

# **NATO, the European Union, and Changing Concepts of Security in Central and Eastern Europe**

by

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## NATO, the European Union, and Changing Concepts of Security in Central and Eastern Europe

*This paper is a preliminary compilation of research done by several scholars that looks at the security circumstances of selected Central and Eastern European countries and the steps taken to improve their situations. Project participants look at Slovakia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, and the Baltics – countries with diverse preparation for integration with the West but not yet members of NATO or the European Union. While much of this paper is derived from research by colleagues in the project, I alone am responsible for the organization and conclusions presented herein.*

The pace of change in Central and Eastern Europe has picked up. Three countries have already joined NATO and seem good bets for EU membership in 2004 or 2005. Democracy has triumphed over authoritarianism in Croatia and Serbia while ethnic conflict has become violent in Macedonia. The economic growth rate of some countries in the region has approached the Asian tigers in their heyday while others have become “mired in a sea of poverty.” A new administration in Washington makes policy pronouncements almost every day that could affect US engagement overseas, while just as often the EU leadership grapples with its own ambiguous attitudes toward deepening and widening. Central and Eastern Europe is indeed in a period of real dynamism, but to what end?

One end is certainly a change in the scope and understanding of security in the region. With fear of invasion fading, except perhaps for the former-Yugoslavia and its immediate neighbors, new issues are occupying the security tableau while others are leaving international affairs and entering the domestic competence of the European Union. This paper looks at NATO, the European Union, and several Central and Eastern European countries to reflect on the changing concepts of security in the region. It seeks to illuminate some of the region’s problems in the large through analysis of specific country issues; it makes no claim of comprehensiveness. The countries examined are Slovakia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, and the Baltic states as a whole; the security issues discussed include classic military threats to state survival, but also economics, political instability, the environment, and societal/minority concerns.

These coincide closely with those discussed by Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde in their book, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, which is used as an organizing referent for the paper. Their approach considers security a social process where problems outside traditional homeland defense are constructed in security terms because of their emerging importance or because political entrepreneurs hope to gain priority or advantage from such identification.<sup>1</sup> Issues are identified as security ones when action “beyond the established rules of the game” frame them as a special kind of politics or as above politics.<sup>2</sup> Security is seen as a negative circumstance, however, a failure to cope with certain issues as ordinary politics; the desired end-state should be desecuritize the issues and to move toward normal processes.<sup>3</sup>

The analysis reaffirms a widely held belief that economic performance is the region’s bedrock concern, even for states doing relatively well and far advanced in their preparations for NATO and EU membership. The post-communist collapse of employment opportunity and social benefits and the economic discipline imposed by neoliberal financial regimes can still cause civil disruption in virtually every state of Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time, revenue constraints are hampering military reform that might delay preparations for entering Western security groupings. Economic performance is linked to political instability because national leaders can push reform efforts only so far before losing coalition and voter sympathy. It is also a factor in societal and minority issues in several countries because poverty tends to be

distributed along ethnic lines. Central and Eastern Europe is a *mélange* of nations whose loyalties often cross political boundaries, as with Hungarians, or who have little national sympathy to begin with, as with the Roma (Gypsies).

Despite the common threat of economic hardship and political instability, the sample demonstrates that security concerns vary greatly throughout the region. The environment, for example, is an issue throughout the region but has been securitized especially in Slovakia. Ukraine has enormous environmental problems as well, but these pale to graver concerns. No overarching security paradigm can be applied to the region as a whole, suggesting that “Central and Eastern Europe” is not a particularly useful level of analysis.

On the other hand, major problems tend to be regional and might respond best to regional solutions. Here theory follows practice, as Buzan et. al. conclude, with regional integration offering the best chance for conflict resolution. Integration changes the systemic organizing principle from anarchy to hierarchy based on a larger hegemonic unit.<sup>4</sup> A Hobbesian bargain on a grand scale is being played out where much of Central and Eastern Europe is moving to surrender some of their freedom of action in exchange for membership in NATO and the European Union. For those so favored, EU membership in particular promises to reduce both traditional and non-traditional security concerns; for those outside the developing Union, however, security may well be reduced. This new Europe holds challenges for the United States, including how to deal with those countries still outside the European Union and how to maintain influence with those within.

## **NATO**

NATO has made a remarkable transformation since the end of the Cold War. As an institution born and bred from fear of the Soviet Union, it has become part of a grass-roots effort to encourage and occasionally to enforce peace throughout Central and Eastern Europe. To join NATO or even to associate with it through outreach programs like the Partnership for Peace require some evidence of democratic process, a free market economy, and respect for basic human rights. With its new charter, NATO has proved enormously attractive to the armed forces of many Central and Eastern European countries and has helped guide them towards Western concepts of military professionalism. It has at the same time allowed for an economically necessary downsizing of the region’s militaries by reducing concerns about threats from neighbors, both near and far.

Central and Eastern European countries have made efforts to mitigate their regional security conflicts as part of their preparation for NATO membership. As benevolent hegemon, NATO has established the beginnings of a security community for the region, certainly for Slovakia and Bulgaria, arguably for the Baltics, but not for Ukraine. In the former-Yugoslavia, NATO has set up virtual protectorates and become the reluctant overlord keeping the peace. Its air campaign over Kosovo remains a controversial issue in both East and West, with the long term effects still playing out. Public attitudes throughout Slavic populations were dramatically against the intervention, but governments more circumspect. For Slovakia and Bulgaria, Kosovo turned into a test of worthiness for NATO membership for which they received high marks.

NATO’s leadership and membership are not just being magnanimous in their policy towards Central and Eastern Europe. NATO could survive the end of the Cold War only by changing, but by doing so it also preempted the options of other European security organizations. NATO as a collective security organization has overshadowed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), arguably a better chartered grouping for such a role; as regional

police force, NATO set back the institutionalization and effectiveness of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) – assuming of course that the will to make CFSP effective could have been found earlier in the post-Cold War period. NATO's enlargement and Kosovo campaign aggravated Russia and marginalized the Commonwealth of Independence States (CIS) it leads. Russia was a virtual strategic ally of the West to the mid-1990s, but now pouts on the sidelines looking for alliance weakness. At a less cosmic level, NATO's security umbrella has allowed the region to redirect scarce resources away from military reform so it is unsurprising that military transformation is proceeding slowly.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, Central and Eastern Europe has been relatively peaceful, excepting of course for the former-Yugoslavia, and NATO has had much to do with it. For good and perhaps occasional ill, NATO is a means by which Western and particularly American power are expressed in Central and Eastern Europe. But its future is dim, with days numbered by a combination of unilateralism from the new American administration – reflected in initiatives like national missile defense – and the recently vigorous intrusion of the European Union into security and defense affairs. NATO was crucial to Central and Eastern European security in the first decade of the post-Cold War period; for the second, its major role may be as unofficial prerequisite for joining the European Union, not for the security it provides.

### **European Union**

As with NATO, EU requirements for membership include democratic processes, a market economy, and demonstration of concern for human rights. It goes far beyond NATO in its requirements for economic viability and conformance to organization statutes and legislation. And like NATO, the European Union has become a steward of security in Central and Eastern Europe – although overshadowed by its transatlantic partner and more indirect in effect. There is a perception that just belonging to the European Union automatically improves security because threatening countries know it is politically and economically strong and can call upon forces to defend its own. And threatening countries may also require good relations with the Union because of their own economic dependence. Consequently, the countries in and adjacent to Central and Eastern Europe have been more inclined to settle their bilateral conflicts: environmental problems are identified and brought to neutral forums for arbitration or review; minority issues are confronted and often mitigated; and, coordination has begun to address transnational problems like organized crime, drug smuggling, and illicit immigration.

As CFSP evolves into a more comprehensive Common European Security and Defense Policy (CESDP), the European Union will take on explicit military roles in Central and Eastern Europe – and likely replace NATO as the region's security guarantor. This should not be a surprise: intervention in the region (the Petersberg Tasks of peacekeeping and related missions) is one of the primary reasons CESDP is being developed and one that many in the United States strongly endorse. EU and associated countries have already made manning and equipment commitments for a new 50-60,000 person rapid reaction force, scheduled for activation in 2003, and EU officials are establishing command and control policies and doctrine for its use. More difficult are negotiations with NATO to implement Command Joint Task Force (CJTF) procedures developed over the years with the Western European Union (the WEU - now part of the European Union) for EU use of NATO assets and procedures in operations where the United States chooses not become involved.

Negotiations are difficult because, in a very real way, the fielding of an EU rapid reaction force and the further institutionalization of CESDP spells the beginning of the end for NATO as

the premier security organization in Europe. By 2010, it seems likely that security issues will either be internalized into EU domestic procedures for its new Central and Eastern European members or handled by the CESDP as part of EU foreign policy. The big question will then be how US influence will be exerted in Central and Eastern Europe and the greater European community. Perhaps an active role will be unnecessary because of the extent of shared values and interests between the United States and the European Union and because of the desecuritization of many issues, but history and international theory suggests caution about any inherent and enduring harmony of interests between great powers.<sup>6</sup>

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe appear to be agnostic about their security associations – as long as they do not return to the repression that accompanied the Warsaw Pact. NATO is the preference *de jure* because of its military muscle, US association, and record of success. Yet there seems little hesitation within the region to associate with whatever defense mechanism the European Union has to offer. CESDP is but the capstone of the broader security blanket provided by EU membership – or even just association – and will have important implications on the security of Central and Eastern Europe. EU military units will likely first be used in Balkan peacekeeping operations, but deployments to the Caucasus and even to Ukraine are possibilities in the mid-term, should current unrest lead to breakdowns of order and authority.

Securitization of the European Union is not without costs. In addition to marginalizing NATO and the United States in the region, the process will also change perceptions of the European Union from a trade group to a military alliance - and alliances are usually against something. As they are already beginning to do, Russia and other excluded states like Turkey will increasingly view the Union through a security lens and will not longer see a benign post-modern civilian superpower – the image EU members like to project. Those inside and out will see a powerful military alliance, possibly triggering a security dilemma where the militarization of the European Union leads to an actual reduction member security because of the fear its brings to non-members.

EU deepening and widening will also have unwelcome consequences for those left behind – countries like Romania relegated to the back of the candidate queue by the European Commission's most recent progress report, and Ukraine with problems so extensive it is kept at arms' length by the West. The prospect of visa and other administrative barriers between Romania and Ukraine and their Central European neighbors to the west provokes resentment and despair on both sides of the rising paper curtain. Families will become further divided and the lively trade regime – often the only economic activity of importance on either side of the border – will come to a halt.

But for those on the fast track to membership, the European Union is viewed as the utopian end-state, where their countries no longer reside in an unstable buffer region between aggressive powers nor part of a repressive bloc. They will be full members of a security community where taking up arms against neighbors is unthinkable and where the inherent strength of the organization is so great that outside forces are almost completely deterred. According to Haglund and Pentland, the favored in Central and Eastern Europe are looking forward to an integration as complete as Spain, Portugal, and Greece have achieved.<sup>7</sup> The EU fast track includes the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia, with late-comer Slovakia making frantic efforts to join their ranks.

## **Slovakia**

If there is a minimalist enlargement of NATO on a next go round – likely after the 2002 NATO summit – Slovakia, along with Slovenia, will be part of it.<sup>8</sup> Geopolitically Slovakia fills the void between Poland and Hungary and shortens NATO's border by hundreds of miles. Militarily, the country has been working hard – admittedly within an impoverished defense budget – to conform to NATO's compatibility requirements. Since the defeat of Vladimir Meciar in the 1998/99 elections, a liberal coalition has moved Slovakia toward greater accountability in politics and a freer market in economics, receiving wide and appropriate praise for bringing the country near the level of its Visegrad Four neighbors in this regard. It is doing well toward EU membership, having opened 23 of the 31 EU accession chapters and already closed 10.<sup>9</sup> Slovakia is closely following EU security and defense developments but for the present focuses on NATO, where Europe's traditional security still rests. Its generals will become interested in CESDP when there is more than rhetoric and paper associated with it.

So what are the security concerns of this apparently blessed country? For one, there are doubts it will be able to sustain the progress of the last 3 years. Economic reform means rationalization of production and has led to the highest unemployment rate in Europe, about 21%, with much of it outside the prosperous capital of Bratislava. This has been accompanied by cuts in government expenditures on social benefits to meet the budget needs of economic reform. Poverty has increased even as the overall economy has grown.

As a consequence, political instability has reappeared. No Slovakia government since independence has ever been particularly stable, with constitutional questions and patched together coalitions a regime hallmark, but the current one looks particularly feeble. While the 4 party coalition of Mikulas Dzurinda has held together since 1998, rising squabbling within the coalition and its constituent party structures has reduced effectiveness and raised doubts about its survival. Some of this is due to expected realignments in anticipation of the 2002 election, but most reflect the coalitions eroding electoral base. Elections today would bring Robert Fico to power, identified by some as a Slovak Jörg Haider, at the head of a coalition dominated by populist and nationalist Meciar supporters. Dzurinda's and perhaps the country's best hope is for the economy to improve sufficiently by the 2002 election so that another liberal coalition can be cobbled together.

Is this a security issue? For Slovakia yes. Political instability and the wrong prime minister will sabotage the country's hope for early NATO and not-too-distant EU memberships – leaving it a black hole in the center of Europe. Its current leadership perceives that Slovakia must be part of larger security groupings to solidify homeland defense and to meet the threat of a wide variety of post-Cold War problems, such as illegal immigration, drug trafficking, terrorism, and general lawlessness. A bad election would also result in a drop in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) which, to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, is the bottom line to economic well being both now and for the foreseeable future. Slovakia fared poorly during the Meciar years, averaging about one fourth of its Visegrad partners in per capita FDI. Under the current coalition, some big names like US Steel have made large investments in the country, although it still lags its neighbors badly; a Fico or Meciar government would end any hope of parity with them.

Slovakia also has a number of environmental security issues. It operates two Soviet-designed commercial nuclear reactor power complexes, one at Bohunice and the other at Mochovce. Each site has had safety problems and been the target of heated protests. Slovakia itself faces diplomatic pressure from EU countries to shut down the reactors, with Austria

periodically threatening to hold up the country's plans to join the European Union. Slovakia also has a long-running feud with Hungary over the Gabčíkovo-Nagymoros dam project on the Danube River, conceived in 1977 by communist regimes in both countries for hydroelectric power production. Hungary pulled out in the early 1990s in the face of environmental concerns and protests but Slovakia pressed forward, leading to a complex tangle of environmental, political, and legal disputes to sort out.

Slovakia's most unsettling security concern, however, is the construction of its very nationhood – the perception of the 4 million Slovaks that theirs is literally a Slovak Republic and that the 600,000 Hungarians and 500,000 Roma who live within their country's borders are threats to national existence. The Hungarians live primarily in the south, adjacent to Hungary itself, and have no intention of becoming "Slovakized." They are there because of the post-World War I Trianon Treaty that greatly reduced Hungary's size, leaving hundreds of thousands of ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia. During the Mečiar years, Hungarian minority rights were reduced and relations with Hungary often strained. The Dzurinda government has a Hungarian party grouping in its coalition and has gone a long way toward meeting Hungarians concerns and to normalizing relations with Hungary.

More difficult may be the country's Roma. They live as an underclass primarily in eastern Slovakia, in and around the city of Kosice. They are perceived by some Slovaks as inherently criminal and as threats to local safety and the settled Slovak way of life. For the present, the very high unemployment rate of the Roma also makes them an economic burden for the country and a cause for social unrest. Slovakia's past official discrimination and current skin-head violence against the Roma affect Slovakia's chances for EU membership. For the future, Slovaks may become a minority in Slovakia by 2060 because of the very Roma high birth rate.<sup>10</sup>

Membership in the European Union is looked upon as a way to help mitigate minority concerns. The Hungarians of the south may be less inclined towards autonomy within an EU open borders regime that allow easy access to their brethren in Hungary; the Roma of the east will be part of the larger EU-Roma community – shared with Hungary, Romania, and to an extent Bulgaria and other states – and EU aid would help meet their social needs. The Roma demographic time bomb will become an EU internal problem.

## **Bulgaria**

Bulgaria has more traditional security problems than Slovakia.<sup>11</sup> It is next to the volatile former-Yugoslavia and affected by spill-over from the conflicts there. During the Kosovo air campaign, Bulgaria was accidentally bombed by NATO. The new violence in Macedonia is a particular concern that could draw Bulgaria into the conflict. To the south, it is bordered by powerful Turkey – which keeps track of the treatment of its kinsmen in Bulgaria.

Bulgaria joined the Partnership for Peace in 1994 and declared its intention to join NATO in February 1997. Its application was supported by a new government's commitment to democracy, economic reform, and respect for human rights. Bulgaria's progress toward military reform is in line with NATO requirements and initiatives, with a new "Concept for National Security" and "Military Doctrine" to guide harmonization with NATO procedures and to help shape the security environment of its neighborhood.

The country has pursued an amazing array of regional security arrangements as a precursor to NATO and EU CESDP association or membership, all under the rubric of the South-Eastern Defense Ministerial (SEDM) process. This began in Sofia with a meeting of

defense ministers from Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey and the United States in October 1997. At a follow-on meeting in Skopje, Macedonia much the same group agreed to create a brigade-sized Multinational Peace Force South-Eastern Europe with headquarters in Bulgaria's second city of Plovdiv. The unit will have active leadership from Greece and Turkey – itself a regional security success. An alphabet soup of other arrangements has developed along the way, often under Bulgarian leadership. As a result, the country has considerably advanced its preparations for joining NATO and for any EU military arrangement that might emerge.

The European Union has been much more forthcoming in its relations with Bulgaria than NATO. The EU attitude on enlargement beyond the few select states on the fast track was rather cavalier for most of the 1990s, and Bulgaria's difficult economic circumstances kept its candidacy far from the realm of realism or desirability as far as the EU membership was concerned. But the 1999 Kosovo conflict jolted EU members into recognition of the dire straits of Central and Eastern European countries outside the privileged group. As a result, the European Union launched the Stability Pact (SP) initiative in June 1999 to support and develop realistic steps towards integration into western security and economic structures. The Pact is a political commitment by the European Union to shape the region's security instead of waiting for conflict and instability to reach crisis proportions.

The initiative was warmly welcomed within Central and Eastern Europe. Bulgaria has subsequently made considerable progress towards EU membership, with the mechanisms for integration in place and a building capacity to meet *acquis communautaire* (legal and administrative) requirements. Bulgaria started formal accession negotiation with the European Union in 2000 and has already closed 8 of them. It expects to submit the remaining chapters by 2002.<sup>12</sup> Bulgaria has also taken note of the development of the EU CESDP. In May 2000, the Bulgarian parliament declared that:

The Republic of Bulgaria shares the common values, principles, and goals of the European Union in the area of its Common Foreign and Security Policy, part of the Treaty of the EU, as well as the instruments of the legislation of the EU in this chapter. The Bulgarian foreign and security policy is based on the same principles and has orientation, identical with the CFSP. The Republic of Bulgaria is prepared, capable to fully participate and actively joins the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union. Along with the integration in the European Union Bulgaria actively strives towards membership in NATO and the Western European Union.<sup>13</sup>

As with Slovakia, minority issues are among Bulgaria's most serious security concerns – particularly the status of ethnic Turks who make up about one tenth of the population. While rights for minorities in Bulgaria were the norm prior to World War II, they were essentially abolished during communist rule. Forced assimilation of Turks began in 1971 and reached severe proportions between 1984 and 1989; "Bulgarianization" extended to personal names and the destruction of Mosques and Koran schools. Perhaps 800 to 2,500 Turks were killed and 350,000 left the country during this reign of terror.<sup>14</sup> The policy was renounced with the end of communist rule and an estimated 120,000-180,000 Turks subsequently returned to Bulgaria, but animosity remains.<sup>15</sup> In the early post-Cold War ethnic Bulgarians protested against government assurances of equal rights to Turks, with disturbances reemerging periodically ever since.<sup>16</sup> The government, however, is understandably proud of its official tolerance of all groups and that the



country's independence has emphasized democracy and human rights instead of ethnicity and nationalism.

Bulgaria's economy is also a profound cause of insecurity. While it has recently been growing an admirable rate of about 5%, it must still recover from its mid-1990s crisis. GDP declined by over 10% in 1996 and inflation reached 500% in 1997, resulting in an almost catastrophic collapse of the economic and financial systems.<sup>17</sup> With a change of government in early 1997, Bulgaria adopted strict fiscal rules and launched a comprehensive economic reform package. Recovery is still hampered by turbulence in the former-Yugoslavia – including a Danube River blocked from NATO bombing – but there is at least some optimism about the future. Such can not be said for Ukraine.

## **Ukraine**

Ukraine is the new sick man of Europe.<sup>18</sup> Its security problems are real, if not exactly traditional. The country is concerned about Russia to the north but more in the context of political and economic subversion than any fear of invasion. The more fundamental concern is for the country's nationhood. Ukraine is as close to a failed state as there is in Central and Eastern Europe, with a collapsing economy and corrupt political system, and with few policies in place that point to a way out of the morass.

Ukraine's economy is in terrible shape, with destitution and misery spreading across the land. Unable to pay its energy bills, it has recently engaged in debt-for-equity swaps with Russian enterprises – leading to a surprising return of Russian influence within the country. Some of its economic problems can be tied to corrupt politics and cozy relationships between national leaders and enterprise managers, but much of it is the result of 70 years of communist rule in the Soviet Union that preceded independence. Individual initiative, the free market, and any kind of dissent were ruthlessly stamped out. To expect a miraculous turnaround in infrastructure, organization, and most importantly manager and worker attitudes, was wildly optimistic.

Recent allegations of President Kuchma's involvement in the murder of an opposition journalist are only the latest round of scandal in a political system that makes Russia look good. The charges were followed by a flurry of protest and demands that Kuchma leave office, but little legal action against him is expected given the judicial and political systems' poor records of accountability.

The bad economy and corruption are on top of very fundamental disputes among Catholic and various Orthodox faiths and between Ukrainian and Russian speakers. Religious confrontations are common over the distribution of church property that had been reallocated during the period of Soviet rule. In language, the country is divided between the Ukrainian speaking and nationalistic west, centered on the city of Lviv, and the Russian speaking east with important concentrations in places like Dnipropetrovsk and the Crimea. The government has been moving toward more required use of Ukrainian, a policy that could aggravate its Russian speakers and Russia itself.

Although the site of the world's worst nuclear reactor accident at Chernobyl and many other environmental hazards, Ukraine can pay only lip-service to environmental policies because of its poor economy. The country simply can not afford the luxury of concern because it is still at the base of Maslow's pyramid and worried about national survival. The environment is nonetheless a security issue because of Ukraine's connections with the West. Applications for foreign aid and loans are often considered by Western governments and the European

Commission in the context of improvements in nuclear reactor safety, and hence very important to the country's economy and survival.

With all of this, Ukraine has still been able to maintain its integrity without terribly destructive civil disturbances and excessive Russian interference in its affairs. Most of the credit must go to the incredible endurance and stoicism of the people of Ukraine, but some measure to NATO and the European Union as well. The relationship of NATO with Ukraine helped establish the country's international legitimacy and provided some measure of security expression. NATO engages Ukraine in a number of ways, including the Partnership for Peace (PfP), joint military exercises, and through the NATO-Ukraine Joint Commission. These and other initiatives are carried out and detailed under NATO's *Charter on a Distinctive Partnership Between NATO and Ukraine*.

The European Union has been less forthcoming. Ukraine is on the wrong side of the developing paper curtain of visa requirements and is becoming less, not more, integrated with the Union. According to Jennifer Moroney, the European Union – with its deeply integrated and closed structure – continues to view Ukraine as non-European and tied by culture and identity to Eurasia. President Kuchma declared that the possible expansion of the EU visa regime means not only barriers to personal contacts, but also to the political, economic, and humanitarian links that already exist in the region. The new border could lead to unintended and possibly tragic consequences for Ukraine, forcing it further into poverty and despair and back to Russia's outstretched arms.

Ukraine's hopes are tied to economic recovery, which will require vigorous reform and more hardship but also more favorable international conditions. The West has been relatively generous financially in encouraging Ukraine's survival and reform, but more may be necessary even as greater sacrifices are required of the Ukrainian people.

### **The Baltic States**

As elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, security in the Baltic states is a mixture of traditional and non-traditional concerns -- but with a distinct emphasis on the traditional.<sup>19</sup> Adjacent to an unstable Russia and an authoritarian Belarus, the Baltics exist in the shadow of possible military or non-military attempts at destabilization – such as curtailment of energy supplies. They each have specific border disputes with Russia and some with each other, and fear mass migration should the economies of their eastern neighbors totally collapse. Russia's official position is for the Baltic states to be neutral, as put forth in its 1997 "Baltic Concept" security paper, which by Russian definition would make them dependent on Russia for their security. This was unacceptable to the Baltics states which have continued their vigorous quest for early membership in NATO and the European Union – effectively rebuffing Russian initiatives. Some Balts actually favor neutrality, but it is the neutrality of a Sweden or Finland – with membership in the European Union and non-membership but cooperation with NATO.

The economic performance of the Baltic states has been mixed, with Estonia often identified as the most dynamic economics in Central and Eastern Europe but with Latvia and Lithuania trailing far behind. As elsewhere in the region, the disruption of communist era economic ties followed by austerity measures caused substantial hardship and political instability. On the environment, Lithuania is home to the Ignalina nuclear power station with two Chernobyl style reactors that are among the largest in the world. Because it provides national income from export of surplus electrical power but is also a major environmental

concern for Western Europe, Ignalina has been a source of continuing controversial between Lithuania and the European Union.

As with Slovakia and Ukraine, a major security concern for the Baltic states has to do with their national identity. This is a product of the tension between nation-building and a desire for integration with the West: are they to be ethnic Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian states or multinational countries with a geographic and liberal orientation? The conflict between these norms and objectives is particularly severe in Latvia where Slavs make up almost half of the population and where language and citizenship issues are most dangerous. During the communist era, Soviet leadership adopted a policy of industrialization and Slavic settlement in Estonia and Latvia -- though much less so in Lithuania. Latvia's post-independence leadership had to make difficult decisions in pursuing their statehood, between accepting the Slavs who populated the land over the past 50 years as equal citizens or pushing for a state that would be by and for ethnic Latvians. The second alternative was selected and implemented through language requirements so restrictive that most ethnic Slavs were effectively denied citizenship, allowing Latvian national parties to dominate the country's political process. This of course gave Russia considerable moral authority in its complaints to the international arena about treatment of its kinship population in Latvia. Of late, Latvia has been moving toward international norms and acceptance of Western ideas on treatment of national minorities -- undoubtedly to improve its chances for joining NATO and the European Union in the not-too-distant future.

Estonia also implemented language requirements that raised tensions with Russia and with its own Russian minority. Unlike Latvia (and Lithuania), Estonia embarked on a dramatic program of economic reform and pursued it resolutely and with consistency. Its neoliberal economic policy, with tight monetary controls and an open privatization policy, has resulted in rapid growth and put it on the fast track for EU membership.

Lithuania is a much more homogeneous country than its neighbors to the north, with ethnic minorities making up less than 20% of its population. Its language issue is not with Russians but with ethnic Poles who occupy a region formerly governed by Poland. Like the Slovak Hungarian issue, the language issue became securitized as a bilateral conflict between Poland and Lithuania. Fortunately for the region, a Lithuanian-Polish rapprochement in 1994 helped reduce nationalist passion within Lithuania and encourage acceptance of the country's Western aspirations abroad.

According to Grazina Miniotaite, Lithuania and Latvia have emphasized the nation and state in their sovereignty discourse while Estonia has placed its emphasis on integration and international cooperation - resulting in distinct security circumstances. The Baltic states should not be considered as a unitary whole despite their fifty years of the common Soviet past. On the other hand, they are united in their belief that Russia is common danger and that integration into Western security and political structures - if not full membership - is their only practical future.

### **A Comprehensive View of Security in Central and Eastern Europe**

Stephen Walt and others would prefer to leave the definition of security within the discipline of strategic studies and cover only traditional national security concerns and the military forces that make up their currency.<sup>20</sup> For him, expansion of security to other concerns dilutes and confuses the meaning of the word, and may disguise ulterior motives under the guise of national interest. His concerns are valid but his solution unrealistic. It is precisely non-traditional issues like the economy, politics, societal problems, and the environment that occupy the minds of the leadership and peoples of Central and Eastern Europe -- not fear of invasion --

and that are linked to their personal and national senses of well-being, the very essence of security. The militaries of the region – the bedrock means of defending countries against threats – would in any case be unable to perform their traditional security mission. All are under-funded, burdened with obsolete equipment, woefully under-trained and undermanned, and essentially unprepared for territorial defense against credible military forces. They would require assistance from other powers if attacked and are themselves being reconfigured for non-traditional missions, such as to counter drug trafficking, organized crime, and terrorism, and to assist in relief of natural disasters. Using Buzan’s lexicon, non-traditional issues have been “securitized” in Central and Eastern Europe – sometimes by necessity but other times for political expediency – and can not be reconciled by ordinary political or bureaucratic processes.

The new security rests most heavily on economics, where the task remains enormous. As Geoffrey and Nigel Swain point out, privatization and other activities designed to reform Central and Eastern European economies, must undo forty years of nationalization and conscious suppression of the market.<sup>21</sup> The process has not gone well anywhere in the region, a victim of bad planning, cronyism, and the tendency of capital assets to concentrate. Even in hindsight, it is difficult to come up with a privatization scheme to avoid the pitfalls seen thus far. How can the interrelationship of politics and economics be separated enough to ensure fairness but remain responsive to the will of the people; how can the dependence of whole regions on decrepit industries be reconciled with social welfare reform; and, how can the natural desire to hold onto local business and resources be reconciled with the need for foreign investment? The total value of economic enterprise in countries like Slovakia and Bulgaria is far less than giant multinational firms (MNCs) like Microsoft and Siemens; an entire country could be purchased by MNCs if there were no investment restrictions.

Economic rationalization will straighten out the privatization mess over the long term, after a few more years of disruption, but will then reflect the double effect of globalization. Reform will undoubtedly raise the overall prosperity of many countries as the merits of local advantage kick in, but dislocation will be severe and the benefits uneven. William McBride overstated view nonetheless captures a key concern, that globalization will result in a “... highly authoritarian, if not quasi-totalitarian, global system in which this simplistic and single-valued logic (the value in question being economic profit) tend to determine, to an ever greater extent, all aspects of life, social, and even private, particularly in the needier countries such as those of Eastern Europe.”<sup>22</sup> There is a very human impact of rationalization on the employment opportunities and social benefits for the region. This is particularly true of Ukraine and Bulgaria, reflecting the generalized conclusion that the worst economic conditions are in the countries of the former Soviet Union followed by the war-torn Balkans. But even in relatively successful Slovakia and the Baltic states, long-term unemployment is a persistent problem and could lead to further political instability. Anomie could set in where whole countries give in to despair.

Economics is inexorably linked to politics, with all governments walking a fine line “between growth and social disruption.”<sup>23</sup> But some political leaders deserve to lose their positions, having abused their power and profited from their authority. Unfortunately, in many cases they have followed the authoritarian and corrupt traditions of their particular countries, resulting in even great political disaffection among the voting population than even the economic hardships of the times would suggest. Governments in Central and Eastern Europe are almost universally mistrusted at the same time that voter fatigue has reduced electoral participation.<sup>24</sup> Lack of support makes it extremely difficult for political leadership in countries like Slovakia

and Bulgaria, who seem to be working hard for their countries' best long-term interests, to maintain power while reforming the economy.

Closely related to economics and politics are societal/minority concerns, associated with local ethnic tensions and the possibility of large-scale migration.<sup>25</sup> As pointed out by Sabrina Ramet, it is striking that in no other part of the world is there so much "fussing" over nation-related terminology – and whether to call particular groups "nations" or "nationalities" or perhaps "national or ethnic group." Being a "minority" is a question of huge importance to many in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>26</sup> When national identity is weak, as in most countries of the region, tolerance declines for fear the minorities "will become an additional tool for the 'kin-state' to support its ethnic minority in the 'home-state.'"<sup>27</sup> Ramet writes of the "ethnarchs," most vividly seen in the former Yugoslavia, who preach that peoples have a right to suppress the cultures and religions of minorities that happen to live within their borders.<sup>28</sup>

In Slovakia and Bulgaria ethnarchs have passed from power, at least for the moment, but recent events in Romania, Ukraine, Macedonia, and even Latvia suggest extreme caution in generalizing their demise. Dominant national groups in Central and Eastern Europe would undoubtedly be content if their minorities would go somewhere else so they would not have to deal with them, but deal them they must and perhaps in the process create a better place for themselves. Coping with change and diversity is precisely the trial needed for democracy and tolerance to take hold in the region. The broad tents of NATO and the European Union can help dull the sharp edges of nationalism and connect transnational communities in new ways, offering a good chance for real nationhood to succeed. More immediately, the accession process to NATO and the European Union creates incentives to treat minorities well.

The environment is a different category of security concern. All countries in the region bear the mark of their past, with poor procedures and poisoned wastelands left over from the low priority given environmental issues by communist regimes whose fundamental concern was industrialization to aid the confrontation with the West. Hazards emerge routinely as bad memories of the Cold War, as in January 2000 when a cyanide sludge spill from a mining waste reprocessing site in Romania essentially killed Hungary's Tisza River. Despite the justified concern for local health and economies, the environment is far below the other security concerns on any Central and Eastern European government's priority list. It is most important as a tradition bilateral or multilateral security concern and usually over Soviet-designed nuclear reactors: Slovakia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, and Lithuania all have disputes with the European Union or its members over their nuclear power stations. But even there, the European Union is likely to be give priority to other reform efforts and to forego environmental improvement until the countries are members.<sup>29</sup>

### **Joining the West**

NATO and the European Union enlargement is the key to Central and Eastern European security. The process will advance the ideal of a Europe 'whole and free, where security and prosperity are shared and indivisible.'<sup>30</sup> The states in the region may have the will to address their security concerns and to cooperate regionally in promoting security, but they still require both direct and indirect support from the Western security community. Monetary aid, easy loans, and most importantly direct investment are needed to get through the period of economic rationalization and political instability; indirect support by rhetorical inclusion and specific membership targets can provide a light at the end of a harsh tunnel of transition.

With the end of the East-West divide, Central and Eastern European countries went through a phase of rediscovering national identity after decades of communist domination. The revolutions of 1989 and 1990 were not calls for diversity, but for recognition of past independence and culture. Over the last decade, however, political elites across the region have come to recognize that their best chances for the future lies with the West and its organizations, and that this implies compromising their independence. In establishing relationships with Central and Eastern European countries, NATO and the European Union made explicit their collective values and expectations for candidate member countries. These are more than platitudes: both NATO and the European Union have already enforced these norms in their membership decisions.

But the turn is not complete. One would feel more confident about the region's future if the attitudes of more of citizens had changed. If joining Europe is about preference formation, it is apparent that many do not yet want what Europe has to offer – but perceive no real choice in the matter. There is more resignation than enthusiasm for membership and, as many believe, little justice in Western actions; conforming to Western norms however noble also restricts freedom of action. It is rather like the beginning of the Cold War, or as revisionists would point out, one of its causes. In 1947, the socialists of Western Europe were bought off or bribed to desert their communist comrades by the promise of dollars and American investment.<sup>31</sup> In contemporary Central and Eastern Europe, national sovereignty is being bought off for the promise of security and prosperity that membership can provide. As one Slovak newspaper pointed out:

It has become unfashionable to ask whether capitalism really brings the greatest satisfaction to the greatest number of people. The question is particularly unwelcome in former communist countries like Slovakia, which must be absolutely unswerving in their dedication to a free market, corporate tax incentives and cheap labor if they hope to survive in a world ruled by international corporations.<sup>32</sup>

But dissenters need to look to the past and future, and to get beyond current emotions. Europe for much of this century as been a game of great powers, most recently the United States, Russia, and the European Union, with Central and Eastern Europe just one of the pawns to play. NATO and the European Union have helped prevent the reemergence of military competition in Western Europe and seem well on their way to doing so in Europe's center. One cannot overestimate the importance of NATO and the European Union to the peace and likely prosperity of Central and Eastern Europe. For the future, when the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are no longer such weak sisters economically and politically, they may emerge from their role as pawns to become real actors within those organizations. Poland is already playing a role as regional leader and defender of its poorer and less developed brethren to the south and east. It is not difficult to imagine many of these places as normal countries.

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<sup>1</sup> Charlotte Bretherton, "Security issues in the wider Europe: the role of CU-CEEC relations," in *Pushing Back the Boundaries: The European Union and Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. By Mike Mannin (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1999), 185.

<sup>2</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 23.

<sup>3</sup> Buzan, *New Framework for Analysis*, 29, and Terriff, 27-28.

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- <sup>4</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 11-12.
- <sup>5</sup> Bretherton, "Security issues in the wider Europe," 199.
- <sup>6</sup> Edward Hallett Carr's *The Twenty Years Crisis: 1919-1939* (New York: Harper Collins, 1939), provides us with the foremost warning in this regard.
- <sup>7</sup> David G. Haglund and Charles C. Pentland, "Pax Bruxellana? The European Union as Multilateral Approaches," 99.
- <sup>8</sup> Portions of this section are drawn from the paper "Slovakia and Security at the Center of Europe" by Charles Krupnick and Carol L. Atkinson.
- <sup>9</sup> *Radio Slovakia International*, 15 November 2000.
- <sup>10</sup> In Romania, as one professor explained, official policy on abortion was based above all on the felt need to prevent the Roma population, with its traditionally high birth rates, from overtaking the ethnic Romanian population. McBride, *Philosophical Reflections*, 88.
- <sup>11</sup> Portions of this section are drawn from the paper "Bulgarian Armed Forces and National Security Policy: Shaping the Security Environment in South-Eastern Europe" by Todor Tagarev.
- <sup>12</sup> "Bulgaria 2001: An overview of government, the economy, and international relations," prepared by the Bulgarian Embassy of the United States, <http://www.bulgaria-embassy.org>.
- <sup>13</sup> *Bulgarian State Newspaper*, # 44, 30 May 2000.
- <sup>14</sup> John T. Ishiyama and Marijke Breuning, *Ethnopolitics in the New Europe* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 23.
- <sup>15</sup> Ishiyama and Breuning, *Ethnopolitics*, 24.
- <sup>16</sup> Sabrina P. Ramet, *Whose Democracy? Nationalism, Religion, and the Doctrine of Collective Rights in Post-1989 Eastern Europe* (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1997), 71-77.
- <sup>17</sup> "Bulgaria 2001," Bulgarian Embassy.
- <sup>18</sup> Portions of this section are drawn from the paper "Frontier Dynamics and the West's Strategic Engagement with Ukraine" by Jennifer D. P. Moroney.
- <sup>19</sup> Portions of this section are drawn from the paper "The Baltic States: In Search of Security and Identity" by Grazina Miniotaite.
- <sup>20</sup> Buzan, *New Framework for Analysis*, 3.
- <sup>21</sup> Geoffrey Swain and Nigel Swain, *Eastern Europe Since 1945*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 117.
- <sup>22</sup> William L. McBride, *Philosophical Reflections on the Changes in Eastern Europe* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999), 75.
- <sup>23</sup> Swain, *Eastern Europe*, 221.
- <sup>24</sup> Swain, *Eastern Europe*, 181.
- <sup>25</sup> Charlotte Bretherton, "Security issues in the wider Europe: the role of CU-CEEC relations," in *Pushing Back the Boundaries: The European Union and Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. by Mike Mannin (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1999), 206.
- <sup>26</sup> Ramet, *Whose Democracy?*, 1.
- <sup>27</sup> Margit Bessenyei Williams, "From 'The Outside In' Or 'The Inside Out'? Multilateral Cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe," paper presented at the 2001 International Studies Association (ISA) Convention, Chicago, 20-24 February 2001.
- <sup>28</sup> Sabrina P. Ramet, *Whose Democracy? Nationalism, Religion, and the Doctrine of Collective Rights in Post-1989 Eastern Europe* (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1997), xi.
- <sup>29</sup> *Financial Times*, 22 November 2000.
- <sup>30</sup> *NATO Washington Declaration*.
- <sup>31</sup> Swain, *Eastern Europe*, 49.
- <sup>32</sup> *Slovak Spectator*, 20-26 December 1999.