

# WEAVING A SECURITY NET

## East Central Europe and the Structures of International Peace and Security

by  
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Fashioning international frameworks to deal with the processes and tensions unleashed by the collapse of communism in the vast area between the Oder-Niese rivers and the Urals would be no easy task in even the best of circumstances. Transformations throughout the post-communist world continue at a breathtaking speed. After years of enforced stability within a rigid constellation, the region has entered a period of uncertainty and a difficult, protracted search for a new—and this time benign—stability.

Given the rapid pace of developments, any account of the current European security agenda from the perspective of East Central Europe will seem provisional, subject to revision with each new twist of Russian politics or Yugoslav conflict or Ukrainian arms policy. With this caveat declared, we will proceed in this paper to consider, first, the purported threats and risks to European security today; then move on to survey the institutions left in—and entering into—play in the European security arena, analyzing their capabilities to handle those security issues and assessing their performance; and, based on this evaluation of the problems and institutional players, attempt throughout to suggest what place East Central Europe can establish for itself in the emerging European security structure. In geographic terms, we will focus primarily on the East Central European countries proper, and only secondarily consider the Balkans and the states emerging from the former Soviet Union that constitute the rest of formerly communist Eastern Europe.

### An Agenda of Risks

The fall of the totalitarian regimes east of Lübeck and Trieste has undeniably opened the way to a new security agenda, different from the one that dominated the decades marked by Europe's division into ideologically polarized blocs. Seemingly overnight, that division disappeared and the hope for European unification arose. All of the new regimes in the former Eastern bloc declared their commitment to the values of parliamentary democracy and the rule of law, which was confirmed

by the results of general elections in practically all the countries of the region. European division and confrontation gave way to cooperation and ideological homogeneity.

However, the end of East-West antagonism also had another effect. A number of problems resurfaced whose roots had developed centuries ago—inherited tensions and conflicts between various nations and ethnic groups, denied and hidden for decades by communist regimes. Not only the East, however, has been thrown into flux by the sudden reopening of societies that were closed for decades. The cohesion of Western Europe has also been undergoing a trial that is perhaps more severe and decisive than any—even that posed by the Soviet threat—over the previous 45 years.

Paradoxically, the disappearance of the worldwide struggle between East and West, behind which always lay the possibility of global nuclear conflict, has led to a decreased degree of stability. For all the deserved enthusiasm about the passing of communism, one elementary truth of power politics should not be overlooked: The ideologically competitive bipolar system, in which the major powers were alert to any risk of erosion of their position that might result from disorder anywhere—the pattern that prevailed in Europe for more than four decades of cold war—was incomparably more stable and (at least in Europe) more peaceful than a system of the sort we see emerging now, in which no major power sees its vital interests in jeopardy in conflict situations almost anywhere.<sup>1</sup>

Among all four Central European countries—the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia—there is agreement that the new security agenda must deal with the whole series of ongoing and nascent conflicts that undermine the region's peace and tranquillity. Yet, in a dramatic reversal of cold war security thinking, this is a security agenda for countries without any clear and identifiable military enemy. Rather, the overarching problem is the fragility and vulnerability of political and economic systems in each country of the region. Instead of the scenarios of military *threats* that defined security in the cold war, the current security situation throughout Central and Eastern Europe is defined by a variety of *risks*, often of a complex nature. The dangers to the region lie in the possible conjunction of various risk factors, mutually reinforcing each other and cumulatively jeopardizing peace and security in the region.

While direct military threats do not occupy a prominent place on the security agenda of European states today, this does not mean that military power can be discounted as irrelevant among the factors governments take into account in their security assessments. It might, under sufficiently unhappy circumstances, rapidly cease to be a merely marginal aspect of relations between some of the European states. The developments in the former Yugoslavia and some states emerging from the former Soviet Union are warning enough that the current peaceful condition

in East Central Europe will not necessarily last forever, and that other, bleaker worst-case scenarios have to be taken into consideration.

Certainly the foremost security problem for East Central Europe is the risk of revival of Russian imperialism. There does not seem to be an imminent danger of a forceful reassertion of Russian hegemony in this part of Europe, but political developments in 1993—most dramatically, the first-place showing by unabashed advocates of reconstituting the Russian empire in the December parliamentary elections—underscore that the revival of Russian hegemonistic tendencies cannot be underestimated, especially in the long run. Even if Russia itself should be stabilized, there is no guarantee of stability in the newly independent countries on its periphery—and, indeed, there is some evidence that some forces within Russia might not only welcome, but malevolently aggravate, such instability to create an opening for reassertion of Russian domination.

Disquieting as this possibility may be in itself, there is a growing pessimism in East Central Europe about the prospects for full-fledged integration of Russia into Europe at all. Because of Russia's unique traditions, history, demography, and geopolitical position, no European country—not even its erstwhile comrades in communism in East Central Europe—can serve as a model for the process of societal transformation through which it is now passing. It is very likely that its future development will be very different from that of East Central Europe's post-communist societies, which enthusiastically seek their inspiration from the West without domestic recrimination or embarrassment and which had, in varying degrees, their own genuinely democratic traditions before they were engulfed by Nazi and Soviet tides a half century ago.

The other area posing risks to regional security that cannot be ignored is the Balkans, especially the former Yugoslavia. True, the impact to date of the Yugoslav wars is indirect. While people and governments in East Central Europe are not, to be sure, indifferent to the Yugoslav tragedy, they stress that there is a profound difference between the Balkan powder keg and their own far more tranquil region, where Yugoslav-style scenarios of nationalist frenzy and ethnic bloodlust seem virtually inconceivable. But there is little doubt that the Yugoslav crisis can have deleterious consequences for European development in general, and put strains in particular on the process of European integration, relations between individual European states, and relations between Western Europe and the United States.

Yugoslavia, of course, has made itself a shorthand place name for a larger apparent risk in the region—a seemingly uncontrolled wave of aggressive nationalism, inter-ethnic disputes and conflicts, oppression of minorities, and religious intolerance. All these phenomena have manifested themselves to some degree practically everywhere in the eastern part of the continent. The frustrations of the post-communist environment provide fertile soil for them. Although they are latently present

in any society, what makes them especially dangerous and virulent in the East is the weakness of the political system and the shock of economic hardship, which tempt demagogic political leaders to base their political strategies on searching for scapegoats and enemies, internal or external.

Indeed, the most profound risks to security arise in the economic sphere—and it is these, in particular, that compound the risks noted above. The emergence of a demarcation line dividing the rich and poor countries in the region would undermine the idea of Europe as a community of shared values and a common security area. Obviously, the individual East Central European countries inherited different structures and capacities that complicate their integration into the more successful and stable part of the continent. However, the fact that they affirm basically the same aspirations makes them uneasy, even suspicious, about being labeled and separately classified. Simply setting a country apart from the region's larger processes of integration could, in itself, intensify its alienation from the others and aggravate tensions in other spheres.

It is evident that, in the aftermath of the disintegration of the Soviet bloc, East Central Europe now finds itself in a dramatically new geopolitical and geostrategic situation, sandwiched between the stable and prosperous West on one side and the vast, destabilized areas of the East, whose political and economic problems differ qualitatively from the hardships of transition through which East Central Europe is passing. As they continue to seek new relationships that would provide them with a satisfactory assurance of security, the East Central European countries still are suspended in strategic uncertainty, sometimes incorrectly referred to as a security vacuum. For sure, the development of their relationships to both their eastern and western neighbors is a process evolving over time. Nevertheless, all these states clearly have one basic strategic objective: They want to be neither "neutral" so long as Western neighbors see continued utility in a common alliance, nor components of the West's buffer zone. Rather, they would like to be full-fledged members of a European security system, no matter how that system will be defined.

Even as the countries of East Central Europe feel their way toward new multilateral security relationships, the fact remains that the surest guarantee of security in the region will be the success of their efforts to develop growing, well-functioning economies and stable democratic politics. This objective is a *conditio sine qua non*, and the highest priority of these countries. The observation that "real" democracies do not wage wars against each other still gives reliable guidance to security thinking.

## Actors

All the countries of East Central Europe put much hope in the further development of institutional links with established security organizations of Western Eu-

rope. The reason they are so emphatic about their need to be integrated as much as possible with the West, and especially to obtain from it some security guarantees as soon as possible, reflects not only their evaluation of possible future threats, but also their experience in the past, sitting for decades on the wrong side of the barricade. That is why their views are so different from those of the countries that were neutral in the cold war, such as Austria and Finland, which in many respects would seem to face similar security concerns. On this, domestic political factors play the crucial role—in the way post-communist societies perceive their situation, and in the need of policymakers and politicians in these countries to be able to justify their positions to their publics.

The future may bring clarity to the cooperative security architecture in Europe, which now seems a clutter of overlapping organizations, institutions, and mechanisms that appear very different in their nature, membership, and potential. The most important multinational actors in the security field in Europe are obviously the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Western European Union (WEU) as the developing future defense arm of the European Union, and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). In addition, the United Nations, the global organization with a mandate for maintaining international peace and security worldwide, has been busy redefining its *modus operandi* and is playing an increasingly important role in peacekeeping operations and crisis management, even within Europe.

Each of the European-based institutions has a distinctive mandate, membership, and mode of operation. Each has relative advantages and weaknesses, and apparently none of these organizations aspires to become the lead player in the security field today. The essence of a cooperativist approach to European security lies in coordinating and drawing on the assets of the several institutions, avoiding any misguided inclination to rely on only one.

In accordance with this concept of “mutually reinforcing” or “interlocking” institutions, which is steadily gaining adherents, the distinctive experience and capacity of each organization should be applied as appropriate to specific cases. The experience of the last four years suggests that the concept of closely coordinated and cooperating institutions will likely become the best model for finding solutions to European security problems. With only slight exaggeration, the rule can be demonstrated by the following example: The CSCE will not be credible in threatening military action to enforce the will of the international community, while for its part NATO could hardly be credible if it attempted to monitor human rights abuses. The principle of mutually reinforcing institutions is simple, although it can only be successful if the members of the relevant institutions are in agreement on what each organization does best and on what any specific situation requires. Even then, it may not always be easy to coordinate the actions of institutions differing in their mandates, resources, and membership.

Of course, it should not be forgotten that it is still sovereign states, with their specific traditions, culture, and (often competing) national interests, that ultimately are the real players on the field of international relations. For it is states that will determine courses of action of international institutions, which can only reflect the aggregate of the wills of their individual members. Moreover, the capacity of *any* of the Euro-Atlantic security organizations to address the new issues of post-cold war security is in doubt, and has to be measured more by the positions of individual governments, in particular those with the means and the motivation to be an obstacle to a concrete collective decision.

## NATO

Created in the late 1940s as the West's key instrument for containment of the Soviet threat in Europe, NATO now finds itself in a very different security situation as a result of the decomposition first of the Soviet bloc and then of the Soviet Union itself. The fact that the Soviet threat has disappeared, along with the bipolar division of Europe, does not, however, mean that the existence of the alliance and its animating idea—a common commitment to the collective defense of Western Europe—have become obsolete. On the contrary, NATO seems well suited to become the most important pillar of future European security and stability. While it is easy to deride NATO as an institution still searching for a relevant new agenda, it is already close to completing its fundamental transformation. Unlike the region's other international bodies, NATO has all the attributes of an integrated military alliance: a highly developed infrastructure and a well-elaborated methodology of consultative, decision-making, and control processes for an integrated military structure. NATO's model of the collective management of security in the military field could be used in a larger European context. The alliance's new military strategy, adopted in December 1991 and advanced in the document MC-400, is already tailored to crisis management rather than to an all-out military attack by a known and clearly identified adversary, and looms very important for East Central and, indeed, all of Eastern Europe. It asserts the principles of "controlled escalation," emphasis on air superiority, and a strong naval presence near crisis areas. The territory of the former Soviet Union is among the areas specified as a potential source of threats to the security of alliance members.

At their 1992 ministerial meeting in Oslo, NATO's member governments reached an agreement in principle on possible "peacekeeping" missions by NATO military forces on behalf of the CSCE. The peacekeeping offer covers not only logistics and transport, other infrastructure facilities, and supplies of military equipment, but also troops, if necessary. But NATO ministers made clear that there would be no subordination of NATO troops to the CSCE, nor would these be automatically dispatched on the CSCE's call. Decisions should be taken on a case-by-case basis.

The Oslo agreement marked a turning point in NATO's efforts to gain relevance to the new international situation and to deal with the turbulence unleashed in Eastern Europe. But it remains to be seen whether, even in coordination with the CSCE or U.N. in peacekeeping, conflict prevention, and crisis management, NATO can prove itself capable of coping with the complex security problems of the post-communist East. The determined refusal of many of its members to be drawn into combat in Bosnia indicates quite clearly that one should not be excessively optimistic about the organization's readiness to involve itself in bloody conflicts like the one still raging in the former Yugoslavia.

The NATO ministers' declaration also asserted that other CSCE countries, including Russia, would be invited to participate in joint peacekeeping missions. This suggestion reflects, however, political good will more than a real state of affairs. Nevertheless, it would be up to the CSCE to decide on which international organization it would call, should a need for a peacekeeping mission arise. The CSCE could then play an important role in giving political legitimacy to NATO's management of European crises. Although the CSCE member states concluded that, in this situation, the most appropriate institution to make use of NATO's offer of support was the U.N., which already had a major peacekeeping operation underway (the U.N. Protection Force in the Former Yugoslavia, UNPROFOR), the mere appearance at the CSCE of NATO representatives in an official capacity to present a blueprint for a peacekeeping action in the hottest of European hot spots was certainly a welcome sign of new inter-institutional cooperation.

The crucial problem affecting NATO's future roles in the emerging security system is the possibility of NATO interventions "out-of-area," i.e., outside the territory of its member states. While some—particularly in the Washington defense establishment—insist that the organization has full authority to take military action "out of area," such intervention on NATO's own initiative seems patently incompatible with the 1949 Washington Treaty, and for that reason is rejected by key European members. The danger of friction, incidents, or even armed conflict between some states of Eastern Europe, especially in the Balkans, highlights the urgent relevance of this issue today. As far as NATO's participation in peacekeeping activities is concerned, NATO representatives have repeatedly insisted that it should be limited to the CSCE area. NATO Secretary-General Manfred Wörner, in an October 1992 speech at Chatham House, specifically ruled out NATO's playing a global role in this respect, although an intervention similar to the coalition assembled in the Persian Gulf is not completely out of the question in the future. However, with an appropriate display of deference to the U.N. or CSCE for authorization, it is becoming increasingly imaginable that the alliance may move beyond the restrictive mindset that limits its action to its own members' territory and consider undertaking missions out-of-area, particularly where it faces bloody fighting on its doorstep.

One of the most important, and unique, roles of NATO is to provide the framework that continues the stabilizing and constructive role of the United States and Canada in European affairs. Security, stability, and peace in Europe will continue to depend on an American presence that is more than symbolic, as well as on cohesion within the North Atlantic alliance. Yet it is evident that, for the foreseeable future, the U.S. will focus more on its domestic problems—problems that, if they remained unaddressed, admittedly could sap American power to influence events in the region in the long run. But with Washington's energies devoted to domestic revitalization, many European issues may shift out of American sight, to the periphery of U.S. policy. Both the other NATO countries and the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe share a common interest in keeping the Americans bound to Europe. A clear and unequivocal policy to this end ought to be an urgent task for the European pillar of the alliance.

NATO's seemingly successful adaptation and continued importance makes all the more poignant to East Central Europeans their continued absence from its ranks. For them, the most urgent question concerns the possible enlargement of its membership to allow them to be integrated into the NATO system of collective defense and obtain its security guarantees, which they see as critical to their security in the future and an essential element of their "rejoining" Europe. Such security guarantees must not be extended, however, by unilateral action of the West; they cannot be afforded merely by a political declaration or even bilateral mutual assistance pacts like those so promiscuously sworn and foresworn in the interwar period. Rather, security guarantees should be inseparably bound up with all of NATO's mutual commitments and obligations. Indeed, governments in East Central Europe envision a master plan for their transition that brings them fully into the trans-Atlantic alliance of democratic states, part of an international community that undertakes and honors mutual commitments, promotes and defends the values of European and global civilization, resolves disputes among its members in a peaceful manner, and cultivates the subtle arts of fruitful negotiation and communication.

Apparently, these are not the foremost concerns of the organization's current member governments. Instead, they have offered the states once bound by the Warsaw Pact something less than a tight embrace—first by creating the North Atlantic Treaty Cooperation Council (NACC) at their Rome summit in 1991, and most recently in their current proposals for a "Partnership for Peace" with the former communist countries, on which action is expected at their summit in January 1994. These alternative arrangements, open also to the states of the former Soviet Union, most notably Russia, reflect the dilemmas and ambiguities of the current security situation in the region. Policies founded on traditional power politics (for example, the principle that one must "not antagonize the Russians") seem in competition with the alternative approach to security premised on "gradual broadening of a zone of peace, security, and prosperity," building a new security structure stone by stone



and weaving a security net whose strength lies not so much in balancing brute military force as in the common purpose of its members and their ability to share information and communicate effectively.

The key problem that haunts NATO, for obvious reasons, is the touchy sensitivity of a nuclear power, Russia, that already feels humiliated, amputated, and prostrate. Even more than other East European countries, Russia bristles at any hint of second-class status vis-à-vis NATO member states, such as in the NACC framework. It is evident that, in practice, some such differentiation is inevitable, but it rankles nonetheless. The problem of different treatment towards East Central and other East European states is a sensitive but unavoidable issue for NATO's diplomats that they must not fail to tackle.

NATO policy should combine a reasonable differentiation among groups of states, cooperation with the East European countries, and their step-by-step involvement in the broader security structure with two principal goals: Maintenance of stability in this region, and encouragement of the "renationalization" of East European countries' security policies. The tendency toward such renationalization has been a major consequence of the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the fragmentation of the Soviet Union, but this inward-looking orientation toward strictly national interests and advantage may accelerate unhealthily in some countries if they are unable to find a place in larger cooperative structures.

This is where the North Atlantic Treaty Cooperation Council has been of undeniable importance to the countries in the region, providing them an entry-level position into a large cooperative security structure. Its function is not as an anteroom leading into the organization, but as a forum for detailed discussion of security problems and for cooperation among the new partners in order to acquaint them better with the alliance. To have any credibility, however, this Council cannot become a new European debaters' club, but prove itself an effective political body where concrete measures prepared at the expert level can be adopted and where genuine consultations and cooperation can be effected.

To date, the consultations in NACC have been supplemented by a program of activities oriented to actual practice, such as the structure of defense-oriented armies, civilian control of armed forces, the conceptual management of arms control, and revision of military doctrines. The new body has even attracted interest among some of the traditionally democratic countries that were neutral during the cold war and are now redefining their own security policies, and it would come as no surprise if such an interest were to grow into a wish to participate. (Quite possibly, only the fact that participation in NACC might imply coequal status with the more hard-pressed "new democracies" has deterred some of the former neutrals from approaching the institution.) Furthermore, the Council ought to follow regional approaches towards Southeastern, Central, and Eastern Europe. It should not cre-

ate a new pan-European platform, since this would simply duplicate the CSCE. The creation of the NACC, nevertheless, represents a first step in a shift of NATO's security perimeter eastward.

Practical assistance by NATO through the NACC framework to the countries of East Central Europe would be useful in the many fields where the alliance has experience and expertise. One example is the coordination of the delivery of humanitarian assistance to areas of conflict in the region. Another is promotion of democratic concepts of civilian-military relations, i.e., civilian control of the army amid open political debate, where the East European countries have insufficient experience. However, the main form of cooperation ought to be military contacts and exchanges. The alliance's invitation to provide special courses for East European officers at the NATO Defense College in Rome and the NATO school in Oberammergau represents an important friendly gesture. The bilateral and multilateral consultations ought to cover such topics as principles and key aspects of strategy and strategic flexibility; issues of defense planning; force and command structures; approaches to arms control and disarmament; planning, management, and analysis of national defense programs and budgets; concepts and methods of training and education in the defense field; defense conversion, including its human dimensions; inter-relationship of defense budgets with the larger economy; and defense-related environmental issues.

There are some other areas where concrete cooperation could bear fruit, e.g., coordination of air traffic management and some projects in the framework of the "Third Dimension" (scientific and environmental programs). Preparations are under way to develop an initial cooperation program in defense-related matters involving seminars, workshops and the provision of expert assistance.

## WEU and the European Union

The new strategic environment in Europe has required a closer cooperation between NATO and the Western European Union. In the past, the only concerted action between the two organizations consisted of synchronization of their high-level meetings. However, Europe needs a qualitatively new level of this cooperation based on a large interaction between both pillars of the West European security identity. In recognition of this identity, the member states of the European Community included in the Maastricht treaty specific recognition of the WEU as an integral part of the process of developing the European Union (E.U.) in the field of security policy. In June 1992, the WEU Ministerial Council insisted on complementarity between the WEU and North Atlantic alliance, and in the aftermath of that decision at the political level the organizations have been working to define their relationship in military operational terms. The joint NATO-WEU na-

val operations in the Adriatic to monitor the implementation of U.N. sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro have set a precedent for further operational coordination of missions. On the other hand, NATO officials (and NATO member states that are not part of the WEU) sometimes stress that the North Atlantic organization cannot be expected always to act together with the WEU. There are, after all, missions that require a single clear command structure, e.g., military operations in areas of conflict, where two organizations' competing claims and chains of command risk confusion and havoc on the battlefield.

Closer working relations between both organizations will be an essential element in realizing the NATO alliance's endorsement of a framework of mutually reinforcing organizations. The WEU ought to establish closer links with other European Union institutions as well.

The main objective of the East Central European countries should be to obtain a special status—possibly an associate membership—in the WEU. The organization's Ministerial Council invited the three East Central European countries, the three Baltic states, Romania, and Bulgaria to its 1992 meeting in Petersburg, Germany, and established a consultative forum linking them with the Permanent Council of the WEU, institutionalizing a political dialogue on ministerial levels. However, this outcome disappointed at least some of the eight invitees. The East Central European countries, at least, would probably have preferred to be treated as the favored prospective candidates from the region for E.U. membership, which would certainly not be appropriate in the case of a country lagging in its process of transformation, such as Romania. Indeed, they harbor considerable resentment about the WEU's assumption that the eight countries are essentially homogeneous, since the terms of their relations to the E.U. are the yardstick for their treatment by the WEU. The current state of relations of the East Central European countries with the WEU, no matter what it may promise for the future, tends to confirm the impression that the Union is the least receptive of the West European organizations to the aspirations and the security needs of Eastern Europe.

The WEU's main problem vis-à-vis the East is to identify possibilities for cooperation, yet not duplicate the work of the NACC or the CSCE. The involvement of the East Central European countries in some of the activities of the WEU, as observers or associate members, may play a crucial role for these countries psychologically and practically. They realize that NATO is not rushing to admit them at present, and that the establishment of "partnerships for peace" is, at least for the moment, the maximum they can achieve institutionally with the North Atlantic alliance. On the other hand, their association with the WEU could assist the East Central European states in meeting the challenge of developing their security policy. Regular and institutionalized dialogue with West European partners will be especially useful on general issues of stability and security in Europe, and specifically on issues of

arms control and disarmament, such as the implementation of European arms control and force limitation agreements with an emphasis on monitoring and verifying compliance.

The Maastricht summit meeting of the European Community not only launched a new vision of joint action in foreign and security policy, but it indirectly outlined the future platform of cooperation with new democracies in East Central Europe. However, the difficulties in security approval of the union treaty in several E.C. countries gave proof that the progress towards a more cohesive Twelve would not be as rapid or smooth as many expected in the Euro-euphoria at the end of 1991. Yet, no matter how the path of implementation of the European union treaty may be modified, the relationship with the East Central Europeans will not be much affected.

The agreements on association known as the "Euroagreements" gave the countries of East Central Europe a green light for a political and security dialogue with the E.U. These countries ought to demand that such a security dialogue begin as soon as possible, accelerating a discussion aimed at harmonizing E.U. security and defense policy and defining the nature and scope of a dialogue with East Central and other East European countries. All the E.U. member states should fully realize that the Maastricht summit closed a predominantly inward-looking period devoted to deepening the Community and opened a new period in which relations with a new circle of associated states, particularly in Eastern and East Central Europe (with all their attendant security risks and issues), would presumably play a pivotal role.

The movement of the E.U. toward a more open security community without the many anachronistic limitations, barriers, and suspicions of the cold war is of key importance to the four East Central European states as well as for the rest of Eastern Europe. This last is, after all, the region in which risks to European security are particularly likely to arise. Consequently, joint action by the E.U. on security policy should be oriented primarily to the East. However, such Union efforts will be more likely to prove effective if carried out in association or concert with East Central and other East European countries.

Meanwhile, two of the WEL's leading members have taken a further step of their own toward military integration, one that has implications for future defense policy everywhere on the continent. In 1992, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and French President François Mitterand formally inaugurated the Franco-German "Eurocorps," 35,000 strong. This effort to create a binational (followed by multinational) standing force raises many questions. Most of the explanations about the corps' multiple "hating"—i.e., its readiness to serve at the call of various international groupings—are not very reassuring. The real reporting lines and chain of command for the corps are not quite clear. Both founding nations stress the corps' complementary character in relation to other institutions, especially NATO. Its freedom of

operation faces uncertain restrictions in the German constitution, especially its provisions regarding external deployment and the "reestablishment of peace." If anything, the political implications of the Eurocorps are more significant than its military impact. In the past, Germany has faithfully followed American leadership in NATO; the decision to create a multinational European army corps outside of NATO is the first sign that Germany aspires to play its own leading role in European security matters. On the other hand, the French participation represents the first permanent French commitment to an integrated command since France left the NATO military structure in 1966. It is fully possible that the Franco-German corps could later become a truly European corps, integrating forces from other European countries as well, and that it would be available to the WEU or the CSCE.

## **Relations with the Newly Independent States**

The situation in the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union has profound implications for political and nuclear stability, arms control, and the current and future architecture of European security. Certainly, events there must be one of the top priorities of any security agenda on the continent. However, East Central Europeans do not view the ongoing processes in the former Soviet Union through the same lens as do Western Europeans, since their priorities are not always the same. For obvious reasons of size and military power, there are two key security players among the ex-Soviet states: Russia and Ukraine. Among the largely Muslim republics of Central Asia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are the most important. It is in the interest of all that these, as well as the other former Soviet republics, achieve some stability or even prosperity. The attainment of this goal within a reasonably short time seems, however, highly unlikely. The number and intensity of conflicts, mostly ethnically motivated, on the territory of the former Soviet Union seem only to increase, and they drain the already weak potential of these states for economic and social recovery. Nagorno-Karabakh and the situation in Georgia are only the most alarming examples of such hot spots, into which even the United Nations is being reluctantly drawn.

Moreover, the concept of a Commonwealth of Independent States to link the former Soviet republics has not fulfilled even the modest expectations of its creators. The new regimes participating in the Commonwealth are plainly not convinced about its advantages, and the organization has not proved effective in dealing with the issues that so concern the rest of the world, such as control over strategic nuclear arms and conflict resolution. The Commonwealth summit in Bishkek demonstrated the utter divergence of views that renders the association systemically incapable of tackling issues of common interest.

From the point of view of the East Central European countries, relations with Russia and Ukraine represent the main area of interest. The Czech Republic, Slovakia,

Hungary, and Poland do not approach these relations identically. Poland and Hungary tend to place the cultivation of their relations with Ukraine foremost, while the Czech and Slovak positions tend to be more balanced between Moscow and Kiev. Nevertheless, a general coordination of their approach towards Russia and Ukraine should continue. Ukraine will likely endeavor for a more active position in the region corresponding to its size and population. No matter how untransparent Ukrainian policies are today, it may be assumed that future political, economic, and military developments in Ukraine will have consequences for the European political environment that cannot be ignored. Moreover, the role of Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland as Ukraine's western neighbors is unique.

## Visegrád Group

Woven into several nets of security cooperation but with no solid international security guarantees, the four states of East Central Europe feel an urgent need for regional cooperation among themselves. The quadrilateral cooperation among the Czech republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland is primarily oriented to general security policy, and is not directly defense-related in nature. In fact, it has been inspired by the Western interest in having a single, relatively homogeneous entity to deal with in the region, rather than four discordant capitals. The group has never imagined itself as any sort of defense minibloc. Nor, for that matter, does it have any mechanisms for settlement of bilateral problems among its participants. The common interest of the four countries is to prevent East Central Europe from becoming a mere buffer zone between the states of the former Soviet Union, such as Russia, and Western Europe.

Within the group, debate continues on the desirability of institutionalizing security links among the partners. In the face of arguments both in favor and against, the inevitable result has been piecemeal institutionalization on an ad hoc basis. The main stumbling block to further development of security cooperation among the four is the shared conviction that any regional cooperation in security matters can only be fruitful if anchored within a larger European security framework. The outside impediments to further strengthening of group cooperation will probably become more formidable, certainly in the now divided Czechoslovakia and probably to some extent in Hungary too. Moreover, the creation of formal institutional structures for regional cooperation could collide with the members' efforts to obtain full membership in the E.U. On the other hand, these states' cooperation should not be construed to mean they have given up their efforts to establish strong Western links as far as security issues are concerned. Since the dissolution of the Czechoslovak federation, the one-time Visegrád "Triangle" has continued to function as a "Quadrangle," with no change in its basic goals.

## Treaties

The East Central European countries, like other former members of the Warsaw Pact, have also established a network of bilateral treaties of cooperation. The Czech republic has such treaties with Poland, Italy, France, and Germany, and treaties with some other European states are in the process of negotiation. These treaties define, among other things, a scope of contacts and cooperation in security matters, such as an obligation to consult in case of emergency. However, these treaties do not constitute alliances, and under them, nations assume no burden to have to come to the defense of their partner. Czechs, in particular, in no way exaggerate the significance of the bilateral treaties, having learned much about them from their history in this century. Nevertheless, these treaties will be of some value in strengthening Czech and Slovak security, especially in the present period of transition.

By contrast, the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe has created a specialized multilateral regime of considerable importance to East Central Europe and to European security generally. Although the long negotiations that produced it were originally designed to reduce the capabilities of either cold-war alliance for a surprise attack—and, particularly, the attack capabilities of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact—the major threat to the West was effectively eliminated by precisely the same events that led to the successful conclusion of the negotiations: the collapse of the communist regimes, the dissolution of the Pact, and the unraveling of the Soviet Union. But, if anything, the CFE treaty has actually grown in significance as an assurance of nations' military security. The key to its importance lies in the very specific levels to which the former Soviet republics are to limit their military capabilities, and to the extensive verification regime established to monitor compliance. Indeed, arduous negotiations were needed to hammer out the formula of allocating the already agreed ceiling of the former USSR among its constituent successor states before the treaty could enter into force in July 1992.

A smooth implementation of the CFE treaty is of paramount importance for the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland—not only because their new military doctrines are premised on their neighbors' maintaining force levels in accordance with this treaty, but also because it allows for a safe reduction in their military spending.

## Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe has gradually evolved from a "soft security" institution into a regional actor of real significance for European security. This transformation has been formally confirmed by the recent declara-

tion by the Conference that it constitutes a "regional arrangement" under Chapter VIII of the U.N. Charter, to which attaches formal international recognition of the Conference as the U.N.'s partner of first resort in dealing with problems of peace and security in the European region.

The CSCE's development from a discussion forum into a multi-purpose institution got a major boost after the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. The United States, which had resisted institutional trappings for what it viewed as a debating forum with the Soviets, assented to a substantial transformation of the CSCE's role once more friendly governments in the East made a pan-European institution seem worthwhile. There are two reasons for the change of U.S. policy. The first is connected with the U.S. presence in Europe in the future. If the U.S. should withdraw from the continent, whether under pressure of its domestic problems or because of European insistence, and NATO accordingly becomes inoperative or even ceases to exist, the CSCE could assume a very important role in providing a continuing political linkage between the U.S. and Europe. The second reason stems from the disintegration of the former Soviet Union. The U.S. in the face of economic problems, will want to share its global responsibilities with Europe and Japan and the CSCE can be politically influenced more easily than the E.U. The process of institutionalization of the CSCE, which started with the adoption of the Charter of Paris in 1991, will continue, although the most spectacular decisions are probably already behind us.

One of the most important decisions, symptomatic of a general trend toward enhancing the organization's capacity for taking action, was the suspension of the rule of unanimity (i.e., of consensus) in certain circumstances to allow political measures to be taken against member states clearly and grossly violating their CSCE commitments. Adopted at the Prague meeting of the CSCE Council in January 1992, the new procedure allows such actions as political declarations or other political steps to be taken over the objection of the state concerned. The new decision-making process marks a turning point in the CSCE's transformation into an effective security forum, since a rogue regime is no longer immunized from the critical scrutiny of 50 other members simply by interposing its veto. This decision had its first application four months later in the case of Yugoslavia. From a systemic point of view, the CSCE is a model of the interrelationship between procedure and substance. The consensus rule, so often presented as a major weakness of the CSCE and an obstacle to its effective action (although the same rule also governs NATO and E.U. decision-making), is in fact what gives a pan-European legitimacy to any Conference decision. Moreover, the rule can be circumvented in urgent cases with general if not unanimous consent, as it was on the suspension of Belgrade's participation in CSCE meetings.

The results of the Helsinki CSCE follow-up meeting reflected a decisive turn in the concept of the CSCE's role in European security, the beginning of which dates back



to the Paris summit. First, the CSCE community now includes all the newly emerged states. By admitting all the former Soviet republics, including those in the Caucasus and Central Asia, the CSCE has taken on wide responsibility for coping with security headaches far removed from Europe's center. Yet, despite this distance, it is conflicts in the Caucasus region that pose a particularly serious threat to stability in the CSCE area and the very credibility of CSCE mechanisms.

Secondly, CSCE structures and institutions have been strengthened. The CSCE has now been equipped with offices and other institutional prerequisites for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, and peacekeeping. New mechanisms have been established, including fact-finding and rapporteur missions as well as detailed modalities of peacekeeping. This has involved an evolution in thinking: NATO countries, for instance, originally opposed the idea of CSCE peacekeeping when Czechoslovakia proposed it in 1991.

In the short time since the Helsinki meeting, the CSCE has managed to proceed relatively far in practical implementation of its new instruments for crisis management in the former Yugoslavia. A CSCE mission to inspect detention camps in Bosnia and Herzegovina documented gross violations of international humanitarian law and general disrespect for basic human rights standards. Together with the mission of the special rapporteur of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights and the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the CSCE mission helped provide the outside world with a clear picture of the brutal situation with respect to human rights in the midst of the largest and the most violent European conflict since World War II.

In the framework of CSCE preventive diplomacy, missions of long duration have been dispatched to Kosovo, Sandjak, and Vojvodina, the three regions of Serbia and Montenegro where tensions have grown to dangerous levels and an international mediation of dialogue between the minorities and the Belgrade authorities is urgently needed.

The inter-ethnic war in Bosnia and Herzegovina brings an imminent danger of a spillover of tension to the neighboring countries. The CSCE has responded to the danger to one fragile new state by dispatching a mission to Macedonia to monitor the situation and help maintain peace and stability. The CSCE action complements the E.U. monitoring mission, which has been extended to Serbia's other neighbors—Hungary, Bulgaria, and possibly Albania. The CSCE has also entered into direct cooperation with the E.U. in preparing the sanctions assistance missions to help authorities in Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania implement the U.N. sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro and the U.N. arms embargo against all the republics of the former Yugoslavia. All the CSCE actions with respect to the former Yugoslavia complement the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia sponsored in 1991 by the U.N. and the European Community. That process

has been the focal point of the protracted and much frustrated international efforts to reach durable and acceptable solutions of the Yugoslav wars.

Another big CSCE concern has been the war in Nagorno-Karabakh. The envisaged Minsk Conference on Nagorno-Karabakh being prepared by a group of interested states under Italian chairmanship has not been opened yet, partly because of the repeated violations of cease-fires by both parties of the conflict, and partly because of their maneuvering at the talks to date in Rome. A CSCE advance monitoring team has made the necessary preparations, but its deployment is not imaginable as long as heavy fighting continues in the region. An assessment of the prospects for settlement of the Karabakh issue does not give any reason for optimism. The cynics suggest that only another year's harsh winter conditions may exhaust the adversaries and bring them to accept the idea of a negotiated settlement. As long as both parties are convinced that they can achieve their goals by military means, the role of the CSCE—or any outside intervenor pressing a peaceful rather than military solution—is very limited.

More CSCE actions are envisaged concerning the Caucasian region. The relatively successful management of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict by a joint peacekeeping effort established by Russia, Georgia, and Ossetians in the summer of 1992 raised hopes for a stabilization of the situation. The hopes proved false after the Abkhazian conflict erupted in 1993, which overshadowed the Ossetian issue by one order of magnitude. The CSCE responded by dispatching a personal representative to Georgia. Further action might be taken on the basis of his findings, possibly in a form of monitoring a cease-fire. Nevertheless, the situation in the region is so murky and fluid that such representatives' findings become rapidly outdated, as was the case of the previous two CSCE missions to Georgia. A suggestion that a CSCE monitor team be sent to Ossetia had already been made in the beginning of August, but it could not be properly passed through the decision-making machinery of the Committee of Senior Officials until mid-September. In the meantime, the situation in the country changed dramatically and the issue had to be reconsidered. Of course, events on the ground in 1993 introduced new elements into the Georgian mix, including Russian "peacekeepers" and pressure on Tbilisi to join the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Participating states are well aware of the limits of the CSCE's potential to act in the field of peacekeeping. It is therefore inconceivable that CSCE operations will ever entail any element of enforcement.

The recognition of the importance for peace, stability, and harmonious relations between states of the treatment of national minorities resulted in establishment of the office of CSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. The former Dutch foreign minister, Max van der Stoep, was appointed High Commissioner by the

CSCE Council of Ministers. His is a rich agenda; even before his official appointment, he was already being asked to pay attention to particular areas of tensions. The role of the Commissioner should be preventive, with the aim to provide "early warning" and "early action" before a situation develops into an open conflict. The mission of the High Commissioner will be sensitive since, under his mandate, his very involvement indicates and confirms that particular tensions related to national minorities "have the potential to develop into conflict."

The new CSCE Forum on Security Cooperation counts among the CSCE's crucial institutional achievements. Its mandate reflects the new security realities and stresses the indivisibility of security, uniting into one mechanism all the hitherto separate CSCE security fora. The era of spectacular disarmament deals is largely past, and the emphasis now is on building a cooperative security system. Focusing more on political rather than military and technical issues, the priorities of the Forum stipulated in its "program for immediate action" are divided into three basic categories: arms control, disarmament, and confidence and security building; security enhancement and cooperation; and conflict prevention.

In the sphere of the "traditional" security dialogue, harmonizing obligations for both arms control and the confidence and security building measures was accorded a primordial importance at the first stage of the talks. The first, and least problematic, step could be the harmonization of information exchanges and notification according to the CFE treaty and the 1992 Vienna document on confidence-building measures. The discussions in the Forum's first weeks suggested that the traditionally neutral countries may have some difficulty in adopting to the CFE information and verification regime. The two other areas the Forum is to address—security enhancement and conflict prevention—will be addressed concretely only at later stages.

The discussions in the Special Committee, one of the two bodies of the Forum, reveal a penchant of several countries for "regionalization" in their approach to security questions. Proponents of regionalization assume that there are no longer general security problems in Europe, and that, therefore, attention should be focused on containing and controlling regional trouble spots. Policy built on this view might yield individually designed measures for specific regions, including "hard" arms control. This approach, no matter how effective and pragmatic it may seem, runs the risk of fragmenting the security dialogue.

The Consultative Committee of the Conflict Prevention Center is the other body of the Forum, though its role within the Forum is not quite clarified. Many of the participating countries consider the Security Forum's absorption of the Conflict Prevention Center undesirable. Whether or not the Center will acquire a role as a negotiating venue is an open question. Some would like it to become a sort of

European "Security Council." In any event, it will deal with the practical implementation of CSCE actions in the fields of conflict prevention, crisis management, and peacekeeping.

A growing awareness that the CSCE should be even more expansive in its reach rather than inward-looking has led gradually to consideration of concrete ways of associating non-member countries with the Conference. A prominent place belongs to Japan, which has clearly expressed its interest in the process, its shared commitment to CSCE principles and objectives, and its readiness to engage itself in European cooperation. Since the Helsinki follow-up meeting, Japan has been the only country to enjoy the privilege of participation in CSCE meetings, although of course without participating in decision-making. The seriousness of Japanese interest in the region has been reflected in Japan's interest in participation in the CSCE missions to the three minority regions in Serbia and Montenegro. However, granting a special status to Japan has also opened the door to other possible applicants among powers outside the European and North Atlantic region. Although the criteria for involvement of non-member countries are set, they can be interpreted in many ways and thus provide grounds for rivalry. Whether such acquisition of a "global" dimension of the CSCE will bring more advantages than drawbacks remains to be seen.

## United Nations

No survey of European security institutions could any longer fail to account for the United Nations. Since the winding down of the cold war, the only global organization with a mandate for maintaining international peace and security has been busy redefining its *modus operandi* in accordance with changed realities. No matter how much it used to be criticized for ineffectiveness and over-bureaucratization only a short time ago, the organization has an irreplaceable role in shaping policy and giving global legitimacy to the actions of the international community. The Secretary-General's 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace*, advances an ambitious agenda of priorities for the organization in coming years, and the dramatically expanding scope of U.N. peacekeeping—including various degrees of U.N. enforcement—demonstrates that the organization's potential is far from exhausted.

Harmonization with other institutions is desirable and, indeed, mandated under Chapter VIII of the Charter, which calls on the Security Council to encourage settlement of local disputes through regional arrangements and agencies. Since the CSCE—unlike other European security organizations—has declared itself a regional arrangement for purposes of Chapter VIII, the debate on such harmonization has acquired a more concrete shape, and the Conference is now expected to seek mechanisms for joint action with the U.N.

The involvement of the U.N. in a European conflict—in the form of a unique “peace-keeping” operation in the middle of ongoing hostilities in the former Yugoslavia—is suggestive. It testifies to the inability of Europe’s regional structures to cope with the situation by their own means, and it demonstrates the indispensability of the U.N. as the most appropriate organization that has both an all-encompassing mandate to be involved in the questions of peace and security anywhere in the world and experience in the sensitive politics of peacekeeping. Although the preference of Europeans should be to handle by themselves the security problems on their own continent without burdening the U.N., it may take some time before their regional institutions are up to the task.

## Conclusions

A new system of security relations will have to combine the resources and experience of the various organizations operating in Europe. The architecture for this future security cooperation should be based on a deliberate, planned, and negotiated division of labor and coordination of action among the key European and trans-Atlantic organizations—the CSCE, NATO, the European Union and WEU, as well as the Council of Europe and, of course, the United Nations. The evident lack of formal links among these organizations has hampered an efficient handling of some of the most urgent security problems on the continent. Such coordination is needed most in the case of crises or emergencies, and ought to cover political, operations, and technical levels. The first precondition for the efficiency of such cooperation is mutual knowledge about the activities of all these organizations. To achieve this, it is first necessary for the secretariats of the various organizations to initiate regular exchanges of information and consultations among them and possibly to agree on a reciprocal participation in the bodies dealing with issues on which the agendas of the institutions intersect.

We may hope gradually to be putting behind us a short period of competing claims among relevant security institutions. As the realization grows that continued backbiting about relative competence and jurisdiction would only be detrimental to the cause of a more secure continent, the process of strengthening this array of institutions should speed up. Ensuring complementarity among the key actors will be a crucial issue for coming months and years.

There remains, however, a certain chance that the positive trends towards a cooperative security architecture may be jeopardized by the re-emergence of more nationally driven policies in major West European countries. The complications related to the ratification of the Treaty on European Union, together with the collapse of the European Monetary System, are a worrisome indication that impulses towards national autonomy may be eclipsing those toward integration. The re-

emergence of the concept of a two-speed Europe, this time just within the framework of the Community, attests to the well-founded concerns regarding a possible disruption of the integration process.

Nonetheless, if the trend that has emerged in recent years continues, the CSCE will retain and reinforce its position as Europe's broadest security platform, and the E.U.—whose members already constitute a certain hard core of the CSCE—would then be the most influential security actor in Europe. Obviously, the division of labor among the existing international organizations is of vital necessity if the collapse and disintegration of Eastern Europe is to be averted. However, it will not be easy to define strict criteria for sharing tasks among the various European security institutions, particularly with respect to management of future risks in the East, most immediately in the newly independent states. The processes going on in the countries of Eastern and East Central countries cannot be compared with the evolutionary changes in the structure of the relatively stable Western countries. The East European countries are dealing with changes of unprecedented scale, bearing potential risks not only to the stability of their immediate subregions but also to the stability of Europe as a whole. There is no doubt that the key to the solution of those problems must be sought primarily in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe themselves. They cannot make it, however, without massive outside assistance and, in particular, without new more efficient forms of partnership in the security domain in general.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> One prominent American expert on international security describes the virtues of bipolarity over multipolarity as threefold: "First, the number of conflict dyads is fewer, leaving fewer possibilities for war. Second, deterrence is easier, because imbalances of power are fewer and more easily averted. Third, the prospects for deterrence are greater because miscalculations of relative power and of opponents' resolve are fewer and less likely." (John J. Mearshimer, "Back to the Future," *International Security*, Summer 1990 (vol. 15, no. 1), p. 14.)

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## THE CURRENT SECURITY THOUGHT IN CENTRAL EUROPE

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1. Fashioning international frameworks to deal with the processes and tensions unleashed by the collapse of communism would be no easy task in even the best of circumstances. Transformations throughout the post-communist world continue at a breathtaking speed. After years of enforced stability within a rigid constellation, we have entered a period of uncertainty and a difficult, protracted search for new stability.

Given the rapid pace of developments, any account of the current European security agenda from the perspective of East Central Europe will seem provisional, subject to further and further revisions. With this caveat declared, I will proceed in this paper to consider, first, the purported threats and risks to European security today; then move on to survey the place Central Europe wants to establish for itself in the emerging European security structure (which should consist of several building blocks of «interlocking» institutions – OSCE, NATO, WET). I will conclude with a couple of remarks concerning the current debate on NATO expansion. In geographic terms, I will concentrate on four Central European countries – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia – and only secondary consider the Balkans, and states emerging from the former Soviet Union that constitute the rest of formerly communist Eastern Europe.

2. The fall of the Soviet Empire has undeniably opened the way to a new security agenda, different from the one that dominated the decades marked by Europe's division into ideologically polarized blocks. Seemingly overnight, that division disappeared and the hope for European unification rose. All of the new regimes in the former communist bloc declared their commitment to the values of parliamentary democracy and the rule of law, the European division and confrontation gave way to cooperation and ideological homogeneity.

In the fall of 1990, when the Charter for the New Europe was solemnly signed in Paris by all member-states of CSCE, the sky was blue over the «old»

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continent. The magnificent vision of pan-European integration, the vision of confederated Europe, which is «no more the conglomeration of different nations influencing one another only through commerce and power struggle» (to use the phrasing of Edmund Husserl, one of the great Europeans of this century) (<sup>1</sup>), but the organic unity of peoples connected above all by the shared political culture, respecting in all their differences the same principles of political behaviour, seemed to be more realizable than ever before.

Six years later, however, it is more than obvious that the end of East-West antagonism also had another effect. The expected harmonious progress of Europe towards new international order founded on rule of law and elementary European values has not materialized and a number of problems resurfaced. Idealism dominating the political discourse after the collapse of communism has faded away and realism reasserted itself in European international arena. Not only the East has been thrown into the flux by the sudden reopening of the societies that were closed for decades. The cohesion of Western Europe has also been undergoing a trial that is perhaps more severe and decisive than any – even that posed by the Soviet threat – over the previous 45 years. The resolution of the ideological conflict between East and West, (which entailed the end of the Cold War, and the disintegration of the «socialist camp», that culminated in the split of the Soviet Union), is surely not only a European affair. It is without any doubt the major political event in the second half of 20th century, which has an immense dynamizing effect also in the other parts of the world.

Paradoxically, the disappearance of the worldwide struggle between East and West, behind which always lays the possibility of global nuclear conflict, has led to a decreased degree of stability. For all the deserved enthusiasm about the passing of communism, one elementary truth of power politics should not be overlooked: The ideologically competitive bipolar system, in which the major powers were alert to any risk of erosion of their position that might result from disorder anywhere – the pattern that prevailed in Europe for more than four decades of cold war – was incomparably more stable and (at least in Europe) more peaceful than a system of the sort we see emerging now, in which no major power sees its vital interests in jeopardy in conflict situations almost everywhere.

Whereas the political architecture in Europe was stabilized by its symmetry during the decades of the ideological confrontation of the Cold War, the main characteristic of the current situation in Europe is complex asymmetry

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<sup>1</sup>Edmund Husserl: "The Vienna Lecture", in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. by David Carr, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1970, p. 289.



and tension between two opposite trends dominating the political processes in the West and in the East: integration and fragmentation.

In a dramatic reversal of cold war security thinking, there is security agenda for countries without any clear and identifiable military enemy. Instead of scenarios of military *threats* that defined security in the cold war, the current security situation in Central Europe is defined by a variety of *risks*, often of a complex nature. The danger lies in the possible conjunction of various risk factors, mutually reinforcing each other and cumulatively jeopardizing peace and security in the region.

What also has to be considered in our current security deliberations is the growing importance of transnational factors, which do not respect the state borders and are not under the control of the governments exerting the sovereign power on their territories. Revolutionary changes in communications and computer technology, the growth of an integrated global market have weakened as a matter of fact the position and role of nation-state in the evolution of international system. It enables freer trade in «bads» as well as in «goods» and makes international crime more significant factor in international relations than ever before. Because territorial nation-states are more open and penetrable now than ever before, any «national» security doctrine or formula cannot afford to ignore the problem of global governance and not to respect the fundamental guidelines of global security policy:

«The primary goals of global security policy should be to prevent conflict and war and to maintain the integrity of the environment and life-support systems of the planet by eliminating the economic, social environmental political and military conditions and generate threats to the security of people and the planet, and by anticipating and managing crises before they escalate into armed conflicts»<sup>(2)</sup>.

3. Among all four Central European countries – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia – there is agreement that the new security agenda must deal with the whole series of ongoing and nascent conflicts that undermine the region's peace and tranquillity.

None of these countries identifies any concrete external enemy in their defence strategies, nevertheless it is clearly perceived in all of them, that the unstable zone where threats and difficulties might come at some point in future is situated in East. Uncertain developments in Russia, Ukraine and other newly

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<sup>(2)</sup> Our Global Neighborhood, Oxford University Press 1995, p. 338.

emerging democracies on the territory of the former Soviet Union, turmoilis and crises accompanying their «transitions» from communism, risk of revival of Russian imperialism, represent the most frequently used arguments, why Central Europe feels the need of fast and firm anchoring in the security system of the West. In spite of the fact that there does not seem to be an imminent danger of a forceful reassertion of Russian hegemony in this part of Europe, the future of Russia, as the Central European politicians and security analysts repeat again and again, remains unclear. Even if Russia itself should be stabilized, there is no guarantee of stability for the countries on its periphery – and, indeed, there is some evidence that some forces within Russia might not only welcome, but malevolently aggravate, such instability to create an opening of reassertion of Russian domination.

The other area posing risks to regional security is the Balkans, especially the former Yugoslavia, which has made itself a shorthand place name for a large apparent risk in the region – a seemingly uncontrolled wave of aggressive nationalism, inter-ethnic disputes and conflicts, oppression of minorities, and religious intolerance. All these phenomena have manifested themselves to some degree practically everywhere in the eastern part of the continent. The frustrations of the post-communist environment provide fertile soil for them. Although they are latently present in any society, what makes them especially dangerous and virulent in the East is the weakness of the political system and shock of economic hardship, which tempt demagogical political leaders to base their political strategies on searching for scapegoats and enemies, internal and external.

There is no doubt that what should be blamed in the first place for the explosion of post-totalitarian violence is nationalism and virulent reemergence of ethnicity in the destabilized regions of East Central Europe. Nevertheless, it must be clearly admitted that new nationalist do not operate in vacuum and that the reason why they eventually could succeed must be sought also in the general habits and practices of European «Realpolitik» which made its come-back after the short period of idealistic enthusiasm. The unprecedented Bosnian debacle is definitely not a disastrous product of ethnic principle which made its come-back in many parts of East Central Europe after the collapse of communist ideology, but «the greatest collective security failure of the West since the 1930», as one high-ranked U.S. official put it recently. The «Yugoslav virus», to use Adam Michnik' words, not only has caused the deaths of thousands of innocent people in the territories hit by the epidemics, but is effective also outside the killing zone. It demonstrates inability of Europeans

to act in concert in such a new situation, it reveals not only how inefficient are the existing institutions and mechanisms when confronted with such a crisis but also how precarious and uncertain are even the concepts and ideas which are supposed to give us a clear and undistorted picture of what is going on and make us capable of understanding. The recent American diplomatic initiative resulting in Dayton Agreements finally stopped the deadly war. Nevertheless, the results of the peace process and its impact on the future European developments still remain to be seen.

The way how Western Europe reacted to the Yugoslav crisis reminded us clearly that there may be also some risk factors originating here to be taken into consideration: inability of Western European countries to abandon their national policies in the moments of crisis and to «act in concert»; possibility of economic recession resulting in increased protectionism and reluctance to proceed quickly enough with the reintegration of post-communist countries; possible growth of influence of extremist elements in the Western societies; tensions and eruptions created by inability of Europe to absorb the steady stream of immigrants from the developing world; endemic conflict between post-modern European civilization and religious fundamentalism gaining strength particularly in many Islam countries. These risks obviously cannot be compared to those irradiating from the East, but to see them and count on them is not a kind of Cassandra's prophecy but rather a sound realistic advice for those who want to «return» to Europe.

It is evident that, in the aftermath of the disintegration of the Soviet bloc, East Central Europe now finds itself in a dramatically new geopolitical and geostrategic situation, sandwiched between the stable and prosperous West on one side and the vast, destabilized areas of the East, whose political and economic problems differ qualitatively from the hardships of transition through which East Central Europe is passing. As they continue to seek new relationships that would provide them with a satisfactory assurance of security, the East Central European countries still are suspended in strategic uncertainty, sometimes incorrectly referred to as a security vacuum. For sure, the developments of their relationships to both their eastern and western neighbors is a process evolving over time. Nevertheless, all these states clearly have one basic strategic objective: They want to be neither «neutral» so long as Western neighbors see continued utility in a common alliance, nor component of the West's buffer zone. Rather, they would like to be full-fledged members of a European security system, no matter how that system will be defined.

4. All the countries of East Central Europe put much hope in the further development of institutional links with established security organizations of Western Europe. The reason, they are so emphatic about their need to be integrated as much as possible with the West, and especially to obtain from it some security guarantees as soon as possible, reflects not only their evaluation of possible future threats, but also their experience in the past, sitting for decades on the wrong side of the barricade. That is why their views are so different from those of the countries that were neutral in the cold war, such as Austria and Finland, which in many respects would seem to face similar security concerns. On this, domestic political factors play the crucial role – in the way post-communist societies perceive their situation, and in the need of policymakers and politicians in these countries to be able to justify their positions to their publics.

It has been said many times that from the point of view of Central European countries an optimum security structure in Europe should be based on the broad concept of security embracing political, economic and defence components and consist of several «interlocking» and «mutually reinforcing» institutions, namely NATO, EU and OSCE. This is also the reason why all of them consider the full membership in NATO and EU as their vital interest and the most important objective of their foreign policies. I cannot go here into a detailed discussion of all building blocks of the emerging security system. I would like to conclude with several remarks concerning the security debate which is now very popular in Central Europe: the debate on the NATO enlargement.

The report on enlargement unveiled in September 1995 by the former NATO's Secretary General Willy Claes explains clearly the current position of the Alliance:

«NATO invites other European countries to become Allies» as «further step towards the Alliance's basic goal of enhancing security and stability throughout the Euro-Atlantic area, within the context of a broad European security architecture. The NATO enlargement will extend to new members the benefits of common defence and integration into European and Air-Atlantic institutions» (par. 2).

«Enlargement should accord with, and help promote, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and the safeguarding of the freedom, common heritage and civilization of all Alliance members and their people, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. New members will need to conform to these basic principles» (par. 4).

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If the admission of new members was really dependent on their conformity with above mentioned principles, on their wildness to join the Atlantic community and readiness to meet all criteria mentioned in the Study, it would be possible to expect that they would be in pretty soon. The situation, however, is not that easy and unambiguous. The document also states:

«Decision on enlargement will be for NATO itself. Enlargement will occur through a gradual, deliberate, and transparent process, encompassing dialogue with all interested parties. There is no fixed and rigid list of criteria for inviting new member states to join Alliance. Enlargement will be decided on a case-by-case-basis and some nations may attain membership before others» (par. 7)... «Stability and security in Europe will be strengthened through an evolutionary process, taking into account political and security developments in the whole of Europe» (par. 11).

«NATO-Russia relations should reflect Russia's significance in Europe security and be based on reciprocity, mutual respect and confidence, no surprise decisions by either side which could affect the interests of the other. This relationship can only flourish if it is rooted in strict compliance with international commitments and obligations, such as those under the UN Charter, the OSCE, including the Code of Conduct and the CFE Treaty, and full respect for the sovereignty of other independent states. NATO decision, however, cannot be subject to any veto or *droit de regard* by a non-member state, nor can Alliance be subordinated to another European security institution» (par. 27).

These formulas indicate clearly what is the security puzzle the NATO policy planners are solving: how to design and realize a new security system in which NATO apparently has to play the central role and not to divide Europe again into to hostile military blocks; how to build a new European security architecture and «not to antagonize Russians». North Atlantic Treaty Cooperation Council (NATCC) created at the Rome summit of NATO in 1991 and The Partnership for Peace proposal adopted in Brussels in January of 1994 have been the way how to implement the evolutionary strategy. The Study on NATO enlargement published in a moment when the individual partnership programs are already on their way represent the third step.

What is warning, however, from the point of view of Central Europeans, is that in spite of all promising formulations most of fundamental questions concerning future security arrangements in Europe remain unanswered, that whole security debate in Europe has been dominated by the following unspoken assumptions:

- That it is up to the West to chose just how many or how few of the East Europeans can be included in its institutions;
- That the former communist countries are likely to be more of a burden rather than advantage for the Alliance;
- That is possible to appease the Russians and satisfy the needs of the East Europeans at the same time and, finally;
- That caution in this enterprise, moving slowly and gradually on NATO' enlargement, is beneficial for European security <sup>(3)</sup>.

The Central European countries are without any doubt interested in having good, stable and mutually beneficiary relationships with the Russian Federation and recognize that Russia as one global superpowers having on its disposal nuclear arms has an important contribution to make to European stability and security. They are aware that for the West Russia is a strategic partner of first rate. On the other hand, they do not want to be condemned to passivity in the political processes in which also their security and future perspectives are decided, and to wait-and-see position. They firmly believe that in spite of the Russian negative attitude and more and more open signals coming from Moscow indicating that any concrete step towards the enlargement would be interpreted as a hostile act and beginning of the new round of the cold war in Europe, there is no alternative to the enlargement of NATO; that a concrete decision «when and how» NATO will expand should be made as soon as possible. Such a move would be, actually, in the security interests of Russia itself. The security limbo and uncertainties in Central Europe can only complicate the Kremlin's calculations to and indefinite degree and efficiently block the emergence of a new, for all European countries desirable security structure.

Of course, the Central European countries should be and in fact they are, patient, as regards their particular security concerns. And they should not push too hard seeing their own national interests only and jeopardizing overall European security developments. On the other hand, it is perfectly clear why the Study on NATO enlargement defining on general level all principles, criteria and conditionalities of this move should be followed, in foreseeable future, by next steps and concrete enlargement decision.

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<sup>(3)</sup> The arguments presented here are borrowed from a discussion paper of Jonathan Eyal, presented at the conference on the future of European security held in Prague in October 1995.