

PROJECT ON ETHNIC RELATIONS

The Project on Ethnic Relations (PER) was founded in 1991 in anticipation of the serious interethnic conflicts that were to erupt following the collapse of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. PER conducts programs of high-level intervention and dialogue and serves as a neutral mediator in several major disputes in the region. PER also conducts programs of training, education, and research at international, national, and community levels.

PER is supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, with additional funding from the Starr Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trust, the Philip D. Reed Foundation, and the Council of Europe.

Individuals and institutions wishing to receive PER publications should write to:

**PROJECT ON
ETHNIC
RELATIONS**



One Palmer Square
Suite 435

Princeton, New Jersey 08542-3718, USA

Telephone: (609) 683-5666

Fax: (609) 683-5888

E-mail: ethnic@compuserve.com

<http://www.netcom.com/~ethnic/per.html>

R e p o r t

DECEMBER 19-21, 1997



POLITICAL LEADERS ON
INTERETHNIC RELATIONS
AND REGIONAL SECURITY
IN CENTRAL EUROPE:
A ROUNDTABLE

**PROJECT ON
ETHNIC
RELATIONS**



POLITICAL LEADERS ON
INTERETHNIC RELATIONS
AND REGIONAL SECURITY
IN CENTRAL EUROPE:
A ROUNDTABLE

BADEN, AUSTRIA
DECEMBER 19-21, 1997

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	1
Introduction	3
Recent Regional Developments	4
The Consequences of The Madrid Summit	9
Effects of the Problems in the Balkans	13
A Romanian Model of Inclusion	16
Reconstructing Bicultural and Multicultural Values	18
Interethnic Relations in Slovakia	19
The U.S. Role in the New Europe	20
Ukraine and Moldova	21
Conclusions	23
List of Participants	24

PREFACE

In December 1997, the Project on Ethnic Relations sponsored the second in a series of meetings on interethnic relations, politics, and regional security in Central and Eastern Europe. This forum brought together high-ranking governing and opposition political leaders and decision-makers to consider regional security strategies in the context of Euro-Atlantic integration trends, the effects of political behavior in each country on the interparty politics of other countries in the region, and the impact of interethnic issues on mutual relations.

The purpose of the series is to provide an opportunity for political leaders from the region and representatives from the United States, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the European Union (EU) to establish and maintain a dialogue as the region undergoes a profound evolution spurred by NATO and EU enlargement. The first meeting in the series, held in Baden in February 1997, focused on the then-pending first-round decisions on NATO enlargement; the meeting testified to the collective sense of uncertainty and ambiguity created by that process. The meeting also considered the dramatic changes in Romanian-Hungarian interethnic relations in Romania and in bilateral relations between Bucharest and Budapest that were resulting from the newly inaugurated coalition government in Romania.

At the second meeting, also held in Baden—five months after the decision made at the Madrid summit to include Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland in the first round of NATO expansion—uncer-



From left to right: Yevhen Marchuk; Vladimir Solonari; Matyas Eorsi; Ferenc Kontra; Csaba Tabajdi; Ralph Johnson. In the background, Samuel Abraham and Ferenc Melykuti.



From left to right: Pal Csaky; Jan Carnogursky; Heinz Fischer; Allen Kassof; Livia Plaks.

tainty had been replaced by rising expectations of domestic and regional benefits to the countries that had been selected, but anxiety continued among those whose countries awaited decisions in subsequent rounds.

One of PER's main objectives is to initiate and institutionalize dialogue on sensitive issues by providing a neutral setting in which it can take place. PER takes no position on the views reported here. In order to encourage frank discussion, the remarks of the participants are reported without attribution. However, a list of the participants is appended.

Warren R. Haffar, PER program officer, prepared the report. Aleksey N. Grigor'ev, also a PER program officer, contributed as well. It was edited by Robert A. Feldmesser, PER's senior editor. Participants have not had an opportunity to review the text, for which PER assumes sole responsibility.

Allen H. Kassof, *President*

Livia B. Plaks, *Executive Director*

Princeton, New Jersey

February 1998

INTRODUCTION

The collapse of the Soviet Union and of the tightly controlled organizational and institutional structures of the Warsaw Pact and its economic counterpart, the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, left a security vacuum in Central and Eastern Europe. The old structures had set the parameters of regional security policy and defined the terms of domestic, bilateral, and regional relations. Today, NATO and the EU are the instruments of a profound transformation, and the meeting in Baden illustrated the dynamics of this process.

Several significant events that took place just before the meeting formed the background for the discussions. In Romania, a decision of the Senate on December 8, 1997, to restrict the education rights of minorities, repealing the liberalizing amendments to a restrictive 1995 law, created serious tensions within the ruling coalition government. In Serbia, the Democratic Party and the Civic Alliance of Serbia, together with a number of other opposition parties, were boycotting the re-run of the presidential elections, scheduled for December 21. In Kosovo, there was a sharp escalation of activity of the Liberation Army of Kosova, suggesting that soon the next major crisis might erupt in that region. Furthermore, there was increasing international pressure on the countries of the region for political and economic reforms, particular anxieties about the course of democracy in Slovakia, and, of course, the prospect of NATO and EU expansion.

RECENT REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

PER's president opened the meeting by asking the participants for their views on the most important changes in their respective countries during the recent past.

Serbia. The participant from Serbia said that, despite international pressure, the present regime in Serbia had so far managed to elude substantial reforms. Elections held in the fall of 1997 produced a configuration in parliament that made it impossible to form a stable government. Two rounds of presidential elections brought no results, and only in the second round of elections, held in December 1997, was a second Socialist Party candidate elected by a narrow majority. The electoral process has been marked by frequent irregularities and violations of the law. She predicted that the government would be forced to conduct new parliamentary and presidential elections, most likely in 1998.

She went on to say that the erosion of the political system could be seen within the opposition. Demonstrations in Belgrade and elsewhere in Serbia in the fall and winter of 1997 had produced the Zajedno [Together] Coalition, made up of the Serbian Renewal Movement of Vuk Draskovic, the Democratic Party of Zoran Djindjic, and the Civic Alliance of Serbia of Vesna Pesic. But the coalition has broken down because of political infighting.

In Montenegro, on the other hand, the election of Milo Djukanovic as president of the republic has brought hope for improvement in political and economic conditions there. There are signs that the new government in Montenegro will be both multiparty and multiethnic, since Djukanovic's candidacy was supported by all minorities and ethnic groups living in Montenegro.

But the situation in neighboring Bosnia-Herzegovina has worsened. Some hope was offered by the collapse of the ruling coalition in the Republika Srpska and the election of Biljana Plavsic as president. Unfortunately, however, noted the participant, the continuation by the international community of its sanctions against Serbia has not helped matters.

When asked what steps could be taken to improve the situation, she said that the main problem was the policy of isolating Serbia that was being pursued by the international community. The international sanctions have taken a serious toll on the economy, leading to tensions that could erupt at any time.

Moldova. The participant from Moldova said that events there—as in many countries in the region—have been dominated by the issue of NATO expansion. Because of its proximity to Russia, Moldova has had to temper its response to that move. However, events over the past year have demonstrated that it is increasingly difficult to be good friends with Russia, and as a result there has been a growing sense within the country that Moldova cannot rely on Russia and must instead look to closer ties with the West.

United States. This had been a successful year for U.S. foreign policy toward Europe according to one of the U.S. participants. The United States has successfully argued the case for an expanded NATO and has, particularly in recent months, been able to move the expansion process forward and in the right way. He added that this expansion was only the first in a series. The United States will continue to work with other countries that wish to be admitted to NATO.

A major setback of the past year was NATO's decision not to include Romania in the first round of expansion.

Romania. A participant from Romania reported that the December 8 Senate decision to in effect restrict the education rights of minorities has dominated current events. Nevertheless, he said, the ruling coalition has so far been successfully preserved and would probably weather the crisis.

Since the last meeting in Baden, the banking system has been reformed and structural inefficiencies within the Romanian economy have been dealt with. These reforms, it is hoped, will increase confidence and spur foreign investment from the West. The greatest difficulty has been the large number of problems demanding immediate solutions. These are problems that took 60 years to develop and will take time to fix. In the coming year, Romania must continue to develop its economic base and undertake the political reforms needed to support this development. He added—and the other participants from Romania agreed—that a major setback of the past year was NATO's decision not to include Romania in the first round of expansion.

Another participant from Romania expressed a sense of frustration over the current situation in the Romani (Gypsy) community and said that this issue could blow up at any time. Although the current gov-

ernment has made efforts to deal with the problem, he said, it does not seem to be making progress or providing the hope to the Roma that is so desperately needed.

Concerning Slovakia, this participant said he wished he could be optimistic about the interethnic situation there, although the realities do not always warrant such optimism. On the other hand, Romania's relations with Hungary have never been better. These relations need to be stabilized over the next year to prove they are credible and reliable. The current crisis in Romania over the education of the Hungarian minority is of grave concern and raises the question of whether or not the cooperative relations with Hungary are sincere or were motivated only by the effort to get into NATO. If the latter is the case, then the decision to

NATO is undergoing its own transformation, affecting its goals, strategies, and organizational structure.

exclude Romania from the first round of NATO expansion could be justified. He argued that the members of the Romanian governing coalition needed to work together in a way that proves the seriousness of Romania's intentions to resolve the interethnic issue so as to assure

Romania's inclusion in the second round. He concluded by saying that the previous year has been successful because the door has been left open; the present task is to prove that it was left open for Romania.

NATO. The participant from NATO said that the past year had brought confirmation that the "straight road" had ended; future decisions about European security will be more difficult. An important aspect that few people acknowledge is that NATO is undergoing its own transformation, affecting its goals, strategies, and organizational structure. Moreover, European Monetary Union, no less than NATO expansion, portends vast and fundamental changes in Western institutions. These changes, he argued, will have a profound impact on the development of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe, yet these countries have had no input on the nature of the changes. Meanwhile, he said, the gulf between the United States and Europe is growing wider; the United States is not as committed to Europe as it once was. All of these factors contribute to a growing sense of unease and ambiguity concerning the future of Europe.

Slovakia. There was a consensus among the Slovak participants that the failure of Slovakia to be admitted to NATO in the first round of

expansion was a major setback. One participant added that the NATO decision has spurred a renewed realization that Slovakia needs to bring itself into European and transatlantic structures. The Slovak participants also agreed that the elections in 1998 would be critical to these endeavors. One participant observed that the agreement between the Slovak Democratic Coalition and the Hungarian Democratic Coalition in Slovakia has been stable, and he predicted that this cooperation would continue.

Another Slovak participant argued that events in the past year have been dominated by the old authoritarian style of governing and that this was not likely to change in the near future, because Prime Minister Meciar is deeply entrenched in the political system. Nevertheless, the decision by the EU to keep Slovakia in the negotiations sent the right message, because Slovakia should not be singled out from others in the region. He added that what progress has occurred in Slovakia should be rewarded, not punished by isolation from the West. The point was made by another participant that the increasing political activity of the Slovak people was a tangible and positive sign of change.

The decision by the EU to keep Slovakia in the negotiations sent the right message, because Slovakia should not be singled out from others in the region.

Hungary. There was no disagreement among the Hungarian participants that the decision at the Madrid summit to invite Hungary to join NATO was the most significant event to have occurred since the previous meeting in Baden. Hungary was also one of six countries invited to take part in preliminary negotiations on joining the EU. One of these participants said that Hungary is a success story that other countries in the region are beginning to recognize. The past ten months have also seen major efforts by Hungary to normalize relations with Slovakia and Romania, efforts that, added this participant, are important and will continue.

Ukraine. The participant from Ukraine said that several significant treaties were signed by Kyiv with its neighbors during the past year. Prominent among them was an agreement between Ukraine and Russia over the division of the Black Sea fleet. A basic treaty between Romania and Ukraine, whereby the two countries recognize their present borders as inviolable and grant extensive rights to each other's national

minorities, was signed on May 3. Treaties were also signed with Moldova and Belarus.

Looking ahead, there are significant challenges that Ukraine must address. Particularly serious is the question of the returning Crimean Tatars. Ukraine does not have funds to improve conditions for these returnees. He urged the international community to increase assistance efforts. Another outstanding issue, he said, was the position of the Crimea generally, a position that is particularly volatile because of recently held joint Ukrainian-NATO military maneuvers, which were used by the Communist Party in Ukraine to raise suspicions about the motives behind NATO enlargement. He added that, despite these tensions, the general tendency of Ukrainian-Russian relations has been positive and moving in directions favorable to both countries.

Austria. The participant from Austria said that the region has been facing three critical issues: NATO expansion, EU enlargement, and the European Monetary Union. He said that there is no consensus within Austria concerning the first of these issues; the positions of the five leading parties are vastly different from one another. The dominant party, the Social Democrats, takes the position that Austrian security can be assured only if neutrality is maintained. The process of NATO expansion should take more time, not less, and countries should use this time to resolve internal problems. In addition, he said, a more concrete and detailed policy dealing with the final stages of the expansion process is needed.

Concerning bilateral relations, he said that Austria has a number of problems with Slovakia. There is a feeling that Prime Minister Meciar is creating a hostile environment for the sole purpose of benefiting his own political position at home. Nevertheless, Slovakia has not been excluded from any part of the expansion process. The Austrian view is that the decision to exclude Slovakia from the European Union was based on a failure in the development of democracy there. Austria does not want Slovakia to be left out of the enlargement process, because this would only hinder progress there.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE MADRID SUMMIT

The discussion turned next to the impact of recent and prospective decisions about NATO expansion on the domestic politics of each of the countries represented and on their relations with one another and with Russia. Participants from Romania were asked to address the question of whether these decisions were linked, for example, to the controversy there over the education of minority ethnic groups.

All the Romanian participants agreed that the current tensions in the ruling coalition had no direct relation to those decisions. However, for a variety of reasons, Romania had a long way to go in meeting the economic goals required by NATO. Romania may have been seeking NATO membership prematurely; perhaps it was simply not ready to be integrated into the alliance. Nevertheless, they found Article 18 of the Madrid communiqué—which made it clear that Romania and Slovenia would not be left out of the expansion process—to be encouraging.

Addressing the requisite political and economic reforms, one of the representatives said that Romania has good ideas, but many of them are difficult to implement. Significant improvements have occurred in the relations between Romania and its neighbors: a treaty with Hungary was signed, resolving long-standing disputes over borders and minority rights, and a similar agreement has been signed with Ukraine.

Membership in the EU is of greater interest than membership in NATO is, because it is seen as being more relevant to people's lives.

Furthermore, in the past ten months Romania has demonstrated the strength of its democratic institutions and has revived its commitment to genuine economic reforms. These actions demonstrate that Romania is serious about being a positive and constructive neighbor.

If the NATO decision on Romania has infused vigor into the pursuit of reform, in Slovakia the decision has brought mixed response. Public opinion on joining NATO has been split, according to one Slovak participant, with only a slight majority in favor of joining, thus indicating that the upcoming elections will not be decided on issues that revolve around the NATO question. He added that two out of the three ruling coalition parties in Slovakia opposed joining NATO altogether, arguing for a position of neutrality instead. For Slovakia, membership in the EU is of greater interest than membership in NATO is, because it is seen as

being more relevant to people's lives. He added that in Slovakia the military has the most credibility. In many ways, membership in NATO would serve only to undermine this credibility and create instability.

Citing the example of decreasing foreign investment and foreign trade, another participant from Slovakia blamed exclusion from the first round of NATO expansion for serious negative economic consequences. He added an optimistic note, however, by saying that Slovakia would probably be invited to join NATO in the second or third round.

Of the countries represented at the meeting, Hungary was the only one that was to be admitted to NATO in the first round. One of the participants from Hungary commented

NATO membership is not about protection against direct threats to security, but rather is about common thinking about the region.

on the impact of this decision on domestic politics. He said that the present government did not want to put the issue of NATO membership before the people in a referendum, because it would create a great deal of irrelevant public discussion.

Moreover, the question of NATO membership does not directly affect people's lives, as membership in the EU would. Rather, he said, it is an issue that politicians use to create complications. Also, it was very difficult to explain the principle of neutrality. Neutrality can exist only in a conflict. He suggested that NATO could ease problems by repeating its message to potential candidates, by naming them more frequently, and by being clear about its intentions.

Austria could play a constructive role, this participant continued, if it were to join NATO and pave the way for others that have not been invited to join. NATO membership is not about protection against direct threats to security, but rather is about common thinking about the region. It must be remembered that the situation for other countries in the region is very different from what it is for Austria, because many of them are former Warsaw Pact members. From a geopolitical perspective, Austrian membership could help others to get membership. For this and other reasons, Austria should be admitted to NATO in the second round.

In responding, the participant from Austria stated that for most countries neutrality is not an option, and Austria does not promote it as a model. For Austria, however, neutrality is part of its constitution, and is thus a

permanent condition rather than one that changes with changing circumstance. He closed by asking whether the future of European security was to get as many countries as possible into NATO.

The NATO participant responded to these comments, saying that there was a great need to openly debate security policy. If this cannot be done, there is a serious problem. Citing the example of Greece and Turkey, both of which are NATO members, he said that one of the benefits of NATO lies in stopping its members from killing each other. He added that agreement to settle disputes by peaceful means is an integral part of the NATO charter, to the benefit of relations between member states and of the entire region.

A participant from Romania commented that NATO membership offers more than participation in a military alliance. It is membership in a common culture, representing intelligence, efficiency, and standards, with the potential for improving social and economic conditions. These are elements that all of the countries in the region need help in attaining, and NATO membership offers a stimulus toward those goals.

To this point, the representative from the EU said that issues of EU and NATO enlargement are very different from each other and that, for many reasons, countries have put most of their efforts into the latter.

He argued that there needs to be a fundamental shift in emphasis toward the principle and process that were endorsed at the Luxembourg summit.¹ The most significant challenge raised there

The debate seems to be over whether NATO is a military or an economic-based alliance. The fact is that NATO is a military alliance.

was the establishment of a common European currency. NATO faces the very different challenge—of a common security policy. This can be readily seen in Bosnia, where there has been no success in formulating a unified policy among member states.

A participant from the United States acknowledged the validity of this point and added that it was clear that there are very different visions of what NATO is and should be. The debate seems to be over whether NATO is a military or an economic-based alliance. The fact is that NATO is a military alliance. This alliance is larger than the individual

¹ The Luxembourg Summit produced an agreement to invite six countries—Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia—to enter preliminary negotiations toward membership in the EU.

members, and any expansion must, therefore, contribute to their collective security.

He also noted that another common confusion is that the United States is the major obstacle to NATO enlargement beyond the three countries named at the Madrid summit. NATO has specific criteria that need to be met before an invitation to join is extended. He said that many of these criteria are economic, because of the many integration requirements for NATO membership. He also added that it is true that many of these criteria cannot be reduced to a mere checklist. Turning to the situation in Slovakia, he said the current economic difficulties there are a result not of NATO's decision but of poor economic policies and investment decisions. Despite this, Slovakia and other countries that have expressed interest in membership will be included in a future dialogue. Citing the example of the Baltic states and the new order of difficulty they present to NATO, he said that there is no master plan for NATO enlargement. He stressed that the most important consideration is to get enlargement right, rather than to rush and get it wrong.

When asked why the first round of NATO expansion had to be limited to two or three countries, he responded that part of the answer was political. The fact is that NATO enlargement is a political as well as a military process. The U.S. president must be sensitive to Congress, and the consensus was Congress would approve a maximum of only three countries. A related issue is that the United States has the largest economic and military burden under Article 5 of the NATO treaty. The individual and collective self-defense guarantees are military commitments that keep Europe democratic and secure, and these commitments must be kept credible. Finally, the United States sees NATO enlargement as a process rather than as a singular event. There has been positive movement within the U.S. Congress, where the debate has shifted from whether or not enlargement is beneficial to the character of the process itself. Similarly, there is the sense that Russian anger over enlargement will be reduced if the process is undertaken carefully and appropriately.

EFFECTS OF THE PROBLEMS IN THE BALKANS

PER's president next focused the discussion on the continuing problems in the Balkans and their impact on Central and Eastern Europe. He asked the participants if innovative solutions or initiatives were available within the region or if the region would be permanently dependent on Western intervention. There was general agreement that the problems in the Balkans were the major obstacle to democratic development for the entire region.

Among the necessities for the Balkan nations are economic reform, democratization and the establishment of a coherent foreign policy.

The participant from Serbia led the discussion that followed. She started by saying that there was a problem of identification regarding the Balkans. When people refer to the Balkans, she said, there is confusion over what and where the region is. This has been true for a long time, but the problem has been heightened in recent years, particularly by the crisis in the former Yugoslavia.

The problems in the Balkans are known and familiar, as are possible solutions. Among the necessities for the Balkan nations, she went on, are economic reform, democratization, and the establishment of a coherent foreign policy. She said there was also a need to define borders once and for all, and, she added, citing the example of Austria, these borders need to be made "soft" so as to permit cooperation and a free flow of travel among the countries. The constant foreign intervention in the Balkans could be stopped, she argued, if there were a commitment from within to communicate and to act together to solve the problems of the region.

She said that the Dayton agreements created an approach to governance that had the effect of negating individual rights. This is a problem for many people in the region. She added that several key issues remain open regarding Bosnia, particularly whether it will survive as a united state or be divided. Despite these difficulties, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia needs to support and maintain its obligations under the Dayton Agreements.

When asked what the international community could do about Kosovo and what steps might bring the Serbs to the negotiating table, she said

that there was a history of action tied to the present regime in Serbia that frustrates any resolution. On the other hand, part of the prevailing attitude in Serbia is a product of shifting attention on the part of the

The international community should be reminded that sanctions are not the only form of leverage and that, traditionally, a mix of punishment and rewards has been more fruitful.

international community, suggesting that it is only half-interested in Kosovo and that Serbia is free to do what it wants. The international community needs to show that it is continuously observant and that it possesses the political will to take action when things in Kosovo get violent. The Serbian government is categorically opposed to the interna-

tionalization of the Kosovo problem, viewing it as an internal matter for Serbia. That is why both the Yugoslav and the Republika Srpska delegations walked out in protest at the mention of Kosovo in the final communiqué at the Bonn conference in December 1997.² She closed by saying that the international community should be reminded that sanctions are not the only form of leverage and that, traditionally, a mix of punishment and rewards has been more fruitful. Perhaps, too, some unorthodox approaches need to be tried.

A participant from Romania agreed, and added that the problems in the Balkans require long-term solutions. Meanwhile, economic aid is badly needed, as is particularly apparent in Kosovo.

A participant from Romania agreed, and added that the problems in the Balkans require long-term solutions. Meanwhile, economic aid is badly needed, as is particularly apparent in Kosovo.

The participant from NATO observed that when one looks at the problems in Serbia and the response by the international community, one sees a gap between rhetoric and action. Events in the Balkans have shown the fundamental philosophical limits of NATO. Specifically, how do democracies exert force to resolve problems when nothing else seems to work? What is needed, he said, is a coalition of the able and the willing in the international community. The United States can not always be expected to intervene when such a coalition is lacking.

A participant from the United States pointed out that it may take a long time to realize the dividends from a given approach. Nowhere has this been more evident, he said, than in Kosovo, where the international community has been trying to bring about a political solution for many years. Both the Bush and the Clinton administrations have sent a clear message to Serbian President Milosevic about the consequences of violence, but the lack of significant progress there and a return to violence illustrates the limits of international actions.

It is possible to be "European" and not be a member of NATO or of the EU.

Acknowledging that there was no set formula for resolving the problems in Kosovo, a participant from Romania said that the international sanctions against Serbia harmed only the Serbian people and thus are of questionable morality. He added that there is no "culture of communication" among the countries of the region; increased communication would promote understanding and tolerance and encourage regional solutions.

PER's president, noting that it was no solution to the problems in Kosovo to simply declare that the Balkans were not a part of Europe, invited comment on how the "new" Europe was to be defined and what the consequences of any definition were likely to be. A participant from the United States responded that it is possible to be "European" and not be a member of NATO or of the EU. Europe, he said, is more than the members of these organizations.

A participant from Hungary, pointing out that the countries of the Caucasus were part of the Council of Europe, argued that there was no need to be rigid regarding the question of who is and who is not in Europe. What is imperative, he said, is that there be a shared vision of the future—one of united prosperity.

² The Bonn conference was held on December 9-10, 1997 as a follow-up for implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords.

A ROMANIAN MODEL OF INCLUSION

The government formed by the centrist coalition that came to power in Romania in November 1996 included, for the first time, two ethnic Hungarian ministers, leading, at least initially, to a reduction in tensions between Romanians and the Hungarian population in Romania. PER's executive director asked the participants to respond to the proposition that this model of inclusion not only might be a long-term solution for Romania but also might be applicable to other countries in the region.

A participant from Romania said that the formula in Romania had grown out of cooperation among the political parties. Its success, he continued, is based on the fact that the coalition operates by consensus,

Romanian national interests and minority interests in Romania are the same.

even while each party pursues its own agenda. Admitting that the formula has not always been easy to implement, he said that it has nevertheless worked despite several obstacles, including an acute lack of man-

agerial skills in the government and significant budgetary constraints. One improvement would be to move toward greater local administration and decentralization. In closing, he added that the recent dispute over the minority-education law was a product of coalition politics and political posturing and was not relevant to the substance of the law itself.

Another Romanian participant commented on the current situation regarding minority education. He said that governing in a coalition is a permanent and natural state of crisis and predicted that the ruling coalition would continue. People had said that this coalition would not last past the first year. It has endured so far for several reasons, among them, shared values and a commitment to pursue nonviolent legal and constitutional methods to achieve common goals. Cooperation among the parties is not without its risks, but it is necessary if realistic goals are to be achieved. He said that Romanian national interests and minority interests are the same. The coalition has made many mistakes—for example, it has failed to demonstrate the common interests of the coalition and the opposition. Within the coalition, he argued, there are shared values but no shared strategy. This is true in its dealings with both the Hungarian and the Romani communities. These issues are neglected at the risk that the opposition will use them to attack the very basis of the coalition. Yet basic agreements have been broken; great care must be

taken that values are not sacrificed for symbolism. At its core, he said, the minority-education issue is about the right to learn in one's mother tongue, and it should not be complicated for the sake of politics. He reiterated that Romanian national interests and minority interests are the same.

Another participant from Romania agreed that each country must find its own solution to its interethnic problems. He said that the issues raised in the dispute over the minority education law were relevant only to the universities, where instruction is in the mother tongue of the students. As for the threat that this issue poses to a unified national identity, he argued that there is a need to protect the natural rights of minorities; doing so will contribute to the well being of society as a whole, and so everyone will win.

The Romanian model could indeed be emulated by other countries in the region.

A participant from Hungary said that the Romanian model could indeed be emulated by other countries in the region. Two important lessons to be drawn from the success of that model were that ethnic parties can work together if they have a common goal, and that actions can change prejudices.

Another Hungarian participant agreed saying the Romanian model is relevant to all of Central Europe. Romania has also had success with privatization, as part of its movement toward a market economy. Such reforms are critically important; they can be gradual, but they need to produce concrete results. However, as far as the Romanian model is concerned, he said it would be better to refer to Western Europe and the United States—for example, the situation of African-Americans in the United States or the Welsh in Great Britain. In both cases, autonomy was not demanded, yet accommodation was provided in a way that preserved ethnic identity.

RECONSTRUCTING BICULTURAL AND MULTICULTURAL VALUES

PER's president suggested to participants that a great challenge lay in the reconstruction of the bicultural and multicultural values that had once characterized the region. The participant from NATO responded by saying that the success in dealing with multiculturalism in historical Europe was due to its relatively small size. Today, the area under discussion is much larger and the problems are much more complex. NATO and the

The real challenge is to reconstruct the social and economic infrastructure of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and to bring them up to the same level as in the West.

EU, he added, are not the appropriate mechanisms for solving ethnic problems. Such problems as those of the Kurds in Turkey and the Basques in Spain may not have solutions at all.

To this point, one of the Hungarian participants declared that minorities are entitled to either maintain their

identity or assimilate. The Roma prefer assimilation, he contended, but they are rejected by the majority community. He added that, although NATO and the EU may not have solutions, they could still be of tremendous help to the region, by providing the necessary infrastructure and by channeling international efforts to elevate living standards and reduce the economic disparities that so often precipitate ethnic tension.

The participant from Moldova commented that, in the public sphere, solutions to minority issues are often impeded by a scarcity of economic resources, and this may be why it is easier to talk about minority issues than it is to take action. The real challenge, he said, is to reconstruct the social and economic infrastructure of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and to bring them up to the same level as in the West. Only when progress is made in these areas will local solutions for dealing with multiculturalism receive the economic support they need to be successful.

The participant from Serbia argued that there was no clear definition of multiculturalism. She said that Yugoslavia was not multicultural but multinational and that this was a much more difficult problem, requiring two models. Those ethnic groups that were recognized under the 1974 Yugoslav constitution as "nations" managed to get their independence. The only "nation" that stayed together with Serbia in the new Yugoslavia was Montenegro.

INTERETHNIC RELATIONS IN SLOVAKIA

Events in Slovakia in the ten months since the first meeting in Baden have been marked by the politics of polarization and by increasing Western pressure for reform. PER's executive director asked the participants from Slovakia to comment on the present state of ethnic relations in their country and on whether they would be an issue in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

The first response emphasized that the recently signed common declaration of the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDC) and the Hungarian Democratic Coalition (HDC) should prevent exploitation of ethnic tensions in the election because the agreement is so important to future cooperation between the two coalitions. Another response, however, was that Prime Minister Meciar would exploit the deep prejudices in Slovakia against Hungarians for political gain, particularly in the northern and eastern regions, where there are no Hungarians. If this is to be avoided, increased cooperation with Hungary will be needed.

A participant from the United States speculated that ethnic issues would more than likely come into play if the economic situation in Slovakia deteriorated. Nevertheless, the United States sees the agreement between the SDC and the HDC as a very positive step. He added that if the government wants to reduce criticisms and pressure from the United States, Slovakia will have to change its minority-language laws to bring them into conformity with European standards.

One of the participants from Hungary said that his country was wary of some of the messages coming out of Slovakia, but that it was important that these messages not be allowed to affect relations between Hungary and Slovakia.

Entering the discussion, the participant from Ukraine said that his country's problems are with Russia, and although the issues are not as politically heated as they are between Hungary and Slovakia, they have nevertheless served to sour relations. The Russian population in Ukraine is one-quarter of the total population of 52 million. He said that the tensions between the two countries have serious economic consequences and gave the example of the drastic reduction of Ukrainian sugar and alcohol exports to Russia. There have also been political consequences that are linked to linguistic problems—Ukraine has tried to make Russian the second official language—but he believes that the situation will not escalate to dangerous levels, as similar issues have elsewhere in the region.

THE U. S. ROLE IN THE NEW EUROPE

PER's president asked participants to comment on the requirements for promoting peace and stability in the region and where they saw the United States in the emerging picture of a new Europe. Responding, a participant from the United States said that American assistance to the

People's worst fears about Russia have not been realized, but the future is still uncertain.

civilian sectors in Central and Eastern Europe is diminishing as it shifts to the military sector in connection with NATO expansion. Poland has been traditionally central to U.S. considerations because of the large Polish constituency in the

United States, so it was not surprising that Poland was included in the first round of expansion. There was not similar support for Romania or Bulgaria. U.S. foreign policy in Central Europe needs to be coordinated with the actions of the EU—but the United States must take the lead.

Another U.S. participant added that there has been a shift of focus toward Southeastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union, primarily Ukraine and Russia. He said that people's worst fears about Russia have not been realized, but the future is still uncertain. He added that the past eight years have been a period of relative stability in Russia, considering the profound economic, political, and social changes that have occurred. He closed by saying that the United States is seeking to coordinate economic development assistance with the countries of Western Europe, because they have the largest direct interest in the region, but he reiterated that U.S. leadership is critical to the success of these efforts.

The EU participant agreed, adding that the political and economic reforms in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are going much better than was anticipated eight years ago. He said that the Luxembourg summit showed that the EU is on its way to enlargement, though this needs to be a step-by-step process. The EU is presently spending more on Ukraine than is the United States, but, he added, this spending was not nearly as efficient. The EU needs to assume a still greater burden and become more efficient in handling assistance.

UKRAINE AND MOLDOVA

As European and transatlantic institutions expand eastward, both Ukraine and Moldova have been increasingly looking to them for support. Both countries want the economic, social, and political benefits that are associated with closer ties with Europe. But the economies of these two countries are tethered more closely to Russia than to other countries in the region. The participants from Ukraine and Moldova were asked to comment on how they saw their countries fitting into Central Europe and how far they saw the process of European integration going.

A situation in which Russia and Ukraine were in opposing military camps would be devastating for both countries.

Responding first, the participant from Ukraine said that public opinion in his country is divided over the issue of NATO expansion (but not over the expansion of the EU). Opposition to NATO expansion comes from Russia and from the 1.5 million retired officers of the Soviet army residing in Ukraine. The question of what would happen if Ukraine joined NATO is a complicated one; a situation in which Russia and Ukraine were in opposing military camps would be devastating for both countries. Borders are presently open between Ukraine and Russia, and there are no visa requirements. There is a fear that if Ukraine were to join NATO, those borders would be marked with barbed wire instead. Such fears are being used by Communist politicians to create confusion and anxiety. The United States and NATO could help, he concluded, by explaining their intentions more clearly.

The participant from Moldova said that the issue of NATO expansion was the same for Moldova as for Ukraine. He acknowledged that there is obviously a broad consensus in the United States and Western Europe for expansion, yet it remains unclear what the final configuration of Europe will be. Neutrality, he argued, is not an option for Moldova; it is natural for Moldova to strengthen relations with the West and to decrease them with Russia. Many in Moldova want it to distance itself from Russia because Russia is seen as volatile and unstable, and Moldova seeks protection from it. He emphasized, however, that Moldova's desire to improve relations with the West should not be viewed by Russia as inherently antagonistic; Moldova does not want to break ties with Russia. The proportion of Moldova's trade with the West has grown in recent years, from zero to roughly 30 percent, while the pro-

portion of its trade with Russia has declined from 70 percent to 40 percent, yet Russia is still a very important trading partner. It would be unrealistic to expect Moldova to break these ties. Indeed, any version of a new and integrated Europe must include Russia. NATO's borders must not surround Russia.

Moldova, he continued, has one immediate problem, and that is the region of Transdnistria, which is still occupied by Russian troops. He said that this issue must be internationalized, and he called for an increase in Western pressure to persuade Russia to withdraw. He added that although the United States does show interest in Moldova, Europe does not. A longer-term problem is that Moldova needs help to prepare for the eventual admission of Romania to NATO, a move that would give Moldova a border with NATO.

CONCLUSIONS

This second Baden meeting illustrated with striking clarity the different visions for the emerging Europe. For the countries of Central and Eastern Europe seeking inclusion in NATO and the EU, uncertainty over the expansion process has been coupled with rising expectations for the domestic political, economic, and social benefits of membership. Less often mentioned were the national-security benefits, though these have been declared by U.S. and NATO officials to be the cornerstone of the alliance. Moreover, while countries aspiring to become members of NATO and the EU conveyed their expectations of broad domestic transformation, NATO and EU (as well as U.S.) officials emphasized that their organizations were themselves undergoing a process of transformation.

Despite these divergences, the meeting also pointed toward a growing consensus that indigenous approaches to the reduction of ethnic tensions and the promotion of accommodation in Central and Eastern Europe do exist. Specifically, the Romanian model of including minority representatives in the governing coalition was acknowledged to be one such approach, and there was consensus among the participants that it was a legitimate formula that could be adopted by other countries in the region.



From left to right: Andrew Dolan, Jonathan Rickert, Constantin Duda Ionescu, Pal Csaky and Cristian Dumitrescu.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

- Herbert Boesch**, Chairman, Joint European-Slovak Parliamentary Committee, European Parliament
- Peter Burian**, Director General, Division of Countrymen, Press and Human Dimension, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovakia
- Jan Carnogursky**, Chairman, Christian Democratic Movement; former Prime Minister, Slovakia
- Pal Csaky**, Vice-Chairman, Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement, Slovakia
- Andrew Dolan**, Director, Strategic Analysis and Policy Department, NATO
- Cristian Dumitrescu**, Vice-President of the Senate, Romania
- Matyas Eorsi**, State Secretary for Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hungary
- Heinz Fischer**, President, National Council (Parliament) of Austria
- Warren Haffar**, Program Officer, Project on Ethnic Relations, USA
- Constantin Dudu Ionescu**, Secretary of State and Chief of Defense Policy and International Relations, Ministry of Defense; Member of the Cabinet, Romania
- Ralph Johnson**, U.S. Ambassador to Slovakia
- Allen Kassof**, President, Project on Ethnic Relations, USA
- Eduard Kukan**, Chairman, Democratic Union, Slovakia
- Yevhen Marchuk**, Member of Parliament and former Prime Minister, Ukraine
- Vesna Pesic**, President, Civic Alliance of Serbia
- Livia Plaks**, Executive Director, Project on Ethnic Relations, USA
- Jonathan Rickert**, Director, North Central European Affairs, Department of State, USA
- Vladimir Solonari**, Chairman, Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and National Minorities, Moldova
- Csaba Tabajdi**, State Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister, Hungary
- Gyorgy Tokay**, Minister, Department for National Minorities, Member of the Cabinet, Romania