



INSTITUTO DE ESTUDOS ESTRATÉGICOS E INTERNACIONAIS

**10th INTERNATIONAL LISBON CONFERENCE
THE REEMERGENCE OF AGGRESSIVE NATIONALISM
AND EUROPE**

Lisbon, 17 - 19th November 1993

**THE RISE OF RADICAL NATIONALISM:
PROSPECTS FOR EURO-AMERICAN COOPERATION**

Desmond Dinan

Director, Center for European Community Studies, George Mason University

The rise of radical nationalism in the Balkans and the former Soviet bloc is one of the most disturbing developments since the end of the Cold War. By destabilizing or threatening to destabilize the region, the rise of radical nationalism hinders the implementation of what U.S. National Security Adviser Anthony Lake has called America's post-containment "strategy of enlargement." According to Lake, one component of such a strategy involves fostering and consolidating "new democracies and market economies... especially in states of special significance and opportunity."

The U.S. and Europe have a common interest in furthering peace, prosperity, and stability in the East. Nor do they lack either policy instruments or institutional platforms to promote that objective. Policy instruments range from economic and technical assistance, to diplomatic recognition and non-recognition, to sanctions and the use of force. Institutional platforms include the UN, NATO, the NACC, the CSCE, and the G24.

Euro-American cooperation to combat radical nationalism is built largely on bilateral exchanges and discussions between the U.S. and individual European countries, and on a highly-developed economic and political relationship between the U.S. and the European community (EC). Indeed, the EC is the United States' main interlocutor on questions of aid, trade, and policy toward the East. Accordingly, this paper will examine prospects for Euro-American cooperation on the question of radical nationalism largely from the perspective of U.S.-EC relations. First, the paper will explore institutional, structural, cyclical, and issue-specific factors that affect U.S.-EC cooperation and collaboration on policy toward the East. Second, it will assess specific policy options and instruments both in light of those fundamental factors, and in view of recent experience in Yugoslavia and elsewhere.

Fundamental Factors

Institutional: The U.S.-EC relationship is now highly institutionalized. Arguably, it is too institutionalized. With great fanfare, the November 1990 U.S.-EC Declaration added another echelon to an already intense network of meetings between U.S. and EC officials. At the highest level of the relationship, every six months the President of the U.S. meets the Presidents of the EC's Council and Commission. The plethora of U.S.-EC meetings, and especially the schedule of Presidential meetings, tends to stress form over substance. A highly institutionalized relationship is not necessarily a close one. Conversely, skipping a Presidential meeting – as happened in the second half of 1993 – does not necessarily mean that the relationship is in jeopardy.

Structural: The highly institutionalized nature of the relationship tends also to disguise its inherent asymmetry. Contrary to some observers' characterization of it, the six monthly U.S.-EC summit is not a meeting between the U.S. President and his EC counterparts. The U.S. president has no EC counterparts. The Council President is the U.S. President's Belgian, Portuguese, German – or whichever country happens to be in the rotating presidency – counterpart. The Commission president has no analogue in national political systems.

The inherent disequilibrium and asymmetry of the U.S.-EC relationship has profound implications for cooperation in the sphere of foreign and security policy. The U.S. is a sovereign, federal state; the EC is a quasi-sovereign, proto-federal entity. The U.S. has a recognizable – although sometimes incoherent – foreign policy, and the means to implement it, if necessary by force; the EC has a fledgling procedure to coordinate its member states' foreign policies and to devise common positions, and has only limited means to take joint action. To put it simply and bluntly: the U.S. has an army, the EC does not.

The Community's member states developed a procedure for foreign policy coordination (EPC), and then a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), because they realized that their own powers of diplomatic and military persuasion were inadequate to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex international system. But the history of EPC, and the development of the CFSE, have been slow and painful. Nor is foreign policy coordination a common Community activity. Instead, it is an inter-governmental process still subject to national veto and to national arm-twisting. Two recent examples, both related to the problem of radical nationalism, illustrate the point. In December 1991 and January 1992 Germany successfully advocated Community recognition of Croatia despite other member states' opposition, and despite the escalation of tension in the former Yugoslavia to which it gave rise. Subsequently, Greece blocked Community recognition of the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia in the teeth of other member states' wish to recognize the new state, and despite the escalation of tension in the Balkans to which it also gave rise. Admittedly both incidents took place under EPC, but it is difficult to see how the outcome would have been different under the new CFSP. "

The CFSP is an unsatisfactory procedure. It emerged as a lowest common denominator from the member states' 1991 inter-governmental conference (IGC) on political union. Perhaps the next IGC, in 1996, will strengthen the CFSP, and also give the European Union a military capability. But there is unlikely ever to be an EC army in the sense that there is a U.S. army. The Maastricht Treaty ratification crisis clearly

showed the limits of European integration, at least for the foreseeable future. Especially after the 1992 and 1993 ratification debate, it is difficult to imagine that Western Europeans would be willing to surrender full sovereignty in the highly sensitive area of national defence. It is doubly difficult to imagine that public opinion in Austria, Finland, and Sweden, which by 1996 may be Community members, would acquiesce in the complete abandonment of neutrality, a label to which at least Austria hopes to cling in the presently-constituted CFSP.

Apart from the question of neutrality, enlargement of the Community will make the development of an effective CFSP even more difficult to attain: it will be far harder to reach consensus in a Community of sixteen or twenty than in a Community of twelve. Moreover, enlargement will introduce new perspectives and concerns that could make the EC's foreign policy agenda too large and unwieldy: Finland has radically different foreign policy concerns than Portugal; Austria has radically different foreign policy concerns than Ireland.

At least Finland's and Austria's main concerns lie to the East, from whence the primary threat from radical nationalism comes. For that reason the next round of enlargement could help to strengthen the Community's *Ostpolitik*, but could also make that *Ostpolitik* harder to formulate and implement. Another round of enlargement to include the Visegrad Four would further strengthen the Community's orientation toward the East, while again compounding the problem of CFSP formulation and implementation.

Not only does the disequilibrium between the U.S. and the EC limit effective cooperation on military and security matters, but the Community's unique character is an inherent source of frustration in the transatlantic relationship. Even if the CFSP became a Community policy rather than an inter-governmental procedure, it would remain subject to undue national influence. The case of the Community's common commercial policy is revealing and highly germane to the current state of U.S.-EC relations. On behalf of the EC, in November 1992 the Commission negotiated an agreement (the Blair House accord) to resolve U.S.-EC disputes over agricultural subsidies. That agreement, in turn, was supposed to unblock the Uruguay Round negotiations. Instead, one member state – France – subsequently denounced the Blair House accord and insisted that the Commission seek "clarification, interpretations, and improvements" to it. Ultimately the Council of Ministers will vote on the Blair House accord, and on the Uruguay Round agreement (if it is ever concluded). Yet, if outvoted in the Council, France threatens to revive the national veto and scuttle the entire undertaking. The United State's annoyance is understandable. Whatever the merits of France's case, the entire affair calls into question the Community's reliability and

efficacy as an international partner. A CFSP run along similar lines would be equally frustrating.

To a great extent, therefore, the structural problem of U.S.-EC cooperation on foreign policy and security lies in the nature of European integration itself. A European Union now exists, but it is hardly the definitive end of European integration. As the process of European integration continues, political union will doubtless become more focused and coherent, but its ultimate objective will never be a single European government, with responsibility for a single European foreign policy, and in control of a single European army.

Cyclical: Apart from structural problems, the current state of U.S.-EC relations is not conducive to close cooperation. Since the high-point of the 1990 Declaration, U.S.-EC relations have taken a noticeable downturn. Only a month after the Declaration was signed, what was to have been the concluding session of the Uruguay Round negotiations collapsed in Brussels. The course of negotiations since that time, and especially the Blair House debacle, has further soured trade relations. Although projections of a new agreement's impact may be exaggerated, undoubtedly a successful end to the Uruguay Round would provide a badly-needed economic boost to the U.S. and EC. Yet, partly because of the recession, both sides seem unwilling to compromise and are adopting instead a beqgar-thy-neighbor approach.

At the same time, the end of the Cold War put transatlantic relations under additional strain. Despite encouraging Brussels to lead the international aid effort for Eastern Europe and to take the initiative in trying to mediate the Yugoslav conflict, Washington clearly resented the Community's growing international profile and occasionally revelled in the Community's apparent inadequacy as an international political actor. A strong U.S. reaction against proposals in the 1991 inter-governmental conference to merge the EC and WEU, thereby possibly weakening NATO, demonstrated Washington's fears of losing its dominant position in the Alliance.

Despite Washington's assertiveness on WEU, the current American mood of disillusionment with foreign affairs makes it harder for the U.S. and EC to cooperate on pressing international issues. As President Clinton, Secretary of State Christopher, and senior American officials have been at pains to point out recently, there is no question of a return to 1920s' and 1930s' isolationism. The U.S. will remain engaged internationally, not least because of the obvious relationship – in terms of military and socio-economic security – between domestic and foreign affairs. Yet the American public, Congress, and Administration are decidedly inward looking; possibly more so

than at any time since the Second World War. President Clinton is having to devote a lot of his time to international affairs, but he won the 1992 election largely on a domestic platform. Thus, at a time of bewildering international instability and biting economic recession, America is least likely to undertake foreign commitments that seem open-ended and expensive. With rising domestic demand for dwindling economic resources, inevitably there is little sympathy or support in the U.S. for costly overseas operations.

Issue-Specific: The issues of radical nationalism and of assistance for the newly-emerging democracies themselves hinder close U.S.-EC cooperation.

First: the problem of radical nationalism is not well understood in the U.S. The U.S. is highly nationalistic in the obvious sense of flag-waving and anthem singing, but its nationalism is inclusive. Because their own ancestors willingly subsumed their native nationalism, while clinging to ethnic identity, most Americans genuinely don't understand the persistence and potency of contemporary radical nationalism. By contrast, most Western Europeans show few outward signs of fervent nationalism – a British government minister's recent effort to promote American style nationalism in the UK engendered more scorn than support – and have long since ameliorated their own radical nationalism. Yet Western Europeans understand only too well the nature and the virulence of radical nationalism today.

Second: As well as being difficult to comprehend, the problem of radical nationalism is notoriously difficult to deal with. Ethnic conflicts seem intractable and unmanageable. They are precisely the kind of issue least likely to engender American public and Congressional attention. Experience in Vietnam and, more appropriately, in Somalia and Haiti cautions Americans against involvement in incorrigible tribal, ethnic, and nationalistic disputes, especially in far-off places.

Third: Americans perceive the problem as primarily and peculiarly European. Instability in Eastern Europe is hardly in America's interest, but it affects Western Europe much more immediately and directly. A massive exodus of refugees from North Africa and Eastern Europe would obviously have a far greater impact on Western Europe than on the U.S. Western Europeans have shown little sympathy for U.S. efforts to stem illegal immigration resulting from instability in Central America; Americans are unlikely to sympathize now with Western Europe's plight.

Policy Options and Instruments

There is a range of policy options and instruments available to the U.S. and EC, either separately or together, to try to influence development in the Balkans and the former Soviet bloc. Like the assessment of factors affecting U.S.-EC cooperation, recent experience shows that Washington and Brussels will not always agree on how best to cope with the problem of radical nationalism.

EC Enlargement: the EC's enlargement into Central and Eastern Europe is a possible solution to some of Eastern Europe's political problems. After all, the Community is, first and foremost, a security system. The Community's original purpose was to help reconcile old enemies in Western Europe by integrating their economies to such an extent that war between them would become both unthinkable and impossible. To cite the title of David Mitrany's seminal work on functional integration, the Community is "a working peace system."

As a peace system, the Community has been an unqualified success. It has also helped to consolidate democracy in its most recent entrants: Greece, Portugal, and Spain. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe are well aware of the Community's potential in that regard. Appeals for EC membership by newly-independent states in Central and Eastern Europe frequently refer to the peaceful implications of European integration. As Czechoslovakia's foreign minister remarked in 1992, "we will be secure only if relations among all European countries are, let's say, like relations between Belgium and the Netherlands."

The U.S. is equally aware of European integration's contribution to peace and democracy. Indeed, whereas the U.S. has always been ambivalent about the external economic implications of European integration – oscillating between euphoria over access to larger markets and paranoia about protectionism – from the outset the U.S. supported European integration largely for political reason. As in the past, the U.S. will watch closely to ensure that a wider EC is not economically a more exclusive EC, but in principle Washington strongly supports further Community enlargement.

Yet there are limits both to the peacemaking potential of Community membership – integration is not a panacea for unrequited nationalism – and to the Community's geo-political and geo-economic scope. The Community has already conceded eventual membership to the Visegrad Four. Having possibly twenty member states will change the Community's character completely. Understandably, the institutional, political, and economic indigestion caused by swallowing the Visegrad Four will sour the Community's appetite for further enlargement to the East. The U.S. will likely sympathize with the Community's point of view.

Economic and Technical Assistance: Both the U.S. and the EC agree that economic development is essential to foster democracy and stability in the Balkans and the former Soviet bloc. They also concur that economic recovery at home will strengthen the transatlantic relationship and provide an essential basis for economic development abroad. Yet their inability to conclude the Uruguay Round is hindering their own economic recovery, weakening their ability to assist newly-emerging democracies, and denying trade opportunities to those countries which need economic assistance most.

Eastern European countries look primarily to the EC for technical assistance, financial support, and export opportunities. Apart from its "Europe Agreements" with the Visegrad Four, the EC has negotiated or is in the course of negotiating a variety of economic agreements with other Eastern European countries and former Soviet republics. Accordingly, the EC has a degree of leverage over its Eastern interlocutors. Indeed, from the outset the Community offered to negotiate Association Agreements only with the Eastern European countries that fulfilled certain "fundamental conditions concerning democracy and a market economy." But the course of current negotiations between the EC and Russia, and the EC and Ukraine, demonstrate the difficulty of exerting such leverage and the gulf that separates East and West on the meaning of democracy and the nature of human rights. In both cases, negotiations stalled partly because of Russia's and Ukraine's refusal to accept the EC's so-called "suspension clause" regarding guarantees for human rights and democracy.

Despite lingering resentment over the EC's leading role in the economic assistance effort, the U.S. has encouraged the Community in that regard. Indeed, the U.S. complains that the EC is not doing enough, particularly with regard to market access for Eastern Europe's primary and industrial products (most recently in a conflict over Russian aluminium exports). Undoubtedly, trade negotiations between the EC and Eastern European countries have pitted the Community's protectionist proclivities against its political rhetoric. When it comes to granting liberal market access, a number of EC member states are succumbing to domestic protectionist pressure and blocking generous terms.

Although not exclusively confined to U.S. and EC participation, a number of cooperative ventures to assist Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have had mixed success. The EBRD was politically controversial from the beginning; the Energy Charter is foundering due to political indecision and lack of legal infrastructure in the Soviet Union and its successor states. By contrast, the G24 was a far more important initiative enjoying widespread support in the U.S. and the EC. Moreover, the U.S.

strongly encouraged the EC to lead the multinational aid effort, and continues to work closely with the EC to channel assistance eastward.

Diplomatic Recognition of New States: The issue of diplomatic recognition of newly-independent and successor states is one on which the U.S. and EC have attempted to cooperate closely. Both have developed criteria based on the CSCE's Helsinki Final Act (1975) and Charter of Paris (1991), including the principle of self-determination, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and a commitment in good faith to the peaceful resolution of disputes. Nevertheless sharp transatlantic differences have arisen over the question of diplomatic recognition, notably in the cases of Croatia and Slovenia.

Sanctions: Not least because of enforcement problems and its likely impact on neighbouring states, the imposition of economic sanctions is an extremely difficult option on which to secure close U.S.-EC cooperation. The effectiveness of sanctions is also debatable, with the answer apparently depending on political rather than economic considerations. The imposition of sanctions during the Gulf and Yugoslav crises raised questions in the transatlantic relationship of military and economic burdensharing. American willingness to enforce blockades and embargoes in seemingly remote corners of Europe cannot be taken for granted.

Military Action: Military force is the most extreme and the most difficult option for the U.S. and the EC. As recent events in Somalia and Haiti have shown, the American people and Administration are unwilling to risk U.S. lives in conflicts, near or far, that do not directly and self-evidently affect America's national interest.

Ironically, the U.S. and eleven of the EC'S twelve member states have an ideal vehicle – NATO – for conducting joint military operations. As Stephen A. Oxman, U.S. assistant secretary of state for European and Canadian affairs, recently remarked, the Yugoslav crisis has not demonstrated NATO's inappropriateness for the post-Cold War World. On the contrary, the "out of area" debate is over, and NATO did all that was asked of it. Further improvements in NATO's ability to respond to out of area crises will likely follow the January 1994 summit.

The main problem, therefore, is not institutional, but political. Yugoslavia has revealed a sharp divergence of opinion within the Alliance on the use of force to try to end or ameliorate ethnic conflict. President Clinton was moved largely by humanitarian concerns to advocate the use of force in Bosnia. Subsequent events in Somalia make it unlikely that humanitarian concerns will again move him to advocate the use of force in ethnic disputes or civil wars.

While most unwilling to use force itself, should the Community decide to do so the U.S. would most likely cooperate with it and possibly provide logistical support. But this brings us back to an earlier, structural point: the Community lacks both a procedure for effective security policy making and the ability to take military action. Moreover, even if the Community develops such a procedure and such a military capacity at the 1996 IGC, it will always face a unique and debilitating problem: Germany's inability to play a role commensurate with its size and power. The problem is not constitutional: that has already been resolved. Rather, the problem is historical and political. Germany's brutal occupation of the Balkans and the former Soviet bloc during the Second World War, and pervasive post-Cold war pacifism, make it highly unlikely that German troops could ever operate in those parts of Europe where radical nationalism now poses the greatest threat. The probable non-involvement of German troops in operations to the East and South-East would make nonsense of an EC military option.

Conclusion

In conclusion, prospects look poor for effective U.S.-EC cooperation to defuse ethnic or nationalist tension in the East. Already, the Yugoslav conflict and the question of aid to Russia have periodically led to resentment and irritation in U.S.-EC relations. Structural factors inhibiting effective cooperation, such as the essential asymmetry of the relationship, are not going to change, although two forthcoming developments – the 1994 NATO Summit and the 1996 IGC – may sharpen the EC's security capability. Nor are the issue-specific factors that militate against greater American engagement likely to alter in the near future. These problems will not be resolved simply by establishing new frameworks; indeed, adequate institutional platforms already exist for close U.S.-EC cooperation. At least cyclical elements such as the poor state of U.S.-EC relations, and the disengagement of the American public, may take a turn for the better. By that time, however, the U.S. and the EC might have missed many opportunities to avert further conflict in the East.