

## ETHNIC IDENTITY, NATIONAL IDENTITY THE FUTURE OF THE NATION-STATE

The global community is moving toward integration, but its unity is fragile. The principles of "open borders, open trade, and most importantly, open minds," articulated by President Bush reflect western notions of modernization and secular democracy. These prescriptions offer no panacea for an increasing number of ethnic and religious conflicts challenging political leaders on every continent. As each contributor to this special features section of *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* writes, ethnic and religious movements are powerful forces defining national identities and steering social and political mobilization.

The historical roots of current ethnic politics are derived from a colonial legacy and Great Power machinations during the period between the two world wars. Using the war-torn Sudan as a case study, Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban maintains that former colonial states cobbled together for colonial purposes have little prospects for stability. The traditional form of nation-state has proved inadequate in bridging political and economic as well as ethnic and religious differences between North and South Sudan.

Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr states that the simultaneous emergence of ethnic and religious activism present the established order with an unwieldy quandary. In Pakistan, statehood was based on an Islamic identity, but that ideal has proved impotent against ethnic tensions that now tear the nation. Movements promoting an ethnically based nationality often provide the rationale for political power plays. As Jean-François Lisée and Lise Bissonnette write, Quebec bases its claim to autonomy on a French linguistic tradition separate from the rest of Canada.

Although western secularists tend to view religious revivalism as a negative force, Gerard F. Powers examines the varied stances the Catholic Church has taken on claims for self-determination in Croatia and in Northern Ireland, and how the church may mitigate conflict. In addressing the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, Paul A. Goble stresses not only the religious aspect to fighting in that region, but also how Soviet policy tied ethnicity to territories and set one group against another.

In Western Europe, the appeals of right-wing politicians prove the potency of racial doctrine in nations faced with a major influx of immigrants. Anthony M. Messina looks at whether political reality matches xenophobic fears as ethnic and racial issues move from the margins to the center of national politics. Western Europe is also challenged by the series of clashes ignited by ethnic and religious differences to its east. Argyrios K. Pisiotis describes the difficulties in rethinking an international security system as the global community struggles to respond to the civil war in Yugoslavia.

Should old borders remain a basis for statehood if they must be held at gunpoint? Perhaps a glimmer of hope can be seen in efforts to dismantle racial apartheid in South Africa. John Matisonn comments on the dramatic political changes that have occurred within that nation's tight ideological system. The rising tide of ethnic and religious politics may portend an end to rigid forms of the nation-state and mark the beginning of a new structure. For now the future of the global order remains in flux.

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