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Slovakia

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Case Preview

THIS CHAPTER EXAMINES THE POTENTIAL for conflict in Slovakia, and Western efforts since 1989 to keep conflict from erupting. There are two related possibilities. First, internal conflict, stimulated by tensions between ethnic Slovaks and ethnic Hungarians in the southern and southeastern parts of the state could erupt in violence. Second, external conflict with neighboring Hungary could break out. The former is more likely than the latter; indeed, only if conflict breaks out within Slovakia is a clash with Hungary at all probable.[1]

Slovak-Hungarian tensions were of historic origins and reemerged after the collapse of the Soviet-dominated Warsaw Pact in 1991, followed by the dissolution of Czechoslovakia at the end of 1992.[2] Vladimir Meciar, Slovakia's prime minister within the federated state, exploited latent nationalist tensions in Slovakia to demand more power for the Slovak government within Czechoslovakia. Disagreements between Czech and Slovak leaders over an acceptable constitutional structure for the state, and over the pace of economic reforms, led by mid-1992 to the conclusion that a unified state could not be sustained; subsequently, the Czech and Slovak republics became independent states on January 1, 1993.

Tensions between Slovaks and the sizable ethnic Hungarian minority inhabiting much of the land along Slovakia's border with Hungary emerged

prior to the breakup of Czechoslovakia, fueled by nationalist sentiment in Slovakia. Relations within Slovakia and with neighboring Hungary were further complicated by the stress Hungary's first non-Communist government placed on protecting the rights of ''all'' Hungarians in the early 1990s. While the Hungarian government has adopted a more conciliatory attitude that gives priority to relations with neighboring governments over its ethnic diaspora, strains between Hungarians and Slovaks remain.

The dominant concern of both Hungary and Slovakia since 1989 has been to integrate with the West by joining Western institutions. While this has mitigated significantly the likelihood of conflict between Slovakia and Hungary, Slovakia's treatment of its ethnic Hungarian minority continues to aggravate relations between these two states. Several Western institutions, notably the Council of Europe and the High Commissioner on National Minorities appointed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), have worked to ease tensions by advocating a European standard for treatment of minorities, while at the same time making clear that border revisions are unacceptable to the international community. Moreover, specific efforts have been made by external bodies to ease ethnic relations both within Slovakia and between Slovakia and Hungary. These have included mediating particular disputes between ethnic Hungarians and the Slovak government regarding legal rights of minorities, working to resolve the dispute between Slovakia and Hungary over the Gabcikovo-Nagymoros dam project on their common border, and improving political relations between the two states.

Mediation efforts have been proceeding since 1993. The total cost of mediation between 1993 and 1997 was roughly $1.8 million. Since 1990 the international community spent roughly $890 million to assist Slovakia's transition to a market economy and a more democratic political system. This adds up to less than $1 billion over a seven-year period, during which violent conflict did not emerge despite fluctuating tensions between Slovakia and Hungary, and within Slovakia itself. The low costs of these exertions, in comparison with the higher price of halting conflicts later, makes their emulation worthwhile.

This chapter will analyze the tensions within Slovakia and between it and Hungary. It will then assess the steps that have been taken to lessen tensions both within Slovakia and between Slovakia and Hungary. Finally, it will evaluate the costs of these efforts and compare them to estimated costs of either a full-blown prevention effort or actual intervention to stop fighting.

Origins and Overview of the Conflict

Czechoslovakia had a short history as a unified independent state. Prior to World War I, most of this territory was part of the Austro-Hungarian Em-

pire, while parts of Slovakia were directly under Hungarian jurisdiction within the empire. The state created at the end of World War I had a variety of structures over the ensuing seventy years.[3] Between 1939 and 1945 Czechoslovakia disappeared; the Czech lands were absorbed by Hitler's empire, while the remaining territory of Slovakia was established as an independent state, but one ruled by a fascist government in alliance with Nazi Germany. In 1945 a new state was again created from Czech and Slovak lands, granting Slovaks increased autonomy; this structure was then superseded by a more centralized structure when the Communists took control after a coup in February 1948. Finally, some steps back toward federalism were enacted during the Prague Spring in 1968; these were not completely abandoned after the crackdown in August of that year, and remained in place until the "Velvet Revolution" of November 1989.[4]

This history gave both the Czechs and the Slovaks some cause for grievance against the other. Czechs resented the Slovaks for their abandonment of the Czech lands in favor of an independent, fascist state in 1939; Slovak nationalism played a role in the decapitation of Czechoslovakia by Hitler in 1939. The increased political visibility of Slovaks after 1968, due to federal reforms that gave them greater voting weight in the national assembly, also fostered resentment. The Slovaks in turn resented the lack of autonomy granted to Slovakia during the interwar period, and remained discontented with their unequal representation in the federal government under the Communists, as well as the uneven economic development of the two states, with Slovakia lagging behind the Czech lands.[5] Slovakia's previous domination by the Magyars under the Austro-Hungarian Empire also created simmering resentments against Hungarians.[6]

Czech-Slovak Tensions Since 1989

During the revolution of 1989, Czechs and Slovaks were united in their opposition to the Communist regime. Civic Forum (CF), which was formed in the Czech Republic, worked closely with its Slovak counterpart, the Public against Violence (PAV), in the overthrow of the Communist regime; and indeed, though the first elected president of the federal state, Vaclav Havel, is Czech, Alexander Dubcek, the former proponent of the Prague Spring who was made head of the Federal Assembly in December 1989, was a Slovak. In the run-up to the first free elections held in 1990, CF and the PAV continued to work together, and they clearly shared their opposition to the Communist Party, as did most of the newly emerging political parties in both parts of Czechoslovakia. However, some nationalist-oriented parties emerged in Slovakia almost immediately after the collapse of the old regime, as well as some with a distinct ethnic base.

The new non-Communist government instituted some measures to decentralize the federal government and to shift more power to the republics

early in 1990. Signs of friction between the two republics emerged shortly after the change in power. The very name of the country became an issue in March 1990, when Havel proposed dropping the word "Socialist" from its title. Slovak activists balked at his suggestion of the "Czechoslovak Republic" as the country's new name. Several versions were debated before the "Czech and Slovak Federated Republic" was finally accepted on April 20, 1990. Before agreement was reached, however, several thousand Slovaks demonstrated for the outright separation of the Czech lands and Slovakia.[7]

Partly as a result of the strains that emerged over this issue, Czechoslovakia's three governments—the federal, Czech, and Slovak—held discussions during the summer of 1990 that culminated in the Trencianske Teplice agreement on August 8 and 9, 1990. This set out guidelines for the drafting of new constitutions at both the federal and republican levels. However, several Slovak political parties vetoed this agreement, and called instead for a sovereign and independent Slovak republic.[8] Several of the parties that objected to the Trencianske Teplice agreement argued that a new Slovak constitution ought to be designed to make federal laws superfluous, and also proposed that Slovak immediately be declared the official and state language in Slovakia.[9]

Signs of antagonism toward Czechs within Slovakia accompanied the debate over the relative rights of the federal and state governments during the summer of 1990.[10] The success of the Slovak National Party, which won 14 percent of the vote in the Slovak parliamentary elections held in June 1990, reinforced the appeal of nationalism as a rallying cry.[11] This led some of the other parties in Slovakia, notably the Christian Democratic Party, led by Jan Carnogursky, to adopt more nationalist positions.[12]

Negotiations over a power-sharing agreement between the federal and republican governments were further exacerbated by the adoption of a language law by the federal government in the fall of 1990. Slovak nationalist groups protested a provision granting the right to schooling and legal representation in a minority mother tongue in places where 20 percent of the population belonged to a given group. The main effect of this federal law, however, was to induce Slovak nationalists to demand more actively that Slovak laws be given precedence over federal ones. As the debate over state's rights in Slovakia became increasingly radicalized, Slovak nationalists, angered by the prospective accord, held a march in Bratislava on November 17, 1990, demanding independence.[13]

Sovereignty became an increasingly potent tool in the struggle for popular support in Slovakia in 1991. Prime Minister Meciar, in an unsuccessful bid to take control of the PAV in February 1991, began to question the organization's aims, and to argue that nationalist concerns ought to be given a higher priority than simply as one of five equal pillars in the PAV's

political platform, as had been agreed in the fall of 1992.[14] Meciar and his supporters took an increasingly populist stand, decrying the pace of the national economic reforms that had been introduced early in 1991 as "unsuitable for Slovakia," and proposing that a referendum be held on the future of the federal state.[15] Indeed, following his unsuccessful bid to gain control of the PAV, Meciar and his followers established a new group, called the Public Against Violence—for a Democratic Slovakia (MDS).[16] There were further demonstrations in Slovakia in mid-March advocating the primacy of Slovak laws over federal ones, as well as demands for a separate Slovak economic system and armed forces, and independence.[17]

This discord culminated on April 23, 1991, in the recall of Meciar and seven of his ministers by the Presidium of the Slovak National Council, and the appointment of Carnogursky as new prime minister. Meciar's critics accused him of subverting the democratic system in Slovakia by acting without consulting the Slovak government.[18] Yet Meciar's populist stand had made him, by the spring of 1991, the most popular politician in Slovakia. His recall provoked a demonstration of 50,000 people in Bratislava supporting him, which again underlined the utility of nationalism as a political tool in Slovakia.[19]

In 1991 the general response of the federal—predominantly Czech—leadership to this resurgence of Slovak nationalism was restrained. Rather than denouncing these proposals, government figures confirmed several times that if the Slovaks wanted independence, they had the right to choose this option. Both the president and his spokesmen noted that two independent states would be better than a dysfunctional federation. Yet they were careful to note that there were a variety of options in considering changes to either sovereignty or the internal makeup of a federated state, and Havel stressed the importance of ensuring that any moves toward independence follow constitutional guidelines.[20]

As the impasse over constitutional issues continued, however, federal officials started proposing that a referendum on the federated state's future be held to resolve this question.[21] This idea was rejected by several leading Slovak politicians. In good part, this was based on the knowledge that in opinion polls held in Slovakia, the majority of the population had repeatedly favored the unified state, which meant that those leaders basing their popularity on nationalist rhetoric stood to lose if an open vote on the federation were held.[22]

The prolonged stalemate over this issue left the federal government of Czechoslovakia paralyzed. Growing Czech frustration with Slovak recalcitrance led to counter moves by the Czech parliament; by late summer 1991, both republican parliaments were developing contingency plans to be utilized in the event of an actual split. In the fall of 1991, the Czech parliament stated its claim to be the legal successor to the existing federal

state should a breakup occur.[23] This latter move came in response to a narrowly averted attempt by Slovak nationalist groups in September 1991 to compel the Slovak National Council to hold a vote on a declaration of Slovak sovereignty; a similar demand was again barely avoided in November. By that time, Havel had requested changes in the newly established referendum law to give not only the Federal Assembly but also the president power to call a referendum, since the federal parliament had been deadlocked on this issue due to Slovak resistance and disagreements over wording of any referendum questions. Havel failed to gain approval for such a move, and by early 1992 even he was noting that the breakup of the state seemed increasingly likely, given the inability of the two groups to find any acceptable compromise.[24]

The irony of these calls for Slovak independence was that virtually no one in either republic disputed the fact that Slovakia would suffer from such a step far more than would the Czech lands. Though it would obviously be hurt as well, the Czech economy was far more advanced, and more likely to be able to expand its ties with the West through trade and foreign investment. Slovakia, in contrast, was far less technologically developed, and was saddled with most of the federated state's outdated heavy industry and munitions plants that had been built to meet Soviet goals in the aftermath of World War II.[25]

Growing nationalist sentiment in Slovakia had led by early 1992 to a situation in which at least a minority in the republic was pushing for the right to form an independent state, while at the same time rejecting the rights of minorities in Slovakia.[26] The paralysis caused by the political stalemate hindered the federal government's efforts to address the state's urgent economic problems.

The spring 1992 elections, therefore, took on additional significance for the future of the republic. The two issues that appear to have been critical to the course of this election were nationalism and economic policies. In the Czech lands, Vaclav Klaus's Civic Democratic Party focused its campaign on continuing the economic reforms at all costs; the strong support Klaus received suggested that a significant part of the population favored economic reform even if it complicated relations between the Czech lands and Slovakia.

The election results in Slovakia confirmed Meciar's strength, reinforcing his popularity, the increasing pull of nationalism, and differing attitudes toward economic reforms. The contrast with the Czech lands was pointed, since Meciar advocated slowing the reform process to make it less painful for Slovakia, and insisted that he would not halt arms production, in deference to the importance of the arms industry in Slovakia. Meciar's success was also based on the anti-Hungarian sentiment expressed in his campaign.

The June elections for the federal state thus doomed Czechoslovakia. The economic aims of the governments in Slovakia and the Czech lands were seriously at odds, as were their views on possible solutions to the federal crisis. While Meciar continued to advocate the maintenance of a loose confederation, rather than a complete break, the Czech leadership rejected this option, stating that if the states could not agree to remain in a workable federation, then they should make a clean break, so both could move forward.

The June elections led to Klaus's appointment as prime minister in the Czech lands. When negotiations between Klaus and Meciar in late June ended in stalemate, an agreement was reached to create a weak and clearly temporary federal government until the country's future could be settled. An integrated solution was clearly no longer an option, however. Klaus's determination to proceed with market economic reforms (and his irritation with Meciar's obstructionism) led him to favor the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, and by the end of July 1992, Klaus and Meciar had agreed on the division of the country.[27] Ironically, once it became apparent that the Czech lands were prepared to go their own way, Meciar tried to sustain at least a confederation;[28] nonetheless, the dissolution of the federal state took place at the end of 1992, leading to the establishment of the Czech Republic and Slovakia as independent countries on January 1, 1993.

Ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia

Slovak nationalism was clearly central to the breakup of Czechoslovakia. The achievement of an independent state did not ease the Slovak need for recognition and "justice," however; instead it fueled tensions between ethnic Slovaks and minorities in the new state, especially the Hungarian minority.[29]

A sizable Hungarian minority lives in Slovakia along the southern border with Hungary, some of the most fertile land in Slovakia. The post-Communist Hungarian government affirmed its recognition of its existing borders, but some Hungarian politicians have also vehemently insisted that the government must defend the interests of all Hungarians regardless of their state of residence, which created tensions with most of Hungary's neighbors.[30] While the actual threat of border encroachments by Hungary is virtually nonexistent, this tension fed Slovak nationalist sentiment against minority rights in Slovakia.

The Hungarian minority makes up 11 percent of Slovakia's population. During the revolution in November 1989, some ethnic Hungarians joined the PAV, the Slovak counterpart of the Czech Civic Forum, in the struggle to overthrow the existing government. A variety of Hungarian cultural and pseudo–trade union organizations were set up shortly after the govern-

ment shake-up began in November 1989.[31] But the most important organizations to emerge were two major Hungarian political parties in Slovakia: the Coexistence Movement and the Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement (HCDM).[32]

In contrast to Romania, there have been marked differences of opinion between the new Hungarian political movements in Slovakia since the introduction of pluralism in 1990. The main split to emerge was between those who cooperated with the PAV (the Independent Hungarian Initiative, FMK), and the alliance formed by the Coexistence Movement and the Christian Democratic Movement, which was backed by Csemadok, which had been the only officially recognized Hungarian organization in Czechoslovakia prior to November 1989.[33] The main disagreement between these groups was based on the priority they placed on the collective and individual rights of minorities.[34] The political differences between these organizations led to mutual recriminations, including attacks by the FMK on Csemadok's "Stalinist" past.

The split within the PAV in 1990 over the issue of Slovak nationalism, fomented by Meciar, had a definite impact on the FMK's attitude toward both the PAV and the other Hungarian political organizations in Slovakia. Over the course of the summer of 1990, Meciar adopted a more confrontational stance with regard to Hungary and the rights of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, declaring after talks with the Hungarian president that Slovakia would not be willing to cooperate with Hungary on questions regarding the problems of minorities until Hungary took similar actions with regard to minorities in Hungary, especially the Slovak minority there. In spite of objections by the FMK, ostensibly one of its members, the PAV also began to attack groups such as the Coexistence Movement, charging that it, along with groups like the Slovak Nationalist Party, was spreading disinformation and deliberately radicalizing the domestic situation in Slovakia. The PAV also protested that the Hungarian Republic was interfering in Czechoslovak internal affairs.[35]

As Slovak nationalist sentiment gradually built during the summer of 1990, greater animosity toward the Hungarian minority began to emerge.[36] One consequence of this was that three of the main Hungarian parties in Slovakia—The Coexistence Movement, the Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement, and the Hungarian People's Party (HPP)—formed a coalition in April 1992 in order to improve their chances of representation in the upcoming elections.[37] This coalition succeeded in winning 7.4 percent of the vote, thus gaining fourteen seats in the Slovak National Council, as well as representation in the Federal Assembly.[38] The results of the June elections in Slovakia made clear that a majority of ethnic Hungarians placed higher priority on minority rights than on other issues

facing the state, and that they favored a position independent of Meciar's PAV—even in alliance with organizations that had a questionable past.

The ethnic Hungarian minority in Slovakia, like that elsewhere in East-Central Europe, insisted that minorities have the right to separate schools with instruction only in the Hungarian language, from elementary school to the university level, as well as the right to use their native language at all levels of public administration in districts where they make up a significant portion of the population, and to have their own churches.[39] The issue of restorating Hungarian-language schools met with serious resistance from Slovak officials and the Slovak population in 1990, as some groups argued that Hungarian schools in Slovakia would be sources of nationalism and potential irredentism.[40] Slovak concerns about Hungarian intentions were undoubtedly exacerbated by Hungarian Prime Minister Jozef Antall's claims in the spring of 1990 that he represented all Hungarians, including those outside Hungary.[41]

Both ethnic Hungarian groups and nationalist-minded Slovak groups tended, over the next year, to exaggerate the strains between these different groups in Slovakia, and the role played by the Hungarian government in fomenting problems in the country. Leading Csemadok officials, for example, complained of an anti-Hungarian campaign in the media, citing charges that Hungarians in southern Slovakia were demanding border revisions and were insulting Slovaks.[42] Other mutual accusations included claims that a high-ranking official of the PAV had said that Hungarian-language schools had been closed in Slovakia because of economic difficulties—and a lack of interest; while a leading Czech newspaper reported that units of the Hungarian army were being deployed along the border with Slovakia, and that Hungarian reconnaissance officers were operating in parts of Slovakia inhabited by ethnic Hungarians.[43]

The stimulus of the most heated objection by the Hungarian minority, however, was the adoption of a new language law in Slovakia. Debate over a new language law began in the spring of 1990. Three different versions were proposed by the Slovak Heritage Foundation, the PAV and the Christian Democratic Movement together, and the Coexistence Movement. The last of these was not considered by the parliament in its deliberations. These proposals clearly reflected the political leanings of each group; the Slovak Heritage Foundation, for example, called for recognizing Slovak as the only official language in the republic. In October 1990, the Slovak parliament adopted a law on languages that granted minorities the right to use their language for official dealings in those cities and communities in which they made up at least 20 percent of the population. The Hungarian community considered this a serious setback. The fact that employees of state institutions were not required to speak or use minority languages, and that public documents, official correspondence, and geo-

graphic names would remain only in the state's "official" language, also angered the Hungarian minority. Even this law, however, triggered protests from Slovak nationalists.[44]

The federal reaction to this debate was muted. Though the federal government did not specifically object to the debate in Slovakia on a new language bill, Havel cautioned the Slovak parliament prior to the vote, noting that Czechoslovakia's return to Europe might be complicated if it ignored the norms of European organizations on this subject.[45] On the federal level, the adoption of a Bill of Fundamental Rights and Liberties on January 9, 1991, was probably a more important indication of the federal government's hopes to resolve this question; this guaranteed minorities the right to develop their own culture and language without discrimination.[46] Hungarian representatives in the parliament were unhappy with this as well, calling the provision on language rights too vague to be useful. Thus, though far less problematic than the rift between Czechs and Slovaks, the Hungarian issue continued to be a nagging concern in Czechoslovakia throughout 1991.[47]

Sources of Tension in Slovakia: External and Internal

Since Slovakia announced its independence on January 1, 1993, three issues have strained Slovak-Hungarian relations: the controversy over the Gabcikovo-Nagymoros dam project; concerns about the Hungarian-Slovak border; and Slovakia's treatment of its ethnic Hungarian minority.

The Gabcikovo-Nagymoros project grew out of a Soviet proposal initially made in the 1950s, which resulted in a treaty between Hungary and Czechoslovakia, signed in 1977, agreeing jointly to build a hydroelectric project on the Danube River. In 1989, following several years of environmental protests and growing government concerns, and despite the project's near completion, the Hungarian government decided to withdraw from the project, citing financial, economic, and domestic political reasons.[48] Czechoslovakia continued construction on its part of the project at Gabcikovo, though this required changes in the plans for damming the Danube. Hungary and the ethnic Hungarian minority in Slovakia opposed this construction, the latter primarily on ecological grounds.[49]

In spite of strong lobbying from Hungary in 1992, Slovak Prime Minister Meciar began the diversion of the Danube into the new channel, which would fill the dam and start the hydroelectric plant, on October 24, 1992. This led to increased protests from both Hungary and the international community. On October 28, Hungary and Czechoslovakia agreed to submit their dispute over Gabcikovo-Nagymoros to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and Czechoslovakia agreed to allow 95 percent of the Danube's flow to return to its original channel. This would preclude the

ecological changes that Hungary feared until a decision was reached.[50] Slovakia, however, did not honor this agreement, returning only 20 percent of the Danube's flow to its previous channel.[51] While Slovakia and Hungary agreed on April 7, 1993, to accede to the ICJ's judgment, this did not provide an immediate solution, since a ruling could not be expected for several years.

Hungary further exacerbated the situation in October 1993 by declaring that it would begin dismantling the construction that had been completed earlier on its part of the original project. Slovakia objected to this, arguing that Hungary must await the ICJ's ruling on the entire dispute. Slovakia also announced its intention to complete the diversion of the river, and to put its power plant at Gabcikovo into full operation.

The judgment on this dispute by the International Court of Justice left the resolution of the Gabcikovo-Nagymoros project in doubt. In September 1997 the court ruled that both Hungary and (Czecho-)Slovakia violated certain provisions of the 1977 treaty. It called on Slovakia and Hungary to negotiate in good faith to find a means to achieve the objectives of the treaty, while taking into account environmental and other concerns, and it called on each side to compensate the other for the consequences of their treaty violations.[52] How the two states would respond to the ICJ's ruling in the long run remains uncertain.

Second, resolving historical questions about the Hungarian-Slovak border proved to be an obstacle to smooth relations between these states. Despite their limited initial interest in cooperation with each other following the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, the new governments of East-Central Europe realized that cooperation with each other was a necessary prerequisite to the coveted membership in Western institutions. This led, in February 1991, to the establishment of the Visegrad Triangle as a loose consulting group including Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia.[53] Additionally, the East European states continued the Soviet practice of signing bilateral treaties as the basis for friendly relations.

The new Hungarian government, however, was slow to sign treaties with several of its neighbors. There were two complicating factors: Hungary's desire to include regard for minority rights in these treaties, meaning the ethnic Hungarian minority outside its borders, and its neighbors' insistence that Hungary renounce any territorial claims. Hungary had previously signed a bilateral treaty with Ukraine that included both of these provisions. Yet the Hungarian government demurred from offering a formal guarantee of the present borders to other states, absent the minority clauses it favored. Slovakia and Romania, the two states with substantial Hungarian minorities, rejected the codification of minority rights in such a treaty. Slovakia's Prime Minister Meciar argued that individual rights were sufficient and group rights immaterial under European law.[54]

This stalemate lasted until March 1995, when a bilateral Hungarian-Slovak treaty on Good Neighborly Relations and Friendly Cooperation was finally signed. Slovakia did not formally ratify the treaty until March 1996, and it only did so after adding a unilateral declaration that this treaty did not provide for "collective" autonomy for Slovakia's ethnic Hungarians, since the formal treaty language had stipulated that the Hungarian minority as a "community" be protected.[55] Budapest has continued to support the autonomy of minority communities outside its borders "in accordance with European practice," though it has not pressed either Slovakia or other neighboring states to grant autonomy.

Critical to even the partial resolution of the minority issue between Hungary and Slovakia was the change in government in Hungary in the summer of 1994, which led to a shift in policy priorities. Under Prime Minister Gyula Horn, Hungary gave good relations with its neighbors greater precedence than protection of the Hungarian minority abroad. This was a marked shift from the preceding Antall government's position.[56]

Clearly, the border issue was entangled with the third source of friction between Hungary and Slovakia: the Slovak government's treatment of its ethnic Hungarian minority. Several factors have exacerbated tensions over the Hungarian minority, including historical resentment and anxiety, Hungarian government statements, the rise of nationalism in Slovakia, and the Slovak leadership's willingness to both fuel and exploit this nationalism for its own purposes.

Historical resentment and anxieties exist on both sides. Slovaks resent the history of Hungarian rule, which they considered (with some justification) repressive and assimilationist.[57] More recently, Slovakia has feared the loss of the territory it gained at Hungary's expense in the Peace Treaty of Trianon in 1920. These fears were exacerbated by the statement of Hungary's first democratically elected prime minister, Jozef Antall, that he was "in spirit" the prime minister of 15 million Hungarians. The population of Hungary is only 10.5 million, and since the remaining 4.5 million Hungarians reside mostly in neighboring states, these states viewed this statement as an indication of revisionist aims.[58]

Hungary's efforts to codify minority rights in its bilateral treaties with neighboring states and its advocacy of autonomy for these communities while Antall was prime minister aggravated fears that it endorsed autonomy as a first step toward secession.[59] The Slovak leadership, in turn, heightened the concerns of both Hungary and its own Hungarian minority by passing laws establishing Slovak as the official state language. Though the first language law in the post-Communist state allowed for the use of minority languages in areas where a minority made up 20 percent or more of the population, this led to heated objections from the radical

nationalist Slovak parties. Subsequent laws to "protect" Slovak language and culture led to insistence on the Slovakization of foreign names and the rejection of bilingual street signs even in minority-dominated communities.[60]

The dispute between Hungary and Slovakia over Slovakia's treatment of its minority eased once Horn's government came to power in Hungary, due to Hungary's larger interest in European integration. The removal of Prime Minister Meciar from power in Slovakia in the spring of 1994 aided the improvement of relations with Hungary; the new government under Jozef Moravcik reiterated its interest in Western integration and, as a result, continued its consultations both with Hungary over bilateral relations and with European organizations over broader questions of the treatment of minorities.[61]

Treatment of the Hungarian minority remained doubtful, however. Meciar was reelected in October 1994, which both slowed Slovakia's economic reforms and kept nationalist sentiment as a central part of the political debate.[62] Indeed, a new Slovak language law, passed in November 1995, restricted the use of any language other than Slovak, in contradiction to both the Slovak constitution and to the 1990 language law that guaranteed minority language rights.[63] An additional source of tension was Meciar's proposal to redraw administrative units in Slovakia. The ethnic Hungarian minority viewed this as a clear attempt to weaken its political representation and voice, since the territory where most ethnic Hungarians reside would be parceled into several administrative districts, rather than one.[64]

Hungarian concerns were further exacerbated by Meciar's suggestion to Hungarian President Horn in September 1997 that the two countries initiate "voluntary" repatriation of their ethnic minorities. This suggestion raised particular concern because it appeared to be an effort to exploit nationalist sentiment as Slovakia began to prepare for elections in 1998.[65]

Though the problems between the Slovak government and the ethnic Hungarian minority are quite real, it is important to remember that these have comprised only one of the political problems confronting Slovakia. Slovakia was not included in the first round of states invited to join either NATO or the EU in 1997, largely because of its poor democratic credentials. This lack of democratic credentials reflects the main cleavage in Slovak society, which is intra-Slovak, rather than Slovak-Hungarian. This cleavage is based on cultural, and especially urban-rural differences about the nature of the state, and it has far-reaching implications for the country's future. Will it choose Western values and standards, or continue to move, as it did under Meciar's leadership in the last few years, toward a more authoritarian model, either isolated in Europe or aligned with states to the east?[66]

Western Efforts to Decrease the Likelihood of Conflict

Western efforts to lessen the possibility of conflict in Slovakia fall into two broad categories: mediation and economic assistance. Two main groups have attempted to mediate in Slovakia: the Council of Europe, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, through its High Commissioner on National Minorities. In addition to these mediation efforts, several Western actors have offered technical assistance and aid to Slovakia to promote market reforms and democratization. One aim of these programs is to help stabilize the country politically and economically, which should ease tensions between minority groups.[67]

The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe established a series of assistance programs beginning in 1989, with the aim of promoting European integration and democratic security (meaning a pluralist, parliamentary democratic system), respect for human rights, and the rule of law. The two central goals of the assistance programs since their inception have been the consolidation and acceleration of democratic reform in Central and Eastern Europe, and the integration of these countries into European structures, especially the Council of Europe. Accordingly, the council has initiated programs in the areas of institution building, training of justices and lawyers, and grassroots democracy building. The Council of Europe has worked jointly with the European Commission (of the European Union) in some of these areas, particularly in its activities in Albania, the Baltic states, Russia, and Ukraine.[68]

Following the breakup of Czechoslovakia, the Hungarian government attempted to block Slovakia's inclusion in the Council of Europe until the latter guaranteed the rights of its ethnic Hungarian minority, in particular by accepting that minorities had the right to establish autonomous territorial units. This outraged Slovakia and caused friction between Hungary and the Czech Republic, since Hungary's Prime Minister Antall tried to enlist Prime Minister Klaus's support for Hungary's position in this effort. It also raised concern in the West because the Council of Europe wanted to admit the Czech Republic and Slovakia simultaneously, as the two successor states to Czechoslovakia.[69] This controversy led the secretary general of the Council of Europe to propose that, together with the CSCE, the council should help deal with the minority question through confidence-building measures and by appointing an ombudsman to monitor minority rights.[70] Slovakia was admitted to the Council of Europe along with the Czech Republic on June 29, 1993; the Hungarian delegation abstained from voting on its entry.[71]

Since then, the Council of Europe has conducted training programs and provided educational materials and documents on human rights, legal co-operation, and various aspects of civil society. It has also carried out study visits to examine the protection of the rights of minorities and Slovakia's adherence to international and bilateral agreements in this area.[72]

The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, now the OSCE) established the post of High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) in 1992, in recognition that ethnic conflict had become a major cause of violence and potential violence in Europe. The HCNM's function is to identify incipient ethnic tensions and warn the OSCE about potential conflicts, and to try to attenuate them before they result in conflict; he is "an instrument of conflict prevention at the earliest possible stage."[73] The HCNM operates independently, with the aim of promoting dialogue and cooperation, and finding compromises acceptable to all parties in a potential conflict. Particularly important for the HCNM's mission is the guarantee of confidentiality surrounding his efforts. This is intended to facilitate compromise between groups that might not be willing to show flexibility in more public statements.

The HCNM became involved in Slovakia when it appeared that regular third-party involvement could be a useful confidence-building measure between Hungarians and Slovakians in Slovakia, and to defuse tension with neighboring Hungary. A team of experts was established in 1993 to analyze impartially the situation of Hungarians in Slovakia and Slovakians in Hungary, based on CSCE (OSCE) principles. The experts were appointed for a two-year period, with the right to conduct up to four study visits to both countries. Following these visits, the experts submitted advice and recommendations to the HCNM, who passed this information on to the governments of Slovakia and Hungary in the form he considered to be appropriate. This advice was nonbinding.[74] The expert team paid four visits to Slovakia and Hungary between October 1993 and June 1995, and the HCNM, Max van der Stoel, also visited Slovakia to consult with the Slovak government and members of the Hungarian minority on the government's planned administrative reforms.

The team's investigations varied over time, as it examined planned administrative reforms and their consequences for the Hungarian minority; education issues such as the question of instruction in the Slovak language in Hungarian schools, training Hungarian teachers, and the creation of alternative bilingual education; the adoption of laws on bilingual road signs; the development of instruments of dialogue between the Slovak majority and the Hungarian minority; the government's cultural policy, especially

the principles of the proposed Slovak language law; and the ratification of a Slovak-Hungarian treaty.[75] In his official recommendations to the governments of Slovakia and Hungary, the HCNM frequently cited international standards that these governments had agreed to uphold, and suggested further consultations on legislative drafts with both the Council of Europe and the OSCE, and with members of the minority communities.[76]

Slovakia's response to the mediation efforts of both the Council of Europe and the OSCE has been mixed. As noted above, the Slovak language law passed in November 1995 left the legality of minority languages, previously protected, in doubt. Both the European Commission and the HCNM continue to urge the Slovak government to pass a law protecting the use of minority languages, pointing out both that Slovakia agreed to European standards of minority rights, and that its efforts to join the EU will be damaged by its failure to submit a minority language law.[77] That these efforts have had some effect is clear from statements by Slovak officials that a minority language law is under preparation. The main obstacle to this legislation was the government of Prime Minister Meciar, which used language as an instrument to promote Slovak national identity. This was part of the government's nationalist cultural orientation, and its less than democratic approach to opposition groups of all sorts within Slovakia.[78] Ironically, the fact that the government restricted the free press and attempted to oversee interpretations of Slovak culture by controlling the Slovak National Theater, among other things, meant that the Hungarian minority could not feel singled out by the government for mistreatment on the basis of nationality. Yet this was hardly a long-term solution, and Western mediation efforts are likely to continue.

The European Union's Phare Program

The aims of the Phare program are to "build a larger family of democratic nations" in Europe. By providing training in a variety of areas such as private sector development, infrastructure, agricultural restructuring, and institutional reform, the Phare program aims to support both economic restructuring and the transition to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe.[79] In the long run, this should speed these countries in their goal of joining the European Union. It is also intended to help ensure that they sustain stable pluralist political systems in the interim, which is in the EU's interest.

American Aid to Slovakia

American aid to Slovakia has been distributed through three separate programs: the Support for East European Development (SEED) assis-

tance program, the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, and the Warsaw Initiative, or Partnership for Peace (PFP) funding. Each program has distinct aims, though all intend to promote stability and democratization in Slovakia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The SEED program, initiated throughout Central and Eastern Europe in January 1992, is meant to help the Slovak republic create a functioning market democracy; to promote Slovakia's good relations with its neighbors and integration with Euro-Atlantic political and security organizations; and to encourage it to promote responsible export and nonproliferation policies, given its substantial arms industry.[80]

The objectives of IMET are to bring military justice systems into agreement with international human rights norms; to expand understanding of key elements of the American democratic system, including the judicial system, the two-party system, the role played by a free press, unions, and educational institutions; to improve civil-military relations in participant countries; and to help shape existing civil-military systems to suit a country's particular circumstances.[81] Though it has come to be associated with NATO expansion, the PFP was originally intended as a mechanism to put off discussion about possible expansion of the alliance, while at the same time deepening political and military ties between NATO and the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Its activities include joint exercises between NATO and partner countries, discussion of issues such as civilian defense oversight and military budgets, and planning for inter-operability of military equipment between NATO and PFP countries. The PFP remains distinct from the issue of NATO enlargement, and will continue, since its aim of ensuring continued cooperation and stability in the region continues to be pertinent.[82] Moreover, NATO spokesmen insist that the first group of states invited to join in 1997 will not be the last, so the PFP remains crucial as a mechanism for helping other states achieve the attributes of democracy and stability viewed as necessary for NATO membership.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) was created after the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, to aid in the transition to market economies in these states (and later the former Soviet Union) by investing in projects in the region, and thereby encouraging private banks and businesses to do so as well. It has concentrated on support for private-sector projects, or equity investments in individual companies that are either in the process of privatizing or are restructuring after privatization, in the case of voucher privatization. The EBRD was active in

Czechoslovakia prior to its collapse, and the projects it had underway were continued once the country split. Since then, the EBRD has granted loans and funded investments in twenty projects in Slovakia.

The World Bank

Slovakia joined the World Bank and the International Development Association (IDA) in January 1993, after the breakup of Czechoslovakia. It received a portion of the structural adjustment loans that the bank had allocated for Czechoslovakia, and has received some assistance through the bank's Global Environment Facility (GEF) to phase out ozone-depleting substances and to protect biodiversity.

Costs of Conflict Prevention to International Actors

Costs to outside actors include international organizations' efforts to mediate disputes between Slovakia and Hungary as well as between the Slovak government and the ethnic Hungarian minority in Slovakia, and aid and assistance to promote economic and political restructuring in Slovakia after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia (see table 8.1).

Council of Europe Costs

The Council of Europe's expenditures in Slovakia cover its support for assistance and cooperation programs. The total budget for its 1996 assistance programs to Central and Eastern Europe was estimated at 70 million French francs, or $12,287,000; of this, roughly 1 million French francs, or $175,530, was allocated for programs in Slovakia.[83] A similar sum was appropriated for 1997.[84] Assuming that roughly equal funding was allocated from 1993 to 1995 for programs in Slovakia, the Council of Eu-

TABLE 8.1
Slovakia: Mediation Costs ($U.S. Millions)

Council of Europe	1.05
OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities	0.75
TOTAL	**1.80**

Sources: Assistance with the Development and Consolidation of Democratic Security: Cooperation and Assistance Programmes with Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Annual Report 1996 (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1997), 149, 175. Max van der Stoel, "The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities," *OSCE ODIHR Bulletin,* 3 no. 3 (1995), 40–41.

rope's total expenses for mediation and education in Slovakia would be about $1 million for this six-year period.

Costs of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

The OSCE budgeted roughly $1 million to the High Commissioner on National Minorities in FY1997 to cover management, travel for the commissioner, and for reporting to the OSCE headquarters in Vienna. The HCNM's activities in Slovakia presumably are included in the accounting for each of these categories.[85] The HCNM's activities in Slovakia are linked with those in Hungary, where he is monitoring the Slovak minority. These two are among twelve situations that the HCNM was monitoring in 1995.[86] Assuming that the HCNM's budget was allotted in equal portions to each project, this means that two-twelfths of the budget would go to the Slovak-Hungarian projects.[87] Thus, roughly $167,000 would be available to the HCNM for work in Slovakia and Hungary in FY1997.

Since the HCNM's mediation efforts began in late 1993, we can assume it incurred roughly similar costs in 1994, 1995, and 1996, and approximately half of these costs in 1993. Thus, total expenses by the HCNM for mediation between Slovakia and Hungary can be estimated at $750,000.

Aid and Assistance Costs

From 1990 to 1994, the European Union's Phare program allocated 80 million ECUs, or $92.64 million, to projects in Slovakia, out of a total expenditure of 4,248.5 million ECUs.[88] Calculating from its overall budget for 1995 of 964 million ECUs, expenditure in Slovakia at a similar ratio of the total would equal 18.15 million ECUs in FY1995, or about $21 million.[89] With estimated overall expenditures in 1996 of 1,037 million ECUs, the expenditure for Slovakia would be 19.5 million ECUs, or $22.6 million. Total Phare expenditures from 1990 through 1997, then, are about $136.3 million.

American aid costs include SEED money, IMET, and the PFP program. In FY1995, the SEED money allocation to Slovakia was $27,334,000; the estimate for FY1996 was $16 million, and the projected estimate for FY 1997 was $15 million.[90] IMET expenditures in Slovakia were $253,000 in FY1995; they were estimated at $530,000 in FY1996, with $600,000 requested for FY1997. Funding for Slovakia under the PFP program was $3,550,000 in FY1996, and is projected at $6 million for FY1997; no expenditure was made in this area in 1995.[91] Total American aid to Slovakia in these areas, then, is $69,267,000.

By the end of 1996, EBRD had allocated $550 million, cumulatively from 1991, to projects in Slovakia. Eighty-seven percent of this funding

went to private-sector projects.[92] Slovakia also received commitments totaling $135 million from the World Bank after Czechoslovakia dissolved (see table 8.2).[93]

Estimated Costs of Conflict

The absence of violent conflict in Slovakia, or between Slovakia and Hungary, makes it impossible to compare actual costs of a war there, or of international intervention should this have become necessary. Yet it is possible to approximate the costs of either a peacekeeping operation or an intervention following a full-scale war in the region, based on the costs of similar operations undertaken elsewhere in this region.

The population of Slovakia is 5.3 million; the ethnic Hungarian minority is 580,000, or about 11 percent of the total population.[94] Ethnic Hungarians make up 90 percent of the population in the south and southeastern parts of the state where they live. The total population in this region, the area that would require policing in the event of any external involvement, is then approximately 644,000.

Estimated Costs of Peacekeeping

A peacekeeping operation in Slovakia would probably be similar in structure to the peacekeeping effort undertaken by the United Nations in Macedonia, UNPREDEP. The population of Macedonia is about 2 million.[95] The forces involved in UNPREDEP include 1,106 troops, 35 military observers, and 26 civilian police. The estimated cost of this peacekeeping operation was $38 million in 1995, and $50 million in 1996;[96] over four years, its cost has been estimated at $204 million.[97]

The population of the predominantly ethnic Hungarian region of Slo-

TABLE 8.2
Slovakia: Aid and Assistance Costs ($U.S. Millions)

Phare	136.27
American Aid	69.27
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	550.00
World Bank	135.00
TOTAL	**890.54**

Sources: Slovak Republic: Country Overview, available at www.worldbank.org/html/etrdr/offrep/eca/svkcb.htm; *What Is Phare? A European Union Initiative for Economic Integration with Central and Eastern European Countries* (Brussels: European Commission, 1996). U.S. Department of State, *Congressional Presentation for Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 1997* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Information Service, 1996), 309.

vakia is roughly one-third of Macedonia's population. We can assume that only the region with a substantial minority, near the border with Hungary, would need to be patrolled by a peacekeeping mission if such an operation were undertaken, rather than the entire Slovak state. Therefore, an observer force for this region would be about one-half to one-third the size of that necessary for Macedonia; the cost (given higher start–up costs than maintenance) would be about half that of expenditures in Macedonia, or $25 million per year.

The Costs of Intervention after the Outbreak of Conflict

Given geographic and cultural similarities, the UN peacekeeping operation in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) is probably comparable to what would be necessary in southern and southeastern Slovakia to restore and maintain the peace if a violent conflict broke out within the predominantly ethnic Hungarian region of Slovakia. UNTAES involved 4,481 troops, 99 military observers, and 257 civilian police, and cost an estimated $383.5 million over eighteen months.[98]

There are two possible models for internal policing (in terms of ratio of troops to population): low-level policing, such as the standard American police force in an urban area, and high-level policing, of the type conducted by British security forces in Northern Ireland. High-level policing, such as the Northern Ireland case, requires a ratio of 20 troops per thousand of population. For high-level policing, at a ratio of 20 per thousand, 12,893 officers would be required.[99] This suggests that the number of troops necessary to conduct an operation similar to UNTAES in the portion of Slovakia inhabited primarily by ethnic Hungarians would be about 12,900 total troops, observers, and military police. This force would be 2.58 times as large as the UNTAES force. Assuming comparable costs of introduction and maintenance, such a force would cost roughly 2.58 times as much, or $659 million per year. Both the Bosnian operation and UNTAES will continue (in some form) for a minimum of two years; thus, such an operation in southern Slovakia would cost the international community over $1 billion for two years (see table 8.3).

TABLE 8.3
Slovakia: Estimated Costs of a Conflict and Postconflict Intervention
($U.S. Billions)

Military policing	.66
Humanitarian costs	.60
TOTAL	**1.26**

Humanitarian and refugee costs would raise this figure. The humanitarian costs incurred by a variety of UN agencies during the Bosnian operation were around $2 billion per year.[100] The costs of similar efforts in Slovakia, with about one-third the population of Bosnia, can be estimated at roughly one-third of this total, or $600 million per year. Refugee costs would also be significant, though primarily for Hungary and Slovakia itself; ethnic Hungarians would be likely to flee across the border to Hungary, while Slovaks seeking to avoid the conflict would be expected to emigrate internally. Estimates of the costs to these two countries are not available. But since private and nongovernmental organizations provided about $200 million to help address refugee costs to Germany and other states due to the violence in Bosnia, an additional $50–$100 million would probably be required to aid refugees in Hungary and Slovakia in the event of a conflict.[101]

Conclusions

Mediation in Slovakia has cost roughly $1.8 million. Additionally, Western organizations have spent about $890 million for both democratization assistance and investment in Slovakia to aid the shift to a market economy. This adds up to a cost of less than $1 billion spent by the international community over seven years to mediate internal and external disputes in Slovakia, to aid in economic reconstruction and development, and to promote democracy.

If the international community concluded that a preventive force in southeastern Slovakia was necessary to preclude the outbreak of conflict, this could cost roughly $25 million per year, a substantially higher figure than the total expenditure of $1.8 million on mediation over the last six years. Yet preventive peacekeeping would be far cheaper than intervention to quell a violent conflict in Slovakia, which could be expected to cost about $1.2 billion per year between military and humanitarian expenditures.

In the final analysis, this study illustrates that mediation efforts are not only far cheaper than prevention or intervention efforts, but they have probably played a useful role in preventing tensions from escalating into conflict in Slovakia, or between Slovakia and Hungary. Yet it must be noted that mediation was beneficial in this case because of the overriding interest both Hungary and Slovakia have in joining Western institutions. This preoccupation far outweighs issues that might otherwise have aggravated relations between these two states; indeed, Slovakia's continued interest in the EU and NATO is especially telling, since it was not part of the first group of states invited to join either organization. Moreover, this

preoccupation with the West has had a strong influence on the behavior of both states, though this is more apparent in Hungary's case. Their interest in joining the West has abetted Western efforts to advocate an international standard for treatment of minorities, while at the same time ruling out the option of border revisions.

The implications of this are not necessarily promising for other cases, since the greater interest Slovakia and Hungary share in achieving Western standards results from their proximity to both NATO and the EU, and the realistic likelihood that they may join these institutions in the not-too-distant future. This geographic advantage is not easily transferable to other states.[102] Nonetheless, the absence of conflict in Slovakia, a state with a significant ethnic minority and a history of grievances between the majority and minority groups, suggests that it is worth considering what external inducements might be able to do to mitigate conflict elsewhere.[103] The combination of mediation plus the prospect of greater inclusion in economic and political organizations that would enable improvements in the quality of life in a given state may provide a useful model of conflict prevention in other regions.