CIVIL SOCIETY ENDANGERED: THE PERILS OF POST-COMMUNISM

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In June 1994, five years after the fall of the Berlin Wall symbolically ended the Communist hold on Eastern Europe, only a quarter of the eligible voters turned out for the local elections in Poland.[1] Elections in Hungary and the Czech Republic and referenda in Lithuania have been plagued by similarly low turnouts. Even in countries where voter turnout was high in the first post-Communist elections, the number of people who say they intend to cast ballots in upcoming elections has dropped, an indication of declining turnout.[2]

In typical American local elections only a one-third of the eligible voters participate, and recent national ballots have involved slightly over half of the potential electorate. By this standard, electoral participation in the post-Communist states of Central and Eastern Europe appears well within an acceptable range for stable democracy. But the United States government can draw upon a vast historical reservoir of systemic legitimacy. Fundamental constitutional principles are not at stake with each election. The nascent democracies of Eastern Europe, by contrast, do not have any similar foundation of legitimacy. Therefore public engagement is much more critical to their survival. Moreover, the low electorial turnout characteristic of the region is accompanied by disinterest in politics and a lack of faith in the efficacy of participation in public affairs.[3] When surveys conducted in 1992 and 1993 asked Hungarians if they felt that they could affect how the government runs things, only twenty to twenty-five percent responded positively. Only one-third of the Poles interviewed in the same survey agreed that voting would enable people to exert any influence.[4]

Once again, comparisons with long-established democracies such as the United States are misleading. Disaffection from politicians and political processes in the United States does not, on the whole, extend to systemic rejection. But in a fledgling state where the democratic system cannot be separated from the chief executive and specific organs of authority, such disinterest and alienation almost certainly presage an erosion of legitimacy. In a national poll conducted in Russia in June 1994, only 19 percent of the respondents considered the government "democratic," and 25 percent of the sample believed that Russia did not, in any case, need a democracy.[5] In surveys conducted in Eastern Europe in late 1993 and early 1994, at least half of those questioned in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slovakia preferred the old Communist regimes to the new political systems.[6] The elections of 1993, 1994, and 1995 returned post-Communist socialists to power in Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Estonia. Candidates who favored accommodation with Moscow emerged as clear victors in Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova. Even in the eastern *laender* of Germany--the territory of the former German Democratic Republic--erstwhile Communists have made a strong comeback.

Only the Czech Republic has a government that is both fully committed to free market economic principles and strongly supported by the electorate. More than any other East European public, Czechs have a largely positive and patient attitude toward the current leadership and policies. Eighty-one percent of Czechs questioned in 1992-93 felt that the "government needs time" to deal with the problems inherited from the Communists. By contrast only 63 percent of Bulgarians, 59 percent of Romanians, and 50 percent of Hungarians gave the same response.[7]

The portrait of political behavior in Eastern Europe painted by these statistics is neither comprehensive nor conclusive. It does, however, suggest a collapse of hope, trust, and confidence throughout the post-Communist states. Increasingly East European publics seem to suspect that the victories of 1989-91, in which they ousted Communist party leaders and in some cases regained long-lost sovereignty, were ephemeral. There is now a widespread perception that the present is no better, and may be substantially worse, than the past. Despite the fact that throughout the region industrial production and exports are rising while unemployment and inflation remain largely under control, there is a debilitating uncertainty about the domestic and international costs of the post-Communist transitions. The fears of people in Eastern Europe are equally divided between the shadow of internal economic or political turmoil and the ominous spectre of external threats, ranging from mass migration to military aggression. To many peace and prosperity seem threatened even before they are at hand.

Such sentiments ought to concern anyone who seeks democratic futures for post-authoritarian systems. Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, political scientists well-known for their work on transitions from authoritarianism, have observed that "the core principle of democracy is citizenship."[8] Indeed, it is axiomatic that democracy as we know it cannot exist without popular engagement in public life and a corresponding accountability of political leaders to the public. An alienated and distant public will leave the political

sphere to small cliques, groups, or classes.

Many who have written about democratic theory have stressed the importance of elite bargaining and the formation of pacts as key elements in obtaining support for democratic polities.[9] Such support is a necessary component of democracy building. But elites--whether defined by class, economic status, power attributes, or ideological criteria--cannot themselves engender popular rule. Although an accord among elites may often be necessary, it is never sufficient for the creation of democracy. And, unless we are willing to stand democracy on its head, legitimate authority at the top is possible only through endorsement by the bottom--all citizens through their votes and participation.

During the Communist period, intellectuals, workers, and others recognized the essential role of nongovernmental activity in moving political life toward the open, tolerant, and plural standards of democracy. Creation of a civil society was a goal of the dissidents who recognized the implacable hold of Communist parties on the formal institutions of power. Only by creating an alternative realm of civil society implanted ". . . in the very womb" of Communist regimes and divorced from those in power could the ferment of democracy find expression. This expansion of the public political realm was successful, providing the principal impetus for the departure, in most cases peacefully, of Communist rulers.[10]

Now the post-authoritarian states exhibit all of the hallmarks of civil society--"independent media, trade unions, professional bodies, consumer associations, religious organizations, charitable bodies, [and] environmental groups."[11] Yet there is a discomfiting dichotomy between political and economic development. In countries such as Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, where civil society began earliest and was most active, participation in elections is lower, public cynicism higher, and trust or confidence in parliament and political parties is minimal. These developments contrast sharply with the positive economic news from Poland, the ample foreign investment in Hungary, and the considerable diplomatic attention devoted to both by the West.

In the Czech Republic, an intriguing debate between conservative Prime Minister Václav Klaus and President Václav Havel began in the spring of 1994.[12] Klaus, who advocates an entirely individual value structure for citizenship, publicly rejected Havel's belief that citizenship requires a collective conscience--a commitment to the larger society and its well-being. This debate, carried out in print and broadcast media, raised an issue that may be critical to the political future of Eastern Europe. Much like the eighteenth-century English philosopher John Locke, Klaus believes that democracy and the free market are inseparable. He maintains that it is property and the profit motive that give individuals a vested interest in participating in the public political sphere. Therefore he sees no need for non-government organizations (NGOs), whose role is to gather and channel citizen demands to the state. In his opinion, individual interests, pursued via profit and the market, are the best guides for citizenship.

Havel, on the other hand, believes that without NGOs citizens will become alienated from the state and political leaders. Voting will be reduced to a formal exercise, and, as a result, representation will no longer be an adequate substitute for direct involvement. Havel is convinced that group and collective interests, channeled to the state through NGOs, bring general, rather than narrow, interests into political life.

At issue is the nature of the relationship between democracy and the market. In Prague, where Charter '77 epitomized civil society in opposition to authoritarian rule, those who opposed Communist repression are now divided over how to create and maintain a public political sphere. Klaus and Havel agree that citizenship in a democracy requires a participatory culture, but they disagree entirely on how to achieve it. Klaus believes that the market provides all that is needed for citizens to become engaged. Havel is equally convinced that citizen empowerment rests on something more than the chance to make a profit and own property. That something has been described as a voice for the voiceless.[13] The poignancy of the Klaus-Havel debate is heightened by the irony that countries such as Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Albania, where civil society was most constrained in the Communist era, have experienced voter turnouts that are consistently higher than those of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Moreover, even though dissatisfaction with current governments in these countries may be widespread, political interest, personal efficacy, and confidence in at least some institutions such as the presidency have remained strong.

These observations raise two important questions. What enables a society to develop and maintain an active public political sphere in which those holding state power are held accountable to the citizenry? What conditions endanger such a participatory culture and threaten public withdrawal, leaving political life to extremists and demagogues?

Civil Society, the Participatory Culture, and Public Legitimation

In many parts of the world, but particularly since 1989 in Eastern Europe, the promise of democracy has been coupled with a corresponding danger of disorder. The direction taken by post-authoritarian transitions is not a matter of political fate. They will become stable democracies only to the degree that an enlarged public political sphere is created and the norms of a participatory culture firmly and generally accepted.

Political elites are central to the democratic transitions. Juan Linz is certainly correct when he notes that leadership is necessary to convince people of the benefits to be gained from a plural, tolerant, and peacefully competitive system, and the need to be patient while expecting such benefits.[14] But elites cannot craft democracies based on negotiated pacts in isolation from the people they govern. The expansion of a public political sphere is a fundamental systemic change that can never be engineered from the top down.[15] Public legitimation and the accountability of those in power must often be generated outside electoral mechanisms, judicial procedures, or the bureaucracy. Even when those institutions

and processes are still controlled by an authoritarian clique, party, or junta, the expansion of civil society is a harbinger of an expanded public political sphere. A "silent revolution" can and did occur incrementally throughout Europe's Communist states, with disaffection spreading and non-governmental organizations providing socioeconomic and even political alternatives to the *nomenklatura.*[16]

Other views of the democratic transition have quite different emphases. Samuel Huntington is among those who have argued for a procedural definition of democracy based upon regularized, competitive elections.[17] Structures and processes are not, however, self-generating. Although the presence of competitive elections, functioning parliaments, and other accouterments may signal democracy, they do not create it. The transformation of political life away from one-party authoritarianism toward a plural, participatory democracy ultimately depends on citizenship. And citizenship is an artifact of culture comprised of attitudes, norms, and expectations that have been molded by historical experience. It is not a matter of procedure or institutional roles. As the public political realm expands beyond intra-party and ideological limitations, citizens become "legitimators," expecting responsive political institutions and leaders. In Eastern Europe, these expectations began to grow long before 1989, and a participatory citizenry had started to develop well ahead of the first free elections.[18]

Unfortunately, we neither understand this process well nor know how to prevent a weakening of public legitimation. As citizens' expectations that their problems will be solved and their needs met exceed the capacities of the new governments, an erosion of citizen trust in institutions and leaders can begin anew. This erosion of trust invariably leads to a deliberate abandonment of the public sphere. Citizens cease to vote, ignore political events, and turn away from other associational activities. This behavior raises serious questions. What do citizens want, need, and expect from post-authoritarian systems? What are the greatest dangers to the fragile legitimacy bequeathed to the first generation of post-Communist governments? What can be done to mitigate those perils and thereby avoid public detachment from, or even abandonment of, the post-authoritarian public sphere?

We have no a priori answers to these questions. Yet, as many East Europeans now seem willing to relinquish plural, competitive democracies for the assurances of renewed authoritarianism and are more responsive to demagogic appeals than to the responsibilities of participating themselves, it is becoming more urgent that these answers be found. Increasing public distrust of new politicians, doubt about their policies, and concern regarding the pace and direction of change are all too evident from public opinion polls and electoral results in post-Communist Europe.[19] Former Communists, right-wing extremists, and others with undemocratic political views have gained or regained strength, and it is no longer preordained that those who led movements to oust the Communists will have long political careers.

Why are East Europeans, who so recently gained a chance for renewed plural and competitive systems, now turning away from change in disconcertingly large numbers and,

sometimes, toward the enemies of pluralism and tolerance? One hypothesis is that countries where Communist repression lasted longest or was most severe will have the greatest difficulty making the transition to democracy. But variations in Communist pasts do not seem to explain much about the post-Communist present. In Hungary, which experienced decades of market liberalization in the form of the so-called goulash Communism, and in Bulgaria, which was rigidly governed by the Todor Zhivkov dictatorship, many voters have supported a slowdown of the economic transition, and public trust in the army has outstripped confidence in parliament, parties, or political leaders.

Another hypothesis is based on supposed cultural differences between the Roman Catholic and Protestant West and the Orthodox Christian and Muslim East. According to this line of reasoning, only Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, Slovakia, and the Baltic states would be able to maintain the civil societies that give rise to public legitimation. But Lithuania was the first to reelect Communists, and socialists have now triumphed in Poland and Hungary. In Slovakia the left-wing nationalism of Vladimír Mečiar has returned with a vengeance, while the old Slovene *nomenklatura* remains intact. In terms of citizen participation, only the Czechs and Slovaks continue to match the Balkan states in voter turnout or political interest.

The troublesome prognosis for post-Communist proto-democracies must be explained by other factors. History and culture do not tell us why political behavior varies in the ways revealed by empirical data. It is true that Czechoslovakia's experience with democracy in the interwar period and the Czech Lands' economic and cultural integration with the West prior to Communist domination eased the Czech transition before and after 1989. These factors may have given the Czech Republic an edge over other post-Communist states, but they were neither absolute--that is, fully present in Czech Lands, entirely absent elsewhere--nor powerful. If, for example, historical experience with democracy or cultural traits were determinative, why did the Czechs not fight in 1968 as the Hungarians did in 1956? And why, in contrast to Hungary's emergent market economy and Poland's Solidarity, did most Czechs and Slovaks quietly accept economic centralization and party control until 1989?

Nor do other variables, such as ethnic composition or rate of economic growth, provide much of an explanation. Poland, a largely homogeneous country with a growing economy, has lower participation rates and more public disaffection from political life than does Romania, a rather heterogeneous state with continuing economic troubles. Unless one is prepared to accept the counterintuitive notion that fewer ethnic frictions and an improving economy are reasons to be politically dissatisfied, these commonly identified factors do not provide explanations.

A third hypothesis posits that the pace of economic change, particularly change that is perceived as too fast--commonly described as "all shock, no therapy"--affects popular commitment to democratic processes. Indeed, in surveys of East European publics conducted in 1993 and 1994, more than half of the respondents approved of the old, state-owned and centralized economic system. On average only 39 percent of those questioned

favored the new, market-oriented systems.[20] This trend was particularly pronounced in Bulgaria, Slovakia, and the post-Soviet states of Belarus and Ukraine. In those countries, respondents favored the socialist economy over the present system by a margin of two-to-one.[21] It appears that once a threshold of pain is crossed, no refinements in electoral procedure, due process, or pluralization of the media can compensate for diminished living standards.

The extent of the social and political costs of accelerating a broad range of market-oriented reforms--ending centralized control of wages and prices, selling off state property, establishing full convertibility of the national currency, and other steps--are only now being assessed. By late 1994, World Bank analyses acknowledged that the "total costs of transition [have been] higher than expected" and that:

> ...nobody expected the massive decline (ranging from 10 to 40 percent between 1987 and 1993) of measured GDP in the transition economies, which dwarfed in its proportion the output and income loss of the United States and Germany during the Great Depression.[22]

The collapse of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been accompanied by ". . . unemployment . . . [that is] not only massive but also permanent," the . . . rapid enrichment of the few and the impoverishment of many," and a sharp decline in consumption of basic foodstuffs.[23]

Many in the West assume that there is an intimate connection between democracy and free markets. A rapid transition to private ownership and a withdrawal of the state from economic decision making are believed to promote a sense of individual responsibility and entrepreneurial initiative. The right to own and to profit from ownership, plus the centrality of these rights to democratic republics, is thoroughly embedded in the eighteenth and nineteenth century liberalism that propelled early American political thought. But today "free-market-democracy" is contorted into a single expression and enforced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other multilateral institutions that can advance, delay, or withhold essential capital. The consequence of such Western aid has been to foster greater debt and heightened public antagonism toward such institutions. And it is no wonder because if, as one international study found, 85 percent of committed Western financial assistance is "debt-creating," then the benefits of assistance received today may be negated by the repayment burden that they impose on the next generation.[24]

Now even Central and East European politicians who eschew extremist views have adopted rhetoric filled with doubt and derision regarding force-fed, free-market transitions. In late May 1995, Hungarian prime minister Gyula Horn lashed out at international financial institutions that "do not pay proper attention to the predicament of the Central and East European region." At about the same time, a debate about the Polish government's international economic policy erupted in the *Sejm* (the lower house of parliament). Former prime minister Waldemar Pawlak was particularly vehement in decrying Poland's pro-

Europe policy, which he said had become an ". . . ideology of servility toward the wealthy capitalist world."[25]

In the United States and Western Europe, the development of capitalism and the expansion of democracy was an evolutionary process spread over two centuries. This process has been vastly accelerated in the post-authoritarian states of Eastern Europe, leading some economists from the region to doubt that the transition is yielding anything more than a "mutant capitalism," with remnants of state ownership resting awkwardly beneath and alongside an entrepreneurial *nomenklatura* composed of the former elites recast as cellular phone-equipped businessmen.[26]

It is possible that despite the industrial surge it may create, the exports it might generate, or the Mercedes dealerships that it could spawn, the forced-march toward a free market economy will foster a pervasive sense of insecurity. Such insecurity may have a deleterious effect on citizen participation, commitment to tenets of tolerance, pluralism, competition, and other core elements of democratic citizenship. Indeed, mounting empirical evidence suggests that the commitment to participatory democracy suffers most in conditions of insecurity. Increasing disparities in income, particularly in situations where drastic changes that could worsen conditions are being rapidly pursued, are a major source of insecurity. Numerous studies have shown that income inequality has a strongly negative effect on democratization.[27] In other words, highly income-unequal societies are not likely to spawn or coexist with democracy.

Such inequality is rapidly rising in post-Communist Europe. Poverty, particularly among those with jobs, has increased greatly--up 17 percent in the Balkans and Poland since 1989. World Bank analyses indicate that the transitional economies of Eastern Europe are experiencing a broad expansion of poverty coupled with an accelerated accumulation of wealth in a narrow entrepreneurial and professional stratum. In the succinct assessment of the World Bank, "inequality increased while overall income sank," thereby contributing almost equally to the increase in poverty.[28] With the exception of the Czech Republic, all post-Communist countries have seen impoverishment increase ". . . so much that it could not be compensated by the benefits of a balanced budget, the reduction of waste, and second economy employment. . . ."[29]

Limited but highly suggestive opinion data from Eastern Europe can now be added to these broadly comparative findings. Support for democratic principles--belief in the value of competitive elections, equal justice, and freedom to criticize the government--has been found to be positively associated with optimism about personal finances or general systemic optimism.[30] Quite apart from academic studies, no one who has recently visited Warsaw, Sofia, or other East European capitals could have failed to notice the signs of wealth. But the principal beneficiaries of this wealth are the "former activists in Communist parties and young-Communist organizations . . . who received excellent, often Western, educations as rewards for their loyalties." These "red managers" first tried out "various trading and stock companies" and later "created their own firms and joint ventures." It is they who "effectively

control power at every level."[31]

Recent comparative research has concluded that widespread public support for gradual change is highly important to a state's prognosis for democratic development.[32] Rapid, externally-enforced marketization, accompanied by at least a temporary surge in income inequality, will heighten insecurity while conflicting with the preference for gradual change. In addition the countries of Eastern Europe are confronting new perils from within, such as "freedom of action [that] has turned into defenselessness against criminals"[33] and inter-ethnic tensions or conflict, as well as external threats ranging from mass migration to direct attack. The boasts of Vladimir Zhirinovsky, for example, may not be taken entirely seriously in the West, but they nevertheless have had an impact on Poles, Romanians, and others whose states have been threatened.

If citizen involvement in the public political sphere is weakened by a heightened sense of insecurity brought on by unrelenting and wrenching internal changes and external threats, then the future of the nascent democracies of Eastern Europe is security dependent. This means that it may be necessary to reassess the emphasis on institutions and processes characteristic of Western democracies. In stressing laws protecting private property, entrepreneurial skills, parliamentary and judicial professionalism, and the techniques of effective political campaigning, the West may be overlooking the more fundamental need for socioeconomic and physical security that quite possibly motivates participation in and commitment to political systems in Eastern Europe.

Post-authoritarian countries can find peace and prosperity in democratic, free market economies. But democracy cannot exist where the public political sphere is weak or collapsing. Without a participatory ethos, government is neither responsive nor accountable to citizens. Yet it is likely that publics will turn away from the demands being placed upon them by the transition if the costs in terms of unemployment, inflation, crime, and political turmoil are perceived to be too high. Without reassurance about the capacity of fledgling democracies to provide security, group and individual political behavior may not be sufficiently mature to cement the victory over authoritarianism required to maintain a robust public political sphere. If faltering post-authoritarian citizenship is most strongly tied to the popular fears that the enemies of democracy capitalize upon, then the changes that the West so eagerly promotes must be linked much more clearly to assurances and guarantees for safety and well-being. If civil society and citizenship are not nurtured, then no East European fledgling democracy will survive the turn of the century.

On Democratization Policy

Focusing on the citizenry rather than on institutions or processes implies a greater concern for the performance of a system in delivering political goods of central importance to individuals and their families--peace, security, and justice, for example.[34] This view of post-authoritarian transitions is derived from the "bottom up," looking first at what matters

most to the most people. Western funding agencies have strongly supported privatization; strengthened the professionalism of new parliaments, judiciaries, parties, and trade unions; and improved electoral and legislative processes.[35] In doing so, they have sought to train and to impart a model, not to understand local conditions. To the extent that the role of citizens in un-making authoritarianism and making democracy has been discussed, it has been assumed that Western support and encouragement were essential.

A very different interpretation may be warranted. Citizens within Communist states brought an end to Communist regimes through their disaffection, noncompliance, and ultimately through revolution, either velvet or violent. Yet Western supporters of democratization activities continue to view their activities as assistance programs in which Western experience is taught or imparted. All too often, privatization and democratization programs fail to acknowledge the indigenous capacity of East Europeans--as individuals acting alone or in association with one another--to insist on changes that call leaders to account and ensure adherence to the tenets of democracy.

According to one view, Communism was defeated by Western military and political resolve and the support for dissidents offered by the West. Now the West must win the peace. This view errs, however, by making policies from Washington or Brussels appear to be more important than the behavior and values of the East Europeans themselves. In the case of the United States, centralizing decision making in Washington has "complicated coordination and implementation of policy," while the American antipathy toward routing aid through governments has meant that coordination with host governments has been minimal.[36] But fundamental socioeconomic and political changes cannot be generated or consummated through external manipulation. The linchpin of democratic change is unquestionably an enlarged participation and heightened role for the populace, developing citizenship where the population was previously confined to the role of subjects.

In my view, Western officials must move decisively away from the notion that a successful democratic transition can be merely transferred or transplanted and toward an exploration of democracy's dependence on an indigenous generation of citizenship. They must ask new questions such as what caused an expansion of the public political sphere so powerful that one-party Leninist regimes were toppled with massive street demonstrations, not civil war. Conversely, they must explore the factors that endanger the participatory ethos. Over the past five years, the expansion of the public political sphere that helped bring about the demise of Communist regimes has become fragile, weakening the accountability of politicians far too quickly for the West to be sanguine about prospects for plural, competitive politics.

The answers may lie in an analysis of socioeconomic and external security. Where threats are perceived to exceed capacities to meet them, there is insecurity. Where people are insecure, democracy is unlikely to take root. If post-authoritarian systems must, by virtue of international pressure, accelerate transformations to the point that income inequality rises and a desire for gradual change is violated, only demagogues will benefit.

The goal of the Western democracies is successful transition to free markets and democratic systems in Eastern Europe, not rapid change. Accepting slower socioeconomic change, expanding safety nets, eliminating foreign debts accumulated by the Communist dictatorships, and opening Western markets to the East are minimal steps by which to reduce domestically generated threats. Retargeting Western support for post-authoritarian transitions toward enhancing the indigenous public political sphere is also essential.

The United States began to undertake such a reorientation in 1994 with the U.S. Agency for International Development's Democracy Network Program.[37] With funding of only $30 million, this initiative will not be sufficient to turn the tide, and the money could easily be squandered by awarding grants to U.S.-based organizations that spend much of the funds maintaining their own staff and overhead.[38] But the concept is new and the emphasis appropriate. Helping East European NGOs promote democracy, economic growth, environmental protection, and the development and maintenance of social safety nets by means of this small endeavor may slow the deterioration of civil society. But the weakening of the public political sphere will continue to undermine democratic transitions until populations sense a heightened capacity to influence policy, to hold leaders accountable, and to assure jobs and social peace.

It is also necessary to provide security at the international level. The West has erred greatly by failing to establish means to reduce threats to East European security. Now more than ever, this threat-rich and capacity-poor region requires not an extension of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), but the establishment of a robust regional collective security companion to it. Regional security needs will be best served through mechanisms for dispute arbitration, early-warning and observer missions, negotiation teams, and true peacekeeping forces in cases where there is a peace to keep. One very underfunded effort of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the High Commissioner for National Minorities (an office currently held by former Dutch foreign minister Max van der Stoel), exemplifies the enormous impact that such activities can have in reducing threats and averting conflict. Far more resources and political support for such endeavors, housed within a collective organization, will be the only means by which to provide external security for Eastern Europe. An extension of NATO will offer little or none of the threat reduction that the region so desperately needs.

Summary

Civil society begot an expanded public political realm and the dawn of public legitimation in Communist-ruled Europe. That achievement is now endangered by the costs of transition and external perils--threats that make people feel insecure, thereby undercutting their commitment to change and their patience with transition processes. Trying to protect themselves and their families from increasing insecurity, they withdraw from public life. Once that begins to happen, the political sphere is left to neo-authoritarians or to the people who inhabited prior regimes, reborn with different labels.

The political sphere can be supported only by reducing perceived socioeconomic and international threats. Domestic and international measures must be coupled with an assiduous effort to target Western support toward indigenous groups and citizens themselves. Spreading entrepreneurial activities, legislatures with computerized voting procedures, parties that produce superb television spots--these and other accouterments of democracy are meaningless unless governments provide fundamental political goods to citizens. Indeed, without a strong, vibrant public political realm where citizens act as legitimators, democracy will soon recede, and all-too-familiar authoritarianism will return with a vengeance.

NOTES

1. See "Low Turnout in Polish Local Elections," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Daily Report*, no. 115 (20 June 1994): 5.

2. In 1992, 77 percent of a Czech sample and 81 percent of a Slovak sample said that they would probably or certainly exercise the right to vote in national elections. In 1994 the Czech proportion had dropped to 70 percent, while among Slovaks it was 74 percent. Czech data from the Center for Empirical Research (STEM) in 1992 and the Institute of Public Opinion Research (1994); Slovak data in both years provided by the Slovak Statistical Office.

3. The coalescence between action and attitude, forming a composite political apathy, was observed in Polish political behavior of the late 1980s through 1990. See David Mason, Daniel Nelson, and Bohdan Szklarski, "Apathy and the Birth of Democracy: The Polish Struggle," *East European Politics and Societies* 5, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 205-33.

4. These results were among data released by the Paul Lazarsfeld Gesellschaft für Sozialforschung based in Vienna under the title *New Democracies Barometer* in mid-1994. These data were drawn from a survey of Bulgarian, Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Slovene, and Croatian citizens, using nationwide representative samples of 1,000 or more respondents. The sample totaled 11,087 people. Data collection was undertaken by institutes in the respective countries. The multinational survey was conducted from November 1993 through March 1994 and was funded by the Austrian Ministry for Science and Research and the Austrian National Bank.

5. As reported on the news program *Vesti* on Russian Television (16 August 1994) and summarized in "How Russians View Democracy," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, no. 157 (17 August 1994): 2.

6. Paul Lazarsfeld Gesellschaft, *New Democracies Barometer*, Figure 2, "Rating Political Regimes: Past, Present, Future."

7. Paul Lazarsfeld Gesellschaft, *New Democracies Barometer*, Figure 5, "Political Patience."

8. Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), chap. 2.

9. Of the many authors who stress elite negotiation and pact formation in democratization processes, some, such as Samuel Huntington, have long pointed out the dangers of mass political mobilization, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968). In the 1980s, Huntington continued to expect that political elites would be the principal determinant of democratic development. See his article, "Will More Countries Become Democratic?" *Political Quarterly* 99 (Spring 1984): 193-218. In his book, *To Craft Democracies* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), Giuseppe Di Palma goes much further, seeing the formation of pacts among elites to create mutual guarantees to live within a competitive system as essential for democratization.

10. Michael Ignatieff's review of Ernest Gellner's book, *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals* (London: Penguin, 1994), which appeared in *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 2 (March/April 1995): 128-36, includes a succinct and evocative portrait of East Europeans' underground civil societies:

> The philosophical study groups in basements and boiler rooms, the prayer meetings in church crypts, and the unofficial trade union meetings in bars and backrooms were seen as a civil society in embryo. Within those covert institutions came the education in liberty and the

liberating energies that led to 1989. In the revolutions of that year. . . civil society triumphed over the state.

I have explored the expansion of the public political realm in European Communist systems that led to the demise of Communist party rule in "The Rise of Public Legitimation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe" in Sabrina Ramet, ed., *Adaptation and Transformation in Communist and Post-Communist Systems* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1993), 11-49.

11. Javier Ruperez, Rapporteur, *Democratization in Eastern Europe: An Interim Report*, Draft General Report, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Civilian Affairs Committee (Brussels: NATO International Secretariat, May 1994), 6.

12. This debate was summarized in Jiří Pehe, "Civil Society at Issue in the Czech Republic," *RFE/RL East European Report* 3, no. 32 (19 August 1994).

13. The "Voice of the Voiceless" is, in fact, the name of an NGO in Zaire dedicated to opposing President Sese Seko Mobutu. It is led by Floribert Chebaya.

14. Juan Linz, "Transitions to Democracy," *Washington Monthly* 13 (Summer 1990).

15. Nelson, "The Rise of Public Legitimation," passim.

16. See, for example, Daniel N. Nelson, "The Diffusion of Non-Supportive Participatory Involvement in Eastern Europe," *Social Science Quarterly* 67, no. 13 (Winter 1986): 636-44.

17. In his book, *The Third Wave* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), chap. 1, Samuel Huntington argues for a procedural definition of democracy based on the presence of elections. Even the most "free and fair" elections, however, do not ensure that access to political candidacy will be available to all, that policies pursued by the victor will be guided by tolerance and the rule of law, or that the international behavior of the elected government will follow peaceful relations with neighbors. Democracy, in other words, cannot be disassociated from who is elected, why they are elected, and what they do once they are elected.

18. Nelson, "The Rise of Public Legitimation," discusses these developments in detail.

19. Trust in institutions, politicians, and policies of post-Communist systems is explored by Richard Rose, "Postcommunism and the Problem of Trust," *Journal of Democracy* 5, no. 3 (July 1994): 18-30.

20. Paul Lazarsfeld Gesellschaft, *New Democracies Barometer.*

21. These data were reported in the *New Russia Barometer, 1994* survey conducted under the direction of the Center for the Study of Public Policy at the University of Strathclyde, Scotland, U.K., Richard Rose, Director, and the *New Democracies Barometer* of the Paul Lazarsfeld Gesellschaft.

22. Branko Milanović, "A Cost of Transition: 50 Million New Poor and Growing Inequality," *Transition: The Newsletter about Reforming Economies* 5, no. 8 (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, October 1994): 1.

23. Mieczyslaw Kabaj and Tadeusz Kowalik, "Who Is Responsible for Postcommunist Successes in Eastern Europe?" *Transition: The Newsletter about Reforming Economies* 6, no. 7-8 (July-August 1995): 8.

24. This was one of the principal findings of Krzysztof J. Ners and Ingrid T. Buxell, *Assistance to Transition–Survey 1995* (Warsaw: Institute for East-West Studies, Policy Education Center on Assistance to Transition "PECAT," 1995).

25. Gyula Horn was quoted in the *OMRI Daily Report* 104 (1 June 1995). Waldemar Pawlak was quoted by *OMRI Daily Report* 102 (26 May 1995) from a PAP dispatch. The *OMRI Daily Report* is available on Internet and by fax from the Open Media Research Institute in Prague, Czech Republic.

26. For one study that offers such a conclusion, see Roman Frydman and Andrzej Rapczynski, *Privatization in Eastern Europe: Is the State Withering Away?* (Budapest and Prague: Central European University Press, 1994).

27. One example is Edward N. Muller, "Democracy, Economic Development, and Income Inequality," *The American Sociological Review* 53, no. 1 (1988): 50-68. Muller has published numerous other studies with related findings.

28. Milanović, "A Cost of Transition," 3.

29. Kabaj and Kowalik, "Who Is Responsible for Postcommunist Successes in Eastern Europe?" 8.

30. Mary E. McIntosh, Martha Abele Mac Iver, Daniel G. Abele, "Publics Meet Market Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, 1991-1993," *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 502.

31. Aleksandr Kuranov writing in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Moscow), reprinted in *World Press Review* as "East Europe's Pink Tide" (August 1994): 31.

32. See Edward N. Muller and Mitchell A. Seligson, "Civic Culture and Democracy: The Question of Causal Relationships," *The American Political Science Review* 88, no. 3 (September 1994): 635-52.

33. Kuranov, "East Europe's Pink Tide."

34. To the best of my knowledge, J. Roland Pennock coined the term "political goods" in his article "Political Development, Political Systems, and Political Goods," *World Politics* 18, no. 2 (April 1966): 419-35.

35. For accounts of these efforts, one might examine the book by financier George Soros, *Underwriting Democracy* (New York: Free Press, 1991), or *New Democratic Frontier* (Washington, D.C.: National Democratic Institute, 1992).

36. These assessments were reported in "Lessons of Western Technical Aid to Central and Eastern Europe: Beneficiaries Should Actively Participate," *Transition: The Newsletter about Reforming Economies* 5, no. 6 (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, July-August 1994): 15.

37. See the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Bureau for Europe and the New Independent States, Democracy Network Program, Request for Applications, No. ##-94-A-001, issued 15 June 1994.

38. By February 1995, the Democracy Network Program had made plans for two regional grants for legal assistance and networking and seven country-specific grants (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia). Negotiations for programs in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, and a regional "legal framework" program were completed as of late February 1995, while other programs were still being finalized. All of the grants were to U.S.-based NGOs, many of which were active in prior U.S. government-funded or privately funded initiatives in post-Communist Europe. Private correspondence to author from Ms. Kay Harris, Bureau for Europe and the New Independent States, USAID (24 February 1995).