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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



■ When reading this issue's cover story, the roundtable on the consequences of the Persian Gulf War, it is useful to register the way in which the French equivalents of the English words "nation" and "state" perform differently when compared to their English counterparts. Check *Oxford*, and you will find these two words are essentially synonymous. Check *Robert*, and you will discover that the first three definitions of *nation* have no formal political, legal or juridical meaning at all – instead *nation* refers to: a group of individuals of common origin; a large

group of people who are conscious of their own unity and want to live together; and finally and simply, "people" or the people. * tat* is the word for country and state defined by politics and borders.

The *State Breaking, Nation Building* title for our roundtable emerged quite unexpectedly from the central and recurring theme of the discussion. The war in the Persian Gulf and its tragic after-effects, have underscored the widening gap between the rewards and responsibilities we confer on countries, and the feeble attention given to groups (*nations* or *peoples*) that aren't lucky enough, numerous enough or powerful enough to have a state to call their own.

Such are the advantages of having a state, that peoples and nations will go to almost any length, including violence on a large scale, to get one of their own, or keep an "enemy" from getting one for itself. And then there are the terrible costs the world occasionally, but regularly, imposes on stateless peoples.

In the world we currently run, being a country is about the only way to be a player, or for peoples to keep themselves safe. It is the

most exclusive club membership on earth, and at the moment, it is really the only way we know to organize things. As our roundtable illustrates, there are hints, some reassuring and others definitely not, that these cosy club rules have almost run their course.

■ Also in this issue, **Jeremy Paltiel** looks at the Persian Gulf War from the perspective of China's leaders; **Tamar Hermann** answers the question, "whatever happened to Israel's peace movement?"; **Keith Krause** describes the many obstacles in the way of slowing the global trade in military hardware; **Fran ois Lafreni re** reports on electioneering in the Himalayas; **Jane Boulden** leads us through one of the most complex (twenty-two countries and a mountain of documents) and elegantly simple (saw the barrel off that tank) arms control agreements ever reached; **V era Murray** visits Bucharest and describes the grim handiwork of the late, unlamented Nicolai Ceausescu; and finally, **Bernard Wood** writes about an admiral's resignation and the need for a Canadian defence policy.

– Michael Bryans

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