

# PEACE&SECURITY

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## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



■ “I would see a return to fairly classical forms of interstate politics.” So goes one speculation about the future of Europe from **Denis Stairs**, one of five participants in a roundtable featured as this issue’s cover story. We should all devoutly hope Dr. Stairs is wrong about Europe, for if not, we are in for a very unhappy and tragic time.

The key word here is “classical.” The classical way in which the states and peoples of Europe have interacted in the last few centuries is through the almost constant preparation for, frequent threats of, and – often enough to kill upwards of seventy million people in

the last three hundred years – calculated use of war to achieve some goal or other. War, and all the social, political, and technological apparatus that went with it, has been an indispensable part of the daily conduct of business between the “civilized” nations of Europe.

The question we need to ask ourselves now, as we run to keep up with the rush of events there, is not “will the new Germany return to its former nasty ways?” or even “can Gorbachev steer his country around the various disasters that loom ahead?” Rather, it is how will states react to the inevitable ethnic rivalries, nationalist resurgences, and economic disasters.

Joining in common celebration of the demise of the Berlin Wall is one thing, but the real test will arrive in something like the year 2002, when whatever security system has evolved must deal all at the same time with – to cite only one of the possible combinations – a resurgent Germany, a nervous France, a civil-war torn Yugoslavia and a sullen, bankrupt post-Gorbachev Russia. The problems and provocations are classical, but the collective and individual responses of nations and their governments (including our own) must not be.

■ The three authors of our other feature stories this time are warily optimistic about the parts of the world they examine. **Christoph Bertram** contends that a security system less “tidy” and formalized than the one Europeans have become used to, is entirely appropriate, now that threats to security are more diffuse; **Peter Hakim** regards the new American ambivalence towards involvement in Central America as, on the whole, a positive development; and **Heribert Adam** sees the surprising lack of bitterness and desire for revenge among South Africa’s *apartheid* victims as the precondition for a peaceful resolution there.

■ Beginning with this issue, *Peace&Security* will be printed on acid-free, non-chemically bleached paper. We are assured by our suppliers that this paper-making process is more benign environmentally than conventional methods, and results in a paper with superior archival qualities. Following comments from some of our readers, we have also ceased the practice of mailing the magazine in plastic protective envelopes.

– Michael Bryans

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**The Geneva Talks: A New Nuclear Relationship Between the Superpowers?** by David Cox, Background Paper 32, May 1990, 8 pages.

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