

It has been clear, as the western countries have navigated the shoals of the crumbling Soviet Union, and the parallel, bloody fragmentation of Yugoslavia, that there are dangers in trying to avoid all risks or defer them indefinitely. On the other hand, there are also dangers in moving too precipitously to give political acceptance and trust to emerging authorities. The councils of the West have not proved strong or cohesive enough to preserve the all-important unity of action in all cases, against differences in national interests or public sentiments.

Unfortunately, Canada and Germany have broken ranks, among the inner circles of the West, in their unilateral pushes for recognition of Ukraine, and Croatia and Slovenia respectively. In their own defence, the Canadian and German governments have stressed that the recognition of states does not imply any necessary approval of their governments' conduct, and indeed that further influence may be exerted through the establishment and conduct of diplomatic relations and concrete cooperation. There is also a legitimate question as to whether the granting of recognition can be effectively used, even by the majority of states acting together, to assure a new state's respect for borders, individual or minority rights, or arms control commitments. Because of the different circumstances, Canada's "jumping the gun" to recognize Ukraine was far less serious than Germany's drive to recognize Croatia and Slovenia against the advice of the UN and the peacemakers, and in the midst of a widespread and confused war situation. The international community had long since understood that Yugoslavia, in its previous form, could not survive, but these moves toward recognition served mainly to complicate the cessation of hostilities, and create false hopes of outside intervention to aid one side.

It can only be hoped that these examples will not become precedents for the success of divisive tactics by governments and secessionist movements, and for the re-emergence of selective and inflammatory intervention by outsiders in the many tinder-box situations which lie ahead in the former Soviet Union, and central and eastern Europe. Even an over-conservative and demanding approach to accepting political change will be preferable to re-creating the fatal danger of European politics in the past, when the inevitable local conflicts escalated out of control through the intervention of outsiders.

In the long transitional period until economic and functional integration of the old eastern bloc itself brings prosperity and security, it will be important to guard against excesses of political, nationalistic or ethnic