

Frozen Conflicts: Post-Communist Perspectives

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Key Elements

- Communist federalism – systematic linkage of territorial administration to nominal ethnic groups – republics, autonomous areas
- Breakdown of central political authority
- Political mobilization framed in nationalist rhetoric
- Ethnic cleansing, refugees and internally displaced persons
- Great power involvement
- Unsuccessful mediation by international organizations

Central Dilemma

Multidimensional View of State

1. Organizational governing capacity
2. Internationally recognized territory
3. Political community

Statehood dilemma

- Self-determination of peoples
- State sovereignty/territorial integrity

Soviet Background

- Institutionalization of nationalism – territorial & individual
- Gorbachev reforms – freedom of discussion, electoral mobilization
- Secessionist movements in republics



Soviet Territorial Administration

Nationality:

- Union Republics (SSR)
- Autonomous republics
- Autonomous oblasts



Gorbachev Reforms

- 1986 program – *perestroika* (restructuring) & *glasnost* (openness)
- Main result – pluralism of thought & discussion
- 1988 political reform – Congress of People's Deputies: 2/3 seats open to contest
- March 1989 CPD elections – failure of Communist officials; voice to independence & democratization



Nationalism Unleashed

- Apr-Oct. 1988 – Popular Fronts in Baltics
- Aug. 1989 – Formation of Interregional Group of Deputies of CPD
- Aug. 1989 – Popular Front demonstrations
Moldova
- Feb-Mar 1990 – Republic elections
- Mar. 1990 – Lithuania declares independence
- Aug. 1991 – Failed coup
- Dec. 1991 – Soviet Union dissolves

Secession within Secession

- Azerbaijan – Nagorno-Karabakh
- Georgia – Abkhazia & South Ossetia
- Moldova – Transdniestria



International Actors

- Russian peacekeepers
- Organization for Security & Cooperation in Europe (OSCE):
 - Minsk Group
 - Mission in Moldova
- United Nations
- European Union
- United States



Commonalities

- Inability of peacekeeping to prevent violence, return to warfare
- Ineffectiveness of international mediation
- De facto control vs. de jure recognition
- Uncertain futures
- Lesson: When no decisive military outcome to a territorial dispute, virtually impossible to provide a negotiated settlement