Ethnic Nationalism Is Still Prevailing
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Saturday, March 3, 2001

PARIS Nationalism, and ethnic nationalism in particular, was the most powerful political force of the 19th century, and arguably it will be that of the 21st century, as well. Internationalism, in the guise of economic globalism and the propagation of democratic ideas, is conventionally thought to be the force of the future, but it is nationalism that expresses the profound human motivations that continue to make history.

Internationalism's attraction is intellectual. The Western powers intervened in Bosnia in the 1990s to defend the idea of nonethnic liberal internationalism. Liberal values were part of the cosmopolitanism of Sarajevo before the Bosnian war. It stood for what the Serbian extremists hated. That is why they were so determined to destroy Sarajevo.

Moderates now govern Bosnia. Moderate forces have unseated the intolerant Tudjman and Milosevic regimes in Croatia and Serbia.

Nonetheless the future will probably see non-Muslim Bosnia-Herzegovina partitioned between Croatia and Serbia. Today's Bosnia-Herzegovina, forced into birth by Richard Holbrooke during the Dayton negotiations of 1995, is probably too much of an artifice to survive.

This is the outcome those two sides wanted in the first place.

Conceivably, they could have had it peacefully, had they gone about it rationally. Whether a cosmopolitan Sarajevo will survive is more doubtful; the war purged its diversity.

Beginning in the mid-1960s, the Indonesian dictator President Suharto caused a million people to be moved from their crowded home islands of Madura and Java (where two-thirds of Indonesia's population lived) to other parts of the politically fragile archipelago nation. This was given both demographic and economic rationales, but it was mainly a political maneuver meant to "Javanize" - with Muslim immigrants - regions with important Malay Christian and immigrant Chinese populations, and rich resources.

The terrible explosion of rage by indigenous Dayak people against Muslims on Borneo during the past two weeks has produced hundreds of dead and thousands of refugees. Dayak resentment against these immigrants, who now dominate Borneo's economy, has been building up for years. It is now being manipulated by supporters of the ousted Mr. Suharto to destabilize his successors, or by forestry interests, but the nationalism of the Dayaks was an explosive waiting to be lit.
Something similar has gone on since 1987 in Fiji, where immigrants, mainly of Indian origin and brought in as field laborers during the British colonial period, now outnumber the Fijians. An Indian-led coalition was elected to national government in 1987.

The Fijians, Melanesian in origin, resisted rule by the Indian majority. A series of coups by Fijian military and civilians has attempted, without lasting success, to restore indigenous Fijian control of their country.

The Rwandan genocide was inspired by the attempt by the minority Tutsi, traditional rulers of the Hutu farmers who are the majority population, to restore the old order.

In 1959, an uprising by the Hutu drove the Tutsi feudal hierarchy out of power, forcing many into exile in Uganda. Democratic elections confirmed Hutu rule. But Tutsi guerrillas began returning from Uganda in the 1990s, to reclaim power.

The slaughter of the Rwandan Tutsi in 1994 was a panicked attempt by the Hutu rulers of the country to block the Tutsi invaders. Something resembling that terrible episode could still happen in Burundi, where the majority Hutu control the civilian government, but where the army is Tutsi.

The nationalism of traditional peoples, or of those with histories long connected with a particular territory, is a tremendously powerful force, able to confound the good intentions of the liberal nations.

Serbian oppression of the Albanians in Kosovo, a policy that launched Slobodan Milosevic's career, put Albanian nationalism into play at a moment when Albania itself was a ruined relic of Communism.

The chain of events set off has produced a drive to create a "greater Albania," led by fighters who worked with NATO forces in liberating Kosovo. Some of these Albanians have set out to "liberate" by force not only the Albanians of Kosovo, but of all the former Yugoslavia.

The Balkan wars are not over. A force is at work that defies the good intentions of liberal internationalism and the "realism" of the NATO countries, substituting something more enduring.

Los Angeles Times Syndicate.

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