

Russia's Border Wars and Frozen Conflicts

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palgrave
macmillan

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ISBN 978-3-319-52203-6 ISBN 978-3-319-52204-3 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-52204-3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017939332

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Cover Design: Samantha Johnson

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

PREFACE

In April 2015, Chapman University held a conference in Los Angeles to examine several frozen conflicts around the world. Participants were asked to focus on what these conflicts have in common, how they differ, and what options remain unexplored to resolve these conflicts. The speakers looked at a number of conflicts on the periphery of the former Soviet Union. These conflicts provide an excellent example of disagreements where similarities and differences could be isolated. Frozen conflicts are not just a problem among emerging nations, however; they can be found in the continuing hostility between ethnic communities in the Balkans, in the struggle for political identity in the Kashmir, in the perpetuation of World War II between Russia and Japan over control of the Kuril Islands, etc. The conference also focused on a legacy of the Cold War, the frozen conflict on the Korean peninsula.

The conference was co-sponsored by Loyola Marymount University, the University of Southern California, and the Atlantic Council. This volume expands upon the presentations of two of the panels: Panel One addressed the situations in Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine; and Panel Two looked at the struggle between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh.

The review of these conflicts demonstrates that, whether the parties in the conflict began the conflict by themselves or in alliances with others, the two sides no longer have the ability to resolve the situation on their own. The longer a conflict perseveres, the greater ethnic tensions arise—even if the two sides share the same ethnic background, as in the case

of the two Koreas. The national interests of one side frequently clash directly with the interests of the other so that, on their own, compromise seems impossible.

In such situations, it becomes incumbent upon world leaders to mediate diplomatic negotiations to halt the conflicts. When everyone negotiates in good faith, then George Mitchell is able to shepherd the warring sides in Northern Ireland into signing the Good Friday accords. Jimmy Carter can convince Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat to sign the Camp David Accords. When the international mediators use the peace process to further their own ends at the expense of the belligerent parties, however, the result is continuation of conflict. To achieve peace in this situation, other possibilities may need to be explored: What are the absolute, non-negotiable interests of the principal actors? Where is compromise possible? Can confidence-building measures lead to a larger peace, or is a comprehensive solution called for? Are the negotiators pursuing the wrong strategy, such as pursuing confidence measures when the issue requires a comprehensive end? Or, are the mediators pursuing a comprehensive solution among parties that do not trust each other enough and need to pursue intermediate steps? Are new mediators required? Are all the interested parties involved in the negotiations, or will a final peace require additional parties at the negotiating table?

This book concentrates on four conflicts found on the periphery of the former Soviet Union: Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine, and Armenia/Azerbaijan. A volume of this size cannot possibly provide the answers to all the questions, but can at least raise them in the context of the individual conflicts. The conference organizers wish to thank the presenters who gave so generously of their time and expertise: the Honorable Sergei Aloslyn, Consul General of Ukraine in San Francisco; the Honorable Doris Barnett, member of the German Parliament; Dr. Bruce Bennett of the Rand Corporation; Dr. Stepan Grigoryan, Chairman of the Board, Analytical Center on Globalization and Cooperation, Yerevan, Armenia; the Honorable Asim Mollazade, member of the Azerbaijan Parliament; Mr. Lynn Turk, Board of Directors, Pacific Century Institute; and Professor Edward W. Walker, University of California-Berkeley.

I would like to thank those who have made this book possible, including those who have read the text and given me feedback. I would particularly like to thank Ambassador Rudolf Perina and Oleksandr Kortenko for their invaluable assistance. While their thoughts were

welcome, the final product and any faults remains with me, the author. I also would like to thank my student assistants: Damaris Bangean for her tireless research and editing, and Brittney Souza for her help in bringing the text to a conclusion. Finally, I would like to thank my wife and daughter for giving me the emotional support as I wrote this volume.

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