Naval War College Review

2001

Identifying Potential Ethnic Conflict,

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Recommended Citation

effects of combat operations. In addition, his research seems to suggest that sustained, well-planned strikes may be more important than the sudden mass attacks designed to produce "shock and awe" that are heralded by many network-centric-warfare advocates.

Additional useful chapters review the ethical considerations arising in information warfare and examine whether or not such mechanisms as arms control and export regimes can apply to information warfare technologies. An article by Francis Fukuyama and Abram N. Shulsky reviews the lessons (familiar to a Naval War College audience) that the military can learn from business in adapting to the information age.

One minor complaint—the book does not offer biographical sketches of the contributors. A few pages devoted to that information would be more useful than the largely unnecessary listing of abbreviations and acronyms. Overall, this collection is useful, but a better introduction to many of these concepts is found in an earlier RAND work by John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age* (1997) [reviewed in the Spring 1999 issue].

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Szayna, Thomas S. *Identifying Potential Ethnic Conflict*. Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1998. 329pp. $25

Since 1989, the U.S. military has been involved in a number of intrastate conflicts integrally related to ethnicity. These ethnic conflicts have been devastating to those involved; the conflicts contributed to regional destabilization; and they have been assumed to breed international terrorism. Most saliently, they have virtually destroyed the hope of peace benefits that were predicted to accrue at the end of the Cold War.

The intelligence community was tasked by the State and Defense Departments to provide explanations for ethnic conflict. Indications-and-warning systems were to be developed and used to alert policy and military decision makers to impending crises. It was assumed that good analysis and prediction would contribute to policies and practices designed to prevent, manage, or contain ethnic conflict and thereby minimize damage to international peace and stability. A number of studies were conducted internally or were outsourced. The task was apparently, but deceptively, simple—produce a predictive model of ethnic conflict. The criterion for a successful model was equally simple—did it work? That is, did the model provide more information of a critical nature than could be provided by country experts, and was it available in a timely fashion?

Identifying Potential Ethnic Conflict is the public report of research sponsored by the deputy chief of staff for intelligence of the U.S. Army. It was produced by a group at the top level at RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, California.

The stated purpose of the project was to help the intelligence community order its thinking about the logic and dynamics of ethnic conflict and to systematize information-collection requirements. The authors did not provide a comprehensive explanation of ethnic conflict but attempted to answer the questions of how ethnic mobilization occurs and under what conditions it leads to violence.

The research was based on the assumption that reliance on static indicators and simple statistical correlation (as found in many other models) did not adequately account for change. Change was assumed to be the political mobilization of "ethnic factors used to aggregate and articulate group grievances." Political mobilization was assumed to be found in changes between and among groups in economic, political, and social spheres of life activities. In other words, they were looking for specific changes in the relationship between group and state that could signal future conflict.

Three stages were identified: Potential for Strife, Transformation from Potential to Likely Strife, and From Likely to Actual Strife. The potential for strife was identified in processes associated with closure, that is, the reification of group boundaries, the strengthening of "us-them" thinking. The transformation from potential to likely strife—critical to the conceptual framework—was found in the mobilization of ethnic-political identity influencing the balance of power between a group and the state. This transformation was assumed to be found in factors associated with emerging leadership, mobilization of group resources, and a series of "tipping" events (similar to the "trigger mechanisms" found in other studies). Change from likely to actual strife occurred through an interactive strategic bargaining process; this was portrayed by assessing the group preferences and capabilities of the state and the contending ethnic groups, presented in tabular form. The model was then applied to Yugoslavia, South Africa, Ethiopia, and Saudi Arabia.

The best part of the model is its focus on change and process. The authors probably have that right—most ethnic groups, under most conditions, live in relative peace and harmony; changes in relationships are generally associated with competition and conflict under conditions of relative scarcity. But, however good this assumption, the model was not adequately developed to test the hypothesis on a variety of cases. The variables, as discussed in this publication, were very general; they need further specification and elaboration. The four case studies, which purported to apply the model, were written by situation experts. They are very informative and make good reading. Nevertheless, the writing seemed to reflect the authors' expertise and perspectives as much as any application of the model.

If, then, the goal was to provide a model that could apply statistical methodology to comparative data and thereby contribute to predicting future ethnic conflicts, it was not accomplished. Most of the conclusions seemed drawn from the analyses provided by RAND's experts and not produced by the operationalization of the concepts or an application of the model to the four cases. Perhaps because this was a public document, the actual data lies elsewhere and the model has greater specificity and applicability than appear in this short text.

The critical test of any model is whether it works—whether it provides more predictive power than an informed observer. In this case, it is hard to say, because as the authors note, "the model needs further specification and elaboration." This will not be the final book on ethnic conflict.

As the consultants' favorite saying goes: "Progress has been made, but further research is necessary."

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