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Civil–Military Relations in Postcommunist Europe: Assessing the Transition[1]

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ABSTRACT *This article argues that the relative homogeneity of communist civil–military relations postcommunist Europe has been replaced by significant diversity. Those states that have joined NATO and the EU have consolidated democratic civilian control of their militaries, re-oriented their defence policies towards peacekeeping and intervention operations beyond their borders and are fashioning new military–society relationships. In contrast, in Russia, Ukraine and most of the other former Soviet republics the military has become part of the nexus of semi- or outright authoritarian presidential rule, while severe economic and social problems are resulting in a dramatic downgrading of the military's professional and operational competence and severely inhibiting the prospects for meaningful military reform. In the countries of the former Yugoslavia, civil–military reform is gathering pace, but continues to struggle with twin legacies of war and authoritarianism.*

Fifteen years after the fall of communism and the end of the Cold War provides sufficient time to make an assessment of the multi-faceted postcommunist transition in Central and Eastern Europe. This special issue of *European Security* attempts such an assessment in the area of civil–military relations. When communism collapsed in 1989–91 the countries of Central and Eastern Europe inherited a very particular legacy in relation to armed forces, defence policy and civil–military relations: the armed forces were part of the communist party-state system; they were oriented, except in the cases of Yugoslavia, Albania and arguably Romania, towards the Cold War mission of conflict with the West; they were large in size and supported by high levels of defence spending; and they were based on universal male conscription, which gave them a broad social presence and perhaps made them a unifying social force. Anyone who travelled in communist Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union

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from the late 1940s to the late 1980s witnessed highly militarised societies, with uniformed soldiers a universal presence.

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe therefore faced broadly similar challenges: reforming the communist party-state system of civil–military relations and replacing it with, hopefully, democratic models of civil–military relations; reducing the size of the armed forces and defence spending and reorienting the military towards new post-Cold War missions; and building new bases of military–society relations. Drawing on the broader civil–military relations literature this special issue assesses the transition in civil–military relations, focusing on these three areas: democracy and the military; defence reform and professionalisation; and the military and society. The articles in this volume examine the postcommunist civil–military transition in eight different countries: Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Romania, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRS)/Serbia–Montenegro,[2] Ukraine and Russia. Collectively these countries illustrate the way in which the interaction of broadly similar postcommunist challenges and distinct national contexts (in terms of size, historical legacies, geo-strategic location, political and economic transitions, involvement in violent conflict and integration with NATO and the European Union) have combined to produce a variety of different patterns of civil–military relations. This introduction draws overall conclusions on the transition in civil–military relations in postcommunist Europe. It suggests that the relative, although never absolute, homogeneity of civil–military relations in communist Europe is being replaced by greater diversity: those countries in the process of joining NATO and the EU are developing patterns of civil–military relations similar to those in the long-established democracies of Western Europe and North America; civil–military relations in the former Yugoslavia republics, especially Serbia–Montenegro, have been deeply scarred by the wars of the 1990s and thus face particular problems relating to armed forces roles in those wars, including issues of responsibility for war crimes; Russia, Ukraine and the other former Soviet republics appear to be moving towards situations where civil–military relations are one part of semi- or 'soft' authoritarian regimes, while economic problems have resulted in a more general degrading—de-professionalisation—of the military.

Democracy and the Military

Military intervention in domestic politics, and the degree of political independence and influence of the military, are generally seen as one of the key problems, often *the* central challenge, of civil–military relations. Much of the academic civil–military relations literature is thus devoted to exploring the circumstances that give rise to and the factors that explain military intervention in politics. Much attention is also paid to exploring circumstances and factors that facilitate civilian political control of the military and the establishment of democratic civil–military relations.[3] The communist system as it developed in

Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union resulted in the emergence of a very particular relationship between the military and politics. The military was generally under the strict political, but of course not democratic, control of the civilian communist leadership and had quite limited room for independent political action. At the same time, the military was politicised in the sense that it was one of the vehicle's for society-wide inculcation of communist values. In most cases it was intertwined with the communist party through the establishment of party cells and the oversight of party education officers throughout the armed forces. Finally, although the military's political independence was limited, the military high command retained substantial control over defence policy, military strategy and force structure.[4] As communism crumbled in the late 1980s and early 1990s this civil–military context raised major questions about the role of the military. To what extent was the military loyal to communism and to what extent would it, either independently or at the behest of or in conjunction with civilian communist leaders, act to defend the old regime? Once the communist regimes fell, the question shifted: to what extent would the armed forces support or resist a transition to *democratic* civilian political control and the broader de-communisation of the military?

Prior to and during the 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe there were fears that the military might intervene forcefully to defend the communist regimes. In the event this did not happen, suggesting that, despite forty years of communist penetration, military loyalty to communism in the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact states was probably skin deep. Lech Walesa, former leader of Poland's anti-communist Solidarity movement and the country's first postcommunist President, argued that the Polish military was like a radish, red (communist) on the outside but white (national) on the inside.[5] As the articles on Poland, Hungary and Romania in this volume indicate the relative ease with which these countries have consolidated democratic civilian control of their armed forces, and the absence of significant opposition to this process from the military itself, reinforces the argument that military loyalty to communism was always skin deep in these states. The situation in the Soviet Union and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ) was different. In the Soviet Union elements of the military high command were wary of the reforms introduced by President Mikhail Gorbachev in the late 1980s and played a central role in the August 1991 coup against Gorbachev—indicating the greater loyalty of at least some parts of the Soviet military to communism compared to their Eastern European counterparts. Russian President Boris Yeltsin's success in opposing the coup and the subsequent disintegration of the Soviet Union, however, suggested that the military was both divided and ill prepared to actually implement a coup.

In the SFRJ the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) became closely intertwined with the politics and wars that emerged at the beginning of the 1990s. The JNA was one of the key national institutions that had helped to hold the ethnically fragmented SFRJ and its own institutional identity was closely linked to that of

the Federal state. This placed it in natural opposition to the secessionist claims of Slovenia and Croatia and ultimately led to its cooption by the Milošević regime and its Serbian nationalist project. The JNA became an increasingly Serbian institution, eventually becoming the army of the successor FRY (as the Yugoslav Army or VJ) and now today's Serbia–Montenegro (as the Armed Forces of Serbia–Montenegro or VSCG). The military always retained a strong tradition of professionalism and corporate self-governance, which made it resistant to the more aggressive politicisation attempts of the Milošević regime. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1990s, its leadership had been filled with Milošević cronies and as an institution it was inextricably linked to the regime's nationalist project and wars. A decade later the challenges of civil–military relations in Serbia–Montenegro are part of the larger challenge of dismantling that nationalist project and the other pathologies, especially corruption and political cynicism, that it imposed on the country. More widely the future of civil–military relations in the country will be closely connected to the future viability of the state union itself, uncertainty over which has stalled defence reform and intensified domestic political divisions. As Alex Bellamy and Timothy Edmunds discuss in this volume, nationalism and war resulted in similar attempts by the Tuctman regime to politicise the Croatian armed forces and tie them to the Croatian nationalist project. Zagreb's road away from these problems is proving easier than Belgrade's however. This is because, in contrast to Serbia–Montenegro, the Croatian state represents a finished political project. The period since 2000 has also seen the emergence of an increasingly strong domestic political consensus on the direction of the country's foreign and defence policy which has allowed Croatia to press ahead with it civil–military reform process.

Following the collapse of communism, the new democratic regimes in Central and Eastern Europe faced the challenge of establishing *democratic* civilian political control of the military and reforming the institutions for the management of the armed forces. As the papers by Paul Latawski, Pal Dunay, Larry Watts and Jan Trapans in this volume illustrate, this challenge proved easier than might have been expected. A core group of Central and Eastern European states—Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia—have all made substantial progress in entrenching democratic civilian control of the military. In all these states major reforms were undertaken in the early and mid-1990s. New constitutions establishing the principle of democratically controlled militaries were put in place, new chains of command were instituted to operationalise this principle, and the military were depoliticised as the old link between the armed forces and the communist party was broken. Although there were often disputes over the details of such reforms and the old guard in the senior military leadership sometimes obstructed their implementation, there was almost no serious opposition to the principle of civilian democratic control of the military. Where minor crises did occur, moreover, they usually involved

disputes between civilian politicians (for example, between Presidents and government ministers) over should control the military, rather than the potentially more serious problem of the military asserting its own right to have a say in politics. There is a strong case that in the sphere of civil–military relations, as more generally, this group of Central and Eastern European states have now reached the stage of democratic consolidation: the principle of democratic civilian control of the military is deeply entrenched and not seriously challenged; institutions have been put in place to put this principle into practice and these institutions function reasonably effectively; and although politics in these countries is sometimes messy and chaotic, serious threats to democracy from the civil–military sphere appear unlikely.

The consolidation of democratic civil–military relations in Central and Eastern Europe also raises interesting questions about how far there are different models of democratic civil–military relations in the region. It is striking that all these countries have adopted models of democratic civil–military relations in which the military is implicitly an institution separate from the rest of society and democracy is exercised in essence through the control of the military by the democratically elected President, government and parliament. This contrasts with the post-1945 Federal Republic of Germany's model, and also the longer-standing Swiss model, of a closely integrated military and society, in which the active participation of civilians in the armed forces through conscription is a central element of ensuring the democratic character of the military.

While the Central and Eastern European states moved down the road towards democratic consolidation in the 1990s, Russia, Ukraine and the other former Soviet republics have faced more difficult political transitions, especially from a democratic perspective. In some cases—as in Belarus and the Central Asian states—communist authoritarianism has been replaced by an old-new brand of postcommunist authoritarianism, with former republican communist party chiefs establishing themselves as national leaders and much of the old communist era political infrastructure remaining in place. In Russia and Ukraine, a more complex situation has emerged with elected Presidents and parliaments in place, a variety of political forces operating but political power increasingly concentrated in the hands of the President and their supporters and weak counterbalancing institutions. Critics thus warn that Vladimir Putin's Russia and Leonid Kuchma's Ukraine have become, or risk becoming, semi- or 'soft' authoritarian states in which the concentration of power in the hands of the President and their circle fundamentally undermines democracy. In this context, the military and other security forces such as the interior ministry and intelligence services are some of the key instruments of presidential power.

While much of the academic literature on civil–military relations focuses on the issue of military intervention in domestic politics, one of the main challenges facing the countries of postcommunist Europe has been the related but distinct problem of establishing effective control over defence policy. As we

noted above, one feature of communist civil–military relations was the relatively high degree of autonomy given to the military in relation to defence policy. As a consequence, when communism collapsed almost no structures existed for civilian democratic control of defence policy. The new governments in Central and Eastern Europe faced a daunting array of challenges in this area: appointing civilian defence ministers and civilian staff to previously military dominated defence ministries; separating military general staffs from defence ministries and subordinating the former to the latter; putting in place institutions for the management of defence policy, budgets and procurement; and establishing parliamentary committees and procedures for the oversight of defence policy. These issues can be viewed as a set of second generation challenges following on from the basic first generation challenge of ensuring that the military does not intervene in domestic politics.[6] For much of postcommunist Europe these second generation problems have proved far more challenging than the first generation ones and have comprised the real agenda for civil–military relations since the early 1990s.

As the articles on Poland, Hungary Romania and Latvia in this volume show, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe spent much of the 1990s introducing a series of reforms designed to address these second generation problems.[7] These reforms proved problematic for two reasons: they involved complex institutional and technical issues, but they also threatened the previous power of the military to shape defence policy and were therefore quite often resisted by senior officers. Despite this, the core group of Central and Eastern European states identified above made substantial progress in implementing such reforms in the 1990s and now mostly have reasonably functioning systems for democratic civilian control of defence policy. Similar patterns have been visible in Croatia from 2000 onwards. This is not to say that these countries do not face problems in these areas. There continue to be problems of mismatches between declared defence policy goals and the resources available to meet these goals, inadequate transparency in relation to defence budgets and procurement and periodic scandals of issues such as procurement and corruption. The longer-standing democracies of Western Europe and North America, however, are hardly immune to these problems themselves and their existence in the newer democracies of Central and Eastern Europe does not by and large reflect any wider malaise in civil–military relations. In the former Soviet republics, much less progress has been made in implementing these types of reforms. More than a decade after the end of communism while Russia and Ukraine both have civilian defence ministers, the boundaries between defence ministry and general staff remain blurred, their defence ministries remain predominantly military-staffed organisations, defence policy-making, budgeting and procurement are deeply opaque and parliamentary oversight is limited at best. These problems are part of and reinforce a deeper malaise illustrated by James Sherr and Dale Herspring's contributions to this volume. Corruption and incompetence have become endemic in the armed forces of Russia, Ukraine and

the other former Soviet republics. Thus, whereas the civil–military problematique has traditionally been conceived in terms of the relationship between the military and the political sphere and the danger of military praetorianism, in the former Soviet Union (and also parts of the former Yugoslavia) the problem is now the impact of wider economic and social problems on the military and the danger that these problems may undermine the military's ability to operate as an effective and useful state institution. Political leaders in these countries are struggling with these problems but, as Dale Herspring's discussion of Russian President Vladimir Putin's approach to military reform shows, whether they can find effective solutions is open to question.

Defence Reform and Professionalisation

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union inherited large, conscript-based armed forces structured for Cold War military missions. In the new political and strategic environment that emerged in the 1990s it was clear that the countries of postcommunist Europe had to radically reform their defence policies and armed forces, but quite what this should mean in terms military strategy, defence spending, force structure and procurement was unclear. In the early 1990s, driven by the end of the Cold War, economic realities and a more general desire to demilitarise their societies, the immediate response of most governments in the region was to drastically reduce defence expenditure and cut the overall numbers in the armed forces. These initial reforms left open the longer-term questions of what these countries' armed forces were actually for and what this implied for defence policy.

The most obvious drivers of defence policy are external military threats to national security. For most Central and Eastern European states Russia was—rightly or wrongly—perceived to be the most likely aggressor. This logic drove these states' desire to join NATO. Other neighbouring Eastern European states were to some extent also perceived as potential threats, as in the historically antagonistic relations between Hungary and its neighbours or Poland and its neighbours, but in most cases such contingencies were seen as less serious than the potential threat posed by Russia. However, while the Central and Eastern European states sought membership of NATO and did reorient their forces away from Cold War deployments on their western borders, concern about Russia did not result in a dramatic redeployment of forces towards their eastern borders or significant increases in defence spending. Implicitly, Russia was viewed more as a potential long-term threat than an immediate military danger. The reality for most of the states of postcommunist Europe was that with the end of the Cold War they had entered a 'low threat' era, at least in terms of classical state-based military threats to their national security. During the 1990s the debate on the role of armed forces shifted away from issues of defending national territory in much of

postcommunist Europe and towards the question of how these countries might contribute to international security more generally. Not surprisingly, the Yugoslav conflict was the primary driver of this process. Central and Eastern European leaders feared that the conflict in the former Yugoslav might destabilise the region more broadly, while Western governments encouraged Central and Eastern European states to contribute to international efforts to manage the conflict. As a consequence, after NATO's interventions in Bosnia in 1995 and Kosovo in 1999, Central and Eastern European states contributed forces to the NATO-led follow-on peacekeeping forces. The ability to deploy peacekeeping forces, and the interrelated desire to integrate with NATO became a—to some extent *the*—key driver of military reform. The September 2001 terrorist attack reinforced but also altered this dynamic. The ability to contribute forces to counter-terrorist operations and related intervention and peacekeeping missions became a further driver of defence policy. A number of Central and Eastern European states have contributed forces to the post-war stabilisation missions in Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban and in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein. The addition of the counter-terrorist mission, however, also implied that armed forces might need the capability to conduct more robust war fighting and peace enforcement missions as well as 'softer' peacekeeping tasks.

These various drivers of military reform have resulted in different patterns across the region. For a small group of countries, direct involvement in postcommunist conflicts became the central driver of military reform. Serbia–Montenegro, Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina (BiH—or to be more accurate the various statelets and groups that constituted BiH) developed armed forces to fight in the wars of Yugoslav dissolution, with spending and force structures reflecting this. Further afield, a similar dynamic was discernible between Armenia and Azerbaijan in relation to the Nagorno–Karabakh conflict. For the core group of Central and Eastern European states noted above, however, the ability to contribute forces to peacekeeping and intervention missions beyond their national borders drove military reforms in the 1990s. This resulted in the development of small elite forces and units for deployment on peacekeeping missions, combined with a focus on inter-operability with NATO (for example, in terms of communications equipment and command and control procedures). These reforms were successful in the sense that they enabled these states both to contribute to peacekeeping missions and to integrate their forces with those of the longer-standing NATO members. Critics, however, charged that the Central and Eastern European states risked developing two-tier armed forces, with a small elite of military forces capable of working with NATO and a large rump of increasingly downgraded armed forces incapable of providing for a credible national defence should that be needed.[8] In Russia and Ukraine a very different set of dynamics have been at work. Although both countries have contributed forces to peacekeeping missions, this has not been a central driver of defence policy. In both countries

economic realities have in many ways been the central shapers of defence policy: dramatic economic collapse resulted in an equally dramatic collapse in the funds available for the armed forces. Combined with the break-up of the Soviet Union, this has resulted in a significant downsizing of the armed forces, along with major cuts in training and related activity and an effective freeze on new procurement. Dale Herspring has described this process as not military reform in any meaningful sense but rather the de-professionalisation of the Russian armed forces.[9]

These debates on defence reform relate to the concepts of professional armed forces and professionalisation. Some of the academic literature on civil–military relations has placed particular emphasis on professionalisation, arguing that this is a central determinant of the prospects for civilian control of the military since professional armed forces are more likely to focus on their professional military tasks of preparing for national defence and the like, rather than intervening in domestic politics.[10] This debate, however, creates some confusion, since the term professional armed forces is open to different interpretations. In this context, professional may refer to the extent to which the armed forces focus on their professional military tasks (as distinct from intervening in domestic politics), the degree to which the military is professionally competent (i.e., capable of performing their military functions effectively) or the distinction between an all-volunteer military and a conscript-based force. In postcommunist Europe it is the latter definition—i.e., equating a professional military with an all-volunteer force—that has come to the fore. Although the process has developed slowly since the 1990s, those Central and Eastern European states who are joining or aspire to join NATO and the EU appear to be gradually moving towards either predominantly or completely volunteer forces. Periods of conscription have been reduced and a number of states have now made commitments to move towards all-volunteer forces.[11] This process has in significant part been driven by the requirement to provide troops for peacekeeping missions and capable of operating alongside other NATO forces. It has, however, tended to preclude wider debate on the defence policy choices facing Central and Eastern European states. From a national defence perspective, for example, there may be case for retaining territorial defence forces and conscription alongside the development of 'professional' forces for deployment beyond national borders. At a minimum, there should be scope for a broader debate on the range of defence policy choices open to the states of postcommunist Europe and the longer-term implications of different paths.

The Military and Society

Communism resulted in the emergence of a very particular yet contradictory relationship between the military and society. The military was one of the tools of state power used to maintain the communist regimes and was therefore sometimes an unpopular institution, especially in Eastern Europe and parts of

the Soviet Union, such as the Baltic republics, where anti-Soviet nationalism remained strong. At the same time, the military was sometimes seen as independent national institution (in Romania most obviously, but also for example in Poland). Conscription, further, was arguably a social unifying force, while the military was used, particularly in the Soviet Union, as a means of nation-building and social engineering. We are right to be sceptical about the extent to which communism created a new 'socialist man'. However, the strength of nostalgia for the Soviet era in much of the former Soviet Union more than a decade after the fall of communism and the extent to which the military is still viewed positively because of its role in the Great Patriotic War against German fascism suggest that national identities, including their military dimensions, *were* deeply shaped by communism.

The fall of communism and the end of the Cold War meant that the old roles of the military—defenders of the communist regimes against domestic threats, Cold War defenders against the threat from the West and a force for communist nation-building—were swept away overnight. Some of the changes discussed above—reductions in defence spending, the size of armed forces and conscription periods—resulted in a general demilitarisation of society. This process has progressed furthest in those countries closest to the West (both politically and geographically), but less dramatically in the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia. What new patterns of military–society relations might replace the old communist model was far less clear.

One of the longest-standing social roles of armed forces, in a wide variety of different historical and political circumstances as has been as nation-builders: both directly as the means by which a nation may be united by force or achieve independence from foreign oppressors and indirectly as a means of promoting national unity, in particular through conscription. Given the more general rebirth of nations in postcommunist Europe one might have expected to have seen a wider re-emergence of the idea of armed forces as nation-builders. As Alex Bellamy and Timothy Edmunds discuss in their contribution to this volume, this did occur in the context of the so-called Homeland War in Croatia in the early 1990s. In general, however, armed forces have not been seen or used as central tools of nation-building in postcommunist Europe. In countries such as Poland, Hungary and Romania this may reflect the fact that these states were already quite well established and in some ways beyond the stage of nation-building. In other countries, such as Ukraine, the very weakness of nationalism may have militated against using the military as a central tool of nation-building. In FRJ and subsequently Serbia–Montenegro, the military's nation-building role has been hampered by continuing uncertainties and disagreements over the future of the state itself.

The demise of the military's communist regime defence role, the limited extent to which the military has become a force for nation-building in postcommunist Europe and the generally low-level of direct external threat to national security raised major questions about role the military would play

and what this meant for its relations with wider society. As we discussed above, one major response to this dilemma has been increasing involvement in peacekeeping and intervention operations beyond national borders. Another element of this has been the use of the military as a means of promoting bilateral and multilateral cooperation with neighbouring states, for example through military exchanges and joint exercises. In terms of military–society relations we describe this process as the armed forces taking on a military diplomacy role. In effect the military becomes an external, foreign policy expression of society's broad goals and values. In much of the postcommunist region therefore the trend towards participation in peacekeeping operations reflects a desire on the part of governments and populations to be seen as a good international citizens, contributing to wider regional and international security and the promotion of democratic values. Although there have been controversies, in particular over NATO's 1999 intervention in Kosovo and the 2003 Iraq War, public opinion has generally been supportive of participation in such operations and willing to accept at least small numbers of casualties in support of this cause.

Another striking feature of military–society relations in postcommunist Europe has been the re-emergence of patterns reflecting pre-communist historical legacies. Countries such as Poland and Romania, for example, have relatively martial histories, in which the military has usually been viewed by society at large as an important and positive national actor. In contrast, countries such as the Czech Republic and Hungary have less martial histories, in which the military has often been viewed as an ineffective defender of national sovereignty and a relatively less important national institution. These patterns have re-emerged in these countries since the fall of communism, with the military generally viewed very positively in Poland and Romania but less so in the Czech Republic and Hungary. Given that these countries have only recently emerged from four decades of communism, this suggests that broad societal attitudes to the military may be remarkably deeply embedded and enduring, passed on from generation to generation.

The changing patterns of military–society relations in postcommunist Europe also raises questions about how far such changes reflect more general global trends. Charles Moskos, John Allen Williams and David Segal have developed the concept of the 'postmodern military' to describe a variety of changes underway in North American, Western European and arguably other armed forces.[12] Postmodern militaries are defined by the combination of a shift away from defence of national territory and towards peacekeeping and intervention operations; associated shifts towards all-volunteer armed forces and increasingly sophisticated military technology; a breakdown of traditional military hierarchies and military–civilian boundaries; the demise of traditional deference within society, including towards institutions such as the military; and the way in which broader social issues—such as women's and gay rights—impinge on the military. Some of these trends—such as the move towards

peacekeeping and all or predominantly volunteer forces—are clearly observable in postcommunist Europe. Other trends, for example a broad societal lack of interest in armed forces in much of the region, may also fit the postmodern model. Yet others, such as issues of women's and gay rights within the armed forces, have barely moved onto the agenda. This suggests that while armed forces in postcommunist Europe may gradually be moving towards the postmodern model observable in the longer-established democracies, this is likely to be a slow and gradual process rather than a dramatic transition.

The Drivers of Change

What factors have been driving the changes in civil–military relations in postcommunist Europe and what does this tell us about the likely future prospects for civil–military relations in the region and more generally? Most obviously, the changes in civil–military relations in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are the result of the collapse of communism a decade and a half ago. This points to the obvious but sometimes neglected conclusion that the broad domestic political environment is the key factor shaping civil–military relations. Thus, it is no coincidence that those countries that that have made most progress in democratization in general have also made most progress in democratizing civil–military relations. Similarly, civil–military relations in Russia, Ukraine and the other former Soviet republics reflect the broader pattern of partial democratization combined with strong and sometimes authoritarian presidential rule.

A second set of factors relates to the impact of external developments on civil–military relations. From a theoretical perspective, analysts have explored the impact of the extent of external security threats faced by a state on the likelihood of military intervention in domestic politics.[13] The relatively low level of external threat faced by most Central and Eastern European states and the relative ease with which they have consolidated democratic civilian control of the military supports the argument that a low level of external threat reduces the power and importance of the military and thereby enhances the prospects for democratic civilian control of armed forces. This argument is reinforced by the fact that the few cases in postcommunist Europe where the military have been more directly politicised—in particular Croatia under Tudman and FRY under Milošević—have taken place in a context of significantly higher levels of external threat or conflict. A second external factor, much less discussed in the general civil–military relations literature, is the existence of positive external pull factors shaping civil–military relations. In Central and Eastern Europe, NATO and the EU—and the existence of a broader community of wealthy established democracies in the West—have exerted a very powerful influence on civil–military relations. At a strategic level, NATO/the EU/the West have provided a model to aspire to, an implicit bastion of support for democratic reformers and hard leverage to support reforms (in particular through the

implicit conditionality attached to membership of NATO and the EU). Functionally, NATO, the EU and individual Western governments have provided practical support for reforms and frameworks for the multilateralisation and reinforcement of the civil–military reform process. Integration into NATO in particular but the West more generally, has become a key driver of defence policy in much of Central and Eastern Europe.

A third set of factors often discussed in the wider literature is the impact of changes in military technology and strategy on civil–military relations. The emergence of the modern nation-state was intimately associated with the development of mass armies and conscription. The development of armoured warfare, modern airpower and nuclear weapons similarly re-shaped civil–military relations, resulting in the development of more technically sophisticated professional soldiers. As was noted above, the combination of low levels of external threat, a shift towards peacekeeping and intervention operations and the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs are pushing the Central and Eastern European states towards pre-dominantly or all-volunteer armed forces. This in turn impinges on other aspects of civil–military relations, in particular reducing the military's role as a force for nation-building or social unification and more generally further demilitarising society. The long-term implications – and indeed viability – of armed forces based on a small professional military designed for operations beyond national borders and with limited engagement with wider society remains to be seen.

A final set of factors relates to the impact of broader social changes on civil–military relations. The postmodern military concept is based in part on the argument that, at least in the industrialised West, we are witnessing the emergence of postmodern societies different in important ways from their nineteenth and twentieth century modern, industrial predecessors. The extent to which the countries of postcommunist Europe and Eurasia are moving down this path remains open to debate. Since the collapse of communism these countries have experienced the collapse of old political authority structures and neo-liberal economic reforms and the associated retreat of the state, thereby introducing some of the elements of postmodern societies seen in the West. At the same time, however, much of postcommunist Europe and Eurasia arguably retain quite traditional, conservative beliefs in relation to issues such as nation, religion, gender and family. As societies there is a case therefore that the countries of postcommunist Europe are currently torn between the postmodern and the earlier modern (and sometimes even pre-modern) eras. In a broad sense civil–military relations in the region are likely to reflect this.

Conclusion

A decade and a half after the fall of communism what conclusions can be drawn about the state of civil–military relations in postcommunist Europe and the nature of the region's transition in civil–military relations? The relative

homogeneity of communist civil–military relations has been replaced by significant diversity across the region. The Central and Eastern European states that have joined NATO and the EU (and more recently NATO aspirants such as Croatia) have consolidated democratic civilian control of their militaries, reoriented their defence policies towards peacekeeping and intervention operations beyond their borders and are developing postmodern military–society relations where the military is simply one state institution alongside others. In contrast, in Russia, Ukraine and most of the other former Soviet republics the military has become part of the nexus of semi- or outright authoritarian presidential rule, while severe economic and social problems are resulting in a dramatic downgrading of the military's professional and operational competence and severely inhibiting the prospects for meaningful military reform. In the former Yugoslavia, in particular in Serbia under Milošević and Croatia under Tudman, war brought the military more directly into domestic politics, but again largely as a result of authoritarian presidential rule. The Yugoslav wars also made war crimes, corruption and links to organised crime central elements of civil–military relations.

The end of communism triggered the emergence of an academic subdiscipline analysing the postcommunist transition process—the so-called 'transitology'. This raises broader questions about the extent to which countries are still in an on-going postcommunist transition process or have now reached a new situation that can be said to have stabilised. As was argued above, the Central and Eastern European states that have joined NATO and the EU have probably passed the point of democratic consolidation in civil–military relations. It is perhaps more useful therefore to analyse them as democracies like their Western European counterparts struggling with the on-going problems of adjusting armed forces to a post-Cold War and post-9/11 world (albeit facing some particular constraints, especially in the economic sphere), rather than states still overcoming the legacy of communism in civil–military relations. The presidential (semi-) authoritarianism that has emerged in much of the former Soviet Union represents a very different pattern with its own distinctive civil–military dynamics. The extent to which this pattern is stable is a matter for debate. Across much of the former Soviet Union Presidents have consolidated their hold on power and opposition is generally weak and/or divided. Presidential elections, the death of old rulers and/or the hand over of power to new ones are, however, likely to present periodic challenges to the status quo. In these circumstances, control of military power may play an important role and the military may be drawn into domestic politics (as occurred in the 1993 Russian parliamentary coup). The recent 'rose revolution' in Georgia illustrated the potential for dramatic political change and democratic opposition to presidential strong-men. In the former Yugoslavia, just as war and authoritarianism brought the military into politics, peace and political change have raised major questions about the military's role in the new environment. In Croatia this resulted in a more general demilitarisation of

society from the mid-1990s and a rapid democratisation of civil–military relations from 2000 onwards. In Serbia–Montenegro the post-war transition has proved much more problematic and attempts to reform civil–military relations have been severely constrained by a more general crisis in domestic politics and the legitimacy of the state itself. In the former Soviet Union and much of the former Yugoslavia therefore the transition in civil–military relations is far from complete.

This analysis of civil–military relations in postcommunist Europe also has implications for the study of civil–military relations more generally. First, the relative absence of military intervention in domestic politics in postcommunist Europe as a whole and the consolidation of democratic civilian control of the military in those countries that have joined NATO and the EU also reflects a broader global trend away from military praetorianism.[14] There is scope for further analysis of the how the global democratic revolution of the last few decades—the spread of democracy to an increasing number of countries around the world—is affecting civil–military relations and the nature of civil–military relations in a post-praetorian world. Second, given the past salience of the military as a symbol of the nation and a tool of nation-building, it is remarkable that, with some exceptions such as Croatia, armed forces have not played a more prominent nation-symbolising and nation-building role in postcommunist Europe. This trend is being further reinforced by the shift away from conscription and towards volunteer armed forces. The issue of the role of armed forces and military–society relations in a post-national era also needs more analysis. Third, developments in postcommunist Europe also point towards the importance of the political-economy of civil–military relations. While most analyses of civil–military relations have tended to focus on either the military's role in politics or broader military–society relations, some of the central problems in civil–military relations in postcommunist Europe have related to economic issues, in particular the impact of dramatic cuts in defence spending on the military, corruption within the armed forces and links between the armed forces and organised crime. Similar problems have occurred in other countries and regions as a consequence of post-authoritarian transitions, wars and post-war situations and externally driven neo-liberal economic policies.[15] Yet there has been very little sustained analysis of the role of military and security forces in these new economic dynamics. In postcommunist Europe and elsewhere there is certainly a need for more serious analysis of these troubling new economic dimensions of civil–military relations.

Notes

[1] This special issue of *European Security* draws together conclusions and analysis from a research project on 'The Transformation of Civil–military Relations in Comparative Context' funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) 'One Europe or Several?' programme (award number L213 25 2009). Further studies from the project can be found in Andrew Cottey, Anthony Forster & Timothy Edmunds (eds), *Democratic Control of the Military in Postcommu-*

nist Europe: Guarding the Guards (Houndmills: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2002), Anthony Forster, Timothy Edmunds & Andrew Cottey (eds), *The Challenge of Military Reform in Postcommunist Europe: Building Professional Armed Forces*, (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) and Anthony Forster, Timothy Edmunds & Andrew Cottey (eds), *Soldiers and Societies in Postcommunist Europe: Legitimacy and Change* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). The project website can be accessed at http://civil–military.dsd.kcl.ac.uk/

[2] The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia became the confederative State Union of Serbia and Montenegro in February 2003.

[3] The classical works on this subject are Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Practice of Civil–military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1957); Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1960); and Samuel E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (London and Dunmow: Pall Mall Press, 1962). For more recent contributions see Martin Edmonds, *The Armed Services and Society* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1988); Larry Diamond & Marc F. Plattner (eds), *Civil–military Relations and Democrac* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) and Michael Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military: The Changing Security Environment*, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

[4] On communist civil–military relations see Roman Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967); Dale R. Herspring & Ivan Volgyes (eds), *Civil–military Relations in Communist Systems*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978); Timothy J. Colton, *Commissars, Commanders and Civilian Authority: The Structure of Soviet Military Politics* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1979).

[5] Thomas S. Szayna, *The Military in a Postcommunist Poland*, N-2209-USDP (Stan Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 1991), p. 43.

[6] We have developed this argument in Andrew Cottey, Timothy Edmunds & Anthony Forster, 'The Second Generation Problematic: Rethinking Democracy and Civil–military Relations', *Armed Forces & Society*, 29:1 (Fall 2002), pp. 31–56.

[7] For further detailed analyses of these types of reforms, and the problems encountered in implementing them see Jeffrey Simon's recent works *Hungary and NATO: Problems in Civil–military Relations* (Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), *Poland and NATO: A Study in Civil–military Relations* (Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004) and *NATO and the Czech and Slovak Republics: A Comparative Study in Civil–military Relations* (Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

[8] Christopher Donnelly, 'Reshaping Armed Forces for the 21st Century', *NATO Think Piece*, 10 August 2001, http://www.nato.int/docu/articles/2000/a000913a.htm (accessed 15 March 2005; Timothy Edmunds, 'NATO's New Members', *Survival*, 45: 3 (Autumn 2003).

[9] Dale R. Herspring, 'De-professionalising the Russian Armed Forces', in Anthony Forster, Timothy Edmunds & Andrew Cottey (eds), *The Challenge of Military Reform in Postcommunist Europe: Building Professional Armed Forces*, (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 197–210.

[10] Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*.

[11] Anthony Forster, Timothy Edmunds & Andrew Cottey (eds), *The Challenge of Military Reform in Postcommunist Europe: Building Professional Armed Forces*, (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

[12] Charles Moskos, John Allen Williams & David R. Segal, *The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces After the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[13] Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military*.

[14] See for example, Robin Luckham, Democratic Strategies for Security in Transition and Conflict', in Gavin Cawthra & Robin Luckham (eds), *Governing Insecurity: Democratic Control of Military and Security Establishments in Transitional Democracies* (London: Zed Books, 2003).

[15] Mats Berdal & David Malone (eds), *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2000).