

Immigration, Ethnic Strife, Nations — And America

A global survey

by Lee G. Madland

The United States of America in recent decades, particularly its political and cultural elite, has exhibited a peculiar blind spot concerning likely consequences of heavy immigration of peoples from widely dissimilar cultures, specifically the wave unleashed by the 1965 Immigration Act which in the historical eyeblink of just thirty years since it effectively took off around 1970, has markedly changed the makeup of the country. In a single generation it has reduced the country's historic European-descended majority from 88 percent to hardly over 70 percent.¹ Unless major legal changes take place, that founding majority may well become a minority within a half-century from now.

Some hopefully, or dutifully, declare this not to be a problem. Immigration is an issue that splits both conservatives and liberals, both Democrats and Republicans. But most of their leaders, afraid of being denounced as racist or worse, cannot bring themselves to oppose the present permissive "open borders" policies which continue to bring in massive numbers of both legal and illegal immigrants — despite public opinion surveys that consistently show considerable majorities favoring immigration reduction, often even among major immigrant groups themselves.

Ethnicity matters. Nationality matters. The term

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Geographer Madland takes his readers for a comprehensive survey of ethnic conflicts around the world and then asks if the United States is not receiving immigrants at a rate that precludes assimilation into the American culture.

"ethnic" is often misunderstood by those who think of it primarily in terms of bloodlines. But physical ancestry is only part. Even more importantly it refers to culture, which in myriad ways — both conscious and subliminal — affects how people see and do things. Without doubt the key single aspect and indicator of a region's culture, of cohesive groups, is *language*, which, after all, is the basic means of human communication beyond the very

simplest levels. And language is a carrier not only of information, but, inherently, of values. Religion can also be a potent factor in ethnicity, in some societies more than others. A sense of common history is yet another binding element. The rest, including a group's customary mores and folkways, are less easily defined as they are often subjective — but all are intertwined with language,

ancestry, religion, and history, reinforcing their status as the major identifiers of ethnic groups around the world.

From small to large, cohesive groups range from family, clan, tribe, to nation. The term *nation* does not denote a sovereign political unit with official boundaries, although many, especially Americans, carelessly or unknowingly use it to mean exactly that. The territories of independent *states* often fail to match those of nations — in fact the two are sometimes wildly different — which has brought tragic consequences in all parts of the world and in all periods of history. A state peopled by a nationality effectively matched with its territory is called a *nation-state*. To avoid confusion we shall here use the word *country* to denote a sovereign state and its territory, whatever its ethnic or national components may be. A nation, then, is a *cohesive group of people with a sense of shared identity*. It is the largest group that effectively shares it. Not everyone need be genetically

related. But always, it speaks one language.

This comes down to one overwhelming fact: people prefer to live and deal with their own kind, in their own culture. This has always been true — everywhere. No amount of Politically Correct posturing or celebrating of diversity has ever changed this fact of human nature. Note that while ethnicity may involve racial and other visible characteristics, this is not always or necessarily the case, and certainly does not explain all. A feeling of ethnic or national identity can cross racial and descent

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— ***Daniel Patrick Moynihan, 1992***

lines, if the prevailing culture is healthy and confident. Multiethnic, multicultural, multinational societies strongly tend to split apart, though on the surface they may be held together for some time by a strong, often repressively authoritarian regime. During a buildup of ethnic tensions many people, though perhaps growing increasingly uneasy in a vague way, are often unaware of the significance of events taking place before their eyes.

The ethnic-cultural makeup of a country greatly impacts all aspects of a society’s life: social, economic, political, and often physical (war!). As Adam Roberts of Oxford, in his foreword to a book by U.S. Senator Moynihan, remarked in 1992: “There have not been many wars in this century whose origins do not include interethnic hostility in some form, and the failure of national boundaries to reflect ancient or modern ethnic realities.” And Moynihan: “World War II was as much pogrom as anything else, and far the greatest incidence of violence since has been ethnic in nature and origin.”²²

As an overview of what not only can happen but often has, let’s look at specific instances around the world just since the Vietnam War period, a span of hardly over a generation and the time of history we are all familiar with. Our focus is on countries with ethnic

conflicts, separatism, or visible potential for such.

In the many cases where major bloodshed has occurred, a useful “handle” to bring home to Americans the human costs involved is to compare available casualty figures with those of U.S. wars, in terms of deaths in the armed forces as a proportion of the country’s entire population when the war began. By this measure the costliest wars America has fought were:³

- 1) THE CIVIL WAR 1861-1865 (4 years): Total for both sides, 498,000 deaths. The most searing conflict in America’s history, directly taking the lives of *1 in 65* Americans, the proportion of each population similar for both Union and Confederate forces.
- 2) WORLD WAR II, 1941-1945 (3 years, 8 months): 407,000 deaths, *1 in 330* Americans.
- 3) THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR, 1775-1781 (6 years, 7 months) 4,435 deaths (in battle only), *1 in 560* Americans.
- 4) WORLD WAR I, 1917-1918 (1 year, 7 months): 117,000 deaths, *1 in 875* Americans.
- 5) VIETNAM WAR, 1964-1973 (8 years, 6 months): 58,000 deaths, *1 in 3200* Americans.
- 6) Other conflicts: War of 1812 (*1 in 3300*), Korean (*1 in 4100*), Mexican (*1 in 13,000*), Spanish-American (*1 in 30,000*).

In making comparisons, it should also be noted that in all American wars after the Civil War there were no American refugees, since those wars were fought outside American territory. In the examples that follow, refugees often number many times those killed, adding further dimensions to the human cost. With this in mind, we now start our survey of countries with recent ethnic tensions and conflicts.

Europe

Some European countries are relatively homogeneous, in part as a result of earlier conflicts and border changes, but some are not. The most serious ethnic eruptions in recent years have come about in the wake of the collapse and breakup of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in 1991, but troubles have occurred elsewhere as well. We start with Western Europe, relatively tranquil since the end of World War II.

Northern Ireland: Ulster Protestants (“Scots-Irish” descended from Scots settlers planted in the 1600s) are two-thirds of the population, Irish Catholics one-third. Partisans of the latter wish to unite the [province with the Irish Republic, the former to remain under British sovereignty. Terrorist violence on both sides has killed over 3,000 since 1969 (or 1 in 500 of its population). The 1998 political accord remains shaky.

In *Great Britain* itself there is an independence movement among an apparently growing minority in *Scotland*, and a smaller less-organized one in *Wales*.

Belgium is split along its middle between the Dutch-speaking *Flemings* in the North and *Walloon French* in the South. A Flemish separatist party is active. Ethnic tension has periodically erupted in demonstrations and has produced separate institutions.

France is mostly French, except in a few peripheral regions such as *Brittany* (Celtic) and *Alsace* (German), where there have been few problems recently. But on the island of *Corsica*, native Italic-speaking separatists have been blowing up French government buildings.

West and East *Germany*, separated since the end of World War II, affirmed their common nationality by reuniting in 1990 as Cold War barriers crumbled.

Switzerland is often cited as *the* prime example of multiethnic harmony. However, it is a unique case in that its four main groups (German, French, Italian, and Romansch, in that order) each firmly control their own territory with little central government intervention. The Swiss accept few immigrants other than strictly temporary workers.

Austria, with significant legal and illegal immigration since the 1960s of Turkish, Spanish, Italian, and Yugoslav workers who now are established, and more recently receiving many refugees from the Yugoslav strife as well as Romanian, Bulgarian and other job-seekers since the fall of Communism, is trying to become more like Switzerland by restricting further inflow — and is being massively criticized for it.

Italy since its 19th-century unification is effectively

homogeneous. An exception is what Austrians call South Tirol (to Italians Alto Adige, won as spoils of World War I),⁴ which outside two major cities remains Alpine Austrian in culture and character.

Spain has had periodic outbreaks of terrorism and violence from *Basque* separatists who want their own independent homeland. Also, *Catalonia* has its own tongue (more or less between French and Spanish). Many Catalans nurture hopes of independence.

The former Czechoslovakia separated peacefully into two ethnicity-based countries, the *Czech Republic* and *Slovakia*, in 1993. Czechs and Slovaks speak related West Slavic languages. Slovakia contains two sizeable minorities, Hungarians and Gypsies.

Albania has tensions between its Ghegs and Tosks, now eclipsed by other

events.

Former Yugoslavia. In 1991 Yugoslavia split into five countries with that many South Slavic peoples: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, “Yugoslavia” (consisting of *Serbia*, including Kosovo, plus Montenegro), and Macedonia. Majority populations in all save Kosovo speak closely related South Slavic languages but are split by fierce, centuries-old clan and national rivalries complicated by history and religious contrasts. Intense fighting soon erupted between the rump “Yugoslavia” and *Croatia* over Serb-populated areas of the latter, which Serbs wished to include in a “greater Serbia,” and then spread to culturally and religiously mixed *Bosnia* involving three complexly interfingering groups: Bosnians (Muslim), Croats (Roman Catholic) and Serbs (Eastern Orthodox). Only *Slovenia* to the north and *Macedonia* to the south have up to now largely escaped ethnic strife (though there is tension between Slavic Macedonians and a 25 percent minority of ethnic Albanians).

Then, just as these struggles died down through exhaustion and outside-imposed truces, a new one erupted in *Kosovo* (90 percent Albanian-speaking Muslims versus Serbs from within and outside the region) which was, for the time being, quelled by U.S.-led NATO intervention and “interim” international policing

efforts. All these conflicts resulted in large-scale “ethnic cleansing” and massive refugee flows. Reliable figures for dead are lacking, but refugees have amounted to some 4 million (out of 22 million who lived in former Yugoslavia, including a majority of Kosovars, and of Bosnians too if internal refugees are included). Now, *Montenegro* may also split off.

Lands of the Former Soviet Union

Along with the collapse of the Soviet regime in 1991, the fifteen ethnicity-based Union republics quickly broke up one by one to form their own sovereign countries. Then, several of those were soon threatened with breakup themselves.

In 1994, Russian and Ukrainian majorities in the Dniester River plain of culturally Romanian *Moldova* revolted to set up their own state. An uneasy truce now prevails.

The most serious challenges to the new countries have been in the Caucasus Mountain region.⁵ Linguistically Iranian, Muslim *South Ossetia* declared independence from Caucasian, Christian *Georgia* in 1990 and sought to merge with ethnically akin *North Ossetia*, in the Russian Federation. The revolt so far has been suppressed, but some 2,000 have been killed and 43,000 rendered refugees (all told, *1 in 11* Ossetians). Then, in 1992, Georgia’s rule in its northwest region, *Abkhazia* (speaking a different Caucasian tongue) was ended by an Abkhaz revolt that drove Georgians out of the territory. (Some 7,000 dead and 200,000 Georgian refugees, *1 in 17* Georgians).

The greatest conflict to date in Russian Federation territory has been in small breakaway *Chechnya* where ethnic Chechens (Caucasian stock and language, Muslim religion) declared independence in late 1994 and were bloodily suppressed — unsuccessfully — by the Russian army. A 1996 truce left *Chechnya de jure* part of the Russian Federation but *de facto* independent, albeit devastated (some 45,000 dead and 150,000 refugees, altogether a third of all Chechens), as the demoralized Russian troops pulled out. Russian dead has been put at over 80,000⁶ — *considerably exceeding American deaths in over eight years in Vietnam*. A new Russian

military offensive in late 1999 and early 2000 occupied much of *Chechnya* and produced over 200,000 refugees. Still, formidable resistance continues.

Ingushetia, also part of the Russian Federation, has clashed with *North Ossetia* in an effort to reoccupy lands lost during Stalin’s wartime expulsion of Ingush to Central Asia. (The Ossetian displaced number some 60,000, roughly *1 in 6* North Ossetians).

“The most serious challenges to the new countries [of the former Soviet Union] have been in the Caucasus Mountain region.”

A bitter 12-year war between two newly independent South Caucasus countries, *Armenia* (Indo-European language, Christian religion) and *Azerbaijan* (Turkic, Muslim), has raged over Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave inside Azerbaijan but peopled by Armenians. Armenia soon occupied this and surrounding areas amounting to almost 20 percent of Azerbaijan’s territory. Sporadic fighting continues. Those killed are put at “only” 15,000 but Azeri refugees are *over a million*, fully a seventh of its 1990 population. As if this weren’t enough, a detached part of Azerbaijan, *Naxcivan*, seeks independence.

In *Dagestan*, Russia since mid-1999 has been trying to suppress bombings by Turkic Islamic separatists whose people live mostly along the Caspian Sea coast. (Most non-Turks, ethnic Dagestanis who speak 28 Caucasian tongues, live in the mountains.)

Tajikistan is the one Central Asian republic of Iranian rather than Turkic stock and language; a complicated mix of factions have been fighting despite several cease-fires. (30,000 killed, *1 in 190* of population.)

In 1999 an armed insurrection in Turkic *Kyrgyzstan* broke out but was put down.

Other Central Asian areas are at risk, such as the densely settled *Fergana Valley* (Uzbek-Tajik-Kyrgyz

populated). Also the steppes of northern *Kazakstan*, colonized in Krushchev's 1950s-60s "Virgin Lands" program, to the point where Russians and other Europeans, along with groups earlier exiled there by Stalin, came to outnumber the Kazaks in their own country. But since its independence some 2.7 million Russians, Germans, and Ukrainians, plus others, have returned "home," significantly reducing Kazakstan's population from its mid-1990s 17 million to 15 million now, with Turkic Kazaks increasing to over 7 million. Even so, 5 million ethnic Russians remain numerically dominant in the north, and are becoming more assertive.

Soviet-sponsored Slavic immigration produced a similar situation in two of the three Baltic countries. In *Latvia*, the Latvian majority was reduced to 52 percent under the Soviets by the early 1990s, Russians and other Slavs having grown to close to 44 percent. From an ethnic Latvian point of view the breakup of the Soviet Union came barely in time. In Finnic-speaking *Estonia*, the ratio of ethnic Estonians to Slavs is estimated at about 62 percent to 35 percent. Since independence, both countries have instituted discriminatory measures toward Slavs, which predictably have produced ethnic tension with the shoe now on the other foot. *Lithuania* has similar problems but less acutely since Lithuanians remain 80 percent of the population, with Slavs (here including many Poles) at 18 percent.

In the *Russian Federation* itself there are many non-Russian ethnic groups besides Chechens who are uncomfortable with Russian control, who form majorities in their own large or small regions, and might well try to separate at such time as they feel they have a chance. Federation territory includes large and small "autonomous" republics or districts formed around fully 38 non-Russian ethnic groups — from Tatarstan and Kalmykia in Europe, to Tuva and Yakutia in Asia. Although in a number of them Russians have become a majority, this gives some idea of the potential for further breakup. Others exist too. In a moment of critical Russian weakness a further fissioning of nations flying off from the Great Russian center could number in the dozens.

Africa South of the Sahara

It might be noted that many of the troubles described in this region, and some elsewhere, have often

been depreciatingly and hubristically dismissed as the result of "tribalism." But what, really, is the difference between tribal and national loyalties? Tribes are often thought of as small groups living in more or less primitive isolation. But they are in fact bona fide ethnic groups just as nationality groups are, and the human imperative to stick with one's own group is exactly the same. Nor are they necessarily small — some so-called tribes are larger than many recognized national groups. And, as this region shows, the scale of carnage involved in ethnic strife can be fully as great in "tribal" conflicts as in national conflicts where more sophisticated weaponry is employed. The difference between, say, the current plague of troubles in former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda is much less than many tend to assume.

In most of these countries a multiplicity of tongues are spoken — in some, hundreds.

WEST AFRICA

Africa's most populous country, *Nigeria* fought one of the bloodiest wars in recent history when its Ibo-inhabited southeastern region seceded in 1967 as *Biafra*. A classic ethnic war raged for three years before Biafra was crushed. Deaths alone are estimated at over a million, many from starvation (*1 in 60* of Nigeria's population at the time).

Liberia plunged into civil war in 1990-93, ten years after a tribal force overthrew descendants of freed American slaves. Some 1.3 million fled their homes (half the population; deaths nearly 200,000, *1 in 13* Liberians). New fighting in 1996 devastated the capital, Monrovia.

Neighboring *Sierra Leone* has also been ravaged by internal war since 1992 with horrible atrocities. Despite a 1996 peace accord, violence and maiming continues.

In the former Portuguese colony of *Guinea-Bissau* civil strife in 1998 emptied the capital, Bissou, and was stopped only by troops sent in by Senegal and Guinea.

THE SAHARA AND SAHEL TO THE 'HORN' OF AFRICA

Moroccan occupation of *Western Sahara* is resisted by Sahrawi nationalist guerillas.

Chad has long suffered from tension and periodic clashes between Muslims (such as Sudanese Arabs in

east/central regions) and southern Christians and animists.

The Sudan is split between the Arab North and the black non-Muslim (Christian and animist) South. Since the mid-1980s the South has been in rebellion against Sudan's "forced Arabization" policy. The continuing war and famine has resulted in some *two million* deaths (perhaps *1 in 8* in the separatist region) plus *four million* internal refugees alone.

Eritrea gained independence from Ethiopia in 1993, after a bitter 31-year war resulting in some 150,000 Eritreans killed (perhaps *1 in 15*); *half a million* refugees fled to the Sudan.

Most people in *Somalia* speak the same Cushitic language — but are deeply divided at the clan level. (As Moynihan remarked acidly, "Ethnic conflict does not require great differences, small will do.")⁷ Anarchy prevails. The 1992-94 US-UN effort to suppress warlords and alleviate starvation mostly failed. External refugees alone are in six figures.

EQUATORIAL AND EAST AFRICA

Strife in *Uganda* under Idi Amin, 1971-1979, was ostensibly political but often ethnically selective: 300,000 people were murdered or "disappeared" (about *1 in 30* Ugandans). Christians were persecuted, and Uganda's 45,000 entrepreneurial Asian Indians expelled en masse.

Rwanda has two main, contrasting groups: the *Hutu*, a subsistence agricultural Bantu people who have comprised 85-90 percent of the population; and *Tutsi*, tall aristocratic pastoralists of a different stock. Several outbursts of Hutu-Tutsi strife with wholesale massacres since 1963. Near-genocide erupted in 1994, in which roughly 800,000 Tutsis and more moderate Hutus were slaughtered at the hands of Hutu militias or starved (*1 in 16* of the population), and *two million* fled to refugee camps in Congo, many dying of disease.

Burundi is a near-mirror image of Rwanda, with a similar mix of Hutu and Tutsi. Several Hutu coups and Tutsi countercoups were staged after independence in 1962. In 1972 nearly all educated Hutus were

massacred,⁸ and further outbreaks in 1993-1999 brought the total of deaths to nearly *half a million* (*1 in 12* of population), and chiefly Hutu refugees to over 800,000.

Since its independence in 1960 the *Congo* (Zaire, 1971-1997) has been plagued by dictatorship, corruption and anarchy, as well as periodic separatism, violence and civil wars. Most recently, chaos has reigned since the mid-1990s with back-to-back rebellions from the East. A

Congolese general triumphed in the first, aided by Tutsi exiles with support from Uganda and Rwanda; now, *his* regime faces Tutsi-led rebels in the East.

The smaller *Congo Republic* had an outbreak of ethnic hostilities starting in 1997 which devastated and emptied Brazzaville; a Kongo rebel group soon reoccupied it.

In the small former Spanish colony *Equatorial Guinea*, civil violence has taken place on Bioko Island, between the native Bubi and Fang settlers from the mainland region.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Angola has been wracked by almost forty years of rebellion, first against 400,000 Portuguese settlers, who left after 1975. Since then, fighting between three ethnically-based though ostensibly political groups has driven *over a million* from their homes. Outbreaks continued in the 1990s, with Ovimbundu rebels still controlling the South.

Mozambique similarly fought an eleven-year war against Portugal (whose presence dated from 1505), winning independence in 1975. And similarly too, the new leadership was challenged by rival ethnic groups and a long civil war followed. After an agreed peace, some *1.7 million* refugees had returned from across its borders by 1995.

Since establishment in 1994 of a multiethnic government in *South Africa*, an uneasy truce between groups has prevailed. Of its 45 million people, about 70 percent are blacks (Bantu); 17 percent whites (more Afrikaner than English); plus 10 percent "coloureds" (mixed) and 3 percent Asian Indians. But the Bantu

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majority belong to many ethnic groups often at odds; major ones are Zulu (24 percent), Sotho (17 percent), and Xhosa (10 percent). Since the mid-1980s, over 14,000 have been killed in fighting between the now-ruling black coalition and Zulus in the east. Also, disgruntled Afrikaners have become more active since the governmental transfer. Potential for both Black-White and Black-Black conflict on a huge scale is there.

The Near East

Cyprus has been effectively partitioned into two countries of Greek and Turkish nationalities since 1974, when Turkey's army invaded the island in support of their ethnic kin and proclaimed *The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus*. This, and preceding violence and terrorism over Greek majority demands for *enosis* (union) with Greece, produced 200,000 refugees (*I in 3* on the island) and nearly complete ethnic separation.

Israel and Palestine. The Arab-Israeli struggle is essentially an ethnic conflict between two Semitic peoples with deep roots in the region who have grown progressively farther apart in the vicissitudes of history. What brought it to a head was the establishment of a Jewish state in 1947 after large-scale settlement of Jews in a land Arabs had long had as theirs. In 1967 and 1973 surprise Arab attacks were decisively repulsed in brief but major wars.

The people of *Israel*, excluding occupied areas, are 82 percent of Jewish faith (the rest being mostly Islamic Arabs), which overlays strong ethnic divides between and within the Ashkenazi ("Western") and Sephardic ("Eastern") Jews, though their unity as a Jewish island in a hostile Arab sea has proven stronger. But Arab resentment festers.

The Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip contain strongly Palestinian Arab peoples (though a sixth of West Bank's population are post-1967 Jewish settlers. Gaza is essentially one big Palestinian refugee camp). Demands for a sovereign *Palestine* to include both have become very assertive including a general Palestinian uprising or *intifada* in 1989. Tension persists despite recent, reluctant self-rule concessions by Israel.

The Islamic Near East

Although the countries from North Africa to Arabia and Iraq all speak Arabic, those on their northern tier — Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan — are ethnically very different and their national languages have essentially nothing in common with Arabic. While the Arab countries have significant internal strains, most have kept intact in recent decades, whether on account of autocratic governments or the spell of militant Islam.

Lebanon, however, has not. Tensions resulting from faster Muslim growth in this uniquely part-Christian Arab country exploded into civil war in 1975-76; some 60,000 were killed (*I in 50*) during just those two years. Palestinian exiles joining the fray triggered Syrian and Israeli invasions. Outbreaks continued through the 1980s, the country now being effectively partitioned among groups. The foreign troops remain in distinct areas.

Yemen joined with former South Yemen in a merger of similar Arab peoples in 1993.

The Arabs of *Iraq* have their own divides, most conspicuously between Sunni and Shia Muslims. A majority are Shiites, but Sunnis control the government. A Shiite revolt broke out in the south after the Gulf War, but was crushed. And in the north are Kurds.

A major non-Arab (Indo-European, Islamic) group with no state of its own are the 20 million Kurds who predominate in parts of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran — straddling one rugged region the size of Italy. Though Kurds have staged periodic rebellions in several areas, all moves toward an independent *Kurdistan* have thus far been suppressed.

In *Iran* the Azeris, though mostly Shiite Muslims as are Iranians, are ethnically far different as they are of Turkic origin and language; their 15 million are a quarter of Iran's population. They heavily predominate in the Northwest and have 8 million compatriots across the border in independent Azerbaijan — a long-term threat for Iran.

Afghanistan: Most Afghans speak Iranian languages but are chronically divided between feuding

clans, tribes, religious and political factions. These more or less united in fighting the 1980-89 Soviet intervention, which resulted in *two million* Afghans killed and *six million* fleeing to Pakistan and Iran (in all, *half* the population). When the Soviets gave up, internal fighting resumed, with a militant Islamic faction now mostly in control.

South Asia

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(The Indian Subcontinent)

Predominantly Hindu *India* and Muslim *Pakistan* were carved out of former British India in 1947, that religious partition accompanied by wholesale bloodshed and many millions fleeing in both directions across the new borders. In 1971 Bengalis of then-East Pakistan, separated from West Pakistan by a thousand miles of Indian territory, rebelled to form their own country, *Bangladesh*. Pakistani repression and ensuing strife produced *ten million* refugees and ended with an Indian invasion to seal the secession.

In India 25 languages are spoken by more than a million people each, 15 of them having been given official status as the basis of Indian states. Northern India speaks mostly Indo-European tongues, the southern peninsula several Dravidian languages. Overlaying all these is the Hindu religion. Even so, Islam is practiced by about a seventh of India's current population of a full billion, the ostensible religious division having left a huge Indian Muslim minority. The major cultural bond among educated Indians of all groups is the English language, but officially Hindi is being pushed to replace it.

India and Pakistan have fought over the northern “crown” of the Subcontinent, *Kashmir*, during the whole

half-century since independence. Overwhelmingly Muslim, it is still divided along a cease-fire line across which firing has never stopped for long. In Indian-held Jammu and Kashmir state, guerilla activity is at a high pitch with Muslim militants now fighting more for independence than for union with Pakistan. Depending on whom one believes, deaths there just since 1989 have numbered 24,000 to 80,000. (Even in the lower range, this is a greater proportion than U.S. World War II deaths.)

Kashmir is hardly the only part of India with a separatist threat. In the *Punjab* region an uprising of Sikhs, whose religion combines elements of Hinduism and Islam, was put down bloodily in 1984 and in 1988 with thousands killed and other searing incidents occurring since. *Tamil* separatists in the South are blamed for assassinating former Prime Minister Rajiv Ghandi in 1991. In *Assam*, thousands died in ethnic violence in 1993. Other northeastern trouble spots have involved hill peoples such as the Naga who have been given separate recognition as the small Indian state of *Nagaland*; also what might be called a “binational” state of *Meghalaya* (joining the very unlike Baro and Khasi peoples). Ironically, it often happens that such concessions have not mollified the aspiring peoples for long, but on the contrary have whetted appetites for more autonomy and independence — in very different parts of the world.

Sri Lanka (Ceylon) suffers from a savage and protracted conflict between the majority Sinhalese (Indo-European, Buddhist) and *Tamil* separatists (Dravidian, Hindu) who are close to a fifth of the population and have been fighting for an independent homeland on the north and east of the island, where they predominate. Since the mid-1980s well over 60,000 have died in the war and associated terrorism (*about 1 in 270* of the island's 1985 population, a greater proportion than American World War II losses). In the fiery flareups at the end of the 1990s some 800,000 Tamils fled to India, adding to earlier flows in which many reached the U.S.

East Asia

The 1.2 billion people of Mainland *China* are a fifth of all humanity. Moreover, fully 95 percent of them live in its well-watered eastern half, the arid inland half being its “wild west.” Although the eastern core region contains many non-Chinese minorities (55 in all are recognized), these are dominated by the huge number of Han Chinese, 92 percent of the country's total. The Han

themselves speak many mutually unintelligible languages (often miscalled dialects) but the vigorously imposed Mandarin is now spoken by more people than all others combined and now can be understood in all parts of China. Then too, all *Chinese* languages have long been written in a single ideographic script.

Nevertheless, China cannot yet be said to be effectively unified. The peoples of the western half, notwithstanding their comparatively small numbers, are numerically still dominant in the larger part of that area, and culturally vastly different. But all of them are objects of a steady, deliberate inundation through a government policy of settling Chinese among them, with resulting cultural-ethnic conflicts.

In these territories (officially called “autonomous regions”) that tide has reached the highest level in *Inner Mongolia*, whose population is now over 90 percent Han Chinese. These occupy mostly its less arid fringes which can support larger populations, the drier and larger area adjoining independent *Outer Mongolia* still being peopled mainly, albeit necessarily thinly, by Mongols who practice a Lamaistic Buddhism of the Tibetan type.

The two main, Turkic-speaking peoples of *Xinjiang*,⁹ the Uygurs in oasis centers ringing its southern desert and pastoral Kazaks in the north, formed the short-lived Republic of East Turkistan until annexed by Mao’s China in 1950. Since then China’s control has been nearly total while a continuing policy-driven influx of Chinese has made them a majority (especially in the northeast half of the territory). During the 1990s, incidents such as blowing up of Chinese facilities have erupted as rebellious groups of Uygurs protest what they see as Han colonization of their homeland.

Tibet, home of a unique Lamaistic Buddhist people, is the world’s prime current example of outright invasion followed by a systematic attempt to obliterate a major ancient culture and replace it with that of the invaders. In 1950 Mao’s forces attacked and defeated the small Tibetan army with massive killing of resisters and destruction of monasteries, its cultural linchpin. After an abortive Tibetan uprising in 1959, the Dalai Lama, Tibet’s

head of state and spiritual leader, fled with 100,000 followers and set up an exile government in India’s Himalayan fringes (joined since by 80,000 more). His office estimates that *1.2 million* Tibetans have perished as a result of Chinese occupation, well over a third in combat, including uprisings, the rest as a result of famine, execution, torture, imprisonment, and forced labor. By the mid-1970s only *eight* of Tibet’s former 6,000+ monasteries and nunneries still operated, as closely monitored token facilities — the rest were razed. In an effort to swamp the native population, *7½ million* Chinese settlers and soldiers backing them have been sent to Tibet (this compares with a total of 6 million Tibetans: 2 million in a Chinese-defined rump Tibet plus 4 million in Qinghai⁹ and western Sichuan, historic parts of Tibet annexed by the Chinese regime).¹⁰

In the present situation it may seem that Tibetans and their 2,000-year-old culture are doomed to extinction or permanent submergence under the Chinese; and that may well happen, as indeed it already has to the Manchus of Manchuria who not so very long ago ruled all China — but a caveat is that over history, extensive and well-established cultures have been very resistant to being wiped out and also quite resilient when opportunity reappears. And in the long run the Chinese might prove not so adaptable to Tibetan altitudes (the plateau averages 15,000 feet), which over millennia seem to have given highlanders inherited physiological advantages in coping with it.

Southeast Asia

Both mainland and insular parts of this tropical region have populations that range from very sparse to extremely dense. Most of them have seen early cultural influences from both China and India, and Arab traders were influential in Indonesia and Malaysia where Islam holds sway. And Islam is overwhelmingly dominant in Indonesia. The Philippines is the only predominantly Christian state in all eastern Asia (83 percent Roman Catholic), a legacy of over three centuries of Spanish rule.

Burmans are 70 percent of the total population of *Myanmar*, but several non-Burman groups (e.g. the

Shan) prevail in regions where Burma has long faced unrest or revolt. In an ongoing rebellion, *Karen* separatists have had thousands killed, with 100,000 refugees now across the Thai border. And in 1992, 200,000 Indian Muslims fled to Bangladesh, though many have since returned (until next time?).

Two years after formation of the Federation of *Malaysia*, the offshore island-city of *Singapore* was expelled in 1965, due entirely to the country's ethnic divide: mainland Malays feared domination by its Overseas Chinese and their economic power. So, the island with its 77 percent ethnic Chinese is going it alone, and very successfully, thank you.

Vietnam has for centuries had a north-south cultural divide stemming from Chinese cultural influences in the north and Indian in the south. Vietnamese dominate both regions in numbers but several minority peoples predominate in the larger area. After the Vietnam War (Cold War-driven with both sides using ethnic schisms), some 140,000 Chinese fled as "boat people" from Vietnamese harassment to Hong Kong (many later reaching the U.S.). The underlying north-south differences remain.

The Khmer Rouge mass relocation and slaughter in *Cambodia* during the mid-1970s was more ideological than ethnic, though no less horrendous for that. But Vietnamese invasions of the 1970s and 1980s certainly had some ethnic motivation.

Roughly half the 220 million people of *Indonesia* live, incredibly, on the single island of Java. Early cultural influences were from India (Indonesia means "Indian Islands") which spread both Hinduism and Buddhism, both of which later influenced the form of Islam which 87 percent of its population now follows (brought by Arab traders in the 14th-15th centuries). Christianity, introduced mostly via the Dutch, is professed by 9 percent. Major languages are of the Malay group, many islands having their own tongue.

Like the other countries of Southeast Asia, Indonesia has a significant immigrant-descended Overseas Chinese population with economic strength beyond their numbers. These believe they were made scapegoats when in 1965 after an attempted coup, 300,000 were killed in army-led massacres as alleged Communists.

There is also *regional* ethnic dissension. In the *Aceh* region at the north end of Sumatra, separatist fighters have been carrying on an insurgency since the 1970s. An independence movement in the *South Moluccas* has been active since the early 1980s; in early 2000, violence escalated between Muslims and Christians on Ceram.

In *East Timor*, Portuguese control from about 1520 produced a society distinct from the general Indonesian, most notably in that its people are mainly Roman Catholic. Portugal's granting of independence in 1975 was thwarted by an Indonesian invasion. The UN estimates that during the 24 years of Indonesian occupation, 225,000 (or *1 in 3*) East Timorese were killed or died in resulting famines. Then, in August 1999, its people voted 78 percent in favor of independence in a UN supervised election. Indonesia promptly turned its militias loose on the island, who produced almost total chaos with 230,000 refugees fleeing or forcibly taken to Indonesian West Timor, and perhaps as many internal refugees bringing the displaced to over half the East's population. A hastily improvised Australian-led peacekeeping force restored a measure of order, but over a human landscape almost totally devastated. Finally Indonesia gave up; a UN commission is now charged with preparing the region for independence.

In mostly rainforest-covered *Irian Jaya* (western New Guinea), the Papuan people are very different, tribally grouped black hunter-gatherers of animistic beliefs speaking some 250 tongues (some different from one village to the next within a day's walking distance) and most of whom have hardly entered the 20th century. However, Indonesia has been fostering a continuing large-scale "transmigration" with over 250,000 having moved there — 1 in 8 of its population are now Malay-speaking brown Indonesians. A Papuan independence movement was smashed by the Indonesian army during the 1970s and 1980s, leaving thousands of guerillas dead. New outbreaks occurred through the 1990s. Papuans fear being inundated, but lack effective unity and organization.

Oceania

This region consists of far more water than land, including Australia and thousands of far-flung islands in the Pacific. Its oceanic vastness is conventionally

subdivided into three major regions: Melanesia (“black islands”) from New Guinea to New Caledonia to Fiji; Micronesia (“tiny islands”) from the Marianas including Guam to Palau to the Marshalls and Gilberts; and Polynesia (“many islands”) bounded roughly by the enormous triangle with apexes at New Zealand, Hawaii, and Easter Island. Excepting Australia and New Guinea, its original peoples speak Austronesian tongues. Ethnic tension most notably exists today in five of the region’s political units.

In *Papua New Guinea* about 715 indigenous languages have been counted, more than in any country on earth. Roughly 84 percent of its people are of Papuan stock and languages, the rest “New Guinea Melanesians” in certain coastal and island areas. Fighting between government forces and secessionist rebels on Bougainville (who want to join the nearby independent and ethnically similar *Solomon Islands*) cost some 20,000 lives in the 10 years prior to 1997, when a truce was signed.

New Caledonia is a French overseas territory. Indigenous Melanesians make up about 42 percent of the population of nearly 200,000, with Europeans, mostly French, close behind at 37 percent. New Caledonian voters in a 1987 referendum chose to retain ties with France — after which there were riots including clashes between Melanesians (“Kanaks”) and the French. An accord signed in 1998 provided for a 15-20 year period of “shared sovereignty” between the groups with France committing to a gradual increase in autonomy. As formerly in Algeria before the mass French exodus resulting from independence, the large number of French settlers with their very different European culture presents a troublesome problem regarding its future status.

In *Fiji*, indigenous Fijians (Melanesian) are 49 percent of the population, and descendants of 19th century British-introduced Indian contract plantation fieldworkers have grown to 46 percent. (Fijians are Christian; Indians a 5-to-1 Hindu-Muslim mix). Fijian politics are dominated by this ethnic divide, and in 1987 Indians succeeded in electing an Indian-led government. It was quickly ousted in two coups staged by the Fijian-

run army, and in 1990 a new constitution guaranteed Fijian control. Ethnic tension continues.

The widely scattered islands of *French Polynesia* form a French overseas territory. A third of its land area and well over half the population is on Tahiti. Polynesians dominate numerically with 78 percent, Chinese are about 12 percent. French make up the remaining 10 percent (6 percent local French, 4 percent metropolitan French), and hold political power, but in recent years an open desire for independence has appeared among Polynesians.¹¹

The Americas

The New World is in many ways a reflection of the Old, in that those descended from European conquerors or settlers control the major countries today. In the broadest sense there are four groups: 1) Descendants of the earliest known migrants, mis-called Indians; 2) Descendants of white European settlers/conquerors, typically a merging of several European groups into a single nationality sharing a common Western culture and language; 3) European-Indian mixtures, commonly called mestizos in Spanish-speaking regions, who, in many countries have come to predominate while retaining basic aspects of European culture such as language; 4) Descendants of African slaves brought in by Europeans during the mid-16th to mid-19th centuries, now in various situations from majority control to minorities ranging from assimilated to slighted. Often they retain distinct cultural traits though speaking European languages.

Populations of American Indians were decimated by European contact, partly from conquest and harsh treatment but more from diseases to which they had acquired little natural immunity. Only in the last century have their numbers begun to rebound in a modest way, though often from a small base. They and their basic cultures now form majorities or something approaching it in only four countries.

Countries where European-descended whites are a majority are also relatively few in the Americas, but four of them cover huge and important areas. From south to north they are Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, the United States, and Canada.

Countries in Latin America with mixed or mestizo majority populations run the gamut from Chile to Mexico. These genetic mixtures are mostly Indian-white in various proportions, ranging from rather heavily European in Chile to rather heavily Indian in Mexico. The large mixed populations tend to be politically in control, frequently in conjunction with a white European minority. Majorities in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico are mixed European-African, of Spanish speech and culture.

African-descended blacks have political control in Belize, Jamaica, and Haiti, as well as in the small independent eastern Caribbean island countries.

Although about 55 percent of the 170 million people of *Brazil* are of European descent — Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, German, and others, though virtually all speak Portuguese — the North and South are quite distinct racially. Various mixtures of white, black and Indian are 34 percent of the total population, and “pure” blacks perhaps 11 percent (“native” Indians are only 0.1 percent). Mixed-bloods and other people “of color” are a majority in the regions from São Paulo state north, while the three states to its south are overwhelmingly European in descent (like nearby Argentina and Uruguay). In this southern Brazilian region a political movement to separate from the polyglot North has existed for some years.

The three countries astride the central Andes — *Peru*, *Bolivia*, and *Ecuador* — by contrast, have high Indian populations today, forming 40 percent to 60 percent of each country’s total and a large majority in the high plateaus except in a few major cities. Quechua (the language of the Incas) is spoken as first language by some 8 million, and the related Aymara in the Lake Titicaca region by about 2 million. (In terms of primary ancestry, these groups are perhaps twice those numbers.) In the coastal regions Spanish-speaking mestizos predominate. These, allied with a white minority, are in political control in all three countries, the Indians still marginalized as a legacy of the Spanish conquest of over four and a half centuries ago. Highland Indian revolts have occurred in the past and could again, with reviving Indian awareness of their ethnic-cultural roots and recent Indian-based guerrilla and terrorist activity in Peru especially. The survival of a highland Indian majority through the centuries may be due in part to

better physiological adaptation to altitudes of 12,000-15,000 feet at which so much of the region lies. (The highest human habitations on earth are here, at 16,000-ft. levels.)

Colombia has been wracked in the last half-century by political violence both rural and urban. Something like 200,000 lives were lost in *La Violencia* of 1948-58. Since 1987 an estimated 35,000 (1 in 900 of pop.) have been killed in the troubles. While an ethnic component exists, economic (today especially drug trade) rivalries have dominated.

In offshore *Trinidad and Tobago* as well as in the nearby mainland countries of *Guyana* and *Suriname*, blacks are large minorities of 30-40 percent, but in all three there are similar or greater numbers of East Indians or “Hindustanis” (Hindu and some Muslim), and in Suriname a large element of Javanese (Muslim); the Asians descend from 19th-century plantation contract laborers brought in after slavery ended.

In all three there has been simmering ethnic tension. Asian groups in Trinidad have attempted two coups. Just before Suriname’s independence in 1975 there was a mass exodus of mainly Asian Indians who feared the ending of Dutch rule, in which some 40 percent of the then-population emigrated (chiefly to Netherlands).¹² Throughout the 1980s an organized group of interior Suriname’s riverine “Bush Blacks,” descended from early escaped slaves, ran a guerrilla campaign that halted with an uneasy peace in 1990.

The island territories of *Martinique* and *Guadeloupe* are each full departments of France with proportional representation in the French parliament. Their people are chiefly black and mixed-race descendants of slaves, speaking Creole dialects of French. Separatist violence has occurred since the 1970s in both, despite French concessions.

Among the small population of *Belize*, blacks (“Creoles”) and mestizos are the two most numerous groups; also Maya Indians, Garifunas (black-Indian mixtures), plus some whites and Asian Indians. Guatemala has long claimed “Belize” and Britain keeps a troop contingent there as a deterrent. But a Spanish-speaking mestizo inflow persists.

Guatemala is the one country in Central America

where “pure” American Indians may outnumber mestizos (figures given vary with definitions). In any case, estimates show that at least 40 percent of Guatemalans speak one of 23 Maya dialects as their first language. Most live in the highlands. Other than a few major centers like Guatemala City where Spanish ways dominate, Maya culture is very much apparent everywhere.

Guatemala has suffered severely since the 1960s from political and ethnic violence, coups, assassinations, and insurgencies with regional guerrilla and terrorist activity involving several Maya groups pitted against the government and its paramilitary allies, with innocent villagers forced to choose sides caught in the middle. During the last 35 years of off-and-on violence some 150,000 people have been killed, 50,000 “disappeared,” and a *million* rendered refugees (most to Mexico despite that country’s efforts to stop the flow and forcibly return them, and many reaching the U.S. through “underground pipelines”) — all from a 1968 population of 5 million (today 12 million).

The huge and growing population of *Mexico*, now past 100 million and concentrated heavily in the southern part of its great central plateau, is ethnically about 60 percent mestizo, 30 percent indigenous Indian, and 9

“[In Mexico] the late 20th century has seen a discernible reawakening of Indian consciousness.”

percent white, chiefly Spanish. (The Indian-white admixture in mestizos favors the Indian by perhaps 3 to 1.) The Indian population is hardly monolithic with some 50 languages spoken, many not speaking Spanish at all. “Pure” Indians, despite being glorified officially and in literature and song, and many having a rich heritage of advanced civilizations, are still Mexico’s poorest citizens and very much marginalized from the mestizo-Spanish mainstream of national life. In truth, the diverse indigenous peoples have never recovered from the Spanish *conquista* five centuries ago.

The late 20th century, however, has seen a discernible reawakening of Indian consciousness. The

greatest of Mexico’s several Indian-majority regions is its Southeast (Yucatan Peninsula and parts of Tabasco and Chiapas states), where Maya predominate outside a few major cities. While Maya is not a unified language, one or another Maya dialect is spoken by at least a million people there (plus several millions in Guatemala). These were the last major people to be subdued by the Spanish, and several Maya revolts later occurred. During 1994 there was an uprising in eastern *Chiapas* among a group of Maya highland farmers, suppressed by Mexican troops; discontent still festers. Mexico’s whole Maya region has to be regarded as an area of potential separatism.

On the north flank of the United States, *Canada* is a state (country) composed of two distinct nations — one English-speaking and one French, the original settlement of French having preceded the English. Britain’s defeat of French forces in 1759 opened Canada to a British (and American Royalist) influx, making English the majority language and culture. French settlement of land, however, was already firmly established in the St. Lawrence lowlands, where French culture and language predominate today as much as ever. The largest number of Canada’s total present population is of British Isles (including Irish) origin, numbering overall about 40 percent of its 31 million people. Non-French Continental Europeans account for 20 percent, and people of other overseas origins (especially Asian) have increased to 12 percent. Indigenous people, American Indian and Inuit, today make up only 1.5 percent of the total. It is important to note, however, that among the non-French groups English is almost always the new language of choice, so Canada’s “Anglophones” can be put at around 70 percent.

French-Canadian “Francophones” are a quarter of the Canadian population, an extremely significant grouping heavily concentrated in *Quebec*. Since the early 1960s, Quebec nationalism has become increasingly assertive, with the province in 1976 and 1980 electing an avowedly separatist government whose measures to insure the survival of French have extended to legal suppression of English in commerce and education. In 1980 the Quebec electorate voted 60 percent to 40 percent against secession from Canada (which means nearly half the Francophone voters approved). In late 1995 a second referendum was held, with the “yes” vote

this time failing by a razor-thin margin of only one percent. A large majority of French voted for secession, the margin against attributable to the Quebec Anglophone minority who naturally voted as a bloc. Another plebiscite is promised at what Québécois leaders find an opportune time, with demographic trends favoring the French — as English-speakers, chiefly in the Montreal area and shrunk to half their former 20 percent of Quebec's population, continue to leave.

If (some say when) Quebec does secede, it would create enormous problems for what would be left of Canada. The four Atlantic Provinces would be physically separated from the rest of English Canada by a now-foreign country occupying half the present country's demographic heartland. Not that passage would likely be denied — the main question here is not so much whether Quebec could go it alone (it could), as whether the rest of Canada could hold together should Quebec leave. Might the economically depressed Atlantic Provinces at some point form their own country or countries, or perhaps petition to join the United States? In any case, Ontario, which has a population equal to the rest of English Canada combined, would politically dominate whatever is left. Would the more prosperous western provinces, already at political odds with the East, long submit to that, or would they too choose to separate?

And now, what about the American Nation?

By any measure, this record of ethnic troubles should give one pause. The tally for the cases mentioned here, just in the short time period since the latter 1960s, is about fifty sovereign countries either having had ethnically related *wars* (civil or external) or major separatist violence or terrorism.¹³ And at least another twenty-five have either regional ethnic troubles or visible tensions, separatist activity and so on. Adding others not mentioned which have not been particularly active or noticed during those 35 years or so, but with explosive potential depending on developments, certainly brings them to well over half the present 194 sovereign countries (states) on earth. Then, a number of countries face several separate problems involving different groups; this survey alone lists in italics no less than 120 specific regions of ethnic troubles or tensions — and many others (e.g., in Russia and Africa) have been omitted for reasons of space. These are all multiethnic/

multicultural/ multinational countries. Countries uniting during this time are only two — Germany and Yemen — but those involved peoples of the same nationality. Garrett Hardin stated the proper goal thus: “unity within nations, coupled with diversity among nations.”¹⁴ Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn has said virtually the same.

What do these troubles — affecting all parts of the world — portend for the United States? The American nation has, until recently, been largely free of such concerns. The major problem of this kind had been the legacy of black slavery from before the Civil War. By the 1960s America was finally making visible progress toward effectively integrating its black population into the

“The Politically Correct view, now riding high, is to encourage diversity and multiculturalism, the opposite of the assumption once held by virtually all Americans, that new immigrant groups would assimilate as they have in the past.”

nation, as the last major group to achieve it. Descendants of the several waves of 19th and early 20th century European immigrants had for the most part been successfully assimilated. But that trend slowed, then broke in the wake of the 1965 immigration law. Naively intended as a modest humanitarian gesture, it has in fact opened the floodgates for massive chain migration of Third World peoples of disparate cultures who can soon bring in relatives, crowding out quotas to the point that Europeans can now squeeze in only with great difficulty. Less than one in ten new immigrants to the U.S. are now of European origin and culture.

The Politically Correct view, now riding high, is to encourage diversity and multiculturalism, the opposite of the assumption once held by virtually all Americans, that new immigrant groups would assimilate as they have in the past. The processes that set this in motion and have sustained it to the present are beyond our scope here, but

have been amply explained and documented in detail by Peter Brimelow in his eye-opening book *Alien Nation*. In any case, the demographic makeup of the U.S. is changing swiftly, fundamentally, led by legal immigration and deepened by illegal immigration, both of which the American nation seems to have lost the will to stop or even significantly slow. Post-1965 Third World immigrants and their descendants will easily become an actual majority within the next half-century or so if present trends are not checked.¹⁵ In Brimelow's words: *There is no precedent for a sovereign country undergoing such a radical and rapid transformation of its ethnic character in the entire history of the world.*¹⁶ (Excepting only some cases of forced intrusion by conquerors and occupiers, *not* naively encouraged by the affected country itself.)

As a number of the worldwide examples cited here show clearly, rapid change in ethnic composition is one of the prime fuses leading to explosions of ethnic conflict and strife. In America these changes were wholly unnecessary, the troubles now looming from it self-inflicted. Many Americans, both liberal and conservative, including many in high places, still are blind to the existence of a problem and favor even higher immigration rates to further increase "diversity."

But diversity of this kind and on such a scale can become divisive, as the world has seen happen again and again, and yet again. Ethnic consciousness and affinity are primordial, closely akin to family ties. Family, clan, tribe, nation — these terms denote the same human impulse, deeply rooted in human nature. It is by all indications instinctual and cannot be wished away. In our reluctance to firmly limit immigration, we are planting seeds of grief not seen in this country since the Civil War. But we clearly do see it when we look realistically at multicultural countries in other parts of the world.

Even so, this has made as yet little impression on many Americans. It all seems so far away, so foreign to the American experience. It is underreported in the news media. And, among the public and news media alike, a knowledge of history and human geography is woefully lacking. Consequently, there is a failure to see these situations for what they are, part of a worldwide upsurge in ethnic consciousness and a desire of each group for an independent existence, overwhelming assiduously promoted notions of political unity based on class or ideology. How far this process will go there is no telling,

but the drive has existed throughout human history, dormant at certain times and places, breaking out in others. And with the huge flow into the U.S. of ethnically and culturally very different peoples since roughly 1970, coupled with birthrates below replacement levels among native-born Americans, it is coming to the United States with breathtaking speed.

Assimilation was indeed effectively occurring during the middle decades of the twentieth century when the U.S. had a "breather" from immigration, and quotas for those who did come were roughly in proportion to the existing ethnic makeup of the American majority, thus keeping it stable. Even the relatively few of non-European backgrounds were assimilating, precisely because they were just that — few. But during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, assimilation has not just slowed, it has reversed. It is now apparent that America has exceeded its capacity for assimilating large, culturally contrasting groups. While some outstanding individuals are successfully fitting in (and consequently receive dotting coverage in the media), more simply are not. Especially among the larger immigrant groups, many are not learning English in more than rudimentary form, if at all.

Partly this lack of assimilation is a matter of numbers, partly of official policy. Increasingly, newcomers don't need to. All this is exacerbated by fashionable celebrations of diversity, multilingual education (*multi* meaning anything but English), and official disincentives to becoming part of the American culture that immigrants presumably came here to join.

What will be the end result of all this? In the absence of major changes in U.S. immigration law and practice within a few years, it's not hard to foresee. In a word, America could become balkanized. If one piece breaks off, others may follow as various ethnic groups who have coalesced into regional patterns unpredictable in detail form their own separate nation-states. Although the processes that could bring this about are fully discernible, most Americans still cannot envision such a future, secure in a naïve faith that this country will always be here for them and their descendants no matter what.

The situation is not yet hopeless. An American wake-up might still come in time to avert national disintegration. A rational first step would be a moratorium on legal immigration until new priorities with greatly

reduced quotas can be sorted out, coupled with a thoroughgoing effort to halt the illegal flow and regain control of U.S. borders. All this can certainly be done (illegal entries were stopped cold in the mid-1950s). The crucial question is: can America muster the will to do it in these liberally minded times?

Immigrants already here and their descendants would not be the least to benefit from a major reduction of new immigration. They came, after all, seeking a better life than the one they had left, which will not be possible to achieve if the flow continues to inundate America's capacity either to generate decent employment opportunities or maintain social cohesion. And no group, immigrant or native, will benefit if America's population balloons to approach the densities of India or China, as it certainly will during this century if the current influx continues unabated.

Will we be forgiven by our descendants if we allow this to happen? The chances of dissolution of the American republic before a tricentennial can be celebrated may now well be, shall we say, fifty-fifty. A fateful coin has been flipped, and it is in the air. €

NOTES

¹ The 70 percent figure is an estimate pending U.S. Census 2000 results. It does not include Near Easterners (mostly Arab and Iranian) as European, although official U.S. classifications count these as white.

² Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Pandaemonium: Ethnicity in International Politics*. Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. X and 54.

³ U.S. casualty figures from *The World Almanac and Book of Facts 2000*, p.217. Numbers of wounded normally exceed the dead, but figures for killed and refugees are simpler, more available, and less ambiguous. Statistics for the Revolutionary War and War of 1812 count battle dead only. (For subsequent U.S. wars, "other deaths" are included.) Various sources used here for other world regions include news media reports.

⁴ South Tirol as referred to here denotes the northern area bordering present-day Austria, *not* the Trentino region to the south which does have a large ethnic Italian majority; both were transferred to Italy in 1918 as one package. This as a part of the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after World War I, its territory apportioned among seven different new and existing countries in a classic case of ethnic partition — but in this case Austrians were separated from *their* country. That great war itself had been triggered by an ethnicity-based incident, the assassination of the heir to the Austrian throne by a Serb nationalist in Sarajevo, capital of

then-Austrian-ruled Bosnia.

⁵ An outstanding map of languages in the Caucasus grouped by type, graphically showing the region's ethnocultural complexity, along with a brief article giving summaries of recent conflicts and estimates of casualties and refugees, is in *National Geographic*, Feb. 1996, pp.126-131. Figures from that piece have been used here.

⁶ The 80,000 figure is from *The Economist*, Sept. 25, 1999, p.59. Worth noting is that on his first day in office, Russia's leader Vladimir Putin visited Russian troops in Chechnya who were besieging its nearby capital Grozny, and told them, "This is about how to bring about the end of the breakup of Russia, that is your fundamental goal." (Associated Press dispatch, Jan. 3, 2000) A neat play of language — Putin was referring to Russia the *state*, of which Chechnya is officially a part. But Chechens consider their region, and people, as *nation*, which in the true sense of the word it is — a nation in the process of attempting to become a sovereign state of its own, against all odds. If anything, they are persistent; they repeatedly fought the czars during the 19th century, and returned as a people in the 1950s after mass deportation by Stalin to Central Asia during World War II. But Russia is clearly worried about how the other non-Russian nationalities it contains would react to a completed Chechen secession.

⁷ Moynihan, p.15.

⁸ *Encyclopedia of World Geography*. Oxford: Andromeda Oxford Ltd. (Barnes & Noble revised ed., New York, 1995), p.176.

⁹ In the now-favored Pinyin transliteration of Chinese into Roman script, the letter X is pronounced as the English *sh*, and Q as *ch*.

¹⁰ Overall figures given by Tendzin Choegyal, brother and advisor to the Dalai Lama, in remarks at a seminar delivered at Hillsdale College, Michigan in autumn 1998 and published in its newsletter *Imprimis*, April 1999. Breakdown as follows: died in combat 433,000; from famine 343,000; in imprisonment 173,000; from execution 157,000; from torture 93,000; driven to suicide 9,000; see Joseph Fallon, "Undermining Tibet's Moral Claims," *The Social Contract*, Summer 1997, pp.255-58.

¹¹ See Peter Benchley, "French Polynesia," *National Geographic*, June 1997, pp.2-29, for some observations on recently developing ferment for independence there.

¹² *The World Almanac 2000*, p.862.

¹³ Forty of those fifty have undergone major wars having ethnic roots. In ten of them the conflicts are actively raging even as this is written.

¹³ The quote is taken from Hardin's essay, "The Conservation of Diversity," his preface in *The Immigration*

Dilemma: Avoiding the Tragedy of the Commons, p.iii, Washington, D.C.: The Federation for American Immigration Reform.

¹⁵ According to U.S. Bureau of the Census projections, based on (1) recent rates of immigration by regions of origin, (2) low rates of natural increase (births over deaths) of

native-born Americans, compared with (3) much higher natural increase for the most numerous recent immigrant groups including second-generation descendants.

¹⁶ Peter Brimelow, *Alien Nation: Common Sense about America's Immigration Disaster*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995, p.129 (The emphasis is Brimelow's.)