IN THIS ISSUE

In his article "The Coming Anarchy," published in *The Atlantic Monthly,* (February 1994), Robert Kaplan offered a grim vision of the twenty-first century world: collapsing states, environmental degradation, global pandemics, a tidal wave of refugees, and a return to a pre-modern style of war that resembles more a kind of brutish and undisciplined high tech criminal brigandage. While Kaplan's view is an extreme one, events in Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda lend credibility to his overall thesis. At the heart of many of the current conflicts lies the question of "ethnicity." When the political process cannot accommodate the competing expectations of ethnic groups or ameliorate the differences between them, or if the state itself collapses, ethnic war may result. Ethnic war is the over-arching theme which links many of the contributions in this issue.

Quebec and Northern Ireland are examined in two articles and a review essay, and they offer a study in contrasts. Christopher Hewitt's study of separatist violence in Quebec attempts to explain why Quebec did *not* follow the same path into turmoil as did Northern Ireland. Hewitt asserts that the political position of the two minorities — Francophone Canadians and Northern Irish Catholics — were profoundly different, that the FLQ campaign produced polarization within the Francophone community, not between English and French, and that the use of emergency powers was legitimized for the Quebecois by their own press and political leaders. He concludes that the dominant paradigm for analyzing communal conflict — the grievance model — was not appropriate for Quebec's situation and may not be relevant to other conflicts.

Jennifer Cornell also addresses critically a dominant paradigm — the belief that the fundamental problem of intergroup conflict is individual prejudice, and that this can be "cured" by cross-community contact. Cornell examines such efforts undertaken in the context of Northern Ireland, and finds them wanting. She concludes that existing efforts have not reduced prejudice because such programs focus on individual contacts, whereas what is needed is inter-group contact, which can arise only from a changed political atmosphere. She also challenges the basic validity of the contact model itself which, she argues, is based on flawed assumptions.

John Darby's review essay of three books dealing with ethnic conflict points to a need for new analytical and theoretical tools to study the problem and to allow scholars to contribute usefully to conflict resolution. He observes that the consensus emerging from the three volumes is that ethnic conflict can no longer be seen as abnormal; it is now a routine part of politics.

One of the analytical tools that can be brought to the study of any problem is to challenge the "conventional wisdom." This is what Brendan O'Leary and John McGarry set out to do in their book on Northern Ireland. Reviewer Dennis Kennedy, however, finds that the volume falls short of its goal, in part owing to methodological problems and in part due to explicit partisanship in the authors' writing. For these reasons, Kennedy does not recommend the book as a "stand alone" introduction to the Northern Ireland conflict.

As this issue went to press, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remained a high-profile policy problem in Washington and at the United Nations. The controversy surrounding North Korea's suspected nuclear weapons program remained unresolved. Andrew Terrill examines a different, but nonetheless important, proliferation problem: that associated with the alleged Libyan chemical weapons program. Terrill concludes that the Libyan government has made a major effort to produce chemical weapons, that such an effort is consistent within Libyan foreign policy, that it represents a danger to peace, and that steps ought to be taken against the Libyan program. He does not, however, suggest what those steps should be.

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