

# Crisis and Conflict Potentials in a New World Order

by Dr. N. Gass

*A new methodology is being developed to analyze present and future crisis and conflict potentials of small or large geopolitical regions. A set of criteria is used to describe the present economic, social, political, and military conditions of a country and the future criteria trends. A multi-criteria decision analysis model is invoked to compute the crisis and conflict potentials under simultaneous consideration of all other countries in that region. The methodology is demonstrated in the crisis and conflict potentials analysis of the former USSR republics including bordering countries.*

*NOTE: A detailed version of this paper is being published in the Journal of the Royal Operational Research Society.*

## INTRODUCTION

The new international order will not necessarily be a peaceful or stable one. Indeed, a multi-polar system (in comparison to the old bipolar one) with its many degrees of interactions, may tend to be inherently unstable. Thus, greater levels of uncertainty and even violence may be the norm in some parts of the world, and international institutions may increasingly be called upon to respond to regional aggression.

The present paper describes a methodology (termed ReCCA) to assess the crisis and conflict potential of a geopolitical region. Countries, interconnected in a multitude of ways, are rated against a number of criteria in areas such as external relations, economy, ethnicity, military factors, etc. The rating matrix thus obtained is analyzed by a multicriteria decision model to determine the crisis and conflict potential of a country in relation to other regional powers. It should be noted that the results are as speculative as they are necessary. They will provide policy makers and contingency planners with systematic and consistent global assessments at specific times, and also with the level of effort necessary for peace-keeping or peace-making operations in a multilateral environment

## RATING CRITERIA

For the present analysis, a set of 10 major and numerous subcriteria has been developed against which all countries subject to analysis are measured. The rating criteria are as following:

### I. External Relations

- Unresolved Bilateral Issues
- Economic Factors
- Racial Relations
- Political System Compatibility

### II Internal Situation

- Social Frustration
- Demographic Structure
- System Pressure
- Internal Political Stability
- Defence Capabilities
- Attack Force Potential

## CRISIS AND CONFLICT POTENTIALS OF FORMER USSR REPUBLICS INCLUDING BORDERING COUNTRIES

Each country subject to analysis is rated against above criteria and a decision model, developed by the author, is being used to analyze the data. The salient feature of the algorithm is the division of the analyzed countries into several groups in which all countries in the same group are statistically similar in crisis and conflict potentials, while there exists a distinct difference to countries in other groups.

The countries selected for analysis are given in Table 1, (page 11), which also summarizes the result for the conflict potentials in 1995<sup>1</sup>. Low class numbers indicate high conflict potential, while higher numbers denote decreasing crisis and conflict potentials.

In the present analysis, the countries are divided in three groups with the following coding scheme:

### Group 1:



Countries which have low crisis or conflict potentials in comparison to the average crisis level of all other countries in the analysis;

<sup>1</sup> The 3220 elements of input were collected from numerous sources and are under constant review for improvements



**Group 2:**

Countries whose crisis or conflict potentials are at the average regional level, and

**Group 3:**

Countries which have high crisis or conflict potentials in comparison to the average conflict level of all other countries in that region.

The top of a bar in Table 1 indicates the conflict class of a country under the worst conditions, while, conversely, the bottom of a bar specifies the best conflict class a country could be in. Thus, the length of a bar denotes the uncertainty in which state of conflict potential a country can be found.

The crisis and conflict potentials of Lithuania and Kaliningrad are rather high. In Lithuania, a crisis seems to have developed over the Polish ethnic group and also an economic problem with Kaliningrad over energy supply<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup>*Kaliningrad is heavily dependant on the natural gas pipeline through Lithuania and also on the electric power supply from the Lithuanian nuclear reactor at Ignalila (staffed by Russian technicians).*

Kaliningrad, in addition to the friction with Lithuania and the immense internal problems may be forced to accept a large group of ethnic Germans, now scattered across Russia. In the worst scenario, Kaliningrad will occupy class 6 which belongs to the top crisis and conflict group.

Four of the five Asian CIS states seem to be in a serious crisis over various issues ranging from ethnic and economic problems to border disputes amongst themselves<sup>3</sup> and with Russia<sup>4</sup>.

The crisis and conflict potential of Afghanistan is in the average group. The internal war may still continue at some level of intensity but is self-contained and thus poses no threat to international peace and security. For this reason, many of the external crisis indicators are low which then leads to the overall average rating.

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<sup>3</sup>*there are nearly 500,000 military personnel stationed in that tiny state to serve the Baltic fleet and 50% of the population works in the military sector, soon to be reduced drastically.*

<sup>4</sup> *Out of 26 borders, 23 are disputed by one or the other party*

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