

## 5. SELF-DETERMINATION MOVEMENTS:

Origins, Strategic Choices, and Outcomes

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*Twenty-two armed self-determination conflicts are ongoing as of the beginning of 2003.*

The quest of national and indigenous peoples for self-governance has reshaped the political landscape in many countries and the international system as a whole during recent decades. Some states and many autonomous regions within states have been formed as a result of such movements. Seventy territorially concentrated ethnic groups have waged armed conflicts for autonomy or independence at some time since the 1950s, not counting the peoples of former European colonies. Two of these conflicts erupted since 2000 and were carried out by Albanians in Yugoslavia and Macedonia; both were spillovers from the separatist war fought by their ethnic kin in Kosovo a few years earlier. One other conflict that were previously contained saw renewed hostilities since 2000: Igorots in the Philippines. Twenty-two armed self-determination conflicts are ongoing as of the beginning of 2003, including some Oromos and Somalis in Ethiopia; Chechens in Russia; and Tripuras, Assamese, Kashmiri Muslims, and Scheduled Tribes in India. Hostilities intensified in several of them in the past two years, most notably the breakdown in negotiations and resumption of fighting in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Despite instances of continued warfare, the last two years have generally seen an acceleration of a trend beginning in the early 1990s that we documented previously — a sustained decline in armed self-determination conflicts and a countervailing shift toward containment and settlement. In fact, more such conflicts have been contained in the past two years than in any other post-World War II time period (see table 5.1 and figure 5.1). Nine major violent self-determination conflicts were held in check in 2001 or 2002, including high-profile cases with international involvement involving the Acehese in Indonesia, Tamils in Sri Lanka, Tajiks and Uzbeks in Afghanistan, and Southerners and Nuba in Sudan. Two of the three conflicts involving new or renewed hostilities since 2000 — Albanians in Macedonia and Albanians in Yugoslavia — were also contained during the same time period. In addition, a year-long flare up in tensions involving Abkhazians in Georgia was contained in late 2000. Ceasefires and negotiated settlements continue to provide some combination of political recognition, greater rights, and regional autonomy to the populations represented by these movements; though not all segments of those fighting for self-determination accept the conditions of these peace accords (see Appendix table 2). In addition, East Timor (formerly a province of Indonesia) became the world's newest fully independent state in May 2002. Though the process was messy, the East Timor case is one of the rare examples of full implementation of peace accords in armed self-determination conflicts, and even more rare since the result was complete independence.

We also have documented another seventy-six (76) territorially concentrated groups that currently support significant movements seeking greater self-determination by political means. This tally includes nineteen (19) movements — new and old — added to the list reported in the 2001 edition of *Peace and Conflict* (see Appendix table 3). Leaders of these groups rely mainly on building mass support, representing group interests, and carrying out electoral and/or protest campaigns. Their tactics may include isolated acts of violence but thus far they have stopped short of serious armed conflict. Some of them, like the Flemish and Walloons in Belgium, the Catalans in

Spain, and the Jurassians in Switzerland, act through autonomous political institutions that were created to satisfy group demands for autonomy. The Flemish and Walloons in Belgium, Cornish in the UK, the Inuit indigenous people in Canada, and Hungarians in Yugoslavia all gained some degree of increased or re-instated (as in the case of the latter group) political, economic, or cultural autonomy between late 2000 and early 2003.

**Phases of Self-determination Conflicts:** Self-determination conflicts move through phases from conventional politics to war, settlement, and sometimes independent statehood. We developed a diagnostic scheme with ten phases to make it easier to track and compare these conflicts. Appendix table 2 categorizes the current status of seventy (70) conflicts — all those with an armed conflict phase sometime during the last 47 years — using the ten phases defined here.

*1. Conventional politics (3 groups):* Self-determination currently is sought by conventional political strategies including advocacy, representation of group interests to officials, and electoral politics. Groups with self-administered regions and power-sharing arrangements in existing states are also categorized here. Protagonists who once fought armed conflicts but now rely on conventional politics include Serbs in Croatia, Kurds in Iran, and Baluchis in Pakistan. Another forty-eight (48) groups that have not rebelled openly in the past also use these tactics now (see Appendix table 3).

*2. Militant politics (3 groups):* Self-determination is sought by organizing and inciting group members to use disruptive strategies (mass protest, boycotts, resistance to authorities). These strategies may be accompanied by a few symbolic acts of violence. Former rebel groups using these strategies at present include Tibetans in China and Ibos in Nigeria. An additional twenty-six (26) groups listed in Appendix table 3 that have not engaged in large-scale violence in the last half-century currently use militant politics.

*3. Low-level hostilities (11 groups):* Self-determination is sought by localized use of violent strategies such as riots, local rebellions, bombings, and armed attacks against authorities, for example by Kurds in Turkey, Uighers in China, and Ijaw in Nigeria. We characterize the Basques in Spain as using these strategies since 1999 (they were categorized in the previous report as using militant politics) because of ETA's persistent and increased bombing campaign.

*4. High-level hostilities (10 groups):* Self-determination is sought by widespread and organized armed violence against authorities. Wars of this kind are being fought by the Chechens, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Kashmiris and Assamese in India.

*5. Talk-fight (4 groups):* Group representatives negotiate with authorities about settlement and implementation while substantial armed violence continues. Fighting may be done by the principals or by factions that reject efforts at settlement. Karenni in Myanmar, Moros in the Philippines, and Cabindans in Angola all re-opened previously dormant negotiations with authorities during 2001 and 2002, while fighting persisted.

6. *Cessation of open hostilities (12 groups)*: Most fighting is over but one or more principals are ready to resume armed violence if efforts at settlement fail. Conflicts where hostilities are checked by international peace-keeping forces, in the absence of agreements, also are classified here. This kind of tenuous peace held at the beginning of 2003 for the Kosovar Albanians, Kurds in Iraq, and Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. Ceasefires were reached in the following conflicts between late 2000 and early 2003: the Nuba in Sudan, Nagas in India, Tamils in Sri Lanka, and Abkhaz in Georgia (the latter checked a resumption of fighting in October 2001).

7. *Contested agreement (14 groups)*: An interim or final agreement for group autonomy within an existing state has been negotiated between the principals but some parties, within the group or the government or both, reject and attempt to subvert it. This is the current situation of the Serbs and Croats in Bosnia, the Chittagong Hill peoples of Bangladesh, and the Bougainvilleans in Papua New Guinea. Southern Sudanese, Casamançais in Senegal, and Acehnese in Indonesia, all reached significant peace accords in the last two years whose durability remains to be determined. In addition, representatives of the Miskito nation of Nicaragua declared that they were re-seeking an independent nation in July 2002, thus contesting a 1988 accord granting them more autonomy.

8. *Uncontested agreement (5 groups)*: A final agreement for group autonomy is in place, is accepted in principal by all parties, and is being implemented. The conflict involving Kachins in Myanmar is at this stage, as are the conflicts between Tuaregs and the governments of Mali and Niger.

9. *Implemented agreement (2 groups)*: A final settlement or agreement for group autonomy has been largely or fully implemented, for example among the Mizos in India and the Gaguz in Moldova.

10. *Independence (5 groups)*: The group has its own internationally recognized state. As noted above, the former Indonesian province of East Timor is the newest addition to this list.

*...we cannot be confident that a conflict has ended until agreements have been fully implemented.*

Self-determination conflicts do not move inevitably through all phases, and due to their complex dynamics, there often is movement back and forth between phases. Groups that have used conventional politics for a long period of time are very likely to continue to do so. But if a group signals its objectives through militant politics or low-level hostilities, the risks of further escalation are high. Six such groups that were in these two phases as of late 2000, including the Corsicans in France and the Shan in Myanmar, escalated their conflicts in the following two years. At the settlement end of the spectrum, we cannot be confident that a conflict has ended until agreements have been fully implemented. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict progressed from agreements to partial implementation during the 1990s and the Palestinian Authority was close to independence when, in September 2000, the conflict shifted back to "talk-fight" as the Second Intifadeh was launched. Negotiations broke down completely in 2001, moving the conflict to a phase of high-level hostilities. In Bosnia, it is possible that if peace-keeping forces withdraw, the Serbs and perhaps the Croats will resume fighting to secure border adjustments. The scarcity of fully implemented agreements signals a potential for renewed resistance by former rebels in most formerly violent self-determination conflicts. The Miskito conflict in Nicaragua is a prime example of this.

*Only five internationally recognized states were born in armed separatist conflicts during the past forty years.*

**Trends in the Onset and Settlement of Self-Determination Conflicts:** Many observers fear that contemporary self-determination movements will continue the process of state breakdown signaled by the breakup of the Soviet Union and the Yugoslav Federation at the beginning of the 1990s. In fact only five internationally recognized states were born in armed separatist conflicts during the last forty years. They are Bangladesh (1971), Slovenia (1991), Croatia (1991), Eritrea (1993), and East Timor (2002). One can expand this list by citing several de facto states established by separatist movements, political entities which are not recognized as such by the international community. Somaliland, which is dominated by the Isaaq clan, has an effective central government and few of the crippling economic and security problems of the failed Somali state. Others are the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus, the Trans-Dniester Republic that nominally is part of Moldova, Abkhazia in Georgia, and Kosovo. The final international status of these entities remains to be determined.

These exceptions aside, the most common outcome of self-determination conflicts is a settlement between governments and group representatives that acknowledges collective rights and gives them institutional means for pursuing collective interests within states. Sometimes a group gains better access to decision-making in the central government, often it gains regional autonomy, and of course some settlements include both kinds of reforms. Thus the outcome of self-determination movements seldom is a redrawing of international boundaries, but rather devolution of central power and redrawing of boundaries within existing states. Agreements recently signed by the Acehnese in Indonesia and southern Sudanese purport to provide more regional autonomy to these groups, but it remains to be seen if these accords will be implemented. The Acehnese accords, signed in December 2002, soon showed indications of preliminary fissures.

Concerns sometimes are voiced that autonomy agreements are a prelude to all-out war for independence. This is an unlikely though not wholly unprecedented scenario. The more common scenario is that most people accept and work within the framework for autonomy while a few spoilers continue to fight in hopes of greater concessions. The greatest risk in autonomy agreements is not the eventual breakup of the state, rather it is that spoilers may block full implementation, thereby dragging out the conflict and wasting resources that might otherwise be used to strengthen autonomous institutions. The pendulum can swing the other way as well — when a state drags its feet during the implementation phase, more militant factions of the communal group may continue or resume violence, arguing that the state has not made good on its promises. For example, splinter groups of Albanians in Macedonia and Yugoslavia, Chittagong Hill peoples in Bangladesh, and Casamançais in Senegal were responsible for acts of violence in winter 2002-03.

Armed conflicts over self-determination spiked sharply upward at the end of the Cold War, but they had been building in frequency since the late 1950s, doubling between 1970 and the early 1980s. Table 5.1 and figure 5.1 summarize the evidence. From five ongoing wars in the 1950s their numbers swelled to a maximum of forty-eight (48) in 1991. But then they declined even more precipitously, to a current low of twenty-two (22), a smaller number than at any time in the last quarter-century. Moreover, fighting in most of these conflicts is low-level and de-escalating.

The immediate reason for the decline has been a marked increase in local, regional, and international efforts to contain and settle wars of self-determination. During the Cold War a half-dozen were contained, usually when the rebels were defeated militarily, and nine were settled or, in the case of Bangladesh, led to independence. Three of the negotiated settlements were in India, two of which — with Nagas (1963) and Tripuras (1972) — led to second-generation wars. During the 1990s another fourteen (14) wars were contained, often as a result of internationally backed negotiations and peacekeeping, and another seventeen (17) were settled by negotiated agreements or — in Slovenia, Croatia, and Eritrea — internationally recognized independence for rebel nationalists. As mentioned earlier, the pace in containment continued in the last two years with nine (9) new conflicts contained in 2001-02. However, no new conflicts were conclusively settled in this time period, perhaps due to the freshness of many of the recent agreements. It is likely that as both sides pull back their troops and reach definitive agreements, a number of these recently contained conflicts will move to the settlement phase. All told, over 70% of all terminations of separatist wars (by containment and settlement) during the last half-century have occurred since 1990.

Self-determination wars are easiest to settle in their early years. Between 1988 and 1994 eleven began in the USSR, Yugoslavia, and their successor states. By 2002 all had been contained or settled except in Chechnya, after an average of three years' fighting. The three newest uprisings in the region — those carried out by Abkhazians in Georgia, Albanians in Macedonia, and Albanians in Yugoslavia — were contained in an average of twelve months. During the same seven years, from 1988 to 1994, another fifteen (15) self-determination wars began in Africa and Asia. By 2000, four of the six new African wars were over and six of nine Asian wars were concluded, after an average of about nine years' fighting. The self-determination wars fought by Afars in Djibouti and Uzbeks in Afghanistan are the most recent to be terminated, the latter due to assistance

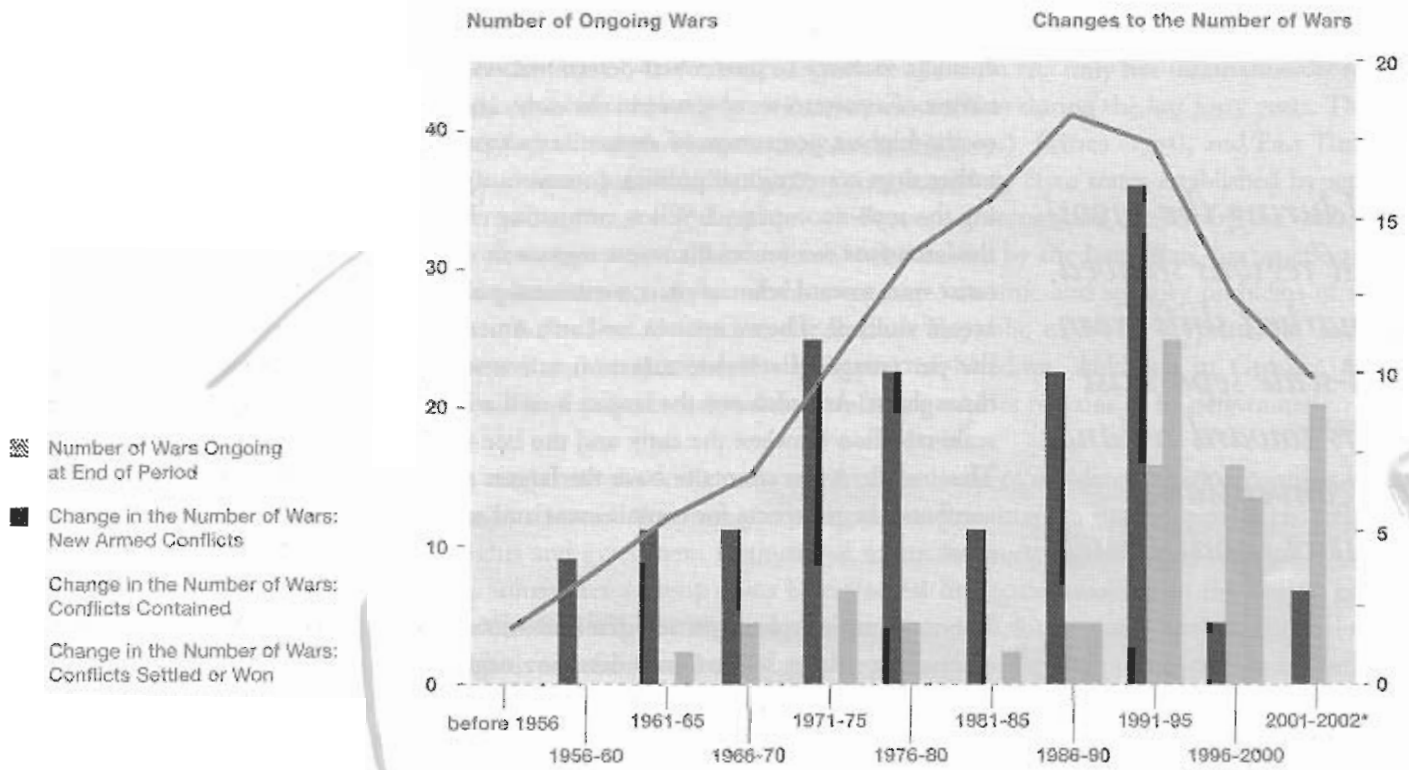
**Table 5.1 Armed Conflicts for Self-Determination and their Outcomes, 1956-2002**

Period	New Armed Conflicts	Ongoing at End of Period	Conflicts Contained	Conflicts Settled or Won
before 1956		4		
1956-60	4	8	0	0
1961-65	5	12	0	1
1966-70	5	15	2	0
1971-75	11	23	0	3
1976-80	10	31	2	0
1981-85	5	35	0	1
1986-90	10	41	2	2
1991-95	16	39	7	11
1996-2000	2	28	7	6
2001-2002*	3	22	9	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>72</b>		<b>29</b>	<b>24</b>

**Note:** Based on conflicts listed in Appendix table 2. "Settled" conflicts include five that ended with the establishment of a new, internationally recognized state. In cases where a settlement/containment of an earlier conflict lasted for five or more years before the outbreak of new fighting, the new outbreak of fighting is counted as a new armed conflict and a subsequent settlement/containment may then be counted as a new event. Examples are Nagas in India, Tripuras in India, Hmong in Laos, Igorots in Philippines, and Sudan Southerners.

(\*) The asterisks in table 5.1 and figure 5.1 indicate that the information for the most recent period in the graph, 2001-2002, covers only two years, unlike the other five-year periods. As such, the most recent period is not strictly comparable with the other periods and the last increment in the chart is not a true depiction of the most recent trend.

Figure 5.1: Trends in Armed Conflicts for Self-Determination, 1956-2002



*International engagement helped end most of the separatist wars in the post-communist states*

from the United States in pursuit of its anti-Taliban goals. International engagement helped end most of the separatist wars in the post-communist states, which helps account for their short durations. Asian and African separatist wars usually were contained or settled without international mediation or peacekeeping, which helps explain the fact that they persisted more than twice as long as those in post-communist states.

The longer self-determination wars drag on, the more resistant they are to either containment or settlement. The average duration of the twenty-two (22) armed self-determination conflicts still being fought at end of 2002 was twenty-nine (29) years and their median duration twenty-five (25) years. Nearly sixty percent are being fought in Asia, most of the others in Africa. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict has been intermittently violent since 1968 despite extraordinary efforts to negotiate and implement an enduring settlement. A handful of new separatist wars began after 1995 and nearly all have been contained. The exception is the ongoing Ijaw rebellion in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta, which escalated in 1995 from protest against lack of development and political participation to rebellion, but is susceptible to settlement in a democratic Nigeria.

*...[during the 1990s] most regions showed a marked shift from full-scale separatist wars toward reliance on conventional politics [and] protest*

The general trends in the uses of violence to pursue self-determination that we find in our analysis of groups in the Minorities at Risk survey complement these regional findings. Between 1998 and 2000 alone, about forty percent of groups using full-scale or episodic violence to pursue self-determination demands were found in Asia, a continuation of a pattern we observed in the early- and mid-1990s. However, Africa was home to the highest percentage of separatist groups engaging in full-scale rebellion (45%) rather than conventional politics, protest campaigns, or episodic acts of violence during the 1998-2000 period. When comparing changes in tactics from the early 1990s to the late 1990s, we found that most regions showed a marked shift from full-scale separatist wars toward reliance on conventional politics, protest campaigns, and occasional acts of violence. The exceptions are Latin America and the Western democracies, where the percentage of self-determination movements using nonviolent tactics was high throughout. Asia also saw the largest increase in those groups shifting away from full-scale rebellion between the early and the late 1990s, a full twenty-two percent (22%). Thus, while Asian countries have the largest proportion of armed self-determination conflicts, the prospects for containment and settlement also seem the most promising there.

The most critical phases in self-determination conflicts are “talk-fight” and “cessation of open hostilities.” Previously dormant negotiations were re-opened in three self-determination conflicts in the last two years — in conflicts involving the Karenni in Myanmar, Moros in Philippines, and Cabindans in Angola — though binding cease-fires or agreements have not yet been reached. In the absence of final agreements, any of the fifteen (15) conflicts in these two phases may revert to open warfare — and have done so recently in the Palestinian-Israeli and Abkhazia-Georgia conflicts. Preventive action and efforts at mediation should be redoubled in these situations to keep them moving toward agreement. Mediators can assist parties in identifying areas of agreement when their hardline bargaining stances prevent them from realizing the needs and interests of the other party, or from recognizing that compromise is possible and necessary to end fighting.

Contested agreements also are worrisome because significant elements on one or both sides of a conflict reject them. Some rebel factions may continue fighting either to cut a better deal, like the Abu Sayyaf faction of Philippine Moros, or because they reject any compromise, like Chechen Islamicists who mounted a jihad against Russian influence in the Caucasus after the first Chechen war ended in a Russian withdrawal. On the other side, political opponents of a government may try to subvert an agreement between authorities and an autonomy movement. They may use legislative means to block implementation or stage provocative actions, like Likud leader Ariel Sharon’s visit in the company of armed police to Jerusalem’s Temple Mount in September 2000. Though a peace agreement was implemented in East Timor, pro-Indonesian militant groups instigated retaliatory violence against the former insurgents. Militia and paramilitary activity against those involved in autonomy movements may also occur in certain conflicts. However challenging it is to reach an initial agreement, it may be still more difficult, and require greater international engagement, to get from “yes, but” to “yes, let’s implement the agreement.”

**Table 5.2: Which Minorities were Most Likely to Seek Self-Determination in 1998-2000?<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Most Important Factors</b>		
	Group's Likelihood of Seeking Self-Determination (other factors held constant) <sup>2</sup>	Number of Groups Seeking Self-Determination (of total number of groups with this trait; other factors not held constant) <sup>3</sup>
<b>Group-level factors</b>		
<b>Group organization and cohesion</b>		
No cohesive organization	2%	10 of 53
Cohesive organization	85%	147 of 215
<b>Historical loss of autonomy</b>		
No historical loss	21%	18 of 85
Loss limited or distant in time	80%	85 of 103
Recent and complete loss	100%	3 of 3
<b>Country-level factors</b>		
Change in communication technology† 1995-2000		† (measured in terms of telephone mainlines per 1000 people)
Decrease of 127 mainlines	<1%	
No increase or decrease in mainlines	38%	
Increase of 34 mainlines (median change)	70%	
Increase of 56 mainlines (mean change)	85%	
Increase of 146 mainlines	100%	

<b>Other Important Factors<sup>4</sup></b>		Effect on Likelihood of Group Seeking Self-Determination
<b>Group-level factors</b>		
Recent increase in demographic stress*		Increases
High levels of political discrimination*		Lowers
High degree of territorial concentration in a regional base*		Increases
Past persistent protest or rebellion		Increases
Targets of severe repression		Increases
Recent increase in cultural restrictions		Lowers
High degree of economic differentials in comparison to dominant group		Increases
<b>Country-level factors</b>		
Highly democratic		Increases
Greater recent increase in human development		Increases
Large number of minority groups		Increases
<b>International factors</b>		
Existence of separatist kin across international borders*		Increases
State participates in major episodes of international violence		Increases
Group currently receives some type of transnational support		Increases
Recent increase in transnational support for the group		Lowers
Large number of conflicts in bordering countries		Increases
High total magnitude of all conflicts in bordering countries		Lowers

**1** Results of bivariate and multivariate analysis of factors that distinguished communal groups seeking self-determination from those that did not, using coded data on 285 politically active groups from the Minorities at Risk project. The analysis examined traits of groups, the societies and countries in which they are situated, and their international environment. Multivariate analyses were run individually at each of these levels of analysis and the most important factors at each level were combined in a final, full multivariate analysis.

**2** These values were derived by holding other factors in the final, full multivariate analysis constant at their average levels, then calculating the percentage contribution of each factor to the probability that a group will seek self-determination.

**3** The numbers should be read as follows: 53 groups in the Minorities at Risk dataset lack cohesive organization, of which 10 seek self-determination, whereas of the 215 groups that have cohesive organizations, 147 seek self-determination. Numbers are not shown for communication technology because this is a continuous variable; values are chosen to illustrate the general relationship between change in communication technology and self-determination demands.

**4** The lower section of the table lists factors that were significantly related to self-determination demands at each level of analysis, i.e. traits of groups, traits of the countries in which they are situated, and traits of their international environment. Asterisks (\*) flag factors that also were significant in the full multivariate analysis, though with lesser significance than those listed in the first section of the table.



Our survey has identified fifty-one (51) groups using conventional political means to pursue self-determination and another twenty-nine (29) using militant strategies short of armed violence (see Appendix Tables 2 and 3). Most are in democratic or quasi-democratic states and have little risk of escalating to armed conflict. The most worrisome of these conflicts involve the people of Western Cameroon; Tibetans and Mongols in China; Sindhis and Sarakis in Pakistan; Ibo, Yoruba, Ndigbo, Oron, and Ogoni in Nigeria; Lhotshampas in Bhutan; Reang (Bru) in India; East Caprivians in Namibia; and Lozi in Zambia. None is a hot war at this writing (January 2003) but the protagonists are using or advocating provocative tactics against governments with a track record of repression. The Tibetans get lots of international attention, the others very little. International attention usually encourages autonomy-minded people to work for constructive solutions and discourages governments from cracking down on them. In the absence of international attention, the peoples flagged here are the most likely protagonists and victims of new separatist wars in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Origins of Self-Determination Demands:** Nearly sixty percent of groups in the Minorities at Risk survey (161 of 285) sought greater autonomy or full self-determination in 1998-2000, the others did not. What kinds of groups, in which kinds of political environments are most likely to seek political autonomy or independence? In search of general answers to this question, we did detailed statistical analyses using coded information on traits of groups, the states in which they reside, and their international environment. The factors include many of those identified by the authors of previous theoretical and comparative studies. Our aim is to test them across the full range of politically active communal groups. Some of the results are summarized in Table 5.2.

Most self-determination demands are justified by reference to a group's historical loss of political autonomy. Not surprisingly, our coded information on lost autonomy is one of the strongest determinants of contemporary self-determination demands. We assessed the effects of whether each group lost autonomy in the distant past or more recently, and whether the loss was limited (such as the dissolution of a regional government) or total (such as military conquest of a previously independent state). Nonetheless, groups whose loss was limited or distant in time — such as Quebecois in Canada, indigenous peoples in Nicaragua, and Sandzak Muslims in Yugoslavia, for example — are fifty-nine percent (59%) more likely to have self-determination grievances today than groups that suffered no such losses, holding other factors constant. And all groups in the Minorities at Risk survey that experienced high and recent loss of autonomy have self-determination grievances. Examples of separatist-minded groups which experienced major losses of political autonomy since World War II include the Ibo in Nigeria, Karens in Myanmar, Tibetans in China, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, Kashmiri Muslims in India, and South Ossetians and Abkhazians in Georgia. Resentment about the loss of control over a group's own affairs, even if held only briefly — as in the case of the Ibo and the Georgian groups — makes it virtually certain that the group will pursue self-determination in the present.

Groups that are highly organized and cohesive are very likely to pursue self-determination. A group that is highly organized and cohesive is eighty-three percent (83%) more likely to have separatist grievances than groups that lack any cohesive organization, holding other factors constant. Serbs and Croats in Bosnia, Scots and Northern Irish

Catholics in the UK, Oromos in Ethiopia, most politically active communal groups in India, and some indigenous peoples in Latin America have highly cohesive group organizations that articulate their demands for self-determination. They contrast sharply with ethno-classes like Afro-Caribbeans and Asians in the UK, Russians in most of the post-Soviet republics, and communal contenders like those of Kenya that lack cohesive political movements. A high degree of group organization is not likely to be a root cause of self-determination demands, but it is a close-to-necessary condition for the articulation of such demands and the formation of movements that can pursue such ambitious aims.

- Another factor that facilitates self-determination demands is a societal or country-level factor — a recent increase in communication technology, as indicated by an increase in telephone mainlines. The larger the increase, the more likely it is that the group will express self-determination grievances. Despite recent arguments that the increase in cellular and internet technology gives aggrieved groups better means to communicate, we have no conclusive evidence that this is linked to articulation of self-determination demands. As is the case with group organization, increases in telephone mainlines facilitate activists' connectedness to each other and allows them to more easily and extensively articulate their demands. Kurds in Turkey, Dayaks in Malaysia, and Basques and Corsicans in France are examples of autonomy-seeking groups in countries that had an increase of at least 60 telephone lines per 1000 people since 1995.

Other factors also contribute to the pursuit of self-determination, though not with the same strength of association. A comprehensive list is given in the lower half of Table 5.2. For example groups that are highly concentrated in one region, such as Papuans and Acehnese in Indonesia, Kurds in Iraq, and Albanians in Macedonia, frequently seek greater autonomy or independence, though this factor alone is not as strong as some researchers have suggested — a number of more widely dispersed groups also want self-determination. Ten groups with less than fifty percent of their members living in their regional base express self-determination grievances, while eighty-one (81) groups with more than seventy-five percent of their members living in their regional base have such grievances. Groups with separatist kin across international borders, such as Croats in Yugoslavia and Bosnia, Basques in Spain and France, and Lezgins in Russia and Azerbaijan also are likely to pursue self-determination themselves — not necessarily union with their kin, but greater autonomy within their country of residence. This is the most significant international factor associated with self-determination demands.

*...self-determination demands are more often voiced by groups in democratic states*

Several indicators of group status within their societies also are linked to self-determination grievances. Groups with a recent increase in demographic stress due, for example, to an influx of migrants or high and rising birthrates, are more likely to pursue self-determination than others. And, somewhat surprisingly, groups that experience relatively low levels of political discrimination — the pattern we code as “disadvantages due to historical neglect” — also are likely to seek self-determination. We also find that self-determination demands are more often voiced by groups in democratic states — probably because the opportunities for seeking self-determination are greater in a more open political environment.

*Of the 161 groups that had self-determination goals only one-quarter (41) were engaged in armed conflicts in 1998-2000*

Taken together, these factors are part of a larger syndrome that characterizes many autonomy-seeking groups. They lost political autonomy when they were absorbed or conquered by the state and are concentrated in peripheral regions of the country; they remain relatively disadvantaged in material terms (high stress) and experience some political disadvantages (low to middling political discrimination). Democracies provide opportunities to articulate such demands, broad and cohesive political movements provide the means for pursuing them. Expression and pursuit of self-determination demands is facilitated by developments in communications technology.

**Protest or Rebellion? Strategic Choices in the Pursuit of Self-Determination:** Of the 161 groups that had self-determination goals in 1998-2000, only one-quarter (41) were engaged in armed conflicts in 1998-2000, usually in the form of guerrilla wars like those being fought by Chechens in Russia, Tamils in Sri Lanka, and southerners in Sudan. Another six punctuated predominantly non-violent campaigns with episodes of bombing and militant clashes with authorities — examples are the Uighers in China, Basques in Spain, and Corsicans in France. The remaining two-thirds of groups (108) used strategies of conventional politics and non-violent protest (six others could not be classified).

Note that our analyses of self-determination grievances and choice of strategies to pursue these grievances include groups with any self-determination interests, from limited autonomy to full independence. To highlight the factors related to grievances and the choice of rebellion or conventional/protest politics in general, we cast the net as widely as possible. It is likely that groups desiring independence rather than autonomy within existing states are more likely to rebel than to protest — a proposition to be tested in future analyses.

The research question here is to identify the characteristics of groups seeking self-determination and their political environments — domestic and international — that shape their choices of strategies. We ran two different sets of analyses, one of which looked at the factors that promoted full-scale rebellion and another that examined the conditions that prompted groups to use any kind of violence. The same factors proved to be significant in both analyses and are summarized below and in Table 5.3.

The factor most closely related to a group's strategic choices is persistent participation in past rebellion. Specifically, groups seeking self-determination that were involved in high-level rebellion with authorities for five or more years after 1985 were sixty percent (60%) more likely than other groups with self-determination grievances to resort to full-fledged rebellion in 1998-2000, holding all other factors constant. Overall, groups that have persistently rebelled in the past have a seventy-seven percent (77%) greater likelihood of using that strategy now. Thus, past choices strongly shape current choices, but this is not quite the same as saying that rebellion (or protest) necessarily persists over time. Some episodes of past rebellion and many protest campaigns for self-determination were and are episodic. What our evidence shows is that when groups resume active pursuit of self-determination grievances, they are very likely to make the same strategic choices that they did in the past. Examples of groups that engaged in sustained armed clashes with authorities for five or more years between 1985 and 1997 and that continued to do so in 1998-2000 include Nagas, Bodos, Tripuras, Kashmiri Muslims, and Assamese in India; Afars and Oromos in Ethiopia; Chechens in Russia; and Tamils in Sri Lanka. In contrast, groups that used protest or conventional political tactics for

five or more years since 1985 and continued to do so in 1998-2000 include Aborigines in Australia, Croats in Bosnia, indigenous peoples in Brazil, Pashtuns and Sindhis in Pakistan, and Zulus in South Africa.

**Table 5.3: Which Minorities Seeking Self-Determination were Most Likely to Rebel in 1998-2000?<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Most Important Factors</b>		
	Group's Likelihood of Using Sustained, Intense Rebellion (other factors held constant) <sup>2</sup>	Number of Groups Using Sustained, Intense Rebellion (of total number of groups with this trait; other factors not held constant) <sup>3</sup>
<b>Group-level factors</b>		
Persistent past high-level rebellion		
No persistent past high-level rebellion	17%	9 of 104
Persistent past high-level rebellion	77%	31 of 48
<b>Severity of repression facing the group</b>		
No repression	<1%	3 of 51
High-level threats to life	17%	38 of 63
<b>International factors</b>		
Military support from foreign governments		
No military support from foreign governments	17%	16 of 115
Military support from foreign governments	65%	25 of 37
<b>Other Important Factors<sup>4</sup></b>		
		Effect on Likelihood of Group Seeking Self-Determination
<b>Group-level factors</b>		
Greater net increase in support for conventional organizations, 1997-2000		Lowers
Group's claimed homeland is different than its current region of residence		Lowers
Greater recent increase in political restrictions		Increases
High current level of restrictions on both freedom of expression and access to higher office <sup>5</sup>		Increases
<b>Country-level factors</b>		
High current degree of human development		Lowers
Greater recent increase in human development		Increases
<b>International factors</b>		
State receives military support from any external source		Increases
Group receives any type of transnational support from NGOs		Increases
High total magnitude of all conflicts in bordering countries		Lowers

**1** Results of bivariate and multivariate analysis of factors that distinguished between the 41 groups that pursued self-determination using sustained, intense rebellion from 114 groups using conventional politics, protest, and sporadic violence (six could not be classified). The analysis examined traits of groups, the societies and countries in which they are situated, and their international environment. Multivariate analyses were run individually at each of these levels of analysis and the most important factors at each level were combined in a final, full multivariate analysis.

**2** These values were derived by holding the repression variable constant at its highest level and other factors in the final, full multivariate analysis constant at their average levels, then calculating the percentage contribution of each factor to the probability that a group will use sustained, intense rebellious tactics to pursue their self-determination demands. The severity of repression factor was held constant at its highest as opposed to its mean level because of the unique distribution of cases at the different levels of repression. Nearly all (93%) of the groups using high-level rebellious tactics were also facing the most severe form of repression, while the remaining 6% were facing no repression. To account for this fact, repression was held constant at its highest level.

**3** The numbers should be read as follows: 104 groups in the Minorities at Risk dataset lack persistent past high-level rebellion, of which 9 are using high-level rebellion currently, whereas of the 48 groups that have used high-level rebellion persistently in the past, 31 are using such tactics currently as well.

**4** The lower section of the table lists factors that were significantly related to the use of high-level rebellion to pursue self-determination demands at each level of analysis, i.e. traits of groups, traits of the countries in which they are situated, and traits of their international environment.

**5** This factor indicates the interaction effect between restrictions on a group's freedom of expression and access to higher office. These two political restrictions individually are not significantly related to choice of strategies, but the combined effect of the two is significant.

International support for separatist groups is a second major factor. Groups receiving military support from any foreign government have a sixty-five percent (65%) overall chance of engaging in sustained armed rebellion. Such groups are forty-eight percent (48%) more likely to be engaged in high-level rebellion than groups receiving no military support from any foreign government. Rebellious separatist groups that received such support in 1998-2000 include the Casamançais in Senegal, Kosovo Albanians in Yugoslavia, Tajiks and Uzbeks in Afghanistan, and Acehese in Indonesia. The direction of causality is ambiguous because in many instances foreign military support is given to groups already in rebellion. But there is little doubt that such support is important in sustaining such conflicts.

A third, somewhat weaker factor is the severity of repression used against a group with self-determination objectives. Groups targeted for high-level, life-threatening forms of state repression are seventeen percent (17%) more likely to use high-level violent strategies than groups that have not been subjected to any repression. The direction of causality is ambiguous because almost all groups in rebellion are targeted for severe repression. Our evidence illustrates the point that separatist rebellions are very likely to persist despite severe repression, for example among Karens and Shans in Myanmar, Chechens in Russia, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and Cabindans in Angola.

A number of other factors also shape group decisions about whether to rebel or use more conventional political means, though with weaker effects. They are listed in the lower half of Table 5.3. Regional concentration increases the likelihood of rebellion, so do recent increases in political restrictions — though these may be responses rather than preconditions of rebellion. Groups seeking self-determination in countries with high levels of human development are less likely to rebel; those in countries with rapid increases in human development, on the other hand, are more likely to rebel — perhaps because countries in the middle stages of development provide more opportunities and incentives for rebellion than highly-developed countries. Rebellion also is associated with significant external support for states and groups — again, probably responses to rather than precursors of rebellion.

*...once a conflict crosses the threshold into rebellion, it is likely to persist.*

The results summarized here are the first step in our analyses. They do not offer much help in identifying the circumstances under which groups that have pursued self-determination by peaceful means are likely to shift to rebellion. But they clearly delineate the reinforcing cycle of violence and counter-violence that characterizes many protracted separatist wars: once a conflict crosses the threshold into rebellion, it is likely to persist.

At the same time we have summarized ample evidence that the cycle has been broken in a number of violent self-determination conflicts. In 2001-02 alone, nine such conflicts were contained, as we observed above. The evidence of our case studies suggest that two kinds of factors have been decisive in most such instances — international engagement, often including forceful intervention, and the warring parties' reluctant acceptance, often under external pressure, that more is to be gained by cease-fires, negotiations, and agreements that lead to greater group autonomy within existing states.