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THE SOUTHERN BALKANS: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE REGION

Ismail Kadare, Predrag Simic,
Ljubomir Frckoski and Ylber Hysa
Edited by Dimitrios Triantaphyllou

The southern Balkans: perspectives from the region

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(*A French version of this paper is also available from the Institute*)

The Institute for Security Studies of Western European Union

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Preface

Once again contradictory dynamics are upsetting the fragile balance in the southern Balkans. On one side is the democratisation of Croatia but above all that of Serbia; on the other, attempts by UCK extremists to destabilise Macedonia. Yesterday's enemy, Serbia, is becoming today's partner, whereas yesterday's partner, the UCK, may become a real adversary in the endeavour to maintain stability in Kosovo and the region as a whole. Once again Western policies, Europe's policy in particular, are being put to the test by realities on the ground.

Edited by Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, a research fellow at the Institute, this *Chaillot Paper* is the first to give space exclusively to authors from the region. Their approaches to the problem, their vision of the future of the Balkans, their historical and mental references are of course very varied, often contradictory, sometimes questionable. Their hopes and proposals for the future of the Balkans, too, vary considerably from one region to another. But it is precisely that which makes this *Chaillot Paper* significant: in spite of their divergences, all of the authors have great expectations of the European Union, which is often criticised but never rejected, because only its total involvement in the region might help it to exorcise its demons.

These essays were written before the recent events in the area of Presevo and the Macedonian border. However, this deterioration in the situation renders the authors' thoughts all the more valuable, as there is once again a pressing situation in the Balkans, concerning the continuance in practice of an internal political dynamic in Kosovo and a re-evaluation by the EU of its policy on the ultimate status of this region. The EU must also, as a matter of urgency, reaffirm, loud and clear, its determination to ensure the internal stability of Macedonia. Because a crisis is now brewing not only in the southern Balkans but also in the Union's crisis-management policy itself.

Nicole Gnesotto
Paris, March 2001

Introduction

Dimitrios Triantaphyllou

The recent change of regime in Yugoslavia is forcing a conceptual shift in outlook on the future of South-Eastern Europe.[1] To begin with, the 'black hole' is no more. Part of the difficulty in addressing the region's pressing needs stems from the fact that the West basically shaped its policies in reaction to or with Slobodan Milosevic for the greater part of a decade. Now that Milosevic is no more, the West is faced with the reality of reinventing its policies. In other words, 'what policies can bring stability and prosperity?'[2]

In the Milosevic era, the focus was on containment and little else. For a little over a year some policy cohesion, with positive results, has been evident. The European Union introduced the Stability Pact (thus stressing the regional approach) and the Stabilisation and Association Process (with its emphasis on conditionality), launched accession negotiations with Romania and Bulgaria and accepted Turkey as a candidate for membership. Whether intentional or not, the significance of the decisions taken by the EU at Helsinki in December 1999 is that South-Eastern Europe's role has become more important for the EU – until then, Greece alone had to deal with its shattered physical links to the EU's core as a consequence of the wars of Yugoslav succession. South-Eastern Europe is no longer simply a region on Europe's hinterlands whose flare-ups need to be managed by the Union; it is now one that is eventually to be integrated. Therefore the stakes for the EU, and the region, are now even higher.

Also, the long awaited Stability Pact Donor's Conference held in Brussels in March 2000, with its emphasis on quick-start projects, indicated a shift of focus towards economic reconstruction. Of course, developments in Croatia and Serbia provided the other good news in the region over the course of the year, as did the fact that the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

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[1]   The terms 'South-Eastern Europe' and 'Balkans' are used interchangeably throughout this *Chaillot Paper*.

[2]   Ivan Krastev, 'De-Balkanising the Balkans: What Priorities?,' *The International Spectator*, vol. XXXV, no. 3, July-September 2000, p. 7.

(FYROM)[3] and Albania did not implode or explode – and that is still true at the time of writing. As a result of these developments, a new sort of 'soft nationalism' is replacing the more volatile and hard-line ethnic nationalism that characterised the region for the better part of a decade.

Yet all is not rosy. In order to follow through integration and economic reconstruction, Yugoslavia (or whatever it might be renamed in the future) will have to be integrated as well. The question arises as to which Yugoslavia we are talking about. The overwhelming majority of Kosovar Albanians want independence for Kosovo. Similarly, a small but growing majority of Montenegrins are in favour of a referendum for the independence of Montenegro. The situation in the southern Balkans[4] threatens the region's stability anew and there is a growing scepticism regarding the efficacy of the international community's policies in Bosnia.[5] It is in particular the western Balkans[6] which is rife with concerns and dangers for all. 'The disproportionate potential of the western Balkans to seriously threaten stability, security and prosperity for all of Europe is a major lesson from the early twentieth century.'[7]

The interesting situation that has developed is one where countries of the region seek integration with the West but see this as a sort of zero-sum game, as they feel that any political influence and economic assistance they have accrued over the last few years, especially since the bombing campaign and the implementation of the Stability Pact, is now under threat. Thus, the Croats complain that different (more exacting) standards for cooperating

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[3]   The official name of this country is the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Nevertheless, with a view to preserving the authenticity of the essays that make up this paper, the shorter form, Macedonia, where used by authors, has not been altered. Similarly, the names 'Kosova' and 'Kosovo-Metohija', being respectively the Albanian and Serb appellations for Kosovo, will be found in later chapters.

[4]   In this paper the southern Balkans are taken to comprise Albania, FYROM and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).

[5]   On the South Serbia situation see, Gareth Evans, 'The Next Balkan Trouble Spot?,' *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, 12 February 2001. On the Bosnia case see, International Crisis Group, 'Bosnia's November Elections: Dayton Stumbles,' *ICG Report*, 18 December 2000; Thomas Friedman, 'In the Balkans, Democracy is for the Like-Minded,' *International Herald Tribune*, 24 January 2001.

[6]   The countries comprising former Yugoslavia and Albania.

[7]   Bertelsmann Stiftung, 'The Balkans and New European Responsibilities', strategy paper presented to the special meting of The Club of Three and the Balkans, 29-30 June 2000, Brussels, p. 13.

with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia apply to Croatia than to Serbia; the Montenegrins and the Kosovars insist on their drive for independence; and though their support is gradually dwindling, the nationalists in Bosnia maintain their power.

The discontent of the perceived losers from this changing balance of power could reopen divisions within not only the EU but the West as a whole. The EU has to set the tone and direction of its policy objectives quickly and clearly, as time is a factor that could lead to further destabilisation, with the creation of new axes, a return to more hard-line nationalism and a more entrenched zero-sum attitude among the region's states.

It is within that context that this paper should be viewed. This publication is in many ways an experiment. It is an experiment because, for the first time, authors from South-Eastern Europe exclusively, and the southern Balkans in particular, have been asked to contribute collectively to a *Chaillot Paper*. It is an experiment because the authors themselves come from different countries or entities with points of view that could be said to be diametrically opposed to each other. It is also an experiment because the background of the authors could be said to be varied. Ismail Kadare is a well-known and respected figure in the world of literature. For decades, he represented the only bright light of anything Albanian during the dark years of orthodox Communist rule in his country. Predrag Simic is an academic who during the 1990s was one of the few moderate voices in Belgrade to gain the respect of his international interlocutors. Ljubomir Frckoski, a former Interior Minister and Foreign Minister of FYROM, is one of his country's most respected scholars. Ylber Hysa is representative of the young generation of Kosovar Albanian activists who are committed to a democratic Kosovo.

All the authors were asked to address the same set of questions pertaining to how they envision the future of South-Eastern Europe. More specifically, they were asked to comment on their perceptions of the role of the international community and what the key impediments to stability in the region were. The approach they have taken in answering has differed considerably. Whereas Ismail Kadare and Predrag Simic have focused on the region at large, Ljubomir Frckoski and Ylber Hysa have preferred to concentrate on the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo respectively. Nevertheless, despite their varied approaches, all have in effect provided a

vision of the issues and difficulties ahead. The juxtaposition of the 'macro' level of analysis of the first two texts and the 'micro' approach of the last two points paints, we feel, a telling picture of the region's problems and perspectives.

Chapter One

THE BALKANS: TRUTHS AND UNTRUTHS

Ismail Kadare

It is obvious to any observer that the stability of the Balkan peninsula depends on two basic factors: first, the people who live there, and second, Europe (or more precisely Atlantic Europe). Neither the Marxist mentality, which glorifies the exclusive right of peoples to determine their own fate, nor the colonialist view of things, which adopts the opposite standpoint, finds any application today, and especially not in the Balkans. The peninsula can be considered as, at most, a part of the European house, and at the very least its backyard. But even if it is the latter, it must be taken seriously, and therefore also the order and tranquillity of this open space if the house demands those things for itself.

When a destiny depends on two parties, their agreement or disagreement becomes a fundamental factor in the course of events. It is fashionable to say that the Balkans are incomprehensible to Europe. That is what the Europeans proclaim but it is above all what the Balkan peoples themselves assert. The latter say it with, as it were, a tinge of regret, but over and above this sentiment there is in their assertion in particular coquetry, capricious-ness, even a certain concealed pride, maintaining: 'We are unpredictable, enigmatic, and nobody can guess what we are thinking.'

In reality our planet is, and is bound to be, merely a confusion of incompre-hension between different regions, between groupings of peoples, often even between neighbouring peoples. To expect that they understand each other perfectly would be naive, just as it would be excessive to deplore their total lack of understanding.

What resembles a time-lag between Europe and the Balkans is neither an enigma nor the result of a whim of destiny. It is the consequence of one simple, tragic fact: the peninsula is a member of a Europe from which it remained severed for a period of five hundred years. Its efforts to rejoin the parent continent were bound to be dramatic. Among the peoples of the Balkans and the Caucasus they tell the legend of a captive eagle that

manages to escape from captivity and return to its family. But its sometime master has ringed its claws, and this stigma makes the fugitive a stranger among its own race. And the family refuses to take the escaped bird of prey back into its bosom.

The Balkan peoples are standing at the gates of Europe yet cannot hide the imprint that the Ottoman Empire has left on their body and in their consciousness. They feel nostalgia for Europe but alongside this sentiment lie irritation and anger: irritation at their own mistakes that they do not wish to admit, and anger at the long period during which their continental mother forgot them.

Because Europe, too, has for long shirked its responsibility. Throughout the twentieth century its relationship with the peninsula was marked by a lack of understanding. Contrary to what many European officials have for a long time thought, the Balkan peoples are not tribes that squabble for futile reasons. And naturally the motives for their quarrels are not always, as Balkan people themselves are keen to give the impression, noble causes. The truth lies somewhere in between.

On this point one is necessarily led to consider, if only briefly, the period of a half-millennium during which the peoples of the Balkans, on the one hand, and the Ottoman Empire, on the other, together conceived one of the greatest historical myths of the recent history of humankind.

It has recently become commonplace to show a certain disdain, satiety, even horror, at the mention of the history of the Balkan peoples. To my mind, that is an unjustifiable attitude and the most serious kind of false interpretation. It is rather as if, faced with a crime, repugnance at the act, rather than leading one to pursue the matter, leads one to close the case. The distorted history of the Balkan peoples is one of the veils that prevents knowledge of these peoples, and as such it fuels the Balkan chaos. This fog of history has been the best ally of the chauvinistic castes in the region, of fierce nationalism and monstrous doctrines in their effort to reject, oppress, mutilate and if possible destroy, the 'other'. To dispel that fog would be to reveal those criminal castes for what they are and deprive them of the obsessive fear that gives them support and justification.

Without dwelling too long on this question, in brief one can say that the Ottomans on the one hand and the Balkan peoples on the other concocted two opposing and scarcely credible versions of history. Neither the Ottoman version, according to which their Empire humanised and civilised the coarse people that they encountered in the Balkans, nor the version of the latter, who present themselves as martyrs constantly preparing for battle against their oppressors, tallies with the facts. There is a third version that brings us back to the reality of things. Agreed, the peoples of the Balkans resisted the Empire, but at the same time they became an integral part of it; they thus had their share of its victories, its great deeds and its crimes. The Ottoman Empire, one of the most perfected military and state structures that history has known, cannot be understood without a clear appreciation of the role that the people of the Balkans and the Caucasus played in it. Perhaps more than the Turks themselves, whom one often mistakenly identifies with the Sultanate, these peoples brought their energies to the workings of that colossal state.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when each of the peoples of the Balkans in turn detached themselves from the Empire, they began to forget a part of their history, the part they felt was shameful, in other words their collaboration, recalling only the heroic part, that of revolt. One then saw a mountain of theses justifying their actions put forward. For the chauvinistic castes of the Balkans it was easy to sustain obsessive fears by concentrating exclusively on Balkan 'heroism' and leaving only the shame of the Balkans to their adversaries.

This mythologising of history was also at the root of all nationalisms in the Balkans; the distortion of facts, which was initially a justifiable stratagem, changed into a serious psychosis of hostility towards others. In the course of the centuries, nationalist psychoses, crystallising from generation to generation through the schooling system, acquired an increasingly virulent poisoning effect. From there to crime against others, the evil idea of the expulsion of strangers, the burning of homes and massacres, it was but a short step. It is to their misfortune and shame that some of the Balkan peoples eagerly took that step. Nationalist ideas, now sustained by the administration, police and academia, bred savage doctrines on a par with the most obnoxious that humankind had hitherto conceived.

When Atlantic Europe decided to intervene in Kosovo to bring an end to a state-sponsored crime, voices were raised in opposition to that intervention among what is called the 'cultural élite'. Until then it had been the cultured elements that had criticised states when they shrank from what, on moral grounds, were justifiable interventions. Doubtless for the first time in the history of Europe and of humankind, the chancelleries of 19 states together launched a military operation in the defence of human rights. The hesitation of cultured people in the face of the unanimity of those chancelleries gives the impression that there was a reversal of their roles.

The Balkan conflict, while producing a new type of action, which is to Europe's honour, also laid bare the dark stains lurking in the hidden depths of its conscience. The eradication of crime, in both minds and in practice, becomes all the more urgent, whether in the Balkan peninsula, where this crime was conceived, or in the European space, which keeps it hidden in its recesses.

Following this line of thought, one might ask whether the states of Europe, through their presence in the current drama in the Balkans, do not have the opportunity, at the same time as re-establishing order in the peninsula, to purge themselves, as Aristotle said of the spectators at the theatre of antiquity, 'by means of pity and fear'.[*]

The international community's active role in the Balkans is not only a necessity but also the only possible way of warding off a murderous, suicidal tragedy on a huge scale.

In the present state of affairs, some of the Balkan peoples are incapable of resolving certain fundamental problems. Their old mistakes and faults not only prevent them from developing normally but inexorably drive them to armed conflict. Thus, the 'Europeanisation of the Balkans', even if this expression may sound rather like a formula from the Enlightenment, goes well beyond that view of things and becomes a determining factor in the establishment of peace in this region and in Europe.

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[*]   *Poetics*, 6, 1449b.

That 'Europeanisation' cannot, alas, be achieved without carrying out certain apparently arbitrary, indeed brutal, acts such as the intervention in Bosnia and in Kosovo.

The section of the Balkan political and cultural élite that declares that its national pride has been severely wounded by the allegedly arbitrary European intervention merely conceals, by taking this attitude, its bad faith and its desire to see the peninsula in a permanent state of destabilisation. Destabilisation helps the cause of the criminal and chauvinistic structures that this section of the Balkans élite has zealously served for a long time. Also, in this regard, the word 'patriotism', in this case pan-Balkan, merits the description of it by the English essayist Samuel Johnson: 'the last refuge of a scoundrel'.

The Balkans themselves, however, do not deserve Europe's contempt, and have a right to its even-handedness.

On the European side, those who hold to the doctrine of non-interference have always found it harder to conceal their old mistrust of colonialists. By displaying excessive respect for the governments of the Balkan states they are in fact demonstrating their disregard for the fate of the people the latter govern.

While recognising the difficulties that any changes to borders would present at the present time, Europe, in the expectation of calmer days and a more progressive view of things in terms of the application of the great principle of self-determination, must at all costs not lose sight of this saving idea. It is the only constructive notion that gives us a glimpse of light at the end of the tunnel. Hiding that light is the most serious offence one can commit against a people: it amounts to announcing the abolition of its right to liberty. No people in the world, and especially not in Europe, could accept such a thing.

Acceptance of the principle of self-determination, and its thoughtful and patient implementation, would greatly soothe the conscience of the Balkan peoples. Without that hope, no progress towards détente and peace in the region seems possible.

This idea, however, can only go together with an unrelenting struggle against all forms of nationalism. Unfortunately, the freeing of the Balkans

from Ottoman and Habsburg rule was driven, accompanied and cemented by the idea of national unity, by the nationalism that has often been confused and identified with patriotism, heroic idealism or even social emancipation. That attitude of mind has penetrated so deeply into the political culture of the Balkans, as well as into culture in the broadest sense, that today, to uproot it, it is essential to strip away all its superimposed strata, like layers of roughcast on an old wall. The danger, however, lies in the fact that if the operation is not carried out in the right places, that is to say where the trouble really lies, there is a risk of affecting the very structure of some nation, causing further collapse that could lead in turn to major troubles that would be bound to damage the peace and stability of the Balkans.

The danger is that an overall fight against nationalism following stereotyped concepts blindly applied, a fight that does not take careful account of the particular characteristics and circumstances of a given country, can produce results that are the opposite of those intended. A good illustration of this was the events in Albania in 1997, when the structure of the state collapsed. Whereas society and all institutions were shaken in the wake of post-communist disillusionment, at a time when the Albanian people had been gripped by uncertainty and despair, and driven to the repudiation of any moral values, indiscriminate propaganda, rather than attempting to dampen down these consuming flames, on the contrary sought to fan them in every way possible. The Albanians were accused of nationalism, of extolling national values at a time when, suffering collectively from aggressive cosmopolitanism, they scorned these very values in the most barbaric manner. They found themselves in the situation of an invalid who is clumsily treated with quite the wrong remedies. This tragic misunderstanding ended with the fall of the Albanian state itself, which brought in its wake serious problems for all of the region (massive emigration, clandestine armies, trafficking in human beings, etc.).

Whereas in the case of Serbia and, to a lesser extent, Greece, Europe considered a cultural intervention necessary to calm aggressive nationalism, in the case of Albania what was important was the opposite: a cultural intervention in order to restore national values, which would have given that people some hope and made them understand that they had to build their lives in their own country and not on foreign soil. That distinction, between the nationalist leanings and self-glorification of Albania's two neighbours, on the one hand, and the cosmopolitan, anarchic tendency of the latter, on

the other, is certainly not to the advantage of the Albanian people. A descent into anarchy is not to the honour of any people, and history has often shown that denial of one's country and a morbid praising of it are merely two sides of the same coin, and are easily interchangeable.

A civilisation's relationship with crime is the fundamental test of any organised society. The very notion of crime is broad and varied. Those are two qualities that the history of humankind itself has given it, a history that, in the present situation, cannot be explained or understood unless this notion is as well. Let us be quite clear that what is meant here is crime in the strict sense, the most fundamental of crimes: the spilling of human blood. The ancient Greeks distinguished very clearly between this crime and all others. Two thousand five hundred years ago Aeschylus, in the *Oresteia*, described the spilling of blood from a man's veins, this irreversible and irremediable act, as the most intolerable horror.

The killing of a man to devour him, to steal his food, ravish his pastures, house, wife or land; murder to wipe out a race, a people: at the beginning of the third millennium, despite the gradual refinement of the human species, in Europe all these base crimes, with the exception of cannibalism, are still practised.

Eradicating crime in the strict sense in the Balkans, and at the same time striking ruthlessly against criminal thinking in Europe and elsewhere in the world, is a duty of the greatest urgency.

Yet to eradicate crime one has to begin by denouncing it. And in order to denounce it, it is essential first to determine its sources.

It should not be impossible to cure morbid nationalism in the Balkans. A UNESCO initiative to review the history books in the peninsula was a worthy one, but was an isolated act that will, I fear, remain without sequel. A process of emancipation that encouraged the Balkan peoples to gain self-awareness would be very important. Knowing one's own true importance and also that of one's neighbour, ridding oneself of fantasies, freeing one's conscience of useless baggage, revanchist venom and wild dreams – there lies the true beginning of emancipation. More especially, one can say that the drama of Serbia today lies in the fact that that small country attributed to itself, either physically or spiritually, an importance that it did not in fact

have. In attempting to falsify objective reality, it endeavoured to accomplish what other states like it had often done before: nourish their hatred of other peoples. And hatred, as we know, is followed by aggression and crime.

History has already proved that Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Albanians and others can live naturally alongside each other. That is not a pious wish, but the conclusion arrived at from the experience of five hundred years during which they lived together and managed to stay on their feet precisely because they lived side by side, and in the most tragic conditions. Refusal to recognise that, and support for the disastrous idea that, in order to have a better life themselves, certain peoples must oppress, and if possible suppress, others, lies at the heart of the drama in the Balkans today. Restoring the age-old equilibrium in the region would be the first step towards ending the drama.

In order to help the Balkan peoples, Atlantic Europe must have a clear idea of certain essential factors. There is one simple yet fundamental reason, among others, for the incomprehension that it has for long displayed towards the conflict between Serbs and Albanians (a conflict without whose resolution there can be no peace in the Balkans): a failure to comprehend the respective importance of the two peoples. Under the pressure of deafening propaganda, in particular from Belgrade, aimed at the European public and also chancelleries, there was a widespread image of the conflict as one between two peoples of quite unequal specific gravity: Serbia, a big, preeminent country with the power to establish order; Albania, on the contrary, a small country, a small population, weighed down with problems and, consequently, doomed to being constantly overshadowed.

This distortion of the picture, this form of hypnosis, sought to perpetuate an absurd situation created by a decision, which was itself absurd, to decree the division of a country at the end of the First World War. Of course, nothing is easier than to reduce the size of a country to a minimum, but what, in this case, was one to do about the Albanian people? And it is precisely that people that continued to press its case in Western chancelleries. It is also why Europe was scarcely touched, this people being merely disturbing like any other homeless being.

This fundamental error should have been corrected precisely because the two peoples were not of unequal weight but virtually the same, be it physically, numerically or culturally.

Was that truth really so misunderstood? By the public at large no doubt, but there are few grounds for thinking so when it comes to specialists on these matters. The briefest of glances at history would have led to different conclusions when defining the respective status of these two peoples in conflict. In the seventeenth century, when the Ottomans, having convinced themselves that they could not attack Europe without the support of the Balkan peoples, decided to side with the peninsula by offering a Balkan official the post of Prime Minister or Grand Vizier of the Empire. For nearly a century the post was reserved, in an almost dynastic fashion, for Albanians. At the time they were apparently considered one of the main peoples of the Balkans, and therefore capable of representing the region. In time, however, this people was to lose its influence and importance. But in spite of everything its body remains, and with it what the Balkan peoples never lose – the memory of their past.

When, under entirely new conditions, Albanians and Serbs renewed their ancient conflict, the oppression of the former by the latter was bound to be seen as revenge for the long and supposedly unjust affront that the Serbs had suffered under Ottoman rule. Except that that revenge could only be temporary. In this world many strange things can happen, but it would be hard to imagine that one Balkan people could be crushed by another.

Once the Balkan peoples have convinced themselves of that truth, once they have understood that their only chance is to refrain from conflict, then they will really be on the path of hope.

It is today natural that the Balkan peoples need Europe. But on the other hand the question whether anyone needs the Balkans, or rather whether the Balkans can be of any use to Europe, is rarely posed. It would stand a good chance of prompting an ironic smile and the thought, 'Who on earth would be interested in inviting the devil in?'.

Of the last two empires that have been involved with the Balkans, the Habsburg and the Ottoman, it was, as mentioned earlier, the latter that from the outset got to grips with the Balkans as a vital factor in its revival. It

arrived at this novel logic by military considerations. For over two centuries, the Ottomans, who were militarily more advanced than Europe, naturally exploited this inexhaustible reserve, which supplied them with officers, warriors, a spirit of adventure, ambitions and madness.

The Habsburgs, aristocrats that they were, could not begin to consider introducing this turbulent and dangerous jumble into their ageing military élite. Moreover, the saying that the Balkans begin at the gates of Vienna, although quoted with amusement in Europe's salons, nevertheless contained, in its worldly aspect, an element of truth, a reproach, even a suggestion, that was never taken into account.

The opposite idea, according to which Europe could use the Balkans as a spearhead against the Ottoman Empire had been current for a long time. Projected crusades by popes, warlords, heroes or adventurers were each in turn abandoned, apparently due to ignorance of the real nature of relations between the Balkans and the Empire. If these relations, as suggested at the beginning of this chapter, were not conformist, neither were they marked, contrary to what one might imagine, with any special heroic spirit. The two Balkan Wars against the Turks at the beginning of the last century were merely a caricature of a long-standing project. In fact it produced very little result. Compared with ancient, more or less epic, confrontations, these two wars only amounted to forays by bandits that were above all anxious to pick over the bones of a corpse.

Strange as it may seem, today relations between Europe and the Balkans, whether we like it or not, renew certain aspects of this old game. The old Ottoman idea of using the Albanian coastline for naval ventures against Europe was taken up by the Soviets, who installed nuclear missiles at the former Turkish (and even earlier, Roman) naval base at Vlore. Today the West apparently intends to do something similar. The Balkans remains an area at risk, sometimes from the West and sometimes from the East. So, when looking at the problems of the region, one must never forget to distinguish between those for which the peninsula itself is responsible and those for which the Continent is to blame.

Whether we like it or not, Europe's policy on the Balkans will necessarily be marked by either Roman-Byzantine or Ottoman-Habsburg reminiscences. Let me repeat, therefore, that there is still, in this thousand-year-old reality,

an idea that retains its force, that of arbitration. Euro-Atlantic arbitration, despite any weaknesses it may have, is not offensive; it would, on the contrary, be salutary for the region. The fact that it would be entrusted to the most advanced democratic countries of our time would give it, in the eyes of the Balkan peoples, who are tired and have been dealt with so harshly by fate, real legitimacy.

In order to exert its influence, to make the Balkans a positive region, capable, as it is in reality, of bringing to Europe not only its riches and its beaches, which one finds there as in other regions, but also resources, human and cultural energy, the Continent will have to rid itself of the remaining prejudices that still veil its vision of the area. Europe must recognise that the peninsula is today the scene of new realities that, until very recently, were unimaginable. To get an idea of the extent of those changes one has only to look at two countries engaged in an age-old conflict: Albania and Yugoslavia. Albania, which only yesterday was still isolated, insane, Stalinist and anti-Western, has become one of the areas in the region that is most orientated towards Europe. Yugoslavia, which was open, pro-Western, liberal or, rather, pseudo-liberal, underwent an opposite evolution: it became a closed, Stalinist country. The two old enemies had until recently reversed their roles. That is a reality that nobody can ignore.

Throughout their long history, the peoples of the Balkans established a physical and spiritual equilibrium among themselves. During the twentieth century, tragic political misunderstandings had the effect of destroying that equilibrium. The tendency to perpetuate evil there through new racist doctrines, such as, inter alia, that which warns against 'Albanian expansion-ism', is at odds with the civilising spirit of the Continent. At a time when the European house is being built, in which all the peoples of Europe must develop naturally, introducing a special law limiting the freedom and harmonious development of a people would be a historical and moral nonsense, to put it mildly.

Europe, as guardian of the peninsula, must at all costs not fall into the trap of Balkan intrigues and jealousies. For their part, the peoples of the Balkans must understand once and for all that, if in past centuries they have marched side by side towards disaster, today they must go forward together towards their salvation.

The return of the great peninsula to its parent continent would bring clear advantages to all. It will only be after that has happened that the distinctive ring in the talons of the eagle that has returned will be seen, not as a sign of separation, but as the mark of a past ordeal.

Chapter Two

DO THE BALKANS EXIST?

Predrag Simic

Ten years of war in former Yugoslavia brought the terms 'Balkans' and 'balkanisation' back into widespread use. By the beginning of the twentieth century, in the West these terms had become synonymous with political violence, ethnic conflicts and the fragmentation of states (*Kleinstaaterei*) that marked the break-up of the Ottoman Empire and the so-called 'Eastern crisis'. At the time that the end of the bipolar division of Europe indicated the possibility of a new and peaceful order, the wars of the Yugoslav succession 'brought wars back to Europe,'[1] showing the inability of the international community to ensure peace in a continent that was no longer threatened by conflicting military and political alliances, but by crises and ethnic conflicts in former socialist countries. Many studies from this period, such as David Owen's *Balkan Odyssey*,[2] Susan Woodward's *Balkan Tragedy*,[3] Robert Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts*[4] and others, are evidence that the Balkans remained the 'European powder keg'[5] at the end of the century just as it was at the beginning. An attempt at 'remaking the Balkans'[6] on religious, cultural, and ethnic grounds caused further fragmentation of South-Eastern Europe, with most Balkan states experiencing economic, social and political crises, with little chance of following Central and East European countries and joining the process of European integration in the foreseeable future.

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[1] Hans Stark, *Les Balkans, Le retour de la guerre en Europe* (Paris: IFRI and Dunod, 1993).

[2] David Owen, *Balkan Odyssey* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1995).

[3] Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1995).

[4] Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (New York: St Martin's, 1993).

[5] F. Stephen Larrabee (ed.), *The Volatile Powder Keg: Balkan Security After the Cold War* (Washington, DC: American University Press, 1994).

[6] Christopher Cviic, *Remaking the Balkans* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs and Pinter Publishers, 1991).

Unlike Western Europe, which reinforced its integration within the European Union during the 1990s, the former Eastern bloc broke up into three main groups:

- To the east of the Continent, the development of the countries that emerged from the former Soviet Union, vaguely organised as the Commonwealth of Independent States, remains uncertain and largely dependent on developments in Russia, which will probably remain militarily, politically and economically the dominant state of the region in the long run.
- Relying on the support of the West and, particularly, of the EU, Central and East European countries have successfully embarked on transition and the creation of regional organisations, such as the Central European Initiative (CEI) and Central European Free Trade Association (CEFTA) on the way to full integration into the EU early in the twenty-first century.
- The third group, consisting of the countries of South-Eastern Europe (i.e. the Balkans) is very heterogeneous, and burdened with underdevelopment, ethnic conflicts and the consequences of the break-up of former Yugoslavia. About a dozen initiatives for regional cooperation, most of them launched after the Dayton peace accord,[7] failed to produce the expected results, above all due to the lack of financial resources (most of them have been designed as self-help programmes), the absence of a clear perspective of European integration and the international isolation of a country that is geographically in the centre of the region – the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The opportunity for the stabilisation of the region did not present itself until political changes had occurred in Serbia, where the victory of the democratic opposition over Slobodan Milosevic's regime in September 2000

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[7]   The First Conference of Foreign Ministers of Balkan States was held in Belgrade in 1988. These meetings were renewed in 1996 in Sofia, while the First Summit of Balkan States took place in November 1997 in Crete. Immediately after the signing of the Dayton peace accord, the EU launched the Royaumont initiative, and soon afterwards defined the so-called 'regional approach' to the countries in the region, based on the formula '5–1+1'. For its part, the United States at the same time launched the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) and somewhat later the Southeastern Balkans Ministerial (SBM) and South Balkan Development Initiative (SBDI). Also significant were other regional initiatives in the close neighbourhood, such as CEI, CEFTA, Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), Working Community of the Danubian Regions (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft Donauländer* – ARGE Donauländer) and others.

eradicated the last remnants of the Berlin Wall in Europe and, somewhat earlier, in Croatia, where the victory of the opposition also eliminated an anachronistic nationalistic regime. Despite the fact that many crisis spots (Bosnia, Kosovo, etc.) are still festering in the region, South-East European countries, for the first time in recent history, have the opportunity to build stable mutual relations and long-term forms of regional integration as part of the European and Euro-Atlantic integration processes.

The failure of the Rambouillet conference, and NATO's military intervention against Yugoslavia in 1999, were instrumental in motivating EU member states towards a more effective CFSP. Under its German presidency, the Union responded to that challenge in June 1999 with the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and the Stabilisation and Association Process. The Pact encompassed most former initiatives for regional cooperation as well as the policies of the European Union and the United States in an attempt to establish a common policy on South-Eastern Europe.

Will democratic changes in Serbia and Croatia indeed mark a turning point in the decade-long ethnic conflicts of the 'Western Balkans'? Or are they only an interlude, such as those in 1990[8] or 1996,[9] before the chain of ethnic wars in the southern Balkans continues to its logical outcome – the creation of ethnically homogeneous nation-states? The answer to this question will depend not only on the future course of events in the Balkans, but also on the policies of the international community, above all the readiness of the European Union to seize the opportunity of the current favourable circumstances for a radically new approach to this region of Europe. The results of the October 2000 elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the continuation of political violence in Kosovo-Metohija, and the incursion of Albanian guerrillas into southern Serbia since November 2000, as well as shaky relations between two members of the Yugoslav federation – Serbia and Montenegro – all signal that the Balkans is still a powder keg of crises that could have far-reaching political consequences. Even on the assumption that

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[8] In 1990 the government of the last prime minister of former Yugoslavia, Ante Markovic, attempted in vain, through comprehensive economic reforms, to prevent the break-up of the country but its effort lacked the support of both the leading Yugoslav republics and Western countries.

[9] The Dayton peace accord at the end of 1995 ended the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but it failed to provide long-term solutions to the problems in the remaining parts of former Yugoslavia, which escalated at the end of 1996 and during 1997.

the present latent crises do not escalate into new armed conflicts, the road towards stabilisation and regional integration of the countries of South-Eastern Europe is strewn with many obstacles inherited from the region's recent and/or more distant past. The question that arises then is: do the Balkans exist? Are there historical, security, economic, and political assumptions that argue for the linking of Balkan states with the processes of European integration?

II.1   Between geography and history

Although geographically the Balkans is unquestionably a part of the European continent, its turbulent history has left its mark, in the shape of deep ethnic, religious, cultural, economic and political divisions. Even the name of the region – the Balkan Peninsula (*Balkan Halbinsel*) – is a fictitious name invented at the beginning of the nineteenth century by the German geographer August Zeune in an attempt to avoid what were at the time politically incorrect names such as 'the European part of Turkey' or 'Turkey in Europe'.[10] Zeune mistakenly believed that the Balkan Mountains in Bulgaria are the northern geographical border of this region.[11] For the better part of its history, from the Roman *limes* (frontier) to the Iron Curtain in the twentieth century, the Balkans was the border between empires, religions and civilisations, while its peoples often clashed in their role of guardians of that border. Among the consequences of imperial wars in the Balkans were large population migrations, which made the ethnic patterns of the peninsula 'spotted like a leopard's pelt', while various religious and cultural influences resulted in the mixing of Catholic and Orthodox Christianity with Islam.[12] A second consequence was ethnic and religious animosities. The fiercest conflicts in the wars of the Yugoslav succession, from 1991 to 1999, took place precisely in the areas of former boundaries between empires, such as Krajina in Croatia, where the Habsburg Empire

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[10]   Ami Boué, *La Turquie d'Europe* (Paris: A. Bertrand, 1840), vol. 1–4.

[11]   'In the north this Balkan Peninsula is divided from the rest of Europe by the long mountain chain of the Balkans, or the former Albanus, Scardus, Haemus, which, to the north-west, joins the Alps in the small Istrian peninsula, and to the east fades away into the Black Sea in two branches.' August Zeune, *Goea: Versuch einer wissenschaftlichen Erdbeschreibung*, Berlin, 1811, p. 11.

[12]   On this point, see: Jovan Cvijic, *La peninsule balkanique : géographie humaine* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1918).

had settled Serbian refugees from the Ottoman Empire since the seventeenth century to guard against Turkish incursions.[13] On the other side of the border, Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was under military administration at the time of the Ottoman Empire, played a similar role. The most problematic source of ethnic and territorial conflicts in the Balkans – in Kosovo-Metohija – is the consequence of conflicts between Albanians, who converted to Islam in the sixteenth century and became the instrument of Ottoman rule, and neighbouring Christian nations.[14]

Wars of liberation and national revolutions in the Balkans at the beginning of the nineteenth century brought into conflict the national projects of Balkan peoples, while interventions by great powers prevented any of them from establishing ethnic borders or attaining hegemony in the region. For that reason the twentieth century in the Balkans began and ended with ethnic wars, giving it a reputation as the European 'powder keg' and creating negative stereotypes in the West. This reputation was additionally reinforced by the wars of the Yugoslav succession towards the end of the century.[15] A total of seven wars took place in the Balkans during the twentieth century: the First and Second Balkan Wars, the First World War, the Greco–Turkish War, the Second World War, the Civil War in Greece and a series of wars of Yugoslav succession in the 1990s. The most frequent motive for these wars in the Balkans was 'unsettled national issues', having as their goal the creation of nation-states, i.e. ethnically homogenous states that extend to the entire ethnic territory of one nation. The national programmes of most Balkan peoples recognised the idea of an 'ethnic' or 'greater' nation-state that relied on 'historical' or 'national' rights. In this regard, there is no substantial difference between Serbian, Croatian, Albanian or other Balkan nationalisms. Attempts at achieving these ambitions in the geographically limited and ethnically, culturally, and religiously very heterogeneous area of the Balkans inevitably led to ethnic and territorial conflicts and massive

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[13]   The term 'Krajina' (frontier) derives from the original name 'Vojna krajina' (*Militärgrenze* – Military Frontier) which this area bore during the Habsburg Empire.

[14]   For example, the Albanian clan Küprülü (Cuprilici) provided a whole dynasty of grand viziers at the peak of the Ottoman Empire. See Georges Castellan, *Histoire des Balkans, XIV–XX Siècles* (Paris: Fayard, 1991).

[15]   On this point see *The Other Balkan Wars* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1993); and Robert D. Kaplan, op. cit. in note 4. In particular, see: Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Vesna Golsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania – The Imperialism of the Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998).

involuntary migrations, i.e. 'population exchange' and 'ethnic cleansing'. In addition to ethnic conflicts, the principle of nation-states created economically non-viable mini-states which sooner or later became the strongholds of authoritarian regimes and revisionist foreign policies. After the First World War, the United States, France and Britain drew a new political map of the Balkans in an attempt to stop ethnic and territorial conflicts and include the region in the new international order in Europe. There were a total of six states on this map, five of which were nation-states, while the sixth – Yugoslavia[16] – was a multiethnic community of South Slavs. The Versailles system of states in the Balkans was revised after the Second World War, this time with the participation of the USSR, and remained in force until the end of the twentieth century. This can be credited to the balance of power between East and West in the region which encompassed two NATO members (Greece and Turkey), two Warsaw Treaty states (Romania and Bulgaria), as well as non-aligned Yugoslavia and self-isolated Albania, which acted as strategic buffers between the blocs.

The Cold War and bloc discipline only froze national conflicts in South-Eastern Europe that were renewed with greater ferocity and a greater number of participants after the break-up of the bipolar order in the Continent in 1989. Regardless of how anachronistic they were, ethnic and territorial conflicts in South-Eastern Europe during the 1990s resisted all attempts at international mediation. Moreover, instead of the 'Europeanisation of the Balkans', ethnic and territorial conflicts in the region threatened to 'balkanise' Europe and brought NATO back to the European scene. From Slovenia to Kosovo, every armed conflict in the Balkans has demonstrated that wars in Europe are still possible, and that the construction of the European Union will neither be complete nor stable until South-Eastern Europe has become an integral member.[17] Even where peace was imposed by NATO military intervention – in Bosnia-Herzegovina and, particularly, in Kosovo-Metohija – the present status quo would probably not survive the withdrawal of international peace forces. The break-up of Yugoslavia, the biggest multiethnic experiment in the region, and the state that was one of the footholds of international order in South-Eastern Europe for 73 years, reinforced the belief that multiethnic societies do not have a chance to

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[16]   The Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes until 1929.

[17]   See Bertelsmann Stiftung, 'The Balkans and New European Responsibilities', strategy paper presented to the special meting of The Club of Three and the Balkans, 29-30 June 2000, Brussels.

complete transition towards market economies and democratic societies successfully, and that only nation-states have a future. An argument often quoted to support this thesis is that West European countries entered their integration processes as established nation-states, that the first NATO members and most advanced candidates for EU membership from the former Central and East European bloc (the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland) are nation-states as well as current candidates from South-Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia). On the other hand, all three former East European federations (Czechoslovakia, USSR and Yugoslavia) broke up after 1989, while most present multiethnic states in the Balkans are dealing with more or less serious ethnic problems and do not have a chance to join either the EU or NATO in the foreseeable future.

Although the wars of the Yugoslav succession during the 1990s did not spill over the former Yugoslavia's international borders, they strongly destabilised the entire region and sent shock-waves throughout Europe and the world. Basically, these wars were waged in two main crisis areas. The first triangle of conflict is made up of Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Underlying this conflict is an ethnic and territorial dispute between two of the largest populations of the former SFRY – Serbs and Croats – who have been living together for centuries in these areas, both laying claim to Bosnia-Herzegovina, where the most numerous ethnic group are Muslims of Slavic (i.e. Serbian and Croat) descent. Although this war ended towards the end of 1995 with the Dayton peace accord, five years after its signing the deployment of international peacekeeping forces under NATO command and almost five billion dollars of international aid, Bosnia-Herzegovina remains a profoundly divided society (as confirmed by the results of the October 2000 elections) without a self-sufficient economy. However, while the Dayton accord halted armed conflict in Bosnia, the end of war in Kosovo-Metohija, the other trouble spot in the Balkans, did not put a stop to political violence and ethnic cleansing, which continue to this day. The incursion of Albanian guerrillas into southern Serbia in November 2000 only confirmed that the Kosovo problem directly threatens not only Serbia, Montenegro, FYROM and Albania, but also Greece and Bulgaria indirectly, as well as the entire southern Balkans.[18] Unlike the Dayton accord, the war in Kosovo-Metohija ended with UNSC Resolution 1244 and the so-called

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[18] On this point see: Predrag Simic, *Put u Rambuje: kosovska kriza 1995–2000* (The Road to Rambouillet: The Kosovo Crisis 1995–2000) (Belgrade: NEA, 2000).

Military Technical Agreement signed in Kumanovo, which does not contain long-term solutions for stabilisation of the southern Balkans and leaves room for an escalation of conflicts.[19]

II.2   The economic geography of the Balkans

The legacy of a turbulent past, the marginal position of the Balkans in relation to major economic processes in Europe and the lack of an economically dominant country that could act as a driving force for the economic development of this region are some of the main reasons for its relative underdevelopment. This gives rise to the question, does a Balkan economy exist at all? Two of the most economically successful countries of the Balkans – Greece and Turkey – do not have the economic potential of a united Germany which in the 1990s contributed decisively to the successful economic transition of its eastern neighbours. Nor does Greece or Turkey have the same level of influence as France, Italy or Spain in the Mediterranean. Until the beginning of the 1990s, the Balkan economic scene was divided into three parts. In the first, Romania and Bulgaria, as COMECON members and a part of the East European trade bloc, guided most of their foreign-trade relations towards other COMECON members – USSR and other Central and East European countries – while economic relations with neighbours developed within the COMECON policy. In the second trade bloc were Greece and Turkey, as EC members and associate members respectively, whose main trade and financial partners were in the West. The third part was the single market of the former SFRY. Owing to its position as a strategic buffer between the blocs, it had relatively favourable arrangements both with COMECON and with the EC, and since the mid-1960s with Third World countries as well. Consequently, Yugoslavia's interest in economic cooperation with its Balkan neighbours was, with certain excep-

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[19]   The Military Technical Agreement of Kumanovo establishes, along the administrative border with Kosovo-Metohija, the so-called Ground Safety Zone, extending five kilometres into the territory of Serbia (Article I, paragraph 3.e.; see Predrag Simic, *Put u Rambuje . . .* , op. cit. in note 18, p. 336), but the instruments for its supervision and control, particularly operational cooperation between KFOR and Yugoslav security forces, have not been defined. A similar omission in the case of the so-called 'safe havens' in Bosnia-Herzegovina was a prelude to the tragedies of Srebrenica and Zepa in the summer of 1995.

tions,[20] relatively modest and took place within the arrangements of COMECON and the EC.[21]

The most visible consequence of the economic division of the Balkans is an underdeveloped infrastructure (roads and railways, telecommunications networks, oil pipelines, etc.) on which regional economic cooperation could rely. In this sense, two different Balkans currently exist.

- The first of these consists of the area of former Yugoslavia, which has been developing as a unique economic space for more than seventy years and has a relatively developed infrastructure. However, the break-up of SFRY divided it, with new 'hard' borders and political differences that reduced mutual economic cooperation among Yugoslav republics to a very modest level. Even in the last decades of former Yugoslavia, the priority of the Yugoslav republics was no longer a single market but economic cooperation with neighbouring countries.[22]
- The second encompasses other countries which were separated during the Cold War, not only by the Iron Curtain but also by their marginal position in relation to the centres of the trade blocs. To illustrate this point, it is worth mentioning that there is only one bridge in a several hundred kilometre stretch of the Danube between Bulgaria and Romania, while the main traffic routes from these two countries lead eastward. The break-up of and war in former Yugoslavia disrupted most inland transport between Greece and Turkey and the rest of the EU, and re-routed it to sea transport. In addition, traditionally 'hard' borders between the Balkan states are a reason for long delays of passengers and goods at border crossings, and they additionally hamper traffic within the region.

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[20] Certainly one of the most successful regional projects is the Djerdap hydropower and navigation system (Romanian: *Portile de Fier*) on the Danube that Yugoslavia and Romania have been developing since the late 1950s.

[21] For example, the annual exports of Yugoslav veal to Greece amounted to 30,000 tons, but a year after Greece was admitted to the EC these fell to only 3,000 tons. Similar drops in trade between the two countries were recorded in other sectors.

[22] For example, it is worth pointing out that the first highway in former Yugoslavia (the Vrhnika–Postojna highway in Slovenia) in the early 1970s was not built on the main route leading from Austria and Italy via Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia towards Greece and Bulgaria, but on the route between Austria and Italy, countries with which Slovenia had and still has developed economic relations.

Another consequence of the economic division is visible in the foreign trade trends in Balkan states. According to official statistics, most Balkan countries, with some exceptions, have almost negligible mutual trade (under 1 per cent of total imports and exports[23]), while for most their main trading partners are Germany, Italy and Russia.[24] Certainly, this data should be treated with some reserve, due to the consequences of the ten-year-long wars of the Yugoslav succession and UN Security Council sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As a result of these, a large share of economic transactions shifted to the black economy and remain beyond the reach of official statistics.[25] During those ten years, the economies of most former socialist countries in the Balkans experienced a dramatic decline. In the case of Yugoslavia, it amounted to a 70 per cent decline from its 1989 level. Causes for this should be sought both in the break-up of the former Yugoslav market[26] and the consequences of the collapse of centrally planned economies whereby the Balkan states, unlike CEFTA countries, did not manage to find an alternative in the EU market.[27] According to economic analyses, which are hard to test statistically, certain countries of the region now generate over 50 per cent of their gross domestic product in the 'shadow economy', while a large share of their mutual trade is carried out through illegal channels.[28] The conditions of the war economy in the republics of former Yugoslavia during the past decade have been conducive to illegal economic activities and the development of international criminal networks which, in addition to traditional activities (such as smuggling of arms, tobacco, illegal migrants, narcotics and other hazardous substances), have extended their activities to illegal trade in vital raw materials, fuel and

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[23]   Vladimir Gligorov, 'Trade in the Balkans', paper presented at the conference 'South-East Europe after NATO and EU enlargement: Towards Inclusive Security Structures?', WEU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, December 1997, p. 2.

[24]   Ibid., p. 3.

[25]   On this point, see Milica Uvalic, 'Regional Cooperation in Southeastern Europe', *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, January 2001.

[26]   The former Yugoslav republics sold 20–25 per cent of their output in the markets of other Yugoslav republics and between 15 and 22 per cent abroad. Ibid.

[27]   A drop in the volume of trade after the break-up of Yugoslavia is visible not only among the republics that were in conflict (e.g. Serbia and Croatia) but also among the others (e.g. Croatia and Slovenia).

[28]   This assessment has been presented at various conferences on contemporary Balkan economies, including: 'Reconstruction and Regional Co-operation in the Balkans', LSE, Vouliagmeni, Greece, 8-10 July 1999; and 'Facing the Future: The Balkans in the Year 2010', Center for Liberal Studies (Sofia) and Center for European Integration (Bonn), Sofia, 12 May 1999.

other products, permeating deeply into these economies and causing widespread corruption.

In spite of the generally adverse consequences of the crises and wars in the Balkans during the 1990s, they also had certain favourable effects, such as shifting former trade trends to a regional focus and establishing the basis for any future regional cooperation in the Balkans. After the end of war in Kosovo-Metohija and the lifting of the UN-imposed trade sanctions against Yugoslavia, a large share of formerly illegal trade transactions will shift to legal channels which will be reflected in future official trade statistics and will illustrate the real extent of these changes. For example, it is worth pointing out that Belgrade, the geographic centre of the Balkans, is situated at approximately the same distance (about 400 kilometres) from Zagreb, Budapest and Sofia. Until 1991, however, the traffic of passengers, goods and money between Belgrade and Zagreb took place within the single political and economic space. That is no longer the case. The traffic between Belgrade, on the one hand, and Budapest and Sofia, on the other, was conducted across the Iron Curtain, and was subject to rigorous border controls. However, the situation is different today: during the past ten years thousands of Yugoslav firms have opened offices in these two cities, while financial transactions are partially carried out through Hungarian and Bulgarian banks. In short, the 1990s radically changed the economic geography of the Balkans and shifted economic processes towards new partners and new markets.

Relations between Hungary and Yugoslavia are an example of this shift. Though they have been through many ups and downs over the last ten years, the break-up of the former SFRY has made Hungary an important link in the traffic of people and goods between FRY and EU countries, as well as in business relations between Serbia and the West. The effects are particularly visible in southern Hungary, notably in Szeged, where a larger number of private Yugoslav firms are registered and where in 1999 the so-called 'Szeged process', which played a significant role in linking democratic opposition in Serbia with the EU, took off. Hungary's membership of NATO in March 1999, its status of 'fast-track' candidate for EU member-ship, and the erection of Schengen borders towards its southern and eastern neighbours complicate its relations not only with FRY but also with

Romania and Ukraine, where numerous Hungarian minorities live.[29] Although it may be assumed that the normalisation of relations between the former Yugoslav republics will bring a portion of passenger and freight traffic back to their former routes through Croatia and Slovenia, Hungary's future membership of the Union could increase the isolation of Balkan states unless it is accompanied by adequate compensatory measures. However, if by then most former socialist countries in the Balkans are granted associate membership of the Union and CEFTA, and if other specific measures are introduced, the on-going process of cross-border cooperation could contribute to bringing the Balkan countries closer to the Union. Soon after its admission to NATO, Hungary was involved in the military intervention against Yugoslavia in March 1999, thereby raising a number of new security concerns in the region that could be removed by early admission of these countries into the Partnership for Peace and the EU. Similar problems in the region could be caused by the admission of Slovenia (also in the first category of candidate countries as envisaged by Agenda 2000) as well as by a selective policy of the Union towards Balkan countries.

Another obstacle for the states of South-Eastern Europe is that the Balkans are situated on Europe's periphery. With the exception of Greece (and to some extent Italy and Turkey), there are no economically developed countries in this part of Europe that could play the role of a 'motor' of regional economic development, and represent the interests of the countries of the region in the political and financial capitals of the Union. The marginal position of the Balkans may be illustrated by the fact that, until 1991, only two Balkan non-EU member countries – SFRY and Turkey – each accounted for 1 per cent of the total foreign trade of the European Union, while *per capita* aid from the G-24 to Balkan states[30] during the 1990s amounted to €388 compared with €882 to the states of Central and Eastern Europe. The fear that the Iron Curtain in Europe will be replaced by a 'Golden Curtain' between the rich and the poor motivated Slovenia and Croatia in a flight from the Balkans, while some other countries of the region see themselves as Central European rather than Balkan states.[31]

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29   There are, for example, about 350,000 ethnic Hungarians in the FRY.
30   Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia and FRY.
31   That is why Slovenia and Croatia view any regional initiative in the Balkans with mistrust. In January 1998, Croatia adopted constitutional amendments which prohibit return to any kind of Yugoslav community.

II.3   The European Union and the Balkans

If political Europe is indeed 'an encounter of a space and a project',[32] is this encounter also feasible for the south-eastern part of the Continent that was historically mainly the periphery or the frontier of Europe? For pro-European forces in Balkan states, membership of the Union is practically the only way to get anchored in Western values and to stabilise their societies and their international environment in the transition process. Failure to fulfil their promises was the reason why such political groups lost electoral power in the past ten years and relinquished initiatives to national-istic, neo-communist and other populist forces as well as forces of an underdog culture present in this region.[33] During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the European Community did not develop a specific policy towards South-Eastern Europe; it instead applied the policy originally designed for Central and East European countries. A part of the West European political élite at the time considered that the eastern enlargement of European integration, the *finalité politique* of the Union, ends at the eastern borders of 'Carolingian Europe'.[34] Consistent implementation of the principle of conditionality and the uneven distribution of the Union's aid to the Visegrad group rather than the Balkan countries further widened the developmental gap between Central and Eastern, and South-Eastern, Europe. The forthcoming eastern enlargement of the European Union will leave most of South-Eastern Europe further marginalised: 'Thus, the EU is de facto dividing the region with its left hand while promoting multilateral cooperation between the states of the same region with the right hand.'[35]

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[32]   Michel Foucher, *La République européenne, entre histoires et géographies* (Paris: Belin, 1999).

[33]   On this point, see Nikiforos Diamantouros, *Cultural Dualism and Political Change in Post-Authoritarian Greece* (Madrid: Estudios Working Papers, Centro de Estudios Avanzados en Ciencias Sociales, 1994).

[34]   According to Willy Claes, then Foreign Minister of Belgium and Chairman-in-Office of the Ministerial Council of the European Union in 1993: 'The countries of South-Eastern Europe belong in the cultural sense to the collapsed Byzantine empire. They do not have a democratic tradition nor a tradition of respect for minorities and, therefore, it would be proper that the enlargement of the Union be restricted to the "cultural circle" of Western countries. The enlargement of the Union should be restricted to the Protes-tant and Catholic circle of European countries.' Quoted in *Kathimerini*, 16 October 1993, p. 9.

[35]   Op. cit. in note 17, pp. 3-4.

Consequently, there are basically two possible scenarios for the development of the Balkans in the first decades of the twenty-first century.

- The first of these – the triumph of the nation-state – is based on the assumption that ethnic and territorial conflicts must, with necessary humanitarian interventions by the international community, be brought to their logical end – i.e., the creation of stable nation-states. Only then will it be possible to establish long-term security, economic and political structures and begin the integration of this region into a European framework. This is corroborated by the consequences of past wars of Yugoslav succession and the attitude of influential political forces in these countries, as well as by the positions of some Western élites. Five years after the Dayton accord, Bosnia-Herzegovina is a profoundly divided country, its central authorities have very little real power, its economy still relies largely on humanitarian aid from the international community, while its unity is based on its 'soft-protectorate' status as guaranteed by the UN and NATO. A year after the implementation of UN SC Resolution 1244, Kosovo-Metohija still finds itself in a state of volatile peace dominated by political violence. It is on the way to its final ethnic division, where small Serb enclaves have survived only in the north and, partially, in the south of the entity. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is a country composed of three different and relatively independent entities – Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo – with an uncertain common future. The situation is similar in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, where a strong Albanian ethnic minority in the west of the country is exerting strong pressure for federalisation. Also, Montenegro's independence could encourage similar requests from the Albanian minority in the east of the country.[36] The consequences of the position that holds that the break-up of Yugoslavia is not over, and support for the independence of Kosovo and Montenegro, could result in the further proliferation of small, weak and revisionist states in the Balkans. In other words, the Balkans would be remade with the revision of existing borders inevitably leading to the forceful relocation of large population groups in the southern Balkans with the aim of

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[36]   Although the Albanian parties in Montenegro are a part of president Milo Djukanovic's ruling coalition, their leaders (such as Ferhat Dinosha) do not miss any opportunity to stress that they live in their 'own land awarded to Montenegro by the decision of the Congress of Berlin', and to put forth a request for federalisation of this Yugoslav republic.

creating ethnically homogeneous nation-states.[37] It remains uncertain whether this process could be contained within the borders of former Yugoslavia, or whether it would spill over to neighbouring countries, which are also burdened with latent ethnic conflicts. What seems certain, however, is that the proliferation of small and weak states in chronic economic and political crises would be conducive to the creation of populist and nationalistic regimes, as previously happened during the 1990s.

- A contrasting scenario – a 'triumph of integration' – relies on an assumption of active stabilisation, regional linking and the association of the Balkan states with the European Union. As a result of the negative experiences of the wars in Kosovo-Metohija, and previous failed attempts at regional linking of Balkan states, the European Union in mid-1999 launched the Stabilisation and Association Process and the Stability Pact, which encompasses almost all the previous regional initiatives. During the following year, a number of both positive and negative changes took place in the region. The positive side of this balance included the departure of authoritarian and nationalistic regimes from Croatia and Serbia, the return of Albanian refugees to Kosovo-Metohija and the relative stability of FYROM and Albania. Despite the war in Kosovo-Metohija, a growing 'euroisation' of regional trade, the harmonisation of national legislation with Community law and the lowering of customs levies is occurring. For the first time in ten years, at the December 1999 Helsinki summit the Union attempted to define a long-term stabilisation and integration policy for the countries of this region.[38] The donor conference of the Stability Pact in March 2000 collected €2.4 billion for quick-start projects in the region,[39] while the first summit of Balkan states and the Union was held in Zagreb in November 2000. On the negative side of the balance lie, however, the weakness of the international administration, continued violence in Kosovo-Metohija, the incursion of more than 1,200

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[37] The incursion of Albanian guerrillas into southern Serbia and the pressure on the vital road traffic communication link between Belgrade and Salonika since the end of 2000 could be interpreted as pressure towards the exchange of territories and population: the remaining Serb and non-Albanian population in Kosovo-Metohija should move out, while Albanians would leave three municipalities on the south of Serbia.

[38] The signing of Stabilisation and Association Agreements with the FYR of Macedonia and Albania (November 1999) and beginning of negotiations on accession with Romania and Bulgaria (December 1999).

[39] Most of these resources were not 'fresh' capital, but previously approved resources for the countries of the region.

Albanian guerrillas into southern Serbia, the strong appeal of nationalistic parties in a number of Balkan states, burgeoning organised crime and corruption across the region,[40] and the relatively small interest taken by Balkan states in assuring regional links, preference being given to direct links with the Union and CEFTA countries. After the momentum built up in the aftermath of war in Kosovo-Metohija and political changes in Serbia and Croatia, one cannot quite rule out that the absence of rapid democratic and market reforms, and the continuation of ethnic conflicts and corruption in the region, could again cause 'Balkan fatigue' in the West and a new marginalisation of the region.

The World Bank regional strategy paper on the Balkans[41] generated intense debate that brought about a clear vision and a concrete political framework for the reconstruction and development of the region based on five main propositions: (a) the problems of the Balkans are defined as those of transition and development, while proposals for reforms are for the first time adjusted to the needs of regional and European integration; (b) subregional integration is an important aspect of the proposed political framework, but its limitations are recognised; (c) preference is given to European integration over subregional integration; (d) institutional reform is proposed as the priority for governments and donors; and (e) emphasis is placed on the preservation of human and social capital.[42] An institutional framework for issues of regional security, economic recovery and development, and democracy and human rights is the Stability Pact with its three Round Tables. However, it still lacks the instruments and financial resources that would enable it to influence substantially the course of events in the Balkans. Moreover, some in the West fear that the present approach of the Stability Pact and the Stabilisation and Association Process could be an additional impediment on the road to full integration of Balkan states into the EU. They claim that it would be better instead to create the conditions for early associate membership of the countries of the region in the Union and their admission into CEFTA as well as a prolonged pre-accession

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[40]   The New York-based organisation Lawyers against Drugs estimates that the traffic of drugs through Kosovo-Metohija has doubled in the last year. *Central Europe on-line*, *Daily News Digest*, 7 June 2000, http://www.centraleurope.com.

[41]   *The Road to Stability and Prosperity in South East Europe* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, March 2000).

[42]   On this point, see Ivan Krastev, 'De-Balkanising the Balkans: What Priorities?', *International Spectator*, vol. XXXV, no. 3, July-September 2000, pp. 7-17.

process on the basis of a revised approach to the Stabilisation and Associa-
tion Process and the Stability Pact.[43]

At this point the question of how to implement the World Bank and Stability
Pact strategies, which are essentially post-conflict strategies, in a situation
where conflicts are not over, arises. In other words, 'how can the economic
strategy designed by the international community be implemented in the
environment of "controlled insecurity" promoted by the international
community?'[44] Security risks in the Balkans are structural, and experience
with NATO-led protectorates in Bosnia and in Kosovo has shown that
international peacekeeping forces can end armed conflicts but cannot
eliminate their causes. The economic situation in Bosnia is being repeated in
Kosovo-Metohija, which is rapidly dependent on humanitarian aid. Even in
EU candidate countries like Romania and Bulgaria, there is deep frustration
with and loss of confidence in democratic institutions and the government.
Renewed ethnic and territorial conflicts in the Balkans could lead to a
further proliferation of protectorates and weak states, i.e. states that either do
not want to or cannot create and implement legal norms. In short, one of the
main aspects of the recovery and development of Balkan states is the
stabilisation of governmental institutions and the re-establishment of their
authority through their reliance on the European Union's institutions,
economic potential and policies. In other words, EU strategy towards South-
Eastern Europe must possess vision and resources similar to the Marshall
Plan or the European Union's policy in the preparation for 'southern
enlargement' in the 1970s and towards Central and Eastern Europe at the
end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s.

The dilemmas posed by NATO's intervention against the FRY in spring
1999 have direct political consequences for transatlantic relations, and may
only be resolved by the final outcome of the changes that occurred after the
war ended. The balance-sheet is inconclusive; it is still too early to say
whether they have indeed brought about a turning point in the decade-long
ethnic conflicts and crises in the Balkans. With its interventions in Bosnia-
Herzegovina (1995) and in Kosovo-Metohija (1999), NATO became an
important security factor in the region, but its role remained restricted to

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[43]   See, for example, Michael Emerson, 'Reconsidering EU Policy for South East Europe
       after the Regime Changes in Serbia and Croatia,' *CEPS South East Europe Monitor*,
       no. 16, October 2000.
[44]   Ivan Krastev, op. cit. in note 42, p. 13.

maintaining the territorial and political status quo, without any possibility of influencing the political and economic processes on which the long-term stabilisation of this area depends. At present only the European Union can play such a role, as its policy in the region through the Stabilisation and Association Process and the Stability Pact exemplifies. However, one cannot avoid wondering whether the Stabilisation and Association Process and the Stability Pact have perhaps become outdated. For most countries in the region, these can only be provisional and transitory; they cannot replace the accession process, with its final goal of acquiring full membership of the Union. The most important, if not the only, political instrument of the European Union in this region is the promise of fully-fledged membership of the EU, if the policies of liberal and democratic forces are to be implemented. However, it would be wrong to expect that integration can be achieved by bypassing the role of the state. The further fragmentation of existing multinational states would not be helpful, since it would not resolve unsettled ethnic and territorial conflicts but only give them an intergovernmental form and lead to further proliferation of weak and unstable micro-states. In contrast, support to the stabilisation of democratic and market-oriented government institutions in the current Balkan states, and their intergovernmental relations, would lay down the groundwork for a political solution of all unresolved crises, while simultaneously eliminating the possible obstacles to their association with the EU and the integration of the entire region.

II.4   Do the Balkans matter?

For over a century the Balkan region was where Europe projected its power and its differences, and where European wars started. The inability to check the centrifugal powers in former Yugoslavia, and to pre-empt or stop the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia, seriously affected the EU's CFSP, while clearly demonstrating that NATO remains the only credible 'hard' security organisation on the Continent. 'In more than one respect, the Western Balkans pose a real threat to the security and stability of the current and future EU member states as well as to the credibility and authority of the EU as a global actor. Europe has to come to terms with new incumbent responsibilities and act accordingly.'[45] The initial weakness of EU policies in the

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[45]   Op. cit. in note 17, p. 9.

Balkans was even confirmed during the 1999 Kosovo war, which was basically a NATO, i.e. US operation, with more than 80 per cent of sorties carried out by US aircraft. As a consequence, EU countries became more active during the Cologne and Helsinki summits by articulating clearer defence policies. The Balkans may offer Europe's one and only chance to develop lasting foreign policy, security and defence arrangements.

Chapter Three

MACEDONIA AND THE REGION

Ljubomir Frckoski

Macedonia obtained its autonomy and independence (from former Yugoslavia) in a unique, peaceful, legitimate and legal manner, progressing towards democracy through a number of indispensable phases in the period 1990-91. These included: the first democratic and pluralist elections; the declaration of independence; and the new state Constitution, which was supported and acknowledged by the EU's Badinter Commission. It should be noted that the negotiations and agreement for the peaceful withdrawal of the Yugoslav Army from Macedonia during 1991-92, and the withdrawal itself, passed without incident.

Throughout this very difficult political process, and especially in the phase that followed (during which Greece imposed two economic embargoes because of the dispute over the country's name; the UN-sanctioned blockade of Yugoslavia; and a number of interethnic incidents that required intervention by the police), Macedonia demonstrated exemplary political and interethnic stability. Yet this stability has seemingly totally escaped the notice of international monitors and analysts. Why has this been so? Why is it that Macedonia is at one and the same time so similar yet still so different from all the other Balkan states, and affected differently by political events in the southern Balkans?

This political stability of Macedonia is due in part to its political history and experience. Macedonia has never known interethnic wars, nor do its ethnic communities have negative collective memories. Moreover, even when tensions have existed, the ethnic communities have known how to live alongside each other. Secondly, the specific cultural backgrounds of the ethnic communities cannot be related directly to the cultures of Macedonia's neighbours (which also applies to the Macedonian Albanians). The Macedonians are in fact different, having a much higher standard of living, and a political culture that understands compromise and the political process, which leads their 'brothers' in Kosovo to regard them as being soft, compromising, and arrogant.

On the other hand, Macedonians, being a relatively small Slavic nation, are developing characteristics of cohabitation and cultural survival. This is especially evident in the position of the Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC). The MOC is still not recognised by the broader family of the Orthodox Churches, even though it is one of the oldest Orthodox dioceses (Ohrid Archbishopric). This has forced the MOC into 'political' alliances with the Vatican that are stronger then those it has with Istanbul or Moscow (the seats of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church respectively). As a consequence, the MOC has mastered complex political manoeuvres and the art of political compromise and cohabitation. Thus, (and we must keep in mind that the MOC is very important for the general political culture of the Orthodox population) liberal values and democratic institutions (which had finally appeared after the fall of communism) are functioning better and are being more easily incorporated in Macedonia than in other 'Orthodox' states, such as Serbia or Bulgaria.

Finally, Macedonia has been lucky in having a competent, liberal and responsible political élite to create the beginnings of democratic pluralism in the country. That élite has managed to realise the potential of Macedonia's political history, turning the country into an effective and open political democracy and a multicultural society.

The second group of factors that have enabled Macedonia to maintain stability in this incredibly unstable region of Europe has to do with what could be called the 'balance of fear'. The very harsh history of conflict, war and trauma in the region is connected with Macedonia's location at the crossroads of the southern Balkans: neighbouring countries have easily been able to interfere in the internal affairs of Macedonia. Macedonia therefore attaches great importance to the principle of non-intervention, and it is very much in the country's interests that internal stability is maintained.

Macedonian interethnic relations have the following characteristics:

- Ethnic differentiation between one dominant (Macedonian) ethnic community and one large minority group (the Albanian ethnic community), impinges upon the wider question of Macedonian-Albanian relations.
- Macedonian-Albanian interethnic relations are compounded by the religious factor (Macedonians being Christian Orthodox and Albanians

being Muslims), which adds to the perception that there is a clash of cultures. Even though this differentiation seems to be destabilising, that has not been the case within Macedonia. There are more shared experiences between Macedonian Albanians and ethnic Macedonians than between Albanians from Kosovo and those from Albania. Secondly, the collective identities of the ethnic groups (Macedonians and Albanians) have not competed with each other. Since they are clearly different, they are not competitive but parallel.

- Basic conflictual differences and ethnic tensions have been expressed through the polarisation of a number of cultural factors. These include education in the mother tongue, use of that language in state and local administration, cultural institutions and media in the language, and the use of national symbols such as the flag.
- The fourth characteristic is that these tensions and conflicts have been internal, but have had a particular regional dimension, especially with regard to the so-called 'Albanian question'.

What was and what is the political system in Macedonia like, especially concerning its response to the conflicts that emerged as a result of the aforementioned differences?

- First, Macedonia has developed as a unitary democratic state and avoided any kind of federalisation or cantonisation on ethnic grounds. Experience from ethnic conflicts in the region showed how a fight over an ethnic territory could lead to ethnic cleansing rather than democracy. As a result, the choice for Macedonian democracy was to avoid, at any cost, the collective interpretation of sovereignty and to maintain this concept regardless of the initial resistance and conflicts it evoked. The only way that democracy could be developed in Macedonia was by emphasising the notion of individual citizens' rights.
- Secondly, this concept necessarily requires a high level of constitutional and lawful protection of cultural differences (much higher than is usual in other European countries). Cultural differences must be liberated from the bondage of the majority cultural policy, so as to allow for the development of the liberal concept of individual rights. Otherwise, a culture can become politicised in a collectivist and authoritarian manner.
- Multicultural societies in a unitary state require a high degree of evenhandedness and efficiency on the part of the state administration. In other words, in a weak, inefficient and ethnically prejudiced state, such socie-

ties have no chance of survival. The role played by the state must be minimal but efficient with regard to law enforcement and social services; it must also permit contact between different cultures.

• This function cannot be fulfilled unless the state is *open* rather than a 'fortress'. A state must be receptive, as Macedonia has been from the beginning, to all kinds of expert help and 'soft arbitrage', in which questions related to human and minority rights are addressed through a sort of ongoing 'trilateral' dialogue between the government, the minority, and foreign experts and institutions. In other words, strengthening the government's operative capability in interethnic relations helps to achieve the desired results.

By applying these principles, Macedonia has succeeded in transforming its fragility into *stability*, and has consequently managed to survive a number of frightening challenges that culminated in the Kosovo (refugee) crisis of 1999. The success of this Macedonian model of domestic interethnic stability has, however, evidently escaped the notice of most foreign analysts.

What can be expected in the near future, and what are the possible internal and external challenges to Macedonia?

It can be said that Macedonia successfully handled the initial and most traumatic phase of the last Kosovo crisis, essentially the military intervention of NATO in Kosovo and the FRY and the huge refugee crisis on Macedonian territory. But one of Macedonia's biggest problems has emerged since the end of that crisis as a result of the introduction of the Stability Pact and West European countries' assessments of the importance of the Balkan states.

The basic parameters for the assessment of the stabilisation process in the region are: support for democracy in multiethnic societies; reforms of the political and the economic systems in accordance with European Union criteria; and legal and practical protection of human and minority rights, again in accordance with European standards.

Since the climax of the refugee crisis, Macedonia's international position and its importance have diminished due to three main factors:

- The greater role in the post-crisis phase of the region for European countries rather than the United States;
- The confusion and implicit distrust among West European countries over the self-declared notion of stability of multiethnic societies; and
- The very weak organisational and strategic preparedness of the Macedonian authorities to promote themselves and to gain a comparatively better position by exploiting their advantages.

The first of these factors is due to Macedonia's lack of experience and tradition in European diplomacy. Even in the best-intentioned European states, there is a confusion and indecisiveness as to what their attitude towards Macedonia should be, given their traditional concerns with and interests in certain Balkan states. The fact that the Macedonian lobby in these European states is smaller and weaker than that of the older Balkan states does not help. The perception of the stability of Macedonia is threatened by a continuing disbelief in its durability, due in part to constant prompting by lobbies in neighbouring countries. Consequently, the EU is unable clearly to define its priorities, so that it emphasises the principles of peace and stability and support for democracy in multiethnic societies hypocritically.

The second factor concerns the concept of *democracy in multiethnic societies*, something in which almost nobody believes in practice. A multicultural society with an efficient democracy, like Macedonia, is an exception. The concept of multiculturalism plus democracy has not been accepted by any other state in the region: in practice, only Croatian, Serbian and Albanian minorities in the Balkans believe in it, whereas in their own countries they have a tendency to repress minorities.

West European countries, although they invented the concept of multiculturalism, find it difficult to conceive how it works in practice. Their experiences are those of homogenous national cultures and are based on the principle of rule by elected majorities, following John Stuart Mill's ideas on homogeneity and democracy.

Thus the currently stable situation in Macedonia is viewed with distrust by Western Europe, which is employing delaying tactics on the premise that multicultural societies are necessarily unstable. As a result, a number of apocalyptic scenarios of the possible disintegration of Macedonia and its

consequences were envisaged at the time that Albania and Bosnia fell apart: Kosovo would explode; Serbia faced disintegration; and Bulgaria would be beset by a serious problem of organised crime. Meanwhile, Macedonia has suffered from two embargoes imposed on it by Greece and one imposed on Serbia by the UN, an assassination attempt on the life of the President, a massive refugee crisis and numerous attempts to destabilise its interethnic basis. Is not the fact that Macedonia has survived all of this sufficient proof of its stability? Why cannot the European states see that Macedonia is the only 'success story' of the region and the key to the success of their efforts in the region, that its fragility is in fact its stability?

One can conclude that, concerning multiculturalism and democracy, there is an uneasy consensus among West European states regarding Macedonia. The ending of the Kosovo crisis has finally thrown the EU into despair for fear that the situation is slipping away from its control, as it does not seem able to decide whether the region's stability will ultimately depend on its support for the existing states in the region (on certain conditions) or for 'ethno-nations' (for example, the Albanians).

The present conflict in southern Serbia is in principle, and legally, different from the one in Kosovo. If it spreads as a result of provocation by Albanian militant groups who have succeeded in gaining international support, then NATO and the EU will in the end become prisoners of the thesis of a Greater Albania. That would mobilise a wide (explicit or implicit) anti-NATO coalition in the region and further threaten the position of Macedonia.

Albanian militants are misreading international support in Kosovo as a licence to encroach further on the FRY's territory. This issue is crucial for the prospects of peace in the region. The international community should be more decisive in its actions, by implementing UN SC Resolution 1244 on Kosovo in detail and breaking up Albanian and other militants. A workable compromise with the militant groups will never be possible. They present obstacles to the holding of any legitimate national elections in Kosovo, as well as to the emergence of any kind of rational political élite. It is necessary to create an international protectorate without any kind of compromise on the issue of formal independence. One can say that the situation in southern Serbia has worsened since the municipal elections in Kosovo and

the overwhelming defeat of the more radical segments of the Kosovo Albanian political élite.

This situation will last for at least the next ten years. In the long term, certain changes are necessary for the whole region, with the emphasis being on integration into the EU. The emphasis on the security of the states and their citizens is probably the first and basic point in the development of peace and stability in the region. Two developments suggest that there are grounds for optimism. First, the international actors are inextricably involved in the region, and have no chance of exiting in the near future. This guarantees that they will make an effort to cut this Gordian knot. Secondly, all Balkan states support and participate in the Stability Pact.

What is missing, though, is a conceptual basis for the establishment of democracy, and human and minority rights. It makes no sense simultaneously to support contradictory practices: multiculturalism in Macedonia to the level of a consensual democracy or a functional federalisation, homogenisation in Bulgaria, and a special status for minorities in Montenegro, for example. The objective must be the same everywhere: the creation of a nation of citizens and the provision of a high level of protection of the cultural identity of ethnic communities.

To be able to achieve the aforementioned objectives, certain conditions need to be met. Firstly, all the countries of the region need to invest in an efficient and non-corrupt state administration. This is the sine qua non condition if the changes are to be effective. The state should be strong, but in a manner different from the traditional strong nationalistic Balkan-type state, which is oppressive towards its minorities, internally corrupt and party-oriented, and does not provide basic services for its citizens.

Secondly, a decisive de-territorialisation of all minorities' rights (except in areas like Kosovo, which were historically autonomous) is vital. Every model of territorialisation of group or cultural rights in culturally divided (or multicultural) societies makes ethnic cleansing in the new entities more likely, rather than sustain their mini-multiculturalism. To achieve this, it would be sensible to centralise a single administration, with the aim of assisting citizens and adopting a fair attitude towards the cultural communities, as well as avoiding their 'ghettoisation'.

Thirdly, these societies need to be open to intervention by a third party, represented by the international community. It is necessary for them to accept the principle of 'soft sovereignty' (which the West European countries all recognise), especially with regard to resolving conflicts and disputes arising from the application of standards regarding human and minority rights. In cases where mistrust is an obstacle to the resolution of a dispute, the participation of an internationally respected third party is crucial. This type of 'trilateral' approach is very successful in dealing with minority problems.

Openness is also necessary for the application of international standards in cooperation between neighbours in the Balkans. Experience shows that if left on their own to cooperate, the Balkan countries (even though some of them constantly deny this) are basically not able to do so without discrimination. There is an underlying fear of domination of the weaker countries by the stronger ones that can only be overcome through the application of international standards and guarantees. Mechanisms for the penalising of local tyrants are necessary. Thus, Balkan societies need to be open for the international community to protect civil society from internal domination by its own state. This can be achieved through a system of financial assistance to non-governmental initiatives, their regional and international networking and pressure on states to establish standards of conduct and tolerance towards these initiatives. It is also important to differentiate this openness of Balkan states in the process of their democratisation from creation of a so-called 'protectorate mentality', which breeds passivity.

In this context, the states of the region need to promote their interests persuasively. In this, Macedonia finds itself at a disadvantage for a variety of domestic reasons. These include: a weak display of its priorities and an almost complete absence of a coherent mid-term or long-term strategy (apart from an incessantly repeated desire to join Euro-Atlantic structures); bad and limited human resources in dealing with the Stability Pact and the preparation of its projects on the operational level; organisational chaos; and a laissez-faire mentality that is typical in protectorates, where it is assumed that others will decide everything.

Of special concern is the fallacious assumption on the part of the Macedonian authorities that only economic projects are important. Their relative lack of interest in projects dealing with human rights, minority rights,

tolerance, etc. suggests that Macedonia will have almost no input in the deliberations and formulation of the most appropriate model of interethnic relations for the region. This could clearly prove to be detrimental to the country's future. Confusion on the part of the West Europeans is also a matter for concern, as they have not been able to achieve the level of influence and clarity in the project approach (Stability Pact) that will effectively bring peace and stability to the region.

Conclusion

For some time to come, Macedonia will be faced with the following possible challenges, which it and the international community will have to address:

- The possible intensification of military incidents created by the paramilitary structures of the Kosovo Albanians. This key point depends on the capability of international actors to control the situation in Kosovo and effectively implement UN SC Resolution 1244 on Kosovo.
- The continued participation of the Albanian parties in the government with the main Macedonian opposition party, should the current coalition crumble. In this case, the role of the international community to effectively convince Macedonia's political actors of the benefits of a 'soft' transition to power and the persistence of an interethnic coalition are especially important.
- A strong security guarantee of Macedonia's borders, especially its border with Kosovo, to curb the spread of militant, military, and criminal forces in and through Macedonia is important. Again, the active participation of the international community is crucial.
- A well organised and clearly led economic investment plan is of major economic and political importance for the long-term stability of the region, in which Macedonia has a crucial role to play.

Chapter Four

UNMIK AND KFOR IN KOSOVA[1]

Ylber Hysa

Over eighteen months have passed since NATO's intervention in Kosova. A comment on the international community's mission there, and the political developments in that land in general, are long overdue.

There were different theories as to what the international community was to do from the moment it entered Kosova. Criticism at the start of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was voiced for various reasons. Some of it was based on the previous experience of similar UN missions in Bosnia, Rwanda and elsewhere. All these expectations, in a way, stemmed from a belief that this time the UN was being asked to do something different, something that could not possibly be expected of it, considering its experience and given its aim and legitimate competencies. On the other hand, from the beginning of the mission, predictably pro-UN voices supported the organisation in principle, for a variety of motives, as the only one able to take on such missions. This pro-UN 'loyalist' group has always looked for protection to the principles to which the United Nations adheres. On this occasion it pointed to the fact that United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 was the only point of agreement within the international community, adding that any other initiative would jeopardise the mission in Kosova and the continued presence of NATO troops there.

The Military Technical Agreement of Kumanovo (which established the so-called Ground Safety Zone, extending five kilometres into Serbia), arrived at after 11 weeks of NATO bombing, was a result of those air strikes and Serbia's losses in infrastructure, economy and industry, numerous diplomatic initiatives, and a calculation by Milosevic that a ground war had to be prevented at all costs. This allowed the wrangling to continue by political and other legitimate means, to the extent that Resolution 1244 acknowledged FRY sovereignty over Kosova, and, as will be discussed below, led to

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[1]   The author's spelling of Kosovo and Pristina have not been altered, as we believe that to do so would detract from the authenticity of his paper (Ed.).

a number of uncertainties due to differing interpretations of the Resolution by the parties involved, ranging from the rigid perception of it as a commandment to total disregard for it.

A tangible example in this regard is privatisation, where different interpretations of the Resolution have hindered its progress. There has been much confusion with regard to what constitutes 'state property'.

Likewise, today, even though it has been over 18 months since the implementation of Resolution 1244 began, neither privatisation nor the guidelines to regulate this important issue in postwar Kosova exist. In fact, Kosova is certainly the only place in the former Socialist bloc where such a process has not yet started, even though there can be no economic transition without privatisation. Instead, in Kosova an improvisation of sorts, as a substitute for privatisation, has occurred, yet if there is no true privatisation it may well be that all the industry and means of production – the core of Kosova's economy – will be left to the mercy of God.

A second example, which illustrates even more clearly the controversy surrounding Resolution 1244, was the decision by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) to make the Deutschmark the currency in use in Kosova while under international administration. The Yugoslav Dinar is a devalued currency that nobody takes into consideration seriously, even in Serbia. In these circumstances, the DM was the principal currency circulating and acceptable in any kind of financial transactions, be it legal or illegal. Also, Montenegro's decision to adopt the DM unquestionably reinforced the UNMIK decision to do the same in Kosova. However, the decision received harsh criticism from UN Headquarters in New York, because of its different 'conception' of Resolution 1244.

At this point, mention should also be made of the early UNMIK decision to adopt all Yugoslavian laws prior to promulgation of Resolution 1244. These included 47 discriminatory laws concerning Albanians that prohibited things like the acquisition and sale of property between Serbs and Albanians, as well as laws imposed by Belgrade in the most arbitrary way, following the anti-constitutional law that had led to Serbia's *anschluss* of Kosova and the

removal of the latter's autonomy.[2] Thanks to such laws, Serbia had established a system of segregation, thus legitimising a state of apartheid and colonial policies. Finally, UNMIK decided to improve the situation by revoking discriminatory laws and those that did not meet European standards. Nevertheless, despite this and the implementation of special regulations, the issue remained unresolved, as the Yugoslav Constitution of 1974 was the legal framework of a former communist state that no longer existed! But, in order to arrive at a political decision to change this circumstance, there would have to be a confrontation between the two sides and agreement 'faithfully' to abide by Resolution 1244. Therefore, the issue of the legal framework that would be essential to postwar Kosova became a deterrent affecting the sovereignty of the FRY. People forgot that Kosova had its own Constitution, based on the Yugoslav Constitution of 1974, and that the introduction of a legal framework in a temporary constitution could not establish Kosova's future status.

IV.1 Co-governing: the political cohabitation of international administrators and Kosovars under the UNMIK umbrella

Concerning the rapid adoption of Resolution 1244 and the agreement to deploy KFOR troops and the international administration in Kosova, it should be recalled that the latter determined the nature of the mission from the very beginning. In next to no time, the international administration had to face a situation of total confusion. Entering a chaotic environment that bore the marks of a terrible war – 850,000 returning refugees (no deported people in modern history has ever returned to a postwar country more quickly than they did), with as many as 120,000 houses destroyed and 500,000 persons displaced – the UNMIK mission faced enormous challenges. In addition, economic hurdles resulting from Belgrade's colonial policies and its policy of apartheid in Kosova, where for ten years Albanians had been fired from their jobs in factories, police and the administration, further complicated UNMIK's task.

In this situation, the international mission in Kosova arrived with a totally improvised agenda and an obvious lack of vision or any long-term strategy.

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[2] 'Problems of Ownership and Property Rights in Kosova, Analyses and Recommendations', *KACI special report*, Prishtina, August 1999.

As a result, UNMIK changed its course of action twice. At first, it tried the mailed fist approach, taking over as many governmental competencies as possible, especially in the first phase of the dissolution of parallel governing structures in Kosova and the demilitarisation of the KLA. Such an approach could not possibly be successful, given the obvious lack of any efficient administration. A postwar society that had been without a police force for five months, without electric power or water, with half a million displaced persons and without the slightest prospect of economic development, could not easily be made to function. Absolute authority cannot be established in a situation of deficiency and an absence of public order and security. It should also be mentioned that the consolidated budget for Kosova did not exceed the cost of one day of NATO air strikes. About six months after the start of its mandate, UNMIK adopted the formula of power-sharing with the local political forces. The Interim Administrative Council (IAC) and the Kosova Transitional Council (KTC) were created as the governmental and pre-parliamentary coordinating core, despite their mainly consultative character.

This process of sharing power between Albanians and international staff, and the integration of Kosovar political structures, rang alarm bells for radical Serbs in north Mitrovica, who, alarmed by the decision of the National Serb Committee to participate in the sharing of power with international structures, responded, in a series of serious provocations, by inciting violence against Albanians.

After this, it was clear that UNMIK was not able simultaneously to handle work on completion of the new government and keep escalating violence under control.

IV.2   UNMIK departments: caught between elections, the challenge of the Rambouillet formula and a limited budget

After the agreement to share power with the Kosovars, co-leaders from the three principal Kosovar parties (LDK, PDK and LBD), as well as represen-tatives of other parties, were added to the various UNMIK departments, some of which are headed by representatives of the minority.

Out of a total of 20 UNMIK departments, 14 have approved regulations and defined responsibilities. Generally speaking, they have serious problems

with the budget allocated, which is remarkably limited. Such a budget is clearly and absolutely dependent on donors, and at present it can do very little with regard to tax-collecting policy.[3] These departments were actually set up long after they had been established following the co-governing agreement. The local staff employed in these departments number 1,325, whereas in some departments, until not long ago, the only local employee was the joint head of the Department of Democratic Governance and Civil Society Support.

Some departments, like that of Education and Science, are very important, considering the huge number of employees in the Kosovar education section (approx. 65 per cent of the Kosovar population are estimated to be under 35 years old); about 28,000 employees are on the payroll in the education section and in scientific institutions. The budget of this department is DM116.2 million, of which only about half has been spent so far, mainly on school textbooks and the reconstruction of school buildings destroyed during the war and badly maintained during the period of Serb rule. However, coordinating these departments after the local elections remains a serious problem, that is, deciding how authority will be shared between local and central authorities. An irregular situation will arise straight away in this case, as the composition of the local authorities will be determined through elections, while the central power will be decided through nominations, combinations of representatives of international organisations (pursuant to Resolution 1244) and the Kosovar political forces which, after the local elections, may come up with a totally different line-up of forces and might spoil the Rambouillet formula. On the other hand, reports by the (elected) municipal board and the municipal international administrator may at times result in a conflict situation as far as decision-making and other interests are concerned. It is necessary, for such reasons, to prepare for elections in Kosova on a national level and to create a legal framework to regulate power-sharing.

Another issue that UNMIK departments must deal with is ensuring transparency and control. For example, after the reprehensible events of Mitrovica that shocked the Kosovar public, when 13 Serbs accused of war

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3   Tom Koenigs, a UNMIK official, has stated that 'an inner functional budget should be created in Kosova' adding that 'three years from now, no money will be accorded to Kosova any more', *Zeri*, 25 August 2000, p. 9.

crimes managed to escape from a prison guarded by international police and KFOR, the question of the division of responsibilities arises.[4] Who should account for this, and to whom? In all normal countries it would result in the resignation of, at the very least, one of the ministers responsible for such a grave failure. In Kosova, such incidents occurred repeatedly in the past, two of them in north Mitrovica, without anyone being called to account.

All of these developments underline the urgent necessity to complete administrative government structures in Kosova by establishing a system with mechanisms that are linked in a solid chain of command and are not only responsible to the Security Council. In other words, Kosova cannot have normal functioning institutions without normally functioning govern-ment bodies, as everywhere else in the West, and this does not in any way affect the question of sovereignty and legitimacy, as it is backed by a UN Resolution which empowers the interim international administration.

IV.3   KFOR: beset by problems

The war in Kosova was a turning point in the strategy of NATO which, by intervening, introduced new guidelines on humanitarian intervention. The result was the return, of almost biblical proportions, of more than half of a deported people and the presence of security forces and an international administration under the UN flag in Kosova. It is often forgotten that the strategic balance was preserved so as to prevent any spread of the conflict into neighbouring countries, especially Macedonia. The achievements are, however, uncertain. The main question here is whether NATO has achieved its aims.

In fact, Milosevic has managed to burden NATO troops, that is KFOR, with many headaches – to the east with Presheva,[5] north with Mitrovica and west with Montenegro. In these circumstances, the NATO troops in Kosova are not merely traditional peacekeeping troops, but also in a sense a front-line force observing developments in the western Balkans. But what NATO's reaction would be in the event of a conflict is hard to see. So far, it has been

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[4]   All Kosovar daily papers included in their headlines information as well as reactions from Kosovar political parties and public opinion about the scandal in Mitrovica prison.

[5]   Otherwise known as Presevo.

made clear by NATO that there will be no intervention outside Kosova territory, especially as concerns the Presheva valley. In the case of Mitrovica, KFOR's responsibility is clear, as it is Kosova territory. However, if there were to be a Northern Ireland-type conflict, NATO troops would find themselves in an unviable situation. Keeping two conflicting parties apart across the River Iber could change the situation completely. In that case, NATO would be like a shark in the river, and its huge military force would be unsuited to such a conflict, while the UNMIK police have proved incapable of calming down such conflicts. In the end, Mitrovica remains at the top of the list of political problems, leaving aside security or military problems. It is hard to think of a military solution in the north of Mitrovica for as long as there is no political (or economic) solution. NATO therefore remains hostage to the political situation in the north of Mitrovica, Kosova's Mostar.

Montenegro is one of the problems with direct effects on the international mission in Kosova and Kosova itself. Every crucial development in relations between Belgrade and Podgorica would have repercussions on the region, and particularly on Kosova, which, according to Resolution 1244, is supposed to be under the sovereignty of the FRY. The changes imposed by Milosevic on the FRY's Constitution have virtually caused the non-functioning of this federation. It is clinically dead, and the patient has been kept alive so far only by the willingness of the international community to assure the viability of the post-Milosevic government in Serbia.

IV.4 Elections: the democracy test for Kosovars

Local elections were held in Kosova on 28 October 2000. The first free elections in the history of Kosova are a very important event and are due consideration. Much debate took place on whether elections were premature or not. The fact that, due to the destructive war and the negative legacy of the previous ten years, Kosovars had been removed from all spheres of life – the administration, courts, police, industry – even though they had once benefited from an advanced form of autonomy, with established institutions, had left deep imprints on Kosovar society. As a consequence, one of the most pressing issues that arose after the establishment of the international administration in Kosova was whether democratic institutions should be established first and then the leaders elected, or vice versa.

In fact, the debate over early elections apparently started first in Western capitals under the influence of the chaotic situation that became apparent after the deployment of KFOR troops and the UN mission in Kosova. Forced to work out an 'exit strategy' in a situation where UNMIK was unable to handle the situation and the KFOR troops were disinclined to act beyond the terms of their military mandate, Western capitals demanded a solution. As a consequence, the power-sharing formula was considered to be only a short-term solution, while holding elections was a mid-term step in this strategy designed to prevent the situation getting out of hand. The last phase, that of the definition of Kosova's final status, seems too distant; it will only be arrived at following a series of measures linked to institution-building in Kosova, as well as developments outside Kosova. Nevertheless, the decision to hold local elections, which are due to be followed by national elections at some time in summer 2001, was definitely one of the most decisive steps taken by the international community. The combination of the electoral process and the building of democratic self-governing institutions are the determining tests for the future of Kosova as well as the fate of international policies there. This 'mid-term' phase comes right after the completion of the emergency phase, which dealt with the improvement of the situation on the ground and the return of refugees. The third phase, that of arriving at a final status for Kosova, is yet to come. The current phase involves tangible problems like building institutions, coordinating and apportioning local and central power, determining economic and development policies, privatisation, administration and other issues that have to do with everyday problems, including national elections and the creation of a higher-level power of co-governing in Kosova. This phase will be the most difficult time for the international administration that is governing in conjunction with Kosovars. This will be the period that demands more serious engagement, skills, dedication and initiative as well as coordination and support from both inside and outside the country. Among the priorities are a check on the mandate of the SRSG, as well as a clear-cut economic and political agenda.

On the political side, postwar Kosova has experienced both the imposition of an interim government and attempts to forge a specific political partnership. The violence used against some members of political parties, mainly LDK (Democratic League of Kosova) during the electoral campaign

demonstrated that political tolerance is seriously challenged.[6] Ethnic violence and non-tolerance remain a challenge for the international mission since the local elections. The participation of Serbs in co-governing bodies, and the preservation of the rights of all Kosovar citizens without discrimination on any basis whatsoever, remains another concrete challenge.

What the international community must assure is that the present situation – without control, public order and security and without long-term policies of democratisation and economic strategies – does not continue. Likewise, it should not attempt to pursue a policy of imposing discriminatory agendas as a result of the complexities of the civil-military mission. It has at times been clear that such diverse policy created situations in which the local political forces had to assume a certain attitude against such discrimination. A policy of favouring one political element rather than another for short-term interests has complicated the transition process. In other words, the international community in Kosova has considered it expedient to back individuals rather than institutions. This policy has deflected the international mission in Kosova from its objective of building democratic institutions. Together with the non-effectiveness of the international police, judicial system and prisons, as well as the negative legacy of the population's relations with the Serb police, the perspective of public order and security has been seriously affected.

IV.5   Concerns for 2001

The local elections in Kosova were considered by many independent observers, analysts and the media to be the most successful recent elections in the region. They were overwhelmingly supported by the Kosovar Albanian population. Considering the fact that these were the first democratic and pluralistic elections in the history of Kosova, they demonstrated the commitment of the citizens of Kosova to exercise their right to vote in a peaceful, democratic manner despite many concerns and warnings by some who advised against holding the elections. Now, expectations have turned towards the Kosova-wide elections that are scheduled for summer 2001.

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[6]   In July 2000, the lawyer Shaban Manaj, a political activist of the LDK from Istog, was kidnapped and killed. Also, attacks against four other LDK political activists have been reported in different Kosova towns; not to mention the murders of former KLA members at an earlier date.

However, the new SRSG, Hans Haekkerup, has been sending ambiguous and contradictory messages about the general elections. He suggests that, without a clear definition of Kosova's legal framework (i.e., whether Kosova is to have a Basic Law or a temporary Constitution), general elections cannot be held. This essentially new strategy reverses that of his predecessor Bernard Kouchner, who was in favour of general elections first, even if they were to be held without a clear definition of the legal framework. What is more, Mr Haekkerup has frozen UNMIK's joint legal commission (which includes Kosovar experts) for the time being.

This issue of which comes first – elections or a legal framework – is indicative of how inter-linked and complex these issues are. In other words, if certain problems and issues are not addressed at a certain level and within a certain period of time, they could block the positive on-going evolutionary political process in Kosova. Defining a legal framework for Kosova has been one of the most serious challenges for UNMIK since the beginning of its mandate, as has been indicated on several occasions by the United Nations, the G-8 and other multilateral political institutions. On the other hand, the holding of general elections is crucial for completion of the democratic institution-building process in Kosova. Therefore, a legal framework, privatisation and general elections are the biggest issues for Kosova in 2001. If these issues are not properly addressed, the UN mission in Kosova could degenerate and all its achievements could be nullified.

Another major concern that will complicate the mandate of the new SRSG is the ambiguous status of the FRY, and the unresolved relationship between Serbia and Montenegro. Montenegro has already announced that a referendum on its future status will be held by June 2001. Kosova, on the other hand, liberated from its repressive links to Belgrade (via the Yugoslav Army and the Serb security forces) is continuing along its path of democratic transformation independently of developments in Serbia or the so-called FRY. With its new democratic institutions, its own police forces, and local elections, Prishtina sees no reason to maintain links with Belgrade. In other words, the FRY that was recently admitted to the UN totally lacks any internal legitimacy.

Any negotiations on the future status of the FRY should secure the equal rights of the three entities (Serbia, Kosova, Montenegro). Before entering into any kind of debate on their future, these entities should be permitted to

become properly functional. In Kosova's case, this means completing the process of democratic institution-building, including the holding of national elections, the creation of a parliament, etc., as well as guaranteeing the protection of minorities. In the case of Montenegro, strengthening the democratic transition and the right of citizens to express their opinion on the future of their state in a referendum overseen by the international community are necessary. Serbia would need to dissolve the security apparatus and other remnants from Milosevic's regime, proceed with democratisation and cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, etc. Only then could negotiations between Serbia, Montenegro and Kosova take place. These should focus on the legal aspects and the economic interests of these entities as well as the long-term interests of the region, while taking into consideration the well-being of the citizens of the respective entities.

Of course, a process like this cannot be completed within just a year or two. Developments in this part of Europe have their own inner dynamic; they cannot be adapted artificially to the wishes and agendas of the international community. If the aforementioned conditions are not taken into consideration, the international community in pursuing a quick exit strategy in the Balkans, could end up with two jobs half done in Kosova and Serbia.

IV.6 Lessons from the Kosova mission: more responsibility for Europe

NATO's intervention against the FRY was very important because it halted ethnic cleansing in Kosova, prevented the conflict from spreading to neighbouring countries and established a new strategy for humanitarian intervention. The intervention followed the path of other wars in the course of the disintegration of former Yugoslavia: all political means having been exhausted, intervention became unavoidable and coherent.

Nevertheless, after the intervention, as soon as the 'Serb security forces out, Kosovar refugees in' promise had been accomplished, NATO and its political leaders in Western capitals had no idea of what to do next. NATO assisted UNMIK in building democratic institutions while waiting for democratic changes to take place in Serbia. It is clear that a long-term action strategy in this context, as well as a clear definition of the political and military aims of the mission, were missing. Responsible for the military

pillar of the mission, NATO is nevertheless a part of the common UN mission, which embodies civilian responsibilities as well. The failures of one part of the mission immediately reflect on its other parts. The UN mission is a generally diverse structure incompatible with the administration of a country, especially a post-conflict one with multiple problems like Kosova. Bureaucratic sluggishness, competing national agendas, budgetary problems and the like have jeopardised all that was achieved by NATO through its bombing campaign.

In these circumstances, two other issues make this mission more difficult. The first is the serious lack of an international police force. The problems are many. The legislation of different countries varies and, unlike the military, policemen cannot be required to participate in missions abroad. In some cases, unarmed police are in no way appropriate for such a mission. Also, there are huge differences in experience and preparation between police forces all over the world, with substantial distinctions in their attitude. Language has also proved a major problem: not knowing the local language, these policemen find it hard to communicate with the local population. Also, lack of knowledge of local customs, mentality and society is another problem. In these circumstances, an international – especially European – police force with a uniform code of conduct would be an important asset for similar missions in future.

In fact, what Kosova needs, after the first phase of the international administration, is an evaluation of the international mission. It is becoming increasingly obvious that Kosova is a European problem rather than simply a UN one. For several reasons, Europe should play a bigger role in the mission's administrative structures and the building of democratic institutions. Kosova's experience, its achievements as well as its failures, have direct effects on Europe, for example in terms of the large number of Kosova refugees in many European countries and the fight against organised crime. European states have more interest in what happens in Kosova than non-European ones (much as Australia played a leading role in the East Timor crisis). This is not meant to impose any restrictions on other countries' contributions to the international mission, but in reality Berlin and Paris have greater interests than other, non-European capitals. In this context, the construction of an economic development strategy and a policy for the establishment of democratic institutions, as well as public order and

the rule of law, democratisation and the building of a market economy in Kosova, would be more of a European responsibility.

On the other hand, with regard to security policy, NATO should definitely be the organisation concerned in the first instance. Only NATO can provide a long-term umbrella of security during the period of transition, not only for Kosova but also for the region as a whole. Yet it is still not clear whether NATO has come to Kosova to assist the UNMIK mission and then leave, or whether it will remain until a long-term, meaningful transition is well rooted in the region. Any hesitation on NATO's part could result in its balkanisation, which would be tragic for the organisation, but also for the Balkans, since only a long-term strategy for Kosova will bring about the irreversible insertion of European and Western values in the Balkans.

If a long-term policy is really necessary for this region, then it is particularly logical that it should first be implemented in Kosova, where the role of the international community is being tested. The failure of Western policies in Kosova would not only be a failure for Kosovars, but also of Western policy in the region as a whole. Conversely, Kosova presents certain conditions that should be exploited by the international community. With its relatively small population, its size (comparable to that of the US state of Connecticut), and with an interesting geographic position surrounded by neighbours whose political, economic and security situation is fragile, could turn out to be a positive experiment with long-term opportunities for Western politics in the Balkans. But in order to achieve this, more willingness and a Euro-Atlantic vision for the Balkans are probably needed.

Conclusion

Dimitrios Triantaphyllou

The most striking feature or aspect of the four chapters is the seeming pro-interventionist rhetoric of their authors. That is to say, all four call for the active participation of the European Union (and the Euro-Atlantic community to a certain degree) in their affairs. The reasons vary, as do the criticisms of Europe's role to date, but the message is clear.

Ismail Kadare contends that: 'It is obvious to any observer that the stability of the Balkan peninsula depends on two basic factors: first, the people who live there, and second, Europe (or more precisely Atlantic Europe).' Predrag Simic wonders whether the EU will seize the opportunity presented by the democratic changes of regime in Croatia and Serbia to adopt 'a radically new approach to this European region'. For Ljubomir Frckoski, the fact that all the countries of the region participate in the Stability Pact and that the EU has committed itself suggests that membership of the EU will be obtained in the long term. Finally, Ylber Hysa thinks that 'Kosova is a European problem, rather than exclusively a UN one.' The issues of massive refugee flows and organised crime stemming from South-Eastern Europe necessitate active involvement on the part of the EU to stabilise the region in order to curb exportation of these problems.

This call for Europe to play a greater and more constructive role is tempered by a number of concerns that are raised by the authors but which have also been raised by a number of Western analysts.

- Firstly, some authors (Kadare and Frckoski in particular) raise the issue of understanding the region's history and developments in it. Kadare correctly writes that 'Atlantic Europe' has totally misunderstood the fact that without a resolution of the conflict between Serbs and Albanians there can be no peace in the region.[1] Frckoski complains that Western observers

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[1]   One of the better recent Western interpretations of Balkan history is Misha Glenny, *The Balkans, 1804-1999, Nationalism, War and the Great Powers* (London: Granta Books, 1999). See also, Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans – Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* and *History of the Balkans – Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard

have continued to stress his country's fragility and depict doomsday scenarios. He asks, 'Why cannot the European states see that Macedonia is the only "success story" of the region and the key to the success of their efforts in the region, that its fragility is in fact its stability?'[2]

- Secondly, the ambiguity of the EU's approach towards the Balkans is decried on a variety of fronts. Predrag Simic complains that the coming enlargement of the European Union will leave out most South-East European states.[3] Ljubomir Frckoski explains that European countries professing the principle of 'democracy in multiethnic societies' do not understand that multicultural FYROM is an exception in the Balkans. Ylber Hysa derides the lack of any long-term strategy for Kosovo.

- Thirdly, the issue of dependency is alluded to by Ljubomir Frckoski who claims that the combination of a weak definition of priorities, limited human resources, and organisational chaos in his country breeds a 'laissez faire mentality that is typical in protectorates, where it is assumed that others will decide everything'. Predrag Simic compares present-day Kosovo to Bosnia, with its profound divisions, unworkable central authorities and aid-dependent economy, and whose unity is based on the 'protectorate' status accorded to it by the UN and NATO.[4]

- Fourthly, among the contributors there are vast divergences with regard to questions of status and their resolution. Whereas Simic and Frckoski warn against the proliferation of weak and revisionist states in the region, Hysa wholeheartedly supports Kosovo's drive for independence. Also, whereas Simic insists that despite NATO's intervention Kosovo still suffers from a volatile political environment, Kadare considers that 'Europeanisation' of

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University Press, 1983); L. S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453* (New York: Rhinehart & Company, Inc., 1958).

[2]   See, for example, Sophia Clement, 'Conflict prevention in the Balkans: case studies of Kosovo and the FYR of Macedonia', *Chaillot Paper* 41 (Paris: Institute for Security Studies of WEU, December 1997).

[3]   One of the issues coming to a head is providing Balkan states 'a strong EU trajectory now' in order to avoid a 'relapse into chaos, repression and violence' and the inability of the EU to admit new states 'faster than it can reform its own institutional structures or faster than the candidate states can themselves achieve the Copenhagen criteria, and this may mean many years.' See Michael Emerson, 'Reconsidering EU Policy for South East Europe after the Regime Changes in Serbia and Croatia,' *CEPS South East Europe Monitor*, no. 16, October 2000.

[4]   For a critical analysis see, Janusz Bugajski, 'Balkans in Dependence?,' *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2000. Also see, Stephen Schwartz, 'The Great Balkan Botch-Up,' *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, 15 February 2001.

the region cannot be accomplished without certain acts of intervention, such as those in Bosnia and Kosovo.

This unambiguous message does present Europe with certain choices. In other words, the EU should not lose sight of the fact that if integration and stability are to become permanent processes in the region, it has to set the agenda. In their joint report on the Western Balkans to the Lisbon European Council of March 2000, Javier Solana and Chris Patten wrote:

> 'The European Union has a unique relationship with the Western Balkans. In addition to our intense political and diplomatic relations we are by far the single biggest donor to the Western Balkans as a whole with contributions to the region by the Union and its Member States amounting to an estimated €9 billion since 1991. In Kosovo alone, some 28,000 soldiers and 800 civilian police from EU Member States are active alongside the European Commission and over 100 of our NGOs. The Union is the only institution capable of comprehensive action, ranging from trade, economic reform and infrastructure, humanitarian assistance, human rights and democratisation, justice and police to crisis management and military security.'[5]

In spite of this massive influx of funds and effort by the European Union, problems persist. The question that therefore arises is whether the approach taken so far is the wrong one. Though not systematically, the authors do raise some complicated issues that need to be tackled by the European Union if it is to get a return on its investment in the region. Of course, many other issues are either too briefly touched upon or totally disregarded. These include the problems of the criminalisation of Balkan societies with 'burgeoning organised crime and corruption across the region' (Simic). Also, there has hardly been any mention of the processes of accepting one's share of responsibility 'for the evils' experienced in the region and reconciliation and cooperation among ethnic groups.[6]

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[5] 'Report on the Western Balkans presented to the Lisbon European Council by the Secretary General/High Representative together with the Commission', 21 March 2000, Lisbon.

[6] See, for example, Flora Lewis, 'Serbs Should Get Started on an Indispensable Healing Process,' *International Herald Tribune*, 12 October 2000. See also David L. Phillips, 'Steps to Stabilize the South Balkans,' *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, 3-4 November 2000.

In this context, the risk of 'policy drift' is very high, as some of the region's actors (especially Montenegro and Kosovo) will try to influence the EU's priorities with their own concerns. On the other hand, restraining Kosovo's and Montenegro's drives for independence is nothing more than a continuation of the policy of containment for fear that a Macedonia and Bosnia will become destabilised and a Greater Albania emerge. Maintaining the status quo by perceiving security in physical terms (borders, sovereignty, etc.) does not address the question of the reform of the domestic security sector, which is a sine qua non condition for the creation of a dynamic process of state-building. In fact, explaining regional instability in terms of the threat of Albanian extremism and, until recently, the regime in Belgrade, does not account for the structural reasons for insecurity in the Balkans. The number of weak states or entities with a high level of violence, rampant criminality and corruption, flourishing black economies, and inconsistent or non-existent economic policies will persist as long as a state-building agenda does not become a high priority. This 'second chance in the Balkans' needs to be grasped both by the region's leaders and the European Union.[7]

This is especially evident if one addresses the issue of security, because it includes the difficult issue of the status of Kosovo and Montenegro. Also the region has become 'the most intense concentration of organised crime in Europe, dispatching drugs, women, cigarettes, and refugees into the EU and absorbing stolen goods from an even wider area.'[8] As a consequence of the absence of a security policy, the 'international community wants to create a secure environment without redrawing the existing borders, to enforce the multiethnic character of the state entities and to promote free and fair elections. But is this squaring of the circle possible if peace is defined as something more than the absence of war?'[9]

What should the EU agenda therefore be? Some suggest 'constructive ambiguity' on the issue of status, predicated on principles such as the rule of law, stability, justice and tolerance before the final status of Montenegro and

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[7]   See Carl Bildt, 'A Second Chance in the Balkans,' *Foreign Affairs*, January-February 2001, pp. 148-58.

[8]   Misha Glenny, 'Has Anyone Seen Our Policy?,' *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2000, p. 175.

[9]   Ivan Krastev, 'De-Balkanising the Balkans: What Priorities?,' *The International Spectator*, vol. XXXV, no. 3, July-September 2000, p. 13.

Kosovo is discussed.[10] 'Constructive ambiguity' in effect acknowledges that independence will be achieved at some stage but it also provides a very clear realpolitik approach to managing the region. Others avoid the question of status, preferring to stress closer ties between the EU and the states of the former Yugoslavia as a cure-all in establishing stability in the region.[11] Yet how feasible is the approach of using the prospect of European integration to promote regional integration when the EU candidacy of South-East European countries like Bulgaria and Romania is complicated and the accession date for even the most advanced candidates keeps being post-poned?

Both the 'constructive ambiguity' and the integration approaches are imaginative and appealing, and merit serious consideration, but they will fail if the agenda does not aim to resolve the real security questions that accompany a proliferation of weak states and their myriad problems. In other words, a regional stability framework has no chance of being effective unless the issue of state-building is addressed. Paradoxically, this might mean granting independence to Kosovo and Montenegro sooner rather than later, since it is the will of the majority of both Kosovars and Montenegrins. If their demands for independence are not addressed, one has to question how seriously they will set themselves to the task of state-building. What is suggested here is a variant of the 'conditional independence' option pro-pounded by the Independent International Commission on Kosovo.[12] Independence comes with certain obligations, both for the international community and the local population. The international community should maintain its presence by providing a security guarantee, working towards regional integration and eventual European integration as well as assisting the independent élite of Kosovo and Montenegro to keep to their end of the bargain, i.e., state-building. The same conditionality should apply to the rest of the region's states as well, i.e., the 'kleptocratic' economic and political structure put in place by Milosevic in Serbia needs dismantling; the col-

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[10] Dominique Moisi, 'The clear need for ambiguous diplomacy,' *Financial Times*, 20 November 2000.

[11] See, for example, George Soros, 'How to encourage the Balkans,' *Financial Times*, 23 November 2000.

[12] See, The Independent International Commission on Kosovo, *The Kosovo Report – Conflict, International Response, Lessons Learned* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

lapsed Albanian institutions need (re)building; and a more stable power-sharing arrangement is necessary in Macedonia.

Recently, the southern Balkans have become the focal point of European (and American) interest in the wider Balkan region, with a low-intensity conflict in southern Serbia, an unsettled security situation in Kosovo and the most serious threat facing FYROM's sovereignty in its brief existence. These developments merit serious consideration. Only a comprehensive approach of the type mentioned above would give the region a fighting chance of gaining respectability and present the European Union fewer headaches. Implementing only parts of the strategy could only lead to a false sense of mission accomplished, whereby the region would be contained by a stable physical security framework within which weak states and insecurity reign supreme. The authors from the region writing in this *Chaillot Paper* have rung the warning bells. It is Europe's turn, together with the region's élite, to take notice and solve the problems.

About the authors

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