

ŠTÚDIE
ANALÝZY

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**Do the Balkans Exist?
Visions of the Future of
Southeastern Europe:
Perspectives from the
Region**

Ten years of war in ex-Yugoslavia brought back into use the terms “Balkans” and “balkanization” that by the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries in the West became synonymous with political violence, ethnic conflicts and fragmentation of states (*kleinstatte-*

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rei) that marked the breakup of the Ottoman Empire and the so-called Eastern Crisis. At the time when the end of bipolar division of Europe indicated the possibility of a new and peaceful order, wars for the Yugoslav legacy "brought wars back to Europe"¹ showing the inability of international organizations to ensure peace in the continent that was no longer threatened by conflicting interests of military and political alliances, but by crises and ethnic conflicts in former socialist countries. Many studies from this period, such as David Owen's *The Balkan Odyssey*², Susan Woodward's *Balkan Tragedy*³, Robert Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts*⁴ and others are evidence that the Balkans remain the "European powder-keg"⁵ at the end of the century as it was at its beginning. An attempt of "remaking the Balkans"⁶ upon religious, cultural and ethnic grounds caused further fragmentation of Southeastern Europe, while most Balkan states experience economic, social and political crises with slim chances to follow Central European countries and join European integrating processes in the foreseeable future.

Unlike Western Europe, which reinforced its integration within the European Union during the past decade, the former Eastern European bloc broke up into three main groups. To the east of the continent, development of the countries that emerged from the former Soviet Union, vaguely organized as the Commonwealth of Independent States, remains uncertain and largely dependent on the development of Russia that will probably remain militarily, politically and economically the dominant country of the region over the long run. Relying on the support of the West and, particularly, of the EU, Central European countries have successfully embarked on transition and the creation of regional organizations such as Central European Initiative (CEI) and Central European Free Trade Association (CEFTA) on the way towards full integration into the EU at the beginning of the 21st century. The third group, countries of South Eastern Europe (i.e. Balkans) is already very heterogeneous, burdened with underdevelopment, ethnic conflicts and consequences of the breakup of former Yugoslavia. About a dozen initiatives for regional cooperation, most of them being launched after the Dayton peace agreement⁷, did not bring about the expected results, above all due to the lack of financial resources (most of them have been designed as self-help programs), absence of clear perspective of European integration and international isolation of a geographically central country of the region – Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The opportunity for stabilization of this region did not present itself until political changes in Serbia, where the victory of democratic opposi-

tion over Slobodan Milosevic's regime in September 2000 eradicated the last remnants of the Berlin Wall in Europe and, somewhat earlier, in Croatia where the victory of opposition also eliminated an anachronous nationalistic regime. Despite the fact that many crisis spots (Bosnia, Kosovo, etc.) are still active 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 European and Euro-Atlantic integrations. The failure of the Rambouillet conference and NATO military intervention against Yugoslavia in 1999 had serious consequences not only for relations between the U.S. and Russia but also for trans-Atlantic relations, confirming weaknesses of the Common Foreign and Defense Policy and marginal position of the Union in issues of European security. Under the German Presidency, the Union responded to that challenge in June 1999 with the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe and stabilization 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 the attempt to establish common policy towards South East Europe.

Will democratic changes in Serbia and Croatia indeed bring about a turning point in decade-long ethnic conflicts in "Western Balkans"? Or are they only an episode such as those in 1990⁸ or 1996⁹ before the chain of ethnic wars in the south of Balkans continues until 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 international community, above all readiness of the European Union to take the opportunity of the present favorable circumstances for a radically new approach to this European region. The results of the October elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the continuation of political violence in Kosovo and Metohija and incursion of Albanian guerrillas to the south of Serbia in November 2000, as well as shaky relations between two members of the Yugoslav federation – Serbia and Montenegro – all warn that the Balkans is still a powder-keg of crises with far-reaching political consequences. Even under the assumption that the present latent crises do not escalate into new armed conflicts, the road towards stabilization and regional integration of the countries of South East Europe has many obstacles inherited from recent or the more distant past of this region, which give rise to the question: "Do the Balkans exist?" i.e. are there historical, security, economic and political assumptions for regional linking of Balkan states and its European integration?

Between Geography and History

Although geographically the Balkans is unquestionably a part of the European continent, its turbulent history left its mark in profound ethnic, religious, cultural, economic and political divisions. Even the name of the region – the Balkan Peninsula (*Balkan Halbinsel*) – is a fictitious name originating at the beginning of the 19th century by German geographer August Zeune in an attempt to avoid then politically incorrect names such as “European part of Turkey” or “Turkey in Europe”.¹⁰ He mistakenly believed that the Balkan Mountains in Bulgaria are the northern geographical border of this region.¹¹ Since the Roman *limes* to the Iron Curtain in the 20th century, during most of its history the Balkans were the border between empires, religions and civilizations, while its peoples often clashed in the role of their border guards and guardians. One of 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 The second consequence was ethnic and religious animosities. The fiercest conflicts in the wars for the Yugoslav legacy from 1991-1999 took place precisely in the areas of former division lines between empires such as Krajina in Croatia, where Vienna settled Serbian refugees from Ottoman Empire since the 17th century to guard against Turkish incursions.¹³ On the other side of the border, Bosnia and Herzegovina which was under military administration at the time of the Ottoman Empire played a similar role. The most difficult source of ethnic and territorial conflicts in the Balkans – Kosovo and Metohija – is the consequence of conflicts between Albanians, who converted to Islam since the 16th century and became the instrument of Ottoman rule, and neighboring Christian nations.¹⁴

Liberation wars and national revolutions in the Balkans at the beginning of the 19th century confronted national projects of Balkan peoples, while interventions of great powers prevented any of them from reaching ethnic borders or establishing hegemony in the region. That was the reason why the 20th century in the Balkans began and ended with ethnic wars, which earned this region the reputation of the “European powder-keg” and created negative stereotypes in the West. This reputation was additionally reinforced by the wars for the Yugoslav heritage towards the end of the century.¹⁵ A total of seven wars took place in the Balkans during the 20th century: the First and Second Balkan Wars, World War One, the Greco-Turkish War, World War II, the Civil War in Greece and a series of wars for the Yugoslav heritage

Table I: Ethnic composition of South East European countries
(before the wars for the Yugoslav legacy)

Country	Dominant people	(%)	Biggest minority	(%)
Albania	Albanians	98.0	Greeks	1.8
B&H	three peoples			
Bulgaria	Bulgarians	85.7	Turks	9.4
Croatia	Croats	78.1	Serbs	12.2
Greece	Greeks	100.0		
Macedonia	Macedonians	66.4	Albanians	23.1
Romania	Romanians	89.4	Hungarians	7.1
Slovenia	Slovenians	87.6	Croats	2.7
Turkey	Turks	83.0	Kurds	14.0
Yugoslavia	Serbs	62.6	Albanians	16.5

Source: George Brunner, *National Problems and Ethnic Conflicts in Eastern Europe*, Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers, Gütersloh 1996

in the 1990's. The most frequent motive for these wars in the Balkans was "unsettled national issues" their goal being creation of nation-states i.e. ethnically homogenous states that would extend to the entire ethnic territory of one nation. National programs of most Balkan peoples recognize the idea of an "ethnic" or "greater" nation-state that relies on "historical" or "national" rights and in this regard there is no substantial difference between Serbian, Croatian, Albanian or other Balkan nationalism. Attempts at achieving these ambitions in geographically limited and ethnically, culturally and religiously very heterogeneous area of the Balkans inevitably led to ethnic and territorial conflicts and massive involuntary migrations, i.e. "population exchange" and "ethnic cleansing". In addition to ethnic conflicts, the principle of nation-states created economically unviable mini-states, which sooner or later became the strongholds of authoritarian regimes and revisionist foreign policies. After WWI the U.S., France and Great Britain drew a new political map of the Balkans in an attempt to stop ethnic and territorial conflicts and to include the region into 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 one – Yugoslavia¹⁶ – was a multiethnic community of South Slavs. The Versailles system of states in the Balkans was revised after WWII, this time with the participation of the USSR, and remained in force until the end of the

20th century. This can be credited to the balance of power between the East and the 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 played the role of a “strategic buffer” between the blocs.

The Cold War and bloc discipline only froze national conflicts in South East Europe which were renewed with greater ferocity and a greater number of participants after the breakup of bipolar order in the continent in 1989. Regardless of how anachronous, ethnic and territorial conflicts in South East Europe during the 1990s resisted all attempts of international mediation. Moreover, instead of “Europeanization of the Balkans” ethnic and territorial conflicts in the Balkans brought the Common Foreign and Security Policy to the edge, threatened to “balkanize Europe” and returned NATO 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 East Europe becomes an integral member.¹⁷ Even where peace was imposed by NATO military intervention – in Bosnia and Herzegovina and, particularly, in Kosovo and Metohija – the present *status quo* would probably not survive the withdrawal of international peace forces. The breakup of Yugoslavia, the biggest multiethnic experiment in the region and the state that was one of the footholds of international order in Southeastern Europe for 73 years, reinforced the belief that multiethnic societies do not have a chance to successfully complete transition toward market economies and democratic societies and that only nation-states have future. An argument often quoted to support this thesis is that West European countries entered integration processes as established nation states, that the first NATO members and most successful candidates for EU membership from the former Eastern European bloc (Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary) are nation states and that current candidates from Southeastern Europe (Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria) are also nation states. On the other hand, all three former East European federations (USSR, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia) broke up after 1989 while most present multiethnic states in the Balkans cope with more or less serious ethnic problems and do not have a chance to join neither the EU nor NATO in the foreseeable future.

Although wars for the Yugoslav heritage during the 1990s did not spill over its international borders, they strongly destabilized the entire region and dispatched shock waves throughout Europe and the world. Basically, these wars were waged in two main crisis areas. The first conflict triangle is

made up of Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and 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, while both lay their claims on Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the most numerous ethnic group are Muslims of Slavic (i.e. Serbian and Croat) descent. This war ended towards the end of 1995 with NATO military intervention and the Dayton Peace Agreement, but now, five years after its signing, deployment of international peace forces under NATO command and almost five billion dollars of international aid later, Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a profoundly divided society (as confirmed by the results of October 2000 elections) without self-sufficient economy. However, while the Dayton agreement stopped armed conflicts in Bosnia, the end of war in Kosovo and Metohija, the other crisis spot in the Balkans, did not put an end to political violence and ethnic cleansing which continues until the present day. Incursion of Albanian guerrillas on the south of 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 Agreement, the war in Kosovo and Metohija ended with UN SC resolution 1244 and the so-called Military Technical Agreement signed in Kumanovo, which does not contain long-term solutions for stabilization of the southern Balkans and leaves room for an escalation of conflicts.¹⁹

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 of economic development in this region are some of the main reasons for relative underdevelopment. This gives rise to the question: “Do the Balkans 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 decisively contributed to the successful economic transition of its eastern neighbors; nor do Greece or Turkey have the same level of influence as France, Italy and Spain in the Mediterranean. Until the beginning of 1990s the Balkan economic scene was divided into three parts. In the first one, Romania and Bulgaria, as Comecon members and a part of the East European trade bloc, guided most of their foreign-trade relations towards its members – USSR and other East European countries, while eco-

conomic relations with the neighbors developed within the Comecon policy. In the second trade bloc were Greece and Turkey as EC members, i.e. associated members, whose main trade and financial partners were in the West. The third part was the single market of ex-SFRY. Owing to its position of a “strategic buffer” between the blocs, it had relatively favorable arrangements both with Comecon and with the EC, and since the mid-1960s also with Third World countries. That was the reason why the interest of Yugoslavia for economic cooperation with the Balkan neighbors was, with certain exceptions²⁰, relatively modest and took place within the arrangements of Comecon and the EC.²¹

Table II: Population and income per capita in SECI countries

Country	Population	Territory (km ²)	Income per capita (USD)
Albania	3,413,904	28,750	713
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4,383,000	51,233	–
Bulgaria	8,350,000	110,912	1,620
Greece	10,550,000	131,990	10,645
Croatia	4,665,821	56,538	3,650
Hungary	10,566,944	93,030	3,840
Macedonia	2,160,000	25,333	1,919
Moldavia	4,415,000	33,700	4,028
Romania	23,198,330	273,500	1,355
Slovenia	1,989,477	20,256	8,400
Turkey	63,535,000	779,360	2,685
Yugoslavia	11,101,833	102,350	1,531

Source: *Southeast European Factbook & Survey*, ELIAMEP, Athens 1996

The most visible consequence of economic division of the Balkans is an underdeveloped infrastructure (traffic routes, telecommunication networks, oil pipelines, etc.) on which regional economic cooperation could rely. In this sense, two different Balkans currently exist. The first one consists of the area of former Yugoslavia which has been developing as a unique economic space for more than seventy years and which has a relatively developed infrastructure. However, the breakup of SFRY divided it with new “hard”

borders and political differences that reduced mutual economic cooperation between Yugoslav republics to a very modest level. Already in the last decades of former Yugoslavia, the priority of the Yugoslav republics was no longer a single market, but their economic cooperation with neighboring countries.²² The second scene 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 centers of trade blocs. To illustrate this point, it is worth mentioning that there is only one bridge in a several hundred kilometer stretch of the Danube between Bulgaria and Romania, while the main traffic routes from these two countries lead eastward. Breakup and war in former Yugoslavia stopped most of inland transport between Greece and Turkey and the rest of the EU and rerouted 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.

The second consequence is visible in foreign trade trends of Balkan states. According to official statistics, most Balkan countries, with some exceptions, have almost negligible mutual trade (under 1 % of total imports and exports²³) while for most of them their main trade partners are Germany, Italy and Russia.²⁴ Certainly, this data should be taken with some reserve due to the consequences of the 10-year long wars for the Yugoslav heritage and UN Security Council sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As a result, a large share of economic transactions shifted to the informal sector and remain beyond the reach of official statistics.²⁵ During these ten years, the economies of most former socialist countries in the Balkans experienced a dramatic decline. In the case of Yugoslavia, it is as much as 70 % compared with 1989. Causes for this should be sought both in the breakup of the former Yugoslav market²⁶ and the consequences of the collapse of centrally planned economies whereby the Balkan states, unlike CEFTA countries, did not manage to find an alternative to the EU market.²⁷ According to economic analyses which are hard to test statistically, certain countries of the region now generate over 50 % of their gross domestic product in the “shadow economy”, while a large share of their mutual trade is carried out through illegal channels. The conditions of the war economy in the republics of former Yugoslavia during the past decade were conducive to illegal economic activities and the development of international crime networks which, in addition to traditional criminal activities (smuggling of arms, tobacco, illegal migrants, narcotics and other hazardous substances) extended their activities to illegal trade in vital raw

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

In spite of the generally adverse consequences of crises and wars in the Balkans during the 1990s, they also produced certain favorable effects, shifting former trade trends into regional scope, setting the basis for any future regional cooperation in the Balkans. After the end of war in Kosovo and Metohija and the lifting of UN SC trade sanctions against Yugoslavia, a large share of formerly illegal trade transactions will shift to legal channels, which will be visible 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 center of the Balkans, is situated approximately at the same distance (about 400 kilometers) from Zagreb, Budapest and Sofia. However, until 1991 the traffic of passengers, goods and money between Belgrade and Zagreb took place within the single political and economic space. That is not the case now and FRY and Croatia are divided by profound political differences and "hard" borders. Unlike that, traffic between Belgrade, on one hand, and Budapest and Sofia, on the other, led across the "Iron Curtain" and was subjected to rigorous border controls. However, the situation is different today: during the past ten years thousands of representative offices of Yugoslav firms were opened in these two cities, while financial transactions of Yugoslav legal and, particularly, physical persons with other countries are partially carried out through Hungarian and Bulgarian banks. In short, the 1990s have radically changed 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. During the last ten or so years, they had many ups and downs, but the breakup and war in ex-SFRY nevertheless 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 Yugoslav private firms are registered and where in 1999 the so-called Szeged process started, which played a significant role in linking democratic opposition in Serbia with the EU. Hungary's joining of NATO in March 1999 and approaching of the date of its admission into the Union and erection of Schengen borders towards its southern and eastern neighbors raises the problem of its relations not only with FRY but also with Romania and Ukraine, where numerous Hungarian minorities live (about 350,000 only in FRY). Although one may assume that normalization of relations between former Yugoslav republics will return a portion of passenger and freight traffic back

to their former routes through Croatia and Slovenia, one may realistically expect that Hungary's future membership in the Union could increase the isolation of Balkan states unless it is accompanied by adequate compensatory measures. However, if by that time most former socialist countries in the Balkans are admitted to associated membership of the Union and CEFTA and if other specific measures are introduced (including INTERREG program), the ongoing process of cross-border cooperation could contribute to approachment of the Balkan countries to the Union. Soon after its admission into NATO, Hungary was involved in military intervention against Yugoslavia in March 1999, which raised a number of new security concerns in the region that could be removed by early admission of these countries into Partnership for Peace and the EU. Similar problems in the region could be brought about by the admission of Slovenia (also in the first category of countries-candidates envisaged by Agenda 2000) as well as selective policy of the Union towards Balkan countries.

However, even if the consequences of wars for the Yugoslav heritage are set aside for a while, one must notice that the Balkans are situated on the European periphery and that 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 have the role of an "engine" of regional economic development and be representatives of their interests in 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-member countries – SFRY and Turkey – shared with 1 % each in the total foreign trade of the European Union, while *per capita* value of aid of G-24 to Balkan states²⁸ during the 1990s amounted to 388 ECU compared with 882 ECU allocated *per capita* as aid to the Visegrad group. Fear that the Iron Curtain in Europe will be replaced with the Golden Curtain between the rich and the poor was one of the main motives of Slovenia and Croatia for their "flight from the Balkans", while some other countries of the region see themselves as Central European rather than Balkan states.²⁹ This was compounded by stereotypes about the Balkans as a part of a continent that does not belong to Europe. This was an underlying the failure of EU policy in the early 1990s in its attempt to stop the Yugoslav crisis.

European Union and the Balkans

If the political Europe is indeed "an encounter of an space and a project"³⁰ is this encounter also feasible on the southeast part of the continent

that was historically mainly the “periphery” or “the border of Europe”? For pro-European forces in Balkan states the perspective of membership in the Union is almost the only way to get anchored in Western values and to stabilize their societies and their international environment in the transition process. Failure in fulfilling their promises was the reason why such political groups lost electoral power in the past ten years and relinquished initiatives to nationalistic, neo-communist and other populist forces³¹ as well as forces of an underdog culture present in this region.³² During the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, the European Community did not develop a specific policy towards South East Europe and instead applied the policy originally designed for Central European countries. A part of the West European political elite at the time considered that the eastern enlargement of European integration, *finalité politique* of the Union, ends at the eastern borders of Western civilization, within the borders of “Carolingian Europe”.³³ Consistent implementation of the conditioning principle and uneven distribution of Union’s aid to the Visegrad group rather than the Balkan countries further widened the developmental gap between Central and South East Europe. Forthcoming eastern enlargement of the European Union will leave most of South-Eastern Europe at the tail as a powder keg and poor part of Europe: “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”.³⁴

Therefore, there are basically two possible scenarios for the development of the Balkans in the first decades of the 21st century.

The first one – the triumph of the nation-state – relies on the assumption that ethnic and territorial conflicts must, with necessary humanitarian interventions of the international community, be brought to their logical close – creation of stable nation states – and that only then it will be possible to establish long-term security, economic and political structures and begin integration of this region into a European framework. This is corroborated by the consequences of past wars for the Yugoslav heritage and the attitude of influential political forces in these countries, as well as by the positions of some of the Western elites. Five years after the Dayton Agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a profoundly divided country, its central authorities exist only formally, its economy still largely relies on humanitarian aid from the international community, while its unity is based on UN and NATO “soft-protectorate”. A year after the UN SC resolution 1244, Kosovo and Metohija still have the status of a volatile peace dominated by political violence and is on the way to final ethnic divisions where small Serb enclaves survived only

on the north and, partially, in the south of the country. 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 towards federalization, as with Montenegro whose independence could encourage similar requests of Albanian minority on the east of the country.³⁵ The consequences of opinion that “the breakup of Yugoslavia is not over” and support to requests for independence of Kosovo and Montenegro could result in the further proliferation of small, weak and revisionist states in the Balkans or “remaking the Balkans” towards revision of the existing borders whose inevitable consequence would be forceful relocation, i.e. “ethnic cleansing” of large population groups in the south of the Balkans with the aim of creating ethnically homogeneous nation-states.³⁶ It remains uncertain whether this process could be contained within the borders of former Yugoslavia or whether it would spill over to neighboring countries, also burdened with latent ethnic conflicts. What seems certain, however, is that proliferation of small and weak states in chronic economic and political crises would be conducive for the creation of populist and nationalistic regimes, as has already occurred during the 1990’s.

An opposite scenario – a “triumph of integration” – relies on an assumption of active stabilization, regional linking and association of Balkan states with the European Union. Encouraged by negative experiences of war in Kosovo and Metohija and previous failed attempts at regional linking of Balkan states, in mid-1999 the Union launched the “stabilization and association” process and Stability Pact which encompasses almost all the previous regional initiatives. During the following year major changes occurred in the region, both positive and negative. The positive side of this balance records the departure of authoritarian and nationalistic regimes in Croatia and Serbia, the return of Albanian refugees to Kosovo and Metohija and relative stability of FYROM and Albania. Despite the war in Kosovo and Metohija, a growing “euroization” of regional trade, harmonization of national legislation with the community law and beginning of customs leveling is occurring. For the first time during the past ten years, the Union attempted at the Helsinki summit to define a long-term stabilization and integration policy for the countries of this region.³⁷ The donor conference of the Stability Pact in March 2000 collected EUR 2.4 billion for quick-start projects in the region³⁸ while the first summit of Balkan States and the Union was held in Zagreb in November 2000. On the negative side of the balance is, however, the weak-

ness of international administration, continued violence and “ethnic cleansing” in Kosovo and Metohija, incursion of more than 1200 Albanian guerrillas on the south of Serbia, return of nationalistic parties on the elections in a number of Balkan states, burgeoning organized crime and corruption in the region³⁹ and a relatively small interest of Balkan states for regional linking, as they give preference to direct links with the Union and CEFTA countries. After the momentum brought about by the aftermath of war in Kosovo and Metohija and political changes in Serbia and Croatia, one cannot quite rule out that absence of rapid democratic and market reforms and continuation of ethnic conflicts and corruption in the region could again cause Balkan fatigue in the West and new marginalization of the region.

The World Bank regional strategy paper on the Balkans⁴⁰ induced an 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 aspects: (a) problems of the Balkans are defined as transition and development problems, while proposals for reforms are for the first time adjusted to the need of regional and European integration; (b) subregional integration is an important aspect of the proposed political framework, but its limitations are recognized; (c) preference is given to European integration over subregional integration; (d) institutional reform is proposed to be the priority for governments and donors, and (e) emphasis is placed on preservation of human and social capital.⁴¹ 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 instruments and financial resources that would enable it to produce substantial influence on the course of events in the Balkans. Moreover, certain circles in the West fear that the present approach to the Stability Pact and Stabilization and Association Process could be an additional impediment on the road to full integration of Balkan states into EU and that instead it would be better to create conditions for their early associated membership in the Union, admission into CEFTA and prolonged pre-accession process on the basis of a revised approach to Stabilization and Association Process and Stability Pact.⁴²

At this point one cannot avoid the question of how it is possible to implement World Bank and Stability Pact strategies, which are essentially post-conflict strategies, in a situation when conflicts are not over: “how can the economic strategy designed by the international community be implemented in the environment of ‘controlled insecurity’ promoted by the international community?”⁴³ Security risks in the Balkans are structural and past

experience with NATO-led protectorates in Bosnia and in Kosovo has shown that the presence of international peace forces can pacify armed conflicts but cannot eliminate their causes. Five years after Dayton it turned out in Bosnia that as much as 4.5 billion dollars of aid cannot start up economic development, while this former Yugoslav republic during five years from the end of war and Dayton Peace Agreement became a humanitarian aid economy – this will probably also happen in Kosovo and Metohija. Even in countries, that recorded certain progress in relations with the EU during the past several years, such as Romania and Bulgaria, social and economic crisis results in population frustration and loss of confidence in democratic institutions and the government. Continuation of ethnic and territorial conflicts in the Balkans could lead to further proliferation of protectorates and weak states, i.e. states that either do not want or cannot create and implement legal rules. In short, one of the main aspects of recovery and development of Balkan states is stabilization of governmental institutions and the re-establishment of their authority through reliance on Union institutions, economic potential and policies. In other words, EU strategy towards South East Europe must possess vision and resources similar to the Marshall Plan or European Union's policy in the preparation for "southern enlargement" in the 1970's and towards Central and Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980's and beginning of the 1990's.

Dilemmas existing in the West in connection with the justifiability of NATO intervention against FRY in the spring of 1999⁴⁴ have direct political consequences on transatlantic relations and may be only resolved by final outcome of changes that occurred after the war ended. The balance of these changes is contradictory and it would be too premature to conclude whether they indeed brought about a turning point in the decade-long ethnic conflicts and crises in the Balkans. With its interventions in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995) and in Kosovo and Metohija (1999) NATO became an important security factor in the region, but its role remained restricted to maintaining territorial and political *status quo* without the possibility of influencing political and economic processes on which long-term stabilization of this area depends. At present only the European Union may play such a role and its policy in the region is somewhat modified by Stabilization and Association Process and Stability Pact. However, one cannot avoid wondering whether their philosophy perhaps became outdated in the meantime. For most countries in the region, SAA and SP can only be provisional and transitional forms of development of relations with the Union, which cannot replace the accession process with the final goal of acquiring full membership in the Union.

The most important if not the only political instrument of the Union in this region is the promise of full-fledged membership in the EU as the foothold for the policy of liberal and democratic forces in Balkan states. However, it would be wrong to expect that integration is possible by bypassing the role of the state and focusing on non-state integration of these countries, because in that way the Union would find itself in the role of a semi colonial power, as witnessed by the experiences of international administration (actually, protectorate) in Bosnia and Kosovo, as well as attempts to minimize the role of the state in some other Balkan states in favor of supranational institutions or non-government organizations. Further fragmentation of existing multinational states would not be helpful in this sense, since it would not resolve unsettled ethnic and territorial conflicts but only give them intergovernmental forms and lead to further proliferation of weak and unstable microstates. Contrary to this, support to stabilization of democratic and market-oriented government institutions in the existing Balkan states and their intergovernmental relations would set the groundwork for a political solution of open crisis spots, eliminating at the same time obstacles to their linking with the EU and for integration of the entire region.

Do the Balkans matter?

For over one century the Balkans was the region where Europe projected its power, its differences and where European wars started. Inability to check the centrifugal powers in former Yugoslavia and preempt or stop the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia seriously affected European Common Foreign and Security policy clearly demonstrating that NATO remains the only credible hard security organization on the continent even after the Warsaw Treaty and the Soviet Union ceased to exist. "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 Initial weakness of EU policies in the Balkans was confirmed even during the 1999 Kosovo war, basically NATO and, more specifically, the U.S. operation (more than 80% aircraft sorties were performed by the U.S. planes). That led to more active posture of the EU countries during the Cologne and Helsinki summits towards more articulated defense policies. The Balkans may be Europe's one and only chance to develop lasting foreign policy, security and defense arrangements.



Notes:

1. Hans Stark, *Les Balkans, Le retour de guerre en Europe*, IFRI & Dunod, Paris 1993.
2. David Owen, *The Balkan Odyssey*, Victor Gollancz, London 1995.
3. Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*, The Brookings Institutions Press, Washington, D.C. 1995.
4. Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*, Vintage Books, New York 1996.
5. F. Stephen Larrabee (ed.), *The Volatile Powder Keg: Balkans Security After the Cold War*, RAND Corporation and the American University Press, Santa Monica & Washington, D.C. 1994.
6. Christopher Cviic, *Remaking the Balkans*, Royal Institute for International Relations & Pinter Publishers, London 1991.
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 on Crete. Immediately after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, 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". On 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). Significant for these efforts are also regional initiatives in the close neighborhood, such as CEI, CEFTA, Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), Working Community of the Danubian Regions (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Donauländer – ARGE Donauländer) and others.*
8. *In 1990 the government of the last Prime Minister of former Yugoslavia, Ante Marković, attempted in vain to prevent the breakup of the country through comprehensive economic reforms, but its effort lacked support of both the leading Yugoslav republics and Western countries.*
9. *The Dayton Peace Agreement at the end of 1995 ended war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but failed in providing long-term solution to the problems in the remaining parts of former Yugoslavia, which escalated as soon as the end of 1996 and during the 1997.*
10. Ami Boué, *La Turquie d'Europe*, vol. 1-4, Arthus Bertrand, Paris 1840.
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 northwest, joins the Alps in the small Istrian peninsula, and to the east fades away into the Black Sea in two branches."* August Zeune, *Goes: Versuch einer wissenschaftlichen Erdbeschreibung*, Berlin 1808. p. 11.
12. *On this point, see: Jovan Cvijić, La péninsule balkanique: géographie humaine*, Armand Colin, Paris 1918.
13. *The term "Krajina" (frontier) derives from the original name "Vojna krajina" (Militär-grenze – Military Frontier) which this area bore during the Habsburg Empire.*
14. *For example, the Albanian clan Kūprulū (Juprili) gave a whole dynasty of grand viziers at the peak of the Ottoman Empire. See: Georges Castellan, Histoire des Balkans, XIV-XX Sciecle, Fayard, Paris 1991.*
15. *On this point see: The Other Balkan Wars, A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect, with a New Introduction by George F. Kennan, Carnegie Endowment for*

- International Peace, Washington, D.C. 1993; Robert D. Kaplan, Balkan Ghosts – A Journey Through History, St. Martins Press, New York 1993 and particularly: Maria Todorova, Imagining the Balkans, Oxford University Press, New York & Oxford 1997; Vesna Golsworthy, Inventing Ruritania – The Imperialism of the Imagination, Yale University Press, New Heaven and London 1998.*
16. *Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, until 1929.*
 17. *On that point, see: The Balkans and New European Responsibilities, Strategy Paper Presented to the special meeting of “The Club of Three and the Balkans”, Club of 3 & Bertelsmann Stiftung, Brussels-Gervat, June 29-30, 2000.*
 18. *On this point see: Predrag Simić, Put u Rambuje: kosovska kriza 1995-2000 (A Road to Rambouillet: The Kosovo Crisis 1995-2000), NEA, Belgrade 2000.*
 19. *Military Technical Agreement of Kumanovo establishes along the administrative border with Kosovo and Metohija the so-called Ground Safety Zone extending 5 kilometers into the territory of Serbia (Article I, paragraph 3.e., according to: Predrag Simić, Put u Rambuje ... , op. cit., p. 336), but the instruments for its supervision and control, particularly operative cooperation between KFOR and Yugoslav security forces, have not been defined. Similar omission in the case of the so-called safe havens in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a prelude to the tragedy of Srebrenica and @epa in the summer of 1995.*
 20. *One of the certainly most successful regional projects is hydropower and navigation system Djerdap (Romanian: Portile de Fier) on the Danube, which Yugoslavia and Romania have been developing since the late 1950s.*
 21. *For example, annual export of Yugoslav veal to Greece was 30,000 tons, but a year after Greece was admitted to the EC it dropped to only 3,000 tons. Similar drop in trade between the two countries was recorded in other sectors.*
 22. *For example, it is worth pointing out that the first highway in former Yugoslavia (Vrhnika-Postojna highway in Slovenia) in the early 1970s was not built on the main traffic 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.*
 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 Uvalil, Regional Cooperation in South-East Europe, Halki Southeast European Network on Economic Reconstruction, mimeo, University of Perugia, 22 January 2000.*
 26. *Economies of former Yugoslav republics sold 20-25 % of their output on markets of other Yugoslav republics and between 15 % and 22 % abroad. Quoted after: Milica Uvalil, op. cit., p. 3.*
 27. *Drop in the volume of trade after the breakup of ex-Yugoslavia is visible not only among the republics in conflict (e.g. Serbia and Croatia) but also among the others (e.g. Croatia and Slovenia).*
 28. *Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia and FRY.*
 29. *That is why Slovenia and Croatia view any regional initiative in the Balkans with mistrust, while Croatia in January 1998 adopted constitutional amendments which prohibit return to any kind of Yugoslav community.*

30. Michel Foucher, *La République européenne*, Belin, Paris 1998.
31. Results of elections in Romania at the end of 2000 and possible electoral failure of pro-reform government in Bulgaria are examples of this kind.
32. On this point, see: Nikiforos Diamantouros, *Cultural Dualism and Political Change in Post-Authoritarian Greece*, Estudios Working Papers, Centro de Estudios Avanzados en Ciencias Sociales, Madrid 1994.
33. Willy Claes, then foreign minister of Belgium and chairman-in-office of the Ministerial Council of the European Union in 1993 said on this occasion: "Countries of South Eastern Europe belong in the cultural sense to collapsed Byzantine empire, do not have democratic tradition nor 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. Enlargement of the Union should be restricted to Protestant and Catholic circle of European countries". Quoted after Katimerini, 16 October 1993, p. 9.
34. *The Balkans and New European Responsibilities*, Strategy Paper Presented to the special meeting of "The Club of Three and the Balkans", Brussels-Gervat, June 29-30, 2000, pp. 3-4.
35. Although Albanian parties in Montenegro are a part of president Milo Djukanovic's ruling coalition, their leaders (such as Ferbat Dinosba) do not miss an 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 federalization of this Yugoslav republic.
36. Incursion of Albanian guerrillas on the south of Serbia and pressure on the vital traffic communication Belgrade-Thessaloniki at the end of 2000 should be interpreted as the pressure towards exchange of territories and population: the remaining Serb and non-Albanian population in Kosovo and Metobija should move out, while Albanians would leave three municipalities on the south of Serbia.
37. Signing of stabilization and association agreement with the FYR Macedonia and Albania (November 1999) and beginning of negotiations about accession with Romania and Bulgaria (December 1999).
38. Most of these resources were not "fresh" capital, but previously approved resources for the countries of the region.
39. The New York based organisation "Lawyers against Drugs" estimates that the traffic of drugs through Kosovo and Metobija has doubled in the last year. Central Europe online, Daily News Digest, June 7, 2000, <http://www.centraleurope.com>.
40. *The Road to Stability and Prosperity in South East Europe*, The World Bank, March 1, 2000.
41. On this point: see: Ivan Krastev, *De-Balkanising the Balkans: What Priorities?*, *International Spectator*, Vol. XXXV, No. 3, July-September 2000, pp. 7-17.
42. Michael Emerson, *Reconsidering EU Policy for South East Europe after the Regime Changes in Serbia and Croatia*, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels 2000.
43. Ivan Krastev, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
44. On this point, see: Amnesty International, *NATO/Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: "Collateral Damage" or Unlawful Killings? – Violations of War by NATO During Operation Allied Force*, EUR 70/18/00, June 2000, <http://www.web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/index/EUR700182000>.
45. *The Balkans and New European Responsibilities*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

Resumé:

Predrag Simic: *Existuje Balkán? Vízia budúcnosti juhovýchodnej Európy: perspektívy z regiónu*

Slová Balkán a balkanizácia získali opäť svoj nelichotivý význam politického násillia, etnických konfliktov a fragmentácie štátov počas desiatich rokov vojen v bývalej Juhoslávii. Dnes po víťazstve demokratických síl nad Slobodanom Miloševićom a porážke nacionalistického režimu v Chorvátsku sa pre región otvára príležitosť pre jeho stabilizáciu, je však možné, že ide len o epizódu medzi reťazou etnických vojen, ktoré budú pokračovať až do logického konca – vytvorenia etnicky čistých národných štátov. V ďalšom smerovaní regiónu zohráva veľkú úlohu politika medzinárodného spoločenstva, najmä EÚ. Aj keby latentné krízy neprepukli do otvorených konfliktov, ležia na ceste k stabilizácii a regionálnej integrácii mnohé prekážky zdedené z minulosti, ktoré vyvolávajú otázku týkajúcu sa samotnej existencie Balkánu, existencie jeho historických, bezpečnostných, ekonomických a politických predpokladov na prepojenie balkánskych štátov a ich európsku integráciu.

Zo zemepisného hľadiska Balkán do Európy jednoznačne patrí, avšak práve cezeň viedli deliace čiary medzi impériami. Na nich sa odohrali aj najkrutejšie boje vo vojnách o juhoslovanské dedičstvo. Najčastejším motívom vojen na Balkáne boli „nevyriešené národné otázky“ a cieľom vytvorenie národných etnicky homogénnych štátov. Nacionalizmus Srbov, Chorvátov, Albáncov, ale i ďalších balkánskych národov, založený na „etnickom“ alebo „historickom“ práve, sa vzájomne veľmi nelíši. Ide pritom o územie geograficky obmedzené a etnicky, kultúrne a nábožensky veľmi heterogénne. Konflikty preto vyvolali nedobrovoľnú migráciu obyvateľstva a prispeli k vytvoreniu ekonomicky nesebestačných štátov, ktoré ľahko spadli pod autoritárske vedenie. Disciplína studenej vojny národnostné konflikty iba zmrazila. Každý ozbrojený konflikt od Slovinska po Kosovo je dôkazom toho, že vojna v Európe je stále možná. Vytvorenie Európskej únie nebude preto kompletne ani stabilné, kým sa juhovýchodná Európa nestane jej integrálnou súčasťou. Hoci sa vojny o dedičstvo Juhoslávie nerozšírili za jej hranice, výrazne destabilizovali celý región.

Na Balkáne chýba ekonomicky dominantná krajina, ktorá by bola motorom hospodárskeho rozvoja celého regiónu. Je to jedna z príčin relatívneho ekonomického zaostávania a vyvoláva otázku dotýkajúcu sa existencie balkánskej ekonomiky. Juhoslávia bola „strategickým nárazníkom“ medzi politickými blokmi druhej polovice 20. storočia, mala preto pomerne výhodné

kontakty s oboma stranami, neskôr i s krajinami tretieho sveta. Prirodzene nemala záujem o hospodársku spoluprácu so svojimi balkánskymi susedmi. Vzájomný obchod väčšiny krajín Balkánu je veľmi nízky. Ničivé následky ozbrojených konfliktov, ale aj embargo BR OSN na obchod s Juhosláviou sa podpísali pod prechod veľkej časti hospodárskych transakcií do „neformálneho“ sektora. Niektoré krajiny produkujú 50 % HDP v rámci tieňovej ekonomiky. Zaujímavý je aj vzťah krajín regiónu so susedmi regiónu. Maďarsko je dôležitým prepojením na pohyb ľudí a tovarov medzi JZR a krajinami EÚ. Budúce členstvo MR v EÚ môže posilniť izoláciu Balkánu, ak ho nebudú sprevádzať primerané kompenzačné opatrenia. Množstvo nových bezpečnostných otázok vyvolal aj vstup MR do NATO a jeho účasť v ozbrojenej intervencii voči Juhoslávii v marci 1999.

Existujú dva scenáre ďalšieho vývoja na Balkáne. Prvý – triumf národných štátov – predpokladá logické vyústenie množstva etnických a teritoriálnych konfliktov do vytvorenia stabilných národných štátov, a až potom bude možné zaviesť dlhodobú bezpečnosť, hospodárske a politické štruktúry a začať s integráciou regiónu. Opačným scenárom je triumf integrácie a predpokladá aktívnu stabilizáciu, regionálne prepojenie a asociáciu štátov Balkánu s EÚ. Európa predstavila *Pakt stability* a stabilizačný a asociatívny proces, ktoré už potvrdili svoje pozitívne, ale i negatívne stránky. Aby bol dosiahnutý úspech, musí mať stratégia EÚ voči juhovýchodnej Európe svoju víziu a zdroje podobne ako Marshallov plán alebo politika EÚ pre prípravu rozšírenia na juh v 70-tych rokoch, alebo do krajín strednej a východnej Európy na konci 80-tych a za začiatku 90-tych rokov. V súčasnosti iba EÚ môže dostatočne ovplyvniť politické a ekonomické procesy, od ktorých závisí dlhodobá stabilizácia oblasti. Jej najdôležitejším, ak nie jediným politickým nástrojom je príslub plnohodnotného členstva v EÚ.

Balkán bol oblasťou, kde sa premietala moc a rozdiely Európy a kde začali európske vojny. Počiatočná slabosť politiky EÚ voči Balkánu, ktorá bola potvrdená i počas vojny v Kosove, bola posilnená aktívnejším postojom na summitoch v Kolíne a Helsinkách. Balkán je možno jedinou šancou Európy na vybudovanie trvalých zahraničnopolitických a bezpečnostných usporiadaní. *

* resumé: Katarína Žáková