

**THE BALKANS: HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND PRESENT DANGERS OF
RECURRING ETHNIC CONFLICT ON THE EUROPEAN PERIPHERY,
1945–2002**

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1. Why the Case Is Important

The importance of the history and present dangers of recurring ethnic conflicts in the Balkans is traditionally linked to the influence these problems have on the security of the European periphery as well as on the whole continent. Twice in the twentieth century has the security of Europe been fundamentally shaken, with global consequences, and the international relations of the Cold War era had continental Europe as their focus as well. In all these periods, the Balkans was on the front-line of the tensions and struggles between states and ideas. Ethnic differences and conflicts in the region have been overshadowed by the more powerful clashes of World War I, World War II, and the Cold War, but were always persistently present and opportunistically used as motivating factors by the involved governments in all three instances of great power conflict.

The real outburst of the remnants of these ethnic contradictions and conflicts—still, unfortunately, substantial both in quantity and quality—took place after the end of the Cold War, which coincided with the collapse of former Yugoslavia. For this reason, ethnic conflicts in the Balkans during the post-Cold War period are often

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identified with the post-Yugoslav conflicts, though the picture is more diverse and deserves additional scrutiny.

The security of the Balkans, and Europe as a whole, is contingent on the success of the enlargement of the European Union and of NATO to the east and southeast. The old dream of “Europe whole and free” means integration of Southeast Europe into the Euro-Atlantic zone of democracy, security, and prosperity. For the first time in the history of the Balkans, the peninsula began to matter in international politics in a manner that was not in opposition to the powers outside the region; even more, the meaning of the Balkans for these powers was linked to the future stability and prosperity of Southeastern Europe. The historic victory of the democracy and market economics of the developed West over the totalitarianism of Stalinist socialism paved the way for more homogeneous societies in the Balkans and washed away the systemic differences of the previous period. The post-Cold War Balkans, and especially the post-Milosevic Western Balkans, present a new reality and opportunity for Europe and the world, one with the potential for dramatically changing the history of the most conflict-prone part of Europe over the last two centuries. It is also the best opportunity to erase the injustices of the post-World War II division of Europe set down in the Yalta agreements of the leading Allied powers.

Today, more than three years after the end of the Kosovo crisis, there are signs of a regional improvement of the economic performance of the Balkan countries. The Pact of Stability for South East Europe has brought positive results, which parallel the development of a region-wide civil society, springing from the individual nations’ progress, while civil-military relations, democratic control of the armed forces, and the reform of the security sector are already working instruments for the improvement of the security situation and the democratic evolution of the Balkan countries, though in a different way.

The case is also important due to the knowledge base that is required for making responsible decisions in the fields of foreign policy, security, and international relations in the post-Cold War era. The lack of a modern regional economy and infrastructure and the existence of political, social, and cultural disparities have created either a distorted or an incomplete picture of the Balkan situation, and this has been negatively reflected in

the general knowledge of the area. The endurance of the old foreign-policy stereotype of “balkanization” has had harmful consequences for all interested actors in the local, bottom-up drive to modernization and progress in Southeastern Europe. This stereotype, which for decades provided a negative image of the Balkans to the world, overlooks the new and prevailing social, political, economic, cultural, and strategic tendencies that more accurately depict the region’s profile. This is why knowledge of the historical origins and present realistic threats of the ethnic conflicts in the Balkans are fundamental for understanding why such dramatic changes took place in the post-Cold War period and led to the gradual involvement of the Balkans in the European and Euro-Atlantic mainstream.

Thirdly, after September 11, 2001 the development of this case became even more important. The first global war of the Information Age—the war against terrorism—requires a full and detailed inventory of the globe and the issues and territories that correspond to the matrix of the war against terror. The Balkans is the historical meeting ground of Christianity and Islam in Europe, and Islamic extremists have already tried to gain strongholds in areas populated with Muslims. The Balkans also shelter weak states, whose eventual failure may actually convert broad areas into “black holes of civilization”—a nourishing milieu for the settlement and recruitment of terrorists. The existence of active or potential ethnic conflicts additionally generates possibilities of creating separatist terrorism, a source of conflict that has been utilized by global terrorist networks for the latter’s political purposes.

The threat of terrorism is real for all peoples in Southeastern Europe; no nation in the region has been spared, and each has lost victims to terrorist acts in different parts of the globe. The motivation for the governments of the region to join forces in the fight against terrorism is created and driven by a natural reaction to the evil of the new century and by the value of solidarity with those who have also suffered from that evil. Many Balkan states are already part of the counter-terrorist coalition led by the United States. Overcoming the failures of the past, such as ethnic conflict, is indispensable for an effective fight against terrorism by the Balkan countries participating in the coalition.

At the same time, the Balkans have the potential to get rid of terrorism and to invent the formulae of dealing with ethnic and religious conflicts as a pattern of depriving

terrorism from some of its most significant sources of support. A great European experiment of involving people and states in the integration of the continent is underway in the Balkans. If it succeeds, it will neutralize the dangers of failure for some of them. The success of the experiment of integrating the Balkans into the European Union and NATO will mean the end of terrorism's efforts to gain ground in Southern Europe. The long-term strategy of victory against global terrorism—sustainable development—has its first testing ground in the Balkans.

A final argument for the importance of this case study is that the experience of the Balkans in coping with recurring ethnic conflicts may offer a stimulating precedent or even an example to a neighboring region, adjacent to the Black Sea and stretching to the Caspian Sea: the Caucasus. The chances of transferring expertise to the Caucasus in dealing with ethnic conflicts, region-building, and security community construction—all of which have been tried in some way in the Balkans—are growing due to the tendency toward the formation of an encompassing regional community, stretching from the Adriatic Sea in the West to the Caspian Sea in the East, with the Black Sea acting as a pivotal area to this broad territory. This region has been a zone of bipolar conflict during the Cold War period. The structural shifts in the international system of the last decade have resulted in changes in the Balkan-Black Sea-Caspian Sea area that can be defined in geo-economic, geo-political, and geo-strategic terms in the following way:

- In geo-economic terms, the area offers the potential of an encompassing economic zone, which both needs to be developed and to prove its feasibility. The potential development of this zone already has practical implications for both conflicting and cooperative interests, especially on the issue of the transportation of energy resources to world markets. At this point, however, neither of the constituent sub-regions of this broader area has the features of a unified and meaningful functioning economic region within the global economic system.
- In geo-political terms, three geopolitical zones have been formed within this larger region: Southeastern Europe (or the Balkans), the Caucasian region, and the Caspian Sea region. They are quickly evolving into a single geopolitical zone in the context of the global counter-terrorist struggle.

- In geo-strategic terms, the region already constitutes a single zone, which has been confirmed in a decisive way during the NATO campaign against Yugoslavia; by the membership of Turkey and Greece in the Alliance; NATO's enlargement to Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria; the special relations between the Alliance and Russia; the active links of NATO with Ukraine; and the cooperation of the Atlantic Alliance with countries of the Black Sea-Caucasian-Caspian Sea region in the Partnership for Peace program. The fight against terrorism confirmed the legitimate functioning of this strategic zone. The pressure on Iraq and the eventual war that may follow in case Baghdad does not comply with the international rules established by the UN Security Council is further proof of the vitality of this region as a unified geo-strategic zone.

Hence, the experience of closer integration of the Balkans with the EU and NATO is of real and practical importance, particularly in relation to the Caucasus in dealing with the burdens of the past, including the recurring ethnic conflicts, and in the real situation of an already functioning single geo-strategic zone covering the Balkans, the Black Sea, the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea.

2. Historical Overview of Events

The recurring ethnic conflicts in the Balkans constitute a significant element of the term "balkanization," by which is meant a complex interaction in the Balkan region of the interests, objectives, and policies of the great powers with those of the local countries as well as with the psychology of the Balkan people, which resulted in the political and economic fragmentation of the small (and generally hostile) states on the peninsula after 1878, and especially during and after World War I. During this period, the formation of new states continued at the expense of geographical unity and stable administrative structures. The road to this turn of events—the fragmentation of the Balkan territory—was historically prepared by the 500-year-long Ottoman occupation of these lands and by the eruption of anarchy and the establishment of an unjust international legal order after the demise of the Ottoman and the Habsburg empires on the peninsula. The Balkans became a symbol of something that is torn into pieces and that has lost any

connection to a unifying whole. When any dramatic disintegration was to be vividly characterized, the term “balkanization” was used. The term was specially applied to reflect conflicts and wars with an ethnic basis.

How was this state of affairs in the Balkans achieved, and when did the term “balkanization” start to lose its applicability to the region itself? The answer to this question is linked to understanding the complicated historical heritage and the dual role of the great powers, and how this was reflected in ethnic and minority issues. This is, probably, the most direct route to explaining why ethnic conflicts appear again and again over time and why, after the end of the Cold War and especially of the Kosovo crisis, these dangers are diminishing and turning slowly into opportunities for progress. At the heart of all Balkan issues is the “national problem” and its historical relationship to the territorial and political status quo. The national question developed in three stages.

First, from the formation of the Balkan nations in the second half of the eighteenth century until the Eastern Crisis (1875–79), the main objective of the new nations was liberation from the oppression of occupiers—whether Ottoman or Habsburg—and the establishment of national states in conformity with the national principle of a sovereign state for each nation. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the major preoccupation of the then-great powers of Europe was to hinder the Russian advance to the Straits and to support the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, while the ambition of the national liberation movements in the Balkans was to establish sovereign states. In the eighteenth century these national liberation movements failed to achieve their aim, but in the nineteenth century, after three waves of insurgency combined with external pressure and warfare between Russia and Turkey, first Greece, then Serbia, Romania, Montenegro, and lastly Bulgaria all gained their independence. The initial dream of the national liberation movements and freedom fighters was the simultaneous emergence of the sovereign and free people from the remnants of the two empires. In practice, however, those who were liberated first, with external support, concentrated on their own national competitive goals, tacitly renouncing previous regional ideals and serving the interests of the respective competing great powers.

Second, from the Congress of Berlin (June–July 1878) until the 1912–1918 wars, the major issues for the new states were the division of the Ottoman and Austro-

Hungarian legacies, completion of the liberation of the Balkan peoples, and their integration in unified national states. Albania joined the ranks of new sovereign states in 1912. Nearly ten years of war in the Balkans ended the hegemony of the two empires, but did not achieve the full national liberation and unification of the respective Balkan peoples. Many unsolved or badly solved questions remained. The Berlin Treaty of 1878, an unjust international legal framework, mandated the permanent fragmentation or “balkanization” of the region, and thus produced the results that gave rise to the term.

Third, the period after World War I was the time when the political ideals of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson and the practical designs of his post-World War settlement in Southeastern Europe failed and could do little to find a solution based on national self-determination. The U.S. was not yet a powerful enough diplomatic force to promote the normalization of ethnic/nation and state border relationships in the Balkans. In the meantime, the European powers exploited the internal divisions in the region, exacerbating these conflicts and animosities as much as they could for their own ends. The result for the Balkans was opportunistic nationalist behavior under the umbrellas of alliances with external powers. The various inter-war pacts and alignments in the region reflected this, as did the region’s economic retardation. The arrival of World War II did not fundamentally change this situation. How were the post-World War II and later post-Cold War developments in the ethnic picture in the Balkans pre-conditioned by the preceding period?

After World War I, Yugoslavia, Romania, and Greece enlarged their territories, incorporating and oppressing large foreign populations. The territorial aspects of the national problem in the Balkans included remedying the mistakes and injustices that resulted from the wars. The principal demand was that Yugoslavia, Romania, and Greece should return the occupied regions, populated by Bulgarians, Albanians, Hungarians, and others to their respective nation-states; the minimum demand was guarantees of minority rights and no forced assimilation. The problem of the Bulgarians was that they were denied their share of the Ottoman legacy. This legacy was based on the ethnic borders featured on the map drawn by the European great powers and the Ottoman empire at the December 1876 diplomatic conference in Istanbul—six months after the massacres of Bulgarians following the unsuccessful National Liberation Uprising of April 1876. The

map reproduced the boundaries of the Bulgarian Orthodox Christian Church of 1870, as decreed by the Turkish authorities in accordance with the ethnic principle. The Preliminary Peace Treaty of San Stefano (3 March 1878), following the liberation of the Bulgarians brought by the victory of Russia over Turkey, copied the 1870 and 1876 maps in question. A few months later, the Congress of Berlin replaced this settlement with a new one that disregarded the frontiers shown on these maps and divided the Bulgarian nation into five segments. The question thereafter remained unresolved, largely due to frictions between Bulgaria and her neighbors that were purposefully encouraged by European great powers in the context of grand strategic considerations.

Another acute national problem emerged in the newly founded Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. The two rival concepts of Greater Serbia and Greater Croatia had clashed since the first half of the nineteenth century in efforts to settle the state, territorial, and nationality problem of the Western Balkans. A Serbian hegemony was imposed after 1918, based on the Serbs' claim that Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes comprised one nation with three names, which should constitute a centralized state. The centralists' slogan was "One people, one state, one king." The federalist position of the other nationalities upheld the concept of a multinational state with a federal structure. The renaming of the kingdom as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929 marked the victory of the chauvinist centralist forces and the beginning of Serbian royal dictatorship. The friction between Serbs and Croats continued and indeed deepened in the post-war federative socialist period under Tito.

The new states that emerged after the disintegration of the Ottoman empire either shared the ambition of completing their national liberation and unification, or the ambition to expand their territories as much as they could within the respective configuration of the international system and balance of power, both continental and regional. Greece adopted the *Megali* concept, justifying the right to existence of a large Greek state as the successor to the Byzantine Empire. Serbia, motivated by the nationalist ideologist I. Garasanin and his "Outline" of 1844, which assigned Serbia the role of a unifying nucleus of the Southern Slav peoples and regions under Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian rule, strove to establish a strong successor to the briefly powerful medieval Kingdom of Serbia. The creation of a Greater Croatia, stretching from the

Danube to the Adriatic, and from Macedonia to Germany, uniting all “Croatian” peoples, was another Balkan goal. The Croatian ideologists maintained that the “most noble part of the Croatian people live in Serbia.” The Romanians in their turn dreamt of a hegemonic Greater Romania, claiming the existence of Romanian communities in all parts of the Balkans. Bulgaria’s unification program, “A Great and Complete Bulgaria,” derived its legitimacy from the 1870 documents and maps of the free Bulgarian Church, the 1876 Istanbul diplomatic conference, and the San Stefano Treaty. The exclusion of Macedonia, Aegean Thrace, and Northern Dobrudzha, with their substantial Bulgarian populations, from the Bulgarian state by the Berlin Treaty of 1878 was denounced as illegal. Albania, emerging in 1912 as a sovereign state, was cut off from the half of ethnic Albanians who stayed in neighboring countries, and proclaimed the objective of a “Great Albanian state.” Similar ideas were born in the former oppressors’ states—Turkey and Austria-Hungary. For example, the Pan-Islamism of Abdul Khamid envisaged the unification of all Muslims under the aegis of the Sultan. The Pan-Osmanism and Pan-Turkism of the “Young Turks” espoused the unification of all Turkic people in the former Ottoman Empire under one country: Turkey.

There are two elements in each of these concepts that are mutually exclusive in terms of both time and place: historical rights based on mediaeval states at the time of their apogee versus the nationality principle underlying the liberation and unification of various nationalities in independent states in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There could be no possibility of the simultaneous realization of two such conflicting national and territorial concepts, each of which by definition the other. The megalomaniac territorial and national aspirations of the various Balkan states prevented the adoption of a rational approach to the Ottoman and Habsburg legacies. A more unified approach, as advocated by some in the mid-nineteenth century, could have curbed the interventionist style and practice of the great powers at that time. One of the greatest mistakes of the Balkan politicians, repeated by some of them in Serbia up to the end of the twentieth century, is the mistaken assumption that territorial expansion is a magic formula for solving the economic, social, cultural, technological, and other problems confronting their countries. As Balkan history has shown, prosperity grows ever more elusive if it is dependent on the acquisition of more territory.

Until the end of World War II (and even until now), state and ethnic borders do not coincide in any Balkan country. Ethnic groups are so intermingled that it is virtually impossible to reach a “pure” solution to the question of “one state for every ethnos.” This situation is not unique to the Balkans, but is a familiar problem in all parts of the world.

The international legal regulation of the ethnic minority issue in the region dates back to the eighteenth century; the Russo-Turkish Peace Treaty of Kyuchuk Kaynardzha (1744) gave Russia the right to protect the Christian Orthodox Church and the Christians in the Ottoman Empire. Article 7 of the San Stefano Treaty accorded political equality and religious freedom to the Turkish, Greek, and other minorities in free Bulgaria. Similar provisions were incorporated in the regional agreements concluded from 1879–1913.

The Treaty of Versailles made special provision for minorities. The League of Nations was the main guarantor of the basic rights of the citizens of all countries, irrespective of their origins, language or religion. In practice, the minority provisions confirmed the post-war state, territorial, political, and national status quos, and were not aimed at resolving the complicated nationality questions in the Balkans but at creating stability at the expense of the oppressed minorities.

Romania and Yugoslavia were satisfied with the new situation. Their openly chauvinistic policies toward minorities at that time were focused on assimilation. Greece and Turkey dealt with the minority question by forcible “population swapping” under the terms of bilateral agreements subsequent to the Treaty of Versailles. As a result, western Thrace and southern Macedonia were “de-Bulgarized” after Bulgaria’s defeats in 1913 and 1918; Turkey expelled the Greek community in the Smyrna area after the 1920–22 Greek-Turkish war; and half a million Bulgarians were driven out, massacred, or forcibly assimilated by Turkey in eastern Thrace (Edrine) after the Second Balkan War in 1913. The Greeks that were driven out from Asia Minor and the Edrine area were re-settled in western Thrace and southern Macedonia, after the removal of the Muslim population, including people of Bulgarian and Greek origin from those and other Balkan regions to eastern Thrace and Smyrna in Asia Minor. Between the two world wars, effective

campaigns of de-nationalization and assimilation of Bulgarians were carried out in Yugoslavia, Romania, Greece, and Turkey.

After 1945, the Cold War froze and temporarily diverted conflicting attitudes along the axis of East-West polarization. The post-World War II treaties did not change the complicated nature of minority issues in the region. Throughout this period, states pursued a “motherland” policy with respect to their ethnic brothers and sisters in neighboring countries, and a similar, related policy with regard to the minorities within their own state borders. The aspect of the problem of ethnic minorities that persisted and had catastrophic consequences after the end of the Cold War on the political relations and the stability of the Balkans was the practice of protecting compatriots in the territory of ex-Yugoslav states, a practice that was perceived in these countries as a threat of expansionism and intervention. The parallel to this behavior within the territory of individual states relative to ethnic minorities was the appearance of a “fifth column syndrome,” whose most drastic manifestation has been the practice of ethnic cleansing. The ethnic minority question became a source of conflict in the post-Cold War dissolved Yugoslav federation because it became the object of exploitation for nationalistic policy-making purposes—either for domination and/or territorial expansion by armed forces (regular and paramilitary), or as a means of oppressing the minorities within their own borders.

Although there were temptations or conditions for similar practices in other Balkan countries in the post-Cold War period, this performance was isolated in the Western Balkans, mainly within the limits of the former Yugoslavia. The reasons are twofold. First, the Cold War stagnated a situation that had been artificially constructed after 1878 and especially after 1918, when the Yugoslav state was invented,” sealing an already harmful practice of Serbian nationalists to “engineer” nations to serve the goals of domination and expansion. The Stalinist practice of “creating,” “shifting,” or “erasing” nations was embraced enthusiastically by the dictatorial regime of Tito and applied broadly. This is why the collapse of the great beneficiary of the Cold War in the Balkans—the socialist federation of Yugoslavia, exploiting its nonaligned status in the West and in the East—was inevitable.

None of the other Balkan countries was burdened with such substantial inter-ethnic tensions. Bulgaria returned during the first weeks of the democratic changes in late 1989 to the traditional practices of inter-ethnic tolerance, including between Bulgarians and Turks, which had been spoiled by the last five years of the totalitarian regime. Constructive bilateral relations with Turkey also aided this development. Bulgaria's "ethnic model" is a functional one, and it deserves study and application in the Western Balkans and elsewhere. It became one of the pillars of stability in the Balkans during the 1990s. Romania and Hungary also found ways—although with some difficulty—to heal long-standing interethnic tensions. Greece and Turkey also continue to exert efforts to diminish their old animosity without allowing it to slip out of control.

The lessons drawn by the states of the region from the horrific Yugoslav conflicts, however, became a major factor in the evolution of new attitudes toward interethnic issues and cooperation in Southeastern Europe. The nightmarish prospects of an all-out Balkan war in the early 1990s had a multiple effect, both on politicians and on societies in the area. First, the Yugoslav conflicts and tragedies deterred others from seeking a nineteenth-century solution to twenty-first-century problems. Second, non-Yugoslav and some ex-Yugoslav states in the Balkans realized that the wars were a major obstacle to much needed cooperation in economic, infrastructure, social, political, technological, and cultural progress. The post-Cold War transformation of Europe introduced a new opportunity for the Balkans to join in the enlargement of the security regime and the integrated Euro-Atlantic community. This also motivated new perceptions of interethnic and regional political behavior. The opportunity to join the modern democratic world by re-interpreting the lessons of history in the region strengthened the positions of those political actors who favor greater tolerance, reconciliation, and rapprochement. The "silver lining" in the Yugoslav conflicts, especially the crisis in Kosovo, if one can conceive of such a thing, was that Southeastern European states were brought into contact with major external actors who also demanded ethnic tolerance and regional cooperation.

3. Theoretical Relevance

The present case study extends beyond the theoretical frames of inter-ethnic relations and conflict management in international relations. The history, present dangers, and

existing opportunities of dealing with ethnic conflicts in Southeastern Europe have provided theories of international relations in the last decade with a real-world testing ground for trying to outline approaches and solutions to problems that reach far beyond the boundaries of the Balkan peninsula. Effective solutions to the problems under consideration were either found or are in the process of formulation. Here are some examples of the high theoretical relevance of the Balkan case:

- 1) Inter-cultural co-existence in a non-contradictory—and even mutually reinforcing—pattern in Southeastern Europe. Despite the suspicions and claims inherent in the “clash of civilizations” paradigm, Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism, and Islam are proving their ability and readiness to interact and co-exist in the Balkans. Ethnic tensions and conflicts were not multiplied in the last decade by corresponding inter-religious clashes, even in the worst of cases in Bosnia and Kosovo, though there were attempts by fundamentalist forces to generate exactly such developments. A commendable model of ethnic and religious tolerance has developed in Bulgaria in the last thirteen years as a counter-thesis to the ethnic intolerance witnessed in the territory of some ex-Yugoslav republics. Ethnic conflicts in the Balkans proved to be largely pre-conditioned by the unsolved national questions from the period that started after the Berlin Congress of 1878, was further prolonged after the results and treaties following World War I, and was later frozen into place by the Cold War divisions after the end of World War II. Ethnic conflicts in the post-Cold War period of transition from totalitarianism to democracy in most of the Balkan societies displayed two patterns of development: towards escalation of tensions and worsening of relations or towards reconciliation, rapprochement, and tolerance. The latter model began to prevail politically, and this development holds out great promise for the future of the Balkans.
- 2) The struggle with ethnic conflicts in the Balkans has generated tendencies towards the formation of a regional civil society, regional security community, and the construction of a Southeastern European region,

despite the absence of an underlying “regional identity.” A very effective instrument of security community and region-building, especially after the end of the Kosovo crisis, was the transformation of civil-military relations in the Balkans in the context of democratic control of the armed forces and the broader reform of the security-sector. History has led to the appearance of islands of civil society all over the globe, which is a tendency of regionalization as well as of globalization. The Balkan countries, after long periods of animosities and clashes and despite the various differences that still persist, have found common ground for their future in the post-Cold War period and during the bloody post-Yugoslav ethnic conflicts thanks to the ideal of civil society and the efforts put forth toward its realization. The construction of civil –society in the Balkans, especially after recent dramatic ethnic conflicts, needed a strong and positive interaction with the expanding civic space of the Euro-Atlantic region. Democratic values and their social interpretation by the newly developing civil societies turned out to be critical to the adoption of a crucial conceptual regional arrangement in the field of security, that of the “security community.” The most important consequence of this concept from the 1960s in the Balkans is that the use of military force is unthinkable and inappropriate in cases of disputes among the countries in the region. The achievement of the goals of the creation of a regional security community would mean a solution of the Balkan conflicts and control over their sources. Such a security community requires the realization of certain pre-conditions, the most important of which is the shared values of the participating parties. Such a development constitutes a sharp departure from previous practices of constructing opposing alliances in the region. A unique (in comparison to earlier periods) guarantor of the successful application of this concept is the benign involvement of powers external to the Balkans, mainly the European Union, NATO, the United States, and partially Russia. The process of building a Balkan security community in a constructive interaction with

the above-mentioned factors of power and influence stimulated both “bottom-up” and “top-down” efforts toward Southeastern European region-building. Though the concept of region-building may well be messy and loosely defined, it nevertheless holds major appeal for the people of Southeastern Europe; it offers a hope the region is not doomed to be Europe’s dustbin, and that its own initiatives and activities can improve its fate. This hope rests on a perception of Southeastern Europe as a part of a wider European community-building process, that of European integration. All these developments are even more important considering the fact that the Balkan states do not share a common regional identity, but rather an emerging regional inter-state interaction that provides grounds for new identifications within the European integration framework. The specific ways in which the development of civil-military relations, democratic control of the armed forces, and security sector reform would influence these processes will most probably accelerate the strengthening of the notion of commonality of the Balkan societies as they jointly adopt the new Euro-Atlantic security and strategic culture. This factor would continuously influence in a positive way the tendencies toward region-building.

- 3) This case study presents a new perspective on the notion of intervention in international relations. The post-Yugoslavia interventions on the part of the international community were preceded by strenuous preventive diplomatic efforts aimed at triggering positive auto-correcting processes that would lead the warring factions to come to terms in a constructive way. Before the international community intervened and enforced the peace there, were no imperial intentions to divide and set the conflicting sides against each other for the sake of making conquest of the region easier. The interventions in both Bosnia and Kosovo were examples of a larger range of tools for treating “clinical cases.” The first tool employed was conflict prevention. Second, if and when it failed, came intervention. Third, intervention itself was tailored in a way so as to be least harmful to

the respective countries. Collateral damage during interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo caused minimal harm to the civilian population. Fourth, intervention was carried out with the purpose of peace enforcement. Fifth, securing the stabilizing results of the intervention was implemented by applying peacekeeping methods and organizations. Sixth, a major addition to the peacekeeping methodology was the development of peace-building or post-conflict reconstruction/rehabilitation activities. This included providing massive humanitarian assistance, monitoring human rights, training police, establishing a judicial system, regulating elections, overseeing the repatriation of refugees, rebuilding schools, reconstructing the electric and the water-supply systems, etc. In some cases, post-conflict peace-building activity involved nation-building as well. Seventh, a peculiar feature of the post-Kosovo conflict rehabilitation effort was the acceleration of the integration of Southeastern Europe into the Euro-Atlantic security community. This is a rather broad interpretation of the term “intervention” in the case of the post-Yugoslav conflicts, but we can expect to see the application of this interpretation of the case elsewhere in the post-Cold War world, and especially in the post-9/11 world.

- 4) This case study also bears relevance to theoretic issues of integration in international relations. It provides insight into the logical chain of development from conflict via stabilization to differentiated and full integration in international relations. The Balkans during the past fifteen years has been the region of Europe in which this evolution became most possible. The improvement of the situation was possible because bottom-up and top-down efforts towards integration matched and mutually reinforced each other. While the world focused on the immediate tasks of de-escalating the different conflicts from their violent stages and stabilizing the security situation, the main actors involved in the Balkans worked to induce regional cooperation. The bottom-up and the top-down activities of stabilization and cooperation were directed toward higher levels of convergence than the interests of the involved parties. Local

ambition to join the European and Euro-Atlantic mainstream coincided with the need to expand the integration community, and these tendencies were successfully utilized for the solution of urgent security problems and for coping with longer-term national and ethnic conflicts in the Balkans. Thus, for the second time since 1945, after the solution of the Franco-German conflict, the instrument of integration served the purposes of dealing with old international conflicts in Europe. A real success for the European Union, with timely support from NATO and the United States, was the conception and practical flexible implementation of three strategies: stabilizing the Balkans, encouraging differentiated accession to the Union, and full integration of the region in the EU. A major test of this far-sighted strategy for dealing with the enlargement of the EU will be the accommodation of Turkey in the south of Europe and of Russia and Ukraine in the north. The Balkans in the last decade has already displayed a local potential for launching, supporting, and successfully implementing new policies, strategies, and processes. A patient, incremental approach by the Union will inevitably again lead to success.

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