

**SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE:
REGIONAL STABILITY THROUGH CONFLICT PREVENTION
AND PEACEBUILDING**

The most desired expectation from the period that followed U.S.-Soviet confrontation, was that of a new vision and new strategic opportunities. The broad framework of political and academic debate that followed considered several issues seriously influencing the features of future developments.

In particular, the concept of security has been altered by the end of bipolar confrontation and a windstorm of “new” security challenges that mostly emerged from the proliferation of nationalism and ethnic conflicts.¹ The complex situation has opened the road for an immediate search for strategic and institutional accommodation by European institutions. The European community has been transformed and a wider vision of the European Union, through deeper integration among Western European countries, offers an example and possible way of political and institutional vision for a common future. However, it is obvious that the EU integrative processes were selectively translated as a positive example and exported to the countries that were challenged by long lasting political and economic transformation. Immediate attention that Central European countries have received from European institutions and the broader international community has resulted in a clear strategy of support for democratic changes by filling security shortcomings by NATO and advancing of democratic transformations by EU.

However, delayed attention and ignorance of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia resulted in an extremely complex conflict situation that challenged almost “every international organization of substance”.² Unlike the Central European ex-

¹ Some aspects of the need for global perspective on ongoing debate about new security agenda after the Cold War is presented in Poul B. Shares: *The new Security Agenda: A Global Survey*, Japan Center for International exchange, 1998; expressing mostly Western European and U.S. perspectives, but stressing some differences in theoretical approach.

perience, violent disintegration and fragmentation resulted after unsuccessful attempts for political and economic reforms. The deep political, economic and social crisis has encouraged nationalism and outfitted nationalistic leaders with a powerful and favorable atmosphere of self-reproduction.

The debate has followed the events and posed the emphases on uncertainty and insecurity delivered by disintegration processes of former communist states and the consequences for European security and stability, especially its southeastern region. The most challenging and provocative part involves the disintegration of the Former Yugoslavia as a process completely opposite from those applied to western European countries. Grappling with diagnosis of the consequences from the collapse of old communist order, nationalism and the ideal of united ethnic territories, overlapping conceptions of ethnicity and borders, ethnic cleansing and human suffering, possible spreading of a regional conflict was predicted. The use of force at different levels as a means to achieve nationalistic goals and to confirm and anchor projected goals of international recognition was a road to endless conflict spirals.³

The use of force dominated the rhetoric of ethnic/nationalistic leaders when they were speaking in the name of an ethnic group or nation. Rhetoric based on force followed by brutal actions among conflicting parties, was a powerful weapon used to convince international representatives of “seriousness” to achieve group goals and to demonstrate willingness and strong commitment to serve the “kauza” of the group. Simultaneously any intention or readiness for transformative action that would promote common and democratic goals has been successfully suppressed by nationalistic, separatist or irredentist ideals.

From the very beginning, the circle of the lessons based on principles and attitudes favoring forceful instead of peaceful approach to the problems has dominated the strategies of conflicting parties. The strategies of those concerned actors attempting to bring conflicting parties closer to some solution from the conflicting parties have been perceived as manipulative and potential delaying tactics but not as a serious obstacle to future actions and imagined nationalistic goals.⁴ The im-

² Carl Bilt: Force and Diplomacy; Survival, Vol.42, No.1, Spring 2000, pp. 142.

³ Job Cvijeto: Yugoslavias Ethnic Furies; Foreign Policy, No. 92, Fall, 1993.

⁴ Freedman Laurence: Why The West Failed; Foreign Policy, No.97, Winter 1994-95.

pression was that “international” strategy is without clear direction towards the region and has been divided between short-term solutions towards conflict and the protection of western European countries from immediate consequences of the conflict.

The debate, a decade after the enthusiastic wave that should “display creative energy unseen since 1945”, is concentrated on measuring of “success” of the main post Cold War security actors to manage the conflict in the Balkans and widely shared concerns and suspicions about lost opportunity.⁵ After NATO intervention and later, democratic changes that happened in Croatia and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, this question arose even more seriously and urgently in the common EU - U.S. foreign policy agenda. At the very beginning of the debate about post-conflict reconstruction and viable and comprehensive solutions for the problems facing the SEE region, identification of the principal/leading international actor (as a question of political will and division of labor and commitment), is crucial to promote strong action in the core of the problems and to choose between short term settlement measures and long term solution. If recent theoretical analyses are fostering the solution that will change the structure of the conflict driving relations among and within SEE countries, the political commitment and strategy of international actors are still looking and acting divergent.

Conflict prevention or peacebuilding

Security relations among Balkan states significantly changed after the Cold War. External regulating factors of security balance disappeared, and were replaced by a situation in which security was provided only on the basis of emergency. However, each of the four conflicts that occurred in former Yugoslavia, have caused complex regional consequences. International community implemented realist approach that was based on the concept of conflict resolution. The distinction was made between conflict settlement as a short term solution, and conflict resolution that will address some of the concerns of each party in the conflict to develop a

⁵ Jonatan G. Clarke: A Foreign Policy Report Card on the Clinton-Gore Administration, Policy Analysis No.382, October 3, 2000; pp. 15.

mutually acceptable solution. Tools such as sanctions, threats of use of force, use of force, and bringing the parties to a power sharing model of relations based on ethnic security, were combined as recipes to every escalation of the conflict.

The limitations of conflict resolution have been demonstrated in the short time effects and lack of a solution for stable peace. The physical presence of NATO in the region is perceived as producing calming effect for BiH and Kosovo especially. The aim of the military aspects of the process is in general terms to keep the parties from resumption of the hostilities (in Bosnia) and to prevent reinfiltration of JPA in Kosovo. By that international military/security forces are in the gap where neither can explicitly fulfil its peacekeeping mission in the traditional sense nor provide complex post-conflict security requirements. The role of the military component in both cases is to freeze the conflict on a certain level. Specifically the position of international military forces in BiH is to separate opposing parties and to control heavy weapons, but also to provide deterrence and internal security. In the case of Kosovo it leads to an uncertain future role for the military, keeping in mind the complexity of the peacebuilding process and the limitations imposed by traditional military functions. The international military presence in Kosovo has a function to deter reinfiltration of Yugoslav military forces but fulfilling some mix of external/internal function of deterrence and security is additional challenge for the mission.

However, events of escalation of hostilities in south Serbia and Kosovo has raised the question of the functional role of the military aspects of the mission. The concern that withdrawing the international military presence (or changes in troop contribution by U.S. withdrawing) from Kosovo will lead to the reemergence of hostilities is related to the lack of success at the other non-military aspects of the mission. If military aspects of the mission are to be considered as crucial for the support of other peacebuilding aspects, then any announcement for changes in the support of the military component will undermine the viability and success of the mission.

Stability and security of the countries and the people in the region of SEE depends on the appropriate approach that will upgrade or replace previous situation. Some analysis recognized the mismanagement in the previous approach and

over try the assumption that traditional mechanisms of conflict management can be successful. The differentiation is made between “post-conflict strategy” employed as a part of collective security system, and “conflict prevention strategy” as an action that should remove the gravity of the intervention from post towards pre-violent stage of conflict. Notifying the shortcomings from the conflict resolution approach and constant estimation that contemporary internal or ethnic conflicts are difficult to control or solve, one suggest that the circle of the violent conflict can only be broken through simultaneous efforts in the fields of security, democratization and economy .⁶

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to that part of the ongoing debate that puts emphasis and priority on the strategy encompassing solutions calling for pre-emptive engagement and timely involvement in prevention of violent conflict. This paper also starts from the position that prevention of violent conflict is possible, and that post conflict strategies for prevention of resumption of hostilities differs from preventive action that is part of intervention before serious hostilities emerge. Pre-conflict or post-conflict preventive engagement (aside from the common aim to prevent conflicting parties from employment of violence or to contain horizontal or vertical escalation of the conflict), have different starting points.⁷ Depending on the “minor” fact that open violence was or was not part of conflict behavior, the framework of local carriers of preventive action can be defined as sufficient or not sufficient to a successful outcome. It can be a point to distinguish if a particular society is more an object of recovery and comprehensive post-conflict strategy of peacebuilding, or if there are elements that have created an object/partner for more comprehensive preventive action.

⁶ Fetherstone B. : The limits of Conflict Resolution, CHAO Working Papers, 1999

Gligorov, V; Kaldor M.; Tsoukalis L.: Balkan Reconstruction and European Integration, Vienna Institute for international Economic Studies, October 1999, pp.23, are suggestion simultaneous action as a comprehensive strategy for SEE stability.

⁷ “The art of prevention” may be the most general description of the strategy that should be employ and direct to delay to regional conflicts and/or neutralize the sources of conflict and prevent parties from getting involved in open violence, to control escalation or to neutralize possibilities for reemergence. As Vayrynen has assumed the art of prevention should synthesize both- diplomatic and academic experience in order to be successful. Raimo Vayrynen: Preventing Deadly Conflicts: Failures in Iraq, Yugoslavia, and Kosova; Paper presented at 40th annual Convention of ISA, February 16-20, 1999.

Post-conflict prevention, consequently, cannot count on a broader framework of local preventive actors, and the operational definition of the “recipients” of preventive strategy is larger than that of promoters. Differentiation and recognition of prospective local/national level preventive actors is a crucial question for both pre or post conflict prevention. The level of mobilization of preventive actors (within the complex of civil society and political institutions) and their credibility based on previous preventive nonviolent action can contribute and form the basis for a comprehensive preventive action approach. Otherwise, the question about the future of BiH without SFOR, or the future of Kosovo without KFOR, will predominate and take the emphases away from the possibilities of the Stability Pact as an attempt to bring together international actors in a commonly directed approach towards the SEE.

Is opportunity for prevention in the Balkans really lost?

The events in the Balkans from the end of 1980^s into the 90^s has revived the picture of the region as pro-conflict. Again “it is all quiet in the Balkans” was transformed into a “powder keg”.⁸ The statement reflecting the contemporary notion of “balkanization”: “after all we cannot live together” sounds almost convincing. This is notable when one poses the question of the repatriation of refugees and displaced persons in Croatia, BiH or Kosovo, or by the simple combination of options for Kosovo within or out of Yugoslavia; or confusions about (mis)understanding of the issue of EU individual/regional approach towards SEE made by a different position for the associate member and the “potential associate member”,

⁸ Within this paper the term Southeastern Europe is used to describe the group of states encompassing the successor states of Former Yugoslavia, Albania, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey. This composition of states create useful framework for analysis especially if the common variable is consequences from the conflict in the Former Yugoslavia, or if we are looking for long term and viable solution for the stability and security of a particular country, or the region as a whole. It is significant to point out that there are different views from inside as well as from outside about the very definition of the region. Slovenians see themselves as distinct from belonging to the group of nations of SEE, from Croatian view point it is the last piece of country not belonging to the Balkans, similar is the opinion of Romanians. Macedonia was granted the leading country among the group of western Balkan.

and expressions that that (regional) is a less desirable approach.⁹ The image of composition of distinct nations, ethnicities, languages, and religions, connected by belonging to the same region but divided by exclusive nationalism, ethnic intolerance and stereotypes, again attracted the attention of the broader international community. Until recently we were challenged by open conflicts that crawled through the former Yugoslavia and created horizontal and vertical dimensions of conflict. No matter which dimension has been intensified and produced conflict escalation, both conflicting actors and those trying to contribute to the solution, and even those that decided to stay out of the conflict and virtually from the region, needed to pay their full attention, energy and skills to managing the consequences.

As for the conflicting actors, every escalation of the conflict was a chance to come closer to the ethno-nationalistic goals justifying the actions towards the counterparts as legitimate and necessary. As for the concerned international actors, every escalation of the conflict was an alarm to look deeply into the situation and calming instruments previously employed, mostly searching for the gap in the approach or in the next domino.

Within broad analytical work regarding the conflicts in former Yugoslavia it is central to see that prevention of the violent conflicts failed. The failure of prevention is the common responsibility of the international community (to act in conflicting process before emergence of violence, or to address root causes of conflict), as well as of former federal constituent republics who decided to sacrifice the possibility for peaceful resolution by taking nationalistic options. It is clear that immediately after the emergence of the conflict and after internal political radicalization within the republics, the choice of agreeable "recipients" of preventive therapy was discontinued.

⁹ Within the process of the accession of Group 5 (Western Balkan countries: Albania, Macedonia, FR Yugoslavia, Croatia and BiH), the SAA agreement that should be signed with Macedonia, introduced "evolution clause" which consider the country as "possible associative member". The clause is not negotiable, and Macedonian political institutions and the public especially, complained because of different status of accession towards EU and "limits" from the status of "possible associative member". The position was estimated at least as disadvantaged regarding the other aspirants for membership.

The Western European countries' unpreparedness to timely address the potentials for violent conflict resulted from the lack of a comprehensive common policy and preventive strategy.¹⁰ The lack of timely diagnosis from international actors translated into inconsistent policies that come from different centers and did not support the actors that offered different/preventive views from those with nationalistic rhetoric.

The basic approach was conflict management and it remained reactive in all cases. There is a significant number of published works and an increasing number of academic meetings which are dealing with the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia as case studies for missed prevention. But there are only a few studies that pay attention to the only "success story", for the time being, of conflict prevention, the Republic of Macedonia that inquire why it did not happen.¹¹ For some reason, it seems easier to predict that the next domino in the conflict will be Macedonia.¹² One of the explanations for such a "prospective example" is that of applying the same political and ethno-nationalistic elevators for the conflict in Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina and Kosovo. The other one is again taking the position from various international actors of "passive" counting of the indicators and accelerators that are enough to attract attention but obviously not enough to develop clear and timely preventive strategy.

For many reasons, specifically because the conflict in former Yugoslavia was seen as the most complex and most violent one, serious concerns regarding regional stability are still present. They emerge from probabilities that nationalism and ethnic conflicts could follow deeper fragmentation and result in future contesting visions of ethnicity and borders. This condition was perceived as a productive and fruitful environment for practicing "soft" totalitarianism and promotion of nationalistic sentiments. This would be the basic covering mask for a coalition of

¹⁰ The lack of preventive strategy can be assumed a part of the lack of broader inconsistent approach. The need for a comprehensive approach and effective common policy are posed as crucial in Misha Glenny: *Has Anyone Seen Our Policy*, *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.23, No. 4, pp171.

¹¹ Keith Brown: *Prevention can Work*, Special Report, USIP, 2000; Alice Ackerman: *Macedonia and Kosovo Conflict*; *The International Spectator*, Vol.23, No.4, December 1998.

¹² Christophe Chiclet: *Neht Victim of Balkan Crisis? Macedonia risk falling apart*, *Le Monde diplomatique*, January 1999, also available on www.monde-diplomatique.fr.

nationalistic and para-reformist leaders, paramilitary activities and criminal business. According to the present situation, it is time for critical action and suppression of any kind of violence that can undermine the political solution of the open problems, but still there is no clear vision for such an approach.

Macedonian tools of prevention

The level of the conflict at the beginning of 1991-2 was dramatic enough to be seen as a threat to regional security and stability. Horizontal escalation of the conflict in Croatia, and later in Bosnia, sent signals that refugees, displaced persons, nationalism, illegal arms transfers and the criminalization of societies can spread.

The diagnoses for future conflict escalation regarding Macedonia have probably been wrong in the way they were based on some assumptions and historical misreadings, but right in the way they predicted future fragmentation. It was notable that political predictions met expert's analysis when predicting regional destabilization if the conflict chain is going to be linked through the geo strategic location of Macedonia. One of the estimations described the situation as "there is little indication that the situation in Macedonia is significantly more stable today than it was at the time of the Balkan wars".¹³ Bearing in mind ethnic and territorial disputes and the attitudes of neighboring countries, the situation was described as a tripwire for preventive military engagement, especially for U.S. troops. The conflict in the former Yugoslavia was estimated as "parochial" and even in the worst case scenario "the spread of the conflict to Kosovo and Macedonia, with subsequent intervention by such outside powers as Albania, Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey, would not fundamentally alter that reality". This is a reflection of fortunately low-shared perception of tolerant attitude towards possible military engagement of neighboring countries and underestimation of the consequences. Not only failure to recognize the differences and characteristics of the region from the time of the Balkan wars to the end of the 80's, is the basis for incorrect prediction and wrong

¹³ Carpenter T.G.: U.S. Troops In Macedonia: Back Door To War?; The Cato Institute, Foreign policy Briefing No.30, March 17, 1994.

answers. It is also recognition of the fact that nothing has been done to change and improve relations within or among the countries. The years of Cold War for the region were the years of hibernation.

The process of dissolution and fragmentation accompanied by violence has brought the problem to the front door of NATO and EU member(s).¹⁴ Macedonian independence was the only example of peaceful dissolution that has been a successful story of multiethnic democracy during the years of crisis. But, it appears that such an example received little support in the efforts of Western nations to ease regional tensions or to facilitate transition into modern statehood.¹⁵ Actually, the collapse of “old-communist order” on the southeast flank of the EU and Greece’s northern frontier has been perceived as a way for establishment of democratic regimes and this is part of “most desirable expectations”. But, the first effect has been “to unleash the old nationalism” and to challenge the relations among identities which have been separated for a decades.¹⁶ The appearance of Republic of Macedonia as an actor that gained independence peacefully and with potentials to contribute for constructive solution of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, among neighboring countries and consequently EU was not considered seriously. On the contrary, the old historical luggage mixed with different political visions, has opened the complex of questions that neighboring countries has put on “saving account” (the question of northern border with Yugoslavia, the language contest with Bulgaria, and irrational dispute about the name of the country with Greece). That opened a long and uncertain walk between internal stability and regional security challenges and proved that nationalism is contagious.

Furthermore, the presumption that intervention by two NATO members (Greece and Turkey) in a conflict that is not part of a collective security system is a rational answer, is hardly acceptable. It looks mostly like a sub-regional response

¹⁴ Stephen J. Flanagan: NATO and Kosovo: Lessons Learned and Prospects for Stability in Southeastern Europe.

¹⁵ Marchal F.Harris: Macedonia: The Next Domino?; *The National Interest*, No.55, Spring 1999, pp.44.

¹⁶ Loukas Tsoukalis: Greece: Like Any Other European Country; *National Interest*, Spring, 1999, also significant contribution to understand new relations is Anna Triandafyllidou: National Identity and the “other”; *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.21, No.4, July 1998.

mechanism on the costs of NATO's security and conflict management instruments. It may be disposed as an conventional answer for the horizontal spillover of the conflict, but it will look like a decision borrowed from the time of Balkan wars.¹⁷

On the other hand, many analysts and policymakers worried that turmoil in Macedonia could lead to military intervention and regional Balkan war, recognizing the danger of broader regional consequences. The complexity of the Kosovo crisis and consequences from international intervention already created a situation for a drawing of serious lessons. The possible scenario of conflict escalating by horizontal and vertical dimension including the territory of Macedonia is as worrisome as the recent Kosovo experience. On that behalf, if it is to expect international intervention in possible conflict escalation towards Macedonia, it will be something between the Italian and Greek request for Western European response and protection from the consequences of the collapse of Albanian society, and Bulgarian and Greek response to the refugee crisis during the Kosovo intervention when both countries expressed only deep security concerns and intensified diplomatic efforts to contain the conflict within Macedonian borders. Based on the example from Bosnia and Kosovo, but to prevent an escalation involving Greece and Turkey, it was predictable that the U.S. would intervene in Macedonia. However, it was likely that intervention will be based on "building a firewall around Macedonia, rather than saving it, thereby allowing at least part of the destruction to continue".¹⁸

From the Macedonian viewpoint, long lasting horizontal escalation started with "blic" conflict between the Yugoslav People Army (JPA) and Slovenian territorial defense. It has opened the complex of security, political and economic uncertainty, and expelled the question about the future status of the Republic within Yugoslavia. After the negotiated ceasefire agreement and delaying of declaration of independence for 3 months, JPA forces withdrew from Slovenia. The conflict between Croatian Serbs and the Croatian Government, somewhere between declaration for independence and celebration of nationalistic goals and extreme nation-

¹⁷ Tarnar Ted: Conflict management and European Security: the Problem of Collective Security, CIAO working Papers, 5/99.

¹⁸ Harris, pp 45.

alistic euphoria and retaliation with overlapping idea for state and borders, were indicators to create the picture and projection of future relations.

The conflict in Croatia confirmed and deepened concerns, but the immediate emergence of hostilities in BiH and the future escalation of ethnic hostilities supported by outside actors, only proved that the chain of conflict can be long and unpredictable, and that the line of conflict escalation was moving towards the south. It was hard to define remnants that previously were part of a federal state system as something that would have characteristics of democratic political and institutional vision and that would provide a bastion against future conflict escalation.

In early 1990^s there was a lot of pessimism and speculation that Macedonia could not survive violent conflict and the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Behind the fact that according to the status of “Republic” and constitutional “benefits” from that, the southeast republic, together with the Kosovo autonomous province and Monte Negro, was the least developed economically. The suspicions about the future of Macedonia were based on conflicting scenarios and the dynamics of previous conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, and on the possible answer of neighboring states. By that, early warning signals send from Macedonia about possible spillover of the conflict from Kosovo into Macedonia were ignored until 1994 when the UN responded by preventive peacekeeping.¹⁹

None of the solution and measures that have been taken from international organizations of “substance” seems to look effective and affect the conflict in the way that will decrease horizontal and vertical escalation. On the contrary, toughness of ethnic intolerance and nationalism doesn’t look timed by any control mechanism.

From the southern observer line, two lessons have been learned. One was from Macedonian observer viewpoint, and the other from the viewpoint of Kosovo. The first one was that the main challenge for the Macedonian security and stability was escalation of the conflict between Kosovar Albanians and the regime of Milosevic and that the conflict would be extremely unpredictable and untractable with serious consequences for Macedonia.

¹⁹ Georgieva Lidija: Preventive Deployment: Missing link between Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding, Paper presented at ISA Conference, Washington DC, 1999.

The lesson from the Kosovo viewpoint was that until a certain level of violence appeared there would be no attention and commitment from the international community for solving the status of "The Former Autonomous Province of Kosovo".

The conflict that escalated later was one of most predictable conflicts. The warnings during the previous developments of the crisis were based on facts, but also there was no will from either side for a common solution. These positions had been aggravated by the continuous deterioration of all formal institutional relations that could have provided some institutional connections between the province and central government, except military and police control.

The Macedonian perspective on the dissolution process and conflicts in Croatia, BiH and Kosovo, went through substantial oscillations depending mostly on sensitivity of Macedonian soul and possible indirect or direct consequences. The Kosovo crisis and international intervention in FR Yugoslavia were the greatest challenge to Macedonian stability and security since its independence.

For the time being, there was a denial of reality and a refusal to acknowledge the Kosovo crisis in everyday political and public language, assuming that if Kosovo is an internal problem of Serbia, consequently there is no need, no reason, for Macedonia to reconsider its politics of "equidistance". The dramatic changes and vertical escalation of the conflict deepened the awareness that this time there was not time for effectuation of a policy of "equidistance" and the possibilities to manage the consequences from the conflict become dependent on international military presence.

Beside some oscillations, the leading principles for all solutions were: clear political will to stay out of the conflict, to manage the consequences from NATO intervention, to preserve internal stability, and to achieve membership in EU and NATO. Those were the leading foreign political goals that were confirmed by parliamentary declaration, common policy statement of political leaders and supported by the public. Those goals were described as of "civilizational importance" for Macedonia.

The first goal: to preserve the country from eventual military involvement in the conflict was a greater challenge than the state was able to achieve. The limiting circumstances were created immediately after the negotiated withdrawal

of JPA forces from Macedonia and the creation of a “double” security vacuum. The Territorial Defense and police forces of Macedonia that took over the responsibility from JPA to protect the state borders were equipped only with a strong motive to fulfil the role of guarantors of state borders. Their ability to provide the traditional security function of deterrence was considered as insufficient and two solutions were requested to complete traditional security needs. First, preventive deployment of UN forces on northern and western border with Albania and Yugoslavia as deterrent from a horizontal escalation of the conflict from BiH or Kosovo, and second, NATO membership that would enable inclusion in the system of collective defense.

On the way to achieve the goals in both cases Macedonia has a double role. It is the role of recipient of security favors through preventive deployment of UN peacekeeping forces, and at the same time through the policy of “equidistance” distribute the message that any involvement in destabilizing the position of Macedonia could affect and undermine the position of the neighboring countries.

In the second case, Macedonian participation in Partnersheep for Peace (PfP) program was accepted as a road to NATO membership, but hardly as a substitute for improvement of its security position and guarantees. In this case the search for post-UNPREDEP “security arrangements” (NATO membership was excluded as “quick” achievable option), was oriented on the deployment of international military forces, but the core function of the forces has nothing to do with the function of deterrence and security of Macedonia. The signals from the international presence in Macedonia were that all necessary means would be used to terminate horizontal escalation of the conflict, but the host country was and still is the territorial base for logistic support of KFOR. Actually, in the Macedonian case there is a thin line between the object of prevention and the means for prevention, that left open space for insecurity. That was especially evident during the Kosovo crisis. Few indicators significantly demonstrated that Macedonia’s projected or desired role of object of prevention could be averted.

Because of the presence of “extraction forces” in numbers that outnumbered the active army of the host country and the predictable role of NATO ground

forces that would take part in the solution of the Kosovo crisis, serious concerns that Macedonia could be used as a battle ground were present. The question of whether Macedonia would permit the use of its territory for ground intervention reached the stage of disagreement between the coalition Government of VMRO-DPMNE, DA and DPA and the President of the Republic. The coalition Government trying to strike a balance between the difficulties of preserving internal stability, and the expectation that commitment to NATO intervention in Kosovo would quicken admission to NATO (later some foreign politicians speculated that Macedonian and Albanian expectations for NATO membership were not serious). On the other side, while political leaders argued for and against allowing ground intervention from Macedonian soil and raised it as a parliamentary question, President Gligorov has “mentioned” the constitutional opportunity for announcing a “condition of immediate danger of war”. He broadened the process of decision making between Parliamentary decision via Governmental or Presidential arguments.²⁰

As an argument favoring consensus for intervention the leader of DPA, Mr. Dzaferi stated that the “mixed character” regarding the Kosovo crisis is “deadly” for Macedonia. On the contrary, according to Mr. Dzaferi, a constructive “prowestern role” has already resulted in expression of the name “Macedonia” in all reports, such a role will in the future open the road towards western structures, and will guarantee inclusion of the country within the new plan for the Balkans.²¹ The divisions within Macedonian political and public milieu regarding the Kosovo crisis were not the result of changed objectives for admission in western structures (beside the fact that during intervention the attitudes of public opinion regarding NATO significantly dropped). It was a question of international principles and norms, the question of moral and ethical attitudes, compassion with the suffering people and finally the question of a rational solution to preserve the country from involvement in the conflict. The concern regarding unclear consequences and the danger that

²⁰At the same time Bulgarian President Stojanov raised the NATO request for an air corridor over Bulgaria as a matter for constitutional court decision.

²¹ From the interview of the leader of coalition DPA, Arben Dzaferi for MTV, 19.04.1999

a “wrong” decision will be incised in collective memory were expressed among political parties and by Macedonian Prime Minister, also.²²

However, it is questionable if Macedonian politics, divided between preferences of different ethnic groups (clear support of Macedonian Albanians for ground intervention and opposition by the others) will have been respected and not put under the pressure. Also it was questionable if complete consensus was possible under the pressure of the refugee crisis and danger of internal destabilization. One of the critical advantages was that the situation in Macedonia aside from some open ethnic questions, was not poisoned by violent ethno-national conflicts.²³

According to President Gligorov, even the thought of a possible trade off with permission for ground intervention by the NATO membership was not worth it. If that was the case, than role of the “western character” for Macedonia is granted, but was accompanied by the very serious possibility of horizontal escalation of the conflict and the use of Macedonian territory by NATO, the KLA and the forces of JPA, which could easily destroy Macedonia.

The uncertainty was ended with the Agreement in Kumanovo which opened the road for deployment of NATO forces in Kosovo but the open questions in Macedonian public sentiment still remained. This controversial debate is a part of the image that Macedonian public created regarding NATO and it’s security functions and capabilities.

The next challenge that emerged from the Kosovo crisis was the influx of refugees. The signs of a possible refugee crisis were seen and before NATO intervention. In Macedonia there were registered “guests” from Kosovo. Western observers registered the fact that significant number of Kosovars were present in Macedonia but except for curiosity there were no signs of serious concern. That is

²²His statement described the unpleasant position that Macedonia is foster to play and that he is sure that Serbs will dedicate next 10 years to balance the bills, but he is not sure that Macedonian Albanians will take Macedonian position with thankfulness.

²³In his interview for daily “Danas”, Adem Demaci stated that “that part of Albanians is currently doing the best as far as the regulation of common life with other nations is considered”. The estimation is in the context that “that will help the solution of the Kosovo problem because Albanians from western Macedonia will not anymore strive to unite with Kosovo”. “Danas” Belgrade, interview by Safeta Bisevac, November 3, 2000.

why the statement of Macedonian President Gligorov during his visit to Slovenia about strategy for a “refugee corridor” through Macedonia to Albania, gave rise to divergent reactions. Political parties of Macedonian Albanians opposed the statement as unappropriate. Intensification of the NATO intervention and gradually increased numbers of refugees on the border were the signs that the conflict could spread through the refugee crisis. Thousands of refugees seeking security and safety out of the conflict area, created an emergency situation. Neither Macedonia nor international organizations of substance were prepared for such an influx of refugees.

The response of the Macedonian Government at the moment was confused, and in general was an extraordinary attempt to jump over the risk of horizontal escalation of the conflict. According to Amnesty International much criticism has been directed to Macedonian authorities over the issue country of first asylum. In that case economic as well as demographic dimensions and problems were underestimated.²⁴ The significant number of refugees that reached the number of 360.000, was almost 1/5 of total population of the country. That is the number that could represent serious humanitarian concern and challenge even for an economically stronger country.

There are two moments that should be seriously considered as a consequence of the refugee crisis. First, together with the criticism that were addressed to the Macedonian Government regarding the border regime and tactic of controlled acceptance of refugees, simultaneously was developed high polarization and even commercialization of the refugee crisis. As Amnesty International considered both, refugee crisis and the response, could be characterized as unique by two details: “humanitarian evacuation” and NATO “humanitarian” activities at the refugee camps.²⁵ In the case of “humanitarian evacuation” the main remarks were that it should be approved and coordinated by UNHCR, as well as on the basis on agreement of refugees. In the case of NATO involvement as an humanitarian activist that built and coordinated life in several camps, the main remark is that NATO

²⁴ According to recent information's Macedonia received \$50mil, from amount \$660 mil. that should be paid as a compensation.

²⁵ Amnesty International Report; EUR 65/03/99.

troops stationed in Macedonia were primarily to implement the future peace agreement in Kosovo, and by that and current intervention NATO was part of the conflict. Actually, humanitarian evacuation through Macedonia into Albania and later NATO involvement in the regulation of the refugee crisis were part of a common concern of Macedonian authorities and some NATO representatives that refugee crisis could impose serious consequences. The exposure of refugees near the border before the end of intervention could have resulted in dangerous consequences if camps became the basis for mobilization (forceful or volunteer), or if by any case they became military targets.

The next effect was that military intervention created an extraordinary situation with regional consequences, but for Macedonia and Albania as neighboring countries the consequences were more direct. Costs and vulnerabilities are ranked in total score of 26 for Albania and 24 for Macedonia and BiH.²⁶ Actually, the Kosovo crisis and NATO intervention have created additional economic consequences and made the hard economic situation even more complicated. After Kosovo intervention Macedonia (as a result of consistent preventive action or by luck), has succeed to manage the consequences of the crisis. Until now, constant Macedonian efforts to stay out of the conflict in former Yugoslavia reach the shape of reactive foreign policy. Future stabilization of the country through mechanisms for EU association and framework of Stability Pact, will provide the country with appropriate support for prevention as a segment of reign policy.

Stability Pact: potential framework for preventive action

Stability Pact (SP) was signed by the countries of Southeast Europe , the EU and G8, as well as by the representatives of international organizations. The main goal of the SP is to achieve “lasting peace, prosperity and stability for SEE... through comprehensive and coherent approach to the region”. The organizational structure

²⁶ Vladimir Gligorov and Nicals Sundstrom: The Costs of Kosovo Crisis, WIIS, 1999, according to analysis six factors are estimated from 1(worse) to 5(the best). Croatia and Romania have total score each of 19, Bulgaria and Hungary each of 17, and Greece 13.

of SP is three working tables which bring together the issue of democratization and human rights, economic reconstruction and security issues. The potentials and resources of SP to meet the challenges it faces were estimated and still are under suspicious monitoring by various participants, especially recipients. Most of them expected that after the Kosovo crisis the international community will take a more comprehensive and strategy driven approach that will put a border line between the “past” and open a road for the more prospective future. Some expectations put SP in comparative position with Marshal Plan Aid but the comparison is inappropriate. At the moment there is a dividing line between commitment expressed in the text of the SP and expectations of the recipients. One description of SP is that it is more “aspirational rather than practical”.²⁷ The most prospective position that the SP was granted is an “main preventive role”. This is because some regional initiatives that existed before introducing SP, attempted only to bring together representatives from the region and international organizations. But, SP is estimated as a “major political effort that is being mounted, at least in terms of participation”. Additionally, Woodward described the Pact as “a mechanism for strategic coordination.... try rationalize all the factors that are now on the ground, to eliminate some, to try spend money better”.²⁸

The skepticism regarding the SP as a main preventive strategy arise from the estimation that it is a compilation of “Document”, staff of 28 people, and Special Representative of the Council of EU, that have to implement a consistent strategy. Obviously, there is no place in SP for a clear leading position.

The other remark is that regarding financial construction in SP, that there is now clear evidence how much of the money is new or is simply relocated from aid programs. Additionally, serious remarks are coming not only from recipient countries. The Council of Europe Parliamentarian Assembly stated that “the present structure of working tables and Task forces, together with an influx of seminars on recalled topics, risk delaying... furthermore it diminishes the high expectations of the people concerned”.

²⁷ “Regional Assistance Framework”-Balkan Security:Current and Projected Factors Affecting Regional Stability, Briefing Report, 04/24/2000, CAO/NSIAD/00-125BR.

²⁸ Ibid, Also Been Steil, Susan Woodward: A European “New Deal” for the Balkans.

The role of the SP is really unique as it can be the basis for comprehensive preventive action, but not because this project fully relies on the preventive strategy and goals of different international actors, but because it is the only regionally aimed effort that brings together the issues of democratization and human rights, economic and security issues.

The EU established a new framework for closer relations between the EU and the countries of SEE. The framework should be developed through a “progressive approach” adapted for the specific situation of a particular country. EU formulated the term Western Balkans to address the group of countries that deserved special attention towards their road to the status of “associate member”. The new category of relations should be developed through a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) and participation in Stability pact.

This process is under serious criticism from some countries. The main reason is disagreement over the core of the regional approach that has been understood as acceptable and unavoidable regional economic cooperation, but not necessarily “some” regional political integration. It is obvious that there are differences in foreign policy options from some countries as how to achieve the main goal- membership in the EU.

The Republic of Macedonia was the first country that started the negotiations for SAA and it is expected that the SAA will be signed in April 2001. Republic of Croatia started the negotiations at Zagreb Summit as a second country from Group 5 (Western Balkans). It should be reasonable to expect that these two countries will have different tempo of accession. Although Macedonia was the first of the countries that will sign the SAA, relations with EU were shorter than those of Croatia. EU recognition of Croatia in January 1992 resulted in opening a way for providing humanitarian aid and democratization assistance.²⁹ Before the recognition the Cooperation Agreement from 1980 and the Transport agreement from 1990 with SFR Yugoslavia were terminated by the decision of the Council of Ministers of EU in November 1991. Consequently, bilateral contractual relations with Croatia had to replace those agreements but related political situation delayed as-

²⁹ Report from the Commission on the feasibility of negotiating a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the Republic of Croatia, COM (2000) 311, Brussels, 24.05.2000.

signment. Assistance and negotiations were suspended on April 1995, and since 1996 EU has been providing Croatia with assistance for the return of refugees and displaced persons. From 1996-99 relations with Croatia were developed within the framework of the Regional Approach to SEE.

Because of the attitude of the EU towards Macedonia that resulting from the Greek -Macedonian dispute over the name of Republic of Macedonia, negotiations with the EU started on December 1995. From the independence of the country in November 1991 until diplomatic relations with the EU were established in 1996, there was a vacuum in relations. In the meantime only UN preventive deployment in Macedonia and the OSCE mission in Skopje were deployed with a preventive mandate. The European Commission announcement of Agenda 2000, ignored Macedonia, and produced enormous disappointment and serious concern in the country.³⁰ European Parliament adapted the Agreement for cooperation between EU and Republic of Macedonia, applied on January 1998.

After the Kosovo crisis EU-Macedonian contact has been intensified and according to a feasibility study by European Commission, Macedonia fulfilled the conditions for SAA.³¹ According to some analysis considering the Macedonian parameters for accession, it's GDP is "lower than Croatia but it is none the less comparable to some second group accession candidates, such as Latvia and Bulgaria."³² The political achievements in acting as a barrier to Bosnian and Kosovo conflicts and reasonable standards of inter-ethnic political cooperation posed Macedonia on leading place among the countries in the region.³³ Actually, both characteristics are the basic that will distinguish Macedonia as promoter of prevention, from recipients.

Before the Zagreb Summit most of the countries from the region and Group 5 countries especially, concluded that after democratic changes in Yugoslavia the situation in the region is completely different and offered a broader and nonselec-

³⁰ Temporary satisfaction and compensation, but not an alternative to achieve one of it's foreign policy goals-EU membership, was Macedonian inclusion in President Clinton's Agenda 2000.

³¹ Commission Report On the Feasibility of negotiating a Stabilization & Association Agreement with the Republic of Macedonia, COM(1999)300, Brussels, 16 June 1999.

³² Emerson M. : A System for Post- War South-East Europe, CEPS Working Document No.131, May 1999.

tive approach towards European integration. Some analysis argued that the Zagreb Summit was initiated just to show that everyone in the region will have a chance, especially if democratic changes happened in Yugoslavia. At the Zagreb Summit it looked like Post-Milosevic Yugoslavia was an ideal that came too early for some promises to be fulfilled, and necessarily looks for reconsideration of some decisions.

The attitudes of the international community towards post Milosevic SRJ or Kostunica's SRJ are still mixed between the will to support democratic changes and to solve the open questions regarding the Kosovo status, relations with Monte Negro or the future of BiH.

In that sense there are strong announcements that the Stabilization and Association Agreements are too "thin" in content and too slow for the dynamics that the region needed.³⁴ According to Mr.Emerson the basic political conditions were fulfilled in an impressive way: by changing regimes in Croatia and Serbia, by stipulating that the remaining preconditions should be related to the criteria for negotiations for membership, and that the whole region has to approach accession through pre-accession processes.

But if we seriously accept that membership in the EU constitutes a powerful factor pushing for change, as does exposure to international competition, the road towards European integration should be the road of democratic changes in SEE and prevention of behavior that marked the last ten years.

Conclusion

By the end of the Cold War the international community has faced serious challenges that emerged from the sphere of internal conflicts. The seriousness of the challenges were confirmed by numerical proliferation of the conflicts and their characteristics serious enough to be considered as a threat to regional/international security. The confused political and security environment was completed as inter-

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Michael Emerson (member of CEPS) interview for Forum, November 2000, available on www.forum.com.mk

national actors have responded either by ignorance or by predominantly security/military mechanisms. The conflicts and the processes of dissolution have received sporadic attention from international community. That kind of attention has produced some partial and short-term solutions. The picture of the region a decade after the violent conflict has started and various solutions were imposed, did not become neither more stable nor prospective. The description of the region after the four conflicts and NATO military intervention, again is composition of states, nations and ethnicity's, but this time they differs by achievements in transition to democracy, respect for human rights and minorities, intense of civil society, and by their distance from EU or NATO doorstep. However, the impression that international community failed to prevent the conflicts in the region is still present, as is the impression that the framework of relations created by SP and SAA can not remove the conflicting spots without clear commitment to the preventive strategy. Macedonian experience confirmed that prevention as an strategy for avoiding violent conflicts is significant category of national foreign policy and of the system of multiethnic democracy. Macedonian commitment to preventive strategy as a foreign policy tool has arisen and depends on viability to manage internal political, economic and social issues, and especially multiethnic relations as a precondition for internal stability.

The Macedonian experience of multiethnic coalition governments since it's independence has avoided extreme polarization as in BiH and Kosovo and has contributed to solution of some dividing ethnic questions as high education or representation in public institutions. The strategy of integration and institution building based on principles of multiethnic interactions will contribute fore a preventive strategy as a part of democratic institutions. However, the political achievements based on multiethnic democracy, integration and respect of human rights, needs broader support and institutionalization on regional level, in order to revert the effect of domino.

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РЕЗИМЕ

Внатрешните конфликти коишто го одбележаа карактерот на пост-Студеновоениот период, претставуваа сериозна закана за меѓународната безбедност и регионалната стабилност. Сериозноста на закани се потврди преку нумеричкото проширување на конфликтите како и преку нивниот интензитет, доволно изразен да претставува сериозна закана. Конфузното политичко и безбедносно однесување во рамките на државите беше дооформено и со одговорот на одделни меѓународни актери кои по подолго манифестиро игнорирање на состојбите, подоцна/доцна реагираа преку безбедносно-воени механизми. Конфликтите во најголем обем добија спорадично внимание кое резултираше и во парцијални и краткорочни решенија. Затоа сликата за Југоисточна Европа или субрегионот на Групата 5 држави (кои се обидуваат барем со термилошки интервенции да го одбегнат негативниот контекст на Западен Балкан), десет години од почетокот на насилните конфликти, не е ниту постабилна ниту побезбедна. Дескрипцијата на регионот повторно е композиција на држави, нации и етницитети, но овојпат тие се разликуваат според достигнувањата во однос на транзицијата кон демократски општества, почитувањето на човековите права и правата на малцинствата, зрелоста на цивилното општество, како и според оддалеченоста од прагот на ЕУ и НАТО. Како и да е, чувството дека можноста да се превенираат конфликтите во регионот беше испуштена е сè уште присутно, како и чувството дека рамката на односи и иницијативи создадена со Пактот за Стабилност и договорите за Стабилизација и асоцијација не ќе може да ги разреши конфликтните јазли без јасна определба кон превентивна стратегија. Македонското искуство покажа дека превентивните стратегии треба да претставуваат значаен дел од националната надворешна политика и од системот на мултиетничка демократија. Таа ќе зависи од способноста да се управува со внатрешните политички, економски и социјални аспекти, и особено со мултиетничките односи како предуслов за внатрешната стабилност.