

Regional Governance: Lessons from European Involvement in Yugoslav Conflicts

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Introduction

The fragmentation of Yugoslavia has wrought extensive political and social change in the Balkans and Europe more generally. After the collapse of communism and the breakup of Yugoslavia, many Balkan countries have transformed their political systems. European states have attempted to engage and manage this breakup on an individual and collective basis. The involvement of the international community, and above all of EU countries adjacent to the Balkans, has greatly influenced processes of conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction in the region.

In this sense, it may be said that regional political transformations and attempts at governance building have been intimately tied to European initiatives, some of which have been successful, and some of which have not. This paper examines the political implications and features of European governance initiatives in the Balkans. The concept of ‘governance’ is defined here as the realization of democratization, economic development and reconstruction, and the provision of external and internal security on a national and regional basis.

European involvement in the Yugoslav conflict

In the Cold War era, Yugoslavia was useful to the West because it was something of a heretic in an Eastern European context. The West helped to prevent Yugoslavia from being absorbed into the Eastern bloc and developed a close relationship with it. Although liberal and nationalist political movements were severely oppressed under the one-party system, the West regarded Yugoslavia as more democratic and pro-Western than any other country in Eastern Europe. Yugoslavia took advantage of its geopolitical significance to pursue a non-aligned foreign policy during the Cold War. This non-aligned policy enabled Yugoslavia to play a buffer role in a politically and militarily divided Balkans.

In the process of the dismemberment of Yugoslavia after 1991, four conflicts occurred. The brief conflict in Slovenia in 1991 was followed by much more serious ethnic conflicts in Croatia (1991–1995), Bosnia (1992–1995), and Kosovo (1998–1999). The initial Western perception was that these Yugoslav conflicts should be resolved internally. Western countries would refrain from intervention in these conflicts as long

as their national interests were not adversely affected. The US, for its part, initially saw the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the ensuing crisis in Bosnia as a mainly European problem.

However, for West European countries, regional destabilization and substantial refugee flows were problems that could not be ignored. Leading European states initially held that the EC should be the principal external arbitrator in these conflicts. The Yugoslav conflicts were perceived as an opportunity to redefine the European Community's role within the changing European and international security environment.¹ Management of the breakup of Yugoslavia would prove to be an interesting test for the Common Foreign and Security Policy which was being advocated for an emerging European Union.

Following the end of the Cold War, the West differentiated between Central Europe (the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary) and the Balkans (Yugoslavia, Romania, and Bulgaria), which were held to have significant cultural and historical differences. This distinction was evident in the way in which democratic transitions in Central Europe have been supported, and in which conflict in the former Yugoslavia has been managed.²

While Central Europe unquestionably featured prominently in the strategic plans of European and transatlantic institutions, the place of the Balkans in these plans was not so clear. The US directed its efforts at preparing Central European states for membership of Euro-Atlantic structures. On the other hand, the EU took partial and in some cases contradictory action, due to changing policy preferences and internal problems. To borrow an argument from Bugajski, a new dividing line descended across Europe. Although not as imposing as the Iron Curtain, this line has nevertheless served to separate Central Europe from the Balkans. Post-Communist governments in several Balkan countries failed to transform their ossified economies and to institutionalize democratic pluralism. These failures confirmed the suspicions that lay behind the initial differentiation between the two regions.³

I will argue that early European governance initiatives exacerbated rather than removed the problems which led to the fragmentation of Yugoslavia and the 'Balkanization' of the region. I will focus on three issues: the process by which former Yugoslav republics were recognized, the imposition of sanctions against Yugoslavia, and the Vance–Owen peace plan for Bosnia.

The recognition of the former Yugoslav Republics

Without waiting for the judgment of the EC Arbitration Commission, in December 1991 the German government unilaterally recognized the independence of Croatia and

¹ S. Lucarelli, *Europe and the Breakup of Yugoslavia: A Political Failure in Search of Scholarly Explanation*, The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2000, pp. 119–120.

² M. Sadakata, 'Changes in Intervention Theory and the Fragmentation of Yugoslavia', paper at the Conference 'The South-East European Countries in Transition', Zagreb, 12–14 September 2002, p. 6.

³ J. Bugajski, 'Problems of Balkan Reconstruction', 4 August 1999, <http://www.csis.org/hill/ts9908obugajski.html>

Slovenia. The EC followed the German lead, and within a few days more than 50 states had accorded these two republics formal international recognition.⁴ In contrast to its recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, the EC denied legitimacy to Serbian and Albanian national aspirations for self-determination. When Serbs and Albanians protested by referring to their own rights to self-determination, their arguments were rejected by the EC as evidence of Greater Serbian and Greater Albanian sentiment and intent. Woodward rationalized German 'preventive recognition' by arguing that the fighting in Croatia was a result of Serbian and JNA aggression against Croatia's territory and its right to self-determination. Therefore, to deny international recognition of that right would have been to endorse the Serbian army's 'policy of conquest'. This would also have invited an escalation of violence.⁵

This act of preventative recognition precipitated the process of Yugoslavian fragmentation. The differentiation between Central Europe and the Balkans, to which I referred earlier, is clearly reflected in the logic of the European recognition of these two republics. Slovenia and Croatia belonged to Central Europe; the rest of Yugoslavia belonged in the Balkans.

The imposition of sanctions against Yugoslavia

Another factor that promoted Balkanization was sanctions against Yugoslavia by the Security Council. The Security Council imposed sanctions against Yugoslavia three times during the 1990s: an arms embargo in September 1991 in response to the war between Serbia and Croatia; comprehensive economic sanctions in May 1992 during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina; and an arms embargo in March 1998 in response to the Kosovo crisis.

However, the arms embargo of 1991 through 1995 was criticized for contributing to political and military chaos in Yugoslavia and for inadvertently conferring military advantage on Serbia. The embargo applied to all parties, regardless of their responsibility for the conflict, and had the effect of preserving a balance of military power that significantly favored the Serbs.⁶ On this point Cahill argues that United Nations sanctions were introduced only after war had broken out and was raging violently in Croatia, in September 1991. This had the effect of freezing a huge imbalance in favor of the Yugoslavian People's Army, most of whose weapons had passed into Serb hands as the country disintegrated.⁷

Apart from the issue of military advantage, these repeated sanctions dealt Yugoslavia a severe blow. However, the Milosevic regime was able to use the hardship

⁴ C. Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse: Causes, Courses and Consequences*, London: Hurst & Company, 1995, p. 150.

⁵ S. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*, Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1995, p. 183.

⁶ D. Cortright and G. Lopez, *The Sanction Decade: Assessing UN Strategies in the 1990s*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000, p. 65.

⁷ K. Cahill, *Preventive Diplomacy: Stopping Wars before They Start*, New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 155.

caused by the sanctions to mobilize popular support. Sanctions became a convenient excuse for every misfortune in Serbian society; everything could be blamed on the Western powers and on UN sanctions.⁸ As Woodward observed, sanctions may have increased opposition to Milosevic's policies, but they also strengthened the political position of hard-line nationalists, and not middle-class democrats. Ironically, the sanctions served to stimulate rather than contain Serb bellicosity. Sanctions had the opposite effects to those which were intended by the West.⁹

The Vance–Owen peace plan for Bosnia

The Yugoslavian peace process was regularly punctuated by partition plans suggesting that territory should be divided along ethnic lines, especially in the Bosnian case. The assumption of the Vance–Owen plan in January 1993 was premised on the *de facto* partitioning of Bosnia–Herzegovina. It divided Bosnia into provinces which were then allocated to a dominant ethnic group. The real intention of the Vance–Owen plan was to provide for the provincial segregation of the population along ethnic lines.¹⁰

Vance and Owen wanted to halt the bloodletting in Bosnia as quickly as possible. But, in doing so, they studiously ignored the contradiction, which their plan entailed, between the constitutional entrenchment of three ethnic groups as the state's governing actors, and the administrative fragmentation of the state into ten multi-ethnic provinces.¹¹ The Vance–Owen peace plan formalized this discrepancy between the three parties, and served to encourage greater confrontation in Bosnia. But, far from guaranteeing national coexistence, these European governance initiatives resulted in the maintenance and reinforcement of national confrontations.

These difficulties with European initiatives aside, one point should be made about the attitudes of the various Yugoslav parties to the conflict. It is clear that these parties lacked the resolve to reconcile their differences by themselves. It seemed that they willingly tried to invite external powers to externalize or internationalize the conflict. When the civil war arose in Croatia in 1991, Foreign Minister Loncar argued in front of the Security Council that '[s]hort of the assistance of the international community, and the European Community in particular, we cannot avert an economic collapse and social chaos.'¹²

The political leaders of Slovenia and Croatia intended to secede from the federation, and believed that it would be impossible to escape Serbia's political and military embrace without support from the international community. They intended both the internationalization of the conflict and their international recognition as independent states. In addition, they cast their appeal in terms of a right to national

⁸ Cortright and Lopez, *The Sanction Decade*, p. 76.

⁹ Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, p. 386.

¹⁰ W. Bert, *The Reluctant Superpower*, London: Macmillan, 1997, p. 193.

¹¹ L. Cohen, *Broken Bond: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition*, Colorado: Oxford Westview Press, 1995, p. 245.

¹² S/PV 3009, 25 September 1991.

self-determination, and condemned Serbia as the aggressor. After this, all parties to the conflict bickered constantly over the successive mediation and partition plans presented by the international community. As indicated above, the 'Balkanization' of European politics and the internationalization of the conflict by Yugoslav actors caused the military escalation of the Yugoslav conflicts.

The Stability Pact and Balkan governance: the adoption of the Stability Pact

As the former Yugoslavia disintegrated, the EU's initiatives and policies in the Balkans were most frequently formulated on a purely ad hoc basis. Although in 1996 the EU developed a Regional Approach (the Stabilization and Association Process), inviting Balkan countries to implement regional cooperation, this approach lacked both substance and concrete measures of support. Furthermore, the two key countries, Croatia and Yugoslavia, did not have the will to participate in this regional scheme. However, a turnaround in EU policy came in 1999, immediately after the NATO bombardment of Yugoslavia in the spring.¹³

The EU had seized on the Yugoslav conflicts in an attempt to demonstrate its ability to prosecute a European foreign and military policy, but it had failed twice. In Bosnia in 1995, as in Kosovo in 1999, initial European efforts resulted in the United States eventually taking control of negotiations and leading its NATO allies into conflict. According to Holbrooke, Dayton shook the leadership elite of post-Cold War Europe. Some European officials were embarrassed that US involvement had been necessary.¹⁴

In view of its failure to stabilize the Balkans throughout the 1990s, the international community, and in particular the EU, decided to elaborate a new, more comprehensive, and longer-term strategy for the Balkans. This led to the adoption of the 'Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe' in Cologne in June 1999, which was designed to assist the reconstruction efforts of the seven Southeast European countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania and Yugoslavia) which had been affected by the Kosovo conflict.¹⁵

The Stability Pact was put forward by countries from the Balkan region, and by major donor countries and international organizations such as the EU, World Bank, EBRD, EIB and the OECD. The Pact represented a political commitment by all the countries and international organizations concerned to a comprehensive, coordinated and strategic approach to the region. Crisis management would be replaced by preventive diplomacy, and there would be a focus on democratization, human rights, economic development and reconstruction, and internal and external security.

¹³ M. Uvalic, 'Integrating Southeast European Countries into the European Union: Problems and Prospects', Paper at the Conference 'The South-East European Countries in Transition', Zagreb, 12–14 September 2002, p. 2.

¹⁴ R. Holbrooke, *To End a War*, New York: Random House, 1998, p. 318.

¹⁵ Uvalic, 'Integrating Southeast European Countries', p. 4.

For European countries, this Pact was interpreted as a means to link all Balkan states to mainstream European political processes, and in particular to EU integration and the EU enlargement process. Briefly stated, it was an attempt to 'Europeanize' and 'de-Balkanize' the Balkans. However, it is necessary to note that the Stability Pact is not a product of dialogue; instead, it is an institution imposed on the Balkan states by the international community, or to be more precise, the leading extra-regional players – from Brussels by way of Berlin. It sprang from repeated failures on the part of the EU to deal with the mounting crisis in Kosovo, and with the earlier wars in Croatia and Bosnia.¹⁶

The objectives of the Stability Pact

The Stability Pact consists of three Working Tables; Working Table on Democratization and Human Rights, Working Table on Economic Reconstruction and Working Table on Security Issues. Working Table addresses issues such as: the rights of persons belonging to national minorities; the development of a free and independent media; the construction of civil society; the rule of law and law enforcement; institution building; efficient administration and good governance.¹⁷ The aim of the Stability Pact is to achieve lasting peace, prosperity and stability for Southeast Europe. EU countries came to realize that the controversies in the region not only threatened the stability of Southeast Europe but also, to a certain extent, threatened to affect wider processes of European integration, with additional implications for EU enlargement and the unity of NATO's southern command.

Bechev points out that the Stability Pact is clearly not the beginning of a region-building effort. It does, however, constitute considerable progress, in view of the fact that a critical actor (the EU) has acknowledged the fact that the Balkans need a comprehensive governance strategy, in order that the host of common and regional problems encountered since the collapse of communist regimes can be tackled.¹⁸ The West has shown its willingness to revise its Balkan strategy, from one of conflict-containment to one of post-conflict reconstruction, in which local initiatives are revitalized. As noted above, there had been earlier initiatives for regional cooperation in the Balkans, but they did not possess sufficient political weight or provide the same amount of financial aid as the Stability Pact.¹⁹

The Independent International Commission on Kosovo presents two interesting points associated with the concept and the implementation of the Stability Pact. First,

¹⁶ S. Vucetic, 'The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe as a Security Community-Building Institution', *Southeast European Politics* 2 (2, October 2001), p. 115.

¹⁷ Report: 'Stability Pact for South-eastern Europe', <http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/English/reports/stability-pact4bugajski-1-2-2000.html>

¹⁸ D. Bechev, 'Building Southeastern Europe: The Politics of International Countries in Transition: Cooperation in the Region', Paper at the Conference 'The South-East European Countries in Transition', Zagreb, 12–14 September 2002, p. 13.

¹⁹ 'Southeast European NGO and the Stability Pact', Conference Report, Sinaia (Romania), 19–22 May 2000.

it notes that the two processes of political stabilization and economic reconstruction should not be confused and 'are not necessarily convergent'. Second, and more important, there is an implicit contradiction in the attempt to combine strategies based on principles of regionalism and conditionality. The former stems from the reckoning that regional problems require regional solutions, but the logic of the EU enlargement process based on conditionality creates a variety of relationships and thus a new differentiation.²⁰

In launching the stability project and integrating the Balkans into the process of European integration, it is highly significant that the EU countries pay particular attention to the heterogeneity of the region. There is a necessary recognition of the fact that Balkan countries differ in terms their social stability, economic development and international and regional political status. Most of the countries in the Balkans are undergoing a difficult process of economic and social transformation, which is at different stages in different states. Democratic structures are insufficiently developed and the construction of a functioning civil society is at an early stage. Extensive social, economic and ethnic problems prevail.²¹

In these circumstances, the strategy of democratization outlined in the Stability Pact should not be the only option, and the European transitional model should not be straightforwardly adapted to the Balkans.²² The EU should recognize the differences that exist between transitional states across Central and Southeast Europe, but also recognize that it was mistaken to have differentiated so sharply between the two regions in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War.

From the Balkans to Southeast Europe

The most important aspect of the Stability Pact is the fact that the Balkans are finally perceived as a part of Europe. This is expressed in the Pact's consistent use of the term 'South Eastern Europe' instead of 'the Balkans'; the drafters of the Pact explicitly decided to shun the term 'the Balkans'. This was an attempt to transform perceptions that the region is 'backward', 'peripheral', or that it is a 'border' or 'transition zone' and promote the notion that the region is part of Europe.²³

So, the substitution of 'Balkans' with 'Southeastern Europe' is significant. Moreover, the principle of inclusiveness is further underlined by the use of the term 'countries of the region and their neighbors'. References to Europe and to European integration make it clear that the Stability Pact is intended to be something of a springboard towards the ultimate goal of European integration for the region.²⁴ The term 'Southeastern Europe' is positive, compared with the popular

²⁰ The Independent International Commission on Kosovo, *Kosovo Report*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 253.

²¹ <http://www.cds.bg/publications/SEecoop/two>

²² T. Carothers, 'The End of Transition Paradigm', *Journal of Democracy*, 13 (1, 2002), p. 7.

²³ Vucetic, 'The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe', p. 112.

²⁴ Bechev, 'Building Southeastern Europe', p. 14.

negative connotations possessed by the term 'Balkans' and reflected in terms such as 'Balkanization'. But the term also contains the promise of a brighter future. EU strategies to establish peace and promote regional democratization entail redefinitions of what the region is. The term 'Southeastern Europe' has been introduced to convey the idea of an integrated European region.²⁵

Europeanization and Balkan governance: democracy and democratization

As the Eastern bloc collapsed, considerable differences surfaced between those countries which had been a part of it. However, the vast majority of them shared the common aspiration of joining the EU. The EU functions as a reference point for the modernization of aspiring transitional candidate members. Europeanization has become a series of operations leading to systemic convergence through the process of democratization, marketization, stabilization and institutional inclusion.²⁶ In the next section I would like to examine the European concepts of democratization and civil society in the context of Balkan societies.

The Report of Working Table on Democratization and Human Rights states that the key objectives of the project are twofold: the promotion and, where necessary, rehabilitation of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society, and the development of democratic citizenship. It also emphasizes that genuine democratic society entails – contrary to the communist heritage – a strong culture of respect for human rights and the rule of law and the free expression of opinions and pursuit of personal and common objectives by citizens, individually and collectively. In a democratic society, protection of ethnic communities and minorities is not regarded as a sectarian pursuit but as a matter of concern for society as a whole.²⁷

Generally speaking, the transitions of post-communist Balkan states after 1990 were, compared with Central European states, marked by slower rates of social reform. In this region, either the former Communist regime, on the one hand, or radical reformists and extreme nationalists, on the other, were more likely to have influence on public processes. These specifics brought about delayed and unsteady implementation of reform, and were reflected in the substantial influence of organized crime, resulting in a high social price for transition.²⁸ The important point here is that the delayed and uneven reform process is not necessarily taking these states in the direction of democratization, as is suggested by the transition paradigm; these

²⁵ Ibid., p. 1.

²⁶ L. Demetropoulou, 'Europe and the Balkans: Membership Aspiration, EU Involvement and Europeanization Capacity in South Eastern Europe', *Southeast European Politics* 3 (2–3, November 2002), p. 89.

²⁷ Report: 'Stability Pact for South-eastern Europe', <http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/English/reports/stability-pact4bugajski-1-2-2000.html>

²⁸ <http://www.cds.bg/publications/SEEEcoop/two>

states are not necessarily progressing down the charted path from authoritarianism to democratization.²⁹

According to the objectives of the Stability Pact, the EU and other international institutions seek to implement democratic transition projects in Southeast Europe. But Chandler argues that according to European democratization narratives, the Bosnian conflict was, above all, a conflict between two value systems. One system values civil society, and the other values ethnic division. From a European democratization perspective, the vote for nationalist parties provided evidence of the inability of the Bosnian electorate to accept democracy and the necessary associated values of civil society.³⁰

Chandler goes further and claims that the result of democratization in Bosnia appears to be divisive. Negotiation and compromise between the Bosnian elites has been virtually precluded from the outset by the imposition of a predetermined external policy agenda. In reality, the democratization process has removed policy-making capacity from both the state and its constituent entities.³¹ Democratization is linked to international institutional mechanisms, which ensures that international administration will be prolonged for as long as it is in the interests of the major international powers to use Bosnia as a model of international cooperation. According to Chandler, democratization in Bosnia would appear to have little to do with democracy as conventionally understood.³²

Papic criticizes the democratization process from a different perspective.³³ He claims that international aid creates the risk that Bosnia will become a dependent society. Additionally, he notes a fundamental change in the consciousness and mindset of the leaders and the population. Just as in socialist times the all-powerful state and party were expected to solve all the problems, so, today, the international community is expected to fulfil this role. It is expected to resolve all problems, while local energies remain fettered, and the leaders and population passive. Bosnian society has become estranged from democratization as well as democracy under the stability project.

Europeanization and Balkan governance: the construction of civil society

Democratization aside, the construction of civil society is identified as the main objective of the Stability Pact. One of the major challenges in the aftermath of conflict in the former Yugoslavia is to reconstruct (construct) civil society. It is often suggested that the conflicts which have split Yugoslavia apart over the past decade can to some extent be explained by the absence of civil society. The logical conclusion which follows

²⁹ Carothers, 'The End of Transition Paradigm', pp. 6–9.

³⁰ D. Chandler, *Bosnia: Faking Democracy after Dayton*, 2nd edn, London: Pluto Press, 2000, pp. 28–30.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 58, 189.

³³ Z. Papic, 'Bosnia and Herzegovina: From Reconstruction towards Sustainable Development', *Forum Bosnae*, 15/02, International Forum Bosnia, 2002, pp. 151–154.

from this premise is that the construction of civil society is seen as a primary means by which to prevent future conflict.

Llamazares and Crosier note that the term 'civil society' has now become a panacea for resolution of all the problems of the former Yugoslav countries, and that non-governmental organizations have also appropriated this terminology to gather support for their grassroots approaches to societal reconstruction.³⁴ Moreover, it goes without saying that local communities should assume responsibility for the construction of civil society. However, international reconstruction aid for the development of civil society often does not allow for the genuine assumption of responsibility at the grassroots level. Instead, grassroots community organizations either turn themselves into efficiently organized operations that are capable of responding to the agenda defined by international donors, or they die out. Instead of serving the needs of the community, they come to serve the needs of their donors.³⁵

The Stability Pact fully recognizes the important role of civil society in the democratization process. The participating states and the interested parties and organizations associated with the Stability Pact adopted 'The Stability Pact Declaration on NGO–Government Partnership in South Eastern Europe'. This declaration acknowledged that regional NGOs and civil initiatives play key roles in the processes of democratization and peace-building, and in the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as the development of cross-border cooperation in South Eastern Europe. This helps to carry forward the spirit and values of the Stability Pact.³⁶

However, NGOs in the region face difficulties such as: the absence of a strategy to mobilize civil actors, a lack of time and money, a lack of transparency in political structures, and a lack of communication with potential partners and donors as well as with state authorities.³⁷ As Papic claims, international institutions have to consider the need to reconstruct Bosnian society at the local, grass root level, and the need to build non-state structures, non-governmental organizations and other organizations.³⁸

It is sometimes assumed that European political concepts are alien to Balkan society. However, it should be noted that the history of the region shows that it has been possible in the past for all members of society to live together peacefully regardless of ethnicity. A further important point is that Bosnian society could never be reconstructed from the top down, but only from the bottom up. Without such an approach, there will be no progress with regard to the functioning of state institutions nor in the mind-set of the leaders, the population will not change, and

³⁴ M. Llamazares and D. Crosier, 'The Myth of Civil Society: Approaches to Societal Reconstruction in Southeastern Europe', *Higher Education Europe*, 24 (4, 1999), p. 554.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 555.

³⁶ Special coordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, 'Stability Pact Declaration on NGO–Government Partnership in South Eastern Europe', 27 October 2000.

³⁷ 'Southeast European NGO and the Stability Pact', Conference Report, Sinaia (Romania), 19–22 May 2000.

³⁸ Papic, 'Bosnia and Herzegovina', pp. 153–154.

there will be no successful transition towards market economics, democracy and civilized society.³⁹ Attempts to create democratization or construct civil society from above or through international organizations are doomed to failure from the outset. This imperative for local democracy is evident in Kosovo; the nature of the non-violent resistance movement in Kosovo under Rugova was essentially democratic. This ensured the conditions under which citizens could be empowered to participate in a truly democratic fashion.⁴⁰

Post-Milosevic Balkan governance: Serbian politics

It is widely acknowledged that no lasting solution to the political problems of Southeast Europe can be developed without including Serbia. The Stability Pact recognizes that lasting peace will only become possible with the inclusion of Yugoslavia, and that Yugoslavia will be welcome as a full and equal participant in the Pact following a political settlement in Kosovo.⁴¹ The breakup of Yugoslavia and the associated nationalist fragmentation obviously constituted the major impediment to regional cooperation during the 1990s. Government and ruling forces in Yugoslavia and Serbia were subject to international isolation, due to their involvement in past wars.

After the fall of Milosevic in the presidential elections of September 2000, the EU willingly accepted Serbia as a full participant in the stabilization process. However, Serbia's transition was likely to be difficult from the beginning. The Serbian leadership was hardly monolithic. The Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) was composed of 18 different parties and forces, and its unity eroded with time, making the implementation of a coherent and effective reform program difficult. The ruling coalition fell apart in mid-2001 when Serbian Prime Minister Djindjic determined that Milosevic should be handed over to the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague. Djindjic had come to realize that democratic and economic reforms in Serbia were possible only with the support of the United States and the European Union, which were pressing hard for Milosevic's handover. On the other hand, Yugoslav President Kostunica, for his part, wanted to see Milosevic sentenced by a Serbian court.⁴²

These divisions within the Serbian ruling coalition weakened the government's effectiveness and ability to develop a coherent program of economic and political reform. In February 2003 the Yugoslav federation was divided and transformed into a new confederation. The resultant political crisis culminated in the assassination of Djindjic in March. This dealt a serious blow to reform efforts in the Balkan states and endangered an already fragile regional stability.

After the fall of Milosevic, Serbia's size and relative regional importance has put it in a position to receive favorable treatment from the international community, and

³⁹ Ibid., p. 154.

⁴⁰ Llamazares and Crosier, 'The Myth of Civil Society', p. 557.

⁴¹ P. Auerswald and D. Auersward, *The Kosovo Conflict: A Diplomatic History through Documents*, The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1999, p. 1114.

⁴² Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Balkan Report, 7 (8, 28 March 2003).

this has already led to some resentment in neighboring states. Bosnia and Croatia both complained that Serbia quickly gained the benefits of international recognition without having to pay the price that they themselves had to pay. The emotional and political enthusiasm of the international community for Serbia had some practical consequences for its neighbors as well, here the concern was that political support and economic aid had been directed to Serbia at the expense of other states. This was most strongly felt in Montenegro and Kosovo, where political movements which received international support as part of a general campaign against Milosevic were being abandoned now that he was out of power.⁴³

Post-Milosevic Balkan governance: the status of Kosovo and Serbia

The future status of Kosovo is a crucial issue that will have important ramifications for Balkan governance. If Kosovo becomes independent then it must be embedded in a broader, regional settlement. The future political status of Kosovo, where Albanians constitute 90 per cent of the population, will have a considerable impact on the actions of the Albanian independence movement in Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro. The emergence of a Greater Albania may be more of a threat to regional stability than the emergence of a Greater Serbia. This potential problem should also be resolved within the context of broader Balkan governance.

On this critical issue the Independent International Commission on Kosovo proposes conditional independence for Kosovo. It argues that this is the only viable position within the context of a stability pact for all the small states in the region, so that they can develop their infrastructure, trading ties, and political and strategic partnerships within an enduring framework of peace.⁴⁴ The Kosovo Commission regards the Stability Pact highly, as a crucial step towards the creation of such a framework. The Commission also points out that it would be foolhardy to ignore Serbia or to refuse to seek to engage it first in dialogue and then in negotiations over the future of Kosovo. Peace in the Balkans ultimately depends on the integration of Serbia into a regional stability pact for the region. Kosovo's external security is critically dependent on the establishment of a *modus vivendi* between Kosovo and Serbia.⁴⁵

However, under present political circumstances it looks extremely difficult to engage in dialogue with the existing Serb regime. In this context, it is important that all parties to the Stability Pact show leadership to inaugurate political dialogue. Moreover, to accomplish the main goals of the Stability Pact such as economic, political and social stability, it is important to ensure democratic decision making, with the involvement of all stakeholders from all Balkan countries.

⁴³ E. Gordy, 'Serbia's Bulldozer Revolution: Conditions and Prospects', *Southeast European Politics* 1 (2, December 2000), pp. 87–88.

⁴⁴ Independent International Commission on Kosovo, *Kosovo Report*, pp. 274–275.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 275–276.

An approach of this kind would build on existing regional relationships and on the desire of all Balkan peoples for a closer relationship with Europe. Nobody can deny the crucial role that Serbia must play in Balkan governance. Crafting this kind of settlement will require that the various political processes underway in the former Yugoslavia, including talks on Kosovo's final status, on Macedonia, and on Bosnia, be brought into one unified approach.

Towards an indigenization of the Balkans

So far I have outlined EU involvement in transitional Balkan governance within the context of the Stability Pact project, and pointed out some problems regarding democratization and the construction of civil society in the region. In this final section, I would like to discuss the prospects of the Stability Pact and of Balkan governance in general in the near future.

The international missions in Bosnia and Kosovo are similar. In both instances, international agencies sought to mitigate escalating human disasters, to prevent the regional spillover of armed conflict, and to implant an international security force to facilitate stabilization and reconstruction. While Bosnia has in effect evolved into an international 'protectorate', Kosovo is emerging as an international 'ward'.

In Bosnia, international agencies are 'protecting' Bosnian statehood and upholding the country's territorial and institutional integrity. In Kosovo, the stated objective of international agencies was to sustain Kosovo within Yugoslavia, despite the demands of the Albanian majority for independence and statehood. In this sense, Kosovo can be considered an international 'ward', in that the eventual objective is to return the province to Yugoslav jurisdiction after ensuring that a sufficient measure of democratic development and 'self-determination' has taken root in both Kosovo and Serbia.

Serious problems have surfaced with the imposition of an international mandate in both Bosnia and Kosovo. This is evident in a number of areas, including an inadequate provision of reconstruction resources; a failure to generate sufficient indigenous capacity for economic and civic development; an insufficient number of international police officers to provide security for the majority of civilians; turf battles between international organizations; an inability to eliminate the power of local ethno-nationalist warlords in parts of Bosnia; and the creation of deliberative councils without any genuine decision-making powers in Kosovo.⁴⁶

It may be said that in Bosnia ethnic conflicts were imposed by nationalist leaderships and exacerbated by international intervention after the collapse of Yugoslavian communism. Nonetheless, it remains the case that Bosnian society has not grasped the opportunity for ethnic reconciliation. The international mission to establish stability and democratization in Bosnia is far from consolidated.

On the other hand, the Kosovo Albanians were in no mood to forgive their Serb neighbors, many of whom were directly complicit in acts of brutality and expulsions

⁴⁶ J. Bugajski, 'Balkan in Dependence?', *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2000, pp. 178–179.

during the war. Within Kosovo and the wider region it is now generally, if reluctantly, recognized that there are almost no circumstances in which the Kosovo Albanians would be willing to submit themselves to Yugoslav or Serb sovereignty.⁴⁷

The current problems of Balkan governance can be traced back to the piecemeal and top-down approach the international community brought to the region shortly after the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991. Diplomatic interventions selectively targeted individual Yugoslav republics or provinces. Until recently, there was no comprehensive blueprint for the provision of security on a regional basis. This fire-fighting approach sometimes succeeded in halting conflict. But it also set the stage for other rounds of fighting elsewhere, and failed to produce truly stable outcomes which were capable of surviving in the absence of an international political and military presence.

Although international organs have clearly ensured security in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, they have also been accused of creating quasi-colonial bureaucracies (e.g. the Office of UN High Representative), of favoring foreign over indigenous organizations, of duplicating efforts between different international agencies, and of wasting reconstruction and democratization resources.⁴⁸ Given such drawbacks, constructive steps for promoting indigenous institutions that can give structure and content to democracy and self-determination must be considered. In order for international players to be successful in their democratizing endeavors, they must aim to maximize local initiatives, increase support for the most civic-oriented political parties, media networks, and non-governmental organizations, as well as avoiding bureaucratization, waste, and duplication in funding and training.⁴⁹

Confronted with the difficulties inherent in Balkan governance, we have to pursue a more indigenous approach. As Bugajski suggests, the indigenous approach should be introduced into the stability project. According to Bugajski, without more emphasis on 'indigenization', democratization, the marginalization of extremists, and structural economic reform, long-term security could be seriously undermined.⁵⁰ The indigenous approach need not entail isolation or segregation, which would surely entail a re-Balkanization of the region. On the contrary, the indigenous approach seeks an appropriate balance, in both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, between international engagement and indigenous self-dependence. As I suggested above, the EU and other international organizations should re-examine the meaning and relevance of European concepts such as democratization and civil society, in the context of the history and social development of the Balkan countries.

Over and above that, international organizations have to cultivate civic actors to participate in the decision-making process, and implement stability projects for the democratization and reconstruction of civil society. For their part, Balkan peoples have

⁴⁷ M. Buckley and S. Cummings, *Kosovo: Perceptions of War and its Aftermath*, London: Continuum, 2001, pp. 26–27.

⁴⁸ Bugajski, 'Balkan in Dependence?', p. 185.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

to boldly tackle the social inertia inherited from communist regimes, and consciously and willingly participate in the democratization of their own societies.

Viewed in this light, the indigenous approach can be regarded as the only means by which to put the governance of the Balkans on a sound footing. As Carothers claims, transitional countries will not necessarily move steadily along the assumed path from opening and breakthrough to consolidation. Above all, Balkan countries have not made a straightforward transition from authoritarianism to democracy. Almost all Balkan countries belong in Carothers' gray zone, characterized either by feckless pluralism or dominant-power politics.⁵¹ To consolidate a genuine transition to democracy, Balkan countries and international institutions should recognize that the indigenous approach provides an effective and appropriate basis for democratization and the cultivation of indigenous Balkan governance.

⁵¹ Carothers, 'The End of Transition Paradigm', pp. 10–12.