

VISIONS FOR MACEDONIA'S SECURITY

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Security events in Macedonia made the winner those analysts who were guessing that Macedonia will face the same fate as other former Yugoslav republics and made looser those who were thinking that Macedonia would have made significant progress towards integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures, without armed conflict.

I will try briefly to number some of the particular issues that affect the Macedonia's security, which include, integration into Euro-Atlantic security structures; regional and European security architecture; compatibility of the work of the international organisations in the region; the disintegration process that is still going on in the region; the baggage and the legacy of Milosevic era; de-balkanisation of South East Europe; security sector reform and balancing state and human security.

Euro-Atlantic Dimension of Macedonia's Security

Macedonia has been one of the best partners of NATO in the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme since it joined to the programme in 1995. Actually, the events that has been happening in Macedonia, is not only Macedonia's challenge, but also NATO's challenge. Macedonia in 2001, with its new security situation, has been the first example for NATO in dealing with its partners in really operational level. All the things that have been done so far in the framework of the PfP programme, has been in the theory and exercise level. Macedonia is the first case, where NATO has put the theories of PfP in the operational level. The case of Macedonia has created model how one partner country can use the opportunities offered by Article 4 of the Washington Treaty of 1949, i.e. the right to consult with NATO when a partner country face a threat to its security, territorial integrity and sovereignty.

The recent events in the country have particularly been a test for Macedonia's commitment to the strengthening of democracy as well as its determination for the integration into Euro-Atlantic security structures. It is also a test for the capacities of the state institutions to deal with the problem. NATO is a positive factor in the region and the solution to the problem of "hard security" as well as "soft security" problems of the country. All the problems in Macedonia started from the soft security, and later it turned to hard security problems. There is a resilient desire across a broad spectrum of political and civil society in Macedonia to join EU and NATO. Macedonia's desire to join NATO remains strong.

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Macedonian security is part of broader Southeast European as well as continent-wide European security architecture. We have to be aware that all the issues that are relevant to the crisis in Macedonia, have regional dimension. It is important to understand that the recent fighting in Macedonia is not an isolated event, but rather part of larger regional problems. Therefore, there must be regional response to the problems. All the issues are complex, therefore requires comprehensive response.

Interlocking Institutions in the Field

The international community is there in Macedonia: NATO, OSCE, UN and EU, and they have given an unprecedented support to Macedonia. However, there is a need to have complementarity among the efforts of the international organisations. There is a need to avoid duplication and make the efforts of the international community interoperable with each other. OSCE, NATO, EU and UN have significant roles to play. No one of these can resolve all the problems of Macedonia and South East Europe alone. There is also a perceived decline of the commitment of the international community to the region. This should not give way to a loss of momentum for solving the security problems of the region.

Disintegration Process

Disintegration process that is going on in the region as well as the final status problems of Kosovo and Montenegro, greatly affect the Macedonian security and stability. Macedonia has not been acting differently from the international community in these issues. It has accepted the passports of Kouchner and there is also a growing consensus across ethnic groups that, from a Macedonian security standpoint, Kosovo's final status should be resolved and there is need to see Kosovo prosperous, open, and democratic. Whatever Kosovo's final status: protectorate, republic, full independence, conditional independence, etc, it is in Macedonia's interest that Kosovo be peaceful, prosperous, and governed democratically. In the words of the Secretary General of NATO, George Robertson,

“The Alliance did not come to Kosovo to support any individual ethnic group, be they Albanian, Serb, or any other. NATO came to Kosovo to defend a principle -- that ethnic violence must not succeed. That is why we came to the defence of the Albanian community in Kosovo. It is in defence of this same principle that we oppose all efforts to destabilise the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.”

Legacy of Milosevic

The legacy of Milosevic is still alive in the region. The security problems of the region have not suddenly been solved by the end of Milosevic era. Nationalist sentiment remains

pervasive; sovereignty issues remain unsettled; tens of thousands of refugees cannot return home; and war criminals remain unpunished. Political and other institutions throughout the region are fragile. Corruption is endemic, and the evidence of economic failure is everywhere. These issues require comprehensive and forward-looking approach to the current situation. Conflict prevention is much better than crisis management.

Security Sector Reform

At the heart of the regional problems has also been the inability to create an accountable and effective security sector. Without radical security sector reform (SSR), the prospects for successful economic development in South East Europe will remain poor. SSR is therefore the most immediate and important development challenge facing the countries of the region. The underlying causes of instabilities in SEE include weak or ineffective government structures, political instability and economic impoverishment, exacerbated by environmental degradation, and lack of appropriate coping mechanisms. Conflict in turn further reduces the possibilities for economic and political development, contributing to a downwards spiral in which insecurity, criminalisation and underdevelopment are mutually reinforcing. Ineffective security sector is also a result of inadequate resources. Budgetary crises can result, for example, in governments being unable to provide adequate financing for police pay, encouraging corruption, declining morale and low productivity. The security sector reform includes also two important issues: demilitarisation and reintegration of former (and current) combatants and the problem of small arms and light weapons.

More than a million soldiers and other fighters have been demobilised and more than a million people have found their way back to their countries and/or homes in South East Europe in 1990s. Addressing the underlying causes of violent conflict requires a broader and longer-term process of peace building, including the reintegration of war-affected people into society. Full reintegration is a complex process and calls for effective address of social, political and economic needs. The lack of physical security as a result of the violent actions of the former combatants has become a major obstacle in the post-conflict reconstruction projects in Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosovo, and now in Macedonia. At the regional level, many ex-combatants have been drafted again by a new military force to fight in a new conflict and they exercise considerable influence in the post-conflict politics of SEE. Developing civilian management and oversight of the security forces, achieving transparency in military budgeting and attaining sustainable levels of military spending are all challenges confronted by the regional countries.

Tackling the small arms and light weapons diffusion as conflict prevention strategy, is a challenge for south Balkan countries. There are some million of not-exploded mines and big reserves for small arms and light weapons. As claimed by the recent report of ICG, approximate figures circulating in Balkan and Western ministries for the totals of weapons in Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo are as follows: 280,000 Kalashnikovs, one million anti-tank missiles, 3.1 million hand-grenades, one billion rounds of ammunition, and 24 million machine guns.

Balancing State and Human Security

The end of the post-cold war, as claimed by Stratfor, in terms of both regional and domestic politics, have sharpened the debate on what should be the focus of efforts to promote security: is it the security of the state or human security? How the pursuit of state and human security can be balanced? Which of the two should take precedence? The challenge, therefore, is to forge a consensus on balancing the pursuit of state and human security. It has been considered "the most pressing security challenge of the twenty-first century." National governments and institutions must preserve and extend the progress made in securing states against the external threat of war while finding ways to safeguard people against internal threats of repression and gross deprivation of basic human needs. Maintaining state security is as important as promoting human security. The former is an essential prerequisite of the latter, which in turn provides the foundation for national and regional stability. Human security needs regional security in the sense that the former can only be promoted in an environment of inter-state peace and cooperation. At the same time, regional security can only be sustained if the constituent states experience domestic peace built on secured communities - except when the sources of threats to national security are policy-driven.

In conclusion, above-mentioned dimensions of the Macedonian security make the issue of Macedonian security very complex. Therefore, the stability of Macedonia is the security of the region of South East Europe and its stability is the security of neighbouring countries of Albania, Bulgaria, FRY (and Kosovo), and Greece.

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