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Approaching or Avoiding Cooperative Security?

The Western Balkans in the Aftermath
of the Kosovo Settlement Proposal
and the Riga Summit

14th Workshop of the Study Group
„Regional Stability in South East Europe”



Study Group Information





FPF Consortium of Defense Academies
and Security Studies Institutes



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Foreword

Predrag Jureković

The key issue for a peaceful development in the Western Balkans is the question of how to strengthen regional co-operation in this post-warspace, in order to achieve the aim of co-operative security. Five years ago the Regional Stability in South East Europe Study Group of the PfP Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes carried out a workshop on a similar subject that took place also in Reichenau, in Lower Austria, and in which especially the results of the South Eastern Europe Stability Pact reached then were analyzed. The conclusion at that time was that regional co-operation initiatives like the Stability Pact were useful, but the group members came also to the conclusion that the involvement of the international community for a longer period is necessary to put life into them.

What has really changed in the last five years regarding regional co-operation? Does the renaming of the Stability Pact into Regional Co-operation Council, which is planned to be done in early 2008, mean that the regional actors are finally aware of their responsibility for contributing to a peaceful and co-operative security environment? Or is this only wishful thinking on the side of the international community, which wants the countries of the region at last to become a part of the European mainstream? What will, what should be the role of the international community in the regional stabilisation process in the next years?

Are we near to reaching the end of the cycle of international involvement, in which the international role has changed from terminator of war to a peacekeeping role and finally to an advisor's role that gives support in economic and political reforms? Or is it a naïve and illusory idea to expect the Western Balkans in the medium term of becoming an area characterized by well-developed political, social, economic and security relations, seeing that some conflicts like the Kosovo case still have the

potential to destabilize part of the region? In which fields does co-operation work? In which areas is there necessity for improvement?

New dynamics in regard to the stabilisation process have characterized developments in South East Europe in late 2006 and in current 2007. Some of these dynamics linked to Euro-Atlantic integration have the potential to increase regional actors' ability and readiness to strengthen co-operative structures, especially if we look at the positive signals coming from the last NATO Summit in Riga. On the other side dynamics linked to state-building issues could call forth new nationalist tendencies among regional actors and cause serious setbacks in regard to the peace processes.

Beside the difficult Kosovo situation the continuation of the semi-protectorate in Bosnia and Herzegovina evoke critical questions related to regional stability in general and especially to the goal of reaching co-operative security.

Can the perspective for the Western Balkan countries of becoming members of the EU and NATO really guarantee the establishment of self-sustained co-operative relations, having in mind that especially EU membership for most of the Balkan countries will remain a long term goal? Without doubt the EU's integration instruments influence the decisions and behaviour of the politicians in the region, but what is really its influence on the process of reconciliation, which, due to its deep social implications, is much more complicated than the normalisation of political relations? This question seems to be of great importance, due to the fact that without reconciliation, sustained co-operative relations between the former belligerents are unthinkable.

Are there any other incentives outside the Euro-Atlantic integration processes or motives that can be found in the Western Balkan countries themselves, which could serve as catalysts for strengthening regional co-operation? Or do we have to state that the integration of the whole region in the Euro-Atlantic institutions is a *conditio sine qua non* for establishing co-operative security in this part of Europe?

This long list of questions was the guide through the Study Group workshop entitled “Approaching or Avoiding Co-operative Security? – The Western Balkans in the Aftermath of the Kosovo Settlement Proposal and the Riga Summit”, which took place in Reichenau, 11-13 May 2007. This publication includes the presentations and results of the workshop.

The book opens with general reflections about the main topic. Such an opening makes it easier to achieve a common understanding of concepts and terms. Furthermore it supports the setting up of a bridge between theoretical considerations and the political reality on the ground. In this special case different views on the concept of co-operative security are presented, which is here meant in a very broad sense and refers to a comprehensive understanding of security that beside military and police aspects considers also social, political and economic co-operation.

Prof. Denis Sandole from the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at the George Mason University, who is a long-time member of the working group and a specialist of conflict management, in his article focuses on the general challenges of co-operative security in a post-war-space. Heinz Vetschera tries to explain how co-operative security can be applied under the specific conditions in South East Europe. He is a senior researcher from the National Defence Academy in Vienna, who according to his engagement in many OSCE-led missions has the longest practical Balkan experience among the Austrians dealing with the stabilisation process.

Two former parties of conflict cannot find solutions to their problems and develop co-operative relations, if they are not able as a first step to agree on constructive negotiations, in which both sides try to give proper attention to the fears and interests of the other negotiating party. Recent Balkan history and especially the last Kosovo negotiations have provided a lot of evidence for this thesis. Prof. Plamen Pantev, the Bulgarian co-chair of the Study Group and director of the Sofia-based Institute for Security and International Studies in his article deals with this very important element of co-operative security.

Part 2 analyses the unfinished processes of state-building, which many analysts regard as the biggest challenge or obstacle for establishing stronger co-operative relations in the region. The two cases considered are Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. For both, the war period and in the Kosovo case also the pre-war period with its negative consequences for interethnic relations still have a very strong impact on the state-building processes. The stability of both depends very much on their relationship with their neighbours. The internal developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and especially in Kosovo can have an impact on the stability of the neighbouring countries. What distinguishes Bosnia and Herzegovina from Kosovo is its clear political status as an internationally recognized state, while the Kosovo status process has yet not been completed.

The authors deal with the impact of the Kosovo status process and its probable outcome on Kosovo's and Serbia's stability as well as on Albanian-Serb relations and secondly with the capability of Belgrade and Prishtina/Priština to contribute to co-operative security in the region under such difficult political conditions. Jolyon Naegele from the UN administration in Kosovo (UNMIK), Lulzim Peci from the Kosovar Institute for Policy Research, Dušan Janjić from the Belgrade-based Forum for Ethnic Relations and John Erath from the US State Department focus on the Kosovo developments from different corners.

Bosnia and Herzegovina lies in the centre of the Western Balkans and could therefore play an important role in enhancing regional co-operation. But still, important elements for becoming a consolidated state are missing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which would be necessary to make it a regional player. Denisa Saraljić-Maglić from the Foreign Policy Initiative in Sarajevo and Matthew Rhodes from the Marshall Center in their articles approach the question of how Bosnia and Herzegovina as an unfinished state can contribute to co-operative security in the region.

Part 3 deals with the question of how the international and regional efforts to institutionalize regional co-operation as well as the dynamics in

the Euro-Atlantic integration processes could influence the stabilisation process.

Franz-Lothar Altmann from the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin in his article gives information at first-hand on the transformation of the Stability Pact. It will change from a conflict prevention and confidence building initiative, which has been partly driven by non-regional actors, to a regionally-owned Co-operation Council that should be fully operational by early 2008. Will this evolution of the Stability Pact really mean that the Western Balkan countries will take more responsibility for their region, or is there a danger of sticking in personal changes at the top level without enhancing regional ownership?

What do NATO's strong signals sent at its Riga summit to the Western Balkan countries mean concretely for the security co-operation in the region? Are Bosnia and Herzegovina's, Montenegro's and Serbia's accession to PfP a vehicle to improve the security relations in the region? If yes, what are the concrete benefits? Or does membership in PfP serve solely the security interest of the individual Balkan countries, which will use it only for pushing forward the modernization of their armed forces? How will the fact that some Western Balkan countries could become much earlier members of NATO than of EU influence the relations between EU and those countries? What could be its consequences for EU's and NATO's co-operation in the region? How could the different speeds in the two integration processes affect regional co-operation? Amadeo Watkins from the UK Defence Ministry and Sandro Knežović from the Zagreb-based Institute for International Relations try to approach these complicated issues linked to Euro-Atlantic integration.

The human security dimension of co-operative security is the focus of part 4. As it was emphasized earlier co-operation between former parties of conflict lacks substance, if its spirit does not reach the ordinary citizens. Real co-operation in a post-conflict-space seems not to be possible without starting the process of reconciliation. The articles of part 4 show how strongly the legacy of war still influences the fragile process of reconciliation. Sonja Biserko from the Helsinki Committee for Human

Rights in Serbia writes about justice as a precondition for co-operation, an issue which has come stronger to public mind after the disputed judgement of the International Court of Justice in case of Bosnia and Herzegovina's genocide suit against Serbia.

Dragana Klincov from the Human Rights Department of the OSCE mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina in her article provides information about the regional efforts regarding refugee return, which is another topic that deeply concerns reconciliation. Nina Dobrković from the Serbian European Movement summarizes the human security aspects by presenting in her article a broad picture of the relevant interethnic, cultural and economic challenges for establishing long lasting co-operation in the region.

The book closes with a summary of the workshop results, which is provided by Frederic Labarre from the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston.

We hope that our discussion will engage the reader in further thoughts and understanding on the aforementioned topics. All help with the booklet, whether it is large or small, is greatly appreciated and we are indebted to everyone who has contributed their time and effort to its publication, especially Mag. Ernst Felberbauer and Frederic Labarre for proof-reading the texts.

Welcome Speech

Johann Pucher

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear friends and partners within the PfP Consortium,

It is an outstanding pleasure for me to welcome you here on behalf of the Austrian Ministry of Defence at the 14th Workshop of the PfP Consortium Study Group on “Regional Stability in South East Europe”.

Being here in Reichenau at this occasion is a *deja vue* for me. I was here as participant several times already. Now, having taken over the position as head of the Directorate for Security Policy in the MOD, I expect that through this workshop I can even deepen the experience I could gain up to now: be it as Director RACVIAC, or more recently as member of the EU Presidency team working on Western Balkan issues.

I recognise many well-known and well-respected faces representing the main international organisations being active in the Western Balkans. As a co-organiser, we, equally, if not more important, appreciate the presence of representatives and experts from the countries in the region.

A warm welcome also to many friends I personally have had the privilege to meet over the past years during my engagement in the region, both in my capacity within the Austrian Ministry of Defence as well as before in Zagreb. I am glad to see you here again in Reichenau.

This house has gained high importance for this gathering. It is the traditional meeting venue for the workshops of the South East European Regional Stability Study Group. Through this Study Group, Austria supports research and policy coordination between security-political institutions in the Western Balkans.

Let me share some more general thoughts with you. Austria has been a member of PfP since 1995. We are proud to be considered as one of the most active partner countries. Austria has been participating in a variety of PfP activities. I want to mention our IFOR participation during the first year of the AUT PfP membership already, followed by SFOR, now KFOR. As we still see the necessity for a well balanced military presence in the region, AUT has committed herself to take over even more responsibility in 2008: We will assume command of a regional task force in KFOR as the responsible lead nation.

We will be part of the Operational response Force ORF, that will be stationed outside the region, to assist EUFOR ALTHEA as well as in KFOR, if need be. Austria has participated in a lot of PfP exercises, and we have organised several ones. This all has immensely contributed to opening up our Armed Forces, stimulated innovation, and transformation and helped to ensure interoperability of the Armed Forces.

It is even more than that: it has changed the approach of our leaders and soldiers, but also beyond the military establishment proper. PfP activities have allowed our soldiers to establish new contacts. PfP has contributed essentially to promote better insight and understanding by meeting and learning from others.

This is the 14th PfP Consortium workshop already. We think that such meetings are really reflecting the spirit of PfP: To be an instrument for promoting understanding, aiming at joint actions to preserve peace and deepen stability. And we want to go beyond mere theory. The Study Group has been dealing with something concrete: it is the region in transition.

It is a region very close to us: in the geographic sense, but also emotionally. More or less everything that has political relevance, has repercussions on the wider region, has repercussions on Austria consequently also.

The workshop comes at the right time again. The Western Balkans is in a defining phase of its stabilisation: new states have been created, and

the achieved peace processes need to be strengthened. I assume we all are carefully following the political moves ongoing in parts of the region just now: In particular the further steps regarding the status issue for Kosovo, the domestic developments in Serbia.

We all hope that the leaders in the region have the courage to overcome the darkness of the past two decades. We all hope that they have the dedication to look forward, for the benefit of their people. In particular the leaders from such parts of the region where new shock waves might erupt and might influence the security political development in South East Europe. We hope that they are aware of the importance of coherent regional cooperation against the security challenges the countries are commonly facing.

But let me also point at the moral obligation for the West to maintain unquestionably the perspective of integration and membership. For the Western Balkan countries, up to now this has been the most stimulating effect. Yet still much depends on sustained external stimulus.

The EU Stabilisation and Association Process is an essential machinery for promoting transformation of administrations and governance. By gathering all the Western Balkan countries under the umbrella of PfP, NATO has created better conditions for enhanced confidence building and cooperation between the security actors in South East Europe. The possible invitation of the three Adriatic Charter countries to the Alliance in 2008 will further the stability.

The Western Balkan region is on top of Austrian Foreign Policy. This was underlined when the new government listed initiatives to support the Western Balkans Peace processes with first priority in the newly adopted Government Programme 2007 to 2010. Austria supports any rapprochement strategy of South East European countries to the EU and also NATO, if they so wish.

To underline this approach, we have set in place a specific Balkan initiative of the Austrian Ministry of Defence. It focuses on:

- General and overall support for training,

- with an special additional focus on ESDP training;
- Mediating permanent dialogue in any kind of security and defence policy matters on all concerned levels,
- Mediating dialogue in civil-military relations in South East Europe,
- Offering support to Western Balkans Armed Forces for participation in exercises and international peace operations.

Let me focus briefly on one of these issues, namely ESDP training. This sequence of courses, oriented on diplomats, military experts and staff from the MOI as well as civil society, is of a roving nature, having started with its first modules Belgrade in November 2006 and Skopje this March. Further modules will be convened in Zagreb at RACVIAC in June, finalising the course in fall in Sarajevo. We will continue in 2008 and 2009. The program has been supported by Germany, Hungary and Slovenia.

Austria is also offering through this “MOD Initiative” to share our own lessons learned from Austria’s PfP membership with the new and future PfP members. Additionally, we try to support in the entire dimension of Security Sector Reform in South East Europe, putting a focus also on Defence Committees and Parliamentary Staffers. I shall not forget the Austrian Ministry of Interior Police Cooperation Program for South East Europe, absolutely indispensable for improving the situation regarding justice and home affairs in the region.

I would like to conclude my reflections with an invitation to make utmost use of this workshop for debating in depth the issue of “Approaching or Avoiding Co-operative Security”. The knowledge and expertise assembled here in this room will beyond any doubt make this a highly profitable endeavour.

In concluding, it is a privilege to officially open the 14th Workshop of the PfP Consortium Study Group on “Regional Stability in South East Europe”. Thank you for your attention.

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