Negotiating Security in the Balkans

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The capacity of international negotiations in achieving security in South East Europe can be well illustrated by a statement in May 2000 by the then US Permanent Representative to NATO and later US Ambassador to Moscow, Alexander Vershbow: if Russia and NATO were together during the peace negotiations in Rambouillet, France, before the NATO air campaign, we could reach a political settlement and avoid use of force.[1] Often in the last few years the NATO Secretary General and the EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy have been underlining the significance of negotiating security in a multitude of situations, in which both institutions have been involved.[2]

Definitely, successful negotiations in the field of security are the alternative to military clashes. Negotiating security never stopped in the post-Cold War period in the Balkans, including during the very crisis in Kosovo in 1999. However, today we are facing an even more complicated situation, whose novelty requires new attitudes by those who are engaged with the continuing stabilization of the region – a task on which both the Union and the Alliance must not fail.

First, apart from the 'unfinished business' in the Western Balkans, bearing features of traditional power attitudes and requiring continued stabi-

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[1] Alexander Vershbow, NATO-Russian Relations, US Department of State TV Interactive Dialogue Program, in: American Embassy Wireless Files, Sofia, May 11, 2000, p. 24.

[2] See for example: the presentation of Javier Solana at the Annual Conference of the EU ISS on 10 October 2006 in Paris: "For good reasons we Europeans see multilateralism as more than 'just a method'. For us, it is a way of ensuring a sense of international order, of building trust, of combining effectiveness with legitimacy. It is the best manner to manage conflicts of interests and, more than that, prevent them from emerging in first place… Thus we should focus on forging new 'bargains' …", at: http://www. europa-eu-un.org/articles/fr/article_5069_fr.htm

lization effort by robust forces from the international community, a number of issues of lesser intensity in both the bilateral and multilateral relationships in the region call for a working negotiation agenda to avoid tensions and prevent deepening conflicting interests. This concerns property issues, water resources, contentious human rights issues from the past, etc.[3] The process of stabilization does not start and does not end with the 'hot potato' of the Kosovo issue. A well-designed and structured system of negotiations would be needed, a kind of a 'new generation' of post-Yugoslav and 'post-Kosovo' topics from the stabilization realm to tackle the multitude of problems. A new and purposeful effort of 'mapping' these issues will be needed by both analysts and practitioners. Some of these problems could bear the potential of triggering older and more intensive conflicting attitudes.

Second, eight years after the end of the Kosovo crisis and four years after the Thessaloniki resolutions of the EU, the Balkan stability situation resembles more a 'regional security community' in its ripe period of the making. It bears the strong institutional mark, left by the enlarged NATO, an encompassing PfP family of Balkan nations, an enlarged European Union integration community with a dense network of relationships, preparing all non-EU Balkan countries for membership in the foreseeable future. All that means a completely new institutional and normative framework for seeking and finding answers to the 'stability questions'.

There is a record of coping with such issues through negotiations in the NATO and EU context and the Balkan international political and security relationships should get prepared for such an approach. Furthermore, both NATO and the EU have never stopped utilizing the 'negotiation approach', but analysts have been generally treating this issue into the broader theoretic context of 'dealing with conflicts' in the Balkans. However, we are entering into a new stage of development in the Bal-

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[3] See for example: the Cham issue; the social insurance issues, stemming from displacement of persons in huge quantities after the end of the Ottoman empire till today; sharing water resources in all neighboring countries in the Balkans; raising the effectiveness of cooperation in fighting international criminality, etc.

kans where more business-like negotiations on a broad spectrum of interconnected 'stability issues' are becoming more and more actual and pressing – in the area of state-building, integration and societal and human security issues.

The negotiation analytic approach to security issues, including in the Balkans, has the general theoretic studies of international negotiations as well as the specific aspects of the latter in the specific area of security as a knowledge base. The conclusions about the analytic framework of negotiations in the field of security originate from these two cognitive sources.

The negotiation analysis on Balkan security issues may provide us with additional insights, compared to other analytical tools. In addition to these characteristics of the negotiation analysis, the latter should follow some other invariant requirements or specific standard filters, especially important for the security relations.

These elements of the analysis together with the standards, stemming from the cognitive model of security can provide us in the new stage of the evolving Balkan security situation with the means of more adequately assessing the details and peculiarities of the participating in the regional situation parties' attitudes. We should never forget that in South East Europe we are faced with the huge task of stabilizing the Western Balkans, tackling with conflicting interests of various sorts, completing the process of state building, solving these issues from the conceptual perspectives of human and societal security while working for the integration of the whole region in the EU and NATO. This is a really challenging task for the Regional Stability in South East Europe Working Group too. However, with more concrete practical expected results too.