
THE SECURITY OF THE BALKAN REGION. THE ROLE OF NATO

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Hungary is already a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Therefore, I do not need to tell you much about what NATO is. So I can concentrate on the other aspects of my presentation: What is the Balkan region? And what is security?

There are a lot of definitions concerning the Balkan region. Usually we divide this region into Western Balkans and Eastern Balkans. The Eastern Balkans includes Romania and Bulgaria. Usually you are talking about Western Balkans when you are talking about the former Federal Republic of Yugoslav, except for Slovenia. You cannot consider Slovenia part of the Balkan region because it is so strongly middle European. But if you include Croatia in the western Balkan region you will hear all the cries within Croatia because Croatia to a large extent does not want to be included in the Balkan area. While in terms of geography and culture to a certain extent it does belong to this region. It is much easier if we use the division that is used by the European Union. The Western Balkans embodies all the former Yugoslavian territories without Slovenia. The other part, hopefully Croatia will excuse me for using this term, is the eastern part including Romania and Bulgaria.

The second definition is not so easy. What is security and security policy? Usually we think of military security when we are talking about security. But I think that is too narrow. We have to find and we have to come to a comprehensive view of security and security policy, which also includes domestic stability, economic questions that are closely related to our stability. We also have to include all the questions that belong to the field of work, environmental policy, which is to a certain extent a very important matter of security policy when you are talking about the question of water. Therefore I prefer to use the phrases 'security' and 'security policy' in a broad and comprehensive sense, which is not limited to their military aspects.

As I have already mentioned I do not need to tell anything about NATO. I can concentrate on the actual development of NATO, particularly in the period after the Prague conference, where the recent enlargement of NATO was decided.

After the end of the Cold War the nature of NATO was primarily similar to a military alliance directed towards outside. The nature of NATO was transformed to a certain extent into a new area. It is not the confrontation of military alliances that counts any more. It is the defence of territories, countries and nations and even the alliance as a whole that is more important. NATO has been transformed into an instrument defending common values. Therefore, the duties and the responsibilities of NATO on the one hand changed and on the other hand were enlarged. If you are

talking about the defence of values you must see and consider that the defence of values is a global obligation. Consequently, the question of NATO's engagement and the enlargement of its duties outside the territories of the member states leads NATO to a global responsibility. Commitment to the defence of values changed NATO as a whole. On the other hand NATO has had to face rather dramatic changes related to Transatlantic relations. NATO is not the primary partner of the United States anymore. The United States are recruiting "coalitions of the willing" inside and outside NATO. So there has been a tremendous loss in the importance of NATO in Transatlantic relations. Nevertheless, especially after the enlargement process of NATO, its importance has increased because the area of freedom and security have enlarged.

If we return to the role of NATO in the Balkan region we can observe two phases in the role and engagement of NATO in this area. The first phase is characterised by peacemaking and peacekeeping in the area of the former Yugoslavia. I do not need to tell you the historic details of how NATO acted in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. In the beginning similarly to the EU NATO had to go through a learning process. The result of this process could be seen in Kosovo. This first phase of the engagement of NATO is also characterised by detailed military operations combined with peacemaking and peacekeeping afterwards. As a result of this first you can consider the role of NATO as nationbuilding, which can be and is transformed into the responsibility of the EU.

In terms of the division of work between NATO and the European Union the EU is the so-called soft power due to lack of capabilities at the EU level. This soft power is characterised by the skills of nation-building and post-peacekeeping operations.

The second phase is the engagement of NATO in reform politics within and without NATO. When I am talking about without NATO I do not mean completely without the engagement of NATO but outside NATO within the framework of Partnership for Peace (PfP).

The Western Balkan states are for various reasons looking increasingly anxious about their prospects in relation to future NATO integration processes. Why? I will not concentrate on the Western Balkan states only. Romania and Bulgaria are facing the same difficulties as well. Why? Because NATO requires a new and to a certain extent a completely different approach towards the question of military-civilian relations. Therefore it is not only a question of military technical capabilities that the new member states and the PfP member states have to face and they are confronted with. But primarily it is a question of the relation between the military and civilian sector.

Western Balkan and Eastern Balkan states are going to identify and pursue Euro-Atlantic integration especially within NATO and the EU as a priority foreign policy objective, compared to other central and eastern European states that emerged from the grip of the Warsaw Treaty in the late 1980's.

The turning points can be seen in the death of the Croatian leader Franjo Tudjman and the removal of the Serbian president Slobodan Milosevics from power in late 2000. However, despite these events and some kind of stability for the whole region it is

now becoming clear that these were only the first initial and fragile steps forward. In Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro until the year 2000 you found a rather important domination of the civil sector by the military. Due to the pressure of the western alliance, NATO and to a certain extent the European Union changed completely after this point in 2000.

The former Yugoslavia, and Romania and Bulgaria likewise, managed to build up a substantial military capability during the course of its existence. Its underlining strength was its doctrine of total national defence adopted after the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The war in the 1990's drew heavily on these resources, each side taking advantage of what it inherited and what it could lay its hands on through arms purchases. After the end of this war in the former Yugoslavia these military structures have become surplus to requirements and each state was forced to re-examine its military and security options. Considering Euro-Atlantic integration as an actual strategic foreign policy objective has provided some direction for the pro-reformist leaderships. As you all know Slovenia did it first, and in my opinion best, while Macedonia and Croatia are still undergoing this process of transformation in the field of civil-military relations. There is to a certain extent hope that Serbia and Montenegro will follow them in having success in this transformation process in some years. This transformation process, which is now one of the objectives of NATO within the Balkan region, does not only mean making the Balkan states fit for a NATO membership. Slovenia has done it already. I doubt that Croatia will join NATO very soon. And I do not mention Serbia and Montenegro here despite the fact that it may be charming to have Serbia and Montenegro within NATO. But the whole process of transformation cannot be confined to the question of transforming military capabilities. And you all know the new member states of NATO are not able to contribute significantly to the military capabilities of the Alliance.

It is not only the above, although a rather important question, but it is the political question within the transformation process which is concentrated in the relation between the military and civilian sector. As you all know, particularly in the Western Balkan states you can observe a certain domination of the civil sector by the military one. In NATO it is completely the other way around. In Germany we have called it internal guidance (innere Führung). In Germany it is expressed in the system that all the matters of the armed forces are not only concentrated within the civilian led Ministry of Defence but also within the Parliament. Therefore the German armed forces are sometimes called a "parliamentary army". A unique construction which you cannot find in any other member state, not even in the United States. And nobody can question that the United States is not only the key or the lead nation, it is also the nucleus in the question of the relations between civilian and military authorities, and in the question of obligations and domination.

The political leadership has to be completely separated from the military one. Political responsibility has the primary responsibility and there is no place for an

extra role of the military and its leadership. Such a relationship between the military and civilian sector has to be the objective of the transformation process in the Balkan region now after the peacemaking and in the post-peacekeeping period. In NATO member states that is not a problem. They have already learned the lesson. But within the Partnership for Peace countries I think it will be a task for 10, 15 or 20 years. I am not so sure whether the Eastern Balkan countries, Romania and Bulgaria, have already learned their lesson. It seems they have done it. In Western Balkan countries you can certainly state that Serbia and Montenegro, and to a certain extent Macedonia have not accomplished it and Croatia is on the way to do it.

Let me close with one word about the future role of NATO in the Balkan region. The role of NATO on the one hand will continue to keep the peace in areas like Kosovo. You know the political question of Kosovo is still unsolved. The key question is independence or not. In my opinion the point of view of NATO is completely wrong. They say either let Kosovo stay within the constitutional framework of Serbia and Montenegro and create some sort of autonomy and we will continue to protect Kosovo. I think the question of independence has to be solved in the following years as soon as possible.

The role of NATO in the Balkan area is also very important in the transformation process of the relationship between the civilian and military sector. It would be easy to say let's abolish the complete military sector. However, you need the military sector of the Balkan states to stabilise the region.

I am confident this process will have to succeed not only in the interest of us all, but specifically in the interest of the EU, of NATO member states and particularly in the interests of the neighbours of the Balkan region. And I think since you are one of these neighbours particularly in your interests.