

# Untying the Gordian Knot in the Balkans: *Realpolitik*, “Business as Usual” or Thinking “Outside the Box” on Dialogue, Reconciliation and Integration into Euro-Atlantic Structures for Serbia and Kosovo?<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This article explores options for *confidence building* between Kosovar Albanians and Serbs in Northern Kosovo and Belgrade, following the Kosovar Albanian declaration of independence for Kosovo on 17 February 2008, and the subsequent Serb reaction of rejection, supported by, among others, the Russian Federation. The options for confidence building identified and discussed derive from the theory *and* practice of the multidisciplinary field of *conflict analysis and resolution* (CAR), which, by definition, locates them outside “the box” of traditional (*Realpolitik*) diplomatic thinking and discourse.

## Introduction

Given the nature of its still evolving subject matter – relations between Kosovar Albanians and Serbs in Northern Kosovo and Belgrade – this article continues a discussion begun a year ago during the last meetings in Reichenau of the *Partnership-for-Peace (PfP) Consortium Study Group on Regional Stability in South East Europe* (see Sandole, 2007). At that time, the objective was to head off a confrontation between Albanians and Serbs in the Balkans, perhaps igniting renewed violence elsewhere in the region (e.g.: in Bosnia Herzegovina and Macedonia).

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Former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari had just completed his talks with Kosovar Albanians and Serbs, concluding that there was an impasse on how to further proceed. Yet, he offered a plan for the “managed independence” of Kosovo that was discussed in subsequent talks with the parties, leading, once again, to an impasse.

Serb parliamentary elections on 21 January 2007, resulted in a clear victory for the Radical Party of former paramilitary and indicted war criminal Vojislav Šešelj (the party is currently led by another former paramilitary, Tomislav Nikolić), causing concern among many in the international community, especially the European Union, that when the anticipated Kosovar Albanian independence of Kosovo came – as it did on 17 February 2008 – Serbs would respond violently. Other than an apparently orchestrated fire-bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade, such violence did not materialize. Indeed, during recent parliamentary elections that took place in Serbia on 11 May 2008, the pro-EU Democratic party of President Boris Tadić was the clear victor. As President Tadić completed negotiations to form a coalition government with the Socialist Party (BBC, 2008; Matic, 2008), one question now is how to keep the whole of the country (and region, including Kosovo) moving in a pro-EU trajectory through various confidence-building measures.

But first, to better understand and deal with the present, we need to better understand its historical background.

## **The Potency of Serb Nationalism**

Gavrilo Princip had no idea what he was starting on 28 June 1914 (First World War, 2003). Clearly, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and his wife Duchess Sophie, on that fateful day was a mere trigger embedded within a hostile system of competing alliances led by the Triple Entente of Britain, France and Russia and the Triple Alliance of Austro-Hungary, Germany, and the Italy (which eventually changed sides) (First World War, 2001). Still, it can be said that the actions of Princip, a 19-year-old Bosnian Serb high school student who had been rejected by the Serb Army for

his diminutive physical stature, helped to transform Europe into the most murderous region in the totality of human experience. Together with the Balkan wars of the 1990s that resulted in the implosion of former Yugoslavia and brought genocide back to Europe some 50 years after the end of World War II – a linear continuation of World War I – we can say that the 20<sup>th</sup> century both began and ended with Serb nationalism as a potent force. Given where the Balkans are at present, Serb nationalism has become a feature of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as well!

Given this hundred-year-plus trajectory of virulent Serb nationalism – which is not in anyone’s best interest, including Serbs’ – it is the thesis of this article that, before confidence building can commence meaningfully between Serbs and Kosovar Albanians, this situation must be effectively analyzed and dealt with, which the remainder of this article attempts to do.

## **The Role of Kosovo in Serb National Identity**

Princip and his fellow conspirators representing the *Serbian Black Hand*, might have endeavoured to assassinate Archduke Franz Ferdinand no matter what day he visited Sarajevo, but the fact that the day of the visit was Sunday, 28 June 1914 speaks volumes about a core feature of Serb *national identity* that remains with us to this day: the role of Kosovo in the Serb national consciousness and discourse.

For many Serbs, Kosovo is their “Jerusalem”: their “holy ground ... where [their] most historic and religious monuments are located” (Dragnich and Todorovich, 1984, p. 1). Kosovo is the Serbs’ medieval kingdom, the “cradle of their nationhood, when they were virtually its sole occupants ... the centre of [their] empire of the middle ages, at one time the strongest empire in the Balkans” (ibid.; also see Dragnich, 1992, Ch. 9). On 28 June 1389, Kosovo fell to the Ottoman Empire, which eventually ushered into the region 500 years of Ottoman occupation. Serbia reclaimed Kosovo at the end of the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, only to have the dominant population there, over 90%, come to be represented by ethnic Albanians during the remainder of the century. That the major-

ity of Albanians (and Bosniaks) are Muslim is a consequence of the historical Ottoman presence in the region. Hence, for many Serbs, the “Turks have never left” their historical national homeland! Worse, the “Turks” have stolen Kosovo with their declaration of independence on 17 February 2008!

Princip and other *Black Hand* co-conspirators may have been particularly incensed by the Austro-Hungarian Archduke’s visit on 28 June 1914, not only because that was the day of Serb *national mourning* for the loss of their national homeland many centuries before, which they had reclaimed only a year or so earlier. In addition, Bosnia-Herzegovina had become a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1878, and Serb nationalists had figured that it, too, should belong to Serbia. This further added to the “narcissistic rage” (Kohut, 1971) and motivation to kill off the visiting imperialist, who was no better than his Ottoman counterparts who had occupied another cornerstone of Serb nationalism for centuries.

Suffice to say, therefore, that the virulent strand of Serb nationalism, which is represented by Šešelj’s Radical Party, does not include Albanians at all, and it certainly does not include an independent Kosovo. Even progressive, pro-EU Serb President Boris Tadić has indicated that he will never recognize Kosovo’s independence. This is the crux of the problem with which we are faced at present. Again, how confidence can be built between Kosovar Albanians and Serbs in northern Kosovo and Belgrade under such intense historical and contemporary circumstances is the challenge of this article as well for the actors themselves and others in the region and elsewhere.

## **The Potency of “Chosen Trauma” in Serb National Identity**

Kosovo represents for Serbs what Vamik Volkan (1997, pp. 48-49) characterizes as a “chosen trauma”:

I use the term *chosen trauma* to describe the collective memory of a calamity that once befell a group’s ancestors. It is, of course, more than a

simple recollection; it is a shared mental representation of the event, which includes realistic information, fantasized expectations, intense feelings, and defenses against unacceptable thoughts.

Since a group does not choose to be victimized, some of my colleagues have taken exception to the term *chosen trauma*. But I maintain that the word *chosen* fittingly reflects a large group's unconsciously defining its identity by the transgenerational transmission of injured selves infused with the memory of the ancestors' trauma. For example, Czechs hold on to the memory of the Battle of Bla Hora in 1620 when the Czech nation became part of the Hapsburg monarchy and lost its freedom for nearly three hundred years. Scots keep alive the story of the Battle of Culloden, precipitated by Bonnie Prince Charlie's vain attempt to restore a Stuart to the English crown in 1746. The Lakota people maintain mental representations of the massacre of the Big Foot band at Wounded Knee in 1890. Jews will "never forget" the Holocaust. Crimean Tartars define themselves by their deportation from Crimea in 1944 (emphasis in the original).

Shi'ites annually perform an extreme form of remembering a chosen trauma by commemorating their religious leader al-Husayn ibn'Ali through ritualized self-flagellation on the anniversary of his martyrdom. Memories and feelings about historic traumas may also be expressed in indirect or even concealed ways. Subtle symbolic protests against the Spanish conquest of Mexico, which took place nearly five hundred years ago, for example, are still enacted throughout present-day Mexico in folk dances. Officially, the dances celebrate the arrival of Roman Catholicism, but surreptitiously they act out a defeat of the conquistadores, a reversal of history.

In these particular comments, Volkan does not mention the potency of 29 May 1453 for Greeks when Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire fell to the Ottomans; 12 July 1690 for Irish Catholics when the Catholic King James II was defeated by the Protestant King William III (of Orange) at the Battle of the Boyne in Ireland, ushering in more than 300 years of Protestant marginalization and oppression of Catholics; or 24

April 1915 for Armenians when they were subjected to massacres at the hands of the declining Ottomans.<sup>2</sup>

Immediately following these comments, however, Volkan discusses at length the implications for current conflicts of 28 June 1389, when Serbs lost their beloved Kosovo to the Ottomans, ushering in 500 years of Ottoman occupation of the Balkans – the same date hundreds of years later when the Serb nationalist Princip assassinated the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, touching off World War I. Volkan begins that discussion by relating the story of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter’s visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina in December 1994, in the midst of the genocidal unravelling of former Yugoslavia, to bring about a ceasefire between Bosnian Serbs and Muslims – efforts which actually led to a ceasefire for a period of four months. During the trip, President Carter and his group met with Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić and Bosnian Serb military leader Ratko Mladić – who six months later, in July 1995, would preside over the genocidal massacre of nearly 8 000 Muslim boys and men in Srebrenica (see Honig and Both, 1996; Rohde, 1997):

... soon after Carter and his group sat down across from Karadžić and Mladić, the Serbs began to explain the victimization that had begun more than six hundred years ago, after the Battle of Kosovo. The former president had already been briefed in Serbian history and was not surprised that in a meeting in 1994 about current, pressing issues the memory of events from 1389 was so prevalent. While Karadžić and Mladić spoke at length of the Battle of Kosovo, Serbian victimization, and their sense of responsibility to protect their group, the Americans remained silent, allowing the Serbs to discharge their emotions concerning a centuries-old memory (Volkan 1997, p. 50) ...

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<sup>2</sup> Competing framings of the Armenian massacres have, to this day, caused intractable conflict between Armenians and Turks about whether the massacres constituted the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s first genocide, providing a “model” for Adolf Hitler and other architects of the Third Reich to do the same against European Jewry and other groups during World War 2.

For our purposes here, the Battle of Kosovo and its aftermath can be summarized briefly as follows:

On June 28, [Serbian] Prince Lazar and his army clashed at Kosovo Polje, the Field of Black Birds, with the army of the Ottoman Turkish sultan, Murat I. Both Lazar and Murat lost their lives. Some seventy years later, Serbia fell under the control of the Ottoman Empire and remained a part of Ottoman territory until it received its autonomy in 1829. Serbia became fully independent in 1878, when it was recognized by the Congress of Berlin. But some areas, such as the province of Kosovo and neighbouring Albania, remained under Ottoman control until 1912 (*ibid.*, p. 51).

Despite the gap of seventy years between the Battle of Kosovo and the fall of Serbia [to the Ottomans], a popular belief gradually developed that equated the two events. *It is not the historical truth (or even one of many versions of it) that matters in the collective Serb psyche.* What is important is the shared mental representation of the Battle of Kosovo and of the characters who played key roles in it. As decades and centuries passed, *mythologized tales of the battle* were transmitted from generation to generation through a strong oral and religious tradition in Serbia, reinforcing the Serbs' sense of a *traumatized, shared identity* (emphasis added) (*ibid.*, p. 61).

This chosen trauma is an observable part of the contemporary Serb identity. When Albanians settled on the "holy earth" of Kosovo, it "took on the character of a festering wound in the national self-esteem". Political scientist Marko Marković states that *for Serbs the memory of Kosovo is a "sacred grief" and that "mere mention of that name suffices to shake a Serb to the depths of his soul."* He suggests an analogy: "That which the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple is for Israel [and Jews worldwide], and Golgotha for Christians, so Kosovo is for the Serbs" (emphasis added) (*ibid.*, pp. 61-62).

Clearly, "chosen trauma" is a force to be reckoned with, whether for Serbs, Jews, Palestinians, Armenians or any other *identity group* that has experienced profound loss *without appropriate mourning*, with an ex-

pectation that it could happen again! This is why “chosen trauma” is related to *post-traumatic stress disorder* (PTSD):

PTSD is a health condition that can result from wartime trauma such as being physically wounded or seeing others hurt or killed. Symptoms range from irritability and outbursts of anger to sleep difficulties, trouble concentrating, extreme vigilance and an exaggerated startle response. *People with the condition can persistently relive the traumatic events that initially induced horror or helplessness* (emphasis added) (Morgan, 2008).

According to Volkan (1997, pp. 41, 42):

... trauma exacerbates feelings of humiliation and helplessness, which can cause post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In PTSD, the internalized version of a trauma remains in the minds of the victims long after the overwhelming physical danger disappears. ... *Individuals suffering from PTSD behave as though they have an internal theatre where the various actors (victim, victimizer, and rescuer) continuously perform a play* (emphasis added).

PTSD can also result from repeated, intense inter-generational transmission of “chosen trauma”, in which the trauma is experienced *vicariously* instead of directly and personally, but with similar effect. Again according to Volkan (*ibid.*, p. 43):

Transgenerational transmission is when an older person unconsciously externalizes his traumatized self onto a developing child’s personality. A child then becomes the reservoir for the unwanted, troublesome parts of an older generation. Because the elders have influence on a child, the child absorbs their wishes and expectations and is driven to act on them. It becomes the child’s task *to mourn, to reverse the humiliation and feelings of helplessness pertaining to the trauma of his forebears* (emphasis added).

When subsequent generations experience the trauma as it was experienced originally by one’s ancestors who were directly affected by them – “almost as if psychological DNA were planted in the personality of the



younger generation through its relationships with the previous one” (Volkan, 1997, p. 44) – then we have the phenomenon of *time collapse*:

Representatives of opposing groups act ... as if they themselves had witnessed such events, even though some had taken place before they were born.

This is an example of *time collapse*, in which interpretations, fantasies, and feelings about a past shared trauma commingle with those pertaining to a current situation. Under the influence of a time collapse, people may intellectually separate the past event from the present one, but *emotionally* the two events are merged (emphasis added) (Volkan, 1997, p. 35).

As another example of the generic nature of chosen trauma and time collapse, Richard Rose (1971, p. pp. 354-355) eloquently reports from his classic survey of Republican (Catholic) and Unionist (Protestant) perceptions of conflict in Northern Ireland that:

Londonderry on August 12, 1969, aptly illustrates how *time past and time present can fuse together in an explosive way*. Protestants there that day were commemorating the 280<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the besieged Protestant bastion within the old walled city from Catholic hordes surrounding it. As they looked over Derry’s walls, the marchers could see that Catholics, as in Jacobite times, were present in great numbers in the Bogside just below their fortifications. Catholics did not have to turn their minds further back than the previous twelve months to anticipate what might happen next. In that period, the Royal Ulster Constabulary several times entered the Bogside in large numbers, assaulting Catholics on the streets and in their homes that official enquiries could later amnesty but not excuse. The Catholics began to build barricades to prevent a recurrence of this. *This recalled Protestants from ancient history to the present*. The barricades were interpreted as the beginning of yet another Catholic insurrection. The approach of the police to the barricades was seen by Catholics behind the lines as yet another instance in which Protestants sought, in the words of an eighteenth century Irish song, to make “Croppies lie down”. *In such circumstances, it hardly matters whether an individual interpreted events in seventeenth, eight-*

*eenth or twentieth century terms. In Northern Ireland, the conclusions drawn – for or against the regime – are much the same in one century as in the next (emphasis added).*

Since chosen trauma experienced in time collapse is a generic phenomenon, not unique to Serbs, it is hypothesized here that generic processes may be employed in helping Serbs to deal with their *unmourned loss* of Kosovo, and in the process, help them to deal with their virulent nationalism and the “narcissistic rage” (Kohut, 1971) that resulted in bringing genocide back to Europe during the unravelling of former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, especially in Srebrenica where the bodies of the hapless, helpless, hopeless victims are still being dug up as this article is being written.

That at least some Serbs – especially those affiliated with the Radical Party led by paramilitaries that wrought havoc in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the 1990s in the name of Serbs everywhere – could use assistance in this regard seems clear: “*Under Ottoman rule, Serbs became perennial mourners. The “defeat” of June 28, 1389, became the shared loss that could not be mourned but that had to be recalled continually*” (emphasis added) (Volkan, 1997, p. 64). The emotionalism that can be displayed on this issue was vividly expressed by a young Serbian soldier when Serbia reclaimed Kosovo as a result of the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, some 500 years after it was occupied by the Ottoman Turks:

The single sound of that word “Kosovo” caused an indescribable excitement. This one word pointed back to the black past – five centuries. In it exists the whole of our sad past – the tragedy of Prince Lazar and the entire Serbian people ...

Each of us created for himself a picture of Kosovo while we were still in the cradle. Our mothers lulled us to sleep with the songs of Kosovo, and in our schools our teachers never ceased in their stories of Lazar and Miloš [one of Lazar’s son-in-laws] ...

My God, what awaited us! To see a liberated Kosovo ... When we arrived in Kosovo ... the spirits of Lazar, Miloš, and all the Kosovo martyrs gazed on us (ibid., p. 65).

More recently, just prior to the genocidal assault on some 8 000 Bosnian Muslim males by Serbs at the UN “safe area” of Srebrenica in Bosnia during 11-16 July 1995, Serb General Ratko Mladić told Serb television that, “The time has come to take revenge on the *Turks*” (emphasis added) (Williams, 2005). A year later:

Bosnian Serbs celebrated Thursday [11 July 1996] the first anniversary of the conquest of Srebrenica while, nearby, war crimes investigators were sorting through bones and fragments of [some 40 corpses believed to be just a fraction of the more than 7 000 Muslim] men and boys captured and shot after the Muslim enclave fell. ...

Serbs marked their victory ... and reiterated their goal of keeping the territory “*ethnically pure*”.

“There is no place for *Turks* in Republika Srpska”, said General Milenko Živanović, the regional commander, who led the final assault on Srebrenica (emphasis added) (AP, 1996).

Another Bosnian Serb official, in the disputed city of Brčko, proclaimed that year, “We will defend our frontiers *biologically*” (emphasis added) (Dobbs, 1996). Ten years after the slaughter at Srebrenica:

Fewer than half of Serbs polled ... believed the Srebrenica massacre took place. ... Instead of coming to terms with its past, Serbia has circumvented the issue with the narrative skills of a psychopath. For example, a debate on Srebrenica at the Belgrade Law Faculty earlier this year was initially titled “10 Years After the *Liberation* of Srebrenica” (emphasis added) (Brkic, 2005).

As a further perversion of Srebrenica and exacerbation of negative relations between Serbs and Bosnian Muslims (and by implication, Albanians and other “*Turks*”):

*In the Balkans, war crime pays.* This year a record 20 accused war criminals have been turned over to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia at The Hague, compared with only three in 2004. But NATO troops didn't nab these fugitives in daring dawn raids. Negotiators did much of the work, *offering generous financial incentives.* "Everybody here in Serbia believes the government gives big money to indictees", says Nataša Kandić, head of the Humanitarian Law Center in Belgrade. "If you want to go to The Hague, you'll be rewarded and your family will have a very good life." ...

Gen. Ratko Mladić, the accused architect of the Srebrenica massacre, was offered \$5 million to turn himself in, although in the end he decided to stay on the run. (The U.S. government still has a \$5 million reward for his capture.) (emphasis added) (Nordland, 2005).

So, by what "generic processes" can we – the concerned international community – help Serbs to stop living "in history" (Fukuyama, 1989, 1992), to take a "walk through history" (Montville, 1993) to deal with their "chosen traumas" (Volkan, 1997), in order to let go of the "heavy hand of the past" (Sherif, 1967) and move into the future working collaboratively with others in the region – including Albanians – on issues of common concern?

## **Dealing with History and other Deep-rooted Causes and Conditions of Complex, Identity-based Conflict**

Elsewhere, I have discussed the "*3 Levels of Conflict Reality*" (Sandole, 2007) where:

- Level 1 refers to *conflict-as-symptoms*.
- Level 2 refers to conflict-as-fractured relationships that lead to symptoms. And
- Level 3 refers to conflict-as-deep-rooted, underlying causes and conditions of the ruptured relationships.

Examples of *conflict-as-symptoms* are what occurred in Kosovo in March 2004 or, shortly after the fire-bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade following Kosovo's declaration of independence in February 2008.

Clearly, these symptoms reflect *conflict-as-fractured relationships* between Serbs and Albanians that have not changed for many years, except to worsen since NATO's 78-day bombing campaign during 23 March-10 June 1999 against Serbia to force a stop to its ethnic cleansing of Albanians in Kosovo.

*Conflict-as-deep-rooted, underlying causes and conditions* refers to the etiology of the fractured relationships between Albanians and Serbs, which have not really been addressed by the international community – the U.S., EU, Russian Federation and UN – during the negotiations which failed to lead to a breakthrough on Kosovo's status.

By what “magic”, therefore, can Serbs be helped to develop an identity that includes others in its region – among them, Albanians and Bosniak Muslims?

### **Lederach's Leadership Pyramid**

Part of that magic, I believe, stems from the field of *peacebuilding*. *Peacebuilding*, along with *peacemaking* and *peacekeeping*, were part of a typology first developed by the Norwegian Peace Researcher Johan Galtung (1975). Eventually, this typology left the sole confines of the academy to become part of former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's (1992) *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping*. John Paul Lederach (1997), an American Mennonite, was, as far as I can tell, the very first person to publish a book on peacebuilding. In it, he developed a “leadership pyramid” as part of his *Actors and Approaches to Peacebuilding*, comprising levels of any society embedded in violent conflict within which certain initiatives must be taken (ibid., p. 39):

**Figure 1: Actors and Approaches to Peacebuilding**

<i>Types of Actors</i>	<i>Approaches to Building Peace</i>
<b>Level 1: Top Leadership</b>	
Military/political/religious leaders with high visibility	Focuses on high-level negotiations Emphasizes cease-fire led by highly-visible, single mediator
<b>Level 2: Middle-Range Leadership</b>	
Leaders respected in sectors Ethnic/religious leaders Academics/intellectuals Humanitarian leaders (NGOs)	Problem-solving workshops Training in conflict resolution Peace commissions Insider-partial teams
<b>Level 3: Grassroots Leadership</b>	
Local leaders Leaders of indigenous NGOs Community developers Local health officials Refugee camp leaders	Local peace commissions Grassroots training Prejudice reduction Psychosocial work in post-war trauma

As one moves from the top level leadership to the grassroots, those affected by peacebuilding processes increase in number – hence, the “pyramid” metaphor. For Lederach (1997, pp. 41-42), the optimal level at which to intervene may be the middle range (level 2):

Important features of this level characterize the key actors within it. First, middle-level leaders are positioned so that they are likely to know and be known by the top-level leadership, yet they have significant connections to the broader context and constituency that the top leaders claim to represent. In other words, they are connected to both the top and

grassroots levels. They have contact with top-level leaders, but are not bound by the political calculations that govern every move and decision made at that level. Similarly, they vicariously know the context and experience of people living at the grassroots level, yet they are not encumbered by the survival demands facing many at this level.<sup>3</sup>

Before proceeding, let's say a bit more about each of Lederach's three leadership levels and how each relates to Kosovar Albanian-Serb relations.

### **Top Leadership**

For the top level, we can say that, to an extent, there were high-level negotiations between Kosovar Albanians and Serbs in northern Kosovo and in Belgrade, led by a highly visible, single mediator, former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, but that those negotiations were clearly inconclusive. There is a need, therefore, for further negotiations mediated by high-level persons, between:

1. Kosovar Albanians and Serbs (including religious leaders [see Shafiq and Abu-Numer, 2007]).
2. Kosovar Albanians and Belgrade.
3. The European Union and Serbian President Boris Tadić.
4. The European Union and other Serb political parties.
5. The United States and Russian Federation.
6. Potential foreign investors (e.g., Fiat) and Serbian and Albanian industrial and labor leaders.

As any of these dialogues are considered, depending on the political imperative to maintain silence about them, negotiations could be of a *back-*

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<sup>3</sup> It is at the middle-range level that the *Partnership-for-Peace (PfP) Consortium Study Group on Regional Stability in South East Europe* conducts its events. Its published proceedings are disseminated to government ministries and others, and then made available online at [www.bmlv.gv.at/wissen-forschung/publikationen/verlag.php?id=22](http://www.bmlv.gv.at/wissen-forschung/publikationen/verlag.php?id=22), which enhances access by members of all leadership levels worldwide.

*channel* nature (Pruitt, 2006). It is also useful to keep in mind that there are a number of formats to guide the challenging work of third parties involved in talks between representatives of conflicting parties who hate each other, which Ahtisaari and those who followed him may not have employed. One such approach is the “Tit-for-Tat” basis for “escaping” from the *Prisoners’ Dilemma* (PD) – a confounding situation which inheres in many real-life situations – associated with Robert Axelrod’s (1984) “Evolution of Cooperation” project. The PD can be graphically represented as follows (Rapoport, 1964, p. 49):

**Figure 2: The “Prisoners’ Dilemma” (PD)**

		<i>Party II</i>	
		C	D
<i>Party I</i>	C	+5, +5	-10, +10
	D	+10, -10	-5, -5

The PD structure involves a clash between *Realpolitik*-driven individual rationality (+10-10/-10+10) and *Idealpolitik*-driven collective rationality (+5+5), with the counterintuitive result being that individually rational choices, although seemingly successful in the short term, eventually lead to collective loss over time (-5-5). This is the danger that we currently face in the Western Balkans.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In the classic formulation of the PD, two young men are apprehended by the police somewhere in the U.S., on the suspicion that they have committed a homicide. The two young men are taken to police headquarters, separated and interrogated *incommunicado*. Each is presented with the following options: “Confess and *you* go free, while we convict your partner. Remain silent and we get you both for a lesser charge (manslaughter)!” No matter how each frames and considers the issue, each winds up “defecting” (+10-10/-10+10) and, therefore, both *lose* (-5-5) (see Rapoport, 1964, note 13, p. 290).



In the research literature where PD tends to be “played” once, the *Real-politik* option is often dominant. In Axelrod’s (1984) study, however, the game is played repeatedly, thereby more closely approximating the “real world”. It has been in this context that Tit-for-Tat has emerged as the dominant strategy for the following reasons:

1. Tit-for-Tat is *friendly*; one should never be the first to defect (D) from a cooperative strategy (C).
2. Tit-for-Tat is *reciprocal* (provocable); one should always reciprocate the other’s choice, even if it is a defection (D).
3. Tit-for-Tat is *forgiving*; after successive, reciprocating defections (D), one can cooperate (C). This tends to inject *cognitive dissonance* (Festinger, 1962) into the process, generating an opportunity to pause, reflect and perhaps change behaviors, which could turn a *vicious circle* into a *virtuous* one.<sup>5</sup>
4. After the (1)-(3) sequence has occurred for some time, the Tit-for-Tat strategy is *clear*.

Tit-for-Tat appears to be a viable means for escaping from the PD even in situations where there is no central authority, no assumption of altruism on the part of the participants, and where the participants are intent on defending their own interests. What is essential, however, is that the participants expect that their *relationships* (fractured or otherwise) will continue over time – that there exists what Axelrod (1984) calls the “shadow of the future”. This clearly applies to Kosovar Albanians and Serbs, as it did to Croats and Serbs during the Balkan Wars of the 1990s.

## Middle-Range Leadership

The “high-level negotiations” led by a “highly visible, single mediator” under Level 1, involving “military, political, religious leaders with high visibility,” are “*track-1*” processes, where the players tend to be official, governmental actors whose objective is to strike some kind of deal with

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<sup>5</sup> “Cognitive dissonance” refers to an actor’s sense of breakdown between an actual state of affairs and an expected state of affairs. Experienced emotionally as anxiety (“acute psychological distress”), it provides an opportunity to re-achieve balance between expectation and reality (see Festinger, 1962).

their opponent. By contrast, the “problem-solving workshops” conducted under Level 2 tend to be “*track-2*” (*and beyond*) processes, where the players are nongovernmental actors whose objective is, in the presence of a trained, experienced facilitator, to share perceptions with the opposition about the conflict and how it might be dealt with (see Diamond and McDonald, 1996; Mitchell and Banks, 1996, p. 6; Reychler and Paffenholz, 2001, Chs. 5.1-5.2, 6.1-6.4, and 7.1-7.2). Quite often, track 2+ can help pave the way for track 1, especially where *communication, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration* are involved (Nan, 2003).

In some conflict situations, as in Cyprus, ethnic and religious leaders might be trained in conflict resolution theories and skills before they are brought together in a track-2 problem solving workshop so that, by the time they address their common conflict, they speak the “same language”. In addition, they “explore attitudes, values, wisdom, behaviours and interactive patterns; and ... consider how [to] integrate learnings on these subjects and apply them to back home situations” (Diamond, 1997, p. 357; Reychler and Paffenholz, 2001, Chs. 10.1-10.2).

Whether for training or problem solving workshops, “insider-partial teams” might be involved as part of the training or facilitation staff. Their obvious value is that, as “insiders”, they know the languages, cultures, parties and issues far better than the “outsider-impartial” (see Wehr and Lederach, 1991).

Peace commissions, including those conducted at the grassroots under Level 3, are attempts to bring *justice* to a situation where *human security* has been compromised (see Reychler and Paffenholz, 2001, Chs. 12.1-12.8). South Africans, who experienced a society-wide peacebuilding process (see Marks, 2000), had the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) led by Bishop Desmond Tutu (TRC, 2003). After the atrocities committed at Srebrenica, it is clear that Bosnia-Herzegovina is in great need of such a process. *Kosovo is as well.*

## Grassroots Leadership

Grassroots training also tends to be done by track-2 personnel. Skills are imparted to conflict participants to deal with a variety of issues necessary for rebuilding war-torn societies; for example, the conduct of elections, establishment of independent media, and implementation of the rule of law, and educational and economic reform. Such training can also deal with reducing prejudice – often expressed through virulent ethnocentrism or nationalism (Sandole, 2002) – in the minds and behaviors of the parties. Prejudice reduction and “psychosocial work in post-war trauma”, especially significant for those suffering from vicarious and existential chosen trauma/PTSD, are both significant for reconciliation:

Once individuals in conflict – whether at the interpersonal, intergroup, interorganizational, international or any other level – start to express themselves through [violent means], they may become brutalized, unable to view their “enemies” as anything but despicable subhumans. Under such circumstances, which can lead to an extension of the conflict beyond the lives of its original participants [e.g., as in Northern Ireland or the Balkans], potential third parties who wish to intervene effectively must be able to operate at the *intrapsychic* as well as interparty levels. Unless the first is dealt with adequately, the second may only worsen (emphasis added) (Sandole, 1987, p. 296; also see Sandole, 2002).

Hence, until the intra-psychic level – where Vamik Volkan’s (1997) chosen traumas are buried – is dealt with, there will be no reconciliation, no psycho-emotional rehabilitation or reconstruction, no *positive peace* (Galtung, 1969, 1996).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Positive peace* refers to the elimination of the deep-rooted, underlying causes and conditions of violent conflict (level 3 of the levels of conflict reality). By contrast, *negative peace* refers to the absence of violent conflict, which can be achieved either through prevention of likely violence or suppression of actual violence (levels 1-2 of the levels of conflict reality). Negative peace – which is what many consider to be “peace” – is often a prerequisite for positive peace (see Galtung, 1969, 1996).

## Dealing with Chosen Trauma

Dealing with trauma is Carolyn Yoder's subject matter, dovetailing with references to trauma and psycho-social healing in Jeong (2005, Ch. 6) and Ramsbotham, et al. (2005, Ch. 10). Yoder, the director of the *Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience* (STAR) programs,<sup>7</sup> tells us that STAR was established in response to the events of 11 September 2001. As part of its mission to deal with trauma produced by acts of terrorism and other catastrophic experiences:

STAR integrates concepts from traditionally separate fields of study and practice: traumatology (including neurobiology), human security, restorative justice, conflict transformation, peacebuilding, and faith/spirituality. Tying it all together is a three-part model called *The Trauma Healing Journey: Breaking the Cycles of Victimhood and Violence* (emphasis added) (Yoder, 2005, p. 7).<sup>8</sup>

The first part of the model, the *Survivor/Victim Cycle*, comprises the following:

1. Traumatic event(s), act(s) of aggression.
2. Physiological changes.
3. Shock, injury, denial, anxiety, fear.
4. Realization of loss – panic.
5. Suppression of grief and fears – numbness, isolation.
6. Anger, rage, spiritual questions, loss of meaning.
7. Survivor guilt, shame, humiliation.
8. (Learned) helplessness.
9. Re-experiencing events, intrusive thoughts, avoiding reminders, hypervigilance.
10. Fantasies of revenge, need for justice (ibid., Ch. 3).

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<sup>7</sup> STAR is a joint project of the Church World Service and the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University, in Harrisonburg, Virginia, with which John Paul Lederach is affiliated.

<sup>8</sup> This model derives from Botcharova (2001).

If a trauma victim makes it to level 10, then the second part of the model may become operational: the *Enemy/Aggressor Cycle*:

1. Seeing self/group as victims, increased group identity.
2. Unmet needs for safety and justice – shame, humiliation, fear.
3. Development of good-vs.-evil narrative.
4. Dehumanization of the enemy.
5. Seeing violence as redemptive.
6. Decision to pursue own needs even at the expense of others.
7. Social and cultural pressures, pride.
8. Attack in the name of self-defense, justice or restoring honor (ibid., Ch. 4).

John Burton's (1990, 1997) *basic human needs* (BHNs) theory has clearly influenced Yoder's development of an approach to trauma and trauma healing, as *needs for security and justice* are explicitly incorporated into the model. So is, by implication, the work of James Gilligan (1996) and James Garborino (2000) on *shame* and *humiliation* as drivers of violence in pursuit of justice.

Part 3 of the model, *Breaking the Cycle: The Journey to Healing and Security*, comprises the following:

1. Finding safety: Breaking free.
2. Mourning, grieving.
3. Accepting the reality of the loss.
4. Reflecting, understanding root causes, acknowledging the enemy's story, facing own shortcomings.
5. Committing to take risks.
6. Tolerance, coexistence.
7. Engaging the offender (or society).
8. Choosing to forgive.
9. Acknowledging responsibility, restitution, creative justice.
10. Negotiating solutions.
11. Integrating trauma into new self/group identity.
12. Possibility of reconciliation (ibid., Chs. 5-7).

The third and final part of the model is precisely what Armenians and Turks have not undertaken with regard to the issue of genocide pepe-

trated against Armenians during the final days of the Ottoman Empire (see Mooradian, 2003, 2005; Sandole, 2002). In the absence of successful implementation of this part of the model, the parties – or their surrogates (e.g., Azerbaijanis) – are likely to remain “frozen” in the second part: the *Enemy/Aggressor Cycle*. The same also applies to Kosovar Albanians and Serbs.

Trauma-healing efforts, therefore, must be embedded within comprehensive peacebuilding designs, with appropriately coordinated and sequenced sub-routines, in order to deal effectively with brutally assaulted needs (“*Survivor/Victim Cycle*”). In the process, they can move the parties from “*limbic rationality*” (zero-sum: +10-10/-10+10) to “*neocortical rationality*” (positive sum: +5+5) (see Sandole, 1990). Otherwise, the psycho-emotional “walking wounded” may find that the most compelling way to fulfill their needs for safety and justice may be through revenge-based acts of violent aggression against those perceived to have assaulted them. In the event, parties may justify an “attack against ‘the other’ ... in the name of self-defense, justice, security, honor, or freedom” (Yoder, 2005, p. 43):

But the security [they] yearn, fight, and die for is rarely the long-term outcome. *Violence, even within the parameters of a just war or holy war, leaves in its wake more traumatized, humiliated, hypervigilant, angry, fearful, and grieving peoples and societies. It creates more groups with a heightened sense of identity, with their own good-vs.-evil narratives, and with needs for justice and vindication. It starts more survivor/victim cycles that can morph into new enemy/aggressor cycles of violence.* And so, another tit-for-tat story, like those that fill our news every day, begins anew (emphasis added) (ibid.).

This danger will likely continue to face Kosovar Albanians and Serbs unless they and their advocates, with the assistance of trained and experienced third parties, take meaningful steps toward confidence building such as those discussed in this article.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> One appropriate local organization for encouraging such confidence building is the *Victimology Society of Serbia* (see Cotić, et al., 2007).

## Conclusion

The essential point of departure for this article has been that the concerned international community – including the *Partnership for Peace (PfP) Consortium Study Group for Regional Stability in South East Europe* – is dealing with a conceptual and empirical contradiction: a situation where Kosovo declared independence on 17 February 2008, which Kosovar Serbs and Belgrade have rejected. The “local” conflict has been internationalized to include the U.S. and 21 members of the EU which have recognized Kosovo’s independence, in contrast to Serbia, Russia and six members of the EU which have not.

Indeed, the expected transfer of “managerial” authority for Kosovo from the UN to the EU will likely not take place in the foreseeable future (originally scheduled for 15 June 2008) because of Russia’s implicit threat to veto such action in the UN Security Council (see MacDonald, 2008c). So, we have an independent state “in limbo”, with frustrated, angry people on all sides of the issue.

Serbian President Boris Tadić’s pro-EU Democratic Party unexpectedly came out of the recent parliamentary elections ahead of the Radical Party. President Tadić was faced with completing complex negotiations with the “kingmaker”, the Socialist Party – former Serb leader Slobodan Milošević’s Communist Party, led by Ivica Dačić – in order to form a viable governing coalition. Although the outcome of these negotiations was the formation of a pro-European led government, Serb nationalists represented by the Radicals and former Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica’s Democratic Party of Serbia remain a strong force in Parliament. Indeed, the Socialists had previously agreed to join the Radicals and Koštunica’s party to form a new government, one which would have been decidedly anti-EU and pro-Russia (BBC, 2008; Matic, 2008).

As a consequence President Tadić must maintain a critical balance between Serbia’s anti- as well as pro-EU constituents to preserve the integrity of the country in the long term, nudging it ever closer to eventual membership in Euro-Atlantic structures, which is clearly his goal.

This equilibrium is analogous to the “edge of chaos” in *complexity theory*; i.e., it is inherently unstable. Even minimal movement in either direction could lead to a “catastrophic shift” in the reverse direction generating frustration and “narcissistic rage” on the part of those who support the losing option (see Waldrop, 1992; Sandole, 1999; Kohut, 1971). This has clear implications for the security of Serbia, Kosovo and the region, plus relations between the U.S., EU, and the Russian Federation. Hence, President Tadić’s careful balance between, on the one hand, pushing Serbia toward EU membership but, on the other hand, continuing to reject Kosovo’s independence.

In the meantime, security and stability in the region have already become issues as Macedonia, which also has not recognized neighbouring Kosovo’s independence, experienced violence in its Albanian regions during recent parliamentary elections:

Macedonia’s hopes of starting European Union accession talks have suffered a blow after violence marred the country’s weekend parliamentary elections.

The European Commission voiced alarm about the poll, during which one man was killed and nine wounded in gun battles in areas inhabited by the country’s ethnic Albanian minority. ...

The last parliament dissolved itself after Greece vetoed Macedonia’s membership of NATO in April this year over objections to the republic’s name. Pressure mounted as ethnic Albanians demanded recognition of Kosovo ... (MacDonald, 2008b).

Nevertheless, we must not lose sight of the fact that President Tadić’ and his pro-EU party won an impressive victory in Serbia’s parliamentary elections, where even Serbs in Kosovo were allowed to vote. This may have been due, in part, to the EU recently signing with Belgrade a *Stabilization and Association Agreement* (SAA), which conditionally places Serbia closer to negotiating entry into the EU or Italian car giant Fiat’s decision to produce two new models at Serbia’s state-owned Zastava car plant. One way or the other, “it is clear that the west should now do



more to further enhance prospects for the forces of enlightenment in Serbia to prevail over those that would return the country and the Balkans in general to the genocidal conflict of the 1990s” (Sandole, 2008).

For this to occur, Kosovar Albanians, Serbs, and others must enter the realm of the *multiple dialogues* addressed earlier, employing Axelrod’s (1984) “Tit-for-Tat” logic to break out of the *prisoners’ dilemma* trap whenever the parties recognize that they are in one – in effect, to extricate themselves from “history” (Fukuyama, 1989, 1992) and the “heavy hand of the past” (Sherif, 1967). The concerned international community must ensure that these dialogues include potential foreign investors, such as Fiat. Even the Radical Party’s acting head, Tomislav Nikolić, has admitted that foreign direct investment (FDI) is important for Serbia’s development (see MacDonald, 2008a). Shortly before the recent Serb parliamentary elections:

Nikolić [said] foreign investors [had] nothing to fear if his hardline nationalist organization – which opposes the European Union – over Kosovo – wins elections on May 11:

“I’m not going to jeopardize foreign direct investment”, Mr. Nikolić told the Financial Times in an interview. “Serbia has an enormous need for FDI.” ...

“FDI flow is limited, unemployment is growing and the EU is far from us”, he says. ...

As acting leader, [Nikolić] has taken the Radicals in a more moderate direction since the party’s chairman, Vojislav Šešelj went to The Hague to face trial on war crimes charges (ibid.).

In addition to this apparent demonstration of moderation on the part of the Radical Party, the Russians appear to want Serbia in the EU.<sup>10</sup> The

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<sup>10</sup> This revelation was offered by Sonja Stojanović, of the Centre for Civil-Military Relations in Belgrade, during the Reichenau meetings of the *PfP Consortium Study Group on Regional Stability in South East Europe*, 23-25 May 2008.

evolving situation in Serbia with regard to Kosovo, therefore, may be moving in a positive trajectory, which is further reinforced by the decision of the Socialist party to form a government with President Tadić's pro-EU party.

We must take nothing for granted, however. We must also implement other measures, such as ensuring that, among those dialoguing, there are representatives of parties from similar, *identity-based conflicts* elsewhere, such as Northern Ireland. Pádraig O'Malley, for example, has brought representatives from both sides of the Northern Irish conflict together with those from South Africa.<sup>11</sup> More recently, he has brought representatives from various sides of the Iraq conflict to meet with experienced negotiators from Northern Ireland and South Africa (Cullen, 2007). The objective in each case has been to bring "insider-partials" from different, albeit similar, conflicts together to learn "lessons" and "best practices" from one set of parties that may be relevant and transferable to another.

Finally, in the midst of these "multiple dialogues", one additional lesson from Northern Ireland must prevail. According to Jonathan Powell (2008), who was chief of staff to former British Prime Minister Tony Blair during ten years of negotiations leading to the Good Friday Agreement:

*... it is possible to draw some broad lessons [from Northern Ireland] likely to be relevant elsewhere.* Democratic governments, for example, should always be willing to talk, albeit, sometimes in secret, to their enemies, even when such contacts seem to offend common decency. Were Mr. Powell still in 10 Downing Street, he would be advocating a dialogue with Hamas.

Rightly so. Talking is not the same as surrendering – nor, indeed, as negotiating. If terrorist groups do put their weapons to one side, Mr. Powell continues, the imperative is to keep everyone in the room. This re-

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<sup>11</sup> Pádraig O'Malley is John Joseph Moakley Distinguished Professor of Peace and Reconciliation at the John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies, University of Massachusetts in Boston.

quires constant attention and engagement. Eventual success in Northern Ireland flowed from a strategy of “*never letting the talking stop*” (emphasis added) (Stephens, 2008).

This is precisely what the Kosovar Albanians and Serbs in northern Kosovo and Belgrade need to do in order for confidence building to start to take hold and for both to find their inevitable place in the European Union!

## Epilogue

Again, it is essential to point out that the conditions of ruptured relations and virulent nationalism are not unique to Kosovar Albanians and Serbs. These are generic phenomena, meaning that we can learn from one situation something about another situation, despite apparent differences. This is, in part, the value of Pádraig O’Malley’s creative initiative to bring conflict parties from Northern Ireland to South Africa, or, more recently, from Northern Ireland and South Africa to meet with Iraqis – all could learn from one another in ways that would not be possible if they interacted only with “outsider-impartials”.

This assessment clearly applies to the most intractable conflict of our times, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is a major driver of regional and global terrorism. In his review of Benny Morris’ (2008) new book, *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*, Glenn Frankel (2008) begins with a powerful statement on the status of the conflict, which, against the background of our discussion of Kosovar Albanian-Serb relations, sounds remarkably familiar:

In a zero-sum world, one side's gain must be exactly balanced by another's loss [+10-10/-10+10]. In such a world, violence is inevitable, compromise is betrayal, neutral observers are enemies, and the only heroes are those willing to take the contest to its logical, lethal conclusion. *And the only histories worth publishing are those that validate your own self-sustaining myths.* [This] remorseless, zero-sum conflict ... has been going on for three score years [with] no end in sight (emphasis added).

According to Frankel, Morris provides much material that clashes with the competing Israeli and Palestinian narratives on the establishment of Israel in 1948, in the process further explaining the Palestinian position about which many in the West have not been too concerned until recently with the advent of suicide terrorism.

Frankel asks, “Why is all of this worth re-adjudicating six decades after the event?” His response is simple, yet compelling: “Because none of it has been resolved. For Israelis, 1948 is central to the legitimacy of the Jewish state. For Palestinians, it is an open wound.” Frankel concludes, “... 1948 has haunted, and still haunts the Arab world on the deepest levels of collective identity, ego, and pride. The war was a humiliation from which that world has yet to recover” (emphasis added).

As Americans (and others worldwide) contemplate the likely first occupant of the Oval Office in the post-Bush era, it is worth considering the value of renewed American leadership in devoting significant time, effort and resources to finally addressing these issues and resolving this most intractable of conflicts, which clearly feeds the clash of civilizations’ dynamic that undermines national, regional, and global peace, security and stability.

Indeed, the time has come for renewed American leadership in the Balkans as well, where it should complement the “multiple dialogues” plus President Tadić’s careful, complex balancing of his pro- and anti-EU constituents, with visits to the region by Pádraig O’Malley’s Northern Irish and South African conflict veterans. As part of these dialogues, Professor O’Malley can suggest that Kosovar Albanians and Serbs consider another Northern Irish “lesson”:

Since 1997 a total of 36 feature films have been made in [Northern Ireland], in whole or in part. Belfast has featured as New York, London, Copenhagen, and indeed itself. ...

Several thrillers are scheduled this year. One stars [Liam] Neeson and James Nesbitt, a fellow Northern Irishman, as two men “wracked by their experiences during the Troubles”. It may go down badly with Un-

ionists riled by another Belfast production – “Hunger”, which depicts the last days of the IRA hungerstriker Bobby Sands and won the *Camera d’Or* prize at Cannes this year. But many films [including “City of Ember” with Bill Murray and Tim Robbins and “Closing the Ring” with Shirley Maclaine and Sir Richard Attenborough] now make Belfast a backdrop for stories other than its own – *and are changing that story in the process* (emphasis added) (Northern Ireland, 2008).

Imagine a film about the Battle of Kosovo, made in Kosovo and Serbia with Albanian, Serb and other actors and production crew, *in which Albanians are accurately portrayed as fighting alongside Serbs and Hungarians against the Ottoman invasion on 28 June 1389* (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2008). Professor O’Malley and others could then consider taking Serb and Albanian as well as Northern Irish and South African conflict veterans to consult with their Israeli and Palestinian counterparts regarding “lessons learned” and “best practices” for that intractable conflict.

Accordingly, the time has come for the development of *inclusive* rather than *exclusive* identities in the Balkans and elsewhere, given the psycho-emotional interconnections between violent conflicts worldwide. This is no easy task, considering that Lederach (1997, Ch. 6) claims that effective peace building – the ultimate in confidence building and untying of the “Gordian Knot” – may take *more than 20 years* to have salutary impact at the *personal, relational, structural, and cultural* levels. Nevertheless, the prospect of eventual integration into the European Union – the ultimate *Kantian “perpetual peace system”* (Kant, 1983) – should make for a promising start to a longer journey in which the *PfP Consortium Study Group on Regional Stability in South East Europe* continues to play a constructive role.

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