

# analytical

Journal

*Multinational peace support operations, a vital element of the Western Balkans' contribution towards peace and stability*

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Dear reader,

You are looking into the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of Analytica's electronic journal *Analytical* for 2011. The topic of this edition is "Multinational peace support operations, a vital element of the Western Balkans' contribution towards peace and stability". It reflects the intensified discourse among the political elites in the Western Balkans and officials from the prominent international organizations such as the EU and NATO describing the Balkans as "security exporter". Without any doubts the period after the dissolution of the SFR Yugoslavia managed to grab the world's attention by the thousands of lives lost as a result of the animosities between the countries. . The violent disintegration of Yugoslavia managed to destroy among others the social capital built throughout the years. Consequently in a rather hesitant and confusing manner, at the start of the bloodshed, the International Community did not react in its full capacity. However in the years to come its presence in the region has been intensified and managed to rise itself as a guardian of the region where a failure is not considered to be an option anymore. Such an approach made the Western Balkans an area where remarkable set of policies and processes were initiated in order to bring the countries back on track acting as mature democracies with good neighborly relations and on the way to EU/NATO accession. From today's perspective we witness that the presence of the International Community was essential and that its main objective – sustainable peace has been achieved.

The authors of this edition of *Analytical* tackle the post 90s integration processes and more precisely focus on participation into multinational operations as an element which portrays a new image of the region as stable, consolidated and ready to play an important role into the world. In this regard **Lidija Levkovska** and **Shane Thomas Franklin** take the constructivist prism in order to investigate the relationship between the countries of the region and more importantly the transformation of ideas and values that shape the current ambience of good neighborly relations between the countries. They argue that the active presence of the international community together with their integration prospects fosters socialization among the countries. They focus more closely on NATO's involvement in the region through three processes: Peace Building, Security Sector Reform and Partnership and Integration Efforts. In the same line as the previous paper **Bedruin Brljavac** connects Bosnia's participation into multinational operations as a symbol of stability of the country which according to him can be traced back with the successful NATO policy towards BiH. By using clear benchmarks via instruments such as the Membership Action Plan, NATO managed to induce reforms in

Bosnian society. As an example he takes the successful reforms of the Armed Forces. **Rade Rajkovceviski** and **Dimitar Kirkovski** examine this question from a regional aspect and actually support the claim that due to the international involvement in the region and the prospects of joining the EU and NATO, countries cooperate and develop good relations especially in the security sector. Such cooperation is a necessity and multinational operations can serve only as one example. They go even further by pointing out the possibility of a joint Western Balkans military unit as a result of enhanced security cooperation. As they have put it in the text there are numerous examples from all across Europe as well as from the region of successful regional security initiatives. Thus they highlight the Adriatic 3 partnership between Macedonia, Albania and Croatia as a successful model that should be followed. Last but not least, **Marko Savkovic** and **Marko Milosevic** go deeper into the practicalities of Multinational Operations and the role of different organs from the state apparatus in sending troops abroad. Their paper enables the reader to have an in depth understanding on the machinery behind the process of participating into operations abroad and knowing that to a greater extent this model is applicable to the rest of the region it gives a comprehensive outlook of the regional set up.

We truly hope that you will find the selection of the papers relevant and engaging.

## Constructivist Approach to Western Balkans' Contribution Towards Peace and Stability

Lidija Levkovska and Shane Thomas Franklin

### Abstract

*The security environment of the Western Balkans, following the dismantling of Yugoslavia and the nations quest for sovereignty, brought to the fore a growing role of the international community as a socializing power capable of encouraging the governments in the region to adopt liberal democracy values and furthermore develop capabilities to enable them to contribute to peace and stability missions abroad. Almost two decades later, the Westerns Balkan countries, once consumers of security, gradually transform and reform their security architectures and develop deployable forces capable of exporting security. The participation in NATO, EU, UN-led missions represents an avenue that Western Balkans countries employ to demonstrate their willingness to export stability and concurrently develop capacities and capabilities up to par to ensure interoperability and compatibility with allies and partners. We leverage assumptions from the constructivist school of thought and argue that this interest will be sustained and will not prove elusive as the countries from the region join the Alliance. Due to NATO's long-term presence and the advanced level of internalization of shared ideas, norms and values, the countries in the region decide to maintain an increased level of troop contribution to NATO-led missions abroad. Thus, it is within the realm of constructivist school of thought that we find sufficient assumptions to explain the Western Balkans increasing interest to export stability, by participating in missions abroad, and argue that it will be sustained beyond obtaining full-fledged membership.*

**Key words:** NATO, Western Balkans, Security Sector Reform, peace building, constructivism, troop contribution, security consumers, security producers.

The security environment of the Western Balkans, following the dismantling of Yugoslavia and the nations quest for sovereignty, brought to the fore a growing role of the international community as a disciplining power, capable of encouraging the governments in the region to stabilize, democratize and guarantee freedom and security of their people and beyond. The privilege of hindsight allows us to acknowledge the role of NATO as a catalyst for much of the positive change in the Western Balkans region. Over the fifteen years, since the Alliance deployed its first peacekeeping force, followed with the support provided to military and security sector reform initiatives, the Balkans has attained a considerable progress. The countries have worked on reforming and transforming their armies and threat perceptions, gained rich experience, and from source of security concern transformed to credible partners and some of them full-fledged allies today.

NATO's proven position, as the only credible and prominent collective security alliance, coupled with the prospects for membership additionally reinforced and further encouraged extensive change in the Balkans. NATO and the EU prospects of membership, as a major driving force, allowed a greater scope and broader range reforms to materialize within and across the governments and security sectors of the Western Balkans countries. NATO's open door policy, emphasizing that membership is open to any "European state in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area,"<sup>1</sup> makes the countries in region inclined to greater stability, progress, cooperation, development and security sector reform. Hence, almost two decades later, as NATO efforts materialize, they succeed in transforming a "negative peace" into a situation of "positive peace."<sup>2</sup> The countries in the region, once consumers of security, gradually transform and reform their security architectures and, with their sights on NATO membership, develop deployable forces capable of exporting security and contributing to the same values and norms that stabilized the region fifteen years ago.

Throughout the years, the Alliance has further developed and advanced cooperation with the Balkan partners. As the region stabilizes and the aspirations for membership remain a long-term objective, this cooperation ensures achieving military interoperability and compatibility in crisis management, where

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<sup>1</sup> On-line Library, NATO Publications, 1.Enhancing Security and Extending Stability through NATO Enlargement, Updated: April 2004, [http://www.nato.int/docu/enlargement/html\\_en/enlargement01.html](http://www.nato.int/docu/enlargement/html_en/enlargement01.html) (Accessed on May 19, 2011)

<sup>2</sup> Ernst M. Felberbauer, Predrag Jurekovich, and Frederic Labarre, „Advice and Advocacy: Ten Years of the Regional Stability in South East Europe Study Group,” *Connections The Quarterly Journal*, Summer 2010, pp. 93-98

substantial contribution to NATO-led operations from partner countries is equally valued as from NATO full-fledged members. Contributions to NATO-led operations have proven to be a matter of high interest and high on the agenda of the Western Balkans in terms of providing troops to crisis management missions abroad and NATO - led operations. Aside from the obvious source of the Western Balkans increased interest to participate to such missions, such as the membership prospect, financial and material incentives, few other arguments come to play as well.

The argument we assert draws from the constructivist school of thought and the dynamic of socialization enabled by the presence of NATO Alliance in the Western Balkans. Continuous interaction and dialogue with the Alliance has ensured socialization over the years, which have created conditions for the host nation countries to adopt standards, norms and values convergent with those that NATO and EU hold dear. Therefore, the incentive of membership is not the central piece of the puzzle. It is complemented with the regional governments' efforts resolute to demonstrate their progress and achievements, including their compliance with standards and values upheld by the community of liberal democracies they strive to emulate, integrate and build compatibility and interoperability.

This article outlines NATO's involvement in the western Balkans from a) Peace Building; b) Security Sector Reform; and c) Partnerships and Integration Efforts and asserts that results achieved are self-sustainable and will maintain significance as the countries in the region become full-fledged NATO members. Western Balkans contribution to peace and stability, manifested through an increased participation in missions abroad, represents not only an avenue that countries employ to qualify for membership, but also an advanced stage of internalization of standards, norms, values and shared ideas, which we deem sufficient to sustain the level of ambition and commitment to participate to missions abroad beyond obtaining their full-fledged membership.

## Constructivists Conceptual Lenses

Before proceeding with elaboration of NATO's successive engagement and socialization of the Western Balkans, we aim to set the stage by clarifying the main postulates from the constructivist school of thought. Constructivists' assumptions reinforce our argument of sustained interest for contribution towards peace and stability that countries in the Balkans region develop, throughout their different tracks of interaction with the international community and more specifically with the Alliance.

Constructivists reject one-sided material focus,<sup>3</sup> and assert that the most important aspect of international relations is social, not material. They acknowledge the importance of the learning process and identity construction. In addition, constructivist school of thought argues that the identities can be socially constructed and shaped by different beliefs and cultures.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the state behavior cannot be explained only by recourse to material interests, but by the influence of standards, norms and values. What constructivism introduces is the role that the ideas and norms have in shaping actors identities and the constructed meaning that they give to the world around. The ideational aspects of power take into account how the knowledge, fixed meaning of concepts and the construction of identities produce diverse capacities.<sup>5</sup> This resembles the role that NATO and the wider international community have while socializing their ideas, norms and standards, shaping and socially constructing actors' identities, enabling them to produce diverse capacities.

Another constructivist argument that comes to play is the primacy of the idea that gives meaning to the physical elements.<sup>6</sup> Namely, developed capacities and acquired assets remain secondary to the intellectual element i.e. the idea that makes them meaningful and valuable. It is the idea that further organizes plans and guides those capacities. So according to the constructivist assumptions, both the presence of NATO and their continuous dialogue have ensured socialization over the years that not

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen, "Chapter 6, Social Constructivism," in *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, Third Edition, 2007 p.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Barnett, "Social Constructivism" *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, edited by John Baylis and Steve Smith, p. 262, 268

<sup>5</sup> Michael Barnett, "Social Constructivism." *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, edited by John Baylis and Steve Smith, p. 262, 268

<sup>6</sup> Robert Jackson and Georg Sørensen, "Chapter 6, Social Constructivism," in *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, Third Edition, 2007 p. 165

only allowed the host nations to adopt standards, norms and values, but also reshape security apparatus, organize and use it in international security in support of NATO – led international missions. In summary, the Western Balkans have reformed its security apparatus and developed compatible forces, however all that is secondary to the intellectual element that gives true meaning, organizes and guides those capacities. In the words of Jackson and Sorensen “The thought that is involved in international security is far more important, than the physical assets that are involved because those assets have no meaning without the intellectual component: they are mere things in themselves.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore, with or without full-fledged membership, it is the level of socialization, adopted norms, standards and values, coupled with the notion that makes participation to missions valuable, which ensures Western Balkans’ sustained contribution towards peace and stability.

Building on these arguments, we find sufficient assumptions within the realm of constructivist school of thought well equipped to explain the pivotal change in the Western Balkans and furthermore the increasing interest to export stability, by participating in NATO and EU – led missions abroad.

### **NATO’s Involvement in Western Balkans**

The socialization of the Western Balkans was mainly conducted through three separate but interconnected tracks: a) Peace Building; b) Security Sector Reform and c) Partnerships and Integration Efforts. The common denominator for all three remains the prevention of human suffering, regional stability and enhanced political, economic, cultural and military cooperation across the region. Starting from peace building, through security sector reform to building and developing partnerships, all countries in the region have gone through different modules of interaction with the Alliance. Alexander Wendt, a core scholar in the field of international relations and the father of constructivist school of thought, recognizes three distinct degrees of ‘cultural internalization.’<sup>8</sup> Actors’ advancement to the next degree is highly dependent on their internalization of shared ideas, commitment to support such ideas and furthermore demonstrate ownership to those ideas. According to Wendt, the weak commitment reflects weak cooperation and hence weak internalization of shared ideas. As the actors

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Jackson and Georg Sørensen, “Chapter 6, Social Constructivism,” in *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, Third Edition, 2007 p. 165

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 254

move to the third degree they demonstrate strong commitment for cooperation and amplified internalization of shared ideas. Wendt's contribution to the field is not the mere introduction of the role of the ideas, but employing them during social interaction to facilitate actors' advancement to the next level. Through social interaction, the ideas allow shaping of cultures by assigning new meaning to material power and state interest. Therefore, the longer the process of social interaction, the better the chances to create and recreate meanings of concepts and create conditions for ownership and strong commitment to shared ideas.

This is exactly what NATO's long presence in the Balkans continues to achieve during the three tracks of interaction. The Alliance has succeeded to encourage and develop the spirit of understanding and partnerships among former adversaries in the region and furthermore, with the prospect for membership, ensure that the common values, standards and democratic processes are adopted, embedded and practiced with true commitment and ownership. This multi level interaction, development and engagement of distinct instruments of socialization that NATO employs are the subject of the next portion of the article. The interaction depicted in the following three tracks is what ultimately ensures a greater degree of internalization of shared ideas and enables the transformation of the Western Balkans countries from security consumers to security providers.

### **Peace Building**

NATO's involvement in the Western Balkans, since the early 1990s, was in response to the outbreak of hostilities and the bloodshed in the region among the conflicted parties. The total of nine military peace support operations combined between NATO and the EU, with different mandates have been deployed within the region.<sup>9</sup> They all played significant role in pacifying the Western Balkan at different stages of the peace building process.

The Srebrenica massacre followed by further escalation of violence in Bosnia was the watershed that prompted NATO to step in with its disciplining powers and bring the players to the negotiating table. This resulted with the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords in 1995. NATO maintained its role across the entire stabilization period in Bosnia. Firstly with NATO-led "Implementation Force" (IFOR) tasked

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<sup>9</sup> Ernst M. Felberbauer, Predrag Jurekovich, and Frederic Labarre, „Advice and Advocacy: Ten Years of the Regional Stability in South East Europe Study Group,” *Connections The Quarterly Journal*, Summer 2010, pp. 93-98

to implement the military provisions of the Dayton peace agreement and secondly with the follow-up mission “Stabilization Force” (SFOR) tasked to extend necessary support and protection to the civilian elements responsible for the peace agreement political aspects implementation.<sup>10</sup>

The Macedonian case witnessed even greater and more prompt engagement of the Alliance. As the ethnic groups continued to drift apart and adopt violent approaches for mutual communication, NATO’s active engagement eventually led to signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement in 2001. General Blease<sup>11</sup>, a former NATO HQs Skopje Commander depicts this engagement as highly successful, attributing the signing of the agreement to the socialization efforts undertaken by both NATO Secretary General, at the time, Lord Robertson and the EU High Representative Javier Solana.<sup>12</sup> On a larger scale, the peace building process was supported additionally with “Essential Harvest” NATO mission tasked to collect weapons and two other NATO mandated missions “Amber Fox” and Allied Harmony,” both tailored in support of the in country peace-building process.

NATO has been leading a peace support operation in Kosovo, supporting and building peace and stability in the area since June 1999. With over 6,300 troops from the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR), provided by 31 countries (23 NATO and 8 non-NATO), still deployed in Kosovo, the Alliance continues to maintain presence and provide security for all its citizens, irrespective of their ethnic origin.<sup>13</sup>

In retrospect, the peace building process proves to be a very challenging project. However, it has, among the other things, enabled the international community to facilitate and introduce positive transformation and re-introduce amity relations among the formerly violent adversaries. Ultimately, it came almost natural that after the military interventions NATO would remain in the region and assume responsibility for supporting the process of resuming states’ functionality and state building initiatives.<sup>14</sup> These initiatives and NATO’s greater involvement in the aftermath is what allowed the advancement of the countries to the next level of internalization of shared ideas and norms. It created

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<sup>10</sup> Ernst M. Felberbauer, Predrag Jurekovich, and Frederic Labarre, „Advice and Advocacy: Ten Years of the Regional Stability in South East Europe Study Group,” *Connections The Quarterly Journal*, Summer 2010, pp. 93-98

<sup>11</sup> Dennis Blease is a retired British Army flag officer who has served in the Western Balkans with NATO, the UN, and the EU. He is currently Deputy Director of the Centre for Security Sector Management at Cranfield University.

<sup>12</sup> Dennis Blease, “Lessons from NATO’s Military Missions in the Western Balkans,” *Connections The Quarterly Journal*, Summer 2010, pp. 3-18

<sup>13</sup> NATO’s role in Kosovo, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_48818.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_48818.htm) (Accessed on May 19, 2011)

<sup>14</sup> Dennis Blease, “Lessons from NATO’s Military Missions in the Western Balkans,” *Connections The Quarterly Journal*, Summer 2010, pp. 3-18

conditions for the learning process to commence and allowed dissemination of norms, values and standards across different functional areas, including the security and defense apparatus.

### **Security Sector Reform**

The idea of joining the Alliance has already appeared on the radar of the regional countries' leadership in the aftermath of the violent conflicts in the Western Balkans. At the time, it seemed as an overly ambitious goal considering the complex constellation of relations among the former adversaries. Among the other tools developed, the prospect for NATO membership was the main point of entry and the carrot the Alliance dangled to the regional players encouraging positive actions, transformational efforts and above all ensuring all adopt common interests, values and democratic standards. The process was strengthened through diverse assistance and NATO engagement on multiple levels, which allowed, what we label in this article, the second degree of internalization of shared ideas and paved the way for a successful transformation of the Western Balkans security sectors.

Most dynamic and all encompassing is the mechanism that constitutes the Membership Action Plan (MAP). At the 1999 Washington Summit, the Membership Action Plan was introduced to help guide the countries and strengthen their candidacy by periodic evaluations on their progress and regular supervision by the North Atlantic Council.<sup>15</sup> As the NATO membership is tied to meeting certain milestones and prerequisites, the Alliance has developed a set of criteria to evaluate the aspirants against five distinct areas that touch upon every aspect of a democratic governance. Their progress and related plans, the candidates present and submit to NATO on yearly basis in the format of Annual National Program (ANP) for membership. In simple terms, the MAP and the ANP indicate the readiness for admission, as well as the level of norms, values, standards internalized by each individual country.

As communication is highly regarded within NATO context, the Alliance adopted an exclusive strategy to communicate its norms, values and rules to the candidates. This strategy is based on an intensified process of socialization. The Alliance, on the one side communicates its fundamental rules, values and norms to the aspirants and on the other expects advanced levels of their implementation in the domestic system of the candidate. For the purposes of supporting the above mentioned strategy, NATO has

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<sup>15</sup> NATO Public Diplomacy Division, "NATO Handbook", 2006, p.189 <http://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/index.htm>

initiated an ongoing dialogue with the candidate countries. The North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), which was created in 1991 and later replaced with the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), is designed as a joint forum to facilitate the process of multilateral consultation and cooperation. Partnership for Peace (PfP), as part of the above mentioned exclusive strategy, was launched in 1994 to establish regular exchanges with aspirants through bilateral cooperation.<sup>16</sup> PfP was designed as mechanism that would serve as a period of transition and “probationary stage,”<sup>17</sup> wherein the candidates would grow into “producers as well as consumers of security.”<sup>18</sup> It is a channel through which the Alliance teaches the candidates about the rules, values, norms and practices that the community members uphold.<sup>19</sup> Although PfP is primarily intended to integrate states into joint force planning and the international military command structure,<sup>20</sup> it is also an avenue through which they acquire training that meets the requirements and makes them compatible and interoperable with NATO allies.<sup>21</sup> The PfP mechanism facilitates the process of meeting the NATO requirements on the one side, while on the other ensures the partners develop a “deep and permanent relationship with NATO.”<sup>22</sup> In the case of the Balkan countries this exchange *de facto* translates into working towards ensuring a seamless transition to the status of full Ally. The Partnership for Peace is a program that Albania joined in 1994, Macedonia in 1995 and Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia in 2006 and some still pursue with the Alliance today.<sup>23</sup>

The Alliance also maintains an additional communication channel through the NATO Advisory teams embedded within the NATO HQs, residing within respective candidates’ capitals in most of the Western Balkans countries. Besides providing direct hands-on assistance with the host nation’s security

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<sup>16</sup> NATO Public Diplomacy Division, “NATO Handbook”, 2006, pp. 186-187,

<http://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/index.htm>

<sup>17</sup> Frank Schimmelfenning, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 93

<sup>18</sup> Robert E. Hunter, “Enlargement: Part of a Strategy for Projecting Stability into Central Europe,” *NATO Review* 43, no. 3 (1995): 3-8, <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1995/9503-1.htm>

<sup>19</sup> Frank Schimmelfenning, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 93

<sup>20</sup> Daniel Deudney and g. John Ikenberry, “The nature and sources of liberal International order” *Review of International Studies* (1999), 25, 179–196

<sup>21</sup> Robert E. Hunter, “Enlargement: Part of a Strategy for Projecting Stability into Central Europe,” *NATO Review* 43, no. 3 (1995): 3-8, <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1995/9503-1.htm>

<sup>22</sup> Robert E. Hunter, “Enlargement: Part of a strategy for Projecting Stability into Central Europe,” *NATO Review*, Web Edition No. 3 - May 1995 Vol. 43 - pp. 3-8, <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1995/9503-1.htm>

<sup>23</sup> Signatures of Partnership for Peace Framework Document, <http://www.nato.int/pfp/sig-cntr.htm> (Accessed on May 19, 2011)

sector reform process, NATO Advisory Teams ensure, what is commonly acknowledged in the socialization literature, “internalization of the values, roles, and understandings held by a group that constitutes the society of which the actor becomes a member.”<sup>24</sup> This epistemic community of experts on the one side ensures that the socialization process stays on track, while on the other continues to provide a direct link between the aspirant and NATO, supporting security sector reforms in all Western Balkan capitals, including Serbian and Kosovo.

### **Partnerships and Integration Efforts**

Considering the high importance the countries of the Euro-Atlantic area assign to maintaining stability and security, great emphasis has been placed on the military contribution to peace-keeping and collective defense missions.<sup>25</sup> Military contributions to peace-keeping are important cornerstone that fortifies the role of the Alliance in the international security.

Military contributions to missions and international operations in support of peace and stability represent *de facto* a paradigm shift in the case of the Western Balkan countries. The countries from the region, once consumers and now producers of security, maintain an upward trend in respect to their participation in NATO-led operations and missions abroad.<sup>26</sup> In support of this changing paradigm, NATO has developed another set of thematically structured mechanisms to ensure partners are brought up to par to support and strengthen NATO’s role in the international security. PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) is a mechanism that helps the Alliance and partners identify forces and niche capabilities that could be used in multinational training, exercises and operations.<sup>27</sup> Directions for force and capabilities development tailored to enable the partners meet the interoperability requirements are communicated through the PARP mechanism, including recommended steps that facilitate the process. These steps take the form of the so called Partnership Goals (PGs), which ensure the partners develop armed forces better able to operate in conjunction with the armed forces of NATO members. While on

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<sup>24</sup> Alastair Iain Johnston, “Treating International Institutions as Social Environments,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 45 (2001), p. 495,

<sup>25</sup> NATO Public Diplomacy Division, “NATO Handbook”, 2006, p. 185  
<http://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/index.htm>

<sup>26</sup> Rakkasans Team Up with Macedonian Rangers, <http://www.isaf.nato.int/article/isaf-releases/rakkasans-team-up-with-macedonian-rangers.html> (Accessed on May 19, 2011)

<sup>27</sup> Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_68277.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_68277.htm) (Accessed on May 19, 2011)

the one side, the Partnership Goals provide the partners with a specific direction for capabilities development in accordance with NATO standards and priorities, on the other side, countries' compliance with the PGs builds a foundation that prepares them for full-fledged participation within the NATO planning process.

Two other documents that are part of this NATO socialization mechanism include the PfP Interoperability Review and the PARP Assessment. The former provides a snapshot of the PGs implementation progress, while the latter helps the Alliance and the partner countries to jointly assess the capabilities development progress of the latter, while identifying areas for improvement. Western Balkans active engagement with the Alliance, throughout the above elaborated mechanisms, is what precedes and continues at the stage when the partner countries declare forces and contribute to NATO-led missions abroad.

Lessons learned from deployments speak about the challenges that the multinational operations involve due to differences in operational and tactical capabilities by nations within the force, combined with complex cultural issues, command and control procedures and other support issues. By contributing forces to NATO-led operations, the contributing country gains invaluable experience in interoperability, command and control and operational procedures, with intensive interaction with NATO forces in rather dangerous conditions. When a NATO operation or mission is initiated its military authorities draft a concept of operations, which outlines the troop and equipment requirements necessary to meet the required objectives. As the concept of operations gets approved and released, the force generation is initiated, which is the stage when the countries receive requests to provide troops and equipment for missions. This request reaches not only NATO members, but partner countries as well.<sup>28</sup>

Taking part in missions has proven to be high on the agenda of the Western Balkan countries and almost all strive to positively respond to these force generation requests and provide capacities to augment or deploy in support of NATO units.<sup>29</sup> Considering that the Alliance generates forces for missions by drawing from the full-fledged members, the partners participating to missions become *de*

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<sup>28</sup> NATO Troop Contributions, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_50316.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50316.htm) (Accessed on May 10, 2011)

<sup>29</sup> Vermont Guard trains Macedonia military for peacekeeping missions, [http://www.ng.mil/news/archives/2006/10/102306-VT\\_train\\_macedonia.aspx](http://www.ng.mil/news/archives/2006/10/102306-VT_train_macedonia.aspx) (Accessed on May 19, 2011)

*facto* part of multinational forces composed of NATO individuals, formations and equipment,<sup>30</sup> and also part of socialization on another level. The importance of socialization at the operational level cannot be underestimated. If the above elaborated mechanisms ensure institutional socialization, personal contacts on the operational level ensure that the process permeates deeper and creates conditions for an advanced internalization of shared ideas. The socialization between participating countries develops a greater understanding of operations, communications and personal contact among countries nationals. Personal knowledge or mutual acquaintances among participating members greatly enhances the communication and establishes trust and confidence between disparate organizations and personnel. The experience derived from participation in NATO operations also develops support for the Alliance at the ground level, while increasing the level of interoperability.

Finally, while the individual national governments may support NATO, it is the operational personnel whose commitment and efforts make operations possible, integration successful and troops contributions sustainable. Building long-term institutional and operational capabilities and capacities, establishes and deepens relationships between NATO members and partner countries. This is a key enabler for the success of NATO missions and for sustaining the contributing level of ambition for each participating nation, including the countries from the Balkan region.

## **Conclusion**

The body of evidence thus far provides data that support the rhetorical commitments to peace and stability operations voiced by the partners in the Balkans with very impressive records of troop's contributions. Some of them even supersede the records of the long standing full-fledged NATO members. The Balkan nations provide an excellent source for support of high demand and low density specialties in support of special operations forces, military police and medical support, especially in the areas of foreign internal defense, foreign military training and supporting provincial reconstruction teams. These capabilities not only provide tangible direct support to NATO, but enhance and reinforce the missions that were once and, in some cases, still being conducted in their own countries. This truly demonstrates a shift from being a security consumer to a security provider.

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<sup>30</sup> NATO Troop Contributions, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_50316.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50316.htm) (Accessed on May 10, 2011)

Some pundits will be quick to suggest that as the Western Balkan countries become full-fledged members, NATO will lose the carrot that ensures greater troop contribution and the interest to participate to NATO-led missions and operations will assume a downward trend. However, due to the mechanisms the Alliance developed, an intensive interaction with the region has been ensured on multiple levels and the cooperation and socialization within the region pursued over extended periods of time. The three distinct tracks of interaction between the regional countries and the Alliance, portrayed in this article, depict their advancement through the three degrees of “cultural internalization.”<sup>31</sup> The learning process enabled shift in the states’ behavior and as the countries internalize shared ideas and demonstrate ownership to those ideas, the commitment for cooperation grows and matures, ensuring its prospects for sustainment. This purports that even when the countries join NATO, these ideas will not lose relevance, but furthermore will gain new meaning that is of a greater value to the new NATO member. The participation to missions has greater propensity to be sustained, due to the meaning that the status of the full-fledged member obtains and the meaning and value it incurs when contributing to the missions of the Alliance to which the country, as a full-fledged member, belongs and whose ideas and values it shares.

In summary, the participation in NATO- led missions and increasing the nations contribution to almost 5% deployable forces, from the overall available manpower, represents an avenue that Western Balkans countries employ to demonstrate the advanced degree of internalization of standards, norms and values and the results achieved with the modernization efforts of their security sector apparatus.

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<sup>31</sup> Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 254

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## A more determined, if not coherent policy?

### Republic of Serbia and contribution to multinational peace support operations in 2011

Marko Savkovic and Marko Milosevic<sup>32</sup>

#### Abstract:

*Up until 2010, SAF contribution to multinational peace support operations (MNO) has been very limited, due to a number of factors and internal contradictions. Principal actor pushing Serbia's MNO policy forward should have been the MFA, however, in practice this has not always been the case. Legal framework, completed in 2009, failed to notice non-traditional actors of peace support operations. Still not fully represented in NATO, Serbia has just signed the Security Agreement with the EU. Yet, Serbia's deployments abroad are fast changing in terms of character. With five years of delay, by the end of 2011 SAF will send – for the first time since the break-up of Yugoslavia – a designated unit to an MNO. Nevertheless, several issues, not having anything to do with horizontal cooperation between key actors will continue to hamper decision makers' ambition for greater engagement.*

**Key words:** Serbia; peacekeeping; armed forces; police; decision; policy

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<sup>32</sup> Authors are researchers in the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy ([www.ccmr-bg.org](http://www.ccmr-bg.org)).

**Acronyms and abbreviations:**

BIC Bureau for International Cooperation  
CNS Council for National Security  
CPO Centre for Peace-keeping Operations of the Serbian Armed Forces  
CSDP Common Security and Defence Policy  
DIMC Department for International Military Cooperation  
DUN Directorate for United Nations  
EUNAVFOR European Union Naval Force Somalia  
HQ SAF Headquarters of the Serbian Armed Forces  
MF Ministry of Finance  
MFA Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
MINUSTAH United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti  
MNO Multi-national operations  
MoD Ministry of Defence  
MoI Ministry of Interior  
MoJ Ministry of Justice  
NBC Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Defence Systems  
RAF Romanian Armed Forces  
SAF Serbian Armed Forces  
SLF Serbia's Land Forces  
STANAG Standardization Agreement  
UNFICYP United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus  
UNIFIL United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Contribution to multinational peace support operations<sup>33</sup> constitutes an intriguing phenomenon. Soldiers of different armed forces come in contact; work together; exchange; and learn one from another. It is hard to imagine any activity of (international and military) cooperation that affects individual servicemen and women in a more profound way. First, they interact with their colleagues who are most likely to be (if not always) representatives of organizational cultures whose attitudes, beliefs and values may not correspond to their own. This is especially true for UN mandated and led operations. As a result of adjustment comes valuable experience, essentially a collection of individual responses to methods of learning, procedures, insights and real life situations..

For policy and decision makers of countries which are “in transition” towards becoming “consolidated” democracies, participation in MNO presents, all in one, (a) impetus, (b) shortcut and (c) formative experience in the (democratic) reform and modernization of armed forces. It presents an impetus since it offers a promise of tangible foreign policy benefits; and it is both a shortcut and formative experience because it raises important issues of interoperability. In the words of Serbia’s Minister of Defence, “we have to see what others can do in order to know where we are (*Author’s note – in terms of training, equipment, execution of tasks ahead*)”. For Serbian Armed Forces, MNO are the perfect proving ground, where recently built capacities and capabilities may be tested in adverse conditions.

### **Planning Serbia’s contribution to MNO: a complex and incoherent “playing field”**

However, on the ground, SAF contribution to MNO has in so far been limited in scope and modest in numbers, due to a number of factors, or caveats. Some of these caveats are well known and have been outlined a number of times by decision makers, e.g. “Serbia will not send its soldiers to combat operations”.<sup>34</sup> Others on the other hand can be understood solely through the prism of a wider political context of “post-Kosovo-2008-illegal-from-the-Serbian-point-of-view-declaration-of-independence”, hiding a number of challenges or “traps” for those uninformed of the official discourse. This translates into (1) SAF refraining from participation in NATO-led operations, since in December 2007 Serbia has

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<sup>33</sup> From here on we will refer to “multinational operations” or just “MNO” in short. Other acronyms will be presented in brackets.

<sup>34</sup> This point of view is not shared by all decision (or opinion) makers. Take the MP (and member of Committee on Defence and Security) Vljeko Senic’s statement “Why shouldn’t Serbia’s military go to Afghanistan tomorrow?” <http://www.youtube.com/user/bezbednostpomeri#p/u/3/1w-zh-iDeyk> (delivered during the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy’s event, “Serbia and Multinational Operations”, June 16, 2010; statement available in Serbian language only)

excluded itself – to an undefined period of time – from any military alliance. Also, (2) policy and decision makers will look for “alternatives”, with more time and resources being allocated to operations led under the clout of EU’s developing Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The fact that the EU (unlike NATO) presents its members with no system of collective defence seems irrelevant at the point.<sup>35</sup>

The “playing field” of MNO is filled by the Centre for Peace Support Operations (CPO) under the HQ of the SAF; Department for International Military Cooperation (DIMC) in the Ministry of Defence (MoD); Bureau for International Cooperation (BIC) in the Ministry of Interior (MoI); and Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ (MFA) Directorate for the United Nations (DUN).

These units of organization are then joined by several prime policy actors. First, it is up to MoD and MoI to draft the “Annual Plan of Participation in Multinational Operations” (*Godišnji plan učešća u multinacionalnim operacijama* in Serbian). What follows is a debate in the National Assembly, first on the level of the parliamentary committee, and then plenary, after which the Plan gets adopted. Every single decision to send SAF in MNO is authorized by the President; however, the decision to send police forces is sanctioned by the Government. Decisions made by the President and the Government are then enforced by ministers. Similar decision-making and processing system are evident in surrounding countries, namely Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. This may enable policy planners in Serbia to learn from other countries’ experiences and to improve their own policies.

In theory, leading actor in Serbia’s MNO policy should be the MFA. First of all, MFA is involved in what is perhaps the most problematic task of all, which is choosing the operation Serbia will contribute to. MFA either leads or coordinates negotiations with other countries and most importantly, the UN. Representatives of this institution sit in an interagency working group tasked with planning, preparing and executing Serbia’s contribution to MNO, along with colleagues from the MoD, MoI, Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Ministry of Finance (MF).

Three separate problems come to mind in relation to this. First, interagency working group is not a permanent, but an *ad hoc* body. MFA also has to take into full respect relevant ministries’ assessment

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<sup>35</sup> True to the point, the Treaty of Lisbon contains a “solidarity clause” indicating that “the Union and its Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the target of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster”.

whether contribution to a specific operation would be beneficial or not. There is also the omnipresent issue of (building) capacities: MNO related activities are in fact limited to DUN, despite the (rather recent) establishment of Directorates responsible for CSDP and NATO within the MFA.

“Omnipresent” need for building capacities was evident when the first Annual Plan – which took 6 months to complete – was sent to ministries involved in the process. MoD, which took the lead when document was drafted, quizzed other institutions on their human resources, material equipment, and cost estimates. Besides MoI, not a single ministry expressed its desire to join. Less than a year later, when the second Annual Plan was drafted, results were the same.

“The playing field” has been so far dominated by SAF and MoI. Advantages of including non-traditional actors, such as above-mentioned MFA and MoJ have not been taken into consideration. A different – more holistic – approach would imply that non-traditional actors, in line with a widened understanding of security (sector) are equally welcome. However, legal framework fails to mention MFA, MoJ or any other institution explicitly. Instead, a vague formulation, “employees in state administration” is used to describe capacities other than SAF and MoI. In result, there is no incentive for other actors to come aboard. There is no initiative at all to take part in post-conflict stabilisation through joint engagements of MoI, MFA and MoJ. No one seems to perceive the rising demand for election observation missions, where strong expertise has been developed within the civil society. Also, no one has contemplated the simple idea of sending agricultural engineers to facilitate agricultural projects.

It is strange that in a time when regional comparative studies constitute a prerequisite to policy formulation, solutions adopted by, e.g. Croatia made no impression on writers of Serbia’s Law on MNO . Under the mandate of any Croatian participant come “activities of assistance to development of democracy, rule of law and human rights protection”. This strikes us as odd, since we have been informed that the “Croatian Law” had actually been consulted. That said, actors of Serbia’s security sector which might significantly contribute – judiciary, civil defence – are not explicitly mentioned in the Law. Judging by the official discourse, it is questionable whether they will be part of any future engagement at all.

What is also striking is how the Council for National Security (CNS) – latest and arguably most important addition to this framework – actually plays no role in planning and executing MNO. Yet this

has everything to do with how the CNS was introduced in the first place: with the *post festum* Law on the Basic Structure of the Security and Intelligence Services of the Republic of Serbia (2007). Concerned with the growing need to gather all senior decision makers and help them coordinate key decisions related to security of Serbia, up until now CNS has never taken into consideration the (growing) field of MNO. This comes as more of a surprise since holders of the highest authority – ministers of defence, interior and foreign affairs, heads of security and intelligence services, the President of the National Assembly and the President himself – are all members of the CNS.

### **Signs of a more ambitious policy to come: 2009 to 2011 developments**

October 2009 marked the “turning point” in Serbia’s engagement. It was then that the new Law (full name: *on using armed and other defence forces in multinational operations outside the borders of the Republic of Serbia*) was adopted in the National Assembly. Its most important feature was the new definition of operations. Instead of outdated and morally problematic “peace operations”, a new term was adopted, “multinational operations”. This was followed by a wider description of possible grounds for engagement besides traditional peacekeeping, in which all armed forces of former Yugoslavia were since 1950’s. These new missions are now defined in article 2 of the Law, presented as “joint defence operations” “under legal acts regulating matters of defence“, and „operations of providing assistance in answering effects of terrorism and terrorist acts of greater size“.

Also, with the legal framework in place, potential role of police forces has been finally recognized. Prior to October 2009, only did the Law on Police (2005) proscribe participation in MNO as a legal mission for Serbia’s police forces.<sup>36</sup> Serbia’s police officers have so far been deployed – not seconded - to UN mandated and led operations.<sup>37</sup> As well as their colleagues from the SAF, they took the role of (ceasefire and demarcation) observers. Only in MINUSTAH were they provided with an executive mandate, and able to intervene directly by overriding local authorities.

The Annual Plan for 2010 demanded 98 servicemen and women of the SAF deployed to UN operations in Congo, Liberia, Cote d’Ivoire, Chad, Central African Republic, Lebanon and Cyprus, with 36 police

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<sup>36</sup> Law on Police (2005), article 19, paragraph 5

<sup>37</sup> Option of seconding personnel, where individual police officers are practically employed by the UN for a certain period of time has not so far been considered.

officers taking part in UN operations in Liberia and Haiti.<sup>38</sup> In January 2011, Republic of Serbia was still taking part only in UN led operations, with 27 soldiers and 11 police officers deployed at a time.

The real shift, however, has been noted in the nature of deployment. In three operations, soldiers of the SAF are part of other nations' contingents: Norwegian in Chad, Hungarian-Slovak in Cyprus and Spanish in Lebanon. Speaking in February 2011, Serbia's Minister of Defence announced how, for the very first time, SAF will join an EU operation. Two officers of the River Flotilla are expected to board a Greek vessel and engage (with servicemen of eight different countries) in prevention and combat against piracy, which is a persistent threat along the coast of Somalia.<sup>39</sup> All these contributions were therefore modest in numbers, but a sign of things to come.

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**Participation of SAF personnel in MNO (as of  
January 2011)**

Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO)	8	Medical evacuation team AMET-15 comprised of 2 medical doctors and 4 medical technicians; 1 officer and 1 non commissioned officer (NCO) at operation's HQ
Liberia (UNMIL)	4	Officers – military observers
Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI)	3	Officers – military

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<sup>38</sup> "Operations from Congo to Haiti", *Večernje novosti* newspapers, June 3, 2010

<sup>39</sup> "Serbian Peacekeepers to join Greeks on the shores of Somalia", *Tanjug* News Agency, February 11, 2011

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		observers
Cyprus (UNFICYP)	7	Team UNFICYP-1 comprised of 1 officer at the operation's HQ, 2 NCOs, 4 patrol members (3 NCOs and 1 professional soldier)
Lebanon (UNIFIL)	5	Team UNIFIL-1 comprised of 5 officers at operation's HQ
Total	<b>27</b>	
Participation of MoI personnel in MNO		
Liberia (UNMIL)	6	Six police officers as part of the CIVPOL contingent
Haiti (MINUSTAH)	5	Five police officers, special forces designation (Serbian Gendarmerie, Anti-Terrorist Unit, etc.) perform training of Haitian law enforcement agencies

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Total

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UN operation in Lebanon (UNIFIL) should become the destination for at least one medical team and, later on, a unit (of unknown size) of military police.<sup>40</sup> In February, Assistant Defence Minister Tanja Miscevic presented to MPs sitting in the National Assembly Committee for Defence and Security that not only EUNAVFOR, but EUTM in Uganda should also become one of the EU led operations SAF will take part in.<sup>41</sup> Now that the long awaited Security Agreement with the EU was signed, technical agreement establishing legal grounds for contribution of Serbia's medical team to EUTM will soon follow.<sup>42</sup>

Finally and most importantly, the 2011 Action Plan highlighted how, by the end of the year, Serbia will send an infantry platoon to UNFICYP, and an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team to UNIFIL. Final preparations are apparently under way. Also, in the "White Book of Defence of the Republic of Serbia" this newly found resolve was reaffirmed. Through this important document, decision makers announced how "for the purpose of participation in MNO, specific forces of the Army and the system of defence will be designated then trained both in country and abroad" and that "the system of defence will, through continuous development, present its own capacities in light of preparation for MNO".<sup>43</sup>

SAF are in fact very close to having its first ever fully trained unit designated for MNO. Not without delay, that is. As early as 2005, SAF was undertaking training of unit(s) for MNO, one engineers' company, one infantry company with accompanying medical unit and a platoon of military police. Due to lack of political will for deployment, this resource eventually became outdated.<sup>44</sup>

First designated unit being prepared for participation in an MNO is a motorized infantry company of the Third Brigade of Serbia's Land Forces (SLF), comprised of soldiers from the 31<sup>st</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion, 39<sup>th</sup> Logistics Battalion and 310<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion. This company will be comprised of

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<sup>40</sup> "Debate in the National Assembly: SAF participation in MNO", *Odbrana* magazine No. 131: p. 6.

<sup>41</sup> "Serbia to join two EU led peace support operations", *Fonet* News Agency, February 21, 2011

<sup>42</sup> "On military cooperation between Serbia and France", *Tanjug* News Agency, April 7, 2011

<sup>43</sup> Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, 2011, "White Book of Defence of the Republic of Serbia", [http://www.mod.gov.rs/cir/dokumenta/strategije/bela\\_knjiga/Bela\\_Knjiga-Srpski.pdf](http://www.mod.gov.rs/cir/dokumenta/strategije/bela_knjiga/Bela_Knjiga-Srpski.pdf) (accessed April 28, 2011)

<sup>44</sup> Article 30, paragraph 3 of Serbia's Law on (using armed forces and other defence forces in multinational operations outside the borders of the Republic of Serbia) states that once training is completed, unit may be used in a period of three years after which it must be sent to training again.

professionals only. Training itself began on February 18, 2010.<sup>45</sup> Part of this unit has already taken part in an exercise organized at the Romanian Armed Forces (RAF) Babadag military training facility. There they worked together with members of both RAF and the US Army, preparing for deployment to ISAF operation in Afghanistan.

In February 2011, second part of collective training was initiated, to be completed in July 2011. After this the unit will be sent as a whole to military exercises which are carried out with live ammunition. Then every soldier and (commanding) officer will be separately evaluated. At the very end of this lengthy process, SAF will have at its disposal one infantry platoon; one section of military police; and one NBC section. Due to the requirement of rotation of forces, one third of the resource provided by the designated unit will be available for mission at any time.<sup>46</sup>

One should not jump to a conclusion, however. Earlier in 2010, while personnel was undertaking its first tours of duty within the Norwegian contingent, policy makers discussed whether SAF can manage to send an entire field hospital on its own. After it became evident that funds necessary for sending 120 to 150 soldiers (doctors, technicians, force protection etc.) were nowhere to be found, this idea was discarded.<sup>47</sup> It therefore remains to be seen whether the end of 2011 deadline is realistic.

### **Internal limiting factors: some issues are here to stay**

Yet many of the issues that hamper decision makers' ambition for greater engagement still have nothing to do with horizontal cooperation between key actors. First, MoI's capacities for managing police officers' contribution to MNO continue to be extremely limited. By acts that regulate the internal organization of this Ministry, only two employees have been assigned to duties related to MNO; only one position has been actually staffed. This stands in sharp contrast with SAF's CPO, where a number of soldiers and civil servants – close to 70 – are involved in different phases of Serbia's contribution.

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<sup>45</sup> "In Front of the Eyes of the World: Preparing First Designated Unit for Multinational Operations", *Odbrana* magazine No. 129, p. 20-21

<sup>46</sup> This "logic" of rotation is simple: one third of the unit is deployed, one third is preparing, and one third is resting and refitting. In this particular case, one third of a company comprises a platoon, while one third of a platoon comprises a section.

<sup>47</sup> "Serbia in Chad peace support operation", *Euro Atlantic Initiative* magazine, No. 11

MoI also encounters a range of problems when planning and implementing language training. Since 2003, OSCE Mission to Serbia has supported foreign language training, but with partial success. This was due to several key factors. Any intensive course would ask officers to take a four month long leave from duty in order to keep up. Instead, groups met several times per week, for several hours, all in course of several months. In addition, course contents were not adjusted to police officers' needs, and did not refer to terminology police officers use when handling their daily business.

Limited knowledge of English and French (meaning: limited numbers of speakers of these two languages) could also be one of the reasons why the SAF have still not committed a compact unit to any MNO. Yet, since obtaining interoperability has been perceived as one of SAF strategic priorities, Military Academy of Serbia has been implementing NATO STANAG 6001 when organizing and executing foreign language training. Above-mentioned designated unit has received its own centre for learning of English language, equipped with lecture rooms, high-quality audio facilities and computers.

Apart from debriefing which is mandatory and is executed no later than ten days upon return, there seems to be no other mechanism for institutionalization of knowledge and experience members of SAF and MoI gain while in operation. Only in SAF there is an informal practice of assigning servicemen and women to organizational units concerned with matters of civil-military cooperation (CIMIC). In reverse, this CIMIC approach shaped in Serbia, in post conflict, multiethnic environment could be later used as a useful tool in MNO. This policy has nevertheless been so far neglected.

Single greatest challenge or obstacle to any future participation is interoperability, or the lack of ability to take part in joint operations with other countries' armed forces. At the moment, platoon sized formation is at best what SAF can offer to the UN, EU, or any other partner. Smaller in size than a battalion or a company, incapable of independent action, this formation could be viable only within a "parent" contingent. This is exactly the path decision makers in Serbia have chosen, as we have displayed before. As long as servicemen and women are sent within a smaller team, there is no problem. The moment a contingent greater in size gets deployed there is a strong chance that some of the assigned soldiers (or police officers) will not understand any language other than their own. For instance, when Romanian forces deployed to Iraq, knowledge of English was fairly limited in the lower ranks: 80% of officers, 60% of NCOs and no more than 40% of soldiers spoke the language. RAF overcame this by having fluent speakers for liaison officers.

Right up until 2010, even if individual servicemen or women have participated in an operation there was no guarantee that his or hers career might advance in any way. This has changed since: in internal vacancy notices published in SAF magazines (“Odbrana”), official journals and web sites, when deciding on candidates to choose, previous experience of deployment to an MNO is taken as a factor.

Since until January 2011 the full professionalization of the SAF participation was possible only on voluntary basis, the only remaining incentive for soldiers and police officers was money. When abroad, Serbia’s “blue helmets” are paid from \$1050 to \$3000, not counting the salary they regularly receive at home. It is therefore easy to understand why over 5,000 members of SAF are open to participation in MNO.<sup>48</sup> Still, as CPO representatives’ had stated repeatedly, money plays a role only up to a certain level.

### **Conclusion remarks: a coherent and more open-minded system is needed**

Adoption of the 2011 Annual Plan speaks of significant political ambition regarding Serbia and MNO. However, only after a designated unit is deployed, Serbia’s presence will be felt and appreciated. The existing system needs to become coherent, with improved capacity to run the process, widen the base of professionals who are capable and willing to deploy, and raise the level of interoperability. The fact that the draft of the Law was written by the MoD left a lasting impression on state policy towards MNO: it is largely militarized and fails to perceive other, namely civilian actors in the *arena*.

The questions that remain unanswered are what our interest is, and where and how do we want to participate. So far, attitude of MoD and MoI towards MNO has been fragmented and at times too much focused on public relations. Rather shy and almost unwilling presence of MFA translates into a lack of initiative coming from other ministries. This has created a confusing image in the public opinion and led towards criticism. Population stays largely uninformed and confused on how exactly Serbia might benefit by participating in MNO. This is a risk that decision makers can not afford – if increasing participation is already on the table.

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<sup>48</sup> “Debate in the National Assembly”, Ibid

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A Unified Bosnian Army en route to Join NATO:  
From the Perspective of a Security Community

Bedrudin Brljavac

Abstract

*When the war in Bosnia ended in December 1995 with the Dayton Agreement the armed forces in the country were divided along ethnic lines. However, in 2005 the country's politicians agreed on defence reforms that led to merging former rival armed forces into a unified army of BiH as a condition for Bosnia to join NATO. Thus, today unified BiH army is making small but significant contributions towards security maintenance, both at national and global level. In order to explain the efforts of Bosnian politicians to bring the country into the Euro-Atlantic structures and send their troops into multi-national missions we have used security community theory coined by Karl Deutsch. Thus, NATO-related reforms have strengthened security and peace-building attempts among the former warring ethnic groups. Also, country's participation in multi-national peace missions abroad has been crucial commitment to the world security and peace. Therefore, today, as a NATO aspirant, Bosnia has practically become the country that exports security.*

**Keywords:** Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnian Army, NATO, Euro-Atlantic integration, Peace-building, Security, Multi-national peace operations.

## **From Three Armed Forces to Unified State Army**

In the early 1990s the whole world was shocked as bloody conflicts broke up in the former Yugoslavia, firstly in Slovenia and Croatia and then in 1992 in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter, Bosnia or BiH) in 1992-1995 the three ethnic groups in the country fought each other supported by predominantly ethnically-populated armed forces. Although a horrible three-year war came to an end in December 1995 with signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA), the separate armed forces continued to exist functioning in a previous form gathering the young people from the ethnic groups respectively. In fact, DPA established the Constitution of BiH that supposes division of the country into two Entities: the Bosniak/Croat Federation of BiH (led by the Bosniaks and Croats), and the Republika Srpska that is governed by the Serbs (Soberg, 2008). In the same manner, military stayed divided along ethnic lines.

In the Dayton Agreement, defence issues are not expressly presented as a function of the state (Perry, 2003). Thus, it has created separate armed forces, Bosniak-Croat, Army of the Federation of BiH and the Bosnian Serb, Army of Republika Srpska. After Dayton separate armed forces cooperated in the country, which spread their ethnic objectives from the previous war but now only through a different means. Put simply, separate ethnic armies had further increased an existing process of ethno-nationalization and ethnic distrust playing disintegrative role within the society rather than integrating war-torn communities through educative and training programs. That is, predominantly ethnic-populated armed forces had played a considerable political role in the process of indoctrination of their ethnic population within the country. The existence of mono-ethnic armed forces in the country both prevented integration of ethnic groups inside and country's integration into Euro-Atlantic organizations.

However, as the country strives to carry out Euro-Atlantic reforms, the idea of a common state armed force slowly has come to fore. Thus, in September 2003 the representatives from all three ethnic groups have agreed to establish a state defence ministry and a unified military command (Hawton, 2003). Further on, in December 2004, strong pressure from the international community resulted in the formation of an independent commission for defence reform which called for a set-up of a single armed

force at state level. In fact, forming a single army was put as a condition for Bosnia to join NATO. In 2005 the Bosnian politicians agreed to reform the defence and security sectors that will eventually merge the formerly rival armed forces into an integrated and unified army. As a result, today unified BiH armed force is comprised of soldiers from all ethnic groups and is making small but remarkable contributions towards security and peace-building both at national and global level.

### **Building a Global Peace**

In order to explain the increasing efforts of the countries from the Western Balkans (WB) and especially Bosnia and Herzegovina to enter the Euro-Atlantic structures and send their troops into multi-national missions we refer to the so-called security community theory. The concept of the security community was coined by Karl Deutsch and it has become popular in the literature of international relations after the end of the Cold War, as an increasing number of countries entered international organizations such as the EU, NATO, and OSCE to preserve peace and security. The concept of the security community was designated “as a contribution to the study of possible ways in which men someday might abolish war” (Deutsch, 1957, 3). Moreover, Karl Deutsch pointed out that for a pluralistic security community “the keeping of the peace among the participating units was the main political goal overshadowing all others” (Deutsch et al. 1957, 31). Thus, the idea of security community presupposes peace-building as its central principle.

Furthermore, the concept of “security community” is understood as a “group of political units whose relations exhibit dependable expectations of peaceful change, based on the compatibility of the main values relevant to the prevailing political, economic and legal institutions and practice within the constituent units” (Deutsch, 1957, 5). That means that countries by being part of a security community are united in their efforts due to their common values and norms. In fact, a security community is by nature supposed to have “shared identities, values, and meanings” (Adler and Barnett, 1998b: 31). For instance, it is shared values, identities, and meanings that unite a number of countries from the Balkans and hold them together in common efforts to preserve peace or abolish a possibility of war in the future. Therefore, collective identity establishes patterns of diffuse reciprocity manifested in the mutual responsiveness among the members of the community (Adler and Barnett 1998b, 30-33). Today, collective identity has been built among the WB states’ Euro-Atlantic integration process.

## **NATO as a Liberal-Democratic Organization**

NATO is an intergovernmental military alliance which constitutes a system of collective defence, but its members also share and defend jointly their common values and norms. Thus, in the preamble to the North Atlantic Treaty, the signatory states agree on the protection of their values, rather than just the preservation of national autonomy declaring that: "they are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law" (NATO: 1949). In addition, in 1994 the Partnership for Peace Framework Document was based on liberal values pointing out that:

*"Protection and promotion of fundamental freedoms and human rights, and safeguarding of freedom, justice, and peace through democracy are shared values fundamental to the Partnership. In joining the Partnership, the member states of the North Atlantic Alliance and the other States subscribing to this Document recall that they are committed to the preservation of democratic societies, their freedom from coercion and intimidation, and the maintenance of the principles of international law." (PfP, 1994:1).*

Consequently, applicant countries from the WB are supposed to make necessary reforms in line with the values and norms that the Alliance members already respect and promote. That is, after the Cold War NATO has paid special attention to the export of democratic norms to the transitioning countries. There was a great deal of literature about NATO's attempts to promote liberal-democratic norms towards Central and Eastern Europe (Schimmelfennig 1998/9; Williams & Neumann 2000). As Schimmelfennig points out: "states that share the fundamental values of an international community and adhere to its basic norms are regarded as legitimate members of the community and are entitled to join the community organizations. Consequently, we can expect NATO to admit all countries that share its collective identity and values and adhere to its constitutive norms. The faster a country adopts the community values and norms, the earlier it becomes a member" (2000: 8). Therefore, these states are in one way constructing a common identity of secure, democratic and peaceful liberal model.

## **Towards the NATO Membership**

According to the DPA, NATO had a responsibility to enforce compliance with the military aspects of the signed Agreement hence it deployed an Implementation Force (IFOR) of nearly 60,000 troops to the country for that assignment. The NATO-led troops have played a vital part in securing peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina since their arrival in December 1995 (ICG, 2001: 1). In December 1996 IFOR was

replaced with a smaller Stabilization Force (SFOR) with about 32,000 troops. As the country has become more peaceful and stable, NATO's aim was to pass responsibility for security and internal order to domestic military forces. As a result, NATO outlined a number of benchmarks to measure progress toward a self-sustaining peace in Bosnia (Kim, 2006: 1). On December 2 2004, NATO formally brought to end its Stabilization Force (SFOR) mission in BiH and handed over peace and stabilization duties to a European Union force (EUFOR).

NATO has been deeply involved in the post-war country's stabilization and peace-building and it is also committed to supporting Bosnians' aspirations to enter both EU and NATO. However, any country that aspires to NATO membership must meet two conditions, namely, an active participation in the Partnership for Peace Program (PfP) program and the MAP. On 29 November 2006, the alliance, did invite Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro to join the NATO's PfP program (Majstorovic, 2007: 640). Also, NATO's foreign ministers have agreed on April 2010 to launch a Membership Action Plan (MAP) for Bosnia and Herzegovina - a penultimate step for joining the military alliance. Although the MAP is not a final promise of membership and it does not commit the alliance to defend Bosnia against a military threat or affect its decision-making mechanisms it is a crucial assistance program through which NATO and its members provide guidance and support on specific political, economic, security, and legal reforms (Arbour and Clark, 2010).

### **NATO-reform Process brings Security and Peace**

In other words, the Membership Action Plan (MAP) is of utmost importance for the process of reconciliation and peace-building attempts among the former warring population. Furthermore, Bosnian authorities are making necessary reforms to become a NATO member in the near future. However, before it is granted, the Bosnian government is expected to complete the vital question of defence property. Indeed, one of the outstanding issues, is defence property, which should be solved before the multi-ethnic state is accepted into the NATO fold (Pop, 2010). That is, the MAP that Bosnia was granted will formally begin only when the military infrastructure is registered as the property of the Bosnian state rather than the property of the Federation of BiH or the Republika Srpska. Still, NATO officials declared that: "Bosnia has made "significant progress on reform." The alliance

welcomed Bosnia's decision to destroy surplus ammunition and arms... Bosnia also succeeded in uniting its rival ethnic armies that fought each other during the 1992-95 war, no small task in a country that remains ethnically divided” (VoA, 2010).

The prospect of the country's integration into the Euro-Atlantic community has to a remarkable extent strengthened building lasting peace and a long-term democratic perspective among the three ethnic groups. As Joseph stresses: “by putting membership “on the table” – with a U.S.-backed target date -- NATO will change the zero-sum dynamic that has thwarted well-intentioned efforts at reform and supply the crucial leverage to produce fundamental compromise” (2009: 2). Along with the collective defence, disaster relief, humanitarian aid, and cooperation through the NATO Science for Peace and Security Program the NATO membership shall make country more stable and functional. As John Kerry points out in his column, “the NATO membership has a proven record of promoting political progress across Eastern and Central Europe, and it could do the same for Bosnia-Herzegovina, too” (2009). Indeed, the reforms carried out en route to NATO membership have made Bosnia more stable and viable.

In addition, the establishment of the unified armed forces of BiH has become an important step towards strengthening the country and its government. This is also sending a positive message to NATO and EU members that they have a solid partner on the other side. As former U.S. Ambassador to BiH Douglas Mekljejni pointed out after the joint exercises of the Armed Forces and the U.S. Army: "This is just another indicator which proves that this country is strong and solid partner of NATO and of the EU member states" (Bjelajac: 2007). Simply put, NATO-related defence reforms have to a large extent transferred responsibility to the central government. Indeed, should contradictions in state and entity law arise, the state law is the final word, made clear in Article 35: “The Parliamentary Assembly shall exercise democratic parliamentary control over the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina and all state-level defence institutions” (Article 35: 2003).

## **Defence and Army at a State Level**

As a result of the reforms made towards NATO integration Bosnia today has established military structure that is controlled by civilian government as is the case in any democratic country. A new Law on Defence was adopted in December 2003 which reinforced state defence structure. That is, its enactment and supporting legislative action at state and entity levels eventually enabled the formation of a single state-level defence establishment, with a clear chain of command emanating from the state down to the entities, reinforcing the supremacy of the state for defence matters (Perdan, 2008: 256). Furthermore, the Law on Defence made the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina responsible for the protection of country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Also, the Ministry of Defence of BiH was founded in 2004 as a central state body that is in charge of the unified Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus, the country today has just one defence minister, one chief of staff, one chain of command and one army (Perdan, 2008: 257).

Indeed, the NATO-led defence reforms have produced remarkable results, helping Bosnia to create an integrated military that is a model for building effective state institutions and a credible partner to NATO (Kerry, 2009). That is, Bosnia has established a unified armed force in which people from all three ethnic groups are working on joint missions and defence programs. For the first time in the post war period the soldiers of the Bosnian army wear the same uniform with state insignia, they swear the same oath and serve under the same country flag. In addition, by forming a single army the country has made significant steps towards demilitarization so that the conflict that broke out in the 1990s never repeats. As Cerkez-Robinson from the USA Today points out: “Now, the three former antagonists -- a Muslim Bosniak, a Roman Catholic Croat and a Christian Orthodox Serb -- are training together as they prepare for voluntary duty in other crisis areas around the world” (2008).

## **Local Ramifications of NATO Prospects**

NATO membership is perceived among the countries from the region as a good way to become a part of democratic and open western communities. That is, in the region NATO membership is viewed as a major strategic choice that would bring national leaderships and their respective societies closer to Euro-Atlantic integration (EKEM, 2010: 4). Although all the countries from the WB are in one way or

another integrating themselves into NATO structures each of them is at a different stage on this road. Albania and Croatia entered NATO in 2009 and Macedonia is the closest member from the region if it resolves the name dispute with Greece that hinders its integration into NATO for the time being. The remaining countries from the Balkans have made significant progress but are still far from the NATO membership because of their internal problems. That is why the membership of these countries will directly contribute to the enforcement of democracy, peace, stability, market economy and the rule of law in the region (IDM, 2008: 7).

Furthermore, formation and successful maintenance of unified armed forces in Bosnia is to a considerable extent strengthening the idea of multi-national country as a possible political model. That is, unified Bosnian army composed of soldiers from all three ethnic groups working and training together is a proof that multi-national and multi-cultural country is possible and feasible when there is enough political will to achieve necessary consensus. As the head of the NATO-led peacekeeping force in Bosnia, General William Ward declared, “I think it sends a great message... that there is a commitment, a desire to move forward and get beyond the very destructive and terrible times that were experienced here during the war” (Hawton, 2003). This is the great message that peaceful and multi-national Bosnia is a possible project. As the first commander of the Joint Command of Bosnian armed forces General Atif Dudakovic said, “The days of Ustasas, Mujahidins, Chetniks, Partisans, and the JNA had passed. This is now the new era. It is the era of unified armed forces of BiH” (Huseinovic, 2008).

### **Good Neighbourly Relations**

Most importantly, looking from a long-term perspective integration of the region’s countries into Euro-Atlantic organizations will result in peaceful, stable and secure Western Balkans. In the aftermath of bloodshed from the early 1990s this is a historic opportunity for the regional leaders to establish more permanent peace and good neighbourly relations among themselves. Thus, in 2011 WB, indeed, resemble a more peaceful and secure place than in the 1990s. This is to a large extent due to the regional states’ Euro-Atlantic integration aspirations and common efforts committed on this road. As president Bush emphasized at the Bucharest Summit: “Today Balkan, is a region which is growing in tolerance and peace. These changes are a result of NATO determined actions and courageous choices of Balkan leaders, who have been working for leaving behind the violence and past divisions” (IDM,

2008: 11). Indeed, today it is almost impossible to think about the option of open war between the countries from the region.

In addition, NATO and EU integration prospects have become crucial for strong and dynamic regional cooperation among the WB countries themselves. In other words, these countries and their governments have come to realize that only by increasing regional and international cooperation (political, social, economic and security) can their strategic objective of joining the two poles of the Euro-Atlantic community be attained (Couloumbis & Ramaj, 2007: 17). The rationale behind the requirement for the WB regional cooperation as a prerequisite for both accession in NATO and the European Union is straightforward (Seroka, 2008). For that purpose the regional governments have implemented reforms such as closer cooperation with neighbours and multi-dimensional cooperation. Through its elaborated structures and effective missions, NATO has become a key player in shaping cooperative security in the post–Cold War Europe (Sanader, 2005). It would not be exaggeration to say that without Euro-Atlantic perspective the region would be one big ‘powder barrel’ of Europe.

A large numbers of senior officers in the WB militaries have obtained education in NATO and PfP facilities, and defence strategies have been adapted to integrate with NATO and ESDP strategic plans (Seroka, 2008). For instance, the Adriatic Charter has been an effective instrument that has proved the practical usefulness of the regional cooperation of some of the WB states. The Adriatic Charter is an association formed and signed in May 2003 by Albania, Croatia, Republic of Macedonia and USA to help their NATO efforts. BiH and Montenegro joined it in December 2008. As Grdesic points out: “the Charter has opened up many political, military, security and economic possibilities. Meetings, talks and contacts of the political elites of the three countries have enabled prejudices to be overcome and the trust built” (2004: 120). Thus, if this trend of peaceful coexistence and increasing cooperation is sustained, the Kantian peace proposition will be successfully confirmed (Couloumbis & Ramaj, 2007).

### **Bosnian Troops in Multi-national Missions**

In addition the NATO's Partnership for Peace Programme, which Bosnia joined in December 2006, includes the practical cooperation with the applicants for membership. Thus, Serbs, Croats and Muslims who completed training for the first army unit bringing together Bosnia's warring factions of

10 years ago left for the Middle East yesterday to join U.S.-led coalition forces in Iraq (Dervisbegovic, 2005). To be precise, Bosnia and Herzegovina deployed in June 2005 a contingent of 36 troops specialized in mine-removal activities to the Diwaniyah area in southern Iraq. A Bosnian unit had the duty to deal with unexploded ordinance and ammunition (Hawton, 2005). The unit is Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit and was subordinated to a US Marine Engineer unit in the Fallujah area. Bosnian contingent were set to rotate to Iraq for a period of six-months each. Additionally, in August 2008 a 49-man infantry unit was deployed to Baghdad to guard the U.S. Military Camp Victory (Reuters, 2008).

Furthermore, in 2009 Bosnia sent its troops to Afghanistan to join the NATO-led mission ISAF. In light of this, a small contingent of Bosnian soldiers has been deployed to Helmand Province to serve as part of the Danish Contingent providing security for their base in Gereshk (Plante: 2011). The country sent in total 10 officers to serve within ISAF. Although its number is modest, a deployment of the Bosnian troops to Afghanistan is one of the major steps forward in the country's road to become a NATO member in the future. In addition, participation in a multi-national mission in Afghanistan is vital to contribute to certain extent to international security and peace-building in the world. As NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer emphasized “NATO’s success in the peacekeeping and peace enforcement operation in Afghanistan is the alliance’s number one priority” (Hendrickson and Smith, 2006: 302).

### **Importance of Multi-national Peace Missions**

From its foundation in 1949 until the early 1990s, the central purpose of NATO was to provide a collective defence to its members. The end of the Cold War left NATO with an identity crisis of sorts: what was it, should it continue as an alliance, and if so to what purpose and under what circumstances? (Michta, 2001: 1). Following newly emerged conflicts in the world, NATO has launched a number of the so-called peace support operations. That is, NATO has formulated a doctrine on PSOs: “PSOs [...] involve military forces, diplomatic and humanitarian agencies [...] and may include Peace Enforcement and Peacekeeping as well as Conflict Prevention, Peacemaking, Peace Building and Humanitarian Relief” (NATO, 2001: xi). According to NATO, PSOs may also include peace enforcement missions that “aim to re-establish peace” (Non-article, 2005). So far, NATO has launched

PSOs in Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Afghanistan and in a support role in Iraq. Multinational operations hold many benefits over unilateral actions (Dijkstra, 2010: 1). Therefore, it is of utmost importance that Bosnia has been participating in a number of the peace missions.

An active participation in abroad multi-national missions has been of crucial importance, as the country fulfilled its main obligations on the road towards NATO integration. After the hard work on NATO related reform process Bosnia has practically become the country that exports security. In other words, Bosnian government has to a significant extent improved the image of the country that once was highly dependent on foreign security intervention into the one that has developed armed forces which have a capacity and common will to contribute to international security. As Thomas Moffatt, U.S. European Command security assistance officer in Sarajevo points out: “It is still a place that needs assistance from the international community for stability and reconstruction ... But, I think they are moving from a position as a security consumer to security provider. It demonstrates to the international community that Bosnia and Herzegovina can step up and help in some way” (Emert, 2005).

Also it is of crucial importance for young democratic country such as Bosnia to be approaching NATO as the world's most successful organization dealing with world security. In this light, participation in missions abroad under the umbrella of NATO or the European Union in order to contribute to stability and peace in the world has been one of the most important preconditions for Bosnia. With deploying its troops in missions Bosnia is slowly entering the family of peaceful and democratic countries which, as a rule of the game, do not wage war against each other. In fact, keeping democratic peace among them has become one of the most remarkable achievements of the Alliance. Simply put, the key of NATO's success lays in common values shared by its members such as democracy, freedom, rule of law, free market economy etc. (IDM, 2008: 7). Thus, integrating into NATO through foreign multi-national missions will strengthen the peace in the world and in Bosnia.

## **Concluding Remarks**

During the war in Bosnia (1992-1995) the three ethnic groups in the country fought each other with predominantly ethnically-populated armed forces. Although the war came to an end in 1995 with the signing of the Dayton Agreement the armies in the country were divided along ethnic lines creating separate armed forces, Such predominantly ethnic-populated armed forces had played considerable political role in the process of indoctrination of their ethnic population. However, as the country stives to carry out Euro-Atlantic reforms the idea of unified armed forces has slowly become a subject of discussions. Also, single state army was a condition for Bosnia to join NATO, which influenced the reform processes in the security and military sector. Thus, in 2005 the Bosnian politicians agreed to merge the former rival armies into a unified army. As a result, today unified BiH Army is comprised of soldiers from all ethnic groups and is making small but remarkable contributions towards security and peace-building both at national and global level.

Additionally, the prospect of the country's integration into the Euro-Atlantic community has to a significant extent brought security, stability and peace between the warring ethnic groups. Similarly, maintenance of unified armed forces of BiH has become an important step towards strengthening the country and its government. Equally important, integration of the region's countries into Euro-Atlantic organizations will result in a peaceful, stable and secure environment, providing to the regional leaders a historic opportunity to establish more permanent peace and good neighborly relations among themselves. Furthermore, after establishing unified armed forces Bosnia has deployed its troops to a number of multi-national peace operations. Taking part in the multi-national missions has been of crucial importance as the country prepares for integration into NATO. Most importantly, after the hard work on the NATO-related reform process Bosnia has practically become the country that exports security. This is important message for the world peace, indeed.

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## Regional Dimension of Participation in Missions Abroad

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### Abstract

*The events in the 90s had serious implications on the peace and stability in Europe and beyond. The collapse of the USSR and Yugoslavia; political instability and the initiation of democratic processes associated with transitional changes in post-socialist countries; the need to redefine national doctrines, including NATO's strategies; the intensifying effects of globalization associated with economic migration and refugee crises; increasing porosity of borders that allowed illegal crossings, trafficking of illicit goods and large influx of people to Europe considerably changed the security picture of the continent. In the areas that were recovering from the consequences of ethnic conflicts, the efforts of the international community to resolve the security issues between states turned out to be the appropriate solution for the acceleration of reforms in the security sector in the framework of fulfilling the requirements set for the Euro-Atlantic integration processes. In 2003 the Adriatic Charter was founded, following the pattern of the Vilnius group several years before in 2000. Thus, the region of Southeastern Europe, from users of services of foreign military missions, began contributing to world peace support missions. Although several years ago it was impossible, today the state representatives and army' officials think loudly about forming a military unit of the Western Balkans countries which will have the task to train the Afghan security forces, maybe as soon as year 2012.*

*Regional cooperation in the military missions is not an unknown practice in Europe. The Czech Republic and Slovakia, Scandinavian countries, Benelux and others regionally connected countries practiced sending their troops on joint missions decades ago. This paper, by analyzing the situation in the defence sphere, aims to explain the reasons that experts identify as the basis for the regional cooperation of the smaller countries in participation in international missions.*

**Key words:** NATO, Macedonia, Military Missions, Western Balkans, Democratisation

Participation in military missions is not an unknown word on the territory of the Western Balkans (WB): during the 90's the West military sent military contingents in former Yugoslavia in order to stop the conflicts and the bloodshed. Today, the same countries already have a history of their own of sending troops in military missions in the crisis areas of the world, as in Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Chad and in UN missions in Cyprus, Lebanon, Liberia, Sudan, Western Sahara etc.

The inseparable security of the modern world nowadays poses a new challenge upon the WB countries: regional cooperation and participation into missions abroad. Although many of these countries had a common ground and even more than just mutual security cooperation since not long ago they were part of the same state, that particular fact can be more of a burden than a relief because of the nature of the events during and after the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

Regional cooperation of participation in missions abroad sounds like something new, or something extraordinary, but in fact it is not. We cannot think of a conflict in modern history with just two warring parties. The 4<sup>th</sup> generation of warfare says that the wars today are stateless, the opponent itself is an integral part of the people and it is very difficult to separate it from the people<sup>49</sup>. Even if we look at a more classic approach towards warfare, we will again find more than two "participants" regardless of whether we are looking at a small conflict or a full scale, values or interests have made military alliances throughout the years. The recent past shows that even when a state superpower can accomplish a victory by itself, it engages into different kinds of coalitions<sup>50</sup> so it can obtain legitimacy for the intervention.

However, the question that floats is which missions should we analyze if we wish to take a look at the *regional* approach? The international law justifies interventions against any country that is a threat to world peace according to the Charter of the UN<sup>51</sup> and allows the use of force by the members of UN. Without going too deep into the question of mandate, we want to stress just one fact: all the states from the Balkans (except Serbia) want to become (or already are) a part of NATO. This one very particular

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<sup>49</sup> According to 4<sup>th</sup> generation of warfare, like in William S. Lind et al., "The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation," *Marine Corps Gazette* (October 1989): 22-26.

<sup>50</sup> For example, Coalition of the willing, or Antiterrorist coalition.

<sup>51</sup> Chapter 7 from the UN Charter (1945), article 48: "The action required to carry out the decisions of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security shall be taken by all the Members of the United Nations or by some of them, as the Security Council may determine".

regional characteristic has vital influence towards regional cooperation of the countries of Western Balkans in military missions. That is why in this paper when we talk about military missions we will refer mostly to NATO-led missions.

### **Cooperation between NATO countries and partner countries in military missions**

Cooperation of NATO countries in military missions is a logical thing because the Alliance itself is composed of countries with similar ideological matrix - liberal democracies<sup>52</sup>. NATO was created as a military alliance in 1949 so it can deter the threat from the Soviet Union posed to Western Europe. Besides political will for military cooperation amongst the member states, robust and very real military forces were needed for that reason. The military component was a very significant part from the Alliance. Along with that, military command structures were needed for presenting the solidarity and unity of the Alliance, and even more for the capability of command and control of those forces. In those different command structures<sup>53</sup> each member country was represented with officers and non-commissioned officers.

The dramatic change of the security environment of Europe in the nineties (mostly because of the disappearance of the Soviet threat) brought series of transformations in NATO. Until the dissolution of the former Soviet Union the area of operations of NATO was geographically restricted to the territory of the member states. The war in the Balkans helped NATO to redefine its role and to start operations outside the territory of NATO, and soon after that outside the territory of Europe, i.e. in Afghanistan. NATO's strategies started to change according to the new threats. A part of the transformation was that NATO built different programs and mechanisms for cooperation with the countries from the former Warsaw Pact and Soviet Union, former Yugoslavia and also countries from the Mediterranean, Near East, even states like Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and Japan<sup>54</sup>. A Partnership for Peace was created (PfP) with primary role of preparation of future NATO members for the duties and tasks of the membership itself. PfP in most of the cases served the countries for transformation of the armed forces so they can equally contribute in combat alongside the armed forces of the NATO members. Part of those countries already had experience<sup>55</sup> in peace keeping missions in the Balkan area<sup>55</sup>, but just as soon

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<sup>52</sup> We will not go too deep in this premise for the question of liberality of Turkey.

<sup>53</sup> The International Military Staff and different Components Commands (land, sea and air) dispersed all over Europe.

<sup>54</sup> For example, Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, Istanbul Cooperation Initiative and Contact Countries.

<sup>55</sup> A lot of countries from PfP and different arrangements took part in IFOR mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, Sweden, Pakistan etc.

as 1999 they presented their readiness to take part in combat in Kosovo's air campaign after joining NATO.

Another fact that influences the countries' regional cooperation is that from the beginning of its functioning NATO does not have its own forces but generates forces for each mission from its members. This means that each of the countries that want to take part in certain missions contribute with their own forces. Therefore, cooperation is not a question of choice or desire, but a question of necessity. This does not apply only for NATO members: its partners are an important part of NATO-led missions as well. In the "Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of NATO" from 2010 a lot of the attention is given to relations with partner states. Even in the preface it is said that the Strategic Concept will guide the next phase in NATO's evolution, so that it continues to be effective in a changing world, against new threats, with new capabilities and new partners. It offers the partners around the globe more political engagement with the Alliance, and a substantial role in shaping the NATO-led operations to which they contribute. And as for the relations and cooperation with Partner states in military missions, the strategic concept in Article 30 states "We will enhance our partnerships through flexible formats that bring NATO and partners together – across and beyond existing frameworks...We will give our operational partners a structural role in shaping strategy and decisions on NATO-led missions to which they contribute."

The scope of the cooperation between NATO and partners in international missions across the world is best depicted with this single fact: 48 countries are part of ISAF mission in Afghanistan, both NATO members and NATO partners<sup>56</sup>.

### **Conditions that predetermine the regional approach of the Western Balkan countries into missions abroad**

The transformation of the armed forces of the WB countries (together with societies and political systems in general) after the events in the nineties resulted in changing the principle role of the armed forces: a shift from defence against outside attack from the neighbours into contribution for regional peace and stability and support of the state's foreign policy.<sup>57</sup> Redefining the security strategies meant

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<sup>56</sup>NATO, "International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): Key Facts and Figures" (Data from March 4, 2011), SHAPE HQ of NATO, Mons, Belgium, <http://www.isaf.nato.int/images/stories/File/Placemats/PLACEMAT.MARCH%2004..pdf>

<sup>57</sup> The mission of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia is "to prepare, organize itself and train for combat and other actions in order to accomplish its constitutional role and function for defence of the Republic of Macedonia, and to take part

changing beliefs and opinions that have dominated the previous system with new ones compatible with the modern concepts of security. The armed forces had to expand the area of operations and start accomplishing their tasks outside their respective territory, in conjunction with other states in different frameworks, in order to respond to terrorism and other threats.

All the states in the region are still coping with the problems that have derived from the shift in their economy and political life accompanied with the effects of the global economic crises. The security in the countries is best described with the following facts:

- Condition of the region in general are stable unlike 10-15 years ago;
- There is a consensus about the Euro-Atlantic integration and future of the region that promises long term security, economic stability and sustained economic growth;
- Strategic reforms are conducted in the security sector; and
- The use of international security assistance is lowered to a minimum. From a consumer, the region became an exporter of security services<sup>58</sup>.

The Balkan area was rebuilt after the conflicts and wars, and the multi-ethnic society had to revive once again, now in a transition democracy. A lot of new models were exclusively used and “tried out.” The visible involvement of the international community in the region has highly contributed to the reform pace of the countries in many areas: reform of the security sector, training for and conducting military missions, conflict preventions, dealing with refugees etc. At the same time, the international community never lost interest or sight of the democratic processes in the Balkan area and continued with investments in regional cooperation. It is a continuing process towards accomplishing regional and

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in peace support missions, defensive and counterterrorist missions home and abroad, in conjunction with, or as a part of other collective defence systems (NATO, EU, PfP). Source: Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Macedonia, “Misija na Armijata na Republika Makedonija,” Skopje, Macedonia, <http://www.morm.gov.mk/morm/mk/ARM.html>.

The mission of the armed forces of Albania says that they are “actively engaged in the accomplishment of the constitutional mission: **protection of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, protection and support of the people in times of peace, crisis and war, as well as contributing to peace and security in the region and beyond**”. Source: Albanian Armed Forces, “Mission of the Albanian Armed Forces” Tirana, Albania, <http://www.aaf.mil.al/mat.php?idr=61&idm=430&lang=EN>.

In Croatia, the development of the key capabilities is “focused on planning processes and joint operations, as well as multinational crisis response operations, including Croatian Armed Forces deployment beyond national territory but within Allied Forces (NATO, UN, EU or other Coalition forces) and in keeping with Croatian national interests and resources”. [http://www.osrh.hr/data/about\\_en.asp](http://www.osrh.hr/data/about_en.asp).

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the first task of the Armed Forces is “participation in collective security operations, in operations to support peace and self-defence, including the fight against terrorism”. Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia, “Mission of the Croatian Armed Forces,” Zagreb, Croatia, <http://www.mod.gov.ba/en/text.asp?id=75>.

<sup>58</sup>Right now only two EU missions are conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, and one NATO mission in Kosovo.

common interest of each of the countries and, in a way, overcoming short-sighted national populist movements. The NATO membership, without any doubt, is a factor that will attract foreign direct investments in the area, bring the region economically closer towards developed Europe and expand the regionalism in the security area.

### **Dilemmas in the region for participation in joint missions abroad**

Sending troops in mission abroad is more of a political than a security issue. The use of military forces is in the narrow competence of the state itself, and in this case even more because the soldiers are sent thousands kilometres away from the state territory. The following things influence that decision: public opinion, expenditures of the Ministries of Defence the state as a whole. The biggest factor- what are the gains in term of the interests of the state.

Public opinion is analysed from the aspect of the support that the people give to the countries' defence politics. Unlike Western Europe where the orientation of the government (left or right orientated) can influence the decisions for sending troops on missions and where the (not) participation in missions can be very influential for winning elections, in the WB countries seems like those things do not matter at all. Maybe it is because of the impression that these states "owe" it to NATO the end of the bloodshed and the return of the security. The population in this region seems to be immune to the pacific movements in the world and it is not interested at all (or at least proactive) in limiting the military missions abroad. It is general impression that the people see NATO, EU and the membership in both organizations as an economic and social prosperity, a desired state, so the participation in military missions is seen as a prerequisite and a way towards the goals of Euro-Atlantic integration. Finally, this is not a characteristic exclusive for this region: the newer members of NATO, or "New Europe" in terms of former secretary Donald Rumsfeld, are more eager to send combat units in missions than the older member states<sup>59</sup>.

When speaking about the defence expenditures and sending troops in mission, there is one basic principle in NATO on this topic: The cost lay where it falls. What this means in simple words is that each country that wants to participate in a mission must pay for all of its expenses. Alongside all the expenses for training of forces, the country must pay for all the maintenance of force and equipment. It is a lengthy and demanding process from organizational and financial aspect especially for the smaller

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<sup>59</sup> Donald H. Rumsfeld, Briefing at the Foreign Press Centre by Secretary of Defence, January 22, 2003, <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=1330> (accessed May 20, 2011).

countries, in which a lot of contractors, subcontractors, companies and local labour are employed from the area of the mission country. Therefore the smaller countries when sending troops in theatre are logistically attached to the bigger states by signing mutual arrangements and their contingents are a part (under operational command/control) of the bigger states' contingents. The WB countries so far have sent smaller contingents in different crisis area around the world. The biggest unit sent by Republic of Macedonia on a mission is a company sized element in ISAF in Afghanistan (around 150 people). The same goes for Republic of Albania, their biggest unit is also a company sized element, and the total number of personnel deployed in Afghanistan is 250. So, it is not a surprise that Republic of Croatia's biggest unit sent on a mission is again a company sized element, and again in Afghanistan where the total number of soldiers is around 300. Bosnia and Herzegovina just finished the first rotation of an infantry unit in Afghanistan in April 2011 – platoon sized element.

When talking about the gains from the missions for the country as a whole in a matter of achieving the interests of a state, it is very difficult to say that there is reciprocity between achieving the interests of the state and the expenditures for the mission itself. Unlike the expenditures which can be easily calculated in Euros and Dollars, achieving the state interests cannot be easily measured. The membership in international organizations brings array of obligations and a spectrum of activities in the area of security policy in order to deal with risks and threats towards state interests and values. Some of the WB states, even when they were not members of NATO, were part of its missions and took their fair share of the security obligations. Their goal was ultimately to become part of NATO and EU, i.e. to become a part of the western world of liberal democracies. Their obligations to have 8% of the armed forces deployable and to have 2.5% of the armed forces deployed, lead in that direction. Ultimately, the general interest of the WB countries for taking part in international missions is to be part of the “international team” and not left aside.

The success of the contingents, their influence upon the reputation of the state in international politics, is also an immeasurable category. Thus, it is often said that the soldiers participating in missions are the country's best ambassadors. So far, the price of human life was not part of the calculation. That variable can significantly change the price of the mission, it can change the public opinion and support for the on-going mission, and it can even influence and change the country's politics.<sup>60</sup> This debate is not yet actualized in the countries of Western Balkans.

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<sup>60</sup> For example, Spain stopped the mission in Iraq in 2004 as an aftereffect of the Madrid terrorist attacks and the 11 victims in the mission previously.

The aspiration for regional military cooperation in the Balkans was first manifested with the SEEBRIG initiative (1998) - Southeast European Brigade, a multinational military force that can be used for peacekeeping or aid operations in the Balkans and elsewhere. According to the constitution Agreement<sup>61</sup>, the purpose of SEEBRIG is to contribute to the regional security and stability and to foster good neighbourly relationships among the countries in Southeastern Europe, in the context of SEDM (Southeast Europe Defence Ministerial) process, under the auspices of Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and in the spirit of Partnership for Peace (PfP). Also, this multinational brigade represents an instrument in crisis solving by its participation in peace-keeping operations and humanitarian assistance. As Adam T. Joseph Lopez, former commander in chief of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe and NATO commander of allied forces, southern region, has remarked, “SEEBRIG will not be a remedy for existing bilateral disputes, but it can help dispel the negative perceptions some countries have of others by broadening the dialogue among the member countries.”<sup>62</sup> The regional approach in military missions abroad was proven in practice in August 2005 when medical personnel was sent to Afghanistan as part of the Combined Medical Team in the A-3 format (Macedonia, Albania, Croatia).<sup>63</sup> These countries continue with the mission to date.

If we look at the challenges the joint mission of the countries of Western Balkans faces, some questions emerge:

1. *What are the consequences the state faces if it does not participate in a joint mission?*

Not all Balkan states are part of NATO, but as previously seen, that fact does not influence their decision to (not) send troops as part of NATO-led missions. We do not think that there will be some political consequences for the state however, that will not go in line with the countries present positions for regional defence cooperation and good regional relations. If there is an initiative for forming regional military forces that will take part in the ISAF mission, again, just like in all NATO-led missions, the need to be part of the “international team” will overcome the

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<sup>61</sup> See the Agreement on the Multinational Peace Force South-Eastern Europe at [http://www.morm.gov.mk/morm/sedm-pmsc/doc/mainColumnParagraphs/0/content\\_files/file1/MPFSEE-Agreement-comp.pdf](http://www.morm.gov.mk/morm/sedm-pmsc/doc/mainColumnParagraphs/0/content_files/file1/MPFSEE-Agreement-comp.pdf)

<sup>62</sup> Gary Dempsey and Spiros Rizopoulos, “Alternatives to a NATO-Dominated Balkans” in *NATO’s empty victory: a post-mortem on the Balkan War*, ed. Ted Galen Carpenter (Washington: CATO Institute, 2000), 146.

<sup>63</sup> Two more countries approached towards the Adriatic Charter (A-3 group formed by Albania, Croatia, Macedonia and USA) in 2008 (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro) forming the A-5 group.

narrow national interests even more because of the fact that the countries have already sent troops in the same crisis area. Just like the A-3 group, the framework for military regional cooperation could be the A-5 group plus some other countries from the region, under the guidance and leadership of USA. Perhaps the group would be given another name so the cohesion and the co-operation would be stressed and recognized, like Balkan-7 or similar. It is known, however, that the WB countries have a tendency to better accomplish their interests while under the leadership of a greater power.

2. *Can the security forces (Armed Forces and the Police) cooperate better than the politicians? Can the “Balkan syndrome” hinder the regional military cooperation?*

Unlike the general impression that the military is an organization that is inert, conservative and resistant to changes, the armies of the WB countries so far have shown just the opposite: they have undergone thorough changes and transformations, and are open for cooperation with other armies, especially when part of a mission abroad. It is reasonable to believe that not all the ghosts from the past have settled down, so some members of the armed forces will not have complete confidence in their Balkan counterparts. However, obedience of orders and hierarchy as one of the basic tenets of military organizations will help in overcoming those challenges, especially because an additional factor of cohesion is the common enemy outside the gates. Finally, the cooperation with the Afghan security forces while conducting joint missions, after the completed training of the Afghan forces, will dictate that the Balkans regional forces will have to rely not only in their counterparts, but also on their Afghan colleges.

3. *Which authority will determine the number, structure and types of forces and the details of the Balkans regional forces?*

From experience, the greatest challenge is to obtain political agreement among the leaders of the WB countries. After that, the actions will be transferred from political to operative level, for the lower echelons to set up the details. So far (in missions in the A-3 group or SEEBRIG) the command of the mission usually rotates between the members. The structure and the number of forces for the required mission is consistent with the capabilities of the WB states. The participation, even a symbolic one, is a great contribution to enhancing regional cooperation in the field of defence and security.

## **Conclusion**

The Western Balkans countries, in order to implement their security strategies, are continuously increasing the quantity and scope of the forces participating in international military missions, regardless whether they are being part of NATO or led by other international organization where they are members or have a partnership relations with. The contribution and the reputation of the WB armies are leading towards further de-stigmatization of the region from the past events. Even though the region needed an outside impulse to strengthen the will of political leaders for cooperation, they now have a history of their own in contributing to world peace and security.

The armed forces, when deployed on a mission abroad, have showed that they can communicate on the field far better than the politicians on the table and that their professional approach makes them immune to the challenges continually posed upon the Balkan area: political instability, economic uncertainty and tensed ethnical relations. The current regional cooperation gives the Western Balkans countries a fundament for establishment of regional military forces for a joint mission abroad alone or together with the armed forces of some of the greater powers. Either way, it will significantly broaden the regional cooperation and help in the integration of the region in the Euro-Atlantic sphere.

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