



CHALLENGES OF SERBIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

• COLLECTION OF PAPERS •

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Belgrade, 2015

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THE EDITOR'S INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

The Collection of Papers entitled *The Challenges of Serbia's Foreign Policy* is the result of activities marking the 20th anniversary of the Forum for International Relations of the European Movement in Serbia. It was preceded by an international conference held under the same name in Belgrade on 12th November 2015. The conference, staged by the Forum for International Relations and backed by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, had 16 speakers and debate moderators, gathering together over 160 participants from the ranks of government administration, political parties, diplomacy, academic circles and the media, as well as young researchers and students. It also elicited the interest of researchers studying Serbia and the region from quite a number of countries.

For twenty years now, the Forum for International Relations has been using the power of the spoken and the written word to influence the environment in which Serbia's foreign policy is shaped. Its texts have been published on a regular basis by the printed media and its words carried by the electronic media; it has provided analyses, evaluations and recommendations at numerous national and international seminars, conferences and public debates; it has given lectures at universities and released books and collections of papers; it has had contacts with statesmen, diplomats and experts; moreover, at 6 p.m. every Wednesday, it reviews stands taken and presents new stands, holding discussions with other parties both at home and abroad, and patiently developing a joint platform on major foreign policy and international issues. This collection of papers is but a brief representative cross-section of all that has resulted from the Forum's listed activities, it is the result of a constant sharing of views and one way of addressing the public.

The authors of the texts have selected some of the key issues of Serbia's foreign policy relations, as well as those that are not high on the domestic agenda but are an illustration of important foreign policy processes. The authors mainly include active diplomats as well as diplomats who have continued to publish their papers or teach at universities after their retirement from active duty, veteran reporters, former correspondents from world metropolises and major Mediterranean countries who are currently columnists of leading dailies or periodicals, scholars, university professors, officials of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as an author from the ranks of the medical profession, interested in health diplomacy. A group of authors as diverse as this implies different approaches, insights, narrative methods and focus. Nevertheless, their ongoing dialogue has provided significant room for the exchange of ideas and information and has been a constant arena reflecting the massive accumulation of individual knowledge and Serbia's long-term, as well as its daily, foreign policy challenges.

Jelica Minić

TWENTY YEARS OF THE FORUM
FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE
EUROPEAN MOVEMENT IN SERBIA

TWENTY YEARS OF THE FORUM FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN MOVEMENT IN SERBIA

Irina Žarin and Dragan Đukanović

Its Origins and the First Foreign Policy Platform

The Forum for International Relations was founded in 1994, as part of the opposition party, The Civic Alliance of Serbia (GSS). The party was a *successor* to the Serbian branch of former Yugoslav reformists, who urged the peaceful transformation of former socialist Yugoslavia in the early 1990's. However, in a widespread surge of ethnic nationalism in the post-Yugoslav region, these ideas failed to secure a significant number of supporters. At the same time, the then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), comprising two member republics (Serbia and Montenegro), found itself in almost complete isolation, without any realistic or predictable foreign policy concept.¹ Consequently, as far back as 1994, a number of experts on international politics and international economic relations (from academic circles, the NGO sector, the media, former diplomatic structures etc.), who critically reflected upon the isolated position of a *third* Yugoslavia, offering an alternative of sorts to such a state of affairs, emerged as a group in Belgrade.

Already a year later (1995), the Forum for International Relations joined the European Movement in Serbia, set up in 1992. In doing so, the Forum ceased to exist as an expert group under the aegis of the GSS opposition party, becoming an open-type body predominantly urging an end to the crisis in former Yugoslavia and the abandonment of the position regarding the country's isolation. One of the main goals of the newly-founded body was to ensure that contemporary international relations and tendencies were not perceived solely through the prism of wishful thinking and nationalism. Consequently, following a series of public debates in 1996 and 1997, the Forum published an informal alternative foreign policy strategy (*Proposed Alternative Foreign Policy Platform*), as part of a special edition called *Foreign Policy Volumes*.² This strategy provided a way out of isolation, better relations with its newly-created neighbours of the FRY, attempts to secure the country's re-admittance to some international organisations and bodies and the commencement of its European integration process.

¹ The UN imposed sanctions on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 30th May 1992 due to, as pointed out, the country's role in hostilities in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

² See: *Yugoslavia and the International Community*, Foreign Policy Volumes, No.3, Belgrade, 1997

A New Decade: New Foreign Policy Challenges (2000–2010)

In the years that followed, the Forum for International Relations of the European Movement in Serbia (EMinS) held a large number of panel discussions throughout the country, promoting its ideas, which reinforced the pre-election pro-European agenda of the country's joint opposition (Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS)). One of the most important stages in the Forum's activity was the 2000-2003 period, when a large number of its members were involved in the work of the then Yugoslav foreign ministry³, and their influence was especially visible during the preparation of the foreign policy address (24th October 2001)⁴, by the then foreign minister, Goran Svilanović. This address highlighted the need to fully re-define the foreign policy of the then FRY and accept realistic changes in the country's environment, which meant announcing its EU and NATO membership.⁵ Moreover, the address pointed out that the country had to strengthen ties with its neighbours and reinforce its role having just been re-admitted to regional and global international organisations.⁶

Some foreign policy objectives and tasks listed at the time, primarily those regarding the Euro-Atlantic integration of the FRY and its re-positioning in Southeast Europe, gradually changed following the handover of power in Belgrade in 2004 and when the new government, led by the increasingly Eurosceptic Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), took office. It was during this period that the Forum gradually parted ways regarding official state policy, which had primarily abandoned the idea of NATO membership (after 2007), and increasingly showed similar tendencies with respect to Serbia's membership of the European Union, actually referring to the efforts made at the time to find a solution to the status of Kosovo. In 2008 and 2009, the Forum released another edition called *European Volumes*, in which it problematized and presented specific issues expected to contribute to the new popularisation of the European idea in Serbia.⁷

³ Dušan Lazić, Jelica Minić, Milica Delević, Vladimir Vereš, Branislava Alendar etc.

⁴ See: Address given by Goran Svilanović, Yugoslav foreign minister, to the FRY National Assembly, Belgrade, 24th October 2001, in: *Serbia's Foreign Policy: Strategies and Documents*, eds.: Nataša Dragojlović, Stanislav Sretenović, Dragan Đukanović and Dragan Živojinović, European Movement in Serbia, Belgrade, 2011, pp. 286–311.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ The edition, including a total of six volumes, was published between May 2008 and May 2009, with the support by Slovak Aid and the Slovak Foreign Policy Association.

Although it seemed at first that the Forum's fundamental ideas had also been re-affirmed after the return to power of the Democratic Party (DS) in Serbia in the second half of 2008, what actually followed was a foreign policy of a highly nationalist nature in some segments, specifically towards the country's immediate neighbours and after the unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence. At the time, the foreign policy matrix previously promoted by the rightist DSS, especially with regard to Serbia's proclaimed *military neutrality*, was *de facto* also insisted on. In a way, primarily due to numerous media appearances of Forum members, attention was drawn to the disastrous effects of the then highly dispersive and unfocused foreign policy concept of *four pillars*, based on Serbia's artificial equidistance from four key players in contemporary world politics (the US, the EU, Russia and China), and to the country's unrealistic elevation to their level.

The Forum's Activity after 2010 and a Proposed New Serbian Foreign Policy Strategy

While marking the 15th anniversary of the Forum in 2010, a collection of papers by Forum members was published entitled *Serbia and the World* (editor Borivoj Erdeljan) with the support of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Belgrade Office. The collection of papers highlighted numerous shortcomings of the then dominant Serbian foreign policy concept, its lack of objectivity as well as its unrealistic approach.⁸

Realising that Serbia would fail to define its foreign policy objectives, tasks and priorities any time soon, the Forum published a *Proposed Foreign Policy Strategy of the Republic of Serbia in 2010*.⁹ The proposed strategy was based on Serbia's Euro-Atlantic prospects, a realistic view of the current international environment and an impartial perception of primarily political and economic relations with great powers.¹⁰ The Forum's document elicited the reaction of numerous professionals and the public because it was guided by the idea that the offered material could serve as an inspiration and encouragement to also adopt an official foreign policy strategy and pave the way for and reinforce Serbia's path to the EU. What is especially important is that several different generations, ranging from senior undergraduates to already experienced players in political processes, helped prepare the publication, which was yet another demonstration of the Forum's singularity, reflected in its multidimensional approach to current issues.

⁸ The end of 2010 saw the publication of the *Yearbook of the Forum for International Relations*, eds.: Svetlana Đurđević-Lukić, Jovan Ilić and Mihajlo Ramač; the yearbook also included important analyses by members of this body of the European Movement in Serbia.

⁹ See: *Serbia's Foreign Policy: Strategies and Documents*, eds.: Nataša Dragojlović, Stanislav Sretenović, Dragan Đukanović and Dragan Živojinović, op. cit., pp. 11–19.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

The Forum for International Relations and the Challenges of the Future

The Forum for International Relations of the European Movement in Serbia has over the past two decades remained a consistent critic of any effort to isolate the country internationally again and keep it outside the modernisation processes in Europe and the world. In this context, it does not indeed directly influence the shaping and implementing of Serbia's foreign policy at this point but, being a part of civil society, it is a major *corrective factor* for decision-makers in the sphere. In the coming period, the Forum will remain true to its fundamental non-party commitments, but it will by all means be focused on providing support to pro-European movements, forces and parties. The Forum will in particular focus on further improvement of relations in the southeast of Europe and the Western Balkans, cooperating with kindred organisations in the neighbouring countries. On the other hand, one should point out that the Forum has never been an exclusive like-minded people only type of club, but has instead become a framework for exchanging views on foreign policy issues and international relations in general.

In the coming period, the Forum will be ready to continue providing constructive support to both the final formulation of Serbia's foreign policy (its priorities, objectives and tasks), including efforts to align it with the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, as well as providing support for its effective and efficient implementation.

SERBIA'S FOREIGN
POLICY PARTNERS:
RELEVANT PLAYERS IN A
MULTIPOLAR WORLD

CONTEMPORARY RELATIONS BETWEEN SERBIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Tanja Mišćević

Introduction

Serbia's European integration process is in fact characterised by two parallel processes today, namely the implementation of the obligations assumed under a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) on the one hand, and EU membership negotiations, which should create conditions for assuming all political, economic and legal obligations arising from membership of the Union, on the other.

When it joined the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) in November 2000, Serbia accepted its basic principles that the path to the EU depends on individual progress in meeting the Copenhagen criteria and the implementation of the SAA, with special emphasis on the importance of regional and good-neighbourly cooperation among the Western Balkan states.¹¹ Primary importance in the process was thus given to the SAA. This agreement and the Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade-Related Matters were signed on 29th April 2008, and since 1st January 2014, trade between the EU and Serbia has been completely exempted from duty, except in the case of agricultural products considered to be extremely sensitive by the two sides.

In signing the SAA, Serbia assumed an obligation to gradually align its legislation with the EU *acquis* and to implement the latter consistently, although, in fact, it had started this process as far back as 2004. To meet this obligation, in October 2008, the country adopted the National Programme for the Integration of the Republic of Serbia into the European Union, defining the plan of legislative activities to be carried out by the end of 2012. In February 2013, the first National Programme for the Adoption of the EU *Acquis* for the period 2013-2016, was also adopted. The drawing up of the revised version of the latter programme is underway, it will represent the plan up to 2018 and will be in full alignment with EU law and practice; in addition to legislative measures, the programme defines institutional and financial prerequisites necessary for their implementation.¹²

¹¹ The principles were affirmed at a summit held in Thessaloniki in June 2003, when it was made clear that the future of the Western Balkans was in the EU; the Western Balkan states' European prospects were also affirmed in the European Council's conclusions in December 2005, December 2006 and June 2008, constituting the basis for the region's lasting political and economic stability and development.

¹² One should not disregard the significance which the realisation of the freedom of movement of the Serbian people has on the country's European integration process, firstly by closing the visa facilitation and readmission agreements from May 2007 and then through a dialogue on visa liberalisation, which was achieved on 30th November 2009. Also, Serbia's experience in absorbing IPA funds has been positive, considering that the IPA funds utilisation level amounts to approximately 98% annually. The elements of a sector-specific approach are in place, while during 2014 the transfer of jurisdiction to the relevant Serbian bodies was ensured due to the decentralisation of the management of IPA funds.

The implementation of the SAA means much more than just lower duties on EU goods - it is a test of the credibility of Serbia's earnestness in truly meeting the obligations assumed under the deals reached with the EU. Consequently, the implementation of the SAA, which is the initial test of whether a country is a serious candidate for membership talks, will be monitored throughout the negotiation process.

The decision to start membership talks, which was made by the European Council on 28th June 2013, the first Intergovernmental Conference held on 21st January 2014, a year and a half-long process of analytical review of legislation in 35 chapters (*screening process*, September 2013 – March 2014) and the probable opening of the first negotiation chapters are the basic elements of the second process. The main logic of the negotiation process is that EU membership is Serbia's strategic goal, as well as the means to modernising its legal, economic and institutional system. Consequently, its opening statement at the first Intergovernmental Conference underlined that, "...the Republic of Serbia sees EU accession as a mechanism for changing and adjusting to the conditions required from all EU members, and as a way to improve the overall efficiency and competitiveness of the EU, as well as its own reputation in Europe and worldwide. The accession process greatly boosts the political and economic reforms in Serbia."¹³

However, EU accession talks are a completely different form of international negotiation than standard negotiation. In order to become an EU Member State, a country must adopt the *acquis communautaire*, the community legacy, i.e. the EU's primary and secondary law. Consequently, the talks are centred around agreeing on terms and time frames for a candidate country's acceptance and the implementation of the *acquis* and the approval of potential transitional periods, which must be limited in their scope and duration. During EU membership talks, a candidate country cannot refuse to accept any fundamental standard of EU legislation but, by providing good arguments, it can postpone the start of its implementation.

The goal is to ensure that Serbia is absolutely ready to assume the obligations arising from EU membership by the end of 2018 so that it can become an EU Member State at the start of the Union's next budget period. In Serbia's case, agriculture and rural development, environmental protection and climate change, energy, the cohesion policy and industry and transport have been highlighted as areas of special importance in terms of their harmonization with EU *acquis*, international standards and the implementation of reached agreements.¹⁴

¹³ The opening Statement of the Republic of Serbia, Intergovernmental Conference on the Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union, http://www.seio.gov.rs/upload/documents/pristupni_pregovori/pregovori_uvodnaizjava.pdf

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 11-14.

The issue of accession talks and Serbia's progress in the process are monitored by the National Assembly on a regular basis, as defined under its *Resolution on the Role of the National Assembly and Principles in the Negotiations on the Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union*, passed in 2013.¹⁵ Civil society organisations, which gather at the National Convention on the EU for monitoring negotiations, play a special role in talks. In fact, the involvement of the National Assembly and civil society constitutes a major element of the negotiation process, because in this way it is society rather than the government that takes ownership of it and, as a result, its legitimacy is stronger.

These are more or less the standard elements of a candidate country's accession talks with the EU, and in fact, all the countries that negotiated their membership of the Union at some point encountered these elements of the process. Certainly, they were not encountered in the same way and to the same extent, which is especially reflected in the place and role of civil society in the negotiation process, as well as the understanding of the final goal of the talks. However, Serbia's negotiations are followed by many new elements which we in the main only encounter, and even at the very beginning of the process. We shall try to structure them in terms of obligations inherent in them.

A New Approach to the Negotiations

What is referred to as a new approach to EU negotiations in fact already started to take shape during Croatia's accession talks by the introduction of benchmarks for opening and closing talks on some, but not all chapters. However, the benchmarks, which have become an obligation for each negotiation chapter, but in particular the structured overall approach, were finally formed only when the decision to open negotiations with Montenegro was made. The move implies giving primary importance to the rule of law, namely Chapter 23 (judiciary reform, the fight against corruption and human and minority rights) and Chapter 24 (justice, freedom, security), which are the first to be opened and the last to be closed in the negotiation process. Moreover, they are given the role of a *controlling factor* in the negotiations, because the imbalance clause, stipulating that any standstill in the implementation of the obligations arising from these chapters should result in activating the mechanism for the suspension of the entire membership talks, is introduced. In addition to the opening/closing benchmarks, these chapters imply the setting of interim benchmarks and time frames to assess consistency in meeting alignment obligations in the rule of law sphere. Also, the negotiations are much more open to the position and role of EU Member States, because they decide on whether the benchmarks have been met or not. Finally, benchmarks are multiplying, which can be illustrated by the fact that the number of benchmarks Croatia had to meet was twice as small as the number of interim benchmarks Montenegro has to meet for Chapters 23 and 24 alone. In fact, one can conclude that each phase of the negotiation process is much harder to complete than ever before.

¹⁵ See the Resolution, <http://www.parlament.gov.rs/активности/европске-интеграције/документа.279.html>

The new approach is naturally the result of the experience the EU gained in previous enlargement waves and of the realisation that the Union is primarily a community of values and not just a common market. The rule of law, specifically the protection of fundamental rights, is considered a prerequisite of EU legitimacy, which goes beyond economic and political integration. These issues, which are of such relevance to negotiations today, are believed to include nine norms vital for European values, namely five core norms (peace, the idea of freedom, democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms) and four *minor* norms (social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development and good governance).¹⁶

Fundamentals First

In addition to the basic focus being put on the rule of law, focus on specific issues has been further reinforced by the European Commission's documents, the enlargement strategy papers.¹⁷ As a result, priority has been given to the economic governance issue and the need to start the reform of public administration in the early stages of negotiations. Needless to say, the reason for this is, yet again, the experience the EU gained in its previous enlargement rounds, when countries, which were not yet completely ready, became EU Member States, after which the degree of influence of institutions on the further course of their reforms decreased or, in fact, completely disappeared. Economic governance thereby acquired its own monitoring mechanism in the form of the Economic Reform Programme (ERP), which a country has to prepare every year as a fiscal element, including budget programming as well as strategic development plans. In fact, this is reminiscent of the obligations assumed by the Member States of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and is therefore frequently referred to as the *European Semester Light*, because once we submit our programme proposal, the EU assesses the quality of the proposed activities. The logic behind the document is that a country must also be economically prepared for membership and not only be capable of adopting laws aligned with the *acquis*. On the other hand, it is obliged to reform public administrative in order to create an administrative apparatus which will have the capacity not only to hold talks, but also to prove that it is capable of implementing all that has been agreed on; moreover, such an administrative apparatus, at the state level as well as at regional and local levels, must be prepared to meet all the requirements once the country becomes a Member State, i.e. once all EU policies become a part of its national public policies.

¹⁶ Manners, Ian (2002), Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?, in: JCMS, Vol.40, n°2, p. 242.

¹⁷ See the enlargement strategy papers since 2006, which deal with the enlargement issue and debates on enlargement policy elements, in particular the negotiations and European integration of potential candidates and candidate countries. http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/package/index_en.htm

A New Innovative Approach Adopted for Serbia

In the case of Serbia, there is yet another particularity, namely Chapter 35. The chapter usually covers issues such as the new *acquis*, which appears in various chapters once negotiations on this chapter are temporarily closed, as well as access to specialised EU bodies and special arrangements for some countries (e.g. the trade regime in the Neum corridor in the case of Croatia). In our case, this means the mechanism of monitoring all (present and future) deals resulting from the Belgrade-Priština dialogue on the normalisation of relations. This chapter has the same status in the negotiation process as the chapter on the rule of law, it has interim benchmarks and the imbalance clause can be applied to it: should it be assessed that there is no headway in the implementation of the agreements reached, the mechanism for the suspension of talks in other chapters can be activated. The additional problem is that there are no legal rules in this chapter, so that it is not quite clear which criteria should be used to assess whether sufficient headway has been made in meeting the obligations arising from the chapter. The chapter is something quite new even to EU institutions (the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission) as well as to Member States, and naturally Serbia, and as a result, it is one of the most challenging chapters to negotiate. What is quite clear are the basic principles of Chapter 35, namely it is by no means a substitute for dialogue but only a mechanism of monitoring all that has been agreed on; the chapter framework must not go beyond the dialogue framework or the framework of the agreements reached. Chapter 35 does not allow for the expansion of the normalisation issue to new areas, as this can be done through dialogue only.

A Changed Environment for EU Enlargement

The additional problem in Serbia's EU membership negotiations is a change in stand on further enlargement of the Union. The term '*enlargement fatigue*' has been present and in circulation within the Union for quite some time, especially with regard to public opinion of Member States, and, naturally, this has transferred to the political elite as well. On the other hand, one should by all means point out that the messages sent by the EU itself as well as its Member States are quite clear, offering support to Serbia's EU membership, assistance in the country's fulfilment of conditions and the monitoring of the impact of its reforms. At the same time, however, the domestic public also tends to interpret messages of this kind as a warning that the time is not right for further enlargement. An encouraging fact is that a huge percentage of Serbian people back reforms, which constitute the very essence of integration and preparation for accession, far more than they back membership itself; this is an indication of their awareness that it is the process of changing the environment in Serbia that is important and not the goal itself, which is membership of the Union. The trend, unprecedented in any of the countries that have held membership talks, constitutes a major mainstay of the negotiations.

Other initiatives which change things and at least somewhat soften this argument, such as the Berlin Process, should be highlighted by all means. This initiative, which was proposed by the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel and became operational in August 2014, is based on the identification of one of the biggest problems facing the Western Balkan countries, a problem that represents a significant obstacles regarding interconnections and connections with the rest of Europe, namely infrastructure. The initiative does not end there, because the second conference of the Berlin Process which was held in Vienna broadened its focus so as to include the connections and mobility of young people. In fact, efforts are made to make the region more accessible to all wishing to invest in its countries; this is an extremely important effect of the European integration process, this sense of partnership and belonging, and of being part of business trends. Quite interesting is the view that, *"Member States need to be more pro-active if EU enlargement is to continue to be the main driving force in the Balkans. Conversely, they should be prepared to encourage competitors who are ready to invest in the region with 'no strings (that is, no conditionality) attached'."*¹⁸

Challenges Facing the EU and Serbia

The economic crisis, the fiscal deficit, problems with the energy policy, the Greek crisis, the referendum in Great Britain, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and its deficiencies, the migrant crisis and the threat (and, regrettably, the fact) that Europe could be confronted with terrorism on its territory, are but a few of the issues draining the European political elite's attention and energy. They all fully reflect on Serbia as well. And just as the migrant crisis has shown, when the EU and Serbia are confronted with the same challenges at the same time, Serbia's response to these challenges must be a part of the joint European solution. There has never before been so much talk about Serbia demonstrating, as it does in this very case, European values in dealing with huge numbers of people trying to find safety in the EU via its territory. Serbia also demonstrated a respect of the rules defined by the EU member states in this particular case and showed that, undoubtedly, there can be no response without its engagement in the resolution of the problem. No matter how you look at things or how big this problem is, it has provided a major opportunity for discussions about the negotiations in much broader terms than just in terms of their technique, indicating that a true EU member country is not a country that is only capable of drafting laws in keeping with European law and practice, but primarily a country that shares its values of solidarity, tolerance and cooperation.

In fact, we have only managed to list all the challenges facing Serbia in its negotiation process, without explaining any of them in too much detail. However, it might be too soon to provide any explanations, because we are still in the early stages of the negotiation process, which will definitely take a while. The explanations, at this stage, could only represent a problem for the process which is indeed Serbia's strategic course: not only as a goal, but primarily as an instrument.

¹⁸ Stratulat, Corina, EU enlargement to the Balkans: shaken, not stirred, EPC Policy Brief, 4th November 2013, p.4.

A CHANGE IN THE CONTEXT OF EU ENLARGEMENT: WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Introduction

Jelica Minić

In the past few years, the circumstances of the EU enlargement policy have changed considerably. These changes are related to global changes and crises which have been generated in the EU and its Member States or have taken place in the Western Balkan countries, which are candidates or potential candidates for full membership of this most important integrated group in the world. What do the changes in question include?

Firstly, the enlargement issue has been marginalised on the EU's agenda. Priorities have changed under pressure from external and internal influences.

Secondly, changes on the priority list have resulted in a lesser focus on the Western Balkans at an institutional level. This was primarily reflected in the structure and organisation of the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) after the newly-appointed European Commission took over the running of the Union's affairs in 2014.

Thirdly, the Member States' role in deciding on and implementing some EU common policies has visibly grown, which in the given sphere has been formulated as the *nationalisation* of the EU enlargement policy.

Fourthly, the Western Balkans generally has a negative image, which leads to a decline in the EU Member States' support for further enlargement. The decline in support is linked with widespread *enlargement fatigue*, which is also the result of the Union's negative experience with newly-admitted member states after its last three enlargement rounds.

Fifthly, some Western Balkan countries are faced with decreasing support for further European integration, i.e. with *accession fatigue*, which is the result of both a limited capacity for reform in the countries in the region as well as EU developments that have a negative bearing on the Union's credibility and *soft power*, which have chiefly manifested in its enlargement policy.

Sixthly, the Western Balkan countries have registered modest progress in adopting and in particular implementing the *acquis communautaire* (the accumulated body of EU law), while their development after wars, sanctions and uncontrolled transition, lags considerably behind the European average.

All of the above characteristics of the general climate of today's enlargement process have a bearing on the Western Balkan countries' slow progress in their EU association and accession process.

Marginalisation of the Enlargement Process on the EU Agenda

The EU has gone through a difficult period of financial as well as overall economic and social crisis, which has placed great challenges before its organisational structure, governance mechanisms and major policies. The very survival of the Eurozone has been called into question, making the reduction in the number of countries that are members of this most integrated circle of European structures probable, especially after the latest blow dealt to it by the debt crisis in Greece as well as other EU member countries, especially those in the south of Europe. Fiscal control has been tightened, governance mechanisms have been upgraded and serious discrepancies in the assessment of the best responses to the challenges of the crisis have been overcome.

The enlargement waves of 2004, 2007 and, finally, 2013, when Croatia joined the EU, triggered a host of problems in the *absorption* of new Member States. The main one was the problem of how to ensure that reforms continued at the same pace as during the accession negotiation stage, when there were no mechanisms to influence the reform process. As a result, the *European Semester*¹⁹ was developed to monitor the measures and policies implemented by Member States in the economic domain but, more often than not, it was not possible to prevent regression, i.e. the process of going one, two or even more steps back in the sphere of democracy, good governance, fiscal and tax policy, utilisation of European funds etc. The above difficulties have resulted in the strengthening of the Member States' Eurosceptic political forces that, as a rule, are also sceptical about further enlargement of the EU.

One should add to this the difficulties and challenges not strictly generated in the EU, although the Union has been involved in their occurrence. They chronologically include talks with the US on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which includes the creation of a single market for goods, services and investments while giving preference to company interests over state interests in potential disputes, and different control standards for foodstuffs; the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis and a new *Cold War* with Russia, followed by sanctions which seriously damage both the EU as well as Russia, and the migrant crisis i.e. the *migration of people* from war-torn and poverty-stricken parts of Africa, the Middle East and even more distant Asian countries to Europe, which followed soon after.

How can the Western Balkan countries respond to all these challenges, which inevitably affect them as well? Their only possible strategy is to consider the enlargement process, with the above spectrum of difficulties and crises which confront the EU, as part of a solution rather than a problem and a counterbalance to the tendencies to exit the Union (*Brexit*), proving that the EU is still an attractive option and that its *soft power* still produces results in the Western Balkans.

¹⁹ With the aid of the European Semester mechanism, launched in 2011, the European Commission annually monitors and analyses fiscal and structural reforms of every member state, provides recommendations and monitors their implementation. http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/the_european_semester/index_en.htm

Lessening the Focus on the Western Balkans at an Institutional Level

Even though it was decided to resume top-level dialogue at the EU-Western Balkans summit in Thessaloniki in 2003, it soon ground to a halt. The establishment of the WB6 (six Western Balkan states) format facilitated the launch of the Berlin Process (WB6 summit in Berlin, August 2014), which is not an absolute replica of the Thessaloniki summit but nevertheless represents top-level working conferences and events of the countries in the region with the most interested EU member states (Germany, Austria, France and since 2015, Italy). The first summit centred around connectivity in the region itself as well as with the EU, focusing on infrastructure investments. The second summit, held in Vienna in August 2015, introduced topics including unsolved bilateral issues, stronger ties among young people in the region and cooperation with civil society organisations. Preparations for the third summit due to be held in Paris, are under way. In this way, additional dynamics have been provided and the statement made by the European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker to the effect that there will be no further enlargement by the end of the present Commission's mandate in 2020, at least to some extent has been softened.

Some EU member countries have thus softened their business-as-usual approach to enlargement negotiations, except that terms to be met by the candidate countries concerned have been tightened and multiply all the time. The DG NEAR composition suggests that the Western Balkans is just one of two issues in the EU's further enlargement rather than its exclusive preoccupation, as in previous enlargement rounds. Also, negotiation issues and pre-accession preparations have been transferred in part or, in some cases, significantly from an EU-individual country level, to regional organisations and structures such as the Energy Community of Southeast Europe, the Central European Free Trade Agreement - CEFTA 2006, the Southeast Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO), the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) etc.

What can the Western Balkan countries do to turn the above changes at least partly in their favour? Firstly, they must organise themselves better and use existing institutional possibilities, including the opportunity for candidate countries to join some EU institutions, bodies and agencies, in order to present their needs and interests in the most convincing way possible. The fact that Macedonia and Serbia have been invited to European summits dealing with the refugee crisis shows that there are some issues that make it necessary for candidate countries to become a part of the joint team for the resolution of European problems.

Nationalisation' of the EU's Enlargement Policy

An excellent analysis by the European Policy Centre (EPC), which covers 17 EU Member States, underlines that the opinions motivating key political decisions are increasingly sought from national parliaments rather than the European Commission, suggesting growing *nationalisation* of the enlargement policy.²⁰ This is the result of economic and political problems that burden the EU and its Member States and work against its enlargement. The emergence of new political parties and general election tendencies in Europe, work against the Union's enlargement. Bilateral disputes between individual member states and Western Balkan countries aspiring to join the EU, which have led to well-known blockages in the accession process, also contribute to such a state of affairs. The enlargement process has thus *become far more unpredictable and increasingly dependent on politics in EU Member States rather than on progress within the region.*²¹

What can the Western Balkan countries do to respond to the *nationalisation* of enlargement? Their approach to Brussels-based institutions and Member States must be adapted to the changes in the EU. They must make a much greater diplomatic effort in addressing the European Parliament, the European Council, the rotating EU presidency and, finally, the Member States themselves, their governments, parliaments, political parties and the general public.

A Negative Image of the Western Balkans and the Declining Support of Member States for Further Enlargement

The support of Member States for the Union's further enlargement to the Western Balkans is on the decline. However, people's and politicians' views differ on the matter. Consequently, in the region's immediate neighbourhood (Austria, Italy, Hungary), politicians visibly support and encourage their Balkan neighbours, while the people do not support this to the same extent. The region's particularities related to a legacy of war, weak and unstable countries, ethnic tensions and the slow transition process, give rise to opposition to and scepticism about the capabilities of countries in the region to improve life in the EU.

The unfavourable image of the Western Balkans is further compounded by numerous open issues and bilateral disputes among the Western Balkan countries themselves as well as with their EU neighbours; the influx of 'false' asylum seekers from the region following the liberalisation of the visa regime and insufficient and sporadic information about the region, which mainly concerns internal or bilateral crises and tensions.

The Western Balkan countries ought to do much more both individually as well as collectively to improve the volume and quality of positive information concerning real-life facts, processes and successful results in the region, their potential competitive advantages and the values they can bring by joining the Union.

²⁰ *EU member states and Enlargement towards the Balkans*, eds. Rosa Balfour and Corina Stratulat, European Policy Centre Issue Paper No.79, July 2015, p.1.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p.2

Declining Support for European Integration in Some Western Balkan Countries

The Western Balkan countries lack a good system of communicating information concerning European integration and the reforms it entails to parliaments, business and academic circles, the professional community and the general public. Insufficient coordination among state institutions in informing the parties benefiting most from the process, as well as the general public, by all means contributes to this.²² The situation is changing to the extent that the channelling of non-repayable IPA funds from a technical assistance level to specific projects is more transparent. The growing involvement of professional and academic circles and sector-specific target groups in EU programmes and agencies open to the countries in the region contributes to this.²³ The situation is somewhat better in administration both at state as well as local levels, especially in border areas, where local communities increasingly initiate and take part in cross-border cooperation projects. However, generally speaking, both the quantity and quality of information are considered to be insufficient.²⁴

Accession fatigue is largely the result of politicians and experts presenting European integration in the media in such a way which fails to recognise the real effect it has on people's lives. Not enough is being done to promote what has been achieved so far, the reforms that have had positive effects and the amount of assistance received, or our prevailing dependence on the EU in terms of trade, investment and technology, compared to all other international partners. However, due to the slow pace of the integration process and the increasingly complex and challenging conditions, make EU membership seem more and more like a moving target. One should add to this the deluge of media reports on problems within the EU itself, ranging from the economic crisis and its social and political consequences, to difficulties encountered in economic governance in major integration aspects, to *Grexit and Brexit* and the way the refugee crisis is managed. Information of this kind does not help increase EU popularity, leading instead to the people's growing scepticism about the Union's future and the prospects for its further enlargement. It is not therefore surprising that support for EU membership in some countries in the region, and Serbia in particular, registers a downward trend.²⁵

It is vital that the Western Balkan countries promote communication with the public in an easy-to-understand and acceptable way and address the increasingly negative perception of the Union with the help of EU delegations in the region and Brussels' institutions.

²² *Communication Strategy for the Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union*, European Integration Office of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade, 2011, p.10.

²³ The programmes concern different areas such as science, university education, young people, the environment, the fight against discrimination, the fight against social exclusion, gender equality, consumer protection, the promotion of fiscal system functioning, transport, intelligent energy etc. See: *Vodič kroz programe Evropske unije* [Guide to EU Programmes], Dragana Bass, Ivan Knežević, Nataša Dragojlović, European Movement in Serbia, Belgrade, 2014,, <http://www.emins.org/uploads/useruploads/knjige/Vodic-kroz-programe-EU-za-web.pdf>

²⁴ *Communication Strategy for the Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union*, p.12.

²⁵ See: *Balkan Barometer 2015*, Regional Cooperation Council, Sarajevo 2015, p. 45. http://www.rcc.int/seeds/files/RCC_BalkanBarometer2015_PublicOpinion_FIN_forWeb.pdf

Limited Headway in the Adoption and Implementation of the Acquis and Insufficient Development

Following the end of Croatia's EU accession talks and its membership of the Union in 2013, the structure of and time frame for the opening of negotiation chapters changed for the remaining Western Balkan countries. Chapters 23 and 24, defining the rule of law and opened in previous cycles of pre-accession talks at the end of the negotiation process, were placed centre stage. The practice was introduced in 2012 when pre-accession talks with Montenegro opened, while economic governance and public administration reform were listed as negotiation priorities in 2013 and 2014 respectively. This marked the introduction of the EU's new negotiation approach, which immediately directed the negotiation process to key issues (*fundamentals first*).²⁶ The changes were justified by the slow progress of the countries in the region in areas crucial for the preparation of future Member States for admission to the EU and meeting the Copenhagen criteria.

The Western Balkans is characterised by extreme imbalances and low competitiveness, high unemployment and growth that fails to create new jobs (characteristic of the 2001-2008 period, when solid economic growth was registered in the region), as well as unfavourable structural changes, based on the expansion of the service sector at the expense of industrial development (deindustrialisation), and the structure of foreign direct investment, which is such as to greatly dictate this change in direction. The outbreak of the world financial crisis, followed by the world economic crisis soon after, has additionally contributed to the region's lagging economy and slowness in catching up with the average development level of EU Member States.²⁷ Great dependence on the EU market and investments proved to be a negative factor during the crisis, because it largely spilled over into the region due to a high level of economic integration.

The Western Balkan countries depend on each other and will therefore have to use the potential of regional cooperation in the best way possible in order to speed up their economic and social progress and European integration. Business circles are already using this potential considerably. However, far more should be done to highlight each success, each achievement, all the existing resources that could back change and reform, as well as the sectors which could become the region's recognisable brand and the basis of its growth, exports and the creation of new jobs (organic food, tourism, information and communications technology (ICT), creative industries, the metal manufacturing sector, infrastructure, etc.). Everything that can contribute to the region's good image is encouragement to its people, supporting the argument that the EU needs the region as much as the region needs the EU.

²⁶ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-1100_en.htm

²⁷ The Western Balkan countries' GDP per capita on average amounts to about 35% of the EU's average income level.

THE US IN TRANSITION

Momčilo Pantelić

The US has been speedily shaping the world for quite some time, but the world has significantly changed, crossing the line set by US guidelines so that now the US itself has to adapt to global changes.

The US affirms itself as a world leader by encouraging other countries to embrace the changes it makes internally, having the common good in mind. Such a message was sent from Washington following President Barack Obama's decision to reject the disputed Keystone XL oil pipeline project, aiming to show the US and himself in a new role, the role of a global leader in the fight against climatic cataclysms, by calling for greater protection of the environment of his fellow countrymen.

Obama's initiative has no chance of succeeding, it has encountered fierce opposition both at home and abroad, but it has at least a triple transition aspect. Firstly, the US has never been at the forefront of the campaign for cleaner atmosphere and, consequently, the current US administration's aspiration to spearhead the movement for the planet's recovery could help the country win recognition as a power that does not shrink from undergoing essential pacifist transformation. Secondly, such an uncharacteristic move would in part compensate for its declining influence in other global affairs. Thirdly, Obama's move aims to make concern for the well-being of mankind, which surpasses the scope of strategic results achieved regionally and locally, such as the nuclear deal with Iran, the normalisation of relations with Cuba, and the reform of the domestic health care as well as financial system, part of his historical legacy.

All things considered, the US is an unregistered champion of transition and its boomerang effect. At the end of the last century, it managed to ensure the transition and adaptation of nearly all countries to its model only to find itself in transition now, adapting co-existence with systems that identify with its guidelines, and finding a signpost for their transformation in its rivals, even if this means maintaining partnership ties when mutual interests dictate.

The US transition from domination to different forms of adaptation can be compared to the challenges of transition from a one-party regime to a multi-party system. Currently, the emerging multipolar world does not seem at all more stable or more promising than the disintegrating unipolar world, specifically in view of the devastation in Syria and Ukraine and the continued chaos in Iraq and Afghanistan, and of their effects, including the current exodus, the proportions of which threaten to overwhelm the reception capacity of the uncoordinated EU and its sympathising neighbours. Nothing good can come of this if the decentralised world repeats the mistakes of US centralisation and, instead of unilateral autocracy, imposes multilateral autocracy (which contributed to former Yugoslavia's disintegration resulting in war).

As indisputably the only superpower (capable of wielding its power throughout the world, relying on its military, economic, innovatory, technological and communications supremacy), the US has the opportunity to contribute vitally to (quite rare) a peaceful transition in global relations and determining its new position (confident that it will keep its leadership status). Based on numerous available analyses, this would imply in a nutshell the following moves: 1. to define, on a new basis, international relations, primarily with its ally, an uncoordinated Europe, its competitor, China and rivalry-prone Russia, in order to improve cooperation in alleviating the threats looming over humanity (climatic cataclysms, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, alleviation of explosive inequality etc.) and at least reduce the risk of a big conflict that would shake the entire world; 2. to reform international institutions and international law so as to reflect more realistically the balance of power and needs in the world, which includes a more subtle method of determining the scope of spreading globalisation and narrowing national sovereignty, and 3. to eliminate internal political hurdles to such external arrangements.

The ideological obstacles to greater US adaptability and constructive action, most frequently identified in the country itself, include insisting on it being an *exceptional* and *indispensable* (vital, invaluable) nation in world relations. Both features are indisputable from the point of view of its superpower status, but are rather debatable when they reflect its tendency to exempt itself from observing international rules of conduct, in the development of which it has played a key role.

This shortcoming has been pointed out by many experts, including renowned US globalist Joseph Nye, who has speculated as to whether the US can keep its leadership status in global affairs when other countries see that its law-makers keep blocking international cooperation. Former Spanish foreign minister and World Bank official Ana Palacio, who has called attention to the fact that the US has failed to ratify a series of major international treaties and that it tends to exempt itself from the rules it itself promotes and, more often than not, imposes wherever it can, is much of the same view. According to her, it would be better for both the US as well as the entire world if it acted as an *indispensable partner* rather than an *indispensable power*.

Still, the fact remains that the US continues to rearrange the world more than the world rearranges the US or the country rearranges itself. This is not just the result of its supremacy in testing the strength of others, but also of its inability to come to terms with its own weaknesses.

Richard Haass, president of the influential New York-based Council on Foreign Relations, warned earlier in an article published by the Foreign Affairs magazine that the greatest threat to US security in the foreseeable future was the country's growing political non-functionality. He was primarily referring to bipartisan skirmishing that frequently slows down a government's efficiency, even though the speed of decision-making has become an increasingly decisive factor in addressing the challenges of *accelerating history*.

The dissatisfaction over the growing influence of money on political decision-making is spreading, the general feeling being that the process has taken hold so much that it even undermines the foundations of democracy. Former US president Jimmy Carter has recently even stated that the system has warped into an 'oligarchy' and that unlimited political bribery plays an increasingly decisive role in presidential elections.

The race for party nominations for the US president partly confirms this. It is breaking records in terms of funding, even though public dissatisfaction with the offered candidacies grows. Namely, many object to the contours of nepotism that Hillary Clinton and Jeb Bush personify, which contributes to the growing rating of Donald Trump, a multimillionaire with no political experience, and Senator Bernie Sanders, a self-proclaimed socialist. The impression that should the competition remain the same, the American people will have one of the least attractive offers for the office of US president in recent history is not unfounded.

One should recall that Obama was elected US president in 2008 and then re-elected in 2012, which the world largely welcomed due to his being a leader personalising the general need to redefine both the US as well as overall international relations. The fact that he was the first black person to be elected US president rekindled hopes that other positive miracles could happen, too. He did try to fulfil those needs and hopes but it turned out, which was realistic and might have been expected, that systems, internal and external alike, did not allow for changes to be made by a pro-reform individual, even though he is considered to be the most powerful man in the world. It was as if all actual power-holders existing even outside legal bodies had conspired to prove that essential changes were not possible, regardless of how the majority people at the national and international level yearned for them.

I suspect that whoever succeeds Obama will be less inclined to multilateralism unless the process of alignment with others proves to be necessary for the immediate defence of the flexibly defined vital interests of the US. As for Serbia, its relations with the US will remain basically unchanged - the US will still be important to us, while we will be of secondary importance to them. In addition: Serbia increasingly feels the revived rivalry between Moscow and Washington in the Balkans, which in part is due to its double commitment: to integrate with the West (EU membership) and protection from Russia from territorial disintegration (international recognition of Kosovo's self-proclaimed independence, largely backed by the West).

The good thing is that, at least when this text is due to go to press, we are not a US pre-election campaign issue. Its foreign policy segment is mainly characterised by major ordeals such as the war in Syria and the war against terrorism in general, as well as its relations with China, Russia and other countries aspiring to leave their global stamp on this century. We are just some *unfinished business* likely to remain stamped as such for a long time rather than to be settled soon.

SERBIA'S RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA: AN OVERVIEW OF THE POST-YUGOSLAV (POST-SOVIET) ERA

Srećko Đukić

The SFRY knew only too well what it wanted or, better still, what it did not want when it came to Moscow and it knew how to achieve these goals. This question was raised in strong enough terms and debated on in Serbia's pre-European path period, as well as in its EU-candidate period. Serbia's fundamental lack of relations with Russia in the post-Yugoslav/post-Soviet era was the result of its having no well-defined concept of relations outside EU membership. What kind of relations can Serbia have with Russia in the context of mutually different internal and foreign policy processes, as the courses taken by both increasingly diverge with Belgrade moving in the direction of Brussels (EU, NATO), while Moscow is moving away from Brussels, NATO and the EU, and opting for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the Eurasian Union and BRICS increasingly diverge?

Serbia's trade and economic relations with Russia were expected to become a real stimulus to its economic revival. This did not happen despite the preferential free trade agreement, as well as the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). Serbia's imports from Russia exceed its fragmented exports (its top exports include women's tights, apples and other fruit, pork and PVC flooring), which no longer figure prominently either in the Russian market or in other EEU markets and, consequently, the country inevitably registers a chronic deficit: from its total trade in 2014 with Russia of USD 3.5 billion, the deficit amounts to USD 1.5 billion, with Kazakhstan over USD 200 million, and with Belarus approximately USD 15 million.

Since the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, both major geopolitical realities, a considerable amount of time, nearly a quarter of a century, has passed in which the world has changed, and yet the question of where Serbia's relations with Russia are heading is still open. If the SFRY knew exactly what it wanted or, better still, what it did not want when it came to Moscow, and if it successfully achieved these goals, ranging from big political goals, via even bigger economic and cultural goals, to military and military industry goals, after the disintegration of the SFRY and the Soviet Union this question was raised in strong enough terms and debated on without reaching any final conclusion, both in the period when Serbia was on the pre-European path and as an EU candidate country. One should add that the golden Yugoslav-Soviet era was at the same time the golden era of Serbia's relations with the SSSR/RSFSR, with which Serbia (as well as other republics) developed special contractual cooperation.

If foreign policy is defined by history and geography, what is Serbia's foreign policy goal regarding Russia, given that the country is unequivocally committed to its strategic European road of no return? No country with a pro-Russian policy has managed to join a tightly-knit economic and political integration system, such as the EU. The Bulgarians have firmly promised to the Russians that they will be their voice, but this has not happened (nobody ever asks us anything, it is others who decide), therefore the saying from the Bible, "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me, scatters" applies.

Constant uncertainty looms despite the strategic Serbian-Russian agreement, top-level statements on lasting brotherhood, historical tradition, and emotions, are some of the things that we have personally experienced, and are frequently overrated categories used in games outside the domain of real foreign policy relations and doctrines. It is not enough to wish and proclaim something, if the intention is not backed by a serious plan of how to realise it. Reduced to a modest capacity, Serbia is really finding it hard to square that circle and build a credible policy. That is why it has resorted to manoeuvring, a practice also used by the EU, the US and Russia, which currently suits everyone.

Russia is a country with a great historical role in the Balkans and it is capable of waiting while we depend on it to be our indispensable mainstay and turn to it whenever we are in a difficult situation. We do not have that kind of relationship with any other country or any other people. Our more recent, as well as our distant history has a lot in common, but one cannot live on history, one lives for history, it is the reason why things are created. The truth is that over 50 per cent of the Serbian people are traditionally pro-Russian, while Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov stated in an interview with TASS (13 July 2015) that this held true for the same percentage of Bulgarians. Pro-Russian sentiment deepened in Serbia in the 1990's and in later years, so that according to some surveys, 61 per cent of Serbs share this sentiment now. Links are required between history and contemporary times, tradition and reality.

Relations between Serbs and Russians and their countries go back centuries, emerged in a thousand-year-old common history of Slavism, Christianity, civilisation, culture, mutual assistance and understanding, as well as misunderstanding and different expectations. Relying on each other and counting on Russia have become a part of our existence. Russia is the guardian of Serbia, and Kosovo and Metohija's status in the UN Security Council, a proven champion of the interests articulated by Belgrade in the highest of bodies of a world organisation. There is a very old quotation that testifies to these relations even today. The Emperor of Russia, Alexander I, requested that Karađorđe sign a peace treaty with the Turks in 1812 because he wanted to withdraw his troops from the Balkans to defend Russia against Napoleon, stating that, "if Russia holds out, that will be also good for Serbia, and if Russia fails, there will be no Serbia".

One must admit that Serbia is at a watershed between Russia and the West. However, there are some who would like to see it carry out the impossible mission of building a bridge between Moscow and Brussels. Serbia is far from being (SFR) Yugoslavia with the power to do something like that. *Special relations* between Serbia and Russia are constantly caught between Serbia and the West and Russia and the West. It is therefore clear what Serbia can expect on its road to the EU and in the EU, including Kosovo and Metohija and Russia. This mission implies loyalty towards the chosen side, and in relation to *Serbia's main, strategic, European choice*, regardless of the fact that history, as well as awareness of *belonging to both sides of Europe*, are embedded in that choice.

We cannot therefore bask in the old glory of Serbian-Russian relations, not fearing that this can be destroyed, too. More realism, more rationalism, more wisdom and mutual interests must be invested in and built into these relations. This is what Serbia's relations with Russia have been fundamentally lacking throughout the post-Yugoslav/post-Soviet era, an era we are still going through without a well-defined concept of relations and an integral foreign policy concept, except for those concerning EU membership. The foreign policy *pillars* and the red and other lines are of no help here, instead what is needed are well-defined plans for political, economic, cultural and all other ties.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Boris Yeltsin made the famous statement to the effect that Russia "has been brought to its knees". Fifteen years after the Yeltsin era, Russia rose from its knees, finding its place in the new international constellation. Serbia was unaware that it was in an even worse situation as there was no one to tell it that. Moreover, Serbia saw the dismembering of former Yugoslavia as its chance to move forward with seven-league boots, independently and free from the burden of other republics. Today, it does not know when or whether it will rise again and recover from the longest agony in the last two centuries of its history.

What kind of relations can Serbia and Russia have in a context of different internal and foreign policy processes which are taking place in the two countries? In the first decade of the post-Soviet/post-Yugoslav era, Moscow and Belgrade moved in opposite directions. Moscow pursued a highly liberal course in its foreign as well as its internal policy, which intensified disagreements with Belgrade altogether. Serbia was left without Russia's vital support at a crucial point. The Yeltsin regime and Andrei Kozyrev's diplomacy did not at all go hand in hand with the Milošević regime. Russia's politics, a considerable segment of Russian society, and its elite in particular, were imbued with pro-Western, pro-US and pro-European sentiment, as was the case at one point in Russian history, when in the 19th century swords were crossed over Western culture and pan-Slavism. Serbia's disappointment with Russia climaxed when the latter voted in the UN Security Council for the imposition of sanctions on the FRY on 31st May 1992, and the setting up of the Hague-based Tribunal a few years later (1995), rendering it impossible for it to protect Serbia from NATO aggression. Public sentiment was not crucial at that point. The Kremlin did not forgive Belgrade for its support for the attempted overthrow of Yeltsin in October 1993 or for sending its delegation to ceremonies marking victory at Red Square. The opposition under the Milošević regime did indeed come across some understanding and support from Moscow, holding formal and informal meetings with Igor Ivanov at the Russian foreign ministry at Smolensk Square.

After Yeltsin, Moscow changed sides step by step, while Belgrade did so immediately after the fall of Milošević on 5th October 2000. The replacement of the Kremlin's hazyains on 31st December 1999, indicated a new focus and resulted in huge changes later on. Vladimir Putin, Yeltsin's protégé and successor, stayed on a global Western liberal track, firstly introducing the much needed corrective factors of stabilisation and predictability into the country's internal policy. It was not until his second term in office that Putin started pursuing a more conservative political course of Russia's historical state traditionalism and interventionism, while throughout his first term in office, he tried to secure its position as a country integrated into Western society. He did not manage to do so. The *crown* of these efforts, a special deal with NATO known as the Rome Declaration on *NATO-Russian Relations: a New Quality* (28th May 2002), did not help much, either. In a speech delivered in Munich in 2007, Putin revealed that the time had come to change something in relations with the West and that the former policy had been exhausted.

In the 15 years of Putin's term in office as Russian president and the same number of years of democratic rule in Belgrade, Serbia's relations with Russia have encountered no major challenges. However, as the course taken by Belgrade is moving in the direction of Brussels (EU, NATO), while the course taken by Moscow is moving away from Brussels, NATO and the EU and opting for the SCO, the Eurasian Union and BRICS and increasingly diverging, some questions are constantly being raised.

Despite this, the agreed upon Serbian-Russian huge energy packet (largely contested in Serbia), which is one of the most promising segments of the *South Stream* gas pipeline, failed. While the world moves forward in leaps and bounds, the trade and economic relations, which are much needed by Serbia, are very modest. These relations were expected to act as a real stimulus to Serbia's economic recovery, however, due to the lack of political will, this has never happened. As a result, Serbia's exports and range of goods have never even come close to those from the Soviet era (finished products, equipment, tools, machinery, prefabricated factories, construction works and *turn-key* projects). The Serbian economy has missed its chance. Following the aggression, Yeltsin extended a hand of assistance to war-torn Serbia. In late August 1999, the FRY and the Russian Federation signed a free trade agreement in Moscow. The agreement widely opened the door to the preferential treatment of a whole range of Serbian goods on the Russian market. And then Belgrade decided to monetise its entire trade with, and all debts to Russia (due to its *imminent* accession to the EU and the World Trade Organisation (WTO)).

In March 2008, the Serbian and Belarus governments signed a free trade agreement in Minsk, marking the continuation of the policy of extending the free trade zone for the Serbian economy, based on the belief that it could be kick-started and developed in this way, despite the lack of results and analyses showing that the weaker side is the losing side. In early 2011, a free trade agreement was signed with Kazakhstan. The agreements sealed with Russia and Belarus were also adapted to coordinate them with the three countries' Customs Union, set up as part of the joint EEU project. No other country than Serbia can boast of having such a widely open door to Eastern and Western integration markets, stretching from Vladivostok to Lisbon.

Russia holds the leading position in Serbia's imports, but also in its trade deficit due to the import of energy commodities, oil and gas, raw materials and machinery. The other two countries with which Serbia registers the highest trade deficit include China and Germany. The EU, the Russian Federation and China account for 80% of Serbia's trade deficit; Serbia registers a 90% surplus in trade with only three countries, namely Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia.

Serbia's imports from Russia exceed its exports to that country, with women's tights (USD 78 million), fresh apples (USD 77 million), frozen sides of pork (USD 49 million), PVC flooring (USD 43 million) and centrifugal pumps (USD 37 million) being its top five exports (2014). Its exports to far away Kazakhstan amounted only to about USD 17 million in 2014 (as against 2012 and 2013, when it amounted to USD 11 million respectively), while its imports (oil) amounted to nearly USD 200 million (as against 2012 and 2013 when it amounted to USD 415 million and USD 888 million respectively). Serbia's trade with Belarus is also burdened by its chronic deficit, with its exports amounting to USD 73 million, and its imports to about USD 86 million in 2014 (their volume was the same in 2012 and 2013).

Serbia's fragmented exports to Russia cannot pay for its imports from that country and, consequently, it cannot avoid a (high) chronic deficit either in its trade with Russia (USD 1.5 billion) or in its trade with Kazakhstan (about USD 200 million) and Belarus (about USD 15 million). In 2014, Serbia's exports were again fragmented, playing a marginal role on the Russian and EEU markets.

HOW FAR IS CHINA?

Jasminka Simić

Introduction

China has implemented its reforms gradually. In the late 1970's, China moved away from a closed system of central planning to a more market-based economy, already becoming the world's No.1 exporter in 2010. The reforms implied the abolishment of collectivised agriculture, gradual price liberalisation, fiscal decentralisation, greater autonomy of state-owned enterprises, a stronger private sector, development of the capital market, a modern banking system and opening the door to foreign trade and investments.

The government's 12th five-year plan (March 2011), endorsed at the 3rd Plenary Session of the Communist Party (November 2013), stressed the continuation of economic reforms and the need to increase domestic consumption so that the economy would depend less on fixed investments, exports and heavy industry in the future. The government of Chinese President Xi Jinping has demonstrated greater readiness for new reforms in order to focus on long-term economic stability. This means that the market would play a crucial role in the allocation of funds. In the past few years, China has renewed its support to state-owned enterprises in the sectors it deems important for economic security, specifically demanding that the industry's global competitiveness be strengthened. In 2014, China implemented a number of economic reforms, including the adoption of a law enabling local governments to issue bonds, the opening of several state-owned enterprises to private investment, cuts in administrative bureaucracy and the relinquishing of the one-child policy; it introduced tougher fines for environmental pollution and agreed to limit carbon dioxide emissions by 2030. Such a restructuring of the economy has resulted in more than a tenfold increase in GDP since 1978, with GDP amounting to USD 17.62 trillion in 2014, with a growth rate of 7.4%, making China the world's largest economy.²⁸ For the first time in modern history, the US, with a registered GDP of USD 17.42 trillion and a growth rate of 2.4% in 2014, was outperformed. China's economy accounts for 15% of the global economy and one fourth of GWP. Its foreign-exchange reserves amount to USD 4 trillion.²⁹

²⁸ The World Factbook, Available from: www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html, 16. X 2015.

²⁹ The World Factbook, Available from: www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html, 16. X 2015.

In 2005, it tied its national currency, the yuan, to the US dollar, joining the basket of international currencies. From 2005 to 2008, the yuan's cumulative appreciation against the dollar amounted to more than 20%, but the exchange rate remained pegged to the dollar between the onset of the financial crisis and June 2010, when China gradually started increasing the value of its currency. In 2013, the yuan was listed as one of the top ten most traded currencies in the world. Despite the deceleration of its economic growth and fluctuations in the yuan in 2015, China aims to ensure that the yuan becomes a method of payment of in the International Monetary Fund with special drawing rights by the end of 2016.

The Chinese government is faced with numerous economic challenges: a reduction in the high rate of domestic savings, low domestic consumption, the creation of more job opportunities, bigger salaries, meeting the wishes of the middle class, migration from rural areas and a growing number of people with a university degree, curbing corruption and social stratification, and reducing environmental pollution caused by the speedy transformation of the country's economy. Its coastal provinces register greater economic development than its inland provinces. By 2014, more than 274 million migrant workers with families moved to urban areas in search for jobs. One of the consequences of China's population control policy is the fact that it is now one of the fastest-aging nations in the world. China is trying to broaden its capacity to produce energy from other sources, turning from coal and oil to the development of nuclear and alternative energy. A few factors could slow down China's economic growth, such as its outstanding debt resulting from its loan-funded incentive programmes.

China's Global Power

Parallel to its economic modernisation, China carried out military modernisation, earmarking USD 188 billion for this purpose in 2013. It staged a military parade (3rd September 2015) to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, in which 12,000 troops with state-of-the-art weapons took part. To invoke the universal value of the 1945 victory and the need to maintain post-war world order, China invited officials from 20 countries, including Serbia, to the parade. The message sent from the commemoration of the 70th anniversary was clear, indicating that China has huge capacity nowadays to defend itself from any external threat and yet is determined to maintain peaceful order for the sake of its own development, as well as that of the entire world.³⁰ In this way, it wanted to make it clear that it has the capacity and is ready to defend its interests, specifically in the Asia-Pacific region where the US is trying to form an anti-Chinese *Asian axis*. China's *Silk Road Economic Belt*, the *21st Century Maritime Silk Road* initiative, and its close cooperation with Russia, other BRICS countries as well as Egypt to realise these projects, represent a promising prospect for a world that is still in agony due to the financial crisis and the threat of large-scale wars.³¹

³⁰ E.I.R.Strategic Alert, Weekly Newsletter, Volume 29, No. 37 – September 10, 2015.

³¹ Egyptian President Abdel Fattah-el-Sisi's presence at the military parade in Beijing (2015) provided an opportunity to sign a memorandum with China's State Construction Engineering Corporation on building a new administrative centre for about 5 million people in Egypt. The Chinese corporation will also build a rail way that will serve the new centre.

a. The Silk Road Economic Belt

In line with President Xi Jinping's win-win strategy as a new model of international relations centring around global peace and development, China has launched the Silk Road Economic Belt project.³² This means the strengthening of economic, transport and cultural ties, between China and Central Asian countries (excluding Russia), as well as firmer ties among their peoples, stretching from the Pacific to the Baltic Sea. It includes two trade routes, the land route starting in the Xinjiang region and the maritime route starting in the Fujian province, merging in Venice. It follows the ancient Silk Road, launched during the rule of the Han Dynasty about 2,000 years ago and used to transport goods and communicate information from China to the West. Its aim is to promote the export of goods produced in Xinjiang to neighbouring Central Asian countries in order to reduce the local population's political discontent³³, as well as to ensure China's energy security (imports from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan), to develop an alternative land route for the transport of Chinese goods to European markets and a potential transatlantic free trade area, and to create a climate of peace in the region.

The Silk Road Economic Belt provides for economic cooperation with the EU and *the 1+16* policy. China, which exports industrial and consumer goods, machinery, equipment, clothing, footwear, furniture and toys to the EU, is the Union's second-largest trading partner, while the Union, which exports machinery, equipment, motor vehicles, planes and chemical products to China, is China's largest trading partner. Once the EU and the US reach an agreement on a free trade zone (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)), the Silk Road Economic Belt could extend via the Atlantic, providing an opportunity for cooperation and negotiations with the US in a new economic and trade community.

The 1+16 policy, which provides for cooperation between China and the Central and East European (CEE) countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia), was launched at a summit in Warsaw (2012) and continued at summits held in Bucharest (2013), Belgrade (2014) and Suzhou (2015). China's goal is to ensure that its trade with the CEE countries reaches USD 120 billion and that capital infrastructure projects (high-speed railway between Budapest and Belgrade) are implemented by 2018.

³² Simić, Jasminka, *The Economic Belt of the New Silk Road: Chinese Breakthrough in the West or a Response to Asian Challenges*, Intenational Problems, Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, 2015, pp. 196-217.

³³ Western countries insist on respect for human and minority rights, specifically of the Uighur Muslims in the Xinjiang region

The new *Silk Road* project links three continents, offers new opportunities for development and a new future for both China as well as all the countries located along the route. At the same time, it represents a challenge to the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and the US-dominated North America and Pacific trade networks.³⁴

b. China and Russia's Joint Development Efforts

During Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Beijing to attend the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, about 30 agreements were signed, marking a new stage in the two countries' relations. The two countries' presidents underlined the complementarity between China's plan to build the Silk Road Economic Belt and the EEU. China agreed to buy a 9.9% share in Russia's leading *Yamal* gas project in the Arctic. This was the first investment by China's Silk Road Fund and, at the same, aid to Russia to help ease the effect of Western sanctions. Also, for the first time ever, Russia enabled China to invest in Russian gas and oil projects. China plans to invest in transport infrastructure, agriculture and forestry in the Russian Far East. The project to develop this region coincides with the plan to reindustrialise China's northeast.

In Shanghai (2014), the two countries signed a 30-year agreement on the supply of gas to China; the gas supply via the *Power of Siberia* eastern gas pipeline with an annual capacity of 38 billion cubic metres of gas, worth USD 400 billion, is due to start in 2018.

China and Russia are the major pillars of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) (2001), which also includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which are all situated on the Silk Road Economic Belt. Its priorities include strengthening member states' stability and security, the fight against terrorism, separatism, extremism, drug trafficking and boosting cooperation in the fields of economy, energy, science and culture. Although it has not acted as a military structure so far, the SCO could be a counterbalance to US military, political and economic presence in this part of the world.

Under a joint deal by the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and the South African Republic) a Shanghai-based development bank was formed (2014) with initial capital of USD 50 billion and an emergency fund of USD 100 billion. It was envisaged as an instrument for the penetration of developing countries' markets and a counterpart to the World Bank.

³⁴ The *Silk Road Renaissance* organization held its first international conference in South Korea's ancient capital of Gyeongju (August 2015) as part of a cultural and educational exhibition aiming to revive the history of this city of culture, situated at the final point of the maritime Silk Road. The conference resulted in the setting up of the Silk Road University Network as an international intellectual arena for the presentation, exchange and enrichment of ideas, knowledge and research related to the Silk Road.

c. Trans-Pacific Partnership

In October 2015, the agreement on Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) as a free trade zone was signed by 12 countries in this region (Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam and the US) to promote trade and investment, to enhance innovation, economic growth and development, and to support the retention of jobs. The TPP agreement is US President Barack Obama's primary trade goal, aimed at securing the abolition of tariffs and access to the Japanese car market.

In addition to its economic significance for the US, the TPP is also of geostrategic importance to the country as an instrument for mobilising its allies in restraining China's rise. China is surrounded by US military bases, it is involved in a dispute with Japan over the Diaoyu Islands (Senkaku Islands in Japanese) in the East China Sea, as well as long-standing disputes with Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei and Malaysia in the South China Sea. An additional cause for concern is the fact that Japan has altered Article 9 of its post-war constitution, which now authorises it to use its troops to defend itself in the event of an attack on its territory, as well as the territory of an allied nation.

Serbia and China

Relations between Serbia and China, dating back to the period of former Yugoslavia, which established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in 1955, have gone through the following three stages, characteristic also of other Southeast European countries: 1) the first stage lasted from the early 1950's to the second half of the 1970's, in which China established diplomatic, economic and other relations with the former Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania and former Yugoslavia; 2) the second stage began in 1977 with China's policy of opening to the world; 3) the third stage occurred after the Cold War, when politically motivated relations were superseded by economic interests. In the 1990's, many Chinese immigrants arrived in Southeast Europe, setting up small and medium-sized businesses, supplying local markets with affordable Chinese goods and thus preserving social peace in transition-impooverished countries.

After 2000, with the arrival of major Chinese investors and the signing of a 35-year concession agreement with the Greek port of Piraeus (2008), for the unloading of Chinese goods and their further distribution to the European market, *China became one of the top ten trading partners of countries in the region, thus changing the pattern of its economic relations with them.*³⁵ This has resulted in the launch of the 1+16 policy, providing for China's cooperation with the CEE countries, in which Serbia plays an active role.

³⁵ Simić, Predrag, *Odnosi Kine i Jugoistočne Evrope: kontinuitet i promene*, Biseri sa zrnima pirinča [Relations between China and Southeast Europe: Continuity and Changes, Pearls with Rice Grains], a collection of papers marking the 40th anniversary of sinology 1974-2014, the Belgrade University School of Foreign Languages, Belgrade, 2015, pp. 11-24

China has already invested in Serbia's energy sector, roads, bridges and car-manufacturing industry as part of a strategic partnership the two countries set up in 2009. China's car-manufacturing giant, Dongfeng, has signed an agreement with the Priboj Automobile Factory (FAP) to assemble vehicles in Serbia.³⁶ The *Chinese shopping centre Zmaj*, opened in Belgrade in 2010. China completed the construction of the bridge across the Danube in Belgrade in 2014, with Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang attending the opening ceremony. The country plans to invest in the power plant in Kostolac and the motorway linking Belgrade with the Adriatic Sea.

In 2014, Serbia's exports to China amounted to USD 14.4 million, while in that same period its imports from China amounted to USD 1.7 billion. China's share in Serbia's total exports and total imports amounted to 0.1% and 8.3% respectively.³⁷ Serbia mainly exports cork, wood, plant machinery and equipment, and plastic materials in primary form to the Chinese market. Office machines, clothing and electric machines account for the largest share of Serbia's imports from China. The Chinese model of economic development, combining traditional and modern elements, as well as the socialist system and a market economy, and Chinese investment in the politically unstable Xinjiang region, populated by Uighurs, a Turkic ethnic group with a strong separatist movement, serve as an example to Serbia and other countries in the southeast of Europe of how to stimulate economic growth and solve political and ethnic issues in the future.

Conclusion

With development projects such as the Silk Road Economic Belt, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the New Development Bank BRICS (NDB BRICS), China has responded to the economic and political challenges placed before it by its neighbours in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as Western countries. At the same time, it has remained true to the fundamental principles of peace, equality and justice among peoples, on which the post-WWII world order is based. China plans to allocate USD 12 billion to the UN anti-poverty fund by 2030. It is President Xi Jinping's wish that, in 2049, the People's Republic of China mark its centenary as a country of rich people. Consequently, the strategic partnership with China opens new prospects for the countries gathered in existing regional trading groups, and leading to the strengthening of multipolarism in international relations. The traditional friendship between Serbia and China has been reinforced by more intensive economic cooperation at a bilateral as well as a multilateral level under the *1+16* policy of cooperation between China and the 16 CEE countries.

³⁶ Poulain, Loïc, *China's New Balkan Strategy*, Centre for Strategic&International Studies, Central European Watch, 2002, Washington

³⁷ Source: Serbian Chamber of Commerce, Economic Cooperation: Serbia and China, <http://www.pks.rs/MSaradnja.aspx?id=73&p=1&pp=2&,18.X2015>.

THE LIMITATIONS OF REGIONAL COOPERATION

Jovan Teokarević

Regional cooperation in the Western Balkans has been significantly promoted in the past few years, primarily as a result of two parallel processes. On the one hand, it is closely linked and intertwined with the process of European integration of the countries in the region, while on the other hand numerous instruments for cooperation of countries and societies have been set up and developed in a large number of fields.

However, parallel to many undeniably successful results, relations among the Western Balkan countries and societies are often riddled with grave crises, making it necessary to reconsider the basic principles of cooperation in the region. Just in a brief one-year period, starting in autumn 2014, the Western Balkans was shaken by a series of brief crises, which destabilised the entire region and called into question the majority of positive results achieved so far. In October 2014, amidst the encouraging process of normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo, Serbian-Albanian relations drastically deteriorated after an incident with a drone flying a flag of 'Greater Albania' at a football match between the Albanian and Serbian national teams in Belgrade. The brawl that broke out during the match was followed by an unprecedented trade-off of insults, rekindling old stereotypes and hate speech in the Serbian and Albanian media and among the general public. A repeat of the deep crisis in Albanian-Serbian relations, though on a somewhat smaller scale, was triggered by clashes between Macedonian security forces and Albanian terrorists in Kumanovo in May 2015; the clashes, like the earlier incident, stoked a debate in the region on Albanian aspirations, as well as their status and relationship with their compatriots and neighbours. In early July, tensions, this time between Bosnian Muslims and Serbs, heightened again over the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of genocide in Srebrenica and attempts to reinterpret the event. In early October 2015, due to an increased influx of refugees from the Middle East to the Balkans, the border between Serbia and Croatia was temporarily closed, resulting in a bilateral trade war and an exchange of accusations and insults between the two countries' governments and the general public.

A decade and a half after the end of hostilities in the region, which in the meantime has certainly progressed in every aspect, achieving a considerable level of stabilisation, one should not be satisfied with the conclusion that, unlike before, this and similar crises have not ended in armed clashes. Although the above and other cases of sporadic deterioration of relations in the Western Balkans blow over relatively quickly and are in part resolved, they are a clear testimony to a complex war legacy and the still high potential of conflict in the region.

One should by no means forget that external factors, such as the world economic crisis and the EU crisis, the rekindled Cold War tensions between Russia and the West, and the global conflict with radical Islam and terrorism, have a negative bearing on relations in the region as well. The fundamental principles of regional cooperation in the Western Balkans are themselves part and parcel of the same problems. Some of the chief problems will be discussed in the text below.

Firstly, despite expectations and numerous efforts, the region has never sufficiently or truly acquired *ownership* of regional cooperation. After the armed conflict, it was imposed from outside by international organisations and the most influential countries as an inevitable instrument for the preservation of peace, reconciliation and the region's overall development. The problem is that this cooperation still largely survives primarily due to external pressure and the setting of conditions. Consequently, to a greater extent it is more a way of enabling governments in the region to show that their countries deserve membership of international organisations and assistance, rather than an indicator of the political elite and societies' real interest in and need for cooperation.

Naturally, there are many opposing examples of initiatives of state and non-state players, however, the situation is by all means much better than before, with more than 50 initiatives and forms of cooperation in a large number of areas, which is commonly referred to as *capillary networking* in the region. However, as a rule, the key steps forward are still instigated from outside. This is best illustrated by a few recent examples. The *Berlin Process*, which was launched at a summit in Berlin in August 2014 and continued at a summit in Vienna in August 2015, offered support to the region's integration into the EU and stepped up regional cooperation. Still, one cannot but ask oneself whether the governments of the Western Balkan states could not have launched and shaped the process themselves, at least initially, since this would have been more proof of their maturity and the maturity of the entire region. Similarly, the conclusions and commitments of both summits were certainly necessary and important, but if they had been the result of local players themselves rather than the German and Austrian hosts, would they not have carried greater weight? Furthermore, if cooperation had become something quite normal and ordinary, Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina could have signed an agreement on the final delineation of their border a long time ago, while Serbia and Kosovo could also have reached four new agreements on the normalisation of their relations long ago. In both cases agreements were reached at the eleventh hour, on the eve of the summit in Vienna, and consequently they were proof of the fulfilment of obligations assumed a long time ago, specifically towards foreign patrons, rather than an expression of the governments and societies' internal needs and interests.

Secondly, even when there is some headway in regional cooperation, the following happens as a rule: the wording of agreements is burdened with *constructive ambivalence*, the rule of communication with the public is non-transparency, while the implementation of all that has been agreed on is put off as long as the given circumstances allow. This is best illustrated by years-long negotiations on the normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo. Each step forward, taken after much hesitation, is most frequently interpreted as a concession to the external setting of conditions and a condition for getting closer to EU membership rather than as a solution to the real needs and interests of the people on whose behalf the talks are held. Moreover, the public is not well informed about the talks or about the conclusions, agreed measures or deadlines for commitments.

Thirdly, the guiding principle of Western Balkan - and initial European - regional cooperation is functional integration, which starts in non-political (primarily economic) areas, encouraging every other form of cooperation step by step, including that in the most sensitive areas, namely politics and security. There is more and more evidence that functional cooperation neither spreads automatically nor infinitely and that it does not overcome all obstacles (in Asia, this is referred to as the '*Asian paradox*'), not even cooperation under a specific stimulating framework such as European integration. Functional cooperation has many limitations of its own, starting from those in the economic sphere, because only 15-30% of total trade is conducted in the region itself, which varies from country to country, while the EU is the largest trading partner, accounting for about 60% of total trade with every individual country in the region.

Fourthly, in addition to the development of regional cooperation, the Western Balkans is confronted with many unsolved bilateral issues, some of which are highly complicated. Consequently, it is a good thing that the Berlin summit, resulting in several agreements on cooperation in the transport and energy sectors, endorsed a study of and recommendations for the resolution of bilateral disputes, as a major condition of regional cooperation as well. However, it is unclear why the countries in the region, i.e. their governments, did not do much more themselves a long time ago, negotiating with each other to address in particular the legal and economic issues resulting from the disintegration of former Yugoslavia, which not only pose as a burden to the people, but also to the countries' bilateral relations.

Fifthly, the relationship between regional cooperation and European integration is mutually stimulating but potentially conflicting. It is stimulating because regional cooperation is at the same time a precondition as well as an instrument of European integration, but the two sides of the equation can conflict if one side does not function well enough, as is currently the case. If, as now, membership of the EU is not speedy, the Western Balkan countries will perceive regional cooperation as an inadequate substitute at best, i.e. their own *Balkan version of the European Union*, established at the expense of their promised presence in the real Union, and naturally, they will oppose it.

There is another potential conflict between regional cooperation and European integration: the latter is basically a bilateral process between the Union and a candidate country, while regional cooperation goes beyond that framework and, consequently, candidate countries do not perceive the EU's setting of conditions in relation to regional cooperation as an integral part of reforms needed for further European integration, but as an additional and independent external source of conditioning. Also, regional cooperation could be encouraged if there were a joint regional institution that could lobby for, guide and represent the Western Balkans before the Union on behalf of all countries in the region. There is no such institution, because it is contrary to the bilateral nature of the integration process. The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) is by no means such a body, because at best it coordinates regional cooperation, but based only on that agreed on by regional governments, i.e. based on the least common denominator, which often is not enough and is long overdue. Due to opposition to the true institutionalisation of regional cooperation through some more lasting institutions that would be set up along the lines of the Montenegrin government's proposal on the '*Western Balkans 6*' of a few years ago, no other joint body, which could compensate for the above deficiencies, has been formed, either.

Sixthly, the lack of greater and more effective regional cooperation in the Western Balkans is also the result of the failure by authorities in all countries to make a greater effort to play a more active and direct role in the process of reconciliation among the countries and peoples that were at war in the previous decades. The condition for this is a critical attitude towards the past, which is still lacking. In this context, it is by all means commendable that Serbia and Albania accepted the initiative to set up a regional youth office, launched by some youth NGOs at the summit in Vienna. The same could be said about a proposal by the Serbian and Kosovo chambers of commerce to establish a permanent joint regional platform for cooperation between chambers. The scope of these and similar initiatives, the effects of which are yet to be seen, will not be large as long as the governments of the Western Balkan countries do not encourage their people and the public to reconsider the recent past in a comprehensive and critical manner, as this is the very foundation of better relations, better cooperation and a better future.

The Western Balkans' list of major problems has been expanded due to the current refugee crisis, which cannot be solved without another level of close long-term cooperation with the EU. Together with the many challenges, this could be an opportunity for the Western Balkans not only to learn how to cooperate, but also to contribute to cooperation, i.e. to help itself by helping others.

THE EMERGENCE OF A MULTIPOLAR WORLD

Simeon Pobulić

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 marked the end of the bipolar power structure, i.e. it put an end to the exclusive domination of two world superpowers. To be more specific, the one of them ceased to have power, while the other continued to be a superpower. The process set in motion after that introduced other countries to the global stage, those not counted on when geostrategic policies were being defined during the Cold War era. Players emerged whose economic power speedily grew, and with it their influence in the world. They were dubbed 'growing economies' – a name that nicely fit the nature of the emerging changes. These do not only include populous China, but also populous India. These countries, with a lower level of influence, were also joined by a number of larger Asian, African and Latin American countries. A socially and economically strong Europe, represented by the EU, more or less kept its previously secured high economic and political status, but it was burdened with financial and economic difficulties. Russia, the largest country and one nearly forgotten due to the chaos triggered by the disintegration of the Soviet Union, following a number of years of political desperation its economy started to recover and it began establishing strong central authority, which reflected on its status in global relations.

Parallel to the shift in the balance of power, views on social and economic models also altered. As a result of the changes in production and consumption, as well as capital allocation and the impact of new technologies, the once highly successful Western economic model is no longer as attractive as before, even though the 'growing economies' insufficiently defined models are also far from being widely acceptable. The assumption that power is the ultimate proof of superiority, i.e. that a nation with a greater military power proves in this way that it is more superior and that it has better institutions, better principles and values, and a better civilisation in general, has lost its earlier significance. The reason for this is the shift in the balance of power.

Even though the bipolar power structure collapsed, the term *Cold War* is still used, despite the evident changes, probably because it better suits efforts to defend former positions. Indirect proof that things have really changed can be seen in the fact that the ideological division that was at one point present in the bloc system as a determinant, no longer exists in the world. That is, the division into capitalism and socialism. There is only a division into liberal capitalism and centrally-managed capitalism. The former relies on a free market and private initiative, while the latter on the centralistic establishment of basic parameters of supply, demand and funding. There are no other military alliances either, except for NATO, although new security consultation centres are being set up with a tendency to strengthen mutual obligations. Such a turn causes confusion because it is often disregarded that the social and economic division into the rich North and the poor South, which is no less significant, is still maintained in a somewhat changed constellation. The tendency of breaking up traditional communities within the framework of the post-colonial defining of state borders, along the lines of national and religious identity, should be added to all that.

The most significant change in the balance of power concerns the status of the US. The diffusion of power, a result of the strengthening of growing economies in the East, and even in the South, has diminished this country's early big advantages. The status of the US as the No.1 superpower and its role as an indispensable factor in crisis management and world economic trends have not been called into question. As far back as 1988, Paul Kennedy, a US historian, suggested in his famous book *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, that US leadership was eroding due to a decline in relative rather than absolute power. Consequently, a serious threat to the country's real interests can only be triggered by the political elite's inability to adapt to a multipolar world order. The very failure to understand this fact can be detected in some US political moves, which, though they should not be equated with decisions with disastrous effects, definitely represent a disturbing reality.

The fastest and most dramatic redistribution of power in history was followed by a growing economic, as well as geostrategic rivalry in regions such as the South China Sea, Eastern Europe and even some parts of Africa. Countries with growing economic power want to have much greater influence in defining the rules of the world economic order, which is definitely in accordance with their penetration of new markets, the borders of which are increasingly hard to define.

Geopolitical clashes in the Middle East have been rekindled, and now include new players with dangerous intentions which represent a threat to peace in the region, namely the Islamic State movement. The conflict between Sunnis and Shiites, resulting from deep internal imbalances and external influences on a part of the world rich in oil and gas, can also be listed as a destabilising factor. To complete the picture, a considerable number of *frozen* regional disputes, previously known, should be added to the list. This means that the number of conflicts in the world, when compared to the Cold War era, has not decreased, only the motives have somewhat changed, or new reasons and new players have appeared. In some situations, the world seems to be even more polarised than during the Cold War era.

In such global circumstances, the number of issues, the nature of which is such that they cannot be solved individually, grows. They include climate change, the fight against movements using terrorism to achieve their goals, mass migration from war-torn and poverty-stricken regions, water and energy supply, the prevention of drug production and trafficking, the fight against organised international crime and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The constant and difficult issues of developing the least developed countries, fighting global poverty and malnutrition, and preventing the spread of dangerous infectious diseases could be added to this list. All of these issues are being discussed, but the adoption of measures to eradicate these problems is too slow. Financing the development of underdeveloped regions from public aid to the amount of 0.07% of the GDP is still a problem.

However, due to the growing interdependence of nations and countries as a result of overall technological and scientific progress, cooperation and understanding are an imperative now more than ever. Yet the world is still far from a level of cooperation that could be described as satisfactory and in line with the degree of looming threats. The reasons for this do not always lie in political rivalry or security issues, but often have to do with assessments of whether certain assumed obligations related to internal social and economic needs and goals can be fulfilled.

Under the new balance of power, economic problems, which are not only the result of a shift in the cycle of prosperity and recession, but are also the absence of adequate multilateral regulation, have had a significant impact, especially in the finance sector. All economic problems are primarily national in nature, but not to the extent that they can be separated from global trends, especially not in the long term. International cooperation is therefore a must, while protectionism, sanctions and the lack of developmental solidarity are detrimental to all.

Similar in effect are the differing views on the management of the finance sector, which is largely responsible for the drop in production and rise in material inequality, which is reflected in creditor countries' and debtor countries' finding it hard to coordinate their positions. Disagreements mainly occur either along the lines of austerity with the goal of meeting obligations towards creditors, or developmental support through debt rescheduling/release. Public reactions, which place national interests in a more humane framework, defined by social and economic needs, are inseparable from these disagreements.

The policy of national prestige has always been, and still is, linked with the conditions of world trade and global financial transactions. There are also new links between the economy and geostrategic goals, which aim to preserve former advantages or to create new advantages. They are reflected in the setting up of new free trade zones and new global financial centres. Understandably, such projects are linked with the status of the two leading powers, the US and China. They include the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the US-EU Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). For its part, China is behind the initiative to establish the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), joined by many economically significant non-Asian countries. The goals of the New Development Bank BRICS (NDB BRICS) are rather similar. Both banks are expected to complement the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the US-backed Asian Development Bank (ADB), although they could be primarily considered as competitors. These new initiatives indicate an ambition to make other currencies besides the US dollar international currencies.

The economic strengthening of growing economies makes it necessary to enable participation on a more equal footing in setting the rules of the world economic order and the development strategy. By establishing development banks, growing economies are indeed trying to use these instruments of cooperation to set different standards for the funding of infrastructure projects and production. The earlier practice of political conditioning, such as the imposition of the Western model of respect for human rights, is being rejected. Understandably, this also has the function to improve individual economic interests, i.e. exports, and access to natural resources. China's interest is most prominent in this respect.

Political cooperation, or even security cooperation, cannot be separated from economic cooperation, despite some obstacles rooted in unsolved disputes. It is this that acts as the *spiritus movens* of the establishment and promotion of close cooperation between China, India, Russia, Brazil and South Africa (the BRICS grouping) and cooperation within the growing Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Efforts to broaden the circle with new players that are in a similar geopolitical situation and have the need for greater economic cooperation are evident as well, pointing to a new grouping of developing countries.

Under such circumstances, despite cuts in army and armament budgets of some great powers, primarily due to reduced economic growth and lower government revenues, the modernisation and upgrade of weapons is on the rise in China, Russia, India and certain countries that export oil and gas. In an effort to develop superior weapons, they compete in the fields of aviation, the navy, and rocket systems. One could even say that some countries are faced with renewed requests for the development of nuclear weapons. Is there a germ of great danger in all of this? In the broadest context, there certainly is, although this trend can be interpreted as an effort to boost the means of deterrence and secure the best possible position in the new multipolar structure. The multipolar structure will have to find a response to the phenomenon of the Islamic State as well, because it poses a threat to the interests of all great powers. None of them can solve this problem alone. It is vital that they all find a joint response to it, the prerequisite of which is joining forces in every sense possible. Understandably, a military solution is inevitable, but a solution which, as a thread of future stability, would follow the principles of peace and cooperation of the rest of the world with the Muslim population. The possibility of new cases of the right to self-determination, which implies the creation of new states, should not be ruled out should it prove to be a solution.

Europe, organised within the EU, which is the richest part of the world, with regard to geopolitical changes has a status which enables it to exert influence of the first order. The Union acts as a US ally via links provided by NATO, as well as in other ways, such as their coordinated approach in international bodies, and the UN in particular. As a one-of-a-kind organisation, the EU is still an unequalled historical experiment in governance. However, the Union's global influence has somewhat dwindled due to the unfavourable economic situation of its Member States, resulting from the devastating transatlantic financial crisis and continuing due to internal structural deficiencies, in particular the inadequately projected Eurozone. The Union has still not managed to efficiently overcome low economic growth, persistent unemployment and lower employee living standards in its Member States or to rein in the debt crisis in the south of Europe. The EU's austerity and budget stabilisation policy has evidently failed to yield satisfactory results since it has not offered solutions that would kick-start growth founded on new technological and governance bases.

Subsequent solutions provided for by the European Central Bank's quantitative easing programme and the Juncker plan of financial support to development are yet to show whether they are sufficient and whether they serve the purpose in terms of their scope and utilisation. Moreover, the crisis in Ukraine, terrorist attacks by Islamist movements and the growing influx of refugees from Asia and Africa pose a great, new, and unexpected burden to Europe. Although European nations have no other alternative than the EU, in view of the difficulties encountered in its functioning, comprehensive governance reforms and the setting of priorities are needed. The Union's influence in a multipolar world will doubtlessly depend on these reforms.

Shifts in the balance of power with regional or global significance are not something that is immediately accepted as encouragement for a necessary shift in focus. Change often precedes the awareness of the need for cooperation. Consequently, in the global politics of a truly and increasingly interdependent world, chief players must explain the real motives of their policies as clearly as possible. Without such an approach, it will be hard to secure trust and reach agreement. Relying on money, ideology and misinformation in the form of soft power can be no substitute to an approach with clearly-defined interests. A multipolar world perceives danger differently, because more partners with different interests are involved. Even more so in view of the fact that certain countries can relatively easily reach agreements on some important issues, but cannot at all agree on other issues. In any case, victory and defeat are perceived in a new way. Old alliances can be revived and enhanced, but they cannot prevent new partnerships from being created in a way that disregards the practice to date. Geopolitics, technology and the nature of conflict go beyond old organisational forms, although new forms bring new unknown elements. Consequently, one cannot help but ask oneself whether it is possible to build a new world order on the rules of the former world order and with the unaltered role of international organisations such as the IMF, the WB, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and even the UN. Probably not.

In support of optimism, the following should be added: with its knowledge and technology, the world can accept many shifts, but it cannot accept a large-scale war in which leading world powers would be directly involved. This is not just because of the threat of mass devastation and a great loss of life, but also because of the economic burden resulting from the preparations for such an undertaking. There is also the question of how to justify a great loss of life, specifically in countries with a low birth rate. Admittedly, as a rule, small-scale operations could be launched, but not directly, instead via third parties. Some world powers, afraid that they could lose their former status, could be expected to act irrationally and ruthlessly in certain situations in the short term.

To conclude: multipolarity does not automatically constitute a better world order, but let us hope that, under pressure from a wider circle of interests, it could make it possible for a large number of countries to voice their requests in a more authentic way, as well as to accept a more democratic approach to international relations. However, vassalage as a form of relationship between big and small countries will not just disappear with all these changes. It will be hard to discard the rule *'those who are not with us are against us'* when setting up a multipolar hierarchy. Still, the right to a choice and the search for a joint solution in order to preserve peace and free economic trends in the world represent such strong arguments that no one will dare to jeopardise them drastically, because, if nothing else, rival parties would take advantage of this.

In the emergence of a multipolar world, small countries cannot significantly influence relations among countries beyond the framework of their recognised status. Regrettably, defending equality is not something that is greatly recognised. Sovereignty is still present in proportion to the available power. Consequently, there is nothing else left for small countries other than to carefully monitor developments, learn lessons and try to secure the best solutions, primarily via regional institutions and international organisations. In this process, their agreeing on vital issues should by no means be disregarded. Joint pressure is always much better than that exerted individually. Everything mentioned above also holds true for Serbia.

RECONCILIATION,
SECURITY AND
HEALTH IN
ALL POLICIES

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION IN THE REGION

Milan Karagaća

The modern world is confronted with new and ever more numerous challenges which are increasingly hard to address, and, instead of the expected stabilisation on global and regional levels, the crises tend to escalate. The situation in the Middle East, the migrant crisis, the confrontation over Ukraine, and the problems faced by the EU are a good enough reason for the Western Balkans to ask itself how these challenges should be dealt with. Due to its multi-ethnic and multinational structure, as well as extremely difficult past experiences, the region is faced with a serious threat which can be addressed only through a concerted effort.

True reconciliation is a prerequisite of joint action and the confronting all challenges. Are the countries in the region and their political elite aware of this, are they ready to show it and in which way do they show it?

How else can one explain the fact that, 20 years after the end of the war in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and 15 years after the end of armed clashes in Kosovo, relations among the newly-emerged countries are, to put it mildly, pretty much where they were before the conflict? How else can one explain the fact that they all possess sufficient strength and the capacity to rekindle tensions whenever it is necessary? What is it that makes it impossible for us to develop relations resembling those that existed in former Yugoslavia, or those that existed between Germany and France in 1965, which was also 20 years after a war? There are many reasons for this, and many more excuses, but evidently there is no goodwill or understanding as to how grave the problem is, because nationalism has withdrawn into a protective cocoon, not allowing common sense to prevail.

It is high time everyone understood that the issue of general reconciliation and catharsis is in the interests of all the people and countries emerging from former Yugoslavia, because it is an issue of peace, security and the future. Those messages delivered by top religious dignitaries on religious holidays, who do not hesitate to preach abundantly on peace and reconciliation, forgiveness, love, brotherhood, unity and all that is peace-loving and joyous in the extreme, using big words such as "dear God, please help us" in the process, can only sound hypocritical.

Not even politicians, ranging from heads of state or government to party leaders to all others, miss the opportunity to send messages which are even more definite and to the point than the rigid messages of the church. However, this generally ends with nice, short-lived phrases which are immediately followed by statements that poison people's minds once again.

Is reconciliation really possible in what was formerly Yugoslavia, in the sense that we live like human beings, without hatred and the constant rekindling of disputes, provocation, hate threats and new wars? It takes will, honesty, and courage to ensure reconciliation. The words of Prof. Vladeta Jerotić, and the famous *letter from Konrad Adenauer to the Bonn pastor*, could be a good lesson to us all in this regard.³⁸

As far back as 1999, Prof. Jerotić stated the following: "Are not the latest tragic events experienced by the Serbian people yet another, and possibly a final warning, chance and challenge to speak openly about the centuries-old issues regarding the Serbian people's character, like a panel of doctors consulting a patient, because the treatment depends on the diagnosis made? ... One should not be afraid of the truth! The years-old lie has deeply corrupted these people, holding them back as children, which they no longer are. The truth always has a cathartic effect, helping both individuals as well as nations mature. We must be ready to hear the truth about ourselves and, after that we must not take revenge or allow the wantonness of anarchy to fester within us. Then, and only then, will the truth have a cathartic effect".

Much in the same vein is Desimir Tošić's statement that, "We have burdened ourselves with hideous transgressions and crimes, unaware of the burden we are leaving behind, one that weighs primarily on our shoulders, a burden that others are not obliged to carry. Personally, I wish Serbia would start freeing itself from the burden I have mentioned. If you complain that some of our people are missing and you take the list bearing their names with you, for example, to Brussels, the way our prime minister has done, you should also take with you a list of those reported missing after our operations. If you say that 122 churches and monasteries were destroyed by fire in March 2004, would you be so kind as to tell us how many mosques were demolished in Kosovo in 1999? Many would be surprised to see that that number is much higher than the number of Orthodox churches destroyed. Things are even worse in Bosnia, where the ratio between destroyed Orthodox churches and mosques is approximately 1:9. The Orthodox Church must speak out on this, it must pray for all people, not just for some bishop in Vranje."³⁹

The same can be applied to all peoples in the region, so everyone should feel free to replace the words '*Serbian people*' with the name of their own people, and think about this in the context of their own country and nation. Once they have thought about it and decided to do something useful for their own people, as well as all peoples, all political and religious leaders, politicians, party apparatchiks, new historians and national-religious patriotic political officials, reporters and small-time journalists, writers, analysts and others should carefully examine the letter from *Adenauer to the Bonn pastor*. When the presidents of newly-emerged countries realise that they have truly understood it, they should write an identical letter to the religious leaders and institutions of their respective nations. I underline that they should do so only once they are certain that they have understood it and that they can be so sincere and honest as to list all that those belonging to their nation and religion have done to others, about which religious leaders have kept quiet and still keep quiet. The point is to admit to oneself as well as others the truth about oneself and others, and to sincerely extend the hand of reconciliation. It is not hard to copy Adenauer's letter, all you have to do is change the names:

³⁸<http://pescanik.net/pismo-parohu/>

³⁹<http://pescanik.net/ubijte-glasnika/>, 26.5.2006.

"In my opinion, the German people and the bishops and the clergy carry great guilt concerning what happened in concentration camps. It is correct that probably not much could have been done after the fact. This guilt is present from before. The German people, as well as the bishops and the clergy, to a large extent fell for national socialist agitation. They adopted all that was stated in the article practically without resistance, and with partial enthusiasm. Here lies their guilt. ...It was also known that great cruelties were committed in concentration camps, that the Gestapo, our SS troops, and to an extent our troops in Poland and Russia, proceeded with unparalleled cruelty against the civilian population. The Jewish pogroms of 1933 and 1938 happened completely publicly. The murder of hostages in France was disclosed by us officially. It cannot be truly asserted that the public did not know that the national socialist government and the leadership of the army continually violated, as a matter of principle, natural law, the Hague Convention, and the simplest commandments of humanity. I believe that, if all the bishops together had opposed this, on a specific day, publicly from the pulpits, they could have prevented much. That did not happen, and for that there is no excuse. If the bishops had, because of this, gone to prison or concentration camps, it would not have been a shame, quite the contrary."

The adoption of declarations in which countries take such a stand, condemning unequivocally those that have committed atrocities, naming them and their units, and passing laws prohibiting the denial of crimes, of the holocaust, of genocides and crimes against humanity, and banning, in particular, the rehabilitation and glorification of perpetrators of these acts, would be a major civilizational step towards true reconciliation, and a relief to all. It would be the first civilizational step of courage, to stand before one's nation and the world alike and to take one's nation on a road of catharsis and reconciliation rather than a road of more crimes and plight.

The question of whether reconciliation is possible depends, before all else, on whether those holding public office and religious leaders are prepared to act primarily like human beings. That is, whether they are prepared to back everything they say at Christmas, Bayram and on other occasions with actions, and whether they really mean what they say or it is just insincere, empty talk.

There has been a series of initiatives, promises, pledges and specific moves, but they have yielded no real results. The current Berlin Process could provide additional impetus, together with the many regional initiatives launched, which gives us a reason to hope.

Serbia has spearheaded the reconciliation process in the region (let us not specify at which point and how sincere its actions were), and former president Boris Tadić and current Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić should doubtless be given credit for this. It should be pointed out at this stage that with his stand, which many considered as unexpected, Vučić has set a good example to others by showing that even an unpleasant situation can prove to be a good opportunity to improve relations rather than make them tenser. Relations with Albania, Vučić's attitude toward Croatia and his initiative after the incident that occurred in Srebrenica are examples of this.

The visit by the three-member presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina to Serbia was without doubt a statesmanlike move on Vučić's part, despite the protocol procedures and the reasons for President Tomislav Nikolić's absence. Vučić's meeting with the three Bosnian presidency members in Belgrade, according to them, sent a strong, clear message of: "may there never be blood in the Drina again, or in any river or stream, and may there never be prison camps, pits or mass graves again." In other words, let us just act as human beings, let us talk things over and come to an understanding. What kind of effect does this have, and can visible headway be made in the normalisation of relations, or is all that was said just empty talk delivered on the occasion?

This was a good opportunity to launch an initiative to formulate and adopt a joint declaration/resolution on reconciliation, because we have seen that others can always turn us against each other, but, at the end of the day, after ten, twenty or thirty years, it is only up to us to secure reconciliation and the sooner we do it the better.

That day, everything seemed surreal: just the day before it was unimaginable that reporters, different analysts, politicians and even people interviewed in the street, in live or special programmes, could speak affirmatively of brotherhood and unity, which the very same people had ridiculed only a few days earlier. The impression was that brotherhood and unity were something that went without saying and that they were popular again. Everyone was saying that we did not have to love each other collectively, but for us just to be normal and not hate each other, to live next to each other as human beings. The message sent from the 1+3 meeting in Belgrade was "leave nationalism and chauvinism alone, it is the economy that sustains us". This just proves that the media can shape public opinion and influence the masses in any way they like. Let us imagine now that all the poisoned history textbooks in the region were rewritten in this vein and that all TV stations persistently promoted peace, forgiveness and reconciliation for one month only, and we were to have a new reality. Moreover, if all three religious communities decided to work on the reconciliation of people rather than preach hatred, we would soon almost reach the Scandinavian level.

The 1+3 meeting in Belgrade was held in a cordial atmosphere, resulting in announcements that the two countries' relations would finally start to normalise. All participants voiced their firm commitment, subsequently manifesting it in the streets of Belgrade. Regrettably, the trend only lasted for two days, after which they all went back to chanting their mantras, while this meeting and all its messages were soon to be forgotten.

The events surrounding Srebrenica proved yet again that the resolution on which no one, not even the English, comments on any more, was pointless and more harmful than beneficial to the normalisation process in the region. The resolution and the strong media response it elicited triggered the incident in Potočari, in which a number of people attending the commemoration assaulted the prime minister of a neighbouring state.

This very incident showed that it is high time reasonable moves were made, while Vučić indeed demonstrated that things can only be improved by smart moves and not by trying to outdo somebody else's hatred and primitivism. He disappointed all extremists when he stated that, despite all that had happened he would work even more on reconciliation.

One cannot but wonder why even 20 years after the war, Bosnian Muslim politicians do not deem it necessary to pay their respects to Serbian victims, why Bakir Izetbegović does not visit Bratunac, for example, why he and Milorad Dodik do not visit all the execution sites and show their reverence for the victims as befits human beings, why they do not do this together, accompanied by top religious dignitaries, and when will they finally start to live from developing the economy, rather than the exploitation of the halo of victims and nationalism, as Bosnian Muslims have done, or by dispensing doses of nationalism by complaining that others want to destroy the Republika Srpska, as Bosnian Serbs have done.

The question arises as to what Great Britain wanted to achieve with its resolution on Srebrenica and why it feels so much empathy for the killed Bosnian Muslims, turning a blind eye to other victims in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the far more massive crimes in the world, on which it neither proposes nor adopts resolutions.

If someone truly cares about peace and reconciliation in the region, than they cannot secure them by adopting just one resolution and incessantly repeating the term 'genocide'. Surely, the fact that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has passed its ruling on the matter, qualifying the event, should suffice, but there are some people in Serbia who also pretend not to have heard about this qualification, which has neither accused Serbia of genocide, nor has declared the Serbs genocidal. Serbia has not lodged an appeal against the Court's ruling, which means that it has accepted the qualification. It is therefore hard to understand why so much dust has been raised and why there is so much fear that the Serbs will be declared genocidal, because they will not, and nor will the Serbs be qualified in this way, so there is no need for Serbia to defend the Republika Srpska in this matter. However, at this point one should again recall Tošić's words: "do not hide or justify what cannot be justified".

We return now to the issue of the adoption of a joint declaration/resolution which is a far more effective solution than any to be imposed on us by the English or somebody else. Why is it that the elite in the region did not agree on and adopt a joint declaration/resolution on reconciliation and the condemnation of crimes and genocide on behalf of their respective nations a long time ago? As long as we do not do it ourselves, various resolutions will be thrust upon us all from all sides, simply because they are more prone to maintaining their line of retreat by pinning the blame on others. That is why they refuse to drop the poisonous rhetoric of the 1990's or choose to simply postpone it for some time. This is best illustrated by a regular trade-off of barbs between Dodik and Izetbegović, the flare-up of Croatian patriotic rhetoric, and the relevant Serbian ministers' responses to it.

It seems as if everyone is just waiting for someone to pin collective blame on their people so that they can have a reason to come to their heroic and patriotic defence and have the opportunity to blame the other side as much as possible. If the ICJ ruled that genocide happened in Srebrenica, how is it that Dodik and the Serbian leadership interpret this as *the entire Serbian people being qualified as genocidal and the Republika Srpska as a genocidal creation, just so it could be destroyed*. So, we deny genocide in order to avoid the entire Serbian people being burdened with the qualification that it is *genocidal*, however, since we do not deny that *the heinous crime was committed*, it turns out that we declare ourselves *war criminals*. Also, there is no mention of who precisely believes that all Serbs are responsible for Srebrenica or that all Muslims should be blamed for the mass crimes committed against Serbs in 1941, or for the crimes committed at Crno Jezero, the River Una, Kravice, Bratunac; moreover, there is no mention of who believes that all Croats are responsible for the crimes committed at Jasenovac, Jadovno, Gospić, the church in Glina, the Korana bridge and Pakračka Poljana, in the Lora prison camp etc., or even for *Operation Storm*, but the perpetrators of crimes and persecutions must be tried and convicted. The point is that such policies and the specific perpetrators must be condemned primarily by those in whose name the crimes have been committed. This should be said, but not in a Balkan-style manner, *"I am really glad that we have more victims because now we can tell you that you are worse war criminals"*, and, if the number of victims of the wars of the 1990s is not deemed to be high enough, we will compensate for it by referring to World War II victims, starting with Podrinje, where Muslims were killed, and Jasenovac, Jadovno, Gospić and other Ustasha camps in which Serbs perished, and ending with Bleiburg, where *"partisans/Serbs/Communists killed hundreds of thousands of peaceful Croats"*, as if they were Red Cross staff rather than members of notorious Ustasha death squads.

Nationalist platitudes suggesting that they all fought a defensive war and only defended themselves while all the rest were aggressors and war criminals, do not hold water because they all both launched attacks and defended themselves, while in the wars of the 1990s all warring parties pursued the policy of ethnic cleansing and everything that emerged from that war, starting with Croatia and the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina, its entities included, is the result of ethnic cleansing and the war atrocities that came with it.

The logic that only the victims of Srebrenica are true victims and that Naser Orić is a hero cannot be accepted either, nor can the claims that the scope of this crime was not so massive, as it is a well-known fact that buses were commissioned in Šabac and Loznica to transport those not welcome to stay. It is known exactly who did what and on whose orders, as well as what happened in Bratunac, Kravice, Kazani, Sarajevo or Vukovar, at the Korana Bridge or in Gospić, Srebrenica, Tomašica etc.

All it would take is a comprehensive resolution condemning all religiously or ethnically motivated crimes, and highlighting all such cases from the 20th century accompanied by relevant figures in order to illustrate a given crime or genocide rather than give cause for revanchism. No one is asking or forcing today's generations in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia or elsewhere to assume the blame, but it is their moral, historical and political duty to use all means available to oppose all attempts to deny crimes, from those least serious to those committed on the largest scale possible, such as genocide.

Everyone should reveal the truth about the crimes committed by their compatriots, and provide accompanying accurate figures regarding those crimes, and then all of those crimes should be condemned under a joint resolution as a dark memorial from the past and backed with the pledge that this should never happen again and that all textbooks in the region should be based on the truthful and unbiased depiction of events. Only on such foundations can young generations be educated and raised unburdened, because all we do now is poison their minds, preparing them for new wars.

If this is not done, the elites will continue repeating the same old story and no resolution will be able to help either them or the people and the region to return to their normal lives, abandoning the twisted nationalist and chauvinist point of view. The truth and willingness of everyone to come to terms with the truth is a basis for sincere and lasting reconciliation.

It takes the wisdom of someone like Prof. Jerotić, the frankness of someone like Tošić, the statesmanlike courage and responsibility of someone like Adenauer, and the honesty and humanity of someone like Brandt to truly confront the truth in general.

Our obligation is to, through reconciliation, free future generations from the burden of coming to terms with crimes which they are not responsible for and which someone else has committed in their name.

THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF THE EU'S COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Zdravko Zeljković

In the security sphere, defence constitutes a specific area of the European integration process. It is the very *essence of sovereignty* and, as a consequence, the dynamic of the integration process has been slower. Still, with the Maastricht Treaty, security and defence became a major segment of European integration.

The expansion of the security and defence policy, reflected in the past few years in both procedural as well as institutional fields, and numerous EU military and civilian missions, testifies to the Member States' efforts to go beyond the framework of national cooperation and shape the EU as a global actor.

The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is an integral part of its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Under the Lisbon Treaty, its goal is to provide the Union with *an operational capacity drawing on civilian and military assets*.⁴⁰ The Union can use these assets on missions aimed at peacekeeping, conflict prevention, and strengthening international security, in keeping with the UN Charter. Consequently, the CSDP is an integral part of the EU's foreign policy, contributing to it through the development of civilian and military capabilities, backed by an adequate strategy. However, the CSDP should also represent a major step towards the gradual strengthening of the EU's common defence policy, leading to a *common defence, should the European Council, acting unanimously, so decide*.⁴¹ The Union's missions under the CSDP include joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peacekeeping tasks, and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making and post-conflict stabilisation.⁴² The legal wording of these missions is visibly similar to the principles of the UN Charter, because they are carried out outside the Union and have the following three-pronged goal: peacekeeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security, as well as highlighting the wish to strengthen ties with the UN and secure international legitimacy, as an inevitable accompanying element of the EU's growing military aspirations.⁴³

⁴⁰ Article 42(1) of the Treaty on European Union.

⁴¹ Article 42(2) of the Treaty on European Union.

⁴² Article 43(1) of the Treaty on European Union.

⁴³ Janjević, Milutin, *Spoljna politika Evropske unije* [EU Foreign Policy], Official Gazette, Belgrade, 2007, p.196.

To implement the EU's security and defence policy, a new institutional structure has been adopted. Based on the guidelines adopted by the European Council in Cologne in June 1999, a decision was taken to form new bodies. As early as 2001, three new bodies, including the Political and Security Committee, the Military Committee and the EU Military Staff, were set up.⁴⁴ The *Political and Security Committee* is the chief body of the EU's security and defence policy in charge of political control and strategic direction of crisis management operations. Its tasks include the following: monitoring policy implementation, providing guidance to other committees in the area of the CSDP, sending guidelines to the Military Committee and the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management, holding political dialogue, coordination, supervision and control of the work led by working groups in the area of the CFSP, and the political guidance of the development of military capabilities. The *EU Military Committee* is the Council's highest military body and a primary forum for Member States' consultations and military cooperation in conflict prevention and crisis management. The Military Committee directs all EU military activities. Its basic role is to give military advice to the Political and Security Committee and make recommendations on military matters. The Military Committee gives advice and makes recommendations primarily in the following areas: military aspects of the crisis management concept, assessment of risks likely to trigger crises, military aspects of the political control of crisis management operations, assessment of military capabilities, the EU's military relations with non-EU European NATO members, and the assessment of financial aspects of military operations and exercises. The Military Committee also provides military guidelines to the *EU Military Staff*, which is a technical body tasked with planning, assessing and providing recommendations for the concept of crisis management and general military strategy, as well as with implementing the Military Committee's decisions and policies.

The Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management, set up at a meeting of the Council of Ministers in May 2000, is in charge of civilian crisis management.⁴⁵ The body operates as the Council's working group, reporting to the *Permanent Representatives Committee* (COREPER). Its primary role is to make recommendations to and advise the Political and Security Committee on civilian aspects of crisis management. Its task is to enable coordination and synergy between civilian and military aspects of crisis management. On 12th July 2004, the Council of Ministers took the decision to establish the *European Defence Agency*⁴⁶, entrusting it with the following tasks: developing defence capabilities in the field of crisis management, promoting and enhancing the EU Member States' armaments cooperation, strengthening the European defence industrial and technological base, and ensuring greater efficiency in research and technology fields. In developing defence capabilities for crisis management operations, the Agency's task is to define and coordinate the Union's future needs (troops and equipment), propose forms of cooperation, and submit fund assessments.

⁴⁴ Council Decision of 22nd January 2001 setting up the Political and Security Committee (2001/78/CFSP), Official Journal of the European Communities, n L 27,30.01.2001,p.1; Council Decision of 22nd January 2001 setting up the Military Committee of the European Union (2001/79/CFSP), Official Journal of the European Communities, no. L 27,30.01.2001, p.4; Council Decision of 22nd January 2001 on the establishment of the Military Staff of the European Union (2001/80/CFSP), Official Journal of the European Communities, n L 27, 30.01.2001, p.7.

⁴⁵ Council Decision of 22nd May 2000 setting up a Committee for civilian aspects of crisis management (2000/354/CFSP), Official Journal of the European Communities, n L 127, 22.05.2000, p.1.

⁴⁶ Council Joint Action 2004/551/CFSP of 12th July 2004 on the establishment of the European Defence Agency, Official Journal of the European Communities, n L 245, 17.07.2004, p.17.

In addition to the establishment of political and military bodies, the EU's security and defence policy necessitated the development of military and civilian capabilities. Consequently, in a meeting in Helsinki on 10th -11th December 1999, the European Council reached an agreement on what it termed as the Headline Goal 2003, which provided for the setting up of forces capable of *coping with* potential crises. The Council decided to set up a corps-sized European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF) by 2003, with between 50,000-60,000 personnel, deployable within 60 days and capable of carrying out tasks for up to one year. These forces would not be stationed in any particular place but would be activated when necessary and be capable of carrying out tasks independently; they would have intelligence elements, their own logistics and, when necessary, air and naval elements. This practically means that rapid reaction should be the key element of the development of the EU's military capabilities.

In the same meeting, the European Council also decided to define collective goals for collective capabilities in the sphere of command, control, intelligence and strategic transport. The Force Catalogue was compiled and released at the Capabilities Commitment Conference held in Brussels from 20th-21st November 2000. The Member States committed to contribute certain military capabilities, which were included into the Force Catalogue. It was established that the Member States' total forces consisted of 100,000 troops, 400 fighter jets, and 100 vessels.

Yet, the Catalogue neither specified the types of operations the European forces would carry out nor addressed the issue of joint planning of production and the development of military capabilities or of coordination of national defence forces and the common European defence strategy.⁴⁷ The Capabilities Improvement Conference, held on 19th November 2001, adopted the European Capabilities Action Plan (ECAP) and a Statement on Improving European Military Capabilities, which suggested that there were still areas in which the contribution of Member States was insufficient.

The EU's initial operational experience in crisis management revealed that the Headline Goal 2003 was hard to achieve and that smaller mobile rapid reaction units were a great advantage. The Headline Goal 2003 primarily focused on conventional conflicts, characteristic of Europe. The globalisation of the EU's security and defence policy and the adoption of the European Security Strategy pointed toward the need to adopt a new global goal, which would take into account the Union's broader geographical engagement and new, contemporary threats, which required new resources and capabilities.

⁴⁷ Čehulić, Lidija, *European Defence*, Zagreb, Politička kultura, 2006. str. 144

In a meeting held on 12th December 2003, the European Council adopted the European Security Strategy, which highlighted the importance of the development of military capabilities, stating that forces should be more flexible and mobile, that more resources should be allocated for defence, and that these resources should be used more effectively.⁴⁸ The Strategy urged the development of *effective multiculturalism* centred around the UN, suggesting that the EU should therefore help strengthen the UN by contributing adequate capabilities to it. Since 2003, the UN has repeatedly asked the EU for mobile rapid reaction units, which would be used in operations under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter. In view of the UN's modest capacity to launch a military operation in a short period of time, it would be great importance if the EU could place its own military forces at the disposal of the UN (in the initial stage of a military operation) until it got organised and deployed its own troops to a crisis area. For the EU, providing *services* to the UN would mean a more active role on the international scene.

As a result, in a meeting held on 17th May 2004, the Council of the European Union adopted the Headline Goal 2010,⁴⁹ which focused on new, non-traditional threats constituting a part of the European Security Strategy, with the goal of continuing the development of capabilities and adapting them to the new strategic environment. Unlike the Headline Goal 2003, which laid emphasis on the quantitative needs of European capabilities (strength of forces), the Headline Goal 2010 focused on qualitative aspects including mobility, self-sustainability and interoperability. The main points of the Headline Goal 2010 include the following: forming a civil-military cell within the EU Military Staff, setting up the European Defence Agency, completing the development of battle groups by 2007, improving the performance of all levels of EU operations by developing appropriate compatibility and network linkage of all communications equipment and assets both terrestrial and space based, and developing quantitative benchmarks and criteria to be met by national forces in the fields of deployability and multinational training.⁵⁰ The concept of EU battlegroups is the key element of the Headline Goal 2010. The battlegroups are rapidly deployable forces capable of stand-alone operations or of participating in the initial stage of more complex military operations. The initiative to set up these forces was launched at the Franco-British summit in Le Touquet on 4th February 2003, when the two countries agreed that it was necessary to improve the European capabilities in the deployability sphere, which implied the setting up of forces deployable to a crisis area within 5-10 days. Germany endorsed this concept, which was presented to the EU's Political and Security Committee on 10th February 2004, when it was also agreed to form units that could be rapidly deployed and transported to a crisis area for EU or UN purposes. The plan was to set up 13 battlegroups, each of which would be 1,500 troops strong. The battlegroups would be deployable in under 15 days and capable of carrying out tasks in a crisis area over a period of 30-120 days. Their basic features include high deployability and efficiency.

⁴⁸ *A Secure Europe in a better World*, <http://www.consilium.europea.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>.

⁴⁹ Headline Goal approved by General Affairs and External Relations Council on 17th May 2004, <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/2010%20Headline%20Goal.pdf>.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*

Battlegroups are combined-arms, battalion-sized forces, reinforced with tactical and logistic support elements. Each EU Member State is expected to contribute two battlegroups for a six-month period. The battlegroup packages are offered on a voluntary principle at the Battle Group Coordination Conferences twice a year. Each Member State is responsible for its battlegroups, which means that it has to pool the capabilities needed to set them up as well as take care of their training and combat readiness, command structure and funding. The operational scope of battlegroups has been expanded so that now, in addition to performing the Petersberg tasks, they can be used in disarmament operations, as support to third countries in their fight against terrorism and for security reforms. Based on interoperability, the training of battlegroups is expected, given time, to help develop a common military culture.

The Headline Goal 2010 revealed serious deficiencies in the armaments sector. Article 296 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community, which after the Lisbon Treaty had come into effect became Article 346 of the Treaty on the European Union, is derogation from the internal military market and industry rule. Due to the lack of common rules on military equipment, Member States directly invoked Article 296, which resulted in an inhomogeneous armaments market, based on the duplication of national programmes and, consequently, higher expenses. However, significant cuts in Member States' defence budgets were followed by the restructuring of their military forces and their growing engagement in crisis management operations, which generated additional expenses. As a result, the investment segment of defence budgets was reduced. The gap between the reduction in this budget segment and increased expenses reflected also on the development of EU military capabilities and the prospects for the future European security and defence policy. European forces were not reinforced with state-of-the-art military equipment, which are increasingly vital for contemporary crisis management operations.⁵¹ To overcome this situation and find joint solutions, the European Defence Agency, intended as a *catalyst* for the development of EU military capabilities, was formed.⁵²

The former dilemma of whether *to spend better or to spend more* lost its significance after the economic crisis which hit the EU, among others. It is unrealistic to expect that Member States will agree to increase their military expenses and, consequently, priority should be given to the rationalisation and coordination of current capabilities. In this context, special attention should be paid to both reducing duplication and better coordination of the procurement of military equipment, as well as to improving the European forces' operability level. Despite the inevitable cuts in military expenses, their restructuring has not been *Europeanised*, i.e. each Member State implements its military reforms independently.

⁵¹ Vukčević, Dejana, „Derogacija pravila unutrašnjeg tržišta EU u oblasti naoružanja“, [Derogation to the EU Internal Market Rule in the Armaments Sector], *Politička revija*, No. 3, 2010, p. 275.

⁵² Menon, Anand, *European Defence Policy from Lisbon to Libya*, *Survival*, Vol. 53, No. 3, 2011, p. 85.

Despite the financial and Eurozone crises in EU Member States, which inevitably leads to cuts in their defence budgets, they are neither ready, nor motivated to invest in certain capabilities just because they have been identified as insufficient at an EU level. Some Member States fear that their contribution to a multinational project will be greater than that of other Member States and, as a result, they persist in taking planning decisions independently, without coordination with other Member States. As a result, a surplus national (tactical) capacity is maintained, while at the same time there is a lack of strategic capacity.⁵³ The solution should therefore be sought in the application of the *pooling and sharing* principle, expected to ensure better coordination of defence planning, including the harmonisation of military needs, the division of resources and roles, better cooperation in the research and technology sphere, industrial consolidation and elimination of protectionism in the military equipment market.

The decreasing trend in the military budget is likely to continue during the accession negotiations between Serbia and the EU. In the framework of reform of the security economic and political circumstances dictate that the decision-makers face the fact that the time when the security policy determined the defence budget is over. Now the defence budget drives security policy, because Serbia cannot have more ambitious defence and security policy than the one it can afford. This means that the country will need to be pragmatic and realistic in the process of accession to the EU, as well as with the obligations that this process bears within the negotiation of the Chapter 31.

The major challenge is the transformation and adjustment of the structure of security and defence sector to match the one in EU Member States. It will require the renunciation of systems and structures that have been created for other types of security threats in relation to contemporary and future threats.

The armed forces of Serbia will not be able to function in a usual way, at least not to the same extent and with the same intensity. The new approach will require setting new priorities, harmonization of structures, reducing procurement and in certain segments, the reliance on the security capacities of the EU and the partners from the region.

⁵³ Biscop, Sven, „The UK and European defence: leading or leaving?“, *International Affairs*, vol.88, no 6, 2012, p. 1303.

Membership in the EU is Serbia's strategic interest and it is a process that inevitably flows, a process that will gain in importance and intensity of the forthcoming opening of the first chapters. One of the most important aspects of the accession is the area of security and defence, or the common security and defence policy of the EU. In this field a special place belongs to the Army of Serbia, and its participation in missions and operations organized by the EU. In time we believe this participation will increase.

The intergovernmental approach to the EU's security and defence policy is not necessarily an obstacle to the development of joint resources and capabilities. Since the beginning, the CSDP has been based on intergovernmental cooperation and the principle of consensus, as the basic way of decision-making. Still, it cannot be perceived solely as a sum of national interests. The evolution of this policy can be understood as a stimulus to joint investment in capabilities.

The CSDP has, so far, been directed in an *ad hoc* manner, without defining the military and civilian resources deployment strategy. Global goals, such as a resource and capability strategy, have been defined, limiting the development of the EU's security policy to the development of capabilities and institutions. The affirmation of the EU's defence and security policy should be the result of political aspirations and an expression of the vision of the EU and its position in the world. The EU's security dimension must be perceived in a broader context, as a part of the Union's foreign policy, contributing to its goals and its role on the international scene.

ISLAMIC THREAT: REALITY OR FICTION

Dušan Simeonović

In the introduction to his book, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, John Esposito, a famous US Islamologist, raises some questions that seem to me vital for the present preoccupation of the world, specifically the West, with Islamic threats and acts of terrorism. Are Islam and the West on an inevitable collision course? Are Islamic fundamentalists mediaeval fanatics? Is Islamic fundamentalism a threat to world stability? I would like to add to these the following question: Is Islamic civilisation compatible with Western civilisation, i.e. are Islam and democracy inevitably and inherently incompatible?

The West's perception of Muslims is still being expanded and revived by numerous caricatures, selected articles, and TV reports. As for the Islamic religion, papers on it are most frequently a mixture of prejudice and ignorance. More often than not, Islam is depicted as a *fanatic, bloodthirsty, reactionary, xenophobic and above all destructive force*. The current poverty and underdeveloped state of the majority of Islamic countries are most easily identified with Islam itself. The contribution the Arab-Islamic world made to Western civilisation by preserving the Greco-Roman heritage during Europe's obscure Middle Ages is usually underrated.

It is easy to forget that during the Umayyad Caliphate in Spain (10th century), Cordoba, with some 70 libraries and over 400,000 books, was the world's cultural centre, where Plato, Socrates and Aristotle were translated into Arabic, and an academy for Talmud study was set up, while Andalusian Jewish culture flourished.

Is a civilisation, which at the height of its power was to such an extent ready and able to absorb and develop the greatest advances in philosophic and scientific thoughts of an inherently different civilisation, really so incompatible that coexistence is impossible in changed historical conditions?

The decades-old conflict between Western civilisation and the Islamic world in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance was a conflict of equals. It was characterised by mutual hostility and even animosity, as well as mutual respect. This radically changed with the technological and material progress of European countries in the 19th and 20th centuries. The hostility and fear that these countries felt was superseded by their contempt for the lack of such advances in the Islamic world. After several centuries of domination in the world, Islam entered a period of long decline and, seen through the eyes of the West, was unable and unready to adopt the values of Western civilisation.

That civilisation - as the proud, imperialistically trivial Europe of the 19th century preferred to refer to it - *was arrogant humiliation of everything non-European* - wrote Lord Cromer, the British consul in Cairo during the British occupation of Egypt in 1907.

Naturally, it would be too simple and untrue to exclusively blame external factors, regardless of whether they include the Mongols, the Turks, or even the West, for the collapse of a civilisation that brought scientific and cultural values to astonishing heights in one historical epoch.

Throughout history, relations between Islam and the West, despite their common theological roots, were characterised by their unwillingness to establish substantially closer ties, as well as by stereotypes and confrontation. The West perceived the flourishing and expansion of Islamic civilisation as a theological, political and cultural challenge, and even a threat to Christianity.

In the 20th century, European imperialism and the years-long occupation of Muslim countries had a far-reaching, deep impact on Islam's relationship with the West. European colonial powers either replaced or transformed political, social, economic, legal and educational institutions of Muslim societies. The Islamic world was confronted with the challenge of how to oppose the West's imperial hegemony, which posed a threat to Islamic religion and culture and in particular the Islamic world's moral norms. The struggle for independence from colonial rule went hand in hand with movements aiming to restore the lost identity of their one-time glorious past.

The end of World War II placed another heavy burden on relations between the Islamic - and in particular Arab - world and the West, with the creation of the state of Israel in what was historically Palestinian territory. The crisis has persisted to the present day. The West, and the US in particular, are considered to be anti-Islamic and uncritically pro-Israeli, which gives rise to strong anti-US as well as anti-Western sentiment, even in moderate political circles in Muslim countries.

Moreover, US support for repressive regimes in Arab countries has in particular reinforced anti-US sentiment in both the laymen as well as the ultra-Orthodox segment of Arab societies, which is controversial only at first glance.

The result of conflicting interests between the layman elements of the Islamic world and Western countries was that Islamists, who had left a deep and visible imprint on everyday life in all domains of Muslim society, triumphed in this conflict. A large segment of the population identified itself with them, even more so since they had adopted all the social and national demands traditionally supported by the Left as well as movements emerging from the struggle for independence.

The answer to the question of whether Muslim societies' centuries-old blindness or the Western powers' centuries-old greed should be blamed for all of this will not help us much today. Both hypotheses can be defended.

In his famous speech in Cairo in 2009, Obama stressed that the US was not, nor would it ever be, at war with Islam. These words instilled new hope throughout the Islamic world, but were proved to be a great illusion. Today, there is no difference between Obama and G.W. Bush as far as Muslims are concerned. The majority of them believe that the US is at war with Islam.

Further identification of Islam as a danger or a threat, and the perception of the Muslim world based on glib generalisations and stereotypes, such as *militant Islam*, *Islamic fundamentalism* and *terrorism*, minimises the West's ability to take into account the fundamental differences that lie at the heart of these phenomena.

In his book, *Islam: Dogma and Life*, Darko Tanasković, a renowned Serbian Islamologist, states that, if the term 'Islamic fundamentalism' is stripped of all inappropriate connotations, it means in its broadest sense a movement urging the return to fundamental values/fundamentals of Islam. Interpreted in this way, it is a natural part of every true Islamic effort to reconsider, in a creative way, the world and one's position in it. Such an act is not *a priori* negative or retrograde, but depending on its internal structure, it can prove to be positive or even legitimate.

According to Tanasković, there should be a distinction between such positive fundamentalism and activist, political or militant fundamentalism, which reduces Islam and Sharia to an instrument of political struggle.

The 1970's and 1980's witnessed the *resurgence* of Islam as a potential global power in Islamic countries' politics, embraced by most of the Muslim world. The governments of these countries, as well as opposition groups, began to rely increasingly on religion in order to win the population's political support and approval. Islamic activists in particular, used every opportunity, legal or otherwise, to penetrate the power structures. As a result, internal political antagonisms deepened throughout this region, triggering clashes, especially in multi-ethnic and multiconfessional communities. At the same time, the fact that Asia (India, Indonesia, Pakistan etc.) is home to the largest Muslim population is often disregarded due to the frequent identification of Islam with the Middle East.

Economic destitution, hopelessness and long-repressed anger, which is the result of a loss of identity, especially among young people, coupled with accumulated antagonism towards the West, either because of policies, which are perceived as anti-Islamic, or the highly insulting provocations from the West, essentially low and unnecessary, generating terrorism which is the most extreme form of political struggle, i.e. an angry response to these policies and provocations.

In this context, the view that mixing religion and politics inevitably leads to fanaticism and extremism was the main factor in the conclusion that Islam is inherently undemocratic and intolerant. The inability or unwillingness to distinguish between moderate Islamic movements and those that are violent and extremist in nature, results in glib simplification. The governments of the US and most European countries do not equate aggressive campaigns launched by Israel or some Christian states with Judaism/ Christianity. This is only done in the case of Islam.

The success of some Islamic movements in democratically held elections has created room for the penetration of Islamic political forces into power centres, giving rise to speculations as to the inherence of Islam and democracy. Some cases, even the temporary seizing of power by Islamists, reinforce the arguments of those who are afraid of further democratic processes, and that, in the Muslim world, there is a danger as well as evidence that *democracy might be taken over* by far-right Muslim forces. Undoubtedly, this has posed a threat not only to *layman* autocrats in their decades-old rule, but also to Western interests in this region, important to the West in more ways than one.

Admittedly, some Islamic movement leaders openly speak against Western-style democracy and the parliamentary system of government. As far as they are concerned, Western *prêt-à-porter* democracy showed its true colours when it reacted to the results of democratic elections in Algeria, won by the Islamic Front, or Hamas's victory in Gaza, or Hezbollah's joining the coalition government in Lebanon. Egypt is the latest such example.

The case of Iraq is in particular characteristic. To some, it shows that the Muslim world is impervious to democracy, while to others it lays bare the true face of Western-style *democratisation*.

In his book, *Disordered World*, Lebanese novelist Amin Maalouf describes what *the great US democracy* brought to the Iraqi people as disgraceful and reprehensible. According to him, if this is the result of ignorance, than it is regrettable. If it is the result of material interests, than it is a crime. Personally, I share the second view.

In the past few decades, the concept of democracy has become an integral part of contemporary Islamic thought, but its interpretations differ from its connotation in the Western world. *Islamisation of democracy* or *democratisation of Islam* is based on the modern reinterpretation of traditional Islamic ideas of political liberation and supports the principle of democratic election and the parliamentary system of government. None of it necessarily implies the uncritical acceptance of Western forms of democracy.

In a climate in which the majority of Arab governments have in the past few years been traumatised by ghosts of *Muslim fundamentalism*, this fear has been an excuse to keep limiting political liberalisation and democratisation.

To autocratic rulers in the Muslim world, potential democratisation meant a real threat of opposition forces' growing stronger. However, to most Western governments, democracy, which would have by all means brought radical changes to these countries' systems of government, signalled that old and reliable friendly regimes might not survive and could transform into independent, less predictable entities likely to jeopardise the West's presence and influence, especially their unobstructed access to Arab oil. Consequently, maintaining the status quo was the West's absolute political and strategic priority, irrespective of the fact that it meant keeping autocratic regimes alive, led by corrupt and discredited autocrats.

No one heeded the *alarm* sounded by the Arab world, yearning and ready for radical changes, for the exercise of fundamental human rights and freedoms, for a democracy adapted to their conditions and, above all, for restored human dignity, that is, for the values deemed universal by the West and the entire democratic world. The Arab Spring is a paradigm of such a relationship.

So, is there an *Islamic threat*? In a way, there is, according to Esposito. The same as there is a Western or Jewish-Christian threat. Some Muslim leaders, as well as their Christian and Jewish counterparts, have either used or still use their religion to justify aggression and militancy, conquests and persecutions, in the past and the present alike. Political Islam as well as the practice of referring to any religion or ideology can indeed be efficient, as well as dangerous. However, the lasting vitality of Islam relying on its authentic sources and messages should be a challenge rather than a threat. And the challenge confronting Western civilisation with respect to Islam is to better understand the history and reality of the Muslim world. Recognising the diversity and many-sidedness of Islam is at variance with the notion of a uniform Islamic threat. It reduces the likelihood of the *prophecy* about the inevitable clash of civilisations, which boils down to the West's fight against radical Islam.

Guided by its ideals of freedom, the Western world is in a position to acknowledge, if not support, the aspirations shared by most of the Islamic world in its quest for new roads to the future. This would help narrow the gap between the reality and fiction of an *Islamic threat*.

HEALTH DIPLOMACY IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE'S MULTILATERAL RELATIONS

Simo Vuković

The preservation and promotion of health are increasingly becoming an inevitable determinant of social and economic policies, as well as a major component of most sovereign countries' security and foreign policy orientation. At the same time, health is an inevitable element of international relations, it is a part of numerous joint platforms and strategic and action documents of international organisations. Foreign policy makers in countries such as the US or Great Britain have long recognised the intermediary role of health, which could be used to achieve good results in foreign policy, aware of the fact that improving the health of the world's population could greatly help further other goals, such as the reduction of carbon emissions, or even give impetus to global economic growth.⁵⁴ Consequently, a number of US officials have called on the Obama administration to secure the return of the US to a multilateral commitment to global health, as an investment in its national interests.⁵⁵ Some authors even believe that advancing health can greatly contribute to peace and security, especially in war-torn regions.⁵⁶

This must have been the guiding principle of the international community when, at the start of the century, it encouraged the strengthening of a multilateral framework for health preservation and promotion in Southeast Europe based on the foundations of the stabilisation process in the region. The effects of the war in former Yugoslavia and the social transition of nearly all countries in the region deeply affected the population's health, devastating and rendering inefficient national health systems and institutions. On the other hand, the challenges the entire world was confronted with in the post-Cold War era (climate change, cyclical financial crises, new pandemic threats etc.) left the countries in the region incapable of sufficiently responding to them, while their populations were extremely vulnerable. Their concerted action, as an efficient tool, especially with regard to health and social cohesion, was a logical response in establishing stronger and more intensive multilateralism in Southeast Europe. The above process, implemented at a varying pace in the past 15 years, has evidently been successful. Health diplomacy, though still in its infancy in Southeast European countries, has without doubt crucially contributed to it. That is why an analysis of the potential of health diplomacy in the new stages of development of regional relations, especially on a multilateral basis, is important to us.

⁵⁴ UK. Strategy for Global Health 2008-2013. Department of Health, London, 2008.

⁵⁵ Henderson M. *Barack Obama adviser Harold Varmus calls for science as diplomacy*. The Times 2009; 27 March.

⁵⁶ Hotez PJ. *Vaccines as instruments of foreign policy*. EMBO Reports 2001; 2(10): 862-8.

Health Diplomacy as a Powerful Weapon of 'Soft' Foreign Policy

Diplomacy, as the art or practice of pursuing a country's foreign policy or conducting international relations, went through a significant transformation in the post-cold war period. The geopolitical reconfiguration of international relations and globalisation are considered the key processes in the post-cold war world. The emergence of new powers such as China, India and Brazil as new geopolitical factors on the world stage required diplomatic approaches to be adapted and innovated. Globalisation, which intensified communication among people and resulted in new aspects of connecting people, gave rise to global problems that spared no community and no country. Global warming and climate change, economic instability, population migration and the spread of diseases on a pandemic scale clearly required concerted action and, consequently, efforts to redefine foreign policy and shape a more modern, *new diplomacy*. A major task facing the concept of *new* diplomacy was to expand what was up to that point the traditional professional capacity of the diplomatic service so as to include a broader circle of experts and policies.⁵⁷ Another major characteristic of the *new* concept was the inclusion of diplomacy in other sector-specific policies under government policy, as well as greater focus on adequate regional diplomacy (geographic regions rallied around a specific issue).⁵⁸ The set of such changes included the growing involvement of non-state actors (NGOs, private companies, individuals etc.) in foreign policy shaping and its implementation.

Health diplomacy, as we know it today, has been shaped in an environment of *the diversification of diplomatic structures, illustrated by an explosion of multilateral negotiation platforms aimed at addressing new global issues*.⁵⁹ As such, health diplomacy has become a part of *soft diplomacy* or a powerful weapon of 'smart power' in international politics. While traditional diplomacy (*hard power*) dominantly relies on military and economic resources, *soft diplomacy*, including health diplomacy, uses values, cultures, policies and institutions.⁶⁰ In this context, health diplomacy is defined as an instrument occupying *the space between international health assistance and international political relations*.⁶¹ The conventional definition of the term 'health diplomacy' speaks of the method of interaction between stakeholders engaged in public health and politics for the purpose of representation, cooperation, resolving disputes, improving health systems and securing the right to health for vulnerable populations.⁶²

⁵⁷ Heine J. *On the Manner of Practising the New Diplomacy*. Working Paper No.22, Centre for International Governance and Innovation, University of Waterloo, October 2006.

⁵⁸ Gynell A., Wesley M. *Regional diplomacy has new impetus*. Australian financial Review 2008; 3 April: 79.

⁵⁹ Benedick RE. *Diplomacy for the Environment*. In American Institute for contemporary German Studies. Environmental Diplomacy, Conference Report, Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC, 1998.

⁶⁰ Ney J. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. Washington DC: Public Affairs, 2005

⁶¹ UCSF Global Health Sciences, " *GHS Initiative in Health Diplomacy*".

<http://globalhealthsciences.ucsf.edu/programs/Diplomacy.aspx>

⁶² Health Diplomats, " *Health Diplomacy*," Geneva. <http://www.healthdiplomats.com/index.php?page=31> health overview

Taking into account the reconfiguration of international relations and diplomacy, health diplomacy, though still largely unrecognised as an effective tool, plays a growing role in defining global and regional policies, as well as general and sector-specific national policies. Including health diplomacy in the shaping and implementation of countries' foreign policies is a major challenge. Foreign policy goals with an indirect impact on health (security, economy, migration, post-conflict confidence building and reconciliation processes, etc.) should constitute the common ground and the least common denominator in that synergetic activity.

On the other hand, goals aimed at health preservation and promotion should be an integral part of foreign, as well as other sector-specific policies. Recognising the significance of such an approach, the European Council adopted a strategic political framework in the form of a document entitled *Health in All Policies* as far back as 2006, which calls for a single approach to public policies across sectors, systematically taking into account health and health systems.⁶³ The principles and values embedded in the document as a result of joint action and years-old efforts by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the EU have become part of numerous strategic documents and agendas, including the Southeast Europe 2020 strategy, thanks to health diplomacy.

This approach is, in particular, reflected in highly developed countries. Switzerland's foreign health policy, as defined under the 2006 framework document, stressed that the concept of health issues being indirectly addressed in its foreign policy had become obsolete, which put emphasis on a more comprehensive approach and stronger policy coordination at national and supranational levels, called for by greater global interdependence.⁶⁴

Further efforts to strengthen health diplomacy should also take into account the objective lack of diplomatic skills and knowledge characteristic of *conventional* diplomacy. This in particular refers to the makers of health policies, which are indeed linked with and greatly depend on regional and global international processes. These weaknesses in health diplomats' expertise particularly refer to the complex processes of negotiation and the adoption of regional and global agreements and policies primarily related to health (trade deals, agreements on environmental protection, intellectual property policy etc.).⁶⁵

In view of the above aspects of the emergence and development of health diplomacy, Southeast Europe, which consists of a complex community of countries that emerged from former Yugoslavia and the Eastern Bloc, burdened with conflicts that occurred in distant or recent history, as well as the many side effects of social transition and a numerous and vulnerable population, poses a special challenge to multilateral cooperation.

⁶³ World Health Organization. Regional Office Europe. Health in All Policies.

http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/188809/Health-in-All-Policies-final.pdf

⁶⁴ Switzerland. Swiss Health Foreign Policy. Federal Department of Home Affairs and Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Bern, 2006.

⁶⁵ Lee K., Smith R.. *What is "Global Health diplomacy" A Conceptual Review.*

http://blogs.shu.edu/ghg/files/2011/11/Lee-and-Smith_What-is-Global-Health-Diplomacy_Fall-2011.pdf

Multilateralism in Public Health in Southeast Europe

To prevent further conflicts, especially in view of the needs of countries that emerged from former Yugoslavia, the international community set in motion the process of the large-scale reconstruction of Southeast Europe in 1999, by institutionalising the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe. In addition to reconciliation, confidence building, security, the development of democracy, respect for human rights, and economic progress, the initiative to establish social cohesion as a major prerequisite of the reconstruction of destabilised societies in the region was a key component of the process. By recognising health, health care, and health system reform as major components of social cohesion, public health became an integral part of the process of the reconstruction, as a result of the efforts made by the international community and in particular the WHO Regional Office for Europe, and the Council of Europe. This created a new area of multilateral cooperation in Southeast Europe, resulting in the First Health Ministers' Forum held in Dubrovnik in 2001.

Focusing on the needs of vulnerable segments of the region's population, the health ministers of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova, the then FRY, Romania, and Macedonia, adopted the Dubrovnik Pledge, agreeing on several priorities for which they would strive for when adopting and creating national health policies. The priorities listed in the Pledge included access to health care services, the strengthening of mental health services and the setting up of regional health-related data collection/exchange networks and systems. The Health Ministers' Forum in Dubrovnik and the joint document marked the establishment of a multilateral institutional platform for health-related political and technical cooperation, and focused on goals set at a regional level as well as those related to future European integration.⁶⁶ Thanks to the expertise and technical support offered by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Council of Europe, as well as donations from the international community, the network soon launched several projects, led by certain Member States. Formally, the above efforts resulted in the setting up of the South-eastern Europe Health Network (SEEHN) as a permanent initiative.

After summing up the results of the implementation of the Dubrovnik Pledge and analysing the findings of more comprehensive studies on health in the context of economic progress, the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Council of Europe, backed by the Council of Europe Development Bank, staged the Second Health Ministers' Forum in Skopje in 2005, which was attended by the health and finance ministers of Member States of the initiative. The Skopje Pledge, as a sublimated result of this meeting, affirmed the governments' resolve to develop the health systems of the countries in the region in a balanced way, underlining sustainability as an important goal of health care. The Second Health Ministers' Forum also reinforced the Member States' commitment to the further development of SEEHN through the adoption of its Statutes.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ SEEHN. Dubrovnik Pledge. <http://seehn.org/web/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Dubrovnik-Pledge2001.pdf>

⁶⁷ SEEHN. Skopje Pledge. <http://seehn.org/web/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Skopje-Pledge-2005.pdf>

Through coordination at the level of Member States' health ministries and the technical assistance and expertise of the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Council of Europe, institutional mechanisms for the sustainable operation of the SEEHN were set up in 2009, by defining its bodies, responsibilities and funding methods provided in the Memorandum of Understanding of the Future of the South-eastern Europe Health Network in the framework of the South East European Cooperation Process (completed with the adoption of amendments to the Memorandum in 2011).⁶⁸

The Memorandum of Understanding was also important because it took into account the fact that Romania and Bulgaria had meanwhile been granted full EU membership (2007) and that, as a multilateral platform, the SEEHN was capable of adapting to such political circumstances. The SEEHN demonstrated the same amount of flexibility and its continued commitment in taking into account the reality of the emergence of Serbia and Montenegro as separate states (2006) as well as Croatia's later accession to the EU in 2013. The implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding resulted in Skopje being chosen as the SEEHN Secretariat's seat (2010) as well as the setting up of nine Regional Health Development Centres specialised in specific public health areas, and with offices in each Member State (2011).

The 10th anniversary of cooperation under the SEEHN was marked by the Third Health Ministers' Forum in Banja Luka in 2011. This regional health forum, with the highest attendance ever, dealt with the health issue in the context of its influence on social and economic development, underlining in particular that all European countries were extremely burdened with chronic non-communicable diseases and that what was needed was concerted regional action under the SEEHN framework.

At the Third Forum, which resulted in the adoption of the Banja Luka Pledge, the SEEHN Member States, taking into account the relevant WHO and EU documents (the proposed new European health policy: *Health 2020*, the proposed European Action Plan for Strengthening Public Health Capabilities and Services, the conclusion of the Council of European Union on *Health in All Policies*, the European Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases), committed to coordinating and jointly implementing government policies. In regard to the above mentioned accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU, the Forum took into account and endorsed the Memorandum of Understanding with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) (signed by the RCC as the successor of the Stability Pact and the SEEHN in 2010) and urged that SEEHN bodies and policies be adapted to the given circumstances. Moreover, the Banja Luka Pledge was also important in terms of expanding the multilateral platform so as to recruit new partners and include them in the Network's activity, specifically the NGO sector and non-SEE countries. Proof of the readiness to do so was Israel's admission to the SEEHN.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ SEEHN. Memorandum of Understanding. <http://seehn.org/web/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/MoU-2009.pdf><http://seehn.org/web/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Amendments-to-MoU-2011.pdf>

⁶⁹ SEEHN. Banja Luka Pledge. <http://seehn.org/web/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Banja-Luka-Pledge-2011.pdf>

The most significant result of health diplomacy and the application of the *Health in All Policies* political approach was that, under the document called *Southeast Europe 2020 Strategy*, which was coordinated by the SEE economy ministers in 2013, the incorporation of health became a separate dimension that contributed to economic development. Economic development and growth, as the mainstay of the region's future development strategy and its determination on the population's health, were also confirmed in *ad hoc* meetings of the SEE health ministers held in Skopje and Belgrade in 2014 and 2015 respectively, resulting in relevant statements. In addition to focusing on political, economic and social issues in general, the Skopje statement stressed the importance of intensified regional cooperation in joint emergency operations (prompted in particular by disastrous floods that hit the region in 2014).⁷⁰ The statement issued in Belgrade in 2015 could be described as a further evolution of the region's awareness and its need for more intensive multi-sector cooperation, especially in responding to the challenges of mass migration, migration of health workers, population aging, and health system reform.⁷¹

Regional Health Challenges

Despite many bilateral interstate agreements aimed at technical cooperation in the health care field (reimbursement of insurees' expenses, professional training etc.), it was the creation of a strong multilateral basis, the SEEHN that provided a framework for the SEE countries' strategic and political cooperation and activity. The gap between the capacity of health diplomacy and respectable results in the development of regional relations in the health care field was largely bridged by the open and generous assistance of the international community.

However, increasingly ambitious goals and multilateral agendas make it necessary to more intensively develop the potential and capacity of health diplomacy in keeping with the modern concept of the development of international relations. This need was also globally recognised through the relevant conclusions of the eight most developed countries (G8), and the Oslo Ministerial Declaration of 2007 (signed by the foreign ministers of Brazil, France, Indonesia, Norway, Senegal, South Africa and Thailand) resonated powerfully. The Oslo Ministerial Declaration highlighted the need for closer ties between global health and foreign policy and the importance of their mutually beneficial synergy.⁷²

⁷⁰ SEEHN. Skopje Statement. 2014 <http://www.euro.who.int/en/about-us/partners/news/news/2014/11/34th-plenary-meeting-of-the-south-eastern-europe-health-network-held-in-skopje>

⁷¹ SEEHN. Belgrade Statement. 2015 http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/281119/Belgrade-Statement-22062015.pdf?ua=1

⁷² Oslo Ministerial Declaration. 2007 http://www.who.int/trade/events/Oslo_Ministerial_Declaration.pdf

In order to respond to the pronounced needs at global, regional and national levels, the development of the capacity of health diplomacy should take into account recommendations regarding the radical restructuring of diplomatic services, the replacement of hierarchical structures with networked structures, and the development of new forms of cooperation (new technologies, stronger consultative processes, data collection/analysis, capacity analysis etc.).⁷³

The SEE countries are in this respect confronted with a special challenge, due to the fact that, to a greater or lesser degree, health diplomacy is present in a rudimentary form. Regardless of whether we talk about the additional engagement of current professional foreign ministry services or about the modest (and often insufficient or voluntary-based) capabilities of health ministries, they are not enough to respond to growing needs. This is reflected in the lack of energetic coordination and consultation regarding the wave of migrants in transit from war-torn regions in North Africa and the Middle East. Also, the lack of efficient joint investment in new health technologies, the insufficient procurement of medicines and medical supplies, the lack of concerted utilisation of highly specialised medical professionals, innovative solutions to the health system funding crisis and the alarming migration of health workers, call for urgent regional action.

The processes of the coordination of global and regional strategies and policies (Millennium Development Goals and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the European health policy framework *Health 2020*, the SEE 2020 development strategy etc.) make it imperative for national, foreign, and health policies to develop flexible health diplomacy, based on the *Health in All Policies* approach. Thanks to its efforts in the past decade, the SEEHN has grown into a strong regional multilateral platform, which nevertheless manifests some objective weaknesses including hierarchical rigidity, bureaucratisation, the slow flow of information, the slow pace of decision-making, questionable financial sustainability and inertia in efforts to include the NGO sector. On the other hand, the SEEHN has still not recognised the role of the RCC, failing to use its excellent potential in terms of political leadership, modern administration and expertise. Duplication of capacities, the fragmented process of decision-making with the consequent delays in meeting needs, the insufficient flow of information, the lack of evidence-based policies and the measurement of achieved results, are a discourse that the SEEHN can avoid by developing and fully implementing the instrument of health diplomacy.

⁷³ Riordan S. *The New Diplomacy*. London: polity, 2002.

THE MISSED OPPORTUNITIES
OF SERBIAN DIPLOMACY

THE MISSED OPPORTUNITIES OF SERBIAN DIPLOMACY

Pavle Jevremović

For the umpteenth time, Serbia is currently faced with challenges and dilemmas related to its position in today's world, speculating as to who its allies are, whose assistance and understanding it can count on, where it belongs and what it stands for, and the threats that loom in today's chaotic international circumstances.

To begin with, one can state with some optimism that Serbia has no enemies in the classical sense, no enemies scheming to settle old imagined scores or to fulfil their aspirations, if not by weapons than by subversion or similar clandestine methods. However, Serbia carries heavy baggage dating back to the years of the violent disintegration of the South Slavs' common state, from which, justly or not, it emerged burdened with the greatest liability for these tragic events.

Due to these and other circumstances, we are unlikely to, soon or probably even ever, get a final and completely satisfactory answer to the question of why and how Serbia found itself in this unenviable position. However, it is worth addressing the question of what Serbia is doing today to improve its reputation and promote its position in the international community.

A Disorganised State

In daily politics, Serbia's diplomacy, a professional and competent foreign policy service or, as in all well-organised states, the country's foreign ministry, should play an indispensable role in communicating with the world, promoting the country's policy and protecting its interests and the interests of its citizens. Given that it is a small country, Serbia has an impressive diplomatic infrastructure, including embassies in 68 countries, 23 consulates and 7 missions. It has established diplomatic relations with 127 countries. Seventy-two countries have diplomatic posts in Serbia.

The building or, one could say, the reconstruction of Serbian diplomacy after the disintegration of former Yugoslavia in 1992 proceeded unevenly. In the first stage, it was largely obstructed by the UN sanctions against and international isolation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), a hybrid creation that was formally the common state of Serbia and Montenegro. Throughout its existence, the FRY remained an incomplete state structure, with Serbia having a dominant foreign policy role. The FRY inherited an almost intact diplomatic service from former Yugoslavia, as well as, with a few exceptions, embassy buildings, official residences, technical services and, most importantly, skilled personnel. Eight years later, due to the removal of personnel declared unfit for ethnic or political reasons, in conditions of isolation and sanctions, this advantage, if the then regime at all considered it as such, was irreparably lost.

The collapse of the anachronistic and worn-out one-man regime after its electoral defeat at a federal level in September/October 2000 marked the beginning of a new, radically different stage in the FRY/Serbian foreign policy. The international rehabilitation of Serbia began at lightning speed, although indirectly under the official umbrella of the FRY, through the FRY's speedy admittance to the UN and other international organisations and agencies, and its renewal of suspended bilateral diplomatic relations, for example its relations with the US, or the improvement of existing relations.

Faced with the need to keep up with the unexpected and unprecedented dynamics of international activity, the FRY foreign ministry was at a loss and ill-prepared to accept its share of work. For example, one of the first jobs to be done by the newly-elected FRY President Vojislav Koštunica's understaffed office, which was in the process of being set up, was to draft more than 200 replies to heads of state, prime ministers and renowned persons throughout the world, expressing his thanks to all who had congratulated him on his election.

This flood of messages was followed by another, no less in proportion, congratulating him on the occasion of 29th November, still marked as a national holiday at that point, and then by a third with new year's greetings. Normally, sending replies to these messages would be a routine job, but for a country about to emerge from isolation and shake off the shackles of years of ostracism there was nothing routine about this exchange of messages.

Most of the foreign ministry's regional departments, normally in charge of these jobs, were of no great help due to the lack of diplomatic communication and information about the countries they were supposed to be in charge of. When sending replies at the highest state level, no matter how brief they are, one has to make sure they are carefully politically weighed, without the slightest error in addressing a person and quoting their name and position, state or organisation etc. The Ministry's inability to perform this seemingly trivial task was a barometer of the state of Serbian diplomacy.

In an institutionally disorganised state, the greatest burden of launching dialogue and opening up to the world after October 2000 was, in the political sense, shouldered by Koštunica, while in the organisational sense by his immediate associates; meanwhile, the foreign ministry was slowly awakening from sanction-induced hibernation. The engagement, enthusiasm and sense of responsibility of *political survivors* from the ranks of professional diplomacy would fill this gap until the consolidation of the foreign ministry, which was neither quick nor easy.

Hopes and Expectations

The country's grand entrance onto the international scene commenced with an invitation to Koštunica to address the EU summit held in the French seaside resort of Biarritz on 14th October 2000. This was followed by meetings with heads of state or government, ministers and renowned public figures, either during their visits to Belgrade or during Koštunica's visits to European metropolises. Informing officials about the events preceding and leading up to the handover of power in the FRY/Serbia, and the great hopes and expectations related to this new stage of democratic development, was a familiar refrain at all of these meetings. The reputation of the FRY/Serbia and of the new political leaders in Belgrade/Serbia, grew rapidly.

All doors were open to representatives of the new government, or at least they seemed to be in the first few days. Generous assistance was hinted at, and wishes to establish close cooperation with the country in order to make up for the lost years of *diplomatic exile*, were voiced. The rather lengthy list of initiatives included a peculiar and interesting offer by the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs to enrol a number of our young diplomats at its diplomatic academy, one of the most prestigious institutions of its kind in South America, because it believed that Chile's experience in eliminating the traumas of dictatorship could be useful to us.

The euphoric dialogue held with foreign high- and top-level officials soon resulted in the crystallisation of major questions regarding the next steps to be taken and the new government's priorities: the economy, of course, the adjustment of the constitutional order, methods of ensuring the functioning of a federal state comprised of two entities that were strikingly different in size, the consolidation of democratic institutions, the establishment of the rule of law etc. Each of the above areas implied a long list of specific questions that were yet to be answered.

Since day one, the main goal, wish, and intention - the country's accession to the EU, urged for in October 2000 as well as 15 years later - has been the common denominator of key issues and necessary answers. Serbia has in the meantime been drifting between Scylla and Charybdis with regard to domestic politics and upheavals in its neighbourhood, and also rattled by shocking events in world politics. It is therefore rather debatable whether Serbia is closer to its European goal today than it was in 2000.

The lengthy list of tasks, set in early 2001 and expected to be carried out by Serbia without much difficulty on its road to consolidation, has not changed. It is usually said that a country's foreign policy is a reflection of its internal policy. In the case of Serbia, the country's foreign policy, seen from abroad, has indeed acted as an uncharacteristically detailed X-ray of its internal policy. Where is Serbia's diplomacy at all? Many facts suggest that it has been lost in the labyrinths of the country's internal policy.

A Ministry in Limbo

The FRY proved to be an unhappy format for Serbian diplomacy. The FRY foreign ministry was basically comprised of Serbian personnel. The reorganisation of the FRY as the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro in 2002 somewhat changed this. What was new was that when dividing ambassadorial posts, Montenegro got its quota of major posts including the head of the country's permanent mission to the UN in New York, as well as ambassadorial posts in Moscow and London (two countries that are permanent UN Security Council members) etc. At Serbia's expense, over the course of a few years, diplomats from Podgorica did their job of setting the ground for Montenegro's withdrawal from its unsuccessful union with Serbia.

As for the Serbian side, the foreign ministry remained disintegrated, without any functional ties with the political structures and administration of Serbia. Faced with the process of getting closer to the EU, which hit a dead end with all these changes, exposed to pressure due to delays and inconsistencies in cooperation with the Hague-based Tribunal, and the gathering storm clouds over Kosovo, Serbia was at a loss, without its own diplomacy as a competent foreign policy service. The eloquence and efforts of Vuk Drašković, the foreign minister of the dying state union, and his appeals to foreign officials to display some common sense and patience, specifically in regard to Kosovo, had no visible effect. The most they could elicit were personal sympathies or concealed compassion. That was all he could do with the ministry *in limbo* entrusted to him. The country's foreign policy was conducted where the real power was, i.e. on the other side of Nemanjina Street, in the Serbian government. The consequences would be grave and, understandably, unfavourable for Serbia.

It would be logical to assume that, after the dissolution of the state union, an independent Serbia would finally start employing the necessary staff, especially in segments of administration responsible for contacts with the world, which should naturally centre on the foreign ministry. The reality was quite different. After October 2000, the foreign ministry was not reinforced with new personnel that were uncompromised by their servility to the former regime. Even today, it is hard to understand why the *pool* of politically shaped young people with political criteria sharpened during campaigns against the authoritarian regime and with excellent personal references was not used. This pool soon vanished in the wasteland of Serbian party politics, in a clash with the authorities' ignorance and because of their other priorities.

In the years that followed, the gap was somewhat alleviated by students of the foreign ministry's Diplomatic Academy which, interestingly, which although inherited from the pre-October 2000 period, reached an enviable level with the generous assistance of the Swiss government. However, the initial enthusiasm that Serbia would finally get a much needed modern foreign policy service, staffed with competent personnel, vanished into thin air. Thanks to the commitment, knowledge and personal integrity of a handful of seasoned diplomats, the professional level and dignity of the service were maintained.

Ignorance and Arrogance

The chief limiting factor in Serbian diplomacy is its undefined position in shaping and implementing the country's foreign policy. The chronic malady of Serbian coalition governments is the *feudalisation of portfolios*, which at times assumed absurd proportions, mostly affecting the foreign ministry. The complexity of international cooperation and the presence of a foreign policy dimension in each segment of government make it necessary for the foreign ministry to rely on and serve all government bodies and institutions. If not, Serbia cannot pursue a planned, rational foreign policy in the highly serious task of promoting and protecting its state interests. Improvisation and amateurism become inevitable.

The practice of bypassing the foreign ministry, additional channels of diplomatic communication and their indispensable role in setting the ground for high- or top-level dialogue on the most difficult issues for Serbia, such as Kosovo, or, earlier, in certain stages of cooperation with the Hague-based Tribunal, considerably weakened Serbia's negotiating position. By entering into high- or top-level dialogue without a previous probe, intimate knowledge of relevant details, identifying disputable issues, as well as without making room for compromise, Serbia gives up its *second line of defence*, because it has no line of retreat if it comes across difficulties or failure. The responsibility remains with the solitary high-level negotiator/president/prime minister/minister... By revealing information to the public selectively, failure can be presented as success and points won at home, but political damage remains.

Ignorance and arrogance are by all means the reasons why official diplomacy is bypassed and belittled by the people with high-sounding titles who surround the most powerful officials. In far better organised countries, obsession with prestige is an inevitable malady of the teams surrounding high-level civil servants, however, the established hierarchy of responsibility in performing the tasks of national interest is a corrective factor present everywhere. Even if memories have faded at home, in the corridors of international diplomacy the reputation of Yugoslav diplomacy as a disciplined, highly professional service still lingers.

Another disruptive factor, probably the biggest one in the functioning of Serbian diplomacy, is the result of the above mentioned *feudalisation of portfolios*, most evident in the case of the foreign ministry. In all post-election combinations and distributions of portfolios in governments about to be formed, the post of foreign minister represented the most attractive spoils. The tendency to mystify the diplomatic profession is still widespread here, while free access to the media, travel abroad, photo-opportunities with officials of important and powerful countries, and everything that goes with this is irresistibly tempting to all our politicians.

The foreign ministry is a big and complex institution and, led by responsible persons, it is a powerful state policy instrument. Due to the nature of the service, the minister must have a final say in the allocation and selection of personnel. In our case, each handover of the post of foreign minister was followed by an inflow of newcomers who were often appointed to high-level posts without their professional skills being checked first, but who enjoyed adequate personal or political protection. The ease of use of such power over people, by removing them from office without any explanation and by favouring one's protégés, recruited from outside or already present, coupled with the disregard for knowledge and dedication, inevitably has multiple negative effects.

Privatisation

The fragmentation in defining and implementing Serbia's foreign policy, which is a more modern term than '*feudalisation*', is the heaviest burden facing Serbian diplomacy. In a situation when it is unclear who is in charge and whose opinion carries greater weight in taking foreign policy decisions, the true priorities of this policy are also unclear. By delaying and lingering with regard to cooperation with the Hague-based Tribunal for almost a decade, the alleged priority of Serbia's accession to the EU was undermined. Serbia's unreadiness to distance itself from the heavy legacy of its recent past was also revived, resulting in its democratic credibility being undermined. The campaign against Serbia joining NATO, which consumed energy and confused the public at a point in time when no one was asking Serbia to join, was yet another challenge to common sense.

A special challenge to Serbian diplomacy was the lack of a coherent, or more precisely the lack of any policy on Kosovo, except for the familiar refrain from top-level officials that Serbia would never recognise Kosovo. As a result, Serbian diplomacy had its hands tied whenever the opportunity for securing at least a modest advantage in addressing the Kosovo issue presented itself. The country's Russian patrons also failed to understand this policy, finding a way out of this situation by reiterating that they would fully back Serbia in regard to Kosovo in the UN Security Council.

In view of the ever-changing foreign policy goal and the lack of vision regarding Serbia's international position - a gap successfully concealed by the aggressive exploitation of the media - it did not take much to *privatise* foreign policy, put it in the service of personal promotion and reduce the foreign ministry and Serbian diplomacy, with its entire potential in terms of personnel and organisation, to a mere technical service.

It is hard to establish the chain of responsibility for Serbian foreign policy flaws, such as when Serbia succeeded in their demand that the UN General Assembly address the International Court of Justice (ICJ) with the question whether the declaration of Kosovo's independence was in accordance with international law, which is in effect an advisory opinion. Announced as a diplomatic triumph, it ended as a spectacular failure. Equally controversial was the appointment of Minister Vuk Jeremić as president of the 67th session of the UN General Assembly. If this had been a standard candidacy procedure, it would have meant great recognition for Serbia, but not at the cost of creating a split in and the blockade of the regional Eastern European Group (EEG). Transferring the vote to the General Assembly was the second ever precedent in the UN's nearly seventy-year-old history.

The privatisation of foreign policy can bring personal gain, but it is the country that pays the price for it at the end of the day.

Diplomacy cannot be expected to perform miracles. One can conclude without hesitation that Serbian diplomacy has for years been confronted with the difficulty of transposing the parameters of the country's internal policy to the international scene via the country's foreign policy. This is not an easy task to accomplish given the heated political situation at home, reforms being announced and yet implemented with difficulty, the erosion of the legal system, the unreformed judiciary, endemic corruption, undefined policies in a series of areas, and all manners of improvisation.

The task would be much easier if these dilemmas were under the umbrella of a recognisable vision regarding immediate as well as long-term objectives. Pragmatic politics leads to solutions that maintain internal balance and make it possible to move forward, in the process of which the role of external factors becomes disproportionately significant. Relying on competent diplomacy is therefore more than necessary.

However, the problem is that it takes time and administrative skill of top-level authorities to rehabilitate diplomacy, while, on the other hand, challenges and events rapidly unfold on the international scene. This results in improvisation and failure, especially in situations when neither should occur.

Examples of Flaws

Due to the significance of foreign policy, it must be defined and pursued at three levels: the head of state, the prime minister, and the foreign minister. There is no reason why there should be any discrepancy among them. In this trinity, in organised states, the foreign ministry, being a foreign policy service, has the central role of the joint political service. However, some dissonant chords are evident in Serbia's foreign policy, at least to the extent they are reported on in the media. This leads to the Prime Minister allegedly not knowing, *because he does not have time*, what issues the President will discuss in the Vatican with Pope Francis, one of the highest-ranking international figures today. If this is true, then it is disparaging to both the Pope, which is quite unreasonable, as well as the President, which is politically incorrect, to put it mildly.

The textbook example of protocol-related and political flaws are those committed during Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama's visit to Serbia, which would never have happened if the visit had been properly prepared through diplomatic channels, namely if the visit agenda had been coordinated in detail, if the issues on which agreement was possible and problematic areas where differences should not be intensified, had been identified, if points to be highlighted in a public appearance had been agreed on; in other words, if both sides had made an effort and ensured the success of the meeting between the two countries' prime ministers, as they should have been done 69 years after Enver Hoxha's last visit to Serbia in 1946.

The domestic public as well as a large number of foreign observers are already used to Serbian officials making uncoordinated, at times strikingly contradictory statements on key international issues. Understandably, this is differently interpreted, but it could be easily avoided if there was a minimum of coordination, including greater reliance on the foreign ministry's relevant services, that apparently few consult. The foreign ministry, *de facto*, has not had a spokesperson for a long time.

The daily interpretation of foreign policy is left to tabloids and entertainment television stations, even in regard to the most sensitive issues (relations with the US/Russia/the EU, inevitably involving the Kosovo issue). By launching provocative and, as a rule, unverified information and half-truths, and by riling things up by calling politicians or institutions to account, tabloids, deliberately or accidentally, take on the role of arbiter in Serbia's foreign policy.

The disordered relations and overlapping responsibilities characterising Serbian foreign policy operationally place Serbian diplomacy in an impossible position. There is no rational justification for Serbian diplomatic posts to remain vacant. The practice of delaying the appointment of ambassadors can be interpreted as failure to strike a deal at the highest level or, worse still, it can leave the impression that they are not necessary in already marginalised embassies. If the latter is true, it is a reason to be truly concerned about the future of Serbian diplomacy.

The foreign ministry is one of the few departments that have managed to maintain its valuable potential in terms of personnel and relevant services. This is reflected in the fact that Serbia is about to end its OSCE presidency with success. There is plenty of room for the modernisation and greater engagement of diplomacy, but not much can be achieved by relying on individual efforts, nor if these efforts are isolated from other segments of state administration. The level of horizontal communication needed for the Ministry to become Serbia's foreign policy service, one that suits the needs of all administration segments and economic and other entities in the country's relations with the world, has not yet been achieved. And yet, external pressure and internal needs work towards that goal.

It is a happy circumstance, as initially stated, that Serbia has no open enemies after its bitter trials in the recent past. It is yet to be seen how long this breathing spell will last and how it will be utilized.

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