

Joergen Dragsdahl

International Workshop

**The Internationals on the Balkans
- Lessons for Macedonia -**

1st and 2nd December 2001
Heinrich-Böll-Foundation Berlin

A Conference Report



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1. Introduction

On December 1 and 2, 2001, the Berlin Information-center for Transatlantic Security (BITS) and the Heinrich Boell Foundation jointly organized an expert-workshop entitled “The Internationals in the Balkans – Lessons for Macedonia”.

Around 40 experts, representing politics, the military, international organizations, research institutes, non-governmental organizations and the media gathered in Berlin to discuss five larger topics:

- International Interventions in the Balkans – Lessons (Not) Learned
- Military Actors in the Balkans
- Non-Military Actors in the Balkans
- Reviewing the Roles of International Actors in Macedonia – Achievements and Shortcomings
- The Mission Next – How to do better?

The organizers agreed to hold the workshop under rules not allowing to publicly attribute individual statements made by specific speakers. The intention was to give room for an honest self-critical review of the performance of the individual international actors in the Balkans, not for a self-praising one. As a result officials as well as NGO representatives presented a picture much more distinguished and problem-oriented than usual. Some turned drastic, pessimistic or even became sarcastic when comparing their tasks and the capabilities at hand to meet them. While everyone showed his deep and personal commitment to help strengthening the peace processes in the Balkans, it rapidly became clear that the means to achieve this goal need to be upgraded in many ways. Whether NATO, the European Union, the OSCE, the United Nations, whether in the military or in the civilian field – even in the industrialized part of the world we are far from having effective crisis-management capabilities, ready, credible and up to their task. We know a lot about our deficits, however we still too often stick to particularity when it comes to competing organizational, institutional or national interests. One participant mentioned an all too obvious example: When Switzerland offered money and help to revitalize wine-production in the Kosovo, one of the few areas in which the Kosovar economy could be successfully re-built, some EU members objected for reasons of avoiding competition for their own products.

Soon it became clear that while each of the actors faces specific problems, there are a number faced by all of them.

- After nearly ten years of crisis-management in the Balkans, politics for whatever reasons has not yet developed a credible, strategic vision or a comprehensive plan that could change the mood of the local populations towards a strong resolve to rebuild their war-torn societies and economies.
- The absence of both, a vision and comprehensive integrated planning, become most visible in discussions about the interrelationship between the different Balkan conflicts and the possible solutions to them. There is a strong call for an integrated approach and attempts to find regional solutions to end the Post-Yugoslav wars. This call is directed towards politics, local politics but also the international community.

- Inadequate programs and capabilities to fight corruption and organized crime, typical for war-torn societies, as well as inadequate means to re-build economies present a larger challenge than providing military stability. However, stability is not enough. People need a perspective in terms of security that includes better economic security.
- These deficits contribute to international actors becoming part of the problem rather than contributors to a future solution. International actors are not immune to corruption, co-operation with organized crime or pursuing national interests through one-sided co-operation.
- There is a serious and substantial lack of civilian and specialist capabilities in crisis-management. Therefore on a regular basis soldiers must do way more than soldiering. Governments are quick to send the military, but they are slow to develop and fund civilian crisis-management capabilities. All actors are suffering from inadequate civilian capabilities.
- International actors and their personnel often lack adequate knowledge of the culture they have to operate in. Short deployment times contribute to this problem. However, perceptions and misperceptions play an enormous role in conflict areas. Often international actors become part of the blame oriented culture for reasons of both insufficient knowledge of the local culture and limitations to fulfill the expectations of local populations.
- The mandates for international actors are often inadequate for the tasks to be fulfilled later on, and the means available to international actors are often inadequate to fulfill their missions.

Looking forward to the future role of the international actors in the Balkans, and more specifically towards their future role in Macedonia, a number of suggestions were raised, on both the political and the practical level, for increasing the support to the peace process in this country. Additional suggestions were sent to the organizers in the aftermath of the workshop. While many appear in the conference report, some are worth mentioning here in addition:

- Several participants stressed the need to as soon as possible create the political environment necessary to constructively discuss the question of the future status of Kosovo. Some suggested to make such a discussion dependent on the Albanian majority in Kosovo accepting similar standards for minority rights as those negotiated under the Ohrid framework agreement. However others cautioned against tackling this question too early.
- Several participants stressed the need for holding parliamentary elections in Macedonia as early as possible. With the Social Democrats as the most moderate ethnic Macedonian party no longer part of it, the remaining government might prefer conflict escalation over the risk of losing an election and, even more important, some members of the current government losing their immunity.

- Several suggestions were made to help bridge practical problems arising from a lack of adequate capabilities and integration. Among those was the suggestion to help all international actors present in Macedonia by creating a “specialist country advisory team”, offering all international actors background information and helping to avoid misperceptions. Another suggestion proposed to build an institutionalized memory on prior activities of international actors, to help fill the gaps resulting from the quick rotation of personnel while offering information gathered from debriefings. Again another suggestion was made to create a very flexible high-level emergency crisis-prevention team, made up by a number of well-informed and well-connected internationals, trusted by the conflict-parties and capable of defusing upcoming crisis situations via personal contacts and interventions. Such a group would need the resources to act very flexibly and in a non-bureaucratic manner.

While the workshop took place in a very open, productive and often also in a very constructive atmosphere, two factors had a negative impact. First: time was short. Second, and even more important, for a variety of reasons the Albanian participants all had to cancel their participation so shortly before the event that replacements could no longer be invited. Their voice was missing, even though other participants did their best to present the Albanian point of view.

The report on the workshop, which is present in this booklet, differs from normal workshop reports. It is neither a recollection of all the discussions held during the sessions. Nor is it another attempt to present the best possible explanation for or analysis of the events on the Balkans, the successes or failures of the international actors. There are plenty of such reports. We asked our rapporteur Joergen Dragsdahl, a professional Danish journalist, to try a different undertaking: To skip most of the basics, much of the well-known arguments, and instead have a look at those elements of analysis and those suggestions that could help move the debate forward. We asked him to emphasize all those bits and pieces from the debate that might prove helpful when discussing and planning for the future of Balkan peace missions, especially for the future of NATO’s mission in Macedonia. While such an approach necessarily in some way is subjective, Joergen Dragsdahl’s report is a very objective attempt to fulfill this unusual and difficult task.

While to our knowledge the participants of the workshop found their meeting interesting, open and thought-provoking, we hope that the readers of this report will get a similar impression.

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2. Executive Summary

2.1. Unpopular internationals

Why has the international community become unpopular in the Balkans? Why have the populations become cynical, frustrated? Why does there seem to be no match between input and outcome?

These key questions were raised during a two day conference in Berlin “*The Internationals in the Balkans – Lessons for Macedonia*” on December 1st and 2nd 2001. The search for answers took place under a cloud of pessimism – partly, according to some participants, caused by a feeling of having lost the battle against new Balkan wars. “God-damned, nobody has learned anything”, one participant remarked. With regard to Macedonia, several speakers expected a new round of armed conflict in early spring 2002. At least one person painted a worst case scenario, outlining the risk that hostilities might break out at any time (see 5.2).

Organisers had invited about 40 people with very considerable experience as participants and observers during the interventions in the Balkans since the early 1990’s. They were asked to reconsider with a “self-critical view of the past” the accomplishments of the international civilian and military actors and take a look at the lessons to be learned for future operations in Macedonia. It is, the organisers further stated, “our intention to identify both useful perspectives and positive projects for the upcoming year in order to strengthen the peace process in Macedonia”.

The invitation for a self-critical review was heeded with scathing criticism of the overall Balkan-effort by the internationals during the last ten years. International actors apparently face a basic crisis of legitimacy for their efforts, in Macedonia as much as elsewhere on the Balkans. As one participant put it: “What will happen, if NATO does not invite Macedonia as a member and the public opinion turns against NATO and demands that NATO leaves the country?”

According to the ground rules of the seminar, participants can’t be identified. But independent corroboration of these key problems is available.

According to a report by Boran Jovanovski of the weekly Skopje magazine Forum, ethnic Macedonians are fed up with what they see as the West’s excessively pro-Albanian policy. “Confidence in Western institutions, and in NATO in particular, is”, he writes, “tumbling among ethnic Macedonians, according to polls published by the Skopje Institute for Democracy. One suggested that more than 50 per cent of ethnic Macedonians harbour feelings of anger or hatred towards NATO (though an even larger number still feel Macedonia ought eventually to join the alliance)”.¹ It is likely that Macedonia will not be invited to join NATO during the upcoming November summit of the Alliance in Prague.²

¹ Balkan Crisis Report No. 286, 5-Oct-01

² Out of nine aspirants, Macedonia is lumped with Albania as the two countries without a chance to become NATO members in a very detailed study: “Organising National Defences for NATO Membership”, Centre for European Security Studies (December 2001).

Debate during the conference illustrated this gap between the internationals and the locals. Several speakers complained about almost insurmountable obstacles for securing local co-operation. “It is impossible to co-operate in a blame-oriented culture where the only issue is how to shift blame to others”, one participant from an international organisation said. “If there is not a preparedness to co-operate on an equal basis, then we will never get anywhere. There will never be a solution, only a question of: How can I shift the blame to others and retain the right to put forward demands”. But one participant from the Balkans responded that the West itself decided to intervene and thus will have to cope with the Balkan culture as it is: “You blame a carrot for not being a potato”. While it is true that the Macedonians bear the main responsibility for what happened to them, this participant said, the internationals with all their experience should have known better before they entered into the conflicts.

2.2. Stability is not enough

One fundamental explanation for the self-imposed difficulties encountered in the Balkans was supported by several speakers: The internationals strive for stability – not for lasting security.

In a paper distributed at this and other seminars one scholar, Daniel Nelson of the George C. Marshall Center, has publicly criticised the American and West European notion that “containing conflict and managing crises are the hallmarks of achievement”. But “were we to ask only if and how our national interests can be protected or insulated from regional turmoil (...) then the conditions that generate a decade of vicious and costly conflict may be more likely to recur”. Lasting security may require lots of instability: “A final unravelling of what was Yugoslavia, a pursuit and prosecution of indicted war criminals, an ouster of kleptocrats who create market economies for their own profit, and a vigorous attack on organized crime...”.³ Few if any disagreed with this analysis.

In other words: the internationals have attempted crisis-management with some positive results, but have failed miserably in making the transition to conflict-resolution. Crisis-management is about putting out fires, while conflict resolution is about eliminating the reasons for fires.

At least one participant suggested an even more negative explanation: Why the repeated failures? Are top-governmental officials in the West incompetent? Or don't they care, or are some pursuing specific national aims? Can we be certain that chaos at the periphery of Europe is not considered helpful by some?

This approach did not win widespread support. Neither Washington, nor Berlin, Paris or Rome are interested in maintaining the conflict, one retorted: There are some groups in the Balkans that have an interest in constant conflict because they benefit from it in their own criminal activities. There is also an extreme lack of responsibility and vision on behalf of local politicians. In Macedonia at the peak of conflict, this participant further claimed, there were no politicians looking beyond the next national elections.

³ Four Confusions, Four Misunderstandings: Ghosts of American Balkan Policy.

It is, some stressed, inherent in a crisis management approach to experience failures. Crisis management happens because nobody knows how a crisis will develop when a crisis starts. It is a “try as you go”-effort. Miracles don’t happen, so a perfect solution can never be expected. Macedonia is one step in the sequence of conflict potentials within the Balkans which have to be controlled and brought into a set of arrangements. Macedonia would have gone down the drain anyway because people in Macedonia could not cope with the crisis. It would have had negative consequences for the whole region. Could we outside Macedonia really afford that? Keep in mind that Albanian extremism and organised crime are permeating the structures of the neighbouring countries and successfully reached out into Western European countries. In Germany they are competing and partly replacing the Western European mafia and fight Russia’s for control over specific sectors. Balkan problems are European problems.

However, a containment strategy for the crisis might not be the best approach. In case after case, when changes at the highest political level happened, the West supported the new leaders and lost interest in more fundamental changes. The social, political and economic changes needed are forgotten and the desire to stabilise the area prevails. We might be trying to somehow stabilise the whole area because we don’t want to think about it any more. This stability might not be very stable. We might thus see some of the problems coming back again if we are not going forward with changes instead of merely stabilisation.

Far too often the United States but also the present German government and other governments seek stability without realising that unless you create a secure environment it cannot remain stable for very long. Unless people are secure, unless people can get up in the morning and not be concerned about employment and health, but rather about what their neighbours will do, stability will not prevail.

2.3. An integrated approach

If conflict resolution is the only way to achieve lasting security, how should the internationals retool their efforts accordingly? “The tools we have for intervention are barely more relevant than cavalry horses”, one speaker said.

One issue repeatedly came up: The need for more integrated efforts. Local issues can differ from one administrative, national or geographic entity to the other, but regional integration is a must. This is true for the way the internationals act. “We need to see the Balkans as one area of activity and not as a number of hot spots where we do patchwork”, it was stated. This approach has significant implications for the stated goal of multi-ethnicity. “We have to avoid isolated enclaves and go for regional multi-ethnicity”, one participants stressed. Regional states also must share responsibility for development beyond their own borders. However, few if any have reached a stage where they can.

Individual actors in the local entities also must integrate their efforts. The present piecemeal activities ignore the need for “nation building” from scratch. “If you intervene you have full responsibility, because in intervening you assume that local people are not able to rule themselves”, one speaker said.

The military tool has thus been overtaxed. As one speaker said in response to a critique: “I can agree that soldiers are not conflict managers. But we are left alone to deal with problems. We can’t be policemen, social workers etc. But governments send soldiers out and they do way more than soldiering. They [the governments] should have civilian instruments to back them up”.

Several speakers called, more or less indirectly, for a well trained civilian intervention corps able to handle the full spectrum of challenges in a failed state – from providing security with armed units to providing effective administration and a judicial system, economic development and schooling.⁴ The European Union and the OSCE have plans and ideas going in this direction, but so far neither organisation is planning for a permanent standing corps with all functions integrated and trained together.

Frequent rotation of staff in the international missions was singled out as a key problem. For example, the OSCE has a maximum stay of 5 years in a mission but the reality is an average stay of 18 months. Thus the staff members often lack the knowledge about local conditions. High quality decisions can be prepared by both the internationals and local experts together. But once the decisions are made and carried out, something quite different results. Westerners can’t predict the outcome because they don’t know who gets blackmailed and paid off. The basic problem in Macedonia is, it was stated, that Westerners don’t do things in a way Macedonians understand. And vice versa. A problem associated with the rapid turn-over of staff is the illusion of expertise in Western countries. Most Europeans come to the Balkans for a limited time and work on limited subjects. Then they go back and are *the* experts because the others at home know nothing.

We thus need experts who stay in the Balkans, learn the decision making procedures and the mentality. People should be brought to Macedonia, not in big numbers, to live there, talk to people, learn about how Macedonians deal with their problems. Then solutions that are carried through by Macedonians should and probably could be found. Anything imposed on them will not work.

Several other concrete suggestions came up:

To heal the wounds of conflict in Kosovo a reconciliation and truth commission, similar to what happened in South Africa, should be convened by locals. Neither KFOR nor UNMIK can do this, but they can play a role in encouraging such an initiative.

Who monitors the international authorities? Except for a few foreign news media correspondents the answer is: Nobody. The international NGOs should play a monitoring role. There must be a parallel to the standard role of civil society, where citizens interfere in the internal affairs of their own authorities because they take democratic participation seriously.

Finally, a framework for handling Macedonia in a global and regional context was presented (see 6.).

⁴ A concrete proposal developed by the British American Security Information Council (BASIC) was referred to. See: A Conflict Prevention Service of the European Union (COPS). Report from June 2000. Obtainable through www.basicint.org

3. International Interventions in the Balkans – Lessons (Not) Learned?

Is the situation worse than ever, after nearly ten years of intervention? Open warfare has been suppressed through the presence of armed peace-keepers, but according to several participants in many other respects the answer is: Yes. “We have contained, accommodated but not solved any problems”, one person said. “We are exactly where we were ten years ago, the only difference being that there are different players and more players from the international community involved. And maybe even more problems than we had then”.

And why is this so? An answer to this question calls for more nuances. For ten years there has been a lot of discussion on whether the policies of the West have contributed to the destruction of Yugoslavia. One contrary view presented in Berlin was that the people of Yugoslavia have contributed almost exclusively to the destruction of the federal state and their own societies. But, several said, the intervening parties have committed many mistakes and not learned their lessons fast enough.⁵

The conference heard three presentations on *International Interventions on the Balkans – Lessons (Not) Learned?* They were titled:

1. Ten Years in Trouble – All Local Problems or a Small Chessboard?
2. Interlocking or Inter-blocking International Institutions?
3. The Changing Character of Military Intervention – Consequences for Future Crisis-Management.

In addition a short intervention was made on *Changing Security Patterns – September 11 and the Impact for the Balkans*.

Most conflicts have their local specifics. But there are some common issues: the economy and nationalism.

The economy: Yugoslavia differed from other post-communist societies in its multinational character and its division into six republics and two provinces. None of these subjects tried to solve the economic problems but all tried to push the blame for them on others. The economic problems thus became national issues and never got solved. With the exception of Slovenia the economic situation today is worse than it was when the Balkans' troubles began. A process of de-industrialisation is taking the region 20-30 years back in development, and it will be pretty much completed in the next 4-5 years.

Also, the intervening parties, while they focused on stability, had a complete lack of understanding of how deeply destroyed the very fabric of societies was at the beginning of the break up of Yugoslavia. They experienced the coincidence of the destruc-

⁵ . The International Crisis Group in a report, *Bosnia: Reshaping the International Machinery* (dated 29. Nov 01), reported: “After six years and billions of dollars spent, peace implementation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains far from complete (...) It is beset by five main problems: lack of a shared strategic vision, uncoordinated leadership, duplication and lack of communication, personality clashes and cross-cutting institutional interests, and ineffectual management of economic reform”.

tion of a country and the collapse of a whole system. Yugoslavia was totally dependent on its communist regime. This regime was not imposed on a country which was basically oriented towards a market economy with private enterprise and thus just had to be liberated. But nevertheless the intervening parties relied on the assumption that it would take only a very short time to achieve a minimum of “normalisation”.

Rapid privatisation was promoted by the international community, and usually it was declared a condition for economic support. However, privatisation often resulted in the destruction of existing managerial structures and of economic planning. The national economies were converted into a black market because rapid privatisation was conducted through political and personal connections. By demanding quick progress on privatisation, donors often forced governments to sell national property both under-priced and to dubious investors. Who could afford to buy large state-owned enterprises? Often the potential investors came either from the old oligarchies, or they had a background in organized crime and/or they were corrupt. Finally, there were potential foreign investors. While a common explanation for the lack of economic development is “corruption”, it has to be acknowledged that corruption is a way to make things work. If corruption is to be fought we should first make things work, a precondition given way too little attention by the internationals working in the Balkans.

One participant gave an additional example, quoting social security and microeconomic aspects of the situation of Albanian families in Macedonia. He reported on the drafting system used by the NLA earlier in the year and the financial benefits given to the families and the draftees who agreed to serve and fill the rows of the NLA for six months. Compared to the chances to earn one’s living in the civilian economy, these benefits were so attractive to both the draftees and their families that many young Albanian men decided to serve. Based on similar calculations, organized crime finds the ground well prepared for recruiting new actors. This participant predicted that unless the international community would take care of achieving rapid improvement in the economic and social environment, such a situation could easily reemerge.

Nationalism: The second common problem is a very aggressive nationalism, primarily Serb and Albanian nationalism but to a more limited extent also Croat nationalism. The Croat nationalism has been more or less satisfied. The Albanian nationalism has undergone different phases – from being a reaction against Serb oppression to being an active, aggressive nationalism. The Serb nationalism has by no means, even with the removal of Milosevic, been changed. Was there a possibility in the last ten years to change anything through intervention? There were possibilities, but the mistake was to accommodate nationalism. We made it less dangerous but we did not manage to remove it.

An original, German, vision was to handle the Balkans with “interlocking” institutions. In reality, at least for the first half of the 1990’s, the institutions were often “interlocking”. However, both terms camouflage the conflicting interests of nation state actors within these international institutions.

We will have to deal with the issue of interlocking or interlocking institutions as long as certain central political issues are not being resolved. Two of them should be mentioned:

1. Central provisions of the Dayton Accord, especially those dealing with the return of refugees to their pre-war homes and achieving the prosecution of war criminals, have been neglected.
2. As long as the future status of Kosovo is left open, there is no real chance for lasting stability and peace in the region.

This might not be enough, it was argued: The most important thing is to take responsibility. After World War II Germany was utterly destroyed. For at least ten years one dominant power decided which way Germany should go. Europe has not done the same thing in the Balkans. There was no leading political entity to help these people along a very difficult way. We are hiding behind the United Nations, OSCE, EU – all these beautiful international organisations where nobody is responsible. As long as Europe has no common foreign policy, and as long as fighting within the EU over ways and aims is going on, nothing will really work.

September 11 has increased this challenge for the EU because on the US agenda South-Eastern Europe has been removed from the front- to the back-burner. Macedonia is of absolutely no importance to the US these days. Much needs to be done if Europe wants the US to refocus its attention towards the Balkans.

4. Military Actors in the Balkans

Military exit is not a viable option for the foreseeable future, partly because the security situation could destabilize again, partly because we lack a “bridge” to normalisation, i.e. a rapid reaction civilian corps. The intervening parties must assume the full responsibility for external and internal sovereignty. A main lesson is: There is a military part of intervention, but there is also a part afterwards that no military can perform.

This, in a nutshell, was the consensus view both during presentations and debate on the topic: *Military Actors on the Balkans*. Presentations were heard on

1. Joint Peace Support Operations in Kosovo – Interests, Challenges, Approaches and Benefits
2. Developing a Lead-Nation Policy – Problems Inherent, and
3. Disarming Warriors – Problems and Lessons.

For Kosovo, NATO had neither a coherent political strategy nor an agreed military strategy. Legitimated as an intervention in the name of human rights, the Alliance’s approach left numerous political questions for future decisions. Today there is no peace in Kosovo, only a peace process. The international community must realise that isolated peace for one sub-region in the Balkans is a myth.

The future peace process for Kosovo must be integrated in a comprehensive regional system which ensures prosperity and development. The international community has not focused enough on the question of a multiethnic society. It is not so easy to establish one if there are 90 percent Albanians and 5 percent Serbs. One cannot solve the problem locally, only in a regional context. If one tried to establish it locally, then one would create tiny enclaves which would need constant protection. There would be no public services, no administration, no schools – nothing that makes life really worth living there.

Another big problem is the division of Kosovo in five brigade sectors, each with a lead nation from NATO having primary responsibility. They are small kingdoms, where different national strategies are implemented and national interests are pursued. There is a lack of intelligence sharing about criminal activities and other problematic developments. The lead nations sponsor economic development with a main focus on their own brigade sectors. This over time has a tendency to lead to fragmentation and differentiation between the sectors, because they become more and more influenced and shaped by the lead nation spending the money.

Several different intervention models are executed in the Balkans simultaneously: The missions in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia are completely different. The role of the military in Kosovo is totally different from what the military did and still does in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bosnia is a state with somewhat limited sovereignty. In Bosnia the powers of the government are described in the Dayton agreement. Bosnia receives international support to stabilize a fragile situation militarily and advise the country's administration and authorities. Kosovo is not a state, the future status still needs to be defined. In Kosovo there was no government, no police, no functioning administration. The military forces intervening initially had to assume many of these functions and only later were supported by civilian forces and experts for the different tasks. Again, the operation in Macedonia is completely different, since Macedonia is still a sovereign nation whose government is often concerned about having to surrender parts of the country's sovereignty to international forces operating in the country to stabilize the situation.

The whole concept of "lead nation" actually is problematic. NATO needs this concept for political reasons. It has to avoid a situation where there is no leadership. The concept provides experience and also develops useful responsibilities. But it is the wrong tool. Lead states intervene in problems that are either tribal and thus local or transnational. Thus we are not matching the problem with the instrument. Instead we need transnational responses to sub-national problems, preferably a rapid reaction civilian corps.

Soldiers are not nation builders: If we talk about conflict prevention in the future, we should have instruments ready to back up the soldiers and follow them immediately to take up that role. As long as there are no integrated civilian and military components for preventive measures, we will not be able to build up capacities as quickly as is necessary to really confront the essential issues in any crisis. That is why it is so important that the European Union until 2003 is building up a basic capacity also in the civilian field.

Among the about 20.000 KLA-members, we have no account of 2.000 to 2.500. They are on the loose and did participate during insurgencies in Presovo and also in Macedonia. The UN International Organisation on Migration overall did well in job-training. The basic problem turns out to be job-creation. The training is far advanced compared to the local economy. So training programs should be linked up to job-creation. There is a need to think about the creation of small and medium size enterprises as part of a reintegration policy. Some who went to Macedonia as fighters were paid far better by the insurgent organisation than they would have been in jobs in Kosovo.

However, the insurgency in Macedonia was not just exported from Kosovo: It is a great myth that the NLA in Macedonia and the UCPMB in the Presovo Valley were almost completely recruited from Kosovo. NATO checked that. The result was that the share of the Kosovars in both places was not more than 20 percent. This illustrates the implausibility of the claim that all of the problems of Macedonia came out of Kosovo. The 20 percent comprise all sorts of soldiers, some commanders among them, but the vast majority were normal soldiers. It was people who were unemployed, who did a military job in previous places and who will be available as a reservoir for the next crisis.

5. Non-Military Actors in the Balkans

Early during any intervention public security is a key task for the intervening parties, not only for internationally recruited police and military, but also for judicial and related agencies. Yet intervening parties have not proven ready to properly address this task. Thus all sorts of different problems came up, making it difficult for the international actors to gain confidence and build trust in their activities. People in the region of conflict became impatient and dissatisfied since there were no or insufficient numbers of judges checking who was imprisoned for legitimate reasons and who was not. Civilian police forces (CIVPOL) arrived late and not ready to immediately begin their tasks. Thus in many cases the grip of criminal elements was consolidated before policing efforts were started in earnest. These are only two of many examples illustrating a crucial lack of civilian crisis response capabilities, repeatedly observed throughout the conference.

On the topic of Non-Military Actors on the Balkans three presentations were heard:

1. IGOs – the role of the OSCE
2. NGOs in the field – Chances, Problems and Limitations
3. Civilian Peace Enforcement – Rebuilding Police Forces.

The weak performance of OSCE missions is one reason why the international community has become unpopular in many areas. The central headquarters has very little influence on field activities in many areas. The heads of missions have almost unlimited power and are absolute sovereigns in their little fiefdoms, it was claimed. It has become more and more difficult to send real experts into the field. Rapid rotation also is a problem.

Many problems in rebuilding police forces were highlighted. A key reason for difficulties with UN missions have been the complex, contradictory and overly ambitious mandates for many missions. Monitoring of uniformed local police has left other forces – plain-clothes, special police forces, secret services, militias and even private security agencies – unattended. These often comprise enormous numbers. They can destructively influence the climate in a persistent way. It is necessary, for example, in a future mandate for Macedonia or Afghanistan to clearly define the jurisdiction of all mission components in a joint strategy paper to get a comprehensive hold over all government agencies and avoid grey areas.

Deployment of very often inexperienced police officers from all over the world in UN missions today still goes on. Early deployment is essential, but it has so far been highly deficient. Delay carries high costs, not only financially but also in terms of despair of local populations and demoralisation of CIVPOL. Shadow security agencies are established during a delay, and illegal power structures are created in local administrations.

Robust mandates for comprehensive civil-military co-operation are urgently needed. They have to include an agreed joint strategic planning. The joint campaign needs to outline precise benchmarks for the first phase, for both the military and the CIVPOL and, if the mandate provides, for their counterparts. A major focus has to be the disarmament of the civilian population, a task of utmost importance. Lack of proper disarmament combined with other factors like non-functional infrastructure, high unemployment, widespread food shortage and corruption will result in small crime and growth of organised crime. A main emphasis should be put on fighting organised crime. If the security situation is to be stable, crime must be tackled as a first priority. Central parts of the police and judicial system are likely to be corrupt.

The integrated strategic approach needs to include programs to effectively monitor the judicial system. It was a failure, a mistake, an essential shortfall of Dayton not to provide for monitoring of the judiciary in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Only after two years was a judicial system assessment program started (from 1998 on).

6. Reviewing the Roles of International Actors in Macedonia – Achievements and Shortcomings

6.1. Sharply divergent approaches

For ten years Macedonia was considered a miracle in the Balkans – at least by some Macedonians. But now is the time to face the hard truth. During the conference that acknowledgment proved painful for both internationals and local representatives.

Two presentations were given:

1. The situation in Macedonia - What Next after Essential Harvest and Amber Fox
2. International Crisis (Mis-)Management – A Macedonian View.

The conference review of how the situation in Macedonia might develop was primarily negative. (An up to date review of the situation in Macedonia, incorporating information from the conference, follows in section 6.2). The pessimism indicates the urgency of finding better ways of handling the situation. Sharply divergent views were presented, as these three contrasting quotes illustrate:

A: “I am getting sick and tired. We have talked about these things for ten years. We cannot constantly go back to a certain kind of victim talk. There is no moving forward. What is happening in Macedonia today - it was clear 5 years ago [that it] would happen. Macedonians lived in the illusion of being a miracle. The outside world did not. It is said by Macedonians: "Don't interfere." Yes, somehow maybe it would have been better not to interfere at all. Yet it would have been terribly bloody”.

B: "There is some truth to the notion that the internationals have a neo-colonial attitude, and that this breeds resentment in Macedonia. Macedonia suffered heavily under the sanctions, and promised help did not come. Why did massive help not come to Macedonia after what happened in 1999 – for building up the educational system, for social programs? It was clear the country was not able to help itself".

C: "You blame a carrot for not being a potato. You expect the Macedonian political culture and system to be so good after ten years of transition. But who armed [the] UCK in Kosovo, who supported it? It was Western governments, not the Macedonian one. The bloody government in Macedonia came to power thanks to Western support. Westerners can't say they did not know these were bastards, because the West did know. You never supported democracy by publicly stating "This government is not acceptable." On the contrary, Macedonians have been told to be proud of their politicians. It is the Western approach to make the issues simple. But they are not simple. There are so many missions and missionaries that Macedonians have become sick of them. Westerners come with different approaches. It is confusing. We are running out of time and patience after ten years. It is time we do something for ourselves".

Is Macedonia a victim of Western crisis mismanagement? According to one point of view, the West entered the Kosovo conflict with misperceptions. NATO believed it could fix the situation with four days of blitzkrieg. Then it appeared that this would not succeed. Another agenda appeared: The credibility of NATO is at stake, therefore one simply could not stop the war anymore! We have to win the war! Thus it was no longer a matter of conflict management. Consequences for Macedonia were not considered - and in several areas even ignored afterwards.

Is Macedonia a viable concept? Its name is claimed by one neighbouring country, its language is declared to be a dialect of the language of another neighbouring country and its church is seemingly part of the church of a third neighbouring country, one participant stressed.

Is the problem in Macedonia really an ethnic conflict? But in fact, one argued, the country was very peacefully divided up by the leaders of the two ethnic sides prior to the conflict on a criminal basis. So is there a criminal divide of the country in terms of spheres of influence?

6.2. Macedonia in between wars?

During the conference the risk of war being started by either Macedonians or Albanians was raised. The options include

1. Displaced Macedonians might arm and join the illegal Macedonian Lions or other groups to "free" their villages or to fight Albanians all over the country.
2. The new Albanian guerrilla organisation AKSh (Albanian National Army (ANA) in English) might try to end the Ohrid Process and to unite "the Albanian nation" by armed conflict.

Both possibilities have after the conference been raised by other observers like NATO's country-commander in Macedonia, the Danish general Gunnar Lange. He

has publicly spoken about his fears of war between Albanian rebels and Macedonian security forces next spring, if the political process for reconciliation is not moving with sufficient speed. "Then the ethnic Albanians will try to do what they did the last time", Lange said according to the Danish news bureau Ritzau.⁶

Also, the International Crisis Group in a recent report warned: "There is a real risk that the anti-reform camp in Skopje will be tempted by a military solution, even at the risk of national partition – a move that would be welcome by Albanian extremists". According to this report the international community "has tended to underestimate the profound challenge" the Ohrid framework agreement poses to Macedonia's already fragile sense of identity. "The NATO and OSCE missions have let themselves be outflanked by the anti-reformists".⁷

During the Berlin-seminar the plan followed by the president of Macedonia, Boris Trajkovskij, was described. It consists of 6 phases:

1. Military and political isolation of the armed rebels,
2. Ceasefire,
3. Disarmament of the Albanian rebels in NLA,
4. Interethnic dialogue,
5. Change of the constitution,
6. Amnesty for NLA rebels.

This plan has largely been followed until now, although a law on amnesty has not yet been passed in the Macedonian parliament⁸. But according to this presentation "it is obvious that one important phase" is missing in the plan and it is key, namely "the return of displaced persons into the crisis areas".

In fact, during December ethnically mixed police patrols have, under international supervision, returned for brief visits to several villages, but have been blocked from entering others. As of the time of writing, police forces did not return into a majority of villages under Albanian control. In an interview the prime-minister of Macedonia, Ljubco Georgievski, referred to the 15 villages that police has entered as being "controlled by terrorist groups" and added: "A vast number of villages and territories are still inaccessible to the Macedonian police and army".

Little progress is reported on the return of displaced ethnic Macedonians. On the issues of displaced ethnic Macedonians, Georgievski stated that "the most painful problem in this situation is the fact that the Macedonian citizens, that is the ethnic Macedonians, cannot return to their own villages. Even those who have remained there are gradually deserting the villages".⁹

⁶ The Danish daily "Information", 18-Dec-01.

⁷ Macedonia's Name: Why the Dispute Matters and How to Resolve it, 10 Dec 01.

⁸ President Trajkovski has by decree pardoned a number of insurgents. But numbers were too low to convince the Albanian population that there did not remain eligible individuals that should receive pardons or public explanations as to why they are not eligible. (On December 20th president Trajkovski, according to DPA, pardoned a further nine ethnic Albanian fighters. This brought the total pardoned to 64 out of 88 on a list submitted by Justice Minister Idzet Mehmeti in November. Trajkovski, however, called his pardons of the nine a "final round").

⁹ FBIS-EEU-2001-1228.

This could become one cause of a new war. As one observer said in Berlin: “Some 30.000 people are still displaced inside the country. Support for some 20.000 was stopped by the ICRC (International Red Cross), due to their assessment that these people could go home into their villages in the crisis area.¹⁰ To radicalise these people is quite easy. They live with friends, families, in shelters, schools, just somewhere, but not at home – where they want to be – and do not trust the politicians, do not trust the security situation, do not trust the still combat-ready and winterised Albanian fighters, they do not trust the legal paramilitary police-force and have no houses nor schools for their children”.

In addition, many reports still refer to ongoing ethnic cleansing of remaining Macedonians in predominantly Albanian areas, even from the second largest city Tetovo. However, on December 26 the presidents of 12 of the 18 Tetovo local communities signed a declaration on restoring mutual trust between the Macedonians, Albanians and other nationalities in their municipality. The remaining presidents allegedly would sign later.

Albanian nationalism is another possible motive for renewed war. The NLA, the Albanian rebel organisation, was officially disbanded during the fall of 2001, but a new group, the Albanian National Army ANA or AKSh in Albanian, has announced its presence as well as its unwillingness to accept the Ohrid Process. According to information presented at the seminar, that group encompasses 5-800 soldiers, organised in battalions, it has headquarters in Kosovo and top-staff in Macedonia, holds regular meetings, sends reconnaissance elements into Greece and has close connections to Northern Albania, where the authority of the Tirana-government is weak.

6.3. Mixed picture from news reports

Little is said about Macedonia and the prospects for war in major Western news media. But some specialised news services and local media give a mixed picture of some hope and many outstanding problems.

Operation “Amber Fox” had its mandate prolonged beyond December 26, the previous timeframe, for another three month. NATO’s country commander Gunnar Lange and other sources predict at least one more extension. Indeed, another extension for three months is likely. The NATO ambassador to Macedonia, Claus Voller, on December 20 in an Associated Press interview suggested another round of gun collection to encompass both ethnic Macedonians and Albanians.

Both president Trajkovski and prime minister Georgievski stressed that the presence of the internationals is useful in Macedonia – thus countering the above highlighted Macedonian displeasure with the internationals. It is possible that later in 2002 the EU will take over the NATO mission.

On December 20, according to Macedonian Radio young Albania police candidates completed the three-month training course at the Idrizovo training camp in Skopje. It is foreseen that the 100 Albanian candidates will immediately start work as part of the government’s pilot plan to return ethnically mixed police units to the crisis regions.

¹⁰ Figures on the number of refugees vary and are difficult to estimate.

The training of the Albanian candidates was provided by the OSCE, and laid out in the Ohrid Agreement.

7. The Next Mission– How to do better ?

Finally, the conference heard presentations and debated the next steps to be taken. In one line of argument the EU role was stressed, in another the UN role. But real conflict between the two approaches did not surface.

After the start of democratic changes in Serbia and Croatia, after the general elections in Kosovo and hopefully after the full implementation of the framework agreement in Macedonia, it was concluded that there is a chance for a new process of lasting stabilisation in the region. The complexity of the issues at stake cannot be dealt with by quick fixes. They require long term stabilisation, which is an incremental process taking into account many factors.

The EU stabilisation and association process is the essential instrument to integrate the countries of the Balkans into European structures and to offer them, and this is an essential element, a concrete perspective of membership in the European Union.

The stability pact has been a product of ad-hoc'ism. It has since 1999 concentrated on a host of uncoordinated projects and did not focus on key issues. The political work of the stability pact must be refocused.

What would be the principles guiding the political process in the region? Six were mentioned:

1. The overriding principle must be regional stability. Each solution must contribute to stability of the region as a whole.
2. Non-use of force: All actors must agree that conflicts are only solved through negotiations.
3. The principle of self-determination cannot be given absolute priority. This is very difficult to uphold politically, but there is an antagonism between self-determination and sovereignty. However, we must accept that certain populations will have to go through the phase of a national state because they will eventually accept transparency of borders and integration.
4. Territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders. There must be recognition of existing borders in the region but the principle must not be an obstacle to the creation of new subjects of international law. The principle of peaceful change must open the door for change of the status quo.
5. We must look at the establishment of democratic states based on the rule of law. This implies wide protection of minorities in the constitutional frameworks. But multi-ethnicity must not be a dogma. Any solution must be accepted by the neighbours.

6. A very important principle is regional responsibility. Some Western governments have shown a neo-colonial attitude. Any solution must be developed by the countries in the region themselves. The international community can at best play a complementary role.

A three phase process was proposed. First a regional ministerial meeting next spring, whose aim is to agree on a political process of dialogue and negotiation to identify issues for acceleration of the European integration processes - for example energy cooperation, the fight against organised crime and minority protection. The second phase would be the dialogue and negotiation process to be started immediately afterwards. This can create the basis for - in a third phase - tackling some of the more complex status questions, like the future of Kosovo.

Participants stressing the UN role presented three theses for a settlement:

1. We have a global dimension of the Balkan problems which clearly prescribe a global settlement.
2. We need to harmonise the efforts among the key players.
3. We must support and be open to a political outcome building on responsible indigenous players.

Ad. 1 All settlements, missions and approaches will have to be dealt with in the UN security council. It is a very long term effort. It will be a process of generations, not years. Until then a pragmatic approach to control conflicts will be necessary.

Ad. 2 The attempts of the international communities to help sort out the crisis in Macedonia were confusing. It was a nightmare – especially for the Macedonians. If we intend to prohibit or – if necessary isolate future hotspots as early as possible, we will need a much more homogeneous and a much better communicated approach.

Ad. 3 The regional states shares responsibility as integration factors. But who can take this responsibility? Not many have reached the stage. Strangely enough, Serbia would be a candidate for such an integration effort and entrustment, but it would have to be carefully controlled and confined.

Regional integration is an absolute must. If other South Eastern European countries beyond Greece join NATO, this might have a positive stabilising effect since it would demonstrate NATO's longer term commitment to the Balkans.

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