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THE BALKAN CIVIL WARS: CAN THEY BE CONTAINED?

by Dennis McDowell

National War College

February 8, 1993

For the Romans did. . . what all wise princes should do, who consider not only present but also future discords and diligently guard against them; for being foreseen they can easily be remedied, but if one waits till they are at hand, the medicine is no longer in time as the malady has become incurable. . . Thus it happens in matters of state; for knowing afar off (which it is only given to a prudent man to do) the evils that are brewing, they are easily cured. But when, for want of such knowledge, they are allowed to grow so that every one can recognise them, there is no longer any remedy to be found. Therefore, the Romans, observing disorders while yet remote. . . never allowed them to increase in order to avoid war; for they knew that war is not to be avoided, and can be deferred only to the advantage of the other side..."

Niccolo Machiavelli
The Prince
in the year of our Lord,
1532

Note: This essay is a revised and condensed version of a research paper completed for Core Courses I and II at the National War College in December 1992.

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This paper addresses the roots of Yugoslavia's breakup and civil war, the prospects for a regional war and its impact on U.S.-European security, and a strategy to contain the conflict.

The Roots of Conflict

The primary cause for Yugoslavia's failed 70-year experiment in multinational statehood was that the South Slavs' original consensus for union -- an anti-dynastic, anti-imperial alliance -- ultimately proved too weak to permanently reconcile the fractious, heterogeneous mix of ethnic groups and nationalities in that country. In fact, the roots of internal conflict and disintegration were firmly established at the time the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was created in 1918. Ironically, the Serb and Croat tribes that migrated to the Balkan peninsula a thousand years ago had a common Slavic heritage; yet over the centuries they developed divergent worldviews influenced by competing European and Near Eastern empires, Balkan demographics, and 20th century European war and politics.

The sharply contrasting religious, political and nationalistic orientations that divide Serbs and Croats today are largely attributable to each group's separate experiences under the domination or influence of different late- and post-

medieval empires. For example the Croats, who settled in the northern and western Balkan peninsula, adopted the relatively libertarian, christian heritage of their rulers while subjugated by the successive Frankish, Hungarian, Habsburg and Austro-Hungarian Empires. As fate would have it, the Serbs' settlement in the eastern and southern part of the peninsula forced them within the spheres of influence of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. Accordingly, Serbs adapted by accepting the more authoritarian political culture, orthodox religion, and militant lifestyle of their imperial masters.

Therefore it was no surprise that the new Kingdom established in 1918 was plagued immediately by the Serbs' and Croats' socio-political differences and that the stability of the new multinational state would be tested often in ways that exacerbated ethnic divisions. Yet despite a generation of growing Serb-Croat division and distrust, major violence was avoided prior to World War II. But then during the war, Yugoslav unity was damaged badly and probably irreparably by ethnic atrocities instigated by Hitler and carried out by his puppet Croat Fascist government with the help of the "Ustasa" Croat terrorist organization. Hundreds of thousands of Serbs were massacred and comparable numbers of Croats killed in Serb reprisals. That holocaust left a horrible, indelible scar on the memories of all subsequent generations of Serbs and Croats.

After World War II the fragile, ethnically-heterogeneous, multinational state of Yugoslavia was held together primarily

by Josip Tito's communist suppression of internal conflict. Although functional for his purposes, Tito's policies merely left ethnic strife and regional nationalism to fester. Tito's death in 1980 predictably loosened the political shackles that artificially united the federation; and though Tito's successors held the country together for a decade, they were not able to forestall growing political, economic and nationalist crises in the country.

Then the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe accelerated rising demands in the Yugoslav republics for free elections, democratic reform and greater republic autonomy. Free elections were permitted and Yugoslavia's Communist leadership met with resounding defeat in historic national and republic elections during 1990.

Yugoslavia Splinters

Despite victories at the poles, the republics' demands for greater regional autonomy and independence were not satisfied by the Belgrade regime. Those unmet demands led to the final splintering of Yugoslavia in 1991-92 when in successive votes the Slovenians, Croatians, Macedonians and Bosnians chose secession from the federation. Suddenly the apparent sweet democratic victories at the poles turned bitter as Yugoslavia broke up, resulting in a bloodbath that belied the hope of a Europe "free and whole."

Yugoslavia's dissolution appeared to be a fait accompli. But, the Belgrade government was dominated in 1990 by the

ex-Communist and Serb nationalist Slobodan Milosevic who, as inheritor of the former Yugoslav People's Army, sought to forcefully hold Yugoslavia together with successive military interventions in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia. After the Slovenians did not back down, Milosevic apparently resigned himself to independence for Slovenia--a homogeneous nation that contained negligible numbers of Serbs.

Instead, he focussed his energies on pursuing his real goal: a "Greater Serbia" that would bring all Serbs and Serb-controlled territory together within the former Yugoslavia, irrespective of "administrative" republic boundaries. Serbia's Army, along with indigenous Serb nationalists and irregular forces, brutally pursued that goal in heavily Serb-populated Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The resulting two-year civil war among Serbs, Croats and Muslims has killed almost 20,000 persons, produced nearly 2 million refugees and resulted in crimes of inhumanity and mass murder that borders on genocide.

Tragically, the international community was slow to respond to the bloodbath -- the worst hot war in Europe since World War II -- and has been grossly ineffective in its belated efforts to halt it. U.N. resolutions deploring and appealing for the end to the violence, the economic boycott and arms embargo, the so-called "no-fly zone," and diplomatic mediation efforts have all been ineffective. U.N. peacekeepers and international food aid have done little to stop the steady destruction of Bosnia's societal infrastructure, mounting death counts and

the hemorrhage of refugees. The international community has shied from military intervention as it appears sure to become a costly quagmire; and thus far neither European nor American leaders believe that any vital security interests are at stake.

However, the lesson from this tragedy is that the Yugoslav experience is not unique on the peninsula and the sinister Serb hypernationalism fomented by Slobodan Milosevic is a contagion that could provoke reactionary nationalism and regional conflict.

The West's underestimation of this danger could prove to be a tragic failure of judgment. Americans must understand the historical and contemporary reasons why the Balkan peninsula is again ripe for war, as there have been clear early warnings since 1988; and now the signs are even more imminent.

Ironically, the likely flashpoint for a widened war is not in either another seceded republic or a bordering state, but rather in the spread of civil war to Kosovo, Serbia.

The Prospects for Expanded Balkan Conflict

Thus far, the civil war in the former Yugoslavia has involved Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims. However, there is another important disaffected ethnic, nationality group there -- the 1.5 million ethnic-Albanian Muslims of the autonomous province of Kosovo in Serbia -- that has a history of suffering repression by central authority. Moreover, in the last five years the Serb repression against Albanians in Kosovo (engineered by Milosevic) has reached a level of cruelty and totality that has created a "pressure cooker" situation in the province.

If Kosovo explodes in mass violence and civil war, it would likely prompt a large-scale Serb military offensive and possible ethnic cleansing to "Serbianize" the province. Bordering the province is the homogeneous nation of Albania with its 3 million ethnic-Albanians and northern Macedonia with about 400,000 ethnic-Albanians. If the Kosovar Albanians are systematically killed or expelled from their homeland, it is difficult to be sanguine about the neutrality of their brothers next door, as well as other affected regional states. In fact, there is plentiful direct evidence to substantiate concerns about how war in Kosovo would likely spread across borders first to Albania and Macedonia, and then drawing in Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey.

Balkan history is instructive here because the Serb-Croat rift that turned so violent in World War II and again in 1991 was far from unique in the Balkans. Extreme Serb-Albanian resentment emerged at the time of the birth of the state of Albania which became independent -- despite violent Serb opposition -- during the Balkan Wars in 1913; then five years later the Serb-Albanian rift was exacerbated with the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.¹ Further complicating the situation, the victorious World War I Allies' unjudicious configuration of boundaries for the new Kingdom and the subsequent 1926 Yugoslav territorial settlement with Albania left 500,000 ethnic-Albanians within the Yugoslav territory of latter-day Kosovo. This caused bitter disappointment for Albanian nationalist leaders; thus from that

point forward the Kosovo question has been a point of contention between Albania and Yugoslavia.²

Moreover, the importance of Kosovo to Serbia has much deeper and symbolic roots; for it is a land long considered sacred by Serbs since their unsuccessful, historic "Battle of Kosovo" against the invading Turks in 1389. A measure of Kosovo's significance to Serbs was manifested during the Axis powers' occupation of the Balkans, when Serbs fought Albanians for control of Kosovo until the Fascists were defeated and Kosovo was reinstated as part of Yugoslavia.

Yugoslav-Albanian post-war relations were further strained due to Tito's expansionist policy toward Albania. After Moscow's Cominform excommunicated Yugoslavia in 1948, Albanian President Hoxha seized the opportunity to reject Tito's policies by breaking economic ties and inciting anti-Yugoslav sentiment among both Albanians and Kosovo's alienated ethnic-Albanians.³

Yugoslavia's Albanian problem got progressively worse as Kosovo's Muslim Albanian population grew rapidly after World War II, eventually constituting about 90 per cent of Kosovo's population by the late 1980s.⁴ Consequently Serbs, although controlling the region's government, likely felt compelled to take defensive action by rallying around "claims" of Albanian discrimination. Tito's repression in Kosovo led to an explosion of ethnic unrest in 1968, forcing him to ease up; but further violent demonstrations in the 1970s were not prevented.

In 1981, rioting Kosovars demanded Belgrade's recognition of a Kosovo "republic" and this prompted Tito to impose police control there.⁵ This caused further deterioration of relations between Belgrade and Tirana. In the late 1980s, harsh political repression became the rule and Milosevic moved in November, 1988, to strip out of the Kosovo constitution the province's right of autonomy, which provoked 100,000 ethnic Albanians to take to the streets; and in early 1989 the Kosovo Assembly, while literally "under the gun," approved the changes.⁶ About two dozen ethnic-Albanians died as tens of thousands clashed with police, thereby evoking a vehement denunciation by Albania.

Early warnings of a building Kosovo crisis with ramifications for regional stability were given in 1989 when Serb military leaders began warning of potential military intervention; and especially by Milosevic's declaration at the June 1989 Battle of Kosovo celebration that Serbia could not exclude possible "armed battles" to put down counter-revolutionaries.⁷ Serbia's repression in Kosovo escalated in 1990 when Milosevic dissolved the Kosovo assembly, arrested assembly delegates meeting in secret, closed the Albanian-language daily newspaper, and "Serbianized" Kosovar businesses.⁸

Increasing regional concern about the Kosovo crisis was evident in a statement by the leading Albanian opposition Democratic Party in Tirana in February, 1990, which pledged Albania's full support for Kosovar Albanian self-determination.⁹ After Serbia began its aggression against Croatia, Albanians

expressed additional concern; for example the Albanian Parliament pronounced in July 1991 that the fight by the Albanian people for survival in Yugoslavia "would enjoy the backing of the whole Albanian nation."¹⁰

In response to the southern drift of Serb-Croat fighting in the Fall of 1991, Albania placed its Army on alert along the Albanian-Yugoslav border.¹¹ Steadily increasing tension in Kosovo has heightened Albanian nationalism in the mother country, with Kosovo being the single unifying issue among Albania's political parties.¹² Albania's President Alia has appealed to the CSCE, the European Community, the Western European Union, NATO and the U.N. Security Council to intervene in Serbia's "genocidal" plans.¹³

Serbia's actions in Kosovo in the last two years and her aggression against Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina suggest that Milosevic's threats are not hollow. New, violent Kosovar demonstrations in the fall of 1992 and the reported establishment of Kosovar Albanian guerilla forces--who may be receiving training in Albania--are additional critical signs of escalating tension.¹⁴ Albania has been attempting to solicit support from Islamic countries to assist the Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo.¹⁵ Albanian Kosovars have also sought support from Slovenia. In May 1992, Serb military forces in Kosovo were being reinforced along the borders with Macedonia and Albania.¹⁶ Further, a radical wing of the Kosovar Albanians has advocated armed rebellion and Kosovo's merger with Albania. Kosovo's Albanian

leader, Ibrahim Rugova, has indicated that he would not rule out unification with Albania.

Signs of Milosevic's plan for a "Greater Serbia" continued to surface at the end of 1992, with reports of: a Serb Committee for the Return of 200,000 Serbs and Montenegrins to Kosovo who, it is claimed, were expelled by Hitler and Tito during World War II; Serb colonization of Kosovo with Serb refugees numbering 120,000; the transfer of Serb military air forces and other armaments from Bosnia to Kosovo; the mobilization of Serb reservists in Kosovo; and, a secret Serbian plan to force the 500,000 ethnic-Albanians in Kosovo out of the province. On November 6, four Albanian Kosovars died in clashes with police. Kosovo's "President" Rugova sent a message on November 9 to President-elect Clinton indicating his intention to request U.S. assistance after Clinton entered office. In December, three more ethnic-Albanians were killed by Serb authorities.

If Kosovo were an isolated case of a repressed minority within Serbia that was not part of a much larger regional ethnic composition, then concerns about regional stability and expanding war would stand on weaker grounds. But that is not the case. In addition to Kosovo's neighbor Albania, newly independent Macedonia -- just south of Kosovo -- also has a sizable minority Albanian population (about 22%) that may be at risk; the reason is that Milosevic's vision of a Greater Serbia may also include Macedonia, as he has referred to it as "South Serbia."¹⁷

Macedonia's Interior Minister Ljubomir Frckovski is concerned that Serbian nationalists, aided by former Yugoslav Army secret service agents, have infiltrated his country to foment ethnic clashes in order to destabilize Macedonia -- a possible target for Serbian territorial expansion.¹⁸ In fact, ethnic violence between native Macedonians and Albanian extremists began to erupt in Macedonia in late 1992. Also, unattributable incitant propaganda has appeared in the Skopje press; for example, a purported map of "Greater Macedonia" appearing on November 14 showed it comprised of Macedonia and parts of the four neighboring countries of Serbia, Albania, Greece and Bulgaria.¹⁹ There are also reports of Serb nationalist calls for Serbia and Greece to divide Macedonia between them.

Separate troubling reports of possible "ethnic cleansing" in Muslim neighborhoods in southern Serbia--perhaps a precursor to more ambitious aims for protecting Serbs in the south--emerged in early November, 1992.²⁰

Concerns began changing to fears of expanded war in the Balkans as the new year approached, with a chorus of dire warnings of an international conflict coming from many of the region's leaders. Warnings were voiced recently by Macedonian Prime Minister Crvenkovski, Macedonian Foreign Minister Maleski, Kosovo's Prime Minister Bukoshi, Kosovo's "President" Rugova, and Albania's Foreign Minister Serreqi. The Albanian government's request to join NATO is indicative of the alarm with which it views recent developments in the region.

Co-Presidents Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance of the Geneva Conference on Yugoslavia have identified Macedonia, Kosovo and Sandzak, Serbia, as probable new flashpoints.

Finally in late November, ten Balkan and neighboring countries participated in a Conference in Istanbul on Developments in the Former Yugoslavia, and issued a Final Joint Declaration that warned of possible regional conflict, demanded that U.N. observers be deployed on the borders of Bosnia-Herzegovina and asked the U.N. Security Council to investigate the possibility of sending U.N. forces to Kosovo, Vojvodina, Sandzak, and Macedonia because of the dangerous situation in those areas.

On December 10, 1992, Secretary General Boutros Ghali proposed that the U.N. send peacekeeping troops to Macedonia to "prevent" the spread of conflict. On December 19, President Bush agreed with British Prime Minister Major that it was important that the spread of conflict to Kosovo and Macedonia be deterred and that they were prepared to enforce the no-fly zone over Bosnia as an additional step for isolating the Serbian government. Today there are several hundred Scandinavian peacekeeping troops under U.N. mandate located in Macedonia in an effort at preventive diplomacy.

On December 20, Slobodan Milosevic was reelected to office and subsequent statements by him gave every indication that he is not yet deterred from further pursuit of a "Greater Serbia." And it is far from clear whether the Serb "peace

gestures" at the Geneva negotiations are anything more than a charade intended to head off Western intervention in Bosnia. On January 23, 1993, new fighting erupted in Croatia; it is not yet clear what impact renewed warfare in Croatia would have on the scenario of a southern expansion of the war.

Civil war in Kosovo will remain a possibility until Serb repression is ended. If Milosevic miscalculates the likelihood of Albanian appeasement or the political will of other regional leaders and thus initiates a holocaust in Kosovo that spills rapidly into Macedonia, then the West may find itself no more prepared to stop the "toppling dominoes" in the Balkans than it was to halt the horror in Bosnia.

The "Toppling Dominoes"

The figurative "toppling dominoes" are the additional Balkan states and other nearby countries that would reluctantly, regrettably, but inevitably be drawn into an international conflict on the peninsula due to the complex interlockings of common and conflicting ethnic and national interests. If Albania and Macedonia become engaged, then Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey could follow rapidly. What are the reasons?

First Bulgaria: Bulgaria has been at loggerheads with Serbia during this century in the second Balkan War of 1912 and again in the 1930s; the issue being in both cases a dispute over borders involving Macedonian territory.²¹ Other motivating factors for Bulgaria include the facts: that she occupied parts of Macedonia during the second world war; that the Macedonian

language is a dialect of Bulgarian; and that almost 200,000 Bulgarians consider themselves to be of Macedonian origin.²² Moreover, Bulgaria considers Macedonians to actually be western Bulgarians.²³ Bulgaria is likely concerned about either Serbian designs for regional dominance or Macedonian claims on Bulgarian territory. A final complicating factor is Bulgaria's own serious ethnic-Turk Muslim minority problem. Thus it is conceivable that if there were Serb aggression against Macedonia, Bulgaria would oppose Serbia.

Second Greece: A central concern of Greece involves her policy of nonrecognition of the Macedonian successor state. This is due to not only national pride (i.e., her historical contention that Macedonians are really northern Greeks) but also historical Macedonian claims on Greek territory. However, Greece's interest in the state of affairs to her north involves other important factors, including economic interests (e.g., Greece's exports to EC countries are transported through Serbia); historical ties (e.g., in the Balkan Wars, Greece fought with Serbia against Bulgaria); and a nexus of ethnic considerations with strained Greek-Turkish relations (i.e., Greece's concern about Turkey's support of Moslem minorities in Kosovo, Macedonia, Albania, and Bulgaria, which heightens Greece's perceived longer-term threat of a Turkish-Moslem sphere of influence in the Balkans).²⁴ For all of these reasons, if Turkey were to formally join an anti-Serb alliance or intervene on behalf of Muslims, Greece would likely be driven to align formally with

Serbia thus pitting Greece also against Albania, Bulgaria and her intense rival, Turkey.

Third Turkey (and other Moslem countries): The Turkish government has been very concerned about the fate of the Bosnian Muslims and it, along with several of the region's other Moslem countries, have been calling for steps to support the Muslims such as ending the arms embargo and military intervention to halt the Serb aggression. Thus Turkey and Bulgaria, though not natural allies, could unite in common cause with all the Albanian belligerents to fight not only Serbs throughout the former Yugoslavia but also Serbia's ally, Greece.

The threat of Muslim extermination has also gotten the attention of militant Islamic fundamentalists; there have been reports in recent months of from 2,000 to 6,000 Mujahideen fighters from Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey and Lebanon introduced into Bosnia in support of the Muslims.²⁵ Should the scale of that commitment grow commensurately with a widening war, it could raise the specter of a transnational religious war against Christian Slavs in the former Yugoslavia with disturbing implications for the possible involvement of the region's other Orthodox populations. Moreover, Serb propaganda alluding to former Ottoman Turk imperialism will surely exacerbate tensions.

Finally, further afield there are other possible countries (e.g., Hungary, Romania, Italy, Austria) that could be profoundly impacted by massive refugees fleeing a pan-Balkan war and thus become pulled indirectly into the conflict. Still further

removed from the war, but quite sensitive to the ongoing conflict, is Russia. The common Slavic heritage shared by Russians and Serbs has not been lost upon new, rising Russian nationalists who have become increasingly vocal in their support of Serbia's situation -- thus enlarging the web of countries with possible interests and stakes in an expanded conflict.

These are some prospects for, and likely dimensions of, a potential pan-Balkan war. If it occurs, why should it matter to the rest of Europe and America?

Why the Balkans Matter to Europe and America?

The answer is simple. The Balkans matter because "isolated islands of prosperity and peace cannot persist in a wider world of deprivation and war"; the truth in this statement by Johan Jorgen Holst was crystal clear in 20th century European military history.²⁶ Unlike the world wars, the scale of the Balkan conflict is currently isolated (and may remain so) and it is surrounded by relative peace and prosperity; but those conditions may be temporary and thus do not negate the relevance of Holst's proposition, but rather they charge us to make consequential judgments about the likelihood and scale of a wider war and its potential European security implications. Indeed, many wars start small but not all remain so.

The spillover of civil war across international borders could, at its worst, produce consequences affecting indirectly the heart of Central Europe. Any major destabilization in the heart of Europe today is a security concern for all of Europe.

Any expanding regional war that destabilizes not only Europe but also the strategic landbridge linking Europe, Asia and the Middle East certainly brings into play major if not vital U.S. security interests. Consider first how a spiraling Balkan war could affect specific European economic, social and political stability, and ultimately military security.

The direct economic costs of mounting destruction to the current Balkan belligerents are incalculable. By European standards, their economies were already poor and struggling with reform. There are also direct, although limited, economic costs to other regional states. For example, Greece's trade with Central and Northern Europe is being impeded now; it could be severely disrupted. Other potential belligerents -- Albania and Bulgaria -- are struggling as well. Severely war-damaged economies could have a decisive political impact in the Balkans if economic failure halts political reform and causes a general reversion to autocratic rule.

Turkey, on the edge of Europe, has been a model success at modernization and economic growth for a predominantly Moslem country; should she be drawn into an unfortunate and costly conflict, her economy could be set back and thus cause social and political instability. Finally, massive Yugoslav debt default will add strain to West European creditors such as Germany, which is already burdened by unification costs and extended world recession. Projecting the exact direct economic costs of widening war and their impact on regional stability is

difficult, but they surely would be enormous and could ultimately alter the security environment.

A vital consideration is the significant indirect costs of the war for Western Europe resulting from a refugee influx unprecedented in post-war Europe. The East European refugee migrations to Western Europe during the past 2 years are on top of the refugee flow just prior to the 1989 revolutions. Germany received over 100,000 refugees in 1990 alone. The Yugoslav refugee flow in the past 18 months has been particularly hard on Germany's economy and society, provoking growing anti-foreigner sentiment and neo-Facism. The German authorities have been struggling for months to stabilize this situation.

The 2 million refugees from the Yugoslav conflict are also a growing problem for Austria, Hungary and the Czech lands. Even if the situation were to stabilize today the current refugee crisis will produce an economic drain on Europe for years, and worse consequences if the flood does not stop. Unless this torrent of refugees is halted, it will continue to exacerbate a rising tide of ethnocentrism and hyper-nationalism in Europe today.

The Yugoslav civil war is an omen of a dangerous trend that may cause further explosions among Czechs and Slovaks, Romanians and ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania, Slavs and Turks in Bulgaria, and Greeks and Albanians in disputed territory. For that reason, Milosevic's unchallenged drive to create a "Greater Serbia" or recreate an earlier Serbian realm is a dangerous

model for other Central European ultra-nationalists seeking power with platforms for correcting historical injustices.

The consequences of war refugees transcend economics because the growing reaction within refugee-saturated countries is to restrict the free movement of people by closing the doors to immigration -- an indirect indicator of the fragility of European unification -- and in the case of Germany to restrict the privilege of political asylum. Political instability will grow whenever ethnic or nationalist intolerance and hatred, linked to economic decline and competition, polarizes nations' politics. Political polarization within countries can have consequences for interstate relations when stressed governments turn away from cooperation and toward nationalistic policies. A more severe political consequence could be European backsliding on unification and collective action which, in turn, could increase unhealthy economic competition, exacerbate ethnic divisions, and impede security cooperation.

The security of individual European states and the region will be weakened if socio-political division prevents them from reshaping a solid security structure as NATO's role diminishes and the United States reduces substantially its military presence in Europe. Moreover, Europe's failure to douse the flames of war along her southeastern perimeter surely is shaking the confidence of the new East European democracies who have sought to place their faith and fate with a larger interdependent Europe. Yet, those governments have found no firm security

structure to replace the Warsaw Pact; and, they cannot be sanguine about relying on the West due to the cautious responses of NATO leaders to their requests to join NATO.

Without a well-grounded security structure in place, some former Warsaw Pact countries eventually may either go it alone (with a fortress mentality) or choose to form subregional alliances in the absence of collective security for all of Europe. A divided Europe without common direction and dominated by nationalism could result in new, unstable alliances and balances of power. An unstable Europe, adjacent to the disintegrated Soviet empire and economically hostage to Middle Eastern and Persian Gulf politics and conflict, is not a choice ingredient for global stability.

Finally, and not coincidentally, near genocide of Muslims by European Slavs is occurring where Ottoman Muslim Turks fought Balkan armies in defense of their empire less than a century ago. Although there is no prospect of a new age of empire-building from the East that would threaten Europe, there is an equally unsettling analogy with the Great Crusades. Today, the vast Moslem world contains a growing radical fringe that views the West as evil and an enemy that is worthy of personal martyrdom.

Any threat of cultural war, or jihad, at the backdoor of Europe is a problem for all of Europe and the West. Unless Milosevic's terror is stopped by the West, the warriors of Islam may intervene massively. The guilt that our collective

conscience now feels as a result of Milosevic's crimes will pale to that which we will bear if we fail to prevent a 21st century Christian-Muslim war. The rebirth of European history, if carried to logical extremes, forces upon Europeans a bizarre vision -- that of staring once again into the frightful abyss.

Accordingly, with the euphoric afterglow of the West's Cold War victory now well diminished, it now behooves Americans to take a long-term, sober view of the current conflict and to project the full range of possible but unpredictable consequences for their security of an enduring, spiraling regional war.

When the Yugoslav civil war began in early 1991, the United States had only begun reviewing its security strategy for a changing world order; but it was clear then that even with the altered international security environment, there remained important, enduring U.S. national security interests relevant to Europe.²⁷ Since last summer, the worsening crisis in the Balkans has initiated debate about what U.S. security interests are at stake in the Balkan warfare.

The American security interests at stake in the event of a spiraling regional Balkan war are directly related to the European security interests that will be threatened.

American economic security has become the watchword for the 1990s. Indeed, U.S. national security today, in its broadest sense, places a premium on the strength, competitiveness and growth of the U.S. economy, prosperous U.S. exports and trade (especially with Europe), a stable international financial

system, and assured access to strategic natural resources. Further, in view of the large defense drawdown in the coming years, a robust U.S. economy will become an increasingly important foundation for the U.S. national security posture, including the basis for future requirements for defense reconstitution and mobilization.

The importance of a peaceful, stable and prosperous Europe for the United States' economy has always been significant and continues to grow. Consider the following facts:

- the European Economic Community (EC) is America's largest trading partner accounting for about 25% of total U.S. exports (i.e., over \$100 billion a year);
- U.S. exports to the EC are critical for reducing the U.S. trade deficit;
- U.S. exports accounted for one-third of total U.S. growth in GNP from 1988 - 1992;
- the combination of U.S. exports and subsidiary sales within the EC total about \$600 billion--i.e., three times those to Canada and four times those to Japan; and,
- European economic unification (i.e., the Single Market) is expected to increase U.S. exports as a result of EC economic growth along with the declining value of the dollar.²⁸

In sum, Western European economic security is critical for American economic -- and thus national -- security. In addition, if the new market economies in the old Warsaw Pact

countries grow and prosper, Eastern Europe will represent new and expanding market potential for competitively-priced U.S. goods. American and European economic security depend on a stable international finance system, including the stability of currencies and currency exchange, and the international bond market, which are pillars for a sound world economy. European and American economies are inextricably intertwined; a major shock to one has major ramifications for the other. The world's modern industrial economies are integrated into a "global economy" that reinforces our "wholeness." In addition to Japan, the other "board directors" (i.e., the G-7 countries) that manage the global economy reside in Europe and America.

What are the economic security implications of a pan-Balkan war for the United States? An expanded regional Balkan war -- if drawn out over several years and involving non-Balkan countries around the periphery -- could prolong and exacerbate Europe's current long recession, an outcome that would ripple through the world economy and have a direct impact on the United States. Additional millions of refugees flooding to Central and Western Europe would produce a severe economic drain on the EC that would indirectly reduce demand for U.S. imports. European instability could halt or reverse economic union, thereby dashing the expectations for economic expansion; even worse, political instability could provide an excuse for European governments to adopt nationalistic policies such as greater economic protectionism that would affect U.S. trade prospects.

If an ever-expanding war ultimately required large-scale intervention by European and U.S. armies, then the post-Cold War peace dividend and even more resources would be diverted from economic investment and savings to non-productive, military expenditures. Instability in Europe would inhibit growing U.S. investment there -- an option that also looks favorable with economic union.²⁹ All of these adverse economic impacts would hurt the U.S. economy and complicate our long-term economic problems (e.g., trade deficit, budget deficit, national debt).

American political and military security interests in Europe could also be damaged if a southern expansion of the Balkan warfare resulted in Greek and Turkish forces intervening on behalf of opposite sides, resulting in a major NATO rift and possible war between Greece and Turkey. If NATO's political paralysis prevented quick resolution of the crisis, and/or if the United States hedged in its response vis-a-vis its two warring allies, then severe or even permanent damage could be done to both NATO's credibility as a post-Cold War collective security alliance and U.S. relations with both Greece and Turkey.

Despite the end of the Cold War, Turkey remains a country of strategic significance to Western Europe and America as demonstrated by her valuable role in the Gulf War, including her permission to use NATO and Turkish airbases for operations against Iraq.³⁰ In fact, had political conditions prevented the U.S. and its allies from deploying forces to the Gulf from the Mediterranean, thus forcing them to deploy instead

from the Indian Ocean, the coalition's projection of power would have been less potent.³¹ Moreover, future out-of-area NATO missions could very likely be carried out in the same volatile region of the Middle East, thus magnifying the importance of the NATO Southern Region. Accordingly, estranged U.S.-Turkish relations could result in possible denial of base access in Turkey and other benefits in a future crisis affecting U.S. vital interests in the Gulf.

Moreover, Turkey is the model of the type of pro-Western, secular and modernizing Moslem country that the United States would prefer other Moslem countries adopt. Loss of Turkey as an ally and friend in the Moslem world would exacerbate America's foreign policy concern over spreading militant Islamic fundamentalism.

There are other U.S. security interests that would be at risk by a spiraling Balkan war. In recent months, the growing influence of Russian nationalists has created growing doubts about Russia's continued cooperation in the U.N. and with the United States on matters such as the sanctions against Serbia. If an expanded war resulted in direct attacks by belligerents on Serbia, it is far from unimaginable that it could lead to Russian aid to Serbia and a major U.S.-Russian disagreement that could begin a reversal of the new found American-Russian partnership that could affect vital U.S. security interests.

History has demonstrated that when hegemonic threats to Europe became severe, America went to Europe's defense as a

vital security interest. We have defended on European soil a "way of life" that still -- notwithstanding the formal end of the Cold War -- is practiced genuinely only in a minority of countries. Therefore, the argument that with the end of the Cold War the United States has no enduring vital interests in Europe for which it is worth sacrificing American lives makes a mockery of our past sacrifices as a nation. Preserving the common U.S.-European political heritage and value system is an inextricable link that binds European economic and military security with that of North America. Admittedly, a hegemonic threat is no longer poised to march to the Rhine in a few days time; but the unfolding holocaust in the Balkans, if not contained, can destabilize Europe and resound in America.

U.S. Policy on the Balkans: Conflict Management

Forging a U.S. Balkan policy requires an exercise of balancing realism and national interest. We must differentiate honestly between aspects of the current Balkan imbroglio that are beyond our ability to effectively control and those that are not, and between aspects that entail sufficient risk to U.S. security interests and those that do not. Americans are uncomfortable dealing in shades of grey; but the new European "disorder" makes it imperative. Moreover, there is a logical case for viewing the events in the former Yugoslavia since early 1991, and the future course of conflict in the region, as a continuum that suggests a need for a comprehensive strategy and solution. On the other hand, the fractious Yugoslav history

weighs against that approach succeeding; comprehensive solutions may not be possible. Thus, realism leads us down the path of conflict management, as opposed to termination and resolution.

Accordingly, we must forge a U.S. Balkan policy that is guided by discrete judgments about when and what U.S.-European security interests require U.S. action and by a broader U.S. strategy for the new Europe. And most important, as in "grand strategy," fine discrimination among interests, threats, goals and political will, and instruments of power and policy, is a virtue that can spell the difference between success and failure.

Bosnia

In Bosnia, no vital U.S. interest is at stake, thus U.S. military intervention is not justified; our interest is primarily humanitarian. But even U.S. "humanitarian intervention" with peace enforcement -- an apparently evolving new role for the U.S. military -- appears inconceivable. A decision to commit U.S. military forces to a conflict that has both civil and inter-state dimensions, that has no clear-cut aggressors and victims in the long view of history, that is driven mainly by ethnic-nationalist hatred as opposed to traditional state politics, that involves belligerents who have historically demonstrated violent opposition to outside interference, and that involves horrible terrain and weather, is an extremely difficult proposition. Moreover, the American people do not have the political will today to place tens or hundreds of

thousands of our soldiers in harm's way in Bosnia -- a major commitment involving great risks, high costs, uncertain duration and questionable prospects for success.

The threat that the Bosnian civil conflict could be transformed into an international conflict due to outside intervention appears low; nevertheless preventing that unlikely occurrence should be a U.S. goal that is pursued by vigorous U.S. diplomatic leadership in negotiating a permanent ceasefire and equitable territorial settlement for Bosnia, and the same for Croatia.

Kosovo and Macedonia

The real risk to U.S. security interests in Europe is from the consequences for Europe of a spiraling Balkan regional war that begins with violence in Kosovo that spreads initially to Macedonia. That scenario must be prevented and Serbia is the proper object of a deterrent strategy. Serbia's violation of the human rights of ethnic-Albanian Kosovars long ago became gross and systematic. Since Macedonia and Albania will not likely remain neutral in the event that Kosovo explodes with Serbian ethnic cleansing, such circumstances present a clear threat to international security and thus provide a legitimate basis for the U.N. to approve a Chapter VII "enforcement action" against Serbia, in spite of the Charter's prohibition on intervention into the domestic affairs of a state.

Accordingly, the United States must act to take the lead in devising a U.S.-NATO deterrence strategy for the Balkans,

utilizing all instruments of policy, including U.S. military power. This is a qualitatively different threat that, if understood by Americans, can bring back into balance U.S. goals in Europe and America's political will to commit U.S. military power to achieve those goals. The commitment of a multilateral deterrent force to the Balkans should be authorized by the United Nations with NATO serving as the U.N. executing agent. The size force should be massive to halt, reverse and defeat any Serb aggression within Kosovo or Macedonia. As such it will require commitment of significant forces by all member countries. Such forces could be deployed in Macedonia and Albania at those governments' request. Bulgaria and Hungary should also receive force allocations if those governments desire it. Serbia must come to the understanding that if its actions threaten international security, then Serbian sovereignty will be at risk. The mandate of the NATO force will be publicly and unambiguously proclaimed as defensive in nature and aimed at deterring Serbian aggression in Kosovo and Macedonia.

With a force in being, the U.N. could pursue, on a priority basis, a political strategy to defuse the situation in Kosovo. U.N. resolutions should be adopted that demand the following steps from Serbia:

- the stand-down of the Serb militia in Kosovo;
- the demobilization of the Serb reservists in Kosovo;
- the removal of Serb military armament recently transferred to Kosovo from Bosnia;

- the end of violations of ethnic-Albanians' civil rights;
- the return of Kosovo businesses to their rightful owners;
- the reestablishment of a free Albanian press; and
- the commencement of general political reform to
bring about a more democratic, pluralistic system.

Pan-Balkan Security System

In concert with the diplomatic initiatives to bring peace to Bosnia, and again to Croatia, and the politico-military steps to protect ethnic-Albanian Kosovars and Macedonia, the U.N. should organize a Conference on Balkan Security charged with negotiating agreements that can facilitate a long-term basis for peace, security, liberty and prosperity for the peoples of the former Yugoslavia and the surrounding Balkan states.

The United States and NATO could play leading roles. These initiatives would symbolize America's continued commitment to European security in the evolving new European order. With U.S. leadership, NATO can assert its continued role as a critical strand of continuity during the tumultuous transition now underway in Central and Eastern Europe.

Otherwise, as each additional crisis develops in the future, the U.S. will find itself increasingly acting in a reactive way, rather than proactive. Placing the current Balkan crisis within a framework that defines the future U.S. role in Europe will give U.S. policymakers more solid ground for the critical decisions ahead in the evolving new world order.

NOTES

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3. Steven Pavlowitch, Yugoslavia (Praeger Publishers, 1971), p. 217-218. See also Pano, op. cit., p. 483.
4. Elez Biberaj, Yugoslavia: A Continuing Crisis (Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, October 1989), p. 8.
5. Ibid. p. 6-7.
6. Ibid. p. 8-9.
7. Ibid. p. 10.
8. Sabrina P. Ramet, "The Breakup of Yugoslavia," in Global Affair (International Security Council, Spring 1991), p. 103.
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10. Franz-Lothar Altmann, "Ex-Yugoslavia's Neighbors: Who Wants What?" in The World Today (The Royal Institute of International Affairs, August/September 1992), p. 165.
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12. Elez Biberaj, "Albania at the Crossroads," in Problems of Communism, September-October 1991, p. 2.
13. Ibid. p. 16.

14. Sabrina P. Ramet, "War in the Balkans," in Foreign Affairs (Council on Foreign Relations, Fall 1992), p. 89.
15. Altmann, op.cit., p. 165.
16. Ramet, op. cit. (note 14), p. 89.
17. Ibid. p. 483.
18. FBIS, Eastern Europe, Paris AFP in English, 13 Nov. 92 (FBIS-EEU 92-221, 16 Nov. 92) p. 44.
19. FBIS, Eastern Europe, Belgrade TANJUG in English, 14 Nov. 92 (FBIS EEU 92-221, 16 Nov. 92) p. 44-45.
20. Blaine Harden, "Prelude to 'Ethnic Cleansing' is Heard in Serbia," Washington Post, November 11, 1992, p. A-1.
21. Jelavich, Charles and Barbara, "Balkans," Encyclopedia Americana, (Americana Corp., 1970), Vol. 3, p. 90, 96.
22. James Pettifer, "Macedonia," in International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs, July 1992), p. 484.
23. Altmann, op. cit., p. 164
24. Ibid.
25. NBC Nightly News, October 26, 1992, report of Tom Aspell, NBC News. Also FBIS EEU- 92-212, 2 Nov. 92, p. 39.
26. Johan Jorgen Holst, Remarks at 14th Annual NATO Symposium, Washington, D.C., April, 1991.
27. The White House, U.S. National Security Strategy, August 1991, p.7. Relevant excerpts concerning U.S. security interests in Europe include:

"It is important that we not let euphoria over the easing of East-West confrontation blind us to the potential security problems within a new Europe...disputes between and among some

Eastern European states and ethnic groups appear to have been merely frozen in time by decades of Cold War....Security problems could emerge in the East in the course of the 1990s. The powerful centrifugal forces in Yugoslavia are particularly worrisome....NATO will also be essential in promoting a stable security environment throughout Europe, which remains a 'central strategic arena' and represents 'compelling interests' for the United States....and, that our future enemy will more likely be instability and, that in the face of threats to stability, U.S. military strength will be a foundation for security--both regionally and globally."

28. Louise B. van Tartwijk-Novey, The United States and the European Community, (Madison Books, 1992), pp. 106-107.

29. Ibid.

30. Bruce R. Kuniholm, "Turkey and the West," in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 2, Spring 1991, pp. 36-37.

31. Admiral Jonathan T. Howe, USN, "NATO and the Gulf Crisis," in *Survival*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 3, May/June 1991, p. 247.