

# The Road to Peace in the Balkans is Paved With Bad Intentions

An Address By

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*Note: This paper draws on a wide range of current and historical intelligence reporting, but, for the sake of brevity, it is not possible to cite all these, and all historical sources. What is presented are the conclusions and trend projections based on analysis of the source material based on some two decades of close involvement in Balkan, South-Eastern European, and related developments.*

**I**'his conference is aptly titled “A Search for a Roadmap to Peace in the Balkans”, because we have yet to find a road map, let alone, should we find it, the right road to take. In any event, because of the short-term thinking, greed, fear, and ignorance which have plagued decisionmaking with regard to the region by players inside it and out, the road to peace in the Balkans is paved with bad intentions.

It has been long and widely forecast that the security situation in the Balkans — indeed, in South-Eastern Europe generally — would become delicate, and would fracture, during the final stages of the Albanian quest for independence for the Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohija. As pessimistic as those forecasts were, however, the situation was considerably worsened by the eight-hour visit to Albania on June 10, 2007, by US Pres. George W. Bush. The State Department told the President that he would he would receive a hero's welcome in Albania, and perhaps the White House felt that this might resonate in his ratings at home.

The Albanian visit, however, did nothing for Mr Bush's ratings in the US electorate, but it did have strategic consequences. None of the consequences were positive either for stability in the Balkans or for US interests. From the standpoint of those State Department elements promoting Kosovo independence — and particularly Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas

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Burns — however, the move was designed to make Kosovo independence a *de facto* reality. This would then bypass the United Nations Security Council, where Russia was determined to veto the stampede toward Kosovo independence, despite the attempts to make it seem inevitable.

This deteriorating security situation in the Balkans, even if it falls short of major conventional warfare, seriously jeopardizes regional economic growth, and the planned development of an infrastructure to transport energy from the Caspian/Central Asian region to markets in Western Europe, and into the Mediterranean terminals. This damages the strategic and economic interests of most regional states, the European Union, and the US. Of course it particularly has ramifications for South-Eastern Europe in general, and the entire Eastern Mediterranean theater, ultimately impacting Cyprus, Lebanon, Syria, and Israel.

In large part, the deteriorating viability of many areas of the former Yugoslavia is the result of the continuation of the policies toward the Balkans of the former US Clinton Administration by the US State Department. The US State Department, with many careers put in place and sustained during the Clinton era, fought hard to have the current Bush Administration sustain the Clinton policies, on the basis that the Bush White House already had too many issues to deal with as a result of the Iraq War and the so-called “Global War on Terror”. Under-Secretary Burns, in particular, insisted on having the Bush Administration, through Secretary Condoleezza Rice, formally sign off to that specific policy decision: to continue the Clinton Administration line. The results have been profoundly damaging to US and Western strategic and security interests.

As a result, not only Kosovo, but all of Albania and other Balkan communities have become captive of the criminal-political movements which owe their power to their alliance with *al-Qaida*, Iran, and the Saudi-funded Wahhabist movements.

The Kosovo region is now a lawless area. It has been ethnically-cleansed of Serbs (more than 300,000 in the past five years), and re-populated by Albanians who have progressively and illegally, over the past decades, migrated into the area.<sup>2</sup> Albanian gangs, virtually all linked with either the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA<sup>3</sup>) — which legally no longer exists — or other Albanian militant groups control all trade and life in Kosovo. Years of so-called peacekeeping by the international community count for nothing. Kosovo’s presence as a nominally independent state, without any of the essential foundations to meet the true criteria for sovereignty, can in no way further the stability of the region, or of Europe. Neither can it serve US strategic interests, unless US interests can be defined as a breakdown of viability of Eastern and southern Europe.

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<sup>2</sup> An estimated 90 percent of the population of the Kosovo and Metohija region by 2007 was believed to have been made up of ethnic Albanians. Some of these were the descendants of Albanians who had earlier illegally migrated into the area, but some 40 percent of the territory’s population is comprised of Albanians who crossed illegally into the territory in the past decade or so. In that time – in fact in the past five years – some 300,000 Serbs whose families had lived in the area for a thousand years or more were essentially forcibly

<sup>3</sup> The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) is also known by its Albanian name, *Ushtria Clirimtare e Kosoves* (UCK) (OVK in Serbo-Croat), has a variety of offshoots and derivations, such as the Albanian National Army (ANA), the Liberation army of Pre\_ovo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (LAPMB), and so on. The KLA was, as part of its nominal disbanding after the NATO-led war against Serbia in 1999, to provide the key cadres to form the official Kosovo Protection Corps.

The visit to Tiranë by Pres. Bush signaled the start of an open season of expanded Albanian-backed terrorist and political activities in the region, which will re-ignite armed and political conflict in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), in Kosovo itself, in parts of Serbia proper — including the Ra\_ka area linking Serbia and Montenegro, and linking Kosovo with Bosnia at the area of the Gorazde Corridor, and in the Pre\_evo Valley area — and also, most significantly, within Greece, and within Montenegro. This new warfare will be supported by many elements of the international *jihadist* movements which work closely with Albanian groups such as the KLA along the so-called Green Transversal line (or *Zelena Transverszala*) — really a clandestine highway or network — which not only carries *jihadists* but also narcotics and weapons along international supply lines crossing from Turkey and the Adriatic into the Balkans and on into Western Europe. And there will also be increased support from a variety of governments and from co-opted officials from outside the direct region: Iran, Turkey, the People’s Republic of China, and others.

What we saw with the Bush visit to Tiranë was the emergence of the Albanian thrust — supported by both the Government of Albania and the KLA — of an Albanian-sponsored group, the UCC,<sup>4</sup> seeking secession for part of Greece, Epirus, known historically also as Chameria. The Cham people draw, to some extent, their identity from a community formed in the Epirus area of Greece by the Roman Army some two millennia ago. The reality today, however, is that the Chameria Liberation Army — the UCC — was formed by the KLA and is in fact a part of the quest for a “Greater Albania”, and its proponents have said as much.

A delegation of the UCC on June 10, 2007, delivered a letter to Pres. Bush during his visit to Tiranë. The UCC letter referred to the existence of an Albanian minority in Western Greece (Epirus) and the UCC requested recognition of the “genocide of the Albanian Chamerians” allegedly conducted by the Greeks in the end of World War II, and to recognize “the right of the people to return to their homes in Greece from where they were expelled”, and “return their estate that was attached”, plus other nationalist requests.

And a few weeks before Pres. Bush’s arrival in Albania, UCC delegations delivered letters to the US embassies in Rome and Tiranë. Albanian nationalist sentiment and protests increased, along with strong propaganda against the Greek minority in southern Albania, after the Bush visit to Tiranë. The UCC, meanwhile, has been building its support base with demonstrations and events

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<sup>4</sup> *Der Spiegel* on May 7, 2007, noted that the extremist paramilitary Albanian organization, UCC (Chameria Liberation Army/*Ushtria Climentare e Camerise*) — also known by the initials OVC, which seeks the annexation of part of Greece to “Greater Albania” — threatened to use violence to pursue its claims within the Greek state. UCC is a branch of the KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army: UCK) terrorist organization, and its aim, according to its own public statements, is to “free the Chameria area, that is under Greek occupation”. UCC calls Chameria an area of Western Greece which borders with Albania. In 1995, after a secret meeting, the KLA had announced the future creation of UCC. The political mastermind of UCC and leader of the organization is known only by an alias: “Alban Vjosa”. However, the real name of the UCC leader is Idajet Beqiri, 52, an Albanian lawyer and founder of the “Albanian National Unity Party” (FBKSh). Beqiri is friend of former Albanian Prime Minister Fatos T. Nano and the present Prime Minister, Sali R. Berisha. On November 10, 2003, *Der Spiegel* (issue number 46) had published an article titled The Albanian Rebellion, in which it made reference to the “Albanian revolt” in the Chameria area (of Greece), during the Athens 2004 Olympic Games. The article also included an interview with an Albanian KLA terrorist, named Ahmet, in the city of Thessaloniki in northern Greece. Ahmet described in the interview his theories for “Greater Albania”.

leading toward today — June 27, 2007 — the date that the Albanian Parliament in 1994 called the “Chameria national anniversary”.

The presence of Pres. Bush in Albania, then, and his statements supporting the independence of Kosovo, encouraged and triggered the extreme feelings of nationalist Albanians, who are also seeking independence in western FYROM, and the Greek region of Epirus. Indeed, the Albanian people have for decades, but increasingly in the past 15 or so years, been so distracted by leaders who have promised that they could, and should, have some of their neighbors’ wealth, that they have allowed those leaders to fail them in actually creating wealth and strength in Albania itself.

Significantly, although Albanian organizations are now re-grouping to seize more and more control over parts of FYROM, threatening the existence of that state as a viable entity, there are also FYROM Government elements voicing louder and louder claims to the Macedonian areas of Greece. It is obvious that some temporary common cause will be found among the Albanian groups and the FYROM groups<sup>5</sup>, given that they are both seeking to break off parts of Greece, even though they are, in other respects, mortally opposed to each other. It could even be argued that, given the reality that the foundation of Greece as a modern, multi-societal nation-state began with the unification of Hellenism under King Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great, it is not those elements in Skopje which should be seeking to compromise the integrity of Greece, but, rather, the other way around. Greece, if historical and cultural precedent were to hold sway, should be seeking parts of the former Yugoslavia which were integral to the original Greek Macedonian entity.

So, the broader battle is now being joined in South-East Europe, in Kosovo, Ra\_ka, the Pre\_evo Valley, in FYROM, Montenegro, and Epirus. It is also linked to issues and players which at first may seem peripheral to the Balkans; indeed, it is in large part proxy warfare which is symptomatic of the emergence of a new Cold War on a global scale.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, Turkey’s rejection of the advice of the great modernist leader, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, to abstain from attempting to revive pan-Turkism and Islamism, has led Ankara to provide official and unofficial support for a wide range of radical and *jihadist* causes in the Balkans. Thus, the instability of the Balkans has been fed by Ankara’s romanticism, even to the extent that members of the Bosnia-based terrorist group *Kvadrat* have been facilitated in traveling through Turkey to get into Chechnya, where they have been engaged in terrorist and insurgent operations, and then repatriated through Turkish-controlled Northern Cyprus, where they are clearly supported by the Turkish Cypriot and Ankara authorities. Significantly, *Kvadrat* is not only linked into *al-Qaida*, but its members receive training in Bosnia from Iranian Intelligence officials.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The question should also be raised as to the widespread activities in FYROM of the intelligence services of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), particularly since the FYROM Government switched its recognition from the Republic of China (ROC: Taiwan) to the PRC in 2001. As well, PRC intelligence officials have clearly had significant dealings with Albanian groups, including the KLA, and have assisted in the KLA’s acquisition of weapons and explosives. See, in particular, *Defense & Foreign Affairs Special Analysis*, October 25, 2005: *New Evidence Highlights Albanian Link to Explosives Used in London, Madrid Bombings.*]

<sup>6</sup> See Copley, Gregory: *Clausewitzian Friction and the New Cold War*, in *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy*, 6-2007.

<sup>7</sup> The Global Information System (GIS) and *Defense & Foreign Affairs* first brought the activities, funding, training, and operation of *Kvadrat*, in 2004, including detailing the locations of training camps in Bosnia, the funding by

The greater question of Turkish-Greek relations, then, and Turkey's position on Cyprus, all become part of the equation related to the stability of the Balkans, quite apart from issues relating to the expanding and planned networks of oil and gas pipelines.

But, regardless of causes, the reality is that Greek-Turkish relations are now more tense than would be ideal if the two countries are to effectively cooperate to exploit the massive web of oil and gas supply lines beginning to emerge from the Caspian region and across the Caucasus and Black Sea and through the Balkans. Within all of this, too, we see the historical paranoia between states: between Ukraine and Russia, between Turkey and Greece, between Turkey and Armenia, between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and so on. The question of Turkish stability becomes a key factor in itself, and the Turkish General Staff knows that it is constrained by the elected Government and the process of European Union (EU) entry from dealing as it would like with the massively-increasing Kurdish insurgency and the perceived threat from the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK<sup>8</sup>) safe-havens in northern Iraq.

The Turkish Armed Forces may decisively end, once and for all, through a disguised coup, the Turkish EU entry process so that the General Staff can unequivocally control internal stabilization operations. Within this context, then, international pressures on Ankara to negotiate over Northern Cyprus will fail, and Turkey will consolidate its position in Cyprus and may even threaten to expand it. This, and resentment by Turkey of Greece's control of the Aegean, will further increase tensions. Indeed, it is surprising that military tensions over the Aegean did not erupt by around August 2006. But in the event that the Turkish General Staff assumes primacy in the country then we can expect a significant heightening of tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. There is no question but that the Greek General Staff is highly conscious of this.

We can only imagine the negative consequences for Balkan stability if, for example, Turkey's status changes and Ankara no longer feels obliged to temper its activities, or its use of Islamist surrogate or proxy groups to further pan-Turkist ambitions. This would be particularly significant if Ankara saw a strategic advantage in destabilizing Greece through the support of separatist groups trying to wrest control of Epirus away from Athens, or to transform the stability of northern Greece's Macedonian region, which gives Greece its window into both the Balkans and Turkey. Greece would probably be forced to respond by supporting Kurdish separatist activities in Turkey, or by supporting Iran's radical leadership in undermining Turkey's strategic depth — and wealth — which derives from the energy pipelines linking Turkey with the Caspian. This would profoundly impact European plans for increasing its energy supplies from Central Asia and the Caucasus, and would have negative effects on the Black Sea littoral countries and the Balkans.

All of these possible ramifications are negative for the stability of the Balkans, for Europe, and for Western interests generally, not to mention the delicate process of stabilization and growth in

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Saudi groups, and the military training by Iranian intelligence officials. The detailed intelligence on *Kvadrat* highlighted the reality that Turkish, Saudi, and Iranian officials have all been linked with an *al-Qaida* terrorist operation.

<sup>8</sup> *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan* (PKK: Kurdistan Workers' Party). See also *Defense & Foreign Affairs Special Analysis*, August 30, 2006: *Turkey and the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (PKK): Preparations for the Confrontation*.

Central Asia and the Middle East. How the Balkans impacts the greater region, and how the greater region impacts the Balkans are equally important. The US, meanwhile, has fostered Turkish belief that it need not comply with either international law or the profound teachings of Atatürk who, for all his anti-Hellenic feelings, offered Turkey a path to a prosperous, strong future, divorced from the sweet-scented rot of the decaying Ottoman Empire.

What disturbs me is that none of the US officials with whom I have spoken on State Department policy toward the Balkans, Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus have been able to articulate a comprehensive understanding of the region's history, the realities of current activities, or the linkage of their policies to any identifiable US or Western interests. US policies toward the region, as a result, have been crude, ill-considered, and more likely to hurt the friends of the US and the West rather than further US, Western, and allied interests.

None of this, however, excuses the failings of regional politicians in the Balkans. Most Serbian politicians are, for example, still beholden to a US private citizen, financier George Soros, who, in a deal struck in the Budapest Hilton Hotel in 1999, paid some \$250-million to the leaders of what became the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) to help in the overthrow of the Serbian Milosevic Government. These parties — unlike the Serbian Radical Party, which did not receive Soros funding — sold their soul (and subsequently gave commercial concessions in Serbia proper and Kosovo) — to Soros who now, through various front groups such as his International Crisis Group (ICG), demands the independence of Kosovo from Serbia. So Serbian politicians, except those of the Radical Party, can do little but mumble their complaints while Kosovo is taken from them. Short-sighted, self-interested policies prevail, and unrest and conflict will follow. It is probable that the US will successfully bypass the UN Security Council and create — before the end of 2007 — a *de facto* recognition of Kosovo independence, but in all this time, the Serbian Government has not yet developed the capacity or policy to physically contain the ongoing expansion of Albanian militant activity across from Kosovo into Serbia proper.

In my recent book, *The Art of Victory*<sup>9</sup>, I said that the world was, in the post-Cold War age of Global Transformation, entering a period of *cratocide* and *cratogenesis*: the murder and the birth of nations. In a series of lectures recently, I also said that we were equally in the process of the transformation of existing societies: *cratometamorphosis*. My friend and learned colleague in Athens, Professor Marios Evriviades, worked with me to put into these Greek-derivative words the phenomena which I saw emerging. We have not yet seen the completion of the break-up of Yugoslavia, and even the wrenching of Kosovo may not complete it. We will then see the dismemberment of some of the Yugoslav parts already independent, perhaps even the dismemberment of FYROM and Bosnia. For if Kosovo is allowed to separate from Serbia, why not Republica Srpska from Bosnia? If FYROM is to be rend asunder by the voracious Albanian activities, should not Greece stake its claim to reunifying the Macedonian lands which once constituted the heartland origins of the modern, unified Greek state?

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<sup>9</sup> Copley, Gregory R.: *The Art of Victory: Strategies for Personal Success and Global Survival in a Changing World*. New York, 2006: Simon & Schuster's Threshold Editions. ISBN-13: 978-1-4165-2470-0, or ISBN-10: 1-4165-2470-3.

Indeed, the question of resolving FYROM's name may be a key to its survival as a nation-state. It is at present a claimant to the legacy of the Macedonian people, but in reality, ethnic Macedonians are only a minority of the population. A secret Greek suggestion to Skopje was that the country should settle on the name "Slavic-Macedonia-Skopje", which is clearly unworkable and cumbersome. However, some name which suggests geographic – rather than ethnic – legitimacy would probably help Skopje retain control, and perhaps it is worth investigating whether the FYROM region should resume its historical legitimate name, "Dardania"<sup>10</sup>. This was the name of the region until 1900. And Tito only suggested naming the area "Macedonia" after World War II when, while the Greek civil war was underway, there was a slim chance that the Macedonian part of northern Greece could be seized, assuming the communists fighting in the region could have their way.

In any event, the growing regional unrest demands that the FYROM name issue be resolved soon. Greece will almost certainly veto FYROM entry into NATO in 2008 unless the matter is decided, quite apart from anything else.

And if the matter lays unresolved, then the continual tearing away at FYROM will continue. The KLA and Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha have begun talking about a future entity called "Kosovar-Macedonia". The fact that both the KLA and Berisha use this name indicates that the "Greater Kosovo" and "Greater Albania" concepts are one and the same. And Bulgaria, too, sensing the turmoil, has re-awakened its interest in its historical claims to the FYROM territory should Skopje be unable to retain control of the territory. Bulgaria has already given some 100,000 Bulgarian passports to FYROM citizens in recent years, making those passport-holders now European Union citizens. The reality is that FYROM's Slavic citizens are seeking an insurance policy should FYROM fail as a state. Some 85 percent of the FYROM economy is already controlled, or sustained, by Greece, and yet it is the Albanians and Bulgarians who actively seek to grasp the territory. Therein, quite apart from all the other factors, lie the seeds of a new Balkan war. And the key to saving the stability of the FYROM territory, and the region, may lie in finding a way to allow the leaders in Skopje to save face over the name issue. "Dardania" or "Slavic Macedonia" would do it, and give Skopje the legitimacy it needs to assert control over a multi-ethnic state: a modern nation-state in the context of the Westphalian principle.

Meanwhile, the US State Department says that the case of Kosovo is *sui generis*; unique and unconnected from any other parallel examples, such as Republica Srpska. Vain, arrogant, wishful thinking. Perhaps those State Department officials will be surprised, too, to see — a decade or two hence — the claims of autonomy emerging for parts of Arizona, Southern California, or Texas, citing the same pretext of "self-determination" now being claimed by those who moved across the borders to occupy Serbia's Kosovo province. The US thought, too, in the 1980s, that igniting  *jihadism*  among Afghans against the Soviet occupation was an example *sui generis*, containable and unrelated to the outside world. But the flame captivated other elements of

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<sup>10</sup> Significantly, Wikipedia describes Dardania as an ancient country encompassing southern parts of present-day Serbia (including the area of the modern-day province of Kosovo), mostly, but not entirely, western parts of the present-day FYROM, and parts of present-day north-eastern Albania.

Muslim society, and continued to spread until parts of lower Manhattan, the Pentagon, and London, Madrid, Casablanca, and Bali were in smoldering ruin.

But let me conclude with my main points:

1. The US will cause the *de facto* recognition of Kosovo independence before the end of 2007, even if it means a further round of so-called negotiations before going back to acceptance, *in toto*, of the recommendations of UN Special Representative Marti Antisaari, who, not coincidentally, is a former associate of George Soros' International Crisis Group which has always been committed to Kosovo independence;
2. As a result of the encouragement given to the Albanian expansionist cause, there will be continued dynamism in Albanian separatist, terrorist, and agitation movements throughout the Balkans, and a renewed confidence and vitality to Albanian criminal activities in narco-trafficking, human trafficking, and illegal arms trade through Europe;
3. Conflict issues in the Middle East, and specifically in Iraq, and relating to Iran, will continue to have a profound impact on the stability of the Balkans, and *vice-versa*;
4. None of the regional states, but particularly Serbia, are doing enough to address the security ramifications of the coming *de facto* independence of Kosovo, and the US State Department itself cannot articulate a valid set of reasons why it is working against US and Western interests with its policies in the Balkans;
5. The Balkans region and the Eastern Mediterranean generally are entering a further period of crisis, insurrection, and possibly open conflict. This will significantly constrain the development of emerging patterns of trade, and particularly energy trade, from the Caspian and Black Sea regions into Europe, and into the Mediterranean basin.

There is little good news from the region, given the fact that the local and global players are moving around the Balkans without a coherent roadmap. But when roadmaps for peace are being drawn up, let us at least consult all the locals so that we can get a comprehensive view of the region and its possibilities.