Fifth Sofia Meeting

EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION: LONG-TERM STABILITY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

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PREFACE

The Central and South Eastern European Security Forum, known as the Balkan Mosaic was established in December, 2004. Balkan Mosaic project has turned into invaluable tool able to cultivate and streamline the Balkans potential. The three pillars of NGO networking, regional research dimension and the Young Leaders component proved successful in the elaboration of Overall Agenda for Action and for sustainable institutional links amidst miscellaneous actors.

The Fifth Balkan Mosaic Sofia Meeting was organised in February 2008 in a crucial moment for the Western Balkans – only a week after the Presidential elections in Serbia, five days before the Independence of Kosovo to be proclaimed and two months before the Bucharest Summit of NATO. The participants had the opportunity to streamline their joint endeavours in setting new public agenda in the region. Through the means of public debate and dialogue, the Balkan Mosaic Network members in pursuit of common values and interests examined the various aspects of regional cooperation as well as the challenges and opportunities for the Western Balkans key security issues.

The overall topic of the meeting was devoted to Euro-Atlantic integration and the long-term stability in the Western Balkans. The objective of the Balkan Mosaic Fifth Sofia Meeting was to discuss the opportunities for the Western Balkans development. The aim of the meeting was to gather together young parliamentarians from across the region, representing different political parties and representatives from NGO in order to further strengthen their efforts on networking within the region.
The present publication contains speeches from the Opening Session of the Fifth Sofia Meeting and the discussion focused on the issue of Kosovo independence. The materials have not been subject to editorial or styling correction in order to preserve the initial inspiration and the insight originality of the texts.

The participants in the Fifth Sofia Meeting, made a decision to continue the project and to transfer the leadership of Balkan Mosaic from Bulgaria, Romania and Macedonia to Albania, Croatia and Serbia.

I would like to thank all my colleagues with whom four years ago we started to build the fundament of the Balkan Mosaic Project. Particularly I would like to mention Mr. Alex Serban and Dr. Luviu Muresan from Romania, Mr. Lazar Elenovski, who is a Minister of Defence of Macedonia now, Mr. Arian Starova from Albania, Professor Radovan Vukadinovic and Professor Lidija Cehulic from Croatia, Mr. Vladan Zivulovic from Serbia, Mr. Milos Solaja from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Lulzim Peci from Kosovo, Mr. Savo Kentera from Montenegro and Mr. Ivan Sotirov from Bulgaria.

At the end of my words, I would like to thank the Secretary General of the Atlantic Treaty Association - Mr. Troels Froehling and Mr. Kristian Sorensen from Dialogue Development, Denmark - for the inspiration and for making Balkan Mosaic real and consistent. I would like also to express my gratitude to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, to the Norwegian Atlantic Committee and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their financial support for Balkan Mosaic Project. Last but not least, I would like to thank Mr. Harald Thorud whose efforts on Balkan Mosaic fundraising and organization proved invaluable.

Avgustina Tzvetkova
President
Euro-Atlantic Education Initiative
OPENING SPEECHES

FIFTH SOFIA MEETING

EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION:
LONG-TERM STABILITY IN
THE WESTERN BALKANS

Simeon Nikolov
Deputy Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence of Bulgaria

Dear Mrs. President,
Dear colleague Mr. Karabina,
Dear Mr. Passy,
Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and honour for me to greet here on my behalf and on behalf of the Minister of Defence, the participants into this forum which is aimed to discuss the prospects for development of the countries in the Western Balkans in the course of the process of integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. I would like to express my appreciation to the Euro-Atlantic Education Initiative, Balkan Mosaic Foundation and the Atlantic Treaty Association for the organization of this conference which is extremely topical now in the context of the upcoming Bucharest NATO Summit in April this year.

When we speak about the Euro-Atlantic future of the Western Balkans, dear ladies and gentlemen, we mean not only the mainte-
nance of stability and security in the region. The Euro-Atlantic perspective for these countries is also the driving force for the reforms as regards home policy and also they are an incentive for the economic development which covers quite a larger area of issues which have to do with the activities of various state or government institutions and also non-governmental organizations. The development of the relationships the deepening of the partnership on various levels as this forum also shows and demonstrates are also a clear signal for the readiness and the willingness of the nations from this region to continue to try to put every effort into the reduction of the conflict potential and also to stick to their commitment in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration. I believe that at today’s meeting we will also be able to confirm the support that we are giving to the Euro-Atlantic future of the Western Balkans that will be on the part of all the participants in this forum.

Although the countries from the Western Balkan region are at different stages of their integration into the common Euro-Atlantic space they do have a common strategic priority as regard security which is based on the adoption of common principles that is: democratic values, the rule of law, functioning market economy, respect for the rights of citizens. We, that is the countries from the region, are very well aware of the fact that it is through joint efforts that we could achieve success for our deserved recognition as an integral part of the European and Euro-Atlantic family. That’s why I would like to state that Bulgaria has been putting every effort into the development of the political dialog and the cooperation in support of the countries in the Western Balkans so that they could integrate into the Euro-Atlantic structures. And this support is and will be not only in the political but also in the practical aspect.

As present President of the South-Eastern Europe Cooperation Process Bulgaria will host a meeting on 11 March this year. This will be a defence ministers meeting, the South-Eastern Europe Defence Ministerial Meeting within the initiative which will be entitled Defence Policy for Security Cooperation and Development for South-Eastern Europe. We expect this meeting to bring together high officials from international organizations such as NATO, EU, OSCE, the
Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, the Regional Cooperation Council, as well as some non-governmental organizations. We envisage that this meeting provides us with the opportunity to exchange views and discuss issues of mutual interest such as the Euro-Atlantic prospective for the region and the transformation of the regional cooperation.

We are convinced that the open door policy will lead to the enlargement of NATO in the near future. This is why it is in the interest of the countries that are aspiring for membership – Albania, Macedonia, Croatia - to continue their preparation and to expect the respective evaluation and assessment that they deserve for their achievements and we expect that this appreciation of their achievements takes the form of invitations for full-fledged integration.

The existing instruments and practices that NATO has for partnership are extremely fruitful as regards to reforms in defence and security sector. So we welcome their further effective and efficient use by the countries that are included in NATO program Partnership for Peace – these are Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia.

Last but not least I would like to point out that we are paying a lot of attention to the development of the outstanding issues as regard security of the region of the Western Balkans. It is our view that we should be looking for only a political and peaceful solution. Through its presence here NATO is also a guarantor of peace in the region and this presence will be necessary till lasting stabilization process is achieved.

I am convinced that this international forum will provide the opportunity to every participant here that they can have an in-depth discussion on the issues having to do with the getting a clear view for the Euro-Atlantic future of the countries of the Western Balkans as well as setting out specific concrete practical steps for its successful realization in practice. Thank you for your attention.
Ministers and Excellencies,
Dear guests and friends, colleagues,

This conference is organized in a very, very special moment of the development of the Balkans. Only two weeks after the presidential elections in Serbia, one week before the proclaimed independence of Kosovo, and two months before the Bucharest summit of NATO. This is critical period for the development of the whole region and I would say for the whole of Europe. Our experience in Bulgaria shows that the negotiations with NATO and the European Union are the greatest motivation for acceleration of the reforms in our country and this is the case for all countries which are aspiring to join these unions at this moment. We are seeking to have association and stabilization agreements for all countries in the region – this will be of a crucial importance for all of us – and the two axiomatic goals for the development of this region are membership in NATO and membership in the European Union. And I would like to very firmly stress on the fact that one does not go without the other.

This is only a ceremonial address to this conference – I am not going to enter into details of foreign affairs or international relations, or neighbourly relations at this moment. But I would like to underline only one very important question which has to be solved in foreseeable future. This is the dispute between our two neighbours, the dispute between Macedonia and Greece for the name because I believe that the solution of this problem in one way or another may be very important for the development of the whole region. I very strongly hope that the two countries will find a solution which will be good for the region and if we from Bulgaria might be helpful in this respect I assure you that we should do our best.

I would like to wish all the best to the conference, to the rest of the speakers. Thank you very much and all the best to the conference.
Petrit Karabina  
Deputy Minister of Defence  
Ministry of Defence of Albania

Excellencies, ministers, colleagues,

It is a great opportunity for us I think to meet each other and to share together our own approaches concerning the Euro-Atlantic integration as a long-term stability of the Western Balkans. After the end of the Cold war the Balkans faced two challenges at once - the dissolution of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the transition towards democracy. The first challenge influenced the second as well.

The first challenge of the Balkans was a political one. The dissolution of former Yugoslavia, of the Western Balkans was a bloody process. The crisis in former Yugoslavia that involved more or less the entire region producing political instability, economic poverty, organized crimes, corruption, illicit trafficking, illegal immigration and numerous social psychological consequences. Finally the Yugoslav crisis has been followed by the establishment of several new independent states. The last stage of this bloody story is the final definition of Kosovo’s status. Kosovo’s status should be in accordance with the right of the people for self-determination and with democratic principles and values- characteristic for the Euro-Atlantic community. The Kosovo’s final status as an independent state, democratic and multi-ethnic, will close the Cold war chapter in the Western Balkans. Independent and democratic Kosovo will produce peace in the region. After the Kosovo solution the way of the Western Balkans to a rapid rate of democratic transformation will be entirely open. So, Kosovo’s solution is the last and most complicated unresolved political issue in the region.
The second challenge of the Western Balkans is related to the democratic transition and the regional integration in Euro-Atlantic structures. The transition is the process of individual and regional diversity. It depends on traditions, culture and education of each country, of the level of development and political struggle and leadership as well. On individual level my country is concluding the transition period. The political stability has replaced long-term political conflicts. The parliamentary democracy has established sustainable structures. The rule of law has created the necessary legal and institutional functional framework. Fundamental freedom and human rights have become natural part of the state and society. Free and liberalized economy is working better and improving the economic level of my country and the large standard of people.

In Albania for the time being all the tension now has been focused on two dimensions of further reforms - on judiciary reform and the electoral reform also. All political parties are cooperating in a very constructive way. A national political pact has been reached at last between the majority in the Parliament and the opposition to facilitate these reforms and to give result that could be contested by no one in the future. This political consensus has produced political synergy required to get fast and successful reforms. No country can be really developed and integrated in the Western Balkans isolated from each other. It makes the regional approach more than necessary for all of us. After long way many achievements have been reached and much progress has been done overall in the Western Balkans. As a result actually the regional remaining problems are converging in limited areas including democracy, security, economy and foreign affairs. I think that the Balkans need to join efforts on regional level.

In the above mentioned areas dealing with the democracy, security development and foreign relations we are facing more or less the same problems. Especially, we need to cooperate in the field of combat with organized crimes and corruption, to improve the security in our environment, to have better cross border cooperation and to come closer and closer to the same approach in middle and long term perspective in regional relations.
The individual and the regional progress that has been achieved in the Western Balkans and the challenges we have in front of us are strictly linked with Euro-Atlantic integration of the region. NATO has been a great contributor to establishing peace, security, stability, democracy and sustainable development of the region. But now is us to demonstrate our own thanks and commitment at the same time to implementing all the standards required by this treaty in frame of membership action plan in order to fully deserve the Bucharest Summit invitation. Of course invitation in Bucharest is not an intention itself. The invitation in my perspective is an appeal for further efforts to continue reforms in the field of security and defense, in the field of democracy, economy and foreign relations. But I think despite the continuing problems the Western Balkans need so much a NATO encouragement because our peoples are waiting to be a part of the Euro-Atlantic family and to share values and responsibilities. Being aware that I share the same opinion with my distinguished colleagues, I do very much support the idea of Balkan Mosaic Foundation and we consider it another Euro-Atlantic value in our region. My country, my Ministry of Defense especially and I will give always the required contribution to this center to make it always a success. Thank you.
It’s very much pleasure for me to be here with you today. If you permit that I’ve written some remarks I will start global and move Balkan. United states have supported both NATO and European Union enlargement for a simple reason which is – we believe it’s good for the countries, we believe it’s good for the Balkans and South-Eastern Europe or Eastern Europe itself; we believe it’s good for the Euro-Atlantic community. We’ve seen that joining the two great Euro-Atlantic institutions NATO and the European Union, institutions that build our principles and standards, and institutions help raise not just the standard of living and the zone of stability and the zone of security, but also help raise living standards and democratic principles and the evolution and the organic development of political life in the countries. That is why we are very much in favour of them. In the nineteen century great powers wanted weak client states. That paradigm at least for the Euro-Atlantic institutions is over. We seek strong productive self-assured and self-confident countries - ones that are part of a collective, cooperative and collaborative endeavour whether in NATO or the European Union, that bring to bear collective strengths and wisdom to help the peoples and regions develop naturally and peacefully. What NATO is seeking to do for example is to work through cooperation and friendship, not through competition and division for a new Europe.

Over the past several decades every 2.2 (two point two) years there has been a NATO crisis – what is NATO going to do? The last
one was NATO – out of area or out of business. That has been swept aside by history as you see what NATO does today for example in Afghanistan where the countries and the Alliance themselves have determined that their future is to be able to help a country beat back the forces of terrorism and instability and that NATO countries have undertaken a great mission to do that. In Europe itself the United States and Europe no longer talk about Europe as a problem but what we and Europeans can do together in the rest of the world and that is both in a NATO and a European Union context.

And let me give you just a couple of examples of how dramatic the changes have been. Twenty years ago the United States had 320 000 troops in Europe - today it has fewer than 90 000. We have closed over thousand bases, facilities and sites both in the United States and Europe. In the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty they established what are called treaty- limited equipment in most cases we are twenty per cent of those limits. Because the fight is not in Europe, it is elsewhere and we and the Europeans together can do great things in the rest of the world. What we do seek to do when we are here in Europe is to build capacity and build interoperability with our partners and friends.

In two short months there will be a NATO Summit. It will take on major challenges first and foremost what to do about Afghanistan. It will take on question of having MAP - the membership action plan for those states that are interested in it. And it will take up the great issue of enlarging the Alliance with three additional members - Croatia, Albania and Macedonia. In addition to that, looming behind everything of course is Kosovo. We believe very strongly that the peaceful evolution of the Western Balkans, the peaceful evolution of relations between Serbia and all its friends and neighbors in the immediate area is critical for not just South-Eastern Europe but for the Euro-Atlantic community. Regrettably the great state of Yugoslavia that was born through the fire and bloodshed of World War I and died tragically in the bloodshed of the wars of Yugoslavia in the 1990s has an opportunity today to move in a new peaceful direction. We believe that the negotiations on Kosovo have exhausted their potential. We believe that the status goes unsustainable. We believe that the
Ahtisaari plan is the best way forward. And we believe that both Serbia and Kosovo have an opportunity to join the great Euro-Atlantic institutions. The European Union through the Stabilization and Association Agreement has offered Serbia a clear smooth straight road to Europe. The door is open, the road is open. There are no bumps on the road, there are no puddles on the road, there are no detours on the road. It’s up to the Serbian people to decide what their future can be and it’s surely their decision. What we seek to do is to work with our European friends and partners and the International Community so that the resolution of Kosovo is peaceful and it is quick, that its status and standards go together. And it is true for everything the European Union and NATO stand for - it is standards - and how you apply them fairly and equitably.

Now, much of what we talk about is geo-politics and we tend to forget geo-economics. The countries of the western Balkans are tied together through economic interests as much as through political interests – whether you have the Turkey-Greece interconnector, whether you have the Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline, whether you have South Stream, whether you have any of the great pipeline or energy grids, they have commonalities. Trade, transport, the free movement of peoples are all important. We want to see that economic system develop and we can only do so peacefully. And we can only do so when there is a zone of stability and security so that the people have confidence in what they can enjoy. We are optimist, as Americans are optimist about the future. And so we are optimistic about the Western Balkans. And it will take a lot of hard work, but we are also confident that with the help of our good friends in Bulgaria and the help of our good friends in Serbia, and Albania, and Macedonia, and Greece, and Romania and everyone in the European Union, and NATO this can be done - peacefully, securely, quickly. And this is not a pipe dream - we have seen what Europeans can do when they collaborate together and when there is European Union solidarity.

We are confident that the Western Balkans will be able to join the rest of the continent to enjoy a peaceful, prosperous future. Thank you.
Esteemed Chair,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to welcome the 5-th Sofia Meeting of the Balkan Mosaic Project. I appreciate very much the opportunity to speak to you today on this important topic. My word of appreciation goes for the hosts and organizers of this event.

I would like to start by pointing out that over the last years the Western Balkans was a place of intensive work and assistance by the international community. NATO, the EU, the Council of Europe, the United Nations, the OSCE - all pulled together, and their combined efforts already brought tangible results. Indeed, this is a showcase for positive and successful cooperation between different international organizations. The experience clearly demonstrates that the process of putting into practice democratic and economic reforms in the countries of the region is directly related to and stemming from the process of receiving an unambiguous and real prospect for joining the Euro-Atlantic structures.

The region of the Western Balkans certainly has a lot of problems to solve, in different areas. After more than a decade of conflicts, economic sanctions, breakdown of institutions, law and order etc. there are high levels of organized crime, trafficking, corruption and related security problems. State-building, as well as better gov-
ernance, remain priority concerns in much of the Western Balkans. Those problems tend to spread beyond the region and increasingly threaten the interests of greater Europe and NATO. They are an impediment to the European and Euro Atlantic integration of the region and in finding the best strategy to deal with them - we need a comprehensive, regional approach with the active support of the international community.

The main security challenges that the Western Balkans are facing now are linked to the continuing wide-ranged reforms in the states that still have to undergo their transition way. Each country faces specific problems and a common denominator for their solution could hardly be found. But building consensus on the common interest of the region perceived as security, stability, social-economic prosperity, sustainable development and good neighbourly relations is a key to the overcoming the problems in the region.

The clear European and Euro-Atlantic perspective undoubtedly will serve as a catalyst in this direction. The continued commitment of the international community will guarantee the necessary control and supervision of the transformation process. To qualify for EU and NATO membership means in practice to follow a road map to the long-lasting stability and sustainable economic development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The coming year will be crucial for the consolidation of the transition processes in the Western Balkans. There are a number of priority issues which deserve our great attention – the Kosovo issue, the European way of Serbia, the building of the statehood in Bosnia and Herzegovina, sound governance in the Republic of Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro, possible invitations to NATO for the three current candidate countries and further development of the relations between NATO and the new PfP partners. This makes the role of EU and NATO very challenging and important.

Perhaps the most critical issue for the regional stability in the Western Balkans is Kosovo. The outcome of the Kosovo status proc-
ess will affect us all through its impact on regional stability. The Kosovo status is an important element of the regional and I would say of the European architecture of stability and security, and whatever it would be it should not engender new instability in the region in short, medium and long term perspective.

I believe that the status of Kosovo should give clear answers to the following questions: long lasting settlement, control, regional guarantees, European perspective. NATO should continue to be guarantor of peace and security in Kosovo. A re-configuration of its role and position there, combined with the establishment of an EU mission are needed to guarantee the stability in the region.

All countries of the Western Balkans have been moving forward towards the EU, albeit at different speeds. Croatia is engaged in accession negotiations with the EU, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has obtained candidate status. It is very encouraging that the EU has signed or initialled Stabilisation and Association Agreements with all the countries of the region and economic integration with the EU is well advanced.

However the reforms are not only means of joining the Euro Atlantic club, they have inherent value in themselves – hardly anyone can deny the need for reforming our economies, defense and security structures, our perception of politics as a whole. Keeping the pace and accelerating changes in the region is possible by strengthening institutions and having an actively participating civil society.

Considering the recent past of the WB states, certain political criteria are of particular importance, like good-neighbourly relations and regional/multilateral cooperation. Bulgaria strives to cooperate with and encourage those political forces in the WB countries that have an understanding for these issues.

It is important for EU to stick to its conditionality as a matter of principle and also of credibility. From our experience we know how stimulating and helpful the accession process could be for the internal transformation process. Hence, the acceleration of the European
integration process should not mean forgetting the conditions and requirements, but instead investing more efforts, financial and human resources in assisting the countries to meet the challenges on the road to the EU. Full and effective use of the pre-accession instruments should be made.

The same goes to the Euro-Atlantic integration - membership in the Alliance is performance based; meeting the standards and contributing to the Euro-Atlantic security and stability increases the chances for invitation. Most of the requirements, in the individual context, could be met in the run-up to the Bucharest summit. But the aspirants need to double the efforts to qualify for membership. Thus the enlargement will strengthen the effectiveness of NATO. Regional approach has its positive sides when it goes to keeping the strong NATO’s engagement in the Balkans; at the same time each country has its specific path of development and the progress of each candidate state has to be assessed individually.

Bulgaria supports the Euro-Atlantic integration of the states in the region not only politically, but also in practical terms. In the last two years we have signed and we are implementing bilateral memoranda for cooperation in the field of European and Euro-Atlantic integration with all states from the Western Balkans. We have the willingness and capacity to be carrying out much more activities in the framework of these memoranda, including public diplomacy events, where the vital role of NGO’s like the ones participating here, can best be demonstrated.

For Bulgaria, membership in NATO brings the most reliable security guarantees, as well as a distinguished place in the international community. The security and stability, in their turn, are indispensable for the prosperity of any society and this is evidenced by the stable economic growth. In order to be an active and reliable partner and Ally, our determination is to share in practice the duties and responsibilities of a member state. We believe that a significant part of this duty is on the one hand, to make sure the voice of the states from the Western Balkans is heard and understood in Brussels, and on the other hand, that the efforts to bring stability and security and eventually embrace those states are utilized in the best possible way.
Bulgaria pursues transparent decision-making and predictable foreign policy in compliance with the European Security Strategy and adheres to the broader concept of multilateralism. Our added value to the Common foreign and security policy of the EU is naturally focused on the Western Balkans, the Black See region, human rights and the dialogue between civilizations. The strategic role of Bulgaria towards a more predictable regional environment and namely in consolidating of the European values in the Western Balkan is to be underlined.

Bulgaria, in its capacity of Chairman-in-office of South-East European Co-operation Process believes in the importance of the local ownership of the regional cooperation. Apart from other positive aspects of the regional cooperation it encourages reforms and reconciliation. The Regional Cooperation Council will give further impetus to the efforts of the countries from the region to address the challenges of the European agenda.

By concluding my address I would like to wish you a productive debate during the meeting. Thank you very much for your kind attention.
Remarks by Dejan Hinic
First Counsellor
Embassy of Serbia to Bulgaria

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I will make few comments made particularly on claim against Serbian territory by his Excellency the Albanian Deputy Minister of Defense. It is another proof that the question of all questions which will determine the future of this region, Europe and may be the whole International community is: Will for the first time in the United Nations history a decision be taken contrary to the will of a democratic state and what is more – of UN, OSCE, the Council of Europe and hopefully future EU member state – Serbia. To redraw its internationally recognized borders, to abolish serenity/sovereignty and to amputate 15% of its territory and much more. We believe that respecting the UN Charter, Resolution 1244 Security Council cannot in fact pass the decision to take Kosovo way from Serbia. Decision in favor of independence of Kosovo will practically mean that at the cost of violating the entire body of international law and order the Albanian national minority in the Serbian province of Kosovo is permitted to form another Albanian state on the Balkans in addition to the one already existing.

Proceeding from this belief I have to point out that we are all together facing another issue posing an open and direct challenge to the authority of Security Council of UN. I have in mind the announced illegal act, the unilateral declaration of independence of the province Kosovo. We heard about the values of the Ahtissari proposal. As we know, Ahtissari proposal had been put on the table of Security Council and it was not accepted. The question that follows is: is it possible that a document already rejected by the Security Council can serve as a basis for violation of its valid resolution and even the UN Charter
itself. Another question that imposes itself in the same context: how could the EU send its mission to implement the Ahtissari rejected plan that will be illegal decision evidently contrary to the Resolution 1244. Clearly once the Security Council approves the comprehensive solution reached by both sides of the negotiations and not before, could one rise the issue of character of international mission empowered to put such a solution in practice. In any other case Security Council and the entire world would witness a violation of fundamental norms of international law. If no negotiations are need and if compromise is not possible what should then be done? Where there is no compromise unilateral solutions are resorted to, which is just another way of coming to terms of the policy of force and pressure.

My country position is that as a free and sovereign state Serbia cannot and will not accept any unilateral decision which ignores the Security Council and violates a valid Resolution. Relying on the UN Charter and its own Constitution Serbia will declare unilateral acts of Albanian separatist null and void and for Serbia the province of Kosovo will forever remain its integral part. Serbia sincerely wishes and is ready to resume the negotiations on living together with Kosovo Albanians within Serbia. If we were able to live together for nearly ten centuries it is impossible to understand how today when the entire world is advocating multi-ethnicity, some people can categorically claim opposite. It is possible for us to live together. The Constitution of Serbia guarantees autonomy to the Kosovo Albanians. Once again, we expect Security Council, its member states, EU and member states to respect and support Serbia’s stand and decide on resumption of the negotiations within the framework of Resolution 1244. We are not setting any conditions and we are willing to start the negotiations on the future status of Kosovo right away and in the province itself. Serbia is determined to become an EU member state but with all of its territory, with Kosovo which will enjoy highest possible autonomy. Maybe you don’t know but I will tell you this fact that more than 70% of citizens of Serbia support EU integration. Thank you.
Probably in the program you will see that before my name is written that I am an ambassador of Bulgaria to Iraq. Ambassador is not my first name. My first name is Valery and most of all I feel myself here as a representative of the Bulgarian civil society which thanks God is one of the vibrant civil societies in the region. And from this point of view I would like to start with probably the most undiplomatic statement that could be presented now. And this statement is that I am sorry, but I do not believe that the future of the Balkans, the future of the people of the Balkans will depend too much on the status of Kosovo; neither on the name of Macedonia, nor on the membership of Albania in NATO. Yes, these issues are of vital importance for the Serbian people, for the Kosovars, for the Albanians, for the Macedonians. But the future of the Balkans is something different. The future of the Balkans could be a real future only if this is not a state-centered but people-centered citizens-centered future. If we make the mistake we did, particularly in Bulgaria, if we repeat this mistake in European countries, in neighboring countries, in the countries that are coming, this will be a real danger for the Balkans. This morning we have listened to a lot of speeches about the well-known old paradigms for the Balkans. First one: legacy is responsible for everything - the legacy of the war, the legacy of communism, the legacy of history and this is what you should focus on. You remember probably the report of the Balkans that identified that the Balkan countries should develop civil societies? It is very easy to develop civil society. Ralf Dahrendorf said
in 1994 that the East Europeans will need about sixty years to build civil societies. But there was a recommendation: build civil societies now. Second is: apply trans-ethnic projects in order to integrate for example gypsies and Macedonians with Bulgarians, with trans-ethnic projects, which is unbelievable. And the third recommendation was remarkable: rewrite the history books, the student books. I don’t think that anybody, except some of the western media still follow the legacy paradigm for the Balkans while explaining the entire situation on the Balkans.

The second fundamental paradigm I listened to this morning - I think the Macedonian focus was on this - that transformation will solve the problems. Transformation especially in the case of Bulgaria, but I would say also Romania, was based on the presumption that democracy building and state building reinforce each other - the more you invest in democracy, the stronger state you build; the stronger state you build, the more democracy you provide for the society. Probably this as a concept is well-sounding, but in practice this didn’t happen. This paradigm is wrong. We need a completely different approach towards democratization.

And the third paradigm we also mentioned, I was surprised by the Serbian colleague when he spoke about how much the Serbians support the European membership of Serbia. The third paradigm was the integration paradigm. We, the Bulgarians, we strongly believe that integration will solve the problems. Through integration we will escape from our own corrupted politicians, grey economy and mismanagement. In practice, the integration process was too much bureaucratized. It was focused on the sheets and the bureaucrats were putting ticks- yes, perform it, yes, perform it; chapter closed? - yes, chapter closed. Where were the people behind this? No people. No citizens-centered integration policy. And now we pay the price. Still, in the next couple of years we will receive a lot of money from the European Union. But the money will not solve the problem; we will not become European citizens only by European money.

If we think this way about the future of the Balkans we should address the key problems, we should start to talk whether there is a
connection between criminalized ethnicity and corrupted politicians. Whether it is possible in one country, in one entity to have criminalized ethnicity and in the same time corrupted politicians and to have a strong state, stable economy, stable country which is producing stability through the entire region. Is it possible this social situation in our countries – we are the poorest people in Europe? Why do you think that being the poorest people in Europe we can think as Norwegians, as Brits or as French? The mentality that the poorness is building is a completely different mentality. We expect completely different results from politics. Corruption is eroding the nations, corruption is everywhere. We should start with this – the fact that corrupted politicians started to reproduce themselves. The next generation politician is also corrupted because the fathers were corrupted. And if we run in this circle, who will break - the strong hands? In our countries we look who the strong hand is, the capable person. In Bulgaria several years ago we voted for the king because we believed the magic person would come and solve all the problems for 800 days - it was promised! And people believed. Nothing happened. Now they look at the former general who is former State Secretary General of the Ministry of Interior, now the mayor of Sofia. They look at him not as a presenter of specific political ideas and values, but as a strong hand do help us escape from our own corrupted society. And if we discuss the issues this way finally we will start to recognize that we have not a realistic opinion about the real external factors that determine our future.

I was shocked here this morning that I didn’t hear Russia to be mentioned. Russia is a key factor for the Balkans. Where is Russia in our discussion? Russia is cutting the Balkans just through the middle. What has happened with our political elite, with our businesses here? What does the future of trans-regional cooperation look like? Lukoil is the owner of the biggest refinery on the Black sea but also last year was declared to be the biggest investor in Croatia. Where are we? Where is the trans-regional project? Lukoil - is this the trans-regional project, or South stream - is this the future? Where is Russia in our discussion? We should recognize that the only third side, except for the Kosovars and the Serbians, interested in the status of Kosovo, is Russia. Is the West the same as during the years just after the end of the Cold War? Just after the end of the Cold War the West believed
that in the absence of the strategic threat they should focus on weak states, moderating regimes, reengineering areas, including countries like Yugoslavia, etc. Who is talking about this now?

And the third factor is the regional cooperation. This regional cooperation in fact, despite what Arian said this morning, doesn’t work. The most well designed regional cooperation is the military cooperation. The military cooperation is under the paradigm of the legacy. We use this military cooperation to overcome the heritage from the Cold War – divided countries, divided people. So we don’t see any kind of economic cooperation. We still have some symbolic political regional cooperation. So, having in mind this I wanted only to stress your attention to the way we could discuss the future of the Balkans. And I expect that our distinguished speakers will provide us with strong food for talk.
H.E. Danilo Vucetic
Ambassador of Serbia to Bulgaria

Speaking on the security issues and future of the region is not possible without serious approach toward Kosovo issue. All of you have had the chance to hear recently from the President, Prime Minister and negotiating team of Serbia a series of ideas on Kosovo status that we have elaborated and presented in good faith.

Serbia is not offering new ideas to delay this process. In fact, we have offered examples from other parts of the world to help give momentum to our negotiations. I believe it is in our collective interest to examine all possibilities and lessons. Out of each example we can find possibly something new that can open up a path for us to find common ground.

The last 60 years of European history have offered us unprecedented opportunities and examples of how to accommodate sovereignty and self-governance. They have demonstrated how we can embrace poorer regions and lead them to prosperity.

Three essential aspects must be drawn together. One, we must examine the realities on the ground. Two, we must see what other examples provide us to help achieve our objectives. And, three, we must remember that the collective goal for the region is to find solutions that make us better prepared for a future in the European Union.

Serbia believes that the moment has arrived when we must review carefully the process that has been taken in the last two years. The moment for realism is with us.
The task we face is to bridge today’s realities with a future which I hope will be soon the European Union.

Kosovo is multi-ethnic, it has been asserted. We Serbs have no choice but to reject this proposition. Any objective assessment shows that minorities live in ghettos in Kosovo. Will these be permanent? Pristina has been emptied of all Serbs. Around two hundred thousand Serbs from Kosovo have left since 1999. With all respect: if you want multi-ethnicity then come to Serbia proper. Watch how we manage a country from Subotica to Novi Pazar to Presevo – that is multi-ethnicity. We offer the same to Kosovo because we have demonstrated in practice our ability to be truly multi-ethnic.

Kosovo has become a profoundly segregated society in the last eight years. What will happen if there is a unilateral declaration of independence? You cannot threaten Serbs to co-exist; you will only end up frightening them into separation.

We have been told that Serbia should promote the participation of Serbs in Kosovo institutions and elections. But participation presumes trust and security. If these do not hold – and they do not – then participation becomes collaboration in an unknown fate. Repeatedly, we have asked that standards be implemented. Unfortunately, this has not happened.

We are assured that there should be internal displaced persons return. How many have returned? One percent or two? Why are we still waiting after eight years for an answer to this? The story is of people too scared to return.

We have heard that the two parties to this dispute can never agree. Serbia can not but totally disagree. That is propaganda designed to force an agreement imposed on the parties. We can agree if the goal was not set from the very beginning. There are many ways to arrive at a solution. There are many formulas for a solution. Today, instead, we have a new formula for pressure. They have moved it from the threat of an imposed solution to one of unilateral decisions. This would be profoundly destabilising. Surely, unilateral action in-
vites symmetrical behaviour. Unilateralism is not the monopoly of any one side and it can take many forms.

I want to remind everyone that Serbia today is a democratic nation. Our region needs democratic solutions and a democratic process. That calls for patience and compromise. Albanian population has the opportunity to benefit from our political and economic advance by being associated with Serbia, not isolated from us.

Serbia wants stability and prosperity in our region. Our region must proceed to solutions based on compromise.

Serbia has offered a variety of ideas. We are ready to debate all aspects of our proposal. We are ready to talk on any other idea that can help us arrive at a compromise.

Let me make several points here that may be timely and necessary:

First: relations between Serbs and Albanians have been embittered. The opportunity to find reconciliation in the last eight years has been missed. So, it is understandable that Serbs in Kosovo would also seek self-governance.

Second: there are many parts of the world, and in Europe, where a great majority of members of an ethnic group have sought secession. And this is never granted. Is secession a right in the new democratic order of Europe where groups can retain their rights, identity and self-governance? Are we still living with the 19th century nationalisms or the new opportunities offered by an integrated Europe? What example are we setting with the assumption that secession and independence are the only course of action?

There is a basis for compromise. The elements of this compromise are simple:

Serbia offers to Kosovo most competencies and symbols that are normally reserved only for sovereign countries.
Serbia maintains the right to associate herself with province’s foreign policy, defence, border control and the protection of Serbian heritage. As such, Serbia also reserves the right to exclusive representation in the United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe. Serbia also requires that there be no army but accepts a gendarmerie to ensure domestic law and order in Kosovo.

Agreements would exist between Belgrade and Pristina to ensure the protection of the rights of ethnic communities and, in the case of the Serbs, their relationship with the institutions in Belgrade.

Within each of these competencies, the International Community Representative would have his or her own jurisdiction. And methods of joint cooperation between Belgrade and Pristina would have to be elaborated.

In this model, there would be mutual concessions. The implementation would be supervised and guaranteed by the international community.

The benefits for Kosovo would be immediate and considerable:

1. Kosovo would be officially self-governing, with full consent of Belgrade.

2. Relations with Kosovo Serbs would improve, reversing the current and potential reality of physical separation between the communities.

3. Kosovo would have access to international financial institutions and other international and regional organizations except the UN, OSCE and Council of Europe. This would provide Kosovo with legitimacy in international and other lending institutions.

4. Kosovo would have trade and cultural representative offices abroad.
5. Kosovo would have its own flag, anthem and national teams as they are accepted by international sporting federations.

6. Relations with Serbia would be normalized thus enhancing the prospects for stability and development of Kosovo.

7. Kosovo’s integration into the network of official regional relations and with Serbia would accelerate European integration. Serbia is prepared to ask for benefits of its relationship with the EU to be enjoyed by Kosovo.

Kosovo Albanian delegation, the international community, countries of this region, should seriously take into account Serbia’s proposal.

It is my firm belief that if such framework would be accepted, it would be possible to proceed down the path of negotiation to a mutually beneficial result.

We must stop feeding illusions if we want to build a secure future in our region.

The choice is between unilateral action or some form of negotiated solution. The risks of unilateral action are clear. These are not issues of sentiment but certainties.

We offer continuation of negotiations in the UN SC and it must be clear that Serbia has already turned down and annulled in advance the unilateral act of creating a puppet state on Serbian territory, by circumventing international law. It is very dangerous if steps in this directions are made by institutions which claim that they are based on fundamental values and the respect of the law and legality.

We can negotiate, we are ready for compromise, but Serbia has to remain whole. The Serbian Constitution, confirmed by people’s will, states that Kosovo is Serbia and cannot be anything else for the Serbian government and Serbian state institutions.
Any solution established by the UN SC and based on the UN Charter and principles of the valid Resolution 1244 is acceptable for Serbia. Considering the threats against Serbia, it is our duty today to oppose the violent jeopardy of international law and attempt to seize our territory.

We have no other choice but to be against such policy of power and never to cede our right to preserve the whole Serbia. Serbia counts on law and cannot and will not accept anything but a compromised solution for the status of the province that would be approved by the UN SC.
Lulzim Peci  
Director, Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development Kosovo

Due to direct involvement of NATO and EU in the Balkans, internal changes and processes that led to membership of some countries of the region in these organizations, this part of Europe has never been more secure in its memorable history. Although internal drivers for reform, especially in Western Balkans countries remain weak, most of these countries have made irreversible steps and commitment on their paths toward the NATO and EU, and for those that have not, it is much more a question of ‘how’ rather than ‘whether’.

However, consequences of recent conflicts are present in the form of thousands of refugees, unresolved property issues, organized crime and related. Further, the political and economic situation in general has not recuperated years since the ending of the armed conflicts and thus constitutes fertile ground for widespread social dissatisfaction, renewed radicalism, and potential extremism.

The social fabric of the previous system is largely eroded, but new social capital finds it difficult to take root. Despite of the progress, governments of the Western Balkans countries are still vulnerable to corruption and organized crime and bad governance. As a result, values are in crisis and deviant trends often become an acceptable norm in the governance of countries in the region.

The countries of the region cannot alone cope with international terrorism and organized crime. Also, internal stability and rule of law is becoming increasingly dependent on regional cooperation. To have a chance of overcoming these problems, there must be coordinated and sustained efforts, the concentration of scarce resources on the most important strategic issues, and cooperation among the countries of the region and the international community.
The possible extension of the invitations for NATO membership to Albania, Croatia and Macedonia will further increase the security in the Balkans. This possible change of the geopolitical map of the region is particularly important at this time when Kosovo in cooperation with Brussels and Washington is determining its political status in accordance with Ahtisaari’s Proposal. Also, in coming days the EU is expected to establish the largest mission of ESDP in support of Kosovo status accords.

But, the key challenge for Prishtina and Brussels will be integration of Kosovo Serbs and making them a constructive party for the implementation of the Status Settlement, because of Serbia’s and Russia’s firm opposition of Ahtisaari’s comprehensive proposal. Due to the widespread support that Belgrade enjoys among local Serbs, it is illusionary to hope for any quick change of attitude.

Moreover, according to the Status Settlement, Prishtina is obliged to cooperate with Belgrade in good faith in its implementation. In this respect Prishtina and Belgrade are encouraged to create a joint commission to facilitate their cooperation and for developing good neighbouring relations. The following issues require the cooperation of both sides: Missing persons, International and bilateral debt reconciliation, Municipal cooperation and funding by institutions in Serbia, Return of archives, cadastral records and other documents, including also the return of archaeological and ethnomological exhibits, Military cooperation that is envisaged initially to be conducted on behalf of Kosovo by IMP that will at a later stage transferred to the Government in Prishtina.

Regarding police and cross-border cooperation exchange of forensic expertise, Prishtina will inherit agreements from UNMIK, hence will continue cooperation with Belgrade, as long as Belgrade recognizes the authorities in Prishtina as UNMIK’s heir for this purpose.

If Serbia would agree with the Settlement, which is highly unlikely, cooperation on all matters would be made possible, also with a very positive effect on the Kosovo Serbs. However, Serbia is not ex-
pected to assent to the Settlement or to recognize Kosovo in the short term. It is even questionable whether Serbia will choose to cooperate on some practical issues.

On the other hand, Belgrade’s policies so far are arguably explained by the motive to accomplish a partition of Kosovo, and it is illusionary to expect a change of course in the medium-term. Serbia most probably will also try to block Kosovo’s integration in international organizations and impede Kosovo’s transformation into a functional multi-ethnic state by reinforcing tense relations Albanians and Serbs within Kosovo. Therefore, in the immediate phase of status implementation ensuring peace, security and stability in the region within Kosovo’s territory is key policy for authorities in Brussels, Washington and Prishtina.

Serbia has lost four chances with Kosovo, a decade long peaceful resistance by Kosovar Albanians, Rambuiollet negotiations in 1999, taking responsibility about the past after the fall of Milosevic and Vienna talks. Kosovo is offering a new chance to Serbia, a chance of building good neighbouring relations for the sake of regional stability and prosperity and especially for enhancing of wellbeing of Serbian community in Kosovo. We hope that Serbia will not loose this chance.

To this effect, strengthening regional cooperation initiatives and multilateral cooperation as an alternative platform for enhancing mutual confidence and cooperation between Prishtina and Belgrade is necessary for final stabilization and preparation of the region for full integration in Euro-Atlantic institutions.
It is a great honour for me to be part of this conference and from this morning till now we heard a lot about the regional problems, about Kosovo and other political problems in our region. But from my speech I will exclude politics and I will mainly concentrate on key security issues and progress which was made by Bosnia and Herzegovina. Actually I will inform you about visa border control, money laundering, fighting organized crime and terrorism.

I will start with the visas. Progress in the area of the visa management has continued. Bosnia and Herzegovina has been preparing for the entry into force of an EU level Visa Facilitation Agreement which was signed in September. Bosnia and Herzegovina has lifted its visa requirements for Bulgaria and Romania. All EU citizens can now enter the country without visas. The number of visas issued at the border has been reduced. Efforts have been made to prepare for the transition to the four categories of visas used by the EU and the Siegen context. Further steps have been taken towards introduction of biometric passports which is due in 2008. All data entered into the local systems in diplomatic missions and the consular offices is now transferred electronically to the central administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The country’s preparations in the field of visas are on track. Even tough, no action has been taken for the harmonization of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s visas list with the EU list. Bosnia and Herzegovina has made some progress also on border management. Efforts to reinforce the border police of Bosnia and Herzegovina have continued. The internal structures of the border police have been further developed which has improved the operational capacity for surveillance and control of the state border. Further improvements have been made to border-crossing points but many still remain poorly equipped. Limited political attention and incomplete land expropria-
tion remain obstacles to the sustained progress of this area. As far as readmission is concerned, Bosnia and Herzegovina signed an EU level readmission agreement in September 2007 which should enter into force at the beginning of 2008. It has continued its efforts to establish readmission agreements with non-EU countries. No particular problems have been identified with the implementation of the existing readmission agreements but particular attention should be paid to the treatment given to non-EU nationalities. Bosnia and Herzegovina wants to readmit its own nationals even when no readmission agreement is in force.

When we are talking about money laundering some further progress has been made with the implementation of anti-money laundering measures. The Financial Intelligence Unit in the State Investigation Protection Agency which is called SIPA has continued to increase its staff and has increased its capacity. In addition a training strategy has been developed and the Memorandum of understanding has been signed with Spain. The number of transactions reported by banks and other institutions in accordance with the Financial Intelligence Unit reporting the requirements increased in 2006 compared to 2005. During the 2006 the financial Intelligence Unit reported to the Prosecutor’s Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina 23 money laundering cases involving approximately 26 million of Euro. Finacial Intelligence Unit froze 23 transactions adding up to sum 1.2 million Euro. Efforts need to continue since money laundering is regulated by the Entity’s criminal courts, criminal sections for money laundering are not applied in the same way throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Law on the Confiscation of Illegally Acquired Property has not been adopted. Bosnia and Herzegovina is advancing in the fight with money laundering. Sustained efforts remain necessary however.

When we are talking about organized crime it remains a cause for serious concern in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Organized crime related activities still consist mainly of drug trafficking, trafficking of human beings and financial crime. Vehicle theft and subsequent trafficking is a growing problem. A little progress has been made on improving national statistical instruments for measuring of crime rates which remain basic. Out of the action plans provided for the national strategy to combat organized crime and the corruption only the one
of stolen vehicles has been drafted. Criminal procedure based on the accusatorial system show limitation in a country with different legal traditions. Cooperation between the police and prosecutors is not optimal and this is hampering progress on investigation. The juridical system has not yet adapted to the newly introduced methods of collecting evidence. In consistence between legislation at the state and entity level continue to undermine effective prosecution. Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a country both of regional and a transit trafficking of human beings. Implementation of 2005-2007 National Action Plan for Combating Trafficking of Humans has continued but no new action plan for the period of 2008-2010 has been adopted. Monitoring and reporting on this issue has improved.

Bosnia and Herzegovina shows willingness to address the issue of terrorism. International cooperation has continued and the number of cases related to international terrorism have been settled. There has been some progress on increasing the operational capacity to combat terrorism and financing of terrorism. The State Court gave verdict in its first state-level terrorism trial in May 2007. However there is still limited coordination between the authorities involved. The mandated Law Enforcement Agency which is called SIPA, we already talked about it, has not been reinforced to tackle terrorism-related issues and most investigations are carried out by the entity police. Implementation of the 2006 Antiterrorism strategy has been weak. Bosnia and Herzegovina law enforcement bodies have proposed action plans for implementation of the strategy but these have not been adopted yet. We still have a huge problem with the mine fields in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We expect that we will be able to solve the problem with the new strategy plan for the period 2009-2019. We hope that Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2019 will be clean regarding the mine fields. Overall Bosnia and Herzegovina has started to fight organized crime, trafficking of human beings and terrorism, but sustained efforts over the long term remain necessary. I will conclude this with one sentence. Of course the future of all countries from our region is inside the European Union and NATO. On the other side - it’s up to us. We need to increase our cooperation much more mainly in the field of defence which was mentioned by Mr. Rachev. This conference, I am 100% sure, is one huge step forward, which will help the region. Thank you.
I have a question for you, Mr. Ambassador, Mr. Rachev. It is obvious that solution of Kosovo will be unilateral, one-sided solution and will probably cause some problems. I am not thinking about short-term problems. I am thinking about long-term problems. Do you see what can happen in the region, in Europe, in the world if you accept some kind of unilateral solution of one part, of one country? What does it mean for some other countries and is it a new standard? Are you going to provide a new standard for some other regions and other countries in 5, 10, 15 years? What do you think can be a long-term solution of Kosovo - The concept of this independence, the model, the method?
H.E. Valeri Ratchev  
Bulgarian Ambassador to Iraq  
Councillor to the Political Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

I think that here there are Kosovars and Serbians that can answer the question much better than me and it is awful the practice someone outside to advise the local people. I remember the first international crisis group project on Macedonia. It was a remarkable project. On the second page there was a list of acknowledgements and there were listed about 35 or 40 people without anyone from Macedonia - all were westerners or from everywhere but not from Macedonia. It is awful to give advices this way. I could say only that from the neighboring countries’ point of view most important is not exactly the status. This is a problem between Serbia and Kosovo. For us the most important is how the status will function. This is the impact on the region - the way this status, this decision will function - economically, politically, socially, from security point of view, from criminality point of view, etc. We can’t say that the solution will provide one or another impact. The solution is precondition. The key question is how it will function in the future. So when we discuss one or another solution presented this morning here, we will see what forces, what powers are behind one or another solution; who will guarantee one or another type of division of responsibilities; how the people will survive that, how they will make their life better; what we create - fundamental protectorates or vital countries, etc. I think that you understand my point of view. From strategic point of view the status does not give me a complete answer. We had a lot of decisions about the Balkans. Each of them was presented as a fundamental decision - Dayton Peace Agreement, Stability Pact. We believed that the stability pact would be the European future of the Balkans. Absolutely nothing happened. The International Community spent a lot of money and we cannot see even the highway between Sofia and Belgrade - it does not exist. Even the railroad between Sofia and Skopje does not exist. What does exist then? Russian projects or something else? No.
Branislav Borenovic  
National Assembly of Republic of Srpska  
Bosnia and Herzegovina  

Just to add why I asked this question. Because I am coming also from Bosnia - you know we always try to have a dialog, we succeed to have dialog on many issues. You mentioned very well - we have two sides here, but we have one-sided approach and decision. And that’s the reason why this is a matter of method, of concept, of the concept which maybe can be used on long term in some other regions and areas which can be very dangerous. Because I am talking from the perspective of the region and that is the reason why I am always asking this question: what will happen after a few years if another region says to their politicians and asks for the same concept?
H.E. Valeri Ratchev  
Bulgarian Ambassador to Iraq  
Councillor to the Political Cabinet  
of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

If you are talking about the domino effect or the replication of the case of self-declared independence we can say that in the international space now mainly Russia is interpreting the case from this point of view. Always a precedent is possible. Always some kind of precedent could be replicated somewhere in the future or another place but be sure that if somebody decide to declare self-independence and to fight for this independence, like the Chechens they will do this with or without examples or precedents. This is not exactly the case. Some powers are looking for arguments to do or not to do something. But the reality of the history, the reality of life is completely different. Believe me, I do not think that the separatists in Indonesia will look for precedents in Kosovo to do something, or in Pakistan, or in Georgia, in South Ossetia, Abkhazia, etc. The real reason of Ajaria or Ossetia to declare independence is not Kosovo. This is not the real reason. They have much more serious reasons to do it. They could have much more serious reasons. And if they decide to do this they will not look for precedents because the precedents will not help them. With whom will they argue? The Ambassador spoke in accordance with international Law Order. To whom is he talking? To us as a community? Yes, we accept this. We accept also this statement, this attitude towards the case but this will not help him. The precedent will not help. The forces are more important. The real interest, geo-political interest, strategic long-term interest - this is the most important.
A very interesting situation that the chairman is in the focus of attention. Maybe this is some type of balance at the table or only because you have raised very interesting remarks in your introduction. You said that future is not in the state-centric in the Balkans. I can absolutely agree but may be this precedent I think due to Anglo-Saxon law, the so-called precedent law, and this precedent becoming in our time a precedent is no more precedent. It is an example, even due to Anglo-Saxon law to other cases. I think that in the Balkans if we are really thinking in the state-centric way which I do not declare for but it is a reality also, we have few situations in which we also have to think on a precedent way. For instance in Bosnia and Herzegovina you know there are tensions in Republika Srpska. And there even are some political forces which would like to use personal case. Although there are some explanations I know but Mr. Peci would say about Dayton Peace agreement and so. Although Macedonia, even in Romania you know you have that Hungarian parts, even other parts in Europe. And as a precedent if you would like to know that for instance the example is Catalonia. Autonomous political representatives very carefully follow this situation. For instance you have this situation in Belgium which is very similar to the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Belgium in fact lives in two different communities even three, including the capital. That is a very interesting thing to try to estimate this situation after any type of the solution of Kosovo.
Excellent comment! I will make only one remark not to occupy the space but this reminds me the debate in Iraq we had with President Talabani on the model of federalization of Iraq. And the Iraqis are very happy to discuss federal countries like Germany and Switzerland. And I gave him an example about Balkans, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina. But historically speaking one thing is to build federation between different ethnic people, because of their common interest to stay in one country, and completely different thing is to build a federation from above in order to keep these people in one border which could be also called frontier. This is a completely different result. And when I speak about citizens-centric strategy of development I have in mind the will of the people to build their own country is the most important. We should have confidence in people, the politicians should be confident in people. Not to design artificial pyramids of political constructions. So this is the basic source of stability.
Really few words. With all respect to Mr. Rachev, but if I understood well what you have said now is more or less neglect of the provisions of the international order and stimulating us to accept the reality that great powers and most important countries are very important for the solution of the problems. I think that it is a very dangerous approach. Majority of the countries in the world are small countries and our security, our international position can lie only on the respect of something which is international order - UN Charter and Helsinki Agreement. The pillar of the Helsinki agreement has been protection of the borders which can not be changed only on the basis of agreement. And for the first time in modern history (when I say modern history I think of the period after the Second World War and the creation of the United Nations) for the first time in the modern history we are facing the situation in which some countries are ready to reward secession. Secession on the basis of international law is not permitted. For the first time out of the UN system, in the Security Council it is not Russia only. Last session of the security council of 19 December has shown that majority of the current members of the Security Council are against unilateral proclamation of independence and are in favor of the continuation of the dialog and negotiations. It is a very serious problem and I am not surprised why the representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina have raised the question. Because it is a very serious precedent. I am sure that in many countries in the region and outside the region they are following carefully the Kosovo issue. I am sure that the position of Serbia has been extremely constructive. Starting of the position of the reality of the Serbia has offered has been the maximum of the maximum - practically a state inside the state and it was not enough. And why? It is a crux of the question. Why it was not enough? Ok. And to conclude my intervention, I think in the case of the proclamation of independence and recognitions that it is our conviction. It is the beginning of the problem and not the end of the problem. Thank you very much.
Arian Starova  
Vice-President of the Atlantic Treaty Association  
Member of Albanian Parliament

I wanted to make some comments about some of the issues which were raised during the discussion and the presentation of the speakers.

First, it is very interesting to discuss on precedents. We can discuss on precedents without them, of course. There are a lot of arguments pro and against. But at any time and under any situation in the world, in some region we have a group of problems, part of which might be similar or comparable to each other. And all of these problems need to be resolved to be selected. And of course there are situations when not all the problems can be settled in group but they should be handled one by one. This is the case of Kosovo. It might be a precedent as you is one for the next and so on. But aren’t there inside the UN a lot of problems? We are hearing for 20 years that they need some reforms. One of these problems not linked with restructuring has to do with the contradiction between resolved determination and non-violence of borders. It’s a problem. It should be resolved as well. It’s a big problem. How can we say to some people who faced a lot of problems, killings and massacres upon their shoulders – you should stay there. I do not mean Kosovo. Because there is a principle called non-violation of borders. Which is more important? That principle? Which is on paper? Which is a substructory deduction or let say induction of reality, or the human lives, even a single one? So, we can talk a lot about precedents. We have very similar problems. It’s a very grave case in Kosovo and the International community judged despite these controversies and debates to resolve it that way. And of course, that is an argument itself. It is a realistic policy. And we should follow it. Otherwise we are lagging behind and there will be no solution at all. Because theory comes always after practice. Otherwise we are always with hands tied. This is the case.
Second, there is the idea: what will happen in Kosovo after status? Ok, that is a very serious and realistic concern; and a very fair one, very honest one. But why should we consider isolated Kosovo in the future? Are we talking about the regional cooperation? Are we talking about international cooperation? Kosovo is not alone. Not because there are Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia, even Serbia has a border with Kosovo. But you know regional cooperation is not meaning only neighbouring countries. Kosovo is not alone and of course there are resources and many other things. It will progress economically. It will progress socially. It will progress in any aspect of life. So, there should not be so much concern upon that point. Another idea is that maybe after the status of Kosovo there will be destabilization of the region. I do not believe in that but I have one argument as well and it is the strongest one. Because there are a lot of arguments. And that is coming from Serbia. The newly elected president of Serbia Tadic said that they will not defend and will not recur to arms in the problem of Kosovo. And that is a green light for the International community. And that is a moderation, that is a moderate policy and it is a long-term policy for the region. These were my comments. Thank you.
Lutfi Haziri  
Member of Parliament of Kosovo  
Deputy Chairman of the  
Parliamentary Committee on European Integrations  
Former Deputy Prime Minister

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Short comments, not to reply to anyone else but short comments as experience dealing with Kosovo status, dealing with some problems, which the Ambassador of Serbia mentioned, and not as a good example, as experience to show in front of you for sake of the people because in your opening remarks you mentioned that everything needs to be related to the benefit of people and communities in the region. I am a member of the Kosovo delegation on Status for more than two years and I was leading decentralization, culture heritage and some other problems. And I had the opportunity as a privileged colleague from this room to listen to all the offers from Serbia. And not just to listen but to read the documents, to make expertise to those documents and to reply and comment on the negotiations. Under the Ahtissari process, so called Vienna process or Troika process including as a member of government until January this year (2008) I leaded technical dialog with Serbia. It was under my office to coordinate technical dialog with Serbia but for long three years we never succeeded even on missing people to have any result. Missing people - it is one of the war consequences and one of the problems we needed to resolve. We never succeeded to bring any good example through the technical groups, through the technical people without any politics - just to share information and to exchange bodies in sense of human rights and in sense of resolving the problem with a good will as a part of the war consequences. Because politics from Belgrade were always last minute involved taking missing people as hostages for the final status, taking refugees and IDPs as hostages for the final status, bringing Congo model and bringing solutions and offers as it was mentioned more than autonomy
less than independence. Kosovars had these solutions in 1974. A bit more than this solution – we lost. And for instance by new Federal constitution Kosovo became occupied and Serbia violated and suspended those rights. Kosovars don’t believe any more in any kind of solutions. General solutions for Belgrade will become sustainable and functional in the future. Why Kosovo is \textit{sui generis}? We can discuss a lot. Kosovo is \textit{sui generis} because former Yugoslavia disintegrated and we have something in former Yugoslavia happening. Georgia is not a disintegrated country. You cannot bring the similar problem to aspiration of the minorities in Georgia related to Kosovo. Former Yugoslavia is disintegrated and Serbia is the only country which pretends that is Yugoslavia. But legally, according to international law it is not. It is a successor of Yugoslavia. This is something else. Kosovars came to the point that they agreed solution. Kosovo solution: ‘independence, supervised’ is an agreed solution with International community. And this is a Kosovo’s compromise. It is a compromised solution, Mr. Ambassador; it is not Kosovo’s wish. It is Kosovo’s compromise with International community. And next days it will be declared. Now it is not a declaration of independence, it is a coordinated declaration of independence. And in 24 hours it will be recognized not only by small countries but it will be recognized by large countries, EU countries, African countries and of course by Asia. It will be a recognized country. Of course, our wish is Serbia to recognize this right, and Russia as well. We cannot ignore the role of the position of Russia. Mr. Chairman, you mentioned that we should not ignore the Russian position on Balkan stability. Yes, Russia until June last year as a member of the contact group and in their current situation as a member of the contact group – they are part of the solution. Their political position in Kremlin is against independence. They want to continue negotiations. But as a member of contact group they are part of this policy. Of course, we want them on our side. They will decide to change their position later on and we believe that in the future their position will be part of the stability in the region.

Who will give guarantee for functional country? We want to avoid the Bosnian model in Kosovo. Yes, it is true. But Republika Srpska is part of the solution in Dayton and they had the chance to disagree with Dayton ten years ago. None of us believed that this solution was the best one. But they agreed or someone on behalf of
them agreed and we had an international agreed solution called Bosnia and Herzegovina. We succeeded to avoid the Bosnian model in Kosovo. Serbia wanted to bring the Bosnian model in Kosovo, to divide Kosovo, to bring two parliaments, to bring two governments. They wanted whatever solution for dividing Kosovo. Then it was rejected by us, it was rejected by the International community. And from the Bosnian example we and the International community learnt something – that Kosovo as it is designed in the Ahtissari proposal is a functional state. Minorities will be protected and EU presence in Kosovo will be not just to protect the Serbs but to protect and support Kosovars as well. Thank you.

H.E. Valeri Ratchev
Bulgarian Ambassador to Iraq
Councillor to the Political Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

One very short comment in order to make a connection between the remarks of His Excellency and the last statement. The fact that the status of Kosovo is internationally negotiated, you said coordinated, doesn’t make it legal from international point of view. This was the point of the Ambassador. So, the key problem we have here is the inadequacy of the international law to the contemporary realities, to the moral. Every historical period has its own moral. And the international law depends on this moral. If there is difference between the moral and the law cases like this will always exist.
Alexander Genchov  
State Advisor for NATO Issues  
Ministry of Defence of Republic of Macedonia

I had not planned to discuss about this very sensible issue but while I was here during the discussions I decided to join this discussion. Especially according to the fact that when I started 12 years ago with political and international activities and I was growing up in former Yugoslavia as a citizen of the Republic of Macedonia, this issue was very sensible. This issue was about Kosovo and now we are speaking about the Western Balkans, we are speaking about joining the institutions of the Euro-Atlantic movement; we are speaking about democratic values in the region, we are speaking about the making of modernization and new pillars in approaching the modern values of world democracy but we are speaking in reality about Kosovo for more than one hour. We are speaking about many other things but again this sensible issue is touching many political attitudes and in many situations and political emotions. Now, what I would like to point out especially at this moment as I am a representative also of the government of the Republic of Macedonia as a state advisor for NATO integration. And our attitude as a country was that we will accept every decision that will be brought in Washington or Brussels or any other center of international relations. The attitude of the republic of Macedonia was clear that we will confirm and we will accept the decision that will be taken there about the status. And we will follow that path of what they will decide. But I would like to stress on several thing. This is a very interesting issue even from a psychological approach of many things. Because it is possible it is very possible that some of the things will provoke discussion. This conference is one proof of that. One will have one attitude, on the other day will have many, many attitudes about that and in this situation I think that it will be very, very important all these sensible issues to be solved and not only on this level of unilateral recognition what it will be. We will see how many
countries will follow that process. In this moment we cannot be sure how it will go and what the number of the countries which will do it will be. But it is also very important to end this decision, to have a solution and a political process inside the United Nations body of solutions. Also to be solved as institutions which were involved in the process of negotiations. Because when we speak honestly some questions will be asked after this. Kosovars will say that if Montenegro and some other countries of former Yugoslavia can do it why they cannot do that. But that question may provoke other questions. We are aware, we can admit that or not admit it, we can say it or not say it but there are very sensible regions of that aspect – Ireland, maybe some Romanian, Slovakian questions there; in Asia I heard for a problem of Cashmere; there is a problem of South and North Ossetia, of Abkhazia. So, to be honest, we are a part of the process. That process has its own path through many institutions.

That’s why I want to say that this process must be also supervised by all democratic forces in the world. This is a process which must continue to be analyzed and this is also a process which must have a positive contribution to the whole region and to the whole of Europe, because in the mankind history there will always be many, many challenges like this. And we as democratic countries, as we belong to the modern and civilization values, must continue to work in this direction. Thank you.
Sorena Lortkipanidze  
South Caucasus Mosaic, Georgia

Many times you have mentioned Georgia here. So, I would like to comment. No matter we want or we do not want – there will be a precedent. So maybe there it Kosovo’s independence precedent from international law point of view but it will be psychological, societal, moral or many other precedents. So what we have now in Georgia – we have Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and every day on Russian television we see the presidents of the pact republics talking about their troubles with Georgia. They want independence and they are supported by Russia – a super power. After the re-election of Saakashvili we have a new Ministry – not a Ministry of Conflict Resolution as it was before this presidential election. We have a Ministry of Reintegration. Some concepts of conflict resolution and independence changed. So, we have another vision of the conflict with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. So this is not breakaway, we need reintegration and not resolution or something like this. But our new Ministry of Reintegration said that Kosovo will not be the precedent for Georgia. So, on today’s agenda there is not a clear vision from the new Georgian Cabinet about the linkages between Kosovo’s independence and Georgia’s case. But what is happening in Georgia? In Georgia they say: on the one hand the West support independence in Europe and on the other hand they support territorial integrity in Georgia. In Georgia they say that the West has a lot of double standards. I want to say that we should commit on some concepts, we have to commit on the values. Sitting here I feel that I am not belonging. You are speaking about your problems – the region, the Western Balkans, but Georgia or other regions with which for instance you have the common history – this is not mentioned here. So I would like to say that we should commit South Caucasus, the Balkans, Europe, America to have the same standards in recognition or not recognition, in reintegration or not reintegration. This is my vision. Thank you.
H.E. Valeri Ratchev
Bulgarian Ambassador to Iraq
Councillor to the Political Cabinet
of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

I think that this was the best message to our conference and to us as people from different countries. Yes, this is what I just said about the moral in politics. Double standard is a product of insufficient moral in politics. We completely accept your message. We think that the difference between large countries and small countries is that large countries can do what the small countries cannot. This is the awful reality of the world. So our power is to join, to integrate and to influence the moral of the big powers. This is the way we should act. Thank you.