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**BALKAN REGIONAL PROFILE: THE SECURITY SITUATION AND THE
REGION-BUILDING EVOLUTION OF SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE**

(July 2004)

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I. Introduction

There was new evidence in July of two major tendencies in the region of Southeastern Europe: first, terrorism is not just a new and complex threat, but it influences all other segments of the security environment and all the concepts, policies, norms, and institutions that respond to security threats in general; and second, the deficiencies in the security situation in the Western Balkans create problems not only to region-building and Euro-Atlantic integration prospects, but are a burden to the shifting centre of geopolitical gravity from the Balkan Peninsula to the Black Sea-Caspian Sea region and to the mounting requirements of fighting “terrorism”.

The knowledge of the issue of “terrorism” increased this month in the Balkans by a close examination of the “lessons learned” by the US, reflected in the 9/11 National Commission Report, with Bulgaria gaining new perceptual awareness after the beheading of two drivers working in Iraq by allegedly al-Qaida-linked “terrorists”, and acquiring a better understanding of the methods of “terrorists” to undermine the global “anti-terrorist network of states”.

The preparations for countering eventual terrorist threats during the Olympic games in Greece are another significant aspect of the security situation in Southeastern Europe this month.

The continued involvement of Southeastern European states in post-conflict rehabilitation activities in Iraq and Afghanistan adds to the profile of the region in July. The democracy-building experience of the Bulgarian troops in Iraq bears the marks of national and Balkan regional ‘lessons learned’, applied in a very hard situation.

There is a clear awareness of ‘unfinished business’ in the Western Balkans too. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro, and Macedonia still exhibit deficiencies that in one way or another disqualify them in their European and Euro-Atlantic integration ambitions. The fifth anniversary of the launch of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe was a good opportunity to focus on the issues that still need to be solved by cooperative efforts.

The EU and NATO/PfP political, economic, security, and defense systems are a solid cooperative framework for treating persistent issues that continue to create an unfavourable image for the region of Southeastern Europe. The individual countries and

the region in general are gradually adapting to these institutions. Countries with advanced societies and states are accelerating their accession to the EU and NATO. This prevents competition with negative outcomes for regional stability. The new regional NATO members' desire to integrate their air-defense systems with those of NATO candidate countries is one of the many examples of the constructive, positive developments in the region, and is evidence of the formation of a regional identity with a broader meaning in an incremental fashion through cooperative security formulae.

II. Security Threats and Post-Conflict Developments in the Balkans

1. Terrorism and Post-Conflict Rehabilitation (PCR) of Iraq and Afghanistan

a. Terrorism.

1) Bulgaria. Two Bulgarian truck-drivers were taken hostage in early July by an allegedly al-Qaida-linked terrorist group in Iraq and later beheaded. The terrorists aimed to apply pressure on the Bulgarian government in order to get them to withdraw the country's troops from the occupation forces in Iraq and to discourage the Bulgarian troops. Bulgarian diplomats proposed a UN-negotiated code of conduct for states in hostage crises. On 11 July, the Director of Bulgarian National Intelligence Service (NIS), General Kircho Kirov, warned of potential terrorist acts on Bulgarian territory, urging citizens to greater vigilance.

2) US-Romania. On 21 July Romanian Prime Minister Adrian Nastase met with US President George Bush in Washington, D.C. The Romanian leader confirmed his country's continued support for fighting "terrorists" all over the world. He also pointed to the Romanian support for the US-led complex process of change in Iraq.

3) US 9/11 National Commission Report. The US National Commission investigating the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks provided new experience and knowledge for all other countries in their joint fight on terrorism on 22 July. First, major perceptual deficiencies and a lack of imagination concerning the threat of terrorism in the US before 11 September 2001 were highlighted by the Commission – a problem that is very much existent in most countries of the "anti-terrorist coalition". Second, the recommended restructuring of the US intelligence community in one way or another is a valid requirement for all countries of the "anti-terrorist coalition". Third, Muslim extremism

was identified as a focus of future “counter-terrorist” efforts. Earlier this month, a US non-profit organization, the “Commission on the Present Danger”, also identified Islamic terrorism as the threat that would require most of the US and the world’s attention in the years to come. Fourth, the report said that besides military power, all elements of state power – diplomacy, intelligence, covert action, law enforcement, economic policy, foreign aid, public diplomacy, and homeland defense would be needed in the fight against terrorism. Among the major recommendations are: a) the creation of a cabinet-level National Intelligence Director (NID), overseeing the 15 civilian and military intelligence agencies and departments, including the CIA and the FBI; b) the creation of a new and powerful National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC), far exceeding current capabilities. The NCTC will also be a collector of intelligence information; c) encouraging information sharing across the US government through decentralized networks and with a network-based information-sharing system that transcends traditional governmental boundaries; d) centralizing and strengthening Congressional oversight of intelligence and homeland security; e) strengthening the national security workforce within the FBI and clarifying the missions of the Department of Defense and Homeland Security; f) quickly completing the biometric entry-exit screening system, one that also speeds qualified travelers; g) communicating and defending ideals of democracy and liberty in the Islamic world through much stronger public diplomacy outreach, especially to students and NGO leaders. The effort is compared to the struggle against closed societies during the Cold War; h) developing a comprehensive coalition strategy against Islamic terrorism, using a flexible contact group of leading coalition governments and fashioning a common approach on issues like the treatment of prisoners accused of being “terrorists”.

4) US-Bulgaria. On 22 July, US Secretary of State Colin Powell thanked Bulgaria for its steadfast support in the “liberation” of Iraq and for its decision not to accede to the demands of terrorists who murdered the two Bulgarian hostages. Bulgaria and Bulgarians were not intimidated by the kidnappers or terrorists and set “an example to all of the nations of the world, and especially the nations within the coalition” that kidnapping could not be accepted and that kidnappers could not be negotiated with without encouraging it, Powell said after his meeting with Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon

Passy in Washington. Passy said that Bulgaria would not allow “anybody to blackmail our principles and values”.

5) NATO-Greece. On 26 July, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said in Brussels that NATO would keep an autonomous command of its counter-terrorist forces in the protection of the Olympic Games in Greece in the next weeks. The protective cordon will be imposed from the air, the sea, and on the land. An NBC protection unit from the Czech Republic has been engaged for the protection of the Games. Special forces of the intelligence agencies of NATO countries will be operating on the territory of Greece and of neighboring states. Greece has mobilized 19’502 police officers, 10’422 military troops, 4’216 firemen and 3’409 coast guard staff for the protection of the Olympic Games.

6) Russia-Greece. In addition to deploying the US “Patriot” air and missile defense system at the Olympics, the Greek government has negotiated with the Russian Federation over the positioning of a similar Russian system too. The Russian S-300 system will be stationed in the vicinity of Athens, including at positions near the airport, and near the city of Iraklion on the island of Crete. The measures are part of the plan to guarantee security of the Olympic games, especially its counter-terrorist aspects.

7) Turkey. On 16 July, the Turkish authorities were informed of an alleged al-Qaida-planned terrorist hijacking of an airplane in an effort to blow up a target on the ground. The attack was expected to resemble the 11 September 2001 attacks in the US. For this reason, all civilian airports in Turkey were placed under high alert.

b. PCR of Iraq.

1) The UN. In mid-July, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed Pakistani career diplomat Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, currently ambassador to Washington, as his full-time representative in Iraq. The post had been vacant since suicide bombers blew up the UN’s headquarters in Baghdad last August, killing UN representative Sergio Vieira de Mello. Qazi’s main responsibility will be to help with the formation of a national conference this summer that would create a broader base for the transition than the present interim government provides; to aid in the planning of January’s elections; and to assist in drawing up a new constitution next year.

c. PCR of Afghanistan.

1) Timetable for Afghan Elections. The UN-Afghan Joint Electoral Management Body on 8 July decided the timetable for Afghan elections. The presidential elections will be held in October this year, and parliamentary elections in April 2005. The two elections would be major milestones in Afghanistan's transition to a constitutional, representative government. Despite threats and attacks by the Taliban, the Afghan people are demonstrating a strong desire to exercise their democratic rights and are registering in large numbers for the elections.

2) The UN Security Council on Afghan Elections. On 15 July, the UN Security Council expressed its unanimous support for the Afghan government's decision to hold the country's presidential elections in October 2004. This election is a key requirement under the Bonn Agreement of December 2001. The UN Security Council urged the Afghan government to strengthen the armed forces and the police and to accelerate the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process prior to the elections. According to UNAMA – the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan - 7'175'651 Afghans had registered to vote by 15 July, and the gender gap is closing as women continue to sign up to vote. This figure represents more than two-thirds of the estimated electorate, and women constitute more than 40 per cent of the registered voters.

3) NATO Strengthens Support to Afghanistan. On 23 July, NATO announced that the NATO-led Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) would be augmented as needed to provide additional security at the local level. In addition, two battalions will be sent to bolster the reaction capabilities of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). A battalion of Spanish troops will provide the ISAF quick reaction force, and an Italian battalion will provide the in-theatre operational reserve force. Additional NATO forces will be deployed in Afghanistan by September and will remain there for eight weeks. Afghan President Karzai will retain the primary responsibility for security during the election process.

d. Other Security Threats – Nuclear Proliferation. On 19 July, US and Romanian authorities signed an agreement on joint efforts to remove irradiated fuel containing highly-enriched uranium from Romania's Magurele nuclear reactor. The fuel is of Soviet and Russian origin and will be sent back to the Russian Federation. The bilateral US-

Romanian agreement is part of the Bush administration's Global Threat Reduction Initiative, which was announced on 26 May this year. It is designed to reduce the threat of terrorism by securing nuclear materials against proliferation.

2. Post-Conflict Developments in the Balkans

a. Macedonia. A territorial restructuring agreement was concluded in Macedonia on 14 July, in implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement of August 2001. The agreement would strengthen local democracy at the municipal level. The agreement demonstrated the government coalition's commitment to develop a unified multi-ethnic society, to hold local elections as scheduled in October, and to promote its long-term goal of European integration. The Ohrid Framework Agreement provides for the use of Albanian language in local communities with significant Albanian population. However, ethnic Macedonians protested on 23 July against the plans to give greater rights and powers to the country's Albanian minority. Mobs attacked Albanian-owned shops and property as well as government cars and vehicles belonging to the EU Police Monitoring Mission. At least 17 people were injured in the clashes. Macedonian newspapers have been very critical of the government's decision to change municipal boundaries, stating that this would give local authorities organized along ethnic lines an advantage. This is the first time in three years that civilian protests have turned violent. Macedonians are becoming increasingly afraid of Albanian territorial interests.

b. Kosovo. US Under Secretary of State Marc Grossman visited Kosovo on 7 July. He urged all involved parties to commit themselves to moving faster and more comprehensively and systematically to meet the 'Implementation Plan' that, it is hoped, will lead to a secure, stable and multi-ethnic Kosovo. He said also that the agreed "Standards for Kosovo" were important to the US, and that a course had been established to implement the standards: an implementation plan for standards and a process for reviewing those standards in mid-2005, which would offer the best chance to create a multi-ethnic, democratic, prosperous, and peaceful Kosovo. After the review in mid-2005, the authorities' maturity in solving the 'final status of Kosovo' would be assessed (for the list of "Standards", see: *Balkan Regional Profile, No 56, December 2003*). The Implementation Plan for meeting the standards was presented by then-UNMIK chief Harri Holkeri this spring.

c. Bosnia and Herzegovina. (1) The EU High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Paddy Ashdown, announced measures against ICTY obstructionists on 30 June in Sarajevo. The motivation of the High Representative was to turn NATO's "No" to PfP into "Yes" as soon as possible as well as to clear the blockage that threatens the ambitions of Bosnia and Herzegovina to join modern Europe. Though Sarajevo has introduced major reforms of its armed forces, bringing them under unified command at the state level, the continuing support by some Bosnian politicians and obstructionists for Radovan Karadzic and other indicted war criminals violates the rules of the ICTY in The Hague. The obstructionists are mostly from Republika Srpska (RS). Before it can join PfP, BiH needs to arrest the fugitives from justice. Similarly, the EU will not open talks on the Stability and Association Agreement (SAA) with BiH unless the war crimes issues are settled. That is why, with the support of the US and the EU, the High Representative announced ten initial coordinated measures to help achieve that aim. Some of these included: adding 13 names to the Visa Ban List; the US put one company and three individuals on its designated list. Paddy Ashdown froze bank accounts belonging to individuals in BiH; a Special Auditor's Office was tasked with carrying out a financial review of the company; a political leader, Dragan Kalinic of the RS, was removed from his position as speaker of the National Assembly; the SDS party, established by Radovan Karadzic, has been placed under financial review. Further, RS Interior Minister Zoran Djeric was removed from office together with several senior police officers. Measures have been taken to strengthen the effectiveness of the police structures in catching war criminals. Many SDS and other party leaders have been removed from their and other public positions for nurturing the spirit of obstructionism in RS. On 30 June, EU High Representative for CFSP Javier Solana and EC Commissioner for External Affairs Chris Patten fully supported the measures taken by Paddy Ashdown. (2) On 9 July, the WB in Washington approved a US\$20 million project aimed at improving water and sanitation in the urban areas of BiH. The project is part of the country's medium-term development strategy and of its EU accession process. (3) The US military will stay engaged in BiH after the NATO-led SFOR completes its mission at the end of the year, according to a statement by Major General James Darden of the US Army's European Command's on 12 July during a Congressional hearing on BiH in Washington. The US personnel will

stay at the NATO Headquarters at Camp Butmir in Sarajevo, and eventually, if practical, at Eagle Base in Tuzla. The Eagle Base could be used for joint military exercises with the Bosnian armed forces. The US will also retain its intelligence capabilities in the area, according to General Darden. (4) On 15 July, NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer told SFOR personnel in Sarajevo that NATO would retain a military presence in the country, assisting authorities with defense reform and carrying on certain operational supporting tasks. The secretary-general underlined that he and Javier Solana would continue to work closely together before and after the EU mission was deployed. Solana and Ashdown accompanied the NATO secretary-general to Sarajevo.

III. The National Perspectives of the Balkan Countries: Specific Issues

1. Serbia and Montenegro. (1) Representatives of more than 40 cities and NGOs from Southeastern Europe on 6 July signed a Protocol on Inter-Ethnic Tolerance and Cooperation in Belgrade under the auspices of the OSCE. The signatories of the agreement have committed themselves to promoting cultural diversity and to protecting human and minority rights and other democratic principles. (2) Four ethnic Albanians were shot and wounded by a gunman in a car on 18 July in Southern Serbia. The four were members of one family, and one of them was a pregnant woman. The area was the scene of ethnic conflict some years ago.

2. Croatia. According to an OSCE Mission to Croatia report of 6 July, progress has been acknowledged on refugee returns, reconciliation, the rule of law, reintegration and restitution of property, freedom of the media, police reform, and the state of civil society. However, concrete action remains to be taken on many cases.

IV. State of Bilateral, Multilateral and Regional Relations in the Balkans

1. Bilateral Relations

a. Bulgaria - Macedonia. On 2 July, Bulgarian Defense Minister Nikolay Svinarov met in Sofia with his Macedonian counterpart Vlado Buckovski. They discussed Skopje's request for airspace protection. On 7-9 July, the commanders of the air forces of the two countries met in Skopje and negotiated the details of the Bulgarian donation of a radar for Macedonian air defense. Bulgaria will modernize the Russian-made P-37 radar, and

Skopje will pay the costs. In September, the ministers of defense and the chiefs of staff of the armed forces of Albania, Bulgaria, and Macedonia will discuss the establishment of a common air-defense system for the three countries.

b. Bulgaria-Turkey. On 6-7 July, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Bulgaria and met with Prime Minister Simeon Coburgotski. The two leaders launched the biggest Turkish investment project in Southeastern Europe so far, the construction of two glass plants, worth US\$160 million, by the Turkish 'Shishedjam Group'. The Turkish guest's demands that the Ottoman and Turkish monuments on Bulgarian territory be restored, and demands to be briefed on their state, were officially ignored, but met with disapproval in Bulgarian society and the media.

c. Bosnia and Herzegovina-Bulgaria. On 23-24 July, Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov made an official visit to BiH. He met with the collective chairmanship of the federation – Suleiman Tihic, Dragan Covic, and Borislav Paravaz. They agreed to open an embassy in Sofia and to relax the visa regime. On 15 January 1992, Bulgaria was the first state to recognize newly sovereign BiH. During his visit, the Bulgarian president met with the country's SFOR contingent.

d. Bulgaria-Albania. The Speaker of the Albanian parliament, Servet Palumbi, paid an official visit to Bulgaria from 26-27 July. He met with his counterpart, the speaker of the Bulgarian parliament, Ognyan Gerdzhikov. According to different sources, between 100'000 and 300'000 Bulgarians live in Albania, and the two leaders discussed this issue in a cooperative way.

e. Serbia and Montenegro-Bulgaria. Bulgarian Prime Minister Simeon Coburgotski made an official visit to Belgrade and the Montenegrin capital of Podgorica from 9-10 July. He met with the president of Serbia and Montenegro, Svetozar Marovic. They discussed ways of cooperation in preparing Serbia and Montenegro for EU accession. Coburgotski met with Serbian President Boris Tadic and Serbian Orthodox Christian Patriarch Pavle. In Podgorica, the Bulgarian leader met with the president of Montenegro, Philip Vujanovic. Bulgarian Minister of European Affairs Meglena Kuneva – a member of the Bulgarian delegation - told reporters that although Romania had introduced a visa regime for citizens of Serbia and Montenegro from 1 July, Sofia did not plan to implement any similar measures before 1 January 2007. By then, Bulgaria hopes,

Belgrade and Podgoriza will have been dropped from the Schengen “blacklist” of countries requiring visas.

2. Regional Cooperation: The Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe

On 30 July, the foreign ministers of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, and Serbia and Montenegro published a joint article in the most popular newspapers of their countries on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the adoption of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe. They pointed out that the bruises of the previous conflicts still needed to be healed, especially concerning the return of refugees, the confidence between the armed forces of former foes, the national economies, etc. All countries in the region maintain a special focus on the struggle against organized crime and corruption. The Stability Pact continues to be a major instrument of regional cooperation, adding substantially to the process of stabilization and association of the Western Balkans in the EU enlargement context. The principles of conditionality and differentiated accession are well understood by the individual members of the Pact from the region. European and Euro-Atlantic integration is the shared goal of all Southeastern European countries, and the Stability Pact is a solid and effective instrument of reaching it.

V. The Economic Situation in the Balkan Countries and in the Region

1. IMF-Romania. On 7 July, the IMF approved a 24-month US\$367 million stand-by loan arrangement with Romania to support that government’s economic reform program. The Romanian authorities treat the arrangement as ‘precautionary’ and do not plan to borrow from it at this time.¹ The IMF has published a chart displaying Romania’s main economic indicators for the years 2000-2004 at the following website:

<http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2004/pro4137.htm>

2. USTDA-Romania. On 21 July, the US Trade and Development Agency (USAID) awarded a US\$281’105 grant to the Romanian Ministry of Environment and Water Management to develop a modernization plan for Romania’s network of environmental laboratories. All citizens could have access to cleaner, safer water under the plan.

¹ IMF press release, 7 July 2004, at: <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2004/pr04137.htm>

3. USTDA-Bulgaria. On 23 July, the USTDA awarded a US\$200'000 technical assistance grant to Bulgaria's Civil Aviation Administration to establish the legal and regulatory structures needed to implement and enforce international air safety standards.

VI. The Process of Differentiated Integration of Southeastern Europe in EU and NATO: EU

***EU-Bulgaria.** Bulgaria has pledged to adopt 77 laws by the end of July 2005 to meet EU requirements. After completing its accession negotiations in June, the government presented to parliament its legislation plan to meet the deadline for EU membership.

VII. The Influence of Other External Factors on the Region: National Great Powers and Institutions

1. US

1) US-Serbia and Montenegro. (1) US Under-Secretary of State Marc Grossman visited Belgrade from 6-7 July and met with the federation's foreign minister, Vuk Draskovic. The US diplomat urged stronger cooperation by the Serbian and Montenegrin authorities with the ICTY in The Hague. Grossman congratulated the people of the country for continuing with democratic reforms, and wished Serbia and Montenegro a successful accession to both NATO's PfP and the EU. Grossman underlined the importance for the future of the province of implementing the "Standards for Kosovo". These standards deal with democracy, the protection of minority rights, privatization, and economic issues. (2) On 20 July, the new president of Serbia, Boris Tadic, visited Washington and met with US Secretary of State Colin Powell. The US top diplomat promised to continue support for democratic reforms in Serbia, while insisting on full cooperation by Belgrade with the ICTY in The Hague, especially in bringing war criminal Ratko Mladic to justice. The US supports Serbia's goals of achieving PfP status as a stepping-stone to NATO membership and of EU membership. Concerning the future of Kosovo, the implementation of the benchmarks relating to democracy and human rights is of key significance for the final status of the province, according to Powell. US-Serbian economic cooperation was also important in terms of political stability, Tadic said.

2) US-Southeastern Europe. On 14 July, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State D. Kathleen Stephens testified at a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on “US Policy Toward Southeastern Europe: Unfinished Business in the Balkans”. The “unfinished business” in the Balkans was “nothing less than the completion of the President’s vision of a Europe whole, free and at peace”, said Stephens. “She cited a variety of obstacles to this vision, including ethnic division, economic devastation, war criminals still at large, large number of refugees and internally displaced persons, porous borders, and weak rule of law structures. She also pointed to self-sustaining progress represented by such developments as the election of Boris Tadic as president of Serbia, the forward movement on standards for Kosovo, the successful conclusion of SFOR’s mission in Bosnia, the continued implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement in FYRO Macedonia, and Croatia’s impressive progress towards joining the Euro-Atlantic family of nations.”²

3) US-Bulgaria. From 28-30 July, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the US armed forces, General Richard Myers, made an official visit to Bulgaria. He met with the Bulgarian president, the prime minister, the speaker of parliament, the deputy minister of defense, and the chief of the General Staff of the armed forces. Bilateral military cooperation and US basing policy were discussed during the visit.

2. Russia: Russia-Bulgaria. From 6-8 July, Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov made an official visit to Russia and met with Russian President Vladimir Putin. This was the seventh meeting between the two leaders. It marked the 125th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states. Despite the good relations between the two presidents, economic relations are slow, with a huge foreign trade deficit in favor of Russia. The Russian prime minister and foreign minister are expected to visit Bulgaria by the end of 2004.

VIII. Conclusions

This July brought to the Balkans a greater awareness of “terrorism” and its meaning for the security of the world and the region of Southeastern Europe. The deficiencies in the

² US State Department press release, 15 July 2004, at:
<http://www.usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2004&m=July&x=200407151839171CJsamohT0.7168238&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html>

evolution of individual countries from the Western Balkans towards greater stability and prosperity are perceived more and more as 'unfinished business' that has to be tackled with greater initiative by the countries in the region.

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