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

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I. Introduction

The two security “identities” of the Balkans – the persisting Western Balkans security issues and the rising engagements of the Balkan NATO and PfP countries with the post-election developments in the broader Middle East, mainly Iraq and Afghanistan, gave indications in February of potentially increasing problems and new responsibilities. The continuing unwillingness of Kosovar Albanians and Serbs to come to terms with each other and attacks against moderate Serbs by radical Serbian nationalists as well as attacks by separatist Albanians against Serbian President Tadic supported a longer-term forecast concerning the Balkans compiled in the end of January by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The CIA report on regional until 2020 warned of new bloody clashes, and the major concern was a possible confrontation between organized crime gangs and extremist formations in Kosovo if the province achieved a status of an independent state. According to the forecast, the unsteady course towards EU integration chosen by Albania, Serbia and Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina may become burdens not only for Europe, but also for the world by permanently generating tensions.

These potential problems add to the pressure of the responsibilities that many Balkan countries have taken on themselves in participating in the improvement of the security situation in Iraq and Afghanistan, including within the frameworks of NATO and the UN. The post-election security situation in both countries makes additional support for the nascent democratic processes a necessity. The solidarity of the developed countries with the Balkans in the 1990s and during the new century requires a reciprocal attitude by the Balkan nations that have benefited from Western security assistance in similar contingencies elsewhere in the world.

At the same time, constructive region-building processes and preparations towards EU integration continued in February. Small but important steps were made this month to advance the EU accession efforts of Bulgaria and Romania. Though the two countries, to varying extents, face a long list of issues before they formally accede to the EU on 1 January 2007, the necessary preparations have been made for the signing of the EU Accession Treaty on 25 April this year. Much-needed EU-US cooperation on the problems of the Balkans was demonstrated again during the visit of US President George Bush to Belgium and Germany.

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

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

a. Terrorism: US Assessments of al-Qaida. The directors of the CIA and of the FBI told the US Senate Intelligence Committee on 16 February in Washington, DC that the threat posed by international terrorism, and by the al-Qaida support network in particular, remained the gravest security threat facing the US. CIA Director Porter J. Goss conjectured that it might be only a matter of time before al-Qaida or other groups attempted to use chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons. Goss asserted that the intelligence agencies had dealt serious blows to al-Qaida and other groups in the past year using “aggressive measures” with “key international partners”. FBI Director Robert S. Mueller said that al-Qaida’s overall plan for attacking targets had adapted and evolved to circumvent enhanced security measures. One of the FBI’s greatest concerns were the so-called “sleeper terrorists” who allegedly remained in place for years awaiting orders to launch an attack, he said. According to the administration, the most likely approach of al-Qaida in potential attacks against US targets remained the so-called “dirty bombs”, chemical or radiological weapons, or some type of biological agent such as anthrax. Capitals, nuclear power plants, mass transit systems, bridges and tunnels, shipping and port facilities, financial centers, and airports remained high-value targets for terrorists, said Mueller. The experience of the attacks in Madrid, Spain showed the devastation that a small low-tech operation could achieve and the resulting impact on government and economy, he said.

b. PCR in Iraq.

1) Post-Election Situation. After 35 years of dictatorship, the Iraqi people were able to vote in general elections on 30 January 2005. The courage shown by those citizens that went out to vote and elect leaders by a democratic process was a huge expression of support for any government that would be formed. In total, 8.5 million voters, or more than 58 per cent of eligible voters, participated in the election. The comparatively large number of voters is even more significant in the light of the direct threats made by the al-Qaida leader in Iraq, al-Zarqawi, who had warned the Iraqi people that elections and democracy were heresy.

The election process would not have been possible without security for the polling stations. According to a US Defense Department press briefing with Lieutenant-General David Petraeus on 4 February, the Iraqi security forces provided double security rings around 5'200 polling places across the country to prevent terrorists and insurgents from disrupting the national elections. The commander of the occupation forces in Iraq said that the backup coalition forces had helped, but the primary responsibility for voter security had fallen to the Iraqis.¹

The 136'000-strong Iraqi security forces include 79'000 from the Ministry of the Interior and 57'000 from the Ministry of Defense. The levels of training for the security personnel vary, depending on the units' missions and requirements, Petraeus said, according to the State Department press bulletin.² "Petraeus said that since training began there have been adjustments to reflect the operational environment the units find when deployed," according to the press release.³

On 6 February, US Ambassador to Iraq John Negroponte said the US government intended to work constructively with whatever government emerged in Iraq. According to Negroponte, the various political leaders that were likely to be in responsible positions were committed to the unity of Iraq. "[W]e certainly think that any future democracy of Iraq, any future government, any future political system should strive as much as possible to be inclusive, and to avoid excluding any important political force that is willing to play by democratic rules," Negroponte said.⁴ According to Negroponte, no artificial timetable would determine the timing of the departure of US troops from Iraq. Iraqi security forces were supposed to take the lead role, while the US would play a supporting role.

Negroponte said sabotage was hampering the reconstruction process despite the US disbursing US\$100 million a week.⁵

On 10 February, US Democratic Senator Joseph Biden, seeking support for the administration's efforts to engage the international community more deeply in the stabilization and rebuilding of Iraq, called for the establishment of a "Contact Group" —

¹ US State Department press release: http://www.usembassy.it/file2005_02/alia/a5020414.htm. The full text of Petraeus' comments is available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2005/tr20050204-2083.html>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ <http://london.usembassy.gov/iraq158.html>

⁵ Ibid.

an international board of directors that would support Iraq's transition.⁶ Biden highlighted the widespread recognition in Europe, the Middle East and Asia of the serious consequences if Iraq became a failed state and an expanding base for terrorism. The Contact Group should include the Iraqi government, the major European powers, regional allies, NATO, and the UN, he said. Regular monthly meetings of the group should oversee efforts to strengthen security, rebuild the infrastructure, and develop the political process, according to Biden.⁷ The visit of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Europe and the Middle East, and a subsequent trip to Europe by US President George Bush (both in February), were aimed at strengthening ties with US allies, downplaying recent disagreements, and seeking out common ground for diplomatic initiatives to face future challenges, including the rebuilding of Iraq.

On 16 February, the UN Security Council formally endorsed the Iraqi elections held on 30 January and promised deeper engagement in the efforts to rebuild the country on a democratic foundation. UN Under Secretary for Political Affairs Kieran Prendergast said the prime tasks, facing the transitional assembly and government were suppressing terrorism and violence and stepping up reconstruction, development, and humanitarian activities.⁸ After the briefing, the UN Security Council issued a formal statement affirming its continuing support for the Iraqi people in their political transition and reaffirmed the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Iraq. The Council underlined the need to make the coming constitutional process as inclusive, participatory and transparent as possible. "The council urged the United Nations and the international community to prepare rapidly to provide advisers and technical support to help Iraq promote national dialogue and consensus in drafting the national constitution," according to the US State Department.⁹ The statement said that the Security Council reaffirmed its support for a federal, democratic, pluralist and unified Iraq, in which there would be full respect for human rights. It was noted that the Sunni turnout at the elections had been low and that the UN would be willing to help efforts to integrate the Sunni

⁶ US State Department summary of Biden speech:
http://www.usembassy.it/file2005_02/alia/a5021003.htm.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ US State Department summary of Pendergast speech:
http://www.usembassy.it/file2005_02/alia/a5021602.htm

⁹ Ibid.

community in the new Iraqi government. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that the time would come when the UN would be able to send in additional staff. The UN currently has staff in the northern city of Erbil and is hoping to send personnel to Baghdad and Basra in the south.

On 17 February, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) certified the results for the Iraqi general elections on 30 January.¹⁰ The United Iraqi Alliance received 140 seats, giving the party an absolute majority in the 275-member assembly. The Kurdish Alliance List, which brought together the two main Kurdish parties, received 75 seats. The Iraqi List, led by current Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, received 40 seats. Other parties also received small representation. Given the allocations, no single party has the two-thirds majority that was necessary to name the three-member Presidency Council, which is the Assembly's first order of business, hence the need of negotiations among the parties. The Council is entrusted with the task of appointing a Prime Minister who will exercise the majority of executive and administrative powers. A majority vote of the Assembly has to approve the Prime Minister and the respective Council of Ministers. The primary task of the Assembly would be to draft a Constitution by 15 August. The Iraqis will vote on it at a referendum on 15 October. If it is approved it will serve as the basis for the new general elections on 15 December to establish a constitutional government.

2) NATO in Iraq. On 10 February in Baghdad, US commander Lieutenant-General David Petraeus said that the level of NATO trainers would reach 159 over the next few months.¹¹ Alliance members had also provided substantial assistance in other areas, he said. A training team led by Italy has already developed a curriculum for training security and Iraqi army instructors. Training of the instructors starts in April and courses will begin in September. NATO nations also provided 9'000 weapons to Iraqi security forces in time for the successful elections on 30 January. The contributions came from Romania, Estonia, and Denmark. Hungary also offered equipment and tanks. On 10 February, Petraeus told a press briefing that a NATO Defense Ministerial had brought "a number of new pledges of money for various trust funds involved with the NATO training mission

¹⁰ The following section is taken from a US State Department press release:
<http://www.usembassy.ro/WF/400/05-02-17/eur408.htm>.

¹¹ For the following, see the US State Department summary of Petraeus' remarks:
<http://www.usembassy.ro/WF/100/05-02-14/eur104.htm>.

and also additional pledges of people.”¹² At the NATO summit on 22 February in Brussels, each alliance member pledged support for the training of the Iraqi security forces in some form. According to Petraeus, additional trainers and a budget for the infrastructure of the Training, Education and Doctrine Centre and for in-country training are especially needed.¹³ On 22 February, according to an official quoted by the US State Department press statement, “France made a commitment [...] to provide funding for one of the trust funds in addition to a previous offer to train Iraqi security personnel in France”.¹⁴

3) Coalition Forces in Iraq. (1) On 2 February, the Bulgarian government decided to send five military instructors to train the Iraqi security forces. Bulgarian troops may also join the protection of the NATO training mission. Thirty Iraqi officers are expected to study in training courses at the Rakovski Defense and Staff College in Sofia. (2) On 11 February, Romanian Defense Minister Kalin Taricanu confirmed that Bucharest would send more troops to Iraq. He noted that an infantry battalion would arrive in March in Iraq. Romania now has a 730-strong contingent in Iraq. (3) US CENTCOM commander General John Abizaid thanked Bulgarian, Polish, Ukrainian, Romanian, and other allies taking part in the occupation of the country for their efforts to bring peace and stability to Iraq. He made this statement during his visit on 12 February in Al Diwaniya, where the Bulgarian contingent and other allies are stationed.

c. PCR in Afghanistan. (1) On 10 February, the informal NATO Defense Ministerial meeting in Nice, France decided to expand the alliance’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan, mainly in western part of the country. ISAF will have four Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and one Forward Support Base. NATO would thus cover 50 per cent of the territory of Afghanistan and continue its support for a stable, prosperous and democratic society in this country. An additional 500 troops would reinforce the 8’000-strong ISAF under these plans. (2) On 24 February, the Bulgarian government decided to send 30 more soldiers and officers to Afghanistan,

¹² US Department of Defense transcript of Petraeus’ remarks:
<http://www.dod.mil/transcripts/2005/tr20050210-1569.html>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ US State Department summary of White House background briefing,
http://www.usembassy.it/file2005_02/alia/a5022309.htm.

reinforcing its 50- strong unit. The newly deployed military unit included staff officers, sergeants, medics, military police, intelligence and other servicemen and servicewomen.

2. Post-Conflict Developments in the Western Balkans

a. Kosovo. (1) On 8 February in Mitrovica, the car of the moderate Serbian leader in Kosovo, Oliver Ivanovic, was destroyed in an explosion. Kosovo Serbs and Serbian leaders in Belgrade have accused Ivanovic of “betraying” his own nation – a response to what some observers see as Ivanovic’s moderate, cooperative, and reconciliatory political behavior. He participated in the election of October 2004, in which just one per cent of the Serbian voters took part. On 7 February, UNMIK chief Soren Jessen-Petersen said that talks between leaders of Kosovo and Serbia would begin later in 2005, but if the international community was able to arrive at a positive conclusion about the provincial authorities’ progress towards a set of standards. Among the most important criteria are the protection of human rights and the general security of the province. The aim of the ethnic Albanian majority of the population is independence for the province, but Belgrade still considers this option inadmissible. A US Institute of Peace Report recently noted that the ‘final status’ issue needed action in 2005. However, the process remains unclear and there is a risk that events could outpace diplomacy. Officials in Pristina want to talk of nothing but independence. Limited sovereignty seems to be an acceptable interim solution for Kosovo Albanians. What seems clearer is the need for foreign troops in the province, even if the issue of the final status was decided. The work of the international judges and prosecutors in Kosovo in dealing with inter-ethnic crimes should also continue. The treatment of Serbs and other minorities by the Albanians will continue to be subject to international monitoring. A firm pre-condition for the final status, according to the USIP Report, would be a permanent exclusion of a union of Kosovo and Albania. The international community has the hard task of deciding whether partitioning the territory of Kosovo must be on the agenda of the ‘final status’ process, and if so, whether it would be conceived as part of the solution. The international community must demonstrate resolve in supporting the values of democracy by continuing its help for civil society dialog between Serbs and Albanians – one of the pillars of any future ‘final status’ agreement. (2) On 10 February, the US ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe told the OSCE’s Permanent Council that Washington

was urging the provincial institutions of self-government in Kosovo to accelerate efforts to reform local government, improve security, and provide an environment conducive to the return of displaced people. He also said that the very future of Kosovo depended on Kosovo becoming a place where people of all communities could live, work and travel without fear, and without hostility or danger. The US position was that the standards – the political, economic and security benchmarks that were outlined by the UN in 2002 – should remain the key priority of Kosovo’s government as it prepared for the Comprehensive Review of mid-2005. Fulfillment of the standards is a precondition for any discussion on the province’s future status. (3) On 14 February, Kosovar Albanians threw stones and eggs at the motorcade of Serbian President Boris Tadic near the predominantly Albanian town of Decani while Tadic was traveling to a nearby monastery. On 13 February, Boris Tadic met with UNMIK chief Soren Jessen-Petersen and asked him for cooperation in solving the issues of the province.

b. Bosnia and Herzegovina. This month, the high representative of the international community to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Paddy Ashdown, persisted with efforts for an ethnically united police force. The protests by Republika Srpska against this plan continue to make Bosnia and Herzegovina the only European country without a state-level police apparatus. Under Ashdown’s plan, the police would ignore entity boundaries and sometimes cross entity lines.¹⁵ “The proposed plan is a huge improvement over the current fractured and fragmented situation. It will also mean huge cost savings from today’s overstuffed and inefficient set-up,” Ashdown said in a statement. The EU’s Stabilization and Association Agreement and Bosnia and Herzegovina’s PfP involvement with NATO remain contingent on the ability of centralized state institutions to hand over to the ICTY in The Hague the most wanted war criminals.

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

1. Bulgaria. In February, the Bulgarian government and the National Movement Simeon Second (NMSS) – Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) liberal coalition survived a vote of no confidence. The victory over the opposition challenge took its toll – the

¹⁵ See Bakir Rahmanovic, “Bosnia prepares for unified police force”, ISN Security Watch, 1 February 2005, at: <http://www.isn.ch/news/sw/details.cfm?ID=10697>.

NMSS speaker of the parliament, Ognyan Gerdzhikov was voted out from his post and a new speaker from the NMSS, Borislav Velikov, was elected. In addition, the ruling coalition accepted the “New Time” party into the liberal alliance of mostly young and ambitious political brokers that separated from the NMSS a year ago. Prime Minister Simeon Coburgotski introduced cosmetic structural and personnel changes to his cabinet in an effort to weather the outgoing crisis and to start preparation for the general elections scheduled for 25 June 2005. On 18 February, the Bulgarian parliament adopted on a non-partisan basis the final changes to the Bulgarian constitution of 1991 that opened the way for signing the EU Accession Treaty on 25 April. Before the latest political crisis, Bulgarian President Georgy Parvanov assured foreign diplomats in Bulgaria that the country would preserve its present foreign-policy course after the parliamentary elections in June.

2. Serbia and Montenegro. On 23 February, the authorities in Montenegro suggested to Belgrade to start working on a new union of independent states, in which the level of autonomy would practically mean the existence of two separate independent states. If such an agreement were not reached, Podgorica would organize a referendum for independence, the foreign minister of Montenegro, Miodrag Vlahovic, said.

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

1. Bilateral Relations

a. Turkey – Bulgaria. On 2 February, the Bulgarian minister of the interior, Georgy Petkanov, visited Turkey and met with his counterpart, Abdulkadir Aksu. They signed an agreement for security and cooperation in the city of Izmir. They also agreed on a protocol for enlarging the partnership between their police services.

b. FYRO Macedonia – Bulgaria. On 3 February, the parliament in Skopje ratified the bilateral agreement for establishing cultural centers between Bulgaria and Macedonia. The document was signed in April 2003, and all obstacles to the agreement’s implementation have since been removed. Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon Passy said that Bulgarians had dreamt of the two centers for more than ten years. The Bulgarian cultural centre was the first one initiated by the young state and complements other cultural centers established by the former Yugoslavia state in Skopje.

2. Multilateral Relations

a. Croatia – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Serbia and Montenegro. The ministers for refugee issues of the three countries signed a declaration on 31 January in Sarajevo on completing the return of refugees by 2006. The declaration confirmed the commitment of the three countries to creating adequate conditions to enable the return of 300'000 refugees to the region and to support refugees who chose to stay in their host countries. With this step, the governments of the three neighboring countries have implemented one of their responsibilities under the Dayton Peace Accord. The agreement was supported by the EC, the OSCE, and the UNHCR. New and more housing is needed in all three countries for those who want to return. The agreement has created an opportunity to remove the refugee issue from the political agenda of the region, and prevent the issue from becoming a source of instability in the long term. In the next couple of months, an intergovernmental task force will be set up to draft the “Road Map on Return”. The prime ministers of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia and Montenegro are expected to discuss the issue of refugee return at a regional summit meeting in Sarajevo in October, on the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Dayton Peace Accord.

b. Bulgaria – Turkey – Greece. On 12 February, media sources in these three countries announced a trilateral agreement to construct a joint monument for peace and solidarity on the island of Kavak in the Maritza River, where the boundaries of Bulgaria, Turkey, and Greece meet. Half of the island is Turkish and the other half belongs in equal parts to Bulgaria and Greece. Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon Passy made the proposal to construct the monument in January during his visit to Turkey. The monument should be ready by the end of April, and the EU is subsidizing the initiative.

3. Regional Cooperation: A Regional Conference on Roma Equality

On 2 February, the prime ministers of Hungary, Macedonia, Croatia, Serbia, and Bulgaria, as well as the deputy prime ministers of Romania and the Czech Republic, met in Sofia with the president of the World Bank and EU representatives for a forum aiming to encourage Roma equality in their countries. In a joint declaration, they pledged to eliminate all persisting forms of discrimination against the Roma in their countries.

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

1. Bulgaria –Macedonia. On 2 February, Macedonian Prime Minister Vlado Buckovski met in Sofia with Bulgarian business leaders. Bulgaria's Western neighbor has become an attractive place for Bulgarian investments. Road construction, banking, and energy and gas transportation are the primary areas of Bulgarian private business interest.

2. Bulgaria. On 14 February, the Bulgarian Ministry of Finance announced that the state's debt had been reduced by €555 million in 2004. Currently, the debt amounts to €7.95 billion. The state's domestic debt is approximately €1.37 billion, and its foreign debt is estimated at around €6.58 billion.

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

1. EU – Romania. On 17 February, Romanian Foreign Minister Mihai Razvan Ungureanu said that corruption in Romania was not just an economic problem, but a national security threat. The issue would be regulated by a package of laws that would be introduced to the parliament on 31 March, he said. The Supreme Defense Council would tackle corruption resolutely, Ungureanu said.

2. EU – Bulgaria. On 22 February, the European Commission (EC) approved the final text of Bulgaria's Accession Treaty to the EU. The 25 EC Commissioners presented a unanimously positive assessment of Bulgaria's accession prospects based on the completion of the negotiations and of the final text of the treaty. However, according to Olli Rehn, the EC Enlargement Commissioner, both Bulgaria and Romania would require significant progress in their reforms before satisfying the membership criteria.

3. EU, US – Southeastern Europe. US President George Bush visited Europe from 21-24 February and met with top EU leaders in Brussels. Cooperation between the US and the EU on the stabilization and development of the Balkan region has not been marred by any difficulties or tensions between Washington and Brussels on other issues. The NATO summit in Istanbul in 2004 reaffirmed the goal of integrating the Balkan countries in the Euro-Atlantic structures. The values of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human and minority rights, and a market economy constitute the foundations of the Euro-Atlantic community. The pace of integration lies very much in the hands of the countries of the

region. The US strongly supports the EU position that the future of the Balkan countries is within the EU. The EU's strategic approach to the Western Balkans – the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) – offers these countries the long-term prospect of full integration in the EU structures. The EU's "Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development, and Stabilization" (CARDS) program supports the countries in pursuing their objectives under the SAP. The EU has allocated €4.65 billion for the period 2002-06. The US has allocated US\$2.8 billion in assistance for the same period. The US and EU have been working closely together in the last years to stabilize and prevent further conflict in the Balkans.

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

1. US

a. US – Bulgaria. In the end of January and the beginning of February, a Bulgarian delegation from the Ministry of Defense, led by Deputy Minister Ilko Dimitrov, went to Washington to negotiate the details of how to spend a US donation of US\$60 million. The money will be spent mostly on US arms and military equipment.

b. US – Turkey. On 6 February, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made a short visit to Ankara en route to the Middle East. She met with Turkish President Ahmet Sezer, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul. The two leading diplomats discussed regional issues, mainly Iraq. The US secretary of state said that the bilateral strategic relationship was based on a common interest, a common view of the future, but most importantly, on common values. Rice underlined that Iraq's territory should never become a place from which extremist attacks could be launched against its neighbors. Other significant topics at the talks included the Cyprus issue and preparations for a resolution that could defuse the conflict there. Relations between the US and Turkey had cooled down in 2003 after Turkey decided not to let US troops invade Iraq from Turkish territory.

2. Russia: Russia – Serbia and Montenegro. In mid-February, the Russian president's special envoy for the Central Federal District, Georgiy Poltavchenko, visited Belgrade and discussed bilateral economic ties between the Russian region and the Western Balkan country. Poltavchenko said there was a regional Russian interest in developing relations

with Serbia and Montenegro in the banking sector, in road construction, in production and supply of heavy road equipment, and in the agriculture and processing industry. Poltavchenko said that Russia was interested in having the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro as its only strategic partner in the Balkans. Russia is linked to Serbia by centuries-old friendship and common interests.

VIII. Conclusions

With the concerted support of Europe and North America, Southeastern Europe continues to struggle with persisting problems in the Western Balkans. The local assessments and the outside forecasts do not promise an easy near-term end of hostilities, though these have been limited to certain territories. There is an imminent danger that Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia and Montenegro could become burdens not only for Europe, but also for the world. The other countries in the region are inclined to stay prepared and take responsibility for resolving issues in the Western Balkans. At the same time, however, many Balkans countries have embarked on a course that makes them part of the larger international community, and are helping to deal with security problems in other areas of the world. Southeastern Europe is no longer a consumer, but a contributor to security – not only to the Balkan region itself, but also in Afghanistan and in Iraq. The continuing integration of the Balkans into the Euro-Atlantic structures guarantees that both processes will continue.

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