

Balkan in Dependence?

Following NATO's military intervention in the Balkans during the past five years, two international "dependencies" have emerged in the region: Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosova. NATO engagement and the long-term involvement of international organizations in these regions has raised some fundamental questions about the relationship between external intervention, indigenous dependence on international institutions, and the prospects for local self-determination.

Self-determination, in the sense of state sovereignty coupled with indigenous commitment to democracy, is essential for the long-term security of the region. While ensuring provisional stability, there is a danger that current international involvement may actually hinder the development of lasting security based on the principles of self-determination. An evaluation of these questions may not only contribute to a more informed understanding of Balkan developments, but it could also better prepare the international community for future conflict prevention and peace enforcement missions in line with NATO's new Strategic Concept.

Contrasting Objectives

The international missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosova are similar. In both instances, international agencies sought to reverse the escalating human disasters, to prevent a regional spillover of armed conflicts, and to implant an international security force as the primary pillar of stabilization and reconstruction. Although Bosnia-Herzegovina has in effect evolved into an international "protectorate" over the past five years, Kosova is

Janusz Bugajski is the director of the Eastern Europe Project at CSIS.

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emerging as an international “ward.” There are some important definitional and practical distinctions between the two cases.

Under the provisions of the Dayton peace accords, international actors intervened in Bosnia to maintain a single independent country while allowing for significant autonomy for the two ethno-national “entities”—the Bosnian Federation and the Serb Republic. To accomplish this objective, and because of the difficulties encountered in reconstructing a fractured

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state, Bosnia has in effect been transformed into a long-term international “protectorate.” NATO leaders concluded that a hasty international departure could precipitate the country’s disintegration and a renewal of violent conflicts. In reality, international agencies are “protecting” the survival of Bosnian statehood and the country’s territorial and institutional integrity.

In Kosova, the stated objective of international agencies was to preserve Kosova within Yugoslavia despite the demands of the Albanian majority for independence and statehood. Hence, Kosova can be considered an international “ward” in that the eventual objective is to return the province to Yugoslav jurisdiction after determining that a sufficient measure of democratic development and “self-determination” has taken root in both Kosova and Serbia. Whereas in Bosnia international agencies have endeavored to counter disintegrative trends between the two entities, in Kosova they have tried to pacify an overwhelmingly pro-independence Albanian separatist movement.

Serious problems have surfaced in the imposition of an international mandate in both Bosnia and Kosova, evident in numerous arenas, including inadequate reconstruction resources; failure to generate sufficient indigenous capacity for economic and civic development; an insufficient number of international police officers to provide security to the majority of civilians; turf battles between international organizations; inability to eliminate the power of local ethno-nationalist warlords in parts of Bosnia; and the creation of deliberative councils without any genuine decisionmaking powers in Kosova.

In effect, we have witnessed the creation of dependency relationships between Bosnia, Kosova, and international institutions that may become more difficult to overcome the longer such conditions persist. In order to prevent a scenario of permanent guardianship, questions of promoting political self-determination, pluralistic democracies, multi-ethnicity, civil society, and economic development should be reexamined in light of practical experience. Moreover, implementable recommendations must be offered to

policymakers and international organizations to help rectify their shortcomings, to buttress their successes, and to achieve a suitable balance between engagement and noninterference.

In addition to the negative consequences of a long-term dependence that stifles local initiative, the mounting cost and frustration of the Bosnian and Kosovar missions may increase congressional and public pressure on allied governments to withdraw rapidly and prematurely from both quasi-states. Such a move could prove even more damaging given the current necessity of the NATO military presence on both territories.

To avoid either scenario (permanent dependence or rapid evacuation), policy analysts should reflect on the complex relationships between external military intervention, peacekeeping, state-building, and foreign dependence, on the one hand, and the progress of political, economic, and civic self-determination, on the other hand. An assessment is needed in Bosnia and Kosova of the performance of “transitional institutions” to promote or stifle the process of self-determination, including international administrators and protectorate security structures. This can help formulate alternative models to optimize the performance of international institutions in the pursuit of local democracy and self-determination. In sum, international agencies need to examine ways to counter long-term dependency relationships that are both costly for intervening governments and damaging for the progress of democratic self-determination.

Bosnia: The Polarized Protectorate

The stated long-term objective of international actors in Bosnia-Herzegovina is to create conditions for a secure and independent federal state. Under the provisions of the Dayton accords, however, the length and intensity of foreign involvement has not been specified, and a clear “exit strategy” by international institutions has not been determined. Indeed, the United Nations (UN) mandate has been regularly extended without a demarcated timetable.

The reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a single sovereign state and the promotion of a central political authority have frustrated the international community for the past half decade. Nationalist politicians, especially from the major Serbian and Croatian parties, have persistently blocked the process of Bosnian integration. The country remains largely polarized along ethnic lines as nationalist parties continue to control decisionmaking in Bosnia’s two political entities.

The municipal elections in April 2000 were only partially successful in promoting multi-ethnic and civic parties. Although the non-nationalist

Bosniak or Muslim parties gained control in about a dozen major city councils, in the Serb and Croat majority areas, exclusive nationalist and authoritarian parties again predominated as they effectively posed as the defenders of allegedly endangered “national interests.”

International agencies have favored the marginalization of nationalist hardliners among all three ethnic groups. For example, during his term in office, International High Representative Carlos Westendorp dismissed the president of the Serb Republic, Nikola Poplasen, for interfering in the country’s democratic process and for supporting partition. Westendorp also tried to intensify the state-building process by various unilateral measures such as deciding on the country’s new flag, national anthem, a joint currency, a common passport, and a common national license plate.

In a number of cases, nationalist politicians in Bosnia’s cantons and municipalities who openly violated the Dayton provisions were either removed from office or barred from standing in future elections. Westendorp also began to restructure the Bosnian media by wresting control of several television stations from the ruling nationalist parties. Although the high representative did not technically command any military force to put pressure on recalcitrant politicians, his control of major aid and reconstruction resources enabled him to enforce most of his decisions.

The degree of Westendorp’s intervention led to complaints about externally imposed solutions among various Bosnian activists. Others believed that the high representative had not sufficiently exercised his authority or unnecessarily delayed the full implementation of the Dayton accords. Simultaneously, international organizations were severely criticized for failing to arrest the two most senior indicted war criminals—former Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic.

Westendorp’s successor, Wolfgang Petrisch, concentrated his efforts on reforming Bosnia’s corrupt judicial system, buttressing its precarious independent mass media, and improving its educational system. International representatives also condemned the activities of the Croatian-Herzegovinian ultranationalist networks, which thwarted the development of a functioning democracy and prevented the emergence of a competitive market economy. They criticized the previous Tudjman government in Croatia for supporting illicit structures inside Bosnia and for harboring designs on Bosnian territory.

Both Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic and the recently deceased Croatian president Franjo Tudjman incessantly meddled in Bosnian politics and favored hard-line elements in the country. With the recent election of a democratic coalition government in Croatia that has displayed its commitment to an integral Bosnia, the prospects for eliminating separatist trends in Croatian Herzegovina appear to be improving.

Human rights violations against rival ethnic groups, however, have also persisted in Bosnia, including discrimination in obtaining housing, education, and employment, as well as sporadic acts of violence against returning refugees. Serbian leaders in particular continued to block the return of Muslim residents expelled from their homes during the 1992–1995 war. A similar situation prevailed in the Croatian-dominated parts of western Hercegovina. Nevertheless, without current international pressures and financial incentives, the position of Bosnia's refugees and local minorities would be even more severe.

International dependence was also evident in the Bosnian economy. Real growth has continued to stagnate as a consequence of numerous factors, including widespread corruption and mismanagement, dependence on international agencies, and limited indigenous economic development. During the past five years, Bosnia has benefited from substantial foreign economic aid, particularly from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Reports surfaced last year that government leaders had misappropriated up to \$1 billion from public funds or from international aid projects since the Dayton peace agreements were signed in November 1995. The embezzled funds were believed to be about 20 percent of all state finances. The allegations were vehemently denied in both entities, but they soured the climate for further foreign assistance and investment. International agencies also bemoaned the lack of a proper banking system and an effective tax and tariff collection agency in the country. Both factors encouraged illegitimate business activities and undermined the authority of the central government in Sarajevo.

In effect, the survival of Bosnia-Hercegovina as a single state has remained dependent primarily on the presence of NATO and other international institutions to provide physical security, state resources, economic reconstruction, institutional continuity, and territorial integrity. Hard-line nationalists calculated that international resolve would weaken over time and that their resistance to ethnic reintegration and civic democracy would eventually pay off as international organizations disengaged from Bosnia and de facto recognized the existence of two sovereign states. The situation remains stalemated with neither side evidently admitting defeat.

Meanwhile, Bosnia's democrats remain frustrated by the initial weak pressures exerted by international organizations on nationalist "warlords" and the slow development of civic institutions. But the civic activists and

Current international involvement may actually hinder lasting security.

integralists are also cognizant that overdependence on international actors could undermine the authenticity and indigenous development of Bosnia's multi-ethnic and civil democratic institutions.

Kosova: An International Ward

The UN mandate in Kosova is ultimately designed to maintain the region under Belgrade's jurisdiction. Presumably, a large-scale international presence will continue until conditions have been met for a peaceful reintegration of the territory. But such a scenario has raised serious questions about the self-determination of Kosova's population and the instabilities that could be generated by any planned reintegration with Serbia.

Since the occupation of Kosova by NATO forces in June 1999, both constructive and destructive developments have been evident. On the positive side, Kosova has witnessed the expulsion of repressive Serb security forces and the successful return of more than one million Kosova Albanian refugees and displaced persons to their homes. Under the mandate of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), NATO established a Kosovo force (KFOR) consisting of approximately 50,000 troops.

Although violent incidents have decreased, they are still too prevalent to make people feel fully secure. Some basic reconstruction work has been accomplished, especially in providing shelter, food, and medical aid to the bulk of the destitute during the winter months. Furthermore, despite substantial resistance, the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA) officially disbanded in September 1999. A section of the KLA was transformed into a Kosovo Protection Corps that contains 3,000 full-time members as well as 2,000 reservists and is empowered to respond to civilian emergencies throughout the territory. International leaders calculated that this effectively eliminated a potentially destabilizing force in Kosova's development. Paradoxically, the disbanding of the overt KLA structures may have simply driven groups underground while eliminating the immediate prospect for the KLA to become transformed into an effective and legitimate defense force that could assist NATO in its security mission.

Four major shortcomings of the NATO operation in Kosova are visible. First, the territory is torn by political polarization among the majority Albanian population and persistent conflicts with the Serb minority. This is accompanied by the lack of a viable Kosovar Albanian authority. Disputes between the two major Albanian factions continue to hinder the establishment of a single indigenous government. The leadership of Kosova's pre-war "parallel government" led by President Ibrahim Rugova refused to recognize

the legitimacy of the KLA commanders and the “provisional government” established by KLA leader Hashim Thaci.

Conversely, KLA commanders dismissed Rugova as an anachronism in the post-war setting. Such deep political divisions also paralyzed the development of political institutions and the emergence of a civic society. In some ways, such a situation has suited those UN officials who argued that the Kosovars simply could not govern themselves and needed to be shepherded by the international community toward some future Yugoslav framework. The creation of a joint Kosova advisory council under the supervision of UN special representative Bernard Kouchner seems to have merely pacified and not resolved the underlying political tensions.

Second, the problem of criminalization and the lack of the rule of law have become endemic in Kosova. Observers feared that criminal organizations were undermining the emergence of a democratic and law-abiding society. Corruption and crime were commonplace, resulting not only in a lack of security for residents but also in the corrosion of economic and political institutions. This phenomenon also served those who argued that the Kosovars were not prepared for self-government or statehood. In addition, Serbian special forces and paramilitaries continued to operate in parts of Kosova, deliberately provoking violence to discredit international institutions, to undermine the longevity of the NATO mission, and to discount any realistic possibility of Kosovar self-government.

While all Serbian forces evacuated Kosovo ahead of the NATO intervention, much of the Serbian minority also fled, fearing revenge attacks by returning Albanians. An Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) report published at the end of 1999 described the province as being polarized ethnically with both Serbs and Albanians subject to violence by gunmen and vigilantes. Attacks on Serb civilians were particularly worrying, while Serb properties were burned or confiscated, and harassment of civilians was widespread. By the fall, from a pre-war Serbian population of some 200,000, only 70,000 were believed to have remained in Kosovo. Although Serb leaders accused NATO of turning a blind eye to the abuses, military commanders responded that they simply did not possess the manpower to patrol every neighborhood.

The third negative factor in Kosova has been the institutional shortcomings of international agencies. A dearth of serious reconstruction resources, an insufficient number of international police officers, turf battles between international organizations, the undercutting of embryonic Albanian local

Bosnia has in effect been transformed into an international protectorate.

authorities, and the creation of deliberative councils without any ultimate authority or decisionmaking powers are all evidence of the shortcomings. In addition, training and deployment of an indigenous police force as well as establishing a credible and professional judiciary system that could enforce law and order on the territory were consistently delayed.

In such inauspicious conditions, a dependency relationship has emerged between Kosovars and international institutions that may become difficult to overcome the longer the current “stalemate” continues. Such a relationship could seriously threaten the development of indigenous institutions and democratic procedures. To counter such a phenomenon, an election process

has been proposed in Kosova through a campaign of voter registration, political party development, and civic education. This could help establish structure, legitimacy, and authority for elected Kosovar leaders. Observers note that local and central Kosovar authorities must obtain the authority and resources to govern and not simply to consult with international agencies.

International agencies need to examine ways to counter dependency.

The OSCE plans to hold local elections in the fall of 2000 and to make preparations for general elections to a central Kosovar authority possibly in 2001. But the power of the proposed central government and its relationship with UN authorities and the Yugoslav government was persistently unclear. While the overwhelming majority of Albanians continued to demand Kosova’s independence, some local Serbian leaders pushed for the province’s cantonization. They sought to establish Serb majority districts in parts of northern Kosova while gaining their own local administration and retaining special ties with Belgrade. This proposal was rejected by Kouchner on the grounds that it would herald a formal partition of Kosovo along ethnic lines. Albanian leaders also adamantly opposed such a solution and demanded full territorial integrity under a single government. Here, the international community and the Kosovars appear to be in agreement.

The fourth and most important failing that can be directly attributed to international institutions has been the lack of final legal status for Kosova as an independent state. Western leaders believed that postponing the decision on Kosova’s status would allow democratic changes to take place inside Yugoslavia and enable a new relationship to emerge between Serbia and Kosova once Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic was ousted. Critics charged that NATO would face escalating anger from the Albanian community if the UN insisted on preserving Kosova within Yugoslavia, regardless of any possible leadership changes in Belgrade. Meanwhile, for the indefinite

future, Kosova will remain an international ward—and officially part of Yugoslavia—without any inspiring vision for its future status.

In order to avoid long-term dependence on outside agencies, self-determination and independence and statehood for Kosova should be the primary and openly stated objectives of the international community. Such a step could have several positive symbolic, political, and security ramifications. It would restore Kosovar confidence in the international community and prevent a potential radicalization of Albanian politics because long-term ambiguity on the status question can undermine the region's democrats and favor its demagogues.

Accepting future independence could also undercut the threat of a new Serbian takeover by deligitimizing Belgrade's incessant provocations on the territory. Criteria and timetables for a democratic independent state will also give both the internationals and the locals a concrete goal toward which political, institutional, and economic reconstruction can be directed.

Preventing Permanent Intervention

The central dilemma for multinational institutions and Western leaders is how to prevent either the Bosnian "protectorate" or the Kosova "ward" from becoming permanent international "trusteeships" with externally appointed administrations largely bereft of domestic authority or legitimacy. At the other extreme, international leaders must ensure that a wholesale or rapid disengagement does not unravel the results already achieved, particularly in the security arena, and even provoke new armed conflicts on these vulnerable territories.

Between these two extremes, a balance must be found by focusing on indigenous institution building. Although international organs have clearly ensured security in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosova, they have also been accused of creating colonial-like bureaucracies, of favoring foreign over indigenous organizations, of duplicating efforts between different international agencies, and of wasting reconstruction and democratization resources. Given such drawbacks, constructive steps for promoting indigenous institutions that can give structure and content to democracy and self-determination must be considered.

The minimal optimistic prognosis for the two Balkan quasi-states envisions gradual but consistent progress in the state-building process, the construction of legitimate and participatory institutions, and the assurance of interstate security. This would help consolidate and expand positive regional developments that would contribute to eliminating impending crisis and conflict.

Of course, any strategy of “indigenization” involves risks and unpredictable occurrences. Although the primary risk is of a rapid disengagement that provokes fresh hostilities, other potential variables must also be considered. Without the anchoring of democratic governance, both territories may become susceptible to authoritarianism or to political elements linked with the criminal underworld. Alternatively, political fracturing and institutional paralysis may accompany an international withdrawal. It is precisely to avoid such scenarios that outside actors must focus on the institutional preconditions for long-term security with a decreasing international presence. The components outlined below may contribute to the development of democratic self-determination.

International players have an important role in a range of democratizing endeavors. In order for these to be successful, they must aim to maximize local initiatives, increase support for the most civic-oriented political parties, media networks, and nongovernmental organizations, as well as avoid bureaucratization, waste, and duplication in funding and training. There is no simple formula for success, especially given the longevity and entrenchment of the international presence, but the following arenas can remain the chief focus of aid agencies and foreign organizations.

First, regular “free and fair” national and local elections and relative governmental stability will remain essential prerequisites to pursue far-reaching institutional reforms. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, election laws for the next general ballot should further undercut the privileged position of the ethno-nationalist parties that have dominated Bosnian politics since the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Paradoxically, more intensive short-term intervention by the “internationals” may shorten their presence in what can be described as a political version of “shock therapy.”

In Kosova, local and national elections can help to empower actors who have felt largely excluded from the governing process or in a limbo-like position until the status question is permanently resolved. Legitimate elections will also contribute to undercutting political polarization by removing the two Kosovar Albanian shadow “governments” which have yet to face an internationally supervised election.

Second, the two Balkan indigenous administrations will need to promote consensus on the most vital reform issues. They must ensure a measure of programmatic continuity so that the reform process does not veer between unpredictable periods of progress and reversal. Both Bosnia and Kosova require a cross-party commitment to the goal of institutional reform regardless of the differences that may exist between specific political formations. Successful political stabilization requires the consolidation of authoritative democratic institutions based on constitutional principles in which international agencies can provide guidance, expertise, technical support, mediation, and legitimacy.

In this respect, Kosova will need a new constitution that can help concentrate political energy, give credence to legality, and provide a more solid basis for democratic development. All major Kosovar Albanian political players evidently support such an approach, as it would create the foundations of statehood. The organs of government would then acquire the confidence of the public and the commitment of all major political players. In this context, extremist parties advocating ultranationalist and authoritarian solutions must be exposed and marginalized to prevent undermining the body politic of the new state. In addition, integration of the Serb minority into the governing process must take place to ensure stability.

Third, more can be achieved to improve efficiency, competence, and professionalism among government officials and the civil service. Indeed, a core civic administration needs to be developed that provides continuity and credibility regardless of changes in government. Concurrently, the judicial system must become both independent and competent, in which equality before the law is guaranteed, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or creed. Judges and prosecutors need to obtain appropriate training and salary incentives to limit the potential for corruption and favoritism.

Fourth, in the security arena, the police and intelligence forces require strict governmental control and supervision as well as the authority and capability to improve their effectiveness. Public trust in the police forces will grow as their success in fighting crime and restoring law and order increases. Each government must focus on expanding professional police departments with Western assistance that can restore civic confidence in these vital indigenous institutions.

Fifth, both quasi-states can make significant strides to enshrine the full array of human rights, including freedom of expression, conscience, assembly, association, movement, and worship. Each country can also develop a more robust alternative media and a range of citizens' interest groups, including business associations, consumer organizations, minority rights groups, and environmental lobbies. The EU-sponsored Balkan Stability Pact should focus more intensively on this underused human capital as well as on economic reconstruction projects. These constituencies will significantly enhance the democratization process. Democratic politics does not revolve solely around the activities and ambitions of political parties; it aims to maximize public input into the decision-making and policymaking process at local, regional, and national levels.

Outside actors must focus on the institutional preconditions for security.

In the case of Kosova, the question of minority rights needs to be comprehensively tackled, whether by granting cultural and educational autonomy, some measure of territorial self-administration, regional decentralization, or a guaranteed proportion of seats in the future territorial parliament. The protection of minority rights is not the exclusive preserve of national governments but has become a legitimate component of international human rights conventions. Hence, both Balkan quasi-states must pass legislation and pursue policies that comply with their international obligations.

Finally, the development of a multifaceted and multiorganizational civil society will limit the focus on exclusive ethnic and national questions. Encouraging and sending popular participation in a broad range of civic groups and voluntary organizations will, in turn, greatly enhance public confidence in the reform process and in the legitimacy of the political system. A significant change in each nation's political culture is necessary: one that counters decades of antidemocratic ideology and nationalist extremism and transforms public institutions as well as public perceptions.

Transforming Protectorates

Another priority for both Balkan "dependencies" is the consolidation of a credible market reform program. All too often in the past, vested interest groups have stalled or diverted the process to their advantage. Alternatively, numerous politicians have compromised on many essential market components by maintaining state subsidies to unprofitable enterprises, favoring graft and corruption, and failing to ensure the transparent privatization of the state sector. A serious and far-reaching reform program cannot be held hostage by any political party, criminal cartel, economic lobby, trade union, or industrial sector.

No program of economic transformation will gain easy popularity for any government, and indeed most administrations are likely to be faced with the challenges of widespread public disquiet. Nevertheless, a reformist government has to weather such storms and ensure that popular unrest is not exploited by radical antidemocratic and ultranationalist elements or degenerates into a wholesale social and political breakdown.

Significant social support for the transformation program and full respect for private property rights need to be built. Such objectives can be advanced through both a credible media campaign on the benefits of competitive capitalism and foreign investment as well as the astute promotion of successful new businesses. An appropriate business culture needs to be developed in both Balkan regions so that investment and hard work overcome the negative ethics of dependence on the state, economic egalitarianism, robber

capitalism, or uncontrolled criminality among new entrepreneurs.

Public security organs must be authorized and empowered to deal with a dominating and growing problem throughout the Balkan region—organized crime and corruption. The breadth and scope of organized crime and corruption presents a direct challenge to both domestic and regional stability. It also confronts the international community with some serious security problems in the years ahead. In order to effectively combat organized criminality, all Balkan governments (including those in Bosnia and Kosovo) must focus on both the domestic and regional environment.

On the domestic front, the pervasiveness of politically connected corruption and criminality threatens to obstruct the reform process in the region's fragile democracies. It contributes to consolidating the control of special-interest groups, corrodes the institutionalization of democratic procedures, encourages polarization and radicalism, dissipates public confidence in the transformation process, and jeopardizes economic stability, competition, and marketization. To combat domestic crime, appropriate laws must be passed and enforced, and the police must be provided with relevant training, manpower, and equipment. No government official, manager, or businessman can stand above the law.

A breakdown of any tentative reform process could precipitate a resurgence of populism, nationalism, and authoritarianism. This in turn could rapidly provoke ethnic, religious, and regional conflicts inside several countries and spur cross-border confrontations that will challenge allied policy throughout the region. NATO's goals to contain conflict and project security could then be imperiled by several simultaneous regional flashpoints.

Without more emphasis on "indigenization," democratization, the marginalization of extremists, and structural economic reform, long-term security could be seriously undermined. This would in turn require a substantial future outlay of allied resources. Furthermore, fresh crises in the Balkans generated by domestic and international instabilities could seriously challenge cohesion at a time when NATO requires a coordinated approach to its future enlargement and full agreement on its new strategy and missions. International actors need to promote all forms of regional cooperation through a range of bilateral and multilateral ties as envisioned in the South East European Stability Pact.

The elements described above could promote a steady improvement in indigenous empowerment and in the region's overall security situation. As

Balance between international engagement and indigenous self-dependence is needed.

a general maxim, it is worth noting that democracies with growing economies are less prone to wage internal or external wars and are more liable to solve outstanding disputes through dialogue and compromise. In this context, “democratic security” becomes a valid goal for the two Balkan “dependencies.”

Economic reform and market transformation should be seen not merely as domestic but as a region-wide concern. The failure of economic reform, a social breakdown, or the rise of authoritarianism in any specific country will directly challenge all neighboring states. Such factors could reverse reform efforts by exacerbating regional instabilities and distracting attention from domestic agendas. Hence, more emphasis should be placed on building or reviving economic networks that serve to enhance the reform process while increasing regional trade, entrepreneurship, and investment.

Pursuing Balance

The international agenda in the Balkans remains extensive and expensive. It includes assuring sufficient regional security, preparing for combat against potential aggressors, and deterring the prospects for armed conflicts. It also includes the provision of essential humanitarian assistance, the generation of reconstruction aid and investment, the promotion of democratization and institution building, and the preparation for eventual international institutional integration.

What is often lost in this expansive agenda, however, is the pursuit of an appropriate balance in both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosova between international engagement and indigenous self-dependence. As international dependency relationships develop, the incentive for disengagement invariably diminishes. This may be the result of several factors: bureaucratic inertia, occupational self-interest, risk-avoidance, or institutional complacency.

Although there is no easy solution to the Bosnian quandary, NATO leaders must look soberly at potential alternatives, including an overhaul of the Dayton process itself. The two-entity system may have outlived its usefulness in pacifying all three national groups in the early stages of international “peacemaking” and may actually be undermining the efforts at institution building outlined above. Indeed, Dayton may now principally foster division, delay, and duplication in the political process, which invariably favors nationalists rather than democrats. The original internationally imposed peace agreement may therefore require restructuring.

Paradoxically, in order to strengthen Bosnian unity, political power may need to be decentralized and the two-entity concept eliminated. Bosnia’s cantons (or districts) could become the main locus of political authority in which

the three ethnic groups could gain greater administrative representation. Simultaneously, however, much more effort must be focused on dismantling the most obstructive nationalist power structures and apprehending the leading war criminals. In addition, the activities of criminal networks must be forcefully undercut, the three parallel armies must be merged into one defense force, the state and entity bureaucracies must be scaled down, and the bulk of refugees must be returned to their original homes.

Such a vigorous but integrative approach could contain some risks to security forces and may make the international mission unpopular among some political circles and public sectors. But the long-term effect would be to encourage democratic and civic forces that have been obstructed for the past decade to take greater responsibility for the state and to gain greater influence within Bosnian society.

With regard to Kosova, the “nonstatus” stalemate or the continued maintenance of Kosova under Yugoslav control may exacerbate the problems already faced by international leaders in guaranteeing security and building credible local institutions. Most policymakers still adhere to the conventional wisdom that an independent Kosova will destabilize the Balkans. In effect, comparable arguments are being used to those that were employed a decade ago in opposition to Slovenian and Croatian statehood.

It is worth considering some positive implications of a Kosovar state, initially under the auspices of an officially declared NATO or EU “protectorate.” For example, any potential threat from Belgrade toward Albania will be terminated; Montenegro would feel more secure from a Serbian attack. Meanwhile Macedonia’s shorter border with Serbia will limit the destabilizing effects of Belgrade’s nonrecognition of Macedonia’s frontiers. Above all, a substantial NATO presence before a national Kosova defense force is created will convince all military units in the surrounding region to desist from provocative actions.

Kosova’s statehood, if it is handled astutely by the international community, could also help resolve the wider “Albanian question” in the south Balkans. Instead of provoking calls for a “Greater Albania,” such a step could actually pacify the more radical Albanian demands and allow Europe to increase its positive influence by dealing with Kosova as a country in its own right. Internationals, working in tandem with indigenous parties, can pursue a timetable to construct Kosova’s political, legal, and security institutions. The interim international “ward” could thereby evolve toward au-

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tonomy and sovereignty, particularly if Serbia itself remains under the control of its kleptocratic nationalist-socialist elite or descends into protracted violence and even civil war.

The OSCE can oversee the creation of a new Kosovar administration in a much more resolute manner than was evident in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Indeed, during the next three years Kosova can establish all the elements and qualifications for statehood. The Prishtina government will of course have to formally renounce any potential territorial aspirations and sign treaties

with its three Slavic neighbors and commit itself to democratic pluralism, rule of law, a market economy, and European integration.

In many respects, it can be argued that Kosova, as a more ethnically homogenous territory, is better prepared for single statehood than is Bosnia. If the Serbian minority in Kosova receives appropriate physical and institutional protection, NATO ground troops will not have to patrol any “interentity” or

“intercommunity” lines, as the vast majority of Kosova’s population is committed to the territorial integrity of Kosova.

The ongoing turmoil in Kosova and in Bosnia-Herzegovina has a destabilizing effect throughout the Balkan region. Although the worst case scenario is a spreading war, a more likely scenario is “insipid destabilization” characterized by deepening political instability, economic retardation, a freeze on foreign investment, and the growth of illicit business and international criminal networks. This will further estrange the Balkans from the European process and the transatlantic structures. It will also guarantee a costly and permanent security headache for the alliance that can become a bounty for international criminals, fundamentalist extremists (of whatever religious or political persuasion), and other anti-NATO and anti-European elements.

Institutional dependence on foreign actors may be crucial during various national emergencies, such as the ones witnessed in both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosova in recent years, but it is not a viable substitute for “democratic security.” Ultimately, the only legitimate and durable form of Balkan stability and reconstruction has to be based on indigenous democratic development, the self-determination of new states, and voluntary international integration.

Dayton may now principally foster division, delay, and duplication.