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IS EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION OF BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA GOOD FOR THE EU, NATQ AND BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA ITSELF?

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JCSP 41

Exercise Solo Flight

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INTRODUCTION

*Instability in your neighbourhood poses threats which no state can ignore.
Misgovernment, ethnic violence and crime in the Balkans pose a threat to Europe.*

– Robert Cooper, Senior British Diplomat, 2002

Following the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s and the conflicts that followed, including the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina¹ over 1991 to 1995, the Western Balkans² region became a major source of security threats for the European Union (EU). Organised crime networks took advantage of porous borders and the traditional Balkan smuggling route was revitalised as a means to transit illegal immigrants and goods into the EU.³ Some states in the Western Balkans have addressed the issues successfully and moved past this, Croatia being a prime example as evidenced by its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership in 2009 and EU accession in 2013. However, it can be argued that Bosnia-Herzegovina has languished behind despite a vast array of intervention and support from the international community; some argue that the February 2014 protest and riots in Bosnia-Herzegovina make it still the key country of security concern in the region, as the economic problems which started the riots have the potential to turn into ethnic conflict.⁴ Nevertheless, steps continue to be taken to move Bosnia-

¹ Bosnia-Herzegovina is also known as Bosnia, or in its native language *Bosnia Hercegovina*, which is often abbreviated to BiH.

² The Western Balkans region – as commonly understood and as discussed in this essay – consists of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (as defined by resolution 1244 of the UN Security Council), Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia.

³ Florian Trauner, “The Europeanisation of the Western Balkans: deconstructing the EU’s routes of influence in justice and home affairs” (2008): 2, Last accessed 27 November 2014 <http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-riga/virtualpaperroom/059.pdf>.

⁴ Aydin Babuna, "European Integration, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Stability in the Western Balkans: A New Strategy." *Perceptions* 19, no. 2 (Summer, 2014): 1 and 15.

Herzegovina towards full membership of the EU and NATO, but is reform in the form of accession to the EU and integration into NATO what Bosnia-Herzegovina actually needs? Conversely, does NATO need Bosnia within its alliance, and would the EU be strengthened if Bosnia became a Member State? This paper argues that while EU accession and NATO membership offer clear benefits for Bosnia-Herzegovina, they are not currently realistic, and should be carefully managed to prevent them having a detrimental effect on NATO and the EU.

This paper analyses the steps being taken to accede Bosnia-Herzegovina into the EU and permit it NATO membership, and if the ultimate end goals are actually viable and in the best interests of the country, the EU and NATO. The paper starts by examining what Euro-Atlantic integration consists of, before examining what becoming an EU Member State would mean for both Bosnia-Herzegovina and the EU. Similarly, this approach is then taken to investigate what NATO accession would mean to Bosnia and NATO. Some key complicating factors are also considered, such as the effect of Bosnia being a multicultural society, the effect that the EU and NATO membership (or otherwise) of Bosnia-Herzegovina's neighbours might have, Russian influence in the region, and the fragility of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

WHAT IS EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION?

At its simplest, Euro-Atlantic integration is the inclusion of countries as members of NATO and the EU; from a US perspective this is a process of stabilization,

democratization, and alliance formation.⁵ Euro-Atlantic integration of Bosnia-Herzegovina remains a policy priority for Washington and Brussels, perhaps as Bosnia-Herzegovina is seen as the key to stability in the whole of the Western Balkans.⁶ However, given the absence of enlargement progress in the May 2012 NATO summit and enlargement fatigue in the EU, Mylonas argues that “it is high time to reconsider the future of Euro-Atlantic integration in the Western Balkans.”⁷

There are differing views of what NATO and the EU bring to the table. NATO itself states that the EU is a unique and essential partner for NATO, and it and the EU share strategic interests and cooperate on issues of common interest. They work side by side in capability development, political consultations, and the relationship is an important element in the development of an international Comprehensive Approach to crisis management and operations, which requires the effective application of both military and civilian means.⁸ The two organisations share a majority of members, currently twenty-two, and members of both organisations share common values.⁹ Mylonas views the EU-NATO relationship differently, and states that they make different demands; NATO is primarily a military alliance, albeit one that requires certain military

⁵ Harris Mylonas, “The Future of Euro-Atlantic Integration in the Western Balkans.” PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 208, (June 2012): 2. Last accessed 3 April 2015, <http://www.gwu.edu/~ieresgwu/assets/docs/ponars/pepm208.pdf>.

⁶ Jasmin Mujanovic, “Four Theses On Bosnia-Herzegovina’s Euro-Atlantic Future.” European Western Balkans, 16 March 2015, Last accessed 3 April 2015, <http://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2015/03/16/jasmin-mujanovic-for-ewb-four-theses-on-bosnia-herzegovinas-euro-atlantic-future/>.

⁷ Mylonas, “The Future of Euro-Atlantic Integration in the Western Balkans.” 1.

⁸ NATO, “NATO-EU: A Strategic Partnership.” Last updated 4 December 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49217.htm.

⁹ *Ibid.*

and human rights standards to be met, while the EU is a political and economic project that does not shy away from transforming societies.¹⁰ He acknowledges the high correlation between NATO and the EU though, but believes that the EU makes more demands on governments and people of the Balkans than does NATO, and it is for this reason that NATO has not faced the same level of fatigue that the EU has.¹¹ Both views appear to be correct; they do work very closely, yet in simple terms NATO is a military alliance whilst the EU fosters socio-economic development. What is debateable is whether “security is a precondition for any other type of activity” as Mylonas argues,¹² or if it is a ‘chicken and egg scenario’ where security comes after economic, social and political development, thus putting the onus on primacy of the relationship with the EU or NATO.

Membership of the EU and NATO is not inextricably linked. For example, Albania is a NATO member but is not in the EU and takes part in NATO-EU meetings. Similarly, so do the EU members of Sweden, Austria, Finland, Ireland and Malta that are NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) nations. However, Cyprus as an EU member but not a NATO or PfP nation is not permitted to take part in EU-NATO events. Bosnia-Herzegovina could theoretically join the EU but stay out of NATO; this is discussed further in the paper when considering Russia’s influence. Hadžović’s argument that EU membership itself is a solid guarantee for security and economic development has validity, though it is acknowledged that it might also be beneficial to be a PfP nation,

¹⁰ Mylonas, “The Future of Euro-Atlantic Integration in the Western Balkans.” 2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹² *Ibid.*

which enables participants to develop an individual relationship with NATO, choosing their own priorities for cooperation, and the level and pace of progress.^{13, 14}

NATO integration is undertaken through the Membership Action Plan (MAP); this is a NATO programme of advice, assistance and practical support tailored to the individual needs of countries wishing to join the Alliance. Countries participating in the MAP submit individual annual national programmes or roadmaps towards possible future membership covering not only defence but also political, economic, resource, security and legal aspects.¹⁵ Bosnia-Herzegovina was invited by NATO in April 2010 to join the MAP and with the assistance of a NATO team in Sarajevo has been working towards this ever since. From an EU perspective Bosnia-Herzegovina has been working towards membership for considerably longer; along with other Western Balkans countries it was identified as a potential candidate for EU membership in June 2003.¹⁶ Membership of the EU entails resolution of many issues within Bosnia-Herzegovina, including but not limited to, defence modernization, constitutional change, political and economic criteria, and judicial system reform including approximation to EU laws and standards. Some of these many issues will be discussed below.

¹³ Denis Hadžović, “The Costs And Benefits Of Bosnia And Herzegovina Joining NATO Alliance.” *Centre for Security Studies – Bosnia-Herzegovina*, (August 2009): 72, Last accessed 3 May 2015, http://www.css.ba/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/images_docs_troskovi%20i%20beneficije%20pridruzivanja%20nato%20eng.doc%201.pdf.

¹⁴ NATO, “The Partnership for Peace programme.” Last updated 31 March 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50349.htm.

¹⁵ NATO, “Membership Action Plan.” Last updated 10 June 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_37356.htm.

¹⁶ European Commission, “Bosnia and Herzegovina – Membership Status.” Last accessed 7 May 2015, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/bosnia-herzegovina/index_en.htm.

WHAT DOES EU ACCESSION MEAN FOR BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA AND THE EU?

According to Nevenka Savic, the Director of the Bosnian government's Directorate for EU Integration, becoming a member of the EU means, "[i]n the context of everyday life – employment growth, better living standards and better protection of citizens' rights. First of all, the reforms imply a reduction in the unemployment rate, gross domestic product (GDP) growth, a better investment climate and real social protection." Savic argues that in practice, this means lower tax burdens for employers, less bureaucracy in business and government, and social protection according to actual needs, rather than merit.¹⁷ She further comments that "integration into the EU is not an end in itself. It is a voluntary process, whose mechanisms should primarily serve one goal – improvement of citizens' living standards. A prerequisite for its achievement is transformation of the entire society."¹⁸ It is difficult to argue against Savic's view though it should be noted that "the EU pre-accession process has been one of the most ambitious democracy-promotion efforts ever attempted."¹⁹

So whilst it is clear that EU membership and the path to attaining that status could bring great benefit to Bosnia-Herzegovina, it should be asked whether the benefits only extend one way. First and foremost one should consider the epigraph in the introduction,

¹⁷ Nevenka Savic, "We need a reform-driven transformation of the entire society." *European Western Balkans*, 9 April 2015, Last accessed 13 April 2015, <http://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2015/04/09/nevenka-savic-we-need-a-reform-driven-transformation-of-the-entire-society/>.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Lenard J. Cohen and John R. Lampe, *Embracing Democracy in the Western Balkans: From Postconflict Struggles toward European Integration* (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press/The John Hopkins University Press, 2011), 450.

that “instability in your neighbourhood poses threats which no state can ignore.” It follows that improvement of social, economic and security conditions in Bosnia-Herzegovina will be good for the state itself, better for the immediate region and better for the EU. It is argued that the EU “has brought an era of peace, prosperity and stability to Europe such as it has never known – well at least since the Pax Romana.”²⁰ Furthermore, whilst it has been stated that EU and NATO *membership* for Bosnia-Herzegovina are not inextricably linked, it is argued that the two great *institutions* of Europe since the Second World War – NATO and the EU – *are* inextricably linked. NATO has provided the security umbrella under which Europe has progressed.²¹ It should be noted that EU membership of Bosnia-Herzegovina requires the EU to invest money; one might consider whether the EU can cope with further expansion. However, an examination of the EU’s ability to absorb new members shows that full membership of three Western Balkan states including Bosnia-Herzegovina would not create a burden for the EU.²²

Whilst it is not possible in this paper to examine all of the benefits of EU membership in depth, one element is clear: the economic implications are huge. One could argue that Bosnian politicians have been in favor of joining the EU “in the hope that it will effortlessly resolve the perils the Bosnian economy finds itself in.”²³ However, a study in the UK indicates that membership of the EU is worth 4-5% of the UK’s GDP,

²⁰ The American Center for a European Ukraine, “It’s time for a new NATO.” 7 February 2015, Last accessed 7 May 2015, <http://www.europeanukraine.org/home/2015/02/its-time-for-a-new-nato/>.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Babuna, "European Integration, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Stability in the Western Balkans...", 20.

²³ Dina Rokic, “Bosnia and EU enlargement.”, European Western Balkans, 1 June 2014, Last accessed 3 April 2015, <http://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2014/06/01/bosnia-and-eu-enlargement/>.

or up to 78 billion pounds per year.²⁴ Though Bosnia-Herzegovina will not benefit by this amount, the overall value of EU membership can be seen to be very positive.

Furthermore, one should also consider what might happen if it *does not* join the EU; “the entire Western Balkans has half as much population as Poland and... no country in this region has the conditions and resources to be an isolated island in the sea of still competitive European economy.”²⁵

If one looks at recently joined Croatia, it is estimated that Croatia is due to receive 13.7 billion Euros between 2014 and 2020.²⁶ Though on a different scale if one compares the GDP growth of the UK and Bosnia-Herzegovina, it can be seen that they are exactly the same at 2.4%, though of concern is the instability of growth and decline in Bosnia-Herzegovina.²⁷ Nye remarks that “Europeans tend to think that economic power is more important than military power”²⁸ and this feeds back into the ‘chicken and egg’ debate; will Bosnian stability come from a stable and improved economy or from military might as part of an alliance? It is contended that the economic security is required in the first instance, to then facilitate growth elsewhere.

²⁴ Confederation of British Industries, “Factsheet 2: Benefits of EU membership outweigh costs.” Last accessed 7 May 2015, <http://www.cbi.org.uk/campaigns/our-global-future/factsheets/factsheet-2-benefits-of-eu-membership-outweigh-costs/>.

²⁵ Savic, “We need a reform-driven transformation of the entire society.”

²⁶ Stratfor Analysis. “Croatia’s EU Membership: A Long Process with Dubious Rewards.” (July 2013).

²⁷ ieconomics.com, “GDP annual growth rate Bosnia and Herzegovina UK.” Last accessed 9 May 2015, <http://ieconomics.com/gdp-annual-growth-rate-bosnia-and-herzegovina-uk>.

²⁸ Joseph, S., Nye, *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 224.

An example of EU financial assistance – and it not going to plan in Bosnia-Herzegovina – was the EU Council signing the European Partnership in 2008 which set to provide EU assistance to Bosnia-Herzegovina through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) funds. As a potential candidate, Bosnia-Herzegovina is eligible for financial assistance for the first two IPA components which include transition assistance, institution building and cross-border cooperation. However, the EU postponed the second round of IPA funds as Bosnia-Herzegovina, once again, had not carried out the directives it was given. The key reason for this is the lack of constitutional reform in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the need for political consensus of all three peoples to be reached before any changes can be made.²⁹

This leads us to consider the constitutional issues in Bosnia-Herzegovina, whether the membership criteria are a ‘carrot’ or if the EU is providing a ‘stick’. Chandler’s opinion that “the EU recognizes that BiH ‘ownership’ of reform remains limited with international initiative, input and pressure guiding the process of transition”³⁰ may not be strictly accurate as there is certainly desire within some, perhaps many, elements of the Bosnian government and population to join the EU. A key issue is that the EU does not represent a means of addressing the problems arising from ethnocultural diversity, and therefore of solving the constitutional issues that are blocking further progress.³¹ The constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina prevents citizens who do not declare themselves as

²⁹ Rokic, “Bosnia and EU enlargement.”

³⁰ David Chandler, “From Dayton to Europe.” in *Peace Without Politics: Ten Years of International State Building in Bosnia*, ed. David Chandler, 40 (London: Routledge. 2006).

³¹ Christopher Hill, *The National Interest in Question: Foreign Policy in Multicultural Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 241.

one of the three constituent peoples – Bosniacs, Bosnian Serbs or Bosnian Croats – from standing as candidates for the Presidency and the House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly. This has been declared in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in the Sejdić-Finci judgment, and as Bosnia-Herzegovina is in breach of the ECHR the EU may accept that Bosnia has made progress towards accession, but will not permit it when such an obvious breach is being made.³² Furthermore Bosnia-Herzegovina cannot join the EU or NATO with its current constitution and political system; a population of less than four million people cannot support fourteen different governments operating on its territory. It cannot support every third employed person working in the public administration, all while 40% of the population is unemployed.³³

Until the constitutional issues are resolved the country will be in – at best – a stalemate, and this has been happening for some time. Savic notes that “[t]he EU does not lower membership criteria nor does it adjust them to any country in the process, whatever its specific features. On the contrary, the burden of adjustment is always on the aspiring countries.”³⁴ However, this seems to be at odds with Bassuener and Weber, who argue that “the international community reacted by lowering its own standards and conditionality in the vain hope that this would allow momentum to develop.”³⁵ European

³² European Commission, “Bosnia and Herzegovina Progress Report 2014.” (October 2014): 7, Last accessed 7 May 2015, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20141008-bosnia-and-herzegovina-progress-report_en.pdf.

³³ Mujanovic, “Four Theses On Bosnia-Herzegovina’s Euro-Atlantic Future.”

³⁴ Savic, “We need a reform-driven transformation of the entire society.”

³⁵ Kurt Bassuener and Bodo Weber, “House of Cards: The EU’s ‘Reinforced Presence’ in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Proposal for a New Policy Approach.” *Democracy and Security in Southeastern Europe* 4, Issue 12/13 (2013): 55.

Commission reports consistently note insufficient and limited overall progress.³⁶

Bassuener and Weber align with the brief explanation of the constitutional issues and argue that Bosnia-Herzegovina's accession process is jeopardized because reform commitments are not being met.³⁷ In 2014, after more than a decade of Bosnian effort, Rokic wrote that "[t]o define Bosnia-Herzegovina's path to the EU as prolonged would be a massive understatement. It is safe to say that unlike the remaining countries in the region of Western Balkans, [Bosnia-Herzegovina] is lagging behind on its road towards the EU membership."³⁸ Indeed, the most recent EU Progress Report on Bosnian accession notes that:

The country remains at a standstill in the European integration process. There remains a lack of collective political will on the part of the political leaders to address the reforms necessary for progress on the EU path. There has been very limited progress on political and economic issues and on moving towards European standards.³⁹

Rokic is even more pessimistic in her judgement that "[s]eeing as how all of these dates have come and gone and yet Bosnia has still not submitted an application, it is unknown whether Bosnia will ever be ready to meet the demands, reforms and deadlines of the European Union."⁴⁰ It is fair to say that the will existed when Bosnia-Herzegovina set out on the path to EU accession, but the EU might not now be so keen, as Western Europe has become increasingly disappointed with EU enlargement over the past

³⁶ Nevenka Savic, "We need a reform-driven transformation of the entire society."

³⁷ Bassuener and Weber, "House of Cards: The EU's 'Reinforced Presence' in Bosnia and Herzegovina..." 54.

³⁸ Rokic, "Bosnia and EU enlargement."

³⁹ European Commission, "Bosnia and Herzegovina Progress Report 2014." 1.

⁴⁰ Rokic, "Bosnia and EU enlargement."

decade.⁴¹ Bosnian politicians don't see the progress towards EU membership as all doom and gloom though; only last month did Savic state that "[t]here are numerous examples in which BiH has proved to be very functional and credible. The most recent one, from a few days ago, is that it complied with the standards for export of *potatoes* to the EU."⁴² Unfortunately potato export is not exactly the same as a new state constitution, and probably not a step that will see Bosnia-Herzegovina in the EU soon!

WHAT DOES NATO MEMBERSHIP MEAN FOR BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA AND NATO?

Former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright summarized the arguments for NATO expansion when she said that NATO:

...helped France and Germany reconcile with each other, making European integration possible, With other institutions it brought Italy, then Germany, and eventually Spain back into the family of European democracies. It denationalized allied defense policies. It has stabilized relations between Greece and Turkey. All without firing a shot.⁴³

Whilst with an obvious political agenda of promoting the (then) upcoming NATO expansion of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, President Clinton nevertheless added that:

... by admitting new states to the alliance, NATO will limit and help eliminate a potentially destabilizing vacuum in Europe, widening the circle of like-minded nations sharing common values and willing to

⁴¹ Stratfor Analysis. "Croatia's EU Membership..."

⁴² Savic, "We need a reform-driven transformation of the entire society."

⁴³ Madeleine Albright, "Enlarging NATO: Why Bigger is Better," *The Economist*, February 14, 1997.

shoulder common responsibilities and burdens. Already, the prospect of NATO enlargement has strengthened stability and democracy, and promoted regional cooperation among the states of Central and Eastern Europe.⁴⁴

It is difficult to argue against these points. Historical experience and data shows that the NATO expansion has so far had positive effects on the security and democratization of new members – NATO member countries have not waged mutual wars – and has contributed in general to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic zone.⁴⁵ Kříž and Stixová have a similar opinion but also note that in their case study of Macedonia, Albania and Croatia it was difficult to identify which reform efforts had been motivated by the effort to join NATO and which to become a member of the EU.⁴⁶

Whilst one might also consider if NATO has grown weary of the extended time period that Bosnia-Herzegovina has taken, NATO does publicly state that “[t]he Allies are committed to keeping NATO’s door open to Western Balkan partners that wish to join the Alliance.”⁴⁷ It might be asked what Bosnia can add to the might of NATO; legitimacy is one obvious answer, and the armed forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina have deployed in support of the International Security Assistance Force to Afghanistan even

⁴⁴ William J. Clinton, ”Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.” 24 February 1997, Last accessed 3 May 2015, http://fas.org/man/nato/offdocs/us_97/97022406.htm.

⁴⁵ Goran Pranjic, “Benefits of NATO Membership: Historical Experience and the Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina.” *Democracy and Security in Southeastern Europe* 4, Issue 12/13 (2013): 47.

⁴⁶ Zdeněk Kříž and Markéta Stixová. "Does NATO Enlargement Spread Democracy? The Democratic Stabilization of Western Balkan Countries." *Central European Political Studies Review / Stredoevropske Politicke Studie* 14, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 27.

⁴⁷ NATO, “NATO’S Relations With Bosnia And Herzegovina.” 17 Jun 2014, Last accessed 6 May 2015, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49127.htm.

though, or perhaps because, they are working towards the MAP themselves.⁴⁸ To become a member of NATO Bosnia-Herzegovina must represent added value to NATO, no matter how incremental, and this support to ISAF adds value.⁴⁹ However, “[t]he NATO alliance cannot abide a member whose security policy-making capabilities are internally fractured and compromised by anti-European elements, as are currently seen in Bosnia-Herzegovina.”⁵⁰

In terms of what Bosnia-Herzegovina might gain from joining NATO, “[t]he most frequently made assertion concerning the path toward NATO membership is that the accession process itself contributes to the improvement of the security and stability of candidate countries.”⁵¹ Conducting a cost-benefit analysis of Bosnia-Herzegovina joining NATO, and interestingly with funding from the British government to do so, Hadžović states that “[t]his stems primarily from the fact that countries in the process of integration into NATO must make a number of reforms, not just in the security sector but also the overall political, institutional and economic environment.”⁵² Furthermore, it is interesting to note that work done to achieve NATO membership is also useful and a stimulating influence towards a state striving to attain EU membership, and vice versa.⁵³ EU membership might be seen as more achievable and realistic; whilst a NATO team

⁴⁸ NATO, “ISAF Recognizes Nations Through Social Media Campaign.” 23 October 2014, Last accessed on 6 May 2015, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_113975.htm.

⁴⁹ Pranjić, “Benefits of NATO Membership: Historical Experience and the Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina.” 51.

⁵⁰ Mujanovic, “Four Theses On Bosnia-Herzegovina’s Euro-Atlantic Future.”

⁵¹ Pranjić, “Benefits of NATO Membership: Historical Experience and the Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina.” 47.

⁵² Hadžović, “The Costs And Benefits Of Bosnia And Herzegovina Joining NATO Alliance.” 37.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

remains in Bosnia-Herzegovina today with the sole aim of defence sector reform, “the EU has... had undisputed dominance as the preeminent international actor in Bosnia since September 2011.”⁵⁴ Notwithstanding the argument on whether the EU or NATO has primacy, it appears clear that Bosnia-Herzegovina needs to be a member of the EU, NATO or both as for “a small country with limited financial resources, in terms of modern non-conventional threats, it is impossible to provide security to citizens with only relying on domestic resources.”⁵⁵

As was the case when considering EU membership, the costs and economic considerations are vital: can Bosnia-Herzegovina afford to be a NATO member? It is commonly known that NATO says that its members should spend 2% of their GDP on defence, with 20% of that spent on defence investment – known as the “2-20 goal” – although this is a target rather than a mandated amount. Bosnia’s approved defence budget since 2006 has been 1.4% or lower, significantly less than the recommended NATO level.⁵⁶ However, this is not a critical factor; of note, only 4 of 28 NATO members spent 2% or more of their GDP on defence in 2014. Indeed, as an example Germany’s defence minister Ursula von der Leyen noted that due to its strong economy the German GDP was high, and its actual spending on defence was the second highest in NATO even if it wasn’t 2% of German GDP.⁵⁷ Unfortunately the 2% spending figure can be argued against by Germany as 2% is a large amount of money, but this argument

⁵⁴ Bassuener and Weber, “House of Cards: The EU’s ‘Reinforced Presence’ in Bosnia and Herzegovina...” 55.

⁵⁵ Hadžović, “The Costs And Benefits Of Bosnia And Herzegovina Joining NATO Alliance.” 26.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵⁷ Deutsche Welle, “Von der Leyen dubious about NATO's 2-percent rule,” 7 September 2014, Last accessed 3 May 2015, <http://www.dw.de/von-der-leyen-dubious-about-natos-2-percent-rule/a-17907143>.

might not hold water for Bosnia-Herzegovina's much smaller economy. Hasik believes that the 2% value "may just be a stake in the ground, which seemed politically palatable when adopted in the 1990s, to rally European NATO to remediate its collective action problem."⁵⁸

As well as looking at the ability to meet the target of 2% GDP spending it is worth considering the additional costs of being in NATO and of improving a state's armed force; "[i]n the case of Slovenia, the direct impact of the modernization of the army joining NATO was estimated at about 0.1% of GDP, while personnel costs increased due to the professionalization for some 0.4%."⁵⁹ Of course, Bosnia-Herzegovina would have to account for the direct costs of NATO membership such as contribution to the common budget of NATO, costs related to civil and military representation in NATO, costs related to the obligations of troops in joint operations, costs of participation in common activities of NATO, and maintaining the defence budget at the "2-20" level in order to achieve modernization and restructuring of the armed forces to NATO standards.⁶⁰ However, the costs of being a NATO member are assessed as being immeasurably lower than the cost of self-defence against the same threats.⁶¹ On an even brighter note Hadžović determined, perhaps surprisingly, that "there are no clear

⁵⁸ James Hasik, "Is NATO's 2% of GDP a relevant target?" Atlantic Council, 8 September 2014, Last accessed 3 May 2015, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/defense-industrialist/is-nato-s-2-of-gdp-a-relevant-target>.

⁵⁹ Hadžović, "The Costs And Benefits Of Bosnia And Herzegovina Joining NATO Alliance." 32.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁶¹ Pranjić, "Benefits of NATO Membership: Historical Experience and the Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina." 52.

indications that NATO membership significantly increases the growth of public expenditure for defence.”⁶²

Even if Bosnia can afford to be in NATO, would NATO actually step in if Bosnia failed? It isn't known what being a member of NATO would bring with respect to Bosnia-Herzegovina's access to collective self-defence under Article 5 of the NATO treaty, though in theory an attack on one member is seen as an attack on all.⁶³ Indeed, it might depend who the aggressor is: one could see a swift NATO response occurring if an attack was launched by Serbia for example. However, would NATO step in if *Russia* targeted Bosnia-Herzegovina as a NATO member? It might indeed be determined that this would be escalatory towards Russia, although it could well be the case that Bosnian membership of NATO would be a suitable deterrent to Russia in the first place.

Looking at it from the reverse, would Bosnia-Herzegovina commit troops to NATO missions? Through encouragement and facilitation by the US, we've already seen that Bosnia has contributed regularly to ISAF in Afghanistan. However, it should be noted that the possibility of the death of Bosnian soldiers on a NATO mission represents a serious burden for society and a possible barrier to participation in the missions of the Alliance. In Bosnia and Herzegovina 53% of citizens do not support the participation of armed forces in international peacekeeping missions.⁶⁴

⁶² Hadžović, “The Costs And Benefits Of Bosnia And Herzegovina Joining NATO Alliance.” 41-42.

⁶³ NATO, “The North Atlantic Treaty.” 4 April 1949, Last accessed 3 May 2015, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm.

⁶⁴ Hadžović, “The Costs And Benefits Of Bosnia And Herzegovina Joining NATO Alliance.” 62.

One should also ask whether Bosnia-Herzegovina actually needs a strong, NATO-standard, military or if – perhaps controversially – it is it potentially just training up the fighters for the next civil war in the country? It could be that a small yet efficient force is established in Bosnia-Herzegovina that can commit professional forces to NATO, which in turn earns respect and benefits of a much larger collective self-defence. Pranjic summarizes some of the benefits to Bosnia-Herzegovina of NATO membership, in essence saying that it is about the journey and not necessarily the destination:

Transforming the perception of BiH as a country of war, a Balkan country, a country of insecurity, is another very important issue. By improving the efficiency of institutions, reducing the influence of corruption and organized crime, and improving the rule of law and protection of human rights – all basic standards promoted by NATO – as well as increasing general security and stability in BiH and the region, the economy of BiH will see positive direct effects, which will ultimately equate to direct benefits for Bosnian citizens.⁶⁵

SOME COMPLICATING FACTORS – A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY, THE NEIGHBOURS AND RUSSIA, AND THE FRAGILITY OF BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia is a country of hatred and fear.

– Ivo Andrić, 1946, “Letter from the year 1920”

Whilst the epigraph above is a line of fiction from a Nobel-prize winning author it is based on his experience in the Western Balkans and it might well ring true today as it has done throughout the years. Bosnia-Herzegovina has a unique makeup in terms of

⁶⁵ Pranjic, “Benefits of NATO Membership: Historical Experience and the Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina.” 49-50.

Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats and Bosniacs, the ethnic Muslim population, although minorities such as Jews and Roma should also not be forgotten; indeed that is the reason that the constitution has not been deemed legal by the EU. They have worked in harmony – and still do – but politically a status of permanent stalemate, veto, and even inflammatory vitriol seems to prevail. It is beyond the scope of this paper to ponder in depth if Bosnia-Herzegovina actually has a future as a state, but Dunne and Schmidt's view is worthy of note: "...the creation of multi-ethnic states might be a noble endeavor, [but] realists argue that they do not have a very good success rate. Ethnically homogeneous states are held by realists to be more stable and less dependent on outside military occupation."⁶⁶ It has been considered whether the Dayton Peace Agreement, or General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina⁶⁷, should not have prevented the breakup of Bosnia-Herzegovina along the 3 constituent ethnic lines; however the US and EU have concluded that a full legal partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina would lead, using violence, to a Muslim state, which has predictably evoked images of a future terrorist or rogue state and a hub of Islamic radicalization in Europe.⁶⁸ Whilst each of the 3 ethnic groups have all had unsavoury leaders, a key protagonist has been Milorad Dodik, President of Republika Srpska; indeed, he has "advocated the dissolution of BiH

⁶⁶ Tim Dunne and Brian C. Schmidt, "Realism", in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, ed. John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens, 102 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁶⁷ General Framework Agreement for Peace, Initialled in Dayton on 21 November 1995 and signed in Paris on 14 December 1995, Last accessed 5 May 2015, http://www.oscebih.org/dejtonski_mirovni_sporazum/EN/.

⁶⁸ Asim Jusic, "International and EU policy and the Constitutional Reform in Bosnia." *Turkish Journal Of Politics* 2, no. 2 (Winter 2011): 25.

and independence for Republika Srpska, saying that they are historically inevitable.”⁶⁹ On the other hand, Bosnian politician Nevenka Savic, Director of the Directorate for European Integration in the Bosnia-Herzegovinan Council of Ministers, argues that “we should not make a “case” of the fact that Bosnia-Herzegovina is a complex state of divided jurisdictions, as many EU Member States are such.”⁷⁰ Furthermore, Belloni believes that “[t]he contact between individuals of different ethnic groups diminishes the salience of extreme political views and the overall likelihood of violence.”⁷¹

One thing that cannot be ignored is that neighbouring states *have* been able to meet the conditions for EU and NATO membership; does this serve to spur Bosnia on? Some examples of Croatian and Slovenian success have already been mentioned in this paper but “[d]espite claims to the contrary by both the leadership in Serbia and Croatia, the two states continue to exercise a largely negative influence on their smaller neighbour [Bosnia-Herzegovina].”⁷² Although he was writing 2 years before Croatia joined the EU Pettifer’s ideas could still be applicable in the Croatia-Serbia-Bosnia-Herzegovina relationship. He wrote:

It is also arguable that the medium/long-term effects of Croatian EU membership on Bosnia Herzegovina will be unhelpful. If Croatia joins the EU long before Serbia and Bosnia have only started the accession process, with membership many years away, it is an open question as to whether the Croatian part of Bosnia will remain a part of the Sarajevo-capital entity, whether what remains of the Croat-Muslim alliance will hold any

⁶⁹ Bassuener and Weber, “House of Cards: The EU’s ‘Reinforced Presence’ in Bosnia and Herzegovina...” 57.

⁷⁰ Savic, “We need a reform-driven transformation of the entire society.”

⁷¹ Roberto Belloni, *State Building and International Intervention in Bosnia* (London: Routledge, 2007), 184.

⁷² Mujanovic, “Four Theses On Bosnia-Herzegovina’s Euro-Atlantic Future.”

substance, or whether it will gravitate towards Zagreb in an irreversible way. This development could accelerate already existing separatist tendencies in Republika Srpska towards Belgrade and reopen a major Bosnian crisis.”⁷³

Looking further at the Croatia-Serbia-Bosnia-Herzegovina relationship, Mujanovic opines that “Serbia cannot claim to “respect the territorial sovereignty” of Bosnia while simultaneously dubbing itself the guardian of the interests of the Serb people in this neighbouring state”, whilst Croatia more so than Serbia has become a problem for Bosnia-Herzegovina’s future Euro-Atlantic integration. He also writes that “[s]ince Croatia joined the EU, and especially since the election of Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović [as Croatian President in February 2015], Zagreb has made clear its intention to “defend the interests” of the Croat community in BiH.”⁷⁴ Bosnia-Herzegovina has a different make-up to other previous NATO and EU candidates: there is a “growing awareness of the inadequacy of applying the Central European enlargement experience to BiH.”⁷⁵

One must consider Russian influence when looking at Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in particular Russia’s relationship with Bosnia’s neighbour of Serbia, and also therefore with the entity of Republika Srpska within the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bailes sees that Serbia is not ready for Euro-Atlantic integration due to the attitudes it still exhibits,

⁷³ James Pettifer, “The Western Balkans: Returning instability”, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom. (June 2011): 1, Last accessed 7 April 2015
<http://www.da.mod.uk/DesktopModules/EasyDNNNews/DocumentDownload.ashx?portalid=0&moduleid=2116&articleid=740&documentid=868>.

⁷⁴ Mujanovic, “Four Theses On Bosnia-Herzegovina’s Euro-Atlantic Future.”

⁷⁵ Bassuener and Weber, “House of Cards: The EU’s ‘Reinforced Presence’ in Bosnia and Herzegovina...” 55.

and Russia's political influence in Serbia has been seen as the best opening for manipulating events in 'core' European territory.⁷⁶ Even recently Serbia sent troops to a military parade in Moscow and this is being interpreted as an indication that Serbia is not committed to EU integration.⁷⁷ The potential exists with NATO expansion for Russia to lose the 'air gap' between itself and NATO, and whilst Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia are not direct neighbours of Russia the loss of influence might make Russia nervous. Russia is more likely to tolerate EU membership of Bosnia, but the military nature of NATO could be more concerning. In terms of NATO expansion, Kramer has recently shown that NATO has never pledged to keep a buffer zone between the West and Russia:

...the purpose here has simply been to determine whether Russian and western observers and officials are justified in arguing that the US government, and perhaps some of the other NATO governments, made a 'pledge' to Gorbachev in 1990 that if the USSR consented to Germany's full membership in NATO after unification, the alliance would not expand to include any other East European countries. Declassified materials show unmistakably that no such pledge was made. Valid arguments can be made against NATO enlargement, but this particular argument is spurious.⁷⁸

It is also interesting to note that Russia abstained in late 2014 from the UN Security Council vote to extend the European peacekeeping mandate for Bosnia-Herzegovina, reportedly stating that the country cannot be forced into the EU from the

⁷⁶ Alyson J. K. Bailes, "Europe's Security: Attitudes, Achievements, and Unsolved Challenges" in *Rewiring Regional Security in a Fragmented World*, ed. Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall, 282 (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press. 2011).

⁷⁷ Eduard Kukan, "Participation of Serbian soldiers in military parade in Moscow might have an influence on the EU integration process of the country." 7 April 2015, Last accessed 13 April 2015, <http://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2015/04/07/kukan-mep-participation-of-serbian-soldiers-in-military-parade-in-moscow-might-have-an-influence-on-the-eu-integration-process-of-the-country/>.

⁷⁸ Mark Kramer, "Kramer debunked the notion that NATO pledged non-enlargement to Russia." PONARS Eurasia, Last accessed 6 May 2015, <http://www.ponarseurasia.org/article/kramer-debunked-notion-nato-pledged-non-enlargement-russia>.

outside.⁷⁹ However, the the EU's strategy remains grounded in "positive incentives" rather than forcing Bosnia-Herzegovina into the EU, and these do not necessarily provide an effective balance against Moscow's predominantly "negative incentives." Moreover, the EU's positive incentives are conditional and may bear fruit only in the long run, while Russian pressure and receivables exert immediate effect.⁸⁰

Finally, when considering if Bosnia-Herzegovina is suitable for Euro-Atlantic integration the 2014 Fragile States Index was considered. Perhaps encouragingly, Bosnia-Herzegovina 'only' came 86th overall (where 1st place was deemed the most failing state), notably with China at 68, India at 81 and Russia at 85 – so Bosnia-Herzegovina is 'less failing' than 3 of the BRICS nations!⁸¹ Of course, this could be a fault with how the index is calculated, as in the first instance one would consider the economies of China and India to be success stories. When looked at more closely Bosnia's worst position amongst the various categories was in 'Factionalized Elites, meaning conflict and competition among local and national leaders.' This position of 31st could indicate Bosnia's weakness, which is supported by many views. Rokic states that "...in a country as decentralized as Bosnia and with such a catastrophically elevated percentage of political corruption, major changes from within have to take place before the road to the

⁷⁹ Adis Merdzanovic, "Bosnia: A new opportunity for getting closer to the EU?" euobserver, 4 December 2014, Last accessed 3 May 2015, <https://euobserver.com/opinion/126780>.

⁸⁰ Andrey Makarychev, "The EU in Eastern Europe: Has Normative Power Become Geopolitical?" PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 310, February 2014. Last accessed 3 April 2015, <http://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/eu-eastern-europe-has-normative-power-become-geopolitical-co-author-andrey-devyatkov>.

⁸¹ *Foreign Policy*, 2014 Fragile States Index – Rankings and Map, Last accessed 5 May 2015, <http://foreignpolicy.com/fragile-states-2014/#rankings>.

European Union can continue in any way, shape or form.”⁸² Furthermore, and linking Serbia and Republika Srpska again with Russia, Mujanovic describes the corrupt political network as “a crop of small-time political hustlers.”⁸³ He also states that they “have not only been allowed to completely derail the country’s integration into the European state system more broadly but men like Milorad Dodik now conspire openly with Europe’s enemies in the heart of the continent’s soft underbelly.”⁸⁴ Having said all of this about political corruption and Bosnia-Herzegovina still being a fragile state, *Foreign Policy* actually sees Bosnia as a success story in its comment on the 2014 Fragile States Index:

Ten years ago, Bosnia-Herzegovina was still struggling to build a sustainable state after the 1990s war that tore it apart. Since then, the country has improved more than any other country in the index. Major concerns about ethnic tensions, corruption, and governance remain, but the disparities among different groups and regions have greatly improved, as have measures related to refugees, internally displaced persons, and demographic pressures.⁸⁵

This highlights the ever-difficult question of how to measure success. Bassuner and Weber argue that Bosnia-Herzegovina’s “institutional, economic and social deterioration continues”⁸⁶ and the 2014 European Commission Progress report is yet more critical: “[t]here was little progress in advancing reforms to reduce corruption, which continues to affect the entire public sector and remains most acute in the areas of

⁸² Rokic, “Bosnia and EU enlargement.”

⁸³ Mujanovic, “Four Theses On Bosnia-Herzegovina’s Euro-Atlantic Future.”

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Foreign Policy*, 2014 Fragile States Index – Notable Changes and Scores, Last accessed 5 May 2015, <http://foreignpolicy.com/fragile-states-2014/#highlights> .

⁸⁶ Bassuener and Weber, “House of Cards: The EU’s ‘Reinforced Presence’ in Bosnia and Herzegovina...” 54.

service delivery and access to employment.”⁸⁷ It appears clear that an area which would make Bosnia-Herzegovina less fragile, and smooth the path to Euro-Atlantic integration, is to address the corruption in its politics; Mujanovic’s comparison with Croatia and supposition might yet ring true as Bosnia-Herzegovina treads the path to integration: he believes that “almost all of the required EU political, economic, and social reforms in Bosnia-Herzegovina would result in the ouster from power, and likely imprisonment, of the very people carrying through the reforms, as it did in Croatia”⁸⁸ In Croatia the former Prime Minister Ivo Sanader was sentenced in 2012 to 10 years imprisonment for corruption.

CONCLUSION

The Balkans have become boring but not yet boring enough.

– Sir John Holmes, The Ditchley Foundation, Oxford, February 2013

This paper analysed the steps being taken to accede Bosnia-Herzegovina into the EU and permit it NATO membership, and whether the ultimate end goals are actually viable and in the best interests of the country, the EU and NATO. An examination of Euro-Atlantic integration was given, before an examination of what becoming an EU or NATO member means for the institutions and for Bosnia-Herzegovina itself. Key complicating factors were also considered that might not have been applicable to other states that underwent accession, including the effect of Bosnia-Herzegovina having a multicultural society, the effect that Bosnia-Herzegovina’s neighbours might have, how

⁸⁷ European Commission, “Bosnia and Herzegovina Progress Report 2014.” 2.

⁸⁸ Mujanovic, “Four Theses On Bosnia-Herzegovina’s Euro-Atlantic Future.”

Russia influences the region, and the fragility of Bosnia-Herzegovina according to the 2014 Fragile States Index.

As can be seen from this paper, EU accession and NATO membership offer clear benefits for Bosnia-Herzegovina; EU membership, and certainly the achievements along the path to membership would be good for Bosnia-Herzegovina socio-economically. NATO membership offers it 'hard' security and means that Bosnia-Herzegovina will have decided and have been accepted to align with NATO and the collective security it offers rather than aligning to Russia or remaining neutral. Similarly, if Bosnia-Herzegovina joined the EU and NATO it would also create benefits for the EU and NATO. For EU states the improvement of socio-economic conditions in Bosnia and the Western Balkans as a whole has clear potential to reduce crime and the security threat that created war in Europe only 2 decades ago.

While being a member of one institution does not mandate a country to be a member of the other, it would be prudent for Bosnia-Herzegovina to at least be an EU member and a PfP member of NATO: "only a democratic, functional, and sovereign Bosnia-Herzegovina can provide lasting regional stability. A Bosnia-Herzegovina that remains a prize to be won by Serbia or Croatia will only further distance the whole of the Western Balkans..."⁸⁹ In its current state though Bosnian membership of either the EU or NATO is not realistic; however "one dreadful alternative is the so-called "black hole," by

⁸⁹ Mujanovic, "Four Theses On Bosnia-Herzegovina's Euro-Atlantic Future."

which Western Balkan countries, which remain outside the EU, simply continue to “export” instability and uncertainty to the rest of Europe.”⁹⁰

There are problems inherent in achieving these goals. The current political system appears untenable, and what was designed by the General Framework Agreement for Peace to move Bosnia-Herzegovina away from war 20 years ago is no longer conducive to decision making. What is clear is that the appetite of the key players within the EU, such as the UK and Germany, is still there to assist Bosnia-Herzegovina into the EU and this offer of assistance (that has existed for over a decade) should be seized upon before circumstances change for the worst. First and foremost however is the need for constitutional change and the eradication – or at least reduction to a level that will ultimately prove acceptable to the EU and NATO – of corruption within the Bosnian ‘factionalized elites’.

⁹⁰ Mylonas, “The Future of Euro-Atlantic Integration in the Western Balkans.” 4.

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