

Statement

**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Subcommittee on European Affairs**

“The Successor States to Pre-1991 Yugoslavia: Progress and Challenges”

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for inviting me to address this hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on European Affairs. My initial comments will focus on the findings and recommendations of the Council on Foreign Relations' recent independent task force report, *Balkans 2010*. I will conclude with some personal views on the situation in the Balkans. I ask that the full text of our report be entered in to the record. Unless otherwise noted, the report reflects the consensus views of task force members. I should clarify at the outset that when I say "Balkans," I am referring primarily to the states of the former Yugoslavia, with the exception of Slovenia.

As noted in our report, much progress has been made in the Balkans—particularly since Slobodan Milosevic's fall from power in the fall of 2000—but there is still a lot of work remaining to ensure that the successor states become stable, democratic, economically self-sufficient, lawful, and secure partners in a regional and European framework. So the question is, how to get there? The *Balkans 2010* report covered a range of issues vital for progress in the region—including the international role in the Balkans; public security, transitional justice, and the rule of law; economic restructuring and development; refugees and internally displaced persons; and civil society, education, and the media—but there are three recommendations in particular that I think are key in the context of this hearing.

First is ensuring that the European Union and NATO are the primary agents of international influence in the Balkans over the coming decade, albeit with strong U.S. support and interests. The EU's Stabilization and Association Process, in conjunction with continued NATO peacekeeping operations and NATO's Partnership for Peace program and Membership Action Plan, are the blueprints around which the international community can most usefully organize and prioritize its actions, incentives, and penalties. Taken as a whole, these programs

provide the necessary standards for association with, and integration into, Europe, which is absolutely crucial to a successful future for the Balkan states. It is in America's interest to recognize and support the EU's lead in setting standards and providing assistance, and to help the EU stay the course and keep it accountable for its end of the bargain.

Second is the necessity of combating the parasitic politico-criminal-nationalist syndicates that, as Senator Biden has said, "remain a destabilizing factor in the region and an obstacle to reform efforts." A principal recommendation of the *Balkans 2010* task force was the implementation of vigorous campaigns aimed at crippling these criminal groups that threaten internal and regional security. The initiatives undertaken by the Serbian government since Prime Minister Djindjic's assassination are a significant step, and it is important that authorities in other areas, including the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in Bosnia, the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), and the government of Croatia, follow suit with targeted campaigns of their own against the individuals and groups implicated in the illegal intersection of government and financial power. The United States should firmly support these efforts with money and manpower because, simply put, reform won't stick and public security won't be established as long as these politico-criminal groups are allowed to exist.

The third recommendation, related to the second, is the importance of building the rule of law, both civil and criminal, in the Balkans. You can't talk about building the rule of law in the region without reiterating the absolute necessity of arresting war criminals, especially Radovan Karadzic, Ratko Mladic, and Ante Gotovina, and sending them to The Hague. It is encouraging to see the recent arrest of Veselin Sljivancanin, the third most wanted fugitive after Karadzic and Mladic, on the eve of the U.S. deadline to withhold its aid package. This demonstrates two things: that the U.S. still has a lot of pull in the region, and needs to stay engaged in order to

encourage constructive change; and that conditionality remains the best stick we have to ensure that progress on this front continues, and in particular that Karadzic and Mladic are brought to justice sooner rather than later.

Two of the specific issues that this hearing seeks to address are the status of reform efforts, including defense reforms, in Serbia and Montenegro since Djindjic's assassination, and NATO's role in the Balkans. I'd like to elaborate on both of these topics, in part because of the linkages I see between them.

I've already touched on Serbia's recent campaigns against the criminal syndicates, which deserve our continued support. The key for maintaining reform and progress in Serbia and Montenegro, as elsewhere in the region, is to tangibly strengthen the hand of reformist groups in the government, while marginalizing those who oppose reform. There are two steps that the United States can take now that will serve this end.

The first is to use America's influence within NATO to strongly support Serbia and Montenegro's recent application for admission to the Partnership for Peace program. Having Serbia and Montenegro as an active participant in Partnership for Peace is important for enabling the reforms that the country needs to establish civilian democratic control of its military and security forces. I might add, Mr. Chairman, that the Partnership for Peace program itself needs new energy from and emphasis by American leaders.

A second way that the U.S. can reward progress in Serbia and Montenegro, while furthering defense reforms, is to open our Professional Military Education programs to junior officers—lieutenants through majors—in the Serbia and Montenegro army. Beginning the training and education of the next generation of military leaders in Serbia and Montenegro will be indispensable in reaching the standards of professionalism and civilian democratic control that

their military needs to face the challenges of democratization and be responsible partners in a regional security framework, and serves as an appropriate carrot for ongoing reform.

I believe that NATO has a constructive role to play in military reform and security in Serbia and Montenegro. Moving on to the role of NATO more generally, I remain convinced that the NATO peacekeeping operations in the region should continue at the current force levels until effective alternative public security forces have been developed. Much has been made of the recent handover of the NATO mission in Macedonia to the European Union, and I support that transition and the EU's willingness to take on greater responsibilities in this area. But that is by no means a template for the NATO forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, for two reasons. First, despite the handover, the EU still does not have the capability needed to take on even the small-scale mission in Macedonia. Rather, the European Union's assumption of the mission was made possible by an EU-NATO agreement giving the EU access to the collective assets and capabilities of NATO, and NATO maintains a senior civilian representative and senior military representative in NATO headquarters in Skopje. At the present time, only NATO has the capability to maintain the much larger, much needed forces in Kosovo and Bosnia.

Secondly—and this gets at the issue of U.S. involvement in the NATO peacekeeping operations—I still strongly believe that the presence of U.S. troops in the Balkans is a vital demonstration of this country's willingness to do what it takes to “win the peace,” which, as we've all seen in the past few months, is just as important as winning the war. Therefore, I emphasize the importance both of maintaining NATO's peacekeeping operations in the region at the current levels, and of continuing the current ratio of U.S. troop contributions to those operations. At present there are less than 4,500 U.S. troops in the Balkans, and I recommend that this number remain stable. I also envision that NATO's role in Bosnia and Kosovo can evolve

with the security situations in the two areas, moving from security provision to security development as appropriate. This latter initiative should be the major focus of the Partnership for Peace exercises in the region.

Finally, with regards to Kosovo, UNMIK's policy of "standards before status" is conceptually sound and deserves our support, which requires resources that, unfortunately, have not been entirely forthcoming from the international aid community or private investors.

In closing, I thank the Committee for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today, and for keeping a focus on the Balkans during a time when there are so many other pressing issues on the world stage. It is this long-term commitment by the U.S. and its allies that has been at the heart of the remarkable transformation of this region. Until recently, I never thought I'd have to defend the idea that staying the course and finishing a job is a crucial part of any international intervention. But we would not be at this juncture, discussing the progress of these fledgling democracies, if we had not gone through these often messy, complicated, but worthwhile tasks. Thank you.