

Robert L. Barry

After the Bombing: The OSCE in the Aftermath of the Kosovo Crisis

The impact of the recent crisis in Kosovo has been the equivalent of a powerful earthquake in the heart of South-eastern Europe. Both the NATO air campaign and the Yugoslav military offensive against the Kosovar Albanians have resulted in a profound upheaval in the region's political and social landscape, and the shock-waves will continue to reverberate across the region for some time to come. Picking up the pieces once the earth stops shaking will require many years, and a co-ordinated, consistent, and sustained international effort. Even before the dust settles, therefore, it is imperative that we begin to think about the process of reconstructing the social and political infrastructure, not only of Kosovo, but of the entire region of which Kosovo is an integral part. The aim of the international community should be not simply to rebuild Kosovo, although this must of course be a priority, but to stabilize all of South-eastern Europe. In this paper, I want to address the question of the OSCE's role in this process, and suggest that it is in fact time for the OSCE to take on a stronger regional role in this deeply troubled corner of Europe.

In thinking through the international response to post-conflict Kosovo, and the OSCE's part in this response, it is important to draw from the lessons that have been learned from the international community's experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the past several years. While the conflicts in Bosnia and in Kosovo are clearly very different, there is much to be learned from the Bosnian experience, not only in terms of how we approach Kosovo but in terms of how we approach the region as a whole.

The Need for Regional Thinking

First, one of the most important lessons that we have learned in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the need for a region-wide approach to the challenges of building peace and stability. All parts of South-eastern Europe are intimately and irrevocably connected by history, by politics, by culture, and by geography, and there is no escaping the fact that events in one part of the region inevitably have impacts in other parts. Over the past several years, we have learned that Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be insulated from the impact of political events beyond its borders, and that events in neighbouring states often have as great an impact on the peace process as events within Bosnia and

Herzegovina itself. Bosnia and Herzegovina has been, in many ways, a victim of its neighbours, and this is certainly no less true in the case of Kosovo. In South-eastern Europe, perhaps more than in any other region of the globe, it is a fact that peace and stability in one state depend on peace and stability in all states. This applies to issues such as the mobilization and co-ordination of the international reconstruction effort, since it makes no sense to focus all of our resources on one part of the region only to see conflict re-emerge in some neglected corner. It also applies to the challenge of reversing the trend towards further ethnic division in the region; from the return of refugees and displaced persons, to the challenge of fostering inter-ethnic reconciliation and tolerance, to the protection of minority rights, this is a task that requires simultaneous, co-ordinated and ongoing efforts on many fronts. In short, in the aftermath of the Kosovo crisis, the task of political stabilization, economic reconstruction, refugee resettlement and institution-building will be huge, and we cannot hope to overcome these challenges unless we approach them with a regional perspective.

We must, therefore, begin to think not in terms of self-contained missions to individual states, but in terms of a co-ordinated approach to the myriad of inter-connected and over-lapping problems in the region as a whole. It is this thinking that underlies the European Union's recent initiative on a Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. The explicit aims of the Stability Pact, signed in Cologne in June 1999, are to reduce tension, promote democracy and respect for human rights, foster peaceful relations and create vibrant market economies across South-eastern Europe through a comprehensive and coherent approach to the region. While most of the major international organizations active in Europe will participate in the implementation of the pact, the OSCE will take on a leading role, and the Stability Pact is likely to become a key element of the OSCE's mandate.

Co-ordinating Command and Control

Another important lesson to be drawn from the Dayton implementation process in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the need for the international community to speak with a single voice on implementation questions. As the peace implementation process in Kosovo begins to unfold, and as we look towards a more comprehensive approach to the entire Balkan region, foremost in our minds must be the establishment of a clear chain of command and an integrated decision-making structure. The international community must not allow itself to speak in a cacophony of conflicting or even competing voices. Rather, the international community's efforts, from the work of individual

agencies in the field to the highest levels of political leadership, must be guided by a single vision and clear lines of authority.

The existence of a single, co-ordinated chain of command, with responsibility for managing international reconstruction efforts not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo but across South-eastern Europe, would also enable us to more effectively carry out long-term planning. Experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina has taught us that rebuilding post-conflict societies is a matter not of months, but of years, and that a pre-occupation with exit strategies and short-term mandates undermines rather than contributes to the peace and reconstruction process. Until recently in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, looming deadlines for the withdrawal or reduction of the international presence have encouraged nationalist hard-liners to attempt to "wait out" the international community, in the hopes that once Bosnia and Herzegovina ceased to be the focus of international attention they could continue to pursue their various nationalist agendas. Only now, with the recognition that the international presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina will remain until a self-sustaining peace is established, are nationalist extremists beginning to understand that the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords is the only way forward.

The OSCE Role in South-Eastern Europe

Of all the international organizations currently active in South-eastern Europe, the OSCE is in many ways uniquely qualified to take on a greater role in co-ordinating international peace and reconstruction efforts throughout the region. The OSCE has a field presence and considerable institutional experience in all countries of the region, and our field personnel will be a vital asset as we look towards taking on a more prominent institution-building role under the Stability Pact. Similarly, since its inception the OSCE's *raison d'être* has been European peace and security, and with 55 participating States, the OSCE's membership includes all of the main players in the region - the United States, Canada, the European Union, the Russian Federation, and the states of Central and Eastern Europe. The latter states are particularly important, since they not only surround the Balkans, but they can also draw from their own recent experiences to help their neighbours make the difficult transition to democracy and market economies.

Now that the bombs have stopped falling in Yugoslavia, the shape of the international presence in Kosovo is beginning to come into focus. While the United Nations will have overall responsibility for overseeing the peace implementation process, the OSCE will have a major role to play in this effort, particularly in the area of institution-building. The creation of viable institu-

tions of governance will be essential to the broader task of restoring stability to Kosovo, and the challenges in Kosovo are in many ways even more daunting than those we have faced over the past several years in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As the OSCE takes up its new responsibilities - both within Kosovo and regionally within the context of the Stability Pact - its own capacity for effective regional action will need to be reinforced. The OSCE is already well-placed, thanks to its considerable field presence, to identify and promote initiatives for regional co-operation and to assist the Stability Pact Co-ordinator in implementing programmes emerging from the Stability Pact process. The OSCE's regional capabilities need to be developed further, however, by strengthening the ties among its five field missions and among the more than 3,000 national and international personnel involved in these missions. Linkages between the field missions and the OSCE's central institutions - with their special focus on military security, human rights and institution-building, media, economics and national minorities - will similarly need to be reinforced. At the same time, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office needs a regional representative for South-eastern Europe who can act both as a focal point for Stability Pact issues and as a liaison with the Stability Pact Co-ordinator.

In the lead-up to the OSCE's Istanbul Summit in November 1999, the current Chairman-in-Office, Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk, has asked me to develop further the regional dimension of the OSCE's work. Among my responsibilities as the Chairman-in-Office's special envoy for South-eastern Europe will be to conduct a study on the OSCE's future role in the region as the Stability Pact process unfolds. It is my hope that this study will help map out the ways in which the OSCE can better co-ordinate its engagement in the region and most effectively contribute to the implementation of the Stability Pact.

Institution-Building

With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to conclude that in the early days of the international community's involvement in post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina, there was an over-emphasis on organizing elections at the expense of a deliberate and sustained institution-building strategy. At the time, the OSCE and the broader international community were bound by the Dayton timeline, which stipulated that elections were to be held no later than nine months following the signing of the Peace Agreement. While the elections did take place on schedule, and were as free and fair as possible under the circumstances, there were considerable costs involved in holding elections so soon after the end of hostilities. Most significantly, by the time elections

were held in September 1996, the process of return of refugees and displaced persons was just beginning, freedom of movement was still highly limited, and opposition political parties had only just begun to organize themselves. More generally, the institutional framework which is often taken for granted in Western democracies was largely lacking in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the time of the 1996 elections. Under these circumstances, the expectation that elections would allow for the early withdrawal of the international presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and for the full transfer of political authority to the country's newly-elected politicians, proved to be overly optimistic. As the international community embarks upon another post-conflict peace-building mission in the Balkans, this time in Kosovo, the recent experience of Bosnia and Herzegovina must be kept in mind. Kosovo will be much more clearly an international protectorate, something that Bosnia and Herzegovina has never been, and this will enable the United Nations to create viable institutions in advance of elections. Within Kosovo, this includes fostering free and independent media, supporting the emergence of strong and vibrant political parties, insisting on the rule of law and helping to create an effective and impartial judiciary, creating a professional and politically-neutral civil service, and nurturing elements of a re-emergent civil society.

On a broader regional level, while Kosovo's status as an international protectorate will provide time to sort out the territory's ultimate political status, and the mechanisms by which this status will be determined, work must begin immediately to think through Kosovo's future relations with the other political entities within the region. This will be a complex and delicate task, and one that will require careful planning and artful navigation. This is an area in which the OSCE can take a leading role, within the framework of the Stability Pact. It would involve not only helping to design the political architecture linking South-eastern Europe, but also making it clear to all relevant authorities that only through greater regional co-operation can the states of the region hope to eventually become integrated into broader European political and economic structures.

Economic Development

As part of its ongoing commitment to a comprehensive understanding of security, the OSCE has long understood the crucial relationship between economics, on the one hand, and peace and stability on the other. Generating sustained economic growth, reconstructing basic economic infrastructures, and re-establishing trade and commercial relationships are vital elements in any peace-building strategy. When efforts in these areas lag behind efforts in others, tensions among or within states can easily re-emerge.

In South-eastern Europe, the economic challenge is a dual one. Not only does the international community face the substantial task of helping war-torn states such as Bosnia and Herzegovina resurrect economies devastated by war, but it faces the further challenge of helping these states make the difficult transition to market economies. With the recent crisis in Kosovo, this dual challenge has been complicated even further by the widespread destruction and dislocation both in Kosovo and within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia more generally.

Obviously, the economic dimension of post-conflict reconstruction cannot be isolated from the political dimension. This can be seen most clearly in the case of the international community's refusal to provide economic reconstruction assistance to Serbia while an indicted war criminal remains in power. It can also be seen in the case of the eastern Bosnian town of Srebrenica, where international reconstruction funds, long blocked by the intransigence of local political authorities, have now been released with the implementation of the results of the 1997 municipal elections in Srebrenica municipality. While it is clear that economics cannot be divorced from politics, and economic leverage can often be used effectively to achieve political objectives, the long-range goal must be to establish a viable economic framework on which the future prosperity of the entire region can be built.

As in other dimensions, the international community's role in rehabilitating the economies in South-eastern Europe must be both long-term and region-wide. While vital in the early stages of international intervention, humanitarian aid and funding for re-construction must be accompanied by a longer-term strategy for investment and economic development, aimed at the establishment of viable and self-sustaining market economies. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, as the Peace Implementation Council noted at its Madrid meetings in December 1998, it is now time for local political authorities to focus on making the country less reliant on foreign aid and more capable of managing the economy in ways that generate jobs and a better standard of living for all citizens. The representatives of the international community also have a responsibility in this regard, especially to ensure that humanitarian aid and reconstruction money does not create relationships of dependency, but rather gradually restores to societies the power to manage their own affairs without the need of international assistance. This must also be accompanied by a recognition that such a transformation will not happen overnight, but will require sustained and co-ordinated support by international organizations and donor agencies.

At the same time, building viable and prosperity-generating market economies also means overcoming obstacles to transnational trade and investment across South-eastern Europe. Where politics has erected barriers to commerce, we must work towards dismantling these barriers, guided by an un-

derstanding of South-eastern Europe as a single economic zone. Indeed, economic growth across the region depends on the re-establishment of economic linkages both within states and across states, with an eye towards the eventual incorporation of the entire region into the broader economic structures of the European Union.

Restoring economic relationships can also serve the process of reconciliation, as the creation of mutually-beneficial linkages, between individuals as much as between states, can help reduce the fear, hostility and mistrust that have been built up over the last decade of conflict.

In contemplating a region-wide perspective on economic re-construction and development, it is clear that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is central to the success of such a project. The re-establishment of economic normalcy and the achievement of sustained economic growth will remain out of reach as long as Yugoslavia remains an international outcast. Much, therefore, depends on the prospects for political reform and regime change within Yugoslavia itself in the aftermath of the Kosovo crisis. If Yugoslavs can reject the politics of nationalist exclusivism and take concrete steps towards democratic transition and consolidation, then the prospects for economic progress, not only in Yugoslavia but in the entire region, will be vastly improved.

The Military Dimension

While the crisis in Kosovo has complicated the task of restoring peace and stability to South-eastern Europe, it will also create a number of opportunities for re-structuring relations across the region. This is particularly true in the area of military stabilization. Annex 1-B of the Dayton Peace Accords provides a framework for re-establishing military stability not only in the successor states of the former Yugoslavia, but in the broader Balkan region. The Annex established verifiable limits on weapons holdings by military forces not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina but also in Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It also put into place a set of regional confidence- and security-building measures aimed at reducing tensions and establishing trust between military forces in the region, and it envisaged a future regional arms control agreement aimed at creating a military balance in and around the former Yugoslavia. Three and a half years after Dayton, this process, largely conducted under the auspices of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina's Department of Regional Stabilization, has achieved considerable success. Predictably, however, the Kosovo crisis and the NATO airstrikes against Yugoslavia temporarily halted progress towards military stabilization in the region.

Now that the airstrikes have ended, and the Yugoslav military capacity has been reduced, we will be presented with new opportunities to create a stable military balance, reduce the overall level of armaments, and enhance military security in the region. The substantial NATO presence in Kosovo, which is likely to remain in place for a number of years, will provide a significant force for stability that will facilitate progress towards these ends. Achieving these goals will involve the exceedingly delicate task of attempting to manage and control the Yugoslav armed forces in what may prove to be a period of considerably political instability within Yugoslavia. It will also involve bringing the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) under control and ensuring its disarmament under the terms of the Kosovo peace agreement. Beyond the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, however, this task should also involve bringing all states of the region together to hammer out an agreement on regional arms control. This last project, envisioned under Article V of Annex 1-B of the Dayton Peace Accords, should involve every state in South-eastern Europe, and it should aim at the creation of a stable military balance through arms control and confidence-building measures.

Over and above the provisions of the Dayton Accords, however, the shake-up in the regional military balance in the aftermath of the Kosovo crisis will provide significant opportunities to reduce levels of armaments on a region-wide basis. We should take full advantage of these opportunities to establish new limits on arms acquisitions, and should ensure, for example, that any future economic reconstruction aid that goes to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is not diverted into re-building the Yugoslav Army. Steps should also be taken to tie economic aid more closely with transparency in military budgets and caps on military spending, following up on the important progress made in this direction at the Madrid meetings of the Peace Implementation Council. Similar measures could also be taken towards eliminating special police units and paramilitary formations across the region.

At a more general level, the international community must also think through the ways in which the altered political landscape across the region can lend itself to new efforts to implement confidence- and security-building measures. Ultimately, the goal should be to establish the conditions in which military force can be eliminated as a means of resolving conflicts in the region. In the medium term, however, progress towards this goal can be made in the form of initiatives which contribute to reducing or eliminating large-scale mobilization by all militaries in the region. Again, the recently-signed Stability Pact, and in particular the "working table" on security issues envisioned under the pact, can play a key role in both reducing military tensions and furthering the cause of military disarmament throughout South-eastern Europe.

Conclusion

With the immediate crisis in Kosovo now behind us, the international community faces the long and arduous tasks of ensuring that all refugees and displaced persons are allowed to go home, of reconstructing the political, economic and social infrastructure of the battered province, and of laying the foundations for a peaceful Kosovo within the broader context of a stable South-eastern Europe. In approaching the task of re-building Kosovo, our ultimate goal must be to ensure that the recent Kosovo crisis is remembered as a turning point in the region's history, one that marks the end of an era of instability and insecurity and the beginning of an era of peace, security, and economic development. This is an ambitious goal, but its achievement is not beyond our reach. It will, however, require time and a commitment by the international community to take a co-ordinated and region-wide approach to the challenges of building peace and stability in this part of the world.

Within the framework of the recently-signed Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the OSCE will continue to play a key role in the region, and is well-positioned to take a leading role in restoring security and stability to this troubled corner of Europe. In approaching this task, the OSCE should build on its experience and on the expertise it has developed through its field missions throughout the region. It should also re-commit itself to working in close collaboration with other international organizations, in the understanding that only through a co-ordinated international approach can we hope to achieve our common objectives. The aftermath of the current upheaval in Kosovo will provide many opportunities to anchor the region in a more solid and stable foundation; we must ensure that these opportunities are not missed.