

“DAYTON II: IS IT POSSIBLE? IS IT NECESSARY?”

by Kenneth Allard

ABSTRACT

Although the Dayton Accord served to end the war in Bosnia, it failed to "secure the peace either in Bosnia or in the Balkans generally." *Having this in mind, "another diplomatic initiative is required that has two objectives: the securing of future Balkan stability among a larger number of states and the preparation for the reintegration of those states into the European community." Five and a half years after Dayton, the feeling on the ground in Bosnia is "one of impatience at the slow pace of change" as well as a general lack of political will to take on new strategies. The Balkans are no longer a top priority on the world stage and the international community's focus has shifted elsewhere to regions such as China, the Middle East, and Africa. Many of the aims of the Dayton Accord, such as the apprehension of war criminals, establishment of civil order and institutions, ethnic reconciliation, minimal refugee returns, economic reform, and transformation have not been achieved. Because of this, there is a need to call for another international conference which would address outstanding issues. In order to ensure future stability and security in Southeast Europe as a prerequisite to European integration, there should be a clear division of roles among the international factors in the region. The USA should lend "leadership and engagement," while the UN should deal with "mandates rather than operations." In regard to the relationship between NATO and the EU, NATO would play the role of "guarantor of border integrity" while the EU would oversee "the day to day support for reforms."*

The short answer to the first question can be given quickly as a resounding "No" - at least from the perspective of the current conventional wisdom. In the public policy arena, there are few if any calls for a re-consideration of the issues dealt with by the 1995 Dayton Accords of 1995. American foreign policy is increasingly being directed by an emerging view which argues that the challenges of China and the Pacific demand immediate attention,

NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE FUTURE 1 -2(2) 2001, pp. 103-106

although usually with the caveat that Europe must not of course be forgotten. The deployments of US forces to Kosovo and Bosnia are usually cited as examples of an over-extended military policy that must soon turn to other, more urgent problems.

When the problems of Balkan security are addressed, the suggestion for a Dayton II is likely to prompt the response that a second conference is unnecessary when the requirements of the first have not been carried out. There is hard logic to this argument. The Dayton Accords succeeded in their main purpose of halting the ethnic violence that claimed 200,000 lives in the early 90's, and providing a rough modus vivendi for the former warring factions in the newly sovereign entity of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

But looking directly at the realities on the ground in Bosnia, it is difficult not to be discouraged at the unfinished agenda of Dayton:

Notorious and prominent war criminals still walk freely, unchallenged by the NATO forces;

Civil order is still problematic and the existing civil institutions do not inspire competence or confidence;

Ethnic reconciliation is far too slow, impeded by unreconstructed, hard-core foes of the Accords who wait for international attention to wane;

Refugee return is estimated at no better than three percent, even as temporary lines of demarcation become de facto boundaries created by ethnic cleansing;

And above all, reconstruction, commercialization, re-development and economic transformation are still found most often in the realm of wishful thinking or the position papers of august international bodies - which may be one and the same.

These realities lead to the current conundrum. It perhaps can be summed up in this way: the US and maybe even some of its NATO allies are growing weary of the lack of progress in the Balkans, but seem curiously unable to summon the will to try something new. The situation calls to mind the saying attributed to Benjamin Franklin that the personification of futility are those who keep doing the same thing time after time while expecting different results.

There is some danger here. Attention does indeed wander, as it is already starting to do with respect to the Balkans. Other global priorities intrude: if not China and the Pacific, then even more intractable conundrums of the Middle East, AIDS in Africa, and the protection of the environment - to cite but three current examples. And as attention wanders, it requires little imagination to see how things could get worse: in Kosovo, southeastern Serbia, Macedonia, and Albania. And maybe a lot worse if Greece and Turkey were to

become involved. The American novelist Nicholas Gage may be right in warning that there is the potential for a new Balkan bloodbath if we assume the future will merely be an extension of the present. But at the very least, there is a strong probability that such indifference will cause the hard-won gains of Dayton to slip away.

That may be the best rationale for a Dayton II: to consolidate the gains of Dayton I and to create a much clearer vision for 21st century Balkan stability and European integration. My CSIS colleague, Janusz Bugajski, sums up the requirement with admirable brevity: "The long-term stabilization of Southeastern Europe requires both extensive domestic reform and expensive external inputs." If we are to move the current dialogue beyond its current limits, that means providing leadership at three distinct but interrelated levels:

United States & the UN: It is customary on these occasions to urge that the United States should do more of everything: provide military forces in perpetuity, consult more with its NATO partners, conceive a more flexible economic strategy for the region and so on. While not disagreeing with the substance of such urgings, in the current political context they seem plainly unrealistic. Rather, -what the United States can and must provide is leadership, pure and simple. So, too, the UN. Based on my writings and personal experience with peacekeeping, I confess to being an agnostic when it comes to the United Nations actually carrying out operational responsibilities. It can, however, provide mandates built on a consensus of the international community. And that is what is needed here.

NATO & the EU: I will also confess to being somewhat bemused as the EU has struggled to define both a mission and an operational capability for its proposed military entity. But what better mission than providing the first line of defense for Balkan stability in a potential Dayton II? In the military dimension, this arrangement might be especially effective if it were backed up by an effective inter-locking partnership with NATO. But it is clear that the real effectiveness of the EU would be in the day-to-day business of providing the external support to those internal reforms that are the linchpins of future Balkan stability.

The Balkans: Because the principal objective of Dayton I was simply to end hostilities in Bosnia, the requirements for the leaders of the former warring factions were relatively simple: to cease making war and wielding the instruments for war-making. Dayton II would require an altogether more ambitious agenda for nation-building, with leadership at the local level providing much of the impetus and direction for internal reforms that would be the precondition for external support. That fact alone recognizes a lesson that should have been learned from our experience so far:

that international bodies, however well-intentioned, are no substitute for the agencies of state power and administration.

And that economic progress is directly linked to the fairness, competence, and constitutional legitimacy of those institutions.

There are few cautionary examples of modern diplomacy gone awry than last year's abortive effort at Camp David to achieve an accord that was far beyond the capabilities of the United States or its negotiating partners. Some problems cannot be solved but must rather be managed. That said, what would an agenda for Dayton II look like? With Balkan stability and European integration as the strategic objectives, four groups of issues seem fundamental:

Absolute respect for the rights of ethnic minorities within the boundaries of any Balkan state. This includes the right of refugees to return to their previous domiciles;

Apprehension of all indicted war criminals and suppression by all legal means of those individuals or para-military groups opposed to ethnic or human rights;

Time-phased adjustment of borders, balanced between the realities of geography, ethnicity, and the limits of self-determination;

The determination of benchmarks for political and economic reform, accompanied by more aid in absolute and relative terms - and ideally through more flexible, less bureaucratic instrumentalities than have been the case until now.

These are certainly the toughest issues of Balkan security and they are unlikely to be solved in a single marathon session. Instead, what is suggested here is a process not unlike the arms control negotiations that produced the SALT agreements during the Cold War. Then, as now, leadership and engagement of the world's great powers were required. And then, as now, peace was not achieved all at once but by degrees.

Finally, one is reminded of a story that was often recounted by President Kennedy, who inspired the legacy that led to those agreements. The great French statesman Clemenceau asked his gardener for advice on where best to plant a shade tree. The gardener protested that it would be many years before the tree could grow large enough to provide shade. "In that case," replied Clemenceau, "plant it this afternoon."