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Improving Theater Security Cooperation in the Western Balkans

By

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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5 November 2007

ABSTRACT

In the post-9/11 global security environment it is a foregone conclusion that it's much more cost effective, in both blood and treasure, to build and support effective governance in foreign nations than it is to allow them to fail. After more than two centuries of ethnic violence and a decade and a half of genocide and civil war, the western Balkans remain at risk of becoming failed states. The region is strife with narcotics trafficking, organized crime, religious fundamentalism, and terrorism. Allowing failing and failed states to foment transnational terrorism through inability or inaction incurs great risk and future cost. As such, it is in the interest of the United States to assist the western Balkans in improving internal security and bringing the rule of law to ungoverned areas. An objective analysis of the situation in the western Balkans combined with the analysis of EUCOM's Theater Cooperation Strategy Plan (TSCP) shows that EUCOM has done a commendable job in progressing toward the desired end state of stability in the Balkans. That being said, there is significant room for improvement, especially in the arenas of information operations and strategic communications.

Introduction

Currently the United States has more than 180,000 troops involved in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq.^{1,2} The American public is bombarded daily by reports of car bombs and killings in Karbala and Baghdad. Nearly every paper in the country has a ticker counting the number of American servicemen and women killed in Iraq since the start of the war. Given the focus on these current conflicts it is easy to understand why the western Balkans are not at the forefront of American thought. That the United States fought two wars there in the last 12 years is yesterday's news. Unfortunately, the security situation in these forgotten states continues to impact U.S. national security. In fact, four of the six men arraigned in the foiled attack on Fort Dix were born in the western Balkans. Two of those men had known links to Niam Behzoulzi, a prominent leader of the Kosovo Liberation Army with strong ties to al-Qaeda.³

The web of terrorism, drug trafficking, and organized crime that threatens the regional security in the western Balkans also threatens the national security of America. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs' national military strategy asserts the United States "must adopt a global posture and take action to prevent conflict and surprise attack [including] actions to shape the security environment in ways that enhance and expand multinational partnerships."⁴ The United States European Command (EUCOM) has done a sound job in promoting security in the western Balkans through its Theater Cooperation Strategy Plan

¹ Gordon Lubold, "The Changing Complexion of Troop 'Surge' in Iraq," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 14 March 2007, page 2, <http://www.lexisnexus.com> (accessed 28 September 2007).

² Julian E. Barnes and Peter Spiegel, "The Conflict In Iraq: Cooled Rhetoric; Troop Levels; Afghanistan a Source of Worry; Sen. Clinton Says More Troops Needed to Fight Taliban, Not in Iraq," *Los Angeles Times*, 13 January 2007, Foreign Desk, page 8, <http://www.lexisnexus.com> (accessed 10 October 2007).

³ Gregory R. Copley, "On Cue: Balkan Terror in the US," *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy* (1 January 2007): 9, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed October 4, 2007).

⁴ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: CJCS, 2004), 2.

(TSCP) and Country Campaign Plans (CCP). An analysis of The Fund for Peace's failed states indices from 2005-2007 demonstrates this progress.⁵ But there is room for improvement, especially with respect to strategic communications and computer network operations. This paper examines EUCOM's TSCP and CCPs for the western Balkans in order to garner best practices and make recommendations for continued progress.

For the purpose of this analysis, the western Balkans are defined as Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Collectively and individually, these states are an ethnically and socially complex region. The threats that exist within their borders are equally complex. In order to better understand the issues at hand, this paper will first provide a brief history of the region so as to put the problem in context. Discussion will then move on to dissect the major impediments to security in the western Balkans closest to the EUCOM sphere of influence: terrorism, drug trafficking, and organized crime. From those conclusions one can analyze EUCOM's current strategy against the threats to draw lessons learned and best practices.

Looking Back

It is an intolerable affront to human and political nature that these wretched and unhappy little countries in the Balkan peninsula can, and do, have quarrels that cause world wars. Some hundred and fifty thousand young Americans died because of an event in 1914 in a mud-caked primitive village, Sarajevo. Loathsome and almost obscene snarls in Balkan politics, hardly intelligible to a Western reader, are still vital to the peace of Europe, and perhaps the world.⁶

The western Balkans have drastically impacted both East and West for centuries. To say that this region is ethnically and religiously diverse would be an incredible understatement

⁵ http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=99&Itemid=140 (accessed 06 October 2007).

⁶ Attributed to John Gunther by Misha Glenny, *The Balkans: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers, 1804-1999* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2000), xxiii.

(see Table 1). The ethnic and social diaspora that is the western Balkans would consume volumes if one were to examine its complete history and is well beyond the scope of this paper. But a basic understanding of the history is required to comprehend the underpinnings of modern day violence and civil unrest, and critical in estimating the impact of EUCOM operations in the region. The fundamental issues can be broken down into two intertwined categories. The first is ethnic and religious tensions. Although these may seem to be two separate categories, one cannot divorce one from the other in the study of history in the Balkans. The second category that needs mention is external influence of the major powers on the region.

ETHNICITY - Population in 1,000s												
	Albania		BiH		Croatia		FYROM		Montenegro		Totals	
Albanian	95%	3,420					25%	500			26%	3,920
Bosnian			48%	2,160					8%	54	14%	2,214
Croat			14%	630	90%	4,050					31%	4,680
Macedonians							64%	1,280			8%	1,280
Montenegriins									43%	292	2%	292
Serbs			37%	1,665	5%	225	2%	40	32%	218	14%	2,148
Other	5%	180	1%	45	5%	225	9%	180	17%	116	5%	746
Population	100%	3,600	100%	4,500	100%	4,500	100%	2,000	100%	680	100%	15,280

RELIGION - Population in 1,000s												
	Albania		BiH		Croatia		FYROM		Montenegro		Totals	
Muslim	70%	2,520	40%	1,800	1%	59	33%	666	18%	120	34%	5,165
Orthodox	20%	720	31%	1,395	4%	198	65%	1,294	74%	505	27%	4,112
Catholic	10%	360	15%	675	88%	3,951			4%	24	33%	5,010
Other	0%	0	14%	630	7%	293	2%	40	5%	31	7%	994
Population	100%	3,600	100%	4,500	100%	4,500	100%	2,000	100%	680	100%	15,280

Table 1⁷

It is a vast oversimplification, but for the purpose of this synopsis one can divide the western Balkans into three historically significant ethnic groups: Albanians, Slavs, and Turks. Ethnic Albanians are descendents of the Illyrians who emigrated from Italy around the 4th century when Constantine established Constantinople as the Roman imperial capital.⁸

⁷ Summary of demographic statistics of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, FYROM, and Montenegro from Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html> (accessed 2 October 2007).

⁸ Dennis P. Hupchick and Harold E. Cox, *The Palgrave Concise Historical Atlas of the Balkans* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 6.

The Slavs include ethnic Bosnians, Croats, Macedonians, Montenegrins, and Serbs. These tribal peoples invaded the Byzantine Empire from the steppes of eastern and central Europe in the 7th century. Throughout the 10th century, many Slavs adapted Christianity to fit their own culture, thus the birth of Serbian Orthodox Christianity. The Great Schism of 1054 split the Christian church and the Byzantines reconquered much of the Balkans, but Croatia and Bosnia remained Roman Catholics as subjects of the Holy Roman Empire.⁹

The Ottoman Turks invaded the Balkans at the end of the 14th century. On 28 June 1389, the Ottomans made a raid into the Balkans resulting in a brutal battle between Serbs and Turks in Kosovo. Known as the Battle of Kosovo Polje, both the Serbian prince and Ottoman pasha were killed. As Kosovo was the cradle of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the clergy portrayed the death of the Serbian prince as atonement for all Serbia's sins, declared Kosovo "the New Israel," and used the battle as a source of all misfortune the Serbs suffered at the hands of the Turks.¹⁰

It is obvious that there were tensions between conquerors and conquered, but the Turks also unintentionally fomented ethnic and religious strife amongst Slavs. As non-Muslim Slavs and Albanians did not fall under the institution of Islamic law, Orthodox and Catholic Christians were grouped into semi-self governing *millets*. While this was very progressive governance compared to other periods of history, this purely religious division in the eyes of the Turks actually brought multiple religions *and* ethnicities under one rule. For example, Serbian Orthodox Christians were under the rule of the Greek Orthodox. This seemingly benevolent gesture actually increased tensions among the conquered.¹¹

⁹ Ibid., 7-9.

¹⁰ Lawrence A. Tritle, *Balkan Currents: Studies in the History, Culture and Society of a Divided Land. Monographs in Balkan Studies* (Los Angeles: Loyola Marymount University, 1998), 18, 47.

¹¹ Hupchick and Cox, *Historical Atlas of the Balkans*, 21-22.

The Ottoman Empire began to wane in the early 19th century. At this point, the major powers began their exploitation of the Balkans. By the mid-19th century France, Austria-Hungary, and Russia had all propped up rebellions in the Balkans. These countries all had national security interests in the Balkans and saw the region as an opportunity to fight their wars by proxy. By arming Balkan insurgents, Austria-Hungary could keep the Ottomans weak. Russia used the ethnic tensions amongst Slavs in an attempt to gain territory in the Balkans. The carving up of the Balkans at the Congress of Berlin in 1878 was meant to put an end to these wars by proxy, but it was as effective as a band aid on a sucking chest wound. It did not solve any of the underlying issues of ethnonationalism supported by the French example. The issue was the Balkans were neither Europe nor Asia. They had ties to both areas, but belonged to neither. As such, the major powers kept inciting and arming local insurgencies, fanning the flames of nationalism or religious fundamentalism to further their own national interest. Of course, this strategy backfired horribly in 1914, dragging those same major powers into World War I.

At this point, it is important to make one further note about the Congress of Berlin. In removing Islamic rule from the Balkans, the Congress of Berlin had a tremendous impact on the Muslim population. The first item of note is that by this point, the majority of Muslims were not Turks. Many ethnic Albanians, Bosnians, and Serbs had converted and intermarried. The second important item is that Islam is not just a religion; it is a political system as well. With the removal of Islamic rule, many Muslims excluded themselves from the non-Muslim political, economic, and social structure. The implications of this self-exclusion can be seen today in the lack of Muslim representation in non-Muslim countries. The last facet that needs mention is the violence against Muslims. All in all, 1.7 million

Muslims were killed throughout the Balkans in the 19th and 20th centuries. Another 935,000 emigrated to the East.¹² This level of historical violence cannot be overlooked in the context of today's issues in the region.

Following WWI, the major powers followed the same pattern in allowing the creation of the artificial state of Yugoslavia under Serb control. The only change following WWII was the installation of communist repressive governments to stem the tide of ethnic and religious violence. The fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 unleashed centuries of repressed ethnic issues; issues that had become accustomed to being expressed through externally supported violence. These issues manifested themselves in the wars and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo during the 1990s.

In summary, the geographic boundaries of western Balkans are attempting to contain multiple ethnic and religious cultures, all with legitimate historical claims to the same lands. Throughout the centuries these groups have been encouraged by external actors to resolve their disputes through violent means, especially armed insurgency. It should come as no surprise that when one group gains power, the leader of that group promotes these same methods. It is through this lens that one must examine the security issues facing the western Balkans today.

Analysis of the Threat to U.S. National Security in the Western Balkans

Transnational terrorism is arguably the greatest threat to the national security of the United States. There is sufficient evidence that many of these terrorist organizations operate out of the western Balkans. Drug trafficking and organized crime are also prevalent in the region. While these latter activities don't directly threaten U.S. security, they do feed the

¹² Ibid., 34-36.

terrorists with funding and threaten U.S. interests indirectly through their destabilizing effects in the region. As such, one must dissect these three issues, focusing on their critical factors in order to gain a better understanding on how to aid the Balkans in combating them.

There are two major transnational terror groups in the Balkans. As alluded to in the introduction, the first is al-Qaeda. The Fort Dix cell was but one of dozens of examples. The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) is closely tied to al-Qaeda and many of the fighters in the KLA continue to be trained in Afghanistan.¹³ The Party of Democratic Action (SDA) in Bosnia-Herzegovina issued bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, and other al-Qaeda members passports and other false travel documents.¹⁴ The government of FYROM has given U.S. officials a 79-page report detailing actions of al-Qaeda groups in that country.¹⁵ As there is a financial incentive to inflate claims of al-Qaeda activity, one must be careful not to accept every alleged al-Qaeda sighting at face value. Nonetheless, there is sufficient evidence that al-Qaeda is alive, if not well, in the western Balkans.

Iran is the second major player in transnational terrorism in the western Balkans. In the 1997 assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II, Italian security forces arrested 14 men with ties to Hezbollah and other Iranian-funded terror cells from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia.¹⁶ In 1998-99 Iran funneled money and arms into Kosovo to insure the independence of Kosovar Albanian Muslims, and they continue to provide funding, weapons, and other resources to training camps in Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹⁷ Although Iran's role in transnational terror is more covert than al-Qaeda's, it still poses a threat to regional stability. Some may

¹³ Jamie Dettmer, "Al-Qaeda's links in the Balkans," *Insight on the News* (22 July 2002): 23, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed 28 September 2007).

¹⁴ Gregory R Copley, "The Balkan Radical Dervish Continues," *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy* (1 April 2005): 9, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed 4 October 2007).

¹⁵ Dettmer, "Al-Qaeda's links in the Balkans," 22.

¹⁶ Yossef Bodansky, "Italy becomes Iran's new base for terrorist operations," *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy* (1 April 1998): 5, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed October 15, 2007).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

argue that Iran has never directly threatened U.S. national security, certainly not in the manner of a 9/11. While there is validity in this argument, the vast majority of open source intelligence suggests that Iranian and al-Qaeda terror cells are sharing intelligence, ideas, arms, and methods.¹⁸ Furthermore, both groups are decidedly anti-Western and specifically anti-American. As such, both groups deserve study and analysis in this setting.

The first step in this analysis is defining the groups' desired end states and objectives.

Al-Qaeda's desired end state consists of three pillars:¹⁹

- "The Quran-Based Authority to Govern." Islam is the sole religion as well as the foundation of the political system.
- "The Liberation of the Homelands." Muslims are in control of all traditional Muslim lands, including Mideast energy supplies.
- "The Liberation of the Human Being." Only Allah is fit to judge man. Sharia is the only law and must be followed to the letter.

Given this desired end state, one can deduce that al-Qaeda's theater strategic objective is to reduce the power of all non-Muslim states in the Balkans to a level that allows the caliphs to return and reign.²⁰ Operationally, this is to be achieved in two phases. The objective of the first phase is to eject Western influence from the Balkans. The objective of the second phase is to topple the weakened state governments and replace them with a regional caliphate.

Open source information on Iran's foreign policy and strategic ambitions is somewhat less transparent. However, given Iran's nuclear ambitions and recent meddling in Iraq, the evidence suggests that Iran's desired end state is regional dominance. To achieve this, Iran must either increase its own power, reduce that of its competitors, or both. Thus, one of

¹⁸ "Bosnia: Terrorism's Logistical Base." *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy*, October 1, 2004, 6-8. <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed 04 November 2007).

¹⁹ Three pillars are from Christopher M. Blanchard, "Al Qaeda: Statements and Evolving Ideology," *CRS Report for Congress* (9 July 2007): 10-11, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/RL32759.pdf> (accessed 14 October 2007).

²⁰ Although Albania may be considered a "Muslim" state, it is considered an apostate state by al-Qaeda as it follows secular laws. As such, its government is no more fit to rule than any other secular state.

Iran's strategic objectives is to remove Western influence from its neighbors in the Middle East. This also includes the establishment of a Palestinian state in place of modern-day Israel. As such, Iran's operational objectives, at least with respect to the Balkans, are three fold. First, tie up Western (NATO) forces with a decades-long peacekeeping mission. Second, destabilize the region to diminish the legitimacy of Western forces. Third, establish an intermediate base on the doorstep of Europe from which to stage forces, financing, and supplies for operations in Israel and western Europe.

With our adversaries' objectives determined, what are their critical weaknesses and strengths in achieving those objectives in the western Balkans? The weaknesses of these groups are few. Neither group enjoys any ethnic commonality with the population in the Balkans. Both groups are small in number and rely to some degree on criminal activity. On the other hand, both Iran and al-Qaeda terror cells enjoy many strengths; funding, the networked, cellular nature of the organization, and access to arms are but a few of these advantages. However, the most significant strength of these organizations, the "source of power that provides freedom of action, physical strength and will to fight,"²¹ is the support of the Muslim population. Iran and al-Qaeda not only backed Balkan Muslims, but fought alongside them for the past two decades. To many Muslims the Iranians and al-Qaeda are heroes.²² Some might argue that instead of popular support, religious ideology is the center of gravity. But that ideology is merely a critical requirement for popular support as ideology does not, in and of itself, provide freedom of action nor does it give physical strength. What then are other critical requirements of popular support? Terrorist organizations need space to

²¹ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 17 September 2006), IV-10.

²² It should also be noted that the United States is also viewed by many Bosnian Muslims as heroes and protectors.

recruit, organize, and train. Since the entire world, save Antarctica, is divided into states, terrorists require complicit or ineffective states in which to operate. Thus state sponsorship or failed or failing states are also critical requirements for terrorist organizations.

Another critical requirement of the terrorists is the ability to communicate. Without the capability to transmit orders and receive information, the organization or network is crippled. Even in the cellular, decentralized network of al-Qaeda, there must be at least a rudimentary level of command and control. The “space” in cyberspace encompasses both physical space and communications. These organizations require freedom of action in cyberspace to a limited extent for communication, but to a greater extent for information operations.

These organizations also need some kind of financial backing for their operations. While the level of funding required by al-Qaeda and associated movements is up for debate, they are not immune from this rule. Thus financing also becomes a critical requirement. These groups have many sources of funding, from simple offerings at local mosques to complex international business transactions to state sponsors. Although potential sources of funds are almost unlimited, this analysis will focus on organized crime and narcotics trafficking because they are germane to the western Balkans and because the military can have a significant impact on stopping them.

Organized crime and drug trafficking are wicked problems in and of themselves. While on the surface they may be seen purely as symptoms of a failed state, they also serve as impediments to effective governance. Combating these criminal activities not only relieves symptoms, it removes a funding source for the terrorists and reduces the impediments to good governance, hindering the terrorist organizations in acquiring two of their critical requirements. Thus, they deserve further analysis.

It is relatively clear that the center of gravity for these illicit activities is profit. The lure of big money is the source from which they draw their motivation, the will to fight. Without profit there would be no reason for organized crime or narcotrafficking to exist. Although this center of gravity is not aligned with that of terrorism, the critical vulnerabilities of these crimes are very similar. Terrorist organizations, mobsters, and narcotraffickers need freedom of action in space and a means to command and control. Without them, none of their organizations can function.

From the above brief analysis one can see the vulnerabilities pointing to one entity, the ineffective state. Among the roles of effective states are the monopolistic use of force, establishing and controlling borders, and monopolistic use of money, and regulation of the financial markets.²³ Throughout much of the western Balkans, this type of governance is fragile or completely absent. Thus the desired end state of the United States in the western Balkans should be to have strong, regionally balanced independent states, respectful of human rights especially with respect to national minorities. Further, the states should control their borders, have monopolistic control of their respective military forces, and be capable partners in combating terrorism. Of course, the operational objectives in each state will differ somewhat from those of its neighbors, but all fall along the same general themes: assure allies and partners, dissuade potential adversaries, deter aggression and counter coercion, and defeat adversaries.²⁴ In short, U.S. operational objectives should be to improve state governance in order to further national security interests. So what are the tasks? Democratic stabilization? Ethnic reconciliation? Economic and social development? While

²³ D.W. Chisholm, "JMO III-04, Failed States," Powerpoint, 10 October 2007, Newport, RI: Naval War College, JMO Department.

²⁴ Secretary of Defense, *National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: OSD, March 2005), i.

many, especially those in the military, look at these tasks as primarily in the lane of politicians and statesmen, the military instrument of power has a significant role to play.

Analysis of EUCOM Theater Security Cooperation in the Western Balkans

Prior to analyzing EUCOM's TSCP and CCPs in the western Balkans, this study will apply the restraint that U.S. funding for the western Balkan CCPs will remain constant. In other words, U.S. troop levels in the western Balkans will remain the current level of approximately 2,000 personnel.²⁵ Furthermore, the recommendations given will not significantly increase other U.S. resource demands in the region. This analysis will focus on EUCOM's role in combating weak governance and failing states in three primary areas: security assistance, multinational and combined education and training, and information sharing and intelligence cooperation. It is important to remember throughout the study that entry into the EU and NATO provides possibly the greatest incentive for the countries of the western Balkans to reform from within.²⁶

The first area of study is security assistance. Security assistance encompasses foreign military sales (FMS) and foreign military financing (FMF) as well as international military education and training (IMET) among other activities.²⁷ All these tools help to build countries' capacity to extend their governance into ungoverned and under-governed areas. This is particularly important along the more than 3,000 miles of international border created with the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia.²⁸ Improving governance in these areas reduces or eliminates the space which terrorist organizations, organized crime cells, and drug

²⁵ Steven Woehrel, "Future of the Balkans and U.S. Policy Concerns," *CRS Report for Congress* (18 January 2006): 7, <http://italy.usembassy.gov/pdf/other/RL32136.pdf> (accessed 12 October 2007).

²⁶ European Commission External Relations Directorate General, *CARDS Assistance Programme to the western Balkans, Regional Strategy Paper, 2002-2006*, 4.

²⁷ Secretary of Defense, *Security Cooperation Guidance* (U) (Washington, DC: OSD, 22 November 2005), 27-28. (Secret) Information extracted is unclassified.

²⁸ European Commission, *CARDS Assistance Programme to the western Balkans*, 7.

traffickers require to operate. This in turn brings the states of the western Balkans closer to achieving standards required for entry into the EU, furthering individual states' desire to cooperate with U.S. and international efforts.

EUCOM has done an excellent job in providing security assistance to the western Balkans, especially given resource constraints. The internal security of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and FYROM has improved to the point that all three countries are able to contribute troops to Operation *Iraqi Freedom* (OIF). Granted, there is room for improvement with respect to the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but it's not due to lack of effort or focus on EUCOM's part. Continued FMF support will aid in moving that country toward improved internal security, especially with the resolution of the Kosovo issue. All in all, EUCOM gets high marks in this area and can make few changes for the better and remain within set restraints.

Closely related to security assistance is multinational and combined education and training. This category includes education of foreign civilian and military personnel at U.S. institutions, student exchanges, EUCOM sponsored exercises, and foreign internal defense (FID). While security assistance tasks such as FMF provide the hardware, multinational education and training provide the know-how and professional development to apply the hardware effectively. Furthermore the education and training instills Western standards in military organizations, especially with respect to issues of human rights. As mentioned previously, human rights abuses against ethnic and religious minorities have been a source of contention in the Balkans for centuries. Promoting the sanctity of human rights through education of civilian and military leaders promotes legitimacy and improved governance, especially amongst minority populations. Furthermore, the guarantee of minority rights is

one of the primary conditions for entry into NATO and the EU, so the countries of the western Balkans have an incentive to take advantage of combined education and training.

Again, EUCOM has done an exceptional job meeting this objective. Extensive use of George C. Marshall Center programs in advanced security studies, terrorism, and executive seminars have been a mainstay of EUCOM's TSCP for military as well as civilian personnel.²⁹ The annual multilateral NATO exercise *Combined Endeavor* now includes western Balkan nations. As this paper is being written, Albania, FYROM, and Montenegro are participating in Operations *Cooperative Longbow* and *Cooperative Lancer*, NATO-led crisis response exercises.³⁰ In all, EUCOM coordinates nine multilateral exercises annually that are open to participation by western Balkan countries. This education and training is invaluable not only in improving military capability, but directing that capability in positive ways, promoting positive political services as well as minority and human rights. Again, this serves to build better governance and eliminate areas in which terrorists and criminals can operate. EUCOM has done an excellent job in this area and there is little room for improvement.

The final facet of EUCOM's TSCP to be examined is information sharing and intelligence cooperation. These are "activities that increase partner nations' intelligence capacity, information sharing, and awareness."³¹ Arguably, these activities have the greatest potential impact in relieving the symptoms of the states at risk of failing: terrorist organizations, organized crime, and drug trafficking. Specifically, these tools can be used to

²⁹ USEUCOM, *Theater Security Cooperation Strategy* (U), March 2003, 6. (Secret) Information extracted is unclassified.

³⁰ Operations *Cooperative Longbow* and *Cooperative Lancer 07* took place 7-30 October 2007. NATO Allied Land Component Command Headquarters, <http://www.nato.int/lahd/news/2007/n070918a.htm> (accessed 16 October 2007).

³¹ Secretary of Defense, *Security Cooperation Guidance* (U), 28. (Secret) Information extracted is unclassified.

interdict lines of command and control in order to disrupt or destroy operations and infrastructure. Unfortunately, these are some of the most difficult tools to implement because intelligence and information are tough to share. One always wants to be the receiver, not the giver of intelligence. And even when intelligence is received, one has to be wary of the source and the motivation behind the sharing of that particular piece of information. An additional barrier is that no western Balkan nations are members of NATO, thus limiting or slowing distribution of NATO SECRET information. That being said, intelligence may be the most important factor in gaining access to adversaries' command and control networks.

Given resource restraints and the limits inherent in this area, EUCOM has done a pretty good job in working toward this objective. Web-based information programs on an unclassified level have improved information sharing in the region, both between NATO nations and Balkan nations, as well as amongst the Balkan nations themselves. This has served these states well in curbing organized crime and drug trafficking, as well as sniffing out illegal funding for terrorist organizations. That being said, there is certainly room for improvement in this arena, specifically computer network operations. As brought up in the analysis of the terrorist organizations' critical requirements, cyberspace was one of those requirements. Terrorists need freedom of action in cyberspace for two purposes: command and control and information operations. To deny terrorists access to cyberspace may only have a limited effect against their command and control networks. Indeed, if cells are expecting to receive instructions or information via the web and that access is cut off, that information will reach them by some other means. But the internet has been a boon for terrorist actors to get their message to the masses unfiltered and unchecked. There is no

moderator in cyberspace to ensure fair coverage, and al-Qaeda takes full advantage of the asymmetry. EUCOM needs a better message to put out in the region to counter that of the terrorist organizations. The Muslims in the western Balkans are not Arabs and they are not Persians. They are very different ethnically from the transnational terrorist cells that threaten U.S. security. EUCOM needs to exploit this vulnerability. Granted, the western Balkans aren't as inundated with technology as the U.S. is, but it's not as technically deprived as Afghanistan either. There are more than 300,000 internet service providers in the western Balkans and more than 3.5 million people, 35% of the population, use the internet.³² The audience is receptive, but the bad guys are winning the war in cyberspace.

Perhaps of even greater value than information operations are computer network operations. If al-Qaeda and associated movements are using the internet, they can be tracked. While it's true that an advantage of the internet is the relative anonymity it provides (which makes it so desirable to those who commit crimes), all internet activity leaves a footprint. Social engineering, the process of gaining access to networks through human contact is the surest way to achieve success, but that capability takes time to develop. Given the varied routine, caution, and oftentimes paranoia of terrorist cells, this process may yield minute returns. Still, Trojan horses, back doors and even sniffer programs offer tremendous opportunities with little economic cost.³³ In order to exploit the adversaries' vulnerabilities in cyberspace, EUCOM needs to assume a more aggressive, proactive strategy. Of course, they can't do that alone. First, EUCOM cannot approve computer network attacks or

³² Summary of statistics of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Montenegro from Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html> (accessed 4 October 2007).

³³ John R. Hoyt, *A Proactive Strategy Toward Terrorism and Transnational Crime* (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 1998), 92-94.

exploitation. Approval for these activities lies with the Secretary of Defense. As such, gaining approval for these operations must be given priority. Second, EUCOM does not have sufficient organic capability to conduct these operations. It will require coordination with other government agencies as well as a lengthy mission analysis to ensure the psychological impact is achieved in the military operation.

Conclusions

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” That old adage is as true today as it was when Benjamin Franklin spoke it more than 200 years ago. In the post-9/11 global security environment it is a foregone conclusion that it’s much more cost effective, in both blood and treasure, to build and support effective governance in foreign nations than it is to allow them to fail. Allowing failing and failed states to foment transnational terrorism through inability or inaction is simply not acceptable. After more than two centuries of ethnic violence and a decade and a half of genocide and civil war, the western Balkans remain at risk of becoming failed states. The region is strife with narcotics trafficking, organized crime, religious fundamentalism, and regional and transnational terrorists. These threats to regional stability adversely affect America’s national security. EUCOM has done an admirable job in promoting regional security in the western Balkans, especially in areas the military is traditionally good at, providing military hardware and training. However, EUCOM needs to branch out and come up with better strategic communications and innovative offensive solutions in computer network operations in order to defeat the adversaries that use the western Balkans as a base of operations to threaten U.S. national security.

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