

## Security and the Stability Pact

presentation by Susan L. Woodward, at first annual meeting of SEEPIN, Ohrid, Macedonia, June 23-25, 2000.

There is a paradox in this relationship between the Stability Pact and the issue of security. On the one hand, the general consensus – widespread – is that the biggest problem in Southeastern Europe is the prevailing climate of insecurity. On the other hand, the fewest number of Stability Pact projects and the least developed of the three working tables is table III – projects on security. And of the projects that have been identified and funded, the majority of the funds go for de-mining – important, but scarcely touching the essential issue. As Christiaan Poortman said yesterday, there is no regional strategy for either Working Table I or Working Table III. I find this amazing.

How can one explain this paradox?

I can imagine five possible explanations.

First, is an institutional explanation. The European Union is not a security organization, at least, it is only now entering this field. The international financial institutions are legally prohibited for being engaged in security – if not as thoroughly by their Charters as some argue, then certainly by their lawyers' interpretation of those Charters. Apparently, states consider the last preserve of their sovereignty to be security. Or it may be that NATO's presence in the region is considered sufficient to address security in the region; as Krastev describes the current situation in his paper, this is an environment of "controlled insecurity."<sup>1</sup>

A second explanation could be that there is insufficient knowledge on this issue. There is a vague sense that the general climate is one of insecurity, but few specifics. As Miroslav Hadzic, sitting in the audience, can tell you, the divide between military and civilian matters continues to dominate scholars as well as practitioners, and threat assessments are done by militaries, not by civilians. Knowledge, after all, is reassuring – it reduces uncertainty and insecurity. Perhaps there is just a lack of knowledge.

A third explanation may be duplicity. We say that insecurity is the greatest problem, but we may not really believe it. If one looks at the theories underlying assistance policies to the region, security is absent. Until recently, the basic assumption of assistance was that economic aid will act as an incentive to political cooperation. Now that causal relationship has been reversed. Donors argue that political institutions must be created, and they will provide the conditions for economic growth. That is, now political factors are the independent variable, and economic ones the outcome, the dependent variable, whereas previously it was the reverse. Security simply does not occur in our understanding of transition, while many view uncertainty as a good thing.

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<sup>1</sup> In the discussion that followed, a number of persons said that there is a serious problem if the explanation for downplaying security in the Stability Pact is that everyone looks to NATO for its provision.

That is what a market injects, after all. For almost two hundred years, in fact, our models of market economies and liberal democracies are not based on societies created by war.

A fourth explanation is political. Politically active people in the region may not be ready yet for the switch from a focus on the military defence of borders to the new concepts of human security in the North. Insecurity may be too politically useful a weapon to give it up so soon. These societies may be caught in between borders and enemies, on the one hand, and the transition agenda, on the other. Politicians use insecurity as a political base and a means of economic aggrandisement. The process of the formation of new political classes is now dominant, and far from complete. But are these societies trapped in this half-way house for ever? What studies do we have that explains how politics actually works in the countries of the region? Do they exist?

Finally, one might address the paradox from the opposite angle by asking you here why no regional strategy appears to be possible? Does the explanation lie in the answer to that question?

Let me make four concrete proposals regarding what we can do now for security and the Stability Pact. First, I want to draw your attention to the excellent suggestions in the paper by Sinisa Tatalovic. He proposes that the Stability Pact become a forum for discussion and resolution of inter-state, geopolitical questions, for example, demarcation of the sea; interstate cooperation; the creation of a new system of conventional force reductions in Europe (control of conventional weapons) connected to and under the auspices of the OSCE; the creation of larger demilitarised zones, both on land and on sea (including the requirement that all countries in the region sign the Ottawa agreement on anti-personnel landmines, giving first priority to de-mining; the creation of a common approach to trade in illegal arms and drugs; and solutions to transit problems of the region, particularly for those countries with no exit to the sea.

A second proposal is to take seriously the contributions to this meeting by Ivan Krastev and Vojin Dimitrijevic regarding the insufficient attention to the state and the rule of law. Instead of focusing on non-governmental organisations as the check on governments and their exercise of power, how can we get legal protection of peoples' security? As Krastev argues, weak states are the source of insecurity in the region. Without a priority to state-building, to the creation of "functioning states capable of governing according to the rule of law," all else will fail. The concept of the neutral state needs to be discussed and sought. Vojin Dimitrijevic proposes one starting point. Identify the international conventions which have not yet been ratified by states in the region, for example, the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, and the Optional Protocol of the ICCPR.

A third proposal is demilitarisation: but not in the sense usually tossed about, but specific projects aimed at the demilitarisation of society and economy within the region. The former Yugoslavia, at least, was a country organised for military self-reliance, for its independent defence, beginning in 1948-49. Not only the army and defence industries but all of social and economic organisation was aimed at, or in opposition to, that policy

of defence. This means that the transition process and the steps that must be taken to integrate more fully with the European Union is fundamentally a process of demilitarisation in the widest sense.<sup>2</sup>

And fourth, I propose that SEEPIN organise a colloquium on perceived security threats in the region. This would be based, first, on analyses within each country – it can be organised by members of the network – of their primary security threats,<sup>3</sup> and then, the gathering in a colloquium of representatives of each country in the region to compare these analyses and to see whether some security-reducing projects or agreements can be built on it. Because security is always based on perceptions rather than reality itself, such a colloquium would aim at making these perceptions explicit and testing them against the perceptions of others. In some cases, it will be immediately obvious what kinds of knowledge or policies – bilateral or multilateral – can be taken to reduce perceived threats; in others, it may generate serious thinking about a regional approach.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen Larrabee rejected the need for demilitarisation, saying that the security threats in the region are not external but internal. This provoked me to add that because of the overriding sense in much of the region that the borders are not yet settled, it is not clear what is external and what internal. The Stability Pact assumes that borders are settled, placing emphasis on customs regimes and border police, but this is why knowledge is needed, to see to what extent Larrabee's assumption is shared by people in the region, or whether their fears and behaviours are in part influenced by their view that some borders may yet change. Daniel Serwer added also that there are still some external security problems, such as the status of Prevlaka and the border between Serbia and Macedonia.

<sup>3</sup> Nicolae Chirtoaca offered that the Euroatlantic Centre in Moldova has prepared such a threat analysis for Moldova, distinguishing between hard and soft threats (a hard threat exists, he argued, in the presence of Russian troops in Transnistria, whereas soft threats result from a weak state and from the socioeconomic vulnerability of individuals to poverty, unprotected property rights, crime. etc.).

<sup>4</sup> Vojin Dimitrijevic responded to this suggestion positively, saying that it is a good idea to find out what is *perceived* as security threats in the region; the "entire concept of security needs deconstruction," he added. "Any society has to live with a certain level of uncertainty and insecurity, but what is really meant by security and how it is used and abused in the region" needs analysis. "State security is a polite name for security of the regime," for example, while what is "territorial security" when land is taken away? Any security regime that reduces sovereignty is perceived as threatening, while the word security is "totally devoid of human content."