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THE FATE OF THE WESTERN BALKANS REGIONAL SECURITY SUBCOMPLEX - THE NECESSITY OF REGIONAL COOPERATION

Abstract: *We refer to the Western Balkans as a regional security subcomplex that is only part of a wider, European complex. It consists of all the states of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, except Slovenia, including Albania. It is a region that had a very turbulent past and which is still, in many ways, specific. Relations between the countries of the Western Balkans are determined by unresolved issues from the past, very intense regional security dynamics, as well as projections of the interests of global powers. However, even in such circumstances, regional cooperation is imperative in the fight against terrorism, illegal migration, transnational organized crime, and other serious threats and challenges to regional security and stability. The paper will present the basic geopolitical and security characteristics of the regional security subcomplex Western Balkans. Based on that, we will be able to get a full picture of the necessity of regional cooperation in the Western Balkans in the light of Euro-Atlantic integration and the construction of a kind of security community in the region.*

Keywords: *Region, subcomplex, Western Balkan, Cooperation, the Security community, Security Science*

Introduction

The term "Western Balkans" has been used frequently in public discourse for the last fifteen years. This term supplanted (but not completely) the "Southeast Europe". In that, we can recognize the intention of modern European bureaucrats to define the respective region with one name that will not contain the name of the old continent at all. In that way, the European Union and its members would win a "terminological battle" with the non-integrated part of Europe.

The region of the Western Balkans was formally defined by the adoption of the "Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans" (European Council, 2003), and this term is mentioned in some earlier documents of the European Union. Its use has intensified in media circles after Romania and Bulgaria became members of the EU in 2007. However, we could not say that this term was not used before. Certain printed sources date back to the 19th century, and in which the Western Balkans are mentioned. Thus, the widespread belief that the term Western Balkans "represents only a neologism of modern European bureaucrats" is not fully founded (Lipovac, 2016, p. 171).

In modern international relations, as well as in several European Union documents, the position is generally accepted that the regional security subcomplex Western Balkans (hereinafter: WBSC) consists of all states created by the disintegration of the former SFRY (except Slovenia) and Albania - the Republic of Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Northern Macedonia, and Albania. We can say that these are states that are, originally, part of the Stabilization and Association Process. One of the basic (for the EU certainly basic) characteristic of this region is non-integration. However, non-integration is not a (sufficient) indicator of the (security) interdependence of the states that make it up.

Besides, Croatia became a full member of the EU in 2013 but was not excluded from the Western Balkans subcomplex. EU membership has only changed the way this country participates in regional security dynamics, giving it an advantage over others. However, it should be noted that Croatia is often perceived as another in a series of problematic periphery countries, and thus as a burden for rich EU members (Polović, 2013, p. 26). Also, the portal "European Views", which deals with monitoring and analysis of topics related to the functioning of the EU, assessed the Croatian presidency of the Union as catastrophic. The portal criticizes Croatia for "silence before the rise of authoritarianism in Hungary", as well as for the decline of democratic standards in the country (Nezavisne novine, 2020).

In the following, we will try to present those characteristics of the Western Balkans that are driven by regional security dynamics, giving it the epithet of a special regional security subcomplex.

Basic Geopolitical and Security Characteristics of the Western Balkans

Each regional security (sub) complex is determined by relatively permanent, intertwined, patterns of (dis) friendship. Such patterns have been present in the Balkans for centuries - never completely clarified relations between the Balkan peoples and states, as well as the opposing interests of the great powers that have always tried to reshape the Balkans following their needs. At the same time, the Balkan states paid little attention to mutual relations, and more to relations with great powers, trying to achieve a "strategic advantage" over their neighbors in those relations (Obradović, 2014). But we are primarily interested in the present. What further complicates the security characteristics of the Western Balkans are the asymmetric sources of threats, primarily hybrid operations carried out by governmental and non-governmental actors, and above all the Russian Federation. When we look at the last 10 years, we can dominantly see the pattern of influence and disinformation to maintain interethnic and interstate tensions and to undermine the unique security identity of the Western Balkans.

For this work, we will use the Security Science definition provided by Dr. Darko Trifunović, Security Science is based on theories of State and Law, the theory of Conflicts, the theory of Complex Systems as well as the theories of Catastrophe. Starting from Plato Ideal Society within the Ideal States to Thomas Hobbes and his description of the Natural condition of Mankind and Natural Laws and Contract (Trifunovic, Todorovic 2020 p. 11)

Regional security dynamics

For the above-mentioned patterns of hostility to be sufficiently intense to foster regional security dynamics, there need to be concrete unresolved (open) issues that are still a stumbling block for developing quality relations between states in the (sub) complex. When it comes to WBSC, there are two main unresolved regional problems: Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo and Metohija . (Lipovac, 2016). Will BiH be divided into two or three states or will it perhaps move towards unitarization? Will Kosovo and Metohija remain part of the Republic of Serbia, be part of a "Greater Albania" or be an independent state? These issues concern, more or less, all states and nations of the region, with the unavoidable role of superpowers and great powers.

Each WBSC unit wants a different solution to these two problems. The issue of Kosovo and Metohija is of interest to all Serbs and all Albanians in the Western Balkans, regardless of the country in which they live. Thus, all Serbs (represented by official Banja Luka and official Belgrade) are interested in all possible changes in the constitutional and legal status of BiH, as well as the other two constituent peoples in BiH plus official Zagreb. Besides, the problems of

Kosovo and Metohija, and BiH are connected so that the way of solving one problem can dictate the way of solving another. For example, the eventual independence of Kosovo would allow the Republika Srpska, under the same arguments, to demand the same solution. It should not be reminded that the current member of the Presidency of BiH from the ranks of the Serbian people, Milorad Dodik, has repeatedly announced a referendum on the independence of the Republika Srpska. Thus, "in addition to the historical, political-legal, cultural and linguistic proximity of WBSC units, what clearly outlines the boundaries of this subcomplex is the involvement of all actors and different (national) interests in terms of final solutions for Kosovo and BiH" (Lipovac, 2016, p. 16).

Also, Lipovac (2016) distinguishes between patterns of hostility that exclusively imply relations between WBSC units and those patterns that imply the participation of at least one actor that is not part of the Western Balkans. Within the WBSC, these are the following patterns/relationships:

- Serbs - Croats (in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina),
- Serbs - Albanians (in Kosovo, as well as in municipalities in southern Serbia (Presevo, Bujanovac, Medvedja)),
- Serbs - Muslims / Bosniaks (in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and, possibly, in Montenegro),
- Macedonians - Albanians (in Northern Macedonia),
- Serbs - Montenegrins (in Montenegro),
- potentially Montenegrins - Muslims / Bosniaks (in Montenegro),
- potentially Montenegrins - Albanians (in Montenegro),
- potentially Croats - Muslims / Bosniaks (in Bosnia and Herzegovina) .

In addition to these patterns of hostility, some involve the participation of an external actor, and which can certainly lead to a deepening of tensions in the WBSC:

- Slovenes - Croats (border issue),
- Serbs - Hungarians (in Serbia),
- Bulgarians - Macedonians (in Northern Macedonia),
- Albanians - Greeks (in Greece) .

In addition to all the patterns on the lines of relations between the various Western Balkan states/peoples, we should also mention the security dynamics at the domestic level. The

biggest problem of WBSC is the "unfinished" state. Namely, in the countries of the Western Balkans, there are still factors that hinder the process of democratization in various ways. At the top of that list is the lack of agreement on the main principles, values, and priorities of the political and economic system, and especially the consensus on the necessity of Euro-Atlantic integration. Institutions cannot ensure the rule of law, and civil society is weak and is almost under the full monopoly of political parties. In these conditions, an alliance between political (state) and criminal structures are inevitable, and the best example is Albania. Its weak state structure and strong criminal "clans" open space for the activities of organized criminal groups (Vučić and Milenković, 2014). Besides, the situation described above opens space for radical ideologies, i.e., for terrorist and extremist activities of certain radical elements which, without a doubt, operate in the area of WBSC.

Influences of global powers

One of the main theses of the founders of the theory of regional security complex is that "regional conflict patterns shape the directions of the intervention of global powers" (Buzan & Weaver, 2003, p. 52). We have already said that for centuries the Balkan area has been an arena in which global forces have fought for influence and interests, as it is today. The influences of global forces in the post-Yugoslav, post-conflict period were determined by the process of globalization or the construction of a new world order based on unipolarism. That unipolarism would imply the domination of the United States of America, the spread of the so-called Western liberalism ("export of democracy"), as well as the neoliberal economic model (global market). So, the key foreign policy factors that at this time have a decisive influence on the regional security dynamics are the United States, NATO as an operational body of "collective security", and European countries embodied in the European Union, with the very present influence of the Russian Federation, which through the instrumentalization of nationalisms, traditions, culture, religion and energy monopoly seeks to achieve its geopolitical interests. However, great powers, such as the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation, have not been sitting idly by for a long time and projecting their interests in the WBSC in various ways. In this way, a kind of "foreign policy alternatives" for the Western Balkan countries ("Belt and Road", "Eurasian Union") appear. Also, we should not forget Turkey, which has strong historical ties with the WBSC and which, under the leadership of R. T. Erdogan demonstrated her neo-Ottoman aspirations.

Here is no doubt that the great powers will avoid any kind of confrontation in the future and will lead to the so-called proxy conflicts. There is no doubt that the Western Balkans will be an important "proxy server", that is, a training ground for such conflicts. So, in the Western Balkans today we have the so-called manometric pressure of external forces, which takes the

form of military-strategy to financial investments in energy, infrastructure, banks, etc. This influence comes from three sources:

- West (EU and NATO);
- East (Russia and China)
- Islamic world (Turkey, Gulf countries) - (Balazic, 2016).

After the collapse of the USSR, the United States remained the only world superpower that can intervene anytime, anywhere. Many authors argue that a new Cold War is imminent and, in that sense, the United States and Russia declare each other as the greatest threat to national security. In the context of that confrontation, the space of the WBSC is extremely important for the United States in terms of preventing the spread of Russian influence in Europe. Therefore, the fact is that the United States considers the Western Balkans an extremely important complex in the context of defending their national interests. If we want to see the influence (presence) of the United States in the Western Balkans, we must start from the NATO alliance as a military-political, operational structure of the United States. Four of the six WBSC countries are members of NATO, namely: Montenegro, Croatia, Northern Macedonia, and Albania. By adopting a document entitled "Bosnia and Herzegovina's Reform Program", Bosnia and Herzegovina have confirmed its Euro-Atlantic commitments. In that sense, the issue of the Republic of Serbia, which is divided between the West and the East by national policy, remains open. How such a policy will trace the geopolitical path of the Republic of Serbia depends on several factors (final status of Kosovo and Metohija, the final status of Republika Srpska, enlargement of the European Union, issue of Serbo-Croatian relations - possible blockade on the Croatian side, potential resumption of the Cold War). Serbia is cooperating closely with the Alliance based on the adopted "Individual Partnership Action Plan" (IPAP). When considering the issue of this country's entry into NATO, we must point out the fact that the Republic of Serbia is practically surrounded by NATO members. Serbia borders eight countries, seven of which are full members of the Alliance. Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the eighth, is determined to join NATO. In the future, the Republic of Serbia will certainly see the positive and negative effects of full membership in this military-political alliance. By joining NATO, Serbia becomes part of the collective defense system, which significantly changes its position within the global and regional security dynamics. Certainly, this would make Serbia a much more important factor in regional security cooperation. After all, in the conditions of being surrounded by NATO members, we can justifiably ask the question of the sustainability of neutrality, not to mention turning to some eastern bloc (Balazic, 2016; Šekarić, 2019). However, "the fact is that the mentioning of Serbia's membership in NATO, due to the emotional burden of this issue, and due to the relatively recent NATO intervention in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, may result in loss of support and votes in the elections, which ultimately does not popularize this issue among ruling political elites" (Šekarić, 2019, p. 11). This, let's call it, emotional/perceptual segment also includes the "fraternal" attitude of the Serbian people towards the Russian people and the Russian Federation,

and here we should have in mind the influence of active measures from the Russian Federation when it comes to Serbia's NATO membership.

The European Union's policy towards the countries of the Western Balkans has gone through two phases. In the first phase, during the last decade of the twentieth century, the Union tried to respond to the political, war problems in the region with urgent (ad hoc) measures. In the second phase, this policy was elaborated by the Stabilization and Association Mechanism, which, in addition to concluding a formal agreement, implies intensive cooperation of the European Union with the appropriate country in the region (Šekarić, 2019). Finally, we can say that the third phase began when the first country in the Western Balkans joined the Union, and when the European perspective of other countries was confirmed. For now, therefore, only the Republic of Croatia is a full member of the EU, while all other WBSC countries have the status of candidates (except BiH, which is a potential candidate). In general, it is very rare to talk separately about regional (security) cooperation in the Western Balkans and the process of integration of the WBSC states into the European Union. In the comprehensive "Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union" (2016), the promotion of cooperative regional orders was identified as one of the main priorities of EU foreign policy. That has always been the EU's priority, especially when it comes to the Western Balkan subcomplex. The European Union has been one of the most important foreign policy actors in the WBSC since 1995. Its activity in this region is largely focused on promoting security cooperation. Many initiatives in this area, some of which are fully institutionalized, have been launched or at least supported by the EU. In this regard, it should be borne in mind that any insecurity in the Western Balkans could have implications for the security of the wider European security complex. Therefore, the EU and some of its members are very interested in developing cooperation in the field of security, because such cooperation is a precondition for the political and economic stability of the WBSC. Sometimes, it even seems that regional police cooperation in the Western Balkans is more of a project/process initiated and led from outside than the internal need of the Western Balkan states. In other words, one gets the impression that the cooperation has progressed only "so that Brussels would be satisfied", and not because that is the only way that regional problems such as organized crime, migration, terrorism, and violent extremism, etc. can be solved. Certainly, among the most important, if not the most important, is the financial assistance that the EU provides to candidate countries and potential candidates for membership. A significant part of that assistance is directed to all types of regional cooperation. This is supported by the fact that the second component of the so-called Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance ("IPA") refers directly to cross-border cooperation. The large funds allocated by the Union for these needs have enabled, among other things, the creation of operational mechanisms for regional cooperation in the Western Balkans (Ristić, 2017).

Furthermore, in addition to the influence from the West, the eastern winds are blowing more and more in the Western Balkans. Historically, Russia has always sought to exert great influence over the entire peninsula. Today's impact is the result of new geopolitical and security

dynamics. Namely, Putin's Russia, in creating the Eurasian Union project as a kind of geopolitical substitute for the Soviet Union, is counter-pressuring Europe and the EU across the borders of the former USSR. In that sense, the Western Balkans is the soft belly of the EU: Russia's pressure is not only a response to the expansion of Euro-Atlantic integration towards the East but also the establishment of better-negotiating positions with the EU and NATO (Balazic, 2016). It should be said that Russia still has a strong influence on the WBSC countries such as Serbia or Bosnia and Herzegovina. Taking as a fact that the United States and its EU partners have identified Russia as the greatest threat to national security, it can be reasonably expected that Russia will use all available means to protect itself and its interests in the mission of disturbing the interests of the United States and the EU. In this context, Russia can take the following steps:

- provokes political and security instability, given the proliferation of "Russian agents of interest" in the Western Balkans,
- uses its capacities to wage asymmetric wars and provoke international conflicts,
- economic conditions (Trifunović, 2016).

The main "stronghold" of the Russian Federation in the Western Balkans is the Republic of Serbia and, in general, the Serbian people. Professor Trifunović (2016, p. 582) even believes that "Russia by force, i.e., aggression is trying to prevent certain countries from becoming NATO members ", and that "this threat also exists when it comes to the Republic of Serbia because official Russia strongly opposes Serbia becoming a NATO member." All in all, there is no doubt that the Kremlin is trying to use regional security dynamics to realize its geopolitical aspirations, while seriously is counting on the traditional connection between the Serbian and Russian people. A huge part of the Serbian political public still perceives Russia as the only ally that will positively influence the resolution of the Kosovo issue. The situation is somewhat more specific in BiH, i.e., the Republika Srpska, where the current government, by agreeing to the document "Bosnia and Herzegovina's Reform Program", practically traced BiH's path to NATO. On the other hand, that same government is publicly demonstrating a bias towards the Alliance, creating an image of full cooperation with Russia. However, regardless of the Alliance's presence in the Western Balkans, the Russian Federation remains a serious external factor that will probably never give up the San Stefano postulates, in terms of controlling most of the Balkans.

During the previous decade, the People's Republic of China has become an important factor at the regional and global level (the second world power), and we are witnessing its increased presence in the Western Balkans. China is present in the WBSC, primarily in the economic sense, and that presence is part of its "breakthrough" in the European market. Nevertheless, it should not be ruled out that in the future, if it strives to approach the currently dominant United States in terms of military power, it could become more actively involved in the struggle for spheres of interest in the Western Balkans region "(Šekarić, 2019, pp. 18). Above

all, the presence and influence of the People's Republic of China in the area of WBSC, by its character, is quite different from the activities of other global powers. The literature is dominated by the understanding that for the first time in the history of the Balkans in general, a foreign partner appears in the form of China, which puts itself on an equal footing with regional actors. Thus, China is trying to present itself as not treating the Western Balkan countries only as its "younger brother" or no economic partner, nor, unlike the others, is it militarily present in the Western Balkans. Such opportunities are provided by the "Belt and Road" initiative ("New Silk Road"). Also, the People's Republic of China, since it acts purely from an economic position, does not favor those countries of the WBSC with which it has better political (bilateral) relations. This is not the case with other great powers operating in the Western Balkans (Cvetković, 2016; Šekarić, 2019). So, China's economic presence in Europe and the Western Balkans is visible, but the main question is whether it can have any security implications? According to different analyses, there is a prediction that nature of PRC role in WBSC can be changed in the coming years. First of all, their doubts are focusing on "loan traps" and international policy adjustment with PRC foreign policy goals. The reactions of the United States (and even certain large multinational corporations) to the growth of Chinese influence in Europe, as well as the position that France, Germany, and other so-called countries of "Old Europe" will determine the security nature and destiny of the initiative "One Belt, One Road" (Dragišić, 2016). In addition to all the above-mentioned global powers, we must also mention Turkey in the context of its influence on the WBSC area. At the same time, it is superfluous to recall the historical role of this country in the Balkans as a whole. Today, on the other hand, there is a lot of talk about Erdogan's so-called neo-Ottoman politics. One of the most important items of that policy is certainly Ankara's attempt to re-establish an autonomous sphere of influence in the Balkans. Turkey's strategy for the Balkans is in line with the old Green Corridor paradigm. This geopolitical concept has two meanings. First, it marks the goal of creating a continuous chain of predominantly Muslim political units, from Istanbul in the southeast to northwestern Bosnia ("only 100 miles from Austria"). Secondly, it means the concept of ethnoreligious connection (networking) of Muslim communities along the mentioned route (Trifković, 2013).

To conclude, the space of the Western Balkans today, as in the past, is a space where various influences of global powers are refracted. Each of these forces has its interests, which it seeks to achieve by using its zones of influence among the states and peoples of the WBSC.

Security challenges, risks, and threats

The Western Balkans region faces numerous security challenges, risks, and threats, of which, among others, significant are organized crime, terrorism, and illegal migration.

A special group of original security threats is asymmetric security threats, which are carried out by organized criminal groups operating in the area of the Western Balkan subcomplex. WBSC units are mostly still weak and unfinished states with a weak institutional apparatus. In such conditions, organized crime stands out as one of the most significant security threats. Its bearers are deeply involved in the political structures of the countries of the region. Thanks to the connection with politics, the main organizers of criminal activities take over the monopoly over the most lucrative branches of the economy, which prevents the progress of the state in the economic, and thus in the political-institutional sense. We should not ignore the fact that such persons often wage a special (propaganda) war against that part of the government that is ready to resolutely fight organized crime. At the same time, corruption and money laundering are indispensable accompanying elements. In that sense, Professor Dragišić (2016) talks about a new form of totalitarianism, the so-called "Ochlocracy", which occurs when corruption affects political parties, civil society organizations, the media, the health and social sector, and, unfortunately, religious organizations. The ochlocracy is, of course, largely present in the WBSC states. Another significant asymmetric security threat stems from terrorism and violent extremism. One of the biggest challenges in the Western Balkans is certainly the extreme ideology based on the political interpretation of the Islamic religion, that is, Islamism, as well as a form of political violence - Islamist terrorism. Islamism has been present in the WBSC for many decades, and the establishment of a wide and well-organized network of Islamists and terrorists began intensively only after the beginning of the war in BiH, when tens of thousands of Islamic fighters (mujahideen) came to fight in the so-called The Army of BiH, to create the first Islamic state on the territory of Europe. The logistics established by the mujahideen during the war, with the help of rich Middle Eastern countries led by Saudi Arabia, have meanwhile developed into a large (terrorist) base for expanding influence and achieving geopolitical goals of various entities - from countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey, etc. to terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda or, more recently, the Islamic State. Their common goal is the Islamization of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the entire Western Balkans. Some authors, such as Walter Meyer, talk about how new heaven has been created in the center of Europe (in the Balkans) for Islamic State fighters, strategists, and recruiters. The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina depicts the nature of the problems that the Balkans have with Islamist terrorism (Vukojičić, 2018). Likewise, we should not lose sight of the fact that the above-mentioned organized crime is often used as a means of financing terrorist activities (the example of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army).

In the end, one of the biggest challenges for the security of the region is certainly the migrant crisis. It is, in fact, a security challenge that the whole of Europe is facing. We are talking about a large number of migrants (refugees) from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and others. Most are young, able-bodied men, among whom numerous security services have identified a large number of terrorists. For them, the Western Balkans is just a transit route on the way to the countries of the European Union. However, it is only a matter of time before the Union closes its external borders and completely "walled up" the Balkans. In that case, a

huge number of dissatisfied people would find themselves imprisoned in countries that did not want to settle permanently. They do not fit into such a social environment, nor, in the end, does that society accept them, but it is simply forced to take care of them (Vejnović and Radišić, 2018). There is no need to explain why this is a big security risk. By the way, when we talk about the challenges of organized crime, terrorism, and migration in the Western Balkans, we must emphasize the importance of regional police cooperation in the context of border control. Namely, the security system of state borders should be adjusted to the situation in WBSC, especially in the context of current migration flows. All WBSC countries, strategically opting for EU accession, have set themselves a comprehensive plan that envisages the harmonization of several areas of national legislation with the *acquis communautaire*, which includes the area of border security management based on the "Concept of Integrated Border Management". What reflects the specificity of this concept is that it is not a pure police model of the state border security system, but an integrated action of border police, customs, and border inspection services in combating cross-border crime and other illicit activities at the state border (Dostić and Keković, 2018). We have seen, therefore, how much the space of WBSC is burdened with modern security challenges, risks, and threats. However, "what is most worrying is the creation of a kind of regional criminal cartel in which criminals from all over the Balkans are involved" (Dragišić, 2016, p. 80). This fact significantly determines regional security dynamics, identities, and interdependencies. This means that much better (police) cooperation between the Western Balkan states is necessary, "because it is a security problem that seriously endangers each state in the region and requires a single response from all states, regardless of their differences" (Dragišić, 2016, p. 80).

Possible Scenarios in the Regional Security Subcomplex of the Western Balkans - Necessity of Cooperation

Regarding the possible scenarios that are determined by the patterns of friendship and hostility in WBSC, Lipovac (2016) identifies three possible options:

- return to conflict formation (return to the 1990s),
- maintaining the security regime (status quo),
- building a security community (improving regional cooperation).

When it comes to the first scenario, we can say without any hesitation that the shadows of the 1990s and even the 1940s still stand over the Western Balkans. However, we do not have to go so far into the past to notice events that hide the potential to, with the inevitable influence of key international actors, grow into a conflict formation. For example, the constitutional-political

struggle between political Sarajevo and political Banja Luka does not abate. This, again, leads us to the conclusion that Serbia and Croatia, as signatories and guarantors of the Dayton Agreement, will not be able to stand aside all the time. At the same time, the relations between these two countries are still burdened with old animosities and unresolved issues from the past, which further complicates the situation. Removal of Cyrillic inscriptions in Vukovar, ambivalent attitude of the Croatian authorities on the use of Ustasha insignia and greetings, etc. are just some of the burning topics. On the other hand, the perception of war during the nineties which is present in Serbia does not fully contribute to the reconciliation process, convicted war criminals are present in media and shaping public opinion in Serbia. Cooperation between Serbia and Croatia is a key milestone for the successful EU integration process of Serbia and reconciliation. Economic cooperation between Serbia and Croatia is very significant, so there is a huge potential for the two countries to continue their cooperation as EU members. Furthermore, events such as the murder of Oliver Ivanovic, all events related to the introduction of taxes on goods from Serbia, incursions of "ROSU" and arrests of Serbs in northern Kosovo, the transformation of Kosovo's security forces into armed forces - the so-called. Kosovo Army, etc. (Đukić, 2019). In addition to all that, hate speech and war-inciting rhetoric are still present in the Western Balkan media, but, unfortunately, also in scientific journalism. Human rights can never be given the necessary level of protection, and civilian control over the security services is inadequate. Crime and corruption, social inequalities, and an insufficiently high standard of living can be generators of social unrest. All this leads us to the conclusion that the Western Balkans still have a high potential for conflict.

The second scenario would involve maintaining the current situation, which can be described as a security regime. The CPAC states do not have the potential to (at least shortly) significantly increase their strength and/or power, so it is not to be expected that any of them will significantly change the existing structure in the subcomplex. Therefore, states opt for balancing rather than open conflict (Lipovac, 2016).

The third, also very probable scenario is the building of a security community. The condition for that is the integration of all the countries of the Western Balkans into the European Union and NATO. This would lead to an overlay and the WBSC would, as such, cease to exist, i.e., it would be 100% integrated into the European RBC (Lipovac, 2016).

Conclusion

When we look at the above three scenarios, we will see that only the third means (self-sustaining) stability and that, as such, it is the most desirable. Euro-Atlantic integration and effective regional cooperation are key components of the security community of the states that make up the WBSC. The security community is based on the need of states to establish stable cooperation and association, i.e., on the idea of integration of states into a community in which

sincere, tolerant, peaceful, and constructive international cooperation would eliminate the problem of "security dilemma" and wars as a way to resolve disputes and conflicts of interest. (Mijalkovic2011). Although regional cooperation covers various sectors (political, economic, scientific, etc.), cooperation in the field of security stands out as the most important segment. Regional security cooperation is simply a necessity, for several reasons. First, stronger security co-operation contributes to creating political stability, security, and economic prosperity in the region. It is a path that leads through a trust to reconciliation. Secondly, regional security cooperation is a solid mechanism for solving security challenges, such as organized crime, corruption, violent extremism leading to terrorism, illegal migration, border management, etc. (Emini & Mark, 2019). Furthermore, the security of the Western Balkans is indivisible. No matter how much countries differ in economy, culture, they have security as their common denominator. So, since they are not able to solve the stated security problems on their own, the states of WBSC simply have to cooperate (Vučić and Milenković, 2014). This necessity undoubtedly has the potential to prevent a return to conflict formation, and even to turn the decades-old security regime into a security community. It should also be said that the security community is not a political community at the same time. Therefore, the Western Balkan security community would not be a "new Yugoslavia". It would be about free, unobtrusive, interest-motivated cooperation of states that, like all neighbors, are directed at each other. Therefore, it is not about the creation of some supranational entities, but about functional cooperation, policy coordination, and the creation of multilateral arrangements in various areas, including internal affairs and security (Kovačević, 2002).

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SUDBINA REGIONALNOG BEZBEDNOSNOG PODKOMPLEKSA ZAPADNOG BALKANA - NEOPHODNOST REGIONALNE SARADNJE

Rezime:

Zapadni Balkan nazivamo regionalnim bezbednosnim podkompleksom koji je samo deo šireg evropskog kompleksa. Sastoji se od svih država bivše Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, osim Slovenije, uključujući Albaniju. To je region koji je imao vrlo burnu prošlost i koji je i dalje, na mnogo načina, specifičan. Odnose između država zapadnog Balkana određuju nerešena pitanja iz prošlosti, vrlo intenzivna dinamika regionalne bezbednosti, kao i projekcije interesa globalnih sila. Međutim, čak iu takvim okolnostima, regionalna saradnja je imperativ u borbi protiv terorizma, ilegalnih migracija, transnacionalnog organizovanog kriminala i drugih ozbiljnih pretnji i izazova za regionalnu bezbednost i stabilnost. U radu će biti predstavljene osnovne geopolitičke i bezbednosne karakteristike regionalnog bezbednosnog podkompleksa Zapadni Balkan. Na osnovu toga, moći ćemo da steknemo potpunu sliku o neophodnosti regionalne saradnje na zapadnom Balkanu u svetlu evroatlantskih integracija i izgradnje svojevrsne bezbednosne zajednice u regionu.

Ključne reči: Region, podkopleks, Zapadni Balkan, saradnja, bezbednosna zajednica, nauka bezbednosti