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**INTERVENTION BY DIMITRIOS TRIANTAPHYLLOU  
AS RESPONDENT TO JANE SHARP'S PRESENTATION  
ON "SECURITY CHALLENGES IN SEE"**

Intervention at the Conference on "Regional Cooperation and Reconstruction in South-East Europe"  
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## INTERVENTION BY DIMITRIOS TRIANTAPHYLLOU AS RESPONDENT TO JANE SHARP'S PRESENTATION ON "SECURITY CHALLENGES IN SEE"

First, I would like to say that I am speaking in my personal capacity and that my comments and views in no way represent official policy of the Western European Union.

I listened with great attention and interest to Jane Sharp's excellent presentation on the security challenges in Southeastern Europe. Many of her points are well taken. These include the troubled relationship with Russia; the future of Montenegro; and trouble in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (henceforth FYROM), Albania, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

I will attempt to take a more conceptual approach.

One cannot but be alarmed by developments in the region. If one is from the region one cannot but be troubled by what is happening in his own backyard and the reaction of the international community to these developments. Despite all similarities to the Balkan Wars at the eve of the Great War, the crises in Southeastern Europe since 1991 as a result of the breakup of Yugoslavia have nothing in common. While back then, the various Balkan irredentisms destabilized the spheres of influence that were in place between the great powers, today's Balkan nationalisms as well as the continuous social and political upheavals do result to a great extent from the absence of a comprehensive Euroatlantic (or at least a European or an American) approach to the Balkans. Whereas for the countries of Central Europe, the doors both of NATO and the EU have opened; for the countries of Southeastern Europe, integration into the Euroatlantic structures of defense cooperation and economic integration is a long way away.

It should also be stressed that the countries of SEE have not gone to war with each other for as long as the countries of Western Europe have not waged war with each other. That is since 1945. [as for the much maligned "perennial" Greek-Turkish conflict, it is worth remembering that the two countries have not waged war with each other since 1922] What we have in SEE since 1991 is conflict stemming from the disintegration of one and only state. All conflicts have not spilled beyond the external borders of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia *yet*.

Thus, the question begs itself whether the region is inherently unstable or whether the instability is imported from the outside by extra-regional actors who are unsure or undecided about what their policy for the region should be.

The first security concern then is the lack of coordinated policy between the United States and its European allies. Why is NATO in the region? What are its priorities? What needs to be done? While the European allies attempt to work with the region as is such as Kosovo *de jure* part of FRY, a multiethnic FYROM, a united B-H, etc., the United States attempts to anticipate regional shifts and changes such as an independent Kosovo.

What are the Alliance's interests? The danger is that should there be continued divergence between Europe and the United States over SEE, NATO might remain in the region for a

long time to come for the wrong reasons and at a high cost (the latest *Military Balance* estimates that the Kosovo war will cost NATO countries \$11bn while peacekeeping in the province comes at a cost of \$10bn per year). As things stand today, NATO guarantees the *de facto* partition of Kosovo (and therefore addresses the position of the Kosovo Albanians) while it seeks to preserve the viability and sovereignty of FYROM (by in fact refusing the similar demands by the Albanians of the said state). *In other words, the Allies have thought it possible to implement simultaneously in the same part of the world a policy in support of the territorial sovereignty of one state while denying such a right to another.*

The danger of these non-ecumenical half measures is that the Alliance might inadvertently be supporting the agendas of certain states or peoples at the expense of the other states of the region. Please do not misunderstand me but NATO at this stage of the game due to the lack of common strategic vision by its member states seems to be doing its best to allow the Kosovo Albanians to achieve their aspiration for independence while giving fodder to Albanian nationalists in Albania proper and in FYROM who aspire to a "Greater Albania". (One need only remember Sali Berisha's remarks at his party's recent Congress or follow the ongoing Presidential campaign in FYROM and listen to the concerns expressed by that country's former Foreign Minister Lubjomir Frckovski) Are the other countries of the region comfortable with the possibility or eventuality that the Alliance's policy in the region suits the interests of 2 million Kosovars to a tee or that because of its incoherence it seems to be in fact designed to advance only or principally the interests of the Kosovars?

Related to this, the second major concern is the growing Albanian assertiveness in Albania proper, in Kosovo, and in FYROM. The mixed signals by the international community seem to fuel this assertiveness which due to the poor state of Albania's economy, its fragile institutions, and the lack of control of many parts of the country by the central authorities remains the only tool for the political elite to inspire support for their side. Albanian politics are, thus, more radicalized. Can the genie be kept under wraps, though? How does such rubbish play out in FYROM, B-H, and elsewhere?

The third security concern, therefore, is the viability of FYROM as a consequence. Is FYROM a country with an end date? Is it in our interest for FYROM to have an end date? The demographic situation in that country shows that by during the second decade of the next century, the Albanians will be the majority ethnic group there. How should this potential explosive situation be handled?

The fourth concern is, of course, Serbia. Should it remain a black hole? For how long? Do the allies have a long-term policy in place? One of the major security concerns, other than the scenario of an independent Montenegro and the implications that come with it, is what happens after the ouster of Slobodan Milosevic. Will Serbia's and the region's problems end there? The kleptocracy in place there now will not necessarily be easy to dislodge. Should the opposition come to power are we going to have a "stable and democratic" Serbia as has been repeatedly suggested by its supporters. Beyond the inevitable squabbling between its political elites, chances are that the opposition is more likely to carry the flag of a chauvinistic kind of nationalism because one of its clarion calls has been that Milosevic has failed to live up to his promises of creating a Greater

Serbia. Are we ready to deal with a democratic yet nationalistic regime, in lieu of Milosevic's, which will be attempting to bring the country with an average per capita income of \$50 per month out of its self-inflicted black hole? Can such a regime be democratic? Can such a regime be stable or enhance stability in the region?

One final word about the European Union-sponsored Stability Pact, or in other words the European approach since it is Europe that is paying the bill for reconstruction. The Stability Pact could and should act as a major engine of stability and security in the region but it possesses two fundamental problems: a insufficient amount of available funds in order to truly bring about a substantive regional stability,[estimates range from \$30bn to \$100bn] and it does not include the FRY within its confines thereby making it impossible to fundamentally create a comprehensive regional security framework.

It is in the implementation of the Stability Pact that the aforementioned drawbacks of the divergent approaches by the Allies on either side of the Atlantic can serve a real liability in attempting to curb Albanian irredentism, preserving the viability of FYROM, defining Serbia's role, dealing with Russia, and so on and so forth. Is Milosevic the major problem or is it our inability to devise a coordinated plan of action?

Thank you.