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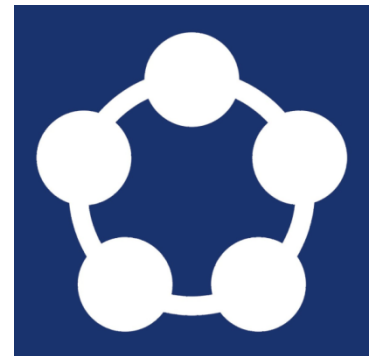
***Towards a final Conflict Resolution?  
General Political Elections in Bosnia i Herzegovina 2010:  
Results' appraisal and consequences***

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## EDITORIAL

The IAPSS Online Magazine "A Different View" editorial team has the honor to welcome you to its January-February 2011 issue with the topic "*Towards a final Conflict Resolution? General Political Elections in Bosnia i Herzegovina 2010: Results' appraisal and consequences*".

The ADV editors presume that the conclusions and the arguments of the authors are negative regarding the subject "if the current political situation in BiH can lead towards a final conflict resolution". Nevertheless, expectations, based on reasonable evidence, for restraining nationalism in tolerable levels by a more decisive international intervention by the EU, leading towards economic development, stability and symmetry in power, in BiH and in the Balkan region, and thus preventing them from slipping into, or resuming, civil war, illuminates this dark place in the European continent, the frozen conflict in BiH, and reveal its current issues seeking for an answer.

Vasilis Kiliaris in his academic article argues that Nationalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina had prevailed in the last decade of the 20th century. Analyzing the term, he stresses that notwithstanding that nationalism is a political principle, a sentimental assumption or an ideology, Nationalism is considered as a phenomenon as well. In contradiction with the rest five republics of Yugoslavia, Bosna i Herzegovina (BiH) had approximately in terms of power three equally self-defined ethnic groups. Moreover he incorporates the term Balkanization in his analysis, a notion that today is invoked to explain the disintegration of some multiethnic states and their devolution into dictatorship, ethnic cleansing, and civil war. Lastly he presents the theory of Consociationalism that was developed on the basis of achieving reconciliation in societal fragmentation along ethnic and religious lines. By noticing that Reconciliation itself is sine qua non for accomplishing a lasting peace, security and stability in the aforementioned cases, towards a final Conflict Resolution, Vasilis acknowledges the fact that the international imposition of a Consociational democracy in BiH and the support given to the multi-ethnic parties and/or coalitions alongside a strong discouragement against ethno-nationalist parties caused the contrary. Conversely, back to the state electoral level, an evinced three-multi-ethnic party including candidates with Bosniak or Serbian or Croat origin is expected to restrain nationalism in tolerable levels.

Denis Piplaš in his opinion article examines the political current situation in BiH in regard with the recent general elections. By presenting an overview of the system of government, which has its concept in ethnicity, he analyses the general elections outcome. The elections were seen as the last chance for the country to catch up the train, which is expected to bring BiH out of the frozen conflict and the worryingly current bad economical situation. Nevertheless, circa four months since the official confirmation of the results by the Central Election Commission, a state government still does not exist. When the government will be formed remains unclear. It is also unclear if the party with the largest number of votes will lead the government or it will remain in the opposition like it was the case in the previous 4-years term. In Piplas opinion that would probably mean another four lost years for Bosnia's way to the European Union and to a normal society. A popular saying among the Balkan nations is: "that as long as it is stable in Bosnia, it will be calm in the region of former Yugoslavia". Today, Bosnia is everything else, but surely not a stable state. Furthermore the question remains: "what future awaits Bosnia and Herzegovina? A peaceful and viable state on the way to the European Union or the dark place in the European continent?". In concluding his position, he urges for a more decisive international intervention by the EU, and according to the International Crisis Group "Bosnia – Europe's time to act" January 2011 policy briefing: "(EU) member states should [...] shift from the Office of the High Representative (OHR) to a reinforced EU delegation.[... and] should rapidly install a comprehensive plan to reinforce the EU presence [...] and] should withdraw from domestic politics and, unless a threat to peace emerges, focus on reviewing past decisions".

Victoria Potapkina and Srdan Karalic dialogue article expresses clearly the debate about whether BiH must remain united under the same state, or if the most convenient is to end conflicts in the region and enhance the welfare of its citizens by separating the country. Fifteen years have passed since the Dayton peace agreement was achieved. The promises of peace and stability for this country, seeking for the unification path, have not yet been accomplished. The Dayton agreement was inevitable in the case of war, and not fully adapted to current situation that is undergoing across BiH nowadays. With unemployment and poverty rates over 40%, economic instability and a corrupted and asymmetric political system, BiH is far away from achieving the internal stability needed. Those conditions propitiate the debate about if BiH must continue its political status quo– that apparently won't help to a

large and important faction of Bosnian citizens- or if the country has to start with a political fragmentation into its three different national entities: Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. This dialogue article is rich in contextual, historical and documentary notions. It aims to approach the situation of the different conditions faced by the BiH citizens. Furthermore, this article remarks the consolidation of the Islamic Bosnian citizens into a nation - by representing the 80% of the population in the 51 percent of the BiH territory - and the issue of influences and motivations for stabilizing the country's regime in order to join the EU and NATO. This last but not least is going to implicate this clump towards economic development, stability and symmetry in power, in BiH and in the Balkan region.

Ines Katic-Vrdoljak in her opinion article analyzes the problems associated with democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a transition country - an extremely important topic for the academic debate dealing with developments in the Western Balkans. While democracy with all its accompanied elements has lately been recognised by the international community as a crucial element of state-building and development in collapsed and transition states, it cannot be established over a short period of time. Even so, no political stability can be achieved until strong and stable state institutions are fully built to provide for power, authority, good governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights and strong civil society. BiH is still struggling to become a fully functional state despite large-scale international assistance received in the past two decades. The situation is further exacerbated by the ongoing neoliberal reforms. Most importantly, overspread nationalism, particularism, clientelism and corruption prevent the central power and authority from being established, which hinders political and economic reforms required for the country's accession to the EU. Ines concludes that in order to bring about stability and prosperity in these countries, instead of a one-size-fits-all solution, more comprehensive, customized and long-term state-building scenarios should be devised for them, where political models and laws introduced should reflect their values, practices, tradition and culture in order to prevent them from slipping into, or resuming, civil war.

For further reading, writing and scientific research, integrated in the upcoming ADV issues, here are some thoughts:

The evolving turmoil in the region of North Africa and the Middle East, i.e. the Democratic issue in the Arab world, this mostly civil originated revolution with demands for democratic changes on the governance of its regimes, is currently on its peak in Libya. Democracy is a broad term and as such it has successfully confirmed its compatibility with the Arab-Islamic culture being examined by an holistic approach from Morocco (West) to Iran (East) and from Syria-Iraq (North) to Yemen and Oman (South). Is there a notable justification for an international intervention in the region according to the principle Responsibility to Protect (R2P) based on the Security Council Resolution on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict [(S/RES/1674 (2006))]?

Skoal!!!

## **Democracy: a necessary but insufficient condition for state-building – The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

*Ines Katic-Vrdoljak<sup>1</sup>*

Democracy with all its accompanying elements has been recognised lately as a crucial element of state-building and development undertaken by the international community embodied in international institutions, organisations and development agencies in collapsed and transition states. While in the 1970s and 1980s economic growth was emphasized and eagerly pursued by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, from the 1990s it became evident that economic growth was a necessary, but not sufficient condition for the development and stability of developing countries. Democracy, good governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights and strong civil society, has all been seen as equally important elements. However, the problem with democracy is that it cannot be established in any country over a short period of time, and even if it could, it may not bring political stability until all other elements are in place and until strong institutions providing for mechanisms for power and authority to govern the state have been built and the new values internalized by its citizens, especially with neoliberal reforms under way. The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina exemplifies this well.

As one of the six Yugoslav republics, the country became independent in early 1992. However, differing national interests of the nationalist elites representing its three dominant peoples, namely Bosnian Croats, Serbs and Muslims (now referred to as Bosniaks), had plunged the country into a bloody four-year war that was eventually stopped by NATO military intervention and sealed by the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995 intended to keep together the country now comprised of two entities - BiH Federation and the Republika Srpska. Besides recovering from a large-scale destruction, this once socialist single-party republic with centrally planned economy was also to go through transition to a capitalist market economy and liberal democracy, a process that all Central and East European countries have gone or have

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been going through following the fall of the Berlin wall. However, fifteen years and dozens of billions of dollars later, a stable and prosperous state is still nowhere in sight. While the international community succeeded in ending the conflict and bringing peace, security and relative stability by keeping the presence of NATO and later also EU stabilization forces and placing the High Representative as the civilian authority with a wide scope of authority and powers, and subsequently got involved in a myriad a variety of programmes and reforms through multilateral and non-governmental organisations and institutions, the country is still struggling to properly function, achieve good governance and establish true democracy. Why is that?

Generally, to establish democracy, good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights in developing and collapsed states, the international community has been implementing best practices from developed countries. However, it seems that some facts are ignored in that endeavour: what took developed democratic Western countries centuries to achieve is to be implemented in these states over a short period of time, whether due to the governments' limited and stretched human and financial resources allocated across the world, or their desire to see quick results for their political goals at home or on the world stage. Unfortunately, this may result in the mere establishment of organisations but not institutions capable of managing the state successfully.

Firstly, every society is different: what works for one society may not necessarily work for another. In other words, social, cultural and historical contexts are all important and require specifically tailored reforms and not one-size-fits-all solutions. British or French history considerably differs from that of Hungary or Croatia in that they had different imperial experience, political systems and economic development. In Bosnia and Herzegovina specifically, the legacy of Austro-Hungarian Empire that at the turn of the twentieth century replaced five hundred years' Ottoman rule in the region, widely referred to as the crossroads of three monotheistic religions - namely Catholic, Orthodox and Islamic adopted by Bosnian Croats, Serbs and Bosniaks respectively - resulted in diverse cultures, traditions, values and national interests that are now difficult to reconcile. Further, socialism established after the World War II also left a strong mark on the mindset of the people.

One of the characteristics of this political system was job security. Once obtained, a job was likely to be retained for a lifetime. This is a legacy that still seems to prevail in the people's minds despite quite different trends we are witnessing reflected in job insecurity brought about by globalization and widely prevailing neoliberal self-regulating market philosophy over the past three decades. It is this sense of security that can be to an extent responsible for the all-pervasive lack of a sense of responsibility across the civil service and business alike. For example, the time needed to start a business is exceptionally long (which can also be attributed to the complicated bureaucratic procedures), which discourages any domestic or foreign investors. Also, court suits can easily take years, whether they pertain to civil law suits or disputes between companies.

Collectivism, reflected in a strong sense of belonging to a community and a need for a charismatic leader, a feature seemingly inherent in all Slavic societies, was another characteristic of socialism. This, coupled with the non-existent political, and particularly dissent, culture that the former communist regime ruled out, provides a weak basis for establishing a strong civil society needed in modern democratic states as a system of checks and balances of government. Indeed, with the slight exception of this year's elections, the voter turnout has been quite low hitherto, although is it also the omnipresent disappointment with politics that can be blamed.

Secondly, even if these difficulties can be overcome and true democracy established, there is a question if the country can achieve stability and prosperity if strong state institutions are not fully built. This would primarily imply an answerable and responsive government and also independent judiciary and police prepared to get to grips with corruption and organized crime and to penalize abuse of power and authority by politicians and functionaries. In Bosnia, only few state institutions have been up and running in the past fifteen years, mainly due to the resistance of the Serb-dominated Republika Srpska that seeks to retain as much authority and independence as possible. A single military force, that under the pressure of the international community and NATO leadership united what were once three warring parties, is a rare successful endeavour, although there are attempts to undermine this project too. None of the post-war governments has done so much as to attempt to eliminate (or at best reduce to the lowest level possible) corruption deeply embedded in the whole society: from the police to the health and education sectors to courts, or to do away with patrimonialism reflected in the ruling elite only favouring certain class of people

most of whom became exceptionally rich and powerful during and after the war through highly suspicious dealings in return for their political support. Nepotism is so spread that it is almost internalised by the people as normal: getting a job in the civil service and parastatal enterprises is almost impossible without political or family connections, where these generally seem to serve as harbors for family, friends and political supporters. Acquiring once worker-owned companies subject to privatisation seems to work on pretty much the same principle, where these are sold at shamefully low prices to political clients, their employees made redundant and the buildings most often sold at much higher prices.

Privatisation is only a part of neoliberal reforms under way in the country. These reforms, initiated and assisted by the international community also include squeezing the state, trade liberalisation and transition to a market economy. Even if implemented in a fully transparent way, all of these measures entail large-scale job cuts, reduction of social benefits such as free education and health care, and the inability of domestic producers to compete with goods imported from developed countries with high productivity and therefore lower costs, particularly if these are subsidised by the respective governments. All this can in turn lead to massive protests of workers and farmers as witnessed all too often in Bosnia lately, and generally to civil unrest, which can undermine both political stability and economic development. In political terms, that may mean the eventual withdrawal by the public of political support for the government of the day and ultimately the loss of its legitimacy, and in economic terms, a significant reduction of sources of people's income and therefore of taxes as the main source of state revenues, more so since this opens the way for informal employment and economy.

It should be noted that Bosnia and Herzegovina needs strong and stable institutions with inbuilt checks and balances, established central power and authority, mature and responsible politicians truly committed to liberal democracy and respect for human rights, to also be allowed to join the European Union that is declared to be one of her most important long-term goals. More specifically, the eligibility for accession negotiations with EU authorities is conditioned upon the constitutional reform to make the state fully functional, the related implementation of the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights pertaining to the inclusion in the political structures of groups classified as Others, and the registration of the immovable state property, all of which has seen a stalemate for some time. The reasons why those who

identify themselves primarily (or even solely) as BiH citizens rather than exclusively as members of one of the three main ethnic groups have no place in BiH politics, the immovable property is persistently refused to be registered as state-owned and constitutional reform contested and rejected by nationalist and particularistic-oriented politicians can be undoubtedly attributed to the mentioned shortcomings, but also to the weaknesses of consociational electoral model that partly contributed to the five-month delay in establishing a new government following the general elections last October due to the disagreements between the victorious parties on the distribution of the key political posts.

In short, international support, and indeed supervision, is necessary in collapsed and transition states. However, while imposing political models and laws in a country seems relatively easy, that hardly ever works because, in order to be effective, they need to reflect the values, practices, tradition and culture of the people of the country in question. Also, democracy cannot be established overnight: in West European countries it came into being through a gradual and painstaking process and flourished only when strong and stable state institutions were built to provide for political and economic stability and security for their citizens. Therefore, , there is a question of whether perhaps more comprehensive, customised and long-term state-building scenarios should be devised and implemented in these countries by the international community to prevent them from slipping into, or resuming, civil war. The example of Bosnia and Herzegovina certainly raises this question.

## **Bosnia and Herzegovina after the general elections: instability and a “failed state” or the newest candidate for EU membership?**

*Denis Piplaš<sup>2</sup>*

**Abstract** This article will examine the political situation in one of the most unstable states in Europe – Bosnia and Herzegovina. To understand the complicated situation in which this country is, I will give an overview of the system of government which has its concept in ethnicity, and analyze the general elections held in October 2010. The elections were seen as the last chance for the country to catch the train, which will bring them out of the frozen conflict and the worryingly bad economical situation. Now, almost four months later the state government still does not exist. Many ask the question: what future awaits Bosnia and Herzegovina? A peaceful and viable state on the way to the European Union or the dark place in the European continent?

It is an unusual sunny January day in the Bosnian capital. The streets of downtown Sarajevo are full of young people sitting in cafes. The one who are not sitting, but walking on the main pedestrian zone are trained with the best clothing brands. For someone who is not familiar with the political situation nowadays in Bosnia, it could seem as the most peaceful and stable place in the world. Yet, the appearance is deceiving.

In the fifteen years after the end of Europe’s bloodiest war after the Nazis, the country did not move a lot forward. Only a small amount of reforms had been achieved with strong pressure from the International Community. But, the International Community moved to further political issues all over the globe. Bosnia is not anymore on the first place of their political agenda. Why should it be? The military conflict is over, and the US and EU have more important issues which they have to deal with. Unfortunately, they forgot that an entire region depends on the

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situation in Bosnia. A popular saying among the Balkan nations is: *“that as long as it is stable in Bosnia, it will be calm in the region of former Yugoslavia”*. Today, Bosnia is everything else, but surely not a stable state.

The content of the Dayton Peace Agreement (which stopped the war and which determined the constitution of the country) has become a fetter which does not allow the country to move forward. The Agreement actually brought peace but cemented the ethnic divisions of the country. The results are: a not effective overall state with two republics/entities inside (one Serbian, one Croatian – Bosnian Federation with ten cantons also separated by ethnical lines) and three ethno political elites – Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian (also referred as Bosniaks or Bosnian Muslims). The current leadership of the Serbian republic (Republika Srpska – RS) has repeatedly threatened with secession, and some Croatian politicians in the Federation are standing for their own third “republic”. The ten cantons are often left alone with jurisdictions as if they were own separate states. For instance, it means that the educational system in each canton is different - an enormous bureaucratic machinery for a small country. In a labyrinth like this it seems that everybody get lost in its own different approaches. Some experts believe that the Bosnian experiment of a nation building has failed; others warn against the emersion more violence. Still, other voices find that the country is better than its reputation as an eternal war and conflict zone.

The general elections held in October 2010 were seen as the only way out of the crisis which lasts few years. After an aggressive pre-election political campaign from all sides for a period of several months, the results have shown some differences within the Bosnian society. For the first time a party without a clear ethnical background - the Social-democratic Party (SDP), with its pro-EU commitment, won the largest number of votes. Yet, we must admit that the voters were mainly Bosniaks. Within the Serbian population the ruling Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) achieved a clear victory, but did less well than expected. This party is often referred as quasi–social democratic, as it has a clear ethno - nationalistic orientation. The SNSD was expelled from various international organizations of socialists and the main figures of the party often make unpopular statements in which they deny genocide and other war crimes happened during the Bosnian war. The Croatian community supported mostly its own ethnic parties, which are constantly bringing up the idea of a separate Croatian entity in the western part of the Herzegovina region. They take the argument that it is the only solution in maintaining the culture and

language of the Croats – the most affected community by population decline after the war, mainly due to migration. On the Bosniak side, the parties which campaigned on the issues of defence of the state and radical changes in the constitution lost heavily its voters. But it is complicated to name a clear winner in Bosnia's largest ethnic group, given to the fact that there are several parties which are considered as popular and influential.

Actually, the wide political pluralism and the huge number of political parties, on such small space, with totally different approaches on the situation is one of the major obstacles in forming the state government four months after the elections. The Bosnian parliament which should accept and enact laws in the fastest procedure, as the state lags behind the entire region, is still not able to work. But even if it would work, the question of how efficient it would be maintains. It is not unusual to see particular resistance of the RS parliamentarians, which threaten often to pull of the general government institutions.

When the government will be formed remains unclear. It is also unclear if the party with the largest number of votes (the Social Democrats) will lead the government or it will remain in the opposition. If the result would be that, we would face almost the same government like in the past four years; and that would probably mean another four lost years for Bosnia's way to the European Union and to a normal society.

On the other side, the Bosnian society is slowly losing its will for political engagement. The huge corruption scandals or the apartheid educational system in some parts of the country brought a stage where most people see the political elites as an enemy and not as a tool for recovering the country.

So, what could be the solution and is there a solution which could satisfy all three sides? In such a political constellation a clear progress can only be achieved with a huge presence and a leading role of the European Union in the urgently needed reform process. But, the International Community failed already twice in Bosnia in the past twenty years. Firstly, allowing war and Genocide on European territory for the first time after World War II, and secondly, with a very "soft" policy after the war, when they allowed former warlords to remain on public positions. The international community also approved the situation where a side mostly responsible for the ethnic cleansing and destruction has a status of an equal party in the negotiations; with their leaders systematically denying such crimes. Today, if the European Union does not

want a “dark spot” on the European continent, it is time to act. In the newest report of the “International Crisis Group” (Bosnia – Europe’s time to act) it is presented on the best way what could be the way out of the crisis:

*After years of hesitancy, European Union (EU) member states should make 2011 the year when the lead international role in Bosnia and Herzegovina shifts from the Office of the High Representative (OHR) to a reinforced EU delegation. Bosnia has outgrown the OHR established in 1995 after the Dayton Peace Agreement and the creation of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC). Today the country needs EU technical assistance and political guidance to become a credible candidate for EU membership, not an international overseer to legislate for it or maintain security. Member states should rapidly install a comprehensive plan to reinforce the EU presence, including an embassy led by a strong ambassador, strengthen the membership perspective and build local credibility. OHR should withdraw from domestic politics and, unless a threat to peace emerges, focus on reviewing past decisions.*

Unless some dramatically changes happen on the political scene of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the only way in conducting the country is through international intervention. The state is still too weak and exposed, to handle the current situation. Even the last elections could not help, as the political powers which are working to weaken the state are still very active and present. Let’s hope that this year will bring some changes on the Balkans.

## History restates? Nationalism prevails in BiH

Vasilis Kiliaris<sup>3</sup>

**Abstract** Nationalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina had prevailed in the last decade of the 20th century. Notwithstanding that nationalism is a political principle, a sentimental assumption or an ideology, Nationalism is considered as a phenomenon as well. In contradiction with the rest five republics of Yugoslavia, Bosna i Hercegovina (BiH) had approximately in terms of power three equally self-defined ethnic groups. The term Balkanization is today invoked to explain the disintegration of some multiethnic states and their devolution into dictatorship, ethnic cleansing, and civil war. The theory of Consociationalism was developed on the basis of achieving reconciliation in societal fragmentation along ethnic and religious lines. Reconciliation itself is sine qua non for accomplishing a lasting peace, security and stability in these cases, towards a final Conflict Resolution. The international imposition of a Consociational democracy in BiH and the support given to the multi-ethnic parties and/or coalitions alongside a strong discouragement against ethno-nationalist parties caused the contrary. Conversely, back to the state electoral level, an evinced three-multi-ethnic party including candidates with Bosniak or Serbian or Croat origin is expected to restrain nationalism in tolerable levels.

**Keywords** *Nationalism, BiH, Balkanization, Consociationalism, ethnic groups, Conflict Resolution*

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**Nationalism** in Bosnia and Herzegovina had prevailed in the last decade of the 20th century – the words Nacionalizam, Bosna i Hercegovina (BiH) is used with the same meaning in all three languages (Serbo-Croatian) commonly spoken by the three national entities, the ethnic groups of Bosniaks, Serbians and Croats. This prologue is deliberately ambiguous aiming to emphasize the contentious issue of voting along ethnic lines, such as was the case in the recent parliamentary and presidential elections in BiH on October 3, 2010.

In the words of Ernest Gellner, Nationalism “is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent”, arguing that nationalism became a sociological necessity of the modern states' effort to harmonize polity (political entity) with culture (ethnic group) (Gellner, 1983). On an alternative approach, Eric Hobsbawm defined that using the vocabulary of Nationalism based on the “initial working assumption, (that) any sufficient large body of people whose members regard themselves as members of a ‘nation’ will be treated as such”, is misleading and oversimplified because of its sentimental nuance (Hobsbawm, 1990). In addition Nationalism defined “as the idea that the world is divided into nations which provide the overriding focus of political identity and loyalty which in turn demands national self-determination” is dialectically challenged because the term nation itself is more difficult to get a general scientifically agreed definition (Breuilly, 1993).

Notwithstanding this triple consideration, being a political principle, a sentimental assumption or an ideology, *Nationalism is a phenomenon*. A global one that arose since the era of the French revolution and the transformation of the medieval state into the modern state based on the social contract theories formed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Hence **modern states** are the political mechanisms, distinguished from both the rulers and the ruled over, bearing the supreme jurisdiction over a demarcated territory, whereas their claim for monopolizing the coercive force co-exists with a minimum level of support or loyalty from their citizens (Skinner, 1978 & Giddens, 1985).

Focusing in Southeastern Europe, modern states are considered the ones having a solid ethnic state or a self-determination ethnic majority with the power and willingness to rule and govern; a condition that exist since the mid-nineteenth century nationalistic movements in the Hapsburgs Austrian Empire and the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 or the latest in the aftermath of the Balkan wars and the First World

War (WWI). This typology of the modern state combined with the notions of nationalism creates the aspect of civic nationalism, a commitment to a state and its values, like it was the cases in the prior-federal states of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. In this regard, ethnic nationalism, a commitment to an ethnic group based on common descent, language and religion beliefs, was suppressed by the civic nationalism and the communist regimes ante and post World War Two (WWII) respectively.

Former Yugoslavia was such a modern state with the Serbian ethnic group in the led, especially during the 1980's. The reason was that although Tito (1892-1980), its founder, hero and leader, succeeded a state-strengthening position, evidenced by his splitting with Stalin and Yugoslavia's leading in the Non-Aligned Movement, after his death the revival of ethnic nationalism was not averted. One of its six component socialist republics was BiH having itself the characteristics of the aforementioned type of modern state, at least till the collapse of the Communist polar of the international system towards the end of the 1980's. In contradiction with the rest five republics of Yugoslavia, BiH had approximately in terms of power three equally self-defined ethnic groups.

Subsequently in the 1990's Nationalism prevailed in ex-Yugoslavia failing to recall decades of a socialist type path of cooperation and co-existence between its component socialist republics and nations. Religious and Ethnic origin nationalist movements, even during the Cold War, were gradually burning like a candle, establishing ethnically based independent states when the momentum turned on their site. The collapse of the Soviet Empire and its subsequent fall of the Iron Curtain were for Western Balkans an unfortunate turn of events. BiH was the main theatre of battles in a senseless series of wars. The replication of the Balkanization in BiH itself has had just begun.

The aftermath of the intra-state war in BiH could be summarized as follows:

100,000 persons, both military and civilian, were reported as killed or missing

2, 5 million people internally displaced among the former republics

Many refugees of all nationalities are still displaced today

Regarding the term **Balkanization**, at the beginning was embodied in the Balkan Wars and WWI describing the ethnic and political fragmentation that followed the breakup of the Ottoman Empire. The term was duplicated in the Yugoslav wars dividing the multinational state of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into smaller ethnically homogeneous entities (i.e. Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia without Kosovo and Voivodina) or territorial units with an ethnic majority group (i.e. Serbia including Kosovo and Voivodina, FYROM). The term is also used in account to ethnic conflict within multiethnic states such as the BiH. “The term Balkanization is today invoked to explain the disintegration of some multiethnic states and their devolution into dictatorship, ethnic cleansing, and civil war” (Pringle, 2011). This last contemporary approach of the definition in relation with a multiethnic state explains substantially the causes of the establishment of a separate-level model of voting in BiH as it has had been realized in every electoral procedure since the Dayton Peace Accords in 1995, in 2010 as well.

This type of governance is broadly accepted as a pretext of power-sharing intending to guarantee a just ethnic group representation in multi-ethnic societies. It has become known as the consociation, “the prescribed method of conflict regulation of the ‘international community’ (i.e., the United States when it has the support of the European Union [EU] and the United Nations [UN])”. Most recent examples are the cases in Afghanistan, FYROM, N. Ireland and BiH which have been broadly studied in comparative academic literature, while Sri Lanka and Cyprus are “in prospective power-sharing agreements” of consociation (O’Leary, In Noel, 2005: 3). Thus *Con* and *Societional* terms aim to describe the promotion of the integration of segregated societies of a state, by founding the “technical political-science term ‘*Consociational*’ democracy” (Lijphart, 2004: 97). Hence the theory of **Consociationalism** was developed on the basis of achieving reconciliation in societal fragmentation along ethnic and religious lines. Reconciliation itself is sine qua non for accomplishing a lasting peace, security and stability in these cases, towards a final Conflict Resolution. And to do so, the “combination of the policies and the institutions of autonomy and power-sharing” in this type of fragmented societies is implemented (Gurr, 1993, In Lijphart, 2004: 97).

Indeed, the electoral politics in BiH are influenced extensively by the constitutional arrangements imposed by the international factors in 1995, such as the UN, the EU, the OSCE and the NATO. This international intervention in BiH politics

intended to reach concurrently “the creation of a politically united Bosnia and the promotion of non-nationalist parties” (Hulsey, 2010: 1133). Nevertheless, the outcome of the recent elections failed to meet these ambitious goals simultaneously.

Specifically, this model distinguishes BiH electoral procedure between state and entity levels. BiH constitutionally is governed by a three-presidency board, a central-state parliament, one assembly for each of its constituent entities and a separate presidency for the Republika Srpska (RS) entity. The two assemblies-entities are referred to the Assembly of the Federation of BiH's (FBiH) ten cantons elected by their Croats and Bosniaks residents and the RS National Assembly elected by its Serbian inhabitants. Consequently, “the Bosnian party system is best viewed as three separate party systems, one for each ethnicity” (Hulsey, 2010: 1135).

The results from the 2010 general elections according to the aforementioned model were officially confirmed by the Central Election Commission one month after the ballot procedure of the peoples of BiH. Firstly, the citizens of BiH voted according to their ethnic group feeling of belonging for one incumbent in a tripartite presidency.

The outcome was as follows (in parenthesis the percentage of the votes received by each elected member in comparison with his opponents within each ethnic group):

Bosniak Bakir Izetbegovic (34.86%), SDA candidate

Serbian Nebojsa Radmanovic (48.92%), SNSD candidate

Croat Zeljko Komsic (60.61%), SDP candidate

Secondly on entities level, within the RS, Milorad Dodik won the presidential election with 50.52% of the votes. He is the leader of the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) which also dominated the RS National Assembly with a 45% from a total of 83 seats. As far as the FBiH, the multi-ethnic Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the Bosnian Party of Democratic Action (SDA) secured together a 52% in a 98 seats assembly.

Lastly on the state level, on a 42-seat parliamentary assembly, SDP and SNSD with eight seats each and SDA with seventh control the house of representatives of BiH with a combined 55%. Nevertheless, the last two parties having a concrete mono-ethnic list of parliamentarians along with the rest smaller nationalist parties, e.g. the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) won four seats and the Croatian Democratic Union of BiH (HDZ BiH) three, potentially can stalemate the BiH parliamentary sessions,

i.e. altogether hold 22 seats, namely 52%. On the contrary, having only-one significant multi-ethnic party mostly represented in FBiH by a combined Croats-Bosniaks list, (SDP) with only 19% power, minimizes any sincere efforts of strategically oriented homogenous policies with a focal point on the entire territory of BiH.

The international imposition of a Consociational democracy in BiH and the support given to the multi-ethnic parties and/or coalitions alongside a strong discouragement against ethno-nationalist parties caused the contrary. The intervention enhanced “parties that appealed to only one of the three nationalities but that presented themselves as more moderate alternatives” (Hulseley, 2010: 1136). Such case is the SNSD that dominated RS politics in the last elections. The nationalism phenomenon is going to persist, revive and even lead to more extremism as long as the consociational party system and the foreign involvement continue. In multiethnic constituencies-entities such as is the F BiH, nationalistic sentiments are likely to increase like is the case with the SDA. In mono-ethnic constituencies-entities such as is the RS, nationalism as a political principle may be moderated (SNSD), nonetheless in the state level (BiH) it’s embraces one more extreme rhetoric than the one in the intra-entity political arena (RS). Lastly, nationalism from the point of view of an ideology or dogma is more or less in the same levels comparing to the one existing in the EU member states extreme right or left parties.

Conversely, back to the state electoral level, an evinced three-multi-ethnic party including candidates with Bosniak or Serbian or Croat origin is expected to restrain nationalism in tolerable levels. Potentially, this party could be the SDP, the only one having his nominee elected in the BiH presidency receiving the absolute majority of more than 60%. Should this path manages to embrace more non-nationalist politicians from the other two ethnic groups as well, BiH road map towards the EU is going to become narrower.

## The Untenable Bosnia: Reforms or dissolution?

*Viktoria Potapkina<sup>4</sup> & Srđan Karalić<sup>5</sup>*

Nearly 15 years have passed since the signing of the Dayton accords<sup>6</sup>, ending the 4-year-long Bosnian war. However, Bosnia's future still remains uncertain, as both political and ethnic divisions within the country remain strong. Despite its many post-war achievements, Bosnia is now in a dreadful state of sharp social and political polarization, economic problems and increasingly high unemployment, challenging the already divided government further in addressing real problems the society is facing. There are diverging views on institutional and constitutional reforms (especially with regard to the Dayton accord, concerning the Bosniak-Croat Federation, the Republika Srpska and the central Bosnian

November 21<sup>st</sup> will mark Bosnia and Herzegovina's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of peace. Decade and a half ago, leaders of Serbia, Croatia and the Muslim-controlled part of Bosnia signed the Dayton Peace Agreement, ending the most brutal conflict in Europe after World War II. The agreement, brokered by Clinton's administration, also provided Bosnia with a constitution, political system and established a delicate and highly undefined balance of power within the country. Its main goal was unification of the war-ravaged state and setting it on the path of reconciliation, reconstruction and subsequent EU membership.

Fifteen years later, it is clear none of this happened. The country is divided

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<sup>6</sup> Full text of the Dayton accords can be found at - <http://www.oscebih.org/overview/gfap/eng/>. The constitution is in Annex 4. The accords were signed in Paris on December 14, 1995.  
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government), lack of a census for the past 20 years, no exact estimations of war casualties, of refugees outside the country, or any plan for policy development in education, employment or development. Although most observers agree that the Dayton accords were a great achievement in ending the war and laying the foundation for consolidating peace, it is also seen as a document based on compromises and reflecting wartime circumstances, and cannot de facto insure a functioning democratic state. The Agreement does not abide by the basic principles of international law, making it extremely difficult to sustain an overall integrity and international subjectivity of the country. The resulting unstable political situation further increased the schism between the opposed sides in Bosnia and created a general dissatisfaction with the system. The current state is clearly unsustainable, where highly independent units can, and often do, block the system. Two obvious possible paths forward exist: dissolution or the current status quo, with inevitable complete reform to the Dayton accords.

Advocating the current status quo, this perspective on the matter will not discuss what the possible dissolution of the state will bring in the positive sense, but will look at the consequences of such

along ethnic lines more than ever. The economy is still not functioning adequately and does not generate a sustainable and note-worthy growth. Unemployment is over 40 percent, the same as the percentage of the population living below the poverty line. The political system is defunct and asymmetric. Corruption is widespread. Political power within the country is not institutionalized, but rather dispersed among various players on the political scene that use it solely for their own benefit. The situation is additionally complicated by the presence of the international community (mainly the Office of the High Representative) and its rising confusion in how to position and react in this vertigo mess. The country is lagging behind the whole region in the process of EU and NATO integration, and is now on the very bottom of the list of potential members in both organizations. Alongside with Kosovo, it remains a poisonous relic of the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia and a source of instability for the still fragile Balkan region. All this said, is Bosnia an untenable country and should it cease to exist?

One of the strongest arguments answering the above question with “yes” is that Bosnia lacks basic national

an action in negative terms.

The dissolution thesis proposes the splitting of Bosnia by entity line. This would result in a separate Muslim-Croat Federation, which is currently a highly decentralized entity of 10 cantons, with limited harmonization on the entity level, a non-functional government, high budget administration costs and political disputes; and Republika Srpska, inhabited mainly by Serbs, a highly centralized entity with hegemonic governance and a superior stand point in state-level decision making. Separating the single, centralized and “homogenous” Republika Srpska from the rest of Bosnia might indeed solve some problems of Republika Srpska, however it would leave the Federation with the same problems Bosnia faces as a whole today. The entity would not be able to survive on its own as an independent state and such an action does not provide a wholesome solution to the problem faced by Bosnia and Herzegovina today. Thus the notion of the well being of both sides can be deemed implausible. Furthermore, such a step would lead to inevitable regional instability. Namely, the signatories of the Dayton agreement guarantee peace and security in the country and the region, in other words, safeguard the dissolution of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the future and

consensus. Three country’s constituent nationalities, Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats, have three, in almost all aspects, conflicting views on Bosnia’s future. Bosniaks or Bosnian Muslims, the largest ethnic group, perceive Bosnia as their only homeland and want to see it heavily centralized in the political sense. The majority of Bosniak’s politicians and intellectuals are advocating the creation of one Bosnian nation with three religions: Islam, Orthodoxy and Catholic Christianity. Serbs are consolidated and concentrated on slightly less than half of Bosnia’s territory, in Republika Srpska, one of the two semi-autonomous entities. The overwhelming majority of them does not perceive Bosnia as their country and identify themselves solely with Republika Srpska. It is not a secret that both in political and intellectual, as well as in the broad public spheres, the ultimate goal is separation of Republika Srpska and consequent unification with Serbia. The recent poll of public opinion showed that 88% of Republika Srpska’s population supports independence of this entity. Croats share a similar attitude as the Serbs. Pushed by the Dayton Agreement into an institutional framework of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the other entity, where Bosniaks are overwhelmingly dominant

the causing of the instability in the region.

Considering the potential secession of Republika Srpska from the Federation, one must first look at its means of doing so prior to the impending consequences. The principle of the right to national self determination, which entered the framework of international law and diplomacy with the ratification of the United Nations Charter in 1945, challenges the national integrity of states, since it is the will of the people that make a state legitimate, implying that a people should be free to choose their own state and its territorial boundaries. However, the Charter or any other resolution does not insist on full independence as the best way of obtaining self-government. Furthermore, they do not include enforcement mechanisms. Today, there are by far more self-identified nations than there are existing states, with no intention or existing legal process to redraw state boundaries accordingly. In this regard, the infamous case of Kosovo can be mentioned. However, its application to the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina is impossible. Whichever way one chooses to look at it, either as a unilateral declaration of statehood, which is illegal under international law, or a *sui generis* case under UN Security Council Resolution 1244, and therefore a case that

both by numbers and politically, they feel institutionally misrepresented and subdued. After the recent general elections, that took place this October, the most prominent Bosnian Croat politicians are openly asking for their own, Croat-majority based entity, while the general population would gladly separate from Bosnia and join neighboring Croatia. In this situation, it is quite visible that only one out of three constituent nationalities identifies Bosnia as its country and wants its existence.

Another aspect of Bosnia's unsustainability is the political system. The country has one of the most complicated systems in the world with asymmetrically structured institutions. Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina are the so-called *entities*, which deal with more affairs than the country does. Republika Srpska has a relatively simple institutional structure based on two levels – entity and municipalities. On the other hand, the Federation is divided into ten cantons reflecting its dual ethnic character, while the cantons themselves are further divided into municipalities. This means that the Federation has three levels of government – federal, cantonal and municipal. Additionally there is the state level of government, making it three for

does not set a precedent, it would be unacceptable for Republika Srpska to take a similar step. Furthermore, the leadership of Republika Srpska, specifically Miolrad Dodik, has clearly stated that they do not and never will recognize Kosovo's independence.

The possible dissolution of Bosnia could open the possibility for the creation of an Islamic Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina out of the remaining 51 percent of the Bosnian territory, as the population is comprised of a Muslim majority, constituting approximately 80 percent. The creation of an Islamic Republic seems quite probable and rather inevitable, however, largely unacceptable to the European Union.

After Republika Srpska performs secession from Bosnia, it would need to gain international legitimacy. This would be a hard process over a long period of time. It seems probable it would encounter similar recognition problems Kosovo is facing today, with 120 countries, 5 of them EU member states, still not recognizing it as an independent state. Considering this scenario further, however, the remaining Territory of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina would continue Bosnia's legal existence. This would enable it to sue the newly independent Republika Srpska for

Republika Srpska and four for the Federation. Furthermore, Bosnia also has a district, the northeast city of Brčko, the status of which is the result of an unresolved dispute during the Dayton negotiations. The decision upon its status was made by an international supervisor in 2000 and was declared a *condominium* of both entities. Brčko also has its own government, parliament, ministries, etc. Such a political system as a result encumbers Bosnia with 14 governments, 14 parliaments, 14 premiers, over 160 ministers and over 500 MEPs on all levels. A public administration of this size burdens the budget heavily with over 40 and 55 percent of GDP of Republika Srpska and the Federation respectively. The current year's near-bankruptcy of the Federation caused the major social distress and street riots in the capital of Sarajevo.

Besides the high economic costs of the system, it is also discriminatory. In the ethnic-based political structure, there is no place for non-Serbs, non-Croats or non-Bosniaks. As an example, there is no legal foundation for a member of one of over a dozen ethnic minorities in Bosnia to run for the post of the member of the Presidency, since this 3-member body is reserved strictly for one Serb, one Croat and one Bosniak. Even the European

aggression and genocide during the years 1992-1995 to the International Criminal Court. The law suit would obviously include among others, extremely large reparation claims. The probability of Republika Srpska sustaining such a law case seems improbable, most likely leading to the newly independent country's collapse and bankruptcy.

Looking at the claims within present-day Bosnia itself, many Bosnian Serbs say that secession is not realistic and simply want to defend the autonomy they won with the Dayton accords. Bosniaks, are convinced that by blocking as much legislation as possible Milorad Dodik is following the example of Milo Djukanovic, the Montenegrin leader, when he set out to prove that the loose federation of Serbia and Montenegro could not function. In the meantime, the Bosniak-Croat Federation is balancing on the brink of bankruptcy and the sharp, polarized socio-political situation in country as a whole does not allow all levels of government to address pressing issues of health, education, unemployment, technological innovation, energy, or environmental protection.

Of course, all three ethnic groups of Bosnia form their own historical constituent. All three have a deserved necessity of preservation of their

Court of Human Rights ruled a year ago that this constitutional clause is in conflict with the basic elements of human rights and needs to be changed.

A third most striking fact about Bosnia's artificial statehood is the mixture of history and geopolitics. When Yugoslavia started to fall apart in the beginning of the 1990s, it happened exclusively along ethnic lines. The ethnic and religious hatred inherited from history and undefined relations among Yugoslavia's nationalities started the whole process. The comprehensive approach of the international community was to allow the break up of Yugoslavia along Republics' administrative borders. This principle was abandoned in the case of Serbia when its southern autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohija declared independence, supported by most Western countries. Such a policy of double standards in a region, where questions of ethnicity and borders are so heavily interconnected, additionally created a potential for instability both for the region and Bosnia. It is hard to explain to Bosnian Serbs by what standards of international law Albanians in Kosovo have the right to secede from Serbia, while they do not have the same right in case of Bosnia. The major argument by the world's leading

historical memory. However, as the EU opens its doors to Southeastern Europe, Bosnia needs to form an effective national community capable of accession into the EU. The region as a whole is setting integration into the EU as its main foreign policy goal, striving to join the united Europe. If the goal is the same, Bosnia should unite over a single European idea, as the disintegration of Bosnia and Herzegovina in such a short time would be detrimental to the process.

countries, which supported the independence of Kosovo, is that the atrocities committed in the conflict in Kosovo makes it impossible for Kosovo Albanians and Serbs to live together in one country, only amplifies the reasons for dissolution of Bosnia. If around 10 000 casualties in the Kosovo War requires the separation of Serbs and Albanians in Serbia, why should not that be the same reason for the separation of Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks in Bosnia, where over 100 000 people were killed in the war?

Bosnia and Herzegovina is an ultimately dysfunctional and untenable country. Besides the aggressive eagerness of the international community to maintain this artificial creation, nothing else holds it together. Historical experience teaches us that any state built without a basic consensus of its political elites and a comprehensive social agreement among the population is eventually doomed to fail. In Bosnia's case, any kind of reform that would make it a functional state will be conflicted with the particular interests of its constitutive elements and will just generate a new potential conflict. If there existed a way for Bosnia to become a functional country, this would already have happened. The international

community should rapidly change its policy toward this country. It should help in ending the process of forming nation-states in this part of Europe by allowing those nationalities that do not want to live in Bosnia to leave it. After all, the nation-state concept is in the very foundations of the united Europe and why would the Balkans be an exception.

## Call for articles

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#### **I. Academic articles should show:**

- academic style and tone
- excellent English
- between 1000 and 4000 words
- in-text references (APSA-Style): Name of author, year of publication, page  
<http://www.ipsonet.org/data/files/APSAStyleManual2006.pdf> (e.g. Klausmann, 2007, 23)  
<http://www.refworks.com/Refworks/OSPreviewer.asp?format=233&selected=323&sampleD=true>
- a bibliography at the end

#### **II. Opinion articles should be:**

- on a current political, economic or legal issue
- written in standard English
- between 1000 and 2000 words
- no in-text reference

#### **III. Dialogue articles:**

- two authors take different sides on an issue and oppose their arguments in two columns  
(no bullet points)
- excellent English
- between 2000 and 4000 words (altogether)

With your articles please include a **short presentation of yourself** (approx. 100 words) in the following style (3<sup>rd</sup> person singular): Name, age, (hometown), university, degree, focus of your studies/Master or Bachelor Thesis, current employment or study interests, e.g.:

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