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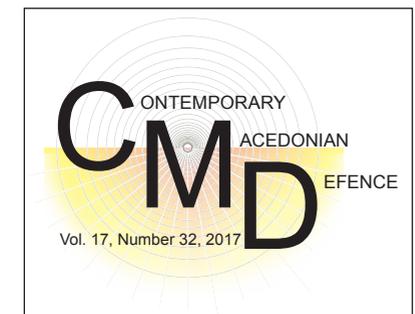
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# **СОВРЕМЕНА МАКЕДОНСКА ОДБРАНА**

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# СОВРЕМЕНА МАКЕДОНСКА ОДБРАНА

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МЕЃУНАРОДНО НАУЧНО СПИСАНИЕ НА  
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## BRIEF REVIEW OF THE GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION IN THE REGION WITH A SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE SECURITY THREATS AND MIGRANT CRISIS

Muhamet RACAJ<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *The purpose of this paper is to give a brief overview of the geopolitical situation in the region of Southeast Europe, particularly in the region of the Balkan Peninsula and the interests, and influence of some great powers in this area. In the context of security threats to the region, several types of possible security threats to the region will be discussed and elaborated, such as terrorism, the presence of foreign fighters from the crisis regions, transnational organized crime, etc. A special focus will be given on the analysis of the large migrant crisis the region is facing, and the possible security implications thereof. A special part of the paper will elaborate on the situation with the migrant crisis in the Republic of Macedonia. Conclusions regarding this paper's subject will be presented at the end.*

**Kay words:** *geopolitics, security, asymmetric threats, migrant crisis*

### Introduction

Apart from Serbia, which aspires only for membership in the EU, the other countries in the region are deeply involved in the processes of transformation and democratization for EU and NATO membership. The current reforms contribute to the improvement of the security situation in the region. The international political and financial support improves the stabilization of the development processes of the countries in the region. The economic support of Russia to Serbia and the Republic of Srpska, as well as the economic impact in Bulgaria have also resulted in a positive trend, giving the opportunity of choice, but only from an economic aspect. The regional cooperation, particularly in the defense sector is improving, but somehow ignoring Kosovo and Bosnia, because they are still considered unstable.

There is maximum investment in the democratic processes of the Anglo-American exponents versus Russian political and military interests in the region. The situation in the region can be defined as dynamic because of some global and regional issues which directly or indirectly have a negative impact on some regional security issues. The socio-economic crisis in the countries is also a negative trend in terms of the security in the region. There is a weak economic growth in the region and a high unemployment rate, which is common for all Balkan

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<sup>1</sup> The Author, PhD, major-general, Armed Forces of the Republic of Macedonia

countries; and a high rate of economic migration to Western Europe. The negative trends in terms of ethnic and religious differences are evident from the tendency of ethno-nationalist groups continuing to propagate ethnic hatred, which widens the ethnic division.

The instability in the Middle East and North Africa continuously strengthens the influence of extremist organizations, organized crime, and illegal migration in the region, which have a negative impact on the security in the region.

Open bilateral issues between countries in the region are considered negative trends in the security environment in the region. Considering all the challenges and interests, the regional players, exponents of global players - US, Russia and China, want to push their national interests, which are closely associated with the environment of the Republic Macedonia.

These factors, in some cases can cause low-level violence, and are a constant challenge to the security situation. Often the low intensity can rise to a strong momentum, but only if it is allowed by the global and corporate organizations.

### **Interests and Influence of the Big Powers in the Balkans**

The relations between the US and Russia, from a historical point of view, started hundred years ago, when Russia led by its own interests strongly influenced some processes in the region, and at that time the United States had not yet been the dominant world power. EU is a dominant actor in the Balkan region today, but not in the military sense, mostly through its powerful economic dimension, which is in the focus of the Russian-American relations. The Union is an area for economic development, but also an area military dominated by the US, whereas Russia is only a consumer of the new technologies produced and found in the EU, for its own development and exploitation of the powerful energy resources.

EU's only economic interest in the Balkans is communications and transportation. EU is an economic giant, but is completely disabled, "sick" of the national interests of its members. When EU's interests are endangered, it asks for help from the US or Russia, a service it financially compensates in a different form of financial exchange.

Turkey as a traditional player in the Balkan region is facing many new challenges; it is losing its flexibility and is becoming slow and clumsy, and in this context it is dominated by the warm-cold relations with Russia. They are trying to change Atatürk's idea, risking the possibility of getting lost in the unknown. The US considers this as an unstable move by Turkey and suggests that such developments could lead to its destabilization. Time will show whether Turkey has the capacity to be the "balance" in the region.

The Austro-Hungarian interests appear to be direct in the region, especially with the emergence of the migrant crisis. They are giving a clear signal that their national interests are being protected at the mainland, on the mere coast, South and South East Europe. It is a new surprise on the European security landscape, which rises over and obstructs the German economic interests. Austria is implementing a new policy, a policy

of a peninsular state, acting as if it were not a landlocked country. It is a phenomenon for consideration, and influence in the area of the Balkans. The big Balkan countries have recognized this, and reenact moves from 100 years ago.

In the new millennium, China entered the region through infrastructure, and is often bundled with Russia as a new combined force, not recognizing or skillfully playing with the EU borders and NATO interests.

The UK is the latest enigma which will strongly affect the region. The UK shows that it will play the role of “eternal interests,” well known in the region. Time will show if it will be so. For now, the “eternal interests” remain, and are modulated in the context of the emergence of the two entities in the area, Macedonia and Kosovo, in relation to Serbia (which is economically weakened), in different historical contexts.

The Republic of Macedonia can be considered in terms of security in the context of the Anglo-American influence in this area, whereas the lessons learned from our history can confirm this, for example the Thessaloniki Front in World War I, World War II, and the interests of Great Britain regarding Thessaloniki, the civil war in Greece, etc.

Macedonia needs to find its place as a key entity in this phenomenon and to benefit from all geopolitical and security dimensions in the region, becoming an interesting continental country, economically strong country with strong diplomacy.

### **Asymmetric Security Threats for the Region**

The Balkan countries share many common security challenges that can affect the integral security in the region. Regarding terrorism, as the most dangerous asymmetric threat, it should be emphasized that the possibility of terrorist attacks in the region cannot be disregarded. The region remains an important logistics base, and a transit route for terrorists and extremists to Central Europe, as well as to crisis areas with the intention to carry out terrorist acts or recruit new fighters; the region also serves as their shelter.

The involvement of foreign fighters from this region in the conflict areas can also be seen as an opportunity for a security breach in the region. From that perspective, there are several possible factors that may affect the security situation in the countries of origin of these fighters during their involvement in conflicts. Upon their return, it is likely that they will engage in spreading extremist beliefs, recruit new members, and engage in illegal training of new fighters. It is likely that they will also provide logistic support to other foreign extremist elements they had encountered in conflict regions.

Extremism, religious or national, is still active in the region in the form of separatist groups or movements. Political differences in certain countries are factors for continuation of extremist activities. These groups are determined to impose radical religious and ideological beliefs and as such they pose a risk to the security of certain countries.

Transnational organized crime is an asymmetric threat defined as a permanent security threat to the region; combined with the wishes of some of the regional leaders

for personal profit, using the tools of the state, above all the subtle-secret services. The real challenge is to prevent political leaders from committing this abuse. Transnational organized crime continues to spread its influence, whereas the implications of these activities are felt by all countries in the region. The movement of migrants from the Middle East, parts of North Africa, and Asia continues to impact the Balkan region. There is an increased risk of infiltration of militants and criminals in the countries of the region, which will be a challenging security situation in the future.

### **The Migrant Crisis and Its Impact on the Region**

The European migrant or refugee crisis is an expression of a number of incidents, or series of events associated with the mass arrival of refugees. Europe is facing major problems in dealing with hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing from the war affected areas in the Middle East and North Africa, seeking asylum in European countries. The Protection Agency within the European Union - Frontex registered 1.55 million illegal crossings of the borders of the European Union in 2015.<sup>2</sup>

The migrant crisis is posing a challenge to all of Europe, but particularly to the continent's smaller countries where economies are being strained and capacities overstretched. There is a real danger that such pressure could lead to a violent backlash against the migrants and test ties between the indigenous Muslim and Christian populations of the region.<sup>3</sup>

The main reason for the current migration to the EU is the pursuit of prosperity, while the main causes are: the breach of security and stability in the regions of the Middle East and North Africa; the existence of double standards in the international world order; loss of perspective for a better tomorrow for the youth in the domestic countries; collar soft power of the EU (especially Germany, France, Sweden, and the UK). According to the statistics, since the beginning of the wars and instability, around 60 million people have been forced to leave their homes. Refugees and migrants, heading to EU countries, originate primarily from Syria but also from Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Nigeria, Sudan, and Eritrea. From 2011 up until today, 4 million people have left Syria, which is one-fifth of its population. This has been caused by the rule of Bashar al-Assad, and the brutality of terrorist organizations ISIL and "Jabdzhat al-Nusra."

Germany, France and Sweden are the most attractive countries for the refugees, primarily because they have a developed welfare system. In the first four months of 2015, about 242,000 asylum applications were submitted in EU countries, which is 80 percent more than the same period the previous year. The majority of the asylum seekers are men aged 18 to 34 years, but there is also an increase of the number of minors who are asylum seekers. In addition, Syrians and Kosovars represent 40 percent of the total number of the asylum seekers in that period.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://hr.wikipeia.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Ariel Cohen, DinuPatriciuEuroasia Center – Atlantic Council, 27 January 2016.

In terms of how refugees are reaching the EU countries, statistics show that about 219,000 people have passed through Turkey's Mediterranean and arrived to Spain and Italy. Furthermore, the refugees are moving through the Western Balkan countries (Greece, Macedonia, Serbia). According to the International Organization for Migration, in 2014, about 3,200 people died in the Mediterranean waters, and in the first half of 2015 their number was around 2,500 people. Winter will bring an increased number of deaths due to deteriorating conditions for sailing in the Aegean Sea. Germany as a powerful economic force, regardless of the risks, undoubtedly recognized the economic benefits and thus directed migrants through the Balkans, aware that they will pass through a filter, and after that it would make an additional selection of the necessary human resources, i.e. cheap labour. Realistically, Germany considers the stability in the Balkans only through the relative stability of communications, driven by self-interest. The occurrence of double standards is connected with: the aggravated socio-economic situation; the current illegal migration crisis poses a threat to the socio-economic stability and internal security; social - threats to national identity; economic - additional costs for institutions.

The massive influx of refugees and migrants in the Balkans, used as a route for entry into the EU through its members on the periphery, such as Greece and Croatia, did not bypass Macedonia and Serbia, as candidate countries for EU accession. Greece's failure to fulfil its obligations to secure the borders of the Schengen zone is in stark contrast to the role played by Macedonia to cope with the influx of hundreds of thousands migrants fleeing war zones.

According to security experts from the United States, who visited the region, the security of the Greek-Macedonian border is the key for managing of the migrant crisis. If this is not realized, the Schengen regime, a great achievement of the EU, will face suspension. This will have serious consequences for the future of the EU.

More than 750,000 migrants moved through Macedonia last year. Macedonia, with some help from Albania, Slovenia, and other neighbours, has received, fed, provided medical assistance to, and processed these migrants. Brussels, Berlin, and Washington need to do all they can to help countries such as Macedonia cope with this challenge.<sup>4</sup>

The Syrian migrant crisis has affected the overall situation of the countries in the region, including the Republic of Macedonia. The security instability in the Middle East and North Africa, the military activities in Syria, the lost hope of the young population, and the interventions by several countries are the main causes of mass migration of the population. The current migrant crisis has a multidimensional effect on the countries in the region. From a social point of view, there is a real threat to the national identity, which is likely to increase nationalism, racism, and xenophobia. This is likely to lead to social disintegration of migrants in the countries which have accepted a larger

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<sup>4</sup> Ariel Cohen, DinuPatriciuEuroasia Center – Atlantic Council, 27 January 2016.

number of migrants. The migrant crisis will cause additional costs for medical care, transportation, etc. The refugee and migrant crisis poses a threat in many aspects, and has an impact on the economic and social stability, as well as on the security of the countries that migrants cross or remain in, including the Republic of Macedonia. The busiest Western Balkan route used to reach the Schengen area, i.e. Germany, Sweden, and other western and Nordic countries, brings negative influence in the social aspect, but it is also a real threat to national identity (culture, language, religion), and such threats will inevitably lead to an increased incidence of xenophobia, nationalism, and racism. Finally, it will create conditions for the emergence of social disintegration in the states in which migrants pass through or remain. Economic stability, as the key to social stability and internal security, can be threatened by spending additional resources and facilities (accommodation, health, utilities, transport, and education) that the concerned countries need to provide and make operational because of the new situation.

Although the migration started seemingly spontaneously, it can be concluded that it was a planned and organized transport route through the Western Balkans, including Macedonia. The abovementioned is confirmed by the following facts: telephone guidance at border crossings; persons in charge of migrants who appear several times in the trains transporting migrants en route Tabanovce-Gevgelija and vice versa; marking trails of passing (plastic bottles and textile); the existence of places where migrants pay for making fake IDs, and selling fake passports in Greece; offering bribe to the members of the Armed Forces and the Interior Ministry, in order to accelerate and facilitate transit through Macedonia; there is unconfirmed information that transportation is funded, and the funds are obtained at several locations in Turkey and Serbia.

Greece, as the first EU state, directs refugees and migrants exclusively towards Macedonia with precise instructions on how to continue the road to some of the EU countries. At the beginning of the crisis, between 2 and 3 thousand refugees arrived or were transported on a daily basis at the southern border of Macedonia. That figure rose steadily. The average number of foreign nationals who were transported or let through at border station 59 is about 4,000 people per day, or 120 thousand per month. Greece, besides transportation of migrants to Macedonia, additionally cleaned its territory from illegal migrants, who have been staying on its territory for a while.

Bulgaria, despite having a wire fence on its border with Turkey, introduced additional measures by placing the armed forces as support to the border police in order to better control the border line. According to the findings, the authorities in Sofia were optimistic that the refugee crisis will not be directed to their country, because they have no free transit corridor and borders are kept very strictly, and they also consistently conduct checks in the country. On the other hand, they were preparing the ground with the proper rhetoric, warning about how difficult it is for them requiring help from the EU for Bulgaria. Bulgaria has made efforts to deter refugees through various outreach programs.

Serbia is trying to present itself as the most humane country in the region, and

to a great extent succeeds in this endeavour. The success is evident through the support amongst migrants, but also by the support from the western media, which have hardly expressed any criticism regarding the manner in which Serbian authorities deal with the crisis. In support of Serbia's success is the presentation of the "neighbours' failures", which are presented in the Serbian media, but in some of the Western media, too. In the camps in Presevo and Kaljizha, they primarily maintain peace and order, and the pace of transported migrants, while their registration and identification is a secondary task. Serbian authorities unofficially estimate that in the last six months about 400 thousand people transited through their territory.

The situation in Croatia escalated after September 15; when Hungary closed the border with Serbia. The Croatian police clashed with massive groups of migrants, who were prevented from entering the newly established shelter for registration of refugees seeking asylum in Europe. The refugees and migrants arrived in Croatia by organized transportation by buses from Serbia. As a safeguard against the large wave of refugees, Croatia closed the border crossing Batrovci, thus creating tension and countermeasures regarding the relation Serbia – Croatia. Furthermore, besides the interstate level, there was an obvious attempt in Croatia to use the migrant crisis for obtaining daily political points.

At the moment, the situation in Macedonia is safe and stable. The border crossings with Greece and Serbia are open and there is no unexpected delay. Parts of the border, where transit of illegal migrants is observed are held under tight control of the security forces, ensuring optimal and smooth transition, according to the national and international legal norms and charters for the protection of human rights. In partnership with the national authorities, the Red Cross of Macedonia, UNHCR, and numerous other organizations, the Republic of Macedonia, within the possible capabilities, provides a humane treatment for illegal migrants. The increased control of the security forces on the border with Greece and Serbia is in accordance with the decision of the Government to declare a crisis situation on these border lines, due to the increased influx of illegal migrants and the need to maintain peace and stability in the national framework. The Foreign Ministry officially informed Greece and the Republic of Serbia, and other countries worldwide through its diplomatic offices regarding this issue.

The Republic of Macedonia has taken a series of steps and measures in addressing this global problem. The Law on Asylum was amended, which allows migrants to decide whether to apply for asylum or leave the territory of the Republic of Macedonia in a period of 72 hours. Two temporary protection points were established, aiming to provide assistance to migrants in Gevgelija and Tabanovce. Meanwhile, vulnerable migrants are temporarily accommodated in the reception centre for asylum seekers in Vizbegovo, near Skopje. There is also consideration in terms of opening a Center for migrants. The inter-ministerial body composed of the ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Interior, Local Government, Health, and Labour and Social Policy was founded in June. This body meets regularly in order to monitor the development of the

situation of migrants and takes appropriate actions. In July, an Action Plan was adopted on the measures for resolving the situation with the increased influx of migrants. The Macedonian security forces are regularly active on the field to control and suppress groups conducting illegal activities related to the transfer of migrants.

According to the Ministry of Interior, upon the amendments to the Law on Asylum were made, they issued certificates to a total number of 41,414 foreign nationals. According to the nationality of the persons who the certificates were issued to, the majority are citizens of Syria-33,461, then Afghanistan- 2,073, Iraq-1,947, Pakistan-1,198, Somalia-561, Palestine-560, Congo-301, Bangladesh-230, Nigeria- 142, Cameroon-140, Eritrea-140, Ethiopia-109, and a smaller number of other nationalities. In the middle of 2015, the daily influx of illegal migrants is estimated to have exceeded the figure of 4,000, which was not the case in the beginning of the migrant crisis, when the daily influx reached the figure of about 600. This number, as of the beginning of 2016, was relatively decreased due to winter conditions, unfavourable for the migrants. The continual increasing of the number of illegal migrants on the territory of the country was communicated by the Republic of Macedonia to the international community on a regular basis, stressing the need for aid in improving the limited capacity to deal with the migrant influx and improving the cooperation with the other countries regarding border policy and border control. We also communicate with our neighbours, the EU, and the UN, because Macedonia is only one of the destinations on the migrant route.

### **Possible Consequences for Macedonia from the Re-escalation of the Migrant Crisis**

Macedonia is a State Party to the 1951 Convention and its Protocol of 1967. The Law on Asylum, adopted in 2003, incorporates the provisions of the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol in its national law, including the definition of a refugee, cessation clauses, to the exclusion clauses and the principle of non-refoulement.<sup>5</sup> The 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol remain the foundation of the international protection regime and should be fully respected when applying “subsidiary” or “complementary” forms of protection. In addition to the general principles of the international refugee law, in light of the current status of the Republic of Macedonia as a candidate country for EU membership and its efforts to incorporate the European legislative instruments into the national legislation, it is appropriate to refer to the legislative framework and general principles of the EU for asylum.

The figures show that over 6,500,000 people are registered as displaced, refugees, with the Western European countries as the end destination. Syrian refugees,

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<sup>5</sup> Член 33 на Конвенцијата од 1951: Ниедна земја договорничка нема да протера или со сила да врати (“*refouler*”) на било каков начин бегалец на граници на територии каде неговиот (или нејзиниот) живот или слобода би биле загрозени врз основа на неговите (или нејзините) раса, вера, националност, припадност на одредена социјална група или политичко уверување.

interviewed in Lebanon, and Jordan, have indicated sexual violence as one of the main reasons for leaving Syria. The Republic of Macedonia is on the itinerary of migrants-refugees, who travel from Syria via Turkey, Bulgaria and Greece to Western European countries. Some of the migrants are using Macedonia only as a transit route on their way to European countries. However, the number of those who decide to stay and seek asylum in Macedonia is growing. At the beginning, the refugee problem would be an additional burden on the economy of our country. The increasing xenophobia would be the other issue causing general discomfort to the society. Growing tensions would result into the fear of crime. The theft of food, clothes, and other necessary resources would occur, too. In such conditions, the criminal activity such as human trafficking could not be excluded. If we take into consideration the example of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, producing hashish for a living, drug trafficking could not be excluded as well. In Syria, thefts of antiquities from 6 museums were reported, which means that there is a possibility that precisely these people possess them, and thus in case of need they would start illegal trade in cultural property.<sup>6</sup>

If we make a deeper analysis of the consequences, we must also take into consideration the Syrian outbreak of polio. Polio is transmitted through contaminated food or water, and an outbreak among children in Syria was confirmed, where the disease had not occurred in 14 years. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the disease was probably spread from Pakistan, one of the three countries where it is endemic, and there is a warning that Syria could become a threat to millions of children in the Middle East. Polio can be easily spread from person to person, and quickly spread among children, particularly in unsanitary conditions, such as in Syria nowadays, where millions of people are affected by the 4-year war, as well as in crowded refugee camps in neighbouring countries. An escalation, i.e. a new wave of refugees from Syria would be a threat to progress, and would hinder Macedonia's path to EU and NATO.<sup>7</sup>

The migrant crisis also has an impact on the security in the region in other contexts. The historical ambitions of Macedonia's neighbours for the area of Vardar Macedonia began to be mentioned, seeking for their opportunity. It is no secret that the borders are closing because of the migrants; however, there are certain strong military structures along the Macedonian borders. This seems like repeating of some 100-year old stories. The well-known rhetoric is already being used in some neighbourhoods.

## Conclusion

Generally, in terms of the geopolitics of the great powers concerning the region, we can conclude that it is necessary for the United States, along with the EU, and the United Nations to become more involved as soon as possible, and to ensure the necessary support and assistance to the Balkans, particularly in dealing with the consequences of the migrant crisis,

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.utrinski.mk/default.asp?ItemID=0944212C2DD1CA47BFF298BEC6C8E414>

<sup>7</sup> Ariel Cohen, Dinu Patriciu Euroasia Center – Atlantic Council, 27 January 2016.

and the security challenges it brings. In the longer run, Washington and Brussels must facilitate the aspiration of Macedonia and other countries for EU and NATO membership. Macedonia is ready to cooperate with the institutions and the Member States of the European Union in supporting the further development of measures to tackle this global problem. In this situation, the Republic of Macedonia must be responsible, control the borders, carry out registration of migrants due to the national and European regulations and the international law, must maintain good foreign and diplomatic relations with its neighbours.

Although the security situation in the region is stable, there are some sensitive indicators of possible security threats in the form of violence, enabling transnational crime, which is influenced by the regional political leaders.

The increasing extremism, organized crime, and illegal migration in the region are security threats that may affect the security environment; however, greater destabilization of the region is possible if global players encourage their regional residents-countries, led by their regional national interests, to the detriment of the Republic of Macedonia.

The international community is a factor of stability in the region, and the presence of destabilizing factors shows the necessity of its further presence. That is one point. However, will the countries in the region be able to institutionally withstand the long and endless geostrategic games in the region and for how long, will this lead to exhaustion from several aspects, such as demographic and economic !?

The concentric circles of security threats suggest the need for further analysis of the possible impacts on the security of the Republic of Macedonia and the Balkans, to the extent possible having in mind today's perspective of the notion of security. Considering the spiraling process of globalization, social development, and the need for a sense of security, in terms of understanding and prevention of the new risks and threats, besides the open issues, there is certainly a series of new issues, regarding which the state should find theories on tackling issues as well as modes for the solution thereof.

Security is neither a permanently established and constantly sustainable factor for development of the country, nor is it inherited and transmitted factor for survival of the state in a globalized world.

Although in the long run, there is no danger of conventional war in Europe, the dissolution of the bipolar world, relapses and consequences of the disintegration of certain former socialist countries, the negative consequences of globalization, national, religious, great-and territorial confrontation –are potential and real risks and hazards that can lead to crises and conflicts.<sup>8</sup>

The region of the Balkans retains something invisible at first glance to many “experts” - a large and dangerous threat that will endanger the security and stability for a long time in the Balkans, and beyond, in Europe. It is perhaps the most invisible part of a major “terrorist iceberg” as sent from the Middle East towards the Balkans and Europe, even before the start of the conflicts in the Balkans. Neither the Balkan countries, nor the major European powers have seriously taken the threat of a new growing security threat, which will find the most serious support and leverage precisely in the post-conflict societies in the Balkans. Years of warfare in the former Yugoslavia inevitably radicalized many Islamic movements in the Balkan region. That paved the way for the creation of new, tight connections and scope for further cooperation between the Balkan terrorist organizations and various terrorist organizations in the Middle East. The installation and expansion of militant Islamic fundamentalism, primarily in Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Albania, Turkey and Bulgaria was a product of the new threatening se-

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<sup>8</sup> Национална концепција за безбедност и одбрана, стр.6.

curity developments in the region. In this context, it is necessary to emphasize that this was organized in an original, specific way and with different intensity in all parts of the Balkans. The common denominator for the Balkans is that it (will) serve as an open gate - bridge for the transfer of new security threats from the Middle East to Europe and, through Europe to the US. It was anticipated and very logical that the current Balkan conflicts will open the doors widely to a new wave of fundamentalist/Islamist militant terrorist activities. The new wave of terrorism in the Balkans, towards Western Europe, will be brought about by the "united" structures of the Balkan terrorist organizations in conjunction with identical structures "imported" from the Middle East. The history of the Balkans, and the history of many regions of the world have always included various violent crimes, and terrorism is one with a prominent position.<sup>9</sup>

The migrant crisis is the initial spark that initiated the debate on what Europe and the European Union should look like tomorrow or in ten years. Will it be a Union dominated by politicians like Viktor Orban, who use migrants to impose their own vision of what Europe and the EU should look like, or will the spirit that formed the EU prevail - the spirit of togetherness, cooperation between peoples and traditions?

Europe, and therefore the European Union must have a common policy, to find a solution of how to protect the external borders. It is necessary to strengthen Frontex, especially to take appropriate measures to resolve the crisis at its source, the crisis hotspots - the countries such as Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Neglecting these countries by NATO and the EU takes a toll on them, and this cost is rising constantly. European security requires functional institutions, patrolling, and monitoring borders, immigrant services enhanced with biometric capabilities against terrorism. Balkan countries lack the capacity and resources. Europe should provide a common answer for the migrant problem, because no country can solve the problem by itself with its own resources. Macedonia expects the treatment as a Member State by the EU. We emphasize solidarity and shared responsibility as essential. No less important is the need to adopt a unified position in addressing the challenges with the refugees and urgently address the protracted conflicts as the primary cause of the immigrant-refugee crisis.

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