

Democracy and Security

in Southeastern Europe

The Lead Story

Russia and the Western Balkans



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Atlantic Initiative

The Atlantic Initiative (AI) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization, established in Sarajevo in 2009 by a group of academics and journalists concerned about the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina, particularly the slow pace of its accession to NATO and the European Union.

We believe that Bosnia's integration into NATO and the EU is of crucial importance for the country, but are equally convinced that lively and informed public debate before and during this process is sine qua non for its successful completion. In that spirit, we wish to initiate, encourage and enable this debate through a wide range of activities on various platforms in order to reach and involve multiple audiences.

The journal "Democracy and Security in Southeastern Europe" is only one of our projects under this stated aim, carried out in partnership with the governments of the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Norway. We are thankful for the encouragement from several non-governmental organizations in the region and particularly grateful for the support of the NATO HQ Sarajevo, the Bosnian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Bosnian Ministry of Defense and the George Marshall Alumni Association in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

*For more information on the Atlantic Initiative, please visit our web page:
<http://www.atlantskainicijativa.org/>*

EDITORIAL



Vlado Azinović
Editor-in-Chief

NATO and Russia after the Lisbon Summit

The Beginning of a Beautiful Friendship?

When we presented NATO's New Strategic Concept a few months ago in this very publication, we stressed its significant importance, but we could not have imagined that the summit at which this document was to be adopted – a gathering of presidents and officials from NATO member countries held in Lisbon on November 19th and 20th – would be almost unanimously deemed historic by the global public. As it turns out, some processes initiated in Lisbon are being hailed as the new way toward positive changes in the development of global affairs.

For those of us who come from a region that is said – sometimes to such an extent that it flirts with bad taste – to be producing more history than it can digest, such allusions to historic determinism understandably and, almost automatically, arouse caution and doubt.¹ However, regardless of whether the Balkans are challenged by an overproduction of or inability to digest history, it seems there are a number of solid arguments to assuage doubts about the possible historic scope of the Lisbon Summit, even in the most guarded observers.

With adoption of its New Strategic Concept, valid until 2020, the North Atlantic Alliance has finally stepped out of the Cold War paradigm that has strongly dictated NATO's outlook on and response to global security challenges since the late 1990s. This new concept is hoped to establish a better balance between the nature of these increasingly dynamic challenges and the Alliance's ability to respond to them effectively.

Discussions in Lisbon confirmed NATO's intention to accelerate the transfer of responsibility for the security and political situation in Afghanistan to the country's government and democratic institutions by 2014, and reinforced its commitment to provide training and equipment support to the Afghan Army and police forces as well as to the country's civil sector. In the Lisbon Summit Declaration, NATO member countries emphasized the continuation of the open door policy that invites into NATO all democratic European countries that are ready to take on the responsibilities and duties required for membership.

While these decisions and pronouncements are important, it is difficult to see them as historically significant. However, there is no such ambiguity about the agreement on a joint antimissile shield meant to protect the territories and populations of NATO member countries from ballistic missile attacks. Adding to the weight of this agreement is Russia's announcement that its experts will participate in preparation and planning for development of this program.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, who participated in the Summit, said "...the missile defense system will be useful only when it is universal." His attendance has put an end to bad relations between NATO and Moscow that began in 2008 when the Russian Army entered the insurgent Georgian republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. An American-

European antimissile program has so far been seen by Moscow as a threat to Russian security; a shift in this attitude and the involvement of Russia in development of this system could lead to the creation of a joint antimissile shield that would extend from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Beyond this, NATO and Russia have announced cooperation in the fights against terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, piracy, and the illegal production and trafficking of narcotics, and Russia has further reiterated its support to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.

A few weeks before the Lisbon Summit, a joint operation of American and Russian commandos destroyed four heroin laboratories and confiscated nearly a ton of the drug in the Achin region of Afghanistan's Nangarhar Province, at the border with Pakistan.² Nangarhar is one of the country's biggest centers of drug production, and is also known for its massive Tora Bora Cave complex where, in 2001, Osama bin Laden was lost without a trace. The Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan has been financed with the money from drug sales, and significant quantities of the narcotic surface regularly in the Russian market. Some of the income from the sale of heroin there is used to finance terrorist operations in the Russian republics of Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Dagestan, and even in Moscow.

Several days after the Lisbon Summit, Russia announced that it would allow armored NATO vehicles to pass through Russian territory on their way to Afghanistan. After a series of devastating attacks against NATO convoys in Pakistan and that country's decision to temporarily close the key route of the Khyber Pass, Russia's cooperation will provide NATO with an alternative entryway for logistical support to the ISAF mission. Three quarters of all food, fuel, and weapon supplies bound for international troops in Afghanistan used to pass through Pakistan. Russia, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine had allowed the passage of NATO convoys carrying food and fuel, but had not previously permitted military vehicles and weapons.

Based on reports from Lisbon and apparent changes in the attitude of Russia toward NATO activities, it is easy to believe that the events of this autumn portend historic changes in the relationship between Moscow and the Western military alliance. In press reports, and in some European capitals, Russia's conduct is being seen as a "game changer", a welcome shift with potentially positive long-term consequences.

While some observers have framed this shift as an attempt by President Medvedev to prove himself more cooperative with the West than Vladimir Putin – his would-be opponent in the 2012 presidential elections – it is more likely Russia has recognized that its most serious threats do not come from the West.

One of the diplomatic reports of the American State Department just made public by the Internet portal WikiLeaks suggests the US has warned the Russians that North Korea delivered twenty BM-25 missiles to Iran. These missiles were modeled on the Russian R-27, designed for carrying nuclear warheads – once standard equipment for Russian submarines. Unlike the Russian prototype, the range of which was a little under 2,500 km, the North Korean mid-range missiles can reach targets at 3,200 km. If fired from Iran, they can reach Berlin as well as Moscow.³

The demands of Chinese immigration to the vast and uninhabited parts of Siberia and the Far East have for some time been provoking fear in Moscow of a Chinese demographic expansion that might, in the near future, result in Russians becoming a minority in their own country. Of course, for Russia, geopolitical rivalry with China does not end with demographics.

If we add to this the prolonged instability of Afghanistan – from which drugs and, increasingly more often, terrorists are arriving in Russia – it is clear that NATO and Russia share far more security challenges today than ever since the end of the Cold War. Assuming that it is not just a short-term ploy meant to buy more time to reexamine its relations with the West, the shift in Russia's attitude toward NATO could truly take on historic significance.

For those of us in the Western Balkans it remains to be seen if, and in which way, this warming of Russia toward the Alliance will impact the efforts of countries in the region to become full NATO members. Will these countries, hostages of the historic convergence of Russia and the West, be left standing in front of NATO's open doors, stopped in their tracks before reaching their strategic goals? Or, will Russian support to efforts in the region to invest in Euro-Atlantic integrations, which have some way to go yet, contribute to the prevention of more unpleasant history in this part of the world and to strengthening rational processing among domestic leadership, turning the region towards the future?

The articles that await you in this issue attempt to explore some of these questions.

NOTES:

- ¹ The statement that the Balkans produce more history than they can digest, almost with no exception, is attributed to former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. However, it was originally penned by British author Hector Hugh Munroe (1870-1916), known under the pseudonym *Saki*, who used this epigram in 1911 not to refer to the Balkans but to Crete (H. H. Munroe, *The Chronicles of Clovis*, London: Penguin Classics, 1989).
- ² "Kabul slams joint U.S.-Russian anti-drug raid in Afghanistan." *Xinhua*, November 1, 2010.
- ³ Broad, William J., James Glanz, and David E. Sanger. "Iran Fortifies Its Arsenal With the Aid of North Korea." *New York Times*, November 28, 2010; Ure, Laurie. "U.S. fears Iran has long-range missile, but Russia calls it a 'myth'." CNN, November 29. available at : <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/US/11/28/wikileaks.iran.missile/index.html?hpt=TI>.

The Lead Story

A conversation with Alexander Botsan-Kharchenko, Russian Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Russia is not against NATO; we are against its expansion

By: Edina Bećirević, Nerzuk Ćurak, and Vlado Azinović

Skilled diplomat, observant and articulate professional, the first man of Russian diplomacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a special expert on the situation in the Western Balkans – in our interview, Ambassador Kharchenko proved to be a very pleasant and engaging conversationalist whose interpretations, not only of diplomatic but also of key political and security issues, cannot be disregarded. In a dynamic discussion characterized by a high level of constructive disagreement, Ambassador Kharchenko talked about relations between NATO and Russia, the Russian proposal for a system of European security, political and economic relations between Russia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as about issues within Bosnia and Herzegovina, putting special focus on the importance of strengthening the entities while, at the same time, not hiding on which side of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian triangle his sympathy lies.



The Western Balkans is an important region for Russia

Mr. Ambassador, in the range of Russian foreign policy priorities, what place is occupied by the Western Balkans?

If we look at it from a historical perspective, it is one of the most important regions, but at this moment, its importance is additionally highlighted for Russia. Namely, in addition to traditional and historical ties, we also have economic ones. In the broader region, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, we have started working on key projects that will make Russia an unavoidable economic and energy factor in the Western Balkans, as well as in Europe. I refer first of all to the South Stream [pipeline], which we have had intensive negotiations about with sev-

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