

THE BALKANS, QUESTIONS OF SECURITY AND GEOPOLITICS

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BALKANI GJEOPOLITIKA DHE SIGURIA II



FORWARD

Dear reader,

The writing of any book, however simple that it may be, is the finalization of not only years of hard work but also the crowing of great emotions experienced by those who have the great fortune of having their works assessed by other readers. I am hopeful that this publication will pass the test of truth, the test of your objective judgment and opinion.

It is several years now that I have worked on writing articles, studies and books on issues of national and regional security. Following this experience, I felt for some time the need to write a full work in the field of geopolitics and security for Southeastern Europe. I hope that the book you hold in your hand may serve as a key to finding the explanation not only to what has happened in the Balkans in the past but also to identifying the prognosis about the future on the basis of multifaceted analyses and studies.

The book has made use of multiple sources and taken under consideration a number of facts and developments that cast light on geopolitics and intrigues in the Balkans, the role of the great powers and the international community in these developments and the place occupied by the Albanian issue in these developments.

The book will serve as a text for students of political sciences, international relations and security studies. I am confident that the book will also serve as an important piece of literature for any one interested in conducting studies or wanting to learn more about development in the Balkan region.

This publication is divided in 17 chapters that cover specific subjects. Such a structuring follows not only a logical line but will also be helpful to readers and researchers. In its current form, the book is also suitable for university audiences and for teaching.

A whole chapter is devoted to presenting the concepts and a historic treatment of geopolitics, geo-strategy and security, the evolution of these concepts and contemporary positions on these subjects. The book then analyses conflicts in the Balkans, geopolitics and regional security up to the end of the cold war. The third chapter looks the process of dissolution of Yugoslavia, the creation of independent states and its impact on the regional security environment and geopolitics. A special chapter is devoted to the 1997 crises in Albania, the internal and external factors that contributed to it and the impact it had on our national and regional security.

The fifth, sixth and seventh chapter will acquaint readers with Albanian-related geopolitical issues in the Balkans. Special consideration is given to the Albanian national issue and national security policies to resolve it. The book also analyses the issue of Kosova. It does this by looking at the century-old Serb genocide aimed at changing by force the Albanian presence in Kosova; NATO's intervention and international administration, the creation of the

independent state of Kosova, the impact of this development in regional geopolitics and challenges that accompany it. In this chapter readers will also get a picture of the origin and dynamic of the inter-ethnic conflict in Macedonia, the Ohrid agreement and the challenges that this issue presents for regional security.

Due to the role it has played in developments in the Balkans and its importance for regional security, the book also looks closely at a number of other issues, including the religious landscape in the Balkans and its impact on regional security; minorities and the importance of respecting human rights; international terrorism and its impact on regional security and geopolitics; organized crime as a player with experience in regional developments and the threat it presents to national and regional security.

Chapters in the book put forth the thesis that only the process of Euro-Atlantic integration, namely NATO and EU integration of the countries of the region, will provide the key to healing the wounds of the region. Special attention is given to the role of regional cooperation and joint security measures as the new security vision for South East Europe. Such measures can be reflected in inter-border cooperation, integrated border management and the role these measures will have on regional security and NATO and EU integration..

One chapter is devoted to analyzing the role played by Russia in the region, Russia's relation with and its influence on regional security and geopolitics in the Balkans. In addition to the issues specifically mentioned above, the book also examines a great number of other issues that are related to and affect our national security and regional geopolitics.

In closing, I feel greatly indebted and would like to thank a number of colleagues and friends. I would like to thank Fredi, Iliri, Krenari, Bujari, professor Ismet, professor Vasillaq for their advice and encouragement. I would also like to mention in particular the work carried out by the editor of this publication, Mr. Nexhat Myftiu as well as the great work carried by my wife, Aida, who is the first reader, editor and critic of all the chapters in this book.

The Author

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