

Croatia's Roadmap to Partnership for Peace

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Croatia has come through a tumultuous, historic, and painful ten years symbolized for me both by the pride and joy in your eyes when "Lijepa Naša Domovina" is played and by the horror and tragedy now going uncovered in the New Vokovar Cemetery.

Having won the war and established your independence, you are now confronted with the need to take equally painful and courageous steps to "win the peace" and to consolidate firmly Croatia's place in the world. This requires, first and foremost, a national consensus on your vision for your country's future.

An important part of that vision is just how you want to safeguard your national security. It is my firm belief that this can best be done by meeting the conditions for membership in the Partnership for Peace – including the establishment of a fully free and democratic market-based society. This includes establishing a modern, democratically-oriented military force capable of joining and actively participating in the Partnership for Peace with the eventual goal of full membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO.

My aim is to outline for you the critical role that NATO and the Partnership for Peace play in the world today; clarify why the United States believes that it is in your interest and in our interest that Croatia participate in these institutions; and to give you the "Roadmap" which, if fully implemented, will lead to the active support of the United States government for Croatian entry into the Partnership for Peace by the end of this year.

With the end of the Cold War and dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, there were those who suggested that NATO's work was done and even questioned its need to continue. Events of the 1990s proved how misguided this approach was. NATO leadership and participation have been invaluable both in the successful resolution of the Persian Gulf war and closer to home, in bringing about and then implementing the Dayton Peace Agreement. If anything, NATO is a more active and more important player than ever.

When first created, skeptics also claimed that the Partnership for Peace was only a way of channeling new applicants for NATO membership into a

permanent second-class status. How wrong they were. PFP is an incredibly active organization with 27 members who participate in over 1,000 activities per year and have held more than 93 joint exercises in the few short years of its existence. I saw for myself two years ago in Tuzla, Bosnia how lessons learned through joint exercises in the PFP program paid off in excellent field cooperation in the SFOR mission in that country.

Further proving the point, last week, on May 21, President Clinton signed the instruments of ratification for the enlargement of NATO. In doing this, he officially granted the United States' approval for admitting three new members to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization – the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. If the Parliaments of the 15 other current member states of NATO also approve the changes to the North Atlantic Treaty necessary to make this happen, it will be the first historic step in the process of enlarging the western community of nations to the east. The old Iron Curtain will at last have been completely torn down and shredded, and our goal of seeing – for the first time in history – a peaceful, undivided Europe will be one step closer to achievement.

Importance of Croatian Participation in PFP/NATO

Croatia has, of course, already gone a long way down the road to joining the western family of democratic nations. It has done so with the support and assistance of the United States of America. Thus, unlike its eastern neighbor, which remains isolated and under sanctions, Croatia is a member in good standing of the United Nations, the OSCE, and other international organizations. It has also assumed a prominent role in the preservation of stability in the region through its membership in organizations such as the Central European Initiative. On the military side, we also know very well of the determination of the late Defense Minister Šušak to establish a western military force compatible with NATO. We have already together made outstanding progress in that regard with the work of the MPRI corporation and with the million of dollars my government has spent on training

and education programs for the Croatian military over the past several years. Now I believe it is time to carry this process, which began seven years ago with your independence, forward to the next level.

This next level – the next milestone on this journey – will occur when Croatia becomes a Partner for Peace. This will be an important step, for PFP is an integral part of President Clinton's vision of a free and undivided Europe. Croatia's membership in the Partnership for Peace would bring many benefits. It would enhance regional stability, which is a central goal of our diplomacy. It would help foster greater civilian control over the military – an essential feature of any western democratic society. It would lead to more transparency in the defense budgeting process, a greater capacity to participate in peace-keeping operations, and a host of other positive changes. It would allow the Croatian army, navy, and air force to participate in joint military exercises with the military forces of the United States and our other NATO Allies. It would establish patterns of political-military cooperation between Croatia and neighboring NATO and PFP states that would enhance stability in the region. It would allow Croatia to ask for consultations with NATO if it has received a direct threat to its territorial integrity, political independence, or security. You would benefit most of all from these things, but these changes are important for us, and for our friends and allies in the West, too, for PFP fosters the kind of democratic, transparent military that is better able to take on the tasks we would like to see the Croatian armed forces assume.

But membership in Partnership for Peace brings with it certain obligations as well. To give you a better understanding of what these are, let me read to you a part of the Partnership for Peace Framework Document – the document that established this initiative. I quote:

"Protection and promotion of fundamental freedoms and human rights, and safeguarding of freedom, justice, and peace through democracy are shared values fundamental to the Partnership. In joining the Partnership, the member States of the North Atlantic Alliance and the other states subscribing to this Document recall that they are committed to the preservation of democratic societies, their freedom from coercion and intimidation, and the maintenance of principles of international law."

"Why so much emphasis on democracy, human rights, and shared values?" The answer is very simple and extremely important. NATO's effectiveness as a military organization is totally dependent on its effectiveness and cohesiveness as a political organization. Throughout the decades of the Cold War and the challenges facing us today, NATO has

been successful because the member states' common values and shared vision of the future has led to consensus on policy and military action. It is absolutely vital that that consensus be preserved; all new applications for membership will be rigorously scrutinized with this in mind.

Croatia's Roadmap to PFP

Let me now explicate the details of the roadmap that the United States has given to the Government of Croatia. I must stress that this is an *American* document only. Compliance with this document does not mean automatic entrance into PFP. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, after all, operates on the principle of consensus. Our allies have their own views on Croatia's suitability for membership – views that may differ from ours. But if Croatia complies with *all* the terms of this roadmap, it can rest assured that the United States will do its best to support – and to sell to its allies – Croatian membership in Partnership for Peace.

The roadmap to membership in Partnership for Peace points to steps in three areas – reconciliation and refugee return, implementation of the Dayton Agreement, and democratization.

Return and Reconciliation

Last month, in a tent in the new cemetery in Vukovar the other members of the Article 11 Commission and I spoke with family members of the victims whose bodies were being exhumed not far away. It was a gray and gloomy day; fittingly the sun only came out afterwards, when we laid a wreath in the cemetery in memory of all those who had fallen. Each of the stories the family members told was heart-rending. Their pain, after seven years, was still palpable. They were sincere when they said that they will never be able to forget what was done to them in those dark days. Frankly neither could I. Neither could anyone.

We do not expect people simply to wipe out the past. To many people in the United States, the legacy of our War Between the States, our Civil War, is still alive, although it ended more than 130 years ago. We still struggle with the issues that precipitated that war – relations between races, between regions of the country, and between the states and the federal government. I myself know from personal experience in Vietnam that reconciliation is not easy. It took the U.S. and Vietnam over 20 years to reestablish diplomatic relations following our conflict. So it is not hard for us to understand that the recent past is still so vivid in Croatia today.

What I do believe is greatly in Croatia's interest, however, is that along with remembering the past, one must have a vision of how to build a better future for Croatia. One path would continue the pattern of ethnic hatred and conflict that has characterized this region for the past century. It could easily lead to a Palestinian situation along your borders with generations of embittered Serbs having no roots anywhere else. The other path, which admittedly is more painful and more difficult in the short term, is to adopt the reconciliation processes implemented in Western Europe following the Second World War and which have led to the establishment of the European Union.

The section in the roadmap entitled "Return and Reconciliations" is simple and straightforward. It has two basic points:

1. to facilitate the return of all refugees and displaced persons with previous, permanent residency in Croatia who wish to do so; and
 2. to ensure the safety of all Croatian citizens, regardless of ethnicity.
3. The roadmap also lists key benchmarks for implementing point one regarding return:
- Establishing and adhering to fair and equitable standards for proof of citizenship;
 - Adjusting Croatian legislation to honor the property rights of all Croatian citizens equally;
 - Making a measurable effort to provide equitable access to housing reconstruction and new housing for Serbs alongside ethnic Croats; and
 - Ending the practice of settling Croatian refugees in abandoned Croatian Serb homes.

It is important to note that in most of these benchmarks some variant of the word "equal" appears. We emphasize this because it is a fundamental tenet of all western democratic societies, which value tolerance and diversity in and of themselves – that people be treated equally and as individuals, regardless of their race, religion or ethnicity.

Implementation of the Dayton Agreement

The second part of our roadmap concerns the absolute necessity to implement the Dayton Agreement. This is, I wish to stress, not an agreement that is open for renegotiations. The United States supports Dayton, stands by it, and expects to see it fulfilled in all its terms and expects the Republic of Croatia, as a signatory, to use its full influence to help bring this about.

We are concerned by a mixed message that many Bosnian Croats receive. On the one hand, they see the Government of Croatia and many of their leaders stating a full commitment to the complete imple-

mentation of the Dayton Agreement; on the other hand, they see that many institutions and practices contrary to Dayton are maintained, often with the support and encouragement of the Croatian Government. There are no options to Dayton. As long as there is a perception that other options may exist, our efforts are hindered, and the result is that Croatia will be tied more and more to Bosnia and the Balkans.

Thus, we ask the Government of Croatia to use its influence to strengthen the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Among the things we wish to see happen are:

1. The complete integration of all Federation police forces;
2. The end to obstructionism by the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croat community on matters involving development assistance;
3. The dissolution of all the now-illegal Bosnian-Croat institutions and accounts that together constituted the para-state of Herzeg Bosna, including the end to the use of its symbols and trappings and the adoption of Federation symbols;
4. The full implementation of municipal election results;
5. The normalization and integration of Mostar; and,
6. The development of a Federation Defense force, including the use of standardized ranks and insignia. There must be full cooperation on defense matters.

We are also asking that the government take steps to recognize fully – and to strengthen – Bosnian sovereignty, including:

1. The establishment of a state-to-state agreement with Bosnia clarifying sovereignty issues and resolving all outstanding border disputes;
2. An end to all subsidies to Bosnian Croat officials and institutions (including the Bosnian Croat part of the Federation Army); and,
3. The establishment of a uniform border regime that facilitates trade and travel with all parts of Bosnia on an equal basis.

In short, we expect the Government of Croatia to demonstrate to the Bosnian Croat community and its leadership, both in public and in private, that they do not live in Croatia, but in Bosnia – now and in the future. The Federation will never work as long as the Bosnian Croats see it only as an option, not a reality.

We also want the Government of Croatia to encourage reconciliation and reintegration in Bosnia as well as in Croatia. Specifically, we want the government to use its influence to facilitate the return of refugees and displaced persons, especially to the Livno and Neretva Cantons, just as we are demand-

ing of other leaders that Croats be allowed to return to Sarajevo, Central Bosnia, and the Republika Srpska. We also want to see the development of an open and independent media in Bosnia. This must include the elimination of separatist messages in those branches of the Croatian media that circulate through Bosnia.

We understand that the survival of the Croat nation in Bosnia is a sensitive and emotional issue, and that some will argue – incorrectly – that the Croatian nation in Bosnia, although the smallest of the three ethnic groups, is once again being asked to make enormous concessions. We believe that the best way to protect the Bosnian Croat community is to create a tolerant and pluralistic society in Bosnia and Herzegovina in which all people, whatever their ethnic group, are treated the same. Full implementation of Dayton will result in a stable, democratic, and economically viable Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The United States has more than just a spiritual interest in seeing this happen. We have made a large investment, including the deployment of our troops, hundreds of millions of dollars in development assistance, and significant amounts of military equipment and training to the Federation Army. If we add up all our monetary contribution to the peace process – including the cost of our SFOR deployments – we shall find that the sum total approximates the annual gross domestic product of the Republic of Croatia. Let us not forget as well those Americans, including many of my friends and colleagues, who have given their lives in pursuit of peace in your region. With such an investment, we are not prepared to let Dayton fail.

Democratization

The third and final part of the roadmap concerns democratization and the development of a civil society.

First, concrete steps need to be taken on electoral reform. Specifically, the recommendations on the Croatian electoral system made by the OSCE after the Presidential elections in June 1997 need to be implemented, as well as recommendations by the COE and other international monitors regarding previous elections in Croatia. As you will recall, Senator Paul Simon, who led the OSCE observer mission, termed these elections “free but not fair”. There is an American expression, almost a cliché now, drawn from sports, that describes what we are seeking – that is, to level the playing field. We wish to see steps taken to change the system so that all the advantages do not lie with one party. We wish to see a truly equitable electoral system develop and truly democratic election legislation adopted, for without this Croatia can not be a fully functioning democracy and will not be welcomed into the Euro-Atlantic community.

One of the crucial elements of a level playing field is equal access to the media. This is made im-

measurably more difficult if the media is not free or fair. So the second part of the democratization section of our roadmap to Partnership for Peace seeks to ensure freedom and independence in the media. This has three aspects.

First, we wish to see the further development of truly independent television. In this regard, the removal of TV Moslavina's licence on an easily corrected technical point is not a good sign. Neither was the removal of Radio Koprivnica's director. We are watching this, as well as what is happening with Radio Libertas, carefully, for it is not just Croatian State Television's First Program, as some maintain, that concerns us. We want to see the development of a vibrant and viable private broadcasting sector nationwide – one that can provide much-needed competition and alternate views to the state-controlled broadcast sector. The system of awarding TV and radio broadcasting licenses, for example, needs to be far more transparent and divorced from partisan political considerations.

But, that said, Croatian State Television remains a major concern. The second aspect of the media portion of our roadmap calls for a reduction in state and ruling party control over the media. Croatian State Radio and Television are the most important, but not the only examples, of what concern us, and we certainly hope that the management of HRT will make positive changes in its news and informational programming so that it becomes what the journalists in groups like Forum 21 are seeking – a true public broadcasting network. It is clearly far from that today.

This brings me to the third aspect – ceasing the legal and financial persecution of journalists. There are more than 500 civil and criminal libel suits pending against journalists and publishers. As long as the government can use the criminal code to intimidate journalists and to discourage the free expression of opinion, problems will exist in this area. Bad taste is now against the law in America or western Europe; it should not be in Croatia. The criminalization of any criticism of the country's leadership, as we see in the endless trial of the editors of Feral Tribune and the recent Globus case, is not what democracy is all about. In fact, democracy cannot be said to exist where a free media does not exist. This situation must be changed if Croatia is to move further down the road to the West.

I want to emphasize once again that, in presenting this roadmap, we are not holding Croatia to any kind of special or higher standard. We are not, in other words, trying to exert “unfair and unacceptable pressure” on this country. Very specifically, these are the uniform standards we must have for any applicant to these exclusive and vital institutions in order to preserve their effective cohesion. We are merely asking that Croatia honor the solemn commitments it undertook when it signed the Dayton and Erdut Agreements, when it acceded to the Council of Europe, and when it joined the UN and OSCE.

The Partnership for Peace is the anteroom to NATO membership. As the document issued by the heads of state and government of NATO's member nations in 1994 put it: "Active participation in the Partnership for Peace will play an important role in the evolutionary process of the expansion of NATO." Four years later, three countries are on the threshold of moving from PFP to full NATO membership. This is a path the United States hopes other countries will follow – including Croatia.

But NATO membership is not automatic for PFP members. NATO, after all, in a community of like-minded nations. All share a commitment to the same fundamental democratic principles. As the North Atlantic Treaty, which established NATO on April 3, 1949, says: "The parties ... are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law." Although I have been here only four months, it has been long enough to know that the people of Croatia share this heritage and this commitment to the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. This is, in fact, what makes Croatia a prime candidate for inclusion in the western community of democratic nations.

We also recognize that, unlike some of those countries now entering NATO, Croatia has had to make

the transition from decades of authoritarian rule to market capitalism under the most trying circumstances, while simultaneously fighting for its survival and freedom as an independent state. We know this was not easy. We can sympathize. Our country, too, was born in war, and 222 years later we are still struggling to reach the goal enunciated in the first sentence of our constitution – "to form a more perfect union."

This is, in fact, why we have presented the Government of Croatia with this roadmap. Our roadmap is not long or complicated. Its terms are clear and simple. When they are met, Croatia will have our full support for entry into Partnership for Peace. If they are met, Croatia will also strengthen both its international reputation and its own democratic system.

To briefly sum up: the United States Government firmly believes that it is in our best interest and your best interest that Croatia base its future security policy on PFP and NATO. We want to assist you in joining PFP as quickly as possible and have presented a roadmap to your government to help it to do so. We hope you can complete all the benchmarks by the end of 1998. The timetable, however, is up to you. Nothing would give me more pleasure, however, than seeing Croatia achieve this historic step forward in time for the Christmas/New Year holidays. We will help you in any way we can. ■

Challenges to the New World Order

Radovan Vukadinović

When the socialist system in Europe collapsed, the bipolar model in international relations vanished, and a new phase was started, of a search for structures and models of international relationships. But just as one-time attempts to introduce the concepts of trilateralism or pentagonalism did not change the bipolar relations of the two super powers, so today's discussions that endeavour to create an image of a model of the new world order on the so-called formula of "one super power and four great powers" or "one super power and several great powers" are still far from the reality. Thus the claim that the world order has been established and that a new model can

be discussed within the framework of the existent structure of the distribution of power has come more and more to dominate, especially in America. Its view is that it is easy to see that there is only one super power and that the world order is subordinated to it, this structure of relationships not being likely to change in a generation. This implies that multipolarity, seen in this way, means primarily that there is a central and large pole, the United States, while the other parts, the four great powers, China, Russia, the EU and Japan, or the several great powers, are unable to fulfil the tasks of leadership, of the central pole that is.