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# **Geopolitics vs. Globalization in the Balkans: The New Rivalries in the Energy and Transport Sectors**

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**CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY  
BUDAPEST**

**Geopolitics vs. Globalization in the Balkans: The New Rivalries in the  
Energy  
and Transport Sectors**

**By Blagoy Klimov**



**Submitted to  
Central European University  
Department of Politics**

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Politics and the  
Political Economy of the Post-communist Transition

**Supervisor: Professor Nicole Lindström  
Second reader: Professor Loránd Ambros-Lakatos**

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*Dedicated to all those, who dream of building a future world as a place for cultural rivalry of the nations and to my grandfather Alexander Klimov, who was one of those dreamers*

\*Photograph on Front Page by Paul Clemence

Abstract:

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To Matus and Szabina, to Magda and Karlina.

Geopolitics vs. Globalization in the Balkans: The New Rivalries in the Energy and Transport Sectors  
 MA Thesis- First Draft  
 By Blagoy Klimov-MA Political Science  
 Supervised by Prof. Nicole Lindström

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## List of Abbreviations:

ADB	-Asian Development Bank
AECL	-Atomic Energy of Canada Limited
AMBO	-Albanian-Macedonian-Bulgarian Oil Corporation
CPC	-The Caspian Pipeline Consortium
CIS	-Commonwealth of Independent States
EBRD	-European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EDC	-Export Development Corporation
EIA	-Energy Information Administration
EIB	-European Investment Bank
IDB	-Islamic Development Bank
SBDI	-South Balkan Development Initiative
SPSEE	-Stability Pact for South-eastern Europe
TACIS	-Technical Assistance for the newly-Independent States
TDA	-American Trade and Development Agency
TEN	-Trans European Networks
TINA	-Transport Infrastructure Needs Assessment
TRACECA	-Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia
WB	-World Bank



## Introduction

Brian Blouet writes that the last 150 years were a constant struggle between the processes of geopolitics and globalization, a struggle between 'geopolitical states who wanted to close off and control earth space, resources and population and globalizing ones who wished to open up the world to the free flow of ideas, goods and services.'<sup>1</sup> According to Blouet the world we live today is a result of the clash between these tendencies, with the post-Cold War –arrangements heralding the triumphant dominance of globalization tendencies over geopolitical thinking and the possible end of geopolitics.

Another group of analysts proclaim the coming end of globalization and the rebirth of geopolitical thinking as a result of strengthened border controls against drug trafficking and immigration and 'deterritorialized permanent dangers' as an implication of recent terrorist threats.

However in the EU context, for example, the strengthening of outside borders is accompanied with intensification of internal integration processes. Therefore even if such emerging geopolitical thinking persists in the future it will be part of an integrated blocs' external policy, while integration will continue to be the dominant internal paradigm. Therefore even if we account for some deficiencies of Blouet's theory, it is still largely valid for the processes, taking place in the internal EU's policies.

In the new geopolitical post-Cold War order the Balkans are included in the Euro-Atlantic system, and thus strongly influenced by integration and globalization processes. In such a political and economical framework, the present international regimes provide scope

for intensive policy coordination and cooperation among Balkan states, as a consequence of the growing interdependence. These countries' institutions have to perform 'patterns of practice' consistent with the new political and economical order.

Furthermore most of the Balkan countries are in a different stage of their negotiations for accession into the European Union and NATO. At the pan-European Conference of Transport Ministers in Helsinki in 1997, fifty-two countries decided to plan the building of ten multimode corridors, in order to connect the EU's Trans European Networks (TEN) with the infrastructure of Eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup> This initiative aimed at supporting the acceding countries' economy stabilization and facilitating the establishment of the future common European market. These corridors should comprise of road, rail, oil, gas and telecommunication connections.

Considering the strategic location between three continents, it is no surprise that six out of all ten multimodal corridors pass through the Balkan Peninsula region. However despite the numerous attempts and initiatives by the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the EU, the European Investment Bank and other institutions concerned, aimed to accelerate the completion of these corridors, there has not been much substantial action taken in that direction. After a decade most of the projects are still in their infancy-stage. Seemingly there is a facilitating political framework with democratic governments in all Balkan countries and generous access to funding from the EIB, EU and other institutions. *So, where do the obstacles come from?*

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<sup>1</sup>Critics on Brian Blouet, *Geopolitics and Globalization in the Twentieth Century*, available at [http://www.reaktionbooks.co.uk/titles/global\\_geopolitics.html](http://www.reaktionbooks.co.uk/titles/global_geopolitics.html); Internet; accessed June 2003.

<sup>2</sup>TINA Vienna: *Transport Strategies*, 'The Network' available from <http://www.tinavienna.at/tnetz.htm>; Internet; updated March 2003, accessed March 23, 2003

*The research focuses on how present Balkan political elites declare that they would adhere to the values of integrating and globalizing Europe in their Balkan policy, while de facto employing the ‘arsenal’ of geopolitical egoistic planning.*

*I also argue that narrow geopolitical planning in inter-Balkan relations, which is embedded in the geopolitical thinking of present Balkan political elites, obstructs the democratization and economic recovery of these societies.*

The terms ‘*narrow geopolitical planning*’ or ‘*egoistic geopolitical planning*’ are used above in the sense of Balkan political elites, employing strategies much more consistent with Blouet’s geopolitics and Haushofer’s discredited *Geopolitik* of the 1930’s, rather than modern and global-structures-oriented *Geopolitique* or the Globalization concept, which are supposed to be the predominant present paradigm in democratic societies.

Is there something particular that makes Balkan political elites so stubborn and suspicious to each other in regards with the implementation of the big pan-European infrastructure projects?

Probably the main reason for such state of affairs is the very large geopolitical stake involved in the transport and energy-infrastructure routes. Balkan countries set great hopes in the construction of large-scale pan-European infrastructure projects, ‘believed to help them get out of their state of crisis as it was the case in the US and Germany in the 1930’s’ following the Great Depression.<sup>3</sup>

Another argument explains the political obstruction with geopolitical interests of external actors. This is most certainly evidenced in the alternative oil pipeline projects, where the US supports financially and politically the AMBO project, Russia –the Burgas-Alexandroupolis route and the EU the Trieste-Constanta project.

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<sup>3</sup> ‘The Place of the second bridge over the Danube in the Bulgarian-Romanian Relations’, available at <http://www.omda.bg/engl/news/comment/brige1307.htm>, Internet; accessed May, 2003.

This research also indicates historical legacy as a possible variable. The research explores some present policy aspects, which support the finding that historical legacy might still have some influence on Balkan elites, by inspecting the region's historical doctrines, present transport and energy strategies. However it also takes into account the difficulties from the fact that such documents are usually not officially published, or published in very limited quantities. Operationalization of such a variable as historical legacy is also a significant challenge.

Very often external actors perceive Balkan lack of cooperation as rooted in historical prejudices, mutual mistrust and vivid stereotypes. However the argument in this research is completely different. Irrationality is regarded, not as a consequence of 'ancient hatreds' and genetic predisposition, but in relation to the current political and economical context. In this sense it is truly irrational for Balkan countries not to cooperate in the present strongly cooperation-facilitating international regime with so many obvious benefits arising from eventual cooperation and EU integration.

The aim of this research is not to argue that 'geopolitical egoistic' foreign policy is fundamentally irrational in an era of globalization. Instead the focus is on the particular historical, geographical and political context. Although it is a fact that even in the most Euro-committed countries, politicians are concerned *both with absolute and relative gains*, in situations when 'the policies followed by one government are regarded by its partners as facilitating realization of their own objectives, as the result of a process of policy coordination'<sup>4</sup>, cooperation is usually achieved. The research focuses on how present Balkan political elites still prefer to think in the logic of relative gains, despite the cooperation-facilitating international regimes.

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<sup>4</sup> Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony*.

In order to explore that Balkan ‘phenomenon’ of immense rivalry, albeit widely proclaimed cooperation, this research focuses on eight case-analysis. First four cases observe how local political elites perceive the pan-European multimodal corridors crossing the region as sources of fierce competition, rather than the officially declared intra-regional cooperation, which was the major objective for their adoption. The other four cases explore similar rivalries in the energy sector, where couple of years before the adoption of a regional energy market, there is an immense competition for the leading place on the market. Also the routes of the pipeline projects that should transport Caucasian oil to Europe are highly contested issues.

The reason for selection of transport and energy infrastructure projects for the aims of this research is that the pan-European corridors were one of the main initiatives aiming at supporting the Balkan countries’s economy stabilization and facilitating their economical, political and cultural integration into the Euro-Atlantic space. Thus the consequent gridlock of the projects due to geopolitical planning, albeit mutual interests, facilitating international regimes and proclaimed EU commitment, makes the case worth exploring. The specific case selection within the larger framework of energy and transport sector was not very complicated since nearly all pan-European infrastructure projects in the Balkans encountered a situation of discord largely due to obstruction of neighboring countries.

My first chapter will start with a section that identifies the main arguments in the globalization-geopolitics discussion and briefly introducing Blouet’s theory. This is followed by a section on the main developments of geopolitics as a scientific discipline: from the theories of Rudolf Kjéllen and Friedrich Ratzel, through nazi-associated *Geopolitik* to modern global-concern *Geopolitique*. By exploring the historical development of geopolitical science the research aims to indicate that the old geopolitics' methods (1930's) clash with the concept we today define as 'globalization'. On the contrary, the new geopolitics (that

emerged in 1970s) is consistent with globalization. Such an overview introduces to the fact that present Balkan countries' foreign policies employ geopolitical methods, consistent with the old geopolitics and clashing with the globalizing world's philosophy (and with the new geopolitics). The second section of the first chapter will deal with the collapse of the old communist geopolitical order and the new emerging international regime. The third section of the first chapter will concentrate on the place of the Balkan region in the new geopolitical order with subsections devoted to the role of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (SPSEE) and the Transport Infrastructure Needs Agency (TINA), as the backbone initiatives, aimed at the political, economic and cultural reintegration of the region to the Euro-Atlantic geopolitical space.

The second chapter explores in depth the Balkan rivalries in the Transport sector, scrutinizing different cases, and namely the conflict between Transport Corridor VIII and *Via Egnatia*, the geopolitical battle over the place of the second Danube bridge on the route of Corridor IV, the competition among countries on the routes of Corridor IV and Corridor X, as well the controversial interest surrounding the opening of new border point between Bulgaria and Greece, where suddenly brown bears emerged as leading political actors.

Similarly third chapter explores the immense competition in the energy sector among Balkan countries' political elites, and the negative economic consequences of such clash of interests. The first section of the chapter scrutinizes the 'Nuclear Wars' between Bulgaria and Romania for the leading regional energy-export position, and namely the Kozloduy vs. Cernavoda Nuclear Plants conflict. The second section analyses the 'dawn of a new Middle East' in the Caucasus and Central Asia region and the alternative Balkan pipeline projects that should transit the oil to western markets. Again each state lobbies for its 'own' project, disregarding economic efficiency, technical parameters and competitive advantages of other countries' project. The consequence of such rivalry is that up to date neither project is

commissioned, which supports the findings that Balkan antagonism obstructs the economic development and modernization of the respective societies.

# Chapter 1

## Geopolitics vs. Globalization or Geopolitics *and* Globalization

As Paul Claval wrote in 1994, geopolitics is ‘à la mode’ again. In a seemingly post-communist, post-ideological and post-confrontation world, geopolitics has somehow ‘comfortably’ returned into scientific and practical discourse as ‘reflection on geopolitical and geostrategic problems [became] more than ever essential’.<sup>5</sup> This is happening at the same time as Gearóid Tuathail wrote ‘it is now something of a cliché to assert that we live in an era of transition between a dying Old World order and the birth of a New World order.’<sup>6</sup> However there is not a single correct answer where such transition might lead to.

Some like Alvin Toffler and Michael Finley predict that humanity is gradually entering into its Third Wave of change, where the Third Wave of ‘information capitalism... will establish a completely new order of norms, values, behaviors and even subjects’<sup>7</sup>, replacing the civilization paradigm, established after the ‘Second Wave of industrial revolution some 300 years ago.’<sup>8</sup> It is also a transition from ‘a brute force’ to a ‘brain force’ economy<sup>9</sup>, from

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<sup>5</sup> Geoffrey Parker, *Geopolitics: Past, Present and Future* (London and Washington: Pinter, 1998) , 1, quoting Paul Claval, *Géopolitique et Géostratégie* (Paris: Éditions Nathan, 1994)

<sup>6</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathail, ‘At the End of Geopolitics? Reflections on a Plural Problematic at the Century’s End’ , available at <http://www.majbill.vt.edu/Geog/faculty/toal/papers/End.htm>; Internet; accessed June, 2003, (capitalization mine).

<sup>7</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathail, ‘At the End of Geopolitics?’.

<sup>8</sup> Alvin and Heidi Toffler, What is the Third Wave?, available at <http://www.toffler.com/thethirdwave/default.shtml>; Internet; accessed June, 2003, (capitalization mine).

<sup>9</sup> Alvin and Heidi Toffler, What is the Third Wave?.



mass-production by centralized, hierarchical, bureaucratic institutions to ‘de-centralized, de-massified, diversified, virtual organizations with distributed decision making.’<sup>10</sup>

Second group of analysts believe<sup>11</sup> that humanity is approaching ‘the end of civilization’ with the legitimization of ‘liberal democracy as a system of government...[emerging] throughout the world over the past few years, as it conquered rival ideologies like hereditary monarchy, fascism, and most recently communism.’<sup>12</sup> Francis Fukuyama further writes that ‘liberal democracy may constitute the ‘end point of mankind’s ideological evolution’ and the ‘final form of human government,’ and as such constituted the ‘end of history.’’<sup>13</sup>

Such a stance is ardently opposed by the structuralism and dependency theory proponents, who argue that there is an urgent need for change in the existing neoliberal paradigm, as it cannot provide solution for the growing inequalities between center and periphery and also that the ‘triumph of a fully neoliberal world order is impossible in a decentered, polyglot world of emergent anarchy and pervasive indifference.’<sup>14</sup> But it must be noted that even they position ‘the problems of underdevelopment and development within a global context.’<sup>15</sup>

However where all approaches meet is their acknowledgement of the epochal economic, political and social transformation processes the world is witnessing in the last decades of the twentieth century. Such processes are classified under the rather general term ‘globalization’. Although it is hard to be classified, Globalization as a trend ‘implies that a

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<sup>10</sup> Fleming, ‘Creating a New Civilization’, available at <http://www.worldtrans.org/whole/createnewciv.html>; Internet; accessed June, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathail, ‘At the End of Geopolitics?’.

<sup>12</sup> Francis Fukuyama, introduction to ‘The End of History and the Last Man’, (Penguin, 1992)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathail, ‘At the End of Geopolitics?’.

greater interdependence is happening among different regions and countries in world in terms of finances, trade and communications.’<sup>16</sup> Giovanni E. Reyes writes that as a theory of economic development ‘one of its major assumptions is that a greater level of integration is taking place among different regions of the world, and that this integration is having an important impact on economic growth and social indicators.’<sup>17</sup> At a top political and economic level, globalization is the process of denationalization of markets, politics and legal systems, i.e., the rise of the so-called global economy.<sup>18</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathail writes that ‘globalization is best conceptualized as the transcendence of the territoriality of state capitalism, its boundaries, regimes, and horizons, but not territoriality itself.’<sup>19</sup> Going back to the argument that in the era of globalization, geopolitics is ‘à la mode’ again, a logical question arises: *Is there any controversy between geopolitical thinking and the Globalization concept?*

For some analysts the answer most certainly is ‘yes’, as they believe that there is an intense clash between the two concepts and they are mutually exclusive: while Geopolitics glorifies the importance of spatial dimensions to the functioning of a state, the latter heralds ‘the death’ of geography. Paul Virilio and more recently, James Der Derian write about ‘the eclipse of geopolitics’ by ‘*chronopolitics*’ or the ‘politics of time.’<sup>20</sup> Furthermore Virilio proclaims the ‘strategic value of territory’, being replaced by the ‘emergent strategic value of

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<sup>15</sup> Cristobal Kay and Robert Gwynne, ‘Relevance of Structuralist and Dependency Theories in the Neoliberal Period: A Latin American Perspective.’ *The Journal of Developing Societies*, 16(1): 49-69(2000).

<sup>16</sup> Giovanni Reyes, ‘Theory of Globalization: Fundamental Basis’, available at <http://sincronia.cucsh.udg.mx/globaliz.htm>; Internet; accessed June, 2003.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Introduction to Globalization’, available at <http://www.globalization.com/index.cfm?MyCatID=1&PageID=1321>; Internet; accessed June 2003.

<sup>19</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathail, abstract to *The Postmodern Geopolitical Condition: States, Statecraft, and Security at the Millennium*, available at <http://www.majbill.vt.edu/geog/faculty/toal/papers/millennium.htm>; Internet; accessed June 2003.

telemetricity’, associated with *chronopolitics*. Brian Blouet also discusses about ‘The Cold War and the Triumph of Geopolitics’ and ‘Globalization and the Death of Geopolitics?’<sup>21</sup> He also writes that the last 150 years were a constant struggle between the processes of geopolitics and globalization, a struggle between ‘geopolitical states who wanted to close off and control earth space, resources and population and globalizing ones who wished to open up the world to the free flow of ideas, goods and services.’<sup>22</sup> According to Blouet the world we live today is a result of the clash between these tendencies, with the post-Cold War – arrangements heralding the triumphant dominance of globalization tendencies over globalization thinking and the possible end of geopolitics.

As Gearóid Ó Tuathail wrote other group of analysts believe that humanity is witnessing a transition from geopolitics to *geo-economics*: ‘ [states] impelled by the bureaucratic urges of role-preservation and role-enhancement [want] to acquire a ‘geo-economic’ substitute for their decaying geopolitical role’. For others the transition is from geopolitics to *ecopolitics*: ‘Ecology has become ‘the new sacred agenda’ which requires a new faith in the future of life on earth and ‘a new reverence for absolute principles that can serve as guiding stars by which to map the future course of our species.’’ Yet others believe that there is an evolution from geopolitics to *geo-governance*: ‘The dilemma of global politics is no longer geopolitics but geogovernance, the ongoing and often unhappy struggle to establish workable governance structures at the global scale.’<sup>23</sup> What is common for all of them is not only that geopolitics and globalization are not mutually exclusive but also the latter is the gradual evolution of the former. In this respect globalization might also be

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<sup>20</sup> Timothy Luke and Gearóid Ó Tuathail, ‘Thinking Geopolitical Space: The Spatiality of War, Speed and Vision in the Work of Paul Virillo’ in *Thinking Space*, ed. Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (New York and London: Routledge, 1998)

<sup>21</sup> Brian Blouet, *Geopolitics and Globalization in the Twentieth Century* (London: Reaktion books, 2001)

<sup>22</sup> Critics on Brian Blouet, *Geopolitics and Globalization in the Twentieth Century*, available at [http://www.reaktionbooks.co.uk/titles/globa\\_geopolitics.html](http://www.reaktionbooks.co.uk/titles/globa_geopolitics.html); Internet; accessed June 2003.

<sup>23</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathail, ‘At the End of Geopolitics?’.

regarded as the end of modern geopolitics and the birth of post-modern geopolitics, where the ‘postmodern geopolitical condition’ is rendering the spatial imaginations associated with modern state-centric geopolitics increasingly redundant (though they remain in use).<sup>24</sup> Geoffrey Parker writes about the new global-scale oriented geopolitique, that replaced the nazi *Geopolitik* and Cold-War geopolitics.<sup>25</sup>

Third group of analysts and policy-makers write that along with the many advantages globalization brings, it also poses significant threats. After the initial excitement of ‘less states’, falling borders and integrating markets, the dangers from such development also became evident. As Gearóid Ó Tuathail writes this is evidenced by the new ‘rhetoric of President Clinton's administration’<sup>26</sup> in the mid-nineties of the twentieth century

‘We are all...vulnerable to the reckless acts of rogue states and to an unholy axis of terrorists, drug traffickers and international criminals. These twenty-first-century predators feed on the very free flow of information and ideas and people we cherish. They abuse the vast power of technology to build black markets for weapons, to compromise law enforcement with huge bribes of illicit cash, to launder money with the keystroke of a computer. These forces...are our enemies’<sup>27</sup>

Such perception of a ‘world of deterritorialized dangers grounded in certain territorial ‘rogue states’<sup>28</sup> opens the door for the triumphant return of the geopolitical thinking. The terrorist attacks in the United States from September 11 further strengthened this tendency.

The same process is witnessed in Western Europe, where initially the creation of a common market eased the liquidation of nationalistic sentiments in the respective societies and the pursuit for self-sufficiency of the national economies. However the more integration processes advance within the union itself, the more it becomes close to external actors. The

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<sup>24</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *The Postmodern Geopolitical Condition*.

<sup>25</sup> Geoffrey Parker, *Geopolitics: Past, Present and Future* (London and Washington: Pinter, 1998), 10.

<sup>26</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *The Postmodern Geopolitical Condition*.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

new EU external borders should guard against drug trafficking, poor immigrants, international terrorism. Illegal immigrants and crime revived nationalism in some Western societies. In this aspect globalization has contributed to the rebirth of geopolitical thinking.

Fourth group of analysts goes even further proclaiming the coming end of globalization. Harold James in his book 'The End of Globalization' explores 'the circumstances in which the globally integrated world of an earlier era broke down under the pressure of unexpected events',<sup>29</sup> and namely the Great Depression. James writes that the demise of the first global economy 'was not simply a consequence of the strains of World War I but resulted from the interplay of resentments against all these elements of mobility, as well as from the policies and institutions designed to assuage the threats of globalism.'<sup>30</sup> James makes parallel to the recent world's developments and poses the question-is humanity witnessing the beginning of the end of globalization. Stephen Kobrin writes that trade wars, the rise of regional blocs, opposition to immigration and increased border controls, as well as the terrorist attacks might well be first signs of the 'end of the second global economy.'<sup>31</sup>

In this research on Balkan infrastructure rivalries, geopolitics and globalization are regarded within the theoretical framework of Brian Blouet, who heralds the recent triumph of globalization tendency over geopolitics after more than a century of intensive rivalry. On the contrary, the proponents of the 'end of globalization' theory argue that increased border control as a consequence of international crime and illegal trafficking are signs of the decline of globalization. However in the EU context, for example, the strengthening of outside

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Harold James, *The End of Globalization: Lessons from the Great Depression* (Harvard University Press, 2001)

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Stephen Kobrin, *The End of Globalization?*, Presentation for Geopolitics Course at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, available at <http://www.management.wharton.upenn.edu/kobrin/Course%20Material/Geopolitics%20Sp%2003/geo03Sp3abw.pdf>; Internet; accessed June 2003.

borders is accompanied with intensification of internal integration processes. Therefore I believe that even if such emerging geopolitical thinking persists in the future it will be part of integrated blocs' external policy, while globalization will continue to be the dominant internal paradigm. Therefore even if we account for some deficiencies of Blouet's theory, it is still largely valid for the processes, taking place in the internal EU's policies. Related to the Balkan context, the region's countries, which are in very advanced EU-accession stage should in observable future will be part of the globalization paradigm: free movement of people, goods and money, as well as part of the common market and economy. According to Blouet's framework, all Balkan political elites that have declared that they would adhere to the Euro-Atlantic values of integration and internationalization, should have left behind the traces of geopolitical thinking and open up to the free flow of ideas, goods and services between acceding Balkan countries. However despite their opening towards the EU, Balkan countries still prefer to 'close off and control earth space, resources and population' among themselves, which is consistent with Blouet's old geopolitical thinking tendency, as well as with the concepts of Ratzelian *Geopolitik* and Cold War geopolitics. This is evidenced from the rivalries along the routes of the pan-European infrastructure projects that pass through the region. That is why some authors started to write about 'The Balkan geopolitical competition called 'Balkan cooperation.'

### **1.1 Geopolitical Science: From Discredited *Geopolitik* to 'à la mode'<sup>32</sup> *Geopolitique***

The etymology of the word geopolitics comes from Greek *Geia* and *polis*: the goddess of the earth and the city-state of ancient Greece respectively.<sup>33</sup> Therefore it could be derived

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<sup>32</sup> Paul Claval, *Géopolitique et Géostratégie* (Paris: Éditions Nathan, 1994)

<sup>33</sup> Geoffrey Parker, *Geopolitics: Past, Present and Future*, 10.

that geopolitics explores the terrestrial forms and space of the Earth and the control and organization of it by humankind.<sup>34</sup> The relationship between man and nature have been studied since the times of Aristotle, who wrote ‘There are many things that make men good and virtuous; these are nature, habit, rational principle.’<sup>35</sup>

According to Bertil Haggman, geopolitics is the ‘study of the international [political] scene from a spatial or geocentric viewpoint, the understanding of the whole being the ultimate object and justification.’<sup>36</sup>

The term Geopolitics (Geopolitik in Swedish and German) was first developed by Rudolf Kjéllen (1866-1922) at the turn of the twentieth century in his book *Introduction to Swedish Geography*.<sup>37</sup> His most important work, related to Geopolitics is *The State as a Living Form*, published in 1916. Kjéllen was strongly influenced by Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904), Professor of Geography at the University of Munich, who first explored the synthesis of human and natural phenomena and published his *Politische Geographie* in 1897, which is believed to be ‘the seminal work in modern political geography.’<sup>38</sup>

Since that moment Geopolitics has always been regarded as a study, bordering on Political Science, Geography, International Relations and History with a predominance of the former two. Geoffrey Parker even writes that ‘Geopolitics had a divided parentage-political

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34 Ibid.

35 *What is Geopolitics*, University of Wales at Aberystwyth Electronic Database, available at <http://users.aber.ac.uk/ijp1/what%20geopolitics.htm>; Internet; accessed May, 2003.

36 Bertil Haggman, ‘Geopolitics, The United States, The Eurasian Transcontinental Bloc and China’, available from <http://www.algonet.se/~jman/bertil/geous.html>; Internet; accessed March 23, 2003.

37 Haggman, Bertil, introduction to *Geopolitics: Classical and Modern* (Helsingborg, 1996)

38 Parker, *Geopolitics: Past, Present and Future*, 11.

science and geography- and from the outset both disciplines tended to regard it as being a sort of illegitimate child of the other.’<sup>39</sup>

Ratzel and Kjéllen believed in the organic theory of the state, and namely that the state, possessing many features similar to that of living organisms, had to ‘adjust to his environment in the same way as flora and fauna.’<sup>40</sup> State roots were in the land and environment played a vital role. In order to grow, a state had to expand ‘if it is to be a healthy [organism]’ and also that ‘the growing state would tend to absorb less successful ones.’<sup>41</sup> Such ideas made the emerging science susceptible, in the later decades, to appropriation by political elites for unclear ‘purposes that lie beyond the pursuit of knowledge.’<sup>42</sup>

Indeed Geopolitics or Political Geography (how some preferred to denote it) evolved dramatically in the next four decades since it was first developed. The beliefs of Kjéllen were that geopolitics should be a science ‘used to designate the determining influence of environment on the politics of a nation’<sup>43</sup>, but the implementation of geopolitics into Nazi Germany’s National Socialist’s Doctrine in the Second World War brought an immense discredit to the Geopolitical Science.

The deviance of Political Geography into the new fascist *Geopolitik* could be traced to Karl Haushofer and his journal *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* (1924). Parker writes that the purpose of that journal was to examine ‘the geopolitical elements of the German situation with a view to altering them to Germany’s advantage.’<sup>44</sup>

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39 Ibid. , 3.

40 Haggman, introduction to *Geopolitics: Classical and Modern*

41 Ibid.

42 Richard Hartshorne, The Nature of Geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 29 (3/4) ( Washington DC, 1939)

43 Haggman, Geopolitics, The United States, The Eurasian Transcontinental Bloc and China

44 Parker, *Geopolitics: Past, Present and Future*, 31.



In 1976, the new geographical journal *Hérodote*, edited in Paris was the first sign that issues, exploring the relation between spatial and political dimensions are gradually returning into scientific and scholarly discourse. In 1983, *Hérodote* was subtitled ‘*Revue de géographie et de géopolitique*’,<sup>45</sup> (Geographical and Geopolitical Review). Its objective was ‘to use the spatial methodology to understand the issues better and to facilitate more effective action.’<sup>46</sup> Furthermore *Hérodote* -circle propagated that the new géopolitique should be distant from the old statist approach, while concentrating on global issues such as environmental protection and ecology, world poverty and ‘the using up of finite resources.’<sup>47</sup> Such a stance would allow for the reevaluated science to be much more objective and to overcome the egoistic self-state-centered perspective of the traditional *Geopolitik*. Parker wrote that géopolitique ‘emerged as one of the manifestations of a new earth-consciousness and the one which treated political phenomena as being essentially environmental in their implications and part of a multi-dimensional and holistic human world.’<sup>48</sup>

Ratzelian and Kjellen’s theories considered the state as the ultimate level of organization, with state representing ‘stability, order and purpose’ without which there would be an inevitable ‘slide into chaos.’<sup>49</sup> Their ideas were inspired by Hegel’s nation-state representing ‘the highest form of political existence, embodying as it did the common purposes and aspirations.’<sup>50</sup> As Parker claims this was the philosophical basis that justified state’s interest concern of the early geopolitical science.

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45 Geoffrey Parker, *Geopolitics: Past, Present and Future* (London and Washington: Pinter, 1998), 46.

46 Ibid., 46

47 ‘Écologies/Geographié’ in *Hérodote*, 26 (1982) in Geoffrey Parker, *Geopolitics: Past, Present and Future* (London and Washington: Pinter, 1998), 52.

48 Parker, *Geopolitics: Past, Present and Future*, 54-57, referencing to David Livingstone, *The Geographical Tradition* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992)

49 Ibid., 56.

50 Elisée Reclus, Hegel et la géographie in *Hérodote*, 2 (1976) in Geoffrey Parker, *Geopolitics: Past, Present and Future* (London and Washington: Pinter, 1998), 56.

The end of the Cold War and the present paradigm of integration and globalization position deprived the nation state of its 'sacrosanct position.'<sup>51</sup> As Parker wrote there is a clear interest in 'other levels of organisation'<sup>52</sup>-lower and higher. *Geopolitique* consistent with the global approach could finally transform it from 'a discipline of war to a discipline of peace.'<sup>53</sup>

The overview of the historical development of geopolitical science from discredited *Geopolitik* to a global-concept *Geopolitique* aimed to introduce a framework in this research, to which subsequently, the specific Balkan context would be related. Most western societies have adopted the global-structure-concept for the relation between space and polity. 'Space-bounded' countries had dissolved to give way to the notion of boundless European space. This global vision of a state as a part of bigger geographical space and the whole Earth is the main philosophy behind the new geopolitical understanding and the geopolitics (*geopolitique*), that emerged in the late 1970's *Hérodote*'s circle.

On the contrary, in the Balkans, despite the widely but hypocritically proclaimed dedication to the values of integrating and globalizing Europe, these political elites are de facto employing the 'full arsenal' of geopolitical egoistic planning in their Balkan policy, which is consistent with the Ratzelian *Geopolitik*. As Gergana Dimitrova<sup>54</sup> wrote 'own' location in the Balkans is perceived by indigenous elites as 'source of welfare and economic gains', 'as exceptionally rare and attractive endowment that could boost the country's...importance in the eyes of the more economically advanced world and thus

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<sup>51</sup> Parker, *Geopolitics: Past, Present and Future*, 56.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> J O'Loughlin and H Heske, 'From Geopolitik to Geopolitique: Converting a Discipline of War to a Discipline of Peace', in N. Kliot and S. Waterman, eds., *The Political Geography of Conflict and Peace* (New Heaven, CT: Belhaven, 1991), in Geoffrey Parker, *Geopolitics: Past, Present and Future*, 57.

<sup>54</sup> Gergana Dimitrova, *The Road to Europe: The Symbolic Economy of Self-Representation in the Balkans*, PhD Research Project- work in progress, IRES Department, Central European University, Budapest (2001-2003).

encourage accelerated EU and NATO integration.’ Thus geography is used as a strategic weapon against other countries: by trying to diminish neighbors’ location, political elites promote their ‘own’ location. The fierce geographical rivalry, which is scrutinized in the second and third chapters, is even more irrational in the light of the fact that today’s ardent contestants are tomorrow’s EU full-member states.

### **1.2 Collapse of the Old Geopolitical Order and the Emergence of New ‘Geo-systems’<sup>55</sup> in Eurasia**

The collapse of the Soviet geopolitical system at the end of the twentieth century initiated radical geopolitical transformation processes in vast regions of Europe and Asia. The bi-polar confrontation-world-of-yesterday had forever dissolved to give way to a completely new international regime.

Neither the political, nor the spatial understanding of the world would ever be the same, as used to be in the last fifty years. The new emerging geopolitical order challenged the traditional scholarship, numerous analyses, national doctrines and strategies in every sphere, developed for decades by academia, scientific institutes, think tanks, governmental and non-government agencies. For example generations have studied Montblan as the highest peak in Europe but recent geography textbooks proclaim 5,642m- mount Elbrus in the Caucasus as the highest elevation in Europe.<sup>56</sup>

As a result of the dismemberment of the USSR, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, (and the unification of Germany), twenty-seven new sovereign states appeared on the political map of Europe and Asia. As a result of this, Ioannis Loukas wrote that the idea for ‘broadening of the Euro-Atlantic space to the East’<sup>57</sup> was followed by a process of intensive revision of the traditional ‘perception regarding the whereabouts of the eastern border of

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<sup>55</sup> Ioannis Loukas, *The New Geopolitics of Europe*, Analysis-S43, Naval Academy, UK Ministry of Defence, 8.

<sup>56</sup> Vanya Voinova, ‘United Europe Expanded to the Caspian Sea’, *Balkanite+* , 9-10 (2000)

Europe<sup>58</sup>. Loukas also defines the formation of three ‘geo-systems’ on the territory of the former Soviet Union: ‘The Geo-system of Eastern Europe: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldavia [sic], Russia, the geo-system of the Caucasus: Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan’ and ‘the geo-system of Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kirgizstan.’<sup>59</sup>

Similarly the former communist space, outside of the Soviet Union formed several ‘geo-systems’ using Loukas’s terminology. Namely these are the Central European (Visegrad) countries: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovak Republic, and, the Balkan countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Croatia and Slovenia.<sup>60</sup> Within these five ‘geo-systems’ some very distinct sub-divisions emerged, as some states in one system initiated processes of integration into the Euro-Atlantic space, while other lacked such a perspective, at least in the observable future.

### ***1.3 The Balkan Region in the New Geopolitical Order***

Two of these ‘geo-systems’ have always been perceived as turbulent, prone to instability, ‘buffer zones’, and namely the Balkans and the Caucasus. In the communist era they were at the southernmost border zones of the Soviet geopolitical system, somehow neither belonging to Europe, nor to Asia.

The new strategic alignments that appeared in the post-cold-war period completely changed the strategic position and significance of these regions, although they are still considered to be the most vulnerable geo-systems. There are already some indications that the Balkans will not be regarded anymore as south-eastern Europe, but as the southern part of

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57 Ibid., 6.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid., 8.

Central Europe<sup>61</sup>, while the Caucasus ‘geo-system’ will be ‘the new’ south-eastern Europe.<sup>62</sup> The ‘new’ Eastern Europe will comprise of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus stretching to the Ural Mountains in the North and the Caucasus to the South.<sup>63</sup> Thus for the first time in modern history the geographical boundaries of Europe proper will overlap with the political. Ioannis Loukas believes that this will be the predominant paradigm in the twenty-first century.

Such a development positions the Balkan region at the very heart of Central Europe, with a clear perspective for political incorporation in the Euro-Atlantic space. Such a process provides the Balkans for the first time with a favorable political framework for development in addition to the strategic geography that has always played a vital role for the region, regardless of the political status quo.

### **1.3.1 The Role of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe**

The expressed commitment for accepting the Balkan ‘geo-system’ as part of the Euro-Atlantic geopolitical system required the economic and military stabilization of the region. As an implication of such pursuit for economical reconstruction and secure environment of the region lead to the creation of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (SPSEE) on 10 June 1999 in Cologne. The Stability Pact was also ‘ the first serious attempt by the international community to replace the previous, reactive crisis intervention policy in South

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60 Croatia and especially Slovenia are also often considered as Central European countries

61 Ioannis Loukas, *The New Geopolitics of Europe*, 10.

62 Ibid., 9-10 .

63 Ibid., 7.

Eastern Europe with a comprehensive, long-term conflict prevention strategy.’<sup>64</sup> Thus it aimed at promoting a ‘secure environment’<sup>65</sup>, sustainable democratic development and economic prosperity. SPSEE also had to foster close cooperation between the countries of the region on one hand and between them and the European Union on the other. The latter is a key actor in the Stability Pact. It also ‘undertakes to draw South Eastern Europe ‘closer to the perspective of full integration ... into its structures’, including eventual full membership.’<sup>66</sup>

### **1.3.2 Transport Infrastructure Needs Assignment (TINA) Initiative, International Transport Corridors and the Balkans**

In the framework of this new political and economic cooperation, the role of Transport was recognized as of utmost importance for the fulfillment of the common goals of the European Union and the transition countries from the new geo-systems. The prospect of the accession of the east European countries in the EU gave birth to the vision of the integration of Western Europe’s. The Trans European Networks (TEN) were officially agreed upon in 1996, to serve as the basic multimodal road, rail, energy and communication corridors in the EU’s infrastructure. At the pan-European Conference of Transport Ministers in Crete (1994) and in Helsinki (1997), fifty two countries decided to plan the building of ten more multimodal corridors, located in the accession countries, in order to connect the EU’s Trans European Networks (TEN) with the infrastructure of Eastern Europe<sup>67</sup>, as one of the main initiatives aiming at supporting the latter’s economy stabilization and facilitating the establishment of the

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<sup>64</sup> *Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe*, ‘About the Stability Pact’, available from [http://www.stabilitypact.org/stabilitypactcgi/catalog/cat\\_descr.cgi?prod\\_id=1806](http://www.stabilitypact.org/stabilitypactcgi/catalog/cat_descr.cgi?prod_id=1806); Internet; updated March, 2003, accessed March 23, 2003

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

future common European market. The program, connected with the implementation of the pan-European transport corridors was called the Transport Infrastructure Needs Assignment (TINA) initiative. Representative of EU- countries as well as of the 10 acceding countries (plus Cyprus) participated in the initiative.

At its final stage the TINA Network should comprise of '18,683 km of roads, 20,924 km of railway lines, 4,052 km of inland waterways, 40 airports, 20 seaports, 58 river ports and 86 terminals (out of which, 20 are situated in seaports and river ports, and 66 stand alone)',<sup>68</sup> and should be fully integrated into the already existing Trans European Networks (TEN). The EU has set 2015 as an objective for reaching that goal. The estimated budget for the whole project by the year 2015 is 90 billion Euro, as for the Balkan part of the project, nearly 11 billion Euro.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *TINA Vienna: Transport Strategies.*

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Eric Cotte, 'Where is the Eight Corridor?', available from <http://www.scarabee.com/article103.html>; Internet; accessed May, 2003.

## CHAPTER 2

### The New Balkan Rivalries in the Transport Sector

*Via est Vita (Road is Life)-ancient Roman saying*

#### **2.1 States as 'Rational Egoists': Cooperation and Discord**

Robert Keohane in *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* defines that cooperation can be established when 'the policies followed by one government are regarded by its partners as facilitating realization of their own objectives, as the result of a process of policy coordination.'<sup>70</sup> The latter is different from the state of harmony, where 'actor interests happen to be in alignment.'<sup>71</sup> Cooperation is also 'a situation where actor policies would hinder the attainment of the goals of others but through a coordination process policies are adjusted so as to obtain cooperation rather than discord if policies were not adjusted -- behavior patterns are altered via coordination to achieve cooperation.'<sup>72</sup> Keohane perceives the mutual interest of states as given, but accounts for the fact that even when mutual interests exist, cooperation very often is not achieved. Keohane

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70 Robert O. Keohane., *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) in Constantine Danopoulos, 'Toward Cooperation in Post-Cold Southeastern Europe?' available from <http://www.uottawa.ca/associations/balkanpeace/texts/danopoulos-cooperation.pdf>; Internet; accessed May 2003.

71 Robert Keohane, University of Washington Lectures on *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, available from <http://faculty.washington.edu/majeski/lecture7.html>; Internet; accessed May, 2003

72 Ibid.



writes for states as 'rational egoists' and also that international relations are interplay of 'dependence and conflict, of partnership and competition.'<sup>73</sup>

However, there are certain arrangements that facilitate cooperation and namely international regimes and institutions. The latter, according to Keohane are 'recognized patterns of practice around which expectations converge -- and these practices affect state behavior allowing for cooperation', while international regimes are 'arrangements for policy coordination created by the fact of interdependence – they are made up of rules, norms, principles, and decision-making procedures.'<sup>74</sup>

### **2.1.1 Controversies between the Actual Situation of Discord in the Balkans and the Favorable Cooperation-Facilitating International Regimes**

Relating theory to the Balkan context, we can clearly rule out the state of harmony in interstate relations. However in the new geopolitical post-Cold War order the Balkans are included in the Euro-Atlantic system, and thus strongly influenced by integration and globalization processes. In such a political and economical framework, the present international regimes provide scope for intensive policy coordination and cooperation among Balkan states, as a consequence of the growing interdependence. These countries' institutions have to perform 'patterns of practice' consistent with the new political and economical order.

In International Relation's theory on cooperation and discord, realists 'assume that states are obsessed with relative gains' and 'any potential exchange between states must exactly preserve the pre-existing balance of power'.<sup>75</sup> On the other hand liberal institutionalists, assume that states leaders are primarily motivated by absolute gains' and that

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73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

75 David Rousseau , *Relative or Absolute Gains: Beliefs and Behavior in International Politics*, available at <http://www.ssc.upenn.edu/~rousseau/ABSREL5.PDF>; Internet; accessed June 2003, 2-3.

‘state leaders will accept any agreement which makes the state better off.’<sup>76</sup> Therefore, two of the main Keohane's criteria facilitating cooperation mentioned above -international regimes and institutions create a favorable framework for absolute gains- thinking and coordination never experienced before on the Balkans. Furthermore the liberal paradigm which is embedded in globalization and in particular EU integration also presupposes that integration-favoring political elites should also be motivated by absolute gains thinking, rather than solely relying on relative gains.

Regional blocs undermine the classical realist vision of states as constitutive parts of the international system .<sup>77</sup> In regional blocs, such as the EU there is already ‘higher authority that can constrain or channel the behavior of states’<sup>78</sup> and facilitate cooperation as states no longer operate in chaos. The old realist argument justifying the logic of relative gains that ‘security and well-being ultimately rest on their ability to mobilize [states’] own resources against external threat’<sup>79</sup> is no longer adequate. Regional blocs promote cooperation and advance the logic of absolute gains.

Although it is a fact that even in the most Euro-committed countries, politicians are concerned *both with absolute and relative gains*, in situations when ‘the policies followed by one government are regarded by its partners as facilitating realization of their own objectives, as the result of a process of policy coordination’<sup>80</sup>, cooperation is usually achieved. Furthermore ‘neo-realists explain that all states must be concerned with the absolute and relative gains that result from the international agreements and cooperative efforts’ and neo-liberal institutionalists are ‘less concerned about relative gains and consider that all will

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Timothy W. Luke, *Nationality and Sovereignty in the New World Order*, *Antipodean*, 3(1996) [electronic journal of world affairs published by the Department of Politics at Victoria University Wellington ]

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony*.

benefit from absolute gains.’<sup>81</sup> However both consider the importance of absolute gains for cooperation to occur.

This is not the case in the Balkans. Although Balkan political elites might be expected to also focus on absolute gains at least in situations which will most certainly make their countries better off, they still prefer to think predominantly in relative terms.

According to realists, states worry that today’s friend may be tomorrow’s enemy in war, and fear that achievements of joint gains that advantage a friend in the present might produce a more dangerous potential foe in the future. As a result states must give serious attention to the gains of partners.<sup>82</sup>

Despite the encouraging environment and the fact that they very often share mutual interests, Balkan countries fail to coordinate their policies in the big Pan-European transport and infrastructure projects, which are perceived as the backbone of the EU's initiative for economic and political recovery of Eastern Europe, and the Balkans in particular. Where do the obstacles come from?

## ***2.2 States as ‘Irrational Egoists’: Geography as the ultimate weapon on the Balkans***

Jeanne Kirk Laux writes that the post-communist world promises to fulfill two post-World War II dreams -- the European dream of building a regional security order based on common social and economic interests; and the American dream of extending market economics and democratic institutions into a worldwide liberal order.’<sup>83</sup> In the light of the new

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<sup>81</sup> *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* Second Edition, John Baylis and Steve Smith, eds. (Oxford University Press, 2001), available at [www.oup.co.uk/powerpoint/bt/baylis/Chapter09.ppt](http://www.oup.co.uk/powerpoint/bt/baylis/Chapter09.ppt); Internet; accessed June 2003.

<sup>82</sup> David Rousseau, *Relative or Absolute Gains*, 6.

<sup>83</sup> Jeanne Kirk Laux, ‘The Return to Europe: The Future Political economy of Eastern Europe’, in *Political Economy and the Changing Global Order*, eds. Richard Stubbs and Geoffrey R. D. Underhill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 264.

geopolitical system, in the Balkans international regimes and institutions facilitate the '*secure environment*', *sustainable democratic development* and promote *economic prosperity*, all of which are not only European or American 'dreams', but highly-required prerequisites in order for the 'return to Europe' to take place.<sup>84</sup>

In the last years we are witnessing the gradual fulfillment of all three factors. Namely since the end of the Yugoslav wars, there is a relatively secure conflict-free environment (with the possible exceptions of the Macedonian-Albanian and Kosovo conflicts). The sustainable democratic development is recognized by the classification of most Balkan countries as liberal democracies with one of the highest values for political and human freedoms in the world. Concerning the third requirement, needed for a successful implementation of the infrastructure projects, namely economic development, the region's countries are still the countries with one of the lowest GDP per capita in Europe. However the growth rates are among the highest in the continent. (6 percent for Bulgaria in 2000, 5,3 percent for Romania in 2001, etc.), while the rate for Western economies is within the range of 1,5 to 2,0 percent. Furthermore the World Bank predicts for the period 2003-2005 steady 4.8% and 4.6% average GDP growth for Romania and Bulgaria respectively.<sup>85</sup>

Greater part of 'the return to Europe' project, which by virtue incorporates the East European countries' inclusion in the regimes of Western regional governance and security, 'acceptance into the established institutions of market economics',<sup>86</sup> is the completion of the pan-European infrastructure projects crossing the region. Although all the required criteria, discussed thoroughly above, for the successful completion of the infrastructure projects are met, these projects remain in their infancy stage.

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84 Ibid.

85 The World Bank Group-Ed Stats, available from <http://devdata.worldbank.org/edstats/cg.asp>; Internet; accessed March 24, 2003

83 Ibid.

Considering the very favorable geographic location, the Balkan lands are perceived as the key to three continents- Europe, Asia, Africa and also the Middle East. They are also located on the boundary of three civilization zones according to Samuel Huntington's *civilization paradigm*. This geopolitical location has influenced the Balkan countries' history and determined the great geopolitical stake concentrated on this relatively small territory. Thus it comes as no surprise that six of the ten multimodal: transport, oil, gas and telecommunication corridors, planned at the Helsinki summit in 1997, pass through the Balkans and namely Corridors IV, V, VII, VIII, IX, X (see fig.1 and Appendix 1).



FIGURE 1. PAN-EUROPEAN TRANSPORT CORRIDORS ON THE BALKANS  
*Map courtesy of balcanica.org*

It is a fact that the relatively small Balkan Peninsula is the land of eleven countries<sup>87</sup> with a complicated economical and historical development, which are in a process of transition to a market economy and on the way of full integration into the Euro-Atlantic institutions. In such a cooperation-facilitating international framework at the turn of the

<sup>87</sup> Montenegro is also included within this number

century, the prevailing Balkan lack of cooperation, in the transport and energy sector is a phenomenon worthy for exploration.

In the Balkans, Keohane's rational egoist state is clashing with the irrational *homo Balkanicus-egoist State*. Very often external actors perceive such irrationality as rooted in historical prejudices, mutual mistrust and vivid stereotypes. However the argument in this research is completely different. *Irrationality is regarded, not as a consequence of 'ancient hatreds' and genetic predisposition, but in relation to the current political and economical context*. It is truly irrational not to cooperate today with so many obvious benefits arising from eventual cooperation. Is there something particular that makes Balkan political elites so stubborn and suspicious to each other in regards with the implementation of the big pan-European infrastructure projects?

Probably the main reason for such state of affairs is the very large geopolitical stake involved in the transport and energy-infrastructure routes. Balkan countries set great hopes in the construction of large-scale pan-European infrastructure projects, 'believed to help them get out of their state of crisis as it was the case in the US and Germany in the 1930's' following the Great Depression.<sup>88</sup>

Another argument explains the political obstruction with geopolitical interests of external actors. Misha Glenny writes: 'Most of the ethnic and political conflict in the Balkans has its roots not in atavistic instincts and tribal sentiments of intolerance for otherness, but rather in games played by cynical great powers.'<sup>89</sup>

Another tempting answer would be to point out the complicated historical legacy, which still influences Balkan governments' decisions in all aspects of foreign policy, and

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<sup>88</sup> 'The Place of the second bridge over the Danube in the Bulgarian-Romanian Relations', available at <http://www.omda.bg/engl/news/comment/brige1307.htm>, Internet; accessed May, 2003.

<sup>89</sup> Vladimir Tismaneanu, review of *The Balkans: Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers, 1804-1999*, by Misha Glenny (Viking,2000), available at <http://www.tikkun.org/magazine/index.cfm/action/tikkun/issue/tik0103/article/010351.html>; Internet; accessed June, 2003.

particularly in such project of vital geopolitical significance as the pan-European transport infrastructure corridors network. Although such argument might really be plausible to a certain extent, it most certainly introduces some degree of political danger. Some writers like Robert Kaplan created an image for the Balkans as ‘a place riven by such innate, historical and profound ethnic and religious hatreds, that a brutal war and ethnic cleansing seem almost inevitable.’<sup>90</sup> Kaplan’s *Balkan Ghosts* are believed to have ‘contributed to false perceptions about [external actor’s] ...ability to influence events in the Balkans’ and further strengthening the Western stereotypes about the region’s incapability to deal with modernity.<sup>91</sup> Kaplan’s book argues that even in the case of Western intervention, the ‘risk for new waves of angry battles and appalling massacres will always be very high,’<sup>92</sup> because of the intrinsic ‘ancient hatreds’ in the region.

Maria Todorova’s *Imagining the Balkans* challenges Kaplan’s theories and most of the Western stereotype ‘balkanisms’. She also writes that ‘as in the case of the Orient, the Balkans have served as a repository of negative characteristics against which a positive and self-congratulatory image of the ‘European’ and the ‘West’ has been constructed.’<sup>93</sup> Reflecting on authors like Todorova, Gergana Dimitrova summarizes their arguments:

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<sup>90</sup> Laura Rozen, ‘Robert Kaplan’, available at <http://archive.salon.com/people/bc/2001/04/17/kaplan/index1.html>; Internet; accessed June 2003.

<sup>91</sup> Michael R. Hickok, review on *Eastward to Tartary: Travels in the Balkans, the Middle East, and the Caucasus* (New York: Random House, 2000), by Robert D. Kaplan, available at <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/bookrev/kaplan1.html>; Internet; accessed June 2003.

<sup>92</sup> Vladimir Tismaneanu, review of *The Balkans: Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers*.

<sup>93</sup> Angeliki Papantoniou, review on *Imagining the Balkans*, by Maria Todorova (Oxford University Press, 1997), available at <http://www.eurunion.org/magazine/9804/p30/p30-9804.htm>; Internet; accessed June 2003.

Recent critical scholarship demonstrates that hegemonic Western representations of the Balkans have attached to the region an image of danger, instability, violence, eternal conflict and civilizational ambiguity. These representations affect not only the region's international image. They intervene in the construction of Balkan identity and continuously slip into political conduct. The Balkan countries have to a large extent internalized the West's image of themselves, and have come to consider 'Balkan' as dangerous, impure and undesirable.<sup>94</sup>

Although the historical legacy argument should not be overemphasized, it also should not be completely disregarded. Also an important distinction should be made-Balkan nations and political elites should not be regarded in Kaplan's terms as being eternally prone to conflicts, because of some kind of 'Balkan history ghosts' or genetic predisposition. Instead the conflicts should be regarded in their historical and political context. The historical legacy argument should be explored only in relation to the conflict's contemporary framework. What is most interesting for this research is why in the present historical and political context, which is strongly facilitating cooperation, Balkan elites still cannot find their common ways, which is evidenced by the rivalries upon the routes of the major energy and transport projects to be build.

The research explores some present policy aspects, which support the finding that historical legacy might still have some influence on Balkan elites, by exploring the region's historical doctrines, present transport and energy strategies. However it also takes into account the difficulties from the fact that such documents are usually not officially published, or published in very limited quantities. Operationalization of such a variable as historical legacy is also a significant challenge.

However it is a fact that most of the region's countries have decades, even centuries-old national doctrines and strategies for the development of their nations. These doctrines (strategies, programs) although periodically revised are still irrelevant to the today's

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<sup>94</sup> Gergana Dimitrova, planned research Bulgaria's Road to Europe: The Symbolic Economy of Civilization and Self-Representation in the 'Turbulent' Balkans, available at



processes of globalization, multilateralism and integration. They incorporate many elements, consistent with Blouet's geopolitical thinking. The Balkan political elite's foreign policy today is to a large extent based on national programs, strategies or doctrines for the development of the respective nation. Such doctrines encompass different spheres of social life, such as economical, political, cultural, prescribing norms of political behavior, inconsistent with the globalization and integration concept and the Euro-Atlantic values, to which all Balkan elites are somehow hypocritically adhering. Present national strategies have their roots in the national doctrines of the Balkan countries, adopted shortly after their liberation in mid or late XIX century.

Some analysts wrote that behind the creation of such programs in the nineteenth century, lay 'their intense nationalism and the desire for territorial aggrandizement, under the pretext of including all co-nationals into their respective nation state',<sup>95</sup> The nationalist dreams of 'Greater Bulgaria,' 'Greater Serbia', 'Greater Romania' and 'Greater Greece', for example, strongly influenced these programs at the time of their adoption.

The original Greek *Megali idea* (Great Idea) was first formulated in 1796 by Rigas Ferreros. According to Ferreros 'Istanbul, which was conquered by Fatih the Conquerer [sic] in 1453, will be taken back,...[as well as] Crete, Rodhos, Cyprus, Anatolia ... Greeks will go up to Egypt as Alexander the Great had done it before and a Hellene Empire called Byzantium will be established.'<sup>96</sup> Thus the Greeks' dream was reviving the Byzantium Empire in the form of a modern Greek nation-state.<sup>97</sup> After its independence from the Ottoman Empire

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[http://www.ceu.hu/oldtest\\_phd\\_research.html](http://www.ceu.hu/oldtest_phd_research.html); Internet; accessed June 2003.

<sup>95</sup> Vladimir Georgiev, 'Nationalism in the Balkans', final paper submitted for Prof. John R. Lampe's *Ideologies and National Identity in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Southeastern Europe*, Department of History, Central European University-Budapest (2003), page 6-7

<sup>96</sup> *Megali Idea*, available from [http://www.geocities.com/t\\_volunteer/greece/megali\\_idea.htm](http://www.geocities.com/t_volunteer/greece/megali_idea.htm); Internet; accessed May, 2003

<sup>97</sup> *Constantinople: the 1000 years capital of Hellenic (Greek) Empire of Byzantium*, available from <http://members.fortunecity.com/fstav1/english.html>; Internet; accessed 10 February, 2003.

Greek state had closely followed this program, as it succeeded in incorporating Crete, Rodhos, 12 Islands and the other Aegean [sic] Islands into the modern state. In 1919 Greece managed to take control on Izmir and parts of Anatolia in Turkey, but was defeated and three years later had to withdraw.

Bulgaria's national idea, adopted in 1878 was – borders according to the Treaty of San Stefano (3 March 1878- a present Bulgarian national holiday). Thus the Bulgarian state would be complete only if encompassing the three territories inhabited by the Bulgarian ethos, as the state considered them – Moesia, Thrace and Macedonia.<sup>98</sup> Since the country's liberation, Bulgarian political elites had involved the country in five wars to accomplish their *idee fixe*, which had very negative consequences for its further development.

Serbian national doctrine was called *Nachertanie (Strategy)* and was formulated by Ilija Garashanin in 1844. Its main theses were the creation of a Serbian state, overlapping with the boundaries of the medieval empire of King Stefan Dushan. Such a state had to include all territories adjacent to Serbia-Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia, Croatia and Hungary. For every territory, mentioned above a special plan is developed. Until 1929 the Serbian program *Nachertanie* has been a document of highest secrecy. Since 1844 until the split of Yugoslavia in 1991, 'closely following its [*Nachertanie*] principles the political elites of Serbia managed to transform 4 million newly-liberated Serbia into a 25 million Yugoslavia.'<sup>99</sup>

As Hristo Genchev writes Balkan infrastructure completion should follow a strategy, which is above any national strategy with simple and clear criteria: most shortest and profitable routes, situated according to where the natural geographical morphology of the Balkans is most facilitating to such projects. These should be linkages among industrial and

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<sup>98</sup> *120 Years San Stefano – a map of the Bulgarian lands*, NIE Magazine, available from [http://members.tripod.com/~NIE\\_MONTHLY/Karti/k02.html](http://members.tripod.com/~NIE_MONTHLY/Karti/k02.html); Internet; accessed 10 February, 2003.

demographic centers, long established by geographical and historical factors, such as crossroads, water resources, favorable climate, rich hinterland, labor force. 'Only similar strategy could provide for the best investment of the limited local and external funds for these projects.'<sup>100</sup> What happens in fact?

Present national doctrines, such as the Greek 'Unity and Lobbying of the Hellenes around the World' or the Bulgarian National Doctrine: National Strategic Programs<sup>101</sup> are most certainly very different from their discredited predecessors. However in the present programs for the development of the respective nation still could be traced elements from their compromised original documents. The neighbors are still perceived as ultimate rivals, but not as partners. Even if they are perceived as partners, the idea for domination could still be sensed in the concept of own exclusiveness or missionary role in relation to other Balkan countries. Dino Siotis, commenting on the new geopolitics of Greece writes:

Naturally Greece is more advanced than the rest of the Balkan countries. All of these Balkan states came out of restrictive regimes, lacking democratic governments, and unable to express themselves freely. As such, they can not be compared with Greece, a country that has taken gigantic strides toward democracy, economic and cultural development and, above all, human rights. The New Balkan countries considered, and continue to consider, Greece as the state which offers them inspiration, showing them the way toward Europe and leading them to a democratic system...Greece may be considered a small country in comparison with other, more powerful European countries, but in the Balkans it is considered a "superpower", a power which has taken on the role of defending human freedom and an agent of stability and security in the area.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Stoyan Bojadzhiev, 'The Decline of Serbian Nationalism: From Ilia Garashanin to Slobodan Miloshevic-the Death of *Nachertanie*', *Macedonia*, 26 (1998), 4.

<sup>100</sup> Hristo Genchev, 'Geography-Arbiter in the Rivalry Called Balkan Cooperation' in *Makedonia*, 34 (1997), 8.

<sup>101</sup> See *Bulgarian National Doctrine, Program for Preservation and Spiritual Unification of the Bulgarians around the World* (Sofia:Znanie,1998)

<sup>102</sup> Dino Siotis, 'The Others are from the Balkans', available at <http://www.helleniccomserve.com/balkans.html>; Internet; accessed June 2003.

Another reason for the competition along the routes of the energy and transport corridors is the great geopolitical significance infrastructure projects might have for the economic recovery of the region. Most of the Balkan countries perceive their transitory location between three continents as an asset of utmost importance. Therefore Balkan political elites believe that the large-scale pan-European infrastructure projects will help them 'get out of their state of crisis, as it was the case in the US and Germany in the 1930's after the great crisis in 1929-1931'.<sup>103</sup> If a certain country has geographical advantage in relation with a planned energy or transport project route, most neighboring country conceive the former's profits as potential losses for them, which is a main reason for the intensive rivalries and creation of alternative projects. The latter aim at diverting a planned route to other country's advantage, regardless of the geographical, economical and technical merits the original project might have had.

The immense infrastructure projects have been adopted by the EU to help the economic, political and cultural integration of the post-communist space into the Euro-Atlantic system of shared values. However instead of serving an integrative function, the transport and energy corridors became an object of fierce rivalry among Balkan political elites. Despite the widely, but hypocritically proclaimed dedication to the values of integrating and globalizing Europe in their Balkan policy, these political elites are de facto still employing the Blouet's geopolitical planning, which is inconsistent with the philosophy of the present globalizing world and their aspiration for EU accession. The above explored factors such as economic and geopolitical significance, historical legacy and external actors' influence might have contributed to the present state of conflicting policies between the Balkan countries in regards to the pan European transport corridors, oil and gas pipelines and in the energy sector. As a

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<sup>103</sup> 'The Place of the second bridge over the Danube in the Bulgarian-Romanian Relations', available at <http://www.omda.bg/engl/news/comment/brige1307.htm>, Internet; accessed May, 2003

consequence of such geopolitical planning (embedded in national programs, strategies, doctrines) in intra-Balkan relations, which is embedded in the above mentioned geopolitical thinking of Balkan political elites the democratization and economic recovery of these societies is significantly hindered.

The clash of the interests in the transport sector and the consequences for the development of the respective Balkan societies will be thoroughly explored below with a number of different cases. Despite all favorable factors, discussed above, which should enhance cooperation, such as ‘internationalization of foreign policy’<sup>104</sup> regimes, the EU-NATO integration, Stability Pact programs, TINA initiatives, Balkan political elites very often encounter a situation of discord, failing to coordinate their policies in building the pan-European transport infrastructure projects. They fail to coordinate, despite the obvious mutual interests that exist and the great gains, discussed above (secure environment, benefits of integrated market economies, etc.) they would get if cooperate.

### **2.2.1 Conflicts along the route of the Great Silk Road: *Via Egnatia* vs. Transport Corridor VIII (*Via Para Egnatia*)**

In antiquity the *Great Silk Road* has been the shortest route between Europe and the Far East. It stretched for nearly 7000 km, starting from the northwestern provinces of China and finishing at the East Mediterranean. The *Great Silk Road* was in fact a trade route between Rome and China with mainly silk departing westward and wool, silver gold on the way back.<sup>105</sup> However after the fall of the Roman Empire and the Great Geographical Discoveries era in the later centuries, the significance of this route diminished and it was neglected for the centuries to come. During the communist era the ancient *Silk Road* has been further

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104 Jeanne Kirk Laux, *The Return to Europe*, 264-265.

completely blocked and such situation deformed the natural economical and cultural flows along this route.

The continent-scale project TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia) is considered to be the modern ‘Eurasian renaissance of the [Great] Silk Road.’<sup>106</sup> It was adopted on the Third Pan-European Transport Conference, held in Helsinki, 1997 (although the first initiatives go back as 1993), as an implication of the new geopolitical understanding of Europe. Its main objective was to provide for new transport routes between Europe and Asia, as well as to integrate the Caucasus and Central Asian countries to the transport infrastructure of the EU. It should also promote political and economical sustainability as well as enhance cooperation between the countries along the corridor.

However the TRACECA corridor does not completely overlap with the ancient *Silky Road*, as it is shifted southward to circumvent the turbulent region of the Near and the Middle East (Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, etc). The slightly altered route would create a thousand km-long diagonal of Euro-Atlantic-values-committed countries, passing in-between the ‘risk region’ to the south and Russia to the north.

On the financial part, the EU and the initiative for technical assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) helped to attract IFIs, such as the World Bank (WB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have made commitments to provide more than 1.7 billion Euro for the project.<sup>107</sup> TRACECA is planned to be fully operational by 2020.

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<sup>105</sup> *Silk Road* from Britannica Concise, available from [http://education.yahoo.com/search/be?lb=t&p=url%3As/silk\\_road](http://education.yahoo.com/search/be?lb=t&p=url%3As/silk_road); Internet; accessed May, 2003

<sup>106</sup> *Traceca: 1993-2002: Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia* <http://www.traceca.org/rep/brochure/brochure.pdf>; Internet; accessed May 2003, 2.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

At the conference in Helsinki, 'It had been recognized that one of the weaknesses of the TRACECA route, in the context of the EU Tacis program, was the lack of linkage between the western end and the European market'<sup>108</sup> Therefore it was decided that the TRACECA corridor would be integrated to the pan-European Trans-European Networks (TENs) by a link on 'corridors IV and VIII, via the port of Varna' on the west Black Sea coast. Therefore as Eric Cotte analyzed 'the planned development projects on the European continent scheduled for the next 20 years depend on the building of corridors crossing the Balkans.'<sup>109</sup> Furthermore the whole feasibility of the connection between Europe and Asia (TEN and TRACECA) on the revived *Silk Road* depends on the link through the Balkans and namely: port of Poti [Georgia] in the Caucasus-port of Varna [Bulgaria] on the Balkans, how it was initially adopted.

The part of the *Great Silk Road* that is passing through the Balkans is the so-called Corridor VIII, also adopted at the Helsinki, 1997 conference. The route of pan-European multimodal Corridor VIII from Caucasus -Poti (Georgia) to the Italian port of Brindisi is planned to start in the Black Sea port of Varna, Burgas, Dimitrovgrad and Sofia on Bulgarian territory, then pass through Skopje and Bitola in Macedonia and reach the Adriatic coast at Durrës in Albania. (See fig.2 below [red color])

Furthermore the corridor East-West (corridor VIII) was not only supported by the EU in the Crete (1993) conference but also by the US-government. In New York (1995) four Balkan Presidents (Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Turkey) in the presence of President Clinton announced the South Balkan Development Initiative (SBDI). 'The SBDI is designed to help Albania, Bulgaria and FYR Macedonia further develop and integrate their

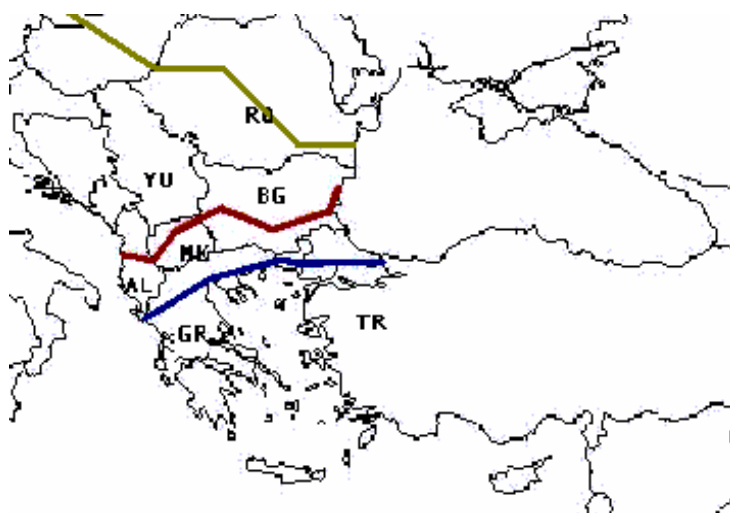
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<sup>108</sup> Eric Cotte, 'Where is the Eight Corridor?'.  
<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

transportation infrastructure along the east-west corridor that connects them.’<sup>110</sup> This project received the strong support by Washington and later was reconfirmed by the EU on the Helsinki conference as Corridor VIII was proclaimed the shortest and most efficient trade route between Europe and Asia, which is evidenced by the economical indicators below;

The length of Corridor N8, defined on the basis of the now functioning road, is 995 km. The mutual trade of countries within the Balkan segment is USD 13 420 million for 1997, and of those along the continuation of the Corridor towards Central Asia - USD 34 213 million, or totally along the whole length of the Corridor - USD 47 633 million. For most of the countries prognoses and trends indicate a GNP increase - in Bulgaria by 3% yearly, in Albania - 5%, Macedonia - 1-1,5%, Armenia - 5%, Azerbaijan - 5-6%, Georgia - 10%, Kazakhstan - 2%, Kirghizstan - 6%, Tadjikistan - 3-5%, Turkmenistan - 2%, Uzbekistan - 2%. The expected ratio between local and transit traffic, as revealed by the macroeconomic indexes, is 1:3 - 1:5 in favor of the transit one. It is evident that the parameters and qualities of the already built and functioning transport infrastructure in the region, as compared to those of other transport routes from East to West, lag behind in creating competitive conditions for attracting traffic.<sup>111</sup>

However the immense geopolitical stake that concentrates in such a link, bridging two



continents provoked fierce competition among Balkan countries to divert its route, through their territory, despite the decisions of the 1997 Helsinki conference.

<sup>110</sup> US Trade and Development Agency, 'TDA Awards \$4.3 Million in Transportation Grants In The South Balkans', available at [http://www.tda.gov/trade/press/dec9\\_98.html](http://www.tda.gov/trade/press/dec9_98.html); Internet; accessed June, 2003.

<sup>111</sup> Serguey Roussev, 'Environment Management along the Road-Bed of Trans-European Corridor N8 in the Section between Sofia and Skopje', in *Balkans: Politics, Economy, Security* [journal on-line] 2, no. 2 (2000); available from <http://www.balkanica.org/balkanreview/current/a3.html>, accessed May, 2003



FIGURE 2. PAN-EUROPEAN CORRIDOR N8 VS. GREEK PROJECT VIA EGNATIA

For example Greece, started investing 1 trillion GDR (3.4 billion Euro) in a gigantic project called *Via Egnatia* (marked with dark blue on fig.2), passing from Istanbul, through Greek Provinces of Thrace and Macedonia and finishing on the Ionic Sea and from there continuing to Italy by ferry-connections suspiciously soon after the initiative for the Corridor VIII, which circumvented Greece was announced in the Second Transport Conference in Crete (1994).

The ancient Roman road *Via Egnatia* was one of the major transport, trade and military-purpose arteries, connecting the two capitals of the Empire- Rome and Konstantinopolis<sup>112</sup>, stretching for 754 Roman miles (1117km) from the Adriatic port of Dyrrachium (near present-day Durrës, Albania) to the capital- Konstantinopolis. It was constructed in 130 BC and named after Proconsul Gaius Ignatius, who ordered its construction.<sup>113</sup>

The modern Greek project, closely following the ancient route of *Via Egnatia* encompasses a motorway- 680 km -long, 24.5 m wide, '1650 bridges, with a combined length of 40 km, 76 tunnels, with a combined length of 49,5 km, 50 interchanges with the existing road network, 43 river crossings and 11 railway crossings.'<sup>114</sup> *Via Egnatia* is often referred as 'project on a scale never before contemplated in Greece'<sup>115</sup> and one of the 'largest road construction projects in Europe.'<sup>116</sup>

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112 Francis Carter, *A Historical Geography of the Balkans* (London: Academic Press, 1977), 134.

113 *Via Egnatia*, available from <http://www.abu.nb.ca/courses/NTIntro/images/Egnatian.htm>; Internet; accessed May, 2003

114 *Egnatia Odos*, 'The Egnatia Motorway Project' (2003), available from [http://www.egnatia.gr/flash/en/project\\_about\\_en.html](http://www.egnatia.gr/flash/en/project_about_en.html); Internet; accessed May 16, 2003

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid.

Greek authorities often consider transport- Corridor VIII, as *Paraegnatia*, which means ‘opposite of *Via Egnatia*’. Furthermore Axel Stiris Wallden in the volume ‘Greece and the New Balkans: Challenges and Opportunities’ writes that Corridor VIII (red in fig.2) and Via Egnatia (blue in fig.2) are mutually exclusive and that the Greek project is much more feasible.<sup>117</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece declares that ‘Via Egnatia is perhaps the most vital road project for the country ... to link western and southern Europe with the East.’<sup>118</sup> It is clear that for Greece the ancient *Silky Road* should be diverted from Corridor VIII, adopted in Helsinki, 1997 to Via Egnatia. Furthermore some Balkan analysts suspected that Greece was sabotaging Corridor VIII, using its privilege position as the only EU-member in the region. Arben Kola for example writes:

However, while the Albanians were most ardent supporters of the Corridor, until recently the Greeks have been its greatest opponents. Athens was afraid that the construction of this Corridor might reduce the importance of the port of Thessaloniki. Being a member of the European Union, which will be the main investor in the Project, Greece tried hard to postpone its realization.<sup>119</sup>

Upon its completion, Via Egnatia would be the first major infrastructure project in Greece along the East-West direction. For decades the country’s transport infrastructure has been developed in the North-South direction from Athens to Thessaloniki –Belgrade and Western Europe. (Corridor X) As an implication of Greece’s dedication to the North-South direction on the Transport Conference in Helsinki (1997) Greece’s delegation managed to carry its point of building a new Corridor X Salzburg (Austria), Ljubljana, Zagreb, Belgrade, Nis, Skopje and Thessalonica (Greece). On the same conference Romania pushed for corridor IV to divert to Constanta, as an alternative to the already-planned route through Vidin-Calafat

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<sup>117</sup> Axel Stiris Wallden, ‘Greece and the Balkans: Economic Relations’, in Van Coufoudakis, Harry J. Psomiades and Andre Gerolymatos, eds., *Greece and the New Balkans: Challenges and Opportunities* (New York: Pella Publishing Company, 1999) quoted in *Greece’s New Geopolitics*, Ian Lesser et al.(Rand, 2001),82.

<sup>118</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece, *Foreign Policy*, ‘Transportation’ available from <http://www.mfa.gr/english/greece/today/transportation/highways.html>; Internet; accessed May 28, 2003

to Thessaloniki. These three developments and namely, Greece's project Via Egnatia (opposed to Corridor VIII, see fig.2), Corridor X as an alternative to the southern direction of Corridor IV (see fig.5) and the alternative Romanian Corridor IVa to Constanta (see fig. 1 and 2), all of which ardently supported by Greece suspiciously coincide with one Greek



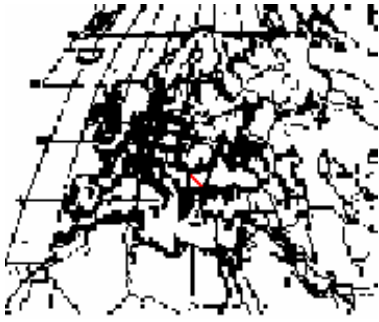
geopolitical program, formulated thirty years ago from the Athens Center of Ekistics. The project *Ecumenopolis 2080*<sup>120</sup>(see fig.3a) defines, which Balkan territories should be subject of modernizing, industrializing and urbanizing (marked with black clusters of dots) with three level-scale of

investment intensity<sup>121</sup>. According to the Greek hypothesis from 1969, in the time horizon of 2080[!] the transport directions East-West and North-South should pass through Greece. According to this strategy the role of the diagonal projection, the ancient Via Militarum from Istanbul, through Belgrade to Vienna (marked with red diagonal line on fig.3a) that has always been attracting the large amounts of the trade flows between Asia and Europe, even in the Cold War era, should be weakened through the building of the Belgrade-Thessaloniki route, Via Egnatia and the Constanta-Budapest road. (black clusters on fig.3a) In the 1997-article 'Geography-Arbitrator in the Rivalry, Called Balkan Cooperation', Hristo Genchev writes:

<sup>119</sup> Arben Kola, 'Corridor Eight: Dreams and Interests' available from <http://www.aimpress.org/dyn/trae/archive/data/199804/80426-005-trae-tir.htm>; Internet; accessed May28, 2003

<sup>120</sup> *Ecumenopolis 2080*, *ACE Newsletter*, 5, no. 5, (December 1969) quoted in Hristo Genchev, 'Geography-Arbitrator in the Rivalry Called Balkan Cooperation' in *Makedonia*, 34 (1997), 8.

<sup>121</sup> Hristo Genchev, 'Geography-Arbitrator in the Rivalry Called Balkan Cooperation' in *Makedonia*, 34 (1997), 8.



I always believed that similar appropriations of geography could only exist only under exclusive circumstances, such as the Cold War. The idea that a single Balkan country-Bulgaria-could be intentionally isolated, seemed to me horrific, but the geopolitical project Via Egnatia, which was planned as a component of the Balkan range of *Ecumenopolis 2080* ...began to be realized precisely in the years after 1989<sup>122</sup>

FIGURES 3A AND 3B. *ECUMENOPOLIS 2080*-GREEK PROGRAM FOR DEVELOPMENT, URBANIZING AND MODERNIZING

Although these fears of Bulgarian scientific and political circles might be somehow exaggerated, it is a fact that four decades after *Ecumenopolis 2080* was created, the Athens Center of Ekistics in the article of Professor John G. Papaioannou published an updated map of *Ecumenopolis*.<sup>123</sup> The new time horizon was the year 2100. From the segment of the map, taken from the article (fig.3b) could be seen that the project *Ecumenopolis* has not changed much even after the global geopolitical transformations after the Cold War and the adoption of Pan-European Transport Corridors. The areas that have to be developed on the Balkans are again Via Egnatia, Thessaloniki -Belgrade and Constanta-Budapest routes, circumventing the Great diagonal Istanbul-Belgrade-Budapest. (the latter indicated with red line in fig. 3a, added by me, to indicate where the black clusters are missing. This is an implication of the idea of the Greek strategy *Ecumenopolis 2100* that the Great diagonal should not be a subject of modernizing, industrializing and urbanizing). Even if these accusation of narrow single-state-interest geopolitical planning might be somehow overstated, it is suspicious that modern Greek political elites at present support exactly those projects, described in the *Ecumenopolis 2080* and *Ecumenopolis 2100*.

Bulgaria in the 'opposite camp' is engaged in developing its own paramount project, and namely 'The gigantic infrastructure project...Corridor N8, [which] will be finished by

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<sup>122</sup> Translation from Bulgarian

2020' according to the prognosis of the American Trade and Economic Development Agency. Bulgaria perceived the intensification of the construction works of the Greek Via Egnatia project as an impetus to further increase the speed of the works on its part of Corridor VIII.<sup>124</sup>

After Bulgarian diplomatic efforts on Sep, 9<sup>th</sup> 2002 Memorandum for the Completion of Corridor VIII was signed in Bari, Italy, where Bulgaria has again declared that Corridor VIII is a major project of paramount importance for its economy. Although the country insists that it is lacking funds for construction of the pan-European corridors it constantly secures funds from the state budget and international donors, such as EIB to exclusively invest in the route Sofia-Burgas, which is part of Corridor VIII. The estimated budget for the project is about 2.2 billion dollars and the section through Bulgarian territory requires 1.2 billion BGN (700 million dollars). On March 16, 2003 Regional Development Minister Valentin Tserovski opened the construction of the new section of the Thrakia motorway [Bulgarian name for the part of Corridor VIII, crossing the country] between Orizovo and Stara Zagora. 'The project is worth about EUR 54 M, eighty percent of which are provided by the European Investment Bank and the rest of the money will come from the state budget. About 3000 workers [!] will be employed in the construction, which is expected to finish in 30 months.'<sup>125</sup>

While Bulgaria and Greece competed for the faster completion of 'their' projects, Corridor VII and Via Egnatia respectively, in order to attract the traffic along the future Europe-Asia corridor, Romania proposed its own territory as the fastest and most efficient route along the Road of the Silk In the common strategy of the Romanian Transport Ministry and the National Railway Company the road from Constanta to Budapest (Corridor IVa)

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<sup>123</sup> John Papaioannou , 'Environment and the Role of Ekistics' , Athens Center of Ekistics, available from <http://business.hol.gr/~bio/HTML/PUBS/VOL2/gb-papai.htm>; Internet; accessed May, 2003

<sup>124</sup> Roussev, 'Environment Management'.

<sup>125</sup> 'Construction of Orizovo-Stara Zagora Trakia Highway Section', *Novinite.Com*, available at [http://novinite.com/view\\_news.php?id=20437](http://novinite.com/view_news.php?id=20437); Internet; accessed May, 2003.

(marked with yellow on fig.2) has the greatest priority over all other infrastructure projects, especially over the other branch of corridor IV. Romanian government neglects the latter route, because upon completion it would be the fastest linkage to the ‘rivalry projects’ of Corridor VII and Via Egnatia. Furthermore the strategy clearly indicates that Romania, perceives ‘their’ variant as the place for the link from Europe to Asia. According to the Romanian transport development strategy, published on the site of the Romanian State Railways-CFR,

Two branches of the 4 Corridor cross Romania from West to East - the northern branch (Curtici, Arad, Coslariu, Brasov, Bucharest, Constanta) and from South to West - the southern branch (Curtici, Arad, Timisoara, Craiova, Calafat)... the northern branch of the 4th Corridor has priority on the route Curtici, Arad, Alba Iulia, Brasov, Bucharest, Constanta, that insures the railway transit link on Romanian territory for the Central and Western Europe with the Southeast Europe and the Middle Orient relation.<sup>126</sup>

Despite their advanced EU-accession stage (for Bulgaria and Romania) and its member status (for Greece), Balkan political elites continue to perceive their neighbor as an opponent, as a ‘subject’ of fierce rivalry. The infrastructure projects that are common European initiative are being modified in order to diminish the significance and the profit of the neighbor and increase its own, which most definitely was not the idea behind their adoption. Alternative projects are being proposed, regardless of economic efficiency, technical parameters and geography. Geography is used in Haushofer’s *Geopolitik*-way, as Balkan political elites still have ‘space-bound’ mentality. It is simply irrational to be ‘space-bound’ in boundless Europe. Irrational: both economically and politically.

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<sup>126</sup>CFR-Romanian State Railway Company, *Modernising the Railway Network on the Fourth Pane[sic]-European Corridor*, available at [http://www.cfr.ro/JF/engleza/2000\\_9/coridor.htm](http://www.cfr.ro/JF/engleza/2000_9/coridor.htm); Internet; accessed May, 2003

## 2.2.2 Bridges without Shores: The Geopolitical Battle over the Place of the Second Danube Bridge on the Route of Corridor IV

*... Dim politicians might do exist in this world, but definitely not dim drivers-Ognyan Minchev*

Another implication of the Balkan policy of obstruction is the decade-long negotiation process between the governments of Bulgaria and Romania for the place of a second Danube bridge to be constructed between the two countries. A peculiar fact is that in the 470 km-long common Bulgarian-Romanian border along the river Danube, there is only one bridge in operation, connecting the two countries, and namely the Ruse-Giurgiu Bridge in the east part of the border (68 km away from Bucharest). (see fig.4)

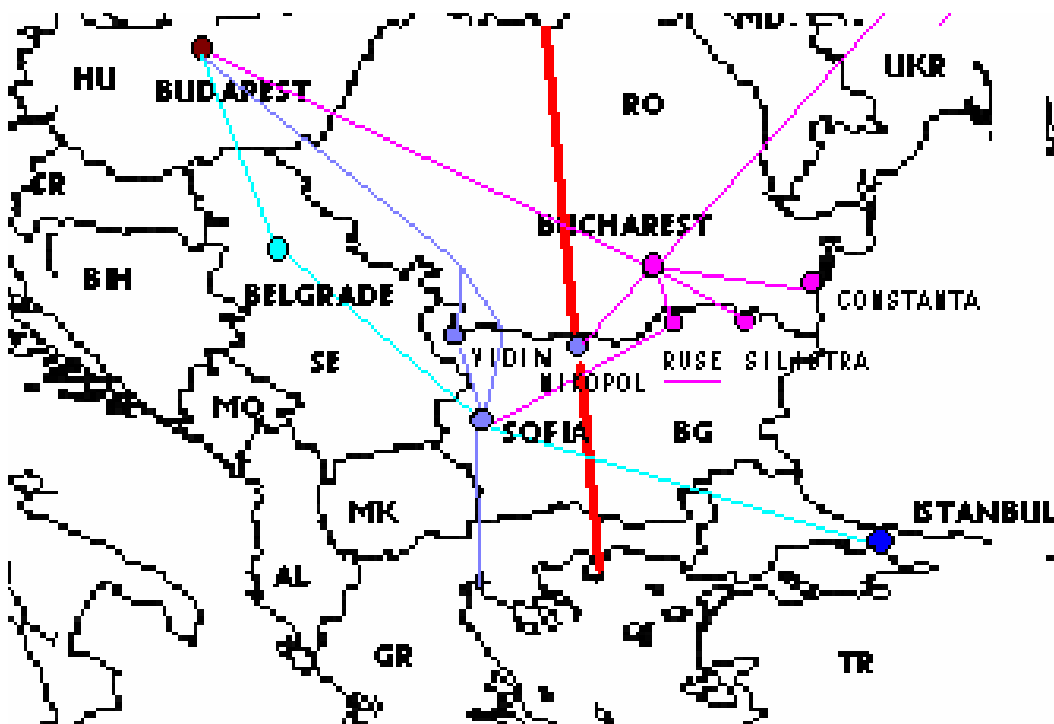


FIGURE 4. BULGARIAN AND ROMANIAN GEOPOLITICAL CLASHES OVER THE SECOND DANUBE BRIDGE PROJECT

For comparison only in Budapest alone with Lágymányos Bridge completed recently, there are nine permanent bridges spanning between the two shores of the river<sup>127</sup>. Furthermore 'along the total [European], Danube navigable length, 104 bridges are built at an

average distance of 21.38 kilometers. The distance between the last bridge, Moldova - Veke Bridge, and the Danube Bridge at Ruse is 556.42 km<sup>128</sup>, which is 40 times longer than the average density in the upper part of the river.

The bridge at Ruse, or 'The Bridge of Friendship', as it was called, was opened back in 1954 and served mainly the trade relations of the Balkan countries and the USSR. The bridge was a significant element of the infrastructure, comprising of road, rail, gas and oil connections, serving the Northeastern direction (from Balkans to USSR) of trade flows, cultural and military interaction.

The new geopolitical order strongly diminished the importance of the Balkan countries' trade connections with Russia, as most of them reoriented their import-export policies towards the EU-markets. Thus the corridor through Ruse gave way to the route along the ancient Via Militaris from Istanbul through Sofia to Belgrade and Western Europe (marked with blue on fig.4) in terms of geopolitical significance, because it is the shortest land connection between the Near East, Middle East and Europe. The new international regimes and geopolitical order positioned the European Union as the new major trade partner for the Balkan economies, thus the Via Militaris was perceived as the backbone along which the 'return to Europe' project would concentrate.

However the war conflict in former Yugoslavia, which started on June 27, 1991 when the Yugoslav People's Army marched into Slovenia, and the subsequent wars with Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo in the next decade, had a strong impact on the transport system in the Balkans. The wars 'virtually made unusable the shortest route from Western Europe to the

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<sup>127</sup> Tourism Office of Budapest, *Bridges*, available at <http://www.budapestinfo.hu/en/sights/hidak.html>, accessed May, 2003

<sup>128</sup> Yordanka Gancheva, 'The Second Danube Bridge: Where is the Problem Actually?', Institute for Market Economics, available at [http://www.ime-bg.org/pdf\\_docs/papers/bridge.doc](http://www.ime-bg.org/pdf_docs/papers/bridge.doc); Internet; accessed May, 2003, 1 .



Balkans and Asia'<sup>129</sup>, and namely the Via Militaris. Such a state of affairs provoked a nervous search for an 'alternative route to the EU that circumvents Serbian territory'<sup>130</sup>, as the losses that the Balkan economies suffered from the embargo on Yugoslavia and the blocked routes amounted billions of dollars. Around 1996, only for Bulgaria the figure was estimated at 4 bln dollar- losses.<sup>131</sup>

The initial idea for construction of a second Danube bridge dates back to 1993. However negotiations started, as late as in 1995, when Bulgaria and Romania decided to build an alternative route to Western Europe: a 'strategic bridge that could link the countries of Southeast Europe afflicted by the crisis with the European transport system.'<sup>132</sup> EU announced that it would support the project with a 200 million ECU credit on very favorable terms.<sup>133</sup> That was perceived as the 'the only real compensation for the damages the two countries suffered from the embargo against Yugoslavia'.<sup>134</sup> However the location of the new bridge turned out to be a highly –contested issue, with Romania staunchly refusing to consider any variant to the west of the port of Nikopol. (red line on fig.4-Bulgarian projects of interest to the west of the line, Romanian-to the east), while Bulgaria supporting a connection at the very west part of the border at Vidin-Calafat or Lom-Rast. In particular, the Romanian side proposed three variants on the Bucharest meeting between Bulgarian prime minister Jan Videnov and Romanian president Ion Iliescu, held in 1996 and namely: a link at Nikopol - Turnu Magurele, new bridge at Ruse, or Silistra to the east. (see fig.4) Such

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<sup>129</sup> Gergana Dimitrova, *The Road to Europe: The Symbolic Economy of Self-Representation in the Balkans*, PhD Research Project- work in progress, IRES Department, Central European University, Budapest (2001-2003).

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>131</sup> *About Bulgaria*, 'Economy', available at [http://www.geocities.com/abstract\\_f/aboutbulgaria.html](http://www.geocities.com/abstract_f/aboutbulgaria.html); Internet; accessed May, 2003.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> 'The Place of the second bridge over the Danube in the Bulgarian-Romanian Relations', available at <http://www.omda.bg/engl/news/comment/brige1307.htm>, Internet; accessed May, 2003

variants were economically inefficient as they would increase significantly the total length of the road and also they would overlap with the already-built bridge at Ruse, serving mainly the connection to Northern Europe and the CIS countries, but completely inadequate as a connection serving the ties with Western Europe. For example the Budapest - Szeged - Arad - Pitesti - Bucharest - Ruse - Sofia - Thessaloniki is 1553 km long, while the road through Vidin –Calafat would be just 1289 km, only 238 km longer than the classical route from Istanbul through Belgrade to Budapest.<sup>135</sup> (1051km.)

In 1994 the British independent consultancy company *Sir Alexander Gibb* was financed by the PHARE program to research ‘the second bridge necessity and to find ‘its most appropriate place, through estimating the traffic’<sup>136</sup> The survey concluded that the most appropriate place for the bridge is at the western part of the river at Lom-Rast (which is very near to Vidin-Calafat), which is the shortest and potentially economically most profitable variant. However official Bucharest denied these results and continued to obstruct the implementation of the project. From the facts stated above it is visible, that the Romanian side declared its willingness to participate in a construction of an alternative bridge, while at the same time obstructing it as much as possible, when it comes to actual steps towards the realization of the project. Where does this irrationality arise from?

First, if the bridge is constructed at the northwestern part of the border at Lom-Rast or Vidin-Calafat (as all independent surveys recommend), this will position Bucharest away from the main transport routes to Western Europe.

Second the more the bridge shifts to the west, the more it would decrease the transit length on Romanian territory. Acting as ‘irrational egoistic state’ Romania would prefer to preserve the status-quo, despite the pressures from the EU and most of the Balkans countries,

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Gancheva, ‘The Second Danube Bridge’, 3-4.

which are all interested in the existence of the alternative route. The Romanian political elites prefer to develop infrastructure along the corridor Budapest - Bucharest - Constanta – Istanbul (see fig. 4), which will put Constanta Port in a key position;<sup>137</sup> Another direction favored by Bucharest is the route ‘Budapest - Bucharest - Ruse - Sofia – Thessaloniki (see fig.4), which will maintain the long transit and Bucharest’s role as a key transport junction’.<sup>138</sup>

Third, as Yordanka Gancheva from the Institute of Market Economics wrote, for Romania ‘65 % of 1998 annual export is directed to EU. The trade volume with Bulgaria, Greece and Macedonia all together is negligible, and for this reason transport costs are not of paramount importance’. Thus the Romanian side does not have the impetus to develop the shortest southern connections, as they would only underestimate Bucharest and port of Constanta. Furthermore Romania has the interest to obstruct the second bridge on the Danube, as it ‘ will have bigger benefits from long-distance transits, rather than from establishing shortest trade routes.’<sup>139</sup>

On the Third All European Ministerial Conference on Transport –Helsinki, 1997, where the map of the transport corridors was specified it was decided that Corridor IV should pass through Vidin-Calafat. However the Romanian side pushed that the route of Corridor IV ‘should divert to Constanta as no. IV a’<sup>140</sup> (see fig.1) Since then Romanian political elites further enhanced their obstruction of the second bridge, trying to invalidate the southern direction of Corridor IV to Thessaloniki and Istanbul and develop it only in the part, that diverts to Constanta. As an implication of that policy the first modern Romanian highway

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> ‘The Place of the second bridge over the Danube in the Bulgarian-Romanian Relations’, available at <http://www.omda.bg/eng/news/comment/brige1307.htm>, Internet; accessed May, 2003

was recently opened between Bucharest and Constanta and also in 1996 Romania has opened the new ferry 'Eforie' running between Constanta and port of Samsun in Turkey.<sup>141</sup>

What Bucharest most obviously did not take into account was that after the war conflicts in Yugoslavia were over the natural trade flows would return along the shortest Via Militaris route from Istanbul-Sofia-Belgrade-Wien, circumventing Romania and excluding it from the 'big geopolitical game'. Moreover after the normalization in Yugoslavia, the EU, the SPSEE and other international factors are much less inclined to financially support the bridge-project. As Gergana Dimitrova wrote the project 'might seem to be losing its outward significance after the end of the Kosovo crisis and the disappearance of the pariah Yugoslavia'.<sup>142</sup>

This case is an argument in favor of the hypothesis that narrow-egoistic geopolitical planning obstructs the modernization and economic recovery of Balkan countries (in this case Bulgaria and Romania), as the second Danube bridge in 2003 (ten years after the initial project) is still existing only on paper. The two countries have missed substantial opportunities to attract some of the flows of the Via Militaris route, to receive generous support to implement the project from outside donors, such as EIB, the PHARE program in the period 1995-2000, at the time when the project was of high priority for the international community as an alternative route to the one through troubled Yugoslavia. If the project was accomplished in that period, the economies of the two countries would suffer much slighter losses than the billion-dollar ones indicated from the embargo upon Yugoslavia and the hundred of millions, lost during the Kosovo crisis.<sup>143</sup>

Most probably as a consequence of the latter developments there are some positive indications that the logic of economics could prevail over egoistic geopolitical considerations,

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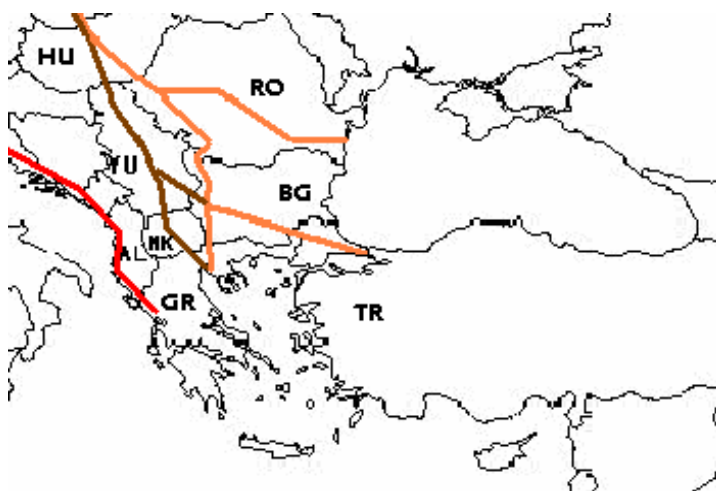
<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Gergana Dimitrova, *The Road to Europe*, 28.

as after ten years of gridlock a Bilateral Agreement for the construction of a new bridge at Vidin-Calafat was signed on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2000 and ratified on 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2001 by the parliaments of the two countries. However this was only achieved after Special Coordinator of the SPSEE Bodo Hombach declared that the project for the second Danube bridge is taken out of the competence of the bilateral relations Bulgaria-Romania and is a project of European primary political and economical concern.

If however, despite the signed agreements for construction and the exerted -pressure by the EU, the two countries continue to delay the completion of the project they will further calculate losses from financing, building of infrastructure, employment, profits both direct and indirect.

### 2.2.3 Transport Corridor IV vs. Corridor X



The Corridor IV (marked with orange on fig.5) links Dresden (Germany) to Istanbul (Turkey) via Prague, Bratislava, Gyor, Budapest, Arad, Craiova, Sofia and Plovdiv. Ways diverge to provide links to Nuremberg, Vienna, Bucharest and

FIGURE 5. RIVALRIES OVER THE NORTH-SOUTH DIRECTION:  
PAN-EUROPEAN CORRIDOR N4 VS. VIA MILITARIS

Constanta (Corridor IVa). Corridor X (marked with brown on fig 5) crosses Salzburg (Austria), Ljubljana, Zagreb, Belgrade, Nis, Skopje, Veles and Thessalonica (Greece).<sup>144</sup>

While corridor IV was regarded by EU Commission as a project of utmost importance during the Yugoslav conflicts as a conflict-bypass route, its relevance significantly

<sup>143</sup> *About Bulgaria, 'Economy'*.

diminished at the end of the crisis. After the fall of the Milosevic regime, Greece initiated the creation of new transport corridor, and namely Corridor X at the Transport Conference in Helsinki (1997), which would link Belgrade with the Greek port of Thessaloniki. Such a development made European analysts believe that the routes of the two corridors are to the large extent overlapping.

The second Greek initiative, that undermined Corridor IV was the project, later known as the 'Dalmatian' corridor (marked with red line on fig.5) linking the Italian port of Trieste to the Greek city of Igoumenista, following closely the Adriatic coast via Albania, Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Croatia, a project proposed in middle 1998 and estimated to 3 billion dollars.<sup>145</sup>

#### **2.2.4 Brown Bears as Leading Political Actors: The Obstacles in the Opening of New Border Points between Bulgaria and Greece**

Until 1988, the 500 km common Bulgarian-Greek border was served by only one [!] border checking point, and namely *Kulata-Promahon*. The second checking point is officially opened as late as November 5, 1988.<sup>146</sup>

On December 22, 1995 after the pressure exerted by the European Commission, the foreign ministers of Bulgaria and Greece, Georgi Pirinski and Karolos Papulias signed an agreement for the opening of three new checking points, along the common border and namely: *Goce Delchev-Drama*, *Rudozem-Ksanti* and *Momchilgrad-Komotini*, as well as the adjacent infrastructure. The agreement explicitly stated that the three new checking points should be commissioned not later than the end of 1998. The program PHARE donated 24

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<sup>144</sup> Kola, 'Corridor Eight: Dreams and Interests'.

<sup>145</sup> Eric Cotte, 'Where is the Eight Corridor?'.

<sup>146</sup> Apostolos Hristakoudis, Bulgarian-Greek Cooperation in the Sphere of Transport Infrastructure, *International Relations*, 3 (2001), 103.

million German marks exclusively for the fast completion of the *Goce Delchev -Drama* checking point.

It seemed that this could be one of the very few Balkan common infrastructure projects that can be implemented without the obstruction of any side. However it should not be disregarded that in the Balkan political game, even the local fauna could be a crucial player. The Greek ecology organization *Arcturos* decides to send a protest-letter to the EU Commission, where it expresses its concern that the new Goce Delchev-Drama checking point disturbs 'the ecological harmony in the region and threatens the population of the local...brown bears.' As a consequence the project is significantly delayed, as Brussels requires new route of the checking point in compliance with the environment.

Ecological concerns are definitely something very important and not to be disregarded in infrastructure building. However in this particular case ecology appears to be used to intentionally delay the opening of the new checking point, as in that region there was hardly any brown bear population. Commenting on the case, the German magazine *Spiegel* writes:

Greeks had just invented something to delay the commissioning of the checking point. They said that tens or even hundreds of bears passed through exactly that spot...and the automobile traffic would disturb them... on the contrary... in the region there are two or three bear families at most and in the exact spot of the point a single bear has not been mentioned for years...<sup>147</sup>

After two more years of arguments, the new 'ecologically-correct' project provided for a 600 meter-long tunnel, on the exact place between the two borders, that added 18 million marks more to the project's cost. The Special Coordinator for the Stability Pact Bodo Hombach commented that this bear-tunnel is 'senseless'.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Tunnel für Meister Petz: Zwischen Bulgarien und Griechenland werden für den Tierschutz Unsummen aus EU-Steuergeldern verbuddelt, *Spiegel*, 48, (2000) quoted in *Makedonia*, 2 (2001)

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

The real motive behind this obstruction could have been the fear of the Greek side that eventual new checking point would provide for the increased communication between Bulgarians and the *Slavophone* minority in Greece. (population Greece, considers as 'Slavic-speaking Greeks') On Bulgarian side the concerns from the new checking point opening might have been connected with the fact that the Bulgarian border region's economically deprived population might emigrate to the Greek labor market. Whatever the reasons for the obstruction on Bulgarian or Greek side, such a policy is inconsistent with the Bulgarian statute as an acceding EU-state and Greece's as an established EU-member state and has negative consequences for the economies of both countries. It is even more irrational to relate these cases of obstruction and narrow-interest's state planning to the broad framework of Euro-Atlantic integration: a framework all Balkan political elites proclaim affection to.



## Chapter 3

### Clash of interests in the Energy Sector in the Balkans

*Hell is other people* – Jean-Paul Sartre

#### **3.1 Nuclear Wars: One nuclear plant is not enough, two are too much**

##### **3.1.1 Kozloduy vs. Cernavoda**

In 1970 after a bilateral agreement between the USSR and Bulgaria, commenced the construction of the first nuclear plant on the Balkans-NPP Kozloduy. More than 100 000[!] workers are involved in the massive project. The first two 440 MW units are put in commercial operation respectively in July 1974 and November 1975. Units 3 and 4 are put in commercial operation correspondingly in December 1980 and may 1982 and the last two Units 5 and 6 with reactors WWER-1000/V-320 are completed in September 1988 and December 1993.<sup>149</sup> Upon its completion the nuclear plant at Kozloduy is being proclaimed the biggest pride of the Bulgarian industry.

In 1979, Romanian autocrat Nicolae Ceausescu perceived the newly constructed Bulgarian plant as an impetus for his own ‘ grandiose dreams of building five or more reactors’ at the Cernavoda site on the river Danube.<sup>150</sup> ‘Canada’s export credit agency, the Export Development Corporation (EDC), provided a one billion US dollars- loan to Romania

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<sup>149</sup> NPP Kozloduy, *About the Plant* , available at <http://www.kznpp.org/eng/main.php?cont=1>; Internet; accessed May, 2003.

<sup>150</sup> *Romania’s Cernavoda-Second Nuclear Reactor* available at <http://www.sierraclub.ca/national/nuclear/reactors/cernavoda-2-backgrounder.html>, Internet; accessed May, 2003 .

for construction of the Cernavoda nuclear station.’<sup>151</sup> Canada’s state nuclear company, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL), cooperated with the forced construction of the plant but ‘these plans collapsed through technical incompetence and lack of funds.’<sup>152</sup> Following the disintegration of the totalitarian system, further loans from the EDC and other Italian donors were taken for the completion of the plant. Twenty years after the initial negotiations started the result was the incredible 2.2 billion dollars cost of the project with only one unit put into exploitation, as late as April 1996.

The latter date could be traced as the starting point of the Bulgarian-Romanian ‘nuclear wars’. The opening of the single nuclear unit at Cernavoda (1996) coincided with pressures, exerted by EU on Bulgarian authorities to close the first four of the units at Kozloduy. Bulgarian political elites and the media suspected that there is a ‘conspiracy against Bulgaria’ and ‘France and Canadian companies that have put money into Romania’s sole nuclear plant at Cernavoda would like Romania to replace Bulgaria as a Balkan energy supplier,’<sup>153</sup> Furthermore ‘international pressures are exerted to close the Kozlodui nuclear power plant... coming mainly from Canada and Italy with the intention to recover ‘the billions invested in the plant in Cernavoda.’’<sup>154</sup> The tension intensified to such an extent that when the Romanian president visited Bulgaria to attend the Greece-Bulgaria-Romania Trilateral Summit, the most significant daily *Trud* (Labor) ‘expressed its regrets for the fact that the Romanian President had not been welcomed with rotten tomatoes and eggs.’<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Marian Chiriac, ‘Power Wars’ Between Bulgaria and Romania’, *Balkan Crisis Report*, 89 (1999) quoting from Newspaper *Daily-24 Hours* (April, 1999)

<sup>154</sup> Gabriela Velea, ‘Who Takes Advantage of the Rising Tension between Sofia and Bucharest?’, available at <http://www-old.nineoclock.ro/TR4/2040com.html>; Internet; accessed May, 2003.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

While it is clearly exaggerated that there is some kind of conspiracy against Bulgaria, it is also a clear fact that Balkan countries are one of the main initiators of the negative EU-opinion. Greece, as the only EU-member in the region uses its influence to persuade the European Commission to exert pressure on Bulgaria for the early closure of the Kozloduy plant. According to Greek Environment, Town Planning and Public Works Minister- Costas Laliotis:

The reactor's operation was a 'huge mistake' and said the European Union has adopted a proposal by the Greek ministry calling for Bulgaria to cease the reactor's operation, with domestic electricity demand *covered by neighboring nations' grids*. Mr. Laliotis said the EU has agreed to cover power transfer costs.<sup>156</sup> (emphasis mine)

In 1999, the conflict intensified after an ultimatum from the European Commission to Bulgaria announcing that Bulgaria should 'specify a schedule for the early closure of the four reactors at its Kozloduy nuclear power plant as a pre-condition for [initiation of] European Union accession talks.'<sup>157</sup>

At present the nuclear plant at Kozloduy contributes from 44 to 46% of the total annual energy production in Bulgaria. Bulgarian energy system covers 45% of the constant deficit in the common energy balance of the Balkan countries, which is 'accessed as a significant contribution to the economic stabilization of the region',<sup>158</sup> and that makes the country the leading exporter of energy in South Eastern Europe.<sup>159</sup>

However if the first four units of the Kozloduy plant are closed until 2006, as the European Commission insists, Bulgaria will turn from a major energy exporter to chief

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<sup>156</sup> ANA Bulletin, May 21, 1995, 'Laliotis Announces New Radiation Watchdog System as Bulgaria Cranks up Kozloduy Reactor Again', available at <http://www.hri.org/news/greek/ana/1995/95-10-21.ana.html>; Internet; accessed June, 2003.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> *Energy Strategy of Bulgaria*, Ministry of Energy and Energy Resources of Bulgaria, available at [http://www.doe.bg/download/energiina\\_strategia/Energy\\_strategy-Eng2.doc](http://www.doe.bg/download/energiina_strategia/Energy_strategy-Eng2.doc); Internet; accessed May, 2003.

importer in the region. As the political elites perceive that such a step would have strongly negative consequences for the Bulgarian economy, 'Romania is... over eager to exploit the economic opportunities which it believes will ensue.'<sup>160</sup> Furthermore Bulgaria not very modestly perceives itself as the 'regional pivot of the Balkans', that it is 'a pole of stability' and that 'many people rely on Sofia for the solution of their own problems.'<sup>161</sup> To a large extent this perception is empowered by the country's leading position in the Balkan energy export market. Romania is also facing over capacity in electricity generation and decreasing home consumption<sup>162</sup> That is why 'Romania has pinned its hopes on the Kozloduy shutdown to help it become the leading regional electricity exporter.'<sup>163</sup>

As part of its energy policy Bulgaria intentionally levied very high transit taxes for Romanian energy transport to Greece and Turkey, which made Romanian energy export economically incompetent. Romanian Minister Basescu accused that 'Sofia... [was] blocking for years Romania's plans to export electricity elsewhere in the Balkans.'<sup>164</sup> Although there is a constant deficit of electricity in the Balkan market, Bulgaria obstructs the possibility for other energy exporters to cover this deficit by imposing high transit taxes.

On its part, Romanian political elites push for the closure of the Bulgarian plant, despite the fact that the first two units produce the cheapest energy in Europe with 1kW/h estimated under 2 cents<sup>165</sup>. The exporter who would replace the 45% Bulgarian share in the Balkan deficit coverage would most certainly introduce much higher prices, which would

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<sup>159</sup> Decision for Approval of the Energy Strategy of Republic of Bulgaria, Ministry of Energy and Energy Resources of Bulgaria, available at [http://www.doe.bg/cgi-bin/i.pl?l=1&p=288#\\_Toc7408501](http://www.doe.bg/cgi-bin/i.pl?l=1&p=288#_Toc7408501); Internet; accessed May, 2003.

<sup>160</sup> Marian Chiriac, 'Power Wars' Between Bulgaria and Romania', *Balkan Crisis Report*, 89 (1999)

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Marian Chiriac, 'Power Wars'.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

calculate great economic losses to Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), Macedonia and Bulgaria, which all would have to pay the new prices for their energy imports. The only ‘winner’ would be Romania. However, as a whole the region would become much more externally-energy-dependent as the single unit at Cernavoda would not be able to substitute for the four closed units at Kozloduy. Thus the Romanian, Yugoslavian and Greek political elites which persistently declare the Kozloduy nuclear plant as the ‘biggest treat to the region’ would most certainly calculate significant economic losses from the eventual closure. Similarly to the transport policies in the region, in the energy sector despite the declared commitment to the common markets, integration of economic policies, etc., the irrationalities of *Homo Balcanicus* prevail over the economic logic.

If a country in the Balkans is natural resource-abundant or has some competitive advantage, the political elites of neighboring countries perceive this advantage as a treat, as a target of obstruction and try to diminish it by trying to either ‘construct their own replica’ of the advantage or hinder it by all possible means. This is completely heterodox to basic economic laws, and most certainly the attempt to replicate other’s competitive advantage, without own resource endowments and economic sufficiency leads to inconsistent results with meager performance, which most certainly obstruct the modernization and economic recovery in the respective societies.

This energy rivalry seems even more irrational after on 15 November 2002 ten Southeast European Governments signed upon the agreement of establishing a common electricity market by the year 2005, as a step of its integration to the common electricity market of the EU.<sup>166</sup> Such peculiarity is not left unnoticed even by local scientific circles:

Although both Romania and Bulgaria ostensibly agreed on September 10 to link all national energy grids and thus create a regional electricity market in the Balkans, the

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<sup>165</sup> Marin Devedzhiev and Todor Kondakov, ‘The Premature Unit-Decommissioning of NPP Kozloduy Would Cost Us One Billion Dollars’, Memorandum, *Bulgarian Geopolitical Community in Macedonia*, 2 (2002), 8.  
<sup>166</sup> *Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe*, ‘About the Stability Pact’.

'power war', as the media have called the latest conflict between the two countries, rumbles on and reflects a long history of economic competition.<sup>167</sup>

Competition, which is inconsistent with the advanced EU-accession-status of both countries. Furthermore narrow political interests and the consequent obstruction prevents both countries to become together the major transit point between two large electric grids. Balkan countries' grid is still connected with the United Power Systems (UPS) electric grid of former COMECON countries through Moldova, Ukraine and Russia.<sup>168</sup> With their accession to the EU Bulgaria and Romania would inevitably be connected to the main European grid, and namely: Union for the Coordination of Production and Transmission of Electricity (UCPTE). Thus, as Georgy Ganey wrote it would become possible 'to transfer large quantities of electricity between Russia and the Ukraine on the one side, and UCPTE on the other, without endangering the performance standards of the latter'<sup>169</sup>, making Balkan countries 'the cheapest and readiest bridge between the power systems of Europe and Russia'<sup>170</sup>, calculating huge transit tax-profits and enhancing their home gas infrastructure and consumption. However such a favorable opportunity might well be eliminated due to the present lack of cooperation, the imposing of high taxes to a neighbor's gas transit, the egoistic profit-pursuit. Such an outcome would have enormous negative implications on Balkan transition economies: losses from unrealized transit profits, the incapability to

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<sup>167</sup> Marian Chiriac, 'Power Wars'.

<sup>168</sup> Georgy Ganey, 'Bulgaria and Balkan Energy Flows', *Centre for Liberal Strategies-Sofia*, available at [http://www.cls-sofia.org/publications/papers/bulgaria\\_and\\_balkan\\_energy\\_flows.pdf](http://www.cls-sofia.org/publications/papers/bulgaria_and_balkan_energy_flows.pdf); Internet; accessed June 2003, 5.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> In his analysis Georgy Ganey mentions Bulgaria, but his observations are also valid for Romania and other Balkan countries.

enhance ‘performance by improving the capacity utilization’, inability to reduce fluctuations, reduce cost and pollution.<sup>171</sup>

### **3.2 Oil and Gas Pipelines: ‘The Dawn of a second Middle East’<sup>172</sup> and the battle over the transit routes from there**

World’s oil-demand-dependency on the Persian Gulf reserves rates at 40 % and is expected to rise by 2010 up to 52 %, if no alternative sources are developed.<sup>173</sup> The oil crises of 1973 and 1979 pushed developed countries to search for alternative sources in order to become more energy independent. With the fall of the communist system in the new geopolitical international order, the regions of Caucasus and Central Asia were recognized as part of the ‘larger belt’ of countries belonging to the Euro-Atlantic space. Such a development provided a solution to the Western’s dependency problem, by allowing for access to the region’s ‘hundreds of billions of barrels of untapped oil reserves and trillions of cubic feet of natural gas [that] lay underneath the rugged, barren, inhospitable landscape of Central Asia around the Caspian Sea coastline and the Caucasus region.’ which could be an alternative to either Russian or Middle East supplies.

However ‘the transportation...from the distant and land-locked countries of the Caspian to Western Europe and Western hemisphere (USA) is the biggest challenge for the Western oil companies operating in the region.’<sup>174</sup> The crowded and narrow Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits in Turkey, and the latter’s policy for restricting oil tankers-traffic brought

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Dimitris Yannopoulos , Chequerboard of Oil, Minefields, available at <http://www.globalexchange.org/september11/athensNews092801.html>; Internet; accessed May, 2003.

<sup>173</sup> Marika Karayianni , Caspian Oil Seeks Safe Transit Route, *News and Trends Central Asia* 6, no. 20 (2001); available at <http://www.blueprint-magazine.de/oil/ntc14380.html>; Internet; accessed May, 2003.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

up the issue for transportation of Caucasian and Central Asian oil through pipelines reaching the West Coast of the Black Sea and subsequently to the Western markets.<sup>175</sup>

The problems with the Bosphorus require further scrutinizing. After the March, 2001 completion of the Tengiz-Novorossiisk (CPC) pipeline that linked the Kazakhstan fields with the Russian Black Sea port, Russia managed to divert some of the oil deliveries through its territory, thus securing its own transit share in ‘the big oil game’. By 2015 estimates indicate that Russia’s oil export through Black Sea ports are expected to be not less than 50 million tons annually. By the same year, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan are expected to supply to the western markets 100-120 million tons annually.<sup>176</sup> Also according to estimates ‘even under the most optimal arrangements, Bosphorus is incapable of letting through more than 70-80 million tons of oil a year.’<sup>177</sup> Therefore by the end of the next decade more than 100 million tons of export oil-shipments could be in danger of being disrupted.

This is what led to the immense need of pipeline projects bypassing the Bosphorus straits. At least four projects were considered as a solution to the problem, and namely Odessa-Brody-Gdansk, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Burgas-Alexandroupolis, Burgas-Vlore and the fifth Constanta –Trieste was rejected as it was considered economically insufficient.<sup>178</sup> As analyst Ivan Grybanov wrote ‘it cannot be ruled out that only one out of these four projects will survive under the present conditions of slowing oil demand growth on the world markets.’<sup>179</sup> This was one of the main reasons for the subsequent intense competition among Balkan countries for their ‘own’ project. The projects Burgas-Alexandroupolis, Burgas-Vlore

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ivan Griabanov, No Bosphorus, Please: Four Projects to Bypass the Turkish Straits Spring to Life, Simultaneously, available at <http://www.rusenergy.com/eng/caspian/a01032002.htm>, Internet; accessed May, 2003.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.



and Constanta –Trieste pass through the Balkans and they are scrutinized in the sections below.

### 3.2.1 Russia and the Burgas-Alexandroupolis Project

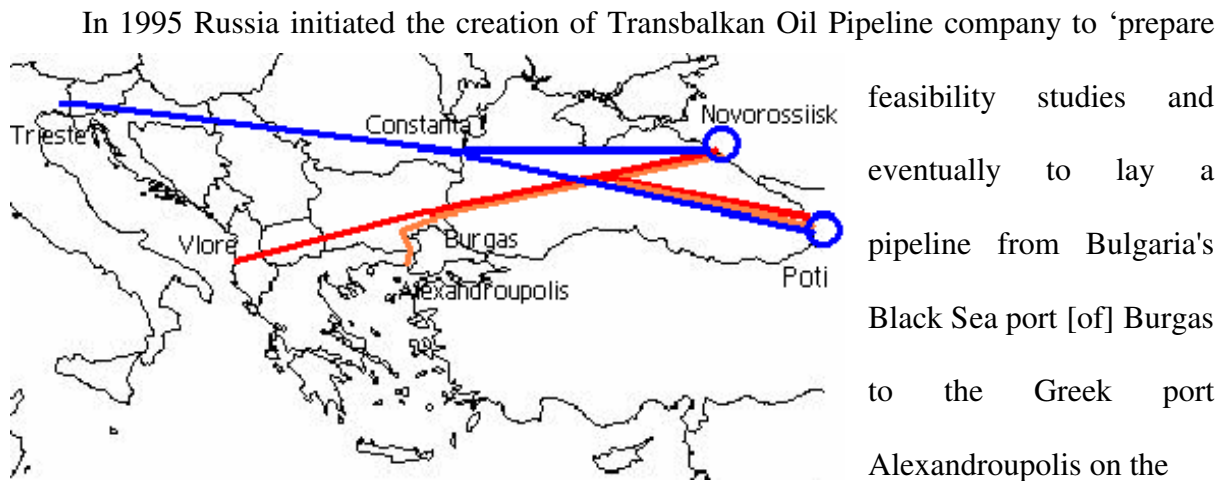


FIGURE 6. ALTERNATIVE BOSPORUS-BYPASS PIPELINE PROJECTS ON THE BALKANS

Aegean.’<sup>180</sup> (marked with orange on fig.6) Such a project combining oil tanker transport from the Russian port of Novorossiisk to Burgas and then with pipeline to Alexandroupolis would allow for Kazakh and Russian oil to bypass the overcrowded Bosphorus straits and provide an alternative route to the Western markets. Bulgaria and Greece would largely benefit from the project, as the transit taxes would be significant. The Transbalkan Oil Pipeline Company was scheduled to start its work at the end of 1995 and complete the project by 1998 the latest. However most definitely such precision in planning and timing did fail to consider the Balkan inconsistencies, as Bulgaria and Greece, shortly after signing, started arguing over the percentage share in the company. While Russia has secured 50% for itself, the two Balkan countries could not agree for the remaining percents. Greece insisted that Bulgaria should not

<sup>180</sup> ‘Russia Planning Balkan Pipeline’, *Monitor* 1, no.89, available at [http://www.jamestown.org/pubs/view/mon\\_001\\_089\\_000.htm#009](http://www.jamestown.org/pubs/view/mon_001_089_000.htm#009); Internet; accessed May, 2003.

have more than 5% of the shares, as it cannot provide sufficient funding.<sup>181</sup> This has led to a seven-year gridlock of the project with significant economic losses, mainly from unrealized transit taxes, calculated both for Greece and Bulgaria. An agreement between the two sides was reached as late as November 2002, when finally Bulgaria, Russia and Greece reached a political decision regarding the equal participation of the countries in the construction of the Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline.

The Burgas –Alexandroupolis Project pipeline (orange color on fig.6) would consist of a 280 km-long pipeline with a capacity of 15,000,000 tonnes/year, planned to reach an optimum of 35,000,000 tonnes/year. The pipeline is estimated to cost approximately 660 million dollars and further 300 million for adjacent infrastructure at the ports of Burgas and Alexandroupolis. According to the agreement from 2002 each country had to invest equal share of 220 million dollars. The 2002 -Agreement between Bulgaria and Greece might lead to the conclusion that after a decade of discord, the Balkan countries might have finally learned to respect the laws of economics, where efficiency and competitive advantages dominate over egoistic geopolitical concerns and narrow-interest planning. Unfortunately this is not the case, as evidenced by the following sections.

### **3.2.2 USA and the AMBO Burgas-Vlorë Project**

In 1996 the newly established Albanian-Macedonian-Bulgarian Oil Corporation (AMBO) initiated the Burgas-Vlorë project. The AMBO Burgas-Vlorë line (marked with is 898 km long and has a planned capacity of 35,000,000 tonnes per year.<sup>182</sup> The estimated price of the project is 1.13 billion US dollars. This project was directly supported by the

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<sup>181</sup> Jacklin Jacheva, 'Oil as Politics', *NIE*, 5 (1997), 27.

<sup>182</sup> See Appendix B.

American government within the framework of the South Balkan Development Initiative (SBDI) of the Trade and Development Agency (TDA). It closely follows the route of transport Corridor VIII from Black Sea to the Adriatic (passing consequently through Bulgaria, Albania and Macedonia). What is peculiar about this project is that 'exclusive rights for the AMBO pipeline and corridor VIII were granted to the Anglo-American AMBO group.'<sup>183</sup> The latter is declared the only party 'allowed to build the planned pipeline from Burgas to Vlore' and also AMBO has the sole rights to negotiate with creditors and investors.<sup>184</sup> Some analysts like Michel Chossudovsky write that this project, which is strongly backed by the US government 'supports the interests of the oil giants, including BP-Amoco-ARCO, Chevron and Texaco.'<sup>185</sup> The project had reached a very advanced stage, but the conflict in Kosovo slowed down its implementation. However AMBO has initiated fundraising campaign in US and elsewhere and 'once financing is secured, the pipeline could be constructed in four years.'<sup>186</sup>

The AMBO-pipeline project is fiercely opposed by Romania and Greece and to a smaller extent by Turkey.<sup>187</sup> The former two are ardently lobbying for the alternative projects, passing through their own territories. Furthermore some analysts believe that Greece had finally agreed to the equal share for the Bulgarian side in the Burgas-Alexandroupolis project under 'the treat' of the rapidly advancing Burgas-Vlorë project. Furthermore Greece is hoping that if the prognosis for 'slowing oil demand growth on the world markets' turns out to be correct, if the Greek project is commissioned first it will make the AMBO project

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<sup>183</sup> George Matthias, Where is the Eight Corridor? -The Pan-European Networks (PAN) and the Economic Significance of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, Current Concerns 9/10, (2001); available at <http://www.currentconcerns.ch/archive/20010907.php>; Internet; accessed May, 2003.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Ivan Gribanov, 'No Bosphorus, Please'.

<sup>186</sup> Southeastern Europe Regional Country Analysis Brief-Romania, Bulgaria and Moldova, Energy Information Administration, available at <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/seeurope.pdf>; Internet; accessed May, 2003.

economically insufficient. Greece hopes that if construction of the former project predates the latter, the Bulgarian side will discontinue its political support for the ‘rival’ Bulgarian-Macedonian-Albanian AMBO project, which is a required pre-requisite for its commissioning.<sup>188</sup> However while seven years the AMBO and Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline projects were in constant rivalry (with Greece supporting the latter and Bulgaria constantly changing its support), Romanian political elites surprised everybody with their alternative project Constanta-Trieste.

### 3.2.2 EU and the Constanta-Trieste Project

Despite that the Romanian Foreign Minister Andrei Plesu has declared in 1998 ‘that Romania's policy on Caspian oil transit is based on regional cooperation’ and also ‘closer cooperation rather than competition will make the transit bids of Ukraine, Romania and Bulgaria stronger’,<sup>189</sup> he initiated a new fierce competition on the Balkans. Taking advantage of the gridlock in the Bulgarian-Greek negotiations over the Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline, Romania revived (the previously rejected as inefficient) project for a route, passing through its territory from the port of Constanta on the Black Sea to the port of Trieste on the Adriatic (marked with blue on fig.6) In the year, when Bulgaria and Greece finally agreed upon the percentage shares in the consortium, Romania intensified its efforts to provide funding for its route, through different sources such as The U.S. Trade and Development Agency (TDA),<sup>190</sup> despite the fact that the route passes from an extremely long, difficult and volatile area through the Carpathian Mountains and the Western Balkans and cuts off the

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<sup>187</sup> Georgy Ganev, ‘Bulgaria and Balkan Energy Flows’, 3.

<sup>188</sup> Ivan Nikolov, ‘The Burgas-Alexandroupolis Pipeline: Bidding Continues’, Macedonia, 46(2000),1.

<sup>189</sup> Ron Synovitz, ‘Croatia/Romania: Support for Pipeline Linking Constanta with Trieste’, available at <http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/1998/09/F.RU.980930131519.html>; Internet; accessed May, 2003.

Mediterranean Sea.’<sup>191</sup> Thus the latter characteristics make the Romanian project much less economically viable than Burgas-Alexandroupolis project and the AMBO projects with its 1300km length, compared to 280 and 900km respectively. Despite 63% of the infrastructure of Constanta-Trieste exists, its completion would cost 1billion US dollars, as much as AMBO and twice as much as Burgas-Alexandroupolis project. From the technical data is clear that the Romanian proposal is not motivated by ‘most shortest and profitable routes, situated according to where the natural geographical morphology of the Balkans is most facilitating to such projects’<sup>192</sup>, but by the Romanian geopolitical desire to attract the routes of the Caspian gas solely through its territory despite the fact that its project is not economically efficient. Greece perfectly aware of the limited local and external funds for the Bosphorus- bypass projects tried to discredit the Romanian project in front of EU donors, funding institutions, public opinion. In this respect the statement of Greek Minister of Economy and Finance Nicos Christodoulakis, regarding the Constanta-Trieste project is characteristic ‘ For such issues, the map itself usually gives the best answer.’<sup>193</sup>

In the era of the Dawn of New Middle East (Caucasus oil fields), the interests surrounding Balkan transit pipelines are an immense interplay of global oil giants’ interests, EU, US and Russian attention. However it cannot be ruled out that the Balkan countries have enough leverage to influence the different projects’ implementation. Furthermore even if the fact that the Burgas-Alexandroupolis project is backed by Russia, the AMBO by the US-administration, and the Constanta-Trieste by the EU<sup>194</sup> is taken into account, it cannot be denied that Balkan political elites use their limited influence to ardently obstruct rivalry

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<sup>190</sup> US Department of State, *TDA Supports Constanta to Trieste Oil Pipeline Development*, available at <http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/12376.htm>; Internet; accessed May, 2003.

<sup>191</sup> Marika Karayianni, ‘Caspian Oil Seeks’.

<sup>192</sup> Hristo Genchev, ‘Geography-Arbiter in the Rivalry’.

<sup>193</sup> Marika Karayianni, ‘Caspian Oil Seeks’.

<sup>194</sup> George Matthias, ‘Where is the Eight Corridor?’.

projects and lobby for ‘their own’, despite feasibility studies, economic efficiency prognosis and technical parameters data.

## **Conclusion**

Humanity is entering the realm of a *Third Wave World*. Or it might soon witness the end of civilization. It does not necessarily have to sound so apocalyptic, but the transformation processes the World is undergoing at the wake of the new Millennium are a plausible reason to speak for an emerging New Order. No matter if it is called ‘Integration’, ‘Globalization’ or ‘Transnationalization’, these are all different aspects of one process. While we still cannot speak of the ‘death of geopolitics’ and the ‘birth of chronopolitics’, the prevailing scholarly discourse signifies that globalization undermines the classical value of geography.

Regional blocs undermine the classical realist vision of states as constitutive parts of the international system. In regional blocs, such as EU there is already ‘higher authority that can constrain or channel the behavior of states’ and facilitate cooperation as states no longer operate in chaos. The old realist argument justifying the logic of relative gains, that ‘security and well-being ultimately rest on their ability to mobilize [states’] own resources against external threat’ is no longer fully adequate. Regional blocs promote cooperation and advance the logic of absolute gains.

After the fall of the communist regimes in Eurasia, the Balkan region was recognized as part of the future Euro-Atlantic space with short and middle-term perspectives for full integration into the EU. The latter initiated major pan-European transport and energy projects to facilitate Eastern Europe and in particular Balkan’s economic recovery and integration into its structures. Ten years after the projects’ adoption they still remain in their infancy stage

despite the cooperation facilitating international regimes, generous access to funding and regular pressure exerted by the EU.

Present Balkan political elites are ardently proclaiming that they would adhere to the values of integrating and globalizing Europe in their Balkan policy, while de facto employing the ‘arsenal’ of geopolitical egoistic planning. Such geopolitical planning in inter-Balkan relations, which is embedded in the geopolitical thinking of present Balkan political elites, obstructs the democratization and economic recovery of these societies. Despite the numerous attempts and initiatives by the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the EU, the European Investment Bank and other institutions concerned, aimed to accelerate the completion of these corridors, there has not been much substantial action taken in that direction. After a decade most of the projects are still in their infancy stage due to obstruction or lack of support by neighboring countries.

Despite their opening towards the EU, Balkan countries still prefer to ‘close off and control earth space, resources and population’ among themselves, which is consistent with Blouet’s old geopolitical thinking tendency, as well as with the concepts of Ratzelian *Geopolitik* and Cold War geopolitics.

Probably the main reason for such state of affairs is the very large geopolitical stake involved in the transport and energy-infrastructure routes and the great hopes Balkan countries set in the construction of large-scale pan-European infrastructure projects, ‘believed to help them get out of their state of crisis as it was the case in the US and Germany in the 1930's’ following the Great Depression. Another argument explains the political obstruction with geopolitical interests of external actors. This is most certainly evidenced in the alternative oil pipeline projects, where the US supports financially and politically the AMBO project, Russia –the Burgas-Alexandroupolis route and the EU the Trieste-Constanta project, as well as in the conflict between Corridor IV vs Corridor X and the Dalmatian diagonal.

Historical legacy also might still have some influence on Balkan elites, as countries' current doctrines, present transport and energy strategies have incorporated some elements from the old compromised national doctrines and some other elements consistent with Blouet's geopolitical thinking.

This research focused mainly on the irrationality of current Balkan political elites in the implementation of the pan-European transport and energy sectors. Namely the situation of discord was explored in the broader context of European integration. It also explored geopolitical thinking, as variable causing discord. Although not the main concentration of the research- historical legacies, great economical significance and external actors' influence were indicated as possible explanatory variables to the geopolitical thinking, consistent with Blouet's theory. A shortcoming of this research should be acknowledged, and namely- the depth of exploration of national doctrines. It could have been more complex and elaborated. This is a consequence of the fact that such documents are usually not officially published, or distributed only in specific circles. Operationalization of such a variable as historical legacy is also a significant challenge.

While there is sufficient scholarship on the Balkan cooperation and regional organization programs after the Cold War, as well on the implementation of common infrastructure projects, research on the latter's obstruction from Balkan political elites is rather scarce. Reasons for such a situation of discord are even more neglected. Further scholarship might concentrate on the reasons for the present state of disagreement and lack of cooperation with introducing more explanatory variables, as well as further exploration of the historical legacy argument and respective countries' historical and present national doctrines. Such a research might contribute to better understanding of the present Balkan irrationalities and to the implementation of alternative programs or projects that would provide solution to the problems. The Greek *Megali Idea* (Great Idea), Serbian *Nachertanie* (Strategy) and the



present Bulgarian National Doctrine: National Strategic Programs and Greek *Unity and Lobbying of the Hellenes around the World* require special attention.

Most probably in a decade we will witness a fully EU-integrated Balkan region in an even further globalized world. Most probably this will happen even earlier. Most probably. Let us pray for this *homo Balkanicus* of the future...

## Appendices:

### A. Pan-European Transport Corridors in the Balkans: routes and maps

#### Corridor IV

##### Link EU-South-eastern Europe

Road; rail; Danube ferry link; airports; ports; combined transport. Total length: 3.258 km



Berlin	Germany
Dresden	
Nuremberg	
Prague	Czech Republic
Brno	
Vienna (rail)	Austria
Bratislava	Slovak Republic
Győr	Hungary
Budapest	
Arad	
Craiova	Romania
Bucharest	
Constantza	
Sofia	Bulgaria
Pfloddiv	
Thessaloniki	Greece
Omenio	Turkey
Istanbul	

#### Corridor VII

Waterway route on the Danube from Germany to the Black Sea; connects up with the North Sea via the Rhine and the Main

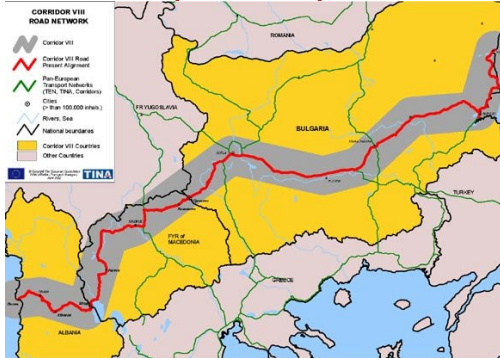


	Germany
	Austria
Bratislava	Slovak Republic

Győr-Gönyü	Hungary
	Croatia
	Serbia
Ruse	Bulgaria
Lom	Moldova
	Ukraine
Constantza	Romania

**Corridor VIII**

**Road; rail; expansion of port of Durrës; combined transport in Bitola; Length: 1.300 km**



Durrës	Albania
Tirana	
Skopje	FYR Macedonia
Bitola	
Sofia	
Dimitrovgrad	Bulgaria
Burgas	
Varna	

**Corridor IX**

**Road; rail ; port expansion**

**The Council in Essen (1994) declared the link Helsinki-St. Petersburg-Moscow as priority  
Total length: 6 500 km**



Helsinki	Finland
Vyborg	
St Petersburg	
Pskov	Russia
Moscow	
Kaliningrad	

Kiev	
Ljubasevka	Ukraine
Odessa	
Chisinau	Moldova
Bucharest	Romania
Vilnius	
Kaunas	Lithuania
Klaipeda	
Minsk	Belarus
Alexandroupolis	Greece
Dimitrovgrad	
Ormenio	Bulgaria

### Corridor X

Road; rail ; Length: 2 360 km



Salsburg	Austria
Graz	
Zagreb	Croatia
Belgrade	
Nis	
Veles	
Thessaloniki	
Bitola	FYR Macedonia
Skopje	
Ljubljiana	Slovenia
Maribor	
Budapest	Hungary
Belgrade	Serbie
Novi Sad	
Nis	
Sofia	Bulgaria
(Corr IV - Istanbul)	
Veles	
Florina	
Via Egnatia	

**B. (Bosporus Bypass) Oil Pipeline Projects on the Balkans: technical data**

<b>Name/Location</b>	<b>Route</b>	<b>Crude Capacity</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Estimated Cost/Investment</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Albanian Macedonian Bulgarian Oil (AMBO) Pipeline</b>	Burgas (Bulgaria) via Macedonia to Vlore (Albania) on Adriatic coast	750,000 bbl/d (could be expanded to 1-million bbl/d)	560 miles (898km)	\$850 million to \$1.1 billion	Construction delayed, (proposed 2001-2002) as financing is arranged. As by 2003, construction has not yet started.
<b>Burgas Alexandroupolis (Trans-Balkan Oil Pipeline)</b>	Burgas to Alexandroupolis (Greece) on the Aegean Sea coast	Proposed 600,000 bbl/d to 800,000 bbl/d	178 miles (280km)	\$600 million	After 7 years of negotiations new agreement signed in 2002 between Bulgaria, Greece, and Russia. As by 2003, construction has not yet started.
<b>Constanta-Trieste Pipeline</b>	Constanta (Romania) via Hungary, Slovenia, and/or Croatia to Trieste (Italy) on the Adriatic Sea coast. Omisalj (Croatia) also has been proposed as a terminus.	660,000 bbl/d	855 miles (1300km)	\$900 million	Feasibility studies completed; financing still to be arranged. Jan. 2003: agreement signed in Bucharest between Romania, Yugoslavia and Croatia. As by 2003, construction has not yet started.

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