

## **IV. Conclusions: the ‘Must’ of Euro-Atlantic Solidarity on Post-Conflict Rehabilitation**

Plamen Pantev

Preserving and developing trans-Atlantic relations has proved to be an indispensable tool of handling the various challenges of global international relations – in the past century and in the first years of the present one. The attraction of membership in NATO for countries that are still in a process of post-conflict rehabilitation activities, the accession of new members of the Alliance from the former Soviet bloc, the examples of vitality and institutional modernization by the North Atlantic organization itself are significant arguments in this direction. Whatever the differences within the trans-Atlantic community in the past and in the recent years, preserving and developing the relations between Europe and North America does not have a substitute of guaranteeing the democratic trends and stability in the world. There are allies, partners, friends of the trans-Atlantic community, but no substitute in backing the progress of human civilization. Making the world safe for global economic activity, a place where democracy, human rights and dignity matter is the heart of the trans-Atlantic philosophy and construct.

Post-conflict rehabilitation activity is just one of the areas that has a stake in keeping and upgrading the trans-Atlantic relationship. However, it is becoming more and more important.

First, the need of effectiveness in international security relations shows that durability of peace after intra-state or inter-state conflicts is linked not just to an efficient peace-enforcing and peacekeeping operation, but also to a level of democratization of the conflict-stricken societies, to the institution-building success, the security sector reform, disarmament of the conflicting sides, the return of the refugees and to the social and economic progress after the end of the hostilities. Post-conflict rehabilitation experience shows that manageability is more important than democracy at the initial stage of recuperation of the war-torn/conflict distressed so-

cieties. Democracy building is a crucial task for the mid-to-long term. All these activities are becoming already part of a forward targeted conflict-prevention. Both Europe and North America are interested in effective conflict-prevention results. One of the important lessons of Balkan post-conflict rehabilitation has been that success would not have been possible without a working trans-Atlantic cooperation. South East Europeans have been often taking US-EU, NATO-EU solidarity and cooperation for granted, though it has been not that easy end product of commonality of values, principles and to a great extent – adjustment of threat perceptions. This positive experience needs to be kept alive, continuously studied and applied elsewhere in the world.

Second, post-conflict, especially war-torn societies are a potential milieu of attracting and creating terrorist activity. Resolute actions of rehabilitating these societies should prevent this from happening or intensifying. It would be interesting to consider the Iraqi case from this perspective. There were opinions before the war in Iraq that the result of the US/Coalition Forces intervention would lead to an intensified terrorist activity. The alternative was pacification of a dictatorial regime that sooner or later would have openly staged the same activity that terrorists already carried out. There are clear difficulties in implementing post-war rehabilitation in Iraq while a mounting terrorist struggle adds to the resistance of elements of the regime of Saddam Hussein. But only a success by the international community in post-war rehabilitation of Iraq would deprive the Islamic-motivated terrorists from the argument that the Muslim world is doomed to never catch-up with the rest of the civilized democratic world. Success of democracy and market economy is in the interest of the trans-Atlantic community in its fight on terrorism. So, post-conflict rehabilitation bears a strong counter-terrorist aspect too – an aspect that the trans-Atlantic relations cannot neglect, especially when diverging perspectives pull the countries of the community into different positions in critical periods of international relations.

Third, facing the realities of the present-day low or absent international institutions' capacity of sustaining, coordinating and practically implementing crisis management, peacekeeping and peace-building activity when the needs for that are existent, trans-Atlantic cooperation and soli-

solidarity is an indispensable source of coping with this issue. While in the case with the Balkans the trans-Atlantic community has found its solutions by shifting responsibilities, but also South East European nations' future to the European Union and NATO, post-conflict sites in other regions of the world are not that lucky. The vehicle of trans-Atlantic relations is the leading potent factor that would organize the efforts of dealing with the security, economic, social and political distress of the post-war societies of the broader Middle East, Africa and Asia. It would include not only identifying the donors of economic help but also support humanitarian organizations to carry out their activity and organize security stabilization efforts. Trans-Atlantic cooperation is crucial for involving, motivating, facilitating and supporting all other international institutions that have capacity for post-conflict rehabilitation.

Fourth and last, post-conflict rehabilitation is important for trans-Atlantic relations from theoretic and strategic point of view: no conflict should any longer be approached without a clear vision where to drive the developments after the hostilities end. Definitely this is an ambitious task that neither the USA, nor the EU are able to carry out alone globally. The challenge of both the USA and the EU in solidifying their global roles is how to define their cooperative attitudes towards each other in outlining their post-conflict rehabilitation activities. The task is ambitious since post-conflict rehabilitation is quite broader and encompassing social, political, security, military, economic and financial activity. For example, humanitarian aid, security sector reform, economic reconstruction are just parts of a more systematic effort, defined as post-conflict rehabilitation. Considering the immensity and high costs of the task, on one side, and the persisting budget limitations for every international actor, on the other side, the implementation of this post-conflict management tool requires a most economic approach for both the United States and the European countries. Trans-Atlantic cooperation could be the vehicle and the driving force in attracting the world capabilities in coping with post-conflict rehabilitation tasks.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that post-conflict rehabilitation needs trans-Atlantic solidarity, but the very trans-Atlantic relationship could overcome its moments of difficulties and doubts by utilizing the coop-

erative potential of the post-conflict rehabilitation itself. The lessons of post-conflict rehabilitation in South East Europe and by South East Europeans are certainly needed pieces of the mosaic of knowledge shared by the trans-Atlantic community.