

## ISLAMISM AND SECURITY IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

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This monograph presents detailed arguments against a new military mission in Bosnia. Nevertheless, should U.S. policymakers consider the possibility, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) should point out that a new military mission is unlikely to solve Bosnia's political problems or expedite North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)/European Union (EU) membership, but would instead face serious difficulties. Their analysis could draw on the extensive experience acquired by the U.S. Army during 9 years of NATO Implementation Force (IFOR)/Stabilization Force (SFOR) deployment in the country, as well as the expertise gained by participation in the NATO headquarters unit in Sarajevo.

The analysis could include:

- The reasons a military mission would be unlikely to advance Bosnia's accession to NATO. In particular, NATO could hurt the process by putting pressure on the Bosnian Serbs to give more power to a central state they fear will be dominated by Muslims.
- A reminder that IFOR/SFOR and NATO success in unifying the armies of the three ethnic groups and in creating a central ministry of defense occurred in a sector where they had expertise and exercised authority. A new military mission would be unlikely to repeat that success in nonmilitary sectors.
- The difficult experience of our European Allies under the EU military mission (EUFOR) and their decision to disengage from Bosnia make it unlikely that they would be willing to provide troops for a new mission.
- The threat of low-level violence and the limited ability of U.S. military troops to combat it

make European gendarme forces critical. Yet, those troops are unlikely to be available.

- Security-related developments in the country have deteriorated since SFOR's departure. Anti-Americanism has grown as poorer Bosnians are radicalized by Wahhabis or other Islamist groups, while home-grown Bosnian terrorists, as well as former *mujahideen*, may threaten U.S. personnel or facilities.

With regard to the expedited entry of Bosnia into NATO, OSD and JCS should ensure that policymakers focus on broader political issues that to date have received insufficient attention, particularly:

- The danger of pushing for a central state that Bosnian Serbs will never accept if they see it as a vehicle to reduce them to the status of second-class citizens in a Muslim-dominated state.
- The danger of sharing classified information and decisionmaking with Bosnian politicians and representatives with ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and Iran.

To prepare for such a debate, the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) and U.S. Army Europe (USAEUR) may wish to retrieve any available in-house expertise and institutional memory on Bosnia, particularly among those who have served or are serving in those commands, as well as those who served on OSD's Balkans Task Force.

Unfortunately, the U.S. military presence in Europe is a shadow of what it was during the IFOR/SFOR mission, and many such individuals have dispersed or been engaged for years in missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, or elsewhere. However, civilian

analysts and political advisers, including individuals who served in the NATO headquarters in Sarajevo, may have valuable country experience to contribute. In addition, consulting present and past EUFOR participants could prove useful.

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