

Hybrid Wars. Breaking the Balkans, Country Scenarios

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In-depth Report: [THE BALKANS](#)

(Please read [Part I](#), [Part II](#), [Part III](#), and [Part IV](#) before this article)

The research thus far has thoroughly explained the Hybrid War context in the Balkans and the specific regional vulnerabilities that are ripe to be exploited. This penultimate section will thus briefly elaborate a bit more on each country's Hybrid War scenarios and segue into the final chapter that talks about the dire threat facing the Republic of Macedonia, the most susceptible of all the Balkan states to this new form of warfare.

Slovenia

In and of itself, there aren't any endemic factors inside Slovenia that place it at risk of a Hybrid War, but it is in danger of suffering destabilization as a result of the "refugee" crisis. The work earlier touched upon the regretful incident where a group of out-of-control "refugees" [torched their own camp](#), showing everyone that all it takes for pandemonium to break out among the 'human caravan' is just a few impassioned provocateurs. Thankfully the authorities were able to re-establish control before panic and/or aggression took hold over the rest of the crowd, but the incident brought to light a serious threat that will remain so long as there are "refugees" transiting the Balkans.

✖ Slovenia itself isn't expected to be targeted by the US or any other external actors intent on provoking a Hybrid War, but as is seen by the camp incident, certain Hybrid War triggers don't always need an external patron to provoke. The conditions for a "refugee" riot are already well established and intimately interwoven into the entire 'migration' experience, partly owing to the unpreparedness of the transit states to accommodate such massive human inflows and also due to the composition of the "refugees" themselves (mostly young, military-aged men with pro-Islamist sympathies). There exists the distinct possibility that an unforeseen spark somewhere along the "refugee" transnational 'chain' could lead to a larger riot that takes the victim state's government off guard (whether it's Slovenia or whichever other transit state) and triggers a larger regional crisis in its wake.

Still, it seems as though Ljubljana has prepared for this scenario in light of the "refugees" burning their own camp and has [called in](#) the EU to assist with security measures. Slovenia obviously sacrificed a degree of its sovereignty in this request, but it's questionable exactly what level of independence it even had prior to this (being such a gung-ho EU and NATO member), so in a sense it's somewhat of a moot point to even consider (although nonetheless relevant to mention). Therefore, the country's real vulnerability to Hybrid War stems not so much from an unplanned incident that could lead to a larger "refugee" riot on its own territory, but from the humanitarian consequences of this or another Hybrid War

scenario happening 'upstream' in Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, or the Republic of Macedonia, and thus sending an even more overwhelming flood of people surging across its borders and obliterating what little institutional defenses it has against such an asymmetrical destabilization.

Croatia and Bosnia

Croatia shares the same risks of a "refugee" riot as Slovenia does, and it is equally susceptible to being caught in the middle of any mayhem that the 'migrants' decide to start. That being said, just like with Slovenia, Croatia is not a target for American-provoked Hybrid Wars, and although understanding that its allies' stability is in jeopardy due to the "refugee" scheme, Washington wants to avoid any intentional scenario for weakening its Western Balkan partners to the advantage of the Central Balkans. If taking down the Central Balkans through a provoked "refugee" riot on their territory means that adverse consequences will come to the Western Balkans, then so be it, the American strategy goes, so long as the multipolar megaprojects are endangered enough to justify the collateral damage to the US' Lead From Behind proxy in Zagreb.

Moving beyond the "refugee" riot scenario and to speak more concretely about another Hybrid War risks that could feasibly result in Croatia's involvement (whether as an active player or a passive participant), the US would like to destabilize Bosnia in order to draw Belgrade into a quagmire. This was discussed at length earlier so there's no need to repeat all the details, but the general idea is that militant Dayton Revisionism on the side of Sarajevo (at the behest of its Western patrons) is already leading to tensions with Banja Luka, and if the current trend keeps pace, then relations between the two federal entities will significantly deteriorate in the coming year. Croatia's self-interest in this course of events is simple –the Croat-Muslim entity will seek as many external partners as possible while it prepares for a possible conflict with Republika Srpska, and the most geopolitically 'natural' one for it to reach out to is Zagreb, which has its own historical ambitions for actualizing Greater Croatia.

✖ Spoken about in this context, Croatia is trying to turn Bosnia's Croat-Muslim entity into its proxy domain, and this becomes more realistic as preplanned and provoked tensions are ratcheted up against Republika Srpska. Under this structural arrangement, Croatia has more involvement in supporting a Conventional War in Bosnia than a Color Revolution and/or Unconventional War, meaning that it's not necessarily partaking in a full Hybrid War-facilitating role, although its actions would likely contribute to the destabilization of the whole country. The reader should remember that one of the US' main strategies is to lure Serbia into the Bosnian boiler and trap it in a quagmire that leads to a full state collapse with time, an objective which didn't succeed in the early 1990s but now seems to have a higher probability of occurring, provide of course that the US can trick Serbia into a conventional intervention there. Just as the US used the killing of Russians in Donbass to try and produce an emotional and shortsighted response from Moscow, it may try to emulate the same pattern in Republika Srpska with the Serbs in order to goad Belgrade into a geopolitical trap, possibly even going as far as also using a Color Revolution to set the patterned chain of events into motion.

Serbia

This brings the conversation around to Serbia and the very real threat that it faces from multidirectional Hybrid War threats. Continuing with the tangent that was touched upon

above, Belgrade must be cautious in getting drawn too deeply into Bosnia's spiraling problems (initiated entirely by the US' initiative, one should never forget), but at the same time, it must strike a balance between avoiding a 'Reverse Brzezinski' and simply capitulating its geopolitical position. Therefore, when forecasting Serbia's role in any forthcoming Bosnian destabilization, it would be wise for Belgrade to initially limit its support and refrain from over-emotionally getting drawn into the conflict, no matter how provocative the 'bait' is (e.g. Sarajevo trying to do to Republika Srpska what Kiev was doing in Donbass [to completely different situations, but the general idea is the same]). Other than that general guidance, there is nothing else solid enough to be suggested until any conflict actually breaks out, as the detailed specifics will dictate more concrete action at that time.

Moving along, the preceding chapter outlined the threat quasi-separatist threat that could emerge from the ethnic Hungarians in Vojvodina, prodded on as they'd be by nationalist actors such as Jobbik. It is here where a more 'traditional' Hybrid War threat could become manifested, since there's the possibility (however vague it may seem at this time) for the community there to utilize Color Revolution technologies in agitating for some sort of more clearly defined identity separateness from the Serbian state. Each Color Revolution scenario makes use of different on-the-ground tactics and slogans that apply most efficiently to the given situation, but it could be foreseen that language rights might play some sort of role in the future. The uniqueness of the Hungarian language is a source of pride for its speakers and is an integral part of the Hungarian national identity, and nationalist provocateurs could push the people into organizing around it in order to give their nascent movement a unifying factor. For example, one possible scenario could be see Jobbik-organized Hungarian Serbs demanding the creation of a so-called "Hungarian Regional Autonomy" in the northern reaches of Vojvodina, using a language dispute as pretext for galvanizing the demographic. It probably wouldn't descend into its own Hybrid War, but a faulty state response to this emerging and premeditated crisis could severely worsen relations with Hungary and possibly jeopardize the Balkan megaprojects.

✖ Rounding out the rest of Serbia's Hybrid War threats, it's necessary to touch upon the socio-political vulnerabilities of Sandzak and the Presevo Valley. Both southern regions are inhabited by a large amount of Muslims that could be provoked into resentment against the titular Serbian majority, obviously being aware of how tactically success this was for the Kosovo-based Albanians (despite leading to a failed 'state' shortly thereafter). The US' goal here isn't in recreating another 'geopolitical Kosovo', but in simply stirring up problems between minorities and the titular Serbian majority. That fact that the "refugee" 'chain' flows through the Presevo Valley is a strategic advantage in this respect since it means that the transnational travelling 'caravan' could be manipulated into being a catalyst for this scenario, per the "refugee" riot risk that was earlier discussed. Both areas' proximity to the occupied Serbian Province of Kosovo means that they're within relatively easy reach of [ISIL-affiliated terrorists](#) that have taken nest in the NATO protectorate. The most dramatic scenario would be if these individuals found a way to arm the "refugees" prior to or immediately after a planned incitement against the Serbian authorities, which could then be joined by the Presevo Valley Muslims (provided that their preconditioned for such action).

Montenegro

This tiny country is being [sucked into NATO](#) against the wishes of the majority, and it's already produced a sizeable amount of domestic instability as a result. Interestingly enough, the conditions inside Montenegro might give way to a form of Hybrid Warfare, albeit not one that's conducive to American foreign policy goals and which would be entirely organic if it

occurs. Aside from the previously discussed interests that the US has in Montenegro, its geostrategic territory is envisioned to host a part of the [long-cherished Ionian-Adriatic Pipeline](#), a prospective project to link the [Trans-Adriatic Pipeline](#) (TAP, supplied by Azeri gas) northwards to Croatia and help Zagreb become a sizeable energy hub in conjunction with its [planned](#) (but [ultra-expensive](#)) LNG terminal in Krk island. From an American perspective, NATO absolutely must occupy Montenegro in order to perpetually guarantee the pipeline's viability, and any legitimate opposition against its proxy Djukanovic cannot be tolerated since it's unknown whether his democratically elected replacement will want the project or not. For these reasons, NATO is bunkering down behind Djukanovic and supporting the violence that he's unleashed against the protesters. Their calculation is that a non-NATO, non-Djukanovic Montenegro would be an unreliable transit state, hence why it must be avoided at all costs.

Seen from this analytical vantage point, the West's blind support for the unpopular Djukanovic is ironically more harmful to its soft power than anything else, since their backing of him amidst the violent crackdown and non-democratic NATO push has tarnished their reputation in the eyes of their nominal supporters. The rapid polarization that has transpired since the government's preemptive September announcement about joining the military bloc seems to be irreversible and deeply rooted, with impassioned anti-NATO and anti-Djukanovic supporters unlikely to ever backtrack on their ideals. Now that Podgorica accepted Brussels' invitation for membership, there's an ever-dwindling window of opportunity for the protesters to act in stopping what appears to be a looming fait accompli. Pushed to act, they might very well make a determined push against the government sometime in the next year or two before Montenegro's formal admission, which could see a renewed spate of protests rocking the country and simultaneously taking place in other cities besides just the capital. There's no doubt that Djukanovic will react savagely to this development and that NATO will stand fully behind their prospective member in offering political, material, and intelligence support, meaning that the lines for a possible civil war are clearly set in the sand, provided of course that the opposition is serious enough about continuing their protest movement in the face of such violent adversity.

✖ Organized protest marches all throughout the country could scare Djukanovic into thinking that a Color Revolution is being hatched against him, and in some ways, the political technologies and tactical applications could very well mirror this traditional Western regime change strategy. The pivotal difference, however, is that no foreign patron is supporting the Montenegrin opposition and the entire anti-government movement is purely endemic and founded on grassroots resistance. Because of its genuine origins, it might perhaps be in a greater position to succeed in its regime change goals than any of the artificial Washington-engineered Color Revolutions before it due to its literal adherence to the precepts laid out in Gene Sharp's "[From Dictatorship To Democracy](#)", and this frightens Djukanovic and his NATO patrons to no end. Therefore, they'll take the most severe and violent course of action if they feel 'threatened' by a critical mass of anti-government protesters converging on the capital, and the bloody and chaotic aftermath could motivate the oppositionists to take up arms against the government and wage a guerrilla war. If it comes to that, then Hybrid War would have come to Montenegro in the one way that the US could never have expected it to, and its successful completion (the replacement of Djukanovic with a democratically elected and multipolar leader) would throw a serious wrench into the US' strategic plans for the Balkans.

Albania

Albania is a very peculiar country when it comes to Hybrid War, since it perpetually needs to continue pursuing one abroad in order to prevent its emergence at home. The full details of this theory are contained in the author's earlier work called ["Greater Albania" Is A Myth To Preserve The Country's Unity](#), but to summarize, the guiding concept is that the Gheg and Tosk differences in Albania are a lot larger than most observers realize, and that without the unifying ideology of Greater Albania, the separateness between these two dialect groups would quickly come to the surface and create political complications for the perpetually impoverished state. In order to deter this from happening, Albanians are periodically reminded of the irredentist crusade that lies at the heart of the government's post-Cold War legitimacy.

Typically, Greater Albania is evoked whenever Albania itself is closest to a serious domestic crisis authorities see the need to trot it out as the ultimate distraction. This happened during the 1997 economic crisis when Greater Albania was directed against the Serbian Province of Kosovo, and again in 2015 when the deteriorating economic conditions inside the country gave rise to tens of thousands of EU-destined migrants and the parallel revival of the KLA in Macedonia. Neither case is coincidental, and it's argued that without the driving force of Greater Albania to unify and distract them, then the distraught citizens of Albania would direct their negative energy towards the government and unintentionally provoke the chaotic conditions where the Gheg and Tosk divide could take on political dimensions.

✖ What's also important to mention (and is argued in the aforementioned source article) is that Albania is one of the few countries in the world where Christianity actually grew since the end of the Cold War. This is attributable to Catholic missionary activity heavily active in the northern part of the country, and amidst any domestic political uncertainties, it's possible that this extra element of identity (Christian Albanians) could come to the fore as the national identity begins to disintegrate with the rise of Gheg and Tosk. Making matters even more complicated would be if Turkey's Neo-Ottomanism continues its Balkan lurch and Ankara succeeds in pressuring its junior proxies in Tirana to mildly support (or at least make their country conducive to) social Islamism. This could produce tensions with Albania's rising Christian minority, traditional atheists, and secular Muslims, and might turn out to be the key catalyst for dismembering the Albanian national identity. With all these competing identity factors just below the country's social surface, and each of which are capable of emerging during prospective anti-government protests amidst the economic crisis, it shouldn't come as much of a surprise that Tirana's elites are once more resorting to the myth of Greater Albania in order to preserve their positions, and this will be discussed more thoroughly when addressing the Republic of Macedonia.

Greece

The US must strike a real tricky balance when dealing with Greece, since it wants to destabilize it enough to preempt Balkan Stream and the Balkan Silk Road, while at the same time not doing anything to offset the TAP. However, if it came to it, then Greece and the TAP could be sacrificed so long as doing so was thought to guarantee the destruction of the multipolar megaprojects, although this of course is the failsafe, last-resort option that the US would only pursue if it was in a desperate enough position (e.g. Hybrid Wars don't break out as planned in Serbia and the Republic of Macedonia). The two tools used to achieve the strategic unbalancing of Greece and meant to place it in a position of perpetual servitude are the "refugee" crisis and the fierce left-right divide.

“Refugees”:

The “refugee” crisis was spoken about at much length before, and it could potentially affect Greece in the same manner as the other downstream states that were earlier discussed. The key difference, however, is that Greece practically doesn’t involve itself in any useful capacity in dealing with the “refugees”, meaning that there are less ‘opportunities’ for them to get distraught and lash out against the authorities. Truth be told, Greece pretty much has an ‘open-door’ policy when it comes to “refugees”, emulating in many respects the [“wet foot, dry foot”](#) policy that the US has in place for Cubans. In both cases, if an individual is intercepted at sea, then they’ll likely be sent back, or at the very least, not allowed to freely continue their mission to wherever it was that they intended to reach further afield. But, if they physically touch foot in American, or in this case, mainland Greek soil, then standard immigration rules are not enforced and they receive a carte blanche to do as they please (with the US actually offering them a package of welfare benefits, unlike the poorer and less politically motivated Greeks). The US does so on purpose in order to [lure Cubans away from their country](#) and beget a humanitarian and political crisis (which [is slowly gaining steam](#) in Central America at the moment), while Greece has its ‘wet foot, dry foot’ policy due to pure ineptitude, a lack of funds, and misprioritization brought about by the economic crisis.

✖ Regardless of the reasons, the effect is the same – Greece turns such a blind eye to the “refugees” and ignores them to such a point that Athens greatly facilitates all manner of illegal immigration to the rest of Europe (be it of “refugees”, terrorists, or economic migrants), thus giving these individuals no ‘probable’ cause to riot that could be exploited by interested outside actors. They simply don’t exist, and even if a “refugee” finds themselves ‘stranded’ in mainland Greece, they’re a lot more complacent than in any of the other transit states because the society seems to have no issue with these ‘indefinite tourists’, and the standard of living is so low at the moment that whatever funds they brought with them for their journey will be beyond sufficient for a prolonged period of time (keep in mind that many “refugees” have thousands of Euros with them). The only exception in this case is if they’re stranded on an island en route to the mainland, in which case their prospects of ‘freedom of movement’ in Europe are less bright because they still haven’t reached the continent itself yet. Anyhow, this isn’t as significant of a Hybrid War factor because any “refugee” riot on the Greek isles is physically contained and poses no real threat to the government’s stability.

Political Polarization:

The real threat facing Greek stability isn’t “refugees”, but the vicious left-right divide that continues to split the nation. In Greece, there’s no such thing as a ‘political moderate’, since people are either ardently on the left or the right, and this is directly due to the legacy of World War II, the Greek Civil War, and the military junta that ruled the country from 1967-1974. All Greek families were affected to one degree or another by these two traumatic events and their fallout, although the impact they had on each individual was substantially different depending on their political disposition. It’s generally understood that leftist Greeks played a decisive role in the anti-Nazi resistance and were naturally poised for leading the country after the Germans’ defeat, but American and British support for the reinstalled authorities (motivated by nascent Cold War fears) shifted the military balance and ultimately contributed to their loss in the subsequent civil war. Nearly two decades later, the military coup drastically put the country on a hardcore right-wing trajectory and led to numerous instances of state oppression against the country’s leftists. All in all, these three milestone events in Greece’s modern history significantly polarized the country’s

citizenry and contributed to the present threat of political violence that returned during the economic crisis.

The sustained economic suffering that Greeks have been experiencing as of late has given rise to a hyper-polarization of the existing left-right divide as seen by the popularization of Syriza and Golden Dawn, respectively. Granted, the current leadership of Syriza has largely moderated its hardcore leftist ideology for financially existential reasons under heavy German and EU pressure, but many of its followers still hold these ideas close to their heart. On the opposite spectrum of things, Golden Dawn is an ultra-nationalist right-wing movement that has made its presence visibly felt over the past couple of years. Ideologically speaking, these two parties couldn't be more distant from one another, literally representing polar opposites and having incompatible social policies and historical narratives. It's difficult to gauge the number of Greeks from either side that are fervent enough believers in their cause to possibly engage in street violence to promote or defend it, but in comparative situations of hyper-polarization and extreme economic malaise, there are usually a critical number from each camp that could fulfill this role. Typically, though, it's more common for right-wing supporters to do this than their left-wing counterparts, so even if Golden Dawn has comparatively less public support and membership than Syriza does, it could in fact have a more forceful street presence in any future unrest.

✖ At this stage, it's difficult to predict the exact triggers that could provoke a wave of street violence in Greece, but it can safely be presumed that they would have some kind of connection with the economic crisis and German-enforced austerity. It's even conceivable that it wouldn't be Golden Dawn that takes to the streets first, but Syriza supporters revolting against a controversial decision by their party-led government, which in any case would be a magnet for counter-protests such as those by the right wing that could then lead to possible violence. The thing about Greece is that the old wounds of political division run quite deep even to this day, and for Greeks, it's not just a matter of ideological affiliation one way or another for the theoretical sake of it, but of how earlier beliefs had tangible effects on the livelihood and safety of various family members in the past. This makes the left-right divide a very personal one for many people and testifies to the difficulty inherent in moving past it, to say nothing of how quickly the historical memory of politically targeted violence and suffering could return as a driving factor in aggravating civil relations. Thankfully, Greek society has thus far resisted the political violence that some find so attractive and tempting, but it can't be assumed that the present state of misleadingly peaceful affairs will last indefinitely. The longer that the economic crisis goes on, the most polarized each camp becomes, and it seems to be only a matter of time before one or the other takes to the street in desperation for their cause and provoke a tense counter-reaction from their ideological rivals.

Hell In The Hellenic Republic:

To bring the Greek Hybrid War forecast to a close, even if there's a return to political violence in the country, it seems unlikely that this will ever descend into a full-fledged civil war. The most immediate consequence of left-right violence would be the degree that it destabilizes the ruling government, which might feel prompted to call in military support if the situation quickly spirals out of control. One should keep in mind that the preceding event - large-scale political protests by one or both sides - could tactically resemble a Color Revolution depending on the political technologies involved, and that the breaking point might come from a clash between the two and/or an unexpected (and perhaps unprofessionally conducted) military intervention that leads to a spike in civilian-on-civilian

and/or state-on-civilian violence.

This doesn't mean that an Unconventional War between any of the sides is guaranteed to follow, but that point itself is irrelevant in the larger context of American grand strategy because the government would have been already been destabilized to the degree that neither of the multipolar megaprojects is any longer a priority. They wouldn't in and of themselves be discounted from that point on, but if one or both of them became a political subject of intense debate (e.g. if the Balkan Silk Road would be constructed mostly by imported Chinese laborers instead of unemployed Greeks), then it's possible that grassroots pressure could be applied in offsetting the entire endeavor or at least 'halting' it indefinitely, especially if there's a government shuffle or outright change in the wake of the street violence. If this happens, then the US would succeed in sabotaging both projects while still holding Athens back from the precipice of full-scale chaos, which would thus allow Greece to still perform its role as a pivotal TAP transit state and remain an integral piece of the unipolar world.

To be continued...



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