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THE AGE OLD BLITZKRIEG OF THE BALKANS: RE-WRITING THE TRUCES?- Dibya Prakash Lahiri¹**Abstract:**

One of the most sublimed regions with the warfare and relatively stronger and bigger battles fought, the Balkan in itself has been the mighty place for the ones who wished to seal their fate and rule the world with a glowing face with nowhere to outshine others. The battles and fights for sustenance since Mesolithic and Neo-lithic age have been descriptive as well as inhabit the powerful structure and the blood of the Balkans which has brought the leaders to who they are today. The paper dates back in time about the history of the region and the development it has been building with its connection to seas and land and the reason for the regular action for the region. The paper talks about the various battles and wars fought on the land along with the reasons for the same. The paper tries to find out the quintessential purpose for the rulers and warriors all around the world to come up and fight for their place in the region. The paper subtly questions the role of the modern-day leaders who have known the history yet have been known for their inaction to save and secure peace in the region. The paper also finds out the ways with which the region can reach to peace and truce for a longer time and how the time has come to move ahead from the conventional truces to making the subjective and underlying conditions which will prevail in ensuring peace around the land. The paper concludes with a sign of optimism to change the course of action for the region as well as create an acceptability amongst themselves for their own survival as well as unity to prevent the loss of their cultural aura.

Introduction:

In modern day history, it is not a matter of essence for one to behold century old warfare and battles which did not last for more than 4 years. The conclusive understanding has never reached even after a century later which led to a revolutionary change in the Balkan land.

¹ 4th year B.A.LLB(Hons.) student from Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies

Countless battles, rebellions and uprisings emerged which resulted in the fading away of the mighty Ottoman Empire from the region after taking over the disputed land of Adrianople in 1362 whilst the legends of the land were skirmishing over the dominance of the land. The never-ending fights between the countries of Balkans over the domination of the land have been evidential and are a never-ending process over the ownership of those areas. The Balkan has never been a place of peace from the beginning of its existence. The era of Achaemenid Empire brought the land of trade routes and cultural development into the realms of battles and bloodshed. On the commandment of the supreme leader Darius I of the empire and checkered brilliance of commander Megabazus, the empire ramped over the region defeating the Scythians near Danube River.² Cut to 1500 years later, the battle does not stop nor is it confining itself to the idea of land being taken over, its existence in itself became a matter of honor for the rulers to come, including the mighty Ottomans. With the downfall of the mighty Turks, the place again became a battlefield for the ones who have sought a legitimacy through which they will be impacting a bigger and a brighter future ahead. The warfare has always surrounded itself with the major impact leaning towards a straight fight between the Bulgarian army and the Serbian Army which in turn led to the establishment of the Second Balkan War which will be discussed later in the paper. Not only has there been a drastic change since then, eight decades into the ceasefire, there was a rise of communal separation of states taking around Serbia in the peninsula with the Muslims shifting gear to form a separate state which came to be known as Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since then, there has been a direct ceasefire between the Balkan states, however, with a never ending desire to take over and formation of their own land holding power over each other. The change in leadership over the period of time was considered a way out to provide a peace and truce amongst the states, however, the co-incidence of the change of leadership hits in with one country's leader idea of disrupting the political legitimacy in the other state has led to a never ending passive aggressive warfare over the land as well as the intervention of the big brother countries into their domestic involvement. The Balkans have always proceeded towards exceeding their potential which is of utmost existential negativity which was processed with the bombing of Belgrade in 1999 going ahead to show that the sovereignty or the power of independence of these nations is taken away by the big brothers of the country.

² Miroslav Ivanov Vasilev. "[The Policy of Darius and Xerxes towards Thrace and Macedonia](#)" ISBN 90-04-28215-7 p 70

History:

The Balkans have held a history which has been discussed and considered of utmost importance due to the reasoning of holding the ideal place for carrying trading activities as well as the diplomatic position of the Scythians of the east as well as for their connection to the western world. With the coming in of the Mesolithic age, the modern-day region of Lepenski-Vir in present day Serbia was of the first human settlement in the Europe near the Danube River back when there was a drastic change required for the process and progress.³

The Starčevian Culture:

One of the first representatives of the Balkans came through the identity and declaration of the Starčevo culture which was a wild-spreading development made into the genes of the South-Eastern European territory with improved skills towards agriculture with better machinery and technological up gradation. Most of the settlement under the culture of Starčevo was inclining more towards the path which was culturally secure and had a great effect in cultivation which was identical to the Mesopotamian civilization. The development of tools and weapons are to be made out of bones of animals which were sharpened for the purpose of securing their territory as well as use for hunting.⁴ One must always remember the importance of the idea which is undermined is the fight for the post of chieftain. It is said that the Starčevo culture, despite its intention to not indulge into the idea of warfare, had a way out to claim and seek legitimacy which holds an important position in the modern-day times to understand the concept of survival of the fittest. The progress made by the cultural changes garnered the attention of the wave which was overshadowed by a bigger settlement under the similar umbrella but somewhat a bigger conscript as well as holding on to remain with the fact that there are no stones unturned nor inflicted upon.

Cucuteni-Trypillia Culture:

The bigger settlement was with-holding two separate divisions that became a cultural diversity with holding to a perspective which shall come into action in near future as well as start off a different era which puts the Balkans on a greater pedestal. With the settlement of the Cucuteni-Trypilla Settlement, there was a drastic change brought in the times which was considered to the last of the Chalcolithic Age and held a huge area of control which extended from the eastern Carpathians moving to the western Dnieper Valley which hold an area of 225,000 sq. km to

³ Government of Serbia, “Lepenski Vir, The Oldest Urban Settlement in Europe”

⁴ Rajković D and Vitezović S, “The Starčevo Culture Horizon at the Site of Kneževi Vinogradi (Eastern Croatia)” (2020) 47 Documenta Praehistorica 156

250,000 sq km, excluding the tempest frost zone and moving towards the ideal weather for the sustainability of the tribesmen living under the helm of the settlement. The traditional culture of pottery which was held between the Cucuteni and Trypillias was more of a symbiotic relationship that holds an important positioning that has to be dealt with the dispute which came in with the drastic shift of the time which lasted for two millennia. The cultural barrier which was on the rise led to the question of dominance between the two sub-cultural groups which led to an increasing competition amongst the commercial location. However, it must be kept in mind that the residential location of the Cucuteni's not surrounded themselves in the fields which were of soil that did not contain much of minerals nor the weather conditions were subsisting enough for the process of farming to be carried out. This resulted in the frequent movement and migration of Cucuteni's to the Trypillian land which had moderately better weather climate (present day Northern Macedonia and Romania). This resulted in the establishment of migration from the Jaded Cold winter lands to the serene, warm and comforting land which slowly tilted towards becoming a sub-continent for the settlers to take control of the land. With the temperature smoothening the conditions to habitat in, the area of Trypillian was also great land for cultivation due to the abundant availability of water, both through the spring borne out of the mountains as well as the trans-boundary rivers which were perennial and were the freshest source of water.

Vinča Culture:

All such circumstances made cultivation a favorable practice and thus, came in the rise of agriculture during the Chalcolithic Age in the region of present day Eastern Europe which also became a center of disputes and fights for the future generations to come and also a pathway to develop a cultural change that was to be furthered and spread through out the whole of present day Asia and Eastern Europe. The evolution took a drastic turn with the coming in of the Vinča culture which held an important position in the field of development of pottery as well as the one of the earliest examples of establishing legitimacy for the copper metallurgy even when the culture does not associate itself with either the Neolithic age nor the bronze age. The era of Vinčian era extended to the entirety of the Balkan Region which commences from the present-day Serbia, extending partly to Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Bosnia, North Macedonia and

Greece which held control almost over the entire region on their own.⁵ Similar to the Cucuteni culture, the Vinčian tribesmen came in through the land of Anatolia which validates the region to be of utmost importance due to its holding over the agricultural productivity as well as the presentable conditions which made the sustenance easier. The quintessential of this culture was to endure the best possible way to improve on the agricultural progress which was laid down by the previous culture that was held under the idea of retaining and providing for a way out which was carved out by the previous cultural eras.⁶ With improved agricultural practices, the members of the Vinčian were able to improve on agriculture, animal husbandry as well as work upon with the improvised tools of weaponry for hunting and forging.⁷ The cultivation process became much more impactful as they introduced the cultivation of the wheat, flax, oats and were readily trading barley to the Proto-Indo-European tribes. The advancement in terms of trade and development that existed in the region was responsible enough to show the potential of the region which could hold such an important portfolio which was not only inscribing as the zone of developing regions as well as holding the best way possible that would succeed in terms of providing a way for the Geo-strategically development of the land. The growth has been dynamic as well as plays an important role in developing the structure of the land which was being prepared, however with the lack of proper structure of the society in which they live in, it turned a topsy-turvy for the tribesmen living under the culture as they degenerated and within a millennium of their sustenance, they brought down the population and they were slowly dying out. The remaining population had to battle out their residence and their land against the powerful and well equipped Proto-Indo-Euro Tribe who ruled over the modern-day Iran and brought their allegiance to action.

Yamnaya Culture: The prodigy of Proto-Indo-European Culture:

A distinctive feature of the Balkan is known to be never left out barren nor its isolation from the inter-continental transitions which existed since time inception of the human civilisation. The distinctive feature of the region was always to retain its position as well as the power being held by the different eras and civilization of people surrounding and gathering the best way out to retain as well as carry on their day-to-day functioning. The importance remains that even in the

⁵ Chapman, John (2000). *Fragmentation in Archaeology: People, Places, and Broken Objects*. London: Routledge. [ISBN 978-0-415-15803-9](#).

⁶ Chapman, John (1981). *The Vinča culture of south-east Europe: Studies in chronology, economy and society* (2 vols). BAR International Series. Vol. 117. Oxford: BAR. [ISBN 0-86054-139-8](#)

⁷ Viničian Culture, 1470.

early days of the human civilization, the Balkan was a known trade spot as well as a tactical region which helped in the carrying out of transactions and trades despite the miniscule quantum which was traded. The opportunity was taken up by one of the strongest forces of tribesmen and herders who developed a cipher which was quantized with bravery and opportunistic vision as well as the potential to hold their land for the longest by winning and through successive and repetitive action of sustenance. The evolutionary changes that have been brought in the region was with the coming in of the Proto-Indo-European tribesmen who were considered of utmost importance in terms of taking over the land along with maintaining the structure which provides for the military development. The Tribesmen have not been given any specific positioning from where they have come from or the source of originating. There have been many opinions from where these men have come from, as they have widely ranged from moving from the Indian Peninsular, as well as locating on the lands of modern-day Iran as well as in Northern Caucuses which held different linguistic areas and settled in various areas around the world.⁸ The Culture was known to be one of the oldest in the world as well as mended their own ways of enduring a right and a legitimate structure to the modern-day understanding of the characters of the various languages spoken around the world. The legacy of the culture held by these men was conked on to the evolutionary Yamnaya Culture who retained their control over Balkans for a long time. Batted with great power and great potential to sustain the harsh weathers, the Yamnaya culture mainly constituted itself of the herders, grazers and fierce warriors who spoke a language which was the amalgamation of the Indo-European culture as well as adopting to the scriptures which match to the present day Latin America.⁹ Constituting under the Eastern Hunters and Gatherers(EHG), the Yamnaya culture held an important position in terms of providing the updated weaponries which helped in them in fighting their enemies as well as contemplated on establishing their own legacy. The advancement in technological placement made the culture hold the staple diet which included meat, vegetables, milk, yogurt and mead which provides for the existence. The development of structures was indeed known as well as the ability of the warriors to hold the idea of craftsmanship. Arriving between 5000-4800 B.C with sweeping powers, the Yamnaya culture was successful in defending its territory against the various short tribesmen that came through

⁸ Russel Gray, (2003). [computational methods from evolutionary biology to track words](#) of the Proto-Indo-European tribes

⁹ Dolukhanov, Pavel M. (1996), *The Early Slavs: Eastern Europe from the Initial Settlement to the Kievan Rus*, New York: Longman, [ISBN 0-582-23627-4](#)

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the mountains of Ural as well as crossed the Sea of Azov.¹⁰ The tactical skills helped the culture to be able to retain their potential which will hold a long-lasting effect as well as provide for an ideal situation to make it clearer for the people to understand as to what attains out as the best way possible that endures the legacy as well as showed the Geo-political status of the region. The three-millennium long existence of the culture ensured drastic development in the region which became a major trading centre as well as a transit through this location which acts as a connector between the modern-day Europe and Asia.

End of the Yamnaya Culture: The rise of Greco-Balkan civilization:

The end of the Yamnaya culture showed a drastic shift in the region which moved towards the rise of the domination of the Greeks taking control of the land. Earlier, the Greeks were inclined towards establishing their legacy around the region but preference was much higher given to the location of Constantinople. However, with the constant fight entangling with the Romans, there was a drastic need for the Greeks to take control over a region that would have a strategic base which will have a long-lasting impact as well as help strategically when it comes down to create a structure that will be systematic as well as holds a quintessential power in terms of establishing an area that will make a better source of retreat.

The coming in of the Illyria regional identification into the Balkan defines the essence and the importance of the holding the control over the land which has been touched upon and lived on in the past. What entices the coming in of various tribes in to Illyria depends quintessentially on two aspects:

- ➔ Geo-Political Strategy
- ➔ Abundancy of resources to avail grains and food along with a sustainable climate of warm and soothing.

There have been several of tribes belonging to the region which have played an important role in developing the modern-day weaponry of Balkan. The tribes are as follows:

I. Albani:

Known mostly through the words of Ptolemy who belonged to the city of Albanopolis in modern-day Albania. They are considered to be the original Albanians of modern-day times.

¹⁰ Reich D, "Mysterious Indo-European Homeland May Have Been in the ..."
<<https://www.science.org/content/article/mysterious-indo-european-homeland-may-have-been-steppes-ukraine-and-russia>> accessed March 31, 2022

II. Amantes:

The tribes' men resided in the modern-day South Western Albania and were considered to be of strength and were involved in arms combat and battalion.

III. Ardiaei:

One of the foremost rulers of the land, the empire traditionally ruled over the land of Illyria and defines itself with utmost essence of war-fights which took place and created an understanding of what constitutes to be an important of what constitutes of the modern-day Albanian War clan as well as putting forth a powerful structure which controlled the entirety of the land of Balkan under the leadership of King Agron the great.¹¹

The idea which retains and creates a special positioning came with the arrival of the Greek rulers in their truest form is the coming in of the Hellenistic culture which gave a global recognition of the Balkan on a global level with which they were able to fight for the legitimacy and it was made clear to the world about the land which holds one of the most important locations which will be impacting them for future purposes. Alexander the Great played an important role for the creation of Garrisons that would act as a protector to the Greek empire.

With the passing of time, the Balkan became a centre of power-holding due to its connectivity throughout the nations and a huge responsibility which is owed towards maintaining a discord amongst the modern-day Western Europe, Asia as well as Mediterranean linkage. By the late 6th century BC, the attention towards the Balkan was caught by the mighty Persians who ruled under the provincial power of the Great Achaemenids who were keen to look out for their ways to enter into the mighty region. With quintessentially holding a great response towards their constant fights with the Greeks, the Persians focussed greatly towards attacking and acquiring the Balkan state which was partly under the control of the Greeks and partly under the ruling of the king of North Macedonia, Amyntas I.

Siege of Pella:

The birth place of Great Alexander, the Greek warrior and an able conqueror of the world, the land sought its power and derived its functioning of the administration from Macedonian empire that held an important position during the early fifth and sixth century BC. With its holding of utmost potential as well as of a military. The most diverse form of military which mostly composed itself of the tribes which included the genes of tribesmen and warriors

¹¹ Šašel Kos, Marjeta (2014). "Agron, Illyrian". The Encyclopedia of Ancient History. Wiley-Blackwell.

belonging to the Genes that were Macedonian, Persian, Thracians, Medes, Greeks, Cissians, Hyrcanus, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Bactrians, Sacae, Arians, Caucasians, Chorasmians, Gandarians, Dadicae, Caspians, Sarange etc. which consisted to be one of the most important and diverse soldiers who held a lot of powers when it came down to affirming the best possible ways which were inherited as well as given powerful impact that consistently came in fighting as well as strategizing tactics. Sorting themselves with utmost power which was sorted into four types that are as follows:

- ➔ Immortals (The elite soldiers of the Nobels and protector of the King)
- ➔ Sparabara(The backbone of the Army)
- ➔ Takabara(Native fighters, used their own weapons)

Despite holding a powerful tool and mechanism which is looked upon to be one of the finest of the arsenal in the ancient Balkan, the leadership turned out to be the dark horse for the region. The Macedonians have been known to be one of the most fearsome warriors who held powerful positioning in terms of dealing with the enemy trying to attack as well as fortified their regions with structures that were difficult to break as well as involved engraved provocations over the period of time has resulted for the region to be in constant dispute during the rule. However, finally there was a change required in the Balkan region which came in with the Great Persian Rule Darius who ruled and dreamt of a long-lasting effect. The ruler of Northern Macedonia under Amyntas surrendered to the Persian mighty ruler, Darius who aimed to conquer the region after providing a structure which intended to take over the Balkan land post acquisition of Greece. The siege of Pella took place in 510 B.C with the allegiance pledged by Amyntas to stay loyal to the Persian empire and provide for the military aids and necessary support in various forms when in need.¹² The Persians intended to go further up to the Danube River wherein they wanted to completely eradicate the Cynthians up the North and make a complete establishment. Megabazus, Darius' trusted General was given the responsibility to take over the Balkan region further down South and taking up strong positions up North wherein they faced fearsome battles from the Russians.¹³ On his watch, the Achaemenids were easily able to take over the modern-day Russia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania and Ukraine. The siege of Pella enabled the Persians to expand their dynasty to an all-time high which covered the present-day Tajikistan on the east to the Balkans in the west which turned out to be a massive area of four

¹² Joseph Roisman, Ian Worthington [A Companion to Ancient Macedonia](#). pp. 342–45. John Wiley & Sons, 2011 [ISBN 1-4443-5163-X](#)

¹³ Roisman, J., 2014: *A Companion to Ancient Macedonia* pp. 245-248. John Wiley & Sons

thousand Kilometres(approx.). The utility of the Macedonian and Paeonian tribe soldiers were quintessential in terms of fighting war with the Greeks under the ruling of Xerxes in Sparta in early 5th century BC. The region was also successful in terms of allowing trades and carrying out important cultural interactions through the region which connected to the great cities of Alexandria

As it has been greatly quoted “Nothing lasts Forever”, the legacy of the Persians were brought into question with the coming in of the Greco-Persian war which held a lasting impact not only on the Kingdom but also for the Region that was willing to set a rebel into motion unchaperoned. The preparation of the Greco-Persian War holds a long-lasting effect on the people living in the region as they had to decide their loyalty and support to the either side as well as understand their ongoing gains which shall impact and provide them with a quantitative action which can benefit them in the longer run.

Greco-Persian War:

The Greeks finally decided to find a way to save their legacy against the mighty Persians before their existence turns into dust and declared one of the long-fought battles which came to be known as the Greco-Persian war. The war commenced with Ionian revolt which sought to formalise the complete eradication of the Persian ruling in the region and to provide a way in to send them back to Asia Minor.¹⁴ The revolt commenced with a fierce battles and rebellion taking place lead by Aristagoras, in association with the leaders of the Ionians along with the king of Cyprus and who were crushed with immediate effect by the Persians and the Macedonian army who provided a strategic power to cut the Ionian troops from three strategic locations including to Lade, Thrace and Lapesus. The rebellion failed mainly because of two reasons:

- ➔ due to lack of strategy
- ➔ lack of coordinated efforts between the parties who were also cut-out by the Balkans.¹⁵

Filled with the fresh wound of betrayal and anger, Darius planned on invading Athens and occupying the Greek territory, however, the Persian army was stopped at Marathon and handed

¹⁴ Herodotus, Godley, A., Herodotus. and Herodotus., 2004. *The Persian wars*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, pp.458-460.

¹⁵ The Tripartite agreement between the rulers of Thrace, Macedonia and Greece.

them a defeat even after outnumbering the Greeks.¹⁶ Darius died before invading Athens properly. The responsibility was now transferred to Xerxes the Great, his son who inclined towards a massive invasion. After ransacking the Balkan region controlled by the Greek, the emperor invaded and attained success by taking over Athens. However, despite the brave fight put up, the invasion was successful for a short period of time as the mighty Greeks decided to fight one last battle on the shores of Corinth and defeated the Persians at the Battle of Salamis, which let Xerxes retreat back to Sardis (Modern-day Turkey). The Greeks finally pushed the Persians out of Greece through the Battle of Platea which further reduced and weakened the strength of the latter which would in turn weaken their position in Balkans. The final blow to the European legitimacy of Achaemenids of Persia took place at Mycale where the Athenians sought to increase their strength in Asia Minor by pushing the Persians further ahead and retreating them into their camps as well as defecting to the Greek side. With the loss at Mycale, the entire Persian Europe came to an abrupt end, and the territory of Northern Macedonia was again freed keeping the land an independent area without any support of great powers on either of its side.

However, the independence did not last for a long period as the smaller interventions have always been noted when it comes to ruling as the ideal Geo-political location of the region always incurred the attraction and greed of the rulers of both the realms i.e native as well as outsiders.

The Era of Dardans:

Amongst the oldest tribes belonging to the Balkan region came in through the Dardans, the Paleo-Balkan tribe who ruled over Albania through chieftains, keeping them solitary and independent of any contact to the nearby surrounding. Dardanians were considered to be one of the distinct Trojans who originated near the Danube River Valley and have Phrygians genes occupying over their physical state. With one of the uniqueness of belonging to the same family genes of the Greek gods, the Dardans were considered to be of the idea which was of ultimate conservatism as well as fighting for their legitimacy which was not to be merged with the Greeks of Athens as they believed in their superiority over them because of the relationship with gods.¹⁷

¹⁶ Battle of Marathon, 490 B.C

¹⁷ Dardans considered themselves to be the nearest source to the Greek god Dardanus, a warrior and the powerful slayer and known for establishing the city of Dardanus on the foot of Mount Ida.

The Dardan chieftain Bardylis who was in consideration to the understanding as well as providing for a way to dominate the local culture as well as believe in such provisions which give in the way for establishment of a domination. The kingdom was formed and it ruled over the area of modern-day Albania, Serbia, parts of Krashnodar as well as Ukraine. The kingdom was considered to be of utmost conservatism which helped them in killing the North Macedonian emperor Perdiccas III. However, the Illyrians were defeated by the Philip II of Macedon and conquered the area up to Lake Ohrid.¹⁸ The Illyrians tribesmen were routed by Alexander the Great in 358 BC wherein the chieftain Cleutis was killed and several of the generals were slaughtered. However, with their impeccable fighting capacity and positioning idea due to the rule over the strategic Balkan, Alexander took the soldiers to conquer the mighty land of Persia.

The Retake by Illyrian Tribe and the emergence of Roman Empire:

After due consideration as well as longer period of action being taken, the Illyrian tribes after five decades related themselves into deeper action by the will of taking back their lost land which they possessed to be “prized and necessity”. The tribesmen recaptured the region in 312 B.C with the capital being established at Scodra. After the annexation and retake of Scodra, the Illyrian had to face the rising Roman Empire who were willing to enter into negotiation to maintain alliance. However, the Illyrians confined to the idea of retaining their own position and diplomacy which in turn drove a way-in for relinquishing their interests. However, the Romans, with their impending interest in developing and creating love and the dream of the Senate to conquer the citadel of Scodra. With the first of the battles initiating on the lines of conquering the land, the Romans, with their strategic development and warfare skills, moved towards initiating the best way possible action as well as entangled their opponents with calculative distractions. The Illyrians, who were known to be of the ideology which retains to the idea of providing for a way out as well as for theft and piracy, moved swiftly but were not able to hold much of a power for themselves which concluded with Romans taking victory and resulted in the desertion of Demritus fleeing the battle field.¹⁹

The second Battle of Illyrian war which was fought between the Romans and Illyrian tribe played an essential role in providing a way for the Romans to be able to take over the Strong

¹⁸ Battle of Ohrid, 358 B.C.

¹⁹ The First Illyrian War, 220-219 B.C

Geo-political Region which was never under their rule. The second battle of Illyria, as one can speak for the importance of balancing the power as well as ensuring a complete occupation of the Balkan region.²⁰ The second battle showed the way for Romans to understand the importance of the Balkans which they believed to a strategically point of view keeping in mind the prized areas that include Alexandria as well as Memphis for their future conquests. The takeover of Romans into the Balkans marked the commencement of one of the greatest period in terms of prosperity as well as holding the ideal place for the citizens of the Rome to bring in the action as well as play their role in development as the key holder and position to create a trade route as well as connecting to the future East-capital Constantinople which plays an important role in the developing the future for the empire as well as for the future political situations around the world.²¹

Golden Age of Balkan:

As mentioned in the beginning, the Balkans held an important position not only transitionally but also Geo-Politically which caught the attention of many but were difficult to be conquered just like the great city of Constantinople, which sought to find their ways that holds a powerful impact when others are trying to move forward with counter-attacks and struggles. The Romans played an important role when it comes to raising important concerns as well as protecting the area under the field. The Romans sought to completely annex the Balkan as well as eradicate the Greek influence which turned out to be a failed idea as the complete eradication of a culture was not possible. Despite constant support being made to the region, the Roman empire again fell to the ground due to the constant internal fights that took place within the empire led towards the falling of territory towards the other coming invaders from the east which included the bigger positioning rulers and tribesmen including Huns, Greuthungs and Thervings. The fights between the tribesmen of the east and west, resulted in weakening of the Romans due to the lack of proper stationing of soldiers and army men. With the end of the Roman empire, the Balkan became potentially weaker and did again became independent with no allegiance and threats and remained volatile for a long time, which include the smaller battles by Therving under Fritigern and Visigaths under Alaric I who ensured the smaller regions under their cognisance.

²⁰ Eckstein, A., 1994. Polybius, Demetrius of Pharus, and the Origins of the Second Illyrian War. *Classical Philology*, 89(1), pp.46-59.

²¹ Cirkovic, S., 1973. Black Appalachia: A Chapter. *Appalachian Heritage*, 1(2), pp.60-64.

The drastic changes that have come in with the fall of the Roman Empire and the drastic change talks about the constant opportunities which come in to action as well as ensuring that there are no boundaries remaining and pertaining to the needs and desires of the region.

The Take-over of the Ottomans:

The Islamic take over in the Middle-East as well as the rise of Ottomans paved the way for many of the Empires and dynasties to reconcile their positions and prevent any action which shall act as a hindrance or might lead to loss of territory. With the Byzantine empire constantly monitoring the movements and intentions of the Ottomans to expand and move towards the west in Eastern and South-eastern Europe. The constant effort to provide for a way that holds power and understanding will captivate and an interesting factor which is considered to be of utmost importance. The first full-fledged battle was by Sultan Orhan Ghazi wherein he captured the city of Bursa wherein he took control of the land and made the capital there.²² The loss of land affected the Byzantine empire severely. The victory of Ottomans in Kosovo in 1389 led to the downfall of the Serbians in the Eastern European culture and the intention to conquer the land of Eastern Europe.²³ The conquest of Ottomans was further enhanced by the conquering of Constantinople by Mehmed II in 1453 which became set the inertia into motion for the Ottomans to completely end the Byzantine and the control of Rome on to the Eastern European regions. The regions were further conquered in the 16th century wherein the Ottomans were able to defeat the Shahs of Iran under Sultan Selim wherein they were able to hold their forte as well as pave the way out for the establishing a secret pact with the people of Balkan region that ensured their prosperity. Under the Ottomans, drastic economic reforms came through which brought a significant change to the livelihood and stability in the residence of the area. Along with the idea of holding such position, the warfare and the battles severely improved in the area. The prosperity under the Ottomans remained for a certain period of time as the continuous disruption commenced in the area of recent Ottomans which came in the early 19th and 20th century when the declaration for independent Balkan came into existence.

The end of Imperialism: The first Balkan War:

The gradual decline in the quality of emperors and their administrative manoeuvring led to serious consequences for the empire which they had to pay heavily in terms of losing out on

²² Siege of Bursa, 1326.

²³ Battle of Kosovo, 1389, Sultan Murad I v/s Vuk Brankovic

territory and the desolation of the treasury. The Ottomans, in a rush to weaken the Russo-Balkan pact, declared a counter invasion on the entire league on the eve of Montenegro's invasion. The idea of fighting against the Balkan league turned out to be the Frankenstein as the arrival of the Bulgarian soldiers that played an important role when it comes to the defending territory. The resulting factor which is seen to be the final blow to the mighty Ottomans and the warriors was the siege of Adrianople. The idea behind the drastic loss came in cognisance with the take over by the Bulgarian army that resulted in heavy losses. The siege which took place in 1913 led to the end of the First Balkan war which goes on to show the importance of the unity which was needed as well as paved the way for independent Balkan region. The Imperialists put an end to their five-century old rule in the areas nearing Thrace which was signed at the Treaty of London.²⁴ Apart from developing the treaty to concede Thrace, the Ottomans were asked to put forward the opinion of neutralising the region. Apart from the Balkans taking note of what remains under Ottoman, with its downfall in 1919, the entire Turkish clan was moving out of the way and the Balkan to provide and finding its way to provide for a free era.

The Second Balkan War:

With the end of the First Balkan War, there was a drastic change that was introduced in the region which led to the end of the Ottoman empire at the Treaty of London. However, with the settlement made in the region was not sufficing the needs of the parties to the Treaty which became evidential with the end of the war. The second Balkan War premised on certain factors which were the promises made in the form of agreement between the parties as well as ensured that there will be peace and neutrality amongst the rulers and the alliance members. The idea essentially failed with the Serbian Army failing to comply with the standards of the agreement which included the departure of the Serbian Army from the Northern Macedonia which was to become a part of the Bulgarian Empire. With the rise of Discontentment within the leadership, the Tsar of Bulgaria invaded the alleged Greek territory which came through the actions as well as provided for the best way which would help them in conquering the land. However, the Serbs in collaboration with the Greeks provided for a way to push the Bulgarians back to the

²⁴ Treaty of London, 30th May 1913.

Pre-war frontiers.²⁵ Meanwhile the Ottomans sought for the way to reclaim Adrianople wherein they attacked with the Macedonians. The double edged sword battle for the Bulgarians made it difficult for them to continue the battle and sought for the way with which they can sue for peace as well as give an ideal situation which will be powerful enough to hold the structure as well as give in for a way with which the Tsar is not harmed and provides immunity for the same by the other countries.

The peace to the Second Balkan came to an end with the Treaty of Bucharest taking place which resorted the positioning of the various countries and their access to the various territories. With Bulgaria being the biggest loser as they surrendered most of the Macedonian land as well as the Serbs getting a big chunk of land for themselves.²⁶ The peace might have been kept for the time being, however it must be noted that the idea behind establishing an affirming peace treaty could only be kept for so long as the bigger battle which led into World War I essentially shifted towards ending the position and drastically bringing a haunting experience for the region which was again a battle field.

The region again became a battlefield for the troops and soldiers to emerge into shadows, this time effectively towards the battle and constant disruption led to no sovereignty possible till the arrival of League of Nation who tried to prevent such further actions.

The impact of World War II on Balkan:

With being one of the instigators of the First one, the Balkan region had been influenced heavily by the impactful and powerful administrative strategy of Hitler who wanted to increase his expandability as well as provide for a way into the area surrounding the Soviet Union. The main intention which Hitler held was to capture those areas which bordered with the Soviet Union, which in turn would successfully create a pressure on Stalin when it came to his attack and invasion of Stalingrad which was due in 1943.²⁷ The states of Romania and Hungary were under thorough pressure to cede the land to Germany as well as the Soviet Union demanded for the best way out which will be impending and provide for a way that will ensure the idea of giving back a battle which, if fought, would be between Hungary and Romania with USSR and

²⁵ Hall, R., 2014. *Balkan Wars 1912-1913 / International Encyclopedia of the First World War (WWI)*. [online] Encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net. Available at: <https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/balkan_wars_1912-1913> [Accessed 11 April 2022].

²⁶ ANDERSON, F. and HERSHEY, A., 1918. *Handbook for the Diplomatic History of Europe, Asia, and Africa, 1870-1914*. By F.M. Anderson and A.S. Hershey. Pp. 482. Washington.

²⁷ Johnson, I., 2017. *The Motherland Calls: The Battle of Stalingrad, 75 Years Later - War on the Rocks*. [online] War on the Rocks. Available at: <<https://warontherocks.com/2017/08/the-motherland-calls-the-battle-of-stalingrad-75-years-later/>>

Third Reich playing a cold war. To avoid any such confrontation, the Arbitral Award was declared by Hitler at the Vienna Award in 1941.²⁸ Greece, being one of the quintessential pain in the Neck for Hitler, turned the war around with the allegiance of British Army to protect the Greek Territory at any cost led to the failure of Hitler on the front of Balkan which turned out to be a Frankenstein as the division of Yugoslavia weakened his position and the battle of Stalingrad turned out to be a battle of fear which they failed with immediate effect and the Axis powers lost the energy to further enunciate and participate in the battle. The re-structure and re-routing of the map of Balkan took place wherein there were no hidden motives or intentions which could not be dealt during the war.

The accession by the various leaders in Europe went ahead to show the importance as to why is there a dire need of the region which placed itself as one of the biggest factor which would connect both the world as well as became a centre of warfare in the 1940s. The Geo-political accession, annexation, diplomacy and tie-ups led wonders to people think about the importance of the region as to how the situation has been in the region for over 6 millennia as well as never held a sovereign powerful position. Given the tactical understanding of the region, being saddled with unfavorable climatic conditions due to constant war, the region became a battlefield than a hub for people to reside and live in. The idea is essentially to provide a way that will ensure peace and stability. The best opinion was putting out the Balkans to a safer and secured leadership under whose shadow, the region could peacefully grow and develop into an ideal area and location.

Balkan after the Second World War:

The dawn of a new era began in the Balkan region as well as in Europe with the coming in of the Second World War which had led to drastic territorial changes in the region. Post World War II, the Balkan fell into the ideology of the Communists which led the independent states merging with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic and came under the same banner which was led by Joseph Stalin for a wider United Russia. The discussions further went ahead to form a wider Balkan league which shall also include the Yugoslavian Republic as well as mending the other countries such as Albania, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia. To the inclusion of Yugoslavia into the Communist Russia, the secretary of the Communist Party of Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin made Marshall Josip Broz Tito the President of the Yugoslavian Republic in 1948

²⁸ Legal.un.org. 1940. [online] Available at: <https://legal.un.org/riaa/cases/vol_XXVIII/407-412.pdf>

wherein he led the state and went in congruence with Moscow.²⁹

However, realizing the potential threat to the position of the Secretary, Moscow decided to expel Yugoslavia from the USSR into an independent republic in 1948 with coming out of the strains between the two leaders.

Under the leadership of Tito, the Yugoslavian republic remained much at peace with the leader constantly monitoring the differences between the communities as well as keeping a check on the external factors that might take action and harm the sovereignty of the land. The leadership of Tito kept the region intact before his death in 1980 which led to the splitting of Yugoslavia. The splitting of Yugoslavia turned bitter with the rise of one particular Serbian Conservationist known to be Slobodan Milosevic.

Post-Yugoslavia- the rise of Milosevic:

The end of Yugoslavia brought in drastic changes within the territory of Balkans as they find a vacuum in the leadership as well as provide for the best way out as well as take cognizance that takes note of the idea as well as the potential threat of outer regions and developments that have taken place in the past. The resentment began with the split of Yugoslavia into six countries that include Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro and Macedonia, with Serbian province which contained Kosovo which is equivalent to 90% of the Ethnic Albanians. The unacceptability of the Albans by the Serbs living in the same area led to the rise of the great political star, Slobodan Milosevic, a staunch conservationist who promised to bring back the glory days of Serbia and clear out any discretion which separated Kosovo from Serbia.

The serious turn of events in 1989 led to violent disruptions taking place in the country. The ratification of the Constitution to bring Kosovo under the Serbian police led to the riots in Kosovo which was consequential to the killing of 20 lives.³⁰ With an iron-fist ruling strategy adopted by Milosevic, in May 1989, he was named as the President of United Serbia which consisted of small other countries.

With the fall of Berlin wall, the collapse of Yugoslavia was consequentially leading down to the slow separation of Slovenia, Croatia and the Muslim-dominated Bosnia and Herzegovina into independent states, which was observed as a problem for the Bosnian Serb.

With the coming in of 1992, the Serbs entered into the Bosnian Land declaring independence as

²⁹ Appointment of Josip Tito as the head of Yugoslavian Republic, Jan 13, 1948.

³⁰ Refugees, U., 2022. Refworld | Chronology for Kosovo Albanians in Yugoslavia. [online] Refworld. Available at: <<https://www.refworld.org/docid/469f38f51e.html>> [Accessed 11 April 2022].

well as the intervention from the Croats resulting a warfare among the three states resulting in the bloodiest war in the region over the past five decades which lasted for a long time killing a huge number of soldiers.

With the coming in of 1993, the Croats and Bosnian ended a 10-month old warfare when they were in allegiance to stop the domination and misuse of power by the Serbs. The Bosnian and Croats were already in conflict over their territory. With the fight constantly continuing for over four more years, the end to the warfare came in through the Bombing of Belgrade by the NATO air force which killed thousands of innocent citizens. The bloodiest war came to an end with an agreement signed amongst the parties which moved forward with the idea of reducing the trouble of the Yugoslavian Republic. By August 1999, Montenegro moved out of its way from the Yugoslavian Republic into an independent state of Montenegrin identity which distinguished itself from the Serbia.³¹

The plight of Balkan over the years:

The idea behind the development of Balkans is a question one really needs to ask, “Why Balkan has to be an area for leaders to prove their legitimacy?”. The answer is simple, the better one gets to pass by, the better it is to trade and control the others. The battles fought in the past to the wars that seal legitimacy, raises a serious question about the existence of the “Hype” to secure the area which not only connects to the west-coast of Adriatic sea near Italy to Black sea in modern-day Ukraine to connecting with the Mediterranean sea for the African world, one can always see the Geo-political strategy the rulers have had, with the best explanation in terms of trade and tariff but also for the Ottomans to fill their treasury by conquering the cities through Balkans.

Similar was used by Hitler in an attempt to surround the Soviet Union and attack the Stalingrad, this goes on to show off the strategic importance of the location. The Yugoslavian Republic under Tito developed the Non-Alignment movement that gave them greater strategic importance and played one of the essential roles in transportation of various substances and products from Africa to Europe and other distanced land.

Even after holding one of the best strategical location, the area has never been able to attain peace nor a very successful economy in comparison to other parts of Europe. In recent studies,

³¹ Bender, K., 2001. Montenegro. [online] The Princeton Encyclopedia of Self-Determination. Available at: <<https://pesd.princeton.edu/node/726>> [Accessed 11 April 2022].

it has been shown that the Balkans have the poorest standard of living in the whole of Europe where, the Albanians have the worst condition to live.³² Initially a rural agriculture based land, the region, whilst entering into constant wars fetched through heavy constraints wherein the land was destroyed as well as there were no other ways to earn. This is despite the fact of the support from the western world which played a significant contribution to improve the condition of the Eastern European countries who were subjected to the Communist rule. Amongst the Eastern European Countries, the region has comparatively gotten a lower standard of living as well as development of modern-day times of warfare and machinery which has been easier for other countries such as Czech Republic and Poland have been able to adopt a better structure which intends to successfully charm the betterment for the people. The people living in Balkan became a part of the Second world countries that did not hold back the undermining of the development as well as the higher rates of unemployment which paves the way for economic cripples and poverty along with the shambled Health Care facility.

Critics have been of the opinion that one must not be spite the region very much as the Western European nations such as England, France, Spain and Germany held several colonies that helped them in earning richer values and high amount of profitability. The critiques have also vocalized about the development of railways and roadways in independent region of Balkan during the 19th century as well as credit the residents to have incorporated the modernization despite the rules and miseries of the past which were especially under control of the Ottoman Empire.³³

The Geo-political scenario is the essence for one to use it, but to misuse and not provide a solution which would further make it a formidable place to live in, the Historic location might come down to the same position where Bamiyan was left out by Taliban.

Way Forward:

Despite all the warfare and strategically battle fought, even if it is coming to the legitimacy and isolation or for any other purpose, the idea is to neutralize the location through the reforms and segregation or recognition of the states which will be understanding and acceptable. The heels of the war and the agony caused by the regular intervention has always been essential for the countries to take hold the accountability. Destruction and development can neither be a symbol

³² Living, C., 2020. Cost of Living in Albania. [online] Numbeo.com. Available at: <https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/country_result.jsp?country=Albania>.

³³ Ocean Rail Logistics system, connecting France and Greece through Balkans.

for transition nor can it be a justification to bring congruence to the beliefs and ideas of nations who have been victims of the injustice of the part. The dire need to introduce an evolutionary change in terms of economic support, acceptance, diversification and making the realization of their identity is originally the aim which was sought by Marshall Tito. However, the breaking down and the actions of the West led to the dramatic destruction of power in the region itself as well as the incompetency to accept such changes that might have a positive impact on their lives. The inability to accept can be justified because of the over-powering negative effects that have been the result of constant push which has not been condemned but condoned.

For one it might be the food and for other it might be the Poison is what is required to be understood and given a better understanding of the situation which exists in the region. The lack of acceptance as one of their owns since the Illyrians has given the status of Serbs living in the region even a weaker approach for them to put out an effort. One must accept and give them the way forward which will be impacting them in all the ways and realization which is motivating towards the Positive re-enforcement.

Conclusion:

The idea of the Balkans knowing to be one of the most efficient location to place their positioning for affirming the world domination can be seen a way for the reasoning of the region to have had a bigger historical warfare compared to the disputes lying in Gaza and West Banks. The idea one must keep is the fact that the area is not confined or meant for the purpose of providing the purpose to the Balkan men. With proliferating skills to imbibe the techniques to combat warfare as well as cultivate, the right move is required to balance out the constraint and concerns that have been highly impactful in terms of giving the quantitative growth to the countries as well as give them a scope to change their horizons and visualize themselves on the pedestal of a developed nation rather than being called out as a “second world country”.

There is a dire need to shift from the modern-day conventional truce pacts and alliances which have been pledged in the past by many but fulfilled by none. The conditions with which each of the member country suffers from needs to be understood, solutions must prevail which will give clarity to their lands and incite the desire to create a coordinating and a cooperative environment amongst themselves. To support, initiate and develop the bon-homie amongst the regions as well as find solutions that will create a self-sufficient interdependency when the time comes.

All such truces, commencing from London to Bucharest to Vienna, none worked and all failed

in the end because of the lack of substantiation and understanding of the conditions prevailing. The municipal law and international law must go hand in hand before any actions can be taken because of the de-recognition of the Treaty signed between Croats and Bosnians who wanted peace but further went ahead and killed of their owns. The idea must not only be meaning to create a formidable space but also ensure the better movement towards improving the human conditions and viable for them to live instead of the dire need to supply ammunitions and war-cry battle which are fought with the ambition to succeed the throne or garner the votes.

The idea must be way beyond the comprehension of one to not spite the wrong doings of the past as well as recognize the importance to bring the social structure back to the same position as that of the peaceful no-mads and cattle herders in the region.

As Geoffrey Chaucer says “It is better late than never”, now it is the time for the people to come together and re-write their own future which needs a perception of the United-Balkan, which they dreamt of not once but twice and utilize their abilities to make their own people understand and initiate the condition which do not need the laws but the support to bring peace. The harbinger cannot be the pedestal unless one takes the initiative to be helped out by the Harbinger. The question is not of the structure of today, but a dream for them to build for tomorrow.

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