

**Michael Dark: Policing and Security: Lessons from UN Involvement in the Balkans**

The United Nations has been involved in peacebuilding in the Balkans since the end of the conflict in Bosnia. My comments are based upon UN efforts at insuring human security post-conflict, particularly through police reform. This has an effect not only on the police themselves but also on the prospects for minority returns to areas dominated by other ethnic groups.

The UN experience of rebuilding police forces indicates that Cyprus will face a difficult task in developing common police institutions. The proposed Joint Investigation Agency will face serious internal cooperation problems, while recruitment at the state level will be limited and come at the expense of existing police forces. The proposed common police force faces a prolonged period of institutional instability. Cooperation between existing police forces takes time to develop and often requires third-party assistance.

The willingness of Cypriots to return to areas in which they will not be the majority is linked to their perceptions of security, particularly as it pertains to policing rather than the military. In the short term, this might not be too much of a problem, as the Balkan experience reveals that minority returns are limited by urbanization and economic opportunities. This might buy Cyprus some time to reorient its police forces and develop the necessary security apparatus to facilitate reintegration.