The “Green Corridor,”
Myth or Reality?
Implications of Islamic Geopolitical Designs in the Balkans

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The Green Transverse or “Green Corridor” (in Serbian/Croatian, Zelena transverzala) is a classic geopolitical concept that has been used in two distinct, albeit interconnected meanings.

The Green Corridor defines the long-term Islamist goal of creating a geographically contiguous chain of Muslim-majority or Muslim-dominated polities extending from Turkey in the southeast to the northwestern-most point of Bosnia (a mere 30 miles from Slovenia, 100 miles from Austria) as a means of attaining wider geostrategic objectives. In a key 2001 report by the Italian security services, it is defined as “the project of Islamic colonization of the Balkans that aims at the gradual establishment of a green corridor to include all regions in which predominantly Muslim ethnic groups prevail.”

It also denotes the ongoing process of increasing ethnoreligious self-assertiveness among major traditionally Muslim communities in the Balkans. This has had a fourfold effect. It has expanded the geographic area of Muslim demographic dominance; it has established or expanded various entities under Muslim political control with actual or potential claim to sovereign statehood; it has enhanced the dominant community’s Islamic character and identity within those entities, with the parallel decrease of presence and power of non-Muslim groups; and it has prompted Muslim ambitions for ever bolder designs in the future, at the risk of conflict with non-Muslim neighbors.
The purpose of this chapter is to give some clarity to this concept. Such clarity is essential to an understanding of the motives, actions, and expectations of different actors in the Yugoslav wars of 1991–99 and their aftermath. It is also necessary the fact that over the past two decades, the policy of the United States has favored, by design or default, the aspirations of various Muslim communities in the Balkans along the geographic line extending from Turkey to Central Europe.

Reality and Ideology

Some Western analysts and media pundits, notably in the English-speaking world, have been a priori dismissive of any suggestion that a long-term geopolitical design exists, let alone that it is being systematically pursued by the Muslims in the region. They have alleged that the Green Corridor was a product of the region’s non-Muslim nationalist paranoia based on “Islamophobic” assumptions. In fact, the most authoritative proponents of the Green Corridor theory in recent years have been institutions and experts—notably British, Italian, and Israeli ones—with no ethnic or personal axe to grind in the Balkan imbroglio.

Political, cultural, religious, and demographic trends among Muslim communities in the Balkans strongly suggest that the Green Corridor is taking shape either deliberately or spontaneously. The reality and the implications of the “Transverse,” as an idea and as an ongoing project, are well understood by an increasing number of experts around the world.

The Bosnian War was still raging when the late Sir Alfred Sherman, one-time advisor to prime ministers David Ben Gurion of Israel and Margaret Thatcher of Britain, warned that the Muslims’ objective was “to create a ‘Green Corridor’ from Bosnia through the Sanjak to Kosovo” that would separate Serbia from Montenegro and facilitate Albanian pressures on Montenegro and Macedonia. Writing in United Kingdom’s The Jewish Chronicle 16 years ago, he warned that the West is “in effect fostering this Islamistan”: “Washington is keen on involving its NATO ally Turkey, which has been moving away from Ataturk’s secularist and Western stance back to a more Ottomanist, pan-Muslim orientation, and is actively helping the Muslim forces.”

Alfred Sherman’s diagnosis proved to be prescient. More than a decade later, it was confirmed by Col. Shaul Shay, an expert on Islam at the BESA (Begin-Sadat) Center at Bar-Ilan University. He notes that “the Balkans serve as a forefront on European soil for Islamic terror organizations, which exploit this area to promote their activities in Western Europe, and other focal points worldwide.” His conclusions regarding the Green