

Article by the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch: "A New Strategy for the Balkans?"

I read with much concern Fareed Zakaria's column advocating the redrawing of borders in the Balkans ("Breathing Room in the Balkans," WORLD VIEW, April 2). It will take much more than "a few new chairs" at the United Nations to establish a lasting peace in that region, and changing borders there would be disastrous-as it was when the Great Powers did so in 1878 and when dictators like Slobodan Milosevic set about creating a "Greater Serbia" in the 1990s. I cannot think of any state in Europe that is-or has ever been-"monoethnic," or why this is desirable. Multiethnicity in a society is a strength, not a weakness, as a dynamic country like the United States so clearly shows. Power should rest with citizens with clearly defined rights, backed by the rule of law. This leads to a stable civil society and is proving successful in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where I am in charge of implementing the Dayton peace accords. It should serve as a model in countries, such as Macedonia, where ethnic tensions are on the rise. The international community's strategy for the Balkans is to bring the countries of the former Yugoslavia into Europe as prosperous and stable partners. Giving in to a bunch of noisy nationalists would bring us right back to square one.