

THE “FUTURE” REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA: UNIFIED OR DIVIDED?

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines on the future of the Republic of Macedonia, assesses its political future, by evaluating the inter-ethnic relations and ethnic Albanian identity in Macedonia, what may be the impact of the Greater Albania concept on her state structure, why Macedonians Albanians has gone into conflict with Slavs Macedonians, what were their grievances and claims, (actually their concerns in Macedonian country), how the conflict was resolved, and what is the importance of Ohrid Framework Agreement for Macedonians, and what could be the alternatives instead of secession and make some recommendations in the context of conclusions.

Keywords: Republic of Macedonia, Balkans Policy, European Union, International Politics, Sovereignty

INTRODUCTION

Communal claims to territory are among the basic threats to peace in the post-Cold War world. The territorial claim can be categorized as either mutually exclusive vis-à-vis the state's perceived right (leading to secession) or accommodatively inclusive (leading to autonomy, power-sharing or decentralization).¹ While ethnic and separatist conflicts are among the most implacable and intense of disputes,² the drive towards ethnic-national self-determination claims

¹ I. William Zartman, (ed.), Preventive Negotiation (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001). In this volume, see the chapter by Anatole Ayissi, Territorial Conflicts: Claiming the Land, pp. 41-65.

²Alexis Heraclides, Ethnicity, Secessionist Conflict and the International Society: Towards Normative Paradigm Shift, Nations & Nationalism, Vol. 3(4), 1997, pp. 493-520.

is one of the greatest challenges facing the International Community (IC) in the '90s.³ For instance, at one of his hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, former United States (US) Secretary of State Warren Christopher asked once; *"If we don't find some way that the different ethnic groups can live together in a country, how many countries will we have? We'll have 5,000 countries rather than the hundred plus we now have."*⁴

In this frame, it is supposed that the key and most urgent question of international affairs, particularly of today, is the following, which should be addressed and identified: *"How can people who feel profoundly different from each other live together without fighting?"*⁵ For that, we shortly need to investigate the power of self-determination. In fact, "self-determination" means that a "people" determines its own "future". The definition and interpretation of the concept of self-determination have both evolved over time. Two important aspects have not changed, however. First, self-determination is a dynamic process, not an end. Second, self-determination has both an internal and an external dimension.⁶

There are two distinct – yet not mutually exclusive – approaches to self-determination each based on a different form of nationalism: the territorial and the ethnic. Territorial self-determination seeks to achieve a particular political status for a defined territory and for all the people who reside it. International law (IL) only recognizes as legitimate certain territorial claims. For a democratic process to operate the "community" needs to be defined a priori and the rights of the minority have to be guaranteed.⁷ Even in a working democracy there is no guarantee against the "tyranny of the majority", a potentially explosive situation if the majority and the minority are ethnically defined. In this sense, ethnic self-determination presupposes identifiable ethnic nations or political communities of individuals who share genealogical origins, often more mythical than real.

However, ethnic approach creates a number of serious problems since the wave of ethnic claims to self-determination challenges the very foundations of the international order and the security

³ Communal groups are "groups whose core members share a distinctive and enduring collective identity". Ted Robert Gurr, *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethno-political Conflicts* (Washington DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 1993), p. 3.

⁴ *New Peace Threat Is An Old Enemy*, International Herald Tribune, 8 February 1993.

⁵ Edward Mortimer, *Peace and Its Pieces*, Financial times, 19 May 2001.

⁶ Michla Pomerance, *Self-determination in Law and Practice* (Boston, MA: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1982), p. 1; Hurst Hannum, *Autonomy, Sovereignty and Self-determination* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), p. 30; Morton H. Halperin and David J. Schaeffer and Patricia L. Small, *Self-determination in the New World Order* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1992), p. 52; Lee Buchheit, *Secession: The Legitimacy of Self-determination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 14-15.

⁷ This is the same critic, which Sir Ivor Jennings leveled against the Wilsonian doctrine of self-determination: "On the surface it seemed reasonable: let the people decide. It was in fact ridiculous, because the people cannot decide until somebody decides who the people are." *The Approach To Self-Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), p. 56.

of the international system. Ethnic-national self-determination, if left unchecked, can be destructive to the international system.⁸ This is absolutely the case for ethnic Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia (Hereinafter, Macedonia).⁹ Before going deep into the roots of their secessionist (!) claims, it is intended to clarify general aspects of interethnic relations and ethnic Albanian identity in Macedonia, including brief introductory remarks about the country.

Before looking at current developments, one ought to recall briefly how security and defence evolved after 1945 in Europe. Initially, in spite of the rather obvious bipolar confrontation between East and West that ran through the centre of the continent, it took Western governments a full decade to forge a lasting defence structure for Europe. The 1948 Brussels Treaty of the Western European Union (WEU), initially perceived as a mutual defence pact against any future repetition of German aggression, provided a political nucleus that helped to convince the United States (US) to launch the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), re-strengthen US military presence in Europe and thus provide protection to its European Allies.

In this context, the multinational military headquarters SHAPE, kept in place after World War II, was transferred from WEU to NATO, from British to American hands. As a complement and symbol of European political control, the post of NATO Secretary-General was (and still is) reserved for Europeans. With West Germany's inclusion in NATO as an equal partner in 1955 after the rejection of the premature and misconceived European Defence Community by France, an arrangement was established that fundamentally remained unchanged until the 1990s, marked by indisputable, beneficial US dominance that provided a stable framework for Europe's process of economic growth and integration.¹⁰

When the Eisenhower administration pulled the carpet from under their British and French Allies in the Suez intervention of 1956, the leading military powers of Europe learned, among other things, that there was no longer any room for their independent military role in a world of US-Soviet antagonism and an Alliance dominated by US leaders, who regarded NATO as vitally important to US interests. Since then, the international use of force has never been an area, where any European NATO country felt it advisable to take initiatives at odds with US interests. This, of course, led not only to a culture of dependency in military affairs but, above all, often to the marginalization of defence aspects in national and, by extension, European foreign and security policy-making.

⁸ The Times, 21 September 1992.

⁹ This is the official name in use in the country itself. However, the international community (except for Turkey: Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.) recognizes it as "former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", which is the temporary name under which the country was admitted into the United Nations on 8 April 1993.

¹⁰ Klaus Becher, "EU Defence Policy: Evolution, Prospects and Implications", December 2001, consulted on Dec., 20, 2016 at <http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/feher5.pdf>.

Since the early 1970s, European integration proceeded slowly, but with remarkable steadiness, from the Werner plan to Economic and Monetary Union and the Euro as common currency and from the Davignon plan to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). In the G-7, a new forum was developed that allowed Europeans to strengthen their international political voice, based on their economic weight. Defence, however, remained entirely outside the scope of this European integration process, and available energies went into securing sufficient influence within NATO.

This line of development culminated in NATO's decisions to set up flexible Combined Joint Task Force command structures and to develop a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) within the Alliance. Franco-German bilateral approaches since the 1980s had helped to conceptualize the possibilities of closer co-operation between Europeans in defence and armaments. Like the attempted revitalization of WEU, however, it never acquired more than marginal operational relevance, mainly because defence establishments remained focused on NATO as the only serious show in town.

As to be expected, the security and defence calculus of European nations has been changing in several dimensions since the end of the Soviet Union (SU). One element was the considerable reduction in force sizes and defence budgets that convinced not just the smaller countries that they could no longer organize and pay for a high-quality, all-round national defence without decisive efforts to pool their resources. This was also reflected in a reorganization of NATO that favored the establishment of new multinational units, in part with US participation, in part just European, like the European Corps (EUROCORPS) and, in the South, European Force (EUROFOR) and European Maritime Force (EUROMARFOR). Rationalization of national defence structures went even further in some cases, as with the Dutch-Belgian integration of navies and air task force.

Since the inception of the campaign toward European unity in the aftermath of World War II, the United States has actively recognized that a united Europe is a stronger Europe and that a strong Europe is fundamentally in the interests of the United States. Since the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952 as the first step toward the present-day EU, the United States has strongly supported the process of European integration, based on the rationale that closer cooperation among former foes would bring stability and economic growth to Europe, greatly reducing the likelihood that the nations of Europe would ever again engage in armed conflict against one another. As Robert Kagan has observed, the EU democracies have realized Kant's "Perpetual Peace" insofar as war among EU members is unthinkable today.¹¹

¹¹ Doug Bereuter and John Lis, "Broadening the Transatlantic Relationship", *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2003-04, 27:1 pp. 147-162, by The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), consulted at <http://www.naa.be/default.asp?shortcut=466>.

Inter-Ethnic Relations and Ethnic Albanian Identity in Macedonia

The history of the two major ethnic groups (Slav Macedonians and Macedonian Albanians) undoubtedly created an elementary level of ethnic tolerance, but there was no real coexistence. These two groups have mostly lived side by side as two separate worlds: the elements that divide them (e.g., different ethnic origins, cultures, traditions, languages, and religions) have been emphasized more strongly than the elements that bring them together.¹²

In the aftermath of World War II (WWII), in the newly created historic context of a world divided into blocks, Yugoslavia has transformed into a socialist federation constituted by six equal nations of Bosnians, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, Montenegrins and several other national minorities (Albanians, Turks, etc.). Nevertheless, when in 1989 Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union began to disintegrate, an urgent need arose to redefine the issue of national security of the nations that constituted these federations. Yugoslavia disintegrated as a result of the extreme nationalism in all Yugoslav nations developing into an ethnic war.¹³ In 1991, independence of Macedonia was declared, and one year later, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia acknowledged Macedonia's secession.

Relations between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians have long been problematic. During the Yugoslav legacy until 1991, in which Macedonia became independent, the relevant historical legacy was not one of "ancient hatreds", but rather the socio-economic structure left over from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, of which the Socialist Republic of Macedonia was a member from 1943 to 1991. In the '80s, Macedonia's then-communist authorities supported and then aped Serbia's crackdown on ethnic Albanians. Since the advent of democracy, repression has eased. Also during this period, despite many human rights abuses, an extensive system of collective rights for minorities was established. In reality, however, discrimination against certain ethnic groups was common practice and ethnic Albanians especially resented not being considered a "constituent people" like the ethnic Macedonians and felt like second class citizens. During the Yugoslav period, the socio-economic, cultural and educational gap between ethnic groups widened and the minority policies pursued were insufficient to curb the demands of the ethnic Albanian community.¹⁴ Protests escalated in the 1980s, also as a side-effect of the demands for more autonomy by ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. In 1989 a new constitution was adopted defining the Socialist Republic of Macedonia as "the national state of the "Macedonian nation" rather than "the state of the Macedonian people and the Albanian and the Turkish minorities" as it had stood before.

¹² Biljana Vankovska, Current Perspectives on Macedonia, Heinrich Böll Foundation, 23 November 2003.

¹³ Mirjana Maleska, Painful Confrontations, New Balkan Politics, Vol. 5, 2003, pp. 3-16.

¹⁴ See the Report on Minority Rights in the Republic of Macedonia, September 1999 by the Macedonian Helsinki Committee (at http://www.riga.lv/minelres/reports/macedonia/macedonia_NGO.htm).

Interethnic relations in Macedonia had already been strained as a result of both old and relatively new (post-1991) problems. It is true that Macedonian society was insufficiently inclusive in social and economic terms. Citizens of Albanian origin did not enjoy a fair share in the state administration and other social services and were thus frustrated by a sense of marginalization.¹⁵

In November 1999, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Istanbul Summit Declaration commended the government of the Macedonia for its commitment to domestic reforms designed to enhance stability and economic prosperity.¹⁶ At the same time, it emphasized the importance of continued attention to the development of interethnic relations. Macedonia represents an apparently successful model of preventive diplomacy and good interethnic relations. Nevertheless, especially as a result of the conflicts in the region, a serious degradation of interethnic relations has occurred over the past decade, mainly between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians. The Kosovo conflict in the first half of 1999 posed a particularly serious threat to the fragile interethnic equilibrium in the country by exacerbating ethnic divisions.¹⁷

Furthermore, there is a certain degree of uncertainty within the general population regarding future prospects for the country due to the lingering belief that the demands of ethnic Albanians are merely steps towards secession or the creation of a “Greater Albania-perceptions”, which are augmented by statements made in the local press. The picture at the end of 2000 was that of a country divided along ethnic lines, with virtual parallel societies for ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians, and a lack of communication and interaction between ordinary people from different ethnic backgrounds. This has resulted in mistrust, misunderstandings and some sort of hatreds leading to interethnic tensions, in particular over language and education issues.¹⁸ It is believed that, what degraded the state was exclusively related to the failing projects of both democratization and multiethnic co-existence, which would, if achieved, eliminate in one degree the deep and long-lasting interethnic hatreds among country’s communities, which seemed to be one of the main reasons of the conflict in Macedonia.

Macedonia is composed of large numbers of different ethnic, religious and linguistic groups (non-ethnic Macedonians represent one third of the population of 2 million) with a strong sense of their distinct identity. Yugoslavia was classified by Barry Buzan as a state lack of a coherent

¹⁵ Vladimir Ortakovski, *Interethnic Relations and Minorities in the Republic of Macedonia*, *Southeast European Politics* 2 (1), 2001 (www.seep.ceu.hu/issue21/ortakovski.pdf).

¹⁶ See the OSCE Istanbul Summit Declaration of November 1999 (Art. 9) at: <http://www.osce.org/docs/english/1990-1999/summits/istadec199e.htm>.

¹⁷ Farimah Daftary, *Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Macedonia (until end 2000)*, European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI), at www.ecmi.de (consulted on 12 October 2016).

¹⁸ Mirjana Najcevska and Violeta Petroska Beska, *Between Political Solutions and Reality: Inter-ethnic Relations in the Republic of Macedonia*, *Helsinki Monitor* 10:3, 1999, pp. 8-14.

national identity, or the presence of contending national identities within the state.¹⁹ Macedonia, which has inherited the same identity problems from former Yugoslavia, is a republic of the former socialist Yugoslavia, governed as Unitary Multiparty Republic, has an area of 25,713 Sq. Km. and a population of 2,083,200, about a quarter of them ethnic Albanians.²⁰ The principle ethnic majority are the Macedonians who account for 66% of the population while 22% are Albanians.²¹ Ethnic Albanians²² mostly live in compact settlements in the western part of the country (forming over 60% of the populations of Tetovo and Gostivar), and also in the capital Skopje, where they constitute 14% of the population. Other ethnic minorities include Turks, Romas, Vlachs and Bulgarians. The Macedonians are mostly Christians of the Orthodox Church (94.8%), while Albanians and Turks are mostly Muslims (98.2%). The official language is Macedonian, although Albanian is also widely spoken. Other minority languages include Turkish and Bulgarian.²³

The Macedonian nationality has always been the most contentious in the Balkans.²⁴ In 1907, King Nicola of Montenegro told the Danish journalist Franz von Jessen: “The Balkans is the small change that the great powers use in their transaction”. It has not become less true since then, with Macedonia as a good example.²⁵ Modern Macedonia dates from the decisions of Tito and Stalin, who decided to set up a Macedonian republic within communist Yugoslavia after 1945, in the interests of Yugoslav communism. Some of the Macedonia’s neighbors felt betrayed by this decision. Bulgaria believed Macedonia was Bulgarian, and Greeks that it was Greek. Greece has never recognized the new republic by its preferred name of the Republic of Macedonia. Macedonia is also the name of a region in Greece. Macedonians believe their little country is involved in a fight for survival, and that the “four wolves” of Greece, Albania, Bulgaria and Serbia – which surround it as its traditional enemies (!) – are always poised to strike.²⁶ In the ‘90s, Macedonians speak a language codified in 1946, spoken by less than two million people, and with a very slender literature. They are members of an Orthodox Church

¹⁹ Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear* (Padstow, Cornwall: Pearson Education Limited, 1991), p. 100.

²⁰ NATO, *EU Misstep Could Throw Macedonia into Civil War*, l’Agence France-Press, 16 March 2001.

²¹ On 1 Dec., Macedonia’s State Statistical Office released the ethnicity results of the 2002 census. Ethnic Albanians now comprise over 25% of the population, compared with 22% in 1994. Slav Macedonians remain the overwhelming majority at just over 64%, with the remainder of the population composed of small numbers of Turks, Romas, Vlachs, Serbs and Bosniaks. The official results of the 2002 Census are available on the website of the Macedonian State Statistical Office, at: <http://www.stat.gov.mk/index1an.html>.

²² For more on the ethnic Albanians, see the entry by Minorities at Risk Project at the University of Maryland, at: <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar/macalban.htm>.

²³ Boris Odbojka, *Macedonia History: Macedonia Timeline of Events*, Virtual Macedonia Forums, 29 July 2003, pp. 1-5; Dimitar Ilievski, *Macedonia: The Wave of the Future*, Pravda, 2 August 2001, p. 3.

²⁴ James Pettifer, *Viewpoint: Macedonian Identity*, BBC News, 4 July 2001; see also, James Pettifer, *The New Macedonian Question*, ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 12-19.

²⁵ Hakan Wiberg, *Macedonia: High Risk That The War Will Continue*, The Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research (TFF), 14 March 2001, p. 1.

²⁶ See Pettifer, 4 July 2001, op. cit. p. 1.

whose authority was established by a socialist political regime in 1968. They are heirs to a 1903 revolution that until the 1940s was described by almost all sources as being Bulgarian. They are descendants from people who were called, and at times called themselves, Serbs or Bulgarians. They have no modern history of independent statehood; the last period that they can claim as boasting a Macedonian regime was in the 11th century.²⁷

It is believed that a question such as “Do the Macedonians know who they are” is, in principle, meaningless, and it is substantial that they know who they don’t want to be, namely, neither Bulgarians nor Serbs, and, least of all, Greeks or Albanians. The decisive thing for this autochthonous option of “the nostrism”, (our-cism), is not only the policy of memories, conducted by the services of the authorities, which strives towards creating a collective identity. It could be said that Macedonians, declare themselves “Macedonians”, if, for no other reason, than at least because they are, first of all, convinced as to the necessity and all-inclusiveness of the ethno-national self-determination; and, second, because the identification “Macedonians” seems to them to be the most attractive option out of all that could have been chosen from 1944 onwards.

In the (in the meantime outdated) Preamble of the first Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, the country was defined as a “national state of the Macedonian nation”, while granting lower status to the other third of the population, “the Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Romani and other minorities”.²⁸ Bearing in mind the modern history of the region around Macedonia, this is actually a completely unhistorical definition, because the movement for autonomy in the Osmanli Macedonia near the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, which the Constitutional Preamble refers to, operated in a multiethnic even supranational regional concept in which the notion “Macedonian” existed as a common term for the Bulgarians, Turks, Vlachs, Jews, Serbs, Albanians, Greeks and others.²⁹

Bulgaria President Zheliu Zhelev said in one of his interviews in 1991 for “Die Züddeutsche Zeitung:” “Bulgaria (it recognizes a Macedonian state, but) does not recognize a Macedonian

²⁷ Keith S. Brown, *Of Meaning and Memories: The National Imagination in Macedonia* (Ph. D. Thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago 1995), pp. 5-6; see also Potoa izleguva u {te edno izdanie pod naslov: *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton, NJ, 2002).

²⁸ Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, 1991. Translation Valentin Stojanovski, Barbara Utevska (Skopje 1992). For changes in the Constitution in 2001 see Ulrich Büchenschütz, *Die Verfassung der Republik Makedonien auf dem Prüfstand*, in: *Südosteuropa* 50 (2001) 134-149, und Ulf Brunnbauer, *Doch ein historischer Kompromiß? Perspektiven und Probleme der Verfassungsreform in Makedonien*, ebd., 346-367.

²⁹ Compare Bernard Lory, *Approches de l’identité macédonienne*, vo: *La République de Macédoine. Nouvelle venue dans le concert européen*, ed. Bernard Lory, Christophe Chiclet (Paris, Montreal, 1998), pp. 13-32; Feroze A. K. Yasamee, *Nationality in the Balkans. The Case of the Macedonians*, vo: *Balkans. A Mirror of the New International Order*, ed. Günay Göksu Özdoğan, Kemâli Saybaşılı (Istanbul, 1995), pp.121-132; Fikret Adanır, *The Macedonians in the Ottoman Empire, 1878-1912*. In: *The Formation of National Elites*, ed. Andreas Kappeler (Aldershot, New York, 1992), pp. 161-191.

nation, because this nation has been artificially made-up by the Komintern for a specific political goal.”³⁰ Nearly two-thirds of Macedonia's two million people are of Slavic descent, Eastern Orthodox Christians, but nearly a quarter of its people are ethnic Albanian Muslims. The rest are Greeks, Turks, and Serbs. Macedonia's surrounding neighbors -- Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Albania -- at one time or another all have had designs on its territory. The Greek claim to Macedonia goes back to the 4th Century BC, when these lands were joined under the rule of Phillip II of Macedon. The Bulgarian claim reverts to the 10th and 13th centuries, when the Bulgarian Empire extended across Macedonia to the Adriatic Sea. The Serbian claim stems from the victory of Serb King Stefan, who overran Macedonia in the 14th century. And the Albanian claim is a result of five centuries of Muslim domination of Macedonia that followed under the Turkish Ottoman Empire.

A Greater Albania or A Fairer Macedonia?

It is assessed that the roots of tensions and conflict in Macedonia lie in the ideology (let's say, dream) of “Greater Albania”. To the politicians of the Balkans - almost without exception corrupt and despised by their own constituencies - the myth of a Greater Albania comes in handy. It keeps the phobic Macedonians, the disdainful Serbs and the poor and crime-ridden Albanians united and submissive within their respective countries, although each group for differing reasons.³¹

During WWII, Albanians throughout the Balkans formed a puppet state of “Greater Albania” under the auspices of Italian fascists, bringing all Albanian-populated areas together. This is remembered by Albanians as a glorious period, while Macedonians (and other non-Albanians in the Balkan Peninsula) associated this period with serious war crimes committed by Albanian (Ballist) armed forces.³² However, it is also worthwhile not to forget the resistance that the Albanians showed against German invasion of the Balkans. Albanians showed a great and successful resistance to Germans over the Balkans with other guerilla and militia warfare.

The Albanian nationalist agenda has been clear for years – at least to those people in the West who are willing to look.³³ The ultimate goal and agenda of Macedonian Albanians is to create an

³⁰ Quoted from Insider, 1991, N. 11, p. 27. for more comments on the ideological, historical and theoretical aspects of Zheliu Zhelev's understandings about Macedonia, see Ethnos V. Todorov, Nation, Nationalism. Aspects of Theory and Practice, (Sofia, 2000), pp 39-46.

³¹ For more information on this issue, see Paulin Cola, The Myth of Greater Albania, (New York: New York University Press, 2003); Sam Vaknin, The Myth of Greater Albania?, Central Europe Review, Vol.1, No. 17, 18 October 1999.

³² Biljana Vankovska, Macedonia After the Kosovo War, TFF Meeting Point, (www.transnational.org), October 1999.

³³ For just a few of the warnings about the KLA and its agenda, see Gary Dempsey, Washington's Kosovo Policy: Consequences and Contradictions, Cato Institute Policy Analysis No. 321, 8 October 1998, pp. 4–7, 11–16; U.S. Senate Republican Policy Committee, The Kosovo Liberation Army: Does Clinton Policy Support Group with

expanded, ethnically pure Albanian state, “Greater Albania”, which includes not only Kosovo and Albania but large portions of the Union of Serbia and Montenegro, Macedonia and Greece. The disorder in Macedonia, which the Macedonians experienced bloodily, was part of a strategy to create a “Greater Albania.”³⁴ Therefore, in this case, the simplest explanation is that Albanian nationalists want to establish a greater Albania state and are taking fairly direct measures to accomplish that goal.

The collapse of the Yugoslav empire divided this space into two main Albanian-populated areas –the Kosovo province and Macedonia.³⁵ But Albanians could never reconcile themselves with this reality, and in spite of the efforts by Belgrade and Skopje, have succeeded in preserving close-ties between Albanian communities in this space. The Kosovo province became a real center of gravitation for all Albanian communities after the demise of Yugoslavia. Sometimes nationalist forces in neighboring Albania showed their propensity to expand the struggle in Kosovo to encompass all Albanian minorities living in the Balkan countries.³⁶ Actually, concerns stem from that Kosovo's secession might reinforce the Macedonian Albanians' demand for autonomy which would destroy the Macedonian state and trigger the chain reaction in the Southern Balkans involving all regional states.³⁷ It would be wrong to reduce the problem experienced in Macedonia to that of a Greater Albania. The establishment of a broad Albanian secessionist movement can become a catalyst for demands of other ethnic minorities in neighboring states as well as for latent inter-state disputes.³⁸

The Macedonians are a small nation. There are ethnic Albanians everywhere in Macedonia, but mostly in its western part, which borders on Kosovo. The Albanians in Macedonia are economically better off than their brethren in Albania and in Kosovo, but relatively. However, they are a minority and, inevitably, suffer discrimination (especially in the job market and in education). Unemployment and discrimination, especially among the well-educated, breed resentment. Resentment in the Balkans breeds virulent nationalism and guns, not necessarily in this order. Macedonian Albanians ostensibly insist on waving the flag of a neighboring country

Terror, Drug Ties? From ‘Terrorists’ to ‘Partners,’ 31 March 1999, www.senate.gov/rpc; Chris Hedges, Kosovo’s Next Masters?, *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 3 (May–June 1999): 24–42; Michael Radu, Stabilizing Borders in the Balkans: The Costs and Consequences of a Greater Albania, in “NATO’s Empty Victory: A Postmortem on the Balkan War”, ed. (Washington: Cato Institute, 2000), pp. 123–32.

³⁴ Ted Galen Carpenter, Waist Deep in the Balkans and Sinking, Cato Institute Policy Analysis No. 397, 30 April 2001.

³⁵ Nadia Alexandrova Arbatova, Macedonia and European Security, Center for European Policy Studies (CEPS) European Security Forum, Brussels, 28 May 2001, p. 2.

³⁶ The Balkans Survey, *The Economist*, 14 January 1998, p. 5; Steven Erlanger, The Balkans: A One-Time Ally Becomes the Problem, *New York Times*, 25 March 2001.

³⁷ Stavros Lygeros, Greater Albania Still Troubles the Balkans, *Macedonian Heritage*, 5 February 2001.

³⁸ Werner Weidenfeld, Potential Conflicts in the Southern Balkans, in “A New Ostpolitik - Strategies for a United Europe”, ed. (Gütersloh: 1997), pp. 51-53.

(Albania) rather than their own on official occasions. That most of them entertain the dream of a “Greater Albania” does nothing to assuage Macedonian fears.³⁹

At the beginning of the ‘90s, the present Albanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Pascal Milo, in a text published in the Skopje magazine “Balkan Forum”, wrote that Kosovo's independence, a confederation, federation or autonomy of the ethnic Albanians in Macedonia and settlement of the banished Albanian's property issues in Camarija/Greece, have been the priorities in the Albanian foreign policy. The most extreme manifestation of this national strategy of the Albanians from Macedonia was the declaration of “Republic Ilirida”, immediately after the proclamation of the Macedonian Constitution of 1991. Even though some of the creators of the “Republic Ilirida” nowadays state that it was not secessionism, but a territorial and political autonomy, the fact remains that in the context of disintegration of the Yugoslav federation, this step by the Macedonian Albanians was on a certain road towards creating an ethnic conflict.⁴⁰

Macedonians mostly believe that the ethnic Albanians are simply trying to repeat the Kosovar success in other parts of Serbia (Presevo) and in Western Macedonia. Support of Kosovar-Albanian secession heightens the danger for Macedonian territorial integrity, as Macedonian's substantial Albanian minority may be incited to take up arms for the creation of a Greater Albania.⁴¹ Though Albanians are keen to perpetuate a myth of a Greater Albania, it is believed that reality doesn't support much such a concept.

However, nowadays, this Great-Albanian viewpoint is still popular, maybe not in Albania (Albanian authorities has recently and officially declared once again that they are in favor of territorial integrity of Macedonia.), but in Macedonia. For instance, the research of the American State Department conducted in May 2002 showed that 48% of the ethnic Albanians see their future in “Great Albania”, while the support for the ethnically mixed Macedonia for one year increased from 71% to 39%.⁴² In September 2003, the situation in Macedonia deteriorated again. The Front for Albanian National Unification, under whose cover the illegal Albanian National Army (ANA) is operating, has announced emergency mobilization of its units. Albanians say they were forced to do this because the Macedonian government refused to react to the ANA ultimatum on the withdrawal of all security forces from Kumanovo. But the question is: Could the Macedonian government react differently to such an ultimatum? Agreement to honor the

³⁹ Sam Vaknin, No Albanian Intifada!, Central Europe Review, Vol. 3, No. 12, 26 March 2001, pp. 24-31.

⁴⁰ In an interview for Aktuel from 8 June 2001, one of the participants in the establishment of "Republic Ilirida", Mirhad Emini, declared that the request for territorial and political autonomy of the Albanians from Macedonia was not a request for secession of the Albanians, but a request for equality and their improved inclusion in the state system.

⁴¹ Theodore G. Karakostas, Greek-Macedonian Relations, USA Today, 29 April 1999, p. 13.

⁴² “Albanians Do Not Want to Separate from Macedonia”, Macedonian Information and Liaison Service News Supplement, Skopje, 15/16 June 2002.

demand would have amounted to withdrawal of national jurisdiction from a part of the country's territory. In Macedonia, the ANA, now called the Front for Albanian National Unification, kept its weapons and its fighters, after a brief respite, resumed their actions by presenting the aforementioned ultimatum to the Macedonian government. If Albanian extremism will be continued to be nurtured and allowed the creation of a two-subject Macedonian state, the outcome of regional developments will be easily predictable. In a few years Macedonian Albania will announce secession from Macedonia and, joining forces with the Kosovo, Greek and Montenegrin Albanians, attempt to create a new state. In fact, it is an old plan of creating "Greater Albania", which clearly poses serious threat to the Balkans. Recently, in October 2003, the independent Member of Parliament Xhezair Shaqiri has again expressed his strong support to the idea leading to the federalization of the country and of "Greater Albania". Popular sentiments like those of Mr. Shaqiri will continue to promote a separation of Macedonia along ethnic lines.

Grievances and Claims of Macedonian Albanians

In the late '80s, it was becoming apparent that a purely individualistic approach to human rights was insufficient to respond to the demands of ethnic minorities and other groups for greater recognition of and protection for their culture and, in many cases, greater political authority over their own affairs. However, neither international human rights law nor the then-contemporary understanding of "self-determination" addressed these issues; human rights could be asserted only by individuals, and self-determination in the form of independence was available only to colonial territories. Nonetheless, bringing together the strands of human rights, attempts have been made to promote the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples, and movements to foster fuller participation in both economic and political development activities.⁴³

It is considered that the strongest catalyst, and perhaps the most important one, for self-determination are the fears and insecurities – not only the opportunities – created by the collapse of multiethnic states. Many ethnic groups feel insecure at the prospect of belonging to new states with new dominant ethnic groups. They therefore claim or assert their alleged right to self-determination as a defence mechanism against the nationalist policies of aspiring state-builders.⁴⁴ Albanians in the Macedonia are peoples, who have claimed self-determination as a defence against a new and feared status quo.

There are ills, which provide fertile ground for claims to ethnic self-determination: violations of the human rights of the individuals belonging to an ethnic group, economic discrimination against an ethnic group, political marginalization of an ethnic group, cultural oppression, bad

⁴³ Hurst Hannum, *Territorial Autonomy: Permanent Solution or Step Toward Secession?*, Center For Development Research (ZEF Bonn): Facing Ethnic Conflicts, 14-16 December 2000, p. 1.

⁴⁴ Monty G. Marshall, *States at Risk: Ethno-politics in the Multinational States of Eastern Europe*, in Gurr, "Minorities at Risk", pp. 180-83.

government and absence of democracy.⁴⁵ Besides, it is also important to notice that self-determination appears firmly entrenched in the corpus of IL, inter alia, as a requirement that all racial groups be given full access to government.⁴⁶

In 1991, the adopted Constitution of independent Macedonia has reflected the real distribution of the social force. The Assembly, constituting many Parties, voted that Macedonia represents a national (unitary) state of the Macedonian people, (where equal rights are extended to citizens of other nationalities). Ethnic Albanians were particularly unhappy with this formulation and would prefer a civic definition of the Macedonian people. While it insists that Albanians, Turks, and others are equal citizens, the use of an ethnic Macedonian identity to define the state of Macedonia is discriminatory towards them and serves only to antagonize them.⁴⁷ Naturally, ethnic Albanians did not agree that Macedonia is a country of “one people”.⁴⁸ Instead, they wanted it to be a country of “all its citizens”.⁴⁹ The Macedonian Orthodox Church gained the status of a national church and the Macedonian language was declared to be the only official language that is used on the whole territory of the state. The Constitution guaranteed to minorities the right to obligatory primary and secondary education in their mother tongue and the official use of their languages in the municipalities where they represented the majority, together with some other rights (regarding the development of their identity, culture etc.). Mechanisms existed to promote the participation of non-ethnic Macedonians in education, public employment, the police and other spheres. Despite these measures, they were under-represented.

⁴⁵ For more information on “just-cause theory” and “choice theory” and others, see Bruno Coppieters and Richard Sakwa, (Eds.) *Contextualizing Secession: Normative Studies in Comparative Perspective* (Oxford:Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 1-21

⁴⁶ Antonio Cassese, *International Law*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 106.

⁴⁷ Kamal S. Shehadi, *Ethnic Self-Determination and the Break-up of States*, *Adephi Paper No:283*, December 1993, pp. 68-69.

⁴⁸ See *Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia*, (Skopje: Napredok, 1991), p. 1.

⁴⁹ Azis Polozhani, the Vice President of the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP), a coalition member in the unity government in Macedonia in Fall 2001, says, “I appreciate their sacrifice for Albanian rights. The demands of the rebels are the same issues we have been bringing to the Macedonian Parliament for 10 years, and nothing happened until they took up arms.” He believes the National Liberation Army (NLA) would end its insurgency if four main demands are met: first, for Albanian to become an official state language in schools, Parliament, and other state institutions; second, a publicly funded Albanian-language university; and third, proportional employment in the public sector for ethnic-Albanians, who comprise 1/4 of Macedonia's 2 million inhabitants but hold only 4 percent of the state jobs. The rebels' most contentious demand is a constitutional change that would make Albanians a “founding nation” of the state, along with Macedonian Slavs. Polozhani rejects the idea of secession, and not even the NLA has called for autonomy or independence, unlike the rebel Kosovo Liberation Army, which fought Yugoslav security forces during the Kosovo crisis two years ago. This information was consulted on 11 October 2016 at <http://www.alb-net.com/pipermail/amcc-news/2001-May/000017.html>.

The 2000 World Report by the US based Human Rights Watch also drew attention to continued under-representation of non-ethnic Macedonians.⁵⁰

According to many Macedonians, such regulations should not be underestimated since they contributed a lot to the emancipation of the minorities in Macedonia.⁵¹ However, for instance, the 1991 Constitution provided for a Council for Inter-Ethnic Relations. Its role was to consider issues related to interethnic relations and to submit ideas and suggestions for their resolution. However, it has been mostly criticized for under-representing the Albanian minority and for not having the power to influence government policy. The process of legislative reform has been slow and the Constitutional Court has had to intervene on many occasions to bring laws in conformity with the Macedonian Constitution. By then, most basic laws have been put into place and create the basis for the respect and promotion of human rights. However, there were still many technical and financial difficulties in implementing these rights.

The newly-independent country inherited the ethnic problems of the Yugoslav era, and did not make enough to sweep them away via 1991 Constitution. Anyway, it was in the field of education that the separation among the different ethnic communities was most visible: ethnic Albanian children attended separate classes in their mother tongue at the pre-, elementary and high school level.⁵² Even in ethnically mixed schools, there was not much contact between students with different mother tongues as they attended separate classes under the same roof; the same situation generally applied to teachers. Students found themselves in an atmosphere of negative stereotypes and ethnic prejudices which could not be discarded on the basis of personal experience with members of the “other” ethnic community.⁵³ The question of higher education in the minority language has also been one of the main sources of dispute between the ethnic Albanian community and the Macedonian government and also a major source of interethnic tensions amongst the general population. The government has tried to give ethnic Albanian students more opportunities to enter university through a quota system, which did not work well.

⁵⁰ For more information on the 2000 report and subsequent years' reports, visit the web page at <http://docsmgmt.hrw.org/macedonia-pubs.php>. (consulted on 4 November 2016).

⁵¹ In the text “The Albanians in Macedonia live in the best conditions in the whole of the Balkans” published in *Utrinski Vesnik* on 31 March-1 April 2001, the journalist G. Duvnjak gives more indicators for this. The participation of the Albanian population in administration has an increasing trend. In 1993 there were 3% of ethnic Albanians in the administration, while this number has presently reached almost 10%. Two of the seven members of the Republic's Judiciary Council are Albanian. There were 26 Albanian mayors from 123 municipality centers elected at the last local elections and the number of municipality councils in which a majority is represented by councilors from the Albanian parties is very large.

⁵² In May 2000, for example, thousands of parents and teachers protested in Bitola at government plans to provide an Albanian language class at a local secondary school claiming that this would prompt Albanians from neighboring areas to attend the school thereby undermining its “Macedonian identity”; in the end, the government withdrew its plans.

⁵³ See V. Petroska Beska, M. Popovski and N. Kenig-Bogdanovska, *Ethnic Stereotypes Among Future Pre-School and Primary School Teachers* (Skopje: Ethnic Conflict Resolution Project, 1998).

Ethnic Albanians have long demanded as well that the State provide higher education in Albanian language.⁵⁴

Calls to make Albanian an official language on the same level as Macedonian-based on the view that ethnic Albanians should be granted the same status as ethnic Macedonians-have been rejected for 10 years. It can also be said that, in practice, the use of minority languages in communication with administrative and legal authorities was restricted. Several other language-related items remained unresolved, for example the right to use a minority language in courts, as well as a new set of internal rules for parliament, which would enable minority representatives to use their mother tongue in parliamentary proceedings.⁵⁵

The media in Southeast Europe has also played a major role in propagating ethnic conflict and war in the region. Although the Macedonian media did not deliberately exacerbate ethnic tensions, it greatly reinforced ethnic divisions. Another problem was the lack of professionalism as well as the absence of truly independent print media as political forces attempted to assert their influence. Most of the programming on national television was in Macedonian, but there were some programmes in five other languages.⁵⁶

In this frame, it can be said that many issues remained open and unanswered adequately between 1991-2001; and the social problems, which have shaken Macedonia during this ten years and the inefficacy and corruption⁵⁷ of the state, have contributed toward the social revolt taking an ethnic form.⁵⁸ Ethnic Albanians have long complained of less-than-equal treatment compared the Slav majority. The ethnic Albanian community has been dissatisfied with its status for 10 years. They

⁵⁴ The extent of the financial commitment of the Macedonian government was unclear (although, in current situation, the Ohrid Framework Agreement of 13 August 2001 opened the way for state support.). There is a lack of international standards as to whether there is an obligation on behalf of the state to fund higher education in the minority language.

⁵⁵ Diana Johnstone, Albanians in Macedonia: Facts and Fictions, National Albanian American Council (NAAC) Fact Sheet, 30 May 2001.

⁵⁶ There are two hours of state television programmes per day in Albanian, one hour in Turkish, as well as 13 minutes weekly in Vlach, Serbian and Romany each. On Macedonian state radio there are 570 minutes daily in Albanian, 270 minutes in Turkish, and two hours in Vlach and Romany; there is also a programme for listeners abroad in Albanian, Bulgarian and Greek.

⁵⁷ International Crisis Group, Macedonia's Public Secret: How Corruption Drags the Country Down?, 14 August 2002 (www.crisisweb.org/projects/showreport.cfm?reportid=739).

⁵⁸ Mahi Nesimi, the leader of PDP, states in an interview for *Aktuel* from 18 May 2001, that "The Macedonians are still incapable of abandoning the past, and even the present practice of corruption and taking bribes from the Albanians, for releasing personal identification documents, for issuing a passport, a birth certificate, even a death certificate, for registering a newly born, issuing a driving license, enrolment in university and in high school, for surgeries and many other things...".

did not vote for the 1991 Constitution. They said, “we are not satisfied, we are outvoted, we feel like second-class citizens.”⁵⁹

Some claims that, in the process of building the Macedonia as an independent State, a number of errors were made through the institutionalization of exclusively nationalist definitions that eliminate and marginalize “the other”, such as; in the 1991 Constitution of Macedonia, the essential interests of the Albanians were not reflected.⁶⁰ The Macedonia was a classic example of distorted democracy at work, in which mechanisms of power favored the primary Macedonian people and penalized the secondary Albanian population, who nevertheless made up one-fourth of the country. During the following years, together with the other political parties of ethnic Albanians appearing on the Macedonian political scene later (for example, Arben Xhaferi's Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) that entered the government after the elections in 1998), the representatives of ethnic Albanians stressed continuously the need to grant a bigger status to the Albanians in the country, asking for their equal status with the Macedonian people and all the rights of “power-sharing” that arise from such a status.

The issue of the status of Kosovo became another important source of instability. The crisis between Serbia and Kosovo had a direct impact on unrestness of Macedonian Albanians. The Albanian insurgency in Macedonia was an exact carbon copy of that waged in Kosovo.⁶¹ Interethnic relations in the young state of Macedonia have long been problematic, and thus poor. Macedonia and its entire population, irrespective of their ethnic origins, stood to be among the greatest long-term losers of Kosovo conflict.⁶² During the Kosovo crisis in 1999, the parties of ethnic Macedonians unfortunately ignored the growing Albanian nationalism. Thus, some requests that could have been reasonably answered by the government, such as for example the high education in Albanian language, were cast aside with the explanation that it was a problem that should be dealt with by the police. This attitude undoubtedly instigated Albanian radicalism in the country and the consequences were felt soon after. As a consequence of these unlucky approaches of ethnic Macedonian authorities, it can surely be said that it proved bitterly and bloodily that peace could not be built with ethnocentric and hegemonic projects.⁶³

Furthermore, the economic exhaustion of the country after a series of wars and sanctions in the last years was another “structural source” of instability transforming the enormous social

⁵⁹ Mirce Tomovski, Political and Security Crisis in Macedonia, Puls Weekly Magazine (New Balkan Politics), An interview with Mirjana Maleska, 14 September 2001, p. 3.

⁶⁰ Arben Xhaferi, Challenges to Democracy in Multiethnic States, (edited by Shirley Cloyes, Balkan Affairs Adviser, Albanian American Civic League (AACL), October 1998, p. 2. (available at www.aacl.com/challenges_to_democracy.htm)

⁶¹ John Laughland, Macedonian Turnabout: Divide et Impera, ANTIWAR Magazine, 23 March 2001 (Originally published in “The Spectator”).

⁶² International Crisis Group, The Albanian Question in Macedonia, 11 August 1998.

⁶³ Cited in Xhaferi, op. cit. p. 4.

discontent into an ethnic conflict. Judging from the first statements of members of the NLA,⁶⁴ they were recruited primarily from the army of young, unemployed people, in whom social revolt takes the form of extreme nationalism.⁶⁵ Even before the conflict, there were more than 300,000 unemployed persons in Macedonia, mostly ethnic Albanians, and approximately 59% of employees had not received their salaries for several months. The number of impoverished and socially endangered people in ethnic Albanian society was therefore constantly increasing. These economic hardships, inter alia, mainly affected ethnic Albanians, since they were employed mostly in private sector or in small agricultural units.⁶⁶ Endemic criminality, corruption and poor economic conditions including human trafficking were essentially the main problems of Macedonian society,⁶⁷ and unfortunately they still are. In slightly more than a decade Macedonia has become a banana republic, where only crime and corruption could flourish.⁶⁸

At the end of February 2001, three soldiers from the Macedonian army were killed in the border village of Tanusevci near Kosovo. This event marked the beginning of the classic inter-ethnic conflict model, and the coalition government of the Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski as well as the Parliament condemned the “armed groups of extremists” and asked for foreign military help. It should be noted that at this moment the Albanian political leaders in the coalition, who, even before the crisis, wanted, which was promised by the Macedonian leaders, but not established, that the Albanians expected the status of a constituent nation, Albanian to be granted the status of an official language and higher education in the Albanian language, demonstrated a high degree of loyalty. In this context was the statement that, if necessary, the territorial integrity of Macedonia would be defended.⁶⁹ It is highly valuable to reiterate that the NLA, the so-called ethnic Albanians rebellions who fought against Macedonian security forces, always claimed to

⁶⁴ The NLA and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) have the same abbreviation in Albanian: UÇK (which stands for Ushtria Çlirimtare Kombëtare in the first case, and Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës in the second).

⁶⁵ On one of his visits to Tetovo during the crisis, Max Van Der Stoel, the EU High Commissioner on Minority Rights, declared that there were many students from the unofficial Tetovo University among the members of the NLA. Mirhad Emini, in an interview for *Aktuel* from 8 June 2001, stated apropos the crisis: “I see primarily elements for social revolt, these young people up in the hills are unemployed, with no perspectives, disappointed...” In his interview for *Aktuel* from 18 March 2001, the Secretary of the Party of Albanians, PDP, Mahi Nesimi writes: “...the armed conflict between the Albanians and the Macedonian authorities is a reflection of decades of accumulated discontent of the Albanians with their general position. It is a reflection of discontent, a discontent that surges from the bottom of the heart, from the bottom of the soul. This discontent is general, all-national...”

⁶⁶ Edward P. Joseph, *Making A Real Peace in Macedonia*, International Crisis Group, 30 August 2001.

⁶⁷ Robert Hislope, *The Calm Before the Storm?: The Influence of Cross-border Networks, Corruption and Contraband on Macedonian Stability and Regional Security*, Paper presented at the 2001 Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association (APSA), San Francisco, 30 August-2 September 2001.

⁶⁸ US Institute of Peace, *The Future of Macedonia: A Balkan Survivor Now Needs Reform*, US Institute of Peace, Washington D.C., Special Report, 30 March 2001.

⁶⁹ At the session of the Macedonian Assembly on 18 March the Declaration condemning the “armed groups of extremists” was passed. This condemnation was supported not only by the DPA of Arben Xhaferi, but also by the opposition Albanian party PDP of Imer Imeri.

be fighting for the improvement of the rights of the ethnic Albanians in Macedonia.⁷⁰ They always called for a new Macedonian Constitution, better rights for Albanians, and international mediation, and insisted that Macedonians and Albanians are equal national groups in the same state.⁷¹ It is believed that NLA never wanted a bi-national state in Macedonia. What the NLA really meant was that the Macedonians nationalists in Skopje politics should accept the modern concept of a multicultural and pluralistic state, including all minorities.

The Skopje government had already been criticized by Brussels and Washington for its inability to deal with the crisis. Probably the IC was right, because the government ignored the years-long grievances and claims of the Macedonians Albanians. Because, Skopje government believed that any measure could have jeopardized the unitary character and the identity of ethnic Macedonians.⁷² The crisis diminished when the IC committed itself to implement the Framework Agreement and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) committed itself to collect the NLA arms handed over voluntarily. At the press conference during his visit to Skopje at the beginning of the crisis,⁷³ Dr. Solana requested once more that negotiations between legitimate political representatives of the Macedonian and Albanian political parties be started as soon as possible, and promised economic and political support to Macedonia for reforms that would take the country closer to European Union (EU) membership.

As for the consequences of the conflict, we can say that the Albanians had succeeded in their goal of internationalizing the conflict and bringing international representatives to Macedonia, the IC became part of the solution, and more importantly, the Macedonians had lost the initiative for in the last 10 years the government had been unwilling to hold discussions about constitutional changes.

Ohrid Framework Agreement and Its Implementation: Last Best Hope for Bridging the Gulf

The factors stimulating territorial claims – security, identity and prosperity – are not mutually exclusive; typically, they overlap one another. Territorial claims can be described as “claims to preserve identity”.⁷⁴ In the absence of a single ethnicity or language, territory itself can be the

⁷⁰ Best possible proof of this claim is comprised in the Military Communiqué No: 6 issued on 20 March 2001 by NLA Tetovo Branch fighting for greater rights in Macedonia. For the said Communiqué, which sets out NLA’s political aims in Macedonia, see *We Don’t Seek Killings and War...*, The Guardian, Special Report: Macedonia, 21 March 2001; see also Tom Walker, *NATO Troops Caught in a Balkan Ulster*, The Sunday Times, 18 March 2001.

⁷¹ Paul Wood, *The Rebels’ Agenda*, British Broadcasting Company (BBC) News, 11 March 2001.

⁷² According to *Aktuel* from 8 June 2001, Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski declared: “I fear that in less than a month the Macedonians will start thinking that any measure was not such a bad idea”.

⁷³ “*Utrinski Vesnik*” comments that this was the fifth meeting of Dr. Solana with the Macedonian politicians in just ten days (Tuesday, 27 March 2001).

⁷⁴ UNPREDEP (United Nations (UN) Preventive Deployment Force) and Open Society Institute – Macedonia, 1996. “*Inter-Ethnicity: Turning Walls into Bridges*”, Skopje, Macedonia: Open Society Institute.

source of identity when dissimilar groups voluntarily choose to live territorially separate within the same sovereign state or, for secessioned claims, in a new different sovereignty.⁷⁵ In this frame, one of the most important aspects of violence prevention involves negotiating constitutional arrangements that give the communal group guarantees that its identity; security and prosperity will be fully and equally assured within a plural state.

Ohrid is the setting for the signing of Macedonia's sometimes-threatened ceasefire in 2001.⁷⁶ The Ohrid Framework Agreement (hereinafter, the Ohrid FWA), signed on 13 August 2001 by the leaders of the four biggest Macedonian parties, mainly sought to promote a civic conception of the state, while at the same time reinforcing the formal power-sharing system which had existed between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians.⁷⁷ It was signed after eight months of armed clashes between the forces of the central government and the local armed groups of the ethnic Albanians (the so-called NLA), with the mediation of the western countries demonstrating their ability to intervene decisively.

The document set several basic principles: the use of violence for the achievement of political goals was completely and unconditionally rejected; the sovereignty, territorial integrity and the unity of Macedonia were guaranteed; the multiethnic character of the state was to reflect in the public life and institutions; the development of a decentralized government; the development of local self-government in accordance with the European Declaration for local self-government; equal participation of the national communities in public administration; the right to veto for minorities in affairs regarding cultural and linguistic interests, but the right to veto even when the law of local self-government and municipality borders was in procedure, etc. The package of discreetly-formulated 15 constitutional amendments were contained in Annex-A of the FWA – for the official use of the Albanian language, for giving more rights to the Albanian minority, for nominating Albanians in the state and municipality services and facilitating their equitable representation in the public services of legislation, in the juridical system and in the police and military. In addition to the constitutional changes, a whole series of new laws also needed to be adopted. (Annex-B) Finally, Annex-C dealt with confidence-building measures, including the hiring and training of 1,000 ethnic Albanians in the local police, to facilitate implementation of

⁷⁵ Asbjorn Eide, *New Approaches to Minority Protection*, Geneva: Minority Rights Group International, Report 93/4, 1993.

⁷⁶ Macedonia On The Tightrope, Radio Netherlands Wereldroep, 4 September 2003, at www.rnw.nl/hotspots.

⁷⁷ "Given the increasing emphasis on democratic governance as a fundamental human right, ethnic group claims for self-determination should ideally be accommodated in a democratic framework within existing states ... Power sharing. Defined as practices and institutions that result in broad based governing coalitions generally inclusive of all major ethnic groups in society, can reconcile principles of self-determination and democracy in ethnic multiethnic states, principles that are often perceived to be at odds." This notion is expressed in Timothy D. Sisk's *Power Sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflicts*, US Institute of Peace Press, 1996, p. vii.

the Framework Agreement and also called for international assistance of various kinds in the implementation phase.⁷⁸

Ohrid was a framework document for constitutional and legal changes in Macedonia. Under it, the Macedonian authorities made major concessions to ethnic Albanians.⁷⁹ As a consequence of Ohrid FWA, on 16 October, 2001, the Macedonian Parliament accepted the new Constitution of the country, which envisaged greater rights for the Albanian minority. According to the amended Preamble and the 15 constitutional amendments, the Macedonian language remains official in the Republic, whereas in the regions where over 20% of the population is Albanian, the Albanian language also becomes official – parallel with the Macedonian. Guarantees are given for greater participation of Albanians in the state administration and the police, and for proportional participation of the ethnic communities in the governmental bodies and public administration. Mechanisms are created for blocking decisions in the Parliament and in the municipal organs concerning legal projects in the area of culture. This satisfied Albanian politicians, who insisted on having a say in security matters of the country through the institutions. Finally, the changed text of the Preamble of the Constitution is: “the citizens of Macedonia, the Macedonian nation, as well as the citizens who live within the borders of the state, and who are part of the Albanian nation, Turkish nation, Vlach nation, Serbian nation, Roma nation and others, have equal rights”.⁸⁰ With the FWA, the concept of Macedonia as a nation-state (national state of the Macedonian people) has been greatly abandoned.⁸¹

Currently, the Albanians students attend several secondary schools across Skopje, united in ethnically homogeneous classes with Albanian as a language of instruction. The European Commission helped with five million euros to the re-establishment of an officially recognized, Albanian-language university in Tetovo. In October 2002, President Trajkovski appointed two Albanians Parliamentarians in the National Security Council (NSC), based on his presidential authority to appoint three Council members. It was one of the best proofs of Macedonia’s successful post-conflict recovery attempt.

It is believed that the IC gave the perfect message via Ohrid FWA that Macedonia’s borders are inviolable and this agreement is indeed a foundation for a civic society, not a precursor to partition. The Ohrid FWA is somewhat a proof of the “maturity of Macedonian political parties”.

⁷⁸ For the full text of the Framework Agreement, visit the web page of the President of the Republic of Macedonia, available at <http://www.president.gov.mk/eng/info/dogovor.htm>.

⁷⁹ Valery Asriyan, Commentary: The Situation in Macedonia is Deteriorating, RIA Novosti, 2 September 2003.

⁸⁰ Vrbani Todorov, The Conflict in Macedonia – Hypotheses for Development (Part 2), The Watson Institute for International Studies, 21 May 2003, available at <http://www.watsoninstitute.org/clang/Todorov.pdf>.

⁸¹ The Framework Agreement was signed by the leaders of the two biggest political parties of the Macedonians and the two political parties of the Albanians in Macedonia: Ljubco Georgievski (VMRO-DPMNE: the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation-Democratic Party for Macedonian Unity), Branko Crvenkovski (SDSM: Social Democrat Alliance of Macedonia), Arben Xhaferi (DPA) and Imer Imeri (PDP).

My remarks echo those of the Dr. Solana, who praised the four leaders of the political parties in June 2001. Dr. Solana stated that Macedonian citizens should be proud and trustful of their leaders, who would find a way out of the crisis.⁸²

As Arendt Lijphart, a political philosopher at Yale University, has argued, consensual decision-making offers the only chance for the survival of multiethnic social formations. Anything else will lead to confrontation, polarization, ethnic despotism and, in the end, the disintegration of the State.⁸³ Consociationalists argue that even if there are deep communal differences, overarching integrative elite cooperation and joint problem solving in post election coalitions is a necessary and sufficient condition to assuage conflict. In this way Lijphart suggests that consociation relies on four basic principles: a broad based “grand” coalition executive, minority veto, proportionality in the allocation of public funds and civil service positions, and group autonomy.⁸⁴ It is interesting to notice that all of these items have been imported by the Ohrid FWA.

In conclusion, it can be said that implementation of the Ohrid FWA is progressing, however, there will continue to be periods of instability focused around the perception of concessions granted to the ethnic-minority community at the expense of the ethnic-majority.

Proposing Alternatives to Secession

Unless one accepts the principle of self-determination as an absolute right and grants it to every group claiming to represent a “self”, that is a nation, regardless of its attitude towards democratic values,⁸⁵ from a normative view-point the Macedonian’s Albanians claim for secession should be rejected. We would strongly advocate, as political leadership of Macedonia does, a common and unitary state as well as peaceful coexistence between the ethnic groups in Macedonia.

Despite Albanian protestations to the contrary, demands for equal rights are still understood in Macedonia as steps in the direction of territorial autonomy and, in the end, secession. It seems to ethnic Macedonians, particularly in light of the Kosovo precedent, that their country’s territorial integrity is at stake. However, to date, the NATO Allies have been unanimous in condemning what they view as ethnic Albanian extremism in Macedonia. None of them wants to encourage further changes in the national boundaries of Macedonia.⁸⁶ Therefore, we believe that, if

⁸² Ulrich Schneckener, *Die EU Als Krisenmanager: Der Testfall Mazedonien* [The EU as Crisis Manager: The Test case of Macedonia], *Internationale Politik* 56, 2001, p. 43.

⁸³ Arendt Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 114-118.

⁸⁴ Cited in Lijphart, *op. cit.* p. 25.

⁸⁵ Bruno Coppeters and Richard Sakwa, (Eds.) *Contextualizing Secession: Normative Studies in Comparative Perspective* (Oxford:Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 39.

⁸⁶ Joanne Mariner, *Macedonian’s Albanian Question*, FindLaw’s Writ Legal Commentary, Columns by Joanne Mariner, p. 2, 31 May 2001 (available at <http://writ.news.findlaw.com/mariner/20010531.html>).

Albanian extremism would be nurtured and the creation of a federative Macedonian state would be allowed, in that case it will lead to secession eventually.

As mentioned at the very beginning of “Introduction”, power-sharing after civil-wars seems to me the best possible way of matching the problems to solutions. But not in the way of Consociational democracy. It is the most popular form of power-sharing between different communal groups.⁸⁷ Consociational democracy and ethnic power-sharing are often coupled with a regime of communal autonomy.⁸⁸ Though Consociational democracy has serious drawbacks, it remains a reasonable constitutional architecture which allows people who feel profoundly different to live together. Of course, Consociational democracy includes autonomous, federal or confederal units as territorial arrangements. The Albanians in Macedonia are demanding certain forms of local autonomy. Their demands have so far not been met by their respective governments because of fear of encouraging secession in border areas. We do not advocate any sort of local autonomy, which would easily prevent security sector reform and the return of internally displaced people, mostly ethnic Macedonians. We also strongly dismiss federalism as an option to resolve the conflict between Skopje and the ethnic Albanians of Macedonia. We believe that federalism leads to partition of Macedonia. As known, many federal states like the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia broke up. Confederal arrangements are also out of my agenda due to similar above-mentioned reasons. For me, the territorial integrity of Macedonia is utmost important.

The solution to most ethnic conflicts over self-determination can be sought in new constitutional arrangements. Reconciling conflicting claims to self-determination can be done by redesigning the political system within which communal groups live and interact. “Constitutional engineering” is a safer, better alternative to redrawing international boundaries and ethnic cleansing.⁸⁹ The requirements for reconciling conflicting claims to self-determination area democratic form of government, respect for human rights and plurism and a civic – as opposed to ethnic – definition of national identity.

Authoritarian rule, by definition, denies popular participation in government and the people are deprived of the exercise of internal self-determination. It usually rests on the solidarity of small elite which belongs to one communal group. Other groups are discriminated against politically, sometimes also economically. Democracy is a necessary requirement for the exercise of self-

⁸⁷ Cited in Lijphart, op. cit. pp. 21-99; see also Arendt Lijphart, Majority Rule Versus Consociationalism in Deeply Divided Societies, Politikon, December 1977, pp. 113-126.

⁸⁸ Uri Ra’anan, Maria Mesner, Keith Armes and Kate Martin, State and Nation in Multi-ethnic Society (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991). In that volume, see the chapter by Theodor Hanf, Reducing Conflict Through Cultural Autonomy: Karl Renner’s Contribution, pp. 32-52.

⁸⁹ Donald Horowitz, Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992); see also the excellent volume, Joseph V. Montville, (ed.), Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990).

determination by communal groups. However, it is not a sufficient requirement since even democratic regimes can create conflicts when the rights of the ethnic minority(ies) are threatened by majority rule. Macedonia had a working parliamentary system but that has not satisfied ethnic Albanians. In addition to democracy, human rights and pluralism, the resolution of an ethnic conflict requires a constitutional structure which defines the national identity of the state and creates a political system which reconciles conflicting claims to self-determination. When forging a national identity, ethnic identity is very dangerous, (while the civic one is the right one). Even a liberal constitution such as the Macedonian one falls into this trap.

One of the strategic orientations of Macedonia as a state and of its citizens is the integration in the family of European nations, where she belongs both geographically and from a civilizing point of view. As a result of the democratic processes in the state and of its contribution to the stability and peace in the region, Macedonia has done its first step to a full integration in the EU and in Euro Atlantic structures, by signing the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU on April 6, 2001.⁹⁰ It is also important to recognize the messages of the EU Special Representatives. In 2002, Alain Le Roy, the Special Representative of the EU at that time, stated that the EU will not accept any ethnical division, which is not according to the European standards.⁹¹

It is proposed not many alternatives to secession, but only two tasks for Macedonia to pursue: Firstly, to become a democratic, secular and social state governed by the rule of law, bearing in mind the concepts of public peace, national solidarity and justice; secondly, to implement the Ohrid FWA fully, without different reading.

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the Macedonian debate certainly gives an additional admonition against a generic right to self-determination. It highlights how the definition of those “selves”, i.e. nations, is already problematic in itself.

Current IL on self-determination is blind to the demands of ethnic groups and national, religious, cultural, or linguistic minorities. Not only does IL refrain from granting any right of internal or external self-determination to these groups, but it also fails to provide any alternative remedy of a general character to the present plight of so many of them. Clearly, political stability and the territorial integrity of States are important values that States do not accept being disregarded. To them, indiscriminately granting the right to self-determination to all ethnic groups would pose a

⁹⁰ This information has been consulted on 22 November 2016 at www.president.gov.mk/eng/makedonija.htm. It is an official web page of the President of the Macedonia. For ambitions of Macedonia for EU membership, see web page <http://eu.president.gov.mk>.

⁹¹ EU Does Not Accept Ethnical Division of Macedonia, Macedonian Information and Liaison Service News Skopje, 17 April 2002.

serious threat to peace and bring about the fragmentation of States into a myriad of entities unable to survive. It should not come as a surprise that it is precisely those States that benefited from the principle of self-determination when they liberated themselves from colonial or dictatorial rule, which are now among the staunchest supporters of a strict interpretation of self-determination. It would seem that most member States of the world community have heeded the warning issued as clearly as 1952 by a leading champion of human rights, Eleanor Roosevelt, who, speaking as a US delegate, stated that: “Just as the concept of individual human liberty carried to its logical extreme would mean anarchy, so the principle of self-determination given unrestricted application could result in chaos”.

However, though careful thought should be given to a framework of exceptional secession in some cases of ethnically based federation and, in particular, in instances of sizeable groups that suffer discrimination and repression, in Macedonia case, we do not ever support any secession. If a state is not prepared to accept a more diversified image of itself and provide for effective participation (voice) when confronted by the reality of a sizeable politicized minority, then it has to come to terms with partition (exit), for after all forced integration or unity (forced loyalty) is a contradiction in terms.⁹² We believe that, by the pressure of IC, Macedonia has been made to get prepared. If not, a final civil war was on the way to divide the country. The IC made Macedonian Authorities to understand those relevant facts. It can be asserted with great certainty that had Macedonian government taken into consideration the requests of the ethnic Albanians for the last ten years, Macedonia would not have been on the verge of a civil war.

The Ohrid FWA on paper is not enough. A true mutual recognition is necessary for the communities to live together, despite differences that confront or separate them. Actions must follow the words. This is the difficulty. War has deepened the mistrust and disbelief between Macedonians and Albanians. The first steps towards taking “action” are burdensome, unpleasant and hard, with lot of doubts and obstructions. There is lack of good will, but there is no other way, apart from the misery toward which every military conflict leads. One of the possible consequences of this “political earthquake” is the strengthening of national self-sentiment in ethnic Albanians, and the reaction in Macedonians of the need to strengthen their own national identity. This shall not be painless.

Macedonia case is somewhat interesting and different in itself. Macedonia is a “Partnership for Peace” (PfP) country, which is the member of European Atlantic Partnership Co-operation (EAPC) programme of NATO. It is in the Membership Action Programme (MAP) process as well. It is my conviction that, following the adoption of the Ohrid Agreement, Macedonia had finally returned to the path of genuine democracy. The constitutional arrangements and the Ohrid Agreement is not enough. It is time that Macedonians should pass from a Constitution to bread

⁹² Cited in Heraclides, op. cit., p. 516.

and butter. Children cannot be fed with Constitutions and Framework Agreements. The country still leads the list of countries with the highest rates of unemployment (around 40%).⁹³ Macedonians should understand that they have a real internal enemy, which is poor economy, not Albanians; but also an external friend, not an enemy, which are the Euro-Atlantic structures. And for the IC, it should force Macedonian citizens to believe, via concrete actions and supports, that they will soon be rewarded with full inclusion in the family of democratic European nations. The remarks in the Joint Conclusions of 1st Foreign Ministers' Meeting as EU-Western Balkans Forum in Brussels on 9 December 2003 highlight the truth that the future of the Western Balkans is within the European Union. The EU's shared ambition is for the countries of the Western Balkans, which are still not members of the EU, to follow the successful path towards ultimate membership.⁹⁴ Seen from a European perspective, there is no doubt that, one day, all Balkan states will become EU members. There is one road to the European Union and all countries in the region have directed themselves towards it. However, the criteria that the EU poses are political and economical. The continuing economic stagnation and resultant lack of employment opportunities will likely result in an atmosphere of competition for scarce resources between ethnic leaders, rather than cooperation towards common long-term goals.

The distribution of jobs, power, and resources was understandably viewed as ethnically motivated. These factors breed resentment and the potential for direct violence as a response to structural violence (i.e., violence embedded in an unjust state system). It appears that impoverished and maltreated citizens, regardless of their ethnic affiliation, had solid grounds for social unrest. The distrust between the ethnic groups provided room for ethnic manipulation and an ethnic response to social injustice. Living in separate worlds, Macedonians and Albanians are still unable to see that the real causes of their misfortunes have little to do with their ethnic differences. Therefore, it is strongly claimed that Macedonia's future should be to get integrated as soon as possible into the Euro-Atlantic structures. We believe that the Ohrid FWA will, if implemented properly by the Macedonian authorities, facilitate the utmost appropriate adoption of Western standards and, ultimately, incorporation of Macedonia into Western institutions. Macedonia should catch this integration at a timely manner, without hesitation. The "Euphoria" should be permitted to fade under the pressure of old and increasingly urgent problems. In an economically weak state incapable of providing normal living conditions, democracy and citizenry are the important aspects hard to win. Even though the responsibility for Macedonia's future lies basically in Macedonia herself, more responsibilities lie in the hands of the IC in order to facilitate, first of all, a secure Europe. In this sense, it is claimed that the EU and NATO

⁹³ International Labour Office (ILO), World Unemployment Rates 2001/02, Employment Office or Labour Force Sample Survey Unemployment Statistics, ILO, Geneva. (www.ilo.org).

⁹⁴ EU-Western Balkans Forum, 1st Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Brussels, 9 December 2003, para. 2 at <http://ue.eu.int>, No 15904/03 (Presse 363).

should take the lead roles for the IC in drawing Macedonia into both European and transatlantic political, security and economic institutions.

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