

**THE MACEDONIAN CRISIS**  
**AND**  
**BALKAN SECURITY**

**ESF WORKING PAPER No. 2**  
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**WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY**

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**FOREWORD BY**

**FRANÇOIS HEISBOURG**

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**WORKING PAPER No. 2**  
**OF THE**  
**CEPS-IISS EUROPEAN SECURITY FORUM**

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## FOREWORD

FRANÇOIS HEISBOURG \*

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On May 28th, the second meeting of the CEPS/IISS European Security Forum turned its attention to the Kosovar/Albanian insurgency and Balkan security. In other words, the current Macedonian crisis was at the heart of the discussion which greatly benefited from three well focused papers, speaking from clearly distinct geopolitical perspectives.

Thus, Nicholas Whyte suggested tongue-in-check that this time, Europe's hour had finally struck, that Europe's broad-spectrum systemic approach gave the EU pride of place in dealing with the Balkans. For the short run, he mentioned the risk of Kosovar guerrilla activity against KFOR, if the latter's presence were seen as the main obstacle to independence – an 'Irgun scenario', as it was dubbed by the chairman.

Dana Allin's American viewpoint emphasised the exemplary quality of US-European cooperation vis-à-vis the Macedonian crisis, while emphasising the need to discuss the insertion of a NATO force in that country.

Nadia Alexandrova Arbatova's presentation contained an element of Russian *Schadenfreude* at the spectacle of NATO being hoisted with its Kosovar petard in Macedonia. She suggested inter alia extending KFOR's mandate into Macedonia. She also considered that the need to exclude the prospect of independence for Kosovo was the basis of stability in the region. This was hotly disputed in a discussion enriched by the substantive participation of analysts and representatives from Macedonia and Albania. A number of salient points can be drawn from the proceedings.

First, there was little support for a direct, and forceful foreign military intervention. From a Macedonian perspective, the insertion of a NATO force (whether new, or as a UN-authorized extension of KFOR) would have substantial drawbacks: as in Bosnia and in Kosovo, it could lead to, or entrench, territorial partition; and by establishing a *de facto* protectorate, it would produce the same political, economic and social distortions as in other parts of the former Yugoslavia. In other words, everything should be done by the EU, NATO and by the international community more generally to help Macedonia deal with the crisis. Naturally,

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\* Chairman of the Geneva Centre for Security Studies and Chairman of the European Security Forum.

such assistance has to be accompanied by the sort of political initiatives and military conduct that would help avoid further alienation of the Albanian-speaking population. This ‘finding’ against forceful foreign intervention – at least as long as there is a prospect for an internal solution – was possibly the most important result of the meeting. Nevertheless, the case against the insertion of foreign troops in Macedonia should not be overstated. After all, a UN Peacekeeping Force – including US forces – successfully played a crisis prevention role in Macedonia for close to ten years. Trouble from the UCK began only after these forces had left Macedonia as a result of China's refusal to review the Security Council's mandate, subsequent to Macedonia's recognition of Taiwan in 1999.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, the role of transnational crime in the current situation was underlined, given the close interests that exist between local or regional mafias (which incidentally bridge inter-ethnic gaps when it is in their "bizness" interest to do so) and the failing states in which they operate.

International cooperation against money laundering was key in fighting these phenomena. But it is no less necessary for law-and-order to be more fully implemented locally at least in Kosovo, even if this could run against the ‘force protection’ imperative. Indeed, while it is well understood that KFOR could hardly control the roughest stretches of the border between Kosovo and Macedonia, it is more difficult to explain why mafia infrastructure and UCK arms depots in Kosovo weren't being more systematically dismantled. It was time to give the lie to the joke: "Welcome to Kosovo: your Mercedes is waiting for you!" In this respect, it was noted that criminal groups prosper in so-called ‘gray zones’ of indeterminate legal status and uncertain political provenance, of which Kosovo is a vivid example.

Thirdly, the point was made that the international community in general and NATO in particular needed to ponder the proposition that it may have become part of the problem rather than part of the solution. In a sense, we ‘invited’ the UCK to destabilise Macedonia by stating that independence for Kosovo had to be avoided since it would provoke the destabilisation of Macedonia; not surprisingly, the UCK has been doing its utmost to destabilise Macedonia, thus voiding the syllogism of its logic.

The discussion was not conclusive on this issue of Kosovo's ‘final status’. As one participant emphasised, the international community may have displayed an excessive attachment to the status quo: independence is habitually rejected for Kosovo in the name of Chechen or Basque

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<sup>1</sup> Macedonia's recognition of Beijing in June 2001 may help re-establish a UN-based option.

precedents – but then, why do we assume that this has to be the case (other than as a self-fulfilling prophecy)? Here mention was made of Slovakia, a country that had no constitutional right to secession nor any prior internationally accepted record of independence – yet Slovakia's independence has not been contested; nor did it create a precedent.

It was noted that democratic Serbia may well be moving away from the traditional claim on Kosovo (why would Belgrade want to lay claim on two million disaffected Kosovars?), eventually opening the way to independence. *En attendant*, it was suggested that the international community should establish formal guidelines when setting up protectorates such as Bosnia, Kosovo or East Timor, possibly reviving the UN's Trusteeship Council.

Finally, the view was widely expressed that the US would most probably not quit the Balkans in the near future. A unilateral US departure could prompt a European departure, thus leading to a particularly unwelcome implementation of the principle 'in together, out together'.

It was also noted that, however destabilising the Albanian guerrilla operations may be in Macedonia, this was not a movement that was supported by the Albanian state. Indeed, the UCK's demand for Greater Albania is distinctive in that it does not enjoy the backing of the country in whose name it is being voiced. This makes for a situation that is intrinsically different from that one that characterised the 'Greater Serbia' of Milosevic, which deliberately undermined the neighbouring countries where significant numbers of Serbs lived.

July 2001  
Geneva

## L'HEURE DE L'EUROPE – ENFIN ARRIVÉE?

NICHOLAS WHYTE

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For most of the last ten years, Europeans have been embarrassed by Jacques Poos' rash promise of 1991; during the conflicts in Bosnia and Croatia from 1991 to 1995, the phrase seemed only to sum up the ineffectiveness and the pomposity of the European Union's pretensions to be an actor of importance in its own backyard. The Dayton Agreement of 1995 was achieved only when Richard Holbrooke threatened to pull the US out of the process and 'leave it to the Europeans'. Terrified by this awful prospect (at least, according to Holbrooke's version), the warring parties agreed to the deal.

From the latest Macedonia crisis, however, it is apparent that *'l'heure de l'Europe'*, at least in the south-eastern part of the continent, actually has arrived. Rather than pompous and ineffective statements from the Council of Ministers, Europe is now sending in Javier Solana, a figure with almost the authority of an American Secretary of State. Furthermore, Europe provides a credible prospect for future coexistence with and between the Balkan states. The latest confusion surrounding the activities of Robert Frowick may indicate that the time for personal missions brokering deals between tribal leaders may be over, and that the more systemic approach of European integration has become the dominant paradigm for a successful approach to the problems of the region. This paper examines why and how this has come about.

This year's fighting in Macedonia has both indigenous and external causes. Internally, the problems of building a viable state have been huge. The costs of the economic transition for Macedonia will include a massive slimming down of the public service, and the privatisation of formerly state-owned factories. As a result of the legacy of past discrimination, this will mean that many ethnic Macedonians will lose their jobs. The ethnic Macedonians resent the apparent relative prosperity of their ethnic Albanian neighbours, fuelled by what is called the 'informal economy', and apparently not very vigorously taxed (though of course tax evasion is endemic on all sides).

Ethnic Albanians feel that historical forces have yet again incorporated them into a state against their will, where they cannot use their own language for official purposes, where the security forces are dedicated not to keeping the peace but to keeping them down, and where the existence of a few token ministers and ambassadors from their community has done little to address the underlying problems of the 'national state of the Macedonian people' (as it is

described in the Preamble to the Constitution). Ten years of playing by the democratic rules have brought little reward.

The external situation has been shaped by the protracted disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. Macedonia's historical experience of constitutional change since 1878 has been entirely imposed by outside forces. In particular, the present continuing uncertainty over the status of Kosovo has encouraged wishful thinking by militants who remember the days – not very long ago – when the ethnic Albanian population in Western Macedonia, and also in the Presevo Valley in southern Serbia formed a single social and economic space with Kosovo. In their view the fact that UN Security Council Resolution 1244 extends only to the territory of the former autonomous Yugoslav province of Kosovo is an unfortunate mistake, which should be corrected. It is surely no coincidence that the outbreak of violence in Macedonia at the end of February came the day after the border between Kosovo and Macedonia had been fixed (after negotiations which did not involve anyone from Kosovo), and that the village of Tanusevac, where it all began, is literally divided in two by the frontier.

To this, we add the perception on both sides that the international community recognised Slovenian and Croatian independence in 1991 after they began to fight the Serbs; that the Bosnian Croats and Serbs defended themselves against the threat of a Muslim state in Bosnia by fighting a war; and that the Albanians in Kosovo gained the support of the international community only through fighting a guerrilla war, after years of ineffective passive and pacifist opposition. We may respond that the diplomatic recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, and for that matter Bosnia and Macedonia, was the result not of violence but of the recommendations of the Badinter Commission coupled with the collapse of the institutions of the Yugoslav state; we may point out that any political gains made by Bosnian Serbs and Croats came at a truly horrible cost; we may point out that the Western intervention in Kosovo came about only after the Milosevic regime adopted genocide as a state policy; but it is still very difficult to construct an argument that violence is counterproductive.

Of course, that should not stop us from trying. And the record of the last few months is in fact rather encouraging. The insurgency in the Presevo valley has now been resolved, partly through the external mediation of NATO and the European Union – Javier Solana appointed a Personal Representative to be the EU's 'point man' on the ground, the first time this post has ever existed – and partly because there was genuine good will from both the government of Serbia (in the person of Nebojsa Covic) and from moderate Albanian politicians, who actually consented to the return of Yugoslav troops to the 'buffer zone' along the Kosovo border.

Likewise, it seems that both sides in Macedonia are groping towards a similar accommodation. All the major political parties of both main ethnic groups are now included in the government; unlike any of the factions in previous Balkan conflicts, the Macedonian army has not engaged in wholesale slaughter of civilians; violence from ethnic Macedonians in the cities directed against their Albanian neighbours has been very localised (though none the less regrettable); and ethnic Albanians in the cities have remained remarkably quiet – almost all of the actual fighting has been in villages in the mountainous Kosovo border.

However there is still potential for disaster. Last week's news of an agreement brokered by Robert Frowick, an American diplomat with much Balkan experience on secondment to the OSCE, which tied the 'National Liberation Army' to the political agenda of the ethnic Albanian political parties, produced chaos in the Macedonian government. Ethnic Macedonian leaders are terrified of being seen by their constituents as having surrendered to terrorism, and the perceived effect of the 'Frowick agreement' was to tie the ethnic Albanian negotiating agenda to the threat of violence.

This must have come as an unwelcome surprise to Frowick, who presumably thought he had managed to get the NLA to agree to a ceasefire on terms that were identical to what was on offer anyway. The text of the Frowick agreement is annexed to this paper; the substantive proposals are ambitious but would be perfectly acceptable in a peacetime situation. (The whole affair is reminiscent of the 1994-97 period in Ireland, when John Hume of the moderate SDLP used to present John Major with the latest text which would be acceptable to the IRA in order to bring peace, and Major would then reject it on the grounds that he was not going to cave in to terrorist demands.)

This diplomatic row is probably resolvable. More serious is the possibility that the intensified military activities of the Macedonian army might result in extensive civilian casualties among ethnic Albanians, which certainly would inflame the situation; or, as Saso Ordanoski has warned, that extremists among the ethnic Macedonians, whose faith in their political leaders is already low, take the law into their own hands and begin a campaign of sectarian violence. Equally serious is the likelihood that the grand coalition government, once it has got over the Frowick affair, fails to deliver on any sort of reform agenda. This is where the international community has a real role to play.



## **The European interest**

James Baker's 1992 quip that 'we don't have a dog in that fight' has become almost as notorious as Jacques Poos' *'l'heure de l'Europe'*. The European perspective is different; Europeans no longer support one dog or another, but are interested in the entire pack. One could begin by listing obvious factors, such as the geographical location of the Balkans across major transport routes, the proximity to EU member states such as Greece, Italy and Austria, and the interest of European states in both humanitarian aid and peacekeeping activities in their immediate neighbourhood. But that is merely to state the obvious. The extent of European interest in the Balkans may have fluctuated in the last ten years, but the fundamentals remain the same.

What has changed is the ability of the European Union to take effective action as an actor. The ineffectiveness of the 1990s reflected the priority of transforming the Central and Eastern European countries into credible applicants for EU membership, the momentous project of the single currency, and most of all the lack of institutional support for the CFSP. Two policy instruments are important here, one of which developed gradually in the 1990s, the other arriving suddenly in 1999 as a result of the ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty. Together, the enlargement process and the institutional strengthening of the CFSP have made the EU a more visible player in the security of the Balkans.

For the first time in centuries, all of the political elites in south-eastern Europe are looking in the same direction— towards the West. This is matched by the emotional commitment of Western European political leaders to reuniting the continent. The prospect of EU membership, worryingly distant even for Romania and Bulgaria, may be distinctly long-term for the countries of the Western Balkans, but the fact that it is definitely on offer has already had a stabilising effect.

Consider the case of Albania, whose government has taken a strong line against the violence in Macedonia, and appears much more interested in the 21<sup>st</sup> century game of integration rather than the 19<sup>th</sup> century game of territorial aggrandisement. For the first time in the history of the Balkans, an ethnic rebellion has failed to get support from the 'mother country' and this is largely because of the policy alternatives given to the Albanian government by the Euro-Atlantic integration process. Likewise, the fact that Macedonia has actually signed a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU denies credibility to the suspicion that the international community would countenance a division of the country. And the forces of

nationalism in Croatia remain in disarray in the face of the integration process – their performance in the recent local elections was only a slight improvement on their disastrous results in January 2000.

In addition, to adapt Henry Kissinger's famous question, Europe now has a phone number. (It is +32 2 285 6111.) The personification of the CFSP in the shape of Javier Solana could perhaps have led to a series of Holbrooke-style (or perhaps Frowick-style) confrontations with the local tough guys, intended to browbeat them into a settlement which they then would have to be continually reminded of. Instead we have seen a more systematic approach, where Europe's political support for the Macedonian government's security actions is heavily conditioned on progress on other fronts, and where Javier Solana found himself facilitating the formation of the new government in Skopje – surely the first time an EU official has played such a role. We have also seen institutional innovation from the EU, where Personal Representatives of Solana have been appointed for the Presevo Valley and Macedonia – both of them professional diplomats with other responsibilities, who are part of the arsenal of institutional resources available to the EU's Mr PESC.

Strategic problems remain. In order for a state to integrate into the EU, it is first necessary to have credible structures in place; Croatia and Albania are obvious examples. Macedonia quite possibly could have met this criterion, before the current violence began. Bosnia, where the word of the international community's High Representative is law, does not. It is impossible to see a Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EU and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia under its current constitutional mess, simply because it is not clear which competences can be expected to be exercised by the governments of Serbia and Montenegro, and which competences (if any) belong to the internationally recognised state. And the unresolved future status of Kosovo leaves open not only the issue of 'sovereignty' but also the question of how a sub-national protectorate can have a credible prospect of European integration. (The same question is also faced by the component parts of Bosnia, but at least there the answer – that they must learn to work the institutions of the Dayton state more effectively – is more obvious.)

The other huge strategic issue raised here is the effectiveness of EU-NATO cooperation. The United States cannot offer an integration process to the Balkans. Only Europe can propose inserting the region, bit by bit, into a trajectory that leads, through regional cooperation and external assistance, ultimately to full participation in the EU. Therefore, there will always be a tension between the US instinct to keep things quiet, even if that means creating

'democracies' that leave the local thugs in control (a 'stabilising' technique also used historically by European colonial powers), and the European agenda of civilising the region in preparation for its integration.

Already we see a divergence of interests both at the macro level, with US Defense Secretary Rumsfeld muttering once more about withdrawing US troops from the Balkans, and also at the micro level, with US troops too wary of putting themselves in harm's way on the Kosovo/Macedonian border to effectively keep the peace. The frequent presence of Lord Robertson at Javier Solana's side in the region is comforting, but it is also a reminder that the responsibility of maintaining a secure environment for the European integration of the Balkans lies in the hands of a completely separate institution.

A final note. If disaster can be averted in Macedonia, and if (as seems more likely) the relationship between Montenegro and Serbia is resolved reasonably peacefully, the challenge of maintaining order in Kosovo will remain. At present, the majority population of the protectorate passively assents to international peacekeeping because many are personally profiting from the situation and because they believe that the international community will some day deliver independence. What François Heisbourg has dubbed a 'Irgun scenario' is all too plausible, in which Kosovars perceive an international intention to restore Yugoslav sovereignty, and again take up arms, but this time against KFOR; this could provoke a rapid NATO withdrawal. The only way to avoid this scenario is to begin serious talks between the political representatives of Pristina and Belgrade on Kosovo's future status sooner rather than later, facilitated by the international community led by the EU. Conflict prevention is far preferable to crisis management.

ANNEX

## Process of Ending Armed Conflict in Macedonia\*

At noon local time on Wednesday, 23 May 2001, the following actions will take place:

1. Announcement by the UÇK and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia of the cessation of hostilities.
2. Announcement of amnesty and rehabilitation by the government for UÇK personnel who are Macedonian citizens in the whole area of Macedonia, except for those who are ICTY suspects [and persons with criminal records preceding the conflict]. Any persons found with illegal weapons after Friday, 22 June 2001, will no longer be eligible for the amnesty.
3. All detainees and prisoners convicted of political crimes will be released by noon local time on Wednesday, 30 May 2001.
4. OSCE unarmed observers, together with other international monitors under the coordination of the OSCE, will enter the Kumanovo area.
5. A Commission composed of the OSCE and the Mayor of Lipkovo will begin collecting UÇK arms under seal, which will be delivered to the Macedonian security forces.
6. Macedonian security forces will not enter the Kumanovo area. However, an unarmed institutional establishment of the Macedonian State (the President of Lipkovo Municipality, health institutions, post office, etc.) will be established there.
7. Uniformed UÇK forces will no longer be visible in any of the areas of conflict, either armed or unarmed.
8. The Government of the Republic of Macedonia will expedite substantial efforts towards reconstruction in the Kumanovo area.
9. Announcement of a joint statement by Albanian political leaders as soon as possible about the common goals to be reached in the process of reform.
10. The Albanian leaders will send a letter of intent concerning the process of political dialogue to Ambassador Frowick setting out the issues they expect to be resolved. Ambassador Frowick will respond with a letter noting his support for the inclusion of these issues in the dialogue.
11. President Trajkovski announces the next meeting of the President's All-Party Commission to intensify the political dialogue aimed at reforms will take place on Friday, 8 June 2001.

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\* *Author's Note:* This is the text of the agreement between the political leaders of the two main ethnic Albanian political parties in Macedonia, and the leadership of the 'National Liberation Army', with the mediation of US Ambassador Robert Frowick, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office's Personal Representative for the situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. News of the agreement caused a major crisis in the Macedonian government and evoked denunciations from the international community, though Arben Xhaferi and Ymer Ymeri maintained that they were only responding to requests from the Macedonian government and others; a European official commented to me that on this occasion the international community's 'co-ordination was sub-optimal'. This version of the document was obtained from one of the ethnic Albanian negotiators.

12. At noon local time on 22 June 2001, armed Macedonian security forces, with unrestricted OSCE monitoring, will resume control over the Kumanovo area. Macedonian security forces will show maximum restraint in re-establishing and maintaining order in the area not currently under their control.

13. If one side fails to implement this entire understanding, then the other side will consider the understanding null and void.

### **Statement of the Albanian Leaders of Macedonia concerning the Peace and Reform Process in the Republic of Macedonia**

The Albanian leaders of Macedonia, conscious of the historic moment for the Republic of Macedonia and its peoples, have agreed on a joint action based on a national consensus which should reform the Republic of Macedonia so it can be a democratic state of all of its citizens and all of the ethnic communities.

The consensus of the Albanian leaders is based on these principled positions:

- recognition that the aimed reforms preserve the integrity and multi-ethnic character of Macedonia;
- recognition that there are no ‘ethnic territorial’ solutions to the problems envisaged and that any attempt to ‘ethnically break’ territories will bring harm to the citizens of Macedonia and peace in the region, and
- recognition that there is no military solution for the problems in the Republic of Macedonia;
- recognition that the transformation of RM should lead the country into Euro-Atlantic integration; and
- recognition that the solution will be found within a domestic political process with the facilitation of the US and the EU.

Based on these principles, the Albanian leaders of Macedonia are fully intended to participate in the process of reformist dialogue, dealing with these issues:

- the amendment of the preamble of the Constitution
- the unrestricted use of the Albanian language as an official language in Macedonia
- the ethnic proportionality in institutions of the state
- the enlargement of the powers of the municipalities
- the full secularisation of the Constitution/i.e. state and
- the introduction of consensual democracy in areas concerning ethnic rights /i.e. the limitation of majority over-voting in areas that directly concern ethnic rights.

Also pertaining to the negotiations are measures for the transformation of the NLA members into various forms of civilian life occupation/duties, including those within the state institutions.

Within this debate, a special focus will be on:

- full rehabilitation of all of the members of the NLA

- reconstruction of villages and family economy destroyed during the fighting as well as care for the victims of war (war invalids, family of the killed) and
- ARM military duty within the municipality of birth.

In the dialogue that will be conducted within the roundtable of leaders of the political parties making up the present Government coalition, headed by the president of the Republic, and through the facilitation of the US and OSCE, a consensual form of presentation of the Albanian factor will be created.

Arben Xhaferi, President, PDSh  
Ali Ahmeti, Political and Military Leader, Ushtria Çlirimtare Kombëtare  
Ymer Ymeri, President, PPD

## MACEDONIA AND EUROPEAN SECURITY

NADIA ALEXANDROVA ARBATOVA\*

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The problem of Macedonia can be seen and analysed from different angles. It is part of the so-called Albanian question, it is closely related to the situation in the post-Milosevic Yugoslavia, and consequently to the problems of stability and security in the Balkans, which, in their turn, are part of a broader picture of European security and Russian-Western relations. But the very core of what is going on in Macedonia now, as it is seen from Moscow, is a logical continuation of the Kosovo problem which has not been resolved by NATO's military intervention. As for the latter, the Macedonian problem can be also seen as a product of miscalculations and ill-conceived decisions of the international community, and, particularly, NATO and the United States. With the Yugoslav experience of the past decade as background, the recent developments in Macedonia are just new evidence in support of the thesis that the immediate risk to Balkan peace is not so much aggression but secession by minorities big enough to contemplate statehood which in turn could trigger war. ('The Balkans Survey' in *The Economist*, 14 January 1998, p. 5). Like Kosovo, the Macedonian problem has three aspects – internal, regional and international.

Macedonia is part of a broad Albanian space in former Yugoslavia, which includes Kosovo, Albanian enclaves in southern Serbia (Medvedja, Presevo and Bujanovic) and those in Montenegro (Gusine and Plav). The collapse of the Yugoslav empire divided this space into two main Albanian-populated areas – the Kosovo province and Macedonia. But Albanians could never reconcile themselves with this reality, and in spite of all efforts of Belgrade and Skopje, succeeded in preserving close ties between the Albanian communities in this space. The Kosovo province, where the Albanian community had enjoyed broad political and economic rights in Tito's time and where the Pristina University had been the main educational institution for the Albanian political elite in FY, became a real centre of gravitation for all Albanian communities after the demise of Yugoslavia. The so-called Albanian question acquired a new dimension with the collapse of Yugoslavism as a ruling ideology, which encouraged Albanian struggle for independence. In the mid-1990s, there emerged a network of extremist Albanian structures under the name of national liberation armies with the leading role played by the Kosovo Liberation Army. The Kosovo Albanians

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\* Senior Research Fellow, IMEMO, Moscow.

ceased to support non-violent actions against the Milosevic Yugoslavia and Serb nationalism and resorted to the Intifada-like strategy along the Palestinian pattern. This struggle was supported by nationalist forces in neighbouring Albania who showed their propensity to expand it to all Albanian minorities living in the Balkan countries.

From the very beginning, the internal aspect of the Kosovo problem was being seen by Russia and the West from different angles. For the West it was mostly the problem of securing the rights of ethnic Albanians, which had been severely violated by nationalistic Serbian authorities. To Russia, by contrast, the Kosovo case looked like a Serbian Chechnya and the core of the Kosovo problem was being regarded by Moscow in a broader context of several interrelated issues – territorial integrity and secession, national minorities' rights and terrorism. Being a multinational state and being faced with the problem of its territorial integrity (in Chechnya and in other crisis-prone areas inside the Russian Federation), Russian leadership has always been more sensitive than other members of the Contact Group to this challenge, and understood better the vulnerabilities of the Yugoslav Republic.

Although Moscow recognised that it was a big mistake and disservice to the Yugoslav national interests to deprive Kosovo of the status it had in Former Yugoslavia, it proceeded from the understanding that state sovereignty and the continued existence of international borders should be given priority over the right to self-determination. There is no contradiction between the principle of territorial integrity and the right to self-determination, if the latter can be achieved by peaceful means. Apart from this there may be one exception of this rule – a policy of genocide against a national minority that is proved as such by independent international observers and institutions. This is essential for understanding Russia's position on the Kosovo crisis and on the renewed attacks of Albanian extremists in Macedonia, although there exists a very strong temptation in the West to explain it by Slavic solidarity and the Orthodox factor in line with Samuel Huntington's paradigm.

To put it simply, the Kosovo conflict had two key problems to be resolved – the Milosevic nationalist policy vis-à-vis ethnic Albanians and Albanian extremism directed at reuniting the minorities living in Kosovo, Macedonia and Greece with their mother country. NATO's military campaign against Slobodan Milosevic's Yugoslavia justified by humanitarian intervention has resolved only the first problem, but it has not eliminated the threat of a new conflict in the Balkans, having left Albanian extremism without any adequate response. Moreover the war against the Milosevic regime justified NATO's alliance with Albanian



extremists who are trying now to do in Macedonia what they did to Serbian authority in Kosovo.

After the war against Yugoslavia, NATO and Washington closed their eyes to the fact that the remnants of KLA and their supporters who had not been fully disarmed were taking advantage. They were driving out non-Albanians from the province, murdering moderate Albanian politicians, intimidating witnesses and judges and rebuilding and dominating activities like drug-running, arms smuggling and people trafficking. Ironically, the recent democratic election of President Vojislav Kostunica has encouraged Albanian militants to step up their request for a permanent separation of Kosovo and adjoining Albanian enclaves, since they are fearful that the West, and namely NATO, will cut a deal with the new Yugoslav leadership and reinstate military control of Serbia.

On many occasions, KFOR has showed its impotence to rein in Albanian militants in Kosovo and to guarantee provisions of the Military Technical Agreement signed in June 1999. Some of the fiercest clashes between the remnants of KLA and Serb forces have occurred in a 3-mile-wide demilitarised zone established by the Military Technical Agreement. The Albanians have turned the zone into a hotbed of resistance, founding the grandly named Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovic (three of the towns they wish to free in southern Serbia). (See Michael R. Gordon, 'NATO Patrols Edgy Border, This Time Protecting Serb' in *New York Times*, 25 January 2001.)

If Albanian extremists continue to target Serb forces and KFOR does little to stop them, President Kostunica will be faced with a very difficult dilemma: to step back; which would reinforce Serb nationalists, or to use force against Albanian secessionists, which in its turn would confront NATO with a difficult choice of siding with one of the warring parties. If the present conflict in southern Serbia continues to spread allowing ethnic Albanian militants to take their fight to Macedonia, while NATO is not ready to take on new responsibilities on the ground, it might result in a military union between Macedonia and Yugoslavia. Despite positive changes in Belgrade, the predominant opinion in the West is that the Milosevic old guard still holds powerful positions in the security and army apparatus. Thus, there is a risk that KFOR will be drawn into unwanted hostilities that threatens to undermine the KFOR solidarity and provoke a new conflict in Russian-Western relations.

In a way, the US and NATO are reaping in Macedonia what they sowed in Kosovo. 'The militants' goal supported by ordinary people, victims of Slav discrimination is to

consolidate ethnic Albanians, be it in Kosovo or in Macedonia, under Albanian rule.’ (See Steven Erlanger, ‘The Balkans: A One-Time Ally Becomes the Problem’, *New York Times*, 25 March 2001.) Albanian militant groups have misread Western support in Kosovo as a *carte-blanche* to encroach further on the FRY territory. This issue is crucial for peace in the region. (Ljubomir Frckoski, ‘Macedonia and The Region’, in *The Southern Balkans: Perspectives from the Region*, Institute for Security Studies, Chaillot Papers 46, April 2001, p. 42.)

Ironically, Macedonia, which recently was being singled out as the only case of preventive diplomacy in the Balkans and which demonstrated its full loyalty to NATO in the Kosovo crisis and hosted Albanian refugees, has been left by NATO on its own. Russia's proposal to deploy peacekeeping forces in Macedonia along the border with Kosovo didn't evoke any serious response from the West, which is not ready to take new risks on the ground and to recognise that it has made a serious mistake in Kosovo and created a kind of Frankenstein. Russia's position on the regional aspect of security in the Balkans has been formulated during the Kosovo crisis. It stemmed from Moscow's concerns that Kosovo's secession might reinforce the Macedonian Albanians' demand for autonomy which would destroy the Macedonian state and trigger a chain reaction in the Southern Balkans involving all regional states, Bosnia included. The recent developments in Macedonia are the best evidence in support of the assertion that such a threat still exists, and it would be wrong to reduce this problem 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 the neighbouring states as well as for latent inter-state disputes. (See ‘Potential conflicts in the southern Balkans’, in *A New Ostpolitik Strategies for a United Europe*, edited by Werner Weidenfeld, Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers, Gutersloch, 1997, pp. 51-53.)

Although Bulgaria and Greece have settled their quarrels with Macedonia about what to call the Macedonian nation and the name “Macedonia”, they continue to perceive them as an irredentist threat. The respective minorities may be encouraged to cause problems between Greece and Albania. In addition, as a reaction to a broad Albanian secessionist movement, an Islamist movement could develop to form a coalition between the Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sandzak and Albania. It is no riddle why the Albanian extremists are being supported by Ben Laden's organisation.

It is promising that the last meeting of the Contact Group in Paris (April 2001) agreed on its approach to the situation in the Former Yugoslavia after the renewed attacks of Albanian

militants in Macedonia having condemned extremism and confirmed the principle of territorial integrity of Macedonia and Yugoslavia. But we remember that the same Contact Group stressed 'its condemnation of violence and acts of terrorism in pursuit of political goals, from whatever quarter' (Contact Group Statement, 8 July 1998, Bonn.). Nevertheless, it did not prevent the Kosovo crisis which became a turning point in post-bipolar international relations and drastically changed Europe's security landscape.

The Kosovo crisis dealt a heavy blow to Russia's relations with the West, and particularly with NATO. This crisis, which had entailed dramatic consequences for Russia's domestic development, can also be viewed as a culmination and a logical conclusion of the over-ripe Russian-Western contradictions, and in the first place the growing gap between Russian and Western threat perceptions. Apart from that, the Kosovo crisis had virtually proven that the West didn't view Russia as a full-fledged partner. This was proved rather vividly by the fact that Russia was deprived of its own sector in KFOR operation.

As Yeltsin's successor, President Putin has proclaimed himself a devoted partisan of Russian-Western cooperation having supported ratification of the START II Treaty, post-Kosovo dialogue between Russia and NATO and strategic partnership with EU. Russian leaders and those of leading Western countries continue to negotiate with each other, voicing all kinds of good wishes and important initiatives. However, this process tends to conceal a new trend in Russia's relations with the West. These relations had quickly passed through a romantic period in the early 1990s, with the concerned parties expressing mutual disappointment and failing to understand each other in the late 1990s. As of today, such relations have confidently entered the pragmatic-minimalist phase, which tends to resemble the East-West peaceful co-existence to an ever-greater extent. This was eventually reflected in the Russian military doctrine and NATO's new strategy. This is also proved by the fact that Putin's extremely important initiative stipulating the deployment of a tactical ABM system together with NATO hasn't evoked any serious response in Europe, in Canada nor in the United States.

The Kosovo crisis affected not only Russian-Western relations, but the Euro-Atlantic partnership as well. The EU failure to take a lead in the Kosovo crisis dented the image of the Union as a new concept of power that attempted to enhance the process of European integration in the field of CFSP and CEDI. The latter in its turn brought about new problems in the EU-NATO relationship. Any attempt by the EU to build a European military alliance is being seen across the Atlantic as a move to undermine NATO and to marginalise the United States in European security. At the same time, NATO insiders say that the Americans are

going to pull out anyway over the next 10 years, and the new EU military partnership will accelerate this process. They could be out in all but a token presence by 2003.

Thus, a new conflict in the Balkans can erupt at a time when Russian-Western relations are far from perfect, when the new US administration views the Balkans as peripheral to American national interests and when Europeans cannot cope with this problems on their own. The post-Kosovo challenges to European security can be exacerbated by new trends in Russian and American foreign policies. What should be done to prevent unlimited conflict? The solution of the Macedonian problem lies in Kosovo. It is not enough to only recognise that territorial integrity of Yugoslavia is a key to stability in the Balkans. Territorial integrity of Yugoslavia must be a primary goal of KFOR, which means that NATO should decide how to respond to Albanian extremism. It is of the utmost importance for NATO itself not to reduce its role in the region that threatens to destroy its credibility as a guarantor of regional stability. American leadership should help to re-think NATO's strategy in the Balkans to turn the KFOR mission into a real success story. Some suggestions towards this end:

1. The remnants of KLA should be disarmed in full. The United States, which is the only country with tangible leverage over moderate and militant Albanians, should use this leverage.
2. The border between Kosovo and Macedonia, which is transparent, should be closed to prevent any penetration of Albanian extremists from Kosovo to Macedonia.
3. The KFOR mission should be expanded to Macedonia with Russia's participation on an equal footing.
4. Consequently, it would be extremely important to revise the terms of Russia's participation in KFOR and to involve it as a real partner.
5. The European countries and the United States should press the Albanian diaspora to stop military and financial support of Albanian militants in FY.
6. The European Union should enhance implementation of social and economic reconstruction for the region giving its full support to re-integration of Yugoslavia and Macedonia into Europe. Hopefully, all these efforts will help not only to avoid the repetition of the Kosovo scenario but to pull Russian-Western relations out of the blind alley.

**SOUTH BALKANS CONFLICT, NATO'S MISSION  
AND THE AMERICAN INTEREST**

**Dana H. Allin\***

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**F**rom the early 1990s, as Yugoslavia suffered its wars of ethnic cleansing, there was much dreadful speculation about the consequences of Macedonia succumbing to the same fate. Some of the more lurid scenarios – such as a general south Balkans war drawing in Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey – never seemed very logical. The real challenges to Macedonian identity and stability – including nationalist hostility and a damaging blockade from EU member Greece – were grave enough. In any event, for most of its first decade as an independent state, Macedonia confounded the pessimists by surviving.

Now, armed ethnic conflict has come to Macedonia, and the pessimists have reason to feel vindicated. Carl Bildt told a London audience in March 2001 that the present state of affairs in Macedonia reminded him of Bosnia in 1992, or Kosovo in February 1998. Some consider the threat of ‘Greater Albania’ nationalism to be as unsettling for the first decade of this century as ‘Greater Serbia’ nationalism was for the concluding decade of the last century. And critics of NATO suggest (again, not very logically) that the Kosovo intervention was the fateful action in a chain of events leading to the demise of Macedonia.

The current threat to Macedonia is the most serious one it has faced, which is to say that it is very serious indeed. There is, however, a huge difference between Macedonia today and Yugoslavia in 1991-95 or 1998-99. That difference is a central government exercising civilised restraint and trying to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of an Albanian minority which accounts for around one-third of the country's population (the true share is disputed, of course).

The armed Albanian extremists seem to have shared the misconceptions of some Western commentators who argued that, in going to war for Kosovo, NATO demonstrated support for the violent agenda of a ‘Greater Albania’. The misconception is based on rather simplistic reasoning. Western support for the Macedonian state against Albanian violence is perfectly consistent with military intervention in Kosovo to protect Albanians against Serb violence. This message may finally be sinking through to the Albanian rebels.

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## **Politics and Security**

Officials in Skopje have tried to suggest that that the armed insurrection is entirely imported from Kosovo. This seems unlikely: Western journalists have found a high degree of at least tacit support for the guerrillas from Macedonia's Albanians; and the fighters themselves include many Albanians from the Macedonian side of the border (a border that is of relatively recent salience anyway). Skopje's accusations do point, however, to a disturbing truth: while the insurrection clearly has some organic connection to the grievances of Macedonia's Albanians, it also has an autonomous life of its own, and thus a strictly political solution to it may not be available.

The political problem is bad enough on its own. Despite the apparent good faith of successive governments, Albanians suffer discrimination in daily life, and have not been made to feel full equality as citizens. Ethnic resentments are palpable, and have been worsened by the recent violence. Srgjan Kerim, the country's Foreign Minister until early May, admits that Albanians have some cause to feel like second-class citizens: 'We should have had many more Albanians in national structures ... If Albanians are not part of national structures they can't identify with the country.'

Macedonia's Albanian politicians share some of the blame for the current crisis; too often they have put forward agendas that have more to do with nationalist symbolism than with practical measures to improve the lot of the minority. Thus, at various times in the past decade, ethnic relations have been strained by such nationalist rallying cries as demands for an Albanian-language university; the right to fly Albanian flags over municipal buildings; the recasting of Macedonia as a bi-national state; or the designation of Albanian as a second official language. Not all of these demands are unreasonable. Nor is it unreasonable, however, for some Slav politicians to worry about the paralysing effects of bi-national federalism in a small country with a weak state.

The efforts of the West in trying to arrange a political accommodation – including high-level attention from especially, Javier Solana – have been generally in the right direction. These efforts follow a decade of sustained Western attention, and Macedonia's relative stability until now, like the recent advent of a national-unity government, have to be counted among the successes of the West's Balkan policies. That success, however, cannot be allowed to obscure one unwelcome reality: that the transatlantic commitment to the Balkans must include not just an active role in mediating inter-ethnic dialogue, but also a commitment to the integrity of the

Macedonian state. This commitment has a military dimension. In the first instance, this will require KFOR to do everything possible to block the infiltration of fighters and the flow of weapons from the Kosovo side of the border. The Macedonian government has also asked NATO troops to supervise the implementation of a disarmament pact, if one can be reached. The Albanian rebels too have indicated that they would welcome such a NATO role. Yet everything that has been achieved in the Balkans so far could be threatened by Macedonia's break-up, and if the conflict worsens, NATO should be ready to insert a force that is prepared to go beyond peacekeeping: to use force, if necessary, against Albanian guerrillas, and to restrain the potential excesses of Macedonian government forces.

Many in the West will find the prospect mind-boggling. But so was the idea of forceful intervention on the side of the Sarajevo government in the early 1990s, and so was the idea of deploying American troops in Bosnia for one year – much less the five-and-a-half years that they have remained so far. In early 1998, it was mind-boggling to imagine that NATO, with the United States in the lead, would intervene militarily in Kosovo. Critics of these earlier interventions will no doubt seize on any discussion of a deployment in Macedonia as evidence that they were right: Balkan interventions equal mission creep and quagmire. Yet it is difficult to imagine how NATO, after all that it has done and invested in the former Yugoslavia, could stand aloof from a Macedonian civil war.

Civil war is absolutely a worst-case scenario, and one need not assume that it will happen. But options for inserting a NATO force, ready to confront Albanian guerrillas and restrain the potential excesses of Macedonian government forces, need to be on the transatlantic table for open discussion, now. There are four reasons that the discussion cannot wait:

- First, Skopje on its own may not be able master the crisis either politically or militarily. Politically, the ability of a national unity government to agree on constitutional arrangements satisfactory to the Albanian parties and of tangible benefit to the Albanian population is questionable. The state, in any event, is weak, and probably lacks the administrative elan to fully implement such important reforms as the creation of a truly multi-ethnic police force. Moreover, even if the government does succeed, that is hardly a guarantee that a rebellion of hundreds or thousands of well-armed Albanians – whose leaders are not party to the talks – can be turned off like a water spigot. On the contrary, Europe has enough experience with armed terrorism to suggest that political accommodation tends to inflame rather than calm the extremists. Militarily, Macedonian security forces surprised Western analysts with

some early successes. But they have not proven that they are able to quell the rebellion with methods acceptable both to the West and, more importantly, to their own Albanian citizens. American intelligence analysts have expressed disquiet at aerial photos showing burned-out villages reminiscent of Serb scorched-earth tactics in Kosovo. The comparison should be handled carefully: no one is suggesting that Skopje is operating in the same moral universe as Slobodan Milosevic's former regime. But moral chaos flowing from administrative incompetence can be bad enough. Large-scale civilian deaths – even a single shell killing 20 women and children in a cellar – could push Macedonia's ethnic conflict past the point of amicable return. Another Kosovo comparison is worth bearing in mind: the Drenica massacre of early 1998 that turned a limited guerrilla campaign into a Kosovo-wide insurrection.

- Second, the psychologically stabilising impact of having NATO troops just over the border in Kosovo is going to be much diminished unless it is clear that they will be used where they are needed.
- Third, American and European governments have important decisions to make. The Bush administration has to settle for itself the fundamental issue that the Bush campaign raised with its criticism of the Clinton administration's use of American troops for 'nation building.' Does America have a serious interest in Balkan stability or not? If so, will it continue to use military force to pursue that interest? And the Europeans have to decide what they will do if the Bush administration stays with its original instincts.
- Finally, time is the enemy. There is very little time for American and European governments to agree on action; the pattern of the past ten years is that such interventions, when they come, are too often too late.

### **The American Interest**

This is an inconvenient crisis for a new US administration that has less of a commitment to the Balkans engagement than its predecessor. On the eve of the recent fighting, Macedonian politicians indicated that they had heard President George Bush's campaign rhetoric, and believed a US withdrawal was imminent. In formulating its policies, the Bush administration should be aware that both Balkan moderates and Balkan extremists are listening.



Since Bush's inauguration, his administration has backed off from talk about a withdrawal. Colin Powell in particular has recognised the dangers such a withdrawal would pose to NATO unity. But the new administration's attitude towards a long-term Balkans deployment will differ significantly from its predecessor. Whether or not US troops withdraw in the medium term, the ambivalence of the American military commitment could be damaging. The crisis in Macedonia, suggesting another intervention and a deeper commitment, makes this painfully clear.

The European allies should recognise that the uncertainties of the US commitment are not just due to the new administration's policies. Rather, such uncertainties arise from American history, domestic politics and geo-strategic responsibilities. The idea of a 'division of labour' (as mooted by Bush's National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice), in which the European allies concentrate on peacekeeping and the United States husband its resources for 'major war' contingencies in East Asia and the Persian Gulf, may have troubling implications for NATO solidarity. But the idea also reflects, to a significant extent, present realities. Europeans probably need an American flag to be with them in Macedonia. But they may have to carry it almost alone.

## ABOUT THE EUROPEAN SECURITY FORUM

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The Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) and the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) joined forces late in the year 2000, to launch a new forum on European security policy in Brussels. The objective of this *European Security Forum* is to bring together senior officials and experts from EU and Euro-Atlantic Partnership countries, including the United States and Russia, to discuss security issues of strategic importance to Europe. The Forum is jointly directed by CEPS and the IISS and is hosted by CEPS in Brussels.

The Forum brings together a select group of personalities from the Brussels institutions (EU, NATO and diplomatic missions), national governments, parliaments, business, media and independent experts. The informal and confidential character of the Forum enables participants to exchange ideas freely.

The aim of the initiative is to think ahead about the strategic security agenda for Europe, treating both its European and transatlantic implications. The topics to be addressed are selected from an open list that includes crisis management, defence capabilities, security concepts, defence industries and institutional developments (including enlargement) of the EU and NATO.

The Forum has about 60 members, who are invited to all meetings and receive current information on the activities of the Forum. This group meets every other month in a closed session to discuss a pre-arranged topic under Chatham House rules. The Forum meetings are presided over by François Heisbourg, Chairman of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. As a general rule, three short issue papers are commissioned from independent experts for each session presenting EU, US and Russian viewpoints on the topic.

**The Centre for European Policy Studies** (CEPS) is an independent policy research institute founded in Brussels in 1983, with the aim of producing sound policy research leading to constructive solutions to the challenges facing Europe.

**The International Institute for Strategic Studies** (IISS), founded in London in 1958, is the leading international and independent organisation for the study of military strategy, arms control, regional security and conflict resolution.