

**DOCUMENTI
IAI**

**PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT IN EUROPE:
THE CASE OF MACEDONIA**

by Radoslava Stefanova

Paper prepared for the IAI-SWP research project on
"Preventing violent conflicts in Europe"

IAI9708

ISTITUTO AFFARI INTERNAZIONALI

PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT IN EUROPE: THE CASE OF MACEDONIA*

by Radoslava Stefanova

One would think that conflict prevention in the Balkans has historically been an oxymoron. Based on past experience, it can be noted that preemptive actions aimed at avoiding the re-ignition of the eternal “powder keg of Europe” have been quite a rarity. In this context, there are two research dimensions that could be explored after a brief conceptual assessment of the relevance of prevention per se in the particular context of the area. The first one involves an extrapolation of current security risks in and around Macedonia from the general tendencies brought about in previous wars. The second dimension identifies and analyzes how and by who conflict prevention has been applied and sustained, and whether it can be termed a success.

Establishing conceptual parameters

For purposes of conceptual clarity, conflict prevention in this study will be given a more specific meaning than the already traditional definition formulated by the former UN Secretary General, namely an “action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts, and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur.”¹ While the first two categories identified by Boutros–Ghali are undoubtedly preventive in scope, “[limiting] the scope of [conflicts] when they occur,” in itself a post factum event, is an aspect that can be left to the realm of conflict management and conflict resolution. To complement the conceptual demarcation lines of the terminology adopted in this paper, “conflict” is used to mean violent occurrences and practices outside of the commonly accepted boundaries of civilized dialog.²

By implication, conflict prevention as defined in this study refers to conscious actions undertaken by third parties and/or by the conflicting parties themselves to alleviate tensions in situations when there are sufficient reasons to believe that policy inertia will lead to violence. Any evaluation of a given conflict prevention action as a success or failure is necessarily based on counterfactual thought. In particular, “a case assessed as a success implies that were it not for the impact of preventive diplomacy, it is at least likely that a major conflict would have occurred.”³ The epistemological value of counterfactuals remains controversial, although there have been interesting attempts

*I wish to point out that the use of the name Macedonia in this paper is not a political decision in defiance of its UN-adopted temporary name—Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) but is wholly dictated by practical considerations to circumvent the clumsiness of the acronym and to avoid the absurd situation in legal terms of referring to a recognized state by the former name of another state.

¹Boutros Boutros–Ghali *Agenda for Peace* (Geneva: UN, 1992), p. 13.

²An approximation of the meaning of conflict used in this paper is to be found in what Dennis Sandole terms “aggressive manifest conflict process” with reference to the irreversible damage inflicted on both the individual well-being and the societal fabric. Dennis Sandole, “Paradigm, Theories, and Metaphors in Conflict and Conflict Resolution: Coherence or Confusion” in Sandole and van der Merwe (eds.) *Conflict resolution Theory and Practice, Integration and Application* (Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 6.

³Bruce W. Jentleson, “Preventive Diplomacy and Ethnic Conflict: Possible, Difficult, Necessary” Policy Paper N° 27, Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, University of California, June 1996, p. 8.

to establish criteria to assess them.⁴ Elaborating this conceptual analysis is clearly beyond the scope of this paper, but it has to be stressed that a methodological choice to avoid counterfactual reasoning “would prevent us from drawing the sorts of ‘lessons from history’ that scholars and policy makers regularly draw on such topical topics as the best ways to encourage economic growth, to preserve peace, and to cultivate democracy.”⁵

Why Macedonia is a case-study

The case of Macedonia is rather characteristic not only because of the ethnic and religious conglomeration which makes the country a miniature of the whole region. What has to be noted is that many risk factors that have traditionally drowned the area in bloody wars are still to be found in Macedonia—ethnic tension between the Slav majority and the Albanian minority, registered abuses of human rights, lack of democratic tradition, closely linked to the lack of tradition of statehood, opportunistic parties and inflammatory language, institutional weakness, poor economic performance, neighboring countries’ pressure. Yet, conflict has not occurred. On the contrary, interstate tensions have reportedly decreased.⁶ As compared to past historical precedents, when Macedonia was the locus of war under similar circumstances, one qualitatively new element has emerged—a strong international will to act preventively to counter what was believed to be an imminent conflict. That tenacity found a concrete expression, inter alia, in the preventive deployment of international troops under the auspices of the UN commissioned by Security Council Resolution N° 795 on December 11, 1992 following a request by the Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov. Initially, the deployment forces in Macedonia were established as part of the United Nation’s Protection Force (UNPROFOR’s) general peacekeeping effort in the former Yugoslavia, mandated on 21 February 1992 by Security Council Resolution 743. On March 31, 1995 the Security Council replaced UNPROFOR by three separate peacekeeping missions, of which the one in Macedonia was mandated by Resolution 983 as the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP).

Although, as already mentioned in the preceding section, it is difficult to predict whether this international commitment will guarantee peace for an indefinite period of time, a distinct causal relationship can be observed between the presence of the UNPREDEP and the other preventive initiatives, on the one hand and the sustained relative stability in the region during the last five years, on the other hand.⁷ At the time of the deployment Macedonia found itself in vicinity to raging conflicts in Bosnia–Herzegovina and Croatia, bordering Serbia, and particularly, the highly precarious Kosovo region. Furthermore, Macedonia borders economically ravaged Albania along areas highly concentrated with ethnic Albanians. Finally, the uneasy relationship with Greece, to the South, and the mutual suspicion with Bulgaria to the east complete the picture of considerable regional instability, which was countered by a multi-sided timely international involvement.

⁴See Philip E. Tetlock and Aaron Belkin, *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics: Logical, Methodological and Psychological Perspectives* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁵Ibid., p. 4.

⁶Boutros Boutros–Ghali in a report to the UN Security Council, November 22, 1996. It is important to note the contrast between frictions with neighboring states, which have subsided, and the internal ethnic equilibrium, which has been exacerbated.

⁷Ibid., Vladimir Ortakovski, “The Role of Peace-Keeping Forces in the Republic of Macedonia,” *Review of International Affairs* XLVII:1051, 15 December 1996, p. 25; *The Economist Intelligence Unit Country Report*, 4th quarter, 1996, p. 40; Jentleson, p. 11.

The uneasy internal equilibrium should also be taken into consideration. There is a considerable Albanian minority, which claims a special “founding” status in a state that has just come into existence and still faces some problems over its international recognition, and which finds itself geographically adjacent to highly concentrated Albanian communities. Turkish and Serbian minority groups (four and two per cent, respectively)⁸ are politically organized, and with strong stakes in the mother-countries nearby. Political parties with openly and increasingly nationalistic agendas are contributing to the internal turmoil in Macedonia. Finally, a dire economic situation contributes to the already present ethnic tensions. The perseverance of peace in Macedonia under similar circumstances is by far an event without precedent in the history of Balkan discords, and, therefore, it warrants particular attention.

Historical background and conflict precedents

The Macedonian “question” constituted a central part of the “Balkan question,” which emerged after the June–July 1878 Congress of Berlin. That diplomatic endeavor, orchestrated by the nineteenth century great powers, drew arbitrary state boundaries at the dissolution of the Ottoman empire in the wake of the 1877–78 Russo–Turkish war. The Congress warranted the re-integration of Macedonia into the Ottoman empire after the February 1878 San Stefano treaty, negotiated at the end of the Russo–Turkish war, had included it in a large independent Bulgarian state. Macedonia has since been an object of territorial contentions between neighboring Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece, all of which had historical, cultural, or geographical claims on the region. The problem was particularly aggravated by the fact that such territorial redistribution was effectuated in a period, in which the notion of the nation-state constituted the very essence of statehood.⁹

A simple chronological enumeration of events reveals not only that no reconfiguration of boundaries in the Balkans could occur without a major war, but also that not even one outbreak of violence in the region could circumvent the highly contested territory of Macedonia.¹⁰ When in 1885, the Principality of Bulgaria re-united with the Ottoman protectorate of Eastern Rumelia to form a larger Bulgarian state, there was a clear aspiration to include also Macedonia. To counter such ambitions, Serbia demanded territorial compensation and declared war.¹¹ In 1903 Macedonia sought independence from the Ottoman empire in the major Ilinden rebellion, with substantial backing from Bulgaria. During the 1912–13 Balkan wars the term “contested territory” was forged with reference to Macedonia in the treaty between Bulgaria and Serbia, indicating major problems in the short-lived Bulgarian–Serbian alliance. No mention of the name “Macedonia” was made when the equally short-lived alliance between Greece and Bulgaria was negotiated because of an impossibility to reach an agreement of how to eventually divide it. In the wake of the Balkan wars the uneasy Bucharest peace treaty that drew the boundaries through Macedonia became the prelude to the 1914 First World War—Greece absorbed the territory fifty miles north of Thessaloniki, and east of Kavala, and all of Epirus including Janina. Serbia gained Vardar Macedonia. Bulgaria therefore caught the occasion of recompensing for the loss of these territories in the 1914 World War that followed. In the wake of the war Macedonia remained divided between Greece,

⁸World Factbook page on Macedonia, <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/nsolo/factbook/mk.htm>.

⁹See, *inter alia*, Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

¹⁰See, for example, Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804–1920*, v. VIII (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1977).

¹¹Victor E. Meier, *La Rinascita del Nazionalismo nei Balcani*, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1968), pp. 152–153.

Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria—only to be claimed again in the 1941 Second World War. Taking advantage of the quick advance of Axis powers at the beginning of the war, Bulgaria conquered all of Macedonia, thus driving the Greeks and the Serbs out of the geographical area. By 1944, however, the territory of Macedonia was re-divided again between the victorious Greece (51%) and Yugoslavia (30%)—within the latter it became an autonomous republic—and the defeated Bulgaria (19%).

This territorial distribution remained the status quo during the Cold war until the 1991 disintegration of Yugoslavia when, after a referendum, the part in the Yugoslav federation declared independence. This is the sole exception in the history of bloodshed in the Balkans that circumvented a direct clash over the territory of Macedonia despite the raging Bosnian war in a close vicinity. However, due to the intense past controversies over Macedonia just described, as well as due to the hegemon vacuum sharply felt in the region in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, there were expectations that Macedonia would not remain out of the war for long. Thus history has rendered Macedonia a “grey zone, a limbo territory, politically unidentified, offered and available for partition and division among the neighboring countries.”¹² This is the background against which the preventive deployment of the UN troops and the general international preventive effort in Macedonia looms out as a clear preventive action whose timely application can hardly be a coincidence with the single non-violent involvement of the Macedonian issue in the Balkan imbroglio. Our focus in the next section, therefore, will be the analysis of the security risks which warranted the preventive action, i.e. an examination of what was (and still is) to be prevented.

Overview of the existent conflict potentials

The internal spectrum

At the disintegration of the Yugoslav Federation in early 1991 Macedonia chose a rather moderate position, not excluding the option to remain within a loose Yugoslav Federation.¹³ However, the escalating violence that ensued from the Serb offensive launched in June 1991 to counter the Slovenian and Croatian declarations of independence did not leave too many alternatives to the Macedonian leadership. Unwilling to remain in a Serb-dominated state, Macedonia also organized a referendum on the issue of independence on 17 September 1991. Seventy-five per cent of the population voted in favor.

Here it is worth introducing the first chain of problems closely related to the viability of the newly established state, namely the nexus between nationality and statehood. As C. J. Dick notes, “[t]here is no Macedonian nation and there has never been a state of Macedonia. The federal republic created within Yugoslavia was little more than a geographical expression. [...] for many, especially non-Slavs, a desire to escape from Yugoslavia cannot automatically be equated with a desire to forge a new country.”¹⁴

¹²Dimitar Mircev, “Macedonia’s Position in the Balkans: A Factor of Conflictualization or a Factor of Stability and Peace,” a paper delivered at the international conference “Armed Conflicts in the Balkans and European Security,” Ljubljana, 20–22 April 1993.

¹³Together with President Gligorov, Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic proposed a confederal plan with a common market, and common foreign and defense policy, which was snubbed at by the more potent Yugoslav players—Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia. Erich Frankland, “Struggling with Collective Security and Recognition in Europe: The Case of the Macedonian Republic,” *European Security*, 4:2, Summer 1995, p. 366.

¹⁴C. J. Dick, “Conflict in Former Yugoslavia and Options for the West,” a paper by the Conflict Studies Research Center, June 1995, p. 6.

While Slav Macedonians claim to possess a distinct ethnicity, language, and history, two of its neighbors, Greece and Bulgaria, have not recognized neither the existence of a Macedonian nation, nor that of a distinct Macedonian historical heritage and language, thus denying the new state some of the fundamental attributes of statehood. Due to a Greek veto in all international decision-making summits, Macedonia continues to be internationally recognized as an ex-Yugoslav republic, rather than as the Republic of Macedonia, which it calls itself.¹⁵ These frictions undermine some of the legitimacy of the Macedonian state, and contribute to the overall climate of eroded security in the region.

What further adds to the problems of the Macedonian self-assertion on the map of the Balkans is the significant Albanian minority which claims a “founding people’s” status. The Macedonian Albanians point out to their important role in the 1991 independence referendum, and campaign for the formation of a bilingual, bi-ethnic federal state.¹⁶ Thus, the problems surrounding the recognition of Macedonia’s nationhood and statehood constitute one of the major conflict potentials both in Macedonia, and in the region.

On the internal front, President Kiro Gligorov has shown a remarkable knack in guiding Macedonia away from the perils of the Yugoslav war, quite in contrast to Serbia’s Slobodan Milosevic (despite being to a large extent a product of the ex-Yugoslav communist elite with a strong professional background in Belgrade).¹⁷ The Social-Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM) has consistently dominated the country’s legislature in coalition with the Socialist Party (SP) and with the moderate ethnic Albanian Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP), which has five ministers in the government holding key economic portfolios.

The strongest opposition party is the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization–Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (IMRO–DPMNU), which has a marked nationalist agenda. At the local municipal elections in November 1996 it won some seats in the east. Similarly, there is a radical ethnic Albanian party, the Party for Democratic Prosperity of the Albanians (PDPA), which won four mayoralties, including the two major cities where there is a highly concentrated Albanian population—Tetovo and Gostivar. That party has had a net predominance over the government coalition party, as well as over another small Albanian party with a parliamentary representation—the Albanian Democratic People’s Party—in the Albanian populated areas. As is immediately noted from this brief description of Macedonian political life, there has been a growing radicalization, or even primordialization, of the internal political life in the country, which endangers the delicate balance held by the moderates.¹⁸ Other parties with a parliamentary representation are the Democratic Party (DP) and the Liberal Party (LP), which, however, do not seem to play a decisive role in the political life of the country.

¹⁵Only Turkey recognizes Macedonia by its new name.

¹⁶The ethnic tensions between Macedonians and Albanians surfaced immediately after the referendum of independence; which the Albanians claimed expressed their desire to break from Yugoslavia, but not in favor of a monolithic “Macedonian” state. Almost immediately after the referendum the Albanians in Macedonia organized their own referendum, which showed that an overwhelming number of Albanians favored at least a loose form of autonomy, short of complete independence for their ethnic. Miranda Vickers and James Pettifer, *From Anarchy to a Balkan Identity: Albania* (London: Hurst and Co., 1997), p. 171.

¹⁷James Pettifer, “Macedonia: Still the Apple of Discord,” *The World Today*, March 51:3, 1995, p. 57.

¹⁸Kim Mehmeti, “Disappearing Democracy,” *War Report*, May 1996; Marie-Françoise Allain et Ivailo Ditchev, “Fragile Macédoine,” *Le Monde Diplomatique*, November 1995; “Watch Macedonia,” *Foreign Report*, 23 November 1995; Helena Smith, “Mad, Sad and Dangerous Hold Key to the Balkans,” *The Observer*, 16 October, 1994.

The riskiest factor on the internal scene is the tense relationship that exists between the large proportion of ethnic Albanians and the Macedonian majority, which is also identified as the riskiest factor in general by a number of scholars and policy makers now working on the region.¹⁹

It is difficult to establish with certainty the precise number of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia, since many Albanians boycotted the 1994 census, conducted by the government. The figure is somewhere between the official 23%²⁰ and the 30–40% claimed by the ethnic Albanians.²¹ There have been serious incidents like the forced closure of the Albanian-language University in Tetovo in 1995, and, as of today, not only has tension not yet abated, but it seems to be increasing.²² The first violent clashes on 9 July 1997, which left two dead after the state police intervened in Gostivar to remove the Albanian national flag put up on the town hall by a number of ethnic Albanian demonstrators, most probably indicates serious problems to come.²³ What is paradoxical is that the unrest was provoked by a governmental attempt to ease ethnic tensions by adopting a law on 10 July 1997 enabling ethnic Albanians and Turks to fly other national flags next to the Macedonian one on private occasions or religious holidays. The PDPA mayor of Gostivar and the town's City Council President were consequently incarcerated for "fanning national, racial, and ethnic intolerance, inciting rebellion, and disregarding [the decisions of] the Constitutional Court,"²⁴ while martial law and a curfew were introduced in Gostivar. In the words of Fabian Schmidt, in Macedonia there is a "vicious circle of violence [and] mutual mistrust."²⁵ There seems to have been an increasing pile-up of ethnic prejudice. According to a recent opinion poll, 87% of the Albanians feel discriminated against by Slav Macedonians, while Macedonians were found to be particularly prejudiced against Albanians.²⁶

Current economic and social indicators in Macedonia contribute to the exacerbation of the existing tensions. It was only last year (1996) that the country emerged from a long period of recession, and GDP growth is still low—1.5–2.00 per cent.²⁷ High interest rates, high levels of public spending (45 per cent)²⁸ and slow privatization impede industrial production, which has decreased by almost 50 per cent over the last five years, and continues to decline.²⁹ Furthermore, the prolonged embargo by Greece and the economic sanctions imposed on Serbia by the international community kept both exports and foreign investments low.³⁰ Unemployment is at 8.6 per cent, and

¹⁹Based on a series of interviews conducted by the author in the period of June and July 1997 with senior officials from NATO, the OSCE, the Hague Foundation of Inter-Ethnic Relations, the Working Group on Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities at the Office of the High Representative, the European Commission, and the Macedonian Army.

²⁰EIU Country Report, p. 40. Suzanna Van Moyland, "Macedonia—Home But Not Yet Dry," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 7:2, February 1995, p. 66

²¹Alice Ackermann, "The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: A Relatively Successful Case of Conflict Prevention in Europe," *Security Dialogue*, 27:4, p. 411.

²²Vickers and Pettifer, p. 172.

²³It is worth noting that Turkish flags were flown by the demonstrators together with Albanian ones. *RFE/RL Newslines*, 1:120, 18 September, 1997; *Transitions*, 4:3, August, 1997, p. 11.

²⁴*RFE/RL Newslines*, 1:120, 18 September, 1997.

²⁵Fabian Schmidt, "Western Macedonia's Vicious Circle of Violence," *RFE/RL Newslines*, 1:74, 16 July, 1997.

²⁶Emilija Simoska, "Macedonia: A View on the Inter-Ethnic Relations," *Perceptions*, June–August, 1997, pp. 96–98.

²⁷Stefan Krause, "Moving Toward Firmer Ground in Macedonia," *Transition*, 3:2, 7 February, 1997, p. 45.

²⁸*EIU*, p. 42.

²⁹United Nations Preventive Deployment Force—Recent Developments, Department of Public Information, United Nations http://www.un.org:80/Depts/DPKO/Missions/unpred_r.htm.

³⁰Krause, p. 46.

the average monthly income is US \$ 200.³¹ Scarce availability of adequate welfare cushions exacerbates the existing ethnic tensions and feeds radical nationalism.

An important indication for conflict potentials triggered by Macedonia's economic reality is the country's poor banking system, characteristic of which is a build-up of pyramid investment schemes quite analogous to the ones that predated the mass violence in Albania. To counter a mass rebellion similar to the Albanian one, the Macedonian government has already paid US \$ 12 million out of the scarce national reserves.³²

Another factor with generally negative consequences for the internal economic well-being of the country is the fact that by 1996 Macedonia re-established its traditional economic dependence on Serbia, which has re-affirmed itself as the country's most important regional economic partner.³³ In view of the major political and economic problems in Serbia, and above all, in view of the size of the informal sectors in both countries, this phenomenon could hardly be a sign of a major economic improvement to come.

To reiterate, when linked to the growing ethnic tensions, Macedonia's economic performance assumes an even more important dimension. To draw a link between these two variables, one could refer to Donald Horowitz's classic conceptual dependency established between the economic well-being of ethnic groups and their propensity to secede.³⁴ He maintains that a backward ethnic group in a backward region, which is where we can classify the Albanian minority in Macedonia, will tend to attempt to secede despite economic costs of secession and will do so frequently and at an early stage of the ethnic tensions. In the case of Macedonia, this contains implications for major ethnic violence to come along with a considerable potential for a regional spill-over.

The regional configuration

The regional context is extremely complex and volatile. There is a plethora of interwoven problems that encompasses the whole region, and whose influence on the internal conflict nexus might topple the fragile equilibrium in Macedonia.

Of these, a conflict-prone situation is most likely to emerge from Serbia or from Albania. Even though an "Agreement on the Regulation of Relations and on the Promotion of Cooperation" was concluded between Macedonia and Serbia in April 1996, the Albanian question might re-ignite tensions with Serbia. In combination with the current crisis of failed statehood in Albania, the risk potential is high. The danger consists in the eventual violent explosion of Serbia's Kosovo region, which might trigger an uncontrolled flux of ethnic Albanians through the borders of three states. The 90% ethnic Albanians in Kosovo have managed to organize themselves relatively well.³⁵ They possess a shadow government and a shadow President, Ibrahim Rugova, who increasingly participates in international talks on behalf of the Kosovo Albanians, demanding extended autonomy. Past precedents and gross human rights abuses by the Serbian authorities in the region have indicated that Serbia is unrelenting concerning any autonomy concessions for Kosovo, which it considers a step-board for secession. It is difficult to abstain from a speculation that in case the Albanians in Kosovo consider to resort to a violent solution to achieve autonomy or independence, on the one hand there

³¹Ibid. p. 45.

³²*Transitions*, 4:1, June 1997, p. 11.

³³FYROM Statistical Office, 1997.

³⁴Donald L. Horowitz, "Patterns of Ethnic Separatism," Society for Comparative Study of Society and History, 1981.

³⁵Elez Biberai, "Kosova: The Balkan Power Keg," *Conflict Studies* 258, February 1993 (Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, Washington, D. C.); Vickers and Pettifer, p. 177.

might be an influx of Kosovo Albanians into Macedonia, which will aggravate the already tense relationship between Albanians and Macedonians. On the other hand, it is not unrealistic to assume that the Albanians in Macedonia might consider joining in the Kosovo unrest in the hope of creating a similar impetus later in Macedonia. Either scenario is likely to produce mass violence as Serbian and Macedonian authorities attempt to crush what they would consider a civil unrest in their countries. Growing incidents of inter-ethnic defiance between the official holders of authority in Macedonia and Serbia on the one hand, and their respective Albanian minorities, on the other hand, do not exclude a possibility for coordination of resistance activities by the two ethnic Albanian minorities. To complicate this potential scenario, despite the cooperation accord signed between Macedonia and Serbia, what would commence as an inter-ethnic conflict might well grow into an inter-state one, if the two countries decide to counterbalance internal problems with alliance-building from elsewhere in the region.³⁶

It is necessary to introduce Albania proper in this hypothetical risk assessment imbroglia. Contrary to an initial intuitive proclivity to draw parallelisms between the violence in Albania proper and the situation in Serbia and Macedonia, it will be argued in this paper that the state implosion in Albania has had a deterrent effect. Despite the violent outbreaks and the general anarchy reigning in Albania, it is difficult to propose, as of today, that the state failure, which has deprived the country of the fundamental attributes of statehood, will spill over to neighboring Serbia and Macedonia in the form of an inter-state conflict.³⁷ There are two reasons for this assumption. First, the effort to control all borders of countries surrounding Albania including those of Macedonia and Serbia have been instrumental in reducing to a great extent the danger of an unmanageable refugee influx. Second, it is important to note a structural difference between the two distinct political phenomena that are to be identified in Albania on the one hand, and in Serbia and Macedonia, on the other hand, namely those of state implosion and ethnic conflict respectively. The former does not necessarily include net adversaries, and certainly does not have to do with a crusade of contrasting identities. Similar to a natural calamity, the collapse of the state structure in Albania affected all citizens who found themselves in equally precarious conditions of survival. It did not seem to have interfered with the people's perceptions of their own identity. By contrast, ethnic tensions in Macedonia have to do with the primordial fear of the Albanian community of being dominated and eventually driven out by the Slav Macedonians. Therefore, these perceptions condition the most basic prerequisites for any social formation.³⁸

Another factor that reinforces the structural impediments of a violent spill-over from Albania into Macedonia is that under the present economic and social circumstances in Albania, the Albanians in Macedonia and those in Kosovo are unlikely to keep reunion

³⁶Turkey, for example, has been quite active in promoting Balkan countries and their minorities, to which it feels culturally linked, such as Bosnia, Macedonia, and Albania. It has recently offered to help re-build the Albanian army (*RFE/RL Newslines*, 1: 118, 15 September), and it is not unrealistic to assume that it will get involved in a possible conflict involving the Albanian minority in Macedonia. It is also probable that Greece will not remain aloof if conflict in the Balkans spreads out beyond national borders.

³⁷Based on a series of interviews conducted by the author in the period of June and July 1997 with senior officials from NATO, the OSCE, the Hague Foundation of Inter-Ethnic Relations, the Working Group on Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities at the Office of the High Representative, the European Commission, and the Macedonian Army.

³⁸For a theoretical analysis of this argument, see, *inter alia*, David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, "Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict," *International Security*, 21:2, Fall 1996, p. 43.

claims with Albania on the top of their political agendas. In general, there no longer seems to be a clearly delineated “Greater Albania” cause.

Before turning to the analysis of the other actors in the region it is worth identifying also the sole real security threat in Albania that might have a detrimental effect in Macedonia and in Kosovo—the uncontrolled circulation of significant quantities of arms after gangs broke into the barracks of the Albanian police and army during the Albanian crisis. Despite the fact that the border is indeed monitored, inter alia by the UNPREDEP, illegal traffic of arms to both Macedonia and Serbia is taking place.³⁹ In view of the tense ethnic situation in both Kosovo and Western Macedonia, the amount of weapons circulating between the three countries is a real security risk with potentially gross consequences for the overall stability of the region.⁴⁰

As far as the other countries bordering Macedonia are concerned, namely, Greece and Bulgaria, it can be claimed that although there are points of friction, which will continue to persist, they are very unlikely to lead to violence. In Greece, the political succession at the top alleviated many tensions created by the former Premier Papandreu’s uncompromising and highly nationalist policy approach to Macedonia, which he used for domestic and electoral purposes.⁴¹ For example, Greek troops were mobilized on a number of occasions along the Macedonian border, unnecessarily heightening military tension in the region. The new government of Kostas Simitis seems to have drawn important lessons from the mistakes of its predecessor in adopting a more pragmatic approach to the Macedonian problem. Considerable progress has been made towards the resolution of the existing three contentious points, namely, article 49 of the Macedonian constitution, which Greece considered to contain indirect territorial claims, the Macedonian national flag, which reproduced the Star of Vergina, considered by Greece exclusively its own national symbol, and Macedonia’s official name. As a result of an Interim Accord in 1995, which provided for the resumption of the bilateral talks, in 1996 Macedonia amended its constitution to address Greek concerns, and agreed to remove the star of Vergina from the flag. Reportedly, the two sides are advancing in the negotiations on the name dispute.⁴² Furthermore, an increasing awareness of the necessity to conduct a more cooperative approach is to be registered not only in the Greek policy making circles, but also in the academic community, which is a qualitatively new evolution.⁴³

³⁹RFE/RL Newswire, 1:112, 8 September, 1997.

⁴⁰Based on a series of interviews conducted by the author in the period of June and July 1997 with senior officials from NATO, the OSCE, the Hague Foundation of Inter-Ethnic Relations, the Working Group on Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities at the Office of the High Representative, the European Commission, and the Macedonian Army.

⁴¹Christophe Chiclet, “Athènes et Skopie dans l’Impasse Macédonienne,” *Le Monde Diplomatique*, May 1994, p. 8.

⁴²EIU, pp. 36–37.

⁴³While before 1996 the Greek academic community supported, for the most part the government’s extreme nationalistic position, mostly bombarding the world with “historical proofs” and “scientifically based facts” for the Greek cause (see, for example, Maria Nystazopoulou–Pelekidou, *The “Macedonian Question”: A Historical Review* [Corfu: Ionian University, 1992]; Dean Katsiyiannis, “Hyper-Nationalism and Irredentism in the Macedonian Region: Implications for US Policy,” *European Security*, 5:3, Autumn 1996; Nikolaos Zahariadis, “Nationalism and Small-State Foreign Policy: The Greek Response to the Macedonian Issue,” 109:4, Fall 1994.), scholarly analyses of the need for modern thinking in Greek foreign policy has recently become to impose itself in the academic community of the country (see, Marilena Koppa, “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: The Strategic Dilemmas,” a paper delivered at the Fifth Annual International Seminar of Conflict Resolution in Corfu, August, 1996; Nicholas X. Rizopoulos, “Pride, Prejudice, and Myopia: Greek Foreign Policy in a Time Warp,” *World Policy Journal*, 10:3, Fall 1993, pp. 17–28).

In Bulgaria the line adopted at the recognition of Macedonia in 1992, namely, the recognition of the Macedonian state and not of the Macedonian language and nation, is unlikely to change. This unrelenting approach has already impeded the signing of several trade and investment agreements due to a Bulgarian refusal to sign an official translated version in Macedonian, which Bulgaria considers a dialect of Bulgarian.⁴⁴ The Macedonians, on their part, have refused to sign the agreements in a common “neutral” language, such as English. These might seem petty fall-outs, but they have created feelings of mutual suspicion between the two countries, despite the staunch Bulgarian support for Macedonia during the double embargo and the international recognition impasse. For the most part, however, the uncompromising policy concerns of Bulgarian politicians are little rooted in existing popular attitudes, which are at present quite apathetic to what used to be “the Bulgarian national cause.” It can be claimed with certainty that currently the Macedonian rhetoric in Bulgaria is rather a partisan debate between the political rivals with little, if any, resonance in the electorate. For example, a recent statement by an advisor to the new President Stoyanov suggesting that Bulgaria should normalize its relations with Macedonia by signing a couple of basic treaties (implying the recognition of a Macedonian language) produced a reaction in the opposition press, but almost none in the general public. With the new administration that came to power in Bulgaria in April 1997, which is very committed to espousing a vigorous Western-oriented policy, it can be predicted that this somehow old-fashioned patriotism, which lacks above all substantial electoral backing, will give way to a more sober and realistic approach with Macedonia in the next couple of years. As noted above, it is very unlikely that existing friction points between Macedonia, on the one hand, and Greece and Bulgaria, on the other hand, will lead to violence.

To recapitulate this risk assessment analysis, at present the biggest security threat in Macedonia is the growing ethnic tension between the Slav Macedonians and the Albanian minority, which has resulted in the radicalization of Macedonian political life, which might be rekindled by an ethnic explosion in Kosovo.⁴⁵ It should be noted that this is a new threat as compared to the one at the initial deployment of the UN preventive troops in the country, which was assessed to be a direct Serb aggression similar to the offensive in Slovenia and Croatia. It is, therefore, worth examining at this point the nature of the preventive actions undertaken in Macedonia and their evolution and adaptation in view of the new security exigencies in the country.

Nature of preventive actions in Macedonia

The local leadership

Having an unprejudiced understanding of the present and potential security risks is a fundamental factor for the timely employment of the appropriate preventive action. In that the Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov deserves much of the credit for the maintenance of relative stability in Macedonia.⁴⁶ A bright example is Gligorov’s skillful negotiation of the withdrawal of the Yugoslav national army in exchange for the non-mobilization of Macedonia during the Serbo-Croat hostilities. It might appear a maneuver that rendered the country defenseless, but what it achieved was above all its removal as a potential military target for Serb aggression, which seemed quite probable in 1992. Finally, on 11 November 1992 Gligorov requested the UN Secretary General to

⁴⁴Robert Mickey, “Unstable in a Stable Way,” *Transition*, 1:1, January 1995, p. 38

⁴⁵Vickers and Pettifer, p. 179.

⁴⁶Baudouin Bollaert, “Macédoine: Une Stabilité Miraculeuse,” *Le Figaro*, 15 February, 1997; p.2.

commission the preventive deployment of UN troops to Macedonia to deter an eventual Serbian aggression.

It is worth noting that Gligorov's actions were focused not only on the neutralization of the external threat, but also on addressing to an extent the problem of the Albanian minority inside the country. The sustained coalition partnership between the SDSM and the PDP, although not enough in itself to ease the tensions described above, has played a legitimizing role, particularly in view of the fact that the Albanians have already boycotted several governmental initiatives on a national level.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the attempt to co-opt the Albanian elites by offering them ministerial posts served to splinter their party into two, thus creating power struggles among the various leaders and preventing the eventual institutionalization of the Albanian leadership, similar to the developments in Kosovo.⁴⁸ However, some new political initiative is warranted in view of the recent radicalization of Macedonian politics, as mentioned above. Countering the wavering electoral performance of moderates is certainly a new challenge for President Gligorov that needs to be addressed very urgently. It can be hoped, however, that based on his political performance in the past, President Gligorov will confront successfully this new security and political challenge. Furthermore, much remains to be done in the sphere of cultural rights, particularly, in terms of higher education in Albanian, which has been a continuous source of political tensions between Macedonians and Albanians. After the 1994 parliamentary elections Albanian local officials decided to open an Albanian-language university in Tetovo, where about 70 per cent of the population are ethnic Albanians. The Macedonian central authorities declared the university illegal and jailed the newly elected dean, which led to particularly violent clashes in 1995, and to anti-Albanian demonstrations by Macedonian students that continued into April 1997. The Government, however, has shown a disposition to create quotas for ethnic Albanian students in Macedonian universities, and to increase the meager opportunities for higher education in Albanian (currently limited only to Pedagogy and Drama),⁴⁹ although legalization of the Tetovo university is improbable.⁵⁰

Local NGOs

An important preventive role has been played by some local NGOs which promote increased ethnic awareness and reconciliation, an indication that some Macedonian intellectuals have come to realize the volatility of the situation. For example a new, but very active NGO of this kind is the multi-ethnic Center for Multi-cultural Understanding and Cooperation, whose basic purpose is to promote ethnic tolerance and cooperation between the culturally diverse communities of Macedonia, by mediating conflicts, and increasing inter-cultural interaction. Its advisory board members represent proportionally different ethnic communities. Other NGOs, which have also been working on the issue of inter-ethnic reconciliation are the Ethnic Relations Center in Skopje and the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation. They have done important and

⁴⁷For example, in June 1994 the Albanians boycotted the annual draft into the army.

⁴⁸There is some opposition to Ibrahim Rugova, particularly in the face of Adem Demaci, dubbed the "Albanian Mandela." See Fabian Schmidt, "Protests in Serbia Raise Hopes of Reconciliation in Kosovo," *Transition*, 3:4, 7 March, 1997, pp. 17–18. Shadow Prime Minister Bujar Bukoshi has also expressed some criticism of Rugova's moderate tactics. *RFE/RL Newslines*, 1:96, August 17, 1997. However, there does not seem to be a serious challenge to Rugova's primacy in the managing of Kosovar affairs that could lead to the splintering of his party and to a division of the loyalties of the Kosovo Albanians.

⁴⁹This compromise has been suggested by the High Commissioner on National Minorities in the course of an on-going project for ethnic reconciliation in Macedonia, which will be elaborated below.

⁵⁰Duncan Perry, "On the Road to Stability—or Destruction?" *Transition*, 25 August, 1995, p. 41.

original statistical work on registering the existing attitudes among the members of various ethnic groups and proposing some conflict resolution strategies. Other NGOs have been created with a substantial aid from abroad, and they will therefore be considered in the next section.

International involvement

Multilateral initiatives

The UN

In this section it is important to note that the nature of the international involvement in Macedonia is *sui generis* in the history of UN peacekeeping. Two particular characteristics which are worth examining carefully can be identified in this respect.

First, for the first time in 1992 the UN Security Council unanimously upheld a purely preventive military engagement. Past UN experience in peace-keeping operations has at all times been a *post factum* event. The Macedonian case thus marks an important evolution in the UNSC policy approach.

Second, in 1994 the UNPREDEP's mandate, which had until then had a strictly military scope, including border monitoring and reporting, early warning, fact-finding, etc. has been extended to include civilian activities, or what has been termed "the human dimension," i.e. promoting ethnic reconciliation, assisting various humanitarian activities, monitoring the Macedonian general and local elections, and facilitating other UN-sponsored humanitarian, social, and economic projects.⁵¹ An example of an efficient adaptation to the exigencies of the situation in Macedonia is offered by UNPREDEP's involvement in the guarding of Macedonia's western border during the Albanian crisis. Another important contribution of the international deployment troops has been the 1994 negotiation of a military administrative boundary between Serbia and Macedonia to delimit the area of operation of (then) UNPROFOR. That significantly contributed to the signing of an important bi-lateral accord with Belgrade in 1996, which relieved much of the political pressure on Macedonia's northern border. UNPREDEP also played a very important auxiliary role in the Italian-led Alba operation in Albania proper, which did not deploy stabilization units in the risky border area with Albania. Overall, the UN performance in Macedonia has been remarkable, even though it alone cannot guarantee a sustained peace in Macedonia.

Important lessons in the direction of the possibility for a more vigorous engagement to uphold global peace may be inferred from the Macedonian experience.⁵² These include a high degree of coordination in both data collecting and decision making on the part of the UNSC members, a credible commitment to act, and last, but not least the importance of a US involvement on the ground. It is important to note that the UNSC member-states were not taken up by a sudden altruistic fit in deciding to act in Macedonia, as opposed to, for example, Bosnia. What was fundamental was that the Macedonian situation was presented as an imminent threat to the peace that could be redeemed at a relatively low cost, whose significance loomed large in the contrasting background of the UN/NATO involvement in the Bosnian war. In November 1996,

⁵¹United Nations Preventive Deployment Force—Recent Developments, Department of Public Information, United Nations http://www.un.org:80/Depts/DPKO/Missions/unpred_r.htm.

⁵²For a comprehensive analysis see Hans-Ulrich Seidt, "Lessons Learnt from the Crisis in the Balkans," *European Security*, 5:1, Spring 1996.

before going out of office Boutros Boutros-Ghali, proposed to the UNSC to extend the mandate of UNPREDEP for another six months, and marked the important role it played in containing a spill-over of violence in the Balkans.⁵³ The UNSC acted on the Secretary General's proposal by adopting Resolution N° 1110 of 28 May 1997, which extended the UNPREDEP mandate until 30 November, 1997. However, due to Russian concerns over the presence of US soldiers in the UNPREDEP contingent, and to the reported intention of the Macedonian government to re-arm in order to build up some defense structure of its own, the number of the troops are being reduced by 1/4 and there is little prospective for further extensions.⁵⁴ It is important to maintain a minimum number of troops in the country as long as the future of the Dayton accords remains uncertain, and as long as there are frequent violence occurrences that might lead to significant border transgressions of the Macedonian border from Albania or from Kosovo. Overall, however, it could be claimed that "so far, the UN's FYR Macedonia mission constitutes a relative success because there has not been any spread of violent conflict, either on the interstate or the inter-ethnic levels."⁵⁵

The OSCE

The OSCE reacted promptly to the build-up of tensions in Macedonia by sending in 1992 a Spillover Mission as well as occasional fact-finding missions such as the ones under the auspices of the High Commissioner on National Minorities with the specific purpose to monitor the developments in and around Macedonia. Owing to these initiatives, incidents of ethnic intolerance were registered, investigated, and reported to the international community, a fact which certainly influenced the prompt deployment of UNPREDEP. Furthermore, the OSCE missions tried to mitigate and mediate specific inter-ethnic conflicts, thus directly engaging on the ground.

The OSCE mostly functions on the basis of priorities defined on an inter-governmental level. The most demanding actions are undertaken by consensus. Fortunately, in the case of Macedonia, there was an early general understanding among the member states that the country was a potential crisis zone, and no insurmountable political contrasts arose concerning the need for early action. This allowed the Organization to unfold its conflict prevention capabilities, permitting the individual OSCE bodies to make full use of their institutional freedom of action.

Particular attention has to be paid to the sui generis role of the High Commissioner on National Minorities. The HCNM has been able to gain an increasingly greater autonomy in conducting his/her own analysis of the problem areas, and in acting quickly to disperse ethnic tensions and induce cultural reconciliation within the OSCE area.⁵⁶ In Macedonia the HCNM, Mr. Max van der Stoep, has been conducting two such projects, which have involved the promotion of ethnic Albanian participation in Macedonian

⁵³Boutros-Boutros Ghali in a message to the International Workshop "An Agenda for Preventive Diplomacy: Theory and Practice" held in Skopje, 16-19 October, 1996; Branko Geroski, "With a Peace to Keep," *War Report*, October 1995, p. 43

⁵⁴Krause, p. 46.

⁵⁵Alice Ackermann and Antonio Pala, "From Peacekeeping to Preventive Deployment: A Study of the United Nations in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia," *European Security*, 5:1, Spring 1996, p. 93.

⁵⁶Maria Amor Martin Estébanez, "The High Commissioner on National Minorities: Development of the Mandate" in M. Bothe, N. Ronzitti, A. Rosas, *The OSCE in the Maintenance of Peace and Security* (forthcoming, Kluwer, 1998).

universities, and the mediation between policy-makers from different ethnies to increase possibilities for higher education in Albanian, as mentioned above.⁵⁷

The International Conference on Former Yugoslavia

The former Working Group on Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities of the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia has contributed significantly to the creation of personal contacts between the leadership of different ethnic groups by conducting a series of informal mediation activities. Its performance, although often overlooked, was fundamental before the deployment of UNPREDEP, and was not completely substituted by the Dayton accords. The conference covered the whole ex-Yugoslavia area, thus creating a comprehensive agenda for pressing issues including the ethnic tensions in Macedonia.

The EU

In the background of the active involvement of both the UN and the OSCE, it should be noted that the EU's performance could have been more satisfactory (it did, in fact, attempt to act in a manner similar to that of the OSCE), had its potential contribution not been blocked by a threat of a Greek veto on all issues related to Macedonia. What was registered, however, in the course of this research, was a major awareness by the European Commission of the issues concerning both Macedonia, and the whole crisis region in the Balkans, as well as availability of insightful analyses.⁵⁸ Therefore, there is readiness for action, much of which is, unfortunately, lost in bureaucratic implementation and consensus-building procedures. In late 1996 (i.e., after the 1995 Interim Agreement between Macedonia and Greece on the normalization of the relations) the EU negotiated a preferential Cooperation Agreement with Macedonia, which also contains a Financial Protocol. Besides the purely economic aspects of the agreement, which, *inter alia*, encourage the country's aspiration for association with the EU, it also stresses the importance of good neighborly relations in the region to ensure a climate of stability.⁵⁹ A number of other field agreements, including the extension of the PHARE program to Macedonia in February 1996 have also been negotiated with Macedonia, all stressing the importance of stable environment and regional peace.⁶⁰ Thus, by introducing a classical carrots-and-sticks approach, the EU is becoming increasingly involved in preventive activities.

Other European organizations, such as the Council of Europe, have played an important role by helping Macedonia by providing expertise to Macedonian officials,

⁵⁷Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations, "Specialized Programmes in Support of the High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe," p. 9; The Role of the High Commissioner on National Minorities in OSCE Conflict Prevention, Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations, the Hague, June 1997, pp. 56-59.

⁵⁸Based on a series of interviews conducted by the author in the period of June and July 1997 with senior officials from NATO, the OSCE, the Hague Foundation of Inter-Ethnic Relations, the Working Group on Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities at the Office of the High Representative, the European Commission, and the Macedonian Army.

⁵⁹"Common Principles for Future Contractual Relations with Certain Countries from South-Eastern Europe," a Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament; Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, 2 October 1996, COM (96) 476, pp. 2-3.

⁶⁰"Relations Between the European Community and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia," Report by the Office of External Relations: Europe and the New Independent States, Common Foreign and Security Policy, External Service, General Directorate of the European Commission, Brussels, 21 January, 1997.

administering the 1994 census, and facilitating communication between Macedonians and ethnic Albanians.

NATO

NATO has also been engaged in Macedonia, especially after the country's joining the Partnership for Peace Initiative in November 1995, particularly in the conduct of some joint military exercises launched within the PfP framework. However, NATO has been very careful to take into consideration Russian objections to unfolding NATO activities (particularly, the presence of the US 502nd Infantry Contingent is invoked⁶¹) in the context of its general objection to NATO enlargement (Macedonia has declared its desire to join the alliance as soon as possible, and despite its exclusion from the first wave of enlargement at NATO's July 1997 summit, it is likely to continue nurturing these aspirations). Thus, NATO's involvement has, to an extent, created some tensions, while alleviating others. However, NATO is not engaged in producing early warning analyses, acting solely on the basis of the decisions of the North Atlantic Council.⁶² Macedonia's involvement in the PfP, however, has had an indirect conflict prevention effect in the region.⁶³ It should further be recognized that, particularly with regard to South-East Europe, that "NATO cannot be all things to all people, metamorphosing into both an alliance for common defense and a collective security organization."⁶⁴

International NGOs

Several INGOs contributed to and aided the UNPREDEP mission acting in a similar vein with the other international organizations involved. Specific ethnic reconciliation projects like the London-based "Search for Common Ground in Macedonia" or the initiatives of the Foundation of Inter-Ethnic Relations in the Hague deserve attention. The role of international NGOs is characterized by the correct identification of the problems, even though their activities were concentrated on addressing the internal inter-ethnic tensions, and on general humanitarian relief operations, as opposed to, for example, easing inter-state ethnic tensions, particularly linking the Kosovo problem to the ethnic Albanian grievances in Macedonia. Generally, international NGO activity in Macedonia has been relatively limited, and quite conventional in nature. Much remains to be done in terms of boosting the establishment and development of more NGOs that could facilitate both inter-state and inter-ethnic understanding and thus contribute to the further de-escalation of tension in the region.

The US

⁶¹Stephen Larrabee, "Russia On the Balkans Again?" *Mirovaja Ekonomika i Mejdunarodnie Otnoshenia*, N° 10, 1994; see also Olga Murdzeva-Sharik and Svetomir Sharik, "Peace and UNPREDEP in Macedonia," a paper delivered at the Symposium "New Dimensions of Sustainable Security in the Post-Cold War World," Vienna, November 1996.

⁶²Based on a series of interviews conducted by the author in the period of June and July 1997 with senior officials from NATO, the OSCE, the Hague Foundation of Inter-Ethnic Relations, the Working Group on Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities at the Office of the High Representative, the European Commission, and the Macedonian Army.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Daniel N; Nelson, "Security in the Balkans: A Bleak Future?," *The Future of NATO Working Paper 95.3*, November 1995, Old Dominion University, p. 28.

An inseparable facet of the Macedonian case of conflict prevention is the US leadership. Evidently, quite willing to stay away from a Bosnian-type choice between a military engagement in the midst of a raging violence and a strong inclination to avoid US losses of life, in the Macedonian case both the Bush and the Clinton administrations showed a marked willingness to invest efforts in preventive activities. As noted by F. Stephen Larrabee, “the US have a strong interest in defusing ethnic tensions in Macedonia and preventing an internal explosion there.”⁶⁵ Reportedly, the US criticized Greece for its uncooperative approach in both NATO and the EU, and threatened both Albania’s former President Sali Berisha and Serbia’s Slobodan Milosevic with credible and prompt response in case of military interventions in Macedonia. US officials were particularly successful in their involvement in the mediation of the 1995 Greek–Macedonian agreement. The presence of US federal troops played a crucial deterrent role in halting eventual aggressors. Furthermore, US lobbying in the UNSC for an immediate and decisive action in Macedonia was crucial in obtaining consensus there, and, particularly, in neutralizing Russian concerns. In short, the US involvement in Macedonia has been crucial both in terms of international leverage in regional conflict prevention problems, and in terms of well–assessed foreign policy priorities and responsibility.

Turkey

Turkey has been particularly active in following the developments in Macedonia.⁶⁶ It is particularly concerned with Muslim populations in the Balkans to which it feels religiously, culturally, and historically linked.⁶⁷ Furthermore, Turkey has also acted strategically in the Balkans in developing solidarity alliances to use in its rivalry with Greece. As early as 1992 President Gligorov visited Turkey and expressed a desire to forge stronger ties as a counter–weight to Greece and Serbia.⁶⁸ It has reportedly launched an intensive military training program of high–ranking Macedonian officers. While the presence of an important regional country player and a NATO member state might help to sustain stability in Macedonia, it is important that Turkey avoid the externalization of its dispute with Greece. Quite beyond the ethnic and religious problems that such a development might create on the internal scene of Macedonia, this undertaking would render Greece particularly nervous, which is hardly a way to proceed with the fragile and very complex negotiations with Macedonia. The US has been quite proactive in balancing Turkish initiatives off by launching a series of military educational exercises of its own and within PfP, as mentioned above. On its turn, however, this has upset Russia, thus creating a chain reaction of inter-state suspicion that goes beyond the region, that hardly contributes to the solution of the intricate Macedonian imbroglio. Germany has also signed a separate military cooperation agreement with Macedonia in September 1996 which involves the training of Macedonian officers. It should be noted that in the background of the well-coordinated international preventive action in Macedonia, particular efforts should be directed at avoiding that the country becomes the

⁶⁵F. Stephen Larrabee, “The Balkans” in Zalmay Khalizad, (ed.) *Strategic Appraisal 1996* (Santa Monica, RAND, 1996), p. 99.

⁶⁶See, *inter alia*, Kemal Kirisci, “The End of the Cold War and Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy Behavior,” *Foreign Policy* (Ankara), 13:3–4.

⁶⁷See for example, Oya Akgönenc Mughisuddin, “The Balkans in Transition: Old Conflicts, New Dimensions,” and Ali Fuat Borovah, “The Bosnian Crisis and Turkish Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Policy* (Ankara), 13:3–4, 1993.

⁶⁸Duncan Perry, “Macedonia: A Balkan Problem and a European Dilemma,” *RFE/RL Research Report*, 1:25, 19 June, 1992, p. 41

locus of other bilateral rivalries by allowing local authorities to play various external powers off each other while rearming at a fast rate.

Implications for conflict prevention theory based on the case of Macedonia

Macedonia provides an excellent testing ground for the concept of conflict prevention which has received particular attention due to the new nature of conflict in the post-Cold War period. Despite the relatively short time-span of preventive actions, and despite the continued ethnic turmoil, violence has been avoided, and the case can certainly be labeled a success at this point in time. As already mentioned, there are no guarantees as to the endurance of this success. However, particularly when contrasted to the events in former Yugoslavia, where the risks of inaction have materialized in mass bloodshed, the Macedonian case has confirmed the theoretical premises of conflict prevention theory.

Other important findings of this research indicate that international involvement in conflict prevention per se is not a panacea and cannot be applied indiscriminately in all occasions when there has been a registered ethnic volatility and an imminent threat of violence. Conflict prevention awareness is thus a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for the maintenance of regional peace and ethnic tolerance.⁶⁹ Other necessary conditions include what might be termed a relatively advanced conflict prevention culture on the part of the local leadership, which helps raise the conflictual situation on the international agenda, international consensus as to the volatility of the region and the possible causes of war, a credible commitment to act, and a well-developed network of information exchange and coordination between the international and the local actors involved. Finally, unilateral leadership and actions upholding the international preventive framework of activities play a fundamental role in the successful maintenance of the preventive impetus. However unilateral initiatives that create niches of ambiguity that could be used by individual actors at the expense of the general preventive objective, should be avoided. In short, conflict prevention should be a well-thought out, continuously supervised and multilateral affair.

Implications for conflict prevention policy based on the case of Macedonia, and policy proposals for sustained peace in the country in the future

In the case of Macedonia, the relative success of UNPREDEP should not be taken for granted. The new UN Secretary General might consider recommending to the UNSC to extend UNPREDEP mandate for at least another six-month term in November, while reconsidering the severe reduction of the deployment troops to 300. Furthermore, in view of the increased ethnic tensions in the country the UNPREDEP's mandate might be further modified to include more civilian components, such as increased collaboration with the local police, which would hopefully prevent minority abuses and contribute to the internal stability.

⁶⁹The more clear-cut typology for successful conflict prevention by Stuart Kaufman should also be borne in mind, although we consider necessary to introduce a more complex one in the text. Stuart Kaufman identifies four necessary and sufficient conditions that ensure success—1) consent by the parties to the conflict; 2) cooperation by the parties to the conflict with the preventive activities; 3) appropriate mandate; and 4) strong motivation for the international community to act. Stuart J. Kaufman, "Preventive Peacekeeping; Ethnic Violence, and Macedonia," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 19:229–246, 1996, pp. 232–33.

The OSCE might want to consider eventual membership for Serbia, which would allow for missions and closer monitoring in the problematic Kosovo region. That would promote a more comprehensive approach to ensure greater respect for human rights by the local administrations, perhaps leading to the solution of the higher education problem in Macedonia and to the alleviation of the tense situation in Kosovo.

The European Union might become more active by contributing to international efforts aimed at redressing the grave situation in Albania, which will certainly relieve border pressure, and, therefore, reverse escalation of ethnic tensions in Macedonia and Kosovo. Also, by stressing the linkage between Macedonia's desire to join and fully participate in important international organizations and fora, such as the EU and NATO, and the maintenance of a human rights standard, the EU could achieve significant improvement of the current situation. Reconstruction and development aid programs are crucial in anchoring Macedonia's fragile democracy.

After the NATO summit in Madrid in July 1997, increased cooperation within PfP will balance off the disappointment of not having been included in the first wave of enlargement and contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region. Also, a more active engagement by NATO would render reticent eventual security offers of individual countries, which might undermine the stability in the region, and contain some of the dangers created by the increased illegal circulation of weapons.

Other international organizations like the World Bank, the EBRD, and the IMF should get involved with the objective of giving a boost to foreign investment which will reflect positively on the ethnic tensions in Macedonia, and postpone, if not render reticent, Albanian minority independence claims. Direct foreign economic aid, like the recent IMF US \$ 80 million and the World Bank's US \$ 45 million loans are fundamental to keep the impetus of the country's fragile recovery. Economic aid is also extremely important in upholding the moderate policy of the country's leadership.

To recapitulate, conflict prevention in Macedonia has been by far successful, although it is not exhausted with the presence of UNPREDEP and the prolongation of its mandate. Preventive activities have been contingent on the efforts of a number of international and local organizations, which have acted in time and in coordination with each other. In view of the evolution of the conditions that allow for the successful implementation and maintenance of conflict prevention in Macedonia, it should be understood that there is still room for significant improvement. It includes the maintenance and the elaboration of existing initiatives, as well as the launching of new ones in view of the heightening of ethnic tensions, and in view of the general exigencies of the regional peace. As Stephen Griffiths notes, "[a] century ago it was just likely that a conflict would already have broken out; now, with greater purposeful international pressures, it is possible to keep the situation on hold until a diplomatic and political solution can be found. However, this is a situation that needs to be watched carefully."⁷⁰ The post-Dayton security situation continues to be very unstable and the international community has a vital interest in preserving the peace in the sole ex-Yugoslav space, which has so far escaped violence.

⁷⁰Stephen I. Griffiths, "Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict: Threats to European Security," *SIPRI Research Report* N° 5, Oxford University Press, 1993; p. 61.