

A DISPUTED NAME: IS THERE A SOLUTION TO THE NAME
ISSUE BETWEEN MACEDONIA AND GREECE?

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ABSTRACT

The name dispute between Macedonia and Greece emerged in 1991, immediately after the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, when Macedonia declared its independence. Since then, Macedonia and Greece negotiate under the auspices of the United Nations mediation trying to achieve a “mutually acceptable solution.” The resolution of the issue is highly uncertain and questionable.

The name issue is a unique problem in the history of international relations. This issue concerns foreign policy, history, ethics, security, and economy. The historic background which goes back more than 2000 years, further contributes to the complexity of the problem.

Usually international disputes occur over more “traditional” conflicts that involve such matters as borders, land, human rights, or religion. In this case one country insists on a change of the name of the other country, which is virtual rather than material demand. While the problem is virtual, the consequences are real. Recent developments, especially after the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April 2008 where Greece blocked Macedonian accession into Alliance, increased negative sentiments threatening to destroy what has been achieved in building good neighborly relations for more than a decade.

The first chapter introduces the problem and explains how it occurred. Chapter two discusses the historic background of the dispute focusing on three periods: ancient history and the period of Philip II and his son Alexander the Great; recent world and regional history; and a discussion of the historic facts of the dispute. The third chapter explores the security aspect of the name issue and its implications on bilateral relations between Macedonia and Greece as well as on the regional stability. Chapter four envisages the possibility for resolution of the dispute and points to the necessity of solution as soon as possible.

The discussed issue is summarized in the Conclusion. The evidences presented in this paper shows the complexity of the problem for which there is not a simple solution and that international mediation in the efforts for resolution of this issue is essential. This chapter also envisages consequences and possible developments related to the name dispute.

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To my father Gjorgi

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION OF THE PROBLEM

The Republic of Macedonia and Greece are neighboring countries that claim to be committed to the defense of democratic values and the strategic goal of a stable, united and prosperous Europe. Today, instead of working together to achieve these goals, Macedonia and Greece are trapped in emotions evoked by the spirit of Alexander the Great, who died some 2300 years ago. Both countries share parts of the territory of Alexander's legendary Kingdom and claim their rights to ancient Macedonian heritage including the name "Macedonia." The dispute between the two nations has arisen over the simple issue of whether the Republic of Macedonia, a young country that emerged from the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, may call itself Macedonia.

During the 1990s, the sub-region of southeastern Europe faced many security challenges as a result of civil wars, inter-ethnic conflicts and border disputes. The reasons for these conflicts included the imposition of domination; fights for territories; religious and ideological intolerance; prejudices; and fanaticism. The name dispute proved to be exceptional and unique in nature. Greece questioned the right of its northern neighbor to call itself Macedonia when the Yugoslav Federation dissolved in the early 1990s. In the beginning, the dispute seemed minor, manageable and easily resolvable. However, none of these proved to be the case. The conflict has persisted for nearly twenty years, affecting political, economic, cultural and security relations between the two countries as well as the region as a whole. Furthermore, the dispute has become an obstacle to the

realization of long-term strategic priorities, including the full integration and lasting stabilization of Eastern Europe.

The name dispute has the potential to turn into an unwanted and uncontrollable problem and could easily and quickly escalate into a larger conflict. Hence, a solution is necessary. This paper will discuss whether a solution is possible and, if so, how a solution to this conflict can be achieved.

Yugoslav v. Grecian Macedonia

Modern Macedonia is a predominantly rural, land-locked country located north of Greece. It is the geographic “Crossroads of the Balkans,” a centuries-old description of Macedonia that re-emerged after the country declared independence from communist Yugoslavia in 1991. The young democracy stretches across approximately 25,713 square kilometers with 2,150,000 inhabitants, 600,000 of whom live in Skopje, the capital. The biggest Macedonian river, Vardar, divides Skopje in two parts. The western part is dominated by the Macedonian people, while the eastern part is inhabited mainly by ethnic Albanians. The largest ethnic group overall consists of ethnic Macedonians. According to the 2002 census, 64.18% of the inhabitants declare themselves as Macedonians, and 25.2% as Albanians. Smaller ethnic minorities include Turks, Roma, Serbs, Bosnian, Vlachs, and others.¹ The Macedonian economy is among the smallest in the world, with a gross domestic product (GDP) of about \$6.2 billion, representing about 0.01% of the total

¹ Central Intelligence Agency, “The World Factbook: Europe, Macedonia,” Central Intelligence Agency, <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mk.html>> (accessed February 12, 2010).

world output.²

Many generations dreamed to see Macedonia as an independent sovereign state. But, once independence was declared, there was little time for festivities, and the euphoria was short lived.³ The predominantly Eastern Orthodox country struggled with internal ethnic problems which had started under the Yugoslav authority. Political demands of the ethnic minority quickly increased in late 2000, leading to open conflict in 2001 when ethnic Albanians in Macedonia questioned their minority rights and participation in the government.⁴

Despite the inter-ethnic hostilities, the general consensus among all ethnic groups has been consistent--namely, that for Macedonia to move forward, the country should align itself with the West and join NATO and the European Union (EU). Unfortunately, NATO membership was denied because Greece rejected Macedonia's post-independence name.

Macedonia's name dispute emerged soon after the Macedonian secession from the former Yugoslavia in 1991. Although the problem was identified and proposed solutions were negotiated by the UN Security Council in 1993, Greece still considered it necessary to impose stronger pressure on the Republic of Macedonia in order to safeguard its

² Ibid.

³ Andrew Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* (Stanford University, Stanford CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2008), 261.

⁴ Department of State of the United States, "Background Note: Macedonia," Department of State, <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/26759.htm>> (accessed March 2, 2010).

perceived national interest.⁵ Greece concluded that it was unacceptable for Macedonia to seek international recognition and accession to such international organizations as the United Nations, International Monetary Fund, Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe, and others. The main Greek concern was that the word “Macedonia” within the name “Republic of Macedonia” implied territorial aspirations by the Macedonian state. Another serious issue for Greece emerged during campaigns in the first democratic election in Macedonia in 1990 when some political parties used nationalist rhetoric calling for unification of all Macedonian territories. Greeks also objected to sections of the new Macedonian constitution which, according to Athens, alluded to territorial reunification. Political leaders in Athens were also concerned that the new country had adopted the ancient emblem of Alexander’s Macedonian dynasty – the star of “Vergina” – on the new Macedonian flag. Greece considered the use of these symbols to be a theft of Greek history and cultural heritage. The Greek anger culminated in February 1994, when the United States, followed by Australia, recognized the Republic of Macedonia. In addition, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund announced the extension of credits intended to stabilize the new country. Greece perceived such developments as weakening its diplomatic positions.⁶

⁵ John Shea, *Macedonia and Greece: The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers 1997; reprint, Jefferson North Carolina and London, 2008), 280.

⁶ Spyridon Kotsovilis, “Exploring the Sources of Greek Foreign Policy towards the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,” Conference Paper, 2nd PhD Symposium on Modern Greece, (June 10, 2005), The Hellenic Observatory, London School of Economics and Political Science, 5, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/hellenicObservatory/pdf/2nd_Symposium/Spyridon_Kotsovilis_paper.pdf> (accessed March 1, 2010).

In response, on February 16, 1994, the Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou made official the decision of his Government to suspend the trade links with Macedonia and to close the Greek Consulate in Skopje. Athens started an oil embargo by closing its Thessaloniki seaport to Macedonian suppliers. Greece also frequently closed its border to prevent the transport of goods between the two countries.⁷ These measures were aimed to promote economic weakness and political destabilization in Macedonia, which was forced to seek alternative supplies of oil from Bulgaria and Turkey.⁸

The situation could be described as an attempt to kill a mosquito with a cannon. The explanation of Greece's policy was best described in a letter from the Greek Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros – Ghali informing him about the attitude of his country towards the Republic of Macedonia. In his letter, Papoulias explained:

...the premature recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina, not preceded by previous overcoming of ethnic problem, led to a civil war and brought foreign countries into the crisis....This example in Bosnia could be repeated in the case of Skopje....Two ethnic groups in this region are antagonistic one towards the other, and that there is always possibility of a worsening of their relations. Skopje emerged as a result of certain geopolitical speculations in the past, ideas that could still destabilize the region. Peace in the region is threatening not only by the name of this new state, but also by the series of actions, resulting from the usurpation of the name Macedonia, and with an aim of creating a new historically non-existent country, with territorial pretensions as its fundamental policy, especially towards Macedonia, a northern region in Greece.⁹

⁷ Shea, *Macedonia and Greece*, 284.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 279.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 278.

Papoulias expressed concerns that the Parliament in Skopje intended to unite Macedonia by including Greek territories in its own, that the Parliament uses Greek historic symbols on the national flag, and that it is unacceptable for Greece to border a country which calls itself Macedonia or uses similar words that originate from that name.¹⁰

Papoulias indicated that a multi-ethnic conflict on Greece's northern border, Macedonian reappropriation of ancient Greek and a desire to unite Macedonian territories influenced the name dispute.¹¹ Athens' political leadership believed these reasons justified a hard line response to these issues. He claimed that Greece was surrounded by potential dangers which could destabilize the region, stating that "Greece is not the reason for any kind of problems in the region, but others are creating problems for her,"¹² as was the case with the inter-ethnic wars in the twentieth century which had taken place in the area.¹³ Ironically, many Greek politicians stated that a "small multi-ethnic society could not survive in the Balkans," which contradicted Athens' support for the unification of Cyprus – a country divided after a military invasion by Turkey in 1974.¹⁴ By supporting Cyprus' unification, Athens supported the ethnic diversity of the island.

¹⁰ Ibid., 279.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Loizides Neophytos, "Doves against Hawks: Symbolic Politics in Greece and the Macedonian Question," *International Studies Association*, Chicago, (February 2007), 24, <http://works.bepress.com/neophytos_loizides/15/> (accessed March 16, 2010).

Because like Cyprus, most Balkan societies are multi-ethnic, Greece's concerns about potential threats from its neighbors are hypocritical.

Political analysts are divided on how to interpret Greece's position. Some, including Americans Janusz Bugajski and David Augustin, criticized Greece for "provoking nationalist feeling by aggravating fears over alleged Macedonian expansion,"¹⁵ instead of contributing to the regional stability as a local superpower by "drawing the fragile and non threatening Macedonians into a closer alliance."¹⁶ William Dunn, another American analyst, believed Greece's desire for "cultural purity" dictated its position.¹⁷ He stated that the main political parties in Greece based their policies on a "myth of continuity with classical antiquity and a notion of exclusive entitlement to symbols, conquerors, kingdoms, and territories of the ancient world."¹⁸ Dunn also noted that Greece did not call any part of its territory "Macedonia" until 1988, when Andreas Papandreu's Greek government changed the name of "Northern Greece" to "Macedonia."¹⁹

Other analysts disagreed; they argued that Greece was concerned about the Skopje's potential influence on the Macedonian minority in northern Greece.²⁰ At the center of the dispute they saw Greece's concern over future "land claims by Slav

¹⁵ Shea, *Macedonia and Greece*, 281.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 282.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 283.

Macedonians who left Greece, or [who] were expelled, in the Greek civil war [of 1948].”²¹ Therefore, according to the first president of independent Macedonia, Kiro Gligorov, thousands of deportees might want to return to their abandoned homes and ask for repossession of their property or equivalent compensation, which would have negative impacts on Greece’s economy and its ethnic structure.²²

In spite of the conflict which existed between the two countries, in 1993 Macedonia and Greece began to negotiate under strong international pressure and UN mediation.

The Independence of Macedonia and UN Resolution 817

Literally from the very first day of its independence, Macedonia faced serious challenges including the spread of the inter-ethnic tensions in Kosovo, social unrest in Albania as a consequence of the economic and financial collapse, and military threat from Slobodan Milosevic’s authoritarian regime in Serbia. In addition, the new country had to deal with inter-ethnic tensions at home, and the name dispute with Greece.

Since Macedonian independence, Greece has sought to obstruct every attempt of the young republic to gain recognition of its independence and join the United Nations, as well as to integrate into NATO, the European Union and other international organizations

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

under its constitutional name, the Republic of Macedonia.²³

The Greek government has carried the dispute beyond the naming issue. Greece also denies the existence of Macedonian minorities within Greece, and questions the existence of the Macedonian language as well as the use of Macedonian national symbols. As a consequence, historical events and processes have been mutually disputed.²⁴ The conflicts have continued for almost twenty years with Greece demanding that Macedonia change its name, while Macedonia struggled to keep what it considers as its constitutional name. From the moment of Macedonian independence, Greece has accused Macedonia of being “unacceptably irredentist.”²⁵ Greece has specifically objected to a number of articles of the Macedonian Constitution and has demanded that these articles be amended or changed to reflect the Greek maximalist position. Particularly, on the name issue, Greece demanded the complete absence of the word “Macedonia.”²⁶

The Republic of Macedonia became an independent state on September 8, 1991, and was admitted to the United Nations in April 1993, pursuant to the terms of UN Security Council Resolution 817 (1993). In view of the “difference” between Greece and

²³ Ljubomir Danailov Frckoski, “The Character of the Name Dispute between Macedonia and Greece,” Office in Macedonia: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, (May 2009), 4, <<http://www.fes.org.mk/pdf/Frckoski%20-%20Character%20of%20the%20Name%20Dispute.pdf>> (accessed March 12, 2010).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Aristotle Tziampiris and others eds., *Athens-Skopje: An Uneasy Symbiosis, 1995-2002: The Name Dispute in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia after the Signing of the Interim Accord* (Greece: Papazisis, 2003), 227.

²⁶ Ibid.

the new country concerning the constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia, the resolution provided that the country should be “provisionally referred to... within the United Nations” as “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”²⁷ until “settlement of the difference between Macedonia and Greece is reached.”²⁸ The resolution stated that the issue should be resolved in the interest of peace and good neighborly relations in the region.²⁹

At the time, it appeared that the basic characteristic of the name dispute involved mainly the use and control of symbols related to the words “Macedonia” and “Macedonian.”³⁰ The conflict, however, turned into a political confrontation between the two neighbors. The adoption of Resolution 817 (1993) and later Resolution 845 (1993) by the UN Security Council directly acknowledged the potential of the name dispute to escalate into a security conflict. In order to avoid this, the UN resolutions requested that the parties resume bilateral talks under the auspices of the UN Secretary General in an effort to find a solution.³¹

²⁷ United Nations Security Council, “UN Security Council Resolution 817 (1993),” adopted at its 3196th meeting on April 7, 1993, <<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N93/203/74/IMG/N9320374.pdf?OpenElement>> (accessed February 2, 2010).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ United Nations Security Council, “UN Security Council Resolution 845 (1993),” adopted at its 3243rd meeting on June 18, 1993, <<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N93/361/24/IMG/N9336124.pdf?OpenElement>> (accessed February 5, 2010).

Resolution 817 (1993) made clear that the intention of the provisional reference to “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” was meant only as a descriptive designation by which “the State would be referred within the United Nations.” Resolution 817 (1993) did not create a “new name for the State,” nor did it require the State to call itself “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.” Still, in compliance with this resolution, “the Republic of Macedonia has always used and continues to use its constitutional name in written and oral communications with the United Nations, its members and officials, without reproach or sanction.”³²

Furthermore, in the October 1995 “Memorandum on Practical Measures Related to the Interim Accord from September 1995”³³ the UN Security Council provided that Greece can refer to the Republic of Macedonia under the provisional reference, while Macedonia kept the right to call itself Macedonia in its dealings with Greece. The provisions of the Practical Measures were mutually accepted, as were Resolution 817 (1993) and the Interim Accord 1995. These documents were also intended to set the stage for Macedonia and Greece to engage in good-faith negotiations in order to resolve the differences over the name dispute.³⁴

³² Letter from the Macedonian Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Slobodan Tasovski to the President of the 64th UN General Assembly, Dr. Abdussalam Treki, October 20, 2009.

³³ UNSC, “Resolution 817 (1993).”

³⁴ United Nations – Treaty Series, “United Nations Interim Accord, Vol. 1891, 1- 32193, Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,” signed at New York on September 13, 1995, <http://untreaty.un.org/unts/120001_144071/6/3/00004456.pdf> (accessed February 15, 2010).

Shuttle Diplomacy

In the early 1990s inter-ethnic wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina culminated. Despite significant efforts, European allies failed to prevent further escalation of the devastating conflicts. Preoccupied with the First Gulf War, the U.S. did not pay sufficient attention to the security developments in the Balkan region. It was not until the mid 1990's that international diplomacy began to achieve encouraging results in coping with the Balkan crises. The coordinated efforts of European countries and President Bill Clinton's first administration used "stick and carrot" approaches including shuttle diplomacy by Assistant Secretary of State Ambassador Richard Holbrooke. Holbrooke was best known "as the architect of the Dayton peace accords"³⁵ which concluded the war Bosnia and Herzegovina. The American diplomat is also called "the Bulldozer"³⁶ or "Raging Bull"³⁷ because of his reputation of confronting militant leaders in the Balkans to get them to the negotiating table. Holbrooke will also be remembered in the Balkans as the negotiator who settled a potentially explosive dispute between Macedonia and Greece over the use of the name "Macedonia."³⁸

After shuttling between Skopje and Athens, in September 1995, Holbrooke succeeded in convincing the governments of Macedonia and Greece to sign the Interim Accord, which established bilateral relations for the first time in the history of the two

³⁵ "World: Americas Richard Holbrooke: The Balkans' Bulldozer," Editorial, *News BBC*, August 5, 1999, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/413122.stm>> (accessed March 2, 2010).

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

nations. The signing of the Interim Accord marked a significant move toward regional stability. Besides requiring mutual recognition, the Accord's Article 4 required the parties in the dispute to refrain from use of force. Additionally, in Article 5, Macedonia and Greece agreed to "...continue negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations pursuant to Security Council Resolution 845 (1993) with a view to reaching agreement on the difference..."³⁹

The Interim Accord was successful as a means to reduce further escalation of this dispute or eruption of another conflict in the already burning Balkans. It prevented the spread of the conflicts from south of the former Yugoslav federation and it showed that bilateral conflicts could be resolved without any use of force. It was an opportunity for the weaker side in the dispute, Macedonia, to consolidate after the strong Greek pressure and the economic sanctions respectively imposed by Athens between 1993 and 1995.⁴⁰

Some analysts, including Dr. Ljubomir Danailov Frckovski of the Law Faculty in Skopje, termed the years beginning with Macedonian independence in 1991 and ending with the signing of the Interim Accord in 1995 as "the phase of great denial." Those years marked the first and most challenging period in the relations between Macedonia and Greece. During this period Greece continuously denied the existence of the new independent state of the Republic of Macedonia. Furthermore, Greece had intensified the political battle by bringing the name dispute to the EU. In its Lisbon Declaration in June

³⁹ United Nations Interim Accord (1995).

⁴⁰ Shea, *Macedonia and Greece*, 284.

1992 to the EU, Greece stated to be "...prepared to recognize Macedonia, but under a name that would not include the word Macedonia, as such..."⁴¹

The American "Bulldozer" did not resume another round of shuttle diplomacy designed to bring a quick solution to the name dispute. The resolution of the inter-ethnic conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia were much higher priorities for the international community. Although solutions were found for other problems in the Balkan Peninsula, the name dispute remains a significant unresolved matter.

The name dispute proved to be complex and difficult to resolve. What had started almost twenty years ago as a dispute over the historic name "Macedonia" later expanded into a serious political obstacle in bilateral relations between Greece and Macedonia, which were characterized by economic embargos, mutual provocations, obstructions and vetoes cast in international forums.

Macedonia and Greece had agreed to the Interim Accord provisions, which were compromises negotiated under the UN umbrella. Since the signing of the Accord, relevant international organizations and individuals have offered to mediate in order to resolve the dispute. Unfortunately, such efforts have not achieved success.

The situation became worse after the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April 2008. Tensions arose between the two countries when Greece blocked Macedonia's accession into NATO. The Greek veto in Bucharest was the tipping point of the dispute.⁴² In response, Macedonia took Greece to the International Court of Justice in The Hague,

⁴¹ Frckoski, "The Character of the Name Dispute," 11.

⁴² Ibid.

accusing her for violation of article 11, paragraph 1 of the 1995 Interim Accord i.e. for blocking accession of the country into international organizations if applies under its provisional name. Macedonian Foreign Minister Antonio Milososki explained to the media that “the name dispute was not the matter of this application,”⁴³ but resolution of “this legal dispute”⁴⁴ and protection of Macedonia’s rights foreseen with the Interim Accord.⁴⁵ It became increasingly clear that in order for the conflict to be resolved, all aspects of the conflict’s complexities had to be taken into consideration, including the origin of the problem and its nature.

In addition, domestic pressures increased. Ethnic Albanians in Macedonia are not overly concerned over the name of the country; however, they are interested in Macedonian integration into NATO and EU. Until 2009, when Albanian’s coalition partner in the government, the “Democratic Union for Integration” (DUI), appointed its representative, they showed little interest for their inclusion in the negotiation process related to the name issue.

After the Bucharest Summit, when Greece blocked Macedonian accession into NATO, and Albania joined the Alliance together with Croatia, ethnic Albanians became less patient. They quickly increased their pressure on the Government to reach a compromise with Greece, demanding immediate membership into NATO. “The

⁴³ “Macedonia Takes Greece to the World Court,” Editorial, *Balkaninsight News*, November 17, 2008, <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/main/news/14845/>> (accessed March 4, 2010).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Albanians, with or without the Macedonians will join NATO and the EU”⁴⁶ stated the vice president of DUI, Rafiz Aliti. Although Mr. Aliti never provided additional explanation, it is commonly accepted that what he meant by his statement was a repeat of the 2001 conflict and violent succession of the western part of the country. In several statements made in January 2010, the leader of the opposition “Democratic Party of Albanians,” Menduh Thaci, went further in predicting bleak scenarios for Macedonia should the name dispute remain unresolved. He stated that Macedonia “must change the name and must reach a compromise”⁴⁷ adding that the country was on the “verge of total destabilization”⁴⁸ because its integration perspective was blocked.

Diplomacy by Compromise

After two years of “stop and go” negotiations, which were frequently interrupted by Greek economic embargos, pressure, threats and mutual accusations, Macedonian and Greek foreign ministers, Stevo Crvenkovski and Karolos Papoulias, signed the Interim Accord in 1995. Aware that no Greek government would accept a compromise over the name issue, Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov adopted a more flexible position. In 1992, in order to secure Macedonian admission to the UN, Mr. Gligorov had agreed to the provisional name for the country as “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.” In an attempt to avoid tensions at home, Macedonian political leaders explained the

⁴⁶ Katerina Canevska Arsovska, “Albancite so ili bez Makedoncite ke vlezat vo NATO i EU,” (With or without Macedonians the Albanians will enter NATO and EU), *AI News*, November 2, 2009, <<http://www.a1.com.mk/vesti/default.aspx?VestID=115744>> (accessed June 15, 2010).

⁴⁷ Biljana Sekulovska, “Taci: Makedonija e pred Totalna Destabilizacija” (Thaci: Macedonia is about to Face a Total Destabilization), *AI News*, February 21, 2010, <<http://www.a1.com.mk/vesti/default.aspx?VestID=120156>> (accessed March 15, 2010).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

unpopular compromise to their domestic constituents as an important precondition for survival and international recognition of the country.⁴⁹ Despite the promises that this reference was to be a temporary solution utilized for a few months, after fifteen years it is still used by international organizations to which Macedonia belongs or seeks membership. For many Macedonians, this compromise was seen as a defeat of diplomacy. They were frustrated by the imposition of an unwanted solution that was virtually imposed by the stronger party in the dispute, Greece, and that has remained in place despite its intended temporary status.

Macedonia made additional concessions when the country signed the Interim Accord in 1995. These included agreeing to abandon the use of the sun or star of Vergina on its flag and introducing another state flag. Furthermore, under strong international pressure, the Macedonian government agreed to make changes to its Constitution. The new amendments stated that Macedonia had no territorial claims towards neighboring countries, and that the Republic of Macedonia would not interfere in the rights of other nations in their internal affairs. As the Republic of Macedonia believed it was responsible for ethnic nationals living in neighboring countries, Macedonians considered these requirements as highly objectionable.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Tziampiris, *The Name Dispute in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia after the Signing of the Interim Accord*, 227.

⁵⁰ Macedonian Assembly, "Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia - X. Amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 08-44/1," (January 6, 1992), Macedonian Assembly, <<http://www.sobranie.mk/?ItemID=A431BEE83F63594B8FE11DA66C97BEAF>> (accessed March 1, 2010).

The concessions made in the 1995 Interim Accord calmed tensions and led to normalization of the relations between the two countries. Diplomatic relations were quickly established, followed by normalization of economic cooperation and trade. During this period Macedonia continued its efforts to secure wider international recognition under its constitutional name, which led to successful recognition by the United States, Russia and China. By the end of 2007, the Republic of Macedonia had gained recognition under its constitutional name by over 120 UN member countries.⁵¹ In addition, Skopje and Athens significantly improved their mutual relations and Greece became one of the biggest investors in Macedonia.⁵²

Unfortunately, the name dispute remained unresolved and it was only a matter of time before the conflict resurfaced. The honeymoon lasted until 2006 when Macedonia entered its final phase for NATO membership under either the provisional name of “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” or with compromise name “the Republic of Macedonia (Skopje).” Greece insisted on a resolution of the name dispute before Macedonian accession into NATO and threatened to use its veto power.⁵³ In addition, Greece strongly opposed the decision of the Macedonian government to rename the national airport from “Petrovec” to “Alexander the Great.” The Greek foreign minister Dora Bakoyannis responded that “[t]his attitude by Skopje is not compatible with obligations of good neighborliness that emanate from the Interim Agreement and from

⁵¹ Frckoski, “The Character of the Name Dispute,” 12.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

commitments towards the European Union, nor does it serve their Euro-Atlantic expectations.”⁵⁴

Whether or not it was in response to Macedonian provocations, Greece started an aggressive diplomatic campaign in order to obtain a compromise from Macedonia on the name issue. The Greek offensive focused heavily on Washington, especially in efforts aimed at convincing the President George W. Bush Administration to reconsider its decision to recognize Macedonia under its constitutional name in 2004.⁵⁵ In addition, Greece, by using its strong lobbying power in the U.S., consequently managed to initiate several resolutions in the U.S. Congress which accused Macedonia of chauvinistic propaganda and territorial claims.⁵⁶ The U.S. Congressional resolutions were designed to reinforce the pressure on the Administration, as well as the government in Skopje, to make additional concessions. Greece also continued to threaten to veto Macedonian integration into NATO, and later into the EU. Greece’s right to veto the Macedonian application to join NATO gave Athens an advantage in the process of negotiation over the name dispute. This potential veto was the strongest political tool in the hands of Greek diplomacy to force its counterpart to compromise.

⁵⁴ Embassy of Greece, Washington D.C., “FM Bakoyannis Warns FYROM over Skopje Airport Name Issue,” December 29, 2006, Embassy of Greece, <<http://www.greekembassy.org/Embassy/content/en/Article.aspx?office=1&folder=24&article=19409>> (accessed March 15, 2010).

⁵⁵ Department of State of the United States, “Background note: Macedonia,” <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/26759.htm>> (accessed March 15, 2010).

⁵⁶ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, “111th Congress House Resolution 486,” 1st Session, (May 21, 2009), U.S. Congress, <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/gpoxmlc111/hr486_ih.xml> (accessed March 15, 2010).

President Bush, in his address at the NATO Summit in Bucharest on April 2, 2008, affirmed the U.S.'s support for Macedonian membership in NATO. The President stated: "Tomorrow NATO will make a historic decision for admission of three Balkan nations: Croatia, Albania and Macedonia. United States strongly supports the call for NATO membership of these three nations."⁵⁷

Despite high expectations, however, the name dispute had not been resolved by the time of the Summit in Bucharest. Greece exercised their veto and Macedonia was denied membership into the Alliance. Thus the NATO enlargement process was blocked for the first time in its history. In an attempt to satisfy the two parties in the dispute, as well as to support future negotiations, the participating NATO members issued a Declaration from the Summit in which they regretfully noted that negotiations over the name issue failed. Therefore, Allies decided to extend an invitation to Macedonia "as soon as a mutually acceptable solution" to the name issue is achieved.⁵⁸

After the meeting in Bucharest, Macedonia and Greece held several rounds of negotiations under the auspices of UN mediator Mathew Nimitz; however, these talks did not produce any significant progress. On the contrary, the problem became even more complicated when issues related to Macedonian identity and the Macedonian language were brought to the negotiation table. Furthermore, both countries claimed that they had

⁵⁷ "Bush: Makedonija ke Dobie Pokana," (Bush: Macedonia will be Invited), Editorial, *AI News*, April 2, 2008, <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm?mode=pressrelease> (accessed March 20, 2010).

⁵⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), "Bucharest Summit Declaration," Press Release: (2008) 049, April 3, 2008, NATO, <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm> (accessed March 12, 2010).

already made maximum concessions and could not go beyond their current positions. Essentially Greeks stated that they had accepted the word “Macedonia” in the official name of the Republic of Macedonia, while Macedonians said that they had already made sufficient compromises by changing their flag and Constitution.

Analysis and Solution

The name dispute is a complex issue. From the time the problem first arose, instead of solving it, Macedonia and Greece both added more questions to the negotiation table. These additional issues included the scope and use of the name, Macedonian identity, and the Macedonian language. At this point, it is unclear how these problems will be resolved. Political leaders in both countries are under enormous domestic pressures with respect to these issues. The Greek government believes it successfully eliminated this pressure by publicly agreeing on the use of the word “Macedonia” in the composite name for the Republic of Macedonia. From its side, Macedonia also made several concessions and changed the national flag, amended the country’s Constitution and most of all, agreed to negotiate about the name that Macedonians already choose for their country. But the problem persists.

Security implications remain the most significant challenge related to the name issue. By accepting Resolutions 817 (1993) and 845 (1993), the UN Security Council recognized the security component of the dispute and its destabilizing potential, and undertook the responsibility to play a leading role in resolving the problem.

At the beginning of the diplomatic battle over the name issue, Greece claimed that use of the name “Macedonia” by its northern neighbor posed an external security threat for

Greece. Politicians in Athens blamed their counterparts in Skopje for manipulating historical facts, as well as resorting to chauvinistic propaganda and making additional territorial claims. Greece is the biggest political, economic and military power in the region, rendering such arguments about external security threats unsustainable. In addition, during the negotiation process the Greek government publicly announced that it accepted the word “Macedonia” in the future name of its neighbor. This successfully eliminated pressure at home, and at the same time, convinced the international community of its intentions for a peaceful and mutually acceptable resolution of this issue. In sum, Greece believes it has made sufficient concessions on this issue. Thus Athens is content to wait and see if the other side is ready or willing to make additional compromises.

As expected, it remains for Macedonia to carry the burden surrounding the issue. In the long run, it is more realistic to expect that Macedonia would face internal security challenges. The Albanian ethnic community is less sentimental about the name issue, and the society is again dividing along ethnic lines. Political parties of ethnic Albanians are louder in their demands for compromise with Greece which would allow for a quick accession of the country into NATO. Hence, further delay in the resolution of the problem could lead toward inter-ethnic tensions and further political instability in Macedonia. Experiences from the past have shown that Macedonian instability is a potential threat for security in the region. The only encouraging fact is the repeatedly articulated determination by both Macedonia and Greece to continue to negotiate under UN mediation in the hopes of developing a mutually acceptable solution. Such a solution

is achievable, though it would have to deal with the root history of the problem, which is probably the most challenging task.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Complex historical issues underlie the name dispute between Macedonia and Greece. Both nations argue that they have an exclusive right to the use of the name “Macedonia,” as well as the Macedonian symbols, and the Macedonian identity.¹ At the core of the dispute are two differing interpretations of historical events from antiquity to the present. To better understand the problem, three historical periods should be taken into consideration: first, the time from the reigns of Philip II and his son Alexander the Great to the Ottoman Empire; second, the era from the beginning of the 20th century until the Balkan wars (1912, 1913); and, third, during and after World War II.

From Ancient Macedonia to the Ottoman Empire

The word “Macedonia” applies to the geographic region occupying the central part of the Balkan Peninsula that covers about 67,741 square kilometers. Historically, the Macedonian geographic boundaries changed constantly, until they were officially recognized in the nineteenth century. The surrounding countries have traditionally been attracted to the geo-strategic position of the Macedonian territory. Macedonia has served as an economic crossroads, linking Central Europe and the Mediterranean region with the Near East and the Suez Canal. Macedonia also links the Drin river valley with the Adriatic Sea. Via Egnatia, the shortest Roman-era cross route to cross the Balkans, runs

¹ Loring M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 6.

through Macedonia, connecting the Adriatic Sea to the Bosphorus through Thessalonica.²

Macedonia was populated as early as the Neolithic era (c. 6000 BC); however, historians disagree on the origin of the Macedonian people. Some recent linguistic and written evidence, toponyms and archaeological findings suggest there was a “gradual formation of Macedonian tribes, and a distinct Macedonian identity through the intermingling, amalgamation, and assimilation of various ethnic elements.”³

Despite the limited knowledge regarding the evolution of a separate Macedonian ethnicity and traditions, according to some evidence Macedonians were different than the rest of the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula, such as the Thracians and the Greeks. Around the fourth century BC, Macedonians started using the Greek language for official communication, but they did not perceive themselves as Greek.⁴ Although they spoke Greek and dressed like Greeks, Macedonians built their own unique society.⁵

In addition to the lack of conclusions about the origins of Macedonian ethnicity and traditions, little is known about the creation of the first Macedonian state. Some evidence suggests that the period between the reigns of the first Macedonian King Perdiccas I (700 BC) and Phillip II (359-336 BC) was marked by instability, domestic anarchy and external attacks. The Macedonian kingdom during Philip II’s rule prospered. Philip introduced reforms in governance and the financial system of the state, and

² Andrew Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* (Stanford University, Stanford CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2008), 12.

³ Ibid., 11.

⁴ Ibid., 12.

⁵ Ibid.

encouraged the growth of economic trade, thus making the Macedonian state an important trade factor in the Mediterranean.⁶ Furthermore, between 356 and 338 BC, Philip II took advantage of the long-lasting political crisis in Greece and conquered its territories Thessaly, Chalcidice, and Thrace. With their final victory over the Greek army in 338 BC, the Macedonians established their dominance in the Balkans and their hegemony was recognized by the Greek city-states.⁷

The glorious era of the Macedonian kingdom continued under Philip's son, Alexander the Great. In several battles between 334-331 BC Alexander's army defeated the Persians and expanded the Macedonian kingdom to the east. The 331 BC victory at Gaugamela established Alexander as the master of the Near- and Middle East. He extended his kingdom from the western Balkans to India and from the Danube River and the Black Sea to Egypt, Libya and Cyrenaica. After his death in 323 BC, his enormous and "ungovernable" kingdom began to collapse.⁸

The Macedonian kingdom continued to exist, but the victorious era of Alexander the Great ended and never re-emerged. In the battle near Pydna in 168 BC, the Macedonians were defeated by the Romans, their biggest competitors for Balkan hegemony. The loss is considered to be the end of Macedonian independence and the beginning of the Roman rule.⁹

⁶ Ibid., 14.

⁷ Ibid., 15.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

Alexander the Great and the Name Dispute

Ancient Macedonian history occupies a special place in the arguments over the name issue. Greece and Macedonia are entrenched in the belief that they have direct historical ties with this particular period, mainly because of their desire to identify themselves with the prosperous society of ancient Macedonia. Greeks claim that “during Antiquity, Macedonia was part of the Hellenic world and the foundation of Alexander the Great’s vast empire.”¹⁰ Greek historians defend the theory that “the ancient Macedonian kingdom had organic cultural ties with the Greek cities,”¹¹ primarily because the Greeks arrived in the Balkans in the 12th century BC, much earlier than the Slavs, who came in the 7th century AD. According to the Greeks, ancient Macedonia is a mixture of different cultures whose inhabitants call themselves Macedonians regardless of their language or origin.¹² Athens prefers to perceive ancient Macedonians as Greeks, in part to justify the conquest and subsequent partitioning of Macedonia in the beginning of the 20th century, but also to explain its international position in the negotiations concerning the name dispute. Alexander the Great is significant to the Greeks because of his strong role in

¹⁰ Spyridon Kotsovilis, “Exploring the Sources of Greek Foreign Policy towards the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,” Conference Paper, 2nd PhD Symposium on Modern Greece, June 10, 2005, The Hellenic Observatory, London School of Economics and Political Science, 3, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/hellenicObservatory/pdf/2nd_Symposium/Spyridon_Kotsovilis_paper.pdf> (accessed March 20, 2010).

¹¹ Neophytos Loizides, “Doves against Hawks: Symbolic Politics in Greece and the Macedonian Question,” *International Studies Association*, Chicago, (February 2007), 7, <http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1014&context=neophytos_loizides> (accessed March 21, 2010).

¹² Ibid.

spreading Hellenic culture to distant parts of the then unknown world. Greeks also take pride in being descendants of his “extraordinary figure.”¹³

On the other hand, Macedonians offer their own perspective and comparative analysis of the two civilizations’ formation of statehood and stabilization of territorial integrity. Their analyses serve as counter-arguments to “the imposed axiom” of Alexander the Great’s dissemination of the Hellenic culture. Namely, they argue that unlike the Greek city-states, which were permanently oriented toward the sea, the Macedonian kingdom was mainly confined to the continental part of the Balkans. As a result of the differences in their geostrategic positions, the two societies developed different political, economic and cultural concepts. Furthermore, while Macedonia was a centralized state, the Greek city-states were autonomous and unable to unite. Unlike Philip II and Alexander the Great, who were motivated by the political philosophy of globalization and uniting of the existing civilizations, the Greek priority was not the export of the Hellenic culture, but the protection of the Mediterranean from the Persians.¹⁴

Professor Vasil Tupurkovski from the Saints Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje argues against the usurpation of the Ancient Macedonian history. He claims that this history is an integral part of human civilization and belongs to all nations in these

¹³ John Shea, *Macedonia and Greece: The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers 1997; reprint, Jefferson North Carolina and London, 2008), 23.

¹⁴ Vasil Tupurkovski, Ph.D., International Law Professor at Skopje University, “Arguments for the Undying Saga of Ancient Macedonia,” interview by Jovan Pavlovski, *Macedonian Times Magazine*, April, 1997, <<http://www.gate.net/~mango/Tupurkovski.htm>> (accessed March 21, 2010).

regions. The geo-strategic vision of Philip II preceded the contemporary idea of integrated Balkans. During his rule, the Balkans were a central part of Europe and Philip II considered them to be the basis for further penetration towards the eastern world.¹⁵

The Arrival of the Slavs in the Balkans

The arrival of the Slavs in the Balkans marks another important phase in Macedonian history. In the sixth and seventh centuries AD, Slavic tribes invaded the Balkan Peninsula. It is believed that they colonized the native population and imposed their Slavic language. Throughout the Middle Ages until the arrival of the Ottomans and the establishment of the Ottoman Empire in the fourteenth century, Macedonians and their Slav co-habitants were an integral part of three dynastic Byzantine Commonwealth states – Bulgaria, Byzantium and Serbia.¹⁶

Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians identified their states with the empires of the Middle Ages, openly demonstrating their imperialistic ambitions, including territorial claims to Macedonia. The medieval Macedonian Slavs never succeeded in establishing a long-lasting independent political entity. Moreover, the existence of a Macedonian state with a separate identity has been permanently denied by its neighbors. Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians argued that “the absence of a medieval state bearing that name [Macedonia] meant that a Macedonian identity and a nation did not and could not exist.” They insisted on their exclusive right to Slavic Macedonia as their own.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians*, 20.

¹⁷ Ibid.

“Slavs” and the Name Dispute

At the core of the dispute between the Macedonian and Greek nationalist historiography is “the continuity of the Macedonian people and their culture throughout the history.”¹⁸ Macedonians are divided between two positions regarding their origin. The extremists argue that modern Macedonians are not Slavs but “direct descendants of the ancient Macedonians, who were not Greek.”¹⁹ Their intention is to connect modern Macedonians with Alexander the Great, whose powerful personality makes him the most desirable candidate to be the ancestor of Macedonian people. This position is often used to counter Greek claims that their northern neighbors are Slavs, and not Macedonians. Furthermore, these claims are intended to prove the continuing existence of a “non-Greek Macedonian culture”- and an ancient Macedonian empire independent from the Greek-city states - as the constituency of the first Macedonian state.²⁰ The second position is a more moderate version, which maintains that the history of modern Macedonia began in the sixth and seventh centuries A.D., during the Slavic invasion of the Balkans.

Two events in the ninth and eleventh centuries mark this period of Macedonian history. First, two Macedonian brothers of Slavic origin, Cyril and Methodius, invented the Glagolitic alphabet, which made written Old Church Slavonic possible, and brought literacy and Christianity to the Slavs. Second, their students, Clement and Naum, founded the first Macedonian archbishopric in the city of Ohrid, in 893 AD which marks the

¹⁸ Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 48.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid

beginning of the Macedonian Orthodox Church. In 1014, the Macedonian Empire led by Tsar Samuil, considered to be the first Macedonian state, was defeated by the Byzantine emperor Basil II. Together with the state, the Macedonian church fell and remained under Greek control until 1767.²¹

Macedonian Identity and Language

The name issue is not the only problem that aggravates relations between the two countries. Questions regarding Macedonian identity and language has also been raised during the negotiations. The linguistic work of the brothers, Cyril and Methodius, played an important role in the creation of the Macedonian national ideology.²² Even though there are similarities with other Slavic languages, the Macedonian language is unique in its grammar, lexical and phonetic properties. In addition, the basis of the Macedonian language, which was codified and “formally recognized in 1944,” originates from Old Church Slavonic and is over a thousand years old. Cyril and Methodius developed Old Church Slavonic on the basis of the dialects from the Thessaloniki region. Hence, the modern Macedonian language is directly linked with the medieval Macedonian language.²³

The Greek position is easy to explain, as almost all Greeks agree with the “continuity of Greek culture from antiquity to the present.”²⁴ They argue that Cyril and

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 45.

²⁴ Ibid.

Methodius were Greek monks from Thessaloniki who “developed the Glagolitic alphabet and spread both literacy and Christianity to the Slavs.”²⁵

The church also plays a role and fuels the arguments in the name dispute. Since its establishment during the rule of emperor Justinian I (527-565), the Macedonian Orthodox Church (MPC)²⁶ still struggles for recognition by its Orthodox sister-churches. The history of MPC is overshadowed by efforts for restoration of its 1767 Archdiocese. Until the twentieth century, MPC was annexed to the Patriarchate of Constantinople and several other jurisdictions of the neighboring Orthodox Churches. Before the end of World War II, MPC decided to restore its Archdiocese of Ohrid. During this time several dioceses in Macedonia were under the United Orthodox Church of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenians, later known as the Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC). The decision for restoration of its Archdiocese MPC was, therefore, submitted to the Holy Synod of the SPC. The Synod of SPC declined the MPC’s decision and rejected the request for autonomy. The relationship with the Serbian Church worsened in 1966. As a result, the Holy Synod of MPC proclaimed the MPC as Autocephalous, on July 17, 1967.²⁷

The Church in the Name Dispute

The dispute between the Macedonian and Serbian Orthodox Churches remains unresolved to this day. Due to the strong influence of SPC over the other Orthodox churches, the autocephaly of MPC has not been recognized. The name dispute presents

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Macedonian Orthodox Church, “History of Macedonian Orthodox Church,” MPC, <<http://www.mpc.org.mk/English/MPC/history-mpc.asp>> (accessed March 24, 2010).

²⁷ Ibid.

an additional obstacle in the relations of MPC with the rest of the autonomous Orthodox Churches and particularly with Greek Orthodox Church (GOC).

The Beatitude Archbishop Stefan of Ohrid, who is the head of MPC, argues that there is little possibility the church issue will be resolved without a prior decision on the name dispute between Macedonia and Greece. According to the Archbishop, the problems between the churches came to light when the Serbian church questioned the name of the Macedonian church, most likely as a gesture of solidarity with the GOC. Assuming that the Macedonian and the Serbian churches are willing to make a compromise, the name of the MPC could still be problematic for the very powerful GOC. Hence, Archbishop Stefan claims that “the political part [of the dispute] should be resolved by the state and the future resolution should guarantee the preservation of the link between the Macedonian identity and the name of the MPC.”²⁸

Macedonian politicians also became involved in the church issue. In two consecutive letters in 2008 the Macedonian Prime Minister, Nikola Gruevski, requested that UN mediator Matthew Nimetz include the issue of the status of MPC in the name negotiations. In his lengthy letters regarding the dispute between MPC and the other Orthodox churches, and particularly with SPC and GOC, whose mutual relations are based on closeness and solidarity, Mr. Gruevski asked for prioritization of this issue and

²⁸ “Avtokefalnost i Identitet,” (Autocephaly and Identity), Editorial, *Forum Magazine*, January 31, 2010, <http://www.forum.com.mk/_tools/pdf/16714/article> (accessed March 27, 2010).

recognition of MPC by the GOC as soon as possible.²⁹

The Balkan Wars and the End of the Ottoman Empire

Another longstanding political problem concerning the Macedonian issue was created between the end of the Balkan Wars in 1912-13 and the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1918. This period was marked by the building of sovereignty and national identity of the Balkan nations, but also by border, territorial and minority disputes. The goal of the Balkan nations to liberate themselves from Ottoman control was the primary reason for the Balkan Wars. One consequence of these wars was the partitioning of Macedonia.

In the nineteenth century, the Ottoman rulers divided the Balkan territory into “three vilayets,” named Solun (Thessaloniki), Bitola, and Kosovo, known as Macedonia by Macedonian nationalists as well as the rest of the world. In today’s terminology, this territory is called “Greater Macedonia.” Two censuses, one in 1881 and one conducted by the end of the nineteenth century, show similar figures, namely the overwhelming number of Slavs over the small Greek population. Of the total of 1,863,382 inhabitants, 1,251,385 declared themselves as Slavs, 463,839 as “Muslims,” and 57, 480 as Greeks.³⁰

The political processes and interests concerning the Macedonian land and its inhabitants determined relations among the Balkan countries. During the First Balkan War in 1912, the military alliance of Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro

²⁹ Goran Momirovski, “Gruevski Bara od Nimic da se Pregovara i za MPC,” (Gruevski Asks from Nimetz to Include MPC in the Negotiations), *A1 News*, August 11, 2008, <<http://www.a1.com.mk/vesti/default.aspx?VestID=96244>> (accessed March 30, 2010).

³⁰ Shea, *Macedonia and Greece*, 98.

successfully defeated the Ottoman Empire. At the end of the war Macedonia was occupied by Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia; and the state of Albania was created.³¹

Thousands of Macedonians volunteered for the wars against the Ottomans. They believed that the defeat of the Ottoman Empire would bring them the independence they so desperately coveted. Many fought for this during the 1903 Ilinden uprising. Macedonians claimed that over 100,000 of their troops took part in the war for liberation with additional help provided to the allies by the local population. Surprisingly, their brothers and co-religionists of Slavic origin had other plans and did not offer them any help.³² The First Balkan war ended with the London conference agreement in May 1913. The major powers agreed to a new partition of the land in this document. As a result Macedonia was no longer under the Ottoman authority, but was divided among the Balkan allies.³³

After the Ottoman withdrawal from most of the Balkans in 1912-1913, the former allies started the Second Balkan War, also known as the Inter-Allied War, in a pact to gain control of Macedonia. In an attempt to take Serbia's portion of Macedonia, Bulgaria faced the Serbo-Greek alliance and was defeated on its own territory. Romania also saw its interest in this war and fought on Bulgarian territory in the north of the country;

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 102.

³³ Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians*, 126.

however, the Ottomans took back the eastern Thrace, which it had lost in the previous war.³⁴

The Second Balkan War ended with the signing of the Bucharest Treaty at a conference held on August 10, 1913. This conference resulted in the redistribution of the Macedonian land between Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Albania. Bulgaria received the eastern part, known as Pirin Macedonia; Serbia took Vardar Macedonia in the north; and Greece received the Aegean part. Although the Greek rulers received the biggest portion of the Macedonian territory, they nonetheless did not keep the name Macedonia, nor did they use it in describing the region until the 1980's. In 1919 Albania also received a small part of the Macedonian territory.³⁵ With minor corrections, this border situation remains unchanged to this day.

The division of the Macedonian territory permanently severed the ties among the populations in the region. None of the countries that took a slice of the Macedonian territory recognized the Macedonian nation; instead they all followed an aggressive policy of assimilation and forcible denationalization.³⁶

Interwar Period – Between the Two World Wars

During World War I the major powers on both sides paid little attention to the Macedonian question. As a result, Serbia and Greece took the opportunity to fight over Macedonia, and were unwilling to give up their respective parts of the Macedonian

³⁴ Shea, *Macedonia and Greece*, 102.

³⁵ Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians*, 126/127.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

territory. Bulgaria joined the Central Powers of Germany, Austro-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, in 1915. Under the assumption that the victorious side would carry out a new distribution of territories, the Bulgarians immediately attacked Serbian forces deployed on Macedonian land; however, they were defeated.

The First World War ended with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.³⁷ The Macedonian question was put on the agenda at the Paris Peace Conference several times, particularly at sessions of the Committee established to deal with the creation of new states. Different aspects on the Macedonian identity issues came under consideration. The great powers, however, did not meet the wishes or high expectations of the Macedonians for an independent state. The Conference concluded that Macedonians should be treated as a minority and the territory they inhabited should be divided among four neighboring countries: Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria and Albania.³⁸

Macedonians in the Occupied Territories

Greece took the biggest piece with the 1913 partition of Macedonia: about 34,356 square kilometers. Although statistics about the national composition of the population in Aegean Macedonia before 1913 are inaccurate, all but Greek sources claim that Macedonians were the biggest group at 28 percent, followed by 25 percent Turks, and 21 percent Greeks. Immediately after the occupation, the Greek government started a forcible Hellenization of the Macedonian population. The existence of any Macedonians

³⁷ Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians*, 131.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 133.

was totally denied, the use of their language was strictly forbidden, and both their personal names and the geographic toponyms were replaced by Greek names.³⁹

In order to make significant changes to the national structure, the Greek government turned to forced emigration and colonization of the population in Aegean Macedonia. Population exchanges occurred mainly with Bulgaria and Turkey. Over 80,000 Macedonians were expelled from Greece to Bulgaria, and 23,000 Greeks from Bulgaria settled in Aegean Macedonia. Approximately 400,000 Turks were expelled from Greece in 1923, while 1,200,000 Greeks from Asia Minor settled in Greece.⁴⁰

Serbia and Bulgaria occupied a smaller part of Macedonia. In 1918, with its 25,713 square kilometers and 728,286 inhabitants, the Serbian dominated Vardar Macedonia became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, better known as Yugoslavia. As in Greece, Macedonians under Serb rule were not allowed to declare their national identity, were called Serbs and exposed to forced assimilation.⁴¹

Initially the Serbian part of Macedonia was called “Southern Serbia.” During the period between the two World Wars this area was named Vardarska Banovina (Province of Vardar). After World War II Vardarska Banovina became part of the Yugoslav federation under the name of The People’s Republic of Macedonia. It was renamed again in 1963 as the Socialist Republic of Macedonia.⁴²

³⁹ Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 53.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians*, 133.

⁴² Ibid.

Bulgaria took 6,788 square kilometers of Macedonian land in 1913, with 235,000 inhabitants. The Pirin Macedonians were in much better position compared to their compatriots in Serbia and Greece. Sofia took a more paternalistic attitude toward the Macedonians in all of the occupied parts of Macedonia. Bulgaria treated these people relatively well, although Sofia referred to them as Bulgarians. Unlike Serbia and Greece, Bulgaria assumed the name “Macedonia” and showed tolerance toward the Macedonian culture and political activities. In the period between the two wars this part of Macedonia was known as the Pirin district, whereas after the Second World War it was renamed Blagoevgrad Okrug (“Blagoevgrad District”).⁴³ During World War II Bulgaria joined the Axis Powers and together with Italy occupied the Vardar Macedonia.

World War II

Macedonians, led by their aspirations for self-determination and creation of their independent state, started an active anti-fascist movement in 1940. The communist leader Josip Broz Tito, whose plan was the unification of all the Yugoslav territories, supported the Macedonian resistance.⁴⁴ Macedonians took advantage of the Yugoslav assistance to realize their national cause. By 1944, around sixty thousand Macedonians joined the Yugoslav partisans and established around five hundred “national liberation councils” throughout the occupied territory. They achieved success on August 2, 1944 during the first session of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) held at the Monastery St. Prochor Pcinski, when the delegation decided to

⁴³ Ibid., 148.

⁴⁴ Henryk J. Sokalski, *An Ounce of Prevention: Macedonia and the UN Experience in Preventive Diplomacy* (Washington DC: United States Institute for Peace, 2003), 38.

establish the Macedonian state. This event is considered as one of the most important in modern Macedonian history. After centuries of repression, partition and assimilation, the Assembly's decision opened the door toward independence.⁴⁵

The Republic of Macedonia received autonomous status and became one of the six Yugoslav republics. Macedonians adopted their own constitution which guaranteed the "distinct character and culture of the nation." In addition, the Macedonian language became one of the official languages in Yugoslavia. Hence, modern Macedonian pro-Western politicians argue that "Macedonia and the Macedonian nation are not the creation of the Comintern, Stalin, and Tito, but a result of the long and hard struggle of the Macedonian people for liberation."⁴⁶

Macedonia and the Civil War in Greece

The ethnic map of Aegean Macedonia has been permanently changed by the Greeks. As a result of the Balkan Wars and World War I, Greece significantly enlarged its territory and increased its population. In November 1919, as a result of the Neuilly Treaty, Greece gained Western Thrace from Bulgaria which, as a defeated party in the Great War, was also forced to transfer about 300,000 people. After their war (1921-1922) Greece and Turkey signed the Treaty of Lausanne on July 24, 1923 which allowed for an exchange of population in which Greece got rid of the unwanted Turkish minorities from its territory. At the same time, Greece proceeded to import some 1,250,000 Greeks from

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Asia Minor, settling them mostly in the northern part of the country especially in the wider Thessalonica region.⁴⁷

The activities of population exchange centered on the Greek program for the Hellenization of the Macedonian population and reduction of its dominance in Aegean Macedonia. Despite these activities, a large percentage of Macedonians still remained in the region. According to Greek sources, nearly 60 percent of the 56,000 inhabitants in Florina, located in the northwestern corner of Greece and one of its poorest and most undeveloped districts, declared themselves as “locals” or “local Macedonians.”⁴⁸

The Civil War in Greece erupted in 1946, immediately after the Second World War, between the left oriented Communist Party of Greece (KKP), which later established its military formation - the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG) - and the pro-western monarchist powers. At that time, the territory of Aegean Macedonia was still predominantly populated by Macedonians, who spoke the Slavic language. In need of additional support and as a gesture of socialist solidarity, KKP offered the Macedonians a wide range of minority rights and an opportunity for self-determination.⁴⁹

In return, the Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia allied with the Greek Communists and took the heaviest burden of the front, since they populated mainly the northwest part of the country bordering Yugoslavia and Albania. According to some data, five out of eight DAG divisions were formed in Aegean Macedonia. Furthermore,

⁴⁷ Charles R. Shrader, *Withered Vine: Logistics & the Communist Insurgency in Greece, 1945-1949* (Westport, CT, USA: Greenwood Publishing Group, Incorporated, 1999), 31.

⁴⁸ Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 116.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

Macedonians accounted for almost 50 percent of the military veterans throughout Greece and up to 75 percent in Aegean Macedonia. The latter made a significant military contribution.⁵⁰

Shortly before the Yalta meeting held in February 1945 between Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin and Franklin D. Roosevelt to “finalize postwar settlement plans,”⁵¹ the British army defeated DAG. Stalin did not object to the British actions in Greece in return for which, allegedly, the Soviets became the dominant military power in Eastern Europe. In addition, the Soviet leader agreed with his war allies to allow Tito’s rule in Yugoslavia until a referendum on the monarchy could be held.⁵²

The British victory seriously weakened the communist movement in Greece. By the end of the war, Yugoslavia, the biggest KKE supporter, facing a threat to its own existence, ceased to support the unification of Macedonia. The Yugoslav withdrawal turned out to be one of the most decisive moments for the struggle of KKE, as well as the fate of Aegean Macedonians, whose national aspirations were also discouraged by the capitulation of the Greek communists in 1949.⁵³ The outcome of World War II did not bring national unification to the Macedonian territories, nor recognition of the Aegean (Greek) and Pirin (Bulgarian) parts. On the contrary, the pro-western Greek government

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Dennis P. Hupchick and Harold E. Cox, *Balkans : From Constantinople to Communism* (New York, NY, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 378.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians*, 211.

completely denied the Macedonian minority and identity on its own territory, and referred to the Macedonians in the Republic of Macedonia as “Serbs” or “Skopjans”.⁵⁴

Conclusion

Historical events from the beginning of the 20th century dominate the discussions about the name issue. Hence, it is necessary to point to the problematic areas in the interpretation of the historical facts. The disputes between Greece and Macedonia are mainly related to the events from the Balkan wars of 1912-1913, the Bulgarian occupation of parts of Greek Macedonia in the Second World War, the Yugoslav involvement in the 1944-1949 Greek Civil War, and the independence of the Republic of Macedonia in 1991.

Macedonians blame the Greeks for partitioning the territory of Macedonia by redrawing its northern borders in 1913. In defending its stance, Greece cites its experiences from the past conflicts and backs its position by claiming that “one nation’s partition of an historic homeland is another nation’s legitimate border.”⁵⁵ In addition, the Macedonians claim that their national identity has been denied by its neighbors, primarily the Greeks, pointing to the forced assimilation of the Macedonian minority in Greece.

Despite their shared democratic political structure, Macedonia and Greece developed completely divergent societies and states. Greeks are obsessed with an

⁵⁴ Ibid., 212.

⁵⁵ Loizides, “Doves against Hawks,” 7.

“ethnically homogenous society having a single and unique culture.”⁵⁶ Greek politicians argue that their country has always been an “exclusive homeland of the Greeks.”⁵⁷ Hence, “any expression of cultural diversity, especially with respect to Macedonians, has been instantly linked to past threats against the country’s territorial integrity.”⁵⁸ Between 1978 and 1991, the center of this discourse of political arguments was the ethnic Macedonians’ expulsion from Greece after the 1948 Civil War.⁵⁹ During this period, even the playing of Macedonian songs was considered a crime by the Greek authorities. In their opinion, allowing settlement of the Civil war refugees on Greek territory would be equivalent to a “major national threat.” Anyone who expressed support for the Macedonian minority was immediately labeled as a traitor by the Greek authorities.⁶⁰

Macedonia is an entirely opposite case from Greece. The country has grown into a multi-ethnic and multicultural society and bears all the consequences of a high level inclusion of its diverse ethnicities and cultures in the political system. For instance, the decision making process might be slowed down because the most important political decisions in the country have to be agreed consensually by the majority (represented by

⁵⁶ Ljubomir Danailov Frckoski, “The Character of the Name Dispute between Macedonia and Greece,” Office in Macedonia: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, (May 2009), 10, <<http://www.fes.org.mk/pdf/Frckoski%20-%20Character%20of%20the%20Name%20Dispute.pdf>> (accessed March 12, 2010).

⁵⁷ Loizides, “Doves against Hawks,” 13.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 14.

the ethnic Macedonians) and all other ethnic groups.⁶¹ Following the inter-ethnic conflict in 2001, Macedonia accepted the highest standards for minority rights in Europe. The country introduced the principle of equitable representation of the ethnic communities in the public administration and government institutions and enhanced their rights in the use of their language, alphabet, symbols, and established minority institutions for culture, education and religion.⁶² These changes made Macedonia a unique example of positive treatment of its minority populations in the hostile Balkan environment.⁶³

The situation in Greece is permanently monitored and addressed by the Council of Europe (CE), one of the most competent international organizations in the area of human rights issue. In its February 2009 report, as it had reported before, the Council of Europe Commissionaire called upon Greece to make “more and strenuous efforts” to ensure full respect and protection of the human rights in the country.⁶⁴ At the last Plenary session on March 12, 2010, the CE member countries paid particular attention to the “Macedonian question.” The final conclusions at the meeting requested that Greece recognize the Macedonian language; provide an appropriate compensation to the Macedonian refugees from the Civil War; and allow for the establishment and free functioning of Macedonian

⁶¹ Frckoski, “The Character of the Name Dispute,” 10.

⁶² Snezana Teodosievska Jordanovska, “Constitutional, Legal and Other Measures Aimed at Promoting the Equitable Representation of Communities in the Civil Service and the Experience from the Ombudsman Office- Report,” Council of Europe – European Commission for Democracy and Through Law, (February 6, 2006), 3, <[http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2006/CDL-UDT\(2006\)005-e.pdf](http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2006/CDL-UDT(2006)005-e.pdf)> (accessed March 30, 2010).

⁶³ Frckoski, “The Character of the Name Dispute,” 10.

⁶⁴ Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights - Communication Unit, “Greece: More and Strenuous Efforts are needed to Protect Minority Rights,” Council of Europe, Press release 125 (2009), February 19, 2009, <<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1409421>> (accessed March 29, 2010).

non-governmental organizations on its territory. The resolution has been supported unanimously by almost all member countries, except Greece.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

SECURITY ASPECT OF THE NAME DISPUTE

During the war in the former Yugoslavia, former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker told “USA Today” in 1994 that the conflict might spread and “If Macedonia is endangered, the U.S. should be making preparations for war.”¹ Secretary Baker warned that in such a scenario the conflict would involve Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Albania and probably Hungary.² The same year, on another occasion related to the Balkan conflicts, the American businessman and founder of The Open Society Institute (OSI), George Soros, in his address to the U.S. Congress’ Committee for International Security, International Organization and Human Rights, warned that Macedonian disintegration as a consequence of the Greek embargo could lead to a third Balkan War.³

Over ten years later, these statements highlight the two issues that still pose a serious challenge to Macedonian stability. The first issue is the inter-ethnic tensions at home; the second and much more internationalized is the name dispute with Greece. Unlike the minority question involving human rights and good-neighborly relations, the name dispute is irrational and is not related to the “facts on the ground.” Essentially, Macedonia and Greece have no minority disputes or territorial claims. The disagreement

¹ “U.S.A. in Support of Macedonia,” Editorial, *Macedonian Information Center (MIC)*, April 29, 1994, <<http://www.b-info.com/places/Macedonia/republic/news/94-04/94-04-29.mic>> (accessed March 15, 2010).

² Ibid.

³ John Shea, *Macedonia and Greece: The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers 1997; reprint, Jefferson North Carolina and London, 2008), 364.

is about Macedonia's use of the ancient symbol—the star of Vergina and the word “Macedonia”—which Greeks claim belongs to them and their history and cannot be used by another nation.⁴ Both issues are tangible, interrelated and important for regional stability.

The stability of Macedonia depends significantly on its relations with its neighbors. A destabilized Macedonia could have negative impacts, with catastrophic consequences for the region. Neighboring Greece is an EU and NATO member and hence bears the highest responsibility for the Macedonian security, and consequently has higher stakes in it than any other European state.⁵ This chapter will deal with the security aspect of the name dispute and will explain why this issue matters and should be resolved.

Macedonia - Center of Regional Instability

Since it emerged as an international entity in the 19th century, Macedonia has been at the center of regional disputes and conflicts. In almost every war that took place in the 20th century “Macedonia has been its main theater.”⁶ Macedonia was “the principal arena” as well as “the principal prize in the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913.”⁷ Every

⁴ Ben Fowkes, *Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict in the Post-Communist World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 116.

⁵ International Crisis Group, “Macedonia’s Name: Why the Dispute Matters and How to Resolve It,” ICG Balkan Report No. 122, Executive Summary and Recommendations, (December, 10, 2001), i, ICG, <<http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/europe/balkans/macedonia/122-macedonias-name-why-the-dispute-matters-and-how-to-resolve-it.aspx>> (accessed May 3, 2010).

⁶ Ted Galen Carpenter, “U. S. Troops in Macedonia: Back Door to War?,” in the *Working Papers of The Cato Institute, Foreign Policy Briefing* No. 30 (March 17, 1994), <<http://0-www.ciaonet.org.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/wps/cat07/#note8>> (accessed March 10, 2010).

⁷ Ibid.

unilateral intervention involved countries from the region. At times, Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece were divided and fought against each other, and at other times, they were allies in their efforts to take control of the Macedonian territory and its population. In most cases they were generously supported by the great powers that used them to exercise influence in this region.

Historic Background

After the 1878 Berlin Congress, Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece became the main competitors for acquisition of the “largest and nationally undetermined portion of the Ottoman Empire in Europe.”⁸ They fulfilled their plans after World War II by dividing the region into Aegean (Greece), Pirin (Bulgaria), and Vardar Macedonia, which was later incorporated in Yugoslavia, and became an independent state, the Republic of Macedonia, in 1991. These borders, which were drawn in 1913, remained until the present with some minor changes. Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece have fought each other over the Macedonian land, but have been united in their denial of the existence of a separate Macedonian identity. Serbs called them “South Serbs,” to Bulgarians they were “Bulgarians”, and to Greece, “Slavophone Greeks.”⁹

During the Civil War in Greece (1948), Macedonians and Slavs from the Aegean part paid the highest price for the ambition of the President of Socialist Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, to extend his influence in this part of the region. They chose to fight on the side of the Greek communists, expecting recognition of their identity in return; however,

⁸ ICG, “Macedonia’s Name,” 11.

⁹ Ibid.

their hopes proved to be futile. Thousands of them were expelled from Aegean Macedonia or escaped from the forceful Greek assimilation policy. Greece has never recognized Macedonians as a separate identity, or “Slavo-Macedonians” as an ethnic minority on its territory.¹⁰

Serbian domination was suspended during Tito’s rule. Vardar Macedonia became one of the six constituent republics of the Yugoslav federation. As part of Yugoslavia, Macedonia received the long expected right to self-determination for the first time in its history.¹¹

The Price of Independence

The independence of Macedonia from the former Yugoslav federation was treated differently by each country in the region. Some thought it a miracle that Macedonia gained a peaceful withdrawal from the Federation, while others refused to welcome the birth of the new state or to recognize the identity of its people. Biljana Vankovska, a professor of Political Science and Military Law at the University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, argues that the identity problem, which proved to be an “enormous obstacle in both political and security terms,”¹² is at the core of the “Macedonian question.”¹³ She locates the problem in the permanently disputed “existence of the distinct Macedonian ethnicity” and its linguistic, religious, cultural and historical identity.

¹⁰ Ibid., 12.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Biljana Vankovska, “Civil-Military Relations in Macedonia – Historical background,” in the *Copenhagen Peace Research Institute*, Copenhagen, Denmark: COPRI/DIIS (August, 2000), <<http://0-www.ciaonet.org.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/wps/vab02/>> (accessed April 2, 2010).

¹³ Ibid.

While Bulgaria accepted the name, though it continued to deny the language, “Greece saw and still sees Titoist Macedonia as an artificial creation – a ‘mutation’ of the underlying, ‘true’ Bulgarian identity of the Slav peoples in all Vardar and Pirin regions.”¹⁴ The identity problem thus grew into a longstanding name dispute with Greece. Both countries claim they have the right to use the word “Macedonia.” While Greeks claim it is their exclusive right, Macedonians argue that they “depend on the name Macedonia as the designation of both their state and their people.”¹⁵

The Peace Had a Chance

Macedonian-Greek relations were not always tense and confrontational. The signing of the 1995 Interim Accord opened another phase in their bilateral relations. Initially, neither side was totally satisfied how this document was negotiated and signed. Macedonia negotiated about something that it considered as already belonging to her – the name and the ancient Macedonian symbols. This resulted in Greece’s departure from its original position and its “refus[al] to accept the use of the noun Macedonia”¹⁶ altogether.

Economic Cooperation

Based on the Interim Accord provisions, progress was achieved in all areas of mutual interest. This cooperation became possible as a result of the agreement between

¹⁴ ICG, “Macedonia’s Name,” 12.

¹⁵ Ibid., 15.

¹⁶ Dr. George Voskopoulos, Ph.D., “The Greece-FYROM 1995 Interim Accord,” *American Chronicle*, (June 9, 2008), <<http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/view/64427>> (accessed on March 15, 2010).

the two countries to postpone the resolution of the name dispute.¹⁷ The most impressive progress was achieved in the economic sphere.

In the first two years following the normalization of their bilateral relations, Greece became the leading investor in Macedonia and its biggest commercial partner (with \$250 million next to Yugoslavia's \$400 m. and Germany's \$338 m. according to 1997 figures). These investments were in areas such as construction, banking, textiles, foodstuffs, electronics, and telecommunications. Furthermore, Greece and Macedonia signed several agreements easing cooperation in different areas of common interest and facilitating the realization of important projects such as those in hydro-economy. Despite the visa restrictions and economic difficulties, tourism rapidly increased on both sides of the border.¹⁸

European Integration

Once Greece lifted the 20-month trade embargo in 1995, Macedonia began to work toward the realization of its strategic goals, including accession to NATO and EU membership.¹⁹ The new developments allowed for closer cooperation between the two countries on major regional and international issues. Initially, Greece endorsed the Macedonian aspirations to join the Euro-Atlantic organizations. In terms of the EU,

¹⁷ Evangelos Kofos, "Athens-Skopje: an Uneasy Symbiosis (1995-2002)," in the *Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, ELIAMEP, Museum of the Macedonian Struggle Foundation*, Evangelos Kofos and Vlasid Vlasidis, Athens: Papazisis Publisher, (2003), 15, <http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/InterimAgreement/Downloads/Interim_Foreword.pdf> (accessed May 23, 2010).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), "Macedonia, Economy – Overview," *The World Factbook - Europe*, CIA, <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mk.html>> (accessed April 20, 2010).

cooperation was focused on the reconstruction of the “north-south European route E75, hydro-electric projects on common waters and implementation of the Program of Community aid to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (PHARE) programs.”²⁰ As a part of its overall security and foreign policy strategy for a secure and stable region, Greece supported NATO membership for all Southeastern European states, including Macedonia.²¹

Despite this support, Greek authorities kept reminding their Macedonian counterparts that any final agreement on NATO or EU membership would depend on the decisions of the member states’ parliaments. Hence, in the event that the name issue remained unresolved, the Greek parliament might block the Greek Government’s approval. Greeks also referred to the NATO membership requirement that “an applicant country should maintain smooth relations with its neighboring countries,”²² warning that an unresolved dispute over the name issue might be problematic to the Greek Parliament.²³

Balkan’s Security - Responsibility of Greece

Nearly twenty years after independence, Macedonian-Greek relations are still locked in the name dispute. The negotiations failed to produce a resolution to the problem and further deepened the disagreements between Athens and Skopje. Greece continued to

²⁰ Evangelos Kofos, “Greece and FYROM: Recent Developments and Prospects for Bilateral Relations - Greek Support to FYROM’s International Orientations,” *Istituto Affari Internazionali*, (1998), <<http://0-www.ciaonet.org.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/wps/koe01/>> (accessed March 3, 2010).

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

use its privileged position as a NATO and EU member to block Macedonia's accession into these organizations. At the Bucharest Summit in April 2008, Greece essentially vetoed the Macedonian membership into NATO and in December 2009, it used the unresolved name issue to prevent Macedonia from opening the accession talks with the EU. The NATO and EU member countries expressed their willingness to reconsider their positions over the integration process once the name dispute is resolved.²⁴

Greece does not pose a direct threat to Macedonia, but Athens' policy isolating Macedonia could lead to a political destabilization of the northern neighbor. The international community frequently expresses its concerns about the possibility for escalation of the situation in Macedonia, encouraging Macedonia and Greece to find a mutually acceptable solution to their dispute as soon as possible.²⁵

In his interview for the Vienna's daily "Standard," the EU special representative to the Republic of Macedonia, Ambassador Erwan Fouere, warned that any postponement of the Macedonian accession talks with the EU "could open the doors to inter-ethnic tensions."²⁶ Ambassador Fouere added that the disappointment from being

²⁴ "EU Urges Macedonia Name Talks," Editorial, *Balkaninsight News*, February 3, 2010, <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/main/news/25467/>> (accessed March 15, 2010).

²⁵ "Fuere: Pregovori so EU oti se Mozni Tenzii," (Fouere: Negotiations with EU because the Possibility of Tensions), Editorial, *AI News*, February, 2, 2010, <<http://a1.com.mk/vesti/default.aspx?VestID=119680>> (accessed, February 12, 2010).

²⁶ Ibid.

“left in the lurch”²⁷ by the EU would have a negative impact on the spirit of reform, an already undergoing process in Macedonian society.²⁸

For Sabine Freizer, the Director for Europe at the International Crisis Group, the “unfortunate” name dispute is a product of the Balkan crisis of the 1990’s. Based on her experiences in the region during the early 90’s, she argues that “the name issue can have very negative consequences for peace and stability in the Western Balkans.”²⁹ Therefore, blocking Macedonian accession into NATO and the EU is completely against Greece’s foreign policy interests, which include the stability, security and prosperity of the Balkan region.

Since the beginning of the new millennium, the Balkan’s political and security environment have changed dramatically. The countries in the region replaced their communist regimes and committed themselves to building democratic societies and free market economies. Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania became members of NATO and the EU; Albania and Croatia joined NATO; and Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina participated in NATO’s Partnership for Peace Program.

Greece is the oldest democracy in the region. As a member of both organizations, NATO since 1952 and EU since 1981, it has advanced its position and prospered more than its neighbors. As a regional leader, Athens’ responsibility is to promote mutual

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ South East Europe TV Exchange, “Interview with Sabine Freizer, ICG,” online video, (April 1, 2010), SEETV, <http://seetv.blastmedia.eu/story/index/vocabulary_id/tags/term_id/281/story_id/15413/media_id/32527> (accessed May 15, 2010).

cooperation, economic development and integration of the Balkan countries into the EU and NATO. Furthermore, Greece has permanently reaffirmed its commitment to lasting stabilization of the Balkan Peninsula. In June 2003, Greece, which had a six-month term to preside over the EU, hosted a Summit between the EU and the five Western Balkan countries. At the meeting, the European Union supported the aspirations of the Balkan countries for their European integration as well as their access to the EU financial funds such as the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization (CARDS) program.³⁰

Pursuit of Peace

Contemporary Macedonia is surrounded by democratic countries. The process of Euro-Atlantic integration significantly decreased any possibility for conventional war between Macedonia and its neighbors, but the risk of internal instability could not be entirely ruled out. Given its size, history and ethnic diversity, the security instability in Macedonia could easily escalate. The political parties are ethnically based and they strive for compromise in the decision making process; hence the internal stability depends highly on inter-ethnic tolerance.

Although Macedonia gained its independence in 1991, a number of neighboring countries refused to recognize this fact. Macedonia's poor economy and weak defense capabilities made the country vulnerable and an easy target. The political leadership

³⁰ European Commission - Enlargement, "The Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans," *General Affairs & External Relations Council (GAERC)*, Extracts from successive General Affairs & External Relations Councils, Western Balkans Council Conclusions (16 June 2003), EC, <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/enlargement_process/accesion_process/how_does_a_country_join_the_eu/sap/thessaloniki_agenda_en.htm> (accessed April 17, 2010).

quickly realized that its best defense would be the integration of Macedonia into a collective security system under the umbrella of the West. What they initially saw as prevention against external threat later became a guarantee of internal stability and the main point of cohesion of the Macedonian multi-ethnic society.

Since Macedonia voiced its desire to join NATO and the EU, the integration processes required for membership have served as the main balance of the relations between the two major ethnic communities, as well as of the stability of the country. Integration into NATO is among the few issues upon which all of the political parties in Macedonia agree. The decision to seek NATO membership was unanimously passed by the Macedonian Parliament in December 1993 and it has remained a priority issue for the country's foreign policy.³¹ In 1995, as a NATO aspirant country, Macedonia joined the NATO Partnership for Peace Program and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, and participated in the regional initiatives for cooperation such as the NATO South-East European Initiative.³² Developments in 2001, however, showed that lasting peace and internal stability have not yet been achieved.

Macedonia's Security Challenges

Inter-Ethnic Relations at Stake

“If you see the neighbor is shaving, start foaming.” This Balkan expression is probably the most accurate description of the domino theory, which explains how

³¹ Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Macedonia, “Our Way to NATO,” Ministry of Defense, (May, 2006), 2, <http://www.morm.gov.mk/morm/en/nato/nato_way.html> (accessed April 20, 2010).

³² The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “NATO's Relations with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,” NATO, (March, 2010), <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_48830.htm> (accessed April 10, 2010).

conflicts spread in this traditionally turbulent region. Despite the peaceful secession from former the Yugoslavia in 1991, Macedonia was not an exception from the other republics, and in less than two years after the NATO airstrike against Serbia and the Kosovo crisis in 1999, the country faced inter-ethnic conflict at home.

The tensions turned into armed hostilities in February 2001 when a group of ethnic Albanians attacked Macedonian government forces near the Kosovo - Macedonian border, claiming to fight for greater civil rights in Macedonia. Very soon the sporadic skirmishes turned into insurgency and spread throughout the northwest part of the country, threatening to engulf the entire region. In order to prevent further escalation of the conflict, UN, NATO, the EU and OSCE coordinated their efforts in June 2001 to help the country implement a cease-fire agreement, initiate a process of confidence building measures and facilitate political dialogue between the parties in the conflict.³³

A cease-fire was established in July 2001 with international assistance. A month later, the leaders of the four biggest political parties, two from each ethnic group, signed a peace agreement named the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which was monitored by representatives of the international organizations (NATO, EU, OSCE and the UN). The Ohrid Framework Agreement was incorporated as an amendment in the Macedonian Constitution of 1991 and became the main pillar of Macedonian peace and stability.³⁴

³³ The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), "Skopje Requests NATO Assistance," NATO, (January, 2001), <<http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2001/0618/e0620a.htm>> (accessed April 15, 2010).

³⁴ Macedonian Assembly, "Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia - Amendments IV – XVIII," Macedonian Assembly, <<http://www.sobranie.mk/en/default-en.asp?ItemID=9F7452BF44EE814B8DB897C1858B71FF>> (accessed April 30, 2010).

The Ohrid Framework Agreement met Albanian demands related to their status as a constituent ethnic group, granting them a more active role in the creation of the new state, particularly in the decision-making process about issues of strategic interest to the country.³⁵ The Agreement also provided a solution for the regulation of the equitable representation of minorities in public administration, and especially in defense and security services; created special constitutional and legal procedures to prevent “majorization” of minority interests in legislative procedures, both at the local and the state level; and created a legal framework to allow the use of the national symbols and languages of the minority ethnic communities.³⁶

With regard to the name dispute, the Albanian political parties have been notably patient, but not detached. They carefully criticize the government for its lack of flexibility in the negotiations with Greece. Ethnic Albanians expect quick Euro-Atlantic integration of the country so that they can join their compatriots in Albania, which became a NATO member in April 2008.³⁷

According to a survey conducted for the Ministry of Defense between April 2 and 10, 2010, sixty-five percent of Macedonian citizens do not support the name change as a condition for Macedonia to join NATO. The survey showed that eighty-four percent of ethnic Macedonians responded negatively compared to only 7.1 percent of ethnic

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Shkëlzen Aquifi, “Taci: Ahmeti e Roba so Izminat Rok,” (Thaci: Ahmeti is Merchandise with an Expired Date of Use), *Alsat News*, April 2, 2010, <<http://alsat-m.tv/lajme/vendi/34245.html>> (accessed April 19, 2010).

Albanians and 8.9 percent “others.”³⁸ The Albanian coalition partner, the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), demonstrates more tolerance and understanding of the sensitivity that the issue poses for their Macedonian partners. On the other hand, the Albanian opposition party, the Democratic Party of Albanians, blames the government for “blocking the Euro-Atlantic processes, as well as for degradation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement which could lead to unpredictable consequences.”³⁹

Hence, a bigger dispute between Albanian political parties or pressure by the population for redefinition of the Ohrid Agreement – as a consequence of the poor economy and social situation – could result in repositioning of the Albanians and a more aggressive stance on their part.⁴⁰ This warning came from the opposition leader of the Party for Democratic Prosperity of the ethnic Albanians in Macedonia, Menduh Thaci, who recently argued that if the Macedonian leaders fail to make arrangements with the Albanians, “Macedonia most definitely cannot exist as a unitary state.”⁴¹

³⁸ “Seeset i Pet Otsto od Makedonskite Gragjani ne se za Promena na Imeto vo Zamena za Vlez vo NATO,” (Sixty-five Percent of Macedonian Citizens are against the Change of the Name in Return for Entry into NATO), Editorial, *Macedonian Information Agency (MIA)*, April 24, 2010, <<http://www.mia.mk/default.aspx?mId=31&vId=73354928&lId=1&title>> (accessed April 26, 2010).

³⁹ Zoran Jovanovski, “Nacionalistickata Politika Vinovna za Mozna Destabilizacija,” (The Nationalist Politics Blamed for a Possible Destabilization), *AI News*, April 30, 2010, <<http://a1.com.mk/vesti/default.aspx?VestID=122657>> (accessed May 5, 2010).

⁴⁰ Spiros Sofos, “The Greek-Macedonian Dispute – Time to Return to the Drawing Board,” *Transconflict*, (March 24, 2010), <<http://www.transconflict.com/2010/03/the-greek-macedonian-dispute-%e2%80%93-time-to-return-to-the-drawing-board/>> (accessed May 5, 2010).

⁴¹ Shkëlzen Aquifi, “Taci: Ahmeti e Roba so Izminat Rok,” (Thaci: Ahmeti is Merchandise with an Expired Date of Use). *Alsats News*, April 2, 2010, <<http://alsat-m.tv/lajme/vendi/34245.html>> (accessed April 19, 2010).

Divided Macedonians

The name dispute also divided the ethnic Macedonian political parties. The ruling center-right Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) and the party in ruling opposition, the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), argue over the best strategy to approach the issue. Their diametrically opposite positions are reflected in Macedonian society, which is divided on whether or not to make a compromise with Greece. The disagreements over the name dispute are often accompanied by mutual accusations and reflect other political, economic, social and religious issues as well. This situation could potentially bring the country to a political crisis.

The disagreement between the nationalistic VMRO-DPMNE and the leftist SDSM is not new. The rivalry emerged in 1992, when Macedonia was struggling for international recognition and acceptance into the UN. The political gap widened during the 1992 debate in Parliament over President Kiro Gligorov's proposal for support of the name "Republic of Macedonia (Skopje)." According to President Gligorov, this proposal should have been the final concession and the conclusion of the dispute with Greece.⁴²

Members of Parliament from VMRO-DPMNE disagreed with the President's proposal, claiming that "no one has the right to change Macedonia's name, nor the right to violate the constitution which stipulates that Macedonia's name cannot be changed."⁴³ The opposition blamed the President for not consulting with the other political parties.

⁴² "Fiery Debate in Parliament over Name," Editorial, *Mak News*, December 10, 1992, <<http://www.b-info.com/places/Macedonia/republic/news/101-200/187.1>> (accessed April 30, 2010).

⁴³ Ibid.

They argued that accepting the word Skopje as an addition to Macedonia's existing name is a diplomatic defeat, done under pressure by the European Community and Greece.⁴⁴

The government coalition defended the proposal, stating that the addition of "Skopje" would not change Macedonia's name. The ruling parties claimed that compromise would open the process of Macedonia's international recognition, which in return would bring a better standard of living. The two ethnic Albanian parties, PDP and NDP, which were part of the government's coalition, supported the President's proposal.⁴⁵

Another large disagreement between the Macedonian political parties came in 1993, during the process of the country's accession into the UN. Macedonia became a UN member in 1993 under the provisions of the UN SC Resolution 817 with the provisional name "The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia." The UN membership was not accepted unanimously by all Macedonian political parties. VMRO-DPMNE strongly objected to the joint British, French and Spanish proposal for Macedonia's membership into the UN under "the temporary name of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia." The President of VMRO-DPMNE, Ljubco Georgievski, argued that if Macedonia is forced to accept another name without being consulted, "any acceptance of the proposal by the Macedonian government would be done without the approval of the

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Macedonian people and citizens,” and that the UN decision would have negative political consequences for the country.⁴⁶

Patriots and Traitors

The domestic political tension became more visible after the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest when Greece blocked Macedonian membership into the Alliance. Given the challenges that accompanied the Macedonian independence and the problems with its neighbors, including the name confrontation with Greece, VMRO-DPMNE became the main political actor and took the leading role in the promotion of the Macedonian nationalist ideology, regardless of whether it was in power or in opposition. In an attempt to reaffirm the Macedonian national identity this party used symbols or named public spaces that Greece considered as “appropriation of the region’s Hellenistic past.”⁴⁷ Furthermore, VMRO-DPMNE kept raising the question about the treatment and rights of the Macedonian minorities in Greece and Bulgaria. In the context of the name dispute, keeping this issue open was considered by Athens as nationalistic policy with destabilizing effects on the fragile political situation in Macedonia.⁴⁸

Under VMRO-DPMNE’s leadership, the right-wing political coalition won the 2006 elections and gained more seats in Parliament after the 2008 early elections. The Parliament was dissolved only one week after Greece blocked Macedonia’s entry into NATO at the Summit in Bucharest. The VMRO-DPMNE leader Nikola Gruevski, whose

⁴⁶ “Georgievski Gives Note to Security Council,” Editorial, *Mak News*, February 24, 1993, <<http://www.b-info.com/places/Macedonia/republic/news/201-300/261.1>> (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁴⁷ Sofos, “The Greek-Macedonian Dispute,” *Transconflict*, March 24, 2010.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

popularity increased after Bucharest, told his electorate that the decision for early elections was taken because of “inefficacy and incapability to meet the promises”⁴⁹ from the 2006 elections campaign. The opposition parties disagreed with the government’s decision and warned that early elections would further distance Macedonia from NATO membership. They criticized the government for having no strategy in the negotiations, suggesting that Macedonia should reach a compromise with Greece.⁵⁰

In response to these critics, the government usually referred to the provision in the VMRO-DPMNE’s Party Program, which emphasizes commitment to the negotiation process until a mutually acceptable solution with Greece is achieved. On the other hand, the government has stressed that a number of potential actions are unacceptable including constitutional changes for the purpose of changing the nation’s name; undertaking of any actions that would “undermine the Macedonian national identity, nation and language”;⁵¹ and any kind of solution or compromise with Greece “without previous declaration by the citizens through a referendum.”⁵²

The opposition parties headed by the Social Democrat Union (SDSM) demonstrate more flexibility about the dispute with Greece. They are willing to support

⁴⁹ “Macedonia Heads to Early Election,” Editorial, *CBC News*, April 12, 2008, <<http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2008/04/12/macedonia-election.html>> (accessed May 5, 2010).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Vnatresna Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija – Demokratska Partija za Makedonsko Nacionalno Edinstvo (VMRO - Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity), “Program for Rebirth 2008 – 2012,” 135, VMRO, <<http://www.vmro-dpmne.org.mk/Dokumenti/Programa%202008%20EN%20WEB.pdf>> (accessed May 1, 2010).

⁵² Ibid.

any agreement between the two governments that would guarantee the preservation of the noun “Macedonia” in the country’s name and the adjective “Macedonian” in describing the nationality of its people.⁵³ SDSM urges the government to display greater transparency and more public awareness about the negotiation process. According to the opposition, Macedonian citizens must be informed about the further steps the government is taking, given that the achievement of the country’s strategic goals of NATO and EU membership depends only on the resolution of the name dispute. For the opposition, any “name referendum that is doomed to failure”⁵⁴ without the government’s approval within the UN negotiation process is unacceptable.⁵⁵

Searching Identity in the Past

The identity issue brought more problems to the entire situation. When VMRO-DMPNE achieved power in 2006, the influence of Alexander the Great became more present among Macedonians. First, the government renamed the national airport and later, after Greece vetoed Macedonian membership into NATO in 2008, it initiated several projects glorifying Macedonia’s direct ties to Alexander and other ancient heroes. The representatives of international organizations and diplomats criticized these steps and advised the Macedonian government to refrain from provocations, at least until the end of the negotiations process with Greece. International officials reminded the Macedonian

⁵³ Sinisa Jakuv Marusic, “Macedonia Opposition Slams PM over Statement,” *Balkaninsight News*, April 27, 2010, <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/main/news/27664/>> (accessed May 2, 2010).

⁵⁴ Biljana Bogdanovska, “Nema Potreba od Liderska Sredba za Imeto,” (No Need for Meeting of the Political Leaders on the Name Issue), *Forum News*, March 1, 2010, <<http://www.forum.com.mk/18577>> (accessed April 28, 2010).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

leaders about the Greek sensitivity about Alexander the Great, whom Greeks consider to be their exclusive cultural property.⁵⁶

More concerns emerged as a result of the growing controversy about the roots of the Macedonian contemporary identity. Boris Georgievski, a political journalist for Deutsche Welle Radio, who investigated how the rise of nationalism during the so-called “search for Macedonian identity” has affected the Macedonian multi-ethnic society concludes that, “an attempt to construct a new identity for Macedonia on the basis of a presumed link to the world of Antiquity, known locally as *Antikvizacija* (*Antiquisation*), would have devastating consequences”⁵⁷ for the country. He claims that additional provocations will further complicate already fragile inter-ethnic relations.⁵⁸

Sam Vaknin, a former advisor to the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, argues that *Antiquisation* as a “nation-building project”⁵⁹ is directed more against Albanians than Greeks or Bulgarians. Vaknin warns about multiple consequences of *Antiquisation*. First, the creation of an identity would marginalize the ethnic Albanians and prevent them from becoming Macedonian nationals. Second, this process would divide the ethnic Macedonians between those who support the *Antiquisation* and those who claim they are descendants of the Slavs. Last but not least, he stresses that the process of Macedonian

⁵⁶ Boris Georgievski, “Ghosts of the Past Endanger Macedonia’s Future,” *Forum News*, October 27, 2009, <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/main/news/23207/>> (accessed May 5, 2010).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

accession to the EU would be delayed as a result of the Greek response to this populist campaign.⁶⁰

Oddly enough, the competition between Macedonia and Greece about “who came first” turned into a quest for their “long lost relatives.” In July 2008, the Macedonian Prime Minister and the Macedonian Orthodox Archbishop hosted Prince Ghazanfar Ali Khan and Princess Rani Atiqa of the Hunza people, from Pakistan’s Himalaya region, who claim they are descendants of Alexander the Great. While Hunza visitors told the national media that they didn’t know about Macedonia until 12 years ago, a Macedonian linguistics professor issued a statement about similarities between the grammar of Hunza and Indo-European languages.⁶¹

Greece’s search for its own ancient relatives was equally successful. They established close relations with the Kalashi tribe from the Himalaya region in Pakistan. Greeks subsequently requested Greek - Americans to ask the American government to provide special protection to the “Hellenic descendants of the armies of Alexander the Great in the Himalayas.”⁶²

Derogated Priority

The poor economies of both countries present another potential challenge resulting from the name dispute. The traditional problems of the national economies in

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

the Balkans are inflation and unemployment.⁶³ In addition, Greece suffered substantial consequences from the 2008 global recession. The weekly magazine “The Economist” ironically calls Greece the “Country That Needs Help,” tying the name dispute to Greece’s enormous financial deficit, which has totally collapsed the country’s economy.⁶⁴ On the other side of this issue is Macedonia, among the poorest countries in Europe. Despite the optimistic prognoses of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that Macedonia is recovering from the recession, the country is still struggling with slow economic growth, high unemployment and decreased foreign direct investment.⁶⁵

The economies of the Balkan countries are small and interdependent. Professor Nicholas Gianaris at Fordham University in New York argues that the driving tool of their economic growth is trade, which can “create a favorable environment for further regional cooperation.”⁶⁶ On the other hand, Gianaris claims that the regional political disputes and frictions would lead to “greater isolation, restrictions on resource movements, loss of potential economies from large-scale production, and less economic and cultural development.”⁶⁷

⁶³ Nicholas V. Gianaris, *Geopolitical and Economic Changes in the Balkan Countries* (Westport, CT, U. S.: Greenwood Publishing Group, Incorporated, 1996), 140.

⁶⁴ “What’s In A Name?,” Editorial, *The Economist online*, March 25, 2010, <http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=15766873> (accessed May 15, 2010).

⁶⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, “The World Factbook: Europe, Macedonia,” CIA, <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mk.html>> (accessed April 20, 2010).

⁶⁶ Gianaris, *Geopolitical and Economic Changes in the Balkan Countries*, 141.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 173.

Blackmail and Revenge

Finally, the name dispute should be viewed as an example of inappropriate practices on how the EU and NATO handle the integration processes. Essentially, the Balkan Peninsula faces dormant conflicts, which stand in the way of the full integration of the region into the European family of democracies. On the other hand, unfortunately, being a member of the EU or NATO enables that country to be in a position to blackmail those who aspire to join these organizations. For instance, in order to resolve a border dispute, Slovenia vetoed Croatian admission negotiations with the EU. Similarly, Greece has been able to block Turkish integration into the EU because of the Cyprus issue, concerns regarding the Aegean Sea and other disagreements. Greece has also vetoed Macedonia's entrance into NATO and the start of accession talks with the EU.⁶⁸

Given the current bilateral relations of the other potential candidates for EU membership, this practice could worsen in the future. For example, after accession to the EU, Croatia could veto Serbian membership simply as revenge for the civil war of the 1990s. Macedonia could be blocked by Albania unless it makes more concessions regarding its minority population within Macedonia. Albania could also use its veto on Serbia to obtain recognition of Kosovo by Belgrade.⁶⁹

The strategic vision of the U.S. is "Europe whole, free and at peace, a Europe whose security is not based on its divisions but is based instead on its potential for

⁶⁸ Marko Attila Hoare, "The Difficult Road to Balkan Stability," *The Henry Jackson Society – Project for Democratic Geopolitics* (November 9, 2009), <<http://www.henryjacksonsociety.org/stories.asp?id=1307>> (accessed May 19, 2010).

⁶⁹ Ibid.

integration.”⁷⁰ Membership in the EU is highly desirable, which motivates Balkan countries to commit to democratization of their societies. The achievements in many of these countries are visible and it appears that the situation in the Balkans is improving. If the tendency to use the power of veto continues, however, this could impede progress toward democracy in these countries. In such cases, “Western passivity and vacillation” could transform potential progress into undesirable directions.⁷¹

Conclusion

The name dispute has significant impact on Macedonian policy, economy and security. Further delay in resolution could widen the gap between the inter-ethnic communities. Even though the possibility for repetition of the 2001 conflict is small, it should not be entirely excluded. While Macedonian integration into NATO and the EU will not immediately resolve the internal problems of the country, these steps would ease the inter-ethnic tensions.

Two aspects of the Macedonian Euro-Atlantic perspective are of particular importance. First, the continuation of the integration processes is important for regional stability. An internal conflict has serious potential to spread throughout Macedonian national borders. Second, Macedonian integration is a missing puzzle in the wider and long-term Trans-Atlantic strategy for a unified Europe.

⁷⁰ Federation of American Scientist, “NATO Expansion 1997,” Assistant Secretary of State Mark Grossman’s speech at Southeastern Europe Defense Ministerial, Bulgaria, (October 6, 1997), U.S. Executive Branch Documents, FAS, <http://www.fas.org/man/nato/offdocs/us_97/97100602_wpo.html> (accessed May 15, 2010).

⁷¹ Ibid.

Therefore, the current situation regarding the name problem is unsustainable. The main question is not whether, but how to resolve it. The crux of the issue remains proving ownership and exclusivity over an ancient historic heritage. From Greece's point of view, responsibility for the name conflict is a result of Macedonian refusal to compromise, while Macedonia believes it is justified in the use of the name. Regardless of which country is correct, the continued existence of the name conflict could have unpredictable developments and consequences.

CHAPTER 4

IS THERE A SOLUTION TO THE NAME DISPUTE?

Fifteen years after Macedonia and Greece committed to resolve the name dispute under the provisions of the 1995 Interim Accord, the two countries are still unable to reach an agreement. The official acceptance of the Interim Accord eased the tensions between Skopje and Athens, however, the name dispute remained an obstacle in achieving full cooperation between the two nations. Before negotiations intensified, in anticipation of and following the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest, the process was deadlocked in sterile talks and unproductive attempts to bring the parties closer to a solution.

The various rounds of negotiations followed a similar pattern. The UN mediator, Matthew Nimetz, would initiate separate or joint meetings with the Macedonian and Greek negotiators, and attempt to stimulate the discussions by offering, when he deemed it opportune, concrete proposals. Nimetz's efforts were usually supported by statements issued by the international community including NATO, EU and the U. S.. These statements aimed to encourage the negotiation process and emphasized the importance of quick resolution of the problem which would allow Macedonia to join NATO and EU. Nimetz would usually recommend a deadline by which time the problem would be expected to be resolved, emphasizing that the solution should come while the issue was still on NATO and EU's respective agendas.

These joint efforts were insufficient to resolve the dispute. Today, Macedonia and Greece remain entrenched in their positions without any sign of compromise. This

chapter will explore the main challenges in dealing with this problem in an attempt to answer the question of whether there is a solution to the name dispute.

An Ideal Situation

The name dispute has the characteristics of a virtual problem, though it produces tangible consequences. The problem affects all segments of the bilateral relations between the two countries, including the economy, trade, culture and religion, as well as the general situation in the region. Hence, before discussing possibilities for resolution of the dispute, it would be helpful to look into the possible benefits that a resolution to this problem would bring to Macedonia and Greece, and try to predict the quality of their relations should the dispute be resolved.

The pursuit of peace and stability in the Balkans is an endless effort. Similar to the conflicts involving Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo, the name dispute should be treated like a deadlocked conflict deserving significant attention by the international community. After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the political leadership in Athens believed that an eventual formation of the axes of Ankara, Tirana, Skopje, and Kosovo, could pose a security threat for Greece. On the other hand, Greek political analyst Ioannis Tzounis claimed that during the conflicts on the Balkan Peninsula, Macedonia served as a buffer zone which saved Greece from spillover of the conflicts to its territory.¹ However, Macedonia was not spared from internal inter-ethnic turbulences, and in 2001 the country became another source of instability in the Balkans. The peace

¹ Neophytos Loizides, "Doves against Hawks: Symbolic Politics in Greece and the Macedonian Question," *Forthcoming, International Studies Association*, Chicago (February 2007), 12, <http://works.bepress.com/neophytos_loizides/15/> (accessed March 25, 2010).

was brokered with international assistance, but almost ten years later this problem still has potential to destabilize the region, which in itself acts as a serious threat to regional stability.

The 1993 consensus among all of the internal political parties for Macedonian integration into NATO and EU proved to be the most reliable guardian of Macedonian peace, having the capacity to absorb the tensions between the biggest ethnic communities and rid them of their respective anxieties. Therefore, the resolution of the name dispute would allow Macedonia to gain membership into Euro-Atlantic organizations and also increase stability in the country. In their joint op-ed published in the Macedonian daily “Dnevnik”, the EU Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighborhood Policy, Stefan Fule, and European Parliament members Jorgos Shacimarkakis and Zoran Thaler, urged Macedonian authorities to resolve the problem with Greece, stating that it would open the European perspectives for the country and enhance regional cooperation, stability, security and good neighborly relations.²

According to these European diplomats, the solution would allow quick economic progress, reduce the high unemployment rate and attract direct foreign investment.³ For instance, Croatian acceptance into NATO along with the advanced negotiations for accession into the EU, provided further stimulus for Croatia to increase its

² “Vreme e da se Mrdne od Mrtva Tocka!” (It is Time to Move from a Dead Point!), Stefan Fule, Jorgos Shacimarkakis and Zoran Thaler, *Dnevnik*, May 29, 2010, <<http://www.dnevnik.com.mk/?itemID=C78A1795BBA2DE43A42C4B23EBCEBAA8&arc=1>> (accessed June 20, 2010).

³ Ibid.

economic growth and direct foreign investments, which helped make this country a regional leader.⁴

Greece would be another beneficiary of the resolution of the dispute. Many Greek banks and potential investors in the region have already expressed their interest in dealing with Macedonia. These benefits for Greece would result only in a stable region completely integrated into the EU.⁵

The three European diplomats concluded that “the EU enlargement remains to be the best strategy for ensuring stability, peace and economic prosperity in the Balkans.”⁶ In the context of the global economic recession, stable and committed future members are of particular importance for the EU. The Europeans expect that Balkan countries will demonstrate sufficient democratic capacity in overcoming the existing challenges and achieve permanent progress.⁷

Obstacles on the Road to Resolution

While Macedonia and Greece have an interest in resolving the name issue and despite being aware that valuable rewards would be forthcoming in the case of a positive outcome in the name dispute, it appears that the two nations are still far from finding a

⁴ U.S. Department of Commerce - U.S. Commercial Service, “Investment Climate: Croatia,” *Chapter 6*, (February 18, 2010), U.S. Department of Commerce, <<http://www.buyusa.gov/croatia/en/investmentclimatestatement.html>> (accessed June 20, 2010).

⁵ “Vreme e da se Mrdne od Mrtva Tocka!,” (It is Time to Move from a Dead Point!), Fule, Shacimarkakis and Thaler, *Dnevnik*, May 29, 2010.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

solution to the problem. The conclusion of the issue would require that all obstacles are appropriately addressed and resolved.

The name dispute emerged immediately after Macedonia's independence from the former Yugoslavia. In August 1991 the Council of Ministers of the European Economic Community appointed the Arbitration Commission of the Conference on Yugoslavia, also named the Badinter Arbitration Committee after the French criminal lawyer, university professor and politician Robert Badinter. The main task of the Committee was to provide the Conference on Yugoslavia with legal advice.

In its assessment on the legal issues related to the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Arbitration Commission concluded that Macedonia had met the conditions for independence. Despite this positive evaluation of the Commission, due to the Greece's objection to Macedonia's name, the European Union refused to recognize Macedonia until December 16, 1993.⁸ Greece asserted that the name of its northern neighbor constituted a violation of Greek sovereignty and demonstrated territorial aspirations. In order to prevent another conflict in the already inflamed Balkans and under pressure from the international community, Greece and Macedonia agreed to put the dispute on hold.

Legal Aspect of the Dispute

According to a proposal by UN Secretary General Boutros-Boutros Ghali in April 1993, the Security Council approved Resolution 817, under which Macedonia became a

⁸ Ana Trbovich, *A Legal Geography of Yugoslavia's Disintegration* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press Inc.), 281.

member of the UN with a temporary name of “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.” Some analysts argue that Macedonia’s acceptance into the UN is unprecedented, running contrary to the provisions of UN regulations for admission of a new member state. According to Dr. Igor Janev, a former special advisor of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia, from the legal point of view, UN Security Council (SC) resolution 817 (1993) and General Assembly (GA) resolution 47/225 (1993) impose additional requirements to Macedonia’s admission to the United Nations. He claims that these conditions, which include “the applicant’s acceptance of a provisional name and an obligation to negotiate with another country (Greece) over its final name,”⁹ are in collision with the provisions of Article 4(1) of the UN Charter. Article 4(1) pertains to the accession of new members in the UN, stating that “Membership in the United Nations is open to all other peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and... are able and willing to carry out these obligations.”¹⁰ Dr. Janev argues that these obligations limit Macedonia’s legal right to choose its name. He concludes that acceptance of Macedonia into the UN under a provisional name is against the UN Charter’s provision, which renders the membership status of the country unclear. Hence, the lack of progress in negotiations over the name issue is due to the nature of the problem. Since, in this case, Macedonia defends its right

⁹ Dr. Igor Janev, “Some Remarks about the Legal Status of Macedonia in the United Nations,” *Review of International Affairs*, Vol. LIII, No. 1108 by Dr. Igor Janev (October – December 2002), 2, Maknews, <http://www.maknews.com/html/articles/janev/un_admission_of_macedonia2.html> (accessed May 30, 2010).

¹⁰ Charter of the United Nations, “Chapter II: Membership, Article 4,” adopted June 1945, United Nations, <<http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter2.shtml>> (accessed May 25, 2010).

of self-determination related to the name of the country and the identity of its people, he believes the dispute is between Macedonia and the UN, rather than between Macedonia and Greece.¹¹

Diplomatic Race

Relations with Greece remained poor after Macedonia's admission into the UN in 1993. Macedonian diplomacy focused on establishing bilateral relations with countries that recognized Macedonia's constitutional name. According to some Macedonian sources, more than 120 UN member-countries and three out of five UN Security Council permanent members preferred to use the term "the Republic of Macedonia" in establishing bilateral relations and official communication with Macedonia. A significant step forward that strengthened Macedonia's position was the 2004 decision by the administration of the President George W. Bush to recognize the "Republic of Macedonia" as the official name of the country.¹²

From its side, Greece condemned its northern neighbor for allegedly having territorial aspirations toward Greek territory. After the 1993 political crisis in Greece, Andreas Papandreou's political party, Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), regained power. In order to put greater pressure on Macedonia, the newly elected Greek government pulled out of negotiations mediated by Washington and imposed a sixteen-

¹¹ Dr. Janev, "Some Remarks about the Legal Status of Macedonia in the United Nations," 4-5.

¹² "U.S. Recognizes Macedonia, Drawing Ire from Greece," Editorial, *USA Today*, November 4, 2004, <http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2004-11-04-greece_x.htm> (accessed June 9, 2010).

month trade embargo on Macedonia in 1994.¹³

The reconciliation came in August 1995, when Macedonia and Greece signed an Interim Accord (IA) in which the signatory parties agreed to make particular concessions. While Macedonia agreed to change the national flag and amend its constitution to state that the country had no territorial claims towards any of its neighbors, Greece assumed the obligation not to hinder Macedonia's integration into international monetary institutions and organizations such as NATO, OSCE, and the EU.¹⁴

Interim Accord Provisions

Despite the fact that the IA provides the base which regulates bilateral relations between Macedonia and Greece, Greece's veto of Macedonia's membership into NATO at the 2008 Bucharest Summit seriously challenged the credibility of the agreement. The government in Skopje described the Greek veto as a violation of "Article 11 of the Interim Accord regulating Greece's duty to refrain from blocking Macedonia's international integration."¹⁵ According to Macedonia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonio Milososki, with this act Greece pushed Macedonia towards legal uncertainty, but also questions the credibility of the other documents concluded between the two

¹³ Andrew Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History* (Stanford University, Stanford CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2008), 270/271.

¹⁴ "Vremena spogodba" (Interim Agreement), Editorial, *Forum News*, September 13, 1995, <http://www.forum.com.mk/dosie/Dosie_Ime#17157> (accessed June 17, 2010).

¹⁵ Risto Karajakov, "Macedonia, Name Issue Arrives before ICJ," *Observatorio Balcanicaucaso – research electronic media*, November 19, 2008, <<http://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Regions-and-countries/Macedonia/Macedonia-Name-Issue-Arrives-Before-ICJ>> (accessed June 28, 2010).

countries.¹⁶

In response, Greece denied any violation of the IA and accused Macedonia of lacking interest in a “timely solution of the name issue;”¹⁷ using a “strategy of delaying the negotiations;”¹⁸ and violating Article 7 of the Interim Accord which regulates the basic principles of good neighborly relations, specifically referring to Macedonia’s provocations, including renaming the Skopje airport “Alexander the Great.”¹⁹

Possible Solutions

The negotiations between Macedonia and Greece begun in 1995 are ongoing, though with varying intensity. After 15 years of joint efforts and international mediation headed by UN mediators including Cyrus Vance, Robin O’Neil and current mediator Matthew Nimetz, the only considerable progress was Greece’s claim that it would depart from its hard position which stipulates that the final solution should not include the word “Macedonia.” This concession by Greece is highly questionable since the provisional name under which Macedonia became a UN member also contains the word “Macedonia.” Despite the fact that a solution has not been reached, the negotiations pivot

¹⁶ Goce Mihajlovski, “Makedonija Utre so Dokazite protiv Grcija,” (Macedonia Tomorrow with Evidences against Greece), *AI News*, July 19, 2009, <<http://a1.com.mk/vesti/default.aspx?VestID=111650>> (accessed June 29, 2010).

¹⁷ Karajakov, “Macedonia, Name Issue Arrives Before ICJ.”

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Mihajlovski, “Makedonija Utre so Dokazite protiv Grcija,” (Tomorrow, Macedonia with Evidences against Greece).

around eventual compromise for a composite name of the Republic of Macedonia, which will include a geographic determinant.²⁰

The possibility of discussing a concrete proposal to solve the problem was opened for the first time in the report of the International Crisis Group (ICG) on December 10, 2001. Before this report was issued the name dispute had been treated as a bilateral problem. In the report, titled “Macedonia’s Name: Why the Dispute Matters and How to Resolve It,” the ICG proposed an agreement between Macedonia and Greece consisting of three elements. First, the report called for bilateral resolution of the dispute between Macedonia and Greece. Second, it recommended a formal recognition of the agreement achieved between Macedonia and Greece by the international community (members of NATO and EU and the other countries) who would exchange diplomatic notes with Athens and Skopje acknowledging that Macedonia’s name is “Republika Makedonija.” The international community would guarantee consultations with Greece and appropriate measures in case there were any violations of the treaty. Third, the report stated that the name “Republika Makedonija” would be used by the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations on a working level for all purposes.²¹

This package also addressed Greece’s major concerns, including guarantees that Macedonia’s name would be changed; that the monopolization by Macedonia of the single name “Macedonia” would be avoided; and that the use of the name “Republika

²⁰ “Kako da se Dojde do Slozeno Ime so Geografska Odrednica?,” (How to Achieve a Solution for Composite Name with Geographic Determination?), Editorial, *Forum News*, December 10, 2001, <http://www.forum.com.mk/dosie/Dosie_Ime#17159> (accessed June 20, 2010).

²¹ ICG, “Macedonia’s Name,” iii.

Makedonija” for Macedonia, on a working level within the UN and other international organizations, would be ensured. Greece also demanded the use of a descriptive (composite) name with a geographical determinant for Macedonia such as “Upper Macedonia,” on which the ongoing negotiations between the two parties would be based.²²

Before the ICG’s proposal, similar proposals for a new name for Macedonia were in circulation including: Central Balkan Republic; the Republic of South Slavia; Vardarija; Republic of Macedonia – Skopje; Macedonia (Skopje); North Macedonia; New Macedonia; Constitutional Republic of Macedonia; Independent Republic of Macedonia; and Democratic Republic of Macedonia. Although ICG’s efforts did not result in a positive outcome, Macedonia and Greece continued to negotiate under the auspices of Mathew Nimetz, the UN Secretary General’s envoy, who offered several additional proposals which were rejected, either jointly or by one of the parties.²³

Nimetz Proposals

In 2005, Nimetz offered two concrete sets of ideas to overcome the problem. The first set consisted of two proposals. The first proposal presented in April, “Republika Makedonija-Skopje,” written in the Cyrillic alphabet,²⁴ was positively received by Athens, but rejected by Skopje. Macedonia preferred to defend “the double formula”

²² Ibid.

²³ “Kako da se Dojde do Slozeno Ime so Geografska Odrednica?,” (How to Achieve a Solution for Composite Name with Geographic Determination?), Editorial.

²⁴ Zoran Nikolovski, “Nimitz Proposal For Macedonia’s Name Sparks Debate,” *Southeast European Times*, April 14, 2005, <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2005/04/14/feature-02>, (accessed June 12, 2010).

position which would allow Greece to choose a name in bilateral communications with Macedonia, and Macedonia would keep the right to use its constitutional name (Republic of Macedonia) in relations with other countries.²⁵

The second of Nimetz's proposals was presented in November. It addressed a wider spectrum of issues including the scope of the use of the new name, the identity, the language and the culture. This proposal also offered options for international recognition of the country. Nimetz proposed an English transcription in the Macedonian language for the "Republic of Macedonia," i.e. Republika Makedonija or Republic of Makedonija. Concerning the identity, the UN mediator proposed "the citizens of Republika Makedonija" or "the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia - Skopje." This proposal was tacitly accepted by the Macedonian side, but rejected by Greece.²⁶

The second set of proposals was officially offered in February 2008, just before the NATO summit in Bucharest. It sought to unlock Macedonia's entry into NATO. Several proposals which were offered at this time concerning the name of the country in international communications were: Constitutional Republic of Macedonia, Democratic Republic of Macedonia, Independent Republic of Macedonia, New Macedonia, and Republic of Upper Macedonia. In March, shortly before the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest, Nimetz proposed a new solution: Republic of Macedonia (Skopje). Although Macedonia showed little interest in this suggestion, both parties rejected this proposal.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ International Crisis Group, "Macedonia's Name: Breaking the Deadlock," Pristina/Brussels: ICG Europe Briefing N°52, (January 2009), 5, ICG, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/b52_macedonias_name___breaking_the_deadlock.ashx> (accessed May 30, 2010).

The last proposal came in August 2009 and was a modification of the term “North Macedonia” as a name for international use of the Republic of Macedonia i.e. “The Republic of Northern Macedonia; the Northern Republic of Macedonia.”²⁷

The negotiations failed. Despite the general support voiced by the NATO Allies for acceptance of Macedonia, and particularly by the U.S., Greece did not give consent to Macedonia’s invitation to join NATO. According to Athens, Greece objected because of Macedonia’s unwillingness to compromise over the name issue thus failed to meet the criteria of good neighborly relations.²⁸

Further Spread of the Dispute

As a reaction to Greece’s veto at the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest, Macedonia filed a petition against Greece at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague. Macedonia accused Greece of violating the Interim Accord’s Article 11 by blocking Macedonia’s admission into NATO. According to Macedonia, Greece violated the provisions of Article 11 which stipulate that Greece “agrees not to object to the application by or the membership of the Party of the Second Part [Macedonia] in international, multilateral and regional organizations and institutions of which the Party

²⁷ Elizabeta Galevska, “Nimic Predlozi Formula za Resavanje na Sporot,” (Nimetz Proposed a Formula for Resolution of the Dispute), *AI News*, March 26, 2008, <<http://a1.com.mk/vesti/default.aspx?VestID=91146>> (accessed June, 14, 2010).

²⁸ Embassy of Greece Washington, D.C., NATO Summit, “Karamanlis: Everyone has to Respect the Rules,” April 4, 2008, <<http://www.greekembassy.org/embassy/content/en/Article.aspx?office=1&folder=24&article=23238>>, (accessed June 12, 2010).

of the First Part [Greece] is a member.”²⁹ The case is in its initial phase under the consideration of the ICJ. The best prognoses suggest that the process could be concluded within three to four years. Macedonia justifies its decision to seek ICJ’s arbitrage as an action aimed to “protect its rights under the Interim Accord and to ensure that it is allowed to exercise its rights as an independent State acting in accordance with international law, including the right to pursue membership of relevant international organizations.”³⁰

Macedonia’s attempt to prove its case before the ICJ is legitimate, but even an eventual victory does not guarantee immediate accession into NATO or the EU. In accordance with its competency, ICJ has only an advisory role upon request of the UN Security Council. Furthermore, the decisions of the court are not obligatory for the countries. Hence, it cannot be expected that the ICJ arbitration would influence the name dispute or that it would cause major consequences for Greece.³¹

In addition to encountering difficulties in gaining membership in NATO, Macedonia is facing a similar problem related to the European integration process. Macedonia became an EU candidate country in 2005, but it has not succeeded to open negotiations for membership. Despite the positive recommendations of the European

²⁹ United Nations – Treaty Series, “United Nations Interim Accord, Vol. 1891, 1- 32193, Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,” signed at New York on September 13, 1995, <http://untreaty.un.org/unts/120001_144071/6/3/00004456.pdf> (accessed February 15, 2010).

³⁰ Zoran Kosanic, “Obstacles to FYROM’s Membership of NATO: a Tougher Agenda than Expected,” 6, *NATO Defense College (NDC)*, Italy, NATO Research Paper (February 2009), NDC, <<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ord516=OrgaGrp&ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=97488>> (accessed Jun 2 2, 2010).

³¹ Ibid.

Commission in its December 2009 report Greece blocked the start of negotiations due to the name issue. The issues remained on the EU agenda in 2010.

Tactics and Strategies

The positions of the disputed sides indicate a one way directed pressure, from Athens towards Skopje. Macedonia took a more defensive approach with less publicity, mainly responding to Greece's demands. While the name of the country is problematic, the identity issue proved to be an ever greater concern for the political leadership in Skopje. In his address to the public on April 27, the President of the Republic of Macedonia Gjorge Ivanov stated that Macedonia cannot accept a solution which might cause the identity of the Macedonian people to be on tenuous grounds or which contributes to the change of definition of the language or distinctiveness of the Macedonian nation.³²

Greece, on the other hand, is in a more comfortable position and thus it has more maneuvering space in future negotiations. The Greek government presented proposals to mediator Nimetz which, according to Athens, could lead to a resolution of the name dispute. Greece claims that these proposals contain the maximum concessions acceptable for Athens including:

- a composite name for the Republic of Macedonia with a geographic determinant such as "North," "Upper," or "New" that must stand before the word Macedonia;
- a new name to be the official name of the country for use in bilateral and international communication. The name must be applied in government and personal documents (passports, IDs, etc.), as well as in all documents that are part of internal legal

³² Pece Stefanovski, "Ivanov ocekiva Vzaemno Prifatljivo Resenie za Imeto," (Ivanov expects Mutually Acceptable Solution for the Name), *AI News*, April 24, 2010, <<http://www.a1.com.mk/vesti/default.aspx?VestID=122535>> (accessed June 14, 2010).

or commercial operations (letters or documents from ministries, the documents of municipalities, traffic permits, customs forms, export declarations, cadastral permits, etc.);

- separation of the adjective “Macedonian” into three segments which would determine the nation, ethnicity and identity of the people and would define the name of the language derived from the new name (Severnomakedonci; severnomakedonski language, nation, ethnicity).³³

The other Greek demands are related to the change of the Macedonian internet code “MK,” currency code “MKD”, trade, sports, transport and other uses in international communication.³⁴

The Role of the U.S.

The U.S. role in the name issue alternates between mediation and balancing efforts. The current UN mediator Nimetz and his predecessor Vance were American experts in international law.³⁵ Macedonia has the backing of the U.S. administration and has received the significant support. This support became most visible with the Administration’s 2004 unilateral decision to recognize Macedonia under its constitutional name of “Republic of Macedonia.” The Department of State explained this decision as “an appropriate and correct step at th[at]is juncture”³⁶ aimed to support Macedonian

³³ “Debela Grcka Crvena Linija,” (A Greek Fat Red Line), Editorial, *Vest News*, January 19, 2010, <<http://www.vest.com.mk/?ItemID=93F82ACEA222634FBFC230E54B05E24D&arc=1>> (accessed June 17, 2010).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Zoran Kosanic, “Obstacles to FYROM’s membership of NATO,” 6.

³⁶ “U.S. Recognizes Macedonia, Drawing Ire from Greece,” Editorial, *USA Today*, November 4, 2004.

stability and democratic reforms.³⁷

In response to the Bush Administration's decision, Greek Foreign Minister Petros Moliviatis presented a formal protest to the U.S. ambassador in Greece, Thomas Miller, pointing out the "multiple negative consequences of such a unilateral move."³⁸ Unable to change the decision of the American President, Greece sought support from the U.S. Congress. With assistance from influential Greek-Americans, Greece succeeded to initiate several resolutions in both the House and the Senate. These resolutions were sponsored and co-sponsored by members of the Congressional Greek Caucus, which consists of Greece's strongest supporters in Congress. These resolutions sought to put pressure on the administration, as well as on Macedonia, in order to advance Greece's position in the negotiation process.

These resolutions were introduced in the 108th, 109th, 110th and 111th Congresses. Each had similar wordings, mainly encouraging Macedonia and Greece to agree upon Macedonia's official name and its use "for other purposes." The resolutions also demanded that "the Secretary of State to return to the long-standing policy of the Government of the United States to recognize and refer to the FYROM as such."³⁹ Lastly, the Congressional resolutions consistently urged Macedonia "to abstain from hostile

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, "108th Congress House Resolution 530," 2 session, (November 20, 2004), U.S. Congress, <<http://www.thomas.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c108:H.CON.RES.530>> (accessed June 15, 2010).

activities” and negative propaganda toward Greece.⁴⁰ Despite Greece’s attempts to present the name dispute as “a matter of human rights” and interference with its cultural heritage, these resolutions refer to the Macedonian issue as a “national security issue” only for Greece. In light of Greece’s international position, including EU and NATO membership, the claims that Macedonia is a security threat are unsustainable at the very least.⁴¹

Public Opinion

It appears that the Greek government has successfully handled the name dispute issue at home. The political leadership in Athens convinced its public that the word “Macedonia” is acceptable in the future name of the northern neighbor. It may be ironic, but the economic crisis which is seriously shaking the Greek society has resulted in Greeks paying less attention to all other issues including the dispute with Macedonia. Hence, in the context of the name dispute, Greece’s political leadership has adopted more of a “wait and see” position and left the hot potato in the hands of its northern neighbor.

Across the border, the Macedonian government faces the opposite situation. Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski is under pressure from the international community to reach a compromise with Greece. In addition, he is continuously criticized by the opposition within Macedonia which requests more transparency and a clearer position

⁴⁰ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, “111th Congress House Resolution 486,” 1st Session, (May 21, 2009), U.S. Congress, < <http://www.thomas.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c111:H.RES.486:>> (accessed June 18, 2010).

⁴¹ ICG, “Macedonia’s Name: Why the Dispute Matters and How to Resolve It,” 14.

from the government in the negotiation process. Finally, he is under pressure from the most difficult constituency - a domestic public divided by political and ethnic lines.

The latest public poll conducted in May by the Macedonian daily “Dnevnik” showed that Macedonians oppose any compromise with Greece over the name issue that would include a “new international name for the country with a geographical determinant.”⁴² However, 44 percent of the population would accept a geographical determinant to the name Republic of Macedonia only if the eventual solution guarantees Macedonian identity and membership of the country into NATO and EU.⁴³ The survey showed significant differences between Macedonians and Albanians about “fundamentally important issue[s] for the future of the country.” While 48 percent of ethnic Macedonians favor the government’s policy on the name issue, four-fifths of the Albanians are not satisfied on how the negotiations are handled and 69 percent expressed disapproval with the government’s official policy.⁴⁴

This poll results indicate that Macedonia and Greece are currently very far from a compromise. The prognoses for a resolution of the dispute in the near future are even less likely now that a June deadline foreseen for the start of Macedonia’s accession talks with EU in the event of positive outcome of negotiations over the name has not been met. The beginning of negotiations with EU provided few concessions for Macedonia in return for

⁴² Saso Kokalanov, “Nema Raspolozenie za Kompromis,” (No Mood for a Compromise), *Dnevnik*, May 26, 2010, <<http://www.dnevnik.com.mk/?itemID=CA7F10B5347C3848ACF9C40BDE6D633F&arc=1>> (accessed June 21, 2010).

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

its compromise over the name. In addition, the announcements by the Macedonian government of its decision on a political referendum left little hope that a solution could be achieved before the NATO summit in Lisbon, scheduled for November of this year. However, despite the manifestation of “hard” attitudes, the poll also shows an increased willingness for more flexibility, particularly among the younger population (between 18 and 29 years old). Fifty-two percent of this group said they would accept a new name for the country if the compromise ensures Macedonian identity.⁴⁵

Last, but not least, the poll also explains why the majority of Macedonians strongly opposes any compromise over the name. Macedonians believe that Greece started the name dispute. They are highly suspicious of Athens’ honesty when the Greek government claims that the dispute is about drawing a distinction between the Macedonian and Greek regions of Macedonia. Over eighty percent of Macedonians are convinced that Greece really desires both changes of identity and also the name.⁴⁶

Conclusion

Macedonia and Greece failed to meet another “deadline” for resolution of the name dispute during the Spanish presidency of the EU in the first half of 2010. Thus, the long-standing issue continued to be an obstacle in relations between the two neighbors. As a result, Macedonia missed another opportunity to qualify for negotiations with the EU. Greece failed to allow resolution of this bilateral issue as a part of its ambitious plan for the integration of the Balkan countries into the EU by 2014. This integration would

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

strengthen Greece's position as the regional leader. Hence, the statement by Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou, which he issued after meeting with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon on June 21, that if the timetable had been set the problem would have been resolved a long time ago, is meaningless. Furthermore, Papandreou's conclusion that lack of solution is big loss for Macedonia and Greece because the two countries "have so many common interests,"⁴⁷ is ironic.

Like the other Balkan countries, Macedonia's integration into NATO and EU is part of a long-standing vision for the unification of Europe and the lasting stabilization of the Euro-Atlantic zone. The EU and NATO should not allow a situation in which their overall objectives are held hostage by a "virtual" dispute. The question is not whether there is a solution to the name dispute, but how to achieve it. The resolution of this issue is a necessity.

⁴⁷ Goce Mihajlovski, "Papandreu: Steta sto Dosega ne Najdovme Resenie," (Papandreou: It is Pity that we haven't Found a Solution Yet), *AI News*, June 22, 2010, <<http://a1.com.mk/vesti/default.aspx?VestID=124498>> (accessed June 23, 2010).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Forward

The Prussian Prime Minister and founder of the German Empire, Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898), stated that “If there is ever another war in Europe, it will come out of some damned silly thing in the Balkans.” The visionary skills of the German leader proved to be a very accurate prediction of the unpredictable behavior of the small nations in the Balkans. The name dispute between Macedonia and Greece is a unique phenomenon in international relations. The problem which confronts the two neighbors emerged on September 9, 1991, a day after Macedonia declared independence from the former Yugoslav federation. Greece opposed the name of the new state and claimed exclusive use of the word Macedonia. Emotions and political tensions escalated and bilateral relations between Macedonia and Greece have been gridlocked for almost two decades.

Macedonia claims that the problem is unilateral and is only a Greek concern. Skopje offers a solution called “dual formula” in which one name will be used by Greece and the constitutional name, the Republic of Macedonia, by the rest of the world. Greece claims that the name issue has broader regional and international aspects. Athens insists on an *erga omnes* solution, which includes a composite name for its northern neighbor with geographical determination and verification by the UN Security Council.

Disputes

Former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill stated that the “Balkans produce more history than they can consume.” History is certainly at the core of this problem. Greece claims that “Macedonia” is an allegedly “stolen name.” Both Macedonia and Greece claim to have rights over Macedonian history and symbols. Greece insists on exclusivity and blames Macedonia for falsification of the historical facts, and for having aspirations toward Greek territories. Both countries try to bolster their claims by providing different interpretations covering 2000 years of history. Thus, in order to understand nation’s use of the word “Macedonia,” one must interpret the meaning of ancient Macedonian history, the star of Vergina, and the characters of Alexander the Great and his father Phillip II.

In order to gain concessions from Macedonia to change its name, Greece took actions designed to accomplish the political isolation and economic bankruptcy of its northern neighbor. Over time, these activities intensified and became more radical. As a result of Greek pressure, the European Union (EU) adopted the Lisbon Declaration in 1992. This decision postponed Macedonia’s recognition by the EU, despite the positive recommendation by the French legal expert Robert Badinter that Macedonia and Slovenia had fulfilled the necessary criteria to be recognized as independent states. The Declaration also prohibited the new state to use the name “Macedonia.” In 1993 Athens imposed an economic embargo on its northern neighbor. Since this “special lecture” did not produce desirable results, in 1994 Greece imposed total embargo on Macedonia that lasted 18 months.

The issues became more complicated in 2006 when Macedonia sought membership into NATO. Instead of resolving the dispute, more issues were brought to the negotiating table. Greece questioned Macedonian identity and its historic and cultural heritage, while Macedonia raised the issue of Macedonian refugees expelled during the 1948 Greek Civil War. The latter issue reflects Greece's refusal to recognize Macedonian minorities and their roots in Greece. In 2008 Greece vetoed Macedonia's accession into NATO and blocked the start of the negotiations for EU membership. These actions by Greece directly challenged Macedonia's internal stability as well as security in the region.

Attempts for Resolution

Although at the beginning it appeared that the name dispute was a minor problem between Greece and Macedonia future developments underscored the international seriousness of the issue. In an attempt to defrost the relations between Skopje and Athens and to overcome their differences, international organizations became involved in mediation efforts. Some progress was made when Macedonia was admitted into the UN in 1993 under the provisional name "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia." In the opinion of the Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov this provisional name should have lasted for only a couple of months. Further progress toward resolving the dispute began when the UN Security Council adopted Resolutions 817 and 845, which urged the parties to resume bilateral talks and to find a "mutually acceptable solution." In addition, Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali appointed Cyrus Vance as his special envoy to mediate the negotiations.

Future developments showed that President Gligorov was wrong when he predicted that the dispute would last couple of months. As it turned out, the issue has remained unresolved for the following 19 years. The two countries have failed to find acceptable solution. While the countries negotiated, many in the media speculated that the new name for Macedonia would include a geographical prefix such as “North,” “Upper,” or “Central Balkan.”

The embargos affected Macedonia’s economy but did not achieve any advantages for Greece. Greece’s policies triggered counter-reactions by EU countries who disapproved Greece actions. As result of international pressure, primarily by the United States, relations between Macedonia and Greece entered a new phase after signing the document called Interim Accord (IA) in September 1995. In the first half of October 1995, the Macedonian Parliament ratified the agreement and changed the state flag and the Constitution. In response, Greece opened its borders and lifted the unilateral embargo. Although the IA was able to normalize relations between Macedonia and Greece, further negotiations did not produce significant progress.

Future Prospective

Unfortunately, what might appear to be the easiest to implement solutions for the dispute are those which are the most impossible and unrealistic. First, the problem would be much simpler if Macedonia were already a member of NATO and the EU. Then Greece could not use the power of a veto as a “political weapon” to block Macedonia’s entry into these international organizations. The good economic and people-to-people

cooperation between Macedonia and Greece would then help bring the two countries together.

Second, neither Greece nor Macedonia is likely to drop this issue, so it will remain a major irritant in their bilateral relations as well as a continuous problem for the EU and NATO. The vast majority of Macedonian citizens support the country's accession to NATO and EU. Any political disagreement in the achievement of these strategic goals would lead toward divisions along ethnic and ideological lines of the Macedonian multi-ethnic society.

The problem is present and has to be addressed. In almost two decades of negotiations Macedonia and Greece have not been able to produce a mutually satisfactory solution for their dispute. Despite the declared commitment by the Macedonian government, in reality, there are few activities on the ground that would suggest any further willingness to compromise in order to resolve the dispute. The hesitation by the Macedonian political leadership is understandable given the strong opposition by the Macedonian public to any change of the country's name.

Greece, due to the economic problems at home, has tried to win a diplomatic battle over the name dispute by convincing its NATO and EU allies of its "honest" intentions. Leaders in Athens claim that Greece seeks to resolve the problem with Macedonia to mutual satisfaction as part of its strategy for integration of the Western Balkans into the EU and NATO. Greece continues to rely on the existing principle of solidarity with its NATO and EU partners, which it has used to postpone Macedonia's

entry into these organizations in return for more concessions in negotiations over the name.

Recent developments suggest that there have been more serious activities aimed at a resolution of the dispute. Representatives of the two countries have held frequent high-level, closed-door meetings, and despite the secrecy of the talks, some media reports optimism among diplomats in Brussels that a resolution of the name dispute may be possible within weeks or months.

If a resolution is not achieved by the time of the NATO Lisbon Summit in November, then the best way forward would be a declaration of a temporary moratorium of the negotiation process. This option would give more time to the Macedonian side to build a national consensus as well as to gain critical public support for a possible compromise with Greece. The resumption of the negotiations should be internationally guaranteed.

Meanwhile, Macedonian and Greek political leaders should take advantage of the established practice for high-level, frequent meetings as part of a broader concept of strengthening mutual confidence and cooperation. The bilateral contacts should be focused on attempts to unlock Macedonia's integration processes as well as cooperation in the region. In support of these activities, the two countries should fully take the advantage of the EU decision to exempt Macedonia, together with Serbia and Montenegro, from the "Schengen list" thus allowing visa-free entrance in Europe for Macedonian citizens. These steps should lead toward further relaxation of regional and bilateral relations. The Euro-Atlantic integration processes proved to have the power to

absorb various disputes in Europe. It would be unrealistic to expect that the EU and NATO will assume responsibility for resolving the problem between Athens and Skopje, but these organizations could help in healing the wounds by providing a perspective in the relations of the two countries. In fact, these are the basic principles on which NATO and the EU have been built.

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