

The Macedonian Crisis - Terrorism, National Movement, or Struggle for Self - determination?

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ABSTRACT

Macedonia epitomizes the unresolved national issue which the majority Macedonian and the minority Albanian people of the former Yugoslav republic faced after the disintegration of their common state. The Macedonian state occupies a geostrategical spot and is important to maintain the balance in the region.

The Macedonian majority shares the border with Albanians, who at the end of the 20th century have not attained their national goals. After the Serbian retreat from the Kosovo province, Kosovo Albanians, together with those in South Serbia and western Macedonia, demanded their historical and national rights.

This action threatened the very existence of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Fighting for their national interests, Albanian rebels did not forgo violence; by criminal and terrorist means, they essentially took the democratically elected Macedonian government hostage. They forced political negotiations to be held and assured the acceptance of their present demands. But the Albanian demands, the core of the new Prizren Declaration, are greater than those granted, so continuing violence in Macedonia is expected. If so, it is likely that foreign fighters with connections to the world terrorist network will take part.

The Historical Framework

The Agreement on borders¹, to which FRY² and FYROM³ agreed in the treaty signed by Koštunica⁴ and Trajkovski⁵ in Skopje in

1. The Agreement on FRY and FYROM borders was signed during the SEECEP meeting, (Skopje, February 23, 2001) by rump Yugoslav president Vojislav Koštunica and FYROM president Boris Trajkovski. The agreement defines Macedonia's west border (Kosovo) and Macedonia's north (Serbia), and is in accordance with the 1244. UN Resolution.
2. FRY (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), Serbia (Kosovo and Vojvodina), and

February 2001, triggered the clashes that began between the Macedonian police and Albanian rebels. The agreement essentially prevented the Macedonian Albanians from achieving their national demands. For Macedonians, the presence of four hundred KLA(6) (UCK-OVK) terrorists from Kosovo and Šara mountain range⁷ was the beginning of aggression and terrorism in the country.

Whichever date is assigned, February 2001 marked the end of the 'Virtual peace' in Macedonia, the end of the 'Make-believe national tolerance and co-existence' praised by the International Community (IC). (The International Community could then assert that conflicts in former Yugoslavia were caused by nationalist policies of its peoples.) The so-called peace lasted until the autumn of 1991, when FYROM proclaimed its independence. The 'Mirida' referendum, by which Macedonian Albanians wanted to achieve the western parts of Macedonia, precipitated fierce ethnic clashes that were later repressed. The Albanian demands were silently accepted by the Macedonian and Albanian political (nationalistic) elite. Unofficial Albanian autonomy was thus established, as was de facto local government in the areas of Albanian majority.

The fact is that Macedonian authority had been absent in western Macedonia for ten years. The Macedonians stood off from the invisible borders of Albanian territory, allowing it slowly

Montenegro were formed in 1992, after dissolution of the Union of Socialist Republics of Yugoslavia. Population, 10 million.

3. FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) left the Union of Socialist Republics of Yugoslavia in 1991; the sovereign state of Macedonia's population is over 2 million. According to the 1991 census, 66.9 percent are Macedonians, 22.6 percent Albanians (unofficial numbers 23 to 25 percent). During the antifascist uprising in 1944, Macedonia made the foundation for its statehood. The Macedonian majority and Albanian minority live in an unstable balance in an important geostrategic area. Greece disputes its right to use the name of Macedonia, therefore FYROM.
4. Vojislav Koštunica, democratically elected president of FRY, defeated Milošević in the last Yugoslav elections.
5. Boris Trajkovski, FYROM's president.
6. KLA (UCK/OVK ð Albanian) Kosovo Liberation Army; Kosovo Albanians' military force fighting for secession from FRY and independence. After UN and KFOR forces entered Kosovo, KLA is disarmed and disbanded. Majority of men comprise the Kosovo Protection Corps and are under UN and KFOR surveillance. KLA members were probably involved in Serbia's south and Macedonia's west armed conflicts.
7. Šara mountain range is a natural border between Kosovo and Macedonia, a harsh mountain range ideal for guerrilla fighting. It is a symbolic Albanian mountain.
8. 'Mirida' is the referendum held in 1992 by which Macedonian Albanians tried to establish the Albanian University in Debar, but actually to achieve political autonomy.

to become a state within a state. In that area, gun running, drug trafficking, and people smuggling flourished.

After the Yugoslav army⁹ left Kosovo, Albanian interest in the common ethnic territory grew to include western Macedonia. Placing the FRY/FYROM demarcation line on the Šara mountain range, which is situated in the heart of Albanian territory, meant an Albanian declaration of war.

The greatest influences in the formation of the sovereign Macedonian republic were Slobodan Milošević¹⁰ and Serbia¹⁰, and the US¹¹. Macedonia, as Bosnia and Herzegovina¹², fought to stay within Yugoslavia. But by late autumn of 1991 Macedonia's separation from Yugoslavia was accepted.

To Milošević¹⁰ Macedonia, traditionally close to Serbia, was more useful as an independent negotiator between him and whomever he was at war with. Macedonia also supplied free passage to the traditional allies of Serbia; i.e., Greece and through it to France and Great Britain. If Macedonia stayed in rump Yugoslavia, this could not be accomplished. Counting on its orthodox partnership, Milošević¹⁰ agreed to Macedonia's independence. In that process, the US through UNPREDEP¹³ exerted its military presence, thus securing NATO's¹⁴ south wing and a strategically important corridor connecting Europe and Asia.

The Southeast Europe/Balkans¹⁵ region, after the fall of the Berlin wall and the new world order, was a laboratory in which the

9. Federal Yugoslav Army. The Yugoslav National Army was commanded by Marshal Tito, and formed from the National Liberation Movement force opposing the occupiers in World War 2.
10. Slobodan Milošević¹⁰, Serbia's and FRY's president, president of the Serbian Socialist Party, former communist, later Serbian nationalism's symbol, instigator of all wars on former Yugoslav territory, and able political tactician. He was indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Kosovo. Presently being tried at The Hague.
11. US – the United States of America.
12. Bosnia and Herzegovina, the state of three constitutional nations: Muslims, Serbs, and Croats. On March 1st 1992, Muslims and Croats voted for (secession from Yugoslavia). Serbs refused to accept the referendum results. At the beginning of April, with Serbia's and Montenegro's full support, the Serbs initiate a bloody conflict. Serbs ethnically cleanse and commit war crimes against the Muslims and Croats. In 1995, the war ends and the Constitution is drawn: 51% of Bosnia and Herzegovina territory becomes the Bosnia and Herzegovina federation, and 49% Republika Srpska (Serbs).
13. UNPREDEP. The United Nations Protection Deployment force, employed by UN 1993 Resolution in the FYROM, mostly American and Swedish soldiers. Its mission was to protect Macedonian borders from Yugoslav threats.
14. NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization.
15. SEE/Balkans, South East Europe/the Balkans. The geographical and political name for the former Yugoslav states, Albania, Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, and Romania. EU

US, EU¹⁶ and NATO tried to secure a future for the former Yugoslav peoples (called 'the Balkans question'¹⁷ in the last century). The Yugoslav crisis¹⁸ was contrary to the EU plan for European unity and the US vision of globalization. Thus the FYROM came to illustrate that the demands for ethnically pure states (which led to the denial of national, religious, and cultural freedoms) are nationalistic frenzy and a crime.

Coexistence and recognition of national rights in multi-ethnic Macedonia became an ideal to hold up to the warring states of former Yugoslavia. Using Macedonia as an example, IC¹⁹ has devised new ideas, and new solutions and proposals for the political and economic formation of the region.

After ten years, various state and political constitutions for SEE/Balkans were formulated in that laboratory: unitaristic, federal, confederal, independent national states, protectorates, regional unions, pacts, processes, and initiatives that recognize minorities as equal in government (the proposition of the German foreign ministry²⁰ e.g.). IC is currently trying to impose a permanent solution to the SEE/Balkans crisis.

The Macedonian question

At the end of the 19th century, the Macedonian question and VMRO²¹ freedom fighters against the Turkish rule were vexing the administration uses the designation as a euphemism for the Balkans.

16. EU ÐEuropean Union.
17. 'The Balkans question' first surfaced when the Ottoman Empire collapsed in the 19th century. Those living in the Balkans in the 20th and the first years of the 21st century wanted freedom and their own national states.
18. 'The Yugoslav crisis' refers to the political tensions and aspirations for national independence of peoples populating former Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav crisis became 'chronic' after the forming of the Yugoslav Union in 1918, 'acute' after Tito's death in 1980, and is being resolved in the wars of the 1990s.
19. IC ÐInternational Community is the political denominator used in SEE/Balkans area for countries, organizations, and unions that play an important role: UN, USA, NATO, EU, the Russian Federation, China, Japan, India.
20. German foreign ministry. Joschka Fisher ÐGermany's foreign minister, proposes in his 'non-paper' a solution for ethnically motivated clashes in the Balkans: ethnic minority rights should equal ethnic majority rights.
21. VMRO. The Macedonian Revolutionary Organization founded in 1893. The secret organization was in constant armed struggle against Turkish occupation. The Ilinden uprising in 1903 was suppressed in blood; VMRO used terrorist methods, wanting to unite Macedonia and Bulgaria. After WW1 and after Macedonia became part of Yugoslavia, VMRO continued its fight against Serbia. King Alexander was assassinated in Marseilles by a VMRO member. After the FYROM's independence in 1991, VMRO became a legal right-wing political party (VMRO-DPMNE).

Balkans and Europe. Serbia, led by its own interest, formed South Serbia and Macedonia, a plan realized in the First Balkans War²². Bulgarian aspirations towards Macedonia had, for a short period, been realized during World War I and World War II. Stalin helped communist rebels in northern Greece. Yugoslavia had always backed Macedonia's sovereignty; after that, US became its curator.

In the bloodbath of Yugoslavia's disintegration, it seemed that only the Macedonian question was resolved peacefully. But along with the Macedonian came the Albanian question.²³ Ideas of the First Prizren League²⁴ and the Greater Albania²⁵ as proposed on Congress of Berlin²⁶ in 1878 had their practical realization in the forming of Albania²⁷ in 1913. The Albanian confrontation with Serbian hegemony continued throughout the 20th century.

Strong Serbia, a member of the winning coalitions formed after both World Wars and aided by France and Great Britain, thus governed over the majority of SEE/ Balkans territory, including the Albanian people. By the end of the 20th century, the conditions were present for the Slovenian, Croatian, Bosnian, Serbian, Montenegrin, Macedonian, and Albanian question to come to the fore.

Albania today is steeped in its own problems and, as publicly declared, not interested in Greater Albania, but only concerned with forming a democratic and legal state.

22. The First Balkans War was waged for Turkish territory in the Balkans. In 1912, Orthodox countries and Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, and Greece, backed the Serbian victory over Turks near Kumanovo. The dispute between Serbia and Bulgaria on how to divide Macedonia started the Second Balkans War in 1913; Serbia and Greece then divided Macedonia.
23. The Albanian question is Albania's quest for a national state. After the Congress of Berlin in 1878 and the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, Albanians either lived in Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, or Macedonia.
24. The First Prizren League is the meeting of Albanian political and tribal elite in 1878 in Prizren, where the Albanian national interests were first formulated.
25. Greater Albania is a term describing Albanian unification demands that the state consist of parts of Montenegro, Greece, Macedonia, Kosovo, and south Serbia.
26. The Congress of Berlin in 1878 is European powers divided the territory previously held by the dying Ottoman Empire. They agreed that Serbia and Montenegro remain independent; Austria occupies Bosnia and Herzegovina. Serbian interests toward Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are thwarted, which leads to two Balkans Wars and WW1 (Assassination of Archduke Frances Ferdinand in Sarajevo, 1914, committed by agents of a secret Serbian terrorist organization).
27. Albania is the state Albanians formed in 1912 under the auspices of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. With Albania's statehood, Serbia is cut off from the Adriatic. Later, Albania is occupied by Italy, and after WW2 becomes a backward communist state. After the long Enver Hoxha rule, it is one of the poorest countries in the world.

The war in former Yugoslavia began in Kosovo²⁸, devastated Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and then returned to its starting point, dividing Kosovo from Serbia. This created a new political situation. After Milošević's fall, Serbia began democratization processes, and reassessed its national interests. The south, populated by Albanians, and Macedonia and Montenegro were of utmost interest. Its traditional ally, Russia, agreed. The West supported Serbia again after the fall of Milosevic and began to question its promise of Kosovo independence to the Albanians; it also opposed Montenegro's independence. The formation of small, independent states was passe, and the EU and US disagreed with secession from socialist Yugoslavia. The bywords were integration and globalization, regional co-operation and integration. Flora Lewis²⁹, in the spring of 1995, said: "The only solution for Yugoslavia is Yugoslavia." The West has instigated co-operation among the countries with the Agreement on borders signed by FYROM and the FRY. This provoked Macedonian Albanians and the Macedonians, but grounds for the crisis had been prepared much earlier. The NATO action "Essential Harvest"³⁰, was the key phase for the FYROM peace process. The official FYROM government had early on characterized the Albanian rebellion as a terrorist act, an aggression from abroad; but its arguments, accepted by Russia and Orthodox neighbors, were rejected by the EU and NATO. The Albanian side offered little evidence to back its claim. After September 11th, however, there was a new perspective on events in Macedonia.

For Macedonia, the Albanian rebellion was an act of terrorism; therefore, it must be dealt with as the US is dealing with Afghanistan. The overseers of the crisis, EU and NATO, are opposed to such a reading. They call it "The Israeli syndrome"³¹; local ethnic clashes do not equal global terrorism.

Terrorism is the key factor to understanding the Macedonian crisis. The fight against communism/socialism in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo is a carbon copy of that which happened in Afghanistan. Afghan war veterans, urged by religious leaders in Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and Egypt, and backed by

28. Kosovo is the area sharing a border with Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, and Macedonia. Populated by Albanians (90%) and Serbs (10%). An historical Serbian province, "the cradle of the Serbian state," where Kosovo's Battle was waged in 1389, a mythical Serbian defeat that spawned Serbian nationalism. Albanians lived under Tito, who gave them autonomous rights later revoked by Milošević.

29. Flora Lewis, "Reassembling Yugoslavia," *Foreign Affairs*, spring of 1995.

30. "Essential Harvest" is NATO's disarmament operation. ONA members in Macedonia turn in 3000 weapons, the key element of the Ohrid Treaty, signed by Albanians and Macedonians.

31. "The Israeli syndrome" is used by EU politicians to describe the lack of condemnation of state terrorism and the apathetic response to ethnic minority requests.

Iranian money, have rushed to aid Bosnia's Muslims. They joined the mujahedeen generations that were raised in refugee camps or rose from poverty in Algiers, Sudan, Yemen, Afghanistan, or Pakistan. After the Dayton Peace Accord³², a number of them stayed in Bosnia and Herzegovina; others left for Albania, next door to Kosovo and FYROM.

The US aided Bosnia and Herzegovina indirectly, in accordance with the US policy of support for moderate Muslim secular states. Quoting³³. Instead of fostering co-operation, the US aid led to Muslim religious and cultural self-awareness (hundreds of mosques have been erected in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and FYROM), a different way of life, and rejection of western values. After September the 11th, Muslim houses displayed slogans and graffiti supporting Osama bin Laden³⁴ and opposing US actions. Threats to western diplomatic missions temporarily closed US and British embassies in Bosnia. Persons allegedly connected with Al Qaeda³⁵ were arrested.

The Macedonian and Serbian press reported covert terrorist networks in the former Yugoslav countries, foreign terrorist fighters in the recent Macedonian and earlier Kosovo clashes, training camps in Albania, and alleged Bin Laden financial funds. 40,000 fighters were said to be ready on Bin Laden's command to erupt in the Balkans and attack American interests.

As a result of press coverage, intelligence agencies have confirmed the mujahedeen presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and the FYROM. Presently, SFOR³⁶ is arresting terrorists in Bosnia and Herzegovina; KFOR is also conducting massive search operations in Kosovo.

In spite of the peace process led by the EU and NATO, no solution to the Macedonian crisis is in view. Winter will postpone guerrilla actions till spring. Macedonian political parties and public opinion should by then accept the imposed new constitution.

32. Dayton: Wright-Patterson, Ohio, US air base. In 1995, a peace accord was signed here, and the future constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina was drawn: two entities and three nations.

33. Fouad Ayami is Head of Middle Eastern studies at Johns Hopkins University, School of advanced international studies.

34. Osama bin Laden is Saudi millionaire, Afghan fighter, founder, sponsor, and Al Qaeda's Emir. Instigator of many attacks against American interests, the most public being the September 11th Twin Towers attack.

35. Al Qaeda is also Al Qaeda. The base, the avant-garde world terrorist network of Islamic radicals that opposes US and Israeli domination. Its members are the believed perpetrators of the WTC and Pentagon attacks. Has infiltrated many countries where it recruits, trains for, finances, and prepares attacks on Western power symbols.

36. SFOR is Stabilization Force is NATO's military unit, whose mandate is to keep the peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Albanians will have achieved their short range aims. This could be one step to achieving Macedonia's federalization and the founding of Greater Albania or Greater Kosovo³⁷. That Albanians reached their goals using terrorism is irrelevant. But to the world, marking the difference between one man's terrorist and another man's freedom fighter is apparently important.

Military and Strategic Situation of Macedonia in 2001

The capture at gunpoint and detention of a TV crew in Tanuševac³⁸ (February 2001) confirmed the existence of organized Albanian guerrillas in Macedonia; they controlled the region stretching from Kumanovo³⁹ on the north border with FRY to Lake Ohrid⁴⁰ on the south border with Albania. Albanian guerrillas armed themselves without interception, built watchtowers and trenches; they prepared to defend their own territory and later to advance on other parts of Macedonia they considered theirs. Using guerrilla tactics, Albanians inflicted the first official Macedonian police and military losses. They cut the water supplies, ambushed, threatened, and expelled the non-Albanian population.

FYROM acted with military restraint, avoiding unnecessary civilian casualties. This restraint masked its inexperience, military incompetence, and inadequate military and police cooperation. The powerlessness of government forces meant lost control of Macedonian territory. Macedonian forces in early spring had expelled guerrilla fighters from above Kumanovo and Tetovo⁴¹, secured the road to the Šara mountain range peak, and the border crossing to Kosovo's Blace⁴². The danger that Albanians would close the highway connecting Beograd, Skopje, and Athens was averted, but not a dead or wounded guerrilla fighter was found. They just disappeared, melting into civilian populations,

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37. Greater Kosovo's political and territorial name for a state which would unite Kosovo with parts of south Serbia (Medvedja, Bujanovac, Preševo), western Macedonia and part of Montenegro.
 38. Tanuševci is the first Albanian stronghold overlooking Kumanovo, where the Albanian rebellion of February 18th 2001 occurred.
 39. Kumanovo is city on the FYROM northern border. Site of the Kumanovo Battle in 1912, when a Serbian army defeated Turkish forces.
 40. Lake of Ohrid is On the border between Macedonia, Albania, and Greece. Serbian capital in the Middle Ages. A meeting place for Macedonian and Albanian politicians. Under IC wing, Ohrid Agreement was signed.
 41. Tetovo is City in western Macedonia. Albanian political, economic, and cultural center. Site of fierce clashes between Macedonian forces and Albanian rebels. EU helped open the Van der Stoep's Albanian University.
 42. Blace is Frontier pass in Kačanik gorge through which 320,000 Albanians from Kosovo were expelled.

entering cities and villages, or going into Kosovo to commence a new, fiercer phase of combat.

Helped by their co-nationals from Kosovo and foreign volunteers, all experienced fighters and backed by logistics, money, and political support, the armed OНАО⁴³ combatants succeeded in ethnically cleansing the greater part of western Macedonia. They expelled the Macedonian police and army forces and occupied two thirds of Kosovo, thus securing a strong negotiating position. Doing this, the rebels used terrorist strategies: killing of civilians, taking hostages, and committing sabotage and war crimes. In return, the Macedonian side could not avoid excessive use of force against civilian targets. Macedonian soldiers could not be averted from vengeance; the ICTY in The Hague⁴⁴ is investigating the war crimes committed by both sides. In the occupied villages, Macedonian police uncovered a mass grave containing the village missing.

Finally, under EU pressure, the Ohrid Agreement/Framework Agreement⁴⁵ was signed in August 2001. The Albanians agreed to disarm and disband OНАО in return, they got greater minority rights in areas where they were the majority. The Macedonian population had difficulty accepting the concessions, but EU and US pressure and promises were hard to resist.

NATO implemented the military part of the agreement (Essential Harvest and the Amber Fox⁴⁶). Soon the ANA⁴⁷, a new armed Macedonian-Albanian group, surfaced. ANA asked Macedonia to honor the Ohrid Agreement that gave unconditional pardon to the Albanian rebels. ANA is considered to be the main source for the continuing armed assaults, bomb attacks, and the destruction of Macedonian churches and cultural monuments.

The ranks of ONA and ANA contain Albanians from Kosovo and American citizens of Albanian descent. The financial support for these organizations can be traced to the US. Other foreign volunteers are also involved in ONA and ANA. They took part in the Kosovo fighting and were active in the Macedonian conflict. Because of these activities, ANA from July 2001 has been put on the U.S. State Department's Black List.

43. ONA – Liberation National Army – military wing of Macedonian Albanians.

44. ICTY – International Tribunal in The Hague for war crimes committed in former Yugoslavia.

45. Ohrid Agreement – Framework Agreement. Albanian and Macedonian politicians agreed on Albanian minority rights: local government, official use of the Albanian language, education, proportional police forces, and a redrafting of the Macedonian constitution.

46. Amber Fox – NATO's operation to secure OESS personnel safety and to oversee the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement.

47. ANA – Albanian National Army – On State Department's Black list. Foreign fighters in its ranks connected with criminal and terrorist underground.

Due to Albanian rebel pressure, and honoring the Ohrid Agreement (this time under EU and US pressure), Macedonian president Trajkovski has accepted the major part of the Sobranje agreement.⁴⁸ Foreign and domestic crisis controllers may allow the use of force to achieve a final political accord. Kaçaks⁴⁹ are skillful fighters. Come spring, they could again press their political demands by use of arms. The negotiators would be Albanian legal political parties sympathetic to the rebels. If negotiations stagnate, the rebels in the field will exert armed pressure.

The reasons for Macedonia's refusal and Albanians' pressure to accept the Ohrid Agreement can be traced to the First World Albanian League Congress's declaration: "All Albanians should unite on all their ethnic territories: Montenegro, Kosovo, Eastern Kosovo (South Serbia), and northwestern Macedonia, even if force must be used." This stance will overshadow future political moves and the Macedonian armed conflict.

The Macedonian Crisis Finds Political Foundation

The political crisis in Macedonia was reached during Rankovič's⁵¹ repression, the brutally rebuffed uprising in 1981, and resurfaced at the break-up of Yugoslavia ten years later. Tense and volatile situations in the areas where Albanians lived in former Yugoslavia infected neighboring areas, particularly west Macedonia.

The drive to achieve greater autonomy for Albanians, first supported by Tito and later revoked by Milošević⁵² was accompanied by a demand for the founding of an Albanian University in Debar⁵². When that was refused, Albanian demonstrations (1991) followed.

After these events, a never-written accord was reached concerning divided sovereignty, which held for ten years and ended when Serbia withdrew its troops from Kosovo. Albanians grasped the occasion to push for an Albanian state, Greater Albania, or

48. Sobranje – The Macedonian Parliament.

49. Kaçak – Historical Albanian guerrilla fighter.

50. The first world Albanian League Congress in Prizren, November 2001. Made a political and historical statement that Albanians should seize the momentum to achieve the will of the Albanian people.

51. Aleksandar Rankovič – Vice-president of former Yugoslavia, close aide to Marshal Tito. Symbol of revolutionary terror in the 50s and 60s, head of secret communist services; led fierce, repressive campaign against Albanians in Kosovo. Retired from office July 1st 1966, after being accused of using secret-service powers against Tito (secretly recorded Tito's conversations).

52. Debar – Small city in south-east Macedonia, close to Lake Ohrid. Majority Albanian population. Demonstrations in the 1990s rebuffed in blood. Radical Macedonian-Albanian stronghold. Radicals demand that west Macedonia be united with Kosovo and Albania.

Greater Kosovo. The political climate was more favorable in 2001. Milošević⁵⁴ was driven from power, and Serbia had started its own democratization process. Kosovo was a UN protectorate, and a step away from independence. Albanian centers of political power abroad (Germany and Switzerland) and other Albanian ethnic areas concluded that the US was in favor of Albanian independence. The right political moment to unite had come. However, ethnic demands were affected by Albanian criminal organizations, who by then were entrenched in international drug trafficking, arms running, and people smuggling. These organizations again offered financial help to Macedonian Albanians as they had in Kosovo.

The EU and the US considered the destabilization of this area a major concern, and immediately intervened in the crisis. The US openly supported the Macedonian government; Albanians were supported secretly. Albanians were US allies in the Kosovo crisis, keepers of the Strait of Otranto⁵³, and opposed to Serbian nationalism adversaries.

The crisis had various stages, beginning with the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement and leading to the ONA disarmament in late September. It also had its extreme and violent form (Macedonian nationalist parties' war cries). NATO, EU, and the US intervened to reach a political solution to the crisis. EU was especially active: rewards/threats were offered and made to solve the problem; the US made certain that its global interests would not be jeopardized.

After Milošević's⁵⁴ fall, Serbia again entered the political scene. It had the support of the Russian Federation and its Orthodox neighbors, both of whom rejected Albanian nationalism. Putin⁵⁴ and his minister Ivanov⁵⁵ initiated the New Congress of Berlin in order to define borders, and thus stop formation of new states in the SEE/ Balkans area; i.e., Kosovo, Montenegro, or Greater Albania.

Rewarding Macedonia with the Stabilization and Enlargement Agreement's⁵⁶ membership, the EU got both the warring parties to sign the Ohrid Agreement. NATO helped disarm-

53. The straight of Otranto is the narrowest sea, 72 kilometers, between Italy and Albania. Whoever controls Otranto, controls the Adriatic, and southeast and central Europe.

54. Vladimir Putin is Russian Federation president.

55. Ivan Ivanov is Russian foreign minister, initiator of the Ivanov Proposal, a New Congress of Berlin that would guarantee territorial borders and non-interference in neighboring countries.

56. Agreement on Stabilization and Enlargement between EU and SEE countries; the political, economic, legal, and financial measures that aspiring countries must take to enter EU. Macedonia and Croatia are the only SEE/Balkans countries to sign.

ing the Albanian rebels, and OESS⁵⁷ implemented the Ohrid Treaty. The Albanians obtained local self-government, the right to use their language, and a proportional number of policemen. Macedonia accepted the divided state sovereignty, and the ethnic minority as designed in Brussels⁵⁸ became equal to the majority.

Macedonia's political parties accepted the Ohrid Agreement, but Macedonian police returned to villages previously controlled by rebels. The West Macedonian Albanian population is one with its co-nationals in Kosovo. This goal, never spoken of openly, seems to be achieved: the future secession of western Macedonia, and its unification with Kosovo or Albania, a goal clearly written in the recent Prizren Declaration.

Terrorism and the Macedonian Crisis

Terrorism's purpose is to seriously endanger civilian populations and force governments or international organizations to fulfill their demands; to destabilize or interrupt basic political, constitutional, economic, or social structures of a country or international organization.

The terrorist actions of armed groups in the Middle East, Europe, or Afghanistan are identical to those perpetrated in western Macedonia. Armed Albanian groups threaten civilians and demand that the government fulfill demands ranging from autonomy, federalization, and even secession of Albanian-populated areas. Rebels have thus destabilized the state, taken hostages, and by other criminal means (drugs, arms, slavery) ethnically cleansed the non-Albanian population and threatened international organizations. These acts brand them as terrorists.

But Albanian rebels claim to be freedom fighters. They fight to use the Albanian language and for cultural and economic self-determination. Are there indications that Albanian guerrilla fighters are terrorists and that international terrorism influenced the Macedonian crisis? Macedonian majority opinion is convinced that such a connection exists. Europe wouldn't speculate even after September 11th.

57. OESS (Organization for European Security and Stabilization. Established 1975 at Summit Conference in Helsinki. The Helsinki declaration set guidelines for peaceful co-existence among ideologically different countries. NATO and Warsaw Pact guaranteed security without changing borders. Fall of the Berlin Wall has changed the world political relations completely.

58. Brussels (Capital of EU and NATO and the most important European political and military center.

59. Definition of terrorism in EU's Declaration on Terrorism.

The former Yugoslav Armed Conflicts and Terrorism

In order to understand the influence of terrorism on the SEE/Balkans region, one must start with the wars that marked the breakup of former Yugoslavia. Though Islamic humanitarian organizations offered support during the 1991/1992 war in Croatia, it was during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina that Islamic fighters, war veterans, and various militant and terrorist organizations' members took part. Such were Algeria's GIA⁶⁰, Egypt's JIHAD, Muslim Brotherhood and Gama el Islamia⁶¹ members, to mention a few, and a wide spectrum of Arab terrorist organizations (Hamas, Hezbollah)⁶². The secret services of Iran and other countries were drawn into the conflict, and so were money, arms, and equipment shipments from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Sudan, Iran, Libya, and even the Sultanate of Brunei.

At first, the idea of helping the Islamic brothers wasn't conceived as fighting against the 'infidels' and western values. Many mujahedeen, with the CIA's⁶³ silent consent, crossed Croatia en route to Bosnia and Herzegovina to fight against communism, Serbian aggression, and to defend Bosnia's sovereignty. After the public mujahedeen cry for Islamic values, for an Islamic constitution of the future state, and a sovereign Islamic Bosnia and Herzegovina, the troubled future of Southeast Europe was clear.

After the Dayton Peace Accord, the mujahedeen threatened its tutors (Bosnian secret services and politicians)⁶⁴, the CIA, and other western intelligence services. Mujahedeen were thus forced to leave Bosnia and Herzegovina. A few hundred had citizenship

60. GIA is Militant Algerian organization. Tries to topple the Algerian government and make Algiers an Islamic religious state. GIA killed twelve Croatian workers in Algiers in 1993.

61. Islamic Jihad, Moslem Brothers, Gamma el Islamia is Secret Egyptian organizations; aim is to install the true Islamic government in Egypt. Responsible for Anwar el Sadat's assassination in 1981. Fighters sent to Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, and Kosovo. Linked with militant organizations fighting against Israel and for the Palestinian state. Close ties with Al Qaeda. The founder of Islamic Jihad, dr. Al Zawahiri, is Osama bin Laden's lieutenant and alleged organizer of the terrorist acts of September 11th 2001.

62. Hamas, Hezbollah is Secret Palestinian organizations fighting for liberation of Palestine. Iran strongly backs Hezbollah.

63. CIA is US Central Intelligence Agency.

64. Alija Izetbegović is President of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Presidency during the war. Educated in Islamic schools in Cairo, Egypt. Incarcerated in former Yugoslavia for promoting Islam. Honorary Commander of the Seventh Muslim Brigade of the Mujahedid which contains foreign Muslim volunteers, Afghan war veterans, and the new generation of devout Islamic youth committed to the spread of Islam.

through marriage and remained, but they were not inactive. New terrorist camps appeared in Bosnia and Herzegovina. From them, their activities could be traced to France, Italy, Croatia (car bomb in Rijeka, the killing of returned Croat refugees in central Bosnia, car bomb in Mostar)⁶⁵ and Arab countries. After thorough intelligence and police investigations before and after September 11th, Al Qaeda sleeper cells were traced to Bosnia and Herzegovina; one terrorist directly involved in the September 11th attacks was also identified.

Also discovered were plans to hijack planes and attack the military base in Tuzla. Terrorists accused of bomb attacks in Rijeka and Mostar were arrested as well. Police in Bosnia and Herzegovina extradited (wanted terrorists in their countries of origin) Hasan al Sharif, Mahmud Shulah and Abdullah Esindar to Egypt, and sent Said Atamani and Zuhair Shulah to France. Hasan al Sharif, under the assumed name of Bensaïem Belkasem, was identified as a key Al Qaeda figure in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many press said that Osama bin Laden got a Bosnian passport⁶⁶ in 1993. But former president Izetbegovic quickly denied the report. In the NATO defense ministers' meeting (December 18th 2001), NATO's Secretary General, George Robertson, claimed that SFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina had eradicated the Al Qaeda network there; also, KFOR in Kosovo was investigating alleged terrorists there.

When the war ended in Bosnia and Herzegovina, political turmoil subsided, but the tension in Kosovo increased. Mujahedeen from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania's training camps were active in inciting the Kosovo conflict (1998/1999). Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung⁶⁷ cites dates when the first Islamic terrorist branches were established in Albania.

After the fall of communism, Salih Berisha (Washington Post, 1993) invites Muslim clerics from Egypt and Saudi Arabia to Albania. Mohammed Zawahiri, Bin Laden's first lieutenant, comes to Albania as a functionary of an Islamic relief organization. Under that guise, he brings into Tirana more Egyptian radicals and establishes the first terrorist cell, thus coordinating from Albania the network of Islamic extremists in Arab countries, primarily Egypt.

65. The car-bomb explosion at a police station in Rijeka, Croatia, allegedly was done in reaction to the extradition of Al Qassem, a leading member of an Egyptian terrorist organization. He was in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and then disappeared. The car-bomb in Mostar was revenge for Egyptian terrorists killed by the Croatian Defense Forces.

66. Sarajevo's weekly *Dani*, September 24th, 1999.

67. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, December 2001.

Their activity soon attracts the SHIK⁶⁸ and the CIA. Along with Zawahiri were Osman Saleh, passport forger and Al-Qa'ida military instructor, and Yasser al Serri, who had the sobriquet of the electronic brain of the organization. Ahmet Ibrahim el Naggara, an Egyptian married to an Albanian, was in charge of foreign affairs. In the spring of 1998, Attia and Saleh both disappeared from Tirana; very likely they were extradited through CIA channels to Egypt, where they were tried, found guilty of terrorism, and executed. But Zawahiri escaped abduction and extradition. He was recently arrested in London, and is currently awaiting court action.

The Greek and Macedonian press were quoting intelligence service data at the peak of the Macedonian crisis concerning the existence of Al Qa'ida training camps in Tropoja, Kukës, and Bajram Curri in Albania's north. After training, Al Qa'ida combatants were sent to Kosovo, Macedonia, the Middle East, and Chechnya. Their activities were probably financed by Osama bin Laden during his brief stay in Albania in 1992 and 1993. According to the Greek Antenna TV⁶⁹, Bin Laden was twice in Albania during Berisha's government. General Veyvakis⁷⁰ claims that behind the façade of the Arab Albanian bank in Tirana are Osama bin Laden's assets.

Kosovo was the next destination for foreign terrorists. After NATO's bombing campaign and Serbia's retreat from Kosovo, the ground was prepared for greater Albanian territorial claims. Muslim volunteers in Bosnia were estimated at a few thousand; those for Kosovo and Macedonia at a few hundred. After the Dayton Peace Accord, Milošević's capitulation, and the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement, fighting in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia subsided.

NATO enforced peace in these countries; however, foreign combatants turned some of the villages into Muslim spiritual and political centers. The west and the US worked to prevent an Islamic religious and political influence and to ensure the safety of its troops. Under strong IC pressure, all foreign combatants were forced to leave Southeast Europe. The majority were identified (their data are at the disposal of interested services and states). Many, because of their terrorist past, could not re-enter their countries of origin; they are on their way either to Chechnya, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, or are re-inventing themselves in Afghanistan, the heart of present-day terrorism.

The Australian Taliban's story is an exemplary illustration of such a combatant's path. A young adventurer, David Hicks⁷¹, came to Kosovo to fight in KLA ranks. He inhaled Islamic teach-

68. SHIK is Albanian Secret Service.

69. Antenna TV is Athens TV station.

70. General Veyvakis is retired Greek army general and chief of staff.

71. The Times, December 13th, 2001.

ings, went to Australia, and then to Pakistan. In Pakistan, he joined the terrorist organization Lashar-e-Taiba⁷² and fought for Kashmir's independence. In 1999 he underwent Al Qaeda training in Afghanistan. He is captured in northern Afghanistan and handed over to American forces. If he is tried before an American military tribunal, he can face death. The media reports at least two more Australians who joined the Taliban and possibly Al Qaeda. Also mentioned are one French and a larger group of British Muslim citizens.

The American John Walker's story got the greatest media coverage. After his capture, he said that he was not renouncing the Al Qaeda cause. Hundreds of Arabian, Chechen, Albanian, Pakistani, Macedonian, Albanian, and Bosnian Muslim passports and other documents were found in the Al Qaeda camps, evidence of the role of terrorists in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia. For example, Albanian daily news⁷³ reported that five Arab families were expelled from Albania. Mostly Egyptian, they were members of Islamic relief organizations, such as World organization of Islamic aid, Incarnation of Islamic heritage, Al Haramein,⁷⁴ and Al Waffk Pakistan. The Frontier post⁷⁴ reported that border troops arrested 28 Al Qaeda fighters escaping Afghanistan. They were Sudanese, Saudi, Turkish, and Albanian nationals. It appears that Albanians were successfully recruited. Whether Albanians went first to wage war in Afghanistan or were only training there to later return and fight in Kosovo, South Serbia, or Macedonia, is irrelevant.

Future Perspectives

A high possibility exists for renewed clashes in Macedonia. A Federal Yugoslav official warned that Albanian terrorists plan to renew the fighting soon in South Serbia, and commit terrorist attacks on Belgrade. Ibrahim Rugova⁷⁵ infers that Muhammad Hassan Mahmoud, head of Al Qaeda's network, is somewhere between Kosovo and Albania and directing terrorist operations in the region. On December 9th 2001 Albanian terrorists leveled the 9th century Orthodox St. George's church, dating from the 9th century in Rečica near Tetovo. An assassination attempt in Skopje

72. Lashar-e-Taiba Muslim military organization fighting for liberation of Kashmir.

Colin Powell, State Department Secretary General, blacklisted it as a terrorist organization in December 2001.

73. Albanian Daily News, October 10th, 2001.

74. The Frontier Post, Quetta, November 2001.

75. Ibrahim Rugova Muslim Kosovo Albanian Democratic Party leader, the majority party in Kosovo's Parliament. Moderate politician; his goal is an independent Kosovo and peaceful co-existence.

on the Macedonian Prime Minister Georgijevski⁷⁶ in Skopje was prevented when two Albanians carrying explosives were captured. Boškovski⁷⁷ also projects future Albanian terrorist acts in Kosovo, South Serbia, and FYROM.

Macedonian media reports the quiet ethnic cleansing of Macedonians who used to live in dominantly Albanian territories. The Kosovo model is also applied there: wealthy Albanian guest-workers⁷⁸ are buying land from intimidated Macedonians. Intelligence services are warning of ANA armed actions after Ramadan⁷⁹. Macedonian president Trajkovski asked NATO to prolong its Purple Fox mission for another three months. Russian sources predict a renewal of clashes in Macedonia if it suits the US, who manipulates the crisis. The US admitted that American citizens of Albanian origin were fighting in the ranks of ONA and ANA; it then froze the assets collected in America to support the guerrillas and stopped issuing visas to any Albanians involved. The German press related, unreliably, that American advisors were in Macedonia, that secret helicopter reconnaissance flights over Macedonian territory occurred, and that military equipment had passed through the porous Macedonia-Kosovo border, which is under American control.

A certain, unnamed Macedonian diplomat is of the opinion that American intelligence played a role in the Albanian guerrilla presence in Macedonia. He claims that aggression against Macedonia began in Kosovo in February 2001, when four hundred terrorists, KLA members, arrived and crossed the Šara mountain range in the American controlled sector in Kosovo. That act, said the diplomat, was caused by Macedonia's weakness, and the concessions IC made to the new democratic Serbia / Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Federal Yugoslavia was right to identify its conflict with Albanians as a conflict with Islamic terrorism. By branding Albanians terrorists, Serbia will keep Kosovo within borders of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's borders.

Albanian demands, backed by armed struggle, grow more adamant. Albanian criminal organizations fund the struggle. Its ideological base is the Prizren Declaration. Their members are nationalistically intoxicated youth who are lavishly supported by an international terrorist network. Official Macedonian circles opine that militant Kosovo forces (ex-OVK fighters) and the radical Albanian World Organization are enmeshed in the conflict.

76. Ljubčo Georgijevski - Leader of VMRO/DMPNE, Macedonian Prime Minister.

77. Vlade Boškovski - Macedonian Interior Minister. Advocates military solutions to the Albanian question.

78. Guest workers - Term for SSE/Balkans nationals who work in western European countries, and then invest their earnings in their countries of origin.

79. Ramadan - Holy Muslim month of fasting and prayer.

A strong NATO resolve is to eradicate terrorism in this part of the world. SFOR and KFOR actively implement the UN Security Council 1373 Resolution dealing with world terrorism and the EU Resolution which defines it. Although NATO supports one instead of three separate international peace forces (one for Bosnia, one for Kosovo, and one for Macedonia), Macedonia opposes being linked with Kosovo and Bosnia.

Conclusion

FYROM in a year has lost the approval of EU and US. EU, in particular, is dissatisfied with Macedonia's nationalist interpretation of the crisis, and its appropriation of blame to the Albanians. Some EU politicians conclude that closer ties with Macedonia were premature, and that the Macedonian government is untrustworthy and not yet ready for compromise. Hence financial aid is postponed (Donors' Conference).⁸⁰ It is claimed that Macedonia has not yet met European democratic and ethnic tolerance criteria. Recently, however, they were saying just the opposite. Again all the blame for IC's own misjudgments and failures is heaped on Macedonia's shoulders. Macedonia must concede that its constitution will be changed (it is now written that Macedonia is the Macedonian people's state), and accept the fact of Albanian autonomy & the division of sovereignty between the majority Macedonian and the minority Albanian people.

IC condemns the Macedonian Albanians' radical methods. It supports Albanian moderate politicians, hoping that they can negotiate peaceful coexistence in Macedonia. IC does not want a conflict in one of SEE/Balkans countries to again spill over the borders. The US has profited by the former Yugoslavia break-up by gaining strategic advantage in Southeastern Europe, especially Albania and Macedonia, a gain it assures by its military presence. In order to break nationalistic Serbia, the US used Islamic mujahedeen. The CIA and DIA⁸¹ brought mujahedeen terrorists into the SEE/Balkans; following along were Al Qaeda, Islamic Jihad, and then GIA. As in Afghanistan, these organizations have broken away from the control of their mentors and become their enemies.

Serbia explains that the war, in fact, is a war between two historically opposed religions: Christianity and Islam. Serbian secret services first instigated Albanian rebellion and then suppressed it by state terror. That same refined game continued in South Serbia. Albanians fought with arms bought from Serbs, and Serbs negoti-

80. Donors' Conference & Rich countries assistance to rebuild FYROM in return for the Ohrid Agreement.

81. DIA & US Defense Intelligence Agency.

ated with Albanian terrorists. When é ovi³ plan was accepted, Serbia's South was muted. Then arms merchants sold weapons to western Macedonia's rebels. Serbia thus destabilized its Southern neighbor, while at the same time encouraging it to recognize Serbia as its true orthodox and anti-Islamic ally. Serbs denounced Albanian rebels in Macedonia as terrorists from Kosovo; Kosovo Albanians were classified as Islamic fundamentalists, all done to keep Kosovo within Federal Yugoslavia's borders.

Serbia has also used the Israeli syndrome as a political ploy. Paul Williams⁸³, an American international law expert, said that Serbia is meddling into Bosnia and Herzegovina's international affairs, and is not quite innocent in the recent Macedonian crisis. Parts of the radical Macedonian political scene act similarly. A connection also exists between the Serbian and Macedonian secret services, particularly when overseeing and directing the Macedonian crisis. The hostile reception of Albanian refugees from Kosovo, and the hostility shown towards NATO in pro-Serbian demonstrations in Skopje during the Kosovo war are also signs of that cooperation.

Bulgaria and Greece are publicly opposed to Albanian nationalism. It is to be considered of global importance. The fear of a second terrorist front, opening in the Balkans, is a gross exaggeration, as is the number of 40,000 fanatical Islamic combatants. But the fact is indisputable that a war between two religions was waged in this region. Hidden arms exist, as do sleeping combatants. So any party interested in a two-civilization conflict should look at Europe's soft underbelly, toward which the Green Islamic Transverse is pointed.

NATO's strong presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia, and the traditional Slav animosity towards Muslims abort such a plan. Even in countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Albania, and Macedonia) where the Muslim population prevails, there are no prospects. These countries are presently defining their national and state identity and seeking European unification and globalization. Islamic radicalization of the area is at best a forlorn hope.

In Macedonia's crisis, the ties between terrorism and organized crime are close. The war taxes Albanian emigrants pay Đ

82. é ovi³ Plan Đalso é ovi³ Agreement; Serbian Minister's plan to stop hostilities in Serbia.

83. Paul Williams, Monitor Podgorica, December 21st, 2001.

84. The Green Transverse ĐA territory connected to and inhabited by Muslims in SEE/Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sandžak, southwestern Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, and Bulgaria). Corridor through which the Turkish army advanced into Middle Europe.

drug trafficking and people smuggling - finance the Albanian armed rebellion.

Neighboring countries are vitally interested in this area. Russia wants to become a world power again. Existence of the "leper" terrorists is a fact in Bosnia. Foreign terrorists fought in Albania, Kosovo, and Macedonia. The safest East-West illegal immigrant route passes through the area, but is used by terrorists also. The new SEE/ Balkans geopolitical map is not yet defined. Forming new national states is still an unfinished process.

Important is the fact that the political aims of Macedonian Albanians and terrorists are the same.

The Macedonian crisis is yet to be solved. However, it could happen if there were less pressure and fewer unreal peace proposals, mediation, foreign interference, nationalism, and pure hate. What is needed is more transparent dialogue, more compromise, and more economic help.

What next? The armed struggle for Kosovo's independence will continue, as will the Macedonian Albanians' struggle to retain their achieved rights. The danger lies in the ease by which legal demands for greater national rights can also be called terrorist demands; but from the other point of view, terrorist acts are also those of freedom fighters. Once that distinction is made, one embraces the terrorist (or freedom fighter) and condemns the freedom fighter (or terrorist). So the argument continues. James Pettifer⁸⁵, a BBC journalist, states the international communities' doubt about the Macedonian crisis: "The international communities' dilemma about Macedonia's events is how to base the politics on such shaky and insecure foundations."

85. James Pettifer, BBC News, July 4th, 2001. Journalist and Macedonian affairs expert, author of