

# Foreign Policy and Ethnic Tensions in FYROM after the Greek-Skopje Interim Agreement

**Spyridon Sfetas\***

## RÉSUMÉ

Cet article se penche sur l'Accord intérimaire survenu entre la Grèce et Skopje. Il montre que celui-ci a apporté une amélioration substantielle des relations bilatérales de ces deux pays et a accentué la coopération interbalkanique. Ceci a eu pour effet de faciliter l'intégration européenne de l'Ancienne République Yougoslave de Macédoine (ARYM). Ainsi, malgré le contentieux entourant la dénomination de cette petite république, les relations Grèce-Skopje demeurent excellentes.

Étant membre de l'OTAN et de l'Union européenne, la Grèce, pays économiquement développé, est bien placée pour aider l'ARYM à redresser son économie. Contrairement à la Bulgarie et la Serbie, la Grèce ne constitue pas une menace à l'identité slavomacédonienne, créée après 1944 pour contrecarrer les visées serbes et bulgares, en autant que l'ARYM n'ait pas de revendications territoriales sur la Grèce et qu'elle n'enfreigne pas l'héritage culturel hellénique.

Enfin, le facteur albanais constitue une force déstabilisante pour l'ARYM, ce qui la rapproche d'Athènes, d'autant plus que la Grèce pratique dans cette région une politique de sécurité et de stabilité.

## ABSTRACT

The following article describes how the Greek-Skopje Interim Agreement brought about a noticeable improvement in bilateral relations and interbalkan co-operation. The resulting climate facilitated FYROM's integration into Europe, e.g. admission to certain European organisations, an agreement on co-operation with the European Union. Despite the name issue, Greek-Skopje relations are excellent.

As a member of NATO and the European Union, Greece is not only diplomatically placed but also economically developed and thus in a position to contribute to FYROM's economic recovery and survival. Contrary to Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, Greece does not challenge the Slavomacedonian identity, created after 1944 to counteract Bulgarian and Serbian aspirations, as long as this new identity does not infringe upon the cultural heritage of Hellenism, or lay territorial claims of any kind on Greece. The Albanian factor in FYROM, a destabilising force, brings Skopje closer to Athens, since Greece applies a policy of stabilisation and regional security.

\*University of Thessaloniki, Greece

The Interim Agreement, signed by Greece and FYROM in September 1995 under the auspices of the United Nations, opened up a new chapter in the relations between the two countries. This rapprochement, the outcome of shuttle diplomacy, assumed by President Clinton's special envoy in the Balkans, Richard Holbrook, and had to be viewed as the aftermath of the scheduled settlement of the Bosnian Crisis as a whole (the Dayton Agreement), after NATO's airstrikes on the Bosnian Serbs early in September 1995.<sup>1</sup> The active involvement of American policy in the Yugoslav Crisis in summer 1995 made effective American mediation possible in the dispute between Athens and Skopje. Since there was no consensus on the name issue, the "small package deal" solution was promoted, namely the taking of confidence-building measures and continued of negotiations about the name, which was left in abeyance.<sup>2</sup> Compared with the Vance-Owen plan (May 1993), the Interim Agreement may have been less desirable for the Greek side<sup>3</sup>, but, in general, spirit of both diplomatic acts is the same.

Greece has already realised that the quintessence of the "Macedonian Question" is international recognition of a new state, which calls itself "Republic of Macedonia" and not the change of identity of the Slavic people living in the FYROM in favour of rebulgarisation, reserbianisation or in favour of the thesis that the Slavomacedonians are an "amorphous mass, a flour with which one can bake every cake one wishes", as the Swedish right-wing politician and scholar Rudolf Kjelle'n stated in 1916, describing the ethnopolitical situation in Macedonia. Such a view could rekindle the old Serbo-Bulgarian antagonism over Macedonia, which also affects Greece.<sup>4</sup> If Skopje-State is to survive, which corresponds to Greek interests, it should have an identity. Through the Interim Agreement, FYROM consented to respect the inviolability of the borders, renounce any territorial claims to Greece, refrain from any hostile propaganda against Greece, interpret article 49 of the Constitution in such a way that no interference in Greek sovereign rights could be permitted and suspend the flag with the "Sun of Vergina". After the signing of this agreement, the Greek-Skopje dispute was allegedly restricted to a tussle about the name Macedonia. The Interim Agreement is an international act, binding for both countries. It should be stressed that the definite settlement of the name issue has to be accepted by both sides, according to Security Council resolutions.<sup>5</sup>

Subsequent to the Greek-Skopje understanding, FYROM's foreign policy has had three keystones: peaceful European integration, renewed ties with America, and Balkan co-operation. National security and recovery of the ailing economy are two matters of great urgency. The political significance of the Interim Agreement for FYROM lay in the fact, that only after this rapprochement with Greece, a member of European Union and NATO, could FYROM begin pursuing its European integration policy. Gligorov was now allowed to apply for admission to European institutions. FYROM was admitted to the European Council and to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe in the second half of 1995 without any Greek objection. Only after Greek Foreign Minister Pangalos had visited Skopje in March 1997,<sup>6</sup> could FYROM sign an agreement on co-operation with the European Union. This agreement, signed 29 April 1997 in Luxembourg, stipulates that FYROM's farm products could be exported to the European market and the European Union must award a loan of 150.000.000 ECU to FYROM that until the year 2000 in order to improve its infrastructure.<sup>7</sup> The former Yugoslav republic's fears that Greece might obstruct the ratification of the agreement by the European Parliament as a form of revenge for the use of the name did not materialise<sup>8</sup> and the agreement went into effect on January 1, 1998.<sup>9</sup> Prior to this agreement, only Slovenia had negotiated on association with the European Union. Similar agreements are not expected in the near future with Croatia and "rump" Yugoslavia. It must be stressed that Skopje was admitted to European institutions under the name Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It indicates that Europe does consider Greek sensitivity regarding the name issue, which is still an issue in the negotiations.<sup>10</sup> FYROM's long-term target is to become a member of the European Union. Skopje's authorities are aware of the fact that the former Yugoslav republic's access to Europe depends on Greece. The new Coalition Government, formed by VMRO-DPMNE, Democratic Alternative and the Democratic Party of the Albanians at the end of November 1998, after the elections in October- November 1998, is attaching particular importance to Greek-FYROM relations. Despite its former political profile as a proBulgarian and nationalistic party, nowadays VMRO-DPMNE presents itself as a modern, moderate centre-right party, ready to solve all the questions with the neighbours and to facilitate foreign investments.<sup>11</sup> The question of FYROM's future association with the European Union was discussed during

Georgievski's visit to Brussels in December 1998 and Gligorov's in France in February 1999. But it will take a long time until Skopje meets the necessary criteria.

Germany stands out as the main central European country trying to boost political, economic and military relations with FYROM. Germany takes first place in the country's investment sector and is an important trade partner. On April 9, 1997, an agreement was signed in Skopje on the training of high-ranking and non-commissioned Slavomacedonian officers in German Military Schools.<sup>12</sup> Two days later Crvenkovski signed two agreements in Bonn. One agreement with Kinkel, regarding construction of the Skopje-Bulgarian railroad, which will be financed by Germany to the tune of 30 000 000 DM. A second agreement was ratified with Waigel. It stipulated that Germany should deposit 170 000 000 DM in order that FYROM's foreign debt be paid off.<sup>13</sup> Financial matters were also discussed during Kinkel's visit to Skopje in October 1997.<sup>14</sup> Through economic penetration into the South Balkan Peninsula, Germany strives to counteract American political leverage.

On June 17, 1997, Gligorov paid an official visit to the United States with a view to generating American interest in investing in his country (so far no noticeable American business activity in FYROM) and to securing the prolongation of American military presence.<sup>15</sup> He asked President Clinton to not withdraw the 300 American soldiers deployed in FYROM and, rather, to replace them with soldiers from Bosnia, should they pull out of the FYROM. Clinton and Albright did not commit themselves to meeting Gligorov's demands, but limited their remarks to emphasising American interest in the stability of the area, as NATO military manoeuvres (Partnership for Peace) on the soil of FYROM in Krivolak in May 1997 had already proved. UN General Secretary, Kofi Annan, had suggested a reduction of UN troops stationed in Macedonia. He argued that there were no external factors which threatened FYROM's integrity, but only internal ethnic tensions.<sup>16</sup> In order to anticipate FYROM's apprehensions, NATO's high commandant in Europe, General Clark, paid an official visit to Skopje at the end of August 1997 and offered a future military co-operation between FYROM and America to counterbalance the possible withdrawal of UN troops.<sup>17</sup> The tense situation in Kosovo, where the underground organisation "Kosovar Liberation Army"<sup>18</sup> was clashing with the Serbian security forces, had placed

FYROM in a precarious position. The likelihood of spillover into FYROM cannot be ruled out. This likelihood is what urges Washington to apply a deterrent policy. At a session of NATO Foreign Ministers in Luxembourg (late May 1998) the prolongation of the UNPROFOR-UNPREDEP mandate, which expired August 31, 1998, had been suggested. Russia was strongly opposed to the deployment of NATO forces in FYROM and demanded Russian participation in the UNPREDEP. It also came out against the imposition of sanctions on the so-called rump Yugoslavia and disapproved of NATO's military intervention in Kosovo, calling on Serbs and Albanians to come to terms. Since 1997, Russia, a country well acquainted with Balkan affairs, has been pursuing an active Balkan policy. Hence it would be a mistake to underestimate Russian involvement. During his visit to Moscow in January 1998, Gligorov suggested that Russia be present in the Balkan Peninsula where it could provide preventive diplomacy so that any potential crisis could be avoided. A relevant agreement was signed between Gligorov and Yeltsin.<sup>19</sup>

In late June 1998, Crvenkovski paid an official visit to Washington, where American officials gave him definite assurance of the American commitment to protecting FYROM.<sup>20</sup> Not long after Crvenkovski's visit, the UN Security Council ruled on the prolongation of the UNPREDEP mandate to last until the end of February 1999. Their number increased by 300<sup>21</sup> men and reached the number of 1100 men. Stressing the geopolitics of the South Balkans, NATO embarked on armed manoeuvres in Krivolak in September 1998.<sup>22</sup> Also, in December 1998, a NATO Rapid Reaction Force of 1,700 men under French command was deployed in the FYROM to supervise implementation of the Kosovo agreement, signed by Milosevic and Holbrook in October 1998, and to help extract OSCE monitors from Kosovo in the case of massive hostilities, hostage taking, urgent medical problems or land mines.<sup>23</sup> As a reaction to the establishment of diplomatic relations between FYROM and Taiwan in January 1999, China used its Security Council veto to thwart a new extension of the UNPREDEP mandate in FYROM on 25, 1999. But NATO's military intervention on March 24, 1999, has assigned a pivotal role to FYROM. Some might even say that the former Yugoslav republic is being turned into an American protectorate. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether or not NATO can safeguard FYROM's territorial integrity, given the dynamic and unforeseeable developments in the wake of NATO airstrikes against Serbia

(Yugoslavia). This intervention is a violation of international law and could lead to a new Cold War. In Rambouillet, no serious effort was made to solve the Kosovo Question in terms of Yugoslavian sovereignty; instead, Kosovo was turned into a new American protectorate. Serbian reaction was justifiable, but led to a vicious circle from which no one seems able to escape.

The Greek-Skopje interim agreement indirectly promoted inter-balkan co-operation. Gligorov's initial bottom line for a policy of equal distance from all neighbours did not prove functional. After the lifting of embargoes, the Greek economic presence in FYROM has increased greatly.<sup>24</sup> Cultural exchanges, development of tourism, mutual visits of politicians to both countries are the first signs of a new era in bilateral relations. As a NATO and EU member with a developed economy and democratic institutions, Greece is more attractive to the FYROM than other Balkan countries. Greece stands up for the former republic's territorial integrity and sovereignty. The Albanian factor, which acts as destabilising factor in the FYROM, brings both countries closer. In view of the escalation of the Kosovo crisis with its interbalkan dimensions - spillover into FYROM, stream of Albanian refugees into Greece, dangerous situation for the Greek minority in Albania - Skopje also counts on Greece for assistance. During a visit to Ochrid (late April 1998), the Greek Defence Minister A. Tsochatzopoulos supported the initiative for the establishment of Balkan Multinational Rapid Deployment Forces that could operate as peacemakers in areas of instability. He came in support of FYROM's future admission to NATO and invited Defence Minister Kitanovski to visit Greece.<sup>25</sup> Sticking to a constructive Balkan Policy, Greece participated in the Balkan Defence Ministers Meeting, held on September 26, 1998, in Skopje, during which the establishment of a joint peacekeeping force was agreed upon.<sup>26</sup> In the wake of this initiative, defence ministers from Italy, Greece, Albania, Bulgaria, FYROM and Romania signed an agreement in Athens on January 12, 1999 to finalise the relevant arrangements. Because of a government change in Ankara, Turkey, a full member, was represented by its ambassador to Greece. It was agreed that the headquarters would be in Plovdiv (Philippoupolis, Bulgaria) for four years and then rotate among other member states. A Turk would be the initial commanding officer; a Greek, the first head of the Political Secretariat. Both positions would subsequently be rotated among the member states. FYROM inhabitants do not have anti-Greeks feelings and did not even during the embargo. They are eager to

come to Greece for various reasons, such as shopping, tourism, business and medical treatment. The past years of animosity forgotten, Gligorov has often praised Greece's constructive policy in the Balkan Peninsula. Athens-Skopje relations are not seriously affected by demands from the "Aegean-Lobby", e.g., unconditional recognition of a "Macedonian" minority in Greece, recognition of a putative Greek "genocide" during the Greek Civil War, and the restitution of their confiscated property. In fact, Skopje seems to support the above unofficially, although in media mainly for internal consumption.<sup>27</sup> In the improving climate, the so called "Aegean Refugees" are allowed to visit Greece if in the passports the place of birth is given with the respective Greek name (for example, Florina instead of Lerin). FYROM will put forth the question of using Salonica's harbour for the shipping trade. In principle, Greece is not against granting a free trade zone in Thessaloniki (Salonica), as FYROM's economy and viability are contingent upon it to some extent, but it is not an item on the agenda.<sup>28</sup> Preparations have already been made by both sides to facilitate the railway connection between Thessaloniki and Skopje. On June 23, 1998, Greek Foreign Minister Pangalos and his FYROM counterpart, Handziski, an agreement signed in Athens on border communication and co-operation.<sup>29</sup> At a joint press conference, they pointed out that the bilateral relations are excellent and further development is expected within the next few months, despite differences concerning the name issue. They both opposed NATO intervention in Kosovo and favoured a diplomatic solution. Pangalos warned Western countries against meddling in Balkan affairs and said, "enough blood has flown in the Balkans because of amateurism".<sup>30</sup> On July 8, 1998, the Greek Minister of Public Order, Romaios, and FYROM's Minister of the Interior, Cokrevski, signed in Ochrid, an agreement on the co-operation between the police of both countries in fighting criminality, black marketing, arms and drugs smuggling.<sup>31</sup> Greek-Skopje relations are not yet normal in the diplomatic sense (there are Heads of Liaison Offices, not Ambassadors), but the current developments are irreversible and should result in a climate of good neighbourliness.

On April 8, 1996, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and FYROM signed an agreement on the regulation of relations and the promotion of co-operation between the two countries, which, in fact, meant mutual recognition.<sup>32</sup> The so-called "rump" Yugoslavia recognised "the state continuity of Macedonia from ASNOM 1944

and the Republic of Macedonia, the state continuity of Serbia and Montenegro from 1918".<sup>33</sup> Both countries established full diplomatic relations at the level of Ambassadors. Although Belgrade was initially reluctant to recognise Skopje under the name "Republic of Macedonia", it eventually did so. Many politicians speculated that through this political motion Belgrade was aiming to blackmail Greece into a favourable settlement of the question of the Serbian free trade zone in the harbour. But, in fact, Belgrade acted under the pressure of the international factor to recognise the former Yugoslav republics immediately after the Dayton Agreement. Since Skopje did not want to be recognised under any name other than Republic of Macedonia and accepted the State continuity and international legal personality of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Belgrade gave in. Both sides accepted that the question of the succession of the previous Yugoslavia should be solved by agreement in the future. The terms "Republic of Macedonia and Macedonians" do not cause difficulties for many Serbian politicians (especially Socialists) as far as these terms have an antibulgarian connotation. Athens was not amazed at this Yugoslav diplomatic proceeding and the Greek reactions were rather faint. Early in September 1996, Yugoslav Prime Minister Kotic visited Skopje and signed several agreements on economic co-operation and trade, which resulted in a Customs Union between Belgrade and Skopje.<sup>34</sup> Early in July 1997, Crvenkovski visited Belgrade and signed other agreements on the abolition of visas, the opening of new consulates, cultural and sport exchanges and the setting up of a mixed commission to examine and correct school books<sup>35</sup>. Businessmen from both countries met at the Yugoslav Chamber of Commerce in Belgrade and discussed the possibility of Yugoslav companies assuming the reconstruction of the power supply network in FYROM, the construction of railway networks and even an oil pipeline from Thessaloniki (Salonica) to Yugoslavia via the FYROM.<sup>36</sup> But because of its ailing economy and international isolation, Yugoslavia is not in a position to complete all these ambitious plans in the short term.

Despite the political normalisation and the economic co-operation, there are still outstanding issues that affect the bilateral relations.

1) Borders: Since May 1997 a mixed diplomatic-expert Commission has been working on the demarcation of the borders.



But no agreement has been signed yet. Belgrade lays claims to some strips in the border area between FYROM, Bulgarian, and Yugoslavia, between FYROM, Albania and Yugoslavia and between Kumanovo and Skopska Crna Gora. Skopje considers these points of strategic importance and wants the borders to remain as they were drawn after the war.<sup>37</sup>

2) Succession of former Yugoslav: No agreement has been reached yet. Skopje takes account of the attitude of the other former Yugoslav republics and stands firm on signing of a multi-lateral agreement and not a bilateral one.<sup>38</sup> Recognition of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as successor of the Former Yugoslavia is a matter of principle for Belgrade. It presupposes that the other sides accept that Communist Yugoslavia did not collapse, but some republics seceded from the Federation, which gives rump Yugoslavia all the hereditary rights.

3) Church Relations: The Autocephalous "Macedonian Church" is not recognised by the Serbian Patriarchate, which burdens interstate relations. Property rights of the Serbian Orthodox Church are unsettled. Through the intermediation of the Greek Orthodox Church negotiations were held between the two Churches from December 1998 until February 1999, but without tangible results. Serbian historians demand the preservation of Serbian cultural and historical monuments in the former republic and the security of all rights to free political, educational, cultural and spiritual organising and activities for the Serbs.<sup>39</sup> In Serbia there are also factors (some politicians, historians, the Serbian Orthodox Church) that claim that Macedonia is South Serbia and that the "Macedonian nation" is artificially contrived by the Communist International. This discourse causes strong reactions among Slavomacedonian historians.<sup>40</sup>

As far as the future of bilateral relations is concerned, it could be said that Belgrade would try to exert a strong influence on FYROM. Milosevic has been trying to talk Gligorov into incorporating FYROM into Federal Yugoslavia, threatening that otherwise the Serbian army would not come to help FYROM, should an Albanian uprising of great dimensions break out in Tetovo.<sup>41</sup> Gligorov refuses to discuss such an option.<sup>42</sup> In Skopje one talks about Finland's syndrome when referring to the special relationship of Skopje-Belgrade.<sup>43</sup> Contrary to its former anti-Serbian attitude, VMRO-DPMNE as a government party continues the conciliatory policy towards Belgrade, despite the friction caused by NATO deployment in FYROM.

Skopje's relations with Sofia stagnated until February 1999. Both countries were on bad terms and are still squabbling over the boundary between Bulgarism and Slavomacedonianism. Bulgaria was the first country to recognise the "Macedonian state" on February 15, 1992, but not the "Macedonian nation". For the Bulgarian side, the so-called "Macedonians" are ethnic Bulgarians and only through Tito's policy were they estranged from their roots. According to Bulgarian politicians and historians, the "Macedonians" would declare themselves as Bulgarians, if they were given political and democratic freedoms. The Bulgarians will never become accustomed to the idea of a Slavomacedonianism based on an antibulgarian stance. The experience of the years 1944-1963 is still alive in the Bulgarian politics. A driving force of the "Macedonian nation" was the Communist International.<sup>44</sup> It found recognition in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The revision of the thesis about the existence of a "Macedonian nation" as a historical category by Bulgarian Communists at the March Plenum (1963)<sup>45</sup> did not meet with a response. In his Memoirs Zivkov clearly notes how isolated Bulgarian was in the socialist world regarding the Macedonian Question, even after 1963.<sup>46</sup> President Stojanov said in Strasbourg in April 1997 that Macedonian history had been the most romantic part of Bulgarian history to demonstrate that the so-called Macedonians had a Bulgarian national awareness and only after 1944 did they differentiate themselves from the Bulgarians. Nowadays Sofia claims that about 30, 000 Bulgarians were killed by Yugoslav secret police between 1944-1950 as opponents to the forcible antibulgarian Macedonisation policy.<sup>47</sup> Sofia and Skopje could not sign some 20 draft agreements because of the language barrier. As Bulgaria does not recognise the historical development of a "Macedonian nation", it denies necessarily the existence of a separate standard "Macedonian" language which is qualified by the Bulgarians as a Serbianised Bulgarian dialect. An agreement on cultural co-operation signed by the University of Skopje and that of Veliko Tarnovo had to be cancelled, as it was written in Bulgarian and "Macedonian".<sup>48</sup> Up to a point, Bulgarian enjoys the support of Russian historical science. Contrary to the former Soviet attitude, the current national Russian position is that for the whole nineteenth century it was impossible to speak about either a distinct "Macedonian nationality" or "Macedonian" culture, which is claimed as Bulgarian heritage. In a "History of Literature of the West and South Slavs", published by the Russian

Institute for Slavonic and Balkan Studies in 1997, no "Macedonian" literature is mentioned for the nineteenth century, which caused strong reactions in Skopje.<sup>49</sup> Bulgaria supports political parties in FYROM that have an allegedly probulgarian inclination, like VMRO-DPMNE.<sup>50</sup> Bulgarian historical literature on the Macedonian Question, produced by the Macedonian Scientific Institute after 1989, is impressive. In an open letter, addressed to President Gligorov by the staff of this Institute in September 1997, the Bulgarian point of view is clearly expressed.

Mr. President,

Not long ago, the Macedonian Bulgarians living in the USA, Canada and Australia, as well as those in Germany, addressed you in an open letter on the occasion of your interview of July 23, 1997. In our capacity as Macedonian Bulgarians and members of the Macedonian Scientific Institute -academicians, corresponding members, professors, assistant professors, research associates and public figures- we would also like to express our opinion on the problems treated by you in the interview.

We are pleased with the fact that you recognised a number of facts about the Republic of Macedonia and the relations between our two countries, namely:

1. This was the first time you have declared before the world that the process of "debulgarization" in the Republic of Macedonia has been completed "with the exception of some persons and one or two parties". That statement of yours confirms the historical truth that, until 1944, the Slavonic population of the Republic of Macedonia has been a Bulgarian one. Furthermore, in this way you supported the statement made by President Petar Stoyanov in Strasbourg -that "Macedonian history is a part of Bulgarian history, and one of its most romantic parts-the struggle of the Christian population against the enslavers".

2. You pointed out that the probulgarian attitudes in the Republic of Macedonia were a "standing problem" for you. This, Mr. President, is true only regarding the period since 1944. It is well known that the population of Macedonia has always legitimised itself as being Bulgarian, which is testified by the Ottoman archives, the diplomatic correspondence of the foreign consuls, foreign observers, travellers, eminent scientists, military people and others who had worked in the historical-geographic region on Macedonia, as well as by the written documents left by the most prominent figures of the National Revival period....

3. You finally found the courage to confirm a statement that we have made a number of times, namely that "the recognition of a state, and not of a language or a nation, is a matter of international law". This is exactly the truth, Mr. President, for the state is a political; i.e. legal category, which is subject to recognition, while the language and the nation are scientific categories which are not subject to recognition. The policy of Serbo-Communists in the Republic of Macedonia towards legitimising the Comintern decision of 1934 for the creation of a "Macedonian language" have led to the present situation, i.e. a political decision of the problem....

4. You are right, Mr. President, in stating that the language disputes is "a domestic problem of your own". The Macedonian Serbo-Communists have "conjured up" that language which, according to the *Focus* newspaper, is spoken by less than a half of the people of the Republic of Macedonia. Therefore, we dare ask you: since this is a domestic problem of yours, why is your government constantly intruding it onto us and using it to block the normal relations between our states?

Mr President, once upon a time, our great poet Ivan Vazov, who is of Macedonian origin, said, "You cannot quench the unquenchable". You and your follower would not be able, in spite of all efforts made, to quench the Bulgarian spirit of the population of Macedonia. You are afraid that the notion of "One people in two states" might assert itself. You are right to do so because that is an idea that enjoys ever-greater popularity among people from both sides of the Rouen and Belasistsa. That idea has also been part of the programme of the national liberation movement of the Bulgarians in Macedonia for decades now. This is a righteous idea, which has its future.

At present, the attitude of the Republic of Bulgaria towards the Republic of Macedonia is more than a well-wishing one. Namely because of this Bulgaria:

1. Was the first country in the world to recognise your state.
2. Helped you save your economy from a crash (without any signed agreements) and during the double economic embargo.
3. Did not consent to a division of the territory of the Republic of Macedonia.

4. Interceded with Russia and other countries for the recognition of your state, and they listened to the voice of Sofia.

All this testifies to the fact that the Bulgarian state is not an enemy of the Republic of Macedonia and that its people are a real brother to its people. You should also not forget that the Republic of Bulgaria is the home of over 3 million of Macedonian Bulgarians and their descendants who have been driven away by the Turkish, Serbian and Macedonian authorities, i.e. over three times more than the Slavonic population of Macedonia. Therefore, we are not indifferent to the fate of the Republic of Macedonia.

Mr. Gligorov, in our capacity as Bulgarians from Macedonia and as scholars, we are well aware of the complex political heritage left by the Serbo-Communists to the Republic of Macedonia. Yet, the brothers from both sides of the Rouen and Belasitsa mountains, would like to live at peace and with wide open borders, instead of in an atmosphere of mistrust and hostility, imposed by your present government which is servicing interests alien to both the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Bulgaria.<sup>51</sup>

Bulgaria does not conceal its aspirations towards Skopje. The Bulgarian national doctrine, elaborated by Bulgarian intellectuals and submitted to President Stojanov in January 1998, emphasises that Bulgaria is the only state in the world that borders on segments of the Bulgarian population and that the "Macedonian nation" is a communist figment.<sup>52</sup> The quintessence of the doctrine is "Free, Independent, Democratic and Prosperous Bulgaria, Spiritually Unifying Force of the Bulgarians throughout the world". No territorial claims are laid on the neighbouring countries, but the necessity of a Bulgarian cultural response is highlighted.<sup>53</sup> These principles are destined to determine the Bulgarian foreign policy for the next century. The Bulgarian military doctrine stipulates that in the case of an armed conflict between Albanians and "Macedonians" in FYROM, Bulgarian special security forces will be involved,<sup>54</sup> no matter how desirable or not to Skopje. Obviously, Bulgaria is worried about the likelihood of FYROM's increased dependence on Belgrade in the case of an Albanian riot. Greek-Serbian penetration into FYROM is undesirable for Sofia.<sup>55</sup> Only a few days after the Greek-Skopje Interim Agreement and immediately after Gligorov's visit to Belgrade, there was an assassination attempt made on his life, probably by agents of the pro-Bulgarian organisation MPO

(Macedonian Patriotic Organisation). This is a bad omen. Bulgaria's long-term objective is confederation with FYROM; i.e., two states of one Bulgarian nation.<sup>56</sup> Bulgaria paid particular importance to the recent parliamentary elections in FYROM and the victory of VMRO-DPMNE was regarded (wrongly) as a victory of the "latent Bulgarian awareness" of the "Serbomacedonism". There are hopes in Sofia that the problems will be sorted out and that relations will improve noticeably. Urged by the United States to come to terms with Bulgaria's future admission to NATO, Bulgarian Prime Minister Ivan Kostov and Ljubco Georgievski signed a declaration in Sofia on February 22, 1999. According to the declaration, neither country has any territorial claim on the other and neither will undertake, incite or support actions of a hostile nature against the other.<sup>57</sup> The declaration was signed in the official languages of both countries, in "Macedonian", according to the Constitution of FYROM and in Bulgarian, according to the Bulgarian Constitution. The language dispute appears to have ended, however, Bulgaria did not recognise a separate "Macedonian" language, as it is perceived in FYROM. It reserves the right to have another approach to the interpretation of the so-called "Macedonian" language.<sup>58</sup> Both sides found a technical formula to unblock the signing of a series of agreements. Bulgarian donated decommissioned weaponry to FYROM, including Soviet-made tanks and artillery, but in any event, Bulgaria is too weak to play for FYROM a role similar to that of Germany towards the former DDR after 1989. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Sofia will launch a more offensive cultural attack on Skopje to dispel the "myth of Macedonism".

If the Bulgarian factor is a potential factor of destabilisation, the Albanian factor is a real one. The Albanian question in FYROM has a long history dating from the Second World War, when the western parts of Serbian Macedonia with Kosovo were integral parts of Great Albania (1941-1944) and the vast majority of the Albanians, considering themselves to have been liberated from Serbian suzerainty with Italian and German help, joined Albanian nationalist organisations rather than the Yugoslav resistance movement.<sup>59</sup> Slavs in the western parts of Serbian Macedonia became the victims of Albanisation. Fascist Italy was determinedly cultivating racist anti-Slav sentiments and ethno-political relations between Albanians and Slavs became very strained. Moreover, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia recognised the Albanians as an ethnic minority (*narodnost*), not as a sovereign nation. In the

Federal Socialist Republic of Macedonia, Albanians were officially recognised as a minority and were granted cultural and educational rights, without, however, being integrated.

The disturbances in Kosovo in October 1968 and April 1981 had an immediate impact on the Albanians in Yugoslav Macedonia, who, like the Kosovars, were seeking to establish an Albanian Federal Republic. Illegal Albanian organisations were actively urging secession from Yugoslavia in the Yugoslav territory of Macedonia. After the collapse of Yugoslavia, Albanians in FYROM (over 500,000) have been trying to be recognised as an equal constituent nation,<sup>60</sup> but their long-term target is secession. FYROM offers the most typical Balkan example of a situation in which the dominant ethnic element is not sufficiently stronger than the minority groups. The ethnic mosaic in the former republic offers all the potential for an extremely fluid situation, ranging from co-existence and tolerance to mutual distrust and isolation in separate areas; from co-operation at a government level and the granting of basic rights to constant strife and paramilitary activity on both sides. The reciprocal effects of all these factors, coupled with FYROM's economic problems, present a picture in which mutual prejudice and negative stereotypes predominate and each community feels threatened by the other.

The greater FYROM's success in consolidating its international positions, the deeper the gap grew between Slavomacedonians and Albanians, who have been striving to create a shadow state. For the time being, they claim the equality of Albanian as a second official state language, the legalisation of the Albanian University in Tetovo, and the right to fly the Albanian flag. Early in February 1995, when Albanians sought to open their own University in Tetovo, FYROM police intervened and cracked down on demonstrators. One ethnic Albanian died, several were arrested and sentenced to prison including the Rector of the University, Fadil Sylejmani. Due to ethnic tensions, political balances are very flimsy. When in January 1997 the moderate Albanian party PDP (Party for Democratic Prosperity) threatened to relinquish the Coalition Government, the Parliament passed a bill which provided that Albanian students in the Faculty of Education could be taught in Albanian language. But not all-Albanian parties represented in Parliament voted for the bill, because they perceived it as a minimal. Slavomacedonian students reacted strongly to this Government concession. They demonstrated in the streets of Skopje against the governmental decision,

using very abusive language against the Albanians, and went on hunger strikes.<sup>61</sup> The political atmosphere in FYROM was further envenomed by the election of the Albanian Alajdin Demiri as Tetovo's mayor in February 1997. Although the two important Albanian parties, the moderate PDP and the radical PDPA had nominated different candidates, at the last moment, in order to prevent the election of the Slavomacedonian candidate, they agreed on a common candidate. After his election, Demiri tried to establish close co-operation with Rufi Osmani, the Albanian mayor in Gostivar, regarding the raising of the Albanian flag on municipal buildings in municipalities where Albanians are the mayors.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, for some weeks the Albanian and the Turkish flag had flown in the municipalities of Tetovo and Gostivar. Rufi Osmani did not comply with either the Constitutional Court's ruling to lower the Albanian and the Turkish flags or the new law on national minorities, which stipulated that their flags could be hoisted only during national celebrations.<sup>63</sup> When on July 9, 1997, police forces forcibly took down the Albanian and the Turkish flags from the municipality in Gostivar, the incident escalated.<sup>64</sup> In a scuffle with police, two Albanians died; fifteen were injured and over three hundred arrested. Rufi Osmani was detained in custody on charges of dissemination of ethnic hatred. Fears were expressed that the disturbances in Gostivar could spill over into Tetovo and Debar. All Albanian parties, in FYROM and in Albania as well, condemned the police action. Demonstrators in Tirana burnt the FYROM flag in front of the embassy.<sup>65</sup> The leader of the PDPA, Arben Dxaferi, went to Tirana to give interviews about the situation. On the one hand, he accused Gligorov of having acted in compliance with instructions given by Milosevic, but on the other hand, he revealed that after the collapse of Yugoslavia, all Albanian parties in Kosovo and FYROM had agreed on a common policy to gain independence for Kosovo and autonomy for the western parts of FYROM.<sup>66</sup> Gligorov, in Madrid to attend a NATO summit conference, was able to decline any responsibility for police intervention, and corroborated Dxaferi's statements in an interview in the Belgrade publication *Ekonomaska Politika*.<sup>67</sup> The parliament in Skopje set up a commission to investigate the events of July 1997 right away, but Osmani and Demiri had been sentenced to 7 and 2 and a half years imprisonment respectively,<sup>68</sup> before the commission submitted its findings. The conclusion of the commission, which was made known in March 1998, used equivocal language. The police made use of violence in some cases, but all the activities of the Albanians were unconstitutional.<sup>69</sup>



Ethnic tensions in FYROM coincided with insurgence in Albania itself. For the first time FYROM's army was on the alert and in a state of military preparedness.<sup>70</sup> Soldiers were still patrolling the borders to prevent an influx of refugees from Albania, but also drug and arms smuggling. Severe frontier incidents proved unavoidable. Rumours were rampant that Berisha's followers would try to overthrow the new socialist Albanian government by stirring up trouble in FYROM and Kosovo and by calling on Fatos Nano to take a clear position towards the "unredeemed" Albanians. A large number of Albanians in the former Yugoslav republic possess weapons. On July 6, 1997, the two Albanian parties, the PDPA and the Popular Democratic Party, were merged into one.<sup>71</sup> Its name, "Democratic Party of the Albanians", clearly shows a spirit of solidarity with Berisha's party.

The situation in Kosovo had its repercussions on the Albanians in FYROM. Demonstrators expressed their solidarity with the Kosovar Liberation Army<sup>72</sup>, delivered humanitarian aid to the Albanian refugees and demanded the release of Osmani.<sup>73</sup> They called for NATO airstrikes on Serbian targets in Kosovo, but came out against NATO's military presence in FYROM.<sup>74</sup> They reason that it is supposed to be directed against Albanians, as potential insurgents. On the contrary, Gligorov opposed any military intervention in Kosovo, since it could make the Albanians in FYROM more insolent and radical, but he was looking forward to seeing the deployment of NATO strike forces as peacemakers in his country<sup>75</sup>. The international factor does not consider FYROM to "be part of the Kosovo problem",<sup>76</sup> however, the Albanians favour a "conclusive solution" and the "Kosovar Liberation Army" (UCK/KLA) does not rule out FYROM from the field of their operations.<sup>77</sup> The Albanian factor in FYROM is its Achilles' heel and the developments must be monitored. By a series of agreements, the socialist government of Fatos Nano and Panteli Majiko succeeded in improving relations with Skopje noticeably.<sup>78</sup> However, Albanian socialists can hardly influence Albanians in FYROM, those who back up Berisha's party. Besides, the political situation in Albania is still fluid and Prime Minister Panteli Majiko does not control North Albania, which is the bastion of the "Kosovar Liberation Army". When the FYROM entered an electoral period, the "Albanian syndrome" played a role in the election campaign. Dxaferi threatened abstention from the elections, should the marginal minority status of the Albanians be

perpetuated.<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, Georgievski, leader of VMRO, pointed out that the "unwritten law" concerning the participation of Albanian parties to the government had to be abolished.<sup>80</sup> Once in power, the VMRO-DPMNE underwent a change, given the pressure of the political circumstances. Following recommendations from the United States, Georgievski did not oppose the Democratic Party of the Albanians to join the government. On December 29, 1998, parliament passed a draft amnesty law that would end the jail terms of some 800 people, mostly ethnic Albanians, who were convicted for violating the 1997 law on the public display of national symbols. Among them were the Albanian mayor Osmani and Demiri. President Gligorov refused to sign the bill, arguing that interference in the judicial power was inadmissible. But Parliament overrode Gligorov's veto and on 4 February 1999 approved the amnesty law. The government is also planning to recognise Albanian as an official language in the parliament and public services and to legalise the Albanian University in Tetovo. Since President Gligorov will object to these anti-constitutional acts, amending the constitution seems the simplest solution. Frictions between the non-homogenous government and the President proved inevitable, as the government's recognition of Taiwan without Gligorov's knowledge has already demonstrated. Obviously, the United States intends to avert a spillover of the crisis from Kosovo to FYROM and imposes on the new government a policy of openness to the Albanians. But as in Kosovo, these concessions could pave the way for the creation of an Albanian shadow state in the western parts.<sup>81</sup> It is true that Washington is against the creation of such a state in FYROM and Kosovar independence. However, the internal dynamic of events and developments after NATO's intervention in Kosovo might be the most decisive factor, since policy is a continuous readjustment to changing conditions. In June 1991, the American government was initially against Yugoslavia's dissolution and adopted the Greek viewpoint, only to shift its attitude swiftly.

Given all these parameters, it is simplistic to say that the Macedonian Question will be definitely settled if Skopje and Athens come to a compromise solution about the denomination of the new state in the international sphere. Sooner or later the UN Security Council will impose such a compromise solution.<sup>82</sup> The term Slavomacedonians, required by Greece, has no pejorative connotation and was used in abundance by those heralding the notion of Macedonianism (Krst Misirkov, Dimitri Cupovski and

others). However, a Macedonian question will continue to exist not in the sense of FYROM's real irredentist policy, but in terms of its survival struggle. Skopje-Sofia relations are not without problems, the Albanian factor might spin out of control, and Yugoslavia will try to exert more and more political pressure. Apart from the political dimensions, it will be difficult for the historians of the Balkan countries to come to any understanding of the historical aspects of the Macedonian question.

Under these circumstances, must the FYROM side with Greece? Should the FYROM see Greece as a guarantee of survival and economic development? Greece is taking advantage of its membership in NATO and the European Union to pursue a constructive Balkan policy of regional co-operation and security. Any intransigence by either side in the name issue might inhibit the full normalisation of the bilateral relations. The dispute about Macedonia must be transferred from the politicians to the historians. Greek historians must open a direct dialog with the Skopje's historians to clear up historical misunderstandings over the boundary between Hellenism and Slavomacedonianism. The field of historical prejudices and stereotypes in schoolbooks must be smoothed. Students from Skopje should visit Vergina and the Archeological Museum of Thessaloniki (Salonica). They should become familiar with Greek history. The Slavomacedonian nation was created in a Communist society under greenhouse conditions. Nowadays, in a nascent pluralistic society, there are various trends in Skopje, as found among the new generation of historians who are reappraising their own history. We must contact them. The Slavomacedonian identity is still an identity in evolution. It neutralises the old Serbo-Bulgarian scramble over the identity of the Macedonian Slavs and is not undesirable for the Greeks, as far as it is confined to the framework of FYROM. Minority questions, raised by some circles for internal consumption, cannot hamper the process of normalisation of the bilateral relations, for the simple reason that "Macedonian" minorities do not exist, as this term is defined in the International Law. Bilingualism is a common phenomenon in the border areas of the Balkan Peninsula and the cultural elements (folklore, habits and customs, etc.) of the orthodox Balkan peoples point to a mutual influence. The cultural differentiations are not always too striking to be re-defined into national terms and become characteristics of a new identity as "imagined community", as social anthropologists, unfamiliar with the Balkan reality, pretend. Greek national ideology was shared among the

various autochthonous and refugee elements in Greek Macedonia. Urbanisation, mobility and intermarriage have shaped a society in Greek Macedonia, characterised by national cohesion. In the Balkan Peninsula ethnicity partly overlaps the national identity. For seven years the Movement of Balkan Prosperity-Rainbow and the OMO-Illinden have been trying to discover "Macedonian" minorities in Greece and Bulgaria respectively. Until now the results are rather negative.

The Slavomacedonian identity will probably demise, if the Skopje-State collapses. Greece is against this option. Skopje's authorities must understand it and draw the relevant conclusions.

### NOTES

1. See the relevant chapter from Holbrook's book on the Dayton Agreement, as quoted by Alexis Panatelas in the Greek newspaper, **To Vima**, 3.5.1998.
2. For a juridical approach to the Agreement from the Greek point of view see H. Rozakis, **Politikes kai nomikes diastaseis tis metavatikis symphonias tis Neas Yorkis metaxy Elladas kai FYROM**, ELIAMEP, Athens, 1996.
3. For a comparative analysis see I. Cholevas, I **"Endiamesi Symphonia" Athinon-Skopion. Istoriko-Keimeno-Scholiasmos-Kriseis**, Athens 1995, pp. 51-63.
4. For the Greek side the term "Macedonians" is a geographic one, but for the other side it has an ethnic connotation in the sense of the distinction of the Slavic population in Macedonia from the Bulgarians and the Serbs. This different use causes confusion and so the hoopoe medium must be found to distinguish the Greeks from the Slavs. The most appropriate name could be the term Slavomacedonians. The notion of a "distinct Macedonian nation" goes back to a resolution of the Communist International (January 1934), but the process of its creation began taking place in Yugoslav part of Macedonia only after 1944. Probulgarian feelings among the Slav local population were alive and the Bulgarian occupation forces in the Serbian part of Macedonia in the Second World War were received as liberators. But two factors proved favourable for the Yugoslav Communists and the option of the Slavomacedonism. The subsequent dissatisfaction with the occupation authorities was due to social reasons and the evident

defeat of Germany. Bulgaria would be a defeated country and could not fulfill its national dreams, whereas the new Yugoslavia would be a victorious federal state in which the Slavomacedonians were recognised as an equal nation with the other nations and would have their own state. This solution seemed to be attractive and many who had served the Bulgarian authorities joined the partisans. The main purpose of the "Macedonia policy" was to differentiate the Slavomacedonians from the Bulgarians and to eradicate both Bulgarian and Serbian influence. The task was difficult, because the Bulgarian consciousness was relatively highly developed in considerable segments of population. The Yugoslav authorities broke up all the Bulgarian organisations that were opposed to the notion of Macedonianism on an antibulgarian basis. Statehood, a standard language, a church and national historiography were basic ingredients for the politics of mutation. Official historiography and social sciences in general were systematically employed in a nation-building effort, which, however, flagrantly infringed upon the historical legacy and cultural identity of neighbouring nations. Despite the means that had been used, the political results of the Macedonian experiment are undeniable. Through a forcible educational policy, Skopje's authorities managed to create a new identity, which does not want to be Bulgarian, Serbian or Greek. Greek hard position on the name issue (no use of the terms Macedonia and Macedonians, including derivatives and composite names) was interpreted in Skopje as a challenge to the Slavomacedonian identity. Greece had no alternative solution regarding the identity of FYROM's Slav inhabitants to suggest. For the successful experiment of the "macedonisation" see St. Troebst, "Yugoslav Macedonia, 1944-1953: Building the Party, the State and the Nation", in: **Berliner Jahrbuch fur osteuropaische Geschichte** 2, 1994, pp. 103-139.

5. See Th. Veremis, Th. Kouloubis, **Elliniki Exoteriki Politiki. Dilimmata mias neas epochis**, Athens, 1997, pp.39-40.

6. Pangalos' visit to Skopje coincided with the crisis in Albania and its possible spillover into FYROM. Pangalos came out for the territorial integrity of FYROM and supported its steps towards the European integration. See, "Albanija gi zblizi Skopje i Atina !", **Nova Makedonija**, 20.3.1997.

7. See "Spogodbata so EU ne znaci protekcionizam za Makedonija", **Nova Makedonija**, 5.5.1997.

8. See "Ratifikacija na Spogodbata za soraboka so Makedonija", **Nova Makedonija**, 2.10.1997.

9. See "Evro-makedonskata spogodba stapuva vo sila", **Nova Makedonija**, 1,2,3,4.1.1998.
10. Despite the fact that a lot of countries have recognised Skopje under the name "Republic of Macedonia", President Gligorov comes up with difficulties not only in the international sphere, but also in the bilateral inter-state relations. It was made clear during his visit to Poland, where the Polish government insisted on Gligorov signing the relevant agreements under the name "FYROM". See "Potvrda na prijatelstvoto, dogovorite nepotpisani", **Nova Makedonija**, 30.10.1997.
11. The elections in October-November 1998 were held in a quiet atmosphere. The victory of the Coalition VMRO-DPMNE-Democratic Alternative (62 seats) was due mainly to economic reasons. Besides, VMRO possesses well-trained cadres, characterised by party discipline. American involvement in FYROM has a catalytic influence on framing the foreign policy of the new government. The leader of Democratic Alternative, V. Tupurkovski, is believed to promote American interests and to balance any "extreme" tendencies, emanating from the circles of VMRO. He will run for the Presidency in October 1999.
12. See "Zusammenarbeit mit Makedonien", **Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung**, 10.4.1997.
13. See "Deutschland sagt Mazedonien Unterstützung zu", **Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung**, 12.4.1997.
14. See "Makedonija moze da smeta na germanskata podrška", **Nova Makedonija**, 17.10.1997.
15. See "Makedonija ceka americkanski kapital", **Nova Makedonija**, 18.6.1998.
16. See "Anan preporacuva namaluvanje na UNPREDEP", **Nova Makedonija**, 16,17.8.1998.
17. See "Intenziviranje na meguarmiskata sorabotka Vashington-Skopje", **Nova Makedonija**, 27.8.1997.
18. For this and other Albanian terrorist organisations in Kosovo see Stephan Lipsius "Untergrundorganisationen im Kosovo. Ein Überblick", **Sudosteuropa**, 1/2, 1998, pp.75-82.
19. See "Kosovo pred eksplozija", **Sega**, 5-11.2.1998.
20. See "Makedonskata politika ima poddrška ot Vasigton", **Nova Makedonija**, 1.8.1998.

21. See **Makedonia** (Greek newspaper), 23.7.1998.
22. See "Demonstracija na silite za mir", **Nova Makedonija**, 12,13.9.1998.
23. This was the main matter, discussed by Georgievski and Solana (early December 1998) in Brussels. See "Nova sorabotka megu NATO i Makedonija", **Nova Makedonija**, 8.12.1998. For this concession, which caused strong reactions in Belgrade, FYROM got American military aid.
24. See M. Vichou "Oi Scheseis Elladas-FYROM", in: **I Ellada kai o Kosmos 1996-97**, ELIAMEP, Athens 1997, pp. 92-94. According to the head of the Greek Liaison Office in Skopje, Alexandros Mallias, the commercial trade between Greece and FYROM surpassed the \$250-million mark in 1998.
25. See "Zaednicki interes za stabilnost vo regionot", **Nova Makedonija**, 27.4.1998.
26. See, "Multinacionalna brigada ke go cuva mirot na Balkanot", **Nova Makedonia**, 28.9.1998.
27. Striving to appease the "Aegean lobby", the new Foreign Minister Alelksandar Dimitrov (from the Party of the Democratic Alternative) raised such questions during Pangalos visit to Skopje on 22 December 1998. Pangalos denied the existence of "Macedonian minority" in Greece according to the terms of the International Law and branded "The Rainbow" as a conglomeration of "Slavomacedonians, stalinists and homosexuals". For the reactions in Skopje see "Pangalos: Vo Grcija nema makedonsko malcinstvo", **Nova Macedonia**, 23.12.1998, "Ostri reakcii na izjavata na Pangalos", **Nova Macedonia**, 24.12.1998. Pangalos statements did not affect the bilateral relations.
28. Vasil Tupurkovski, who is heading an "Agency for Development and Revival", during an unofficial visit to Thessaloniki in December 1998 sounded out the Greek side on this issue and found the freight to expensive.
29. See, **Makedonia** (Greek newspaper), 24.6.1998.
30. *Ibid.*
31. See "Zaednicki protiv organiraniot kriminal", **NovaMakedonia**, 10.7.1998.
32. See **Yugoslav Daily Survey**. Selected and Published by the Press and Information Department of the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 8.4.1996.

33. See "Normalizacija odnosa sa Makedonijom. Najzad, nesto prirodno", **Nin**, 12.4.1996.
34. See "Jugoslovensko-makedonski odnosi. Mala, lepa, okretna", **Nin**, 6.9.1996.
35. See "Završi dvodnevna poseta na makedonskiot premier Branko Crvenkovski na SR Jugoslavija", **Nova Makedonija**, 4.7.1997.
36. See **Yugoslav Daily Survey**, 3.7.1997.
37. See "Makedonsko-Jugoslovensko raganicuvanje-Igra na zborovi i nervi", **Nova Makedonija**, 27, 28.9.1997. The demarcation of the borders between the two countries came up after the termination of the Second World War, but the borders were administrative within the Yugoslav federation. After 1945 Belgrade incorporated Kacanik, Presevo, Bujanovac and Trgoviste. The Serbian monastery Prohor Pciniski, where the Anti-Fascist Council of the National Liberation of Macedonia announced on 2 August 1944 the establishment of the People's Republic of Macedonia, was also awarded to Serbia. Nowadays this monastery, which has a historical and political significance for FYROM, is claimed by the Slavomacedonian side, but the Serbs are unyielding. Further Serbian claims were rejected by the Yugoslav federal commissions, which were set up in 1947 to settle the controversial questions between the federal units.
38. See "Granicniot spor megu Makedonija i SPJ moze brzo da bide resen", **Nova Makedonija**, 27.11.97.
39. See S. Terzic, "The Serbs and the Macedonian Question", in: **The Serbian Question in the Balkans, Geographical and Historical Aspects**, Faculty of Geography, University of Belgrade, 1995, p. 75.
40. See I. Katardziev, **Sosedite i Makedonija, Vcera, Denes, Utre, Skopje 1998**, p. 53-55. Katardziev assails Dobrica Cosic, but without persuasive arguments.
41. See "Gripozna diplomacija. Milosevic u nevoljama", **Nin**, 2.5.1997. After the withdrawal of the Yugoslav army from FYROM in 1992 Gligorov had supposed that Milosevic was aiming to destabilise FYROM. According to him, Milosevic expected that the Albanians would rise up and so Skopje's authorities had to call on the Serbs for help since they were exploiting FYROM's weakness, and could thus incorporate it into Yugoslavia. See Gligorov interview with Viktor Meier (Oktober 1994) as quoted by V. Meier, **Wie Jugoslawien verspielt wurde**, Munchen 1996, p. 342.



42. VMRO is strongly against this option. The marginal position of Montenegro in the Federation and the rift between Belgrade and Podgorica make Skopje more cautious.

43. See "Makedonia: Sledvastato potencialno ogniste", **Sega**, 16-22.7.1998.

44. For the relationship with the Communist International-Macedonian Question see Sfetas, "The Macedonian Question as viewed by the Comintern between the Wars", in: **Balkan Currents. Studies in the History, Culture and Society of a Divided Land**, edited by Lawrence A. Tritle. The Basil P. Calogeras Center for Modern Greek Studies, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, California 1998, pp. 95-118.

45. About this Plenum see A. Parvanov, "Aprilskata politika na BKP po makedonski vapros i dr. Todor Zivkov", in: **Balgarskata Narodnost i Nacija prez Vekovete. Material OT Nuance Konferencija, Cast Vtora**, Institut po Istorija na BKP pri CK na BKP, Sofija 1988, pp. 320-325. According to Zivkov, the Plenum was held without Chruscov's knowledge and approval. See T. Zivkov, **Memoari**, Sofija 1997, p 455.

46. T. Zivkov, *op.cit.*, p. 456.

47. "Ezikovijat reket", **Sega**, broj18, 15-21 Mai 1997.

48. See "Makite na rektorot od Trnovo", **Nova Makedonija**, 21.10.1997.

49. See "Kliment Ohridski, Pejcinovik, Miladinovci... ne se makedonska literatura!", **Nova Makedonija**, 22.10.1997. For the promotion of this book in Sofia see "Razbiti iljuzii. Makedonskite avtori sa prosto Balgari", **Duma**, 25.9.1998. It should not be forgotten that Russia decided to recognise Skopje under Bulgarian prodding and on Bulgarian soil. In a Press Conference in Sofia on 3 August 1992 Yeltsin expressed himself as follows: "We call on the European Union to stand up for Macedonia and to recognise it. We are going to rest on the Bulgarian position regarding Macedonia and to uphold it. Should Macedonia be recognised, it would be shed much less blood. Macedonia should decide by itself, how it will be named." See **Makedonija. Put k Samostojatel nosti**. Dokumenti. Moskva 1997, p. 417.

50. Georgievski's following statements point to the umbilical cord connecting Macedonians and Bulgarians. "Why are we ashamed to admit, and attempt to evade the fact, that what we deem the

most positive aspect of the Macedonian revolutionary tradition grew from the Exarchist (Bulgarian) part of the Macedonian people! I would not be revealing anything new if I remind you of the fact that Gotse Delchev and Dame Gruev and Pere Toshev and Giorche Petrov -must I continue to mention all of them- were Exarchist teachers in Macedonia, paid by and carrying out its educational program. I am not revealing any secret if I say that our Ilinden heroes and the mass of the revolutionary organisation was recruited only from the Exarchist part of the Macedonian people...". See L.Georgievski, "If Cotse Delchev was alive in 1945, he would have finished up in Idrizovo", Macedono-Bulgarian Review "**Vardar**", 5, 1996, pp. 21. This journal is published by the Bulgarian Discussion Club of Torodo. Despite this historical background, in no case is Georgievski ready to deny the existence of a Slavomacedonian identity as a living reality nowadays. Krasimir Karakacjanov, the leader of the Bulgarian VMRO and Deputy in the Bulgarian Parliament, accused Georgievski of inconsistency. Late August 1997 the Executive Committee of VMRO was forced by L. Georgievski to resign, having been charged with corruption and alleged probulgarian attitude. See "Rakovodstovoto se deli na makedonisti i bugaromani", **Nova Makedonija**, 2.9.1997. Those who identify themselves as Bulgarians in FYROM are a negligible quantity.

51. The letter is published in the institute's Journal **Makedonski Pregled** 4, pp.11-16, 1997.

52. About the Bulgarian national doctrine, see the articles "Trjabva da preodoleem krisata na balgarskija nacionalizam", "Istoriceski romantizam ni e nuzen i dnes" in the Bulgarian newspaper **Makedonija**, 7.1.1998. The following article is also interesting "Neobchodima ili izlisna e Nacionalna doctrina na Balgarija", **Makedonija**, 21.1.1998.

53. Despite its difficult financial situation, Bulgarian opened a cultural centre in Caribrod (Serbia) to demonstrate its interest for the western outlands, where a Bulgarian minority has been living since 1920. Belgrade accused Sofia of state chauvinism, see "Bugarija obvineta za drzaven sovinitam", **Nova Makedonija**, 10.2.1998.

54. See the interview of Bulgaria's Defence Minister G. Ananiev "Njama da zavladjavame sasedite si", **Casa** (a Bulgarian weekly newspaper), 23-29.1.1998.

55. See, for example, the article "Bulgaria ad se seabed OT dal-bokija zimen san", **Makedonija**, 10.6.1998. Being aware of the potential danger that the Greek penetration into Skopje and the stagnation in the relationship between Sofia and Skopje imply for Bulgarian long-term goals towards FYROM, Bulgarian political analysts stress the need to stop regarding history as a hindrance for the development of bilateral relations and for the resolution of the language problem through negotiations. See the article, written by a group of specialists (A. Lilov, I. Ganev, L. Petrov and D. Dimitrov), "Neophodima e nova politika v otnosenijata mezdur Republika Bulgarian i Republika Makedonia", **Mezdunarodni Otnosenija**, 3, 1998, pp. 67-68.

56. R. Holbrook, the U.S. ambassador-designate to the UN, hinting about Bulgarian aspirations towards Skopje, said that Sofia would not miss the opportunity to grab a piece of "Macedonia", should this state collapse in the aftermath of the Kosovo crisis. For the Bulgarian reactions see "Holbruk i romantika", **Sega**, 4-10.6.1998.

57. For the text see "Zaednicka Declaracija", **Nova Makedonija**, 25.2.1999.

58. See the statements of the Leader of the Bulgarian VMRO, Krasimir Karackacjanov, "Priznavame constitucijata na Makedonija, a ne ezika", **Makedonija**, 17.2.1999.

59. For a historical approach to the subject from 1918 to 1995, see, Sp. Sfetas, K. Kentrotis, **Oi Albanoi ton Skopion. Themata ethnotikis siniparxis**, Institute for Balkan Studies, Thessaloniki 1995.

60. See E. Meta, "The Albanian-Macedonian relations and the Albanians", in: **The Balkan Analyst Quarterly Revue of the Institute of International and Strategic Studies**, Tirana, 1-2, 1977, pp. 27-32. The author qualified FYROM's admission to CSCE and to the Council of Europe as undeserved, due to its failure to meet the Albanian demands.

61. See "Pocna strajkot so glad", **Nova Makedonija**, 5.3.1997.

62. See "Se bara javna upotreba na albanskoto zname", **Nova Makedonija**, 20.6.1997.

63. See "Izborot na znaminjata sloboden-upotrebata ogranicena", **Nova Makedonija**, 11.6.1997.

64. See "Simnati albanskite znaminja vo Gostivar i Tetovo", **Nova Makedonija**, 10.7.1997.

65. See "Makedonskata ulicna vojna", **Sega**, 24-30.7.1997.
66. *Ibid.*
67. See "Intervju na Kiro Gligorov za Belgradeska Ekonomska Politika", **Nova Makedonija**, 27.8.1997.
68. See "Kaznata na Rufi Osmani namalena na 7 godini", **Nova Makedonija**, 20.2.1998 and "Za Demiri i Bedzeti dve i pol godini zatvor", **Nova Makedonija**, 5.3.1998. Before going to prison, Demiri expressed himself in a interview with the newspaper **Fokus** as follows: "Macedonia cannot be a unitarian state... We cannot allow that Macedonia becomes an exclusively Macedonian state because we have been living here as well. If no political solution is to be found, all other options are possible, quoted in "Makedonija vo sveto", 3-16.7.1998.
69. See "Anketata komisija za Gostivar gi podeli pratenicite", **Nova Makedonija**, 26.3.1998.
70. See "Makedonskata armija vo sostojba na borbena gotovnost", **Nova Makedonija**, 5.3.1997.
71. See "Makedonija treba da bide i albanska drzava!", **Nova Makedonija**, 7.7.1997.
72. See "Solidarnost so 'OVK' i 'Kosovo Republika'", **Nova Makedonija**, 7, 8.3.1998.
73. See "Protesten miting na PDPA i NDP vo Gostivar", **Nova Makedonija**, 17.4.1998.
74. See "Miting na Albancite na gradskiot plostad vo Skopje", **Nova Makedonija**, 11.6.1998.
75. However, Gligorov is reluctant to allow to NATO unconditionally to make use of Krivolak for possible airstrikes against the Serbs. See, "Skoplje odbilo zahtev NATO", **Nasa Borba**, 25.6.1998.
76. See "Richard Holbruk vo Skopje. Makedonija ne e del od Kosovskiot problem", **Nova Makedonija**, 24.6.1998.
77. See "Po eksloziite vo Kumanovo i Prilep. Delo na domasni radikalni grupi ili na OAK?", **Nova Makedonija**, 9.1.1998.
78. See "Albanskijot Premier, Fatos Nano vo Makedonija. Golem pottik za megusosedskata sorabotka", **Nova Makedonija**, 16.1.1998 and "Sredba Crvenkovski-Nano vo Ochrid. Makedonija i Albanija pobliski uste za eden cekor", **Nova Makedonija**,

23.2.1998. On January 22, 1999 Georgievski paid an official visit to Tirana, where he discussed mainly economic issues with the Albanian government. Maj. and Georgievski agreed that current relations between Spoke and Tirana are an example of how new relationships can be built in the new Balkans.

79. See "Intervju Arben Dzaferi, Lider na PDPA-NDP. Nema stabilnost bez razresuvanje na etnickiot jazol", **Nova Makedonija**, 15.5.1998.

80. See "Intervju na Ljupco Georgievski, Lider na VMRO-DPMNE. Tri uslovi za predizborna koaliciona", **Nova Makedonija**, 8.5.1998.

81. During an interview with Reuters, Arben Xhaferi expressed himself as follows: "We are asking for progress on rights, in matters of education, language and employment, not making a plea for Greater Albania. If we do not have step-by-step progress we could face the same situation as in Kosovo. I will begin to lose my credibility and my function in society, just like Rugova has. The expectations of the ethnic Albanians in Macedonia are so high, so long denied, that we cannot manipulate them. We accept living in Macedonia and cultivating our rights with this state, but there must be progress". Commenting on Dzaferis' statements, a Slavomacedonian deputy, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, gave the following replay: "Xzaferi is very clever with his demands. He denies any interest in Greater Albania. We are obliged to wonder if this is not a game to begin to undermine the state. Ask Macedonians if they trust the ethnic Albanians, if they think they are loyal to our state, and most will say no", as quoted in "Kosovo crisis shadows Macedonia's ethnic Albanians", **Australian Macedonian Weekly**, 22.12.98.

82. Prior to his visit to Athens, Handziski in an interview with the Greek newspaper **To Vima** did not exclude the possibility of a double or triple denomination and for the first time a politician from Skopje stressed the historical bonds of Macedonia with the Greek world. See **To Vima**, 21.6.1998. Pangalos and Handziski agreed on the continuation of the procedure embarked by the United Nations.