Greece and the Balkans since 1974

Dimitrios Triantaphyllou*

RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur retrace l'histoire et l'évolution des relations entre la Grèce et ses voisins, les Balkans. L'article indique aussi jusqu'à quel point la politique domestique de la Grèce se trouvait influencée par ses relations extérieures. M. Triantaphyllou souligne les efforts des hommes politiques grecs et démontre les enjeux de la guerre dans l'ancienne Yougoslavie et de la "Question de la Macédoine"/Skopje.

ABSTRACT

The author traces the history and development of Greek relations with the Balkans. The article shows how much Greek domestic politics were influenced by the country's external affairs. The author points out the efforts of Greek politicians and shows the significance of war in the former Yugoslavia and the Macedonian Question.

The advent of democracy in Greece in 1974 after seven dark years of military rule coincided somewhat with the détente in East-West relations. In an attempt both to secure Greece's northern borders and to defer some of the focus away from Cyprus, former Prime Minister Constantine Karamanlis took advantage of the changing political environment by visiting Bucharest, Belgrade and Sofia within a two-month span in 1975. Greece's version of Ostpolitik was thus well underway.

Encouraged by developments during the July Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) meeting in Helsinki, Karamanlis put into place a multilateral Balkan policy by securing an inter-Balkan meeting at the level of Deputy Ministers of Coordination and Planning.[1] Greece was in search of multilateralism in the Balkans much as it was in the past (the Balkan Pact of 1934 comes to mind). The basic difference from previous multilateral approaches is that the initiative Karamanlis launched in 1975 was not addressed against any particular state in the area,[2] although it clearly aimed to assure that Greece would not face a threat on its northern border as it faced in the east from Turkey. The 1974 invasion of Cyprus necessitated the restructuring of Greek security considerations leading to an instinctive deemphasis and at times even indifference towards developments within the Warsaw Pact.[3] The Papandreou government followed Karamanlis' policy in the conviction that Greece's northern

* Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)

neighbors had ceased to have designs on Greek territory. A stable north implied reduced possibilities of multi-front conflicts and made it easier to address the threat from the East.[4]

Rapprochement with Albania was underway since 1971 with the establishment of diplomatic relations (though the state of war between the two states would be in effect until 1987). The principal thorn in Greece's Balkan relations was the 'Macedonian Question' which survived the interwar years to the post-Cold war period. As long as Yugoslavia remained a single entity and the Socialist Republic of Macedonia (SRM) a part of it, the issue was left dormant for the sake of stability.

Once in place, Karamanlis' multilateral diplomacy in the Balkans led to the inter-Balkan conference of Deputy Ministers of Planning in Athens in January-February 1976. All Balkan states, except for Albania, participated in a discussion that centered around themes of "low" politics.[5] This conference clearly brought out the cleavages that existed between and among Balkan states at the time. Albania remained opposed to multilateral arrangements until 1988; Enver Hoxha's regime preferred to retain its isolationist position. Yet among participating states at the 1976 meeting (Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Romania, and Greece), there were deep divisions. This was especially evident with regard to the positions of Bulgaria and the other participating countries. As the Balkan state most closely affiliated with the Soviet Union, Bulgaria found itself at odds with the other communist states in the area and attempted to reduce the importance and content of Karamanlis' initiative. Its position reflected "Soviet fears that an institutionalized Balkan cooperation could affect the cohesion of the Warsaw Pact."[6] Karamanlis refused to be dissuaded. A conference of experts on telecommunications and transportation took place in Ankara on 26-29 November 1979 coinciding with a more positive attitude toward such meetings by Bulgaria. Although it was evident that political questions could not be addressed directly, Karamanlis sought to approach political cooperation indirectly, "through confidence building in non-political fields."[7] He continued to play an active role in the multilateral dimension of Greece's Balkan policy even after his accession to the presidency in 1980. Sofia was the venue of the next conference between 15-19 June 1981 while a fourth and fifth took place in Bucharest (7-12 June 1982) and Belgrade (19-23 June) respectively. As shown above, the advent of PASOK in 1981 did not produce significant changes in Greece's Balkan Policy as adopted by Karamanlis. Once Andreas Papandreou saw the virtues of his predecessor's multilateral diplomacy opted for the development of close relations with all of Greece's northern neighbors. A new dimension in Greece's thinking was its accession to the European Union as a full member in January 1981. Thus, Greece sought

simultaneously to develop a European orientation to its Balkan policy. With regard to its northern neighbors, the cornerstone of PASOK's policy in the Balkans was the development of a "special relationship" with Bulgaria. Despite their different economic, social, and political systems and the divide of belonging to adversarial blocs, Greece and Bulgaria shared concerns "over the Turkish threat as well as over occasional "Macedonian" propaganda".[8] Papandreou attempted to introduce "high politics" and security to inter-Balkan cooperation by developing along with Todor Zhivkov of Bulgaria and Nikolai Ceausescu a Balkan nuclear weapon free zone at the cost of a loss of prestige among its NATO allies while enhancing Greece's status with the Warsaw Pact members. The nuclear weapon free zone concept was finally shelved in 1984.[9]

Conventional wisdom suggests that PASOK's Balkan policy, both at the multilateral and bilateral level, had more elements of continuity than innovation from the policy inherited from New Democracy. Yet despite this continuity, during the PASOK era, the first Conference of Balkan Foreign Ministers took place in Belgrade in March 1988. Thanos Veremis correctly assesses that 1988 would have been a watershed year for Balkan multilateralism "if the protagonists of the Belgrade meeting could have foreseen the cataclysmic developments in Eastern Europe that were only a year away."[10] It must be noted that Albania participated for the first time in the process.

Despite the political importance of the Conference with the ecumenical participation of all Balkan Foreign Ministers, progress was only made in the fields of education, communications, environment, commerce, and culture. After careful preparations, the Second Balkan Foreign Ministers Conference took place in Tirana on 24-25 October 1990.[11] Despite proposals by Greece and Bulgaria for the establishment of a permanent Balkan Secretariat designed to act as a referee to ethnic and territorial disputes which had "bedeviled relations in Southeastern Europe," the Yugoslav Wars froze all multilateral efforts in the region until 1995.[12] The last opportunity for constructive multilateralism had been lost. It should also be noted that the security challenges and threat perceptions had changed. Instead of external threats posed by ideological or military blocs, the new threats came from within the states in the form of ethnic fragmentation as Yugoslavia was to discover.[13] By 1990, the new circumstances imposed by the fall of communism radically altered the basic premises of Greece's traditional Balkan policy. According to Yannis Valinakis, four major factors of change have influenced Greek policy since. These include the strategic re-orientation of Bulgaria; the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the prospect of border revisions; Turkey's Balkan activism; and regional political and economic instability.[14]

Bulgaria with a new centre-right government sought to find a *modus vivendi* with Turkey as the survival of the new government depended on a party dominated by ethnic Turks. The disintegration of Yugoslavia brought to the forefront the 'Macedonian question' which would dominate Greece's Balkan diplomacy between 1991 and March 1995. The end of the Cold War also affected the dynamics of the Greek-Turkish antagonism for influence in the Balkans as Turkey embarked on a systematic process of concluding various agreements with Bulgaria, FYROM, and Albania raising Greek fears that an "Islamic" arc was being formed along its northern and eastern borders.[15]

These developments put multilateralism on ice and Greece began to view the Balkans through the prism of bilateralism. Bulgaria's re-orientation brought about a controversial decision from Greece's point of view when the UDF government recognized the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) as an independent state with the name "Macedonia." The disintegration of Yugoslavia also contributed to the Greek concerns about the Macedonian question which would hold Greek diplomacy captive for over five years. This issue would isolate Greece from its Balkan neighbors and lead to the decline of its credibility *vis-à-vis* its European Union partners.[16] Although the details of the Greek-FYROM differences lie outside the purview of this article[17], the aftereffects do not. The positive Greek diplomatic efforts in the Balkans during that particular time frame went almost unnoticed. These included the establishment of Greek businessmen in most Balkan capitals and the opening of Greece's borders to some half a million "economic refugees and illegal migrant workers from the former communist states" who supported the economies of their countries of origin by providing remittances back home.[18] Greece, which had been ideally suited to play a stabilizing factor in the Post-Cold War era, had found itself marginalized. The signing of the Interim Agreement with FYROM in September 1995 coupled with the Bosnian Settlement, otherwise known as the Dayton Accords, of November 1995 and the normalization of relations with Albania allowed for the gradual re-establishment of multilateral diplomacy in the Balkans. Although Karamanlis was basically motivated by political considerations in his search for multilateralism in the Balkans, European Union membership in 1981 and the emergence of post-communist democracies at the beginning of the 1990s coupled with the Wars of Yugoslav Successions shifted the focus for Greece to the politico-economic dimension. That is to say that Balkan multilateralism as pursued by the Mitsotakis government in the early 1990s, and later by Papandreou upon his return to power, and now by Costas Simitis, has increasingly stressed the need for economic cooperation. According to a recent Ministry of Foreign Affairs publication:

A new era of collaboration and of mutually beneficial economic relations among Balkan countries has opened up since the transition of most of these countries to market economies. For Greece in particular, it has facilitated the re-establishment of historical economic and trade relations with these countries which had experienced significant shrinkage in relative terms during the post-war period.[19]

Within the aforementioned context, the current government has specifically defined its Balkan policy since 1996. The crux of its policy is to assure peace in the Balkans "within today's established borders and constitutional realities" by putting to use Greece's "capacity as a member of the European Union, NATO, the Council of Europe, Western European Union and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as her excellent relations with her Balkan neighbors."[20] The specific objectives of Greece's current diplomatic activity in the Balkans are:

– A conference of the Balkan states aiming at the adoption of a regional Agreement that will safeguard the respect of borders, will encourage good neighborliness and cooperation and will promote the protection of human rights in general and of minorities in particular.

– The steady improvement of bilateral relations of Greece with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) on the basis of the Interim Accord of New York, placing emphasis on the concrete definition and implementation of its provisions of economic and financial nature.

– The consideration of expanding NATO's Scheme for Partnership which has not been incorporated.

– The further improvement of relations with Albania.[21]

In the economic sphere, the Simitis government has stressed four priorities for action aimed at enhancing the prospects for economic development in the region including investment in value-adding activities; fostering human resources; creating a stable macroeconomic environment; and integrating the region with the European Union by creating the energy, transport, and telecommunication infrastructure of the Trans-European networks.[22] In the trade sector, Greek exports to the countries of the Balkans increased from some 300 million USD in 1989-1990 to 800 million USD in 1994 while Greek foreign direct investment in the Balkan states grew significantly in the fields of trade, services, finance, and manufacturing.[23] The problem for the Simitis government, like previous governments, is to find a balance between stability and instability. As Theodore Couloumbis has so aptly put it, "Greece belongs institutionally to the pole of stability but, unlike its remaining partners, it borders on a region of fluidity and real or potential conflict north and east of its frontiers."[24] The telling economic (and, to a certain extent, political) divergences between the northern and southern post-communist tiers in

Europe significantly affect the region's stability. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, "the Balkans has experienced larger falls in output, have been less successful in controlling inflation and have incurred greater social and demographic costs during the transition. The discrepancy between the two regions in the post-1989 drop in output has been dramatic, even when allowance is made for the impact of the wars in former Yugoslavia."[25] A second issue confronting Greek policy in the Balkans is European Union policy which has been one of bilateral rather than multilateral approach. The absence of EU multilateralism in the Balkans has made it the stalking ground of individual EU member states, thus complicating Greece's approach.

Despite these particular problems, Greece might be able to assume a leadership role with regard the European Union's policy for the Balkans. This is especially true with regard the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) which should aim at upholding the values constituting the essence of European integration. The asymmetrical geographical relationship between Greece and its European partners *vis-à-vis* the Balkans allows Greece to pursue the aforementioned ends. The European Union's attractiveness and influence in the Balkans after the fall of Communism stems from the hope that, at some future date, it will open its gates to the countries of the region. The European Union's lack of clearly defined objectives and the requisite instruments to deal effectively with the Yugoslav and other crises does not imply that Bulgaria, Rumania, the Yugoslav Successor states, and Albania do not preserve the hope for future integration into the Union.[26] The promise of EU membership gives the ruling elites a clear sense of direction and purpose thereby creating a tremendous driving force for change. From the politico-economic standpoint, Greece is, in many ways, bearing the burden of the European Union's limited efforts to date in the Balkans. The EU's presence, to date, has been limited to the Royaumont Initiative for Good Neighbourly Relations and Stability in Southeastern Europe with the aim of restoring dialogue, preventing tensions and crises as well as establishing permanent good neighborly relations among all states in the region. The ambivalence of the European Union's attitude towards the Balkans has deprived the ruling élites of the sense of purpose and direction of their counterparts in East-Central Europe. This is also the case for Rumania and Bulgaria which are on a faster track of EU membership as signatories of associate agreements than the rest of the states in the Balkans. The Yugoslav crisis seems to have dominated the debate in Brussels and elsewhere in the West by concentrating on the pros and cons of direct intervention thereby allowing various European states to focus on bilateral ties with area states in an effort to accommodate their patron-client predispositions. It could

well be that, with hindsight, "the most fateful event was the brush-off delivered in 1989/90 by Brussels to the Yugoslav federal government, which under the reformist prime minister of the time, Ante Markovic, sought to buttress a bold reform program (akin to Poland's shock therapy) with Western aid and, especially, EU Associate status."[27]

Although it seemed towards the end of 1995 that the Balkans would take a turn for the better, with the Dayton Accords in place, the cease-fire in Bosnia upheld, the UN sanctions against Serbia-Montenegro suspended, and the Interim Agreement between Greece and FYROM signed, illusions were shattered as political and economic instability in Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia took hold. Despite these odds, the process of multilateral diplomacy took hold anew with the Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Countries of Southeastern Europe in Sofia in 1996 leading to a follow up meeting in Thessaloniki in June 1997. The Thessaloniki Conference had brought "high" politics to the agenda for good by focusing on enhancing stability, security and good neighborliness, developing multilateral regional economic cooperation, proposing measures to stimulate trade and investment and accelerating the development of infrastructure in transport, telecommunication and energy sectors. It was also the stepping stone to the First Summit of the Leaders of the Countries of Southeastern Europe which was held in Crete on 2-4 October 1997. This Summit had finally brought Karamanlis' and later Papandreou's Balkan policies full circle after 23 years. In Crete, the heads of state of Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, FYROM, Albania, Rumania, and Yugoslavia gathered in an attempt to institutionalize this sort of meeting and to establish a Permanent Secretariat which would propel further multilateralism in the Balkans.

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

	GDP (1989=100)		GDP growth (%)		Inflation end-period (%)	
	1996	1995	1996	1997	1995	1996
East-Central Eu.	**95,2**	**5,5**	**4,6**	**4,6**	**14,8**	**12,3**
Hungary	86,0	1,5	0	3	28,3	19,8
Poland	104,5	7	6	5,3	21,9	18,5
Czech Republic	85,9	4,8	4,1	4	7,8	8,6
Slovakia	89,9	7,4	6,5	4,8	7,2	5,4
Slovenia	96,3	3,9	3,5	4,2	8,6	9
Balkans	**73**	**5,2**	**1,5**	**1,6**	**33,3**	**74,6**
Albania	82,1	8,6	5	0	6	17,4
Bulgaria	67,4	2,6	-10	-3	32,9	310,8
Rumania	88,1	7,1	4,1	2	27,8	56,9
Croatia	69,2	1,8	4,5	5	3,7	3,5
FYROM	59,1	-2	2	4	9,1	0,3
Yugoslavia	51,2	6	5,8	3	120,2	58,7

	Exports per head ($) 1996	Cumulative FDI ($m) 1990-95	FDI stock $ per head end-1995
East-Central Eu.	**2 000**	**25 312**	381
Hungary	1 335	11 190	1 094
Poland	647	7 148	185
Czech Republic	2 135	5 692	551
Slovakia	1 591	783	146
Slovenia	4 289	499	251
Balkans	**434**	**1 796**	35
Albania	78	200	63
Bulgaria	532	353	42
Rumania	335	954	42
Croatia	1 042	251	53
FYROM	459	38	18
Yugoslavia	161	n/a	n/a

Sources: national statistics; EIU estimates and forecasts in The Economist Intelligence Unit, Economies in Transition, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union: Regional Overview, 1st quarter 1997, p 11

While the crux of Greece's Balkan Diplomacy since 1974 focused on multilateralism, there was a simultaneous development of bilateral relations with her Balkan neighbors. These relations were not always smooth yet their cultivation on the part of successive Greek governments was instrumental in strengthening the multilateral dimension of its foreign policy.

Greek-Albanian Relations

The 1971 agreement though did not guarantee as significant benefits for the Greek minority in Albania as the September 1975 Albanian Edict, was to prove. It called on all Greeks in Albania to change their Greek and Christian names to Albanian ones inspired by the ancient Illyrian traditions. Yet the relative lack of reaction from the Greek side demonstrates a willingness to emphasize stability (as in stable borders) within the overall framework of its Balkan multilateral policy. PASOK's rise to power in 1981 did not imply significant changes in Greek-Albanian relations. In fact, the presence of a left-wing government in Greece implied better cooperation and understanding with Enver Hoxha's orthodox Communist regime. Despite the worsening of the status and conditions of the Greek minority due to the pogroms implemented by Hoxha's regime, PASOK pursued, in general terms, the policy of goodwill of the previous government toward Albania. This led to the lifting of the state of war between the two states on 28 August 1987 despite massive negative reaction from opposition parties both on the right and left of the political spectrum.[28]

Though Albania steadfastly refused to participate in any multilateral initiatives in the Balkans, excluding itself from such meetings until 1988, successive Greek governments reiterated the need for a stable relationship with Albania. Albania was not the focus of Greece's multilateral diplomacy, its self-imposed isolation basically neutralized it. Yet, for Greece, the normalization of relations with Albania implied a security that irredendist claims on the part of a powerful segment of Greek society - which demanded undue attention on the rights of persecuted Greeks of Albania - would be offset. Greece's preoccupation, in fact, made it a non participant in a number of international fora such as the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) which, in 1988, passed resolutions condemning Albania for its various human rights violations.[29] The fall of Communism in central and Eastern Europe since 1989 brought relations between Greece and Albania to a new era which also coincided with a new centre-right government in Greece. Within two years, the new Greek premier Constantine Mitsotakis visited Tirana twice; his Foreign Minister, Antonis Samaras, once. Samaras attempted to upgrade Greece's interest in the Greek minority there and made it a point to stress that during his visit to Albania in October 1990 to participate in the Second Balkan Foreign Ministers Conference.[30]

Greek-Albanian relations soured significantly with the coming to power in Albania of Sali Berisha and his Democratic Party at the time of PASOK's return to power in 1993. A border incident and the persecution of Greek minority leaders in early 1994 led to the deterioration of bilateral relations between the two countries as Greece perceived these events to be a witchhunt perpetrated by the Berisha regime, which sought to find political scapegoats in order to assure its political survival.[31]

Relations have again taken a turn for the better with the victory of the Socialist Party under the leadership of Fatos Nano in the summer of 1997. Albania's dire economic and political straits have led the new government to embark on a policy of conciliation with all its neighbors. In this respect, the Simitis government in Greece has taken the lead both in promising and providing economic assistance to Albania and the technical know-how necessary to rebuild the economy.

Greek-Bulgarian Relations

Though Bulgaria like Albania is considered one of the revisionist states in the Balkans, Greek-Bulgarian bilateral relations have steadily improved since the end of the Second World War. Although for a few years after the war, the two states did not have diplomatic relations and were immersed in the ideological East-West divide, relations began to take a significant turn for the better after 1964. Between 1964 and 1974, relations improved

significantly. For Greece, the worsening situation in Cyprus and its relations with Turkey necessitated a normalization of relations with Bulgaria. It became evident to Bulgaria that staunch entrenchment in the Soviet camp had estranged it from neighboring states. In fact, relations were improved during the Colonels' regime in Greece with the visit of the Bulgarian Foreign Minister to Athens in May 1970.[32] In May 1973, relations were further improved with a Joint Declaration stressing the principles of Good Neighborliness, Mutual Understanding, and cooperation. Mention has already been made of Karamanlis' emphasis on multilateralism which found Bulgaria participating in the process, albeit with reservations. The Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 forced Greece to secure its northern borders and to improve its relations with her Balkan neighbors. In the Bulgarian case, Karamanlis' diplomatic initiatives began to bear fruit because the Turkish invasion was coupled with the worsening of relations between Greece and the United States and Greece and NATO. Sofia thus attempted to exploit the inter NATO divisions and responded favorably to Greek attempts to improve ties, despite the ideological divide.[33] PASOK's victory in 1981, further consolidated the bilateral ties, due to its emphasis on a "special relationship" with Bulgaria and to its rampant anti-Americanism, which struck a positive chord both in Sofia and Moscow. Part of the groundwork for improved Greek-Bulgarian relations had been done by Karamanlis. His visit to Moscow, in 1979, implied a Greek-Soviet rapprochement and, by extension, the green light from Moscow to Sofia for greater participation in Balkan multilateralism. Mention has already been made, earlier, of the perceived Turkish threat to both countries and to the so-called Macedonian issue which found both countries at odds with Belgrade and Skopje. In September 1986, a Greek-Bulgarian Declaration of Good Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation was signed which surpassed qualitatively and substantially the 1973 document. This document paved the way for a number of common initiatives between Papandreou and Zhivkov for a nuclear-free Balkans (February 1988 in Sofia and April 1989 in Haskovo). The fall of Zhivkov and the changes that occurred in Bulgaria in 1990 and 1991 had a drastic impact on its foreign policy. In a marked change from the previous regime, the anti-Communist Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) which came to power with the support of the predominantly Turkish Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) changed its policy toward Turkey. The new government felt that cooperation with Turkey would be to Bulgaria's advantage for a couple of reasons. First, the reduction of tensions between the two states would impact Bulgaria's security positively. It was estimated in 1991 that 70% of Turkey's tanks and 55% of its artillery were stationed near the Bulgarian-Turkish border. Secondly, rapprochement with Turkey would allow Bulgaria to play a leading role in

the Macedonian Question by recognizing the emerging "Macedonian" state and enlisting "Turkish support against a future military challenge from Serbia."[34] Despite the aforementioned developments, Greek-Bulgarian relations have developed smoothly, as the two countries, have signed agreements concerning three new border posts and settled a dispute over the waters of the Nestos River.

Greek-Yugoslav Relations

For Greece, the improvement of relations with Yugoslavia became a principal concern with the return to democracy in 1974. Motivated by the 1974 Cyprus crisis, Greece sought to secure its northern borders; in this context, it especially sought Yugoslavia's help, influenced by that country's leadership role in the non-aligned movement as well as the fact that access to Western Europe went through Belgrade. In fact, Greece and Yugoslavia agreed to free their common border of the concentration of troops and to transfer them to other borders. Greece also offered free trade facilities in Thessaloniki to Yugoslavia providing it with an economic outlet to the Mediterranean.[35]

There were disagreements with regard to Belgrade's support in 1978 of Skopje's demands of the existence of Slavo-Macedonian minorities in Bulgaria and Greece. Yet Belgrade differentiated itself from Skopje in the sense that, while in Skopje, it was felt that the recognition of a 'Macedonian minority' in Greece was a necessary condition for the improvement of Greek-Yugoslav relations; Belgrade thought that cooperation and friendly relations with Greece would bring about positive developments in the Macedonian question.[36] Papandreou's election in 1981, caused apprehension in Belgrade due to PASOK's pre-election calls for withdrawal from NATO as Belgrade felt more secure with a Greece aligned with the West. Overall relations, though, were good since the Greek threats did not materialize and as negotiations for admission to the European Community progressed. Belgrade hoped to reap economic as well as political benefits from Greece's entry into the EEC since its geographical position "was expected to accrue direct and indirect economic benefits."[37]

Thus, until the collapse of communism and the spitting asunder of Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia warmly championed the Cypriot cause due to its leading position in the non-aligned movement to which Cyprus also belonged. On the other hand, Greece maintained a neutral position with regard to Belgrade's periodic crackdown of its Albanian population and in the Yugoslav-Bulgarian dispute over Macedonia despite the greater commonality of positions with the Bulgarian one. Thus, the biggest thorn in Greek-Yugoslav relations - the Macedonian question - remained

neutralized for the sake of stability and security. This security concern was augmented by the Yugoslav crisis which found Greece at odds with its EU allies. While the rest of the EU and the West, in general, laid blame on the Serbs for the 1991 crisis, Greece felt that things should remain as they were. This difference in opinions took a turn for the worse after December 1991 with the so-called "Skopjeanization" of Greek foreign policy which would keep Greece diplomatically isolated in the region until the fall of 1995.

In other words, "Greece had been caught unprepared to face the challenge of an old federal entity turned suddenly into an aspiring independent state without shedding its irredentist claims."[38]

Greece maintained a pro-Serb attitude throughout the Yugoslav crisis. This stance was demonstrative of Greek non-conformity with the EU position. This pro-Serb position has helped in maintaining influence in Belgrade, despite the fact that the two countries do not share a border anymore. Slobodan Milosevic, Serbia's and Yugoslavia's strongman, has been particularly responsive to Greek mediation attempts throughout the war in Yugoslav and has also been willing to participate in the new multilateral diplomatic initiatives proposed by Greece ever since.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the overall assessment of Greece's Foreign Policy in the Balkans since 1974 has been a positive one. The policy of multilateral diplomacy has taken a force of its own and is rapidly becoming all the more important in the post-Cold War and post-Dayton era. The states in the area, still licking their wounds from the transition to democratic norms and market economies, from the war in Yugoslavia, and from the European Union's dismissive approach to the region, are on the whole, on the road to recovery (stability). Much of this recovery is owed to their conviction that they need each other's support to overcome their political, economic, and social woes. Credit should be given to the successive Greek governments which, despite their tumultuous relationships with their northern neighbors (the revival of the 'Macedonian' question between 1991 and 1995 being a case in point), have never lost sight of the overall objectives of stability and good neighborly relations in the region ,based on the ten principles of the Helsinki Final Act. The significant element here is the national consensus on the multilateral dimension of Greece's Balkan policy which guarantees a relatively steadfast diplomatic effort that transcends periods of failure such as that in1991-1995.

NOTES

1. For more on this meeting, see Thanos Veremis, Greece's **Balkan Entanglement**, (Athens: ELIAMEP-YALCO, 1995), p. 36.

2. The Balkan Pact of 1934 included Greece, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Turkey, but left out revisionist states such as Albania, Bulgaria, and Italy.

3. Yannis Valinakis, **Greece's Security in the Post-Cold War Era**, (Ebenhausen/Isartal: Stiftung Wissenschaft and Politik, April 1984), p. 40.

4. **Ibid.**, p. 41.

5. Agriculture, water resources, energy, transportation, commerce, tourism were some of the issues discussed.

6. Veremis, **Greece's Balkan Entanglement**, p. 37.

7. **Ibid.**, p. 38.

8. Valinakis, **Greece's Security in the Post-Cold War Era**, p. 41.

9. For more on this issue, see Veremis, **Greece's Balkan Entanglement**, p. 39; Also see, Donna J. Klick, "A Balkan Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone: Viability of the Regime and Implications for Crisis Management," **Journal of Peace Research**, 24:2, 1987.

10. Veremis, **Greece's Balkan Entanglement**, p. 41.

11. For more on the background leading to Conference, see Evangelos Kofos, "Greece and the Balkans in the `70s and `80s," **Yearbook 1990**, Athens, ELIAMEP, 1991, pp. 193-222.

12. Veremis, **Greece's Balkan Entanglement**, p. 41.

13. **Ibid.**, p. 43; see also Thanos Veremis, "A Redefinition of Security Considerations in Southeastern Europe," **Southeastern European Yearbook 1992**, ELIAMEP, pp. 153-161.

14. Valinakis, **Greece's Security in the Post-cold War Era**, p. 42.

15. **Ibid.**, p. 48.

16. See Thanos Veremis, "The Revival of the 'Macedonian' Question, 1991-1995," in Peter Mackridge and Eleni Yannakakis, eds. **Ourselves and Others**, (Oxford: Berg, 1997), p. 227.

17. See Thanos Veremis, "Greek Foreign Policy After 1974," in this issue; Also see Yannis Valinakis, **Greece's Balkan Policy and the Macedonian Issue**, (Ebenhausen: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, April 1992); Duncan Perry, "The Republic of Macedonia and the Odds for Survival," **RFE/RL Research Report**, 20 November 1992; Christos Rozakis, **Politikes kai Nomikes Diastaseis tis metavatikis Symphonias tis Neas Yorkis**, (Athens: Sideris and ELIAMEP, 1996); Yannis Valinakis and Sotiris Dalis, eds. **To Zitima ton Skopion. Episima Kimena 1990-1994**, (Athens: Sideris and ELIAMEP, 1994); Memorandum of Greece, New York, 25 January 1993, (Athens: ELIAMEP, 1993); Thanos Veremis, **The Revival of the 'Macedonian' Question, 1991-1995.**

18. Veremis, **The Revival of the 'Macedonian' Question, 1991-1995**, p. 233.

19. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Press and Mass Media, **European**

Perspectives: Economic and Foreign Policy Issues, (Athens, 1996), p. 29.

20. Costas Simitis, "Greece in the Emerging System of International Relations," in **Review of International Affairs** (Belgrade, 15 August 1996), XLVII:1046-47, pp. 3-7.

21. **Ibid.**, p. 5.

22. **Ibid.**, pp. 5-6.

23. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Press and Mass Media, **European Perspectives: Economic and Foreign Policy Issues**, p. 33.

24. Theodore Couloumbis, "Strategic Consensus in Greek Domestic and Foreign Policy Since 1974," in Van Coufoudakis, and Harry Psomiadis, eds. **Greece and the Balkans: Challenges and Opportunities**, (forthcoming 1998).

25. **The Economist Intelligence Unit, Economies in Transition, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union: Regional Overview**, 1st quarter 1997, p. 10.

26. Thanos Veremis and Theodore Couloumbis, **Greek Foreign Policy: Dilemmas of a New Era** (in Greek), (Athens: ELIAMEP and Sideris, 1997), pp. 31-32.

27. **The Economist Intelligence Unit, Economies in Transition**, p. 23.

28. See George Harvalias, "Albania" in Thanos Veremis, ed., **The Balkans: From Bipolarity to a New Era** (in Greek), (Athens: Gnosi, 1994), p. 191.

29. The Greek Representative abstained from the voting which took place on 27 March 1988. For more on this issue, see Harvalias, pp. 185-186.

30.In fact, Samaras returned by car to Greece making a point to visit minority villages in the south. The visit created tensions as clashes between the police and minority Greeks broke out. Many analysts also suggest that Samaras' trip opened the way for a huge wave of migration with Greeks in Albania to Greece in the Winter of 1990-1991. **Ibid.**, pp. 188-189.

31. For more on these events, see Miranda Vickers and James Pettifer, **Albania: From Anarchy to a Balkan Identity**. (London: Hurst and Company, 1997), pp. 186-208. Also see Nikos Ziogas, "Developments in Albania in 1994", in Theodore Couloumbis, Thanos Veremis, and Thanos Dokos, **eds., The Southeast European Yearbook, 1994-1995**, (Athens: ELIAMEP, 1995), pp. 205-219.

32. The first of its kind since World War II.

33. Kyriakos Kentrotis, "Bulgaria" in Veremis, ed., **The Balkans: From Bipolarity to a New Era**, pp.397-398.

34. Valinakis, **Greece's Security in the Post-Cold War Era**, pp. 43-44.

35. Kofos, **Greece and the Balkans in the'70s and '80s**, p. 200.

36. Thanos Veremis, "The Trilateral Struggle for Macedonia after the Second World War," in Veremis, **ed., The Balkans: From Bipolarity to a New Era**, p. 623.

37. Kofos, **Greece and the Balkans in the '70s and '80s**, pp. 201-202.

38. Veremis, "Greece and the Balkans in the Post-Cold War Era", in Harry Psomiades and Van Coufoudakis, eds., **Greece and the Balkans: Challenges and Opportunities**. (forthcoming 1998)