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Solving the Macedonian Question: Avoiding War in a Bi-Ethnic State



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¹ Ivan Dikov. [Time for Preemptive Division of Macedonia\(?\)](http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=138718).
http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=138718

Introduction:

Declaring its independence from Yugoslavia on September 8th 1991, Macedonia was the only former Yugoslav republic to peacefully secede from the federation. Internally, however, tensions persisted between the ethnic Macedonian majority and the ethnic Albanian minority. After the conflict in neighboring Kosovo and the arrival of 200,000 ethnically Albanian refugees in Macedonia, tensions reached an all-time high in 2001.

Perhaps due to the polarization of both sides after Kosovo and the overflow of refugees equaling 10% of the country's population, armed conflict persisted from February through August of 2001. Albanians demanded greater political rights such as official recognition as the second titular nationality, recognition of Albanian as the second official language, and support for an underground Albanian university. Macedonians, however, claimed that Albanians already enjoyed sufficient political and civil rights and were suspect of the Albanian demands as a step toward Albanian autonomy or succession.

After approximately 200 casualties, the conflict was resolved by the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement on August 13th, 2001. The agreement paved the way for increasing the rights of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia including provisions for altering the official languages in the country. In years since, Albanians have seen increased integration in the Macedonian government, yet tensions persist on the ground level. After a decade of relatively peaceful coexistence, 2012 has exhibited the limitations of the Ohrid Framework Agreement where numerous beatings and killings has Macedonia on the brink of warfare again.

Thesis:

In this paper I will explain the limited success of the Ohrid Framework Agreement exhibited by the reescalation of conflict between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians in 2012, and

I will argue that the issue persists due to a lack of sincere cooperation on behalf of both sides. Sincere cooperation would entail that both sides not only exercise their civil rights in Macedonia, but also do so to integrate in society as one people rather than stay separate. I will propose a solution to this issue, incorporating genuine integration in the school system, a ban on ethnically based political parties, incentives to diversify communities, and a mandatory use of the Macedonian language in public. To avoid ethnic conflict in Macedonia, the solution must integrate ethnic Albanians into Macedonian society and transform them from Albanians to Albanian-Macedonians. While others have addressed the current situation in Macedonia, calling for a focus on building to economy to relieve tension between both ethnic groups, the proposed solutions in this paper are urgent and require immediate action to avoid a civil war.² While I would agree that economic prosperity could cool some of the violence, Macedonia's economy has been on the rise for some time and will be until its ethnic groups learn to live together.

Roadmap:

I will begin with a brief historical review of Macedonia both before and after its independence from Yugoslavia to lay the context of the insurgency. I will then proceed to explain the insurgency in 2001 detailing the demands of both sides prior to the conflict, and developments during the insurgency. I will then explain the resolution of the insurgency via the Ohrid Framework Agreement and the extent to which the agreement was successful.

Though the insurgency was stopped and seemed to be peacefully resolved on paper, tension persisted for a decade in Macedonia until a recent reescalation of events in 2012. I will explain that the reescalation of conflict was due to the failures of the agreement and a lack of genuine cooperation. I will final propose a solution to the problem incorporating genuine

² Jason Miko, The Albanian Flag. 11/28/12. <http://jasonmiko.com/the-columns-dnevnik-73.shtml>

cooperation through nation building via the school system, the banning of ethnic political parties, integrating communities, and eliminating the fear of secession.

The model I propose that Macedonia adopt is based on the United States' society, where people of numerous backgrounds coexist as Americans.³ While every American has an ethnic, racial, national, or religious background, such groupings are secondary to their allegiance to America. There are other available models, such as the Belgian, Swiss, and Bosnian, however, all three are inferior to the American model and would not eliminate tension in Macedonia. Bosnia is the worst as its three ethnic groups remain segregated and have separate terms for leading the government. Belgium has two language groups, however, Flemish and French speakers have a national allegiance to Belgium. That is not to say that there is not tension in Belgium between the segregated Flemish and French regions. Still, both groups avoid letting their differences escalate into warfare. Finally, Switzerland is further divided with four language groups, however, the four groups identify as Swiss and not French, German, Italian, or Romansh.

If Macedonia were to adopt a Bosnian, Belgian, or Swiss society model, ethnic Albanians will not identify as Macedonian nationals and will remain segregated in the western half of the country like Bosnia and unlike Belgium or Switzerland. Macedonia would remain volatile and could trigger warfare throughout the Balkans if minority ethnic groups in neighboring states seek to intervene or rebel against their state. An ethnically based model such as in Bosnia would be the worst possible outcome as even today Bosnia remains internally divided, and all three ethnic groups take turns controlling it politically with divergent interests. A linguistically based model such as in Belgium or Switzerland would not be much better since it would literally divide the Macedonia into two pieces, keeping both groups separate and further fueling the fear of Albanian

³ Religious Pluralism And Civil Society: Section Three: Minority And Immigrant Experience: Active Versus Passive Pluralism: A Changing Style Of Civil Religion?, 612 Annals 133

succession. This is why the American model, with some modifications, would be best as it highlights unity despite both ethnic groups different backgrounds.

A) Background & Historical Context

Though Macedonia's history goes back to ancient times, the last century is more relevant to the insurgency as many nationalities within the Balkans had their awakening. In 1944, the Anti-Fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) declared Macedonia as one of six republics within Yugoslavia. ASNOM went on to codify the Macedonian alphabet and distinguish it from the primary language in Yugoslavia, Serbo-Croatian. During this period Slovenians, Croatians, Bosnian, Montenegrins, Serbs, Macedonians, Turks, and Albanians lived relatively peaceful and tolerant lives under the rule of Josip "Tito" Broz.⁴

On September 8th, 1991 Macedonia declared its independence amidst the fall of the Berlin Wall, the breakup of the USSR, and the breakup of Yugoslavia. Macedonia seceded from Yugoslavia peacefully and avoided the Yugoslav wars of the early 1990s as other states ceded with bloodshed. In 1999, some 200,000 or more ethnic Albanians fled from the war in Kosovo into Macedonia. Though many left shortly after the war, ethnic Albanian sought autonomy or independence for the western, Albanian-populated areas in Macedonia, similar to Kosovo.⁵

This tension reached its peak when an insurgency persisted from February to August 2001, where the western half of Macedonia was occupied by Albanian insurgents named the National Liberation Army (NLA or UCK). The insurgency ended with NATO intervention, sending a ceasefire monitoring force and brokering the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Under the

⁴ Public Paper of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. 2/25/74.

<http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/0AF2E0456C964935B7705FB5BF6F31F9.pdf>

⁵ Turkish Weekly, Macedonia's Independence Day. 9/7/05

<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/19318/macedonia-s-independence-day-september-8.html>

agreement, the Macedonian government agreed to delegate greater political power and recognize the Albanian minority.⁶

Still, with a more balanced political configuration, Macedonia remains deeply divided. The northwestern region which borders Kosovo and Albania is overwhelmingly Albanian, while very few live in the rest of the country. Most Albanians opt not to send their children to Macedonian speaking public schools, but rather send them to independently-established Albanian speaking schools while Macedonian students (and their parents) refuse to learn Albanian as a second language (instead of English, French, or German). Even the political parties are ethnically divided with each party pursuing the interests of its own ethnic group. It is fair to say that both Macedonians and Albanians resist to integrate, and would rather live in the current segregated status quo.⁷

Macedonia stands at the crossroads of two very different futures: either its two ethnic groups integrate and coexist peacefully, or it remains divided such as Bosnia and affords each group autonomous status.

B) The Insurgency of 2001

In February of 2001 the Albanian NLA began attacking Macedonian security forces, with the goal of gaining greater rights and autonomy for the Albanian minority, which accounts for a quarter of the population. There was also concern the NLA would demand a referendum, seeking to partition the Albanian portion of the country from the rest of Macedonia. Though both groups had coexisted before, rather uneasily, tension began to build when the Macedonian government repressed speaking Albanian and banned the use of the Albanian flag in 1997. This is not to say

⁶ RTF Fan, Clashes Between Macedonians and Albanians in Macedonia. <http://www.rtvfan.net/ria-novosti-clashes-between-macedonians-and-albanians-in-macedonia/>

⁷ Zeljko Bajic, Macedonian Language Dispute. http://www.balkanpeace.org/index.php?index=/content/balkans/FYR_macedonia/mac08.incl

that the government did so arbitrarily, but it was a misstep in handling a growing concern with the Albanian minority's lack of loyalty to Macedonia.⁸

The NLA demanded greater political rights, such as recognition of Albanian as the second official language, recognizing Albanian as a second nationality within Macedonia, and state support for an underground Albanian-language university. The Macedonian majority, however, asserted that Albanians in Macedonia enjoyed sufficient rights, equal or better than other minorities in Europe. The majority was also suspicious of Albanian demands for autonomy, which would be a step toward secession, especially since unofficial referendums among ethnic Albanians wished for autonomy. There were also demands among radical Albanian politicians for an autonomous republic of Illiryda (after their tribal routes) in the western end of Macedonia, as well as incidents of Albanian flags being hung in front of state institutions in the western end of Macedonia. Such incidents threatened the sovereignty of the Macedonian government since it seemed that it lacked authority in Albanian populated areas.⁹

March of 2001 saw a struggle over the city of Tetovo in northwest Macedonia. NLA forces were positioned in the mountains and fired at Tetovo's security forces below. Many nearby villages that had been held by the NLA for weeks were taken back as Macedonian forces pushed the NLA north into Kosovo. For a month there was a lull in the fighting while NLA forces regrouped, and political dialogue was opened with Albanian parties in the government.¹⁰

In May, NLA attacks came the mountains north of Kumanovo, with a similar response from Macedonian forces of trying to push out the NLA. The most critical struggle was over the Lipkovo dam, which the NLA ceased and closed, thereby cutting off Kumanovo's water supply,

⁸ BBC News. Who are the Rebels? 3/20/01. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1231596.stm>

⁹ ICG Balkans Report. The Macedonian Question: Reform or Rebellion. 4/5/01. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/Macedonia%209.pdf>

¹⁰ Zidas Daskalovski. The Macedonian Conflict of 2001: Between Successful Diplomacy, Rhetoric and Terror. 2004. <http://people.stfx.ca/cpcs/studies-in-post-communism/Daskalovski2004.pdf>

instigating a humanitarian situation. The Macedonian government demanded Lipkovo's villagers evacuate to prevent civilian casualties, however, Lipkovo's mayor told them not to evacuate and avoid being caught in the crossfire by sitting in their basements. A temporary ceasefire was brokered by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) so that water could resume flow to Kumanovo, and so Lipkovo's villager could receive food, water, and medicine. The NLA violated the ceasefire by setting fire to a historic church nearby. Ultimately the offensive was put on hold because the NLA ceased the village of Aracinovo in June, only 5 miles outside the capital of Skopje.¹¹

The fight for Arachinovo in June was the most critical point of the insurgency because of its proximity to the capital of Macedonia, and the NLA's threats of targeting police stations, parliament, government buildings, and even the airport with 120mm mortars. After several days of fighting, the Macedonian forces advanced and came very close to expelling the NLA from Arachinovo. NATO's secretary-general at the time urged the Macedonian forces to halt before the conflict erupted into a bloody civil war. In reality, there were a number of Americans trapped in Arachinovo, and NATO had sent six fighter planes to use force if the operation continued.¹²

After much political pressure from NATO to stop the fight for Arachinovo, the Macedonian government ended the offensive on the NLA and allowed it to evacuate to Lipkovo. In response, ethnic Macedonians protested in front of parliament, particularly by policemen who took part in the battle, demanding an answer to why the operation was halted allowing the NLA to evacuate with their weapons. Protestors broke into parliament demanding to speak to the President and calling for his resignation. In July, NATO brokered a ceasefire, where Macedonian

¹¹ CNN World. Soldiers Killed in Macedonia. 5/3/01. http://articles.cnn.com/2001-05-03/world/macedonia.unrest_1_macedonian-soldiers-albanian-party-bitola?_s=PM:WORLD

¹² CNN World. Macedonia Army Calls Ceasefire. 6/11/01. <http://edition.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/europe/06/11/macedonia.refugees05/index.html?iref=allsearch>

forces were only allowed to fire back when under attack from the NLA, in equal proportion. Records indicate that the NLA fired at Macedonian forces and kidnapped civilians during the period.¹³

During the ceasefire, the NLA repositioned itself within and around Tetovo, and opened fire on villages that were populated by Macedonians in the region. Macedonian forces resisted firing back and notified OSCE monitors to take measures. During this time, police forces delivered firearms to civilians to protect themselves since they were not covered by the ceasefire. Macedonians in the Tetovo region begged that the President demand the army to expel the insurgents. During this period in July, two NATO helicopters were spotted entering Macedonian airspace from Kosovo and dropped containers that were intercepted by the NLA. Though NATO initially denied the incidents, it later confirmed and stated the containers were meant for KFOR.¹⁴

Late July and early August saw NLA forces trying to penetrate the capital of Skopje when 10 NLA were captured in a northern, predominantly Albanian neighborhood. Concurrently, NLA and Kosovo Protection Corps opened fire on the village of Radusa and advanced toward the Rasce spring, which is the main water source for Skopje. While the President resisted using force and sought a political resolution, the Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior became increasingly impatient and ordered intervention to secure the Rasce water source.¹⁵

¹³ Macedonia Helsinki Committee. Month Report for June 2001. <http://www.mhc.org.mk/default-en.asp?ItemID=DF250A5381386A41829ECBD3AF935BAB>

¹⁴ CNN World. NATO Slams Offensive in Macedonia. 6/22/01.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/europe/06/22/macedonia.03/index.html?iref=allsearch>

¹⁵ Petrit Mehaj. That Message and Hope. 2008. <http://soros.org.mk/dokumenti/FIOOM-Poraka-i-nadez-tom-II.pdf>

In the very last days of the insurgency, there was a clash between the NLA and police forces in the village of Ljuboten outside of Skopje. A convoy of army trucks exploded when they ran over landmines prompting a search for NLA insurgents the following day. When the police force entered the village they were fired on from several houses and called for reinforcements. Once the village had been secured, 100 men who were arrested were subjected to a paraffin test to determine whether they recently shot firearms. Twenty-seven tested positive and were sentenced for terrorism.¹⁶

What this historical background demonstrates is that Macedonia is a volatile country that could (re)erupt into civil war very quickly, requiring immediate action to avoid further bloodshed. This section also demonstrates that both groups remain ethnically divided and need to find some common ground so they can move forward as a unit. The vast detail of this section relates to the thesis to demonstrate the fight between the ethnic groups for control within Macedonia, as opposed to my solution requiring that they share it in a way that mutually benefits both groups.

C) The Ohrid Framework Agreement

On August 13, 2001 the Ohrid Framework Agreement was signed, putting an official end to the armed conflict. Under the agreement, the Macedonian government pledged to increase rights to Albanians by making Albanian the second official language, increasing Albanian representation in the government, police, and army, and implemented a more decentralized government. The Albanian political parties (not including the NLA) agreed to abandon separatist demands, fully recognize all Macedonian institutions, and disarmament of the NLA. Following the agreement, NATO and Macedonian troops collected and destroyed NLA weapons and Ali

¹⁶ CNN World. Soldiers Killed in Macedonia Blast. 8/10/01. http://articles.cnn.com/2001-08-10/world/macedonia.planes.1738_1_radusa-macedonian-soldiers-tetovo?_s=PM:WORLD

Ahmeti, former NLA turned politician, announced the dissolution of the NLA. Though incidents continued between Albanians and Macedonians, they were isolated and on a much smaller scale. While the specific clauses of the OFA allow for enhanced rights to ethnic Albanians, they do not do enough to integrate ethnic Albanians in Macedonian society. The end result, is that both groups obey the agreement to the extent that is required, but continue to isolate themselves and remain bitter towards each other.

1. Nondiscrimination

Clause 4.1 of the OFA states “the principle of nondiscrimination and equal treatment of all individuals before the law will be respected. This principle will be particularly endorsed as far as employments in the public administration and the public enterprises are concerned. It will also be implemented in terms of access to public financing for development of business activities”.¹⁷ Though Albanians have always played a role in government since Macedonia’s independence, the implementation of Clause 4.1 has seen an increase from roughly 5% to 16% representation depending on the agency.¹⁸ While the figures are obviously positive, the implementation has been subject to criticism of political marketing where perhaps Albanians are more represented in the public sector, but not adequately enough to have an impact, lack of placing qualified candidates, and un-Macedonian actions by Albanian representatives (such as the Defense Minister publically saluting an NLA monument).¹⁹

2. Decentralization

¹⁷ Framework Agreement, Clause 4.1, Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, (2002), PE Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia.

¹⁸ The data has been retrieved from the database on equal representation developed by the Sector on Implementation of the Framework Agreement, available at www.soifa.gov.mk

¹⁹ Frosina Cvetkovska, Row Frustrates Albanian Equality Efforts, Institute on War and Peace Reporting Report, 23.8.2006. Available at www.isn.ethz.ch/news/sw/details.cfm?ID=16567; <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/macedonia-coalition-must-make-up-or-break-up>

Clause 3 of the OFA calls for decentralization of government in the areas of “public services, urban and rural planning, environment protection, local economic development, culture, local finances, education, social security and health protection”²⁰ The goal of this clause was to increase the participation of the local population within the municipalities which in turn increases the confidence of the population that the chosen municipal and security personal are more representative. While this may be so, often the interests of the newly appointed municipal personal directly contradict the national government. In areas that are majority Albanian, such as Tetovo, one would not recognize that it is still Macedonia as every sign is in Albanian, and even the Albanian flag is flown in front of the municipal buildings. Such decentralization does not follow a model of integration, but rather more similar to a separate but equal status quo.

3. Language, Culture, & Education

Clause 5 of the OFA states “the laws that related directly to culture, use of language, education, personal documents and use of symbols, as well as the laws on local finances, local election, the City of Skopje and the municipal borders, will have to be adopted with a majority of votes. That includes majority of votes of the parliamentary members that claim not to be representative of the majority population in Macedonia”.²¹ This clause effectively gives the Albanian minority a veto right within parliament. The “Badinter principle” as it is called requires a majority of Macedonian parliament members as well as a majority of Albanian parliament members to pass any of the laws above.²² While the implementation of the double majority safeguards the Albanian minority from being overpowered the by Macedonian majority, the

²⁰ Framework Agreement, Clause 3.1, Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, (2002), PE Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia.

²¹ Framework Agreement, Clause 5.2., Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, (2002), PE Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia.

²² Set Times. EC Envoy: Macedonian Parties Must Define Laws Requiring Badinter Majority. 11/13/06.http://setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/newsbriefs/setimes/newsbriefs/2006/11/13/nb-07

voting of legislation that requires a double majority vote is almost always controversial and dissatisfactory. In 2007 when the Parliament debated the Broadcasting law, Albanian representatives demanded the changes be passed through a double majority, while Macedonian representatives declined. The Committee on Inter-Ethnic Relations is the proper agency to address such a question, however, it never did. Later, the Parliamentary Speaker, Ljubisa Georgievski, (ethnically Macedonian) decided that a double majority was not required in an opinion he distributed to the parliament.

4. Official Languages

Clause 6 of the OFA states that each language spoken by at least 20% of the population is considered an official language alongside Macedonian.²³ At the local level this has been implemented and Albanian majority areas have seen their municipalities and schools switch over smoothly. The concern has been that if Albanian was used officially at the national level in government ministries and agencies that it would lead to a linguistic federalization of Macedonia, which is unacceptable to the Macedonian majority. Following the OFA, there was an initiative to make Albanian a mandatory second language in public schools, however, this was short lived as both Macedonian students and parents were strongly against it because of their unwillingness to learn Albanian after the insurgency, especially when English, French, and German are more useful in their perspective. According to my proposal to adopt the US model, instruction in the dominant language is the appropriate path, however, this means that Albanian majority areas must learn Macedonian in public school as opposed to Albanian, which is currently accepted under the OFA.

5. Summary

²³ Framework Agreement, Clause 5.2., Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, (2002), PE Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia.

Overall, the agreement has had some positive impact on Macedonia as Albanian's rights have increased and the insurgency was quashed for a decade. The agreement, however, is not without shortcomings because even though Albanian's rights increased since 2001, their integration has failed, as both ethnic groups prefer to keep to themselves and resist interacting with each other. There is also an element of ego as no group is willing to bow down to the other and integrate and thus dilute its own identity. Certainly, as two-thirds of the population, Macedonians reject any notion that they are to compromise their identity due to a foreign minority. The Albanian minority's loyalty remains to their native Albania, despite however long they have lived in Macedonia as they have been raised to be Albanians and not Macedonians.

The result is that the opposition party at the time, VMRO-DPMNE (Macedonian nationalists), criticized the government composed of SDSM (social democrats) for its concessions and was able to gain control in the following elections in 2006. Since the OFA is widely unpopular with the Macedonian majority, it is used as a political weapon when the government shares-power with the Albanian parties as each party is fighting over who is the "most Macedonian." Ironically, even the nationalist VMRO party is in coalition with one of the (weaker) Albanian parties (DPA), but has been able to maintain power since 2006 through its strongly nationalist policies with regard to the Albanian issue, and also the Greek naming issue. Similarly, the Albanian parties are fighting amongst themselves as to which one is the "most Albanian" as the DPA is less popular amongst Albanians than the DUI party. Collectively this leads to both Macedonian and Albanian parties becoming more politically polarized as both are trying to gain support (i.e. votes) from their respective ethnic groups, while the agreement calls

for them to reach a middle ground.²⁴ Thus, respecting the essence of the OFA is deemed political suicide, and parties trying to remain in control of the government have increased the tension between both ethnic groups and a reemergence of tension in 2012.

D) Reescalation in 2012

The year 2012 has been noted for its reescalation of ethnic tensions in Macedonia; highlighting the shortcomings of the OFA. Perhaps the first incident was on January 14th when Albanians took offense to some costumes worn by Macedonians in an annual carnival in Vevcani, which was followed by several protests from Albanians. Later that month, fire was set to an Orthodox Christian Church nearby in Struga along with a number of smaller incidents attributed to the Albanian Muslim population.²⁵

In late February, a Macedonian police officer killed two Albanians in Gostivar, after stating he was attacked by them for refusing to move his vehicle.²⁶ In March there were a number of incidents where Macedonians were beaten in both Skopje and Tetovo including children, elderly, and police officers.²⁷ Five Albanians were arrested in relation to the attacks.

The violence culminated in April when five Macedonians were executed at a lake just outside the capitol of Skopje.²⁸ Shortly after the police arrested five Albanians in relation to the attack. Macedonians protested in the village near the incident and in Skopje, both of which turned violent. Protestors in Skopje marched towards an Albanian neighborhood chanting “a

²⁴ Dr. Lisen Bashkurti. Final Status For Kosovo: Untying The Gordian Knot: I. Essay: Political Dynamics Within The Balkans: The Cases Of Bosnia & Herzegovina, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Serbia, And Montenegro, 80 Chi.-Kent L. Rev. 49

²⁵ Sinisa Jakov Marusic. Church Almost Burned in Struga, Macedonia. 1/31/12.

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/ethnic-tensions-surge-in-macedonian-town>

²⁶ Milka Smilevska. Double Murder in Macedonia. 2/28/12. <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/video/milka-smilevska-o-dvostrukom-ubistvu-u-makedoniji>

²⁷ Milka Smilevska. A Wave of Inter-Ethnic Incidents in Macedonia. 3/9/12.

<http://balkans.aljazeera.net/makale/talas-meduetnickih-incidenata-u-makedoniji>

²⁸ Milka Smilevska. Detention for Participants of the Incidents in Macedonia. 3/11/12. <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/makale/pritvor-za-ucesnike-incidenata-u-makedoniji>

good Shiptar is a dead Shiptar” and “gas chambers for Shiptars”.²⁹ Protestors clashed with the police as it stopped them from advancing any further into the neighborhood.

In response to the arrested Albanians alleged to have been involved, Albanians protested in Skopje demanding their release.³⁰ The protest chanted contradictory messages such as “being Albanian isn’t a crime”, “Allah is great”, “death to Christians”, “UCK/NLA”, “see you in the mountains (i.e. war)”, and “greater Albania”. Al Qaeda and Jihad symbols were spotted amongst the protestors.³¹ The response from the government has been to increase security in the capital and to call on the media to avoid pointing fingers too soon in order to not fuel any more violence.

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While the situation cooled down in the following months, there is still friction between both groups as conflict could erupt at any second. Both groups have avoided passing in each other’s territory for fear of being beaten and/or killed. Without a reopening of peace talks with both groups, fear of civil war looms in the background.

E) Solution as an Integrated State

The Ohrid Framework Agreement is failing because it does not adequately address the integration of two ethnicities into one nationality. Rather it has allowed two separate nationalities to coexist in a single state, competing for power against themselves. To solve this problem, another round of negotiations must commence soon to make adjustments to the currently

²⁹ Courier. Protest Against the Quintuple Murder. 4/16/12. <http://bukvar.mk/news/protest-poradi-petkratnoto-ubistvo?newsid=WXHm> . “Shiptar” is the word used by Albanians to identify themselves, however, they take offence to other groups using it, similar to the “N” word in the US.

³⁰ Turkish Weekly. Radical Islam Poses Regional Threat. 5/11/12.

<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/135995/radical-islam-poses-regional-threat-.html>

³¹ CNN iReport. Radical Islamist Insurgents Protest in Skopje, Macedonia. 5/4/12.

<http://ireport.cnn.com/docs/DOC-785531?ref=feeds%2Flatest>

³² B92. Police Release Names of Suspects in Macedonian Murders. 5/3/12.

http://www.b92.net/eng/news/region-article.php?yyyy=2012&mm=05&dd=03&nav_id=80072

deteriorating system. Rather than going down the path of the Dayton Agreement, in which three ethnicities take turns governing Bosnia, Macedonia needs to look to the American society model of nation building to ensure it can continue to exist peacefully and pursue national interests rather than two sets of ethnic interests. While the US has had its share of tensions, including a civil war, it has moved in the right direction affording minority rights while also incorporating them in society rather than allowing segregation to persist. Europe on a whole, however, has allowed groups to segregate such as in Belgium, Switzerland, and elsewhere but the distinction of those states and Macedonia is that the individual groups still identify with the greater nationality (i.e. both Wallons and Flemish identify as Belgian).³³

Under the American model, (a state composed of numerous backgrounds, yet representing one dominant American nationality) I propose that the Republic of Macedonia must commence on building a national identity that incorporates both ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians. To be clear, this is a question of identity and not politics, thus American Federalism does not adequately address the question. Under this model, no matter what ethnicity citizens are in Macedonia (Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Serbian, Vlach, Roma, etc...) they are all to be Macedonian by nationality. This goes beyond documents and passports, but is deeper in that every ethnicity will be represented by the Macedonian state, and every ethnicity will pledge allegiance to the Republic of Macedonia above all other states. Perhaps dual nationality will have to be banned to ensure that ethnic-Albanians are truly committed, but other considerations will have to be balanced as many ethnic Macedonians might opt to hold on to US and EU passports for better opportunity. Though banning dual citizenship would likely be unpopular to current dual nationals in Macedonia, many states practice this by requiring one to renounce a citizenship

³³ The Service Course. Pride of Wallonia. 3/17/08. <http://www.theservicecourse.com/2008/03/pride-of-wallonia.html>. When one of Belgium's greatest athletes was asked if he was Flemish or Walloon, he avoided picking a side and replied, "I'm Belgian".

when acquiring their own. In effect, however, the renounced state would still claim the individual as a citizen unless that person declares his new nationality to the renounced state, which means that ethnic-Albanians would still technically be dual nationals, but not in the eyes of either the Macedonian or Albanian government.³⁴

1. Language Preference

Since the state in question is the Republic of Macedonia, the clear preference will have to be towards the Macedonian language. Therefore I propose that in the public sector (government, schools, etc...) Macedonian is the primary language and must be used by all. To accompany this, the Albanian language will be recognized as a secondary language (much like Spanish in the US) allowing for the use of Albanian when reasonable. In the private sector, it is up to the establishment to use whatever it likes. It will be highly advantageous for a business to be fluent in both languages as it opens its market to the entire population. Currently, many Albanian businesses are fluent in both languages, so they receive both Albanian and (some) Macedonian customers. Far fewer Macedonian businesses are fluent in Albanian, which means they get much less business from Albanians. If Macedonian businesses choose to neglect potential Albanian customers, that is at their own loss. In the US it is a positive when a business can offer its services to a wide demographic of customers (Spanish, Portuguese, Polish, etc...) so I believe market forces will pressure Macedonians to embrace speaking Albanian.³⁵

2. Schools

³⁴ UK Border Agency. [How Do I Give Up British Citizenship or Another Form of British Nationality?](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/britishcitizenship/givingupcitizenship/)

³⁵ BBC News. [Is Language Key to Ethnic Integration?](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/2261239.stm) 9/16/02.

Public schools are to be taught in Macedonian, and Albanian is to be offered as a foreign language.³⁶ Again, since this is Macedonia, the primary language has to be Macedonian; however, it will be advantageous for students to learn Albanian since a quarter of the population speaks it. Integration of ethnic Macedonians with ethnic Albanians will have to happen in the school system, and starting with kindergarten or pre-K before prejudiced elders influence children. There must be a quota that accommodates for 25% of ethnic Albanians in each public school so that there isn't a divide between Albanian schools and Macedonian schools. Though this approach has been criticized in some US cities, the two groups won't integrate if left on their own.³⁷ While much of the Albanian population is concentrated in the northwestern corner of Macedonia, it might be difficult to accomplish such a quota in the opposite corner of the country, but some leeway (within 5-10%) would be a step in the right direction. Private schools, again, are free to teach in whichever language they wish since they are independent from government funds. Interestingly, there is one such school in Skopje that teaches in both languages simultaneously (the "Mosaic" approach), and perhaps such schools would be encouraged with government subsidies.³⁸

3. Political Parties

Ethnically based political parties must be banned, and so the current parties must embrace a similar quota allowing for approximately 25% ethnic-Albanians or losing their ability to participate in politics. By integrating the political parties, the anticipated goal will be to shift their focus from pursuing ethnic interests that polarize both groups against each other, to pursuing national interests for the good of all Macedonians regardless of their ethnicity. The

³⁶ Macedonia.Org. Education in Macedonia. <http://faq.macedonia.org/information/education.html>

³⁷ Hans Bader, Education Department Pushes Racial Quotas in School Discipline. 5/4/12.

<http://www.openmarket.org/2012/05/04/education-department-pushes-racial-quotas-in-school-discipline/>

³⁸ US Dept. of State. Nova International Schools <http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/69802.htm>

integration of political parties would create a more balanced agenda that can focus on ideological differences rather than ethnic. While individual integrated parties might appeal to one group or another, the preference will hopefully be a result of ideology since the parties will be representative of both ethnic groups. While this a modification of the US approach where there is not forced integration of parties, the goal is to make the political system more like the US where the political parties are not ethnically based and differ on the extent they are liberal or conservative. By shifting the focus from “what is good for my group” to “what is good for the county” Macedonia can focus on building its economy and diplomacy with neighboring states so that it can pursue its NATO and EU membership aspirations.

Also, by integrating the political parties, the members of those parties will be forced to work together and better understand their different ethnic cultures. Those who refuse to integrate will not be an option at the following elections, while those who wish to be elected will be keen to make the shift. The current barrier is that both groups remain separate and do not know enough to feel comfortable interacting with each other. Removing the barrier will entail a transition period where members will be hesitant to change, but ultimately they would become acclimated to each other when interacting on a daily basis. Through this daily interaction, members of both ethnic groups will realize that despite their ethnicities, they are all humans and they have more similarities than differences. This exposure will change party members from pursuing Albanian interests and (ethnic) Macedonian interests, to pursuing collective interests because by and large the greatest issue in Macedonia is its poor economy. It would be a mistake to federalize Macedonia based on ethnicity, such as in Bosnia, because that will further polarize the groups into pursuing ethnic interests rather than national interests.

4. Community Integration

A difficult, but perhaps most effective step would be to integrate Macedonian and Albanian communities so that both ethnicities live side by side. The problem with segregated communities is two fold; the two groups do not learn to coexist with each other, and the two groups become overly introverted. Looking at the US, there are pockets of ethnic and racial groups that stick to each other in certain communities. For example, in New Jersey there are entire towns that are majority Hispanic, Black, Polish, etc...³⁹ The more ingrained a certain person is into his own ethnic group, the more his English and interpersonal skills suffer. In Elizabeth, NJ the majority of residents are Hispanic and its residents communicate almost exclusively in Spanish.⁴⁰ While their heritage is important to the diversity of New Jersey and the US, the Hispanic residents of Elizabeth often have difficulty interacting with Americans outside of their group. Due to their limited interaction with Americans outside of their community they have little chance to practice their English and almost no exposure to American culture and customs. Despite the fact of this reality, the US is still a model because it has put in place a system for all backgrounds to integrate in US society, starting with mandatory English in all public schools including Elizabeth which is 60% Hispanic. If Hispanics chose not to integrate, that is their own lost. The failure with the OFA in Macedonia, though, is that it allows for the ethnic groups to be further segregated, such as mandatory Albanian in some public schools.

The same is true of Macedonia where entire villages, towns, and cities are either ethnically Macedonian or Albanian. The residents of an ethnically Albanian community communicate almost exclusively in Albanian and practice exclusively Albanian customs. Macedonian communities do the same, hence, the two groups do not get along. The Ohrid Agreement does not do enough to integrate them, rather it gives the Albanian community the

³⁹ City Data. NJ Ethnic Groups. <http://www.city-data.com/states/New-Jersey-Ethnic-groups.html>

⁴⁰ City Data. Elizabeth, NJ. <http://www.city-data.com/city/Elizabeth-New-Jersey.html>

right to further isolate itself from the rest of Macedonia. The ethnic Albanian communities need to stop isolating themselves and live side by side with Macedonians, but the Macedonians also need to embrace the Albanians and treat them as equal members of the community. To accomplish this, a government plan is necessary to incentivize members of both groups to live in the others' community. While complete integration is an overly idealistic goal, the elimination of an ethnically dominated community, where one ethnicity comprises 90% of the population, could be accomplished if the government created an economic incentive, such as lowering property taxes for those who move into the opposite community for a number of years.⁴¹

F. Broader Implications

Situated in one of the most volatile regions in the world, the stability of Macedonia is critical to maintaining a war free Balkan peninsula. Each state in the Balkans is composed of multiple ethnicities, including majority and minority groups. Additionally, each group is nostalgic of its distant past where one time their country encompassed far more territory than it currently does. The combination of numerous ethnicities combined with irredentist tendencies leads to animosity between each other that often escalates into warfare. For example, extremist ethnic Albanians make claims that historically, Albania encompasses the current Albania and Kosovo as well as parts of Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro.⁴² If tensions escalate in Macedonia, there will very likely be a spill over effect in Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro where ethnic Albanians are similarly pushing for greater civil rights and a Greater Albania. After the Kosovo war between Serbs and ethnic-Albanians in 1999, the spillover of refugees into Macedonia increased tensions, which erupted in the 2001 insurgency. On that point, Kosovo is

⁴¹ Emily Badger. [Watch These American Cities Segregate Even As They Diversify](http://www.theatlanticcities.com/neighborhoods/2012/06/watch-these-us-cities-segregate-even-they-diversify/2346/). 6/25/12.

⁴² Besar Likmeta. [Poll Reveals Support for "Greater Albania"](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/survey-greater-albania-remains-popular). 11/17/10.

now an independent state dominated by ethnic Albanians, and shares an open border with Albania. While Milosevic's atrocities are inexcusable, NATO/UN's solution to partition Serbia and create an independent Albanian dominated Kosovo has energized the Greater Albania concept. Instead of finding a peaceful way for Albanians to coexist in neighboring states, the international community has instead separated the children from fighting (temporarily). Neighboring countries such as Serbia and Greece have taken a much more hardline approach than Macedonia, which has had mixed results. Obviously in Serbia, Milosevic did not concede any added rights to Albanians, which resulted in the insurgency in its Kosovo regions. After aggressively fighting against the Albanians, NATO stepped which led to the eventual partitioning of Serbia where Albanians now control the independent Kosovo, which is the worst possible scenario for Macedonia. In Greece, however, the approach is to not even recognize the Albanian minority (or any other minority other than "muslim") which has preempted the question of Albanian rights (since they don't exist to the Greek government) but also earns it one of the poorest human rights records in Europe.⁴³

If Macedonia, and indeed much of the Balkans were accepted into NATO and the EU, much of the tension in the Balkans would subside because ethnic groups that are scattered across several nations would be unified under the EU's open borders. The catch-22 is that NATO and the EU are hesitant to accept much of the Balkan states until they stabilize. To further complicate the matter, Greece (illegally) opposes Macedonia's entrance into NATO and the EU due to a dispute over Macedonia's name.⁴⁴ Greece opposes Macedonia's name due to irredentist concerns with its Macedonian population near the Greek-Macedonian border. Again, if borders

⁴³ US Dept. of State. 2010 Human Rights Report: Greece. 4/8/11.
<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/eur/154427.htm>

⁴⁴ BBC News. ICJ Rules Greece "Wrong" to Block Macedonia's NATO Bid. 12/5/11.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-16032198>

were open under the EU, this tension would subside as ethnic groups would be free to unite as if borders did not divide them. Perhaps the only way to undo the inaccuracies of the age of nation-states is to unify them in supra-national federations such as the EU. Though this is an alternative solution, the problem is that Macedonia needs to find a way to stabilize itself first because the EU and NATO have pushed back entrance dates time and again with no confirmed entrance date in sight.⁴⁵

For the time being, I believe that the American Model is imperative to maintaining the peace because states are vehemently against ceding territory and/or bi-ethnic rights to minority groups in their borders. If ethnic Albanians want to go to Albanian schools, speak Albanian in the public sector, and self-govern, then their option is to live in Albania (and/or Kosovo). If, however, they wish to live in Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, etc... then they have to make a good faith effort to integrate into those societies and become Albanian-Macedonians(Serbians, Montenegrins, Greeks, etc...). Likewise, these states need to embrace ethnic Albanians and accept them as fellow countrymen. In the end, ethnic-Albanians have a choice to live in which ever country they wish, however, they have to integrate into that country and not instigate conflicts for greater political power. If they live in Albania they will speak Albanian, and likewise if they live elsewhere they will speak that states language. The option to “Albanianize” Macedonia or any other state should be off the table, requiring them to integrate into the host state if they wish to function in society.

G. Counterarguments

Counterarguments to my proposal will likely point to notions of self-identification and call for a redrawing of borders or adopting a bi-ethnic federal Macedonia. The problem with such

⁴⁵ European Commission. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. 10/10/12.
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/fyrom/index_en.htm

arguments is that they will inevitably lead to warfare in Macedonia and elsewhere. If borders were to be redrawn in Macedonia, ceding territory to ethnic Albanians then ethnic Macedonians would retaliate for the loss of territory. Similarly, neighboring states with Albanian minorities would face the same concerns.

If Macedonia were to operate like Bosnia, again, ethnic Macedonians would oppose the Albanians term of running the government and retaliate. Further, Macedonia would be burden by terms of radically divergent interests as Macedonians would pursue their interests and Albanians their own. Macedonia could not be federalized as Switzerland or Belgium because both states are composed of Swiss and Belgian nationals that are subdivided by language groups. In Macedonia, ethnic Albanians do not identify as Macedonian nationals and so its federalization would in effect be a breakup of Macedonia rather than a unification. More specifically, the language groups in Belgium and Switzerland identify as Belgian and Swiss, however, a federal Macedonia would lead to two groups that identify as Macedonians and Albanians that would endless despise each other.

Conclusion:

Macedonia lies at the crossroads of either peace or turmoil, and the current is pushing it towards the latter. The OFA has tried to address the differences between both groups in Macedonia, but fails to understand that increasing civil rights to Albanians is inadequate to stabilizing Macedonia. By allowing ethnic Albanians to increase their authority in Macedonia without first ensuring their allegiance to the state, ethnic Albanians are only further isolated from Macedonian society and will continue to clash culturally, and politically.

What is so great about America is that it is rich with diversity, encompassing nearly every denomination from around the world, yet, it maintains that no matter your background, you are

American. Despite the fact that America has had a history of slavery, segregation, civil war etc... at no point was there a serious threat that any portion of America would become less American (i.e. if the Southwest states pushed for Spanish being the primary language, or if Maine was to be absorbed into Canada). Of course, there are individuals who are more comfortable with their own kind, and are hesitant or outright refuse to Americanize, however, those individuals respect America's cultural and territorial integrity. As the leading example of countless ethnicities unifying under one nationality, many states such as Macedonia have much to learn from America.

In the end, a peaceful Macedonia would be composed of a single nationality, Macedonian, with members who are ethnically Macedonian, Albanian, Turk, Roma, etc... These ethnic groups have lived together peacefully in the past (i.e. under the Ottoman Empire and Yugoslavia) and now it is time for them to put down their differences once more and embrace their similarities to build to a more prosperous Macedonia.