Between Preventive Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution: The Macedonian Perspective of the Kosovo Crisis

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Abstract

The paper deals with the Kosovo crisis as one of the most tremendous challenges for European security. Most international factors are aware that the situation requires a wide range of diplomatic actions, conflict mediation, good offices, and crisis management, not only in Kosovo, but also beyond. As a starting point for the analysis serves the fact that the Balkan countries still look like a system of connected vessels, both in political and security terms.

The paper is particularly focused on the impact of the Kosovo crisis on Macedonian political and security prospects. In very few, if any, countries the linkage between domestic and foreign policy is so closely intertwined as in Macedonia. Obviously, Macedonia's external environment makes long-term stability far less likely. Nevertheless, one must keep in mind that Macedonian insecurity originates from the ethnic characteristics of the country. The ethnic tensions in Macedonia, especially those associated with ethnic Albanians, threatened to place the country on the brink of a serious internal and external conflict.

The Balkans, always known as the "powder keg" in Europe, has been a theatre of paradigmatic changes during the last decade. The collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War are the two earthshaking events having initiated a complete re-definition of the Balkan geopolitical and geostrategical profile.

What seemed to be an *annus mirabilis* in 1989/90 for most of European continent, after Yugoslavia's dissolution (1991/92) turned into *annus horibilis,* especially for the Balkan peoples. The ethnonational conflicts that emerged on the territory of former Yugoslavia have become a test for the international community's ability to prevent, mitigate and/or resolve conflicts in the post-Cold War period.

Thus, the international community (and especially great powers) faced new challenges and responsibilities in regard to the maintenance of the world peace and security. It is well known that during the Cold War the original UN system of collective security was supplemented with new mechanisms like peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations. However, both traditional and above mentioned non-traditional mechanisms for maintaining peace and security have shown to be insufficient and non-effective in regard to avoidance or settlement of so-called "wars of the third kind" [1]. It seems that the main characteristic of the new security landscape lies in the fact that the gravest and the most frequent conflicts today emerge not between, but within the states. [2] New threats and dangers have asked for more flexible and subtle responses to the increasing number of regional and intra-state crises.

Many different international security organizations, state representatives and prominent individuals have paraded through the Yugoslav successor states for several years in search of a solution. For that purpose, a variety of methods, techniques and mechanisms for conflict management were activated with minor success. The failure of the international community in great extent was a consequence of its inability to understand the complexity of the Balkan legacies and the logic of the current developments. Having lack of a global view on the Balkan conflicts, all international factors took a role of firemen, putting out a fire after the fire. The missing link in their actions has been the lack of awareness that all Balkan conflicts have always been deeply interrelated and interdependent. The other missing point is the lack of conceptual thinking and practice of conflict prevention and conflict management. That has been proved in many occasions, but this time the special accent will be put on the Kosovo [3] conflict.

Albanian Question in (Former) Yugoslavia: Between Myths and Reality

The celebration of the 600th anniversary of the Kosovo Battle in 1989 was one of the most remarkable event in the last stage of former Yugoslavia's existence. On the surface, it could be described as a unique occasion, in modern times, for

a Serbian mass demonstration of reaffirmation of identity, and lament for a loss of sovereignty, symbolized by this traumatic historic event. In essence, this year represented a turning point of the ongoing deep social, political and economic crisis and a locus of Yugoslavia's demise. The real causes for Yugoslavia's dissolution were extremely deep and complex. Thus, the emergence of the Serbia's overt dissatisfaction with its own constitutional status within the Yugoslav federation did not represent the reason, but rather consequence of a series of events, which had already been prepared in the economic, political, legal and inter-ethnic spheres of society. [4]

This date is usually and wrongly considered as a beginning of the Serb-Albanian discord over Kosovo, especially by the international community and media. Identification of the repeal of the Kosovo's autonomous status in 1989 as the major rationale of this conflict has been nothing else but an unjustifiable simplification and de-historization of this age-old conflict. This approach does not take into a consideration the long-lasting and bitter historical legacy of relations between Albanians and Serbs, who are much more different and segregated than any other two peoples or nations in ex-Yugoslavia. However, this long-lasting trauma until now has never been resolved through ethnic war, but has been rather festered throughout the 20th century. Kosovo was a witness of many dramatic fights for ethnic domination, migrations, etc.

Nevertheless, what can be said for sure is that Kosovo was not very often a scene of a peaceful coexistence of the two dominant ethnic groups - Serbs and Albanians. Despite all historical grievances, the Kosovo conflict does not imply a simple animosity between these ethnic groups, but rather conflict over political, economical and social inequalities between them. An author rightly stresses that "the inequalities that divide disadvantaged minorities from advantaged or dominant groups are the enduring heritage of four major historical processes: conquest, state building, migration and economic development. Every people who established an empire or settled frontiers, who conquered nonbelievers or civilized natives, who built a modern state, did so at the expense of weaker and less fortunate peoples". [5]

Misinterpretations of this conflict can be found far more often, than critical approaches toward the relevance of its historical background. The Kosovo conflict is the most obscure one due to the fact that there is a real mixture of myths, half-truths and facts supported by each party in the dispute. For instance, some of the explanations of this conflict promote *ab antiquo* argument, with the sole purpose of proving historical rights of one ethnic group over a certain territory. This version is advocated by the Albanian side, which base its claim to Kosovo on Albanians' status as descendants of the ancient Illyrians, a

people who are believed to have occupied the Balkans some time before Romans and 1,000 years before Slavs. [6] However, there are no scientific facts to back this belief. [7] On the other hand, the Serbs insist on Kosovo as their heartland and that at the peak of their state's glory, in the Middle Ages, there were very few inhabitants with Albanian origin. Each party in dispute tries to prove its own truth and consequently, one's exclusive historic right over this unfortunate territory.

The collision between these two myths demonstrates how strong are the emotional attachments to Kosovo by both sides, and explains why they hold irreconcilable positions regarding the disputed territory. In addition, there are some more historical myths linked with such tragic episodes, such as: expulsions and exodus of the population (sometimes Serbian, sometimes Albanian), religious intolerance, Kosovo as a holy land or birthplace of national and cultural awakening, etc. For instance, Serbs see in Kosovo their Jerusalem, while for Albanians it has a significance of Piedmont in their struggle for national liberation and unification. Moreover, all of these myths are not always aged, but there are some newly born myths about Kosovo. The nature of this extremely complex conflict cannot be fully surveyed without first dispelling these myths - both the old and the new ones. In this context, H. Wiberg argues: "Most of these perceptions, originating in family traditions or political propaganda, have *some*historical background, sometimes much; they disagree on *how many*were killed, *to what extent* different peoples took part, and whether events were *typical or exceptional.*All groups see themselves as historical victims of brutal oppression, even genocide. After 1945, these feelings were suppressed in the name of national reconciliation (Brotherhood and Unity); but did not disappear and were passed on, for example, by oral family traditions. What one group sees as a genuine historical grievance is often dismissed by others as mythical or monstrously exaggerated; this exacerbates the traumatic relations, adding the extra trauma of *not being heard."* [8] Today this is true for both sides - Kosovo Albanians are disappointed by being forgotten at Dayton, and Kosovo Serbs are deprived from their right to express their truth and interests.

However, what seem to be indisputable is that the first close contacts between the two tribes, and especially the deterioration of their mutual relationships occurred during the period of Ottoman domination, when ethnic Albanians began their mass settling the Kosovo region. Unfortunately, this process coincided with the Serb's exodus that picked up momentum after a failed uprising in 1689. The additional factor that heavily influenced the relations between two ethnic groups was the process of Islamization, which had been

underway for almost two centuries. Unlike the other Balkan peoples, until 18th century the Albanian population overwhelmingly converted to Islam. Consequently, not only demographic, but also the power balance among national groups was shifting according to the successfulness of the Islamization process. Having being incorporated in the administrative and particularly in the military system of the Ottoman Empire, this balance shifted drastically in favor of the Albanians to the detriment of good relations with their Slav neighbors. As a reward for their loyal service they were given territories in Albania's neighboring regions, such as Kosovo and Western Macedonia. Islamization reflected on personal welfare and social advancement.

From Serbian perspective Albanians were considered as a part of occupation troops. At the same time, Albanians dreaded of the Christian (Slav) pretenders to the Turk patrimony, which had granted them a privileged status. By the 19th century in areas where Serbs and Albanians were interrelated, ethnic/religious differences lost their significance and a more critical contrast occurred. It was a collision in political outlooks or concepts. While Serbs had a clear idea of Serbian statehood, Albanians mostly tended to identify themselves with the Ottoman Empire, whose part they were for a long period of time.

At the end of the 19th century, Albanians were the last among the Balkan peoples that were further to develop their tribal loose organization into an independent state and community, with a specific cultural and national identity. In 1878 some prominent Albanian leaders established the Albanian League in Kosovo town Prizren, attempting to unify territories inhabited with Albanians in a form of autonomous province within the Ottoman Empire. This project marked a rise of Albanian nationalism and envisaged a formation of a nation-state of all the Albanians in the Balkans (Greater Albania). Leaded by this dream the Albanian people have frequently counted on the external, and most often - wrong allies. Since then, Kosovars have dominated all Albanian national strategy. Some of the most prominent national figures were Kosovars.

Kosovo was taken over by the Serbs during the First Balkan War in a ruthless way, by killing and expelling the ethnic Albanians from the region. The table turned during W.W.I when the Serbs were driven out and the Albanians wreaked their revenge on the Serb troops. In 1918 Serbs regain Kosovo again and Yugoslav government systematically began with the attempt to bolster the Serbianization of the province. The only occasion when almost whole Albanian nation found itself within one "state" happened during W.W.II (1941-44), when Greater Albania was established with Italian and German support. The Axis powers dismantled first Yugoslavia among them, and established a control over its territory by creation of many puppet states. The Albanians believed that

their eternal dream had been realized - Kosovo was annexed to rump Albania and became a part of Greater Albania.

Communist Yugoslav leadership tried to involve the Kosovo Albanians in partisan resistance movement against occupiers, but its attempts were unresponsive or unrewarding. The Communist project of Second Yugoslavia was less than what Albanians had got from the occupiers. According to the memories of a partisan resistance organizer, conditions for guerrilla movement in Kosovo were worse than in any other region of the country. [9] The wartime situation in Kosovo was reminiscent of Turkish times, in sense that Albanians were returned to positions of power and anti-Slav mood prevailed once again. Not only the Albanians exercised local power, but also many of them gave active armed support to the Italians and Germans (quisling Ballist troops). On the other hand, most of the Serbs rather joined Chetniks groups, than partisans. Grievances became deeper during this period due to the infliction of many atrocities by both sides.

In the course of anti-fascist struggle, and especially after beginning of the partisan resistance in Albania proper led by the newly-created Albanian Communist Party, Yugoslav Communist party let the Kosovo Albanians to believe that after the war they would have the right of self-determination, including the rights to secession. The promise was not fulfilled and Kosovo remained an autonomous unit within Serbia, which has never been forgot by the Albanians. The Serbs, however, still remember that about 100,000 Serbs forced out of Kosovo during the war have never been permitted to return. In turn, almost the same number of Albanians from Albania proper was given residence in Kosovo as well as Yugoslav citizenship.

At the very beginning of the new federative Yugoslavia there were considerable difficulties between the Albanian masses and the government. Many forms of nonviolent and violent resistance marked the first post-war years. On 8 February 1945 Kosovo was subjected military administration, which was repeated several times later. In fact, one can say that during the entire Tito's era, Kosovo was the scene of considerable ethnic unrest, as the Albanian minority sought to achieve greater cultural and political autonomy. What began as the "Autonomous Kosovo-Metohija Region" (1947), became the "Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija" (1963), and ended up as the "Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo" (1969). It might seem as an insignificant semantics, but according to the provisions of the 1974 Federal Constitution it meant ascending from a faceless geographic entity to a "constituent element of the federation."

In former Yugoslavia Albanians were not considered a constituent nation, but according to the 1974 Constitution they were *de facto* granted a republican status. Kosovo became a full constitutive element of the Yugoslav Federation with direct and equitable representation in all Party and state bodies. Kosovo and Voyvodina were, in other words, elements in the overall Federation with the same rights and duties as the six republics, although the constitution did not give them statehood like the republics.

Serbia felt that it was deprived of having full control of its territory. Eventually, Serbs came to feel that they were weakened in Tito's Yugoslavia because 21 % of the Serbs in Serbia were outside Belgrade's jurisdiction, namely those having lived in the two autonomous provinces. In Croatia, Serbs made up 15 % out of the entire number of inhabitants, but had no special rights or autonomy as minority. In Serbia, Albanians made up 8 % and had a constitutionally guaranteed status - in fact, perhaps the most liberal in terms of education, culture and democratic participation any minority in the world enjoyed. However, the Kosovo Albanians were not happy with that status due to their own good reasons. One of them was that history unfairly has condemned the Albanian people to live separately in three states, Albania, Serbia and Macedonia. In addition, they have not forgotten that throughout the fifties and sixties, Belgrade practiced a systematic policy of discrimination against the Albanian minority.

From Albanian perspective the autonomous status only existed on paper. They were dissatisfied with being defined as a 'nationality' (that could not have a republic but only autonomy) rather than being a 'nation' such as Croats or Serbs. Thus, the 1970s witnessed a series of demonstrations, clashes with Serb police, imprisonments, increased tensions and hatred. National Liberation Movements and Marxist-Leninist groups were fighting, more or less underground, for full independence and unification with Albania. Some Albanians wanted republic status within the Yugoslav federation, while others wanted a full independence. After the Albanian riots and the imposition of martial law in Kosovo in 1981, the Communist Party (LCY) used a typical socialist interpretation of the disturbances, qualifying them as Albanian separatists' "counterrevolution". Thus, Yugoslav leadership hesitated to identify the real causes of the unrest.

On the other hand, Serbian Party gave different interpretation and capitalized on the symbolic meaning of Kosovo and latent Serbian nationalism. "The Serbian Communist party redefined Kosovo as an ethnic threat, tapping national myths surrounding Kosovo and history of the great Serbian medieval state" [10]. In 1985, the Serbian Academy of Sciences produced a memorandum,

which strongly criticized Tito and the Communist state for anti-Serb policies. The report also condemned "genocidal" anti-Serb policies in Kosovo, where the 10 percent Serb minority was said to be oppressed by the Albanian majority. The Academy promoted the idea of a Serbian state as a solution. That idea was adopted very soon by Slobodan Milosevic. In 1986, he became head of the Serbian Communist Party at the time when it was under serious attack by a new democratic opposition. By making a patriotic, pro-Serbian speech in Gazimestan (the Kosovo battle site) in 1987, Milosevic deprived the opposition of nationalism as a tool, and made it as his own.

In regard to the Kosovo crisis Yugoslav federation demonstrated its political impotence to deal with ethnic conflicts and to protect its citizens (both Serbs and Albanians). It did not have at its disposal any nonviolent instrument for conflict prevention and/or resolution. Second Yugoslavia was born in mid of civil war and all kind of inter-ethnic clashes, which represented a climax of a long and bitter tradition. Yugoslav Communists (partisans) addressed all the oppressed social strata and nonrecognized ethnic groups, and gathered them around a new project of socialistic federation of equal republics and peoples. After W.W.II, one of the major tasks was the suppression of all historical grievances. The formula of this specific kind of national reconciliation was found in the project of "Brotherhood and Unity". However, grievances and national frustrations did not disappear, but rather were temporarily frozen. From the very beginning, First Yugoslavia was supposed to be a state of all South Slavs, but it was not able to provide equality even between the Slav nations, not to mention non-Slavs. Despite its sincere intention, even Second Yugoslavia was split between affirmation of national identities and cultures on one hand, and the support of the process of Yugoslav national identification, on the other hand. Not surprisingly, it was incomparably more difficult for Albanians to identify themselves as Yugoslavs (literally meaning, South Slavs). They used to feel as an island in the Slav-populated region and, not surprisingly, there was insignificant percentage of ethnic Albanians having declared themselves as Yugoslavs among them in all censuses held in former Yugoslavia.

Today one can see another serious wave of violence in a protracted and very complex conflict, which is a result of accumulated frustrations, if not decade-long traumatisation, on both sides. For many analysts, Kosovo represents the very place where the Pandora's box of ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslavia has been opened. Furthermore, some of them expect the circulus vitiousus to be completed on the same place. On the other hand, some other students of Yugoslav conflicts consider the possibility of spilling over of the

Kosovo conflict in neighboring regions and its transformation in virtually new Balkan war. No matter whose forecast is right, it is obvious that the postponement of the resolution of Kosovo conflict might have far-reaching consequences for the regional and European security in the next millenium.

The Kosovo Puzzle: Building of Contemporary Myths and Fallacies

According to the peace and conflict researchers, the diagnosis of a conflict represents a very significant part of conflict mitigation. It is a word about the analysis of the past, because only the past can produce data. But at the same time, the therapy of the past is what is needed. [11] This conclusion is especially relevant for such a complex conflict as the Kosovo one certainly is. In addition to the very perplexing historical background, which is very often deliberatelly transformed into several myths by the disputed parties, the current situation is furthermore burdened by some newly created myths about the recent developments in regard to the Kosovo conflict. One can identify, at least, three versions fostered by the Serbian regime, by the Kosovo Albanians or by the international community.

The Serbian regime insists on the thesis that among the majority of the Serbian people Kosovo still represents a cradle of their Serbdom and statehood. Having emphasized this "fact", the regime has tried to justify its harsh repression and measures for pacification of the Kosovo Albanians. However, the true sentiments of the Serbs regarding Kosovo are not quite in accordance to this official argumentation. Aside from the truth about the Kosovo as an embodiment of Serb's national identity, the new generations of Serbs have not been so enthusiastic about Kosovo region. In the period of Second Yugoslavia's existence, Serbs from the province were constantly leaving this economically unattractive region in a huge number. The demographic misbalance between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo emerged as a result from these migrations, followed by extremely high birth rate among Kosovo Albanians.

The presence of only 10% Serb population in Kosovo is mostly an effect of the economic reasons, rather than planned "ethnic cleansing" carried out by the Kosovo Albanians. As for the Serbs from Serbia proper, the Kosovo province has always been rather a place from the history textbooks, than a part of their homeland. Some recent studies have shown that most of the Serbs have never been in Kosovo, which implies that they only have had emotional ties with this particular part of their imagined homeland. Therefore, there is a ground for the

assumption that Serbian citizens are not very eager to fight and to die for this territory. This is the real explanation for many examples of desertion from police or military service on the side of Serbs.

However, the Kosovo issue certainly still posesses a great emotional potential. Since 1987 Milosevic has many times misused the Kosovo issue for ethnic mobilization of the Serbs. Those living in Serbia proper have been mobilized on the basis of their sentiments and "responsibility before the future generations of Serbs". The strength of this rationale can be seen from the fact that both ruling and opposition parties in Serbia are almost unanimous in regard to the Kosovo issue. Despite the devastating economic and political conditions, Milosevic has succeeded to consolidate his political position within Serbia and Yugoslavia.

At the same time, the regime has secured its existence on the fear of Kosovo Serbs, which has represented a reservoir for obtaining at least 26 parliamentary seats in the National Assembly of Serbia. The Kosovo Albanians have consistently refused to participate in any Serbian or Yugoslav elections, arguing that this would imply recognition of the Serbian and Yugoslav authorities. Their votes have been considered essential in securing victory of the democratic opposition in Serbia. Because of Albanian boycott, Milosevic could count on these seats for sure, and this Albanian decision let a person like the criminal named Arkan to be the parliamentary representative from Kosovo.

The second modern myth in Kosovo is linked with the model of passive resistance led by Ibrahim Rugova, the "president" of the so-called independent Republic of Kosova. The misperception of what was happening in Kosovo and a belief that Rugova practiced a Gandhian-type of nonviolent resistance have prevailed within West public and media. It is the core problem that the international community has not been able to clear up. According to some more insightful analysts Rugova's strategy can be described as unprincipled non-violent resistance, which is essentially different from the genuine Gandhian model. [12]The Rugova's policy was never directed toward establishing a dialogue with its adversaries and building a basis of support among "good" Serbs. On the contrary, the final solution has been seen in the form of international military intervention in support for Kosovo's independence. Thus, the crucial inconsistency in Kosovo Albanians' politics was the advocacy of non-violence within Albanian community while simultaneously calling for NATO bombings.

It is very indicative that Albanians refused the dialogue with the government of Milan Panic, because "their strategy of mobilization of international support

and intervention stood a better chance with a "bad guy" like Milosevic in Belgrade than with a "nice guy" there like Panic" [13]. The image of peaceful and victimized people was supposed to influence the international public opinion. The explanation used by the Albanian side was that "the Albanians would consider only a meeting on neutral soil led by international mediators". Thus, official negotiations between FR Yugoslavia and the Kosovo "shadow state" mediated by an international organization and taking place on "neutral" soil became for Prishtina a precondition for all formal meetings and the main goal for Kosovo Albanians' "diplomacy". Serbian and Albanian sides obviously were intertwined by a mutually unacceptable goal: the internationalization as a primary goal of the Albanians, which was resolutely vetoed by the Serbian side.

The main feature of Kosovo Albanians' non-violent resistance to Serbian rule has been the organization of a parallel society, followed by its own political institutions, educational and health-care systems, taxation and, cultural and sport life. What looked as a hallmark of this peaceful resistance to state oppression, in course of time started to play a contradictory role. Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova tried to present is as "internal liberation" of oppressed Albanians, but according to many reports on human rights abuses and violations one can say that Kosovo Albanians have never been more oppressed by the Serbs than in that period when they enjoyed more freedom to run their own affairs. From one side, during this period Albanians increased their moral and a feeling of self-sufficiency.

On the other hand, this situation also led toward self-marginalization and radicalization of the Albanian community. Gradually, they began to perceive their "independent" state as a prison. Those circumstances were correctly interpreted by Kosovo Albanian writer Shkelzen Maliqi, who argued that the parallel structures helped to contain radicalism and to sustain a broad consensus in support of the Albanian policy of peaceful resistance. Especially, the educational segregation strengthened the antagonism between Serbian and Albanian communities in Kosovo. Within their "shadow state" Albanians did promote neither peace and human rights education nor conflict understanding. Instead, the closed school system raised several generations of young Albanians on the ground of national exclusiveness and intolerance toward neighboring communities and ethnic groups.

The Serbian rule in the province has rightly been described as an apartheid-like system. Even basically accurate, this presumption has never been earnestly elaborated by numerous conflict managers engaged in the conflict. The apartheid has been actively supported by both Serbian and Albanian parties. There has been established a perfect balance of intolerance [14]. Because of

different reasons both sides promoted the same creed: the worse, the better. The increasing number of Kosova Albanians' victims was supposed to be used as a very convincing argument for internationalization of the Kosovo issue. At the same time, the Serbs (citizens or members of the security forces) killed or expelled by Albanians were used as alibi for state repression. The two practically authoritarian regimes, the Serbian and shadow government of Albanians, have been only nourishing the extremism on both sides. For a long period, Albanians in Kosovo have been convinced that the time was working for them and they only should be patient and wait for international assistance in their struggle for independence.

According to many features, Albanian parallel society in Kosovo cannot be defined as democratic or devotedly attached to the respect of human rights. Political project of the "Republic of Kosova" does not offer much optimism about its democratic essence. It looks more as a twin sister of Serbian regime. Having in mind the Albanians' strategy employed in Kosovo, the would-be state creation will not face a bright future. "The liberated Kosovo would become a garrison state, a state imbued with repression, a mirror of the state it seceded from and, perhaps, the scene of a civil war." [15]

Despite the verbal support and appreciation, the Kosovo Albanians' wishes were never fulfilled. The Kosovo issue was never high on the agendas of the peace conferences in Hague, London or in Geneva. Despite Albanians' expectations, it was not included in Dayton either. The fact that Rugova's policy had not given desired results brought disillusionment and triggered the tectonic changes of parallel power in Kosovo. The final outcome was radicalization of the general mood of Kosovo Albanians and re-direction of their movement toward strategy of violent resistance. However, an insight analysis would show that within the parallel Kosovo society there have been parallel activity of the advocates of both non-violent and "intifadah"-style strategy for gaining state independence.

Being "forgotten by Dayton" is not the only reason for intensification of the KLA's para-military and sometimes terrorist operations. The facts can prove that KLA was not born at once, as a spontaneous reaction toward international community's inconsiderateness and the Serbian repression. From the very beginning of Albanian resistance against Milosevic's regime, there have been "two games" in the town. Thus, what happened after Dayton was the hard-line policy got mass support on expense of Rugova's non-violent policy. The military organization, equipment and preparedness of the KLA's fighters have clearly shown that this armed force have been existing for some longer period. There are some speculations that this process started in 1993. In other words,

the violence has always been perceived as the only alternative to Rugova's non-violent strategy. ₁₆

Relying on their mass support, the KLA leaders have tried to justify their armed resistance against Serbian state terrorism. That was supposed to equalize their "just resistance" with the idea of just war. However, the usage of unjust methods, such as terrorist actions, executions of their Albanian fellows accused of collaboration with the Serbs, creation of a psychosis of fear and insecurity that intensifies pressure on the departure of the non-Albanian population and, unwillingness to negotiate with its adversaries - all these steps have made democratic Kosovo almost impossible.

Endorsing some of these newly created myths, the international community has also added some new ones. Conflict "managers" have reduced this complex conflict into two-party conflict, unconsciously draw a line between them and contributed to their hostility. The media and even some policy makers through the world have once again oversimplified the Balkan cast of characters into heroes and villains. But this facile impression ignores the reality that Kosovo drama has many actors and many sorts of extremists. [17] In this tragedy there are many internal conflicting parties, such as: Kosovo Serbs v. Kosovo Albanians; Kosovo Serbs v. Serbs from Serbia proper; Kosovo Albanians v. Kosovo Albanians. The picture is more complex when including many external interested and involved actors.

No systematic negotiation effort was ever tried neither between the parties in the dispute nor through involvement of third-party mediation. This conclusion cannot be changed by the fact that there have been involved numerous international actors (on track 1 and track 2, i.e. international governmental and non-governmental organizations) and that there have been proposed various projects for the future status of Kosovo. [18] More importantly, the conflict has never been addressed in a right way, because too much energy and time have been wasted in searching the final solution for the Kosovo's political and legal status. It might sounds cynical, but it seems that everyone involved in this conflict has had its own reasons for its continuation, and even for its aggravation. Having in mind that both dispute parties, Serbian and Albanian, have since along shown incapable in resolving their own conflict, the so-called international community seems to deserve the main accusations for the current war-like situation in Kosovo.

For far too long the Serbs and the Albanians in Kosovo have lived side by side, but not together. They confined themselves in their ethnically compact cocoons. In other words, they have been living caught in the trap of ethnic

security dilemma, and there has been almost no one to help them to break out this *circulus vitiosus* and to start with confidence-building measures.

The Albanian versus Macedonian Question: Searching for Ethno-Political Modus Vivendi

The outbreak of violence in Kosovo has again shone the spotlight on Macedonia. Kosovo issue, and especially Kosovo conflict, bear great relevance for Macedonia. This comes not only from the fact that Macedonia is the closest neighbor, but also from the important fact that the Kosovo issue is only a part of a wider Albanian Question in the Balkans. Thus, within its borders Macedonia is itself burdened with a part of this complex historical problem. Furthermore, the puzzle is additionally made more complex by the existence of so-called Macedonian Question.

The exploration of the impact of Kosovo conflict on Macedonia necessarily call for a look inward and focusing on the facets of relationships between Macedonians and Albanians from a historical perspective. Among the other heavy historical legacies, the Republic of Macedonia has entered the period of its independence as a state with a certain mortgage of uneasy inter-ethnic relations with Macedonian Albanians. Their history can be traced since long ago, but most importantly - they have never been as troubled as the relations between Serbs and Albanians have.

Most of the time during the history, Albanians and Macedonians succeeded to build relatively stable relationships of ethnic tolerance and co-existence. The presence of Albanians in the western part of Macedonia, like their Kosovo brethren, could be traced from the same historical period (17th-18th century). The myths about the historical rights over the territory are very similar with the Kosovo case. [19]From the very beginning, the contacts between Albanians and Macedonians were determined by the fact that in the critical moment of the Turkish invasion in the Balkans the Macedonian Slavs were in a radically different political position. Namely, it was not a glorious period for Slavs in Macedonia, which medieval state had been defeated long ago. [20] They were not politically and military organized, and they were not able to give a big resistance to the invading troops. Macedonia was the first of the lands, later known as Yugoslav, to fall under the Ottoman Turks and the last to be freed from Ottoman rule.

The dark centuries of Ottoman of subjugation and cultural deprivation left the region's Slavs backward, illiterate, and caused rivalry over their ethnic identity. More importantly, the Ottomans destroyed the Macedonian aristocracy, enserfed the Christian peasants, and subjected the Slavic clergy to the Greek patriarch of Constantinople. The living conditions of the Macedonian Christians deteriorated especially in the 17th and 18th centuries as Turkish power declined. From that moment neighboring national elites began their rivalry over Macedonia. Therefore, the Albanian minority has never been subject to national oppression by the Macedonians or to open violence or armed conflicts. Having converted into Islam, Albanians gained a privileged social, political and even military status in regard to Macedonian "kaurs" (a Turkish word for Christians). The religion, rather than ethnicity, was the main factor that distinguished them in those times. However, the aggressive and competitive politics run by the newly established nation-states in the neighborhood over Macedonia's territory and population were much more harmful. From a modern national perspective, traumas originated from the five-century long relationships with Muslims (Turks or Albanians) are not considered as harmful for national-building process of the Macedonians.

In the First Yugoslavia both Albanians and Macedonians were in the same subservient position, belonging to the group of peoples deprived from the right of self-determination. The situation changed in favor of the Albanians in the western part of Macedonia during the W.W.II when the "Greater Albania" was established under the auspices of the Italian occupational forces. In the period of four years, Macedonians were put under a hard repression by new Albanian authorities, not because of their ethnic affiliation, but rather because most of the Macedonians were engaged in the partisan movement headed by the Communist Party. In the core of the conflict was the collision between political vision of Macedonia as a republic of the new Yugoslav federation versus assembling the Western Macedonia to the rest of the territories inhabited with Albanians. For sake of the newly promoted "Brotherhood and Unity", the atrocities committed by the Ballist forces in Macedonia were not permitted as an issue of discussion. On the other hand, the executions of the Albanians carried out by the Partisan forces were also veiled from the eye of the public.

Having choosen the right side in the anti-fascist struggle, Macedonians (at least, in what is called Vardar Macedonia) has gained their "own" state for the first time in their history. It was a radical change in the status of the two previously nonrecognized ethnic groups within the First Yugoslavia. Generally speaking, "after their oppressive treatment by Serbia in pre-War Yugoslavia, Macedonians blossomed in the dignity Tito offered them." [21] On the other

hand, while Albanians in Kosovo were granted a special status, those living in Macedonia felt cast out.

Despite being the poorest region of former Yugoslavia, Kosovo represented a cultural, political and economic center for Albanians wherever they lived. Albanians from all over Yugoslavia were attracted by educational and employment opportunities in the Kosovo province. Strong emotional and personal relationships were developed especially between Kosovars and Albanians in Macedonia. Despite being situated in different federal units, due to the unrestricted internal mobility, Albanians in Yugoslavia were able to create their own ethno-cultural community. That fact offers an explanation why today relationship between Albanians in Macedonia and Kosovo has traditionally been closer than contacts between them and the Albanians in Albania.

In the past The Albanians in Macedonia have closely followed the events in Kosovo, by organizing demonstrations in Macedonia mirroring those in Kosovo. Undoubtedly, there have always been strong links between the two areas. One can point out that occasional troubles in the relations between Macedonians and Albanians were rather product of the conflict out of area, more precisely in Kosovo, than in Macedonia itself. Albanians in Macedonia were highly sensitive to every development in the neighboring autonomous province of Kosovo, while Macedonians were obedient to the federal politics and symphateticwith the Serbian leadership. Interethnic tensions occurred several times and coincided with the similar incidents in Kosovo - in 1960s and 1970s. According to an Albanian scholar, in the developments in Macedonia (riots in the town of Tetovo) from 1968 many of the principal actors were actually Kosovars, who had fled Prishtina three weeks earlier. [22] One can notice that almost every tension in Macedonia has been a reflection of the influx of Kosovo activists rather than a result of an authentic activism of Macedonian ethnic Albanians.

Especially, the unrest in Kosovo in 1981 had strong impact on Macedonian plight. Albanians from Macedonia immediately manifested a tendency to emulate their Kosovar brethren. The reaction of the Macedonian government was harsh, even it is an exaggeration to describe the situation worse than that in Kosovo province. [23] The purges were undertaken within the ranks of the Party's members with Albanian descent as well as among the teachers, imprisoning them for separatist and irredentist activities. [24] The statistical and other sources from that period clearly indicate that Albanians were not adequately incorporated in the political and economic institutions of the Macedonian Republic. However, there are no reliable indicators that large numbers of

Albanians were not admitted to positions of importance in the infrastructure. [25] Another thing, which is usually falsely interpreted in some foreign sources, is linked with the schooling of Albanians in that period. Namely, education in mother tongue for all nationalities in socialist Macedonia were not denied, although it was reduced during the period of worsening of interethnic relations in 1980s.

The history of these ethnic groups has undoubtedly created the elementary level of ethnic tolerance, but there can be no talk of their real togetherness. Macedonians and Albanians have most often lived one next to another as two separate worlds where the elements dividing them have been more emphasized than the elements bringing them together (different ethnic origins, cultures, traditions, languages and religions). The lack of social interactions and mutual understanding of each other's language, culture and history quickly transforms itself into fear. Democratization of Macedonian society is faced with the necessity of invention of the optimal model of co-existence between the ethnic groups it unites. The explosion of ethno-cultural pluralism is not a problem in itself: the problem arises from the fact that the cultural systems and ethnic groups have very few points of contact, i.e. that they are separate and parallel systems. [26] Therefore, simultaneously with the transition, the redefinition of the relations between all the ethnic groups existing in the country is a necessity. Macedonians were more directed toward other brotherly peoples and republics in former Yugoslavia for many years. It is one of the reasons which contributes to neglecting the internal plight on inter ethnic plan. During the five-decade-long existence of the Macedonian State, much closer relations have been established with the other Yugoslav peoples, which today still exist against all odds.

Despite all tensions and problems, the democratization process has brought some relaxation in regard to the interethnic relations in Macedonia. Despite the constant grumbling about their alleged treatment as "second class citizens" in the new political system, unlike their Kosovo brethren, Albanians in Macedonia have used all constitutional and political opportunities to play a role of a significant political factor. The so-called Albanian political body in its surface looks that it has never been united. There are several political parties, whose behavior and rhetoric depend on whether they are in the governing coalition or not. Those Albanians who until yesterday were labeled as radicals are to-day moderates, and *vice versa*. The same conclusion has been proved also in the case of Macedonian parties. Despite of these political fluctuations, the most important thing is that Albanian parties have been included in all post-communist Macedonian governments.

Under the different political platforms of the Albanian parties, one can easily discover several common features. In short, the primary goal of their political agenda is to gain and to extend their collective rights rather than individual ones. Their basic activities are directed toward achievement different constitutional status for their ethnic group, i.e. re-definition of the Macedonian Republic as a bi-national state; extension of the linguistic rights, i.e. affirmation of the Albanian language as a second official language along with Macedonian one; education in mother tongue on all levels, including university level; more adequate representation of the Albanians in all political and public sectors (especially within the security and military forces), proportionate to their share in the population in large; and development greater autonomy of local government. The parties are, as it is correctly pointed out in a Report of International Crisis Group, divided over the means of raising the status of Macedonia's ethnic Albanians. [27]

Very often the relations between the two biggest ethnic groups in the country have shown to be uneasy and even troublesome, but miraculously Macedonia has survived despite all bad predictions. Since 1991, on Albanian side there have been several important indications concerning the attitude toward Macedonian state: Albanians boycotted the referendum on independence in 1991 as well as the census; Albanian parliamentary group boycotted adoption of the new Constitution in the same year; in 1992 Albanians held illegal referendum which demonstrated that 90% supported independence; in 1994 they declared an autonomous republic "Illiryda" in the western part of the Republic. At early November 1993, the police arrested a group of Albanians (including a deputy minister of defense in the government of Macedonia) and accused them of attempting to establish para-military forces. Their next steps ostensibly would have been to separate "Illiryda" by force, and then to unify it with Albania and independent Kosovo. Since late 1994, the illegal private Albanian university has been functioning in Tetovo, which is still one of the hottest issues in Macedonia.

Macedonian government's reactions were not always standardized. Some Albanian motions were answered with harsh repression, and sometimes they were ignored and tolerated. The previous government, although considered as one run by moderates from both sides of the ethno-political spectrum, did not define a clear ethnic policy. It sometimes practiced a bizarre "ostrich tactic", and sometimes manipulated with ethnic issues in order to divert the public attention from the hot social and economic problems. In general, the moderates from the previous government usually flirted with national sentiments of the heterogeneous Macedonian population. However, one must admit the fact that

this government introduced the good habit of interethnic cooperation, at least, on the highest political level.

The new coalition government elected after the latest parliamentary elections held in fall 1998 looks like a marriage of unlikely partners, getting together the most radical Macedonian and Albanian parties. The parties that rule the country until recently have been regarded as nationalistic and radical. However, there is a basis for cautious optimism. Some doubts remain as to its viability and its ability to reconcile interests that are often conflicting and even mutually exclusive. For the time being, Macedonia continues to amaze the world with its internal developments, especially in regard to the building of its own *modus vivendi* among the numerous ethnic groups it brings together.

There are ambiguous attitudes toward Macedonia's stability. Sometimes Macedonian state's strength and its stability are often exaggerated. At the same time, Macedonia is also very often considered as a time bomb and the most dangerous flash point in the Balkans. It seems that the truth is somewhere halfway: Macedonia is still searching for its own way, but being fragile and vulnerable it is still very sensitive to all kinds of external pressures.

Impact of the Kosovo Conflict on Macedonia: On the Brink of the Conflict?

Although Macedonian government and the international community make frequent reference to inter-ethnic relations between the Macedonian majority and the Albanian minority, and especially to latter's secessionist and irredentist aspirations, it seems that at the moment more actual concern is the residual effect of Kosovo conflict on the country. Evaluation of this impact on Macedonia's and regional prospects has to take into consideration that there are some different perspectives, which are purposely backed by various segments within and out of Macedonian society. The hypothetical question about real impacts of the developments in Kosovo is likely to be given different answers, depending on who is asked. Therefore, it is quite complicated question to be answered. Within Macedonian society there are, at least, three distinct viewpoints and explanation of the (non-)existence of direct linkage between the Albanian Question in FR Yugoslavia and Macedonia. One must, however, keep in mind that within each of them there are some variations, which additionally complicate the situation. All these interpretations have one thing in common - that the war in Kosovo means stirring up of incidents in the whole region.

According to the official standpoint promoted by the Macedonian government, the problem related to the Albanians in Macedonia is internal one and, consequently, it should be resolved within the political and legal state mechanisms. Macedonian officials have been trying to stress distinctions between the historical background and current status of Albanians in Macedonia and those living elsewhere. The first argument, which is usually used in this context, is that Albanians in Macedonia are a whole lot better off than their brothers in Kosovo or their motherland. In addition, they give emphasis to the fact that Albanians are represented in every institution of the political system. The government and the parliament are the places where they can and should make their voice heard. Macedonia's Government and politicians in generally take great pains to differentiate the solution of their country's Albanian issue from the solution of Kosovo's conflict. Having failed to satisfy some of the reasonable Albanian demands, the foregoing Macedonian government contributed to strengthening of the radical political parties and marginalization of moderate ones.

The worsening of the Kosovo conflict in neighboring Yugoslavia in the beginning of 1998 forced Macedonian government to think of forms of conflict avoidance onto Macedonian territory in case of spilling-over the violence. Until then there had been an official attitude that in case of armed struggle in Kosovo, Macedonia would have sealed its borders. Therefore, a statement of the President Gligorov given during his visit to Slovenia in February 1998 provoked great surprise both in Macedonia and its neighbors. According to the President, Macedonian authorities were ready to provide a humanitarian corridor for Albanian refugees in case of overt armed clash in neighboring Yugoslavia. The final destination of the refugees (which number was estimated 200-400 thousand people) was to be Albania, and the whole operation was supposed to be realized under the international monitoring. The idea provoked various reactions, mostly negative. There were opinions that promotion of corridor operation could have been comprehended indirectly as an insinuation that the Kosovo knot could not be untied with peaceful political steps. Even more, some critics implied that Macedonian politics had appealed on another ethnic cleansing. The idea was supported neither by Albanian leaders in Kosovo nor in Macedonia. Menduh Taci, the vice-president of the DPA called the plan a "fascist idea", accusing Gligorov of trying to create panic and aiding the Serbian campaign of ethnic cleansing. [28]???

Macedonian fears originated from the belief that there might have been many technical difficulties in performance of such an operation. Having in mind Macedonian grave economic and social situation, it was clear that the country

couldn't cope with so many refugees. There were speculations about possibility that many of the refugees would prefer to stay in Macedonia rather than to go to impoverished "mother-country". On the other hand, one could not exclude risk of infiltration of some radical Albanian elements that might have radicalized situation in Macedonia. And at last, and not at least, the import of such a big number of Albanian population in Macedonia would disturb fragile demographic balance in the Republic. There were even some considerations that in this worst-case scenario the Yugoslav Army could easily continue its operations on Macedonian territory. When the war in Kosovo broke out, it became clear that President's predictions were not quite realistic, especially regarding the number of refugees from Kosovo. However, Macedonia has remained very sensitive regarding this question. The borders have not been sealed, but the topic of Kosovo refugees was not publicly discussed. The refugees have officially been described rather as "guests" of the Albanian families in the western part of Macedonia.

The second perspective comes from the side of Macedonian public. It is highly suspicious toward Albanian community, and especially its political leaders. The impression one gets is that the radicalization of the situation in Kosovo intensifies the Albanophobia among the Macedonian public. Due to the some historical and more recent grievances, Macedonians are not very much inclined toward Serbs, but their disposition toward Albanians is even worse. That point can explain the sympathies existing among many Macedonian citizens toward Serbian side in Kosovo conflict. Macedonians still cannot forget the very critical political moments when they were "left in the lurch" by the Albanians on the most substantial issue - the international recognition of the Macedonian state. There is still a gap of mistrust among Macedonian and Albanian community, which is particularly apparent in regard to the international responses to Kosovo conflict. While Albanians urge for use of force, Macedonians are more inclined toward "soft" pressure on Milosevic's regime. At the end, this question represents one more line of division between the two ethnic communities in Macedonia.

The third perspective is advocated by the Macedonian Albanians. Undoubtedly, the leading role among them belongs to those Prishtina-educated Albanians eager to assume leadership in their community in Macedonia. Under their influence, the ordinary citizens of Albanian origin are highly responsive to the currents in Kosovo, and they speak openly about their readiness to fight alongside their co-nationals and relatives in Kosovo. [29] Arben Xhaferi, the leader of the Democratic Party of Albanians, which until recently has been labeled as a radical one, and now is one of the government coalition partners,

said that the situation in Kosovo "is pushing us to be soldiers, to think in a military way. We are good soldiers and we know how to fight" [30]. This standpoint was repeated in January 1999 by one of the leading Albanian intellectuals in Macedonia, Kim Mehmeti in a TV interview given to a private TV station. [31] Mehmeti, who is also known as a director of the Center for Inter-Ethnic Understanding and Cooperation appealed to his co-nationals in Macedonia that the support of their Kosovo brethren is their moral obligation.

Obviously, the most prominent members of Albanian community do not make any difference in regard to the question of citizenship of Macedonian or Yugoslav state, and perceive the Albanian community as a whole. The strong emotional tie to Kosovo was explained in this way: "Albanians in Macedonia may feel an ethnic tie to Albania, but the big emotional tie is to Kosovo. Kosovo is the cultural and intellectual foundation for us. The writers, the journalists, the educators all came from Kosovo; anything of value is from there. We need to defend Kosovo. Should the first person being killed for protecting my sister be an American?" [32]???

On the Albanian side of Macedonian society, there is no dilemma concerning how the problem of Kosovo should be resolved - its independence is not even questioned. [33] Albanians openly call for NATO military intervention in Kosovo as the only way to stop the war there. The foreign observers in Macedonia have a point when state that "Macedonian Albanians look northward to learn the lessons of escalation rather than Kosovo Albanians looking south to learn accommodation" [34].

Regardless of the different attitudes advocated by the distinct segments of Macedonian society toward Kosovo issue, or their different perceptions, there are several points where the impact of this conflict can be clearly recognized.

- *Implications on the democratization process* and ethnic politics in the Republic. Since 1991 when Macedonia gained its independence in a peaceful manner, it has been trying to focus on its internal affairs. The promotion of democracy and harmonized inter-ethnic relations has been defined as the main goals of the new state. However, its external environment has been so turbulent, which forced Macedonia's government sometimes to pay more attention to the external than to the internal developments. On the current stage of political development, Macedonia is faced with a dilemma whether to build a nation-state or a multiethnic political system.
- *Economic repercussions.* Macedonia emerged as an independent state with a heavy legacy of being economic most underdeveloped and the

poorest Yugoslav republic. Being in a center of a turbulent region, it could not attract foreign investments. In addition, for a long period Macedonia was under a dual embargo - one from the north, imposed by the UN sanctions against FR Yugoslavia, and the other from the south, dictated by the Greek government because of the dispute over name 'Macedonia'. In Macedonia's best interest is conflict resolution of the Kosovo conflict. Its prolongation can bring disastrous consequences on already collapsed Macedonian economy. Trying to divorce the country from this turbulent neighborhood, the new Macedonian Government has undertaken some dubious actions in the field of foreign political and economic relations. The decision to establish closer political and economic ties with Taiwan is considered to be the best way of creating a new form of cyber-neighborhood and creation of a new climate for economic impetus.

- *Security threats.*In addition to the side effects from the Kosovo conflict, there is justifable fear that it might have a more direct impact on Macedonia's security. It is believed that so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) has already established cells in Macedonia and that they are constantly flourishing. The International Crisis Group states that according to its sources in the Albanian community in Macedonia KLA activities are focused on fund-raising for refugees in Albania and recruitment of fighters with previous military experience. It seems that KLA has been present in Macedonia for some longer period, before the latest escalation of the conflict in Kosovo. In Macedonian public there was released information about alleged death threat against the rector of Tetovo University. [35] There have been also two cases of car bombs outside police stations in some Macedonian cities, which have been connected with KLA, and both of them have not been officially confirmed as such.

Another consequence of the Kosovo conflict is evidenced in an increased flow of weapons into Macedonia from Albania. Macedonian Army and security forces are poorly equipped to control the situation in the Macedonia-Albanian border. It is estimated that 700-800 thousand small arms and light weapons stolen during the 1997's unrest in Albania have found their way to Kosovo through Macedonian territory. However, a certain suspicion remains as to where is the final destination of such weapons: Macedonia or Kosovo.

At the end, one cannot neglect the possibility of Macedonia's unintentional involvement into Kosovo conflict due to the actions undertaken by the international community.

Preventive Action in Macedonia: Results and Limitations of Preventive Deployment

Since September 1991, when Macedonia gained its independence in a peaceful way, this country has been in the focus of dire predictions. International observers contended that Macedonia would inevitably be involved in the bloody conflicts coming from north (Croatia, Bosnia or Kosovo). After whole period of eight years of peaceful existence, possible answer of the question why there was no overt ethnic conflict in Macedonia - still provokes great interest. For some analysts, Macedonia's survival without major eruptions of ethnic violence is a miracle; for others, this situation is result of the relatively successful application of preventive diplomacy [36]. However, there are opinions that it is too early for ultimate optimism and that the danger of ethnic conflict still hangs over Macedonia. In this context, one can pose three interrelated questions: first, is the peace in Macedonia a result of a pure coincidence and a miracle; second, is the peace in this country an achievement of the first preventive mission (UNPREDEP) in the history of the UN; and third, what is the impact of the Kosovo conflict on Macedonia's political and security outlook.

So far Macedonia represents a "success story" within the Yugoslav turmoil. In this context, one must bear in mind that Macedonia succeeded to gain its independence in a peaceful way in a very critical historical moment, and before the installation of the UN forces. It was possible due to its leadership's wisdom and moderateness as well as because of some lucky external circumstances. Therefore, some analysts speak about 'Macedonian peace model in the Balkans' [37]. Peace in Macedonia was put in risk in several occasions both from internal and external factors, but the violent conflict has been avoided.

There is a widespread opinion that UN preventive peacekeeping mission (UNPREDEP) in Macedonia has greatly contributed to the maintenance of the peace in the country. Even it is true, there are some other things that should be pointed out. The UN mission in Macedonia has been used as a part of a strategy of preventive diplomacy, and it is perhaps best known within a range of different preventive efforts undertaken within a longer period in this country. After a six-year long performance, it is possible to make a critical assessment of this unique UN mission:

Firstly, the very fact that the preventive diplomacy operation has been applied for the first time in Macedonia (once part of SFR Yugoslavia) presents an

immense paradox - it confirms that Yugoslav drama could have been avoided if preventive diplomacy had been implemented in time on the other parts of the former Yugoslavia. It is especially true for Bosnian conflict.

Undoubtedly, in Macedonia it was activated *in time* (before any violence occurred), due to the series of coincidences, and not because of the agility and awareness of the UN organs. It seems that the decisive and catalyst factor was the request derived from the threatened country. Even more, Macedonian authorities showed foresight in requesting preventive UN intervention. In view of eventual future operation of such kind the UN should have this point in mind. For "preventive action requires *early* action in order to be *effective* action" [38].

Thirdly, there is official estimation that one of the main and the most important characteristics of UNPREDEP has been clear, and at the same time, sufficiently general mandate. Despite the fact that the Macedonian officials insisted that Serbia posed the main threat to Macedonia, it was clear that external aggression from the north was a highly unlikely scenario. In fact, the peaceful withdrawal of the Yugoslav People's Army proved that the Serbian politics had already been focused on its more important front in Croatia and Bosnia (the so-called first and second major interlocking conflict triangles or "powder kegs" in former Yugoslavia). Serbian interests in Macedonia were not so heavy and urgent, which was one of the main reasons for bloodless separation of this republic from former Yugoslavia. Actually, from the very beginning it was crystal-clear that the Albanian factor represented a main source of potential conflict escalation. It was supposed that if conflict erupted in Kosovo, the Albanian refugees would flood southwards causing disturbance of the fragile inter-ethnic balance and/or provoke interventions from different (neighboring) sides. Therefore, one can say that this marvelous mission from the very beginning was established because of wrong reasons. [39] However, in the course of time the mandate has been virtually changed and re-directed from external towards internal sources of threat. "Interestingly, while the operation's mandate and function appeared on the face of it to be primarily to uphold the integrity of the state of Macedonia - in other words was statist - it did, in fact, come to have an important ethnic dimension." [40]

Originally, UNPREDEP's main mandated task was to monitor and report any developments in the border areas, which could undermine confidence and stability in Macedonia and threaten its territory. The mission served as an early-warning source for the Security Council. At the beginning the emphasis was on troop deployment (military component), which was supposed to serve as a minimal but significant psychologically deterrent force. Very soon the accent

of the mission was changed in accordance with the recommendation of the Secretary-General: "It should, however, be stressed that UNPROFOR has no mandate in relation to the internal situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which could prove to be more detrimental to the stability of the country than external aggression. Although UNPROFOR stands ready to lend its good offices in appropriate circumstances, it has no mandate to intervene in the event that internal stability results in some form of civil conflict (...) It is UNPROFOR's view that the more likely sources of violence and instability are internal and thus beyond the mandate of the Force [41]".

Consequently, the Security Council in its resolution extended the repertoire of prevention techniques in this case. Thereafter, the mission focused more on other tasks like: assistance in strengthening mutual dialogue among political parties and helping in monitoring human rights as well as inter-ethnic relations in the country. [42] Thus, UNPREDEP was subsequently focused on three main pillars of its mandate: political action and good offices (political dimension), troop deployment (military dimension), and the human (socio-economic) dimension. The mission has been recognized as a significant instrument for facilitating dialogue, restraint and practical compromise between different segments of society. This is why some analysts began to pose the question "whether the operation had turned into an internal mediative, peacebuilding/development role, rather than a defensive hedge against spillover effects from neighboring states" [43].

Fourthly, it has been also stressed that UNPREDEP assisted in the country's social and economic development along with other agencies and organizations of the United Nations system. This last statement is very hard to accept having in mind that economic development and social justice determine sustainable peace in the country. "One of the causes for the precarious state of Macedonia's economy as a source of internal tensions was the cost of the mandatory sanctions against the former Yugoslavia and the unilateral economic blockade by Greece. While part of history now, they nevertheless cost the economy some $4 billions US." [44] In this regard one can say that the UN has "protected" and "punished" Macedonian citizens at the same time.

Fifthly, one of the main characteristics and, at the same time, one of the very important factors of the mission's success has allegedly been the cooperative spirit of relationship between the mission and the Government. This fact has been emphasized in almost every report of Secretary-General to the Security Council. However, after UNPREDEP's mandate had been changed there have co-existed two different interpretations and attitudes in regard to the real scope of the mission. This ambiguous situation can be illustrated with a letter of a

Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Secretary-General, in which *inter alia* was expressed a doze of reserve in regard to monitoring the implementation of minority rights: "The Republic of Macedonia highly evaluated the role of UNPREDEP, which although *is not strictly in its mandate,*significantly influences the rationalization and erasing of the debate on these issues" [45].

It seems that (invisible) tension between the host government and the preventive force has arisen since the violent incident in (mostly Albanian-populated towns) Tetovo and Gostivar in July 1997. In mid August Macedonian Government received a copy of the UN Secretary-General's report to the Security Council, which provoked fierce reactions. The most disputable part of the report included a recommendation for strengthening the "civil component" of UNPREDEP. In this report Kofi Annan openly raised a dilemma regarding the relevance of the old mandate under the radically worsened internal conditions on the inter-ethnic plane. The current mandate was evaluated as anachronous. This statement was afterward strengthened by the similar proposal of Elisabeth Rehn, the UN Special Repporteur on Human Rights. [46] As could be expected the Government was unwilling to accept any sort of change to the UNPREDEP mandate. This attitude was justified with the argument that a strengthening of the "civil component" to monitor internal conditions violates the basic framework of the Preventive Deployment. While the UNPREDEP's mission was concentrated on external threat and played more statist role, consent of the host state was its operational parameter and the operation was relatively uncontroversial. [47] The very moment the mission turned toward internal sources of potential conflict, consent of the host state became questionable. [48]

Sixthly, one of the conclusions drawn from the Macedonian case has been that successful preventive deployment can be performed only by the request of the one country. Furthermore, the mission might be effective and successful when the UN troops are deployed only on the one side of the border. Designers of this mission have been thoughtful in their sincere wish to preserve peace in Macedonia, but the recent developments in neighboring Kosovo prove that peace cannot be preserved partly, within the borders of one state. It is especially true when states and peace in the Balkans are concerned. Mission's success has been dependent on numerous factors situated behind the state's borders. Balkan states still look like a system of connected vessels, and due to this interdependence - peace in Macedonia is only a part of peace in the Balkans. Big handicap of this mission from the very beginning was lack of additional and/or similar peace missions in the crisis flashpoints in Macedonia's neighborhood.

Seventhly, paradoxically UNPREDEP has proven that conceptual thinking on preventive deployment is at a relatively unadvanced state. The main problem that deserves special attention is differentiation between preventive deployment operations in inter- and intra-state conflicts. One must keep in mind that *An Agenda for Peace* primarily emphasizes the statist concept of preventive diplomacy. In other words, having in mind the sensitivity of a number of UN member states to the issue, *An Agenda* takes into account the classical sovereignty principle. This is why it does not dwell on ethnic preventive diplomacy (deployment) strictly. On the other hand, the very context of ethnic conflicts presupposed more liberal definitions of sovereignty and consent in peace operations. It seems the UN have still not found an appropriate way to overcome these objective perimeters based on the traditional approach to the state sovereignty. The main obstacle for creating and implementing a more pro-active concept of preventive diplomacy lies exactly in this fact.

The Role of the Less Visible Actors of Conflict Prevention in Macedonia

The uniqueness of the UN preventive peacekeeping mission in Macedonia very often shadows the significance of numerous players in preventive efforts. The positive outcome in Macedonia has been common achievement of numerous players: political leadership, NGOs, individual citizens, and various international organizations. [49]

Among the preventive actors who complemented the successful UN mission, several can be pointed out. ICFY's Working Group on Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities played a significant role initiating negotiations between Macedonian and Albanian political communities over some very delicate issues, such as territorial autonomy and other rights demanded by the Albanians in Macedonia. This body has also succeeded to persuade Serbian minority to forgo secession in return for minor constitutional concessions.

The OSCE "spill-over monitoring mission" was established in order to prevent the spread of war in former Yugoslavia to the south. It was responsible for the monitoring of political, economic, and social conditions in Macedonia, thus providing early warning and many preventive initiatives. In course of time, the organization has focused especially on human rights issues and particularly on inter-ethnic relations. The OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van der Stoel, has conducted regular fact-finding missions and negotiated in several crises to defuse ethnic tensions, such as those that erupted over the illegal Albanian University in Tetovo. There is a widespread opinion that the

OSCE has been handicapped by the nature of its mandate. Therefore, whenever it tried harder to propose some solution in regard to inter-ethnic relations, the government overtly manifested its reluctance. Many of the OSCE initiatives were labeled as political oversight and were rejected. Despite limited results, the presence of this mission in Macedonia has at least had a cooling, moderating influence on the worst nationalist tendencies.

A few non-governmental organizations, both international and domestic, explicitly became involved in long-term conflict prevention. They have offered technical, humanitarian, and development assistance. One of their fundamental premises is that the direct contact between adversaries in a safe setting facilitates trust building and mutual respect. Among these NGOs is, for instance, the Washington-based *Search for Common Ground (SCG),* whose projects focus overwhelmingly on changing attitudes and values of conflict groups and teaching Macedonian citizens to combat ethnic stereotypes. [50] Such long-term conflict management efforts on the grassroots level are significant for creating a culture of nonviolent conflict resolution among the population and help to create cross-cleavage empathy among professionals, scholars, journalists and ordinary citizens. SCGM activities also aim for supporting those international efforts that target the political elites across the ethnic spectrum.

Being supported by the Macedonian government and also assisted by the international NGOs, many institutional forms of conflict prevention activities flourish in Macedonia. Most of them arise from the Skopje University's professors and researchers. The Center for Ethnic Relations along with SCGM has convened many Macedonian-Albanian roundtables on substantial inter-ethnic issues. It has also a very distinguishable research record on the field. However, one of the most significant steps in this direction was the establishment of the Peace Studies Program within the Balkan Peace Studies Center in 1997. It has been one of the first attempts for creation an academic basis for continuous peace education on the university level. This program has been realized on a two-track basis: one with the students, and another, with the wider audience and often in co-operation with domestic NGOs. It has organized a series of long- and short-term conflict resolution training programs for students and educators, from kindergarten to the university level. Dissemination of nonviolent conflict resolution skills has been realized through many different forms and on different levels, trying to embrace all the segments of Macedonian society. Efforts of special relevance have been made toward promotion of inclusive and non-inflammatory journalism, creation of TV programs teaching tolerance, etc.

Activities conducted by all these less visible players in the game called "conflict prevention" are usually underestimated, but they have been proven as very important in Macedonian case. Their results cannot be clearly seen and evaluated in short term, but they are precious in long-run perspective. The analysts are unanimous that outside efforts would have been in vain if Macedonian leaders and citizens had not shown determination to prevent violence. [51] So far, the Macedonian case proves that it is possible to prevent ethnic differences from turning violent.

International Responses to the Kosovo Crisis and Macedonia's Position:Between the Hammer and the Anvil

Since the beginning of the Yugoslav drama, numerous security organizations have proven incapable both in conflict prevention and conflict management endeavors. Macedonian and Kosovo cases can be pointed out as the two most contrast approaches toward prevention of immediate break out of a violent conflict. As it was previously explained, Macedonian case is usually considered as a clear success on the ground, even there are no reliable criteria what can be estimated as a success in preventive missions. In other words, is the absence of violent conflict the main criterion in the evaluation of the conflict prevention or some other indications must be taken into account, which can guarantee that peace will be lasting after the termination of the mission. The analysis of the character and virtually changing mandate of the UN preventive deployment in Macedonia has proven that this unique mission was stationed for totally wrong reasons. It was established when external aggression from north was highly unlikely scenario.

By the time the mandate has been transformed and more focused on internal conflict mitigation, but officially it has been admitted neither by the UN officials nor by the Macedonian government. Thus, so praised political will among the all relevant factors in Macedonia was based on a blurred conception about the real mandate of the mission. Undoubtedly, UNPREDEP's achievements ought to be given positive evaluation, but it has not succeeded yet to alleviate internal conflict potential or to address the roots of the conflict. Basic problems are still immediate, there is no conflict transformation or conflict resolution on the horizon. The greatest achievement of this early action is the avoidance of use of pressure or threats toward the parties in the dispute and different segments of Macedonian society. It is a real preventive diplomacy on the field, and which is more important - it is not diplomacy backed by force.

From a wider point of view, the main limit of this mission of preventive peacekeeping is in the fact that it has been bounded only at one state's territory. From a current perspective and having in mind the developments in Kosovo, which has been very predictable, one should point out that there is a need for re-evaluation of the achievements and results of the UN mission in Macedonia. Firstly, it is clear that Macedonia needs some sort of mechanism for conflict mitigation, or precisely - conflict transformation within its own society. Secondly, Macedonia itself and the region would have benefited greatly, if this mission had been extended toward Kosovo region in time. The fatal delay of some forms of conflict prevention in Kosovo has also jeopardized the situation in Macedonia. UNPREDEP was not able to give the expected results, without simultaneous mission on the other side of the border.

The outbreak of open and a large-scale violence in the Serbian province of Kosovo is the final evidence that international responses to this conflict have been unsuitable and/or tardy. With their non-violent politics, the Kosovo Albanians "bought" some time for the international community in a very critical moment of escalation of the war in Croatia and Bosnia. The outbreak of violence in Kosovo was among the most predictable events in the world. Despite loud early warnings about this conflict, nevertheless, there was no early action. The period of several years gave enough time to the international players to implement some form of conflict prevention, but the opportunity has been missed. [52] Both Yugoslav (Serbian) regime and the international community looked satisfied with the situation on the ground, relying all the time on common sense of the confronted peoples. Indeed, for several years there existed a unique model of hostile coexistence, i.e. a low degree of friction and apparent stability of the Serbian-Albanian dualism in Kosovo. [53]

The miscalculations of the international community resulted from its shortsighted and sometimes even divergent politics toward Kosovo crisis. The attitude of the international actors toward the Serbia's regime has been inconsistent and non-principal since the beginning of the Yugoslavia's dissolution in 1991. From one side, the West has treated Milosevic as "a butcher in the Balkans" and untenably the Serbs have been satanized as the only guilty ones in the highly complex conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia. At the same time, they accepted Milosevic's sign on the Dayton Peace Accords, considering that he was the main guarantor that the agreement will be accomplished. Thanks to the international community, suddenly Milosevic (as well as Tudjman and Izetbegovic) was given a role of peacemaker, which also contributed for the strengthening of his dominant political position in FR Yugoslavia. During this period, the international

community was deeply aware of the situation in Kosovo, but intentionally turned its blind eye to it. Actually, they tolerated the Serbian state repression in the province, while loudly asking for improvement of the Kosovo's Albanians human rights.

The international community has been waiting too long until the situation in Kosovo has heightened so much, that coercive international measures appeared to be indispensable. In that stage of a violent conflict, the international "help" inevitably has a character of interference in the conflict, especially regarding its possible resolution. [54] Humanitarian reasons are most of the time used as justification for their "just military intervention". It might sound cynical, but all of those actors seem to be more concerned about political dimension of the conflict resolution (i.e. future political status of the province) and, of course, about their own strategic interests, than the genuine humanitarian dimension of the conflict relief. [55] Everything that they have exercised until now have been a diplomacy backed by force and "peace ultimatums", usually forwarded to only one of the conflicting parties. Nobody still addresses the real everyday problems of the ordinary citizens, who are the biggest victims and losers in long run. No matter what dimension of the Kosovo conflict have been in the focus of the international players, one must say that Kosovo Serbs have been always neglected, both by Serbian authorities and international factors.

In all recent attempts for conflict management, by using the double standards all conflicting parties have not been given the same opportunities. Having in mind that conflict resolution should matter not the political and military leaders, but people who live there - it is unforgivable gesture to accept the KLA as an equal partner in negotiations, and not to admit some kind of political representation of the Kosovo Serbs. The KLA is a questionable partner because of many reasons, but most importantly - it does not have legitimate right to represent the Kosovo Albanians. [56] According to the latest agreement of the Contact Group, NATO threats will be equally directed to both sides - the Serb security and military targets and the KLA nucleus. Undoubtedly, Serbs' targets for eventual bombing have been selected very carefully by the NATO commanders, but nobody is sure how can they precisely strike the KLA's bases. Their tactics is peculiar - they are mostly intermixed with the civilian population. Instead offering protection of their own people, they are hiding behind their backs. On the other side, major Serbs' military facilities are concentrated around urban districts, and possible air strikes would certainly caused many civilian and innocent victims.

From Macedonian perspective, one can point out that the latest motions of the international community are extremely contradictory and even dangerous.

Reportedly, the real motivation for the Americans and Europeans in considering all necessary measures including the military intervention in Kosovo has been to prevent the conflict spreading to Macedonia. With that purpose, some very strange and even unusual operations have been carried out both in Kosovo and Macedonia. The first one is so-called OSCE verification mission, and the second one is NATO-led "extraction" mission stationed on the Macedonian northern border.

With the firm resoluteness to stop the violence in Kosovo, the international community joined the game of military and muscle power, which has been already played by the dispute parties. The bombing threat to Serbia was discovered to be the right solution. Despite the fact that the threat was not realized, it prepared the atmosphere for the next steps. Following the provisions of the Holbrooke-Milosevic agreement from October 1998, the OSCE has been given a peculiar mandate "to monitor developments in Kosovo". According to the chairman of the OSCE, Amb. Bronislaw Geremek, the so-called verification mission in Kosovo represents "the greatest challenge in the history of the OSCE". [57] It is quite reasonable judgment having in mind that the OSCE describes itself as a pan-European security organization established as a primary instrument in its region for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in Europe. In spite of this ambitious rationale, the OSCE has until now been proven to be very inexperienced in many of its assumed roles.

Not surprisingly, from the very beginning this mission has been proven to be very unclear, ambiguous and even unsuccessful. The main reasons for this situation can be found in several facts. Under the guisse of the mission a 2,000-strong force has been sent on the ground almost without any serious preparation. Its stuff represents a mixture of military personnel in civilian clothes and civilian experts from different fields. However, there are no professionals in conflict mitigation. Basically, there are many people who are not even familiar with the background of this extremely deep conflict. In addition, they are not even sure about their everyday tasks. Having being sent on the ground when there was virtually no real cease-fire, they are not able to provide neither humanitarian relief nor real conflict settlement. They are more in a role of passive observers, who are very likely to be misused from all the sides in the conflict, including the international community itself. The presence of this international force offers the parties in the dispute an opportunity to provoke incidents in order to accomplish their own political goals.

The establishment of the OSCE mission in Kosovo has been followed by a subsequent "extraction" mission in Macedonia. One cannot escape from the

impression that the real role of the OSCE mission, in fact, was supposed to be only a prelude for this NATO-led mission. Both the Macedonian and international officials have been repeatedly stated that the "extraction mission" in Macedonia is of essentially humanitarian nature and that its main task would be to evacuate the unarmed OSCE verifiers when needed. The suspicion about its real mission has been raised the very moment when the speculations about the necessity of additional military force in a form of "extractors of the extractors" were revealed by the media.

Since 1991 the Republic of Macedonia has been trying to deserve the epithet of "the oasis of peace" or "beacon of hope" midst the turbulent Balkans. As it was previously argued, peace has been a result of many endeavors undertaken both by the Macedonian government and citizens and the international assistance of various natures. Suddenly, the mild Macedonian landscape has been changed by the presence of the NATO forces. One cannot avoid the impression that Macedonia has been put in a very ambiguous and undesirable position, at the same time hosting the UN and NATO forces with essentially different mandates and different impacts on its security. As a result, Macedonia was transformed in a place *d'arme*. If it is true that the UN preventive peacekeeping mission was initiated at the first place by the Macedonian government, in this second case - it cannot be true.

The installation of the NATO troops on Macedonian soil was resolutely demanded in a very critical moment of its internal political life. Macedonia was caught in an interregnum period, when the new Macedonian parliament and government were not constituted after the latest elections. In fact, Macedonia's willingness to place its territory at the disposal of NATO "extractors" has been tested. De facto it had no choice. Both the President Gligorov and the new government of the young Prime Minister Georgievski have faced a very difficult dilemma, as it is not in their country's best interest to participate in something that is bound to antagonize Serbia and look like a support to Albanian separatism through violence. Heavily dependent upon foreign military aids and tending toward NATO membership and EU integration, Macedonian government accepted additional military presence. One of the leaders of the coalition government, a professor of international law, Dr. Vasil Tupurkovski wrote in 1997 that "Macedonia must not seek to exploit existing differences among the Balkan states, nor must it seek to improve its international position to the expense of its neighbors" [58]. However, being in the ruling position he has obviously changed his mind.

The current situation in Macedonia as well as in the region can be described as a stage for a collision between preventive diplomacy versus preventing

diplomacy. Previously, there has been widespread consideration that UNPREDEP has provided a stable security environment in Macedonia in which democracy could establish its roots in society. [59] The latest international motions are likely to undermine UNPREDEP's achievements and to involve Macedonia in a possible violent conflict with the northern neighbor. Today Macedonia is in a paradoxical situation, included at the same time in a process of conflict prevention and in a peace enforcement operation.

Conclusions

During a period of several years, the Yugoslav crisis has demonstrated the importance of concerted international action to prevent or resolve conflicts before they turn violent. However, there have never been a workable unanimous approach towards settlement of the various ethnic conflicts in the region. For instance, in Bosnian crisis there were applied several forms and mechanisms of international responses including use of force, except preventive deployment. Despite desperate appeal of the President of BiH, Alija Izetbegovic, before the outbreak of violence in the country, international community turned its deaf ear. Almost one year later, in case of Macedonia, on the contrary, preventive deployment forces were sent soon after the President's request. And in Kosovo case, international community did not undertake early action, despite alarming indications and early warning facts coming from the field.

In general, one can define two main approaches emloyed on the region: the strategy of "preventive engagement" and the so-called realist approach to conflict resolution and international security. Realists' approach to international conflict is based on a unidimensional principle that the behavior of state is constrained by the deterrent or coercive force of external power(s). Consequently, realists have proposed solutions to the various conflicts in former Yugoslavia calling for use of force, rather than attempting to address the roots of the conflict. Unfortunately, Macedonian case is the one and only example of preventive strategy, which is in place, against much more examples of the realist one.

From theoretical point of view, it is very interesting to explore whether there is a consistent framework for conflict prevention. Having in mind that the new concept of cooperative security in the world is exactly about conflict prevention, it is very important to determine its clear definition and its scope of activities. The approach taken in this paper is rather different from the most

usual definition. For example, in a recent theoretical works in the field of international security studies conflict prevention is considered

"as a series of political options ranging from non-coercive to *coercive* measures - diplomatic, political, economic and *military* instruments appropriate to the evolution of a dispute before it erupts into conflict, in the spirit of Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. These measures taken as a whole correspond to the institution of a period of 'unstable peace' or a 'negative' period (characterized by tension and suspicion between the parties but in which violence is absent or sporadic). The instruments chosen include fact-finding and observer missions, diplomatic and economic forms of pressure and the preventive interposition of troops. They therefore also include 'harder' measures such as economic or *diplomatic sanctions* and the *threat of the use of force* if there is any escalation of violence. This distinction between 'soft' and 'hard' measures also corresponds to a distinction between types of dispute to which they are applied... To put it another way, non-coercive strategies have better chances of success in the early stages of a dispute, whereas coercive strategies are more suited to a situation in which positions have polarized." [60]

Obviously, despite many discussions of the issue, there is still no common and crystallized approach advocated both by scholars in the field of international security studies and those in the field of peace and conflict research. The former rely on so-called "hard" and "soft" measures in conflict prevention, while the laters only if they speak about conflict prevention, they insist of exclusion of pressures and threat of use of force. Thus, the demarcation line dividing these two main approaches can be specified as a collision of preventive measures backed by force (if necessary) and nonviolent conflict prevention. Moreover, peace researchers prefer discussion on conflict transformation, rather than on conflict prevention. They also differ from the security researchers regarding the question whether the conflict is something normal or maybe undesirable. In other words, the core problem in these two approaches is a choice between power and nonviolent conflict resolution. In this context, an author aptly argues that "the field has been polarized between those who have argued that effective conflict resolution is correlated with a capability to exercise some form of power over conflict parties to encourage or coerce them to reach a settlement, and on the other hand those who have argued in favor of non-coercive intervention based on trust-inducing dialogue and the formulation of integrative or 'win-win' outcomes" [61]

The behavior of the international community and the measures undertaken on its behalf in the Balkans, has proven that this *real-politic* approach has been dominant. However, the outcomes are still not only unsatisfactory, but also

discouraging. The recent moves and "hard solutions" in regard to the Kosovo conflict are likely to jeopardize the achievements attained in conflict prevention by "soft" manners. Macedonia is unwillingly involved in the "peace enforcement" operation in her immediate neighborhood, while at the same time it loses ground for preservation of the original *raison d'être* of UNPREDEP mission in the country. At the moment Macedonia is not allowed to focus on its fragile inter-ethnic relations and democracy-building process, but it is forced to play a role, for which it is nether able not really interested - "a role of factor of peace in the Balkans". Macedonia's future is unpredictable. From one side, NATO requests its active involvement in the Kosovo crisis, which is also opted by Albanians in Macedonia. Consequently, these moves transform the "peace oasis" in the biggest "military base" in Europe. Due to the recent moves of the new Macedonian government in the field of foreign policy, Macedonia faces the future of a "banana republic" in the region. The true question is: is there any other choice for this fragile and weak state?

Obviously, Macedonia's external environment makes long-term stability far less likely. Nevertheless, one must keep in mind that Macedonian insecurity has its roots within the country. But there is one more significant aspect of Macedonian mosaic of ethnic and religious groups: if their co-existence succeeded here it could succeed anywhere in the Balkans. Macedonia could be a great hope for the Balkans. At the same time one must bear in mind that all the problems in the Balkans are in one way or another interrelated. Because international factors have failed to understand that they cannot adequately predict events and find them on the defensive. There has been a tendency to simplify the Yugoslav conflict to a clash in black and white between the forces of good and evil. Such presentation displaces responsibility from western meddling and errors of judgement One must keep in mind that the efforts to resolve conflicts within the particular Balkan state cannot give positive outcomes, because the Balkan states look like a system of connected vessels. Plights and changes, both positive and negative, within each of them influence indirectly the other states and the entire region.

Whatever it is very difficult to find appropiate explanations of the Balkan conflicts it is far more difficult to answer the question what is to be done. The shortest answer is that the only way leads through economic development and democracy. But consequently a new question appears on how to achieve this goal. Viewed from the external standpoint, there are several things that international community have to do: first, to try to understand the full complexity of what has been happening in the post-communist Balkan countries; second, to be ready to sacrifice part of their living standard in order

to help these countries to overcome their worst economic and political difficulties; third, they have to rethink their short-sighted politicies in the name of their own imagined or real "national interest". The Balkans must not be used any longer (as it was many times before in the past) as the small coin that the great powers use in their transactions. One must have in mind that economic sanctions or military coercion cannot be appropriate response to the Balkan conflicts: they rather might strengthen the regimes they are directed against.

The core problem in managing ethnic conflict is that the adversaries most often define peace in triumphant terms and, consequently, accept or reject conflict regulating techniques on whether they hold a promise of victory. In face with the ongoing negotiation to be held in Rambujet near Paris between the Serbian and Albanian side, this hypothesis is likely to be proven. Since the government is one of the conflicting parties, this conflict has been usually defined as an asymmetrical in terms of power and military strength. However, it is also usually neglected that the asymmetry can be recognized in terms of unbalanced international support that is given to each of the parties. In this particular case, conflict development has been profoundly affected by external factors, either by the international community or by foreign governments. This situation led the actors more eager to find allies outside the country instead to look for a solution with their opponents.

It can be assumed that ethnic conflicts will be a permanent characteristic of the Balkan political landscape. Within such context, it is most important to do everything in order to avoid "winner takes all" outcomes. The primary task for every ethnic group is to learn to live with ethnic conflict and to deal with it without any kind of violence (direct or structural). Conflict resolution in the Balkans is likely to be a long-lasting process, which will challenge both Balkan peoples and the international community.

Endnotes

Note 1: For more detail see Kalevi J. Holsti, *The State, War, and the State of War,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Back.

Note 2: Zlatko Isakovic, *Politicka i komunikaciona moc u medjunarodnim odnosima (Political and Communication Power in the International Relations),* forthcoming, p. 214. Back.

Note 3: The usage of the name 'Kosovo' in this paper does not imply any political disposition of the author. Albanians prefer the name 'Kosova', while Serbs insist on the name 'Kosovo and Metohija'.Back.

Note 4: Håkan Wiberg, "Societal Security and the Explosion of Yugoslavia" in Ole Wæver, Bary Buzan, Morten Kelstrup & Pierre Lemaitre (eds.), *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe,*(London: Pinter Publishers Ltd, 1993): pp. 93-109. Back.

Note 5: Ted Robert Gurr, *Minorities at Risk,* (Washington, D.C.: USIP, 1993): 34. Back.

Note 6: See: Elez Biberaj, "Kosova: The Balkan Powder Keg" in: Peter Janke (ed.), *Ethnic and Religious Conflicts: Europe and Asia,* (Dartmouth: Aldershot, 1994). Back.

Note 7: The origins of the Albanians are disputed. For more detail see: John V.A. Fine, Jr., *The Early Medieval Balkans,*(Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983): 9-11. Back.

Note 8: Håkan Wiberg, *ibidem,*p. 97-98. Back.

Note 9: Svetozar Vukmanovic - Tempo, *Revolucija koja tece (Revolution That Flows),* (Belgrade, 1971): 338. Back.

Note 10: Vesna Pesic, *Serbian Nationalism and the Origins of the Yugoslav Crisis,* (Washington, D.C.:USIP, 1996): 29. Back.

Note 11: Johan Galtung, "Third Parties in Conflict Transformation: Conflict Facilitators, Conflict Thieves, Both or Neither?", *TFF-10th Anniversary Collection - Articles,* Webedition (http://www.transnational.org) Back.

Note 12: Jan Oberg, "Kosovo: Why it is serious? What not to do!", *TFF PressInfo #34,* March 5, 1998. Back.

Note 13: Jan Oberg, "Kosovo War No Prevention Failure", *TFF PressInfo #41,* August 17, 1998. Back.

Note 14: Dusan Batakovic, "Kosovo-Metohija in the Twentieth Century: Nationalism and Communism", *Eurobalkans,* No. 30, Spring 1998. Back.

Note 15: Jan Oberg, "Kosovo: Why it is serious? What not to do!", *ibidem* Back.

Note 16: Jan Oberg, "The Kosovo War No Prevention Failure", *ibidem.* Back.

Note 17: See: Johan Galtung, *ibidem.* Back.

Note 18: For more detail see: Stefan Troebst, *ibidem.* Back.

Note 19: For example, Arben Xhaferi, the leader of the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), which is one of the three coalition partners in the current Macedonian Government advocated this thesis. In the interview for a Macedonian newspaper, he argued that Albanians in Macedonia are descendents of the ancient Illirians, while Macedonian nation has been created during a recent process of ethno-genesis. (*Makedonsko vreme (The Macedonian Times),* September 1998. Back.

Note 20: The Byzantines and Bulgars ruled Macedonia alternately from the ninth to the fourteenth century, when Stefan Dusan of Serbia conquered it and made Skopje his capital. A local noble, Vukasin, called himself king of Macedonia after the death of Dusan, but the Turks annihilated Vukasin's forces in 1371 and assumed control of Macedonia. Back.

Note 21: Jim F. Brown, *Nationalism, Democracy and Security in the Balkans,* (RAND: Darmouth, 1993): 160. Back.

Note 22: Isa Blumi, "The Question of Identity, Diplomacy and Albanians in Macedonia: Has the rain Come?", *International Journal of Albanian Studies,* Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 6 (Web-edition). Back.

Note 23: Elez Biberaj, *ibidem,* p. 16. Back.

Note 24: For more legal, political and statistical documentation see: S. Milosavlevski - M. Tomovski, *Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia 1945-1995,* (Studentski zbor: Skopje, 1997). Back.

Note 25: Duncan M. Perry, "The Republic of Macedonia: finding its way" in K. Dawisha and B. Parrott (eds.), *Politics, power, and the struggle for democracy in South-East Europe,*(Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1977): 232. Back.

Note 26: Limiting factors in the cultural and social integration of the Macedonian society are: a) the political manipulation of the political parties formed on the basis of ethnic belonging, with the aim of winning the power or satisfying some unreal maximalist demands; b) incompleteness of the legal system and the legal state, which on the basis of objective legal criteria will be able to deal with the social conflicts; c) evident ethnic and cultural closeness and creation of parallel educational institutions and systems; d) complete closeness with regard to marriages between people of different ethnic and cultural belonging; e) tendencies towards closing certain economic activities (employment on the national basis, etc.); f) establishing parallel institutions of the already loose and undeveloped civil society (existence of parallel non-governmental, cultural and sports organizations). See more detailed: Petre Georgievski, "Kulturnata razlicnost i opstestvenata (dez)integracija" (Cultural Versatility and the Social (Dis)integration), Dialog, No. 9/1995. Back.

Note 27: The Report of International Crisis Group "The Albanian Question In Macedonia: Implications of the Kosovo Conflict for Inter-Ethnic Relations in Macedonia", 11 August 1998. Back.

Note 28: *Ibidem,* p. 3. Back.

Note 29: See: The Report of International Crisis Group "Macedonia: The Politics of Ethnicity and Conflict", October 21, 1997; Back.

Note 30: "Macedonians fear they could be next", BBC News, March 11, 1998. Back.

Note 31: Interview with Kim Mehmeti in a TV show A1-International, January 20, 1999. Back.

Note 32: The Report of International Crisis Group "The Albanian Question In Macedonia: Implications of the Kosovo Conflict for Inter-Ethnic Relations in Macedonia", 11 August 1998, p. 2. Back.

Note 33: See more about Albanian political parties' attitude toward Kosovo see more: Iso Rusi, "Speaking of Kosovo and the Corridor", AIM Press, February 10, 1998. Back.

Note 34: The Report of International Crisis Group "Macedonia: The Politics of Ethnicity and Conflict", October 21, 1997. Back.

Note 35: The president of Tetovo University was accused of collaborating with the Macedonian "regime" by the KLA in June 1998. It threatened to kill him because behind-the-scenes negotiations between Macedonian president and the Albanians over the Albanian-language university. Such death threat also came during a campaign to purge moderate PDP-leaning instructors from this university and replace them with supporters of the more radical DPA. This episodes speak not only about the KLA influence in Macedonia, but also proves the politicization of this educational issue within the Albanian community in Macedonia. Back.

Note 36: Alice Ackermann, "The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: A Relatively Successful case of Conflict Prevention", *Security Dialogue,* No. 4, Winter 1996. Back.

Note 37: Tadekazu Fukase, "Constitutions et la paix entre les etats", *Paper presented at VIth World IACL Congress,* September 1995, Tokyo, Japan. Back.

Note 38: Jan Egeland, "Preventive Diplomacy: Moving from Rhetoric to Reality", Key-note Address on the Workshop on *An Agenda for Preventive Diplomacy: Theory and Practice,* Skopje, October 16, 1996, p. 2. Back.

Note 39: Jan Oberg, "The Kosovo War No Prevention Failure", *ibidem.* Back.

Note 40: Jeremy Ginifer and Espen Barth Eide, "Ethnicity as a Source of Conflict", *Balkan Forum,* No. 2, June 1997, p. 196. Back.

Note 41: Secretary-General's Report S/1994/300 of 16 March 1994. Back.

Note 42: It is considered that the crucial and potentially most explosive problem in Macedonia is connected with inter-ethnic relations in the country, especially between the Macedonians (the majority) and the Albanians (the most numerous national minority, which comprises 23% of the population). For more detail see: Biljana Vankovska-Cvetkovska, "Ethnic Conflict in Macedonia: Can There Be Winners and Losers?", *Peace and Security,* Vienna, vol. XXIX, September 1997, pp.39-46; Robert W. Mickey and Adam Smith Albion, "Success in the Balkans? A Case Study of Ethnic Relations in the Republic of Macedonia" in Ian Cuthbertson and Jane Leibowitz (eds.), *Minorities: The New Europe's Old Issue,* (Institute for East-West Studies, 1993). Back.

Note 43: See Shashi Tharoor, "The Concept of Preventive Deployment in the 1990's", paper presented at the Workshop on *An Agenda for Preventive Diplomacy: Theory and Practice,* Skopje, October 16, 1996, p. 12. Back.

Note 44: Henryk J. Sokalski, "Preventive Diplomacy: the Need for a Comprehensive Approach", *Balkan Forum,* No. 1, March 1997, p. 46. Back.

Note 45: Letter of Minister Ljubomir Frckovski of August 6, 1996, quoted by Henryk J. Sokalski, ibid, p. 45. Back.

Note 46: MILS News, 28 August 1997. Back.

Note 47: Jeremy Ginifer and Espen Barth Eide *, ibid.*, p. 196. Back.

Note 48: Visible collisions on the relation Macedonian Government - the UN appeared during the mast few months of the latest UNPREDEP mandate. In his report to the Security Council from November 20, 1997, Kofi Annan announced with slight resignation that the host government had told the Special Representative that his good offices were not needed in regard to the inter-ethnic relations. See:

"Pocetak kraja misije UN u Makedoniji" ("The beginning of the end of the UN Mission in Macedonia"), AIM, 19 December, 1997. Back.

Note 49: Alice Ackermann, "Conflict Prevention in Macedonia", *Peace Magazin,* May-June 1998, Webedition. Back.

Note 50: For instance, the "How We Survive" journalism project sponsored by SCGM resulted in simultaneous publication in major Albanian and Macedonian newspapers of a series of reports on how people of all ethnicities were coping with problems of daily life. SCGM encourages the publication of contrasting opinions on important issues, sponsores roundtables at the University of Skopje in order to encourage direct interethnic discussions on issues of common concern, etc. Back.

Note 51: J. Marks and E. Fraenkel, "Why Macedonia has not exploded?", *Conflict Prevention Newsletter,* vol. 1, No. 1, March 1998; Stuart J. Kaufman, "Preventive Peacekeeping, Ethnic Violence, and Macedonia", *Studies in Conflict&Terrorism,* No. 19, 1996. Back.

Note 52: Sophia Clement, "Conflict Prevention in the Balkans: Case Studies of Kosovo and the FYR of Macedonia", *Chaillot paper 30,* (Institute for Security Studies of WEU: Paris, 1997). Back.

Note 53: Stefan Troebst, "Conflict in Kosovo: Failure of Prevention? An Analytical Documentation 1992-1998", *ECMI Working Papers,* No. 1, May 1998. Back.

Note 54: See: Interview with Jan Oberg, Zeri (Pristina) , No. 1687, December 22, 1998. Back.

Note 55: "After the Serbian ofansive, the villages are devastated, the population is constantly moving from one place to another, and even age-old customary Leka Dukadjini's law is not respected any more. In situations like this, the profitable are the local renegades of the worst type, who have nicknamed themselves with names of the beasts (such as Tiger, Lion, Falcon, etc.) and who have appointed themselves KLA's commanders. These days everyone who can exert control over, at least, twenty armed people, is in the position to declare himself a military commander of certain area, collect taxes and regulate the traffic. Noone can see the power able to regulate the public order and to disarm the gangs: Serbia is not allowed, NATO does not want to, and Albanians are not able to do that alone. It means that the situation on the ground is likely to worsen, in humanitarian and every other aspect, no matter what might Milosevic, Holbrick and Rugova sign tomorrow. The only difference will be that from now on this worsening will be oversighted from air by the jet planes of the highest technology, and from the ground by the OSCE observers. Thus the international community will be in a better position to watch what is happening in Kosovo. That will make noone to feel better, especially not the ordinary citizens, who are in a gap to chose between the Serb's brutal reppression and Albanian terrorism." (Dejan Anastasijevic, "Kosovo na raskrscu" ("Kosovo at Crossroad"), *Vreme (Times),* No. 418, 24 October, 1998). Back.

Note 56: "Rising from obscurity after Drenica, the KLA won a wide and enthusiastic following and took charge of a vast area of the country, but, when the predictable Serb counteroffensive came in Orahovac, the KLA melted away, giving no protection to the population it claimed to represent. The KLA makes the pretense of observing the Geneva conventions but does not provide the International Committee of the Red Cross access to its prisoners. Its denunciations of more moderate Kosovo politicians, its inaccessibility (no major U.S. news organization has profiled the KLA in depth), and its lack of a visible leadership to articulate its demands and those of the Albanian

population suggest that it is living in a different world from the countrymen it claims to represent." (Roy Gutman, "Tragedy of Errors",*New Republica,* 26 October 1998) Back.

Note 57: BBC News, October 16, 1998. Back.

Note 58: Vasil Tupurkovski, "The Balkan Crisis and the Republic of Macedonia" in Constantine P. Danopoulos and Kostas Messas (eds.), *Crises in the Balkans: Views from the Participants,* (Westview Press: Boulder, 1997): 150. Back.

Note 59: See: "Peacekeeping Success in Macedonia", *Military Watch,* vol. 2.20, October 2, 1997. Back.

Note 60: Sophia Clement, *ibidem.* Back.

Note 61: Tom Woodhouse, "Ethnicity, Conflict Resolution, and Post-Cold War Security" in Lee-Anne Broadhead (ed.), *Issues in Peace Research 1995-96,* (Bradford: University of Bradford, 1996): 45.Back.