

# 10 CHANGING BALKANS

*11<sup>TH</sup>  
INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE*

*20–21 February  
2009  
OHRID*

**MACEDONIA**

**ON THE ROAD**

**TO NATO AND EU**

*Balkan Political Club  
Foundation*

*Sofia, 2009*

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Balkan Political Club

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## FOREWORD

Ohrid hosted the 11th international conference of the Balkan Political Club “*Macedonia on the Road to NATO and EU*” (20 – 21 February 2009, “Millenium Palace” hotel). Several working sessions covered the subjects of “Macedonia’s Place in SEE, 18 Years After Gaining Independence”, “The Role of Political Myths and Legends in the Balkans”, “Inter-ethnic Relations and Identities”, “The Republic of Macedonia’s Membership to NATO”, and “EU Strategy for the Balkan Borders – Removing, Not Reshaping”. Antonio Milososki, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Macedonia, was approved on the 21th February 2009 as member of the Balkan Political Club.

Macedonia is ready to make a compromise to reach a settlement on the name dispute with Greece, provided it will not jeopardise its national interests and national dignity, Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski said at the opening of the forum. He stressed that membership in EU and NATO is Macedonia’s top priority and that the country would continue working with dedication to achieve these goals. *The disappointment with the outcome from the Bucharest Summit in April 2008, the delayed invitation to membership for Macedonia and imposing the resolution of the name difference with Greece as additional conditional criteria outside usual*

*membership criteria was indeed painful”, Gruevski said. He added that there was preparedness to make a compromise, but not at any price. “We are prepared for a reasonable compromise that will not threaten our national interests, our national dignity.” Gruevski said. In his presentation Dr. Zhelyu Zhelev, President of Bulgaria (1990 – 1997) and President of the Balkan Political Club, pointed out that Macedonia’s NATO and EU accession is not only in its own interest, but in the interest of the entire Balkan region, since the issue is important for the security and stability of the neighbouring countries and the region in general. “My inner conviction is that the accession of the Republic of Macedonia to full NATO and EU membership is necessary not only for the country itself, it is necessary for the entire Balkan Region. Because this matter concerns the security and stability of its neighbours as well, be they close or more remote.”*

According to him, the further blocking of Macedonia’s NATO accession could lead to internal destabilisation, which could endanger the region as a whole.

*”I have in mind appeals of some circles among Macedonia’s citizens of Albanian ethnic origin for “cantonisation” and “federalisation” of the country and, in the more extreme case, for the secession of Macedonia. This is bound to set the Balkans ablaze again, this time from the territory of the Republic of Macedonia. Given such a scenario, however, there will be no way to limit the conflicts within the boundaries of Macedonia.”, said Dr. Zhelev.*

He added, *“The name problem is very awkward, since both parties use it for daily politics. According to me, Greece’s remarks would have been justified if Macedonia was called Northern Greece or Upper Greece. In that case, Greece would have the right to remark on the name use. Even in the past and during the time of former Yugoslavia, the country was called Republic of Macedonia and it did not change its name after the federation’s break-up. Of course, it preserves its sacred right to determine the name, under the condition that it is not a copy of another name”.*

In his speech Suleyman Demirel, the 9th President of Turkey, stressed the significance of Macedonia’s prospects towards integration with the Euro-Atlantic structures. *”Turkey believes that Macedonia rightly deserves its place within NATO. The Turkish stance is straightforward: countries that fulfil the Alliance’s obligations and display political determination should be able to become NATO members”, he said.*

*“I believe that the matter concerning the Republic of Macedonia’s constitutional name should be resolved through dialogue and negotiations”, President Demirel concluded.*



Romania's President Emil Constantinescu (1996–2000) drew the attention of the audience to the Balkan myth of the sacrifice of creation as a plea for redeeming self-respect. In his presentation he treated the four myths, essential for the entire contemporary European society, identified by the political analyst Raoul Girardet – the myth of conspiracy, the myth of the Saviour, the myth of global age and the myth of unity.

According to the prominent Macedonian intellectual Ljubisha Georgievski, the war of concepts – multi-ethnic and mono-ethnic – is very sophisticated reflecting the approach to the Balkan countries regardless of their official membership or candidate status, and depending on the same dilemma. *“Shall the multi-ethnic, multi-confessional and multi-racial Balkans splash over Europe and prevail as a concept or shall it not?”*, he asked in his emotional speech. *“The multi-ethnic concept of Macedonia is a real challenge to the mono-ethnic concept of Greece and that is the main sin we are having. Not the issue of the name”*, Georgievski emphasized.

The problem imposed by Greece is irrational and unique in its kind, however being *realpolitik* politicians we should accept reality as it is, Ljubcho Georgievski, PM of Macedonia (1998–2002) said. *“We can see the public situation, we can understand both the EU with the exception of a few friends of Macedonia and the NATO member countries including the USA, and the sending of clear signals and messages to the Republic of Macedonia. I think that we should be brutally realistic about what message they send – that we should make a compromise about the name and after the compromise”*.

Antonio Milososki, Foreign Minister of Macedonia, stressed in his speech that problems can be remedied sometimes with the mediation of a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, as shown by the signing of the Interim Accord in 1995. *“Both parties were not very happy with this Interim Accord but it helped normalize relations. I stress that it is not a matter of mistrust between the Macedonian and the Greek nations; it is rather that certain groups of politicians and I think that most of them come from Greece, have their political and private interests, bias, to prevent the resolution of this problem.”*

Hikmet Cetin, Foreign Minister of Turkey (1991–1994), appealed to take away the emotions and be realistic: *“Obviously, this decision implies that it is equally incumbent upon both Macedonia and Greece to find a mutually acceptable solution. It is their shared responsibility to act constructively and seek an early settlement of the matter.”*

There was good news for the Republic of Macedonia on the 15<sup>th</sup> July 2009, when the EU Vice-President Jacques Barrot and EU Enlargement

Commissioner Olli Rehn have announced the Commission's recommendation to lift the visa regime for Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia by first January 2010. **Unfortunately Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Kosovo have been excluded from the new EU regime.** On the one hand, the new Balkan visa rules draw some cheers for Macedonians, Serbs and Montenegrins who will be able to catch a plane and just land anywhere in the EU, no visa required. On the other hand, the peoples in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo were frustrated and disappointed. This decision created a huge gap for the rest of the Western Balkans. Some commentators posed the question – is this a kind of new division of the Balkans?

*Tanya Mangalakova*  
*Coordinator*  
*Balkan Political Club*

# LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

## BALKAN POLITICAL CLUB

- Agni Vlavianos – Arvanitis** President and Founder, “Biopolitics International Organisation”, Greece
- Akkan Suver** President, “Marmara Group Strategic and Social Research Foundation”, Turkey
- Ali Serdengecti** Former MP, Turkey
- Constantin Mihail Grigorie** Ambassador of Romania to the Russian Federation
- Dimitar Dimitrov** Minister of Culture of Macedonia (1998–2000)
- Emil Constantinescu** President of Romania (1996–2000)
- Evgenia Popescu** Honorary Consul of Romania in Burgas, Bulgaria
- Hayati Korkmaz** Honorary Consul of Bulgaria in Bursa, Turkey
- Hikmet Cetin** Foreign Minister of Turkey (1991–1994)
- Ivo Slaus** Member of the Croatian Academy of Science and Art
- Kiro Gligorov** 1st President of Macedonia (1991–1994, 1994–1999)
- Ljubisha Georgievski** Ambassador of Macedonia to Belgrade
- Ljubcho Georgievski** PM of Macedonia (1998–2002)
- Mladen Ivanic** MP, Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2003–2007)
- Murat Karayalcin** Foreign Minister of Turkey (1993–1995)
- Nikola Gruevski** PM of Macedonia
- Simeon Saxe Coburg Gotha** PM of Bulgaria (2001–2005), Leader of National Movement Stability and Prosperity
- Suleyman Demirel** 9th President of the Republic of Turkey
- Zhelyu Zhelev** President of the Republic of Bulgaria (1990–1997)

## GUESTS

- Antonio Milososki** Minister of Foreign Affairs of Macedonia
- Aylin Cesur** Chief Adviser, President Demirel, Turkey
- Asparuch Panov** “Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty”, Project-Coordinator for Bulgaria and Macedonia
- Branislav Sarkanjac** University Professor, Macedonia
- Diana Ivanova** “Holiday services” tour operator, Bulgaria
- Emil Milushev** Businessman, Bulgaria
- Engin Koklucinar** Secretary General of the “Marmara Group Strategic and Social Research Foundation”, Turkey
- Goran Stojkovski** PhD, Republic of Macedonia
- Ivaylo Trifonov** Former Ambassador of Bulgaria to Yugoslavia
- Lyubomir Ivanov** President of the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria
- Marko Markov** Former Ambassador of Bulgaria to Yugoslavia, BiH, Albania
- Mujgan Suver** Chairwoman of the Human Rights & the EU Platform of the “Marmara Group Strategic and Social Research Foundation”, Turkey
- Petar-Emil Mitev** Ivan Hadjyiski” Institute for Social Values and Structures, Bulgaria
- Peter-Andreas Bochmann** “Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty”, Resident Representative for Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania and Moldova
- Sevinc Koklucinar** Expert, Turkey
- Stefan Stratiev** Diplomatic Institute, Bulgaria
- Stefan Tafrov** Ambassador of Bulgaria to the UN (2001–2006), Bulgaria
- Velichko Kirilov** “Holiday services” tour operator, Bulgaria
- Vlado Popovski** Professor in the Law Faculty of “St. Cyril and Methodius” University, Macedonia

## EXECUTIVE BUREAU, BALKAN POLITICAL CLUB

**Tanya Mangalakova** Coordinator

**OFFICIAL OPENING**  
FEBRUARY 20, 2009

MODERATOR:  
LJUBISHA GEORGIEVSKI



NIKOLA  
GRUEVSKY

PRIME MINISTER  
OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF MACEDONIA,  
MEMBER OF THE  
BALKAN  
POLITICAL CLUB

## A REASONABLE COMPROMISE THAT WILL NOT THREATEN OUR NATIONAL INTEREST

*Distinguished Mr. Zhelyu Zhelev, President of the Balkan  
Political Club,  
Distinguished members of the Balkan Political Club,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Welcome to Ohrid, one of the oldest cities in Europe and undoubtedly the cultural and spiritual capital of the Republic of Macedonia. The founder of the modern Turkish state Kemal Ataturk once said that humanity is a body and each nation is a part of that body. We must never say it is not important for me if part of the world is feeble, sick. We have to consider it in terms of something that could possibly affect us, as well.

This thought is fully applicable if we reflect it on our region. Whenever in the past a country in the region was affected by some of the illnesses of modern states, this illness has never bypassed the other countries or has always had serious implications for the social life of those countries. We obviously need a shared success here in the Balkans. Success, which requires co-operation, understanding and good neighbourliness! In this respect, the membership of the Republic of Macedonia of NATO and of the EU will be a great success for us but also a great step forward for the entire Balkans. Therefore this is where I see the mission of the Balkan Political Club. Therefore we are especially honoured to host this event and I am honoured

to be able to speak before this eminent gathering of friends for whom the prosperity and the bright future of the countries of the Balkans is their guiding idea and their goal.

*Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,*

The success of the Balkans is linked closely with the integration of the countries into the EU and NATO. The disintegration from the past should be replaced with European integration based on shared values and interests. All countries in the region regardless of the stage of their integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures must be guided by the shared interest of completing the European architecture in this area, in this region. For all of those countries what is the paramount development interest is reaching lasting peace and lasting stability. This can be achieved only in the framework of the European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

The countries in the region must not allow that despite the fact that all of them work towards their European integration on the other hand they are treated as European issue. All countries in the region must have political will and decidedness to go forward with this process. This process requires leadership. People create history and not *vice-versa*. We can achieve progress when courageous and skillful leaders take advantage of the opportunity to move things forward, to paraphrase former US President Harry Truman.

The Republic of Macedonia bears its share of the responsibilities. Membership of the EU and NATO is the top foreign policy priority of the Republic of Macedonia but also a logical outcome of the achieved progress in all sectors of the society.

We would expect that our efforts in implementing the complex and difficult reforms in the defence area as well as in the other spheres of the social and political system as well as our contribution to global security will be crowned with the membership of the Alliance as soon as possible and we expected that this would happen at the Bucharest Summit last year.

At the same time we have invested greatly in good neighbourly relations. The Republic of Macedonia is greatly interested in developing the relations with all its neighbours including of course Greece. In this respect we have no claims of any kind towards our neighbours, nor do we demand a change of name of other states or regions. Respecting the others, we would expect basic respect from the others. Over the last years we have made great concessions, major concessions for the sake of good bilateral



relations with Greece, including change of the flag, constitutional amendments and constructive participation in the talks on the name difference.

Therefore the disappointment with the outcome of the Bucharest Summit in April 2008, the delayed invitation to membership for Macedonia and imposing the resolution of the name difference with Greece as additional conditional criteria outside usual membership criteria was indeed painful. I would like to stress that this delay will not be a reason to stray away from the right direction and we will continue the reforms and we will continue constructively participating in the talks with Greece. We are prepared for a reasonable compromise that will not threaten our national interests, our national dignity. We hope that Greece will also demonstrate some readiness. It is especially important to bear in mind that the talks are about the name of the Republic of Macedonia and not the name of the Republic of Greece. It would be counterproductive if the issue was resolved at the cost of sacrificing European values. Our goal is that any misunderstanding should be resolved in accordance with the European principle of tolerance. As it is, inter alia, stated in the Founding Declaration of the Balkan Political Club *“Our vision for the future of the Balkans is a future of respecting differences and moral values”*.

However I think that little has been done to address the negative implications of the delay of the invitation for the Republic of Macedonia to join NATO and for the 4 years in the waiting room of the EU without commenced negotiations, which is unsustainable and has a discouraging effect. We have the political, administrative and institutional capacity to immediately start access negotiations with the EU. We would expect that the EU would leave open the possibility of making positive steps forward during the Czech EU-Presidency by providing additional assessment of the fulfilment of the conditions for a start of the accession negotiations. Not starting negotiation talks is not favourable and beneficial for anybody.

The partnership relations and dedication to the values of the Alliance have been confirmed by the Republic of Macedonia by its participation in international missions. In this aspect as regards the implemented defence reforms the Republic of Macedonia has been continually highly assessed by NATO, which recognized it as a stable military partner. In December 2008 the government of the Republic of Macedonia adopted a courageous decision to increase its troops participating in NATO missions – an increase of 25 % of the ISAF mission which was implemented during the January

2009 rotation. We are also preparing an analysis of the possibility of additional military strengthening of our participation in ISAF in 2010.

The Republic of Macedonia is continually strengthening its political security cooperation with its neighbours and the countries of the region. We are actively participating in and promoting the regional initiatives and forums aimed at strengthening mutual trust and cooperation, stability and development of the region, promoting Euro-Atlantic values. At the same time we are ready to continue contributing to security together with our partners in the Alliance and in the EU.

As a country that has achieved significant results in the reforms in the context of the visa liberalization we would expect that the European Commission submits a proposal to the European Council for abolishment of the visa regime for our citizens by the end of 2009\*.

In conclusion I would like to underline that we are aware of the possibility of a certain defocusing, or rather refocusing of the debate on the enlargement to the internal developments in the EU such as the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, the elections for European parliament in June 2009 as well as the effects and consequences of the global financial crisis. However the so-called “enlargement fatigue” risks to undermine the achievements of the EU and NATO in the Balkans.

Lyndon Johnson once said, *“We must open the doors for opportunities and enable people to pass through those doors...”* Security and stability of the Balkans are clearly linked up with the EU and NATO. Our success will not be complete and certain as long as all countries in the Balkans are not integrated in the EU. Replacing our very difficult history with bright European future requires joint work and solidarity. If we accept such an approach, then the full Europeanization of the Balkans will become a reality.

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\* The citizens of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro should be allowed to travel visa-free to the EU in 2010, The European Commission proposed on 15th July 2009

ZHELYU  
ZHELEV

## OPENING SPEECH

*PRESIDENT OF  
THE REPUBLIC  
OF BULGARIA  
(1990–1997),  
PRESIDENT OF  
THE BALKAN  
POLITICAL CLUB*

*Your Excellencies Presidents,  
Your Excellencies Prime Ministers,  
Ministers,  
MPs,  
Dear guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Opening the 11<sup>th</sup> international conference of the Balkan Political Club, I would like to recall its character, goals and priorities, as they are written in its Founding Declaration and Code of Ethics, to remind you also of the standards and principles on which its activity is based and the relations between its members in the process of work.

The Balkan Political Club is a non-governmental organization of a regional nature – mainly politicians, diplomats and intellectuals belongs to it, albeit only in their capacity as individuals, not committing the institutions they head or represent, and not representing the country of their origin. This circumstance makes them equal in rights and free in the debates to express opinions and ideas that can be different from the official stances and from the commonly accepted position of the respective country.

The key tasks and priorities of the Balkan Political Club are:

- Construction of the communications and energy structure of the Balkans which means modern highways, high-speed railway lines,

- regular air transport that connects in a sustainable way both the national economies of the Balkan countries and the region as a whole to the other parts of Europe;
- Construction of gas and oil pipelines that transport oil and gas resources from Central Asia and the Russian Federation to Europe;
  - Development of the nuclear power sector;
  - Strengthening of peace, security and stability on the Balkans as a *condition sine qua non* for prosperity of the countries of our region;
  - Full membership in NATO and EU for all Balkan countries that is the most reliable guarantee for the peace and security in this part of our continent.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I took the liberty to recall the key goals and priorities of the Balkan Political Club which are embedded in the Founding Declaration and the Code of Ethics of the Club, because during the next two days (today and tomorrow) we will face the necessity to repeat them over and over again.

The future membership of the Republic of Macedonia in NATO and EU and the painful dispute between Athens and Skopje related to it will force us to act as a real political club that will be able to stay on the level of the science of politics – political science, and it will not permit us to become involved in the jungle of political speculation and partisan bias.

I wish to believe that we will succeed in this respect one more time, because once our Club has already passed with dignity such a test!

It is related to the 2<sup>nd</sup> international conference of the Club, held on 29–31 March 2002 in Skopje dedicated to the security issues on the Balkans. The security forces of the Macedonian state and the Albanian paramilitary formations had just ceased their armed clashes. At that time, at the closure of the conference the Club members adopted a Declaration stigmatizing all attempts at resolving the political issues by use of force and arms, stressing that the political problems should be resolved at the round table, expressing support for the Ohrid Framework Agreement.

The present case that emerged from the conflict between Athens and Skopje, of course, is much more complicated than the events in early 2001, but when a policy of principle is made, a wise decision always can be reached. We must not forget that the best policy is the policy of principle.

I look forward to our conference being successful and fruitful and I believe that this will happen because skilled politicians and researchers of politics are in this hall.

# SESSION ONE

## PART ONE

### THE ROLE OF THE POLITICAL MYTHS AND LEGENDS IN THE BALKANS FEBRUARY 20, 2009

MODERATOR:  
CONSTANTIN MIHAIL GRIGORIE



ZHELYU  
ZHELEV

*PRESIDENT OF  
THE REPUBLIC  
OF BULGARIA  
(1990–1997),  
PRESIDENT OF  
THE BALKAN  
POLITICAL CLUB*

**INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE  
OF THE NATO  
AND EU MEMBERSHIP  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

*Your Excellencies Presidents,  
Your Excellencies Prime Ministers,  
Ministers,  
MPs,  
Dear guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,*

My inner conviction is that the accession of the Republic of Macedonia to full NATO and EU membership is necessary not only for the country itself, it is necessary for the entire Balkan Region. It is so because this matter concerns the security and stability of its neighbours as well, be they close or more remote.

The opposite development, i.e. if it fails to get an invitation once again, can inevitably drive it towards internal destabilization, moreover, on ethnic basis. I have in mind the appeals of some circles among Macedonia's citizens of Albanian ethnic origin for "cantonization" and "federalization" of the country and, in the more extreme case, for the secession of Macedonia. This is bound to set the Balkans ablaze again, this time from the territory of the Republic of Macedonia.

Given such a scenario, however, there will be no way to limit the conflicts within the boundaries of Macedonia.

When a country is applying for NATO or EU membership or for

both simultaneously, as the case of the Republic of Macedonia is, the requirement is for it to be a democratic state with a market economy, but also to have no unresolved problems with its neighbours.

I think that the Republic of Macedonia is such a country. But it so happens that one of its neighbours: the Hellenic Republic, claims that it has unresolved issues with the Republic of Macedonia. It upholds that the Macedonian state has no right to call itself “the Republic of Macedonia” – a name under which it existed as one of the republics in the Yugoslavian federation for almost half a century after World War II. And after the collapse of the federation, when it became an autonomous and independent state, it retained the same name: that of the “Republic of Macedonia”.

Likewise, when in 1992 the European Community considered the issue of the recognition of the former Yugoslav republics as autonomous and independent states, Macedonia was not among the recognized states, even though according to the conclusions of the Badinter Arbitration Committee, together with Slovenia Macedonia met completely the criteria set by the European Community.

The dispute on the name of the Republic of Macedonia, which has been sustained between Athens and Skopje for 17 years now, has become real warfare between two national mythologies. This is very unpleasant and annoying, because both countries use myths as a weapon for the attainment of political goals and for policy making.

In this case Greece believes that by adopting the name of “Republic of Macedonia” Skopje encroaches on its historical heritage from the Ancient Times, which includes the name of the ancient state of Macedonia.

The Macedonians, on the other hand, think that having named their state “Republic of Macedonia”, they have automatically become direct successors of the state of Philip II and Alexander the Great, at that in all aspects. This, in turn, has incited them not only to name important facilities after Alexander of Macedonia, such as the Skopje airport and a part of the motorway along Corridor No 10, but also to invent new myths which have a ring of absurdity about them, like the one about the “seven-thousand-years-old Macedonian script”; about “the Macedonians as the oldest people on the Planet Earth”; or “Only the Sun is older than Macedonia”; “Only the Macedonians understand the mystic secret of the Sun”; also the myth about the “Rosetta Stone”, which contains inscriptions in three languages:



ancient Egyptian, classical Greek and an unknown language – the unknown language, though not yet deciphered, has been proclaimed to be ancient Macedonian”<sup>1</sup>.

The truth is that neither of them have grounds to claim the heritage of ancient Macedonia, and even less so to declare themselves the rightful successors of ancient Macedonians.

The Greeks have no moral right to do so, because ancient Greeks and Macedonians were radically different tribes and they were not just at enmity with each other, they waged sanguinary exterminating wars.

Let us recall the “Philippics” by Demosthenes, the orator of the Democratic Party in Athens. These were orations delivered against Philip II and his policy of conquest of the Greek polises, half of which he seized by using fire and sword. Alexander, his son, continued the war until he conquered the entire Greek world, and then he organized the march to the East and the conquest of the world.

Let us quote just one of the speeches of Demosthenes against the Macedonian King Philip II.: “The Macedonian King has nothing to do with either Greece or the Greek culture. He is a barbarian, a tyrant, a despot, who will smother rather than rescue the last remnants of the Hellenic independence, love of freedom and culture.”

“All the champions of the Macedonian party, who are trying to convince the Athenians of the philhellenism of the Macedonian barbarian are paid by him and by giving out Macedonian money and by deceit they bribe the wretched and confused Athenian demos”.

“There can be no doubt whatsoever in the treacherous plans of the Macedonian. The only goal Philip strove to achieve was the pillage of Hellas, its deprivation of its natural riches, of trading and strategic points. And for the attainment of his loathsome intentions Philip made use of the discords and disagreements among the Hellenes themselves. To say nothing of Olynthus, Methoni and 32 cities along the coast of Thrace, which were destroyed with unprecedented cruelty, and to say nothing of the extermination of the Phocians. He deprived the cities in Thessaly of their freedom and statehood and instated his agents as tyrants in Euboea, at an arm’s length from Athens.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Македония на кръстопът. Macedonia at a crossroads”, “Iztok-Zapad”, Sofia, 2008, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> V. S. Sergeev, “The History of Ancient Greece”, “Nauka I Izkustvo” State Publishing House, Sofia, 1950, p. 387–388.

After the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BC, where Philip II of Macedon routed the allied forces of the Greeks, the ancient Greek world came to an end. The rest was finished off by Alexander before he undertook his march to the East.

The question is: what historical, political and moral grounds can present-day democratic Greece have to claim that it is the successor of ancient Macedonia and that it can dispose with its heritage, including the granting of a permission or banning the use of its name?

History does not like evaluative judgements, as it does not like the conditional mood either, such beginning with “if” (if it did not happen this way but otherwise...). And it has its reason: otherwise it would not be capable to free itself from subjectivism and the subjective arbitrariness in the interpretation of events. But in this case, when speaking of heritage and the warfare to inherit, an evaluation becomes obligatory.

What is the balance eventually? How did the deeds of Philip II and Alexander of Macedonia finish? By the destruction of the gorgeous ancient Hellenic world that gave to humanity democracy; philosophy; exact sciences such as Euclid’s geometry, Archimedes’s physics, Aristotle’s formal logic; the genesis of the European art and literature; Olympic games, which even today 2500 years later, excite all humanity. What did Philip II and Alexander of Macedonia leave behind? – Bloody wars accompanied by hundreds of devastated towns, by thousands of massacred and so on. Is that the heritage for which democratic Greece and democratic Macedonia are fighting?

But let us leave myths and legends alone and talk as sober politicians. Greece would have had the right to demand a change of the name of Macedonia in just one case: if the former Yugoslav republic had somehow included the name of Greece in its own name. For example: “New Greece”, “Upper Greece”, since geographically the Republic of Macedonia is situated higher up towards the mountains. It could also be called “Northern Greece” or “South-Western Greece”. In such a case the Republic of Greece would have been fully entitled to protest indignantly against the plundering of its name and to insist before the international courts that its neighbour should be condemned for illicit misuse of its name.

What grounds does present-day Macedonia have to uphold its constitutional name as the Republic of Macedonia? Firstly, it is located in one part of the ancient Macedonian state of Vardar Macedonia, while the other two parts are situated on the territories of neighbouring states, respectively Pirin Macedonia in Bulgaria and Aegean Macedonia in Greece.

Secondly, under the name of the Republic of Macedonia it was a constituent part of the Yugoslav federation and under that name it existed for almost half a century.

Thus, in reality it did not change its name after the disintegration of the federation but retained it. And thirdly, it availed itself of the sacred right of each people to determine the name of its state on its own, provided that it is not a repetition of the name of another country.

EMIL  
CONSTANTINESCU

*PRESIDENT  
OF ROMANIA  
(1996–2000),  
MEMBER  
OF THE BALKAN  
POLITICAL CLUB*

**THE BALKAN MYTH  
OF THE SACRIFICE OF CREATION:  
A PLEA FOR REDEEMING  
SELF-RESPECT**

*“If the Balkans did not exist, they should be invented” –  
Herman Keyserling*

Could we get a glimpse of contemporary society, which is suffocated by the preoccupation for immediate efficiency of its actions and by the benefits resulting from the above, of the founding myths and legends, which carry within the essential traits of those who gave us birth and which reflect the image of the experiences that have preceded us?

The construction and expansion of the EU as a political project, which tries to build on diversity in national, ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural identities as a milestone for the political and economic success of Europe in a globalized world, brings back the debate on the importance of political myths.

Raoul Girardet bets on the affiliations between the contemporary political imagery and the great myths of mankind, while the latter offers the conceptual material needed by the present to get the name of non-temporality. Out of this symbiosis derive contemporary myths, either political or of a different nature, getting validation both by their connection to the past and by the exceptional influence they can get in a modern reality, which is still re-writing its history. The French political analyst identifies four myths, which he thinks essential for the entire contemporary European society: the myth of conspiracy, the myth of the saviour, the myth of the

global age and the myth of unity. All four refer to the social and political events that have radically altered the face of Europe over the past two decades. If we should talk about the revolutions of 1989 which led to the fall of the iron curtain and to the fall of communism, or about the evolution of European nations in the period immediately following the said revolutions; if we should approach the idea of European unity or the danger of a could-be return to communism, we will discover between the lines manifestations of the four above-mentioned political myths.

We could raise the question to which extent these myths can support a positive direction or reversely lead to derails and failures? And last, but not least to what extent one could avoid excessive mythologizing and implicit deformation of both history and reality.

A large part of the Balkan countries, which have been for half a century within the area of influence of communism, have faced such dramatic challenges. The idea of a national saviour, so widely used in the period preceding World War II has turned into the reality of burdening dictatorships. The myth of unity and that of a golden age degenerated into the process of becoming Soviet and into the pathological denaturizing of history and reality. The myth of conspiracy has led to the demonization of the West, seen as the main adversary of the pretence welfare of communist countries.

The fact that the policy of states within this geographic space has been associated to these myths, in an almost identical manner, has drawn the attention to a common psychology: the psychology of the Balkan peoples, which integrates the former into a special unity. What does “special” mean in this case, and how does it show in the image of the Balkan peoples about themselves and that of the West about the same?

The answer comes from a rather remote past, as, being more than a geographic or historic concept, the Balkans represent an imaginary space, which hosts a paradox: Primordial Europe that has become a region opposite to Europe.

The expression “Balkan Peninsula” is dated back to 1808, whereas the negative connotations have become evident only since 1918. While over the 19<sup>th</sup> century the reticence of the West derived from the images of wild regions, scarcely populated and backward, where it is dangerous to venture (*Hie sunt leones*), the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brings about the image of a permanently conflicting area, “Europe’s powder-keg” that could inflict danger in neighbouring regions too.

The images were covering a reality that nobody could deny, but which was turned by politics into accentuated stereotypes, such as “Balkanizing”, while literature and later cinema transformed them into simplified myths fixed in universal sensibility.

In the period of the Cold War, the Balkans vanished from the interest of the West, which was promoting a two-fold perception, one where political and military arguments were violating geography, by placing Communist Germany and Czechoslovakia in the East of Europe, as they were part of the Warsaw Treaty, whereas Turkey and Greece were labelled Western, as they were members of NATO. Once Southeastern Europe was freed from communist dictatorships, through its own effort and peacefully, the fears of the West, which was unprepared for such a radical change, emerged in the shape of the theory of “clash of civilizations”, according to which only the catholic and protestant West was qualified for democracy and a market economy. I had the chance of replying to the late Huntington at Harvard, during a conference on the “dialogue of civilizations”, arguing that he was extending an economic and political experience of two centuries to a history probing a survival capacity of two millennia. Huntington’s theory as well as the reticence of the West, kept alive by the blood-stained conflicts in former Yugoslavia, have already been surpassed today by the new European political and economic framework.

Europe’s stability will, yet, be truly ensured to the point when the cultural model of unity in diversity will become reality.

The Balkan experience can become again a term of reference for the “other Europe”, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

80 years ago Herman Keyserling was writing in his famous “Spectral Analysis of Europe”, that Europe was in its essence a “Balkan Peninsula”. If it was wide-ranging and united as the United States and Russia, its meaning would fade away, as its spirit was born on the field of tensions between state-towns fighting each other in Ancient Greece and which have perpetuated from one people to another, leading Europe to present the same dynamic unity, as that of the Ancient Balkans. Since tensions in Western Europe have faded, we should be grateful, so Keyserling, that there is a modern Balkan Peninsula, where we can learn what should be avoided. Yet, I would rather say that now, when the tensions within the Balkans seem to have faded too, we should, as well, learn from ourselves how we can avoid them. Yet there is something else that we should learn: how to build a cultural model of dignity which should not be based on

despising others, but on understanding each other's values.

At this point we cannot be silent on the fact that, so far, the Balkan peoples have been the first to disregard Balkanhood. They have placed themselves in the outskirts of Europe, considering that the West was the only "true Europe". In the collective mind of the Balkans a trip to the West was becoming a trip to Europe bearing an initiation feature. Even if this vision was favoured over the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century progress and modernity, the extension of this subordinate pose of humiliating subordination becomes counterproductive in the new European and global political reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Recovering one's cultural pride becomes primordial. As a matter of fact we are not only the continuators of Ancient Greece, with Aristotle, Pericles and Sophocles, of the Thracians, Orpheus and Aesop, or those of the Ottoman civilization with the sophisticated Suleyman the Magnificent. We are nonetheless contemporaries of the Greeks Seferis and Elytis, of the Bosnian Andric, of the Jewish Canetti from Ruse and of the Turkish Orhan Pamuk, all of the former laureates of the Nobel Prize for literature over the past decades. We might too easily forget that Croatia gave Mestrovic and Tesla, Albania Ismail Kadare, Turkey Orhan Pamuk, Romania Constantin Brancusi, Eugen Ionescu and Tristan Tzara, who have initiated modernism in art and literature over the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

"Balkan" still remains a *nomen nudum*, a term empirically used and never validated by a complete description of the object it refers to. It is hard to speak about cultural unity, while the Greek, Turkish, Bulgarian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Bosnian, Macedonian and Romanian languages belong to such different linguistic families. Nevertheless there is a common sensibility, which derives from the depth of a century-long cohabitation, marked by tragic conflicts and surprising affinities. It is revealed to us in the myths that tell whatever it is that we do not know about ourselves yet.

Girardet was not wrong in identifying the four political myths that have led to the shaping of the present European civilization. Nevertheless none of these four myths is representative for the Balkan world. The unique, defining myth in all its aspects for the cultural Balkan area is: The myth of the constructor. There is a wide range of Greek, Romanian, Bulgarian, Albanian, Serbian legends, which talk about a special character, identified with the "Great Constructor", who creates through his talent and sacrifice a unique and perennial edifice. This construction is either a bridge, like the bridges over the Arta in Greece, over the Mostar in Herzegovina, and over



the Struma in Bulgaria; a fortress (the Scadar) for the Serbians, (the Tesanc) for the Bosnians, a tower for the Albanians, and a monastery (the Curtea de Arges) for the Romanians. In all cases, the building master is the one to choose his supreme sacrifice so that his work could last over centuries. He is at the same time saviour, restorer of the ideal order of a golden age; he fights for the co-existence of past and present. It could be that similar elements in this legend were also found in the mythology of other peoples, outside the Balkan area, but the aspect that has granted them immortality here is the quality of the artistic and literary expression witnessed by Marguerite Yourcenar's "Oriental Stories", by Lucian Blaga... A historic milestone of the myth of the Constructor is the legend told by the Byzantine chronicler John Malalas of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, where Alexander is said to have sacrificed at the foot of the fortress of Alexandria a young girl, named Macedonia. The factual reality of such an act matters less, as it is surpassed by the symbolic importance of the gesture. The great king was sacrificing his own homeland for supporting a great idea – that of an empire built not only on military force, but also on unity in language and culture.

In the conscience of all Balkan peoples the sacrifice for creation brings into being a whole social, cultural and even religious system. It is the time that the peoples in the Balkans have a say in the innovation of politics, by shedding away humiliating stereotypes, even if at some point they had corresponded to a reality that has been overcome today. It is the time that the Balkan people should again have a vision of the world.

The basis of politics resides in the capacity of society to adapt to one reality or another and the expression of this adaptability is represented by the myth itself. Therefore we can say that the resorts of political endeavours are rather mythical than ideological. The two levels – mythological and ideological – can cohabitate. Yet if ideology tends to substitute the myth as a defining element of a people or a civilization, the danger of derailing becomes imminent, while history fully proves the above. Legend and myth are expressions of a belief and conscience of a people, their use in the interest of a person or a restricted group of people speaks against their authority. As a matter of fact, politics itself should be anchored to the life of the entire community, to the life of the city and not just to a part of the latter. The false understanding and the misuse of the myth could lead politics to certain failure. Identifying the true original myth, which is to my understanding the "myth" of the Constructor in the Balkans can offer essential milestones in avoiding such a situation. It is not about a simple



resort to history, a cultural gesture, but about an essential act in the existence of communities, offering a correct perspective on the present and a just estimate of the future.

At present, the Balkan countries are undergoing a profound process of changing, determined on one hand by the reorganizing of the former communist countries, and on the other, on the need of shaping an efficient political thinking, founded on true democratic values. We can raise the question if resorting to the myths of the peoples in this region can be integrated in such a socio-political context? My answer is positive. In fact, the validity of these resorts is not determined by the changes undergone by a certain civilization. They describe the intimate ground that makes these changes possible and it is this that we have to firstly take into account. The four political myths I was referring to previously can redirect their movement on the trajectory of these changes, while undergoing changes of pattern. It is only the founding myth, the myth of the Constructor that keeps up its position irrespective of changes that have come up in time. The 1989 revolution has been the moment when the peoples in Southeastern Europe felt an astral moment in history and were ready to die for freedom, truth and rightfulness, by shaping a new destiny. From this perspective, the world of the Balkans is far from being that space “ou tout est pris a la legere”, and has become again the mythical space of creation through sacrifice, an area where reality has been and still is looked at with the profound seriousness of him, who assumes the ultimate implication of a solid construction that should defy the future.

It is the future of a world where self-respect is founded on the respect of the peer, and of the peer's respect for you.

LJUBISHA  
GEORGIEVSKI

## THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS

*AMBASSADOR  
OF MACEDONIA  
TO BELGRADE,  
MEMBER OF  
THE BALKAN  
POLITICAL CLUB*

It sounds maybe a little bit unusual but I must tell you that the title of my address – The Road to Damascus is connected with the title of our conference. It is more than obvious that societies with no regard to their civilizational, cultural, confessional, ideological, ethnical, political, tribal structures cannot keep going if deprived of their fundamental mythologies. The fundamental narratives serve as creative vehicles of stereotypes in each society. Unfortunately the Balkan political elite has not proved to be able either to declare more explicitly a political will or to perform multi-national political action in order to deserve its way out of the Balkan pandemic or, to put it better, of the Balkan mythology pandemonium. According to the symptomatics of this political putrefaction, the Balkan nations have been victims of three mythologies struggling for the stage simultaneously – the mythology of nationalism, the mythology of communism, and the mythology of democracy.

The tragedy of Yugoslavia and to be more specific, the case of Serbia was a result of two mythologies sharing not only the same patterns but also the same social structures and political elites. Here the communism mythology was self-transformed into the vampire of nationalism. The political elite though remained the same singing lullabies to the newborn monster. The case of Macedonia was going to be a similar one but the failure of the Serbian conception about the way of transition was due to the multi-confessional and multi-ethnical structure in Macedonia for centuries. This type of structure

being influenced, designed and controlled by an ethnic political elite could not but self-transform Macedonia into a national communist monster.

The mythology of democracy has prevailed since the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia says: “In the Republic of Macedonia live Macedonians as well as part of an Albanian ethnos, part of a Serbian ethnos, part of a Turkish ethnos, part of a Wallachian ethnos, part of a Roma ethnos, part of a Bosniak ethnos, and some others.”

Thus what we do experience now throughout the Balkan political arena is the wrestling of two opposed statehood concepts – the concept of multi-ethnic, multi-confessional and multi-racial state eminently represented by Macedonia among the others, and the concept of one ethnoscation eminently represented by Greece.

In spite of the true fact that the first multi-ethnic concept is inclusive, i. e. democratic, the second is EU *ipso facto* exclusive, i. e. totalitarian, and many democrats in Europe ignore this fact. As for instance the acrobatic manipulation of the Greek mythologies because it is impossible to maintain within the frame of Aristotle’s logic such absurd mixes as liberal communism, anarchism, mono-ethnic exclusive democracy and open aggressive nationalism paraded by the army.

In spite of this clear situation Macedonia is constantly told to watch its tongue in order not to provoke its neighbour. As if the issue between Macedonia and Greece was psychological rather than political or to put it straight forwardly as if the issue between Greece and Macedonia was not historical but hysterical.

This war of the concepts – multi-ethnic and mono-ethnic is very sophisticated reflecting the approach to the Balkan countries regardless of their official membership or candidate status, and depending on the same dilemma. Shall the multi-ethnic, multi-confessional and multi-racial Balkans splash over Europe and prevail as a concept or shall it not?

The multi-ethnic concept of Macedonia is a real challenge to the mono-ethnic concept of Greece and that is the main sin we are having. Not the issue of the name.

We are facing now the same dilemma but now the ex-Balkans dilemma is becoming a European dilemma, an ex-Balkan dilemma as a melting pot or powder-keg. Now this dilemma is a European dilemma since the Europeans have become a melting pot of multi-religiousness, multi-ethnicity and multi-confessionalism and multi-, multi-...everything in order to succeed as a concept. The old European concept of a mono-ethnic nation is dying day by day.

But why do I think so? I think so because I cannot imagine a discussion

on mythology without imagining the narrative. I would ask you to be so kind as to spare four minutes for my narrative since by profession I am a storyteller. I shall try to tell you the narrative of our issue – on the road of Macedonia to Europe. The action takes place in Europe nowadays. A member of NATO nation gets very angry because a small neighbouring nation, which is “a would be NATO member” names its territory with the same name it has had for 3000 years. A NATO member nation gets additional armament such as airplanes and submarines for some 5 billion dollars in order to match the armament of the small but obnoxious and aggressive nation, which disposes with two helicopters. A NATO member nation tells the other NATO member nations that the “two-choppers nation” is ready to invade the NATO nation and thus involve all NATO alliance into a war. The obvious meaning of the intention to invade is as follows:

The “would be NATO member” named its airport “Alexander the Great” in order to delude NATO since calling it Alexander the Great they might not necessarily think of Alexander of Macedonia.

The “two-chopper” aggressors changed their flag in order to delude the entire international community.

They invaded the ancient Greek towns during the rule of Philip and before Alexander ages and ages ago! They invaded, they are aggressors, and this is a historical fact. Being totally gripped by panic the NATO member nation invites NATO to discourage the obnoxious aggressor which in the meantime dares to send to Afghanistan more soldiers to fight shoulder to shoulder with the NATO army. Some NATO members that were previously suspicious about the military strengths of “the two chopper nation” are overwhelmed with the latest information about Afghanistan. Furthermore, the Macedonian troops in Afghanistan are following the path of Alexander’s troops. It is obvious a new mythology is born. The holly truth says that “the two-chopper nation” is the most aggressive one, otherwise it was going to buy some more choppers, wasn’t it? In the meantime both nations sit down around the table searching for negotiation and for some compromise. What would the compromise be? The compromise is, what I say is, since I am member of the Club and you are not member of the Club, says the NATO member – *Vae victis!*. This is the end of my narrative, ladies and gentlemen. But don’t forget the two choppers, be prudent!

# SESSION ONE

## PART TWO

**THE PLACE OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF MACEDONIA IN THE  
CO-ORDINATES OF SEE, 18 YEARS  
AFTER IT BECAME A SOVEREIGN  
AND INDEPENDENT STATE  
FEBRUARY 20, 2009**

**MODERATOR:  
EMIL CONSTANTINESCU**



KIRO GLIGOROV

## WE CONTINUE ON THE ROAD

*THE FIRST  
PRESIDENT  
OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF MACEDONIA  
(1991–1994;  
1994–1999),  
MEMBER OF  
THE BALKAN  
POLITICAL CLUB*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear friends,*

Allow me, first of all to welcome the initiative of President Zhelyu Zhelev for organizing this thematic conference of our Club, motivated by the outcome and consequences of the last year NATO summit in Bucharest. It is well-known that at that time, at the NATO summit in Bucharest the request of the Republic of Macedonia for NATO membership was rejected only because of the objection of Greece supported by several other NATO member states.

It is also well known that, since its independence the Republic of Macedonia has clearly and undoubtedly established the main strategic roads of its foreign policy actions. Namely, they have been: NATO membership and also European Community/Union membership, as well as developing friendly and overall good neighbourly relations with all its neighbours, which means having good relations and good regional cooperation.

I would like to assure you that our people indeed have nothing against the Greek people. On the contrary, our people indeed like the Greek people. Yet, we need to live together, to respect each other, to be good neighbours. We also have to have good cultural and other types of cooperation. Our people use every weekend opportunity to visit Greece, to buy something that is lacking here, to go on a vacation every summer in Greece.

Until this very moment, this strategic orientation of the Republic of Macedonia has not changed, regardless of the changes of the structure of the government and the state that happened in the meantime. And, it has been supported by the huge majority of our population in the Republic of Macedonia.

The Bucharest summit did not surprise them however, did not disappoint them. We continue on this road. NATO membership of the Republic of Macedonia is not just a geopolitical motivation for our citizens. Being part of the Euro-Atlantic community has also a civilizational meaning to them.

As far as NATO is concerned, the Republic of Macedonia has been making a great contribution to the overall common activities of the alliance, even more than some full-fledged members of NATO. According to some statements made at numerous attendances on the aforementioned Bucharest summit, the Republic of Macedonia has met all conditions for NATO membership. Let me repeat: the invitation is not extended simply because of Greece's rejection and the problem that it has with the name of our country. And this very name of ours has not been such as of yesterday, or since our independence.

The pretensions that the entire ancient and antique world is Greek are absurd and purely irrational. (I hear and read nowadays that official Athens has rejected the presentation of various artifacts, excavated on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, in some advertisements, in the Macedonian museums, on the presumption that they are Greek only, etc.). In Skopje there is a small association of citizens calling themselves "Alexander the Great", with no more than 1000 members. I think that there is some kind of delusion that we only like to be successors of Alexander the Great and Phillip II. We are successors of ancient Slovenian tribes that have mixed here in the Balkans throughout the centuries. Maybe there is also something remaining of the blood of Alexander the Great...

According to this very logic, then even the iron deposits and the natural riches in Macedonia could be proclaimed as Greek, because of the term Macedonia.

Regarding the EU context, the question of our membership in the EU is much more complex. Formally, in order to achieve EU membership the so-called Copenhagen criteria must be met, although it is very clear that for the enlargement of the Union mainly a political decision is taken. On the other hand, in the European Union and almost in all member-



states, the so-called enlargement fatigue has been present for many years. That is especially the case after the last wave of enlargement and the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the Union. Because of the consequences of the global financial and economic crises, the mentioned fatigue has transformed into fear from expansion. Uncertainty and unpredictable development are, so to say, the biggest enemies of the politicians. And, the Union is for years now in constitutional crises. The effort to establish a constitutional treaty has failed, because of the unfavourable referendums in France and in The Netherlands, and similar is the destiny of the Lisbon treaty after the unfavourable voting of the citizens of Ireland against it. According to the present treaties of the Union, institutional solutions for its functioning with more than 27, i.e. 28 member-states do not exist.

It therefore seems that quick getaway from this situation in which the EU has found itself is not in sight. It can be acknowledged that the EU enlargement with new member-states from the so-called Western Balkan sub-region is not among the main priorities of the Union. To say it more precisely, the enlargement of the Union is only a verbal priority, occasionally stressed and permanently used as an incentive tool to encourage the reforms in the candidate and aspiring states and to maintain the dominant interest in those countries for Union membership. In other words, the European Union is preoccupied with its internal consolidation in an expanded structure of 27 member-states, it is preoccupied with finding a way out of the so called constitutional crisis and the way out of the consequences of the global financial and economic crises, with energy dependency and security in power resources supply, with adjusting to the new foreign-policy signals from the new American administration led by Obama, with the Iraqi and Afghan wars and the acute Middle-East crises...

Let me stop listing further. Realistically seen and analysed, the Western Balkans and the enlargement are not in the Unions scope. Unfortunately, that is so, although I deem that leaving the Western Balkan enclave outside the European Union is not good either for the Balkan countries, or for the European Union. Postponing of an immediate and instant approach by the Union to open an active, gradual and scheduled accession process for the Western Balkan countries will only widen the gap between these countries and the EU and will aggravate and prolong their accession to the Union. As an expected inevitability and consequence of it, the interest and the civil support for Union membership in the aspiring countries will weaken

and they will experience “tiredness of conditioning and postponing”. If that becomes the case, on a long-term bases, the Western Balkans as a “black hole” shall bring in new and bigger uncertainties than the present ones, and at the end of the day, this shall cost the Union even more.

Not once have I said that the creation of the European Union has been the greatest project of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With its constitutional norms, principles, decision-making mechanisms and policies, the Union has shown that it’s a specific universe of values. Let me just mention here the case of Jorg Haider in Austria and the manner in which the Union dealt with the chauvinism and racism of that politician in one of the member-states.

However, the European Union is still a gathering of selfish states and has no mechanisms of dealing with the biased and nationalistic interests of some of the member states. The question is whether the present European leaders, inspired by the wisdom of the founding fathers of this grand project shall find means to further develop the values and effectiveness of the Union.

What are the perspectives for membership of the Republic of Macedonia, as well as the other Western Balkan countries, in the EU? I would not leave out Turkey in this regard. Turkey acquired candidate country status many years ago, although the problems which it faces in its pleading for full membership are more specific. Nonetheless, I would like to emphasize that Turkey as well should become member of the Union.

Several years ago, namely the Turkish aspirations for Union membership provoked the European Commission to try to get round the Turkish full-fledged membership, and instead of it, to promote the idea of so called privileged partnership. Of course, the Turkish side rejected that idea.

In the present-day circumstances, I personally would not be surprised if some similar ideas regarding the Western Balkan countries, as well arise in the Union. Some political structures already stand for dividing those countries into two groups: the so called Adriatic group, which will embrace Croatia, Montenegro, Albania and the Republic of Macedonia, and the second one, Balkan-continental group, which will embrace Serbia, Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In my opinion, of crucial importance for the road of the Republic of Macedonia towards the EU, as well as the other western Balkan countries, except Croatia, is the question of the visa liberalisation and unobstructed possibilities for travelling in Europe. Of course, with more strict control of the stay in the EU member states.

I, personally, would not be against concluding new types of treaties, which would not be a substitute for the full membership treaties, but a new phase or interim phase on the road towards accession to the Union. Here, primarily I have in mind such types of treaties from the economic and financial domain, that enable belonging to the European economic area, intensified economic co-operation, entering the euro zone and similar ones.

MLADEN IVANIC

*MP OF BOSNIA  
AND  
HERZEGOVINA,  
MEMBER OF THE  
BALKAN  
POLITICAL CLUB*

## **PROMOTION OF THE WESTERN BALKANS**

To speak about Macedonia on its road to EU and NATO cannot be done without having thought of the whole situation in the region. I became Minister of Foreign Affairs seven years ago and held the post till three years ago and that was the time when Macedonia was approved as a candidate country. At that time the region was seen as more united than today. I can give you a few examples. It was almost not impossible some six years ago that the ministers of the Western Balkan countries should agree for one of them to speak on behalf of all of them before the EU ministers of foreign affairs. There was a common approach, common discussion, common statements on behalf of the whole region from Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia. These days this is not possible unfortunately. I think that this is not a good mood within the region and also a big problem for each country in its effort to achieve EU membership.

If I have to send a message to our Macedonian friends, my message to them is again to be involved as much as they can in the promotion of South East Europe and the Western Balkans. Macedonia has a lot of reasons for that. For us in Bosnia the fact that Macedonia is a candidate country is a big positive signal to do the same. We know that Macedonia has not yet opened negotiations and the road will be very long but Macedonia is a candidate country and this cannot be forgotten. It is a big success, in my opinion.

Macedonia basically fulfilled all technical, political conditions to become a NATO member. I do not imagine that NATO in the future could reconsider its position. There is a problem with the name. I think, for Macedonia the problem of its name will remain. There are just two options in front of our Macedonian friends. One option is to do its best to negotiate with Greece independently without any other influences or to try to find some sort of mediator that will be very difficult. My suggestion is to be very active and to insist on the negotiations because this can be a problem in the future and not only with NATO but with EU, as well.

Croatia, which was almost on board, all of us are already seeing Croatia as member of the EU, now has a very sensitive dispute with Slovenia. Croatia can be faced with a similar experience like Macedonia. For itself Serbia has a problem with Kosovo, if you see from the European perspective all these countries as potential candidates. A lot of ministers will say: "We would like to see you in the family", but in reality behind closed doors they would say: "Why have in the family countries which are not agreed on their names, borders, which can not take a common stand regarding Kosovo.". We have to be faced with reality. Is it fair or not? A completely different story! Diplomacy is not about who is right, who is fair and who is correct. Diplomacy is basically balancing the different interests and we have to understand that. All of us have first to create as much as possible a mutual approach to the EU that means regional cooperation, not to repeat the mistakes of the past "I am better than my neighbours" which will be never welcomed by the EU. But even with that there is a question – will the EU accept so quickly all the candidate countries soon? I am not so sure.

A few years ago there was one term, which was adopted by the EU – "absorption capacity". The EU has a problem with absorption capacity. May I ask our European friends "Do you want to be absorbed?". It means do you want to be digested? This was a very clear message that there is a negative approach. There were a lot of nice articles, nice speeches, and messages but in reality I think that all of us have a huge problem. But even if we do our best still there is a big question mark will we be accepted as soon as we would like and expect to be accepted! There is a big lack of trust in the institutions in the Western Balkans. We have strong politicians; we have strong individuals and not so strong institutions. This is the straight image about us, which we have to change.

Experts expect a lot from the Lisbon Treaty and in the end probably all member states will ratify it. I am not sure that this will be the end of the

discussion about the EU. We have a lot of challenges in front of us. We do not have clear answers and if you want to be honest I think that the prospects are not so good not only because of us but also because of the internal problems within the EU.

I urge as much as possible our Macedonian friends to be a leading agent, a leading country, promoting the regional cooperation which will be to the benefit not only of Macedonia but of all of us.

SULEYMAN  
DEMIREL

## MACEDONIA RIGHTLY DESERVES ITS PLACE WITHIN NATO

NINTH  
PRESIDENT OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF  
TURKEY, MEMBER  
OF THE BALKAN  
POLITICAL CLUB

*Excellencies,  
Distinguished Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It gives me great pleasure to attend the 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Balkan Political Club, of which I am a proud member. I am also honoured to be given the opportunity to address such a distinguished audience, here in beautiful Ohrid. Indeed, glancing at the agenda, I see that there are highly regarded and honourable names attending this conference, all of whom are esteemed colleagues and friends of mine.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Balkan Political Club, and especially to His Excellency Dr. Zhelev for inviting me to this conference. My sincere thanks also go to the authorities of the Republic of Macedonia, our gracious hosts and friends.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Visiting the Republic of Macedonia has always been a happy occasion for me. I still have vivid recollections of my three visits to this country during my tenure as President, in July 1995, October 1998 and April 1999. And during each of my visits, I have had the opportunity to witness at first hand the deep-rooted and sturdy bonds, based on a common culture and shared values, between the Turkish and Macedonian peoples.

In fact, there are numerous reminiscent symbols of our long common history, which can be seen in Macedonia today. The Ottoman-Turkish architectural masterpieces such as the Covered Bazaar or Bezisten, Kursunlu Han and the Mustafa Pasa Mosque in Skopje, and the Painted Mosque in Tetovo are noteworthy. One important historical fact that comes to my mind is that the founder of the modern Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, studied at the military high school in Bitola.

I would also like to underline the Turkish people's deep interest and genuine sympathy towards Macedonia and the Macedonian nation. A very basic example of this fact can be seen in ratings of the popular Turkish TV series named, "Farewell Rumelia", which is filmed entirely in Macedonia. Whether rooted in ancestral ties to this land or the common history, Turkish public opinion's affinity towards Macedonia, in my point of view, will continue to be a genuine driving force in our bilateral ties.

Taking strength from those bonds of friendship, Turkey was the first country to recognize Macedonia with its constitutional name and as a nation, only to follow as the first country to open an Embassy in Skopje.

Today, Turkish-Macedonian relations are at an excellent level. This is something that I am absolutely proud of. The traffic of high-level visits and the volume of dialogue and cooperation between the two countries are satisfactory. The course of our economic relations is also promising. Just in 2007, compared to the previous year, the bilateral trade volume has increased more than 43%. In 2008, the trade volume was recorded as 324 million dollars. As I said, this is a promising area of our bilateral ties. For there evidently is a desire and will on both sides to expand the economic and trade relations. I personally have a special interest in this regard, since it was during my state visit to Macedonia in 1995 that the Turkish-Macedonian Business Council started to flourish. I am confident that as the number of Turkish businesses in Macedonia rise, direct and indirect investment opportunities will also increase.

People-to-people relations are also another important accelerant in the realm of bilateral relations. Around 127.000 Macedonians visited Turkey in 2007 and I am hopeful that this number will continue to grow in the coming years.

While mentioning people-to-people relations, I must underline the exceptional importance of Macedonians of Turkish origin, who make up nearly 4% of the population. I am sure that the Macedonian authorities will join me when I say that the Turkish-Macedonian community is acting



as a bridge of friendship and cooperation between the two nations. A state's protection of the cultural, religious and linguistic heritage as well as the livelihood of its minorities is, as in numerous cases, not only a requirement of *pacta sunt servanda*, but also a universally accepted norm. Macedonian citizens of Turkish origin only add colour to and enrich the socio-cultural fabric of this country. It goes without saying that their equitable representation and the improvement of their social status and economic conditions will definitely have a positive impact in further developing the Turkish-Macedonian relationship.

*Excellencies,  
Distinguished Participants,*

That being said, I have to emphasize that there still has a lot be done for Macedonia. At this point, I would like to underscore the importance of Macedonia's perspective towards integration with the Euro-Atlantic institutions.

Turkey has always believed that the integration of the regional countries in the Euro-Atlantic structures is of prime significance for the consolidation of peace and security in the Balkans. That is why Turkey has extended its full support to regional countries' integration perspectives. In a region such as the Balkans, where, unfortunately, elements of instability still continue to exist, I am of the view that these perspectives must be maintained resolutely.

In this regard, Turkey has supported Macedonia's bid to join both the EU and NATO. We surely hope that Macedonia, having acquired a candidate country status in December 2005, will launch its negotiation process with the EU as soon as possible. I am sure that the Turkish negotiation process for full EU membership, which began in October 2005, would give valuable insight for Macedonia's road ahead. I personally know that Turkey is ready to share its experiences in this context.

Similarly, Turkey believes that Macedonia rightly deserves its place within NATO. The Turkish stance concerning this issue is straightforward: Countries that fulfil the Alliance's obligations and display political determination should be able to become NATO members. As a reflection of this policy, Turkey demonstrated its full support for Macedonia's membership candidacy during NATO's Bucharest Summit. I see it as quite unfortunate that, despite all efforts exerted by Macedonia's friends, the Summit ended without a formal membership invitation being extended to

Macedonia. I believe that this outcome arose not because of Macedonia's deficiencies, but due to NATO's failure to display cohesion on such an important matter.

Of course, at this point, the Greek objection to Macedonia's NATO candidacy comes to the forefront. I do not wish to talk in detail about this issue. But only for the record, I believe that the matter concerning the Republic of Macedonia's constitutional name should be resolved through dialogue and negotiations. This is actually the respective stances of both Macedonia and Greece. I do hope that the name issue can be overcome in the near future. This will surely remove an obstacle not only on the road of Macedonia's integration with Euro-Atlantic structures but also contribute to attaining a new impetus towards an environment of sustainable peace and security in the Balkans as a whole.

*Excellencies,*

*Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is my assessment that history has been unjust to the Balkans, a region which, in the past, has had much more than its fair share of turmoil, ethnic unrest and war. Differences in religion and ethnicity sowed seeds of mistrust, instead of begetting the benefits of diversity. Despite all of the positive developments in recent years, one has to accept the fact that, unfortunately, lasting peace and stability based on mutual trust and cooperation have not yet been fully guaranteed. I am sure that you will join me when I say that the main lesson learned from the sad events in the Balkans is that war should not be seen as a way to pursue national interests. On the contrary, in today's globalized world, cooperation and seeking peaceful solutions to problems are fundamental to achieving lasting stability, peace and prosperity. Once the countries and peoples of the region see the merits of cooperation, there could be no reason why the Balkans should not rapidly reach an exemplary stage of prosperity with its vast multi-ethnic and multi-cultural assets.

I believe there is no reason why the Balkans in the 21st century cannot be an area where different ethnicities and cultures coexist peacefully and set an example to the rest of the world. To help ensure this, I believe that these countries should be integrated into the EU and Euro-Atlantic structures as soon as possible. This momentum should be preserved for the prosperity of the region. Naturally, Turkey will spare no effort to this end.

His Excellency Prime Minister Gruevski, pointed out most clearly in his speech at the recent 45th Munich Security Conference that “Macedonians continue to seek membership in NATO and EU because it is a natural expression of our shared values, commitment to freedom and respect for individual rights and the rule of law”. It is these universal values that are and will continue to serve as one of the main bonds holding the region’s countries together.



# SESSION TWO

## PART ONE

### THE INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS AND IDENTITY

FEBRUARY 20, 2009

MODERATOR:

GORAN STOJKOVSKI



LJUBCHO  
GEORGIEVSKI

*PRIME MINISTER  
OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF MACEDONIA  
(1998–2002),  
MEMBER OF  
THE BALKAN  
POLITICAL CLUB*

## WE SHOULD MAKE A COMPROMISE

We would like to see our state as NATO member. Obviously Macedonia according to the opinion of the NATO experts deserves to be invited. However before us there appears a very exceptional and rare problem of the name, that is the well-known name issue between us and Greece. Evidently everybody would like to agree that in a manner of being a friend of Macedonia the problem imposed by Greece is irrational and unique in its kind, however being *realpolitik* politicians we should accept reality as it is. Unfortunately over the 18 or 19 years of our independence the Republic of Greece via diplomatic means and already being member of many international organizations has succeeded to unilaterally convince its most important partners that it holds part of the truth in what is considered to be the so-called name issue. We can see the public situation, we can understand both the EU with the exception of a few friends of Macedonia and the NATO member countries including the USA, and the sending of clear signals and messages to the Republic of Macedonia. I think that we should be brutally realistic about what message they send – that we should make a compromise about the name and after the compromise, they say:...at the first NATO session you will be accepted as full-fledged NATO member and by the end of the year you will get a visa-free regime and by the end of 2009 you will be definitely given a scheduled date for the start of the negotiations for EU accession. Let me tell you that

this very offer made by both the EU and NATO is not something small or insignificant, however the very request, the very conditions that Macedonia that has to fulfill are not so insignificant, either. However there is this challenge, this very temptation which road to take as a state and as a nation – to get together and to overcome that problem and make a huge leap forward or to get stuck in a ditch battle. Shall we not consider a situation where the Republic of Macedonia should find strength to accept that very compromise given the name issue, let us say “Northern Macedonia” which is put on the table and which I think is not damaging to the identity of the Macedonian nation or the Macedonia state. It is incomparable with what we have today on the name as international context but let us not forget that for the last 15 years we have been called “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”.

However, instead of taking that road, that direction on the name of the Republic of Macedonia last year we seem intensively to have directed our social contacts on another track. Instead of making efforts to solve that problem, we have entered what seems most probably to be preferred by Greece, into a discussion who has more right to the legacy of Ancient history, who is much more successor to the ancient Macedonians. A topic for me first and for all other states and other peoples, of a discussion more typical of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A topic that is outdated and unnecessary because of the current political state of affairs. We have a very clear situation. Greece shows muscles, shows strengths, it shows that it has been irritated by this topic and we are persisting into that very debated topic, pursuing a debate that is much more a debate for academic circles. I think that our policy and politicians need to re-consider that issue.

In the last years we have been preoccupied in our society with the changing of the names of airports, roads, stadiums with names taken from ancient times and thus making further efforts to enhance our sensation, our feeling vis-a-vis this very dispute that we have with our neighbors.

In that context I can tell you only that we are opening a completely unnecessary discussion.

Furthermore talking about the multiethnic question let me tell you once more that the Republic of Macedonia, like many other states has diverse problems – social and economic problems and some specific problems like the name issue. However according to my personal vision, the issue overarching all others is that is cohabitation, living together with the Albanians and how definitely and ultimately to reach an overall



comprehensive solution of all problems.

Here we should make genuine efforts within the Macedonian society and not on the kind of questions that are put now which nobody knew or discussed until recently. Evidently they cannot contribute to the overall solution but further divide the Macedonian society producing an internal crisis.

Let me shift to another topic. I feel sorry that the Republic of Macedonia was stated as a model in ethnic relations. In 2001 we had a fiasco. We had after that the Ohrid Framework Agreement concluded, it was considered a new beginning for the Republic of Macedonia and new unity of the state but let me tell you that sadly such a conclusion cannot be drawn with respect to the Republic of Macedonia. Because evidently the Ohrid Framework Agreement exists, yet the Albanian and the Macedonia community in this state took different opposing tracks.

Today the Ohrid Framework Agreement in its technical literal implementation has been fulfilled 90 – 99 %. However, in its very extension part we still have the problem of a real line of division between these two communities within our state. Hence when we talk about the need to see Macedonia in NATO. I am of the opinion that this should happen as soon as possible and hence I think that our international friends should give us further support. I am always sending appeals to the Macedonian government to get together and make efforts to finally join EU and NATO. I would not hide my pessimism that the very essence of the Macedonian future lies in solving and finding a realistic functionality of these inter-ethnic relations between Macedonians and Albanians.

Take the town of Struga which is about 20 km away – there is the huge problems of division between Macedonian and Albanian high-school students. They would like to see ethnically clean classes and this is the current Macedonian reality. May be we are going to solve that problem for a week, may be it becomes ground for further divisions. That is the core issue and to make further efforts to solve it is the only true perspective for Macedonia that I see. I think that even a month not to say a year of delay of Macedonia joining NATO and postponing the definite start of the negotiations of Macedonia's EU membership, is just postponing that historical powder-keg exploding and you being our neighbours witnessing again the region addressing its own necessities and not addressing its future.

PETAR-EMIL  
MITEV

## THE ROAD TO NATO AND EU AS POLITICAL RATIONALITY

“IVAN  
HADJISKI”  
INSTITUTE FOR  
SOCIAL VALUES  
AND STRUCTURES

I feel connected with Macedonia. My grandfather, Ilia Stefanov, came from the city of Veles. He was Macedonian rebel (komita). Later, he became adversary to any kind of violence, a Tolstoy-ist. After the war, he struck the following balance: “It is best for Macedonia to decide its destiny alone, separately both from Serbia and Bulgaria”. I am sure he would have welcomed the Republic of Macedonia.

The main idea I wish to suggest to this conference is: Macedonia’s road to NATO and EU requires double rationality – both in the relations with its Balkan neighbors and in the relations between the ethnic communities inside the country. I have in mind the attitude of Macedonia to its neighbors but also their attitude to Macedonia. The issue is, therefore, about a new level of political rationality in the region.

In 1989, immediately after the beginning of transition in Bulgaria, I became involved with the Bulgarian Road to Europe Movement. In 1990 this term established itself constantly in the political language and was unanimously acknowledged. Certain nuances became evident, too. The road to Europe passes through Washington, according to another thesis – through Istanbul. And according to yet another concept – through Moscow. Today Macedonia is in front of NATO and EU’s doors. In both cases, its road passes through Athens. In 1990-ies it might have seemed that its road was through Belgrade. Or through Sofia. Now it is obvious that it is through

Athens. It would be illusive to believe that there is some path, for instance a legal one, circumventing the Greek capital city. Or, that there is a fast and easy road to Athens through Washington. The situation is not as unusual as it looks. Romanian road to NATO and the EU passed through Budapest. Romania had to meet two interrelated conditions – one internal and one external; to normalize ethnic relations between the Romanian and the Hungarian minorities as well as its neighbourly relations with Hungary.

The same applies to Bulgaria. The Bulgarian transition was too destructive, accompanied by mass unemployment, declassing and impoverishment. Many people doubted that we would ever be accepted in the “Rich & Wealthy Club”. However, there existed two major preconditions, which allowed Bulgarian Euro-Atlantic integration. The first one: relations between Bulgarian majority and Turkish minority became normal. The second one: Bulgaria has no claims on its neighbours; it pulled through Macedonian independence.

The problem situation in Macedonia shows, though not in such a positive way, the importance of the same preconditions.

The last report of the International Crisis Group dated 12 January 2009 reads: “The adjectives for nationality and language have emerged as critical since Bucharest... The importance to Macedonians lies in suspicion, not unreasonable given persistent Greek assertions about the artificiality of the Macedonian nation, that behind Greece’s objections to the name lies a denial of the Macedonian nation itself.”

The ethnic formation undergoes several stages, each of distinctive socio-psychological specifics:

- National self-awareness. The ethnic group “discovers” itself.
- National euphoria (accompanied by virtual and/or real expansion).
- Touch-down, reduction, dismissal of illusions.
- Normal and stable self-confidence.

One way or another, the Balkan peoples pass through these stages. Nobody has been able to skip national euphoria. The Russian scientist Gumilev, defined it by the term “passionality” (from passion). The Bulgarian classic writer, Ivan Vazov, described it by the confidence that makeshift cherry-wood cannons would cause “the fall of Turkey”, would defeat the regular Turkish army. (There are contemporary examples of euphoric audacity, too: “Rock against rockets”.) National euphoria gives birth to the Megali-idea, Great-Serbian and Great-Bulgarian ambitions, to the notion of *Romania mare*. At the next stage – the touch-down, it becomes clear

that Byzantium will not be resurrected, that All-United Bulgaria is not to be; that Yugoslavia – as super realization of Serbian state system – is untenable.

If it is acknowledged that Macedonian national awareness has been developed in the last hundred years and particularly intensively so after World War II, then the reasonable question is: how far has this process gone? Macedonia leaves the impression that it has not lived through the second stage yet. Macedonian identity is inadequately considered equivalent to “Macedonism without borders”. In such a situation, the adamant Greek position starts playing the role of touch-down, of reduction, of dismissal of illusions. The same role, which, for Bulgaria, played the two national catastrophes and for Serbia – the collapse of Yugoslavia and the NATO “strike”.

Macedonian identity or NATO and EU? This is a false dilemma. The principal question is not “either – or”. In Europe, each country comes with its own identity thus enriching the common European culture. This very diversity constitutes the uniqueness and power of Europe. The dilemma is caused by the inadequate understanding of identity. Thus, the choice is between political realism and illusionary self-sufficiency and encapsulation. Nothing is easier than playing on the emotional string of identity. But no rule exists for long-term measurement of dignity by means of imagination. Such play may turn out to be a losing one if it does not lead to real resolving of the most important structural issues of the nation – state.

The issue has another side, too. The dispute between Athens and Skopje is rooted in the unfinished ethno-national formation in Macedonia and the unfinished assimilation of Slavic-Macedonian population in Greece. The unfinished ethno-national formation contains (potential) strive for unification of the territories inhabited by populations, which declare (or are able of declaring) the same identity. Unfinished assimilation is a historic heritage, which explains the increased Greek sensitivity. Three Greek provinces have in their names the noun “Macedonia”. This, in itself and measured by European criteria, should not be a problem. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg borders the Belgian province of Luxembourg. Not as a “Southern Luxembourg”. And not with a “Northern Luxembourg”. The duplicated name not only failed to aggravate the relations of the two neighboring countries. It was Belgium and Luxembourg that took the first step towards integration by establishing a customs union, which was later joined by the Netherlands.

Disavowal of Macedonian language does not mean disputing Macedonian identity in general: it is acknowledged by as a local and not national one. It would probably have remained local if history had taken a different course. But division of historic routes creates ethnic divides, too. History has divided Croats and Serbs, even Bosnians and Serbs, notwithstanding their common ethnic roots and common language. Bosnia is another example of ethnic formation on the Balkans. Bosnians only found their name after the collapse of Yugoslavia. In Tito's Yugoslavia they were Muslims with capital M. A paradox, only surpassed by the officially imposed name of Macedonia as "Former Yugoslav Republic".

The road from local to national identity is a normal historical road. Macedonian specifics are its delay on this road. For Macedonia itself, it is important not seek virtual compensations but rather to continue along the road. The conditions of the 21<sup>st</sup> century both facilitate and complicate this.

The road we are talking about is not only a collective one where schools, media, institutions are factors. It is also an individual road walked by the person, an issue of conscience, of personal awareness and judgment. Democracy, free movement of people, free access to information, all creates optimal conditions for individual solution. These are the conditions provided by the European Union.

The Balkan problems of difficult division originate from special closeness. We enriched the political language with the term "balkanization". But actually, the Balkans possess a pulsating history with alternating and intertwining integration and disintegration processes, balkanization and de-balkanization.

The first balkanization is the medieval one; it paved the way of the Ottoman conquest. In the conditions of *Pai Ottomana*, homogenization processes took place. Lack of borders facilitated mobility. Demographic, socio-psychological, and cultural relations created prerequisites for the formation of a peculiar Balkan community. The first integration is the Ottoman one. The second balkanization set the already independent Balkan states against one another. At that time the term balkanization was first devised – in the West – to define regional fragmentation brimming with hostility and lack of collaboration. De – balkanization, though partial, is the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians, Yugoslavia. Yugo-integration was followed by third balkanization – the collapse of Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia and the wars in the

1990-ies. At the outcome of the successive disintegration there stands the prospect of a new – European integration.

The pulsating Balkan history contains a double paradox. Closeness divides. The distant one brings the close ones together.

As important as the role of geo-political powers may be in our times, it is not sufficient. In internal perspective, the road of Macedonia to NATO and EU starts in Skopje and passes through Tetovo.

The complexity of the Macedonian case lies in the coincidence of Macedonian birth and Albanian Revival as the Bulgarian scholar, Assoc. Prof. Antonina Zhelyazkova, very accurately said it. Both ethnic groups aspire for self-assertion. The main issue is the multi-ethnic future of Macedonia. It seems difficult but there is a European solution: a civil nation. Not ethnic identity but civil involvement is the state-creative element, the basis of a democratic society. This is a standard solution requiring a lot of good will and political common sense in order to be applied to a non-standard situation.

The Albanian ethno-national process commenced later than the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian ones, but substantially precedes the Macedonian process. It could become destructive for the Macedonian nation – state. The chance for this not to happen is again European integration. Synchronization of Albanian and Macedonian ethno-national processes cannot be accomplished by means of formations such as the “small Schengen”, which will give advantage to the Albanian side. The optimal way is within a united Europe.

Identity is a broad term with levels lower and higher than the national ones. We are all born in a city or village, in a region with its own specifics, with local identity. We acquire the awareness of national identity. But also – the awareness of belonging to European civilization. European identity will become increasingly important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as national identity became more important than the local one in 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. And the most important thing – we are all humans, members of humankind. We have the identity of the species *Homo sapiens*. What could be more important than to live our human lives normally and expand the opportunities for our children and grandchildren for peace and prosperity? That is why we must not allow conflict of identities.

Accession of Macedonia to NATO and the EU is not just a national but also a regional issue, important for the stability of Southeastern Europe.

The Balkan countries are partial to the existence and development

of an independent, undivided, and prosperous Macedonia.

Macedonia's road to NATO and the EU is a common road to political rationality. The Balkan neighbors can and should facilitate such a road by acknowledging the formation of a new nationality with its own language and independent Church. Macedonia, in its turn, must show that such acknowledgement is not a precondition for territorial claims or misappropriation of cultural and historical heritage of neighbouring countries.

The most important thing is to realize that the level and responsibilities of Balkan, and most of all, of Macedonian social and political elites, are at stake here.

Let us hope that *“Македонија ќе го најде патот”* (Macedonia will find the right path).



DIMITAR  
DIMITROV

## NAME AND IDENTITY

MINISTER  
OF CULTURE  
OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF MACEDONIA  
(1998–2000),  
MEMBER OF  
THE BALKAN  
POLITICAL CLUB

The current Greek focus on our name is not the first of its kind. The first-night performance took place a century ago. However it is not a repetition by itself because the present position of Greece is totally opposite to the then position taken by Greece – rejecting the name while back in those times it was instrumental in giving it. That Greek “Godfathering role” was an example of an onomastic intervention on the name itself with the hind-sighted intention of change of mindset and identity. This aspect of the Greek manipulation of the name of Macedonia was noticed by Kuzman Shapkarev who in a letter to Marin Drinov of 1887, 10 years after the Berlin congress saw through the perfidious intentions of Greece. In that first case it was connected with the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, now it is connected with the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

The principles of *real politik* prompted the Great Powers to revise the *San Stefano Treaty* (*The Preliminary Treaty of San Stefano was a treaty between Russia and the Ottoman Empire signed at the end of the Russo-Turkish War, 1877–78*) at the Berlin Congress in 1878, which prepared Macedonia to be a future pillage of Greece and Serbia.

The hellenization of Macedonia was achieved via direct assimilation of Macedonians, killing and prosecution of our forefathers, threats, by force or persuasion.



The latter method was applied by the Greek state's propaganda machinery the name being attached central position. The toponym "Macedonia" derived from the Macedonian population who used that name to identify themselves with the ancient Macedonians in the Greek ethno-mythology and here we can comment the position of President Dr. Zhelyu Zhelev about the two mythologies.

"The Slavs passed through and they slavianized you", Karavangelis wrote in his book "The Macedonian struggle". The Slavianized Greeks became Slav Macedonians, Slavophones by virtue of their language but Greeks in their souls. This is according to Karavangelis and I was able to read his book in the original because I am Greek by birth although I am not "*bellinos to genos*" (Greek by origin). It is precisely because of this difference that the Greek democracy is implemented as Greek ethnocracy "*helleniki ethnocrathia*". For that very reason even though I am Greek I was not integrated in the "*Greek ethnocracy*". I was expelled and deprived of my Greek nationality and I am not allowed to visit Greece to this very day.

In this propaganda scheme the Slavs are nothing more than a phantom. How they have managed to pass on their language to the descendants of the Alexander the Great, how many they were, whereto they resettled is not explained. We can lift the curtain to some extent thanks to the German historian Jacob Fallmerayer who dwells on the decisive impact of the Slav element on the modern Greek nation (*according to his theory the ancient, "Hellenic," population of the southern Balkans had been replaced during the Migration Period by Slavic peoples*). Owing to that thesis Fallmerayer has become the most hated foreigner by the Greeks, wrote Greek writer Nikos Dimou. The propaganda network for "Macedono-machi", the fighters for Macedonia, backed by the Greek state until this very day, is a vulgarised replica, a reply to Fallmerayer. Since the Greek expansion was following with the discord in Europe, this reply was successfully translated into practice.

The current updating of the name is taking place in the conditions of a reconciliation and unification of Europe and the name is a precise polytonym – "Republic of Macedonia", thus in opposition to the new European reality.

The formal construction of this discordance is a paralogism by its nature. Now, just like a century ago, it is linked to the term "Macedonia" but then our forefathers tried to focus on the identity of Macedonia and Macedonians. The politonym Republic of Macedonia is identified with the

toponym Macedonia as geographic Macedonia is divided in areas, the Republic of Macedonia is reduced to a geographic area, smaller than the Greek area Macedonia, and it is concluded that as such it does not have the right to be called “Republic of Macedonia” without an additional geographic specificity as requested – northern or upper Macedonia – in order to be different from the Greek area of Macedonia which, in turn, could be called southern or lower Macedonia.

The denial of the state/nation is done by reducing, transferring the politonim into a toponim. Such geographic specifications are possible for identical types in order to make a difference between regions and states. “Republic of Northern Macedonia” would entail not an area of southern Macedonia but a “Republic of Southern Macedonia”, meaning either that the area of Macedonia belonging to Greece should be separated into an independent state or that the Republic of Greece itself should change its name.

This paralogical construction deriving from the equalization of the toponym with the horonym, ethnonym and politonym (Macedonia) is respectively reflected in the name Republic of Macedonia. If a century ago the members of VMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization) waged a life-and-death war with the followers of the Greek theory regarding our origin from Alexander the Great now there is the danger that this theory be promoted to a national ideology with the help of which we would fight for our name. The crux of this theory is that we are by blood related to our ancestors the ancient Macedonians while the Greeks are not – the ancient Macedonians were not Greeks.

Bucephalus was not Greek, of course!

If a century ago the Greek theory about our origin from the ancient Macedonians served the purpose of conquering and ethnic cleansing/hellenization of the real Macedonia, the present day variant of this theory could mean that today we witness ethnic cleansing of a virtual Macedonia.

The archaeological and propaganda spots such as “Macedonia for ever” will be a digression from the legal and political dispute about the name of the country Republic of Macedonia and objectively is a harakiri for our state, and for its majority Slavic population.

We had this tragic-comic Greek-Macedonian dispute within the imprecise use of the term Macedonia. When Karamanlis declares himself to be Macedonian as an argument against the name of the Republic of

Macedonia he equalizes horonym with politonym. His being Macedonian is related to a geographic area while he is Greek by nationality. However, the state of Macedonia means a national affiliation.

The name issue is not only subject to epistemologic and logic disputes. The new independant state also had to deal with Mitsotakis and Milosevic who worked towards its disintegration, economic blockade, intervention in the Constitution – acts which belong to Europe of a century ago. In such circumstances there is no solution to the name dispute. If we face the new European reality with the Republic of Macedonia as its legitimate part, there is no room for such a dispute.

The paradox which we are thus reaching is that the name dispute is both an internal Macedonian cause and one with a global character. Just like a century ago the resolution of the Macedonian question by the Berlin Congress took place with European consent (the great powers) the resolution of the name dispute now is something that the EU, NATO and the UN are responsible for.

Following the same logic the reduction of the dispute to a bilateral issue is a superficial approach or a deliberate recapitulation of a Bizantine-style invasion on a post-block European and Euro-Atlantic recomposition. Labeling it as a “bilateral issue” is both contentious and cynical turning this issue into a condition for European and Euro-Atlantic integration and the opening of national border for us. This reflects the two basic tendencies in the European and global order – force and national interests versus democratic standards and human rights. The Greek position tends to favour force crystalized in the modern Greek state passing over to the establishment of a new concept of a united Europe and the culmination and end of the *real politik*.. But the road covered from collapse of the concept of *real politik*, to a new world order did not come about through academic debates and administrative solutions. There were series of wars (the Balkan wars, the First and the Second World wars) and the causes for the wars and the Berlin Congress.

Seen from the perspective of the new tendency of law and democracy, the name dispute by definition is a failure. Primarily failure by Greece, but also failure by the EU, NATO and the UN. The extent to which these organizations favourize Greece and tolerate the destructive potential of the dispute on the fragile shoulders of Macedonia, will be the same to which their own postulates will be undermined and thus threaten “their own honour” (Willson).

The accession of the Republic of Macedonia to the UN with the provisional reference, the Lisbon declaration of the EU on the name, the Bucharest Summit of NATO with the Greek veto on our accession were a series of humiliations for these organizations. The then Secretary General of the UN Butrus Butrus Ghali explicitly defined the accession of the Republic Macedonia in the UN under these terms as humiliation and refused to participate in this “undignified” act.

The prevention from such traps and failures lies in solidarity and the principle of consensus requires reform of the administrative regulations and procedures governed by the spirit of unification and sharing – as the chairman of the Carnegie Committee Baron d’Estournelle de Constant said: “Both for small and big nations there is no other way but reconciliation”. In the light of this noble pleading of a century ago, developments in the so-called Western Balkans, the name dispute and the problem of Kosovo are tragic failures for Europe. The stand taken by NATO and EU officials towards us, namely to fulfill the Greek demands with the argument that Greece has the advantage of being member of NATO and the EU is equal to the cynicism of Disraeli and Bismarck rather than the nobleness of Gladstone and the statemanship of General de Gaulle.

Perhaps we should not subscribe to the argument of the status quo advantage; perhaps there is a better and fairer solution than to break the thread where it is the weakest.

*“Wherever the standard of freedom and independance has been and shall be unfurled, there will ber (America – author’s note) heart, ber benedictions and ber prayers be”*, said John Adams in the year of the Greek liberation – 1821.

In the eyes of Almighty – Gladstone addressed voters in 1880 – life in a mountain village in Afghanistan is as inviolable and sacred as is your own life.

Where do we – all of us – stand with our preoccupation with the name dispute between the rope-tight thread of law and these noble committments?

# SESSION TWO

## PART TWO

### MACEDONIA'S MEMBERSHIP IN NATO

FEBRUARY 20, 2009

MODERATOR:

DIMITAR DIMITROV



ANTONIO  
MILOSOSKI

## ON THE ROAD TO NATO AND EU

*MINISTER OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF MACEDONIA*

Regarding the topic Republic of Macedonia – Challenges on the Way to Membership of NATO I would like to start a discussion, which involves the membership perceptions and the belonging concept. I am convinced that the Republic of Macedonia with its contacts in the past 18 years since its independence has managed to prove it deserves to belong to the North-Atlantic Alliance. Regretfully it has not yet managed to accomplish membership of that same Alliance. Regretfully the paradox lies in the fact that our membership of the Alliance is not only of interest to the Republic of Macedonia but also to the Alliance. At several discussions before the Bucharest NATO Summit there were comments that the North-Atlantic Alliance should not be concerned if there were countries knocking at its membership gates, moreover these being countries that are ready to make a contribution to NATO and which desire to become part of NATO but that the Alliance should be concerned if there was the opposite tendency and no one desired anymore to become NATO member. In the case of the Republic of Macedonia we have the will and of course stable contacts as a de facto ally and evident proofs of the trust already afforded us on our way to NATO.

I will go a few years back and I would mention that only eight years ago Macedonia was a consumer of the security support of the North-Atlantic Alliance because of the internal challenges, because of circum-

stances impacting and related to the regional context – Kosovo and of course Kosovo related to the wider Yugoslav context and the predominant position of the Republic of Serbia. A number of years ago Macedonia was in a short conflict which facilitated a Resolution that was brokered by the police mission, the EU and the mission of NATO. This country of 2, 5 million citizens, with a modest budget and per capita income has managed in the last 8-9 years to reach such a quality of internal stability and of progress in security-related reforms that has earned it a place among countries in a position to send troops to take part shoulder to shoulder with other allies making a contribution to the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan. Thus, from a consumer country we transformed ourselves into a country that can within its capacity help peace missions. I believe that this is the greatest capital that a country could acquire especially when desiring to show that membership of NATO is not only a privilege but is also a process of sharing responsibility.

The Republic of Macedonia has consistently shown that it is prepared to share responsibility thus making even more interesting this paradox, as is the case of many historical developments in the Balkans – our participation in the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan whereby the troops of the Republic of Macedonia served together with Albanian, Greek and Croatian soldiers in a joint military medical team in Afghanistan. The Macedonian and Greek soldiers wore their national uniforms, national flags, and of course they had national names, Greece and Macedonia fighting under a single flag, serving NATO and the mission. And I believe this will be one of the greatest challenges of the Alliance in the coming 10 – 15 years. There were no problems arising, at all. On the contrary, that was a possibility to cooperate, to learn about other people, to express solidarity reaching the common and shared goal.

Referring briefly to the provocative story told by distinguished Ambassador Georgievski about the “two-chopper country” I would just like to make a correction – Macedonia has six choppers, six helicopters – two of which are donations from the Republic of Greece. I am saying this in order to present my personal conviction, which I am certain you all share, and I know that a good part of the Greek politicians share it but perhaps because of the conflict they can not allow themselves to recognize that the Republic of Macedonia has never been and will never be a threat to the Hellenic Republic. On the contrary, if there was no Republic of Macedonia as such I think what would have been the wisest and the most



innovative thing for the Greek side to do was to invent its northern borders where a peaceful neighbour lives – and a good economic partner, a good friend and of course a country that makes contributions to regional security.

In this context, I believe that the damage, which has been done can be remedied but the problem is that in the past 18 years mutual trust between the Republic of Macedonia and the Hellenic Republic was wounded, it suffered the greatest losses and this is the hardest to be remedied.

It started in 1991 when this country made efforts by democratic and peaceful means through a referendum to win its independence and request international recognition. In most cases of struggle for independence the neighbours support that country. We did have such support from the Republic of Turkey, Bulgaria, Albania. Unfortunately from the part of the Republic of Serbia and from Greece we have been facing serious obstacles in establishing full independence. The same was to be observed concerning the trade embargo. A landlocked country as ours is had its access to sea blocked by Greece for several years knowing how important for its economic survival the Thessalonica port was! I believe that this has additionally undermined our mutual trust, more properly to be called lack of trust.

But things can be remedied sometimes with the mediation of a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, as shown by the signing of the Interim Accord in 1995. Both parties were not very happy with this Interim Accord but it helped normalize relations. I stress that it is not a matter of mistrust between the Macedonian and the Greek nations; it is rather that certain groups of politicians and I think that most of them come from Greece, have their political and private interests, bias, to prevent the resolution of this problem.

As a counter-argument some Greek politicians behaved in a different way demonstrating a pragmatic and pro-European approach not only towards the Republic of Macedonia but also towards other neighbours of Greece. It was the case of the former Prime-Minister of Greece Mr. Simitis who as of 1996 led the country in the next 4-year period. In that period the historical dilemmas remained the same, they were not resolved, the differences by definition remained the same, prejudices were also not alleviated or resolved overnight but the attitude and trust was increased. Greek investors for the first time started visiting the Republic of Macedonia and made investments showing and winning good will in the mutual interest of both countries.

A serious mistake was made with respect to Macedonia when it was prevented from receiving a membership invitation at the NATO Bucharest

Summit because allowing us to get the invitation of NATO membership would have created the circumstances to have an impact on the dispute with the Greek government and would have given an impact to the dispute to go in the direction of pragmatism.

In conclusion, I would like to add that after Bucharest we were forced to institute legal proceedings before the International Court of Justice. For the first time the Republic of Macedonia appeared as a plaintiff versus the government of the Republic of Greece bringing up charges of violation of the Interim Accord of 1995 which facilitated the taking of pragmatic steps to move closer to each other and get to know each other, and thence, naturally, there were benefits to be drawn.

It was confirmed that the Interim Accord had been violated, especially its article 11 under which Greece was obliged not to block and not to object to the membership of the Republic of Macedonia in international organizations provided that The Republic of Macedonia is gladly accepted in those organizations albeit with the old-fashioned and a bit ridiculous reference Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. But the question is can we allow ourselves the luxury of Macedonia remaining in a status quo situation regarding NATO for several more years? I will be open and I will say that the Republic of Macedonia's politicians are aware that to the north we are bordering with Serbia and Kosovo and Bosnia is in our neighbourhood, too – all of them places of conflict 15 years ago and now they are in a difficult economic situation. Therefore in such circumstances it would be irresponsible to object and impede the invitation for membership of the Republic of Macedonia in NATO for several reasons among which the basic one – it is better to have the Republic of Macedonia in NATO than to have NATO in the Republic of Macedonia.

LYUBOMIR  
IVANOV

PRESIDENT OF  
THE ATLANTIC  
CLUB IN  
BULGARIA

## THERE IS SIMPLY NO WAY OF JOINING THOSE CLUBS OTHER THAN BY ACCEPTING THEIR RULES

*A politician thinks of the next election; a statesman, of the next generation.*

James Paul Clarke, American politician;  
also Sir Winston Churchill

One year after the Bucharest Summit of NATO, the balance of achievements of the Republic of Macedonia in its European and Atlantic aspirations is less than encouraging. The country is lagging behind other Western Balkan states (such as Albania or Croatia), and appears increasingly isolated from the mainstream development processes in the region. The initial natural sympathy of the international community towards a small new state has been expended during the last few years with hardly any results. Nowadays all the advice coming from NATO and EU is addressed to the Republic of Macedonia rather than to Greece, including criticism of particular steps of Skopje perceived as unhelpful and irrational. For the Western World understands and expects rational behaviour, fearing what is believed to be unpredictable and bringing potential security risks. Unfortunately, during the last year the Republic of Macedonia has been seen as doing in its dispute with neighbouring Greece the opposite to what NATO and EU membership required or what both NATO and EU were expecting Skopje to do. As a result, the Republic of Macedonia is perceived as a potential factor of 'Balkanization' of NATO and EU – something the

latter are less than keen on importing in any great quantities.

Since Bucharest we have witnessed numerous moves of the ruling political elite in Skopje that are apparently internally oriented towards consolidating more and more political power, securing a landslide victory in the last year's early parliamentary elections, and now set to win the forthcoming presidential and local elections as well. Ethnic nationalism has been activated to fuel this process, including expansionism to areas of history regarded by neighbouring nations as their own historical legacy. Controversial initiatives were undertaken, like renaming airports and highways after Alexander the Great and Philip of Macedon, or bringing up minority rights and property claims against Greece. Regardless of their possible justification, none of those steps helped create the favourable atmosphere of mutual trust and goodwill needed for the resolution of the dispute with Greece. However, such policies have proved highly rewarding as elections winner, and boosting unheard of public support (some 60%) for the government of a country in dire and worsening economic situation. Therefore, either the government's claims of NATO and EU accession being their priority are insincere, or the ruling political *elite* in Skopje does not understand well the rules, standards and values of NATO and EU. The latter differ from e.g. the UN in not accepting everybody as one is, essentially being two clubs of the likely minded instead, with their own rules and procedures. There is simply no way of joining those clubs other than by accepting their rules. More so that obviously, the Republic of Macedonia is in greater need and has more to benefit from joining the clubs than they are to benefit from this particular enlargement.

One absolute condition for NATO and EU membership is the proven willingness and ability to develop good neighbourly relations. A number of other Central and East European nations used to have problems with their neighbours – suffices to mention the minority issues between Romania, Hungary and Slovakia – yet all those disputes and disagreements have been timely resolved. By contrast, the Republic of Macedonia went to Bucharest without having settled its dispute with Greece, bringing unprecedented confusion and embarrassment to the summit agenda. One year later, the prospects of resolution seem as remote as ever. Moreover, one should bear in mind that the Atlantic Alliance is specifically wary of candidate member states entangled in disputes with their neighbours that may carry security risks, even when the disagreements are with third parties (like the case of Georgia and Ukraine vis-a-vis Russia). Here the dispute is with a

NATO and EU member state (Greece), and while the Republic of Macedonia is a valued NATO partner, its strategic importance for the Alliance is not so great (as is that of Turkey or Ukraine for instance) as to warrant some special treatment or concessions.

If I permit myself a prediction, the ruling elite's current policies are likely to keep yielding domestic political gains for some more time, probably carrying the popular vote in the forthcoming presidential and local elections, yet building in the process new walls between the Republic of Macedonia and its neighbours. Moreover, present tendencies do not rule out the possibility of deterioration in the bilateral relations not only with Greece but also with Bulgaria. Indeed, Bulgarian public attitudes are becoming increasingly skeptical about Skopje's policies, and those attitudes are formed by no governmental public diplomacy either. Besides, the continuation of present Skopje policies is likely to meet less and less understanding with NATO and the EU.

In the field of economy, the Republic of Macedonia has been getting fairly modest direct foreign investments so far, and the experience of NATO enlargement in Eastern Europe suggests that as long as a country stays outside the Alliance it is unlikely to attract major foreign investors, which is particularly detrimental in times of world economic crisis. Therefore, the present course of development is bound to bring further economic, social, ethnic, and eventually political hardship.

The escalation of ethnocentric Macedonian nationalism is at odds with the country's ethnic dynamics and realities, where the influential Albanian community has little use for ethnic Macedonian nationalism. Earlier or later, divergent ethnic attitudes towards the country's national priorities are going to challenge the ethnic cohabitation and peace. Recent carefully worded warnings by Albanian political leaders (which fall on deaf ears, not unlike 2001), and indicative instances of ethnic tension in Struga and elsewhere might be just the proverbial tip of the iceberg. The big question is: What would the Macedonian Albanians do if they are to see one day Kosovo and Albania in NATO and the EU, with the Republic of Macedonia staying outside?

Unfortunately, this admittedly dark scenario is not so impossible. While Skopje politicians might claim they are following the majority wishes of the ethnic Macedonians, political elites bear responsibility for the public attitudes in the first place (more so when such attitudes are government sponsored), and second, at some point the leaders may become hostages

to public attitudes they have helped create. That would be a point when the scenario becomes irreversible. Maybe that point of irreversibility is nearing, maybe it has already passed. If there is some more time available though, it would be few years at most, precious time for resolute statesmanly action not to be wasted.

AKKAN SUVER  
*PRESIDENT OF  
THE MARMARA  
FOUNDATION,  
MEMBER OF  
THE BALKAN  
POLITICAL CLUB*

**WE HAVE TO SAY,  
“WELCOME ABOARD” TO  
MACEDONIA WHICH HAS  
KNOCKED ON NATO’S DOOR**

On behalf of the Marmara Foundation, I would like to express my heartfelt greetings to all distinguished personalities attending this important conference.

Today I will share my opinions with you about the NATO concept here in the city of Ohrid in Macedonia which is an indispensable country in the Balkans, as well as the main factor of the Adriatic triad.

I will approach the relation between Macedonia and NATO taking all its dimensions into consideration, such as national securities of the Balkan states, economic power and prosperity in the Balkans; instead of considering it as a simple situation: a country’s membership to an international organization. As we all know, Macedonia has not yet taken the place it deserves in the Balkans; because of the name dispute created by Greece.

This name problem of Macedonia called “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” by Greece in the light of their concerns about their territorial integrity and national security, is not related to us. Because we officially recognized this country as the “Republic of Macedonia”.

Together with Turkey, more than 120 different countries including the United States, the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation also recognized the country as the Republic of Macedonia. But Greece is still insisting on the name “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”.

And because of this Macedonia’s possible membership in NATO is

blocked by Greece. The other two Balkan states, Albania and Croatia, have already received official invitations to join NATO; but Greece opposed the membership of Macedonia during the NATO Summit which was held in Bucharest on April, 2008. Consequently Macedonia did not receive the NATO invitation because of the Greek opposition during the Summit.

At this point, I would like to touch upon the importance of Macedonia's membership in terms of the future of the Balkans.

I am also an inhabitant of the Balkans like the majority of personalities present at this conference, from the Balkan states. As we all know very well historically the Balkans have been associated with different religions, multi-ethnicities, many wars, conflicts and migrations.

The Balkan Political Club in which I have had the honour of being a member, was established in an endeavour to help stop these wars, conflicts and migrations, as well as for a peaceful coexistence of peoples who believe in different religions and have most divers ethnic origin. At this conference of the Balkan Political Club which aims to help europeanize the Balkan states in terms of securing peace, justice and improvement in the region I would like to underline that Macedonia must become a part of the European integration like Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Turkey, since it is an absolute fact that all the Balkan States are part and parcel of Europe.

Consequently I consider Macedonia's membership in the NATO as a sharing of peace, prosperity and security in accordance with democracy.

Peace in the Balkans is our ideal.

It is only possible to secure permanent peace and stability in the Balkans, covering the whole political, economic and security issues of the region through the efforts of all Balkan States.

We can only maintain peace through the establishment of cooperation and partnerships. It is not possible to speak of security, unity or prosperity, excluding or giving a different statute to any Balkan State.

None of the Balkan States has the right to say to the others: "I live on my own. I solve my problems by myself. I do not need to ask for advice; I do not listen to the others".

Security and prosperity in the Balkans can only be secured through collective cooperation in compliance with global rules. This is the only way to keep the peace in the region. And this will lead for the establishment of permanent peace, prosperity and sustainable stability in the Balkans.

President Suleyman Demirel defined globalization with the following words: "Humanity started to make concerted efforts to fight against poverty,



and to safeguard peace and the Earth only at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This is globalization.” Even this definition by itself can spontaneously be a solution to Macedonia’s solitariness.

So I would like to underline that in order to achieve the above goals the following must be our main objectives:

- Undivided Balkans,
- Democratic Balkans,
- Peaceful Balkans,
- Prosperous Balkans.
- Their fulfillment depends on the unity and cooperation in the Balkans.

Turkey is a NATO member country. Turkey has always supported and worked towards the NATO memberships of the Balkan States. Moreover, Turkey wholeheartedly supported even the membership of Greece. Previously experienced conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Bulgaria would never be repeated in the conditions of memberships of the Balkan States in NATO.

Finalizing my intervention; I would like to state that; the future of our people, the stability of the region and the democratic values do not have to be endangered by wrong statements and declarations. This would be a false, defective and improper attitude.

Macedonia is a nation. It has knocked on NATO’s door out of its own free will. In the light of the traditional hospitality of the Balkans, we and Greece have to say “welcome aboard” to Macedonia, and give it a warm reception overcoming our fears and concerns.

Once again, on behalf of the Marmara Foundation, I would like to extend my greetings to all of you; and to thank all distinguished directors of the Balkan Political Club, especially President Zhelyu Zhelev, for the organization of this important conference.

HIKMET CETIN

FOREIGN  
MINISTER  
OF TURKEY  
(1991–1994),  
MEMBER OF  
THE BALKAN  
POLITICAL CLUB

## WE NEED TO TAKE AWAY THE EMOTIONS AND BE REALISTIC

*Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am very pleased to participate in the Conference of the Balkan Club five years after the previous one.

Let me begin by thanking the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Macedonia and the Balkan Political Club for giving me this opportunity to address this prominent forum. It is a great pleasure for me to be here today with you. I would also like to thank all those who have taken part in and contributed to the organization of this important gathering.

I believe that our deliberations here will be particularly relevant and opportune as we are preparing to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of NATO.

The forthcoming Summit on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary is expected to be more than a symbolic and historic gathering. Through a Declaration on Alliance Security which will be adopted by the NATO Heads of State and Government, the Alliance will deliver a clear message that, after 60 years, NATO is determined to continue its contribution towards ensuring security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region and beyond, and that it is fit to respond to the evolving challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The fact that the Declaration will also serve as a reference for updating the current Strategic Concept makes it even more significant.

Indeed, dramatic changes have taken place in the security environment

since 1999 when the current Strategic Concept was last formulated. The September 11 terrorist attacks against the United States, the activation of Article V for the first time in the history of the Alliance, NATO's involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as NATO's possible future role in responding to the new risks and threats such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cyber terrorism, energy security and piracy, justify a new concept. On the other hand, I believe that the current Strategic Concept still involves relevant and valuable aspects. In order to preserve these elements, we should prefer to update the 1999's Strategic Concept instead of drafting a new one.

The 60th Anniversary Summit will also have significance as we prepare to welcome Albania and Croatia as new Allies on this occasion. Our preference would, of course, have been to see the Republic of Macedonia in the same group. But, let me elaborate on this issue in more detail a little later.

NATO and EU enlargement processes have proven to be important pillars of peace and stability in Southeastern Europe. In the recent past, the Balkan region in particular was identified with turmoil, ethnic unrest and a big scale civil war. Today, the countries of the region seem to realise the importance of bilateral and multilateral cooperation for peace, stability and prosperity. Perspectives for EU and NATO membership are the most important incentives of this change in the region. We have encouraging examples of regional countries that, having recovered from recent conflicts and war are now taking part in international peace operations as "contributors to" rather than "consumers" of peace.

NATO's open door policy has proven its value in terms of projecting and consolidating peace, security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. In the post Cold War era, it has contributed to the elimination of dividing lines and creation of a whole and free Europe. However, the mission is not yet completed. NATO's open door policy should definitely continue. Let me share with you, on this occasion, my observation that there has been no "enlargement fatigue" in NATO, as it has been suggested now and then in the European Union.

Those European democracies which are willing and able to contribute to the objectives and assume the responsibilities of the Alliance should be given the opportunity to become member of NATO. In this regard the rules of the game are clear: That is to meet NATO's performance-based standards. Whilst performance-based standards are important in assessing

the eligibility of potential members, the multiplying effect of enlargement in terms of further democratization and stability should be also taken into account. Experience has thus far shown that even membership perspectives could serve as a driving force for democratization and defense reforms.

Albania and Croatia are expected to join the Alliance as full members at the next NATO Summit to be held in Strasbourg/Kehl. This will take place in a matter of a couple of weeks. We rejoice together with Albania and Croatia, as we have done so for other countries in previous rounds of enlargement. Yet, this time we are also driven by a deep sentiment of dismay, given the fact that Macedonia is not included. Let me underline my country's strong and unreserved desire to see Macedonia join the Alliance at the earliest opportunity. This round of enlargement will not be truly complete until that is realized.

When looking into the future and considering the way forward as regards Macedonia's membership in NATO, it is necessary to absolve ourselves of emotions and to concentrate on the reality. Indeed, there are some important facts that need to be recognized. That is what I will try to do, and while doing so, I will be as frank as possible. As the well-known Turkish proverb goes: "As bitter as it may be, your friend will tell you the truth." In this spirit, and as a true friend of Macedonia, sincerely believing in the need to have that country join NATO as soon as possible, I will focus on three areas that require attention and action.

First, it is important to recall that, at the Bucharest Summit, the Alliances Heads of State and Government clearly recognized the hard work done by Macedonia, as well as her commitment to the process. To put it shortly, Macedonia has fulfilled the criteria for joining NATO. However, you are aware that mention was also made of the state of affairs in the negotiations for the resolution of the so-called name issue. It was noted, with regret, that these negotiations have not produced a successful outcome. Against this background, the Allies agreed that an invitation to Macedonia would be extended as soon as a mutually acceptable solution to the name issue has been reached.

Let us be clear, the resolution of this issue is not a prerequisite per se for receiving an invitation for membership. It is not part of the criteria. Furthermore, NATO is not party either to the problem, or the negotiation process. As you all well know, Turkey recognizes Macedonia's constitutional name. And we defend Macedonia's right at every international forum. However we need to take away the emotions and be realistic, it is also an

undeniable fact that NATO acts on consensus. That is the way in which, I would dare say, the far from perfect decision at Bucharest was taken. Obviously, this decision implies that it is equally incumbent upon both Macedonia and Greece to find a mutually acceptable solution. It is their shared responsibility to act constructively and seek an early settlement of the matter.

The fact of the matter can be summarized as follows: The solution of this problem will make it impossible for any Ally to further delay Macedonia from taking her rightful place as a full member of NATO. This is the reality that needs to be borne in mind.

Macedonia's continued commitment to resolving the issue is critical. Equally critical is to ensure that the international community, particularly, most if not all members of NATO are convinced that Macedonia is indeed doing her best. I will go further and say that in these circumstances, Macedonia needs to "bite her finger" harder than anyone. This is not to say that Macedonia should give in on her vested rights and interests. Not at all. But what I am suggesting is that Macedonia should not succumb to provocations, or go down a path that may at times seem to be the easier one, namely that of populist rhetoric. I have lived in politics for many years and am well aware of the tempting nature of this. Yet, I am also very cognizant, particularly in such difficult times, of the need of responsible leadership and of a shared sense of direction among the population. Euro-Atlantic integration is a declared objective of the Macedonian people. Macedonia, through its leaders and with the support of her people will have to navigate that process wisely.

Particularly in the run up to the upcoming elections, it is wisdom and prudence that should prevail, and not populist rhetoric that may give grounds for Macedonia skeptics to level criticism.

Let me add, however, that all Allies bear responsibility to encourage both parties towards an expeditious settlement. Meanwhile, they can and should elevate their engagement with and assistance towards Macedonia.

Second, it is crucial that Macedonia continues the reform process in political, economic and defense spheres. Areas that are consistently highlighted by the international community, such as the judiciary, as well as the fight against corruption and organized crime should be attributed particular attention. Needless to say, further efforts and sustainability are also required regarding the equitable representation of ethnic communities in the central and local administrative structures in line with the Ohrid

Framework Agreement. I am particularly pleased when I see Macedonians of Turkish origin increasingly represented in the government structures together with their Albanian fellow countrymen.

This symbolizes the multi-ethnic harmony within Macedonia, and should be seen as an asset, as well as a source of pride for this country.

The upcoming Presidential and local elections are important in confirming Macedonia's commitment to democratic values and the rule of law. It is of critical importance that the elections are conducted in a free and fair manner, with the highest possible voter turnout. I am sure that the Macedonian authorities, together with the citizens of that country will make a collective effort to ensure the peaceful and successful conduct of the elections.

As far as the defense reform is concerned, let me state my happiness to see that Macedonia has become an active promoter of regional cooperation and in reality, an exporter of security and stability. This has ramifications not only for this beautiful part of the world, but also beyond. Take the case of Afghanistan, for instance. I remember when two Macedonian officers were deployed as part of the Turkish contingent under ISAF. Since then, Macedonia has increased its contribution to ISAF to a total of 168 personnel. Moreover, I have been told that compared to 2008, Macedonia's contributions have increased significantly, at a ratio of about 25%. This confirms the level of capability that the Macedonian Armed Forces have attained and their interoperability with NATO forces.

During my long tenure in Afghanistan as NATO's Senior Civilian Representative, I personally witnessed the valuable contribution that Macedonian soldiers provided to our joint endeavor in Afghanistan. Let me also remind you that Macedonia has been providing logistic support to KFOR since 1999, thus contributing to international efforts to further stabilize the region. In this way, Macedonia is making concrete contributions to NATO's efforts in Afghanistan and Kosovo. I am confident that Macedonia's valuable contribution to international and NATO-led operations will continue in the future.

Finally, I would like to highlight the importance of having sustainable public support for Macedonia's Euro-Atlantic integration. So far, the statistics for Macedonian citizens' support to NATO and EU memberships are impressive. I know that public support for NATO membership has suffered a certain decline, namely from 93% to 85% after the Bucharest Summit. However, it is still at a remarkable level. My humble suggestion to

the Macedonian authorities is to tirelessly maintain their efforts in keeping high public support for NATO membership.

Let me conclude by once again expressing my deepest appreciation of this opportunity to speak and underline my hope that soon, we will be able to get together to discuss what more Macedonia can do so as to enhance international peace and security, but this time, as a NATO member. Let us not lose sight of that goal while showing patience and acting in tranquility, two characteristics that are served well by the exceptional setting here in Ohrid.





# SESSION THREE

**EU STRATEGY  
FOR THE BALKAN BORDERS –  
REMOVAL NOT RESHAPING**  
FEBRUARY 21, 2009

MODERATOR:  
SIMEON SAXE-COBURG-GOTHA



AGNI VLAVIANOS-  
ARVANITIS

*PRESIDENT OF  
BIOPOLITICS  
INTERNATIONAL  
ORGANISATION,  
MEMBER OF  
THE BALKAN  
POLITICAL CLUB*

## **BIOPOLITICS – BUILDING A GREEN SOCIETY OF VISION AND HOPE**

I look outside and I am inspired by the beauty of this place. I am pleased to see all the distinguished leaders present here today. I would like to thank President Zhelev for his leadership and for the opportunity to participate in this distinguished group. I would also like to greet President Demirel and President Constantinescu. I think it is a true honour to be here and to be with you at this meeting with all the highly distinguished friends, some of whom I have known for years and some who are new friends.

I would like to thank Minister Antonio Milososki for the great hospitality that he has shown us. Please convey to your Prime Minister how grateful we are to have this opportunity to be here and to listen to all the viewpoints. Sometimes each of us is isolated due to thinking from only one perspective. That is why these meetings are so important. We must seek answers to our problems in a positive way. Through dialogue and good will, problems can be avoided. I think that only through a process of thesis-antithesis can we will arrive at a beautiful synthesis. This is what this meeting can be about and this is where our dialogue can lead us. I am very optimistic and I think that by the time we meet in Turkey, all these problems we are talking about will be resolved. If we seek the answers in a positive way, through good will, love, wisdom and truth, we will find them.

I was inspired by what former Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Cetin

said yesterday. He asked us to look into the future. The problems were stated forcefully. As a person coming from the Hellenic part, I regretted very much hearing negatives about my beautiful country and my wonderful people, who are always near all of you, and who support the region and its neighbours in joining the European Union and in building a better future for their citizens. I do not know why these problems were not avoided and how we reached this point, because with good will and mutual respect, I am sure they could have been avoided. Hopefully, after elections, solutions will be found and we will join forces in building a better future.

What are we to do at this moment in time? Today, we face a financial crisis; the whole financial system is spinning, and we do not know where it will end. This financial crisis is coupled with another crisis that is even more important – although people do not realize it – and that is the environmental crisis. Nonetheless, I think that we are given a tremendous opportunity.

When we look at the beauty of this earth, which is but a tiny spot in our universe, we must ask ourselves why do we continue being divided? It does not make sense. I am a biologist not a politician, and for me, the enormous beauty is to see the macro-cosmos of the universe, but to also see the miracle of the micro-cosmos which we all share in our bodies and with plants and animals. As human beings, we have become too aggressive and too bound to the models of the past – such as Divide and Rule or using aggression – which do not lead us to the future that we need. This moment of the dual crises is a golden opportunity to create a new society, a new structure altogether, a Green Society in which we will rethink and reformulate how we handle our societies.

We spent time discussing our differences, but now it is more urgent to hear the ticking clock. Every second should lead us to new thinking, to sharing and building a promising future which is urgently needed. This region – and the Balkan Political Club particularly – can play a key role, because in this region we have so much diversity, similarly to the human body, where the various parts perform specific functions. It is this diversity that creates our interdependence and the harmony. We are now aware of the mistakes we made in the past. Now we must turn the page. We must understand that we are all together, we are all dependent on each other, and we have this enormous richness in the region – richness in language, in aesthetics, in culture, in nature – that we need as a force for positive momentum toward the future.

How can we achieve this in a moment of crisis, a moment of great unemployment? The effort in my new book is to ask: How can we save life on this planet? How can we protect the environment and reverse unemployment? This must become our constant thinking; not how to divide ourselves, but how we can work together, how can we benefit from the differences we have? This is the beauty. We don't want just one type of flower on this planet. We want many types, many religions, many colors of people, the diversity is what we want, to have the positive momentum and the strength to mold this new Green Society.

Yes, we have unemployment, but millions of opportunities are also present. The problem of unemployment and the problem of environmental degradation can be tackled together through the creation of Green Salaries. Try to visualize completely new cities, with zero pollution, with green terraces, with urban farming. We can achieve it with better insulation for buildings, more trees and aesthetics, vertical agriculture. We are wasting opportunities that are present. We are polluting and destroying water resources with careless agriculture, and we are causing desertification.

This meeting is a golden opportunity, because it is a NATO meeting, and NATO needs to assume a completely new role. Yes, there is a war – a major war – and this war has to be against climate change and the destruction of the environment. Now is the time for NATO and other international institutions to move in and clean the oceans, because the fish are disappearing. Now is the time to clean the soil that is polluted with chemicals and industrial wastes. Now is the time to reverse desertification and the onset of dry areas by planting trees.

We need to work together, not saying that this is the border and my area is here and your area is there. E-commerce and e-learning are tools we can use, and we must not lose a minute in providing a new kind of education. We also need to convince the media of the severity of the problem – and this is where our leaders can do more – because now the press only gives us negative news. We do not want to hear the negatives. We possess life which is an enormous gift. It is the positive energy that is the beauty, the harmony, the diversity. We have that. Why should we spend time on negatives? Why can we not see clearly that if we all work together, we can reverse the negatives?

I think that after a few months, or however long it takes to resolve the problems in the area, we can work together once again. I am committed to working for the good of your country. At the same time, I am convinced

that all of us are committed to working together towards building a better future for our children. The only mistake we must be careful to avoid is to blindly accept technology as the answer, without fully understanding its consequences. The positive, life-supporting aspects of technology are great. We must not focus on how we can destroy each other. There is enough capability to destroy ourselves and the whole globe many times over. We need to convert technology to the positive, to cleaning the environment, to stopping global warming, to creating genetic banks to save biodiversity on our planet. This will create new jobs – green salaries – and opportunities for education and at the same time, still be profitable for business.

I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to share with you this feeling of joy, that we possess bios – life – and the feeling of love for our neighbours. I know we will find solutions together. I am very grateful to President Zhelev for providing this opportunity for the exchange of views. I feel that good will shall prevail, but I only hope that it will not prevail too late. Climate change is happening. A rise of two degrees in average global surface temperatures is a reality, and this will cause enormous environmental problems, but if it becomes four degrees, we may join the dinosaurs.

### **Harmony**

With wings of the soul  
I touch the golden waves of infinity  
around, heavenly beauty like light  
sparkles rays with colours of flowers  
whispers the soil, awakens the earth  
not like a mother, just like a daughter  
of the cycle of wear  
and the infinite of the eternal  
the melody of the universe  
is surrounded by the rhythm of harmony

*A. Vlavianos-Arvanitis  
Oscillations, A Collection of Poems, 1983*

IVAILO TRIFONOV

*FORMER  
AMBASSADOR OF  
BULGARIA TO  
YUGOSLAVIA*

## **BALANCE OF THE TWO MAIN PRINCIPLES**

In the last decades all of us have witnessed the dissolution of three big political structures – of the former USSR, of the Warsaw Pact and of former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Luckily the dissolution of the USSR was almost without bloodshed. However to reach a formal bloodless scenario and outcome preserving the frontiers as they used to be in the former USSR, dramatic changes took place. Still common sense prevailed.

Luckily the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, too, was peaceful and without any excesses.

The international order is based on two principles – the principle of non-violation and non-changing of borders and if such a change is really necessary it should be made by common agreement of the states involved. We have witnessed such a division of former Czechoslovakia and luckily in the last period of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia when Montenegro separated from Serbia. However such examples have been rare. The dissolution of former Yugoslavia was marked by the most brutal acts of inhumanity, violence, murders and that was in the middle of Europe, of European civilization, in the Balkans. We have seen wars for territories at the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century and change of borders by using force.

The principles of non-violation of national borders and of self-determination of peoples were either not observed at all or, were applied

in different ways by the factors of the international community.

Following the Dayton Agreement if Mr. Milosevic had not been so rigid towards NATO, most probably the NATO reply in 1999 would not be so harsh. Mistakes made by Mr. Milosevic had let also to the dissolution of Serbia's national idea.

I am going to present another opinion of mine, namely that the rigid position of the USA to have Kosovo proclaimed as a new state in the Balkans to some extent is due to the very fact that Serbia had shown itself as the last bastion of Russian influence on the Balkans. "If we do not sign, then Belgrade will be erased from the map", Martti Ahtisaari and Victor Chernomyrdin warned Milosevic in 1999. If then Serbia had turned to the West and respected the Western principles of civilization, the structure of NATO and the EU, most probably there would not be such a definite outcome. The USA reacted in such a drastic way in order to limit the Russian influence in the Balkans.

I was witness to the events in Belgrade at that time, the bombing of Belgrade, the revolution leading to the downfall of Milosevic. I have often raised that question with my colleagues in the diplomatic circles and we all share the same opinion.

Which of the two main principles will be dominant, depends on the main factors in the international community. Will the principle of non-violation of borders or the principle of self-determination of the nations come to the foreground, depends on these factors. That is politics!

Politics uses measures for protection of one's own interests and for a balance of interest. It is necessary to find a good balance between the two principles – the non-violation of national borders and the right to self-determination of nations.



STEFAN TAFROV

## COMPROMISES SHOW THAT THE COUNTRY IS MATURE

*AMBASSADOR  
OF BULGARIA  
TO THE UN  
(2001–2006)*

I had the privilege of being a foreign policy adviser to Dr. Zhelyu Zhelev when he was elected President in 1990. He changed the Bulgarian foreign policy.

I would like to say how honoured I am to speak today in the presence of highly respected leaders in the Balkans – President Demirel, one of the great architects of Turkey, Antonio Milososki, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the friendly Republic of Macedonia, and last but not at least my friend, the former PM of Macedonia Ljubcho Georgievski.

Dr. Zhelev already pointed out that failure to resolve the name issue, the fact that Macedonia is not member of NATO and has not yet joined the EU is a common concern and a threat for the entire region. I think that there is a consensus on that issue and I agree that this is a threat to both Macedonia and the entire region.

I am very happy to be in Macedonia these days because the act of recognition of Macedonia was one of the most important moments in my political and diplomatic career.

I would like to share with you the dilemma that Bulgaria faced in 1991–1992 as regards the recognition of the four former republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia which sought independence. New democratic Bulgaria was in a chaotic situation back in those days. Serious developments were taking place to the west of our borders, too. We were

not certain what course events would take in the future, a war was most likely break out. Therefore we were determined to strengthen our position with regard to Europe and the US. We needed to deal with the fears coming from the West that there might be a spill-over of the conflict in the Balkans. That was our first foreign policy task. When all four republics – Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia, one after the other decided to become independent, we followed closely that process. And above all, the processes in Macedonia as an immediate neighbour to Bulgaria. We have deep and long-standing historic ties, so our attitude was a special one. The fact is that with respect to Macedonia Bulgaria's foreign and domestic policies are interlinked.

Therefore the then government of Bulgaria decided to recognize Macedonia along with the other republics which had proclaimed independence, for two main reasons. The first reason was that we wanted to send a message of friendship to the people of Macedonia. We wanted to base our relations on a bright perspective, we wanted to have peaceful cooperation with the Macedonian people.

The second reason was no less important for us. We wanted to prove our partners in Western Europe and the US that Bulgaria was making a pro-European, pro-Euro-Atlantic choice. At that time the former communist countries such as Bulgaria were kept, to use a metaphor, in a cold-store area after the breakdown of communism. In some of those countries there were attempts at communist revival. The foreign policy of the Republic of Bulgaria was focused on what we call in Bulgarian national ideals, which means also respect for Macedonia. With the recognition of Macedonia as an independent state Bulgaria sent a clear message to the international community and to our partners in NATO that we were choosing the European path of development and not the nationalistic one. This was prompted by two factors. The first factor were the developments in former Yugoslavia, the nationalism of Milosevic, which helped sober up the Bulgarian public; also the crimes of the communists in Bulgaria against the Bulgarians of Turkish origin. The Bulgarian democratic opposition and Dr. Zhelev enjoyed public support at those times and the Bulgarian Turks supported him. So, we started on our path from the Turkish populated areas in Bulgaria and then our road to Europe passed through Skopje.

You know that the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the European Union had to adopt a decision on Badinter's proposal in 1992. At that time Greece objected to the name of Macedonia and protested against its

recognition. It was clear that Greece would block the recognition of Macedonia by the EU. It was not easy for Bulgaria to decide on taking such a step against the will of Greece, which was both a neighbour and an important partner. But we considered that we had not only rights but also responsibilities vis-a-vis the rest of the Balkans and Europe – a responsibility to provide support to Macedonia in those difficult times, because the Macedonians were entitled to the right of having a state of their own. Bulgaria was the first country to recognize Macedonia. I am not going to go into the details of the recognition. I was deputy minister of foreign affairs. The minister was not in Sofia at that time. The Prime Minister Filip Dimitrov and President Zhelyu Zhelev encouraged me and I worked on getting a political consensus in the ruling party, and among the democratic forces in the Parliament for the recognition of Macedonia. Another very important moment, and I take advantage of the presence of President's Demirel and PM Hetin – there was good cooperation between Bulgaria and Turkey on that issue. In the days prior to the recognition the Turkish Ambassador in Sofia came up with the proposal and insistence that when Bulgaria recognizes the former Yugoslavian states not to forget and neglect the recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I myself insisted on the recognition by Turkey of Macedonia. The Ambassador said there would be no obstacles in that respect. As far as I remember the Turkish Ambassador told me that Mr. Demirel wanted to visit Belgrade in connection with these events. Turkey decided to recognize all four states after Mr. Demirel's visit to Belgrade. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of February Turkey recognized Macedonia, a day after we recognized it on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February. This was a good coordination between the two countries on an important Balkan issue.

I also recall that according to the Badinter committee conclusions two republics were found to meet the criteria set by the European Union and these were Slovenia and Macedonia. It gave us the green light when the Council of Ministers had an open session to discuss the issue. I remember reading a coded telegram from our Ambassador in Belgrade Marko Markov who gave arguments in favour of the recognition of Macedonia by Bulgaria. All this helped Bulgaria avoid international isolation. President Zhelev addressed the nation supporting the decision of the government, PM Filip Dimitrov told me that he had already got the endorsement by the government and that the official act of recognition was to take place exactly on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February. There was the session of

Parliament, the decision of the government was read saying “Today the government of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted a historic decision to recognize the four new states, former Yugoslav republics – Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Macedonia” and when Dr. Zhelev said Macedonia everybody cried “Bravo” and there were loud applause.

When a country and nation are having difficult moments in their history compromises should be made. They are a proof of maturity and far-sightedness, a look into the future. I am not in a position to give advises to my Macedonian friends, I am not Macedonian, I do not wish to interfere but I believe myself to be a friend of Macedonia. When I consider this difficult issue with Greece I agree that Macedonia is quite right. I agree with your arguments, the arguments offered by PM Gruevski and former PM Georgievski. But what is the real balance of forces? Public opinion in Greece is backing up the official government’s position. In the USA there is a new President, a new administration. I do not believe that the new US administration will put this issue high on its priority list, as it has been the case with the previous Bush administration. You are aware of Sarkozy’s position, he is supporting Greece. This does not help Macedonia.

Time does not help Macedonia either – time passes without, regrettably, Macedonia starting accession negotiations. The time factor is very important. We in Bulgaria know that.

I believe that the Republic of Macedonia the existence of which is one of the best things that has ever happened to the Balkans over the past 100 years, is a reliable guarantee of stability in the Balkans. This was one of our motivations for the recognition of Macedonia. As President Dr. Zhelev pointed if this situation of relative isolation continues the risks will become higher and we should not just wait and see what will happen next and whether things are going in a positive direction.

In conclusion, I would reiterate what Mr. Hikmet Cetin said: The future is of greater importance than the past. When we weigh the pros and cons I think that the future should prevail.

MARKO MARKOV

## VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE BORDERS

*FORMER  
BULGARIAN  
AMBASSADOR TO  
ALBANIA, SERBIA  
AND BOSNIA AND  
HERZEGOVINA*

The formulation of the EU strategy on the Balkan borders as REMOVAL NOT RESHAPING provides a new vision for the region's development as a whole and the Western Balkans in particular.

Border removal may seem a distant scenario for a region once labelled as "powder keg" with ethnic wars and prejudices. However it seems an achievable goal in the context of the European perspective of the Balkans, and when all EU members in the future form a greater Schengen.

But things are not that simple. Analyzing the current developments in the Balkans, national Intelligence director Denis Blair in his annual report foresees 2009 to be the year of great instability for Europe irrespective of the peaceful proclamation of Kosovo independence and the proposal for NATO membership extended to Albania and Croatia. The report underlines the problem of the unresolved political status of the Serb minority. It also points out to the failure of inter-ethnic commitments to achieve power-sharing in Bosnia and Herzegovina which puts the survival of the multi-ethnic state under question.

In our discussion borders are an important keyword. Why?

– We see that Slovenia and Croatia which avoid being associated with

the Balkan region are entangled in a serious border and territorial dispute.

- The situation is especially alarming in the Western Balkans. The way the Dayton Accords shaped Bosnia and Herzegovina makes it a challenge to the borders. The Dayton “product” – a formation of one federation and one republic – has left the Croats still dreaming of a “third entity” – the wartime “Herzeg – Bosna”. The Serbs and Croats are against a unitary form of state. The political leaders of all three state-forming nationalities blocked the efforts of the international community for reforms in the security sector and for strengthening the common institutions etc.
- The concept of border removal corresponds to the concept of relativisation of borders characteristics to a certain extent of some of the EU and NATO countries. This is so because the problems related to border control require a new quality of monitoring.
- The unilateral proclamation of Kosovo’s independence de facto changed the sovereign borders of Serbia and brought to the agenda additional pretensions for “Eastern Kosovo”. The tackling of this problem goes beyond the EU border strategy.
- The recently launched plan of the presidents of Albania and Kosovo for a “Balkan Schengen” between Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro raises the following questions:
  - What is the meaning and the aim of removing the borders when the citizens of all four countries now cross the borders without visas? There are practically no border obstacles between Albania, Kosovo and even Macedonia.
  - Are not there any hidden objectives behind this move of the “Albanian factor” that may mostly affect Macedonia?
  - There is another problem related to the inter-ethnic one – visible or invisible borders. We all heard about a segregated ethnic system of education, in Struga and in Kosovska Mitrovica. And these are far from isolated cases in the Western Balkans.



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