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FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA 2002:

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE RISKS OF VIOLENCE AND WAR

Jan Øberg

Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research (TFF), Sweden

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1   Introduction

This report offers a framework and some tools for analysing the conflict in Macedonia[1] and the larger conflict formation of which it is a part. The purpose of the analysis is to assess, through intellectual as well as more intuitive methods, the risks of violence and war in the country in the near, medium and long-term perspective. Such early warning studies are meaningful only if linked to "early listening" and "early action", as illustrated, for instance, by the case of Kosovo/a.[2] Numerous organizations, among them Amnesty International and the Transnational Foundation (TFF),[3] repeatedly warned from the early 1990s that there would be war in Kosovo, unless international efforts at mitigating, mediating and finally negotiating were introduced. There was minimal early listening and no early action, resulting in the conflict growing more and more serious and becoming militarized. In the end the NATO bombing in 1999 had to be promoted as the only solution, in spite of the fact that it caused even more human suffering and has still not led to a sustainable peace in the region, a good three years later.

Nothing is so practical as good theory. The present report includes elements of general theory and some concepts to help readers understand this conflict as well as other conflicts. If the analysis increases the understanding of complex conflicts in general and those pertaining to Macedonia in particular, it will have served two of its major purposes. Because, without comprehensive "diagnosis" we can neither produce a reasonable "prognosis" nor hope to bring adequate "treatment" or "therapy". Only on the basis of both theory and empirical analysis can we hope to assess the risks of violence and wars in complex systems. And only by adding constructive thinking can we hope to prevent violence and help people and societies move toward peace.

One particularly important, underlying assumption throughout this report is that violence and war happen not only because of the presence of causes of war; but also because of the absence or weakness of causes of peace, such as well established institutions for conflict management, lively and open public debate, a high degree of government legitimacy, perhaps peace education in the schools, myths and rituals emphasizing peace, tolerance and diversity, etc. A society that lacks such elements is, naturally, much less resistant to violence and aggression within the body social.

A central conclusion of this report is that Macedonia is at risk in a rather unique way, in that both its "causes of war" and its "causes of peace" may have weakened after the experience of war in 2001. Thus, a new round of major fighting is not likely in the near future, but, on the other hand, the limited war undermined the single most important factor for peace: the conviction among the vast majority of Macedonians and Albanians that it was both possible and desirable to live together. The nations might not love each other as collective groups, but

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[1] This report will, for greater convenience, use the term Macedonia for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)

[2] As is well known, the Serbian name for the province is Kosovo, the Albanian is Kosova. Many writers systematically use the double-ending Kosovo/a. However, for convenience sake the name Kosovo will be used throughout this report, except in quotations and titles using another form. This implies no political verdict in favour of one or the other name or group.

[3] Henricson-Cullberg, M. (*et al.*), *Preventing War in Kosovo*, Lund: Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, 1992

it was a widely held belief, particularly on a person-to-person level, that it was possible to interact and live together in one state. In 2002, however, there is instead a widespread belief, albeit not publicly stated, that "after this we can't live together". The fragile faith in co-existence and the trust that existed between the groups is eroding. In the eyes of the Macedonians, it seems, the war was a zero-sum game in which they lost internally to the Albanians and to the international community.

A word on the methodology and philosophy of war risk assessment employed in this report is also appropriate. There are schools of thought that believe that war is possible to predict in a rational, scientific manner, and that when certain factors are empirically present to a defined extent and in certain combinations, war will inevitably break out. This is a rational, natural science-inspired philosophy but not the one applied in this report, which instead is based on informed analysis of empirical data: the author has undertaken several hundred interview/dialogues with Macedonians and Albanians from all walks of life since 1991, including the war period in 2001, and similar activity in other parts of former Yugoslavia, including Kosovo, for equally long. This has been combined with the academic peace and conflict research experience of the author over some twenty years, as well as with published materials, not least the mass of material now available on the Internet.[4]

Macedonia might in fact be regarded as something of a war assessment enigma. When wars raged in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, many feared that Macedonia was next. UNPREDEP (United Nations Preventive Deployment Force) was set up to prevent "spill-over" based on the hypothesis that the then Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic would invade Macedonia. But war did not break out. Before, during and after NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia, most people - including the present author - estimated that this would place such a burden on Macedonia that violence and war might well break out. It did not happen. When NATO/KFOR (Kosovo Force) and the UN took over the administration of the Kosovo province, many diplomats and scholars expected that to mean increased stabilization of the region. However, among several factors leading to the 2001 war in Macedonia are the failed disarmament of the Albanian Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK/KLA), and the ongoing militancy of those KLA troops who did not join the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), as well as the ongoing trans-border arms traffic. In other words, Macedonia has proved a rather unpredictable subject for war risk assessment, something that should be kept in mind when reading this report.

2   A Bird's Eye View of the Conflicts in Macedonia

2.1 Internal, Regional and Global Sources of Conflict

Usually Macedonia is associated with ethnic conflict between the majority Macedonians (63% in the 1981 census) and the minority Albanians (20% in the 1981 census; current official figure 23%; Albanian claims range up to 40%, though they have boycotted the recent census). However, there are many other nations: Turks, Roma, Serbs, Moslems (known as Torbeshes, Pomaks, or Poturs), Vlachs, Bosniaks, Bulgarians and others.[5] However, conflict could also erupt along other axes such as the class dimension (rich/powerful versus poor/powerless), which criss-crosses that of ethnicity, in that for instance the Macedonian and

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[4] For an extensive collection of Internet links see the website of the Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, http://www.transnational.org/links/FYROM.html

[5] See Poulton, H., *The Balkans: Minorities and States in Conflict*, London: Minority Rights Publications, 1994

the Albanian mafias have no problems co-operating. There is also a centre-periphery dimension, with Skopje, the capital, and Tetovo, the perceived capital of the Albanians, set against the impoverished rural areas. Indeed, the potential for class or material conflict may be more fundamental than that based on ethnicity. In addition issues of political legitimacy and democratic governance must be included. It is difficult to find citizens who believe that the country has an honest, democratic leadership. Corruption, economic and moral as well as political, flourishes. Likewise, the near civil war of 2001 does raise the question of the extent to which the armed forces are under democratic control. A further complication is the fact that Macedonia is a society in transition from its unique Yugoslav socialism toward a more or less foreign-imposed liberal capitalist market economy and presumed democracy, based on a multi-party system. Finally, there is the sphere of culture and religion, which make up the deeper collective subconscious that might well be mobilized should some of the other conflict dimensions move from latent to manifest mode.

Moreover, present day Macedonia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or FYROM, occupies only a part of the historical geographical Macedonian space, the rest being part of Greece (Aegean Macedonia), Bulgaria (Pirin Macedonia) and – a small slice – Albania. Macedonian nationalist sentiments in the late 1980s lead to considerable antagonisms and tension with Greece, Bulgaria and Albania. At this level most of the conflicts remain unsolved but have faded nonetheless. At the time of Macedonian independence, Greece expressed concern about the name, the flag and certain formulations in the Macedonian constitution, while Bulgaria formally recognized the new state but did not admit to the existence of a Macedonian nation, and Albania feared for the status of Albanians as a "minority" rather than a constituent people. However, the international community concentrated almost all attention on the perceived risk of a Serbian/rump-Yugoslav invasion of Macedonia which, in this larger perspective, was the least polarized or tense among Macedonia's external relationships and thus the least likely to erupt into war, although the Macedonian and Serbian maps of the now international border differed on a number of points. Since then the flag has been modified and Greece has lifted the sanctions as well as invested heavily in Macedonia. The border with Serbia has been settled and considerable parts of the Constitution changed (by the Ohrid Framework Agreement of August 2001). The other regional conflict issues remain unresolved or have deteriorated further.

The standard image of conflict contains, among other features, a division between "them" having the conflict, say the Macedonians and Albanians in Macedonia, and "us", meaning the international community acting as exclusively well-intentioned, impartial mediators and peacemakers. The analytical approach applied in this report considers this view grossly simplifying or false. The history of the Balkans provides abundant evidence that many external powers have had interests there, have conducted wars, signed peace agreements and drawn boundaries in these foreign lands, activities that may cause violence to erupt at a later stage. This is just as evident today, with the countries of the European Union, NATO, OSCE and the US super power, having economic, military, political etc. interests, and competing with each other to achieve their goals. To put it crudely, there is hardly a single government about which it can be said that it is a disinterested and impartial mediator.

Nor should it be ignored that the risk of conflict in Macedonia must be assessed against the background of a much deeper and wider conflict formation encompassing the Balkans, the Middle East, the Caucasus and the Central Asian Republics, affected by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, and the expansion of NATO/Partnership for Peace.

Securing Western/US access to the oil resources throughout this region is a fundamentally important explanatory factor behind various long-term policies and tactical moves by the international community, also in Macedonia.

2.2 The Role of the International Community in Macedonia

In this macro perspective, it is now time to ask whether the international community has influenced the risk of violence and war positively or negatively since Macedonia's independence.

The argument here is that the net influence has been negative. To put it crudely, if war breaks out in Macedonia at some point in the future it can not be explained exclusively by circumstances inside Macedonia itself. Actors in the international community beyond the regional neighbours are, have been and will remain participants in the conflicts of the region and deeply responsible for what happens in Macedonia. For example – historically Macedonia's major exports of agricultural produce went to other Yugoslav republics, most importantly Serbia. Years of war blocked transport routes not only to the Yugoslav republics but also to Ukraine, Russia and Romania. The international sanctions against Serbia were officially respected, but there immediately emerged a black economy, based on smuggling across the Macedonian-Serbian border, which boosted local Macedonian, Serbian and Albanian mafia groups. The present, rampant corruption in Macedonia has most of its roots in that period, and there are continuing reports of intra an inter-mafia violence in northwestern Macedonia.[6]

For a long time, Western countries more or less took for granted that the territory of independent Macedonia was at their disposal free of charge. The military so-called "extraction" mission that was set up over the border around Kumanovo to evacuate OSCE mission staff in the event they would be threatened by Milosevic was one of the first examples. For the later de facto occupation of Kosovo by NATO/KFOR, Macedonia was used for international military deployment and as a base area. Had a ground invasion been deemed necessary, troops would have had to go in mainly through Macedonia.

The outbreak of fighting in Macedonia itself in 2001 had many and complex causes, but one very central reason was that the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA or UCK), contrary to announcements made by NATO/KFOR and the UN already in autumn 1999, was neither disbanded, made illegal or fully transformed into the civilian Kosovo Protection Corps, KPC. While weapons flowed in from Albania to the Macedonian-Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA), it was obvious that it could not have operated without close physical, political, economic and military ties to various Albanian hard-liners across the border in Kosovo. Fighting erupted inside southern Serbia and in Macedonia. It would hardly have been possible had the groups been completely disarmed and the Macedonian-Yugoslav border sealed off by at least some of the more than 40,000 heavily armed international peace-enforcing troops.

At the political level, the international community set itself up as mediators and peacemakers, while war-like activities threatened to get out of hand. The diplomats' basic message to the Macedonian government (with both Macedonian and Albanian ministers) was that it would be unacceptable if it fought back too hard, or disproportionately, against this armed incursion

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[6] See Wood, N., Violence Stirs Fear of Wider Conflict in Macedonia, *Washington Post*, 26 April 26 2002

and de facto occupation of areas making up perhaps 10-15% of the territory. Ukraine came under strong EU pressure not to deliver weapons to Skopje and there were quite serious and repeated reports of Western involvement on the Albanian side through intelligence services and through private military advisory corporations, one of them being the US based Military Professional Resources Inc., MPRI.[7]

A foreign-mediated, lengthy negotiation process ended up in the Ohrid Framework Agreement of August 2001 which contains provisions for laws granting amnesty to most of the Albanian military leaders, for changes to the constitution in favour of the Albanian citizens and for the granting of wider autonomy to regions and municipalities.

2.3 A Steadily Weakened Macedonia

For a young sovereign state with a considerable original problem of identity and insecurity, these international developments were highly disturbing. Time and again, Macedonia's rights as an independent, sovereign state were surprisingly, unwisely, disregarded; it is fair to say that neither the mature democratic European states nor the United States would have accepted to be treated the way they have treated Macedonia. In addition, according to President Trajkovski the country has not been paid any compensation, nor does it expect this to happen.[8]

In all fairness it deserves mention that the UNPREDEP mission as well as OSCE and several foreign NGOs have treated the country with respect and served all its various citizens and overall stability well. But to the extent that such matters can be assessed at all, they have by no means been able to positively balance the overall negative influence by other, stronger factors in the international community.

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3.1 The Most Important Regional Factor: Kosovo

As long as the geographical border between Macedonia and Kosovo/Serbia is as open for all kinds of more or less illegal trans-border activities, military and civilian, as has been the case hitherto, there is not going to be peace in Macedonia. As long as there is general agreement that sovereignty and self-defence are basic norms in the international community, no government of a sovereign state can be expected to stand idly by and watch while armed incursions happen and sizeable parts of the country comes under the control of one single group. But this is what the international community has been demanding of the Macedonian government, effectively depriving Macedonia of its right to self-defence.

Over 40,000 international peace-enforcing soldiers were set down on the ground in Kosovo. In September 1999, the world was informed that the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK/KLA) had been disarmed and disbanded and that 5,000 of its allegedly 20,000 troops had been transformed into the purely civilian Kosovo Protection Corps, KPC. In March 2000, the present author and colleagues from the TFF participated in an international training

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[7] See for instance Schrader, E., US Companies Hired to Train Foreign Armies, *Los Angeles Times*, 14 April 2002

[8] As stated by him at an international conference in Skopje in 2001 attended by the author.

programme[9] for the KPC on human rights, reconciliation and related matters in Pristina. Its top leaders took part in the course in full battle-dress, some with bodyguards and some carrying arms. The official KPC leader was, and still is, Agim Ceku, who had been a high-ranking officer in the Croatian Army during the 1995 Operations Flash and Storm against the Serb majority areas in Croatia. In an interview with the present author, Ceku stated that he had helped set up the KLA/UCK as early as 1993 when, from time to time, he was back home in his native Kosovo. Albanian units were able to take up armed struggle inside southern Serbia, and afterwards the militarized malaise began spilling over into Macedonia. The chaotic breakdown of Albania in 1997 was of course a contributing factor. Allegedly 575,000 weapons and tonnes of ammunition disappeared from the depots into the hands of people with well-established plans for their use: in Kosovo and in Macedonia.[10]

Postulating this "Kosovo connection" for the 2001 war in Macedonia is controversial. However, there have been numerous stories about foreigners of US and other nationalities doing covert operations and supporting the NLA inside Macedonia. Likewise, there are reports on how the KLA/UCK has established itself since 1992-1993 and received training, arms, uniforms etc from various sources in the West. The present author is not a specialist in intelligence and covert operations. But conversations with high-level personalities in the Macedonian Ministry of Defence, including its crisis group set up during the 2001 war, and with a former chief of intelligence, back up such reports to a remarkable extent. In addition, during the war repeated requests by Albanian party officials for help in establishing contact with NLA's political spokesman, Ali Ahmeti (by 2002 leader of the Albanian all-Party coalition), elicited the response that an internationally known intellectual in Pristina would know where Ahmeti was, since he was his liaison and knew his whereabouts when he was in Kosovo, rather than in the mountains around Tetovo.

It is hardly surprising that all this did not receive much prominence in Western media during the 2001 Macedonian war: NATO/KFOR and the UN have far from succeeded in de-militarizing Kosovo. The Macedonia-Kosovo border seems as porous as it has always been, and weapons have somehow seeped through the US controlled zone and entered the war zones in northern Macedonia. To the extent that arms trade or smuggling is related to the rampant corruption and black economy of the region in general and the Albanian, Kosovo and Macedonian space in particular, this is likely to continue until mafia activity is reduced, controlled and finally eradicated there.

3.2 Internal Factors for War and Peace

3.2.1 The Framework Agreement
The six-month war in 2001, like any war, left deep scars on the human mind and collective consciousness. The Framework Agreement that was signed in Ohrid in August 2001 represents rather too much of a defeat seen from the Macedonian viewpoint, while the Albanian political elite can point to manifest progress (the amnesty, the local government law and changes in the constitution) in important parts of this side's struggle for more recognition and rights.

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[9] See Jarman, P., *Teaching Peace in Kosovo: A Report,* Lund: Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, 2000

[10] See Oberg, J., NATO's Number Nonsense, *TFF PressInfo*, No 125, August 2001, http://www.transnational.org/pressinf/2001/pf125_NATOnumbers.html [accessed July 2002]

By this we do not wish to judge the Agreement as such, we merely point to the difference in interpretation by the two groups, when they compare with the pre-war situation. Objectively speaking, the Macedonian side has reason to feel weakened vis-a-vis both the Albanians and the international community; some used "humiliation" to characterize the feeling in conversations with the author. The Albanian side can look back on the event and draw the conclusion that not before violence was introduced did they make progress toward achieving their goals.

The Agreement must be seen, however, in the perspective of the ethnic conflicts throughout the 1990s, to which it is supposed to be a solution.

3.2.2 *Effect of Inequality and Internal Conflicts*

In some respects there has been more repression of the Albanians in Macedonia than in Kosovo. Thus, for instance, Pristina University was the centre of learning for Kosovo Albanians, while for almost a decade the issue of higher education for Macedonian Albanians has been controversial. Since 1997, the majority of Macedonians have regarded the Tetovo University illegal. Albanians do not play a role in the state administration, police, or military commensurate to their proportion of the population (25% - 40% depending on sources). In the National Museum in Skopje there is not a trace of Albanian (or any other minority) culture. Tourist books and brochures hardly mention Albanians or reflect their culture; the language, images and symbols on bank notes and stamps are devoid of anything non-Macedonian. Whether these are relevant criteria is another question, but this is what the Albanians perceive as their subordination.

Those in Macedonia who had it in their power to do so never really sustained an honest inter-ethnic dialogue, either in the community or at government level. Informal segregation is practised by both sides in schools, media, clubs, restaurants and residential areas: "We don't mix with them"; "we can't live together but perhaps as neighbours"; "I would never have a boyfriend among them", are statements visitors have heard repeatedly throughout the 1990s, but more often by Macedonians than by Albanians. There was no overall policy or strategy, no bridge-building state leadership, at least not after the end of the presidency of founding President Kiro Gligorov. There was and is no vision that could bring substantial reforms and promote genuine trust. Making political deals and muddling through by postponing decisions and changes became the order of the day practised by both sides in government as well as municipalities. Unfortunately this fragile state of affairs was implicitly endorsed by US and EU diplomats who, disregarding the time bomb character of the situation that dragged on year after year, called Macedonia "an oasis of peace". Perhaps it was felt that an international success in the Balkans was badly needed, in this case one created by the small but very energetic OSCE mission and the UN's UNPREDEP mission.

A marked difference from Kosovo was that there was enough formal co-operation between the communities in Macedonia to make it possible to pretend that things would go well, in spite of all. The conflict was more about the future than about the present, more about structures and relative influence or power sharing than about violence and repression. Generally speaking, Macedonian Albanians have had more moderate demands than have the Kosovo Albanians, who long ago declared that only an independent "Kosova" would be acceptable. Macedonia's Albanians have been much less confrontational. They correctly assessed their own potential influence on all Macedonia as much greater than what could be achieved by the Kosovo Albanians in the much bigger Serbia. They have a stake in

Macedonia to an extent that Kosovo Albanians could never expect for themselves in Serbia, and certainly not under Slobodan Milosevic's leadership.

This is why moderate Albanians in Macedonia now feel under pressure, and many express sympathy for those who have taken to arms, since there is structural as well as direct repression, making Macedonian Albanians see themselves as second-class citizens. Therefore, in principle, the struggle of the Albanian NLA enjoyed widespread legitimacy in Albanian circles. On the other hand, moderate Albanians recognize that, in the long term, armed struggle could well split Macedonia and ruin the vision of one whole future Macedonia over which they have substantial, if not dominant, influence. This attachment to Macedonia (of which there is no equivalent relative to Serbia among Kosovo Albanians) has to do with this long-term vision but also with the fact that Albanians in Macedonia generally consider themselves to be better off socio-economically and politically than Albanians in Albania and Kosovo. This is illustrated by the fact that tens of thousands of Albanians have come from Albania and from Kosovo to live in Macedonia.

This being said, it is important to emphasize that acknowledging the second-class status of Macedonian Albanians is in no way intended to justify the armed struggle in 2001 or the extremist claims on both sides that "the others" understand only weapons. Based on numerous fact-finding missions and several hundred conversations with all sides since 1991, the present author is of the firm belief that the de facto level of presence of Albanians in politics, trade, the educational system and media in today's Macedonia does not justify the extremist claim that only armed struggle can overcome the repression. It is not true that in 2001 warfare was the only way; but it is true that the Albanians had reason to feel that the willingness among Macedonians to accept equality, or serious negotiations about it, was very limited.

At the same time it is easy to understand that many Macedonians fear for their relative status and influence in tomorrow's Macedonia, and many believe that at some point in the future, they will become a minority and second class citizens in their motherland. This fear is based on three factors: ethnic polarization in general, the marked difference in Macedonian and Albanian birth rates, and the Albanian struggle for higher status and more power in society. The fact that, across the border in Kosovo, hard-line Kosovo Albanian leaders have managed, through various methods, to drive out an estimated 200,000 Kosovo Serbs, and this after KFOR and the UN took over, i.e. under the very eyes of tens of thousands of civilian and military internationals, has hardly diminished this fear.

Macedonians also readily make reference to the fact that Albanians participate in the government, and that Macedonians and Albanians get along well in the rural areas and in the factories. Although there have been examples of unfair treatment and police violence, Macedonians in power have not set up, or attempted to set up, a repressive system of exclusion, day-and-night political control or human rights violations that could be compared with the quasi police-state established by Belgrade in Kosovo. To put it in psycho-political terms: both the Macedonian and Albanian political elite perceived their conflict within the framework of a common state, but each side saw the other as threatening to itself and thereby potentially destructive of the state. However, the careful observer would not find enough psychologically destructive energy channelled into the ethnic relationship per se to predict or explain a war. The outbreak of the civil war must therefore be explained rather in terms of a

complex interplay between the inner societal dynamics and the global framework around it, in particular as it developed before, during and after the bombing of Yugoslavia.

But before we develop this track further, let us challenge a few of the myths about ethnic relations as explanatory factor behind internal wars.

3.2.3   Challenging the Myths around "Ethnic Conflicts"

What has just been said may convey the impression that Macedonia is just another "ethnic" conflict and that its problems can be brought into the formula: Macedonians versus Albanians. It cannot. Nor, on the other hand, can the diagnosis leave out the conspicuous ethnic dimension of the problems in the country.

In all the complex conflicts that media usually term "ethnic conflicts", there are other, more deepseated elements of malaise, such as socio-economic crisis, constitutional chaos, latent traumas from earlier wars, individual economic deprivation, misery, anomie or value vacuum, unemployment, hopelessness, etc.

In many cases it is more fitting to say that ethnicity is a channel through which destructive energies rooted in these other factors are played out; it is the dimension around which it is most easy to mobilize the social energy that makes people hate and fear and go to the killing fields. Macedonia certainly displays a series of such non-ethnic conflict dimensions, such as class, legitimacy, State identity, insecurity in relation to neighbours, etc. as well as influences from regional and global culture.

The present report challenges the standard (and often media-promoted) image of two well-defined, exclusive groups pitted against each other with strong polarization. Such images are based on analysis that is at best simplifying, at worst non-existent. At an early stage of the war in 2001, leading mainstream media suddenly changed from referring to "Macedonians" to calling the Macedonian side "Slav Macedonians" or "Macedonian Slavs" and contrasting it with "the ethnic Albanian minority". Why this happened or who introduced it, is not known to the author, but it was conspicuous. It seemed to cast a Serb-like shadow over the Macedonians and implicitly compare the Macedonian leaders of the republic with President Milosevic in Yugoslavia. In short, it created a manipulated replay of the Kosovo conflict on Macedonia's territory.

Finally, there are also conflicts inside each conflicting party. There are hard-line and soft-line Macedonians as well as Albanians. There are class divisions and divisions in terms of education and there is ideological diversity. No conflict in the world displays complete inner homogeneity. Furthermore, Macedonian attitudes to the Albanians differ widely depending on where the roots of the person are. Macedonians have a much less negative attitude to a Macedonian Albanian whose roots have always been in Macedonia and who was born there; he or she is considered more loyal to the State. An Albanian who, at some point in the past, has come from Kosovo or Albania to live and work in Macedonia is much less appreciated; and these "foreign" Albanians or "newcomers" are again divided into those who have become Macedonian citizens and those who are considered illegal immigrants. Newcomers are viewed with suspicion and as potential troublemakers.

3.2.4   Macedonian "Fatalism" and Albanian "Voluntarism"

This section is about tendencies and very impressionistic aspects which the frequent or long-term visitor to Macedonia can hardly help noticing. Admittedly it cannot be backed up by scientific proof and it is, of course, gross generalizations to be taken with a grain of salt. But

it is not entirely impressionistic; it is also based on what people will tell you about themselves and about the others.

The generalized Albanians appear rather voluntaristic and dynamic, while Macedonians come across as rather more fatalistic or deterministic in their outlook on life and political style. The Albanians in Macedonia set up their own university in Tetovo a number of years ago and financed it out of their own and the diaspora's pockets. They establish armies, struggle for their rights, see business opportunities everywhere and come across much more as a unified nation, not only inside Macedonia of course, but with their kin in Kosovo and Albania. Of course they are split too in family or clan loyalties, or different mafia groups fighting each other, and there is a quite clear perception of status differences, of degree of "civilization" among themselves. Thus, for instance, Kosovo and Macedonian Albanians may discuss who is more educated and modern, but agree that they are both more so than Albanian Albanians. Many of Macedonia's finest Albanian intellectuals and political leaders hold degrees from the University of Pristina from the days of old Yugoslavia.

Throughout the 1990s, under the leadership of the moderate Ibrahim Rugova, Kosovo-Albanians developed their own state ("Kosova"), which, for most practical purposes, had little to do with Serbia proper. This parallel society provided income, health clinics, education, culture and eventually an army for the nation, much of it financed by donations from the Albanian diaspora around the world who were expected to pay up to three per cent of their income to this Albanian project. (Something like that was never done by the Serbs for their minorities in say, Eastern and Western Slavonia or Krajina in Croatia). So, Albanians may have many divisions but when it comes to the great long-term goals, they seem highly united.

This type of entrepreneurial attitude is less frequently found among the generalized Macedonians. There is more of a come-what-may approach like "yes, the situation is bad but what can we do, except wait for a better tomorrow?" There are fewer visions of a better life, less national leadership, more citizens' disillusionment and sense of powerlessness. It is a classical debate culture, with everyone being an expert on social and political affairs. While there is a great readiness to talk, not the least in cafés over coffee, there is little capacity for concerted action in any direction. Citizens feel that there are endless debates in Parliament but no perceived improvements of everyday life whatever the outcome of these debates, if any.

National solidarity seems limited; somewhat like Serbs, Macedonians quarrel with each other and do not seem to get a larger visionary project off the ground. You can hear internationals say about them that politically "they never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity." Thus, the political system muddles through, a lot of energy is wasted on internal squabbles and economic as well as political deals; Macedonian citizens do not really expect anything good to happen, life just is like that. For sure, after former President Kiro Gligorov they have a strong sense that they are without national leadership in times of crisis.

3.2.5 *Porous Ethnic Borders*
Inter-ethnic relations are important for the understanding of Macedonia. Quite a lot of empirical research has been conducted since the late 1980s; it gives ample evidence as to their intricacies, complexities and sophistication. Emilja Simoska has summarized it well in

her article, "Macedonia: A view on the inter-ethnic relations" from 1997.[11] Here is an excerpt of only one of several interesting findings she reports, pointing in the direction of an increasing polarization of attitudes already five years before war broke out:

> While 10 years ago ethnically "clean" marriages were desirable for less than one-third of the young people, in 1996 the percentage was two times higher, with evident differences between the different groups. Homogenous marriages were preferred by 38 per cent of the Macedonians, 50 per cent of the Turks and 79 per cent of the Albanians. The choice of friends or associates had never before been related to their ethnic background, but last year's data indicated that over one-quarter of the young people would be friendly only to members of their own ethnic group. Thirty-four per cent also claimed that it was "difficult to be friendly with people who do not belong to their people" (ten years ago this response was given by less than four per cent). Undoubtedly, barriers of this kind do not have to lead to practical hostility, just as mixed marriages and friendships in some other countries were no guarantee of the prevention of radical conflicts or wars. Nevertheless, if compared with previous years, they indicate a deepening of the ethnic distance between different groups.

Vasiliki Neofotistos[12], a Greek-American anthropologist of Harvard University who spent 18 months during 2000-2001 doing field studies in Macedonia, argues that the ethnic borders are indeed permeable, even porous. This does not mean that there are no negative stereotypes or that perfect harmony exists between the groups. But we should be analytically aware of the distinction between collective images used by groups for self-identification and/or political purposes (including the creation of a "war psychosis"), and the individual, everyday experience, where it is perfectly possible to relate to individuals among "them".

Thus, for instance, for Macedonians a person can possess *kultura*, which denotes a state of (European) civilization, urban values and good manners irrespective of ethnicity and formal education. To be "modern" means something like following fashion, wearing perfume and brand name clothes, driving expensive cars, spending a lot of money and using a mobile phone while going to the right "in" places. If Albanians possess *kultura* or perform as "modern" in the eyes of a Macedonian, "they inhabit the realm of being an *albanets*. At the same time, *kultura* forms the mechanism through which Macedonians transform an *albanets* into *nash tsovek* or, 'our man'", according to Neofotistos.

On the Albanian side, she finds the same important mechanism. "*Besa* is an Albanian term that could be translated as 'credibility/trustworthiness' in Macedonia. Similarly to *kultura*, *besa* is a quality that a person possesses. The means to achieve it are loyalty, respect, understanding and communication with others. ...Exactly like *kultura*, the local notion of *besa* both brings about the creation of alternative classifications to those of ethnicity, and also renders the classifications that ethnicity provides porous by permitting the admittance of Macedonians within the Albanian community as 'almost Albanian' co-ethnics." An Albanian

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[11] Simoska, E., Macedonia: A View on the Intern-ethnic Relations, *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No 2, 1997

[12] Neofotistos, V., Beyond Stereotypes: The Porousness of Ethnic Boundaries in the Republic of Macedonia, unpublished paper, PhD thesis in progress, Harvard University, 2002

may say about a Macedonian who has *besa* that he or she is "exactly like an Albanian! [*eshte bash si Shqiptar!*]".

So there are two levels. There is the collective level where stereotyping and polarization is possible. Then there is the individual level which is much less clear-cut and where, by definition, stereotypes are impossible, because the actors perceive each other as human beings with good or bad characteristics and manners. Here you are not good or bad because of your ethnicity or who you are but because of how you are and behave. The picture is much more blurred, porous or "soft" and the parties build on sympathy and develop empathy.

One may say that this compares to some extent with Max Weber's distinction between *Gemeinschaft* (informal, need-oriented community) and *Gesellschaft* (formal, functional society). However, for the assessment of the risk of war and violence one may advance the simple hypothesis thus: the stronger the *besa/kultura* dimension is in Macedonia, the stronger the body social immune-defence against violence. And the weaker it is, the fewer such personalized bonds we find across ethnic borders, the weaker society's immune-defence.

3.2.6   *Effect of Erosion of* besa *and* kultura
One may fear that, after the fighting in 2001, this is exactly what has happened. In late May, 2001, in the midst of fighting, the US State Department published a survey of Albanian and Macedonian attitudes on a variety of essential issues. In several ways, as Tim Judah states, they were mirroring a will to live together, rather than split the country, on both sides.[13]

The atmosphere now, as the present author was able to gather in April 2002, is different. The unspoken requirement to be loyal with one's own ethnic group, to be disciplined and not to risk being perceived among your peers as a "traitor", because of seeing good traits in even a single individual among "them", has risen tremendously. Many *kultura/besa*-based relationships have had to be cut. Extremists and militants on both sides have displayed a gross lack of *besa* and *kultura* and treated each other appallingly. Norms have been broken down, anomie (normlessness) is on the increase. Both sides know that there are individuals on their own side who have done cruel things, and at the same time one must be loyal. So, the reaction is to retreat, mind one's own business, not seek contact with the other side but seek security in your own - stereotyped and stereotyping - groups.

In summary, to the extent *kultura* and *besa* were factors for peace throughout civil society, that factor is much weaker now. Violence has its own subtle consequences, one of them is that in future it will be less difficult for extremists to mobilize energies along hard, rather than soft, collective ethnicity-based borders. This is likely to have serious consequences for Macedonian civil society and for the Macedonian state.

4   Factors Influencing the Prognosis for War and Peace

In principle, four "scenarios" are possible, based on the interplay of factors supporting war and peace. The extremes would be represented by on the one hand a combination of strong peace factors with weak war factors, leading to peaceful development and stability ("scenario A"; and on the other hand a combination of strong war factors with weak peace factors, leading to violence, war and instability ("scenario D". With both peace and war factors strong we would find a dynamic equilibrium, characterized by unpredictable change ("scenario B"),

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[13]   See Judah, T., Albanians Back Macedonian Unity, *IWPR Balcan Crisis Report*, No 250, 25 May 2001

while a combination of weak peace and war factors would generate a negative equilibrium and stagnation ("scenario C").

We would argue that Macedonia existed in a state of negative equilibrium during most of the 1990s and slid into war in 2001 when the war inducing factors grew in strength. The question now is whether the country can be helped from the outside, and has the energy itself, to move into dynamic equilibrium, or, better, peaceful stability through the strengthening of the factors for peace and control and weakening of the factors for war.

4.1 War and Peace Inducing Factors

4.1.1   War Inducing Factors
The following factors (listed without priority) are likely to increase the risk of war in Macedonia. It is believed that no single one of them is strong enough to cause war. The more "war factors" that manifest themselves over time, however, the higher the risk:

- deepening negative subjective perceptions of "the other", polarization, stereotyping;
- deepening socio-economic crisis, misery, unemployment, strikes, chaos and "law and order" policies as response;
- partial cancellation of promised foreign aid, no matter the reason; in short, the use of foreign aid as a leverage: aid now is a small compensation for what Macedonia has paid for international sanctions and international warfare against its neighbour;
- anomie and hopelessness: the less attractive civil life becomes, the greater the risk that people think "anything, including war, is better than this and I have no more to lose";
- continued presence of thousands of weapons held by civilians, by para-military groups such as The Lions and by Albanian extremists in NLA/ANA, the splinter Albanian National Army - NATO's Essential Harvest mission in 2001 removed only a fraction of the weapons;[14]
- partisan or otherwise biased involvement by the international community, including increased influence of foreign intelligence services and private military consultant firms on one or both sides;
- tendencies toward a two-bloc political system with all Albanian parties in one bloc and the Macedonian parties in the other, which would signal a division of the country;
- failure to implement the Ohrid Framework Agreement and consequent legislation, eroding whatever mutual trust may still exist; Macedonians may feel that there is too much implementation too fast, Albanians that there is too little too slowly;
- unpredictable events such as e.g. the killing of a leading politician, a riot in some village, or pre-election provocations by paramilitary groups; in short, socio-psychological sparks that may ignite the local "powder keg";
- little or no return of citizens who were driven from their homes (IDPs) and no compensation allotted to them;
- difficulties in implementing the patrolling by ethnically mixed police in the former war zones;[15]
- continued flow of arms coming over the border from Kosovo and Albania;
- early recognition of Kosovo as an independent state: this would trigger dissolution of the Dayton process, generate unpredictable developments in present Yugoslavia and raise the

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[14] See Oberg, NATO's Number Nonsense

[15] The OSCE is responsible for this as well as for the training in the new National Police Academy. See OSCE Boosts its Democratic Policing Operations with Series of New Initiatives, *OSCE Newsletter*, March 2002

stakes for Albanians in Macedonia, who might then demand parity with the Kosovo Albanians.

Should one or more of these factors begin to hit the front pages of the international press, Macedonia must be seen as entering the road to war again.

4.1.2 *Peace Inducing Factors*

A corresponding list of peace factors would include the following:

- overall economic development reaching all, general improvement of standard of life and welfare: a focus on the citizens basic needs;
- increased government leadership and a perception among citizens that it is legitimate and honest;
- a broad public discussion about future defence and security, including the option of NATO membership (given that the latter is a divisive issue, with Albanians positive and Macedonians negative to the organization);
- EU membership as it may offer a sense of direction lacking now, but the price would be the further erosion of Balkan and Macedonia/Albanian specificity and culture – however, many may be willing to give that up and feel that "it is better to hand over our future to somebody else";
- healthy socio-economic development and democratic governance in Albania and Kosovo;
- normalization in all spheres of life in the regions affected by the 2001 war, not the least constant presence of ethnically mixed police and provision of safety for all;
- socio-psychological healing, reconciliation and tolerance training in the education system: e.g. peace education, production of new politics and history textbooks for schools and other educational institutions, reflecting the views of both sides on past as well as contemporary issues, training in dealing with conflicts and their resolution without violence;
- socio-psychological healing, reconciliation and tolerance training in the media: e.g. publicity for educational programmes in conflict resolution, positive news (such as when *Utrinski Vesnik* reported on 5 April 2002: "Confidence between Macedonians an Albanians returns in Neprosteno") and stories about inter-ethnic co-operation in Macedonia and elsewhere; denunciation of hate speech;
- socio-psychological healing, reconciliation and tolerance training in cultural life: inter-cultural events, celebrations, museum exhibitions, poetry evenings, drama and theatre to express what happened and the hurt and harm - but without apportioning blame;
- socio-psychological healing, reconciliation and tolerance training in politics: deepening and expansion of opportunities for inter-ethnic initiatives, promotion of investments and political projects that reward ethnic tolerance, serious efforts at creating some kind of inter-ethnic "ombudsman";
- socio-psychological healing, reconciliation and tolerance training in the economy: economic benefits, especially international donor funds, targeted at companies, banks and infrastructure projects which are operated in a spirit of tolerance and reflect inter-ethnic economic co-operation; rewarding projects in which parties work together;
- a national reconciliation process institutionalized in a Commission of Truth and Reconciliation;
- a multi-year conference for the Balkans modelled upon the OSCE, which would approach the many issues and perspectives relevant to economic stabilization, security and democracy in a larger forum and enable solutions to specific issues to be anchored in a larger, regional framework, thereby laying the foundation for a future, sustainable peace in the whole region.

4.2 Immediate Stumbling-blocks

4.2.1   Winners and Losers, Victory and Humiliation
In general terms, Macedonians and Albanians judge the internationally brokered Framework Agreement of August 2001, very differently. The former see themselves as losers/dissatisfied, the latter as winners/happy. This is well illustrated by on the one hand an article by Skopje based Reuters reporter Kole Casule,[16] and on the other an interview in August 2001 with NLA spokesperson Ali Ahmeti for *Voice of America*.[17]

This analysis does not take a stand on whether or not the Agreement is fair. It also expresses no opinion as to whether Albanians are "right" in demanding a higher, equal status (or fighting for it with arms), neither does it express views on whether Macedonians should have granted such rights and status long before and, perhaps, thereby avoided the war last year. But what the analysis does emphasize is that it is unfortunate - with a view to future peace in the country - that the Agreement is of such a kind that one side feels it has lost all and won nothing. It feels it has been humiliated not only by the opponent in the internal conflict but also by the international community. Humiliation is bound, one way or the other, to have a negative impact on future relations.

It would be a Balkan miracle if, against this background, the implementation of the Agreement on the ground will be smooth and in accordance with the projected timetable. In the words of one internationally respected expert, Edward Joseph, senior Macedonia analyst for the International Crisis Group, as quoted by Casule: "People thought that when they passed the constitutional reforms, the hardest part was over. They didn't understand or actually realize [the underlying meaning] of some of these steps." Casule reflects: "Parliament may prove the most obvious example of how unprepared Macedonians are for their brave new post-war world."

4.2.2   Pressure by the International Community on the Government
A recent report by the Institute for War and Peace Reporting illustrates the risk of international demands on the Macedonian government turning into stumbling blocks for the peace process:[18]

> EU representatives accused Prime Minister Ljupco Georgievski of dragging his feet over legislation to widen the official use of the Albanian language and to allow equal Macedonian-Albanian representation in state institutions. The Ohrid agreement in August stipulated that these and other reforms should be introduced within the lifetime of the current parliament but little sign of movement has been detected so far. The rebuke was delivered at a meeting in Luxembourg on April 16 of delegations headed by Georgievski and the EU Commissioner Javier Solana. The ostensible purpose of the meeting was to review the progress of last April's Stabilization and Association Agreement, a forum for charting Macedonia's progress towards integration with the EU. 'Of course', said David Daly, head of the EU Balkans Office, 'we cannot force

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[16] See Reuters [Skopje], Casule, K., Macedonians Pay Price for Peace with Rebels, 18 December 2001

[17] See Ahmeti, A., UÇK e mbështet marrëveshjen, *Voice of America*, 10 August 2001; English translation, NLA Supports the Peace Agreement, http://www.alb-net.com/amcc/cgi-bin/viewnews.cgi?newsid997542008,30665, [accessed may 2002]

[18] See Jovanovska, S., Macedonia: EU Scolds Georgievski, *IWPR Balkan Crisis Report*, No 332, 19 April 2002

anybody to do what we think is right. We merely offer an overview of what is necessary for European integration.' Since Macedonia's main hope for the future lies in joining Europe, Brussels' 'advice' cannot easily be ignored.

The IWPR report lists about ten other, very comprehensive changes requested by EU leaders Chris Patten and Javier Solana. Given the events independent Macedonia has gone through as a result of actions by the international community, one must question the wisdom of applying such strong pressure. Economic aid from the EU, which is by far the largest donor, is directly tied to satisfying the EU's conditions, as expressed by Chris Patten, the EU external relations commissioner, in Thessaloniki on 11 April 2002:

> In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, we expect all parties to continue to adhere scrupulously to the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement. *Our assistance will continue to depend on that…* [emphasis added]. The EU has lived up to the promises it made on assistance for the implementation agreement, not least at the Donors' Conference we arranged with the World Bank last month. Huge sums were raised at that conference. We expect the money, every euro of it, to be properly spent. And we are determined to see in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and indeed throughout the region, a really determined effort made to root out corruption. Corruption poisons political and economic life throughout the region: it has got to be tackled with total and unstinting resolve.[19]

The donor conference held in March 2002 was postponed from October 2001, because of concerns that the Macedonian government was not fulfilling its part in the peace agreement. At the meeting, donor funding of about US$274 million was pledged for macroeconomic assistance in support of reconstruction and of implementation of the Framework Agreement. In addition, donors indicated that another US$241 million would be available for general economic development during 2002. Most of the funds will be used to help the Macedonian government balance its budget for 2002, with the remainder allocated for rebuilding of homes, schools, power lines, etc. More than US$22 million would go towards the cost of implementing the peace deal, including removing land mines, decentralizing the government, improving teaching and promoting the use of the Albanian language.[20]

Macedonia, thus, is a country that, for all practical purposes, is under foreign political, economic and military control, having to acquiesce in external demands in order to survive and, at a later stage, become a member of the EU and of NATO. An investment of US$515 million, giving the EU and NATO virtually full control of a strategically important country through which pipelines for the Caucasian oil are already being built, must be seen as rather advantageous. But it also suggests that if Macedonia does fall into war again, the international community is so deeply involved, and in fact steering the process, that it will not be able to stand aside.

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[19] See Patten, C., Speech at the Western Balkans Democracy Forum Meeting in Thessaloniki, 11 April 2002, http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/news/patten/sp02_150.htm [accessed May 2002]

[20] See *CNN*, Macedonia Offered $515m to Rebuild, 12 March 2002, http://www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/europe/03/12/macedonia.donor/index.html [accessed May 2002]

It should be remembered that this situation has developed in the wake of a series of events that have all contributed to destabilizing the country, as well as undermining its already fragile identity as an independent and sovereign state:

- detrimental effects on its economy of the decade of sanctions against Yugoslavia;
- large scale influx of refugees;
- risk of being drawn into a war with Serbia, because of serving as military base for NATO;
- civil war made possible at least partly through an inflow of weapons, ultimately due to failed peacekeeping by the international community in Kosovo and Albania;
- experiencing war on its territory and simultaneous pressure not to practise the right to self-defence accorded by the UN Charter, Article 51;
- experiencing the presence of at least some elements of uninvited Western intelligence services and private military corporations;
- being pressured to accept a peace agreement that is considered grossly humiliating to one side and, in the eyes of many, a "sell out", to which has been added economic leverage, in that the donor funds are not treated as compensation for the destabilizing events but are used to ensure that Macedonia does what is required by the Western community, the EU and NATO in particular.

It would seem to be a safe prediction that the international community is about to reach the limits of the political carrying capacity of Macedonia's political system. The Macedonian side, government as well as citizens, may at some point in the future signal that it does not see this as fair and that it has not been given a reasonable stake in shaping its own future. It must be feared that the Framework Agreement, when seen in the perspective of this list of fundamentally important destabilizing events, will be implemented much more slowly than demanded by the international community and, naturally, by the Albanian side.

4.2.3   *International Low Priority to Reconciliation after the War*
As we have seen, the EU contributes considerable funds to Macedonia, but its specific support to inter-ethnic dialogue is surprisingly limited. It consists of the following elements:

- assessing the performance of a national census;
- start-up financial support for the creation of a Secretariat for the President of the Republic designed to organize inter-ethnic dialogue;
- funds committed to the reconstruction/rehabilitation of the houses that were destroyed or damaged by fighting in the areas of Tetovo and Skopska Crna Gora.[21]

None of this will do anything to heal the socio-psychological wounds or increase tolerance and trust. It can be concluded that most of what we have called peace-inducing factors above will not be promoted by any of the international funds made conditionally available to the country.

5   Conclusion: Will There Be War in Macedonia?

5.1 Summarizing the Analytical Elements

In the previous chapter we outlined four possible scenarios, depending on the interplay of war and peace factors. Summarized these could be listed as follows:

A: Peaceful development/stability

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[21] See European Union, *The EU's Relations with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Brussels, [May 2001?], http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/see/fyrom/index.htm [accessed May 2002]

B: Dynamic equilibrium/unpredictable change
C: Negative equilibrium/stagnation
D:Violence and war/instability

In the next section we will attempt to assess the likelihood of any one of these scenarios prevailing: within the next few months; within one to two years; and in the longer perspective up to, say, the year 2008.

Any such attempt must be based not only on theories and concepts applied to the concrete situation and empirical evidence, but also on a close examination and evaluation of the likely balance between peace and war inducing factors, and the likely impact of immediate stumbling blocks. Inevitably this assessment has to make the best use of the personal intuition of the author and his accumulated knowledge, derived from field missions and general knowledge of the country over some ten years.

5.2 Three Answers for 2002 to 2008

1. June-September 2002
Between now and the elections in autumn, there is little risk of war, though one might define the situation as reflecting scenario C (stagnation). What to look for is whether the conflicts appear to deepen. All sides will prefer to wait and see: to what extent will the Ohrid Framework Agreement be implemented and to what extent will the new reality be accepted? All sides will have an interest in appearing seriously committed to it in front of the international community, which is likely to use economic assistance as a carrot and its possible withdrawal as a stick.

2: September 2002 to 2004
The prospect is uncertain, with either scenario D (war) or B (unpredictable change based on strong, dynamic equilibrium) quite possible. The outcome will depend on the extent to which peace factors are strengthened so as to make it unattractive, so to speak, for all to start a new war. The immediate stumbling blocks must be removed, which implies a changed attitude on the part of the international community in the direction of treating Macedonia as a respected partner, in a process in which the whole of multi-ethnic Macedonia feels it has a stake and something to gain. Crucially developments will also depend on whether the international community will remain more engaged elsewhere such as in Afghanistan, Iraq, or the wider Middle East, rather than in the Balkans.

3: 2004 to 2008
The character of this period will be dependent on developments in the midterm. It will not be possible to reach the highly desirable Scenario A, because there is little genuine support inside the country or internationally for the factors conducive to peace in general and reconciliation, forgiveness and tolerance in particular. If over the years, dissatisfaction mounts on both sides and the Framework Agreement implementation process stalls - the Albanians seeing too little and too slow implementation, the Macedonians seeing too much - then the risk of war increases.

5.3 A New War Would Mean the End of Macedonia?

It must be understood that the war and the Framework Agreement of 2001 should be regarded as a form of final call, which could function as a turning point in the direction of solidifying peace once and for all. For that to happen, constructive support from the outside will be

needed and peace-inducing factors supported and developed. The alternative outcome is that the war and the Agreement will lead to a new war.

If a new war breaks out in the middle or long term, it will have extremely serious consequences for Macedonia, for the entire region and for the international community. Due to the build-up of destructive energies over time, such a war is unlikely to be contained within the northern and northwestern parts of the country but would engulf the whole territory, Western Macedonia in particular.

Given a further internal split on the Macedonian side, there is an added risk of intra-Macedonian civil-war-like fighting. This combined with a Macedonian-Albanian military struggle is likely to cause an escalating trend towards dissolution of the Macedonian state. The more total the dissolution, the more likely that Albania, Kosovo, Bulgaria and perhaps Greece will throw their lot in with various parties or be drawn into the catastrophe.

It is difficult to see how a purely Albanian North-Western Macedonia and a purely Macedonian South-Eastern Macedonia could survive as independent states - or would be allowed to by the international community. A division would mean that hundreds of thousands of people would have to move, Albanians from East to West, Macedonians in the opposite direction. If this were to happen, the Vardar River would divide the two communities in Skopje, if it were at all possible for the capital to remain multi-ethnic. In addition to this population movement, it is also likely that tens of thousands of Albanian refugees would move into Albania and Kosovo, while Macedonians, without any readily available external refuge, are likely to remain internally displaced possibly for years until some kind of viable, political settlement could be implemented.

However, this bleak future is not inevitable. Nor is Macedonia's future decided only by Macedonians and Albanians inside Macedonia. To a larger extent than is usually recognized, Macedonia's fate is now in the hands of the international community, because of the degree to which it has interfered in Macedonia during the last decade. There may be Europeans and Americans who believe that the Ohrid Framework Agreement, sweetened by promises of (conditional) economic aid, will bring stability, security and peace to Macedonia. This report wants to sound a warning that this could turn out to be a dangerously misleading assumption. Therefore a responsible international community must change its own peace-making principles sooner rather than later and become pro-active. It must be ready to do its utmost to prevent violence, while simultaneously preparing itself to help the citizens of the war-torn country if violence prevention nevertheless fails.

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