Security in Southeastern Europe and the U.S.-Greek Relationship

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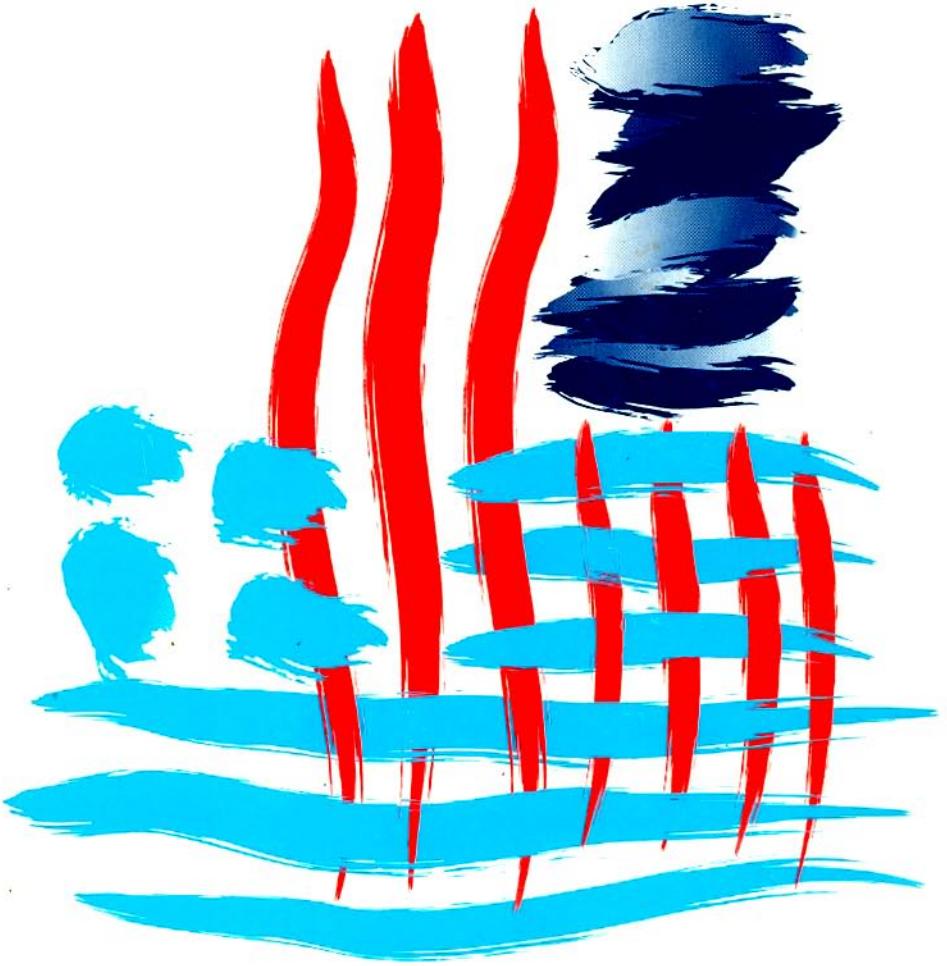

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on the other, of preventing the resurgence of the so-called Macedonian question that in the past had provoked tensions and wars. Greece's position was interpreted and exploited as a pro-Serbian tilt, which deprived us – it has to be said – of a measure of international support in our own differences with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. At any rate, Greece is trying to reach an accommodation with its new neighbor in the north, of which we will have more to say as we proceed.

Overall, it needs hardly to be repeated or stressed that Greece remains, as ever, fully and strongly committed to the inviolability and sanctity of the international borders in the Balkans. However, this has not always been the case with respect to Greece's northern neighbors. Consider the following acts:

- The annexation by Bulgaria, following the German invasion of April 1941, of the eastern part of Greek Macedonia and western Thrace.
- The Titoist proclamations of August 1944 setting forth as Yugoslav policy the intention of incorporating Greek (and Bulgarian) Macedonia into a "unified" Federative Republic, which was to be given the name "People's Socialist Republic of Macedonia."

As regards the Bulgarian occupation of Greek territories, it ended with allied victory. The peace arrangements that followed, the spirit of reconciliation that prevailed thereafter, and the subsequent efforts by President Karamanlis to rekindle Balkan cooperation, facilitated the establishment of friendly relations between Greece and Bulgaria.

The case of Yugoslavian policies on Macedonia proved to be a much more difficult problem. Tito's design was to create a South Slav Federation incorporating the Greek and Bulgarian provinces of Macedonia and reducing Bulgaria to the status of the seventh republic of the great federation. This design failed. Another effort by Belgrade to exploit for its own purposes the Greek civil war of 1947 by annexing Greek Macedonia failed as well. From that point on, Yugoslav policy adopted the tools of propaganda; usurpation and monopolization of the name, symbols, and the

cultural heritage of ancient Greek Macedonia; issuance of maps showing a Macedonia extending from Skopje south to Mount Olympus, and as far as Thessaloniki; the fabrication of irredentist and minority claims against Greece; and related techniques.

Indeed, the fact of the emergence of a new republic bordering Greece, and specifically its Macedonian provinces, was bound to create serious problems. A concerted effort was made by the European Union, the United States, and the parties concerned to find a solution that would address the question of a new name acceptable to both parties, the disavowal of territorial and minority claims, guarantees for common borders, and the elimination of ambiguities suggestive of irredentist aims in the constitution of the new republic. It was also understood that any viable solution would have to provide ways and means to build friendly, good-neighborly relations between Greece and the republic and enhance their economic cooperation in all sectors. Greece has all the willingness, once some irritants are removed, to assist in all possible ways the security and prosperity of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Let me add that this is how Greece approached the negotiations organized under the auspices of the United Nations and conducted under the guidance of Cyrus Vance and Lord David Owen (later Mr. Vance alone), which resulted in the draft agreement of May 14, 1993. It is regrettable that the agreement was not finalized; after more than a year the Interim Agreement was signed covering a number of important issues, but not the question of the new state's name. It is to be hoped that a comprehensive solution – including the matter of the name – will soon be found, so as to permit the two neighboring states to work together for stability, prosperity and security for themselves and the whole of the Balkan area.

Greeks and the Macedonian Question: Lessons for a Better Future ⊛ *Kalypso Nicolaïdis*

The so-called "Macedonian question" has plagued modern Greece since its inception.[1] I will concentrate here on the events that followed the declaration of independence of the Northern part of

Macedonia in 1991 – recognized internationally under the name of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) – and ask what lessons may be drawn from the Greek foreign policy response during the period 1991-1995.

Why look back on this phase of recent Greek external relations? Isn't this "beating a dead horse," as some would say? We all know the facts: With the break-up of Yugoslavia, the new republic proclaimed independence under the name "Macedonia." The Greek government immediately opposed the use of the name "Macedonia" for referring to what it called the "Republic of Skopje," arguing that this implied a claim to the Greek northern province of the same name. Under pressure from the international community, the "former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" agreed to enter the UN under this temporary name; but the two countries were unable to agree on any compromise, leading to the implementation of a Greek embargo in 1994. The agreement signed between the two countries in the fall of 1995 has resolved other contentious issues related to FYROM's flag and constitution. The agreement signaled a partial return to normality; moreover, an increasing number of Greek policymakers have come to look back more critically at recent foreign policy.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to reflect on what happened for at least three reasons. First, a retrospective assessment is necessary for the sake of future policy. Not all issues have been resolved between the two countries, and even when all specific disputes have been settled, a sound diagnosis about the recent past will help find better approaches in the near future. Moreover, lessons from the Macedonian case may be transferable to other areas.

Second, the Macedonian question is a typical instance of the gap between promise and performance that can be said to characterize Greek economic and political achievements to a greater extent than is the case in many other countries.[2] We need to understand the reasons for such a gap if Greece is to enter the twenty-first century as a prosperous and peaceful nation. Relations with its other northern neighbors, Bulgaria, Romania and even Albania are actually rather promising; and while Greece has not played a visibly positive role

with regards to the Bosnian war, there was not much that it could do in the first place. But on the Macedonian question, there is indeed a gap. On the promise side, Greece was, with the end of the Cold War, the only country in the region that belonged to the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance, the Western European Union, and the European Union. Thus, it was the only possible solid bridge to the West for the fledgling republic of FYROM. Moreover, Greece was the only country in the region not to hold any territorial claims on this republic and could thus capitalize on this initial creditability. Yet, despite this promising basis for its relations with FYROM, Greece's actual performance was disappointing to say the least. It is certainly the case that blame should not fall on Greece alone. The West's lack of sufficient engagement with the issue, combined with FYROM's unyielding stance, did not help (to be sure, Greeks were not necessarily consistent, criticizing their allies as well for engaging with FYROM authorities). But I want to argue here that, even given these other factors, Greece could have acted differently. Instead, Greek government policies helped increase instability in FYROM, provided incentives for its turn to Turkey, and, more generally, seemed to signal to the rest of the world that Greece could not be trusted as a diplomatic ambassador for the rest of Europe.

A third related reason for revisiting the Macedonian question stems from the recognition that Greece still has a long way to go to restore its lost credibility on the international scene. Greeks who travel or live abroad have experienced and continue to experience the damage that the Greek government's handling of the Macedonian question, and the concurrent nationalist mobilization of the Greek body politic, has done to their country's image. Greek feelings and passion regarding FYROM were simply and absolutely not understood by the rest of the world. Even when reluctantly supported at the official level, Greek diplomats were often condemned in private as irresponsible. Speeches by Greek representatives on Macedonia in EU or UN councils were perceived as propaganda, not as an appeal for serious debate. And now, if the prospect of Greece's leaving the European Union does not raise resistance in some quarters, it is in part because Greece

is considered as a country that "does not play by the rules of the game" when it comes to FYROM or (for that matter) any other issue. Greeks, while often rightly feeling that the world has not done justice to their view, cannot afford to stand proud and alone. For years past and for years to come, speeches will be given, arguments exchanged, and diplomatic history written on the Macedonian question. The residue of the Greek policy vis à vis FYROM is going to stay with us for a while, and it is crucial that we deal sensibly with this recent historical heritage.

To what extent and why was the Greek government's policy vis à vis FYROM between 1991 and 1995 misguided? And could it have been different? This is a debate that needs to be had openly in Greece. I will provide only a few elements for addressing these questions along two lines, namely rhetoric and policy.

First, rhetoric. Greece did not convey a clear and effective message to the rest of the world regarding the deep causes of its attitude and policies towards FYROM. Little wonder it was not understood. For one, spokesmen for Greece usually used the wrong historical reference; the reference to Alexander the Great as proof of Hellenistic antecedent claims over the region more often than not backfired against Greece. At best Alexander the Great is considered a universal heritage, and many in the West considered that modern Greece was unduly appropriating him and invoking his name. More generally, outside observers react negatively to attempts to bolster a cause through reference to antiquity. Such attempts seem to mean that advocates cannot find good enough arguments for their cause in modern history. Moreover – as with the case of Palestinians and Israelis – references to a quasi-mythological past invite rebuttals that may seem ludicrous to one side but have become the "truth" of the other side. Others build their historical myths, too, and outsiders may give equal weight to myths or "histories" from both sides. In this case, the Greek side's focus on Alexander inevitably invited rebuttals on the FYROM side questioning whether and to what extent Alexander the Great was Greek, or at least whether the people living under him were. To Greeks who know that Philip brought

Hellenic culture to the rest of the Balkans, and Alexander spread this influence to India, the fact that Macedon and Greece were separate entities under the House of Philip is merely an epiphenomenon.[3] But the citizens of FYROM use this as the basis for their own story about their collective identity.[4] In short, collective myths about our past may seem powerful and sacred to us but do not necessarily hold the same force for "objective" outsiders. They are not usually our best card.

The historical referents that Greece could have used much more effectively belong to the twentieth century, but they are themselves too contested in Greece proper to provide grounds for a simple and coherent discourse directed at the outside. First, the rest of the world too often ignores the tragedy that the "Great Catastrophe" of 1921-1923 represented for Greece (wherever the blame may lie). The rest of the world ignores all the more that the northern Greek province of Macedonia – the part of Macedonia integrated to Greece in 1912 – was the main area of settlement for the close to one million Greeks fleeing from Asia Minor following the creation of modern Turkey. Thus, Greek "Macedonia" became a new homeland for large displaced Greek minorities – including also Greek refugees from the Bulgarian and Yugoslavian parts of the region in the inter-war period – and eventually one of the most prosperous provinces of Greece. It took a long time, however, for these Greeks from Asia Minor (like the author's grandparents) to be integrated locally; the Greek province of Macedonia was seen as part of the "periphery" until the 1980s, with most of the Greek political elite coming from the Athenian center (notwithstanding the one notable exception of Karamanlis). There was therefore some autonomous basis for Greek Macedonians to form a strong regional as well as national identity, to compensate either for their status as exiles or for their semi-exclusion from the mainstream of the country.

But I would argue that it is more accurate to see the "Macedonianization" of the refugees as a carefully orchestrated enterprise of the Greek state with the acquiescence of the refugees themselves. Pontians, Karamanlides, Asia Minors, Vlachs and others

were turned into "Macedonians" who had lived in the province for 3,000 years in order to become "true" Greeks. The deal was good for both sides. For the refugees, the crafting of a regional identity served as a basis for a Greek identity. Ultimately they wanted to build a unified and centralized national society against the particularisms of local minorities, be it Jews, Slav-Macedonians, or Turks, or even the proud regional identities of the Peloponnesians and the islanders. For the centralizing Greek state, this was a means for the incorporation of the "alien" refugees into the national body without immediate political co-optation.[5] Outside observers sometimes feel that non-Macedonian Greeks often "discovered" Macedonia when it became contested, and while they may not always be wrong, they should be rendered sensitive to the peculiar history, fears, and feelings of Greek Macedonians. Western Europeans well understand such issues of regional sensitivities, and the delicate relationship between nation-building and the need to incorporate influxes of population. Greek spokesmen need to give the argument more of a chance.

The other core historical referent that justifies Greek sensitivities over Macedonia is of course the civil war (1943–1949). This is not the place to discuss the many and complex arguments as to the roots and consequence of this war. Suffice to say that at one level, the civil war was fought on an ideological plane between Greek communists (KKE) and non-communists, and deeply divided Greek society for the decades to come. At a deeper level, it can be seen as an "ethnic" battle in Macedonia, where the Slav-Macedonians provided two-thirds of the Democratic Army's recruits. The latter lost and migrated to Yugoslavia or the rest of the Balkans. It is a fact that Tito supported the creation of a federal state of Macedonia within the framework of Yugoslavia, that would unify "Macedonians under Bulgaria and Greece" and by the same token give Yugoslavia an access to the sea. It is also a fact that the Greek communist party, the KKE, had held the line of a 'united Macedonia' until the mid-1930s; indeed, some of the leadership on the communist side had allied themselves with Tito during the war in calling for an independent Macedonia

within a Balkan federation. This made them appear even within their own ranks as national traitors.[6] It is therefore not hard to empathize with the claim from Greek politicians and diplomats that there are historical grounds for fearing Macedonian irredentism. But if outsiders can be brought to understand how civil-war memories may fuel Greek sensitivities, it is not likely they will also see how the argument justifies fears of actual expansion on the part of FYROM today.

This leads to a second observation. The Greek message to the world not only did not use history in an effective manner, it also highlighted the wrong threat. Greece argued that FYROM represented a security threat. The strength of irredentist sentiments in FYROM, and their ability to permeate the government, made FYROM dangerous for Greece as long as such irredentism was not curtailed.[7] It is true that Greece's neighbors have a tendency to become its enemies. It is also true that Macedonians from FYROM sing songs referring to "our great Macedonia from Ochrid to Salonika." But I have never met anyone not bearing a Greek name who perceived a credible threat from a weak underdeveloped country with 10 percent of Greece's GNP, from a country only beginning its process of nation-building, from a country plagued by deep internal divisions. Even Greeks ultimately admit among themselves that the threat is not going to be valid within the next twenty years. And whether they believed in their own argument or not, Greeks should have understood early that the security argument was just not credible abroad. Instead of positing a security threat, Greece should have emphasized – and should continue to emphasize – that FYROM's unilateral insistence on the name "Macedonia" and on appropriating other Macedonian symbols was a threat to a principle that in turn could bolster stability in the region, namely the sharing of identities and inclusion across borders.

The message that the world needs to hear is this. Macedonia is a shared space and a shared identity. Historically, "Macedonia" has never been identified exclusively with a specific national entity. This region has been shared for centuries and will continue to

be. To be sure, the ancient Macedonians under Philip and Alexander were part of the Greek world. Since the sixth century, however, Slavs, Greeks, as well as other peoples have lived and "created" together in this space, individually and collectively. Up to the early fifteenth century each dominant group successively appropriated a large share of this area, which came to represent the heart of their respective cultural and political heritage. This region was on and off part of the Eastern Roman Empire, Byzantium, which by the turn of the millennium flourished under the Macedonian dynasty – technically, Basil the First was from Didimoriho in present-day Thrace, which was outside what was then Macedonia. Later, sometimes under the shield of Byzantium, sometimes in open conflict with it, Serbs and Bulgarians successively controlled parts of this region (Skopje and Ochrid were each the capitals of their respective kingdom). These people shared common cultural and religious traditions, as well as a common fate under five centuries of Ottoman occupation.

Macedonia played an important role in the modern history of Greece long before its southern part became part of the Kingdom of Greece. By the end of the nineteenth century, Macedonia had become a space for open rivalries between nascent national forces. When the independent Bulgarian Exarchate was established in 1871 in order to balance the influence of the Greek-controlled Patriarchate in Istanbul, a struggle for the loyalty of the local Macedonian population erupted between Greek and Bulgarian religious leaders. Under the cover of religious affiliation, what was at stake was determining the national label of these Macedonian people. The struggle continued with the creation of the great San Stephano Bulgaria of 1878 and the Macedonian Struggle of 1904-1908 between Greek and Bulgarian irregulars in the Ottoman province of Macedonia.

Interpretation of the period that followed World War I is highly contested among historians, and this is not the place to engage in this debate. The bare facts unequivocally tell the story of the partition of the region. After the Balkan war, Macedonia was divided along today's borders between Bulgaria, Greece and

Serbia. Separation along national lines was further emphasized by extensive population movements. At the same time, some nationalist groups operating in the Yugoslav part of Macedonia sought total autonomy, while others sought to put themselves under the protection of Bulgaria.[8] Others looked to Albania. Unfortunately, Macedonia was to become once again a part of another struggle – this time between communism and capitalism. Stalin inspired local communist parties to fight for the creation of an "independent Macedonian state" as part of the ambition to form a Balkan Communist Federation. Nazi Germany recycled these plans, offering Greek Macedonia to both Yugoslavia and Bulgaria in exchange for its support.

The end of World War II did not spell the end of the communist project for a "greater Macedonia." Tito, confined within the borders of Yugoslavia, made "Macedonia" the sixth republic of the Yugoslav state. He encouraged the strengthening of a Macedonian identity that was to draw on all historical developments in the broader region, encompassing references to Alexander the Great and the Byzantine Empire, or the Bulgarian kingdom, and even systematically attempting to distance the Slavic dialect spoken in this Republic from its Bulgarian origin. To be sure, Macedonians did not need Tito to have a sense of national identity that started to express itself politically in the nineteenth century. But his policies further undermined the potential sense that Macedonia ought to be seen as a shared region with a complex history and multiple converging cultural, religious, and indeed national influences.

In short, both Greek and Slav Macedonians need to learn to read history through the other's eyes and explain to the world that they can share the historical identity of Macedonia peacefully. The inhabitants of FYROM cannot pretend that they and the Slav minorities in neighboring countries are the only ones to have a claim on Macedonia's history. But Greece cannot both criticize FYROM for this and play the same game. When tourists arrived in Greece through Thessaloniki airport between 1993 and 1995 and saw official signs with "Macedonia is Greek," the con-

notation was certainly not inclusive. Macedonia is not only Greek. By the same token, the official denial since the 1950s of the existence of a Slav Macedonian minority (or group) in Greece and the publicized official refusal to grant it some basic rights (like that of non-discrimination in public employment on the basis of mother tongue) has not bolstered Greece's case abroad. A majority of citizens in Greece, like France, support assimilationist goals. This is fair enough, although one may espouse more multiculturalist approaches to national identity. But denying the existence of Slav Macedonians in northern Greece, even if the group is small (47,000 Slavophones according to the official 1951 census) and well assimilated (most nationalist Slav Macedonians from Greece are those who have emigrated) is not justified. It amounts to denying again the rich history of the region and the blend and mix of populations and memories that it represents. In short, to see Macedonia as a shared region is clearly a challenge for Greece, and presupposes a redefinition of the whole Greek nation-building project.

Finally, Greece's message is not heard because it is all too often expressed in terms of rights and not enough in terms of interests.[7] Other countries and other people more easily relate and understand arguments that relate to interests, including self-identity, and may be ready to seek out options to help meet these interests. Speaking in terms of rights "we have a right to contest the use of the name Macedonia" – is counterproductive. There is always a counterclaim based on an opposing right; "a nation has the right to determine its own name." Better to explain why Greece sees its interests threatened. And this is also the kind of discourse that would prepare Greek public opinion for the give and take of international politics. How could Greeks be convinced to accept compromise over a "right," which is by definition absolute?

It is time for Greeks to speak a language that the rest of the world understands.

The second aspect of Greece's handling of the Macedonian question that I want to touch on is that of action, more specifically the policy of isolation and ultimately embargo adopted by

successive Greek governments. To be sure, the embargo was lifted in 1995; but Greece's policy has not entirely turned from isolation to engagement. Moreover, the miscalculations that led to such a policy could easily be repeated in other realms, so it is useful to draw some lessons here.

The policy of isolation was based on two miscalculations. The first miscalculation on the part of Greece was to think that this action would serve to signal both its determination and its desperation to its European and American allies, and moreover that the potency of this signal would be strong enough to compensate for the loss of political capital that it would unavoidably entail. Clearly, the idea was not intrinsically flawed. An embargo hurts the countries implementing it. And such willingness to bear costs can serve as a credible signal that there is a lot at stake in a party's position. It must be said that Greece's allies took it seriously enough to refuse to recognize FYROM under any other name. But, overall, the signal supposed to be sent by the Greek embargo was simply lost in the noise. And the noise was the general sense that the embargo was wrong, a case of overkill that destroyed Greece's credibility. The rest of the world, especially Greece's European allies, could not understand Greece's decision to resort to coercion rather than persuasion vis à vis such a powerless country; and the Europeans could not forgive Greece for "going it alone" at a time when they were desperately trying to establish the basis – or the semblance of a basis – of a common foreign and security policy. The politics of veto and unilateralism were simply anathema in these early years of the post-Cold War era, especially on the part of a small country like Greece.

In this regard, it is important that Greeks not misinterpret the European Court of Justice's ruling in 1995 on the issue of the FYROM embargo. The ECJ did not rule that it could not condemn the Greek embargo on substantive grounds. Rather, the ruling was about the court's jurisdiction. The court has been criticized often enough for infringing on member states' sovereignty. An embargo is a touchy issue, in that it is at the intersection of trade (over which the court has undisputed jurisdiction) and security (over which it has no jurisdiction, even under the revised Maastricht Treaty). The ECJ did not

want to risk being accused of ruling over security in the name of addressing trade. The ruling neither condemns not condones the Greek embargo. It was a small success for Greece that at least the court recognized that this was a security matter simply because it was considered by Greece to be one. But the court was not in a position to judge whether such a security claim was justified. What remains is that disagreement within the EU over the legality of the embargo was a political issue, not a legal issue, and that at a political level Greece only succeeded in isolating itself.

The second miscalculation underlying Greece's policy vis à vis FYROM was that a containment strategy would have had a higher probability of yielding the desired outcome than an engagement strategy. In theory, such a calculation may be justified when a country sees a neighbor building an alliance against it with presumed aggressive purposes, and/or when it assesses that the regional balance of power is shifting against it. These conditions were not met in the case of FYROM. If anything, as stated above, mainstream political forces within FYROM had an interest in forging an alliance with Greece, its only neighbor with neither territorial claims nor demands for the protection of a kin minority. In 1992-93 the overriding threat to FYROM's security was the threat from the north, with Serbian politicians declaring very openly that FYROM ought to be part of a greater Serbia (although ultimately the DNA, the Yugoslav army, withdrew peacefully). As a matter of fact, and except for the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO) party, FYROM's three other main parties expressed early on their desire for good relations with their Greek neighbor. Even if such declarations may appear as disingenuous in light of FYROM's own policies, Greek leaders could have taken their counterparts at their word. Assessing the regional balance of power did not justify containing FYROM, but rather suggested the wisdom of engaging it in a stabilizing alliance.

Strategically, containment could also have been justified if it could have had a favorable impact on the domestic balance of power within FYROM – that is, if containment might actually have strengthened those in the government advocating com-

promise, or groups within the country more favorable to Greece. It can be argued that if Greece had indeed chosen to promote the vision of Macedonia as a shared space, it would have been in its interest to strengthen the position of the Albanian minority, which had been the most favorable to a compromise name for their country given its own resistance to the potential hegemony of Slav Macedonians. Names such as Vardar Macedonia or the Central Balkan Republic may have better reflected their own vision of a pluralistic and ethnically tolerant Republic. While insisting on a place at the table for FYROM's Albanians can appear inconsistent with Greek grievances about Albanian policy regarding Kosovo and northern Epirus, it would have in fact showed consistency in the Greek approach to "rules of the game" in the region: Greeks in Albania ought to be recognized in the same way Greece is willing to recognize Albanians in FYROM.

In practice, the Greek embargo and the broader policy of isolation actually influenced the internal balance of power in FYROM against Greek interests. It reinforced nationalist forces by fostering a siege mentality; it weakened the Albanian minority by increasing the scarcity of resources to be distributed between groups; and it weakened the moderate forces in the FYROM government who, as the founders of the new nation, could not be seen as advocating concessions under the threat, or use, of coercive tactics.

After intense negotiations, some concessions have been made by both sides: FYROM has changed its flag and reinterpreted its constitution, and Greece has lifted the embargo. But Greece has diverted too much of its energy to this single foreign policy issue, lost considerable political capital among its allies, and squandered much goodwill on the part of the inhabitants of FYROM who have been known to be friends of Greece and Greek beaches. We are left with a historical heritage that needs to be managed above and beyond a change of policy in Greece. The impact of past policies is still with us, and we must continue to reflect on the lessons to be drawn in order for Greece to play a constructive role in the region.

Finally, the issue of FYROM's official name has still not been resolved. Macedonian Yugoslavs understandably think of themselves as "Macedonians" *tout court* and thus seek international recognition under that name. It should have come as no surprise that Greeks would react strongly against such an attempt to "monopolize" the Macedonian identity. What should Macedonian Greeks reply when asked about their regional origins? With a "Macedonia" as neighbor, they cannot simply answer: Macedonia. Nevertheless, Greeks need to reckon with the facts. FYROM has already become de facto "Macedonia" in the international press. It may very well remain so.

Should Greece still hold firm on the issue? Under certain conditions. It must first unambiguously support FYROM's efforts to achieve full-fledged statehood and bring together the country's own multi-ethnic population. It must show its willingness to implement confidence-building measures with its neighbor and help deal constructively with instability in the Balkans. It must help make up for the economic losses it has imposed with the embargo through greater trade as well as exchange of people and experts. Under such conditions, it remains legitimate for Greece to argue that the new nation-state can only claim "part" of a larger, much older and, above all, more diverse Macedonian identity.

At the beginning of this dispute, I argued with others that Greece ought to promote from the start a compromise such as "Nova Macedonia" or maybe better, "Nova Makedonija."[10] "Nova", "new" in Slavic, would have alleviated Greek sensitivities about appropriation of Greek legacy and territory. "Makedonija" would acknowledge the right of the "new Macedonijans" to proclaim their Macedonian identity, while distinguishing – through the Slavic spelling – their identity from that of the Greeks. Such a compromise would have satisfied the legitimate interests of both parties, namely achieving statehood for the new republic, and alleviating symbolic concerns for Greece. One such compromise was actually proposed by Greece at a late stage of the negotiations and might have been accepted if proposed at the beginning. But it looks as though, on this issue, that time is on the side of FYROM. If it is already too late, Greece will only have itself to blame. Ultimately, however, we cannot forget that peace and prosperity in the Balkans is about more than names and symbols. Greeks must resist the temptation of sustaining their collective identity in exclusionary terms. In the Balkans, perhaps more than elsewhere, this is the condition for long-term co-existence.

Endnotes

1 I would like to thank Dimitris Keridis for his feedback.

2 See Allison and Nicolaïdis (eds.), *Greek Paradox: Promise Versus Performance*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996).

3 For an exposition of the Greek viewpoint, see Nicolaos K. Martis, *The Falsification of Macedonian History-Ancient Jewish Sources and Testimony on Macedonia*, (Athens, Greece: Euroekdotiki, 1984).

4 On this and other historical background on Macedonia as analyzed outside Greece, see for instance Hugh Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?*, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995).

5 I am grateful to Dimitris Keridis for pointing this out.

6 See E. Kofos, *The Impact of the Macedonian Question on Civil Conflict in Greece, 1943-49*, (Athens, Greece: Hellenic Foundation for Defense and Foreign Policy, OP 3, 1989).

7 Evidence of irredentism in FYROM has been thoroughly highlighted in Greece. For instance, Thessaloniki -the second biggest Greek city- is seen as the unliberated capital of "Great Macedonia," by FYROM nationalists who have used the white tower symbolizing the city as trademark. But there is no evidence of official use of the white tower, contrary to a belief widespread in Greece. To be sure, FYROM's government itself did endorse such a vision choosing for a flag the Virgina star -sun of Philip II , which the Greeks interpreted as a sign of coveting Greek land (the tomb of Philip was found near Thessaloniki). It is certainly true that through these actions, the government at least implicitly endorsed some of the views of an opposition nationalist group like VMRO; it argued that these were symbolic, not strategic acts.

8 See Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians*, pp. 34-32, 102-114, 148-162.

9 See Loukas Tsoukalis in *The Greek Paradox*, pp. 161-174.

10 The latter suggestion was made to me by Dimitrios Ioannidis.