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On the Razor's Edge: Macedonia Ten Years after Independence²

Introduction

The emergence of an armed insurgency movement in Macedonia, over the last few months, has demonstrated once more that the Balkans remains a conflict-prone region, and that Macedonia continues to be in a vulnerable position. After escaping the fate of its more unfortunate neighbours for nearly ten years and being hailed as the only former Yugoslav republic to secede without bloodshed, Macedonia now finds itself at the abyss of war. Once an example for the relative success of preventive diplomacy initiated on the part of a number of indigenous and international actors, Macedonia is quickly becoming an example of failure to act preventively.

Although Macedonia's peaceful secession from Yugoslavia has often been viewed as incidental, some international and domestic efforts were devoted to preventing the outbreak of ethnic war in the early years of independence. For years, Macedonia's multi-ethnic governments pursued a policy of accommodation and power-sharing, if only on a limited basis, gradually expanding the rights of all its ethnic minorities, not only those of Macedonian Albanians. The Working Group on Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY) led negotiations between ethnic Albanians and the Macedonian government on the expansion of minority rights. The United Nations deployed preventive peacekeepers (United Nations Preventive Deployment Force, UNPREDEP) to Macedonia's borders with Serbia and Albania, the first and only preventive mission in the history of that organization. Its mandate was to prevent a spillover of the wars raging in the other former Yugoslav republics. The OSCE monitored progress towards safeguarding ethnic and other human rights through its Mission in Macedonia's capital Skopje and the intermediary efforts of the

1 The author wishes to thank the following individuals for their helpful comments and materials: Ambassador Geert-Hinrich Ahrens, Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania; Lynn Carter, Management Systems International; Farimah Daftary, European Centre for Minority Issues, Germany; Lidija Georgieva, University of Skopje; Ted R. Gurr, University of Maryland; Janie Leatherman, Illinois State University; Lyubov Mincheva, IRIS, Bulgaria; Harald Schenker, Media Advisor of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje; Stefan Troebst, University of Leipzig.

2 The text of this article was finalized on 25 August 2001 and does not reflect developments over the last few months, including the dismantling of the UCK/NLA and the settlement of the crisis. An updated account of developments in Macedonia after August 2001 can be found in: Alice Ackermann, Macedonia in a Post-Peace Agreement Environment: A Role for Conflict Prevention and Reconciliation, in: *International Spectator* May/June 2002 (forthcoming).

OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Many non-governmental organizations were also engaged in long-term conflict management programmes, directed towards building a sustainable peace on the societal level, promoting ethnic tolerance and more unbiased and multi-ethnic media reporting. But most important in the prevention equation was the political will of the country's leadership, including the Macedonian Albanians, not to go down the path of Croatia or Bosnia by choosing a moderate approach to managing minority relations.³

For Macedonia, therefore, the current crisis is a tragic development that is likely to set the country back in terms of economic growth, inter-ethnic co-existence, and long-aspired membership in European institutions, particularly the EU and NATO. Since its independence in 1991, Macedonia had made significant progress towards democratization, economic transition, the guaranteeing and protection of minority rights, and the establishment of peaceful relations with neighbouring countries. Much of this came as the result of a moderate leadership and the support of regional and international organizations, in particular the ICFY Working Group, the United Nations, the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe, to name a few. Although the country has remained ethnically divided, with fragile political institutions, a fledgling economy, a segmented civil society, and still existing grievances on the part of its ethnic Albanian population, for ten years Macedonia managed to survive in a region plagued by war, ethnic violence and instability. In fact, Macedonia was considered to be successful enough that prior to the outbreak of armed confrontations in early 2001, most recent studies predicted that the risk of instability seemed less than it had been in the first few years following independence. The country's leadership had also developed a peace-building capacity adequate enough to manage existing ethnic tensions through the political process.⁴ For most experts on the region, the formation of an insurgency movement, therefore, came with little warning and few would have predicted the likelihood of militant mobilization ten years after independence.

3 See for example, Alice Ackermann, *Making Peace Prevail: Preventing Violent Conflict in Macedonia*, Syracuse/New York 2000; Alice Ackermann, *The Republic of Macedonia and the OSCE - Preventive Diplomacy in Practice*, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (Ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 1997*, Baden-Baden 1998, pp. 69-75; Abiodun Williams, *Preventing War: The United Nations and Macedonia*, Lanham/Maryland 2000.

4 See for example, Heinz Willemsen/Stefan Troebst, *Transformationskurs gehalten: Zehn Jahre Republik Makedonien [Sustained Transformation: Ten Years of the Republic of Macedonia]*, in: *Osteuropa* 3/2001, pp. 299-315; Lynn Carter/Alice Ackermann/Goran Janev, *An Assessment of Ethnic Relations in Macedonia*, unpublished USAID/Macedonia Report, Washington, D.C., 2000. Ted Gurr, in his ongoing project on "Minorities at Risk" tracked 275 ethnic groups and did not find Macedonia to be at high risk of ethnic violence. Cf. Ted R. Gurr, *Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century*, Washington, D.C., 2000. See also a more recent study, Ted Robert Gurr/Monty G. Marshall/Deepa Khosla, *Peace and Conflict 2001: A Global Survey of Armed Conflicts, Self-Determination Movements, and Democracy*, College Park/Maryland 2001.

How can one therefore explain Macedonia's teetering on the brink of war since February 2001 after years of concerted efforts to prevent violent ethnic conflict? What explains the sudden emergence of an armed insurgency movement in late January 2001 that, came summer, had mustered enough recruits and firing power to threaten the country with an all-out ethnic war? What has been done so far to manage the crisis and what possibilities exist to even now find a political solution to end the conflict? To answer these questions, this article explores the causes of the current crisis, looking at four different explanations that may explain its outbreak - unresolved grievances, groups contending for power, the spoiler effect and the spillover of militant ethnic Albanian nationalism. Thereafter, domestic and international responses will be analysed, with particular reference to the efforts of the OSCE. In conclusion, several policy recommendations, which focus on the implementation of a long-term preventive approach for Macedonia and the region, are suggested.

The Origins of the National Liberation Army (UCK/NLA)⁵ and Possible Causes for Its Emergence

It is difficult to determine the exact date and the causes for the emergence of an armed insurgency movement in Macedonia. While it is speculated that the National Liberation Army was already in existence in the autumn of 1999, and that it certainly existed in the year 2000,⁶ it did not take responsibility publicly for any violent acts until late January 2001, following a grenade attack on a police station in Tearce. In a communiqué sent to the Macedonian daily newspaper *Dnevnik* dated 23 January, the UCK/NLA stated their objective in rather vague terms - the liberation of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia.⁷ In subsequent communiqués and interviews since March, the UCK/NLA emphasized that their armed struggle was aimed at constitutional rights and equality for Macedonia's ethnic Albanian population, rather than the territorial disintegration of Macedonia. Their demands included the following: con-

5 In the Albanian language, the National Liberation Army translates as *Ushtria Clirimtare Kombetare*, UCK, thus incidentally giving it the same acronym as the Kosovo Liberation Army, which in Albanian is *Ushtria Clirimtare e Kosoves*, UCK. Therefore, in this article the acronyms "UCK/NLA" (National Liberation Army in Macedonia) and/or UCK/KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army) are used.

6 See for example: Stefan Troebst, Groß-Kosovo oder unabhängiges Kosovo? [Greater Kosovo or Independent Kosovo?], in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung of 19 June 2001, p. 10; International Crisis Group, The Macedonian Question: Reform or Rebellion, in: ICG Balkans Report 109/2001; Mirka Velinovska, New Paramilitary Army is Ready in Macedonia, in: Start, 2 June 2000 (also available at: www.balkanpeace.org); Greek Politician Says KLA Trying to Destabilize Macedonia, in: Intelligence Digest 97/2000, 16-29 June 2000 (also available at: www.balkanpeace.org); Macedonian media reports in April stated that Defence Minister Ljuben Panunovski had accused Interior Minister Dosta Dimovska that she knew of an Albanian insurgency movement as early as August 2000. Cf. Macedonia Divided, in: RFE/RL Balkan Report 33/2001, 4 May 2001.

7 Cf. ICG Balkans Report 109, cited above (Note 6), p. 3.

stitutional nation status for ethnic Albanians, Albanian as a second official language and equal employment opportunities for ethnic Albanians.⁸ They have justified violence on the grounds that there has not been any progress in advancing ethnic Albanian rights through the political process over the last ten years.⁹

Little is known about the origin, command structure and size of the UCK/NLA. It is believed that the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK/KLA) was responsible for the creation of two splinter groups, the now "defunct" Liberation Army of Preševo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (*Ushtria Clirimtare e Preshevas, Medvegjas e Bujanovcit*, UCPMB) based in Southern Serbia, and the UCK/NLA.¹⁰ The UCK/NLA allegedly consists of an odd mixture of "fighters" - veterans involved in the 1981 Kosovo revolt; UCK/KLA veterans, who for the most part, were left out of politics in the new Kosovo; "demobilized" UCPMB fighters, who slipped into Kosovo from Southern Serbia; and Albanians from Macedonia. Moreover, it is believed that the Albanian mafia is financing the UCK/NLA, as they previously financed the UCK/KLA.¹¹ Additional funding comes from international donations that are diverted to the so-called "National Liberation Fund",¹² and there have been reported cases of extortion on behalf of the UCK/NLA.¹³

While the UCK/NLA's troop strength is said to be around 1,100 men,¹⁴ this figure might be much higher given that the UCK/NLA can recruit among ethnic Albanians in Macedonia, Kosovo and other parts of the former Yugoslavia as well as in the diaspora. There have also been reports of forced recruitment, and the UCK/NLA has been successful in attracting unemployed ethnic Albanian youths, particularly from Macedonia. The UCK/NLA's lead-

8 Cf. Changes for Macedonia's Constitution?, in: RFE/RL Balkan Report, 28/2001, 17 April 2001; also Paul Wood, Eyewitness: Inside the NLA, BBC News, 20 March 2001, at: news.bbc.co; UCK Sprecher Ahmeti: Wir erkennen die mazedonische Grenze an und wollen keine Trennung [UCK/NLA Spokesperson Ahmeti: We recognize the Macedonian border and do not want a division], in: Deutsche Welle, 7 April 2001, at: www.dwelle.de/MON.

9 For a summary of UCK/NLA communiqués and statements, see: Alice Ackermann, On the Razor's Edge: Is There Still a Place and Time for Long-term Conflict Prevention in Macedonia? Paper presented at the Annual International Conference of the Centre for South East European Studies (CSEES), University of London, 14-16 June 2001.

10 Cf. ICG Balkan Report 109, cited above (Note 6); Lyubov Mincheva, Risk Assessment, unpublished paper for the Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland, College Park 2001; Farimah Daftary, Testing Macedonia, in: ECMI Brief 4/2001, p. 2; see also the informative report by Stefan Troebst, cited above (Note 6).

11 OSCE sources, telephone interviews, 25 and 27 July 2001.

12 Reported in Philip O' Neil, NLA Set for Long Haul, in: IWPR Balkan Crisis Report 235/2001 of 5 April 2001.

13 According to a Reuters source, for example, on 31 July 2001, KFOR troops arrested three men in Prizren who were accused of extorting money to support the UCK/NLA. Cf. KFOR, Albania Continue Crackdown on Supplies to UCK, in: RFE/RL Newsline 143/2001, Part II, 31 July 2001.

14 A profile of the UCK/NLA was published in a Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung article on 14 July 2001. For a summary, see: Macedonian Rebels: 1,100 "Troublemakers", in: RFE/RL Newsline, 132/2001, Part II, 16 July 2001.

er is forty-two year old Ali Ahmeti who comes from Zajas, a village near Kičevo, and who is believed to have been responsible for UCK/KLA logistics during 1998 and 1999, also participating in gunrunning operations.¹⁵ The UCK/NLA is said to be organized in brigades, which are located in the areas surrounding Kumanovo, Tetovo, Gostivar and Debar. UCK/NLA arms supplies come mostly from Kosovo as well as Albania, Bulgaria and Montenegro.¹⁶ More recently, KFOR troops have been successful in blocking supply lines from Kosovo, and Albania has also stepped up its border controls.¹⁷ The UCK/NLA in Macedonia not only has the same Albanian acronym as the UCK/KLA in Kosovo, the UCK/NLA's connection to the UCK/KLA is also clear in that it has adopted tactics similar to those used by the UCK/KLA and the UCPMB, not only as to the combat techniques it uses, but also in its attempts to become a political force and gain international recognition. Since the Tearce attack in late January 2001, the UCK/NLA has repeatedly launched a series of major offensives from areas surrounding the cities of Tetovo and Kumanovo. On 25 March, the Macedonian government began a massive bombardment of UCK/NLA-held positions, after having issued an ultimatum to the NLA on 21 March to lay down their weapons within twenty-four hours. The offensive ended on 29 March with a governmental statement that the UCK/NLA had retreated into Kosovo. Although in late March and early April, it appeared that the fighting was over the pattern of on-again, off-again clashes quickly resumed throughout April and May. The crisis came to a head in June when the UCK/NLA moved into the vicinity of Skopje, seizing the village of Aracinovo, from which the Macedonian army was unable to dislodge them. It was only through an EU-brokered cease-fire that serious bloodshed was avoided. It allowed the 500 UCK/NLA fighters to withdraw, albeit with their weapons, under NATO escort to a KFOR base near Kumanovo.¹⁸ The negotiated withdrawal, however, led to massive public outrage and on 25 June, 5,000 protesters attacked the parliament building, chanting anti-Albanian and anti-Western slogans, demanding the resignation of President Boris Trajkovski, and insisting that the government continue to

15 Cf. Jonathan Steele, Macedonia Rejects Rebel Cease-fire Offer, in: *The Guardian* of 22 March 2001, at: www.guardian.co.uk/macedonia/story/. The newspaper also noted that the UCK/NLA has claimed that sixty per cent of its fighters are from Macedonia. On Ahmeti and the UCK/NLA, see also: Ali Ahmeti - And a Number of New Faces, in: RFE/RL Balkan Report, 38/2001 of 1 June 2001.

16 Cf. Macedonian Rebels, cited above (Note 14).

17 Cf. RFE/RL Newslines, 141/2001, Part II, 27 July 2001; RFE/RL Newslines, 143/2001, cited above (Note 13).

18 The Institute for War and Peace Reporting stated in their 4 July 2001 Report that Prime Minister Georgievski had accepted the withdrawal of the UCK/NLA fighters from Aracinovo because the Macedonian military had estimated that it would have taken ten days to uproot the insurgents from the village at substantial losses rather than the twenty-four hours that had originally been projected; cf. Vladimir Jovanovski, Skopje Politicians Sober Up, in: IWPR Balkan Crisis Reports, 261/2001, 4 July 2001. A spokesperson for the President's Office noted at a conference at the University of London on 14-16 June 2001 that in some areas the Macedonian armed forces found themselves unable to oust the UCK/NLA from their positions.

pursue their military approach towards the UCK/NLA. In the aftermath of Aracinovo and the violent demonstrations in Skopje, the UCK/NLA stepped up their attacks near Tetovo and Kumanovo, threatening to also take their struggle directly to the capital.¹⁹

The arrival in early July of U.S. envoy James Pardew and his EU counterpart François Léotard led to a negotiated cease-fire that took effect on 6 July, which allowed political talks to begin under the auspices of the two Western mediators. Although the cease-fire agreement held for more than two weeks, a serious breach occurred on 22 July when the UCK/NLA attacked villages near Tetovo, leading the government to issue another ultimatum to the UCK/NLA - to withdraw from Tetovo by 25 July or face an all-out offensive. The cease-fire breach accompanied a deadlock in negotiations with ethnic Macedonian parties unwilling to make concessions on the expansion of ethnic Albanian rights and rejecting certain provisions in a Western-sponsored draft proposal. On 27 July, negotiations were resumed again - but only after NATO had negotiated another cease-fire to restart talks.²⁰

As aforementioned, it is difficult to identify the exact causes for the emergence of an armed insurgency movement in Macedonia, in particular, at a time when Macedonia was seen as having made substantial although slow progress towards minority rights. Among the possible explanations for the UCK/NLA's emergence are unresolved grievances, groups contending for power, the so-called spoiler effect and the spillover of militant ethnic Albanian nationalism. The issue of long-standing grievances deserves particular attention here, not only because the UCK/NLA have made them their "*causa belli*" but political, economic and socio-cultural grievances are most often the causes for ethnic conflict. The UCK/NLA demands, however, are not all that different from those that were the focal point of inter-ethnic negotiations when Macedonia became independent. Since then, ethnic Albanian leaders have fought for the expansion of more collective rights using the political process. It is also not entirely clear why and how these grievances have triggered militant mobilization at this point in time, and not several years ago when inter-ethnic relations were far more tense and the DPA, the ethnic Albanian coalition partner in the present government, took more radical positions.²¹

19 Cf. RFE/RL Newslines, 121/2001, Part II, 26 June 2001.

20 Cf. Macedonian Cease-Fire Broken, in: RFE/RL Newslines 137/2001, Part II, 23 July 2001; Macedonia: NATO Brokers New Cease-Fire, in: RFE/RL, 26 July 2001, at: www.referl.org/nca/features/2001/07; Rebels Remain in Captured Macedonia, in: The Guardian, 26 July 2001, at: www.guardian.co.uk.

21 The current government was formed in 1998 and consists of a coalition of VMRO-DPMNE (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity), the Liberal Party (LP), and the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA). Prior to its inclusion in the current government, the DPA was considered the more radical of the two major Albanian parties. At present there are three Albanian parties, the DPA, the PDP (Party for Democratic Prosperity; in government until 1998 and now considered to be the more radical, although it has lost members and political importance), and the National Democratic Party (NDP) created in March 2001.

The question that beckons then is one of timing: "Why now?" From an outsider's perspective, Macedonia's minority rights record, while not perfect, seems nevertheless substantial enough. Macedonian Albanians seemed to have benefited following the country's secession from the former Yugoslavia and its turn towards democracy. Since 1991, all governments have adopted a power-sharing approach that has included ethnic Albanian parties as coalition partners - even if this division of power remained rather limited in that not exactly the most important ministerial posts were given to ethnic Albanians. Substantial concessions were also made regarding education and broadcasting in the minority languages. Ethnic Albanians, for example, have the right to be educated in their own language at the primary and secondary level. Over the last few years, the country has seen the expansion of Albanian radio and television stations, and the print media. The highly contested issue of an Albanian-language university was temporarily settled in 2000 through a compromise solution suggested by the then OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), Max van der Stoep, proposing the creation of a multi-lingual institution of higher learning, the so-called South East European University in Tetovo.²²

At the same time, however, there has also been little progress on the most contentious issues that have been on the agenda since independence - constitutional recognition of ethnic Albanians as a nation and recognition of the Albanian language as the second official language of the state. Since 1991, ethnic Albanian politicians have made compromises on these demands - more primary and secondary education in Albanian; an increase in Albanian language broadcasting; a European-sponsored and funded "Albanian" university; the use of Albanian in areas with an Albanian majority, subject to the Law on Local Government which took years to pass Parliament - all in lieu of demands for changes to the preamble of the constitution recognizing ethnic Albanians as a nation, and the use of Albanian as a second official language. Ethnic Albanian leaders believed that many of these compromises - negotiated under the auspices of the ICFY Working Group on Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities at first, and later the OSCE High Commissioner

22 The official ceremony marking the beginning of the construction of the South East European (SEE) University took place on 11 February 2001, following the establishment of an international foundation, the SEE University Foundation, on 30 November 2000 that is to manage international funds and oversee the University project. The SEE University is to have an Albanian curriculum with courses also taught in Macedonian and other European languages, and is to include faculties of law, business and public administration, communications, computer studies and teacher training. The University opened on 20 November 2001. Cf. New University Project Unveiled in Tetovo, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, OSCE Press Release, 12 February 2001, at: www.osce.org/news/. The adoption of a new Law on Education on 25 July 2000 made it possible for this new institution to be established. Prior to this, there was no legal framework that allowed for higher education in the Albanian language. It is for this reason that ethnic Albanians had set up their own university in Tetovo in 1994, which the Macedonian government considered illegal, and which caused serious tensions between the Macedonian authorities and ethnic Albanians for several years.

on National Minorities, during a time when secession was a more serious possibility - could be expanded over time. However, all subsequent governments, including the present one under Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski not only failed to make good on these promises and expand minority rights but also neglected to convince the Macedonian population that such action was essential for maintaining ethnic peace.²³

Apart from frustrations over these unresolved contentious issues, ethnic Albanians have a series of other grievances: that the Macedonian state remains primarily identified with one ethnic nation, the Macedonian, indicative by the many Macedonian national symbols; that progress towards local self-government, which would give more political and economic power to municipalities, remains slow; that ethnic Albanians are underrepresented in the police, the military and other administrative professions; and that unemployment, while endemic in the entire country, is more severe for ethnic Albanians because of discriminatory practices. Also with respect to SEE University, some observers are of the view that this is again only a compromise. First, it was only Arbën Xhaferi, the party leader of the DPA, who accepted the idea of the SEE University and not necessarily all the members of his party or those of the PDP. For example, the PDP argues that the so-called Tetovo University, illegally established in 1994, should receive public funding. It is also far from certain how much support there is for the new university from the Albanian population. Teuta Arifi, lecturer at the University of Skopje, has critically remarked in this connection that Western funding would now also benefit SEE University and thus disadvantage other state universities. Furthermore, the language requirements for SEE faculty are so stringent that only ethnic Albanians would have a chance of getting a teaching position there, which would again lead to further inter-ethnic competition.²⁴ From this discussion on existing grievances one may argue that there is some justification for the UCK/NLA's emergence and the support the Macedonian Albanian population gives them. However, it is not clear whether the UCK/NLA are not simply exploiting these grievances to mask other interests, such as the deliberate destabilization of Macedonia.

23 The author wishes to thank Ambassador Geert-Hinrich Ahrens, Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania, for his valuable comments and insights regarding minority rights in Macedonia during an interview on 25 July 2001. Ambassador Ahrens served as the ICFY Working Group chairman from 1991 to 1996 and was responsible for negotiations between ethnic Albanians and the Macedonian government on minority rights issues. The Working Group's role in these negotiations is explored in Ackermann, *Making Peace Prevail*, cited above (Note 3), chapter 5.

24 The author would like to thank Stefan Troebst for providing this information. Cf. also: Stefan Troebst, *Dreh- und Angelpunkt ist die Regelung des künftigen Status des Kosovo [The Pivotal Point is the Future Status of Kosovo]*, interview with Stefan Troebst, Balkans expert and cultural scientist at the University of Leipzig, on the Macedonian Peace Agreement, in: *Deutsche Welle Monitor*, 17 August 2001, at: www.dwelle.de/M/; cf. also: Veton Latifi, *Albanian Divisions Threaten Accord*, in: *IWPR Balkan Crisis Report 271/2001, Part I*, 14 August 2001.

There are three other explanations for the emergence of the UCK/NLA, which are equally potent, and which are to various degrees linked to the existence of long-standing grievances. For one, it may be argued that the UCK/NLA have emerged as political contenders in the struggle for power in the state. This contention for power is two-fold, involving an inter-group and in-group dimension. On the one hand, the UCK/NLA is not only challenging the ethnic Macedonian leadership with regard to their legitimate power but also the established ethnic Albanian parties. Although ethnic Albanian leaders over the last ten years established political legitimacy to represent the Macedonian Albanian community in their struggle for more collective rights through political channels, they have now come to be perceived as having failed in their efforts.

Related to this explanation is the argument that the UCK/NLA also function as spoilers of what was until a few months ago considered an "incremental and managed" approach to minority rights. There are two ways in which the spoiler effect works in the case of the UCK/NLA:

1. The UCK/NLA have been attempting to "spoil" a political process by which elected ethnic Albanian leaders in Macedonia have sought the expansion of minority rights over time.
2. The UCK/NLA constitutes so-called "spoilers from outside" - that is, individuals who lost out when the UCK/KLA failed to create an independent Kosovo, and who are now trying to achieve their long-aspired goal of an independent state through the destabilization and disintegration of Macedonia.

From that perspective, the current crisis in Macedonia is a direct spillover from Kosovo and linked to the existence of an all-Albanian nationalist movement which includes Kosovo Albanians, who were sidelined in Kosovo politics, as well as radical Macedonian Albanians, all of whom are seeking to establish a "Greater Kosovo" or some sort of ethnically homogenous entity.²⁵ There is some evidence for this not only because of the links between the former UCK/KLA and the UCK/NLA but also because of the sources of financial support for the insurgency movement.

Domestic and International Responses: Crisis Management Rather than Prevention

Crisis management rather than escalation prevention has been the dominant approach to the insurgency on the part of domestic and international actors. Much of this has to do with the fact that a state only seldom relies on non-

25 Cf. Mincheva, cited above (Note 10). Stefan Troebst has documented these connections, cf. Troebst, cited above (Note 6).

military options to control insurgent movements. Because the UCK/NLA used violence from the very beginning, the Macedonian government automatically reacted with counterviolence as it saw the territorial integrity of the state threatened and thus attempted to defend it. Unfortunately, possible non-military options were thus foreclosed because a military solution to the crisis was seen as a much faster and better option. As part of this military solution to the problem, the Macedonian government, which from the beginning referred to the UCK/NLA as "terrorists" and viewed the armed insurgency as a spillover from Kosovo, refused negotiations and instead tried to uproot the UCK/NLA fighters from their bases in towns and villages and force them to withdraw to Kosovo. In the process, Macedonian armed forces were rather heavy-handed in their bombardment of ethnic Albanian villages and there were numerous reports of human rights violations against ethnic Albanians.²⁶ By May, the government also began to show signs that it was having difficulty coping with the crisis and that the collective decision-making process had become seriously impaired which further inhibited a shift in policy towards a negotiated settlement.

Contending positions emerged within the Macedonian leadership and between ethnic Albanian and Macedonian parties as to how to manage the crisis, all of which affected the government's ability to prevent further escalation and bring the crisis to an end. By May it appeared that Prime Minister Georgievski and President Trajkovski were at odds over whether to continue with a military option or seek a cease-fire, disarming the UCK/NLA with NATO's assistance, and granting a partial amnesty to local UCK/NLA fighters, a compromise solution preferred by the President. Georgievski's mercurial behaviour, promising constitutional change on one day, such as in his "agenda for peace" on 30 May, only to back away from it a few days later, arguing instead that changes in the constitution could lead to the federalization of Macedonia, also became an obstacle in moving towards a political settlement. Inconsistencies in policy approaches can also largely be attributed to differing positions, particularly between Albanian and Macedonian parties, over such constitutional changes that would have granted more rights to ethnic Albanians. Throughout June and July it also became apparent that the government was becoming increasingly immobilized because of the influence of popular pressure, particularly on the part of more nationalist Macedonians, who began to stage several demonstrations, some of which led to violent acts as on 25 June and 24 July, and who have opposed making any concessions to ethnic Albanians or the UCK/NLA.²⁷

26 Cf. Human Rights Watch, *Macedonian Government Abuses in Runica Village*, in: Human Rights Watch World Report 2001, Macedonia, 29 May 2001, at: www.hrw.org/press; and Human Rights Watch, *Macedonian Police Abuses Documented*, 31 May 2001, at: www.hrw.org/press. Human Rights Watch also sent letters to UCK/NLA leader Ahmeti, President Trajkovski and Prime Minister Georgievski on 4 May 2001, calling for the protection of the civilian population.

27 Cf. Macedonia: Georgievski Shifts Policy on Constitution Change, in: RFE/RL, 31 May 2001, at: www.rferl.org/nca/features/2001/05; Jolyon Naeyegele, Macedonia: Possible Turn-

One of the more serious political crises occurred in late May. It threatened to break up the national unity government, consisting of all political parties, which had been formed under EU auspices on 13 May.²⁸ The crisis was triggered after it had become public that the leaders of the DPA and the PDP had signed a "peace agreement" with the UCK/NLA leader Ali Ahmeti in which they emphasized their common political agenda - changes to the constitution, Albanian as a second official language of the state, more proportional representation, and more local autonomy.²⁹ The Macedonian government rejected the agreement, as did NATO, the EU, and the OSCE. It was only because of the intervention of Javier Solana, the EU's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, who visited Skopje on 28 May, and then again on 29 May, that the collapse of the national unity government was prevented and the coalition partners issued a statement on the annulment of the "peace agreement".³⁰

All these incidences demonstrate that the Macedonian government has had considerable difficulties in adopting a common stance towards resolving the crisis. Moreover, the readiness to use force has been surprising. Worse, resorting primarily to a military approach has only exacerbated the violence. As the last few months have clearly shown, threats issued by the UCK/NLA have met with counter-threats by the Macedonian government and vice versa, and this "tit-for-tat" strategy was also evident among all the political parties as their leaders became more unyielding and adopted "maximalist" positions. In particular, the more nationalist elements within the Macedonian government consistently tried to derail negotiations, refusing any compromise on some of the contentious issues. What appears tragic to most observers is that there were few concerted efforts on the part of Macedonian and ethnic Albanian politicians over the last few months in appealing to their respective com-

ing Point in Macedonia's Interethnic Conflict, in: RFE/RL, 1 June 2001, at: www.rferl.org/nca/features/2001/06; A Breakthrough in Macedonia?, in: RFE/RL Balkan Report 38/2001, 1 June 2001; Macedonia Divided, in: RFE/RL Balkan Report, 4 May 2001; Macedonian Security Forces Paralyzed By Power Struggle, in: RFE/RL Balkan Report, 42/2001, 15 June 2001; Vladimir Jovanovski, The Macedonian Hawk, in: IWPR Balkan Crisis Report 255/2001, 13 June 2001. On President Trajkovski's Peace Plan, see for example, Trajkovski's "Last Chance" Plan, in: *ibid.*

28 The PDP and the major opposition party, the SDSM (Alliance of Democratic Forces in Macedonia), were added to the national unity government. Cf. Ulrich Buechsenschutz, The New Macedonian Government in Facts and Figures, in: RFE/RL Balkan Report, 36/2001, 18 May 2001.

29 The so-called peace agreement also stipulated an amnesty for UCK/NLA fighters in return for a cease-fire and the UCK/NLA's right to veto decisions regarding ethnic Albanian rights. Its signatories committed themselves to preserving Macedonia's integrity and emphasized that a military solution could not resolve Macedonia's problem.

30 Cf. Veton Latifi/Agim Fetahu, Albanian Deal Threatens Coalition, in: IWPR Balkan Crisis Report 250/2001, 25 May 2001, at: www.iwpr.net; Politische Führer der Albaner in Mazedonien und UCK stellen gemeinsame Forderungsliste auf [Albanian Political Leaders in Macedonia and the UCK/NLA Draw up a List of Common Demands], in: Deutsche Welle Monitor, 24 May 2001, at: www.dwelle.de/MON; Colin Soloway, Albanian "Peace Deal" Controversy, in: IWPR Balkan Crisis Report 251/2001, Part II, 31 May 2001, at: www.iwpr.net.

munities to protect their common state by putting nationalist sentiments aside. The exceptions are perhaps only to be found among some of the local politicians in smaller multi-ethnic communities such as Kumanovo.

Constructive international involvement, mostly by way of third-party mediation, also has come relatively late in the crisis, although it is fair to say that the international community was quick in condemning the violent actions of the UCK/NLA. Although the three major European institutions that have assumed a direct role in the conflict, NATO, the OSCE, and the EU, were able to take a co-ordinated approach, they have basically responded in a reactive rather than a preventive fashion. Perhaps UCK/NLA use of violence and Macedonia's insistence on a military approach to resolving the crisis are mostly to blame for this reactive response. It forced NATO, the EU, and the OSCE to adopt a two-track, but dichotomous, approach to managing the conflict - they would not only support Macedonia's military option but would also simultaneously press for a political solution.

EU's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana and NATO Secretary General George Robertson have functioned primarily as "trouble-shooters". Under their individual or collective leadership, the EU and NATO have brokered not only temporary cease-fires but have also discouraged Georgievski from declaring a state of war, an action he seriously considered twice, once on 6 May, and a second time on 6 June after stating that only a strong military response would achieve peace, and which could have led to an all-out civil war. In early May, Solana was crucial in the formation of a national unity government and in preventing its break-up a few weeks later. In late June, Solana brokered a cease-fire allowing UCK/NLA fighters barricaded in Aracinovo to leave on buses under NATO escort. On 26 July, Solana and Robertson, accompanied by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Romanian Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana, rushed to Skopje with the pledge that NATO, the EU, and the OSCE would assist in the implementation of a possible peace agreement. The visit came at a time when negotiations threatened to be derailed because of the unwillingness of the Macedonian delegation to agree to the mediators' draft proposal, and when there were renewed UCK/NLA attacks, the threat of a new Macedonian military offensive, and a riot in Skopje.

It was only in early July, nearly six months after the first violent attacks occurred that the international community was able to persuade the Macedonian government and the ethnic Albanian leaders to engage in political negotiations that were intended to move towards fulfilling some of the most contentious demands of ethnic Albanians so as to undermine the UCK/NLA and avert an all-out civil war. Since the arrival of U.S.-EU envoys, Pardew and Léotard, there were rounds of negotiations where the three different parties - ethnic Macedonians, ethnic Albanians, and the two envoys - presented proposals for a new legal framework that was to resolve the nation status and use of the Albanian language issues. Negotiations also addressed a number of

other issues, such as the representation of ethnic Albanians in the police and other institutions, the selection of local police chiefs, national symbols, and amnesty for UCK/NLA fighters. While already on 26 July, Solana and the NATO Secretary General announced optimistically that an agreement on 95 per cent of all issues had been reached, the most contentious issues remained the use of the Albanian language and the composition and control of police forces.³¹ The next few weeks were to be crucial, not only as to whether a political agreement could be produced but also as to whether it was going to be acceptable to all the contending parties and their constituents. At the beginning of August, an agreement was finally reached in Ohrid, which was signed on 13 August by the Macedonian government and representatives of the Albanian parties, but not the UCK/NLA, who did however declare they would be willing to support the agreement. This agreement contains the following measures and stipulations: The official use of Albanian in Parliament, with simultaneous interpretation, and in areas where Albanians make up at least 20 per cent of the population; the publication of laws and other official documents, including identity cards, in the Macedonian and Albanian languages; non-discrimination and equal opportunities for Albanians in the public services; an increase of the number of police officers of Albanian origin by 500 by July 2002 and by another 500 by July 2003 in areas with Albanian populations, after ethnic Albanians had agreed that control of the police rest with the central government; local heads of police however may be selected by the municipal councils from a list compiled by the ministry of the interior; a change in the preamble to the constitution so that it no longer refers to specific ethnic and national groups and the term "citizens of Macedonia" is used in their stead; the introduction of the so-called "double majorities", which the Macedonian media also call the "Badinter mechanism" as Robert Badinter can be attributed with creating this constitutional mechanism that is to protect the representatives of minorities from being outvoted in Parliament; a change in Article 48 of the constitution in which the word "nationalities" is replaced by the term "communities"; the establishment of a new institution, the Committee on Inter-Community Relations to replace the Council for Inter-Ethnic

31 For a more in-depth discussion of the negotiations and the various proposals and counter-proposals presented, see for example, Ulrich Buechsenschutz, *Macedonians React to Albanian Proposals*, in: RFE/RL Balkan Report 49/2001, 17 July 2001; and Ulrich Buechsenschutz, *Macedonia: Speaking a Different Language*, in: RFE/RL Balkan Report 51/2001, 24 July 2001; Saso Ordanoski, *Macedonian Talks Avoid Collapse*, in: IWPR Balkan Crisis Report 264/2001, Part I, 21 July 2001. The Western proposal included a draft constitution written by Robert Badinter, the French constitutional expert who in the early 1990s headed the EU's Badinter Commission, a group of constitutional experts who established the criteria for the recognition of new states in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. On some of the events in late July cf., *inter alia*, RFE/RL Newsline 141/2001, Part II, 27 July 2001; RFE/RL Newsline 142/2001, Part II, 30 July 2001. For coverage of the course of the negotiations, cf. *Breakthrough Reported on Language Issue in Macedonian Talks*, and *Police Issue to Dominate Macedonian Talks' Next Round*, in: RFE/RL Newsline 145/2001, Part II, 2 August 2001 (both reports in the same issue); *Peace Talks Resume in Macedonia*, RFE/RL Newsline 146/2001, Part II, 3 August 2001.

Relations, which was rarely ever convened; an extension of the Albanians' rights to university education in their language and to the use of Albanian national symbols. Moreover, the UCK/NLA was guaranteed amnesty and on 15 August, NATO mediator Peter Feith signed an agreement with UCK/NLA leader Ahmeti in Sipkovic near Tetovo in which the UCK/NLA declared its willingness to surrender its weapons, ammunition and uniforms to NATO troops. The first NATO troops taking part in operation "Essential Harvest", which was to number between 3,500 and 4,000 men and to implement the demobilization of the UCK/NLA within 30 days, arrived in Macedonia on 17 August.³²

As to the OSCE's role in the crisis, since February, the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje had increasingly warned of the deterioration in inter-ethnic relations and the threat the UCK/NLA posed to the country, indicative in that it had begun to send daily reports to the OSCE Permanent Council, rather than once weekly as was customary. But even the OSCE with its commitment to early warning and conflict prevention has not been able to render more than crisis management. Again, much of this has to do with the Macedonian government's approach to the crisis, and lately, their resentment against all international pressures. Moreover, the Spillover Monitor Mission remained considerably understaffed, although the number of its members had been increased to twenty-six at that point in time, had little logistical support to undertake serious preventive action, and probably needed a revised mandate to effectively deal with the kind of tasks which would address the ethnic violence witnessed over the last few months, and to engage effectively in overseeing implementation of the political agreement. For the most part, the Spillover Monitor Mission continues its monitoring activities and is expected to assume a major role in what has been referred to as "post-crisis rehabilitation", that is the monitoring of certain provisions associated with the political agreement - short-term and long-term confidence-building measures such as the resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons; assistance in local reform and the training of an ethnically mixed police force.³³ The OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission has also publicly condemned the "ethnic cleansing" of Macedonians from villages near Tetovo.³⁴

32 Cf. Ulrich Buechsenschutz, The Macedonian Peace Agreement, Part I, in: RFE/RL Balkan Report 58/2001, 17 August 2001; Ulrich Buechsenschutz, The Macedonian Peace Agreement, Part II, in: RFE/RL Balkan Report 59/2001, 21 August 2001; Conditions Met for NATO Role in Macedonia, in: RFE/RL Newline 154/2001, Part II, 15 August 2001; NATO Moves Into Macedonia, in: RFE/RL Newline 160/2001, Part II, 23 August 2001. In correspondence with the author on 8 August 2001, Stefan Troebst called attention to the fact that the former Minister of the Interior Frckovski had already between 1992-1993 tried to establish a larger quota for Albanians in the police force. This attempt failed however because younger Albanians who had applied to the police force were ostracized by their families and peers.

33 OSCE source, telephone interview, 26 July 2001.

34 Cf. OSCE Condemns Violence Against Civilians, in: RFE/RL Newline 139/2001, Part II, 25 July 2001.

Most of the OSCE's activities have remained confined to diplomatic instruments: condemnations and warnings of the escalation of violence; and a number of Permanent Council sessions to discuss the crisis. However, the Permanent Council also authorized additional monitors to the OSCE Mission.³⁵ On 21 March, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Geoana appointed Ambassador Robert Frowick as his Personal Representative in Skopje. In a special Permanent Council session, Frowick detailed his role: "to develop a concept for coherent action of the OSCE" in co-ordination with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Head of the Spillover Monitor Mission.³⁶ Frowick's mission, however, was cut short when it was reported that he had assisted in the negotiation of the so-called "peace agreement" between the UCK/NLA and the two major ethnic Albanian parties and was accused of acting on his own without informing the Macedonian or OSCE authorities.³⁷ On 1 July, former HCNM Max van der Stoel was appointed Geoana's Personal Envoy with the mandate "to facilitate a dialogue and provide advice for a speedy solution of the current crisis (...)".³⁸ The pressures that NATO, the EU and the OSCE have mounted on the Macedonian government to end the crisis politically has resulted in an increased hostile attitude towards Western involvement, both on the part of the Macedonian government, particularly its hard-liners, but also the ethnic Macedonian population. There have been several violent demonstrations, the most recent one on 24 July when nationalist Macedonians attacked Western embassies and offices including that of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission as well as destroying OSCE vehicles. There have also been a series of negative statements from the Macedonian government's spokesperson, accusing the

35 Cf. OSCE, Permanent Council, Decision No. 405, Temporary Strengthening of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, PC.DEC/405, 22 March 2001. The Mission was increased from eight to sixteen members. On 7 June, the Permanent Council once more increased the staff by ten members, enlarging it to 26. Cf. OSCE, Permanent Council, Decision No. 414, Further Enhancement of the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, PC.DEC/414, 7 June 2001.

36 OSCE, Chairman-in-Office, Need for intensified political dialogue in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Press Release, 30 March 2001.

37 In a meeting with Geoana on 25 May, Frowick maintained that he never had direct contacts with the UCK/NLA but that he had only met with ethnic Albanian leaders from Macedonia, Albania, and Kosovo, as well as Macedonian leaders from Skopje. Cf. OSCE, Chairman-in-Office, Chairman-in-Office meets with Personal Representative Frowick, Press Release, 26 May 2001. Judging by one source, Frowick was not in a position to notify all parties to the mediation process. Therefore, Frowick's role in the mediation process should in the future be examined again more carefully to be able to yield a fair analysis. It should also be mentioned that Frowick was the first Head of the then CSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje from September to December 1992 and in 1993, the Founding Director of the NGO "Search for Common Ground in Macedonia"; cf. Ackermann, cited above (Note 3).

38 OSCE, Chairman-in-Office, Van der Stoel appointed Personal Envoy of Chairman-in-Office, Press Release, 29 June 2001. Van der Stoel also made several visits to Macedonia while still High Commissioner. His last visit came just two days before his mandate ended at the end of June. However, there is no publicly available information on the frequency of visits during the crisis or their content. Van der Stoel arrived as Personal Envoy in Skopje on 10 July 2001.

West of having been partisan and siding with terrorists.³⁹ An intensive disinformation campaign also began once negotiations started, with media reports accusing NATO and the United States of assisting the UCK/NLA.⁴⁰ Prime Minister Georgievski himself stirred the fire several times, for example on 18 July when he announced that the latest compromise proposal, which the Macedonian delegation had deemed unacceptable, was interference in the internal affairs of Macedonia and that the West was attempting to impose federalization on Macedonia.⁴¹ Even after the political agreement had been signed and NATO troops deployed in Macedonia, anti-Western and anti-NATO sentiments prevailed, which Patrick Moore of Radio Free Europe described as a "broader propaganda war". For weeks the Macedonian media had been fuelling anti-Western sentiment from which even Western journalists did not escape. Macedonian nationalists blockaded the main road between Skopje and Blace on the border of Kosovo; and the Macedonian population in general sees the NATO troops deployed in Macedonia as supporters of the UCK/NLA.⁴²

A Comprehensive Conflict Prevention Plan for the Region

There is a great urgency to implement a comprehensive and long-term conflict prevention approach for Macedonia and the Balkans. But whether such a policy can be adopted soon, or even at all, will not only depend on whether the agreement reached on the most contentious issues such as language use, nation status, and representation in the police, can ultimately be implemented, especially against the will of staunch Macedonian nationalists. At present, many observers are pessimistic on the prospects for a peaceful settlement of the crisis, simply because of the severity of the mistrust and animosity that has been unleashed by the armed confrontations over the last few months and the sentiments of victimization that all parties to the conflict have experienced. Moreover, the readiness with which military force has been indiscriminately used, both by the UCK/NLA and the Macedonian government, has made it difficult to resolve the crisis permanently by political means. Lastly, even if the conflicting parties still want to avert a large-scale war, there is a growing sentiment that each side now seems ready to defend its in-

39 See here, for example, ... And Issue Ultimatum, in: REF/RL Newline 139/2001, Part II, 25 July 2001.

40 Cf. Disinformation Campaign in Macedonia, Serbia? RFE/RL Newline 142/2001, Part II, 30 July 2001.

41 Cf. Macedonian Prime Minister Says West Backs "Terrorists", in: RFE/RL Newline 135/2001, Part II, 19 July 2001.

42 Cf. Patrick Moore, Skopje's Own Goal, in: RFE/RL Balkan Report 60/2001, 24 August 2001. In regard to the campaign against Western journalists, Moore makes the comment that one had been able to observe the same pattern of behaviour on the part of the Serbs during the Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo wars as now in Macedonia, for example, Western journalists were sent aggressive e-mails.

terests, and if necessary by force. The threshold for using force had already been crossed several months ago, when the UCK/NLA thought it would be possible to achieve its goals, whatever they may be, through violence and the Macedonian government thought it possible to defeat the UCK/NLA militarily in a relatively short period of time.

However should Macedonia once more have the good fortune to be spared the fate of some of the other former Yugoslav republics, it is crucial that a more long-term approach to conflict prevention be adopted. Such an approach must not only be inclusive of those provisions envisioned as part of the NATO/EU/OSCE post-conflict rehabilitation and confidence-building measures. Moreover, there need to be short-term, as well as more long-term, structural preventive measures, including the following: the creation and institutionalization by the government of a regular forum for inter-ethnic dialogue where progress towards the implementation of those provisions agreed upon in the negotiations and the expansion of minority rights in general can be monitored; the establishment of a multi-ethnic police and military force as well as an ethnically mixed academy for the training of such forces; a textbook reform to eliminate stereotypes from social science books; introduction of educational programmes to reduce extreme nationalist sentiments and promote a civic identity rather than a nationalist one; major party reform to stamp out corruption and nepotism; a reform of the media to stop provocative reporting; major initiatives to address unemployment, particularly among youth; creating more economic opportunities and the building of infrastructure in remote areas of the country but especially those near the Kosovo border which have served as recruiting grounds for the UCK/NLA because of their lack of educational and employment facilities; assistance in local government reforms; and the facilitation of good governance.

A regional approach to conflict prevention is also clearly needed in co-ordination with NATO, the EU and the OSCE, as well as some of the countries in the region to stop the flow of arms and the infiltration of militant groups. Moreover, a demilitarization plan for the entire region should be adopted, and given the success of the UNPREDEP, a similar preventive force should be deployed along the Macedonian-Kosovo border. An early warning and information gathering entity should be created to monitor regional and internal developments; economic assistance should be targeted towards the region in an effort to facilitate post-conflict prevention; cross-border co-operation should be intensified, in particular through projects that enhance the economic conditions of local communities in Macedonia, Kosovo, and Albania. Lastly, however, what is most crucial is that some solution to the Kosovo "problem" be found, because as long as there is neither true political autonomy for Kosovo without the UNMIK and the KFOR presence, nor an independent Kosovo, Macedonia will remain on the razor's edge because despite the planned demobilization of the UCK/NLA by NATO troops extreme

groupings like the UCK/NLA will be very difficult to isolate on a long-term basis.⁴³

Concluding Thoughts

While there is still some hope that a full-fledged ethnic war can be averted, on the societal level there is a distinct sentiment that interethnic co-existence is already suffering from irreparable damage. The injustices committed and the narratives of victimization are beginning to resemble those that we have heard about in other parts of the Balkans - houses and shops set on fire; ethnic cleansing of villages; people fleeing their homes; the destruction of cultural assets of a religious nature, for example that of the 14th-century orthodox monastery in Lesok;⁴⁴ the demonization of the "other." But there are still a few good examples of local politicians and citizens trying hard to preserve peace in their communities, such as in Kumanovo, a multi-ethnic town of Macedonians, Albanians, Vlachs, Serbs, and Roma. Here, the mayor, Slobodan Kovačevski, and his counterpart, Feriz Dervish, a member of the municipal council, have exerted their influence to defuse ethnic tensions, even in light of the fighting in their area. Whether the creation of new narratives by victims and victimizers can be brought to a halt in time depends on whether the provisions in the political agreement are in fact implemented as quickly as possible, whether the popularity of nationalist extremists on both sides can

43 According to reports, in the meantime a UCK/NLA successor organization has already been formed in Macedonia, the Albanian National Army under the leadership of Xhavid Hassani, a former UCK commander in Kosovo and Macedonia. The Albanian National Army declared in a communiqué that they did not plan to stop the war or recognize any political agreement. Cf. Iso Rusi, Comment: Last Chance for Peace, in: IWPR Balkan Crisis Report 271/2001, Part I, 14 August 2001; Latifi, cited above (Note 24); Macedonia: How many groups, how many guns?, in: *The Economist*, 25 August 2001, pp. 36-37. Halil Matoshi reports that the Albanian National Army is made up of fighters from the Kosovar UCK/KLA and the Macedonian UCK/NLA who are not in agreement with the Macedonian peace agreement. Their commando bases are in Macedonia, Kosovo and the Preševo Valley. This rebel movement had existed under the same name before in 1999 as a faction of the Kosovar UCK/KLA. According to their spokesperson Alban Hoxha, the Albanian National Army is fighting for a unified Greater Albania. Cf. Halil Matoshi, The Albanians' New Model Army, in: IWPR Balkan Crisis Report 274/2001, 24 August 2001. UCK/NLA Commander Ahmeti indicated in an interview on Deutsche Welle that the UCK/NLA would set up a political wing so that it will be able to participate in the next election in January 2002 because the fight for Albanians' rights has moved from the battlefield into the Parliament. Cf. *Macedonian Albanian Guerrillas to Form Party on the Model of Sinn Fein?* in: RFE/RL Newswire 156/2001, Part II, 17 August 2001.

44 The Macedonian government accused the UCK/NLA of destroying the monastery and said this act could be compared to the destruction of the giant Buddhas in Afghanistan by the Taliban. On the other hand, the UCK/NLA gave the Macedonian government responsibility for the destruction charging it with wanting to circumvent the peace agreement. Cf. Moore, cited above (Note 42).

be stemmed, whether moderate politicians can still rescue the political process and whether the UCK/NLA can be isolated permanently.⁴⁵

45 Opinion polls show that both ethnic groups have lost confidence in their parties and the party leaders. Cf. Ulrich Buechsenschutz, Macedonian Disappointments and Fears, in: RFE/RL Balkan Report 60/2001, 24 August 2001.