

**Macedonia:**  
**The International Community as a Stabilizing Factor**  
By Saso Klekovski, March 2003

**1. INTRODUCTION**

In the course of 2001, armed clashes took place in Macedonia, which expanded from an isolated incident to a threat of civil war. They came to an end by the signing of the Framework Agreement on August 13, 2001. Macedonia has been stabilizing since then.

The international community had and still has a significant role as a stabilizing factor. In fact, the intervention of the international community in Macedonia can represent a model for successful international intervention in war prevention and re-establishment of peace.

Brief description of the conflict in Macedonia and dealing with it, the Framework Agreement, the participation of the international community and the importance of this participation is set forth below.

**2. THE CONFLICT AND THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT**

**2.1. The conflict in Macedonia**

At the beginning of the crises in March 2001, there was a situation of isolated conflict between the security forces and an armed group of ethnic Albanians in the village of Tanusevci at the border between Macedonia and Kosovo.

Later on, the armed groups identified themselves as National Liberation Army, (abbreviated as UCK in Albanian, ONA in Macedonian and NLA in English) and proclaimed Ali Ahmeti their leader.

The escalation of the crises began with the start of the fighting in Tetovo in April 2001. Due to the incapability of the Government, which failed to react at the beginning and overreacted later on, the clashes expanded down a line that spread west of Kumanovo, north of Skopje and Tetovo and east of Gostivar. Approximately 140 inhabited areas were controlled by NLA instead of Macedonian authorities.

The polarization of the ethnic groups began with the start of the clashes in Tetovo. This polarization was triggered by the death of security force members in an ambush attacks in Vejce, Karpalak and Ljubanci and the excessive use of the Army – heavy bombing of certain villages in Lipkovo and Aracinovo.

The Macedonian – Albanian relations turned into hostility with the development of the crises, making an initiation of a civil war possible. The incidents in Ljubanci and Ljuboten in August 2001 were the first early signs of an escalation of the situation towards a civil war.

**2.2. Dealing with the conflict**

The development of hostilities instigated a need of short-term solutions for “enmity management”, with a primary goal of establishing control over the hostilities.

The measures for control over the enmity included numerous activities.

**Table 1. Measures for enmity management**

<b>Avoidance of armed conflicts</b>	
Ceasefire	Several unilateral ceasefires by both sides.
Isolation of the conflicted parties	Restraining, non-support and prevention of the extremists asked from their possible allies. Achievement of neutrality of Albania and control over the border with Kosovo (KFOR). Neutrality of Greece, Bulgaria, FR Yugoslavia and later on of Ukraine and Russia achieved.
Armament prevention	Discouragement of weapon proliferation.

<b>Capacity building for conflict management</b>	
Building of a position for negotiations by the political leaders of the ethnic Albanians	The Prizren Declaration was signed by Ali Ahmeti (NLA), Arben Xaferi (DPA) and Imer Imeri (PDP) on May 24, 2001. It enabled a coordination of the political and military representatives of the ethnic Albanians and support for the legitimacy of DPA and PDP by NLA.
Capacity building by the Government	Government of grand coalition consisted of all the major political parties: VMRO-DPMNE, DPA, SDSM and PDP and all the other parties represented in the Parliament except for DA was formed on May 13 2001. SDSM and LDP abandoned this Government on November 22, 2001.

### 2.3. The Framework Agreement and its Realization

The Framework Agreement sets forth ending of hostilities and represents a solution for some of the constitutional and political problems in Macedonia. It was signed by the four major political leaders in Macedonia (VMRO-DPMNE, SDSM, DPA and PDP leaders) on August 13, 2001 (also known as Ohrid Agreement). The agreement was also confirmed by Francois Leotard and James Pardew.

The goals of the Framework Agreement are:

- Sustaining of democracy and development of the civil society;
- Euro-Atlantic integration;
- Development of multicultural society.

Briefly put, the basic principles are:

- Non-violence and consistency of the integrity and the unitary character.
- Multi-culture and its appropriate reflection in the public life and the Constitution;
- Democratisation/ participation through decentralization.

Activities:

- Ending of enmity, disarmament, government restoring, returning of the displaced persons, revitalization and rebuilding;
- Just representation, identity expressing, enhanced education and language use; special systems for passing of decisions concerning the minorities: Assembly Code, laws on public administration, police, identification documents, language use, special measures etc.;
- Decentralization: laws on local self-government; local self-financing; municipal borders; measures for development of the decentralized government;
- Additional measures: census and elections.

**Table 2. Overview of the realization of the Framework Agreement**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Realized/Period</b>
Framework Agreement	Signed on August 13 2001
Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia	The Macedonian Assembly passed the amendments IV to XVIII of the Constitution on November 16, 2001
<b>End of enmity</b>	
Disarmament of NLA	NLA disbanded. In the course of the operation for collecting of the weapons from NLA, which was called Essential Harvest and lasted from August 27 - September 25, 2001, a total of 3.875 weapon pieces and 397.625 ammunition, explosive and mine pieces were collected. Additional measure: Amnesty of NLA members by Amnesty Law (passed on March 7, 2002).
Government restoring	140 inhabited areas reintegrated in the period December 4 2001 – July 7, 2002.

Revitalization and re-building	5800 houses were damaged during the conflicts to various extents, most of them lightly damaged. About 5000 lightly damaged and 200 severely damaged houses were renovated.
Returning of the displaced persons	July 2001 – approximately 130 thousand displaced persons (80 thousand internally displaced and 50 thousand refugees to Kosovo). January 2002 - 16.303 internally displaced persons. February 2003 - 8.273 internally displaced persons.
<b>Multi-cultural society</b>	
Just representation	In the course of 2002, 632 members of various ethnicities were trained for policemen (437 Albanians, 101 Macedonians, 39 Turks, 30 Romas, 10 Serbs, 5 Vlahs, 10 Others). Training of a new group consisting of 600 policemen began in 2003.
Identity expressing	A Macedonian Assembly Code, passed on July 15, 2002, regulates the right of minority language use during Assembly sessions. The alteration and amending of Identification Card law by May 30 2002 regulates the communities' language use. Law on travel documents (passports) – not passed.
Special systems for passing of decisions concerning the minorities	Decision for establishment of Inter-Community Relations Committee was passed on November 12, 2002.
<b>Decentralization</b>	
Law on local self-government;	Passed on January 24, 2002, following the long negotiations for dividing of responsibilities in the area of education and health.
Local self- financing	Postponed until the passing of new territorial demarcation. It is necessary for the finance sources to be adjusted to the number and size of the municipalities.
Municipal borderlines	A new Law on territorial demarcation is planned. Postponed until the announcement of the Census results.
<b>Additional measures</b>	
Census of the population	Census – planned for autumn 2001, postponed for spring 2002, realized November 01-15, 2002.
Elections	Elections planned for the autumn 2001, realized during the regular period on September 15, 2002.

### 3. THE POSITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

#### 3.1. Position, goals and description of the participation of the international community

The international community position in relation to the conflict was built and determined by UN acts. The Security Council, with the Resolution 1345 of 21 March, 2001, reconfirmed by the Resolution 1371, gave the basic framework to it. It was supported by the USA (Statement by the USA President) and the EU (The Council of Ministers).

The Resolution 1345 condemns the violence, reconfirms the integrity and sovereignty, calls for rejecting the arms and using the dialogue as a way for overcoming the differences, demands respect of the International Humanitarian Law and the Human Rights, acclaims Albania, and requires Kosovo to isolate the extremists, requires from KFOR to strengthen the control over the borders and invites everybody to contribute towards the peace and democracy.

The International Community was involved in all the phases, that is:

- "enmity management" with a primary goal of establishing a management over the enmity;

- achieving and realization of the long-term solutions.

The main forms of participation are diplomacy and military. Supporting forms are the financial support and the political analysis.

The diplomatic forms have included the diplomatic corps in Skopje; special representatives by the EU and USA and occasional involvement of the highest diplomats and officials.

The participation of the International Community was managed by Javier Solana, European Commissioner for External Affairs and Security; George Robertson, Secretary General of NATO; Colin Powell, State Secretary of the USA and occasionally Mircea Joana, OSCE chairperson and Chief of the Romanian Diplomacy and Condoleezza Rice, US National Security Adviser. Aside, the President of Russia Vladimir Putin was also involved.

Special representatives of the EU and USA were permanently positioned in Macedonia.

**Table 3. Special representatives of the EU, USA and OSCE**

<b>Representative</b>	<b>Period</b>
Francois Leotard, EU Special Envoy to Macedonia	25 June until the end of the year 2001
Alain Le Roy, EU Special Envoy to Macedonia	Until November 2002
Alexis Bruhns, EU Special Representative to Macedonia	From November 2002
James Pardew, USA President Special Representative	6 July – December 2001
James Holmes, USA President Special Representative	March – June 2002
Robert Frowick, OSCE Chairperson's Special Representative	March – June 2001

### **3.2. Some examples of the International Community participation**

#### **3.2.1. Some examples of the participation in the control of the hostilities**

One successful example is the successful isolation of the extremists.

The isolation of the Albanian military extremists has been started with the Resolution 1345 by the UN, USA support (statement by the USA President) and EU Council of Ministers. The USA prohibited the travels and suspended the financial accounts of the extremist groups and of some individuals in Kosovo, Macedonia and from southern Serbia.

Later on, when the Macedonian political and military leadership started using exaggerated military force, especially bombing some settlements, Javier Solana, George Robertson and Colin Powell discouraged the use of heavy weapons. The activities were inter-related and included demanding arms restraint, discouraging possible allies to take part and condemning the weapons proliferation. The activities were partly obvious, like for example Condoleezza Rice's visit to Leonid Kucma, Ukrainian President, July 2001 (Ukraine was one of the main Macedonian suppliers with heavy weapons), and partly obscure. After initially supporting the Macedonian Government, Greece, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia altered their opinion and declared neutral attitude. The same thing later on happened with Russia and Ukraine. The supply with heavy weapons ended.

The second example is the one of building negotiating positions of the political leaders of the ethnic Albanians with the Prizren Declaration. Here, Robert Frowick was involved as a facilitator. This question aroused numerous controversies, after which Robert Frowick was withdrawn. The Macedonian public perceived the Prizren Declaration as a support by the Albanian political actors for the NLA and withdrawal from the isolation of the extremists. In fact, the process was reverse. The military actors legitimized the position of the political leaders and they got mandate to negotiate with the Macedonian Government.

### 3.2.2. Some examples of the involvement in the process of ending the hostilities

The key phase in the process of ending the hostilities was the disarmament of NLA and the reintegration of the whole territory. This phase was impossible without greater diplomatic efforts, but also military presence. The military presence formally started with the implementation of the operation disarmament of NLA called "Essential Harvest". This operation was implemented by the NATO forces. An overview of the military missions in Macedonia is set forth.

**Table 4. Overview of the military missions in Macedonia**

Operation	Forces	Period	Mandate
Essential Harvest	NATO – Task force Harvest – 3.500 soldiers	22 August – 23 September 2001	Disarmament of the Albanian ethnic groups and destroying the weapons
Amber Fox	NATO – (Task Force Fox) – 750 soldiers	23 September 2001 – 15 December 2002	Protection of the international monitors who monitored the implementation of ending of hostilities
Allied Harmony	NATO – 150 soldiers	16 December 2002 – March 2003 (?)	Support to the international monitors and counselling the Government (MK) in the overtaking the security
?	EU	March 2003 (?)	The same as the previous mandate

### 3.2.3. Financial support

The process of peace building was supported by the international community with a donor conference, as well. The goal of the donor conference was to provide money necessary for the reconstruction, realization of the Framework Agreement, to restore the Budget's deficit made during the conflict. The donor conference took place in Brussels on 12 March 2002. The gained support amounted to 307 million Euros. It was the most successful donor conference for Macedonia, exceeding all previous conferences altogether.

**Table 5. Overview of the aim of funds**

Purpose	Amount (million Euros)
Support to the balance of payment	173
Reconstruction of the damaged objects	85
Realization of the Framework Agreement	49
Total	307

The donors announced other 271 millions euros for economic development projects in the years to come.

The European Commission and the World Bank publicly announced the amounts of their donations at the Donor Conference for Macedonia in Brussels. The largest individual donor was the Netherlands, with about 60 millions Euros, followed by the USA with 44,47 millions, Germany with 13,44 millions and Japan with 10,10 millions Euros. The EU countries promised another 101,78 million Euros. EU donated 104 millions Euros and the World Bank 33,67 million Euros.

As an assistance for economic development of Macedonia through financing projects, the donors promised 273,94 million Euros. Germany offered the most - 50 million Euros, the USA - 40,89 million Euros, the European Commission 24,5 millions, and Greece 14,67 million Euros. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development will finance projects amounting to 55 million Euros, and the World Bank 22,45 million Euros.

### **3.2.4. Political analysis**

The support in the sphere of political analysis is provided as a part of the overall financial support. Due to the level of importance, two non-governmental organizations should be stated: the International Crisis Group – ICG and the European Stability Initiative – ESI, Berlin.

## **4. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

### **4.1. The Successfulness of the Peace Process in Macedonia**

This is the second year since the start of the implementation of the Framework Agreement in Macedonia. One could conclude that the situation is stable. In fact, the peace process in Macedonia can be set as a model for successful intervention in war prevention and peace support.

The conflict in Macedonia was prevented on the verge of its expanding to a civil war. The violence seized, the armed groups were disbanded and disarmed. The territorial integrity and sovereignty of the overall territory of the country were restored. Tools for settling the differences through dialog were established. Macedonia has strengthened its democracy and multicultural society.

The Resolution 1345 can be considered achieved.

The international community had and still has an important role as a stability factor.

### **4.2. Why is the Peace Process in Macedonia Successful?**

What are the lessons learned from the peace process in Macedonia?

To begin with the reasons for the success so far:

#### **1. Peace is supported by the forces and institution of the country itself**

There was a significant level of moderation towards military solution of the situation among the domestic political, and even military actors. This enabled legitimacy of the institutions. The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia continued to perform its mandate (contrary to the breakdown of Bosnia Herzegovina Assembly that marked the outset of the war there).

Macedonian institutions such as the President and the Government of the Republic asked for an intervention by the international community.

What was important was that no political force wanted to be isolated from the international community and none was.

#### **2. Multilateralism of the international community provided**

Prior to the inclusion of the international community, a legitimacy of the intervention was provided by obtaining agreement on the side of UN, manifested through Resolution 1345 of the Security Council. When some discrepancies occurred (primarily with Moscow), they were addressed on time.

#### **3. Integrated response by the international community**

The response of the international community was integrated and consisted of political, military and financial measures. These measures were complementary. They would not have been successful if it had not been for this integrated approach and all the elements.

#### **4. Permanent special envoys**

The intervention of the international community depended to a large extent on the capacity built through direct presence of the permanent special envoys of EU, USA and OSCE.

The permanent presence of the special envoys enhanced their understanding of the conflict in Macedonia. This enabled timely reaction. Since we are talking about deliberately sent diplomats/politicians higher by rank than the ambassadors, the special envoys have lighter and more appropriate approach to the crucial authorities in terms of the stances of the international community.

### **4.3. Some disadvantages of the international community intervention**

The international response also had several disadvantages:

#### **1. Failure to predict the initial conflict and its development**

Prior to the clashes, there was a significant international political and military, as well as intelligence presence (B&H, Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia).

Yet, the development of the initial events was not predicted and there was not an early warning. The incident in Tanusevci was not predicted. Later on, the capacity of the Macedonian authorities for dealing with the situation was wrongly assessed, i.e. there was not an assessment that there was no such capacity.

An intervention of the international community in the early phase might have decreased the human losses that happened later on.

#### **2. Non-mediatory behaviour on the part of some mediators**

The role of the special envoys was to be mediators in the process. Some personal solutions were not the best ones. An example of this was James Pardew. He publicly took sides towards the stances of both sides and thus caused several incidents. Contrary to this, examples of good mediators were Alan Le Roix and Alexis Bruhns.

#### **3. Development of "protectorate syndrome"**

The emphasized intervention of the international community brought to some signs of "protectorate syndrome". This brought to a decrease of the domestic capacity and responsibility for dealing with the problems and conflicts for some period of time. It quickly provoked a feeling that it is a responsibility of the international community to solve the problems. Example: The reconstruction of the damaged houses is completely responsibility of the international community, both in terms of financing and realization agencies. The Government reacted as if it had not been its problem. This led to further illegitimacy of the authorities, instead of the reversal process. This development was stopped by the 2002 elections and the shift of government.

### **4.4. Some risks of destabilization**

The successfulness of the process so far should not lower the alertness level.

Macedonia is facing problems in terms of realization of the Framework Agreement. There are also examples of other restraints. Example: The Framework Agreement sets forward adequate representation of the communities in the public administration. At the same time, the reforms of the public administration (agreed with the World Bank) ban any employments in the public administration.

Some of the threats are the political-constitutional problems that have not been solved and the need of economic development.

Macedonia faced serious obstacles in its growth as a country. Macedonia is still not recognized by its constitutional name by EU and USA, i.e. it is a UN member under the reference Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Macedonia is facing closing of industries, high unemployment rate, and insufficient development. Unless this process reverts, some important society segments will feel abandoned, which will increase the risk of new destabilizations.

At the end, I would mention two regional problems: the Kosovo status and the organized crime.

Out of the eight possible options for Kosovo status (according to USIP), four would most probably have negative influence on Macedonia (and Bosnia Herzegovina).

The assassination of the Serbia Prime-Minister Zoran Djindjic is a serious organized crime warning. The solidarity and support of the Serbian public and the prime ministers of the neighbouring countries (including Croatia and Albania) gives hope.

The possibilities of more rapid EU integration could help in dealing with some of these threats.