
National Security of Macedonia

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Summary

After gaining independence in 1991, Macedonia set off on the hard path of maintaining independence and territorial integrity. Fully disarmed, rife with great internal problems and conflicts, surrounded by hostile neighbours, Macedonia has been building its national security system. Due to its modest economic and security resources, it has relied on generous foreign aid, primarily that of the USA, which have considered Macedonia the pillar of its politics on the Balkans. Regarding its national security system build-up and the integration into the international security organisations, Macedonia has accomplished a lot, but is still faced with an array of problems, caused by the internal (primarily ethnic) strifes and the volatility of its environment, particularly in Kosovo. In case of armed conflicts that might – due to any reasons – beset Macedonia, and concerning its economic underdevelopment and military might, there is a small chance for successful defence in a probable simultaneous conflict with the internal para-military units and armies of (possibly) several neighbouring countries.

Introduction

The 1991 referendum on the independence and the withdrawal of the Yugoslav Federal Army (YFA) from its territory, marked the beginning of a new phase in the development of this former Yugoslav republic. Macedonia, almost completely disarmed, burdened with forbidding internal problems and repudiated by all its four neighbours (Albania, Greece, Bulgaria and SR Yugoslavia), has found itself in an extremely awkward security position. Many observers of the security processes on the Balkans have predicted an outbreak of hostilities in and around this state. Macedonian perspectives – situated on the central geopolitical axis of the Balkan peninsula and without genuine political allies among its neighbours – have not been optimistic at all. It is thought that a new Balkan war might be much more serious than the former two world wars and the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The experience from the wars on the territory of the former Yugoslavia has taught us that, once an armed conflict starts, it is all but impossible to put an end to it without enormous efforts by international community and a terrible price to pay. In case of Macedonia, international community and the USA as the leading world power, have come to understand that ethnic problems cannot be solved by arms. On the contrary, resorting to weapons in this case becomes a part of the problems, aggravating them. That is why the UN and the US,

immediately upon Macedonia's declaration of independence, organised peacekeeping forces within UNPROFOR to prevent the outside aggression and the internal ethnic strife between Macedonians and Albanians. Identification of Macedonia as the key area for the Balkan security, and dispatching American soldiers to this country, has provided this state with peace in a precarious environment. This grace period has served for getting a comprehensive picture of the real sources of threats to national security, the identification of national interests, the definition of policies and the build-up of a national security system, and for joining European security integrations. In the process of security consolidation, Macedonia has achieved remarkable results, but is still faced with a plethora of problems, which are caused by the internal relations and the instability of the environment, particularly the situation on Kosovo.

About the State

Macedonia is situated on the Balkans, for centuries a cross-roads region of the communication line connecting three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa. Geographically, Macedonia is to the east of Albania, west of Bulgaria, south of SR Yugoslavia and north of Greece. Macedonia covers an area of 25,713 square kilometres of a mostly hilly and mountainous region with a broad network of rivers and lakes. Macedonia has several climates; in the valleys along the Vardar and the Strume rivers, the climate is Mediterranean; in the northern valleys and basins surrounded by high mountains the climate is continental or moderately continental, while in the highest regions the climate is alpine.

According to the 1994 census, Macedonia has 1,945,932 inhabitants (66.5% Macedonians, 22.9% Albanians, 4.0% Turks, 2.3% Romanies, 2.0% Serbs, .4% Vlachs and 1.8% other national minorities). It is interesting that 60% of the population are concentrated in big cities, and 40% live in the villages. More than 25% of the population live in the state capital, Skopje.¹ Contrary to the official data on the ethnic composition, the government of the neighbouring Albania thinks that the presence of Albanians was minimised in the census results; it claims that almost 40% of the Macedonian population is Albanian.²

Macedonia is a parliamentary democracy, and its constitutional model accepted the solutions of the developed Western democracies. The legislative power is concentrated in Sobranje (parliament) which, according to the 1991 Constitution, is "a citizens' representative body". The representatives are elected in general, direct, free, and secret elections for a four-year mandate. Sobranje is in permanent session. The Constitution stipulates that the total number of representatives may range between 120 and 140 rep-

¹ Euroasian File, Macedonia Special Issue, Turkish International Cooperation Agency, no. 105, August 1998, p. 1.

² Zlatko Isaković, *Međunarodni položaj Makedonije /International position of Macedonia/*, in: *Suvremeni procesi i odnosi na Balkanu*, Institut za međunarodnu politiku i privredu and Centar za međunarodne studije at the Faculty of Political Science, Belgrade, 1997, p. 380.

representatives.³ The competences of *Sobranje* are: designing and amending the Constitution, passing laws, ratification of international treaties, deciding on war and peace, deciding on co-operation, joining and leaving alliances, or uniting with other states, appointment of the judges for regular courts and the Constitutional Court.⁴ Head of the government, who constitutionally holds executive power, is a prime minister. President of the republic appoints prime ministers, who appoint the cabinet members, who are confirmed by *Sobranje*. The government is responsible for implementing laws, for the national budget, proposing bills and budget, controlling the operation of the administrative bodies and for establishing diplomatic relations.⁵ The cabinet may be faced with a no-confidence vote by the parliament, terminating its mandate. The cabinet members may not be members of parliament at the same time.

President of the Republic is Head of State, elected via direct and secret elections for a five-year mandate; the same person may be elected to this function not more than twice. President must be at least forty years old and a Macedonian citizen who has lived on its territory for at least ten years out of the fifteen years preceding the elections.⁶ He or she is Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, appoints and withdraws ambassadors, performs various ceremonial duties and proposes two members of the Constitutional Court.⁷ Under certain circumstances president may have the right of a suspending veto over certain bills submitted to the parliament. Although, according to the Constitution, the Republic of Macedonia is defined as a parliamentary democracy, in fact it functions more like a presidential democracy due to a very prominent role of its president, Kiro Gligorov, in the country's political life.

Geostrategic Security Position

Situated as it is in the centre of the Balkans, Macedonia is a key traffic artery in south-east Europe and a pivotal communication point. Due to political, economic, and military considerations, the geostrategic interests of the neighbouring countries have historically and traditionally been linked to this region, manifested in their efforts to seize control over this territory. On the other hand, this is the point where not only the interests and ambitions of the neighbouring states collide, but also those of major European powers. The construction of the Balkan transversal east-west, connecting Macedonia (via Bulgaria) with western and eastern Europe as well as with Near and Middle East, and (via Albania) with the Adriatic and south-east Europe, has given this region a great strategic and economic prominence. Macedonia is extremely important

³ Article 62 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, according to: *Novi ustavi na tlu bivše Jugoslavije /The new constitutions on the territory of the former Yugoslavia/,* *Međunarodna politika*, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Political Science, Belgrade, 1995, p. 139.

⁴ Article 68 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, *ibid.*, pp. 141-2.

⁵ Article 91 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, *ibid.* p.148.

⁶ Article 80 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, *ibid.* pp.144-5.

⁷ Article 84 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, *ibid.* p.146.

for the security of the whole Balkan region, the reason why great European and world powers, particularly the US, have taken great pains not to allow the flare-up of another conflict on the Balkans. US policy embraced Macedonia from the moment it was created as a state. Thanks to such American support and help, Macedonia has managed to fend off all the problems in its relations with its neighbours.⁸

The geographic factor, due to its topography, communication lines and other natural characteristics, offers very favourable conditions for the defence of Macedonia's territory. However, its relatively small and closed territory, without indirect (rivers) or direct access to the sea, is an obstacle to organising eventual defence and receiving economic and military aid in case of war.⁹

Sources of Threats to National Security

Macedonia is faced with all those sources of national security risks which are typical for other transitional states. Official Macedonian concerns most often cite, as the sources of dangers to national security, the escalation of the conflict on Kosovo, and the expansionist aspirations of some neighbouring countries to create greater nation-states by seizing pieces of Macedonian territory. Internal threats to national security that are paid most attention to are terrorism, inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts.¹⁰ This might be surmised from the answer to one of the questions asked in a poll conducted from March to May of 1996 on the random sample of 2,800 respondents by the Agency for public polling NIP *Nova Makedonija – DATA PRESS* of Skopje on the subject "Peace in Macedonia". The question was: "What represents the biggest threat to peace in Macedonia?"; the respondents answered in the following manner (in the descending order): social injustice (riots) 39.86%, the conflict between Macedonians and Albanians 39.9%, unanswered 12.56%, the outbreak of a war on Kosovo 12.43% and the neighbouring countries 5.86%.¹¹ On the whole, among the sources of possible threats to the national security of Macedonia, the most prominent are the existing and potential ethnic and religious strifes and unresolved disputes with the neighbouring countries.

⁸ On American policy towards Macedonia, see: Radovan Vukadinović, *Američka politika na jugoistoku Europe / American policy in south-east Europe*, *Politička misao*, vo. 35, no. 4, 1998, p. 16.

⁹ Slobodan Dimiškovski, *Osnovi na nacionalnata odbrana na Republika Makedonija: vojno-politički spekti*, NIP Globus, Skopje, 1996, pp. 153-64.

¹⁰ *Bela knjiga za obranata na Republika Makedonija*, Ministry of defence, Skopje, 1998, pp. 23-4.

¹¹ See: Olga Murdzeva-Skarik and Svetomir Skarik, *Peace and UNPREDEP in Macedonia*, paper presented at the XVI Conference IPRA Creating Nonviolent Futures, Australia, 8-12 June 1996, p. 25.

Ethnic and Religious Conflicts

For Macedonia, the biggest ethnic and religious problem is the position of the Albanian minority that makes up 22.9% of the total population (according to some estimates even 40%). Although this national minority, due to the help of international community, is largely integrated in the Macedonian society, enjoying a high degree of political, territorial, and cultural autonomy, in the long run it can represent a huge security problem for Macedonia. Due to their demographic growth, the Albanians are going to become a majority nation in Macedonia in a few decades, a development that Macedonians have not been looking forward to. If it occurs, there would be another Albanian state in this region that would probably strive for the unification with the existing Albania, an enormous security risk. This – but not only this – makes the Macedonian security issue most complex and dangerous.¹²

The fast-growing Albanian population, mostly concentrated on the part of the territory near the border with Albania, first expressed their demand for being recognised as one of the two constitutive peoples and then, perhaps not so explicitly, the demand for a territorial-political autonomy within Macedonia. Since the Albanians did not take part in the 1991 referendum for the independence of Macedonia, and the government in Skopje refused their demand for autonomy, the Albanians began clamouring for independence. So, on 10 and 11 January 1992, they organised their own referendum, on which as many as 90% of the Albanians voted for independence. Skirmishes with Macedonians ensued,¹³ which provoked the international community to get involved. In the early stages of the functioning of the Macedonian state, its emerging army was not able to protect its borders; its borders were protected by the understaffed and undermanned police forces, the reason that a large numbers of Albanians from Kosovo and Albania illegally entered Macedonia. Basically, the conflict between the Macedonians and the Albanians is similar to the conflict on Kosovo.¹⁴ The existing political, economic, and security situation increases frustrations on both sides: one party claims that this presents a danger for the integrity of the Macedonian state, and the other is frustrated by the inability to unite with the neighbouring Albania.

Some majority nations, like Macedonian today, may in the coming decades become minorities. Thus it might happen that Macedonians, as well as some other peoples on the Balkans, by securing human and ethnic rights for the existing minorities, are securing their own future survival. On the other hand, minority ethnic groups will not be able to secure the conditions for their survival unless they develop effective

¹² Siniša Tatalović, *Etnički aspekti sigurnosti Jugoistoka Europe /Ethnic aspects of the security of south-east Europe/*, *Politička misao*, vol. 35, no. 2, 1998, p. 74.

¹³ In early November of 1993, Macedonian police arrested a group of Albanians and charged them with attempting to establish an illegal “autonomous province of ‘Ilirida’” in the west of Macedonia and later to secede and unite with Albania and, eventually, with an independent Kosovo. Dušan Janjić, “National Identities, Movements and Nationalism of Serbs and Albanians”, *Balkan Forum*, Vol. 3, no. 1, March 1995, pp. 21, 64.

¹⁴ For more details on this conflict, see Zlatko Isaković, “Macedonia and the Security in the Balkans”, *CSS Survey*, no. 5-6, May-June 1996, pp. 1-3.

communication and other kinds of relations with the majority nation. In the circumstances in which one loyal minority may expect that today's majority is to become a loyal minority in the future, it must be able to envision the circumstances in which it will eventually turn into a majority population. This means that security is reciprocal, both today and in the future, since roles may reverse, so it is either security for all or for nobody.¹⁵ This means that both sides have to be able to look upon their security as a function of the other side's security.

Disputes with the Neighbouring States

Macedonia's independence triggered off an immediate Greek protest, since in Macedonia it is thought that a large portion of the Macedonian people live in Aegean Macedonia in Greece, and because Greece does not recognise the Macedonian nation, let alone that a section of it lives in Greece.¹⁶ The Greco-Macedonian dispute revolves around three issues: the name of Macedonia, the national flag, and some sections of the Macedonian constitution which, according to Greece, may imply its territorial pretensions towards Greece.¹⁷ Macedonia incorporated into its flag Alexander the Great's star, which originated in Greece. Certain Macedonian parties and politicians claim that Greece "has no legitimate rights to the Aegean Macedonia",¹⁸ and display maps on which 38% of the territory of the "Greater Macedonia" is within Macedonia's borders, 51% in northern Greece, and 11% in western Bulgaria.¹⁹ Only thanks to the US mediation, and the fact that the USA and its allies sent to Macedonia 796 soldiers²⁰ as part of a special peacekeeping operation UNPREDEP, the conflict did not escalate. Even more, in bilateral talks, certain contentious issues (e. g. the flag and constitutional wording) have more or less been resolved. An important step in finding permanent solution was the recognition of Macedonia by the European Union on 6 October 1995; Greece also gave its blessing and lifted its economic blockade of Macedonia. For the

¹⁵ Zlatko Isaković, *Međunarodni položaj Makedonije*, op. cit. p. 390.

¹⁶ Despite Badinter's arbitrary commission's opinion, Macedonia was recognised only at the end of July of 1992, due to the Greek opposition. Greece accepted the existence of an independent state of Macedonia instead of "the former Yugoslav Socialist Republic of Macedonia", but not under a name that would include the word "Macedonia". Macedonia nevertheless became a UN member under a temporary "technical" name of the "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" – FYROM.

¹⁷ Ranko Petković, *Međunarodni položaj i spoljna politika balkanskih zemalja /International position and foreign-policy of Balkan countries/*, in: *Balkan '97, Evropski pokret u Srbiji*, Belgrade, 1997, p. 10.

¹⁸ According to Eric Herring, "International Security and Democratization in Eastern Europe", in Geoffrey Pridham, Eric Herring, and George Stanford (eds.), *Building Democracy? The International Dimensions of Democratization in Eastern Europe*, Leicester University Press, London, 1994, p. 99.

¹⁹ See: Hakan Wiberg: "Societal Security and the Explosion of Yugoslavia", in Ole Weaver, Bary Buzan, Marten Kelstrup, and Pierre Lemaitre (eds.), *Identity, Migrations and New Security Agenda in Europe*, Pinter Publishers Ltd, London, 1993, p. 105.

²⁰ *The Military Balance 1998/99*, Macedonia, p. 89.

time being, a new name for Macedonia has not been found, primarily due to internal political reasons on both sides.²¹

Although Bulgaria was among the first states to recognise Macedonia, it does not recognise the Macedonian nation and the Macedonian language, a possible source of conflict between these two countries.²² The unwillingness of Bulgaria to recognise Macedonia is twofold: it wants to prove that in Bulgaria (Pirin Macedonia) there are no Macedonians, but also to express its territorial pretensions regarding Macedonia in which, it claims, there are no Macedonians but only Bulgarians. Bulgaria has recognised the Macedonian state, but not the existence of the separate Macedonian nation i. e. for Bulgaria, Macedonia is just another Bulgarian state. This represents a risk not only for the relations between these two countries but for the security of the whole southeastern Europe.

In the relations between Macedonia and Albania, the bone of contention is the position of a large number of Albanians who live in the western and north-western part of Macedonia. This issue has been radicalised by some Albanian parties in Macedonia, whose activities have been co-ordinated with their counterparts in Kosovo and Albania. These internal ethnic strifes greatly affect Macedonian relations with Albania, who has recognised Macedonia, but considers it a state that does not belong exclusively to the Macedonian people. Albania is for a diplomatic solution to the problem of the Macedonian Albanians, but also lets it be known that in case of a war in Macedonia, it will not stand by idly, but plans to come to the Albanian minority's help.

Although Macedonia cultivates good relations with SR Yugoslavia²³, particularly in the economic sphere, this country presents the biggest security threat for Macedonia. The Macedonian public is wary about the possibility that the ethnic violence between Serbs and Albanians, and especially the renewed hostilities on Kosovo, might relatively fast spread into Macedonia. That is why the least predictable threats to the national security of Macedonia are those linked with the developments in the neighbouring Kosovo, or Serbia and SR Yugoslavia. The relations between Macedonia and SR Yugoslavia might worsen because SR Yugoslavia, due to its geopolitical and military-strategic concerns, cannot be indifferent whether Macedonia is an independent state and a good neighbour or harbours on its territory military bases of great powers which

²¹ See: Nikolaos Zahariadis, "Is the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Security Threat to Greece?", *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 5, no. 1, winter 1994, pp. 100-1.

²² After World War II, Bulgaria recognised the existence of a Macedonian minority on its territory (in 1956, more than 63% of the population of the Pirin Macedonia declared themselves Macedonians), but this was soon disclaimed as was – later – the existence of the Turkish minority in that country. Stanko Todorov, a member of the Politburo of the Bulgarian Communist Party declared in 1985 that Bulgaria is a mononational state. See: Vojislav Stanovčić, *History and Status of Ethnic Conflicts*, in: Denisov Rusinow (ed.) *Yugoslavia – A Fractured Federalism*, The Wilson Center Press, Washington, DC, 1988, p. 24.

²³ Macedonia exports into SR Yugoslavia goods in the amount of \$50,387,000, or 17.3% of total exports, and imports from SR Yugoslavia goods in the amount of \$51,387,000, or 13% of the total imports. According to these indicators, SR Yugoslavia is Macedonia's main trading partner. Eurasian File, Macedonia Special Issue, Turkish International Cooperation Agency, no. 105, August 1998, p. 5.

might pose a threat to the Yugoslav security.²⁴ Some authors think that in case of a conflict between Macedonians and the Macedonian Albanians, Serbs would become Macedonian allies and not a threat to its security.²⁵

National Interests

The goal of the Macedonian national security policy and the system of national security is to realise fundamental national interests. In defining its national interests, Macedonia started from very high democratic standards which should enable it a rapid integration into the European political, economic and security organisations. The national interests are as follows:

- protection of life and security of the citizens;
- protection of independence and territorial integrity of the state, securing political freedoms, civil and human rights, including the rights of religious, ethnic, and other minorities;
- providing material well-being and prosperity of the citizens.²⁶

Besides these general national interests concrete, specific interests have been defined as follows:

- economic and political integration into the European Union;
- political or military integration into the collective systems of security (OUN, OSCE, NATO and WEU);
- developing and protecting democratic institutions in the political system;
- developing an economic system based on the market economy principles;
- willingness for co-operation with all neighbours;
- organisation of a defence system.²⁷

National Security Policy

Starting from the stated national interests, the national security policy of Macedonia is a part of the global politics of the Republic of Macedonia and includes the protection of life and personal security of its citizens, independence and territorial integrity of the state, political freedoms, civil and human rights, material well-being and prosperity of its citizens. In order to accomplish these goals, national security policy is based on the following principles:

²⁴ Slavoljub Šušić, *Balkanski geopolitički košmar*, NIU "Vojska", Belgrade, 1995, p. 287.

²⁵ Zlatko Isaković, *Međunarodni položaj ... op. cit.*, p. 382.

²⁶ *Bela knjiga za obranata ... op. cit.*, p. 25.

²⁷ *Strategy of the Defence of the Republic of Macedonia*, President of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, 1998, p. 11.

- organisation of defence as a system that enables the realisation of the right and the duty of each citizen to protect and defend the country, as guaranteed by the Constitution;
- organisation of defence so that it enables the individual and the collective armed self-defence in case of a military aggression, as guaranteed by Article 51 of the UN Charter;
- developing the defensive character of the defence system;
- organisation of the military forces as deterrence in case of an aggression and other forms of external threats to the security of the country; the forces should be organised in such a way as to be able to offer armed resistance in case of an aggression;
- organisation of defence with the purpose of securing a comprehensive protection of the inviolability of the airspace and preventing its eventual violation for carrying out an aggression on the third countries;
- securing the continuity of the economic and the political system under all circumstances.²⁸

In line with this, the political dimension of the defence strategy of Macedonia is based on the following:

- deterrence from aggression;
- defence of the country in case of an aggression; and
- co-ordination of the defensive efforts and activities with other countries', using regular venues of international co-operation.

In line with the Constitution of the republic of Macedonia, nobody has the right to recognise the occupation of the state or of any of its parts.²⁹ This means that the defence system of Macedonia stems from the policy of armed resistance to any attempt of aggression and leading a defensive war on the entire territory. The defence system has the task to provide the conditions for the functioning of all government bodies and institutions and their integration into the systems of collective security. Macedonia has been trying to secure guarantees for its national security from the international security organisations; that is why it has given its support to them and opted for active participation in them. It is particularly interested in the co-operation in the creation of the new European security architecture based on NATO, OSCE and WEU.

The defence system of Macedonia has defined its peacetime and wartime structure, the goals of development, preparation and deployment of its armed forces in all conditions, as well as their comprehensive civilian control and administration. That is why the defence system involves the entire defence potential of the country: the citizens, the government, the armed forces, the civil defence, the local self-rule bodies, the public institutions and companies of special importance for national security and defence.

²⁸ Bela knjiga za obranata ... op. cit. p. 25

²⁹ Article 123 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia ... op. cit., p. 155.

Defence Doctrine

In designing and evolving the defence doctrine, Macedonia starts from the following general principles:

- constitutional and legal provisions and the adopted policies;
- historical experiences, particularly those from the Second World War (war of liberation) in Macedonia and those from the wars waged after it (particularly those led on the territory of the former Yugoslavia);
- analyses of the evolution and the features of military-political doctrines in the realisation of political goals;
- analyses of today's technology for waging wars and the character of combat systems and equipment;
- estimates that, judging by the strategic situation in Europe, both now and in the near future, an armed conflict (a regional or continental war) on a broad scale is not expected;
- the exceptionally well-developed relations of Macedonia with the European and world powers;
- the fact that in its vicinity there are still certain forces that harbour expansionist aspirations regarding the Macedonian territory.³⁰

Using its national interests and the needs of the Macedonian people and other nationalities, Macedonia has made some energetic efforts to direct its activities towards the preservation of peace and security in the country and the Balkans. It advocates peaceful solutions to all contentious issues among states and peoples, co-operation and friendly relationships with all states, particularly with the neighbouring ones, based on the principles of equality, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and other countries' interests. Nevertheless, preoccupied with its internal problems and the hostile neighbours, it is in no hurry to enter into security arrangements that might bring it more harm than benefit.³¹

Starting from these principles in its foreign policy orientation, Macedonia does not recognise or accept war and other forms of violence as a political means in settling disputes among states but does recognise the right of every state to self-defence in accordance with the UN Charter. This means that Macedonia may find itself embroiled in a war only if it were imposed on it by an armed attack on its independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

If that were the case, Macedonia will offer resistance to any aggressor by an all-out defensive war, engaging all possible human, material, technical, and spiritual resources at the state's disposal on its territory; the resistance will cease only when the aggressor retreats from the country. In defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity, Macedonia would rely primarily on its own assets and capacities, as well as on the support of international security organisations. All its citizens would take part in the

³⁰ Slobodan Dimiškovski, *Osnovi na nacionalnata ...* op. cit., pp. 239-41.

³¹ Radovan Vukadinović, *Postkomunistički izazovi evropskoj sigurnosti /Post-communist challenges to European security/*, Grafotisak, Grude, 1997, p. 54.

defence. The basic form of resistance would be armed struggle, led by the armed forces, plus the utilisation of all other possible forms of combat, resistance, and unarmed underground activities.

System of National Security

Managing national security

Managing national security in peace and war is done by means of constitutional and legitimate functions of the legislative and executive power. Sobranje of the Republic of Macedonia, as a representative body of the citizens and the carrier of the legislative power, controls how the government's authorities are enforced in the realm of national security and defence, monitors the combat readiness of the state for defence, declares the presence of an immediate war threat, declares the state of war and the end of the state of war, and introduces the wartime budget. The parliamentary committee for interior affairs and defence participates in the preparation of all bills from the domain of national security and defence and controls the realisation of the legal and the constitutional provisions on defence, particularly those from the Law on defence.

The military command is based on the principles of the integrated command in the use of the forces, the means and the enforcement of the obligations concerning the execution of the decisions and orders of the superior officers. President of the Republic is Commander-in-Chief. Within their constitutional function of Commanders-in-Chief, presidents define strategy and plan of the defence of the Republic, decide on the introduction of security measures, regulate the organisation and the formation of the armed forces, their development, the deployment of the army; they also order the mobilisation of the armed forces and the enforcement of the security measures, and perform other tasks in accordance to the Law on Defence.³² Presidents chair the Security Council of the republic, which also includes Sobranje's Speaker, Prime Minister and the ministers of security, defence and foreign affairs, and three members appointed by the president. The Council discusses security and defence matters and sends proposals to Sobranje and the government.³³

The government of the Republic of Macedonia, as the carrier of executive power, has the following defence-related tasks: proposes the funds necessary for defence, draws up the budget for the state of war, outlines the plan for the state's defence, discusses the issues regarding the security and the defence of the Republic and submits motions to Sobranje. The government decides on the regulations, decisions and other acts concerning national security and defence.

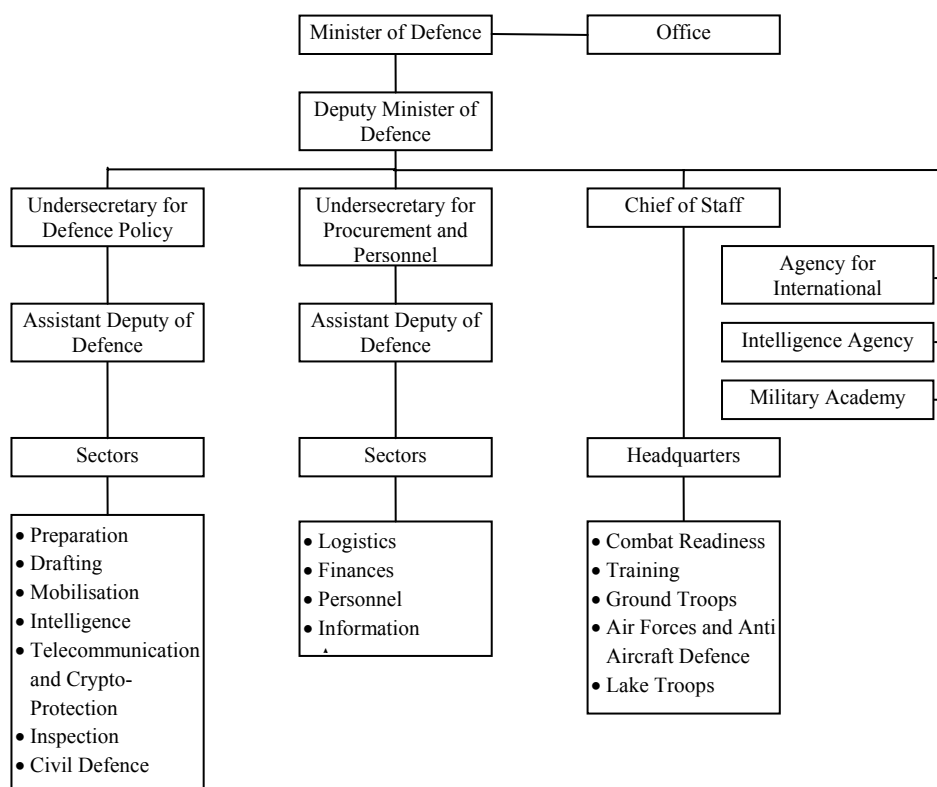
Ministry of Defence designs the defence strategy, gives estimates of the possible military and other threats, monitors the organisation and preparation of the defence system and proposes measures for its development and improvement, works out the

³² Biljana Vankovska and Ivan Cvetkovski, *Pravo i odbranata*, ROBZ, Skopje, 1996, pp. 308-9.

³³ Article 86 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, p. 146.

defence plan, organises the transfer of security measures and monitors their implementation, identifies the developmental needs and procures the resources allocated to defence, plans and outlines the structure and the documents for the development of the armed forces, secures the command of the army, replenishes the armed forces and arranges the conscription, controls and evaluates the combat readiness of the armed forces and performs other tasks in line with the Law on defence.

Fig. 1. Structure of the Ministry of Defence



Source: WEB page of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Macedonia, address: www.morm.gov.mk/mak/osnovi.htm

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, there are no restrictions in the co-operation with international military-political organisations, unless the co-operation runs counter to the Constitution and the national interests of the state. The Constitution stipulates that the decision to join or leave an international organisation can be brought by Sobranje, with the majority vote of the total number of MPs, upon the proposal by President of the Republic, the government or at least forty MPs.³⁴ Based on this Article, Sobranje on 23 November 1993 passed the Decision on the full membership in the NATO. The Decision represented the basis for Macedonia's acceptance in the Partnership for Peace.

Military defence

In order to organise military defence, Macedonia established its own armed forces following its independence. In case of war, the army of the Republic of Macedonia will carry out armed struggle. The law defines the army as an armed force of all the citizens of the Republic, which is in line with the civil definition of the political system of a state. Its fundamental constitutional task consists in diverting all potential external threats, as well as conducting armed struggle for the protection of territorial integrity and independence in case of an aggression. Exceptionally, and only by a presidential decree, the army of the Republic of Macedonia can take part in certain actions aimed at eliminating the consequences of a state of emergency. This does not change the basic orientation of military defence because, according to the Constitution, "a state of emergency can be introduced in case of natural disasters or epidemics".

The peacetime composition of armed forces is designed so that it encompasses about 1% of the total population or about 20,000 soldiers and officers (9,000 are recruits doing military service).³⁵ In accordance with their needs, and having in mind the existing standards in the developed democratic countries, the armed forces of the Republic of Macedonia are made up of two parts: the operational units and the reserves. The operational units are prepared in peacetime conditions for a successful execution of their constitutional role, if a need arises. The reserve corps of the armed forces is made up of the citizens who have served in the army, after which they are deployed in the reserve military units. The armed forces of the Republic of Macedonia consist of ground troops, air forces, anti-aircraft units and lake troops.

The ranks of the Macedonian armed forces are filled by soldiers who serve military service lasting nine months and professional soldiers.³⁶ Macedonians make a majority of the recruits; the percentage of the Albanians increased from 7.5% in 1992 to 26.5% at the end of 1993. Some authors think this increase means that the Albanians have either decided to accept the Macedonian state as their own or want to use the army for

³⁴ Article 121 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, p. 155.

³⁵ The Military Balance 1998/99, Macedonia, p. 89.

³⁶ At the end of 1996, professional soldiers and officers made up 35% of the total number of Macedonia's armed forces.

strengthening their position in a possible conflict.³⁷ In comparison with the neighbouring countries, Macedonia has the fewest peacetime and reserve soldiers per 1,000 inhabitants (if we exclude the members of the Albanian paramilitary troops); the number of peacetime soldiers per 1,000 inhabitants is smaller only in Bulgaria.

The central place in the Macedonian armed forces belongs to the training of its troops. Joining the Partnership for Peace meant more radical changes, primarily establishing schools for the existing sectors and agencies. There are constant changes and modifications in military training in order to conform to the western standards, without overstraining Macedonia's financial capacities. The army has adopted a combined training system which includes a contractual training of soldiers, training of recruited soldiers and units, training of the reserves, and the regular in-service education of officers. The contractual training is modelled on the western systems. It focuses on testing mental and physical stamina, shooting drills in all conditions, and doing task-oriented drills. Training recruits and regular military service units is divided into two periods. The period of basic training lasts five months and the period of additional training lasts four months and focuses on tactical drills with ammunition. The reserves train in individual and group drills and exercises. Officers are educated at the Military Academy in Skopje.

The armed forces are not equipped with the sophisticated firepower technology, communication technology, state-of-the-art reconnaissance equipment, logistics, and other equipment necessary to a modern army. At present, their army has at its disposal the equipment and the weapons that used to belong to the former territorial defence of Macedonia. Although this is obsolete technology, it is thought that it is of utmost importance for it to be handled and operated expertly and efficiently so that it can be optimally used in a war. The army has gradually stocked itself: four Zlin 242 aeroplanes have been purchased, ten UTVA-75 aircrafts for school flights, and four Mi-17 helicopters³⁸, plus a considerable quantity of ammunition for ground troops, mortars and rocket launchers, radio equipment and other technology, which increased the mobility of a part of the peacetime units, the firepower and information-dissemination power. In 1998 200 vehicles for miscellaneous purposes were purchased, together with twelve armoured vehicles (BTR-80) and eighteen 105mm American howitzers, a big step in the modernisation of the army.³⁹

³⁷ See: Stefan Troebst, "Macedonia: Powder Keg Defused", *RFE/RL Research Report*. No. 47, January 28, 1994, p. 20. On the importance of ethnicity for the Macedonian army, see: Biljana Vankovska-Cvetkovska, "The Trial of Democracy in: 'Macedonia: The Ethnic Problems and the Military'", paper presented at the International Conference IPSA, Research Committee "Armed Forces and Society", *National Security and Globalisation*; Seoul, South Korea, 23-26 July 1996, pp. 10-5.

³⁸ The Military Balance 1998/99, Macedonia, p. 89.

³⁹ Bela knjiga za obranata ..., p. 78.

Civil defence

Doctrinally and theoretically, civil defence in the Republic of Macedonia is treated as a sub-system within the integral defence system; it has an appropriate place, role, organisation and tasks. It is an “element of the defence system of the state, organised and prepared to secure by non-military and non-violent means, the defence and the protection of the population and the material resources in peace, states of emergency, and war; to secure the functioning of the government, production, and social services; and to create the conditions for non-armed forms of aggression-resistance in case of need.”⁴⁰ However, in practice civil defence has not been constituted yet, not even normatively or legally. At present, in Macedonia there are only some elements of civil defence and that in a very narrow sense. In this sector, whose tasks are protection and safety, there are 180 specialised manoeuvre units (manned by 14,000 reserves). Also, 1,400 shelters, with the capacity of 130,000, have been built. As of lately, a need has been felt for redefining the place, role, and significance of civil defence, from the standpoint of its link with the military defence (armed forces), in order to increase their mutual efficacy and co-ordination.

Finances

Defence as an activity of special state interest is financed from the national budget. The allocation for defence budget is done for each fiscal year in accordance with the stipulated legal procedure. Passing the budget goes through several phases, with the participation of Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Finance, the government, the Committee for Interior Affairs and Defence, and Sobranje. In the budget procedure, the right to give initiatives, outline drafts and proposals belongs to the executive authorities, while Sobranje as a legislative body votes for the budget in December of the current year for the next year. After the budget has been passed, the president of the Republic signs the declaration of the budget proposal, after which it is treated as a public document and published in “*Službeni vesnik Republike Makedonije*”. Apart from fulfilling its legal obligations in all the phases of the budget procedure, the Ministry of Defence performs other continual tasks: sees that the forces are utilised optimally, that the financial resources are appropriately projected, planned, and allocated into various funds, and takes care that the defence capacities are maximised within the framework of the resources allocated by the state.

Macedonian army may be considered the weakest on the Balkans, but its defence budget takes up the smallest percentage of GNP. The defence budget for 1998 was 3,900,158,000 denars (1 dollar is 56.2 denars), which represented 2.27% of GNP or 8.56% of the state budget.⁴¹ The structure of defence costs was as follows:

⁴⁰ Stojan Kuzev, *Civilna obranam* NIP Đurđa, Skopje, 1996, p. 203.

⁴¹ Bela knjiga za obranata..., op. cit. p. 66.

No.	Type of expense	Amount (in denars)	%
1.	Salaries	1,764,905,000	45.25
2.	Maintenance	1,686,969,673	43.25
3.	Equipment	420,147,327	10.77
4.	Research and development	8,036,000	.21
5.	Other expenses	20,100,000	.52
	Total Expenses	3,900,158,000	100.00

Source: Bela knjiga za obranata na Republika Makedonija, Ministra of Defence, Skopje, 1998, p. 66.

In the projection of Macedonia's economic development until 2002, an increase of the state budget is envisioned, based on the average annual growth of GNP of 4.3%. This means that the Macedonian defence budget for 2002, despite a decrease in defence spending to 2.1% of GNP will amount to 5,445,000,000 denars.⁴²

The Relation Macedonia – International Community

The survival of independent Macedonia has to a large extent depended on the support of the international community and the deployment of the peacekeeping forces. The leadership has enjoyed remarkable popular support. According to the results of a poll in Macedonia, conducted in December of 1992, to the question "Do you approve of the presence of the UN peacekeeping forces in Macedonia", 48.6% of the respondents answered affirmatively, 41.2% were against, while 9.59 did not answer. To the question "Does UNPROFOR's presence alleviate the risk of a war in Macedonia", 50.74% of the respondents answered negatively, 38.2% answered positively, while 11.4% did not answer. And finally, to the question "Who should have decided on the arrival of UNPROFOR troops to Macedonia?", the respondents answered in the following way: the citizens in a referendum (43.7%), President Kiro Gligorov (21.49%), Sobranje (18.18%), the government (7.93%), unanswered (4.46%), minister of defence (3.14%), minister of the exterior (1.32%).⁴³

The original UNPROFOR peacekeeping mission was later replaced by the UNPREDEP mission, whose mandate is based on the concept of pre-emptive diplomacy which has taken the following forms: (1) patrolling Macedonia's borders with Albania and SR Yugoslavia, monitoring and reporting on the events that might undermine the trust and the stability of the host country and pose a threat to its territory; (2) strengthening mutual respect and promoting the dialogue among political, social and ethnic forces and groups in Macedonia; (3) aiding social development and progress; and (4) promoting multicultural and multiethnic co-operation. According to the results of the already mentioned 1992 poll, the answers to the question "What does UNPREDEP rep-

⁴² Ibid., p. 70.

⁴³ Olga Murdzeva-Skarik and Svetomir Skarik, op. cit. p. 25.

resent in Macedonia?” were as follows: a new UN method for preserving peace (73.28%), forces for protecting Macedonia from its neighbours (11.57%), unanswered (9.29%) and military forces for protecting the country from a war from the north (5.86%). To the question “Whose interests are protected by UNPREDEP?”, 37.58% answered that they protect the interests of the Republic of Macedonia, US interests (21.71%), UN interests (16.29), EU’s interests (13.71%), while 10.71% did not answer. To the question “Is there a need for UNPREDEP in Macedonia?”, 51.29% of the respondents answered positively, 35.71% negatively, while 13% did not answer. To the question “Could peace in Macedonia be preserved without UNPREDEP?”, there were 50.29% positive and 26% negative answers, and 23.71% of the respondents did not answer. To the question “Is UNPREDEP able to prevent a potential war in the Republic of Macedonia?”, 40% of the respondents answered negatively, 36.86% answered positively, while 23.14 of them did not answer.⁴⁴

After Slovenia, Macedonia was the second former Yugoslav republic that on 15 November 1995 became the 27th member of the NATO’s program “Partnership for Peace”; not long ago, USA and Macedonia negotiated an agreement for a reciprocal deployment of an unspecified number of the other country’s soldiers on their respective territories, for an unlimited term.⁴⁵ The governments of both countries have put in tremendous efforts into the development of bilateral relations. It seems that the purpose of such an orientation of the Macedonian government was to lay down the conditions for accomplishing several very important internal and foreign-policy goals, primarily those linked with the neighbouring countries. On the one hand, the establishment of the political and military co-operation with USA should pacify the Albanian minority in Macedonia, both directly – by exerting influence on the behaviour of that minority’s political leaders – and indirectly, by its sway over the leaders of Albania proper, with whom USA have already established rather intensive and amicable relations. On the other hand, this has had a purpose of securing a more flexible Greek stance on the thorny issues. Third, Macedonian leadership probably thinks that the American presence on its soil fortifies its political position in relation to the neighbouring Bulgaria i. e. that somehow it dampens the possible Bulgarian aspirations that might challenge Macedonia’s independence and territorial integrity. The fourth major goal of the establishment of such close military and other relations with USA was linked with the expected behaviour of SR Yugoslavia towards Macedonia following the cessation of hostilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.⁴⁶ The presence of foreign troops on the territory of Macedonia is in the function of its national security. This has strengthened the belief of the Macedonian leadership that the US, in case of a conflict with Albania, Greece, Bulgaria, or SR Yugoslavia, would adopt an approach similar to the one

⁴⁴ See: Olga Murdzeva-Skarik and Svetomir Skarik, *op. cit.* p. 16 and pp. 26-7.

⁴⁵ This has already been used as a pretext for about 2,000 more NATO soldiers to be deployed with the mandate to take part in the withdrawal of OESS monitors from Kosovo, if necessary. It is expected that very shortly another contingent of 3,000 NATO soldiers will be dispatched to Macedonia.

⁴⁶ See: Duncan M. Perry, “The Republic of Macedonia: Foreign Relations, Issues, and Dilemmas”, *Analysis of Current Events*, Association for the Study of Nationalities (Eastern Europe and ex-USSR), Year 6, no. 10, History Department, City College of New York, May 1995, pp. 1-3.

employed in the Greco-Turkish conflict;⁴⁷ at the same time this has reduced its relevance in international relations, primarily due to the possibility that it has been turned into an American “military base”, or a protectorate, and that the country’s political life gets militarised.⁴⁸

On the other hand, since the idea of a neutral Macedonia has been abandoned, it is thought that Macedonian leadership has missed on the historic opportunity to become a model for peaceful solutions to conflicts, as well as for the elimination of certain types of weapons from the Balkans. According to certain estimates, due to the Russian opposition to NATO’s eastern expansion, Macedonia can easily turn from “an oasis of peace” into “an apple of discontent and a destabilising factor on the Balkans and beyond”.⁴⁹ This is indirectly contained in official Macedonian opinions that point out that NATO is the sole guarantor of the stability and security in Europe and that there is no other organisation organised and efficient enough to be able to efficiently and rapidly secure stability and prevent conflicts.⁵⁰ That is why Macedonia views NATO as the bastion of the European security architecture and aspires to expediently become its full member.

Conclusion

Contrary to the predictions, Macedonia has managed to preserve its independence despite a plethora of internal problems and external threats. This was accomplished by means of a balanced foreign policy and the staunch US support. US recognised in Macedonia the stabilising factor for the plight of the Balkan countries. However, even after eight years of independence Macedonia has not eliminated the threats to its national security. Some of them, like the Kosovo imbroglio, have become even more dangerous. Should armed conflicts erupt in Macedonia, chances are – due to the level of its economic development, and political and military power – that Macedonia would not be able to defend itself successfully in an eventual simultaneous confrontation with its internal paramilitary units and the armies of, perhaps, several neighbouring countries. In this case, Macedonia would probably have to “choose the lesser of two evils” i.e. to side with Bulgarian and Albanians who, in case of a victory, might then partition the country, or to enter into an alliance with Greeks and Serbs who might, in case of a victory, challenge its independence. If the parties Macedonia sides with lose the war, the disappearance of Macedonia from the international scene would even be more certain.

⁴⁷ In that sense, the preemptive intentions of this super-power are manifested in joint manouvres of the Albanian and the Macedonian troops on the territory of both countries, as well as in some other activities.

⁴⁸ See: Olga Murdzeva-Skarik and Svetomir Skarik, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁴⁹ Olga Murdzeva-Skarik and Svetomir Skarik, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-2. In the opinion of one author, it is less important whether the state is to be called the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or by its constitutional name; much more important is the fact that it can still be called a “powder keg” and “bone of contention” (Biljana Vankovska-Cvetkovska, *op. cit.*, p. 2).

⁵⁰ Bela knjiga za obranata..., *op. cit.*, p. 29.

It may be concluded that Macedonia, like other multiethnic Balkan states, might in the long run secure its survival if it – based on the defence model used by Switzerland, Sweden, or Finland – protected itself with (relatively) small armed forces, neutrality, and tolerance among its ethnic groups. Such insubstantial defence would be much cheaper, which would stimulate the development of Macedonian economy, since the saved resources might be funnelled for other purposes. Otherwise, by arming itself and accepting a large number of foreign soldiers, Macedonia might turn from “an oasis of peace” into “a powder keg” with unforeseeable consequences for the security of south-east Europe.

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