PAN-ALBANIANISM:

HOW BIG A THREAT

TO BALKAN STABILITY?

25 February 2004

Europe Report N°153
Tirana/Brussels

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ICG Europe N°153 25 February 2004

PAN-ALBANIANISM: HOW BIG A THREAT TO BALKAN STABILITY?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Pan-Albanianism is seen by many observers as a serious threat to Balkan stability. A century of shifting borders has left ethnic Albanians scattered across Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Greece. The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), the National Liberation Army (NLA) in Macedonia, and other groups have all waged campaigns of violence in support of enhanced rights for ethnic Albanians. Where is the ceiling to their ambitions?

ICG's research suggests that notions of pan-Albanianism are far more layered and complex than the usual broad brush characterisations of ethnic Albanians simply bent on achieving a greater Albania or a greater Kosovo. It is instructive that both the KLA and NLA started to gain popular support in Kosovo and Macedonia respectively at precisely the time when they moved away from their initial pan-Albanian nationalist goals and concentrated on more rights for their own people. The "Albanian National Army" (ANA) which overtly advocated a "Greater Albania" agenda, never managed to gain popular credibility. Violence in the cause of a greater Albania, or of any shift of borders, is neither politically popular nor morally justified.

In Albania since the arrival of multiparty politics, poverty and internal political conflict have eclipsed any aspirations towards expanding the state's boundaries. Albania is more interested in developing cultural and economic ties with Kosovo, whilst maintaining separate statehood; and successive Albanian governments have opted for a strategic partnership with Macedonia as both aspire towards membership of NATO and the European Union.

There remains a risk of conflict in Kosovo, where the question of future status has not yet been resolved. The desire of the vast majority of Kosovo's population for independence is supported by most Albanians elsewhere in the Balkans. However an independent Kosovo is quite a different matter from a Greater Albania. The international community's problem is to manage the process of dealing with Kosovo's final status without destabilising its neighbour.

In both Macedonia and the Presevo Valley of Southern Serbia, conflict was ended in 2001 by internationally brokered peace agreements, respectively the Ohrid Agreement and the Covic Plan. While there is dissatisfaction with the pace of implementation of these agreements, and with the delivery of promised reforms, this has not yet reached the point of crisis; the ANA's attempts to capitalise on local discontents in Macedonia and Southern Serbia failed. Continued international attention will be necessary to ensure that all sides deliver on their promises. Montenegrin Albanians, on the other hand, have thus far resisted any form of paramilitary activity.

The large Kosovo Albanian diaspora communities living in the United States, Germany and Switzerland have played – and will continue to play – a key role in the current and future economic, social and political development of Kosovo, as well as dictating military events on the ground. They could easily open up new fronts if they wish to keep up the pressure on the numerous unresolved Albanian-related issues. For these reasons it would be advisable for the Albanian and Greek governments to try and settle the long-standing issue of the Chams displaced from Greece in 1945, before it gets hijacked and exploited by extreme nationalists, and the Chams' legitimate grievances

get lost in the struggle to further other national causes.

In the long term, Albanian nationalism will be tamed by full implementation of internationally-brokered agreements and respect for Albanians' place in Macedonian, Serbian, and Montenegrin society, together with consistent pressure on Albanian extremists and politicians who appeal to them. The process will be assisted by European integration - as the borders open between Albania and its northern neighbours, and economic and educational opportunities increase across the region. Decentralising power in Macedonia, and giving Kosovo conditional independence in return for an assurance from all the Albanian entities in the Balkans that the present borders of south-eastern Europe will remain unchanged, would also help stabilise the situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Government of Albania:

1. Continue efforts to neutralise paramilitary groups and extremist politicians by cracking down on all illegal arms trafficking and hoarding of weapons in Albania and maintaining cooperation on law-enforcement with neighbouring states and the European Union.

To UNMIK and KFOR:

2. Intensify security efforts against organised crime and political militants, in particular by securing Kosovo's borders more effectively.
3. Prepare for a peaceful, legal and democratically rooted process of resolving Kosovo's final status, including if necessary a bar on Kosovo uniting with Albania.

To the Government of Macedonia:

4. Continue implementation of the Ohrid Agreement, including security sector reforms and decentralisation.

To the Government of Serbia:

5. Reconstruct the Coordination Body for Southern Serbia.
6. Rein in extremist elements in the security forces.
7. Tighten customs controls along the Administrative Boundary with Kosovo, and crack down on organised crime.

To the Government of Montenegro:

8. Assist with the establishment of an Albanian-language teacher training college in Tuzi or Ulcinj, in order to train future elementary and secondary school teachers.

To the Government of Greece:

9. Take immediate measures to improve human rights for all Albanians resident in Greece.
10. Open negotiations on the restoration of Cham property rights.

To Albanian Political Leaders throughout the Balkans:

11. Speak out against extremist politicians and violent groups which seek to undermine the peace agreements of the last five years.

To the International Community, particularly the European Union and its Member States:

12. Continue to insist on the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement and the Covic Plan.
13. Put firmer pressure on and increase assistance to the Albanian and neighbouring governments to crack down firmly on illegal trade and smuggling.
14. Facilitate the removal of obstacles to legal inter-Albanian trade.
15. Ease the visa regime for residents of south-eastern Europe wanting to work in or visit the European Union.
16. Give a positive response to Macedonia's application for membership of the European Union, and encourage Albania's aspirations to EU membership and both Albania's and Macedonia's aspirations to join NATO.
17. Continue monitoring the activities of Albanian extremists, and the politicians who aid them.

Tirana/Brussels, 25 February 2004

ICG Europe N°153 25 February 2004

PAN-ALBANIANISM: HOW BIG A THREAT TO BALKAN STABILITY?

I. INTRODUCTION

During 2003 the spectre of militant support for a Greater Albania appeared once again in the Balkans, with a new organisation, the Albanian National Army (ANA), promising to fight for the unification of all their people in a single territory. The ANA, however, never came close to acquiring a critical mass of popular support in any of the parts of the Balkans inhabited by Albanians. Albania itself has other priorities;[1] Albanians in Macedonia since the 2001 Ohrid Agreement have not supported violent action against the state, despite much grumbling about the pace of reforms.[2] Peace in the Albanian inhabited parts of southern Serbia, bordering Kosovo, is fragile but secure for now.[3] The ANA's opportunism seems now to have been a mere flash in the pan that failed to ignite a wider conflict; it is unlikely to get any further, as most of its leading members have been arrested in the last few months and are now awaiting trial or extradition in various jurisdictions.

But the wider policy questions remain. Is there a real potential for further Balkan conflict, driven by a "Greater Albania" agenda similar to the "Greater Serbia" and "Greater Croatia" agendas that fuelled the 1992-95 Bosnian war? Or is the Albanian Question now definitively answered, with the exception of the undetermined future status of Kosovo? And what policy measures can and should be taken by the international community to ensure continued stability?

Those who are concerned about pan-Albanianism have merely to point to the map. Three and a half million Albanians live in Albania. Ninety per cent of Kosovo's two million population are ethnic Albanians. The number in Macedonia is somewhat more than 500,000, concentrated in the western valleys bordering Albania and Kosovo, and also in the capital, Skopje, and constituting about a quarter of Macedonia's population.[4] Another 60,000 live in Montenegro,[5] and slightly more in Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac, three municipalities in southern Serbia. There are also historic Albanian minorities in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria and Turkey, and of course more recent concentrations all over Western Europe.

Albanians in the Balkans are divided into two distinct groups with different dialects and social structures. Those who live in the former Yugoslavia and the mountainous regions of the northern half of Albania are known as Ghegs. Those who live south of the Shkumbini River are Tosks. The overwhelming majority of Ghegs have a Muslim background, with around 10 percent being Roman Catholic. Roughly 80 per cent of Tosks have a Muslim background, with around 20 percent being Eastern Orthodox Christians. The traditional social organisation of the Ghegs was tribal, based upon a tightly-knit clan system connecting various isolated homesteads, and thus more fragmented than that of the lowland village-based Tosks. The standard written Albanian language is based on Tosk dialects, but Gheg is now enjoying something of a literary renaissance.[6]

[1] ICG Balkans Report N°140, *Albania: State of the Nation 2003*, 11 March 2003.

[2] ICG Europe Report N°149, *Macedonia: No Room For Complacency*, 23 October 2003.

[3] ICG Europe Report N°152, *Southern Serbia's Fragile Peace*, 9 December 2003.

[4] According to the official Macedonian census figures, released on 1 December 2003, Albanians constituted 509,083 (25.2%) of Macedonia's 2,022,547 population. The 1994 census results had 442,914 Albanians (22.4%) out of 1,936,877.

[5] Montenegro census figures.

[6] Albanian is an Indo-European language, close to the Romance languages but distinct from them, and rather more

Divisions among Albanians are therefore an important factor to be taken into account. How the international community reconciles these different perspectives toward Albanian aspirations is of tremendous significance, and will be key to preventing renewed violence in a region that has already seen so much ethnic turmoil during the last decade. This report provides a region-wide survey of the issues surrounding majority and minority ethnic Albanian populations in Albania, Kosovo, southern Serbia, Macedonia, Greece and Montenegro, and reviews the brief history of the Albanian National Army, the only significant armed movement in recent times to espouse an overtly pan-Albanian political agenda. Considerable focus is also given to the historic roots of "pan-Albanianism", Albanian diasporas elsewhere in Europe and North America and the often voiced concern that Albanian birth rates are being used to politically alter the landscape in the Balkans.

A. THE BURDENS OF HISTORY

Instead of referring to "pan-Albanianism", Albanians themselves tend to use the phrase "the Albanian National Question", which a controversial 1998 Albanian Academy of Sciences' paper interpreted as "the movement for the liberation of Albanian lands from foreign occupation and their unification into one single national state".[7] While this may be the maximal objective of the national programme, it remains more mythical than practical for most Albanians who recognise that such an aspiration is utterly inconsistent with the reality of contemporary geopolitics. Albanian intellectual Fatos Lubonja notes, "the Albanians' dream of being united one day has been a part of their collective consciousness without becoming a political programme because Albanians have always been very weak".[8] Others see pan-Albanian cultural or economic initiatives not as a step toward a greater Albania or greater Kosovo, but simply as part of the growing European trend toward encouraging integration across national borders.

Albanian nationalism is rather different from the traditions of Serbian, Croatian or even Greek expansionism, in that the ideology is not driven from the capital of the Albanian state. Although all Albanians are now familiar with the terms "pan-Albanianism", "Greater Kosovo" and "Greater Albania", it is rare to hear them use such terms themselves. Albanians tend to view the issue from more of a holistic perspective, and see their political agenda as a collective effort to strengthen the Albanian position in the southern Balkans by freeing themselves from Slav oppression. From the perspective of outside observers, this may appear to be consistent with a strategic plan to link their separate territories. For the Albanians, however, these territories are not separate – they are all Albania – albeit divided into different political units by the demarcation of Albania's borders in 1913 and 1921 and the subsequent break-up of Yugoslavia, and very few advocate the redrawing or abolition of borders.

Support for pan-Albanianism has never been strong within Albania itself. Unlike Belgrade and Athens, whose territorial grasp increased continually between the early nineteenth century and the middle of the twentieth, Tirana became capital of an independent state almost by accident in 1912; and a brief war-time expansion of its territory in the 1940s happened under Italian occupation. The current Socialist-led government in Tirana, like all mainstream political parties in both government and opposition in Albania, is opposed to any political unification of Albanian-inhabited territories. Paskal Milo, who served as Albania's foreign minister from 1997 to 2001, was so dismayed by the number of questions he was asked by foreigners pertaining to the issue of a greater Albania that he felt compelled to write a booklet to refute the notion that a desire for a greater Albania exists in mainstream political circles in Albania, Kosovo or Macedonia.[9]

The few public pronouncements by leading figures in Albania in favour of revisiting border issues have been quickly disavowed by the larger political

distantly related to Greek and to the Slavic languages spoken by their Balkan neighbours. There are grammatical differences between the Gheg and Tosk dialects, though they are mutually comprehensible. The Tosk-based literary language was promulgated by the Tosk-dominated Communist government. Ghegs argued that their dialect had been sacrificed in favour of the then Stalinist regime's desire to dominate the Ghegs both politically and culturally - during the Second World War, the Ghegs in both Albania and Yugoslavia were overwhelmingly anti-communist. Since the collapse of communism in Albania in 1991, there have been numerous academic initiatives aimed at officially re-instating the Gheg dialect on a par with standard Albanian. This has resulted in a revival of literary Gheg, with the publication of numerous works by hitherto suppressed Gheg writers.

[7] *Platform for the Solution of the National Albanian Question*, Albanian Academy of Sciences, Tirana, 1998, p. 5.

[8] BBC radio interview, 25 April 2002.

[9] Paskal Milo, greater Albania - *Between Fiction and Reality*, Tirana: 2001.

establishment. Likewise the mainstream political parties in Kosovo concentrate on independence for their province rather than union with Albania, and Albanian political parties in Montenegro favour independence for that republic without any change to its borders. In Macedonia's September 2001 elections, while parties supporting some form of pan-Albanianism did score some successes, a clear majority of ethnic Albanians rejected their policies in favour of an agenda of integration in the context of the Ohrid peace agreement. However, as long as there remain a few militants who claim to be fighting for a "Greater Albania", no matter how little their level of public support, Albania's neighbours will remain suspicious, fearing dire consequences from Albanian expansionism or any new or enlarged Albanian state.

Any sense of "national awakening" among Albanians is a relatively recent historical phenomenon. The greatest Albanian historical hero is Gjergj Kastrioti – or Skanderbeg – whose statue can be found in many Albanian cities. Skanderbeg first fought for the Ottomans in the early 1400s, before shifting allegiances and uniting Albanian chieftains in resistance to the Turks. The appeal of a historic figure like Skanderbeg to ethnic Albanians is understandable. His exploits and ability to unify the Albanian people stand in stark contrast to what has often been a rather dismal history for Albanians. Like their neighbours, they endured five centuries of Ottoman occupation; and in recent decades, the Albanian state was ruled by one of the most backward and harshest of communist dictatorships, and separated from the large numbers of their Albanian brethren living next door in Slav-dominated Yugoslavia. It is no wonder that the heroic feats of an Albanian chieftain, who managed to unite and inspire different clans to fight for Albanian sovereignty, are portrayed so positively 500 years later.

Despite Skanderbeg's resistance, by the late 1400s the Ottoman Empire had overwhelmed Albanian territories, and many Albanians subsequently converted to Islam. Further, many Albanians viewed the Ottomans as a useful bulwark against the Slavs to the north and the Greeks to the south, which encouraged a general identification with Ottoman Turkish rather than specifically Albanian identity. In addition, and unlike many of their neighbours, Albanians do not cherish memories of a vanished Albanian Empire.

It was not until the late nineteenth century that a broader and more specific sense of national identity began to emerge among Albanians, driven by the "Eastern Crisis" of 1875-1878. After uprisings in Herzegovina, Bosnia and Bulgaria, the 1878 Russian backed Treaty of San Stefano assigned much Albanian-inhabited territory to Slavic states. The arrangement stirred 300 Albanian leaders from across the Balkans to gather in protest in Prizren, Kosovo. Proclaiming the establishment of the Prizren League, they opposed the dismemberment of Albanian-inhabited territory and petitioned the Great Powers to force Ottoman authorities to unite the four regions of Kosovo, Shkoder, Monastir and Janina into one political-administrative unit within the Ottoman Empire.[10] The petition represented the first time Albanians sought territorial unification, but it was rejected by the Congress of Berlin in July 1878 (which however returned the Albanian inhabited areas to Ottoman rather than Slavic control). Bismarck famously commented that Albania was merely a geographical concept; there was no such thing as an Albanian nation.

In the next few decades, Albanians increasingly began to chafe under Ottoman rule both as a result of aggressive efforts by Turkish leaders to assimilate Albanian populations and the persistent denial of Albanian nationality. At the 1912-1913 London Conference, held in the wake of the First Balkan War, the great powers agreed to support the creation of an independent Albania with a population of some 850,000, but assigned most of what is today Kosovo to Serbia and Montenegro.[11] The border was adjusted again, once more to Albania's disadvantage, in November 1921 in the wake of World War I.

Meanwhile, in November 1918, a group of Kosovo political exiles had established the Committee for the Defence of Kosovo to campaign against the borders established at the London Conference and advocate Kosovo's liberation and, for the first time, the establishment of a state to unify all Albanian-inhabited lands.[12] Albania's 1921 border left almost half those people whose identity could be fairly characterised as "Albanian" outside the Albanian state. Almost half a million Albanians were resident in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and a

[10] For a detailed account of this period see: Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians - A Modern History*, I.B.Tauris, 1999. Monastir is now more usually referred to as Bitola, in southern Macedonia; Janina in northern Greece is now normally spelt Ioannina.

[11] As estimated by the Carnegie Commission – see last page of *The Other Balkan Wars*, Carnegie Endowment, 1993 (1913).

[12] The earlier League of Prizren had sought only a unified, autonomous Albanian region within the Ottoman Empire.

further 70,000 were located in Greece. Obviously, ethnic Albanians were not the only ones left deeply discontented with Europe's redrawn borders after World War I, and considerable turmoil would spring from the reconfigured map of the continent over the decades that followed. That said, the borders drawn by the Great Powers left Albania with what one commentator has called "by all odds the most backward state of Europe".[13] Like the Macedonian VMRO and the Croatian Ustasha movements, the Kosovo Committee received some support from Italy as part of Rome's general strategy to destabilise the Belgrade kingdom. However, the group had been militarily defeated by 1924, and Ahmet Zogu (subsequently King Zog), who had come to power with help from Belgrade, remained in control of Albania until it was annexed by Italy in 1938.

Albanian nationalism reared its head again during the Second World War. Under Italian and German occupation, a form of "Greater Albania" actually existed for four years during the war. parts of Kosovo and the Albanian-inhabited areas of western Macedonia were united with Albania under Italian rule.[14] In Albania itself, two resistance groups, the Tosk-dominated, communist-dominated National Liberation Front and the mainly Gheg nationalist Balli Kombetar, were persuaded by the Allies to fight for the liberation of "ethnic" Albania, which was to include Kosovo. In order to persuade the Kosovo Albanians to join the fight against Fascism, the Albanian and Yugoslav Communists organised a conference in December 1943 in the village of Bujan on the Albania-Kosovo border. The conference concluded with a key statement: "For the only way freedom can be achieved is if all peoples, including the Albanians, have the possibility of deciding on their own destiny, with the right to self-determination, up to and including secession". The Yugoslav Communists accepted this as the only way to gain support among Albanians in Kosovo. However, they reversed the policy in 1945 at the Prizren Conference, when a handpicked group "decided" on behalf of the Communist Party of Kosovo that the province was to be a part of Serbia and not Albania. Kosovo Albanians therefore never saw Yugoslavia as a country they had freely chosen to join.[15]

Both Albanian and Yugoslav Communists believed the Albanian question could be amicably solved once the Axis forces were defeated. However it was inevitable that the terms would be largely determined by Yugoslavia, which brought the Communists under Enver Hoxha to power in Albania in 1944-45 (just as Ahmet Zogu had been brought to power by a military intervention from Serbia two decades earlier). Indeed Tito, who ruled Yugoslavia from World War II until his death in 1980, originally hoped to integrate not only Albania but also Bulgaria into Yugoslavia. However, Tito broke with Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in 1948, and the Yugoslav-Albanian border then became a closed boundary dividing the Albanian communities.

Albanians in Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro were classified among Yugoslavia's numerous minority groups, and suffered from persistent discrimination in terms of language, religion and access to educational abilities. Albania itself was ruled by Enver Hoxha until his death in 1985, and during his rule, Albania became one of the most isolated and repressive communist regimes in the world. Albania remained weak, backward, brutally poor and largely ignored by the international community. The isolation of Albania under communism, the underdeveloped status of the Albanian-inhabited regions of the former Yugoslavia and a general lack of hope all dampened pan-Albanian sentiment during the 20th century.

B. AFTER THE FALL: CHAOS AND NEW ASPIRATIONS

The fall of the Soviet Union and the dramatic changes that consequently swept through Central and Eastern Europe resurrected the "Albanian question" in ways that few would have predicted. Throughout the Balkans, communism's demise led to the mass production of maps showing the "historic" and "ethnic" basis for territorial aspirations of extremist groups belonging to one nationality or another. Albanian maps of this kind show "Greater Albania" – or "Ethnic Albania" as

[13] L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453* (London: 1958), p. 731.

[14] The districts of Pristina, Peja, and Prizren, (now in Kosovo), Tetovo, Debar, Kicevo and Struga, (now in Macedonia), and Ulcinj, Tuzi, and Plav (now in Montenegro) were joined with Italian-ruled Albania, whilst the prefectures of Mitrovica, Vucitern, Gjilan and Podujevo (now in Kosovo) were left in German-occupied Serbia. Thus the rich mines of Trepca could be exploited by Berlin rather than Rome. To the south and east, the districts of Skopje, Kumanovo and Prespa (now in Macedonia), Kacanik (now in Kosovo), and Presevo (now in Serbia) were annexed to Bulgaria.

[15] For a useful discussion on these events see: Gani Perolli, *Konferenca e Bujanit*, New York, 2002

Albanians prefer to call it – comprising the state of Albania together with Kosovo, western Macedonia, south eastern Montenegro and the Epirus region of Greece, known to Albanians as Chameria.[16] Kosovo Albanians also responded to Belgrade's suspension of their autonomy by replacing their old Marxist-Leninist political parties and organisations with new political entities and leaders. By far the most significant of these was the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), headed by Dr. Ibrahim Rugova.

Albanians were not the most vigorous group in the Balkans to embrace a "greater nationalist" agenda as Yugoslavia unravelled. The programme for a Greater Serbia – the *Nacertanie* – was perpetuated in the notorious 1986 Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and served as the ideological platform for Slobodan Milosevic's efforts to create a Greater Serbia by ethnically cleansing large swathes of territory. In the 1990s, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman also embraced the notion of a "Greater Croatia" with similar results. Expansionist nationalism has also seen a resurgence in Romania and Greece, and Yugoslavia's violence seemed to define for the world the dangers of a rebirth of long suppressed ethnic divisions across the former communist states.

When communism collapsed in Albania in 1991, the international community seemed more interested in containment than engagement. Italian peacekeepers were deployed from September 1991 until December 1993 as part of *Operation Pelican*. Both Italy and Greece were eager to staunch the flood of refugees pouring out of Albania and a flood of humanitarian supplies poured into the poverty-stricken country. Politically, however, Albania was largely ignored by the international community and left to its own devices.

By the early 1990s, a number of Kosovo Albanian opinion-makers had begun to argue openly that all "ethnic territories" should have been included within the borders of Albania when it was created in 1912. Much of this newly smouldering discontent was driven by Belgrade's increasingly harsh policies toward its own Albanian minority.[17] This in turn led to the developing importance, and increasing radicalisation, of the Kosovo-dominated diaspora in the USA, Germany and Switzerland. As Yugoslavia began to disintegrate, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) section of the Kosovo Albanian political elite appeared at the 1992 European Community Conference on Yugoslavia. However, whatever hopes the Kosovo Albanians had for a broader political voice were quickly frustrated, and their representatives were relegated to a side room at the conference where they had to be content with watching the proceedings on a television monitor.[18] The Kosovo Albanians saw this as a significant humiliation. As a result, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), founded in 1993, and other small groups such as the Kosovo People's Movement, began to grow.

The hopes of Yugoslavia's Albanians took a decided upturn in December 1992 when the first President Bush, in his last weeks in office, issued what came to be known as "the Christmas warning", telling Milosevic that the U.S. would "be prepared to employ military force against Serbians in Kosovo and in Serbia proper" in the event that Serbian action triggered conflict in Kosovo.[19] However, Kosovo was left almost entirely off the agenda at the Dayton peace conference in 1995 that resolved the Bosnia conflict. Albanians were simply not considered significant players in the great game as it was then being played in the Balkans. These developments left Kosovo Albanians with an abiding sense of humiliation, and directly contributed to the continued radicalisation of the population.

In March 1997, it was Albania's turn to force the world to take notice. After a series of pyramid banking schemes collapsed in Albania, weeks of rioting brought down the right-wing government of President Sali Berisha. During this period, law and order broke down completely, Albania's military arsenals were sacked and the country – and its neighbours – were flooded with more than half a million looted weapons. An international force from eight European countries was deployed to Albania in April 1997 to restore order, and the Socialist Party took power after parliamentary elections in June.

Kosovo Albanians had meantime grown deeply frustrated with the visible lack of success of the largely non-violent political resistance practiced by

[16] See map in Appendix I. By the same token, extremist Greek nationalist groups claim territory as far north as the central Albanian town of Elbasan.

[17] After Kosovo's autonomous status was repealed in 1989, Albanian workers, including health care staff and teachers, were dismissed from their jobs. A policy of Serbianisation of the province's culture and education ensued and armed Yugoslav soldiers began patrolling the streets.

[18] ICG interviews with LDK officials, London, 1992.

[19] See Tim Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge*, Yale University Press, 2000, pp. 73-4.

their leadership under Ibrahim Rugova. The anarchy in Albania provided the founders of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) with both a supply of small arms and a stretch of ungoverned territory in northern Albania in which they could arm and train a guerrilla force. By 1998 open conflict had broken out between the KLA and Yugoslav security forces.[20]

The KLA was perceived by many as a proponent of greater Albania. In July 1998, Kosovo Liberation Army spokesman Jakup Krasniqi publicly announced that the KLA's goal was the unification of all Albanian-inhabited lands.[21] On New Year's Eve 1998, while on Albanian national television, the KLA's General Staff called for "1988-1999 to be the years of the unification of the Albanians and of the freedom and independence of Kosovo".[22]

As fighting in Kosovo escalated into 1999, and increasingly large refugee flows were being pushed in Albania and Macedonia from Kosovo, NATO initiated military operations against the Milosevic government. In June 1999, Milosevic was forced to accept NATO's terms for ending the conflict. Kosovo, under the watchful eye of a large NATO peacekeeping force, became an international protectorate with its final political status unresolved.

The KLA had officially disbanded after the 1999 conflict. But many of its members drew the conclusion that if fighting should begin in the Presevo Valley in southern Serbia between ethnic Albanians and ethnic Serbs, NATO would once again come to the rescue and release Presevo from Serbian control, annexing it to UN-administered Kosovo. They were wrong. After the fall of Slobodan Milosevic in October 2000, and his replacement by new governments in Belgrade, the West strove to build a new positive relationship with Serbia, and the Presevo conflict was settled essentially on Belgrade's terms. NATO made clear that it did not intend to redraw borders, and that military provocations by Albanian militant groups would be treated as a direct security threat.[23]

Similarly, the 2001 ethnic Albanian insurgency in Macedonia was met by the EU and U.S. with an intensive effort to broker agreements regarding ethnic rights between ethnic Albanians and the Macedonian government within the existing borders of Macedonia. The neglect of legitimate concerns about Albanian cultural and educational rights had led to support for military action by a critical mass within the Macedonian-Albanian community. The obvious links of the Albanian militants in the Presevo Valley and in Macedonia with the former KLA structures in Kosovo led many observers to express fears regarding the wider aims and ambitions of the Albanians of the former Yugoslavia.[24] One distinguished historian singles out Albanian nationalism as arguably the last remaining expansionist ideology in the region.[25]

However, the moral justification for any campaign of violence has now largely dissipated - with Kosovo's removal from Belgrade control, the Covic Plan for southern Serbia, and the Ohrid Agreement in Macedonia all delivering to ethnic Albanians outside Albania enhanced prospects without changing borders. The context of European integration now has the potential to change the political dynamics of the entire region. If and when the states of the region join the European Union, then Albanians will all be part of the same political unit for the first time since 1912, with no economic barriers and complete freedom of movement. The question is, will the momentum of this process be compelling enough to deter any thought of settling matters by other means?

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[20] ICG reported on this as it developed: see ICG's *Kosovo Briefing*, 17 February 1998, and ICG Briefing, *Kosovo Crisis Key Issues*, 12 October 1998.

[21] Der Spiegel, N° 28/1998, pp122-123

[22] Political Declaration N°22 of the Kosovo Liberation Army, TVSH Television Network (Tirana), 31 December, 1998

[23] See ICG Balkans Report N°116, *Peace in Presevo: Quick Fix or Long Term Solution*, 10 August 2001, and Europe Report N°152, *Southern Serbia's Fragile Peace*, 9 December 2003.

[24] For a particularly alarmist Serbian view of the dangers, see *Greater Albania - Concepts and Possible Consequences*, Institute of Geopolitical Studies, Belgrade, 1998.

[25] "Irredentism seemed stronger among Albanians than most other peoples in southeastern Europe [since 1992], perhaps because they had been deprived for so long of their freedom. … Occasional Greek references to 'Northern Epirus' (i.e. Southern Albania), Bulgarian dreams of 'Macedonia', Romanian nostalgia for Bessarabia and Moldova are today faint and meaningless echoes of issues which provoked wars and invasions a century ago: politics there has ceased to gravitate around expansionist and national glory. Only perhaps some Albanian nationalists have yet to abandon the dreams given up by their neighbours". Mark Mazower, *The Balkans*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000, pp. 126, 134-5.

II. THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ANA

The story of the Albanian National Army shows how difficult it can be to analyse pan-Albanianism. It is a murky tale, with few observers producing reliable reports. Many in Serbia are eager to exaggerate the links of officially sanctioned Kosovo structures with terrorism; the opposition parties in Macedonia desperately want to find evidence of the "failure" of the 2001 Ohrid Agreement; while UNMIK, KFOR and the Macedonian and Albanian government parties all have an interest in creating the impression that the situation is generally under control. The press releases and website published by the ANA's own supposed political wing are unreliable, inconsistent and sometimes demonstrably false. What follows is a summary of the known facts, backed up by ICG's research on the ground in Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Brussels.

During the Macedonian conflict of 2001, the Albanian National Army (ANA) was muttered about darkly as a possible splinter group from the National Liberation Army (NLA), the major ethnic Albanian combatants led by Ali Ahmeti. The ANA was blamed for several violent incidents in the immediate aftermath of the signing of the Ohrid Agreement – the bombing of a monastery in August, and then an attack on Macedonian police followed by a hostage-taking incident in November – but the organisation seemed to have no tangible spokesman and no discernible strategy, and some observers queried if it might not simply be a deniable front for Ahmeti's NLA, supposedly disbanded as part of the peace process, or even cover for trouble-makers in the Macedonian security forces.

The international community was sufficiently concerned for the U.S. to impose a travel ban and financial embargo on both the ANA and its supposed political wing, the National Committee for the Liberation and Defence of Albanian Lands (KKCMTSH) on 4 December 2001. The ANA issued a communiqué threatening renewed conflict in January 2002, and were blamed for a shootout on 25 March at Ali Ahmeti's headquarters near Tetovo in which four were killed.[26] At this point, former NLA commanders disparaged the ANA as having only about 20 members, while Macedonian security forces thought it numbered 100-150; both agreed that it was poorly organised, no serious threat to Macedonia, and largely based in Kosovo.[27]

In August 2002, two Macedonian reservists were killed in an attack attributed to the ANA, and at the end of the month there was another suspicious kidnapping incident. The week before the September 2002 elections, a policeman was killed in an ANA attack on a police station near Tetovo. A grenade attack on the newly elected parliament in November was claimed both by the ANA and by an otherwise unknown Macedonian extremist organisation. To add to the confusion, the ANA denied responsibility for another bomb attack in Tetovo later that month.

The international community signalled in December 2002 that it took a serious view of the ANA, with UNMIK authorities indicting two men from the Viti municipality of Kosovo on charges of terrorism, recruitment for a terrorist group, inciting racial hatred and illegal possession of weapons and ammunition. They had been arrested the previous summer, along with a third man who was released for lack of evidence, in what was portrayed at the time as a general sweep against extremists. UNMIK's description of the indictees as ANA members was the first concrete indication of ANA activity outside Macedonia.

The ANA responded at the end of 2002 by mounting a publicity offensive.[28] The National Committee for the Liberation and Defence of Albanian Lands (KKCMTSH), had now formally merged with the Tirana-based Party of National Unity (PUK) to form a new Albanian National Union Front (FBKSH), led by the previously unheard-of "Valdet Vardari", "Alban Vjosa" and "Vigan Gradica".[29] The agenda of the ANA and FBKSH was quite simply the reunification of all Albanian territories in a single state. They argued that political agreements following recent conflicts (presumably meaning the Covic Plan and the Ohrid Agreement, both signed in 2001 to end the conflicts in Southern Serbia and Macedonia) had not shown satisfactory results, and predicted that 2003 would "mark a decisive phase in the

[26] The organisation was also implicated by the Macedonian authorities in the still unresolved case of seven Asians killed by Macedonian police on 2 March 2002.

[27] Jolyon Naegele, "Macedonia: Former Rebel Leaders Attempt To Move Country Forward", Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty 12 April 2002.

[28] The organisation maintains a rather scrappy website, currently at http://www.ifrance.com/akshalb/ .

[29] These three names turned out to be pseudonyms; see below.

reunification of our ethnic inhabited areas and Albanians that live in them, in the long-awaited Albanian national state in the Balkans."[30]

"Vardari" and "Vjosa" gave a series of interviews to Albanian-language media in early 2003, and in February there was a series of violent incidents in the Southern Serbian municipality of Bujanovac. Although not all of these were claimed by the ANA, there were also rumours that the organisation was active in southern and eastern Kosovo and a confused claim of responsibility for a bomb attack on the courthouse in the south-western Macedonian town of Struga. There appeared to be setbacks for the organisation in March, with two members killed by Serbian police in Bujanovac while planting a bomb, and several more arrested by the Kosovo authorities.[31]

The most alarming incident of the first half of 2003 – and the first actual act of violence in Kosovo – took place in Zvecan on 12 April, when two ANA members were killed in the process of blowing up a key railway link between Kosovo and Serbia. Both the dead men turned out to be serving members of the Kosovo Protection Corps. This triggered an immediate investigation of links between the officially sanctioned KPC and the ANA, which was declared to be a "terrorist organisation" by Michael Steiner, the then UN Special Representative in Kosovo. U.S. sanctions against the ANA were intensified and extended to include the FBKSH.[32] The months following the railway bridge bombing saw a surge in attempts to raise funds in the name of the ANA. Police sources reported cases of extortion all over Kosovo. How much of this really represented the ANA as opposed to diverse criminals adopting the ANA label was unclear. Often, it was a case of established protection racket networks trying on a new identity.[33] ANA graffiti also spread through Kosovo, becoming an almost obligatory adornment of rural bus shelters.[34]

By now it was an open secret that the real identities of the leadership of the FBKSH, and thus presumably also of the ANA, were Gafurr Adili ("Valdet Vardari"), a former associate of Ali Ahmeti from Kicevo in Macedonia;[35] former Albanian army general Spiro Butko ("Vigan Gradica"); and Idajet Beqiri ("Alban Vjosa"). Beqiri had been the leader for many years of the very small Party of National Unity in Albania, and had been imprisoned for six months in 1994 and again in 1996 for alleged abuse of office when he was a judge in the 1980s;[36] he was released after the collapse of the Berisha government in 1997 and was granted political asylum in Belgium.

The next few months saw arrests and trials of suspected ANA members in Macedonia and Kosovo rather than violent incidents ascribed to the organisation. This culminated when Gafurr Adili, who had been denied entry into Albania at Tirana airport in March, was arrested by Albanian police on 1 July 2003 after illegally entering the country from Macedonia. He and a colleague were charged with possession of forged documents, illegal border crossing, incitement of interethnic hatred and creating terrorist organisations. This was the first visible security move against the ANA by Albanian authorities, and the rest of July was relatively quiet.

August 2003, however, saw a significant increase of violence. The victims included Serb civilians and international police in Kosovo, and Albanian civilians and Serbian security forces in Southern Serbia. At the end of the month a kidnapping incident in Macedonia led by Avdyl Jakupi ("Commander Cakalla"), who

[30] See "AKSH Warns Of 'Hot Spring' In The Region", KosovaLive, 27 December 2002, which appears to have been the first extensive interview with ANA representatives.

[31] The noted Presevo Valley militant Shefqet Musliu, arrested by KFOR in April 2003 and still in custody in Kosovo, has denied involvement with the ANA per se, and the ANA has likewise denied that he is one of their members. Nevertheless, UNMIK police sources told ICG in November 2003 that they saw a connection between the ANA and remnants of the UCPMB.

[32] The U.S. was apparently unable to follow UNMIK's lead in declaring the ANA a "terrorist organisation" because its activities are not directed explicitly against the United States.

[33] ICG interviews, Pristina, November 2003.

[34] In some areas the inscription "AKSH" (ANA) alternated with "Ukshin Hoti", a University of Pristina professor of philosophy and leader of the UNIKOMB party, which espoused Kosovo's union with Albania. A Serbian court imprisoned Hoti in 1994 for violating the constitutional order. He was abducted from Kosovo's Dubrava prison by Serbian guards in May 1999 during the NATO bombing campaign, never to be seen again. The graffiti can be read as an attempt to ascribe to the ANA an association with intellectual rigour and the enigmatic quality Hoti developed due to being taken out of circulation so early and the mystery surrounding his fate.

[35] Interestingly, in his 27 December 2002 interview with KosovaLive, "Valdet Vardari" had explicitly denied that Gafurr Adili was one of the individuals behind the ANA.

[36] Beqiri's case was raised by Amnesty International in 1996. One of his fellow prisoners at that time was Fatos Nano, now Prime Minister of Albania.

claimed to be an ANA leader, and his comrade Hamdi Bajrami ("Commander Breza"), led to a massive security operation on 7 September in which two of Breza's supporters were killed.

Beqiri, however, denied to ICG that Cakalla and Breza were in fact members of the ANA and described them as "criminal, unpatriotic elements".[37] His own problems now began to increase, as Albania issued an international arrest warrant for him on charges of inciting religious and interethnic hatred, and more suspected ANA members were arrested in Kosovo by KFOR.

No violent incidents have been attributed to the ANA since an attack on a Serbian patrol near Bujanovac on 24 September 2003. Gafurr Adili was convicted in a Tirana court in November, but released on consideration of time served in pre-trial detention; he remains in Tirana, but his movements are limited because he has no valid travel documents. Idajet Beqiri was arrested on the Albanian international warrant while crossing into Germany from Switzerland on 16 December, and remains in custody in Konstanz. And the Swiss authorities announced on 28 January 2004 that they had arrested a major fundraiser for the ANA. This part of the story appears to be over.

There remains of course the risk of splinter groups. In November 2003 Cakalla and a colleague published an open letter announcing that they were forming a new "Death Unit", and accused Ali Ahmeti and the DUI of betraying the interests of the Albanians of Macedonia. They described the ANA as an "invention" of Ahmeti and Macedonian PM Branko Crvenkovski. However this initiative was not a long-lived one; Cakalla and his colleague surrendered to KFOR on 30 January 2004, and are now in the custody of UNMIK police while Macedonia's request to extradite them is processed.

Why did the ANA fail to ignite the flames of conflict, in contrast to the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in 1997-98, the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (UCPMB) in 2000-2001, and the National Liberation Army (NLA) in Macedonia in 2001? Conspiracy theorists will mutter about the ANA's lack of support from the international community (i.e. the United States and its allies), but the fact is that the KLA gained international support only after Belgrade had shown itself to be acting wholly in bad faith in late 1998, and the UCPMB and NLA had no international support at all.[38] It is also true that the ANA lacked numbers and organisation, but the same is true of the earlier history of its more successful predecessors.

Three crucial factors contributed to the failure of the ANA:

First, the circumstances were much less propitious for an armed struggle. Considering the years of intense repression in Kosovo by Belgrade, the most surprising thing about the emergence of the KLA in retrospect is that it took so long. The subsequent campaign of the UCPMB, spurred on by wishful thinking about international intentions and the continuing policies of Milosevic, came as little surprise. And while the NLA's appearance in 2001 was predicted by few, the fact is that successive Macedonian governments – and perhaps more importantly, elected Albanian representatives in those governments – had failed to deliver any of the improvements promised to the country's largest ethnic minority.

On the other hand, the political prospects for Albanians in Macedonia, Southern Serbia and Kosovo since the ANA began operations in 2001 have shown measurable, if sometimes disappointing, improvement. Presevo and Bujanovac now have ethnic Albanian mayors; Albanian municipalities (indeed, all municipalities) throughout Macedonia are rubbing their hands in eager anticipation of receiving greater powers through decentralisation, while at the same time resisting any merger with their neighbouring municipalities of any ethnicity; and Kosovo's political energies, for now, are largely absorbed in squabbles between the Assembly and the UN. In particular, the potential for trouble in Macedonia has

[37] ICG interview, Brussels, 23 September 2003. The FBKSH published a press release later that day describing the length, topics and atmosphere of the conversation (with moderate accuracy, including the fact that ICG disagreed with their analysis on numerous points), and Beqiri was subsequently quoted in the Belgrade media making incorrect statements about our office décor (*NIN*, 9 October 2003).

[38] It should be noted that despite occasional claims to the contrary from Belgrade, most recently in public statements by Momir Stojanovic, head of Serbia and Montenegro's Military Security Agency, in February 2004, there is little evidence of strong links between the ANA or other Balkan militants and wider Islamic terrorist networks such as Al-Qaeda.

been largely neutralised by Ahmeti's DUI achieving certain symbolic breakthroughs such as use of the Albanian language in parliament and in passports, and the even more important legalization of Tetovo University. These breakthroughs have helped insulate Ahmeti –and indeed the Ohrid process as a whole – from criticism on the more disappointing aspects of implementation, such as state employment.

Second, the ANA failed to make a significant impact on public opinion. One must, of course, be careful in making judgments concerning 'popular support' for the ANA at a time of relative calm. Most Albanians and Macedonians believed there was no popular support for the NLA in Macedonia at the beginning of 2001. However, after the onset of conflict and the beginning of Balkan-style ethnic displacement, ethnic feelings quickly polarized and the NLA's popularity increased dramatically. The ANA was unable to reproduce this success. The individuals involved are unpopular, and failed to gain the enthusiasm of Albanians on the ground or in the diaspora. (One former UCPMB commander was quoted as saying, "Who are these people who all of a sudden have started asking for the unification of Albanian lands? We don't know them – and this is a small place."[39]) Its leaders' decision to begin their publicity campaign under pseudonyms sowed distrust right from the start, and then once it became known that Beqiri in particular was involved, the organisation's potential credibility was further eroded. The persistent confusion about which violent incidents were attributable to the ANA, or even which of the many noted militants of the region were formally members, signalled an organisation that was very uncertain of its own identity. Given the diffuse loyalties of the various Albanian militants of the region, and their proven difficulties of communication, it is likely that any future outbreak of militancy will be just a temporary coalition of the willing.

Future opportunists who want to push a violent pan-Albanian agenda may be more fortunate with their timing, and may be smarter in terms of their internal and external communications strategy. However they will be able to do nothing about the third of the ANA's problems, which is that the idea of using force to reunite all Albanians in a single country is genuinely unpopular. Although many other factors may have been more important, it is nonetheless a matter of record that in 1998 and again in 2001, the KLA and NLA began to seriously gain in popular support only after they had publicly moved away from a "Greater Albania" agenda and shifted respectively to independence for Kosovo and constitutional reform in Macedonia. By contrast, the more the ANA broadcast its pan-Albanian rhetoric, the fewer military successes it achieved.

[39] "ANA Fails to Stir Albanian Passions", Belgzim Kamberi and Jeta Xharra, IWPR Balkan Crisis Report N°461, 25 September 2003.

III. ALBANIA: THE VIEW FROM TIRANA

Since the end of the Kosovo conflict, Albania has promoted itself as the logical point of reference for ethnic Albanians in neighbouring countries. In general, Albania's politicians have advocated closer political, economic and cultural ties among ethnic Albanians throughout the region, but have resisted the temptation to call for changing borders. Rather than redraw territories, Albanian leaders have aimed to ensure that existing borders do not obstruct connections between ethnic Albanians as a whole. In this vein, the Albanian government has taken small steps toward promoting cross-border ties, including opening an "information office" in Pristina, Kosovo in 1999. Given its myriad domestic challenges, Albania remains highly unlikely to lead any unification movement. Only the Party for National Unity, now part of the Albanian National Union Front led by Idajet Beqiri, supports such a goal, and its popular support has always been minuscule. Albania's commitment to regional stability and its opposition to militant supporters of pan-Albanianism have been demonstrated in recent months by its strong stance against this group and the Albanian National Army with which it is associated.

While Albania's politicians have generally avoided giving the slightest impression of officially advocating unification, there have been some exceptions. For example, the Albanian Academy of Sciences argued in its 1998 "Platform for the Solution of the National Albanian Question" that the "rightful aspiration of all Albanians is the unification of all ethnic Albanian lands in a single national state".[40] The Academy, which had seen its prestige dim considerably after the fall of communism, was using nationalism in an effort to regain lost prominence. It has since renounced the Platform as a thing of the past, but the document stirred controversy in neighbouring states and helped foster an aura of suspicion that remains to this day.[41]

The only other statement by any prominent official in Albania along these lines was in the run-up to the 2001 election, when Arben Imami, chairman of the moderate Democratic Alliance, a government coalition partner that includes some of Albania's most sophisticated intellectuals, publicly identified the unification of Kosovo and Albania as a party goal.[42] The broader political establishment, including his own party, roundly criticised this stance and dismissed it as pre-election posturing. Within days, the Democratic Alliance's general assembly rejected its leader's statement and toned down the wording of the electoral programme, calling for a "rapprochement" between Albania and Kosovo rather than an official union. However, this rapid backtracking did little to quell the anxieties of Albania's neighbours.

Fatos Nano, who became Prime Minister of Albania for the third time in July 2002, has called for closer political and economic ties among Albanians living in the Balkans, but insists that this would not entail a shift in borders. Nano also maintains that ensuring freedom of movement throughout the region is the best way to deflect nationalist calls for a greater Albania. Nano has noted, "The emphasis should be on promoting free movement between peoples of Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo, which would help to avert pressure from ideas associated with greater Albania. It is all about creating new ways of co-existence, firstly amongst Albanians, so that we are seen as emancipated and democratic and a factor for stability in the Balkans".[43] In reality, in free market conditions, in post-Milosevic Yugoslavia, much of Nano's programme will occur through inevitable economic development.

Former President Sali Berisha, who remains leader of the opposition Democratic Party, has generally sought to steer clear of the pan-Albanian debate in recent years. His reluctance to engage with the issue can be explained in part by his earlier wrangling with Kosovo Albanian political figures on the topic. When he first became President in March 1992, Berisha declared that one of his main aims was Albanian unification.[44] By the end of that year, however, Berisha had changed his mind completely, stating publicly that "the concept of a greater Albania is not considered in serious Albanian political circles".[45]

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[40] Platform For the Solution of the National Albanian Question, Tirana, 1998, p.3.

[41] The Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts issued a bitter condemnation at the time, and l
ater declared that the fighting in western Macedonia in the spring of 2001 represented the implementation of this Platform.

[42] Reuters, 13 April, 2001. Arben Imami, party chairman, made the statement in the run-up to the 2001 election.

[43] Reuters interview with Fatos Nano, 6 December 1999.

[44] BBC, *SWB*, EE/1336, B/3, 23 March 1992.

[45] Reported in *Bujku*, 19 December 1992: "Idetë për një Shqipëri të Madhe janë ide të cilat absolutisht nuk mbështeten në qarqet dhe forcat politike shqiptare."

This drew stinging criticism from outspoken Kosovo academic Rexhep Qosja, who stated in an open letter that "Albania has never accepted its existing borders and has always tried to remind international circles that these borders are unjust, dividing the Albanian land in two. They are borders that go through the very heart of the Albanian people".[46] However Albania's politicians, with the exceptions noted above, have taken a different view.

The Berisha-Qosja exchange was typical of a number of debates during the 1990s between die-hard nationalists (almost invariably from Kosovo or the Kosovo-originated diaspora) and the relatively more moderate politicians and academics in Albania. Historically and culturally, Albania is a focus for Albanians living elsewhere to remain engaged with their history and reaffirm their national consciousness. Since the end of the Kosovo conflict, with general improvements in the security situation, there has been a marked upswing of tourists from the Albanian diaspora, including those from Kosovo, visiting Albania's south-western coastal strip – the "Albanian Riviera" – and travelling to national shrines, including the Skanderbeg museum in Kruja and Independence Square in Vlore.[47]

The Albanian government has also sought to bolster its nationalist credentials by working to build a joint forum of Albanian political parties from Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro. In 1999, Fatos Nano (then out of office) began drafting a common political agenda between Tirana, Pristina and Tetovo with Hashim Thaci, the former Kosovo Liberation Army leader who now heads the Democratic Party of Kosovo. Nano also enlisted Arben Xhaferi, the leader of the Macedonian Albanian Democratic Party. The three aimed to develop a pan-national strategy that would integrate all Albanians. As Nano explained, "It will not be a movement in support of a greater Albania but will serve the great European Albanians".[48] In April 2000, Nano initiated a dialogue under the banner of the "Political Forum for Stability and Integration" with Albanian leaders from across the political spectrum. Ibrahim Rugova, whose relations with the Socialist Party have never been good, refused to participate in the forum. Nano plans another meeting of Albanian parties in March 2004.

However, there have been numerous less formal meetings organised by Nano between Albanian political leaders from different parts of the Balkans, such as the one in Pogradec in February 2003, which brought together Kosovo journalist Veton Surroi and Macedonian Albanian political leaders Ali Ahmeti and Arben Xhaferi. According to a rather anodyne press release, they "reaffirmed the cooperation of all Albanians in the process of European integration and agreed on strengthening the engagement by Albanian political parties with those in other countries to strengthen the democratic institutions".[49] ICG understands that in fact some participants wanted to establish a consensus on the possibilities that might open up if the Ohrid Agreement were to fail, but that Ahmeti, the only one present actually involved in implementing Ohrid, refused to be drawn into such speculation.[50]

Within Albania, there is little support for ethnic Albanian separatist movements either in southern Serbia or Macedonia. While some public support exists for Kosovo's independence, this is based more on general sympathy for the situation of Kosovo Albanians rather than any aspirations for unification with Kosovo or Macedonia. Tirana has markedly little enthusiasm for political unification with Kosovo, and many Albanian politicians fear that in any such union power would shift from Tirana to Pristina.[51] Within such an expanded Albania, power would shift decisively from the Tosks to the Ghegs, who would now be in the majority, and the Ghegs of northern Albania would themselves be outnumbered by the Ghegs of Kosovo.

There is also a general sense that the future of Kosovo will be determined by "Great Power" politics, an arena in which Albania has never had influence. The current Albanian government has limited its direct aims to improving trade links with Kosovo, and the ruling Socialist Party's party

[46] Albanian-American newspaper *Illyria*, 3 February 1993, p. 5.
[47] According to the Albanian ministry of tourism, the number of tourists from Kosovo visiting Albania is estimated at several thousand. Visitors from Kosovo mainly arrive in Albania in July and August and stay primarily in the coastal towns of Saranda, Pogradec, Durres and Tirana.
[48] ICG interview with Fatos Nano, Tirana, December, 1999.
[49] *Fakti*, 10 February 2003.
[50] ICG interviews in Macedonia and Kosovo, April and June 2003.
[51] According to one Albanian intellectual, "there is tension and stress in relations between the political class of Kosovo with its counterpart in Albania. There is a form of elitism in Kosovo - they want to be the centre of things - they consider us backward". ICG discussion with Albanian intellectuals, Tirana, May 2002.

platform comments, "The future goal of all Albanians is to create an Albanian zone comprising all Albanian-inhabited regions of south-eastern Europe being integrated into Euro-Atlantic structures".[52] The government has rightly assessed that Albania's future prosperity will best be improved by pursuing greater integration with the rest of Europe, including Kosovo. That said, the general public as a whole is probably more in favour of unification, and certainly strongly favours independence for Kosovo. However, it is clear from election results that the population has other priorities, and that there is little support for any campaign of violence in aid of such a goal.

Outside Tirana, especially in the northern border regions, there is very strong support for unification with Kosovo, largely due to a belief that dissolving the border would bring immediate economic and social benefits to these regions. In fact, positive changes in regional economics have already been witnessed due to the opening of 5 new border crossings over the past three years. Further south in Albania, where the local Tosk population has much less in common – socially, culturally and historically – with the Albanians of the former Yugoslavia, support for unification is somewhat weaker.

Although the north-south divide in Albania is becoming less noticeable, tensions between the left and right of the political spectrum, and the hot-button issue of Kosovo, are still prominent in this debate. The Albanian Socialist government lost significant credibility among Kosovo Albanians after Fatos Nano held an ill-advised meeting with Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic in 1997. Although Albania redeemed itself in the eyes of many Kosovo Albanians by providing humanitarian relief and shelter to hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanian refugees in 1999, there remains much scepticism amongst Kosovo Albanians as to the true nationalist credentials of Socialist politicians in Albania. Meanwhile, leading members of Ibrahim Rugova's LDK maintain a close relationship with former Albanian President Sali Berisha and his party. In contrast, Hashim Thaci's Democratic Party of Kosovo enjoys better relations with Albania's left and centre ground party leadership.

The question of Albanian state support for ethnic Albanian militants operating in Kosovo, Macedonia and southern Serbia has been of international concern. Of course, prior to and during the Kosovo war, it would have been political suicide for the government to have been perceived as cracking down on KLA guerrilla activity in Albania. During the 2001 conflict in Macedonia for example, the Albanian government was extremely reluctant to publicly arrest National Liberation Army activists operating from Albania or to curtail their activities. Weapons continue to trickle – rather than flood – into Kosovo and Macedonia from hidden arms dumps in Albania.[53] Although the Tirana government is receiving international assistance to halt the smuggling, it will always be difficult to control the remote mountainous terrain that separates Albania and Kosovo. In addition to a relatively ineffective local police force broadly sympathetic to the aims of the insurgents and highly susceptible to bribery, the government is also hampered by small but influential groups within the Albanian military and intelligence services who sympathise with the insurgents in Presevo and Macedonia. Composed of hard-line socialist military personnel, members of Albania's communist party and former and current members of Albania's Intelligence Service, these elements have happily overlooked arms smuggling. Much of the smuggling is also driven directly by a profit motive as well.[54] Smuggling remains a financial issue - a case of supply and demand, which has little to do with nationalism and everything to do with black market economics and geography.

However, the political will to deal with the problem does appear to exist in Tirana. It is significant that, in a context where Albania's performance in its relations with the European Union is generally perceived as disappointing, law enforcement is seen as an area where the country has performed

[52] Paskal Milo, *"Greater Albania" - Between Fiction and Reality*, Tirana, 2001, p 45. Although Former Albanian foreign minister, Paskal Milo clearly articulates his country's priority goal is unification with Europe and not with Kosovo. "In the official policy of the Government of Albania there is not, nor has there been, any reference to or any aim at the creation of a 'Greater Albania'. To the contrary, there have been clear and unequivocal statements that such an idea is counter productive and contrary to the objectives of Albania to be integrated into a United Europe".

[53] Significant weapons finds were made in January and August 2002 on the Albanian side of the Kosovo border. There are probably still scores of weapons dumps hidden throughout Albania's border districts.

[54] Ethnic Albanian insurgent groups acquire a far greater proportion of their weapons supply from elsewhere in the Balkans and Eastern Europe than they do from Albanian sources. At the height of the Kosovo war, the KLA reportedly bought much of its weapons supply from Serbs.

particularly well.[55] It should also be noted that successive Albanian governments have opted for a strategic partnership with Macedonia as both aspire towards membership of NATO and the European Union. Even more important, perhaps, the crucial interventions in the story of the Albanian National Army – the arrest of Gafurr Adili and the international arrest warrant issued for Idajet Beqiri – were both initiatives taken by the Tirana government.

[55] ICG interviews with European Commission officials and member state diplomats, January and February 2004.

IV. KOSOVO: INTERNAL DIVISIONS

While the majority of Kosovo Albanians do not currently support the creation of a politically integrated Albanian state, a minority remains strongly committed to this ideal. As in Albania, the major political parties have avoided rhetoric encouraging a greater Albania, knowing full well that it would badly antagonise an international community upon which Kosovo continues to heavily rely on for support. Political parties on both sides of the border also realise that a united Albania would mean greater political insignificance – why compete with another set of parties for votes, where it is difficult enough to win elections against the present candidates. However, several small radical groups in Kosovo continue to openly promote national unification.[56]

Albanians both inside and outside Kosovo argue that Kosovo independence would be a stabilising factor in the Balkans, and especially in conjunction with efforts to implement existing agreements and improve human rights for ethnic Albanians in southern Serbia and Macedonia. In keeping with this reasoning, they suggest that independence would effectively neutralise the more extremist tendencies of ethnic Albanian insurgent groups and the diaspora. The two Albanian states, Kosovo and Albania, would then be able to concentrate on building political and civic institutions to prepare for eventual integration into European structures, and the relations between Albanians in Albania and Kosovo would pose no threat to neighbour states.[57]

The uncertainty over Kosovo's final status will continue to make neighbouring states uncomfortable, to say the least, until the issue is resolved. ICG has long argued that the most likely and desirable way of resolving the issue is for Kosovo to receive a form of 'conditional independence', including as one of the conditions that Kosovo might make a binding commitment that it would not seek to expand its

[56] Milo, *op.cit*, p. 52. According to Milo, these include: the People's Movement of Kosovo (LPK), the National Movement for the Liberation of Kosovo (LKCK), the Republican Party of Kosovo (PRK), and the Albanian National Democratic Party (PNDSH).

[57] ICG discussions with Kosovo Albanian activists, Pristina, May 2002

boundaries or unite with Albania.[58] However, the international community feels little sense of urgency for now in addressing the issue of Kosovo's final status; the current doctrine is that discussions on the topic might begin in mid-year of 2005, if there has been sufficient progress on standards.

Although the Greater Albania idea lacks any serious backing in Kosovo's political establishment, by summer and autumn 2003 it nevertheless began to find niches in Kosovo's cultural ecology. The small LPK party launched a petition seeking Kosovo's union with Albania. LPK activists collecting signatures became a feature of the landscape near the Grand Hotel, in the heart of Pristina. Dr Paulin Kola's presentation of his new book "The Search for Greater Albania" in October 2003 packed the auditorium in Pristina's national library. Ironically, the conclusion of his researches was that: "I have not found a Greater Albania project anywhere – not in history, nor in modern times." The title of the U.S. edition of his book, "The Myth of Greater Albania", emphasised the point. However, despite its intangibility, "Greater Albania" as a phrase or refrain was demonstrating its drawing power.

Historically, Kosovo Albanians have oscillated between an idealistic attachment to the Albanian state and disappointment with Tirana's actual stance on pan-Albanian issues. Although they are generally well intentioned toward the citizens of Albania, they have often held Tirana's political elite in contempt. During Enver Hoxha's reign, for example, Kosovo Albanians felt that the attitude toward Kosovo was consistently condescending.[59] The tensions between intellectuals in Kosovo and political leaders in Albania during the early 1990s have been reviewed above. It has to be stressed that the disappointment with Albania stems chiefly from the lack of interest and action by Albania, as a sovereign state, to press for greater rights of Albanians outside of Albania (rather than in Albania's lack of interest in unification).

The Kosovo Liberation Army's political origins were with the small group of "Enverist" exiles who advocated union of Kosovo with Albania, who are still represented by the People's Movement of Kosovo (LPK).[60] It is striking that as the KLA gathered popular support in Kosovo and among the diaspora, its political goal shifted to independence for Kosovo. Since the 1998-99 conflict, political parties which emerged from the KLA – Hashim Thaci's Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) and Ramush Haradinaj's Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) – have been if anything more moderate on many issues than Ibrahim Rugova's LDK. The LPK and another small party, the National Movement for the Liberation of Kosovo (LKCK) – continue to push for an independent Kosovo and eventual unification with Albania. Two nationalist movements, Balli Kombetar or the National Front, with bases in both Albania and Kosovo, and the Second League of Prizren, based in New York and Pristina, have also traditionally campaigned for a greater Albania.[61] In the 2002 elections for 920 seats on the 31 municipal councils in Kosovo, the LPK won four seats, Balli Kombetar two seats and the LKCK none at all. Their total score of 1.2% was a decrease from the unimpressive 2.2% in the November 2001 election. Their political weight is perhaps higher among the diaspora; it is pretty low in Kosovo.

Kosovo's mainstream parties do not include support for greater Albania in their platforms. The LDK does not now advocate a greater Albania and is highly unlikely to advocate any move toward unification. Likewise, the PDK and the AAK – political heirs of the former KLA – do not support a greater Albania, though both had strong links with the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (UCPMB) in southern Serbia and the National Liberation Army in Macedonia. Both the PDK and the AAK recognise that more active support for a

[58] See ICG Balkans Report N°108, *After Milosevic: A Practical Agenda For Lasting Balkans Peace*, 26 April 2001, pp 127-128.

[59] In the early 1980s, a common saying in Kosovo was "Enver Hoxha should remember that he is the head of a state and head of a party, but not the head of a nation".

[60] See in particular Tim Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge* (Yale, 2000) and the final section of Paul Hockenos, *Homeland Calling: Exile Patriotism and the Balkan Wars* (Cornell, 2003).

[61] Balli Kombetar was a fiercely anti-communist resistance movement founded in Albania in 1942 with the aim of re-uniting all ethnic Albanian territory. The Second League of Prizren was formed in Prizren in 1943 by members of Balli Kombetar who, in co-operation with the German occupying authorities, aimed to co-ordinate the activities of various Albanian nationalist groups and to campaign for ethnic unification. The First Prizren League was formed on 10 June 1878, at a meeting of 300 Albanian nationalist leaders held in the Kosovo town of Prizren. The primary purpose of what the Prizren League, was to organise political and military opposition to the dismemberment of Albanian-inhabited territory, and to petition the Porte to unite the four vilayets of Janina, Monastir, Kosovo and Shkoder into one political and administrative unit.

greater Albania would carry a high cost in terms of censure by the international community, upon whom they still rely heavily for support. When Leka Zogu, heir to the Albanian throne, visited Kosovo early in June 2003, he attempted to bolster his own position by supporting an ethnically united Albanian nation; the crowds that cheered were insignificant.

While the LDK has steered clear of endorsing greater Albania, it remains the most outspoken advocate for Kosovo's independence.[62] Even before Yugoslavia disintegrated, Ibrahim Rugova was calling for Kosovo to be given status as a full republic within Yugoslavia. Rugova also claimed after the Kosovo conflict that UN resolution 1244 which ended the war was merely a "big compromise to end the war in Kosovo, but [it] did not rule out future independence. Anything other than independence is inconceivable for us".[63]

In the second half of 2003, Kosovo's politicians began to explore instrumentalizing the threat of a Greater Albania as leverage to persuade the international community to settle for an independent Kosovo. The message they conveyed amounted to: "If you won't grant us independence, we can opt for something worse." In such a context Kosovo independence could be presented as splitting the difference, a compromise. Ibrahim Rugova posed it rhetorically at the end of September 2003, warning that if the independence of Kosovo was not recognised, then sooner rather than later, extremists can be expected to try and form a unified Albanian state.[64] The Presidency of the Kosovo Assembly sent a similar yet subtler signal in November 2003 with its respectful reception of the LPK petition for state union with Albania, which by then had amassed nearly 46,000 signatures. Presidency member Hydajet Hyseni assessed that: 'the LPK petition will naturally be included in the agenda as one of the options present in our political life," because: "the people's will should find its way to the institutions".[65]

While Rugova continues to stress that "Kosovo's independence is an essential part of the LDK programme", the PDK, in contrast, has tactically concluded that the international community is not prepared to open the issue at present, and has sought to curry favour by contrasting their own "responsible" behaviour with that of Rugova and the LDK. In April 2003 Hashim Thaci proposed a moratorium on Kosovo's final status "for a certain period of time", a position perfectly in line with that of the international community.[66] However, both the PDK and the smaller AAK essentially agree with Rugova's position that Kosovo is already independent, and is merely waiting for the international community to recognise this.

There has been a debate within the last year in Kosovo on the concept of a separate Kosovo identity. Arben Xhaferi (leader of the DPA in Macedonia) is one of the fiercest critics of the idea, and he is one of the main promoters of unification of Albanian inhabited territories. But even for Xhaferi the pan-Albanian argument is a means rather than an end – he realises that by connecting the fates of the Albanians in Kosovo, Macedonia and Presevo Valley, these (separate) units each stand a better chance of getting a better deal.

The ethnic Albanian insurgency in Macedonia in spring 2001 was strongly supported in Kosovo. The relative success of the National Liberation Army's tactics and military skills – in contrast to the 2000 Presevo insurgency – boosted morale among Kosovo's Albanian political actors. The conflict also underscored the residual potency of the KLA tradition and led many international observers to conclude that Kosovo was bent on exporting radicalism and extremism. More politically sophisticated Kosovo politicians realise that such an international perception has damaged Kosovo's credibility as a potential good neighbour post independence. There was no visible support for the Albanian National Army from any Kosovo political actor.

Recognising the vulnerability of Kosovo Albanians to charges of extremism, the late Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic used an April 2002 visit to Great Britain to argue that an independent Kosovo would face hostility from most of its neighbours while fomenting a fresh round of regional chaos, "The first consequence would be crisis in Macedonia and the possible disappearance of the Macedonian state. The second consequence would be Bosnia and the future of the Bosnian state. The third consequence is a huge crisis for the democratic forces in Serbia. The

[62] For a fuller discussion of the issues surrounding Kosovo's final status see *A Kosovo Roadmap (I): Addressing Final Status*, and *A Kosovo Roadmap (II): Internal Benchmarks*, ICG Balkans Reports N°124 and N°125, 1 March 2002.
[63] *Der Spiegel*, 17 April 2000.
[64] Beta News Agency, Belgrade, 19 September, 2003, quoted from an interview on Czech radio on 18 September, 2003.
[65] Kosovo at a Glance V.I.P. Daily New Report, 19 November 2003.
[66] Interview with Jagodina-based TV station, Palma Plus, first reported in *Epoka e Re*, 7 April 2003

question is, is the benefit of a second Albanian state in the Balkans worth taking the risk of all these consequences?"[67] His successor, Zoran Zivkovic, warned that the secession of Kosovo "would create a dangerous precedent. In that case all the borders all over the Balkans would be up for rearrangement".[68] Serbian leaders, of course, are doing their best to deter any unilateral action on Kosovo's independence by the international community.

Meanwhile, economic and cultural integration between Albania and Kosovo proceeds, with growing links at all levels. The signing of the Albania-Kosovo Free Trade Agreement in May 2003 is likely to be an important landmark in this process. Nevertheless, the political relationship between the two Albanian entities continues to be marked by some mutual frustration and distrust, undercutting any broader momentum for pan-Albanianism. Former Albanian foreign minister Ilir Meta refused to "give any prepared formula for Kosovo status" shortly before his resignation.[69] Tirana's recent offer of mediation between Kosovo and Serbia was not received with enthusiasm by either Belgrade or Pristina. Kosovo Albanians have always relied much more on the United States than on Albania, and this seems unlikely to change.

[67] BBC interview with Zoran Djindjic, 15 April 2002
[68] *Der Spiegel*, 17 May 2003, p. 128.
[69] Interview with Deutsche Welle, 16 June 2003, quoted in *Epoka e Re* and *Kosova Sot* the following day.

V. MACEDONIA: SHOULD WE STAY OR SHOULD WE GO?

The Macedonian situation differs considerably from that in Kosovo or the Presevo Valley of southern Serbia. After 1989, Macedonian Albanians enjoyed relatively better economic conditions and broader political rights than other Albanians in the former Yugoslavia. Yet this was not always the case. During the 1950s and 1960s, Macedonian Albanians suffered the same degree of ethnic persecution under the purges of Yugoslav Minister of the Interior Aleksandar Rankovic as did the Kosovo Albanians.[70] Again, in the mid-1980s Albanian-language schools were closed and traditional walls around Albanian homes were destroyed. Many Albanians were also imprisoned for engaging in "nationalism", a range of activities that included attendance at Albanian weddings.[71]

As Yugoslavia disintegrated in the early 1990s, Albanians in Macedonia were unenthusiastic about the new state. Even Macedonian politicians like current PM Branko Crvenkovski acknowledge that the seeds for grievance were sown with the new Constitution promulgated largely by the Macedonian ethnic majority, after declaring independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. The new Constitution formally removed protections accorded Albanians under the last Yugoslav Constitution and, as Crvenkovski admits, ethnic Albanians refused to vote for it.[72] Indeed, Albanian districts of Western Macedonia organised a referendum in 1992 which approved "territorial autonomy" and eventual union with Kosovo. An "Autonomous Republic of Illirida" was then declared by several municipalities, but no more was heard of it. Macedonia's Albanian elite settled into a pattern of participation in government and carving up the available patronage with the ethnic

[70] Aleksandar Rankovic was vice president of Yugoslavia and regarded in some quarters as heir-apparent to Tito. He headed the Yugoslav Security Police (UDBA). The UDBA was responsible for serious abuses of the Albanian population. On the pretext of suppressing Albanian irredentism, UDBA put pressure on Albanians to emigrate. Between 1954 and 1957, some 195,000 Albanians left Yugoslavia, and by the time of Rankovic's dismissal the figure had reached 235,000.
[71] Elez Biberaj, *Albania in Transition. The Rocky Road to Democracy*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1998, p. 256.
[72] See Crvenkovski's speech to SDSM congress in February 2003, quoted in *Macedonia: No Room for Complacency*, ICG Europe Report N°149, 23 October 2003 p. 26

majority.[73] The Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) represented Albanians in the Macedonian government from independence until the 1998 election, when they were replaced by the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), who were in turn replaced in government by the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) in 2002. Although the DPA's leaders had split from the PDP in 1994 because they wanted to pursue a more nationalist agenda, in fact neither party ever raised the territorial question before the 2001 conflict. In addition, Ali Ahmeti, who led the National Liberation Army during the conflict and is now the leader of the DUI, has consistently restated his party's commitment to Macedonia's territorial integrity.

Initially, Xhaferi and the rest of the ethnic Albanian political establishment in Macedonia actively opposed the National Liberation Army insurrection in the spring of 2001. The DPA even publicly expressed support for the Macedonian military response. Following mediation efforts by U.S. Ambassador Robert Frowick, a joint declaration of Macedonian Albanian leaders, including the National Liberation Army's Ali Ahmeti, was forged in Prizren. This declaration promised a cessation of hostilities in exchange for increased rights for Albanians within Macedonia. Although Ambassador Frowick's efforts were immediately disowned by the international community, the agreement nonetheless formed the basis for the peace agreement which followed.

The Ohrid Agreement, signed in August 2001, mandated fundamental changes to the Macedonian constitution, increasing the rights of Albanians to influence the legislation most important to them, such as Albanian-language education and increasing Albanian representation in government and in the police force. The Agreement also included requirements for the National Liberation Army to disarm and disband.[74] Ali Ahmeti and most of those who fought beside him appear to have opted for a purely political path for now, and the success of their activities in 2001 has left Macedonia's Albanians in a potentially much improved position.[75]

Divining the true intent of Albanians in Macedonia based merely upon their public statements is challenging. However, the efforts to implement the Ohrid agreement have offered a useful barometer with which to judge the intent of the respective actors in the crisis. NATO and other international observers cite Ahmeti's consistent support for the Ohrid Agreement, including supporting the return of Macedonian police and army personnel to conflict areas as evidence that his aims are directed toward expanding political rights rather than dividing the country along ethnic lines. His forthright opposition to the Albanian National Army, whose agenda was explicitly one of redrawing borders, is another positive indicator.

The majority of Macedonian Albanians, even after the 2001 conflict, still identify themselves as citizens of the Macedonian state and want that state to survive. The general Albanian attitude can be summed up by the words of a young Macedonian Albanian journalist, who told ICG that "Macedonia is *my* state, but we must have European standard human rights and political integration. Macedonia should be a state of two equal communities – Macedonians and Albanians and then it could survive".[76] Opinion polls reveal that while a majority of Albanians in Macedonia favour the idea of the political unification of Albanians in the Balkans in one state, few support unification if fighting is involved.[77] A crucial indicator in this respect was the failure of the Albanian National Army to capture much support from Macedonia's Albanians. The only political party to support "federalisation", the NDP led by Kastriot Haxhirexhi, has only one seat in the Macedonian parliament.

And whatever their 'true intent', the Albanians at Ohrid accepted an agreement that aimed to resolve their grievances without reference to territory. Unlike the Dayton Agreement, there was to be no concession such as federal re-organization that

[73] See ICG Balkans Report N°133, *Macedonia's Public Secret: How Corruption Drags The Country Down*, 14 August 2002.

[74] See *Macedonia: Filling the Security Vacuum*, ICG Balkans Briefing, 8 September 2001 and *Macedonia: No Room for Complacency*, ICG Europe Report N°149, 23 October 2003.

[75] See also James Pettifer, *FYROM After the Concordia Mision*, Conflict Studies Research Centre paper G129, February 2004.

[76] ICG discussion with Arsim Sinani, Pristina, May, 2002

[77] Office of Research, US State Department, Opinion Analysis, 8 May 2002; 73 per cent supported the idea of unification, but only 30 per cent were in favour if fighting with neighbouring states was involved.

would have accorded Albanians formal 'control' of parts of the country. There are of course provisions for reorganizing municipal boundaries under the overall decentralization mandated by Ohrid. While this process has sparked deep concern about creating (or recognising) *de facto* "ethnically Albanian" areas, it is important to remember that Ohrid itself does not prescribe territorial division.

For a number of social and political reasons, Macedonia's Albanians remain closer to Kosovo Albanians than those in Albania proper. For example, the majority of Albanians in Macedonia share the deep suspicions of Kosovo Albanians regarding Tirana's cordial relations with Greece, Skopje and Belgrade. During the conflict in Macedonia in the spring of 2001, the Albanian government appeared ill-informed about the military situation with the National Liberation Army and assumed (as did many observers) that the Skopje authorities would quickly crush the insurgency. Further, the Macedonian Albanian leaders in Tetovo have always been strongly anti-communist, and have traditionally had poor relations with the Albanian socialists who have been in government since 1997.[78] Unless Tirana becomes notably more activist with regard to Kosovo or Macedonia, there will be no significant moves by the Macedonian Albanian leadership to strengthen anything beyond cultural and economic ties with Albania. In marked contrast, a shared history as citizens of the former Yugoslavia combined with strong family and kinship ties between the Albanians of Macedonia and Kosovo links these two Albanian entities in a fashion not shared by their ethnic kin in Albania, Montenegro and Greece.

Even during the 2002 election campaign, the DPA moved toward radical nationalism, openly appealing to "ethnic Albania" and repeatedly challenging the viability of the Ohrid agreement as a solution to Albanian concerns. Despite reprimands of senior EU and US diplomats, its leader Arben Xhaferi has repeatedly argued that ethnic Albanians in Macedonia should have the right to self-determination, and is a proponent of a Federal Albania should ethnic Albanians and Macedonians go their separate ways.[79] Its deputy leader, Menduh Thaci, made a provocative speech in July 2002 asking, "…as the Slavs have many states, why can Albanians not integrate as one nation?"[80] Macedonian Albanians have always been amenable to some type of integration or confederation with Kosovo, and should Macedonia decline even further economically or should the Ohrid Agreement stall, then the notion of some greater integration with Albania will become increasingly desired.

Many in Macedonia, of all ethnicities, still believe that the international community is not seriously committed to maintaining the integrity of the state. The European and American insistence on the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement is an important reassurance that no further drastic rearrangements of the country's borders or constitution are expected. Implementation is also important because the Agreement will deliver practical benefits to local government units after the promised decentralisation of powers has taken place. But more reassurance can and should be given; the country's very name still is barely acknowledged by international actors.[81] Macedonia's aspirations to join both NATO and the EU should be treated both seriously and sympathetically.

[78] James Pettifer, *FYROM After Ohrid*, Conflict Studies Research Centre, March, 2002, p 5

[79] For Arben Xhaferi's views on the situation facing Albanians in Macedonia, see his essay *Challenges to Democracy in Multiethnic States*, http://aacl.com/challenges_to_democracy.htm, 16 May 2001 and further analysis in *Macedonia: No Room for Complacency*, ICG Europe Report N°149, 23 October 2003

[80] Menduh Thaci speaking at the Third Conference of the DPA Youth, Tetovo, 3 July 2002

[81] See ICG Balkans Report N°122, *Macedonia's Name: Why The Dispute Matters And How To Resolve It*, 10 December 2001.

VI. MONTENEGRO, SOUTHERN SERBIA AND GREECE

A. ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT?

A recurrent media story over the last few years has been the sudden emergence of a new Albanian guerrilla group threatening to destabilise Montenegro, followed by its equally rapid disappearance. The latest such incident was in January 2004, when a website appeared claiming to be published by the curiously named "Montenegrin National Army". It warned that "experimenting with the fate of Albanians in Montenegro" would lead to "actions aimed against essential Montenegrin buildings and interests". Albanian leaders in Montenegro disclaimed any connection with or knowledge of the organisation, and pointed to numerous grammatical errors in its startling declarations. The site soon disappeared from the internet, having provoked the media storm in Montenegro and its neighbours which was presumably its authors' objective.

The Albanian community in Montenegro is concentrated in the south east of the country, adjoining northern Albania. Despite vigorous protests from both Muslim and Catholic Albanians, the region was ceded to Montenegro following the Congress of Berlin in June 1878. There followed a continuous pattern of forced and voluntary assimilation, and along with the wider Slav population, there was considerable emigration from the Albanian communities. In general, there was a wider sense of tolerance toward ethnic Albanians both because their numbers were relatively small, and since there was an existing fabric of social interaction between Montenegrins and Albanians. The two peoples shared similar clan structures and traditions, and there was some degree of intermarriage between them, particularly in the border regions. The degree of assimilation is so acute that in some districts many Albanians no longer speak their mother tongue. According to a recent survey, some Montenegrin Albanians have joined Montenegrin political parties, and others have collaborated with the government's security forces and special police in monitoring the Albanian population.

In the former Yugoslavia, the Albanians of Montenegro escaped much of the harassment suffered by their ethnic kin in Kosovo and Macedonia. Albanians composed roughly seven per cent of Montenegro's population according to the 2003 census, slightly up from 6.5 per cent in 1991. This is the one corner of the former Yugoslavia where Albanians recognise they are an absolute minority, and tensions have largely been minimal. Montenegrin Albanians have Albanian-language schools and their own newspapers, magazines and cultural organisations. Radio Podgorica broadcasts in Albanian and there is also an Albanian-language TV station. Nevertheless, there are still many areas in which Montenegrin Albanians feel disadvantaged and discriminated against. Whilst accepting that, due to their small population, they could not expect the State to provide an Albanian-language university, Montenegrin Albanians believe that an Albanian-language teacher training college should be established in an Albanian-inhabited region of Montenegro to train future elementary and secondary school teachers. Currently, there are far too few properly trained Albanian-language teachers, which results in much larger than average class sizes, and fewer students going onto further education. [82]

Another factor which causes resentment amongst Albanians is the State's confiscation of Albanian-owned land onto which Slavs are settled in order to alter the ethnic composition of the border regions. According to Anton Lajcaj, a professor in Tuzi, within the next year, 1,200 Slavs will be given flats and jobs in factories on confiscated land between Tuzi and Podgorica.[83] There is no shortage of disgruntled Albanians claiming that parcels of Albanian-owned land are being systematically confiscated by the State without adequate compensation. In general, many Albanians believe that the prevailing mentality of the Montenegrin government is deeply racist to Albanians and that there is no willingness at governmental level to ensure that the Albanian minority receives full political, economic and cultural rights. The Albanian political parties in Montenegro are attempting to frame a joint agenda which includes demands for senior ethnic Albanian appointments in the Podgorica government structures, and perhaps a separate

[82] See interview with Nailj Draga, MINA news agency, 20 January 2004

[83] "Montenegro: An Apartheid State in the Heart of Europe", The Albanian-American Civic League Fact Finding Mission to Montenegro with Congressman Tom Lantos. published September 2003, p. 2

municipality for the majority Albanian town of Tuzi (currently part of the Podgorica municipality).[84]

Although some Montenegrin Albanians would like to secure a degree of autonomy, there has until recently been little support for political unification with either Albania or Kosovo. However, now that the status of Montenegro remains an open question, Montenegrin Albanians have become more concerned with improving their status in the republic. Because they are a small group, Montenegro's Albanians tend to associate themselves politically with the more numerous Muslims, who comprise around 14 percent of the Republic's population. Cultural links with Albania are strong and Albanian state television is a dominant influence. Many Montenegrin Albanians have family links with the northern clans in Albania's Han-i-Hoti region, as they do with Kosovo's Albanians, and have thus been able to play a key role in the substantial and growing trade links across the border and across Lake Shkoder. Their relations have recently been improved considerably by the opening of two new border crossings between Montenegro and Albania.

There are two main ethnic Albanian political parties in Montenegro: the Democratic Union of Albanians and the Democratic Alliance of Albanians. Both parties support Montenegrin Premier Milo Djukanovic's ruling coalition and his goal of independence. The Montenegrin Albanians have traditionally had better relations with their Slav neighbours than Albanians in Kosovo, southern Serbia or Macedonia. This is due in part to the fact that up to a third of these ethnic Albanians are Roman Catholic, enabling the Christian Albanian population to act as a sort of bridge between the Orthodox Slav and Muslim Albanian communities. It is also due to the cultural similarities between traditional Montenegrin and Albanian societies.

Albanian leaders in Montenegro have complained that the Albanian government has paid them relatively little attention compared to ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. The Albanian government, however, has been eager to build broader political and economic ties with Montenegro and has not been keen to be seen as interfering in Montenegro's internal affairs. Instead, Tirana has emphasised the need for Albanians to be engaged in the process of Montenegro's democratisation and stabilisation. Over the past year, a number of bilateral initiatives have helped improve Albanian-Montenegrin relations. Apart from the new border crossings, the Albanian government has decided to increase the number of scholarships for Montenegrin Albanians to study in Albania. Special attention has been paid to the improvement of road infrastructure linking Albania with Montenegro, and a huge bridge is to be constructed over the Buna river, which will connect the beach at Ulcinj with that of Velipoja to facilitate communication between these important tourist centres.

While recognising that their political destiny lies within Montenegro, Montenegrin Albanians also want to strengthen their economic and cultural links to Albanians in other parts of the Balkans. Montenegrin Albanians are very keen to see a quick implementation of a unified pan-Albanian education system. President of the Democratic Union of Montenegrin Albanians, Luigj Juncaj, argues, "We want the same curriculum for all Albanians in the Balkans. Language, literature and history are most important to us because with these three subjects you can strengthen knowledge about Albanian culture, heritage and national consciousness".[85] This follows a call the previous year by the leader of the Albanian Democratic Union, Fuad Nimani, who told the BBC, "Our party asks that the education programmes for Albanians in Montenegro should be unified for all Albanians in the Balkans".[86]

Although there is little support for pan-Albanianism as such in Montenegro, there is now an increasing desire amongst the majority of Montenegrin Albanians for a degree of administrative and cultural autonomy in the form of that briefly enjoyed by Kosovo under the 1974 Yugoslav constitution. This has become more pronounced since the formation of the new Yugoslav federation composed only of Serbia and Montenegro, a measure that was ratified in May 2000. Prior to this, Montenegro's Albanian population was firmly supportive of then-President Milo Djukanovic's independence campaign and largely kept nationalist demands regarding the autonomy issue on a back burner. Indeed, Djukanovic warned of the dangers of silencing the Muslim and Albanian pro-independence supporters, writing to the *Washington Post*, "The Muslim and Albanian minorities have always been part of the democratic

[84] See "Ferhat Dinosa: We shall request offices in seven more ministries", *Publika*, 5 November 2004

[85] ICG interview with Luigj Juncaj, Podgorica, September 2000.

[86] UPI, 13:09, 6 September 1999

bloc, seeing Montenegro as their own state and participating in the work of the pro-independence government. If the Montenegrin majority, which favours independence, and the republic's national minorities are deprived of their political voice, then the stage may be set for civil strife on a scale that could destabilise both Montenegro and its neighbours".[87]

The nucleus of nationalist agitation comes from the almost exclusively Albanian-inhabited region of Ulcinj and this area's diaspora, which is based largely on the east coast of the United States. It remains to be seen how the Montenegrin Albanians respond to their continued minority status in yet another remake of Yugoslavia, and to what degree they are going to remain content.

B. THE PRESEVO VALLEY IN SOUTHERN SERBIA

The Presevo Valley sits astride the only north-south corridor through the mountainous Balkan peninsula, lending a strategic importance to an otherwise relatively isolated area. The position of the ethnic Albanian population in southern Serbia's Presevo Valley reflects not only the tensions between the Valley's Albanian inhabitants and the Serbian populace, government and armed forces, but also the proximity of neighbouring Kosovo and Macedonia and the political agendas of international and local actors in the region.[88] According to the latest census data (2002), ethnic Albanians form a majority in the municipalities of Presevo (90 per cent) and Bujanovac (54.5 per cent), and a minority in the municipality of Medvedja (26 per cent). Despite making up a majority of the Valley's population, under the Milosevic regime ethnic Albanians were excluded from employment in education and health care, dismissed from state-owned companies, the police and other public sector jobs. Currently the region is relatively peaceful, although occasional isolated incidents continue to highlight the fragility of the peace settlement.

Similar to other areas of the Balkans, the Presevo Valley was subjected to ethnic cleansing during previous conflicts, most notably after the First Balkan War (1912), and again during and after the First and Second World Wars. Oral histories of these events are passed down to each generation and have directly fuelled radicalism in the region, among both Serbs and Albanians.[89] Although the most recent unrest in the Presevo Valley emerged during the 1999 war in Kosovo, a 1946 decision by the Yugoslav government to separate the Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja municipalities from Kosovo and place them under direct Serbian Republic jurisdiction created a grievance that continues to inflame passions among the local Albanians.

In March 1992 ethnic Albanians held an unofficial referendum in which they voted nearly unanimously to re-attach the Presevo Valley to Kosovo. Following the 1999 entrance of NATO troops into Kosovo, many of the Serb security forces withdrew from Kosovo and relocated just over the border in the Presevo Valley. The presence of these security forces quickly led to heightened tensions and antagonisms between Serbs and ethnic Albanians, as well as a series of incidents and charges of human rights violations. By March 2000 over 7,000 Albanians had fled southern Serbia for neighbouring Kosovo and Macedonia. Amidst the turmoil, a splinter group of the KLA, calling itself the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (UCPMB), emerged and began launching attacks against Serb security forces.[90]

The UCPMB aimed to internationalise the plight of ethnic Albanians in southern Serbia, with the goal of securing NATO intervention on their behalf. This was the model the KLA had used in Kosovo and the UCPMB reasoned that it could be replicated in Presevo. Between 700 and 1,000 UCPMB guerrillas began operating inside the three-mile Ground Safety Zone (GSZ), created by the military technical agreement signed by NATO and Belgrade in June 1999. These guerrillas enjoyed the *de facto* protection afforded by a NATO ban on heavy weapons within the GSZ. As fighting escalated in the spring of 2001, and with an Albanian insurgency gaining steam in Macedonia, it became clear that the Albanian insurgents in southern Serbia and Macedonia were using the demilitarised zone to facilitate their attacks and smuggling of weapons. In addition, extremists

[87] *Washington Post*, 20 August 2002

[88] For a detailed examination of the situation in the Presevo Valley, see *Southern Serbia's Fragile Peace*, ICG Europe Report N°152, 9 December 2003.

[89] For an account of the origins of the current tensions in the Presevo Valley, see Bob Churcher, *Kosovo Lindore/Preshevo, 1999-2002*, Conflict Studies Research Centre, March 2002.

[90] See ICG Balkans Report N°116, *Peace in Presevo: Quick Fix or Long Term Solution*, 10 August 2001.

on both sides in southern Serbia appeared intent on creating provocations to further their respective causes.

Between March and May of 2001, following intensive NATO and US-led diplomacy, the international community brokered a peace agreement between the Albanians and Serbs that led to the disbanding of the UCPMB (Konculj Agreement), the re-entry of Serb security forces into the GSZ, and the creation of a vigorous civilian component – known as the Covic Plan – that would bring significant international and domestic investment into Valley. The Plan also envisioned new elections in the effected municipalities, as well as the creation of a multi-ethnic police force and integration of Albanians into public institutions, such as civic administration and the judiciary.

Since the signing of the Konculj Agreement, the "Covic Plan" – the Program and Plan for the Solution of the Crisis in the Municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac, and Medvedja – has been implemented with mixed results. To ensure that ethnic Albanians had appropriate representation at the local level, municipal elections in the region were planned and to ensure that the voter's list reflected demographic realities, a census – overseen by the OSCE – was conducted in late April 2002. Elections – monitored by OSCE/ODIHR and found to be fair and free – were held on 28 July 2002. The ethnic Albanian Party for Democratic Action (PDD) won in the municipalities of Presevo and Bujanovac, while a Serbian coalition won in Medvedja.

The Covic Plan has resulted in progress in numerous areas. Multi-ethnic police units have been formed and new local elections held, while the media scene has been freed significantly: there are now Albanian language television stations and print media. Important steps towards integration are still required in other areas, particularly the judiciary. Many Albanians complain about what they regard as the slowness of implementation, particularly regarding the economy. Although the local police force has become multi-ethnic, their presence is overshadowed by the Serb gendarmerie, and a visible Army presence, symbolised by the construction of a new base. Reforms in the education and the overall delivery of public services need to be strengthened. The region is chronically poor and underdeveloped, with few employment opportunities. All in all, the peace is fragile and dependent on international donations and supervision. It also depends on the personality of Coordination Centre head Nebojsa Covic, whose position may not be secure given the current political crisis in Serbia.

The UCPMB insurgents were not fighting for a greater Albania. Rather, they sought to remove Serbian control and integrate the Presevo Valley with Kosovo.[91] The emergence of the UCPMB also coincided with rising violence in the divided northern Kosovo town of Mitrovica, where Serbs – angry over the ethnic cleansing of Serbs by Kosovo Albanians – began to establish a *de facto* partition of Kosovo. Presevo Valley Albanians were anxious that they would be pushed to the side during any future discussions on the final status of Kosovo, and wished to link the fate of the Valley with any final settlement for Kosovo. As a result, the Presevo Valley also represented a bargaining chip aimed at counterbalancing Serbian efforts at partitioning Kosovo.

Many of the armed incidents that occurred in the Presevo Valley in the summer of 2003 appeared to be attempts to include Presevo in impending (October 2003) discussions between Belgrade and Pristina. They emphasised the region's continuing problems, as well as difficulties implementing portions of the Covic Plan. They sent a clear message that both Belgrade and the international community will have to keep paying attention to the Valley in order to maintain peace and reduce tensions.

While the overwhelming majority of ethnic Albanians in southern Serbia wish to see their region integrated with Kosovo, they would prefer this to come about through political, rather than military means. There is very little sympathy for an armed insurgency, and there do not appear to be any greater pan-Albanian ambitions at play in the Valley.[92] Given that the 1999 NATO campaign against Serbia established a UN protectorate over Kosovo, as well as the possibility that a probable outcome of final status negotiations for Kosovo could be independence, the realignment of administrative borders is no longer merely an internal matter of state structures. Rather, it has connotations of changing international boundaries. It also poses the spectre of Serbia losing more territory.

The appearance of the ANA appears to have somewhat radicalized the Albanian political scene in southern Serbia. As a result, local politics have

[91] See Map at Appendix I.
[92] ICG interviews with Albanians in Presevo and Bujanovac, March-November 2003.

become more nationalistic, with less room for political manoeuvre, cooperation or compromise with Belgrade available to moderate Albanian politicians, such as Riza Halimi of the PDD. There is profound dissatisfaction over the slowness implementing the Covic Plan, as well as with the lack of progress in improving their economic situation.

In the meantime, the Presevo Valley Albanians continue to look across the mountains at Kosovo, where they see the prospect of an independent Albanian-controlled state, without Serbian interference. To them this is vastly more appealing than being an Albanian minority in a Slavic majority state.

C. THE GREEK QUESTION

There are two long-established groups of people of Albanian decent living in Greece. The first of these, known as Arvanites, emigrated from Albania during the 13th to 15th centuries, settling primarily in the Greek provinces of Peloponnesus, Attica and the Aegean islands. These earliest Albanian migrants have now been largely assimilated into the mainstream Greek population. The second group, known as Chams, live in the north-western Greece adjacent to the Albanian border. Since the expulsion of the Muslim Cham population in 1945 by Greece, the remaining Christian Orthodox Chams have also been assimilated.

There is also a third group of Albanians in Greece – estimated by the Albanian Foreign Ministry to number around 400,000 – who have worked there as seasonal and residential workers since 1992. Although most of these individuals are located in Athens, Albanian communities can be found throughout Greece, including the islands. At present these immigrant workers are not politically organised, but there are growing demands for better living conditions. This group would like to see official work and resident permits granted and they would like better pay and improved work conditions, including access to insurance and credit facilities. These Albanians also feel that they are often harassed by the police because of their ethnicity and would also like to see Albanian language schools established.[93] Albanian language schools are not as prominent an issue in Greece as in other locales, because the number of Albanian children living in Greece remains relatively small, and there is extensive superficial assimilation. However, this situation is changing as the resident Albanian population increases, with growing numbers of families joining their menfolk to live permanently in Greece. Albanians in Greece are also eager to avoid inciting local nationalists by being seen as demanding extra rights. The government of Greece has concerns regarding potential Albanian terrorism, and the government has invested heavily in the economies of all three of its immediate neighbours to the north in an effort to promote regional stability.

Nevertheless, the number of Albanian families (as opposed to single migrant men) settling in Greece is increasing. With no Albanian-language schools, many Albanian children speak only Greek and are unable to write Albanian. Many of the Albanians in Greece feel it is the duty of the Albanian government to better represent their interests in Greece. They have argued that without stronger backing from the Albanian government they will have no choice but to form their own political forums, which in turn will attract the attention of Albanian political elements from elsewhere in the Balkans. Already the main Albanian and Kosovo political parties – the Socialist Party, the Democratic Party and the Democratic Party of Kosovo – have set up offices in Greece.

The central focus of these political groups has been to increase their profiles back home by creating a solid support base amongst the ever increasing number of Albanians living permanently in Greece. Party activists have been helping to lend weight and legitimacy to the various Albanian émigré groups' demands for improved human rights, as well as seeking some redress to the Cham issue. The Chams are the ethnic Albanian population of the region of north-eastern Greece known to Albanians as Chameria.[94] Between 1921 and 1926, the Greek government endeavoured to deport Albanian Muslims from Chameria in order to allot their lands to Greeks who had been deported from Asia Minor during Kemal Ataturk's revolution. Later, in 1944, the Greek government unleashed a pogrom in the region and some 35,000 Chams fled to Albania and Turkey. The Greek authorities then approved a law sanctioning the expropriation of Cham property, citing the collaboration of this community with

[93] ICG interviews with members of the Albanian community in Athens, September 2001.

[94] An area of Epirus extended between Butrint and the mouth of the Acheron River and eastward to the Pindus mountains.

occupying German forces. This law remains in force today. While the forced displacement of the entire population has left a lingering sense of injustice among Albanians in general, no post-war Albanian government has placed the Cham issue high on its foreign policy agenda with Athens. Today, the Cham issue is seen by many Albanians as yet another unaddressed historical slight, and one Albanian journalist equated the plight of the Chams with that of the Palestinians, "Some of them still have the keys to their houses. They won't be able to forget where they came from and we must not forget either".[95]

[95] Interview with Ilir Haxhiu, Tirana, May 2002

VII. EMIGRES, IDENTITY AND THE POWER OF DEMOGRAPHICS

A. THE DIASPORA: POLITICS AND CRIME

The ethnic Albanian insurgent groups that have emerged over the past six years have relied heavily on the one million ethnic Albanian émigrés for political, moral and financial support. The Albanian diaspora has widely echoed the themes of historical injustices and been quick to advance the argument that the Albanian "nation" is unfairly divided. The most significant émigré communities are in the U.S., Germany and Switzerland. There are currently an estimated 400,000 Albanians in the United States, 350,000-400,000 Albanians living in Germany and some 160,000 in Switzerland. The number of Albanians in Turkey is estimated at more than a million, but most have been assimilated, and only recently begun to renew their contacts with Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. There have been small Albanian communities in Greece and Italy since medieval times, but their recent expansion dates only from the collapse of the one-party state in Albania in 1991. Smaller communities also exist in Belgium, the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, Holland and France.

Although there are generally close relations between the Albanian diaspora from all Balkan countries, there are occasional tensions between Kosovo Albanians and Albanians from Albania. In a World Bank survey of the Kosovo diaspora in Germany, many Kosovo Albanians expressed the view that Albanians from Albania were responsible for the image in western countries of widespread criminality amongst all Albanians. There are also some political differences, some quite profound, between the two groups.[96]

It is estimated that prior to 1941, between 200,000 and 300,000 Albanians were forced to emigrate from Yugoslavia due to the loss of their land during the colonisation period, most going to the U.S. or Turkey.[97] More recently, Albanians fled Yugoslavia in the 1960s to escape the persecution of Alexander Rankovic's secret police, again after the 1981 and

[96] World Bank Report, "The Kosovar Albanian Diaspora in Germany", Barbara Balaj, 2000

[97] Zamir Shtylla, *Kosovo Historical Review*, no. 3, Tirana, 1994, p. 20. It should be noted that other historians set a lower estimate; Noel Malcolm, for example, suggests that 90,000 to 150,000 left Kosovo during colonisation.

1989 Kosovo riots, and most recently during the Milosevic era. Although a good number of these émigrés settled in America, they also went in large numbers to Germany and Switzerland.

It is among these communities that one finds the greatest degree of enthusiasm and organisational support for pan-Albanianism. This is due primarily to two factors. First, these are long established and relatively prosperous communities, as opposed to the more recently established and poorer groups in Greece, Italy and other European countries. Second, the émigrés in the U.S., Germany and Switzerland are primarily from the former Yugoslavia, while the rest of the diaspora is largely made up of citizens from Albania that have left in the last decade to seek work. In many respects this latter group can be considered as seasonal migrant workers, rather than diaspora communities, in that they return frequently to Albania where their families continue to live.

In marked contrast, Albanians in New York, Stuttgart and Zurich are often second or third generation members of settled Albanian communities, which have been able to establish a network of well-funded social, cultural and political organisations. The most influential of these are the National Albanian-American Council (NAAC) and the Albanian American Civic League (AACL), which was founded in 1986 with the purpose of bringing together the various influential groups of Albanian-Americans to campaign on behalf of Albanians in Yugoslavia and to bring Kosovo to the attention of the U.S. Congress. These organisations have been active in lobbying, financing and debating a range of pan-Albanian issues. But even among these more hard line groups, it is extremely unusual to hear anyone advocating the unification of all Albanian-inhabited territories. Rather, the primary emphasis is centred on lobbying for an independent Kosovo, the single most important goal of the Albanian diaspora at the current time.

The Albanian diaspora was a crucial element in the radicalisation of Kosovo Albanian politics. Many of the radicals who fell afoul of the Yugoslav authorities went abroad where they formed new political groups beyond the scope of the conservative Democratic League of Kosovo, dominated by Ibrahim Rugova. These outside groups, such as the Kosovo People's Movement, played key roles in the development of the Kosovo Liberation Army, and in many ways were born of the diaspora.[98]

Without diaspora backing it would have been difficult for the insurgents in Macedonia, southern Serbia and Kosovo to finance their operations. In the U.S. there is a strong Albanian lobby on Capitol Hill, and Albanian organisations have effectively lobbied congress through a sophisticated network of contacts, primarily in the Republican Party. Émigré groups are also deeply divided along political and ideological lines often backing specific factions in the region. The Democratic League of Kosovo, for example works through Vatra, the Pan-Albanian Federation of America, while the Albanian-American Civic League is closer to the president of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj.

The Kosovo conflict led to sharp fissures in the diaspora communities between supporters of Ibrahim Rugova and Hashim Thaci. In Germany, for example, the vast majority of Kosovo Albanians supported Rugova before 1999. During the war, however, the community split fairly evenly between support for Rugova and Thaci, and there were even brawls between supporters of the different factions. Local Albanian social clubs were also divided during the war, and some have remained so. Since the end of the war, the majority of Kosovo Albanians abroad have continued to support Rugova. [99]

The most high profile of the diaspora groups is the NAAC, which has tried to exert a moderating influence among the various political factions, particularly in Kosovo. At the beginning of 2002, the NAAC called on Albanian leaders in Kosovo to make concessions regarding the establishment of a Kosovo government. In a statement, the council said it was high time for Kosovo leaders to forget their personal interests and to cooperate in establishing a stable government. [100] This, however, is the broad-based, acceptable face of diaspora politics. Behind the scenes, a number of highly nationalist groups continue to operate, and they are content to leave political lobbying to the NAAC and the AACL, while they concentrate on planning the strategy and the logistics to continue the struggle in the Balkans. These groups hold regular meetings to raise funds for

[98] James Pettifer, *Kosovo Economy and Society After 1945*, Conflict Studies Research Centre, March 2002
[99] The World Bank survey: The Kosovar Albanian Diaspora in Germany, by Dr. Barbara Balaj, 2000
[100] *The OSCE Monitor*, 16 January 2002.

the military struggle and to coordinate their activities with those on the ground. A prime motivating factor for the radicalisation amongst this group is that many of them have either spent time in Yugoslav prisons for nationalist activities or had a relative imprisoned or killed by former Yugoslav security forces. For these Albanians there are still scores to be settled and a burning desire to see Kosovo achieve independence.

The diaspora has also spawned criminal groups. There is generally acknowledged to be a serious problem with ethnic Albanian organised crime groups in Western Europe. According to Europol, these groups are actively involved in human trafficking and drugs smuggling, and have developed from simply being facilitators and service providers to taking over particular criminal markets, often with extreme violence.[101] It seems pretty clear that the profits from these lucrative and illegal activities go to the personal use of criminal bosses, rather than to political goals. The fact that Kosovo Albanian involvement with the drugs trade came to public notice at about the same time as the Kosovo crisis climaxed was seen as significant by some commentators; it is largely (though not completely) dismissed by those who have looked into the matter. Paul Hockenos, for instance, concludes that "the predominant source of the KLA's guns and money was not big-time criminals but the enormous disenfranchised diaspora population spawned by Milosevic's policies."[102] External aid to law enforcement across the Balkans is a high priority; there are EU police missions now operating in both Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Although the political will to deal with the problem does exist in the region,[103] human trafficking will be difficult to root out completely as long as the EU makes it profitable for criminals to circumvent immigration laws. It would be preferable to address the twin problems of Western Europe's labour shortage and the Balkans surplus working-age population by liberalising the visa regime. It should be possible to set up, on the one hand, a system of benchmarks for the national administrations to fulfil in order to qualify for visa-free access to the EU. At the same time, existing schemes for short to medium term visits, whether for study or for employment – including also employment in the EU's own institutions – should be liberalised.[104] The EU has started to move in this direction by opening up some educational exchange programmes, but more can and should be done.

B. THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIMENSION

The debate over high birth rates among ethnic Albanian populations was a central issue in the Kosovo conflict and has also appeared prominently in current debates in Macedonia. South-eastern Europe's six million ethnic Albanians are a young population with by far the highest birth rate in Europe – a marked contrast to the ageing, low-birth rate populations of their immediate Balkan and Italian neighbours. It has long been asserted by Albania's Christian Orthodox neighbours that the high Albanian birth rate represents a concerted and systematic plan to conquer territory by way of a "population bomb". The reality is more complex, and high birth rates are more a function of lack of economic and educational opportunities than any grand design. In most studies of global human population patterns, the single most important determinant regarding family size is the level of education of women. Other significant factors include the number of rural as opposed to urban dwellers, religious practices and the general economic development of a given region. The southern Balkans do not seem to be an exception to these trends.

Educated women from Pristina have, on average, far fewer children than women from villages in rural Kosovo. A similarly educated woman from Tirana

[101] Europol's *2003 European Union organised crime report*, p. 14, lists ethnic Albanian criminals ahead of organised crime groups from other parts of the former Yugoslavia, Russia, Turkey, Nigeria, Morocco, Colombia, China and Vietnam as "among the main threats to the EU".

[102] Hockenos, *Homeland Calling*, p. 255; see also Tim Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge*, p. 70.

[103] The U.S. State Department's June 2003 *Trafficking in Persons Report* states that while the governments of Albania and of Serbia and Montenegro have not met minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, they are nonetheless making significant efforts to do so; the Macedonian government is reported as fully complying with the minimum standards required by the U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.

[104] See ICG Balkans Briefing, *Thessaloniki and After I: The EU's Balkan Agenda*, 20 June 2003, and also the impressive Fabian Society/Oxfam report by Russell King, Nicola Mai and Mirela Dalipaj, *Exploding the Migration Myths: Analysis and Recommendations for the European Union, the UK and Albania*, (London and Oxford, 2003).

has on average 2.7 children, compared with the average six-child family found in the villages of the poorest north-eastern region of Albania.[105] Religious adherence also plays a significant role regarding family size. Muslim Albanians have a higher birth rate than do Roman Catholic Albanians, who in turn have more children than do Eastern Orthodox Albanians. In short, there never was a national conspiracy amongst Albanians to produce large numbers of children in order to strengthen their claims on a particular territory. Rather, the number of children Albanian women have is determined, as elsewhere in the world, by their level of education, their religion and whether or not they live in an urban or rural setting. In the former Yugoslavia, the Albanian-inhabited areas were not only the most economically underdeveloped; their populations were also the least educated. Albanians only started to attend higher education in the very late 1960s, and all statistics since the 1970s show a decline in the ethnic Albanian birth rate.

Nowhere is the issue of Albanian fertility more widely discussed than in Macedonia, where demographic politics has important political ramifications. In the 1994 census, Macedonian Slavs made up 66.7 per cent of the population and ethnic Albanians 22.7 per cent. But ethnic Albanians, who have a more traditional and conservative society in which women rarely work, continue to have high birth rates. In a report by the United Nations Children's Fund, the birth rate for ethnic Albanians in 1994 was put at 2.7 per 100 people in the population, while it was only 1.3 for the ethnic majority. Accurate statistics are hard to come by (and have not yet been released from the 2002 census in Macedonia), but ethnic Macedonians are obviously concerned that they might become a minority in their own country.

According to Pande Lazarevski of the Skopje-based Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, investing in Macedonia's women – through education and providing economic opportunities – would provide a peaceful solution that would ultimately benefit all Macedonians. He notes, "What we are facing now is how to fight traditional society - how to liberate Albanian women not just to be birth machines".[106] In a recent article about how the Albanians' high birth rate is unnerving Macedonia's Slavs, an Albanian woman describes why after having just given birth to her third daughter, she would try again to conceive a male child. "Sons make a family go on", she said. "Daughters make someone else's family go on".[107]

C. ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

The opening up of the border between Albania and Kosovo in 1999 has had a dramatic impact upon the economic life of the adjacent districts, restoring a number of natural trading routes. The area around the Kosovo town of Djakovica for example, traditionally had close economic links with northern Albania, including livestock, leather and metal trades. The rupture between Tito's Yugoslavia and Enver Hoxha's Albania broke these economic links and cut off one area of the regional economic space from another. However, given concerns about cross-border smuggling and extremism, UNMIK has been slow to see borders opened more broadly.[108]

Albanian leaders have launched a number of socio-economic initiatives aimed at improving trade between Albania and Kosovo, and Albania clearly hopes that its impoverished north-eastern districts will benefit from increased business with Kosovo. Aware that the economic prosperity of northern Albania depends on a more open border between Albania and Kosovo, the Albanian government is trying to do everything possible to link Albania and Kosovo by road and rail. Such initiatives are also aimed at lessening Kosovo's dependence upon trade and communication links with Serbia and Macedonia.

After the end of the Kosovo war, then Albanian Prime Minister Pandeli Majko identified the development of ties between Albania and Kosovo as a top priority for the government, and it has remained central on Albania's agenda since that time. Albanians from Albania and the diaspora have been asked to deposit money in a special account to help fund the construction of a 350-kilometre road from the Albanian port of Durres to Pristina which would link Tirana and Pristina via the Morina border crossing in northern Albania. The Albanian port of Durres has also been offered as a port city for Kosovo, free of

[105] Statistics from the 2001 census in Albania.
[106] *The New York Times*, 11 August 2001.
[107] Ibid.
[108] For a useful discussion of the development of Kosovo's economic development see: James Pettifer, "Kosovo – Economy and Society After 1945", Conflict Studies Research Centre, March 2002.

Belgrade's control. The Albanian Development Fund has also financed the reconstruction of a 6.5-kilometre road linking north-eastern Albania with the Kosovo town of Djakovica. Albanian railways are nearing completion of a $200 million railway that will connect the Albanian port of Durres with the town of Prizren in southern Kosovo. A large U.S. corporation has recently signed contracts to reconstruct the Durres to Tirana railway.

Following the then Albanian Prime Minister Ilir Meta's visit to Kosovo in December 2000 to discuss strengthening economic, cultural and educational ties, numerous other cross-border economic initiatives have been initiated. The Albanian Academy of Sciences has produced a plan to encourage cross-border trade and joint Albania/Kosovo economic ventures. Over the past two years, Albanian companies have been rushing to the Kosovo market, including insurance companies, the Tepelena and Glina mineral water firms and Albanian Airlines, which now operates to Pristina. The Albanian government also intends to buy energy from Kosovo through direct procurement, and to build a new telecommunications network between Albania and Kosovo.

The major Panaida exhibition of Albanian products, which has been held in Tirana for the past six years, will now start in Tirana and then move to the southern Kosovo town of Djakovica. Djakovica has been selected as a New Economic Zone, in large part because of its potential for privatisation.[109] In May 2001, Albania and Kosovo signed a memorandum on economic cooperation, aiming to liberalise trade and kick start institutional cooperation.

From Albania's perspective, all the above pan-Albanian initiatives are designed primarily to boost Albania's economic prosperity. In that spirit, Albania continues to view border restrictions as an impediment to broader growth. From the Kosovo perspective, the extortionate import taxes imposed upon goods entering the province has only encouraged smuggling and other illegal activities. Much of the success of cross border economic initiatives will ultimately depend on the success of reconstructing Kosovo, an effort that has lagged to date.

[109] The Gjakova/ Djakovica region had been selected as a trial region in Kosovo for the development of independent factory enterprises in the Markovic era in the late 1980s.

D. CULTURAL LINKS

Plans for the social and cultural integration of Albanians in the southern Balkans continue to gain steam, and the process of "unifying" the education systems of Albania and Kosovo is well under way. Cooperation between the universities of Tirana, Pristina and Tetovo is intensifying with a regular exchange of teaching staff together and joint research projects and workshops aimed at establishing a unified university curriculum. Moves toward including the education programmes of ethnic Albanians in Montenegro are also underway. In one sense, this educational integration is a cultural alternative to the territorial notion of a greater Albania.

In summer 1999, in the wake of the Kosovo refugee crisis in Albania, the Albanian government offered to share its education system with Kosovo as a step toward culturally unifying the two Albanian entities. Ethem Ruka, the then Albanian education minister, told his equivalent in Kosovo's provisional government that the Tirana leadership considered cooperation between the Kosovo and Albanian schooling systems an investment and part of the "long-term strategy of our state".[110] Following a pan-Albanian education conference in Tirana in June 2000, Ruka called for a single Albanian-language primer for elementary schools in Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro, in order to support the development of a standard Albanian language. Ruka told the linguists that "the unified Albanian-language book would be a cornerstone for all-national unification".[111] Not surprisingly, his remarks quickly sparked fears that education represented the first plank of nationalist efforts to create a greater Albania". Ruka emphatically disavowed any such intention, and many Albanian education officials and linguists see the suggestion of a common primary school textbook as part of a thread of tradition that began in 1970 with efforts to standardise the language. There was also an urgent need to supply Kosovo with educational materials, and the standardised Albanian-language primer is now widely in use in Albanian schools throughout the Balkans.

Trying to craft shared history books has proved more difficult. History is the canvas on which Albanians project images not only of their national

[110] UPI, 10:37, 27 August 1999.
[111] RFE/RL, *Balkan Report*, Vol. 45, 16 June 2000.

identity but also of real and perceived historical injustices. The period from 1939 onward has proved particularly tricky in that regard. In Albania this has been reflected in the different historical textbooks produced under the communist period (1944-1991), the regime of Sali Berisha and the Democratic Party (1992-1997) and the current Socialist-led administration.

For example, communist history books depicted the World War II with heroic accounts of the partisan struggle against the fascist invader and shameful descriptions of their traitorous Albanian collaborators – the right-wing Balli Kombetar and the royalists. Following the collapse of the one-party state, the new Democratic Party immediately scrapped the communist texts and produced a revised text which portrayed the Balli Kombetar and Legaliteti as patriots and vilified the communist partisans. The current history texts published after the fall of the democratic regime in 1997 tried to produce a more balanced account of this controversial period. A new history book entitled *A History of Albania and the Albanians* has recently been published in Pristina and is intended for use in all Albanian schools throughout the Balkans. The book deals extensively with the issues pertaining to the "unjust" creation of Albania's borders and the various expulsions, rebellions and demonstrations involving the Albanians of the former Yugoslavia. There is also much on the expulsion of Muslim Albanians from northern Greece as well as maps explaining the extent of "historical ethnic" Albanian territory.

In late November 2001, delegates from Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and the diaspora, gathered in Prizren for the first World Albanian Congress. Prizren, as the birthplace of the Albanian national movement. The congress, which was attended by more than 30 delegates held discussions on topics ranging from exchanges of various Albanian theatre companies, to the establishment of a Convention of Teacher Training Institute to train teachers to teach anywhere in the "New Albanian Space", a term that began to be used in 1999 at the time of Fatos Nano's pan-Albanian dialogue initiatives, and has since crept into political parlance.

There was a genuine attempt at the congress to bring about a *rapprochement* over many contentious issues, such as the damaging debate over the official use of the Gheg literary language in Albania. Although Gheg and Tosk are largely the same language, they remain two very distinct dialects. In 1968, as part of an effort to identify with Albania, ethnic Albanian students in Kosovo decided to discontinue the use of their traditional Gheg literary language, in favour of the then newly-adopted official Albanian literary language, based primarily on the Tosk dialect. The Kosovo Albanian intelligentsia supported the use of the literary language of Tirana under the slogan "one nation, one language".[112] Since the collapse of communism in Albania, many Kosovo and northern Albanian intellectuals have been arguing for the restoration of Gheg as an official literary language on a par with Tosk. As with most pan-Albanian issues, the language debate is closely tied to the national divisions surrounding the events of the Second World War, where the "unified literary Albanian" is still viewed by many as the language the victorious Tosk communists imposed upon the vanquished Ghegs.

[112] Stavro Skendi, *Balkan Cultural Studies*, Boulder, Colorado, 1980, pp. 38-41

VIII. CONCLUSION

As this survey makes clear, notions of pan-Albanianism are far more layered and complex than the usual broad brush characterisations of ethnic Albanians simply bent on achieving a greater Albania or a greater Kosovo. Indeed, divisions within the Albanian communities across southern Europe remain pronounced, and the desire to territorially unify all the Albanian peoples has long held far more power as myth than as a practical political agenda. That said, pan-Albanianism is perceived by many non-Albanians as a major regional threat.

Since the arrival of multiparty politics in Albania, the country has been struggling to overcome acute poverty and internal political conflict. The broader national question has been largely ignored due to the more pressing need to foster internal national reconciliation and to building up its shattered economy. Albania therefore is more interested in developing cultural and economic ties with Kosovo, whilst maintaining separate statehood. On the whole, Albania's relations with the Albanians of Kosovo and western Macedonia have been far less intimate than the relations of these two with each other. For some in Albania in particular, one of the main obstacles to forging closer political ties between Tirana and Pristina is the potential clash of elites. Albania' current Tosk-dominated government is also concerned that too many Ghegs would be incorporated into a unified Albanian state. Despite the tremendous support given to the thousands of Kosovo refugees in 1998 and 1999, Albania remained aloof from the conflicts in Presevo and Macedonia.

There is widespread misunderstanding of Albanian national aspirations. Albanians have got used to the idea of separate Albanian entities in the Balkans. They are well aware of the cultural and ideological divisions between them, and are therefore content to preserve their separate political entities as long as business, cultural and travel restrictions are removed. At the present time, few Albanians press the issue of forming a single political unit. However, if the final status of Kosovo is not resolved within the foreseeable future, the southern Balkans will inevitably see a resumption of conflict. The independence of Kosovo therefore remains at the core of the Albanian question.

The situation regarding Macedonia's Albanians is more complex. Theirs is a struggle for economic as well as national and cultural rights. On the whole they have been largely focused on achieving coexistence within the Macedonian state, securing the ability to govern themselves at a local level and having equal representation at governmental level. It is essential therefore for the Macedonian government to fully implement the Ohrid reforms, in order to prevent the growth of small groups of radical nationalists, such as the ANA and other diaspora-based groups.

Much the same can be said about the Presevo Valley and the Covic plan which was designed to reintegrate the Albanians into Serbian civic life. The Albanians, however, want the opportunity to develop their own civic life in their own language. Despite recent progress in the recent local elections, establishment of a multiethnic police force, and plans for a census, there remains a strong desire amongst the Presevo Albanians for some form of autonomy along the lines of that which Kosovo enjoyed under the 1974 Yugoslav constitution for the Albanian-speaking areas within the plan. Montenegrin Albanians meanwhile have thus far resisted any form of paramilitary activity, and generally support the government of Premier Milo Djukanovic. They will continue to press for enhanced autonomy within Montenegro, but are unlikely to resort to violent means.

At present there is no comprehensive study of the role played by the Albanian diaspora in financing and coordinating the various ethnic Albanian insurgent groups that have fought in Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia. The large Kosovo Albanian diaspora community living in the United States, Germany and Switzerland has played – and will continue to play – a key role in the current and future economic, social and political development of Kosovo, as well as dictating military events on the ground. They could easily open up new fronts if they wished, to keep up the pressure on the numerous unresolved Albanian-related issues. For example, just as the Greeks could exploit their dwindling minority in southern Albania, the Cham issue, which is a festering wound in Albanian-Greek relations, could easily be used by Albanians seeking to put pressure on other aspects of the national struggle – for example to press for autonomy in Montenegro. For these reasons it would be advisable for the Albanian and Greek governments to try and settle the Cham issue, before it gets hijacked by extreme

nationalists, and the legitimate grievances of the Chams get lost in the tangle of other national causes.

Amongst Albanians in general, but particularly those of the former Yugoslavia, there is a growing intolerance of what is perceived as the international community's inability to accept the new dynamics of the Albanian world. Albanians are a young and rapidly growing population, many of whom have been raised in either a climate of violence and anarchy in Albania or amid human rights abuses and war in the former Yugoslavia. They want to see tangible progress not only in their political future but also in their general living standards and opportunities.

In the long term, therefore, Albanian nationalism will only be contained by more fully opening the borders between Albania and its northern neighbours, and increasing economic and educational opportunities across the region. Decentralising power in Macedonia, and giving Kosovo conditional independence in return for an assurance from all the Albanian entities in the Balkans that the present borders of south-eastern Europe will remain unchanged, would also help stabilise the situation. This would allow Albanian aspirations across the Balkans to develop in a natural and organic manner that would enhance the socio-economic development of the entire region, without posing any threat to the integrity of Albania or its neighbours.

Tirana/Brussels, 25 February 2004

APPENDIX A

MAP OF ALBANIA

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APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY OF NAMES, ACRONYMS AND USEFUL TERMS

AAK Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (political party led by Ramush Haradinaj)

AACL Albanian American Civic League

ANA Albanian National Army (paramilitary group)

DAA Democratic Alliance of Albanians (political party in Montenegro)

DPA Democratic Party of Albanians (political party in Macedonia)

DUA Democratic Union of Albanians (political party in Montenegro)

DUI Democratic Union for Integration (Albanian political party in Macedonia, led by Ali Ahmeti)

EU European Union

FBKSH Albanian National Union Front (political wing of the ANA, post-2002)

GSZ Ground Safety Zone

KFOR NATO peace-keeping mission in Kosovo

KKCMTSH National Committee for the Liberation and Defence of Albanian Lands (political wing of the ANA, pre-2002)

KLA Kosovo Liberation Army

LDK Democratic League of Kosovo (political party headed by Ibrahim Rugova)

LKCK National Movement for the Liberation of Kosovo (political party)

LPK People's Movement of Kosovo (political party)

NAAC National Albanian-American Council

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NLA National Liberation Army (paramilitary group active in Macedonia in 2001)

OSCE/ODIHR Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe – Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

PDD Party for Democratic Action (Albanian political party in Southern Serbia

PDK Democratic Party of Kosovo (political party led by Hashim Thaci)

PDP Party for Democratic Prosperity (Albanian political party in Macedonia)

PUK Party of National Unity (political party in Albania)

UCPMB Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (paramilitary group active in Southern Serbia)

UN United Nations

UNMIK UN Mission in Kosovo

USA United States of America

VMRO Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (pre-1940 terrorist group; post-1990 major political party in Macedonia)

APPENDIX C

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

The International Crisis Group (ICG) is an independent, non-profit, multinational organisation, with over 90 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

ICG's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, ICG produces regular analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers. ICG also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a 12-page monthly bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in all the most significant situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

ICG's reports and briefing papers are distributed widely by email and printed copy to officials in foreign ministries and international organisations and made generally available at the same time via the organisation's Internet site, www.crisisweb.org. ICG works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The ICG Board – which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media – is directly involved in helping to bring ICG reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policy-makers around the world. ICG is chaired by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari; and its President and Chief Executive since January 2000 has been former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans.

ICG's international headquarters are in Brussels, with advocacy offices in Washington DC, New York, London and Moscow. The organisation currently operates thirteen field offices (in Amman, Belgrade, Bogotá, Cairo, Freetown, Islamabad, Jakarta, Kathmandu, Nairobi, Osh, Pristina, Sarajevo and Tbilisi) with analysts working in over 40 crisis-affected countries and territories across four continents. In Africa, those countries include Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe; in Asia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kashmir and Nepal; in Europe, Albania, Bosnia, Georgia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia; in the Middle East, the whole region from North Africa to Iran; and in Latin America, Colombia.

ICG raises funds from governments, charitable foundations, companies and individual donors. The following governmental departments and agencies currently provide funding: the Australian Agency for International Development, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Foreign Office, the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, the Luxembourgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Republic of China Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Taiwan), the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the United Kingdom Department for International Development, the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Foundation and private sector donors include Atlantic Philanthropies, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Ford Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, Henry Luce Foundation Inc., John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, John Merck Fund, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Open Society Institute, Ploughshares Fund, Sigrid Rausing Trust, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Sarlo Foundation of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund, the United States Institute of Peace and the Fundação Oriente.

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* The Algeria project was transferred from the Africa Program to the Middle East & North Africa Program in January 2002.

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