UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE www.usip.org

SPECIAL REPORT

1200 17th Street NW • Washington, DC 20036 • 202.457.1700 • fax 202.429.6063

The Future of Macedonia

A Balkan Survivor Now Needs Reform

About the Report

This report is based on the Workshop on Future Issues for Macedonia, co-sponsored by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the United States Institute of Peace and held in Mavrovo, Macedonia, on October 20–22.

The report was drafted prior to the outbreak of fighting in Macedonia. Nonetheless, the issues discussed herein remain fundamental to Macedonia's future.

The workshop was co-chaired by Daniel Serwer, director of the Institute's Balkans Initiative, and Deborah Alexander, director of NDI's Central and East European Programs. The workshop brought together more than twenty citizens of Macedonia from across the ethnic and political spectrum, including members of civil society. The panel chairs and speakers at the two-day meeting were Keith Brown of Brown University, Victor Friedman of the University of Chicago, Brenda Pearson of the International Crisis Group, and Serwer. This report reflects the discussion at the conference—the areas of consensus as well as the areas of disagreement. The report was written by Kurt Bassuener, program officer in the Balkans Initiative.

The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Institute of Peace, which does not advocate specific policies.

March 23, 2001

Contents

Introduction 2
Protection of Individual Rights 2
Inadequacy of State Institutions and Citizen Involvement 3
Weak Institutions Engender Corruption and Cynicism 4
Disillusion with Europe but Hope for Integration 5
Improving the Neighborhood 6
Conclusions 7

Briefly...

- Macedonia has managed to maintain internal stability and independence through a tumultuous decade. It now has to face crucial issues threatening the country's social peace, prosperity, and further integration into the European economy. These include establishing a more modern, civic democracy; increasing transparency and efficiency in governance; and addressing endemic corruption and public cynicism.
- Individual human rights form the basis of modern democracy, and a citizen's ability to exercise these rights is a test of rule of law. Macedonia's gravitation toward institutionalizing group rights reflects the failure to promote and protect individual rights. Macedonia's ethnic minority communities believe that the state favors the ethnic Macedonian majority. Until this situation is remedied, progress on other fronts is difficult to envision.
- Decentralization of governance, coupled with transparency and public accountability of administration, could help ameliorate ethnic tensions in Macedonia and increase governmental efficiency. At present, local administrative units are too small to function efficiently. New, larger, administrative units should not be drawn on an ethnic, but rather administratively logical, basis.
- Weak institutions in Macedonia have allowed systemic cronyism and corruption, undermining public confidence and fostering general cynicism and lack of respect for the law. This subverts efforts to construct a functioning economy and deters investment. Building solid public institutions, rooting out corruption, and fostering accountability require leadership from civil society and the media that has hitherto been lacking.
- Macedonia suffered greatly during the past decade due to regional conflict and indirect effects of sanctions, which helped promote illegal commerce and corruption. Assistance from the international community, including the Security Pact for Southeast Europe, the European Union (EU), and the United States, has not fulfilled Macedonian expectations, inspired by promises of assistance especially during the Kosovo war. Macedonians nevertheless regard future EU membership as indispensable. This gives the European Union enormous influence, if it sends consistent signals.
- From Macedonia's perspective, NATO is a positive factor in the region and the solution to the problem of "hard security" for the country. Despite widespread opposition among ethnic Macedonians to the 1999 NATO air campaign against Yugoslavia, and

episodes of friction with NATO forces, there is a resilient desire across a broad spectrum of political and civil society to join the alliance. There is also a growing consensus across ethnic groups that, from a Macedonian security standpoint, Kosovo's final status is of less importance than whether it is prosperous, open, and democratic.

- Responsibility for Macedonia's internal democratic and institutional development rests with those citizens who have the vision and willingness to advocate the changes necessary. However, the West has an abiding interest in Macedonia's progress, and should invest in promoting civic values and public accountability.

About the Institute

The United States Institute of Peace is an independent, nonpartisan federal institution created by Congress to promote research, education, and training on the prevention, management, and resolution of international conflicts. Established in 1984, the Institute meets its congressional mandate through an array of programs, including research grants, fellowships, professional training programs, conferences and workshops, library services, publications, and other educational activities. The Institute's Board of Directors is appointed by the President of the United States and confirmed by the Senate.

Board of Directors

Chester A. Crocker (Chairman), James R. Schlesinger Professor of Strategic Studies, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University • **Seymour Martin Lipset** (Vice Chairman), Hazel Professor of Public Policy, George Mason University • **Betty F. Bumpers,** President, Peace Links, Washington, D.C. • **Holly J. Burkhalter,** Advocacy Director, Physicians for Human Rights, Washington, D.C. • **Zalmay Khalilzad,** RAND Corporation, Washington, D.C. • **Marc E. Leland,** Esq., President, Marc E. Leland & Associates, Arlington, Va. • **Mora L. McLean,** Esq., President, Africa-America Institute, New York, N.Y. • **María Otero,** President, ACCION International, Somerville, Mass. • **Barbara W. Snelling,** State Senator and former Lieutenant Governor, Shelburne, Vt. • **Shibley Telhami,** Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development, University of Maryland • **Harriet Zimmerman,** Vice President, American Israel Public Affairs Committee, Washington, D.C.

Members ex officio

Paul G. Gaffney II, Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy; President, National Defense University • **Colin L. Powell,** Secretary of State • **Donald H. Rumsfeld,** Secretary of Defense • **Richard H. Solomon,** President, United States Institute of Peace (nonvoting)

Introduction

The United States Institute of Peace and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) held a Workshop on Future Issues for Macedonia at the Hotel Bistra in Mavrovo, Macedonia, on October 20–22. Twenty people drawn from a broad spectrum of Macedonia's political and civil society, including media, human rights, labor, and others, participated in the roundtable discussions, in addition to the conference organizers and session chairs. Invitees reflected the diversity of peoples and interests in Macedonian society as a whole. Each participant was invited as an individual and spoke in her or his personal capacity. As the discussion was not for attribution, no names will appear in this report.

The discussions were informal, amiable, but sometimes charged. This report tries to describe the cleavages, which were not necessarily ethnic in character, as well as articulate areas of broad, if not universal, agreement.

Protection of Individual Rights Is Crucial

Participants agreed that individual rights form the basis of the democratic system, and that the politics of the past decade, as well as institutional and psychological baggage from the Tito era (with its reliance on defined "nationalities" and "national minorities") have detrimentally de-emphasized individual rights in favor of group rights. Calls for group rights are a reaction to discrimination and denial of individual rights to the Albanian and other minorities.

Some ethnic Macedonians expressed the view that protection of individual rights is improving and that no radical overhaul is required. Since independence, Macedonia has included the Albanian and other minorities in governance and public life. Members of the Macedonian intelligentsia have worked to defeat ethnic exclusivist Macedonian nationalism, which has diminished as a viable political force. From their perspective, Albanians have not made similar efforts to counter Albanian nationalism. One ethnic Macedonian said inter-ethnic tensions would dampen if Macedonia were more prosperous, as "the Deutschmark is the common language." Most in attendance agreed prosperity would at least help in this regard.

The consensus among Albanian participants was that members of their community are discriminated against and have inadequate participation in state bodies. The question of citizenship poses an issue, with tens of thousands (100,000, according to one participant) of Albanian residents not holding Macedonian citizenship, while ethnic Macedonians in the diaspora abroad, many of whom have never lived in Macedonia, hold passports. To Albanians, this illustrated unequal application of the law, and underscored the contention that they and other minorities have been second-class citizens in Macedonia since independence, despite their acceptance of the Macedonian constitutional context and substantial efforts to promote Macedonian stability, in particular during the NATO/Yugoslavia war. Albanians from this perspective have not been exclusivist but

rather are prepared to live cooperatively with other communities. The gap in economic and social development between Macedonians and ethnic Albanian communities was acknowledged as a factor, though the differential is narrowing.

Members of non-Albanian minorities expressed frustration that their individual and collective rights were not respected by either the Macedonian or Albanian communities and political parties, and that Western institutions, especially the European Union (EU), pay scant attention to their situation. Smaller groups such as the Vlachs, Roma, and Turks also find it difficult to make their concerns heard within Macedonia and therefore bear the brunt of political compromises between the dominant Macedonian and Albanian communities and political parties. Ethnic politics permeate society, including the workplace, with ethnic Albanians asserting that jobs are given to those with the "correct" ethnicity or party affiliation, that is, ethnic Macedonians.

Individual rights are not sufficiently respected for any citizens.

Individual rights are not sufficiently respected for *any* citizens. All groups in Macedonia deserve protection of their linguistic, educational, and cultural rights. Most participants felt that the new Law on Higher Education, which will allow the opening of a new private, trilingual (Macedonian, Albanian, and English), and European-accredited university in Tetovo, had contributed to the considerable reduction of ethnic tension in Macedonia. Beyond education and culture, the demand for group rights is a reaction to inadequate protection of individual rights.

Inadequacy of State Institutions and Citizen Involvement

Even after the fall of communism, the state has sought to dominate public life rather than provide public services.

The failure to protect individual rights is part of a more general failure of the state to provide clear rules of the political, economic, and social game and to enable parliamentary control and oversight of state institutions. Even after the fall of communism, the state has sought to dominate public life rather than provide public services. Macedonians, Albanians, and others do not regard themselves as individual citizens with a defined and equal relationship to each other and to the state, but rather as members of collectivities that have to be defended from each other as well as from the state.

Members of the political class and media, among others, concurred that politicians and media continue to fall far short in promoting individual rights and public accountability. Citizens lack confidence in the capacity of public institutions to protect individual rights, and minorities feel they suffer systemic discrimination by the state. Little has been done since independence to articulate a new social contract, in which citizens are made aware of their rights and obligations as well as the rules governing the behavior of the state. Political cooperation among ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians at the upper reaches of government, which is common, is not reflected in social relations. Political cooperation reflects a collective rights viewpoint, with assignation of control over certain sectors—not the sort of example of cooperation that will lead to greater civic-mindedness of their constituents.

Political cooperation among ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians at the upper reaches of government, which is common, is not reflected in social relations.

Macedonia needs institutional development, especially in the civil service, judiciary, and police. However, the impetus to create impartial public bodies is lacking. The public has shown little will to pressure political players to deal with these shortcomings. Some participants held that citizens are resigned to official corruption, assuming that all politicians and officials are corrupt and that this is an inevitable part of politics. According to this view, citizens rarely vote for or against politicians on this basis. Others disagreed, asserting that the poor showing of the VMRO-DPMNE (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization–Democratic Party of Macedonian National Unity) at recent local elections may well have been connected to the widespread view that theirs was a more corrupt government than the last. While the damage suffered by the ruling coalition in autumn 2000 local elections was connected to their perceived corruption, the campaign against them did not showcase this issue. In any event, ground-up pressure to "clean up" Macedonia's politics has not yet emerged.

Some felt that real decentralization to regional and local levels through a Law on Self-Governance could help diffuse inter-ethnic tensions by bringing government closer to constituents. If the proposed law were adopted and elites "decriminalized," one participant noted, local governance could have the fiscal wherewithal to function effectively, unlike now. Existing local administrations were, participants agreed, too small to function effectively, serving as little more than tokens of patronage for political parties. While fears of cantonization by the Macedonian majority attend discussion of decentralization, the current local units—there are 123 in a country of just over two million—are too small to provide effective government. None present expressed a desire for decentralized units of the Macedonian state to have any ethnic basis. A consensus emerged that some shift toward more local responsibility would be useful, but only with new, strengthened, and transparent administrative structures. Demarcation of larger administrative districts, developed in a more open and vibrant political and civic climate, able to generate revenue without inordinate reliance on the center, would serve Macedonia well.

Weak Institutions Engender Corruption and Cynicism

Fifty-six percent of Macedonia's population is worse off in real terms than they were a decade ago.

Macedonia has faced severe economic dislocation as a result of the combined effects of Yugoslavia's dissolution, regional wars and sanctions, and internal factors. Fifty-six percent of Macedonia's population is worse off in real terms than they were a decade ago. Roughly a third of the work force is unemployed, with youth that have never had a regular income composing a majority of Macedonia's jobless. Corruption is pervasive at an institutional and personal level, and is perceived by many Macedonian citizens to have gotten worse, or at least more brazen, since the VMRO-DPMNE, DA (Democratic Alternative) and DPA (Democratic Party of Albanians) came to power in 1998. Transparency International's 1999 Corruption Perception Index rates Macedonia in the same rank with regional neighbors Romania and Bulgaria, along with Egypt and Ghana, for perceived corruption. This corruption deters investment, both foreign and domestic. Sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), and the smuggling that attended them, along with the Greek blockade, created an environment conducive to corrupt practices in Macedonia. Political patronage, awarding jobs and business on the basis of private connections, and use of public office for personal gain are the current norms. Institution building has been a neglected priority, resulting in fragile public institutions with little popular confidence. The business-enabling environment of courts, customs, and police remains weak. Privatization thus far has apparently benefited a few well-connected insiders (on both sides of the transaction), who have made off with state assets at sub-market valuation. Accusations of "asset stripping" have been leveled at both SDSM (Social Democratic Party of Macedonia) and VMRO/DPMNE-led governments.

Political patronage, awarding jobs and business on the basis of private connections, and use of public office for personal gain are the current norms.

The free market system now appears to be generally accepted across the full breadth of the social and political spectrum, which was not the case at the time of independence. But there remains a body of public opinion, promoted most vocally through organized labor, that the state has final responsibility for employment and the economy in general. However, reliance on the state as an employer greatly increases the opportunity for political patronage and abuse of power. One participant suggested that labor inflexibility by itself was a greater barrier to foreign and domestic investment than corruption. Others noted that Macedonia still had to contend with the legacy of a "dependency culture" developed in the socialist period. This is manifest on the social level, with the conditioning of the population to expect work and benefits to emanate from the state. Macedonia in the socialist Yugoslav context was primarily a producer of raw material and semi-finished goods, with goods being finished for sale (or export) in other republics. In part to compensate for general underdevelopment, Macedonia was a net receiver, along with Kosovo and Montenegro, of "solidarity funds" from the state to aid development. Elements of such a dependency culture appear to be manifested in the current

reliance on external funding and lack of saleable exports. The question of whether the labor market should be liberalized polarized workshop participants mostly along ethnic lines, with ethnic Albanians generally more supportive of far-ranging liberalization.

Most participants agreed that financial disclosure laws should be enacted for political candidates, office holders, and administrators. At present, there are no legal requirements for such public figures to disclose their assets. The lack of transparency in privatization remains a problem, promoting speculation about subterfuge and corruption. According to those at the workshop, procurement also requires more public scrutiny. The current political culture does not demand public accountability. Although societal change takes time, establishing objective standards of conduct in the official sector would accelerate the process. Unless addressed directly, this problem will continue to sap Macedonia's economic progress and exacerbate other social problems.

The lack of transparency in privatization remains a problem, promoting speculation about subterfuge and corruption.

As with individual rights and their protection, a clear majority thought that political, media, and other civic actors had been delinquent in making the public aware of the scale of the corruption problem, and in proposing methods to address it. As mentioned earlier, most participants asserted that the voting public was generally resigned to politicians being corrupt, rarely punishing infractions at the ballot box. There are apparently no effective legal sanctions applied to public officials who are corrupt and misuse their authority. Enforcement of those laws that do exist falls short, breeding contempt for the law and legal institutions. Political parties have not held their members accountable for corruption, even when faced with serious public accusations. In such a climate, investments from within and abroad are likely to be viewed as unsafe, leaving the door open for further corruption through "insider" privatization. A chorus of consensus rose on this point. Greek investors are viewed by most Macedonians and many other observers as among the main beneficiaries of the Macedonian privatization process, along with ruling party stalwarts (Greeks are by far the largest foreign direct investors). The media was castigated for not doing serious investigative journalism on public corruption.

Political parties have not held their members accountable for corruption, even when faced with serious public accusations.

Disillusion with Europe but Hope for Integration

Macedonian citizens across the political and ethnic spectrum are disappointed in "the international community," which many (particularly ethnic Macedonians) view as having created many of the country's economic problems by imposing sanctions and waging war against Yugoslavia. Despite Macedonia's cooperation with the West, Macedonian citizens (especially ethnic Macedonians) believe that their country has not been compensated or rewarded appropriately for their sacrifices and cooperation over the past decade. In comparison to most of its former Yugoslav neighbors, Macedonia's relatively peaceful management of its own problems has led to the country being ignored in favor of Bosnia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and now Serbia. Macedonians believe they need more external assistance, as well as more understanding of the country's difficult situation.

In comparison to most of its former Yugoslav neighbors, Macedonia's relatively peaceful management of its own problems has led to the country being ignored in favor of Bosnia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and now Serbia.

The Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe, unveiled in Sarajevo in July 1999 and having political, economic, and security components, was hailed at the time as a comprehensive system to assist countries in the region achieve their goals of greater integration with European and Euro-Atlantic structures. From a Macedonian perspective, the pact is failing in its promise to assist Macedonia in its economic transition. Many participants were of the opinion that the "quick start" projects announced for Macedonia this year were designed to meet the international community's priorities, such as infrastructure for transit of KFOR (the NATO-led "Kosovo Force") into Kosovo, rather than tailored for local needs. Less economically developed eastern Macedonia has been bypassed by the Stability Pact projects in favor of western Macedonia and the capital, Skopje, where most ethnic Albanians live. This, perversely, has stoked ethnic tensions, as ethnic Albanians are viewed as international favorites by ethnic Macedonians and smaller minorities.

Macedonians are disenchanted with Brussels' perceived treatment of their country.

Some even posited that the European Union keeps relations with Skopje tentative to force Macedonia into greater regional political re-integration, making the very term "regional integration" suspect to some. Following NATO's intervention in the Kosovo war, in which the West relied on Macedonia, some participants opined that Macedonia should have driven a harder bargain with Brussels in negotiations leading to the association agreement with the European Union, which allows freer trade with EU members. Despite proposals for greater regional economic integration, the EU's bilateral insistence on tighter visa regimes and changes in trade regimes erects barriers to regional trade. Macedonia, whose natural trade routes have been either officially cut or stifled by Belgrade up until recently, desperately needs freer regional trade. It is unclear how to stimulate regional trade while also moving toward greater pan-European integration unless all the countries of the region are on the same path and have harmonized their relations with each other. Recent statements by European UN officials encouraging local economic alignment have prompted worries that independent Macedonia would be pressured to integrate with its Balkan neighbors in a poor-man's European Union, diverting Macedonia and its neighbors from full EU membership. It remains unclear how to balance the goal of EU membership in the long-term with the immediate need to stimulate regional commerce and economic interchange. Despite these concerns, there was consensus at the workshop across ethnic lines that EU membership is the ultimate goal and that Macedonia is the boat that will get them there.

While Greece is taking a much more friendly approach to Macedonia, some Macedonians remain concerned about their southern neighbor. Greece has not accepted the name "Macedonia," or the existence of a Macedonian minority in Greece. Some believe that Greece has been a predatory investor, more interested in gaining influence than in productive economic activity. In addition, Greek insistence that the "corridor 8" trans-Balkan East-West highway, slated to traverse Bulgaria and Macedonia, be rerouted through northern Greece bolsters the view that Greece continues to approach Macedonia in an adversarial fashion. The shift of the road southward will hamper Macedonia's attempts to integrate itself with its neighbors and Europe.

Security Requires Improving the Neighborhood

If the challenge posed by ethnic Albanian insurgents in southern Serbia and northern Macedonia can be resolved, movement on serious regional demilitarization should accelerate, so that resources hitherto plowed into armed forces can be redirected.

The prospects for "hard security" in the Balkans appear to have improved with NATO's intervention in Kosovo and the overthrow of the Milosevic regime in Serbia. Interstate violence is no longer a major threat. If the challenge posed by ethnic Albanian insurgents in southern Serbia and northern Macedonia can be resolved, movement on serious regional demilitarization should accelerate, so that resources hitherto plowed into armed forces can be redirected. In addition, western aid in "soft security," such as more Partnership for Peace activities and regional cooperation, would assist Macedonia and its neighbors in their progress toward Euro-Atlantic institutions. Macedonia's desire to join NATO, though strained during the Kosovo war and NATO air campaign, remains strong.

Macedonians welcome the democratic change in Serbia, anticipating that the fall of the Milosevic regime will help bring an end to economic isolation. Macedonia's economy has traditionally depended on its position on the north-south axis of the Balkans. The cementing of democratic rule in Serbia is eagerly awaited. Macedonians expect that their longstanding border dispute with Serbia will be resolved quickly, and are encouraged by signals to this effect from Belgrade. A solution to the division of Yugoslav state assets and debts should come soon as well.

Instability in and emanating from Kosovo is today Macedonia's biggest external security problem, along with unrest in Serbia's Presevo Valley. Ethnic Macedonian workshop participants tended to believe that an independent Kosovo would exacerbate inter-ethnic tensions within Macedonia, and possibly lead to partition. They preferred that Kosovo's status remain undefined indefinitely. Some resented what they viewed as American

insistence that the issue be resolved soon, seeing such action as premature. Albanians tended to believe that independence would end instability in Kosovo and ensure Macedonia's territorial integrity. Some believe that complete dissolution of the former Yugoslavia into its component entities (an independent Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and Vojvodina) would be the best way to build healthy regional relations on the road to Europe.

While views differed on the preferred ultimate outcome, there was consensus that whatever Kosovo's final status, it is in Macedonia's interest that Kosovo be peaceful, prosperous, and governed democratically. Instability in Kosovo can only hurt Macedonia.

Conclusions

Despite these pronounced differences in viewpoint, there was substantial agreement concerning Macedonia's present condition and what is desirable for its future, even if participants were not able to identify a clear road map. To develop such a road map, which is needed in the near future as the entire region reassesses itself, more dialogue is needed in Macedonia, including among civil society, business, and labor, as well as the media and political elite. But while Macedonia must chart its own course, the international community should assure Macedonia that it will not be forgotten because of its relative stability. There is no country in the region more deserving of a peace dividend after a decade of nervous uncertainty. It is important that the West not dash Macedonia's hopes of inclusion.

More dialogue is needed in Macedonia, including among civil society, business, and labor, as well as the media and political elite.

Macedonians of all groups were able to come to consensus on what is needed to help develop functioning government and ameliorate ethnic friction in Macedonia:

- stronger economic growth and development
- a more active civil society sector, aimed in part at increasing contact among ethnic groups at the grassroots and changing intolerant or exclusivist mindsets
- better protection of individual rights within the context of stronger law enforcement generally and firmer commitment to the rule of law
- stronger, more transparent and more accountable central and municipal institutions
- reduction of state intervention in the economy and the society at large and limits on political party control of state resources and jobs
- stronger parliamentary and citizen oversight of government

These measures would help address the debilitating problems of corruption, lack of public accountability, and cynicism, which thrive in the current environment of weak and opaque public institutions. There is a dire need for public disclosure laws for politicians, candidates, and appointed public officials, as well as for conflict of interest legislation. The United States has world-class expertise in these and other good-governance areas, and should redouble its assistance efforts in these sectors.

There is a dire need for public disclosure laws for politicians, candidates, and appointed public officials, as well as for conflict of interest legislation.

Palpable desire to make up for lost time and the foregone advantages of the common Yugoslav state is evident in Macedonia. Most citizens view inclusion in the European Union and NATO as necessary to secure the country's future, as do their neighbors. This basic agreement implies an underlying willingness to accept general European standards, despite the difficulties this adaptation will entail. This sentiment will not in itself bring about the major changes necessary to make Macedonia a viable candidate for either the European Union or NATO. But the hope of eventual inclusion is one of the strongest incentives for domestic and regional democratic development, providing a foundation upon which responsible political and civil actors can build. In its efforts, Europe needs to both be reassuring that the door is and will remain open, while not repeating mistakes of stoking unrealistic expectations of how long the necessary changes will take. There is a general acceptance that objective criteria need to apply.

For more information, see our web site (www.usip.org), which has an online edition of this report containing links to related web sites, as well as additional information on the topic.

A reinvigorated economic, political, and security effort from the European Union is urgently required to prove, rather than merely proclaim, its commitment to draw the whole of southeastern Europe into a zone of security and shared European prosperity. Macedonia is not alone in doubting the strength of such a commitment (Romanians and Bulgarians make similar observations), though its situation is in some ways more critical than many other potential beneficiaries of Europe's help.

The following initiatives would assist Macedonia, and the region as a whole:

- a redoubled commitment to assist Macedonia in reforming its administrative structures and legal framework to reflect EU norms and western standards of transparency
- greater sensitivity to Macedonia's dependence on trade, and in particular maintaining the original route of the "corridor 8" trans-Balkan road project through Macedonia and Bulgaria
- focusing future Stability Pact–coordinated aid on areas of relative underdevelopment, and setting priorities for Macedonia's economy in consultation with local independent experts
- adherence of all EU members to anti-corruption standards in dealing with Macedonia and the region as a whole, most importantly as concerns privatization and foreign investment
- greater assistance in combatting regional organized crime
- focusing on the conditions for smaller minorities, as is the case within the European Union

Effective cultural and educational programs for minorities need financial and technical support while Macedonia rebuilds its economy. Having them in place will dampen much of the pressure for collective *political* rights, which has posed a problem in the Balkans for the past decade.

The United States also has a continued interest in promoting Macedonia's stability. U.S. leadership in NATO and its longstanding commitment to Macedonian sovereignty, as demonstrated in its support for the UN mission UNPROFOR (later UNPREDEP), give it unique capabilities to assist the country in its efforts to improve its security. The United States could lead NATO to address the following, which affect not only Macedonian, but regional security:

- Regular contact between NATO officials and Macedonian security authorities on the situation in the Presevo Valley of southern Serbia would show new commitment to Macedonia's security concerns.
- Discouraging incursions from Kosovo and assisting Macedonia in properly responding when provocations occur would likewise reassure Macedonians.
- Continuing efforts bilaterally and through NATO to assist the Macedonian military should encourage greater representation of the country's ethnic composition throughout the command structure.

The future of Macedonia is up to its own citizens. Without a more vigorous effort on the part of Macedonia's civil-society actors to hold the government and its agents to account and to promote the societal changes necessary to make Macedonia a modern civic democracy, the best the country can hope for is continued nervous stagnation. However, now that the era of massive bloodletting in the region appears past, the West has an abiding interest in ensuring that the cleavages and structural flaws that allowed them to burst onto the front pages of the media 10 years ago are resolved.

Without a more vigorous effort on the part of Macedonia's civil-society actors to hold the government and its agents to account and to promote the societal changes necessary to make Macedonia a modern civic democracy, the best the country can hope for is continued nervous stagnation.

United States Institute of Peace
1200 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036