THE UNRESOLVED 'DIFFERENCE OVER THE NAME':[1] A GREEK PERSPECTIVE

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I. THE COURSE OF A NAME DISPUTE: FROM INDEPENDENCE TO UN MEDIATION AND THE INTERIM ACCORD

1. Introduction

The Interim Accord between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), which was signed in New York on 13 September 1995, initiated a process of normalising and laying the foundations for constructive relations of co-operation and trust between the two countries. Equally important, however, was its missing dimension: how to address a problem which had bedevilled the two countries for the previous four years (from September 1991 to September 1995). That problem was none other than the 'difference over the name of the state' — as the UN

1. 'The difference over the name of the state' was the phrase used in UN Security Council resolution 817/7.4.1993, which called upon Greece and FYROM to resolve the issue as quickly as possible. Ten years on, 'the difference over the name' persists.

Security Council phrased it — which 'needs to be resolved in the interest of maintaining peaceful and good-neighbourly relations in the region' (UN S/RES 817/1993).[2] During the preceding period, 1993–5, the failure to resolve it had had a detrimental effect both on bilateral relations and on the wider Balkan region. This was especially the case when a Greek blockade was forced upon FYROM from March 1994 to September 1995.

This study investigates the reasons why - despite a decade of diplomatic endeavours and a new era of constructive bilateral relations initiated in 1995 with the signing of an Interim Accord under UN auspices - the 1993 Security Council resolution on the name issue has not been resolved. The issue will be addressed on two levels. First, the 'official level', on which the government policies and negotiating strategy were constructed in an international and bilateral framework. Second, on a level which relates to the 'public perception' of the problem and the articulation of the public debate.

2. Greek concerns and approaches to the problem

Anyone who is well versed in twentieth-century Greek politics will easily recognise in the Greek arguments of the early 1990s the impact of Greek security concerns dating from the traumatic war experiences (1940–9) in connection with the Macedonian question.[3] The beginning of the collapse of the Yugoslav

2. The full text of the resolution may be found in Ioannis Valinakis-Sotiris Dalis (eds.), *The Skopje Question: Official Documents 1990–1996*, with an introduction by Evangelos Kofos and a foreword by Theodoros Couloumbis, 2nd edition, Athens, 1996, pp. 147–148 [in Greek].

3. Evangelos Kofos, 'Greek policy considerations over FYROM's independence and recognition', in James Pettifer (ed.), *The New Macedonian Question*, London, Macmillan Press, 1999, pp. 226–233.

Federation in 1991 brought back obsessive feelings of uncertainty in a rapidly changing world north of the Greek border, at a time when the very real danger of a Greek–Turkish confrontation was simmering to the east. Furthermore, since the mid-1980s, wider segments of Greek public opinion, particularly among the Greek Macedonian diaspora, had been aware of another kind of concern: that of the gradual erosion of Greek Macedonian cultural identity and historical heritage by Slav-Macedonian nationalism.[4]

This was the climate in Greece when Yugoslavia's southernmost federated republic – the Socialist Republic of Macedonia – declared itself, on 17 September 1991, an independent state under the name of the 'Republic of Macedonia'. The European Community, pressed by the then Greek Foreign Minister, Andonis Samaras, responded to the new state's request for recognition with three conditions. The first was that it would make no territorial claims against its neighbours. The second that it would not engage in propaganda against Greece, and the third that it would not use a name that implied territorial claims (resolution of the EC Council of Foreign Ministers, 16 December 1991).[5] The wording confirms that the Greek position was focused specifically on security concerns, in particular that their northern neighbour should not constitute a base for interests hostile to Greece; that any possibility of stirring up and promoting irredentist demands and visions should be nipped in the bud; and that a specific commitment should be given not to engage in 'hostile propaganda'. The purpose of the last point was mainly to prevent the fomentation of a minority question,

4. *Ibid*, and in the slightly modified Evangelos Kofos, 'Greece's Macedonian Adventure: The Controversy over FYROM's Independence and Recognition', in Van Coufoudakis et al. (eds.), *Greece and the New Balkans: Challenges and Opportunities*, New York, Pella, 1999, pp. 361–394.

5. For the text of the resolution, see Valinakis-Dalis, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–52.

chiefly through pressure for the return of Slav-Macedonians who had fled Greece in the period 1944–9.

In the next two months Samaras addressed two substantive communications to his European counterparts — a long circular and an even longer oral presentation[6] — while the President of the Hellenic Republic, Constantine Karamanlis, addressed a brief letter to the leaders of the member-states of the European Community.[7] As political texts, the Foreign Minister's communications based their argumentation on an analysis of the threat to the security of both Greece and the wider region, with specific reference to the fanning of Bulgarian and Albanian nationalism. In contrast to the popular rallies of the time which were dominated by issues of historical identity and cultural heritage, the official texts treated the cultural aspect of the problem as a matter of secondary importance. And when they did mention it, it was in order to make foreign interlocutors aware of the importance of averting confrontations and threats to peace on account of cultural controversies. Particular emphasis was placed on the fact that the Macedonian name was already widely used in the region of northern Greece. This region was actually called 'Macedonia', was larger than FYROM both geographically and demographically, and, above all, was inhabited by two and a half million Greeks who identified themselves by their regional name, *Makedones* (Macedonians). 'If Skopje is given the right not only to usurp but, as an independent state, to monopolize the [Macedonian] name,' Samaras concluded in his address at the EC Foreign Ministers' meeting in Lisbon on 17 February 1992, then 'it will unleash old quarrels and new conflicts in the whole region on

6. Texts and analysis in Aristotle Tziampiris, *Greece, European Political Cooperation and the Macedonian Question*, Ashgate, 2000, pp. 207–213, 218–232.

7. Valinakis-Dalis, *op. cit.*, pp. 63–64.

a wild scale.'[8] In a sense, this was a foretaste of Huntington's 'clash of civilizations'. For his part, President Karamanlis, a Macedonian himself, emphasised mainly historical and cultural arguments in his letter to his European counterparts asserting that FYROM had 'absolutely no right, either historical or ethnological, to use the name Macedonia'.

A year later, in January 1993, Greece's new Foreign Minister, Michalis Papakonstandinou, also a Macedonian, submitted an interesting 'memorandum' to the United Nations. In it, he opposed FYROM's admission to the United Nations under the name of the 'Republic of Macedonia' and with a flag bearing the symbol of the 'sun of Vergina'. Here too, emphasis was initially placed upon security concerns supported by appendices of maps and published texts, reflecting FYROM's alleged territorial aspirations against Greece. Again, the name was cited as a fundamental source of disagreement: FYROM was seeking to 'monopolise' the Macedonian name, despite the fact that it occupied only 38.5 per cent of the territory of Macedonia, compared to over 51 per cent for Greek Macedonia. The name thus 'conveys in itself expansionist visions both over the land *and the patrimony of Macedonia through the centuries*' (emphasis added).[9]

The events that followed are known well enough. The memorandum's arguments, which were presented in strikingly moderate tones for the time (in comparison, to be sure, to the electrified atmosphere in Greece and the diaspora), led to the aforementioned Security Council resolution 817/1993. The new state was accepted into the United Nations under the provisional name of the 'Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia'

8. The text of the address was first published in Tziampiris, *op. cit.*, p. 227.
9. See the full text in Valinakis-Dalis, *op. cit.*, pp. 129–137.

(FYROM) but without the right to fly the flag bearing the 'sun of Vergina'. At the same time the Secretary General was entrusted to mediate a solution to the difference over the name.[10] Intensive negotiations followed with Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen acting as mediators. Eventually, a text that regulated all aspects of the two countries' bilateral relations and proposed a composite name — 'Nova Makedonija' — for international use was produced.[11] Internal pressure in both countries, though primarily in Greece, left the proposal in limbo for about a year. The issue returned to the forefront in 1994–5, when the Vance–Owen draft (excluding the paragraphs about the name) was used as the basis for the Interim Accord of September 1995.[12]

Throughout this four year period, individuals and groups in Greece and the Greek diaspora expressed their views and demanded a share in the handling of the 'national issue'. The role of the 1992 and 1993 mass rallies has been widely seen as contributing to the development of a highly charged and uncompromising movement. Under these circumstances, Greek political leaders realised that any divergence from the dominant popular perception would carry a huge political price for them. It is interesting that in a very short space of time, the public's dominant perception of the Macedonian issue overruled positions at the official level that had remained unchallenged for decades. Thus, an ill-informed Greek public became easy prey to unsound historical interpretations and nationalistic rhetoric. The airing of such views before international audiences was initially met with scepticism, and then with a strong negative reaction, which was not infrequently accompanied by a hefty measure of derogatory

10. *Ibid*, pp. 147–151.
11. *Ibid,* pp. 152–161.
12. Kofos, *Adventure*, pp. 381–383.

comments.[13] The core of such 'revisionist' arguments embraced by the Greek public and media focused on cultural issues and interpretations of Macedonia's history, its geographical borders, and, especially, the legitimate use of the Macedonian name by Greeks alone. In short, they maintained that the identity and patrimony of an entire people — the Greek people, and more specifically the Greek Macedonians — was in jeopardy. The empirical table[14] which follows sketches the 'traditional' and post-1990 'revisionist' viewpoints.

The 'traditional' perspective which, in many ways corresponded to 'official' discourse, as it had been formulated since the Second World War,

(i) considered that the geographical region of Macedonia extended northwards as far as the Shar and Pirin Mountains and, apart from Greek Macedonia, included Yugoslav ('Vardar') Macedonia and the Blagoevgrad province of Bulgaria ('Pirin Macedonia');

(ii) accepted the name 'Socialist Republic of Macedonia' (SRM), as designating the southernmost federated republic of Yugoslavia;

(iii) employed the noun 'Slav Macedonians' and the adjective 'Slav Macedonian', both in Greek and, especially, in foreign-language communications, thus distinguishing between the Greek Macedonians and the Slav inhabitants of, or migrants from, the wider Macedonian region, in order to prevent the Slavs from monopolising the term;

(iv) appeared to endorse the view that the Slavs, inhabiting the

13. *Ibid*, pp. 386–392.

14. Conclusions drawn by the writer after years of study and observation of the debate over the name issue in Greece.

wider Macedonian region during and after the end of the Ottoman period, were 'ethnic Bulgarians' rather than 'ethnic Macedonians';

(v) accepted that no other region than the lands comprising the Macedonian kingdom in King Philip's time (4th century BC) were entitled to be considered as 'Macedonia', which meant mainly present-day Greek Macedonia and a short strip of southern FYROM;

(vi) recognised the Hellenic origin and language of the ancient Macedonians;

(vii) rejected the existence of a 'Macedonian' minority, 'Macedonian' language, or 'Macedonian' nation, although it was not quite clear whether such references related to the concepts of 'minority', 'language', and 'nation', or, rather to their identification as 'Macedonian'.

With the proclamation of the independence of a Macedonian state in 1991 the public perception in Greece of the Macedonian problem began to diverge on fundamental key points from the decades-old 'traditional' or 'official' position. One is struck by how rapidly the newly minted theories were accepted by wide segments of public opinion and how they weighed upon the 'official' discourse. Point for point, as in the previous table, the new views:

(i) identified the geographical and historical region of 'Macedonia' almost exclusively with the present Greek Macedonian region;

(ii) contested, with certain minor exceptions, the view that areas north of the Greek border had ever been Macedonian until, for its own political and expansionist purposes, Tito's communist regime assigned the Macedonian name to its southernmost federated republic. Therefore, only the Greek part of the geographical region

could lay a legitimate claim to being truly Macedonian. For the partisans of this line, any reference to three 'Macedonias' was purely and simply a 'traitorous' act;

(iii) rejected the term 'Slav Macedonians' and its derivatives, because it associated the Slavs with the Macedonian name;

(iv) viewed the newly independent state north of the Greek border as a 'construct', a 'statelet' (and other such disparaging terms), which should be referred to merely as 'Skopje'. By extension, all the state's derivatives should be based on the state appellation, such as 'Skopjans', 'Skopjan Church', even 'the Skopjan question' (to Skopiano).

(v) The only points on which the two approaches – 'traditional' and 'revisionist' – seemed to converge were the Hellenic identity of the ancient Macedonians and the negation of a 'Macedonian minority' in Greece.

The promotion of such novel perceptions by public groups led to the adoption of the popular slogan, 'No to the name Macedonia or its derivatives!' as the 'official' Greek doctrine in handling the name issue with FYROM. As a result, the cultural aspect took precedence over purely political arguments which had, at their core, issues of 'security'.[15]

The subsequent development of the issue is well known. Via the provisional solution of 'FYROM' as the name to be used at the UN (1993), we arrived at the Interim Accord (1995), bypassing the question of the name. To fully appreciate the provisions of the accord, we must first compare it with two previous draft texts: the March 1992, EU-sponsored 'Pinheiro package,' and the Vance–Owen UN plan of May 1993.

15. Kofos, *op. cit.*, pp. 386–391.

3. The cultural aspect of the difference over the name: Pinheiro (1992), Vance–Owen (1993), Interim Accord (1995)

The 'Pinheiro package' was a draft plan drawn up by the Portuguese presidency on the instructions of the EU Foreign Ministers meeting at Lisbon (17 February 1992). After repeated consultations with Athens and Skopje, Pinheiro produced two texts[16]. The first was a draft treaty 'confirming the existing borders', in which the two signatories offered mutual assurances regarding recognition and the inviolability of borders and pledged to not make any territorial demands. The second, was a letter from FYROM's government to the Greek government in which it unilaterally undertook to meet all of the latter's demands of renouncing any territorial claims and preventing activities against Greek Macedonia, as well as to repudiate the related actions of the former Yugoslavia, pledging itself not to resort to or tolerate such activities in the future. It also promised to neither make minority-related demands, nor to foster the idea of a unified Macedonian state in the future. These two documents quite accurately reflected the traditional concerns and apprehensions of the Greek side on the issue of 'security'. Less important, but still present, were the Greek demands in the cultural domain, as Skopje was to undertake to discourage actions which might assail 'the cultural and historical values' of the Greek people. As for the name of the state, Foreign Minister Pinheiro proposed the appellation 'New Macedonia'. Back in Athens, on the recommendation of Foreign Minister Andonis Samaras, the

16. Valinakis-Dalis, *op. cit.*, pp. 87–90. Thodoros Skylakakis, *In the Name of Macedonia*, with a foreword by K. Mitsotakis, Athens, 1995, pp. 282–285 [in Greek]. Tziampiris, *op. cit.*, pp. 117–119.

Council of party leaders, chaired by President of the Republic Constantine Karamanlis, rejected Pinheiro's proposal on the name; and thus ended this first international mediatory mission.

A year later, on 14 May 1993, the neighbouring state had already been recognised by the UN under the provisional name of the 'Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.' Vance and Owen produced a new draft treaty which sought to regulate all aspects of the two countries' relations. On the critical name issue, it produced a mutually binding formula of 'Nova Makedonija'. This was the Slav Macedonian version of Pinheiro's 'New Macedonia'. In view of the dramatic developments in the Balkans during the intervening twelve months, and concern over a possible southward spread of hostilities, the new text sought to construct - on an equal footing - a framework for harmonious relations between the two sides. In this respect, Greek concerns over security issues were covered by the universal principles of good neighbourly relations and co-operation, to which both sides were bound to observe. As an additional gesture to the Greek side, the draft plan (article 6) included binding amendments relating to articles 3 and 49 of FYROM's constitution. Special emphasis was placed upon the obligation of both sides — but in particular FYROM — to prevent or discourage hostile and propaganda activities of an irredentist nature against the other side (article 7). Even more important was the explicit and detailed commitment from each side to not use 'symbols, names, flags, monuments, or emblems which are part of the history or the cultural patrimony of the other'; and they also pledged to 'respect' each other's official place-names.[17]

Regardless of the document's subsequent fate, one is struck by the fact that both the new Greek negotiating team under Foreign Minister Michalis Papakonstandinou and the two UN mediators

17. Valinakis-Dalis, *op. cit.*, pp. 154–155.

perceived that the cultural aspect of the disagreement – together with the name – was the fundamental sticking point. Hence, they began to seek ways of dealing with it. The problem of 'security' could easily be covered by international conventional law and the standard rules of good neighbourly conduct. However, in the spring of 1993 the Greek public's openly demonstrated concern regarding questions of identity and the associated political cost compelled Konstantinos Mitsotakis's government to temporarily reject the compromise proposal. A few months later, Andreas Papandreou's new government totally froze the UN's mediation efforts.

It was to be another two and a half years before a new international document was presented to the two sides. However, circumstances were now radically different. Rump Yugoslavia to the north was experiencing its bleakest armed conflict since the Second World War, while most of the scenarios envisioned by the international analysts at the time saw the hostilities spreading southwards towards Kosovo and FYROM. Inspired by an unfortunate decision to 'move forward', the Papandreou government imposed an economic blockade on FYROM in early 1994, as a way of pressing for a solution. As a result, the international community united against Athens. What had been a debate over identities and 'cultural goods' (which was what the issue of the name had evolved into) now became a problem of the violation of the human rights of an emerging nation. In this unfavourable international climate, the now gravely ill prime minister yielded to U.S. pressure to leave aside the name and essentially the entire cultural aspect of the problem. He accepted the Interim Accord, which had been drawn up on the basis of the 1993 Vance–Owen plan, with negotiations over the name deferred to some future date.[18]

18. Alexis Papachelas, "Richard Holbrooke reveals: How I persuaded Andreas Papandreou to come to terms with Gligorov", excerpts published in *To Vima* 3.5.1998; see also the Greek translation of Richard Holbrooke, *Stop the War*, Athens, Ellinika Grammata, 1998. Kiro Gligorov, *Memoirs* (translated in Greek

In comparison with the Pinheiro and Vance–Owen plans, the Interim Accord plays down the core concerns of the dispute (security and identity) and places special emphasis on the positive prospects for normalising and developing full-scale relations. To be sure, with regard to the question of security, the agreement reiterates all the basic international principles of respect for the independence and territorial integrity of states, the inviolability of borders, non-intervention in domestic affairs, and so on and so forth, and confirms FYROM's amendments of two of the articles in its constitution (articles 3, 49), more or less as set forth in the Vance–Owen plan (article 6). However, the fundamental difference lay in its approach to cultural considerations. Negotiations over the core problem of the name were postponed to some unspecified future date. Explicit commitments in the Vance–Owen plan (see above, article 7 of the plan) were drastically modified. More specifically, the reference to each party's obligation to discourage 'any activity of an irredentist nature against the other party' and 'to respect the official geographical names and place-names of the other party' was excised. This was a serious error on the part of the Greek negotiating team, because FYROM's refusal (like Yugoslavia's before it) to use the official Greek appellations would inevitably fuel and recycle sharp confrontations both at a political level between governments and at a cultural level between the two

from the Slav-Macedonian), Athens, 2001, pp. 323–329, excerpts published in *To Vima*, 10.6.2001. Also Christos Zacharakis, "Response to Gligorov's Memoirs", *To Vima*, 17.6.2001.

19. As did, indeed, happen in the years which followed, undermining the efforts to cultivate a good climate in the bilateral relations. One typical incident was sparked off when FYROM started again calling Thessaloniki 'Solun' and the Greek side threatened to call Bitola 'Monastiri'. *Vradyni*, 21.5.1998. The problem was resolved by sidestepping reference to particular toponyms opting, instead, for the name of the respective countries as place of birth.

neighbouring peoples.[19] Lastly, the negotiators' obvious inclination to play down the various aspects of the cultural disagreement as much as possible led to the weakening of the relevant clause in the initial Vance–Owen draft plan regarding the non-use of 'symbols, names, flags, monuments, or emblems which are part of the history and the cultural patrimony of the other party'. This phrase was removed from the Interim Accord text and the offended party was simply left with the possibility of pointing out to the other what it deemed to be the inappropriate use (not 'violation' as in the Vance–Owen plan) of certain symbols. In this case, it would be up to the recipient of the complaint either to rectify the situation or to explain why it would not do so.

While the text of the Interim Accord was being drafted, it was obvious that the main concern was to play down as much as possible the divisive aspects of the relations between the two countries and, starting from scratch, to open up channels of communication for the development of normal full-scale relations. During those days in the autumn of 1995, when the foreign ministers of two unnamed states were signing it,[20] the unanswered question was not whether the various provisions regarding economic and other relations could be implemented, but rather whether the Interim Accord would ever become a 'final agreement' by resolving the difference over the name.

In retrospect, one might say that the 'security' aspect had essentially been pushed aside and - despite the tempestuous developments that were to take place in the 'western Balkans' in the years that followed - was seen as a matter of secondary importance for Greece. By contrast, the 'identity' and 'cultural

20. Greece was termed the 'Party of the First Part' and FYROM the 'Party of the Second Part', without being named. It was the first time since the birth of the Greek state that its representative —in this case Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias— had signed an international convention in which his country's name was 'concealed'.

goods' aspect continued to smoulder both at the 'official' level and in public debate throughout the initial seven-year duration of the Interim Accord. This period — together with the stormy efforts to find a diplomatic solution to 'the only remaining disagreement' — are examined below.

4. The handling of the name issue in the Interim Accord

The rather unexpected announcement of the conclusion of the accord inevitably prompted lively debate in Greece. Objections were centred around two points: first, the fact that the main bone of contention (the state's name) had been bypassed; and second, the doubtful fate of the negotiating process over the name. By contrast, there were no problems with the lifting of sanctions, the restoration of diplomatic relations using the name 'FYROM', and the granting to Greece's neighbour of all sorts of facilities which had formerly been permanent sources of friction. As was only to be expected, public debate extended into all areas of public life, including the political elites, the mass media, the academic community, and various cultural institutions. A sample of the initial reactions to the cultural dimension of the problem which the accord had left in abeyance will provide an idea of the prevailing climate at that time both in Parliament and in public discourse.

Certain assessments at the time appeared almost prophetic. For instance, the New Democracy parliamentary spokesman Yorgos Souflias, anticipated that FYROM's eventual name would end up as 'either just "Macedonia" or a composite name derived from the name "Macedonia"'. He added that since there would no longer be any possibility of applying pressure on President Gligorov, the most likely scenario was that the name would 'drag on over time and end up as plain "Macedonia"'.[21] His colleague, deputy parliamentary spokesman

21. *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia*, 24.9.1995.

Dimitris Sioufas, noted that the concessions made by the Greek government would lead to a 'de facto recognition of [FYROM] under the name of "Macedonia"'.[22] In short, ND seemed to be insisting, presumably to save face, on the line taken by the council of party leaders in 1992, and also on the 'total package' (i.e. including the issue of the name), demanding that the accord be ratified by Parliament. Apart from the accurate predictions regarding the name, the ND representatives' political positions at that time were groundless: ND itself had already, in 1993, overturned the council of party leaders' resolution to rule out the term 'Macedonia', by implicitly concurring with the name 'Nova Makedonija'.

A substantial and lengthy parliamentary debate took place at a special session of the Greek Parliament on 6 November 1995.[23] It was not a question of ratifying the accord, since this had already been ruled out in the text of the accord itself. The government presumably wanted to avoid a possible backlash from a large segment of public opinion and its own MPs and, also, at the same time to achieve as much tolerance (if not approval) as possible from the political world for the process which it had itself accepted. With regard to the first point, Prime Minister Papandreou adopted his usual tactic, namely of offering vague assurances that his government would take a firm stand at the negotiating table against any mention of the name 'Macedonia'. He did, however, imply that he might accept a compromise solution. Though pressed by the Opposition, he refused to put his cards on the table with regard to the process and the type of name he would be seeking. He stated that he expected the negotiations to proceed quite rapidly and successfully, and explicitly promised to present the

22. Interview, *Ependytis* 23-24.9.1995.
23. *Praktika Voulis*, 6.11.1995.

'final agreement' to Parliament for ratification.[24]

The debate that followed showed that, in essence, all the political parties represented in Parliament seemed to concur. With very few exceptions, no cries that the nation was being 'sold short' and 'betrayed' were heard this time. This was in contrast to the outcry which the Mitsotakis administration had faced just two years before for its similar endeavour. At that moment Parliament reflected the 'fatigue' that seemed to have overtaken public opinion after the four-year affair regarding FYROM's final name. Quite clearly, the vague formula of the Interim Accord served the needs of both 'doves' and 'hawks'. To be sure, the main Opposition leader, Miltiadis Evert, was quick to point out that separating the problem of the name from the rest of the agreement left the initiative in Skopje's hands, and there was an obvious risk that no agreement would be reached and the name 'Macedonia' would become an international fixture. Many of the speakers shared this appraisal of the situation. For the rest, the debate was deflected into mere bickering about the past, with recriminations flying back and forth not so much between parties as between individual MPs, regardless of political affiliation. Interestingly, the advocates of the most inflexible line on the matter of the name — Stelios Papathemelis of the PASOK governing party and Andonis Samaras, who was now leader of the Political Spring party — criticised the accord because, among other things, it followed 'the Mitsotakis line' (dual name, composite name). And while the current Prime Minister Papandreou had left the chamber early on, his predecessor had probably started to enjoy the vindication of history.[25] In the end, the

24. It should be noted that Kiro Gligorov presented the accord to his own National Assembly, where, after lengthy debate, it was accepted by an overwhelming majority.

25. Kyra Adam, "Consensus and hide-and-seek over the name", *Eleftherotypia* 7.11.1995.

propensity towards criticism and recrimination turned out to be a useful safety valve offering release from public pressure.

Eminent representatives of the academic world specialising in international relations were quick to support the government's initiative. The backbone of their argument was that what Greece gained from the Accord was more important than the problem of the name, which was thus relegated to a lesser position. For example, one of the first, Charalambos Papasotiriou of the Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, a member of the Institute for International Relations (IDIS), considered that the improved relations between Athens and Skopje released Greece 'from a dispute of minor importance' which had prevented Greece's 'economic infiltration of the Balkans' and the possibility of its playing a leading role in Balkan developments. For relations with Skopje to be completely normalised, he concluded, the Greek government should accept 'a compromise name for our neighbour'.[26] In a similar vein, Theodoros Couloumbis, Professor in the Athens University and President of the Hellenic Institute for Defence and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), took a positive view of the accord for several reasons. According to him, it would open up commercial relations with the Balkan interior, for instance, and strengthen Greece's position vis-à-vis Turkey. With regard to the name he suggested that 'we should not accept plain "Macedonia", but start negotiations immediately and go for a composite name, preferably "Novamakedonija"'.[27]

The task of supporting the accord from a scholarly point of view was undertaken by Christos Rozakis, Professor of International Law in Athens University and , in 1996, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs in Costas Simitis's administration. In

26. *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia*, 24.9.1995.
27. *Ibid*.

his report entitled 'In Search of a Balkan Policy', which was presented for public debate on 9 November 1995, he offered a detailed analysis of the legal and political dimensions of the Accord. At the same time, however, he also set the tone of the policy which the first Simitis administration would adopt a few months later in the Balkans, and especially with regard to the Macedonian question. The following excerpts give a clear picture of the official interpretation of the Interim Accord, as well as an assessment of the course of the negotiations to be pursued over both the name and bilateral relations with FYROM:

> The [accord] will be replaced by a final agreement, which will *presumably* include a solution for the name. ... The transitional nature of the accord also makes it possible to bypass the route of parliamentary ratification. ... The parties have agreed ... to continue negotiations with a view to reaching agreement on the difference over the name (article 5). The specific reference to 'reaching agreement' unquestionably constitutes a significant obligation for the two parties ... not simply to negotiate but to reach a solution. ... Although the wording of article 5 [regarding the name] does not necessarily ensure a happy outcome, it does guarantee *the good intentions of both parties* and also reflects the increased negotiatory pressure that may be brought to bear in order to achieve a solution. The obligation in article 5 to conduct negotiations over the name relates to the stage of seeking *a mutually acceptable name*.'[28] (emphasis added)

28. Christos Rozakis, *Political and legal dimensions of the New York Transitional Accord between Greece and FYROM*, Athens, ELIAMEP, 1996, pp. 18, 27, 32, 33, 35 [in Greek].

These observations, carefully noted by a distinguished jurisprudent, reflect a fair degree of optimism for substantial goodwill negotiations which would 'presumably' lead to a solution in the form of a 'mutually acceptable name'. However, although it is logically implied, nowhere in the text is there any specific reference to an intention or obligation to reach an agreement over a mutually acceptable name. Although the supporters of the Interim Accord accepted, as an appropriate conciliatory gesture, a composite appellation which would include the Macedonian name, no one at the time would have dreamt of arguing that Athens ought to adopt the northern neighbour's constitutional name.

As a historical footnote it must be added that, throughout the seven-year period, the PASOK government had been proclaiming that *it* would never accept the name 'Macedonia'. However, what the analysts did not put their finger on at the time and what, therefore, public opinion did not grasp was that the uncompromising slogan 'No to "Macedonia" and its derivatives!' concerned Greece, but not necessarily third parties (states, international organisations, international mass media, and so on). Consequently, the road to acceptance of a dual or triple name for use, *inter alia,* by FYROM, the international community, and Greece, could not be regarded as a breach of pledges and promises on the part of PASOK.

II. NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE NAME: THE 'OFFICIAL LEVEL'

1. The Greek — or rather the Macedonian — calends

A dense veil of secrecy hung over the talks held in New York under the UN mediator Cyrus Vance. Diplomats from Athens and Skopje were assigned the task of preparing exit scenarios from the

name imbroglio. The talks were initially expected to continue for the next few months and this had a soothing effect in the public opinion of both countries. This, in turn, relieved both Andreas Papandreou's government and the successive administrations of Costas Simitis from feeling any pressure to swiftly resolve an especially difficult and disagreeable problem and from having to pay the political price of a defeat. The official records of the negotiations are not, of course, available, as the issue remains open.[29] However, occasional official statements and press leaks, together with the writer's own off-the-record discussions and interviews with persons directly or indirectly involved in the issue in New York, Athens, and Skopje, make it possible to decipher the course of the negotiations during the seven years after the Interim Accord was signed.

A frank analysis by Professor Rozakis only a month after the Accord came into force, shed sufficient light on the strategy the Greek side would adopt. In his view, the impressive desire of both parties to proceed with the comprehensive and constructive development of bilateral relations, reflected their readiness 'not to allow the "Transitional Accord" to come to a standstill as long as the issue of the name remained unresolved'.[30] Yet Rozakis went on to offer the optimistic view that 'the rapprochement between

29. In an interview with *To Vima* (17.6.2001), Ambassador Christos Zacharakis, who was the Greek negotiator in the New York talks until 1999, refused to talk about the substance of the negotiations; but in his new capacity of European MP, he noted cryptically that 'the Greek negotiating position "shifted" considerably during the negotiations, both as regards the acceptance of terms which had originally been precluded [the Macedonian name, perhaps?] and as regards the force and the frequency of the Greek reaction whenever the name "Macedonia" was used at an international level.'

30. Rozakis, *op. cit.*, p. 34. Rozakis prefers the term 'transitional' to the term 'interim'.

the two parties and the dynamics of the Accord will eventually make it possible to resolve the difference over the name with a mutually satisfactory compromise.' Adding that 'any disappointments and impasses which might arise on the way to an agreement over the name should not prevent the concurrent implementation of the Transitional Accord,' he concluded with the telling apostrophe: '*What has already been agreed must not be used in negotiations as a lever to gain advantages in the matter of the name*.'[31] Developments over the next seven years showed that these assessments were to constitute a kind of rough outline of the Accord's implementation and also of the form the negotiations over the name would take. They fell wide off the mark only in their forecast of the long-term outcome.

Alongside the exposition of ideas for a strategic course, the conclusion within a month of the supplementary 'Memorandum on practical measures related to the Interim Accord'[32] revealed how the two parties would address the practical problems of communication arising from the use of different names. One has to admire the skill and ingenuity of the diplomatic efforts to 'square the circle'. Since Skopje had already managed to create a precedent, with Athens's acquiescence, by ensuring that its name was nowhere mentioned as 'FYROM' in the Interim Accord, it had no trouble in the Memorandum in securing the right to use its constitutional name both to and within Greece. For their part, the Greek authorities retained the right to affix stickers, like a kind of fig-leaf, over the constitutional name or to stamp the name 'FYROM' on vehicles or goods entering Greece. Of course, the other side would do the same, *mutatis mutandis*. The ludicrous situations that arose out of the exercising of this right became

31. *Ibid*, pp. 37–38 (emphasis added).
32. See the text in Valinakis-Dalis, *op. cit.*, pp. 371–381.

standing jokes for a number of years in the offices of the Foreign Ministry, in the customs-houses, even in the state health services, where, for instance, slaughtered animals imported into Greece from FYROM had to be double-stamped by Greek health authorities. Among the 'practical measures', included by the drafters of the Memorandum was - at first sight – an innocuous formulation, according to which Greek businesspeople, visitors, students, etc. in FYROM could sign documents (such as contracts) bearing the name 'Republic of Macedonia' without implying acceptance of the name. How this provision was implemented, even by Greek state enterprises, as Greek business and investments in FYROM increased, seems to belong in the realms of state secrets.[33]

The general conclusion is that Athens not only committed the question of the name to an uncertain process, but also officialised in bilateral relations the Skopje's non-use of the provisional international name FYROM. Truly, the Greek diplomats involved in the negotiating process would be shouldering an onerous task.

With the signing of the 13 October 1995 Memorandum, the Interim Accord also came into effect. In Athens, with Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou gravely ill in the Onassis Cardiac Surgery Centre, the political leaders continued to give out upbeat messages about the rapid termination of the negotiating process, while in public they appeared unshakeable over 'Neither "Macedonia" nor its derivatives'. A matter of days prior to Costas Simitis becoming Prime Minister, Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias noted that a new climate had developed in bilateral relations since the signing of the Interim Accord and that the issue of the name would 'move forward'. Curiously, however, he expressed the opinion that the final decision should be taken at a

33. Information gleaned by the writer from reliable, cross-checked sources. See the relevant subparagraph xiv, *Memorandum,* in Valinakis-Dalis, *op.cit.*, p. 377.

new meeting of the Council of party leaders chaired by the President of the Republic.[34]

In New York, negotiations were undertaken by Ambassador Christos Zaharakis and his FYROM counterpart, Vanja Toshevski, with Cyrus Vance mediating on behalf of the UN Secretary General. Vance was later assisted by the American diplomat Matthew Nimetz, who eventually took his place when Vance withdrew in 1999.[35]

2. The first steps

The assumption of the premiership by Costas Simitis, with Thodoros Pangalos as Foreign Minister, was obviously going to bring about a rapid revision of positions and approaches, given that the two statesmen were not burdened by the commitments and rigid attitudes of the 'patriotic' line PASOK had taken from 1992 to 1995. In his policy speeches in Parliament, the new Prime Minister vaguely assured the Greek people that 'we shall stick to our guns.' This, as Pangalos subsequently explained, meant, 'we shall not accept a name containing the word "Macedonia" or derivatives thereof.' However, he cryptically added that all kinds of arguments, names, and qualifiers were being tabled, and there was a limit to how far negotiation could go.[36] The rapid deterioration in relations with Turkey over the Imia issue

34. "Karolos Papoulias interviewed by Petros Efthymiou", *To Vima* 14.1.1996. Nevertheless, a high ranking Greek diplomat revealed to this author that the initial instructions by Foreign Minister Papoulias to Ambassador Zacharakis also included versions for a compound state name.

35. The former President of FYROM, Kiro Gligorov, gives a very concise account of the negotiations in his memoirs: *Memoirs*, Athens 2001, pp. 324–332 (Greek translation from the original in Slav Macedonian).

36. *Greek Parliamentary Proceedings*, 29–30.1.1996.

refocused attention on the risk of a clash on Greece's eastern border. By contrast, after the Dayton accords, the Balkan front remained in a state of flux; but by early 1996 the worst of the crisis seemed to be over. Consequently, negotiations in New York could drag on without storing up further political cost and worries for the new government. Certainly, there was no reason why Skopje should not accommodate its southern neighbour on that score. The passage of time was a welcome ally to both.

The first year after the signing of the Interim Accord went by with regular monthly meetings in New York and a host of proposed names and plans for rapprochement being exchanged by the negotiators. Meanwhile, the mediator worked on ways of reconciling the proposals from the two parties. By the end of the year, the churning out of names seemed to have reached saturation point. Greece had apparently made tacit overtures in New York regarding a composite name; while the other side clung firmly to its 'constitutional' name. At first, with the zeal of the newly converted, the Simitis administration had apparently believed that its overtures would pay off. In March, it was telling the other political parties that a 'more or less mutually acceptable' solution was in the offing. By the summer, however, hope had given way to despair and the discussions in New York were at a standstill. 'We're not in a hurry, we can wait,' was the line now being transmitted from official quarters.[37] Meanwhile, the pendulum had begun to swing wildly from optimism to pessimism and back again. The Simitis government therefore had no hesitation in publicly repeating — several times in 1997 — that it remained 'unshakeable' on its uncompromising line of 'Neither "Macedonia" nor its derivatives.'[38]

37. *Eleftherotypia*, 1.8.1996.
38. *Kathimerini*, 8.2.1997; *Eleftherotypia*, 25.7.1997.

At that time, however, it was clear that its representative in New York was discussing a large number of alternative composite names, which, of course, contained some form of "Macedonia". The government apparently realised that domestic opposition on this issue was still strong; and so it was pursuing a process that might moderate the political price of a compromise. If the press reports were to be believed, Simitis and Pangalos seemed at that point to be hoping for, or even encouraging, Vance to submit to the Security Council a composite name, which would replace 'FYROM' as the international name and would be accepted 'of necessity' by both sides.[39]

All this speculation and the deliberate leaks to the mass media strongly suggest that those handling the issue on the Greek side were now convinced that, with no lever for negotiation, they could not expect maximalist solutions. Furthermore, the uncertain time-scale for resolving the problem seemed to be no longer stretching into months, but into years. New York could only offer the 'alibi' of time: an alibi that the negotiators could offer to pressure groups in their respective countries and an alibi that the Greek government could offer to the international community to deter it from hastening to abandon the provisional name of 'FYROM.' This was the last negotiating weapon in the Greeks' diplomatic arsenal.

Under these circumstances and in the framework of a more general review of its Balkan policy, the Simitis government, with Foreign Minister Pangalos as its spearhead, turned to improving Greece's Balkan relations by means of initiatives mainly in the framework of the European Union. In October 1996, the Foreign Minister announced that he had put together a package of

39. *Ethnos*, 1.2.1997; *Ependytis*, 1–2.2.1997; statements by Pangalos in Parliament, reported in *To Vima*, 31.1.1997, and *Pontiki*, 6.2.1997, with excerpts from the proceedings; also an interview given by Pangalos to Yannis Kartalis, *To Vima*, 31.8.1997.

measures and proposals for 'security, friendship, and equal partnership' with Greece's three northern neighbours, a package which the mass media were quick to dub the 'Simitis Plan'.[40] Greece, 'the Balkan country in [Western] Europe and the [West] European country in the Balkans', was shaping the new role that was its right but which it had culpably neglected for the past five years.[41] The government's thinking was, of course, that improving relations with FYROM was a paramount priority for the additional reason that forging closer co-operation and thawing the ice would also make it easier to resolve the problem of the name.

In such situations, as the saying goes, 'it takes two to tango'. In Skopje, however, the success of the Interim Accord had apparently encouraged the nationalists to push and insist on maximalist demands. In public statements and bilateral discussions, the new Foreign Minister, Ljubomir Frckovski, was advocating a policy that was diametrically opposed to that of the new Simitis administration in Greece. Not only was he inflexible on the question of the 'constitutional name', but he was openly striving to do away with the provisional international name of 'FYROM' both among international organisations and at a bilateral level among the member countries of the United Nations. Furthermore, he was launching verbal attacks on Greece, accusing it of violating the terms of the Interim Accord. With the help of an aide-memoire, which he passed on to international organisations and foreign embassies in the summer of 1996, he

40. *To Vima*, 27.10.1996.

41. For a classic criticism of the handling of the issue in the period 1991–4, see Thanos Veremis and Theodoros Couloumbis, *Greek foreign policy: prospects and concerns*, Athens 1994, pp. 27–40 [in Greek], where, however, the writers base their proposals for 'de-Skopjanising' Greek policy (p. 33) on the erroneous impression that Security Council resolution 817/1993 obliges the two sides to reach a 'mutually acceptable' solution.

accused Greece of: delaying the signing of the affiliation treaty between FYROM and the EU because of the disagreement over the name; refusing to stamp the passports of certain citizens of FYROM, because their place of birth in Greece was given in the old, Slavonic, form rather than the Greek; rejecting customs certificates bearing the name 'Republic of Macedonia'; refusing a Palair Macedonia passenger aircraft permission to land because of the company's name; and, finally, insisting at the Balkan Conference in Sofia that his country be referred to as 'FYROM', an incident which had forced the FYROM delegation to withdraw. He then dredged up the old permanent arsenal of complaints from the Yugoslav era: the rights of the 'Macedonian minority' in Greece were not recognised, free communication had been abolished, and confiscated property had not been returned to the Slav-Macedonians who had fled Greece between 1944 and 1950 .[42] FYROM's leaders at that point were obviously under the impression that, contrary to the Security Council's resolutions and the Interim Accord's provisions with regard to 'resolving the difference over the name', the time had come to unilaterally replace the provisional international name of 'FYROM' with the republic's constitutional name. The method chosen to achieve this twofold aim was confrontation.[43]

42. *Eleftherotypia*, 29.7.1996 and 2.8.1996; *Kathimerini*, 4.8.1996; *Ependytis*, 13–14.7.1996.

43. The Greek analyst Seraphim Kotrotsos believed that the exponent of this policy was the Foreign Minister, Frckovski, while President Kiro Gligorov was being more prudent so that Greek investors would not lose interest in his country: *Ependytis*, 13–14.6.1996. *Eleftherotypia*'s correspondent Takis Diamandis reported from Skopje a comment by a foreign diplomat, who felt that, 'when Frckovski took over, relations between Greece and FYROM were good, but he has taken them way back to how they were before the Greek blockade': *Eleftherotypia*, 5.8.1996.

3. For the honour of FYROM

The international climate seemed to be in FYROM's favour. The number of countries, especially in the Third World, establishing diplomatic relations using the new republic's constitutional name was growing.[44] By and large, FYROM became plain 'Macedonia' in the international mass media as well as in informal discussions with Americans and European Community associates. Certain American officials did not conceal the fact that they were deliberately using plain 'Macedonia' in their dealings with FYROM, while the US ambassador in Skopje told the local newspaper *Nova Makedonija* that his country used 'FYROM' only as a formality.[45] Within two years, this international vogue had just stopped short of the pinnacle of the UN hierarchy. On an official visit to Skopje, the Secretary General himself, Kofi Annan, apologised to his hosts for using the name 'FYROM' in his official speech, explaining that he would, otherwise, have problems with Athens.[46]

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44. Frckovski stated that Skopje would appeal to the UN for recognition under the constitutional name, since two-thirds of the seventy-two countries which had recognised FYROM had done so under the name of 'Republic of Macedonia': *Eleftherotypia*, 29.7.1996. Two years later, Gligorov himself returned to the subject, stating that if two-thirds of the UN member countries recognised the constitutional name, he would ask the UN General Assembly to accept it: *Kathimerini*, 26.6.1998.

45. *Ependytis*, 15–16.6.1996. The State Department replied to a protest by the PanMacedonian Association of the United States and Canada to President Clinton, that 'Macedonia' was used as an unofficial short version of a long name. Nonetheless, 'the United States continues to support the use of the name "FYROM"': *Macedonian Press Agency* (MPA), Thessaloniki, 2.6.1999. By 2001, following the publication of an International Crisis Group report (see below), the State Department representative, Philip Recker, stated that 'the official name remains FYROM': *US Department of State Press Release*, 11.12.2001.

46. *Kathimerini*, 26.6.1998.

These public statements were only the tip of the iceberg. An undeclared contest of political public relations was already raging all over the world. Greece was no longer trying to efface its neighbour's Macedonian name, but to preserve the provisional name accepted by the UN. It is true that the Greek side had considerable success with almost all the international organisations it belonged to, despite the Security Council's 1993 resolution stating that the name 'FYROM' would be a provisional one for use by UN agencies. Thus, the EU (in the Stability Pact too), the OSCE, NATO (in the Partnership for Peace programme too), the Council of Europe, the International Olympics Committee, the international sports federations, and other organisations accepted FYROM under that name, establishing it as a provisional international name. To be sure, in their correspondence with these organisations, the state authorities used the name 'Republic of Macedonia'; but the replies they received were addressed to the 'Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia'.[47] Almost seven years after the signing of the Accord, Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski responded to Opposition accusations of compliance with Greece with an important revelation. He stated, with the support of official data, that as a result of previous administrations' refusal to compromise over the name, sixty-nine international organisations now recognised the country as 'FYROM', rather than under its constitutional name.[48] This was not done, however, without objections.[49]

47. Interviews conducted by the author with officials in the Foreign Ministry in Athens and representatives of the Greek Press Bureau in Skopje, December 2002.

48. 'The government of FYROM answers its critics on the question of the name', *Macedonian Press Agency*, Thessaloniki, 20.2.2001. The Greek Press Bureau in Skopje, quoting the local press, gave more specific figures: 43 international organisations (including the UN and the International Monetary Fund) and 29 sports federations. Press Release, 1 March 2001.

49. The question of changing FYROM's name to 'Republic of Macedonia' has come up for discussion from time to time in organisations such as the OSCE, the

At the bilateral level of diplomatic recognition, Skopje was making progress. Athens estimated that by 2002 seventy-three countries had already recognised FYROM by its constitutional name. Of these, thirteen had changed 'FYROM' to 'Republic of Macedonia', reducing the number of countries recognising it under the provisional international name from sixty-six to fifty-three.[50] However, as long as the EU and the USA continued to support the process of resolving the problem through the UN, it was difficult for the terms of the Interim Accord to be set aside without the assent of all those involved. Unable to prevail upon the US and EU governments, the leaders in Skopje opted for a kind of 'pincer tactic', persuading even remote Pacific statelets and countries in Africa and Latin America to accept the constitutional name.

In parallel, 'guerrilla-war' was being waged by the Slav-Macedonians for the use of the constitutional name on conference labels, in speeches and formal addresses, on the shirts of the national teams' athletes attending international meetings and, above all, in the international mass media. The efforts of Greek representatives to oppose these moves were increasingly blocked and eventually proved fruitless. This was only natural. The discomfort felt by third parties over the perpetuation of a problem which had nothing to do with them, nor were they interested in trying to understand it, made it possible for 'FYROM' to lapse into 'Republic of Macedonia' and, more simply, plain 'Macedonia'.

European Parliament, and the Council of Europe, though without any substantial change of practice: 'Georgievski: discussions for EU accession starting soon', *Macedonian Press Agency*, 29.4.1999; *Dnevnik*, 3.2.2000.

50. Some governments which had recognised the country as FYROM retained this name for international use, while using 'Republic of Macedonia' at the bilateral level. Personal interviews conducted by the writer in the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens, September 2002.

Given these circumstances in the international milieu, the resistance of certain Greeks began to wane, at least at the private and day-to-day level.[51] The string of crises in the region – the international intervention in Kosovo and the intercommunal strife with the ethnic Albanians within FYROM itself – had turned the media spotlight on this little Balkan country which, under other circumstances, would have disappeared in the maelstrom that followed the collapse of the multinational states. The power of the mass media eventually bulldozed the one-word Macedonian name into common parlance. The Greek Cassandras of September 1995 seemed to have been proved right, at least at the international level. All that was left was the legal force of 'FYROM' in the international organisations and bilateral relations.

The official position and the supporting arguments were summed up in an informative document issued by the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Entitled 'FYROM: the name issue', it could be found on the ministry's web site in 2002. The document stated that Greece favoured a compromise, composite name, which would help to stabilise FYROM. It added that the Greek Parliament would never accept the name 'Republic of Macedonia' and for this reason Greece asked its associates and third countries, bearing in mind the Greek efforts towards securing the stability of FYROM (listing a number of helpful gestures on Athens's part), to urge Skopje towards a swift resolution of the problem, and meanwhile to avoid using the name 'Macedonia', thereby giving officials in FYROM the impression that time was on their side. It concluded by underlining Greece's constructive stance during the

51. A high-ranking diplomat told the author that a considerable number of Greek businesspeople used the term 'Macedonia' in their transactions with FYROM, leaving the Greek diplomats with the 'privilege' of defending the name of 'FYROM' (September 2002).

negotiations in New York 'for a mutually acceptable compromise'.[52]

4. The sun and the wind vying for the shepherd's cloak[53]

While the first year of negotiations in New York was devoted to an interminable name-game, from 1997 onwards Greece ventured along the parallel route of direct contact with the leaders in Skopje. It was a time when Athens was beginning to try a carrot-and-stick policy of tempting promises accompanied by the harsh language of realism. The first step was an organised visit by Greek journalists to Skopje. This was a major opportunity for representatives of the political, economic, and social scene in FYROM to hear about the Greeks' concerns from the mouthpieces of public opinion and, subsequently, for the Greek public to learn first hand about their neighbours' views. This was quickly followed by the first visit of a Greek Foreign Minister to Skopje. Thodoros Pangalos tempted his audience with plentiful verbal 'carrots': 'The ice is thawing,' he told *To Vima*'s Yannis Kartalis on his return.[54] But he had no difficulty in wielding the 'stick' of realism also. When Gligorov persisted with the usual arguments about the constitutional name, Pangalos told him that his attitude directly contravened the Interim Accord because it precluded a mutually acceptable solution. Negotiation, he pointed out, does not mean that one side persists in its original stance, while the other is forced to capitulate totally. Gligorov's attitude would make it difficult to reach an agreement over

52. Non-paper, 28.1.2002. Early in 2004, this non-paper was removed and replaced on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) site by a new one.

53. From Yoryos Drosinis's poem, 'The Sun and the Wind' (based on Aesop's fable of 'The North Wind and the Sun'), which featured in Greek primary-school readers from the 1950s to the'70s. *Anthologio* 1976.

54 *To Vima*, 23.3.1997.

FYROM's future admission to NATO and the EU. The government's signature would not be enough as the text of the international treaty would have to be ratified by the Greek Parliament, which would be heavily influenced by the unresolved issue of the name. 'They'll have to think very seriously about the outcome of these negotiations,' Pangalos said a few months later, 'in case we finally decide that [FYROM] and its people are just not worth bothering with.'[55] This was a veiled but clear warning that Greece might take a passive stand over the eagerly anticipated arrival in FYROM of Greek businesspeople and investors and also might not play the role of mediator between Skopje and the international organisations. This gave government circles in Skopje something to think about, as it was accompanied by hints that there might be difficulties with contracts with public enterprises and organisations if these had to be ratified by Parliament.[56]

The pendulum continued to swing back and forth for a whole year. Greek 'threats' about problems with international organisations and investments continued, but they began to flag and lose their credibility because they were not carried out. It was obvious that preparations were being made for a flood of Greek capital into FYROM, based exclusively on economic criteria. The tide was held back only by uncertainty over an imminent new armed conflict, this time in neighbouring Kosovo. Reports in the Athens press[57] and various indiscreet statements by government representatives made it clear that the problem of the name was now of lesser importance in bilateral relations.

55. *To Vima*, 31.8.1997.

56. *Dnevnik*, 11–12.4.1998.

57. Nikos Konstandaras commented in *Kathimerini* (27.6.1998) that the name paled into insignificance once FYROM's territorial integrity appeared to be threatened by the spreading war.

Succinct as always, the Greek Foreign Minister continued to play the alternate roles of the 'north wind' and the 'sun', in the hope of winning the 'shepherd's cloak'. In interviews published in FYROM he stated that the issue of the name was a 'problem of semantics', that a 'tolerable' compromise would be desirable, and that in any case the name 'is [now] a marginal issue'.[58] After this, Pangalos received a unique compliment from President Ljubco Georgievski: 'Pangalos spoke with the wisdom of Ulysses, the courage of Achilles, the clarity of Plato, and the concision of Aristotle.'[59]

Diplomats quietly continued preparing the ground for a new agreement. In the summer of 1998 a usually well informed diplomatic editor reflected the progress of the discussions in the hopeful headline: '[FYROM] question probably close to resolution'.[60] Thanks to direct communication between the Foreign Ministers, Thodoros Pangalos and Blagoj Hadjinski, and with the active support of American diplomatic representatives, the prospect of a new rapprochement had begun to emerge. The two sides asked Cyrus Vance to draw up a proposal for the name and a process for implementing the agreement. According to the same source, Vance's proposal was 'Republic of Macedonia-Skopje', while the process for implementing the use of the name would move away from the hitherto entrenched positions.[61]

58. *Dnevnik*, 11–12.4.1998; *Nova Makedonija*, 10.6.1998.

59. *Macedonian Press Agency*, 13.4.1998.

60. Nikos Marakis, *To Vima*, 21.6.1998. A Greek high ranking diplomat confirmed to the author that, although the proposed solution was not satisfactory, the two sides would accept it if it were proposed by the UN Security Council

61. *Ibid.*

5. The elusive solution

Despite the optimistic predictions in the Greek press, this latest rapprochement also came to naught. With the Greek side focusing its efforts on maintaining the use of the name 'FYROM' at an international level and Skopje doing its best to widen the circle of those who had officially accepted 'Republic of Macedonia', the conflict at the official level was naturally reflected in the mass media, which sustained the atmosphere of tension.[62] In Athens the Foreign Ministry observed that as long as the issue remained unresolved it would act as a brake on the smooth progress of bilateral relations; while in New York, despite the various scenarios being proposed, there seemed to be no way out. One stage in the turbulent career of the name was already over.

Two new factors now ruffled the stagnant waters. In neighbouring Kosovo, the long-threatened crisis was becoming a reality with the emergence of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and its first armed clashes with the Yugoslav army. In FYROM national elections in November ousted the historic leaders who had steered the country to independence, to membership of the UN, and to the Interim Accord. The winner, and new Prime Minister, was Ljubco Georgievski, leader of the 'nationalist' VMRO. A year later, in November 1999, Kiro Gligorov stepped down as President of the Republic and was succeeded by Boris Trajkovski, also of the VMRO. This was the party which, in 1991, in the nationalist frenzy of the time, had proclaimed its vision of 'Greater Macedonia', even

62. Christina Poulidou (*Ependytis*, 28.2.1998) pointed out that Greece faced a dilemma in its efforts to resolve the problem of the name: whether to forcefully support FYROM's European prospects in the hope of creating a climate conducive to a compromise solution; or to promote a 'carrot-and-stick' policy and risk exacerbating the confrontations, creating domestic instability, and inflating the crisis.

going so far as to express the wish that its next conference would be held in 'Solun' (Thessaloniki)! Seven years later, in 1998, shortly before elections, Georgievski excused himself to the present writer with the disarming *mea culpa*: 'We've all been through our childhood illnesses.' Paraphrasing Bill Clinton's 'It's the economy, stupid!', he asserted that his policy as Prime Minister would deal '90 per cent' with the economy.[63] During his first four-year term he followed both these guidelines to the best of his ability.

In the end, the chemistry between Pangalos and Georgievski worked positively to a certain extent. In late December 1998, when Pangalos was visiting Skopje, the two men seemed to have found a common basis to build on. Undoubtedly, the mortar was provided by an impressive package of offers, mainly of Greek investments in FYROM. In April 1999 *To Vima* surprised its readers with the eye-catching headline: 'Agreement over the name: Republic of Macedonia – Skopje'. The sub-heading reported that Simitis and Gligorov would sign the agreement in Washington on 25 April at the gathering to mark the fiftieth anniversary of NATO's founding. The detailed account of the backstage manœuvring in one of Athens's most serious newspapers betokened a deliberate leak. The agreement, it seemed, was the result of secret negotiations which Pangalos himself had been leading until he was removed from the Foreign Ministry at the end of February owing to his involvement in the Öçalan affair. According to the newspaper report, after Pangalos's departure, Prime Minister Costas Simitis himself had taken over the case, with the agreement of the new Foreign Minister, George Papandreou. The point of convergence was the name which Vance had proposed the previous summer. FYROM

63. At a meeting between the author, Georgievki, and Trajkovski at the Greek Liaison Office, Skopje, June 1998.

itself would continue to use its constitutional name, but the proposed new name would be used in all its international relations.[64]

The dynamics of the American intervention must have acted as the catalyst. As had happened with the signing of the Interim Accord in 1995 on the eve of the Dayton Accord, so too in the case of the negotiations to resolve the difference over the name, on the eve of NATO's military intervention in Kosovo, the Americans were making haste to clear up crises in the rear of the field of its armed engagement.

The announcement by the Skopje media of the terms of the gestating agreement provoked a storm of protest locally, together with the usual nationalistic cries and criticism of Prime Minister Georgievski. A similar climate seemed to be developing in Greece. The bombing of Serbia, which began on 24 March and ended two and a half months later, was to include the nascent resolution of the name among its 'collateral damage'. The story behind one more unburied corpse is not common knowledge. A year later, however, Kartalis wrote in *To Vima* that it had been Simitis himself who had back-pedalled at the last moment.[65]

6. The name as a quid pro quo

The war over Kosovo may have ended with the withdrawal of the Serbian army and the conversion of the area into a UN protectorate under the military cover of NATO, but renascent Albanian nationalism was not concealing its broader ambitions. The following year, guerrilla groups, offshoots of the KLA, extended their armed operations into the Preshevo–Medvedije–Bujanovac

64. *To Vima*, 10.4.1999. Confirmed by a Greek high ranking diplomat to the author.

65. *To Vima*, 11.6.2000. The author has been unable to verify this information.

valley in south-western Serbia. The risk that similar violent action might spread to the Albanian-speaking areas of FYROM was no longer merely a theoretical possibility. Reports of the movement of weapons and armed men across borders were a daily occurrence. This time, the target of the Albanian separatists of the wider 'Albanian region' (as the Albanian nationalists termed all areas in the western Balkans with compact Albanian populations) was not the Westerners' 'adversaries', namely the Serbs, but the Westerners' 'protégés', namely the Slav Macedonians of FYROM.[66]

The hostilities which broke out in FYROM in February 2001 demonstrated that the Slav Macedonians had not been able to address the Albanians' demands promptly and by political means and thus nip the rebellion in the bud. The Slav Macedonian leaders' almost childlike faith in the full external protection of NATO — basically the American umbrella — was due to the fact that FYROM had been the recipient of inordinate loving help and protection from the United States and various EU countries for the past decade. Presumably overestimating their country's 'strategic position', they did not seem to realise that that position had been undermined as the Balkan environment had entered a new period of rapid transformation (the fall of Milosevic in Serbia, the crisis in Montenegro, and, especially, the startling entrance of the Albanian factor onto the Balkan stage). Hence, despite the international community's initial attempts to support FYROM's state structure against the armed Albanians,[67] the fear that the

66. For Albanian irredentism, see Evangelos Kofos, 'The Albanian Question in the Aftermath of the War: A Proposal to Break the Status Deadlock', *Journal of Southeast and Black Sea Studies*, vol. 2, No. 1 (January 2002), 151–172.

67. Sotiris Dalis, *Yugoslavia in the post-Milosevic era: The new political and economic factors*, Athens, ELIAMEP–Sideris, 2002, pp. 197–216 [in Greek]. In late March 2001, the US Secretary of State asked NATO's allies to support 'Macedonia' against the 'armed extremists'.

spread of hostilities would destabilise the wider region prompted the US and the EU to urge Skopje to accept the basic terms of the Albanian 'National Liberation Army' (NLA). Faced with the threat that the Albanian demands for equality might escalate into demands for their own 'territory' (i.e. for cantonisation) and that the western provinces of the country might ultimately secede, American and European mediators eventually forced the Slav Macedonian side into an impressive *volte-face*. The upshot was the signing of the 'Ohrid Agreement' on 13 August 2001.[68]

These developments were to have serious consequences for the Greece-FYROM negotiations over the name. It is true that in the two-year period 2000-1, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under the personal supervision of Minister George Papandreou, had applied itself to a thorough revision of ideas and programmes for peace, stability, and development in the Balkans, with FYROM as the nodal point. In the past, offers of economic and political support for FYROM had been largely motivated by the desire to create a climate and a network of relations that would make it easier to achieve a mutually acceptable and honourable solution regarding the name. The new approach considered the name issue to be just one of the problems that had to be resolved consensually, or, if necessary, to be skirted for the time being so as not to stand in the way of the primary goal of the global Balkan initiative: a policy in which the United States and the major EU countries would work together, with Greece playing the leading role. The 'new Greek doctrine' that took shape at this time was based on the premise that FYROM had to survive for many reasons, not least because its very existence deterred its neighbours from acting upon latent nationalist visions such as

68. See the text of 'The Framework Agreement, Ohrid, 13 August, 2001' at www.ecmi.de/download/Focus-2002Brunnbauer.pdf. For a Greek summary of the Ohrid Agreement, see Dalis, *op. cit.*, pp. 252–254.

'Greater Albania' or even 'Greater Bulgaria'.[69] Press reports stated that in the early summer of 2000 Simitis and Papandreou had decided that the issue of the name had to be resolved by the end of the year, as Greece was to develop its policy of regionalism, spearheaded by the Stability Pact.[70]

Between autumn 2000 and early 2001 Papandreou and Georgievski met a number of times. Clearly both men believed that certain conjunctures were creating a new dynamic for a resolution of the name. Public opinion in both countries seemed to have shed its nationalism and was now mature enough to be able to accept a compromise; if similar initiatives had failed in the past, this was due to a lack of nerve on the part of the politicians who had been handling them; in the present circumstances, the economy, and especially economic co-operation, created a suitable climate for joint ventures; and, lastly, the Americans were applying strong pressure and making no secret of their desire to close unresolved issues as quickly as possible. The two statesmen seemed determined to reach an agreement.[71]

With a very small circle of associates, assisted by financiers, the two statesmen made a final effort to emerge from the mire of the name-game. According to deliberate leaks to the press, by mid-January 2001 they had achieved a 'new' rapprochement, involving 'a name consisting of two words to be used in all contexts at an international and a bilateral level'. Again, *To Vima* conveyed the general optimism, with the headline, 'The name enters the home stretch'.[72] For the Greek side, it was obviously less important just

69. For the Bulgarian national doctrine, see *Bulgaria in the 21st century: The Bulgarian National Doctrine*, part I, Scientific Centre for Bulgarian National Strategy, Sofia, 1997, p. 125 [in Bulgarian].

70. *To Vima*, 11.6.2000.

71. *Ibid*.

72. Nikos Marakis, *To Vima*, 21.1.2001; also *Eleftherotypia*, 17.1.2001.

then whether the name would be 'Nova Makedonija', 'Gorna Makedonija', or some such composite, as long as Greece was not isolated with a name that it alone would use in its bilateral relations with FYROM, while the rest of the world used the constitutional name.[73] Several months later, Alexis Papahelas revealed that in February 2001 both Georgievski and the leader of the Opposition, Branko Crvenkovski, had assured Greek Premier Simitis that they would accept 'Gorna Makedonija' as the international name and were ready to sign an agreement. But this was a critical time for FYROM, as hostilities were about to break out with armed Albanians, after which the whole name issue would be complicated by the highly charged ethnic conflict.[74]

To return to early 2001, the 'total package' was Athens' 'Christmas present' to Skopje, a present that would help to create a climate conducive to concurrent talks over the name. Its main offers were full political and economic support, a hundred million dollars in aid, further Greek investments, immediate admission to the EU regional programmes, development of the Vardar valley, favourable regulations for seasonal workers in the form of visas for citizens of FYROM, and help with entry into NATO and the EU. Greece also promised to intercede in the ecclesiastical problem with the Serbian

73. Yannis Kartalis stressed in *To Vima* (11.2.2001) that 'this opportunity to settle the name issue must not be missed', and added 'it matters little whether the name is 'Upper', 'New', or 'Northern Macedonia', as long as a solution is found to this outstanding issue that has bedeviled Greek foreign policy for years now.' Stavros Lygeros of *Kathimerini* noted that the question of the name had reached a watershed and set out the basic criteria for a solution: there must be a single composite name to be used by everyone, not a 'dual' name (i.e. one to be used by Greece and another by everyone else; 'Republic of Macedonia – Skopje' was unacceptable; and the solution must not offend anyone's dignity: *Kathimerini*, 11.2.2001.

74. *To Vima*, 19.8.2001. Papachelas cited Greek diplomats as his sources. Information confirmed by this author with senior Greek diplomats.

Patriarchate on the basis of the Church of Skopje's immediate subordination to the Oecumenical Patriarchate.[75]

As far as other countries were concerned, the Greek plans and the thinking behind them were in line with their own rationale for supporting FYROM. However, during the string of crises which directly or indirectly affected FYROM's territorial integrity and its people's sense of security, the United States and some EU countries thought it necessary to put an end to the name issue, chiefly through concessions from the Greek side. Their main argument was that the resolution of the name problem would have an immediate psychological impact by helping to consolidate a sense of security among the Slav Macedonian element of the population, with wider stabilising effects at the social level. Supporters of this view argued that for a nation which felt threatened or coveted by its neighbours, this gesture by Greece would set an example to the rest of FYROM's neighbours.[76]

The international community's exhortations and 'sermonising' over an agreement increased once the hostile activities of the armed Albanians in Serbia's Preshevo valley began to spread in the summer of 2000 and armed incidents started to take place within FYROM near the Albanian border.[77] The activity reached

75. *To Vima*, 18.2.2001, and *Eleftherotypia*, 9.2.2001, relaying information published in *Dnevnik*, 8.2.2001.

76. During a fact-finding mission to Skopje regarding Greek–FYROM relations (6–8.12.2002), a three-member group from the Thessaloniki Research Centre for Macedonian History and Documentation (Kofos, Tziampiris and Vlasidis) heard at least three local leaders repeat a cliché-ridden argument about the insecurity felt by their people on account of the views and behaviour of all their neighbours vis-à-vis their country: Bulgaria was refusing to recognise the language, Serbia was refusing to recognise its independent Church, Greece was refusing to recognise the name of the people and the state, and Albania was contesting its territorial sovereignty.

77. Cross-checked information from discussions with officials in the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2001–2).

a peak in the spring and summer of 2001 and continued while the Slav Macedonians and Albanians were conducting negotiations, which eventually concluded with the Ohrid Agreement.

Despite increasing pressure, it was clear that the partners and allies appreciated Greece's substantive interventions to secure peace and stability in the wider region of the western Balkans, especially FYROM. The impression in Athens was that, apart from verbal exhortations, the United States and its partners would not risk taking practical steps that might displease Greece, such as unilaterally recognising FYROM as the 'Republic of Macedonia', or amending the Security Council resolution regarding the temporary name of 'FYROM'. Tellingly, the experienced American mediator Matthew Nimetz had been pointing out since 1999 that if impolitic pressure were applied for solutions unacceptable to one side or the other, there was a risk of rekindling certain serious issues that had settled down. A 'good solution' would be a mutually acceptable agreement that would safeguard the prestige of both sides. If this were unfeasible at any given moment, he would prefer to postpone the entire process rather than impose an undesirable proposal.[78]

As had happened many times in the past when the FYROM press disclosed that a solution was imminent, public reaction was as vehement as it had been in Greece in 1993, when it became known that C. Mitsotakis and M. Papakonstandinou were about to accept the compromise solution of a composite name. But in contrast to the strong international criticism of the Greek reaction at that time, equally excessive reactions by the nationalists in FYROM eight years later were regarded with tolerance by other countries. This was explained by the hopeless situation in which the Slav Macedonian leaders found themselves in. On the one hand they were unable to suppress the activities of the Albanian

78. Interview published in *Kathimerini*, 13.10.1999.

separatist guerrillas, and on the other they faced intolerable pressure from the international community to make major concessions to the Albanian element in FYROM.

It is interesting to note that, at the time of the crisis, Greece was the one country which stood beside the Slav Macedonians from the start of their interethnic conflict with the local Albanian element. Not only was Greece's political, moral, and material support crucial, but it even risked undermining the good relations which Greece had hitherto maintained with the Albanian element in FYROM.[79] Furthermore, the Greek government was careful not to exploit its neighbour's weakness by demanding that all the outstanding issues connected with the Interim Accord be resolved. Between moral principles and *realpolitik*, Athens chose the former. Its reward for this generosity was redoubled pressure from non-Balkan arbiters to capitulate over the name, which they regarded as a necessary palliative to compensate for the concessions the Slav-Macedonians were being called upon to offer the Albanians.[80]

In the end, Papandreou took a gamble. He requested that Javier Solana, the EU High Representative for foreign policy and

79. Dalis, *op. cit.*, pp. 201, 212–213, 257–258. In March 2001, a non-paper on FYROM, prepared by Ambassador Alexandros Mallias, head of the Balkan Directorate, and Alex Rondos, special adviser to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was leaked to the press. It stated, *inter alia,* that Greece's position on the interethnic conflict in FYROM was dictated by the need to safeguard the unity of the neighbouring country, and was in no way influenced by a partisan preference for either of the warring sides.

80. *Ibid*, pp. 270–271. The Greek government was criticised for its choice. In a lengthy analysis (*To Vima*, 19.8.2001), Alexis Papahelas reported a Western diplomat's comment that 'Greece had an opportunity to put the issue on the table, but didn't,' because George Papandreou felt that Athens should not take advantage of the crisis. Greek diplomats were apparently disappointed, because they could now foresee no swift resolution of the problem. The Slav Macedonians had been obliged to revise their constitution for the sake of the Albanians, and it would be difficult for them to do it again within the next ten or fifteen years simply to meet the Greek demand that the name of the state be changed.

defence, be appointed mediator on behalf of the EU in the problem with FYROM. The aim was twofold: Greece would gain some breathing space; and the issue would be restored to EU jurisdiction, whence it had been withdrawn in December 1992, when Gligorov had taken it to the United Nations with a request for admission to that global organisation.[81]

Two days later the Al Qaeda attack on the twin towers in New York turned everything upside down. The Balkans, FYROM, and a 'peculiar' quarrel between Athens and Skopje now seemed like dim fossils of a bygone age, as far as the staffs of the Great Powers and of the sole Superpower were concerned. There was only an international NGO – the International Crisis Group – left to promote the quid pro quo solution through a new approach seeking to resolve all the unfinished business between Athens and Skopje.

7. The ICG report: for a 'total package'

The International Crisis Group is an international NGO with prominent figures in the fields of politics, diplomacy, business, and the media on its board. Its president and chief executive is former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans. The ICG produces detailed reports analysing crises all over the globe and making practical recommendations for addressing them. It also publicises its views to the media, governments, and international organisations around the world. The analyses offer a rather obviously American perspective. At times of heightened trouble, the ICG usually stations its teams in crisis areas. This happened in Bosnia, in Kosovo, and, shortly before the interethnic strife broke out, in FYROM, where it staffed a special bureau. In an unofficial

81. *Eleftherotypia*, 10.9.2001.

capacity, it appears to assist the diplomatic initiatives of Western governments (mainly the US) and international organisations.[82]

The ICG seems to have played this sort of role in the concluding of the Ohrid Agreement between the Slav Macedonians and the Albanians.[83] Its thirty-two-page report on *Macedonia's Name*, published on 10 December 2001,[84] acknowledges that the international mediators exerted pressure on the Slav Macedonians to offer the ethnic Albanians wide-ranging concessions, the like of which has not been seen in any other Balkan state in peacetime. Presumably to assuage their feelings of guilt, the writers of the report conceived the idea of offering 'in exchange' a solution to the issue of the name that would be paid for by the Greeks.

This report has all the familiar hallmarks of reports and findings issued by international NGOs. They are not to be judged by their scientific objectivity, but mainly by the effectiveness of arguments that serve a specific political agenda.[85] Yet the writer of the ICG report had spent quite some time visiting Greece in order to gain a deeper understanding of the substance of the Greek arguments and, above all, to gauge the depth of the emotional reaction in Greek public opinion and the political elites if an undesirable solution were imposed.

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82. For details, see the ICG website www.crisisweb.org.

83. As indicated in a long discussion between the author and the head of the ICG's Skopje bureau, Edward Joseph, Maroussi, 4.10.2001.

84. ICG, "Macedonia's Name: Why the Dispute Matters and How to Resolve it", *ICG Balkans Report* No. 122, Skopje/Brussels, 10.12.2001, www.crisisweb.org.

85. One extreme example is a report on Albania and the Chams of Thesprotia (Camëria) by the British Defence Ministry's Conflict Studies Research Centre (CSRC). The report uncritically adopts Albanian nationalist views without making the slightest attempt to examine the views of the other side. And in this case we have the irrational notion that Greece should pay some price to propitiate Albanians for concessions they had been forced to make under pressure from representatives of the international community. See Miranda Vickers, 'The Cham Issue: Albanian National and Property Claims in Greece', CSRC, *Report G109*, London, April 2002, www.csrc.ac.uk/pdfs/G109.mv.pdf.

What is new about the ICG report is not that it essentially adopts fundamental tenets of the Slav-Macedonian side, such as the notion that the international community should unanimously accept the Slavonic version of the constitutional name, 'Republika Makedonija', while Greece uses another name, preferably 'Upper Macedonia', in bilateral relations and in the international organisations.[86] Its distinction lies in its attempt to put together a 'package' which includes compensatory gestures for the Greek side too. Regardless of any objections to its overall approach to the issues, it is noteworthy that an international NGO, well disposed towards FYROM's views, felt it necessary to include in the package of proposals certain provisions, which, apart from FYROM's eventual name, would, in the ICG's judgement, also take account of fundamental Greek sensitivities. This approach by an international NGO, which seems to have understood the core of the Greek view of the problem, is worth noting, because it differs even from the official Greek handling of the issue during the seven years after the Interim Accord was signed.

Indeed, judging by what has been publicly divulged, between 1996 and 2002 the Greek negotiators do not seem to have attached much importance to the cultural aspects of the disagreement, as these were presented in the negotiations between 1991 and 1995, for they remained low on the list of official Greek priorities. The Greek 'packages' of this period are characterised by the variety and the volume of mainly unilateral offers of economic, political, and even emotional support to Skopje. But, apart from the name, they contain no Greek demands of a cultural nature, though cultural considerations lie at the heart of the wider concerns and reactions of large segments of public opinion in Greece, especially in Macedonia and the Greek diaspora.[87]

86. For more information about the ICG report, see the study by Aristotle Tziampiris in this volume.

87. Discussed in the next section.

The following points in the ICG report touch upon the cultural disagreement between the two parties and constitute quasi *quid pro quos* from Skopje to the Greek side.

- Assuming that the Greek side will refer to the state as 'Upper Macedonia' at the bilateral level, it will be able to refer to the inhabitants of that state as 'Upper Macedonians'.
- The state of 'Upper Macedonia' will be bound to respect, preserve, and honour the legacy of the Greek tradition in its territory and the cultural heritage rights of all the peoples in the wider geographical area of Macedonia.
- It will also promise to take a scientific approach to the ancient, mediaeval, and modern history of the geographical region of Macedonia and its people, on the basis of the historical truth.
- It will invite UNESCO or another international organisation to examine the country's educational curriculum, especially the sectors of history and geography, in order to bring it into line with international standards and the spirit of article 7 of the Interim Accord.
- It will be bound to not oppose in any way (including, presumably, legally) the commercial use of the names 'Macedonia' and 'Macedonian' for products or services of Greek provenance.

Irrespective of objections to the way the 'concessions' are formulated, what emerges from the ICG report and what those studying or handling the issue need to bear in mind is that, in its efforts to work out a solution to the problem of the name that is favourable to the Slav Macedonians, an international organisation has understood the need also to safeguard the historical and cultural heritage and identity of the Greeks in general and the Greek Macedonians in particular; a heritage and an identity which are in danger of being expropriated if FYROM succeeds in its efforts to monopolise the Macedonian name.

8. The end of the initial seven-year term

As the Interim Accord was moving towards the end of its seven-year term, the government in Athens produced an interesting appraisal of what had been hitherto achieved. In contrast to the euphoria of the early years, when it had been widely expected that the outstanding issue would be resolved by developing close economic relations, by the end of the period Foreign Minister Papandreou himself concluded that the excellent economic relations that had been forged could not, in and of themselves, resolve the problem of the name.[88] This was the time when Prime Minister Simitis was officially stating in Parliament that he would not accept two names, but a single international name to be used by one and all.[89]

The final year of the Interim Accord's original allotted span was characterised by reduced interest from the Americans, who were now focusing on international terrorism and the war in Afghanistan, as also by the Georgievski administration's inability to go ahead with a compromise solution because of upcoming elections. The defeat of the VMRO and the election of a new government under Branko Crvenkovski seemed to signal the end of an era that had been characterised by the illusion that some kind of solution was in the offing. The change of government in Skopje coincided with the end of the Interim Accord's seven-year term. Although the name issue had been accorded less attention during the run-up to the elections, the possibility of extending the agreement had been publicly debated. Meanwhile, in Athens the political torpor of the summer months had completely ignored the issue.

The Interim Accord reached the end of its seven-year term on

88. *Eleftherotypia*, 16.2.2001.
89. *Eleftherotypia*, 3–4.3.2001.

13 October 2002, but according to the relevant provisions it would be automatically renewed unless either of the parties wished to end it. Neither did, both stating their wish to extend it for another year, if not indefinitely. The Greek side remained firm in its desire to find an acceptable composite name with UN help, which had not proved possible in the previous seven years due to Skopje's intransigence.[90] The Greek government's position on the name was clarified a few months later at a press conference called by the Foreign Ministry spokesman. Having explained that the Interim Accord was 'undergoing a process of tacit renewal' - which meant that it would be effective for an indefinite period, possibly even longer than a year - Panos Beglitis stated with regard to the name:

> We are maintaining our negotiating position regarding the name. We do not accept two names, and that is final. Two names are not a realistic proposition. *We remain firm in our insistence* on a single name to be used by all, *a single international name for all purposes*. We believe that the negotiations must continue . . . so that a mutually acceptable name can be found on the basis of the negotiatory framework I have just outlined.[91] (emphasis added)

To sum up: seven whole years after the Interim Accord was signed one was left with the illusion that no water at all had flowed under the Vardar/Axios bridges...

90. Statements by the goverment spokesman, Christos Protopapas, *Athens News Agency*, 13.9.2002.

91. Panos Beglitis' press conference, *Macedonian Press Agency*, 6.3.2003.

III. THE DIFFERENCE OVER THE NAME: THE LEVEL OF 'PUBLIC PERCEPTION'

The issue of the name cannot be explored exclusively at the 'official level', where government and other state representatives laboured for seven years, usually 'behind closed doors', to find a solution. If one considers the problem in its entirety from the Greek perspective, its ramifications clearly spread much wider than negotiations over the name, and become embroiled with complex cultural and emotional issues relating to the identity of the Greek people. Furthermore, apart from those officially handling the issue, the stage was also crowded with various groups and non-governmental organisations, all of which had an opinion to offer and thus directly or indirectly influenced the political approach to the problem.

1. Political élites and government agencies

During the seven-year period 1995–2002, the political debate, mainly within Parliament, followed a downward curve. Naturally enough, it was lively in the months which followed the signing of the Accord, in the context of debates on national foreign policy. Whenever the press revived speculation about the name, the subject of the New York negotiations reappeared regularly in Parliament in the form of questions tabled by MPs, usually Greek Macedonians known for their sensitivity over the issue. These interventions also related to the international use of the name 'Macedonia' or to issues connected with the activities of individuals abroad. The written answers, provided by the Foreign Ministry, were stereotypical and rather vague, usually with no further follow-up.

Considering the debates which had taken place there only a few years earlier, when the Macedonian question had been one of the major national issues, the parliamentary floor had become a little-

used forum.[92] A contributory factor here was undoubtedly the tactics employed by the successive PASOK administrations from as early as Andreas Papandreou's time. The failure to bring the Interim Accord before Parliament, even for discussion, and subsequently the fact that a considerable number of international agreements with FYROM were not presented for ratification, alienated Parliament from the course of relations with Greece's northern neighbour. These tactics on the government's part could have raised constitutional concerns too because, though unratified, the bilateral agreements appeared nonetheless to have been implemented to a considerable degree.[93] Furthermore, by claiming that the negotiations in New York were secret, the government was able to confine itself to vague and general statements. It is illustrative of the parties' bewilderment over the problem of the name that, a year after the Interim Accord was signed, not only the party in power, PASOK, but also New Democracy (ND) as the main opposition party and the Communist Party (KKE) were reluctant to give a clear answer to a specific question on the subject from the Macedonian Press Agency.[94] More specifically, PASOK simply stated that, 'the government has taken its official, stated position to the negotiating table' (p. 220). ND did not even mention the subject specifically, noting merely that it would address national issues 'with calm determination' (p. 231), while the KKE stated cryptically that

92. Yannis Loulis, *Time for politics in Greece: Elections, public opinion, political developments 1980-1995,* Athens, Sideris, 1995, pp. 521–527 [in Greek]. The author refers to MRB's *Trends* [in Greek], where, in answer to the question 'What is the most important foreign-policy problem?', the answer 'FYROM' was in first place in 1992, given by 60.2% of those polled, but had gone down to second place by December 1994, with only 12.9%.

93. Unofficial information obtained by the author from government and business circles.

94. Vlasis Vlasidis (ed.) , *The Third Hellenic Republic and its institutions*, Macedonian Press Agency, Thessaloniki, 1997, pp. 215–261 [in Greek].

'whatever name our neighbour goes by' and whatever agreements were signed between Greece and the Balkan countries, it would all depend on the will and the interests of the 'imperialists' (p. 240). By contrast, the smaller parties were explicit. The Coalition Party desired 'a mutually acceptable solution to the name that does not preclude the geographical term "Macedonia" or a derivative of it' (p. 246). DIKKI, by contrast, stated that '[FYROM] must not be recognised under the name of "Macedonia" or its derivatives' (p. 254). Political Spring too was opposed to any compromise, requesting that '[Greece] demand an end to the territorial claims and the usurping of the name of our Macedonia' (p. 259).

As Minister for Foreign Affairs, Thodoros Pangalos, articulate as ever, was a frequent exception. Regarding the Interim Accord and what had preceded it, he stated that neither he nor the new Prime Minister, Costas Simitis, had been involved in contracting the 'one-sided' agreement.[95] Two years later, he said in another statement that the issue of the name had not been a 'fundamental consideration in [the government's] Balkan policy'. Nonetheless, it ought to be resolved because it could cause serious problems in the future and lead to deadlocks.[96] With the changeover in the Foreign Ministry in late February 1999, the Greek government appeared to adopt a more consensual approach. The activities of the armed Albanian nationalists in Kosovo and subsequently in south-western Serbia (Preshevo) were fuelling fears of a more general flare-up in the wider area. In a televised interview broadcast in Skopje,[97] the new minister, George Papandreou, reflected the change in tone when he underlined that both sides

95. *Pontiki*, 6.2.1997, with an extensive summary of the parliamentary debate of 31 January 1997.

96. Pangalos' interview published in *Nova Makedonija*, 23.12.1998.

97. *Eleftherotypia*, 16.2.2001.

had their emotional concerns and that any solution was not going to be 100 per cent pleasing to both.[98]

The now temperate political language, compared with the acute political confrontations that had preceded the Interim Accord, may also be attributed to the fact that at this time there was no substantial divergence between the positions espoused by the government and the opposition parties. Apart from the usual sparring over the way things had been handled in the past, ND demanded that any final decision be brought before a council of party leaders, presumably believing that the decision of the informal councils of 1992 under the then President, Constantine Karamanlis, still stood.[99] However, ND refused to clarify whether its proposal had the practical procedural purpose of revoking an earlier act, over which the founder of the party had presided, or whether it was seeking to bring the old slogan of 'Neither Macedonia nor its derivatives' up for debate again. Andonis Samaras's small Political Spring Party certainly continued to support this view both in Parliament and in the press.[100] The KKE and the Coalition Party were openly in favour of a composite name, believing it vitally important to develop good neighbourly relations all round.[101]

98. At this time, in discussions in official Greek quarters, the author was given the impression that the Greek side had made about '90 per cent' of the running, while Skopje refused to cover the remaining 10 per cent.

99. *Eleftherotypia*, 16, 19.2.2001, for statements by New Democracy 's parliamentary spokesman, Prokopis Pavlopoulos. ND's honorary president, Constantine Mitsotakis, also felt that the party leaders should convene, the difference being that he openly favoured a compromise solution to the issue of the name.

100. When the Kosovo crisis broke out, Samaras granted a long interview to the Thessaloniki newspaper *Makedonia* (27.4.1999), in which he stated that he was firm in his old convictions and that he would not 'haggle over the name of Macedonia', although he conceded that mistakes had been made.

101. A statement by the Coalition Party called upon all parties to reach a consensus 'on the basis of a mutually acceptable composite name'. The left-wing splinter Movement for Renewal and Modernisation took a similar stance: *Eleft-*

The conclusion is that, regardless of the various nuances, no Greek political faction so much as hinted that it would agree if the international community sanctioned, and Greece accepted, FYROM's constitutional name.

Apart from these party lines, MPs from the two biggest parties (mainly Greek Macedonians) vigorously opposed any compromise solution, expressing maximalist views and arguments typical of the period when PASOK had been in opposition in 1992 and 1993.[102] Since Parliament did not provide sufficient opportunity for publicising these views, the 'internal opposition' resorted to the mass media, chiefly in Thessaloniki. As the years went by, the UN mediation process in New York appeared to have become bogged

herotypia, 16, 19.2.2001. As early as 1997, Maria Damanaki of the Coalition had been demanding that the issue be 'brought to a close with a composite name, otherwise a year from now it will be plain "Macedonia"'. However, in a television broadcast, Orestis Kolozof, one of the leading cadres of the KKE, expressed the advanced view that 'it's nothing to do with us what their name is to be . . . [the country] has a name': in a televised debate in which the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Elisabet Papazoi, and PASOK MP Stelios Papathemelis also took part, NET TV, 08.45, 7.3.2001. Written questions submitted by the author in May 2003 regarding their official position on the name issue received no reply from either ND or the KKE.

102. Throughout the seven-year period, the chief proponent of these trends in PASOK, speaking also for a wide political range of Macedonian politicians regardless of party, was the former Minister for Macedonia and Thrace, Stelios Papathemelis. His own political discourse and argumentation in Parliament and in the mass media epitomised the views of those who opposed the use of the name 'Macedonia' and its derivatives for the state and the people of FYROM. See his article in *To Vima* (6.7.1997) for an across-the-board critique of the official handling of the issue, especially the lifting of the blockade, which, according to this Macedonian MP, led to 'the humiliation of Greek diplomacy'. See also the text of a question he submitted to Parliament, opposing the composite names 'Northern Macedonia' and 'New Macedonia' ('a gross diplomatic blunder by Greece'), because they left intact the 'core of Stalin's fabrication and the spurious Macedonian nation'. The names, he opined, would eventually fall out of use, 'leaving plain "Macedonia"'. *Macedonian Press Agency*, 13.2.2001.

down, while the media debate was also languishing. On local TV channels in Thessaloniki, however, the problem was sustained by talk shows and by interviews which promoted mainly, though not exclusively, maximalistic views.

At the local government level the question of the name was not an electoral issue. In Thessaloniki, however, the successive mayors of that period, all from New Democracy, publicly took the line that the word 'Macedonia' or its derivatives should not be part in FYROM's eventual name.[103]

In the educational sphere, at primary and secondary level there is very little reference to the Macedonian question or, by extension, to the use of the Macedonian name for FYROM and its people.[104] In the textbooks, the terms 'Macedonia' and 'Macedonians' relate to Greek concepts: the state of the Macedonian kings and their people in the ancient period; while in the modern era they designate the region of what is now Greek Macedonia and its Greek inhabitants. Greece's neighbour to the north, when it is mentioned at all, is usually 'Skopje'. A recent geography textbook has a map of the Balkans referring to it as the 'Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia'.[105] An earlier textbook produced by the Pedagogical Institute, entitled *Themata Istorias* (History Topics),

103. Mayor Vasilis Papageorgopoulos stated unequivocally that the decision taken by the party leaders in 1992 should not be changed: *Eleftherotypia*, 3–4.3.2001. In contrast, in a televised interview, Athens Mayor Dimitris Avramopoulos, a former diplomat, called for a composite name including a geographical derivative of the name 'Macedonia': *Ependytis*, 1.3.2001.

104. Despoina Karakatsani, 'The Macedonian Question in Greek History Textbooks', in Christina Koulouri (ed.), *Clio in the Balkans: The Politics of History Education*, Thessaloniki, 2000, pp. 289–291.

105. However, a recent (2002–3) school 'folder' titled '*Gnorizo tin Ellada* (Getting to know Greece), gives Greece's northern neighbours as Albania, 'Skopje', and Bulgaria. This was sharply criticised in *Avyi* (19.1.2003) because it ignores the UN decision that 'Skopje' be referred to as 'FYROM'.

which was printed in 1998 for an optional subject at second-year senior-high-school level, included a chapter on the 'Macedonian Question' up to 1993, which was when the authors submitted their various chapters for publication. The terminology used includes 'Macedonian nation' and 'Macedonians' in quotation marks; as also the term 'Slav Macedonians', without quotation marks, for Slavonic speakers in Greece with Slavonic national consciousness, especially in the period 1941–50.[106] However, this particular textbook was scarcely used, because, presumably owing to pressure of work, the optional subjects were not a success.[107]

2. The mass media and public opinion: the use and choice of names

During the period when Greek public opinion was highly charged (1992–5), a combination of bewilderment and ignorance impelled people to impulsively seek names both for the new state and for its people. The use and subsequent establishment of sometimes disparaging names reflected the popular disapproval of the neighbours' adoption of the Macedonian name. It also acted as a kind of apotropaic device against an apparent, though not always rationally defined, 'threat'. It was inevitable that such tactics would rouse and propagate rivalry, even, perhaps, hostility.

After the signing of the Interim Accord and as a considerable segment of the mass media began to fall in with the government's initiatives for détente, rapprochement, and then co-operation with

106. Evangelos Kofos, "The Macedonian Question in the last two centuries", in the students' book *History Topics*, Athens, Pedagogical Institute, 1998, pp. 41–70, and especially in the teacher's book of the same title, pp. 43–92.

107. Karakatsani, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

FYROM, the use of disparaging names fell off. During the seven-year period, the use of the name 'Skopje' in a number of media was replaced, to a certain extent, by *ΠΓΔΜ*, the Greek acronym for FYROM. This applies mainly to reports and articles in the centre-right, centre-left, and left-wing press, but not, usually, to traditional right-wing and Thessaloniki newspapers.[108] This analysis does not include organs representing the fringes of the two extraparliamentary extremes, the readers of which find, on the one hand, disparaging names for the new state and on the other, the use of the name 'Macedonia' with no adjectival qualifier. However, in the spoken discourse of radio and television the more easily pronounced 'Skopje' remained. An empirical survey which the writer conducted using a written questionnaire confirmed the oral prevalence of the term 'Skopje' even among people with university-level education who in writing used the initials ΠΓΔΜ or FYROM.[109] Nonetheless, the noun 'Skopjans' and the adjective 'Skopjan' remains prevalent, while the term 'Slav Macedonians' is coming back into use among certain analysts,[110] especially in the left-wing press, which is more familiar with the term from the 1940s. One very rarely finds the name 'Macedonians', with or without quotation marks. The use of the term 'Makedonci' is

108. Some journalists tended towards a more evolutionary use of the name, presumably as a gesture of good will: 'fYRoM', 'fYROMacedonia', 'FYR of Macedonia', 'fyr Macedonia', or even, in full, 'former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia'.

109. For further details, see the section on 'Survey results'.

110. One of the first Greek journalists to use extensively the term 'Slav Macedonians' was Stavros Lygeros in his analyses in *Ependytis* and *Kathimerini*. Others who use it to identify the inhabitants of FYROM include Takis Michas (*Eleftherotypia*), Christina Poulidou (*Ependytis*, *Avyi*), Richardos Someritis (*Kathimerini*), and many others.

occasionally attested, being the name by which the Slav inhabitants of FYROM refer to themselves in their own language.[111]

For a better understanding of the problem's public perception in Greece, we need to examine the picture transmitted by the mass media after the UN admitted the new state under a provisional name for international use that was different from its constitutional name. Public debate was disadvantaged by the fact that, in the early years at least, the negotiations in New York were shrouded under the cloak of 'state secrecy'.

To be sure, some details of the secret negotiations did appear in the Greek press from time to time. Yet, it is strange that, throughout the seven-year term, in Greece the 'public perception' of the problem of the name focused on whether or not the new state's name would include the word 'Macedonia' or a derivative; whereas the negotiators had already accepted the constitutional name for use by FYROM itself and were debating whether composite names, incorporating the term 'Macedonia' or its derivatives, should be used by the international community or only by Greece. In the absence of any clear understanding of the various stages of the talks, it is difficult to decide whether the concealing of the finer aspects of the negotiations served the two parties' negotiating tactics or whether they were deliberately keeping public opinion in the dark in order to avoid premature untoward popular reaction.

111. Used in *To Vima*, since 1996, under the byline 'Anaryiros'. For the use of this name, see E. Kofos, 'National Heritage and National Identity in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Macedonia', *European History Quarterly*, No. 2, April 1989, 238, 244. A clearer distinction is made between the terms 'Macedonians' and 'Makedonci' in a leaflet produced by the General Secretariat for the Press and Information, *Macedonia: More than a difference over a name*, Athens, April 1994. The leaflet was produced for Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou's trip to the United States.

In the circumstances, the various scenarios that were publicly aired in Greece anticipated:

(i) the constitutional name, 'Republic of Macedonia', to be used by one and all, as the 'single-name scenario' (FYROM's original position);

(ii) the constitutional name to be used by the international community, and another name to be used only by Greece, as the 'first dual-name scenario' (FYROM's official 'compromise' proposal);

(iii) the constitutional name to be used only by the new state, a second name to be used by the international community, and a third to be used only by Greece, as the 'triple-name scenario' (the usual preference of international third parties);

(iv) the constitutional name only for domestic use within the new state and another for international use by everyone else, as the 'second dual-name scenario' (the official Greek preference).

Having turned the negotiating table into a name-inventing competition, diplomatic and government officials in New York, Athens, and Skopje were now exploring other ways out of the impasse. These included ideas for a Slavonic rendering of the name for international use (*Nova Makedonija*), or a one-word composite name (*Novomakedonija*), or the addition of a geographical prefix (*Gorna Makedonija*) or a historical prefix (*New Makedonija*). The possibility of adding a suffix was also discussed, such as the name of the capital, for instance (*Makedonija – Skopje*).

Understandably, it was mainly Greeks who were leading the quest for a name, assisted by third-party mediators, both official and unofficial. In FYROM, at a government level and also at the level of public debate, the position on the constitutional name was

unanimous and virtually unshakeable. All that Skopje was prepared to discuss with Athens was the possibility of a composite name, which it would prior approve, for use by Athens in the latter's bilateral relations with Skopje.

Within this farrago of scenarios, with public opinion essentially uninformed and confused, it is no wonder that public reaction in Greece either remained mired in its 1992 mindset or lapsed into apathy.[112] Either way, Greek diplomacy was scarcely able to exploit the voice of public opinion with any degree of conviction in its efforts to achieve a solution.[113]

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112. An experienced high-level Greek diplomat expressed the opinion in September 2002 that 'all that Greek public opinion has kept in mind is snatches of the old slogans' (in a conversation with the author).

113. In the course of the seven years, all sorts of analyses and proposals appeared in the Greek press. Regarding the 'triple-name scenario', Christina Poulidou wrote (*Ependytis*, 3–4.8.1996): 'If our diplomats reckon that the 'triple-name' solution is technically sound, the politicians can hardly fail to see that in real life solutions like these simply fall about laughing . . .' Five years later, believing the game to have been 'lost long ago', K. I. Angelopoulos in *Kathimerini* (21.8.2001) noted that 'only if we had adopted a different policy towards Skopje—i.e. the dissolution of the state—and not argued the need for FYROM's stability could we have hoped for something.' Stavros Lygeros scoffed at 'Republika Makedonija – Skopje': 'It's just an attempt to sugar the pill,' he wrote, 'which some politicians may need, but Greece doesn't. There's no need to add ridicule to diplomatic defeat.' His conclusion was that Andreas Papandreou had committed a 'crime of omission' by not allowing Greek diplomacy any leverage, and so the 'Skopjans' had got what they wanted. Nor had the theory that the rapid improvement in economic relations would lead to a resolution of the name proved correct, because the Slav Macedonians were excluding all possibility of an honourable compromise: *Kathimerini*, 11.6.2000. Yannis Kartalis, in contrast, seemed able to accept RM – Skopje, though he thought it unlikely that Skopje could; and he concluded with the pessimistic appeal: 'Whatever happens, this tale of missed opportunities must be brought to an end at last, even if it leaves behind it the bitter memory of a string of false moves that led to a undesirable result': *To Vima* (11.6.2000). An article by Yannis Antypas in *Ependytis* (7–8.8.1999), titled 'I baptise thee . . . Macedonia', is illustrative of the general confusion in public opinion: he foresees that the issue will conclude 'with a name that will completely satisfy Skopje, such as "New Macedonia"'.

3. The academic debate

It is extremely difficult to summarise the serious Greek academic debate on the difference over the name during the seven-year term of the Interim Accord. However, certain trends are discernible.

Before the Accord was signed and immediately afterwards, the prevailing trend in the academic community was to sharply criticise the way the political leaders had handled the issue between 1991 and 1995. The first to deal with the problem, former Foreign Minister Andonis Samaras, was criticised for his maximalist stance. Prime Minister Mitsotakis and his government came under fire for "timidity" in the face of the political price to be paid for an attempt at compromise. Andreas Papandreou was blamed for his disastrous imposition of the blockade and for adopting the policy of the 'lesser package', which excluded the issue of the name from the negotiations that led to the Interim Accord.

It is interesting to note that public criticism tended to focus not on approaches and decisions which had deprived the country of a satisfactory resolution of the problem, but on the exaggerated way the Greek views had been presented internationally. The international community seemed to think that the Macedonian Question had absorbed Greek diplomatic energy for a long time, relegating even relations with Turkey to a lesser footing. Greece thus risked becoming part of the Balkan problem, rather than playing a leading role as the only member of the EU and NATO in the region.

In the period 1991–5 the academic debate was dominated by the cultural and historical and much less the political dimension of the problem. Led by archaeologists and historians, the debate had emphasised arguments and data proving the 'Greekness' of Macedonia and the Macedonians from antiquity to the present day. Discussion of modern history concluded with a criticism of Tito's 'fabrication' in 1944 of a 'Macedonian state', a 'Macedonian

nation', and a 'Macedonian language'. In this context, academic discourse could not avoid becoming embroiled in the wrangling over names, and numerous likely and unlikely appellations were proposed, all of which had one thing in common: they studiously avoided any reference to the name 'Macedonia' or its derivatives.

After the Interim Accord had been signed, interest in these quarters dropped away. Presumably people had run out of arguments. However, the subject continued to engage public opinion for a further five years, and this encouraged younger scholars to explore aspects of the history, the culture, and the contemporary politics and society of Macedonia in the wider sense. A list of MA and Ph.D. theses submitted to the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki on subjects connected with Macedonia reveals a sharp increase in young scholars' interest.[114] In France, and in Britain especially, there was a similar surge in postgraduate theses, and in new disciplines moreover, such as international relations and social anthropology.[115] At the same time, in Greece, presumably as a turn of the tide from the previous period, a revisionary trend began to emerge in the books that were being written on Macedonian issues in various branches of the social sciences. It was an approach that broadened research into the traditional Macedonian Question; however, only indirectly can one say that it contributed to the academic debate over the outstanding issue excluded from the Interim Accord. Its main contribution was perhaps an attempt to better understand the other side's perspective.

114. For the titles of theses on Macedonia-related subjects see www.macedonian-heritage.gr.

115. See, e.g., the Ph.D. thesis for the London School of Economics (1996) published in Aristotle Tziampiris's *Greece, European Political Cooperation and the Macedonian Question*, Aldershot, Burlington USA, 2000; as also the unpublished M.Phil. thesis by Ekaterini Lomvardea, 'The Influence of Public Opinion and Pressure Groups on Greek Foreign Policy in the Case of the Macedonian Question (1991–1995)', Wolfson College, University of Cambridge, July 2001.

To sum up, we may say that the academic debate revolved around three focal points. The first, involving mainly political scientists, sought to resolve the problem of the name through a network of Greek initiatives for broader co-operation in a Balkan framework and especially at the bilateral level of relations with FYROM. The second pondered questions of cultural heritage and identity in the wider area of Macedonia; while the third, nascent, aspect of the debate promised to overturn the traditional perceptions by demolishing dividing structures within and around Greek Macedonia. Whether and how these approaches influenced the political treatment of the problem can be judged only in the long term. But it is interesting that the academic community believed that, whatever the outcome of the name issue , questions of historical and cultural identity and international policy that relate directly or indirectly to the wider area of Macedonia are politically relevant and academically interesting over the long term.

The foregoing appraisals were motivated by a desire to record and group general trends in the academic sphere. They have deliberately avoided individualising the views expressed. Two exceptions will now be made; not because they reflect the prevailing trend, but for precisely the opposite reason. The first one could be called 'heretical'. It was presented in the form of a lengthy article in an Athens newspaper and carries the signature of an eminent jurisprudent, a professor emeritus in the University of Athens. The other, expressing the 'traditional' view, took the form of a letter, also in an Athenian newspaper, as the Interim Accord was completing its seven-year term. It was signed by two equally eminent professors in northern Greek universities. Both their timing and their content demonstrate the breadth of concern in the Greek academic community over the new Macedonian question.

With its across-the-board critique of Greece's policy and stance towards FYROM, especially over the name, the article by Georgios Koumandos, Professor Emeritus in the University of

Athens, published in *Kathimerini* in 1999,[116] reflected an isolated but heretical stance. Starting with the observation that there is no precedent for a new state's being recognised and having its name simultaneously challenged, Professor Koumandos declares that 'the war over the name, which should never have been fought in the first place, is lost.' In consequence, he cannot see the point of 'a futile guerrilla war waged by the rearguard'. He believes that the other side is inflexible and that 'there is no room for any give and take'. Consequently, 'as things stand, the main "give" can only come from the Greeks,' because 'the thorn in our relations with Skopje [*sic*][117] must be removed, right now.' The 'thorn' in question is apparently not only Greece's refusal to recognise its neighbour as 'Macedonia', but also the very use of the Macedonian name by the Greeks themselves. It is a fact that not even President Kiro Gligorov and the Slav-Macedonian nationalists have expressed such a view; indeed, they have repeatedly stated that they would have no objection to the Greeks' using the Macedonian name also, presumably in its geographical sense.

Regardless of the fact that they were not widely accepted, these views of a distinguished member of Athenian academic society shifted the debate to the key issue of the *monopolisation* of the Macedonian name, this time by FYROM and its Slav inhabitants. This is a major question, which Greek diplomacy brought up right at the start of the international confrontation,[118] since monopolisation of the name leads directly to the usurpation of everything 'Macedonian', including all the Macedonian elements of the cultural and historical identity of the Greeks. Professor

116. George Koumandos, "Macedonian issues", *Kathimerini* 23.5.1999.

117. *Ibid*. It is interesting to note that, while the writer appears to advocate acceptance of the name 'Macedonia', he himself does not use the loaded appellation, but resorts to 'Skopje'.

118. See references in Section I.

Koumandos then goes so far as to recommend that all reference to or use of the term 'Macedonia' and its derivatives be eschewed in Greece. The following excerpts are sufficiently revealing:

> "There remain certain other names or changes of name that were made in haste, if not too late, for, where the name is concerned, no subsequent use invalidates the rights of the previous user. Thus, the name 'Macedonia' has been added to a ministry, a university, an airport, and an airline. No-one can forbid us to use it, but its practical utility is dubious because it can only cause confusion. If we wish, we can keep it as a monument to our own naivety. But we might be taken more seriously if we discreetly abandoned it."

The writer is evidently not aware that the Yugoslav state never used the administrative term 'Macedonia' until 1945, when the former 'Old Serbia' and later 'Vardarska Banovina' was renamed the 'People's Republic of Macedonia'. It was Greece which first used the name 'Macedonia' — as soon as Greek Macedonia was liberated, in 1913—to identify the new administrative area of the Greek state as the 'Governorate General of Macedonia'.[119]

The foregoing makes it clear that Professor Koumandos's statement that 'no subsequent use invalidates the rights of the

119. As for the 'previous user's right', suffice it to add that the name of 'Macedonia' was preserved in Greece as an administrative appellation throughout the interwar period and until just after the Second World War, when the Ministry of Northern Greece was established to include Thrace and, for a while, Epirus. When the country was geographically reorganised in the early 1970s, the Ministry of Northern Greece was abolished and the name returned in the districts of 'Western and Central Macedonia' and 'Eastern Macedonia and Thrace'. In 1975, the abolition of the districts brought back the 'Ministry of Northern Greece', which was renamed the 'Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace' in 1989, two years before the proclamation of an independent state to the north of Greek Macedonia named 'Republika na Makedonija'.

previous user' rather supports the views of those who totally oppose FYROM's use of the Macedonian name, not simply for historical reasons, but now for legal reasons, since the 'previous user' is Greece. The advice to 'discreetly abandon' (why 'discreetly', one wonders?) the Macedonian name would not merely help to demolish 'a monument to our own naivety', but might call forth the comment that a mixture of ignorance and naivety is not the best guide when addressing explosive confrontations over questions of cultural identity

The second case is that of Ioannis Touloumakos and Dimitrios Tsoungarakis, professors respectively of ancient history in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and Byzantine history in the Ionian University of Kerkyra, who marked the completion of the Interim Accord's seven-year term by bringing the issue of the name and of cultural identity up for public debate again. The two academics are aware that the question is no longer very topical, that some people consider a waste of time and energy to discuss it, that 'Macedonia' has now become the republic's accepted name abroad, and that even within Greece there are occasions when the name of 'Macedonia' is taken for granted. Nonetheless, they believe that topicality is short-lived, 'while issues of national importance are of lasting significance' and 'issues left unresolved or erroneous solutions that are accepted are "bequeathed" to future generations with all the consequences they entail.' For this reason, having rejected plain 'Macedonia' for geographical reasons (the greater part of Macedonia lies in Greece) and for reasons of 'three thousand years of historical tradition', they opt for 'Nova Makedonija'. They believe that to accept plain 'Macedonia' 'would diminish modern Greece both politically and morally, and this, one may be sure, would not be without repercussions'.[120]

120. Their letter, published in *Kathimerini*, 24.10.2002.

4. The Greek Macedonian diaspora

The concluding of the Interim Accord provoked strong reactions among the ethnic Greeks in the rest of the world, especially in the Greek Macedonian diaspora. Its undeniably important provisions for normalising bilateral relations and releasing Greece from the quagmire of the Macedonian question did not concern them directly. Their problem was how to deal with the fact that existential aspects of their identity, their Macedonian name, and their historical and cultural heritage were constantly being disputed in the countries they lived in. As early as the 1960s, long before the Greeks in Greece were aware of the problem, the ethnic Greek Macedonians – especially those living in multicultural countries – were constantly at loggerheads with Slav Macedonian immigrants over aspects of their historical and cultural identity. This was the main reason for their own vigorous mobilisation as soon as it was announced that the 'Republic of Macedonia' had declared independence. Aware of the direct repercussions upon themselves, they provided the most militant aspect of the Greek popular protests world wide. It was only to be expected that, from their point of view, no compromise was acceptable, for it would automatically call their identity into question. The fact that the Slav Macedonian nationalists of the diaspora shared the same concerns and thus showed the same reaction did not trouble them at all. Their credo rested upon a fourfold system of values: (i) the 'Greekness' of the ancient Macedonians and, by extension, of the 'Macedonia of Philip and Alexander the Great'; (ii) their own historical – though not, certainly, biological – descent from the illustrious Macedonians of antiquity; (iii) the existence today of 'only one Macedonia, which is Greek Macedonia'; and, in consequence, (iv) the Macedonian name as an exclusive element of their own identity.

These views were not changed by the signing of the Interim Accord. Inevitably, the exclusion of the name from the Accord and

the Greek government's subsequent efforts to arrive at a compromise formula led the ethnic Greek Macedonians to openly criticise the government's policy and to accuse it of 'compliance'.[121] However, this opposition distanced the Greek Macedonian diaspora from the governmental approach, and at the same time identified it with the supporters of the 'uncompromising' or 'maximalist' line within Greece. Throughout the seven-year term of the Interim Accord, these two lines, that of 'official' or government policy and the 'gut reaction' of the ethnic Greek Macedonians, seemed to diverge.

This development bore a cost. After the Interim Accord had been signed, the Greek leaders concentrated on developing a policy of rapprochement and co-operation with all of Greece's Balkan neighbours, while the cultural quarrel with FYROM was downgraded in official priorities. As a result, the 'official' policy started losing the support of the Greek Macedonian lobby. For their part, the Greek Macedonians did not conceal their disappointment at having been 'abandoned' by the 'motherland' over what they regarded as an existential issue. The negative effects were not long in making themselves felt.

It is a fact that in the early years of the crisis, the protests held by the ethnic Greeks (and not only those of Macedonian origin) achieved substantial results. In Australia especially, the ethnic Greeks managed to delay the federal government's recognition of the newly independent republic for a long time; and when it was eventually recognised, it was under the name of 'FYROM'. Even more significant was the action taken by the ethnic Greeks to persuade the Australian government to establish 'Macedonian Slavs' as the name of the inhabitants of FYROM and 'Macedonian Slavonic' as their language (which is taught in Australian schools),

121. Harsh anti-government statements, directed against Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos, were issued at the World Conference of Panmacedonian Associations, Thessaloniki, 21–27.7.1997.

instead of 'Macedonians' and 'Macedonian' respectively. Several years later, the Australian authorities eventually yielded to pressure from the Slav Macedonian Australians and removed the second part of the compound. The ethnic Greeks even took the matter to court, but to no avail.[122] It is unknown whether any steps were taken by Greek government representatives. But the circumstances had changed, because the general de facto use of the Macedonian name for FYROM and the Slav Macedonians had by now also spread to Australia.

It is difficult to chart the activities of the ethnic Greeks in general, and the Greek Macedonians in particular, in the countries where they are organised into Panmacedonian and other ethnic associations. Visits to web sites reveal a striking degree of involvement by ethnic Greeks, which is not so noticeable in Greece.[123] Recently, in 2002–3, local Panmacedonian organisations in various American states launched an interesting campaign and managed to persuade local legislative bodies to pass resolutions asserting that the ancient Macedonians were Hellenes and confirming that 'the inhabitants of the northern province of Greece, Macedonia, are their Hellenic descendants.'[124]

It is true that these activities can have very little effect on the unresolved issue of FYROM's name. Nonetheless, they do show that, regardless of how the Greece–FYROM dispute over the name is settled, the Greek Macedonians of the diaspora are aware

122. Decision 1650, 21 December 1998, of the Federal Court of Australia overturned the decision of the government of the state of Victoria. The latter's appeal to the Supreme Court of the land in 2000 was unsuccessful, which meant that the Slav-Macedonian language remained officially 'Macedonian'.

123. An exception is www.macedonian-heritage.gr based in Thessaloniki, which frequently records 100,000 visitors a month.

124. Just two examples: resolution No. 3354, 11 December 2002, House of Representatives, State of Missouri; resolution No. 446, 92nd General Assembly of the Senate, Illinois.

that non-material values like cultural identity and heritage cannot be safeguarded by laws and treaties. They are lost because of apathy and inertia, or survive through daily excercise and vigilance.

5. The Church

Their long tradition as national churches automatically gives the Orthodox churches in the Balkans a leading role in the nationalist movements of the various national groups. This was borne out during the latest momentous upheavals on the Balkan Peninsula following the collapse of the atheist regimes and the break-up of the Yugoslav confederation. Although Greece was not directly involved in the world-shaping changes in the region, the resurgence of the Macedonian question could not fail to bring the Church of Greece to the fore, where, indeed, it played a leading role in the mass protests of 1992-4.

This was preceded, however, by two notable events. More than two decades prior to this latest crisis the Church of Greece and the Oecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople had supported the Serbian Patriarchate over the uncanonical secession of its dioceses in the then federative 'Socialist Republic of Macedonia'. With Tito's intervention, those dioceses formed the 'Autocephalous Macedonian Orthodox Church'. The new Church, however, was never recognised by the Orthodox Patriarchates as autocephalous and was not admitted to the World Council of Churches. It was no secret that the fundamental reason for the Church of Greece's opposition was the new Church's Macedonian name. This was, in other words, a foretaste of what was to ensue twenty-five years later with the recognition of an independent state bearing the Macedonian name; except that 'Byzantine' diplomacy proved more effective than 'Greek' secular diplomacy.[125]

125. Charalambos Papastathis, 'L'autocéphalie de l'Église de la Macédoine yougoslave', *Balkan Studies*, 7 (1968), 151–155.

The second consideration was the truly leading role played by the Greek Orthodox Churches in the diaspora. Owing to their quasi ethnarchic position, the Church leaders in the United States, Canada, and Australia —countries with a strong ethnic Greek Macedonian presence— led the protests (though not always without problems), uniting and consolidating the wider diaspora. Their role, especially in the United States, as the spearhead of the 'Greek lobby' has been thoroughly documented.[126]

In the climate which developed after the signing of the Interim Accord, the Church of Greece worked with the Oecumenical Patriarchate and the Orthodox Church of Albania to try to mend the rift between the Patriarchate of Serbia and the schismatic Church of FYROM. Consultations had advanced considerably by the summer of 2001, on the basis of converting it into the self-administered 'Archdiocese of Ohrid', a kind of successor to the Slavonic Archdiocese of the same name in Ottoman times. These developments provoked the virulent opposition of nationalists in FYROM and the Slav Macedonian diaspora. As far as they were concerned, the restoration of ecclesiastical order and the removal of a divisive issue from the turbulent Balkans were of minor importance. It mattered more to preserve a bearer of the (Slav) 'Macedonian' name, which had helped to unite migrants to countries overseas and in Europe for three decades.[127]

During the seven-year term of the Interim Accord, the Church of Greece and the various local prelates, especially of the Macedonian dioceses, remained sensitive to the 'national question', even when it seemed to be receding from their flock's day-to-day priorities. The ecclesiastical debate remained

126. Iakovos, Archbishop of America, *I, Iakovos*, Athens, 2002 [in Greek]. Of particular interest is his letter to President George Bush Sr. on the subject of Macedonia, 26.3.1992, pp. 381–382.

127. *Macedonian Press Agency*, bulletins 21.5.2002, 6.6.2002, and 23.8.2002.

uncompromising, fixed upon the slogans and objectives of 1992–4, though with the verbal excesses of the past somewhat modified. Thus, in 2001, at a time when the issue had once again flared up in Greek public debates owing to strong rumours that the government was about to strike a compromise over a composite name, the Holy Synod of Greece decided to make its views officially known, citing an earlier pastoral encyclical of 1992. The following excerpt is quite enlightening, as it covers almost all the grievances aired when the crisis was at its height:

> The Church of Greece believes that the use of the name 'Macedonia' by the neighbouring state constitutes usurpation of a considerable portion of our history and culture, paves the way for territorial demands and the resurgence of non-existent minority issues, assails Greek dignity, and violates the historical truth. The Church cannot be unmindful of the cries of protest which are being raised by the organisations of [Greek] Macedonians abroad and are being heard the length and breadth of the globe. Nor can the Church overlook the profound dismay of its flock living in Northern Greece. For if we put our signature to the recognition of a state the name of which includes the term 'Macedonia', then it will not be long before the Northern Greeks are forbidden to call themselves 'Macedonians'.[128]

This initiative on behalf of the Church of Greece, which by inference reflected the views of a considerable and organised segment of the Greek people, ran counter to the government's efforts to reach a compromise solution to the deadlock over FYROM's new name. Certainly it also contained unrealistic proposals, such as a return to the views expressed by the informal

128. Press release by the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, 5.3.2001.

party leaders' council in 1992. However, it did reflect – with some exaggeration – important aspects of Greek public opinion; aspects which political expediency both at home and, especially, abroad tended to underestimate. To an extent, though, one might say that these views, coming as they did from a sphere that was beyond secular control, helped to replenish Greek diplomacy's negotiating arsenal; an arsenal that, by the end of the Interim Accord's seven-year term, was almost out of ammunition.

6. 'Ethnic' Macedonians and 'Northern Greek' Macedonians

The transnational disagreement over FYROM's name at the 'official level' also has a collateral dimension at the level of the 'public perception' of the problem. In the early 1990s, a small group of Slavonic-speaking activists, mainly from the Florina prefecture and the province of Aridaia, in the Pella prefecture, began presenting themselves as representatives of a (Slav) 'Macedonian minority'. At the peak of the crisis over the recognition and the name of FYROM (1991–5), the movement found support among international circles which believed they had found a useful new basis from which to address the 'nationalist hysteria', as they described the mass protests taking place at that time in Greece. Similar support came from certain Greek activists, mainly in Athens. At a local level, this movement, in combination with the highly charged issue with Skopje, created tensions which in some extreme cases provoked confusion in some civil servants and administrative officials.[129] It is precisely for

129. Angelos Chotzidis, "Articulation and structure of minority discourse: The example of *Moglena* and *Zora*", in B.Gounaris et al., (eds.), *Identities in Macedonia,* Athens, Papazisis, 1997, p. 169 [in Greek]. Occasional attempts to prevent local cultural events from taking place and two or three local-court

these reasons that the Greek side had successfully pressed for the text of the Interim Accord to include stipulations that FYROM would not involve itself in the domestic affairs of any other state with a view to protecting the status and rights of any persons in other states who were not its own citizens.[130]

Two years before the Interim Accord was signed, the thawing of the ice with FYROM helped reduce local tensions. Thus, representatives of the minority movement managed to set up a political party named 'Rainbow'. However, the party's poor performance in local and national elections disappointed its organisers and supporters. Its meagre results also demolished the myth of a sizeable and 'oppressed' minority and tarnished its image among sympathisers and activists both in Greece and abroad.[131]

It is not the purpose of this essay to examine the minority phenomenon within the Slavophone population group — or more

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decisions on actions that might arouse public feeling were eventually overruled by the higher courts of the land; while one—concerning the ratification of the constitution of an association calling itself the 'House of Macedonian Culture' in Florina—went as far as the European Court.

130. The relevant part of the Interim Accord (article 6) states that '[FYROM] hereby solemnly declares that nothing in its Constitution, and in particular in Article 49 as amended, can or should be interpreted as constituting or will ever constitute the basis for [FYROM] to interfere in the internal affairs of another State in order to protect the status and rights of any persons in other States' who are not citizens of FYROM.

131. In the European Parliament elections of June 1994 Rainbow received a total of 7,268 votes nationwide. In the Florina prefectural elections of October 1994, it received 1,400 votes. Finally, in the national elections of September 1996, it received a mere 3,485 votes nationwide, and those jointly with the OAKKE, the Organisation for the Reconstruction of the Communist Party of Greece: Chotzidis, *op. cit.*, pp. 161–162. In his study "Slav-speakers and refugees: Political components of an economic conflict", published in B. Gounaris et al. (eds.), *Identities in Macedonia*, pp. 136–141, Iakovos Michailidis argues that the last results bear out the assertion that a vote for Rainbow was, to a great extent, a protest vote.

correctly within a population group of Slavophone origin – living in some borderland areas of Greece. It merely attempts to appraise this group's collateral effect on the public perception in Greece of the Macedonian name dispute. According to printed and spoken statements by minority activists, Rainbow is the organised political mouthpiece of the 'ethnic' or 'national Macedonians', or alternatively the 'ethnic' or 'national' 'Macedonian community'. Initially, there seems to have been some confusion as to whether the Greek term *ethnika Makedones,* used by minority activists, was a translation of the English 'ethnic' [*ethnotika*] or 'national' [*ethnika*] Macedonians.[132] Subsequently, however, it became clear that the activists chose to be identified as a distinct 'national' group, a part of the 'Macedonian nation' – the *Makedonci* – which had taken shape in former Yugoslav Macedonia in the decades after World War II. This choice was supported, if not prompted, by pro-minority activists in Greece and abroad, as also by the Slav Macedonian nationalists in FYROM and the diaspora.[133]

However, the problem that arises is not the fact that people of Slavonic-speaking origin wish to belong to, and function as, an ethnic or national minority; it is the name they have chosen – *Makedones* in the Greek language – by which to define themselves in Greece. It is a well-known fact that the Greek inhabitants of Greek Macedonia – over two million of them – define themselves as *Makedones*, in the regional and cultural sense of the term. This is, indeed, the practice of the inhabitants of most of Greece's provinces, the Cretans, for instance, the Peloponnesians, the Epirots, the Thessalians, and many others.

132. Chotzidis, *op. cit.*, pp. 149–151.

133. Centre for Minority Group Studies, *Linguistic Otherness in Greece*, Athens 2001, pp. 143–280 [in Greek].

Thus, by attempting to invest the regional/cultural appellation of the Greek inhabitants of Greek Macedonia with a national (Slav) 'Macedonian' connotation, Rainbow supporters are in fact usurping an important element of the identity of their fellow Greek Macedonians. Confusion over the various meanings of the same name inevitably raises complex problems that go beyond semeiotics, inviting a kind of cultural strife. Whereas, a century ago, the dominant geopolitical slogan was that 'whoever controls Macedonia, controls the Balkans', the current contest has reshaped it to 'whoever controls the Macedonian name may lay claim to the entire spectrum of the historical and cultural Macedonian heritage and identity.'[134] Thus, the failure by omission of the Interim Accord to deal effectively with the name issue bequeathed the southern Balkan region with a problem that goes beyond the state appellation of Greece's northern neighbour.

7. Survey results

Surveys play a very useful part in researching public opinion trends. Though their findings should be neither overestimated nor underestimated, two surveys conducted by two serious polling agencies, *Opinion* and *MRB Hellas*, provide interesting analyses of the new Macedonian issue. In addition, the writer has conducted his own empirical investigation by asking 150, mostly university-educated, men and women to fill in a questionnaire. The findings will be discussed below.

134. *Ibid.* See especially Evangelos Kofos's statement (pp. 268–271) that the deliberate efforts of the 'ethnika Makedones', within Greek Macedonia, where two and a half million Greeks with a clearly different cultural identity from that of the *Slav Macedonians* already define themselves as Macedonians, 'inevitably paves the way for confrontations and possible tension'. A more proper and less controversial term in Greece for these people would be 'Slav Macedonians'.

In May 2001, FYROM was once again front-page news in Greece. This time, however, it was not because of the difference over the name, but rather, because of nationalist strife between ethnic Albanians and Slav Macedonians. While the Greek government had decided to support FYROM, the international community was desperately trying to prevent the crisis from spreading and destabilising the wider region. It was in this climate that the Greek Ministry of Defense commissioned *Opinion* to conduct a nationwide survey based on personal interviews with a random sample of 1,600 individuals over the age of 18. The survey focused on general issues of foreign policy and security. Regarding FYROM in particular, the questions probed the Greek public's mood and perceptions with respect to feeling threatened by FYROM, the cultural controversy, and, of course, the problem of the name.[135]

Regarding the name, 45.4 per cent of those polled stated that they did not want a name containing the word 'Macedonia' to be accepted by Greece, while exactly the same percentage favoured a solution that would satisfy both sides. This answer presumably related to the possibility of a compromise composite name as proposed by the Greek government. Just 5.1 per cent agreed with the statement that 'the most important thing is not the name so much as the survival of the new independent state' (this at a time when FYROM's territorial integrity was threatened by the Albanian armed guerrillas). Also, a tiny proportion, just 3.1 per cent, considered that 'the issue of the name concerns only the people and the authorities of FYROM'.

135. A summary was published in *To Vima*, 17.6.2001. The writer would like to thank Opinion for allowing him to use the tables relating to FYROM reproduced in the Appendix, as also Professor Ilias Nikolakopoulos of Athens University for his intercession.

At first sight, the answers do not seem to diverge widely in relation to the respondents' educational level, age group, or even place of residence. However, closer scrutiny of the results shows some revealing differences in the attitudes of various segments of the population. More specifically:

The answers to the two alternatives: (a) 'I reject plain "Macedonia"' and (b) 'I favour a mutually acceptable name' show a divergence in the order of 19 percentage points between respondents with university-level education and respondents with primary-level education. The divergence between residents of Athens and residents of Thessaloniki and other urban centres is as much as 12 percentage points. These differences are clearly shown in the table below.

	(a)	**(b)**
Primary-level education	51%	41%
Secondary-level education	46%	44%
University-level education	32%	54%
Athens	35%	51%
Thessaloniki/other urban centres	47%	44%

Only 3-4 per cent of respondents in each category thought the question of the name should concern only the people and the authorities of FYROM. These represent more or less 55 individuals out of the 1,600 polled. As far as age is concerned, it is the 45-54 and 65+ age groups which tend to uncompromisingly reject the use of the name 'Macedonia', with 49 per cent and 50 per cent respectively; while the youngest group (18-25) shows a lower — though still significant — level of 40 per cent. More women than men reject the use of the name 'Macedonia': 47 per cent and 44 per cent respectively.

With all due reservations, one can draw a number of interesting conclusions about the general population's views on an issue that it

knows about and on which it wants to express its opinions, since a mere 1.8 per cent answered 'don't know/no response'.

An initial appraisal is that, ten years after FYROM's declaration of independence and six years after the signing of the Interim Accord, the percentage of those who completely rejected the inclusion of the name 'Macedonia' (i.e. would not accept even a composite name) was still high. On the other hand, close to half of those polled supported the government's preference for a mutually acceptable solution. Taken together, the answers to both these questions point to the logical conclusion that over 90 per cent are opposed to plain 'Macedonia', which is FYROM's constitutional name. This is especially important because the survey was carried out early in 2001 — a critical time when FYROM was facing the prospect of Albanian armed action — and the questionnaire also offered another two alternatives, which did not garner more than 10 per cent between them.

Another interesting observation is the indirect confirmation of the empirical perception of the different approaches to the issue between 'northerners' and 'southerners', i.e. between Macedonians (in Thessaloniki) and residents of the Athens basin. The former clearly object more strongly to any use of the Macedonian name by FYROM.

The sample also confirms a common phenomenon, namely that a higher level of education, versus a lower one, tends to mitigate 'extreme' or 'uncompromising' views. The same applies to a comparison of views in Athens and in semi-urban and rural areas.

The answers to other questions suggest that a considerable proportion of Greeks continue to nurse a negative image of their northern neighbour. For instance, when asked to rate their degree of confidence in other countries or international organisations, respondents gave FYROM only 3.56 points on the ten-point scale, placing it third from the bottom, just above Albania and Turkey. In answer to the question of whether Greece was threatened and, if

so, by whom, 56 per cent replied in the affirmative. Naturally, Turkey was first, with 85 per cent, followed by Albania (6%), the United States (5%), and FYROM with just 1.5 per cent. This exceptionally low figure for FYROM is easily explained by the state of Greek–Turkish relations at the time of the survey. However, for a country like FYROM, which was regarded as the number-one threat in Greece in the early 1990s, a 'score' of 1.5 per cent in 2001 is, in and of itself, evidence of the substantial change which had come about in Greek public opinion in this respect.

Apart from the Opinion survey, the market research agency MRB Hellas also included questions about the name in its six-monthly surveys, *Taseis* (Trends), in the period 1992–2002.[136] The picture presented by the two parallel curves relating to the answers 'no' and 'yes' to a composite name is extremely interesting. When the mass protests in Greece were at their height (June 1992), the ratio was 91.3 per cent 'no' to 7 per cent 'yes' — a gap, that is, of 84.3 per cent. The difference was down to 38 per cent by December 1994 (65.6% 'no' and 27.7% 'yes'), only to widen again just after the Interim Accord was signed in September 1995. Curiously, throughout the next seven years the gap remained consistently wide, with 'no to a composite name' garnering a high percentage of preference, even though public debate on the issue was declining. The study ended in July 2002 with a gap of more than 50 per cent in favour of 'no'.

Clearly, without additional specific and alternative questions it is not possible to draw clear conclusions about the public mood over the name issue. This is especially true when public debate

136. The writer would also like to thank MRB Hellas—especially Ms Christina Bandouna—for allowing him to use the relevant data. For the period prior to the conclusion of the Interim Accord, see the study by Christina Bandouna, *Opinion poll data relating to the FYROM question, 1992–6*, MRB Hellas, 1996, p. 16 [in Greek].

and concern over the subject are at an all-time low, and public opinion has been left with impressions and clichés that took shape in another time. Perhaps those who favour lack of transparency and political 'silence' where sensitive national issues are concerned should bear this in mind: for beneath efforts to avert the danger of triggering nationalist outbursts may lurk the other danger of consolidating rigid attitudes, which are scarcely conducive to the development of informed public opinion and, thus, are inclined to extreme views on questions of an existential nature, such as the cultural identity of the people.

The answers to a number of more general questions are interesting with regard to the image of the 'other' in 2000 and in 2001. More specifically:

To the question 'Which country is Greece's main enemy in international relations today?', only 1.2 and 2.2 per cent respectively answered 'FYROM' (with Turkey, unsurprisingly, garnering 64.1 per cent and 70.7 per cent respectively).

In a rating of various peoples on a scale of 1–10 (ranging from 'absolutely hostile' to 'absolutely friendly'), the 'Skopjans' (*sic*) were rated low, occupying eleventh place out of fourteen, above only the Israelis, the Albanians, and the Turks.[137] In a more recent poll of 1,600 people by the same company (April 2002), in answer to the question which of seven issues were most important, FYROM's name occupied only sixth place.[138]

We now come to the findings of the aforementioned empirical questionnaire filled in by 150 people, mainly in Thessaloniki, but

137. In order of preference: Serbs, Palestinians, Russians, Japanese, Kurds, French, Americans, Bulgarians, Germans, English, 'Skopjans', Israelis, Albanians, Turks. Source: MRB Hellas, *Trends: Data over time*, 2002 [in greek].

138. *Ibid*. Listed in the following order: Cyprus, Greek–Turkish relations, Greek–EU relations, Greece's relations with Balkan countries, Greek–US relations, FYROM's name, Greece's relations with Middle Eastern countries.

also in Athens and in Florina. Most respondents had a university-level education and represented all age groups.[139]

In answer to the question of what name they themselves use, 89.3 per cent replied 'Skopje' or the Greek equivalent of FYROM 'ΠΓΔΜ' or both. 10 per cent sometimes used 'ΠΓΔΜ' and sometimes 'Macedonia', and one individual (0.7%) used plain 'Macedonia',

In answer to the question about what the Greek side's ultimate concession should be, 67.7 per cent believed 'FYROM' or a composite name including the word 'Macedonia' or a derivative, while 32.3 per cent completely rejected the Macedonian name.

In answer to the most important question, namely what Greece should do in the event of international *de jure* acceptance of plain 'Macedonia', a majority (64.8%) thought that it should take some kind of 'economic or political countermeasures', a very few (8%) chose the avenue of 'mass protests', while 16.8 per cent opted for 'silent acceptance'. Lastly, 10.4 per cent preferred some 'other' option. The interesting thing is that those who went for this last choice, as well as a number of those who selected 'silent acceptance', accompanied their answer with specific suggestions. One group of proposals urged that Greece should continue its efforts at an international level to have the name changed; another felt it necessary that both the government and the people should act by taking specific measures at the cultural

139. The questions were as follows: (a) What name have you used for Greece's neighbour since 1995? (b) Why can the Greek side not accept plain 'Macedonia' as the country's name? (c) What name, or what kind of name, should Greece demand as the absolute minimum? (d) Why has the other side not moved at all from its insistence on its 'constitutional name'? (e) If the international community accepts the name 'Macedonia' *de jure*, how should Greece and the Greek people react? Many respondents did not answer question (d), probably because they did not know enough about internal affairs in FYROM, and it was therefore not taken into account.

and educational level to preserve the Greeks' Macedonian cultural heritage and identity.[140]

With all due reservations imposed by the empirical nature and limited scope of the questionnaire, the picture painted by this specific group of people with a university-level education living or coming from Thessaloniki, the regional capital of Greek Macedonia, is noteworthy. People who may be presumed to have a greater than average degree of concern about and awareness of the issue still firmly believe that the so-called 'constitutional name' as it stands today is unacceptable to the Greek side, mainly because of the negative cultural repercussions. A considerable number tend towards a mutually acceptable compromise solution based on a composite name. At the same time, however, they are deeply uncomfortable with the idea that the international community might formally accept the 'constitutional name', and this is reflected in the suggestion that the Greek side should adopt a negative attitude or take steps against Skopje. Forceful actions, such as the blockade of 1994–5 or mass protests like those of 1992–3, are not well regarded. Another point worth bearing in mind is that a striking proportion, of the order of 27 per cent, reject the notion of taking countermeasures. Faced with the prospect, of a possible diplomatic failure to prevent FYROM from monopolising the Macedonian name at an international level, however, they openly demand that their cultural heritage and identity be preserved through new approaches, political, cultural, and educational.

140. One typical proposal connected with the last question was the following:

i) Promote Greek Macedonia and its history, both ancient and modern; ii) make sure the educational system both in Greece and in FYROM teaches that part of ancient Macedonia also lies within FYROM, as also the fact that Alexander the Great was unconnected with the Slavs.

IV. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS: APPRAISAL AND PROSPECTS

The fruitless seven-year process of trying to settle the difference over the name inevitably engenders concerns and thoughts regarding the further evolution of the issue and its repercussions. First of all, we must summarise a number of conclusions regarding the negotiation process at the 'official level'.

Undeniably, the Greek side launched its efforts having lost certain fundamental negotiatory props. The Interim Accord laid down no time limit nor did it specify the content of the negotiations over the name. Cultural issues, apart from the name, which were permanent sources of friction had not essentially been included for discussion and resolution. Furthermore, despite all that has been said at various times, even officially, the fact remains that the Accord made no provision for any explicit commitment to a mutually acceptable solution based on compromise. Although speed was of the essence for resolving the problem, both sides dragged their feet: the Greek side because it did not want to pay the political price of a compromise; FYROM in order to reap the benefits of time, which heals all woes.

From a historical point of view now, the tactical choices were less important than the strategy that was adopted. Scrutiny of the various stages of the seven-year negotiating process points to the conclusion that clearing up the outstanding name issue was not among the Greek side's priorities. Athens appeared to believe that improved bilateral relations, a good climate, and the nexus of mutual economic and political dependence ('economic infiltration' it was called at first) would pave the way to resolving the problem of the name as well. But the question remains: Was this policy the *means* to resolving the name? Or was it an *end in itself*, an (entirely laudable) way of enhancing Greece's role in the Balkans as a whole, where, however, the name issue , as a thorn in its side from long ago, was presented as a consumable good?

In the early period, the Greek side appeared to be alternating tempting offers with verbal warnings. However, neither the 'sun' nor the 'wind' managed to divest the shepherd of his cloak. Those who devised the idea failed, because essentially they did not themselves believe in the efficacy of the ploy. The pressure was not convincing, nor were the offers good enough to shift the leaders in Skopje from their intransigent positions. As a result, the alternating tactics simply weakened the force of their arguments and rendered this particular avenue to an impassable solution.

However, another path was tried too. In the latter years, especially after the war over Kosovo, Greece had amassed considerable kudos by its role in pacifying and stabilising the Balkans. Its initiatives during the inter communal strife between Albanians and Slav Macedonians in FYROM boosted its image further. Yet it did not seem able to exploit even this 'asset' sufficiently to achieve any substantial, immediate result in resolving the outstanding issue. By contrast, it simply helped reduce the pressure being imposed by certain allies and partners to bring the dispute to an end by a unilateral retreat by Athens. All the same, Greek diplomacy may be credited with having kept the *de jure* name of 'FYROM' going among, mainly, international organisations for seven years. So we can say that, seven years after the Interim Accord was signed, the name issue was simply in a state of 'free fall'.

But what name are we talking about? This study has deliberately avoided entering into the never-ending name-game that is being played 'behind [and in front of] closed doors'; firstly because the confidential nature of the negotiations makes it impossible to have any clear idea of the specific proposals and arguments that have been submitted in New York or between the two capitals; secondly because every Greek is convinced that she or he has the 'perfect' name for the case in point, and it is a waste of time trying to argue at a theoretical level about the 'ideal' name. These days we are used to hearing public statements at a high government level on both sides

to the effect that the solution to the problem will have 'no winners and no losers', that it must be 'fair', 'honourable', and 'not insulting'. Each side, of course, has its own idea of what these terms mean. But all the same they serve as guidelines. With all the audacity of one who has been involved with the issue for forty years now, both as a scholar and professionally, as a political analyst, the writer of this study would simply say that Greece could accept a name for FYROM chosen by the other side on condition that it related exclusively to the geographical area over which FYROM has sovereignty. This would dispel the distressing irredentism which on the other side of the Greek border fuels national complexes about 'persecution' and 'ethnic injustice', and on this side of the border perpetuates stereotyped suspicion of 'expansionist aspirations'. This approach would mean that neither side's perceptions of the cultural differences between the two peoples would be directly affected; but it would pave the way for those differences to enter a process of lengthy debate between experts, scholars, educators, and above all the communities of the citizens of both countries. The main aim of this process could only be to recognise and understand existential concerns on both sides. The endeavour to smooth out the main points of friction might mean that the younger generations would not be contaminated with negative stereotypes regarding their 'neighbours', while at the same time making it possible to cultivate a climate of peaceful and constructive co-existence for the neighbouring states and their citizens.

We come now, however, to the realistic conclusion that Greece, having taken important steps towards a compromise solution during the seven-year term of the Interim Accord, can now retreat no further. It must be widely realised that beyond these limits there lurks 'surrender' to an international *de jure* acceptance of the name 'Macedonia' or to the acceptance of a second name to be used by Greece alone in its bilateral relations with FYROM. Either way, any well-disposed third-party observer

would agree that such an eventuality would lead directly to the loss of Greece's dignity and the expropriation of its people's cultural identity, with unpredictable consequences.

The seventh anniversary of the signing of the Interim Accord was undoubtedly a major milestone. For Athens the most important thing is to clearly draw the line beyond which it will not retreat and to maintain its final position. The statement made by the Foreign Ministry spokesman on 6 March 2003 is in fact clear: Greece remains firm in its negotiating position; it will not accept two names, but insists upon 'a single international name for all purposes'. It now remains to sort out the second part of the problem: namely, how that aim is to be achieved. The time has come for Greece to unequivocally and frankly make clear its position that if in the short term there is no apparent inclination to turn the Interim Accord into a 'Final Accord' by working out a mutually honourable compromise solution, the climate and the structure of bilateral relations cannot be maintained at their present level.

In the past, such warnings have generally taken the form of gentle reminders of difficulties that might arise in forms of co-operation, economic aid and investments, and even in Greece's ever-positive stance in international organisations on behalf of FYROM's interests. The trouble was that all these warnings, which actually came from the higher echelons of government, were set aside at one stage or another and eventually languished by mutual consent. Now, the Greek side has the opportunity to clearly outline the consequences of allowing the problem to drag on in specific sectors, stressing that this time Athens will not content itself with verbal pyrotechnics that fizzle out in no time. Only if and when the other side responds positively will a sweeping programme be implemented for full-scale economic co-operation and political support of FYROM. A 'package of offers' is not a new idea, certainly. In the past, however, the offers were handed over in advance as an incentive to spur the negotiations on, though they never ended in an

agreement. Under the proposed approach, the offers would be the reward for turning the Interim Accord into a 'Final Accord' and resolving the problem of the name. By analogy with the 'packages of offers' put together in the past, 'packages of Greek demands' can be prepared and then brought into play or let lie, depending on how the resolution of the outstanding issue progresses.

In this respect it would be appropriate for the Greek side to put together and formulate certain indispensable conditions for the future 'road-map' relating to FYROM's status as a candidate for EU membership. These must include FYROM's obligation to resolve its difference with an EU member-state regarding the use of the name 'Macedonia'. The rationale for this is already clearly set out in Security Council resolution 817/1993, which states that the difference 'needs to be resolved in the interest of the maintenance of peaceful and good-neighbourly relations in the region'. It should be noted that the practice of setting out special terms has been widely applied to a number of candidate countries during the pre-accession process: one typical example is the preconditions laid down for Turkey at Copenhagen.

For seven years, FYROM displayed extreme intransigence with regard to reaching a compromise solution to the problem of the name and exploited Athens's willingness to abandon its negotiating leverage when the Interim Accord was signed. In the same period, as this study has explained in detail, the Greek side adopted an extremely conciliatory attitude in its efforts to reach a mutually honourable compromise. But with nothing to show after seven years, it is absolutely consistent with international diplomatic practice for Greece to take advantage of the EU's accession procedures so that the problem may finally be resolved. This ten-year-old unresolved issue, which has envenomed public opinion in both countries and offends the dignity and the human rights of a considerable segment of the Greek people — notably the Greek Macedonians — thereby destabilising the region, must not be brought into the European Union.

One indispensable requirement, of course, for implementing a resolute and consistent line is that the Greek side – the government and the political world – has the will to restore the necessary degree of priority to negotiations to resolve the problem of the name and to fully normalise the relations between the two states and their people.

* * *

At the other level, that of 'public perception', the general picture of the problem has always been a confused one. During the seven-year term and especially in the latter years, the fruitless negotiations in New York together with the government's 'hush-hush' tactics meant that the name had come to play little or no part in substantive public debate in Greece. This led certain foreign observers to suggest that the current climate in the country would allow the Greek government to bring the issue to a close.[141] Presumably this meant that Greece should acquiesce while the international community sanctioned FYROM's constitutional name. But did the fact that public debate had died down mean that there would be only a small political price to pay if the government were forced to yield to such a solution? The fact that, despite international pressure, former Prime Minister Costas Simitis refrained from making this final concession for seven years indicates that his political intuition told him not to rely on appearances. He clearly understood that emotionally charged problems, like the undermining of a people's cultural identity, need careful handling. For experienced statesmen, the relatively recent affair of the popular reaction to the fact that the new

141. Report from Washington by Tom Ellis in *Kathimerini*, 6.6.2000.

Greek identity cards make no reference to the holder's religion had been a warning and a lesson.[142]

The general conclusion is that a considerable segment of public opinion remains entrenched in its traditional positions, as the issue is not simply about the name of a neighbouring state, but affects people at a personal level. More especially, as far as the Greek Macedonians are concerned, it appears to be an almost existential question. It is a fact that the public perception of a resolution of the problem has shifted considerably, if not decisively, towards the options available at the 'official level' in terms of a composite name – on condition that FYROM does not monopolise the Macedonian name internationally. The only exception is small groups of people who have some kind of direct connection with FYROM. These groups seem to be prepared to gloss over the name for reasons connected with financial and professional interests or ideological and political motives. Nonetheless, as the surveys have shown, the name issue is deeply rooted in the consciousness of large segments of the population, especially the Macedonians.

So what are the prospects, beyond the political handling of the problem of FYROM's official name? Discussions and the views recorded in a questionnaire[143] by people with university-level education show that their concern is not limited to FYROM's name. It also relates to the wider issue of how to preserve, sustain, and promote the Macedonian aspect of the Greek people's identity and cultural heritage. Clearly, regardless of how the negotiations over the name turn out, this wider issue is going to

142. K. Mavroeidis reaches the same conclusion in his study, "Public opinion and foreign policy: The case of the Macedonian Question in the '90s", *Agora horis synora*, June–August 1999, 54 [in Greek]: 'The mass protests [of 1992–3] showed that, on issues of national identity, especially when territory or even simply some aspect of culture is threatened, public opinion is on the alert.'

143. See Section III above.

constitute the main arena of conflict. A compromise solution to the name will certainly take the edge off the antagonism; whereas if the international community allows Skopje to monopolise the Macedonian name, it will exacerbate the conflict and make the problem a mini version of the 'clash of civilisations' in this part of Europe. Neither side will win if events take this turn.

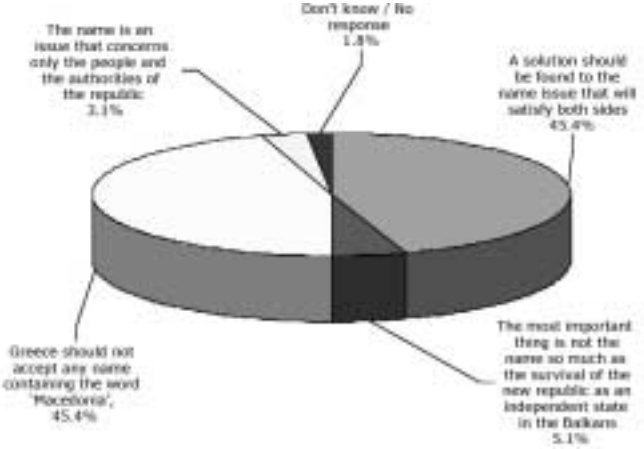
'Public perception' of this aspect of the problem in Greece seems to have run ahead of the efforts at the 'official level', which have become bogged down in the quest for a name. If one interprets public feeling correctly, there is clearly an imperative demand that state and society develop policies together and implement ways of preserving and promoting the Greek historical and cultural identity and heritage of Greek Macedonia and the Greek Macedonians. This might be a basis for the two levels to come together by coupling the *realpolitik* of the 'official level' with the emotional approach of the 'public'.

The dispassionate study of the seven-year inconclusive course of the Interim Accord on "the difference over the name" has shown that the Greek society, and particularly its Macedonian component, has been exposed to a serious challenge of its identity. Whether this situation degenerates into a permanent malaise, would depend on the vigilance of the people themselves – in the capital of the Greek state, in Greek Macedonia and the Greek Macedonian diaspora – and the ability of their representatives to uphold and safeguard their cherished values and their human rights to their name and heritage.

V. APPENDIX: SURVEYS[144]

Table I : Views on FYROM's Name

Basis: the entire sample, n = 100



144. Tables I–V come from a nation-wide survey carried out by Opinion (in Athens, Thessaloniki, urban centres, and semi-urban and rural centres) between 1 and 14 May 2001, consisting of 1,600 personal interviews averaging 20–25 minutes each with individuals aged over 18.

Table II:
Views on FYROM's name in relation
to educational level and place of residence

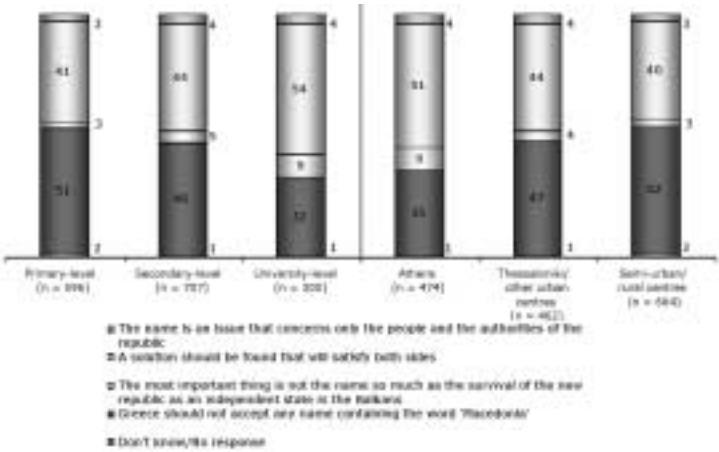


Table III:

Views on FYROM’s name in relation to sex and age

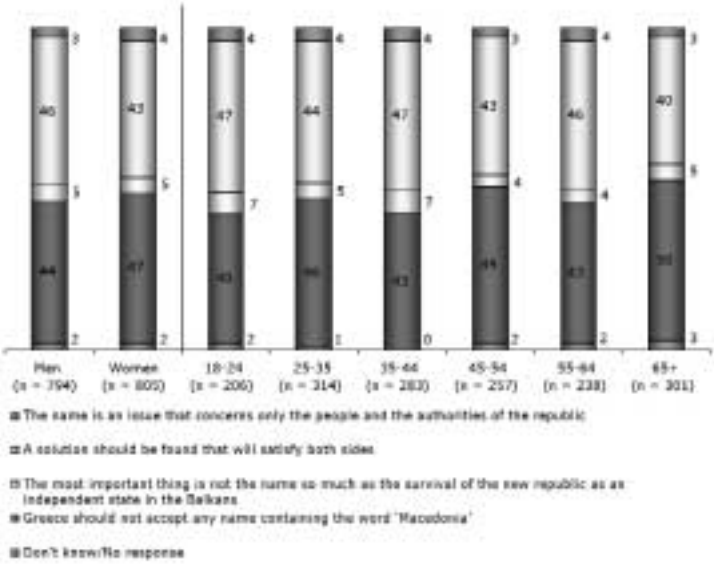


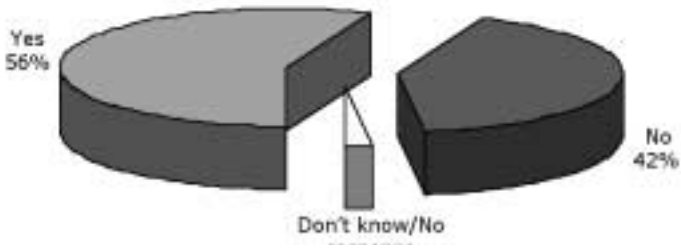
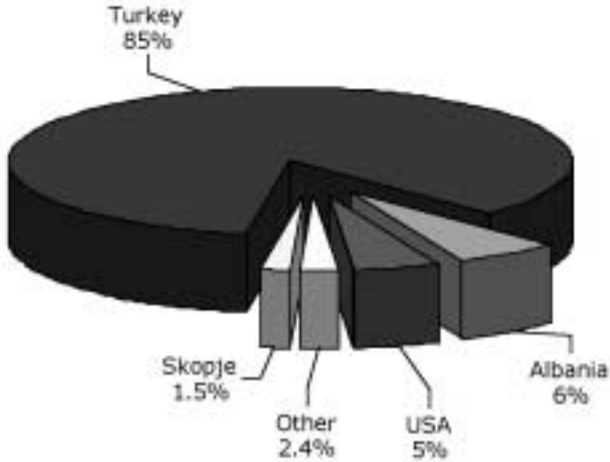
Table IV: Confidence in other countries and organisations
Basis: the entire sample, n = 1,600

1 = No confidence at all, 10 = Great confidence	Degree of confidence (expressed as a percentage)			Average degree of confidence (on the ten-point scale)
	1–4	5–6	7–10	
European Union	23.5	26.7	46.5	6.05
Serbia	31.4	22.4	42.5	5.62
Russia	33.1	24.1	39.5	5.52
France	32.3	30.3	33.4	5.43
Germany	33.0	27.6	36.9	5.43
United Nations	44.2	20.4	29.3	4.70
United Kingdom	51.1	22.4	21.3	4.19
NATO	54.2	18.7	22.9	4.09
Bulgaria	58.6	21.6	16.2	3.92
USA	58.9	19.4	19.3	3.77
FYROM	63.0	18.1	14.0	3.52
Turkey	87.6	6.3	4.5	1.85
Albania	89.9	5.0	3.6	1.80

Table V : Threat to Greece

Basis: the entire sample, n = 1600

Is Greece threatened by any country?



By which country is Greece threatened?