

Managing Controversy: U.S. Stability Seeking and the Birth of the Macedonian State

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This article attempts to explain why the U.S. recognition of Macedonia's independence was such a long and controversial issue that lasted from 1991 to 2004. Based on a defensive positionalist model, this essay suggests that the search of regional stability in the South Balkans was the consistent interest pursued by the U.S. toward Macedonia, and that this preference justifies the slowness with which the U.S. granted recognition. The article also runs counter to the ethnic lobby argument, which is increasingly regarded as a major determinant of American foreign policy toward self-determination movements. More specifically, the analysis casts serious doubt on the proposition that the Greek-American community, through its mobilization, compelled the U.S. government to delay Macedonia's recognition, despite what some liberals have argued.

The American recognition of Macedonia's independence is an interesting case of foreign policy making as the United States did not follow the normal process by which it usually grants recognition to emerging states. It took more than 12 years and three successive presidencies for the White House to complete Macedonia's process of diplomatic recognition. The saga began in the spring of 1992 when the Bush administration decided to delay recognition. Then, the Clinton administration recognized the independence of Macedonia in 1994 under the temporary designation "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)." Yet, the first U.S. ambassador to Skopje, Macedonia's capital, was only named in 1996 after the White House had delayed extending full diplomatic relations to FYROM at the ambassadorial level. Finally, in November 2004, the administration of George W. Bush, in an unexpected and unilateral decision, recognized the republic under its constitutional name, the Republic of Macedonia, in a decision that was opposed by the European Union and vehemently opposed by Greece. The question that this article addresses is why was the U.S. recognition of Macedonia's independence such a long and difficult process?

This essay argues that the United States is a stability-seeking power. Throughout the Macedonian saga, U.S. administrations consistently pursued the interest of strengthening regional stability in the South Balkans, which was at risk because of a profound geo-political disagreement between Greece and Macedonia. This essay suggests that stability considerations defined the American policy toward the controversial birth of the Macedonian state, and justified the slowness with which the U.S. granted recognition.

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The article first delineates the regional stability argument and explains how it applies to secessionist movements. Then, for the sake of theoretical development, a competing argument, namely the ethnic lobby proposition, will be presented as an alternative explanation to the research problem. These two arguments will then be tested on the case of Macedonia, and the last section of the essay will assess the consistency and validity of both propositions. I believe that this essay offers a theoretical contribution that goes beyond the simple case of Macedonia. By comparing the two theoretical arguments mentioned above, this article contributes more broadly to the ongoing debate between realists and liberals on the sources of foreign policy.

The U.S. as a Stability-Seeking Power

Over the years, realists have debated the strategy used by states to maximize their security. According to offensive realists, security can only be partially assured because states cannot be certain of the intentions of others. As a result, states would try to increase their power in order to achieve more security by aggressively competing with one another (Labs 1997; Mearsheimer 2001). Defensive realists, on the contrary, argue that international anarchy makes states anxious about their security, which inevitably leads them to balance power and threat in order to prevent stability gaps and vulnerability (Walt 1987; Mastanduno 1993; Van Evera 1999).

This article builds on the later version of realism. It asserts that the United States is a "defensive positionalist" state, a term that was initially coined by Joseph Grieco (1988, 1990) and which refines defensive realism. According to defensive positionalism, states are unitary-rational agents which seek to maintain their relative position and are "sensitive to any erosion of their relative capabilities" as the preservation of their power guarantees their security in a self-help international system (Grieco 1988:498). States would therefore prefer to work in favor of the status quo rather than against it. States are not "gap maximizers" but "gap avoiders" (Mastanduno 1993:265). They try to avoid instability and insecurity because such conditions increase their vulnerability and could help other states to improve their relative power.

I argue that defensive positionalism applies in great depth to the United States because the American superpower is seated at the top of the international structure. Its powerful position in the system is maintained by the prevention of power losses that could originate from instability in the international system. This is why regional stability matters greatly for Washington. It helps the United States to maintain a powerful position and sustains its security. I assert that minimizing stability gaps, that is reducing or eliminating relative gains whether economic, military, or political ones, that could favor rival states or enemies, defines U.S. interests. In recent history, the United States attempted on several occasions to minimize stability gaps. Following the collapse of Yugoslavia, for instance, Washington quickly supported and recognized Bosnia-Herzegovina as a sovereign state to contain Serbia's violent irredentist ambitions. This way, the United States narrowed a gap in benefits that would have favored Serbia's expansionism (Baker 1995:639). During the Cold War, the United States relied on export controls to weaken the Soviet economic and military resources to eliminate potential gains for the USSR made at the expense of the United States (Mastanduno 1992). This is another example of stability gap minimization.

This paper maintains that reducing or eliminating stability gaps was reflected in the American management of the Macedonian saga. The next section will show how this stability-seeking argument plays out with respect to foreign secessionist states like Macedonia.

Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy toward Secessionist States

The need to prevent power losses and to minimize stability gaps explain why the United States has been cautious in not encouraging secessionist groups abroad (Halperin, Scheffer, and Small 1992). Historically, secessionist movements stood out as one of the most disturbing factors causing instability in the world.¹ These movements have created geopolitical turbulence and threatened to alter international borders. Secessionist attempts have provoked, among other things, civil wars (e.g., in Ethiopia, Indonesia, and Moldova) and initiated state disintegrations (Czechoslovakia, USSR, and Yugoslavia).

As a stability-seeking state, the United States therefore favors the containment of secessionist claims within existing sovereign states as a way to preserve the stability of regional systems. However, this scenario is not always possible as a central state could be the cause of instability or could even collapse as a result of civil unrest or secession (e.g., Yugoslavia). In such cases, this essay argues that the United States will shift its position and recognize the independence of a secessionist state if this state can strengthen the level of stability in the region affected by secessionism.² Based on defensive positional assumptions, we can deduce that the United States will assess the domestic structures of the secessionist state as well as the regional environment in which it evolves before making a decision. Secessionist groups will need to show proof of internal and external stability in order to be recognized by the United States. Indeed, it is unlikely that the United States would be interested in recognizing a new state that is likely to replicate the stability gap of the predecessor state. If the secessionist state is unable to achieve stability, the argument maintains that the U.S. recognition will be postponed or simply denied.

It is important to specify that the stability-seeking argument focuses on the U.S. executive branch of government as the power to recognize foreign governments and states is an exclusive prerogative of the President and the Congress cannot legally oppose such a presidential decision. The presidency has, therefore, a great level of autonomy in these matters (Adler 1995; Henkin 1996). But what constitutes "stability-seeking" and how can it be measured? The following indicators define the notion of regional stability and provide theoretical mechanisms that establish a clear connection between U.S. foreign policy and regional stability.

The internal dimension of stability refers, among other things, to the domestic definition of sovereignty, which is "the organization of public authority within a state and the level of effective control exercised by those holding authority" (Krasner 1999:9). Secessionist leaders who fail to achieve effective control of the territory might face recurrent instability. Another important aspect of internal stability is whether or not secessionists held a referendum on independence. The referendum result will be a measure of the likelihood of future intra state conflicts. The respect and the protection of minorities and human rights will also be taken into account by the United States as an important aspect of internal stability. These considerations are purely instrumental, however, as the protection of human and minority rights will be seen by U.S. decision makers as a means to strengthen stability. This is, therefore, consistent with the stability-seeking argument and does not represent an incursion in the liberal paradigm.

¹ Here, I define the notion of "stability gap" as the increasing disjunction between the way a given regional order was configured and the current state of affairs generated by a secessionist conflict.

² This gain in stability, however, is an expectation rather than a certainty as the United States, like any other state, operates in a state of uncertainty and usually possesses incomplete information for making foreign policy decisions.

As for the external requirements of stability, a secessionist group must accept its former internal boundaries as its new international borders. Territorial revisionism through irredentism, for instance, would not be tolerated. Mark Zacher shows that since 1945 all the new states that were created through state breakups have kept (whether or not they wanted to) their former internal borders as legal international ones. Zacher points out that “states generally desire predictability regarding the international territorial order. They do not like secessions, but if they are going to occur, they do not want the successor states fighting over what their boundaries should be” (Zacher 2001:234–235). I argue that, as a defensive positional state, the United States is especially hostile to the alteration of international borders as it may create stability gaps and therefore security threats. Secessionist states must also avoid intervention in the internal affairs of other sovereign states. Secessionist governments pursuing political revenge or an aggressive foreign policy toward neighboring states will clearly fail the test of external stability. Secessionist leaders who produce cross-national refugees by their policies and actions will also fall short. Indeed, refugees are a source of instability as they could, for instance, alter the demographic equilibrium of neighboring states. Moreover, secessionist states must be at peace with their neighbors when asking for recognition. As a stability-seeking power, the United States will be reluctant to recognize a secessionist entity that might engage in an inter state war following its independence. As it will be shown below, this last indicator of external stability became the main source of contention in the case of Macedonia.

Indicators of U.S. Stability-Seeking

Internal stability:

- Secessionist authorities achieve effective control of the territory.
- Secessionists agree to hold a democratic referendum on independence.
- The new state respects human and minority rights.

External stability:

- The secessionist state must accept its former internal boundaries as its new international borders.
- Secessionists respect international borders (including no cross-national refugees).
- Secessionists demonstrate that no inter state war is likely to occur following independence (absence of irredentism, revenge, and aggression).

Built on defensive positional assumptions and on previous deductions regarding the behavior of U.S. foreign policy towards secessionist crises, the regional stability argument generates the following testable hypotheses:

As a stability-seeking power, the United States will recognize the independence of a secessionist state that simultaneously maintains internal and external stability.

The United States will not recognize or will delay recognition of a secessionist state that does not demonstrate clear ability to maintain internal and/or external stability.

The regional stability argument is testable and parsimonious. It could be falsified if one could demonstrate, for instance, that the United States extended recognition to a secessionist group that could not maintain stability or, conversely, that a state was not recognized by Washington after having fulfilled the above stability criteria. The argument would also be disproved if empirical evidence showed that considerations other than regional stability, such as U.S. domestic

factors or moral considerations, explain the U.S. decision to recognize or not a secessionist state.

Before proceeding to the measurement of the regional stability argument, this article also proposes to evaluate how the competing proposition of ethnic lobbies applies to the case of Macedonia.

The Reputed Power of Ethnic Lobbies

In the post cold-war era, several analysts have moved away from external sources of foreign policy to concentrate on domestic factors. The context of the 1990s engendered a broad range of research that scrutinized, among other things, the impact of domestic ethnic lobbies on the decision-making process (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007; Hockenkos 2003; Nau 2002; Ambrosio 2002; Shain and Wittes 2002; Deconde 1992). Ethnic lobbies are important agents of foreign policy because they can influence decisions with money and votes. Several ethnic lobbies contribute financially to the campaign of presidential candidates and often influence the vote of U.S. ethnic diasporas during elections (Haney and Vanderbush 1999; Shain and Barth 2003). As Ambrosio points out, “[p]oliticians often appeal to the interests of key ethnic identity groups in order to tap into the ‘ethnic money’ and to garner more votes” (Ambrosio 2002:11). For these reasons, the ethnic lobby argument, which was seen as idiosyncratic a few years ago, has been increasingly theorized in the last two decades and several analysts now argue that U.S. foreign policy is increasingly the product of these lobbies. Henry Nau maintains, for instance, that U.S. ethnic groups are now a major determinant of American foreign policy. According to him, U.S. foreign policy is transformed “into a patchwork of ethnic [...] particularisms” (Nau 2002:82–84). Yossi Shain (1995) even questions if U.S. foreign policy still promotes national interest or if it has been undermined by diaspora interests (Shain 1995).

John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt (2006) have recently jumped into the debate on the role of ethnic lobbies, which gave additional weight to this argument. Known for being respectively offensive and defensive realists, Mearsheimer and Walt make the case that the Jewish American lobby has “managed to skew” U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East by convincing the American people that U.S. and Israeli interests are identical. Former U.S. National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, has also questioned the effect of these lobbies. According to him, ethnic groups are increasingly powerful and have a major impact on the definition of the American national interest (Brzezinski 2006). Brzezinski believes that the academic and foreign policy communities must have a “serious debate” on this important issue.

This ethnic domestic angle of foreign policy analysis greatly matters in the context of the current article because it has been used to explain the American response to ethnic conflicts and secessionist movements since the 1990s. Shain (1999:51–66), for example, asserts that some ethnic groups in the United States have been able to pressure U.S. leaders to adopt supportive policies towards national self-determination movements in Central and Eastern Europe. His argument implies that U.S. ethnic lobbies often influence which side the United States supports in a secessionist conflict abroad. To this extent, Macedonia has been one of the most cited examples to support this argument. Authors including Stephen Saideman (2001), Hockenkos (2003); Marshall Freeman Harris (1999), John Shea (1997), David Gompert (1996), and Hanna Rosin (1994), have argued that the Greek-American lobby strongly influenced the U.S. policy toward Macedonia. More specifically, they assert that the United States delayed the recognition of Macedonia’s independence because of the successful mobilization of the Greek-Americans, who strongly opposed recognition.

The ethnic lobby argument is therefore a serious alternative explanation to the research puzzle under investigation. As this article specifically looks at the Macedonian case and Macedonia has been one of the standard bearers for the ethnic lobby argument, I propose to evaluate this argument by bringing the theoretical debate to the forefront.

Within-Case Analysis

The case of the U.S. recognition of Macedonia is well-suited for intra case comparisons and systematical analysis. For the purpose of the current study, the different “episodes” of the Macedonian saga are broken down into five different units of interactions that are treated as separate cases. The benefit of the intra-case comparison is that it looks at variation within one defined political context, which allows to identify the fluctuations in the U.S. position and the factors accountable for them. This comparative method increases the number of points of measurement for a more accurate and systematical evaluation of the proposed arguments.³

Episode 1: The Bush Administration Delays Recognition

Macedonia declared its independence from Yugoslavia in November 1991. In contrast to Croatia, and to a lesser extent Slovenia, Macedonia managed to break from Yugoslavia without any violence. By March 1992, the Macedonian government had removed all its representatives from federal institutions and the Yugoslav People’s Army (YPA) had completed its withdrawal from the republic.⁴

The peaceful and democratic nature of Macedonia’s independence placed the republic in a good position to be recognized by the United States. The National Security Council (NSC) and the State Department were of the opinion that recognition should be granted as it would bring greater stability to Macedonia by transforming its republican frontiers into international borders. Recognition was seen as a major deterrent against a hypothetical Serbian or Greek aggression against Macedonia, which could have inflamed the South Balkans. In a note sent to Secretary of State James Baker in the winter of 1992, Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger warned that the nonrecognition of Macedonia “could create real instability, which less than mature players in Serbia and Greece might decide to exploit” (Baker 1995:640). Eagleburger also stated his appreciation of Macedonia’s process toward independence and praised what can be identified as the internal and the external stability of the republic.

In terms of internal stability, Macedonia had held a successful referendum on independence with a majority of three-quarters in favor of it. The fact that Macedonia’s Albanian minority had boycotted the referendum was not raised by U.S. officials in the assessment of the stability of the republic. The Macedonian government had also achieved effective control of the republic’s territory, it guaranteed minority rights, and it was committed to liberal democracy. A new Macedonian constitution had also been adopted which guaranteed civil rights to all Macedonian citizens and described Macedonia as a civil state as opposed to

³ Within-case analysis is critical in small-n analysis. As Alexander George and Andrew Bennett explain, it is “an alternative that compensates for the limits of both statistical and comparative case analyses.” For more on within-case analysis (see George and Bennett 2005:178–179).

⁴ Serbia’s president Slobodan Milosevic, who was then in control of the YPA, was reluctant to open another front by launching a war in Macedonia. Moreover, Serbia had little incentive to fight in Macedonia as very few Serbs were living in this republic. It is in this context that the Macedonian government managed to sign an agreement with Milosevic on the withdrawal of former Yugoslav troops from Macedonia (see Perry 1992:37).

the “state of the Macedonian nation,” as it was previously defined, in order to reassure its own minorities (Moore 1992:33).⁵

As for the external dimension of its stability, Macedonia had a well defined territory (i.e., recognized republican borders) and respected international borders. The Macedonian government had also amended its constitution to prove that it had no irredentist ambitions toward Greece’s neighboring province of the same name. The amendment denied any territorial ambitions “prohibiting interference in the internal affairs of other states, and reaffirming the inviolability of existing frontiers” (Perry 1992:40). In addition, and this is important, Macedonia met all the criteria included in the U.S. guideline for state recognition which had been unveiled in the fall of 1991 by the State Department. This guideline listed five criteria that would guide the executive in its decision to grant or deny recognition to Yugoslav secessionist republics:

- Determining the future of the country (i.e., seceding republic) peacefully and democratically.
- Respect for internal and external borders.
- Support for democracy and the rule of law, by promoting the democratic process.
- Safeguarding human rights, including equal treatment of minorities.
- Respect for international law and obligations, especially the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris.⁶

Consequently, the Bush administration assessed that Macedonia was a first rate candidate for diplomatic recognition, which would bolster its stability in an uncertain environment.

The U.S. guideline for state recognition reflected U.S. democratic values and its strong interest in regional stability. It reveals the importance that the U.S. executive gave to the internal and external stability of the secessionist states, which indicates that the U.S. administration framed the issue along the lines of the regional stability argument. Although these criteria were not mutually exclusive, points 1, 3, and 4 refer to internal stability and to the governing ability of the secessionist states. Principles 2 and 5 refer to both internal and external elements of stability. Point 2 implies, for instance, that a secessionist state that either pursued irredentism or unilaterally redrew its internal territorial divisions would fail the test. As for point 5, it requests that secessionist leaders obey international norms of state conduct, such as respecting the territorial integrity of other states.

By designing this guideline, the State Department wanted the assurance that recognized republics would not perpetuate instability by replicating Yugoslavia’s ethnic tensions on a smaller scale. These criteria had as an aim the assurance that newborn states would conform to certain standards of internal order and governance so that regional stability would endure. More generally, the conditionality of recognition was a way to socialize seceding states so that they would

⁵ The issue of rights under the new Macedonian constitution remained, however, contentious between Macedonian politicians and members of ethnic Albanian minority throughout the 1990s until the outbreak of the 2001 conflict. Under the new Macedonian constitution, minorities did not have the right of proportional representation within governmental institutions. Moreover, the right that ethnic Albanians had under the former-Yugoslavia to fly the Albanian flag on certain occasions was removed from the constitution (see Pettifer 2001:138 and 143). These elements, however, were not apparent and were not taken into account in 1991 when the United States assessed the stability of the republic.

⁶ These criteria were unveiled before the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in the Fall of 1991 (see Henkin, Pugh, Schachter, and Smit 1993:250). In early 1992, a European Community commission (the Badinter Commission) also ruled that Macedonia was in line with the European principles of recognition. The Charter of Paris was signed by CSCE members in 1990. The Charter had the objective of reinforcing the protection of human rights, democracy, and rule of law in Europe that were part of the Helsinki Final Act (see Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe 1990). http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1990/11/4045_en.pdf (April 5, 2008).

conform to the rules and principles of the international system and would not develop into aggressive (or revisionist) states. In this context, Macedonia was moving fast toward international recognition.

Greece Steps in: Instability Arises

The Greek government of Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis quickly cast a shadow on Macedonia's hope to achieve international recognition. Greece argued that because Macedonia was the name of its northern province, famously known for being the native soil of Alexander the Great and Aristotle, the former-Yugoslav republic of Macedonia had no right to refer to itself as being 'Macedonia'. Athens requested that the government of Skopje remove the word Macedonia from its constitutional name as a condition for recognition even if the republic had adopted constitutional amendments to eliminate any irredentist suspicions that the Greek authorities may have had.

As a member of the European Community, Greece led a vigorous campaign against recognition and managed to veto the European Community (EC) decision to recognize the republic in the spring of 1992 (Simons 1992). As Prime Minister Mitsotakis was an advocate of the Maastricht Treaty, EC members agreed to delay recognition to Macedonia in order to save the Mitsotakis government from falling. The name issue had become a burning political issue in Greece and the option of supporting Macedonia's recognition was politically untenable. Brussels also consented to delay recognition to preserve a single and united European front at the crucial time when the Common Foreign and Security Policy was coming into existence. In return, Mitsotakis consented to sign the Maastricht Treaty, which gave birth to the European Union, and supported EC economic sanctions against Serbia.

Although the State Department and the NSC had initially concluded that Macedonia had fulfilled its stability criteria for recognition and that its diplomatic recognition would be the best option to reinforce stability in the South Balkans, the Bush administration reversed its initial decision and delayed recognition in April of 1992 because of growing political tension between Greece and Macedonia. Washington assessed that the government of Skopje was not in a position to demonstrate that no inter state war would occur with Greece.

The Greek opposition had a major impact on the U.S. policy, not so much because the Bush administration was supportive or empathetic to Athens position, but because the NSC feared that the recognition of Macedonia would intensify the already exacerbated Greek nationalist feeling toward the issue, and might provide the justification for a Greek-Macedonian conflict [Scowcroft, Brent. (2005) Interview in Washington, DC, February 8]. Following Macedonia's declaration of independence in 1991, hundred of thousands of Greeks had demonstrated for months against Macedonia's recognition, and the Greek army had been very active on the Macedonian border by conducting maneuvers to intimidate Skopje (Phillips 2004:54).

The U.S. executive branch was also worried that a conflict between Greece and Macedonia could spark a regional conflict in which Greece and Turkey, two members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), could clash against each other (Gompert 1996:136). The presence of a large Muslim minority in Macedonia provided for speculations in the State Department on a possible Turkish intervention on the side of Macedonia in the case of a conflict with Greece. As peace in the South Balkans was connected to the stability of Macedonia, the Bush administration withheld recognition.

Two other factors contributed to the U.S. decision. First, Greece was a NATO ally and the United States had historically maintained close ties with Greek governments, which the Bush administration did not want to spoil by recognizing

Macedonia. Second, the U.S. desired to act in conjunction with the Europeans on the issue. The U.S. and the EC (from now on the European Union [EU]) had just ended their disagreement over the recognition of Bosnia, Croatia, and Slovenia in the spring of 1992, and President Bush was, therefore, reluctant to move unilaterally on Macedonia.

One question remains however: If the Bush administration believed that Macedonia deserved recognition in the fall of 1991, why did it not recognize the republic then? Why did the executive choose to wait until April 1992 to delay recognition? The U.S. administration made the decision in the fall of 1991 to wait for a general resolution of the Yugoslav war—which was raging in Croatia and was slowly moving to Bosnia—before extending recognition to Yugoslav republics like Macedonia. This conditionality of recognition was used to compel Yugoslav republics to peacefully resolve their conflict, which was expected to reduce the level of instability in the region. This strategy was dropped a few months later when the peaceful settlement of the Yugoslav conflict became unlikely as time went on. At this time, however, tensions between Greece and Macedonia had become a major concern for the Bush administration and prevented the United States from granting recognition to the republic.

The first episode of this saga demonstrates that policies and politics obey very different rationales. On paper, Macedonia was a good candidate for recognition. In practice, however, the Macedonian issue threatened to destabilize the southern Balkans and, ironically enough, the peaceful Macedonian state turned out to be the only former Yugoslav republic that directly threatened the interest of a NATO and EU member state. In April 1992, the United States extended recognition to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia, but Macedonia was left in the diplomatic waiting room. The United States indicated that the purpose of the delay was to allow Greece and Macedonia to settle their dispute. In a letter sent to a member of Congress who requested that the State Department clarify its stance on Macedonia, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for legislative affairs, Steven Berry, summarized the U.S. position:

While the United States takes very seriously Greek concerns regarding its security and is sensitive to the Greek government's concerns about the potential for instability on its northern border as violence in Yugoslavia continues, President Bush fully endorses Macedonian President Gligorov's efforts to maintain calm and stability and to lead his people to full independence through negotiations with the EC. The United States in no way condones the spread of violence to Macedonia. Above all, we seek solutions which are acceptable to the EC, Greece, and Macedonia noting that a close and friendly relationship between Greece and Macedonia is an important element in Balkan stability and regional prosperity. (Department of State 1992)

This reveals the extent to which tensions between Athens and Skopje inhibited the United States from recognizing the republic.

Did the Greek-Americans Play a Role?

If the ethnic politics argument is right, the withholding of Macedonia's recognition must have been influenced by the Greek-American lobby which was categorically opposed to recognition. Evidence suggests, however, that the Greek diaspora was not an important factor in the U.S. cost-benefit analysis. The Greek-American campaign against Macedonia's recognition only began in the summer of 1992, a few weeks after the United States had decided to delay recognition. It is only then that the Greek-Americans launched an aggressive campaign to transform President Bush's policy into a permanent rejection of Macedonia's independence. The Hellenic-American National Council then sent letters to

Congress members and sponsored a rally in Washington, DC, against recognition, which gathered more than 20,000 Greek-Americans (Perry 1992). A Hellenic organization called the "Americans for the Just Resolution of the Macedonian Issue" even paid for two full-page advertisements in the *New York Times* to make its case against the recognition of Skopje under the name Macedonia; a maneuver directed toward President Bush. The organization argued that the "recognition of Skopje as the Republic of Macedonia would only legitimize its extremist and false claims upon sovereign Greek territory" (Perry 1992:40).

The mobilization of the Greek-American lobby is undeniable but only came after the fact. The lobbying of the Hellenic community was not the cause of the delay. Moreover, no evidence indicates that this ethnic group had any impact on the U.S. decision to extend its delay. State Department archives on the issue, which were recently unclassified, do not suggest that the Greek-American lobby played a role. Former NSC and State Department officials who were interviewed for this research indicate that this ethnic lobby was insignificant in the formulation of the U.S. response in 1992. According to David Gompert, who acted as the Senior Director for Europe and Eurasia in the NSC, the administration of George H. W. Bush was relatively insensitive to the Greek-American lobby [Gompert, David C. (2005) Interview in Washington, DC, January 25]. Thomas Niles, the former Under Secretary of State for European Affairs, concurs. In his view, the pressure exercised by the Greek-Americans was not a major issue for the Bush administration [Niles, Thomas M. T. (2005) Phone interview, January 29]. Of course, one could question the validity of their assessment as Gompert and Niles were not neutral actors but government officials directly involved in the issue. However, the fact that these former officials acknowledged that the Greek-Americans had a strong impact on the position of the White House in 1994, as Episode 3 will demonstrate, enhances their credibility. This adds more weight to their claim that the ethnic group was not in the balance when President Bush delayed recognition in 1992. Thus, it appears that the ethnic domestic issue at stake was minor for the White House in comparison to international issues related to Macedonia's stability.

Enter President Clinton

The Greek-Macedonian struggle reached new heights in the summer of 1992 when Greece decided to close its border to the republic and impose an oil embargo. This decision came in response to Macedonia's adoption of a new national flag that pictured the Star of Vergina, which appeared on the tomb of Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great. This move was seen by the Greek authorities as a falsification of Greece's history and a direct provocation. This event bolstered Greek nationalist passions and dashed hopes for a quick resolution of the conflict (Kofos 2001; Zahariadis 2005).

It is at this time that Democratic President Bill Clinton was elected. The shift of political party in the White House did not result, however, in a transformation of the U.S. policy on Macedonia. Like the previous government, the Clinton administration emphasized the importance of regional stability to justify the non-recognition of the republic. As time went on, however, and as the conflict resulting from Yugoslavia's disintegration threatened to consume the whole southern Balkans, the U.S. interest in the region slowly moved from a peripheral to a core concern (Daalder 2000:9). As the U.S. recognition of Macedonia depended on the resolution of the Greek-Macedonian dispute, the Clinton administration made two important decisions that strengthened the stability of the republic without aggravating the tense political situation with Greece.

First, the White House consented to send U.S. troops to the Macedonian republic as a substitute for diplomatic recognition in order to reinforce

Macedonia's security. As Richard Holbrooke points out: "The situation was so explosive that the United States made its only exception to the policy of not sending troops to the region [...] in order to prevent the war in Bosnia from spreading to the south and igniting a general Balkan conflict" (Holbrooke 1999:122). This decision came after the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had warned the White House that a Serbian attack on Macedonia was imminent and that this conflict could consume the region (Phillips 2004:60). In May of 1993, 300 U.S. soldiers joined the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) for Macedonia, which already numbered 700 UN troops.⁷ The deployment of these troops along the Macedonian border with Serbia gives a clear indication of the importance that the United States gave to the stability of the republic, especially given that the government of Skopje had not formulated demands for any U.S. protection force. This decision was part of the U.S. containment strategy, which attempted to build a *cordon sanitaire* around Serbia to prevent Milosevic's regime from committing further aggressions. The decision was also driven by President Clinton's need to be pro-active in the region at a time when members of Congress were upset about the brutal ethnic strives in the Balkans and the lack of U.S. executive actions to this regard. This measure, however, placed the Clinton administration in a very odd position as American troops were sent to protect the territorial integrity of a state that the United States did not recognize.

Second, the Clinton administration agreed to sponsor the admission of Macedonia to the United Nations in April of 1993. The objective here was to encourage Greece and Macedonia to settle the name issue through the auspices of the United Nations. Greece had reluctantly agreed on the UN admission of the Yugoslav Republic under the provisional name FYROM to show its good faith and its will to resolve the issue. Macedonia was thus admitted as the 181st member of the UN through a Security Council resolution under the name FYROM.

Macedonia's admission to the UN allowed the United States (and EU members) to advance its stability agenda in the Balkans without increasing tensions between Athens and Skopje. The welcoming of FYROM as a member of the UN also bolstered the stability of the republic by underlying the inevitability of its independence. This was made without compelling the Clinton administration to reverse its official position on the issue.⁸

Episode 2: President Clinton Recognizes Macedonia as FYROM

Toward the end of 1993, six members of the EU (Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and The Netherlands) disregarded Greece's sensibilities toward Macedonia and recognized its independence under the name FYROM (Lewis 1993). This decision was prompted by Greece's suspension of its negotiations with Macedonia under the supervision of the UN, which upset EU members and the United States (Zahariadis 2005). Moreover, the EU was dissatisfied overall with Greece's counter-productive campaign on the name issue, which impeded progress on the matter for almost two years. The nonrecognition of Macedonia also had a negative effect on the United States/EU attempt to strengthen UN sanctions against Serbia in 1992–1993. Indeed, as Macedonia was not recognized and could not, therefore, obtain economic support from the

⁷ *The New York Times* (1993), "300 U.S. Troops in Macedonia To Try to Contain Balkan War," July 13, 1993. The UNPROFOR in Macedonia had been authorized by the UN Security Council in late 1992. Its mandate was to protect Macedonia's border with Albania and Serbia. The creation of the UNPROFOR-Macedonia was recommended by the UN Secretary General following a request made by the Macedonian government (see Woodward 1995:295).

⁸ According to Marshall Freeman Harris, who served in Macedonia in the early 1990s as a State Department official, the UN recognition of FYROM was seen in Washington as a first step in the inevitable process of Macedonia's recognition [Harris, Marshall Freeman. (2005) Interview in Washington, DC. (Accessed February 17)].

United States or from international economic organizations, Skopje was compelled to violate UN sanctions by trading with Serbia in order to sustain its economy.

The decision of EU members to disregard Greece's objection created a window of opportunity for Washington. The Clinton administration had the option to move along with the Europeans to advance its stability agenda in the Balkans without being condemned by Greece as the instigator of the measure. The timing for recognition was also better than in 1992 since tensions between Greece and Macedonia had significantly diminished now that the two parties had undertaken negotiations under UN auspices. In early 1994, Washington decided to follow EU members despite Greece's strong resistance. The Clinton administration justified its decision to recognize FYROM by stating that there was "a potential for instability to grow" in the South Balkans and that the recognition of the republic as a sovereign state would increase its stability (Binder 1994).

The White House emphasized the internal and the external stability of the republic in the justification of its decision:

Today, the United States extended formal recognition to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and declared its intent to establish full diplomatic relations. [...] This action will help promote stability in the region. We join nearly every other country of Europe in taking this step. In extending formal recognition, we have taken into account the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's commitment to peaceful cooperative relations and its respect for the territorial integrity of all of its neighbors, and the inviolability of existing boundaries. [...] We recognize that Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have outstanding differences which we expect will be resolved through good faith negotiations. [...] We also take note of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's commitment to democratic principles, to human rights, to the creation of an open, free market economy and to its desire to seek peaceful solutions to problems in the regions. (The White House 1994)

Matthew Nimetz, who was President Clinton's special envoy to Macedonia in charge of the Greek-Macedonia crisis in 1993–1994, confirms that recognition had first and foremost the objective of fostering Macedonia's stability. The purpose was "to reinforce the recognition of sovereignty and to give them [the Macedonians] equality with countries that might be hostile" [Nimetz, Matthew. (2005) Phone interview, February 18].

Greece's reaction to the U.S. decision was immediate. President Clinton was depicted as a traitor and the U.S. consulate in Thessaloniki was attacked by angry Greek protesters who threw eggs at the consulate's windows. More importantly, and as a direct reaction to the U.S. recognition of FYROM, Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou—who defeated Mitsotakis in the 1993 election—announced the imposition of a major trade embargo against Macedonia to retaliate against Washington's recognition of the republic (Shea 1997:285).⁹

Greek-Americans vs. Macedonian-Americans

The decision to recognize FYROM's independence was made despite the strong opposition expressed by the Greek-American community. This indicates that the Greek diaspora failed to transform the U.S. delay into a permanent nonrecognition of Macedonia. But, could the mobilization of the Macedonian-American community have triggered this policy shift?

⁹ Greek Prime Minister Papandreou declared that he was forced to impose the embargo to protect Greece's national security. He pointed out: "this is a real threat to our national security, because Skopje's aim is to gain an exit to the Aegean Sea... We had to remind the world there is a problem concerning stability and security in the region" (Shea 1997:285).

According to Ivan A. Lebamov, president of the Macedonian Patriotic Organization (MPO), even if they were not a unified group, the Macedonian-Americans played a significant role in the U.S. recognition of FYROM. The MPO, a pro-Macedonian association based in Indiana whose central aim was to promote Macedonia's independence, lobbied several members of Congress and "there were many trips to Washington, thousands of letters, hundreds of faxes and tons of paper used by *the Macedonian Tribune*," MPO's newspaper, to promote the independence of the republic (Shea 1997:182–183). For Lebamov, it is clear that the Macedonian-Americans played a key role in the U.S. decision to recognize the republic.

The MPO, however, was the only significant political organization in 1994 that promoted Macedonian-American interests in Washington.¹⁰ Moreover, during their battle for recognition the Macedonian-Americans, who numbered <40,000 Americans,¹¹ were competing against the Greek-American lobby, one of the most effective ethnic groups in Washington, which represents around 3 million Americans (the largest Greek community outside of Greece). If the Greek-Americans, who had strong connections in both Houses of Congress and ties to an influential member of the White House staff (President Clinton's senior advisor George Stephanopoulos), failed to dissuade President Clinton from recognizing FYROM, it is very unlikely that the Macedonian-Americans were able to influence the White House. Indeed, we can seriously doubt that the White House made the calculation that it would be profitable to please the Macedonian-Americans at the expense of alienating the large Greek-American community in a mid-term election year.

The second episode of the saga suggests once again that the United States is a stability-seeking state that focused on Macedonia's internal and external stability. These considerations shaped the U.S. response to the controversial Macedonian question and the efforts of the Greek-American lobby to influence the course of that policy remained a peripheral concern.

Episode 3: The Clinton Administration Backtracks

The recognition of FYROM had a major impact on the mobilization of the Greek-Americans. Within a few days, the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association collected 30,000 signatures against President Clinton's decision (Rosin 1994:11). Several leaders of the community, including Representative Michael Bilirakis of Florida and Senator Paul Sarbanes of Maryland, asked President Clinton to reverse his decision and managed to convince George Stephanopoulos to consult President Clinton about it (Harris 1999:44–45). Members of a national Hellenic group also pressured the U.S. Congress "to urge that President Clinton rescind American recognition of the Republic of Macedonia," which led Congress to pass a resolution asking the president to reconsider its decision (Shea 1997:186).

Under the auspices of George Stephanopoulos, leaders of the Greek-American community (Greek Orthodox Archbishop Iakovos, Senator Sarbanes, and a dozen prominent Greek-Americans) managed to meet with President Clinton in a private meeting at the White House to discuss the Macedonian problem. The meeting was attended by Vice-President Al Gore and National Security advisor Anthony Lake. Neither Secretary of State Warren Christopher nor any State

¹⁰ In the early 2000s, the Macedonia-Americans became better organized and represented in Washington by creating organizations such as the Macedonian American Friendship Association in 2001 and the United Macedonian Diaspora in 2004.

¹¹ The 2000 U.S. census listed 38,051 Macedonian-Americans. Michigan was the state that contained the largest cluster of Macedonia-Americans with 7,801.

Department officials were present at the meeting. Following the reunion, President Clinton backtracked from his initial decision to extend full diplomatic relations to FYROM (e.g., to send an ambassador and open an embassy in Skopje). The president indicated that no ambassador would be sent to Skopje as long as the name and the flag issue remained unresolved between Greece and Macedonia (Ramet 1999:186).

Interagency Disagreement

By delaying the establishment of diplomatic relations with FYROM, President Clinton was hoping to avoid further antagonizing the Greek-American community. This decision, however, led to an important interagency disagreement between the White House and the State Department. Following the U.S. recognition of FYROM in February of 1994, Secretary of State Christopher had urged President Clinton to name an ambassador to Skopje to give added weight to recognition. Officials from the State Department were therefore upset about the drastic turn of events and openly denounced the White House decision, contending that President Clinton was “bowing” to pressure from the Greek-Americans (Greenhouses 1994). Former Secretary of State James Baker also characterized the Clinton administration as being “confused” and “inconsistent” on the issue and accused the President of “failure to stand up to pressure from the Greek-American community” (Shea 1997:365). In an article in the *Washington Post*, State Department officials were quoted as declaring that delaying to establish full diplomatic relations with Macedonia would empower and legitimate Greece’s recent decision to impose a trade embargo against Macedonia (Greenhouses 1994).

Facing this interagency discord, the White House defended its decision by pointing out that it had succeeded in reaching a middle-ground position. Its recognition of the republic satisfied the need for greater stability in the South Balkans, and the delay in sending an ambassador satisfied the Greek-American community. White House officials also argued that the maintenance of the decision to recognize FYROM was a clear demonstration that the administration had not “caved in to political pressure” (Greenhouses 1994).

Did the Greek-Americans Have a Strong Impact on the Process?

The intervention of the Greek-American community did cause the reversal of President Clinton’s decision to establish diplomatic relations with FYROM. However, the United States did not reverse its recognition of the republic. As President Clinton’s NSC advisor, Anthony Lake, points out, this decision did not signify a “reversal of course” [Lake, Anthony. (2005) Interview in Washington, DC, April 4]. Even if the Greek-American pressure slowed the process by which full diplomatic relations were established following FYROM’s recognition, it failed to stop it. In fact, the Greek-Americans were condemned to lose the battle over the recognition of Macedonia. They managed to win a fight by making the Clinton administration retreat from its earlier decision to send an ambassador, but could hardly manage to win the war of recognition.

Episode 4: The U.S. Extends Full Diplomatic Relations to FYROM

In the months following the admission of FYROM to the United Nations, talks hosted by the UN on the name issue failed to produce any significant progress. Things started to move forward in the fall of 1995 when U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, Richard Holbrooke (who was working on a peace plan to end the Bosnian war), undertook discussions with Greek and Macedonian leaders. After

a few back and forth visits to Skopje and Athens, Holbrooke squared the circle by persuading Greece and Macedonia to sign an interim agreement of mutual recognition in which they consented to normalize their relations. Under this agreement, the two states agreed to recognize their mutual frontiers, the inviolability of their borders, and their respective independence. Macedonia also agreed to adopt a new flag and, in return, Athens lifted its economic embargo (Holbrooke 1999:121–127). The two states also exchanged liaison officers and agreed to begin commercial negotiations. More importantly, both parties began serious negotiations on the name issue.

It is in the context of mutual agreement between Greece and Macedonia that the United States established diplomatic relations with FYROM at the ambassadorial level by upgrading its liaison office to an embassy in February of 1996. The U.S. decision was made after both parties had shown a clear commitment to respect each other's sovereignty and had made efforts to find a solution to the name dispute. This interim accord was the piece of the puzzle that could guarantee inter state stability in the South Balkans. As a result of the accord, political tensions dropped significantly and virtually eliminated the probability of an inter state conflict between the two states.¹²

For Matthew Nimetz, who became UN special envoy to Macedonia in 1994, the establishment of a U.S. embassy in Skopje greatly strengthened the security of the Macedonian state. He indicates:

In smaller countries, you have to understand how important it is to have an Ambassador of the large superpower and until that happens there is always a question of whether there will be support for the very survival of the country. And this is a country in the Balkans that never had a history of being an independent country. So, I think that it was a high priority in Skopje to have not only formal U.S. recognition, and a membership in the UN, but a tangible U.S. demonstration of support. [Nimetz, Matthew. (2005) Phone interview, February 18]

After signing the accord with Athens, Macedonia was also able to internationalize and to institutionalize its status as a sovereign state by joining a series of international organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and NATO's Partnership for Peace.

Episode 5: The U.S. Recognizes FYROM as the Republic of Macedonia

The fifth and last episode of the Macedonian saga took place under the presidency of George W. Bush and concerns the U.S. recognition of FYROM as the Republic of Macedonia which, at the time of this writing, is still opposed by Greece. Conventionally, the diplomatic recognition of a new state comes with the recognition of its constitutional name. Macedonia once again failed to experience the conventional process of recognition as the United States recognized its constitutional name 10 years after it recognized its independence. The question to ask here is why the U.S. suddenly felt the need to recognize the name "Macedonia" while Athens and Skopje had still not entirely resolved their contention regarding this issue? This is even more puzzling considering that the EU members were waiting for a final agreement on the name before completing Macedonia's recognition process. What kind of incentives led the United States

¹² In response to the U.S. recognition, Macedonian Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski declared: "The establishment of full diplomatic relations with the U.S.A. at ambassadorial level, is an event of exceptional, I'd say historic, significance for the republic of Macedonia. It's something we have been anticipating for a long time, aware that this would contribute, to a great extent, to the strengthening of Macedonia's position not only on a bilateral basis in relations with the U.S., but overall in the international community, as well." (see Shea 1997:306).

to make such a bold decision? Once again, defensive positionalism offers an explanation.

Macedonia's Growing Instability

Following its independence, Macedonia faced growing internal divisions between some elements of the Christian Orthodox majority and Muslim Albanian minority. Ethnic Albanians were poorly represented within Macedonia's institutions and only a few government ministers were Albanian Muslims. In the second half of the 1990s, some ethnic Albanians rose up against the discrimination and began to express their grievances more vocally. They requested more political autonomy and better constitutional recognitions. Macedonia soon went from the status of a secessionist state struggling for independence to a host state facing an Albanian autonomist movement.

The growing political tension in Macedonia eventually led to ethnic violence in early 2001. Ethnic Albanian insurgents formed a paramilitary force, the National Liberation Army (NLA), and launched several attacks in the northwest of the republic (Phillips 2004). The conflict produced more than 120,000 displaced persons before a ceasefire between the NLA and the Macedonian authorities could be reached in July (Liotta 2003:97). With the assistance of special representatives from the United States and the EU, a political accord known as the Ohrid Agreement was signed in August.¹³ The implementation of the accord, however, was more difficult than expected. Although the agreement had officially put an end to the crisis, ethnic tensions persisted and a significant portion of Christian Orthodox opposed certain dispositions of the agreement. One of the central political contentions dividing many Orthodox and Muslims concerned the modification of the municipal boundaries, which was to give more power to the ethnic Albanians in important Macedonian cities. In the summer of 2004, Orthodox nationalists mobilized and called for a referendum on a proposal to override a decentralization law, which was to redraw certain municipal boundaries. Ten days before the referendum, opinion polls showed that no <43.5% of Macedonians would oppose the decentralization law. The referendum threatened to put an end to the three-year peace agreement that had been sponsored in 2001 by the United States and the EU (Pettifer 2004:4).

In early November 2004, officials from the Macedonian government called on the Bush administration for help and support [Anonymous interview with a State Department official. (2005). Washington, DC, February 25]. As a key instigator of the Ohrid peace plan, the U.S. administration saw the accord as the best way to preserve stability in the southern Balkans. The agreement was seen in Washington as Macedonia's first step toward a successful multiethnic state and as the only solution to ensure Macedonia's eventual integration into the EU and NATO. The State Department was worried that a winning referendum might destabilize Macedonia and that ethnic conflicts might resurface. In this context, the Macedonian issue literally became a short-term crisis management issue for the U.S. administration [Anonymous interview with a State Department official. (2005). Washington, DC, March 10]. On November 3, the day after the reelection of President George W. Bush, members of the State Department and the NSC met to discuss measures to secure the survival of the Ohrid agreement.

¹³ This agreement addressed the core Albanian demands: greater civil rights were guaranteed for Albanians (i.e., political, cultural, and religious rights); a better representation of Albanians in the civil service and in the police force; the recognition of the Albanian language as an official language in districts where Albanians formed the majority; and a double-majority parliamentary system was created which gave Albanians a veto power over Macedonia's political life (see Carpenter 2002:30). Following the signing of the agreement, NATO sent ground troops—as requested by Macedonian Prime Minister Hari Kostov—to lead the “Operation Essential Harvest” which consisted of demilitarizing the NLA and restoring order in the republic.

During the meeting, the option of recognizing Macedonia's constitutional name was retained as a measure to appease Orthodox nationalists who had been struggling for the right to use the name Macedonia as the independence of the republic in 1991 (Pettifer 2004). Recognition was expected to bring more confidence to the Christian majority as well as more evidence of United States support of Macedonia's territorial integrity. This explains why the recognition of the constitutional name was warranted in 2004 as opposed to 2001 when domestic political tensions exploded. Recognition in 2001 would have been an inappropriate measure to bolster internal stability. The Albanian minority was discontent with its political status within Macedonia and the recognition of the constitutional name could have been interpreted as a pro-Orthodox measure.

Certain members of the State Department who attended the meeting pointed out, however, that the Greek-American community would clearly be angry at the United States if the Bush administration was to move on with recognition [Anonymous interview with a State Department official. (2005). Washington, DC, February 25]. Despite this domestic consideration, Secretary of State Colin Powell advised President Bush to extend recognition. The decision was made in a short period of time and resulted from a relatively large consensus between the State Department and the NSC. It is not a coincidence that the Bush administration went ahead with the recognition 24 hours after the U.S. presidential election. The administration knew that the decision would alienate the Greek-American community and was aware that it would have been politically costly to make such a unilateral decision before the election.

At the State Department daily press briefing that followed the U.S. decision, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher declared:

The fact that the [Macedonian] referendum is coming up is part of the equation. We are certainly looking for ways to support the full implementation of the Ohrid Agreements, including the decentralization that's so important to that, and we felt therefore this was the appropriate time to take the step. [...] The point is to show support for a multiethnic society in Macedonia as they proceed in a direction that we feel contribute to their own stability and the stability of the region, and by taking this step in terms of recognizing Macedonia under its chosen name we feel that we bolster that progress. (Boucher 2004)

For the first time as the breakup of Yugoslavia, the United States had made a decision on recognition without consulting its European counterparts beforehand. The reason the United States did not attempt to bring EU countries on board was that it had no wish to offend and isolate Greece, which still opposed FYROM's use of the name Macedonia. The Bush administration, however, was so determined to save the Ohrid agreement that it only informed the Greek government of its decision to recognize Macedonia once the decision was made, a lack of delicacy that infuriated Athens. As much as Secretary of State Colin Powell repeated that the U.S. decision "was not aimed at upsetting Greece," this did not prevent Athens from taking offence at the U.S. decision (Quinn 2004). The Greek government declared that regardless of the U.S. stance on the issue, it would not recognize FYROM as the Republic of Macedonia and that it would oppose its integration in the EU and NATO as long as a compromise was not reached on the name of the republic.

This last episode of the saga shows that the U.S. cost-benefit analysis produced a different outcome than 10 years earlier. It was more important in 2004 to foster Macedonia's internal order and cohesion than to manage Greece's feelings toward the issue. This can be explained by the fact that the Greek-Macedonian tension of the early 1990s, which inhibited President George H. W. Bush from recognizing the republic, was much less significant in 2004. Indeed, as a result of

the 1995 interim accord, Athens and Skopje had normalized their relations and Greece had become the largest economic investor in Macedonia. In the late 1990s, the two states also agreed to build an oil pipeline that crossed both states and signed a bilateral security accord. Moreover, Greece had supported the Macedonian government during the 2001 conflict against NLA insurgents (Zahariadis 2003:277). This growing economic and military interdependence made any inter state conflict very unlikely, and this explains why this factor was no longer part of the U.S. cost-benefit analysis.

The Macedonian referendum proposal to overturn decentralization was ultimately defeated on November 7, 2004 because of a low turnout (Los Angeles Times 2004). It is difficult to measure whether the U.S. decision to recognize Macedonia really had an impact on the referendum result. We can assume, however, that it did influence the outcome in a positive way as supporters of the proposal to override the decentralization law were fewer than polls had shown the week before. According to James Pettifer:

The great short-term achievement of the American recognition decision is that it cut the ground from under the feet of the rejectionists in the Slavophone community, and reinforced the minority who are prepared to accept, if not like, the Ochrid Accords. (Pettifer 2004:4)

Those who saw the U.S. move as a reward for Macedonia's help during the Kosovo war and for its support in the invasion of Iraq in 2003 have misread the meaning of Bush's decision. As a defensive positional state, the United States extended recognition to help maintain Macedonia's internal stability and reinforce order within the region. This episode shows that recognition was a tool to foster the American stability interests in the Balkans, and that this focus remained consistent over the years.

The Second Crusade of the Greek-Americans

Twenty-four hours after the Bush administration recognized the Republic of Macedonia, the head of the Greek-American Church, Archbishop Demetrios, sent a letter to President Bush asking him to revoke his decision (Financial Times 2004). Ten days later, Archbishop Demetrios, accompanied by members of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and Greek-American leaders from Boston, New York and Washington, DC, met with U.S. top officials hoping to persuade them to change their mind. At the State Department, the Greek-American lobby met in private with Secretary Colin Powell, Undersecretary for Political Affairs Marc Grossman, and Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Elizabeth Jones (World Council of Hellenes Abroad 2004). During the meeting, Powell explained that the decision to recognize the name was irrevocable. According to a State Department official, Secretary Powell declared "We knew that the decision would create great pain to you but we had no choice. The objective was to reinforce stability in Macedonia" [Anonymous interview with a State Department official. (2005). Washington, DC, February 25]. The Greek-American delegation then headed to the NSC to meet with National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. Deputy National Security Advisor Fran Townsend and President Bush's senior political advisor Karl Rove attended the meeting. Once more, the Archbishop asked that the United States revoke its decision but received the same answer from the NSC [Anonymous interview with a State Department official. (2005). Washington, DC, February 25]. The delegation finally went on to Capitol Hill to meet with Greek-Americans from the House of Representatives and to conduct strategic meetings with Greek-American Senator Paul Sarbanes from Maryland. In the weeks following its visit to Washington, the Greek-American

delegation sent numerous letters to Congress members in an ultimate attempt to influence the White House's decision. Despite time and energy spent, the Greek-American lobby failed to modify the U.S. decision to recognize the Republic of Macedonia.

Conclusion: Regional Stability or Ethnic Lobbies?

This research shows that the defensive realist paradigm is useful in explaining the United States response to the Macedonian saga. Indeed, the United States acted along the lines of defensive positionalism as Grieco would predict. The within-case analysis performed suggests that the quest for regional stability is the main factor explaining the United States delay of Macedonia's recognition. The search for the stabilization of the South Balkans was consistent during most of the Macedonian saga. Recognition was initially delayed in large part because it would have encouraged the possibility of a military conflict between Greece and Macedonia. Then, recognition was conferred to FYROM in 1994 in order to reduce its vulnerability to Serbian aggression once the prospect of a war with Greece became less of a concern and that Macedonia could guarantee that no inter state war would occur. Diplomatic relations were extended in 1996 once a U.S. sponsored agreement reinforced stability in the region by opening a constructive dialogue between Greece and Macedonia. Finally, the constitutional name of the republic was recognized by Washington in 2004 in an attempt to secure the implementation of the Ohrid agreement, which aimed to strengthen the internal stability of the republic and, by extension, prevent disorder from spreading in the South Balkans (see Table 1).

Facts conform to the initial hypotheses of the research: as a stability-seeking power, the United States only recognizes the independence of a secessionist state that can simultaneously maintain its internal and external stability. In the case where stability would not be guaranteed by the secessionists, the United States maintains the status quo and/or delays recognition.

This article also demonstrates that the three successive presidencies that tackled the controversial Macedonian question (i.e., George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush) made a connection between the internal and the external dimensions of Macedonia's stability, and that this connection guided the American response toward this emerging state. The analysis also shows that the fluctuation of the U.S. position over time was not caused by a disparity in U.S. foreign policy interests but rather by a consistent set of preferences that produced different outcomes depending on the nature of each intra case analyzed. Hence, this essay brings the external factors back to the forefront of the theoretical debate on U.S. foreign policy making toward foreign crises. The case of Macedonia is, therefore, important for theory development. Indeed, the defensive realist argument presented in this article challenges the reliability of the ethnic lobby proposition to explain the U.S. behavior toward Macedonia, a case that is often brought up by the advocates of this liberal argument. The Greek-American lobby was not a major variable in the Bush administration's decision to delay recognition in 1992. This lobby failed to prevent President Clinton from recognizing the independence of the republic in 1994, and failed again 10 years later when it attempted to reverse George W. Bush's decision to recognize Macedonia's constitutional name. The Greek-Americans only had an impact on one specific instance that is on the U.S. decision to delay the extension of full diplomatic relations to FYROM in March 1994. Although one would expect the ethnic argument to perform well in the Macedonian case because of the strength of the Greek-American community in Washington, this study shows that this proposition performs poorly overall.

TABLE 1. U.S. Foreign Policy and the Birth of the Macedonian State

<i>Within-case analysis</i>	<i>Regional Stability Predictions</i>	<i>Greth-American Lobby Predictions</i>	<i>Actual U.S. Foreign Policy</i>
Episode 1: recognition delayed (1991–1992)	U.S. delays recognition of Macedonia	U.S. opposes recognition of Macedonia	U.S. delays recognition of Macedonia
Episode 2: recognition of FYROM (1994)	U.S. recognizes FYROM of FYROM	U.S. opposes recognition	U.S. recognizes FYROM
Episode 3: U.S. backtracks on diplomatic relations (1994)	U.S. extends full diplomatic relations to FYROM	U.S. does not extend full diplomatic relations to FYROM	<i>U.S. does not extend full diplomatic relations to FYROM</i>
Episode 4: extension of diplomatic relations (1996)	U.S. extends full diplomatic relations to FYROM	U.S. does not extend full diplomatic relations to FYROM	U.S. extends full diplomatic relations to FYROM
Episode 5: recognition of constitutional name (2004)	U.S. recognizes Macedonia's constitutional name	U.S. opposes recognition of Macedonia's constitutional name	U.S. recognizes Macedonia's constitutional name

Cases in bold are successful predictions. The one in italics is an incorrect prediction. FYROM, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

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