

## **The Balkan Crisis and Peace-Keeping Operation of the UNO in Macedonia**

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**Abstract:** The topicality of the issue under consideration is determined by the circumstance that during the post-bipolar period the armed conflicts gained widespread currency within which the UNO held and continues to hold peace-keeping operations, moreover, after termination of the cold war another form of such operations appears preventive deployment of the UNO forces as one of the methods of preventive diplomacy. The objective of the study consists in analysis of the activity of the peace-keeping mission of the UNO in Macedonia and the prospects of the preventive deployment for settlement of potential international conflicts as well as conditions required for successful implementation of this form of peace-keeping. The materials of the study may be useful during the process of further studies of the preventive deployment issue and directly during the process of conducting the peace-keeping operations.

**Key words:** System of international relations, the cold war, the Balkan conflict, United Nations Organization, the security council, Macedonia, Serbia, Albania, Secretary-General of the UN, preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment, USA

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 that represented the ending of the 'cold war' was followed by the overall euphoria and hopes for a safer world. Unfortunately, very soon it became clear that the destruction of the Yalta-Potsdam system of international relations established after termination of the WWII and warranting relative stability resulted in not only escalation of the existing but also onset of the new international conflicts as well. Moreover, each of them carries potential threat to the entire humankind.

One of the severest conflicts of the post-bipolar period was the Balkan conflict that affected not only the former union republic of Yugoslavia but the neighboring countries as well, in particular Albania and Greece.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The historical-comparative, retrospective and systematic approaches are used in the study.

**Main part:** For the first time, the United Nations Organization started managing the Balkan crisis in autumn 1991. The hottest armed conflicts took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These were the countries where the UN peace-keeping forces were forwarded in spring 1992. Despite, the absence of the direct armed conflicts a complex situation was also established.

On November 11, 1992 during the meeting in New York with the UN Secretary-General B. Boutros-Ghali, the president of Macedonia asked to place the UN observers in his country because of his concerns as to possible negative impact of the crisis in former Yugoslavia' (Holbrooke, 1998).

Which grounds made the president of Macedonia feel afraid for the situation in his country? Firstly, Macedonia supported sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council against the union republic of Yugoslavia. And, the response of Yugoslavia could have been rather tough. It should also be taken into account that the Serbian minority inhabiting Macedonia boycotted the referendum on independence. The Macedonian Serbs could have become the reason for interference of Belgrade in the internal affairs of the young state.

Secondly, the Albanian minority making about 30% of the country population constituted threat to the Macedonia security (Holbrooke, 1999).

However, according to Holbrooke (1999), the US Under Secretary of State for the European and Canadian affairs who participated in settlement of the Balkan crisis, the most serious situation was established in the relations of Skopje with Athens. The Greek Government reasonably thought that the new state directly endanger the sovereignty of Greece attempting to inherit the Classical Greek culture and the historical name of the Greek province. Thus, Macedonia could have claimed the part of the Northern Province of the modern Greece under the same name.

On November 28, 1992, the group consisting of 14 persons from the forces of the UN Council (UN forces for protection initially forwarded to Croatia and Bosnia) arrived at Macedonia for evaluation of the situation and preparation of the peace-keeping operation. The members of the group met the president of the country Gligorov, the Prime Minister Branko Chervenkovsky, other members of the cabinet as well as representatives of the largest political parties, senior military and political figures and representative of the high commissioner for refugees (Anonymous, 1992). In the course of these meetings, the group of observers had to, firstly, investigate the causes of the Gligorov's request to introduce the UN peace-makers to the country in details, secondly, to try to understand the genuine goals of the Macedonian government that brought itself to such move and finally, thirdly to agree with the government the optimal term for placement of the peace-keeping forces in the country.

During the meeting with the members of the observers' group, the President Gligorov outlined the negative scenario of possible progression of events in Macedonia. He emphasized that if the conflict in Croatia and Bosnia affects Kosovo then Macedonia will be involved in it any way. Thousands of Albanian refugees from Kosovo could appear in Macedonia and Albania is able and has to provide support to its Kosovo brothers. In this case, Serbia will bring its troops into the Northern part of Macedonia to fight against the Kosovar Albanians and their Albanian allies. Besides, in this case, Gligorov left open the possibility of conflict intervention by Greece and Turkey. Thus, it became clear from the message of the president that the conflict may potentially result in the great Balkan war. The president also mentioned the statements of some nationalistically-oriented politicians in Belgrade that contained territorial claims to Macedonia. According to Gligorov, in case of external aggression Macedonia that did not have heavy armament and air forces will not be able to give a fitting rebuff.

Beside, the above-mentioned causes announced by the government of the country, there were two other important reasons for placing the UN peace-keeping forces in Macedonia. Firstly, the UN representatives hoped that presence of peace-makers will strengthen the legitimacy of the Macedonian sovereignty and extend the potential of the international diplomatic recognition of this country. By discussing the term of the peace-maker placement the president Gligorov proposed to start the peace-keeping operation not later than within 2 months after the December elections in Serbia (1992). He was seriously afraid that the Serbian nationalists could win and destabilize the situation in Kosovo and Macedonia with their actions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following the results of meetings and discussions with the government of Macedonia, the observers' mission proposed to the UN secretary-General to place the peace-keeping contingent on the Macedonian side of 250 km long border with the Union Republic of Yugoslavia and the 182 km long border with Albania granted with the following powers:

- Monitoring of the frontier zone and informing of any changes in the situation threatening the security of Macedonia
- Prevention of such threats as well as prevention of collisions between the Macedonian army and the external armed forces

For the optimal fulfillment of the above-mentioned tasks, the mission proposed to place in Macedonia the mechanized infantry battalion up to 700 military officers consisting of three troops, the headquarter and the service organization group. Along with the battalion, the members of the mission proposed to forward to the country 26 UN observers from among the civilian policemen for surveillance over the work of the Macedonian police in the border districts. They will have to 'help settling any ethnic conflicts that may arise in case of illegal border crossing by the Albanians'. Besides, for coordination between the UN forces and the central and local administration it is necessary to forward 2 civilian experts and 2 experts for information issues for organization of the propaganda campaign among the local population that would validate the necessity of presence of the UN peace-keeping forces in the country.

In his report to the security council as of December 9, 1992 the secretary-general supported the conclusions and proposals of the UN observation mission in Macedonia having emphasized that the similar position was stated by the commander-in-chief of the peace-keeping forces in former Yugoslavia the Indian Major General Satish Nambiar. He expressed confidence that placement of the UN forces 'will help Macedonia and the two neighboring countries to overcome the potentially challenging and explosive period'.

On December 11, 1992, the Security Council by its resolution 795 unanimously approved the report of the secretary-general having entitled him to place the UNPROFOR peace-keeping contingent in Macedonia and notify the authorities of Albania and the Union Republic of Yugoslavia of that. This resolution recommended the secretary-general immediately upon receipt of approval of the Skopje authorities to place in Macedonia the military

civilian and administrative personnel of the peace-keeping forces as well as police observers in the border districts, obliged the peace-keeping forces in Macedonia to coordinate their activities with the OSCE mission and to continuously inform the council of execution of this resolution.

Thus, the security council approved the first in the UN history preventive peace-keeping operation that in addition to was started in the country that at that point of time wasn't a member of this international organization. It started only half a year after the address of B. Boutros-Ghali'. The time has come to plan the preventive deployment of peace-keeping forces that can be implemented in a few regions in different ways'. Later on in his memoirs, the ex-UN-secretary-general mentioned that he 'gladly observed the practical implementation of his concept presented in the Agenda for peace' (Anonymous, 1999).

The peace-keeping battalion to the number of 434 military from Finland, Norway and Sweden was placed at the Western border of Macedonia close to the town of Debar and in the North at the border with Bulgaria. The headquarters of the Norwegian troop was located in the suburbs of the capital. The leadership of the Finnish unit chose the town of Tetovo and the Swedes settled down at Kumanovo. By the middle of February, the peace-makers arranged 10 permanent observation posts and 13 temporary ones. By May 1993, 18 posts had been arranged, 4 of which along the Macedonian-Albanian border and 14 along the border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. A small group of military observers consisting of 19 persons was located at the Northern border of Macedonia and in the Western part of the country (Anonymous, 1993a). About 24 civilian observers settled down at the Northern and Western borders of the country.

At the meeting of the NATO-states in Athens on June 10, the US Secretary of State Warren Christopher stated that the USA decided to forward to Macedonia three hundred military for enhancement of the peace-keeping contingent. He also stated that 'the troops will emphasize the severity of our warning to Belgrade and the Bosnian Serbians. The American assistance to the UNO in the region matters both symbolically and at the same time practically' (Anonymous, 1993b). By justifying the participation of the American military in the peacekeeping operation in Macedonia the president of the USA B. Clinton said: 'we have always stated that we will support the UN efforts aimed at settling the conflict on all fronts. This is a very restricted function not a war but a chance to confine the conflict' (Anonymous, 1993c). The US representative in the UNO M. Albright talked in a

similar vein. The UN Secretary-General B. Boutros-Ghali that formally did not appeal to the USA with such a request, however, noted that 'placement of the American troops will enhance the security and stability in the former Yugoslavian republic Macedonia and emphasized that further expansion of the conflict across the region is inadmissible to the world community.

The Macedonian government unanimously welcomed forwarding of the American troops on the day when the Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced that in Athens. On June 18, the security council adopted the resolution 842 (1993) that sanctioned placement of the American peace-makers in Macedonia and, therefore, extended the UNPROFOR mandate'.

On March 31, 1994, the security council by its resolution no. 908 sanctioned the extension of mandate of the special representative of the secretary-general for maintenance of peace and stability in Macedonia (Anonymous, 1994).

On March 31, 1995, for substitution of the UNPROFOR in the former Yugoslavian Republic Macedonia the United Nations Preventive Deployment Forces were established (UNPREDEP).

The mandatory powers of the UNPREDEP counting 1110 military and police officers among which 1049 military, 35 military observers and 26 civilian policemen in general remained to be same like those of the UNPROFOR in Macedonia: monitoring of the border areas and informing of any events that could disturb confidence and stability in the former Yugoslavian Republic Macedonia and constitute threat to its territory. On February 1, 1996, the UNPREDEP became an independent mission accountable directly to the United Nations Organization in New York. Notwithstanding the new status of the operation, its mandate, manpower and composition of the military contingent in general remained to be the same. By the end of the year 1995, within the frameworks of the UNPREDEP 24 permanent observation points were operating along the 420 km long area on the Macedonian side of the border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Albania. Also, 33 temporary observation points were in operation. Daily about 40 patrols were put along the border and within settlements and the UN military observers supplemented the work performed by battalions (Anonymous, 2000).

From the end of 1995, certain positive changes take place in the Balkans that are aimed at termination of the armed conflict. The Dayton and Paris Peace Accords were signed that brought closure to the armed conflict between the Serbians, Croats and Muslims in Bosnia. Also, the Erdut Agreement concerning the status of the Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium and their further

integration into Croatia was signed. These changes decreased the degree of the Balkan conflict. Along with that the position of the Macedonia State was strengthened. By November 1995, three of the four neighboring countries had recognized Macedonia Greece, Bulgaria and Albania. The relations between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Macedonia also improved. This was stated in the report of the UN secretary-general as of November 23, 1995. He also emphasized the increasing role of Macedonia in the international arena (Anonymous, 1995).

On February 25, 1999, in the UN Security Council, the representative of the PR China put a veto on the resolution concerning extension of mandate of the UN forces in Macedonia in response to the diplomatic recognition of Taiwan by the Skopje authorities. In such a way, the first in principle successful preventive peace-keeping operation of the UNO was completed.

**Summary:** Unfortunately, the modern globalized world of the 21st century could not completely overcome the armed conflicts inherited from the 20th century. Today within the single interdependent community of nations any local conflict constitutes potential threat to the international security. As far as possible, each conflict shall be settled prior to the onset of the armed stage. The positive experience of Macedonia, in this regard, shall become the illustrative example. This is why, such method of the conflict settlement as preventive deployment of peace-keeping forces shall enjoy wider application in the practice of the UNO and other international organizations.

## CONCLUSION

Preventive deployment of the peace-keeping forces features decisive advantages over the traditional peace-keeping operation. Firstly, financially preventive deployment is much cheaper than a traditional peace-keeping operation. Secondly, preventive deployment is much simpler in terms of organization, since the peace-makers are brought into the country in the conditions of absence of the armed conflict which facilitates the reconnaissance of the advance parties and management of the peace-keeping contingent in whole. Thirdly, in the conditions of preventive deployment it is easier for peace-makers to fulfill the intermediary political functions aimed at reconciliation of the opposing parties as compared to traditional peace-making when each armed provocation immensely complicates the political dialogue and the tasks of peace-makers. Fourthly, traditional

peace-keeping operation is often conducted under time pressure while preventive deployment is performed with a certain cushion time.

By planning of the future preventive peace-keeping operations one shall take into account the following circumstances: in order to ensure the success of the operation the political will of the UN security council members is required. Besides, the operation shall be timely, i.e., to start at the moment when it is still possible to prevent the armed conflict. It is also necessary to obtain the agreement of the government of the host country and ensure loyalty of the mainstream population. The mandate powers of peace-makers shall be definitely specified in the resolution of the security council for avoidance of discretionary interpretation of any functions. For successful administration of such operation the detailed implementation plan shall be prepared and the approximate time frames shall be defined. The peace-makers that have completed special training at training centers shall be involved in such an operation. It is also necessary to arrange coordination between the military, police and civilian missions of the peace-keeping operation. In order to guarantee the success of the operation it is needed to provide the string information support including engagement of the key international mass media.

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