

Name of Discord, Aim of Co-Operation. Changing Perceptions of Security between Neighbouring Countries.

State relations are signified by major events in history. Alliances and wars, occupations and conquests are moments or periods of history that follow states in their relations many years or generations after the time they occurred. In the same way peoples and ethnic groups keep glorious or tragic memories and their aspirations or fears go beyond state politics or international balances. However, there are moments when the silent river-wise current of popular feelings joins the international conjecture. Time then comes for conflict where rationality inclines to history and fatal past precludes humanity from change.

In modern times the citizen model is dominant and the other is not a threat but a prerequisite of individual identity. Nations divide the world in states but the ethnic state is predominantly a state based on citizenship rather than on ethnic homogeneity. Powerful states are determined by their multiethnic composition. New developments marked the 20 century and the eruption of a globalising society inserted new concepts of analysis compatible to the emergent unified world, the new powers and possibilities offered. Soft borders, regional and global economic integration schemes, policies of non state actors etc. However, since states remain the principal components of international society, we have to analyse their interaction equally through the traditional key concepts of power politics.

Security as a balance between interest and power.

Security is principally viewed as protection against an external threat. Evaluation and perception of an external danger is dependant of the way a State fixes its policy priorities. In the international society the absence of a compulsory jurisdiction brings power considerations to the front. Thus, interaction between policy definition and the context in which it has to be applied influences the security perspectives. In simple, even simplistic terms, we can argue that if the definition of national interest and correspondingly the foreign policy exceeds the estimation of one's own power then disillusion, retreat or defeat are the possible outcomes. On the contrary, if national interest is defined in underestimating the power factor, it will create the will to exploit this vacuum and claims will emerge. Since power appreciations are not stable, a constant game of negotiations, pressures, unilateral acts, claims and counter claims are always in play. As long as a status quo is not achieved, the balance of power is constantly under play. Stabilisation is thus important.

In the traditional realist theory, "interest" is defined as power. The two concepts are described not only in interconnection with each other but also as a single concept. My interest is to increase or impose my power. Although change is introduced, it is considered that it concerns the evolution of a single concept. Both are considered as perennial concerns of the state.

"Realism assumes that its key concept of interest defined as power is an objective category which is universally valid, but it does not endow that concept with a meaning that is fixed once and for all." And although "the idea of interest is indeed the essence of politics and is unaffected by the circumstances of time and place", it is recognised that "the kind of interest determining political action in a particular period of history depends upon the political and cultural context within which the foreign policy is formulated" (Morgentau p.10,11).

In our approach it is not the specific goal presented as "interest" that matters rather than the variability of the interest in terms of its adjustment in a moving power configuration. So the

two concepts are distinguished, intimately interconnected, but defined separately. Interest defined as power and power defined as interest is a tautology not without substance but reductive to the concept of the will of power that is always true but not a sufficient tool of analysis. Thus, one has to meaningfully rephrase the relation of the two concepts and conceive the setting of national interest and consequently the goals of foreign policy (of a nation, state or other political grouping) and then evaluate the implementation of these goals in terms of the general balance of power.

Foreign policy positions are determined by two criteria. The first is institutional, the second is conjectural. Institutional criteria means that the foreign policy position is dependant upon the quality of the person who expresses it, e.g. state representative or academic. A state representative puts his position in a negotiation process and logic so it has to take into account not only the ultimate goals that he wants to achieve, but also the way the interaction of his position will end up with a desirable outcome. He has to calculate internal political reactions and, equally, the other party's reaction. An academic, on the contrary, can act more freely and his position may refer directly to the desirable solution. It can be extremely useful to the state representatives by procuring alternative scenarios even in the negotiation process where a reflexive maximisation of claims seems inevitable.

The conjectural criteria means that foreign policy positions have to be shaped in terms of time and place taking into account the geo-strategic environment in which the state foreign policy would be implemented.

In our analysis we will try to give an account of Greek foreign policy in connection with the denomination dispute between Greece and the new Macedonian State.

The definition of national interest.

Three sectoral levels of analysis lead to the definition of national interest:

- State considerations in its interaction with the international system.
- Internal Political interactions.
Dominant political discourse and opposition. Variability of public opinion, possibility of change (maturity of electoral body, state of education, quality of leadership, etc.).
- Historical legacies.

Additionally, national interest is

1. materially defined
2. symbolically defined (identity-prestige)
3. institutionally determined (state unity, elite or leaders specific interests.)

In terms of theory we apply the general pi that the definition of national interest is an interpretation characterised by its relativity towards facts or previous definitions. This is the reason for using the phrase "perception of national interest" and by this I mean no stability of interest, neither in time nor place, and therefore, neither to be pursued or defended come what may (wider any circumstances). The case of the two neighbouring countries, Greece and FYRoM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), is relevant for showing how damaging the perception of interest can be when it succumbs to short sighted Vision aiming only at personal or party consideration's and supported by a disoriented public. Greece and FYRoM were entangled in a conflict over the name that impeded the former in exploiting the serious advantages in the area at that period and the second in establishing relations with the EU and securing the political and ethnic unity of the newly established state.

Let us remember the facts of the issue.

The creation of the new Macedonian state succeeded the Macedonian federal state of Yugoslavia in 1991. The new state had to promote a unifying identity whilst its multiethnic composition was in fact endangering its state unity. One could support the view that Macedonians, trying to counter or negate the Bulgarian or Albanian claims over the new state, turned to the South (Greece) in a mixed portion of defensive victimisation and expansive heroism.

On the other hand, Greece had to formulate its position to counter the Macedonian claims and to assert its own identity. The denial of the particular name as official denomination of state was the official position of Greece until 1995. We can distinguish three periods concerning the denomination dispute.

The first covers the period until 1994. During that stage Greek diplomacy did not accept any concession and contested any use of the term “Macedonia” even in a hyphenated or compound form. Nevertheless, that period was the most turbulent in terms of Greek internal politics. It comprised the genesis of an ethnic movement rejecting the right for the new state of Macedonia to be recognised as such, the support of the EU and finally the “dissensions” in the ruling party, especially between P.M. and Minister of F.A.

In 1994 the sanctions adopted by the Greek Government against Macedonia hardened the odds of the game.

Finally, the adoption of the ‘Interim agreement’ directed the relation of the two countries to a completely different path.

In the first phase we have to consider the Greek thesis - official and unofficial, between people and government and amongst government members, as well.

Feeling a threat to their national and territorial integrity Greeks tried to defend their country against this “unusual” enemy which neither had military, political nor economic superiority. The slogan that was projected from both, the streets and some “engaged” intellectuals, was that “Macedonia is Greek”. This slogan revealed all the misjudgements, bad reasoning and panic reaction of that period. The slogan miscalculated how it could be exploited by the adverse party and created a false image of the dispute to the Greeks. It was one of these situations where logic is trapped in the obvious (validity) tautology of one’s own rights, without considering the opposing side’s angle. The real issue was missing. Both sides were not taking into account that Macedonia geographically and historically did not represent a single ethnic image. Since 1945 there has been gradual recognition that there are Macedonian Slavs and Macedonian Greeks. Perceiving Macedonia as a single entity leads inevitably to the point that the claims of northern Macedonians and those of the South (Greeks) were mutually exclusive.

Thus this position, expressed by a slogan of double meaning, did not clarify the real dispute. If one refers to the Greek part then the assertion that “Macedonia is Greek” is a pleonasm and it appears as a defensive reaction but considered from the opposer’s angle it could be interpreted as all Macedonia being Greek, thus is registering this as an aggressive reaction.

The Macedonian Question has been settled within the context of the Greek national aspiration (in the 19th century) to free the territories conquered by the Ottoman Empire. This project called “The Great Idea” was materialised in a world where the territorial and border fluidity was immediately connected with the solution of the Eastern Question and the expected shrinking of the Ottoman Empire.

The contemporary national upheaval has not been accompanied by a general reshaping of the frontiers in the Balkan area. The principle of the frontiers inviolability was implemented within the context of the already existing federal states or regions. Nevertheless, the geopolitical map was altered and new independent states were recognised. Therefore, any reference to national claims by one state would be affecting the national integrity of another state, or its external defence. The Greek state has fought for its national integration from Crete to Macedonia since its foundation. After the disaster of 1922, however, it was evident that a century of wars for the unification of its national territories was over and the nation was concentrating on in the problems of democracy and domestic development. The Cyprus question has confirmed this course, since it has shown how harmful the idea of its union to Greece has been.

The revival of the Macedonian question, through the appropriation of the name, led Greece back to the logic of national integration (expansive) or protection of its integrity (defensive). The exclusive appropriation of the name was endowed by a sense of mutilation, especially at the symbolic level. Besides, the denial of any compromise (i.e. a compound name) illustrated the extent of the fear. The victim was the identity itself and any compromise was being experienced as a threat against it. Therefore, defending the name cannot be limited to the logic of defending the nation and its territories, as the latter had been expressed in 1940 when the Greeks resisted successfully to Italian Fascism. Greek reaction represented, therefore, a movement trying to recompose and strengthen its national identity. The place selected as the battlefield (denomination dispute) created the opposite effect, since identity sensibilities concerning origins, ethnic purity and historic rights over territories can be solved only as political questions rather than scientific ones.

The Macedonian question played a crucial role in Greek internal politics due to the position of the communist party in 1924 and 1949 for an independent Macedonia incorporating the corresponding Greek territories. Its position until 1956 had divided the communist party itself and created profound fears that concluded to designate and try communists as traitors. The Macedonian question also put Serbs and Bulgarians in constant rivalry. Tito was trying to promote a Macedonian state that would be included in its Balkan union, creating a constellation of small states under its hegemony. Bulgaria tried to impose its rules on the area especially after the dominant position it had acquired during the Second World War but after the war Tito had been in a better position to negotiate with the allies.

The two states, Greece and the new Macedonian state, clashed in different stages of their development. The new-founded state was trying to confirm its political existence, while Greece was going through a period of relative affluence and decadent stability, disturbed by the international and Balkan changes.

The existential uncertainty of the new-founded state was, to a considerable degree, due to the differentiation process from its historical contenders, basically Bulgarians and Serbs, and aggravated by its extremely fragile internal unity. The Macedonian origin of the new founded state played the role of a powerful stabiliser of its identity but could not function as a warrant of its internal unity. It represented the continuity of the immediate Yugoslavian past, the collective appropriation of a glorious, ancient and recent history, giving, at the same time, the sense of perspective only to the ethnic majority.

The irredentist claims of the new state that had been expressed in the official texts pointed out that the state in question should go beyond the suffocating territorial limits and find expression in a cultural integrative perspective, which, in this case, could only be nationalistic. The example of the newly-founded state confirms, as we believe, the analysis that the building of national identity follows a course in three stages, i.e. from its ethnic emergence to its state formation and finally to the ethnic integration perspective (being, one

and whole). In this course the reality principle (general balance of power in relation to the identity dynamics and the capacity of the state) will determine the final outcome of this process.

The insertion of the Macedonian character in the imaginary of the new state's identity illustrated the violence by which the assertion of the name was invested. The aggressive attitude of the newly founded state was not due to the real elements of its power, but to the way it associated its Macedonian trait with its existential insecurity. Paradoxically enough, the perceived adversaries, historically presenting contending claims, had "a reason to exist" for the new Macedonian state.

The overreaction pervading the Greek attitude draws its strength from its popular origin. When the problem first emerged, the official policy was much more tolerant. So, beyond the parties' policies or any carefully planned motivation, it is important to realise and understand whether the national reaction expressed a general sense of weakness rather than an effort to protect its identity and territorial integrity.

The Greek attitude may be presented as a reflexive reaction to the adversary claim which deprived the Greek side of the advantages it possessed in the area by that time and the prevention of any other initiatives in the European or international fora. It is accompanied by the crisis of adjustment in the international and, more specifically, European system through which a permanent dependence was being confirmed.

Therefore, the relative affluence has led the internal crisis of the public economic and political life of its international integration, to a situation of decaying stability. This contradictory situation is due to the inability of the state to forge an independent national policy on the one hand, and to the necessity of defending the national singularity on the other, as far as the conditions of life, work and entertainment are concerned.

Dependence was confirmed; by the way its policy was ultimately defined not by its own initiatives but in reaction to what others were claiming or giving. The popular reaction in Greece against the appropriation of the name appeared as having the character of a national awakening.

Reinterpretation of national interest in terms of the new configuration of power

- International configuration of power.
Principal actors involved.
New patterns of power relations.
- Regional and bilateral balance of power.

In the cold war period Greek national interest was perceived as an intrinsic part of NATO politics. A clear distinction between external and internal politics was pursued. In internal politics the existence of a Slavo-Macedonian community was considered as a threat. Assimilation or rejection of any claim of the Slavo-Macedonians characterised the state practice. On the contrary, Greece had never opposed the legitimacy of the Yugoslav republic of Macedonia as a federal state entity. Yugoslavia played at that moment an important role in the East-West relations. NATO was in favour of Tito's policies as a buffer state to the soviet influence in the Balkans, acting as a stabiliser between Albania, Bulgaria and the other communist countries. Concerning international politics, Yugoslavia represented the non-aligned movement and the sensitive frontier to the soviet bloc. For the first time in history, a country, due to the cold war antagonism, could function as an axis of stability, keep enemies apart, avoid taking sides and stay out of any sphere of influence.

Integrated in the alliance System Greece had to follow and not oppose any objection. Its national interest was defined in connection to the threat coming from the North, consequently nothing that would deviate from the policy, that aimed to preserve Yugoslavia from any claims, was acceptable.

In the post-cold war period Yugoslavia's role changed dramatically. Neither Europe nor the U.S. were willing to face a strong state in this part of the world. Especially a country with ethnic affinities with the defeated Russians. The break up of the country was favoured by the conflicting policies of the European countries. The new international environment undermined the Franco-German axis because Germany was seeking to re-establish a strong central European zone of influence, integrating the Near East, while France was trying to keep the advantages of its nuclear preponderance.

By this time Greece's national interest was defined by the threat from the east, that is to say the Greek-Turkish relations. Turkey strengthened its geopolitical position in the post cold war period. In the moving Balkan environment new threats to Greece's security were presented.

Albania's internal instability provoked a real security threat, focused basically on the migration movement to Greece. This created violent border incidents concerning illegal immigrants. The creation of Macedonia was geopolitically a rather favourable situation buffering any Albanian or Bulgarian claims for territorial unity. In fact, the break up of Yugoslavia gave Greece a weaker neighbour.

Greece had to choose from which side it was willing to act. In the first phase of the conflict Greece acted as a part of the problem and not as a part of the solution. Intra-European dissension and Greece's incapacity to perceive itself as a full member of EMU created a substratum of a defensive option. Greece was insecure about its European commitment and was going through an identity crisis (identity redefinition in relation to its European status). In this period national interest was defined in connection with the perceived threats, to our way of life (Europe), our identity (irredentist claims - Macedonia) and borders (Turkey).

In the first phase Greece tried to take advantage of its European membership and succeeded in imposing hard limitations upon the new Macedonian state. The European Council decision in 1992 was in favour of the Greek position of rejecting any use of the term Macedonia by Skopje. In fact, I consider that the maximisation of the claim was favoured by an erroneous perception of the new European balances. Germany and the U.S. were in favour of the creation of new states in the area and were trying to design the new environment. In addition, the quality of the new claim was not sustainable because it implied a denial of the identity of the other. Since partition of the new Macedonian state was not desirable, one had to envisage a consensus. Greece used its favourable power conjecture to impose an enviable position. It turned out that Greece's allies were not in favour of its claim, at least in the way in which it was defended, and independently of the favourable decisions of the European Council, their actual support was very weak.

When Greece became aware of this, it realised that it had two options. Either to negotiate or to harden its position. This evolution led to the imposition of sanctions by Greece in 1994. The unilateral character of the sanctions was viewed negatively by the Greek allies. Greece's position was actually leading to a dead end but it was responding to the refusal of consensus from the other side. Although institutionally complying with Greece's demands, actual interests of European partners as great powers in the region diverged. They tried to condemn the sanctions as a unilateral act but this created a popular reaction in Greece and transferred the problem to the European institutional level. The popular reaction regressed Greece to the position of victim in which Europeans were perceived as enemies, thus creating major difficulties in Greece's integration to the European community. FYRoM diplomacy, realising

that European politics were moving at two levels, institutional and bilateral, exploited this situation having understood that the great powers wanted a stable new Macedonian state as a part of their strategy in the region. In this context, the Macedonian government was not willing to make any concessions as to a compound character of the name. It was considered that time was working in favour of the establishment of the de facto use of the constitutional name by delaying the negotiation process.

Nevertheless, the persistence of the Greek side, the institutional blockade in the EU and other international institutions and ultimately the economic sanctions, were creating serious damage to the new country. On the other side the anti-European reaction of the Greek people was equally damaging Greece's interests. Awareness of this negative situation for both countries created a need to reach an interim consensus that would lead to a workable but not definite solution.

The interim agreement of 1995 was thus based on concessions by the two sides of the dispute: FYRoM accepting to withdraw from using the ancient Macedonian flag (*Star of Vergina* discovered by *Andronikos* in 1977 in ancient Pella) and changes in the constitutional irredentist claims of article of the constitution and Greece accepting to redraw the sanctions and unofficially accepting a solution of a compound name.

The evolution of the Greek position was based on two factors. Internal and external. The first is connected to the *Papandreou* era and the coming to power of a definitely European orientated prime minister. From that point, Greece's national interest was identified as the integration in the European Union through its accession to the EMU and the adoption of the new European currency. Foreign policy had then to be adequately reshaped. The fact that Greece had realised that economically and socially it had the possibility to meet the conditions (macroeconomic indicators achieved, infrastructure built, etc.) for accession to the EMU gave to the Greek public a sense of a prestigious goal that counterbalanced its fears. Now, not so insecure about its options and its capacity to achieve them, Greece could take into account other European partners' interests and their neighbours' demands.

We recognise here three factors that contributed to the general configuration of power in which the foreign policy of the two neighbour countries interacted. Three factors are constantly present in the Balkan affairs in the post cold war era, namely Euro-Atlantic relations, intra-European relations and inter-Balkan policies. (In this dispute Russian politics didn't play a decisive role.)

At this stage, FYRoM was perceived by the West as a possible example of a multicultural experiment, as far as its internal unity was at stake and geopolitically as a buffer state and stabiliser of the neighbouring ethnic claims. In addition the state that was favourable to western influence which was proved by the UN American led force and stationing of the NATO military forces during the Kosovo crisis. After the Bosnian unworkable solution and the main clash of regional nationalism in Kosovo, the importance of the new Macedonian state acquired an utmost importance.

This was equally valid for Greece. Redefinition of its national interest was then inevitable for three reasons. The first was that by adjusting its policy to the European and American interests it could fully play the role of the privileged mediator and participate as a member of the powerful block of nations (as member of the EU and NATO). The second was the material benefits that a small but modernising market could procure, especially for Greek Macedonia business and industry, and the third being that the strengthening of the new Macedonian state would preserve the country from the possible new neighbouring ethnic claims in the region and therefore establishing a stable and secure environment at its borders.

The only remaining conflict would be the symbolic one concerning the official and final denomination of the new republic. In my personal opinion, the Option of a compound name would be the solution that would better assure the new Macedonian republic of its state unity and integrity as a citizen modelled multicultural state. This solution presents major advantages because it:

- Will not create any exclusive use of Macedonia but it will be considered as a region and not as a historical apple of discord, as a region whose name could be shared for the common good rather than be one of exclusive possession.
- Will enable to institute an important constitutional principle that will permit integration of the Albanian-Muslim element in terms of equality.
- Will favour exchanges with the other parts of the Macedonian region. It is important to understand that disappearance of friction and the new economic reality that intensifies cross border relations, softening their obstructive character, can unify Macedonia and the Balkan region through trade and culture.

We now conclude to the principal aim of our thesis being that the regional approach, the local culture and the trade are not consistent neither with the state affinities and identity susceptibilities, nor with the globalisation process and soft borders theory. Greek-Macedonian relations in their common Macedonian area can function as the pilot scheme of economic and cultural relations in South East Europe. Cultural exclusiveness leads to isolationism and propriety rights are overwhelmed by mergers and co-operation schemes in the actual globalising pattern. As far as an object is perceived as common but not exclusive, it is no longer a source of friction but a reason of co-operation. The Franco-German relationship concerning Alsace Lorain is the great example in modern history in which a region, after being the theatre of two world wars, is today a region of co-operation and the place that hosts the legislative capital of Europe.

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