



SCENARIO

MACEDONIA JULY 2001

The Setting

The July 2001 ceasefire agreed to by NLA leader Ali Ahmeti, EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, NATO Secretary General George Robertson, and the Macedonian government has basically held for two weeks while discussions continue on the peace plan proposed by Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski. Trajkovski's plan emphasizes the development of a multiethnic society with improved individual rights. The leaders of the ethnic Albanian parties are for reforms oriented toward protection of their rights as a collective group. They are adamant that a new constitution must provide for a consensual democracy with a mechanism that would block important parliamentary and governmental decisions unless the representatives of the Albanian minority approve them.

Consensus among the various political parties has been elusive and several of the different party leaders have threatened to walk out of the negotiations, and out of the increasingly fragile coalition government. The more extreme nationalist politicians of the VMRO DPMNE in particular have criticized the discussions, claiming that Trajkovski is too ready to give into ethnic Albanian demands, and their statements have been increasingly well received by the ethnic Macedonian public. The ethnic Macedonian press has taken up this rallying cry and is questioning Trajkovski's leadership—increasing the press polarization between ethnic communities. An ethnic Macedonian extremist group identified as Macedonia Paramilitary 2000 distributed in late June a pamphlet that threatens the businesses and lives of ethnic Albanians in the capitol city.

President Trajkovski is under tremendous pressure from the international community to find a political solution to the problems in Macedonia. High-level diplomats from the EU, NATO, the United States, and the UN have spent weeks in Skopje brokering the ceasefire and continue to work with armed parties on a political agreement. The European Union, NATO, and the UN are trying to encourage political dialogue between government authorities and the ethnic Albanian community and their agreement to a peace plan providing for the introduction of confidence-building measures such as an agreed multi-ethnic policing regime and guarantees that an eventual political reform process will be implemented; the withdrawal of NLA fighters from the area; and the cessation of hostilities.

The crisis in Macedonia, not unlike the crisis in Kosovo, challenges the NATO alliance. A civil war in Macedonia has more potential to spread to Albania, Greece, Turkey, and Bulgaria than the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo. NATO response thus far to the violence in Macedonia has been the promise of a British-led force of about 3,000 soldiers to implement the disarmament elements of an eventual agreement, a response seen by many to be inadequate. Currently, NATO soldiers based out of Kosovo are protecting the border against rebel activity and attempting to limit illegal arms shipments into Macedonia.

MACEDONIA AUGUST 2001

The Scenario

An unexploded car bomb found in an upscale ethnic Macedonian neighborhood in the capital city of Skopje over the past weekend heightens tension considerably. Representatives of the NLA claim no knowledge of the bomb, but one source blames a splinter faction of the NLA that is dissatisfied with the government discussions and believes the NLA should have a seat at the negotiations. According to this source, this new NLA faction has broken with NLA leader Ali Ahmeti and is also to blame for the assassinations of two men—civilians—in ethnic Macedonian towns north of Skopje. The night after the car bomb is discovered, four prominent mosques are desecrated—apparently all by the same Macedonia Paramilitary 2000—with ethnic slurs and the words, “Kill Albanians,” spray-painted in Macedonian across the doors. A photograph of the graffiti makes the front page of every domestic newspaper in Macedonia, and is picked up by the international press. Reportedly the picture is being used to fundraise in Albanian communities in the United States and recruit young Albanian men into the NLA forces.

In the northeast, where sporadic fighting continues, problems arise due to rebel activity in the area—NATO troops are within a five mile radius of an area where ethnic Serb civilians—mostly older men—are rounded up and fired upon leaving 12 dead and many wounded. Troops see the smoke from burning homes and businesses and hear the gunfire but do not cross into Macedonian territory. NATO authorities receive serious criticism from both sides of the Atlantic as a result of the incident. As it stands, troops are not permitted to engage in active fighting unless in self-defense.

Incidents of violence against ethnic Albanian families and communities also continue to occur and spread throughout the country. A particularly terrible episode involves a random shooting at an ethnic Albanian high school outside of Tetovo where a young girl is killed. During the funeral, the ethnic Albanian community takes to the streets and the police headquarters are surrounded, but the crowds eventually disperse without further violence. Local police claim they have no leads in the case, although there are rumors that a representative of the department is involved in the shooting. The incident is widely publicized in the domestic and international press and leads to outcries by local and international human rights organizations.

One of the obstacles in the discussion is the demand by the ethnic Albanian political parties for a UN guaranteed amnesty agreement for the rebel fighters. There is widespread protest to the proposed blanket amnesty in exchange for arms. Within the UN, there is interdepartmental argument about the efficacy of an amnesty agreement. The international community is unwilling to accept amnesty as a legitimate defense or a viable option, arguing that similar deals in Africa and Latin America have too often served to reinforce impunity of human rights violators. Neither side has proposed a viable alternative to persuade guerrilla fighters to lay down their arms.

The Process

Participants will be assigned identities of different actors in this situation. Given the scenario described above, and the specific dilemmas facing each group, each must assess the mandate of the actor or actor group they represent and describe the range of possible actions and then attempt to formulate a position. A number of events, referred to as drivers, will take place during this six-month period that may impact the situation. Some are known in advance and can be planned for, such as the announcement of the census and the Kosovo elections. Other events will be announced during the course of the scenario. Descriptions of the key drivers in this scenario are included in the packet. The background paper provides more information on the drivers and the full context of the scenario.