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Mario Sharevski

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**THE BALKANS AFTER 1991 THROUGH
THE PRISM OF GEOPOLITICS**

Master thesis

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Author: BSc. Mario Sharevski

Supervisor: Dr. Michael Romancov, Ph.D.

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Abstract

This thesis deals with the issue of the conceptualization, analysis and understanding of the Balkans after 1991 as a specific geopolitical area in order to examine the proclivity of the region towards conflicts and give a general idea of the geopolitical position of the Balkans in local and global context. First, the definition of the Balkans and its borders in physical and politico-geographical structure along with the historical definitions and geopolitical position settings and significance prior to 1991 are tackled. Then follows the application of the geopolitical theories and concepts on the geopolitical map with the states of the Balkans after 1991 in order to conceptualize the area and thus having a framework for examination and comparison of the territorial changes and geopolitical events that occurred in this historical period as well as for a better understanding of the strategic significance of the internal and external geopolitical position of the Balkans. As a third step follows the explanation and outline of the greater territorial irredentist and geopolitical concepts of the Balkan nation states which have been revived and actualized in the period after 1991 serving as a background and basic platform for their geopolitical agenda. Lastly, the thesis tackles the territorial changes that came as a result of the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the emergence of the independent nation states with their internal territorial divisions along ethnic and religious cleavages and their narrower as well as broader geopolitical significance. In the comprehensive review of the territorial changes related and accompanied by the events such as wars and involvement of the external greater geopolitical powers and players, the identified findings of the conceptualization by the application of the geopolitical theories and concepts as well as the greater territorial concepts of the states in order to show and understand their interrelation, compliance and significance. The thesis sums up with all of the findings brought together thus leading to a general conclusion for the geopolitical position of the Balkans after 1991 and an opinion for the prospects for the future evolving from it.

Key words

Balkans, geopolitical theories, great territorial concepts, territorial changes, disintegration of Yugoslavia

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Declaration of Authorship

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.
2. I hereby declare that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
3. I hereby declare that this thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague _____

Mario Sharevski _____

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**THE BALKANS AFTER 1991 THROUGH THE
PRISM OF GEOPOLITICS**

(Master's Thesis Proposal – Geopolitical Studies)

Name: BSc. Mario Sharevski

Supervisor: Dr. Michael Romancov, Ph.D.

I agree with supervising:

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PROJECT FOR A MASTER THESIS

By MARIO SHAREVSKI (GPS)

TITLE OF THE THESIS:

THE BALKANS AFTER 1991 THROUGH THE PRISM OF THE GEOPOLITICAL THEORIES

THESIS CONTENT:

INTRODUCTION

1. DEFINING THE BALKANS

- **GEOGRAPHY**
- **HISTORY**
- **GEOPOLITICAL POSITION, SETTINGS AND SIGNIFICANCE PRIOR 1991**

2. BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE GEOPOLITICAL THEORIES AND THEIR APPLICATION ON THE BALKANS

- **PREDOMINANCE OF THE ORGANIC STATE THEORIES – GEOPOLITIK ON THE BALKANS**
- **GEOSTRATEGY AS (JUST) A TOOL IN THE GREAT NATIONAL IDEAS**
- **THE HEARTLAND OF THE BALKANS (MACEDONIA, SERBIA)**
- **THE BALKANS AS A SHATTER BELT OR A HEARTLAND (GATE OF EUROPE ON THE WAY FROM THE MIDDLE EAST)**
- **THE RIMLAND OF THE BALKANS (BULGARIA, GREECE)**
- **THE BALKANS AS A PIVOT OF THE TELLUROCRACY**

3. BALKAN NATION STATES AND THEIR GREAT TERRITORIAL (GEOPOLITICAL) CONCEPTS

- **UNITED MACEDONIA**
- **GREATER ALBANIA**
- **GREATER SERBIA**
- **GREEK MEGALI IDEA**
- **GREATER BULGARIA**
- **GREATER CROATIA**

4. TERRITORIAL CHANGES ON THE BALKANS AFTER 1991 AND THEIR GEOPOLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

- **THE BREAK UP OF YUGOSLAVIA AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE INDEPENDENT NATION STATES**
- **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND ITS INTERNAL TERRITORIAL DIVISION (ACCORDING TO THE DAYTON PEACE AGREEMENT)**
- **KOSOVO AND SOUTHERN SERBIA**
- **MACEDONIA AND ITS TERRITORIAL ORGANISATION OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNEMENT (ACCORDING TO THE OHRID FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT)**

CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Possibility of including 5th chapter about the key players-great powers USA/EU/NATO, Russia, Turkey and their reengagement on the Balkans (as a another reason/incentive for geopolitical struggle and activeness/conflicts) , although they will be constantly mentioned throughout other chapters in historical and actual positions and activities. (Geopolitical and foreign policies as euroatlantism of USA/EU/NATO, euroasianism of Russia and neootomanism of Turkey should be examined with their prospect and influence on the Balkans). Regarding that some of the Balkan countries such as Greece, Bulgaria (and Romania) are members of the EU, having a opportunity to influence its foreign (and security) policy, the specific role of EU as a player/factor could be examined in this separate chapter.

MAIN AIMS OF THESIS

THE BALKANS, WITH ITS LONG TROUBLESOME HISTORY, THE DIFFICULT INTERNAL POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY AND ETHNOGRAPHY IS UNDOUBTEDLY GEOPOLITICALLY THE MOST ACTIVE REGION ON THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT. BY APPLYING THE BASIC ACADEMIC THEORIES AND CONCEPTS OF THE GEOPOLITICS AND EXAMINING THE EVENTS AND TERRITORIAL CHANGES ON THE BALKAN AFTER 1991, THE MAIN IDEA OF THE THESIS IS TO EXAMINE THE PRONENESS OF THE BALKANS FOR CONFLICTS REGARDING ITS GEOPOLITICAL POSITION IN GLOBAL PROSPECT, LEVELS OF SOCIO-POLITICAL, ECONOMICAL AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AS A MAIN CAUSE OF INNER GEOPOLITICAL STRIFE AND INTEGRATION PROCESSES AS A POSSIBLE SOLUTION.

HYPOTHESES

- **THE EVENTS ON THE BALKANS FROM 1991 CAN BE EXAMINED THROUGH THE BASIC ACADEMIC THEORIES AND CONCEPT OF GEOPOLITICS IN ORDER TO BE PROVEN THE GEOPOLITICAL BACKGROUND AND INTERRELATION BETWEEN THE TERRITORIAL CHANGES AND THE GREAT NATIONAL CONCEPTS OF THE BALKANS NATIONS AS A MAIN CAUSE OF THE CONFLICTS ON THE BALKANS**
- **INTERNAL POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY, ETHNOGRAPY, AS WELL AS SOCIO-POLITICAL, ECONOMICAL AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT ARE REASONS AND FACTORS FOR THE GEOPOLITICAL ACTIVENESS AND EVENTS/TERRITORIAL CHANGES/CONFLICTS ON THE BALKANS SINCE 1991**
- **GEOGRAPHICAL AND GEOPOLITICAL POSITION OF THE BALKANS IN REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXT ARE REASONS AND MAIN**

EXTERNAL FACTORS THAT THE GEOPOLITICAL ACTIVENESS AND CONFLICTS ON THE BALKANS SINCE 1991 ARE LIKELY TO CONTINUE/APPEAR IN THE FUTURE

METHODOLOGY

THE METHODOLOGY OF WRITING, EXAMINING AND PROVING THE THESIS AND HYPOTHESES SHOULD INCLUDE APPLICATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE METHODS OF THE ACADEMIC THEORIES AND THE REAL EVENTS AND ACTUAL FEATURES ON THE GROUND.

APPROACH

THE BASIC APPROACH SHOULD BE THE ANALYTICAL APPROACH IN EXAMINING THE NUMEROUS AMMOUNT OF FACTS, THEORIES, CONCEPTS, REAL (HISTORICAL) EVENTS FOUND IN BOOKS, ACCADEMIC AND POPULAR NEWSPAPER ARTICLES, SCHOOL BOOKS, WEB SITES ON THE INTERNET.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMBO- Albanian-Macedonian-Bulgarian Oil pipeline

ASNOM- Anti-fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia

DOOM- Dvizenje za Osloboduvanje i Obedinuvanje na Makedonija (*Movement for Liberation and Unification of Macedonia*)

EAM/ELAS- National Liberation Front/National Popular Liberation Army

EC/EEC- European Community/ European Economic Community

EU- European Union

EULEX- European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo

FRY- Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

GSZ- Ground Safety Zone

JNA- Yugoslav People's Army

KLA (UCK) – Kosovo Liberation Army

LDK- Democratic League of Kosovo

MAAK- Dvizenje za semakedonska akcija (*Movement for All-Macedonian Action*)

MEP- Member of European Parliament

NLA- National Liberation Army

NATO- North Atlantic Treaty Organization

OSCE- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

RSK- Republic of Serb Krajina

SAO- Serb Autonomous Regions

SDS- Serbian Democratic Party

SFRY- Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

TO- Territorial Defense

UN/ UNSC – United Nations/ United Nations Security Council

UNMIK- United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

UCPMB- Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac

UNPROFOR- United Nations Protective Force

USA- United States of America

USSR- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

VMRO-DPMNE- Vnatrešna makedonska revolucionerna organizacija – Demokratska partija za makedonsko nacionalno edinstvo (*Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity*)

WWII- World War Two

INTRODUCTION

Living in a certain place or region means to have mutual and unbreakable relations of interaction between the humans and the physical space. Based on the physical space, geographical position, resources and climate people have built their habits, culture, cognition, understandings and upon them societies and nation-states. Considering the limits of the physical space where empires were struggling among each other, thinkers, scholars and academics invented theories and concepts regarding the influences, meanings and in the same time possibilities of use of the physical space in order to fulfill the interests and gain advantage of their empires, therefore developing the geopolitics as a scientific branch. As the humanity was developing and improving its position, with rationalism, liberalism and humanism spreading around the world, the influences of geopolitical and geostrategic thinking became available even for the smaller nation states and their elites. In that prospect nation states of the Balkans with its strategically important geographical position, although it was already unremittingly present in geopolitics and geostrategies of the great powers, started to develop their own geopolitical and geostrategic concepts and theories regarding the interests and well being of their countries. That was a main reason for the Balkans to become one of the most active and affinitive places for conflicts and territorial changes. As Cold War ended, the Balkans was again the most active place in Europe and even in the world, where territorial changes occurred and geopolitical struggle revived, accompanied by bloody wars. The process of territorial changes and geopolitical shifting which is diminishing but active and whose consequences are still influential today, although on different levels, shows the relevance of the research on this topic. As Macedonian and a person who lives and plans to live in the future in Macedonia and therefore in this region and also believes in the life in peace as the highest value, academic research on this topic seemed to me an inevitable obligation and contribution in the commitment for the peaceful world.

The main aim of this thesis is to show through the application of the geopolitical theories and concepts on the geopolitical landscape of the Balkans how much the territorial changes and consequent events that took place after 1991 up today are in accordance to them and therefore to draw conclusions whether and why the Balkans are prone to conflicts as well as defining its current geopolitical position in local and global context. As main reasons that are assumptions for the affinity of the Balkans for conflicts, which have to be examined through the review of the territorial changes and their interrelation with the geopolitical map of the Balkans conceptualized by the application of the geopolitical theories on it and greater

territorial concept of the Balkan countries, are taken the internal political geography, geostrategy, ethnography, levels of the socio-political, economical and historical development, as well as its geopolitical position in global context. Therefore the thesis starts with defining the Balkans in geographical, historical and geopolitical meaning and settings, while the second chapter goes through defining the basic geopolitical theories and concepts applied and compared to the features in the Balkans. For the main and most important factor causing the territorial changes and geopolitical strife are taken the geopolitical concepts of the greater (territorial) states of the Balkan peoples, which are briefly outlined and explained in the third chapter. Geopolitical significance of the territorial changes - which are examined on external and internal level (i.e. territorial organization) of the countries - is exposed in the fourth chapter. Also, in order to be proven the main hypotheses about the geopolitical background and interrelation between the territorial changes and great national concepts the thesis contains constant mentions and analysis of the foreign policies and geopolitical concepts of the important key players – outer great powers interested and interfered in the Balkans. At the end the conclusion besides the affirmation of the hypotheses, opens the floor for the integration process as a possible solution.

The methodology of writing, examining and proving the thesis and main hypotheses includes two types of methods: applicative and comparative method of the academic theories, real events and actual features and settings on the ground. Applicative and comparative methods are used intertwined and together in order to show the accordance of the actual features, real events with the tenets of the geopolitical theories and concepts and there to prove the causative and consequential interrelations assumed in the hypotheses. The basic approach on the development of the thesis is analytical approach in examining the numerous amounts of facts, theories, academic research papers and case studies, academic and popular news paper articles, school and textbooks, web sites on the internet.

CHAPTER I DEFINING THE BALKANS

There are numerous definitions about the Balkans, regarding the geography (physical and political), history, politics, ethnology, sociology, anthropology and culture. Despite the many differences regarding the borders and the countries included and considered as a part of the Balkans, it is generally acknowledged that it occupies the region of the peninsula in the southeastern part of Europe. More accurately it is located between Adriatic Sea on the west, Ionian Sea on the southwest, Aegean and Mediterranean Seas on the south, Black and Marmora Seas on the east, and the Danube River and Central European (Pannonian) plain on the north by which it is connected to the continental hinterland of Europe. There are numerous differences in the consideration which countries are part of the Balkans. Geographically, the Balkan Peninsula includes Albania, most of the former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, southeastern Romania, northern Greece and European Turkey¹. Historically and politically, these (six) countries have been referred as “The Balkan States”². However, defining which countries are constituting the Balkans is quite difficult task and therefore the exact number of “The Balkan states” varies depending upon the definition. Another reason of the varying nature of the number of the Balkan countries is the frequent territorial changes, which will be examined as a main subject of this thesis. Regarding their political culture, history and geographical position in the broadest context the region of the Balkans includes the territories or parts of the following countries: Macedonia, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece, Turkey, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. Some sources, such as Encyclopedia Britannica considers even Moldova as a part of the Balkans³. In narrower context, the Balkans is considered with the countries that have formerly throughout the history been part of the Ottoman Empire. Generally, the Balkans is comprised by the states of former Yugoslavia and its neighboring states in the south. Bearing in mind that Greece, Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovenia are members of the European Union, we can include the Balkans as a part of it, although that is nowhere officially stated like that, and in the same time we can count European Union as player (part) in the Balkans. The name Balkans, comes from the Turkish word ‘*balkan*’ which means mountain⁴. However the name Balkans also comes from the name of the mountain range (also known as *Stara Planina*, meaning: ‘Old Mountain’) located in the eastern part of the peninsula, mostly on the territory

¹ Cohen, Saul (2003). *Geopolitics of the World System*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. p.218

² Cohen, Saul (2003). *Geopolitics of the World System*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. p.218

³ Danforth, Loring (2014) *Balkans*. Encyclopedia Britannica - <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/50325/Balkans>

of Bulgaria. From the aspect of the political terminology, it is important to underline that region of the Balkans have been known under many other names. As new political developments are taking place since 1991, considering European Union and NATO integration processes, a new terminological determination was developed regarding the Balkans. Therefore, this region, although with different scope of countries included, regarding their level of development in the integration processes or by the aspect of the geopolitical interests and analysis of the external great players (i.e. USA), is also known under the names *Southeastern Europe* or the *Western Balkans*. These names can be found in the terminology of the official documents and correspondence of European Union, NATO, World Bank, agencies of the UN, researchers and analysts relating to the countries that are comprising the Balkans. Regarding the negative connotation of the name Balkans and the implications of the derived term balkanization, which will be explained further below, more academics and scholars are proposing the replacement of the name the *Balkans* with the use of the terminology such as *Southeast Europe*. For the purposes of this thesis we will take in consideration the definition of the Balkans regarding political geography, history and the geopolitical settings and its significance prior 1991, up to the end of the Cold War.

I.1. GEOGRAPHY

Geographically, the Balkans is occupying the easternmost of the three southern European peninsulas. At a glance it is important to underline that political and geographical boundaries of the Balkans does not thoroughly match and overlap each other⁵. By the three sides, west, south and east, the borders of the Balkans are clearly defined and accepted by the geographers and other scholars, because the waters of Adriatic, Ionian, Mediterranean, Aegean, Marmara and Black Seas are washing the coasts. However, regarding physical, but even more political geography most ambiguous is the northern border. As a rule, geographers concentrate their disputes over the northern and northwestern border⁶. Generally, from the prospect of the physical geography, the northern border of the Balkans is most often considered to begin at the mouth of the river Idria in the Gulf of Trieste, following the southeast foothills of the Julian Alps, and coinciding with the Sava and the Danube Rivers⁷.

⁴ Todorova, Marija (2009). *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford University Press p. 26

⁵ Mileski, Toni (2005). *Makedonija - Rubikova kocka na Balkanot*. Filozofski fakultet, Skopje. p. 67-71 (on Macedonian)

⁶ Todorova, Marija (2009). *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford University p.30

⁷ Todorova, Marija (2009). *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford University p.30

From the point of political geography the definition of the borders, especially the northern one is important because the territories of the states are exciding and going over it, therefore including parts of other geographical regions. However, based on the political culture, history, civilization and culture in the aspect of the political geography and geopolitics as a part of the Balkans should be considered the whole territories of Serbia, Croatia even though their territories are including parts north from rivers Danube and Sava. In that prospect, besides the physic geographical (natural) northern boundary, in politico geographical and geopolitical meaning we can consider their national borders as a border of the Balkans. Historical belonging and occupation of the territories by the different cultural and religious civilizations and empires (which will be covered later) is another very important, sometimes deceive determining factor, about which countries are part and included and where are the exact boundaries of the Balkans. Accordingly, some geographers treat as Balkan, besides Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, and all countries of the former Yugoslavia, only the Dobrudzha part of Romania and the European part of Turkey⁸. Others, well aware that the political-geographic and physical-geographic boundaries do not coincide, tend to include all of Romania (sometimes even Moldova), but Turkey is excluded⁹. Some domestic politicians and scholars in former northern Yugoslav republics and regions, are excluding themselves from the Balkans, counting only Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo (formerly under Ottoman rule) as a part of the Balkans. Within these politico geographical boundaries exists very complicated mixture of ethnic structure of the population which is in direct relation with evolving of the specific kind of political culture, characterized with the great importance of the territory which leads to a strong expansionism and constant affinity for conflicts. Regarding the internal geography of the Balkans and its relation with the political phenomena, which is the main aspect how this thesis addresses the Balkans, it is very important to mention that the relief of the Balkans is mostly mountainous with river valleys which can perfectly use as natural boundaries. But this pattern is not always clearly kept or it is better to say that when it is kept it is an exception. In some cases the high mountain ranges and river valleys are natural ethnographical borderlines between peoples, but historical circumstances and the influence of the former imperial state boundaries and the strong and lively migration processes within them, resulted with a great extent of ethnically mixed population throughout the whole region. Because of these, and the specific process of the formation of the state boundaries (explained below in the part of the history), almost all of

⁸ Todorova, Marija (2009). *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford University p.30

the nations have compatriots living outside the state borders and usually there are settlements populated by the same ethnic group from the both sides of the borders. As a result of this, all Balkan countries are multiethnic societies with complex internal ethnic structure and great conflict potential which is expressed in two ways: by internal struggle of the ethnic groups (for power and territorial division, explained later in this text in the cases of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) or with the strong state supported nationalism with policies such as assimilation, displacement, ethnic cleansing and extermination. Finally, internal geographical features such as the relief of the Balkans actually has the most decisive influence for the existence and development of its own genuine (geo)political characteristics and its significance in broader strategic prospect. The best example is that, the valleys of Danube, the Sava, Morava (hence Vardar) served as the main gateways of migrating people and invading armies for centuries, while the Dinaric Alps and the other Balkan mountains served as a bastion against these movements¹⁰.

Besides the internal geographical structure of the Balkan Peninsula, its geographical position in relations with and regarding other regions on a broader scale shows a great relevance and importance for global geopolitics. Bordering the Black Sea and Turkish Straits (Bosphorus and Dardanelles) the Balkans is a place which is strategically very important as a gateway to the Middle East and Asia and to the Central Europe in the opposite direction. Southern coast of the Balkans on the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea is strategically important regarding the proximity to the Middle East and North Africa, as well as the broader region of Levant (Eastern Mediterranean). Regarding the western coastline on the Ionian and Adriatic Sea, through the Otranto Strait, the Balkans is an entering point for the access in the interior of the Central Europe, although the important Central European powers were tellurocrats and therefore access from/to the sea was never of big importance for them. Hence, the Balkans in these boundaries was very interesting for the interests and strategies of Russia, Austro-Hungary, Italy, Germany and also indirectly for Great Britain and France. Whether it was Russia that wanted access to warm water ports through the Turkish Straits and Aegean Sea, or Austro-Hungary the Aegean and Adriatic Sea, or Germany with its concept of Mitteleuropa and plans for the Berlin-Bagdad railway, the Balkans was geostrategically very (sometimes the most) important place which presented as a battlefield of their interests, on which the Balkan nations were bandwagoning often changing the side. Bearing in mind the

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Gianaris, V. Nicolas (1996) *Geopolitical and Economic Changes in the Balkan Countries*. Greenwood Publishing Group. p.83

permanence and immutability of physical geographical future, the importance of the Balkans remains constant. In that prospect the Black Sea basin by which can be realized or blocked the Russian access to the Mediterranean, navigation of the Danube and its connection with the North Sea by channel through Rhine, as well as Aegean and Adriatic Sea basins shows that strategically the Balkans have important position as for internal and external players¹¹. Regarding political geography, and geography at general, the Balkans is characterized with specifically features which are very important factors about the political phenomena taking place and developing in this region. Politico-geographical characteristics of the Balkans are resulting of the both factors: the circumstances evolving from the territory or physic-geographical and the consequences of the human activities or the anthropo-geographical factor. The first and basic characteristic of the political geographical features of the territory on the Balkans is the *inconstancy or variability*¹². This basic politico geographical feature of the Balkans is two sided and can be seen in two inseparably connected phenomena: inconstancy of the shapes of the territories and the territorial organization and in the same time variability of the number of states, as main actors. Another basic feature of the Balkans in this prospect, closely related to the previous one, is the *politico geographical dynamism* which results and is determined by the physical geographical settings and complex internal and surrounding anthropogenic structure¹³. Evolving from these two basic features, political geography of this part of the planet and simply the Balkans can be characterized by the following appearances: divisiveness and particularity; antagonisms; border disputes; territorial pretensions and claims; spheres of interests; ethnic, national, religious and political exclusiveness; interference of the great powers; economic polarity etc¹⁴.

I.2. HISTORY

Due to the favorable conditions for convenient and descent life, the Balkans has continual presence of population and organized way of life since the first and early ages of the historical development of the humanity. The Balkans is the birthplace or heartland of few ancient and medieval great empires, civilizations and cultures, such as: ancient Greek, ancient

¹¹ Mileski, Toni (2005). *Makedonija - Rubikova kocka na Balkanot*. Filozofski fakultet, Skopje. p. 67-71 (on Macedonian)

¹² Mileski, Toni (2005). *Makedonija - Rubikova kocka na Balkanot*. Filozofski fakultet, Skopje. p. 61 (on Macedonian)

¹³ Mileski, Toni (2005). *Makedonija - Rubikova kocka na Balkanot*. Filozofski fakultet, Skopje. p. 61 (on Macedonian)

Macedonian, Illyrian, Byzantine. Therefore, the Balkans is a region with long and troublesome history and very rich material culture. However, for the purposes of this paper we shall consider history in context of the geopolitics and territorial changes of the Balkans. Regarding the great historical (ancient and medieval) empires, they are very important; sometimes even the core elements of the nationalist theories and great state territorial concepts of the countries. Considering themselves as their descendants and therefore successors, Balkan states are calling upon the historical and natural right of acquisition of their territorial possessions. Historically, with all characteristics and meanings of its present day geopolitical context, the Balkans was discovered or became actual in the 19th century, with the decline of Ottoman Empire which became interest for the European great powers who, through the support of the discontent Christian peoples wanted to acquire geographically strategic chokepoints and sphere of influence. This situation gave an impetus to the Balkan peoples, not just for liberating themselves and establishing national states, but also to create greater territorial concepts for their states upon which they will act in their foreign policies (especially with the great powers, as well as among them), provoking several wars. Since the beginning and throughout the whole 19th century until the two world wars in the 20th century, the Balkans was the most active place with the most territorial changes. From the beginning of the 19th century until the Berlin congress of 1885, Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria were liberated from the Ottoman Empire and ever since they started struggling for the territories remained under Turkish rule. Standing behind their backs and supporting each of them in different periods, Russia and Austro-Hungary (which later annexed Bosnia) were also struggling for spheres of influence and territorial acquisitions for access to the warm water, militarily and economically strategic important ports in the waters of Aegean Sea. This struggle of newly founded Balkan states and their great power patrons resulted with another wave of territorial changes and reshaping of the politico geographical map. At the beginning of the 20th century Albania emerged as a new nation state, while the territory of Macedonia was divided and partitioned among Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria. Territorial changes on the Balkans continued in this period with the formation of the kingdom of Yugoslavia, and the First World War and Paris Peace Conference when territories in Macedonia, Dobrudja, Thrace were repartitioned between Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Yugoslavia. Thus the term *balkanization* with meaning of fragmentation or division of a region or state into smaller states that are often hostile and non-cooperative with one another emerged and spread

¹⁴ Mileski, Toni (2005). *Makedonija - Rubikova kocka na Balkanot*. Filozofski fakultet, Skopje. p. 61 (on

throughout the world. The process of territorial changes on the Balkans was temporarily halted after the Second World War and during the Cold War, when a period of stability followed. After this historical period followed the last wave of territorial changes and reshaping of the Balkans, which is the main theme of this paper. Beginning with the political sphere, in one of its important aspects, the formation of state boundaries, there were several contending factors: the Ottoman administrative tradition; the aspirations of the national movements based on two (quite often incompatible) criteria: historic rights and self-determination; and the strategic interests of the European powers who, as a whole, treated the Ottoman Empire as a pillar and the young Balkan states as a serious threat to the European balance of power¹⁵. The internal Ottoman provincial divisions had followed closely the boundaries of the numerous Balkan principalities in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; in this respect they seem to provide a clear, though not immobile, continuity from the pre-Ottoman period (down to preserving the toponymy)¹⁶. In some instances, internal provincial frontiers were turned into state boundaries (like the vassal provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia, or Albania and Montenegro). In other cases an administrative unit, the Belgrade pashaluk, became the nucleus for the future Serbian nation-state. Still, neither historic rights (based on the territorial zenith of the medieval Balkan states) nor issues of self-determination were, in the final account, instrumental in delineating frontiers¹⁷. At the very most, these elements shaped the controversial and incompatible Balkan irredentist programs.

As a political background for the territorial changes and geopolitical struggle, besides the great geopolitical and territorial national concepts, the Balkans can be defined as place where specific political movements, ideas and trends emerged and clashed. This is mostly evident in historical aspect. The specific admixture of nineteenth century romanticism and Realpolitik on the part of the observers created a polarized approach of lobbying for or demonizing these populations¹⁸. Particularly evocative was the vogue of philhellenism that swept over Europe in the 1820s and the subsequent disillusionment with realities¹⁹. The same trend can be observed in the peculiar brand of Turkophilia and Slavophobia, together with their mirror image phenomena of Turkophobia (or rather Islamophobia) and Slavophilism, as direct functions of great power politics, and specifically nineteenth century attitudes toward

Macedonian)

¹⁵ Todorova, Marija (2009). *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford University p.169

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Todorova, Marija (2009). *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford University p.62

¹⁹ Ibid

Russia²⁰. During the 19th century, in the so-called period of the discovery of the Balkans, these political trends were heavily expressed and present in the public of the European great powers supported by many public figures, politicians, poets, lobbying or supporting for the national(istic) ideas of the Balkan countries. Regarding the politics of the Balkans this political phenomena is still very relevant, with many proponents of the ideas of Slavophilism (i.e. connections and foreign policy oriented towards Russia), Phillhellenism, Turkophilism and Turkophobia, who have certain concepts, prospects and claims over historically legitimate national territories. On the bases of these political trends, new geopolitical and foreign policy concepts, primarily active on the Balkans, are created. The best example of this is the Turkish policy of *neo-ottomanism*²¹ (or pan-ottomanism) implemented by the government of the Prime Minister Erdogan and foreign minister Davutoglu.

I.3. GEOPOLITICAL POSITION, SETTINGS AND SIGNIFICANCE PRIOR 1991

Located in the southeastern tip of Europe, the Balkans has always had very important geopolitical and geostrategical position. Geopolitical position of the Balkans can be viewed from the aspects of: historic-cultural, political, military-geostrategic and economical. Through the territory of the Balkans the relations between the western and eastern civilizations have been maintained, since the earliest times. The great conquest to the East (Asia) of the Macedonian king Alexander the Great started from the Balkans. Later, it has represented a gateway of Europe for the Ottoman Turkish conquest by which the Islam came on the European soil. Interference of the many peoples, tribes, religions, cultures and civilizations resulted with the fact that the Balkans is the only place where the Christianity with its Orthodox and Catholic denominations exists and collides with the Islam, representing the Balkans as a religious and civilization borderline. This is very important in global context of the well known geopolitical theories and concepts for the clash of civilizations.

Regarding to the relevance of the topic, geopolitical settings of the Balkans during the Cold War were established by the end of the Second World War. According to the famous percentage agreement proposed by Churchill to Stalin on Moscow (“Tolstoy”) conference in 1944, the sphere of influence were established in the Balkan countries, therefore making the Balkans a region where the significant part of the borderline of the two Cold War rival blocs

²⁰Ibid

²¹ This geopolitical and foreign policy concept implies exercising political, economic, cultural and religious (i.e. soft power) influence of Turkey in the countries that have formerly been possessions of the Ottoman Empire

was set. From geopolitical point of view, related to the geopolitical position and importance during the Cold War, it is very important to be mentioned that one of the earliest proxy wars between the two rivals took place on the Balkans. Namely, the civil war in Greece from 1946-1949 where communists were fighting against monarchist regime (both sides respectively supported by USSR with its satellites and USA with Great Britain) was one very important case, but it have not implied any territorial change and percentage agreement of sphere of influence was kept. Another very important case which shows the geopolitical importance of the Balkans is the Tito- Stalin split in 1948, after which socialist Yugoslavia became non-aligned country, that later even led to the creating (together with other countries) of the famous Non-Aligned Movement. Also, the Balkans, was one of the places where the US policy of containment of the Soviet Union was implemented. Becoming members of NATO as a part of its southern wing, Greece and Turkey together with Yugoslavia, were playing important military (security) role of the containment of the USSR and its satellites. Looking with accordance to the Spykman's geopolitical theory of the Rimland, which was basic inspiration of the US policy of containment, geographically and even more geopolitically the Balkans was important part of it. This will be discussed later, but however it is very important to state that the geographical position and proximity to the Western Europe (the core of transatlantic bloc and partnership) and Middle East, resulted with a great geopolitical importance and relevance of the Balkans in this period. Even more, it is important to underline that besides all these lively activities, the Balkans was stable and without any territorial changes. As a main reason of this stability we can state the above mentioned geostrategic position and geopolitical importance. The geopolitical position and settings of the Balkans during the Cold War was structured by the 2+2+2 formula²². This formula meant that 2 Balkan countries were part of NATO (Greece and Turkey), 2 countries were part of the Warsaw Pact (Bulgaria and Romania) and 2 countries were non-aligned (Yugoslavia and Albania) making a balance between the Cold War political and military blocs²³. The main purpose of this geopolitical setting of the structure of the Balkans was stability which was necessary, bearing in mind the historically proven internal conflict potential of the Balkans and its influence outside of the region. Although the countries of the Balkans during the Cold War had their territorial pretensions and claims according to their irredentist concepts, they have refrained from any acts that could undermine peace and

²² Mileski, Toni (2005). *Makedonija - Rubikova kocka na Balkanot*. Filozofski fakultet, Skopje. p. 49 (on Macedonian)

balance and cause conflict between the two blocs. One clear example of this is the case when Yugoslav president and leadership was not supporting the concerns of the Macedonian leadership towards the position of the Macedonians in Greece, avoiding deterioration of the bilateral relations with Greece, which was afraid of territorial pretensions and the concept of United Macedonia. However, there were some provisioned territorial changes in this period, which have not completely occurred. The idea of Balkan federation of socialist states provisioned unification of Bulgaria, Albania and Romania with Yugoslavia. In the case of Bulgaria, under the president Georgi Dimitrov, the process of unification of Pirin part of Macedonia towards Socialist Republic of Macedonia in Yugoslavia was officially started (with recognizing full political and national rights of the Macedonians)²⁴ alongside the negotiations for inclusion of Bulgaria as a seventh state in a Balkan federation with Yugoslavia. Also, Yugoslavia as the only country liberated by its strong and large national partisan movement, accepted as an ally of the anti-fascist coalition, felt stronger as a regional power, therefore creating some territorial claims towards its neighbors, namely Italy and Austria. Included within it, the republics such as Slovenia and Macedonia, which have parts of their nations living outside (on the other side) of the borders, hoped for fulfillment of their national unification. However Yugoslav leadership balanced with suppression of the nationalist ideas inside, not letting them have influence on the foreign relations. Besides the division between the two blocks, the period of the Cold War was actually the longest and most stable period regarding conflicts and territorial changes on the Balkans. As the only place in Europe where three different types of foreign policies existed - western and soviet aligned and non-aligned states - with the evident importance of the geopolitical and geostrategic position, structure of geopolitical settings lead to stability and peace on the Balkans for a longer period. With the end of the Cold War and global geopolitical changes, the region of the Balkans was heavily impacted and once again became the place with the fiercest conflicts and instability. Hence, for the Balkans it can be said that for a long time it represents a scene where the processes of fragmentation and globalization have alternately taken place, with general opinion of the western countries that it is a micro space which have never been integrated into Europe²⁵.

²³ Mileski, Toni (2005). *Makedonija - Rubikova kocka na Balkanot*. Filozofski fakultet, Skopje. p. 49 (on Macedonian)

²⁴ Rosos, A. (2008) *Macedonia and the Macedonians: a history*. Hoover Institution Press, the University of Michigan. p. 204 - 205

²⁵ Mileski, Toni (2005). *Makedonija - Rubikova kocka na Balkanot*. Filozofski fakultet, Skopje. p. 55 (on Macedonian)

The changes that happened after 1991, can be seen on two prospects: *global* – animated and influenced by the global changes and developments and *local* – genuinely derived from the trends inside of the states. Although the developments of the Balkans after 1991, as everywhere in the world are result of the combination of the both factors, we will examine the implication of the second by application of the geopolitical theories and concepts. Regarding the global geopolitical prospects of the changes, we can clearly state that with the diminishing of the importance of the ideologies and ascendance of the process of globalization resulting with reemergence of the civilization and cultural divisions, the Balkans as a multireligious, multiethnic and multilinguistic place was unavoidably impacted. In that prospect, immediately after the end of the Cold War and especially during the whole period and process of wars, conflicts, territorial changes and geopolitical shifts, realignments occurred along religious lines with two Orthodox and Islamic axis emerging²⁶. Furthermore these religious and civilization lines remained still evident and relevant today, despite the relative peace and stability and will be even more important in the future, but definitely more in the global context than in the internal one.

CHAPTER II APPLICATION OF THE GEOPOLITICAL THEORIES AND CONCEPTS ON THE BALKANS

The study of the states in the context of global spatial phenomena, which evolved as a need for the power potential and capabilities of the great powers (empires), led to the development of the geopolitics with its concepts and theories. Although geopolitics as a part of the realistic approach of the international relations was developed according to the needs and strategies of the great powers and therefore for studying and covering certain parts of the world, notwithstanding its theories and concepts have some general patterns that could be universally applied elsewhere. Representing places of interests or research as microcosms, application of the basic geopolitical theories and concepts can explain the way of the political and historical processes happening in correlation with the spatial phenomena. Regarding that all geopolitical theories and concepts have been explained, analyzed and contemplated in general terms out of the certain geographical settings on which they have originated, we will try to apply them on the politico geographical settings and current geopolitical map of the Balkans in order to examine their presence, accuracy and compliance and in that context

²⁶ Huntington, Samuel (2007) *The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of World Order*. Simon and Schuster. p.127

explain the territorial changes and organization happened after 1991 with all of their patterns and characteristics. Besides the approach of observing the Balkans as microcosm on which these concepts and theories are applied, in this chapter all of the concepts would be also observed and evaluated for the Balkans in broader global context.

II.1. ORGANIC STATE THEORIES ON THE BALKANS

The concept of the organic state was developed by Friedrich Ratzel, influenced by the social Darwinism using similes and metaphors from biology in analysis of political science and geography comparing the State with an organism²⁷. Summarized this theory regards the state as a land with men on it, linked by the State idea and conforming to natural laws, with development tied to the natural environment, therefore states like organisms must grow or die and the only food they need is in the form of living space (*Lebensraum*) with resources about which states constantly compete between each other²⁸. Ratzel even produced seven laws of state growth and the theory has been complemented by Rudolf Kjellen who insisted that state is an organism composed of five organs, thus coining the term geopolitics. Although there is a significantly big difference in the perception and approaches of Ratzel (analogical) and Kjellen (literal meaning) the essence of the concept is with the comparison of the state with a living organism. Nevertheless, the basic and most important tenets of the organic state theory in general, analogically or literally interpreted, are that the state and its people are (like) organism with its own needs which means acquiring territory in order the state to grow and survive. These two constants – connection of the people with the state as an organism and the importance of the territory and living space with resources for growth and survival, are very influential in prospect of expansionism which imminently means changeable and non-permanently settled borders, absorption of smaller units or dissolution of bigger ones and inevitable territorial changes.

On the Balkans, the thinking of the nations (and their states) in organic concepts is present in the political and scientific sphere. Namely, within the context of the Balkans up until now for the current scientific thought dominates the assumption that the nations are based on ethno-linguistic model of existence of the organic settled nations²⁹. The national building processes and foundation of all Balkan states was based on the synthesis or incorporation and close

²⁷ Glassner, Martin Ira, Fahrner Chuck. (2004) *Political Geography*. 3rd edition. Hoboken: Wiley. p.270

²⁸ Glassner, Martin Ira, Fahrner Chuck. (2004) *Political Geography*. 3rd edition. Hoboken: Wiley. p.271

²⁹ Stojanovski, Strashko. (2012) *Territorial bases of Balkan nationalism: The case of Late Ottoman Macedonia*. Faculty of Law, University "Goce Delchev" – Shtip, Macedonia. p.1

entanglement of two models such as ethno-linguistic and territorial unity³⁰. Greek national ideology and doctrine is considering the nation as a living organism on a historic stretch where the survival is taking place and whose borders are considered flexible and extended³¹. As it will be shown in next chapter regarding the great national territorial concepts, this view oriented for Greece and wider region of Eastern Mediterranean³², served as a basis for the harsh nationalist policies for century and a half. Although it is nowhere officially declared, the rising ultranationalist and neo-nazi movement in Greece such as Golden Dawn is supporter of these views. The views of both Serbian and Croatian extremist nationalist movements “Chetnik” and “Ustash” which in the Second World War defined the nations as living organism with an organic link between the blood and the soil³³ were revived in the period after 1991 and throughout the 90’s during the wars of the breakup of Yugoslavia by their extremist successors and followers. First president of independent Croatia, Franjo Tudjman (1990-1999) in his national ideology defined the nation as historic and organic, existing as historical creation and distinctive and unique living organism³⁴. Given the fact that these extreme nationalist movements were intensively involved within the official or by self organized paramilitary units in the devastating wars that set the territorial changes after the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991, it can be concluded that their acting including the war crimes and crimes against humanity of which many of them have been accused and sentenced were inspired in considerable extent by these organic state theories as well as views and conceptualizations of their nations as living organisms. The organic perception of the nations as a living organism in interaction with the territory reflected in the concept of so-called blood and soil is present also in Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia but only in minor nationalist movements and public addresses. Nevertheless, the organic state theory as defined by Ratzel or Kjellen is not in a thorough overlap with the conceptions of the Balkan nationalisms. Although nations on the Balkans are not completely following the organic state theory they perceive their nations as organism in very strong and inextricable relations with their territories. However, the right for territorial claims and expansion are not based on

³⁰ Stojanovski, Strashko. (2012) *Territorial bases of Balkan nationalism: The case of Late Ottoman Macedonia*. Faculty of Law , University “Goce Delchev” – Shtip, Macedonia. p.2

³¹ Litoksou, Dimitris. (2005) *Nationalism and national myth*. p.2-3. About “*a static organic notion – a nexus of state, nation, religion and Greekness defined in 19th century*” see also: Todorova, Marija (2009). *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford University Press p. 45

³² Litoksou, Dimitris. (2005) *Nationalism and national myth*. p.1

³³ Heyden, Robert (2012). *From Yugoslavia to the Western Balkans: Studies of a European Disunion, 1991-2011*. BRILL, p. 6

analogies with human organism but rather on the historical rights as the “centuries of existence”, as it will be shown latter.

II.2. HEARTLAND OF THE BALKANS

Undoubtedly, the most influential geopolitical concept which in fact is the essence of the geopolitics itself and thus prevailing with its relevance up today is the concept of the Heartland. The concept and the term, as it is well known, were coined by the British scholar and politician Sir Halford Mackinder. In his conception based upon the British imperial interests the Heartland, firstly introduced as the Pivot Area, was geographically placed in the deep hinterland of Euroasia³⁵, on the inaccessible landmass from where it was easy to reach and attack any place on the “World Island”, thus by the possibility of easy outflanking the maritime powers the inevitable consequence of possession of the Heartland meant world domination. In Mackinder’s point of view, the Heartland (or world citadel as well) was primarily region of mobility for land forces, impenetrable by sea power³⁶. According to the actual historical events Mackinder had revised his Heartland theory twice. Once in 1919 where he extended the boundaries of the Heartland including the area of Eastern Europe from the littorals of Baltic to the Black Sea as the most crucial part according to his famous dictum for command of the World Island and domination of the world³⁷. The other revision came up in 1943, although included changes of the boundaries and geographical area comprising the Heartland (detaching central and eastern parts of Siberia – Lenaland) was primarily focused on the change of the theoretical meaning or perception of the concept of Heartland. Namely, in this revision Mackinder changed the conception of the Heartland from an arena of movement (i.e., as a region of mobility of land forces) to one of a “power citadel” based upon people, resources, interior lines and core industrial infrastructure³⁸. Due to this change of the meaning of the conception there was a proliferation of the concept Heartland for many other parts in the world, which led to definition what is it rather than where is it³⁹. This means that the use of Heartland in both meanings, defined as a land’s power base in regards as an area

³⁴ Uzelac, Gordana (2002). *When is the Nation? Constituent Elements and Processes - case of Croatia*. In: *Geopolitics*, Vol. 7, No. 2. p.42-43. From the same author see also: “Franjo Tudjman’s Nationalist Ideology” in: *East European Quarterly*. 31/4 (1998)

³⁵ Cohen, Saul (2003). *Geopolitics of the World System*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. p.13

³⁶ Jones, Stephen B. (1955) *Global Strategic Views*. *Geographical Review*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (Oct. 1955). p. 498

³⁷ Cohen, Saul (2003). *Geopolitics of the World System*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. p.13

³⁸ *Ibid.* p.16

³⁹ Jones, Stephen B. (1955) *Global Strategic Views*. *Geographical Review*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (Oct. 1955). pp. 494-499

where mobility is easy - place from where could be easily attack all other connected places or as core area based upon human, natural, industrial resources in combination with favorable geographical position and features where in both ways the control of it allows prospects for domination, could be applied everywhere globally or regionally. Therefore it could be applied to the Balkans at general as we will try to present here.

Considering the geographical features of the Balkans in the context of the Heartland as an area of centrality from where all other places can be attacked and easily dominated, regarding the present day (after 1991) established states and borders, Macedonia and Serbia are undoubtedly representing the Heartland of the Balkans. Macedonia and Serbia are located in the central part of the Balkans, both landlocked and inaccessible by sea power, but possessing very favorable relief for easy access to every part of the Balkans therefore possessing the main axis and arteries of communication. However, the inaccessibility of the sea power of the Heartland of the Balkans is primarily in context of the Balkan maritime states and prospects for amphibious landings and invasions but not for the great powers such as US, Russia which due to the technological advancements have the capitals of the Heartland within the striking distances of their sea based fleets. The position of Macedonia and Serbia as the heartland of the Balkans is confirmed in several works, analysis and thoughts of domestic and foreign authors, strategists and politicians, as well as by the practical cases from the history and ongoing developments on the ground. Macedonia as central state on the Balkans undeniably presents the heartland of the Balkans according to Mackinder's terminology⁴⁰. Also, the fact that the central position of Serbia around the main "natural trajectories" on the Balkan Peninsula is a constant that cannot be changed⁴¹, contributes to its heartland position. Macedonia possesses the strategically very important Vardar river valley which with its composite relief structure of gorges interchangeable with plains and connectivity with the valleys of its tributaries from east and west within its watershed represents an axis of communications primarily from north to the south on the Aegean Sea and secondary it is a place where the interconnection of the communication from east to the west is located. The very high geo-strategic importance of the Vardar valley and Macedonia at general have been stated many times in the history especially during the Balkan Wars and the First World War when a geopolitical solution for the partition of the Macedonian territory as the last remnant

⁴⁰ Mileski, Toni (2005). *Makedonija - Rubikova kocka na Balkanot*. Filozofski fakultet, Skopje. p. 79 (on Macedonian)

⁴¹ Ilic, Jovan (1995). *The Balkan geopolitical knot and the Serbian question*. In: *The Serbian Questions in the Balkans*. University of Belgrade, Faculty of Geography. - <http://www.rastko.rs/istorija/srbi-balkan/jilic-knot.html>

of the Ottoman rule was undertaken. High geopolitical and strategic importance of the Macedonia can be also seen in former Serbian prime minister Nikola Pasic thought in the manner of Maciknder's dictums: *History shows that those who had Macedonia, was always the first in the Balkans*⁴². Moreover, Macedonia is located in the center of the so-called Balkan geopolitical cross⁴³, which definitely contends its position as a Heartland of the Balkans. Similarly, Serbia possesses the Morava valley which is also an axis where transportation routes from east to west interconnect. But most importantly the Vardar and Morava river valleys are connected between each other in north-south direction with the pan-European corridor 10 and thus with their geographical position actually present the heartland of the Balkans. Following geopolitical observations are confirming this presumption. Vardar valley which ends with its mouth in the Thermaic Gulf (near Thessaloniki), situated in the heartland of Macedonia connected with Morava river situated in the central part of Serbia which flows into Danube and further continues northwards to former Czech-Slovak border ending up on Vistula was identified as the Central European corridor by Milan Hodza in his proposal for Danubian Federation⁴⁴. In Hodza's lecture about Czechoslovakia and Central Europe from March 1931 this corridor situated in the heart of the Balkans together with the Western European corridor involved in the geopolitics of the European continent, were seen as the corridors important for civilization and organization⁴⁵. According to a really important author in the field of geopolitics, Yves Lacoste, one of the most important elements in the Balkans is the "strategic axis" Morava-Vardar⁴⁶. This very axis, connecting Danube and the Aegean sea and being the only really facile route linking the large plains on the central and lower Danube with a significant segment of the Mediterranean Sea was, starting with the 19th century, the goal of several clearly competing 'grand strategies': the Turkish one, the Serbian, the Bulgarian, the Albanese, and the Greek one⁴⁷. On all of these strategies of the 'internal'

⁴² Yambaev, L. Mikhail (2003). *Armed conflict in 2001 in Macedonia and development of the political situation in the country* - <http://www.guskova.ru/misc/balcan/2003-12-23> (on Russian) there cited from: Schatilova, L.V. (1992) *Macedonian question during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913*. In: Russia and politics. Balkan studies. Russia and Slavs. Issue 15. M. p. 189. Cited also by: Nikovski, Risto (2013) *The role of U.S. in Macedonian calvaries (1991-2013)*. p.238-239

⁴³ Kotovcevski, M (2011). *Nacionalna Bezbednost*. Filozofski Fakultet, Skopje. p. 227 (on Macedonian)

⁴⁴ Krejci, Oskar (2005). *Geopolitics of the Central European Region: The view from Prague and Bratislava*. Lulu Publisher. p. 253

⁴⁵ Krejci, Oskar (2005). *Geopolitics of the Central European Region: The view from Prague and Bratislava*. Lulu Publisher. p. 252-253

⁴⁶ Diaconu, Florin (2012) *Geopolitical and geo-strategic status of Serbia on the Danube: The road from geopolitical pivot to geopolitical player (active actor)* in: *Danube strategy – strategic significance for Serbia*. Edited by: Nevenka Jeftic Sarcevic and Edita Stojic Karanovic. Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade. p.122

⁴⁷ Diaconu, Florin (2012) *Geopolitical and geo-strategic status of Serbia on the Danube: The road from geopolitical pivot to geopolitical player (active actor)* in: *Danube strategy – strategic significance for Serbia*.

Balkan players, the goal of possession of this axis (especially Vardar valley in the case of Macedonia) was part of the grand strategies of other ‘external’ players such as Russia (in case of San Stefano proposed territory of Bulgaria) and Austro-Hungary. With its position Macedonia presents major transportation corridor from Western and Central Europe to Aegean Sea and Southern Europe to Western Europe⁴⁸ and also the place where Pan-European corridors 10 and 8 interconnect. Consequently, Serbia has a similar position with the control one of the major land routes from Western Europe to Turkey and the Near East⁴⁹ and being a place where Pan-European corridors 10 and 7 interconnect. With the position of their territories and the transportation infrastructure Macedonia and Serbia connect with road and railway network the eastern part of the Balkans (Bulgaria and Romania) with the western (Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Croatia), as well as the southern part (Greece, European part of Turkey) with the European hinterland on the north, which definitely allows possibilities for easy expansion in economic and military aspects. Geopolitical and strategic importance of the Vardar – Morava axis as a heartland and pivot of the Balkans can be seen in the plan for building a channel that will connect them and will make the navigation from Danube (hence Rhine and North Sea – Atlantic Ocean) to Aegean Sea (hence Mediterranean and through Suez – Indian ocean) possible. The idea of the building of Vardar – Morava channel evolved in the mid-19th century⁵⁰, and it became again actualized in the recent years with the proposals of the Serbian to the Macedonian government and Chinese state owned Construction Company which claimed its profitability in 2013⁵¹. From military aspect the territory of Macedonia having advantages of easy defense due to the high mountainous relief on the borders and hinterland allows easy access or centrality for attack in all four directions. Additionally, the proximity and very short distance of the Aegean Sea (80 km) and Adriatic Sea (100 km)⁵² accompanied with the difficult mountainous relief of Greek and Albanian hinterlands, gives the Macedonian territory high value for easy rejection of any forthcoming amphibious invasion attack whilst in same time it provides great opportunities for quick and

Edited by: Nevenka Jeftic Sarcevic and Edita Stojic Karanovic. Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade. p.123

⁴⁸ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mk.html> - CIA World Factbook – Macedonia (geography note)

⁴⁹ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ri.html> CIA World Factbook - Serbia (geography note)

⁵⁰ Jovanovski, Dobrivoje (2011) *Morava – Vardar (Axios) Navigation Route* - <http://danube-cooperation.com/danubius/2011/11/28/morava-varadar-axios-navigation-route/>

⁵¹ *Chinese claim: Channel Danube – Morava – Vardar is profitable*. Kurir, September 25, 2013. - <http://kurir.mk/en/2013/09/25/chinese-claim-channel-danube-morava-varadar-is-profitable/>

⁵² Mileski, Toni (2005). *Makedonija – Rubikova kocka na Balkanot*. Filozofski Fakultet, Skopje. p. 161 (on Macedonian)

successful attack for capture and control of these coasts. Similarly the territory of Serbia, except the province of Vojvodina located in the Panonian Plain north from rivers Danube and Sava (which is considered as north physical geographical border of the Balkans), is easy defensible due to the relief and with the valleys of the tributaries of Morava towards west, east and south provides possibilities and mobility for attack in all of the four directions, especially toward the interior of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and its Adriatic coast and northwestern part of Bulgaria where its capital is situated. Hence it can be presumed and to some extent concluded that the decision for partition of Macedonia in 1913 besides all other reasons, has an very significant geopolitical meaning and implication in preventing a formation of one single state with access on the Aegean Sea and control over the all points of access such as the river valleys of Aegean basin. Beside all observations on geographical features of positioning and relief of the considered Balkan's Heartland area together with the thoughts of geopolitical authors and strategists, some positive examples from the history are confirming the assumption that the control and possession of the territories of Macedonia and Serbia was crucial for expansion and domination of entire Balkans. Namely, ancient Macedonian kingdom of Phillip II and Alexander the Great, medieval Macedonian king Samuel, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Empire whether emerged from or after conquering this Heartland area, successfully and rapidly spread throughout and gained control over the whole Balkan Peninsula. Considering the geopolitical power constellation on the Balkans in the period after 1991 up today, interesting pattern can be identified for this geographically power base for domination – Heartland of the Balkans. While the all other parts or borderline (i.e. Rimland – as it is argued below) of this Heartland of the Balkans are integrated in the NATO, the two countries that are comprising the Heartland are not members of this military alliance, neither they will become in near future although they are aspiring, fulfilling conditions, actively contribute (Macedonia) and cooperate (Serbia). Regarding that since the Bucharest Summit in 2008 after Greek, publicly stated (by Minister of foreign affairs Mss. Bakoyannis) they will block Macedonian for accession⁵³, contrary to the ruling of ICJ from 5.12.2011, NATO members agreed that the country would receive an invitation upon resolution of the Macedonia naming dispute for which there is lack of willingness from both sides (inspired from positions for defense of the right, freedom and sense of identity from Macedonia and geopolitical calculations from Greece), it is evident that Macedonia is not going to become full member in long term period. Bearing in mind the fact that after tense

⁵³ Lungescu, Oana (2008). "*Nato Macedonia veto stokes tension*". April 2nd, BBC News. -

relations with NATO due to the intervention (bombardment) in the Kosovo Crisis of 1999, Serbia in 2007 has officially declared military neutrality adopted with parliamentary resolution from December 2007⁵⁴, seems that the both countries representing the Heartland of the Balkans will not be integrated in NATO alliance for long term in the future. Nevertheless, the NATO membership of all other states, close cooperation and active involvement in euroatlantic integration processes (EU) leave no space for any unexpected geopolitical reorientation such as alignment with each other against the rest or realignment with external great powers leading to unified possession of the Balkan's heartland that can deteriorate the stability of the Balkans. Another interesting fact about the countries comprising the Heartland of the Balkans is that there are many shared similarities in religion (although there is ongoing longstanding dispute between both Orthodox churches), language (quite different but from same south Slavic group), culture (political and popular), economy, history, beliefs, habits. In addition to these linking indicators for the countries of the Balkanic Heartland is the very interesting result from a recent poll of the public opinion of the citizens of Macedonia which shows that friendliest country is Turkey stated by 16 percent of respondents, followed by Serbia with 12.2 percent⁵⁵. Moreover, regarding the attitude towards the five neighbors with 42.5% of the citizens Serbia is perceived as the friendliest neighbor⁵⁶. As regards with the second meaning of the concept of Heartland as a core area based upon the human, natural and industrial resources is rather difficult to identify one single heartland of the Balkans. Namely, Balkan Peninsula has rather low level of economic development when compared to Western, Central and Northern Europe⁵⁷ and moreover the economic integration and interdependence between the countries primarily in industrial and resource prospect is rather weak and underdeveloped. Except the fact that countries have to some extent moderately developed interaction and integration in trade and market aspect, the Balkan does not present a single economic entity that has a core area based upon human, natural, industrial resources in combination with favorable geographical position and features. In this respect every Balkan state has its own core areas that are not thoroughly matching upon the human, industrial or

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7329963.stm>

⁵⁴ Ejdus, Filip (2012). *State building and images of democratic soldier in Serbia*. In: *Democratic Civil-Military Relations: Soldiering in 21st Century Europe*. Edited by: Sabine Mannitz, Routledge. p.229

⁵⁵ *Makedoncite najdobro mislenje imaat za Germanija, najpriyatelska zemja e Turcija*. Dnevnik, 22.12.2013. <http://www.dnevnik.mk/default.asp?ItemID=58DBBBFFCDF7E34089B82FA69EA9A12D>

⁵⁶ *Anketa na MCMS: Serbia the friendliest, Greece hostile neighbor*. Makfax, 29.12.2013 -

http://makfax.com.mk/326075/anketa_na_mcms_srbija_najpriyatelski_grcija_najnepriyatelski_sosed

⁵⁷ Ilic, Jovan (1995). *The Balkan geopolitical knot and the Serbian question*. In: *The Serbian Questions in the Balkans*. University of Belgrade, Faculty of Geography. - <http://www.rastko.rs/istorija/srbi-balkan/jilic-knot.html>

resource bases. For example, the human and industrial resource base of Macedonia is located around the capital Skopje in the Vardar valley, while the resource base consisted of minerals such as metal ores is dispersed in north-eastern and western together with coal deposits located in southwestern region of the country, whereas food production is also dispersed with Pelagonia plain as a base of grain production in the south west, Strumica and lower part of Vardar valley for vegetables production in the south east of the country. The same is in the case with Serbia where human and industrial base is situated near the capital which is located on the northern tip of Morava valley in the basin of Danube and Sava, whereas other natural resources bases as minerals and food production are dispersed on the east and north respectively. Interestingly from geopolitical aspect the biggest resources of coal and lignite (over 70% of the mineral deposits and 90% of coal⁵⁸) important for the energy stability Serbia have had on the territory of today's Kosovo. With this lack of the resources Serbia additionally was affected from strategic point. This pattern of dispersion of power resources bases with concentration of human and industrial infrastructure around the capitals and natural resources bases throughout the different parts of the territory is present almost in every Balkan state: Bulgaria, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro as a result of the genuine historical development of national economies and tendencies of centralization experienced in the communism. Even, Greece which has not been under communist rule does not thoroughly deviates from this pattern, with food an industrial production bas on the north and human resources base around the capital. Albeit Kosovo has the richest deposit of coal (14 billion tons of lignite) and mineral ores (lead and zinc) not just on the Balkans but also in Europe (sufficient for 13 more centuries according to some estimates)⁵⁹, it has positive trends in human resources such as the highest birth rate and population growth and is located in the central part of the Balkans (bordered with Macedonia and Serbia from three sides) it does not represent the core area of the peninsula that draw the interests and willingness of the other states to clash and fought against each other. In short, besides several smaller core areas in different regions within the peninsula, the Balkans does not have one single core area-heartland of strategic importance in economic and resource base prospect that has been fought over its possession and control in history (such as Ruhr,

⁵⁸ Thompson, C. Wayne (2012) *Nordic, Central and Southeastern Europe 2012*. World Today series, Stryker Post. p. 489

⁵⁹Flounders, Sara (1998). *Kosovo: "The war is about the mines"*. July 30th, Workers World Newspaper - http://www.iacenter.org/folder04/kosovo_mines.htm See also: *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*. Cambridge University Press, 2007. p.124

Saar and Alsas-Lorraine or Blue Banana belt in Europe), neither it is objective in the territorial claims and national strategies of the states in the present period after 1991.

II.3. RIMLAND OF THE BALKANS

Another very influential geopolitical concept regarding the control of certain geographical spatial area in order to dominate the world is the theory of Rimland championed by the American professor of international relations Nicolas Spykman. The concept of the Rimland was inspired and developed in close relation and as a response to the Mackinder's Heartland concept. Spykman considered that the Eurasian coastal lands including Maritime Europe, the Middle East, India, South East Asia and China were the key to world control because of their populations, their rich resources and their use of interior sea lines⁶⁰. High strategic importance of possession of this area is expressed in Spykman's words: "Who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia, who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world"⁶¹. This area is vulnerable to both sea and land power and it must be operated by the both type of forces for survival. Rimland that is actually Mackinder's Inner or Marginal Crescent with its geographical position of surrounding the Heartland and accessible for maritime powers was crucial for containing the land powers controlling the pivot area. In that context the possession of the geographical area identified as Rimland is primarily in regards of blocking the expansion of the power(s) controlling the Heartland. Similarly as Mackinder, in the conceptualization of the Rimland, Spykman offered a grandiose division of the world as Old World (Eurasia, Africa and Australia) and New World (Americas)⁶², which in geographical analogy of the political geographical definition and geographical position can be applied for the Balkans. Despite the numerous reasonable and valid critics for the fragmentation of regions that makes the unitary control of it impossible⁶³, the advantages of Rimland was applied and used in the US policy of containment of USSR communism during the early stages of the Cold War. To sum it up, the general abstract definition of the concept of Rimland could be comprehended as a maritime accessible fringe of countries that surrounds the Heartland allowing possibilities for containing its power and enabling domination in certain region. Bearing in mind the mutual close relationship that exist between the both concepts everywhere where Heartland could be identified means that there must be a

⁶⁰ Cohen, Saul (2003). *Geopolitics of the World System*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. p. 22

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Flint, Colin. (2011) *An introduction to geopolitics*. 2nd ed. Milton Park: Routledge. p.11

⁶³ Cohen, Saul (2003). *Geopolitics of the World System*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. p. 22

Rimland crucial for balancing or domination. Therefore, concept and own genuine Rimland almost thoroughly matching the characteristic of the original one, could be identified and generally applied on the Balkans.

Considering the geographical position, power and political setting of existing states and boundaries after 1991 and especially in regards with the already identified and aforementioned Heartland of the Balkans the Rimland is comprised primarily of Greece, Bulgaria, Albania and Croatia. Montenegrin coast can also be considered as a linking part of the Rimland but its internal high scarcely populated mountainous relief poses difficulties for any kind of mobility in military prospect for blockade or breakthrough to the Heartland. Generally, the Rimland of the Balkans is consisted of the countries that have coasts on the littorals of the Black, Aegean, Ionian and Adriatic Seas; are accessible for external land powers as well as their territory provides land base for activities intended for containment and deterrence of the Heartland. Observing the geographical positioning and the characteristics of the relief several advantages of each of these countries for blockade of any attempt for domination from the Balkan heartland can be identified. From its coast on the Black Sea, Bulgaria possess two great plains of the lowlands of Danube and valley of river Marica separated by the Stara Planina (Balkan) which provides terrain for easy mobility westwards toward Macedonia and Serbia. Moreover, the Bulgarian territory which cannot be perceived as maritime due to its deep penetration into the hinterland of the Balkan Peninsular land mass, allows most convenient place for retreat, regrouping and reorganizing for rejection of any possible attack from the Heartland. On the other hand Greece can be considered as the purely maritime positioned state that controls the entire sea lines from the exit of strategic important Dardanelles (and Bosphorus – i.e. Turkish straits), throughout the entire Aegean Sea where its territorial waters occupies 35% of its surface (by acquisition of only 6 nautical miles while according to Greek claim of the right of 12 nautical miles would cover 63,9%)⁶⁴, Mediterranean to the Ionian See close to the entrance in to the basin of Adriatic Sea. Also, Greece possesses the great plain of Thessaloniki on the southern tip of the Vardar valley which provides territorial base with lower significance for blockade of breakthrough from the Balkans Heartland but undoubtedly its greatest importance is the possession of the entire maritime encirclement of the Balkans. On the other hand, Albania despite the unfavorable high mountainous relief with river valleys that are not linked and do not provide access to the hinterland (perfectly shown in the case of unsuccessful Italian invasion on Greece during

WWII), its coastland on the 45 miles (72 km) wide Otranto Strait which is entrance gate from the Ionian (and Mediterranean) into the Adriatic sea⁶⁵ shows considerably high geographical significance in prospect of internal and external context of Balkan geopolitics. However, bearing in mind that the conception of the Rimland includes the factor of population the unfavorable relief setting of Albania is highly compensated by the qualities of the human factor of the Albanian population which is characterized with the highest birth and growth rate, youth bulge and most importantly the wide geographical distribution in neighboring states of Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia, Macedonia and Greece with active tendencies for expansion more eastwards into the Balkans Heartland. Finally, with the Croatian territory which unifies the possession of the largest portion of the Adriatic coastline of Balkan Peninsula allowing naval blockade and Slavonia as a part of the huge plain of the Panonian lowland – although territories north from river Sava are perceived by some authors as out of the northern physical natural border of the Balkans – which is allowing mobility and space for attack or retreat eastwards to Serbia, the Rimland of the Balkans as a fringe encircling aforementioned Heartland ends up from the western side. It is important to note that Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina (only small “corridor”) have also access on the Adriatic sea but their relief and internal composition of the territories do not provide strategic advantages in mobility. Moreover, the extremely high significance of geopolitical position of Bosnia and Herzegovina that will be mentioned in the following chapters, due to ethnographic and historical factors makes it suitable candidate for representing another geopolitical concept such as shatter belt. Given that prior to the territorial changes resulting from the breakup of Yugoslavia the Heartland and most of the western flank of the Rimland were unified under the control of a single state, it can be concluded that Bulgaria, Greece and Albania are the traditional core of the Balkan’s Rimland. It can be also concluded that this territorial placement of Yugoslavia by possessing the Heartland and almost a half of the Rimland in geographical strategic military prospect, enabled it to break away from the Soviet sphere of influence and successfully resist as a neutral power for such a long time. This may explain and give the answer of the previously aforementioned geopolitical setting with 2+2+2 formula on the Balkans. Moreover, this positioning allowed Yugoslavia to be the bearer of the idea for unification of Balkan federation and even have territorial claims towards Italy and Austria. Similarly to the original concept, the Rimland of the Balkans is fragmented upon

⁶⁴ Mileski, Toni (2005). *Makedonija – Rubikova kocka na Balkanot*. Filozofski Fakultet, Skopje. p. 72 (on Macedonian)

the ethnic-national, religious, linguistic, cultural lines and recently prior to 1991 even politically and ideologically. However, given the integration processes until 2008 all aforementioned countries are members of NATO which means that despite the differences and fragmentation the entire Rimland of the Balkans is unified within a single military alliance. Considering some of the political geographic definitions mentioned in the first chapter, if we consider Romania as a part of the Balkans it is also NATO member which geographical position prolongs the Rimland by bordering the identified Heartland from north-east. The total encirclement of NATO members of the Heartland or Macedonia and Serbia as two Orthodox Christian, culturally close but ethnic, national and linguistically different states, ends up with Hungary (although it is not Balkanic nor geographically, neither politically and culturally neither it is maritime accessible state) which bordering from the north unifies the both flanks of the Rimland from west (Croatia) and east (Romania). The strategic use of this identified Rimland of the Balkans can be seen in two cases after 1991: 1) during the embargo and bombardment campaign on Yugoslavia (especially in the Pristina Airport Incident in the Kosovo crisis, when Bulgaria and Romania closed their airspace for Russian air forces) and 2) the armed conflict in Macedonia in 2001 when USA and NATO blocked and encumbered the arm supplies shipments from Ukraine for Macedonian security forces with closing the route exports through Bulgaria and Greece⁶⁶. In broader regional context regarding the great powers struggle, the position of Bulgaria in this Rimland of the Balkans is very important. Namely, with Bulgarian accession to NATO the Russian alternative for penetration on Aegean Sea through direct Bulgarian breakthrough the western Thracian barrier and exit on the northern part of the Aegean Sea is completely thwarted on the long term⁶⁷. This was well known Russian aspiration is present as a main goal even in the greater Bulgaria concept proposed in San Stefano peace agreement of 1878. Finally, Turkey also a NATO member (since 1952) and very important ruler and geopolitical actor on the Balkans for centuries have very specific position regarding the patterns of division of the world in Mackinder's and Spykman's (as well as Cohen's) geopolitical conceptualizations. Regardless that the European part of Turkey as part of the peninsular landmass having access

⁶⁵ Mileski, Toni (2005). *Makedonija – Rubikova kocka na Balkanot*. Filozofski Fakultet, Skopje. p. 73-75 (on Macedonian)

⁶⁶ For the Ukrainian arm supplies of Macedonian armed forces during the conflict in 2001, see the documentary "Vo Centar – Kako se nabavuvase ukrainskoto oruzje" - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-q7q7e8aiCM> – with statements of former Macedonian prime minister Ljubco Georgievski, Ukrainian foreign minister Anatolij Zlenko and other high ranking involved persons (on Macedonian), as well as short Ukrainian documentary by Mykhailo Malyi - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUBA2u5NhXM> (on Ukrainian)

⁶⁷ Mileski, Toni (2005). *Makedonija – Rubikova kocka na Balkanot*. Filozofski Fakultet, Skopje. p. 71 (on Macedonian)

on Black, Marmara and Aegean Seas and the extremely important Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits complementing the Rimland, the overall position of the Turkish territory especially due to its larger and dominant Anatolian part in Asia Minor separated by the seas fits more in the divisions such as Pivot Area, Inner (Marginal) Crescent and Outer (Insular) Crescent or “Old” and “New World” with Turkey representing the Outer crescent of the Balkans, respectively. Moreover, regarding the growing influence and the role that Turkey plays as an actor in the Balkans hinterland and Heartland is analogous of the position and role of outer (maritime world) powers globally. By this we can draw a complete map of the Balkans in political definition according and in analogy to basic initial geopolitical thinking with Heartland (Macedonia and Serbia) as Pivot Area, Rimland (Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, Croatia) as Inner Marginal Crescent and Turkey as Outer Insular Crescent.

II.4. TELLUROCRACY AND THALASSOCRACY ON THE BALKANS

Tied with the natural environment and physic spatial space development of the human communities and societies was influenced by the two basic geopolitical ways of thinking: *tellurocracy* - or “rule of the land” and *thalassocracy* - or “rule of the sea”. Moreover, the entire history of the humanity, international relations and even the actual geopolitical struggle is seen as a perpetual confrontation between tellurocratic (continental) and thalassocratic (maritime) great powers. Even more, the two aforementioned greatest geopolitical concepts of Heartland and Rimland are derived from and in compliance with the tellurocratic and thalassocratic geopolitical way of thinking. In that context tellurocracy means that in order to dominate the world (or certain area – microcosm) it is necessary to rule the land mass while on the contrary thalassocracy implies the necessity of the control or rule of the seas. Inspired by these tenets many authors starting from Mahan, Mackinder, Spykman, German school of geopolitik up to present day Dugin and Brzezinski have constructed their geopolitical theories and concepts. Within the thalassocratic thinking Alfred Thayer Mahan championed the so-called “Geopolitics of sea” which states that maritime – sea power would dominate the world if it has control over the sea lines especially through possession of the strategic narrow straits called choke points where the sea line, shipping and trade routes passes. In global geopolitical and geostrategic context the Balkan Peninsula has the aforementioned Bosphorus and Dardanelles (i.e. Turkish) Straits on eastern and Otranto Strait (Gate) on western shore as choke points, all of them under possession and control of NATO members. The inland isolated position of the littoral of the Black Sea and its close hydrographic connection with

the Mediterranean Sea has always had extremely high importance⁶⁸. It has crucial importance for well known Russian aspiration for access to warm water seas and projecting sea power as well as for the western British, French and American blockade. The great significance of the Black Sea and the Balkan Peninsula as its western coast with proximity of the straits as its entrance and exit gate have been confirmed many time with the Crimean War, Great Eastern Crisis and Russian proposed Great Bulgaria in San Stefano Treaty, Cold War. The ongoing crisis in Crimea and Ukraine, the US naval drills with Bulgarian and Romanian navies in response to Russian capture of Crimea, shows that in global geopolitical context the Black Sea would remain as highly relevant and the Balkans will be involved due to its strategic territorial and maritime position. Significance in prospect of geopolitics of sea continues with the Aegean Sea basin which is the only access route from Black to the Mediterranean Sea and a place where the maritime and insular contact of the Balkan and Anatolian land mass represent an area with extremely important communication in global and regional military strategic and economic context, makes this sea the most important part of the Mediterranean⁶⁹. Position of the numerous islands and dispute over the delimitation are the essence of the Greek-Turkish conflict, which despite the fact that the both states are NATO members make Aegean Sea as region of high conflict potential. Finally in the observation of the seas enclosing the Balkans, despite the delimitation border dispute between Croatia and Slovenia and prospect for the Russian Adriatic alternative through Montenegro, Adriatic Sea has the lowest conflict potential and geopolitical strategic significance due to its closed position entirely encircled by members of NATO. In regards with our analytical approach for the Balkans as a microcosm to which global geopolitical concepts and theories are applied and examined, tellurocracy as well as thalassocracy can be observed whether the territorial changes since 1991 and actual geopolitical strife are based on the significance of the land or sea possession and domination. Except from the antiquity where the Balkan Peninsula was a place of the dominance of thalassocratic powers – Hellenic city states until the clash with the tellurocratic power of that time - Macedonia under the reign of Phillip II -after whose victory the tellurocracy was established as a dominating ruling principle. Entire set of the territorial changes that happened after the breakup of Yugoslavia, inspired by the great nationalist territorial conceptions that usually points out historical important heartlands for the birth of the nations (ex. perception of Kosovo for Serbia and Albania, mentioned in the next

⁶⁸ Mileski, Toni (2005). *Makedonija – Rubikova kocka na Balkanot*. Filozofski Fakultet, Skopje. p. 67 (on Macedonian)

chapters), were based on the significance of the land acquisition. Additionally, entire wars, decisive battles and operation of Yugoslav wars were waged on land often with very crucial importance of the control of strategic points. There was only one small naval battle of the Dalmatian channels (Korcula and Split) between 14 and 16 November 1991 concluded with Croatian victory. Navy was used for the Yugoslav blockade in support of the unsuccessful siege of Dubrovnik and battle for Sibenik where Croatian forces captured Yugoslav navy facilities and used in defense. Another place where maritime position has significance is the Aegean Dispute between Greece and Turkey with often incidents of violation of the airspace. Nevertheless, except Greece that can be identified as the primarily maritime positioned and the strongest naval power with Turkey, the entire geopolitical positions and strategies whether military or even more upon soft power spread of influence are land based showing prevalence of the tellurocracy. However, sea or naval power and maritime position had no significance in the wars neither in actual interstate relations and geopolitical struggles in the Balkans which confirms that tellurocracy is the predominant way of geopolitical thinking.

II.5. BALKANS AS A SHATTERBELT, CRUSH ZONE OR GATEWAY REGION

In the post-cold war contemporary geopolitics several new conceptualizations of the world map appeared bringing new concepts and definitions for specific regions and areas. Among the influential newly created concepts are the gateway regions and states, shatter belts and crush zone as defined in the works of Saul Cohen, Robert Kaplan and other authors. Shatter belts are defined as strategically oriented regions that are both deeply divided internally and caught up in the competition between great powers of the geostrategic realms⁷⁰. Unlike most geopolitical regions that have varying degree of cohesiveness, shatter belts are global destabilizers⁷¹. The concept of shatterbelt has long held the attention and also terms such as “Shatter zone” or “Crush Zone” have been used by geographers as Alfred Mahan, James Fairgrieve and Richard Hartshorne who were studying them. By 1915 Fairgrieve used the term “Crush Zone” to describe small buffer states between the sea powers and Eurasian Heartland from Northern and Eastern Europe to the *Balkans, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Siam and Korea*⁷². Later, during the World War II, Hartshorne analyzed the “Shater Zone” of

⁶⁹ Mileski, Toni (2005). *Makedonija – Rubikova kocka na Balkanot*. Filozofski Fakultet, Skopje. p. 71 (on Macedonian)

⁷⁰ Cohen, Saul (2003). *Geopolitics of the World System*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. p. 43

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² Cohen, Saul (2003). *Geopolitics of the World System*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. p. 43

Eastern Europe from the Baltic to the Adriatic⁷³. From the contemporary aspect Cohen predicts that the future may bring additional Shatter belts onto the world scene and the most likely candidate is the new/old zone from the Baltic trough Eastern Europe and the Balkans⁷⁴. Undoubtedly the Balkans completely fulfils the definition of shatterbelt: deeply internally divided by ethnic, national, religious, linguistic and cultural lines and caught up in the competition between great and regional powers. Since the mid 19th century the Balkans was arena: 1) of direct confrontation between Ottoman Empire, Russia and Austro-Hungary with Great Britain, France and Germany being involved indirectly by supporting one of the confronted parties; 2) direct confrontation between USA and USSR on the beginning of the Cold War (Greek civil War) and 3) moderate confrontation of the interests of USA, European Union, Russia, Turkey and Islamic World in the Yugoslav wars after 1991. After the end of the wars and the beginning of the process of euro-atlantics integration, USA and western powers gained total dominance due to the integration and orientation towards NATO and EU of the all countries. However, by the end of the first decade of 21st century with the independence of the quasi-state of Kosovo, the blockade, high ethnic and religious conflict potential and uncertain stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia the rise and struggle of influence of other regional powers primarily Turkey vividly appeared. Moreover, the region of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sandjak, Kosovo with Presevo Valley in Southern Serbia and Macedonia can be identified as shatterbelt within (of) the Balkans, due to the extremely deep internal division upon ethnic, religious, cultural lines, strategic position, conflict potential, weak cohesiveness and stability and most importantly competition of all neighboring states as well as involvement of regional and global powers such as USA, Turkey, Russia, EU. Territorially compact belt of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sanjdak, Kosovo with Presevo Valley in Southern Serbia and Macedonia which in fact present geopolitical objects of the actions and competition of the Balkan geopolitical subjects (Serbia, Croatia, Albania, Bulgaria and Greece – i.e. all neighboring states) has a role of regional destabilizer. On the other hand, gateway states are playing novel role in linking different parts of the world by facilitating the exchange of people, goods and ideas whose characteristic may vary in detail but not in the overall context of their strategic economic locations or in adaptability of their inhabitants to economic reforms and exchange⁷⁵. In that context, the concept of

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Cohen, Saul (2003). *Geopolitics of the World System*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. p. 44

⁷⁵ Cohen, Saul (2003). *Geopolitics of the World System*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. p. 49

gateway regions is logical extension of the gateway state concept⁷⁶. From historical aspect the Balkans was a gateway region between the Ottoman Empire and Europe, because under the Ottoman rule it was its economically, politically and culturally most developed region with former Roman, Byzantine (i.e. Christian European) heritage, bordering Europe. According to Cohen's observations from the former Yugoslavia (i.e. Balkans) Slovenia is perceived as gateway state while Montenegro is potential gateway state within the region of Central and Eastern Europe⁷⁷. Regarding the former position as the only free market capitalist economic system together with its strategic position it can be concluded that in the 90's and early years of 2000's – the period of transition of former socialist economies - until the disastrous financial debt crisis Greece has played role as gateway state on the Balkans. Noting the fact that southeast Europe (i.e. Balkans) is the economically lowest developed region, with insignificant economic performance, tied in economic exchange relationship only with Europe it shows that it does not have the role of gateway region despite the higher economic development than the neighboring regions towards east and south. Nevertheless, according to Cohen's idea about the possibility of shatter belts to mutate in gateways⁷⁸, the strategic geographic position of the Balkans towards Middle East, the former Soviet states of Eastern Europe and North Africa would play the decisive role in the possible transformation of a gateway region between them and Central (and Western) Europe. However, recently increased presence with financing large scale investments in infrastructure (dams and motorways in Macedonia, Serbia and ports in Greece) from China indicates its attempts to turn the Balkans as economic gateway to European Union which confirms the gradual transformation of the position of the Balkans as a gateway region of a global geopolitical actor.

II.6. GEOPOLITICS OF AIR IN RELATION WITH THE BALKANS

With the growing pace of the development and advances of the technology in the beginning of the 20th century a new stage and conceptualization of geopolitics emerged. Inspired from the advances of the usage of the air force Giulio Douhet and Alexander the Seversky established the geopolitics of the air. In the manner of tellurocratic and thalassocratic way of

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Cohen, Saul (2003). *Geopolitics of the World System*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. p. 51

⁷⁸ SAUL COHEN: GREAT POWERS, SHATTERBELTS, GATEWAYS, GEOSTRATEGIC REGIONS.

Interviewed by Leonhardt van Efferink (November 2009) on Exploring Geopolitics -

http://www.exploringgeopolitics.org/Interview_Cohen_Saul_Great_Powers_Shatterbelts_Gateways_Geostrategic_Regions_Derwent_Whittlesey.html See also: Cohen, Saul (2003). *Geopolitics of the World System*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. p. 53

thinking about the superiority of land and sea power in regards of world domination De Seversky argued about the superiority of air power proposing a unique “airman’s global view”. He believed that virtually complete air supremacy, not just local or temporary air superiority is possible⁷⁹. In his view the position, configuration and azimuthally equidistant projection centered of the cartographic expression of the North Pole has the crucial significance over which the US and Soviet air dominance clash⁸⁰. While most of US air dominance stretches over Central and South America and Soviet over Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, the entire North Pole, Europe, Eurasia and North Africa are the Area of decision within the striking range of both air forces. Hence, the Balkans is situated within this area of decision. Use of air force bombing over the Balkans was present throughout the entire 20th century. Aerial bombardments over Balkans took place as early as First World War and later again during the Second World War. Regarding the geopolitics of air the Balkans after 1991 shows some unique features and indicators. Interestingly, the Balkans was the only place in Europe that after the end of the Cold War in the 90’s was bombarded by air campaigns. The first air campaign on the Balkans started during the War in Bosnia, early as April 1993. As follow-on to the monitoring operation of Op. Sky Monitor, NATO aircraft enforced the UN Security Council’s No-Fly Zone over Bosnia. Subsequent additions to Operation Deny Flight included Close Air Support to UN peacekeepers and air strikes in support of UN resolutions⁸¹. On 28 February 1994 NATO engaged in the first combat operations in its history when *DENY FLIGHT* aircraft shot down four Bosnian Serb fighter-bombers conducting a bombing mission in violation of the No-Fly Zone⁸²(the so-called Banja Luka Incident). After the *Markale* marker massacre in Sarajevo, on 30th August 1995 on the request of UN peacekeepers NATO launched three weeks long Operation Deliberate Force⁸³ targeted on Bosnian Serb command and control installations and ammunition facilities. These airstrikes were a key factor in bringing the Serbs to the negotiating table and ending the war in Bosnia⁸⁴. Four years later during the Kosovo crisis, NATO launched the air campaign of bombing of FR Yugoslavia which lasted from 24th of March until 11th of June 1999 resulting with the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces and establishment of UNMIK mission in Kosovo. In

⁷⁹ Jones, Stephen B. (1955) *Global Strategic Views*. Geographical Review, Vol. 45, No. 4 (Oct. 1955). p. 501

⁸⁰ Jones, Stephen B. (1955) *Global Strategic Views*. Geographical Review, Vol. 45, No. 4 (Oct. 1955). p. 501

⁸¹ *NATO’s Operations 1949 – present* p.2-

<http://www.aco.nato.int/resources/21/NATO%20Operations,%201949-Present.pdf>

⁸² Ibid

⁸³ Tirpak, A.John (October 1997). "Deliberate Force". Air Force Magazine -

<http://www.airforcemag.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/1997/October%201997/1097deliberate.aspx>

⁸⁴ *NATO’s Operations 1949 – present* p.2-

<http://www.aco.nato.int/resources/21/NATO%20Operations,%201949-Present.pdf>

this mission named Allied Force, NATO used a wide range of aircraft and naval weapons against the FRY including submarine-launched cruise missiles, fighters, fighter bombers, air defense aircraft and AWACS⁸⁵, as well as depleted uranium and cluster bombs. Both aerial bombing campaign in Bosnia and FR Yugoslavia were conducted from Aviano air base in north eastern Italy, with extraordinary high rate of successfulness due to the minor losses (1 plane shot down in Deliberate Force, 2 in Deny Flight and 3 in Allied Force among which is the famous shot down of F-117A Nighthawk) and the complete achievement of the goal of defeating the opponent. Bearing in mind the fact that if all recognised and non-recognised political and territorial units are taken into account, there are 13 of them with the average size of 40,000 sq. km⁸⁶, which is considerably small size of territory each state or entire region is highly vulnerable on air attacks and use of conventional weapons. This is actually the main reason of the high rate of success of the NATO air campaigns. In regards of the strategic position of the Balkan Peninsula in global context it has also high significance. Joint air bases that US since 2006 have in Bulgaria (*Bezmer* and *Graf Ignatievo*) and Romania have extremely crucial significance in regards of possible air campaigns on the Middle East, Eastern Europe and the geopolitical struggle with Russia and Iran. For the possible air campaign for retaliation of Syria in the summer of 2013, US officially sought from Greek government access of the military bases – air base in *Kalamatha* (on Peloponnesus) for the support of the operation⁸⁷. Given the global geopolitical changes after the Cold War characterized with permanently high importance of the Middle East and North Africa, as well as the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, considering the position of the Balkans, it will definitely be further highly important in regards of the global geopolitics of air.

CHAPTER III - BALKAN NATION STATES AND THEIR GREATER TERRITORIAL CONCEPTS

After explaining, application and comparison of the politico-geographical and geopolitical features of the countries of the Balkans with the basic geopolitical theories and concepts, next element which presents a reason for the specific geopolitics of the Balkans, especially the inclination toward conflicts and territorial changes are the great nation states concepts and

⁸⁵ *NATO's Operations 1949 – present* p.3-

<http://www.aco.nato.int/resources/21/NATO%20Operations,%201949-Present.pdf>

⁸⁶ Ilic, Jovan (1995). *The Balkan geopolitical knot and the Serbian question*. In: *The Serbian Questions in the Balkans*. University of Belgrade, Faculty of Geography. - <http://www.rastko.rs/istorija/srbi-balkan/jilic-knot.html>

their territorial claims. The correlation between these greater territorial concepts or simply their involvement into the territorial changes and wars that occurred and happened after 1991 will be the main theme of this and the next topic. Before the start of the review and explanation of them in details, it is necessary to outline the common features and patterns of these concepts. Without exception all countries of the Balkans have their own greater nation state territorial concepts with respective irredentist movements, often backed by strong political and official governmental support. Another common feature regarding the great nation-state territorial concepts is that all of them are based on the references to the historical territories of medieval and ancient empires, of which the Balkan nations are claiming direct progeny. Also, all Balkan countries have included their great national territorial concepts in the education processes, in the schools and textbooks - especially for history and geography as studying and describing the territorial scope of their native homeland. The primary goal of this task of education is to instill and bolster consciousness and perception of these greater territories as national territory not just of political figures but to every single citizen or member of the ethnic and national community. Hence, the greater national territorial concepts of the all Balkan countries are relevant and can be found clearly present in the public life, namely culture, literature and even sports, as the latter one is obvious with recent call from the Albanian president Sali Berisha for forming pan-Albanian football league⁸⁸. Presence of the national irredentists ideas, are also very often found among the official sources in the countries. Whether these territorial concepts are proposed officially by the governments or academic institutions or they are proposed by the political parties or civil society movements, they are inevitable part of the political life of the every single country in the Balkans and often of the international relations and politics in Europe. Interestingly, another new common feature of all of them in context of the strategy of their support, commitment or even fulfillment, evolved as a result of the peace and integration processes sponsored by USA, NATO and EU. Namely, all of the great national territorial concepts find their place and continued their existence in accordance with the integration processes. The countries which are candidates and want to join EU and NATO, as it is most obvious case with Albanians, where politicians officially state that the unification of all Albanians (provisioned in the concept of Greater or “Ethnic” Albania) will be realized within EU and NATO, when all

⁸⁷ Mezzofiore, Gianluca (2013) *Syria: US Asks Greece for Military Base Access*. International Business Times. 27.08. <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/articles/501788/20130827/syria-asks-greece-military-bases-warplanes-spotted.htm>

⁸⁸ *Berisha didn't answer for Pan-Albanian League* – Top Channel News, 5th of January 2013 - <http://www.top-channel.tv/english/artikull.php?id=7963>

countries where they live will become members and the borders will lose their meaning and thus for the first time after 1912 all Albanians in the region will be part of same political unit⁸⁹. The same is stated by some journalists and public figures about the unification of the Macedonians from the Republic of Macedonia and those who live in the other parts of Macedonia within Greece, Bulgaria and Albania. Regarding the great nation state territorial concept it is important to be underlined that the Balkan states which are already members of EU (and NATO), such as Greece and Bulgaria, besides the political parties or movements and groups in the civil society, the official governmental policies are also conducted in compliance with these concepts, especially regarding the celebration of historical events, presentation of cultural and historical heritage and the so-called “care of compatriots living abroad”. Regarding the justification of all of these great territorial concepts there is one argument about the naturalness of the national territories. Namely, using geographical arguments some of these ideas claim that the natural and physical features of the terrain are creating and forming natural unit – land, which has its own (natural) economical, geographical meaning and originality. Another argument which is used in justification of these entire territorial concepts is the inviolable and undisputed historical right of the claimed territories. This argument which evolves from allegations for the indigenoussness (autochthony) of the people to the territories is supported by historical, cultural, archeological, linguistic arguments and facts. Considering the political addresses and actions towards these concepts there are two patterns how these territorial concepts are related. The first one is in a relation with people still living in the certain territories. In this prospect political action is more evident with support by the people living in the other country, thus having implications on the political life and relations between the countries as well as within the countries. With people living in the other country supporting the irredentist idea for unification, this pattern sometimes is more prone for military actions. This characteristic of the pattern is most obvious in the cases with Albanian, Serbian and Croatian greater territorial concepts. The second one is based on calling upon the historical facts and heritage on the claimed territories. Having no compatriots living in the other country whose territory is included in the great territorial conceptions, this pattern is not that conflictual comparing to previous one. Thus, this second pattern is more present within the political, cultural, academic-scientific life of the country – holder of the irredentist idea, without having any

⁸⁹Bogdani, Mirela, Loughlin John (2007) *Albania and the European Union: The Tumultuous Journey towards Integration and Accession*. I.B.Tauris. p.233. See also: <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatches/globalpost-blogs/commentary/eu-enlargement-the-real-answer-ethnic-tensions-the-balkans>

largely significant implications for the official relations with the other countries. In this prospect this characteristic is more prevalent in the cases of Macedonian, Greek, Bulgarian territorial concepts. Nevertheless, all these kind of concepts have radical (militarily) supporters which is additional reason for the conflict on the Balkans. Last characteristic of the territorial concept is that they are morally argued as a justful for the normal existence of the nations and correction historical injustices. Finally, it is important to be pointed out that in this analysis of the great national concepts of the Balkan states would be conducted in regards and comparison of the application of the geopolitical concepts and theories from the previous chapter as well as their implementation and interrelation with the territorial changes after 1991 especially during the Yugoslav Wars. This interrelation would serve as an indicator for the extent to which the greater territorial geopolitical concepts of the Balkan states acted as a driving force of the territorial changes by fostering the motivation as well as for setting the goals and national agenda.

III.1. UNITED MACEDONIA

On the territory known as Macedonia from the ancient history, lived and still living ethnically, linguistically and culturally specific people which have naturally developed Macedonian national self-consciousness and nationhood. Although during the history the term Macedonia administratively covered different scope of areas, its core has always been the watersheds of the rivers Vardar, Bistrica and Struma, the northern coast of the Aegean Sea with the Thermaic Gulf (the Gulf of Salonika) and between the mountains Olympus to the south, Shar to the northwest and Pirin to the east. On this territory specific Macedonian national self-consciousness developed to the extent of attempts with clear national strife for statehood and independence from Ottoman Empire, especially during the end of the 19th century. Rebellions, as well as political movements, as the Interim Government of Macedonia from 1880, envisioned creation of independent and free Macedonian state on this territory. Also, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization acted throughout the whole this territory, preparing the people and conditions for uprising and liberation of this territory, under the concept for Autonomous Macedonia. As a last remained part of the Ottoman Empire in Europe with very favorable geographical position and great economic potential along the backward social and educational situation of the population, Macedonia became battlefield of political (and religious) propagandas and great national concepts of the neighboring liberated kingdoms of Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia. This resulted with the two

Balkan wars in 1912 and 1913, and the Bucharest Peace Treaty according to which the territory of Macedonia was partitioned among the three Balkan states, and one very small part to the newly formed Albania. From the aspect of the aforementioned application of geopolitical theories on the Balkans, the partition of Macedonia made possession of the Heartland of the Balkans form a single power that was Ottoman Empire for centuries to be handed over to the newly established neighboring states, which by not allowing formation of independent Macedonian state on this strategic positioned area seemingly contributed for temporal balance of power of existing states. After this, strong political movement for unification of the Macedonia emerged, envisioning the concept of the *United Macedonia*. The territorial concept of the United Macedonia is comprised by the regions (parts) of *Vardar Macedonia*: present day independent Republic of Macedonia with the area of the monastery Prohor Pcinjski in Serbia and the region of Gora between Kosovo and Albania; *Aegean Macedonia* which is now under Greece (its northern part administratively organized in the three prefectures of Western, Central and Eastern Macedonia without Thrace); *Pirin Macedonia* which is now under Bulgaria, completely in its administrative unit of Blagoevgrad Oblast) and *Mala Prespa and Golo Brdo* now under Albania in its southeastern part. Within these borders Macedonia covers territory of 67,741 square kilometers, or about 15% of the Balkan Peninsula⁹⁰. Since Macedonian territory was partitioned and occupied by the armies of the Balkan states after the wars in 1912-1913, the concept of United Macedonia emerged and evolved as a strong political idea of the Macedonian liberation movement and intelligentsia. Macedonian intelligentsia in St. Petersburg in 1913 announced and sent a memorandum of the independence of Macedonia to the British and Russian foreign ministers and European public, accompanied with the Map of Macedonia (made by Dimitrija Chupovski) including all of these territories⁹¹. Between the two world wars The Comintern, the Balkan Communist parties, and the Macedonian revolutionaries, had emphasized a Macedonian political and civic consciousness and nation and embraced the cause of liberation and reunification and this was to occur through a socialist revolution, paving the way for a Balkan Communist federation, with reunited Macedonia as an equal partner⁹². Moreover, the Comintern specifically called for an independent united Macedonia⁹³. Thus,

⁹⁰ Rossos, Andrew (2008) *Macedonia and the Macedonians: a history*. Hoover Institution Press, the University of Michigan, p.1

⁹¹ Ristovski, Blazhe (1995). *Macedonia and Macedonian Nation*. Detska Radost, Skopje, p. 251-252 (on Macedonian)

⁹² Rossos, Andrew (2008) *Macedonia and the Macedonians: a history*. Hoover Institution Press, the University of Michigan, p.166

⁹³ Phillips, John (2004) *Macedonia: Warlords and Rebels on the Balkans*. I.B. Tauris. p.34

the movement for United Macedonia grew much stronger within the political organizations as well as the Macedonian masses in the period before and right after the Second World War. Until the end of the Second World War the concept of unification of Macedonia was inevitable part of efforts of Macedonian political liberation movements, including the communists which have organized the armed struggle against the fascist occupiers. On the first assembly of the Anti Fascists National Assembly of Macedonia (ASNOM) held in the monastery of Prohor Pciniski on 2nd of August 1944, delegates from Pirin and Aegean Part of Macedonia, under Bulgaria and Greece were present and also these regions of Macedonia were mentioned in the public addresses of the opening of the constitutional session. The idea of United Macedonia was supported by Metodija Andonov – Chento the first president of ASNOM who even planned to plead for it on the Paris Peace Conference⁹⁴ (along with many prominent political and public figures in socialist Macedonia), who was sentenced in jail because of that, thus becoming a symbol of the repression of the communist regime. Closest to the partial realization of the unification of Macedonia took place in the period immediately after World War II when the Bulgarian President Georgi Dimitrov in 1947 signed the Bled Agreement which envisioned union (unification) of Pirin Macedonia and Socialist Republic of Macedonia in Yugoslavia⁹⁵. In this period the national rights of Macedonians were recognized and they received broad cultural autonomy in Pirin Macedonia in Bulgaria. Moreover, in the Civil War in Greece (1945-1949), the Greek communists partially accepted the idea of united Macedonia within a Balkan federation that was to include Macedonian inhabited territories thus winning their sympathies in the districts of Kostur/Castoria, Lerin/Florina, and Voden/Edhessa⁹⁶. This support for unification of Macedonia led to a enormous support of the Macedonians (with around 14,000 fighters) to the Greek Communist Insurgency and after the defeat and expulsion of the refugees it became one of the issues of contention between Macedonia and Greece. Although this territorial concept and idea of the Macedonian land within the mentioned regions was present in the official historical and school books, academic and popular literature, as well as the public life of the people, especially after the repatriation of the Macedonian political refugees from the Civil War in Greece, its support was politically suppressed (and forbidden) by the communist regime. Henceforth, the idea and the support for the United Macedonia become a primal object of the Macedonian emigration. Many Macedonian emigrant organizations have the unification of

⁹⁴ Rossos, Andrew (2008) *Macedonia and the Macedonians: a history*. Hoover Institution Press, the University of Michigan, p.225

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 206

Macedonia as a first political goal and task. In the countries where Macedonians lived in Europe, North America and Australia a political movement was formed under the name “Movement for Liberation and Unification of Macedonia” (*Dvizenje za osloboduvanje i obedinuvanje na Makedonija* - DOOM) which published magazine called “Macedonian Nation”, provisioning political platform for unification and informing about the life of the Macedonians from all parts of Macedonia. In the years of the end of the communist regime in Yugoslavia, and the democratization in the late 80’s and early 90’s, all patriotic and right-wing political parties registered and active in Macedonia, have the concept of United Macedonia as a political goal, inevitable in their political programs and public addresses. Currently ruling party, VMRO-DPMNE (founded on the initiative of the leader of DOOM - Dragan Bogdanovski) in its first party resolution in 1990 called for United Macedonia⁹⁷ and was even proclaiming that the next congress will be held in Salonika (Thessaloniki), where actually the historical Macedonian revolutionary movement - VMRO was founded in 1893. This revival and mentioning of the concept of the United Macedonia together with the independence was immediately seen as a threat of territorial pretensions for Greece, which has objected Macedonian accession in UN arguing that Macedonia has territorial claims and it represents security threat for the Balkans. Despite the inability of Macedonia, and officially clearly stated unwillingness for any territorial changes (change and removal of the Article 48 of the Constitution which provisioned care for the Macedonian minorities in the neighboring countries), the concept of United Macedonia present in the everyday public life in Macedonia is still used as one of the main arguments in the ongoing name dispute and blockades imposed from Greece to the Macedonian integration in EU and NATO. Although the concept is not officially supported by any Macedonian government, neither one of the prominent political parties, it is still present in the public life and the activities of the civil society such as nongovernmental organizations, magazines, cultural manifestations especially in the period after the Greek veto on Macedonian accession on the NATO summit in Bucharest 2008 and the 100th anniversary of the partitioning of Macedonia by the Bucharest Peace Treaty Agreement of 1913. After the independence of Macedonia the only activity regarding the unification of Macedonia, was made by the leader of political party MAAK, Strasho Angelovski, who in 1997 in UN headquarters in Geneva sought through legal means a revision of the Bucharest Peace Treaty of 1913. Not a single military, diplomatic or official

⁹⁶ Bechev, Dimitar (2009) *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Macedonia*. The Scarecrow Press. p.88

⁹⁷ Ackermann, Alice (1999) *Making Peace Prevail: Preventing Violent Conflict in Macedonia*. Syracuse University Press. p.96

political act, neither formation of paramilitary organizations aimed for armed unification of Macedonia or public protest and manifestations happened since the independence of Macedonia. Moreover, despite the single efforts for righteous unification of the partitioned parts of Macedonia, there is no such an official and clearly adopted political, geostrategic and geopolitical platform, concept and strategy for the concept of the United Macedonia. Additionally, the idea is not fully accepted and supported in the society, where left-wing and self-declared pro-European political parties and public figures are strongly opposing and criticizing any attempt and mentioning of the concept of United Macedonia. From the perspective of aforementioned geopolitical conceptualization in the previous chapter, United Macedonia would encompass and connect (link) the Heartland of the Balkans with the Aegean Sea including its entire watershed with the basins of the Vardar, Struma and Mesta rivers. From strategic perspective this would cut off, break and disable unification of the Rimland which will lead to quite strong position of Macedonia isolating Greece deep on the south and cutting of its territorial relations with other Balkan states thus making containment and blockade of Macedonia rather difficult.

III.2. GREATER ALBANIA

Early as 1877/78, during the Great Eastern Crisis in Europe the territorial concept of greater Albania emerged from the proclamation of the political organization called Prizren League⁹⁸. This platform proposed four Ottoman vilayets of Ishkodra, Yannina, Kosovo and Monastir to gain full autonomy into a single territorial unit⁹⁹, and ever since its establishment became inevitable part of Albanian political activity and actions on the Balkans in geopolitical context. Prizren League was in fact a response to the Berlin Congress and attempt to stop the allotting Albanian inhabited lands to newly established Slav states¹⁰⁰. The concept of greater Albania in addition to the existing Republic of Albania includes Kosovo, Preshevo valley in southern Serbia, western part of Macedonia, northwestern Greece and southern Montenegro. During the Second World War as a protectorate of fascist Italy, Albania extended its borders eastwards on most of modern day Kosovo (except of southeastern and northern part) and western part of Macedonia. Although during the Cold War, Albania was isolated country, numerous Albanian minority in socialist Yugoslavia despite the high level of autonomy in the

⁹⁸ Ardolic, Mimoza (2009) *Greater Albania – The Next Crisis in the Balkans?* University of Växjö. MasterThesis p.16

⁹⁹ Kola, Paulin (2003) *The Search for Greater Albania*. C.Hurst & Co. Publishers. p.9

¹⁰⁰ Ardolic, Mimoza (2009) *Greater Albania – The Next Crisis in the Balkans?* University of Växjö. MasterThesis p.16

province of Kosovo, was demanding a status of a republic. Given that constituent republics of Yugoslavia according to their constitutions in the Marxist-Leninist spirit have guaranteed right of self-determination up to secession, many scholars and politicians argue that the real aim of the political demand “Kosovo Republic” was in fact an act of Albanian separatism inspired and oriented towards unification in the greater Albania. The irredentist concept of Greater Albania had a great and wide support among the Albanian Diaspora which lobbied and gathered enormous financial aid and assets for the armed insurgencies of the Albanian paramilitary rebel organizations which has followed in the end of the 90’s and beginning of the new millennia. While the support for the idea of ‘Pan-Albanianism’ exists mostly among the Albanian diaspora from former Yugoslavia especially in Germany, Switzerland and US, ‘Greater Albania’ has not been so appealing to the Albanians living inside the Albanian nation-state that have never played the role of a mother-country throughout 20th century¹⁰¹. Nevertheless, the Greater Albanian concept have also been revived and reemerged on the Balkans after 1991 inside as well as outside of Albania. Calling upon the arguments that Albanians suffered the biggest territorial partitioning and primarily concerning the situation in Kosovo, the Albanian Academy of Sciences in 1998 officially issued the *Platform for solution of National Albanian Question* proposing unification of the historical lands on the geographical space embracing the territories from Nis, Leskovac and Vranje in North, as far East as Kumanovo, Prilep and today Bitola, and as far South as Konica, Yoanina, and Preveza¹⁰². The wars in Kosovo, Southern Serbia and Macedonia as well as the consolidation process of democratic transition in Albania strengthened the basis and established the platform of Greater Albania as the core political program of Albanian politics and parties outside Albania. The developments and the greater progress of Albanian armed struggle backed by the Western powers, primarily USA, made it as most lively and fulfilling great national territorial concept in the geopolitical affairs on the Balkans. The Albanian irredentist concept with the enhancement of the Albanian position of the Balkans and the strong rise of its nationalism, as it is case elsewhere, it is supported by the theories of ancient Illyrian origin of Albanians. Intelligibly the concept of greater Albania has different names among the Albanian political organizations and people, ranging from “historical Albanian territories”, “native Albanian lands”, “ethnic Albania” (*Shqipëria Ethnike*) to the newest formulation and

¹⁰¹ Bogdani, Mirela, Loughlin John (2007) *Albania and the European Union: The Tumultuous Journey towards Integration and Accession*. I.B.Tauris. p.231 See Also: *Pan-Albanianism: How big a threat to Balkan stability?* – Report of International Crisis Group, 25th of February 2004. Tirana/Brussels. p.

¹⁰² Halili, Rigels (2004) *Generating national programmes – intellectuals and nationalism among Serbs and Albanians*. St. Anthony College Oxford. p.9-11

contemplation of the concept as “Natural Albania” by Koco Danaj¹⁰³. This irredentist concept today includes the territory of Albania, Kosovo, western and northwestern part of Macedonia including the capital Skopje, Preshevo valley with municipalities Preshevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja in southern Serbia, southern Montenegro including the capital Podgorica and entire northwestern part of Greece (so-called Chameria or Southern Epirus). Despite that Albanian greater territorial concept is complex set of actual and historical presence of Albanian population tied with nationalist mythology, it predominantly relies of the numerous and steadily growing Albanian minorities living in the neighboring states. Hence, the maps of the greater Albanian territorial concept also include regions of Sanjdak (part of former Kosovo Villayet), parts of Jablanica and Toplica districts in Serbia (near Nis and Leskovac) parts of central Macedonia where very few or no Albanians live at all. This is result of the former historical presence of Albanian settlements in Jablanica and Toplica districts in southern Morava valley that have been expelled after Serbian independence, and the fact that Novi Pazar and parts of Central Macedonia where parts of villayets mentioned in Prizren League although Albanians never lived in those areas. From the perspective of the support of external great powers except from fascist Italy during Second World War, idea of greater Albania did not have supporters until the end of 20th century. Since the 90’s during the Kosovo War and insurgency in Macedonia in 2001, the Albanian struggle had a wide strong support from USA and western allies. Bearing in mind that Albanian armed struggle was world widely presented as struggle for freedom and human rights, despite their official proclamations for “expulsion of the Slavic occupiers from the Albanian territories” (see the statements of KLA in Kosovo in 1998 and communiqués of NLA in Macedonia in 2001 in Chapter IV) the support of USA and western allies has actually indirectly reflected toward the realization of the idea of Greater Albania. Very important indicator of the potential of the concept of Greater Albania is the significantly high public support shown in the polls. Namely, majority of Albanians in Albania (63%), Kosovo (81%) and Macedonia (53%) support the idea of Greater Albania¹⁰⁴. Even more important is the open support and intention that show the highest ranking Albanian politicians as it was case in the speeches of Albanian president Sali Berisha given in Macedonian capital Skopje and Albanian city of Vlora on the celebration of 100th anniversary of independence of Albania on 28th of November 2012, where he spoke for the "Albanian lands" stretching from Preveza in Greece

¹⁰³ Danaj, Koco (2006) Natural Albania. Shtëpia Botuese Erik. p.8 (on Albanian)

¹⁰⁴ Balkan Gallup Monitor (2010) *Insights and Perceptions: Voices of the Balkans*. p.48 http://www.balkan-monitor.eu/files/BalkanMonitor-2010_Summary_of_Findings.pdf

to Presevo in Serbia, and from the Macedonian capital of Skopje to the Montenegrin capital of Podgorica¹⁰⁵. In context of the realization of Greater Albania much significant is the mobilizing power of the Islamic Community over the Muslim minorities in Macedonia with the most tangible evidence by the statement of the head of the Macedonian Islamic Community, Sulejman Rexhepi who stated that unification of Albania was God's will calling for rewriting the authentic Albanian borders and assuring that Islamic Community (IVZ) will contribute with its full capacity to the national cause¹⁰⁶. Finally, last indicator that shows the liveliness and high potential of the Greater Albanian concept is the high birth and population growth rate that Albanians have (highest on the Balkans) accompanied with the expansion of compact settling in different areas. The most tangible example of this was the Albanian majority municipalities according to the new territorial organization of Macedonia and perception and practice of their decentralized competences, which will be explained in the next chapter.

III.3. GREATER SERBIA

As one of the Balkan states that started the struggle for liberation early as the beginning of the 19th century, foundations of the Serbian greater territorial national concepts are one of the oldest on the Balkans. In the development of the Serbian national revival and struggle and thus to the greater territorial concepts contributed several facts and circumstances, such as pan-Slavism and solidarity of all other subjugated Christian peoples under Ottoman rule, interest of great powers such as Austro-Hungary or Russia which bordered Turkey and have pretension to strategic important territories on the Balkans. The basis of the doctrine of greater Serbia has their roots in well known Ilija Garashanin's plan *Nachertanije* from 1844 which envisioned uniting of all south Slavic peoples in one greater state formation Serbia. The idea of greater Serbia later was gradually developed by the works of other prominent Serbian scholars, statesman, geographer and linguists such as Vuk Karadzic, Jovan Cvijic, Vaso Cubrilovic pointing out different aspects of the idea as definitions of Serbs and their lands according language (including Catholics-Croats and Muslims), expulsion of Albanians, homogeneity of Serbia supported by Chetnik movement etc. As it is case with other great national concept of the Balkans, Serbian is also calling upon the historical territories

¹⁰⁵ Murati, Erl. Karadaku, Linda (2012) *Albanians celebrate 100 years of independence*. South East European Times, 30th of November (in English) -

http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2012/11/30/feature-02

¹⁰⁶ Marusic, J.S. (2012) *Cleric's Call for United Albania Upsets Macedonia*. Balkan Insight, 29th of November - <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/senior-macedonian-cleric-calls-for-rewriting-borders>

possessed by the medieval Serb kingdoms. With the development of the idea the concept has changed its territorial scope encompassing territory of Serbia with Kosovo as a core, then Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Macedonia whilst the first stages of development even included some parts of Bulgaria. The creation of kingdom of Yugoslavia under the Serbian Karadjordevic dynasty after the First World War, was seen as partially successful realization of the concept of Greater Serbia. The Serbs were content with this outcome of creation of Kingdom of Serbs, Croat and Slovenes later called Yugoslavia and regarded the new state as a sort of Greater Serbia since they once again had Kosovo under their control and the kingdom was ruled by a Serbian king¹⁰⁷. However, the creation of socialist Yugoslavia temporarily banned the idea of greater Serbia, which became actual and revived again in the end of the 80's with the rise of nationalism. The road to revival of greater Serbia concept prior to the break up and Yugoslav crisis arise with the release of the famous Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences. The memorandum is a well-organized list of complaints and criticisms against the Yugoslav system as it existed at the time. Main theme of the argument in the Memorandum is that Serbia was wrongfully taken advantage of and weakened under 1974 constitution of Yugoslavia, and that as a result, Serbians are the victims of genocide in Kosovo¹⁰⁸ among other things. The Memorandum is written in such a way that it acts as a call to arms for the Serbian people, and justifies any actions taken that will insure the security of 'threatened' Serbia. These viewpoints established the basis (or fueled) of the motivation for modern reemergence of the concept of Greater Serbia that was the Serbian nationalist point of view which assumed that Serbia was exploited by other Yugoslav republics and that situation must be corrected without hesitation¹⁰⁹. However, the true revival of the concept of Greater Serbia in political reality came up in the wake of the breakup of Yugoslavia in January 1991 when Slobodan Milosevic announced intent to annex all Serb lands in a greater Serbia, in the event Yugoslavia ceases to exist¹¹⁰. This inspired Serbian nationalist and radical's as Vojislav Seselj to revive, revise and openly fought for the Greater Serbia concept. According to Seselj's Radical Party proposal during Yugoslav Wars, Greater Serbia included all territories of Yugoslavia east and south from the Karlobag – Ogulin – Karlovac - Virovitica line. This proposed greater Serbian state was

¹⁰⁷ Ardolic, Mimoza (2009) *Greater Albania – The Next Crisis in the Balkans?* University of Växjö. MasterThesis p.13

¹⁰⁸ Halili, Rigels (2004) *Generating national programmes – intellectuals and nationalism among Serbs and Albanians*. St. Anthony College Oxford. p.6

¹⁰⁹ *Greater Serbia: From ideology to aggression* (1993). Croatian Information Centre. p.61

¹¹⁰ *Words Over War: Mediation and Arbitration to Prevent Deadly Conflict* (2000) Edited by: Melanie C. Greenberg, John H. Barton, Margaret E. McGuinness. Rowman & Littlefield. p. 36

supported for national and economical reasons, as it would give Serbia a large coastline, heavy industries, agricultural farmland, natural resources and all of the crude oil (mostly found in the Pannonian Plain), particularly in the Socialist Republic of Croatia, by various Serbian politicians associated with Slobodan Milošević in the early 1990s who publicly espoused such views: Mihalj Kertes, Milan Babić, Milan Martić, Vojislav Šešelj, Stevan Mirković. Also, it would gather over 98% of Serbs of Yugoslavia in one state. In his speeches and books, Šešelj claimed that all of the population of these areas is in fact ethnic Serbs, of Orthodox, Roman Catholic or Muslim faith. Bearing in mind that Šešelj and his Radical Party were involved in the Yugoslav wars with their paramilitary volunteer formations besides the Yugoslav army's support for Bosnian and Croatian Serbs, this greater Serbian concept has important role being a driving force and goal in the wars and territorial changes on the Balkans after 1991. However, outside of Šešelj's Serbian Radical Party, the line as such was never promoted in recent Serbian political life. From the perspective of previously aforementioned application of the geopolitical concepts on the Balkans, this concept of the Greater Serbia (during the Yugoslav Wars) would encompass entire Heartland and the whole northwestern flank of the Rimland. It would also include the largest population and resource bases of the peninsula. Thus, it would be dominant state on the Balkans, but however the lack of the access to the Aegean sea, allows formation of unified Rimland of Black (Bulgaria), Aegean (Greece) and Adriatic (Albania) coasts that would successfully block the greater and further power projection outside of the region.

III.4. GREEK MEGALI IDEA

As one of the politically, culturally, spiritually (religiously) and traditionally most advanced country on the Balkans Greece has always had great influence on a large portion of the Balkans and over the different neighboring peoples and ethnicities. This fact reflected with the relatively early emergence of Greek great national ideas and platforms. The term and the concept of Megali Idea (Big Idea) firstly appeared in 1844 during the debates that preceded the promulgation of the constitution, with means of establishment a Greek state that would encompass all Greek-inhabited areas, including the Greek populations that remained living outside of the 1830 restored Kingdom of Greece under the Ottoman Rule on the northern and eastern (Asia Minor) coasts of Aegaen Sea. This proposed Greek state would include regions of Thessaly, Epirus, southern parts of Macedonia and western Thrace all on the Balkan peninsula. Besides the Greek populations settled over a wide area in the southern Balkan

Peninsula, there were extensive Greek populations in the Ottoman capital, Constantinople (Istanbul), itself; along the shores of the Sea of Marmara; along the western coastal region of Asia Minor, particularly in the region of Smyrna (İzmir); in central Anatolia (ancient Cappadocia), where much of the Greek populace was Turkish-speaking but employed the Greek alphabet to write Turkish; and in the Pontus region of northeastern Asia Minor, whose geographic isolation had given rise to an obscure form of Greek that was not understood elsewhere in the Greek world¹¹¹. In the essence of the Greek Megali Idea was the goal of restoration and revival of the Byzantine empire with Constantinople (Istanbul) replacing the Athens as capital. This was a visionary nationalist aspiration that was to dominate foreign relations and, to a significant extent, to determine the domestic politics of the Greek state for much of the first century of its independent existence¹¹². The highly important strategic geographical position of Greece also contributed great powers to be creators and supporters of the Greek great national territorial concept. Namely, the proposed Greek Plan (or Greek Project) for geopolitical resolution of the eastern crisis, by the Russian emperor Catherine the Great in early 1780's and with support of the Josphe II of Austria, envisaged the partition of the Ottoman Empire between the Russian and Habsburg Empires followed by the restoration of the Byzantine Empire centered in Constantinople as a restored (form of) Greek statehood. This actually served as basis of the linkage with the Byzantine Empire as essential goal and meaning of the concept of Megali Idea. The great powers as Great Britain, France and Russia assisted the establishment of the independent Greek Kingdom after the war in 1829 and also supported the gradual and steadily enlargement of Greece by constant acquiring of territories in the following 20th century. Starting from the Congress of Berlin the enlargement of Greek territory has gradually extended northwards and eastwards acquiring Ionian islands, Thessaly, Crete, Epirus, Macedonia, Western Thrace, finishing with acquisition of Dodecanese islands in 1947. The largest territorial expansion and closest to accomplishing of the Megali Idea in the period between 1918 until 1923 when according to the Treaty of Sevres, Greece acquired Eastern Thrace (present day European part of Turkey) and even the Ionia or the region around Izmir on the eastern coast of the Asia Minor, that later returned them back to Turkey. Period after the First World War and Treaties until the Second World War, marked the official end of the Megali Idea as the chief operative goal of Greek foreign policy¹¹³. It

¹¹¹Haldon, F. John (2013) *Greece – The Great Idea*. Encyclopedia Britannica - <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/244154/Greece/26420/The-Great-Idea>

¹¹² Ibid

¹¹³ Jenikns, A. Mary (1994). *To Megali Idea – Dead or Alive? The Domestic determinants of Greek Foreign Policy*. Naval Postgraduate School. p. 42

appeared that, as a consequence of the Lausanne Treaty and the exchange of minorities, the ethnological limits of the Greek people largely coincided, at last, with the territorial limits of the Greek state¹¹⁴. The security of that state, rather than the liberation of the "unredeemed" part of it, became the major objective of official Greek foreign policy¹¹⁵. After 1991 all Greek government's official line disavows any expansionist views, but the "Idea" has never really died. Actually the concept of Megali Idea is still present in the especially in the civil society, politics, culture and science particularly as its pertain to the formation of Greek foreign policy. Maps of "historical Greece" including territories and cities in present day neighboring Macedonia, Albania, Turkey are issued and present in the Parliament. Prominent public figures such as politicians and even priests give public addresses mentioning acquisition of territories of neighboring states considered "as Greek". Analyzed from the position of territory in regards of the applied geopolitical concepts, Greater Greece would definitely be the strongest and master of the Zone of Straits, entire Aegean, Black and Eastern Mediterranean Sea. The fact that the Heartland and entire landmass of the Balkans on the north remains outside this proposed state, the blockade for northward expansion on the Balkans would be easily effectuated, but nevertheless thus Greece would be very important and dominant regional player of the southeastern Europe and Middle East.

III.5. GREATER BULGARIA

In the 19th century another great national and territorial geopolitical concept emerged on the Balkans on the wake of the ruining and the diminishing of the power and possessions of the Ottoman Empire. That was the concept of Greater Bulgaria, which similarly as the Greek and Serbian one was articulated, supported and championed by the great powers in accordance with their imperial strategies for accomplishing their interests and aspirations. In its essence the concept of greater Bulgaria as defined by the Bulgarian nationalism and accepted by the science, culture and in the politics encompass the regions of Macedonia, Thrace and Moesia. The foundations of the greater Bulgarian concept of Bulgaria bordering Black as well as Aegean Sea were established by the San Stefano treaty after the Russo-Turkish War in 1877/78¹¹⁶. According to this treaty the self-governing principality of

¹¹⁴ Jenkins, A. Mary (1994). *To Megali Idea – Dead or Alive? The Domestic determinants of Greek Foreign Policy*. Naval Postgraduate School p.43

¹¹⁵ Jenkins, A. Mary (1994). *To Megali Idea – Dead or Alive? The Domestic determinants of Greek Foreign Policy*. Naval Postgraduate School p.43

¹¹⁶ Krasner, D. Stephen (1999) *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*. Princeton University Press. p.165

Bulgaria have territory including the plain between the Danube and the Balkan mountain range (Stara Planina), the region of Sofia, Pirot and Vranje in the Morava valley, Northern Thrace, parts of Eastern Thrace and nearly all of Macedonia. It had also access on the Aegean Sea (except Thessaloniki and nearby Khalkidhiki peninsula) and Black Sea and the furthest territorial extension to the west included territories of present day southern part of Albania with very close proximity to the Adriatic Sea. The treaty with this projection of Bulgarian state was composed by the Russian Graf Ignatieff and signed on 3rd of March 1878 which is celebrated even today as Liberation Day. Although Congress of Berlin in the same year reduced and returned back much of these territories under the control of Ottoman Empire, these projected boundaries of the concept of Greater Bulgaria immediately became critical point of Bulgarian foreign policy. Since the creation of the Bulgarian statehood until the end of the Second World War all of the war campaigns that Bulgaria waged were with the goal of capturing the territories provisioned by the San Stefano treaty, especially Macedonia. Similarly like Greece and Serbia, although the Bulgarian church was established in 1870 (before the statehood) in the religious millet system of Ottoman Empire it has established quite widespread and successful religious and educational network in all south Slavic inhabited regions under the Ottoman Turkey territorially matching almost entire proposed greater Bulgaria. The second Balkan war was started by Bulgaria against all other allies due to its dissatisfaction with the territorial gains in Macedonia. During the First World War Bulgaria joined the Central Powers and acquired much of territory provisioned by this concept brining closer to the ideal of San Stefano¹¹⁷. Namely, the entire present day Republic of Macedonia with exception of the part of Macedonia south of the line of the Macedonian (Salonika) front while in exchange it acquired much of eastern Serbia. However, Paris Peace Conference and Treaty of Neuilly took over all of the newly acquired territories including even those controlled prior the war. This prompted Bulgaria to join the Axis during the Second World War, when Greater Bulgaria was re-created as a state by Nazi Germany as a reward by granting territories in Greece (eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace) and Yugoslavia (present day Republic of Macedonia, except the western part and southeastern parts of Serbia and Kosovo). During this period the state creation with the newly re-acquired territories was referred as a “Whole Bulgaria”. With the exception of the previously peaceful return of Southern Dobrudja all of these territories were returned after the Allied Victory and

¹¹⁷ Znamierowska-Rakk, E. (2012) *Bulgarian Territorial Revisionism and Bulgaria's Rapprochement with the Third Reich*. In: *Territorial Revisionism And The Allies Of Germany In The Second World War: Goals,*

the concept of Greater Bulgaria was abandoned as a central point of the foreign policy. However it was never really removed from Bulgarian foreign policy, politics, science and culture. Except the first period of the communist rule of Georgi Dimitrov when attempts for creation of Balkan Socialist Federation with Yugoslavia (and unification of Macedonia) were actual, the entire period of the communist rule in Bulgarian education, culture, science and politics the dream of San Stefano was inevitably present. The most notable remnant of this Greater Bulgarian concept in the foreign policy that reemerged after 1991 and is actual and vivid even today is the attitude towards Macedonia, Macedonian national identity and language. Although Bulgaria was first to recognize the independence of Macedonia, until 1999 when a declaration of good neighboring policy was signed many interstate agreements could not be signed due to the Bulgarian denial of the existence of the Macedonian language. However, the policy of giving Bulgarian passports on short procedure only to Macedonian citizens declaring Bulgarian ethnicity, constant denial and contesting of Macedonian ethnic, national, linguistic, cultural and historical identity and most recently conditioning of Bulgarian vote of support for start of the negotiation process in EU have clear background from the idea of Greater Bulgaria which considers Macedonia as a Bulgarian land. In addition to this, the geopolitical oriented posture of the foreign policy towards Macedonia can be seen in the national doctrine named as “*National strategic program no.1*” issued in 1998 where it is stated that Macedonians are Bulgarians and Bulgaria should act firmly and clearly in front of the international public and diplomatic circles that there is lack of ground and inability to recognize the Macedonian nation, language and state together with Bulgarian state policy of securing the right of self-determination of “Macedonian Bulgarians”¹¹⁸. Public proclamations of this policy continue to be maintained on the official level within the high European institutions such as the organization of debates that talk about the rights of the Macedonian Bulgarians and Bulgaria stretches from Ohrid to the Black Sea, which is organized by Bulgarian MEPs¹¹⁹. Although Bulgaria after 1991 have never officially claimed territorial claims towards any neighboring country, the essence of the foreign policy towards Macedonia, despite the official recognition of the independence, is actually continuation of

Expectations, Practices. Edited by: Marina Cattaruzza, Stefan Dyroff, Dieter Langewiesche. Berghahn Books. p.103

¹¹⁸ Mileski, Toni (2005). Macedonia – the Rubik cube of the Balkans. Faculty of Philosophy, Skopje. p. 175 - 176 (on Macedonian) there cited: Zashitita I duhovno obedinenie na Balgarite po sveta – nacionalna strategicheska programa No.1- Sofia: Nauchen centar za Balgarska nacionalna strategiya, 1998, p.23-27

¹¹⁹ *Bugarija bila od Ohrid do Crno More!* – Dnevnik (2014), April 2nd (on Macedonian) - <http://www.dnevnik.mk/default.asp?ItemID=5895B2D10DDD0A4FB91FBA81B880BF42>

territorial interests of Bulgaria¹²⁰ evolving from the Greater Bulgarian concept. Moreover, the close relationship that Bulgarian nationalists (as Krasimir Karakachanov) and government (official meeting in 2013) have with the political leaders of Albanians in Macedonia suggest about one negative scenario that Bulgaria should get and control part of the territory of Macedonia after its partition on Albanian and Macedonian entity that should function with Bulgaria similarly and according by the formula of close relations between Serbia and Republic of Srpska¹²¹. The territory of Greater Bulgaria proposed on the San Stefano Treaty if established in reality would be another strategically positioned dominant ruler of the Balkans. It would encompass almost more than a two thirds of the identified Heartland (entire Macedonia and Morava valley in Eastern Serbia) and with the access on the Black and Aegean Sea it also controls the entire eastern and southern flanks of the Rimland of the Balkans. The huge territorial land mass would definitely dominate entire eastern, central and southern Balkan Peninsula thus making control and rejection of any blockades and invasion much easier due to the cut off the main transportation corridors and communications and unfavorable dense mountainous relief of the western part of the Balkans (Albania, Montenegro, Greece, western Serbia and Bosnia) . Finally, despite the lack of direct control of the Zone of Straits (Bosphorus and Dardanelles) with its access on western and southwestern Black sea shore as well as northern and northeastern Aegean coast, immediately close to the Straits, greater Bulgaria would also definitely be master of the season this strategically important region.

III.6. GREATER CROATIA

Finally, another greater state territorial concept exists on the northwestern tip of the Balkans which is the Croatian one. Like all of the other greater territorial concepts Greater Croatia has originated during the period of national revival and nationalism in the early 19th century. The very first foundations of the concept can be traced in the works of Pavao Ritter Vitezovic from late 17th and early 18th century claiming that all Slavs are Croats therefore legitimating the expansion of Habsburg Empire on the Balkan therefore claiming historical rights of Illyria. By this conceptualization the main bearer of the Greater Croatian concept was the Illyrian Movement of the 19th century that through the pan-South Slavic unity struggled to establish Croatian national presence within the Austro-Hungarian empire. This pan-slavic

¹²⁰ Mileski, Toni (2005). Macedonia – the Rubik cube of the Balkans. Faculty of Philosophy, Skopje. p. 175 (on Macedonian)

Illyrian movement led by A.Starcevic and Lj.Gaj intended unification of Kingdom of Dalmatia with Croatia as a single linguistic unit¹²² merging within the joint Hungarian-Croatian diet. This established the scope of Greater Croatia that besides modern day Croatia comprised of Dalmatia, Slavonia, Posavina, Zagorje and Istria, includes larger parts of Bosnia, Herzegovina and Vojvodina. With the creation of Kingdom of Yugoslavia commitment for the concept of Greater Croatia acquired new dimensions and with the rising ethnic tensions between Croats and Serbs in the 1930's an autonomous single unit Banovina of Croatia was created after peaceful negotiations. This territorial unit (banovina) encompassed all areas where ethnic Croats lived and gained large scale autonomy but nonetheless it was not full accomplishment of the Croatian national ideal for independence. However, this paved the road of the first real fulfillment of greater Croatian territorial concept that in the same time will establish the tenets of actual greater Croatia concept exploited in the wars after 1991. Following the occupation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia by the powers of Axis in 1941, with a proclamation the puppet state of Independent State of Croatia was established but without clearly demarcated borders. The main bearers and supporters of the greater state idea was the collaborationist Ustash movement, which wanted Greater Croatia which would reach as far as the Drina and even the gates of Belgrade¹²³. Regarding that this proposed territorial scope of Greater Croatia included numerous population of non-Croat origin, advocates of the idea claimed that Muslims living in Bosnia are Croats and Serbs living in Croatia are slavicized Vlachs¹²⁴. This projection was actually fully realized as the Independent State of Croatia included much of present day Croatia except regions of Istria, Baranja and Medjmurje, Croatian populated as well as non-Croatian populated areas far eastwards in entire Bosnia and Herzegovina to river Drina and entire region of Sirmia in present day autonomous province of Vojvodina in Serbia including even city of Zemun which today is part of the Serbian capital Belgrade. According to negotiated Rome Contracts, large parts of Croatian lands on the Adriatic coast (cities of Split, Sibenik, Zadar) and islands were annexed by Italy but in exchange Croatia gained right to annex whole territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, after the capitulation of Italy in 1943, Croatia with assent from Germany, acquired these territories. The creation and the territorial scope of Independent State of Croatia during the Second World War actually established the modern form of the concept of Greater Croatia. Given that nationalism was suppressed by the

¹²¹ Ibid, p. 177

¹²² Roe, Paul (2004). *Ethnic violence and the societal security dilemma*. Routledge p.78

¹²³ Meier, Victor (1999). *Yugoslavia: A History of Its Demise*. Psychology Press. p.130

official socialist Yugoslav state policy of “Brotherhood and Unity” and irredentist concepts were forbidden, similarly like the others, support for Greater Croatia actively persisted and was articulated together with the idea of independence of Croatia by the Croatian Diaspora especially the exiled Ustash movement members in western Europe, Australia, USA and Canada. Nevertheless, complete revival of the Greater Croatia concept came up with the aftermath of breakup of Yugoslavia especially during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995. Regarding the fact that the war of Bosnia and Herzegovina was principally a territorial conflict, Croatian leadership primary goal was territorial extension in accordance with the concept of Greater Croatia. On the two occasions such as Karadjordjevo and Graz agreement highest Croatian leaders agreed on partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the highest Serbian political leaders and commanders. This led to a Croat-Bosniak war and creation of the Croatian Republic of Hezeg-Bosnia. By 1995 Croatia and Croat Bosnia became ethnically pure regions and thus a unified de-facto Greater Croatia consisting of Republic of Croatia and Croatian republic of Herzeg-Bosnia was in operation since 1992 with no outcry from the international community¹²⁵. The support of demising the Dayton accord and instead making a deal with Serbs of partitioning Bosnia in order to acquire territory was officially stated and supported by the Croatian president Franjo Tudjman. This leads to the conclusion that together with Greater Serbian and Albanian concepts, the Croatian one has also played active and important role in the wars and geopolitical instability of the Balkans after 1991. As the last remnants of the influence of Greater Croatia concepts are the efforts of creation of Croatian federal entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina (on the form of Republic of Srpska) that has supporters among a small part of Croatian society and politicians, but it does not have official support of the state of Croatia. Regarding the analytical conceptualization of the Balkans from the application of the geopolitical theories from the previous chapter, Greater Croatia would definitely strengthen the position of Croatia but due to its peripheral position on the Balkans it would not have significance or possibility for domination of the peninsula neither on other bordering regions such as central Europe. Greater Croatia would encompass the western and northern flanks of the Rimland and with total or partial possession of Bosnia and Herzegovina it will be much closer to the Heartland but without control of main communication axis and strategic advantageous important areas and by having Italy on the entire opposite coast in the Adriatic sea it would not have

¹²⁴ Meier, Victor (1999). *Yugoslavia: A History of Its Demise*. Psychology Press. p.130

¹²⁵ Thomas, R.G.C. (2003) *Yugoslavia Unraveled: Sovereignty, Self-Determination, Intervention*. Lexington Books. p.10

possibility for power projection or domination. Nevertheless, Greater Croatia would be a strong and good balancer of any other greater Balkan state possessing the Heartland (central part) and capable of dominating the Balkans such as Greater Serbia or Greater Bulgaria.

CHAPTER IV - TERRITORIAL CHANGES ON THE BALKANS AFTER 1991 AND THEIR GEOPOLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The last decade of the XX century was characterized with dramatic changes on global geopolitical scope that have completely and radically shook the foundations of the post war world international relations and geopolitical world order. On the global political landscape more than dozen new nation states emerged as a result of the breakdown of the federations in the socialist block. Notwithstanding, the process of political, economic and social changes that acted as factors for the global shifts had stricken and affected the Balkans the most and more than any other region in the world. The ethnic conflicts that erupted as a result from the democratic changes that finally allowed release of accumulated frustrations due to the heavily suppressed nationalism and historical (ancient) ethnic hatred by the socialist state policies of friendship and fraternity got the fiercest and worst extent in the form of the wars on the Balkans. Recurrence of the ethnic intolerance and hatred reflected in the wars on the Balkans where the acquiring of territory became primary goal. Thus, the territory was a central point in the wars and occurrences on the Balkans after 1991 with actions such as ethnic cleansing, establishing borders and renaming toponyms oriented toward enhancing and strengthening the control of possessed territory. While the ethnic hatred, ideas for independence or unification were the primary reasons and driving force for the wars, given the opportunity and possibility for their fulfillment the greater national territorial irredentist concepts fit in within the plethora of factors as a motivational and strategic orientation force as well as a fuel of the conflicts in that context. The complexity and specificity of the territorial changes that took place on the political map of the Balkans after 1991 as a consequence of the wars of the breakup of Yugoslavia can be classified on several categories depending the borders and international recognition, such as: 1) external and internationally recognized territorial changes – emergence of the independent sovereign states from the federal republics of Yugoslavia, that are members of UN; 2) de-facto external and partially recognized territorial changes – emergence of international protectorate later independent state from the province of Kosovo; 3) internal and internationally recognized territorial recomposition as federalization – as it is case with Bosnia and Herzegovina and its federal structure of

Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina with cantons, Republic of Srpska and District of Brcko; 4) internal, informal, internationally accepted and territorial organization de-facto functioning as federation due to the process of decentralization – as it is case with the territorial organization of Macedonia and more recently Serbian municipalities of Northern Kosovo. Besides the internal reconfiguration of the political map of the Balkans the crisis and the territorial changes brought a broader global geopolitical significance by the inclusion and recurrent involvement of the old and new great and regional powers as well as a complete change of the geopolitical settings and balance of the region. This is most obvious by the positions taken as well as the active involvement and role played by the greater regional and global actors and superpowers. The new events and territorial changes have also made a tremendous change of the pattern of geopolitical actions starting up a new period of more instability and dynamic processes of activities, shifts, struggle and introduction of soft-power spread of influence of the external global and regional great powers. Unlike the cold war period of almost a half of a century long stability and balance of powers with primal role of the ideology, the period after 1991 that lasts until today is characterized with expressive instability especially in the overall security situation and territorial integrity with the recurrent emergence of the ethnicity, religion, culture and identity as a main factor and force for the interstate relations and geopolitical activities.

I.1. THE DISINTEGRATION OF YUGOSLAVIA AND THE EMERGENCE OF INDEPENDENT NATION STATES

Undoubtedly, the breakup of socialist Yugoslavia presents the biggest event that resulted with the territorial changes by the emergence of the independent nation state evolving from its federal units. So far in the discussions for the reasons for the collapse of Yugoslavia eight factors are identified: 1) economic crisis; 2) so-called “ancient ethnic hatred” between Yugoslav peoples; 3) nationalism; 4) cultural differences among Yugoslav peoples; 5) changes in the international politics; 6) the role of different persons in creation and destruction of the Yugoslav state; 7) Premodern character of the Yugoslav state, which is often compared with kingdoms (tzardoms) instead of nation states; and 8) Structural-institutional reasons¹²⁶. All of these factor have acted with intertwined and mixed influence throughout the entire process of the disintegration of Yugoslav federation. Nevertheless, in regards of the territorial changes in addition to these eight factors there are two more closely

related factors: 1) administrative territorial organization of the federal units – republic and provinces and 2) dispersion of population of nations outside of the borders of the republics and provinces defined as their nation states, primarily Serbs, Croats and Albanians. According to the constitution of 1974, Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was organized as a federation of six constitutive republics with their own constitutions defined as national states and with inalienable right of self-determination up to secession as well as two autonomous provinces. The territorial organization of Yugoslavia together with this constitutionally guaranteed right for self-determination up to secession served as basis for the territorial changes that resulted with emergence of the new nation states. As additional factor to this, in 1991, the EC, the US, and USSR made it clear that they would not recognize any changes of borders that were brought up by force. Since no agreement was possible between the republics, the consequence was that if new international states were to emerge from Yugoslavia, they would have to be based upon the republics of Yugoslavia¹²⁷. Another factor that served as a driving force towards the territorial changes and secession in the same token was the new political constellation that took place in 1990. The crack of Yugoslavia began to show during the elections of 1990, where in the most republic right-wing nationalist and secessionist options favoring independence won the majority of the votes. Each of the republics had elections for their domestic governments, and several elected governments that were not communist – even though the federal Yugoslav government was still under single-party communist rule¹²⁸. The strong opposition of the independence and separation by the Serb population living in Croatia and Bosnia, together with the fact that the majority of the commanding staff of the Yugoslav People's Army was comprised of Serbs, quickly erupted in devastating wars. However, the territorial changes and Yugoslav wars were not sudden and immediate event regarding that through entire existence of Yugoslavia, and especially after the death of the president Tito, there were nationalist and separatist incidents, movements, demonstrations and protests such as the Croatian Spring in 1971, Demonstrations in Kosovo in 1981, Memorandum of Serbian academy of sciences and arts in 1986 etc. Moreover, as it was showed in the previous chapter, the irredentist greater territorial nationalist concepts and ideas for independence were lively supported by the political emigration of the Yugoslav peoples. All of these factors directly and indirectly paved the road for the total and devastating dissolution of Yugoslavia. Considering the duration of the process of territorial

¹²⁶ Jovic, Dejan (2003). *Prichinite za raspagjanjeto na SFRJ*. Templum, Skopje. p. 8 (on Macedonian)

¹²⁷ *Breakup of Yugoslavia – Facts Sheet* - American University of Bulgaria p.2

changes that occurred in former Yugoslavia as well as their external and internal dimension with dubious formal and international recognition, it lasted almost 17 years from 1991 to 2008. Regarding the unclear and unspecified actual (de facto) status with the live processes of separatism that still exists in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia could be argued that the processes of territorial changes that have started in 1991 on the Balkans and in the former Yugoslavia is still not completed.

IV.1.1.SLOVENIA

Slovenia declared independence on 25th of June 1991 which was immediately followed by Yugoslav Federal Parliament refusal and Federal Executive Committee decree for empowering defense minister and interior minister to deploy frontier units of JNA to safeguard state frontiers¹²⁹. With the deployment of Yugoslav army units in Slovenia on 27th of June 1991¹³⁰, the short war of Slovenian independence broke out. The war was fought between Slovene Territorial Defense (TO) and Yugoslav People's Army (JNA). By 4th of July, Slovene Territorial Defense (TO) units surrounded JNA bases in Slovenia and armed skirmishes between them reached the peak and cease fire was agreed with taking control of border crossings by Slovene forces and peaceful withdrawal of Yugoslav forces in the barracks and cross the border to Croatia. On the same day Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) and Serbia formally recognized the independence of Slovenia because it could be used to uphold secession along national lines, there being no other national peoples dwelling in significant numbers in Slovenia then Slovenes¹³¹. Only after 10 days of war, the Brioni accord was signed by which the independence of Slovenia was formally recognized although agreed to suspend the activities stemming from declaration of independence for a three month period. Finally, on 18th of July total withdrawal of JNA from Slovenia was ordered by the Yugoslav presidency¹³². The main reason of the successfulness of the emergence of independence of Slovenia is due to the ethnic and cultural homogeneity of Slovenia, the

¹²⁸ *What Happened to Yugoslavia? The war, the Peace and the Future* (2004). Center for European Studies UNC – Chapel Hill, p.5. <http://www.unc.edu/depts/europe/teachingresources/balkan-crisis.pdf>

¹²⁹ *Words Over War: Mediation and Arbitration to Prevent Deadly Conflict* (2000) Edited by: Melanie C. Greenberg, John H. Barton, Margaret E. McGuinness. Rowman & Littlefield. p. 78

¹³⁰ Ibid

¹³¹ *Words Over War: Mediation and Arbitration to Prevent Deadly Conflict* (2000) Edited by: Melanie C. Greenberg, John H. Barton, Margaret E. McGuinness. Rowman & Littlefield. p. 78 and 85-86

¹³² Ibid, p.78

independence could be established without too many problems and difficulties¹³³. Another reason why the Slovenian independence war lasted only 10 days without significantly large number of casualties and damages besides but in accordance with the ethnic homogeneity and thus small and insignificant number of Serbian is the lack of interest from Serbian and other nationalisms towards Slovene territory which is not part of the greater Serbian or Croatian concepts, that were actual in that time. In this context, relatively quick and successful emergence of the independent state of Slovenia can be analyzed from the geopolitical conceptualizations and definitions of the Balkans aforementioned in the first two chapters. Slovenia which in physic geographical as well as in political and cultural aspect is not considered as part of the Balkans or it is defined at its far northernmost periphery outside of any strategically identified areas such as Heartland or Rimland its position is not important in prospect of domination of the internal geopolitics of the Balkan. Moreover, historically except from the period of Yugoslavia, Slovenia have never had significant or closer ties with other Balkans states neither have greater important involvement in the Balkan geopolitical affairs. Additionally, as geographically farthestmost republic bordering member of EEC and the broader region of the hinterland and core area of Western and Central Europe, prospect for greater military conflict is certainly minor.

IV.1.2. CROATIA

On the same day as Slovenia on 25th of June 1991 Croatia has also declared independence and early as the period of July and August the outbreak of the fighting between Serb paramilitaries and Croatian National Guard took place¹³⁴. Unlike in Slovenia, Croatia had numerous Serb minority comprising around 12,2% spread around the entire country but mostly in the strongholds of the regions of Eastern Slavonia and Baranja in the north east close to border with Serbia and Hungary, Lika in Dalmatia close to the Adriatic coast, Kordun and Bania in central Croatia, that have violently opposed independence. The Serb population that have predominated these several regions of Croatia looked upon Serbia as their nation-state and Serbia upon them as national constituents of Serbia¹³⁵. This situation meant that large scale military conflict would inevitably follow. The fighting in Croatia pitted

¹³³ Mojmir Mrak, Matija Rojec, Carlos Silva-Jauregui (2004) *Slovenia: From Yugoslavia to the European Union*. World Bank Publications. p.10

¹³⁴ *Words Over War: Mediation and Arbitration to Prevent Deadly Conflict* (2000) Edited by: Melanie C. Greenberg, John H. Barton, Margaret E. McGuinness. Rowman & Littlefield. p. 78

Croatian nationalist forces against Serbian paramilitaries backed by the powerful federal army, the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) and it was vicious that gave birth to the term 'ethnic cleansing'¹³⁶. The Croat forces were not nearly as well equipped as the JNA, nor were they backed by a stronger force, as were various Serbian groups supported by the JNA¹³⁷. With each battle the underprepared Croatian forces lost territory to the JNA and Serbs¹³⁸. By December 1991, about one-third of the original Croatian republic was under JNA control, or effectively, Serb control¹³⁹. By January 1992 a UN cease-fire was signed that established a UN peacekeeping force in Croatia called United Nations Protective Force (UNPROFOR)¹⁴⁰, which was the first such mission of United Nation on European soil. The details of the cease-fire maintained the status quo which meant that 30 percent of the former Croatian republic would be controlled by Serbs and the Republic of Serb Krajina. The territory declared itself to be the sovereign Republic of Serb Krajina (RSK)¹⁴¹. It was not internationally recognized and it was a client state of Serbia as 99,8% voted in favor of staying in Yugoslavia with Serbia and Montenegro as well as both of its leaders Milan Babić and Milan Martić publicly expressed views that SAO Krajina belonged with Serbia¹⁴². Territorially Republic of Serb Krajina (RSK) did not presented compact and integral entity with a shape of an elongated ellipse and it was comprised of the three enclaves: Knin Krajina of Northern Dalmatia and Central Croatia (Lika, Kordun and Banija regions), western part of Slavonia and the entirely separated (cut) part of Eastern Slavonia on the easternmost part of Croatia on the right bank of Danube by the border with Serbia (regions of Baranja and western Sirmia - Vukovar). Moreover, according to the testimony of the former Krajina president, Milan Babic, he explained that the RSK municipalities were in an underdeveloped part of Croatia and when Croatia stopped providing financial support to them, they had to turn to Serbia for

¹³⁵ *Words Over War: Mediation and Arbitration to Prevent Deadly Conflict* (2000) Edited by: Melanie C. Greenberg, John H. Barton, Margaret E. McGuinness. Rowman & Littlefield. p. 86

¹³⁶ Hanson, Alan (2000) *Croatian Independence from Yugoslavia, 1991 – 1992*. In *Words Over War: Mediation and Arbitration to Prevent Deadly Conflict*. Edited by: Melanie C. Greenberg, John H. Barton, Margaret E. McGuinness. Rowman & Littlefield. p.76

¹³⁷ DeRouen Karl R, Uk Heo (2007) *Civil Wars of the World: Major Conflicts Since World War II*. ABC-CLIO. p.315

¹³⁸ DeRouen Karl R, Uk Heo (2007) *Civil Wars of the World: Major Conflicts Since World War II*. ABC-CLIO. p.315

¹³⁹ Ibid

¹⁴⁰ Ibid

¹⁴¹ Ibid

¹⁴² Prosecutor v. Milan Martić - Judgement (2007) International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Former Yugoslavia since 1991. p.46 - <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/martic/tjug/en/070612.pdf>

assistance¹⁴³. Babic had also testified that “under no circumstances could [the RSK] exist” without support from Serbia or Yugoslavia¹⁴⁴. However, regarding that Republic of Serb Krajina was bordering Serbian controlled territories in Bosnia and Serbia, it was actually fused with Serbia and rest of the Yugoslavia. Serb-occupied areas in Krajina and Western Slavonia were recaptured by Croatian forces in 1995 during two military offensives that resulted in widespread abuses against Serb civilians (including killing and cruel treatment) occurring as part of an ethnic cleansing operation¹⁴⁵. Eastern Slavonia was transferred from Serb control to UN authority in January 1996. In January 1998 Croatia regained full sovereignty of the region. In the entire process and independence war of Croatia the greater territorial irredentist concept of Greater Croatia have played minor role in comparison with the concept of Greater Serbia, regarding that unifying of the Serb populated areas (lands) in a greater Serbian state formation, already proposed by Slobodan Milosevic in case of Yugoslavia ceases to exist in January 1991¹⁴⁶, was officially declared goal of political and military leadership of the Republic of Serb Krajina, paramilitary units and it was also confirmed by the results on the referendums held. By 1998 Croatia took control over the entire territory that it had prior to the dissolution of Yugoslavia and declaration of independence. Despite the four years of fierce war, at the end Croatian republic emerged as independent state with its thorough territorial integrity. Besides the internal factors, the crucial factor for this final result of the independence of Croatia is due to the decisive influence of the international community and outer geopolitical actors. Actions and activities that UN took during the entire conflict of Yugoslavia had very important effect. In July 1991 both the USA and the European Community (EC) imposed arms embargoes on the SFRY¹⁴⁷. In September 1991, as fighting between Serbia and Croatia intensified, the UNSC passed Resolution 713 (1991) imposing an arms embargo on the SFRY¹⁴⁸. The weapons embargo that UN imposed on Yugoslavia had asymmetric impact as it disadvantaged Croatian as well as Bosnian forces due to the inability to buy and supply with weapons and arms while Serbs gained advantage as they were supported by the federal army JNA which was one of the best

¹⁴³ Darehshori, Sara (2006). *Weighing the Evidence: Lessons from the Slobodan Milosevic Trial*, Volume 18. Human Rights Watch. p.17 - <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/milosevic1206webwcover.pdf>

¹⁴⁴ Darehshori, Sara (2006). *Weighing the Evidence: Lessons from the Slobodan Milosevic Trial*, Volume 18. Human Rights Watch. p.8 - <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/milosevic1206webwcover.pdf>

¹⁴⁵ Ibid

¹⁴⁶ *Words Over War: Mediation and Arbitration to Prevent Deadly Conflict* (2000) Edited by: Melanie C. Greenberg, John H. Barton, Margaret E. McGuinness. Rowman & Littlefield. p. 36

¹⁴⁷ Bromley, Mark (2007) *United Nations Arms Embargoes, Their Impact on Arms Flows and Target Behaviour Case study: Former Yugoslavia, 1991–96*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). p.5 - <http://books.sipri.org/files/misc/UNAE/SIPRI07UNAEYug.pdf>

equipped military forces in Europe¹⁴⁹. Moreover the most important facilities of the defense were located in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina—with about 60 per cent of all production sites were located in Serbia¹⁵⁰. Nevertheless, the UN sent 14,000 peacekeepers to keep the truce in Croatia¹⁵¹ and while it had impact of maintaining status quo that on short term allowed existence of Republic of Serb Krajina on 30% of Croatian territory, on longer term it actually spared Croat forces and contributed allowing them to reequip and better prepare for the final moves of retaking control of the entire Croatian territory. By 1995, the Croatian forces had regrouped, reorganized and rearmed with help and training from the West and the United States¹⁵² and they took the final and decisive action called Operation Flash for liberating south central portion of the former Croatian territory which had been the Republic of Serb Krajina since 1992. However, the crucially deciding geopolitical background for the positive final outcome of the emergence of the independent Croatia besides the western support and help in military aspect, was the political support in regards of recognition of the independence that is even more important. On the 27th of August 1991, the European Community and its Member States, at the same time as convening a peace conference on Yugoslavia, created an Arbitration Committee chaired by Mr. Robert Badinter president of the French Constitutional Council (therefore also known as ‘Badinter Commission’) and furthermore comprised of the presidents of German, Italian, Belgian and Spanish constitutional and arbitral courts and tribunals¹⁵³. The final four opinions were delivered on the 14th of January 1992 and they were concerned with the question of whether the Republics of Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia, who had formally requested recognition by the Community and its Member States, had satisfied the conditions laid down by the Council of Ministers of the European Community on the 16th of December 1991¹⁵⁴. The terms of this ‘examination’ were relatively indulgent and the Committee ruled that two Republics, Macedonia and Slovenia, fulfilled all of the conditions¹⁵⁵. In the case of Croatia a reservation

¹⁴⁸ Ibid

¹⁴⁹ Bromley, Mark (2007) *United Nations Arms Embargoes, Their Impact on Arms Flows and Target Behaviour Case study: Former Yugoslavia, 1991–96*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). p.3 - <http://books.sipri.org/files/misc/UNAE/SIPRI07UNAEYug.pdf>

¹⁵⁰ Ibid

¹⁵¹ DeRouen Karl R, Uk Heo (2007) *Civil Wars of the World: Major Conflicts Since World War II*. ABC-CLIO. p.315

¹⁵² Ibid

¹⁵³ Pellet, Alain. (1992). "The Opinions of the Badinter Arbitration Committee: A Second Breath for the Self-Determination of Peoples". In: *European Journal of International Law* 3 (1). p. 178 - <http://207.57.19.226/journal/Vol3/No1/art12-13.pdf>

¹⁵⁴ Ibid

¹⁵⁵ Ibid

was made in relation to the rights of minorities¹⁵⁶. The request for recognition made by Bosnia-Herzegovina was, in the absence of a referendum, refused¹⁵⁷. On 11th of January 1992 Opinions Nos. 5 and 7 on the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia were issued by the EC and its member states with Croatia failing to satisfy recognition criteria¹⁵⁸. Despite the opinion of the Badinter Arbitration Commission that Slovenia and Macedonia have met all the conditions, on 15th of January EC recognized the independency and sovereignty of Slovenia and Croatia¹⁵⁹. From the geopolitical perspective very important was the role that single actors played with their position in regards of the recognitions and the resolution of the Yugoslav crisis. In this context the most important was the position of the just reunited Germany which push hardest for recognition of Croatia and Slovenia within the European Community. On December 20th, 1991, the German government announced that it would unilaterally recognize Croatia and Slovenia as independent states and although Germany had made its position clear months earlier, the announcement sent shock waves throughout Europe, the United States, and the former Yugoslavia¹⁶⁰. As it announced earlier, on 23rd of December 1991, Germany had unilaterally recognized Croatian and Slovene sovereignty¹⁶¹. Germany continued to push hardest for recognition of independence and it was crucial for the same decision taken by the European Community in January. This opened the way for the United States, to recognize the independence and sovereignty of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (it will be more analyzed further below), three months later, on 7th of April 1992¹⁶². The involvement of the UN, EC and US in the resolution of the Yugoslav crisis and different positions over the recognitions of each of the secessionist Yugoslav republics Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia have extraordinary significant although in each case different impact. General and overall impact of the international

¹⁵⁶ Pellet, Alain. (1992). "*The Opinions of the Badinter Arbitration Committee: A Second Breath for the Self-Determination of Peoples*". In: *European Journal of International Law* 3 (1). p. 178 - <http://207.57.19.226/journal/Vol3/No1/art12-13.pdf>

¹⁵⁷ Ibid

¹⁵⁸ Hanson, Alan (2000) *Croatian Independence from Yugoslavia, 1991 – 1992*. In *Words Over War: Mediation and Arbitration to Prevent Deadly Conflict* Edited by: Melanie C. Greenberg, John H. Barton, Margaret E. McGuinness. Rowman & Littlefield. p.78

¹⁵⁹ Ibid

¹⁶⁰ Crawford, Beverley (1993) *United Germany, Divided Yugoslavia, Weak Europe? The Post-Cold War Debate over Croatia's Recognition and Lessons for Constructing a Common European Security and Foreign Policy*. University of California at Berkeley. p.1

¹⁶¹ Hanson, Alan (2000) *Croatian Independence from Yugoslavia, 1991 – 1992*. In *Words Over War: Mediation and Arbitration to Prevent Deadly Conflict* Edited by: Melanie C. Greenberg, John H. Barton, Margaret E. McGuinness. Rowman & Littlefield. p.78

¹⁶² Binder, David (1992) *U.S. Recognizes 3 Yugoslav Republics as Independent*. Published on 8th of April, New Times - <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/04/08/world/us-recognizes-3-yugoslav-republics-as-independent.html>, see also: Hanson Alan (2000), p. 79

recognitions by the UN and the western geopolitical players such as United States and European Community meant that the dissolution of Yugoslavia and territorial changes resulting with emergence of independent nation states would be conducted and implemented over the lines of the territories and (administrative) borders of the federal republics that constituted Yugoslavia. In that prospect, recognitions guaranteed and secured the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the republics on the international level. Therefore, the recognition of Croatia from Germany, EC and US despite failing to satisfy the recognition criteria meant halting and slowing down the war, thus giving enough time for regrouping and reorganizing of Croatian forces for the final actions which can be considered as legitimate regarding that international community recognized Croatia with its territory that it has as federal Yugoslav republic. Moreover, international recognition meant that Serb held territories declared to be Republic of Serb Krajina would not have any international support and recognition, therefore the Croatian military action (*Operation Flash* in 1995) and ceasing of existence of this quasi-state formation were completely legitimate and justified. It can also be argued, if cases of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are compared, that the number and share of the minority within or the general extent of the ethnic homogeneity the country's population has also determining influence in the final outcome and design of the territorial changes. While Croatia had only 12,2% Serbs in 1991 and the mass replacement of them that was experienced after the operation *Flash* in 1995 caused sharp drop to 4,5% in 2001 (and 4,4% in 2001)¹⁶³, was more possible to be done and also easily (with tacitly acquiescence) accepted by the international community, that was not the case for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia which are much more ethnically complex and heterogeneous. Thus Croatia avoided and did not experienced internal territorial changes and recomposition on formal or informal (de-facto) federal basis as it will be shown in cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Kosovo. Consequences of the operations for return of the control and destruction of Serb quasi-state formations on the territory of Croatia in 1995, which coincides with the end of the war in Bosnia, are regarded as an expected geopolitical outcome that directly results from the arrangement of the geopolitical forces on the global level. Namely, the denial of the historic goal of Greater Serbia for the Serbs in 1991-1992 and the de-facto creation of ethnically pure Greater Croatia for the Croats (including cleansed areas inhabited by Croats in Bosnia) by 1995 are considered as a natural outcome of the Great Power politics

¹⁶³ Berber, M. Grbic, B. Pavkov, S. (2008) *Promena udela stanovništva hrvatske I srpske nacionalne pripadnosti u republici Hrvatskoj po gradovima I opstinama na osnovu rezultata popisa iz 1991 I 2001 godine*. In:

and a preponderance of power at the end of the Cold War¹⁶⁴. Regarding the geopolitical conceptualization of the area of the Balkans, the independence of Croatia in its integral pre-1991 territory, openly backed and supported by the western powers and international community had definite geopolitical significance and meaning of preventing and disabling the real possibility of creation of Greater Serbian political state formation that by acquiring the territorial scope that have been controlled by Serb forces in period between 1991 – 1995 would definitely mean complete destruction of all neighboring states, subjugation of their populations as well as domination of the Balkans. Serbs militarily controlled the entire here identified Heartland of the Balkans, and with Republic of Serb Krajina and territories held in Croatia they reached the Adriatic Sea cutting off the western flank of the Balkanic Rimland. Without decisive international and western powers action and with its military might Serbs or the remnant center of Yugoslavia comprised by Serbia and Montenegro in short time could devastate and acquire the most of the Yugoslav Adriatic coast and therefore take control of the entire western flank of the Rimland. Considering the qualities of human factor of the number and dispersion of the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina together with the military superiority in equipment, resources and capabilities and finally the high motivation backed by the strong rise and wide support of Serb nationalism, the prospects for creation of Greater Serbian state were very likely. Thus, the position of Croatia was crucially important to be preserved in order to stop and prevent the creation of greater Serbia. Therefore the support for independence of Croatia seems the only strategic way to preserve the balance on the Balkans by keeping Serbian factor - that is historically prone to instable relations with the West and closer ones with the East as well as prone to frequently and more easily entering wars – weaker and less decisively significant. Finally in geopolitical context, the strong decline of the Soviet (Russian) power and influence have also extremely benefiting impact in the American and Western management of the crisis and establishing their geopolitical dominance on the Balkans. Despite, the small and individual Russian support for the Serb position and forces, due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and its geopolitical position in Europe, Russia was not capable to be involved more decisively and thus the first stage of the breakup of Yugoslavia and emergence of the independent nation states of Slovenia and Croatia with full/total international and western support opened the way for United States to enter and establish the dominant geopolitical influence on the Balkans.

Stanovništvo, vol. 46, no. 2. Centar za demografska istraživanja - Institut društvenih nauka. p.27 - <http://www.doiserbia.nb.rs/img/doi/0038-982X/2008/0038-982X0802023B.pdf>

IV.1.3.MONTENEGRO

Process of the emergence of the independent nation states from the former federal republics that come up as a consequence of the break up and disintegration of Yugoslavia concluded with the independence of Montenegro in 2006. Under the brokering of EU, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was successfully reorganized into a loose federation or state union of Serbia and Montenegro on 14th of March 2002¹⁶⁵. Thus, Montenegro have definitely paved its road toward independence although it was de-facto independent by having separate customs and police border control on the border with Serbia as well as different currency (Deutsche Mark and Euro) since the beginning of 2000's. Montenegro had also gradually and continually estranged from the Milosevic regime and thus worked on so-called independence on installments throughout the 90's although previously with an overwhelming majority of votes of 95,96% it decided to remain equal part of united Yugoslavia on the referendum of independence held on 1st of March 1992. The agreement for the state union of Serbia and Montenegro put off until 2006 the holding of any referendum on whether the two republics should separate from each other completely¹⁶⁶. Finally, on 21st of May 2006, Montenegro held referendum for independence where with narrow majority vote in favor of 55,5% the state declared its independence¹⁶⁷. Despite the traditionally and long historical close alliance with Russia as well as the large amount of Russian investments, Montenegro have clearly oriented towards integration in NATO and European Union thus putting an end for the possibility of Russian access on the Adriatic Sea. Therefore Montenegro with its position on the Adriatic Sea became the final link for the full integration of the Rimland of the Balkans under the control and allegiance of the euroatlantic powers such as USA, EU and NATO.

IV.2. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND ITS INTERNAL TERRITORIAL DIVISION

As the disintegration of Yugoslavia started with the process of declaring independence and outbreak of the wars in Slovenia and Croatia, the crisis have fiercely struck Bosnia and Herzegovina which was the most ethnically and religiously diverse republic located in the

¹⁶⁴ Thomas, R.G.C. (2003) *Yugoslavia Unraveled: Sovereignty, Self-Determination, Intervention*. Lexington Books. p.10

¹⁶⁵ Bideleux,R. Jeffries, I. (2007) *The Balkans: A Post-Communist History*. Routledge. p.495

¹⁶⁶ Bideleux,R. Jeffries, I. (2007) *The Balkans: A Post-Communist History*. Routledge. p.495

¹⁶⁷ *Montenegro Profile* (2014) – BBC News Europe - <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17667132>

center (heart) of Yugoslavia. Bosnia has always been described as a microcosm of the Balkans, a human mosaic made up of the genes of innumerable peoples¹⁶⁸. It was also a place where the three main religions and denominations in Europe and Mediterranean World such as orthodox and catholic Christianity and Islam, clash and intertwined co-exist. According to the census of 1991 prior the war the ethnic structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina was comprised of Muslims by nationality (Bosniaks) with 43,47%, Serbs with 31,21%, Croats with 17,38% as well as the highest number of self-declared Yugoslavs with 5,54%¹⁶⁹. Although Serbs were mostly concentrated in the northern-central Bosnia (Posavina and Bosanska Krajina) and eastern Herzegovina, Croats in (western) Herzegovina and Muslims in central Bosnia and far in the northwestern corner and easternmost regions close to border with Serbia, generally entire territory of the country was populated by mixed structure of the ethnic groups. After the first multiparty parliamentary elections, throughout 1990 and 1991 the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina steadily worsened and was driving towards a war. Almost a year before breakout of the war in March 1991, Serbian president Milosevic and Croatian president Tudjman met in Karadjordjevo where during the meeting they have secretly negotiated partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina between what in effect would be Greater Serbian and Greater Croatian states¹⁷⁰. Following that track on the meeting between Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban held on 6th of May 1992 in Graz, Austria they have agreed on mutual cooperation and division of Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁷¹. Bosniak Muslim representatives were not invited on the both meetings and because they were not included in these talks the partition was agreed on their expense. Division of Bosnia and Herzegovina was projected to be along the Neretva River with *Mostar* and everything south of it under Croat control. Finally, in between the expanded and greater Croatia and Serbia, it was provisioned to be a small Bosniak buffer state. These two agreements between two warring parties that in the same time were fighting in Croatia show clear and vivid geopolitical background. On one hand they showed that the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was primarily territorial conflict with final goal of acquiring territorial gains and thus the only possible geopolitical solution would be division of Bosnia and Herzegovina. By this it became obvious that greater geopolitical territorial concepts of Greater Serbia and

¹⁶⁸ Slack, A.J. Doyon, R.R. (2001) *Population Dynamics and Susceptibility for Ethnic Conflict: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. In Journal of Peace Research, Vol.38, no.2. p. 141

¹⁶⁹ *The Referendum on Independence in Bosnia-Herzegovina February 29-March 1, 1992*. A report prepared for the staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. p. 3

¹⁷⁰ Roe, Paul (2004). *Ethnic violence and the societal security dilemma*. Routledge p. 34

¹⁷¹ Israeli, Raphael, Benabou Albert (2013) *Savagery in the heart of Europe: The Bosnian war (1992-1995) Context, Perspectives, Personal Experiences and Memoirs*. Strategic Book Publishing. p. 64

Greater Croatia would have considerable influence motivational as well as a driving force in the development and settlement of the conflict. On the other hand, these two agreements confirmed the rule of the geopolitics that the adversaries who are fighting each other in the same time as were Serbs and Croats, having interest in compliance on other place could openly cooperate without obstacles. In accordance on the agreements Serb and Croat began to act and prepare the ground for the already agreed territorial division and expansion, which was inevitably driving towards a war. Similarly as in Croatia, Serbs have proclaimed several Serb Autonomous Regions (SAO) with intent of later unify them to create Greater Serbia, while Yugoslav army (JNA) started to deliver arms to Serb paramilitaries and police which was heavily Serbianized in order to increase the Serb political control. Bosnian Croats have also been acting towards separation. In accordance with the Karadjordjevo Agreement (and prior to Graz Agreement) Bosnian Croat leadership undertook activities in late 1991. On 12th of November 1991, Mate Boban and Dario Kordic held a joint meeting of the crisis teams of Herzegovina and of the Travnik Regional Communities, which decided that Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina should institute a policy achieving their own age-old dream of a common Croatian state, which should proclaim a Croatian Banovina in Bosnia and Herzegovina as initial phase leading towards the permanent settlement of the Croatian question and the creation of a sovereign Croatia within its ethnic and historical borders¹⁷². This was first official and open introduction of the Greater Croatian geopolitical territorial concept and the territorial scope of the previously mentioned unit of Croatian Banovina in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was serving as a basis and goal to achieve. Six days later on 18th of November 1991, Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban proclaimed the existence of the Croatian community of Herzeg-Bosnia as a separate political, cultural, economic and territorial entity on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁷³, which later would be proclaimed as a republic. In the same time primarily Muslim and to lesser extent Croat political factors were advocating independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On February 29-March 1, 1992, Bosnia held a referendum on its sovereignty and independence which was scheduled in accordance with the European Community's response to Bosnia-Herzegovina's request for international recognition¹⁷⁴. Serbs had largely boycotted the referendum and the final results were 99,7%

¹⁷² Israeli, Raphael, Benabou Albert (2013) *Savagery in the heart of Europe: The Bosnian war (1992-1995) Context, Perspectives, Personal Experiences and Memoirs*. Strategic Book Publishing. p.63

¹⁷³ Ibid, p.63-64

¹⁷⁴ *The Referendum on Independence in Bosnia-Herzegovina February 29-March 1, 1992*. A report prepared for the staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. p. 2

in favor of independence out of 63,4% turnout¹⁷⁵. The referendum and its results were immediately and almost completely overshadowed by the well known events such as killings of the Serb orthodox wedding in downtown Sarajevo which began on Sunday, 1st of March, and developed during the course of that night¹⁷⁶. Amidst the ongoing crisis and raging war Bosnian government declared independence on 3rd of March 1992¹⁷⁷. The decision to declare independence was followed by declaring autonomous Republic of Srpska in Bosnia by the Bosnian Serbs¹⁷⁸. Many experts argue that it was the role of the international factors on the recognition of the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina after the referendum that played and gave the crucial impact and impetus on the final outbreak of the war. On 6th of April 1992 European Community and one day later United States recognized the independence and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁷⁹ and on the 22nd of May it was accessed to United Nations. As Bosnia and Herzegovina was on the brink of full-scale war, panic had seized the population and oppositely to the western hopes that recognition would head off the civil war, such actions have sparked the war by provoking Milosevic's order to deploy the army and prompting Serbian invasion of eastern Bosnia by full scale attack of irregulars, Arcan's forces and army reservists on Muslim cities and towns along Drina¹⁸⁰. Recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina which is seen in close compliance with the one of Croatia is widely criticized and analyzed as having considerably important impact on the Bosnian war. Among the most outspoken critics of German decision and pressure is Ambassador Zimmerman who argues that recognition of Croatia necessitated the recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina which in turn sparked the conflict in Bosnia, although the fact remains that it was the U.S. government, at Zimmerman's urging, that pushed the idea of recognizing Bosnia in March 1992¹⁸¹. However, the two different issues of recognition were at issue: the German and EC decision to recognize Slovenia and Croatia and U.S. decision to push for the recognition of Bosnia and

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 19

¹⁷⁶ Ibid

¹⁷⁷ Greenberg C. Melanie, McGuinness. E. Margaret (2000) *From Lisbon to Dayton: Bosnia in: Words Over War: Mediation and Arbitration to Prevent Deadly Conflict* Edited by: Melanie C. Greenberg, John H. Barton, Margaret E. McGuinness. Rowman & Littlefield. p.36

¹⁷⁸ Greenberg C. Melanie, McGuinness. E. Margaret (2000) *From Lisbon to Dayton: Bosnia in: Words Over War: Mediation and Arbitration to Prevent Deadly Conflict* Edited by: Melanie C. Greenberg, John H. Barton, Margaret E. McGuinness. Rowman & Littlefield. p.36 - 37

¹⁷⁹ Hanson, Alan (2000) *Croatian Independence from Yugoslavia, 1991 – 1992*. In *Words Over War: Mediation and Arbitration to Prevent Deadly Conflict* Edited by: Melanie C. Greenberg, John H. Barton, Margaret E. McGuinness. Rowman & Littlefield. p.78-79

¹⁸⁰ Burg, L.S. Shoup, S.P. (2000) *The War in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*. M.E. Sharpe. p. 119-120

¹⁸¹ Burg, L.S. Shoup, S.P. (2000) *The War in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*. M.E. Sharpe. p.121

Herzegovina¹⁸². Nevertheless, both issues of recognition by the external actors and international community had considerable geopolitical influence with multiple impacts on the entire crisis situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and former Yugoslavia in general. The German campaign for recognition of Slovenia and Croatia appears to have influenced Milosevic's decision of 5th of December 1991 to redeploy JNA troops in Bosnia but this German initiative have also helped convince Milosevic to give up the idea of achieving Greater Serbia through military means although it came as a response to a combination of factors¹⁸³. Nevertheless, the recognition (and cease-fire) of Croatia which came as a result of German initiative, had considerable impact in worsening the situation towards war as the winding down of the war in Croatia freed up Croat and Serb forces, above all Croat units from western Herzegovina, to undertake operations in Bosnia¹⁸⁴. Also, reconfiguration of the JNA created a distinctively Bosnian Serb army and Milosevic's decision for its creation was taken in anticipation of a civil war seen as inevitable in the light of the German move toward recognition¹⁸⁵. Moreover, Milosevic and his advisers were convinced that recognition of Croatia would lead to recognition of Bosnia by the EC and the United States so their response was to prepare for war and to provide Belgrade with some basis for denying involvement once the war broke out¹⁸⁶. However, instead of slowing or halting the war, as in the case of Croatia, recognition had apparently accelerated the pace of Bosnia's decline and destruction¹⁸⁷. Regarding that the three main ethnic and religious groups in Bosnia were territorially oriented, even the international community involved in the resolution came up with proposals of constitutional and territorial rearrangement of the country in order to met the ambitions of the parties and thus prevent the war escalating further. On 18th of March 1992 Jose Cutileiro's plan that was dividing Bosnia and Herzegovina into three ethnic cantons was signed, but it was rejected by the Bosnian president Alija Izetbegovic on 25th of March¹⁸⁸. Nevertheless fighting broke out on 6th of

¹⁸² Ibid

¹⁸³ Burg, L.S. Shoup, S.P. (2000) *The War in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*. M.E. Sharpe. p. 121-122

¹⁸⁴ Burg, L.S. Shoup, S.P. (2000) *The War in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*. M.E. Sharpe. p. 121

¹⁸⁵ Ibid

¹⁸⁶ Ibid

¹⁸⁷ Burg, L.S. Shoup, S.P. (2000) *The War in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*. M.E. Sharpe. p. 120

¹⁸⁸ Greenberg C. Melanie, McGuinness. E. Margaret (2000) *From Lisbon to Dayton: Bosnia in: Words Over War: Mediation and Arbitration to Prevent Deadly Conflict* Edited by: Melanie C. Greenberg, John H. Barton, Margaret E. McGuinness. Rowman & Littlefield. p.36

April and two days later on 8th of April the Yugoslav army entered the fray¹⁸⁹. Full scale war escalated quickly throughout the entire Bosnia and Herzegovina. Besides the already started armed conflict in which Serbs were fighting against the others in the mid of June 1992, Croat and Bosniak that were allies to that point started a war between each other in which Bosnian Croats were supported by Croatia and acted according the plans for partitioning of Bosnia and Herzegovina from Karadjordjevo and Graz agreements. Civil war in Bosnia turned to be a total war between all three parties. Unenviable weak position of the Muslims in the Bosnian War from geopolitical perspective opened a gateway not just for reemerging involvement of Turkey in the geopolitics of the Balkans after almost a whole century of absence but also for a totally new involvement for Islamic geopolitical factors for the Middle East such as Saudi Arabia and Iran in Europe. Since 1992 Turkey have openly been involved and supported the Bosnian Muslim side by several diplomatic initiatives including political diplomatic and military measures on different international platforms such as United Nations, Organization of Islamic Countries and regional conferences where it considered to bring the suffering of the Bosnians to the agenda¹⁹⁰. Turkey was loudly advocating for lifting the arms embargo and according to the chief of staff it secretly delivered weapons to Muslims¹⁹¹. Moreover, during and by the end of the Croat – Bosniak war in February 1994 Turkey was actively involved on demand and welcoming of the both sides as mediator in the final settlement of cease-fire and agreement on federation¹⁹². Perhaps as many as four thousand Islamic fundamentalist fighters from throughout the Muslim world flocked to Bosnia and Herzegovina on the open invitation of Alija Izetbegovic to help ensure the creation of the only (fundamentalist) Islamic state in Europe¹⁹³. Regarding the interest of Bosnian president and Muslim leader of Iranian Islamic revolution in the years prior the crisis, Iran and its intelligence have also trained and equipped with arms the Bosnian Muslim forces. Even after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1997 Iran had approximately two hundred agents in various institutions¹⁹⁴ and up today Iran have the largest diplomatic and intelligence network in Europe, exactly in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During and after the war up to day

¹⁸⁹ Burg, L.S. Shoup, S.P. (2000) *The War in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*. M.E. Sharpe. p. 120

¹⁹⁰ Demirtaş-Çoşkun, Birgül. (2011) *Turkish Foreign Policy Toward the Bosnian War (1992 -- 1995) : A Constructivist Analysis*. Karadeniz Araştırmaları, no.28. p. 6-9

¹⁹¹ Ibid, p.9

¹⁹² Ibid, p. 10

¹⁹³ Shrader, R. Charles (2003) *The Muslim-Croat Civil War in Central Bosnia: A Military History, 1992-1994*. Texas A&M University Press. p.51

¹⁹⁴ Bardos, N. Gordon (2013) *Iran in the Balkans: A History and a Forecast*. World Affairs Journal, January-February. - <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/iran-balkans-history-and-forecast>

Bosnia and Herzegovina became a biggest place in Europe where radical Islam is genuinely developed and actively financed through construction of mosques, religious schools and scholarships, charities, by the Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar. Strong rise of Islamic fundamentalism led after the signing of the Dayton Agreement in 1995, one of the main goals of US policy in Bosnia to become the reducing of the influence of Iran and the various mujahedin forces there¹⁹⁵. From geopolitical perspective the war in Bosnia opened the way and introduced the Islamic factor not just on the Balkans, but in Europe too. Thus, the Bosnian war to the greatest extent confirmed the theories and presumptions of the geopolitics of culture (and chaos) and clash of civilizations presented by Samuel Huntington, Robert Kaplan and other authors. The atrocities of the war in Bosnia, especially those of the siege of Sarajevo, led to greater involvement of international and western factors in the attempts of preventing the war. As it was aforementioned in the second chapter, UN imposed arms embargo and no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina and NATO for the first time in its history intervened in Bosnia with several operations such as *Maritime Guard* for securing arms embargo, *Deny Flight* for securing the no-fly zone and preventing violation of airspace and *Deliberate Force* using air bombing on Serb positions. On the ground the war was raging territorial acquisition prior the peace agreement was primary goal. Geopolitically, the problem of Bosnia was difficult to resolve for the Serbs: the Bosnian Muslims in the Podrinje region separated Serbs in northern and western Bosnia from Serbia proper and Serbs in the northeastern part of Bosnia were physically separated from Serbs in eastern Herzegovina¹⁹⁶. The Croats in the Bosnian Posavina region dominated key communication links between Bosnia and Croatia¹⁹⁷. As Serbs have never fully secured control of the narrow Brcko corridor¹⁹⁸, Croatian forces were constantly attempting to gain control of it and thus cut off the direct geographical and territorial link between Bosnian Krajina and Republic of Serb Krajina in Croatia with Serbia. Croats have also dominated communication lines to Ploce and Neum. Bosniaks and Croats also dominated communication links along the Narenta Valley. By 1992, the Croats and the Bosniaks living in compact settlements in central Bosnia were in danger of being encircled by Serbs. Likewise, the Bosniaks and Croats in western Bosnia

¹⁹⁵ Bardos, N. Gordon (2013) *Iran in the Balkans: A History and a Forecast*. World Affairs Journal, January-February. - <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/iran-balkans-history-and-forecast>

¹⁹⁶ Vego, Milan (2000) *Geopolitical and Geostrategic Aspects of War in the Former Yugoslavia: 1991-2000*. Global Europe Program. Wilson Center - <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/212-geopolitical-and-geostrategic-aspects-war-the-former-yugoslavia-1991-2000>

¹⁹⁷ Ibid

¹⁹⁸ Vego, Milan (2000) *Geopolitical and Geostrategic Aspects of War in the Former Yugoslavia: 1991-2000*. Global Europe Program. Wilson Center - <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/212-geopolitical-and-geostrategic-aspects-war-the-former-yugoslavia-1991-2000>

were surrounded by Serbian populated areas. The Serbian attack on Bosnia in April 1992, was conducted as part of the JNA's plan called "*Most (Bridge)*" which attempted to create a land bridge between Serbia and the Serbian occupied areas in Croatia, the Krajina, and south Dalmatia¹⁹⁹. According to the territories controlled by Muslims and encircled by heavily equipped Serb forces, United Nations in April and May 1993 declared Srebrenica as a "safe area", status which was extended to Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zepa, Gorazde and Bihac²⁰⁰. As it is well known later in 1994 safe areas of Srebrenica and Zepa would fall and be seized by Serb forces which would commit the massacres and mass killings in July 1995. Finally on 14th of December 1995 the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed which put an end to the disastrous Bosnian War and totally reorganized the constitutional and territorial structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the Dayton Agreement the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided into two entities: Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina populated mostly by Bosniaks (Muslims) and Croats and Republic of Srpska populated mostly by Serbs and one self-governing Brcko District which is jointly administered as a condominium by the two entities and it is under direct sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Republic of Srpska as well as Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina functions largely as federal units with their own government, police and even their own armies until 2005. Moreover, the entity of Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina is comprised of 10 cantons with their own governments and ministries and a significantly large degree of decentralization²⁰¹. However, some of the Bosnian Croats are still dissatisfied and resentful with their position due to the lack of formal territorial entity despite they are among the three constitutionally equal nations. Due to the outnumbering by the Bosniaks in the decision making process of Federation Bosnia-Herzegovina especially since 2005 political parties and figures are advocating for creation of a third Croat entity or restoration of community of Herzeg-Bosnia. Territorially both entities occupy almost equal halves of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina although they have lack of compact and reasonable territorial structure. Republic of Srpska has an oval shape in which Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina deeply penetrates, with the two flanks separated by the Brcko District which territory also separates two small parts of Federation Bosnia-Herzegovina on the Sava River by the border with Croatia. This kind of the territorial

¹⁹⁹ Ibid

²⁰⁰ Greenberg C. Melanie, McGuinness. E. Margaret (2000) *From Lisbon to Dayton: Bosnia in: Words Over War: Mediation and Arbitration to Prevent Deadly Conflict* Edited by: Melanie C. Greenberg, John H. Barton, Margaret E. McGuinness. Rowman & Littlefield. p.37

²⁰¹ Galbraith, A-R.L. (2008) *Bosnia-Herzegovina: Towards a Less imperfect union*. A thesis submitted to the faculty of Wesleyan University. p.8 - http://wescholar.wesleyan.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1049&context=etd_hon_theses

organization with the autonomous Muslim-Croat federation out of 51% of the territory and a boomerang-shaped Republic of Srpska of the remaining 49% of the land but divided by the Brcko corridor at the corner of the reverse, upside-down L-shaped territory²⁰², remained highly unstable territorial solution of the conflict due to the lack of the territorial reasonability which reflects with complete impractical and inefficient governance as well as constant discontent which can serve as a source for territorial pretensions and nationalism. This is largely confirmed by the fact that the Dayton Accords left all three parties feeling insecure in their gains: Bosnian Muslims secured their independent state, but one with less than a third of the territory of the former Bosnian Republic; the Bosnian Serbs which controlled 46% of the territory prior to the accords gained their own mini-state, but one whose legitimacy was under constant attack; and finally Bosnian Croats achieved recognition of their right to self-determination and joint defense of the federation but at the expense of having to dismantle their own mini-state in Bosnia previously mentioned Herzeg-Bosnia²⁰³. However, regarding the fact that Bosnian Croats maintain close links with their mother-state Croatia by carrying Croatian passports, vote on Croatian elections (ex. in 1995) and even used Croatian currency, licence plates and routed their telephone calls through Croatia indicates their strong position with the power of destruction of the federation, as John Mearsheimer and Stephen Van Evera have pointed out²⁰⁴. Moreover, Dayton maintained the central focus on territory, but did so in a way so as to create vulnerable enclaves of mixed populations: a country of corridors and buffer zones was to prevent Serb and Croat secession²⁰⁵. Lastly, in regards of the territorial division related with the greater Serbian and Croatian concepts there are contradictive allegations that on one hand the Dayton agreement is actually a compromise that partially accomplish and secures their goals and territorial gains while on the other hand on paper it prevented the creation of Greater Croatia (and Serbia)²⁰⁶. Thus Bosnia and Herzegovina remained completely unresolved issue that is constantly actual in the geopolitics of the Balkans as it is example with the Republic of Srpska secessionist movement in regards of the secession and resolution of the status of Kosovo. Nonetheless, the emergence of the independent state of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the Bosniak Muslims as a constituent

²⁰² Thomas, R.G.C. (2003) *Yugoslavia Unraveled: Sovereignty, Self-Determination, Intervention*. Lexington Books. p.10

²⁰³ Roe, Paul (2004). *Ethnic violence and the societal security dilemma*. Routledge p. 36

²⁰⁴ Thomas, R.G.C. (2003) *Yugoslavia Unraveled: Sovereignty, Self-Determination, Intervention*. Lexington Books. p.10

²⁰⁵ Roe, Paul (2004). *Ethnic violence and the societal security dilemma*. Routledge p. 36

²⁰⁶ Thomas, R.G.C. (2003) *Yugoslavia Unraveled: Sovereignty, Self-Determination, Intervention*. Lexington Books. p.10

nation as well as majority have another geopolitical significance in the fact that it establishes the Bosniaks as geopolitical actor on the Balkans with their nation state which represents a basis for creation and development of a new greater territorial geopolitical concept of a Greater Bosnia as a nation and mother-state of all Slavic Muslims on the Balkans encompassing Bosnia and Herzegovina unified with the region of Sandjak which is currently within the borders of Serbia and Montenegro. Considering the geopolitical conceptualization of the Balkans territorial changes of Bosnia and Herzegovina have not intact neither Heartland nor Rimland, regarding the position of Bosnia as a buffer zone between them. Unresolved internal situation of Bosnia and Herzegovina places it as a part of a shatterbelt of the Balkans. This could give the answer why the war of the Bosnia and Herzegovina although it have been the most devastating and disastrous conflict in Europe after the Second World War did not spread throughout the entire region of the Balkans.

IV.3. KOSOVO SECESSION AND SOUTHERN SERBIA INSURGENCY

In the heat of the events of the breakup of Yugoslavia, another hotspot emerged with the case of the Albanian – Serb conflict erupting in Kosovo and Southern Serbia. Unlike the sudden and unexpected breakout of the crisis and wars in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, vivid course of events and constant deterioration of situation preceded Kosovo crisis. Following Tito's death in 1980, a period of political instability commenced in the SFRY and in Kosovo, by the continual deterioration of the situation between Albanians and Serbs. The manifestation of Albanian nationalism became more frequent with many private assaults against Serbian persons and properties reported as well as various other cases of rapes, beatings, destruction of graves, murders and defacing of some monasteries and churches all for reasons of ethnic hatred²⁰⁷. The pattern was emerging that of systematic pressure on the Serbs and Montenegrins to leave Kosovo, sell everything they had and go to Serbia²⁰⁸. Most indicative was that the percentage of the Serbian population in Kosovo fell from 23,6% in 1961 to 13,2% in 1981²⁰⁹. This situation was mentioned in the famous memorandum of the Serbian academy of sciences and arts from 1986 that served as a fostering factor of the rising Serbian nationalism in Yugoslavia at the end of the 80's and beginning of the 90's. Moreover, in 1990 Serbian historians alleged that in the previous two

²⁰⁷ Bieber, Florian. Daskalovski, Zidas. (2004) *Understanding the War in Kosovo*. Routledge. p.7

²⁰⁸ Ibid

²⁰⁹ Ibid

decades some 400,000 Serbs were forced to leave Kosovo, but nevertheless they were ignored both by the Kosovo and federal government which led to the resentment that the state could not and did not want to protect its own citizens rising²¹⁰. In 1981 the secessionist tendencies of the Albanian population culminated in the so-called March riots or the student demonstration with wide popular support where the central message was the demand for Kosovo to become a republic of Yugoslavia (and thereby to have constitutionally guaranteed right of self-determination up to secession) and the final aim of the protesters was union with their mother-state – Albania²¹¹. This was first and vivid sign of the involvement of the geopolitical territorial concept of Greater Albania in the Kosovo issue. All this led to an general situation where independence movements developed amongst Albanians while Slobodan Milosevic rose to power in Serbia on a nationalist platform, exactly on the Kosovo issue. This was evident from his famous and well known visits and speeches of assuring Serbs that no one will ever beat them and the celebration of the sixth hundred anniversary of the Kosovo Battle between Serbs and ottoman Turks. Milosevic accused Kosovo Albanians of violating the rights of the Serb minority in Kosovo, and the Serbian parliament began preparing amendments that would strip Kosovo Albanians of the autonomy granted to them in the 1974 SFRY constitution²¹². Back and-forth atrocities ensued; Albanians responded to Serbian oppression with violence against the Serb minority, and Milosevic reacted by ordering 25,000 Serbian police officers into the province²¹³. Throughout the violent escalation, Kosovo Albanians made efforts to free themselves from Serbian control. In September 1990, most Albanian members of the Kosovo Parliament met outside of its building and passed a resolution declaring Kosovo independent within the SFRY²¹⁴. Slightly more than a year later in September 1991, Albanians in Kosovo organized an illegal referendum in which 87% of voters took part, and 99% voted in favor of Kosovo as a sovereign and independent republic²¹⁵. Few days later Kosovo was recognized by Albania²¹⁶. Additionally, the Kosovo Albanians organized parallel government structures, including a local government assembly, schools, and clinics²¹⁷. In the same time on 1st of March 1992, on

²¹⁰Bieber, Florian. Daskalovski, Zidas. (2004) *Understanding the War in Kosovo*. Routledge. p.7

²¹¹ Ibid, p.7 and 10

²¹² Fierstein, Daniel (2008) *Kosovo's declaration of independence: An incident analysis of legality, policy and future implications*. Boston University International Law Journal, Vol. 26. p. 421

²¹³ Ibid

²¹⁴ Ibid

²¹⁵ Ibid

²¹⁶Bieber, Florian. Daskalovski, Zidas. (2004) *Understanding the War in Kosovo*. Routledge. p. 8

²¹⁷ Fierstein, Daniel (2008) *Kosovo's declaration of independence: An incident analysis of legality, policy and future implications*. Boston University International Law Journal, Vol. 26. p. 421

an unofficial referendum Albanians from the Preshevo Valley in Southern Serbia with 98% of votes declared their desire to join Kosovo by a peaceful annexation to their compatriots²¹⁸. A 1946 decision by the Yugoslav government to separate the Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja municipalities from Kosovo and place them under direct Serbian Republic jurisdiction created a grievance that continues to inflame passions among the local Albanians²¹⁹. Thus the Presevo Valley which is strategically important for Serbia because the main transportation corridors passes through, remained outside Kosovo despite the numerous Albanian population which refer the region as Eastern Kosovo. In the first half of the 90's the conflict in Kosovo was pulsing with a slower pace due to the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina that were under way. But unlike those wars Albanian diaspora in Europe and North America was actively preparing resources for the intending war conflict and also lobbied in the political centers in the western powers. Appearance of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) section of Kosovo Albanian political elite at the 1992 European Community Conference on Yugoslavia²²⁰, is an obvious example of that. As situation continued to deteriorate, in 1993 the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) was founded and began to grow. Nevertheless, the issue of Kosovo was not on the agenda of the international factor's efforts for resolution of Yugoslav crisis and thus Albanians were still not considered as a part of that great game. The last event that preceded and directly influenced the break out of the war in Kosovo was the civil unrest and rioting in Albania in March 1997 when military arsenals were sucked and the country and its neighborhood were flooded with more than a half million looted weapons many of which were supplied as small arms to KLA (UCK)²²¹. Moreover, the total anarchy and collapse of the law and order provided KLA a stretch of ungoverned territory in northern Albania in which they could arm and train a guerrilla force²²². Finally, by 1998 open conflict had broken out between KLA and Yugoslav security forces²²³. Unlike the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the war in Kosovo have more character as insurgency with guerilla warfare, partisan attacks and diversion and

²¹⁸ Janjic, Dusan (2004) *Challenges of the Peace Process in the South of Serbia*. in International Peace Plans for the Balkans – A Success? p.58 See also: <http://www.transconflict.com/gcct/gcct-members/europe/the-balkans/serbia/conflict-in-serbia/> and <http://www.independent.mk/articles/2801/Serbian+Minister+Vulin+Albanians+from+Presevo+Valley+Threaten+Serbia>

²¹⁹ *Pan-Albanianism: How big a threat to Balkan stability?* – Report of International Crisis Group, 25th of February 2004.Tirana/Brussels. p.22

²²⁰ *Pan-Albanianism: How big a threat to Balkan stability?* – Report of International Crisis Group, 25th of February 2004.Tirana/Brussels. p.5

²²¹ Ibid

²²² *Pan-Albanianism: How big a threat to Balkan stability?* – Report of International Crisis Group, 25th of February 2004.Tirana/Brussels. p.6

individual terrorist acts. Although Yugoslav security forces were overwhelmingly superior and extremely powerful in regard of the Albanian insurgents which besides the training camps in Northern Albania had their stronghold in the mountainous region of Drenica in the central part of the province between the two main valleys Kosovo and Metohia, they had the advantage in their guerilla warfare due to the extremely wide support of the Albanian population which presented overwhelming majority and except in the far north it is geographically dispersed throughout entire province. One example of this is seizure and kidnapping in the Belacevac Mine in central Kosovo in 1998 thus threatening the supply with electricity of the most of the province. Regarding the historical significance of Kosovo for the Serbian national sentiment, as well as for the Albanian, the Kosovo War was actually a clash and conflict between the greater Albanian and greater Serbian geopolitical territorial concepts. Regarding that Kosovo was part of the sovereign recognized territory of Serbia, greater expansionist extent in the war has the concept of Greater Albania. The KLA was perceived by many as a proponent of greater Albania. In July 1998, Kosovo Liberation Army spokesman Jakup Krasniqi publicly announced that the KLA's goal was the unification of all Albanian-inhabited lands²²⁴. On New Year's Eve 1998, while on Albanian national television, the KLA's General Staff called for "1988-1999 to be the years of the unification of the Albanians and of the freedom and independence of Kosovo"²²⁵. As the Yugoslav security forces were much superior in any prospect and together with Serb paramilitary units started mass abuses of human rights, the situation worsened and called for a greater international involvement in the prevention and settlement. Although, the talks in Rambouillet held in February 1999, initially ended up successfully with Serbian side accepting restoration of autonomy of Kosovo, it rejected the presence of NATO troops. The international monitors (ratificators) from the OSCE left Kosovo on 22nd of March 1999 and the next day stated the NATO air bombing on Yugoslavia, which is analyzed in the second chapter in the part of the geopolitics of the air on the Balkans. After 78 days of air bombing campaign the war was concluded by the signing of the Kumanovo Agreement which had considerable impact on territorial organization and the following insurgency in Southern Serbia in 2001. On 10th of June 1999, the SC, by adopting Resolution 1244 under Chapter VII, placed Kosovo, a province within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), under joint administration of the

²²³ Ibid

²²⁴ Ibid

²²⁵ Ibid

UN and NATO²²⁶. Thus Kosovo became a protectorate of the United Nations. The Resolution 1244 reaffirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia²²⁷ thus defining Kosovo as part of Serbia (which itself was a constituency of Yugoslavia). Accordingly, Serbia was constantly calling upon this as a guaranteeing of Kosovo status as inextricable part of its territory. Kumanovo Agreement which was officially called as military technical agreement, have also provisioned definition of 25 km of air safety zone and 5 km ground safety zone around Kosovo's boundaries into FRY which Yugoslav forces could not enter without NATO permission. After the end of Kosovo War in 2000 and 2001 a splinter group of KLA calling itself Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (UCPMB) emerged and began launching attacks against Serb security forces²²⁸. The UCPMB aimed to internationalize the plight of ethnic Albanians in southern Serbia, with the goal of securing NATO intervention on their behalf. This was the model the KLA had used in Kosovo and the UCPMB reasoned that it could be replicated in Presevo. Between 700 and 1,000 UCPMB guerrillas began operating inside the three-mile Ground Safety Zone (GSZ), created by the military technical agreement signed by NATO and Belgrade in June 1999²²⁹. These guerrillas enjoyed the de facto protection afforded by a NATO ban on heavy weapons within the GSZ²³⁰. As fighting escalated in the spring of 2001, and with an Albanian insurgency gaining steam in Macedonia, it became clear that the Albanian insurgents in southern Serbia and Macedonia were using the demilitarised zone to facilitate their attacks and smuggling of weapons²³¹. The emergence of the UCPMB also coincided with rising violence in the divided northern Kosovo town of Mitrovica, where Serbs – angry over the ethnic cleansing of Serbs by Kosovo Albanians – began to establish a de facto partition of Kosovo²³². Presevo Valley Albanians were anxious that they would be pushed to the side during any future discussions on the final status of Kosovo, and wished to link the fate of the Valley with any final settlement for Kosovo²³³. As a result, the Presevo Valley also represented a bargaining chip aimed at counterbalancing Serbian efforts at partitioning

²²⁶Milano, Enrico (2003) *Security Council Action in the Balkans: Reviewing the Legality of Kosovo's Territorial Status*. European Journal of International Law. Vol.14, No. 5. p.1000

²²⁷ Ibid, p.1004

²²⁸ *Pan-Albanianism: How big a threat to Balkan stability?* – Report of International Crisis Group, 25th of February 2004.Tirana/Brussels. p.22

²²⁹Ibid

²³⁰ Ibid

²³¹ Ibid

²³² *Pan-Albanianism: How big a threat to Balkan stability?* – Report of International Crisis Group, 25th of February 2004.Tirana/Brussels.p.23

²³³ Ibid

Kosovo²³⁴. However, the fall of the Milosevic regime and the change of the government in Belgrade had impact on completely different solution. After the fall of Slobodan Milosevic in October 2000, and his replacement by new governments in Belgrade, the West strove to build a new positive relationship with Serbia, and the Presevo conflict was settled essentially on Belgrade's terms²³⁵. NATO made clear that it did not intend to redraw borders, and that military provocations by Albanian militant groups would be treated as a direct security threat²³⁶ and allowed entrance of the Yugoslav security forces into the ground safety zones. However, as the talks for the final status of Kosovo between Belgrade and Pristina continued the situation on ground worsened by the unrest of 2004 with wide scale attack on Serbs which led to a even greater extent of ghettoization, living in enclaves and concentration in Northern Kosovo therefore strengthening the internal territorial division. The talks on the final status of Kosovo were driving towards stalemate and in 2007 the special envoy of UN, Martti Ahtisaari proposed his plan and recommendations considering the actual situation of complete separate governing of Kosovo and Serbia without any exercise of Serbian authority as well as the irreversible nature and inability of any attempt of reintegration of Kosovo into Serbia²³⁷. Although plan proposed wide scale self-governing in all segments even to security forces, adoption national symbols and representation in international organization it avoided explicit reference to independence and instead it provisioned the supervised or conditional independence – the approach that Europe have taken to recognition of states to secede from Yugoslavia in 1991²³⁸. Independence and recognition were preconditioned on a commitment to protect human rights and to afford special political protections to Kosovo Serbs²³⁹. In that prospect the Ahtisaari plan proposed wide decentralization, which will especially improve the status of the Serbs in regards of the territorial organization. The political and territorial status of the Serbs and other minorities was even more improved with the creation of several smaller municipalities with Serb and non-Albanian majority throughout entire Kosovo (especially southern and eastern parts). Decentralization as a solution for the internal organization of Kosovo, which was also an issue of contention and high tensions in Macedonia in 2004 as it will be explained below, was within the mainstream of European thinking how to manage potential interethnic conflict without war, ethnic cleansing or

²³⁴ Ibid

²³⁵ Ibid, p.6

²³⁶ Ibid

²³⁷ Perrit, H. Henry (2010) *The Road to Independence for Kosovo: A Chronicle of the Ahtisaari Plan*. Cambridge University Press. p. 165

²³⁸ Ibid, p.169

²³⁹ Ibid

secession²⁴⁰ but it has pretty unstable and highly uncertain impact on the final outcome whether it would lead to integration into state's political structure or towards greater secessionist tendencies and partition. Despite the efforts of the United States and European Union members of the Security Council in rewriting the draft versions of the proposal in order to meet the objections of Russia as a member which holds the right of veto, the talks for adoption of the plan failed. Thus, on 17th of February 2008 the Assembly of Kosovo adopted declaration of independence with unanimously vote for independence of Serbia. The recognitions of independence from United States, Great Britain, France (UN Security Council permanent members with veto power) and Turkey followed the next day, while recognitions of other geopolitically significant actors and members of EU such as Germany and Italy followed in the next two and three days. Apart from Albania which was the only country that recognized the independence of Kosovo from the first declaration in 1990, the neighbors of Kosovo such as Macedonia and Montenegro followed on the same day on 9th of October 2008. As of February 2014 Kosovo has received 109 diplomatic recognitions as an independent state out of which 107 from the members of United Nations, 23 out of 28 EU member states, 24 out of 28 NATO member states and 34 out of 57 members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The declaration of independence was boycotted by the Serbs members of the Kosovo Assembly and it is widely rejected and opposed together with the Kosovo institution by the Serbs living in the Northern Kosovo. Serbia which considers Kosovo as sovereign part of its territory according to its constitution also rejected the declaration of independence of Kosovo as unilateral and requested advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice which decided that the declaration of independence of Kosovo did not violate the international law²⁴¹. Nevertheless, Serbia continues to deny recognition. China and Russia as the two other permanent members with veto power of the UN Security Council do not recognize Kosovo as independent state. Moreover, Russia rejects and consider the declaration as illegal and uses the precedent of unilateral secession of Kosovo as argumentation for support of its geopolitical position and backing of the secessionist movements such as Ossetia and South Abkhazia in the War in Georgia of 2008 and most recently in the secession of Crimea and eastern regions in the ongoing Ukrainian crisis of 2014. As a result Kosovo is still not accessed as a member of the United Nations. Thus

²⁴⁰ Perrit, H. Henry (2010) *The Road to Independence for Kosovo: A Chronicle of the Ahtisaari Plan*. Cambridge University Press. p.169-170

²⁴¹ *International Court of Justice: Accordance with international law of the unilateral declaration of independence in respect of Kosovo: Advisory Opinion*. Press Release, No. 25/2010 from 22 July 2010 - <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/141/16012.pdf?PHPSESSID=b0b24a6135eaf2347d5b0a0badec77ff>

Kosovo still has an ambiguous status of quasi or de facto sovereign state with partial but not full international recognition. The process of territorial division and ambiguous status continued as UN administration was replaced with the EULEX and prior to Brussels talks between Belgrade and Pristina for normalization of their relations. The Serb majority populated region of Northern Kosovo which directly borders central Serbia fiercely boycotted the Kosovo and EULEX institutions often by violent and armed attacks (as in the case of the attempt of Kosovo Police to assert on the two border crossings in the north and imposition of customs taxes for imports from Serbia), thus de facto and completely functioning as independent entity and therefore placing Kosovo in a state of partition. Moreover, Serbs in Northern Kosovo decided to observe the direct rule of Belgrade which they believe as the only legal authority on the whole Kosovo despite the absence of Serbian authorities and freedom of movement and functioning of international (UNMIK) officials according to the Kumanovo Agreement. The problem of the Serbs living in Northern Kosovo was one of the most difficult in the talks between Belgrade and Pristina under auspices of European Union in Brussels in 2011. Finally, on 19th of April 2013 in Brussels delegations led by the prime ministers from Belgrade and Pristina reached an agreement in 15 points with considerable significance of territorial political organization of the Serbs in Northern Kosovo. According to the agreement all parallel Serb institutions were abolished and instead an Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities was established with separate status of the Police and its command as well as judiciary of Northern Kosovo integrated in the framework of Kosovo police and legal and institutional framework. Thus, Kosovo gained full territorial and institutional integrity while Serbs in the northern part gained de facto autonomous and federal status within the institutional framework of Kosovo. Nevertheless, international position of Kosovo continues to be contested in the territorial dispute over the sovereignty with Serbia. In regards of the geopolitical concept of Greater Albania after the independence Kosovo have undertaken several moves for building closer ties with Albania in de facto unification. Closer linking of Kosovo with Albania was developed through construction of infrastructure as the high-way²⁴², replacing the former Serbian telephone code with the Albanian²⁴³ etc. The most important move in that context was the joint meeting of governments of Kosovo and Albania in 2014 in the House of Prizren League – the birthplace

²⁴² *Kosovo opens highway connection to Albania* - World Highways, 26th of November, 2013. - <http://www.worldhighways.com/categories/road-highway-structures/news/kosovo-opens-highway-connection-to-albania/>

²⁴³ *Pristina replaces Serbian country code with Albanian* – B92 News/Tanjug, 7th of September 2012 http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2012&mm=09&dd=07&nav_id=82120

of the idea of Greater Albania - where several agreements for strategic cooperation in facilitating commerce, infrastructure, transportation, building inter-connection power line were signed as well as declarations of special importance was given to the rights of Albanians living outside the official borders and special support for Albanians in Presevo Valley (Southern Serbia) was expressed²⁴⁴. From geopolitical perspective the involvement of the United States as a world's super power was from the greatest significance in the Kosovo crisis and independence. Despite the leading role of United Nations and their administration in the early phases and later of European Union and its administration and role as mediator between the Belgrade and Pristina, the influence of United States in the final settlement of the status of Kosovo is predominantly decisive in any aspect. This leads some authors and analysts to conclude that the case of Kosovo together with the Albanian insurgency and constitutional (and territorial) rearrangement of Macedonia with the crucially decisive American support confirms that the geopolitical concept of Greater Albania is in compliance with American geopolitical and strategic plans, goals and objectives and therefore it is actually an American project²⁴⁵. Moreover, United States have built its largest army military base on the Balkans in Kosovo. That is the Camp Bondsteel which houses 7000 troops and civilian employees, has a 52 helipad airfield for helicopter aviation and serves as a headquarters for Multinational Task Force East²⁴⁶. Camp Bondsteel is the largest and the most expensive foreign military base built by the US in Europe, since the Vietnam War²⁴⁷. This base strategically lies close to the planned Albanian-Macedonian-Bulgarian Oil (AMBO) pipeline also known as the Trans-Balkan, the pipeline project will transport the Caspian oil from Bulgaria to Albania via Macedonia and one of the objectives of the base is that it is expected to protect the AMBO²⁴⁸. Thus with the intervention and secession of Kosovo, United States besides its political dominance have also permanently secured its military presence in the Balkans, that is extremely geopolitically strategic important in the clash with Russia over political, territorial and economic energetic (through the gas and oil pipelines) that is escalating through the years of the new millennium especially with the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. Due to its weakness, Russia played insignificant and minor role during the war in Kosovo and NATO intervention where besides the incident of the Pristina Airport in June 1999 it succeeded to deploy its peacekeepers throughout entire Kosovo independently from

²⁴⁴ *Albania-Kosovo agreement signed in Prizren* – Top Channel News, 11th of January 2014 - <http://www.top-channel.tv/english/artikull.php?id=10798>

²⁴⁵ Nikovski, Risto (2013) *Ulogata na SAD vo Makedonskite golgoti (1991-2013)*. p. 94 (on Macedonian)

²⁴⁶ *Camp Bondsteel, Serbia* – Army Technology - <http://www.army-technology.com/projects/campbondsteel/>

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*

NATO troops. But as the Russian position and power improves and rises in the recent years, Russia showed open political support and backed Serbia in the denial of the recognition of Kosovo and its accession in the international scene. Moreover, Russia intended to build joint center for emergency co-ordination near the southern Serbian city of Nis (close to Kosovo) that is perceived by many as a military base, first one since the end of the Warsaw Pact²⁴⁹. As it was aforementioned in the second chapter Serbia declared military neutrality and non-alignment and it is become more hesitant toward any closer military alignment with Russia as it closer approaches to integration in European Union which was vividly expressed in the recent ongoing Ukrainian crisis. Nevertheless, the case of the territorial changes of Kosovo have considerable impact of the Russian reemergence as geopolitical player on the Balkans as well as enhancing its position in regional conflicts and its sponsored and supported secessionist movements in former Soviet space and finally by all of this towards its global geopolitical position. In the case of Kosovo other geopolitical players such as Turkey, European Union have secondary role supporting Kosovo secession and independence in compliance with the American position. Turkey and its reemerging and rising influence on the Balkans according to the neo-Ottoman foreign policy lines places Kosovo and Albanian factor on highly important place as it was evident with the statement of Turkish prime minister Erdogan for belonging of a common history, culture and civilization during his visit of Kosovo in 2013²⁵⁰ which stirred controversy and official reaction and condemnation in Serbia²⁵¹. Islamic factor have played minor to moderate role in strengthening the Albanian position during the conflict in the 90's due to the strong political influence of the Albanians in the institution of the Islamic communities in Kosovo and Macedonia. However, recently there is significant rise of the radical Islam in Kosovo that is evident with the large number of volunteer fighters in the ongoing Syrian War. Regarding the geopolitical conceptualization of the Balkans after 1991 according to the geopolitical concepts and theories from the second chapter, secession of Kosovo that is surrounded from three sides by Serbia and Macedonia that comprise the Heartland of the Balkans, meant detaching a significant chunk from it. But as the strategically important Albanian populated Presevo Valley where the main transportation axis of the Balkans and European corridor passes, remains under control of

²⁴⁸ Ibid

²⁴⁹ *Russia and Serbia – Base Camps* – The Economist, 4th of February 2010 - <http://www.economist.com/node/15464941>

²⁵⁰ Baydar, Yavuz (2013) *Erdogan: 'Kosovo is Turkey'* – Almonitor, 23rd of October - <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/10/erdogan-kosovo-turkey.html>

²⁵¹ *Erdogan 'Misunderstood' Over 'Turkey is Kosovo' Claim* – Balkan Insight, 28th of October 2013 - <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/davutoglu-erdogan-s-kosovo-statement-misinterpreted>

Serbia the position of the Heartland of the Balkans remained intact. Considering the richest mine deposits that Kosovo possesses and thus presenting resources Heartland of the Balkans, its secession means weakening the position of Serbia as Balkanic heartlandic power in economic and power projection (domination) prospects. Nevertheless, as long as Southern Serbia remains under the Serbian control the inability of Kosovo to cut off the main geographical and geopolitical axis of the Balkans (and Europe) by acquiring Presevo Valley would mean preservation of the situation of geopolitical balance of powers on the Balkans.

IV.4. MACEDONIA AND ITS ADMINISTRATIVE TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

The independence of Macedonia have undoubtedly arisen the greatest geopolitical turmoil of the Balkans. Emergence of the independent Macedonian state have definitely awakened the greater territorial, nationalist and chauvinist ideas, interests, goals, objectives and appetites of all Macedonian neighbors that were settled and calm since the partition of Macedonia in 1913 and after the Second World War when with the partitioned Macedonian territory divided among Yugoslavia, Greece, Bulgaria and Albania to a lesser extent, the so-called Macedonian question was considered as solved and definitely settled. Geopolitical balance on the Balkans established by the partition of Macedonia with the emergence of the independent Macedonian state have definitely been shaken and neighboring states have seen threat on their borders with the existence of this independent country evolving as nation with genuine and specific autochthonous national identity from the partitioned geographical, historical and ethnographical region of Macedonia. As all of Macedonia's neighbors had at one time or another denied the existence of a Macedonian people and its right to a state, claiming its people and territory as their own all of them viewed the small, independent republic as a threat to their past gains or future aspirations there and rejected it as an artificial creation²⁵². Thus Macedonia faced and still faces unprecedented severe obstacles in its recognition and affirmation as an independent state in the international community. In this context are the ongoing issues such as the name dispute with Greece, constant and continual denial and contestation of the Macedonian national, ethnic, linguistic and historic identity and Macedonian national minorities by Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia, as well as consistent interethnic conflict and crisis with the Albanian minority and its secessionist movement that erupted as armed conflict and insurgency in 2001 which thoroughly redefined the internal

constitutional, political and territorial structure and organization of the country. When on 25th June 1991, the Yugoslav army attacked Slovenia, and a month later it opened hostilities against Croatia thus the spilling of blood sealed the fate of Yugoslavia, one day later on 26 June the Macedonian national assembly discussed independence but its members were divided, as did the population in general²⁵³. But the disagreement was not, as many people have assumed, between nationalists and “Yugoslavists.”, rather, it was between moderate or cautious nationalists under the president Kiro Gligorov, who in view of grave internal and external threats urged restraint, and the radical or “impatient” nationalists, whom the party VMRO-DPMNE led and who tended to minimize the threats and wanted independence immediately²⁵⁴. However, once the northern fighting widened to include Croatia and threatened Bosnia-Herzegovina, even the cautious had to agree that the Yugoslav idea was dead²⁵⁵. Macedonian sovereignty and independence even within a loose association no longer formed a viable option²⁵⁶. At this point, Macedonians had only two possibilities. First, they could, as Belgrade and Athens wanted them to do, join a third, or “reduced” Yugoslavia in a new federation in which without the Croats and the Slovenes to counterbalance the Serbs, however, they could have become extremely weak and vulnerable²⁵⁷. Consequently, they rejected this option from the outset. Second, they could declare complete sovereignty and independence—the only route acceptable to most of the population, including the Albanians²⁵⁸. The political leaders resolved to give the people the final say. In the referendum on 8th of September 1991, 72.16 percent of 1,495,080 registered voters cast ballots; 95.08 percent of voters, or 1,021,981 people, supported independence, and only 3.63 percent, or 38,896 opposed it²⁵⁹. Unfortunately—a sign of internal troubles to come—Albanians boycotted the referendum to protest their constitutional status²⁶⁰. On 17th September 1991, the national assembly passed the declaration of independence, and on 17th of November it adopted a new constitution²⁶¹, which was also boycotted by the ethnic Albanian members of the Parliament.

²⁵² Rosos, Andrew. (2008) *Macedonia and the Macedonians: a history*. Hoover Institution Press, the University of Michigan. p. 267-268

²⁵³ Rosos, Andrew. (2008) *Macedonia and the Macedonians: a history*. Hoover Institution Press, the University of Michigan. p. 265

²⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 265-266

²⁵⁵ Rosos, Andrew. (2008) *Macedonia and the Macedonians: a history*. Hoover Institution Press, the University of Michigan. p.256

²⁵⁶ Ibid

²⁵⁷ Ibid

²⁵⁸ Ibid

²⁵⁹ Ibid

²⁶⁰ Ibid

²⁶¹ Rosos, Andrew. (2008) *Macedonia and the Macedonians: a history*. Hoover Institution Press, the University of Michigan. p.256

After the successful referendum for independence of Macedonia and the promulgation of the first Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia on 17th of November 1991, Greece immediately objected and initiated its strong policy of negating Macedonia's right to its constitutional name based on the statement that the name Macedonia implies territorial pretensions²⁶². Besides the argumentation that the name Macedonia implies territorial pretensions towards Greece it also supported this claim by calling upon the articles of the constitution that provision change of the borders and care of the Macedonian minorities living in neighboring countries. Even though Macedonian Constitution was evaluated as a good one and in accordance with all democratic standards by the Arbitrage Commission of the Presidents of the Constitutional Courts of the European Economic Community member countries (EEC), this fact was not enough for the European Community to recognize the independence of Macedonia. On 15th of December 1991, this Arbitrage Commission under the Presidency of Robert Badinter, gave an opinion to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of EEC that all conditions for recognition of Macedonian independence are met and made a proposal for admission of Macedonia to UN²⁶³. In this context is very important to stress that the previously mentioned Commission in its Opinion no.6 clearly stated that the republic had given the necessary guarantees for respect of human rights and international peace and security and the name Macedonia does not imply any territorial pretensions and claims toward any other country²⁶⁴. Despite the opinion of the Arbitration Commission led by Robert Badinter that Slovenia and Macedonia have met all the conditions, as it was already aforementioned EEC recognized the independency of Slovenia and Croatia, but not of Macedonia. Thus the space for geopolitically calculated actions toward Macedonia was left open. The year of 1992 was much turbulent for Macedonia in geopolitical and prospect in regards of the attainment of the independence on the international scene, relations with its neighbors as well as the internal affairs. Territory of Macedonia was much in concern of its neighbors as well as from within by the Albanian minority. On 11th of January on an illegal referendum with support of 74% out of 92% eligible to vote, ethnic Albanians voted for autonomy and several local leaders in predominantly Albanian populated municipalities in western Macedonia declared the region as Republic of Ilirida²⁶⁵. With the proclamation of the

²⁶² "Troubled Macedonia: The name game". The Economist, April 2nd 2009 - <http://www.economist.com/node/13414181>

²⁶³ Jordanov, J. (2008) "Makedonija: koreni I argumenti". Skopje. p.227 (on Macedonian)

²⁶⁴ Mukoska-Cingo, V. (2007) "Konstitucionalizam". UKiM, Praven Fakultet "Iustinianus Primus". Skopje. p.216 (on Macedonian)

²⁶⁵ Bugajski, Janusz (1995) *Ethnic Politics in Eastern Europe: A Guide to Nationality Policies, Organizations, and Parties*. M.E.Sharpe. p.116

Republic of Ilirida ethnic Albanian leaders stated their objective as the unification of all Albanians in the former Yugoslavia while in the interim they favored the federalization of Macedonia in which Ilirida would cover approximately half of the republic's territory²⁶⁶. Thus the objectives of the concept of Greater Albanian towards Macedonia became evident and openly stated. In the same time on the beginning of January, Bulgaria was the first country to recognize the independence of Macedonia²⁶⁷. Bulgaria's recognition of Macedonia as an independent state, however, was overshadowed by statements from the country's authorities who rushed to clarify that this recognition should not be interpreted by the political authorities in Skopje as Bulgaria's recognition of a distinct Macedonian nation in the Balkan region²⁶⁸. Therefore although Bulgaria was first to recognize the independence of Macedonia, of significance was the truth that Bulgaria recognized Macedonia as a state and not as a nation thus leaving open door for possible future unification²⁶⁹. Hence, as it was previously mentioned Bulgaria set up its foreign policy on the ground and objectives of the concept of Greater Bulgaria. By recognizing Macedonia under its constitutional name, Sofia aimed to show the West that Bulgaria had overcome its past irredentism by denouncing territorial claims on a region which Bulgaria's authorities used to see as Bulgarian and had sought to incorporate into the Bulgarian state²⁷⁰. Nevertheless, relation between Macedonia and Bulgaria were not easy and cordial as one of the issue of contention was the so-called language controversy that was the question which language should be used in Bulgarian-Macedonian interstate agreements²⁷¹. When Bulgaria proposed that agreements between Bulgaria and Macedonia should be signed as "the official languages of both countries – Macedonian and Bulgarian", the Macedonian government did not like the descriptor "official" which implied that the Macedonian language was a political convention rather than a language distinct from Bulgarian²⁷². Nevertheless, this issue was solved exactly on this basis with the Declaration for good neighboring relations signed on 22nd of February 1999. The Bulgarian authorities staunchly supported the political position of the past, according to which Macedonian nation in the Balkan region with its own language and history did not exist²⁷³, which emerges and is in the closest compliance with the objectives of the

²⁶⁶ Ibid

²⁶⁷ Cook, A. Bernard (2001) *Europe Since 1945: An Encyclopedia*, Volume 2. Taylor & Francis. p.811

²⁶⁸ Katsikas, Stefanos (2010) *Bulgaria and Europe: Shifting Identities*. Anthem Press. p.139

²⁶⁹ Liotta, P.H. Jebb, R.C. (2004) *Mapping Macedonia: Idea and Identity*. Greenwood Publishing Group. p.6

²⁷⁰ Katsikas, Stefanos (2010) *Bulgaria and Europe: Shifting Identities*. Anthem Press. p.138-139

²⁷¹ Cook, A. Bernard (2001) *Europe Since 1945: An Encyclopedia*, Volume 2. Taylor & Francis. p.811

²⁷² Ibid

²⁷³ Katsikas, Stefanos (2010) *Bulgaria and Europe: Shifting Identities*. Anthem Press. p.139

geopolitical concept of Greater Bulgaria. On the beginning of 1992, Macedonia made some changes by adding amendments to its constitution: clear declaration that Macedonia does not have any territorial pretension to its neighbors and it is not going to interfere in their internal affairs; erasing Article 48 which regulated Macedonian minorities' rights in the neighboring countries²⁷⁴. However this was not enough for recognition by EEC, and on 21st of June 1992 at the Lisbon Summit of EEC, under the Greek influence²⁷⁵, a declaration was adopted which stated that the European council expresses its readiness to recognize the country within its existing borders according to its Declaration dated on 16th of December 1991 under a name which does not include the term Macedonia²⁷⁶. This very offensive decision was immediately rejected by the Macedonian parliament on 1st of July 1992, and the Parliament, at the same time, sent letters for recognition under the constitutional name to EEC (EU), OSCE, UN and their member states²⁷⁷. In the same time Macedonia was acquiring its independence through peaceful means thus being the only former Yugoslav state gaining independence on a specific way without armed conflict with Yugoslav army or Serb paramilitary units. In February and March 1992, Macedonian president Gligorov conducted successful negotiations with JNA with regard to its withdrawal from Macedonia and on 27th of March an appropriate agreement was signed with the Yugoslav general Nikola Uzelac and federal secretary of defense Bozidar Adzic²⁷⁸. In the negotiations Serbia agreed to withdraw all Yugoslav army units from Macedonia by 15th April 1992 and although Yugoslav forces stripped military installations of all equipment, in violation of the agreement, they completed a peaceful withdrawal by 26th March²⁷⁹. Soon after the withdrawal of JNA, Milosevic contacted Greek prime minister Mitsotakis with proposal to divide Macedonia between Serbia and Greece, which Mitsotakis explicitly confirmed to the author of the book and German journalist-correspondent Viktor Meier in conversation in June 1992 indicating that it had been proffered about six months earlier, i.e. almost at the end of 1991 but he had rejected and instead informed the European

²⁷⁴ Mukoska-Cingo, V. (2007) "Konstitucionalizam". UKiM, Praven Fakultet "Iustinianus Primus". Skopje. p.216 (on Macedonian)

²⁷⁵ Kofos, E. (1999) "Greece's Macedonia Adventure: The Controversy over Macedonia's Independence and Recognition" In: James Pettifer (ed.), *The New Macedonia Question*, London, Macmillan Press, 1999 - http://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/english/kofos_adventure_3.htm

²⁷⁶ *Report to the European Council in Lisbon (1992)*, Annex I, p.43 - http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lisbon/li2_en.pdf

²⁷⁷ Mukoska-Cingo, V. (2007) "Konstitucionalizam". UKiM, Praven Fakultet "Iustinianus Primus". Skopje. p.217 (on Macedonian)

²⁷⁸ Meier, V. (1999) *Yugoslavia: A History of Its Demise*. Psychology Press. p.192-193

²⁷⁹ Rosos, Andrew. (2008) *Macedonia and the Macedonians: a history*. Hoover Institution Press, the University of Michigan. p.256

Union²⁸⁰. This proposal for division of Macedonia was also proffered to Bulgaria which refused²⁸¹ due to its view point that existence of independent Macedonian republic on its borders is preferable for Bulgarian national security rather than federal republic under Belgrade's political control or state partitioned between Serbia and Greece which might revive the military conflicts between Balkan states of the early twentieth century²⁸². By this obviously the concept of Greater Serbia tried to involve and gain in the resolution of geopolitical turmoil caused by the emergence of the independent state of Macedonia. Regarding the territorial claims over Macedonia of all of its four neighbors, the conflictive potential of Macedonia was the highest on the Balkans as it was proven with the case with the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 which were fought over the gains and finally led to the partition of Macedonia in 1913. Moreover, conflict over Macedonia may entail and cause a greater Balkan War with highly possible inclusion and involvement of Turkey, which despite fighting for the Muslim population would fight against Greece (and possibly Bulgaria) over their open ongoing disputes taking in account its weakness due to involvement in the conflict in Macedonia. Proposals for division of Macedonia in 1992 would definitely lead to a large scale regional conflict and thus all involved players in the geopolitical turmoil over Macedonia decided to continue and support their position and objectives through political, diplomatic and economic means. In the beginning of 1993, on 25th of January, Greece sent a Memorandum to UN regarding Macedonia's application for membership, openly declaring their views about the problem and trying to explain how Macedonia (with its name) represents a security threat to Greece and the region through certain historical facts from the end of the WWII and Greek civil war 1946-1949²⁸³, when Macedonians living in Greece (so-called Aegean Macedonia) fought on the side of the communist in regards of recognition of national rights and possible unification with Macedonia in greater Balkan socialist federation. The rights and properties of Macedonian refugees expelled from Greek Civil War living in Macedonia and abroad, as well as the reference of Aegean Macedonia in historical books and political life in Macedonia together with 'usurpation' of the Greek historical and cultural heritage is considered as territorial claim and pretension by the Greek officials²⁸⁴. At the core of the Greek-Macedonian dispute laid the Greek claim to exclusive ownership of all things

²⁸⁰ Meier, V. (1999) *Yugoslavia: A History of Its Demise*. Psychology Press. p.193

²⁸¹ Cook, A. Bernard (2001) *Europe Since 1945: An Encyclopedia*, Volume 2. Taylor & Francis. p.811

²⁸² Katsikas, Stefanos (2010) *Bulgaria and Europe: Shifting Identities*. Anthem Press. p.139

²⁸³ Mukoska-Cingo, V. (2007) "Konstitucionalizam". UKiM, Praven Fakultet "Iustinianus Primus". Skopje. p.233 (on Macedonian)

²⁸⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, (2014), *Fyrom name issue* - <http://www.mfa.gr/en/fyrom-name-issue/>

and matters Macedonian: geography, history, traditions, symbols, and, most important, the Macedonian name itself²⁸⁵. This became a highly volatile and emotional issue in Greece because its romantic-nationalist mythology identified and linked it not only with the glories of the ancient city-states, but also with the heritage of the dynastic ancient Macedonian kingdom and empire and the medieval multi-ethnic Byzantine Orthodox Commonwealth and this mythology grounded the previously mentioned Megali Idea (Great Idea), the ideology of modern Greek imperialism²⁸⁶. The name dispute is also an emotional issue for the majority of the Macedonian citizens. Regarding that the reference of Aegean as well as Pirin Macedonia is coming from the geopolitical territorial concept of United Macedonia, Greek and Bulgarian fears of the questioning of their territorial integrity through the urging and mentioning the issue of the rights of Macedonian national minority living within their borders indicate that emergence of the independent Macedonian state was considered as possible basis for adopting foreign policy on the basis of this greater territorial concept of United Macedonia. Although as it was mentioned in previous chapter it was revived and was highly vividly present and actual in Macedonian political, societal and cultural life in 90's it has not had any official state support by the government due to the significantly weak geopolitical central position surrounded by much stronger neighboring states in military, economic, political and human prospects. Hence, with the emergence of independent Macedonia it became object of geopolitical clash, collision and struggle between the greater territorial geopolitical concepts of United Macedonia, Greater Albania, Greater Bulgaria, Greater Serbia and the Greek Megali idea. On 7th of April 1993, UN Security Council adopted Resolution 817 and the next day on 8th of April, according to it, Macedonia became the 181st member of the UN under the provisional reference name "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". According to the Resolutions 817 and 845, on 13th of September 1995 the Interim accord between Macedonia and Greece was signed, as a most important agreement by which the relations between the two countries were clearly defined and finally normalized²⁸⁷. Macedonia was forced to change its national flag, while Greece lifted the unilaterally imposed embargo and trade blockade by closing the border, which together with the UN sanctions and embargo on Serbia had a disastrous impact on Macedonian economy losing about 60% of its trade thus

²⁸⁵ Rosos, Andrew. (2008) *Macedonia and the Macedonians: a history*. Hoover Institution Press, the University of Michigan. p.256

²⁸⁶ Ibid

²⁸⁷ Nikas, C. (2005) "The Effect of the Interim Accord on the Economic Relations between Greece and Macedonia". In: *Athens – Skopje: An Uneasy Symbiosis*. ELIAMEP, Athens. - http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/InterimAgreement/Downloads/Interim_Nikas.pdf

approaching economic collapse²⁸⁸. Greece even became largest foreign investor in Macedonia in the following years. From geopolitical perspective the trade blockade of Greece on Macedonia that lasted from 1992 to 1995 regarding the fact that Macedonia as a landlocked country was totally dependent on imports from the closest sea port of Thessaloniki was very powerful geopolitical tool for pressure. According to US estimates the sanctions against Serbia may have cost Macedonia about \$2.9 billion, and the Greek embargoes \$1.5 billion which led the U.S. Department of State to conclusion that “as a result of these border closures Macedonia’s GDP of 1995 declined to 41 percent of its 1989 level²⁸⁹. Immediately after signing the Interim Accord Macedonia joined OSCE (15th of October), the Council of Europe (9th of November) and NATO partnership for peace program (15th of November)²⁹⁰. However, United States did not recognize Macedonia until early 1996²⁹¹. By the end of the 90’s Macedonia received recognition from Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and demarcated the border in 2001, signed the declaration with Bulgaria in 1999 and played significantly important role in Kosovo Crisis by providing logistic support and opening its territory for NATO intervention on Yugoslavia and also receiving 380,000 refugees from Kosovo²⁹². While Macedonia settled its relations with its neighbors and attained its independence on the international scene, the internal interethnic conflict between Albanians and the Macedonian government throughout the 90’s was steadily worsening and driving towards a greater armed conflict which escalated in 2001. Throughout the 90’s political leaders of the ethnic Albanians have constantly demanded status of constitutional nation rather than national minority, which meant equal status with the Macedonians as holder of the statehood thus acquiring federal and equal autonomous status within Macedonia that will consequently made secession and unification with all other Albanians in one state possible. Besides the representation in political institutions such as parliament, government, municipalities, primary and secondary education as well as state and private media on Albanian, ethnic Albanians considered themselves as discriminated and continued to seek equal constituent status and often called for federalization or cantonization. Several occasions of parallel Albanian institutions such as the University established in Tetovo in 1994, display

²⁸⁸ Rosos, Andrew. (2008) *Macedonia and the Macedonians: a history*. Hoover Institution Press, the University of Michigan. p.270

²⁸⁹ Ibid, p.276

²⁹⁰ Ibid, p.272

²⁹¹ Ibid

²⁹² Ibid, p. 276, See Also: Mileski, Toni (2005). *Macedonia – the Rubik cube of the Balkans*. Faculty of Philosophy, Skopje. p. 175 (on Macedonian) there cited official data of the Macedonian Ministry of Defense which states 379.523 refugees from Kosovo (which accounted as 20,47% or a fifth from a Macedonian population)

of flags of Albania in front of municipal buildings in Gostivar and Tetovo in 1997 which were against the laws were suppressed by police actions that erupted in violent clashes. Extreme Albanian nationalists, mostly in Kosovo and responding to NATO's military intervention and defeat of Milosevic's Serbia there, used Albanian grievances as a pretext to launch armed incursions against Macedonia²⁹³. In early 2001, by the end of January and beginning of February terrorist acts as grenade attack of police station in village of Tearce and skirmishes in village of Tanushevci on the border with Kosovo took place and the National Liberation Army (NLA or with Albanian abbreviation UCK same as Kosovo's KLA) claimed responsibility. Their real aim was to destabilize the new state, detach its northwestern Albanian areas, and annex them to Kosovo and eventually to a "Great Albania"²⁹⁴. This could be confirmed by the first three communiqués of the so-called National Liberation Army which referred to Macedonian police and security forces as occupiers of Albanian lands. Namely, after the grenade attack NLA issued Communiqué in which is stated that the attack was limited and was a proclamation to the Macedonian occupiers and their albanophone collaborators and the uniform of the Macedonian occupiers will be further attacked until the Albanian people are liberated²⁹⁵. This rhetoric evidently reveals that the initial purpose and objective of the Albanian insurgency in Macedonia in 2001 was acquiring territory for eventual and subsequent unification in a Greater Albania. Nevertheless, as conflict escalated and international factors such as US and EU involved in mediation and prevention thus recognizing and legitimating the Albanian insurgents and their paramilitary organization NLA, it changed the rhetoric that the armed struggle was for a greater human rights. In subsequent communiqués, statements of its spokesperson and commander's interview circulated in national and international media until the conflict came to a close in August 2001, the so-called NLA asserted that it favored the preservation of Macedonia's territorial integrity and respected NATO's interests in Macedonia and also described its objectives in Macedonia: status of constituent nation for Albanians, institutionalization of Albanian as the second official language and equal participation of Albanians in state administration²⁹⁶. As it was mentioned the insurgents used Kosovo as their safe place for the leadership of insurgents as well as launching attacks but also was notable

²⁹³ Rosos, Andrew. (2008) *Macedonia and the Macedonians: a history*. Hoover Institution Press, the University of Michigan. p.279-280

²⁹⁴ Ibid

²⁹⁵ Neofistos, P.Vasiliki (2012) *The Risk of War: Everyday Sociality in the Republic of Macedonia*. University of Pensilvania Press. p.37

²⁹⁶ Neofistos, P.Vasiliki (2012) *The Risk of War: Everyday Sociality in the Republic of Macedonia*. University of Pensilvania Press. p.37-38

for its role in the crisis with the Prizren Declaration where leadership of NLA met political leaders of Albanians in Macedonia under auspices of special envoy of general Secretary of NATO Peter Feith (and another US Diplomat Robert Frowick) and declared that there would be no ethnic division of Macedonia²⁹⁷. Moreover, some members of the Macedonian academy of sciences and arts and the prime minister Ljubco Georgievski proposed an exchange of territories and population between Macedonia and Albania as a solution of the crisis which was strongly condemned by the Macedonian society and even by the ethnic Albanians themselves who have said that in this scenario half of the Macedonian Albanians would remain on the other side of the imaginary dividing line²⁹⁸. Involvement of the US and EU was strongly criticized by Macedonian society considering that they are supporting helping the Albanian terrorists and thus the halting of the action of Macedonian security forces (similar interference of US and NATO officials were reported by the Macedonian chief of staff) and organizing the rescue and evacuation of the terrorists (together with 26 American citizens) provoked mass demonstrations in front of the parliament in Skopje²⁹⁹. The fears of full scale civil war spread around the country and were eased by the firm intervention of United States and European Union which mediated cease fire and called for political solution. With aid and under great pressure from American and EU diplomats, the Macedonian and Albanian leaders in worked out the Ohrid Framework Agreement which was signed on 13th of August 2001 by the leaders of the four biggest Macedonian parties, by which the fighting ended. The Ohrid accord called for constitutional and legislative changes to expand civil rights for minority groups. Such rights included greater representation in the civil service, the police, and the army; official use of Albanian in districts with an ethnic Albanian majority; and stronger local self-government³⁰⁰. The preamble of constitution was changed in context that Macedonia is a state of Macedonian nation and parts of the Albanian, Turkish, Romani, Serb, Vlach nations that live in Macedonia and thus with the Framework Agreement, the concept of Macedonia as a nation-state (national state of the Macedonian

²⁹⁷ Matveeva, A. (2003) *Macedonia: Guns, policing and ethnic division*. Saferworld and Bonn International Center for Conversion. p.26

²⁹⁸ Maleska, Mirjana (2003) *Painful Confrontations*. New Balkan Politics, No.5 - <http://www.newbalkanpolitics.org.mk/item/Painful-Confrontations#.U1g7cvmSzgl>

²⁹⁹ For the controversial case of Battle of Arachinovo see: Petrovski, Pande (2006) *Svedostva:2001*. Kiro Dandaro, Bitola. p.111 (Testimonies of the commander of chief of staff of the Macedonian army), http://edition.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/europe/06/25/macedonia.talks/index.html?_s=PM:WORLD

³⁰⁰ Rosos, Andrew. (2008) *Macedonia and the Macedonians: a history*. Hoover Institution Press, the University of Michigan. p.280

people) has been greatly abandoned³⁰¹. Among the several provisions from the Ohrid Framework Agreement the most significant was the census of 20% of an ethnic community on local and national level for acquiring special right such as official use of its language and power of suspense veto so-called “Badinter principle” which is voting with double majority on matters concerning rights of minorities³⁰². Since no community besides the ethnic Albanians constitutes more than 20 percent of the population, only the Albanians have these special constitutional status and rights on the state level. Under the Ohrid Framework Agreement a census of population was organized in 2002, after which a new territorial division of the country was determined and a new law for local government was enacted³⁰³. According to the new law of local government the double majority voting or the so-called “Badinter Principle” was introduced as a rule in the new municipal councils together with a wide range of decentralized competences in education, social, health, security policing services were transposed to the local level. However, the most conflictive was the new territorial organization of the municipalities by which the number of municipalities was decreased from 123 to 84. Several municipalities and towns such as *Struga*, *Kichevo* (implemented in 2013) in western part of Macedonia with slight Macedonian majority or almost equal share of Macedonians and Albanians became overwhelmingly Albanian majority populated by attaching smaller neighboring rural municipalities with predominantly Albanian population. Incorporation of smaller rural predominantly Albanian municipalities was done to the capital Skopje by which it officially became bilingual and Albanian majority municipality of *Chair* was created within it³⁰⁴, as well as in the already Albanian dominant *Tetovo* and *Gostivar* where the share of Macedonians was lowered to 20% and below 19%. Moreover, by attaching Albanian villages two rural municipalities in the center of Macedonia such as *Dolneni* and *Chashka* the share of Albanians was increased over 20% to 33%. Regarding the high birth and natural growth of Albanians, the mobilizing unifying power that the Islamic Community in Albanian nationalist objectives of other muslim minorities such as Turks, Bosniaks, Romas and Macedonian Muslims (it was already case on local elections in Dolneni, Struga, Kicevo in 2009 and 2013) and the low birth, fertility, natural growth and migration rates of Macedonians especially in rural areas it is highly expected that Albanian

³⁰¹ Maleska, Mirjana (2003) *Painful Confrontations*. New Balkan Politics, No.5 -

<http://www.newbalkanpolitics.org.mk/item/Painful-Confrontations#.U1g7cvmSzgl>

³⁰² Taleski, Dane (2005) *Decentralization in the Republic of Macedonia: The Last Step across the Abyss*. SWP-Berlin. p. 5 - http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/arbeitspapiere/Decentralisation_ks.pdf

³⁰³ Ibid

³⁰⁴ Sekulovski, Goran (2008) *The Border City in a Border Country: The Case of Skopje*. University of Paris I, Pantheon-Sorbonne - http://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/31/52/98/PDF/Regions_paper.pdf

would acquire political control and power in central part of Macedonia by becoming majority or merging all Muslim inhabitants in these municipalities. Finally, with this territorial organization a belt of Albanian majority led municipalities along the borders with Albania and Kosovo was created or the entire area of former Albanian occupied zone in Second World War is covered by municipalities led by Albanians. This way created territorial organization had raised the political tensions in 2004 and a referendum initiated by World Macedonian Congress and backed by then major opposition conservative right wing party VMRO-DPMNE for support of the territorial organization from 1996 was held. Prime Minister Hari Kostov has threatened to quit his post if voters approve the referendum and reject the proposed municipality changes and Western powers diplomats have suggested failure to carry through the reforms will make it more difficult for Macedonia to join the European Union and NATO³⁰⁵. Prime Minister Kostov and the government, the European Union and the United States have officially urged Macedonians to boycott the referendum³⁰⁶. Even more United States one day before the referendum announced its recognition of Macedonia under its constitutional name as expression of support of the country's territorial integrity and government position for boycott of the referendum as a measure of appeasing Macedonian fears of division of the state and thus reducing the interethnic tensions raised within the country that threatened greater conflict and the survival of Ohrid Framework Agreement implementation process³⁰⁷. Despite that 427 117 citizens or 95,06% of the votes were for, the referendum had turnout of 26,58%³⁰⁸ which was far below the necessary threshold of 50% to be valid and thus failed. Finally with the law of flags of the ethnic communities passed in 2005 it was legally allowed the national flag of Albania (as well as Turkey and Serbia for the respective minorities) adopted as a flag of Albanian community to be publicly used and installed in front of municipal and city halls and other public buildings where they present majority, which is 16 out of 84 municipalities³⁰⁹. By the end of December 2005, Macedonia was granted the status as candidate for membership in European Union.

³⁰⁵ *Macedonia Votes on Local Autonomy for Ethnic Albanian Minority* - Voice of America via Global Security, 07th of November 2004 - <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2004/11/mil-041107-357b8ba0.htm>

³⁰⁶ Ibid

³⁰⁷ Kim, Julie (2005) *Macedonia: Post-Conflict situation and U.S. Policy*. Congressional Research Center. pp.1 and 9 - <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL32172.pdf> See Also: Paquin, Jonathan (2008) *Managing Controversy: U.S. Stability Seeking and the Birth of the Macedonian State*. Foreign Policy Analysis, No.4. p. 452-453 - http://www.fss.ulaval.ca/cms/upload/pol/fichiers/jonathan_paquin_fpa.pdf

³⁰⁸ *Republic of Macedonia, Referendum 7th of November 2004* – Election Guide – Democracy assistance & election news - <http://www.electionguide.org/results.php?ID=280>

³⁰⁹ Georgievski, Boris (2005) *Law on Flags is Red Rag to Macedonian Opposition*. BCR, Issue 566 – 22nd of July - <http://iwpr.net/report-news/law-flags-red-rag-macedonian-opposition>

The practice of the political power according to this law of decentralization by Albanian mayors so far presented that they do not respect the so-called Badenter Principle of double majority voting for smaller communities – minorities within the municipalities and use the Albanian as a first official language although it is against the law. Hence, the tendencies toward federalization are becoming more evident. The most evident case that this territorial organization of local self-government is in fact oriented towards fulfillment of the geopolitical territorial concept of Greater Albania was the recent local elections in 2013 where the municipal borders of Kichevo were changed and it gained Albanian majority. The ethnic Albanian parties mobilized the Diaspora - citizens residing abroad to come and vote with slogans ‘Kichevo is ours’³¹⁰. Moreover, Albanian political leaders and candidates gave public addresses (to diaspora) that with voting for the Albanian candidate the citizens are making Kichevo part of the (map of) ethnic Albania which starting from Tirana and going through Sturza where the mayor is Albanian, then Kichevo, Gostivar, Tetovo, Skopje (Chair) and Kumanovo all of that is Albanian administration where Albanian flag waves and thus merging of Kichevo would be unifying of the Albanians which is fulfillment of the unified Albania that are dreaming for³¹¹. Hence, the territorial organization of the local self-government in Macedonia became result of “local geopolitical engineering”³¹². This territorial organization and way of functioning of the local-self government together with the established principle of forming the national government ruling coalition with the party that won majority of votes of the Albanians and recent and ongoing political demands for consensual election of political positions such as the president makes Macedonia de-facto federation. Regarding the high conflictive potential due to the collision of geopolitical claims of the neighbors over Macedonia consociative democracy and de-facto federal structure could have impact on fostering secessionism and escalating conflicts. Finally, for the actual geopolitical position of Macedonia in regards of the broader context of the Balkans is important the blockade of the accession process for integration in NATO and European Union due to the name dispute with Greece. Namely, after Greece’s veto on Macedonian accession to NATO summit in Bucharest 2008 and the verdict of International Court of

³¹⁰ Agich, Erlin (2013) *Homeland Calling: Political Mobilization of the Albanian-Macedonian Diaspora for the 2013 Local Elections in Macedonia*. Central European University, Budapest. p.10

³¹¹ Nikovski, Risto (2013) *Ulogata na SAD vo Makedonskite golgoti (1991-2013)*. p. 96 (on Macedonian) See also: Fatmir Dehari’s address to Albanians in Chicago, US - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIJCK4k7FcQ> (on Albanian with Macedonian subtitles)

³¹² Agich, Erlin (2013) *Homeland Calling: Political Mobilization of the Albanian-Macedonian Diaspora for the 2013 Local Elections in Macedonia*. Central European University, Budapest. p.24

Justice in favor of Macedonia that Greece violated the Interim Agreement³¹³, NATO and EU officials adopted the view and decision that invitation and begin negotiations for membership of Macedonia will be delivered and started as soon as mutually acceptable solution to the name dispute would be found. Such a precondition is very unlikely to be fulfilled regarding that majority of Macedonian citizens oppose compromise and any change of the name while Greek red lines for a compound name with a geographical qualifier for use in relations to everyone and for all purposes (erga omnes)³¹⁴ are considered as unacceptable by Macedonian government and citizens. The number of countries that recognize Macedonia under its constitutional name so far is 133 including Russia, China and US as permanent members of UN Security Council with veto power, but however as NATO and EU call for resolution of the dispute US and western powers are urging Macedonia for compromise on the name dispute. Since 2012, Bulgaria has also conditioned its approval and support for starting negotiations for Macedonia's membership in the EU by signing the Agreement for neighborly relations that will resolve the open issues over history, language, identity, minority rights and 'anti-Bulgarian' rhetoric of Macedonian media³¹⁵. Such blockades of the integration process of Macedonia have considerable impact on the internal stability and security of the country as well as broader geopolitical situation of the region. Regarding that Macedonians are becoming more hesitant and skeptical towards euroatlantic integration while Albanians with overwhelming majority are favoring for unconditional rapid integration (thus accepting compromises with Greek and Bulgarian demands), the internal division and fragmentation is steadily rising and thus affecting fragile interethnic relations that are constantly disturbed by series of interethnic violence and murders that escalated in 2012. Considering this, it can be concluded that position as members of EU and NATO with veto power of Greece and Bulgaria is used as a tool for pressure for fulfilling their geopolitical goals and objectives towards Macedonia. It is also highly possible that if Albania and Serbia become members of these organizations could also use this practice, as it is frequently stated in internal political debates in Macedonia. Hence, the integration of Macedonia in EU and NATO which is considered as a strategic aim by the Macedonian government and regarded as the only lever unifying the deeply divided Macedonian society would be determinant of the development of the geopolitical position, turmoil and struggle over Macedonia in the further

³¹³ International Court of Justice – Summary of the Judgement of 5 December 2011 - <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/142/16839.pdf>

³¹⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, (2014), *Fyrom name issue* - <http://www.mfa.gr/en/fyrom-name-issue/>

future. From the aspect of involvement of great and regional powers in geopolitical game over and within Macedonia undoubtedly the most influential is the dominance of the US especially after the crisis and constitutional rearrangements by the Ohrid Framework Agreement in 2001. United States have its biggest embassy on the Balkans in Macedonia and by frequent support, meetings and close cooperation with ethnic Albanian political leaders it has also a significant influence even in the internal affairs of the country. In regards of the blockade of integration process Macedonian government recently started with attempts of establishing closer economic cooperation with China, Russia and India (BRICS) but it has not the potential to jeopardize the dominant role of US. From the regional powers the most evident and vivid is the rising influence of Turkey. Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize independence of Macedonia and it is the only NATO member that officially states in all of its official documents that recognizes the country under the constitutional name 'Republic of Macedonia'³¹⁶. In recent years according to its geopolitical concept of neo-ottomanism in foreign policy Turkey is fostering investments, closer cultural and political cooperation with Macedonia openly expressing strong political support as well as supporting the Turkish minority and Muslims in the country who traditionally see themselves allegiant to Turkey as their protector and (civilization) leader. From the perspective of the conceptualization of the Balkans according to the geopolitical concepts and theories the territorial change that occurred with the emergence of the independent state of Macedonia as a central state it in fact contributed to creation and determination of the Heartland. Despite the weak internal cohesiveness the de-facto federalization upon the territorial organization of the self-government it still does not disturb the balance of the position of the Heartland due to that the Albanian led municipalities do not possess the north-south axis and corridor that connects the states of the Balkan Heartland neither they possess the territory of the intersection and crossway with the east-west corridor. However, the demographic tendencies of rising Albanian and Muslim population and declining Macedonian and Christian population could lead to change of the political power within the country in the future and thus disturb the geopolitical balance on the Balkans with breakthrough of Albanian factor that besides Kosovo with Macedonia would gain control of significant parts of of the Heartland. Finally, the weak cohesiveness and internal instability with several open issues and therefore

³¹⁵ *Bulgaria vetoes Macedonia's EU accession talks*. EurActive. 2nd November 2012 - <http://www.euractiv.com/enlargement/bulgaria-vetoes-macedonia-eu-acc-news-515809>

³¹⁶ Gangloff, Sylvia (2001) *The relations between Turkey and Macedonia: The incoherencies of a political partnership*. Turkish Review of Balkan Studies, No.6. p.38 - http://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/58/32/29/PDF/Gangloff_-_Turkey_and_Macedonia.pdf

without definitely and firmly settled status puts Macedonia in the shatterbelt of the Balkans together with Kosovo, region of Sanjak and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus it seems that preservation of Macedonia as independent and unitary state is the best solution that on hand maintain the geopolitical balance and provide basis for long stading peaceful coexistence on the Balkans. Notwithstanding, Macedonia with its central position will remain crucially important in the development of the geopolitical affairs of the Balkans in the future.

CONCLUSION

From the presented definitions of the Balkans, the analysis and conceptualization of the geopolitical landscape and map of the Balkans after 1991 through the application of the geopolitical theories and concepts, outline of the greater territorial concepts of the Balkan nation states and finally the analysis of the events that occurred as a consequence the territorial changes and emergence of the new independent nation states several conclusions can be drawn as well as predictions can be given.

Despite the generally acknowledged positioning of the Balkans on the easternmost of the southern European peninsulas definitions of its exact boundaries in physical and political geographical context do not coincide and are often ambiguous and dubious. In the definition of the Balkans and the countries consisting it often is included the historical allegiance to the Ottoman Empire although territories that belonged to Austro-Hungarian and other empires are included on the political map of the Balkans. Nevertheless, the significance of the Balkans as a birthplace, gateway and crossway of many civilizations, religions, cultures and peoples throughout the history contributed to the emergence and development of a specific and distinct political culture that is crucially significant for the geopolitical position of the Balkans as ethnically, religiously and culturally heterogeneous area. Geopolitical position, settings and significance of the Balkans prior 1991 that were characterized as an area of balance between the two ideological blocs according to the formula of 2 western, 2 eastern and 2 non aligned countries was irreversibly disturbed and shifted leaving the space for civilization, political, ethnic, cultural cleavages and clashes that resulted with instability and territorial changes on the geopolitical landscape.

Application of the geopolitical theories and concepts on the geopolitical map of the Balkans after 1991 shows several significant findings that can be used for review, examining and explanation of the territorial changes, events which happened as well as the geopolitical affairs and tendencies that are still actual and ongoing. Although not in complete and exact compliance with the Ratzel's and Kjellen's conceptualizations consideration of the nations as living organisms is vividly present and widely accepted in the political, social, scientific-academic and cultural life and debates on the Balkans, almost in every country thus revealing one reason why the Balkans is prone to conflicts and readiness of actors and significant parts of the societies to stand and struggle. Considering both different definitions and meanings of the Mackinder's Heartland theory Macedonia and Serbia can be clearly identified as a

Heartland of the Balkans due to their central geographical position (and favorable relief-internal geography) as well as the possibilities and advantages for military attacks in regards of easy mobility and (in)accessibility providing opportunities for domination of the entire region which in fact evolves from that position. Moreover, both countries share common features in physical geography such as the communication axis and corridors, common political features in regards of their geopolitical position toward the prospects of euroatlantic integration and alignment as well as some common religious and cultural characteristics. Regarding the correlated Spykman's theory of the Rimland in regards of encirclement of the Heartland by land and sea power in order to contain its power, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, Montenegro and Croatia can be identified as the Rimland of the Balkan according to their geographical position. Several cases of the Balkan wars in the 90's which are presented are confirming the validity of this conceptualization. Examining the positions, capabilities and the patterns of conducting military and foreign policy objectives, except from a very short period in the ancient history where the thalassocracy (rule of sea power) was actual, the Balkans and its states are based on the telurocratic (rule of the land power) thinking. According to the recent and later emergence of geopolitical concepts such as gateway region, crush zone and shatterbelt some countries of the Balkans such as Montenegro and Slovenia are considered as gateways although entire Balkan is regarded as a gateway region for global powers such as China towards Europe or USA towards Middle East. Although it is not considered as a shatterbelt in global context due to their internal divisions, high conflictive potential as a result of multiethnic and religious heterogeneity, unclearly settled status as objects and arenas of interference of the geopolitical objectives of the local, regional and global subjects and actors the entire compactly linked region of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sandjak, Kosovo with Presevo Valley in Southern Serbia and Macedonia can be identified as a shatterbelt of the Balkans. Lastly, the Balkans was the only place in Europe after the cold war and 1991 that experienced foreign intervention and air bombing campaign thus confirming the capabilities and successfulness of the geopolitics of air. Moreover the geographical position of the Balkans is favorable for possible use of the air bases in ongoing crisis in Syria and Ukraine, which implicate that the Balkans would be important in the geopolitics of air in global context in the future. Hence, the Balkans as a microcosmic projection of the world conceptualized by the application geopolitical theories and concept originally related on global level provides the firm ground for conclusion that the area of the Balkans and its configuration in physical, political and human-social geographical or

geopolitical sense itself is prone to conflicts which like in the past will definitely be present in the future.

Almost all of the nations living on the Balkans are having greater territorial geopolitical concepts of their homeland that serve as a basis for their geopolitical and foreign policy goals and objectives as well as for their nationalist and irredentist movements and ideas. All of them share common features of their presence and significance in the political, cultural and social life as well as official education. Moreover most of them originated in 19th century as basic platforms for independence and establishing statehoods of Balkan nations, then were suppressed or with lesser significance during the Cold War and communist regimes when they were supported mostly by the nationalist emigration and diasporas. Finally, all of the greater territorial geopolitical concepts of the Balkan states were revived and became again relevant after 1991. The concepts of United Macedonia, Greater Albania, Greater Serbia, Greater Croatia, Greater Bulgaria and Greek Megali Idea that exist on the Balkans were greatly and actively involved in the events and the geopolitical turmoil and affairs that happened on the Balkans after 1991 as it is shown in the last chapter. Thus, they are another reason and cause of the propensity of the Balkans for conflicts and moreover according to their relevance and significance is highly possible that they will continue to foster the actual conflictive geopolitical tendencies on the Balkans

The dramatic changes and events that gripped the world by the end of the Cold War did not pass by the Balkans which after 1991 was the place with the greatest activity and most territorial changes in the world. Territorial changes on the Balkans took place on external and internal level and they were respectively formally and informally, officially and internationally recognized and accepted. Undoubtedly, the breakup and disintegration of Yugoslavia was the most important event that resulted with the territorial changes on the Balkans. The process that started in 1991 with the secession and emergence of the independent nation states from the federal units or Yugoslav republics lasted until 2006 and 2008 with the independence of Montenegro and Kosovo, but regarding the internal territorial divisions, de-facto federalizations and lively secessionist tendencies according to them within Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Southern Serbia and finally Macedonia it is not completely concluded and therefore it provides possibilities and causes for further conflicts. Emergence of the independent nation states from former Yugoslavia resulted with brief armed conflict in Slovenia, disastrous and devastating wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, although Macedonia and Montenegro attained their independence through completely peaceful way. The war in Croatia produced the short lasting quasi and

puppet state of Republic of Serb Krajina while during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina that was primarily territorial conflict emerged republics of Srpska and Herzeg-Bosnia. Within the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina concepts of Greater Serbia and Greater Croatia had significant influence on the geopolitical goals of the parties involved. The conflict and secession of Kosovo and insurgency in Southern Serbia were case where Greater Albania and Greater Serbian concepts clashed with decisive and successful breakthrough of the Albanian. Lastly, the independence of Macedonia revived the old geopolitical rivalries and thus caused the greatest geopolitical turmoil and disturbance that included almost all of greater geopolitical territorial concepts, except the Greater Croatian, at one place. Thus Macedonia faced extraordinarily severe obstacles in the process of its establishment as independent state on internal as well as external regional and global level. Constitutional redefinitions, internal territorial organization and its functioning together with the internal and external tendencies, relations and prospects for euroatlantic integration of Macedonia will definitely be source of conflict issues that will determine the future development of geopolitical relations and processes on the Balkans. In global and regional context the territorial changes and conflicts on the Balkans after 1991 contributed to international interventions and the establishment of the United State as dominant factor and player, but also for reemergence of traditional players present in the history that were absent during the Cold War such as Turkey, Germany or Russia which influence declined in the first decade after the Cold War but now is again rising. Events after 1991 also led to the introduction of completely new external geopolitical players and actors such as the Middle Eastern powers that introduced and support the radical Islam which is factor with rising significance on the Balkans, then United Nations and European Union. Although all of Balkan states especially those that emerged as independent after 1991 are oriented towards integration of European Union and NATO, the use of the position as its member for fulfilling conflictive geopolitical goals and objectives in regards to other Balkan states such is the recent case of blocked and conditioning of Macedonia by Greece and Bulgaria may lead to a occurrence or escalation of conflicts. Thus European Union is becoming internal actor and player in the geopolitical rivalries and struggles on the Balkans and the integration process could become cause and source of conflicts instead of being final and permanent solution that will bring peace on the Balkans. The Balkans after 1991 establish itself as an active hotspot on the global map that will definitely be relevant and important in the global geopolitics further in the future.

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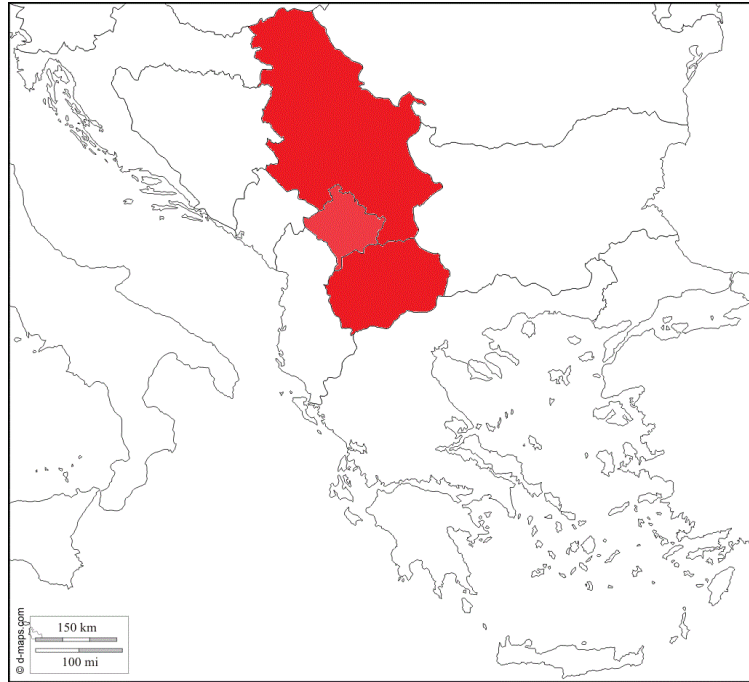
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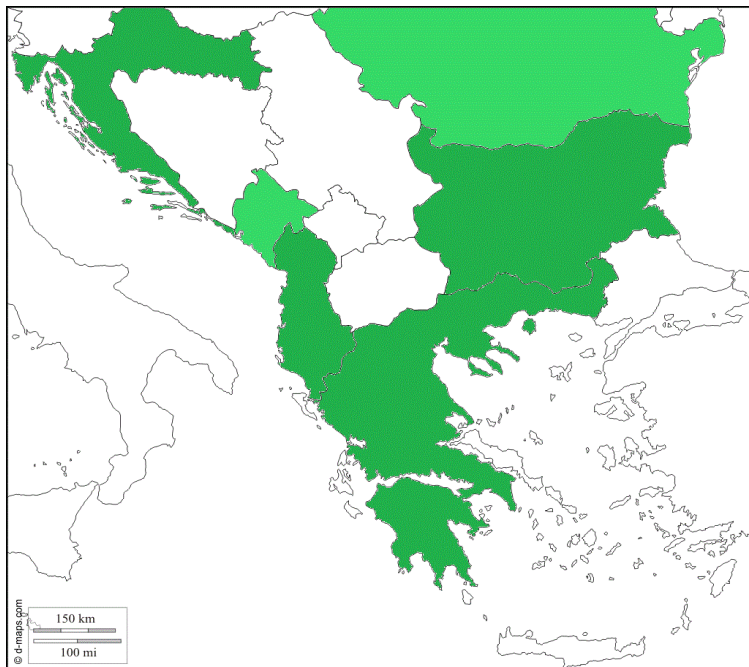
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Appendix

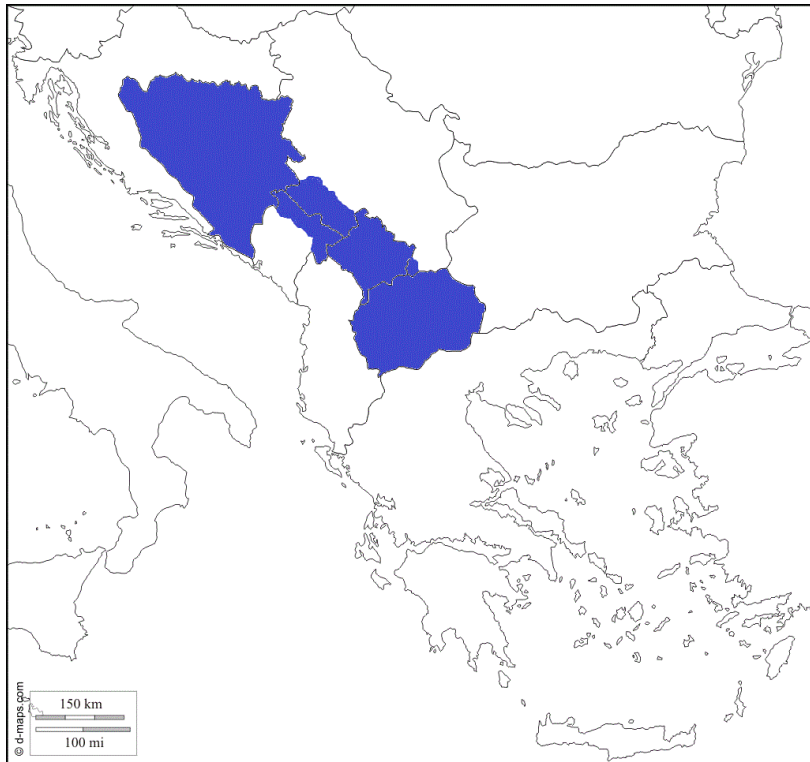
MAPS



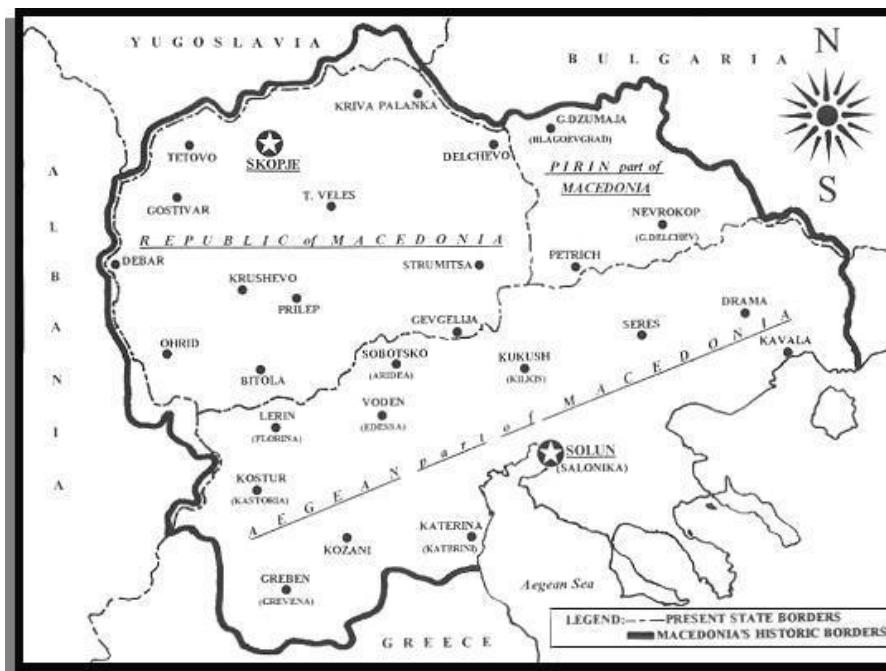
Map 1: Heartland of the Balkans



Map 2: Rimland of the Balkans



Map 3: Shatterbelt of the Balkans



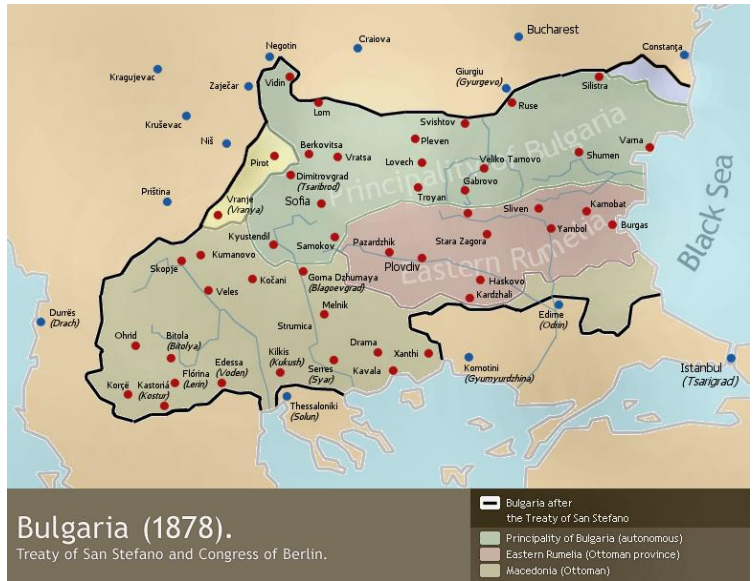
Map 4: United Macedonia



Map 5: Greater Albania



Map 6: Greater Serbia



Map 7: Greater Bulgaria



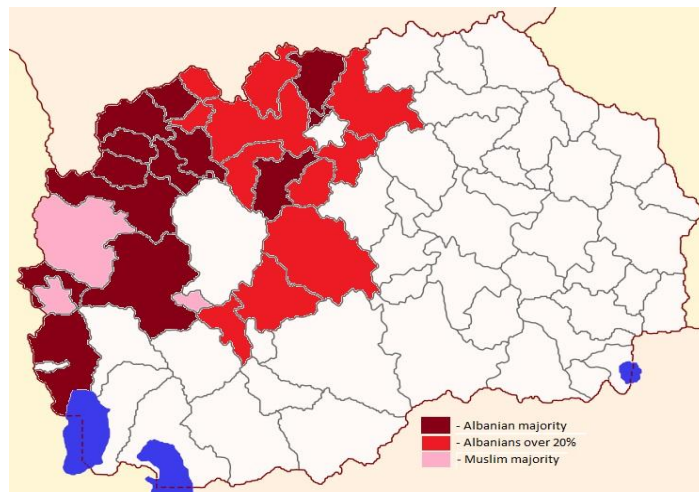
Map 8: Greek Megali Idea



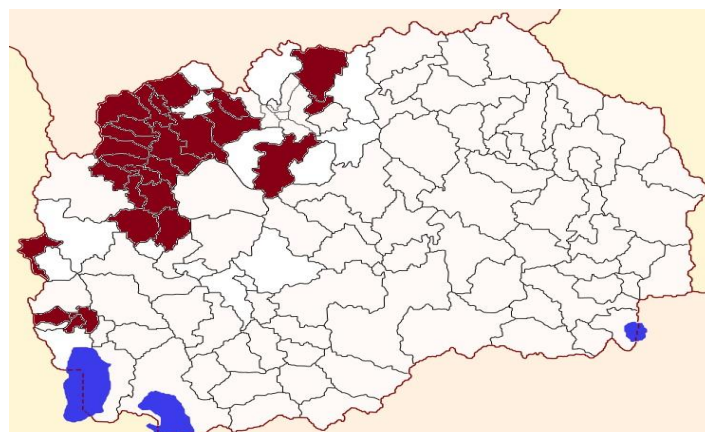
Map 9: Greater Croatia



Map 10: Bosnia and Herzegovina territorial division according to Dayton Agreement



Map 11: Territorial organization of Macedonia after 2004 (situation in 2013)



Map 12: Municipalities with Albanian majority in Macedonia 1996 - 2004