

POSITION
OF THE MACEDONIAN SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE, SOFIA
ON REPORT No. 122
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP OF DECEMBER 10, 2001
IN RELATION TO THE CRISIS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

The Macedonian Scientific Institute* (MSI) found the conclusions of the Report of the International Crisis Group, published in December 2001, highly surprising. The fact that contemporary renowned retired politicians are members of the private organization presupposes the emergence of a document of maximum competency that would offer new ideas to the international community about the future settlement of the Macedonian issue. However, the careful consideration of the document's contents induced unambiguous disappointment in the academicians and professors, who are members of the Macedonian Scientific Institute. We were honestly bewildered both by the general scheme to explain the crisis in the Republic of Macedonia, and the measures that the Committee offers to settle the issues.

The "logic" of the explanatory scheme in the Report is the following one: after the appearance of the Republic of Macedonia three of its neighbors, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, exhibited their pretensions toward the newly formed state. Greece did not acknowledge its name. Serbia refused "autonomy for the Macedonian Church", and Bulgaria denied "the existence of the Macedonian language and a Macedonian nation". This "provocative" behavior on behalf of the state's Christian neighboring countries destabilized the state and eventually allowed the Albanian minority in the country to present in 2001 its political demands as well. The Ochrid agreement of August 13, 2001 was evaluated by the International Committee as a remarkably rational formula for the settlement of the conflict. The Report says that the main hindrance for turning this document into reality is the position of the "Hawks", led by Prime Minister Lyubcho Georgievski, the Chairman of the Skopje Parliament Stoyan Andov and the Minister of Internal Affairs L. Bozhkovski, as well as the destabilizing "provocations" on behalf of the already mentioned Christian neighboring states. Therefore the Report offers the international community to undertake specific

measures concerning the behavior of the legally appointed authorities in Skopje and in the neighboring states, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, on order to enhance the realization of the Ochrid agreement.

We will not, in this case, discuss the clearly disrespectful anti-Macedonian claims of the committee to the legally appointed authorities in Skopje, just because of the fact that these authorities protect the interests of their own state. This is of concern only to the Macedonian Government and Parliament. We will not discuss the Committee's approach either – entrusting some “anonymous experts” in Skopje with the task of offering their positions on the issue, without actually finding the answers to the following questions: Who are these experts? What is their level of competence and what are their political affiliations? Whose interests do they defend in the Balkans? Are they actually able to provide an ingenuous document, without discrediting the Committee or placing it in an unfavorable standing, having to defend tendentious or clearly fallacious pre-election ideas of a certain party, SDSM. These are all questions that are of importance to the members of the private international committee. Here we will only provide our own opinion, mainly concerning the “suggestions” towards the neighboring countries, and most of all, concerning the suggestions towards Bulgaria.

Firstly, there is not a proficient expert, who will agree with the statement that the Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia placed their demands for more rights in 2001, encouraged by the positions of the neighboring countries. The Report has made no research whatsoever of the ancient objective internal reasons and the specific occasions that induced the new Albanian behavior in the present crisis. The Report makes no mention at all of the politics in Albania and Kosovo toward the Republic of Macedonia. Therefore, the unbiased reader will acquire the impression that the Committee's Report achieves one major purpose: to conceal the actual cause for the crisis in the Republic of Macedonia. The guilt is tendentiously being sought outside, in secondary and fallacious external directions.

Secondly, in spite of the fact that Serbia's policy has also been pointed out in the beginning as an important indicator of tension, in reality the Report sets very few substantial demands for allowances or changes in the country's positions in order to stabilize the Republic of Macedonia. Again this is an indication of the political forethought and external political orientation of Skopje's “experts”.

Thirdly, it is true that a large portion of the Report is dedicated to the unjustifiable Greek pretensions concerning the Republic of Macedonia, concealed behind disputes on the name of the new state. However, in the actual implementation of measures concerning Greece, the Republic of Macedonia is asked to make such unbelievable allowances, which would provide Macedonia “with vital reassurance about its own national identity but at the same time meets Greece’s legitimate concerns”. Each unbiased reader would ask himself the following questions: Why would the otherwise unprejudiced commission take such a position? And is Greece the only country with important national interests on the Balkans, furthermore, veiled with terminological disagreements only?

Fourthly, Bulgaria is practically mentioned in the Report in several places. However, if we analyze carefully what is written about Bulgaria, and especially the paradoxical suggestions for our country, concerning the requirements toward the policy of Sofia in the future with regard to the Republic of Macedonia, then it would easily become clear that, according to the committee, the greatest “fault” for the crisis in Macedonia lies within Bulgaria. The country is therefore asked to repeat the multiple burdensome consecutive allowances it has already made.

These are the facts: The Committee’s Report says that Bulgaria “denies the existence of the Macedonian language and the Macedonian nation”, that in this way it restates “the old claims to Macedonian identity”. It says that by refusing to acknowledge “that Macedonians are a separate, unique nation”, it proved that “the ancient pretensions toward the Macedonian territory have not been abandoned in the past”. Even the international community is criticized for having underestimated “the manifestation of justified discontent” on behalf of “the Macedonian minorities in Bulgaria”! The Report makes deliberate attempts to interpret history falsely concerning the Macedonian issue after 1878. It reveals formulations that prove the absurd ignorance and gross falsification of the subject by the alleged “experts” in Skopje. It is clear that they have impermissibly misled the international private committee as well. It is surprising that such formulations, which have been published in the thousands of articles in the anti-Bulgarian media in Skopje for the last ten years, and created by post-totalitarian former authorities, have become the basis for the International Crisis Group Report. This is clear from the quoted sources, and it is another evidence that the Report has been prepared entirely by the pro-Serbian communist circles. It is also clear that the people who signed it were absolutely unaware of its entirely

provocative character. Therefore, in the suggestions for future actions on behalf of Bulgaria there are requirements for actions that have already been completed or are totally irrational. We will quote the most important paragraphs of the document, p. 27: The Commission “recommends that Bulgaria ... take[s] steps to affirm ... recognition of Macedonian symbols. As a condition for consideration of membership in NATO, the EU, or other international organizations, Bulgaria in particular should demonstrate its full disavowal of any claim – express or implied (!?) – on the Macedonian language, nation or state... Bulgaria... should consult the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities to ensure that the position of their Macedonian minorities meets all European standards”. These demands on behalf of pro-Serbian communist circles in Skopje have been directed towards Bulgaria for several decades with no reasonable motives whatsoever.

If these unjustifiable suggestions of the allegedly unbiased and allegedly competent committee were taken in earnest, then how far would they go?

This commission and its “experts” in Skopje completely ignore all official acts of the Bulgarian Head of State, the Parliament of the Republic of Bulgaria, and all bilateral agreements signed by the governments of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Macedonia. All these acts and agreements have already regulated and settled all debatable issues related to the acknowledgement of the new Balkan state and its symbols. It is well known, however, that these official legal documents have been issued for more than a decade. And this has happened in spite of the fact that most of the Great Powers have not yet exhibited such gestures of good will towards the Republic of Macedonia.

It goes against all logic to say that Bulgaria, just as a schoolgirl, has to “CONFIRM” this acknowledgement for a second, or a third time, and again, in a most formal manner. In other words, the “experts” from Skopje require from the Bulgarian President and the Bulgarian Parliament to continually engage themselves with the Macedonian state, to issue declarations annually or to vote unending statements for multiple confirmations of what has already been settled, and to sign the already signed documents. Is not this an absolutely artificial and futile tension, which is introduced into the present good relations between Sofia and Skopje? Bulgaria was forced to sign an unfavorable document on the language, although this is not a common practice in the world, and in spite of the fact that from a legal point of view such an act cannot be taken seriously. Scientific, and in this case linguistic, problems are not solved by politicians issuing decrees, but rather by scientific research. It is also a fact that the administrative delegation of scientists from Skopje was shamefully disgraced by the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow because of its futile attempts to convince Russian scientists that literature in Macedonia during the National Revival was not Bulgarian, but Macedonian.

According to the “experts” in Skopje, Bulgaria should be obliged to guarantee even the rights of the “Macedonian minority” (invented in the Serbian Embassy in Sofia) within its own national boundaries, without any evidence that such a minority actually exists there, and without an indication how it got there. The document takes us back to the dark 30s of the 20th century and the Comintern, when Moscow made use of Stoyan Novakovich’s ultra-Serbian writings on Macedonism. He developed the doctrine for tearing the Bulgarian population in Macedonia away from Bulgaria by creating a “separate Macedonian nation” with a different “Macedonian history”.

This doctrine persecuted one purpose only – to reduce the disagreements between the communist parties on the Balkans concerning the Macedonian issue, all this in the name of class struggle, in order to enhance the establishment of communist authority. After World War II the Yugoslavian Communist Party turned the Comintern Macedonism into a state policy, with the aim of violently tearing the predominant Bulgarian population in Vardar Macedonia away from the Bulgarian people. The civilized world is aware that “theories” for the creation of “new states” were invented not only in the former USSR, but also by the Yugoslavian Communist Party in the Republic of Macedonia after World War II, furthermore, by applying a policy of extreme brutality and force. It will be enough to mention that in the period between 1944 and 1990, 23,000 Bulgarians were killed, other 150,000 were sent to concentration camps like “Idrizovo” and “Goli Otok”, and more than 200,000 were simply forced to leave their birthplaces, in order to seek salvation and sources of sustenance in different parts of the world. Such is the historical truth! Its lack of acknowledgement nowadays may mean only scientific incompetence, an attempt for a fanciful manipulation of the facts in the name of certain political aims, or, what is worse, an attempt to justify communist theory and practices. And these have long been rejected by the free democratic world. This is how, with the help of violence, in the Republic of Macedonia attempts are being made to create a Macedonian nation out of the Bulgarian population, although the Bulgarian people and the scientific and cultural community in the world are well acquainted with the historical truth about the events after World War II. In 1990, when communist Yugoslavia fell apart, the Bulgarian statesmen and the Bulgarian scientists took a realistic and entirely modern and democratic political position:

- Bulgaria, before all other European states, and first in the world, with its serious external policy, acknowledged the independence of the Republic of Macedonia by issuing basic legal acts on behalf of the Head of State, the Government and the Parliament;
- When Greece imposed an economic blockade from 1993 to 1995, it was precisely because of the economic help that Bulgaria provided to Macedonia, that the young republic managed to survive;
- When the Kosovo crisis emerged, Bulgaria was the Balkan country that offered the most considerable help to the Republic of Macedonia;
- The Bulgarian Governments, by the issuing of international acts, found the formula for settling the artificially created problems between the two countries. The Report, however, suggests that if Bulgaria does not fulfill the suggestions, made by the International private committee, then the country should not be accepted in NATO, the EU, and even in other international organizations. This formulation, full of envy, was promoted in Skopje as early as year 2000, by the former pro-Serbian communist circles. And most of all, the Bulgarian scientists are refused the right to make use of the basic truth that new nations, and especially new languages, have never and nowhere in the world been created on the basis of a governmental act in a certain, specified year, month or even in a single day, as is the unique case with the Yugoslavian Communist Party’s decree on the creation of a “new nation” and a “new language” in the “Prohor Pchinski” Monastery near Skopje on August 2, 1944.

On the basis of all that has been said here, the academic members of the Macedonian Scientific Institute refuse to accept the totalitarian “logic”, or the invented “argumentation” of the “experts” from Skopje, by which they offer a “lasting” solution to the internal crisis in the Republic of Macedonia. They are not in conformity either with the scientific truth, or with the European realities of nowadays. They point most of all to the present reality within the Republic of Macedonia itself, where, in spite of all the persecution and dismissals, the population, and most of all the intellectuals, openly proclaim themselves as Bulgarians. The Report conceals the actual reasons that led to the Albanian political attacks in the Republic of Macedonia in 2001 – the policy of antagonism that induced the present Albanian aggressive extremism.

The authors of the Report in question have made great efforts to guarantee selectively the national terminological aspirations of Greece only. Therefore Skopje is recommended to make allowances that border on self-denial. The report openly reveals the attempt on behalf of the alleged experts to underestimate the status of the legally appointed Macedonian government of Lyubcho Georgievski, and to strengthen the positions of SDSM led by Branko Tsarvenkovski with view of the coming elections. It also makes evident the obvious desires to completely isolate Bulgaria from the noble diplomatic efforts to settle the political crisis in the Republic of Macedonia.

Keeping all this in mind, the Macedonian Scientific Institute believes that the document in question does not provide a permanent, balanced and justifiable basis for overcoming the crisis that has been provoked by Albanian and internal political extremism in the Republic of Macedonia. This is a fact, because none of the theses in the Report takes into account the most basic truths, coming both from history and from the present sensible policy of the Republic of Bulgaria concerning the Macedonian issue. From the very first day of the creation of the Republic of Macedonia as an independent state until the present moment, the main purpose in Bulgarian politics has been to facilitate as much as possible the stabilization of the new Balkan state as a sovereign and fully respected factor in the European democratic community.

Therefore, the Macedonian Scientific Institute believes that the Report of the International Crisis Group intentionally distorts the actual situation on the Balkans. It reflects the old-fashioned formulations regarding Macedonia and the artificial administrative approach for the creation of a "Macedonian nation". The ideas of the past have been denied by life itself. The Comintern's fabricated formulations do not reflect contemporary European standards for the people's self-determination. The Report makes no mention at all of the need to defend the individuals, who in spite of the persecution, dare to identify themselves as Bulgarians in the Republic of Macedonia. And these people are a considerable portion of the Macedonians. Bulgaria cannot bear responsibility for these citizens in the Republic of Macedonia who are not sure of their national identity. Nowadays, the problems in the Republic of Macedonia originate from the domestic and imported from Kosovo Albanian extremists and separatists, instigated by those who feel nostalgia for the Yugoslavian Federation. The Crisis Group should have pronounced its opinion on this issue specifically. Therefore, the Macedonian Scientific Institute believes that the ideas in the Report cannot become a basis for settling the contestable issues on the Balkans, and especially in Macedonia. The interstate relations between the Republic of Bulgaria and the present government of the Republic of Macedonia are exemplary. Today, as well as in the future, any problem will be solved in a dialogue of good will between politicians and scientists on both sides, in the spirit of modern democratic values in Europe, where lie the irreversible inspirations both of Bulgaria and of the Republic of Macedonia.

We should make the following conclusions:

Report No. 122 of the International Crisis Group of December 10, 2001 concerning the crisis in Macedonia has been written by Skopje experts, with the purpose of influencing the elections. The Report has then been signed by several former European politicians. It is directed at the present legally appointed government, which is trying to control the crisis situation, as well as at the Republic of Bulgaria.

As a form of "gratitude" for all gestures of good will on behalf of Bulgaria, the irreconcilable nostalgic fans of the Yugoslavian Federation in Skopje, acting as "experts", full of envy, suggest that European institutions impose sanctions against Bulgaria, even for "implied" and never accomplished, non-existent actions of Bulgaria.

The state of Macedonia, which has existed for a decade only, has claims on minorities in Bulgaria, a state with a history of 1300 years.

British, German, French, American, Russian and other West European and East European

politicians, public figures and scientists have written a great number of works, long published both in their countries and in Bulgaria, stating that the Macedonian population is Bulgarian. (We will offer only one example of the great British politician William Churchill and his works published in six volumes.)

Yet, in the name of peace and reconciliation on the Balkans, Bulgaria has again undermined its own interests and was the first country to acknowledge the young Republic, in order to keep it from the neighbor's appetites, which have never had any historical rights over its territory.

This is the reason for our amazement at SDSM's aspirations concerning the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria.

If the Crisis Group were true to honor and morals, it would note that the idea of the actually nonexistent minority in Bulgaria is ridiculous, unlike the idea of an actual presence of a Bulgarian majority in the Republic of Macedonia. This is the actual group of people that has been subject to persecution for decades by the Serbian communist circles in the Republic of Macedonia.

To conclude, in the Republic of Macedonia there is no freedom only for those who identify themselves as Bulgarians. The Crisis Committee should consider these issues shortly, if it really attempts to be objective.

Tendentious political notes of "experts" to the Committee cannot overshadow the cooperation between the two sister-countries.

This collaboration is a fact that guarantees peace on the Balkans and in the world, and in this sense, has to be encouraged and further developed in the future.

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2* The Macedonian Scientific Institute (MSI) was founded in 1923 in Sofia as a non-governmental organization. Its founders are professors, journalists and public figures, who had been deported from the Vardar and Aegean parts of Macedonia after 1913 and 1919, when the region came under the political power of Serbia and Greece. According to the report published by the International Investigation Committee, financed by the American “Carnegie Fund” in 1914, Serbia and Greece took possession of Vardar and Aegean Macedonia with the help of armed forces and after the murders or deportment of a great portion of the Bulgarian population that lived there at the time.

Objectively, MSI is the oldest authoritative, world-renowned academic scientific center that specifically investigates the Macedonian issue. On the basis of unquestionable historical documents, its members have written and published hundreds of monographs, documents, collections, etc. With the help of scientific methods, these works prove that by 1878, when the Berlin Congress artificially introduced the Macedonian issue, the Slavonic population of Macedonia had been speaking Bulgarian, writing in Bulgarian, and had had the same religious background as the Bulgarians in Moesia and Thrace. These people belonged to the same clerical organization, the Bulgarian Exarchate, created with the efforts of Macedonian Bulgarians as well. Therefore, this population is part of the Bulgarian nation. It was not an accident that starting from the Berlin Congress until 1945, the national-liberation organization IMRO was very active. It was founded and led by Damyan Gruev and Gotse Delchev, by Todor Alexandrov and Ivan Michailov. During the period in question hundreds of thousands of Bulgarians came in the free confines of Bulgaria, having been deported by Turkish, Serbian and Greek authorities.

http://www.macedoniainfo.com/Crisis_in_Macedonia.htm