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Country: Hellenic Republic

Committee: Historical North Atlantic Treaty Organization (H-NATO)

Topic: North Macedonia Ethnic Rivalry

The conflict experienced by the cosmopolitan countries, which have more than one religion, language, nation, and culture within the country's borders, is an issue that is constantly up-to-date in the history of countries and in the international arena. North Macedonia is one of these countries with its ethnic rivalry in its history. According to the data, the Albanians, the largest minority in North Macedonia, have been one of the determining issues of both the political and diplomatic agenda of Northern Macedonia, by making demands such as the right to represent in parliaments, education with mother tongue, recognition and acceptance of their national identity throughout history. [1] As these demands could not be resolved on a political level, the tension led to the use of military forces and resulted in ethnic revolts that could be regarded as an attack on the government. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization has established bases by conducting military operations in order to develop and maintain peace. However, a fundamental solution to the problem has not been achieved. As the Hellenic Republic, unless the minority movements in neighboring North Macedonia are fully resolved, minorities in Greece may also be affected and create a domestic security problem.

Due to the increasing turmoil in the region, NATO played an essential role in managing the process and creating a stable political environment. Operation Essential Harvest, which started on August 22, 2001; Operation Amber Fox, which began on September 27, 2001; and Operation Allied Harmony, which came to the agenda on December 16, 2002, are the operations that NATO closely carried out in connection with the problem in North Macedonia. [2][3][4] These operations have a significant impact on resolving regional ethnic turmoil and conflict. With the effect of Task Force Harvest, the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which provides positive rights to minorities in education, usage of language, parliamentary procedures, equality in representation, and decentralization, demonstrates the success of the operations. Many NATO countries supported ammunition and military unit aids in the establishment of the operations. However, tensions between the Albanians in North Macedonia and the indigenous people and governing bodies still show up.

As the Hellenic Republic, we face the problems North Macedonia has been meeting for years because multiple ethnic and religious groups live within our borders. However, since North Macedonia is one of our essential border neighbors, we have a structure that can be primarily affected by the conflicts between the Albanians and the government. In addition, Macedonian national identity has been one of the causes of controversial tensions between the Hellenic Republic and North Macedonia for years. When evaluated within this framework, many of the original and unfounded claims on the identities of the peoples of North Macedonia are closely related to Greece. At the same time, as one of the oldest members of NATO, the Hellenic Republic agrees with NATO on the maintenance of geographical and political peace. As a result of all these factors, Greece has been supportive and participatory in NATO's operations over North Macedonia, both in ammunition and military strategies.

The deep-rooted solution of the problems also has an essential diplomatic value for the Hellenic Republic in terms of solution proposals. In this process of seeking a solution, the root

cause of ethnic tensions should be discussed, and the focus of future agreements should be on resolving these reasons. As a new NATO country, North Macedonia should shape its policies with a peaceful and anti-war attitude in line with NATO values in order to end the ethnic tension and conflict within its borders. However, as a cosmopolitan country that has been experiencing the same pressures for years, we believe that the root cause and solution of the problems can be found in three critical concepts; leadership, diplomacy, and institutional design. As far as diplomacy is concerned, we think that international agreements and organizations should continue working on favorable and de-escalation contracts in the region. Cooperation is necessary for the implementation and control of these agreements.

Sources:

[1] <https://minorityrights.org/country/macedonia/>

[2] <https://www.nato.int/fyrom/tfh/home.htm>

[3] <https://www.nato.int/fyrom/tff/home.htm>

[4] <https://www.nato.int/fyrom/home.htm>