PhD Thesis

Foreign Policy Making in Democratizing States
The Case of Bulgaria in the 1990s

Stefanos Katsikas

LONDON
16 December 2005
To all those who assisted me to complete my research and write this PhD thesis
The notion of 'democratic security' assumes, in addition to growing security as democracy expands geographically and new democracies emerge, the strengthening of the European security as the process of democratization in each country deepens. [...] Throughout the conflict in the former Yugoslavia Bulgaria was labelled an "island of stability". [...] Bulgaria has undertaken a series of foreign policy steps to strengthen peace and security in South-Eastern Europe: participation in and playing host to meetings of the ministers of defence, transport and energy, initiating trilateral meetings on different levels, including top-level, between Bulgaria, Romania and Greece as well as between Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey. These trilateral meetings are dedicated to specific problems, for instance combating organised cross-border crime. These endeavours of Bulgaria in the field of multilateral regional cooperation have already produced results: for the first time states of South-Eastern Europe, at the initiative of the Bulgarian diplomacy, reacted promptly and concertedly to a crisis development in the Balkan region. [...] The world has been an eyewitness of Bulgaria's active foreign policy over the past year. The explanation is clear: it is the internal political stabilization achieved in Bulgaria and the broad consensus of the parliamentary forces on the main priorities as reflected in the Declaration on National Salvation adopted in May 1997. [...] The application for European Union and NATO membership was Bulgaria's natural and conscious choice of the civilization to belong to. The Bulgarians return to Europe where they have always been. European Union and NATO membership is not an end in itself but the only way that can bring economic prosperity, sustainable development and security to Bulgaria. While we bring the national legislation in line with European standards we create the enforcement mechanisms. Our new law-making activity codifies civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights of people and provides the legal guarantees that these rights will be respected. We make a lot of effort to improve administrative and judicial practices in that field and highly appreciate the recommendations and advice that international organisations offer to us.

An extract from the statement made by the Bulgarian Prime Minister Ivan Kostov at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, April 21, 1998) (Kostov's whole statement is available on http://212.122.160.99/old/eng/prime_minister/statements/Pase_eng.html)
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The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Council of European Integration

The Chief Negotiator for EU Affairs

The Ministry of European Affairs

The Coordination Council

The Core Negotiations Team

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Y y- U u
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Ч ч- Ch ch
Ш ш- Sh sh
Щ щ- Sht sht
Ъ ъ- ü
Ю ю- Iu iu
Я я- Ia ia
Acknowledgements

Six years have passed since I enrolled in the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES), University College London (UCL), for the current PhD research project. Throughout these tough and, at the same time, sweet years I have had the chance to gain unconditional support from a number of people to whom I would wish to express my warmest thanks. In a sense, all of them have an indirect share in this work and the form it has taken.

First and foremost, I find it impossible to express my thanks to my family: my mother, father and siblings, Emmanuel and Marina. It would indeed have been impossible to cope with this project without their emotional and, on some occasions, financial support. I acknowledge that my long-term absence in London was something difficult for them to cope with, but I do hope that the completion of my thesis is somehow a compensation for them. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to my uncle Dr Elias Katsikas and his family for the love and encouragement they offered throughout my PhD research.

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them good luck.
### ABBREVIATIONS

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<td>Agency for Economic Coordination and Development</td>
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<td>BCP</td>
<td>Bulgarian Communist Party</td>
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<td>BGL</td>
<td>Bulgarian Lev</td>
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<td>BNB</td>
<td>Bulgarian National Bank</td>
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<td>BSP</td>
<td>Bulgarian Socialist Party</td>
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<td>BSEC</td>
<td>Black Sea Economic Cooperation</td>
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<td>BTA</td>
<td>Bulgarian Telegraph Agency</td>
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<td>CEC</td>
<td>Central Electoral Committee</td>
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<td>Central European Free Trade Agreement</td>
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<td>Committee for European Integration</td>
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<td>CMEA</td>
<td>Council of Mutual Economic Assistance</td>
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<td>CIS</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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<td>CLS</td>
<td>Centre for Liberal Strategies</td>
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<td>CPSU</td>
<td>Communist Party of the Soviet Union</td>
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<td>CSCE</td>
<td>Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>DM</td>
<td>Deutschmark (former currency of Germany)</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>European Economic Community</td>
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<td>Federal Republic of Germany (former West Germany)</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>IMRO</td>
<td>Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
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<td>IMRO-DPMNU</td>
<td>Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity</td>
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<td>MNC</td>
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<td>MRF</td>
<td>Movement for Rights and Freedoms</td>
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<td>NACC</td>
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<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
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<td>OBSEC</td>
<td>Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>Organisation of the Islamic Conference</td>
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<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe</td>
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<td>PASOK</td>
<td>Panhellenic Socialist Movement (the Greek Socialist Party)</td>
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<td>PfP</td>
<td>Partnership for Peace</td>
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<td>PSDR</td>
<td>Party of Social Democracy in Romania</td>
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<td>SDI</td>
<td>Strategic Defence Initiative</td>
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<td>SDUM</td>
<td>Social Democratic Union of Macedonia</td>
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<td>SEEBRIG</td>
<td>Sout-Eastern Europe Brigade</td>
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<td>SFRY</td>
<td>Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia</td>
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<td>SRM</td>
<td>Socialist Republic of Macedonia</td>
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<tr>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>Union of Democratic Forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (also known as Great Britain)</td>
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<td>UMO-Ilinden</td>
<td>United Macedonian Organisation-Ilinden</td>
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<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNCHR</td>
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<td>United Nations Conference on Trade and Development</td>
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<td>UNECE</td>
<td>United Nations Economic Commission for Europe</td>
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<td>UNPROFOR</td>
<td>United Nations Protection Force</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<td>West European States</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organisation</td>
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<td>Second World War</td>
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ABSTRACT

This PhD thesis analyses the mechanisms and factors which have determined foreign policy making in Bulgaria since 1989. It contributes to the process of theoretical discussion concerning whether and how democratization affects foreign policy making. This discussion traces its academic origins to the beginning of the 20th century with theoretical debates among international relations scholars on the subject of whether liberal democratic regimes follow by nature qualitatively different foreign policies than authoritarian political regimes.

Post-Cold War Bulgaria is a good case study for such a topic. A destabilizing factor in the Balkan region and politically isolated from both the immediate regional and the international environment for much of its modern history, Bulgaria has reversed this position since the end of the Cold War. It has engaged in a course of political integration into the regional and the international environment, following a foreign policy aimed at bringing stability and peace to the Balkan region.

Sofia’s qualitatively different foreign policy since 1989 has been interpreted as being the direct result of post-Cold War democratization. It is true that both the scope and the depth of democratization have been unprecedented in Bulgaria’s modern history, but is it enough to explain the country’s post-1989 foreign policy? The thesis argues that such an interpretation is only partially true.

If democratization refers to the establishment of political pluralism, then this process in itself is not enough to explain the country’s post-1989 foreign policy. Bulgaria’s political integration into international institutions such as the European Union (EU)
and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has also exercised a large influence on Sofia’s foreign policy making since the end of the Cold War. This is because Bulgaria’s membership of the EU and NATO was conditional on Sofia’s ability to adjust its foreign policy mechanisms for the political needs of Bulgarian integration into these organisations and to align the country’s foreign policy decisions on a broad range of issues with the foreign policy decisions of the EU and NATO.

The thesis employs a wide range of primary and of secondary sources from both the communist and post-communist periods. These were collected during a lengthy period of fieldwork in Bulgaria which included work in the archives of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The primary sources include foreign policy documents, and personal interviews with a number of political activists, journalists and academics from the communist period and after.
Introduction

Foreign Policy Making in Democratizing States

Despite efforts since the late 18th century to link Western-style liberal democracy to the democratic system of ancient Athens, it seems that the only similarity between the two political systems is the shared name itself.1 Liberal democracy refers to a type of governance in which rules and policy decisions are made not directly by the electorate, as was the political practice in ancient Athens, but by representatives accountable to the electoral body. This accountability is primarily secured through free, fair and competitive elections, in which adults eligible to vote have the right to elect their political representatives.2

The Western model of liberal democracy is inextricably linked to the modern phenomenon of the nation-state.3 Many of its underpinning principles, however ambiguous, such as ideas of self-governance and popular sovereignty, are closely related to the meaning that nationalism gave to the Westphalian state system after the eighteenth century. Nationalism mobilized the masses and provided them with the political role of a modern demos, while the Westphalian system provided the borders for the definition of the national community and bequeathed to the political authorities principles such as sovereignty, autonomy and legality.

While the territorial base of Western-type democracy is the nation-state, the socioeconomic environment in which it has developed is that of the capitalist or

3 McGrew, 1997, pp. 3-6; see also Wolker, 1994 and Linz & Stepan, 1996, pp. 16-33; Parrot, 1997, p.10
market economy. Academic scholars have not yet concluded what the relation is, if any, that binds liberal democracy to the market economy.4 Some of them treat this type of political system as separate from any economic process by arguing that historically non-democratic systems have coexisted with market economies.5 However, it seems that although liberal democracy is not a prerequisite for a market economy, there is no historical example of a liberal democratic system that has become established in a state prior to the emergence of a capitalist economy.6

Scholarly literature produced since the Second World War (WWII) has generally approached the concept of liberal democracy in two different ways: a) normative and b) procedural or institutional. The first approach emphasizes the cultural and behavioral norms of the liberal democratic system.7 It uses the economically developed states of Western Europe and America as the ideal model for how a liberal democratic system should function, and suggests that any state wishing to become a liberal democracy has to follow this model. It also maintains the idea that the success or failure of the democratic system depends on the degree of accountability of the government to the public and thus favours people’s participation in the democratic process.

Post-war American modernization theorists have been the primary proponents of this view and they have also argued that liberal democracy is closely linked to the

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5 Boyer, 1999, pp. 50-1
7 Boyer, 1999, pp. 74-82
economic development of a state. According to them, a state, by promoting economic development and contributing to the welfare of its people, broadens the base of the middle classes, which are the most important pillar of the democratic system. These theorists have also argued that economic development increases the living standards of citizens and gives them the potential to gain a better education, which in turn, contributes to their political awareness and further participation in the democratic process. These scholars were highly influenced in their approach by the breakdown of Western European democratic regimes during the interwar period, which they explained as the result of the economic crisis of 1929.

The second approach to the concept of liberal democracy, the procedural, arose due to the decline of normative theories by the 1970s. The crisis of the welfare state in the seventies, de-colonization, challenges to the Western model of liberal democracy due to the emergence of new social movements in the 1960s and 1970s, and a wave of democratic breakdowns in Latin America, lowered the high expectations that normative theories had cultivated regarding that political system. Instead, liberal democracy came increasingly to be understood in terms of what elites and individuals do and how democratic political institutions function. According to this approach, the stability of democratic regimes is not the outcome of the economic development of a state, but depends on the actions of the political elite and the way in which these

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11 Lipset, 1993, pp. 43-44.
12 Nagle & Mahr, 1999, 5-12
actions are formally structured and pursued within the political system. Economic development is important to the extent that it determines the political actions of the elite and crafts a democratic compromise among them, but it is not central to the argument.

Procedural theorists assume a minimalist approach to liberal democracy. They define a liberal democratic system in terms of how it functions through the frequency of elections. This approach suggests that liberal democracy is not a condition which, once achieved, remains unchanged. On the contrary, it is seen as a continuously evolving process, even in the liberal democratic states of the so-called ‘first world’. It was under the influence of this second approach that the term ‘democratization’ came to be preferred to the term ‘democracy’ in the literature, because it fits better with this new approach of continuous process.

Conceiving of democracy as a process, scholars started to discern different stages within it and began to measure the degree of democratization of each state which declared its political system a democracy. In spite of disagreements about measurement methods and the results obtained, there was broad agreement in identifying four general stages in the democratization process. The first is the period of liberalization of non-democratic rule; the second is the period of transition between

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16 Shin, 1994, Parry & Moran, 1994, pp. 4-8
this and the third stage of consolidation and the fourth is that of ‘maturity’ of the
democratic regime.18

The passage from the first to the second stage is usually determined either by the
violent collapse of the non-democratic regime or a declaration by the non-democratic
regime that free and contested elections will be held in the near future.19 The conduct
of the first free and fair multiparty elections, the adoption of a new constitution and
the repetition of elections at regularly defined terms normally mark the passage from
the second to the third stage.20 According to Linz, consolidation begins “... when
sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an
elected government, when a government comes to power [and] when this government
de facto has the authority to generate new policies and when the executive, legislative
and juridical power generated by the new democracy does not have to share power
with other bodies de jure”.21 Finally, the maturity stage refers to the highly
consolidated democratic regimes of the so-called ‘first world’ which are thought to be
characterized by free, fair and competitive elections, political representatives
accountable to their electorate and equal rights for their citizens to participate in the
political process.

The scholarly literature concerning democratization is mainly preoccupied with the
relation between this process and the domestic politics of a state. Little attention has
been paid to the relationship between democracy and international relations. This is
for two reasons. The first is the traditional division in the academic field of politics
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between domestic concerns and international relations. Since democratization refers to the formation of a particular type of domestic political system, it has generally been accepted that it falls outside the field of international relations. This trend has also been facilitated by the fact that since the WWII the field of international relations has been dominated by the neo-realist school, which downplays the impact of domestic politics on the international interactions of a state. Secondly, when the third wave of democratization began, social scientists were primarily concerned with the processes by which democratization occurred and the problems associated with the consolidation of newly democratic regimes. This has necessarily focused attention on domestic factors. Even in cases where scholars have examined the democratization process of a state in relation to the international environment, they have primarily dwelt on how the domestic politics of a democratizing state are influenced by the international environment before and during the democratization process, rather than how democratization has influenced the foreign policy making of a state.

The few works that examine the influence that the democratization process has on the foreign policy of a state belong to a larger body of theoretical literature, which analyses the relationship that exists between the domestic political system and the foreign policy of a state. The differences in their approach to the democratic system is reflected by the different conclusions these essays have reached regarding the relations between the democratic political system and foreign policy. Moreover, the

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22 The term ‘wave of democratization’ is used by Samuel Huntington to refer to “a group of transitions from non-democratic regimes that occur within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction during that period of time” (Huntington, 1991, p.15). The ‘third wave of democratization’ began with the collapse of the authoritarian regime in Portugal, Greece and Spain in the mid-1970s, it has lasted to date and includes the post-1989 democratization of East European and post-Soviet states. For more details see Huntington, 1991, pp. 1-26.


long-standing debate between liberalism and realism that has dominated the field of international relations since the Cold War has further intensified the divergence between the conclusions reached regarding this topic. Therefore, before reviewing these works, it is worth reviewing how realism and liberalism conceive of foreign relations, focusing on aspects of their theoretical argument relevant to democratization.

Realism proposes a state-centric theoretical model, which focuses on three important assumptions. The first is that states are the most important actors in the international system. The second is that states act like rational individuals in pursuing their national interests and the third is that the international system lacks a central government, the so-called 'anarchy assumption'. Domestic politics, according to both classical realists and neo-realists, can play only a minimal role in foreign policy making. Classical realists see the accumulation and use of power as the state’s primary mission, and from this viewpoint domestic politics is seen as one of the many capabilities that a state should use in its effort to maximize power. There is no established link between realism and democracy, and in some cases classical realists have come to support the idea that democratic regimes are not the most efficient political systems when it comes to exercising power in the interests of the state.

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25 For a general overview of the key assumptions of realism see Goldstein, 1996, pp. 51-93; Burchill, 2001b.
26 Burchill, 2001b, pp. 70-2; Carr, 2001, pp. 11-12.
27 Morgenthau, 1985, pp. 168-9 and 189-92
In contrast to classical realists, neo-realists focus more on the constraints which the international system imposes on the state. According to neo-realists, it is the anarchic system which forces states to interact within the international environment in a similar way, despite their diverse political regimes. Economic and political interdependence between states exists, but, according to neo-realists, it is unable to change the international system, since the interdependence between states is minimal in comparison to the level of economic and social integration found within the domestic environment. This is because, within the anarchic international system, states try to minimize their degree of interdependence. In other words, neo-realism looks away from domestic politics in order to explain the foreign policy of a state, thus limiting the link between democratization and foreign policy.

In general, both classical realism and neo-realism have failed to consider the changing role of state structures. At the very core of both theoretical models lies the argument that the anarchical system has endured over time and that there is little possibility for internal factors such as sub-national identities, state structures or political systems, to change it. According to realism, the ‘code of conduct’ between states is the same, regardless of whether the state belongs to the absolutist era or the twenty-first century.

Liberals have challenged the realist premise that the state is a unitary rational actor and have argued against the anarchy assumption. According to them, international relations, far from being anarchical, are highly structured in many ways through institutions and norms based on reciprocity and cooperation, which are sometimes

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29 For a good comparative analysis of classical realism and neo-realism see Linklater, 1997 and Keohane, 1986, especially pp. 7-16; Burchill, 2001b, pp. 84-5; Waltz, 1979.
30 For a general overview of liberalism see Goldstein, 1996, pp. 95-108; see also Grieco, 1988, pp. 487-492
enshrined in international law. Moreover, liberals have emphasized the role that
domestic politics play in the international interactions of a state, most famously in the
contention of democratic peace theory, that democracy can play a pacifying role in the
international behaviour of the state.\textsuperscript{31}

In supporting this argument, liberal theorists have drawn upon studies from the field
of political science which adopt a normative approach towards democracy. Like these
studies, liberals point to the pacifying role that democratic norms exercise in societies
where a democratic political system is practised. According to liberals, the pacifying
effect of these norms extends from the societal level to influence the foreign policy of
a state in a similar way. Moreover, liberals have argued that democratic systems based
on market economies promote trade relations with other countries, which in turn
increases economic interdependence between states and encourages them to pursue a
pacifying foreign policy.\textsuperscript{32}

Liberal theoretical models offer weak points which should not escape criticism. First
of all, recent liberal approaches, known as neo-liberal institutionalism, concede to
realism many important assumptions including the notion that states are unitary
actors, which, as noted above, leaves less scope for considering the impact of any
domestic factors in the shaping of the international relations of the state.\textsuperscript{33} In addition,
contrary to what many neo-liberal institutionalists argue, the degree of real power that
international law has to restrict the international behaviour of a state might be

\textsuperscript{31} Doyle, 1986; Lake, 1992; Ikenberry, 1996; Talbott, 1996.

\textsuperscript{32} Russet, 1998, pp. 163ff; Lake, 1992; Ikenberry, 1996; Talbott, 1996; see also Little, 1995, pp.67-74
(for a counter argument see ibid, pp. 74-83); Strange, 1995, pp. 160ff.

\textsuperscript{33} For more information about neo-liberalism see Goldstein, 1996, pp. 98-100; see also Grieco, 1988,
pp. 492-5; Grieco, 1993, pp. 116-140 and pp. 301-338; Keohane, 1993; Skak, 1996, p. 23; Young,
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questioned, as might the extent to which morality or concern for international law is a
real motive behind foreign policy decisions. To what extent, for instance, were
international organisations, even the United Nations (UN), able to constrain Soviet
foreign policy in Eastern Europe during the Cold War?

In addition, most liberals see economic interdependence among states as a linear
process of continuous improvement, which can have only pacifying results in the
international relations of states.34 They fail to see that, under certain circumstances,
economic interdependence may lead to increased tensions.35 According to Holsti, "... in
some cases governments and sections of the populations have tried to control or
reduce or eliminate influence of transnational processes on their societies because
they have been perceived as threats to a variety of 'national values'".36 This thesis
could be well exemplified in the efforts made in the mid-1990s by Albania, Bulgaria
and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) to construct a highway
going through the three states so as not to be dependent on Greek highways for their
trade relations with Western Europe and the Middle East.37

Many liberal scholars who examine the relationship between liberal democracy and
foreign policy, such as M. Doyle, M. Howard or F. Fukuyama, have restricted their
scope to examining the degree of war-proneness of democratic states. Most of them

37 This is an example of both cooperation and antagonism since the discussions on the construction of
the highway between the governments of Albania, Bulgaria and FYROM in the mid-1990s were a
source of political tension between these states and Greece, but, at the same time, they did foster good
relations between Tirana, Sofia and Skopje. Nikova, 1998, pp. 287, 289; Triffonova & Kashoukeeva-
conclude that liberal democratic states pursue a peaceful foreign policy.\textsuperscript{38} These analyses, however, present two weak points. The first is that, being influenced by the Cold War climate, they assume a narrow approach to foreign policy relations, according to which a state has two choices: either to make peace or go to war. Such an approach, however, fails to include other aspects of foreign policy, such as the ability of a state to pursue protectionist or more open trade policies. Secondly, even by accepting the pacifying effects that liberal democracy has on the foreign policy of a state, the way that these analyses approach liberal democracy, by seeing it in terms of norms and values, restricts the applicability of their theories to a minority of nations, which includes the mature democratic states of the so-called ‘first world’.

Therefore, the theoretical framework given by these theoretical works is not applicable in the case of newly democratizing states. Even if one accepts that the pacifying foreign policy of a democratic state is due to the role that democratic norms and values play in the society of this state, in a newly democratizing state democratic values and norms are not well entrenched, and from this viewpoint it is questionable if its political system exerts the same pacifying effect as in the case of a mature democratic regime.\textsuperscript{39}

Two of the most prominent scholars to have examined the foreign policy behaviour of newly democratizing states are Jack Snyder and Alexander Kozhemiakin.\textsuperscript{40} Snyder challenges the classical liberal argument that democracies never go to war with other democratic states by pointing to the initial stages of democratization, which he claims

\textsuperscript{39} Ember et al., 1992
\textsuperscript{40} See also Malcolm & Pravda, 1996.
is an unpredictable period for state foreign policy. He argues that the unpredictability is often due to the competitive domestic political environment, which may lead both rising democratic and old political elites to pursue nationalist strategies in order to mobilize the masses to consolidate their hold on power. For Snyder, these strategies can be particularly successful in the event that the political elites seek to prevent their foreign policies from being politically accountable to the public.

Snyder’s theory has been criticized on two points. First, he has been accused of confusing the political concept of liberalization with that of democratization. The former refers to the period of loosening political restrictions within an authoritarian regime, while the latter presupposes at a minimum free, fair and competitive elections for the selection of the most powerful executive body of the state. It has been argued that both the states and historical periods used by Snyder in advancing his theoretical model, namely 19th century Britain and France and 20th century Germany and Japan, refer to liberalizing rather than democratizing political regimes.

Secondly, the potential of nationalism for mass mobilization over foreign policy issues has been analysed by a number of scholars. However, like these scholars, Snyder has also failed to consider the impact that socioeconomic factors can have on nationalist strategies. No matter how vigorous nationalist propaganda is, it is still less likely that people will fall prey to hawkish slogans when they feel socially and economically secure. For nationalistic propaganda to be successful, the socio-

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41 Snyder, 1996; see also Mansfield & Snyder, 1995; Haass, 1956, p. 62.
42 Ibid.
43 Shin, 1994, pp. 142-3; see also Linz & Stepan, 1996, p.3
44 Wolf et al., pp. 176-180; see also Mansfield’s and Snyder’s reply in pp. 196-8
45 See, for instance, Bloom, 1990, pp. 76-104
46 Kozhemiakin, 1998, pp. 15-16
economic environment has to facilitate the success of such propaganda. Furthermore, Snyder fails to conceive of the influence that the international environment can have on the foreign policy of a newly democratizing state.

However, this influence is an important factor for analyzing the foreign policies of the democratizing states of Eastern Europe and, in his work, Kozhemiakin does take three factors into account. These are the degree of institutional change, the level of socio-economic development, and the influence that the international environment exerts on the democratization process. Regarding institutional change, he claims that democratization influences a state's foreign policy because of two direct political consequences, which he terms the 'vertical' and 'horizontal' accountability of the chief executive. The first refers to the degree that the chief executive's authority is subject to electoral approval through free and competitive elections, while the second refers to the pressures and influences coming from within the political establishment of the democratizing state, in particular those from political parties and interest groups.

Socioeconomic factors can have a destabilizing effect in two ways. The first is that policies leading to economic uncertainty and unemployment can undermine the societal consensus regarding the pursuit of a peaceful foreign policy and can shift public attitudes towards radical politics. Secondly, the extent to which liberal democratic norms and procedures have permeated the political system of the newly democratizing state can determine both the stability of the system and the belligerence

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48 Ibid.
49 Ibid, pp. 24-27
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of state foreign policy. In a nutshell, Kozhemiakin argues that the war proneness of democratizing states depends on the ability of their nascent democratic systems to include liberal members of the political elite and society in the decision-making process and to keep them accountable for their foreign policies. Both the inclusion of these members in decision-making and the increased accountability of the political authorities of newly democratizing states are seen as the only means by which nationalist, militant and religious fundamentalist foreign policies can be kept in check.

Finally, the role that the international environment can play in the foreign policy of a democratizing state is important, especially with growing economic interdependence between states. Governments are nowadays conceived as players in a 'two-level game', with the domestic political and social arena on the one hand and the international environment on the other. According to Kozhemiakin, international factors can influence democratic transition and the foreign policy of a state by constraining the potential of democratizing regimes to act autonomously in the international environment.

Examining the foreign policy of newly democratizing states requires scholars to move beyond the narrow approach of how war-prone or not these states may be. Instead, what is needed is a theoretical framework capable of integrating the domestic and international influences and constraints on the foreign policy of a nascent democratic

50 Ibid, pp. 18-20.
51 Ibid, pp. 14-16.
state because, in the end, it is through such a framework that the susceptibility to war of states in Eastern Europe can be assessed.

A number of scholars such as Tonra, Christiansen, Jørgensen and Radaelli, have moved beyond the question of war-proneness and have instead argued that norms, values and the ideas of domestic and international actors can by themselves be explanatory variables for foreign policy behaviour.54

Part of the research of these scholars focuses on foreign policy making in the newly democratizing Eastern European states after 1989. In particular, they attempt to explain how the process of integration into the European Economic Community (EEC), and later into the EU, has influenced foreign policy making in states such as Bulgaria. Their focus on the EEC/EU is justified by the emphasis that the overwhelming majority of foreign policy actors within the states of the region have placed on accession to the EEC/EU, making it the most influential international actor in East European foreign policy making during the post-Cold War period.

For these authors integration into the EEC/EU is mainly conceived of as a process of interaction of norms, values, beliefs and ideas between domestic actors within the Eastern European states and those of EEC/EU institutional bodies in Brussels as well as EEC/EU member states. The main outcome of this process has been the gradual alignment of the foreign policy of the states of Eastern Europe with that of the EEC/EU member states and they argue this has had a positive effect on the security and stability of the European continent and beyond.

In order to better explain this process of interaction, these scholars have employed the term "Europeanization" which is best defined by Radaelli as "processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'way of doing things', and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures, and public policies".\textsuperscript{55}

Looking at the states of Eastern Europe, it is possible to suggest that through this process of interaction domestic actors have come to adopt similar policy styles, procedures, discourses, norms and beliefs to those employed within EEC/EU institutional organs in Brussels and political actors within the EEC/EU member states. In addition, through the process of integration an increasing number of institutional mechanisms within Eastern European states have also become aligned with those of the EEC/EC. Even the very process of democratization in these states after the end of the Cold War has been both inspired and influenced by the EEC/EU. According to Huntington, the EEC was instrumental in aiding the consolidation of democracy in Greece, Spain and Portugal, where "the establishment of democracy was seen as necessary to secure the economic benefits of EEC membership, while Community membership was in turn seen as a guarantee of the stability of democracy"\textsuperscript{56} and now, in relation to the post-communist states of Eastern Europe, Geoffrey Pridham has

\textsuperscript{55} Radaelli, 2003, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{56} Huntington, 1996, p.5.
written, "[The EU’s] influence is...one of persuasion through the link between
democratic conditionality and the attractive prospect of membership."\textsuperscript{57}

This alignment between the states of Eastern Europe and the EEC/EU has also
affected foreign policy making within the states of the region. This is exemplified
both by the political positions which these states have adopted in international forums
and their policies towards non-EEC/EU member states. Over the years these have
increasingly come to resemble those agreed within the EEC/EU institutional organs
and followed by EEC/EU member states.\textsuperscript{58}

Despite this alignment, however, Europeanization theory should not be accepted
uncritically as a model to explain foreign policy making within the newly
democratizing states in Eastern Europe. First of all, it is problematic to claim the
existence of ‘common European’ norms, policy styles, beliefs and institutions to
which the states of Eastern Europe are seeking to align themselves. The EEC/EU is a
political organisation with many member states, each of which has a different
historical, political and cultural background. Characteristically the political systems
adopted by the various Eastern European states since 1989 do not resemble those of
any particular EEC/EU member states but take components from a number of sources.
For example, Bulgaria’s semi-presidential system presents elements of the
presidential systems of France and the USA as well as the political systems of Britain
and Germany.

\textsuperscript{57} Pridham, 1994, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{58} For more details about Bulgaria’s post-1989 foreign policy to that of the EEC/EU see chapters III
and IV of this thesis.
Secondly, alignment to the European norms, values and institutions has not been an unwavering political process. With reference to the Balkans, for example, Anastasakis and Bechev argue that the ability of the EEC/EU to influence the process of democratization in the war-torn states of the former Yugoslavia and Albania has been markedly less than its ability to influence democratization elsewhere in the Balkan Peninsula, including Bulgaria. The question remains ‘why’ and the answer would at least in part seem to lie with this lack of influence within the former Yugoslavia. This offered neighbouring states, such as Romanian and Bulgaria, the chance to benefit from their support for EEC/EU policy during the conflicts. Their prospects of accession to the Union were thus enhanced but so also were the opportunities for the EEC/EU to play a greater role in the domestic and foreign policies of these states. The accession process and Europeanization has therefore not just been about meeting the needs of conditionality and the adoption of wider European values and norms. It has also reflected the geopolitical reality of the post-cold war world.

Therefore, the alignment of foreign policy making in states such as Bulgaria to that of the EEC/EU should not be seen merely as a product of the interaction of norms, values, beliefs and institutions between these states and the EEC/EU. On many occasions trade relations, economic investment and the prospect of EU membership, have been conditional upon East European states meeting certain political and economic criteria set by the EEC/EU and adopting policies in line with those of Brussels. Such is the leverage of the EU that these demands are often implemented even if they run counter to inclinations of domestic political elites and are potentially detrimental to the countries in question. For example, in line with the conditions set

by the EU, the Bulgarian authorities have pledged to shut down the nuclear power station at Kozlodui by 2020. This is being done despite the fact that the country already faces a shortage of energy resources brought about by the curtailment of cheap electricity, oil and gas supplies from the former Soviet Union. Furthermore, when policies are imposed in such a fashion it inevitably raises doubts as to the extent to which wider European norms and values have been internalised and the degree to which externally imposed forms have generated real domestic content.

This thesis looks beyond realist and liberal models and Europeanization theory to suggest that none of these alone provides an adequate theoretical framework to explain the foreign policy making of the newly democratizing states of Eastern Europe. It does this through an examination of foreign policy making in post-1989 Bulgaria; a country which, among the former communist bloc states, is one of the most interesting. Being a destabilizing factor in South-Eastern Europe and politically isolated from the immediate regional environment for much of its modern history, Bulgaria has engaged in a course of political integration into the regional and international environment since the end of the Cold War, in the process following a foreign policy aimed at bringing stability and peace to the Balkan region. But to what extent is such an interpretation true?

The central questions which this thesis attempts to answer are: who are the main foreign policy making actors in Bulgaria during the 1990s; how is foreign policy made, and what factors influence foreign policy decision-making? In order to answer

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these questions, it will build on the previously cited works to shape a novel theoretical base that can better explain Sofia’s post-1989 foreign policy.

Examining the foreign policy of newly democratizing states requires scholars to move beyond the narrow approach of how war-prone or not these states may be. Instead, what is needed is a theoretical framework capable of integrating the domestic and international influences and constraints on the foreign policy of a nascent democratic state because in the end it is through such a framework that the susceptibility of states in Eastern Europe to war-proneness can be assessed.

Liberal democracy is approached using the minimalist procedural-institutional model and the four stages of the democratization process as previously defined. In examining the impact that democratization has on the foreign policy making of a state, the thesis primarily focuses on the decision making process. In the case of Bulgaria, the process is influenced by two different parameters, and it is the purpose of this research to see how these affect foreign policy making. The first parameter refers to the openness of domestic political life and the way that this, through the introduction of a multiparty system, competitive elections and domestic political actors, such as interest groups and ethnic minorities, affects Sofia’s foreign policy. In doing so, the thesis goes beyond the structural explanations adopted by a number of scholars in the past, who have tried to approach the influence of domestic politics on foreign policy in terms of state institutions. Since, in the long term, state institutions remain unchanged, they alone are inadequate in explaining short- and medium-term changes in the foreign policy of states. Therefore, looking beyond state structures, it is

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61 Parrot, 1997, p. 4.
also necessary to stress politics in terms of parties and interest groups and to adopt the horizontal and vertical accountability model proposed by Kozhemiakin.

Apart from the constitutional bodies involved in foreign policy making and the degree to which they have changed in comparison with the communist past, a number of political issues are examined in the second chapter of this thesis. These include the extent to which the constitutional bodies responsible for foreign policy making are limited in their actions, the amount of influence parliamentary bodies have in foreign policy making, the foreign policy agenda of the various political parties, and the influence the electorate has on foreign policy making. Moreover, apart from the political parties, this chapter analyses which other interest groups are influential in foreign policy making and asks whether they gain their influence because of links with political parties or by other means. Finally, it examines the degree to which ethnic minorities participate in foreign policy making. Do minority elites have their own foreign policy agendas? If this is the case, what influence do they have and how is it shaped, by the minority elite themselves, by the wider minority community, or by pressures from the kin-state?

The second parameter refers to influences coming from the international environment and the role that key international actors, such as the UN, NATO, the EU, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe, USA and Russia have on Bulgarian political life. The collapse of the communist regime in Bulgaria produced political, economic and social insecurities, which Sofia wishes to tackle through integration into Western organisations. Western states and organisations have their own foreign policy agenda in relation to Bulgaria, which
stress aspects such as trade, minority protection, tourism and so on. Sometimes, this agenda conflicts with the economic and political relations that Bulgaria already has with Russia or which it is trying to develop with that country. This draws Russia, which in some cases uses economic or other mechanisms deriving from the communist past to preserve its economic and political relations with Sofia, into the analysis of Bulgaria’s post-1989 foreign policy making.

The third and fourth chapters examine how much influence these international actors, which have been already listed in the previous paragraph, can exert on Bulgaria’s post-1989 foreign policy making. The third chapter argues that the most influential of all international actors on Bulgaria’s post-1989 democratization and foreign policy making is the EU. Joining the EU has been the highest foreign policy priority for most of the country’s political agents and, therefore, since the beginning of the 1990s, Sofia has embarked on a long-term political project to gain EU membership. This project has had a huge impact on Bulgaria’s post-1989 foreign policy making, and has come to determine Bulgaria’s foreign relations both with many neighbouring and distant states and a great number of international and regional organisations.

In particular, the main questions which the third chapter seeks to answer are: Why has the EU been the most influential international actor on Bulgarian foreign policy since 1989 and what factors have determined its influence? What are the institutional mechanisms through which EU influence on Bulgarian foreign policy has been exerted, and how has this influence been exercised? What political agenda(s) does the EU have in relation to Bulgaria, and how does Sofia respond to this or these agenda(s)? Which factors have determined the EU’s political agenda(s) in relation to
Bulgaria? What institutional links does Brussels have with the Bulgarian government, political parties and interest groups, and how do these links influence their foreign policy agendas? What constraints do EU projects impose on Bulgarian governmental policies, and how is this reflected in governmental foreign policy agendas?

The fourth chapter of the thesis examines the way that Bulgaria's process of accession into the EU has influenced Sofia's foreign relations with international organisations such as the UN, NATO, the IMF, the OSCE and the Council of Europe, to mention but a few, as well as bilateral relations with states with which Sofia had either limited or extensive political and economic relations during the communist period. With reference to international organisations, emphasis is given to Bulgaria's relations with NATO and the IMF, which have met fierce political opposition from political parties such as the BSP and a large section of Bulgarian society. Yet, despite political opposition, Bulgaria has managed to establish strong political ties with, and be actively involved in, the political activities of both organisations.

With reference to bilateral relations with states, emphasis is given to Bulgaria's post-1989 relations with the Russian Federation, the USA and with economically undeveloped and developing states of the so-called Third World. These relations are emphasized firstly because Russia is deemed to be the political heir to the Soviet Union, with which Sofia kept strong political and economic ties under communism. As a result of these ties, Bulgaria has continued to be economically dependent on Moscow during the post-Cold War period. Vital economic sectors, such as the energy sector, are almost fully dependent on oil and gas imports from the Russian Federation - a factor which every post-1989 Bulgarian government could hardly underestimate.
Secondly, they are emphasized because of the change in Sofia’s relations with the USA, a state with which it had limited political and economic contact during the communist period. Thirdly, these relations are emphasized due to the strong political and economic ties which the Bulgarian communist regime used to keep with a number of Third World states, such as Angola, Libya, Cuba and Nicaragua, to mention but a few.

Some of the main questions which the fourth chapter seeks to answer are: How have Bulgaria’s relations with international organisations evolved since 1989? To what extent have these relations been different from those under communism? How have Bulgaria’s relations with NATO and the IMF evolved during the post-Cold War period? To what extent has Bulgaria’s process of accession to the EU influenced Sofia’s political and economic relations with international organisations in general, and with NATO and the IMF in particular? Are any aspects of Bulgaria’s foreign policy influenced by international organisations other than the EU, e.g. NATO and the IMF; if so, which are they? How have Bulgaria’s relations with the Russian Federation, the USA and Third World states evolved since the end of the 1980s? Which aspects of Sofia’s bilateral relations with these states has Bulgaria’s accession to the EU influenced and how? Are any aspects of Bulgaria’s post-1989 foreign policy making determined by Sofia’s bilateral relations with these states and, if so, what are they?

The fifth chapter examines Sofia’s post-Cold War foreign policy towards the Balkans. Overall, this policy has aimed at bringing stability and peace to the Balkan region and has been in sharp contrast to Sofia’s Balkan policy prior to 1989, which was guided either by Sofia’s irredentist views towards its Balkan neighbours or by Bulgaria’s
need to loyally serve the foreign policies of Great Powers allies, regardless of whether these policies undermined any prospect for long-term peace and stability in the peninsula. This change in Sofia’s post-1989 Balkan policy has been interpreted as a result of the peaceful effects which Bulgaria’s democratization process has exerted on the country’s foreign policy making since 1989. But to what extent is this interpretation true? The chapter argues that this interpretation is not entirely true and it does so by answering the following questions: What have been the main factors influencing Sofia’s Balkan policy both prior to 1989 and after that date? To what extent do the post-1989 factors comply with the factors influencing the foreign policy making of liberal democratic states as advanced by liberal theorists of international relations?

The questions set in these four chapters direct the empirical part of the research of this thesis and lay the groundwork for some theoretical remarks regarding democratization and foreign policy making in the concluding chapter. This chapter will address the following questions: Who are the foreign policy making actors in post-Cold War Bulgaria? What factors influence Sofia’s post-1989 foreign policy making? Is there any well-defined national interest in post-Cold War Bulgaria? Are there enduring priorities in the foreign policy agenda(s) of post-1989 Bulgarian governments? What determines their prioritization? To what degree is foreign policy making a closed decision-making process? To what degree do ethnic or social cleavages in Bulgaria determine foreign policy making? Which international actors have been most influential in Bulgaria’s post-1989 foreign policy making? Are domestic or international actors more influential in Sofia’s post-Cold War foreign policy making, and which factors determine the dominance of one over the other? How has foreign
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policy during the period of democratization in Bulgaria changed from or remained the same as foreign policy during the communist period? In general, given the Bulgarian case study, how does democratization influence the foreign policy making of a state? Under what conditions does democratization promote peaceful foreign policies within a state?
Chapter I

Foreign Policy Making in the People’s Republic of Bulgaria during the 1980s

Introduction

This chapter initially examines the ideological principles governing Bulgaria’s foreign policy during the 1980s, how these principles were applied in practice and the mechanisms of foreign policy making. It then moves on to describe the factors which defined Bulgaria’s foreign relations with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the West and the countries of the so-called Third World. Finally, it analyses the elements which determined Sofia’s bilateral relations with neighbouring Balkan states and the political stance Bulgaria adopted during various efforts at multilateral regional cooperation.

The chapter provides the background needed to compare Sofia’s foreign policy after the collapse of communism. The fact that it mainly focuses on the 1980s is justified inasmuch as, during that time, the Soviet Union, of which Bulgaria was the most faithful ally in the Eastern bloc, experienced political changes which culminated in Mikhail Gorbachev’s coming to power and the inauguration of his policies of Perestroika and Glasnost. These changes came to have serious implications for Sofia’s foreign policy, since they offered Bulgaria the opportunity to follow a more autonomous path than before. In addition, anyone wishing to analyse Bulgaria’s post-1989 foreign policy could hardly ignore its foreign policy in the 1980s because this
period saw the appearance of many of the premises and actors that influence the country’s foreign policy during the post-communist period.

Foreign Policy Decision Making

Ideological Principles of Foreign Policy

Communist ideology, based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, was meant to play a significant role in the political life of the socialist system which Bulgaria adopted in the post-WWII period. At the very least, communist doctrine was used to justify policies \textit{a priori} or \textit{a posteriori}. For that reason, before examining Sofia’s pre-1989 foreign policy, it is necessary first to look at the foreign policy principles of that ideology, as expressed by Soviet theoreticians, and then to see how Bulgaria’s foreign policy converged with or diverged from the Soviet model.

Prior to WWII, Soviet theory was preoccupied either with relations between classes or individual communist parties and not interstate relations \textit{per se}.\footnote{Light, 1988, pp. 145-159.} This was for two reasons: first of all, influenced by the theoretical essays of Marx and Lenin, who downplayed the role of the state in the socialist revolutionary process, Soviet theoreticians hesitated to deal with interstate relations. Secondly, since the socialist community before the war included only the Soviet Union and Mongolia, the international environment did not favour such a discussion. Attempts to create a theory of socialist interstate relations therefore only really began during Khrushchev’s time in office, primarily in an effort to achieve cohesion within the socialist bloc.
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through theoretical principles rather than through the coercive practices used in the Stalinist era. In doing so, Soviet theoreticians used pre-war works on inter-party relations as their theoretical framework.

According to these, socialist internationalism was the basic concept underpinning socialist interstate relations. Based on the prewar concept of proletarian internationalism, which referred to the unity that should govern inter-party relations in the common struggle against capitalism, socialist internationalism demanded unity among socialist states in the conduct of their foreign policy. However, since the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) had the 'last say' in defining the interests of international socialism, the latter usually came to coincide with Soviet state interests.

However, socialist states were not always willing to sacrifice their own interests to serve those of the Soviets. This was evident in the stance adopted by states such as Yugoslavia, China, Albania and Romania from the 1940s onwards. This reality led the Soviets to adjust Khrushchev's theoretical model so as to enforce their influence on the socialist world. This was achieved in the following ways. Firstly, immediately after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Soviets tried to enforce their leading role within the Soviet bloc through the so-called Brezhnev doctrine. This held that the sovereignty of any socialist state would be respected as long as its political actions domestically or internationally were in line with those of the Soviet

63 Skak, 1996, pp. 101-129;
65 Light, 1988, pp. 169-75.
Union. Secondly, in order to enhance their control within the socialist bloc, the Soviets developed a number of institutional mechanisms, such as the annual meeting between the first secretaries of the East European communist parties and the first secretary of the CPSU. Lastly, they stressed the importance of allegiance to principles such as ‘democratic centralism’, which enhanced the control of communist leadership throughout Eastern Europe and through the formers’ fidelity to the USSR ultimately Moscow.

Under Gorbachev the concept of socialist internationalism remained in force. This is evident from various interstate agreements signed by socialist states after 1985 and in the official documents of the CPSU, such as the party programme introduced at the 27th Congress. However, during the second half of the 1980s, socialist internationalism acquired a new meaning. While continuing to espouse the notion that politics within any of the states of the socialist bloc affected the others, the notion of ‘limited sovereignty’ that lay at the heart of the Brezhnev doctrine was renounced. As a result, the scope for future Soviet military intervention in EES was limited.

The redefinition of socialist internationalism under Gorbachev was in line with his new approach to Soviet foreign policy, which was known as New Political Thinking (NPT). At the crux of this approach was Gorbachev’s wish to reduce Soviet control in Eastern Europe in an effort to eliminate the economic burden that this entailed.

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70 Dawisha, 1988, pp. 73-80; see also Skak, 1996, p. 79, 99.
without harming Soviet security interests in the region.\textsuperscript{75} To this end, besides re-conceptualizing socialist internationalism, NPT also effectively abandoned the leading role of the USSR within the socialist bloc by accepting that the Soviet socialist model was not the only path to the future. Instead, the definition of a socialist system became broader, and concepts such as the monopolistic role of the communist party and democratic centralism were laid open to challenge. NPT also set East-West relations on a new basis by allowing EES to collaborate in security and economic matters with the capitalist world, thus increasing their political autonomy.\textsuperscript{76}

Bulgaria followed the Soviet theoretical model closely for almost the entire Cold War period. The principle of socialist internationalism was enshrined in its constitution\textsuperscript{77} and, for most of the communist period, the Bulgarian political system was organised according to the principle of democratic centralism, thus enhancing Soviet control. In addition, the Bulgarian state was fully integrated into the structures of Eastern European multinational organisations, such as the Warsaw Pact and the Council of the Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), which provided Moscow with the economic and political leverage to constrain any signs of independence in Bulgarian foreign policy.\textsuperscript{78}

However, despite Bulgaria’s receptiveness to the Soviet theoretical model, it seems that these Soviet mechanisms controlling Sofia’s foreign policy did not always have the desired results. This is especially true in the 1980s, when a partial emancipation of Bulgarian politics from Moscow was further accelerated by Gorbachev’s NPT.

\textsuperscript{76} Light, 1988, pp. 296-300 and 308-312; Wettig, 1988.
\textsuperscript{77} Article 5.
However, this was not so much due to the initiatives of Bulgarian politicians as to upheavals within the Soviet political scene which distracted attention and gave the Bulgarians increased room to manoeuvre. This had also happened in the past. For example, following Brezhnev's death, the Soviet Union had entered a period of prolonged introversion due to the country's economic problems, which had again given Zhivkov the space to adopt policies less tied to Soviet directives.

**Foreign Policy Mechanisms**

After the amendment of the Bulgarian Constitution in 1971, the state organs constitutionally entitled to participate in foreign policy making were the National Assembly, the State Council and the government (the Council of Ministers). The National Assembly exercised "supreme direction of the state's foreign policy" and was responsible for declarations of peace or war and the ratification of international agreements. The State Council set the general direction of foreign policy, and among its responsibilities was the representation of the state in its international relations, and the appointment or recall of state diplomatic representatives at the behest of the Council of Ministers. It also shared responsibility with the National Assembly for the ratification or abrogation of international agreements. Finally, the government

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79 The period of the mid-1960s is another case in which Bulgaria's foreign policy was less tied to Soviet control. Khrushchev's fall from power and the preceding as well as the ensuing power struggle in Moscow spurred Zhivkov's regime in Bulgaria to follow a foreign policy which resulted in more emancipation from the Soviet Union. Such emancipation can be well exemplified in the case of the Balkans where, at that time, Sofia undertook a series of political initiatives aimed at strengthening bilateral relations with neighbouring Balkan states such as Greece and Turkey with which Sofia had limited relations. For more details see Brown, 1970, pp. 273-297.

80 Constitution of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, 1971, article 78.

81 Ibid., article 94. Under the 1971 constitution, the State Council had legislative as well as executive powers and mostly functioned as the supreme supervising body of state administration. For the entire period of its institutional life, the State Council was chaired by Bulgaria's communist leader, Todor Zhivkov. For more details on the establishment and the institutional role of the State Council in the People's Republic of Bulgaria, see the Constitution of the People's Republic Bulgaria, 1971, articles 90-7; Huleva, 1994a; Huleva, 1994b, Crampton, 1997, p.198.
"organised" and "implemented" state foreign policy according to principles set by the National Assembly and the State Council.82

Constitutional stipulations, however, should not be considered to reflect the real allocation of power in Bulgarian politics. The only constitutional provision that should be taken at face value is item 2 of the first article, which stipulated that the guiding force in Bulgarian society and the state was the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP).83 In communist Bulgaria, as was the case with other Eastern European regimes, real political power in almost every matter including foreign policy lay with the BCP.

However, what made the Bulgarian case different from many of the other socialist states was that, even by Eastern European standards, Bulgaria's political structures were particularly highly centralized and hierarchical. In foreign policy terms, this meant that decision-making power in the 1980s was almost exclusively concentrated in the hands of the General Secretary of the BCP, Todor Zhivkov, and his political faction, the principal members of which included politburo members Milko Balev, Grisha Filipov, Dimitur Stoianov, Iordan Iotov, Dobri Dzhurov and Pencho Kubadinski.84 Almost every major foreign policy decision was first conceived by Zhivkov and this political entourage. The decision was then rubber-stamped by the Politburo of the BCP before being sent to the Department of Foreign Policy and International Relations of the BCP Central Committee, which worked out in detail

82 Ibid., article 98.
83 Ibid., article 1, item 2.
how the decision should be carried out. The actual implementation of the policy was the responsibility of various state institutions, such as the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Bulgarian National Assembly, which both worked under the close scrutiny of the State Council.

Aside from its role in shaping foreign policy, the Department of Foreign Policy and International Relations of the Central Committee performed two other duties relevant to the country’s relations with the outside world. The first was that, along with the Central Committee of the CPSU, it monitored the political activities of both ruling and non-ruling communist parties in the World, as well as parties with similar political ideologies such as labour, leftist and social democratic parties. Based on the findings of this monitoring process, the Department proposed to the Politburo and the Plenary Session of the BCP Central Committee initiatives aimed at either fostering or weakening relations with these parties and then applied any decisions taken on these matters. The second duty of the Department was to monitor the activities of the country’s diplomats. This was not only confined to issues such as their qualifications and performance but extended to their loyalty to the BCP. Almost all promotions of Bulgarian diplomats under communism, though conducted by the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was based on the monitoring process taking place within the Department of Foreign Policy and International Relations of the BCP Central Committee.

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85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
Throughout most of the communist period, Bulgaria’s foreign policy making was a closed political process mainly involving the institutional mechanisms already discussed and restricted to a few high-ranking members of the communist elite. Shifts in foreign policy could only come through either a change in the attitude of the top leadership or with a change in personnel. There were no independent policy making institutes similar to what is known in the West as think-tanks. This was because the Bulgarian communist regime did not allow the establishment of any form of independent policy institutes outside the control of the party. Bulgarian academic scholars also tended to consciously avoid research areas with policy relevance lest they provoked the communist authorities to take an interest in their academic work and personal lives.

The picture began to change gradually after the mid-1980s when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev’s policies of Perestroika and Glasnost lessened the close control that the CPSU had exercised until then on the political and social life of the Soviet Union and promoted a greater freedom of speech and the political emancipation of the Soviet press from tight state control. Bulgaria’s close political and economic ties with the Soviet Union facilitated the influx of these ideas, especially since there was an almost universal knowledge of Russian within the Bulgarian population, and an extensive network of Russian bookshops, making the Soviet press widely available.

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90 Ibid.
The immediate result of this influx of ideas was the emergence at the end of the 1980s of dissident political groups, such as the 'Association for Human Rights', the 'Discussion Club in Support of Glasnost and Perestroika', and 'Ecoglasnost'. These groups were mostly organised by communist party members and people with strong connections with the security services, who sought to distance themselves from BCP political activities, hoping that in this way they would be able to capitalize on any effects which Soviet Perestroika might have on Bulgarian politics.92

In terms of foreign policy, these groups pushed for alignment with Gorbachev's NPT.93 Although their lobbying never took an institutional form - no representatives of these groups participated in any of Bulgaria's foreign policy making mechanisms - at the end of the 1980s, for the first time since they came to power, the Bulgarian communist authorities were faced with domestic political pressure to follow a certain foreign policy agenda, which ironically was that of the Soviet Union.

Apart from the emergence of dissident political groups lobbying the communist authorities to follow the foreign policy path of the Soviet Union, NPT also came to challenge the concept of democratic centralism and the way this had previously been applied to Bulgaria's foreign policy. As a principle, democratic centralism was used by communist theorists to refer to the centralization of political power in the hands of the communist leadership that EES was expected to implement.

For most of the Cold War period, the principle of democratic centralism was applied in the case of Bulgaria's foreign policy making, and this is reflected in the highly

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93 For more details on the political opposition under communism and the emergence of dissenting political groups at the end of the 1980s in Bulgarian politics, see Ivanov, 1994.
centralized and hierarchical structures which were mentioned previously. These structures reflected the iron discipline which the long serving Bulgarian communist leader, Todor Zhivkov, imposed on all ranks of the BCP. Indeed, after he took the party's helm at the end of the 1950s, Zhivkov succeeded in establishing an almost unchallenged personal rule inside the BCP, which allowed him to remain in power for almost thirty five years. By the mid-1960s, he had managed to politically marginalize any possible contender for the party leadership and since then, whenever he felt that a party member either posed a threat to his power or impeded his political plans, he did not hesitate to remove them from the party organs.94 One of the techniques which the Bulgarian communist leader often used in this regard was to appoint the person in question as an ambassador abroad. Even if this did not occur, Zhivkov was still careful to compensate for the dismissal, either by offering them another political position, however insignificant it was in comparison to the post held previously, or by allowing them to continue to enjoy some of the privileges of their previous post, e.g a salary and the use of a state car.95

However, to argue that Zhivkov's long-standing survival as a BCP leader and his ability to discipline the country's foreign policy structures was merely the result of his highly skilled manoeuvring within Bulgarian domestic politics is only partially true. Very little of this would have been achieved if he had not enjoyed Moscow's full support for his political activities. Indeed, all the Soviet communist leaders from Khrushchev to Chernenko were interested in Zhivkov maintaining his strong personal position inside the BCP, and thus offered him full political support in both domestic

95 This was the case with Alexandr Lilov, a Politburo member and Secretary of the Central Committee of the BCP since the beginning of the 1970s. Lilov was dismissed from the Politburo, but despite his dismissal he was allowed to enjoy his salary as a Politburo member and a state car after he left office. See Tchakarov, 1991, p. 150.
and international environments. This is mainly because the Soviet leadership viewed the Bulgarian communist leader as the politician that would best serve the USSR’s national interests, both inside Bulgaria and abroad. Indeed, under Zhivkov’s leadership Sofia’s foreign policy remained almost totally obedient to the Soviet Union. On issues relating to the Vietnam War, the Middle East and Latin America one could hardly find any difference between Sofia’s foreign policy and that followed by Moscow.96

With reference to Bulgaria’s domestic politics, Zhivkov was always quick to anticipate new political currents in the Soviet Union after a change of leadership and adjust policy accordingly. In doing this, the Bulgarian communist leader wished to please and show his political loyalty to the new Soviet leadership, which in turn was expected to confirm his tenure in power. For instance, after he came to power in the mid-1950s, Zhivkov promoted a series of political measures aimed at relaxing the BCP’s tight political control over Bulgarian society, and economic reforms that allowed local enterprises and their managers greater responsibility than they had had in the past.97 These policies were mainly encouraged by similar political and economic measures which had taken place in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev, and which were frozen both in the Soviet Union and Bulgaria immediately after the political upheavals of 1968 in Czechoslovakia. These prompted the then Soviet leader, Leonid Brezhnev, to tighten political control within the Soviet Union and to urge the communist leaders of Eastern Europe to do the same lest they experience

96 Crampton, 1997, p. 199.
similar civil unrest that could challenge the USSR’s hegemony of the communist bloc.  

Zhivkov’s ability to anticipate political changes occurring in the Soviet Union was mainly the result of the personal links that the Bulgarian communist leader had established which allowed him to receive confidential information about the Kremlin’s backstage politics. These primarily involved the Soviet ambassador in Sofia, with whom Zhivkov always sought to maintain a strong personal friendship, and a circle of trusted diplomats inside the Bulgarian embassy in Moscow, whose mission was to infiltrate the personal environment of the Soviet leaders. According to Kostadin Tchakarov, one of Zhivkov’s closest political advisors, at the time of Leonid Brezhnev’s leadership, one of the main ways through which the Bulgarian communist leader managed to receive confidential information about Kremlin politics was Milka Kalinova, a female diplomat working at the Bulgarian embassy in Moscow.  

Kalinova succeeded in establishing friendly relations with both Brezhnev’s daughter, Galina, and his son, Iuri, to whom she often gave expensive presents such as fur coats, jewellery or vacations in Bulgaria, all paid for by Zhivkov’s office. Through these relations, Kalinova received useful information about intrigues inside the Kremlin or forthcoming political changes with respect to either the Soviet domestic political scene or Eastern Europe, which she conveyed directly to Zhivkov.  

In addition, the Bulgarian communist leader kept a close watch on the political activities of high-ranking party members, particularly those whose jobs involved regular trips to Moscow, and close working relations with Soviet officials. Nobody

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100 Ibid.
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was allowed to work as close with Soviet officials as to gain greater confidence and support from the Soviet Union than he enjoyed. Those party members who did not realize this soon experienced Zhivkov’s anger, which on many occasions led to their removal from the political posts they held. The close political circle of the Bulgarian communist leader was aware of Zhivkov’s sensitivity to party members’ relations with Moscow and on many occasions exploited this to undermine the political power of their political opponents. The last decade of Zhivkov’s rule offered many examples of this, with a number of powerful Politburo members, some of whom even managed to climb to the second highest position in the BCP’s hierarchy, such as Alexandur Lilov and Choudomir Alexandrov, being removed from their posts because close members of Zhivkov’s political entourage such as Milko Balev succeeded in persuading the Bulgarian leader that these Politburo members were plotting with Soviet officials to undermine his power.101

One of the main aims of Gorbachev’s NPT was to disengage the Soviet Union from the political life of EES and, in this way, to provide them with the necessary political space to become autonomous in their domestic and foreign policies. For the USSR, disengagement from Eastern Europe in practice meant a gradual reduction of Soviet troops in that region and less spending on sustaining mechanisms for monitoring the political and social life of EES. To Moscow such troop reduction was seen as a way of relieving pressure on the domestic budget at a time when the economy was faced with severe problems. For its part, EES saw the Soviet disengagement as creating a political momentum in the region that would assist them in overcoming the problems

101 Ibid., p. 97.
of economic stagnation and recession, which most of them faced at the end of the 1980s.

But for Zhivkov and other East European communist leaders like him, Gorbachev's NPT also meant that they could no longer count on Soviet support for either their policies or even maintaining their hold on power, unless they aligned their domestic positions with the Soviet policies of Perestroika and Glasnost. However, this would mean among other things that they would have to tolerate greater freedom of speech both inside their communist parties and their states, accept the existence and cope with the activities of dissident political groups and be prepared to negotiate with these groups or adopt policies which would accommodate at least some of their political interests. In other words, any alignment with the policies of Perestroika and Glasnost would challenge the monopoly of power which democratic centralism had bestowed on these leaders and, as far as Zhivkov was concerned, he was not prepared to take any measures that would diminish his personal rule either inside the BCP or the state as a whole. Therefore, while he was willing to apply the economic principles of Perestroika to Bulgaria, Zhivkov was not prepared to accompany this with the necessary political changes, fearing that these would undermine his ability to exercise tight control over Bulgarian politics and society.102

Feeling that Moscow, following its policy of disengagement from Eastern Europe, would not directly attempt to topple him from power through military or other means, as it did in the case of Czechoslovakia in 1968, Zhivkov, for the first time since he took power in the mid-1950s, distanced himself from the Soviet leadership. The

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Bulgarian leader started to openly express doubts on the political impact of Soviet policies on Eastern Europe. According to Kostadin Tchakarov, in a conversation he had with Zhivkov about Soviet policy in January 1989, the communist leader referred to Perestroika and Glasnost as "pure demagogy if they lack a firm economic base".\footnote{Tchakarov, 1991, p. 161.} while according to other sources Zhivkov often stated to his political entourage that "Perestroika is a political storm which I hope to weather soon".\footnote{Ganev, Ivan, personal interview, 25/1/2002; Baeva, Iskra, personal interview, 26/11/2001.} These statements contrasted sharply with remarks such as "Bulgaria and the Soviet Union act as a single body, breathing with the same lungs and nourished by the same bloodstream",\footnote{Crampton, 1997, p. 199.} which the Bulgarian leader had made in the past.

Zhivkov also took practical measures aimed at restricting the influence of Perestroika and Glasnost on Bulgarian society. According to an Athens News Agency journalist, who at the time worked for the Bulgarian official state news agency Bulgarian Telegraph Agency (BTA), after the announcement of Perestroika and Glasnost, the BTA received directives from Zhivkov's political office to censor news coming from Moscow.\footnote{Borisov, Boiko, personal interview, 6/11/2001.}

Zhivkov's political distancing from Moscow provided the opportunity for a number of BCP party members to assume a pro-Perestroika political profile, which they used to establish direct political contacts with Moscow in an attempt to oust Zhivkov from power. At the Politburo level, two such members were Petür Mladenov and Andrei Lukanov. Both belonged to the young generation of communist cadres that was known as the nouveau nomenclature. They had not climbed the BCP's hierarchy
ladder due to credentials gained during the WWII as communist partisans, but rose to power after the mid-1960s as a result of their loyalty to the party and their abilities as technocrats. As such, they were less obsessed with defending communist ideology and more prepared to adapt their ideas to what they saw as the political realities of the time.

At the end of the 1980s, Mladenov and Lukanov began to openly question the doctrine of democratic centralism and to distance themselves from many of the political decisions taken by Zhivkov, including his downplaying of Bulgarian-Soviet relations and his decision to change the Muslim names of Bulgarian Turks, which had created tension in Bulgarian-Turkish relations. On many occasions, Zhivkov with his close circle of friends and political advisers mocked Mladenov and Lukanov but despite his evident displeasure, he found it difficult to dismiss them from the Politburo. By the end of the 1980s, the Bulgarian leader was becoming increasingly politically isolated and he feared that an attempt to remove Moscow's political favourites from the Politburo would further complicate his already strained relations with the USSR, which, in turn, might take measures to remove him from power. His fear was based on the fact that the Soviet leadership, although it had officially declared that it would not interfere in the political changes unfolding in Eastern Europe, by no means remained a passive onlooker. Throughout this period, the Soviet Union under Gorbachev was actively promoting the policies of Perestroika and Glasnost through diplomatic means.

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But Zhivkov was not going to escape what he feared. By the end of the 1980s, he was on strained terms with the Soviet leadership as he stubbornly opposed political and economic reform, despite the fact that Bulgaria's economy was in crisis with a foreign debt of almost $10bn; an amount which was almost twenty times as much as the war reparations that Bulgaria had had to pay under the terms of Neuilly Treaty that put an end to Sofia's participation in the First World War. In addition, contrary to the wishes of the Soviet Union, the Bulgarian leader showed no signs of abandoning the assimilation campaign which he had launched against the Bulgarian Turks in the mid-1980s, in spite of all the security implications which such a campaign had for the entire communist bloc. This was because the campaign threatened to destabilize Bulgaria and draw Sofia into military conflict with Ankara, both of which would have a spill-over effect on the Warsaw Pact states as a whole.

For all these reasons, the Soviet leadership was no longer prepared to continue offering Zhivkov political support as it had in the past. With Moscow's consent and its tactful diplomatic involvement, Mladenov and Lukanov orchestrated a palace coup which removed Zhivkov from power on 10 November 1989, the day after the Berlin Wall was breached. The coup took place after Mladenov had paid an official visit to China in October 1989. On his return journey, he stopped off in Moscow to talk with Gorbachev and it is believed that during these talks the Soviet leader was informed about the existence of coup plans against the Bulgarian communist leader,

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109 This is partly because the Bulgarian leader had no clear picture of the country's real foreign debt until he was removed from power. According to Zhivkov's close political adviser, Kostadin Tchakarov, as late as 1989, the Bulgarian leader still talked of a $6bn foreign debt. This is mainly due to the fact that a number of state officials and many of Zhivkov's political advisers concealed the real amount foreign debt from him lest its revelation lead Zhivkov to proceed with political and economic reforms which might sweep them out of their posts. See Tchakarov, 1991, pp. 156-7; Tsvetkov, 1993, p. 417.
for which Gorbachev gave his consent and promised that the USSR would do its best to ensure a successful outcome. Immediately upon his return from Moscow, Mladenov, along with Lukanov and a number of other Politburo members, moved to oust Zhivkov by persuading him to resign. A key figure was also the Soviet ambassador in Sofia, Viktor Sharapov, who in a meeting that he held with Zhivkov on 3 November 1989 is alleged to have made it clear to the Bulgarian leader that he no longer enjoyed Soviet support. As a result of all this, Zhivkov announced his decision to resign from the leadership of the BCP and the state on 8 November 1989. The decision was approved by the Politburo the very same day and ratified by the Plenum of the BCP Central Committee on 10 November 1989.

Relations with States from Outside the Region

In the previous section, Bulgaria’s foreign policy principles and decision mechanisms were examined. The remaining part of this chapter will analyse how these principles and mechanisms worked in practice by examining four aspects of Sofia’s foreign relations: a) with the USSR and the West; b) with the countries of the so-called Third World; c) bilateral relations with neighbouring Balkan states; d) Bulgaria’s stance towards various efforts at regional multilateral cooperation during the 1980s.

Examining foreign relations with the USSR and the West is essential, not only because of the entrenchment of the two blocs in the Balkan region after the WWII, but

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113 For the purpose of this thesis, the term ‘West’ refers to the economically developed regimes of the so-called ‘first world’, be they members of NATO and the European Community or neutral in the post war divide.
114 For the purposes of this thesis, the term ‘Third World’ mainly refers to economically underdeveloped as well as developing countries of the Middle East, Southeast Asia, the African continent and Latin America.
also because, due to their weakness, modern Balkan states, including Bulgaria, have tended to give a high political priority to relations with economically and militarily powerful states outside the region.\textsuperscript{115}

\textit{Bulgaria's Relations with the USSR}

Bulgaria's full integration into East European institutions offered Moscow the economic and political means to intervene in Bulgarian politics and, if necessary, force Sofia to comply with Soviet directives. Economically, throughout the whole communist period, the USSR was a secure market for about 60\% of Bulgaria's exports and was almost the sole source of energy.\textsuperscript{116} Almost 90\% of Sofia’s oil and gas requirements during the 1980s were imported from the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{117} Economic dependence grew after the end of the 1960s, when Sofia, pressured by Moscow, increased its participation in the 'socialist division of labour' (\textit{Sblizhenie}), through which the Soviets wished to foster economic integration within the socialist bloc.\textsuperscript{118} This led Bulgaria to concentrate industrial production on hauling and lifting machinery and electronics, most of which was exported to the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{119}

Apart from these economic levers, the Soviets could also ensure Bulgaria’s subservience through a number of other devices which they used to influence political decision-making and the communist nomenclature. The 8\textsuperscript{th} Department of the BCP

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{115} Markov, 1998; Panaiotov, 1998; Tsvetkov, 1998.
\item\textsuperscript{116} Appendix, tables 1-12.
\item\textsuperscript{117} EIU, 1988, pp.66-67; Braun, 1983, pp. 200-208.
\end{itemize}
apparatus closely supervised the workings of the party and state administration in every foreign policy issue. This department had direct link with the CPSU Central Committee’s Liaison Office for Relations with the Ruling Communist and Workers’ Parties of Socialist Countries, and the International Department of the CPSU Central Committee, whose main responsibility was to supervise the activities of all communist parties within the socialist bloc.\textsuperscript{120} In addition, the Soviet Union could monitor the loyalty of the more senior political and military cadres by inviting them for consultation in Moscow, where many of them had undertaken their studies.\textsuperscript{121} Finally, the role of the Soviet ambassador in Sofia seems to have been of key importance. As was mentioned above, he even played a role in the palace coup of 1989 which ousted Zhivkov.\textsuperscript{122}

Despite these mechanisms of political control, the Soviets, however, could not always ensure Bulgaria’s subservience, thus making Soviet-Bulgarian relations less harmonious than one would expect. This was especially true during the 1980s. While superficially Bulgaria appeared to be the closest ally of the Soviet Union, bilateral relations were in reality plagued by a number of problems. These disputes were rooted in the autonomous foreign policy which first began to develop as an expansion of the nationalism championed by Zhivkov’s daughter Liudmila in the 1970s.

The policy of autonomy was further developed as a result of Bulgaria’s economic problems following the two oil crises of the 1970s and the consequent USSR decision to review Soviet economic relations with Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{123} In 1982, the Soviet

\textsuperscript{120} Dawisha, 1988, p.76.  
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid, pp. 76-77; Ashley, 1989, p. 114.  
\textsuperscript{122} See above; see also Levesque, 1997, pp. 170-6.  
\textsuperscript{123} Tchakarov, 1991, pp. 155-6.
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Union, plagued by economic difficulties, tried to exploit the rise in world oil prices by increasing its deliveries to the West in exchange for hard currency and technology.\textsuperscript{124} To provide the necessary oil, the USSR notified its East European partners that crude oil deliveries would be reduced by 10% from planned levels.\textsuperscript{125} The Soviet notification was the \textit{coup de grâce} to a Bulgarian economy already under strain due to the rising oil prices.\textsuperscript{126} The country's terms of trade deteriorated and industrial growth fell from 4.1% in the period 1971-75 to a mere 1.23% in the period 1981-84. As a result, Bulgaria turned to the Middle East in search of energy sources to feed the country's large industrial sector, which in turn increased the trade deficit.\textsuperscript{127}

Soviet energy policy towards Eastern Europe was not the only point of discomfort in Soviet-Bulgarian relations during the 1980s. During the same period, the Soviets also complained to the Bulgarians about the quality of the industrial products they were being sold.\textsuperscript{128} Afraid of losing a sure market for its industrial products, the Bulgarian regime responded by turning to the West in search of new technology. The Zhivkov regime also inaugurated a new economic policy, known as the New Economic Mechanism (NEM),\textsuperscript{129} which was designed to rectify the chief faults of the Bulgarian economy. This would then lead to a rise in industrial productivity and an improvement in the quality of goods, thereby securing export markets. In the course of the decade, however, it became evident that the aims of the NEM were over-ambitious and the policy had little real impact.

\textsuperscript{124} BMFA, 1/64/т.4.16//55-64-376 (1988); BMFA, 1/64/т.3//55-64-37
\textsuperscript{125} Kramer, 1985, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid, p. 540.
\textsuperscript{128} BMFA, I-102-64-2-3//03-09-66 (1984)
\textsuperscript{129} Crampton, 1997, pp. 206-208.
When Gorbachev assumed power in the USSR, these problems were accentuated. In line with Gorbachev’s intention of subordinating foreign policy to the needs of the economy, the USSR ended the system of subsidizing Soviet oil prices to Eastern Europe, which previously had been fixed at a five-year average of the world price. Instead, prices rose to world market rates. The result was a further deterioration in the already strained Bulgarian economy and a growing sense of panic among the Bulgarian communist authorities, who instructed the Bulgarian Embassy in Moscow to monitor closely discussions among Soviet officials about future energy plans.

Secondly, Gorbachev strongly disapproved of Zhivkov’s policy towards the Turkish minority, because it was causing disquiet in a number of Western states and could potentially spoil the climate of rapprochement and cooperation between Eastern Europe and the West which the NPT had inaugurated.

**Bulgaria’s relations with the West**

Although Bulgaria was allied to the Soviet Union, it was able to develop diplomatic and economic relations with the West, but these were very much influenced by the ebbs and flows of inter-bloc relations. After the period of détente in the 1970s, which created a favourable environment for Bulgaria’s relations with the West, bilateral relations with most Western states cooled at the beginning of the 1980s with the so-called ‘second Cold War’ following the victory of Ronald Regan in the US.
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Presidential elections of 1980. Imports of high technology products were especially affected due to the restrictions imposed on Eastern Europe by the Reagan administration, with American imports to Bulgaria dropping to $125.3m in 1982 from $225.7m in 1981. In addition, the acute tensions in inter-bloc relations which rose after the deployment of American medium-range nuclear missiles in Western Europe also impacted on Sofia's relations with the West. Thus, in 1984, on the insistence of the Soviet Union, Zhivkov cancelled an official visit to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), which he had hoped would lead to an increase in economic and technical aid to Bulgaria to assist the NEM.

At the same time, Bulgaria's relations with the West were further harmed by a number of other events, in particular the suspected involvement of the Bulgarian secret service in the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II in 1981, and of Vladimir Kostov, a Bulgarian journalist, at the end of the 1970s in Paris, the assassination of the Bulgarian journalist Georgi Markov in London at the same time, and the alleged participation of state trade agencies such as Kintex in drug and arms trafficking to the West through Bulgarian territory. In the Cold War climate, rumours and suspicions were sometimes sufficient for Western governments to make official protests to the authorities in Sofia. One such case occurred in 1982 when the

139 The involvement of the Bulgarian intelligence service in the attempted assassination of Kostov and the murder of Georgi Markov was believed to be driven by comments Kostov made on a series of programmes of the Bulgarian service of Radio Free Europe and Markov on the BBC in which they both exposed some of the international activities of the Bulgarian and Soviet secret services. See Tsvetkov, 1993, p. 403; Crampton, 1997, p. 202.
American State Department officially accused Bulgaria of being a country engaged in "state-sponsored terrorism".\textsuperscript{141}

The political changes in the Soviet Union following Gorbachev’s accession to power produced a turning point in Bulgaria’s relations with the West. Bilateral relations with Western states started to warm again and trade increased. The FRG serves as a good example. Bulgarian-German relations, cool after Zhivkov’s postponing of his official visit to Bonn in 1984, improved after 1985, and culminated in Zhivkov’s official trip to the country in 1987, where the two sides signed economic agreements for strengthening cooperation in the field of high technology through establishing joint ventures. Bulgarian trade with the FRG increased so that the latter became Bulgaria’s chief source of imports in the West by the end of the decade: at $16.4m, a 14% increase over the preceding four years.\textsuperscript{142}

However, Soviet energy policy imposed limits on any improvements in Bulgaria’s trade relations with the Western world. Sofia’s main export items to Western countries were oil and petroleum products made from crude oil imported from the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{143} The Soviet decision to reduce the amount of oil exported to Eastern Europe and switch to world market prices badly affected Bulgaria’s exports to the West. The trade deficit increased, reaching $2bn by the end of the decade.\textsuperscript{144} To try and diminish this deficit, Bulgaria began to encourage foreign investment. It enacted a new investment law in 1989 which, for the first time, allowed foreign companies to acquire shares in Bulgarian firms without formally establishing joint ventures, and

\textsuperscript{141} Crampton, 1997, p. 206; The Times, 3-7-1984, p. 5h.
\textsuperscript{142} EIU, No 4, 1988, appendix 14; appendix, tables 5 & 7.
\textsuperscript{143} Central Intelligence Unit, 1985, pp. 310-12.
\textsuperscript{144} EIU, No 1, 1988, p. 66; Terry, 1985, pp. 521-524; appendix, table 11.
generally lightened the tax burden for foreign companies investing in the country. In addition, the Bulgarian regime tried to promote tourism by upgrading the country’s infrastructure and building hotels and restaurants. However, these measures proved insufficient and since trade, foreign investment and tourism failed to produce the necessary income, the Bulgarians had no option but to resort to foreign loans, with the result that the country’s external debt rose to almost $10bn by 1990.

Bulgaria’s Relations with Third World States

With reference to the states of the so-called Third World, Bulgaria’s foreign policy seems to have blindly followed that of the Soviet Union. Moscow’s political and economic interests were promoted at all times, and Sofia worked to undermine the power of pro-Western regimes and to offer economic and military support to subversive political and military movements which were friendly to the regimes of communist bloc states and the Soviet Union in particular.

This policy remained the same throughout the 1980s. Indeed, the Bulgarian communist regime offered generous political, economic and military support to radical pro-Soviet states such as Libya, Iraq, Cuba, Yemen and Nicaragua, with Zhivkov keeping close personal relations with leaders such as Muammar al-Qaddafi, Saddam Hussein and Daniel Ortega. In addition, with the tacit support of the authorities, a number of special schools were set up in Bulgaria to train military forces from these states and their revolutionary movements, while the Bulgarian

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147 Maxwell, 1985, pp. 254-8
intelligence service, along with the intelligence services of the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic (GDR), was involved in a series of political activities aimed at overthrowing pro-Western governments and military regimes in the Middle East, Africa and Latin America to the benefit of pro-Soviet groups.\(^{149}\)

Apart from any extension of Soviet political influence on Third World countries, the economic and military support of pro-Soviet political and military movements in the Third World brought welcome economic benefits to Bulgaria in a period of acute economic crisis. Indeed, it is estimated that, by the mid-1980s, Bulgaria was earning approximately $500-600m annually from arms sales by state-owned companies, such as Kintext, to conflict-torn Third World states like Iran, Iraq, Syria and Yemen, and to insurgency movements in Latin America, the Middle East and Africa.\(^{150}\) This amount represented 7% of Bulgaria’s exports and about 60% of the country’s annual hard currency earnings and put it in 12\(^{th}\) place in terms of arms sales among the 39 arms exporting states.\(^{151}\) It is not coincidental that the Bulgarian arms industry developed rapidly, with generous Soviet technical and logistical support between the end of the 1960s and the first half of the 1980s.\(^{152}\) This was a period during which the Soviet bloc was actively involved politically and militarily in the Middle East, Latin America and the African continent.

Bulgaria’s policy towards the Third World does not appear to have changed after Gorbachev’s coming to power. Sofia continued to have good relations with and to offer economic and military support to, pro-Soviet regimes and liberation movements.

\(^{149}\) Ibid.

\(^{150}\) Dimitrov, 2002b, p. 17.

\(^{151}\) Ibid.

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in the Third World. Although it is difficult to research issues which are closely related to the world of the intelligence services, the fact that the Bulgarian arms industry continued to build new plants and modernize existing facilities throughout the period would seem to support the view that by the end of the 1980s Bulgaria had not changed its previous policy. Such a view is also corroborated by the fact that the Soviet Union under Gorbachev does not seem to have encouraged Bulgaria to change its policy towards the Third World. It is noteworthy that, during the second half of the 1980s, the Soviet Union started to disengage itself from military activities in Third World states such as Afghanistan. Soviet military troops had been involved in military operations in Afghanistan since December 1979 and Moscow decided in May 1988 to withdraw from the engagement. Yet, both the Soviet Union and Bulgaria continued to provide arms and military equipment to pro-Soviet political and military movements in the Third World as they did the Afghan Marxist resistance organisations after the Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan on the pretext that Third World anti-communist rebellions received similar aid from the USA.

Bulgaria’s Bilateral and Multilateral Relations in the Balkan Region

The next two sections examine the factors which influenced Bulgaria’s bilateral relations in the Balkan region and the political stance that Sofia adopted towards various efforts at regional multilateral cooperation during the 1980s. Bulgaria’s relations with its Balkan neighbours have often been complicated. Prior to WWII, this was mainly due to unfulfilled irredentist aspirations. Of all the Balkan states, Bulgaria had fared worst in post-war territorial settlements, having been on the losing side after

153 Dimitrov, 2002b, p. 17.
the Second Balkan War and both World Wars. These defeats deprived Bulgaria of territory in the regions of Macedonia and Thrace which the Bulgarian authorities had long viewed as Bulgarian, and it was to prove difficult for them to come to terms with their loss to neighbouring states. They thus constantly worked for their annexation to Bulgaria.

As a result, relations between Bulgaria and the other Balkan states throughout this period were full of mutual suspicion, which in itself was a restraining force preventing the country’s political authorities from engaging in regional initiatives aimed at forging sound bilateral and multilateral relations. Sofia did not take part in most of the Balkan conferences organised in the early 1930s with the aim of forging political and economic cooperation in the region, because the Bulgarian authorities were concerned that by participating they would legitimise the territorial status quo and thus effectively relinquish the territorial claims which the Bulgarian state had historically made in the region.  

After WWII, Bulgaria’s Balkan relations were mainly affected by the country’s participation in the communist bloc and the degree of control which the Soviet Union exercised over Bulgarian politics. There were occasions in the country’s Cold War history when Sofia had to follow policies which were the outcome of direct Soviet interference with Bulgaria’s foreign policy making. Such interference often took the form of crude political pressure on Bulgarian officials. Thus, for example, immediately after WWII and under Soviet pressures, the BCP not only renounced pre-War territorial claims in the geographic region of Macedonia but also agreed that the

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155 Crampton, 1997, pp. 161-162; Stavrianos, 1964, pp. 230-270; Geshkoff, 1940, pp. 77-139; Bulgarian National Group for the Balkan Conferences, 1934.
Macedonian territories, known as Pirin Macedonia, which had been incorporated into the Bulgarian state after the end of the Second Balkan War, should be ceded to the newly established Socialist Republic of Macedonia (SRM) which was part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and contained the part of the Macedonian region which had been given to Serbia after the Second Balkan War.\textsuperscript{156} The agreement was part of a Soviet plan to increase Moscow's political influence in the Balkan region by creating a Balkan federal state which would first include the SFRY, Bulgaria and Albania, with the prospect that Romania and Greece would join later.\textsuperscript{157} However, the plan was shelved immediately after the breakdown in Soviet-Yugoslav relations in 1948 and, from then on, Sofia's relations with the SFRY were mainly determined by the ebbs and flows of Soviet-Yugoslav relations.\textsuperscript{158}

On the other hand, there were occasions when Soviet political control over Bulgarian foreign policy making was looser, either because the Soviet authorities wished to provide the states of the communist bloc with enough scope to follow their own foreign policies in areas where Soviet interests were not at stake or because Moscow was engaged in domestic and foreign policy issues which distracted Soviet attention from Sofia's Balkan policies. Whatever the case, when Soviet control loosened, the Bulgarian communist regime often appeared to have become more keen to engage in regional bilateral and multilateral initiatives. Yet, Bulgaria's participation in these initiatives by no means signalled or involved any political distancing from Moscow.

\textsuperscript{156} According to the Treaty of Bucharest in August 1913, which put an end to the Second Balkan War, the Balkan region which constituted part of the ancient Kingdom of Macedonia was mainly divided between Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia. Bulgaria took almost 10% of the region, known as Pirin Macedonia. Greece got control of approximately 52% of the region, which remains known as Aegean Macedonia. Finally, Serbia acquired around 30%, known as Vardar Macedonia. The remaining 8% became part of the new Albanian state. See Jelavich, Vol.2, 1983, pp. 79-105; Grigorova, 1985, 171-239.

\textsuperscript{157} Crampton, 1997, p. 194; Braun, 1983, pp. 32-9; Grigorova, 1985, 171-239.

\textsuperscript{158} Crampton, 1997, p. 194; Braun, 219-224; Grigorova, 1985, pp. 250-7.
Two cases exemplify Sofia’s foreign policy autonomy towards the Balkan region. The first occurred during the period which followed the fall of Khrushchev. The power struggle inside the Kremlin which preceded and followed Khrushchev’s fall spurred the Bulgarian communist regime towards more 'individual' diplomatic action in the Balkan region, which led Sofia to improve its strained bilateral relations with neighbours such as Greece, Romania and Turkey. The second case occurred in the 1980s and is analysed below.

**Efforts at Multilateral Cooperation**

Since the emergence of the modern Balkan states, alongside fragmentation there have also been efforts towards multilateral cooperation. For a long time, these revolved around the idea of building a federal state which would include all the Balkan nationalities. Prior to the First World War, such an idea was primarily expressed by revolutionaries, who enjoyed a marginal position within Balkan societies and had little impact on the foreign policy agendas of Balkan governments. It was only after the First World War that the idea gained the support of movements with mass followings, primarily socialists, agrarians and liberals. For the socialists, federation was seen as the end result of a process of social transformation of Balkan societies. For agrarians, the Balkan states should unite themselves into a federal union in order to avoid being economically exploited by industrialized European states. Finally,
liberals supported the idea of Balkan federation as a means of maintaining peace rather than as a means of economic and socialist transformation of the region.\textsuperscript{163}

After WWII, the idea of a Balkan federation came to be most keenly advanced by the communists, whose influence in the region increased because they took power in many states. Until the 1948 Soviet-Yugoslavian split the communist movement enjoyed homogeneity under Soviet tutelage and nurtured a belief in universalism, which in turn reflected on the proposed federal schemes.\textsuperscript{164} These schemes favoured the establishment of a federation in the area under communist government as a first step on the road to worldwide revolution.

The period following the Soviet-Yugoslav split left no space for federal schemes, because the universalistic spirit, which was supposed to infuse such plans fell victim to the power of nationalism, which now came to influence doctrinal development. Albania and Romania refused to recognize the ideological hegemony of the Soviet Union in the 1960s and Bulgaria, being the most faithful ally of the Soviet Union, buried post-war federal schemes, because they had lost favour with Moscow.\textsuperscript{165} There were some voices, such as Ceauşescu's call in the 1980s for the establishment of a zone of peace and cooperation in the Balkans. However, the core idea behind such schemes was not the creation of a Balkan federation, but the elimination of Cold War antagonism in the region through cooperation among Balkan states, either on a specific or a range of issues. Nevertheless, the Cold War climate and entrenchment of communist nationalism in the region after the Soviet-Yugoslavian split boosted

\textsuperscript{163} Stavrianos, 1964, pp. 224-258.
\textsuperscript{164} Braun, 1983, pp. 32-3.
\textsuperscript{165} Grigorova, 1985, pp. 250-7.
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regional cleavages, thus rendering most of these schemes inactive and regional cooperation extended little beyond bilateralism.

The beginning of détente during the 1970s set the necessary preconditions for regional multilateral cooperation to make headway. Immediately after the Helsinki Summit in 1975 the Greek Prime Minister, Constantine Karamanlis, proposed a scheme for multilateral cooperation influenced by neo-functionalist ideas.166 According to Karamanlis’ scheme, successful regional cooperation could be achieved through a step-by-step rapprochement of Balkan states, starting from low politics issues, such as communications, transport, trade and tourism, later moving on to include high politics. In 1976 Karamanlis made the first step towards the implementation of his scheme by convening a Balkan conference in Athens, in which all states except Albania participated and signed 154 proposals on low politics issues.167 Beyond the promising expectations that such a meeting caused there were problems that prevented a repetition of a similar meeting before the end of the 1980s. The most serious of those problems was Bulgaria which, in line with the Soviet position on the matter, did not favour further multilateral cooperation. Moscow feared that such cooperation would weaken its ability to control Bulgarian politics effectively and thus challenge its interests in the Balkan region.168

At the beginning of the 1980s Sofia started to review its negative stance regarding multilateralism in the Balkan region. In November 1981 Zhivkov put forward a political project aimed at rendering the Balkans a nuclear-free zone. Zhivkov’s project

168 Ibid, p. 53.
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was similar to an old Romanian scheme propounded by the Romanian Prime Minister Chivu Stoica in 1957. This had had the similar intention of rendering the Balkans a nuclear free zone, but had been generally rejected as a Soviet-inspired plan. What is interesting with reference to the Bulgarian project of 1981 is that its implementation necessitated the conduct of multilateral meetings and the conclusion of agreements between the Balkan states, both of which had not found favour with Sofia until that time. The Bulgarian communist authorities had previously feared that fostering political and economic cooperation in the Balkan region would distance Sofia from Moscow’s political and economic influence and thus would undermine close Bulgarian-Soviet relations, together with all the political and economic privileges, such as Soviet economic subsidies in the form of cheap oil and gas, which these relations entailed for Bulgaria. The question that needs to be raised at this point is what led Sofia to review its stance towards regional multilateral cooperation?

The Bulgarian project of 1981 was launched a few days after a meeting between Zhivkov, and his Soviet counter-part, Leonid Brezhnev in the Crimea. The exact content of that meeting’s talks is not known, but it is believed that, as in the case of the Romanian scheme of 1957, the Bulgarian project of 1981 was first conceived by the Soviets and was then launched by the Bulgarian communist authorities. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Moscow sought ways to distract the attention of the international community from its invasion and reassure the West that it might signal an escalation of Soviet military activities in the Third World. Initiatives such as the Bulgarian proposal for a Balkan nuclear free zone were thus designed to cajole the West, which, after the change of both the American administration, with the

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170 RFE Bulgarian SR/1, 16-1-1984, item 5; BMFA, I-100-64-22/01-04-10 (1981).
Republicans coming to power in 1981, and the British government with the Conservatives winning the general elections in 1979, showed it was prepared to escalate the inter-bloc conflict as a result of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan through launching military projects such as the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), a space based, computer controlled defence system that would intercept nuclear missiles before they reached their targets.\footnote{Lefebvre, 1995, pp. 306-7.}

The political landscape in the Balkan region seemed to favour the promotion of the Bulgarian project. In October 1981, a month before it was put forward, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) under the leadership of Andreas Papandreou had taken power in Greece. PASOK came to power with an extremely radical political agenda which pledged to remove Greece from both NATO and the EEC. The country would thus be rendered a non-aligned state patterned on the Yugoslav model. In addition, the Bulgarian project was also fully in tune with the long-term objectives of both Yugoslav and Romanian foreign policy which sought to reduce the military presence of both superpowers in the Balkan region. If the Bulgarian project were accepted by Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia, the Bulgarian communist authorities believed that sufficient political momentum would be gained to lead Albania and Turkey to accept it as well. Correctly, Bulgaria expected Tirana and Ankara to be most sceptical on to whether its project was a genuine political initiative or if it was part of a political plan whose long-term goal would be to promote the Soviet interests in the region.
The Bulgarian project of 1981 was received by the Balkan states as the Bulgarian communist authorities had expected it to be received. Albania, consistent with its policy towards multilateral cooperation, refused any participation.\textsuperscript{172} Turkey, which along with Greece was the only Balkan state that admitted to having nuclear weapons on its soil, rejected the Bulgarian plan as a Soviet-inspired ploy to oust NATO nuclear weapons from the region. Because of its policy of non-alignment, which favoured the disengagement of both superpowers from regional affairs, Yugoslavia supported the idea of establishing a nuclear-free zone. However, according to Yugoslavia, in order for the Balkans to become a real nuclear-free zone, the project should also include the nuclear weapons of the Soviet bases on the Black Sea coast, whose range include the entire peninsula.\textsuperscript{173}

Only Romania and Greece responded positively to the Bulgarian project. Romania, in line with its foreign policy of autonomy from the Soviet Union had been keen on establishing a Balkan zone free from the influence of both superpowers. The socialist government of Greece, although fully aware that the objections to the project rendered it unfeasible, tried to exploit the Bulgarian initiative so as to invigorate a leftist profile and to counter criticism within PASOK over its failure to keep its pre-electoral pledges to take Greece out of NATO and the EEC.\textsuperscript{174} Papandreou invited all the Balkan leaders to participate in a meeting in Athens in early 1984 and all except Hoxha attended but with no real results.\textsuperscript{175} In the joint communiqué issued at the end, it was stated that the participants agreed to submit the ideas proposed during the meeting to their governments with a view to continuing the dialogue in the future but

\textsuperscript{172} Biberaj, 1990, p. 92; Hoxha, 1985, pp.406-7; RFE Bulgarian SR/1, 16-1-1984, item 5.
\textsuperscript{173} Oligorova, 1984, pp. 27-8; RFE Bulgarian SR/1, 16-1-1984, p.16.
\textsuperscript{174} Loulis, 1984, pp. 375-91.
\textsuperscript{175} BMFA, I-100-18-15//05-15-2 Athens.
there is little sign this occurred.\textsuperscript{176} After the Athens meeting, Bulgaria made a final effort to promote its project during the talks for signing a regional ecological pact held in Varna in 1986 but without any success due to strong Turkish objections.\textsuperscript{177}

The unsuccessful outcome of the Bulgarian project of November 1981 did not mark an end to regional initiatives aimed at promoting both political and economic cooperation in the Balkans. Neither did it put an end to the Bulgarian communist authorities’ will to participate in these initiatives in future. Thus, after lengthy diplomatic manoeuvres, in February 1988 a conference of Balkan foreign ministers convened to Belgrade to discuss a wide range of low politics matters, covering economics, transport, cultural, scientific and environmental issues. There seemed to be a unique opportunity for a multilateral breakthrough. The Reagan-Gorbachev agreement on nuclear arms limitation improved East-West relations and there were signs of resolution to long standing bilateral disputes.\textsuperscript{178} In 1987, Greece had put an end to its technical state of war with Albania and after the 1987 Greco-Turkish dispute over the status of the Aegean Sea, Greece and Turkey had started negotiations in Davos, Switzerland, in 1988 aimed at resolving outstanding bilateral issues.\textsuperscript{179} At the same time, Albania had reached an agreement with Yugoslavia over re-establishing cultural relations which had been broken after the riots in Kosovo in 1981.\textsuperscript{180}

The Belgrade conference of 1988 was the only regional multilateral initiative after WWII in which all the Balkan states participated, including Albania which until then

\textsuperscript{176} RFE Bulgarian SR/1, 16-1-1984, item 5.
\textsuperscript{177} RFE Bulgarian SR/3, 8-3-1988, item 1.
\textsuperscript{178} Bell, 2001, pp. 361-369.
\textsuperscript{179} Volkan & Itzkowitz, 1994, pp. 158-161.
\textsuperscript{180} RFE Bulgarian SR/7, 29-7-1988, p 14ff.
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had abstained from all such gatherings.\footnote{RFE Background Report (Albania) / 192, 21-10-1987.} Bulgaria’s participation in the conference can be explained by the country’s need to expand its export markets due to the economic problems which it faced after the mid-1980s and by the new leeway that the Soviet policy of NPT gave to the country’s foreign policy.\footnote{Dawisha, 1989, p. 528; Bradant et al, 1989, p.497-500.} The communist authorities also viewed the Belgrade Conference as an opportunity to break the international isolation resulting from the country’s policy towards its Muslim minority.

Despite the hopes for a multilateral breakthrough raised by the Belgrade Conference, any expectations were swept away by Yugoslav ethnic rivalries and the transformed international environment after the collapse of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe. The second meeting of Balkan foreign ministers held in Tirana in 1990 was dominated by discussions about the Yugoslav wars. In contrast to the conference in Belgrade, the Balkan states did not now seek to promote cooperation on common economic and political areas, but ways of solving conflicts and bringing the area back to a peaceful multicultural symbiosis.

The various attempts at establishing multilateral cooperation in the 1970s and 1980s had all floundered. The principal reason for this lies in the divisions in the region, both those engendered by the Cold War and those more long-standing. Consolidation of inter-Balkan cooperation on a more solid basis could not but involve cooperation on military matters because most of the perceived threats in the area were in this field—something which was unthinkable, especially in periods of high tension between the two blocs. However, even in periods of détente multilateral efforts reached only a
certain point, due to disputes over minority and territorial issues, which accentuated bilateral differences. Albanian-Yugoslav tensions over the Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia, the Bulgarian-Turkish disputes over the Bulgarian Turks and the Greco-Turkish disputes over Cyprus and the Aegean serve only as a few such examples.

Bilateral Relations

In most cases, Bulgaria’s bilateral relations with the states of the Balkan region during the 1980s present a remarkable change in comparison with the past. In order to explain this, it is necessary to look at the factors affecting these relations, which can be systematized in four areas. These are: (a) environmental issues; (b) nationalism; (c) territorial issues; and (d) economic issues, with particular reference to bilateral trade and investment.

a. Environmental Issues

The term ‘environmental issues’ refers to those regional and international issues which affected intra-bloc relations. On some occasions, these issues came to determine Bulgarian relations with its Balkan neighbours for the following reasons. Firstly, environmental issues were always at the centre of the USSR’s attention and in some cases, this led Moscow to tighten its control over Bulgaria’s foreign policy in order to make sure it loyaly followed its line. Secondly, due to the close political and economic relations between Moscow and Sofia throughout the Cold War, Bulgaria was often viewed with suspicion by other Balkan states and thus the Soviet policy on
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a number of environmental issues often determined the Balkan states’ will to promote bilateral relations with Sofia.

The two Balkan states whose relations with Bulgaria were particularly affected by environmental issues throughout the 1980s were Albania and Yugoslavia. In the case of Bulgarian-Albanian relations, it could be argued that they imitated Albanian-Soviet relations. Sofia’s relations with Tirana were frozen after the rift in Soviet-Albanian relations in the 1960s and were officially terminated when Albania withdrew from the Warsaw Pact after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.\(^{183}\) From then on bilateral relations remained cool, both sides often engaged in bitter polemics, and only after Gorbachev’s accession to power did they enter a new phase with Tirana relaxing its rigid political stance towards the Warsaw Pact countries, including Bulgaria.\(^ {184}\)

Environmental issues also influenced Bulgarian-Yugoslav relations, especially as regards Macedonia. At the beginning of the 1980s, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led to a decline in Belgrade-Moscow relations and this gave Bulgaria an opportunity to raise again the Macedonian issue.\(^ {185}\) However, problems resulting from its policy of assimilating the Muslim minority led the Bulgarian authorities to adopt a more conciliatory tone. During an exchange of official visits by the Yugoslav and Bulgarian Prime Ministers in 1984 and 1985, the Bulgarians put forward plans for encouraging cross-border trade and an agreement to control information on the issue that the mass media were broadcasting to the public on both sides.\(^ {186}\)

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\(^{183}\) Griffith, 1963; Marmullaku, 1975, p. 127; Grigorova, 1985, pp. 295-309


\(^{185}\) Braun, 1983, p.223.

\(^{186}\) RFE Bulgarian SR/10, 14-8-1984, pp. 1-4; RFE Bulgarian SR/13, 17-12-1985, item 1; Palmer & King, 1971.
b. Nationalism

According to William Bloom, when governments feel insecure about their ability to keep political control, they sometimes use nationalist propaganda to rally support.\(^{187}\) This was especially true of the Bulgarian government during the 1980s. Sofia faced harsh economic realities, which caused social unrest and eroded the communist regime’s legitimacy. Coercion alone can compensate for declining legitimacy, but as G. Schöpf is remarks “...any regime, no matter how repressive, needs some sort of wider goal which may be future-oriented but it needs also to refer to the past.”\(^{188}\) In the 1980s, the Bulgarian communist regime exploited nationalism.\(^{189}\)

Since the late 1960s, nationalism, along with the policy of consumerism, had been one of the strategies used by the Bulgarian communist authorities to enhance its legitimacy, which had been eroded by the tough domestic political measures introduced following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.\(^{190}\) However, since the Bulgarian economy was not sufficiently developed to sustain a policy of consumerism, nationalism became increasingly important as an instrument for maintaining legitimacy.

The fact that Sofia was closely aligned with Moscow meant that expressions of nationalism were highly dependent on the will of the Soviet authorities. In the 1980s the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and accumulated problems in the Soviet economy monopolized Moscow’s political attention, providing the space for a greater

\(^{187}\) Bloom, 1990, p. 79-81.
\(^{188}\) Schöpf, 1993, p. 191.
\(^{189}\) Ibid, pp. 193-5.
\(^{190}\) Crampton, 1997, pp. 202-3.
expression of Bulgarian nationalism. This was seen in cultural events, such as the celebration of the 1300th anniversary of the founding of the first Bulgarian state.\textsuperscript{191} In addition, as will be discussed below, nationalism was expressed in the form of policies discriminating against ethnic minorities, for instance the Bulgarian Turks, and engagement in bitter polemics with neighbouring countries such as Yugoslavia over the Macedonian issue.\textsuperscript{192}

1. Bulgarian Turks

Since the creation of the modern Bulgarian state, the Bulgarian Turks have often been an issue colouring Sofia's relations with both the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey. The Bulgarian Turks generally live in close communities in the Arda river basin in South Bulgaria, and in the region of Dobrudzha in the North. They are generally believed to have inhabited these areas since the 14\textsuperscript{th} century, when Turkish ethnic groups began to settle in the Balkan region.\textsuperscript{193}

The importance of the Bulgarian language and the practice of the Christian Orthodox religion as fundamental elements of Bulgarian national identity, has led the state to often treat its Turks as second-class citizens,\textsuperscript{194} because most were practising Muslims, used Turkish as their mother tongue, and often were unable to communicate in the Bulgarian language. On many occasions, the state authorities took such measures as the closure of Turkish schools and demolition of mosques, with the hope that by discouraging these people from speaking their mother tongue and practising

\textsuperscript{191} RFE Bulgarian/14, 23-10-1981, items 1&2; Crampton, 1997, p. 204.
\textsuperscript{192} See below.
\textsuperscript{193} Appendix, maps 7&8; Poulton, 1991, p. 119; Simsir, 1988, pp. 1-3; Sahin et al., 1990; Yasar, 1986.
their religion in public, they would foster their assimilation into the ethnic majority. However, such measures proved counterproductive, and many Bulgarian Turks migrated to Turkey, where they believed their cultural rights would be respected. These measures also brought Bulgaria into conflict with Turkey, which viewed these people as a kin ethnic group, and defended their human and minority rights inside Bulgaria.

After the end of the WWII, the communist regime took a series of measures aimed at preserving the distinct ethnic identity of the Bulgarian Turks. The regime wished to be seen to be introducing policies that were more tolerant of this minority than those of the previous ‘bourgeois governments’. Thus, on coming to power, the new regime allowed the circulation of Turkish language newspapers and magazines, gave authorization for the creation of Turkish schools, and opened a department for Turkish language and literature at the University of Sofia.\(^{195}\)

However, this situation did not continue. The BCP feared that the existence of a Turkish minority inside Bulgaria served Turkey’s and the Western bloc’s long-term interests in the Balkan region and that it would give Ankara the right to intervene in Bulgarian politics under the pretext of defending the minority rights of a kin ethnic group.\(^{196}\) In addition, Sofia’s communist authorities feared that any measures aimed at fostering a community spirit among the members of the Turkish minority would provide fertile ground for secessionist political and military movements to erupt, which could challenge the territorial integrity of the state. For all these reasons, on 4 October 1958, the plenum of the BCP Central Committee decided to merge Turkish

\(^{195}\) Poulton, 1991, p. 120.
\(^{196}\) It should be noted at this point that both Greece and Turkey became full NATO member states in 1952.
and Bulgarian schools, and by the early 1970s the teaching of Turkish in schools had been discontinued. The department of Turkish language and literature in Sofia University, which reportedly attracted large numbers of students most of whom were ethnic Turks, also stopped admitting students. These measures soured Bulgaria's relations with Ankara and caused unrest among the members of the Turkish minority who started emigrating to Turkey. Emigration was regulated under the terms of two agreements which Sofia had concluded with Ankara; the first of which was signed in 1950 and the second in 1968.

One measure that seriously affected Bulgarian-Turkish relations in the 1980s was euphemistically termed by the Bulgarian communist regime Vuzroditelnia Protse (Regenerative Process). It arose in 1984 with the aim of assimilating the approximately one million ethnic Turks living in Bulgaria by forcing them to change their Turkish names to Slavic ones. The idea was conceived by Zhivkov and his political entourage, and is believed to be the last resort of the communist regime following the failure of earlier political strategies to integrate Bulgaria's large Muslim minority into a 'united Bulgarian socialist nation'. The timing of the launch of this 'process' was determined as much by the domestic need to boost the legitimacy of the regime as by international factors, which the BCP saw as being opportune. The Soviet Union was powerful enough to protect Bulgaria from international reaction, but incapable of enforcing it to follow more tolerant policies towards the Muslim minority due to the prolonged illness of the then Soviet leader, Konstantin Chernenko, which had diverted Soviet attention from the domestic politics of its satellites.

The Regenerative Process seriously harmed Bulgaria’s economic and diplomatic relations with Turkey, and reduced Bulgaria’s standing throughout the world, including Moscow when Gorbachev came to power. In an effort to put pressure on the Bulgarian regime, the Turkish government cut back its already minimal bilateral trade, with imports from Bulgaria falling by 31.6% and exports by 68.9%, and put forward plans to free its traffic from reliance on the overland route through Bulgarian territory by seeking to establish ferry links with Romania and Italy. In addition, Turkey launched a campaign to isolate Zhivkov’s regime internationally by lobbying international organisations, such as the UN and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which gave it unconditional support.

In response to the Turkish political initiatives, the Bulgarian regime pursued a two-fold policy. First, the Bulgarian leadership sought to prevent Turkey from undertaking any military action against Bulgaria and to this end Sofia forged a temporary military alliance with Greece with the signing in 1986 of the Declaration of Friendship and Good Neighbourliness, which obliged both states to confer in the event of emergencies. The signing of this was seen by Turkey as being aimed at them, suspicions that became stronger when, at the height of a Greek-Turkish dispute over the legal status of the Aegean Sea, Greece tried to secure Bulgaria’s support in the event of a Greco-Turkish war. Second, in order to appease international and Soviet interests, the Bulgarian government gave signs of concession regarding the assimilation campaign, and signed a protocol with Turkey obliging both sides to promote relations of Good Neighbourliness and Friendship by creating a mixed
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commission to work for full normalization of bilateral relations. In fact, this protocol had no real results because the Bulgarian regime did not really want to put an end to the campaign.204

The Regenerative Process was to fatally undermine Zhivkov’s regime. By the end of the 1980s, the Turkish minority areas were in a state of virtual revolt and it seemed that the Bulgarian leadership had lost control of the situation. In 1989, in an effort to curb the turmoil, Zhivkov opened the borders to those minority members who preferred to emmigrate to Turkey, a gesture to which about 300,000 Bulgarian Muslims responded.205 Turkey, unable to absorb such huge numbers of refugees, retaliated by closing its borders, which resulted in a further deterioration of already strained Bulgarian-Turkish relations. Faced with an intolerable situation Moscow offered its backing to a palace coup led by prominent BCP members, which ousted Zhivkov from power.206

2. Bulgarian Macedonians207

Bulgarian Macedonians are a national minority whose lives have been closely interwoven with Bulgarian-Yugoslav relations. In contrast to the case of the Bulgarian Turks, whose welfare determined Bulgaria’s relations with Turkey, it was the welfare of the Bulgarian Macedonians that was affected by Bulgarian-Yugoslav relations.

204 RFE Bulgarian SR/7, 29-7-1988, p. 15.
207 Bulgarian Macedonians are a Slavic ethnic group that lives mainly in the Pirin region of South-western Bulgaria.
There is no agreement on the exact number of ethnic Macedonians living in Bulgaria. Yugoslav academic and political sources claim their numbers to be some 252,908 people. These claims are based on the results of an official census conducted by the Bulgarian state in 1946. However, this census was conducted in a period that was favourable to Bulgarian Macedonians as a result of the then Bulgarian communist leader, Georgi Dimitrov, being of Macedonian origin, both his parents originating from the region known today as FYROM. The BCP recognized the existence of a Macedonian minority in Bulgaria and encouraged cross-border economic and cultural contacts between the Macedonians living in the Bulgarian region of Pirin and the citizens of the SRM in the SFRY. In addition, with Moscow's encouragement, Bulgaria was at that time prepared to promote a customs union with the SFRY and forge a series of other measures aimed at simplifying passport formalities and facilitating border crossing procedures with the SFRY with the view to creating a federal Balkan state, which would first include the SFRY, Bulgaria and Albania and eventually extend to include Greece and Romania.

However, the plan to create a federal Balkan state was abandoned after the rift in Soviet-Yugoslav relations in 1948, which led the communist authorities in Sofia to change their views regarding the existence of a Macedonian minority in Bulgaria. Indeed, the official position of the BCP was that there was no Macedonian nation in the Balkan region and the people who called themselves Macedonians were in fact ethnic Bulgarians. Furthermore, the communist regime took a series of administrative measures aimed at discouraging any open manifestation of Macedonian ethnic identity among the so-called Bulgarian Macedonians. Thus, when renewing the

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compulsory personal identity cards in 1960, the Bulgarian authorities re-classified all those originally registered as Macedonians, as ethnic Bulgarians. A series of political trials were held where Bulgarian Macedonians were accused of undermining state sovereignty and, with the adoption of the criminal law of 1968, the largest number ever of those accused of propaganda, antidemocratic and nationalist ideology were tried under articles 108 and 109 for agitation and propaganda against the state. As a result of these measures, the number of people who officially defined themselves as Macedonians was severely reduced. The national census of 1956 showed approximately 187,789 people registered as Macedonians, a number which fell to 8,750 in the national census of 1965.209 After 1965, the communist authorities of Sofia stopped recording the numbers of Bulgarian Macedonians in national censuses.210

In refusing to recognize the existence of either a Macedonian nation in the Balkans, or a Macedonian minority in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian communist regime had adopted a policy which was to fester in Bulgarian-Yugoslav relations after 1948. This was one of the main impediments to Sofia fostering sound political and economic relations with Belgrade. On numerous occasions, the issue was also used by Zhivkov’s regime to distract public attention from Bulgaria’s economic problems.

A number of events gave rise to bitter polemics between the communist authorities, the academic communities and the press of the two states.211 In January 1979, for example, Tsola Dragoitseva, a Bulgarian Politburo member, published her memoirs, in which she explicitly stated that the Slavic population of the SRM were ethnic Bulgarians and not Macedonians as they claimed, while, in 1983, the Bulgarian army

209 Ibid.
210 Ortakovski, 2000, pp. 165-6.
celebrated the 80th anniversary of the Ilinden uprising, an event which the historiography of the Macedonians of Yugoslavia treat as part of their national history.\footnote{RFE Background Report/26 (Bulgaria), 31-1-1979; RFE Background Report/297 (Bulgaria), 31-12-1983, p. 5-6; RFE Bulgaria/5, 18-4-1983; RFE Bulgaria/3, 20-2-1981, item 1; RFE Background Report/49 (Bulgaria), 3-6-1985.} There were political attempts to reach a compromise about the existence of Bulgarian Macedonians in Bulgaria. In November 1980, for example, the Yugoslav Minister of Foreign Affairs, Josip Vrohvec, paid an official visit to Sofia during which this issue was discussed without any agreement being reached.\footnote{RFE Background Report/282 (Bulgaria), 25-11-1980.} In July 1984, the Yugoslav Prime Minister, Milka Planic, also paid an official visit to Bulgaria, the first since the end of WWII.\footnote{RFE, Bulgaria/10, 14-8-1984.} During talks with Bulgarian officials, Planic attempted to persuade Bulgaria to recognize the existence of a Macedonian minority in its state by referring to the approximately 30,000 Bulgarians living in the Socialist Republic of Serbia, close to the Bulgarian-Yugoslav borders, to whom the Yugoslav communist authorities had granted minority status. However, the results of these discussions were negligible. Zhivkov’s regime continued to hold the view that there were no Macedonians in the Balkans and that all those who claimed to be Macedonians were ethnic Bulgarians, thus undermining any real prospect of improvement in Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations.\footnote{BMFA, кш/3/80/п.27, No. 55-80-82 (1988).}

c. Territorial Issues

Prior to WWII, Bulgaria had nurtured territorial claims against its Balkan neighbours and, as a consequence, territorial issues often determined Bulgaria’s bilateral relations with neighbouring Balkan states. Although similar issues were affecting the bilateral
relations of many states in the Balkan region at that time, with the exception of the
First Balkan War, Bulgaria was on the losing side in all the wars in which it
participated during the first half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, and lost many of the territories in
the geographic regions of Macedonia and Thrace which had originally constituted part
of the Medieval Bulgarian Kingdoms of the Bulgarian Kings (Tsars) Samuel and
Simeon. These kingdoms were inhabited by large Slavic ethnic groups in modern
times and, thus, were viewed by the Bulgarian political elite as being Bulgarian. As a
result of these losses, there was a feeling among the Bulgarian political elite that, in
territorial terms, Bulgaria had been treated unfairly by most of the treaties which
determined the territorial status quo of the Balkans.

During WWII, Bulgaria increased its territorial holdings. The first territorial gains
since the First Balkan War came in September 1940 as a result of Soviet-German
cooperation. Following German conquests in Scandinavia and France, Stalin
demanded compensation in the East, which was made at the expense of Romania. In
the treaty of Craiova signed on 7 September 1940, Romania was forced to offer
Southern Dobrudzha to Bulgaria.\textsuperscript{216} In addition, after the German invasion of Greece
and Yugoslavia in April 1941, Sofia was given political control of several large
territories in Greece and Yugoslavia, including western Thrace, the islands of
Samothrace and Thassos, and Serbian Macedonia, but not full ownership, thereby
denying it from taking full territorial control and leaving the German Axis.\textsuperscript{217} After the
end of the War, Sofia lost these Greek and Yugoslav areas, but retained control of
Southern Dobrudzha.

\textsuperscript{216} Crampton, 1997, pp. 169-170; Cornea, 1940.
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., pp. 171-2.
After WWII, territorial issues did not seem to have the same influence over Sofia’s relations with neighbouring Balkan states and throughout the period of the Cold War Bulgaria made no attempts to make territorial claims. With its signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, Sofia committed to accepting the post-War territorial status quo of the region.\textsuperscript{218}

There are cases where it could be argued that Sofia’s communist regime had not abandoned its long held territorial claims. For example, for most of the Cold War period, it refused to recognize the existence of a Macedonian nation in the Balkans and did not cope well with the newly created SRM as a constituent republic of the SFRY after WWII. Apart from its negative attitude vis-à-vis the Macedonian issue, a series of cultural events was initiated in the 1970s with the aim of orientating the cultural historical inheritance of Modern Bulgarians to the ancient Thracians, whom Greek national historiography claims were the Modern Greeks’ ancestors. In addition, in March 1987 when Greece was on the brink of war with Turkey, the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, Karolos Papoulias, paid a visit to Sofia and asked for military assistance in the event of a Greco-Turkish military conflict. The Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Petur Mladenov, agreed to offer such assistance to Greece, provided that Athens recognized article 48 of the Neuilly-sur-Seine treaty signed between Bulgaria and the winning states of the First World War in 1919. This article compensated for Bulgaria’s loss of western Thrace with guarantees of economic access to the Aegean Sea, which have never been realized since 1919-even after Mladenov’s demanding its recognition in return for assistance.

\textsuperscript{218} Bell, 2001, pp. 310-14.
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However, these cases should be seen more in the light of an attempt to distract the Bulgarian public from the country’s economic and political problems than a systematic diplomatic effort to redraw the territorial boundaries in the Balkans. In particular, Sofia’s refusal to recognize a distinct Macedonian nation aimed to deprive the Yugoslav authorities of the theoretical basis on which they claimed the existence of a Macedonian minority within Bulgaria. The recognition of such a minority was seen as possible encouragement to the appearance of secessionist movements in the region of Pirin, to challenge Bulgaria’s territorial integrity.

Mladenov’s willingness to offer military assistance to Greece, with its condition that Athens should implement article 48 of the Neuilly-sur-Seine treaty, should be viewed as a reaction, which, if it had been applied in practice, would have been seen as having a positive effect on the current fragile Bulgarian economy. It could also be argued that the Bulgarian Foreign Minister’s willingness to offer assistance was of no practical value since, as the then Bulgarian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ivan Ganev, maintained, the offer was made in the belief that war between Greece and Turkey would not be declared, because NATO would intervene to stop two member states from becoming engaged in a military conflict.219

The question at this point then is why did territorial issues during the Cold War period have less influence on Bulgaria’s relations with its Balkan neighbours compared to the period before WWII? There are several possible answers. Firstly, Sofia’s communist elites renounced pre-War Bulgarian territorial claims towards neighbouring Balkan states, because they did not wish to identify themselves with

what they viewed as a political means used by pre-war ‘bourgeois’ elites to rally
public support and remain in power. Secondly, the fulfilment of these claims was
impossible during the Cold War because it presupposed an autonomous foreign
policy, which Sofia lacked as a result of its close alliance with Moscow. Even had
Bulgaria enjoyed autonomy, engagement in policies which sought to revise the
territorial status quo of the Balkan region was a political and military task which Sofia
could not sustain without Moscow’s active diplomatic, economic and military
support. According to Zhivkov, even with this support, Bulgaria was incapable of
resisting a land attack by NATO forces spearheaded by the Turkish army.220 Warsaw
Pact military exercises throughout the Cold War period indicated that the USSR’s
closest ally in the Balkans would have to depend on its own military capabilities for at
least ten days before Soviet military aid arrived, something which was far beyond
Bulgaria’s military abilities.221

d. Economic Issues

In the immediate post-war period, the foreign relations of the Balkan states were
influenced by political more than by economic criteria. The fact that all these states
emerged from the WWII with their economies wrecked favoured excessive political
control over these economies, which in turn prevented the development of an
autonomous economic sector able to influence foreign policy making. This was
especially true in the case of Bulgaria, where the establishment of a communist
political system submerged every economic activity under the tutelage of the BCP.

220 Zhivkov, 1993, pp. 150-1.
221 Ibid.
Economics progressively came to play a major role in Sofia’s foreign policy after the mid-1970s. This was not because the BCP lessened its political control over the country’s economy or because an autonomous economic sector emerged. Rather, economic problems, such as increased foreign debts, eroded the legitimacy of the communist regime and necessitated a reorientation of Bulgaria’s foreign policy on a more pragmatic basis. This reorientation meant that Sofia had to turn westwards and to the immediate Balkan region to find hard currency in order to renew industrial technology, thus revitalizing productivity and economic growth. Although economic pragmatism after the mid-1970s was not immune to the political climate, the state of the Bulgarian economy came to determine the country’s Balkan policies.

In its search for hard currency, Bulgaria turned to the Greek and Turkish markets, where its industrial products had a comparative advantage because they were priced lower than Western industrial goods. However, external constraints limited speedy development of trade relations with both NATO states. In the case of Greece, entry to the European Community compelled Greece to trade more with Western European than with Comecon countries, especially with regard to the products that Bulgaria tended to be exporting. At the same time, Bulgaria could not absorb many of the agricultural products which Greece could not sell in the European market because it had a developed agricultural sector. Thus, bilateral trade with Greece did not develop, despite the good political and military relations of the two states. Total bilateral trade value was $7.18m at the beginning of the decade, and was $7.6m in 1988. In the case of Turkey, Bulgaria’s treatment of its Turkish minority had a serious impact

\[222\] Gianaris, 1982, p. 147 and 153.
\[223\] RFE Bulgarian SR/10, 6-11-1986, item 3; Gianaris, 1982, pp. 154-8.
\[224\] Appendix, tables 1 & 2.
\[225\] EIU, No. 1, 1986, appendix 4; EIU, No. 4, 1989, appendix 4.
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on bilateral trade. During the first half of the decade, this trade, although modest, was increasing, with exports rising from $4.64m in 1981 to $10.70m in 1984, and imports growing from $0.82m in 1981 to about $2m in 1985.\textsuperscript{226} After the initiation of the *Vůrodušiště Protse*, both exports and imports fell sharply, with the former being $0.8m and the latter $0.9m by the end of the decade.\textsuperscript{227}

Despite these constraints on Bulgaria's trade with Greece and Turkey, however, the large trade deficit with Western states during the second half of the decade compelled the Bulgarian regime to forge cooperation with its two Balkan neighbours by encouraging joint ventures as a way of attracting hard currency. One could cite joint ventures such as the collaboration between the Greek company Elleourgia Voriou Ellados and the Bulgarian firm Bulgarsko Pivo in the production of beer and non-alcoholic drinks,\textsuperscript{228} or the joint ventures in 1986 between the Bulgarian, Greek and Turkish governments with the Soviet Union for the supply of 750,000m\textsuperscript{3} of Soviet natural gas through a pipeline crossing Bulgarian territory.\textsuperscript{229}

**Conclusion**

There were discernible differences from the past in Bulgaria's foreign policy making of the 1980s. Although its foreign policy mechanisms remained the same, the change of leadership in the USSR in the mid-1980s, harsh economic realities, and a changed international environment resulting from the demise of the Soviet empire favoured

\textsuperscript{227} EIU, No. 4, 1989, appendix 4.
\textsuperscript{228} EIU, No. 3, 1988, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{229} EIU, No. 3, 1986, pp. 26-27.
new foreign policies, which were in sharp contrast to the principles of socialist internationalism.

During this period, a power vacuum in Moscow following the death of the long-serving Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev in November 1982, along with the Soviet foreign policy of NPT, which was introduced after the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev came to power, gave Sofia leeway to seek some degree of autonomy for Bulgaria’s foreign policy. This was encouraged by the country’s harsh economic realities which were the result of state economic mismanagement and Moscow’s decision to restrict the USSR’s previously generous economic subsidies. As a result, the West and the immediate Balkan region gained in importance, while the Third World retained the same significance in Sofia’s foreign policy agenda as in the past. In the case of the Balkans in particular, this pragmatism was the foundation for increasing both bilateral relations and efforts at regional multilateral cooperation.

However, the economic realities did not determine a linear course in Bulgaria’s foreign policy agenda during the 1980s. A number of factors led the country to deviate from the immediate region and the West. In relation to the West, it was the presence of the USSR in the Balkan region, whose role, although diminishing, remained important to Sofia. Bulgaria’s full integration in the Soviet bloc, for instance, gave the Soviet Union a strong say in Sofia’s foreign policy, such as preventing Zhivkov from improving relations with the FRG in 1984. In terms of bilateral relations, this linear process was disturbed by nationalism, and the aggressive policies, such as the Vůzroditelntia Protses towards the Bulgarian Turks.
Despite a relaxation in Bulgarian politics during the 1980s, the BCP continued by and large to control domestic political life, thus restricting the factors influencing foreign policy to its cadres. However, this relaxation established the ground for other factors to come into play in Bulgaria’s foreign policy: for example, ethnic minorities and political movements opposing the country’s communist regime from which a number of political parties emerged in the 1990s.
Chapter II

From a People’s to a Liberal Democracy

Introduction

The ‘palace coup’ of 10 November 1989 ended the BCP’s monopoly on power and introduced Bulgaria to democratization. During this period, a series of domestic political changes occurred which affected the country’s foreign policy. First, the process of democratization increased the number of actors in domestic politics. These included political parties, think-tanks and ethnic minority groups, many of which had their own foreign policy agendas. Second, the whole process of foreign policy making changed. In the communist past, foreign policy was decided within the party and implemented by the state; with the introduction of a multiparty political arena during democratization, foreign policy was decided by political parties in power and implemented by state institutions, while parliamentary political parties in opposition, public opinion, ethnic minorities and several social groups also played a role.

This chapter shows how Sofia’s foreign policy making since 1989 has been influenced by changes in the country’s domestic political scene, resulting from the collapse of communism. Two aspects of Bulgaria’s foreign policy making in the post-communist period are analysed: a) how foreign policy mechanisms function; b) the factors influencing the formation of the foreign policy agendas of the domestic actors,
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including the political parties, public opinion, think-tanks and ethnic minority groups.\textsuperscript{230}

Foreign Policy Mechanisms

At its December 1990 plenum, the Central Committee of the BCP decided to repeal paragraphs 2 and 3 of the 1971 constitution,\textsuperscript{231} which had legitimised the leading role of the Party in foreign policy making. This decision opened debate over the mechanisms and processes of foreign policy making in the new democracy. The formal debate took place at the National Roundtable Talks. Based on its outcomes, in the 1990 constitution, the state institutions contributing to foreign policy making were: the Council of Ministers (government); the National Assembly; the President of the Republic; and the Constitutional Court.\textsuperscript{232}

The Council of Ministers has the authority to conclude, ratify and renounce international treaties.\textsuperscript{233} The National Assembly has responsibility for declaring war and making peace, deciding on the dispatch of the Bulgarian armed forces abroad, the

\textsuperscript{230} Political elites in democratic states typically demonstrate their political power through official political channels such as political parties, the public, and policy making academic institutes, known as think-tanks. This chapter analyses the foreign policy agendas of the political elite and its official political channels of one particular state and time: post-1989 Bulgaria. The unofficial channels, such as organised economic groups and the mass media, are not dealt with here but this is not to say that their political influence in post-1989 Bulgaria was not important. However, organised economic groups in Bulgaria have rarely acted as lobby groups with clear foreign policy agendas; generally, their political agendas are driven by economic opportunities. Thus, whenever they felt that it would be economically advantageous for them, they would support policy decisions. Topenergy, which is analysed in the next chapter, is one such example where these lobby groups tried to influence the Bulgarian authorities’ decisions. The influence of the private sector in the mass media is weak with only the television channels - which are under state control - being allowed to broadcast nationwide during most of the post-1989 period. This left the media with little scope for developing a foreign policy agenda that deviated from that of the state authorities.


\textsuperscript{233} Article 106.
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stationing of foreign troops on Bulgarian territory, and the ratification or abrogation of international treaties. The President of the Republic concludes international treaties, ratifies changes to Bulgaria's territorial borders and appoints or dismisses the heads of diplomatic missions abroad. Finally, the Constitutional Court rules on whether the above mentioned mechanisms are in line with international treaties.

Since the start of democratization, there have been no coordination problems over foreign policy between the government and the National Assembly for three reasons. Firstly, their domains of responsibility are different: government deals with the executive side of foreign policy while the National Assembly is responsible for the legislative side. Secondly, while all parliamentary political forces are represented on the foreign policy committee of the parliament and can voice their opinions, the majority of the members of this committee are political representatives of the political party in power. This is usually sufficient to ensure that the committee backs government policy, since in Bulgaria, as in any other parliamentary democracy, the political party controlling the government is generally in the majority. Thirdly, the constitution decrees that the National Assembly is the supreme authority and, over foreign policy issues, the government must either support the Assembly or resign.

The Constitutional Court and the other three institutions have also operated amicably since 1989. According to the Constitution, the Court pronounces on the constitutionality of foreign policy decisions taken by the state authorities. Therefore, its sphere of responsibility is narrow, limiting the possibility of conflict. In addition, even in the event of institutional conflict, the Constitutional Court, as the supreme

234 Article 84.
235 Article 100.
236 Article 149.
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juridical authority, makes the final decision in conflicts over matters concerning the constitutionality of laws and government decisions.237

However, between the government and the President of the Republic, major conflicts can arise because they are involved in executive foreign policy making. This situation is exacerbated if the President is from a different political party from the ruling government, and therefore has potentially a different foreign policy agenda. Also, there are constitutional anomalies which have become the basis for clashes between the two institutions.

For instance, article 98 of the constitution stipulates that the President, after consultation with the government, is responsible for appointing or dismissing Bulgarian diplomats.238 However, while constitutionally a consensus between the two institutions is required, the constitution does not specify how differences over appointments or dismissals are to be resolved. This situation is not merely theoretical as such cases have occurred. One such was in November 1995 when the Zhan Videnov government decided to recall six ambassadors who happened to be personal friends of the then President, Zheliu Zhelev.239 The President refused to ratify the government’s decision and a conflict arose over the issue, which was only resolved by the government agreeing to some of Zhelev’s advisers being made foreign diplomats.240

237 For the composition of the Constitutional Court see article 147 of the constitution; see also Melone, 1998, p. 142.
238 Article 98.
239 The ambassadors involved were: Slavi Pashovski, Bulgaria’s ambassador to New York; Lea Koen, ambassador to Brussels; Svetlozar Raev, Bulgaria’s representative in the EU (Strasbourg); Vladimir Filipov, ambassador to Lisbon; Elena Kircheva, ambassador to Bern; and Yani Milchakov, ambassador to the Vatican. See Staff Reporter, ‘Nine Ambassadors Secretly Replaced’, 24 Chasa, 22 September 1995, pp. 1-2, in FBIS-EEU-95-186, 26 November 1995, p.3; Zhelev, 1998, pp. 80-94.
240 Ibid.
Also, article 98 stipulates that the President should conclude international treaties,\textsuperscript{241} while article 106 refers to the government as also being responsible for concluding such treaties.\textsuperscript{242} To date, no legal decision has been reached about when the President is responsible and when the government has responsibility, an ambiguity which has produced conflict on many occasions. In October 1995, President Zhelev signed a declaration in New York with the Presidents of Albania and FYROM, giving consent to the construction of a highway corridor linking the Bulgarian port of Burgas on the Black Sea with the Albanian port of Vlore on the Adriatic Sea. This declaration was signed without consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and went against the policy of the Zhan Videnov government, which did not favour relations with Albania and FYROM.\textsuperscript{243} After the declaration had been signed, the deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kostadin Glavanakov, stated that he was unaware of its contents.\textsuperscript{244}

\textit{Constitutional Anomalies and Constitutional Crafting}

The constitutional anomalies relating to executive power in foreign policy making should be viewed within the context of the crafting of the constitution during the first two years of democratization. The main priority in this process was the creation of a checks and balances political system, which would prevent executive power being assumed by a single political force. There are many historical examples of such usurpation in Bulgaria, even before the communist era, and, to avoid a recurrence, the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[\textsuperscript{241}] Article 98.
\item[\textsuperscript{242}] Article 106.
\item[\textsuperscript{243}] Interview with Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Georgi Pirinski by Kostadin Ivanov, \textit{Duma}, 26 January 1995, pp.7-8 in \textit{FBIS-EEU-96-021}, 31 January 1996, pp. 3-4
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
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post-communist political elite followed the example of other EES by seeking to copy the institutional framework of WES. The Bulgarian political elite saw Western Europe as a model in terms of political stability, which it attributed to the good performance of the political institutions in WES.

However, Western Europe does not present a uniform picture of government design. While certain democratic principles, such as the separation of powers, or checks and balances between state institutions, are shared by all Western European political systems, these principles can take different forms, such as the constitutional monarchy in Great Britain, the French semi-Presidential system or the German chancellor-based parliamentary system.

The fact that Bulgaria adopted a political system close to the French semi-Presidential model with a directly elected President was mainly the result of a compromise between the leadership of the two major political forces, the BSP and the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), during the constitution making process. The BSP supported a strong parliamentary system, where the authority of the President would be weak. This was mainly because, at the time, the BSP had a parliamentary majority, which party leaders thought they could maintain in the years to come. In contrast, the UDF and its leaders argued for a strong Presidential system based on the fact that

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246 Ibid.
247 It is noteworthy that during the National Roundtable Talks, which began on 4 January 1990 and ended on 30 March 1990, BSP supported a strong Presidential system. This was because: 1) the President at that time was Petur Mladenov, a leading BSP member; 2) BSP believed it would lose the first general elections in June 1990. Grozev, 1994, pp. 4-7; also Interview with Grozev Kostadin, 16 January 2002. For a general overview on the National Roundtable Talks in Bulgaria see Melone, 1997, pp. 19-111; Bell, 1997, p. 364.
Bulgaria's President at the time was Zheliu Zhelev, who had in the past led the UDF.\textsuperscript{248}

The compromise was also influenced by the intense political climate in which the constitution making process took place. This was marked by heated parliamentary exchanges over economic issues, such as the food shortages in Bulgaria in the summer of 1991, and the situation was inflamed by huge public demonstrations. The socialist government wanted to finalise the constitution as quickly as possible in order to focus its energies on the economy, which would ultimately determine the government's fate. However, this rendered the process hasty, and affected the final outcome. As a result of the speed with which the constitution making process took place, the document presents anomalies, such as those already mentioned concerning the responsibilities of the executive in foreign policy making.

\textit{The Role of Personality in Foreign Policy Making}

Constitutional anomalies do not fully explain the institutional conflicts over foreign policy making. For example, while the constitution remained unchanged throughout the period of democratization, most of the conflicts between the President and the government on foreign policy issues occurred before November 1996, which was when Zhelev relinquished his position as President of the Republic. It is often the case that in democratizing states, such as Bulgaria, the powers claimed by state institutions do not always coincide with those set by constitutional prerogatives. Quite often, the individuals in charge of these institutions violate the constitutional prerogatives, and

\textsuperscript{248} During the Roundtable Talks, UDF favoured a strong parliamentary system because the UDF leadership expected to win the general elections of June 1990. Ibid.
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attempt to expand the sphere of their responsibilities when they feel that political conditions are favourable.

By the end of 1996, when Zhelev was President, Bulgaria was experiencing marked governmental instability, which continued for a couple of months after he relinquished the position. There had been four changes of government by November 1996 and the President was the only stability in the executive power. Zhelev exploited this situation to try and increase his influence over foreign policy making.

Zhelev's attempts to increase his influence were mainly exemplified by two occurrences. The first was his plan to establish a network of foreign diplomats who were friendly to him, through which he could more easily promote his views on foreign policy. This plan was implemented by Zhelev's adviser on foreign policy, Kamen Velichkov.249 After the UDF government of Filip Dimitrov came to power in 1991, Velichkov found it possible to appoint such diplomats. To this end, he was helped by the constitutional prerogatives requiring consent between the President and the government, because in 1991-1992, when these appointments took place, both branches of the executive were controlled by the same party, namely the UDF.250

The second example was Bulgaria's decision on 15 January 1992 to recognize FYROM under its constitutional name, the Republic of Macedonia.251 Although the decision was taken by the government, Zhelev's input was decisive.252 Through his friend, Stefan Trafov, who at that time was deputy Prime Minister, Zhelev persuaded...

251 Georgiev & Tsenkov, 1993, p. 17
the government that Bulgaria should be the first country to recognise FYROM under such a name. At the government session which took the decision, Trafov disclosed confidential information from the Presidential Palace, that Turkey was planning to recognise the Republic and it was in Bulgaria's interest not to lag behind Turkey.255

The decision was taken when the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stoian Ganev, was on an official tour in Europe, and this was no coincidence. Ganev had argued that Bulgaria's policy towards FYROM should be in line with the policy of the EEC, otherwise it risked complicating relations with the EEC, and especially with Greece, and endangering the possibility of it entering the Community.254 Thus, immediately after the decision was announced, Ganev made a public statement holding the President and the Prime Minister name responsible for this decision. The Prime Minister reacted by accusing Ganev of acting contrary to Bulgaria's interests. An institutional crisis was avoided by concessions and compromises being made on both sides. Trafov became the scapegoat and, after an agreement between Zhelev and Dimitrov, he was sent to be ambassador to Rome, with the promise of a move to London when his period of office in Rome expired. On returning to Sofia, Ganev made a public statement agreeing with the decision to recognize FYROM as the Republic of Macedonia, but maintaining that the government would review the decision if the EEC failed to recognize FYROM under such a name.255

Foreign Policy Making under the Presidency of Petur Stoianov

Cooperation between the President and the government on foreign policy making improved greatly after 1997, when another UDF member, Petur Stoianov, replaced Zhelev as President. This improvement was not the result of amendments to the constitutional prerogatives of the government and the President but rather because, unlike Zhelev, Stoianov had no credentials that allowed him to pursue an autonomous foreign policy. Again, unlike Zhelev, the founder of the party, Stoianov had been one of the younger generation of members who were elevated in the hierarchy after 1995 when Ivan Kostov became the UDF’s leader.

In addition, during the second half of the 1990s, there was political stability in Bulgaria, largely explained by the fact that after 1994 Bulgarian governments had enjoyed a one-party parliamentary majority. This de facto diminished the political role of the President because, only in a situation of governmental instability was the President responsible for overseeing the compromises made among the political parties forming a coalition government, which, in turn, gave the President an increased role in foreign policy making.

In summary, the abolition of article 1 of the 1971 Constitution freed state institutions from communist party control. The abolition led to the establishment of necessary state institutions with an inbuilt system of checks and balances and, with the exception of the President and the government, generally well-defined responsibilities in policy making. Such establishment was aimed at preventing institutional conflicts and to facilitate the policy making process during the period of democratization.
However, during the process of constitutional crafting by the Grand National Assembly in summer 1990, it was realised how difficult this would be. On the one hand, Western Europe, which had influenced every aspect of Bulgarian post-communist politics, did not offer a single constitutional model. On the other hand, the country's pre-communist past offered negative examples of a democratic political system. This left much scope for debate between the political forces participating in the Assembly.

The debate was influenced by the political circumstances of the time. Lack of constitutional expertise, the rush to finalise the constitution in order to focus on the country's economic crisis, and the desire of the members of the team drawing up the constitution to reflect party and personal interests in the final document, resulted in poor definition of the exact responsibilities of state institutions. This affected foreign policy making. In particular, constitutional anomalies regarding the appointments of ambassadors and the signing of international treaties resulted in numerous institutional conflicts between the President and the government.

The constitution was not the only factor determining the role of state institutions in the new era. Personality seems to have been equally important, especially in relation to foreign policy making. Although the constitution remained unchanged throughout the 1990s, cooperation between the President and the government was less problematic when Stoianov became President. This can be explained by Stoianov's rather weak personality compared to Zhelev, and the stability of governments during the second half of the 1990s, which de facto limited the influence of the President on foreign policy making.
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Foreign Policy Agendas of the Bulgarian Political Parties

In liberal democratic systems, political parties constitute the political nucleus in which foreign policy is first conceived. This policy takes the form of a political agenda and constitutes part of the parties' political platforms, which are then exposed to competition at a general election. The Bulgarian electorate, in choosing which of the political parties should have power, therefore also helps decide the official foreign policy of the state.

General elections may determine state foreign policy, but they do not limit foreign policy making to the party that assumes governmental power: the opposition parties can also influence foreign policy through participation in the parliamentary committee for foreign policy and various international organisations and forums. If the presidency is held by a member of the opposition, this is another source of influence.

The previous section examined how the decentralization of the policy making process in post-communist Bulgaria influenced foreign policy making. This section examines the factors influencing foreign policy making within Bulgarian political parties. It argues that foreign policy making by the parties in the post-communist period was inextricably linked to their ideologies. These ideologies were the theoretical lenses through which the party leaders analysed international events. On this basis, the party leaderships set foreign policy priorities and formed foreign policy agendas, which they applied if they come to power, or lobbied for with the ruling party.
Democratization introduced a competitive political environment, which has affected the policy agendas of the Bulgarian political parties. Most of the parties appeared after 1989 and followed different historical courses during the post-communist period. Some of them have enjoyed a continuous presence in the parliament, which de facto has rendered them influential in foreign policy making. Other parties have either only intermittently or never been represented in parliament. The People’s Union, which gained entry to parliament by forming a coalition with the UDF, one of the larger parties, is one such. The fact that these parties have had at best limited experience in parliament renders them less influential in foreign policy making therefore, this chapter focuses only on the parties that had been continuous members of parliament, and on a new party, the National Movement for Simeon the Second (NMSII), which recently held power.

The parties that have been continuous members are the BSP, the UDF and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF). This section focuses on the first two. The MRF is treated as a special case because of its links with the Muslim minority, and is described in the section on ethnic minorities.

Ideology, Identity and the Foreign Policy Agenda

Party ideology is an organised system of ideas that constitutes the theoretical framework within which the party makes its policy decisions and on the basis of which it forms its political platform. Parties reform their ideologies as a way of

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modifying their political identities and presenting a new image to the electorate. They will modify their political image if they see their popularity decreasing, with the aim of rallying public support and regaining political power. In democratic regimes, political power is seen in terms of the electoral rating the party receives in a general or Presidential election and is compared with the ratings in previous elections. In contrast to totalitarian regimes, where political parties modify their identity only to the extent that such a modification serves the parties' goal to keep power, in democratizing states, political pluralism introduces competition among political parties, leading them to modify their identities on a regular basis.

Modifications, when they do occur, are mostly reflected in the parties' foreign policy agendas. In Bulgaria, this seems to be true both for the communist and the democratizing period. As was shown in the previous chapter, many of the foreign policy changes adopted by the BCP at the end of the 1980s were related to the new identity that Gorbachev was trying to force on East European communist parties through Perestroika. This section shows that the foreign policy agendas of the BSP and the UDF after 1989 reflected the political identities of these parties.

**Foreign Policy Agenda of the BSP**

After 1989 the BCP remained in power but could no longer legitimise itself in communist terms, that ideology having been discredited throughout Eastern Europe. Like most of the communist parties of Eastern Europe, the BCP needed to renounce

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Communism and adopt a new ideology if it was to survive politically. This was underlined at the party congress of January 1990, the first congress after the ousting of the party’s communist leader, Todor Zhivkov. The congress abandoned communism and opened the debate over a new ideology.\(^{260}\)

The decision to abandon communism was to have two immediate implications. Firstly, it led to the Party adopting a new name: the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP). Secondly, it heralded a new process of decision-making within the party, which was to affect its foreign policy making.\(^{261}\) Communism essentially used a closed decision-making process, confined to the members of the politburo, and now, a new model of decision-making was introduced in which the party congress was the chief political organ and all major decisions were made through free, open and democratic debate.

This new model of decision-making led to the appearance of two political groups within the new BSP, namely the reformers and the conservatives.\(^{262}\) Both groups agreed on the ideology that would replace communism: i.e. socialism. However, despite their agreement on the name, the reformers and conservatives had different conceptions of what was meant by ‘socialism’, which in turn, was reflected in the foreign policy agendas of these groups.

Thus, for reformers such as the Chavdar Kiuranov and the then Bulgarian Prime Minister, Andrei Lukanov, socialism meant the ideology of European social

\(^{260}\) For more details about the party congress of January 1990 see Dimitrova, 1998, p. 177ff.
\(^{262}\) Todorov, Antoni, personal interview, 3/12/2001.
democratic parties such as the SPD in Germany or the French Socialist Party.\textsuperscript{263} According to the reformers, this identified them as a European socialist democratic party, which, in turn, would grant them access to the Socialist International and give the impression that the party had really broken with its communist past, thus securing its long-term survival in the post-communist scene.\textsuperscript{264}

The reformers argued that the party's foreign policy agenda should be formed on the basis of two principles which were closely linked to the social democratic identity that the reformers sought to confer on the BSP.\textsuperscript{265} The first principle was that Bulgaria should seek entry to the EEC, which it was believed would serve the twin political aims that reformers saw as crucial to the party's survival in the years to come. Firstly, it would send the message to the electorate that the BSP had become a Western European political party opening a new chapter in the country's future. Secondly, it would be in line with the views of about half the Bulgarian public, mostly young and educated people living in urban areas, which also supported entrance to the EEC.\textsuperscript{266} Although the vast majority of the BSP's political supporters were older and less educated people who mainly lived in the countryside, they were emotionally bound to the BSP and were thus less likely to vote for other political parties. By supporting Bulgaria's entry to the EEC, the BSP would therefore be able to increase its appeal to the young and educated people in the cities.

However, the principle of integration with the EEC had other implications for international policy, which the reformers' agenda also sought to promote. This policy

\textsuperscript{263} Ibid; Dimitrov, Boiko, personal interview, 24/1/2002; Draganov, Dragomir, personal interview, 20/11/2001; Grozev, Kostadin, personal interview, 16/1/2002.
\textsuperscript{264} Todorov, 1999a, pp. 19-21, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{265} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{266} Shikova & Nikolov, 1999, p. 27.
of integration meant that Bulgaria had to seek admission to international organisations such as the CSCE and the Council of Europe, a necessary first step for candidate states. Also, relations with the Soviet Union up to 1991, and the Russian Federation and other former Soviet Republics after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, had to be kept at a level that would not negatively affect Bulgaria's entry to the EEC. Bulgaria also needed to promote multilateral relations in the Balkan region and seek participation in regional organisations such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), because such a policy would be in line with the EEC's policy of promoting stability in the Balkans.

For the reformers, integration into the EEC did not mean that Bulgaria had to become a member of NATO. This view was regularly voiced by various middle- and high-ranking party reformers such as Chavdar Kiuranov, who argued that entry to NATO would upset Bulgaria's relations with Russia, towards which a large part of the Bulgarian public and the political elite were sympathetic. It would also restrict the country's right to pursue an independent foreign policy, and could even lead to Bulgarian involvement in military operations such as the Iraq war of 1991, and the war in Bosnia-Hercegovina, both of which conflicts the Bulgarian public was opposed to. Opinion polls held in the 1990s record a negative stance towards NATO. For example, in 1997, two years after the end of the war in Bosnia, opinion polls showed that only 40% of the public supported Bulgaria's accession to NATO.

After the mid-1990s, however, many reformer socialists began to revise their views concerning NATO. For many, Bulgaria's integration into Atlantic structures was seen

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as a forerunner of Bulgaria’s accession to the EU.\textsuperscript{269} This change of heart was the result of two factors. The first was that NATO’s success in ending the war in Bosnia and bringing about a lasting, though fragile, stability in the former Yugoslavia, boosted its image in the eyes of BSP reformers.\textsuperscript{270} The second was the fact that in the mid-1990s there was a debate among NATO member states about the organisation’s expansion eastwards, and many BSP reformers believed that since most of the EU member states were also NATO members, Bulgaria’s accession to NATO would pave the way for the country’s accession to the EU.

The second principle was the promotion of liberal economic reforms in Bulgaria, so that the state would become free market economy. This principle was in line with the programmes of other European social democratic parties, which conceived of their policies as being best pursued within free market economic environment. However, the creation of such an economic environment presupposed cooperation with international economic organisations such as the World Bank and the IMF, and the promotion of policies that would liberalize the country’s trade and contribute to the free movement of capital and people. These policies challenged the network of foreign economic relations which Bulgaria had developed under communism and gave the country the opportunity to interact with Western states such as the USA, Greece and Germany, which in the past had played only a marginal role in Bulgaria’s economy.\textsuperscript{271}

\textsuperscript{269} Todorov, Antoni, personal interview, 3/12/2001; Ivanov, Andrei, personal interview, 13/11/2001; Grozev, Kostadin, personal interview, 16/1/2002.

\textsuperscript{270} Parvanov, 1999, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{271} Petkov, 1999, pp. 24-5.
Conservatives such as Alexandur Lilov, politburo member of the BCP until 1983 and BSP leader after the fall of Todor Zhivkov, and Zhan Videnov, Bulgarian Prime Minister between 1994 and 1996, did not use the term socialism to refer to the ideology of the European socialist democratic parties, as the reformers did. For the conservatives, socialism in many respects resembled the ideology of the Greek Socialist Party, PASOK, in the 1980s. In both cases, in the field of foreign affairs, socialism overemphasised the rights of Bulgarians and Greeks to emancipate their nations from the dangers posed by so-called American imperialism, and organisations such as NATO and the IMF, which were seen as aiding this ‘imperialism’ to promote their political goals.

For the conservatives, the party should give the impression of being a national political force which was striving to protect Bulgaria’s national sovereignty. Such an impression, the conservatives considered, would serve the party’s electoral purposes well. Firstly, it would strongly rebuff the arguments of UDF activists that the BSP was the same communist party which in the past had surrendered national sovereignty to the Soviets. Secondly, by emphasizing issues concerned with national sovereignty, the BSP would evoke feelings of nationalism in the public and, thus, have the potential to gain the electoral support of ethnic Bulgarians, who constituted about 80% of the country’s population.

Protection of national sovereignty came to be the main principle of the conservatives’ foreign policy agenda, on two levels: a) the international, and b) the regional. At the
international level, Bulgaria felt threatened by the USA's growing political and economic influence in international politics, which, following the collapse of the East European bloc, threatened to render EES American satellites.\textsuperscript{275} According to the conservatives, Bulgaria could preserve its sovereignty by developing relations with international actors able to counterbalance the growing influence of the US. These actors were the EU and Russia.\textsuperscript{276}

The conservatives, like the reformers, therefore also supported Bulgaria joining the EU. However, the conservatives tended to emphasize the outcome, rather than the process of, integration and the obligations that this process entailed for Bulgarian foreign policy. This is exemplified by two cases. The first case is cooperation with NATO. While the EU has strong links with NATO, the conservatives were against Bulgaria seeking NATO membership. Even in the second half of the 1990s, when many reformers had revised their opinions, the conservatives persisted with their anti-NATO views.\textsuperscript{277}

The second case is Bulgaria's bilateral relations with Russia, which the conservatives saw as vital to upholding the country's national sovereignty. They propounded the view that these relations should not be restricted to the foreign policy framework set by the EU or any other international organisation. Russia was seen as important for two reasons. Firstly, the communist period had bequeathed a high degree of dependence on Moscow as a source of fuel for post-communist Bulgaria.\textsuperscript{278} By

\textsuperscript{276} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{277} Ibid; Todorov, 1997, pp. 31-33; Ivanov, Andrei, personal interview, 13/11/2002.
\textsuperscript{278} With reference to Sofia's economic dependence on Moscow under communism see Braun, 1983, pp. 199-208.
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controlling the price and supply of oil and gas sales to Bulgaria, Moscow could influence the Bulgarian economy. For the conservatives, it was necessary to encourage good political relations with Russia in the hope that, through such relations, Bulgaria would receive favourable terms for the purchase of oil and gas on a long-term basis. Secondly, the Russian and Bulgarian nations shared a common Slavic origin. As had been the case with communism in the past, this was seen as providing a particular link between the two states, and as something which could secure Russian support in the event that Bulgaria’s territorial unity came under threat.

At the regional level, Bulgaria’s national sovereignty was perceived as being threatened by Turkey. Turkey was seen as being able to use its kinship with the numerous Bulgarian Turks living in the country to challenge Bulgaria’s territorial unity. In the view of the conservative socialists, Turkey had two reasons to challenge Bulgaria’s territorial unity: the first of which was historical. As the successor to the Ottoman Empire, Turkey was believed to be seeking to regain the political and economic influence of the Ottomans in the Balkans. The second reason was the promotion of American interests inside Bulgaria. Since WWII, the Turkish establishment, and especially the Turkish military, had forged strong links with the USA. Due to these links, many BSP conservatives felt that the USA viewed Turkey as its most trusted ally in the Balkans, and used it to promote American political and economic interests in the region.

For the conservatives, the only way that Bulgaria could counter the threat that Turkey posed to Bulgaria’s national sovereignty was the promotion of bilateral relations with those Balkan states that were unsympathetic to Turkey, such as Greece and Serbia.\textsuperscript{282}

The bases for these relations were twofold. The first was the Eastern Orthodox religion, followed by the ethnic majorities in all three states, and a tested basis for forging political and military alliances between the three states against Turkey in the past. The second was the ideologies of the socialist parties in these states, which were similar to the conservative BSP members’ conception of socialism.

At the April 1990 congress, the BCP, though keen to reform its identity, was not prepared to go so far as to become a social-democratic party. The majority of the party members found it impossible to cope with the idea that social democracy, an ideology that communism had accused of being the enemy of the labouring class, should become the party’s ideological banner. Therefore, the conservatives found the ground fertile for gaining control of the party and renewing Alexandur Lilov’s mandate as BSP leader.\textsuperscript{283} The reformers’ influence was restricted to the government, mainly due to the fact that a number of government cadres, such as the then Prime Minister Andrei Lukanov, were leading reformer figures. Their influence, however, proved to be short-lived. The BSP lost power in the October 1991 general elections and the government, until then a bastion of reformist power, fell. The reformist policy agenda which the government had sought to pursue was considered responsible for the electoral result, further undermining the reformers’ influence within the BSP.\textsuperscript{284}


\textsuperscript{283} Bell, 1997, p. 360.

\textsuperscript{284} Bell, 1997, pp. 389-90.
The conservatives took control of the party at a time when a large faction of the Bulgarian public was nostalgic for the communist past. This nostalgia was the result of the country's economic crisis, which after the fall of communism deepened due to the loss of markets in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and led to a decline in living standards for the majority of Bulgarians. This faction discredited the Western orientation as well as the economic reforms supported by BSP reformers and the UDF, and supported the conservatives' view that strengthening relations with other EES, and countries of the former Soviet Union, was the only means by which Bulgaria could overcome its economic crisis. By the mid-1990s, the section of society sharing these beliefs had grown to give the BSP a parliamentary majority with 43% in the general elections of December 1994. Thus, the party leader, Zhan Videnov was able to form a one-party government.\(^{285}\)

Videnov's government, however, proved incapable of bringing Bulgaria out of the economic crisis. Indeed, attempts by government to forge close economic relations with other states within Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union were very unsuccessful.\(^{286}\) Times had changed and, unlike the communist past, economic relations were more dependent on mechanisms set by the environment of the market economy than on political dictates. In the post-1989 economic environment, for example, the poor quality of many Bulgarian goods such as machinery, food and textiles, which under communism Sofia had mainly exported to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, were not competitive with the qualitatively superior products of the

\(^{285}\) As Lilov's protégé Zhan Videnov became BSP's new leader in the fortieth party congress of December 1991.

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West. In addition, Videnov’s government followed a foreign policy which led Bulgaria into isolation from the Western world and deprived the country of the potential to overcome its economic crisis through cooperation with Western states and international organisations.\textsuperscript{287} In particular, the government did not promote market economic reforms and, as a result, came into conflict with international economic organisations such as the IMF.\textsuperscript{288} Within the Balkans, the government abandoned the multilateralism followed by previous governments in favour of the promotion of bilateral relations with states such as Serbia and Greece.\textsuperscript{289}

As a result of this policy, in 1996 Bulgaria’s economy faced bankruptcy, leading society into turmoil with strikes and street protests occurring in all Bulgaria’s major cities.\textsuperscript{290} Videnov’s government, incapable of handling the economic situation, resigned in December 1996, two years before the end of its term. In the general elections which followed four months later, the BSP suffered a crushing defeat, receiving only 22\% of the general vote, with the UDF coming first with 52.26\%.\textsuperscript{291}

The events of 1996 re-opened the debate on the party’s political identity. The conservatives supported the view that the BSP should preserve its identity, and placed the blame for the failure of Videnov’s government to tackle the country’s economic issues, not on the political programmes that it had sought to introduce, but on the unwillingness of the reformers to support the government once the economic crisis

\textsuperscript{287} Alexandrov et al., 1997, pp. 104-121.
\textsuperscript{288} Bell, 1997, pp.391-2.
\textsuperscript{290} Insider, January 1998, pp. 8-9, 14-15, 34-55.
\textsuperscript{291} Insider, January 1998, p. 22.
erupted.\textsuperscript{292} The reformers, on the other hand, stressed the fact that the events of 1996 had undermined any effort which the party had made to break with its totalitarian past, and gave the impression that, despite its change of name, in essence the BSP was the same as the BCP, with the same policies and practices as those of the communist past.\textsuperscript{293} According to the reformers, the only way the party could win a future election was for it to become a European social democratic party and adopt a similar political platform.

The events of 1996 had seriously undermined the position of the conservatives within the party. Immediately after the fall of Videnov’s government, an extraordinary party congress was convened which elected a new leader, the 35-year-old historian Georgi Parvanov, who on his election, declared his intention to reform the party along the lines of a European socialist democratic party.\textsuperscript{294} This declaration of intent provoked such a major reaction from the conservatives that the party was in danger of splitting. Immediately after the fall of Videnov’s government, a number of reformers such as Alexandr Tomov and Dragomir Draganov left the BSP and formed a new party called the Euroleft Party,\textsuperscript{295} an occurrence that threatened such a split.

The Presidential elections of November 2001 further strengthened the position of the reformers within the party. Parvanov was elected President of the Republic, which boosted the morale of BSP activists who, unlike many political analysts, saw this as resulting from Parvanov’s reformist views and not the outcome of a protest vote.

\textsuperscript{293} Ibid; Draganov, Dragomir, personal interview, 20/11/2001.
\textsuperscript{294} For a general overview on Parvanov’s views regarding Bulgaria’s foreign policy see Kanev, 2002.
\textsuperscript{295} Todorov, 1999a, p. 30-31; Draganov, Dragomir, personal interview, 20/11/2001; http://www.capital.bg/99-03/32-03-1.htm
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against the government or a split in the non-BSP vote. At the party congress of December 2001, Parvanov successfully used his electoral victory to further marginalize the conservatives. The political platform of the reformers was adopted, all the party’s major institutions were reformer dominated, and the new party leader, Sergei Stanichev, was a reformer.

Foreign Policy Agenda of the UDF

The UDF was established on 7 December 1989 from a coalition of 13 political groups, most of which had been anti-communist dissident movements at the end of the 1980s. All these groups were represented on the UDF’s supreme governing body, the National Coordination Council (NCC). At the beginning of the 1990s, the NCC was constituted by moderate politicians such as Zheliu Zhelev and Petur Dertliev, who had been influenced by Soviet Perestroika. This influence was reflected in the UDF’s political identity at the time. The UDF resembled a political movement

296 Ibid.
298 These political groups were: Klub za Glasnost I Demokratsiia (Club for Glasnost and Democracy), Nezavisimo Družestvo ‘Ekoglasnost’ (Independent Association ‘Ecoglasnost’), Konfederatsiia na Truda ‘Podkrepa’ (Confederation for Labour ‘Podkrepa’), Nezavisimo Družestvo za Zastita Pravata na Choveka (Independent Association for Human Rights), Komitet za Zashtita na Religioznite Prava, Svobodata Na Svesstta I Duvochnite Chennosti (Committee for the Protection of Religious Rights, Freedom of Conscience and Spiritual Values), Klub na Nezakonno Represiranite sled 9 Septemvri 1944 (Club of Unlawfully Repressions after 9 September 1944), Federatsia Na Nezavisimite studentski družestva (Federation of Independent Student Associations), Dvizhenie ‘Grazhdanska Iniciativa’ (Movement ‘Initiative of Citizens’), Bulgarska Sosialdemokratitseska Partia (Bulgarian Social-democratic Party), Bulgarski Zemedelski Naroden Siuz-Nikola Petkov (Bulgarin Agrarian National Union-Nikola Petkov), Zelenata Partia (Green Party), Radikaldemokratitseska Partia (Radical-democratic Party), Demokratitseska Partia (Democratic Party). In 1990 three more parties joined UDF, thus raising the number of the political groups participating in UDF to 16sixteen. The three parties that joined UDF in 1990 were: Nova SDP [Sosial Demokratik partiia] (New Social Democratic Party); Obedinen Demokratitseski Tsentur (United Democratic Center); Demokraten Forum (Democratic Forum). See http://www.omda.bg/bulg/news/party/sds.htm

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seeking to reform the totalitarian system rather than a political force prepared to administer state government.  

The influence of Perestroika is especially evident in the foreign policy agenda of the UDF, which had been influenced by the foreign policy of the Soviet government under Gorbachev. That agenda, in line with Gorbachev's foreign policy, which encouraged foreign policy autonomy among EES, suggested that equality should be the guiding principle of Soviet-Bulgarian relations, and argued for the autonomy of Bulgaria's foreign policy. In addition, it set Bulgaria's integration with the EEC as a first priority.

At the beginning of the transition period, the idea of Bulgaria entering NATO was mainly symbolic, although the issue was raised by the UDF as early as the 'Round Table' talks in January 1990, and afterwards at the Grand National Assembly by UDF MPs such as Solomon Pasi. At that time an application to NATO for membership was seen as signalling that Bulgaria had shaken free of its communist ties. These ties included Bulgaria's political dependence on the USSR through the Warsaw Pact and the CMEA, and a mistrust of the West and its political and economic structures, all of which the UDF sought to change. In addition, the UDF sought to emphasize the new rather than the old, which the BSP seemed to represent, and promised to bring political freshness and changes to the political scene once it gained power.

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300 Ibid.
301 Ibid.
303 Ibid.
At that stage the issue of national security, if discussed at all, was of secondary importance for two reasons. Firstly, the fall of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe did not seem to have any immediate impact on the military might of the Soviet bloc. The Warsaw Pact, the Soviet bloc’s military branch, remained intact and the Soviet army was sufficiently powerful to protect Bulgaria’s territorial integrity in the event that the country came under military attack. In addition, there was no indication at the time that NATO would expand to the East, let alone accept a country such as Bulgaria, which had been the most loyal ally of the Soviet Union during communism and whose population was perceived to be generally Russophile – a term with negative connotations, both in Bulgaria and the West, used to describe someone with ‘anti-Western’ feelings. The issue of national security became relevant only at the end of the 1990s with the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, and Bulgaria’s possible entry to NATO.304

It is not clear what the UDF’s views were concerning Bulgaria’s relations with neighbouring states at this time. With reference to Greco-Turkish relations, it seems that the party was in favour of maintaining similar relations with both states,305 because both Greece and Turkey had close links with the West, and it was thought that this might promote Bulgaria’s Western orientation.306 Also, the New Democracy Party in Greece was identified as the UDF’s ideological ally. As a result, the New Democracy Party gave financial support to the UDF for its electoral campaigning. It is estimated that on the eve of the June elections in 1990, the UDF had received the equivalent of $1m from its Greek ideological ally.307

304 Ibid.
306 Ibid.
The general elections of June 1990 played a decisive role in shaping the UDF's political identity. The UDF came second, disappointing activists who had thought that Bulgaria would follow the example of many Eastern European states by giving the majority vote to the UDF, which had been linked with the fight against totalitarianism. This electoral defeat undermined the position of the moderate cadres who held the leadership at that time, and laid the ground for the party hardliners to take control. These included such radical politicians as Filip Dimitrov and Stefan Savov, who supported the view that the only way for the UDF to become a leading political force was to abandon the platform of Perestroika.

The radicals were helped in their bid to take control of the party by the political circumstances that prevailed. The election of Zhelev as President of the Republic had left a gap in the party leadership. Zhelev was popular among UDF activists and, despite his moderate political platform, nobody thought of challenging his leading role in the party. Shortly after his replacement by Filip Dimitrov, most of the moderate political figures in the party were either marginalized or purged.

Under the new leadership, the political identity of the UDF changed. It no longer conducted itself as a political movement that wished to reform Bulgaria within the existing political discourse, but became a radical political force which sought to move the country away from its communist past, this being considered responsible for everything negative in Bulgaria and a radical break being seen as a necessary precondition for democratization. For the new leadership, 'anti-communism', however ambiguous a term, became the UDF's ideological watchword and was it to
mark every aspect of the party’s political platform. With reference to its foreign policy agenda, ‘anti-communism’ meant a freezing of relations with states which had previously enjoyed priority, e.g. the USSR, and the fostering of relations with the developed states of the West.\textsuperscript{308} These priorities came to determine the policy agenda of the first UDF government from 1991 to 1992. Integration with the EU and NATO became top priorities of Bulgaria’s foreign policy despite the high economic cost to the country.\textsuperscript{309}

Relations with former partners cooled: which included the USSR, and the Third World countries with which Bulgaria had close relations under communism.\textsuperscript{310} In terms of the USSR, relations deteriorated to such an extent that only a few political channels remained open. One such was represented by President Zhelev, mainly due to his personal relations with the Russian President, Boris Yeltsin.\textsuperscript{311} It is believed that this friendship between Yeltsin and Zhelev played a crucial role in Russia recognizing FYROM as the Republic of Macedonia in 1993.\textsuperscript{312} At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, all ties were severed. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stoian Ganev, was hostile towards Russia, which he saw as being responsible for Bulgaria’s economic dislocation. He went so far as to state publicly on the Bulgarian National TV programme ‘Panorama’ in October 1990 that Sofia should take Moscow to the

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International Court in the Hague for the 45 years of dominance it had imposed on Bulgaria.313

Bulgaria’s relations with most Third World states had been disrupted even before the UDF came into power in 1991. This was the natural outcome of Bulgaria’s economic reforms after the collapse of communism, which had an unfavourable influence on bilateral trade, as well as on the economic activities of the many Bulgarian companies operating in Third World countries. However, when Filip Dimitrov came to power, Bulgaria’s relations with a number of Third World states, such as Libya and Iraq, were further disturbed. The main reason for this breach was the pro-American foreign policy pursued by the UDF government and the determination of Dimitrov to strengthen relations with Israel. Though the Bulgarian-Israeli rapprochement had officially begun in April 1990 with Bulgaria’s recognition of Israel, it was not until Filip Dimitrov came to power that relations improved to the point that Dimitrov paid an official visit to Israel 17-19 March 1992, and made a symbolic visit to the Golan Heights.314 For the UDF government, improving relations with Israel was a strategic decision. Although it led to a weakening of relations with Arab states, the UDF government calculated that it would best serve Bulgaria’s long-term goal of integration into Euro-Atlantic structures because Israel was perceived to be the USA’s closest ally in the Middle East.315

In relation to the Balkans, the UDF proposed that Bulgaria’s policies should be in line with the policies of Western Europe and NATO.\textsuperscript{316} This was because first, it was seen as furthering the party’s image as a political force seeking to break with the communist past. Unlike the policies of bilateralism, which had led Bulgaria into isolation in the past, the UDF favoured multilateralism.\textsuperscript{317} Secondly, aligning Bulgaria’s regional policy with those of the EU and NATO was thought to further Sofia’s long-term aim of gaining entry to these two international bodies.\textsuperscript{318}

These views determined the government’s regional policy when the UDF took power.\textsuperscript{319} This policy can be outlined along the following three axes. Firstly, Bulgaria undertook initiatives to upgrade its relations with its two NATO neighbours, Greece and Turkey. One such initiative was the signing of military confidence building treaties at the end of 1992 by the Greek conservative government of Constantinos Mitsotakis and the Bulgarian UDF government under the leadership of Filip Dimitrov.\textsuperscript{320} Secondly, relations with Serbia cooled in order to reflect EU and NATO policies towards the Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic.\textsuperscript{321} Thirdly, initiatives were undertaken to build relations with the new states emerging from the former Yugoslavia. Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina were recognised as was FYROM under its constitutional names. Although this went against EU policy on the issue, it was believed it would have a positive effect on Bulgarian-EU relations in the long run because it would demonstrate that Bulgaria had overcome the political prejudices of the past and did not nurture territorial claims against its Balkan

\textsuperscript{316} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{317} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{318} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{319} Alexandrov et al., 1997, pp. 75-6.
\textsuperscript{320} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{321} Ibid.
neighbours. Instead it was ready to establish strong political and economic relations with them.\footnote{Ibid; Georgiev & Tsenkov, 1993.}

Filip Dimitrov’s government remained in power for only one year, from October 1991 to October 1992. During this period, the government dedicated itself to purging the state apparatus of people who were thought to have collaborated with the communist regime.\footnote{Bell, 1997, pp. 377-383.} This brought the government into confrontation with almost all state institutions. By October 1992, the government was politically isolated and, in an attempt to escape this Dimitrov asked for a parliamentary vote of confidence on 28 October. The tactic backfired and the government was defeated.\footnote{Ibid.}

After the fall of the Dimitrov government, the UDF entered a prolonged period of internal debate over the party’s identity which was to continue until the next general election in December 1994.\footnote{Dainov, Evgeni, personal interview, 26/11/2001; Abadzhiev, Dimitur personal interview, 30/11/2001; Malinov, Svetoslav, personal interview, 2/11/2001; Kiuranov, Deian, personal interview, 4/12/2001; Todorov, Antoni, personal interview, 3/12/2001; Tsenkov, Emil, personal interview, 3/12/2001. For a general overview on the internal politics of UDF during the first years of the transition period see Nedelchev, 1993.} Two political tendencies emerged during this debate. The first was expressed by a group of hardliners, close to the party leader, Dimitrov, who argued that the most important issue was to rid Bulgaria of the members of the old communist elite who still controlled the state apparatus, which was impeding democratization. Cleansing the state apparatus was seen as the top priority, along with maintaining the identity of a radical political force seeking to save Bulgaria from the ‘burden’ of its communist past.
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Young technocrats such as Ivan Kostov typified the second political tendency, the reformers, who argued that 'cleansing the state apparatus' of members of the old communist elite was not a panacea for the country's ills. For them, the priority was the promotion of economic reforms for growth and to reinforce the democratic system. For the reformers, therefore, it was important that the party should not define itself in relation to the communist past, but rather in relation to the political alternatives it offered for Bulgaria's future. A liberal political platform would free the state economy giving economic prosperity and the prospect of integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

The general election of December 1994 played a decisive role in deciding which of the two rival political tendencies prevailed. In these elections, the UDF received 24% of the vote, 10% less than it had got in the previous general election, and came second. This result seriously undermined the authority of the hardliners. At the 8th National Party Congress in February 1997, the reformers took control of the party and elected Ivan Kostov as the new party leader.

With the reformers in the leadership, the UDF's foreign policy agenda changed to reflect the party's new identity, becoming de-ideologized and more pragmatic. Foreign policy priorities were increasingly determined by the liberal economic changes that the reformers sought to promote. Their first foreign policy priority was Bulgaria's integration into the EU. However, this was not seen as symbolizing

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326 Ibid.
327 Todorov, 1999a, pp. 21-23, 32-3.
328 http://www.online.bg/politics/who/govern/parpart/sds.htm
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Bulgaria’s break with the communist past, but rather as a means through which the country could achieve economic growth.

The reformers supported entry to NATO, but endowed it with a different meaning from the hardliners of the past. For the reformers, joining NATO was seen as a political action from which the country would benefit in terms of national security, as Bulgaria was seen to be vulnerable in the turbulent post-Cold War Balkan region following the dissolution of the Soviet bloc’s military structures. In addition, unlike the hardliners, who on many occasions seemed to emphasize Bulgaria’s relations with the USA and NATO more than with the EU, for the reformers entrance to NATO was seen as a significant step towards Bulgaria’s entrance to the EU, which was viewed as the country’s primary foreign policy goal.330 For the hardliners, the USA and NATO symbolized the Soviet Union’s “other” and, therefore, fitted well with the political image of the radical anti-communist party which the hardliners wished to give the UDF. However, once the party’s political identity changed under the reformers, it was natural that the emphasis on Bulgaria’s relations with the USA and NATO became less strong.

The change in the party’s foreign policy agenda was particularly evident in Bulgaria’s relations with Russia. The reformers’ stance towards Russia was pragmatic.331 Bulgaria could not afford to sever relations with Russia because it was dependent on Moscow for petrol and gas. However, this did not mean that the price of economic dependence should be political subservience as had been the case under communism.

This soon became clear after the UDF came to power in April 1997. Moscow tried to

exploit Bulgaria’s dependence on Moscow for gas, and sought unsuccessfully to put Bulgaria’s gas pipeline network under Russian control. This led to a crisis in Bulgarian-Russian relations which ended only in 1998 after the two sides reached an agreement, whereby Russia recognized Bulgaria’s right to control its own gas pipeline network.332

In relation to the Balkan region, the foreign policy agenda of the reformers was not very different from that of the hardliners. In both cases, the objective was the maintenance of a balanced policy towards all states in the region, except Serbia. However, while the objective of both was the same, the motives underlying it were different. The hardliners saw this policy as a means by which Bulgaria could enter Euro-Atlantic structures.333 For the reformers, however, it was a necessary precondition for economic growth through the increase of intra-regional trade and foreign investments. Reformers did not underestimate the effects that the policy would have on Bulgaria’s entry to the EU, but, unlike the hardliners, they believed that entry depended more on economic criteria than on aligning state foreign policy with that of the EU and NATO.334

The different philosophies of the hardliners and the reformers concerning regional foreign policy were evident as soon as the UDF returned to power in May 1997. Unlike the government of Filip Dimitrov, the government of Ivan Kostov emphasized the economic aspects of intra-regional cooperation such as liberalization of bilateral

334 Ibid.
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trade through the elimination of custom duties for industrial and agricultural products with states such as Turkey and Romania, and the agreement with Greece on the creation of a free economic zone on the Greek-Bulgarian border which would allow employees of these states to work as seasonal workers in their neighbouring countries. This measure was especially beneficial for the Muslim populated regions of the Bulgarian south, where unemployment had reached 90%.

Foreign Policy Agenda of the NMSII

The NMSII is a political force which was founded by the deposed King Simeon II three months before the general election of June 2001. Despite the short duration between the Movement’s formation and the general elections, the NMSII won the election with 42% of the vote. However, this was not enough to give it a majority in parliament, and it approached other parties to form a coalition government. After intense negotiations, which lasted almost a month, the NMSII managed, with the backing of the MRF, to form a government under the premiership of former King Simeon.

The electoral victory of the NMSII can be explained in two ways. The first has to do with Bulgaria's economic performance, which was very poor, laying the ground for populist policies to appear and capture the imagination of the public. It is significant that the NMSII won the elections without any real electoral platform, apart from the

335 In political parlance as well as in many press and media reports, this process of liberalization has been known as the creation of free trade zones (FTZ henceforth).
promise that, were it victorious, it would improve the living standards of the Bulgarian people, and the country's international image within a hundred days. The party's political platform was made known only in November 2001, five months after the electoral victory, when Simeon's government presented a four-year governmental plan before parliament.

The second explanation is related to Simeon's popularity throughout the 1990s. On the eve of the general election of June 2001, his popularity had reached 50% in opinion polls.\textsuperscript{338} As former King he was linked to the monarchy which communism had fought against. In a period which for the most part, was characterized by the discrediting of communism and an acute economic crisis seen as resulting from 45 years of communist rule, Simeon was seen by many Bulgarians as a Messiah who could transform the country during the period of democratization. Also, political powers such as the UDF had contributed to the building of a heroic and extremely popular image for Simeon because they wished to appease both party activists and the part of the electorate that supported the monarchy.

The NMSII did not build its political identity in relation to any conventional ideologies such as socialism or liberalism. For the activists of the NMSII, political ideologies were seen as having divided Bulgaria, being to some extent responsible for the political and economic instability of the preceding 12 years. What Bulgaria needed, according to NMSII activists, was an all-embracing political force, such as the NMSII, which would unite the Bulgarian people and enable all the country's

\textsuperscript{338} BBSS Gallup International, Report 01, 2002.
national problems to be resolved. In order to assume the identity of an all-embracing political force, the NMSII adopted a twofold strategy. Firstly, it attempted to present the former King Simeon as Bulgaria’s saviour, as one who cared deeply about the country, and was capable of solving all its problems. Secondly, it presented a plan to parliament which was an amalgam of the political ideas and suggestions of the other political forces. By this means, the NMSII hoped to attract voters from across the political spectrum and thus achieve viability. Such a manifesto was also in some ways the result of Bulgaria’s EU accession process, which had pushed all the main Bulgarian parties to adopt the pro-liberal political views needed to comply with EU policies and, through such compliance, to guarantee their political survival.

This amalgamation of ideas in the NMSII’s political platform is particularly evident in its foreign policy agenda, which was designed to satisfy as large a part of the electorate as possible. On the one hand, Bulgaria’s accession to the EU and NATO was given top priority in the foreign policy agenda, due mainly to the fact that membership of these two organisations was given priority by all other political parties and was well received by the Bulgarian public. On the other hand, the NMSII’s foreign policy agenda attempted to satisfy the conservative sections of the BSP electorate and some nationalist sections of the Bulgarian public which were unhappy at the prospect of Bulgaria’s becoming a full member of the EU and NATO. This is evident in the NMSII government’s four year plan, which stressed that Bulgaria

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340 Ibid.
341 Ibid.
342 Ilchev, Stanimir, personal interview, 7/12/2001.
would take measures to strengthen relations with Russia and the Arab world.\textsuperscript{343} This part of the government programme should be seen as an attempt to satisfy conservative ex-communists who supported Bulgaria’s relations with Russia, and Bulgarian Muslims who favoured Sofia’s rapprochement with the Arab world.

In addition, the four-year plan stressed that the government would take political measures to protect ethnic Bulgarians living in neighbouring states. No significant measures were actually taken, and this statement should be seen more as an attempt to satisfy the electorate, and nationalist sections within NMSII rather than as a policy objective which the NMSII government intended working towards. Neighbouring states such as Greece and FYROM do not recognize Bulgarian minorities in their territories, and any action taken by the Bulgarian government to protect these minorities would harm Bulgaria’s bilateral relations with these states and negatively affect the country’s Western orientation.\textsuperscript{344}

In summary, the political identity and foreign policy agendas of Bulgarian political parties are inextricably related. Foreign policy agendas are an integral part of any party’s political platform and provide the means by which political parties construct their political identities and pass their political messages to the electorate. In the competitive environment that democratization has introduced to Bulgaria, political parties frequently change their identities to keep connection with as wide a section of the electorate as possible, thus made themselves more electable. However, each change of identity affects their foreign policy agendas. Changes to party identities normally occur after an electoral defeat. This defeat triggers debate within the party

\textsuperscript{343} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{344} Access Organisation, 1999, p. 8
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organs, and in most cases entails a change in the party’s leadership as well as the party’s political platform.

Think-tanks: Foreign Policy Analysts with Limited Influence

In the communist period, policy analysis was a government monopoly. In contrast, in the period of democratization, a number of policy research centres, also known as think-tanks, emerged which influenced the policy making process in Bulgaria. These policy research centres fall into two categories. The first includes centres that have close links with certain political parties. Examples include the ‘Democracy Foundation’, which is affiliated to the UDF, and the ‘Centre for Strategy Research’, which has close links with the BSP. The influence of these centres is restricted to the political parties they are affiliated to. The second category includes policy research centres, such as the Centre for Liberal Strategies (CLS), whose influence on foreign policy making is not restricted to particular political parties. They seek to remain autonomous, wielding continuous influence on Bulgarian policy making, regardless of which party is in power. Thus, the strategy of these centres is twofold. They have developed close links with Western institutes which support the Bulgarian centres in terms of funding and ideas. Also, they stay in touch with the public through the organisation of seminars, campaigns and publications focusing on various policy issues which they see as being important to Bulgarians.

This section focuses on this second category of policy research institutes. It examines how their evolution during democratization has affected their ability to influence Bulgaria’s foreign policy making. Through their strong links with certain political
parties, the first category restricts their influence on foreign policy making and renders their foreign policy agendas similar to those of the parties they are affiliated to, and which were analysed in the previous section.

**Evolution of Think-tanks in Bulgaria**

Immediately after the fall of communism there were no think-tanks in Bulgaria. The political landscape was composed of two groups of policy-makers. One consisted of liberal intellectuals, mostly writers and poets whose writings and speeches had captured the imagination of a large part of the Bulgarian public. Some of these intellectuals, such as Zheliu Zlelev, had opposed the communist regime, and because of this gained legitimacy in the post-communist period. Owing to their popularity, these intellectuals became a sort of 'counter elite' and played an active role in Bulgarian politics in the new period.

The other group was known as the technocrats, and consisted of economists and lawyers working in the Agency for Economic Coordination and Development (AECD), a government advisory body that was established in May 1991 to help the government in its efforts to promote political and economic reforms in the Bulgarian state. Ivan Kostov, one of the technocrats, was a prominent Bulgarian economist who had worked in the AECD before joining UDF in the mid-1990s and Rumen Avramov, also a technocrat, is a well known Bulgarian economist who currently works in the CLS.

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345 Krastev, Ivan, 1999, pp. 6-7.
Both these groups supported Bulgaria's Western orientation but held different views on it. For the intellectuals, a Western orientation was an emotional, ideological notion akin to the first UDF government's conception of a Western orientation. This translated to integration with the EU and NATO, and a freezing of relations with Russia and Third World states, with which Bulgaria had had close ties under communism. For the technocrats, a Western orientation was viewed as necessary for improvement to the economy, which in practice meant integration with Western institutions such as the EU and NATO, and continued relations with Russia and Third World states only to an extent that would not endanger this integration. In other words, the technocrats' views on foreign policy were closer to the foreign policy agendas of the BSP and UDF reformers.

The majority of Bulgarian think-tanks appeared after the fall of Filip Dimitrov's government in autumn 1992 and was related to the fact that the influence of the liberal intellectuals on policy making was in sharp decline because most of the intellectuals were linked to the first UDF government of Filip Dimitrov, and their influence faded when his government lost power in October 1992. It was also related to the fact that the technocrats lost influence with almost all the governments that came to power in the aftermath of the fall of the UDF government in 1992 until the fall of socialist governments of Zhan Videnov and Georgi Parvanov in December 1996 and February 1997 respectively. This was for the most part because the Bulgarian governments of that period were generally controlled by conservative ex-communists, whose foreign policy agenda was in sharp contrast to the foreign policy agenda supported by the majority of technocrats. Therefore, many technocrats left their jobs in government agencies and looked for new channels through which they
could institutionalize their political ideas. Some, such as Ivan Kostov, entered politics by joining the UDF. Others, like Rumen Avramov, Director of the AECD, left their government jobs and set up policy research centres, such as the CLS. These research centres were also popular with young scholars who left their jobs in academia during the post-1989 period when salaries were low.346

Influence on Foreign Policy Making

The fact that the Bulgarian think-tanks came into being as a reaction to the policies followed by the government of Zhan Videnov restricted their scope of influence to the political parties in opposition, especially the UDF. Indeed, for a long time the BSP was against any cooperation with think-tanks, and this stance took the form of an official position ratified by all party congresses. On foreign policy issues, the only advice that the BSP accepted was that of a group of retired diplomats who had been dismissed by Filip Dimitrov's government because of their communist beliefs.

Even after the fall of Videnov's government and the increase in the reformers' influence within BSP, it was not until the 47th party congress in December 2001 that the BSP declared its readiness to cooperate with think-tanks. The reason for this delay was that, although the influence of the reformers within BSP had increased after the

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346 Other policy research centres were founded after the collapse of the UDF government, including the Agency for Social Analyses (ASA), which was founded in 1994, whose main tasks involved the conduct of social surveys and acting as consultants to government agencies, political parties and businesses on social economic and political issues (http://www.ASA-BG.NETFIRMS.COM); the Institute for Market Economics (IME) which was founded in 1993, whose main research objectives were to provide independent assessment and analysis of the government's economic policies and to function as a focal point for the exchange of views on market economics and relevant policy issues (http://www.ime.bg/en/index.html); and the Center for Social Practices which was founded in 1994 whose main research objectives are to conduct social surveys on Bulgaria and offer consultation on social and political issues (http://www.atlasusa.org/directory/institute_profile.php?refer=directory&org_id=661).
fall of Videnov’s government, the presence of the conservatives was still strong, and they always vetoed cooperation with think-tanks, which they viewed with suspicion mainly due to the think-tanks’ cooperation with Western institutes. The victory of the BSP in the Presidential elections of November 2001, and the election as President of the BSP leader, Georgi Parvanov, gave the party leadership enough strength to marginalize the conservatives in the party congress of December 2001 and impose its position on this issue.

The potential for think-tanks to influence the other political parties was greater. However, only a few of them are really influential. Many research policy centres were set up simply to offer lawful cover for the money-making operations of their directors. In doing so, they were capitalizing on a government decree of December 1990, which exempted all research centres and foundations from both national and local taxes, and did not require these foundations and research centres to commit themselves to spending their income on particular projects.

Also, despite the pluralism that democratization has brought to Bulgaria, policy making is still a closed process that is mainly confined to the political parties, leaving little scope for other actors such as think-tanks. This closeness is greater in foreign policy making due to the Cold War mentality prevalent among the Bulgarian political elite, according to which foreign policy making should not be open to many actors because it involves sensitive national issues, whose exposure to open debate would render the country vulnerable to states wishing it harm. In line with this argument, the think-tanks which are influential are those whose directors have forged strong

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347 Ianeva, 1999, pp. 73-74.
personal relations with either the state’s or the parties’ leaderships and are therefore seen as trustworthy political institutes whose involvement in foreign policy making would not pose any threat to the closed foreign policy process.348

Finally, the relationship of the think-tanks with the Bulgarian mass media is also important for the influence that they have on foreign policy making. The greater their influence in the mass media, the greater the influence they can exert on foreign policy making. This is because Bulgarian politicians prefer to follow the advice of think-tanks that have close links with the mass media, in the hope of boosting their personal and parties’ images. One such media-oriented think-tank with influence on Bulgaria’s foreign policy making is the CLS, which is described below.

The CLS

The CLS was founded in early 1994 as a non-governmental policy research centre.349 It was set up as a joint venture by a group of politically active researchers and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation, a German policy research institute with close links to the German SPD. However, the CLS had distanced itself from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation by mid-1994, and was formulating its own goals as an independent think-tank. In relation to foreign policy it had three main goals: a) Bulgaria’s integration into Euro-Atlantic structures; b) the creation of a pragmatic foreign policy towards the Balkan states, Russia and the Third World states with which Bulgaria had close relations under communism; c) cooperation with international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank.

349 Ibid. pp. 3-4.
The CLS was actively opposed to the socialist government of Zhan Videnov, particularly in the period of economic crisis from 1996-1997. The young director of the CLS, Ivan Krastev, developed friendly relations with all the opposition parties, especially the UDF, in an attempt to coordinate the policies of the Centre with those of the parties in opposition and with the aim of toppling the government of Zhan Videnov. It also developed relations with the Bulgarian mass media, which it saw as a means of publicizing its policy agenda, and in so doing, swaying the Bulgarian electorate against the Videnov government. This strategy was assisted by the public unrest over the many economic problems that four years of Videnov’s rule had brought to Bulgaria. It engendered the political, as well as the social pressures necessary to bring down Videnov’s government. At the general election of April 1997, the UDF assumed power for a second time, after seven years in opposition.

In addition to this short term strategy, the CLS’s objective also had long term success. In subsequent years, the CLS became one of the most influential policy research centres in Bulgaria. This influence was especially evident during the time of Ivan Kostov’s government and was facilitated by the personal links between the director of the CLS and the UDF leadership, as well as by the popularity that the CLS acquired, which rendered it useful to the UDF government. This popularity was the result of CLS’s good relations with the mass media, which had given much publicity to its activities.

In terms of foreign policy, the CLS’s influence can be seen in the following two cases. Firstly, it played a decisive role in the solving of the language dispute between
Bulgaria and FYROM.\(^3\)\(^{50}\) The CLS organised workshops and meetings, where the issue was thoroughly discussed by officials from both sides in an attempt at conciliation between the two states.\(^3\)\(^{51}\) It also lobbied the UDF government to find a solution to the issue.

Secondly, as is described in the next chapter, when immediately after the inauguration of the UDF government of Ivan Kostov, Bulgarian-Russian relations were strained by the countries’ divergent views over the status of gas deliveries from Russia to Bulgaria, the CLS played a major role.\(^3\)\(^{52}\) The climate of bilateral relations improved in 1998 when, after tough negotiations which involved the CLS, the two sides signed a memorandum which clarified the status of gas deliveries.\(^3\)\(^{53}\) The CLS organised unofficial meetings between Bulgarian and Russian state officials, which aimed at increasing understanding between the two sides.\(^3\)\(^{54}\)

In short, Bulgarian think-tanks came into being when the liberal agenda of sustaining democracy, promoting market reforms, and orienting Bulgaria towards the West were threatened by the socialist government of Zhan Videnov. Despite the pluralism that democratization has introduced in Bulgaria’s political life, foreign policy making still remains a closed political process, which is mainly confined to those parliamentary political parties which are in power. In many states, including France, the UK and Greece, there is a belief that foreign policy issues should involve few actors. In

\(^{350}\) For more details about the language issue between Bulgaria and FYROM see pp. 351-2 below.


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Bulgaria, the scope for actors such as think-tanks to influence foreign policy making has been limited and mainly restricted to the centre right of the political spectrum. For some time, the BSP refused any cooperation with these actors, and those political parties that do consult think-tanks do so mainly because their leadership believes that maintaining close relations with them serves the electoral goals of their party.

Minorities and Foreign Policy Making

The participation of ethnic minorities in foreign policy is generally determined by the degree of their involvement in the country's political life. The fall of communism generated hopes for increased minority involvement in Bulgaria's politics. In adopting a liberal democratic system of government, Bulgaria bound itself to such political principles as freedom of expression and involvement for citizens, including the country's ethnic minorities.

Despite the initial optimism generated by the political movements described, the participation of minorities in Bulgarian policy making was difficult to achieve. The difficulty mainly derived from the fact that members of the minority elite had a different understanding of participation in policy making from that of ethnic Bulgarians. This was the result of the divergent views of the elites in the ethnic minorities, and the ethnic Bulgarians regarding what constituted the Bulgarian demos. For the minorities, the Bulgarian public was not a unitary collective being. It consisted of the ethnic majority and sundry ethnic minority groups. According to the minority elites, the political system should provide guarantees of political participation for minorities. The most fervent supporters of this view were the
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Bulgarian Turks, who, influenced by the assimilation campaign of the 1980s, favoured the establishment of what they termed the Bulgarian ethnic model. By this they meant the right of every ethnic minority to participate in the policy making process through their right to form political parties, and for their language and religion to be given official status.

The members of the ethnic majority elite, however, saw the Bulgarian public as a unitary collective. The existence of different minorities was accepted by them at a cultural level, but at the political level it was proposed that members of ethnic minorities should participate in policy making as citizens of Bulgaria, rather than as members of the particular ethnic minority group. In addition, members of ethnic minorities should have the right to practise their own language and religion, but these languages and religions should not be given official status by the Bulgarian state because such status would contribute to the establishment of ethnic identities which could challenge the territorial unity of the Bulgarian state.

The intention of the ethnic majority elite to prevent ethnic minorities from participating in the policy making process was always evident. No ethnic minority group was represented at the Roundtable Talks, where all major decisions on the institutional and political reforms concerning democratization were taken. One decision forbade the formation of political parties to represent ethnic minorities. This decision was given constitutional status under article 12, which disallowed the

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foreigning of associations, or engagement in any political activities intrinsic to political parties by ethnic minorities.356

However, some ethnic minorities did manage to contribute to policy making, despite the ethnic majority's efforts to prevent it. One such group was the Bulgarian Turks, who in 1990 managed for the first time in modern Bulgarian history to form their own political party, the MRF, which allowed them to contribute to the policy making process. The political mobilization of the Bulgarian Turks following Zhivkov's political campaign in the 1980s to have their names changed, widely known as Възродителния Процес (Regenerative Process), brought onto the Bulgarian political scene members of a minority elite who realised that formation of a political party would allow them to lobby for the protection of the human rights of Bulgarian Muslims.357 The Bulgarian authorities were reluctant to ban the Bulgarian Muslims' party, fearing that such an action would produce ethnic conflict.

The Foreign Policy Agenda of the MRF

The MRF was formed on 22 December 1989 by Ahmet Dogan, a leading figure in the Bulgarian Turkish movement against Zhivkov’s 1980s attempt at assimilation. It was not registered as a political party like the BSP or the UDF because the Bulgarian constitution did not allow the formation of political parties based on ethnic origins, but claimed to be a movement for specific rights, related to the ethnic and religious

356 Article 12.
freedoms of Turks and Muslims. It retained the status of a political movement during
the post-1989 period.\textsuperscript{358}

Muslims accounted for around 11\% of the population of Bulgaria according to the
census of 1992, which provided the MRF with a substantial electoral base and has
allowed them to have continuous parliamentary representation since 1990 as the third
largest parliamentary force.\textsuperscript{359} This continuous parliamentary representation has given
the MRF influence over Bulgaria's foreign policy making. This influence has been
exercised in three ways. Firstly, on many occasions the MRF has been part of the
government and has thus had the opportunity to contribute to foreign policy making.
The MRF gave parliamentary support to the first UDF government of Filip Dimitrov
from autumn 1991 to autumn 1992, when the government fell simply because the
MRF withdrew its support; it supported the interim government of Liuben Berov
from January 1993 to September 1994 and from July 2001 to June 2005 it has
supported the NMSU government of Simeon Saxgoburgotski. Secondly, the MRF has
acted as a 'security valve' in the trilateral relations between the Bulgarian state, the
Muslim minority and Turkey, and helped to smooth Bulgaria's relations with Ankara.
Thirdly, through the MRF, Bulgarian Muslims have been able to articulate their
foreign policy agenda to the Bulgarian parliament and government and international
forums, such as the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black
Sea Economic Organisation.

However, as with other parliamentary forces, the MRF's foreign policy agenda was
inextricably linked with the political identity that the party sought to build. During its

\textsuperscript{358} For more information see Chapter V, note 845, p. 355.
\textsuperscript{359} Access Organisation, 1999, pp. 7-9.
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15 year involvement in parliament, the party’s political identity has gone through two phases. The first was from 1989 to the mid-1990s, during which time it sought to present itself as the true defender of human rights for Bulgarian Muslims. In doing so, it stressed the rebellious activities of its leadership during the Vuzroditel’niia Protses, and lobbied for political measures such as the restoration of Turkish names which had been changed during the Vuzroditel’niia Protses, and the freedom to practise the Muslim faith.

In terms of foreign policy, the improvement of Bulgarian-Turkish relations was the focal point of the MRF’s foreign policy agenda for two reasons. The first was that the smoothing of relations between the two states would create a favourable environment for the development of economic and cultural contacts between Bulgarian Turks and Turkey. This was seen as important since it would provide Bulgarian Turks with the economic and ideological resources needed to preserve their distinct identity. In addition, through these contacts Bulgarian Turks would be able to continue kinship relations in Turkey, which dated back to the time of the settlement of the Ottoman Turks in the Balkans, and were confirmed by various bilateral treaties signed between Bulgaria and Turkey. It was these close ties that Turkey believed gave it the right to protest to the Bulgarian authorities when the latter abused the human rights of Bulgarian Turks.

The second reason was that an improvement in Bulgarian-Turkish relations was seen as having a positive effect on the status of Muslims in Bulgarian society. It was believed that a rapprochement between Bulgaria and Turkey would help to undermine Bulgaria’s historic suspicion of Turkey, which on several occasions had poisoned
bilateral relations between the two states and had resulted in measures being taken against Bulgarian Muslims.

The rapprochement was regarded as a high priority in Sofia’s foreign policy in the initial post-1989 period and dominated all other foreign policy issues, including Bulgaria’s integration within Euro-Atlantic structures, which the MRF strongly supported because integration presupposed respect of the human rights of all Bulgarian minorities, including Muslims. Following the general election in June 1990, the MRF leader Dogan stated in a press conference that “Bulgaria’s road to Europe passes through the Bosphorus”, meaning that rapprochement in Bulgarian-Turkish relations, and the subsequent improvement in the status of Bulgarian Muslims, should be regarded as a necessary precondition for Bulgaria’s entry to the EEC.

The identity that the MRF sought to establish determined its regional agenda, as well as its relations with Russia and the Arab states. As far as the Balkan region is concerned, the MRF favoured relations with Albania and FYROM because these states were seen as being on good terms with Turkey and they also included large groups of Muslims in their territories with whom Bulgarian Muslims felt a sense of either ethnic or cultural proximity.

The MRF leadership viewed Russia as being the protector of Balkan Slavs, and in many instances as their mentor in discriminatory policies against Muslims. The Vůzroditelní a Protés is an example of such a discriminatory policy in Bulgaria and,

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according to MRF activists, it was orchestrated by Bulgaria's communist regime with Soviet blessing. The MRF's leadership pursued a strategy of distancing itself from Russia and following a Western foreign policy orientation.

Finally, the MRF was in favour of promoting relations with parts of the Arab world, which is the reference point for every Muslim being the land of Mohammed's birth and ministry, where the religion of Islam was developed, and being the destination of the Muslim 'Haj', the pilgrimage to Mecca which each Muslim must make at least once in his life. However, not all Arabic states were seen as being of equal importance. The MRF leadership favoured relations with Egypt and Saudi Arabia firstly because, unlike states such as Libya and Iraq, their regimes were friendly to Western states and to Turkey. Seeking relations with them would not undermine Bulgaria's Western orientation and would also be in line with Turkish foreign policy. Secondly, these states, especially Saudi Arabia, were rich enough to invest in the construction of mosques and schools in areas inhabited by Bulgarian Muslims.

In the mid-1990s, the MRF began a prolonged course of change with the ultimate goal of becoming a liberal party by West European standards, an effort that was finally rewarded by acceptance into the Liberal International in February 2002. These changes to the party's identity were undertaken because the Vuzroditñña Protxes had lost its mobilizing effect on the electorate of the Muslim minority, as well as on the party activists. In the general election of 1994, the MRF obtained only about 5% of the national vote, while in the general election of October 1991 it got 7.5%. In the first general elections of June 1990 it had won 6%. At the same time, the party saw internal struggles. In the mid-1990s leading members, such as Mufti Nedim Gendjev
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and Mehmet Hoja, left the party because in their view the leadership was not giving enough attention to the religious affairs of the minority. They were also critical of the opulent life styles of their party leader, Ahmet Dogan, and other members of the party elite.361 These resignations rendered it necessary for the MRF to review its political identity.

In addition, post-1989 Bulgaria’s economic crisis hit the Muslim population hard. Many of them emigrated to Turkey in search of employment. It is estimated that in 1992 alone, around 150,000 Bulgarian Muslims left.362 This seriously diminished the electorate of the MRF, and showed that for the minority economic problems were of equal importance to the protection of human rights. Thus, the party needed to be able to find answers to other issues than the protection of human rights, and to mobilize people other than Muslims. In other words, the MRF had to become a conventional party, alongside the BSP and the UDF.

Bulgaria’s European orientation started to become a reality with Bulgaria’s Association Agreement in 1993, followed by the European Commission’s (EC) invitation in 1999 to begin negotiations over EU membership. The country’s European orientation, as shown in the next chapter, led the Bulgarian parties to seek some ideological reference with one of the groups of parties represented in the European parliament. The MRF sought this reference in the European liberal parties, the other two major European parties, the European Socialists and People’s parties being an ideological reference for the BSP and the UDF respectively. Also, the MRF’s record of being the Bulgarian political party that emphasized issues such as

361 Bell, 1997, p. 387.
362 Insider, January 1993, p. 20; EIU, No1, 1993, p. 25
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respect for human and minority rights and freedoms, which were dominant issues in almost every European liberal party, made the MRF acceptable to the bloc of European liberal parties and paved the way for the MRF’s acceptance into the Liberal International in February 2002.

These changes in the political identity of MRF were reflected in the party’s foreign policy agenda. Economic problems were the focus of the agenda and determined the foreign policy priorities set by the MRF. The highest priority was integration with Euro-Atlantic structures, which were seen as improving economic conditions for the Muslim minority, as well as Bulgarians generally. In contrast to the first half of the 1990s, Bulgaria’s integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions is not now seen to depend on the improvement of Bulgarian-Turkish relations because Turkey’s place on the foreign policy agenda of the MRF is inextricably linked to the human rights of the Muslim minority. More recently, Turkey’s position on the party’s foreign policy agenda has been downgraded in favour of Bulgaria’s Western orientation as a way of alleviating the economic problems of the Muslims.

The increased importance of the economic issues facing Bulgarian Muslims on the party’s foreign political platform is also reflected in aspects of the foreign policy agenda concerning the Balkan region and Bulgaria’s relations with Russia. In both cases, the MRF favours relations with neighbouring states, such as Greece and Russia, because this was seen as crucial to boost the economy of regions inhabited by Bulgarian Muslims. The MRF often lobbied parliament over issues such as the opening of more check-points on the Greek-Bulgarian border, and improvements to transport between the two states to allow the huge number of unemployed Bulgarian
Muslims in the southern part of the country, more than 90% according to some estimates, to seek employment in Greece. The MRF has also been interested in promoting Bulgarian-Russian economic cooperation in areas such as tobacco cultivation and trade, given that the majority of Bulgarian Muslims in southern and north-eastern parts were tobacco growers.

**Other Minorities**

Apart from the Bulgarian Turks, no other minority has managed to participate in the country’s policy making process on a purely autonomous basis. Minority groups such as Jews, Armenians and Greeks are not sizeable enough to provide representation for any political party on a purely ethnic basis. The Bulgarian Turks account for 9.4% of the total population of the Republic of Bulgaria, while according to the 2001 census Bulgarian Jews count for only 0.01%, Armenians for 0.14% and Greeks for 0.04%. Also, due to their small numbers these minorities did not fall victim to assimilation campaigns during the communist period, which might have encouraged them to seek autonomous political representation through ethnic minority-based political parties. As a result, the elites of these minorities prefer to express themselves politically through ethnic Bulgarian political parties, such as the BSP and the UDF.

Finally, minorities such as the Pomaks or Muslim Romas, though they were affected by Zhivkov’s *Vůzroditelní Protses* in the 1980s, did not seek to express themselves

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363 Appendix, tables 64a-68.
This was because, unlike the Bulgarian Turks, Pomaks and Muslim Romas lacked a neighbouring kin-state to ally themselves and a political elite. Instead, due to their common religious beliefs, they allied themselves to the MRF.

The Macedonian minority was severely suppressed by the communist regime after the Tito-Stalin split of 1948, but like the Bulgarian Turks, it had a neighbouring state with which to ally itself, namely Yugoslavia. However, the fact that the existence of a Macedonian nation in the Balkans continued to be questioned made this minority’s participation in Bulgarian policy making a more complex issue. Two political parties have been keen to represent this minority in the post-communist period. One was the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO), a political party founded in December 1990 by descendants of the Slav refugees who left what is now FYROM and northern Greece after the Balkan wars. The other was the United Macedonian Organisation-Ilinden (UMO-Ilinden), a political organisation founded in April 1990 by a group of Bulgarian Macedonians. The degree of participation of these political parties in foreign policy making has been determined by the way in which these parties sought to represent the Bulgarian Macedonians, which in turn reflects their position on the Macedonian issue.

1. Foreign Policy Agenda of IMRO

365 Poulton, 1991, pp. 111-118
366 http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/pdf/cedime-se-bulgaria-macedonians.PDF.
367 Stoian Georgiev from Petrich was elected as UMO-Ilinden’s first president, later to be replaced by Iordan Kostadinov. Of the various political groups, such as the ‘Independent Macedonian Association-Ilinden-Pirin’ later renamed the Traditional Macedonian Organisation-IMRO Independent Ilinden, the Macedonian Democratic Party and the Union for the Prosperity of Pirin Macedonia, which appeared at the end of the 1980s and represented the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria, UMO-Ilinden was the most radical and active (for more details, see http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/pdf/cedime-se-bulgaria-macedonians.PDF ). It is because of its radical political agenda and its active political involvement in the Pirin region that the foreign policy agenda of this particular political group has been selected for analysis here.
IMRO does not recognize the existence of a separate Macedonian nation. It considers that Slavic peoples living in FYROM and northern Greece are ethnic Bulgarians, who use a dialect of the official Bulgarian language. Therefore, according to IMRO, there is no Macedonian minority in Bulgaria.\footnote{Nedeva & Kaytchev, 2001, p. 178.}

As this is also the view of the majority of Bulgarians, IMRO has been able to gain real political influence in post-communist Bulgaria. This influence was increased through its cooperation in almost every election with the UDF, which, since 1994, has allowed members of IMRO to win parliamentary seats, and has allowed it to become actively involved in the country's policy making process. In the 1997 general election, two IMRO MPs were elected becoming members of the parliamentary committee for foreign policy and integration and the committee for national security.\footnote{The two IMRO MPs elected at the 1997 general elections were Anatoli Velichkov and Evgeni Ekov see Nedeva & Kaytchev, 2001, p. 178. See also Access Organisation, 1999, pp. 33-35.}

IMRO's objective has been to develop the identity of a patriotic political party by recognizing the existence of only one nation in Bulgaria. Therefore, in IMRO's view, the Bulgarian state should not recognize minority participation in Bulgarian politics on a purely ethnic basis, as it considers this would give neighbouring states the right to become involved in Bulgarian politics. Thus, IMRO favoured banning the MRF from involvement in politics because the party represented Bulgarian Muslims, and thereby involved Turkey in Bulgarian politics.
It also opposed the BSP, which it considered was not capable of defending Bulgaria’s national interests. The basis for this view was that most BSP members had initially been members of the BCP, which, according to IMRO activists, had for 45 years served Soviet interests at the expense of Bulgaria’s national interests. IMRO activists saw the BCP’s downplaying of such issues as the abuse of the human rights of ethnic Mediterraneans in northern Greece and western Serbia, which would have created problems in the Balkans that could have involved the USSR. IMRO also judged the BCP for its failure to censure Belgrade for its attempts to establish a Macedonian identity for the citizens of SRM.

IMRO adopted a nationalistic foreign policy agenda for Bulgaria which prioritized two objectives. The first was the obligation of the Bulgarian state to protect ethnic kin groups living abroad, especially in neighbouring states such as Greece, FYROM and Serbia. IMRO saw links with ethnic Bulgarians abroad as a means of promoting economic and political interests in the states involved, thereby improving Bulgaria’s international position.

The second objective was a full and irreversible solution to the Macedonian question on the basis of what IMRO saw as the ‘historical truth’, namely that there was no Macedonian nation. The Bulgarian state should seek to reinforce the ‘Bulgarian identity’ of the Slavic inhabitants of FYROM by undermining any attempt to create a Macedonian identity and by seeking entry to the EU. They did not want to see the state of FYROM ceasing to exist; however, they considered it should be merely
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another Bulgarian state with strong political and economic links with Sofia. Integration into the EU would allow the Bulgarian authorities to help FYROM to be accepted as a member. Bulgarian and FYROM membership would eliminate boundary restrictions between Greece, Bulgaria and FYROM, which would in turn allow the first real political, economic and cultural interaction between the Slav populations of all three states since the two Balkan wars in 1912-1913. In addition to increasing ‘Bulgarianness’, this interaction would also increase Bulgaria’s political and economic role in the Balkans.

1. Foreign Policy Agenda of UMO-Ilinden

In contrast UMO-Ilinden acknowledged that there was a Macedonian nation, different in every aspect from the Bulgarian nation. At state level, this nation was represented by FYROM; while in Bulgaria there was a sizeable Macedonian minority, located mainly in south-western Bulgaria, in the area known as Pirin Macedonia.

UMO-Ilinden aspired to represent Bulgarian Macedonians politically. The 1st article of its founding statute states that the main political aim of the organisation is to unify all ethnic Macedonians in Bulgaria, who on the basis of their place of habitation and cultural affinity have been classed as Bulgarian citizens. The 2nd article addressed recognition of the Macedonian minority by the Bulgarian state. Although the 8th article of the statute states that UMO-Ilinden was against secession of the

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370 Indeed, IMRO countenanced FYROM’s secession from Yugoslavia-IMRO welcoming FYROM’s declaration of independence from Yugoslavia in 1991- and supported the lifting of the Greek economic embargo (in place since 1994) on the newly independent state. IMRO viewed the embargo as undermining the viability of FYROM. See Nedeva & Kaytchev, 2001, p. 178.
371 Interview with Evgeniy Ekov, secretary of IMRO, by Svetlana Tikhova, Reporter, No 7 in FBIS-EEU-94-063, 1 April 1994, pp. 4-5.
372 http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/pdf/cedime-se-bulgaria-macedonians.PDF
Macedonian region of Pirin from Bulgaria, and articles 9 and 10 renounced any form of violence, separatism, nationalism or chauvinism on the part of the organisation’s leadership in order to achieve UMO’s political aims, the party radicalized its political agenda in 1992-94 and included separatist claims. In September 1992, the then UMO-Ilinden leader Йordan Kostadinov in an interview with the Skopje based newspaper Puls, demanded the withdrawal of what he called Bulgarian occupying troops from the Pirin region, the transfer of the Orthodox Church in the region to the authority of the Orthodox Church of FYROM, and the banning of all Bulgarian political parties in the Pirin region.\footnote{373}

The radicalization of UMO-Ilinden’s political agenda could be explained by the fact that ongoing ethnic conflicts in neighbouring Yugoslavia, particularly in Bosnia-Hercegovina, raised expectations among UMO-Ilinden’s political leadership that some revision to the territorial status quo of the Balkan states was possible and, therefore, if the leadership radicalized its political demands in relation to the Macedonian region of Pirin, it was possible that this might lead to the secession of the region from Bulgaria and its unification with FYROM. This radicalization might also be explained by the many internal political conflicts among members of the party leadership regarding who would best represent the political interests of the Macedonian minority.

In October 1994 UMO-Ilinden split into three different political factions, all of which claimed to be the real ideological successor to the UMO-Ilinden party. One faction was based in Sandanski; one in Blagoevgrad; and one in Gotse Deltchev, with the

\footnote{373 Ibid.}
latter being later renamed UMO-Ilinden Democratic Action. There was an unsuccessful attempt to unify the three branches in July 1997, and soon afterwards those of Blagoevgrad and Gotse Delchev, which were the most moderate, merged to form the United Macedonian Organisation-Ilinden-PIRIN (UMO-Ilinden-PIRIN), applying in February 1998 for registration as a citizens’ association in the Blagoevgrad City Court. The aim of the association was to voice and defend the rights, freedoms and interests of the populations of Pirin Macedonia and other parts of Bulgaria, regardless of their religion, gender, social status and origin. The Court refused to grant registration. However, in September 1998, UMO-Ilinden-PIRIN applied to the Sofia City Court for registration. The registration was granted and UMO-Ilinden-PIRIN became a political party with headquarters in Blagoevgrad, with Ivan Iliev Sungartiiski as the Chairman of the party’s National Executive Council.

Both UMO-Ilinden and UMO-Ilinden-PIRIN believed that entry to the EU would help to resolve the Macedonian question by allowing the Macedonian minorities in Greece, Bulgaria and elsewhere in the Balkan region to strengthen cultural contacts with their motherland, namely FYROM. EU membership was the highest foreign policy priority for most of the Balkan states, and the EU, it was believed, would exert pressure on these states in the process of accession to improve the human and minority rights of their Macedonian minorities, including the right to have cultural contacts with FYROM. Even during the radicalization of UMO-Ilinden, the image of the EU was positive, mainly because it was believed that any change in the territorial status quo in the Balkan region would have more chance of success if it had the

374 http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/pdf/cedime-se-bulgaria-macedonians.PDF.
375 Ibid.
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authorities suspected that UMO-Ilinden had not abandoned the goal of Pirin Macedonia's secession from Bulgaria, and kept the party under close scrutiny.\textsuperscript{382}

The practice followed by almost all the authorities in power since the creation of the modern Bulgarian state had been to discourage ethnic minority groups from participation in Bulgarian politics, and more especially foreign policy making, which was seen as a highly sensitive area. Such participation was seen as encouraging ethnic conflicts and the eruption of secessionist movements led by the political representatives of the country's various national minority groups. However, with the creation of the MRF party, things changed: the party received the recognition of the Bulgarian state and had an uninterrupted political presence in the Bulgarian parliament from the beginning of the 1990s. For the first time since the creation of the modern Bulgarian state, an ethnic minority group, namely the Bulgarian Turks, had the opportunity to participate in Bulgarian politics through the MRF, and had to develop their own foreign policy agenda in the Bulgarian parliament and international forums.

The other minorities fall into two categories. In one category are the Armenians, Jews, Romas and Pomaks, who are politically represented by the major political forces, including the BSP, UDF and MRF, and have not developed autonomous political activity through their own ethnically based political parties. The dependence

\textsuperscript{382} In 1999, for example, 61 members of the Bulgarian parliament, mostly representatives of the BSP, submitted a letter to the Bulgarian Constitutional Court in which they claimed that the political activities of UMO-Ilinden-PIRIN were counter to the national unity of the Bulgarian state, and thus were against the Bulgarian constitution. They asked for the party's activities to be declared unconstitutional, but this was rejected by the Bulgarian Constitutional Court. See http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/pdf/cedime-se-bulgaria-macedonians-PDF.
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of these minorities on the major political parties is reflected in foreign policy making. These groups have never had their own foreign policy agenda.

The other category includes the Macedonian minority. IMRO and UMO-Iilinden claim to represent this minority, despite their differing views in relation to the ethnic origins of the Macedonian minority. IMRO, because it maintains that this minority is ethnically Bulgarian, has managed to have elected members. UMO-Iilinden holds that the members of the Macedonian minority have a distinct ethnic identity, similar to the identity of the Macedonians in FYROM. As a result, the Bulgarian authorities have restricted UMO-Iilinden’s political activities and its ability to influence Bulgaria’s foreign policy making. Even after official recognition of UMO-Iilinden-PIRIN as a political party in 1999, the party’s influence on foreign policy making remained limited, mainly because it is a small party with few political supporters and no representation in the Bulgarian parliament.

Public Opinion and Foreign Policy Making

Democratization has allowed Bulgarian citizens to have some say in foreign policy making. Under communism, it was the communist party alone that had the right to decide on foreign policy issues. In the period of democratization the public is seen as being a sovereign political actor with the right to participate in foreign policy. This is the result of the new freedom of expression, and free exchange of ideas, which distinguishes democratic from non-democratic political systems, and allows the public to form its own opinions on foreign policy issues.

383 The term ‘public’ in this section refers to Bulgarians over 18 years old who are eligible to vote and participate actively in the country’s political life.
The public can voice its views through constitutional means, for example through plebiscites and referendums. According to the Bulgarian constitution, the President of Bulgaria has the right to hold referendums on foreign policy issues, the outcomes of which are binding. This constitutional provision has never been applied. Alternatively, the public can hold peaceful demonstrations. According to the constitution, every citizen has the right to protest peacefully, if he or she disagrees with state policy on political issues. National issues have provoked demonstrations from Bulgarian citizens, and particularly those sectors that consider that the ethnic communities to which they belong are under threat.

For example, there were demonstrations immediately after the fall of Zhivkov over the decision of Lukanov’s government to discontinue the policy of assimilation of Bulgarian Muslims, and to restore Turkish names. A substantial number of ethnic Bulgarians protested at this because they thought it would encourage Bulgarian Muslims to demand territorial autonomy and challenge Bulgaria’s territorial sovereignty in the future.

The public can also influence foreign policy making indirectly through a general or Presidential election. The previous section showed that a range of foreign policy issues, such as Bulgaria’s Western orientation, and relations with both Russia and the country’s neighbouring Balkan states, are conceived in a different way by the Bulgarian political parties, and that this affects the policy that these parties pursue when they come into power. Election results affect the foreign policy agendas of

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384 Article 102.
385 Articles 43 and 45.
losing as well as winning parties. For instance, the BSP and UDF revised their foreign policy agendas after losing an election.

The other indirect channel of influence is opinion polls. In every democratic system, opinion polls are used to measure public trends in relation to political, economic and social issues. The results affect policy making at both government and political party levels. In liberal democracies, political power is constitutionally derived from the public, and state officials seeking access to power wish to adopt policies that have wide public support. The results of opinion polls are used by the Bulgarian political parties to shape their strategies. According to opinion polls, Bulgaria’s entry to the EU was supported by over 50% of the Bulgarian public throughout the 1990s.\textsuperscript{386}

Thus, all the political parties have declared that EU membership is high on their foreign policy agendas.

However, the foreign policy agendas of the political parties are not always in line with the opinion polls. First, as will be shown in the next chapter, political parties are not ruled exclusively by the public in the crafting of their foreign policy agendas. International organisations or international political groups to which Bulgarian political parties belong, also have an influence. Secondly, opinion polls record opinions in a “yes” or “no” format, and the responses are often emotionally driven and related to the current political situation, or media campaigns. They are not coherent proposals for strategies relating to foreign policy. It is the task of the political parties or state officials to formulate foreign policy that responds to these polls by prioritising some views, and rejecting others.

For example, over Bulgaria’s entry into NATO, the 1990s opinion polls recorded that over half of the Bulgarian population was opposed to the accession. Many Bulgarians saw NATO as a mechanism that served the USA’s expansionist policies, that would endanger Bulgaria’s relations with Russia, and that would involve Bulgaria in controversial military conflicts. Nevertheless, membership of NATO remained at the top of the foreign policy agendas of all the Bulgarian political parties because the party leaders saw accession to NATO being inextricably linked with Bulgaria’s Western orientation, especially entry to the EU.

Also, throughout the 1990s feelings of nationalism were strong in Bulgaria. In a survey conducted by the Centre for the Study of Democracy in 1994, 25% of the public were of the view that people who do not speak Bulgarian should not have the right to vote, while 47% of the public believed that there were Bulgarian territories within the boundaries of other states. However, the foreign policy agendas of the main political parties do not reflect these views. Party leaders firmly believed that policies that would seek the exclusion of ethnic or religious minorities from the state policy making process and lay claim to territories in neighbouring Balkan states, would negatively affect Bulgaria’s efforts to obtain membership of the EU.

Conclusion

Democratization has changed foreign policy making in Bulgaria in terms of process and the actors involved. Foreign policy making involves various mechanisms and
actors, with special responsibilities. The functioning of these mechanisms and actors in democratic Bulgaria is vital and is not restricted to merely rubber-stamping foreign policy decisions taken by a single political party as used to be the case under communism.

One of the main factors that has affected the outcome of state foreign policy making in post-1989 Bulgaria has been the way in which responsibilities have been defined. In broad terms, these responsibilities were not well defined as a result of the process of institution building which occurred at the beginning of democratization. It is believed that the prerogatives of democratic institutions were not rationally defined, but came about as the result of a bargaining process between political personalities and parties whose motives are in most cases personal or narrow party interests. Such a relationship was evident between the President of the Republic and the government during the first half of the 1990s. Because at the time that the constitution was being written the government and the presidency were controlled by different political parties, namely the BSP and the UDF, this led to a round of tough bargaining between the two political parties, which was to determine the future political system. The UDF, which controlled the Presidency, favoured an empowered President, while the BSP, which controlled the government, proposed that the parliament should be the stronger partner. The outcome was a poorly defined, semi-Presidential system, with the confusion over the prerogatives of these two institutions laying the ground for institutional conflicts and confusion over foreign policy issues.

Theoretically, the danger of conflict between the two branches of the executive, namely the President and the government, over foreign policy issues, is always
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present, since the Bulgarian constitution has remained unchanged for 12 years. In reality, however, institutional conflicts over foreign policy issues were confined to the first half of the 1990s and were the result of governmental instability during that period, which rendered the President sufficiently powerful to have a personal foreign policy agenda which he attempted to impose on the government.

Under communism the BCP was the only actor involved in foreign policy making; democratization has allowed other actors to be involved. Political parties, think-tanks and ethnic minorities all play a role in foreign policy making. However, their influence is not equal. Only those parties that are in power really affect foreign policy. The influence of think-tanks is dependent on their ability to obtain a wide audience. The influence of minorities depends on whether they are represented by a political party and whether their numbers are big enough for any party representing them to win a seat in parliament.

Thus, the power to influence seems to be related to the capacity of all these actors to gain the support of a substantial part of the Bulgarian public. Indeed, the importance of public support demonstrates the increased role of the public in policy making in a democracy, in which it is constitutionally regarded as the chief source of power from which authority can be derived.

However, despite the importance of the public in the policy making process of Bulgaria’s post-1989 democratic system, its influence on state foreign policy making since 1989, has never extended beyond indirect actions. No plebiscite or referendum on a foreign policy issue has been held since 1989 and although elections have often
produced changes in foreign policy making, these changes have not been the prime motivator for public participation. Few people in Bulgaria vote for a party or a candidate in general or Presidential elections solely with a foreign policy agenda in mind, with the exception of entry to the EU, which they see as improving their living standards.

There were some public protests in the 1990s related to foreign policy issues including the decision to allow NATO’s military aircraft to use Bulgarian national airspace during the NATO campaign against Kosovo in 1999. However, the effect of public demonstrations is not clear since these protests did not make the Bulgarian government change the foreign policy decisions already taken.

Thus, it could be argued that Bulgaria’s post-1989 foreign policy making, although it has been a more open political process than in the communist period, remains generally restricted to those political parties which manage to gain power, and some institutions which maintain close links with the political leadership of these parties.
Chapter III

From Proletarian to Liberal Internationalism

Introduction

Chapter II examined how the democratization of Bulgaria has changed both the process of and the actors involved in foreign policy making. It was argued that, like in other domains, decision making on foreign policy has become decentralized. This has resulted in the involvement of many actors, each of whom have their own foreign policy agenda, which, as a result of the new domestic political environment, can now be pursued.

To argue that democratization has been achieved through the new domestic political environment would not be entirely accurate: democratization in Bulgaria was in large part the result of Perestroika, which lifted the Soviet Union’s veto on Bulgaria’s right to autonomous politics.\textsuperscript{389} Also, as was the case in some Southern European countries a few years earlier, the international environment gave context to democratization through its influence on the political actors involved.\textsuperscript{390} After the end of the Cold War, the most influential Western states and international institutions exploited the strong desire of almost every East European state to develop relations with the West, and encouraged them to adopt a system of liberal democracy for governance of internal affairs and to enable good international relations. This has been achieved through the instrument of political conditionality, according to which influential international

\textsuperscript{389} Whitehead, 2001c.

\textsuperscript{390} For the influence of the international environment in previous cases of democratization, see: Powell, 2001; Tsingos, 2001; Whitehead, 2001a, Whitehead, 2001b.
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organisations and states established political criteria which EES must meet to receive economic and political aid. In political terms, conditionality allowed these various international actors to intervene directly in the politics of EES, which was perceived as necessary in the absence of a functioning ‘civil society’.

This intervention was not restricted to domestic issues, it extended to foreign policy and was exercised in two ways: directly, through Bulgaria’s obligations to abide by the decisions of international organisations, such as the UN’s in relation to Iraq at the beginning of the 1990s. This disrupted the good relations that Sofia had previously enjoyed with Baghdad. There was also indirect intervention through economic measures such as trade preference and visa regimes, which also damaged relations with countries where there had been a good relationship during the time of communism. One example is the visa restriction on Russians visiting Bulgaria, which was necessitated by Sofia’s association agreement with the EU. As will be argued below, this restriction was to have a negative impact on economic relations between Bulgaria and Russia and was in sharp contrast to the favourable economic and political treatment of the Soviet Union under communism.

Democratization should be conceived as a political process through which EES sought to break their relations with the communist past and integrate into the Western world. Having abandoned communism, the EES aspired to achieve the political and economic standards of the West, which they saw as the only way of securing long term political stability and economic prosperity. After 1989, EES frequently attempted (quite voluntarily) to pattern their policies upon those practised by Western

institutions such as the EU and NATO.\textsuperscript{392} For Bulgaria in particular, ‘Westernization’ was seen as serving another purpose, that of reducing the international isolation resulting from Zhivkov’s assimilation campaign against the Bulgarian Turks.\textsuperscript{393}

However, Westernization, as this process of integration into the Western world has been called, has not been easy and on many occasions has provoked long and heated debate. The problems relate to the ambiguity of the concept of the Western world. Firstly, the so-called Western world was seen as the opposite pole to the Soviet domain and, therefore, did not include the Soviet Union or, following the dissolution in December 1991, the Russian Federation.\textsuperscript{394} The political systems of both the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation were considered to be far removed from the liberal democratic systems of most WES, the USA, etc. whose political systems were seen as being based on fair and free elections, accountability of the elected state authorities and respect for human rights. The political system of communist and post-communist Moscow was viewed as a regime in which political authorities had either no, or in the case of Russia limited, accountability through free but often unfair elections, and where the human rights of its citizens were downplayed.

As a result, the political system of Russia was seen as alien to the political systems operating in the West and, on many occasions, was characterized as “non-European”, “Asiatic” or, even “barbaric”.\textsuperscript{395} This alienation led EES to see that continuing close

\textsuperscript{392} Zielonka, 2001, p. 519.
\textsuperscript{394} As is argued below, because of the predominance of the Russian element in almost all aspects of Soviet life during communism, Russia came to be regarded by most of the political elite in EES as the inheritor of the Soviet past.
relations with Moscow would have a negative effect on the process of modernization, which these states sought through integration with the Western world. However, in the case of Bulgaria, this became a particularly contentious issue due to the special relations that Sofia had had with Moscow during communism. As a result of its communist past, Bulgaria was dependent on Moscow for energy supplies, a fact that Moscow on many occasions used to interfere in Bulgarian politics.

In addition, the Western world comprises a number of actors, including both states and international organisations, whose influence on Bulgarian politics varies in relation to political conditions inside the country and the importance its political elite assigns to these actors. Good relations with the EU came to be of primary importance for the overwhelming majority of the Bulgarian political elite, exemplified by the fact that accession to the EU was given the highest priority in the foreign policy agendas of most of Bulgaria’s political parties and almost all Bulgarian governments after 1989. Accession to the EU has been an open ended political process which has exercised tremendous influence on every aspect of Bulgaria’s policy making including foreign policy making, and has affected the foreign policy agendas of political parties and attitudes towards international organisations, such as the UN and NATO, and states, such as Russia, the USA, and some of the Third World countries.

This chapter examines how Bulgaria’s increasing integration into the Western world has influenced the country’s foreign policy making. It focuses first on the EU as the international actor with most influence on Bulgarian politics and analyses the effect that the EU accession process has had on aspects of the country’s foreign policy
making: foreign policy mechanisms; relations with international organisations; interstate relations especially Third World countries, the USA and Russia.

**Westernization Becomes Meaningful through ‘Europeanization’**

The dissolution of the Soviet Union affected Bulgaria’s domestic and international security. Sofia lost an important patron which had till then guaranteed international security and internal political stability by offering constant political backing for the BCP, and social support for the Bulgarian people, through economic subsidies, which improved welfare and reduced social unrest.

For the majority of the Bulgarian political elite after 1989, the vacuum left by the dissolution of the Soviet Union could only be filled through Bulgaria’s integration into the political and economic structures of the Western world.\(^3\)\(^9\)\(^6\) The West, the victor in 50 years of bipolar struggle, was seen as the main architect of the post-communist world order and it was therefore unthinkable for a small state such as Bulgaria to ignore it in shaping future security policy. Most of Eastern Europe felt the same and thus the broader dynamics of the region also influenced Bulgaria.\(^3\)\(^9\)\(^7\)

Despite general agreement on the aim of integration into the Western world, at the start of democratization, there was dissent among certain circles of the Bulgarian political elite over the strategy to be adopted to achieve maximum security benefits.

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\(^{396}\) This was the case with the political elite in every East European state, for whom the West represented the main reference point for almost every political force. See Zielonka, 2001, p. 513; Mendras, 2001.

\(^{397}\) Such influence was the result of the strong links between the transition processes in East European countries, and was known as the ‘phenomenon of contagion’. For more details about this phenomenon see Whitehead, 2001a, pp. 5-8; Nello, 2001, pp. 76-77; Drezov, 2001, p. 420.
This dissent arose because of the rather loosely-defined concept 'Western world', which referred both to a group of nation-states and to a dense matrix of independent political and economic organisations, such as the UN, NATO and the IMF. Which of the very many actors comprising the Western world should be given priority in Bulgaria's integration strategy? The EEC and the USA were seen as being the most influential actors in the matrix of Western political, economic and military institutions. Until 1993, the EU was generally known as the EEC. For simplicity, the term EEC is used when referring to the period before the creation of the EU.

As argued in detail below, at the beginning of democratization, it was not clear which of these two should be given priority. For a substantial part of the Bulgarian political elite, mainly supporters of the BSP, it was relations with the EEC that were seen as being most important, mainly for geographic and cultural reasons. They argued that Bulgaria's location in South-Eastern Europe limited its potential for establishing close economic and political relations with the USA, but offered unlimited opportunities for forging close relations with the EEC. In addition, Bulgaria was culturally closer to Europe than to the USA, something, which was historically exemplified by the fact that Bulgaria, since its existence as a modern nation-state, had sought to acquire a European profile and to model the country's political and economic systems on those of the larger European states such as France and Germany.

There was, however, a portion of the political elite who argued that Bulgaria should prioritize relations with the USA. In the main, the upholders of this view were political activists within the UDF including Stefan Savov and the future Prime

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398 Until 1993, the EU was generally known as the EEC. For simplicity, the term EEC is used when referring to the period before the creation of the EU.
Minister Filip Dimitrov. They regarded the USA as a potentially very powerful partner that would guarantee the country’s domestic and external security. They believed the USA would lobby more effectively than the EEC for favourable treatment for Bulgaria from international economic institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. This included favourable terms for loans, funding for economic projects to reduce the privations of the post-communist period, and sympathetic hearings from the London and Paris Clubs, for instance, for renegotiation of Bulgaria’s huge foreign debt, standing then at about $12bn. Those who favoured giving priority to the USA considered this would give other benefits through economic projects and trade agreements which would contribute to a speedy transition from the centrally planned economy and improve the people’s welfare, thereby securing economic and political stability for the country.

Lastly, by virtue of being the greatest Western military power, and because of its leading role in military organisations such as NATO, the USA was seen as offering the best military guarantees against states such as Russia and Turkey, which were seen as posing the greatest potential threat to Bulgaria’s territorial integrity in the future. The threat from Moscow was based on its military might: as well as a numerous and well-trained military, it maintained powerful conventional and nuclear arsenals. Although Russia was acknowledged to be politically and economically weak as a result of the collapse of the Soviet bloc, it was still perceived as forces if its national security or other interests in Eastern Europe were threatened.

For several scholars, the EES exaggerated the military threat posed by Russia in the post-communist period,\(^{401}\) which was seen as a psychological problem rather than a military reality.\(^{402}\) For these scholars, both the political will and the military ability of Russia to pose even a small scale military threat to Eastern Europe were limited because any military conflict would be costly for Russia's fragile political and economic systems and because the Chechen conflict had shown the offensive capabilities of the Russian Federation to be weak.\(^{403}\)

Nevertheless, for a large section of the political elites of EES, including Bulgaria, Russia's perceived military might was a threat. There was a genuine fear that instability in Russia resulting from nationalist or communist political forces taking power in Moscow, could spread in the region and restore Russia's imperial powers.

In relation to Turkey, the threat came from Ankara's military supremacy in the Balkan region, a dominance which a sector of the Bulgarian political elite believed Turkey could exercise over Sofia whenever it thought that the human rights of Bulgarian Muslims were being violated. There was the example of Turkey's military invasion of Cyprus in 1974 under the pretext of protecting the human rights of Turkish Cypriots living on the island. Although Turkey had never exercised military supremacy over Bulgaria during the Cold War, this was thought to be because Sofia was under the protection of the Soviet Union during that period. Any military action against Bulgaria would have produced wider conflict between the Soviet and Western

\(^{401}\) Seidelmann, 2001, p. 2001
\(^{402}\) Ibid.
\(^{403}\) Ibid.
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military blocs. However, this did not mean that Turkey might not exert its supremacy now that the Soviet bloc had collapsed and Russia was in disarray.

That Bulgaria should give priority to relations with the USA was also supported by those of the Bulgarian political elite who considered that ties with the US, being the world’s only remaining superpower, would best guarantee Bulgaria’s full integration into the Western world. The USA was considered to be able to influence the decision-making process of European organisations such as the EEC. The case of Turkey was cited as an example. Having forged a strategic alliance with the USA after the WWII, the Turkish establishment had frequently managed to secure American economic and military aid. In addition, through this strategic alliance Ankara had succeeded in overcoming a number of obstacles in its relations with the EEC, such as the Greek veto at the beginning of the 1990s on the creation of a Customs Union between Turkey and the EEC, and later reluctance to grant Turkey the status of a candidate state for membership of the EU.

A small section of the Bulgarian political elite saw the EEC as nothing more than a large market. It might ensure economic prosperity and political stability for its member states and perhaps could provide the same benefits for those EES that established relations with the Union, but it did not offer military guarantees to Bulgaria. The USA, however, could do this either alone or as a leading force in NATO, whereas the EEC had never pursued an autonomous and effective defence policy. The Western European Union (WEU), although viewed as the Community’s military branch by a number of Bulgarian politicians, was perceived as an extremely
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weak organisation whose role during the Cold War had been marginal, and which could at best only act in tandem with NATO.

Disagreement on whether Bulgaria should give priority to relations with the EEC or the USA soon gave way to a political consensus. By the mid-1990s the overwhelming majority believed that Bulgaria should prioritize relations with the EU, and that membership should be the main foreign policy aim. This consensus was officially endorsed by the unanimous parliamentary decision of 14 December 1995, which sanctioned an application for membership of the EU. The government memorandum that accompanied the application stated: “Membership of Bulgaria in the EU is a strategic goal, reflecting the national interest of the country.”

The decision to give priority to relations with the EEC/EU, however, did not mean that those politicians and policy-makers who thought the USA was more important had disappeared, and they surfaced with Gulf War II, which is discussed in detail below. However, for the larger part of the 1990s this faction was in the minority and could not influence Bulgaria's foreign policy making and even acknowledged the importance for Bulgaria’s joining the EU.

What really lay at the heart of the decision in the mid-1990s to prioritize relations with the EEC/EU? A number of political events which occurred during the first half of the 1990s contributed. Firstly, unlike other multinational organisations such as NATO, the EEC/EU had defined its post-cold war strategy towards Eastern Europe at an early stage. In particular, the European Summit of Copenhagen in June 1993 had

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404 Kissiov, 2002, p. 71; FBIS-EEU-95-231, 1/12/95, p. 2
decided the EU’s strategy towards Eastern Europe and provided for long-term enlargement of the EU eastwards.\textsuperscript{405} For the overwhelming majority of the Bulgarian political elite of the time, the decisions of the Copenhagen Summit opened up the prospect of Bulgaria becoming a full EU member, which became synonymous with the process of Westernization or ‘Europeanization’.\textsuperscript{406} Membership of the EU would be tangible proof that Bulgaria had become an equal in the so-called ‘first world’. The country’s direct participation in the decision-making of the Union was deemed to compensate for the loss of state sovereignty.\textsuperscript{407}

Secondly, the majority of the Bulgarian political elite came to realize that, in the post-Cold War international environment, the greatest risks to state security lay within the state. There was the example of the neighbouring SFRY, where economic crisis and ethnic strife had eroded the foundations of the federal state, leading to its dissolution. In such an environment, it was believed that what Bulgaria needed was not a patron-state such as the USA, able to guarantee Bulgaria’s territorial integrity, but economic growth and consolidation of the newly established system of liberal democracy, so that social and ethnic tensions that could jeopardize state security would be avoided. Bulgaria’s integration into the EU was deemed to achieve this; there were the examples of Greece, Portugal and Spain, all countries with fragile economic and political systems, which had achieved economic growth and political stability after becoming members of the EEC.\textsuperscript{408}

\textsuperscript{405} European Council in Copenhagen 21-2 June, Conclusions of the Presidency, SN180/93, p. 13
\textsuperscript{406} Seidelman, 2001, p. 124, 137.
\textsuperscript{407} Seidelman, 2001, p. 133.
\textsuperscript{408} Whitehead, 2001b; Smith, 2001, p. 44.
Thirdly, whether priority should be given to relations with the EEC/EU or the USA was related more to the initial bewilderment caused by the collapse of the communist bloc and the dissolution of the Soviet Union than to political reality. This bewilderment affected both the Bulgarian political elite and the USA and EEC/EU. Bulgaria needed to redefine its foreign policy priorities; the West had to establish a new strategy for Eastern Europe. It eventually became clear that, despite some differences, both Washington and Brussels had the same political goals, namely economic liberalization and democratic consolidation. The two Western actors worked collectively in international forums without major dispute and were thus able to maintain the balance between ‘Europeanism’ and ‘Atlanticism’.

This agreement and cooperation over political goals generally convinced the Bulgarian political elite that these two actors were not so much competitive as complementary, and that establishing relations with one did not preclude cooperation with the other. In an interview in the Bulgarian news weekly ‘Antneni’ in July 1991, the Bulgarian Foreign Minister Viktor Vulkov, when asked whether excessive reliance on the USA’s friendship might not cause Bulgaria to lose its way on the road to a United Europe, replied that seeking relations with the USA was not a contradiction to, but an extension of Bulgaria’s relations with Europe.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the USA had recognized that the integration of all the Balkan states into the EU would best serve the region’s long-term stability and security. To this end the American administration embarked on a series of economic projects, including the Southeast European Cooperation Initiative (SECI), known also

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409 Smith, 2001, p. 31.
410 Interview with Foreign Minister Viktor Vulkov, Anteni, No 26, June 1991, p. 9.

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as the ‘Schifter Initiative’. These projects were designed to consolidate the fragile democratic institutions of the Balkan states and bring economic growth by improving the regional infrastructure, which would also contribute to the region’s easier and quicker integration into the Union. While, for most of the 1990s, these American initiatives ran in parallel with initiatives undertaken by the EU, by the end of the decade, the USA had begun to decrease its commitment to the region, and bowed to the EU’s decisions about most of the projects in the region. An example of this is the implementation of the ‘Stability Pact’, the most all-embracing regional project, which was launched in 1999 in the aftermath of NATO’s military intervention in Kosovo and set up under the guidance of the EU.

The USA’s disengagement with the region was the result of a debate in American policy making circles that had begun at the end of the 1990s during NATO’s military involvement in Kosovo. This debate concerned the degree of American political and economic commitment in the Balkan region. The prevailing view was that the USA and the EU should share the economic burdens that political stabilization and economic reconstruction of the Balkan region would entail on an equal basis. The USA had borne the brunt of the military offensives in Kosovo in 1999, and it was now the EU’s turn to shoulder the economic burden of post-war reconstruction. In addition, a number of American officials feared that any post-war role in the region would be difficult, due to the widespread anti-American feeling in the Balkan region resulting from NATO’s military involvement in the former Yugoslavia.

This disengagement from the region enforced the Bulgarian political elites’ belief that the EU would be the most influential international actor in the Balkan region in the future. As Anastasakis and Bechev put it: “with decreasing US commitment to the Balkans, the EU has become the only game in town.”

The consensus on giving priority to relations with the EEC/EU was also related to public enthusiasm for rapprochement with Western Europe, which the Bulgarian political elite could not ignore. This enthusiasm was rife throughout Eastern Europe and illustrated by the slogan ‘Return to Europe’ which had captured the public’s imagination and had inspired the 1989 anti-communist revolutions in East Central Europe and Romania.

In East Central Europe and Romania, ‘Return to Europe’ demonstrated the wish of the people for breaking relations with the Soviet Union and the establishment of closer links with the WES. The West European political and social model was very attractive to East Central European societies. This model had the characteristics of political and social systems common to all the WES, such as liberal democratic governance, welfare societies and social market economies, which the East Central European public considered would bring them out of the social and economic stalemate that was the result of nearly 50 years of communist rule.

In the case of Bulgaria the slogan ‘Return to Europe’ did not imply feelings of anti-Sovietism or anti-Russianism, as it did in the case of East Central European states and

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413 Anastasakis & Bechev, 2003, p. 4.
414 Hyde-Price, 1998, pp. 264-267. In this chapter, the term ‘East Central Europe’ refers to the following states: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary.
415 Hyde-Price, 1998, p. 264
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Romania. Russia still had a positive image in Bulgaria even after 1989 due to the long term relations with the Soviet Union and the economic benefits it had received. The latter had meant that living standards in Bulgaria were at a higher level than they had been before WWII. The Bulgarian communist regime did its best to continue a good image for Russia to support their cause.416

In the post-1989 period, for the majority of Bulgarians, Russia was seen as a protector: based on common Slavic origins, Bulgaria could expect support if its security was threatened. The fact that the image of Russia has continued to be positive among the Bulgarian public since 1989 is reflected in the many opinion polls published throughout the 1990s. In a Gallup poll conducted in 1995 about 65% of the Bulgarian public reacted positively to the idea of Sofia maintaining close relations with Moscow, and ranked Russia as the second most favoured international partner, the first being the EU, which in the same Gallup poll received 72% support.417 Russia also ranked second in the public's estimation over which international actor should enjoy Bulgaria's foreign policy priority. In an opinion poll conducted at the end of 1996 only about 20% of the Bulgarian public believed that Russia should be Bulgaria's top foreign policy priority, with 48% responding that Bulgaria should give priority to its relations with the EU.418

The question that arises is that if Russia's image had been good since 1989, then what did the slogan 'Return to Europe' represent for Bulgarians? 'Return to Europe' concerned the economic benefits that the Bulgarians expected to gain from the country's rapprochement with WES. Indeed, for the majority of Bulgarians, Western

416 See pp. 28-49 above.
417 Appendix, tables 29-30 & 54a-55b.
418 Appendix, tables 55a & 55b.
Europe was seen as an economic paradise, which, by offering aid to Bulgaria, could alleviate the hardships that the people were suffering in the post-1989 period through the loss of East European markets and Soviet economic subsidies.\textsuperscript{419} In other words, for the Bulgarian public, the slogan did not symbolize a demand for a radical reorientation of the country’s foreign policy, but a change to Western Europe becoming the guarantor of Bulgaria’s economic prosperity.

This could explain the fluctuations in public opinion towards the EU throughout the 1990s. Immediately after 1989, approximately 50\% of the Bulgarian public were positive about the EU.\textsuperscript{420} This rate, moderate in comparison to attitudes in the East Central European states, dropped to below 40\% between 1994 and 1996.\textsuperscript{421} In 1995, in particular, only 27\% supported the EU.\textsuperscript{422}

After the initial period of euphoria towards the EU, came a period of dissatisfaction as a result of the social and economic conditions that the transition to democracy had brought. In broad terms, there were high levels of criminality, insecurity and poverty, which produced some nostalgia for the communist past.\textsuperscript{423} There was a general feeling that the EU had failed to meet the initial high expectations of the Bulgarian public.\textsuperscript{424} The gravy train that had been envisaged did not exist.

\textsuperscript{419} See pp. 60, 82 above.
\textsuperscript{420} Appendix, tables 30-32 &56a –58.
\textsuperscript{421} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{422} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{423} With reference to the nostalgia of the communist past see also p. 101.
In the latter half of the 1990s opinions changed and in almost all the post-1997 opinion polls the EU received more than 70% support from the Bulgarian public.\textsuperscript{425} This change came about in response to the economic crisis of 1996 which resulted from the reluctance of post-1989 Bulgarian governments to introduce painful, though necessary, economic reforms in line with the recommendations of Western governments and international organisations, including the EU.\textsuperscript{426}

Delay turned to negligence when the socialists came into power in 1996. Under the leadership of Zhan Videnov the socialists refused to introduce any of the recommended economic reforms and came into conflict with the IMF, thus leaving the country once again isolated. Zhan Videnov’s government embarked on an ineffectual project designed to restore the network of economic relations which Bulgaria had enjoyed during the communist period. The socialists thought that by restoring economic relations with their erstwhile communist partners they could alleviate the economic pains of transition more effectively than by following the economic remedies offered by the West.

The 1996 crisis brought down Videnov’s government and put an end to nostalgia for the communist past. The economic pains the crisis inflicted on Bulgarians made them realize that restoration of the relations of the communist period was an infeasible dream. The only way out was to adopt the West’s reforms. This was the first step towards restoring the EU’s image among the Bulgarian public. The second and most decisive step came with the accession to government of the UDF.

\textsuperscript{425} Appendix, table 69.

\textsuperscript{426} For more details about the economic crisis see pp. 105-107; Giatzidis, 2002, pp. 89-92; Stefanov, 1999.
Under the leadership of Ivan Kostov, the new UDF government embarked on the task of promoting economic reforms in line with the recommendations of international organisations, to enable Bulgaria to be awarded membership of the EU at some time in the future. These measures pulled the country out of economic crisis, and the economy soon began to show signs of recovery. The popularity of the EU increased further with the decisions at the Helsinki European Summit in December 1999, which allowed Bulgaria to start negotiations with the EC for full EU membership.

Despite the fluctuations during the 1990s, in most cases public opinion ranked the EU higher than the US. For example, in 1995, when positive opinion about the EU was at its lowest ebb, only 47% of Bulgarians thought that Bulgaria should establish close relations with the USA, compared with 72% for the EU and 65% for Russia. A Gallup poll conducted in 1996 indicated that 7% of Bulgarians believed that top priority should be given to relations with the USA, while 48% were of the view that their country should give first priority to its relations with the EU, and 20% that it should be Russia.

The reasons the USA had a less favourable image than the EU were that among the public, the USA was seen as the enemy of Russia, which the EU was not. Having no autonomous foreign and military policy the EU was regarded as an economic rather than a political institution. Also Soviet Perestroika had served to put the EU in a

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427 Vesselinov, 2002;
429 Ibid;
430 The discrepancy between the low rate of positive opinions towards the EU (27%) and the high percentage of people (72%) who believed that Bulgaria should establish close relations with the EU is because a large part of the Bulgarian population, though having a negative view of the EU, thought that Bulgaria had no alternative but to establish close relations with it. Appendix, tables 54a-54b.
431 Appendix, tables 30, 55a-55b.
432 Ibid.
friendly light for the EES populations and especially Bulgarians, whose political and social life was highly intertwined with that of the Soviet Union. Under ideas such as a ‘Common European Home’, Western Europe came to be seen not as a member of a hostile camp, but as a member of the same continent that encompassed the EES and the Soviet Union. The coexistence in the same continent of EES and WES meant there were common security concerns, which could be overcome through rapprochement and cooperation.

The USA’s negative image was also related to NATO’s two military interventions in the former Yugoslavia, which had produced feelings of insecurity among the Bulgarian public, who were concerned that ethnic strife in the former Yugoslavia would be exacerbated and spill over into the whole Balkan region. The fact that the USA had borne the brunt of the military activities in Kosovo in particular provoked the Bulgarian public into expressing their feelings of anti-Americanism through street protests and responses to opinion polls.

**Bulgaria’s Route to the EU: Does It Affect the Scope of the EU’s Political Influence on the Country?**

The political consensus to give priority to relations with the EU was mainly determined by Brussels’ declared intention to accept Bulgaria as a full member of the Union in 2007. Since 1989, Bulgarian governments have not always been consistent in their application of EEC/EU directives on how to liberalize the economy and consolidate the democratic system, but neither has the EEC/EU been consistent in its desire for Bulgaria to join the Union. Should Bulgaria’s entry to the Union be
postponed from 2007, the pro-EU consensus might be eroded. We now examine the factors that have influenced Bulgaria’s integration into the EU thus far, and analyse how expected integration has affected the country’s foreign policy making. By analysing the factors that have determined Bulgaria’s relations with the EU since 1989, we can assess the grounds on which Bulgaria’s pro-EU political consensus has been based since 1989, and how this will affect the EU’s influence on Bulgarian foreign policy making.

In the case of Bulgaria and Romania, there is a strong belief that accession to the EU will happen in either 2007 or 2008. The first formal links with Brussels came within three years of the end of the Cold War, Sofia and Bucharest had signed a Association Agreements with Brussels, which defined preferential trade regimes with the EU. In December 1999, in line with the decision taken at the European Council in Helsinki they had been invited to begin negotiations with Brussels for EU membership. In October 2002, the European Council declared its intention - reiterated at succeeding European Council Summits - to complete by the year 2004 the negotiations which the Union had begun with Sofia and Bucharest in the aftermath of the European Council Helsinki Summit and to accept Bulgaria and Romania as full members of the Union in 2007; a prospect that for Bulgaria has seemed more real since June 2004 when Sofia completed its accession negotiations with Brussels.

However, there is no guarantee that Bulgaria will become full member of the EU by the end of the decade. The accession process is a very complicated procedure which is not depending only on the progress that a state makes to reform its economy or its political system in line with the guidelines from Brussels. The process also depends
on all EU member states agreeing to a country's accession. Events in any of the twenty-five existing member states that might lead to political or public opinion being negative to the project of EU enlargement per se would be enough to block membership even if negotiations were almost complete. In addition, member states have the right to hold referenda, and if opinion in any of these states were to go against EU enlargement then the treaty would not be ratified.\footnote{It is noteworthy that the EU constitution, signed on 29 October 2004 by the heads of the EU member states and meant to have been ratified by all 25 states of the Union within two years after the time of its signing, was rejected in France by 55% of the popular vote in May 2005 and in the Netherlands by 62% of the vote in June 2005 after referendums were called in both states for the purpose of its ratification. The primary reason of the rejection of the EU constitution has to do with insecurities that the 2004 EU enlargement has caused within a large section of the EU public, including the majority of public opinion in France and the Netherlands, which sees that the EU enlargement in 2004 has diminished the political influence of their member states within the Union and has had negative economic consequences in terms of unemployment and low wage increases due to migration from the new member states. These insecurities have increased from plans to include new member states in future, particularly countries with a large population such as Turkey, which the EU constitution does not impede. The result of the referendums in France and the Netherlands in May and June 2005 respectively has raised the issue of postponing Turkey's EU membership for the foreseeable future at least, and of delaying EU membership for Bulgaria and Romania so that the political elites of EU member states reflect on the result of the May and June 2005 referendums and decide on how to proceed with the project of EU enlargement. \url{http://www.bbc.co.uk/hi/world/europe/3954327.stm}}

Bulgaria's EU accession process also depends on the international environment, which has played a decisive role in the country's bid for membership of the EU since 1989. Throughout the period of democratization, the pace of political and economic reform influenced Bulgaria's accession to the Union less than did international events such as the Soviet coup of August 1991 or the wars in the former Yugoslavia because EU policy-makers judged that such events might derail the democratization and Western orientation to which Bulgaria aspired. This gave a momentum to the accession process on the part of Brussels so as to minimize the influence of these events on Bulgaria's political life.
The importance of the international events can be seen in how they affected the signing of the Association Agreement between Bulgaria and the EU on 22 December 1992; and the decision taken by the European Council in Helsinki on 10 December 1999 to invite the Bulgarian government to initiate negotiations for EU membership.

The Association Agreement of December 1992

After the fall of Todor Zhivkov, the new Bulgarian government moved quickly to restore relations with the EEC, which had been frozen since May 1989 as a result of the communist regime's policy of Vuzroditel'ntsa Protses. Thus, in a letter to the then President of the EC, Jacques Delors, dated 1 December 1989 the Bulgarian Prime Minister Atanasov informed the President of the Commission that the Bulgarian government had taken measures to restore their Muslim names to the Bulgarian Muslims and asked for a resumption of negotiations over the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, which had been discontinued in May 1989.435

Atanasov's request was received sympathetically by the Commission, and negotiations were resumed in March 1990. In less than a month, on 3 April 1990, a Trade and Cooperation agreement between the Bulgarian government and the EC was signed. This agreement was one of the first generation of agreements which the EU was to eventually conclude with most EES. It provided for limited trade liberalization between the two parties, but excluded agricultural products and steel, which the EEC considered to be economically sensitive.436

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434 See pp. 68-72 above.
436 Ibid., pp. 24-29.
After the signing of the Trade and Cooperation agreement, relations with Bulgaria deteriorated as a result of the general election held on 10 June 1990. The electoral victory of the BSP cast doubts over whether democratic reforms would be introduced. Under communist rule, the majority of BSP cadres had enjoyed political and economic privileges which any attempt to introduce democratic reforms would undermine.

The first signs of the EEC’s unease were exhibited before the June election. In May 1990 the European Parliament issued a document declaring that the Bulgarian government had discriminated in favour of the BSP during the electoral period and urging the European Council to make the strengthening of Bulgarian relations with the EEC conditional on the promotion of democratic reforms.437 The political turmoil that resulted from this unfair election deepened the breach in relations with the EEC. There was a general feeling in Brussels that Bulgaria would not easily manage to overcome this political crisis and proceed with the reforms aimed at democratizing the country’s political system and liberalizing the state economy. As a result, Bulgaria was not included in the first wave of EES to begin negotiations over contractual agreements with the EEC, known as Association Europe Agreements. These agreements were an enhancement of the previous Trade and Cooperation Agreements. They provided for trade concessions for all categories of East European products in exchange for a commitment on the part of EES to pass reforms aimed at democratizing their political systems and liberalizing their economies.438

437 Ibid, p. 129.
438 Ibid., pp. 29-46.
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In a report issued in August 1990, the EC showed its readiness to open negotiations over Association Agreements with Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Bulgaria was excluded on the grounds that it had made insufficient progress towards democratizing the political system and liberalizing the state economy.439

By the end of 1991 the EC’s position had softened and it wrote to the European Council on 13 February 1992 urging it to authorize the Commission to start negotiations with Bulgaria over an Association Agreement.440 The Council gave its authorization on 11 May 1992 and negotiations began a few days later.441

It is interesting to know what had changed the EEC’s view. In the short period which had elapsed since August 1990, Bulgaria had not made spectacular progress in either political or economic reforms. The political system was still unstable due to a polarizing political climate which prevented the parliamentary forces from establishing any basic political dialogue. Even in the October 1991 general election, the BSP repeatedly contested the right of the MRF to participate on the grounds that the MRF represented the Muslim Minority and, thus, contravened the constitution that prevented the formation of parties on the basis of ethnic and religious affiliation.442 Economically, the only significant reform that had been introduced by the end of 1991 was a partial deregulation of prices. A couple of laws concerning the privatization of large state-owned companies and the de-collectivization of state collectives had been passed, but had not been applied.443

439 Ibid, p.72 and 130.
440 Ibid., p. 140; Zhelev, 1998, pp. 60-64.
441 Ibid.
442 Crampton, 1997, p. 223.
443 Ibid., p. 222.
The EEC's change of heart was due to the Soviet coup of August 1991 which alarmed the policy-makers in Brussels, and showed that the process of democratization in Eastern Europe was not irreversible. The newly established democratic systems in this region were very weak and there was always the danger that a coup might overthrow them and result in authoritarian rule similar to the communist regimes of the past. This was especially true for Bulgaria, where the ex-communist BSP continued to be powerful after 1989 and remained uneasy about reform.

After the Soviet coup the EEC decided that the only way to ensure continued democratization in Bulgaria was to accelerate the start of negotiations over an Association Agreement. It considered that any prolongation of the period of non-negotiation would increase feelings of disappointment and discontent among the Bulgarian public, who might begin to think that the EEC was not interested in including Bulgaria and, that therefore, there was no need for the country to undergo painful economic and political reforms. In such an atmosphere, pro-reform and pro-Western political forces would have been marginalized, while any anti-reform and anti-Western ones would have gained power at the expense of the country's democratization and regional as well as international security.

Also, with the signing of an Association Agreement the EEC would be in a better position to promote democratization in Bulgaria. The agreement would bind Bulgaria to promoting political and economic reforms, and would provide institutional mechanisms through which the Community could supervise Bulgaria's progress, for example through, the Joint Bulgarian-EEC/EU Association Council and the Joint

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Bulgarian-EEC/EU Parliamentary Committee. The former would bring together Bulgarian governmental and Commission officials on an annual basis, while the latter would provide a forum where parliamentarians from both sides could meet on a biannual basis. In these meetings EEC officials would monitor the progress of Bulgaria’s democratization and intervene if they thought progress was unsatisfactory by giving advice of what should be done to accelerate democratization. It was believed that this would achieve swifter democratization than waiting for Bulgaria on its own to meet the EEC’s criteria before concluding an Association Agreement.

The content of the EEC’s Association Agreement with Bulgaria differed from the Agreements with Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The Association Agreement with Bulgaria made specific reference to the protection of human rights and minority groups, and not all trade provisions were favourable for Bulgaria. These provisions, which were included in the Association Agreements with the Visegrad states, excluded a range of Bulgarian products, such as steel and agricultural products, from immediate access to the markets of the EEC.

These differences can perhaps be explained by the different international environment in which negotiations with Bulgaria occurred. At the time of the Bulgarian Association Agreement negotiations violent conflicts were taking place in the former Yugoslavia, which highlighted the need for a strong human rights component. Because of Bulgaria’s sizeable ethnic minorities and its past record of abuse of minority rights such a component was seen to be of particular importance for Sofia.

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446 The term Visegrad states refers to Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The term refers to both constituent parts of Czechoslovakia, namely the Czech Republic and Slovakia.
To guarantee observance of this provision, there was a clause providing for automatic suspension of the agreement in the event that either of the two contractual parties failed to fulfill their obligations. This provision, though referring to both parties obligations was aimed at Bulgaria’s treatment of its ethnic minority population.

With reference to the provisions excluding Bulgarian agricultural and steel products, this was the result of pressure from powerful lobby groups on the governments of many WES. These farming and steel industry lobby groups felt their interests would be threatened if the Association Agreements being concluded with EES provided for free access of East European agricultural and steel products to West European markets. East European agricultural and steel products were cheaper than comparable West European products; thus their availability in the market would result in economic losses for the agricultural and steel sectors of the EEC. Although these same lobby groups had put pressure for the inclusion of similar clauses in the Association Agreements with the Visegrad states, they had been unsuccessful. Because of this, at the time of the EEC’s negotiations with the second group of states, namely Bulgaria and Romania they increased their activities and were successful.448

Bulgaria as a Candidate State for EU Membership

Since the beginning of the 1990s the EEC had made it clear that Association Agreements with EES should be regarded as having intrinsic value and were not necessarily steps along the way to future membership of the European

448 Ibid., pp. 145-151.
Nevertheless, the signing of Bulgaria’s Association Agreement in December 1992 raised high expectations among the political elite that Sofia would become a full member of the EEC. These expectations were further boosted when, less than a year after the conclusion of this agreement, the EEC at the European Council Copenhagen summit in June 1993 decided to increase the number of Community members and, to this end, the Association Agreements were to be considered as part of the broader framework of a pre-accession strategy.

However, in autumn 1995 the Bulgarian government of Zhan Videnov decided to apply for Bulgarian accession to the EU after an overwhelming majority in support of this decision from the parliament. An official application was submitted to the EU at the European Council summit in Madrid on 16 December 1995. It seems somewhat surprising that Bulgaria’s application for membership coincided with opinion polls recording their lowest support for the EU. However, as mentioned above the majority (approximately 72%) acknowledged that, in terms of Bulgaria’s foreign policy priorities, EU membership was necessary. Also, Videnov’s government hoped that should Bulgaria’s application be successful, the country’s economic problems would be more efficiently dealt with because it could be used as justification for tough economic policies.

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449 Ibid, p. 185.
451 Appendix, tables 54a-54b.
452 At the time Bulgaria applied for EU membership the Bulgarian government was facing huge economic problems which culminated in the economic crisis of 1996. The economic losses of state-owned enterprises amounted to 15% of GDP and this situation was exacerbated by the fact that these losses were being absorbed by the state owned banking sector. In addition, Bulgaria had a $303m trade imbalance at a time when state foreign exchange reserves amounted to $1.236m and the government seemed unable to accumulate the level of reserves that would enable it to meet the repayment of more than $1bn of its foreign debt in 1996 without IMF support. Such support seemed unlikely unless the government took socially costly economic measures aimed at privatizing inefficient state companies and banks and reducing its control of the market. See Dimitrov, 2001a, pp. 81-86.
The EU's response to the Bulgarian application came from the EC about eighteen months later. In a report issued by the Commission on 16 July 1997, Bulgaria was assessed as a candidate for EU membership in the future, but the EU was not yet prepared to begin negotiations. This, according to the report, was because Bulgaria had not implemented the necessary economic reforms, to enable its economy to cope with the EU's competitive economic environment. At the time of the EU's reply, Bulgaria was just emerging from the autumn 1996 crisis, which had paralyzed the country's economy and toppled Videnov's government.

In addition, the EU was also unsatisfied with Bulgaria's progress in the area of political reforms. Although over its six year lifespan, the country's democratic system had proved stable, the economic crisis of 1996 showed that there was corruption in the state apparatus, which posed a direct threat to this stability. The EU authorities had expressed their concerns in various ways. On 25 September 1995 at the summit of the Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs of the EU in Brussels, a decision 2317/95 was adopted which required the nationals of certain East European countries of which Bulgaria was one, to obtain a visa in order to enter EU countries.\(^4\)\(^5\)\(^3\)

The European Council of Luxembourg ratified the Commission's July 1997 report in December. According to this report only five states, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Cyprus, were ready to begin negotiations for membership of the EU. However, less than two years later in December 1999 the European Council of Helsinki reassessed this decision and allowed other EES, including Bulgaria, to begin negotiations with the EC to join the Union. Despite all the efforts of the UDF

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\(^4\) The visa regime for Bulgarian citizens was terminated with a decision taken by the Council of Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs on 1 December 2000.
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government to promote liberal economic reforms, the country's economy was still beset by the aftermath of the 1996 economic crisis and was far from being able to withstand the pressures of the competitive environment of the EU market.⁴⁵⁴

Once again it was the international environment that had influenced the decisions of the EU. The European Council's decision came immediately after NATO's military activities in Kosovo in the spring of 1999, during which both the Romanian and the Bulgarian governments had adopted a clear pro-NATO stance and offered logistical support to the alliance as well as allowing it to use their national airspace. This support brought these two governments into conflict with the majority of public opinion in their countries, which was strongly opposed to NATO's military intervention in Kosovo. Bulgarian opinion polls at the time showed that some 80% of the public was against NATO military involvement in Kosovo and the picture was similar in Romania.⁴⁵⁵

This public opposition to NATO military operations in Kosovo alarmed European officials, and the British Ambassador to Romania, Christopher Crabbie, feared that the Party of Social Democracy in Romania (PSDR) would capitalize on the public's opposition and seek to undermine the political power of the Romanian government of Radu Vasile, which would have detrimental effects on Romania's pro-Western foreign policy agenda and the political and economic reforms being implemented. On 3 May 1999 the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, visited Romania as a part of an official tour of the Balkan countries which had given help to NATO during the Kosovo crisis, and Crabbie, who had long disagreed with the official policy of the

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UK’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office on Romania’s NATO and EU aspirations, persuaded him to announce a change to the UK’s negative position on Romania’s readiness to be invited to begin negotiations with both NATO and the EU. The speech which had been prepared for delivery to the Romanian parliament on 4 May 1999 was rewritten overnight: the new one was in line with the change to Britain’s official policy agreed the previous day. Accordingly the British Prime Minister pledged his country’s support to ease Romania’s passage into NATO and the EU. With reference to Romania’s accession to the EU in particular, Tony Blair said that: “At the Helsinki European Council in December [1999] Britain will support an invitation to Romania to begin negotiations to accede to the EU”.

The change in British policy towards Romania, drove the UK to adopt a similar policy on the issue of Bulgaria’s joining NATO and the EU. At the end of May 1999, Tony Blair, as part of his official tour, visited Sofia. During his meetings with Bulgarian officials including the Bulgarian Prime Minister, Ivan Kostov, and the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, Petur Stoianov, the British Prime Minister pledged Great Britain’s support for Bulgaria’s admission to NATO and the EU. Tony Blair promised that his country would give support to an invitation to Bulgaria to begin negotiations for EU membership, at the Helsinki European Summit in December 1999. This statement was in sharp contrast to Great Britain’s official policy on the issue of Bulgaria’s joining NATO and the EU which until then had been that Bulgaria was in no state to be invited to begin negotiations.

457 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/334543.stm
458 http://www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page1312.asp
459 http://www.rferl.org/newsline/1999/05/180599.
460 Ibid.
This change of heart on the part of the UK’s prime minister occurred for a number of reasons. The domestic political scene in Bulgaria during NATO’s military operations in Kosovo was quite similar to that in Romania. There was a strong public opposition for NATO’s military operations and a fear among Bulgarian and European officials, including British diplomats in Sofia, that anti-reform political parties such as the BSP could capitalize on the public opposition and direct it against the pro-Western foreign policy agenda and the political as well as economic reforms which the UDF government of Ivan Kostov had initiated. In addition, there was a widespread view among many European officials, including several British diplomats that for the process of integration into the EU Romania and Bulgaria should be treated as one case. They were seen as two Balkan states with similar economic and social structures that were different from those of other East European candidate states. They had also followed similar paths in their post-1989 relations with the EU - for instance they both signed Association Agreements at approximately the same period and in due course both were excluded from the first wave of East European applicants. Therefore, it was thought that any decision to accelerate Romania’s accession to the EU should extend to Bulgaria.

The change in British policy on Bulgaria joining the EU was to have a decisive effect on Sofia’s EU aspirations. At that time the British Prime Minister had considerable influence in European politics. The Labour Party, which was in power in Great Britain, was the ideological partner of the French Socialist Party and the Social Democratic Party in Germany as well as a coalition of leftist parties in Italy. In

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461 Personal interview with a diplomat who wishes to remain anonymous, 25/1/2002.
addition, Tony Blair was much admired by most of his European counterparts mainly
due to the fact that he favoured a more active and deeper British engagement in
European politics than had been the case prior to his party coming to power in 1997.
Blair’s position on Kosovo also played a role. This position was seen as a success and
partly as a result of his ‘strong’ leadership. After his tour of the Balkans in late spring
1999, Blair’s government at the European Council in Helsinki in December 1999
lobbied for Romania and Bulgaria to be invited to begin negotiations over EU
membership.

The views of the British government were well received by other EU officials
including the then German Chancellor Gerhard Schroder and Guenter Verheugen,
the Commissioner responsible for EU enlargement and formerly German Minister for
Europe in Schroder’s government, which, like the British government, believed that
the Romanian and Bulgarian governments should be rewarded for their support of
NATO in the Kosovo conflict. These officials feared that otherwise the political
power of the Bulgarian and Romanian governments could be undermined by the pro-
Western foreign policy agendas which both governments were promoting.
Furthermore, both countries were sources for the fuel being smuggled into Yugoslavia
after economic sanctions were imposed on Belgrade, and it was thought that the
prospect of membership would encourage a tighter regulation of borders to make sure
oil supplies did not get through to Serbia.464 In addition, the EC at the time was
positive about the prospect of Romania and Bulgaria being invited to begin
negotiations for EU membership because they felt this freed them from the danger of
accusations of discriminatory practices against Romania, Bulgaria and other countries

464 http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/334543.stm
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such as Slovakia, Latvia and Lithuania, which had been excluded from the first wave of East European applicant states.\(^{465}\)

Thus, the EC reached the conclusion that at the European Council summit in Helsinki the decision taken at the European Council in Luxembourg in December 1997 should be changed and the Commission ordered to begin immediate negotiations with Bulgaria and Romania,\(^{466}\) and in December 1999 they were invited to begin negotiations for membership to open in March 2000.\(^{467}\)

It was expected that this decision would boost the morale of the Bulgarian public through conviction that membership of the EU was not far away and the quality of their lives would be greatly improved. The UDF government hoped to capitalize on this euphoria by claiming that the EU’s decision was the result of the government’s implementation of political and economic reforms and adherence to a pro-Western foreign policy. This would boost the UDF’s public image and confront public opposition to the government’s stance on NATO military operations in Kosovo, and the efforts of its political opponents to capitalize on this opposition. In addition, the government would be enabled to continue with its economic and political reforms in the face of little resistance from the public or opposition parties.

Although the decision did create a degree of euphoria among the Bulgarian public, it did not save the UDF from electoral defeat in the parliamentary elections of June 2001. In those elections the UDF received only 18% of the vote with the newly formed NMSII party receiving 43% and topping the poll.

\(^{467}\) Ibid.
The decision to invite Bulgaria to begin negotiations for EU was also a political move on the part of the European Council which wished to see the UDF continue its programme of political and economic reform. Despite the hopes the decision had raised, the Union however was not prepared to grant membership to Bulgaria in the immediate future, as was made clear at the summit of the European Council in Gothenburg on 14 June 2001. At this summit the European Council decided that, in the short term, the Union was prepared to grant membership only to ten out of the twelve states that were currently conducting negotiations with the EC. The states that would be successful would be those that completed negotiations by the end of 2002.468

The decision of the European Council to restrict EU membership to only ten states was taken for two main reasons. Firstly, the European budget was not sufficient for accession of more than ten countries by 2006, which meant that de facto the two states lagging further behind in the negotiations could not be offered membership until after 2006, even in the event that they had completed negotiations with the Union by 2002. Secondly, the Council wished to allow those countries that were to be granted membership to participate in the European parliamentary elections in May 2004. However, because of the EU’s cumbersome bureaucratic procedures, in order to be eligible to participate in the European parliamentary elections of May 2004, the ten candidate states would have to have completed negotiations with the Union 18 months before the election date.

Bulgaria it was decided would not be included in the group of ten states which would finalize negotiations with the EC by the end of 2002. The period following the European Council in Helsinki was not long enough for the Bulgarian government to catch up with the EES which had begun negotiations for EU membership after the European Council summit in Luxembourg in 1997. By the end of 2002, Bulgaria had managed to close only 23 out of the 30 chapters which comprised the negotiations between the EU and the candidate states. In a report sent to the European Council on 9 October 2002 the EC stated that Bulgaria would not be ready to join the EU by 2004 and that the possibility of membership should be postponed until after 2006.469 The Copenhagen European Council in December 2002 adopted a detailed timetable on Bulgaria’s accession to the EU, dubbed the ‘Roadmap for Accession’, according to which Bulgaria could expect to join the Union in 2007. On 15 June 2004 the Bulgarian government of Simeon Saxkoburgotski completed all parts of the negotiations with the EU, and Bulgaria is currently waiting for the EU to fulfill its promise to accept it as a full member state in 2007.

If the time period after the summit of the European Council at Helsinki was deemed too short for Bulgaria to complete negotiations with the EC by 2002, why was it considered to be sufficient for Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia, which were included in the ten countries to be admitted? Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia had been excluded from the group of states that started negotiations with the Commission after the European Council summit in Luxembourg in 1997 on political grounds. For Slovakia, these applied mainly to the poor democratic credentials of the government of

Vladimir Meciar which was then in power.\textsuperscript{470} With reference to Latvia and Lithuania, despite the many economic problems that these two states faced such as the omnipresence of the state in the country’s economic life, an extremely weak private sector and the existence of labyrinthine procedures that could also question the existence of a market economy, the main reasons for their exclusion were problems concerning the respecting of minority rights, as well as a fear on the part of the Union that starting negotiations for membership with all the Baltic states would not be well received by Yeltsin’s Russia.\textsuperscript{471} The fact that the European Council at Luxembourg decided to start negotiations with Estonia immediately was not because Estonia was further ahead in the fulfillment of EU membership conditions than its Baltic neighbours, but because the Council wished to mitigate the effects of Estonia’s exclusion from NATO at the NATO summit in Madrid in July 1997, a few months prior to the Luxemburg European Council in December 1997.\textsuperscript{472}

By the end of the 1990s, the EU had fewer reasons to object to the membership of these three states. In Slovakia, Meciar’s government had fallen in the general election in 1998 and the newly elected government of Mikulas Dzurinda had started to reverse the democratic deficit.\textsuperscript{473} In Latvia and Lithuania, under the guidance of Western institutions such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE, governments had made progress in the field of minority rights. In addition, the election of Vladimir Putin as President of Russia in March 2000 was to dispel the EU’s fears that Russian-EU relations would deteriorate in the event that Latvia and Lithuania were offered


\textsuperscript{472} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{473} Samson, 2001, p. 381.
membership of the EU. This was mainly because under Putin, Russia's foreign policy became friendlier towards the West than it had been under Boris Yeltsin. Not only did these events lead the EU to revise the decision taken by the European Council in Luxembourg, they also helped to ensure that their negotiations with the EC were given precedence over Bulgaria's.

Bulgaria's exclusion from the first group of states to start negotiations was not based so much on political grounds as on economic grounds.474 Despite the efforts made after 1997 by Kostov's government to tackle the country's problems, Bulgaria still had a long way to go to meet the economic criteria set by the Union. This is not to say that the other three states succeeded in meeting these economic criteria. In fact, if Bulgaria's economic situation in 2002 is compared with that of Lithuania and Latvia, the reasons why the latter two countries were included in the first group of accession states are not clear.475

According to Papadimitriou, since 1989 some of the EU members had developed patron-client relationships based on historical links or cultural proximity with one or more EES.476 The client states have repaid their patrons by introducing economic and political reforms representing their interests regionally and internationally.

Latvia and Lithuania's membership was promoted by Finland and Sweden, and Slovakia was backed by Germany, but throughout the 1990s Bulgaria did not have any such relationship. The only effective help came from the British government after

474 EC, 1997.
the Prime Minister’s visit to the Balkans in late spring 1999. The fact that no state put themselves forward to be a patron for Bulgaria was probably because influential countries in the European North such as Germany, Britain or the three Scandinavian states that were members of the Union were more interested in promoting the membership of the Visegrad and Baltic States because the economic stakes were higher in these.\(^{477}\) The volume of trade and investment from the states of the European North to the Visegrad and Baltic regions were much higher than to the Balkan Peninsula throughout the 1990s.\(^{478}\) In addition, due to the military conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, a number of policy-makers in North European states believed that the Balkan Peninsula was unstable and admission of any Balkan states to the Union posed the risk that Brussels would become embroiled in a future Balkan crisis.

Secondly, EU members such as France were sceptical about EU enlargement in general\(^{479}\) because they believed that priority should be given to deepening cooperation amongst the existing EU members through a strengthening of the institutional infrastructure of the Union and the participation of as many member states as possible in the newly launched European Monetary Union (EMU) project. It was believed that widening the Union eastwards without prior strengthening of the existing institutional infrastructure and securing the success of the EMU would result in a multi-tiered Union with weak decision-making mechanisms, which, in turn, would hamper cooperation amongst EU member states and the Union’s ability to blossom into a powerful international actor with its own foreign and defence policy.

\(^{477}\) The British government’s lobbying for Romania and Bulgaria to be invited to start negotiations for EU membership by the Helsinki European Council was only temporary. It was based on security considerations related to the two countries and the entire Balkan region resulting from NATO’s military operations in Kosovo. It was influenced by Great Britain’s diplomatic staff in Romania and Bulgaria and was in sharp contrast to the views of the UK’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office.


\(^{479}\) Ibid, pp. 97-103.
The only EU member states with an interest in Bulgaria's accession to the Union were Italy and Greece, mainly due to the leading role that both states wished to assume in the Balkans after the end of the Cold War. However, in both states there were powerful lobby groups already at work, such as the farming unions that opposed EU membership for Balkan states such as Bulgaria because they believed that it would prove detrimental to their interests because of the overlap of agricultural exports to the EU. Wine, fresh fruit and fresh vegetables, for instance, which constituted almost 40% of Bulgarian agricultural exports to the EU also accounted for 30% of Greek and Italian agricultural production.\footnote{Ibid., p. 112.} As a result of this overlap, Bulgaria's admission to the Union would be disadvantageous for Greek and Italian farmers since their products would have to compete with much cheaper Bulgarian production.

Also, Greece's ability to advocate Bulgaria's accession to the EU was limited by Athens' weak institutional position within the Union for the greater part of the 1990s. This weakness was related to the poor state of the Greek economy and to its foreign policy towards the Balkan region. Throughout the 1990s, Greece was seen as something of a 'sick man of Europe' because most Greek governments up to 1996 had failed to follow EU directives aimed at invigorating the state economy, which had been on the brink of bankruptcy.

In terms of its foreign policy for most of the decade Athens had followed a nationalist line towards the Balkans aimed at restricting Turkey's influence in the region and preventing the newly created state of the Former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia
(FYROM) receiving recognition as the Republic of Macedonia. According to the Greek authorities, the name Macedonia was linked to the ancient history of Greece, since it was the name given to the Kingdom of Alexander the Great and, therefore, no modern state other than Greece had the right to use it. The Greek government forged a special relationship with the Serbian regime of Slobodan Milosevic, which was international isolated because of its active involvement in the ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{481} This special relationship apparently even extended to the political authorities of Belgrade requesting political and military assistance from Greece in early 1992 in order to implement a plan which firstly aimed at the political destabilization of FYROM with the view to eventually partitioning it territorially between Greece and Serbia.\textsuperscript{482} However, Greece refused the Serbian offer because it realized that any engagement in discussions aiming at FYROM’s political destabilization would have a negative effect on Athens’ international image and bring the country into sharp political conflict with its EU partners.\textsuperscript{483}

Greece’s Balkan policy went against the efforts of the EU to put an end to ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and secure peace in the region by promoting liberal democratic systems in, and multilateral cooperation between, the Balkan states. Conflicts arose both behind closed doors in meetings of the European institutions, and in the public arena, leaving Athens isolated from the other members of the Union and, thus, undermining Greece’s potential to exercise any influence on the EU’s foreign policy decision-making in relation to the Balkan region.

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\item \textsuperscript{482} Takis Michas, 2002, pp. 48-56.
\item \textsuperscript{483} Ibid.
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Greek's institutional position within the EU has improved since 1996, when a change of government took place. The former Prime Minister, Andreas Papandreou, resigned for health reasons and the parliamentary group of Greece's ruling party, PASOK, elected Costas Simitis as his successor. Under Simitis' premiership the Greek government reconsidered its economic and foreign policy.

The Simitis government set itself the difficult task of entering the EMU by 2002. In order to achieve this objective, the Greek government was obliged to follow the Brussels directives and adopt economic measures in line with the economic criteria set by the Union for membership of the EMU. At the same time, the Greek government also began to distance itself from the Milosevic regime and align itself with EU efforts to promote peace and multilateral cooperation in the Balkan region. By doing so, Greece hoped to increase its credibility within the Union as a member state interested in promoting EU interests in the region and influence the EU's foreign policy decision-making in relation to the Balkan region.

However, despite this, Athens has done little to advocate neighbouring Bulgaria's accession to the EU. Firstly, after 1996 Greece was preoccupied with securing the country's entrance into the EMU by 2002 as well as with promoting Cypriot membership of the EU by 2004. These two issues were top foreign policy priorities. Secondly, several Greek policy-makers did not favour EU enlargement eastwards, because they believed that this would entail a substantial cut in the amount of EU Structural Funds given to Greece as a result of the EU's policy of helping the economic convergence of its poorest and richest members by reallocating funds to the more economically disadvantaged EES.
Sofia also had no Western style influential lobby groups able to promote its interests. Indeed, as many Bulgarian officials have often admitted, in order to gain support for state interests, such as the promotion of the country’s membership of NATO and the EU, Bulgarian governments have had to work closely with lobby groups in Europe and America that have close links with other groups, such as the Jewish and the Greek communities in the USA. Bulgarian governments have acknowledged the lack of influential lobby groups as a serious problem in Bulgaria’s post-1989 foreign policy making. As a result, in April 2000 the UDF government of Ivan Kostov took the initiative to invite some 300 Bulgarians living abroad to meet in Bulgaria, in an attempt to establish a network of people who could assist the Bulgarian government in promoting liberal political and economic reforms in the country by offering their know-how. This network could also be exploited to lobby for support for Bulgaria’s national interests abroad. Many of the Bulgarians who participated in this initiative, such as the former heir to the Bulgarian throne Prince Kyril of Preslavski, enjoyed a high social status in their host countries and the Bulgarian government gained from their professional experience as well as their position in their host countries. This initiative became known as Bǎlgarski Velik Den (Bulgarian Easter) because it took place during the period of Orthodox Easter. The participants met in the National Palace of Culture in Sofia where they split into six working groups based on their different interests, and discussed topics related to Bulgaria’s accession to NATO and the EU. During these talks, the Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nadezhda Mihaǐlova, and the Bulgarian Prime Minister, Ivan Kostov, appealed to the participants to present the Western societies in which they lived with arguments.
favouring the enlargement of NATO and the EU, and to assist Bulgaria by every possible means to become a full member of these two Western organisations.\footnote{Ibid.}

However, the Bŭlgarski Velik Den initiative was not successful. The costs were borne by various state companies including the ‘Bulgarian Telecommunications Company’, ‘Mobikom’, and the ‘International Events Department of the Plovdiv Fair’. This sponsorship coupled with the fact that there was an atmosphere of secrecy surrounding the project, the organisation and the purposes of the entire initiative, with the Prime Minister’s office being mainly responsible for its organisation, made a large part of the press and the political elite very suspicious about its real motives, and it lost their support.\footnote{Ibid; Kaytchev, Naum, personal interview, 25/11/2004; Abadzhiev, Dimitur, personal interview, 30/11/2001; Baeva, Iskra, personal interview, 7/12/2001; Gaitandzhiev, Ivan, personal interview, 24/1/2002; Borisov, Boiko, personal interview, 6/11/2001.} The government was accused of having used state funds to hold an event which did little more than boost its public image, and there seems to be some truth in this accusation. Two months before Bŭlgarski Velik Den the director of the Prime Minister’s office, Mihail Mihailov, was forced to resign under allegations of corruption.\footnote{Ibid.} Also many of the participants in the initiative were highly critical of the government’s economic policies which had a negative effect on the government’s public image and made Ivan Kostov’s cabinet and that of Simeon Saxkoburgotski, which succeeded it, less enthusiastic about this, or any similar initiative.

However, the NMSII government of Simeon Saxkoburgotski did recruit some of the participants for government office, including the current deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Transport, Nikolai Vasilev. Vasilev, in particular, was one of the most enthusiastic supporters within the NMSII cabinet for retaining the annual meetings of
the participants. As a result of the efforts of government officials, such as Vasilev, since 2004, the Bălgarski Velik Den initiative has become a non-governmental legal entity which has been registered as a foundation in the district court of Plovdiv under the name the ‘Bulgarian Velikden Movement Foundation’. Annual meetings still take place, but the foundation does not have the same degree of government support and its political influence on foreign policy is dubious.

Bulgaria’s exclusion from the first group of EES to join the EU did not change the Bulgarian public’s image of the Union. Opinion polls published since 2002 show that the overwhelming majority of the public still favoured Bulgaria joining the EU even though not until 2007. The Bulgarian government and the President of the EC, Romano Prodi, who referred to it in a speech in Athens on 16 April 2003 at the signing ceremony of the treaty of accession of ten new members, were confident that their country would be ready to join by 2007.

The Bulgarian government completed negotiations for EU membership on 15 June 2004 and, provided that the pace of economic and political reforms continues at the current rate, the target seems to be realistic. Nonetheless, it is too early to say absolutely that Bulgaria will be an EU member state in 2007. The date of its admission to the Union is not only determined by whether Bulgaria meets the Copenhagen criteria. As argued in the earlier part of this chapter the international environment in which negotiations take place is equally important for Bulgaria, which was affected by the Soviet coup of August 1991 and the Kosovo conflict in 1999.

http://www.bgvelikden.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=245
The fact that international events also worked to accelerated Bulgaria’s accession to the EU does not mean that this will always be the case. It could be that an international event might delay Bulgaria’s accession to full membership, and one such occurred in February 2003. At that time the world was being drawn into an international crisis that split the Western states into two opposing camps. The crisis was over whether the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction and, in the event that it did, how the international community should act. On the one hand, countries such as the USA and Great Britain alleged that Iraq did possess weapons of mass destruction and, therefore, argued that the international community should take immediate military action against Iraq. These states declared their determination to undertake such action even in the absence of approval from the UN Security Council. On the other hand, states such as France, Germany and Russia suggested that the international community should not take any action against Iraq before the inspectors, whom the UN had in the meantime appointed to investigate the matter, had submitted their final report on this issue.

Sofia sided with the British and the Americans and expressed its support for the Anglo-American view in the many discussions that took place on this issue at the UN Security Council, which Bulgaria was presiding over at the time of the Iraq crisis. Also, on 5 February 2003 Bulgaria, along with nine other EES signed a declaration supporting the Anglo-American position. In addition, in the event of an Anglo-American military operation in Iraq, the Bulgarian government declared its intent to assist the operation by all means, including supplying an infantry battalion consisting of 69 military officers, 109 non-commissioned officers and 300 professional soldiers including 13 women, which was included in the ‘Center-South’ Multinational
Division under Polish command.\textsuperscript{492} The main tasks of the Bulgarian battalion would be to maintain order and assist the restoration of infrastructure in the region surrounding the Iraqi town of Kebala.\textsuperscript{493}

Sofia hoped that through a regime change in Iraq the country would receive the $1.6bn Baghdad owed to Bulgaria from communist times.\textsuperscript{494} The bulk of this debt had been accrued through the supply of arms purchased from Sofia during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s. After the end of the Cold War Bulgaria had sought repayment of this debt, but the Saddam Hussein regime constantly refused as retaliation for the support that Sofia had given the UN in its activities against Iraq after the invasion of Kuwait in 1991.

The Bulgarian decision to side with the British and Americans over Iraq is related to the strong pro-American feelings of certain cabinet members, including the Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon Pasi and the Prime Minister Simeon Saxkoburgotski. The former, before assuming the office of Bulgarian Foreign Minister, was the President of the Bulgarian Atlantic Club in Sofia, an NGO aiming mainly at promoting a positive image for NATO and the USA among the traditionally Russophile Bulgarian public. The latter during his exile in Spain had forged strong links with the Spanish political elite, particularly the Spanish conservative party, known as the People’s Party, which was in power at the time of the Iraqi crisis, and offered Spain’s support for the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in March 2003.

\textsuperscript{492} [http://www.md.government.bg/ en /iraq.html]
\textsuperscript{493} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{494} [http://www.capital.bg/weekly/11-98/22-11-1.htm]
As a result, once in power, the government of Simeon Saxkoburgotski’s priority was to secure Bulgarian membership of NATO. This is not to say that Saxkoburgotski’s government was less concerned with membership of the EU, but that at the time it came to office in June 2001, admission to NATO seemed to be a more immediate and easier objective. A NATO summit was due to take place in Prague in November 2002 where the countries that would be included in the coming NATO enlargement in 2004 would be decided, and the possibility of Bulgaria being included was quite strong.

Although the government’s efforts were rewarded and Bulgaria was invited to join NATO at the summit in Prague, this invitation did not secure admission to the organisation. In order to become a full member, the decision had to be ratified by all the national parliaments of the existing NATO’s member states. This process it was expected would take about two years; according to many governmental officials, during this time Bulgaria should always act in close alliance with the most influential member state of NATO, namely the USA and behave as if the country were already a full member. Otherwise, it was possible that Bulgaria’s admission might be blocked. This was a deciding factor in the Bulgarian government’s decision, along with many NATO members, to support the American-British position over Iraq in 2003.

Bulgaria’s stance on the Iraqi issue cast a shadow over the country’s relations with France and Germany and other EU member states which had aligned themselves with the Franco-German position. The decision of the Bulgarian government only a few days after an extraordinary meeting of the European Council in Brussels which had decided the EU’s official position on the Iraqi issue which was to sign the declaration of support for the British and Americans seriously annoyed policy-makers in Paris.
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and Berlin. The European Council’s official position was a compromise between the American-British and the Franco-German views, and Bulgaria’s decision to distance itself from this position by signing the declaration was seen as Sofia showing contempt for the EU’s highest institution.

The fact that nine other states had signed the declaration did not reduce the annoyance in France and Germany towards Bulgaria. Sofia’s attitude was judged to be especially provocative because, while countries such as Poland or Hungary had completed negotiations with the EC for EU membership and, thus, their admission to the EU seemed to be irreversible, Bulgaria, and also Romania’s admission was still in the relatively early stages of negotiation and therefore more compliance was to have been expected. As a result a number of government officials started questioning whether Bulgaria and Romania would become members in 2007. One of these was the French President, Jacques Chirac, who at a press conference on 18 February 2003 stated that “…Bulgaria and Romania, currently expected to join the EU in 2007, had been particularly thoughtless to sign such a declaration and could not have chosen a better way to spoil their chances of joining the EU”.

This statement shows that admission is far from guaranteed. Although Sofia’s stance on the Iraqi issue might not have damaged its prospect of becoming an EU member by 2007, another similar event could well complicate Bulgaria’s relations with the EU and postpone the country’s admission to the Union indefinitely. How might such a postponement affect Bulgaria’s foreign policy making?

495 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2781369.stm ; http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2774139.stm
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Though it is difficult to predict the exact impact that a postponement of Bulgaria’s EU membership would have on foreign policy making, it could be argued that a postponement would erode the political consensus developed since 1989 that the future of their country is irrevocably tied to membership of the EU. A Euro-sceptic public opinion could emerge, which, as Drezov remarks, “might one day grow tired of leaders that promise something as elusive as communism - in this case, membership in the Western club”. \(^{496}\) The rise of Euro-scepticism among the public might in turn reflect on the political elite of the country and might give rise to Euro-sceptic and nationalist political forces that would seek to reorient Bulgaria’s foreign policy by restricting the EU’s influence on Bulgarian foreign policy making.

The Impact of Europeanization on Bulgarian Foreign Policy Making

It has been argued that, throughout the period of democratization, a political consensus developed among the majority of the members of the Bulgarian political elite and the public that Bulgaria’s future is tightly interwoven with that of the EU. This consensus has been the vehicle for the EU’s influence on Bulgarian politics. What will determine the scope of the EU’s influence on Bulgarian political life in the future will be the extent to which such a consensus continues to exist.

This section examines the influence that the EU has exercised on Bulgarian foreign policy making. It is argued that, like other areas of society, the Union has legitimized its interference in foreign policy by ‘democratic conditionality’. Through this principle, which is analysed extensively below, the EU has affected three areas of

\(^{496}\) Drezov, 2001, p. 436.
Bulgaria’s foreign policy: a) decision-making mechanisms; b) relations with international organisations; and c) interstate relations.

The Issue of Democratic Conditionality

The principle on which the EU has legitimized its interference in Bulgarian politics is ‘democratic conditionality’, also known simply as ‘conditionality’. This principle was fleshed out by the EC in April 1990 and linked the timetable of the Association Agreements of EES with the promotion of political reforms that would make the process of democratization in these states irreversible.497 In general, these reforms aimed at establishing: a) free and fair multi-party elections; b) the respect of law and human rights as inviolable principles; and c) liberal market economies. However, the exact content of the reforms required to be adopted varied from state to state, and were mainly determined by EU institutions. As is argued below, the actual input of the EES authorities into these reforms was minimal and mainly confined to applying them in practice.

Besides the calendar for the Association Agreements, the principle of democratic conditionality also came to determine membership of the EES. According to the decision taken by the European Council in Copenhagen in June 1993, the promotion of democratic reforms that would guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities, along with the establishment of a functioning market economy able to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the EU and the ability to take on the obligations of membership,

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including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union, were necessary preconditions for the accession of EES to the EU.498

Although it determined the criteria for EU membership, the Copenhagen European Summit did not lay down an exact schedule for the process by which EES would become EU member states. In reply to political pressure from EES, the Essen European Council in December 1994 adopted a pre-accession strategy for all EES that had signed Association Agreements with the EU. According to this strategy, institutional structures and mechanisms between the EU and the associate EES were established which aimed at assisting these states to incorporate the *acquis communautaire* and proceed with all the necessary political and economic reforms that would enable the associate EES to become well integrated into the single European market without negative consequences on their domestic political and economic systems.499

The European Councils such as that held in Florence in June 1996 decided to accelerate the process of EU enlargement eastwards, but since not all the associate EES were thought to meet the membership criteria laid down by the Copenhagen EU Council, each associate EES was to be individually judged in relation to whether or not it met the criteria, which, in other words meant that the time of EU accession for associate states would vary.500 At first, this differentiation was believed to make the application of the principle of democratic conditionality to associate EES more effective, because it was assumed the differentiation would create a competitive environment, with each of the associate states competing to be among the first EES to

498 Smith, 1999, pp. 118-120.
499 Ibid., pp. 120-128.
500 Ibid., pp. 128-129.
join the EU. This it was thought would spur further progress on political and economic reforms and the adoption of the *acquis communitaire* by these states.\textsuperscript{501} But, since differentiation also meant that some of the associate EES would be left out of the first and perhaps even the second round of EU enlargement, this was seen as having economic, political and security implications for those states that were excluded. In other words, while new EU member states would enjoy the political and economic advantages associated with EU membership, excluded states could feel isolated which might have a destabilizing political effect on them and their immediate regions and create tensions between the new EU member states and the excluded associate countries. As a result, Brussels looked for other options that could reduce the negative implications of being left out of any stage of EU enlargement, which are reflected in the decisions taken at the European Council of Luxemburg in December 1997.

The Luxemburg Council, while it invited only five associate EES to begin accession negotiations with the EU (namely the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia), thus formalizing the principle of differentiation among associate EES introduced by the Florence European Council, also offered the opportunity to excluded associate states such as Bulgaria to join the first group of invitees if they made substantial progress in applying the criteria set by the Copenhagen Council in the future.\textsuperscript{502} This was achieved through the setting of a pre-accession framework based on the conclusion of bilateral agreements, known as ‘Accession Partnerships’, between the EU and each of the associate EES that had applied for EU membership. These agreements would contain a precise national programme for the adoption of the

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{501} Ibid., p. 129.
\textsuperscript{502} Ibid., pp. 130-33.
\end{footnotesize}
acquis communitaire within a set timetable. The EU would provide the applicant
countries with pre-accession economic aid aimed at assisting them to make the
necessary institutional and legal adjustments required by the EU, but the provision of
that aid would be conditional on the applicant country’s ability to comply with the
principle of democratic conditionality which came to be defined as the adoption of
any political and economic objectives set by the EU. Membership negotiations with
any applicant country could be opened, or be interrupted, according to whether that
particular country met the Copenhagen criteria as tracked in annual reviews published
by the EU Commission. Both Bulgaria’s invitation by the Helsinki Council in
December 1999 to begin negotiations for EU membership and its exclusion by the
Copenhagen EU Council in 2002 from the group of the first eight EES that would
join the EU in May 2004 were based on the principle of differentiation which was
introduced by the Florence EU Council and formalized by the Luxembourg EU
Council, which allowed the EU to apply the principle of democratic conditionality
differently from one EU applicant country to another.

The principle of democratic conditionality has always been an important factor in
determining EU relations with both member states and non-member states. It is
important to note that on many occasions the EEC, froze its relations with certain
states either because the democratic systems in them had been overthrown or because
certain democratic values had been violated. For instance, in 1967 the EEC suspended
the Association Agreement it had signed with Greece in 1961, because the democratic
regime was overthrown by a military coup organised by a group of middle ranking

503 This definition is because any political and economic objectives set by the EU were deemed to
specify further the membership criteria as these were determined by the Copenhagen Council.
military officials\textsuperscript{504} and in 1989 the EEC interrupted negotiations over the conclusion of Trade and Cooperation Agreements with Bulgaria and Romania because violations of human rights had occurred in these two states.\textsuperscript{505}

The importance of democratic conditionality derives from the fact that behind the policy lies the Kantian notion that liberal democratic regimes are more likely to engage in peace-oriented and cooperative policies, which the Union has always aspired to for its member states. This notion does not apply to other regional multilateral organisations that are similar to the EU, for instance, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), whose charter does not include notion of promoting liberal democracy or any democratic values among its members.\textsuperscript{506}

However, if democratic conditionality has always been an important factor in determining the EU's relations with both member and non-member states, before 1989 it meant nothing more than the existence of free and fair elections or respect of human rights. In the post-1989 period, both the meaning and the way that the EU applied the principle of democratic conditionality changed. In addition to fair and free elections and the respect of human rights, democratic conditionality also came to mean respect of the rule of law and the existence of a market economy.

And instead of a principle aimed at securing the minimum of democratic credentials on the part of the states with which the Union wished to establish relations, democratic conditionality has come to be an instrumental mechanism that the EU uses to intervene in the political life of those states that wished to gain EU membership to

\textsuperscript{504} Tsingos, 2001, pp. 317-320.
\textsuperscript{505} Papadimitriou, 2002, p. 123 & 129.
\textsuperscript{506} Sheehy, 1993;
create liberal democratic systems modeled on those in existing EU member states. In Bulgaria’s case, this intervention has been expressed in three ways. First through committees such as the Association Council Bulgaria-EEC/EU or the Joint Parliamentary Committee Bulgaria-EEC/EU where both sides, namely Bulgaria and the EEC/EU, are represented. These committees were provided for by the Association Agreement and are the official forums used by the EEC/EU to monitor the progress of democratic reform. Second, through regular reports issued by the EC which assessed Bulgaria’s progress based on the Copenhagen criteria, and on which the European Council, the EU’s highest political organ, decides whether to upgrade EU relations with Bulgaria or not. Therefore, the recommendations made in these reports were seen as important by the Bulgarian political elite. Third, through bilateral negotiations for EU membership, through which the EC highlighted the areas of the Bulgarian legal system that needed to be adjusted to the European *acquis communitaire* and monitored this adjustment. Without these adjustments being made, it would be difficult for negotiations to be finalized and for Bulgaria to be accepted as an EU member.

These changes in the interpretation and application of democratic conditionality were due to the EU’s desire to build long term political and economic stability in Eastern Europe.507 At the beginning of the 1990s, a number of plans were discussed in relation to how the Union could best secure stability in Eastern Europe. One provided for continuation of the Council of CMEA and measures that would intensify economic cooperation between the EEC and CMEA.508 This plan was supported by the then President of the EC, Jacques Delors. Another plan provided for the creation of an

507 Sidelman, 2001, p. 116; Smith, p. 35.
organisation similar to the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) which had been responsible for the management of the Marshal plan in post-War Europe. This type of organisation was seen as a useful mechanism to administer economic aid to Eastern Europe and, therefore, important for promoting political and economic stability.\(^{509}\)

However, most of the policy-makers in Brussels had little confidence that these plans would ensure long-term political and economic stability in Eastern Europe. Firstly, these plans were not attractive to the majority of EES. They did not like the idea of establishing cooperation with the EEC through multilateral schemes such as the CMEA, which most EES saw as a remnant of the communist past with which they had broken.\(^{510}\) Most EES favoured establishing direct relations with the EU on a bilateral basis with the view to one day becoming members. In addition, plans to create an organisation similar to the OEEC were jeopardized as much by the very small amount of economic assistance that the EEC/EU was willing to offer Eastern Europe at the time as by the lack of expertise in EES to administer a Marshal plan-type assistance programme.\(^{511}\) Secondly, it was deemed that, rather than reconstituting multilateral forums, promoting bilateral relations with each of the EES on the basis of democratic conditionality was the best way for the EU to ensure irreversibility of the democratic reforms which had begun to be introduced post-1989 and in this way to secure political and economic stability.

\(^{509}\) Ibid.
\(^{510}\) It should be noted that Bulgaria was not among these EES. The Bulgarian government at the time favoured a scheme which would preserve CMEA and strengthen cooperation between CMEA and the EEC. However, it was in the minority among EES. This, along with the fact that, Bulgaria was viewed with suspicion because of the ex-communists being in power, reduced the value of Sofia’s opinions in Brussels. See Papadimitriou, 2002, p. 190, n. 1.
\(^{511}\) Papadimitriou, 2002, p. 182.
However, as it was shown earlier in this chapter, political and economic stability in Eastern Europe was so important to the EU that, on many occasions, in order to maintain stability, Brussels violated the principle of democratic conditionality. Thus, although in December 1999 Bulgaria did not meet the Copenhagen criteria, the European Council summit held at in Helsinki decided that Bulgaria was ready to start negotiations for EU membership. This was mainly because the Council thought allowing negotiations to begin would boost the image of the UDF government, which in turn would enable it to promote democratic reform which would help to ensure political and economic stability in Bulgaria and the Balkan region as a whole.

However, such cases did not diminish the importance of democratic conditionality as the main instrument through which the EEC/EU influenced Bulgarian politics after 1989. Indeed, all post-1989 bilateral negotiations between Sofia and Brussels have been conducted on the basis of democratic conditionality and all the EC’s reports on Bulgaria refer to the progress made by the Bulgarian government to meet the Copenhagen criteria.

The other reason for the different interpretation of democratic conditionality is related to the outcome of two debates that took place in the West during the Cold War period. The first debate was over the relationship between liberal democracy and a market economy. Since WWII, the views of Western scholars on this subject have diverged.

Scholars such as Joseph Schumpeter argued that there is a strong link between liberal democracy and a market economy, and that liberal democratic systems are based on

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the freedom of choice of their citizens. Freedom of choice is not restricted only to the political field, but applies also to the economic field, meaning citizens should have the right to develop activities related to business and trade. This freedom of choice creates an environment of economic competition within the state, which scholars such as Schumpeter saw as a necessary precondition for the consolidation of a liberal democratic system. First because an environment of economic competition sets the conditions for the economic development of a state that should ensure economic prosperity for its citizens, thereby reducing the social tensions that, otherwise, would be transferred to the political level. Second, because economic competition sets the conditions for the formation of strong civil societies, which were seen as being important for consolidating democratic regimes. Competitive economic environments are believed to help a strong private economic sector to emerge, whose interests are inextricably linked with the existence of a liberal democratic environment through which it can prosper. This private sector becomes an important actor lobbying the political authorities of the state to take measures aimed at consolidating the liberal political and economic environment. Such lobbying is exercised by various means such as sponsoring political parties and political activists who favour liberal political and economic ideas, by controlling the mass media and the press, or by sponsoring NGOs, workshops and seminars to familiarize citizens with these ideas and help them avoid falling prey to policies that would act against this liberal environment.

These views influenced and were influenced by historical developments in the Western world immediately before and after WWII, and particularly by the pre-war

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513 Fukuyama, 1992, p. 108; Lipset, 1959; Lipset et al., 1993; Maravall, 1997; Moore, 1996.
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collapse of West European democratic regimes, which they explained as being the result of the economic crisis of 1929. These in turn were highly influential on post-War political projects such as the development of welfare states in Western Europe.\textsuperscript{515}

A series of military coups that occurred across a number of Latin American and South European states led to a questioning of Schumpeter’s view that economic development consolidates liberal democratic regimes. Many of the states where military coups occurred after 1965, such as Greece, were experiencing periods of unprecedented economic development. In addition, more authoritarian regimes such as China have been experiencing economic development, which also goes against Schumpeterian views that it is only liberal democratic regimes that set the conditions for economic development. Thus, scholars came to the conclusion that there was no relation between liberal democracy and economic development in a market economic environment,\textsuperscript{516} and that economic development in developing countries such as those of Latin America, Africa and South-East Asia, could be best assured by strong states under the tutelage of powerful authoritarian regimes.\textsuperscript{517}

However, a number of developments in the late 1980s and early 1990s undermined the view that authoritarian regimes could assure economic development.\textsuperscript{518} Failures occurred in the vast majority of authoritarian regimes in Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe demonstrating that authoritarian and totalitarian regimes could not be guaranteed to successfully promote sustained economic growth. This view was strengthened by the fact that a number of newly democratized countries such as

\textsuperscript{515} Lipset, 1993, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{516} Dahl, 1971.
\textsuperscript{517} Robinson & White, 1996, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{518} Ibid.
Botswana and South Korea had undergone unprecedented economic growth, despite the fact that the democratic systems in these states were fragile and bore no resemblance to the established democratic systems of ‘first world’ countries. The worldwide trend towards Western-style liberal democracy that began in the early 1970s with a series of democratic transitions in southern Europe and Latin America and culminated in the political changes in Eastern Europe, meant that authoritarian rule was not a possibility for many developing countries.519

These trends allowed the argument that liberal democracy and market economy are related to reappear in the late 1980s. During this period, a number of Western scholars such as Schmitter and Karl argued that although a number of authoritarian systems coped with the market economic systems of their states in the short term, overall, experience shows that the relationship between liberal democratic regimes and market economies is both compatible and mutually reinforcing.520 This is not to say that the arguments against a clear relationship between liberal democracies and market economies have disappeared.521 In fact, scholars such as Bollen argue that the relationship between liberal democracy and market economy is less straightforward than scholars such as Schmitter, Karl or Olson claim. This is because there are several models of both liberal democratic regimes and market economies, which complicate the analysis of the links between the two.522 However, since the end of the 1980s, Bollen’s and similar views have been less influential on the policy making of Western governments and international aid agencies, such as the IMF or the World Bank, than those of Schmitter and Karl. This can be seen in the policy prescriptions offered by

520 Schmitter & Karl, 1991; Olson, 1993.
522 Bollen, 1990; Leftwich, 1996.
Western governments and international aid agencies to EES for reform of their political systems. These policy prescriptions treat the establishment of robust market economies as an integral part of the democratization process.\textsuperscript{223}

The prevalence of the view that liberal democracies and market economies are closely related has touched another debate in the Western world and has answered the question of whether the West should use economic incentives and sanctions in order to promote democratization in Eastern Europe. This debate has run since the end of the 1970s and was raised by the difficulties experienced by such states as Poland and Romania in managing their debt obligations to the West.\textsuperscript{224} For the first time since the end of WWII, the West was in the position of being at an advantage over Eastern Europe, and the prospect of being able to offer economic assistance to EES conditional on the democratization of their political systems was attractive to many Western policy-makers.\textsuperscript{225}

This view was strengthened by the second oil crisis at the end of the 1970s, which plunged the West into economic recession and limited the ability of many Western commercial banks and international organisations such as the IMF and the World Bank to offer the generous economic assistance of the past to EES.\textsuperscript{226} Also, despite the generous economic support that many Western states and international economic organisations had given to a number of East European and Third World countries after the first oil crisis in 1973-4, it had not enabled these states to overcome their

\textsuperscript{223} Robinson & White, 1998, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{224} Kohn, 1989, pp. 19-20.
\textsuperscript{225} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{226} Many Western commercial banks and international organisations such as the IMF and the World Bank showed great eagerness to lend to East European and Third World countries after the first oil crisis of 1973-4 under the pressure to recycle funds placed with them by member states of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). See Kohn, 1989, pp. 17-8.
Increasingly Western policy makers came round to the belief that this was mainly due to the authoritarian and totalitarian regimes in these states, which were not accountable, were corrupt and had mismanaged the economic aid they had received. The view hardened that the only way for these East European and Third World states to overcome their economic problems was to overthrow their authoritarian governments and becoming liberal democracies along the models of the Western world.

In this debate, American policy-makers propounded the view that any economic aid to EES should be conditional on the promotion of liberal democratic reforms by their communist regimes. In particular, the American authorities were interested in discouraging communist regimes from violating the human rights of their citizens and the Regan Administration, which was then in power, introduced a number of economic measures aimed at forcing the communist regimes in Eastern Europe to improve their human rights records. The Reagan administration believed that loosening the control of communist regimes over their citizens would create the right conditions for strong civil societies to emerge, which in the long run would undermine these regimes. The Americans also considered that violation of the human rights of certain sectors of the populations of EES, such as ethnic or religious minorities, posed a security threat. This was particularly true in the case of the Bulgarian Muslim minority, the abuse of whose human rights could easily be envisaged as leading to military conflict between Bulgaria and Turkey and, through them, NATO and the Warsaw Pact countries.

528 Hassner, 1991, pp. 59-64.
On the other hand, European policy-makers, particularly the West Germans, insisted that economic means should not be used to achieve political objectives. They argued that the use of economic sanctions to promote democratic reform in communist states was risky, since it might evoke negative feelings from the citizens of these states, which the communist regime could motivate to gain public support and keep itself in power. This view was in line with the West German foreign policy of Ostpolitik which Bonn pursued from the early 1960s onwards. It provided for the FRG's active economic engagement in Eastern Europe by providing financial loans and investment in infrastructure projects. The assumption was this would loosen any ties of political and economic loyalty that these states had with the Soviet Union. Bonn would then be able to isolate the GDR inside the Eastern bloc as well as internationally and dictate the future terms of any relationship between the two German states.

This also mirrored the political practice followed by the EEC in establishing economic relations with non-EEC member states. The EEC did not make the promotion of economic relations with these states dependent on whether they met certain political criteria, and this is exemplified by the many economic agreements which the EEC entered into with non-EEC member countries. Few of these agreements with states aiming to become full EEC members, were conditional on the

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530 Hassner, 1991, p. 60.
531 Ibid.
532 It should be noted that, due to the foreign policy of Ostpolitik, the FRG did not participate in any sort of economic sanctions that the West imposed on the Eastern Bloc after the beginning of the 1960s, even after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the end of the 1970s and the second Cold War period during the 1980s. In addition, throughout this entire period, Bonn provided massive doses of economic aid to Third World states in order to buy their cooperation and prevent them from establishing any sort of diplomatic relations with the GDR. See Joffe, 1989, p. 104, 110.
existence of a democratic regime and even if conditions deteriorated the EEC was
reluctant to punish the state involved by completely interrupting economic relations.

In Greece in 1967 the colonels' coup led the EEC to freeze the Association agreement
it had concluded with Greece in 1961. However, as Loukas Tsoukalis points out
"[despite the freezing of the Association agreement] both sides continued to adhere to
the [association treaty's] timetable for the elimination of tariffs...and in the end the
freezing was not at a particularly low temperature".\textsuperscript{533} In addition, in evaluating the
democratic records of states, the EEC was mainly interested in whether they had
conducted regular free and fair elections, and tended to ignore the other components
of a liberal democratic regime such as respect of human rights or respect for the rule
of law. Greece, for instance which became a member of the EEC in 1981, has had a
bad human rights record, especially in relation to ethnic and religious minorities.\textsuperscript{534}

By the end of the 1980s, however, the American view had clearly prevailed, and the
EEC came to accept that any future economic assistance to EES should be conditional
upon political objectives. Indeed, since the end of the 1980s, almost all the economic
agreements which the EEC signed with EES were conditional on the promotion of
democratic reform. This can be seen in the provisions of economic treaties such as the
Trade and Cooperation Agreements or the Association Agreements, which all linked
EEC economic assistance with the pace of democratic reform. The EEC was not only
interested in the freedom and fairness of elections, but also focused on respect, or lack
thereof, of human rights and the rule of law, and the promotion of liberal economic

\textsuperscript{533} Tsoukalis, 1981, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{534} Poulton, 1993, pp. 173-192.
reforms, all of which are now seen as necessary components of a liberal democratic state.

The shift in the EEC’s position should not be attributed purely to the fact that by the end of the 1980s an increasing number of Western scholars and policy-makers were of the view that liberal democracy and a market economy were interrelated. A series of other developments throughout the 1980s influenced Brussels’ policy making. First, the West was emerging as the victorious pole in the Cold War and this boosted the USA’s image and increased its political influence in world politics. Second, throughout the 1980s, the most influential states in the EEC, namely the FRG, France and Great Britain, were under conservative rule by parties whose foreign policy agendas concerning Eastern Europe were closer to the agenda of the Reagan government in the USA than to those of their political opponents, the left-wing parties.

Third, almost all communist regimes in Eastern Europe had a history of violation of the human rights of their citizens, especially those of ethnic and religious minorities. This issue was of grave concern for many European officials throughout the 1980s and the first years of the 1990s, because, at that time, in EES such as Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Romania, abuses of human and minority rights were sparking unrest, which was seen to pose a direct threat to the domestic political stability of these states and the stability and security of the immediate Balkan region and the wider European continent.535

The EEC was unable to intervene and put a stop to ethnic unrest in the EES. This was due among other things to the fact that the bilateral agreements which the EEC had signed with EES did not contain any provisions which might have allowed Brussels to exert leverage to defuse such conflicts. In 1980, the EEC signed a Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the SFRY which, although it provided for access of Yugoslavia products to European markets, did not provide for a rapid unilateral suspension of the agreement in the case of human rights violations. As Papadimitriou remarked: “the absence of such a rapid suspension clause in the Yugoslav agreement proved to be very costly when the crisis escalated in the country in early 1991. Unable to use the rapid suspension of the agreement as a negotiating weapon for the preservation of the Yugoslav state, the EEC found itself offering all the benefits emanating from the 1980 agreement to a country that was engaged in a full scale civil war.”

In addition, besides being bound by the bilateral agreements it had signed with EES, what also made Brussels reluctant to intervene in situations of ethnic unrest such as those in Yugoslavia after the end of the Cold War, was that the world was no longer bipolar which reduced the threat of a spillover effect from situations of ethnic unrest.

The ethnic unrest in Eastern Europe in the 1980s and the ethnic conflicts in Yugoslavia in the 1990s changed how EEC policy-makers viewed liberal democracy. Many EEC officials at the time believed that the only way to achieve lasting social peace would be to establish liberal political and social environments where human rights, and domestic and international law would be respected by the authorities of these states. The way to achieve this was for the EEC to be actively involved in the

536 Ibid., p. 144.
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politics of EES and making ties with these states conditional on the promotion of political reforms aimed at consolidating democratic systems in the states. These reforms should not only be aimed at ensuring free and fair elections in these states, but also at creating an institutional network that would guarantee respect of human rights as well as of domestic and international law by their new democratic authorities.

This new attitude towards liberal democracy can be seen in the post-Cold war treaties signed between the member states of the EEC. The Maastricht treaty was one such, which was signed in 1992 and came into force in 1993. One of the novelties of this treaty was the incorporation of Article F which stated that all EEC member states had to respect fundamental rights as guaranteed by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms signed in Rome in November 1950.\(^5\)\(^3\)\(^7\)

Foreign Policy Mechanisms

One of the main conditions of EU membership is that states should adjust their administrative institutions to make them conducive to an easy transposition of EU legislation into their national legislation. This is considered important for the smooth functioning of the Union because it leads to a single institutional framework for the whole of the EU with common rules and institutions in each member state. This is one

\(^{537}\) Ibid., p. 143.
of the criteria of EU membership as specified at the European Council summit in Copenhagen in June 1993.\footnote{http://www.europa.eu.int/Comm/enlargement/intro/criteria.htm}

In line with this condition, since the beginning of the 1990s, almost all EES have worked on adapting their institutional frameworks to facilitate interaction with the EU and the integration of their national legal systems with the legal system of the Union. This adaptation has not only taken place in states such as Poland and the Czech Republic whose prospects of joining the EU were clear from the mid-1990s, but is at work in states such as Albania whose membership of the Union seems still in 2005 to be a far off prospect.\footnote{Demetropoulou, 2002, pp. 188-191.}

This task has transformed the existing institutional edifices of EES through the development of new institutions and the abolition or the re-orientation of existing ones. The transformation varies from one state to another, and depends to a great extent on the stage of relations between the state and the EU, and on differences in the post-communist political systems of the EES or the opinions of the political elites of these states about how existing institutions should be transformed. Nevertheless, this transformation has affected decision-making in all areas of political life in these states, including foreign policy.

In Bulgaria, this institutional transformation has changed the process of foreign policy making in three ways. It has changed the role of the four constitutional actors involved in foreign policy making; it has increased the role of actors other than political parties; and it has increased the influence of EU institutions.

\footnote{http://www.europa.eu.int/Comm/enlargement/intro/criteria.htm}
\footnote{Demetropoulou, 2002, pp. 188-191.}
The Changed Roles of the Four Constitutional Actors Involved in Foreign Policy Making

The institutional transformation resulting from Bulgaria's process of accession to the EU has changed the role of the state institutions involved in foreign policy making, namely the President of the Republic, the government, the national parliament, and the Constitutional Court. This change has been especially profound since the mid-1990s when Bulgaria's accession process to the EU was accelerated and has been expressed in four ways.

- **The President of the Republic**

Firstly, the Bulgarian constitution of 1991 has attempted to balance the power of the government over foreign policy by giving the President the power to participate in decision-making on certain foreign policy issues such as the appointment or dismissal of Bulgarian diplomats abroad. As was argued earlier, this attempt has been counter-productive, especially during the first half of the 1990s, since it has often led the two political institutions into conflict over foreign policy issues. Since the mid-1990s, these conflicts have been rare, mainly due to government stability and decreased ideological polarization between the two major political parties, which de facto has limited the political scope of the President in foreign policy making.

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540 For an extensive analysis of the constitutional provisions concerning the role of these institutions in Bulgaria's foreign policy making see pp. 84-94 above.
541 See pp. 87-94 above.
542 See pp. 90-94 above.
In addition, Bulgaria's integration into the EU has played a significant role in reducing the conflicts between the two branches of the executive over foreign policy issues for two reasons. Firstly, one of the Copenhagen criteria provides that the admission of any state to the EU is possible only if democratic institutions of that state such as the government, the parliament or the head of state are both stable and in tune with one another.\footnote{http://www.europe.eu.int/Comm/enlargement/intro/criteria.htm.}

However, this presupposes that state institutions such as the government and the President of the Republic avoid disagreement over major issues such as foreign policy. Frequent institutional conflicts foster an atmosphere of mistrust that can undermine smooth cooperation between democratic institutions and engender a belief in the wider public that there is an endogenous failure of the democratic system. This could open the door to political initiatives, contra to the state constitution.

Once Bulgaria had declared its intention to become an EU member state, it needed good relationships between government and the President of the Republic. The short post-1989 history of the country showed that what prevented a good relationship was the Bulgarian President's power to intervene in government politics. Zheliu Zhelev, the President of the Republic of Bulgaria at the time, was a powerful personality and his legitimacy in part derived from his strong anti-communist credentials. He was one of the few Bulgarian intellectuals who had opposed communism and struggled for the liberalization of Bulgarian politics since the end of the 1970s.\footnote{See pp. 90-94 above.} He had a reputation that went far beyond the narrow electoral body of the UDF, the political party to which Zhelev belonged.
After he became President of Bulgaria, Zhelev often used his reputation to advance his own views in parliament and especially through caretaker cabinets, which were the majority of Bulgarian governments during his Presidency. His personal involvement was more controversial when the cabinets were appointed by the leader of the successful political party.545

However, in some cases, Zhelev’s efforts to influence the policy agendas of various Bulgarian governments led him into severe conflict with ministerial cabinets, which refused to adopt his views. This mainly occurred with cabinets that were formed as the result of general elections. One such case was the cabinet formed by the leader of the UDF, Filip Dimitrov, following the general elections of October 1991. Zhelev came into conflict with the UDF cabinet on several occasions when he attempted to impose his own views.546 As a result relations between the President and the cabinet deteriorated to the extent that in the late summer of 1992 Zhelev launched an outright attack on the cabinet, which led Bulgaria into a political crisis and undermined the confidence that the government had enjoyed until then.547 In October 1992, the UDF government resigned after losing a vote of confidence in the parliament.548

Zhelev’s policy of interfering in the policy agendas of Bulgarian governments led the leadership of the UDF to decide not to nominate him as the party’s official candidate for the Presidential elections in November 1996. The UDF leadership hoped in this

545 Ibid.
546 Crampton, 1997, p. 228.
547 Ibid.
548 Ibid., pp. 229.
way, to revenge themselves for Zhelev’s attack on Filip Dimitrov’s government and its subsequent toppling which had kept the UDF out of power for four years.\textsuperscript{549}

Also, by deciding not to nominate Zhelev as Presidential candidate, the UDF leadership hoped to get rid of a problematic President and achieve cooperation between the two highest institutions of the executive power.\textsuperscript{550} In the second half of the 1990s, the EU would decide about its eastward enlargement and problems between the two branches of executive power in Bulgaria would seriously delay the country’s accession to the Union; something that the UDF leadership wanted to avoid.

Also, the UDF leadership set Bulgaria’s joining the EU as a top priority and, on many occasions, had clashed with the BSP government which the UDF accused of undermining the prospects of the country joining the EU in the near future by delaying the promotion of political and economic reforms.

The chances of the UDF winning the forthcoming parliamentary elections were quite high. The BSP government had adopted a policy which was leading Bulgaria into the worst economic crisis since 1989, the signs of which were visible in autumn 1996. This had caused disaffection among the public towards the BSP, which in all the opinion polls of the time came well behind the UDF which was recorded as the most popular political party. The prospect that the UDF might win the election also discouraged the UDF leadership from supporting Zhelev as the party’s candidate in the Presidential elections of November 1996.

\textsuperscript{549} Todorov, Antoni, personal interview, 3/12/2001; Grozev Konstandin, personal interview, 16/1/2002.
\textsuperscript{550} Dainov Evgeni, personal interview, 26/11/2001; Abadzhiev Dimitur, personal interview, 30/11/2001; Mladenov, Nikolai, personal interview, 18/1/2002.
The party leadership chose to nominate the 40-year-old lawyer Petur Stoianov for candidate. Stoianov was a young party member quite loyal to the leadership, who had been elevated to the party hierarchy five years earlier under the tutelage of the party leader Ivan Kostov. Loyalty to the leadership and lack of Zhelev’s overt anticommunism made him the UDF’s ideal candidate. The UDF leadership believed that Stoianov would not easily clash with a UDF government for the sake of promoting his own policy agenda, in the event of the party’s winning the election.

However, nomination was not enough to guarantee his election to the presidency. The UDF also had to ensure that Zhelev would not participate because this would split the electorate, and would benefit the BSP’s candidate. The UDF leadership therefore forged an agreement with Zhelev prior to the elections that Zhelev and Stoianov would run for primary elections based on the model of the American Primaries. The winner of the primary election would then run against the BSP Presidential candidate. This agreement was concluded with the help of NGOs such as the CLS. These NGOs had maintained good relations with both Zhelev and the UDF leadership which contributed to the successful outcome of the negotiations.

The primary election took place on 6 June 1996. Stoianov got 66% of the vote and defeated Zhelev. With the support of his party and Zhelev, Stoianov won an astonishing 52% of the popular vote in the Presidential elections of November 1996, while his opponent, Ivan Marazov, won only 25%. Stoianov’s victory in the Presidential elections opened a new chapter in the relationship between the President of the Republic and the government. Stoianov’s presidency was marked by a lack of

551 Zheliu, Zhelev, personal interview, 7/1/2002
conflict between the two branches of executive power, and a period of fruitful cooperation between the two institutions ensued.

This good relationship was also because for most of the period after 1996, the same party, namely the UDF, controlled both the Presidency and the government. However, this does not fully explain why relations between the two branches of the executive entered a period of calm and cooperation which continued into 2001 when the UDF lost control of both branches of the Executive.

In November 2001 the Presidential candidate and leader of the BSP, Georgi Parvanov, won the elections, but in the parliamentary elections of June 2001, the newly established party of the exiled Bulgarian King Simeon, NMSII was victorious and formed a coalition with the MRF. However, despite the two branches of the executive being controlled by different political parties, the relationship between the government and the President was generally good mostly because Parvanov had a non-confrontational style. Even where there was disagreement over foreign policy issues, it did not develop into open conflict.

One such disagreement occurred at the beginning of February 2003 over the Iraq crisis. The US government, while preparing to invade Iraq and overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein, requested the Bulgarian government to allow over-flight, transit passage and the temporary presence of US troops and equipment on Bulgarian territory. The request was received differently by the President of the Republic and the government. On the one hand, the President maintained that parliament and not

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553 Tchanchev Dimitur, personal interview, 18/1/2002.
554 See pp. 90-94 above.
the government was constitutionally responsible for deciding on this issue because, according to article 84 of the constitution of 1991, no foreign troops were allowed to make use of either Bulgarian territory or airspace without the prior consent of the Parliament. On the other hand, the government argued that it could decide on this issue without the prior consent of Parliament because Bulgaria had received an invitation at the Prague summit in 2002 to join NATO. Therefore, the American troops should be regarded as allied troops, to whom article 84 did not apply. The President called on the Constitutional Court to decide on the matter and on 4 February 2003 the Court declared that the government was in the right. The ruling of the Constitutional Court was accepted by the President and the issue was resolved.

However, what explains the good relationship between the two branches of the executive after 1996 is more complex. The good relationship between the President and the government was perhaps due to the influence of democratic conditionality on the Bulgarian political elite which intensified after 1996 because membership of the EU seemed to be a real possibility. Once Bulgaria became involved in these negotiations in the second half of the 1990s, the institutional prestige of the President was diminished, because it was the government which the EU recognized as its main interlocutor and not the President. The course of negotiations was monitored by a Presidential office, but neither these officials nor the President himself were directly involved in negotiations. The government's role in negotiating Bulgaria's membership of the EU confirmed the views of the public and the political elite that it was the cabinet that should decide on foreign policy, which further limited the President's influence in this sphere.

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The institutional transformation that Bulgaria had to undergo in order to integrate European legislation into its national legislation undermined the monopoly of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs over foreign policy. Other institutional mechanisms were established to deal with negotiations with the EU and given that the outcome of these affected a wide range of foreign policy issues, such as the legal regime for the movement of goods or people between Bulgaria and non-EU states, it can also be argued that the influence of these institutional mechanisms extended to much of the government's foreign policy agenda.

The structure and responsibilities of the institutional mechanisms involved in the negotiations with the EU changed many times during the 1990s. In the course of integration, new institutional mechanisms were formed, others were abolished or saw their responsibilities re-orientated, according to the changes the government saw as best serving the country's needs in its negotiations with the EU. The structures and responsibilities of the main institutional mechanisms were determined by government decree No. 47 of 10 March 1999, and decree No. 3 of 20 January 2000. According to these decrees, the main institutional mechanisms involved in the negotiations with the EU are: a) the Council of European Integration; b) the Chief Negotiator for EU Affairs; c) the Minister of EU Affairs; d) the Coordination Council; and e) the Core Negotiations team.

557 Dimitrova, Ralitsa, personal interview, 15/1/2001.
558 Appendix, table 71; http://www.evropa.bg

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Affairs and the Ministry of European Affairs, the Ministry of the National Economy which is responsible for the free movement of goods and people from Bulgaria to non-European countries and vice versa, and the Ministry of Agriculture which is responsible for managing funds that Bulgaria receives from the SAPARD European project.561

The major functions of the Council of European Integration are to assess Bulgaria’s negotiating position with the EU, to monitor the negotiation process and to make suggestions concerning the adoption by the government of priority actions on EU integration issues. Among the responsibilities of the Council is the creation of Bulgaria’s Core Negotiating Team for EU affairs and the establishment of its remit.

- The Chief Negotiator for EU Affairs

The responsibilities of the Chief Negotiator for EU Affairs are to represent the country at intergovernmental conferences on EU negotiations. The Chief Negotiator also manages the Core Negotiation Team and the Coordination Council, whose responsibilities are analysed below, and informs the parliamentary Commissions of Foreign Affairs and European Integration on the preparation, the outcomes and the progress of the negotiations with the EU. The Bulgarian Chief Negotiator after NMSII took power in mid-2001 was Ms Meglena Kuneva.

- The Ministry of European Affairs

561 The SAPARD project is a European project which provides financing for a wide range of measures for structural adjustment in Bulgarian agriculture and rural development. See for more details: http://www.mzgar.government.bg/mz_eng/Sapard/sapard.htm
On 15 August 2002, the NMSII government created the Ministry of European Affairs, which was an institutional upgrading of the post of Bulgaria’s Chief Negotiator for EU Affairs.\textsuperscript{562} The Minister of European Affairs had the same political responsibilities as the Chief Negotiator for EU Affairs had had, and together with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, was responsible for the submission of drafts, reports and proposals relevant to EU issues.\textsuperscript{563} Meglena Kuneva, the then Bulgaria’s Chief Negotiator, was given the post of Minister of European Affairs, while continuing as the country’s Chief Negotiator with the EU.

The decision to create a Ministry of European Affairs was symbolic and allowed the Bulgarian government to show both the public and the political elite that joining the EU remained the government’s top policy priority. The government had reasons for wanting to boost its EU credentials with the public and the political elite. In meetings with NATO officials, the government had been assured that Bulgaria would be invited to join NATO at the summit in Prague in November 2002. However, joining NATO did not mean joining the EU. At the time of the NATO summit in Prague, the EC was due to issue reports determining which EES would be eligible to join the EU by 2004. These reports would be in line with the decision taken by the European Council in Gothenburg in June 2001, according to which the ten EES that had completed negotiations with the EU by the end of 2002 would join in May 2004. Bulgaria was not included in the group of EES destined to join in May 2004.

\textsuperscript{562} http://www.government.bg/English/Europe/News/2002-08-16/787.html
\textsuperscript{563} Ibid.
This decision could have brought the Bulgarian government into conflict with both the public and the political elite. The latter might have accused the government that failure to win admission to the EU in 2004 was the result of a badly balanced foreign policy which gave greater emphasis to Bulgaria's admission to NATO than to the EU. Before he became Minister of Foreign Affairs in the NMSII government, Solomon Pasi had been a President of the Atlantic Club of Sofia, an NGO whose aim was to familiarize Bulgaria's Russophile public with NATO activities; therefore, Pasi would likely have been more interested in seeing Bulgaria join NATO than the EU.

The government saw the creation of a Minister of European Affairs as the best way to combat any such accusations since this would demonstrate that the government was as interested in Bulgaria's joining the EU as joining NATO. The fact that the country's membership of NATO would precede membership of the EU was simply because the criteria and the admission processes of the two organisations were different.

- **The Coordination Council**

The Coordination Council is chaired by the Chief Negotiator and its members are the heads of 30 Working Groups. These groups prepare the negotiating positions of the 30 sections, also known as chapters, into which negotiations with the EU are divided. The Coordination Council sets the general directions of the Working Groups' activities and monitors the progress of the process on a regular basis.

- **The Core Negotiations Team**
The Core Negotiations Team comprises two deputies from the Chief Negotiator's office, deputy ministers from the ministries involved in EU negotiations and leading experts in the field of EU integration. The main responsibilities of the Core Negotiations Team include analysing the information on the commitments that have been undertaken over the course of the negotiation process, and making recommendations to the institutions involved in the planning and scheduling of the country's participation in EU pre-accession projects. In particular, the Core Negotiations Team is responsible for assessing the conditions under which EU pre-accession funds are provided to Bulgaria and recommends how these funds should be spent.

- The National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria

In general, throughout the democratization period, the role of the Bulgarian parliament in the country's foreign policy making has been passive. This is because parliament has been seen more as a political forum that ratifies or rejects political decisions taken by the Bulgarian government, than as a forum which actively participates, alongside the executive power, in the country's foreign policy making. There is a Committee of Foreign Affairs in the parliament in which all the parliamentary political forces are represented and foreign policy issues are discussed, but this committee serves more as a first political forum where foreign policy issues are discussed before being debated in the plenary session of the Bulgarian parliament than as an institutional body which forms state foreign policy with government.
There are a few cases where it could be argued that parliament can go beyond a simple debate on the government’s foreign policy making. According to the Bulgarian Constitution of 1991 parliament has a decisive say in foreign policy issues such as declaring war or making peace, deciding on the dispatch of Bulgarian troops abroad or the admission of foreign troops to Bulgarian territory, and the ratification or abrogation of international treaties.\(^\text{564}\) However, even in these cases the role of parliament is more limited than is suggested by the constitution. This is mainly because parliament is controlled by the political party or parties that form the government and therefore, when parliament is called on to decide on anything, it would be unusual for the majority of to vote against the government’s decisions.

However, the institutional transformation that Bulgarian had to go through in order to integrate European legislation into the national legislation has increased the role of parliament in foreign policy making and allowed it to become actively involved in the shaping of European policy and, through this involvement, to influence Bulgaria’s relations with EU as well as non-EU states, since generally relations with non-EU states are determined by relations with the EU. According to the provisions of the Association Agreement, the Bulgarian parliament formed a Joint Parliamentary

\(^{564}\) Article 84, item 2; It is noteworthy that the deployment of Bulgarian troops in the summer of 2003 in Iraq, which assisted the Anglo-American military operations in the country’s reconstruction after the collapse of Saddam Hussein’s regime, took place after the parliament ratified in May 2003 a government decision on the deployment of the troops. After its ratification by parliament, the decision was published in the State Gazette on 3 June 2003, at which moment it became the law of the Bulgarian state and gave the green light to the government to proceed with the deployment. (http://www.mediapool.bg/site/securitv/2004/05/page_en.shtml#more). On 5 May 2005 the Bulgarian parliament decided to pull all Bulgarian troops out of Iraq by the end of December 2005, with some 62 Bulgarian soldiers leaving Iraq in June 2005, thus reducing the 462 member Bulgarian contingent stationed in the country until then, to 400 in June 2005. The decision was taken after the government felt that the fatalities which the Bulgarian troops had suffered in Iraq – by May 2005, 10 Bulgarian soldiers had been killed in the military operations – had damaged the government’s public image, with 70% of the public disagreeing with the government’s decision to send troops and supporting an immediate pull out of all Bulgarian troops, according to opinion polls published in 2005. (http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/05/news/bulgaria.php; http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=52607).
Committee (JPC) within the European Parliament. The JPC meets at least once a year and discusses issues relevant to Bulgaria’s integration into the EU. These meetings provide the Bulgarian parliament with the opportunity to get information from a source other than the Bulgarian government about the process of integration into the EU and, in this way, to better monitor the government’s policy on this process. In addition, the meetings provide an opportunity for the EU to hear the opinions of all the political parties represented in the parliament on issues concerning Bulgaria’s accession to the Union either during the negotiation process or in meetings between Bulgarian governmental officials and EU officials.

In March 2000 a Committee for European Integration (CEI) was set up in the Bulgarian parliament which operates independently from the committee for Foreign Affairs. The CEI was created in response to EU suggestions that all the main Bulgarian parliamentary political forces participate in the country’s policy making with reference to the EU accession process. The Committee regularly calls on government officials who are involved in Bulgaria’s negotiations with the EU to brief its members on the progress of the negotiation process. In addition, members of the CEI often attend meetings of the Coordination Council, which allows them to voice their views on issues related to the country’s accession process.

The EC has also encouraged the Bulgarian parliament to assume an active role in foreign policy making illustrated in initiatives such as the establishment of a Documentation Centre within the Parliament, supported both financially and technically by the delegation of the EC to Bulgaria.""
the members of the Bulgarian parliament documentary support concerning Bulgaria’s accession to the EU and, in this way, assists the members of the parliament to monitor the government’s policies in relation to the country’s accession to the EU. The Centre is also a source of information on Bulgaria’s accession to the EU for citizens and, in this way, contributes to the transparency of the state decision-making process. In addition, in almost all the annual reports which the EC has issued with reference to the progress of Bulgaria’s negotiations with the EU there are references to how much the Bulgarian parliament has participated in the state decision-making process.

The encouragement which the EC has given to the Bulgarian parliament to play an active role in foreign policy making is in line with a series of policies which the Commission has been promoting since 1997. Such involvement by national parliaments is considered to contribute to the transparency of the decision-making process within EU member states. The EC organised a series of conferences in collaboration with the European parliament, which aimed at bringing together members of the committees of European affairs of EU members’ national parliaments with the purpose of setting common rules in all member states that would enable the national parliaments to better scrutinize the European policy followed by national governments.

- The Role of the Constitutional Court

Transformation is also expected to influence the operation of the Bulgarian Constitutional Court in foreign policy making, rendering it immune from any

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567 Ibid.
interference from the executive or legislative powers that might affect its decisions on foreign policy issues. Indeed, the way that Bulgaria's judicial system functions provides both the executive and the legislative powers with the potential to influence the decisions of the Constitutional Court. This is referred to in the annual reports that the EC issues with reference to the progress of Bulgaria's negotiations with the EU. Some of these reports mention that Bulgaria's judicial system suffers from issues such as corruption, bribery and interference from executive and legislative powers in the decisions taken by the country's higher courts.568

Independence of the country's judicial system is a necessary precondition for Bulgaria's admission to the EU and so far Bulgarian governments have done little to bring the country's judicial system in line with the standards set by the EU. However, because Bulgaria has little chance of being allowed to join the EU unless it reforms its judicial system it can be argued that the country's accession to the EU will lead Bulgaria's judicial to become more independent from the executive and legislative powers. This, in turn, will be reflected in decisions taken by the country's Constitutional Court on foreign policy issues, as the Court will be less open to outside influences.

The Increased Role of Non-party Actors in Foreign Policy Making

Bulgaria's institutional transformation has allowed NGOs to become more involved in foreign policy making. As a result of the transformation, NGOs have acquired a

significant role in shaping Bulgaria’s policy towards the EU and, in this way, their potential to affect Bulgaria’s relations with EU and non-EU states has increased.

NGOs now have the potential to participate in the meetings of government institutions responsible for preparing for Bulgaria’s accession to the EU. One such is the Coordination Council, whose meetings are attended by members of various NGOs who in this way can influence the decisions taken by the Council.

A number of NGO members have joined government officials to sit in committees which meet on a regular basis to discuss issues relevant to Bulgaria’s process of accession to the EU. These committees provide a forum for informal discussions where members of NGOs can express their views on EU matters to government officials. The Civic Forum for instance brings together government officials including Petur Ropchev and Stefan Russanov, both experts who formerly worked in the Bulgarian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence respectively, with members of NGOs and representatives from academia to discuss accession process matters.  

The EU encourages the involvement of NGOs in foreign policy making. Annual reports issued by the EC with reference to Bulgaria’s progress of accession to the EU often refer to the extent that NGOs participate in shaping and implementing the country’s EU policy and, on many occasions, they call on the Bulgarian authorities to take political measures to provide the means for NGOs to be actively involved in the country’s EU policy. In the 15th meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Committee between Bulgaria and the EU that took place in Sofia on 29-30 October 2002 the Joint

http://www.parliament.bg/komisii/ei/En_Civil_forum_main.htm

http://www.parliament.bg/komisii/ei/En_Civil_forum_main.htm
Parliamentary Committee “encouraged the engagement of NGOs in implementation of Bulgaria’s European policies”.570

NGO engagement contributes to the pluralism of views which, is seen as necessary precondition for mature and long-lasting decisions with reference to Bulgaria’s accession to the EU. Also, because the activities of NGOs are mainly related to society, they are seen as mediators between the state and society and, therefore, the more that NGOs are involved in the process of decision-making, the more parts of society will be seen as contributing to this process.

Although it is controversial how closely-linked NGOs are with Bulgarian society, their social activities have often been viewed as serving to familiarize Bulgarian citizens with the effect that accession to the EU will have on the country’s political, social and economic life. A number of opinion polls have shown that many Bulgarian citizens are ignorant about these effects, and that they consider that EU accession is a political formality involving the Bulgarian government and the governments of the EU member states, which will occur quite soon. In an opinion poll conducted by the EU’s official Statistical Service ‘Eurobarometer’ in Bulgaria in 2001 the overwhelming majority of the Bulgarians who responded (approximately 70%) said they wished to see Bulgaria become a full EU member state by 2005, just four years after the EC’s invitation to the Bulgarian government to start negotiations, while a significant proportion (approximately 35%) hoped their country would become a member by 2002.571

570 http://www.europa.eu.int/meetdocs/delegations/bulg/20030422/482103EN.pdf
571 Appendix, tables 42-43.
This lack of understanding has increased the distrust of the public in its democratic institutions. The Bulgarian people tend to view the country’s political authorities as only interested in staying in power for as long as possible, and using their position to benefit themselves, their families and friends and relatives. They are generally seen as having done little to secure economic growth, or improvements in living standards for the population. Opinion polls show that Bulgaria’s post-1989 political institutions such as the parliament, political parties and the government are those least trusted by the Bulgarian public.  

Conclusion

Since Zhivkov’s ousting from power, integration into the Western world has become Bulgaria’s top foreign policy priority, with which the majority of the country’s political elite and public agree. Apart from any economic benefits such as increased living standards through the flow of foreign capital, technical know-how and the increase of trade exchanges, Bulgaria’s integration into the West is seen as bringing a series of political benefits. For instance, an end to the international isolation of Bulgaria since the late 1980s as a result of various political measures taken by Zhivkov’s regime, such as the assimilation of the Bulgarian Turks.

However, despite agreement on the country’s integration into the Western world, in the first years after Zhivkov’s removal from power, there was confusion about what the terms ‘the West’ or the ‘Western world’ conveyed. This was because these terms

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572 This is in contrast to other institutions such as the army, the police and the church which are trusted. See Appendix, table 44.
included certain international political and economic organisations and states and raised the issue of which should receive priority in foreign policy.

Since it was widely recognized that the most influential actors in the West were the EU and the USA, the question soon took the form of whether Bulgaria should give priority to establishing close political and economic relations with the USA or the EU. In due time, the answer to this question favoured the EU and, therefore, integration into the Western world came to be equated with integration into the EU.

Bulgaria’s integration into the EU was to exercise a tremendous influence on the country’s foreign policy making mainly because integration was conditional on a series of institutional reforms which Sofia needed to introduce in order to become a member. These reforms impacted on the entire spectrum of the country’s foreign policy and its foreign policy mechanisms. Many of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ responsibilities were distributed across a series of newly created institutions including the Ministry of European Affairs. This Ministry became responsible for determining a substantial part of the country’s foreign policy along with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. EU integration has also pushed the executive to make the country’s foreign policy a more transparent political process making it more accountable to institutions such as the Parliament or the Constitutional Court.

The influence of EU integration on Sofia’s foreign policy making in the future is conditional on Bulgaria’s accession to the EU within a reasonable time frame and the maintenance of strong political links between the EU and the USA. Negotiations for Bulgaria’s EU membership were finalized in June 2004 and the country is expected to
join the Union in 2007. However, conclusion of negotiations does not guarantee the exact time of Bulgaria's membership. The process of accession is a complex political process that involves many factors and can be reversed at any stage. If Bulgaria does not become a member of the EU within a reasonable time frame, it is quite possible that the political consensus over accession being a top foreign policy priority will be undermined and that nationalist or Euro-sceptic political forces might seek to provide a different orientation and form to Sofia's foreign policy.

The maintenance of strong political links between the EU and the USA is important for maintaining the political consensus that integration into the EU should be Bulgaria's top foreign policy priority. It is this political consensus which has so far given Sofia the momentum to adjust its foreign policy making to fit within the political and legal framework set by the EU.

A rupture in the political links between the EU and the US could undermine this political consensus and reopen the debate on whether Bulgaria should give priority to developing strong political relations with the USA or the EU. A rupture in EU-USA political links would be translated into competition in Bulgaria's political scene between the parties seeking to align the country's foreign policy with the USA and others seeking to maintain its alignment with the EU. The Iraqi crisis of 2003, which caused a split into factions supporting the USA's foreign policy towards Iraq and those who favoured the EU's position on the issue illustrates the dangers of any serious rupture occurring.
Chapter IV

Case Studies of EU Influence on Bulgarian Foreign Policy Relations

Introduction

Chapter III examined how integration into the EU has for the overwhelming majority of the Bulgarian political elite and public become the highest foreign policy priority since the end of the Cold War, and discussed the effects of Bulgaria’s process of EU accession on the country’s foreign policy mechanisms. This chapter analyses the effects of this process on Bulgaria’s relations with international organisations, and inter-state relations. In terms of international organisations, emphasis is given to Sofia’s post-1989 relations with NATO and the IMF, which are the organisations that accession has influenced most.

In terms of interstate relations, the focus is on Bulgaria’s post-1989 relations with developing countries in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America as well as with the USA and the Russian Federation. Under communism, Sofia had almost no relations with the USA but had, of course, very strong relations with the USSR, including the Soviet Socialist Republic of Russia (the official name of what is known now as the Russian Federation in the Soviet Union), and a number of developing countries including Iraq, Libya and Syria. The aim is to show how Bulgaria’s process of accession to the EU has influenced Sofia’s relations with these states.
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Influence on Bulgaria’s Relations with International Organisations

During the communist period, although Bulgaria was a member of the Warsaw Pact and the CMEA, whose members were states with communist regimes, Sofia’s political presence in international organisations whose members included non-communist states was small. Bulgaria refused to participate in international organisations including the Council of Europe and the IMF because they were seen as opposing the fundamental philosophical principles of the political systems in Eastern Europe such as lack of political pluralism, and the existence of a command economy.

Even in those international organisations such as the UN or the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) that Bulgaria did participate in, its role was mainly confined to supporting the political position of the Soviet Union. Thus, Sofia’s input was not considered very important, Bulgaria being regarded as Moscow’s political puppet.573

This picture gradually changed after 1989. Bulgaria is now a member of almost all the main international organisations. In addition to the UN and the CSCE, Bulgaria has been a member of the IMF since September 1990, a member of the Council of Europe since May 1992, a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) since November 2002 and a NATO member state since March 2004.574

573 Leonard, 2000, p. 531.
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These international organisations give greater credence to Bulgaria which is no longer viewed as the puppet of any particular state and is seen rather as a country whose political decisions on international issues discussed in international organisations are taken solely by the Bulgarian political authorities. The Soviet Union and communist organisations, such as the Warsaw pact and the CMEA, have been dissolved and Bulgaria has denounced the communist system. Sofia has declared its intention to follow a foreign policy, free from the influence of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation or any other former communist state. Throughout the post-1989 period, Bulgaria has generally voted with the majority in international committees, regardless of the political and economic consequences that the committees’ decisions would have for the country.

For example, Sofia upheld the decision taken by the Security Council of the UN to impose economic embargoes on Iraq and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) during the 1990s despite the huge economic cost that they would entail for Bulgaria. Observing the economic embargo imposed on Saddam Hussein’s regime, meant Sofia was unable to recoup the $1.5bn the Iraqi regime owed to Bulgaria because of infrastructure projects conducted by Bulgarian state construction companies prior to 1989, and arms deals with Bulgarian military companies such as Kintext during the period of the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s. The economic embargo imposed on the political regime of Slobodan Milosevic cut Bulgaria’s trade routes to Western Europe, thus causing inestimable economic damage to the economy.

As a result of the Bulgaria's improved image within international organisations since 1989, Bulgarian representatives have taken on political offices. In May 1994 Bulgaria became the first ex-communist state to hold the rotating Presidency of the Council of Europe. In October 2001 the General Assembly of the UN elected Bulgaria to chair the UN Security Council, from 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2003. In December 2002 the 10th Ministerial Council of the OSCE convened in Porto unanimously approved Bulgaria's chairmanship of the OSCE for 2004.

Bulgaria's positive image could be part of a conscious political strategy to bring the country out of the international isolation in which it found itself at the beginning of the 1990s as a result of the policy for ethnic assimilation of the Bulgarian Turks during the late 1980s. This accentuated the dislocation of the country's economy which, due to its international isolation, Bulgaria was to cope with alone. Bulgarian governments are now trying to maintain a positive image in international organisations, which should help the country's access to international funding. Funding was seen as necessary to halt the country's economic dislocation and save it from economic collapse.

Successive Bulgarian governments have tried to restore ethnic stability in Bulgaria to secure territorial integrity. The OSCE, the Council of Europe and NATO's prime aims after the end of the Cold War were the prevention and management of military conflicts both between and inside states and, therefore, these organisations provided a

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578 Callaghan et al., 2000, p. 68.
579 http://www.bulgaria2net.com/government/UN/181222001.html
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framework for Bulgaria to seek solutions to its own ethnic problems which post-1989
governments had inherited from Zhivkov’s regime.

However, Sofia’s attitude towards international organisations should not be
interpreted merely as conscious political strategy designed to break the country’s
international isolation. If it had been a rational political choice based on the benefits
which the county would get by participating in and building a positive image in these
organisations, then it would have needed a consensus among all the political actors
which has not been the case. There was support for Bulgaria’s participation in the
Council of Europe, but a large section of Bulgaria’s political elite objected to the
country’s participation in organisations such as NATO for the most part of the
1990s.581

Despite Bulgaria’s admission to the IMF in September 1990, most governments
backed by the BSP had not cooperated with this organisation because it favoured a
neo-liberal economic model which provided for political measures such as
liberalization of prices and trade of goods, privatization of state companies and
generally measures that would reduce state control over the economy. Promotion of
such measures would have entailed a high social cost with rising unemployment rates
and reduced living standards for the working classes, and, thus was in sharp contrast
to the BSP’s efforts to build a public image as the party that cared for the lower
classes.582

581 http://www.internationalspecialreports.com/ciscentralasia/99/bulgaria/10.html; Interview with
Bulgarian Defence Minister Nikolai Svinarov in wysiwyg://main
16/http://www.md.government.bg/_en_interview_svinarov.html;
http://www.md.government.bg/_en_sociological_study_1999_2001.html; Dainov, 1997; Todorov,
1997.
However, the EU gives a great deal of importance to the relations that candidate states have with organisations that the EU views as fundamental to the smooth functioning of both the Union and the international system. These organisations include the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO, NATO, and the OSCE.

Having a good relationship with these organisations was a criterion for candidate states to join the EU. In the EC’s annual report summarising the progress of membership negotiations there is a section that assesses relations with international organisations but why is it that the EC sees this as being so important to the accession process?

There are two main reasons. Firstly, both the EU as an international entity and its member states individually, drive the political agendas of and establish the political norms in all the main international organisations and, by requiring candidate states such as Bulgaria to maintain good relations with these organisations, the Union can align the policies that candidate states follow regarding such international organisations with those of the Union and its constituent member-states. Such alignment is seen as necessary for the smooth functioning of the EU because it allows the Union to have a united political stance towards these organisations. This in turn, sets the grounds for the adoption of common political positions in these organisations once the candidate states become full members of the Union and thus maintains the EU’s control on the foreign policies of EU candidate and full member states and, together with the USA, of international organizations to a large extent.
Secondly, the EU is itself a multinational political entity similar to such international organisations as the UN, the IMF and the OSCE; thus, by participating in these organisations, the candidate states become familiarized with the way that a multilateral political entity functions, which also contributes to smooth functioning of the EU once the candidate states become full members. This familiarization was very necessary in the case of EES because they had a different experience of how multilateral political entities functioned based on their experience in the Warsaw Pact and the CMEA during the communist period. During that time, EES did participate in multinational organisations, but in a quite different way. EES were not involved in collective decision making but were there only to promote or to ratify political decisions taken in Moscow.\textsuperscript{583}

So how has democratic conditionality changed Bulgaria’s relations with international organisations since 1989? It could be argued that democratic conditionality has had two effects: it has aligned many of the political positions that Bulgaria supported in international organisations such as the UN or the OSCE with the EU’s position. For instance, throughout the 1990s, Bulgaria’s position on the respect of human rights in countries such as China, Cuba or Iran approximated the positions of the EU.\textsuperscript{584}

The alignment of Bulgaria’s political positions with those of the EU in international organisations was the result of the increased political cooperation between the Union and Sofia during the 1990s, which was aimed at harmonizing Bulgaria’s policies and institutions with those of the EU, because it was only through such harmonization that Bulgaria could become eligible for membership of the EU. Sofia’s political

\textsuperscript{583} Dimitov, Vesselin, 2000, p. 1
\textsuperscript{584} Center for the Study of Democracy, 1998, p. 106.
cooperation with the Union was achieved in two ways: a) through institutional mechanisms provided by the Association Agreement, e.g. the Bulgaria-EU Association Committee and the Joint Bulgarian-EU Parliamentary Committee, which, although they were mainly political organs that monitored the application of the Association Agreement, also functioned as political forums where European officials met with their Bulgarian counterparts and exchanged views on international issues. And b) through institutional mechanisms that the EU has established with all candidate states within the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) which the Brussels had begun to develop in the mid-1990s.

There are three main CFSP institutional mechanisms:585 the meetings of experts that take place between the EU member states and the candidate states, including Bulgaria. There are approximately ten meetings held every six months. There are also the meetings between EU diplomatic representatives and high ranking diplomats from candidate states, such as the political directors of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, and the meetings between the Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and his counterparts in EU member and candidate states in the General Affairs Council.

Although these mechanisms were designed to develop common political positions able to represent both member states and candidate states at the international level, they were in reality political forums where candidate states were briefed on the political positions which EU member states had already adopted during the meetings of EU political organs in which only member states participated. The candidate states were asked to support these positions in international forums and, in most cases,

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agreed to do so, worried that otherwise they would damage their political relations with Brussels and undermine their chances of membership of the Union. 586

The only way for a state like Bulgaria to effectively influence political positions supported by the EU in international organisations was to become a full member of the EU. By becoming an EU member, a state’s potential to influence policy making within the Union would extend as far as the ability to veto political decisions which were thought to be against the state’s interest.

Democratic conditionality led Bulgaria to establish cooperation with international organisations whose relations with the Bulgarian state had been disturbed for a large part of the post-1989 period. This can be well exemplified by Sofia’s relations with NATO and the IMF which are analysed in the next two sections.

Democratic Conditionality and Bulgaria’s Relations with NATO

Unlike other EES such as Poland, Czechoslovakia or Hungary which, immediately after the fall of their communist systems expressed an interest in joining NATO, in Bulgaria the issue of the country’s joining NATO began to preoccupy the Bulgarian political elite and public opinion only after 1991. Until that time the idea had been inconceivable.

Although the overwhelming majority of the political elite and the public of Bulgaria had come to terms with the failure of the communist system, they could not believe

that this failure would dissolve the Soviet bloc as a military alliance because the collapse of the communist system had left the military might of the Soviet Union relatively intact, and Moscow could mobilize it at any time in order to protect the territorial integrity of EES. Also, a number of EES were dependent on Moscow in terms of arms, military equipment and the training of their army officers, so, despite calls for the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, it seemed too costly for these states to seek its dissolution and admission to NATO.

The Soviet Union still retained a good image among a large section of the political elite and the Bulgarian public after 1989, mainly due to the fact that, throughout the communist period, Moscow had rewarded Bulgaria's loyalty by providing economic subsidies which had transformed Bulgaria from a poor peasant country to an industrial state with high economic growth. Also, unlike other EES such as Poland, the Soviet Union had protected Bulgaria's territorial integrity after the WWII. Although a defeated country, Bulgaria did not experience any disadvantageous border changes. In fact, as a result of the Soviet Union's support in the post-war international forums that convened to define the world order, Bulgaria's territory expanded for the first time since the Balkan Wars. South Dobrudzha, an area which from the end of the Second Balkan War in 1913 to the beginning of WWII had belonged to Romania, had been annexed to Bulgaria in September 1940 as a result of the Nazi-Soviet cooperation at the end of the 1930s, and was allowed to remain Bulgarian territory.587

The issue of Bulgaria joining NATO did not arise, because prior to 1991, NATO was neither interested in nor ready to accept new member states from Eastern Europe. In

587 Crampton 1997, pp. 169-170, 188.
November 1991, NATO concluded an agreement with the former Warsaw Pact countries concerning the reduction of conventional arms in Europe and NATO officials believed this removed the danger of Soviet military superiority in Europe and thus insured NATO against a Soviet military attack. Once the danger of such an attack had been removed, NATO officials saw no reason why the alliance should expand eastwards by the inclusion of EES members.\footnote{Dimitrov, Vesselin, 2001, p. 96; Dimitrov, Dimitur, 2002a, p. 30; De Wijk, 1997, pp. 13-82; Smith et al., 2000, pp. 20-49; Rauchhaus 2001, p. 175; Eyal, 1999, pp. 22-34. For a general overview on NATO’s expansion to Eastern Europe see also Yost, 1998; Asmus et al., 1995; Brown, 1995; Allin, 1995.}

Any NATO expansion eastwards might also create a feeling among political and military circles in Moscow that NATO constituted a serious security threat to the Soviet Union in the long-term, which, in turn, might bring to power Russian nationalist or conservative political forces seeking to halt the liberal political and economic reforms that the Soviet Union was implementing under Gorbachev. This was something that NATO officials did not want to happen because they feared that a possible end to political and economic reforms in Moscow would also have negative repercussions on the political and economic reforms that EES were introducing and might prolong the political division of Europe with unanticipated consequences for the security of the European continent.

At the beginning of 1992 the international environment was totally different from how it had been in the aftermath of 1989. Despite initial assessment that the Warsaw Pact would remain intact, it was dissolved in July 1991 and the Soviet Union broke up in December 1991. The dissolution of the Warsaw Pact meant that Bulgaria had lost the one international institution on which it could count for national security and
For NATO too, the international environment at the end of 1991 had changed. The military coup against Gorbachev in August 1991 showed that, despite the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the military agreements that NATO had concluded with the former Pact countries, these were not enough to secure the political independence and territorial integrity of EES from a possible military threat in the future.

After the coup an increasing number of NATO members came to support the view that the future mission of NATO in Europe should not be confined to the protection of the national security and territorial integrity of WES from a possible Soviet military threat. Instead, NATO’s future mission should expand to also include EES, and offer them domestic stability and security, as well as guarantees that they would not be left at the mercy of any future military threat, be it from the Soviet Union, post-Soviet Russia or elsewhere.

In line with this view, in November 1991 it was decided at a NATO summit convened in Rome to establish cooperation with the states of Eastern Europe by creating permanent institutional mechanisms in which both NATO member states and EES would be included. The declaration, published at the end of the summit, invited all

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589 Dimitrov, Vesselin, 2001 p. 96; Zhivkov, 1993, pp. 150-1.
EES to establish permanent institutional ties with NATO\(^{591}\) that would allow the states of Eastern Europe to exchange information with NATO member states on foreign policy issues and, in this way, influence the political and military decisions taken by NATO. In response to the declaration at the NATO summit in Rome, nine EES, including Bulgaria, along with the 16 NATO member states founded the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) in December 1991. The task of the NACC was to provide a permanent political forum where EES would consult NATO on issues relevant to the foreign policy and defence of those states.\(^{592}\) NATO's cooperation with the states of Eastern Europe was not restricted to the creation of the NACC. At the January 1994 NATO summit in Brussels the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme was established.\(^{593}\) This programme mainly addressed the states of Eastern Europe and aimed at establishing cooperation between the military of these states and the military units of NATO which would enable both sides to undertake common military action in the future.\(^{594}\)

Also, in the mid-1990s NATO began to discuss the prospects of eastward expansion by admitting EES as member states of the organisation. In December 1994 a summit of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the member states of NATO decided to authorize the NATO Secretariat to construct a policy paper to be published in September 1995. This policy paper would define the criteria which EES interested in joining the organisation must meet.\(^{595}\) In line with these criteria, in July 1997, the NATO summit convened in Madrid decided to invite Poland, the Czech Republic and

\(^{591}\) [http://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/hb020201.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/hb020201.htm)

\(^{592}\) Ibid.

\(^{593}\) Bulgarian joined the PfP in November 1994.

\(^{594}\) For more details on NATO's PfP programme see Williams, 1996; [http://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/hb010302.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/hb010302.htm)

Hungary to start negotiations with the organisation. After just under two years of negotiations, in March 1999 the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary became the first EES to join NATO.

Bulgaria’s participation in every institutional mechanism which NATO established with the states of Eastern Europe reflected the Bulgarian authorities’ view that participation could resolve the security vacuum in which Bulgaria had been left by the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. However, despite the country’s participation in the NACC and PfP, its membership of NATO triggered a long political debate, the length and the intensity of which was unprecedented.

On the one hand were political parties such as the UDF, NGO’s such as the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria, young military officers, and academics including the political scientist Dr. Evgeni Daňnov. According to these parties, Bulgaria should seek membership of NATO because this would signify an important step in the process of the country’s integration into the Western world, as it would be seen as rewarding the progress that Bulgaria had made in accepting liberal democratic norms and institutions.

According to the document issued by the NATO Secretariat in September 1995, future members of the organisation would be expected to conform to the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. Given that these principles mirrored the political principles of the EU’s democratic conditionality, a substantial part of Bulgaria’s political and academic elite viewed admission to NATO as part of the process of becoming a member of the EU.

596 For a summary of the main arguments favouring Bulgaria’s admission to NATO see Ivanov, Ivan 1997.
Bulgaria’s membership of NATO was seen as offering a solution to two problems resulting from the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. The first problem was related to Bulgaria’s national security. NATO was seen as being the only international organisation able to provide its member states with effective protection. According to article 5 of NATO’s charter, a threat to the national security of a NATO member state should be viewed as a threat to the national security of its other members, which must protect the threatened member even if it meant resorting to military force. Unlike international organisations such as the WEU which could also resort to the use of force to protect their members, NATO was the only organisation that possessed an effective military infrastructure.

Apart from the protection that NATO would offer, a number of young army officers considered that Bulgaria’s admission to NATO would help it to strengthen its military capacities, which had been in constant decline since the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. Firstly, admission to NATO would provide the opportunity for a large number of Bulgarian military officers to be trained in the military academies of the USA, or other NATO members to update their knowledge and expertise. This training would help the officers involved to achieve rapid promotion in the military ranks and thus was supported by young officers.

Secondly, through admission to NATO, Bulgaria would gain access to the necessary capital and know-how to enable the state to save the Bulgarian military industry from

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600 Ibid; Ivanov, Ivan, 1997, p.72.
the economic decline it had suffered since the end of the 1980s. This was seen as important for both military and economic reasons. In the 1980s Bulgaria’s military industry employed around 12% of the total industrial workforce and produced around 7% of the country’s exports, adding $500-600m annually to the country’s revenue.

On the other hand, a substantial part of Sofia’s political, military and academic elite favoured ‘neutrality’, as they termed the country’s non-membership of NATO. This was the view the majority of the political cadres of the BSP, of elderly military officers, and academics including the historian Dr Iskra Baeva. Some saw Bulgaria’s admission to NATO would mean the country’s shouldering an insurmountable economic burden at a time of severe economic recession. Most of the Bulgarian army’s equipment had come from former Warsaw Pact countries and a decision to join NATO would mean re-equipping the army with equipment from NATO member states so that it would meet NATO standards. Others thought that admission to NATO would entail the presence of foreign military troops on Bulgarian soil, which was seen as disgraceful and dangerous. Disgraceful, because the presence of foreign troops equated with selling out the sovereignty of the Bulgarian state, and dangerous because, in the event that NATO was involved in military operations, the country would de facto become a target.

In most cases, behind all of these objections, was the feeling that Bulgaria should not abandon solidarity with Slavic Orthodox countries such as Russia, with whom

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605 Dimitrov, Vesselin 2001, p.98.
Bulgaria had cultural bonds; the majority of Bulgarians were like most ethnic Russians, Orthodox Christians, and spoke a language that belonged to the same family of languages as the Russian language.⁶⁰⁷ Due to these cultural bonds, countries such as Russia should be more willing to provide Bulgaria with military protection than the member states of NATO with whom Bulgaria had little in common.⁶⁰⁸

This feeling was corroborated by occasional statements from Russian officials aimed at discouraging Bulgaria from seeking NATO membership.⁶⁰⁹ One such was on the occasion of an official visit to Moscow by the chairman of the Bulgarian National Assembly, Blagovest Sendov, in May 1995. At a joint press conference the chairman of the Russian Duma, Vladimir Lukin, stated that, while Russia had no objection to Bulgaria's admission to the WEU, it was against its membership in NATO because this would not guarantee national security. To achieve this, according to Vladimir Lukin, Sofia should conclude a military alliance with Moscow.⁶¹⁰

The political debate over NATO continued until the end of the 1990s. Why it took Sofia almost a decade to decide whether to join NATO was because the BSP was against joining NATO. Its manifesto made this clear and influenced many Bulgarian governments and a large part of the public: for much of the early 1990s 65% to 70% of the population did not want Bulgaria to join NATO.⁶¹¹

For almost five out of the seven years following the first post-communist general elections in June 1990, the BSP directly or indirectly controlled Bulgaria. The

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⁶⁰⁷ Todorov, 1997, pp. 31-33
⁶⁰⁸ Genov, 1998, p.44.
socialist governments of Andrei Lukanov and Zhan Videnov came to power as the result of electoral victory of the BSP in the general elections of June 1990 and December 1994 respectively, and the BSP also had control of the cabinets of Dimitur Popov and Liuben Berov which were in power from December 1990 to November 1991 and from December 1992 to September 1994 respectively thanks to the support of the BSP. Being dependent on the parliamentary support of the BSP, it was very difficult for these governments to deviate from the party’s political position and seek Bulgarian membership of NATO.

In a sense, the general elections of April 1997 set the political preconditions for Bulgaria to join NATO. In these elections, the BSP suffered a crashing electoral defeat which put the party on the margins of Bulgaria’s politics for years to come. The UDF which took power was the first party since 1989 to have full control of the country’s Executive. This enabled the UDF to take a series of political measures towards the country’s membership of NATO. In December 1997, the UDF government decided to upgrade Sofia’s diplomatic relations with the organisation, by establishing a permanent Bulgarian diplomatic mission at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

In March 1997 parliament adopted a government decree that admission to NATO would be a top foreign policy priority. This became the legal foundation for a series of decisions providing political and military support to NATO. The Bulgarian government hoped this would promote accession to the organisation. In July 1997, the

613 The first head of Bulgaria’s permanent diplomatic mission to NATO presented his credentials to NATO headquarters in Brussels in March 1998.
government announced support for the peacekeeping Stabilization Forces (SFOR) that NATO had deployed in Bosnia-Hercegovina under the auspices of the UN, and contributed an engineering platoon comprising 31 servicemen, which was later followed with a transport platoon comprising 17 servicemen and 20 vehicles to help the multinational group BELUGA which was providing logistical support for SFOR.

In April 1999, Sofia supported NATO’s military activities against the army of the FRY in Kosovo by giving NATO military air forces transit passage through its airspace. After NATO’s military activities in FRY were concluded Bulgaria supported the KFOR peacekeeping force, which had been dispatched to Kosovo under the auspices of the UN, contributing a platoon to be led by the Dutch contingent in KFOR.

The March 1997 declaration did not signal a consensus among the country’s political elite over membership of NATO. Many BSP political activists were still opposed to Bulgaria’s becoming a full NATO member state. Without consensus the military reforms that were necessary could not be completed. These reforms included the organisation, training and armaments of the Bulgarian military forces, and their standardization with those of other NATO members. Although these reforms had been initiated by previous Bulgarian governments, more was needed.614 There was a danger that any reforms implemented could be reversed in the event of a change of power, for instance to a BSP government.

614 It should be mentioned that the delay in the promotion of reforms to the Bulgarian army was one of the reasons that the NATO summit in Madrid rejected Bulgaria’s application. The application had been submitted by the caretaker government and the mayor of Sofia Stefan Sofianski, who took power immediately after the fall of the BSP. See wysiwyg/main.16/http://www.md.government.bg/_en_reform_ba.html; Dimitrov, Dimitur, 2002a; Insider Business & Current Affairs, No. 4, 1997, pp. 2-3.
A consensus would also have given the government greater credibility. NATO officials were unlikely to seriously consider diplomatic efforts to make Bulgaria a member state of NATO if they knew that this application was not supported by the country's main political forces. What is important is how did Bulgaria's integration into the EU affect the development of a political consensus on the issue of NATO?

Since the end of WWII the EU had had strong political and military links with NATO. The majority of EU member states were members of NATO and, given the absence of an EU common foreign and defence policy up to the end of the Cold War, NATO was responsible for the national security of most EU member states. Even after 1989, when the EU began to develop its own institutional mechanisms for common foreign and defence policies, these mechanisms were strongly allied to NATO's mechanisms. This can be seen in the EU's support of economic embargoes against Iraq in 1991 and against FRY during the Yugoslav wars.615

As a result of the strong political and military links between the EU and NATO, an increasing number of Sofia's policy makers came to view Bulgaria's accession to NATO as an integral part of the country's integration into the EU and that admission to NATO would accelerate the latter process. This view was reinforced when NATO and the EU both decided in 1997 to accept new member states from Eastern Europe. In June 1997 the NATO summit convened in Madrid decided to invite Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to join NATO, and in December 1997 the European Council meeting in Luxembourg decided to invite these same countries plus Estonia to join the EU.

In addition, good cooperation between the Bulgarian parliamentary political parties and the political forces of the European parliament had been established in the late 1990s. This cooperation was aimed at aligning the structures and the policies of the Bulgarian political parties with the structures and policies of the political forces of the European Parliament, a necessary precondition for Bulgarian parties to be accepted into one of the political forces of the European Parliament when the country became a member of the EU.616

The UDF had worked to forge links with the conservative European political parties, which were members of the People’s Party in the European Parliament.617 The BSP had developed political links with socialist and labour parties, which were members of the European Parliament’s European Socialist Party (ESP), and the MRF was working closely with the liberal parties, which were members of the European parliamentary group of Liberal Democrats.618 The NMSII, after unsuccessful attempts to cooperate with the People’s Party due to objections from the UDF, had managed to build a good relationship with the Liberal Democrats.619

The Bulgarian political parties saw that by establishing political links with political forces of the European parliament, they would be in a better position to compete with their political opponents because these links, would give them access to financial and technical assistance from Europe’s political forces.620 Also, good relations with the

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616 Todorov, 1999, pp. 11-17.
619 Ilchev, Stanimir, personal interview, 7/12/2001.
620 Todorov, 1999, p. 11.
political forces in the European Parliament boosted the image of the political parties in Bulgaria by demonstrating that their political platforms are based on sound ideological principles that go beyond the country’s borders.

At the same time, by developing political links with the Bulgarian political parties, the political forces of the European Parliament were seeking to create legitimate ideological partners in Bulgaria, which would enable them to extend the influence of their ideas and political programmes beyond the borders of the EU. Such partnerships would allow Bulgaria to harmonize the country’s political standards with the political standards of EU member states and would mean that competition between Bulgarian parties would be based on ideological principles, rather than personal differences.

Political cooperation with the parties of the European Parliament came to affect the political agenda of the Bulgarian political parties in the latter half of the 1990s. On many occasions, it led to the Bulgarian political parties changing their policies and political views to reflect those of their political partners in the European Parliament, exemplified by the BSP’s reverse on the issue of NATO.

Following the BSP’s electoral defeat in the general elections of April 1997, the party leadership revised its political stance on the NATO issue and began to favour Bulgarian membership. This was confirmed in the political manifesto passed at the

621 Ibid, p.16.
622 Gaitandzhiev Ivan, personal interview, 24/1/2002; Baeva Iskra, personal interview, 7/12/2001; Vigenin, Christian, personal interview, 10/1/2002.
44th political congress in May 2000,623 which stated that Bulgaria’s admission to NATO was one of the party’s top priorities.624

This revision of the BSP’s view in relation to NATO was mainly the result of pressure from the ESP in the European Parliament. This proved effective because after the general elections of 1997 the BSP had sought desperately to establish ties with the ESP, believing that this would enable it to be received into the Socialist International,625 which would reduce the marginalization it was experiencing.

The BSP’s change of heart over NATO was decisive in achieving a consensus among the political elite. There were still some who were against NATO membership, particular conservative party members such as Zhan Videnov, Alexandur Lilov and Mincho Minchev. However, after 1997, these voices became increasingly marginalized.

The political consensus over entry to NATO gradually diffused through to the public. According to opinion polls conducted in the latter half of the 1990s, almost 50% of the public supported Bulgaria’s joining NATO, and by the end of 2002 this had reached 70%,626 contrasting greatly with the 15% that were in favour at the beginning of the 1990s.627

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623 That the BSP’s political congress in May 2000 was named the 44th reflects the BSP members’ view that the BSP was a political transformation of the BCP, and thus the congresses had some continuity, reflected by the continuation of their numbering from those of the BCP.
624 http://www.bsp.bg/44kongress_en/platform.html
625 Todorov, 1999, pp. 19-21, 30-1.
Prioritizing membership of NATO was maintained after the UDF lost power in the general elections of June 2001 and the new NMSII took office. The Bulgarian Prime Minister, Simeon Saxkoburgotski, appointed the President of the Atlantic Club in Sofia, Solomon Pasi, to be the new Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which demonstrated his support for NATO.

Pasi accelerated the programme of reforms to the Bulgarian army which had been introduced after the 1997 elections. He also continued support for NATO's political and military activities, including military operations against the Taliban in Afghanistan, offering a contingent of 30 Bulgarian soldiers to take part in operations.628 The army reforms and support for NATO military activities were important factors in Bulgaria, along with six other EES, being invited to start negotiations for membership of NATO at its summit in Prague in November 2002.

NATO's decision in Prague was not affected by BSP leader and official candidate, Georgi Parvanov, winning the Presidential elections of November 2001. This is because the newly elected President followed his party position on the issue, and supported Bulgarian membership of NATO, a fact which was stressed on many occasions in his speeches and during meetings he had with NATO officials.629

Democratic Conditionality and Bulgaria's Relations with the IMF

In September 1990 Bulgaria became a member of the IMF, which at the time was seen as a way of saving the country's shaky economy from bankruptcy. The collapse

628 http://www.government.bg/English/Priorities/ForeignPolicy/2002-10-21/845.html
629 http://www.president.bg/en/news.php?id=27&St=0
of the CMEA immediately after 1989 had plunged Bulgaria into deep recession, which affected its capacity to repay the almost $12bn debt inherited from communist times. In March 1990 the socialist government of Andrei Lukanov declared a moratorium on debt repayment, which isolated Bulgaria from international capital markets because its creditors refused to extend any further economic assistance until the debts were repaid.

As a result of Sofia’s isolation from international capital markets, the IMF became extremely important throughout the period of Bulgaria’s democratization. The IMF helped in three ways. Firstly, it suggested policy priorities and formulated economic programmes to deal with the economic crisis. Secondly, by offering economic loans, the Fund helped the Bulgarian economy to achieve long periods of macroeconomic stability. Thirdly, in 1994 through the IMF’s mediation Bulgaria managed to reach agreements with its international creditors over a rescheduling of the $12bn debt which allowed it to regain access to international capital markets.

However, despite all this, relations between the Bulgarian governments in the 1990s, and the Fund were not good. Up to 1997, the majority of Bulgarian governments owed their stay in power to the parliamentary support of the BSP, which did not favour long-term cooperation between Sofia and the IMF. The BSP leadership considered that Bulgaria would lose its economic independence if it established long-term cooperation with the IMF, because this would give the IMF the right to intervene

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62 Ibid., p. 72.
63 Ibid.
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in economic policy. Economic assistance from the IMF was conditional on the ability of the government to promote a series of economic and political measures determined by the Fund.

The BSP leadership viewed the IMF as an international charity, whose role should be confined to offering unconditional economic assistance when asked. This was the party's official position, and was often cited by party officials in official speeches, interviews and communiqués. Why was the BSP against these IMF conditions?

The BSP's main complaint was that generally the IMF made the provision of any economic assistance conditional on the promotion of political measures aimed at removing state control of the economy. IMF policy-makers believed that overriding state control was the only way for the development of a healthy economic environment which, in the long term, would bring economic growth, increase the living standards of all citizens and reduce future dependence of the state on economic assistance from the IMF and their like. This belief was founded on the neo-liberal economic ideas that dominated IMF policy making at the end of the 1980s as a result of the collapse of communism and most of the notions of state intervention in the economy that had been developed in the West since WWII.

However, removing state control of the economy meant the privatization of state enterprises, the reduction of bureaucracies through mass dismissal of personnel from the public sector and the abolition of any type of state protectionism for trade including elimination of tariffs and the cancellation of state subsidies to home

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635 Baeva Iskra, personal interview, 7/12/2001.
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producers. Application of such measures would inevitably lead to short-term economic recession and a rise in unemployment, which would adversely affect the BSP leadership’s efforts to present the party as a leftist political force that was working in the interests of Bulgaria’s working class.638

Also the Anglo-Saxon origin of the IMF’s neo-liberal ideology made the BSP leadership wary of long-term cooperation with the IMF.639 A number of leading BSP cadres believed that the USA was attempting to use the Fund as the means to extend its economic influence throughout the world.640 Consequently, the saw any long-term cooperation with the Fund as raising the possibility of Bulgaria’s becoming an American economic protectorate.

The reluctance of most Bulgarian governments throughout the 1990s to cooperate with the IMF had negative consequences for the economy. The Fund saw the reluctance of these governments to promote the liberal political and economic reforms they required as keeping the country behind the Visegrad states in meeting the EU’s economic criteria. By promoting reforms such as privatization of state companies or the liberalization of state trade through elimination of state control on tariffs, Bulgarian governments would have met the preconditions for the creation of the strong private sector which would constitute the backbone of a functioning market economy, part of the Copenhagen criteria.

But even more crucial was that this lack of cooperation throughout the 1990s produced economic crises which plunged the already declining Bulgarian economy deeper into recession and culminating with the economic crisis of 1997. The socialist government of Zhan Videnov, which came into office in December 1994, believed the main reason for economic recession was the liberal economic reforms that past Bulgarian governments had launched.641

In an attempt to restore the country’s economy to the levels of prosperity experienced under communism, Videnov’s government halted many of these reforms and increased state intervention in the economy. It is estimated that, as a result of the measures taken by Videnov’s government prior to the beginning of 1997, the state controlled almost 52% of the prices of goods and services in the country.642

At the beginning of 1996, the IMF reacted to the economic measures taken by Videnov’s government by freezing all its economic transactions with Bulgaria and refusing economic assistance in the future unless economic measures geared to the requirements of the Fund were implemented. This left Sofia unable to comply with the repayment terms agreed with international creditors in 1994 which saw a $1bn installment of debt due for repayment in the spring of 1996.

This began a chain reaction throughout the economy, and produced the worst economic crisis Bulgaria had experienced since the end of 1989. By the end of 1996, the Bulgarian GDP had shrunk by 10% and annual inflation had reached 300%.643

Between January 1996 and January 1997, average monthly salaries fell almost tenfold

from $110 to $12, while average pensions went from $37 to $4 a month over the same period.\textsuperscript{644} The crisis caused political and social chaos with regular mass demonstrations and strikes which led Prime Minister Zhan Videnov to convene an extraordinary party conference in December 1996 at which he was forced to resign from the party leadership and the premiership of the government. The conference elected the forty-year-old historian and vice-President of the BSP, Georgi Parvanov, as the new party leader, who, after his election, replaced Videnov as head of the government.

Once in office, Parvanov declared his intentions to negotiate an economic programme with the IMF that would release the country from its crisis. However, despite intentions to restore macroeconomic stability, it was difficult for the new government to deal with the political and social environment at the time. The majority of the Bulgarian public had lost faith in the BSP and believed that a new government backed by the socialist party, as Videnov's government had been, would find it impossible to reach agreement with the IMF. The public demonstrations and strikes continued and there was no optimism that Bulgaria would emerge from political and social chaos in the foreseeable future.

Unable to resolve the situation, Parvanov resigned in February 1997. As a result of mediation by the President of the Republic, Petur Stoianov, the Bulgarian parliamentary parties concluded a political agreement on 4 February 1997 according to which a caretaker government was formed under the premiership of the mayor of Sofia, Stefan Sofianski prior to elections being held in April 1997.

\textsuperscript{644} Ibid.
From February 1997, Bulgaria's relations with the IMF entered a new and prolonged period of cooperation. In mid-February 1997 the newly formed government of Stefan Sofianski created the so-called Structural Reform Council composed of technocrats and supervised by the government, which was empowered to conduct negotiations with the IMF. In early April 1997, after a couple of weeks of negotiation, the Council concluded a stabilization agreement with the Fund. According to this agreement, Bulgaria was bound to suspend any protectionist economic measures introduced by the government of Zhan Videnov and to promote a package of liberal economic reforms aimed at the privatization of enterprises under state control. In return, Sofia would receive about $657m in economic aid.645

The UDF government that succeeded Sofianski's caretaker government in April 1997 continued along the same lines and all protectionist measures taken by Videnov's government were suspended. An economic programme aimed at eliminating state control in the economy through privatization of state enterprises and the liberalization of trade was implemented.646

One of the most important aspects of the economic programme of the UDF government was the introduction of the Currency Board in July 1997. This was a non-governmental institutional body whose task was to supervise the flow of currency within or into the country by issuing domestic currency and purchasing foreign currency at a fixed rate.647 In order to build a stable macroeconomic environment and

to restore some of the optimism lost at the social level as a result of the economic crisis of 1996, the Currency Board pegged the Bulgarian Lev (BGL), Bulgaria's national currency, to the Deutschmark (DM) at a fixed rate of 1,000BGL to 1DM.\footnote{448}

Prior to 1997, supervising the issuing and circulation of the national currency and purchasing foreign exchange had been the Bulgarian National Bank’s (BNB) responsibility. However, due to its tight control over the BNB, governments had often manipulated it to advance monies to themselves to finance welfare and protectionist policies such as subsidies for domestic products and ‘lame duck’ industries. In making the Currency Board solely responsible for the issuing and circulation of currency in Bulgaria after 1997, the UDF’s economic programme meant that government could not intervene as it had in the past, and thus set the conditions for the establishment of a free market economy designed to bring economic growth and improved standard of living for the Bulgarian people.\footnote{449}

The cooperation with the IMF continued under Simeon Saxkoburgotski’s government which came to power in June 2001, and in February 2002, the executive board of the IMF approved a two-year stand-by credit of $299m in support of the government’s economic programme.\footnote{450} At a press conference following a meeting of the IMF’s executive board the deputy managing director and acting chairman of the Fund, Shigmitsu Sigisaki stated: “The Fund supports the Bulgarian authorities’ economic

\footnote{448} On 1 January 1999 the Euro replaced the German mark as the national currency of Germany as well as of 11 other EU member states participating in the EMU and, therefore, the Euro replaced the German mark as Bulgaria’s peg currency. Please note that Bulgaria re-denominated its currency in July 1999, dividing it by 1,000. The unit of Bulgaria’s national currency has since July 1999 been called the ‘New Bulgaria Lev’. See Giatzidis, 2002, note 15, p. 108.
\footnote{449} Ibid., pp. 116-118; Gulde, 1999.
\footnote{450} http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2002/pr.0212.htm
programme. This programme offers good prospects for sustained economic growth, sound external imbalances, low unemployment and reduced poverty".651

So why did Sofia’s relations with the Fund become easier after 1997? Was it because socialist governments were no longer in power or was it a result of the prudent actions of governments in reply to the economic crisis of 1997? Neither of these seems sufficient reason for the change in attitude towards the Fund.

That the UDF and NMSII were the ruling powers after 1997 was an important factor in smoothing relations with the Fund. Both parties disapproved of state intervention in the economy. However, the BSP reviewed its political stance towards the IMF after 1997, which would suggest that a BSP government would also have followed the same course as that followed by the UDF and NMSII governments and sought the Fund’s cooperation to resolve the country’s economic crisis and build long-term macroeconomic stability. The severity of the 1997 economic crisis forced the BSP leadership to acknowledge that weak economies such as Bulgaria’s, could not survive without the IMF’s active economic support.652

This can be seen in Parvanov’s readiness to negotiate with the Fund when he came into office after Videnov’s resignation in December 1996. It can also be seen in the party’s political manifesto agreed at the 44th conference in May 2000, which stated that although the BSP favoured an economic system that allowed the state the right to intervene in the economy by taking measures for the protection of the working class, it recognized that the state’s right to intervene should not exceed the limits set by the

651 Ibid.
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international economic environment and the economic capacities of the state. Such a statement had not been included in previous party declarations.

In addition, even if the way that the UDF cooperated with the IMF after the party came into power in 1997 is compared with how it cooperated between November 1991 and December 1992, the difference is huge. When it first came to power at the beginning of the 1990s, the UDF government was a more credible partner for the IMF than other governments that either preceded or succeeded it. However, this first UDF government, like the socialist ones, did little to promote the large-scale privatization of state enterprises. Instead, at the beginning of the 1990s the UDF was mainly preoccupied with the restitution of land that the communist regime had collectivized after WWII, to its pre-War owners.

It could be argued that, although Bulgaria had not experienced a similarly severe economic crisis before 1997, this in itself was not enough to promote long term cooperation between the country and the IMF. The majority of the Bulgarian political elite saw the economic crisis as the result of bad economic management by Videnov's government rather than as the outcome of government's refusal to cooperate with the Fund. In other words, the 1997 economic crisis acted to discredit the BSP as a party more than to promote the IMF.

What changed the political attitude towards the IMF after 1997 was the EU's democratic conditionality and the influence it exercised on Bulgaria's political life. This influence became stronger after 1997 because, for a large part of the political

653 http://www.bsp.bg/44kongress_en/platform.html
654 BSP, 1990, pp. 8-10.
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elite, accession to the EU came to be seen as the only means by which Bulgaria could avoid any further economic crisis. The EU was seen as an economic union that would guarantee prosperity for its members, a view exemplified by opinion polls conducted after 1989.656

After the mid-1990s, Bulgaria’s becoming a member of the EU seemed to a much firmer possibility and therefore policy conditions set by the Union at that time were being taken more seriously. One of the conditions Brussels set for Bulgaria was cooperation with the IMF, because in the EU’s opinion cooperation with the Fund was the only way that Bulgaria could achieve a market economy able to withstand the economic competition inside the Union once the country had become a member.657

Almost a year after the 1997 economic crisis, on 13 December 1997, in commenting on its application for EU membership, the EC had described Bulgaria as lacking a market economy able to cope with the economic competition the country will meet once it joins the Union, and encouraged Sofia to cooperate with the IMF in order to achieve this.658

Democratic Conditionality and Bulgaria’s Inter-state Relations

In addition to international organisations, EU democratic conditionality affected the whole network of Bulgaria’s interstate relations built up during the communist period. The European legislation, known also as *aquis communautaire*, the adoption of which by Sofia was one of the main preconditions for Bulgaria joining the EU, contained a series of agreements and decisions concerning a number of EU member and non-

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656 Appendix, tables 49, 61a-61b.
657 Renzo & Efisio, 1993.
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member states. Bulgaria’s inter-state relations after 1989 were not determined by how close certain state political systems were to a particular ideology, as had been the case in the communist period, but mainly by EU legislation and the political latitudes that this legislation allowed Bulgaria in its relations with certain states. As is argued below, Sofia’s adoption of the acquis communautaire affected the country’s post-1989 political and economic relations with a number of developing states in the African continent, the Middle East and Latin America such as Libya, Iraq and Nicaragua, which had been strong prior to 1989, and also with states such as the USA and Israel with whom Bulgaria had had almost no political and economic relations during communist times.

The influence that EU democratic conditionality exercised on Bulgaria’s inter-state relations after 1989 can be illustrated by three cases: a) Bulgaria’s relations with developing states in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America; b) Bulgaria’s relations with the USA; c) Bulgaria’s relations with the Russian Federation.

Democratic Conditionality and Bulgaria’s Relations with Developing Countries in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America

Throughout the communist period Bulgaria had developed strong political and economic ties with a number of developing states in the Middle East, Africa and Latin America, including Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Libya, Iraq, Cuba and Nicaragua. All these countries had political regimes modeled on Soviet communism and, through political and economic ties with Bulgaria, these regimes aspired to gain a series of political, economic and military advantages that would bring economic growth to
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their states, and an increase in living standards for the peoples of their countries and thus keep them in power. Most of these political regimes had come to power after a populist rebellion or a military coup and, thus, were mostly isolated from the Western world – most Western states have refused or been hesitant to develop political and economic ties with them.

Sofia's communist regime helped the political regimes of these states to maintain power by offering arms, military equipment and other products such as foodstuffs or clothing. In the mid-1980s, almost 7% of Bulgaria's total industrial production, mostly arms and military equipment, was exported to developing states in the Third World, including Iraq, Yemen, Iran and Syria. These exports accounted for more than 60% of annual hard currency earnings.659

After the end of the Cold War, Bulgaria's relations with Third World developing states started to decline both at the political and the economic levels. In the aftermath of Zhivkov's removal from office, the Bulgarian government of Andrei Lukanov downgraded most of the country's diplomatic missions in these states. According to a speech made by the Lukanov's government's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Boiko Dimitrov, in the Bulgarian parliament on 23 August 1990, Sofia had reduced the number of personnel in diplomatic missions in Third World developing states by 20% since November 1989.660

Bulgaria's post-1989 trade with Third World states followed a similar pattern of decline. At the beginning of the 1990s Bulgarian exports to African states constituted

659 Dimitrov, Dimitur, 2002b, p. 17.
5.6% of total Bulgarian exports. At the end of the 1990s, this had fallen to only 1.6% of the country's total exports.\textsuperscript{661} It is remarkable that, according to the UN Statistical Yearbook, Bulgaria's preferential trading partners during communism, such as Libya or Algeria, were not even listed amongst the country's fifty largest trading partners after 1989.\textsuperscript{662}

This picture is in sharp contrast to what might have been expected. Since most Third World developing states were in debt to Bulgaria at the end of the 1980s, it would have been expected that Bulgarian governments would have tried to maintain political and economic relations with these states with a view to recouping their debts.\textsuperscript{663} Indeed, some of the post-1989 Bulgarian governments did take political initiatives in this direction. The government of Zhan Videnov, for example, made an attempt to restore Sofia's relations with Arab states such as Syria, Libya and Algeria in an effort to recoup debts. In 1995, Videnov paid a series of official visits to Arab states in the Middle East and North Africa where he discussed the issue of these debts with the political authorities.\textsuperscript{664}

However, despite these initiatives, Sofia's relations with Third World developing states have never recovered. Even Videnov's government's increased trade with some Arab states was not sustained after the fall of his government. It is noteworthy that while imports from Algeria in 1995 reached 1.4% of Bulgaria's total imports, at the

\textsuperscript{661} Appendix, table 13.
\textsuperscript{662} UN Statistical Yearbooks 1990-2002
\textsuperscript{663} Appendix, pp. 23-24.
\textsuperscript{664} FBIS-EEU-95-135, 14/7/1995, p. 4.
end of the 1990s, Algerian imports to Bulgaria counted for only 0.4% of total Bulgarian imports.665

One of the reasons for the decline in Sofia’s relations with Third World developing states at the beginning of the 1990s was the influence that Bulgaria’s integration to the EU was exercising on its foreign policy through the EU’s democratic conditionality. This affected relations with these states in three ways. The EU did not have good relations with a number of Third World developing states with which Bulgaria had political and economic ties during the communist period because their regimes systematically contravened the fundamental principles of the UN Charter in violating either the human rights of their citizens or the territorial integrity of neighbouring states.

The EU had broken off relations with the regimes of Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Qaddafi in Libya. In Iraq’s case, relations were frozen as a result of Iraq’s military invasion of Kuwait in 1991, reinforced by the regime’s refusal to cooperate with the UN over the inspection of Iraq’s suspected nuclear and chemical arsenal in the 1990s. In Libya, relations were frozen due to Libya’s refusal to extradite to Scotland two individuals suspected of being involved in the Lockerbie bombing in December 1988 which had killed 270 people.666 As a result, both regimes were subject to an economic embargo imposed by the UN Security Council, which the EU also observed.667

665 Appendix, table 24.
666 http://www.allafrica.com/stories/200309140142.html
667 The embargo was lifted by a UN Security Council decision on 12 September 2003, after Libya agreed to extradite the two suspects to Holland where they would be tried under Scottish law. See http://www.allafrica.com/stories/200309140142.html
This affected Sofia’s relations with these two states. The post-1989 Bulgarian governments could not contravene the UN Security Council’s embargoes on Iraq and Libya without undermining the country’s relations with the EU. According to EU democratic conditionality, Bulgaria’s relations with non-EU states should be compatible with the EU’s foreign policy towards these states as stated in the EC’s annual reports on the progress of Bulgaria’s negotiations with the EU, and stressed by many EU officials in meetings with their Bulgarian counterparts.\textsuperscript{668}

As a result of EU conditionality, Bulgaria aligned its foreign policy with the EU’s and broke off relations with Iraq and Libya. As a result these states refused to repay the almost $2bn owing to Bulgaria for arms purchases and funding of infrastructure projects during the communist period.\textsuperscript{669}

EU’s conditionality also affected Sofia’s political relations with Libya and Iraq. Official visits between the two sides were discontinued, and Bulgaria downgraded its diplomatic missions through personnel reduction at its embassies and consulates in these Arab states.

This situation produced some difficult diplomatic crises for Bulgaria. One crisis occurred in 1998 and involved Libya. 393 Libyan children in Benghazi Hospital were infected with the HIV virus and with hepatitis B and C. The Libyan authorities accused four Bulgarian nurses and a Bulgarian doctor working in the hospital of deliberately transmitting the HIV and hepatitis viruses to the children as part of a

\textsuperscript{669} Appendix, pp. 23-24; Bristow, 1996, p. 116.
political plot orchestrated by the USA and Israel to topple Qaddafi’s regime. The Bulgarian medical staff have been detained to face trial, and can expect the death penalty for having plotted against Qaddafi’s regime.

The detention of the five Bulgarian medics in Libya caused a diplomatic crisis between Bulgaria and Libya. The Bulgarian authorities of course supported their nationals and made a series of diplomatic overtures to both the Libyan authorities and the Arab countries that were friendly to Qaddafi’s regime, such as Egypt, to try to ensure that the five Bulgarian nationals, when tried, would not be sentenced to death. The Bulgarian authorities believed that the reason why the 393 Libyan children had been infected with the HIV and hepatitis viruses was the poor conditions at Benghazi Hospital, a view that was supported by various international specialists involved in the case. The accusation of political plotting was a cover up by the Libyan authorities, who were well aware of the poor sanitary conditions in its hospitals, but wanted to hide this from the public.

Other problems occurred over arms. A large part of Bulgaria’s trade with the developing states in the Third World during the communist period involved arms. However, after the end of the Cold War, Bulgaria could not continue this trade at the same level. This is partly due to the economic recession, and partly because many Bulgarian arms specialists and scientists had emigrated in search of a better future,

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671 Ibid.
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which had deprived the Bulgarian arms industry of the requisite funds and technical
know-how to render its production competitive with the output of Western arms
companies, which entered the markets of these states after the end of the Cold War.675

Bulgaria’s inability to continue the arms trade with developing states in Africa, the
Middle East and Latin America at the same level as during communism was also due
to the fact that the EU discouraged Bulgaria from involvement in large-scale arms
trading with these states in an attempt to align Bulgaria with the policies of
international organisations such as NATO and the UN, which aimed at controlling the
international arms trade. Through control of the world arms trade, these organisations
hoped to eliminate national and regional conflicts throughout the world. These
conflicts were believed to occur because national and regional militant groups had
easy access to arms from Eastern Europe as a result of the inability or unwillingness
of the authorities of EES to conduct effective controls on the arms trade.

Furthermore, many of the developing countries of the Third World with which
Bulgaria used to trade arms during the communist period such as Libya or Iraq, were
subject to a UN Security Council arms embargo and, therefore, by being involved in
arms trade with these states, Bulgarian authorities risked coming into conflict with the
EU, and undermining their prospects of joining the EU in the future. On a number of
occasions throughout the 1990s, Bulgarian arms did find their way to countries,
including Sudan and the FRY, which were subject to UN Security Council arms

675 For a general overview of the problems and the process of restructuring of the Bulgarian defence
industry during the post-Cold War period see: Dimitrov, 2002b.
embargoes. However, on none of these occasions was the Bulgarian government found to be behind these sales.

Finally, there have been no European agreements or decisions to establish a special trade regime with states such as Mongolia, Angola, Syria or Iran, which were among Bulgaria’s most favoured Third World partners. Such a regime would have allowed Bulgaria to reduce trade tariffs and in this way to retain some of the pre-1989 trade with these states. On the other hand, the EU has established special trade regimes with Morocco, Israel and Egypt, states with which Sofia had either limited or no trade relations under communism. Under these trade regimes, Bulgaria recently concluded a series of free trade agreements (FTAs) with these states, which should boost its trade with them.677

Democratic Conditionality and Bulgaria’s Relations with the USA

The USA’s relations with Bulgaria were cool prior to 1989 due to Bulgaria’s participation in the communist bloc and the close cooperation between its regime and Moscow on international issues. Since the end of the Cold War, almost all Bulgarian governments have sought to establish good relations with the USA in an attempt to benefit from political, economic and military advantages formerly reaped via the Warsaw Pact and Moscow. Furthermore, forging close political and economic relations with the USA, would align Sofia’s foreign policy with that of the EU and most of its member states which aimed at strong political, economic and military

678 Clyatt, 1993, p. 29.
cooperation established with the USA after WWII when Western Europe and the USA joined forces to keep Soviet influence both on the European continent and in the world in check.

Sofia’s cooperation with Washington since the end of the Cold War can be seen in the military area. The USA has undertaken the restructuring of most of the Bulgarian army through offering training projects for Bulgarian army officers in its military academies, supplying armaments and military equipment, and allowing the Bulgarian army to participate in military exercises with NATO and other EES within the framework of NATO’s PfP programme. The main purpose of this restructuring was to improve the Bulgarian army’s operational capabilities so that Sofia could participate in peacekeeping and humanitarian military missions organised by NATO.

Since 1997, Bulgaria’s political relations with the USA have been further strengthened as a result of Bulgaria’s application for admission to NATO, which presupposed strong cooperation with the USA in the political and the military fields.

The terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in New York on 11 September 2001 and the military operations which the USA has since undertaken against states whose political authorities incited terrorist activities in the USA and Western world has also strengthened relations. These military operations fall under the name ‘Operation (for) Enduring Freedom’ and Sofia has offered its unconditional support. In November 2001, Bulgaria and the USA signed an agreement allowing the over flight, transit and

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680 Leonard, 2000, p. 534; Moore, Roderick, personal interview, 11/12/2001
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stay in Bulgaria of US troops and military equipment and the troops and military equipment of any other country supporting the USA, in their performance of military activities related to the 'Operation (for) Enduring Freedom'. It was in line with this agreement that on 22 November 2001 the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave permission for US cargo aircraft to land at the International Airport in the eastern Bulgarian city of Burgas, and for American military personnel to use the nearby Sarafovo military base in order to support the American military operations being conducted against the Taliban in Afghanistan. Bulgaria also dispatched a military unit to Afghanistan to support American military troops in their fight against Al-Qaeda and the remnants of the Taliban regime and, in February 2003, the government decided to support the Anglo-American operation in Iraq by sending a contingent of 462 soldiers.

Since the end of the Cold War bilateral trade with the USA has doubled. Bulgarian exports to the USA, which accounted for only 2% of Bulgaria’s total exports at the end of the 1980s, increased to 4% in the 1990s. The influx of American investments into Bulgaria is another indication of how economic relations with the USA have improved since 1989. Since 1989, the USA is ranked first in the list of states investing in Bulgaria. A large part of the American investments involve economic assistance given by the American government to consolidate Bulgaria’s political and economic institutions. For instance in the 1990s, the USA contributed about $7m to Bulgaria to combat corruption in the country’s judicial system.

682 Ibid.
683 http://www.government.bg/English/priorities/Foreign Policy/2003-02-20/116.html; See also footnote 559 above.
684 Appendix, table 2.
685 Daskalovski, 1999; Smorgun, 2002, p. 6
Since the beginning of Bulgaria's formal accession process to the EU at the end of the 1990s, Sofia's relations with the USA were mainly determined by the EU's democratic conditionality. This is to say that, similar to many other non-EU states, the corpus of agreements signed by and decisions taken by the EU with reference to the USA set the limits of Sofia's political and economic relations with the USA. For example, in the decision taken on 16 June 2003 by the European Council in Luxembourg and supported by Bulgaria, the EU discouraged EU member states from signing bilateral agreements with the USA giving exemption from appearing before the International Criminal Court in the Hague for US soldiers accused of war crimes. Sofia's compliance with this decision led Washington to follow the same practice with Bulgaria as it had with other EES such as Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia and Slovenia over such compliance, that is to freeze military assistance. However, in the case of all these EES, including Bulgaria, the effect of the American decision would be shortlived because when they became NATO members the USA government would be forced by agreements binding all NATO member states to unfreeze the ban on military aid. In the event the USA lifted its ban on the EES in November 2003, only four months after it came into effect. The Bush government realized that the ban would impede the completion of projects which were both supportive to the process of these states' accession to NATO and necessary for the American military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. For example, a significant part of the American military aid to Bulgaria which had been blocked in July 2003 was aimed at upgrading the international airport in Burgas and the Sarafovo military base.

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in eastern Bulgaria, which the Americans had used for conducting military operations as part of the ‘Operation (for) Enduring Freedom’. 688

However, the EU’s democratic conditionality has not always defined Bulgaria’s relations with the USA because a substantial part of the country’s political elite, which were known as Atlantists, maintained that the USA was not just a Western state, but was a world superpower and the leading state of the Western world which had been victorious in the Cold War. This faction of the Bulgarian elite supported Bulgaria’s seeking to establish strong political and economic relations with the USA, and was indifferent to any limits imposed on these relations by EU democratic conditionality. Some Atlantists even went so far as to suggest that Bulgaria should become the USA’s 51st state, echoing Zhivkov’s political plans in the 1970s to render Bulgaria the 16th Republic of the Soviet Union. 689 For the Atlantists, it was through strong political economic relations with the USA that Bulgaria could best secure the country’s national security.

Like some conservative members of the BSP, the Atlantists were convinced that small nation states such as Bulgaria needed a powerful military patron-state to protect their national security. During the Cold War Bulgaria’s patron had been the Soviet Union, but after the collapse of the Soviet bloc every effort should be made to find another state to play this role, and that state was obviously the USA because it was the most powerful country in the world.

688 Ibid.
Also, throughout the post-Cold War era the USA had occasionally supported small nation states when the national security of these states was threatened. For instance, in 1991, the USA assumed a protagonistic role within international forums, such as the UN, in rallying the support of as many countries as possible for military action against Iraq which had attacked Kuwait. Such events reinforced the view that strong political and economic ties with the USA would protect Bulgaria’s national security effectively.

Also, international organisation such as the UN and the EU were seen as being ineffective at imposing their decisions on international politics, due to the lack of their own military machines. These organisations were dependent on the USA and NATO, in which the USA played a leading role, for the effective imposition of their views.

In general, when in power, the Atlantists have rarely challenged the limits set on relations with the USA by the EU’s democratic conditionality, mainly because since the end of the Cold War, the EU has developed strong political and economic cooperation with this part of the country’s political elite and both sides have worked towards a common position on most international issues, which they then support at international forums such as the UN.

However, there have been occasions when the EU and the USA have taken different positions on international issues and the Bulgarian Atlantists in power, have supported the American position, thereby violating the EU’s democratic conditionality and threatening Bulgaria’s prospects of joining the EU. One such occasion was the decision taken by the government of Simeon Saxkoburgotski in February 2003 to
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support the Anglo-American military operations in Iraq aimed at overthrowing Saddam Hussein.

Democratic Conditionality and Bulgaria's Relations with the Russian Federation

Bulgaria's official relations with the Russian Federation began after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991. Prior to that date, the area that is now known as the Russian Federation had consisted of part of the Soviet Union, known as the Soviet Socialist Republic of Russia, and was not legitimized by the Soviet constitution to have a foreign policy independent from that of the Soviet Union. Consequently, prior to December 1991, Sofia's relations with the Soviet Socialist Republic of Russia were determined by the framework set by the Soviet constitution which was the same framework that determined Bulgaria's relations with the other Soviet Republics.

In general, Bulgaria's post-communist political elite attempted to establish good bilateral relations with the Russian Federation for several reasons. Firstly, in the aftermath of the Soviet dissolution, Bulgaria was economically dependent on the Federation as a result of the strong political and economic links that Sofia had established with Moscow under communism. At the beginning of the 1990s, almost two thirds of Bulgaria's imports came from the Soviet Union and the majority of which were energy supplies, including natural gas from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Russia.

Zhelev, 1998, pp. 30-37,142-150.
In addition, most of Bulgaria’s military equipment and armaments came from ex-Soviet Republics and therefore, the maintenance of this equipment depended on cooperation between the Bulgarian state and various military industries in the Russian Federation. Even the equipment and armaments manufactured on Bulgarian territory were made under licence from the Soviet Union and, therefore, the patents of many of the arms and the military equipment constructed in Bulgaria after 1991 belonged to state companies of the Russian Federation. Since most of these licences would eventually expire, Sofia would need to renegotiate and, in order to do so, needed to maintain political links with the Russian authorities.

Also, the Cold War had saddled Sofia with a debt of over $100m. This debt was mainly the result of imbalances in bilateral trade between the Soviet Union and Bulgaria at the end of the 1980s. The debt mostly concerned the Soviet Socialist Republic of Russia, and political cooperation between the Bulgarian and Russian authorities in the aftermath of the Cold War was necessary if this debt were to be collected. Its repayment would bolster the shaky post-communist Bulgarian economy.

Secondly, a large part of Bulgaria’s post-communist political elite viewed the Russian Federation as a country most of whose population had cultural characteristics in common with the Bulgarian population. Both the Russian and the Bulgarian languages, the official languages of the Russian Federation and Bulgarian Republic respectively, are Slavic languages and the majority of ethnic Bulgarian and Russians practise the same religion, Christian Orthodoxy. This part of the political elite viewed the Russian Federation as a state which, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, was

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691 Dimitrov, Dimitur, 2002b, pp. 60-63.
struggling to break away from the communist past and to recapture the spirit of
Tsarist Russia, which in the past had helped Bulgaria to secure independence and
reclaim what it saw as being Bulgarian territory from foreign occupiers in the Balkan
region.

As a result of the common cultural and historical links which Bulgaria shared with the
Russian Federation, this part of the Bulgarian political elite thought that Bulgaria
would have much more to gain, in terms of foreign policy, by establishing close
political and economic links with the Russian Federation rather than with culturally
alien states such as those of Western Europe or the United States.

In addition, some members of this part of the political elite have come to base the
establishment of close political and economic cooperation with the Russian
Federation on the fact that the Federation was viewed as a rising world power,
capable of curbing what they saw as the expansion of the USA’s influence in the
world after the end of the Cold War. Such a view, which was supported mainly by
conservative members of the BSP, was based on the fact that the Russian Federation
had rich energy sources, a powerful military might that included even nuclear
weapons and rich experience as a world power; all of which were seen as elements
that could lead a state to become a world power. Also, there were pre-existing
personal political links between BSP political cadres, including a number of high
ranking party officials such as Petur Mladenov, Andrei Lukanov and Zhan Videnov,
and members of the post-Soviet Russian elite. These links went back to communist
times when many of the cadres had either studied in Soviet universities and military
academies or had held offices in the BCP, the government and the state apparatus,
which allowed them to keep regular contact with Soviet officials and, through such contact, to build strong personal relations with these officials.

However, despite all attempts to establish good bilateral relations with the Russian Federation, since December 1991 they have been in decline and are not at all reminiscent of the strong political and economic links that Bulgaria enjoyed with the Soviet Socialist Republic of Russia during the communist period. This can mainly be attributed to the process of accession to the EU, which, through democratic conditionality has had a negative impact on Sofia's relations with Moscow.

It has negatively affected Bulgaria's trade with the Russian Federation because EU legislation does not allow the Bulgarian government to conclude free trade agreement (FTA) with Moscow. The absence of any FTA meant that tariffs on Russian products being imported into Bulgaria and Bulgarian products being exported to Russia remained high and discouraged trade. Bulgarian exports to the Russian Federation accounted for more than 33% of total exports at the beginning of the 1990s, but was only 2% at the end of the decade.\textsuperscript{692} Imports from the Federation at the end of the 1990s were 25% of Bulgaria's total imports, a drop of 25% on the total at the beginning of the decade.\textsuperscript{693}

However, democratic conditionality has not been solely responsible for the decline in Bulgaria's trade with the Russian Federation. The adoption of market economy mechanisms in both Bulgaria and the Russian Federation has uncovered problems which the command economy of the communist period had hidden. For instance, the

\textsuperscript{692} Appendix, table 21.
\textsuperscript{693} Appendix, table 26.
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poor quality of Bulgarian products, mostly those of heavy industry such as forklift trucks. In a competitive market economy which the economy of the Russian Federation started to become after 1991, low quality Bulgarian products could not compete successfully with products from Western European countries, the USA, and Japan.

Also, EU conditionality had a negative affect on other economic activities between Bulgaria and Russia, such as tourism. An EU candidate state had to harmonize its national legislation with the EU's legislation on the free movement of citizens which required Bulgaria to adopt a series of political measures aiming at tightening its border controls. The harmonization of Bulgarian legislation with EU legislation on the free movement of citizens became especially necessary after September 1995 when, according to a decision taken by the EU Ministers of Home Affairs and Justice in Brussels, Bulgaria was included in the list of EES whose citizens could not enter the EU Schengen area without a visa. The decision was based mainly on the fact that Bulgaria's border control regime was not strict; the only way that the country could be removed from the list was to adopt a series of political measures to tighten border controls to meet the requirements of EU legislation.

After 1995 a series of political measures aiming at harmonizing the national legislation on border controls with that of the EU were taken. One such, taken in November 2001, required anyone traveling from Bulgaria to Russia and vice versa to have a valid visa. Such measures had a negative impact on Bulgarian-Russian tourism: Russian tourism to Bulgaria fell by about 24% in 2002 over 2001, while

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694 See p. 180 above.
Bulgarian tourism to Russia in 2002 was down almost 16%. This seems to have shocked the Bulgarian authorities who, at the beginning of 2003, rescinded the fees for Russian tourist visas for a period of one year from April 2003, in the hope that Russian tourism to Bulgaria would recover. In the event that this proved effective, there were plans to make Russian tourist visas free of charge in the future.

The EU vetoed a number of projects which Bulgarian governments had worked out with the help of the Russian government in various economic fields based on democratic conditionality. Most of the projects were aimed at invigorating the production of the Bulgarian military industry and were initiated in the mid-1990s under the socialist government of Zhan Videnov. These projects mainly related to the construction of automated systems for anti-aircraft defence, the management of artillery and the production of radio electronic warfare systems. The most impressive was a project for a Bulgarian company to repair Russian MiG-29 military aircraft in Plovdiv, which was being promoted as a regional centre for the repair of similar aircraft.

However, these plans had to be scrapped after EU and NATO officials warned that the promotion of these projects would impede Bulgaria's prospects of joining both the EU and NATO. EU and NATO officials were afraid that these projects would give the Russians access to highly sensitive Western military technology. They also saw these projects as producing weapons using mainly Russian technology which would reduce

697 Although it is hard to establish it through organised statistical data, official sources both in Bulgaria and Russia claim that the removal of visa fees for Russian tourists made Bulgaria an attractive destination to Russian tourists throughout 2003. See http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=21704.
699 Ibid., p. 63.
Bulgaria’s harmonization with the EU and NATO member states’ equipment. The involvement of Russian companies in the production of weaponry and military equipment excluded participation by West European military companies in Bulgaria’s arms market and, thus impeded the integration of the Bulgarian arms market into that of the EU; something which went against EU legislation.

The EU’s democratic conditionality has given rise to strong anti-Russian sentiments among a large part of the Bulgarian political elite and has revived the political dichotomy between the Russophiles and Russophobes that existed before WWII. These anti-Russian sentiments have been nurtured mainly by members of the UDF, who view Russia as a long-standing cultural opponent of Europe, which has become synonymous with the EU.

Sometimes these sentiments have taken on metaphysical dimensions. Russia has been characterized as an uncivilized, even barbaric country, whose culture is mainly Asiatic with nothing in common with the superior, modern and refined European culture of which Bulgaria was a part. Because of Bulgaria’s membership of this superior European culture, it should, through membership of the EU, return to the cultural home, from which it had been excluded by almost fifty years of communist rule. Membership of the EU thus would mean minimal relations with Russia because historically, such relations had resulted in Bulgaria’s being cut off from European culture.

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700 Tsenkov, 1997; Todorov, 1999a, pp. 27-8; Todorov, 1999b.
701 Ibid.
It is interesting that during the communist period Sofia was one of Moscow's most loyal allies and as a result received economic benefits which greatly improved its living standards after WWII. Thus no strong anti-Russian sentiments had been evoked during the communist era. It is possible to argue therefore that the strong anti-Russian sentiments of the post-communist period are at least in part explained by EU democratic conditionality. This restricted Bulgaria's relations with the Russian Federation through vetoing Sofia's political and economic transactions with Moscow, conveyed the message that membership of the EU was irreconcilable with any relations with the Russian Federation. As a result the political elite supported the view that Bulgaria should abandon all relations with the Russian Federation for the sake of keeping open negotiations for membership in the EU and organisations such as NATO.

This was the subject of the political struggle between the two main Bulgarian political forces, namely the BSP and UDF, during the first half of the 1990s. Bulgaria's future relations with Russia were an important element of the political identities of the two main Bulgarian political parties at that time. The UDF wished to build the image of a new political force that sought to pull the country out of the economic swamp that 50 years of communism had plunged Bulgaria into, and to catch up with the levels of economic development that had been achieved by most EU member states. To this end, the political platforms of the UDF emphasized that Bulgaria should build strong political and economic links with the EU and other states of the developed world such as the USA.\textsuperscript{702}

\textsuperscript{702} Malinov, Svetoslav, personal interview, 28/11/2001.
On the other hand, the BSP sought to build an image as a political force whose members were more experienced at ruling the country, due to the almost 50 years they had been in power as members of the BCP. Based on this experience, the members of the BSP claimed to be in a better position to serve the country’s national interests than their UDF colleagues. In line with this image, the members of the BSP promoted what they termed ‘a more balanced’ foreign policy than their UDF colleagues. They argued that Bulgaria would gain most from developing strong political and economic relations with both the EU and Russia. In respect of the latter this was because there were aspects of the country’s relations with Russia that no Bulgarian government could neglect, such as its dependence on the Russian Federation for energy.

After the mid-1990s the UDF’s position concerning relations with Russia moved closer to that of the BSP. Many UDF political cadres stated that political and economic relations with the Russian Federation should be encouraged on the basis of an equal partnership which would not render Bulgaria politically and economically subservient to Moscow, as had been the case during the communist period. One of the reasons for the UDF reversal in relation to Bulgarian-Russian relations was the appearance of the NACC in 1997, an institutional mechanism which allowed NATO officials to discuss security issues with their Russian counterparts. This challenged the view that Bulgaria’s membership of the EU was incompatible with establishing political and economic relations with Russia. If EU member states could cooperate with Russia through the NACC, then it would not be wrong for Sofia to develop political and economic relations with Moscow, within the limits set by EU democratic conditionality.
The general decline in Bulgaria's economic relations with the Russian Federation has affected every aspect of Bulgaria's economic life to different extents. Bulgaria was totally dependent on energy supplies of gas and oil supplies from Russian state companies such as Gazprom and Lukoil. For the almost 50 years of communist rule, the Soviet Socialist Republic of Russia had controlled a substantial part of the Soviet Union's energy sources and had absolute control over oil and gas deliveries to most of the countries of the communist bloc, including Bulgaria.

Sofia's dependence on energy supplies from Moscow allowed Russian officials to interfere in Bulgaria's post-communist politics to achieve certain political and economic goals. These interventions produced political tensions, which often escalated into prolonged political crises. These crises represented an additional burden on bilateral relations, adding to that of EU democratic conditionality.

In 1996 the Russian state gas company, Gazprom, announced plans to expand its gas sales to the Balkans. In order to supply Greece and Turkey, Gazprom needed to cooperate with the Bulgarian state to get permission to transfer gas across Bulgarian territory.

Gazprom exploited the fact that at the time the BSP was in power and one of this party's priorities was to strengthen political and economic relations with Moscow. In May 1995 the Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin paid an official visit to Bulgaria to sign a set of agreements on economic and military cooperation with the

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Bulgarian government.705 One of these agreements dealt with the supply of oil and natural gas to Bulgaria and replaced the Soviet-Bulgarian agreement signed in 1986 which was due to expire.706

One of the provisions of the 1995 oil and gas agreement required cooperation over transporting oil and natural gas from Russia to markets in the Balkans and Central Europe, which Gazprom wanted to exploit to set up a jointly-owned company for the construction of pipelines.707 The new company was to be called Topenergy, and Andrei Lukanov, the former Bulgarian Prime Minister, was appointed as its chairman. As Minister of Foreign Economic Affairs in the 1980s, Lukanov had negotiated the old Soviet-Bulgarian energy agreement and had links with high-level Soviet and Russian officials, including Chernomyrdin, who had chaired Gazprom before becoming Prime Minister.708 Half of Bulgarian shares in Topenergy were allocated to the state-owned gas company Bulgargaz and the rest were given to Multigroup, a Bulgarian firm created after the end of Zhivkov’s regime by former intelligence agents under the aegis of Lukanov, who was then Bulgaria’s Prime Minister.

The Topenergy Project gave Russia, through Gazprom, full control of the transport of oil and gas across Bulgarian territory because in addition to holding 50% of the shares in Topenergy, Gazprom had other advantages. Having been former Bulgarian intelligence agents, many high ranking members of its administration had strong links with Russia’s post-Soviet political and economic elite, including members of

708 Ibid.
Gazprom’s administration.\(^7\) Also, Andrei Lukanov, the chairman of the Board of Directors, though a member of the BSP, was not neutral. Lukanov was one of the Bulgarian government’s hardest critics and was on bad terms with Zhan Videnov, the Bulgarian Prime Minister, while he was on good terms with Gazprom’s administration dating back to when he had held the office of the Minister of Foreign Economic Relations. He was viewed by many Bulgarians as Russia’s man.\(^7\)

The control of the transport of oil and gas through Bulgaria by Topenergy created a political crisis in Bulgarian-Russian relations which was to last for the next two years. The Bulgarian government did not like the idea that a Russian state company had full control of the transport of oil and gas through Bulgaria and the government of Zhan Videnov sought to undermine the power of Topenergy. In July 1996, after lengthy negotiations, the government managed to persuade Gazprom to remove Lukanov as Topenergy’s chairman, but was not successful in persuading Gazprom to remove Multigroup’s 25% shareholding and pass it to Bulgaragaz so that the Bulgarian and Russian state were equally represented.

The issue became more complicated when, in 1997, the UDF party came to power. First, the UDF government adopted a tougher stance on bilateral negotiations than its BSP predecessor had done. This culminated in 1998 when, through Bulgargaz, Bulgaria refused Topenergy the right to deliver natural gas through Bulgaria’s pipelines until bilateral negotiations had been concluded and a solution to the problem had been found.\(^7\)

Second, the Russians attempted to manipulate the situation to put

\(^7\) Baeva, Iskra, personal interview, 7/12/2001; Borisov, Boiko, personal interview, 31/10/2001; Dainov, Evgeni, personal interview, 26/11/2001; Raïdovski, Krasimir, personal interview, 11/1/2002.

\(^7\) Ibid.

\(^7\) Bell, 1998, p. 316.
pressure on the Bulgarian government not to seek NATO membership. In the bilateral meetings they had with their Bulgarian counterparts on the issue, the Russians hinted that the abandonment of Bulgaria’s plans to seek NATO’s membership would bring Russia closer to Bulgaria in the future.

In retaliation for Bulgaria’s refusal to recognize Topenergy’s right to deliver natural gas through Bulgaria’s pipelines, Gazprom first reduced its deliveries to Bulgaria, thus plunging many Bulgarian regions into darkness and limiting their heating, and then threatened to halt them altogether. The UDF government countered by threatening to restrict the flow of Russian gas to third countries. By mid-1997 the issue of Topenergy had reached deadlock and a state of undeclared warfare seemed to prevail. In June 1997 the deputy head of Bulgaragaz was kidnapped by a 'security firm' that had been contracted to leave him disabled for life, and explosives were planted along a road on the outskirts of Sofia which damaged the armoured BMW of Ilia Pavlov, the head of Multigroup.\footnote{712} In September 1997, Bulgaria organised a meeting of the defence ministers of all the Balkan states, to which it also invited the USA, but not Russia, provoking a formal protest from Moscow.\footnote{713}

After an almost two-year stalemate, at the beginning of 1998 the Topenergy issue came to an end. The Russian side realized that the Bulgarian government was not going to retreat, and that its demands for an equal amount of shares in Topenergy would have to be met. Not doing so would be detrimental to Gazprom sales in Bulgaria, and to its plans to sell to new markets in the region. As a result, the Russian side gave in.

\footnote{712} Ibid. 
\footnote{713} Ibid.
After a new round of negotiations the two sides reached an agreement which took the form of a memorandum of cooperation signed by Bulgaria's deputy Prime Minister, Evgeni Bakurdzhiev and the head of Gazprom, Rem Viakhirev. According to this memorandum, Topenergy was converted into a wholly owned Russian company and any future projects concerning the construction of pipelines on, or the flow of gas and oil through Bulgaria's territory, would be the subject of negotiation between Russia and Bulgaria. The signing of this memorandum was to open a new chapter in Sofia's relations with the Russian gas company, and seems to have had positive effect on the settlement of unresolved post-1989 issues between Bulgaria and the Russian Federation, such as the repayment of Moscow's $100m debt as a result of Bulgaria's imbalanced trade relations with the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s. In March 1999 Evgeni Bakurdzhiev and Rem Viakhirev signed an agreement which provided for increasing deliveries of Russian natural gas through Bulgaria from 19 billion cubic metres annually, to 30 billion cubic metres annually. The day after the agreement was signed, the Bulgarian Finance Minister, Mikhail Zadorov, announced that Russia had agreed to pay off its Cold War trade debt to Bulgaria and, in an attempt to revive flagging Bulgarian-Russian post-1989 trade, Moscow had granted most favoured trading nation status to Bulgaria, something that reflected Moscow's political intension to adopt more simplified custom duties for all Bulgarian products imported to Russia. In mid-2003 Gazprom announced that, apart from projects concerning mainly the construction of pipelines, its Bulgarian subsidiary company Topenergy would also become a gas distribution centre in Bulgaria, and through Bulgaria to

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714 http://www.capital.bg/weekly/17-98/15-17-1.htm
715 The trade turnover between Bulgaria and Russia has fallen more than 90% over the last ten years, dropping from $17bn in 1988 to a mere $1.2bn in 1998. See http://www.rferl.org/newsline/1999/03/1-rus/rus-220399.asp
neighbouring Balkan states such as Greece and Turkey.\textsuperscript{716} This announcement reflected Gazprom’s decision to increase its business activities in the Balkan region and beyond in the future.

Indeed, at about the same time as Gazprom’s announcement it became known that the Russian company had plans to construct a gas pipeline running from Bulgaria to Italy. Moreover, after a meeting with the Bulgarian President, Georgi Parvanov, in Bulgaria’s Black Sea city of Varna in June 2004, the chairman of Gazprom’s management committee, Alexey Borisvich Miller, announced that the Russian company planned to build a new pipeline in Bulgaria leading to Greece and Serbia with an annual export capacity of 6 billion cubic metres for Greece and 1.5 billion cubic metres for Serbia.\textsuperscript{717}

Conclusion

In addition to state foreign policy mechanisms, Bulgaria’s integration into the EU affected both the country’s interstate relations and Bulgaria’s relations with international organisations. Interstate relations came to be determined by the EU’s legal framework and by the EU’s common foreign and security policy. As a result, Bulgaria’s relations with states such as the Russian Federation and many developing countries of the Third World such as Libya and Iraq declined markedly. This was because in line with the EU’s legal framework and common foreign and security policy, Sofia imposed trade and other economic barriers on these states such as the introduction of a visa regime with the Russian Federation in November 2001, and

\textsuperscript{716} http://www.in-business.info/English/14En/new_page_15htm.
adopted policies such as Sofia's decision to observe the UN-imposed economic embargoes on Libya and Iraq which brought the Bulgarian governments into conflict with the Libyan and Iraqi political regimes.

On the other hand, relations with states such as the USA improved greatly due to Sofia's attempts to gain political, economic and military advantages and gain protection after the vacuum left by the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the dismantling of the communist bloc. However, despite any advantages that post-1989 relations with the USA may have given Sofia, Bulgaria's process of accession to the EU has also influenced Bulgaria's relations with the USA in the sense that Sofia was obliged to harmonize its policies towards Washington with those of the EU member states. Thus, Bulgaria followed the decision taken in June 2003 by the European Council in Luxemburg and refused to sign bilateral agreements with the USA exempting American soldiers and officers accused of war crimes from trial in the International Criminal Court in the Hague. As a result, the USA froze its military aid to Bulgaria.

Bulgaria's process of accession to the EU came to align many of the political positions which Sofia supported in international organisations, such as the UN or the OSCE, with the EU's political positions. For example, a number of Bulgaria's positions on issues such as the respect of human rights in China, Cuba and Iran approximate those of the EU. Sofia's alignment with the EU's political positions in international organisations is the result of the political cooperation which Brussels established with Sofia during the 1990s as part of Bulgaria's EU accession process. This cooperation has been conducted through institutional mechanisms provided by
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Bulgaria’s EU Association Agreement such as the Bulgarian-EU Association Committee and the Joint Bulgarian-EU Parliamentary Committee, as well as through institutional mechanisms which the EU established with all candidate states within the framework of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, such as regular meetings of foreign policy experts of the EU and the candidate states, and the meetings between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the EU member and candidate states in the EU General Affairs Council.

Sofia’s EU accession process has improved Bulgaria’s relations with international organisations such as NATO and the IMF. The BSP had been unwilling to allow the majority of post-1989 governments, whose tenure was dependent on the BSP’s parliamentary support, to promote the liberal economic reforms which the IMF wanted Bulgarian governments to pursue, or to consent to any plans regarding membership of NATO. The improvement in Sofia’s relations with NATO and the IMF was mainly achieved as a result of changes in the BSP’s foreign policy agenda at the end of the 1990s. Those changes were the outcome of the BSP leadership’s aspirations for the party to become a member of the Socialist International, in the hope that it could find a new political identity which would enable it to overcome the political crisis it had gone through after the defeat in the general elections of 1997. The BSP’s aspirations to become a member of the Socialist International, along with the close political relations which the party had established with European socialist and labour parties from the end of the 1990s, as a result of Bulgaria’s EU accession process, rendered the BSP susceptible to political pressures from European socialist and labour parties. Both had conditioned their relations with the BSP, and the BSP’s membership of the Socialist International, on the party reviewing its negative stance.
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towards Bulgaria’s accession to NATO and the country’s cooperation with the IMF. Through review of the BSP’s negative stance towards NATO and the IMF, a political consensus was established between the major Bulgarian parliamentary force, which secured cooperation between the Bulgarian political authorities and these two organisations from the end of the 1990s. This political consensus has been significant in the country’s being invited to join NATO at the Summit in Prague in November 2002.
Chapter V

Bulgaria’s Accession Process to the Euro-Atlantic Institutions and its Effect on Sofia’s Foreign Policy towards the Balkans

Introduction

Although at the centre of the Balkan Peninsula geographically, Bulgaria was politically isolated from the region for most of the 20th century. Until the end of WWII, this isolation was mainly the result of the Bulgarian political elite’s irredentism aimed at restoring the state borders outlined in the San Stefano treaty. This treaty was concluded between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in March 1878 and provided for the creation of a Bulgarian state extending from the Danube river in the north to the Aegean sea in the south, and from the Vardar and Morava valleys in the west to the Black Sea in the east.\(^{718}\)

‘San Stefano Bulgaria’ was drastically reduced in size at the subsequent Congress of Berlin but the quest for ‘Greater Bulgaria’, as this state come to be known, pulled Bulgaria into four ferocious and devastating wars in the first half of the 20th century. Sofia’s participation in both Balkan wars, and the First and the Second World Wars

\(^{718}\) Appendix, map 2; The San Stefano treaty put an end to the war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire which had begun in April 1877. Fearing that Bulgaria would be a political satellite of Russia, Great Britain and the Austro-Hungarian Empire insisted on the revision of the San Stefano treaty. After in depth negotiations between the great powers in July 1878 the San Stefano treaty was replaced by the Treaty of Berlin. The Treaty of Berlin reduced the Bulgarian state to the territory between the Danube river and the Balkan mountains, turned the area between the Balkan and Rhodopes mountains into an autonomous Ottoman province called Eastern Rumelia, and restored the remainder of the territory to the Ottoman empire. For more details on these events see Crampton, 1997, pp. 83-86; Crampton, 1987, pp. 19-20; Jelavich, 1983, Vol.1, pp. 352-361.
was driven by the Bulgarian political elite’s belief that when these wars were over Bulgaria would regain many of the San Stefano treaty territories.\footnote{Crampton, 1997, pp. 135-147, 171-183; Crampton, 1987, pp. 57-71, 124-135; Jelavich, 1983, Vol.2, pp. 95-100, 106-133, 255-261; Eldurov, 1994; Markov, 1994.}

These beliefs proved ill founded. Sofia was on the losing side with Bulgaria suffering huge loss of life and serious economic consequences. It was also obliged to make reparations to its neighbours damaged by these wars. The end of WWI saw Bulgaria losing authority in almost nine-tenths of the territories of Macedonia, Thrace and east Serbia, areas that Sofia’s political elite had been claiming as Bulgarian since the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.\footnote{Nikova, 1998, 282; Appendix, maps 1-5.}

Apart from the casualties, and economic and territorial losses inflicted on Bulgaria, the country’s engagement in war against neighbouring states led the political elites of these states to view Bulgaria as an aggressor and a bellicose neighbour whose foreign policy was always aimed at upsetting the status quo in the region. This view was reinforced by the fact that Bulgaria had not undertaken any serious political initiative to establish political or economic cooperation with other Balkan states. A series of Balkan conferences organised in the early 1930s had failed to bring any significant political or economic cooperation with the other states of the Peninsula because Sofia refused to accept that the territorial status quo was permanent.\footnote{Crampton, 1997, pp. 161-162; Stavrianos, 1964, pp. 230-270; Geshkoff, 1940, pp. 77-139.}

As a result, Bulgaria was marginalized in regional politics, which was clearly demonstrated when, in the mid-1930s, Greece, Yugoslavia, Romania and Turkey decided to ignore Sofia’s refusal to be engaged in any political initiative aimed at
establishing a strong multilateral cooperation in the Balkan region, and concluded the ‘Balkan Entente’. This was a political alignment which, in February 1934, took the form of a military alliance with the signing in Athens of a military pact between Greece, Yugoslavia, Romania and Turkey. The pact aimed at preserving the territorial status quo of these four states against future challenges from Bulgaria.\(^\text{722}\)

When the communists came to power after WWII, they proclaimed a complete break from the irredentism of pre-War Bulgaria and its desire to recreate the Great Bulgaria of the San Stefano treaty. The communists denounced those aspirations as ‘bourgeois nationalism’ aimed at enlarging the political and economic power basis of the ruling elite against the real interests of the working classes. The aspirations of pre-War Bulgarian political elites were viewed as having put too heavy a burden on the Bulgarian people through the recruitment of soldiers to fight against neighbouring Balkan states over territorial borders, and demands for high taxes to cover post war reparations.

The Bulgarian communists took a series of political measures aimed at restricting chauvinist and irredentist factions within Bulgarian society. The work of pre-War writers, historians and other scholars promoting irredentist views was denounced and withdrawn from circulation.\(^\text{723}\) Military marches and patriotic songs were banned because they included references to territories belonging to neighbouring Balkan states, which, according to the San Stefano treaty, were Bulgarian.\(^\text{724}\)


\(^{724}\) Ibid.
The Bulgarian communists accepted the territorial status quo of the Balkan region agreed after WWII. Bulgaria participated in the CSCE talks at the beginning of the 1970s, which resulted in the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. This Act recognized the inviolability of the post-WWII territorial borders of the European states.\footnote{Garthoff, 1994, pp. 526-555.}

Despite political efforts to overcome pre-war irredentism, Bulgaria continued to remain politically isolated from the Balkan region even in the communist period. The Soviet Union did not support initiatives aimed at promoting multilateral political and economic cooperation between the Balkan states because it feared that through such cooperation, Moscow would lose political control over Bulgarian politics.\footnote{Brown, 1970, pp. 263-69.}

However, there have been some occasions when the Bulgarian communist regime participated in initiatives that promoted multilateral cooperation in the Balkans. Immediately after WWII the BCP was part of an ill-fated attempt to create a Bulgarian-Yugoslav federal state, with a view to its eventually including other Balkan countries.\footnote{Braun, 1983, pp. 33-39; Jelavich, 1983, Vol. 2, pp. 317-329.} Both the Bulgarian and Yugoslav communist parties saw the creation of a Balkan federal state as a remedy for the constant controversies among the Balkan countries.

Also, Sofia became involved in a series of bilateral and multilateral initiatives in the aftermath of a Balkan conference convened by the Greek Prime Minister Constantine Karamanlis in Athens in 1976.\footnote{See p. 54 above; Braun, 1983, 51-53; Phinnemore & Siani-Davies, 2003, p. 178.} These initiatives aimed at strengthening cooperation
between the Balkan states in areas such as energy, transport, telecommunications and the environment, and with some states even to military cooperation. In 1986 Bulgaria signed a declaration of Friendship and Good Neighbourliness with Greece, which provided for military cooperation between the two states, and consultation between them in cases of military crisis.

However, neither of these initiatives, although they lasted some years, reflected any real effort by the Bulgarian communist regime to overcome the isolation which the country had experienced in the period prior to WWII. Nor did they signal a genuine Bulgarian interest in promoting multilateral cooperation among Balkan states. Rather they should be seen as attempts on the part of the BCP to promote Soviet interests in the Balkan region. The project for a Bulgarian-Yugoslav federation at the end of the 1940s was supported by the Bulgarians inasmuch as it had the blessing of the Soviets. It was not coincidental that the Bulgarian communist authorities abandoned this project immediately after the political conflict between the Yugoslav and Soviet leaders, Tito and Stalin, at the end of the 1940s.

The bilateral and multilateral initiatives launched at the end of the 1970s and during the 1980s were in line with the Soviet Union’s policy of peaceful coexistence and cooperation with the Western bloc countries after the CSCE, and the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. At the Athens Balkan conference in 1976, Bulgaria, in line with its policy of discouraging any sort of multilateral cooperation in the Balkan region, was against institutionalizing multilateral cooperation between the Balkan states through the convening of regular meetings similar to that of the Athens conference.

729 See pp. 71-2 above; RFE/RL Bulgarian SR/7, 29-7-1988, p. 15; Ashley, 1989, p. 141.
conference. Bulgaria only reviewed this position in November 1981 when, a few days after a meeting between the Bulgarian and the Soviet communist leaders, Todor Zhivkov and Leonid Brezhnev, in the Crimea, Ukraine, the Bulgarian leader proposed a project which provided for a series of multilateral meetings between Balkan states, to discuss removing nuclear weapons from the Balkan Peninsula.732

Sofia’s participation in bilateral and multilateral meetings from the end of the 1970s did very little to integrate Bulgaria either politically and economically into the rest of the Balkan region. At the end of the Cold War, for instance, the bulk of Bulgaria’s trade was still mainly directed at the Soviet Union and the rest of the CMEA region, with the significant exception of Romania.733 Bulgaria’s political relations with almost all the Balkan states were at a low level at the end of the 1980s; with Albania because of its regime’s adherence to Enver Hoxha’s policy of international isolation which kept Tirana from any political or economic relations with its Balkan neighbours; with Romania because of mutual suspicion over Bucharest’s foreign policy, and environmental issues, such as pollution in north-east Bulgaria from chlorine emissions from Romanian chemical plants on the northern bank of the Danube; with Turkey because of the Bulgarian authorities’ decision to force the Bulgarian Turks to change their names; and with Yugoslavia because of disputes between the authorities over the existence of a Macedonian nation in the Balkans. The only Balkan state with which Bulgaria was on relatively good terms at the end of the 1980s was Greece mainly because of the hostile relations of both with Turkey, which created a feeling of solidarity.

733 See pp. 46-9, 79-80 above; appendix, tables 20&25.
Bulgaria’s Balkan Policy since the End of the Cold War

Bulgaria’s marginalization from Balkan politics prior to 1989 comes in sharp contrast to the country’s active involvement in the political life of the Balkan region since the end of the Cold War. This involvement has been marked by Sofia’s political efforts to promote peace and political stability in the region through the undertaking of and participating in political initiatives aimed at establishing long lasting multilateral cooperation between the Balkan states.

In this period Sofia successfully avoided being pulled into military conflicts with neighbouring countries. Bulgaria reached the brink of domestic ethnic conflict and even war with Turkey, at the end of the 1980s as a result of the country’s abuse of human rights of its Turks. The dissolution of the former Yugoslavia might also have wetted the appetites of nationalist political circles in Sofia for military action against FYROM and Serbia. After declaring its independence from the Yugoslav federation in 1991, FYROM campaigned even more openly and actively for recognition by the international community of a Macedonian nation with its own language, history, national symbols and ethnic minorities in neighbouring countries such as Bulgaria, which was viewed unfavourably by many Bulgarians. Bulgaria was the first Balkan country to recognize FYROM as an independent state, although for most of the post-1989 period Sofia refused to recognize the existence either of a Macedonian nation in the Balkans or of an ethnic Macedonian minority in Bulgarian territory.

Due to the international community's fear that the political independence of FYROM from the Yugoslav federation would destabilize the entire Balkan region, either by leading Belgrade to take military action against Skopje and thus extending the existing ethnic conflicts in the territory of the former Yugoslavia southwards, or by causing conflict between FYROM, Bulgaria, Greece and even Albania, it instituted a series of political measures aimed at protecting the territorial integrity and stability of FYROM. In 1992 the CSCE established a Spillover Monitor Mission in Skopje, a multinational diplomatic mission whose main task was to protect the territorial integrity of FYROM. In addition, in line with resolution 743 of the UN Security Council, a multinational peace-keeping force was dispatched to FYROM, to monitor ethnic tensions between the different groups living in the country, particularly Albanians and Macedonians, and to discourage conflict between FYROM and neighbouring Balkan states such as Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Albania. Initially part of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) deployment force was later renamed UNPREDEP.

The refusal of the Serbian authorities to recognize the approximately 30,000 Bulgarians living around the town of Tsaribrod in eastern Serbia as a national minority and to allow the Bulgarian state to establish cultural links with them, was seen by some Bulgarians, particularly the IMRO and the UDF, as providing a unique chance for Sofia to toughen its stance against Serbia with the view to either forcing the Serbian authorities to recognize the existence of a Bulgarian minority within Serbia or of annexing the regions around Tsaribrod to Bulgaria. These regions, widely known in Bulgaria as the 'western outlands', had belonged to the Bulgarian state

738 Rubeli, 2000, pp. 6-7.
before the First World War, but were annexed to Serbia for strategic reasons in 1918/19.739

However, Sofia avoided becoming engaged in any conflict and since 1989, has been actively involved in political initiatives aimed at promoting peace in neighbouring Yugoslavia and establishing multilateral political and economic cooperation in the Balkan region. As a result of Sofia's active diplomatic involvement in the Balkans, the first meeting of the Foreign Ministers of all the Southeast European states since 1990 took place in Sofia on 6 July 1996.740 It had been impossible to hold such a meeting between 1990 and 1996 because of the wars in the former Yugoslavia, which made it difficult for the former Yugoslav states to sit around the same table, and because of the dispute between Greece and FYROM over the name of the new state.741

**Reasons for Sofia's Post-Cold War Balkan Policy**

Sofia's post-1989 policy of promoting peace and multilateral cooperation in the Balkans surprised many scholars and policy makers both in the West and in the Balkans, who came to refer to Bulgaria as "the island of stability", "an oasis of the Balkans", "the good pupil of the Balkans".742 What prompted this change in Sofia's Balkan policy in the 1990s?

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First, Bulgaria’s post-1989 Balkan policy was mostly dictated by the country’s weak economy. Involvement in any war would have devastated the already weak Bulgarian economy and plunged the country into social chaos, which no post-1989 government would have been able to cope with. Also, the country’s position at the centre of the Balkan Peninsula surrounded by other Balkan states, meant that Sofia had more to gain from following a policy aimed at promoting peace, regional stability and cooperation, a policy that would improve Bulgaria’s image in the Western world, which viewed the region generally as being politically unstable and, thus a highly risky economic environment. The wars in the former Yugoslavia had promoted this image and had serious economic effects on Bulgaria since Sofia had difficulty in attracting the investments necessary for the country’s economic development. As a result, Bulgaria’s levels of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) were low throughout the post-1989 period. Furthermore, a foreign policy aimed at promoting peace and regional stability in the Balkans would guarantee Bulgaria’s trading routes to the Western world remaining open. For much of the post-1989 period, as a result of the wars in the former Yugoslavia and the economic sanctions which the UN Security Council imposed on Serbia, these routes had been closed.

The Bulgarian state had suffered economically from disruption of its trading routes with Europe and the negative image imposed by the Yugoslav wars on the Balkan Peninsula, although some sectors of Bulgarian society, such as those working with the Customs authorities, had exploited the fact that trade routes to Yugoslavia were

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closed, and had made huge profits from illicit trade and smuggling. Although it is difficult to exactly quantify the economic losses which the wars in former Yugoslavia produced, some estimates put them at around $6bn for the mid-1992 to mid-1994 period alone.

However, Bulgaria’s post-1989 weak economy does not completely explain the country’s policy of peace and regional cooperation in the Balkans after 1989. In the period before WWII, Bulgaria’s economy was also weak, but the country’s regional policy was far from one of peace and multilateral cooperation.

Also, the period of economic stability that the country experienced for most of the communist period was mainly the result of generous economic subsidies which Sofia received from Moscow in return for Bulgaria’s political loyalty to the Soviet Union and not the outcome of any policy of inter-state cooperation. Even at the beginning of the 1980s, when the country’s economic stability was coming to an end, Sofia, instead of following policies that would contribute to peace and cooperation between the Balkan states, resorted to political measures, such as the ethnic assimilation of the Bulgarian Turks in the mid-1980s. These measures could have pulled the country into an ethnic conflict similar to those that neighbouring Yugoslavia would experience and might even have led Bulgaria into a war with Turkey.

745 It is estimated for example that during the UN economic sanctions against the FRY, more than 200 cars daily passed between Bulgaria and Serbia carrying almost 10,000 litres of gasoline across the border with the FRY. See Center for the Study of Democracy, 2002, p. 36.
Why did Bulgaria’s weak economy not have the same effect on foreign policy before 1989? The weak economy answer takes for granted that government decisions are the outcome of rational choices determined by the economic interests of the country. However, this view is problematic for the following reasons. First, government decisions are not always determined by economic interests as can be seen in Milosevic’s decisions to embroil Serbia in military conflicts in Croatia, Bosnia-Hercegovina and Kosovo during the 1990s.750 Serbia would have gained more economically if the regime had pursued a peaceful dissolution of the Yugoslav Federation and built strong political and economic links with the states that resulted.

Second, the foreign policy decisions determined by economic interests differ according to the political actors in power. The foreign policy priorities of the BSP were not the same as those of the UDF. The BSP government of Zhan Videnov, as argued earlier, decided to foster political and economic relations with the Russian Federation and Third World developing countries such as Libya, Syria and Iran. The UDF government of Filip Dimitrov, on the other hand, gave priority to political and economic relations with the Western world. So why did post-1989 Balkan policy follow the path of peace and multilateral cooperation with the other countries of the region, regardless of who was in power?

It has often been argued that what explains Sofia’s post-1989 Balkan policy is the country’s political system.751 Post-1989 Bulgaria was liberal democratic with a pluralistic party system, division of power, a free press and active public opinion, similar to the democratic systems in most countries of the Western world after

750 Thomas, 1999.
WWII.\textsuperscript{752} As was the case for these countries, Bulgaria's post-1989 democratic system is considered by a number of scholars and policy-makers to be responsible for this policy of peace and cooperation:\textsuperscript{753} liberal democratic regimes are seen as pursuing qualitatively different foreign policies from those pursued by illiberal democratic or non-democratic regimes.\textsuperscript{754} It is believed that liberal democratic regimes are the only political systems that actively involve the public in decision-making through general elections and political means such as referendums, protests or strikes, which determine the direction of state policy. The state authorities are accountable to the public for the political decisions they take and their remaining in power is determined by whether the public is satisfied with their policies.

This is a simplification of the extent of the public's engagement in state foreign policy making though. Even in mature democratic systems such as those of Great Britain and the USA foreign policy decisions are often taken without the involvement of the public. For instance, the decision to support the American military operations of 2003 in Iraq was opposed by a large proportion of the British public.\textsuperscript{755}

The accountability of state authorities is believed to have a major effect on the foreign policies of states with liberal democratic regimes. The public are generally viewed as being peace loving and their involvement in the state's policy making leads to the

\textsuperscript{752} Nikova, 1998, p. 283.
\textsuperscript{754} Clark, 1989, pp. 147-8.
avoidance of conflict.\footnote{Howard, 1978, p. 31; Reiss, 1970, p. 100; Burchill, 2001, pp. 32-37.} Academic scholars, such as Howard\footnote{Howard, 1978, p. 31.} following the ideas of Kant, see war as resulting from policies followed by non-democratic governments, which aim at expanding their power and wealth through territorial conquests. The public is seen as having nothing to gain from aggressive foreign policies. Any profits from wars go to the military industries as a result of the extra weapons and the military equipment required, or to the non-democratic regime, which, in the event of victory, improves its public image and prolongs its tenure.\footnote{Ibid.} This view seems to ignore situations where governments have been driven to engage in military conflicts with neighbouring states in response to popular pressure. For example, the Deliyannis government’s decision to respond to Greek public pressure in early 1897 and dispatch ships and troops to Crete in an attempt to annex the island to Greece. This decision brought the Greek state into war with the Ottoman Empire, of which Crete was part at that time. Greece suffered an overwhelming defeat and it was only due to the political influence that the great powers of the time, namely Great Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy, exercised on the political authorities in Istanbul that the peace settlement made after the war was relatively lenient towards Greece.\footnote{Clogg, 1979, pp. 92-94.}

Also, states with liberal democratic regimes are viewed as being unique in their ability to establish sound institutionalized political and economic relations between each other. This ability is believed to result from common democratic principles such as commitment to the rule of law, respect for human rights and equality before the law, on which the political institutions of liberal democratic states are founded.\footnote{Doyle, 1986, p. 1151; Fukuyama, 1992, p. xx; Rawls, 1999, p. 49.} The reciprocal recognition of these common principles helps liberal democratic regimes to
find a common language which allows them to avoid military conflicts through bargaining, which is one of the cornerstone of modern democratic politics.\textsuperscript{761}

States with liberal democratic regimes are also seen as willing to liberalize their economies by taking measures to promote free trade with other states and encouraging foreign investments and tourism because they are not preoccupied with preserving power and seek to promote the well being of their citizens. They seek to increase the flow of goods and foreign capital into their territories.\textsuperscript{762} This liberalization of state economies encourages links across frontiers and shifts the loyalties of the public away from the nation-state.\textsuperscript{763} Eventually both political leaders and the public recognize that the benefits of sound political and economic cooperation with neighbouring states outweigh what might be the results of engagement in military conflicts with them.\textsuperscript{764}

The belief that states with liberal democratic regimes pursue qualitatively different foreign policies is shared by many 20\textsuperscript{th} century academic scholars and policy-makers and has been the guiding principle of most Western states' foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. After 1989, US foreign policy gave priority to the expansion of the geographical zones of states that had a liberal democracy on the basis that, through such expansion, the possibility of these states becoming involved in military conflict would be diminished and trade would increase.\textsuperscript{765} But can the change in Bulgaria’s Balkan policy after the end of the 1980s be seen as the natural outcome of the country’s democratization?

\textsuperscript{761} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{763} Howard, 1978, p. 29; Walter, 1996.
\textsuperscript{764} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{765} Talbot, 1996.
Sofia’s post-1989 Balkan policy cannot be seen as a direct effect of the country’s democratization because it was not always the case that the public wanted no involvement in military conflict. Although opinion polls after 1989 reveal that the majority of the Bulgarian public did not nurture any territorial claims against Bulgaria’s Balkan neighbours, there were occasions when the public was ill disposed towards its neighbours.766

After Todor Zhivkov’s fall from power, the Bulgarian government’s decision to restore to the Bulgarian Turks their Muslim names, which Zhivkov’s regime had robbed them of during the second half of the 1980s, caused protests and provoked mass demonstrations from a large number of ethnic Bulgarians, especially those living in ethnically mixed areas.767 Some viewed Bulgarian Turks as an alien ethnic group that should be assimilated for the sake of the country’s national security. Others profited materially from the cheap housing and land that were the result of the mass exodus to Turkey in 1989 resulting from Zhivkov’s policy of forced ethnic assimilation.768 The situation was resolved after ‘The Public Council on the Various Aspects of the Ethnic Issue’ was held at the Bulgarian National Assembly in January 1990 between members of the MRF and human rights organisations such as the Independent Association for the Defence of Human Rights in Bulgaria (IADHR), and nationalist organisations such as the Committee for the Defence of National Interests, which was active in ethnically mixed areas such as Smolyan, Shumen and Ruse.769 The Council confirmed the government’s decision to restore their Muslim names to the Bulgarian Turks, but to appease the nationalists, it decreed that Bulgarian should

769 The chairman of the Committee for the Defence of National Interests was Mincho Minchev, a taxi driver from Kurdzali, a member of the BSP and a former intelligence agent during communist times.
be the official language and made a general recommendation that any political organisations challenging the territorial integrity of the Bulgarian state be banned, as should public displays of the Turkish flag.770

However, this response threatened Sofia’s relations with Ankara which considered the Bulgarian Turks to be a kin ethnic group whose human rights was of concern to Turkey. Various Bulgarian-Turkish bilateral treaties had been signed in the past, acknowledging the ethnic kinship of the Bulgarian Turks with Turkey, and decrying human rights abuses against Bulgarian Turks.771 Ankara froze its political and economic relations with Bulgaria after the policy on name changes. Continuation of this policy would have risked Bulgaria and Turkey into a prolonged political crisis, with consequences for the stability of the entire Balkan region.

The Bulgarian public’s role in post-1989 politics was little different to that of citizens in other democratic states, that is it was generally confined to participation in general and Presidential elections every few years. Most major political decisions throughout the almost fifteen years of Bulgaria’s democratization, such as approval of the post-1989 constitution, Bulgaria’s application for admission to the EU and NATO, and the introduction of the Currency Board in 1997, were taken by the country’s political elite without much public consultation.

In addition, the view that democratic regimes are more willing to liberalize their economies, which shifts loyalties away from the nation state, does not fully explain the changes in Sofia’s Balkan policy. In spite of intermittent political efforts on the

770 Ibid.
part of the Bulgarian authorities to liberalize the country’s economy, the post-1989 Bulgarian economy cannot be called a liberal economy. Up to 2002, the EC’s annual reports on candidate states for EU membership assessed the Bulgarian economy as not being a free market economy and, therefore, it did not meet the criteria for entry to the EU.

With the exception perhaps of Greece and Turkey, the Bulgarian economy has not been sufficiently opened to the Balkan region to allow the creation of an economic network between Bulgarian society and the societies in neighbouring Balkan states. Such a network could have justified the Balkan policy which Bulgarian governments had followed since 1989 in the sense that the sections of Bulgarian society with economic links with neighbouring Balkan states could have lobbied the governments to avoid military conflict in the region and promote a policy of political and economic cooperation with its Balkan neighbours. However, the level of Bulgaria’s official interactions with most of its neighbours since 1989 was not enough to establish such an economic network. Trade with the Balkan region, although slightly higher than pre-1989 levels, remained fairly insignificant, with imports from and exports to the region accounting for less than 10% of total Bulgarian imports and exports. Most of the country’s economic interactions with its Balkan neighbours were restricted to unofficial economic networks which had been developed during the war in former Yugoslavia and which involved the black-market. Thus, their influence on official state foreign policy making is questionable.

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However, with Greece and Turkey official economic interactions have increased since the beginning of the 1990s as a result of these countries’ political and economic integration into the Western world and the economic opportunities that interaction seemed to offer to the public and the state of Bulgaria. In addition to increasing bilateral trade, around 150,000 Bulgarians were working in Greece in 2004 and 150,000 to 200,000 Bulgarian Turks were working in Turkey in 2000, most of whom had fled to Turkey at the end of the 1980s.

The ability of democratic regimes to establish strong political and economic institutions through which they manage political, economic and military differences with other states does not apply to post-1989 Bulgaria. It is true that almost all Bulgarian governments after 1989 took political initiatives aimed at developing regional institutions, through which the Balkan states would work out compromises over their political, economic or military differences. Such institutions include the Balkan Conference on Stability, Security and Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe, which was established by the Bulgarian government of Zhan Videnov in Sofia in July 1996. The Conference was attended by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of all Balkan states and instituted regular meetings among the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the

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774 Bulgarian exports to Turkey amounted to around $8bn in 2002, while in 1995 they amounted to approximately $5.5bn. Bulgarian imports from Turkey from approximately $5.2bn amounted in 1995 reached the amount of $5.5bn in 2002. (http://www.deik.org.tr/bultenler/turkey2003-VI- ForeignTrade.pdf; http://www.econwpa.wust.edu:8089/eps/it/papers/0501/0501055.pdf). The total value of Bulgarian exports to Greece increased from $316.7m in 1994 to $347.2m in 1999, while the total value of imports from Greece declined from $414.3m in 1994 to approximately $410.8m at the end of the 1990s (http://www.statistics.gr/gr_tables/s700)

775 Siadima, 2001; 'Statistical Data on Immigrants in Greece: An Analytical Study of Available Date and Recommendations for Conformity with EU Standards', a study on Greece’s Migration Policy conducted by the Mediterranean Migration Observatory (UEHR), Pandeion University of Athens, 15/10/2004, available on http://www.mmo.gr; http://www.econwpa.wust.edu:8089/eps/it/papers/0501/0501055.pdf; By 2001 the total amount of Greece’s FDI to Bulgaria was estimated at $1.5bn, which corresponded to approximately 10% of the total FDI in Bulgaria, while the level of Turkey’s FDI in Bulgaria since 1992 has been at around $128m. Tsardanidis, 2001; http://www.econwpa.wust.edu:8089/eps/it/papers/0501/0501055.pdf; http://www.mfa.gr/greek/foreign_policy/europe_southeastern/balkans/Bulgaria.html;
Defence Ministers and the heads of state and governments of all the Balkan countries. These meetings would be aimed at fostering political and economic cooperation and would provide a forum for state authorities to air their grievances on political, economic or other problems.

One outcome of these meetings was the Multinational Peacekeeping Force of South-Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG), a rapid reaction force comprising military forces from Albania, Bulgaria, FYROM, Greece, Italy, Romania and Turkey. SEEBRIG has been operational since December 1999 and its main purposes are to strengthen military cooperation among Balkan states in order to avoid military conflict and to forge links between the armed forces of the Balkan states and the armies of NATO member states through the participation of SEEBRIG in NATO's international humanitarian activities. It increased the operational capacity of the armed forces of the Balkan states and helped pave the way for Bulgaria and Romania to join NATO.

However, by itself, the network of regional institutions that has been developed in the Balkans after 1989 has limited capability to influence Sofia's foreign policy making. For instance, the BSEC is a regional forum, which was established at the beginning of the 1990s as a result of the active diplomatic initiatives of the Turkish government under the premiership of Turgut Ozal. Its aim was to bring economic growth and foster long-standing peaceful relations among its members. This would be achieved through the elimination of trade barriers and the BSEC states' involvement in

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776 http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isis/Frame/frame3index.htm
778 Ibid.
779 The member states of the BSEC are: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine. See Sayan, 2002, p. 31; Hinkova, 2002, pp. 9-10; Ayback, 2001, pp. 31-33; Pavliuk, 1999, pp. 144-147.
multilateral economic activities, such as regional infrastructure projects and tourism.\textsuperscript{780}

The failure of BSEC to influence post-1989 Bulgarian foreign policy was due to several reasons. First, a large section of the Bulgarian political elite, mainly members of the UDF, viewed the activities of this organisation with suspicion. Participation in BSEC was believed to undermine the country's prospects of joining the EU: the Russian Federation and Turkey were leading members of BSEC, which allowed them to promote policies that might not be acceptable to the EU.\textsuperscript{781} Both Moscow and Ankara were considered to have good reasons for blocking Bulgaria's membership of the EU. Moscow saw the EU and NATO as competing international actors, seeking to undermine Russia's international influence by their inclusion of EES.\textsuperscript{782} Ankara, although a loyal ally of the Western bloc during the Cold War, could see no prospect of its becoming a full EU member state in the foreseeable future and, thus seeing Bulgaria an ex-communist state and a historical rival being in a position of becoming a member made the Turkish political elite both embarrassed and envious.\textsuperscript{783}

As a result, for most of the 1990s, Sofia refused to consent to the idea supported by certain BSEC states that the BSEC should become an organisation whose decisions would be legally binding.\textsuperscript{784} Instead, the Bulgarian authorities insisted that the BSEC should continue to be the intergovernmental regional forum it had developed into, where member states could discuss political, economic or other issues, without any


\textsuperscript{782} Hinkova, Sonia, personal interview, 16/11/2001; Todorov, Antoni, personal interview, 3/12/2001; Mitreva, Rumiana, personal interview, 29/10/2001.

\textsuperscript{783} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{784} Hinkova, 2002, p. 9; Mitreva, Rumiana, personal interview, 29/10/2001.
decisions being legally binding for member states. In line with this position, until the mid-1990s, the Bulgarian authorities were not active in the BSEC apart from attendance at intergovernmental meetings and working groups related to the preparation or the implementation of decisions taken at these meetings. Between 1993 and 1998 neither Bulgaria, nor Greece participated in the activities of the Parliamentary Assembly of the BSEC, an institutional branch of the BSEC established in 1993 to coordinate the parliamentary assemblies of BSEC member states in adopting common resolutions and declarations on international issues.

BSEC did not have the resources to finance major infrastructure projects in the Black Sea region and was dependent for their implementation on economic aid coming from state and private actors outside the region including the USA, the EU, the IMF and multinational companies (MNC). The majority of BSEC member states were ex-communist countries which had acute economic problems and lacked a strong private economic sector able to co-finance infrastructure projects with state authorities.

However, the BSEC’s inability to finance major projects seriously diminished its scope of influence on Bulgaria’s foreign policy making after 1989 and diminished its

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786 Lacking financial resources BSEC’s interest in interacting with other international organisations had grown significantly by 1996-7. In the first years of the BSEC’s existence there were only irregular contacts between the BSEC and other international organisations and sub-regional groups. The 6th and 7th BSEC meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Chisinau in November 1995 and in Bucharest in April 1996 requested the Permanent International Secretary of the BSEC in Istanbul to develop an exchange of information with sub-regional and international organisations interested in the BSEC. Following an invitation from the Permanent International Secretary of the BSEC, representatives of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the EC, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) held consultations with the directorate of the Permanent International Secretary, which resulted in some projects. For example, an OECD-BSEC workshop was organised with the purpose of highlighting policies for combating corruption. A proposal for cooperation with and assistance to the BSEC was put forward by the UNECE and by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in areas such as transport, energy, environment, trade facilitations and the simplification of border crossing procedures. See Pavliuk, 1999, pp. 144-7.
prestige in the eyes of the political elite and the public. Unlike the EU, the BSEC came to be perceived as an international entity offering little economic benefit to the country and thus has had little influence on foreign policy decisions. Its lack of financial resources also meant that it could not create a strong intra-state network of economic interests.

The role of the BSEC has been mainly confined to promoting policies aimed at eliminating trade barriers thus its activities have overlapped with those of other institutions such as the EU. Nevertheless, interregional trade after 1989 was at a low level and a network of trade relations between the BSEC member states remained a distant prospect. The proportion of trade with BSEC countries such as Romania or Turkey was small compared to total Bulgarian trade, and any increase in trade with these countries after 1989 was related more to the liberalization of Bulgaria’s trade regime as a result of the implementation of EU trade policies than to BSEC policies to eliminate trade barriers.

There were, though, other political initiatives that have influenced Bulgaria’s foreign policy. These include the European Royaumont Process, the South East European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), generally known as the ‘Schifter’ Initiative after its architect Richard Shifter, the US President’s special representative and a member of the American National Security Council, and the Stability Pact for South-East Europe.

The Royaumont Process was launched in September 1995 within the framework of the Paris Peace Conference on Bosnia and Herzegovina with the participation of all

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788 Jackson, 2001, pp. 53-61; Appendix, tables 20 & 25.
the Balkan states, the EU countries, Hungary, the USA and Russia.\textsuperscript{789} This initiative envisaged the development of regional cooperation in the Balkans under the auspices of the OSCE. This was seen as a long-term goal that would be achieved after the building of civil society structures in the Balkan countries.\textsuperscript{790}

The SECI was launched by the USA in March 1996 and all Balkan states plus Slovenia and Hungary took part in the ‘organisational meeting’ held in Geneva in December 1996.\textsuperscript{791} SECI sought to sustain regional stability through the promotion of regional inter-state cooperation in the areas of the economy and environmental protection.\textsuperscript{792} Since 2000 there has been close cooperation between SECI and the Stability Pact with the view to a merger between the two.\textsuperscript{793} A merger was desirable because of the overlap between some of the activities of the two initiatives and would make the merged organisation, known as the Stability Pact, more efficient. In June 2002, Erhard Busek, the then Coordinator of SECI, replaced Bodo Hombach as Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. Several individuals were coordinators in both the SECI and the Stability Pact, so the dates of meetings of the two projects were closely coordinated to avoid overlap. At the beginning of 2003 some of the committees of the two projects, including the Business and Advisory Councils, were merged to allow the resources directed to regional projects and managed by the Stability Pact to be channeled through SECI’s office in Vienna in preparation for an eventual merger.\textsuperscript{794}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[789] For more details on the Royaumont Process see Hinkova, 2002, pp. 12-3; http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/96-98/shtonova.pdf
\item[790] Ibid.
\item[791] For more details on SECI see Schifter, 1998.
\item[792] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
The Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe was a complex political project shaped by the EU after the Kosovo conflict in spring 1999 and officially launched at a conference in Cologne, Germany, convened by the German government, which held the EU presidency at the time. The conference included Foreign Ministers of the EC countries, the G8, Southeast European states, and representatives of the OSCE, the Council of Europe, UN, NATO, the World Bank, the IMF, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and other institutions. The aim of the Stability Pact was to become a mechanism replacing the policy of reactive crisis intervention in South-Eastern Europe, of comprehensive long-term conflict prevention policy to ensure permanent peace, economic prosperity and stability in South-Eastern Europe. This it was believed would be achieved through the implementation of regional projects involving all the participants in the Pact. Each project was overseen by a special committee, known also as a ‘Working Table’, whose task was to monitor the progress of the projects. Working Table I monitors projects related to democratization and human rights and focuses on issues such as inter-ethnic dialogue, cross border cooperation, refugees, the media, education and youth issues. Working Table II manages projects related to economic reconstruction, development, the infrastructure, trade and investment. Working Table III is concerned with projects relating to security issues such as demobilization of army personnel, small arms control, police training, organised crime, corruption, etc. All three Working Tables are coordinated by the Regional

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796 http://www.stabilitypact.org/stability-pactcgi/catalog/cat_descrcgi?prod_id=1806
797 Phinnemore & Davies, 2003, p. 176.
Despite the active involvement of many Balkan states in these political initiatives, they had mainly been conceived and promoted by actors outside the Balkan region. The reasons that the Bulgarian political elite was keen on Sofia’s involvement in these political initiatives were the practical economic gains from infrastructure projects on Bulgarian soil, and because these initiatives were supported by powerful international actors such as the EU and the USA, opting out of them might have led the West to question the level of Bulgaria’s democratization, and deny its accession to the EU and NATO. Sofia’s participation in these initiatives was seen as offering the opportunity, through projects aiming at modernizing the country’s judicial system and the public sector, to entrench democratic norms in Bulgarian society and state, and thus consolidate the country’s post-1989 democratic system. And finally, for some members of the Bulgarian political elite, taking part in initiatives with the political and economic support of the West gave some reassurance that Bulgaria was becoming accepted into the Western world.

Bulgaria’s Post-1989 Security Vacuum and its Effect on Sofia’s Balkan Policy after the End of the Cold War

If neither Bulgaria’s economic weakness nor democratization explains the country’s foreign policy towards the Balkans, then what was it that influenced it? It could be argued that Sofia’s post-1989 Balkan policy was greatly influenced by the security

798 Ibid.
Bulgaria’s loyalty to Moscow earned it the military protection of the Soviet bloc which guaranteed territorial integrity against military attacks from its Balkan neighbours for almost fifty years after the end of WWII.\textsuperscript{804}

The dissolution of the Soviet bloc after 1989 deprived Bulgaria of the economic subsidies and the huge trade markets which had fed the Bulgarian industrial economy and had sustained the relatively high living standards of the Bulgarian population for the previous forty-five years. The loss of the economic benefits which Bulgaria’s participation in the communist bloc had brought was compounded by the collapsing economy, which could not be sustained for systemic reasons. The country was plunged into an acute economic crisis with high levels of inflation and unemployment. The economic crisis threatened to undermine the social peace that Bulgaria had enjoyed for much of the post-WWII period. Also it occurred at a time when the ethnic tensions caused by Zhivkov’s policy of assimilating the Bulgarian Turks into the ethnic majority were still healing, and thus could have produced more tensions, thus posing a direct threat to Bulgaria’s territorial integrity.

After 1989 Bulgaria was left without any patron state or institutional structure to protect it. In July 1991 the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet bloc’s military branch, was dissolved followed by the Soviet Union in December 1991. The Russian federation, which appeared to be the strongest of the successor states of the Soviet Union, was both unable and unwilling to commit itself to political or military projects such as guaranteeing Bulgaria’s national security. Post-Soviet Russia, despite the huge and powerful military might inherited from the Soviet Union, was facing acute economic

\textsuperscript{804} Ashley, 1989;
problems and there were secessionist political movements on its territory which did not allow Moscow to become engaged in large scale economic or military commitments outside its borders.

However, in the volatile post-1989 political environment of the Balkan region Bulgaria's national security was at high risk. Apart from acute economic problems and ethnic tensions, Sofia also had to cope with a war in neighbouring Yugoslavia which threatened to destabilize the whole Balkan region and created conditions for a flourishing black-market, and with the increased military might of its two NATO neighbours, Greece and Turkey. The Bulgarian army had always been weaker than those of neighbouring NATO countries, and the lack of any outside support meant that in the event of a military attack from either Greece or Turkey, it would be unable to defend itself. This military imbalance increased after 1989 because part of NATO's weaponry from the north-west European member states of NATO such as Germany and France was either transferred or sold to Greece and Turkey.

The solution to all this seemed to be integration into Euro-Atlantic political, economic and military institutions, which would also give access to Western economic funding and technical know-how, and would help Bulgaria to overcome its economic crisis and secure long-term economic development and stability. Integration with Euro-Atlantic institutions would also protect territorial integrity by improving the operational capacities of the Bulgarian army and through the security guarantees that the legal documentation of these institutions provide to member states. Such guarantees include security clauses which bind NATO member states to offering

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805 Dimitrov, 2001b, p. 96; Zhivkov, 1993, pp. 150-1.
political, economic or military assistance to other NATO member states. Furthermore, Sofia would belong to the same security organisation as neighbouring Greece and Turkey, which would theoretically reduce the risk of conflict with these two states.

Accession to Euro-Atlantic institutions was a long-term political process conditioned on Bulgaria’s fulfilling certain political and economic criteria. This process has come to affect every aspect of Bulgarian politics, including foreign policy making, and particularly in three areas explaining the desire for regional stability and cooperation. The three areas of Sofia’s post-1989 foreign policy affected by the process of Bulgaria’s accession to Euro-Atlantic institutions are discussed in detail below: a) Bulgaria’s territorial policy towards its Balkan neighbours; b) Bulgaria’s policy towards ethnic minorities in its territory and Bulgarian ethnic minorities abroad; c) Sofia’s diplomatic activity in the Balkan region.808

*Bulgaria’s Post-1989 Territorial Policy towards its Balkan Neighbours*

After the end of the Cold War Bulgaria remained faithful to the territorial policy that the country’s communist regime had followed. It renounced any territorial claims on its neighbours and recognized the status quo formulated at the end of WWII. Territorial claims against neighbouring Balkan states could have involved Bulgaria in military conflicts similar to those that Milosevic’s Serbia had become embroiled in with neighbouring Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina.809 The Bulgarian state economy was in crisis and too weak to fund large-scale military operations, while the country’s military lacked the technical ability to conduct a successful military action.

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808 Bokova, 1996, pp. 22-23.
809 Thomas, 1999.
Even more important was the fact that any territorial claims against Bulgaria’s Balkan neighbours would have undermined the prospects of Bulgaria’s being integrated into Euro-Atlantic institutions. Through bilateral and multilateral meetings between Bulgarian officials and their European or American counterparts the latter insisted that any East European state with territorial claims against its neighbours had no place in the institutions which these European and American officials represented.\(^{810}\)

The official documentation of these institutions emphasized that Bulgaria should follow a constructive policy towards the Balkan region by scrapping any territorial claims and by seeking peaceful solutions to any bilateral or multilateral problems. The EC’s opinion on Bulgaria’s application for membership of the EU issued in July 1997, almost 18 months after Bulgaria’s application for EU membership, in the section on the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy emphasized that Sofia should have no territorial disputes with any member state of the Union or with Romania, and praised Sofia for following a constructive foreign policy towards the Balkan region.\(^{811}\)

Some territorial issues remained unresolved, such as the demarcation of the continental shelf and of the boundaries at the mouth of the Mutludere-Rezovska river at the southeast frontiers between Bulgaria and Turkey. However, these did not pose any serious problems to Sofia’s relations with either Ankara or Euro-Atlantic institutions. Bilateral relations with Turkey had continually improved after 1989 as a result of the Bulgarian authorities’ decision to restore Muslim names to the Bulgarian

\(^{810}\) An anonymous European diplomat, personal interview, 25/1/2002; Moore, Roderick, personal interview, 16/1/2002; Zhelev, Zheliu, personal interview, 7/1/2002; Minchev, Chavdar, personal interview, 15/11/2001; Popova, Svetla, personal interview, 16/1/2002; Dimitrov, Bolfko, personal interview, 24/1/2002; Abadzhiev, Dimitur, personal interview, 30/11/2001; Ilchev, Stanimir, personal interview, 7/12/2001; Mladenov, Nikolai, personal interview, 7/12/2001; Dimitrova, Ralitsa, personal interview, 15/1/2002.

Turks and to give a political voice to the Bulgarian Muslims in the parliament by giving the MRF party the right to be represented in general, Presidential and local elections. In addition, when the Commission’s opinion was issued, Bulgaria was engaged in bilateral negotiations on the territorial issues that Sofia had with Ankara. The negotiations were showing positive results and led to the settlement of these issues, with the Bulgarian government in December 1997 signing two bilateral agreements with Turkey, during an official visit that the Turkish Prime Minister, Mesut Yilmaz, paid to Sofia.

Three parameters guided the policies of Euro-Atlantic institutions towards EES after the end of the Cold War. The first is related to the philosophy underlying the foundations of some of these institutions, whose creation aimed at bringing an end to long-standing territorial claims, which had led their member states into devastating military conflicts in the past, and inaugurating a period of cooperation through which the member states would seek to solve bilateral and multilateral differences by peaceful means. For example, the philosophy behind the Coal and Steel Community, the Council of Europe and the CSCE was that European states should be helped to overcome the territorial conflicts of the past by enforcing recognitions of the post-1945 territorial status quo of the European continent, and by fostering cooperation in the fields of economy, politics, the military and others through their participation in the activities of these institutions.

812 Ibid.
814 Van Ham, 1993, pp. 15-51.
The second referred to the territorial policies of EES after 1989 which was related to protection of their territorial integrity. Any challenge to the territorial status quo of Eastern Europe it was thought would drive the states of that region into endless military conflict which would have serious political, economic and social implications for the member states of these institutions and might challenge the territorial status quo of the whole European continent by drawing even member states of the Euro-Atlantic institutions into conflict.

The principle of protection of the territorial status quo of EES was challenged only on a few occasions during the first half of the 1990s, such as during the dissolution of the USSR, Czechoslovakia and the Yugoslav Federation with the official recognition of FYROM, Bosnia-Hercegovina, Croatia and Slovenia, formerly constituent parts of the Yugoslav Federation, as independent states. But even in these cases the Euro-Atlantic institutions recognized the independence of component Republics of the previously mentioned federal states and did not seek to redraw the borders of the federal constituent republics by encouraging ethnic groups to create new states.

The third parameter is related to how foreign policy decisions in Euro-Atlantic institutions such as the EU and NATO are taken, which gives the right to member states of these institutions to veto foreign policy decisions whenever they deem them to be against their national interests. A number of policy-makers in the EU and NATO felt that the historical example of Greece and Turkey, two states with territorial differences that became member states of NATO in 1952, showed that offering membership to states nurturing territorial claims against other states would seriously affect the smooth functioning of the institutions. These states could abuse their rights
to veto foreign policy decisions whenever they viewed that foreign policy decisions of these institutions favoured the national interests of states against which they had territorial claims. Furthermore, membership for states harbouring territorial claims against other states would lead Euro-Atlantic institutions to become involved in solving the territorial differences of these states. Such involvement would require the otherwise unnecessary deployment of diplomatic personnel and efforts on the part of the Euro-Atlantic institutions.

In addition, through their membership of Euro-Atlantic institutions, states with territorial claims against other states would gain access to the decision-making bodies of these institutions and, thus, have the potential to influence the foreign policy of these institutions in a particular state’s favour. Such influence would undermine the Euro-Atlantic institutions stated policy of remaining independent about international issues and, thus, would undermine the credibility and the international status of these institutions.

Bulgaria did observe the rules set by Euro-Atlantic institutions and, like its communist predecessors during the Cold War, Sofia’s political authorities after 1989 did not challenge the territorial status quo of the Balkan region. Even when the map of the Balkan region changed as a result of the war in neighbouring Yugoslavia, Bulgaria resisted making any territorial claims against its neighbours and acknowledged the territorial status quo of the nation states that had resulted from the dissolution of the pre-1989 Yugoslav Federation.
Bulgaria was the first country to recognize FYROM as an independent nation state once the state authorities in Skopje proclaimed independence from the Yugoslav Federation in December 1991, despite the fact that previously the Bulgarian authorities had questioned the existence of any distinct Macedonian nation in the Balkan region. Indeed, according to the official policy of almost all Bulgarian governments since the end of the 19th century there was no Macedonian nation in the Balkan region and all the people who called themselves Macedonians were Bulgarians and the language that they spoke was a dialect of the Bulgarian language.

Sofia’s decision in January 1992 to recognize FYROM under its constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia did not conflict with the policy of the Euro-Atlantic institutions. Some such as NATO did not have a policy on recognition, while others such as the EU did not view Bulgaria’s decision to recognize FYROM as Republic of Macedonia as something that would damage Sofia’s relations with other EU member states. In fact, most EU member states would probably also have recognized FYROM under its constitutional name, if Greece had not objected so strongly, arguing that the name Macedonia implied territorial claims on the northern Greek province of Macedonia and constituted a usurpation of what the Greeks saw as part of their particular history and culture. Official recognition by EU member states of FYROM as the Republic of Macedonia would have upset relations with Greece and might have

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815 Zhelev, 1998, pp. 151-181; Georgiev & Tsenkov, 1993, pp. 5-20; Alexandrov et al., 1997, pp. 71-3; for a different view see Lefebvre, 1995, pp. 457-460; Borden Savova-Mahon, 2001, pp. 415-420; for a general overview on Greece’s, Bulgaria’s and FRY’s policies on the name issue of FYROM see Poulton, 1995, 177-178.
817 This is because the ancient Kingdom of Macedonia, to which FYROM traced its ancient origins, was claimed by Greeks as being Greek and, therefore, was deemed to be part of the national history of the Modern Greek state. See Michas, 2002, pp. 42-6, 126-7.
destabilized the whole Balkan region by leading the Greek authorities to resort to extreme political measures to force the political authorities in FYROM to remove the term Macedonia from the constitutional name of their country.818

By recognizing FYROM under its constitutional name, Sofia mainly 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 state.819 This was seen by the Bulgarian authorities as being important for the country, because it would help Bulgaria to foster strong political and economic relations with the Western world in the medium term and overcome the problem of national security. In addition, fostering strong relations with the Western world was seen as the first step towards the country’s membership of powerful Euro-Atlantic institutions such as the EU.

In addition, the decision to recognize FYROM as an independent state can also be explained by the fact that the Bulgarian authorities viewed the existence of an independent Macedonian Republic on Bulgaria’s borders as preferable for Bulgaria’s national security than a federal republic under Belgrade’s political control, as had been the situation with the Macedonian state during communism, or a state partitioned between Greece and Milosevic’s Serbia, which might revive the military conflicts between Balkan states of the early 20th century.820 This led the Bulgarian authorities to follow a policy of protecting the territorial integrity of FYROM. The Bulgarian

819 Alexandrov et al., 1997, pp. 7-3; Georgiev & Tsenkov, 1993, pp. 15-9; Zhelev, Zholiu, personal interview, 7/1/2002; Todorov, Vurbam, personal interview, 20/12/2001; Todorov, Antoni, personal interview, 3/12/2001; Mitreva, Rumiana, personal interview, 29/10/2001; Minchev, Ognian, personal interview, 2/11/2001; Kuranov, Deian, personal interview, 4/12/2001;
President, Zheliu Zhelev, used his influence with the Russian President, Boris Yeltsin to persuade Yeltsin also to recognize FYROM as an independent state. Zhelev was the first head of state to visit Macedonia in February 1993, and Bulgaria offered assistance to the Macedonian state on two occasions. The first was at the time of Greece’s trade blockade on FYROM in the mid-1990s when Sofia offered the Black Sea port of Burgas for the trading of goods and fuel with FYROM. The second was during NATO’s bombing of Serbia in spring 1999, when the Bulgarian state offered FYROM economic assistance such as tents, food and personnel in order to help the Macedonian state accommodate the huge number of Albanian refugees fleeing to FYROM from Kosovo.

Bulgaria’s recognition of FYROM 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 of Skopje as Bulgaria’s recognition of a distinct Macedonian nation in the Balkan region. The Bulgarian authorities staunchly supported the political position of the past, according to which a Macedonian nation in the Balkan region with its own language and history did not exist.

These statements were designed to placate the more nationalist elements within the Bulgarian electorate, the majority of whom were political supporters of both the UDF government and President Zheliu Zhelev. This part of the electorate had been unhappy about the decision to recognize FYROM as an independent state, because they felt that in doing so, Sofia had sold out what they saw as Bulgarian historical and

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823 http://www.capital.bg/weekly/99-14/03-14-1.htm.
cultural rights in the region, by which they meant FYROM’s incorporation into the Bulgarian state at some point.

In addition, the statements came as an attempt on the part of the Bulgarian state to forestall the political authorities in Skopje from challenging Bulgaria’s territorial integrity by demanding that the authorities in Sofia recognize the existence of a Macedonian minority in Bulgarian territory.\textsuperscript{824} Indeed, since the creation of the modern Macedonian state at the end of WWII, Skopje had claimed ethnic kinship with a large number of slavophone people living mainly in the Macedonian region of Pirin in south-western Bulgaria and asked that the political authorities in Sofia recognize these people as ethnic Macedonians.\textsuperscript{825} However, due to the Bulgarian political authorities’ persistent refusal to recognize the existence of a Macedonian nation in the Balkans, Sofia had easily rebuffed all these claims.\textsuperscript{826} Indeed, Zhelev on many occasions stated publicly that Bulgaria did not recognize the existence of either a Macedonian nation in the Balkan region or a Macedonian minority in Bulgarian territory.\textsuperscript{827}

Although this refusal to recognize the existence of a Macedonian identity did not imply any Bulgarian territorial claims on FYROM, it quickly damaged the positive impressions that Sofia’s recognition of FYROM’s political independence had initially made on Skopje and on the international community. Instead of leading to an improvement in bilateral relations, Sofia’s decision kept official Bulgarian-

\textsuperscript{824} Giatzidis, 2002, p. 152.
\textsuperscript{826} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{827} Poulton, 1995, p.160.
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Macedonian relations in a state of disruption throughout the 1990s. Bulgaria’s refusal to recognize the existence of a separate Macedonian nation increased political tension between the authorities of the two states, who often exchanged vitriolic political statements and comments through the press and the mass media. The common denominator in all these statements and comments was the request of Macedonian political leaders for Sofia’s recognition of their nation and language, and of a Macedonian minority in Bulgaria while the Bulgarians demanded that the Macedonian authorities recognize the existence of a Bulgarian minority in FYROM.

What was most important was that Sofia’s refusal to recognize the existence of a distinct Macedonian nation prevented either side from concluding 22 bilateral economic and cultural agreements. The Macedonian side wanted the agreements to be translated into both Macedonian and Bulgarian, which the Bulgarian side refused also refusing to include interpreters in the negotiations lest this be seen as an acknowledgement of the existence of a distinct Macedonian language and thus a Macedonian nation. The deadlock in Bulgarian-Macedonian relations was overcome only after the intervention of the EU and the USA which led the two parties to enter bilateral negotiations on the language issue, which concluded with the signing of a common declaration by the governments of Bulgaria and FYROM in February 1999.

According to this declaration, Bulgaria and FYROM stated that they had no territorial claims against each other, and that they recognized the official language of the other

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828 Unofficially, though, Bulgarian-Macedonian relations seem to have been much better and this is due to the fact that since February 1994, Greece officially introduced a unilateral economic embargo on FYROM – in fact, the embargo had been in force without being declared since 1992, which meant FYROM had to redirect its trade through Albania and Bulgaria. See Center for the Study of Democracy, 2002, pp. 17-18, 20-21.
829 http://www.macedoniainfo.com/buletin/msi04/msi_1_bul.htm
831 Drezov, 2001, p. 51; Williams, 2000, p. 29; Engstrom, 2002.
as the language stipulated by the constitutions of the two states and, in this way, Bulgaria recognized implicitly the existence of a Macedonian language, while Skopje implicitly acknowledged that Macedonians living in Bulgaria were Bulgarian citizens, who could not be exploited to challenge Bulgaria’s territorial integrity.\(^{832}\) The outcome of these negotiations over the language issue was also facilitated by the fact that, at the time of negotiations, the Macedonian government was controlled by the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (IMRO-DPMNU) which had won the general elections of 1998. IMRO-DPMNU was closer to the Bulgarian position on the Macedonian language than the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDUM), which had been in power until 1998, mainly due to the strong political links that IMRO-DPMNU had developed with Bulgarian political parties such as the Bulgarian IMRO and the UDF, through which it sought to oppose to what it saw as the pro-Yugoslav foreign policy of the SDUM.\(^{833}\)

The settlement of the language dispute put an end to a major problem in official Bulgarian-Macedonian interstate relations, allowed the two sides to resume all the stalled agreements, and opened up the prospect for further political, economic and cultural cooperation at the interstate level.\(^{834}\) After the joint declaration on the language issue, Bulgaria following the earlier examples of Greece and Turkey, who had donated part of their decommissioned weaponry to Skopje, donated $3.5m worth of decommissioned weaponry to FYROM.\(^{835}\)


\(^{835}\) Ibid.
Bulgaria's renunciation of any territorial claims against neighbouring Balkan states was included in a series of official documents which defined the framework of the country's foreign and military policies after 1989 including the National Security Concept of 1995, which was replaced by the National Security Concept of April 1998, and the Military Doctrine of April 1999 among others. These policy documents were drafted with the help of diplomats and military officials from the member states of the EU and NATO and their content was modeled on the content of NATO and EU member states' documentation. Thus, all Bulgarian foreign and military policy documents cited above asserted that Bulgaria did not regard any country or group of countries as rivals nor did it have any territorial claims against other states. In addition, these documents defined the legal framework through which the Bulgarian military would evolve into a modern army under full civilian control, whose main purpose would be the defence, and not the expansion, of the post-1945 territorial borders of the Bulgarian state.

Apart from Sofia's official territorial policy towards neighbouring Balkan states, Bulgaria's process of integration into the Euro-Atlantic institutions also diminished the scope of public influence for political factions and individual political activists with irredentist views. They could not suggest any realistic plan for how their views could be realized without serious economic or other costs to the country. After 1989,
Bulgaria lacked the necessary economic and military means to impose these views, while at the international level, no international body was willing to back its claims.

Bulgaria’s integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions it was hoped would improve the living standards of Bulgarian citizens and boost the country’s military capabilities so that it could defend itself against any military attacks. This view was shared by an increasing part of the Bulgarian public, which came to support the prospect of Bulgaria joining the Euro-Atlantic institutions as reflected in the many opinion polls that were published in the 1990s, which showed that support for some institutions such as the EU had reached 70% at the end of 1990s.840

Bulgaria’s Minority Policies

Bulgaria’s post-1989 democratization process affected Sofia’s policies towards ethnic minorities.841 For many members of the Bulgarian political elite and the public, the process included Bulgaria’s membership of Euro-Atlantic institutions, such as the EU or the Council of Europe, which was conditioned on the protection of minority rights. The protection of human rights and minority groups was provided for in the Association Agreement that Bulgaria signed with the EU in March 1993 and constituted one of the main criteria for EU membership of EES set by the Copenhagen European Council in June 1993 and also applied to Bulgaria’s membership of Euro-Atlantic organisations such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe.842

840 Appendix, tables 34, 35, 47, 48, 37, 49, 61a-61b.
841 For a general overview on Sofia’s policies towards the Bulgarian ethnic and religious minorities during the post-communist period see Kanev, 1998, pp. 80-9; Zheliaskova, 1998, pp. 165-187; Zheliaskova et al., 1997.
Since Bulgaria's minority policies had been a source of political and military friction with neighbouring Balkan states in the past, any influence on these policies was going to have political repercussions on Sofia's relations with neighbouring Balkan states. In seeking to protect the human rights of Bulgaria's ethnic minorities, Euro-Atlantic institutions such as the EU or the Council of Europe assumed a role, which in the past was mainly taken by neighbouring Balkan states and, in doing so, these institutions removed potential sources of political and military conflicts between Bulgaria and its Balkan neighbours. This role was to monitor the political, economic and social life of ethnic minorities in Bulgaria and intervene whenever it was considered that minority rights were not being respected by asking the Bulgarian authorities to take political measures to improve the living conditions of ethnic minorities and bring them up to the standards determined in the legal documents of these institutions, including multilateral treaties, conventions and declarations.

Both Sofia, and Bulgaria's neighbouring states, recognized Euro-Atlantic institutions as reliable guarantors of Bulgaria's minority rights and, this recognition established the preconditions for avoidance of political or military conflicts over minority issues with the countries of the Balkan region. For Bulgaria's Balkan neighbours, non-recognition of the Euro-Atlantic institutions' role as protectors of the minority rights of Bulgarian ethnic minorities would bring them into conflict with these institutions and, thus, harm any future prospects of membership for them. In addition, non-recognition of the Euro-Atlantic institutions' role in protecting the minority rights of what they saw as kin ethnic groups in Bulgaria would confront these states with the difficult task of assuming this role themselves which would doubtless have affected
their bilateral relations with Bulgaria, the stability of the Balkan region as a whole, and the economic prosperity of their own populations. Sofia did not accept that any neighbouring state had the right to intervene in its internal affairs to the extent that Euro-Atlantic institutions have intervened since 1989.

Through their active involvement in Bulgaria’s minority policies since 1989, the Euro-Atlantic institutions paved the way for improving the living conditions of Bulgaria’s ethnic minorities and avoided large-scale ethnic tensions that could have led Bulgaria into political and military conflicts with neighbouring states. This is not to say that the absence of ethnic tensions in post-Cold War Bulgaria should be interpreted as an indication that minority rights were completely respected after 1989. On the contrary, official reports issued by institutions such as the EC or NGOs such as Helsinki Human Rights Watch point to the fact that there were serious problems in relation to minority rights and that Bulgaria had a long way to go to meet the standards set by international institutions such as the EU. Such reports point to problems such as the constitutional ban on the formation of Bulgarian political parties on an ethnic basis, discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities by administrations such as the Bulgarian police and the high unemployment faced by ethnic and religious minorities.\(^{83}\) While unemployment for Bulgarians ranged

between 10% and 15% throughout the 1990s, for the ethnic and religious minorities unemployment sometimes reached 25% to 30%.\textsuperscript{844}

However, none of these problems could hide the fact that the process of Bulgaria’s integration into the Euro-Atlantic institutions since 1989, along with the greater involvement of these institutions in the country’s internal political affairs, had set the political conditions for a gradually improving political and social environment for Bulgarian ethnic and religious minorities. The process of Bulgaria’s accession to institutions such as the EU or the Council of Europe had led Sofia to gradually adapt its legal system regarding the country’s ethnic minorities to the norms, practices and legal provisions provided by the legal frameworks of these institutions. Through such adaptation institutions such as the EU or the Council of Europe hoped to create a more liberal political environment for ethnic and religious minorities in Bulgaria, which would allow these minorities to participate more actively in the policy decision-making process and offer them equal opportunities. As a result of Bulgaria’s legal system being adapted to the legal framework of institutions such as the EU and the Council of Europe, Sofia incorporated into Bulgaria’s legal documentation the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe for the Protection of National Minorities in October 1997 and passed laws concerning the establishment of a National Council for Ethnic and Demographic Affairs with the participation of political representatives of the government and of the major Bulgarian minority groups, which aimed to promote policies of tolerance and understanding between the various ethnic and religious groups in the country.\textsuperscript{845}

\textsuperscript{844} Koinova, 1999, p. 150.

It could be argued that laws alone cannot improve the political, economic and social conditions of minorities. Practice matters and issues such as stereotypes nurtured by both the country’s authorities and the ethnic majority in relations to Bulgarian ethnic and religious minorities, need to be overcome. Stereotyping was one of the main sources of discrimination and violation of human rights. For example, ethnic minorities such as Roma have often been victims of the negative stereotypes bestowed on them by both the authorities and ethnic Bulgarians. There have been frequent clashes between ethnic Bulgarians and Roma in mixed population regions, and between members of the Roma ethnic groups and the Bulgarian police. There have been cases of arson, and of Romas being beaten by ethnic Bulgarians; there have been arbitrary arrests and threats from the Bulgarian police.\textsuperscript{846} In addition, a series of segregation policies have resulted in Roma being forced to live in ghetto-style economically downgraded regions, Roma children receiving poor education, Roma conscripts being made to serve in the construction and labour corps, and Roma not being allowed to join the police force.

However, this negative stereotyping takes time to overcome. The process of adapting Bulgaria’s legal system to the legal framework of institutions such as the EU or the Council of Europe is only a first step in this direction in creating a different legal environment for minorities, but in the long run it is expected to produce a positive outcome. At the very least, this process of adaptation has created expectations among the EU, Bulgarian minorities and their neighbouring kin-states that Bulgaria’s accession to the EU and the Council of Europe will improve conditions for minorities

in Bulgaria, and these expectations have been enough to ease ethnic tensions and curb political and military conflicts between Bulgaria and its Balkan neighbours.

Sofia’s process of accession to the Euro-Atlantic institutions has also entailed a series of economic and social projects which have been funded by these institutions and implemented by the Bulgarian authorities in partnership with NGOs. These projects have had an immediate effect on the social life of Bulgarian minorities and set the conditions for their smooth integration into post-Cold War Bulgarian society, a necessary precondition for the avoidance of ethnic tensions in the future.

One such project is the so-called framework programme for the integration of the Roma minority into Bulgarian society, adopted by the Bulgarian government in April 1999 and funded by the EU.\textsuperscript{847} The programme involved extensive consultations between the Bulgarian government and Roma organisations and human rights NGOs leading to the establishment of core principles and general measures to fight discrimination and unemployment, increased levels of education and health care, improved housing conditions, and the cultural protection of the Roma minority, as well as increased access to the national media.\textsuperscript{848} This framework programme also envisages the establishment of a National Committee for Prevention of Discrimination whose tasks would be to monitor cases of discrimination against Roma in Bulgaria’s public and private sectors, and report these cases to the Bulgarian authorities to allow administrative and judicial measures to be taken.\textsuperscript{849}

\textsuperscript{848} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{849} Ibid.
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Bulgaria’s integration into the Euro-Atlantic institutions has also led Sofia to take political measures aimed at improving minority political and social life. These measures have been either the result of political pressures exercised by officials of these institutions or an effort by the Bulgarian authorities to conform to the political standards set by these institutions in the hope that such compliance would help Bulgaria to become a member state. Thus, for instance, the decision at the beginning of the 1990s to recognize the MRF, a political party whose supporters and political cadres are largely members of the Bulgarian Muslim minority, as eligible to stand in general, Presidential and local elections was mainly the result of political pressures from European and American officials who pointed out that non-recognition of the MRF could lead to ethnic strife with the Bulgarian Muslims and would undermine the country’s prospects for future integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions.850

In addition, the political tolerance shown by Bulgarian authorities in relation to the political and social activities of ethnic Macedonians living in the region of Pirin since the end of the 1990s comes in sharp contrast to the measures taken in the past to restrict their activities. For example, while up until the end of the 1990s meetings of

850 See article 11, item 4 of the post-Cold War Bulgarian Constitution on http://www.online.bg/law/const/constD.htm; Melone, 1998, pp. 74-76. Due to political pressure from European and American officials and in order to secure the orderliness of the elections as well as the acceptance of their legitimacy by the country’s Muslims the Central Electoral Committee (CEC) in the 1990 general elections asked its district electoral commissions to register candidates nominated by the MRF, even though in the past Sofia’s district court had refused to register the MRF as a political party. The MRF’s registration as a political organisation, and not as a political party, was sufficient to allow its participation in the general elections of June 1990. The CEC decision was also justified by the numerous pledges given by the MRF leadership that their party was not an ethnic party because, apart from Bulgarian Turks, it included ethnic Bulgarians, Jews and Roma among its members. Although the legal basis of the CEC’s ruling was shaky and it drew protests from BSP members, as well as from a large section of the Bulgarian public, the decision has been used as the legal foundation for rulings taken by the Bulgarian Constitutional Court, which rejected petitions submitted to it by BSP members that requested a ban on MRF political activities on the basis that it was a political organisations formed on an ethnic basis, which contravened the provisions of article 11 of the post-1989 Bulgarian constitution. See Poulton, 1991, pp. 166-168; Melone, 1998, pp. 74-76, 277-8; http://www.b-info.com/places/Bulgaria/news/96-12/dec27.bta; http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/pdf/cedime-se-bulgaria-macedonians.PDF; Melone, 1994; Melone, 1997; Bell, 1997, p. 366; Kanev, 1998, p. 84.
the Macedonian minority were prohibited or dispersed, more recently there have been signs of greater toleration. For example, on 21 April 2002, for the first time post-1989, members of the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria were allowed to gather peacefully at Rozhen monastery in the region of Pirin, in order to celebrate the anniversary of the death in 1915 of the Macedonian national hero, Jane Sandanski.

This relaxation on the part of the Bulgarian state towards members of the country’s Macedonian minority was perhaps because Sofia wanted to avoid international criticism at a crucial time in the process of integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. Bulgaria applied for NATO membership and NATO’s summit of Prague in November 2002 was to decide over Sofia’s application, while Bulgaria had been in negotiation for EU membership with the EC since March 2000 and any negative reports on the country’s human rights record in relation to ethnic or religious minorities might seriously disturb negotiations, membership being conditional upon the candidate state respecting the human rights of all its citizens.

The process of integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions also affected Sofia’s policies vis-à-vis ethnic Bulgarians living in neighbouring Balkan states. Although the human rights of ethnic Bulgarian groups living in the Balkan region outside the borders of the Bulgarian state was a sensitive issue for the post-Cold War Bulgarian political elite, the authorities were careful about how they handled this issue lest it

853 Ibid.
854 Respect of human rights was one of the three main criteria for EU membership set by the European Council in Copenhagen in June 1993. For more details see http://www.europa.eu.int/Comm/enlargement/intro/criteria.htm
855 For a general overview of ethnic Bulgarians living abroad see Nyagulov & Milanov, 1998.
cause political conflicts with their country’s neighbours, which would destroy Bulgaria’s post-Cold War international image as a peace-loving Balkan state.

In general, the Bulgarian authorities’ preoccupation with the international image of their country has led them to follow a two tiered policy towards Bulgarian minorities living in neighbouring Balkan states. Firstly, with reference to neighbouring states such as Greece, the Bulgarian state has never raised the issue of human rights abuses of the slavophone communities living mainly in the north-western part of Greek Macedonia, around the regions of Florina and Kastoria, or the slavophone Muslim communities of western Thrace, known as Pomaks, either with the Greek authorities or in international forums. These communities were viewed as ethnic Bulgarians by the Bulgarian authorities in the past, but the Greek authorities have never officially recognized these communities as ethnically distinct or respected their ethnic and cultural rights. Most Greek governments since the beginning of the twentieth century, when the regions of Greek Macedonia and western Thrace were annexed to

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856 Assessing the exact population of the slavophone communities in the north-western part of Greek Macedonia and the Pomaks in western Thrace is problematic due to the tendency to exaggerate or downplaying their numbers depending which side is producing the estimates: the Greeks, the Bulgarians, the Macedonians, or the Turks. Estimating their numbers becomes even more problematic because many of the Pomaks and the slavophones of north-western Greece do not identify themselves as such in censuses conducted by the Greek state, fearing administrative or other discriminatory measures. The main political aim of the Greeks is to assimilate the members of these communities into the ethnic Greek majority - politically, economically, socially and culturally. Many slavophones of north-western Greek Macedonia have fled Greece to countries such as Canada, the USA and Australia, as a result of discrimination against them and punishment from the Greek authorities in retaliation for their collaboration with the communist partisans during the Greek civil war. Best estimates suggest around 30,000 Pomak people (http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/english/reports/pomaks.html). The national census of 1951, was the last official census to record the slavophones of north-western Greece as a distinct ethnic group, and puts their number at 47,000; various Yugoslav and Bulgarian sources estimate their number at between 300,000 to 350,000 people. Both these figures should be seen as either underestimates or overestimates. It would be safe to say that the number of slavophones living in that Greek region today is between 10,000 and 150,000 people. Poulton, 1991, pp. 175-180; Poulton 1995, p. 162, 167.

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the Greek state, have followed a policy of assimilating these communities ethnically and culturally into Greece’s ethnic majority.858

The reason why the Bulgarian authorities seemed not to be interested in protecting the human rights of the Greek slavophone communities of north-western Greece and the Pomaks of western Thrace was not because the post-Cold War Bulgarian political elite had changed its views with regard to the ethnic origins of these people. On the contrary, a large part of the political elite and the public continued to view both the Pomaks and slavophone people living in north-western part of Greece as ethnic Bulgarians.859 However, any attempt by the Bulgarian state to present itself as the protector of an ethnic minority, the existence of which the Greek authorities did not officially recognize, would have brought Sofia into conflict with Greece, which was seen as being harmful to their prospects of joining Euro-Atlantic institutions. Being a full member state of both organisations, Greece had the power to hinder Bulgaria’s accession by vetoing decisions.860

In addition, there was also fear that if Bulgaria raised the issue of human rights abuses of the slavophone communities of north-western Greece, Sofia would become involved in political tensions with the authorities in Skopje, who claimed that the ethnic origin of these communities was not Bulgarian, but Macedonian and, therefore, FYROM and not Bulgaria had the right to be interested in the living conditions of these communities. This would make Sofia look like a troublemaker.861

860 Ibid.
861 Ibid.
In terms of neighbouring states such as the FRY where a Bulgarian minority of approximately 30,000 people lives in the eastern part of Serbia, around the towns of Tsaribrod and Bassilegrad, the Bulgarian authorities were more sensitive to the issue of minority human rights than in the case of Bulgarians living in other neighbouring countries, and the human rights of the Bulgarian minority in Serbia has on many occasions dominated the agenda of Bulgarian-Yugoslav relations during the 1990s. For most of the 1990s, FRY was isolated from the international community which made it easier for Bulgaria to raise the issue without fear of being accused of destabilizing the region. On many occasions, the Bulgarian authorities managed to gain the support of international organisations such as the UN and after appeals by the UDF party and NGOs in March 1995 the United Nations Commission for Human Rights (UNCHR) expressed its concerns for the violations of the human rights of the Bulgarian minority in Yugoslavia and appointed Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Elizabeth Rehn as UN special envoys to investigate the issue. In their reports to the UNCHR, they described serious abuses, noting that the minority were refused the right to communicate in their mother tongue, to have their own schools and have cultural contacts with Bulgaria, all of which the Yugoslav authorities denied. At the 58th Session of the UNCHR held 10 March to 18 April 1996, the FRY delegation to the Commission distributed two documents which claimed that there were approximately 3,000,000 people in Bulgaria who belonged to national minorities, including the Serbian minority. At the same time, the FRY government issued a policy paper in which it suggested that the people in eastern Serbia whom the Bulgarian authorities

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862 Appendix, map 5.
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viewed as a Bulgarian minority were not ethnically Bulgarian but were in fact Serbs. It also argued that the living conditions of the Serbian minority in Bulgaria, the existence of which had been unheard of until that time, was much worse than the living conditions of the people whom Bulgaria viewed as a Bulgarian minority in the eastern part of Serbia.  

Another reason why the Bulgarian authorities were more sensitive to the human rights of the Bulgarian minority in eastern Serbia was that the Bulgarian minority in the FRY had been particularly politically active, inside both Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. The Bulgarian minority in Yugoslavia is the only Bulgarian minority in the Balkans with its own Bulgarian-language weekly newspaper, Bratstvo, published in Nis. In October 1990, a political organisation, the Democratic Federation of Bulgarians in Yugoslavia, was established in Nis with the Bratstvo journalist Cyril Georgiev as its chairman. The organisation was set up to improve the human rights of ethnic Bulgarians in the FRY and in the former Republics of the Yugoslav Federation.

The cautious way that the Bulgarian authorities handled the issue of human rights of Bulgarian minorities in neighbouring countries is also related to the active involvement of Euro-Atlantic institutions such as the EU in the domestic affairs of the states which wished to join it. This involvement led an increasing number of the Bulgarian political elite to believe that the future prospects of Balkan integration into international institutions such as the EU would lead to a long term improvement in the living conditions of the Bulgarian minorities living in neighbouring states and in the

869 Ibid.
cultural communication between these minorities and Bulgaria. As a result, a number of Bulgarian nationalist political groups, such as the IMRO party, which was preoccupied with the issue of human rights of Bulgarian minorities living in Bulgaria’s neighbourhood, began to acknowledge that Bulgaria’s integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures should be a priority for Sofia’s foreign policy.870

Sofia's Diplomatic Activity since 1989

Through the process of accession to the Euro-Atlantic institutions, Bulgaria’s post-1989 democratization project has influenced diplomatic activities in the Balkan region. In the long term, the process of accession has restricted the foreign policy options of Bulgarian political actors and aligned them with the policies of the Euro-Atlantic institutions towards the region. This alignment is more evident during the second half of the 1990s.

Also, since the mid-1990s, Euro-Atlantic institutions such as the EU and NATO have encouraged political and economic cooperation among the states of the Balkan region through political initiatives such as the Royaumont Process, SECI and the Stability Pact.871 As a result of these efforts Bulgaria has participated in a series of regional infrastructure projects, funded by international institutions such as the EU and the USA. These projects were based on neo-functionalist ideas which held that political relations among Balkans states could be strengthened by encouraging economic cooperation among them, in the same way that political relations among the states of

871 See pp. 335-338 above.
Western Europe had been strengthened, first through the creation of the Coal and Steel Community and later through the creation of the EEC.\textsuperscript{872}

Bulgaria had been involved in a number of regional infrastructure projects since the mid-1990s including the European Corridor No 8 which connects the Albanian ports of Durres and Vlore on the Adriatic Sea with the Bulgarian ports on the Black Sea. This aims to provide an alternative land route between the Black and the Mediterranean seas in the process of easing the traffic bottlenecks and pollution in the Turkish Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles.\textsuperscript{873} The project was conducted by Albania, Bulgaria and FYROM in the mid-1990s and funded by the EU ‘s PHARE programme.\textsuperscript{874}

Apart from infrastructure projects, political initiatives to encourage regional economic and political cooperation in the Balkans led Sofia to take political measures aimed at eliminating trade barriers with its neighbours. The best example is the conclusion of a series of FTA(s) between Bulgaria and several of its Balkan neighbours since 1998. These agreements were made primarily under the auspices of the Stability Pact and should be seen as the result of the political encouragement that the EU offered to candidate states in seeking the liberalization of their trade regimes through the conclusion of FTA(s) with either prospective EU members or states which enjoyed a special trade regime with the Union. The EU viewed these agreements as a first test for the EU candidate states in a competitive liberal trade environment.

\textsuperscript{872} Phinnemore & Siani-Davies, 2003, pp. 336-7.
\textsuperscript{873} The natural extension of the corridor in the West was the southern Italian ports and in the east the Black Sea ports of Odessa, Novorossiysk, Poti and Batumi. See appendix, map E7.
\textsuperscript{874} Triffonova & Kashoukeeva-Nousheva, 1999, pp. 279-283.
In July 1998, Bulgaria became a member state of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), which includes Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Romania, and immediately after its accession, began to liberalize its trade in industrial and agricultural products with the other member states. In January 1999, a FTA between Bulgaria and Turkey came into force which provided for full liberalization of Turkish-Bulgarian trade in agricultural goods from 2002 and for mutual trade concessions. Under the auspices of the Stability Pact Bulgaria has also concluded FTA with the FRY, Croatia and FYROM in 2001, with Albania in 2002, with Bosnia-Hercegovina and Serbia-Montenegro in 2003, and with Moldova in 2004. Like the agreements with Turkey and the CEFTA member states, the agreements which Bulgaria signed with all the former Yugoslav Republics and Moldova provided for a gradual liberalization of trade in agricultural and industrial products.

These EU and NATO efforts to encourage regional cooperation also affected Bulgaria's political stance towards regional organisations such as the BSEC. Sofia was initially against the evolution of the BSEC from an intergovernmental forum to a regional organisation whose political decisions would be legally binding on its member states. However, in October 1998, the Bulgarian National Assembly ratified the Charter of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (OBSEC), adopted by the intergovernmental BSEC summit held in June 1998 in

875 http://www.capital.bg/weekly/30-98/18-30-1.htm
877 Aybak, 2001, pp. 53-55.
Yalta, Ukraine, which transformed the BSEC into a regional economic organisation whose decisions would be legally binding on its member states. Participation in regional cooperation initiatives such as the Royaumont Process, SECI and the Stability Pact had established the view among large section of the Bulgaria political elite that both the EU and NATO were concerned with the strengthening of regional cooperation in the Balkans and that Bulgaria's involvement in the political activities of regional organisations such as OBSEC would facilitate, rather than undermine its prospects of joining the EU and NATO.

EU and NATO political initiatives after the mid-1990s to encourage regional cooperation in the Balkans led the Bulgarian authorities to develop more balanced political and economic relations with neighbouring states as a result of their concerns over security resulting from the dissolution of the Soviet bloc.

The choice of which states Bulgaria developed bilateral relations with at this time was largely determined by how the main political parties interpreted the fluid post-Cold War political environment. Thus, the BSP favoured bilateral relations with Greece, Romania and the FRY because according to the BSP leadership, Bulgaria need to cooperate with Balkan states that would be willing to take political and, if necessary, military action against Turkey's expansionist policies in the Balkan region. By this the BSP meant Ankara's efforts to assume the role of the patron state of the Balkan Muslim communities living outside Turkey's territorial borders by supporting these communities to claim respect of their human, religious and cultural rights from the political authorities of the nation states in which these communities lived, such as the

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general support which Ankara offered for Bosnian Muslims during the ethnic
conflicts in Bosnia-Hercegovina in the mid-1990s.

Greece and the FRY were seen as willing to join forces with Bulgaria in developing
an anti-Turkish political bloc. The ethnic majorities of both Greece and FRY were
Orthodox Christian and they nurtured anti-Turkish feelings for various reasons,
including the negative view of the Ottoman period presented in the historical
discourses of all three states and the foreign policy of the modern Turkish state. In
addition, both states were suspicious of Turkish Balkan policy in the post-Cold War
period; for Greece, besides historical rivalries over Cyprus and the Aegean Sea,
Turkey was a strong economic competitor in the new markets of the Balkan states,
while FRY was sceptical about Ankara’s political support for the Bosnian Muslims in
the ethnic conflicts between Muslims, Serbs and Croats in Bosnia-Hercegovina.

Apart from historical prejudices against Turkey, the BSP’s anti-Turkish foreign policy
agenda reflected an effort on the part of the BSP leadership to present the BSP as the
only Bulgarian political force interested in protecting Bulgaria’s national sovereignty
and interests in the unstable regional environment of the post-Cold War period. In so
doing, the BSP leadership hoped to rebuff the political claims of its political rivals,
according to whom the BSP was incapable of defending Bulgaria’s national interests
because it consisted of the same political protagonists who, under communism, had
surrendered the country’s national sovereignty to Moscow. Both the timing and the
domestic political environment seemed to favour the adoption of an anti-Turkish
foreign policy agenda. Bulgaria was emerging from a period when the authorities had
conducted a campaign to assimilate Bulgarian Turks into the ethnic majority. The
campaign had politically radicalized Bulgaria’s Turks who, with Turkey’s support, had managed to secure preferential political treatment and rights from the Bulgarian state. The Bulgarian Turks were the only ethnic group that had secured continuous representation in the Bulgarian National Assembly through their own party, the MRF, despite the fact that the post-1989 Bulgarian constitution banned parties’ parliamentary representation on an ethnic basis. This radicalization had provoked anti-Turkish feelings among the Bulgarian ethnic majority, which the BSP sought to exploit, and secure an undisrupted political position in Bulgaria’s post-Cold War political spectrum.\footnote{Poulton, 1991, pp. 166-168; Melone, 1998, pp. 74-76, 277-8; http://www.b-info.com/places/Bulgaria/news/96-12/dec27.bta; http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/pdf/cedime-se-bulgaria-macedonians.PDF; Melone, 1994; Melone, 1997; Bell, 1997, p. 366; Kanev, 1998, p. 84.}

That Bulgaria should foster strong bilateral relations with Greece, FRY and Romania was also determined by the fact that, unlike other Bulgarian political forces which at the time emphasized Bulgaria’s relations with the USA and NATO, the BSP gave priority to relations with the EU. Of the Balkan states, Greece was the only country which was a full EU member and, according to the BSP leadership, by fostering political and economic relations with Athens, Sofia could count on Greece’s political influence and lobbying in the political organs of the EU to ease Bulgaria’s membership of the Union. However, given the fact that Greece at the time was following a policy of strengthening bilateral relations with the FRY and Romania in an attempt to increase its political and economic influence in the Balkans and perhaps to restrict Turkey’s influence in the region, relations with Greece would mean that Sofia would have to align its regional policies with those of Athens and seek to develop political and economic relations with FRY and Romania.
When the BSP came to power in 1994, it launched diplomatic campaigns in Athens, Belgrade and Bucharest to foster political and economic relations with these countries. This campaigning and the BSP’s Balkan policy in general depended on PASOK being in power in Greece and the Iliescu led successors to the National Salvation Front being in power in Romania, both of whom the BSP had strong political alignments which dating back to the pre-1989 period. In June 1995, the socialist Prime Minister, Zhan Videnov, paid an official visit to Athens where he was warmly welcomed. He and the Greek Prime Minister, Andreas Papandreou, concluded several agreements and signed a joint statement calling for close cooperation in economic and military affairs. With reference to Romania and the FRY, Videnov paid an official visit to Bucharest in April 1995 and to Belgrade in February 1996, the first by a Bulgarian Prime Minister for 11 years, where he discussed with the Romanian and the Yugoslavian authorities political measures to improve political, economic and military relations with Bulgaria. From Yugoslavia’s viewpoint Videnov’s visit to Belgrade was a welcome chance to end Belgrade’s international isolation by building links with FRY’s Eastern Balkan neighbours and, thus counterbalance the country’s broken links with the West and former Yugoslav republics such as Slovenia and Croatia.

In contrast, the UDF tended to favour political and economic relations with Turkey, FYROM and Albania. By favouring political and economic relations with these states, the UDF hoped to present itself as a new political party with fresh ideas and policies.

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that were not politically captive to historical prejudices like the BSP. Such an image it was hoped would bring political gains to the UDF since it obtained the votes of some of Bulgaria’s Muslims in general elections, and left the door open for future cooperation with the MRF, both inside and outside the Bulgarian parliament.

Also, by establishing relations with Balkan states such as Turkey, who had strong influence in international institutions such as NATO, or FYROM and Albania which were not on good terms with Belgrade, Bulgaria would gain the reputation of being an ally of the West because Western countries did not favour any form of political or economic relations with Belgrade, which at the time was under an economic embargo imposed by the UN. According to the UDF leadership, this would increase the country’s international prestige, and would further Bulgaria’s chance of joining NATO and the EU. In the early 1990s, the UDF had emphasized Bulgaria’s relations with the USA and NATO more than with the EU and because Turkey was seen as America’s chief political and military ally in the Balkan region relations with Ankara were therefore more important than cooperation with Athens.

In line with these views, when the UDF came to power in October 1991, it sought to promote political and economic relations with Turkey, FYROM and Albania. At the end of 1991, the UDF government signed a treaty of friendship, good neighbourly relations, cooperation and security with Turkey and, in January 1992, Sofia recognized FYROM as independent under its constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia. In addition, the UDF leadership, including the former Bulgarian President and UDF leader, Zheliu Zhelev, strongly supported economic projects such as the creation of the so-called ‘East-West corridor’ in the Balkans, which called for the
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construction of transport and energy corridors running from Durres and Tirana (Albania), through Skopje (Macedonia), Sofia and Plovdiv (Bulgaria) to Istanbul (Turkey). The ‘East-West corridor’ aimed to establish a direct economic link between Albania, FYROM, Bulgaria and Turkey and, in this way, to diminish Bulgaria’s economic dependence on the predominantly Yugoslav-Greek highways in the Balkan region and on energy projects favoured by the BSP, such as the construction of the Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil pipeline.\(^8\)\(^8\)\(^5\)

In the late 1990s, the Bulgarian governments’ relations with the country’s Balkan neighbours were well balanced. This was mainly because the political cooperation which the EU and NATO sought to promote in the region presupposed avoidance of preferential political or economic relations with certain Balkan states at the expense of others. Preferential relations with certain neighbouring states provoked suspicion and insecurity in other states, which would undermine cooperation in the region.

Bulgaria’s balanced relations with its Balkan neighbours can be seen in Sofia’s bilateral relations with both Athens and Ankara. Unlike the preferential political and economic relations, which Bulgarian governments had promoted with Greece and Turkey in the first half of the 1990s, the Bulgarian government now sought to maintain balanced bilateral relations with both. This was seen as a prudent political strategy, which in the long run would assist Bulgaria’s foreign policy aim of joining both NATO and the EU. Both Athens and Ankara had strong political bonds with the West which dated back to the Cold War period, and keeping good relations with them

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would provide Sofia with two valuable political allies in NATO and the EU, who could lobby for Sofia's accession.

The UDF government that came to power after the fall of the socialist government in 1997 therefore sought to foster sound political and economic relations with both Greece and Turkey. Ivan Kostov, the Bulgarian Prime Minister under the UDF government, paid official visits to Athens in July 1999 and Ankara in October 1999, during which he was promised political support by the Greek and the Turkish governments in Bulgaria's bid to join the EU and NATO. In return for this support, the Bulgarian government pledged to promote in the Bulgarian territory the construction of infrastructure projects which would benefit Greece and Turkey. Kostov's government pledged support for the construction of the Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil pipeline and the so-called 'Upper Arda' hydroelectric project. This was part of an 'electricity for infrastructure' deal agreed between the Turkish and the Bulgarian governments, through which Turkey would increase its imports of electricity from Bulgaria in exchange for the involvement of Turkish companies in the construction of the hydroelectric plant in Southeast Bulgaria.

Efforts to maintain strong bilateral relations with Greece and Turkey continued when the NMSII came to power in June 2001. In January 2002, the Greek Prime Minister, Costas Simitis, paid an official visit to Sofia during which bilateral issues such as the progress on the construction of the Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil pipeline were discussed and the Greek Prime Minister confirmed Greece's political support for Bulgaria's efforts to join Euro-Atlantic structures. Due to the good relations between

886 http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isis/Frame/Frame6index.htm
887 http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isis/Frame/Frame6index.htm

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the two sides, earlier in August 2001, Greece had pledged to donate $54.29m to Bulgaria as part of the Greek government’s economic plan to assist in the post-Cold War reconstruction of the economies of the Balkan states. In October 2002, the Bulgarian Prime Minister, Simeon Saxkoburgotski, paid an official visit to Ankara where he met with the Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit. During the meeting, the Turkish Prime Minister, confirmed Turkey’s support for Bulgaria’s membership of NATO and discussed issues of common interest, such as the resolution of the property issues of Bulgarian Muslims living in Turkey and the clearing of minefields along the common borders of the two states. Also, in April 2003 the Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov paid a one-day working visit to Athens where he met with the Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis who renewed Greece’s pledges to offer political support to Bulgaria in its accession to NATO and the EU. In June 2003 the Turkish Interior Minister, Abdul Kadir Aksu, visited Sofia and met with the Bulgarian Minister of the Interior, Georgi Petkanov, to sign a bilateral agreement on cooperation between police forces of the two states on the issue of combating transnational crime, smuggling and terrorism.

The promotion of regional cooperation in the Balkans after the mid-1990s also produced some trilateral meetings. These occurred between the political authorities of Bulgaria and two other Balkan states and aimed to foster Bulgaria’s relations with these states through the promotion of political and economic cooperation on issues of

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888 In return for Simitis’ visit to Sofia in January 2002, the Bulgarian Prime Minister, Simeon Saxkoburgotski, paid an official visit to Athens in November 2002, during which the two state leaders opened a Greek-Bulgarian economic forum and agreed that, regarding the joint economic project of the Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil pipeline, each of the participants, namely Greece, Bulgaria and the Russian Federation would receive 1/3 of its profits. Greece repeated its political support for Bulgaria’s application to join NATO and the EU and confirmed its political pledge to go ahead with the project of reconstructing the Balkans and provide investments that would benefit Bulgaria to the tune of $54.29m. http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isis/Frame/Frame6index.htm.
889 Ibid.
890 Ibid.
common interest. Before 1997, the trilateral meetings were restricted to Greece and Romania as a result of the socialist government’s foreign policy at the time which favoured relations with Athens and Bucharest. After the fall of the socialist government in 1997, these trilateral meeting were extended to include Albania, FYROM and Turkey. Thus, the first trilateral meetings between the heads of state of Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria was conducted in October 1997 in Varna, Bulgaria, while the first trilateral meeting between Albania, Bulgaria and FYROM was held in July 1999 in Sofia. A second Turkish-Bulgarian-Romanian meeting was held between 1-15 May 2002 in the Turkish Aegean resort of Cesme, where an agreement was signed which provided for the cooperation of the three states in the event of emergencies such as humanitarian or natural disasters. Between 11-13 July 2003, at the initiative of the Bulgarian President, Georgi Parvanov, the Presidents of the Republics of Bulgaria, Albania and FYROM also met on three consecutive days in each of the three countries to discuss the progress of the infrastructure project ‘Transport Corridor No 8’, which involved the construction of a motorway, gas and oil pipelines, as well as an electricity grid connecting the three states.

Conclusion

Until the end of the Cold War, Bulgaria was politically marginalized in the Balkan region. At the end of WWII, this marginalization was the result of the Bulgarian political elite’s irrendentism and their efforts to recreate the territorial borders of the Greater Bulgaria of the San Stefano treaty. As a result, Bulgaria was treated with a

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892 Ibid.
893 http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isis/Frame/frame3index.htm
894 Ibid.
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suspicion which undermined all political initiatives aimed at fostering political and economic cooperation in the Balkan region.

Bulgaria’s marginalization continued throughout the Cold War period as a result of Sofia’s political alliance with Moscow and the Soviet bloc after the end of WWII. Sofia’s involvement in initiatives aimed at regional cooperation was discouraged unless it had Moscow’s consent. Even in periods when Moscow’s political control of Sofia was not strong, such as after the mid-1980s, a series of Bulgarian policies, such as Zhivkov’s assimilation campaign against the Bulgarian Muslims, undermined any efforts on the part of Sofia to play an active political role in regional politics.

Since the end of the Cold War Bulgaria has come out of the political margins and has taken an active role in regional politics. Sofia has been involved in political initiatives aimed at promoting peace, political stability, security and cooperation within the Balkan region. This is in contrast to previous policy and can be explained by Bulgaria’s attempts to develop its weak economy and install a functioning democratic system. This has helped post-1989 Sofia follow a more peaceful foreign policy than the previous totalitarian and authoritarian regimes.

However, this chapter has also tried to offer an explanation for Bulgaria’s post-Cold War Balkan policy that is somewhat different from those in the literature. According to this alternative explanation, since the end of the Cold War, Sofia’s Balkan policy has been influenced by the security vacuum in which Bulgaria was left as result of the dissolution of the Soviet bloc and the demise of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1990s. This vacuum was precedent in the country’s modern history and the only
way to resolve it appeared to be Sofia's accession into the Euro-Atlantic structures, which became a priority in Bulgarian foreign policy.

This process of accession into Euro-Atlantic structures affected three aspects of Sofia's Balkan policy and made it qualitatively different from many previous policies. Firstly, Bulgaria has continued to follow the territorial policy of the communist period towards the Balkan region. That is to say that, as in the communist period, since 1989, Sofia has not nurtured any territorial claims towards neighbouring states and has avoided promoting any policies that might be construed as undermining the territorial integrity of neighbouring Balkan states.

Secondly, the accession process has led Sofia to comply with the rules, norms and regulations regarding ethnic and religious minorities which are in force in international institutions such as the EU and the Council of Europe. Such compliance has led to the gradual improvement of the living standards of Bulgaria's ethnic and religious minorities, which, in turn, has had a positive effect on the country's relations with the neighbouring kin-states of these minorities. In terms of ethnic Bulgarians living in neighbouring Balkan states, the accession process has led the Bulgarian authorities to be cautious in advocating the human rights these populations and to avoid political measures and statements, which could have led Bulgaria into conflict with the countries in which they reside. Such conflicts would have not only damaged Sofia's international prestige but also could have undermined the country's efforts to join Euro-Atlantic structures. Thirdly, Bulgaria's accession process has affected its diplomatic activity in the Balkan region. It has prompted the Bulgarian authorities to establish balanced political and economic relations with their Balkan counterparts and
has led them to promote policies designed to bring peace and cooperation to the Balkan region. It has also led to them playing an active role in regional organisations such as the BSEC.

Sofia’s post-1989 policy, promoting stability, cooperation and peace in the Balkan region was not just the outcome of the choices determined by the country’s post-Cold War economy or of the influence exercised by Bulgaria’s post-1989 democratic system: it was a result of the process of democratization, which included accession to Euro-Atlantic institution, and which left scope for these institutions to influence the actors and many of the decisions of Sofia’s post-1989 foreign policy.
Bulgaria’s post-1989 foreign policy making presents both continuities and discontinuities with that of the communist period. On the one hand, the mechanisms, the decision-making process and the political agents of state foreign policy all changed in the process of democratization which the country has followed since 1989. New political institutions and organs such as the President of the Republic, the Parliamentary Committee for Foreign Policy, National Security and Defence Policies, and the Constitutional Court have been formed and play an active role in Sofia’s foreign policy making, while the roles of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have become more important.

In addition, unlike the communist period when foreign policy institutions and mechanisms were occupied by cadres which originated from a single political formation, namely the BCP, from the end of 1989, Bulgaria’s democratization created a competitive and free political environment which allowed the formation of numerous political parties whose ideas about foreign policy and national priorities varied. As a result of the different ways that there were perceived, Bulgarian political parties formed foreign policy agendas through which they hoped to attract the support of the Bulgarian electorate.

Since the end of the 1980s, Bulgaria’s foreign policy mechanisms and actors have been transformed and this has affected the foreign policy of the Bulgarian state. This is in sharp contrast to the theoretical views of many classical realist and neo-realist scholars, who tend to downplay the impact of domestic mechanisms and actors on
foreign policy. For classical realists, state foreign policy is governed by immutable laws deriving either from human nature or from the dynamics of inter-state competition. They are seen as fixed, politically bipartisan and transcending any changes in the domestic political scene. For neo-realists, most of the foreign policy choices of domestic actors within a state are shaped by the 'anarchic' international system, which lacks any central authority to enforce rules and norms or to protect the interests of the wider international community. This leads these actors to function as rational political entities whose foreign policy strategies are selected on the basis of the political, economic and military capabilities of the state to which they belong and according to which strategy will best secure the survival of the state and maximize its benefits in an 'anarchic' and competitive international system. In short, realists do not believe that either domestic politics or ideological changes influence state foreign policy.

However, contrary to these views, it is Bulgaria’s political change in 1989 which has brought a foreign policy to the country. The main foreign policy priorities of most Bulgarian governments since 1989 have been quite different from those of past communist governments. Under communism the priorities were the maintenance of strong political, economic and cultural relations with the Soviet Union and the states of the Soviet bloc, as well as with Third World countries that flirted with communist ideology. Under communism, the West was viewed as an enemy of the communist ideology, and thus of Bulgaria, whose national interests seemed to be identified with the political application of this ideology. However, this picture changed after 1989, when Sofia reviewed Bulgaria’s foreign relations with the countries of the former

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Soviet bloc, most of which were in economic decline for much of the 1990s, and began to foster closer relations with the West.

In addition, the periods of communism and democratization in Bulgaria should not be treated as two separate, uniform historical terms with regard to the way that foreign policy was conducted. In both periods, there were at times remarkable differentiations in Bulgarian foreign policy making, which further challenge the realist and neo-realist views according to which nation-states conduct their foreign policies as if they were rational actors, regardless of who is in power and regardless of the domestic political, economic and social environment. During the second half of the 1980s, the communist government abandoned the policy of isolation from the West and sought to improve Bulgaria’s political and economic relations with Western states such as the FRG, in the hope that this would gain it access to economic and technological aid which would enable Bulgaria to cope successfully with the economic crisis it faced as a result of Moscow’s policy of reviewing its economic relations with the states of Eastern Europe and significantly reducing the energy and other economic subsidies it had been providing.

During the period of democratization, Bulgaria’s foreign policy priorities changed according to which political party was in power. For example, when the UDF came to power at the end of 1991, Bulgaria’s priorities were to foster political and economic relations with Western states such as the USA, Germany and France, and international organisations such as the EU, NATO and the IMF. The BSP government which took over at the end of 1994, although it continued to foster Bulgaria’s relations with international organisations such as the EU and the OSCE, downplayed others such as
NATO and the IMF and instead sought to strengthen Sofia’s political and economic ties with the Russian Federation and with the developing states of the Third World such as Syria, Libya and Iran, with which Bulgaria had had close political and economic ties under communism.

The second UDF government, which came to power in 1997, continued to encourage political and economic relations with the West, giving priority to Bulgaria’s relations with the EU and working hard to gain Bulgaria membership. This contrasts with the foreign policy priorities of the first UDF government, which placed greater value on Bulgaria’s political and economic relations with the USA seeing them as more important than relations with any other Western state or international organisation, including the EU.

Thus, to what extent can theoretical analyses of realism explain the foreign policy making of states such as pre- and post-1989 Bulgaria? The empirical part of this thesis has shown that the theoretical framework set by the realists cannot fully explain Bulgaria’s foreign policy making under communism and after. This is mainly because the realists view foreign policy making as a static rather than a dynamic process in which domestic factors have limited influence; something which was not the case in either the communist or post-communist period.

However, it would also not be correct to overemphasize the role of domestic political factors on foreign policy making as many liberal theoretical scholars such as Doyle and Fukuyama have done and, thus, to conclude that it was Bulgaria’s domestic
political environment that was responsible for Sofia’s post-1989 foreign policy. As the empirical chapters show, Bulgaria’s post-1989 domestic political actors were not politically unconstrained in conceiving and prioritizing the country’s national interests and, thus, setting their foreign policy agendas. The actions of domestic actors with were determined by the security vacuum, understood in its widest form, which Bulgaria was left in after 1989 as a result of the demise of the Soviet bloc and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. After WWII, Bulgaria’s membership of the Soviet bloc guaranteed its national security through the protection of the country’s territorial integrity, which Bulgaria enjoyed as a member of the Warsaw Pact, as well as through the country’s political and social stability, mostly resulting from the generous economic subsidies that Sofia received from Moscow. These subsidies secured good living standards for the majority of the Bulgarian population and, therefore, guaranteed positive feelings towards communism, lacking almost everywhere else in Eastern Europe, except perhaps in Yugoslavia.

Due to its loss of guaranteed security, a large part of Bulgaria’s political elite and public reached the conclusion that the only solutions was to seek political and economic integration into the Western world. For a long time there was little consensus on what political and economic integration meant among either the public or the political groups. The majority of Bulgarians supported the idea. The fact that both the EEC, later renamed the EU, and NATO had played a decisive role in the politics of the Western world after the end of WWII increased the political prestige of the two organisations, membership of which came to be of high importance at both a symbolic and a practical level. On a symbolic level, membership of the EU and

NATO came to signify that Bulgaria had been accepted as an equal partner in the club of Western states.

On a practical level, membership was seen as offering a solution to two aspects of Bulgaria's national security. On the one hand, membership of the EU would consolidate Bulgaria's nascent democratic political system and secure economic and technical assistance, which, in the short term, would secure economic stability; in the long term, it would result in increased foreign economic investment and trade and, thus, improved living standards. At the same time, membership of a security organisation such as NATO would safeguard Bulgaria's territorial integrity and provide the means for improving the military capability of the Bulgarian army, which would contribute to Bulgaria's being able to defend itself in the event of a foreign military threat. This view could be seen as a variant of the balance of power politics by which theorists of classical realism and neo-realism refer to the formation of military alliances, through which nation-states seek to check and balance the military power of other states seen as posing a threat to their national security.\(^{898}\)

The increased political prestige of both the EU and NATO in world politics led the Bulgarian political authorities to seek membership of these international political entities. The accession process has been lengthy and rather slow and, as far as NATO was concerned, for much of the 1990s did not always attract the political enthusiasm and support of the political elite and the public. Nevertheless, the process was to affect Sofia's foreign policy throughout the period of democratization. The majority of Bulgaria's political actors aligned their foreign policy agendas to the political

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views and decisions on which the EU and NATO conditioned membership. By the end of the 1990s, as a result of this alignment, the actors had generally come to an agreement on the country’s main foreign policy priorities. Thus, in addition to membership of the EU and NATO, on which all the main Bulgarian parliamentary political forces agreed, the majority of the political elite maintained that Bulgaria should try to maintain good political and economic relations with all member and candidate member states of the EU and with non-EU states of the Western world, such as the USA, Canada and Japan, and support the promotion of sound bilateral and multilateral relations with the states of South-Eastern Europe.

Most of the political parties represented in the Bulgarian parliament since the mid-1990s supported the view that fostering political and economic relations with the West should not lead Bulgaria to neglect the country’s relations with the Russian Federation, on whom Bulgaria was dependent for the supply of oil and gas, or with developing states in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, which could become future markets for Bulgarian products which were not competitive in Western markets. This was on the provision that political, economic or any other relations with either the Russian Federation or the developing countries of Africa, the Middle East and Latin America did not conflict with the EU’s or NATO’s connections with these countries.

It could be argued that, during both the periods of communism and democratization, international actors such as the Soviet Union, the EU and NATO, influenced the foreign policy agendas and constrained the international activities of Bulgaria’s domestic political actors. This would confirm the theoretical view supported by neo-
realist scholars such as Waltz, according to whom the international environment constrains the foreign policy activities of state actors who are not entirely free to conduct state foreign policy in the way they might wish. The constraint on the international activities of state actors comes about as the result of such mechanisms as the balance of power by which neo-realists mean the political and the military status quo that militarily powerful nation states establish after large-scale international wars. The establishment and preservation of the military status quo is mainly based on strict control, which the powerful nation states exercise on the military capacities and the international activities of other states. On many occasions, such control can take the form of direct intervention in domestic politics of, or military action against any state attempting to gain enough power to disturb the international status quo.

A more detailed examination of Bulgaria's post-1989 foreign policy shows that neorealist views, with reference to the ability of the international environment to control the foreign policy activity of state actors, are not entirely applicable. First of all, the political control, which international organisations such as the EU and NATO exercised on the foreign policy agendas and the international activities of Bulgaria's domestic political actors, does not assume the form of arbitrary international behaviour of powerful nation states seeking to punish any nation state whose foreign policy challenges the international status quo, as the neo-realists would suggest. Such a form of political control is more related to Sofia's political relations with Moscow during the communist period. At that time, Moscow's control over the foreign policy agenda and the international activities of the Bulgarian communist regime was almost

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899 Waltz, 1990, p.33; Waltz, 1979, pp. 1-17, 116-123; Burchill, 2001a, pp. 87-98.
absolute, and any attempt on the part of Bulgaria to loosen this control or follow an independent foreign policy would have provoked Moscow’s political outrage, which could theoretically have led the USSR to intervene politically or militarily to tighten its political control on Bulgaria as it did with Czechoslovakia in 1968.

But even during the communist period, the USSR’s political control of Bulgarian foreign policy was not continuous, and was mainly depended on the domestic political environment within the Soviet Union. For example, Gorbachev’s decision after the mid-1980s to relax the Soviet Union’s political control Eastern Europe led Bulgaria to take foreign policy decisions which contravened Moscow’s wishes. For example, the BCP’s decisions to change the Muslim names of the Bulgarian Turks to Bulgarian ones in the mid-1980s led Bulgaria to the verge of military conflict with Turkey. This decision did not have Moscow’s political blessing and Soviet officials made it clear that Sofia should not count on the USSR’s assistance in the event of an escalation in the political crisis with Ankara.

In contrast, the EU’s and NATO’s control of the international activities of Bulgaria’s domestic actors was based on the political decisions which have been taken collectively by the member states of these organisations. This control was exercised through political mechanisms such as the Bulgarian-EU Parliamentary committee and the NACC, whose establishment Bulgarian state actors had consented to through bilateral or multilateral agreements concluded with the EU and NATO.

Although foreign policy making during the period of democratization was a more complex political process than under communism, and involved enlargement of the
network of foreign policy mechanisms and multiplication of the domestic actors involved, nevertheless, it still remains a political process confined to only a small circle of the country’s political elite. This circle included the leadership of the political party or parties in power, with some input from the other political groups represented in the Bulgarian parliament. The role of the Bulgarian public in the country’s foreign policy making was mainly confined to taking part in general or Presidential elections every four to five years, and to expressing their views with reference to foreign policy decisions taken by the authorities through frequent opinion polls. Important foreign policy issues, such as the decision of the Bulgarian government to apply for NATO membership, were arguably pushed through against the wishes of a large section of the Bulgarian public, which shows that the input of the Bulgarian public in the country’s post-1989 foreign policy making was limited.

In addition, apart from the political parties represented in the Bulgarian parliament, other domestic actors, including NGOs and ethnic and religious minority groups, had little say in foreign policy making. However, through mechanisms such as democratic conditionality, the process of Bulgaria’s accession to the EU and NATO has established the political framework for a broader and more active involvement of NGOs, ethnic and religious minorities and the Bulgarian public in future foreign policy.

Bulgarian foreign policy making after 1989 was a closed political process. Application for membership of the EU and NATO gave some prospects for its being opened up. However, Doyle and Fukuyama, maintain that liberal democratic states pursue qualitatively different foreign policies from states whose political systems are
Foreign Policy Making in Democratizing States: The Case of Bulgaria in the 1990s

non-democratic. This is mainly because the foreign policy making of liberal democratic states is seen as an open process which leaves little room for bellicose state authorities to pursue foreign policies that endanger the peace and security of the immediate regional and the international environment. Any bellicose feelings on the part of the political authorities of liberal democratic states are allegedly constrained by the public, which is viewed as a peace-loving political entity whose political support is vital for the ruling party in a democratic state to remain in power. As a result of the public's ability to contain any dangerous tendencies in the state political authorities, liberal democratic states are viewed as pursuing foreign policies which aim to promote peaceful relations with other states and to solve any problems which might arise, through peaceful means such as diplomacy.

There are areas where these liberal theoretical views are at odds with Sofia's post-1989 foreign policy making. Bulgaria's public was not always a peace-loving political entity with the ability to keep the state political authorities in check. On the contrary, at times the Bulgarian public attempted to impose its views on the country's political authorities, which might have led the country into political or even military conflict with neighbouring states. One such occasion was after the collapse of the totalitarian regime of Todor Zhivkov when the Bulgarian government decided to review Zhivkov's decision to change the Muslim names of the Bulgarian Turks to Bulgarian ones in the mid-1980s and gave Bulgarian Turks the right to reclaim their Muslim names. The decision caused a huge reaction amongst a large part of the Bulgarian public living in ethnically mixed areas, who, at the instigation of local authorities, organised public demonstrations to express their opposition. Such demonstrations put

heavy pressure on the Bulgarian government and, if they had yielded to the public’s requests, there would have been a risk of a further already strained relationship with Turkey with unpredictable consequences for bilateral relations between the two states, as well as the peace and security of the immediate Balkan region.

Bulgaria’s post-1989 foreign policy has presented many of the characteristics of foreign policy in states with consolidated democratic regimes, such as the USA and most of the EU member states. This is to say, Sofia’s foreign policy since the end of the 1980s has aimed at promoting peace and political and economic stability in the Balkan region, fostering political and economic cooperation with all Balkan states, and gaining membership of international organisations such as the EU, NATO and the IMF with whom the Bulgarian authorities have generally cooperated well. However, this policy was not the product of the country’s newly nascent democratic regime, whose political institutions were fragile and unconsolidated, and whose foreign policy making was largely confined to a small circle of the country’s political elite.

Nor was it the product of Bulgaria’s integration into a strong network of economic activities with neighbouring states through the establishment of strong foreign trade relations with these states or economic investments inbound and outbound with neighbouring countries, as some liberal views maintain in explaining why democratic states follow more peaceful foreign policies than states with non-democratic regimes. Bulgaria’s integration into such a network meant Sofia’s political authorities risking inflicting a high economic cost upon their country in the event that they disturbed political relations with neighbouring states. As has been argued in this thesis, the nexus of trade relations, which Bulgaria managed to establish with neighbouring
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states since the end of the 1980s, was small and in no way explained Sofia's post-1989 foreign policy towards the Balkan region, while, with the exception of Greece and Turkey, whose economic investments in the country have been high, the level of foreign investment from other Balkan states to Bulgaria, or from Bulgaria to these states, remained at a low level throughout the 1990s.

Sofia's post-1989 foreign policy is also in contrast with the theoretical views of scholars such as Jack Snyder and Alexander Kozheemiakin whose research focuses on the foreign policy making of nascent democratizing states. In Jack Snyder's view, the main factor explaining Bulgaria's post-1989 foreign policy would be the country's consolidated, check-and-balance democratic institutions. For Snyder, while consolidated democratic regimes pursue foreign policies aiming at peace and stability for the regional as well as the international environment, newly democratizing states that have not consolidated their democratic institutions are prone to bellicose foreign policies.902 However, contrary to what Snyder argues, Bulgaria's post-1989 peaceful foreign policy has been far from bellicose; something which should not be explained as the effect of the country's post-1989 democratic institutions. On the contrary, these institutions were fragile and with often confused in relation to the responsibilities of the President of the Republic who frequently clashed openly with the government on foreign policy issues.

In Alexander Kozheemiakin's view, the peaceful foreign policy of post-1989 Bulgaria could be well explained as the result of consolidation of democratic practices, norms or values in the country's political elite and the public. According to Kozheemiakin,

902 Mansfield & Snyder, 1995; Snyder, 1991, pp. 32-5, 49-52.
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consolidation of democratic practices, norms and values were the result of the country's intense political and economic interactions with consolidated democratic regimes of the Western world since the end of the 1980s. However, if Bulgaria's post-1989 democratic institutions were weak and far from being considered consolidated, the country's democratic practices, norms and values were even weaker and well below the level of democratic practices, norms and values of consolidated democratic regimes in the West. The post-1989 Bulgarian state suffers from high levels of corruption, as a result of which large sectors of the Bulgarian public, NGOs and the majority of ethnic and religious minorities are often outside the process of policy making and state authorities seem unable to exercise their political control over smuggling and illicit arms trading which could undermine peace and political stability in the Balkan region and draw Bulgaria into political and military conflicts with neighbouring Balkan states. In addition, the country's political elite has taken foreign policy decisions in a polarized political climate where democratic institutions interfere with the decision-making processes so that the political power of those institutions which there are seen as political competitors are undermined. For all these reasons, post-1989 Bulgaria should not be seen as a country where democratic institutions have been consolidated. Sofia's post-1989 democratic system is in a process of consolidation, but is far from being considered as developed as the democratic systems of Western countries such as the USA, Germany, France or the UK.

Even if intense political and economic interactions with consolidated democratic regimes of the Western world was the explanation for Sofia's peaceful foreign policy post-1989, and the consolidation of democratic practices, norms and values in

Bulgarian society, it should be noted that, in its almost fifteen years of democratization, Bulgaria has not been interacting solely with states in which democratic regimes are consolidated. Although the post-1989 security vacuum, along with the economic crisis which Bulgaria sustained led Sofia’s political elite to seek to foster political and economic relations with consolidated democratic states in the West, Bulgarian political forces such as the BSP still sought to foster political and economic relations with illiberal democratic or non-democratic states such as Milosevic’s Serbia, the Russian Federation and developing Third World states such as Iran, Libya and Syria and, indeed, a significant section of Sofia’s post-1989 economic relations, even in vital economic areas such as the energy sector, were conducted with some of these states.

In addition, contrary to Kozhemiakin’s view that in newly democratizing states consolidation of democratic practices, norms and values is the outcome of intense political and economic interactions between these states and consolidated democratic regimes of the Western world, Bulgaria’s foreign policy making during the period of democratization shows that any democratic practices, norms or values of the Bulgarian state in the aftermath of 1989 were not simply the result of Sofia’s political interaction with consolidated democratic regimes such as the USA, Germany, France and the UK. Democratic practices, norms or values in post-1989 Bulgaria were imposed on Sofia through institutional mechanisms such as democratic conditionality which international organisations like the EU used in order to align Bulgarian institutional mechanisms and political decisions with those of the EU before membership.
Kozhemiakin’s view that consolidation of democratic practices, norms and values within democratizing states could have the same pacifying effects on the foreign policy of democratizing states with those of the consolidated democratic states is also problematic. International events such as the Anglo-American military invasion of Iraq in March 2003 have shown that, when opposing or competitive political poles with reference to various international political events are developed between consolidated democratic states, it is quite possible that this will affect the functioning of the democratic system of small nation-states such as Bulgaria. This is because, on many occasions, the domestic political actors of newly democratizing states seek to legitimize and consolidate themselves in the politically fluid domestic environment of their country by copying political ideas and models of political behaviour or aligning their policies to those of international actors whom the domestic political actors value as worthy of imitation for the benefit of their country or for the sake of their own political survival in a politically fluid and unpredictable domestic environment.

In the case of the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, for example, the disagreement between the permanent members of the UN Security Council over the invasion led some of Bulgaria’s political actors - namely the NMSII government and the vast majority of the political cadres of NMSII, the political leadership and many political members of the UDF, and the leadership and the majority of the political cadres of the MRF - to side with the USA, the UK and Spain, which supported the invasion, while others - the political leadership and the majority of the political members of the BSP and some members of the UDF - sided with France and Germany which disagreed with the military action. It could be also the case that a prolonged political disagreement or conflict over an international event such as the Anglo-American
invasion of Iraq would create a deep political cleavages and lead to prolonged, as well as intense, political conflicts between Bulgarian domestic actors which, in turn, could have paralyzed the functioning of the country’s nascent democratic system and led Bulgaria to adopt bellicose foreign policy decisions.

The question is whether Bulgaria’s post-1989 democratization process had had any effect on the country’s foreign policy making. Bulgaria’s post-1989 democratization has been accompanied by changes in the country’s foreign policy making which have led the country’s policy to assume characteristics that can be traced to the foreign policies of consolidated democratic states of the Western world. These changes have led many scholars and policy makers to uncritically adopt the views of liberal scholars such as Doyle and Fukuyama to explain Bulgaria’s post-1989 foreign policy as being the result of the country’s successful democratization process. However, Sofia’s foreign policy making during the period of post-1989 democratization should be seen neither as a result of any successful process of developing democratic institutions, nor as the outcome of a successful consolidation of democratic practices, norms or values in Bulgarian society. Both democratic institutions and norms are still in the development process, are fragile and, thus, incapable of having any foreign policy effects such as scholars like Jack Snyder of Alexander Kozhemiakin suggest. Bulgaria’s post-1989 foreign policy should be seen as an outcome of the political consensus established among Sofia’s political actors to fill the country’s security vacuum by seeking Bulgaria’s integration into the political, economic and military structures of international organisation such as the EU and NATO, and fostering strong political and economic relations with powerful Western states such as the USA, Germany, France and the UK. This consensus has paved the way for the West’s
increasing engagement in Bulgaria’s foreign policy making, which has often led to the alignment of Sofia’s foreign policies with those of Western states and international organisations. On many occasions, that alignment has been the result of the Bulgarian authorities’ willingness to copy Western policies, because they viewed that by doing so, Bulgaria would win the approval of powerful Western states and, in this way, gain access to a series of political, economic and military advantages, including membership of the EU and NATO, within a relatively short period of time.

Preserving Bulgaria’s political consensus on integration into Euro-Atlantic political, economic and military structures in the future will be determined by two main factors. The first is that Bulgarian domestic actors should maintain the priority on Bulgaria’s foreign relations with the West rather than non-Western states or organisations, such as the Russian Federation or the CIS. The second is the preservation of strong political cooperation among Western actors on international issues and the avoidance of any prolonged politically opposing blocs among Western states. Although not immediately foreseeable, a possible lack of these two factors could set the ground for limited Western influence on Bulgaria’s foreign policy and the appearance of isolationist or nationalist political forces with foreign policy agendas, the application of which could imperil regional and international security.

- The end -
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APPENDIX
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Heads of the Bulgarian State,

1981-

Todor Zhivkov .................................................................July 1971-November 1989
Petur Mladenov ..............................................................November 1989- July 1990
Zheliu Zhelev ...............................................................July 1990–November 1996
Petur Stoianov ..............................................................November 1996-November 2001
Georgi Parvanov ............................................................November 2001-

Prime Ministers of Bulgaria,

1981-

Stanko Todorov .............................................................July 1971- June 1981
Grisha Filipov ..............................................................June 1981- March 1986
Georgi Atanasov ..........................................................March 1986- February 1990
Andrei Lukanov ............................................................February-December 1990
Dimitur Popov .............................................................December 1990-November 1991
Filip Dimitrov ..............................................................November 1991- December 1992
Liuben Berov ..............................................................December 1992 – September 1994
Reneta Indzhova ...........................................................October 1994 -January 1995
Zhan Videnov ..............................................................January 1995-December 1996
Georgi Parvanov ............................................................December 1996-February 1996
Stefan Sofianski ...........................................................February 1997-April 1997
Ivan Kostov .................................................................April 1997-June 2001
Simeon Saxkoburgotski .................................................June 2001-August 2005
Sergei Stanishev ...........................................................August 2005-
Bulgarian Ministers of Foreign Affairs,
1981-

Petur Mladenov .....................................................December 1971-November 1989

Boiko Dimitrov ...........................................November 1989-September 1990

Liuben Gotsev ...................................................September 1990-December 1990

Viktor Vulkov ...................................................December 1990-November 1991

Stoian Ganev ....................................................November 1991-December 1992

Liuben Berov (also Prime Minister) ..................December 1992-June 1993

Stanislav Daskalov ...........................................June 1993-October 1994

Ivan Stanchov ..................................................October 1994-January 1995

Georgi Pirinski ................................................January 1995-October 1996

Irina Bokova ....................................................November 1996-February 1997

Stoian Stalev ...................................................February 1997-May 1997

Nadezhda Mihailova ...........................................May 1997-July 2001

Solomon Pasi ...................................................July 2001-August 2005

Ivailo Georgiev Kalfin ........................................August 2005-
BCP Politburo’s (Full & Candidate) Members

1981-

- **12th BCP Congress (31 March-4 April 1981):** Todor Zhivkov (BCP’s General Secretary-FM), Alexandur Lilov (FM), Grisha Filipov (FM), Milko Balev (FM), Pencho Kubadinski (FM), Dobri Dzhurov (FM), Petur Mladenov (FM), Todor Bozhinov (FM), Tsola Dragoicheva (FM), Stanko Todorov (FM), Georgi Iordanov (FM), Petur Diulgerov (CM), Stoian Karadzhov (CM), Georgi Atanasov (CM), Misha Mishev (CM), Vasil Tsanev (CM), Chudomir Alexandrov (CM).

- **13th BCP Congress (2-6 April 1986):** Todor Zhivkov (General Secretary-FM), Georgi Atanasov (FM), Grisha Filipov (FM), Dobri Dzhurov (FM), Iordan Iotov (FM), Milko Balev (FM), Ognian Doînov (FM), Pencho Kubadinski (FM), Stanko Todorov (FM), Petur Mladenov (FM), Chudomir Alexandrov (FM), Andrei Lukanov (CM), Georgi Iordanov (CM), Grigor Stoichkov (CM), Dimitur Stoianov (CM), Petur Diulgerov (CM), Stoian Markov (CM), Nacho Papazov (CM).

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1 The names of the Politburo Members who are displaced here are those who were elected in the first session of the Plenum of the BCP Central Committee that followed the party’s congresses. On many occasions, the members of the Politburo were changed by a decision taken by the plenum of the BCP Central Committee in the interim period of two party congresses. For instance, Alexandur Lilov (in 1983), Ognian Doînov (in 1988), Chudomir Alexandrov (in 1989), Stanko Todorov (in 1989) were removed from office. FM=Full Member of the Politburo CM=Candidate Member
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Chronology of Events
Bulgaria and the European Union

- **8 August 1988**: Bulgaria establishes diplomatic relations with the European Economic Community (EEC).

- **8 May 1990**: Bulgaria signed with the European Economic Community the Convention on Trade, Business and Economic Relations. The PHARE Programme was opened for Bulgaria.

- **1 November 1990**: The Convention on Trade, Business and Economic Relations became effective. It envisaged the gradual elimination of the quantitative limitations on Bulgarian imports to the Community and mutual concessions in the field of trade in agricultural goods.

- **22 December 1990**: The Bulgarian Parliament adopted a decision whereby the willingness of the Republic of Bulgaria to become a member of the European Community was expressed. The signing of the Europe Agreement with the European Community was regarded as a step towards this ultimate goal.

- **1 October 1991**: The European Council decided to authorize the European Commission to start preliminary talks with Bulgaria for signing Europe Agreement.

- **20 March 1992**: The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria established an Interdepartmental Commission on the Association of the Republic of Bulgaria to the European Community. The then Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Ilko Eskenazi, was appointed as the head of the Commission.

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The list is based on the chronology of events of Bulgaria's relations with the European Union as presented on the website of the Delegation of the European Commission to Bulgaria [http://www.evropa.bg](http://www.evropa.bg)
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- **14-15 May 1992**: The first round of the negotiations for association between Bulgaria and the European Community was held.

- **March - December 1992**: Seven rounds of the negotiations as well as a number of consultations at political and expert level were held before a Europe Agreement and a Provisional Agreement on Trade and Related Matters were developed.

- **8 March 1993**: The Europe Agreement for Bulgaria and the Provisional Agreement on Trade and Related Matters were signed. The Europe Agreement provided a framework for the development of a profound political dialogue and for the establishment of a free trade zone covering trade between Bulgaria and the European Community.

- **15 April 1993**: The Bulgarian Parliament ratified the texts of the Europe Agreement and the Provisional Agreement on Trade and Related Matters.

- **21–22 June 1993**: The European Council was held in Copenhagen. The Council decided that the countries in Central and Eastern Europe which had signed Association Agreements with the EU could become full members of the EU in the future. The timeframe of Central and East European countries attaining membership of the EU would depend on their meeting certain political and economic criteria set by the European Council in Copenhagen.

- **27 October 1993**: The European Parliament ratified the Europe Agreement for Bulgaria.

- **31 December 1993**: The Provisional Agreement on Trade and Related Matters became effective. The business section of the 1990 Convention on Trade, Business and Economic Cooperation was suspended.
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- **January 1994**: The first Additional Protocol (link to Documents) to the Europe Agreement whereby the EU unilaterally made additional business concessions to Bulgaria became effective.

- **March 1994**: The first meeting of the Joint Bulgaria-EU Committee was held. Sub-committees on the approximation of legislation, competition, agriculture, transport, and customs cooperation were set up within the Committee. A contract on ferrous metals was drawn up.

- **14 April 1994**: The government of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted a declaration confirming the willingness of the country to become a member of the European Union.

- **24 November 1994**: Bulgaria and the other associated countries were invited to sign EU declarations on foreign policy and security matters.

- **December 1994**: Two rounds of consultations with the European Commission on adaptation of the Europe Agreement and improvement of market access were held in relation to the EU accession of the three EFTA countries Austria, Finland, and Sweden.

- **9 – 10 December 1994**: The European Council in Essen adopted a Strategy on Preparing the Associated Central and East European countries for EU accession.

- **January 1995**: The Second Additional Protocol to the Europe Agreement on the equalization of the trade liberalization time-schedule for Bulgaria and that of Visegrad countries became effective.

- **1 February 1995**: The Europe Agreement for Bulgaria became effective.

- **22 March 1995**: The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted Decree 66 whereby a special European integration mechanism, involving a
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Government Committee, a Coordinating Commission, and a Secretariat of European Integration at the Council of Ministers was created.

- **29 May 1995**: The first meeting of the Bulgaria-EU Association Council was held in Brussels. Bulgaria's strategy for EU integration, regional stability, and the free movement of Bulgarian citizens to EU Member states and the Schengen group were discussed.

- **6 – 8 September 1995**: A joint Bulgaria-EU Parliamentary Committee was set up in Sofia. The political, social and economic situation in Bulgaria, Bulgaria-EU trade and economic relations, cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs, the PHARE Programme performance and the political situation in South and Central Europe were discussed.

- **25 September 1995**: The Council of EU Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs approved a list of countries (Regulation No. 2317/95) whose citizens were required to have visas when crossing the external borders of the European Union. Bulgaria was on the list.

- **9 – 10 November 1995**: The first meeting of the Bulgaria-EU Association Committee was held in Sofia. A detailed review of the Europe Agreement performance was made.

- **December 1995**: The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted a decision to apply for EU membership.

- **14 December 1995**: The Bulgarian Parliament adopted a resolution for an official application by Bulgaria for EU membership.

- **15 – 16 December 1995**: The third meeting of Heads of State and Government during the European Council in Madrid held. Javier Solana was given the application of the Republic of Bulgaria for EU membership. The European
Council asked the European Commission to prepare an opinion on the membership applications of the associated countries.

- April 1996: The European Commission requested the Bulgarian government to fill in a detailed questionnaire, so that an EC opinion on the Bulgaria application for membership could be prepared.

- 31 July 1996: Answers to the questionnaire were prepared and delivered to the Delegation of the European Commission in Sofia.

- 3 March 1997: The European Commission invited Bulgaria to update the information provided within the questionnaire.

- 17–18 March 1997: EC Commissioner Hans van der Bruk paid an official visit to Sofia. The basic measures to be taken by the government for preparing Bulgaria for EU enlargement were outlined.

- 25 April 1997: The up-to-date answers to the European Commission questionnaire on Bulgaria’s adaptation to European criteria were submitted to the Delegation of the European Commission to Bulgaria.

- 16 July 1997: The opinion on Bulgaria’s application for membership was published within Agenda 2000. The Republic of Bulgaria was assessed as a candidate country which was not sufficiently prepared to start negotiations for accession to the EU.

- 12–13 December 1997: The European Council in Luxemburg decided to start negotiations for accession with Hungary, Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Cyprus. At the same time, the Council decided to accelerate the preparation for negotiations with Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia and Romania by starting a screening of the legislation.
Foreign Policy Making in Democratizing States: The Case of Bulgaria in the 1990s

- **23 March 1998**: The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted a National Strategy on Bulgaria’s Accession to the EU.

- **27 April 1998**: The multilateral screening of the legislation of Bulgaria started.

- **May 1998**: The first National Programme for the adoption of the Acquis was prepared.

- **10 March 1999**: The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted Decree No 47 on improvement of dialogue with the EU and for the establishment of a coordination mechanism for Bulgaria’s preparation for membership. The Council of European Integration and topical work were set up.

- **29 November 1999**: Memorandum on decommissioning Kozlodui Nuclear Power units was signed with the EU.

- **10 December 1999**: The European Council in Helsinki decided to invite Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Romania and Malta to begin negotiations with the EU.

- **December 1999**: The Council of Ministers of EU decided to update the Accession Partnership for Bulgaria.

- **20 January 2000**: The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted Decree No 3 upon which the Chief Negotiator of Bulgaria, the core team for negotiations, and work groups according to negotiation chapters were appointed.

- **15 February 2000**: The first Intergovernmental Conference on Bulgaria’s accession launched the negotiations for Bulgaria’s membership of the EU.
March 2000: A Committee on European Integration was set up within the Bulgarian Parliament.

28 March 2000: The first working meeting at deputy level was held. Bulgaria presented negotiation positions on 8 chapters.

25 May 2000: The second meeting at deputy level was held. Six chapters for negotiation were opened.

14 June 2000: The second Intergovernmental Conference at ministerial level was held in Luxemburg. Four negotiation chapters were closed ahead of schedule.

2 August 2000: Bulgaria presented its position on the chapter 'Free Movement of Capital'.

24 October 2000: The third session at deputy level was held in Brussels. Bulgaria presented one position and three new negotiation chapters were opened.

16 November 2000: The fourth meeting at deputy level was held. Bulgaria. Four chapters were opened for negotiation.

20 November 2000: The third meeting at ministerial level was held. The chapters Culture and Audiovisual Policy, External Relations, Statistics, and Consumer and Health Protection were provisionally closed.

1 December 2000: The Council of Ministers on Justice and Home Affairs decided to exclude Bulgaria from the Schengen visa list.

30 March 2001: The fifth meeting at deputy level was held. Three new chapters were opened.
Foreign Policy Making in Democratizing States: The Case of Bulgaria in the 1990s

- **11 June 2001**: The fourth meeting at ministerial level held. Three new chapters were opened and the chapter on Company Law was provisionally closed.
- **27 July 2001**: The eighth meeting at deputy level was held. Two new chapters were opened and the chapter on the Free Movement of Capital was provisionally closed.
- **28 November 2001**: The tenth meeting at deputy heads of delegations level held. Three chapters were opened, and the chapter on 'Freedom to Provide Services' was provisionally closed.
- **20 December 2001**: The eleventh meeting at deputy level was held. The chapter on Industrial Policy was opened and provisionally closed.
- **21 March 2002**: The twelfth meeting at deputy level was held. Two chapters were opened for negotiations.
- **22 April 2002**: The thirteenth meeting at deputy level held. The chapters on Economic and Monetary Union, Employment and Social Policy, and Institutions were provisionally closed.
- **10 June 2002**: The chapters on Free Movement of Persons, Free Movement of Goods, and Taxation were provisionally closed.
- **29 July 2002**: The chapter on Customs Union was provisionally closed.
- **30 September 2002**: The chapter on Financial Control was provisionally closed.
- **9 October 2002**: The European Commission’s regular reports were published, recommending the accession of ten new member states. Bulgaria was recognized as a ‘functioning market economy’. The European Commission expressed support for Bulgaria’s accession to the EU in 2007.
• **24-25 October 2002:** The European Council in Brussels arrived at the decision that the Commission and the Council should prepare a ‘package’ for Bulgaria and Romania to be presented at the Copenhagen meeting of the heads of state in December 2002. The ‘package’ should contain a detailed ‘roadmap’ for the accession of both countries and increased pre-accession assistance.

• **12-13 December 2002:** The European Council in Copenhagen expressed its support for Bulgaria and Romania in their efforts to achieve the objective of membership in 2007 and adopted the roadmaps of both countries.

• **19-20 June 2003:** The European Council in Thessaloniki supported Bulgaria in its efforts to achieve the objective of concluding negotiations in 2004 and join the EU in 2007.

• **15 June 2004:** Bulgaria provisionally closed all negotiation chapters with the EU and is therefore ready to join the Union.
Chronology of Events
Bulgaria and NATO³

- **13 July 1990**: Declaration of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs by which Bulgaria accepted the invitation of NATO's secretary General to establish diplomatic relations with NATO.

- **12-14 June 1991**: The Secretary General of NATO, Manfred Voerner, paid an official visit to Bulgaria.

- **20 December 1991**: Bulgaria participated as a co-founder state of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council.

- **14 February 1994**: Bulgaria signed the framework document and joined the Program of NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP).

- **28 November 1994**: A joint session between the North Atlantic Council and Bulgaria was held at which the individual Partnership Program (IPP) between Bulgaria and NATO was accepted. Since that session, the program has been updated annually.

- **16 October 1995**: Bulgaria joined the Agreement between NATO member states and the states participating in PfP on the status of their armed forces. This agreement provides the legal framework for the participation of military forces of states that take part in PfP in activities on foreign territory.

- **2-3 May 1996**: The Secretary General of NATO, Javier Solana, paid an official visit to Bulgaria.

³ The following list of events is based on the chronology of events on the relationship between Bulgaria and NATO as published on the website of the Bulgarian Ministry of Defence http://www.md.government.bg/en/date_events.html and the website of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs http://www.mfa.government.bg/index_en.html.
17 March 1997: The Bulgarian government accepted a National programme for the preparation and accession of Bulgaria to the North Atlantic Alliance. A decree of the Council of Ministers was issued establishing a governmental mechanism to coordinate efforts for preparation and accession to NATO, the so-called Inter-Agency Committee for integration to NATO. The committee is headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence and includes the Chief of General Staff of the Bulgarian Army and deputy Ministers of all Ministries concerned with these issues.

8 March 1997: A declaration was issued by the Bulgarian government which stated that Bulgaria's accession to NATO was one of the highest priorities in state foreign policy.

9 July 1997: NATO summit, in Madrid. During the summit, invitations were offered to Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary to start negotiations for membership of NATO.

20 July 1997: Bulgaria signed an agreement to participate in the Stabilization Forces (SFOR) in Bosnia-Hercegovina. According to the agreement, Bulgaria would provide the SFOR with an engineering platoon staffed with 31 servicemen under the leadership of the Dutch contingent. Later, Bulgaria would send to Bosnia-Hercegovina a transport platoon staffed with 27 servicemen and 10 vehicles in the multinational group BELUGA which offered logistical support to SFOR.

3 October 1997: Bulgaria hosted a meeting of the ministers of defence of NATO and PfP states from South-Eastern Europe.
• **4 December 1997:** Bulgaria decided to establish a permanent diplomatic mission to NATO and the West European Union (WEU) in Brussels. The first head of the mission presented his credentials on 18 March 1998.

• **23 October 1998:** The National Assembly ratified a governmental declaration on Kosovo by which it expressed the government's support for NATO's efforts to stop the ethnic conflict in the Yugoslavian province.

• **25 March 1999:** The National Assembly ratified a governmental declaration in which it was stated that the National Assembly confirmed that full membership of NATO was Bulgaria's strategic choice for the future. In the same declaration, it was pointed out that Bulgaria would participate neither directly nor indirectly in military activities, organised by NATO, against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

• **24 April 1999:** NATO's summit in Washington. Bulgaria was offered an Action Plan for future membership of NATO. NATO's South-East Europe Initiative was launched.

• **28 April 1999:** Bulgaria signed an agreement with NATO. The agreement provided NATO aircraft with a transit passage through Bulgarian air space.

• **21 June 1999:** Bulgaria signed an agreement with NATO. The agreement provided NATO's military forces with a transit passage through Bulgaria's territory.

• **6 October 1999:** Bulgaria signed a Memorandum with the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Memorandum stated that Bulgarian troops would participate in the United Nations peace-keeping forces (KFOR) sent to
Kosovo after NATO’s military attacks, under the leadership of the Dutch contingent of KFOR.

- **6 December 1999**: A session of the Senior Political Committee of NATO was held with the government of Bulgaria to discuss the implementation and application of Bulgaria’s Action Plan for membership of NATO.

- **9 February 2000**: The Bulgarian military units which agreed to participate in KFOR were deployed in the Dutch contingent.

- **9-10 February 2000**: The newly elected Secretary General of NATO, Lord George Robertson, paid an official visit to Bulgaria.

- **13-14 March 2000**: The Supreme Commander of NATO forces in Europe, General Wesley Clarke, paid an official visit to Bulgaria.

- **26 May 2000**: The Bulgarian National Assembly voted in favour of a draft of Chapter 27 of negotiations with the EU entitled ‘General Military and Security Policy’. The draft stated that, along with integration into the EU, Bulgaria actively sought to join both NATO and the WEU.

- **2 October 2000**: The deputy Secretary General of NATO, Klaus-Peter Kleibert, paid an official visit to Bulgaria. The General discussed with the Bulgarian authorities the implementation of military reforms of the Bulgarian army.

- **November 2000**: The beginning of the process of surveying the structure of the Bulgarian armed forces. The plan of the survey was as follows: a) Preparation of a preliminary survey by the Bulgarian government on the structure of the armed forces by February 2001; b) consultations with NATO headquarters in Brussels on the preliminary survey of the structure of the armed forces by June 2001; c) visit of a team of NATO military
experts to Sofia with the objective of conducting additional consultations on the preliminary survey of the structure of the Bulgarian armed forces.

- **23 January 2001**: Admiral James Ellis, Allied Commander of NATO for Southern Europe, paid an official visit to Bulgaria. Admiral Ellis held discussions with the Bulgarian authorities on the participation of Bulgarian military units in the KFOR and SFOR, the reforms of the Bulgarian army and cooperation with the south command of NATO with a view to Bulgaria's future membership of NATO.

- **21 March 2001**: Bulgarian Defence Minister Boiko Noev and NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson signed an agreement between Bulgaria and NATO regarding the transit of NATO forces and NATO personnel (the agreement was ratified by the National Assembly 6 April 2001).

- **22 March 2001**: The Council of Ministers agreed on transit passage for NATO's military forces through Bulgarian territory. The agreement was signed by the Minister of Defence on 21 March 2001 at NATO's headquarters in Brussels.

- **April 2001**: A session between the Council of NATO and Bulgaria which assessed the progress that Bulgaria had made on the implementation of the Membership Action Plan.

- **9 June 2001**: The Supreme Allied Commander of NATO in Europe, General Joseph Ralston, paid an official visit to Bulgaria.

- **13 September 2001**: The Bulgarian Government expressed the readiness of Bulgaria, though not yet a party of the North Atlantic Treaty, to apply the commitments stemming from article 5 of the Treaty, and to provide the
assistance that may be required in accordance with the statement of the North Atlantic Council dated 12 September 2001.

- **5 October 2001**: Sofia summit of the New Democracies with the participation of the heads of state of the Vilnius group countries, attended by Lord Robertson, Secretary General of NATO. The summit adopted a solidarity declaration with the United States and the NAC Decision of 4 October 2001, reaffirming the commitment of the V-10 countries to conduct foreign and security policies in accordance with the implications of the Washington Treaty, including commitments stemming from article 5.

- **14 November 2001**: The National Assembly unanimously ratified a bilateral agreement between the governments of Bulgaria and the United States regarding over-flight, transit through, and presence in the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria of U.S forces personnel and contractors in support of 'Operation Enduring Freedom' in Afghanistan. Under the agreement, Bulgaria would host the first ever US air force base on its territory.

- **19 December 2001**: The National Assembly adopted by consensus a declaration in support of the decision of 29 November 2001 of the Bulgarian government on the decommissioning and destruction of the SS-23 missiles.

- **10 January 2002**: Bulgaria joined the Memorandum of understanding, signed in London, concerning the formation of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. In February 2002, a Bulgarian contingent was deployed in the Kabul area.
• **14 February 2002**: A meeting in Bucharest of the Foreign Ministers of Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and Turkey launched a '2 plus 2' dialogue and cooperation regarding the early accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the North Atlantic Alliance.

• **27 February 2002**: The president of the USA NATO Enlargement Committee, Bruce Jackson, met the Bulgarian Minister of Defence, Mr. Nikolai Svinarov. The president expressed his confidence that the acceptance of Bulgaria and Romania in NATO would contribute to the strengthening of the southern flank of NATO and stressed that this would be a good reason for the two states to receive an invitation for membership in NATO in the coming NATO summit in Prague.

• **28 February 2002**: NATO’s Secretary General, Lord Robertson, met with the Bulgarian Minister of Defence, Mr. Nikolai Svinarov. They both assessed positively the activities which had been taken by the Bulgarian government on Defence management, planning, programming and budgeting in the defence sphere, and outlined as priorities for the future the improvement of the structures of the Bulgarian officers’ corps and the professional development of the young servicemen, improvement of the operational capabilities of the Bulgarian Army, and the readiness of the Bulgarian Army to participate in joint military activities with the Armies of the NATO member states.

• **18 March 2002**: General Joseph Ralston, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, during his visit to Bulgaria, assured the leadership of the Ministry of Defence that he would continue insisting on Bulgaria being invited for membership of NATO at NATO’s summit in Prague in November of that
year. General Ralston thanked the Bulgarian people for Bulgaria's substantial and timely NATO anti-terrorist operations in Afghanistan and gave an excellent assessment of the Bulgarian security company in SFOR in Sarajevo.

- **9-14 April 2002**: The Bulgarian Minister of Defence, Mr. Nikolai Svinarov, and the Chief of the General Staff of the Bulgarian Army, General Miho Mihov, visited Canada and the USA. During their meetings with the Canadian Minister of Defence, Mr. Arthur Eggleton, and with the deputy assistant State Secretary of the USA, Vaan Van Diepen, they presented the progress that Bulgaria had made in the field of reform of the Bulgarian Army.

- **18 April 2002**: Within the framework of the international conference 'NATO-50 years ahead. Cooperation and Stability in Southeastern Europe', held in Athens, the Ministers of Defence of Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Turkey made a joint statement of their unified position that the acceptance of Bulgaria and Romania by NATO would strengthen the Southern flank of NATO, achieving a geographical balance, and enhancing Euro-Atlantic security and stability.

- **21 November 2002**: At the Prague summit meeting, NATO heads of state and government formally invited Bulgaria along with Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia to begin accession talks with NATO.

- **29 December 2002**: Bulgarian government approved the team for the accession talks, headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Lubomir Ivanov.
10 January 2003: First round of the accession talks at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

7 February 2003: The National Assembly adopted a decision granting permission for over-flight, temporary presence and transit through the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria of forces and personnel of the United States and other members of the coalition. The decision also authorised the deployment of Bulgarian nuclear, biological and chemical protection units out of the country, in support of a possible coalition operation, in connection with the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1441.

26 March 2003: At an extraordinary meeting of the North Atlantic Council, the Permanent Representative of the 19 member states signed the protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty on the accession of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia, in the presence of the Bulgarian Foreign Minister Solomon Passi and the foreign ministers of other invitees.

August 2003: An infantry battalion of the Bulgarian army (462 servicemen) was deployed in Kebala, Iraq, within the Polish command zone.

May 2005: The Bulgarian parliament decided to pull all Bulgarian troops out of Iraq by the end of December 2005.
Bulgaria's Third World Debtor States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Type of Debt</th>
<th>Amount of Debt in mln $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(unless otherwise indicated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>government credits, trade credits, debt to Bulbank</td>
<td>78.739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>government credits, receivables of engineering companies, not subject to transfers by joint ventures</td>
<td>51.1; 306.62; 6.5 Libyan dinars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>government credits, from joint Ventures</td>
<td>17.8; 15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td></td>
<td>93.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td></td>
<td>59.769 mln transferable rubles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.9 mln transferable rubles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.97 clearing rubles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>on clearing account, under clearing agreements</td>
<td>2.44 mln clearing rubles; 1.37 mln clearing rubles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>on clearing account, under clearing agreement</td>
<td>3.6 mln clearing rubles; 597.736 mln clearing rubles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.366</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>military supplies, to trade Organisations</td>
<td>86.126 and 692,000 currency levs; 5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.291 mln and 2.158 million currency levs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.429</td>
</tr>
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4 The table is published in the Bulgarian newspaper Capital on the 29th of March 1998. The page is published on the website on http://www.capital.bg/weekly/11-98/22-11-1.html
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
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<td>44.241</td>
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<td>Somalia</td>
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<td>Tanzania</td>
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<td>11.230mln currency Levs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
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<td>2.156mln currency Levs</td>
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<td>Cuba</td>
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<td>288.7mln transferable rubles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>government credits, company credits</td>
<td>218.5; 11.5</td>
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<td>Bulgarian Imports from the Balkan Neighbourhood</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
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Table 1

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<tr>
<th>Bulgarian Exports to the Balkan Neighbourhood</th>
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Table 2
### Bulgarian Imports from the West

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>12,345</td>
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<td>1991</td>
<td>15,678</td>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>18,901</td>
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Table 3

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>12,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>15,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>18,901</td>
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Table 4
Foreign Policy Making in Democratizing States: The Case of Bulgaria in the 1990s

Table 5

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Table 6

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<tbody>
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<td>Data</td>
<td>Data</td>
<td>Data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreign Policy Making in Democratizing States: The Case of Bulgaria in the 1990s
Table 11

Table 12
Geographical Reorientation of Bulgarian Exports after 1989

UN Statistical Yearbooks 1999, 2000
Table 13.

Geographical Reorientation of Bulgarian Imports after 1989

UN Statistical Yearbooks 1999, 2000
Table 14.
Composition of Trade Commodity Exports of Bulgaria after 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>El Commodities not classified by kind</th>
<th>Miscellaneous manufactured goods</th>
<th>Machinery and transport equipment</th>
<th>Basic manufactures</th>
<th>Chemicals and chemical products</th>
<th>Animal and vegetable oils and fats</th>
<th>Mineral fuels, lubricants, etc.</th>
<th>Crude materials, non-edible, except fuels</th>
<th>Beverages and tobacco</th>
<th>Food and Live animals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
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Table 15.
Composition of Trade Commodities Imports of Bulgaria after 1989

Table 16.

Bulgarian Exports to the EU States and Switzerland after 1989

Table 17.
Bulgarian Exports to Prospect EU Member States of Eastern Europe

Table 18.

Bulgarian Exports to Middle-East States after 1989

Table 19.
Bulgarian Exports to the Balkans after 1989

Table 20.

Bulgarian Exports to the USA, Russia, Ukraine, Canada, Moldova and Japan after 1989

Table 21.
Foreign Policy Making in Democratizing States: The Case of Bulgaria in the 1990s


Table 22.


Table 23.

Table 24.


Table 25.
Bulgarian Imports from Russia, USA, Ukraine, Japan, China, Canada and Kazakhstan after 1989


Table 26
Decision-makers' information sources about EU (a comparison between Bulgaria and candidate states' average)

- National Press
- Magazine "European Dialogue Dialogue"
- National Television
- National Periodicals
- Personal Contacts with EU people
- National Radio
- Visits to EU countries
- Travel
- Internet
- Government
- EU Television Broadcast
- Periodicals from EU countries
- Libraries
- Press from EU countries
- Embassies, consulates and cultural centers from EU states
- The EU delegations in the capital of our country
- Radio Broadcast from EU countries
- University
- Cinema
- School
- Others
- None of them
- At work

Based on Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, 1997, annex figures 59& 60.
Table 27.
Where does your country's future lie?

Based on Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, 1997, annex figure 1.
Table 28.

Where does your country's future lie? (Bulgaria)

Based on Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, 1997, annex figure 1.
Table 29.
Where does the future of your country lie? (a comparison between Bulgaria and candidate countries' average)

Based on Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, 1997, annex figure 1.
Table 30.

European Union's Image in Bulgaria (1990-1997)

Based on Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, 1997, annex figure 9.
Table 31.
European Union’s Image in Bulgaria (1990-1997)

Based on Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, 1997, annex figure 9

Table 32.

Bulgarian people’s information sources about the EU

Based on Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, 1997, annex figure 19.

Table 33.
Foreign Policy Making in Democratizing States: The Case of Bulgaria in the 1990s

If there were to be a referendum tomorrow on the question of Bulgaria's membership of the EU what would you vote?

Table 34.

Based on Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, 1997, annex figure 32.

Table 35.

Based on Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, 1997, annex figure 32.
If there were to be a referendum tomorrow on the question of Bulgaria’s membership of NATO what would you vote?

Based on Central and Eastern Eurobarometer,1997, annex figure 35.
Table 36.

If there were to be a referendum tomorrow on the question of your country’s membership of NATO what would you vote? (a comparison between Bulgaria and candidate states’ average)

Based on Central and Eastern Eurobarometer,1997, annex figure 35.
Table 37.
Based on Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, 1997, annex figure 38.

Table 38.

If your country joins NATO before the European Union, would that make you: a) more likely, b) less likely to vote for EU membership, or would it not make any difference (1997)?

Results of the voting:

- More likely to vote for EU Membership
- Makes no difference
- Less likely to vote for EU membership

Based on Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, 1997, annex figure 38.

Table 39.
Do you feel informed about Bulgaria's accession process?

Based on candidate countries' Eurobarometer, 2001, table 5.7A

Table 40.

Do you feel informed about your country's accession process? (a comparison between Bulgaria and candidate states' average)

Based on candidate countries' Eurobarometer, 2001, table 5.7A

Table 41.
Projected Date of Bulgaria's Accession to the EU (What year do you think Bulgaria will become a member of the EU?)

Based on candidate countries' Eurobarometer, 2001, table 5.1
Table 42.

Desired Date of Accession to the EU (What year would you like Bulgaria to become a member of the EU?)

Based on candidate countries' Eurobarometer, 2001, table 5.2
Table 43.
People's Trust in Institutions (A comparison between Bulgaria and the candidate states' average)

Based on candidate countries' Eurobarometer, 2001, table 1.14.
Table 44.
Foreign Policy Making in Democratizing States: The Case of Bulgaria in the 1990s

Based on candidate countries' Eurobarometer, 2001, table 1.15A.

Table 45.

National Pride (Would you say you are very proud, fairly proud, not very proud, or not at all proud to be Bulgarian?)

- Very Proud
- Fairly proud
- Not very proud
- Not at all proud
- Does not feel to be Bulgarian
- No answer

Based on candidate countries' Eurobarometer, 2001, table 1.15A.
Based on candidate countries' Eurobarometer, 2001, table 1.18.
Table 46.
How would people vote on a referendum concerning Bulgaria's accession to the EU? (A comparison between Bulgaria and the candidate states' average)

Based on candidate countries' Eurobarometer, 2001, table 4.2A

Table 47.

How would Bulgarian people vote on a referendum concerning Bulgaria's accession to the EU?

Based on candidate countries' Eurobarometer, 2001, table 4.2A

Table 48.
Which EU topics would Bulgarian people like to know more about?

Based on candidate countries’ Eurobarometer, 2001, table 3.9.
Table 49.
How much Bulgarian people are aware of international institutions (Have you heard of the following international institutions?)

- The European Court of Human Rights
- The International Court of Justice in Hague
- The Council of Europe
- OSCE
- NATO
- The United Nations
- The EU

Based on candidate countries' Eurobarometer, 2001, table 3.2A

Table 50.
Awareness of International Institutions (A comparison between Bulgaria and the candidate countries' average)

Based on candidate countries' Eurobarometer, 2001, table 3.2A

Table 51.
Bulgarian people's sources of information about the EU

Based on candidate countries' Eurobarometer, 2001, table 3.7.
Table 52.
Based on candidate countries' Eurobarometer, 2001, table 3.7.
Table 53.
Table 54a.

Approval of closer relations with:

Table 54b.

Table 55a
**Bulgaria's foreign policy priority ought to be:**

- Europe
- Russia
- USA
- Other
- No opinion

Table 55b.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 56a.
The image of EU in Bulgaria

Table 56b.

Positive image of EU in Bulgaria

Table 57.
Foreign Policy Making in Democratizing States: The Case of Bulgaria in the 1990s

### Negative image of EU in Bulgaria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Table 58. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Italy</th>
<th>Poland</th>
<th>Czechoslovakia</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
<th>Romania</th>
<th>Bulgaria</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% world total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6361</td>
<td>911</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>671</td>
<td>3720</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>14751</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3156</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>193</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>598</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>193</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14751</td>
<td>2473</td>
<td>1002</td>
<td>1918</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% world total</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 59a.
Table 59b.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total 1991 (ECU millions)</th>
<th>% world total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>5421</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>3805</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechosl.</td>
<td>465</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>3199</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>906</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>399</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13731</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 60a.

[Graph showing exports from the four most economically powerful EU states to Eastern Europe in 1991]
Table 60b. Imports (ECU millions) from East European states to the four most economically powerful EU states in 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>East European states</th>
<th>Italy</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>8000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>7000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Meaning of the European Union for the Bulgarian public

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better future</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A European government</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of movement</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic situation</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens' rights</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucracy</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dream</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of cultural diversity</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 61a.

![Pie chart showing the meaninng of the European Union for the Bulgarian public]

Based on candidate countries' Eurobarometer, 2001, table 2.2

Table 61b.
The image of the EU in the Bulgarian public

Based on candidate countries' Eurobarometer, 2001, table 2.1A.

Table 62a.

The Image of the EU in the Bulgarian public

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very negative</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly negative</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly positive</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very positive</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 62b.

Perceived personal benefit of Bulgaria's EU membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 63a.
Perceived personal benefit of Bulgaria’s EU membership

- Yes
- No
- No answer

Based on candidate countries’ Eurobarometer, 2001, table 4.5
Table 63b.
Ethnic and Religious Composition of the Republic of Bulgaria According to 1992 Census

**Ethnic Composition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic/Religious Group</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Bulgarians</td>
<td>7,300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Turks</td>
<td>800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma (Gypsies)</td>
<td>313,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomaks ('Bulgarian Muslims')</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Macedonians</td>
<td>10,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenians</td>
<td>13,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlachs</td>
<td>5,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karakachans</td>
<td>5,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeks</td>
<td>4,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russians</td>
<td>17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>8,500,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 64a

---

5 The date provided below have been taken from Borden Savova-Mahon, Milena, *The Politics of Nationalism under Communism in Bulgaria*, unpublished PhD Thesis: School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES), University College London (UCL), 2001, p. 13.
Table 64b.

Religious Composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Christians</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgarians</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>1,1</td>
<td>98,8</td>
<td>0,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>60,4</td>
<td>39,2</td>
<td>0,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>71,8</td>
<td>11,4</td>
<td>16,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>12,7</td>
<td>0,2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 65a
Religious Composition of the Population of the Republic of Bulgaria according to the 1992 census

Table 65b
ETHNIC & RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA (CENSUS of 2001) 6

Ethnic composition of Bulgaria (according to the census of 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgarian</td>
<td>6,655,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>746,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gypsies</td>
<td>370,908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>15,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenians</td>
<td>10,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlachs</td>
<td>10,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonians</td>
<td>5,071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeks</td>
<td>3,408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainians</td>
<td>2,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>1,363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>1,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>18,792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>62,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>24,807</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 66a

Table 66b.

6 Data of the census of 2001 for the ethnic and religious composition of the populations of Bulgaria can be found on http://www.nsi.bg/census_e/census_e.htm
Ethnic Composition of the Population of the Republic of Bulgaria (Census of 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgarian</td>
<td>6,552,751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gypsies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenians</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlachs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonians</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainians</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Religious Composition of Bulgaria (according to the census of 2001)

- Orthodox: 6,552,751
- Catholics: 43,811
- Protestants: 42,308
- Muslims: 966,978
- Others: 14,937
- Not Stated: 283,309
- Unknown: 24,807

Table 66c.

Table 67a.
Major Religious Groups in the Republic of Bulgaria (Census of 2001)

Table 67b.

Major Religious Groups in the Republic of Bulgaria (Census of 2001)

Table 68.

71
Table 69.

Are you for or against the entry of Bulgaria in EU?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Against</th>
<th>For</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1977</td>
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<td>1979</td>
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<td>1980</td>
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<td>1981</td>
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<td>1982</td>
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<td>1983</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
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<td>1985</td>
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<td>1986</td>
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<td>1987</td>
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<td>1989</td>
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<td>1990</td>
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<td>1991</td>
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<td>1992</td>
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<td>1994</td>
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<td>1995</td>
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<td>1996</td>
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<td>1997</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The table shows the percentage of respondents for and against the entry of Bulgaria into the EU from 1972 to 1999.
Are you for or against the entry of Bulgaria in NATO?

BBSS Gallup International
ORGANIZATIONAL SCHEME ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION IN BULGARIA

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (National Aid Coordinator)

COUNCIL ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
CHAIRPERSON: THE PRIME MINISTER
SECRETARIES: DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR OF THE DIRECTORATE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND RELATIONS WITH THE IFIS WITH THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
MEMBERS: DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FINANCE, JUSTICE, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, INTERIOR, TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS, AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS, LABOUR AND SOCIAL POLICY, ENVIRONMENT AND WATERS
HEADS OF GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PARTNERS

COORDINATION COUNCIL FOR PREPARING THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA FOR EU ACCESSION
CHAIRPERSON: DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SECRETARY: DIRECTOR OF DIRECTORATE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION, MFA
MEMBERS: HEADS OF THE WORKING GROUPS

30 WORKING GROUPS
30 WORKING GROUPS HAVE BEEN CREATED CORRESPONDING TO THE CHAPTERS OF THE FUTURE EU ACCESSION AGREEMENT. IN THE GROUPS MFA COORDINATORS PARTICIPATE. GENERAL COORDINATION OF THE WORKING GROUPS IS CARRIED OUT BY THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION DIRECTORATE OF THE MFA

DELEGATION FOR NEGOTIATIONS
HEAD OF DELEGATION
THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
CORE TEAM
SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS
(CHIEF NEGOTIATOR/DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS)
Deputies: Head of the Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria to the EU
MEMBERS
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS:
- MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS 1
- MINISTRY OF JUSTICE 1
- MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS 2
- MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS 1
- MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR 1
- MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND TELECOMS 2
- MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND WATERS 1
- DIRECTORATE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND RELATIONS WITH THE IFIS WITH THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS 2

SECRETARIAT OF THE DELEGATION:
DIRECTORATE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION, MFA

Legend:
Reports to
Operational Link

Source: EU MFA, Directorate for European Integration 31/01/2000

Table 71.
Map 1.

Taken from Borden Savova-Mahon, Milena, *The Politics of Nationalism under Communism in Bulgaria*, unpublished PhD Thesis: School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES), University College London (UCL)
Map 1. Bulgaria, 1878-1918

Map 2.

The Balkans, 1878-1885

Map 3.

Taken from Borden Savova-Mahon, Milena, *The Politics of Nationalism under Communism in Bulgaria*, unpublished PhD Thesis: School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES), University College London (UCL)
Map 4.

Map 5.

The Macedonian Question

Map 6.

Taken from Borden Savova-Mahon, Milena, *The Politics of Nationalism under Communism in Bulgaria*, unpublished PhD Thesis: School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES), University College London (UCL)
Map 7.

Taken from Eminov, Ali, Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria, London: Hurst, 1997, p. 73
Map 8.

Taken from Eminov, Ali, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria*, London: Hurst, 1997, p. 73
Foreign Policy Making in Democratizing States: The Case of Bulgaria in the 1990s

Taken from Trifonova, Elena & Kashoukeeva-Nousheva, Vanya (eds.), Regional Infrastructure Projects in South-Eastern Europe, Sofia: Institute for Regional and International Studies, 1999.
Taken from Trifonova, Elena & Kashoukeeva-Nousheva, Vanya (eds.), *Regional Infrastructure Projects in South-Eastern Europe*, Sofia: Institute for Regional and International Studies, 1999.