

North Macedonia Security Threats in the Third Decade of XXI. Century: Institutional and Political Framework as a Key Determinant of Instability

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Abstract

North Macedonia in the post-Yugoslav frame was the only republic that has declared independence without any military clashes, as a consequence of the independence declaration. Such circumstances have, on the European level, promoted this state as a so-called oasis of peace in the Balkans, bearing in mind the war challenges in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and on the territory of Kosovo. North Macedonia, on contrary, has faced with armed clashes on its territory at the beginning of the XXI. century. These were clashes in the northern and western parts of the state between Macedonian security forces and self-declared Albanian armed groups. The realistic purpose, from the side of Albanian paramilitary groups, for the armed attacks against military and police forces of North Macedonia was never confirmed, bearing in mind just finished war on Kosovo territory, but also the position of Macedonian Albanians, as a dominant ethnic minority which, in that moment has had active role in political and social life within that state. There are many studies and researches that have different positions, stating that the goal of the armed attacks by Albanian armed groups was separation of Macedonian territory for the purpose of creating Great Albanian state, while, from the other side, including the official version of the leaders of that paramilitary groups, was the position that human rights for Albanian society in North Macedonia was the purpose of the battles. But, in this paper our goal is not to find out the purpose of the armed clashes in North Macedonia during the 2001, but to determine what are the main security risks and threats for North Macedonia, whether and to what extend ongoing challenges and threats are ethnically motivated, how much relations between Macedonians and Albanians within North Macedonia are misused as a political instrument and, as an essential question - what is the key determinant of the stability of North Macedonia in the upcoming period. Methodological concretization will be used as an analytical tool in the process of triple analyses, on the political, social and ethnic level, which should lead us to the answers. Triple analyses will be used as an empirical tool, while, from the stands of structural realists, we will try to find out the answer about the security issues which are facing small states in international relations, respectively whether they are exporters of instability, do they have capacities to lead sovereign security policy and what are key determinants of their security mosaic. The ultimate, essential goal of the research would be to show up that North Macedonia does not have ethnic security challenges and threats, that its security mosaic essentially is not endangered from “imported” threats and, finally, that its stability and sustainability depends on internal threats which have raised as a consequence of challenges within the institutional and political framework.

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