

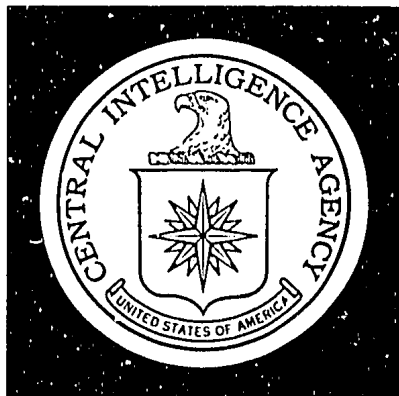
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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

WEEKLY SUMMARY

Special Report

*The Macedonian Syndrome-The Chronic Crisis
In Yugoslav-Bulgarian Relations*

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МАКЕДОНИЈА



THE MACEDONIAN SYNDROME—The Chronic Crisis in Yugoslav-Bulgarian Relations

During the past four years Yugoslavia and Bulgaria have exchanged a torrent of invective over a seemingly obscure historical issue—the ethnic and linguistic ancestry of the peoples of the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Yugoslavs claim that all the clamor, when stripped of its academic pretensions, reveals a strident irredentism on the part of the Bulgarians.

For Sofia, the Macedonian question is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it is exploited for domestic Bulgarian consumption, affording the regime the only safe outlet for Bulgarian nationalism without fear of intervention by Moscow. Not even the Yugoslavs believe that Sofia, at the present time, intends to retake Yugoslav Macedonia by force. On the other hand, it is equally clear that the Bulgarian leadership will be alert to any opportunity to loosen Belgrade's hold over Macedonia in the post-Tito era, and it has already prepared the way with strong claims of inherent rights in Macedonia.

Yugoslavia looks on Bulgaria's refusal to recognize the existence of a separate Macedonian nationality as a potential threat to Yugoslav territorial integrity. The Yugoslavs have also recently become uneasy over what they consider the Kremlin's tacit approval of Sofia's claim that Macedonia is inhabited by Bulgarians. In Belgrade, for example, it has been noted that Bulgarian pressures in Macedonia have at times peaked when tensions have been unusually high between Belgrade and Moscow, as when Yugoslavia voiced its opposition to the Soviet-led occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

The intensity of the Yugoslav reaction to the argument over Macedonia must be viewed against a backdrop of serious internal economic problems and the pending major governmental reorganization. There has been no attempt to hide the seriousness or magnitude of

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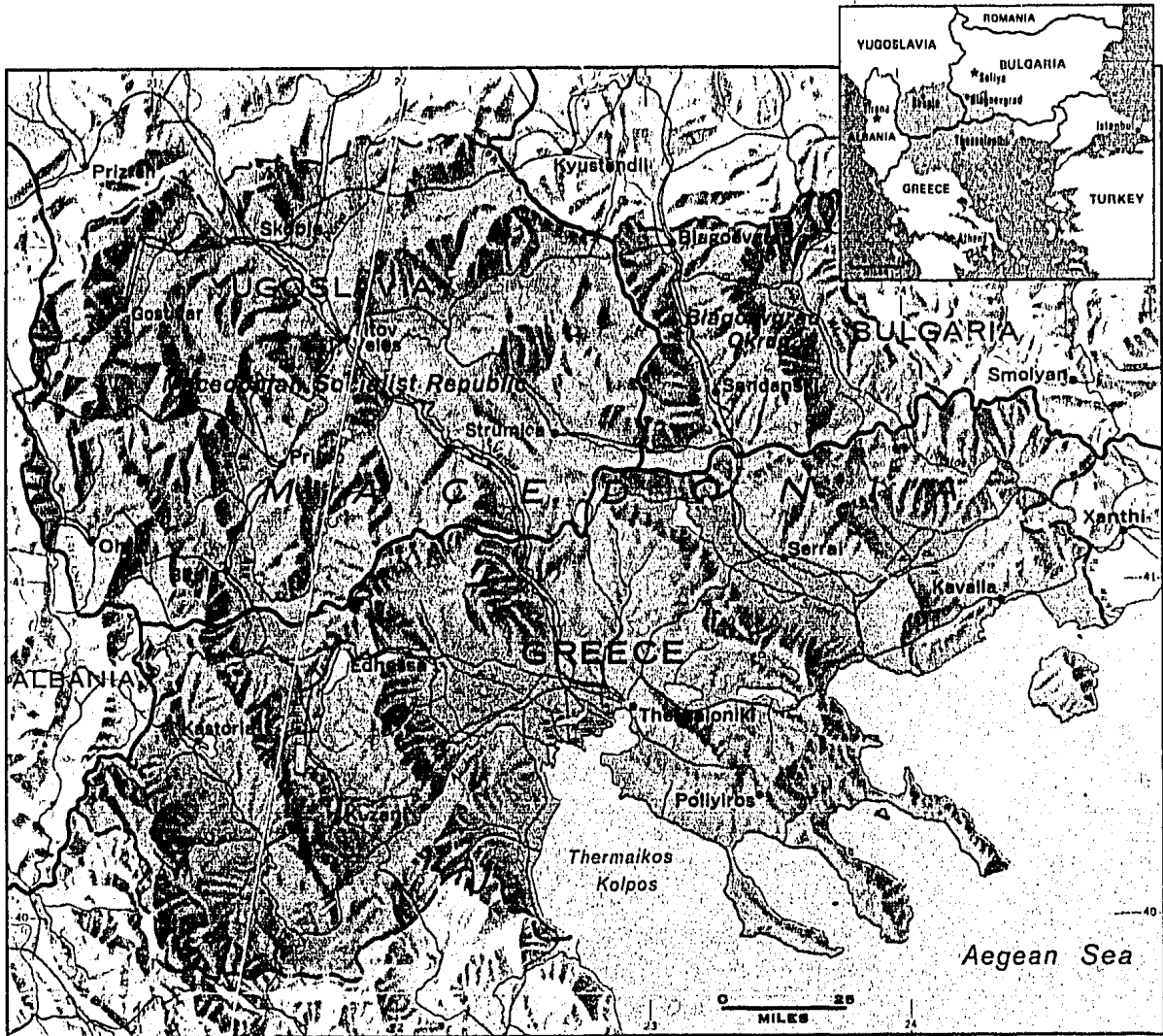
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Yugoslavia VARDAR MACEDONIA (Macedonian Socialist Republic)		Bulgaria PIRIN MACEDONIA (Blagoevgrad Okrug)	
Skopje	CAPITAL	Blagoevgrad	
9,928	AREA (sq. mi.)	2,504	
1,641,000 (1970 est.)	POPULATION	301,000 (1965 est.)	
7.6	PERCENT OF NATIONAL POPULATION	3.7	
71.2	PERCENT OF REGION ETHNIC MACEDONIANS		

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the problems that confront Yugoslavia, and Tito's age adds a note of urgency to the situation. In many respects, therefore, the Macedonian problem and Bulgaria's vague threat to regain the region are an intrinsic part of the succession problem. The Yugoslavs, most of whom wish to hold their federation together after Tito, are keeping an eye on the potential for political instability and disintegration that could come with Tito's passing, which Bulgaria might try to exploit.

To the Yugoslav leadership the dispute is not without its positive aspects. By overdramatizing the immediate threat, Belgrade apparently hopes to minimize internal dissension and rally support for the new federal system, as well as to keep world attention focused on Yugoslavia and on the "implied" Soviet threat.

Actually, the ebbs and flows of the Macedonian problem have not always reflected the status of Yugoslav-Soviet relations. Party and government boss Todor Zhivkov provoked the present crisis in late 1967 at a time when Belgrade and Moscow were on fairly good terms. Historically, the Macedonian question has always had something of a life of its own, reflecting traditional Balkan hostilities and Bulgarian and Yugoslav internal requirements, as well as the prevailing winds in the Eastern European political arena.

Through 1967 and early 1968, Bulgaria took the initiative in the dispute, promoting its claims to Macedonia. But in mid-1968, because of festering problems in the Kremlin's relations with Eastern Europe, the Soviets became active in the confrontation. Then, in late 1969, when both Moscow and Sofia desired a temporary abatement in the intensity of the dispute, the beleaguered Yugoslavs verbally threw down the gauntlet to their two antagonists and have been on the propaganda attack ever since. Thus the future direction of the Macedonian conflict depends now on the preferences of Belgrade.

1912—One of five wars in modern times over Macedonia

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Background

Bulgaria's campaign questions the Yugoslavs' right to sovereignty over Macedonia, one of the Yugoslav federation's six republics. Sofia claims that all Macedonians are really ethnic Bulgarians cut off from the motherland. This position predates the Communist era in Bulgaria. In 1878, the Treaty of San Stefano gave the modern Bulgarian state control of the lands of Macedonia for the first time. A few months later this territory was expropriated by the great powers and given to Serbia (now part of Yugoslavia). Most Bulgarian governments since then have continued to lay claim to this province, although since 1878, Sofia has held the land for a total of only four years.

Belgrade's commitment to a separate Macedonian republic within the Yugoslav state dates from the postwar establishment of the Communist regime. Tito's personal involvement in Macedonia goes back at least to January 1943. At that time he appealed to the Macedonians in Yugoslavia to fight for their independence and to seek national identity through self-determination, i.e., through the establishment of a Macedonian Republic in union with the Yugoslav peoples. Following World War II, Tito put his words into action and a separate Macedonian Republic was created in 1944 as an integral part of the Yugoslav federation. This republic did not include Pirin (Bulgarian Macedonia).

The Communists' seizure of power in both Bulgaria and Yugoslavia seemed to mark the end of the Macedonian issue as a point of contention between the two countries. Bulgarian party leaders condemned the actions of past Bulgarian governments in Macedonia and proclaimed the province an integral part of Yugoslavia. Belgrade and Sofia—stressing reconciliation—agreed in 1947 that, in the long run, a reunion of the Macedonian peoples might be possible.

The charismatic Yugoslav leader, however, had plans for a "greater" Macedonia. He pressed the concept of a larger Yugoslav-Bulgarian con-

federation headquartered in Belgrade. Sofia was receptive to the idea of forming a federation of "Southslavs" in the Balkans—the Dimitrov Plan—but balked at the suggestion that Pirin Macedonia be initially joined to its Yugoslav counterpart as a separate republic. For a time, Macedonians from Yugoslavia were even allowed to open schools and bookshops in Pirin, and the Yugoslav Macedonian-language newspaper was freely sold in Bulgaria.

Even after Tito's break with Stalin in 1948, when Bulgarian-Yugoslav relations also took a turn for the worse, there was no resurrection of past claims to Macedonia. This, however, may have been due to the fact that in the period between the executions of the Bulgarian national Communists in the 1950s and the emergence of the Zhivkov clique in the early 1960s, any expression of nationalism was looked upon with great suspicion in Bulgaria and the USSR.

There was some minor fencing over Macedonia between Belgrade and Sofia in the late 1950s, when the Bulgarians again began to remonstrate over the loss of this province after San Stefano. This vocalizing was usually limited to academic circles in both countries. Scholarly articles on Macedonia were exchanged by social scientists, who debated the true cultural and historical heritage of the people. In the course of the Tito-Zhivkov talks in 1963 and 1965, as well as in Zhivkov's discussions with Yugoslav Macedonian chief Crvenkovski in 1967, it was agreed that "these differences" should not be used as an excuse for polemics; rather, "experts should discuss them and establish the historical truth about them."

The Macedonian issue was revived in a campaign, not very well thought out, that Zhivkov launched in early 1965. The idea was to develop an ethos of patriotism and national spirit in the youth of the then emotionally stagnant country. The dispute over Macedonia became a key means of building national pride, which had been stifled by the Bulgarian Communist Party's subservience

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**Selected Boundary Changes,
1878-1970**

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Signing of Treaty of San Stefano, March 1878

to the Soviet Union. Studies were launched "analyzing" the past relationship of the Macedonian people to Bulgaria. The party re-evaluated its past stand on the Macedonian issue and concluded that it had taken an incorrect and "non-Leninist position" by dropping Bulgarian claims to Macedonia. The party then reasoned that "in doing so, Bulgaria had accepted foreign rule for an area that had a predominantly Bulgarian population." The head of the Bulgarian Writers' Union went so far in the autumn of 1966 as to deny the existence of a separate Macedonian language, concluding that it really was a variant of Bulgarian (a statement with which many Western linguists would agree). During the same year, a leading ethnographer publicly took exception to an article in a Soviet journal treating the Macedonians as a separate nation or people.

San Stefano Revived

By 1967 many Bulgarian academicians and politicians were engaged in turning out books and articles supporting the contention that Macedonia, belonged ethnically, historically, and spiritually to the Bulgarian nation. Long-dead irredentist authors and their works were "rediscovered" and republished.

In January 1967, Sofia celebrated the birthday of Gotse Delchev, a departed Macedonian patriot declared for the occasion to be a "Bulgarian patriot." In December, an article in the party newspaper by an eminent historian—commenting on the upcoming anniversary of the treaty of San Stefano—concluded that the pact

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was based on "generally recognized ethnographic frontiers of the Bulgarian people at that time." In Zhivkov's *Theses on Youth*, also published in December 1967, a whole chapter was devoted to the need for an expansion of patriotic education. Bulgarians, he said, do not make "sufficient use of our glorious historic past in order to educate the youth in a patriotic spirit." The Yugoslavs consider that the present Macedonian crisis dates from the winter of 1967, and accrued from these Bulgarian actions.

The dispute was raised to the level of official bilateral relations on 29 January 1968, when the Bulgarian ambassador in Belgrade was advised by the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry of the "harm" Sofia's pursuit of the Macedonian issue could have on relations between the two countries. Nevertheless, on the 90th anniversary of San Stefano, in February 1968, the Bulgars held a massive ceremony in Sofia, during which the participants lamented Bulgaria's loss of Macedonia.

After the San Stefano celebrations, neither side showed an inclination to let the issue drop; instead, outside events heated the quarrel to serious dimensions. The occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968 increased Belgrade's suspicion of Soviet-Bulgarian collaboration on Macedonia. As Yugoslav support for the Dubcek regime continued throughout the spring and summer of 1968, the Kremlin became increasingly unhappy with Belgrade. At the same time, the Bulgarian communications media mounted a loud assault on the policies and programs of the League of Yugoslav Communists, and the threat of Bulgarian irredentism became real to Belgrade. In mid-1968, the Bulgarian military newspaper, echoing the Brezhnev Doctrine, announced that it was the "duty of the Warsaw Pact to help every country where socialism" was "in danger," implying that what was true for Czechoslovakia could also be true for Yugoslavia. In August, after the Czechoslovak invasion, a Bulgarian deputy minister of defense (who had fought alongside Tito as a partisan) pointedly reiterated the threat, stating that Bulgaria was ready to go "anywhere else" to rescue socialism.



Zhivkov Gives Speech Fostering Bulgarian Nationalism

An objective analysis of historical fact shows that Macedonia has never existed, ethnically or nationally, as a separate state. Macedonia is a geographical region, just as are Thrace, Moesia, Dobruja, and others. The name Macedonia is a geographical term which has undergone many and momentous changes . . .

The Bulgarian Communist Party and the People's Republic of Bulgaria recognize the existence of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia as a component part of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, and strive to strengthen their friendly ties with it. But the BCP and our country cannot ignore the fact that a stubborn policy of forceful denationalization of the Bulgarian population is being implemented in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. Feelings of nationalist and great-nation chauvinism are being incited, for the purpose of turning the people in Macedonia against the Bulgarian nation.

The Macedonian Problem: Historical-Political Aspects Historical Institute, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences Sofia, November 1968

* * *

Our foreign policy in the Balkans is based on the fundamental idea that there should be no controversial questions among the Balkan countries, inherited from the past, which could not be solved peaceably by way of negotiations and protection of mutual interests. It is our position that emphasis must be placed on positive things which the Balkan countries have in common and which unite them, and not on the things which divide them.

Todor Zhivkov
April 1969

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Tito's open criticism of the events of August 1968 apparently prompted Zhivkov—undoubtedly with Soviet endorsement—to adopt an even stronger propaganda and diplomatic campaign against Yugoslavia. The polemics were primarily based on the Macedonian issue but they also contained hostile references to Yugoslav political and economic practices, emphasizing the social and economic problems of the country. It was naively hoped that the Bulgarian campaign would put enough pressure on Belgrade to distract the Yugoslavs from events in Prague and moderate their response to the invasion.

In November 1968, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, under party direction, issued a pamphlet claiming that Macedonia had never existed ethnically, nationally, or linguistically as a nation apart from Bulgaria. The publication stated that all Macedonians, even those in Yugoslavia, actually were Bulgarians. It denounced Belgrade for forcing the integration of the Macedonian people with the Yugoslavs, who were accused of wishing also to lay claim to the "Macedonians" living in Bulgaria. It said that Bulgaria would continue to seek a "constructive solution" to the Macedonian problem that would let Macedonia "freely determine and express its nationality and its national feelings," implying, of course, that these "national feelings" were Bulgarian. This tract was widely distributed in Bulgaria, was broadcast to Yugoslavia, and was circulated in Eastern Europe. Belgrade later reported that several people were arrested in Yugoslav Macedonia for distributing this "irredentist pamphlet."

The following month, in a further sign of their antipathy, Bulgarian leaders boycotted Yugoslav national day celebrations in Sofia, and rumors began circulating in Moscow that Pact maneuvers would soon be held in Bulgaria near the Yugoslav border. These stories inspired increased tensions in Yugoslavia. Polemics became vitriolic, [redacted]

[redacted] A contemporary dimension

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was added to the dispute by Bulgaria's claims that it had liberated Macedonia in 1944—a claim Belgrade categorically denied but viewed as an implied threat.

In September 1969, it appeared that some progress might be made in the Macedonian dispute. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrey Gromyko first visited Yugoslavia, and the President of the Yugoslav National Assembly's Chamber of Nationalities, Mika Spiljak, then went to Sofia. Whether there was any connection between the two journeys is not known, but with things in Czechoslovakia then quiet, the Soviets apparently desired an aura of tranquility in East Europe. If so, little was accomplished, and the Spiljak mission proved a failure. The Yugoslavs, as they had in the past, demanded an end to the Bulgarians' campaign, but Zhivkov declared that he would discuss outstanding problems only with Tito. Spiljak, originally hopeful of compromise after the Gromyko trip, left Sofia "disgusted with the platitudes and generalities" into which the meeting had degenerated.

Despite the fiasco, the Bulgarians showed a willingness to discuss the problem. A meeting between the Yugoslav and Bulgarian foreign ministers at the UN, however, led to a disastrous visit by Bulgarian Foreign Minister Bashev to Belgrade in December 1969. This incredibly undiplomatic trip revealed that neither side was ready to moderate its stand. The talks nearly ended before they started when Bashev let it be known that Bulgaria was willing to renounce all territorial claims on Yugoslavia if Belgrade would admit that the Macedonians were ethnically Bulgarians. The proposal, which was of course rejected, only confirmed Belgrade's suspicion of Bulgaria's sinister designs on Yugoslav Macedonia.

Bulgarian Twists and Turns

In general, the old-line Bulgarian apparatchiks, who had severed rather close ties to the Yugoslav party in 1948, are still nervous about their independent neighbor and the residual

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The Greek Macedonia*(according to 1961 official figures
½ of 1%—41,017—of the Greek Population)*

Athens acknowledges the existence of a few "south Slavs" in its northern border areas, but considers the Macedonian minority problem "non-existent." Yugoslavia claims that a Macedonian minority does exist in Greece, and periodically makes reference to its suppression and forced assimilation by the national majority. Since the Athens-Sofia detente of 1964 Bulgaria has made no mention of the Macedonian minority in Greece, and apparently considers the issue closed.

common interests that might still prove attractive to some nationalistic Bulgarian party members. Sofia has never been comfortable about having Yugoslavia, an unorthodox yet successful Communist country, on its border, especially because of the sharp contrast it affords with Bulgaria's economic and political stagnation.

The Macedonian issue thus seems to have been contrived by the leadership partly to keep Yugoslavia and things Yugoslav at arm's length, and at the same time to rekindle a spirit of Bulgarian nationalism that could be useful to the regime. The nationalism campaign of 1966 fizzled out in two years, but the Macedonian issue has always had a character of its own, and has from time to time been exploited by Moscow. Certainly, Bulgaria's Macedonian policy was developed haphazardly and has moved ahead in an erratic fashion. Some of this can be ascribed to fluctuations in Soviet policy, but some of it must also be related to Sofia's political vicissitudes and ineptitudes in the pursuit of traditional Bulgarian foreign policy goals.

The vehement diplomatic and public responses from Yugoslavia over the Macedonian dispute—particularly after the Czechoslovak crisis—caused Sofia to hesitate and re-evaluate the direction and force of its Macedonian policy. This was

so partly because by early 1969 the Soviets were interested in reducing tensions in Eastern Europe. In March an editorial in the Bulgarian party newspaper disclaimed any territorial desires in Yugoslavia. This was followed by a public statement by First Deputy Premier Zhivko Zhivkov that his country "did not have any interest in land expansion."

In April 1969, in a talk with Austrian journalists, Bulgarian Foreign Minister Bashev said Macedonia remained a "historical legacy" but concluded that it was not a "topical political matter." He accused unnamed "imperialist" circles for "fostering nationalist passions" in the Balkans.

For Belgrade, nevertheless, such platitudes were not reassuring, and Yugoslav propaganda continued to hammer away at the issue. In response, Bulgaria ended its moratorium on polemics in June 1969, though without making Macedonia the direct issue. Sofia's antipathy toward Tito's regime again surfaced, but it was directed at "revisionism" in Yugoslavia rather than at Macedonia. On 28 June, for example, the Bulgarian army paper stressed the "anti-Soviet" nature of Tito's programs and policies. A week later Zhivkov delivered an anti-Yugoslav speech in a similar vein. In July Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations took a further turn for the worse when Sofia restricted the traditional free movement of people from Yugoslav and Bulgarian border villages across the frontier.

Yugoslav Reaction

On 12 February 1969, Belgrade sent its second diplomatic note of protest within one year peppering Bulgaria for "fomenting an atmosphere of disquiet and tension in the Balkans." That same day acting Yugoslav Foreign Minister Miso Povicevic gave a speech in the Federal Assembly

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- Two examples of Bulgarian Macedonian propaganda published in 1969. The first, a photo from BULGARIA TODAY, is from a story on how "the Bulgarians liberated Macedonia during the Second World War." The Yugoslavs call this a "transparent lie." The second example, a poem, is by a long dead Macedonian poet whom the Bulgars have brought back to "life" as a Bulgarian literary figure.

Macedonia, wondrous land,
Greeks you shall never be;
For forests and woods and mountains,
Thy very stones,
Birds, and fish in the Vardar River,
All things on this earth
Will rise to their feet to declare
To the whole of Europe, the whole world:
"Bulgarian 'tis what I am,
And it is Bulgarians who inhabit this land."

*Minstrel at a County Fair, by
Rako Zhinzifov (circa 1850)*

in which he said Bulgarian policy could not be "understood any different than as the feeding of territorial pretensions toward integral parts of Yugoslavia." The League of Yugoslav Communists' newspaper expressed the fear that the Brezhnev Doctrine of "limited sovereignty" would be used as a justification for an invasion. In March 1969 over 2,000 people demonstrated in the Macedonian town of Ohrid, protesting against the Bulgarian "anti-Yugoslav campaign." By May, the Yugoslav deputy foreign minister spoke of a "Balkan confrontation," accusing the Bulgars of territorial aspirations, interfering in Yugoslav internal affairs, subversive propaganda, and planning to hold military maneuvers in border areas. The minister also reiterated the charge that a "third country" was influencing Bulgarian policy toward his country.

In the years since the occupation of Czechoslovakia, the Yugoslavs have become convinced that Moscow has a role in the Macedonian controversy. This was graphically illustrated in an

article of 25 November 1970 entitled "Ghosts of the Past," which appeared in both Belgrade's *Borba* and the Macedonian republic daily *Nova Makedonija*. The article accused Bulgaria of reviving bourgeois territorial claims to Macedonia (and parts of Serbia) as they existed under the treaty of San Stefano. Tsarist "Russia" is the real culprit, according to the two journals, because it "created the fiction of San Stefano Bulgaria."

Into the Seventies

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For a brief period in the spring of 1970, the Bulgarian media gave Yugoslavia more positive treatment, and Soviet diplomats told Westerners that Bulgarian-Yugoslav relations were entering "a new phase." Indeed, something new did seem to be in the offing, and in late June the Bulgarian press talked of all-Balkan cooperation and of improving relations with its neighbors, including Yugoslavia.

For the Yugoslavs, however, there could be no improvement until Sofia officially changed its stance on Macedonia. While Sofia talked of détente, the Macedonian government announced it had uncovered "increased foreign activity" of a hostile nature in the republic. Contrary to Sofia's expectations, the Yugoslavs interpreted Bulgarian statements on Balkan cooperation as a maneuver to embarrass them and to give the appearance that Belgrade was dragging its feet.

Nonetheless, in early July, Belgrade provocatively tested Bulgaria's "new" good will. Three normally routine documents—a 1971-75 economic protocol, a radio-TV protocol, and a border traffic agreement—were presented in the Macedonian language for Sofia's signature. The red-faced Bulgarians refused to sign, whereupon the Yugoslav press jumped on the issue, labeling the refusal "a revival of greater Bulgarian (claims) to sovereign Macedonian territory." In early August, the widely read Yugoslav weekly, *NIN*,

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accused Bulgaria of spreading Stalinist propaganda in Yugoslavia, as well as offering highly paid jobs to Bulgarians living in Serbia in an attempt to lure them across the border. The situation went from bad to worse; in September the Macedonian party central committee called home all Yugoslav-Macedonian students studying in Sofia because of hostile Bulgarian propaganda activity among them.

Three times during 1970 Bulgarian Premier Zhivkov requested a face-to-face meeting with President Tito to discuss major points of difference, but when representatives of the two countries finally met on 9 and 10 November in Sofia to lay the groundwork for such a meeting, the results were disastrous. As they had for the past year, the Bulgarians came to the meeting determined to achieve a facade of agreement by discussing noncontroversial subjects. But the Yugoslavs declared Macedonia the only major issue and stipulated that it be the core of any negotiations. Party Secretary Velchev, the chief of the Bulgarian delegation, then pulled a paper from his briefcase that had been prepared for such an eventuality. The Bulgarians were willing to concede that "a Macedonian state" had emerged after the second World War, but they rigidly insisted that the Macedonian people of this state were ethnically and culturally Bulgarian and that its territory was not conclusively defined. Velchev then declared that, although the present Bulgarian government now was ready to settle the Macedonian problem, he was not certain that the next generation of Bulgarians would be as willing. The chief of the Yugoslav delegation replied that this Bulgarian position negated a policy established by Bulgarian hero Georgi Dimitrov and the COMINTERN. Velchev's admission that this was so ended the discussions, and Yugoslav press polemics sharply increased. Furthermore, Yugoslav Macedonians—with government encouragement—began expressing their support for the "national aspirations" of their brothers in Bulgaria.

In spite of this dismal turn of events, there are indications that the two countries may yet



President Tito

Macedonian Chief
Crvenkovski

"Further progress has been made in our relations with our neighbors, except with the People's Republic of Bulgaria, with which, despite our efforts, regretfully, no such progress has been recorded."

Yugoslav President Tito in a foreign policy report submitted to all chambers of the Federal Assembly on 18 November 1970

"In order to be better able to understand what is hidden behind the resuscitation of the vampire of Bulgarian revanchism, we must ask ourselves what the Bulgarian claims are based on. There are three explanations: First, the internal crisis from which it is necessary to divert the attention of the public by making territorial claims against Yugoslavia. Second, the belief that the Yugoslav Federation will disintegrate and that this is a unique opportunity for Bulgaria to profit and third, that somebody else is hidden behind the Bulgarian claims, that is that the leadership of the neighboring country relies on somebody else's support.... Time will show how justified our doubts are, but, on the basis of everything that we now know, one should not expect any future change for the better in Bulgaria's policy toward Yugoslavia."

Noted Croatian commentator Milika Sundic in an interview with the Zagreb Domestic Service on 27 November 1970.

"The ghosts from the past must be buried forever—in other words) tendencies which until now have frequently been encouraged by other Balkan forces.... I believe that soon a perspective of a more progressive, modern Balkans will open up, a Balkans in which there will be full tolerance and complete respect for every national individuality."

Macedonian Party Executive Bureau member Krste Crvenkovski in an 18 December 1970 interview in the Yugoslav (Albanian language) publication Rilindja.

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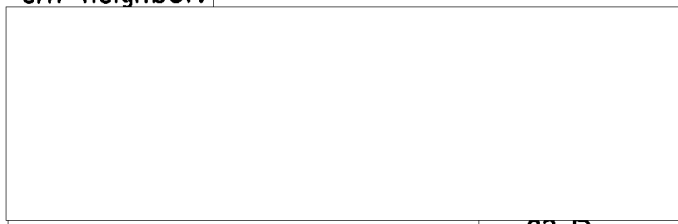
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come to terms.



Yugoslav press attacks on Bulgaria have subsided somewhat, although party meetings throughout the country continue their well-orchestrated denunciation of Bulgarian policy. Furthermore, Yugoslav party luminaries have, in the past month, spoken in a conciliatory manner about improving relations with their eastern neighbor.



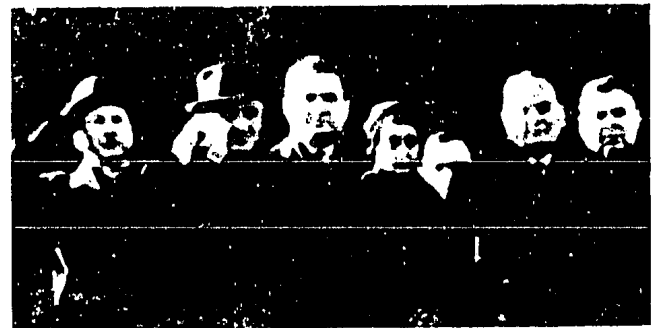
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on 23 December, when President Tito interrupted his vacation on Brioni to receive the Bulgarian ambassador. But the Yugoslavs now say nothing productive came from these talks.

Since October the Bulgars have virtually ignored any invective coming from Yugoslavia and have continued to play for a meeting with Tito to codify some agreement to disagree. Recent public statements of the Sofia leaders have been peppered with calls for a Balkan rapprochement. In a probably related development, the most vociferous of the Bulgarian newspapers on the Macedonian problem, *Narodna Armija*, published by the Defense Ministry, was ordered discontinued as a daily and converted to a weekly in late December. The paper, however, has continued to appear on a daily basis, with no explanation of the sudden reversal in publication schedules. This could indicate some disagreement within the Sofia lead-

ership over the present trends in Bulgarian policy on the Macedonian question.



Zhivkov with Tito in Belgrade—1967



Last Talks—on Kremlin Wall—November 1967

Prospects for 1971

Todor Zhivkov's present self-abasement shows an uncommon willingness to improve the atmosphere. The Bulgarians have made so many concessions that about the only card they have left to play is to agree to a settlement or quietly

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to let the issue die—if the Yugoslavs will allow it. This suggests that perhaps the Yugoslavs are partly correct in assuming that the Soviets now have taken a hand in the matter, if only to try to cool the situation. It is difficult, however, to foresee formal repudiation by Bulgaria of its past Macedonian stand. Rather, a settlement could provide for a tempering of the more provocative elements of Sofia's position and a change in the tone and emphasis of Bulgarian propaganda to stress points of agreement between Belgrade and Sofia.

Belgrade now insists that prior to any rapprochement, Sofia must specifically recognize the existence of an ethnic Macedonian nation within Yugoslavia, demonstrate a willingness to allow

free expression of Macedonian national identity in Bulgarian Pirin, and publicly repudiate its position since 1967. If Zhivkov is serious about improving relations with Tito, he will have to accept the first of these terms. If Tito wishes to reciprocate, he probably will have to drop the last two demands.

Of course, such an arrangement would constitute no more than a return to the tacit arrangement that existed prior to 1967, and it would be quite embarrassing to Zhivkov at that. If such an agreement does take shape, it may be due more to a Soviet desire to avoid involvement in a Balkan territorial squabble than to a lessening of Sofia's nationalistic passions.

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