

SMALL STATE PLAYING THE ASYMMETRIC GAME:  
CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN ALBANIAN FOREIGN POLICY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
IN  
THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

JUNE 2008

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **SMALL STATE PLAYING THE ASYMMETRIC GAME: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE ALBANIAN FOREIGN POLICY**

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JUNE 2008, 268 pages

This thesis examines Albanian foreign policy from a small state point of view. The main argument is that Albania as a weak small state developed close relations with the regional and great powers and align with them in order to compensate its weakness. An historical analysis of the Albanian foreign policy line since its establishment portrays a continuity in this trend except the short isolationist period. The study has three main objectives, firstly, it aims to provide an analysis of the small state foreign policy and small state – great power asymmetric relations within the framework of Albania’s relations with various regional and great powers. Secondly, to elaborate the relevance of the enduring weakness of Albania on its foreign policy making in particular with its relations and alliances with the great powers. In this sense, an analysis of the Albanian foreign policy shows a pattern of shifting alliances in different time periods and under different regimes as part of foreign policy line. Thirdly, to make the historical account of Albania’s alliances and relations with the great powers in terms of continuity and change in its foreign policy line. Albania’s post-Cold War era foreign policy indicates a continuity in this line as it approaches the US as the great power to align with as well as one of two main pillars of its foreign policy along with the Euro-Atlantic integration. In this context, the contemporary

Albanian-US relations constitute the last phase of the Albanian foreign policy trend.

Keywords: Albania, Albanian Foreign Policy, Small States, Small State – Great Power Relations

## ÖZ

### ASİMETRİK OYUNU OYNAYAN KÜÇÜK DEVLET: ARNAVUTLUK DIŞ POLİTİKASINDA DEVAMLILIK VE DEĞİŞİM

Açar, Dilaver Arıkan

Doktora, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi : Prof. Dr. Mustafa Türkeş

HAZİRAN 2008, 268 sayfa

Bu tez Arnavutluk dış politikasını küçük devlet bakış açısıyla incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Tezin temel olarak Arnavutluk'un zayıf bir küçük devlet olarak bölgesel ve büyük güçlerle yakın ilişkiler geliştirerek ve onlarla ittifak yaparak zayıflığının getirdiği olumsuzlukların üstesinden gelmeye çalıştığını göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda Arnavutluk dış politikasının genel tarihsel sürecinin kuruluşundan bu yana olan döneminin tahlili kısa bir izolasyon dönemi haricinde bu eğilimdeki bir devamlılığa işaret etmektedir. Çalışmanın temel amaçları arasında küçük devlet dış politikasının incelenmesi yanında küçük devlet- büyük devlet arasındaki asimetrik güç ilişkilerinin Arnavutluk'u çeşitli bölgesel ve büyük güçlerle olan ilişkileri çerçevesinde incelenmesi de bulunmaktadır. Ayrıca tezde Arnavutluk'un kuruluşundan bu yana varola gelen zayıflığının ülkenin dış politika yapım süreci ve özelde de büyük devletlerle olan ilişki ve ittifakları dahilinde nasıl bir ilgisinin bulunduğu ele alınmaktadır. Bu anlamda Arnavutluk dış politikasının tahlili çeşitli dönemler ve siyasi rejimler altında Arnavutluk'un ittifak ilişkilerinde sapmalarda bulunmasının bir şablon oluşturduğunu göstermektedir. Bunların dışında, tezde Arnavutluk dış politikasının ittifaklar ve büyük devletlerle ilişkiler minvalinde devamlılık ve değişiminin tarihsel bir tetkiki de amaçlanmaktadır. Arnavutluk'un Soğuk Savaş sonrası dış politika çizgisi Amerika Birleşik Devletleri

(ABD) ile bir büyük güç olmasından mütevellit geliştirmeye çalıştığı ve dış siyasetinin Avro-Atlantik bütünleşmesiyle beraber iki kutubundan birini de teşkil eden ilişkisi, ittifak yapmaya yönelik yaklaşımında bir devamlılığı göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda güncel Arnavutluk-ABD ilişkisi Arnavutluk dış politikası eğiliminin en son safhasını oluşturmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Arnavutluk, Arnavutluk Dış Politikası, Küçük Devletler, Küçük Devlet – Büyük Güç İlişkileri

biricik anneciğim ve babacığma

to my beloved parents

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Departing from my personal experiences I have always thought that the state of a Ph.D. candidate while writing a dissertation could best be described as *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner*.<sup>1</sup> Especially in my long writing process I thought that I am running a constant marathon by myself which seemed to be finished at a further distance than I might actually reach. Indeed, I have done other things in this process as well which included literally running many Ks until I hurt my knees while living the metaphor. Despite the dramatic reflection I was not pessimist at all. However, this state of mind has not prevented me often to question what I have been up to. I will always recall my countless listening of *So What*<sup>2</sup> and thinking about why I am doing this and what would happen when I am done with it as the intro tune by bass and the piano constantly ringing in my head. Now I am done and it is time to present my gratitude to the people who actually witnessed my run...

First and foremost, I wish to convey my sincere gratitude to Prof. Dr. Mustafa Türkeş. It could be a classical phrase to say in the thesis that “without him, writing this thesis would not have been possible” but I do really really mean it. Prof. Türkeş has not only been an excellent mentor to me but also had a clear imprint on my academic development. In this process, Prof. Türkeş has always asked all the possible and impossible from me, and I (unfortunately) could only do the doable ones according to me, however it is clear that with his commitment and constant support I did what I could do. So I would like to thank to Prof. Türkeş

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<sup>1</sup> I inspire from the title of Allan Sillitoe’s book (which is actually a short story in the book) to describe the situation. Alan Sillitoe, *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner*, (Plume, New York, [1959], 1992), pp. 7-54. The story also adapted as a movie script with the same name in 1962 and became a movie which was directed by Tony Richardson. For the details of the movie see; <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0056194/>.

<sup>2</sup> Miles Davis, “So What”, *Kind of Blue*, (Columbia Records, New York City, recorded 2 March 1959, 9m22s, 1997). The piano and bass introduction for the piece was written by Gil Evans for Bill Evans and Paul Chambers on *Kind of Blue*. The song is composed by Miles Davis. For a brief information about the song and the opening measures of Davis’ composition see; [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/So\\_What\\_%28instrumental%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/So_What_%28instrumental%29).

once again for always believing in me even at the times that I have pushed the limits of the patience of a very decent man, and ‘being a constant source of inspiration and intellectual challenge’™ to me.

I offer my sincere thanks and endless gratitude to my parents, Sevim Açar and Fikret Açar. They always stood by me in good and bad times and supported me. I owe them more than my life. You are extraordinarily good people and I hope that I am a good son for you...

I would like to express my thanks to the members of the examining committee, Assoc. Prof. Dr. İlhan Uzgel, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sevilay Kahraman, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayşegül Kibaroglu and Assist. Prof. Dr. Emel Oktay, for their invaluable comments, contributions and support for my thesis.

I am heavily indebted to the Middle East Technical University Department of International Relations, which shaped my academic development and provided me with different opportunities and all of my professors who shared their intellectual competence and furnished me with invaluable knowledge. I have been around for so long and spent hell of a good time.

I am also indebted to Prof. James Gow of King’s College for not only making it possible to spend an excellent year at the Department of War Studies as a visiting Research Fellow but also encouraging me to write and as well as creating the opportunity to publish an article. My research activity in London would not be possible without the Jean Monnet Scholarship which I always appreciate.

I would like expand my thanks to the Turkish Ambassador to Tirana, Süphan Erkula for his interest in my visits and sharing his valuable insights with me. The assistance of my friend Günay Babadoğan, Third Secretary of the Turkish Embassy in Tirana is gratefully acknowledged, in addition to the positive attitudes and help of other members of the Turkish Embassy. Dear Günay thank you again.

I am also very much indebted to my dearest cousin E. Asuman Erdoğan who unquestionably hosted me in Ankara for months and accompanied me when I am writing my thesis. The pizzas and the cookies have always been delicious, ellerine sağlık...

My dear friend and brother Ş. İnan Rüma deserves exceptional thanks for his unforgettable solidarity and brotherhood (could not top it). Special thanks goes

to Sait(a) “Mr. Anderson” Akşit who has always been a proven dear friend. My oldest buddy Burak “Buraques” Ağa ıođlu has always been there for me to support and having fun with me, thanks again my brother.  zg r “ z& z” Pişken, lots of thanks for being a splendid man, stay as you are. Two angels  m r( m) [Bostan] Atmaca and Ahu(can) Şenses are always around and making life better and better, thank you ladies...  zgehan “ ekirge” Şenyuva, cheers mate for your magnifico friendship. I would like to thank to my efe brother Erhun Baş and not efe brother Volkan  skiper who are always in the heart and mind. Thanks also expand to my dearest friends Alpan “Tosun” Bek, Tevhide “Tev” Altekin,  ađrı(can)  zt rk,  zlem T r, Umut Koldaş, Işık G rleyen and the Istanbul gang, Mert Emcan,  ađrı Alkaya and Tolga  e en. Zerrin Torun deserves extra thanks for hosting and helping me when I am first in the UK, which always will be appreciated. My London flatmates Shama Saiwat Rahman and Matthew “Matt” Bradley deserve thanks for always being good company and good friends.

I would like to express my thanks to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fatih Tayfur for all his academic support and brilliant conversations he always shares.

I would like to thank also to Deborah Semel for her editing skills, professionalism and sense of humour. Here  m r( m) deserves extra credit for also spending long hours for editing my bibliography and footnotes as in this process inside of her head slowly turned into a windy desert...

Lastly I would like to thank to the Arda Sisters who have been family with us for more than forty years. The late sisters rest in peace.

I bloody did it again!

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Albania has been a weak small state since its declaration of its independence in November 1912. Soon after the independence, Albania was faced with serious domestic and international problems that endangered its existence as a state. With a very weak intellectual leadership and few financial resources, and hardly had definable competing social forces, Albania was unable to develop or sustain structured state institutions. Rather, a politics of competing personalities that was not necessarily conducive to the development of democracy arose out of a personalised political space based on tribal bonds and a lack of independent political experience, which would quickly result in authoritarianism and a personal dictatorship. In view of this situation, Albania may be considered to have been an internally weak state after its independence.

Beyond its domestic difficulties, Albania faced threats to its political independence and territorial integrity from its neighbours and some of the Great Powers, whose recognition of Albania's political independence and sovereignty during the Balkan Wars was not enough to bring security to Albania. The newly established state had to pass through precarious times and was barely able to survive as an independent state following the First World War. The delimitation of its borders remained a major problem. Its independence and territorial integrity was challenged by secret treaties and actual occupation by regional and great powers. Only through the involvement of foreign powers was it possible for Albania to maintain its independence and finalise the delimitation of its borders. These early problems contributed to the consolidation of Albania's weakness during the initial period of its existence. In the coming years, Albania's weakness and the related problem of its survival would continue to be important factors shaping the country, particularly with regard to the formation of its foreign policy.

This study aims to examine Albanian foreign policy from a small-state foreign policy perspective. The continuities and shifts in Albanian foreign policy and their relation to Albania's weakness as a small state will constitute the central themes of this thesis. Albania's persistence in developing close relations with regional and great powers over different periods in its history will be analysed within the context of the formulation of asymmetric relationships between small states and great powers. Common foreign policy patterns and divergences will be elaborated within a historical framework that refers to the influence of particular periods in Albania's development, including changes in Albania's domestic political regime and leadership, as well as changes in the international conjuncture.

The departure points for this study will be an examination of the significance of studying Albanian foreign policy from a small state perspective within the discipline of International Relations (IR) and why Albania has, throughout its existence, remained a weak actor in the international arena. In this context, the relationship among the weakness, foreign support and shifting foreign policy in the case of Albanian foreign policy will be analysed.

The nature of the asymmetric relations between Albania and regional and great powers will be analysed in terms of rationale and determinants of the relationships. Particularly, the alliances that Albania established with those countries will be given specific attention. In this context, the specific historical circumstances, priorities and perceptions of the parties and the changes in the parameters of the alliances will be examined. Whether the sole determining actor in the alliances has been the regional and great powers; could Albania only act as a mere 'pawn' in the alliance relationships or to what extent Albania could have autonomy in determining the context, scope and duration of the alliances are leading questions that the thesis will also dwell upon.

The foreign policy line of Albania since its establishment has been reflecting the Albanian leaderships' consciousness of small state characteristics and limited capacities of their state. This is in a way also reflecting the prolongation of the established weak characteristics of the Albanian state since its foundation. This theme will be an important reference point for the analysis of the Albanian foreign policy all along the thesis. The continuity of the weakness of Albania and accordingly adopting of the policy of establishing close relations and

alliances with the regional and great powers by different political regimes and leaderships have been important characteristics of the Albanian foreign policy.

In this context, the analysis of the Albanian foreign policy since its foundation would be done according to historical periodisation based on the establishment of client relationships and alliances with regional and great powers. In this sense, the initial period for the analysis would be the previously referred state formation and consolidation process expanding through out the interwar period when Albania had developed its first client relationship with Italy to overcome the obstacles of weakness in its domestic realm and foreign affairs.

The study also aims to provide an insight for establishment of client relationship with different regional and great powers including ideologically close and geographically adjacent regional powers as well as geographically distant superpower with global reach or remote great power without excessive capacities. The motives behind the forming of the alliance for Albania and its partners, and the historical circumstances and conditions that had provided Albania the environment conducive to shift the alliance relationship from one patron to another after the deterioration of the relationship between Albania and its different allies would also be analysed in this part of the thesis. The analysis of the role of pragmatic features in the formation of the Albanian foreign policy as a small state would be made in this context with references to different leaderships and periods.

How Albania's enduring weakness as a small state influence the reformulation of Albanian foreign policy after its alliances with Yugoslavia, Soviet Union and China into isolationism and what were the priorities of Albania in the post-Cold War international and regional environment that shaped Albanian foreign policy making in the new era after abandoning isolationism are the general questions that would also be under the scrutiny of the thesis. It would be argued that in the post-Cold War period, Albania had adopted a two pillar strategy for the conducting of its foreign policy in order to get external support for coping with economic backwardness and security problems. The pillars of the foreign policy comprised of Euro-Atlantic integration and developing close relations with the United States (US). The question of whether the willingness on the part of the new political élite and the Albanian people to develop a close relationship with the US

constitutes a return to the previous foreign policy pattern of Albania favouring the establishment of client relationship with great powers would be at this point the central theme for the analysis of the thesis.

In the 1990s Albania faced two important challenges that had influence over the domestic politics and foreign policy formation. First one was the impact of the crisis of the domestic transition process. Albania experienced a major state failure in 1997. The study will focus on the overall transition policies, in particular the involvement of the foreign actors including the international financial institutions in the shaping of those policies and examine their role in the collapse of the Albanian state authority and the consequent total chaos in the country. The relation of the weakness of Albania and the role of the external factors in this process will be examined. The second challenge was the so called 'Albanian Question' in the Balkans and its relation with the regional conflicts in the region. The thesis will elaborate on Albania's foreign policy during the conflicts that emerged in the process of the break up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The US has a more specific place in the Albanian foreign policy. Albania would like to get into a special relationship with the US which they desire to reach to the level of an alliance, yet another form of asymmetric relation with a great power. Albanian leaders from different political lines would like to see the US supporting Albania. They perceive the US as the foremost security provider and source of political support for Albania as well as for the Albanians in the Balkans. Thus they offer their full support for the US in the region and elsewhere in the world to the extent that they could achieve within their capacity. In this sense, what are the determinants of the bilateral relationship between Albania and the US; which party was the determining figure in the formulation of bilateral relations; to what extent can Albania benefit from its relation with the US within the framework of small state-great power relationship would be the essential questions for better understanding the Albanian foreign policy in the post-Cold War period as well as within the context of its historical development.

Following this brief introduction, Chapter 2 further elaborates the questions raised within the content and scope of this study and presents the theoretical framework for analysis. It explains the quantitative and qualitative approaches to

defining small states and offers an alternative approach that focuses on the 'relational power' of the small states that includes an evaluation of Albania's asymmetric relations with regional and great powers within the framework of alliances. Here, it is argued that weakness constitutes an important determinant in the construction of Albanian foreign policy.

Chapter 3 focuses on Albanian foreign policy during the state formation process. It aims to identify the sources of the emerging state's weakness and explore the impact of this domestic characteristic as well as the international conjuncture on Albania's formation of foreign policy as a small state. The chapter covers the period starting with the declaration of Albanian independence in November 1912 and ending with the Second World War. The establishment of close bilateral relations with Italy and its transformation of these relations into an official alliance are analysed in terms of the initiation of cliental relations with great powers as a foreign policy line.

Chapter 4 examines the consolidation of alliance relationships as a characteristic and priority of Albanian foreign policy that continued despite changes of regime and leadership in line with Albania's continuing weakness. This chapter analyses the period from the Second World War through the end of the Cold War, examining Albania's successive alliances with Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union and China as well as the rationale behind the shift from one source of support to another. Finally, the chapter explains the causes and consequences of Albania's isolationism under Enver Hoxha, which represented a major divergence in Albanian foreign policy.

Chapter 5 analyses the transition process of Albania from communist party regime to multi-party democracy and the parallel developments in the foreign policy of the Albanian state. It looks at the regime transition in post-Cold War Albania, which abandoned its isolationist policy and readapted a small state-great power relationship. The chapter examines how the new regime and leadership reproduced Albania's old policy of seeking support from a foreign patron within the framework of a new two-pillar foreign policy that manifested itself in the simultaneous integration into Euro-Atlantic structures and enhancement of bilateral relations with the United States. This chapter explores Albania's weakness during this period and how the transition experience led to the

restoration of the alliance pattern in Albanian foreign policy. By analysing Albania's relations with the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and its bilateral linkages with the United States in the post-Cold War era, it hopes to provide a greater understanding of Albanian foreign policy interests as a small state.

Chapter 6 elaborates Albanian efforts to establish an alliance relationship with the United States. It analyses the emergence of conflicts during the dissolution of Yugoslavia and how the "Albanian Question" created a favourable environment in which Albania could play a role in international politics and garner both economic and political support. It also examines the 1997 pyramid investment schemes crisis and subsequent international intervention in Albania as case studies exposing the continuity of Albania's weakness. Finally, it evaluates the NATO intervention in Kosovo in relation to its contribution to boosting trust in Washington and increasing Albanian commitment to close bilateral relations with the United States.

Chapter 7 explores the likelihood of Albania's establishing an alliance relationship with the United States as part of its contemporary foreign policy trend. It analyses the context of bilateral relations between Albania and the US, including the sources of pro-Americanism and its shaping of Albanian foreign policy. To what extent Albania's wholehearted support for US causes in the international arena was able to promote the deepening of US-Albanian bilateral relations will also be explored in this context. Albania's pursuit of EU membership and the related EU integration process are also analysed as part of Albania's attempts to garner economic support and become a part of the West.

Chapter 8 summarises the main conclusions regarding Albanian foreign policy and the reflections of the analysis of Albania on the study of small state foreign policy.

To shed light on Albanian foreign policy, this thesis will make use of secondary sources on Albanian history and politics as well as material from press archives, especially in its examination of the post-Cold War era. The major primary source used for access to the Albania related news is the archive of the electronic edition of the local English-language daily newspaper, Albanian Daily News, which also contains translations of the leading articles and summary of the

Albanian press. The official Albanian Telegraphic Agency news and some of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB) daily news summaries are also used as news reference. Among the English language foreign media that used for the thesis; the Economist archive since its establishment as well as the New York Times archive are the main sources of information that are extensively used in the analyses.

Field research conducted in Albania in 2000, 2005 and 2007, created the opportunity to test the early findings of research were tested in the field before utilising in the thesis. Within the framework of these field researches, the in-depth interviews conducted with opinion leaders, political party representatives, Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials, foreign diplomatic mission representatives, academics, non-governmental organisation (NGO) representatives and journalists are referred to, when necessary, in order to offer further insight into Albania's foreign policy principles and foreign policymaking process.

## CHAPTER 2

### DIALECTIC OF SMALL STATE, GREAT POWERS AND ASYMMETRIC RELATIONS

#### 2.1 Brief Literature Review

Albanian foreign policy is an area that remains relatively neglected within the foreign policy analysis and area studies fields of international relations (IR) discipline, being generally taken up within the broader Balkans context or as part of Cold War international relations studies. Albania's strategy of alliance formation has been examined within the context of its specific relations with China<sup>1</sup>; however, neither the continuity of Albania's trend towards alliance in the post-Cold-War era nor Albania's foreign policy formulation as a small state has been studied.

Within the international relations discipline, the foreign relations of most countries in the international system considered to be small states are usually analysed from a great-power perspective. There are very few studies at the regional level of the Balkans,<sup>2</sup> and the only example that makes reference to small states in the Balkans dates back to 1983 and concentrates mainly on security issues

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<sup>1</sup> Elez Biberaj, *Albania and China: A Study of an Unequal Alliance*, (Westview Press: Boulder, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> Denko Maleski, who was the Macedonian Foreign Minister between 1991 and 1993, then Ambassador to the United Nations, wrote an interesting short article after the US decision to recognise the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name and elaborated the small state and great power relationship from a small Balkan state's perspective within the Macedonian-US relations context since the independence of Macedonia in 1991. Maleski, Denko, 'The Conduct of Great Power', *New Balkan Politics* [online journal], no. 9, <http://www.newbalkanpolitics.org.mk/napis.asp?id=34&lang=English>

and regional economic cooperation.<sup>3</sup> Examining the overall evolution of Albanian foreign policy from a small state perspective would provide a new and different perspective, since no such small state-centric analysis of Albanian foreign policy is currently to be found in the literature.

In comparison to most of the other countries and nations in the Balkans, studies related to Albania and Albanians have been short of academic interest, particularly in comparison to the quite widespread modern Greek and Slavic studies. Albanians were unknown to both Western scholars and the travel writers popular in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the exception of the famous Albanaophile Edith Durham.<sup>4</sup> As a result, there was little accumulated writing on Albania that might attract the attention of scholars in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century and interwar period to this new small state. This relative lack of interest continued after the Second World War, when Albanian-related analyses were mostly conducted in relation to Albania's role within the communist bloc and its alliances with regional or great powers. Enver Hoxha's political regime did little to make the country more known, especially after its self-imposed isolationist policy that closed off Albania to the outside world.

There are a handful of contemporary scholars and historians who wrote on Albania, Albanians and Albanian foreign policy. Edvin Jacques wrote a detailed historical account of Albanians from Ottoman times until the early 1990s.<sup>5</sup> George Gawrych, in his recent book, shed light on the Albanian nation-building process

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<sup>3</sup> Aurel Braun, Small State Security in the Balkans, (Barnes & Noble Books: New Jersey, 1983).

<sup>4</sup> Mary Edith Durham was a not only a traveller and an observer of the Balkan affairs between 1900s and 1930s but also a political activist supporting the Albanian causes especially against what she perceived as the influential pro-Serb figures like R.W. Seton-Watson in the British political circles. Her mostly known book is 'High Albania' but she also wrote on cultural and sociological aspects of the Balkans in general. Mary Edith Durham, High Albania, (Virago: London, [1909], 1985), Mary Edith Durham, Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle, (George Allan: London, Durham, 1920), Mary Edith Durham, Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs of the Balkans, (G. Allen and Unwin: London, 1928). For a short review on Durham see; Charles King, "Queen of Highlanders: Edith Durham in 'the Land of the Living Past'", Times Literary Supplement, 4 August 2000, pp. 14-5.

<sup>5</sup> Edvin E. Jacques, The Albanians: An Ethnic History from Prehistoric Times to The Present, (McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers: Jefferson, North Carolina, 1995).

and Albanian nationalism under Ottoman rule.<sup>6</sup> Bernd J. Fischer wrote two detailed books that filled important gaps in the analysis of specific periods in Albania's history, the first covering the reign of King Zog and the interwar years<sup>7</sup> and the second looking at the Second World War era.<sup>8</sup> Elez Biberaj also contributed to the literature by writing extensively on Albania as well as on Kosovo. Following his detailed account of the Sino-Albanian alliance, which is the most comprehensive study of Albanian foreign policy in the post-Second World War Period,<sup>9</sup> Biberaj contributed to the literature with an analysis of Albania during the Hoxha regime<sup>10</sup> and later with an examination of Albania's transition process.<sup>11</sup> Interesting insight into the rule of Enver Hoxha, including Albania's foreign relations under Hoxha, can be found in a book by James O'Donnell.<sup>12</sup> Nicholas Pano has also contributed chapters on Albania to several books on Eastern Europe in which he provides important information with regard to Albania's changes in domestic policies and their reflection in Albanian foreign policy.<sup>13</sup> Miranda Vickers and her colleague James Pettifer have written extensively on Albanian history,<sup>14</sup> the Albanian transition process,<sup>15</sup> Kosovo<sup>16</sup> and

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<sup>6</sup> George W. Gawrych, The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians, 1874-1913, (I.B. Tauris: London, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> Bernd Jürgen Fischer, King Zog and the Struggle for Stability in Albania, East European Monographs, (Boulder, Columbia University Press: New York, 1984).

<sup>8</sup> Bernd J. Fischer, Albania at War, 1939-1945, (Purdue University Press: West Lafayette, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> Biberaj, 1986, op.cit.

<sup>10</sup> Elez Biberaj, Albania: A Socialist Maverick, (Westview Press: Boulder, 1990).

<sup>11</sup> Elez Biberaj, Albania in Transition: The Rocky Road to Democracy, (Westview Press: Oxford, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> James S. O'Donnell, A Coming of Age: Albania under Enver Hoxha, East European Monographs, (Boulder, Columbia University Press: New York, 1999).

<sup>13</sup> Nicholas C. Pano, "The Process of Democratisation in Albania" in Politics, Power, and the Struggle for Democracy in South-East Europe, edited by Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrot, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1997), pp. 285-352, Nicholas C. Pano, "Albania", in The Columbia History of Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century, edited by Joseph Held, (Columbia University Press: New York, 1992), pp. 17-64 and Nicholas C. Pano, "Albania", in Communism in Eastern Europe, Second Edition, edited by Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, (Manchester University Press: Manchester, [1979], 1984), pp. 213-37.

<sup>14</sup> Miranda Vickers, The Albanians: A Modern History, (I. B. Tauris: London, [1995], 2001).

the Albanian Question.<sup>17</sup> Paulin Kola has also extended the contemporary literature on the Albanian Question and the issue of Greater Albania in the Balkans.<sup>18</sup> Finally, Owen Peterson has made a very detailed contribution in the form of a three-volume chorological monograph on Albania that should prove useful to researchers.<sup>19</sup>

In the above-mentioned literature, Albanian foreign policy is usually elaborated as part of a general assessment of Albanian history or within a particular time period. While there are chapters in several of the aforementioned books that examine Albanian foreign policy as part of a historical evaluation of the Albanian state or of Albanians in the Balkans, an analysis of the overall formulation and development of Albanian foreign policy from the founding of the state until recent times has yet to be undertaken from a theoretical IR perspective. Although Albania's weakness has been recognised,<sup>20</sup> it has not been put into a small state context, nor has it been analysed within the framework of Albania's policy of alignment with regional and great powers or in terms of the historical continuity of this policy.

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<sup>15</sup> Miranda Vickers and James Pettifer, Albania: From Anarchy to a Balkan Identity, (New York University Press: New York, 1997) and Miranda Vickers and James Pettifer, The Albanian Question: Reshaping the Balkans, (I.B. Tauris: London, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Miranda Vickers, Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo, (Hurst & Company: London, 1998) and James Pettifer, Kosovo Express, (Hurst & Co. Publishers Ltd.: London, 2005).

<sup>17</sup> Vickers and Pettifer, 2007, op.cit.

<sup>18</sup> Paulin Kola, The Search for Greater Albania, (Hurst & Company: London, 2003).

<sup>19</sup> Owen Pearson, Albania in the Twentieth Century: A History, Volume I: Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic and Monarchy, 1908-1939, (The Centre for Albanian Studies in Association with I. B. Tauris: London, 2004), Owen Pearson, Albania in the Twentieth Century: A History, Volume II: Albania in Occupation and War: From Fascism to Communism, 1940-1945, (The Centre for Albanian Studies in Association with I. B. Tauris: London, 2005) and Owen Pearson, Albania in the Twentieth Century: A History, Volume III: Albania as Dictatorship and Democracy, From Isolation to Kosovo War 1946-1998, (The Centre for Albanian Studies in Association with I. B. Tauris: London, 2006).

<sup>20</sup> In this thesis Albert Rakipi recognises Albania as a 'weak nation state' in the security context. Albert Rakipi, Weak States and Security, Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, (Bilkent University: Ankara, 2006).

## 2.2 The Small State Approach in International Relations

Small states became a category in the field of international relations following the definition of “great powers” after the Congress of Vienna.<sup>21</sup> However, small states did not become a specific research category within the discipline of IR until the 1960s following the publication of Annette Baker Fox’s *The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in World War II*.<sup>22</sup> In her book, Fox analysed the foreign policies of six small states (Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey) during the Second World War in relation to their application of a strategy of neutrality in an attempt to remain out of the war despite pressure from the Great Powers. Fox’s work is usually considered the starting point of the scholarly interest in small states that spread through the field of security studies and the analysis of alliance strategies during the 1960s and 1970s<sup>23</sup> at a time when the prominent approach to analysis was one of (neo)realism. The proliferation of small states as a result of the post-Second World War decolonisation process and their increasing profile in international organisations

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<sup>21</sup> The use of Great Powers with capital letters refers to the states which shaped the international relations in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the post-Congress of Vienna era. Britain, Austria-Hungary, Prussia, Russia and France constituted the Great Powers at the time. Charles Webster, *The Congress of Vienna: 1914-1915*, (G. Bell & Sons Ltd.: London, 1950), pp. 143-4.

<sup>22</sup> Annette Baker Fox, *The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in World War II*, (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1959).

<sup>23</sup> Amery Vandebosh, “The Small States in International Politics and Organization”, *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 26, no. 2, 1964, pp. 293-312, Robert L. Rothstein, “Alignment, Nonalignment, and Small Powers: 1945-1965”, *International Organisation*, vol. 20, no. 3, 1966, pp. 397-418; David Vital, *The Inequality of States: A Study of Small Power in International Relations*, (Oxford University Press: London, 1967), Robert L. Rothstein, *Alliances and Small Powers*, (Columbia University Press: New York, 1968), Annette Baker Fox, “Small States in the International System, 1919-1969”, *International Journal*, vol. 24, no. 4, 1969, pp. 751-64, Robert O. Kohane, “Lilliputians’ Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics”, (Review Article), *International Organisation*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1969, pp. 291-310, Trygve Mathisen, *The Functions of Small States in the Strategies of the Great Powers*, (Universitetsforlaget: Oslo, 1971), August Schou and Arne Olav Brundtland (eds.), *Small States in International Relations*, (Almqvist & Wiksell: Stockholm, 1971), Robert O. Kohane, “The Big Influence of Small Allies”, *Foreign Policy*, vol. 1, no. 2, Spring 1971, pp. 161-82, Marshall R. Singer, *Weak States in a World of Powers: The Dynamics of International Relationships*, (The Free Press: New York, 1972), Maurice A. East, “Size and Foreign Policy Behaviour: A Test of Two Models”, (Review Article), *World Politics*, vol. 25, no. 4, 1973, pp. 556-76.

and institutions further increased the interest in the subject.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, scholars from small states began to develop alternatives to great-power-centric approaches to IR in order to better understand international politics and the foreign policies of small states. The Nordic countries, in particular, as well as some island states have been active in small state studies since their initial development, and journals such as *Cooperation and Conflict*,<sup>25</sup> published by the Nordic International Studies Association, became significant platforms for academic discussion on important subjects like the definition of small states and their role in international politics in this early period.

The interest in small states and the relevance of size in understanding international relations gradually lessened in the mid-1980s,<sup>26</sup> as no common or comprehensive explanations or theories explaining small states could be found. According to Ingebritsen and Neumann, scholars in this period “either turned to general IR theories because the size of states was not considered a relevant

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<sup>24</sup> Jean-Luc Vellut, “Smaller States and the Problem of War and Peace: Some Consequences of the Emergence of Smaller States in Africa”, *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 4, no. 3, 1967, pp. 252-69, Wayne A. Wilcox, “The Influence of Small States in a Changing World”, *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 372, no. 1, 1967, pp. 80-92, Susan Aurelia Gitelson, “Why do Small States Break Diplomatic Relations with Outside Powers? Lessons from African Experience”, *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 4, 1974, pp. 451-84; Patric J. McGowan and Klaus-Peter Gottwald, “Small State Foreign Policies: A Comparative Study of Participation, Conflict, and Political and Economic Dependence in Black Africa”, *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 4, 1975, pp. 469-500, Sheila Harden (ed.), *Small is Dangerous: Micro States in a Macro World*, Report of a Study Group of The David Davies Memorial Institute of International Studies, (Frances Pinter Publishers: London, 1985).

<sup>25</sup> Erling Bjøl, “The Power of the Weak”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1968, pp. 157-68; William E Paterson, “Small States in International Politics”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1969, pp. 119-23; Raimo Väyrynen, “On the Definition and Measurement of Small Power Status”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. VI, 1971, pp. 91-102, Gunnar Skagestad, “Small States in International Politics: A Polar-Political Perspective”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 9, no. 1, 1974, pp. 133-4, Niels Amstrup, “The Perennial Problem of Small States: A Survey of Research Efforts”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. XI, no. 3, 1976, pp. 163-82, Niels Amstrup, “Book Review of Hans Vogel’s book of 1979, *Der Kleinstaat in der Weltpolitik*”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. XV, no. 1, 1980, pp. 51-3.

<sup>26</sup> Two important books were published on the small states in the early 1980s as well. Michael Handel’s book still constitutes a very important and relevant source for understanding small states and weakness of the state. Michael Handel, *Weak States in the International System*, Second Edition, (Frank Cass: London, [1981], 1990). Otmar Höll’s edited volume consists of chapters attempting to theorise small state studies and individual case studies analysing small states and dependency issue. Otmar Höll, (ed.), *Small States in Europe and Dependence*, (Wilhelm Brumüller: Wien, 1983).

category anymore, or they developed new approaches to study small states,<sup>27</sup> such as the analysis of small states in the world economy,<sup>28</sup> as, increasingly, “neoliberal institutionalism began to challenge the predominance of neo-realist theory.”<sup>29</sup>

In the post-Cold-War period, interest in small states again began to rise,<sup>30</sup> as a second wave of proliferation occurred with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the break-up of Yugoslavia and even the Czechoslovak ‘divorce’, all of which contributed to an instant increase in the number of small states in Europe and Eurasia. In a parallel development, newly independent and other small states focused their attention on joining international economic and security organisations and becoming part of regional integration initiatives. The European integration process and the new small states’ participation in the European Union was especially important in refocusing academic attention on small states and their role in the international arena.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, parallel to an increase in post-Cold-War

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<sup>27</sup>Christine Ingebritsen and Iver Neumann, “Introduction: Lilliputians in Gulliver’s World”, in Small States in International Relations, edited by Christine Ingebritsen, Iver Neumann, Sieglinde Gstöhl and Jessica Beyer, (University of Washington Press: Seattle, 2006), p. 12.

<sup>28</sup> Peter J. Katzenstein, Small States in World Markets: Industrial Policy in Europe, (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1985). For Katzenstein’s recent reevaluation of his book, see Peter J. Katzenstein, “*Small States and Small States Revisited*”, New Political Economy, vol. 8, no. 1, 2003, pp. 9-30.

<sup>29</sup> Ingebritsen and Neumann, op.cit., pp. 12-3. For the ‘Synopsis of Small States Studies’, see; ibid., p. 16, Table 1.1.

<sup>30</sup> New books dedicated to the small studies like the Ingebritsen and Neumann’s compilation of the leading pieces of the existing small states literature and Hey’s book on the foreign policy analyses of different small states reflect the reappearing interest to the small states studies in the 2000s. ibid., and Jeanne A. K Hey (ed.), Small States in World Politics: Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior, (Lynne Rienner Publishers: Boulder, 2003).

<sup>31</sup> Laurent Goetschel, (ed.), Small States inside and outside the European Union: Interests and Policies, (Kluwer Academic Publishers: Boston, 1998), Sasha Baillie, “The Position of Small States in the EU”, in Small States inside and outside the European Union: Interests and Policies, edited by Laurent Goetschel, (Kluwer Academic Publishers: Boston, 1998), pp.193-205, Laurent Goetschel, Small States and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the EU: A Comparative Analysis, (Nationales Forschungsprogramm) NFP 42 Working Papers, Bern, September 2000, Christine Ingebritsen, “Learning from Lilliput: Small States and EU Expansion”, Scandinavian Studies, vol. 76, no. 3, 2004, pp. 369-82, Anders Wivel, “The Security Challenge of Small EU Member States: Interests, Identity and the Development of the EU as a Security Actor”, Journal of Common Market Studies, vol. 43, no. 2, 2005, pp. 393-412, Clive Archer and Neill Nugent, “Introduction: Does the Size of Member States Matter in the European Union”, Journal of European Integration, vol. 28, no. 1, 2006, pp. 3-6, Baldur Thorhallsson and Anders Wivel, “Small States in the European Union: What Do We Know and What We Would Like to Know?”, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, vol. 19, no. 4, 2006, pp. 651-68, Baldur Thorhallsson,

instabilities and conflicts, security studies related to the small states also returned to the IR agenda.<sup>32</sup> In line with the development of new approaches to IR in this period, small state studies also began to be analysed through constructivist approach that referenced identity, norms and ideas.<sup>33</sup> Depending on the field of analysis and the particular issue, a variety of IR approaches could be applied to explain different aspects of small states and their relations. Changes in the international system after the end of the Cold War created more space for small states to become active in various issue areas including human rights, peacekeeping and the environment, and the new proliferation of small states increased their presence in the international arena. Consequently, the significance of small states was elevated in comparison to earlier periods in terms of the study of international politics and foreign policy analysis.

### **2.3 Defining Small States and Albania as a Small State**

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“The Size of States in the European Union: Theoretical and Conceptual Perspectives”, Journal of European Integration, vol. 28, no. 1, 2006, pp. 7-31.

<sup>32</sup> Efraim Inbar and Gabriel Scheffer, The National Security of Small States in a Changing World, (Frank Cass: London, 1997), Håkan Wiberg, “Security Problems of Small Nations”, in Small States and the Security Challenge in the New Europe, edited by Werner Brauwens, Armand Classe and Olav F. Knudsen, (Brassey’s: London, 1996), pp. 21-41, Zlatko Šabič and Charles Bukowski, Small States in the Post-Cold War: Slovenia and NATO Enlargement, (Praeger: Westport, 2002), Paul Sutton and Anthony Payne, “Lilliput under Threat: The Security Problems of Small Island and Enclave Developing States”, Political Studies, vol. 41, no. 4, 1993, pp. 579-93, Barry Bartmann, “Meeting the Needs of Microstate Security”, The Round Table, no. 365, 2002, pp. 361-74, Allen Sens, “Small-State Security in Europe: Threats, Anxieties and Strategies after the Cold War”, in Small States and the Security Challenge in the New Europe, edited by Werner Brauwens, Armand Classe and Olav F. Knudsen, (Brassey’s: London, 1996), pp. 74-99, Erik Männik, “Small States: Invited to NATO – Able to Contribute?”, Defense & Security Analysis, vol. 20, no.1, 2004, pp. 21-37, Olav F. Knudsen, “Analysing Small-State Security: The Role of External Factors”, in Small States and the Security Challenge in the New Europe, edited by Werner Brauwens, Armand Classe and Olav F. Knudsen, (Brassey’s: London, 1996), pp. 3-20, Raymond Hinnebusch, “The Iraq War and International Relations: Implications for Small States”, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, vol. 19, no. 3, 2006, pp. 451-63.

<sup>33</sup> Ingebritsen and Neumann, op.cit., pp. 15-6, Christopher S. Browning, “Small, Smart and Salient? Rethinking Identity in the Small States Literature”, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, vol. 19, no. 4, 2006, pp. 669-84, Christine Ingebritsen, “Norm Entrepreneurs: Scandinavia’s Role in World Politics”, in Small States in International Relations, edited by Christine Ingebritsen, Iver Neumann, Sieglinde Gstöhl and Jessica Beyer, (University of Washington Press: Seattle, 2006), pp. 273-85.

Although the relevance of size in determining the policy actions of states has been a subject of study in IR, to what extent the small state concept is applicable as an “analytical tool” for understanding international politics<sup>34</sup> has been a matter of intense discussion. It can be argued that the category “small state” may be used as a “way of breaking down the broad category of ‘state foreign policies’,”<sup>35</sup> allowing the international relations discipline to move beyond its traditional focus on only “one size”<sup>36</sup> of state, i.e., the great powers. In other words, rather than the mainstream approach to IR in which even small states are examined in terms of the interests and approaches of great powers, analysing those foreign-policy related behaviours, approaches and perceptions of small states that are intrinsically related to their specific characteristics as small states could widen the perspective of IR scholars and contribute to a better understating of foreign relations.

Rothstein underlines the importance of distinctness of the states in ‘other size’ by stating ‘...Small Powers are something more than or different from Great Powers writ small’<sup>37</sup>. The conceptual relation between the small states and the great powers possess a very structural component of their definitions, which is their relativity to each other. As Bjøl puts it “[a] state is only small in relation to greater one”<sup>38</sup>. But as Rothstein emphasizes what differentiates these two concepts is beyond the simple discrimination relative to their comparative ‘sizes’.

In fact, there has been no doubt as to the existence of small states, at least in common political language; but this does not necessarily lead to a clear identification of the phenomenon as a distinct category of analysis by scholars of

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<sup>34</sup> Peter R. Baehr, “Small States: A Tool for Analysis”, World Politics, vol. 27, no. 3, 1975, pp. 459, 461.

<sup>35</sup> Christopher Hill, The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy, (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2003), p. 47.

<sup>36</sup> Nicola Smith, Michelle Pace and Donna Lee, “Pieces on Ourcraft: Size Matters: Small States and International Studies”, International Studies Perspectives, vol. 6, no. 3, 2005, p. iii.

<sup>37</sup> Rothstein, 1968, op.cit., p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> Erling Bjøl, “The Small State in International Politics”, in Small States in International Relations, edited by August Schou and Arne Olav Brundtland, (Almqvist & Wiksell: Stockholm, 1971), p. 29.

international relations.<sup>39</sup> Contrarily, the concept of ‘great powers’ is widely accepted and used in IR terminology despite the lack of a precise description for this term as well. But while the perception and identification of great powers may be open to different interpretations,<sup>40</sup> just as small states may be recognized as existing despite the complications involved in defining them, it has been argued that by putting in the historical context, it is possible to obtain general agreement as to which states in any particular period should be considered as the ‘great powers’.<sup>41</sup>

The major problem with the small state concept is the lack of a unanimously agreed definition, which stems from a lack of agreement over clear and objective characteristics that would differentiate between small and non-small states. This problem has been an “accepted reality of the field of studying the small states.”<sup>42</sup> However, despite problems of terminology, the departure point of this thesis remains the understanding of the distinct characteristics and roles of small states in international relations as well as their foreign policy traits in general and vis-à-vis the great powers in particular. Under these circumstances, there appears to be no need for an all-agreed, comprehensive, precise and unique definition of a small state, since various approaches to the concept have been utilized in attempts to explain different subjects within the IR discipline.

At this point, however, it would be appropriate to clarify the conceptualisation of “the small state” within the context of this thesis, in which the

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<sup>39</sup> Wilhelm Christmas-Møller, “Some Thoughts on the Scientific Applicability of the Small State Concept: A Research History and a Discussion”, in Small States in Europe and Dependence, edited by Otmar Höll, (Wilhelm Brumüller: Wien, 1983), p. 40. For the analysis of different approaches defining the small state see; Niels Amstrup, 1976, op.cit., pp. 165-7. For a more current account of Amstrup’s analysis of six different approaching methods to small states see; Milan Jazbec, The Diplomacies of New Small States: The Case of Slovenia with some Comparison from the Baltics, (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2001), pp. 38-40.

<sup>40</sup> For classical definitions of ‘great power’ see; Barry Buzan, The United States and Great Powers: World Politics in the Twenty-First Century, (Polity: Cambridge, 2004), pp. 58-63.

<sup>41</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, Theory of International Politics, (Random House: New York, 1979), p. 131. Especially the Neorealists distinguish the great powers relatively easily from their point of view by ranking them at the top in the international system with regard to their capabilities.

<sup>42</sup> In a similar attempt of defining small states, faces ‘the same reality of the field’. Asbed Kotchikan, The Dialectics of Small States: Foreign Policy Making in Armenia and Georgia, Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, (Boston University: Boston, 2006).

adjectives ‘small’ and ‘weak’ are used interchangeably to qualify the ‘state’ in question. Although there may be a difference in the understanding of the term ‘small state’ (or ‘small power’), which appears to refer to the size of a state as a quantitative reference point, and the term ‘weak state’ (or ‘weak power’), which appears to refer to the capacity of a state as a qualitative reference point, in the final analysis, both terms meet at a single point: the limitedness of state capacity and power.<sup>43</sup> The author is aware of the facts that small and weak are not necessarily synonymous<sup>44</sup> and that there are individual exceptions<sup>45</sup> to the definition as used, as well as subcategories of small states, like microstates that may reflect distinctions within the small state categorization.<sup>46</sup> However, author will use the ‘small state’ and ‘weak state’ terms for Albania in this text interchangeably describing the limited physical and material features of the state as well as referring to ‘relational’ features of limited state power.

Despite the acknowledged ambiguity of the concept of the small state, the various approaches used to describe the characteristics of a small state may be broadly categorized into two spheres, quantitative and qualitative approaches; and a complimentary approach to these, the perceptual approach. The quantitative approach focuses on a state’s physical and material features, with population, territory, economic growth indicators and material resources considered to be the main determinants of the state’s size-related characteristics.<sup>47</sup> The quantitative

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<sup>43</sup> In the literature scholars uses the terms ‘small’ and ‘weak’ with state or power basically referring to same concept. Vital, op.cit., Singer, op.cit., and Rothstein, 1968, op.cit.

<sup>44</sup> Hans Vogel, “Small States’ Efforts in International Relations: Enlarging the Scope”, in Small States in Europe and Dependence, edited by Otmar Höll, (Wilhelm Brumüller: Wien, 1983), p. 55. For the argument concerning distinction of the terms ‘small’ and ‘great’, and ‘weak’ and ‘strong’, see; Iver B. Neumann and Sieglinde Gstöhl, Lilliputians in Gulliver’s World: Small States in International Relations, Centre for Small State Studies Working Paper 1-2004, Reykjavik, 2004, pp. 4-5 and Iver B. Neumann and Sieglinde Gstöhl, 2006, op.cit., pp. 7-8.

<sup>45</sup> Jeanne A. K. Hey, “Introducing Small State Foreign Policy”, in Small States in World Politics: Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior, edited by Jeanne A. K. Hey, (Lynne Rienner Publishers: Boulder, 2003), p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> Sheila Harden (ed.), Small is Dangerous: Micro States in a Macro World, Report of a Study Group of The David Davies Memorial Institute of International Studies, (Frances Pinter Publishers: London, 1985).

<sup>47</sup> Tom Crowards, “Defining the Category of Small States”, Journal of International Development, vol. 14, no. 2, 2002, p. 143-79.

categorization is not problem-free, in that it is hard to determine cut-off values for the selected criteria, which are inescapably arbitrary and may vary in accordance with the context and aims of particular studies. There is no consensus as to the size of the population, the amount of land that a state occupies, or the exact level of a particular economic indicator that should be used in defining a small state. Although there have been certain attempts to define mostly the upper limits of certain criteria,<sup>48</sup> these relative benchmarks have proved susceptible to change over time due to developments like increases in the number of states at the international level and in the size of the population at the national level.

Alternatively, a combination of different material criteria is also taken into account in order to qualify the states, such as defining the small state status according to population and land area, or population, land area and income/GDP.<sup>49</sup> However, this does not necessarily overcome the arbitrariness of the definition either. As a result, the methodological tendency is to use material indicators in line with a particular context for understanding and studying small states. For example, in order to provide aid and economic assistance,<sup>50</sup> international development organisations opt for population as the best available measure of size because population-based information is generally easily accessible and conceptualised.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> For example in his 1967 book David Vital, although admitting the ‘imperfection’ of his analysis but due to ‘necessity’, defines the ‘rough upper limits of the class of small states’ for the case of economically advanced countries as a population of 10-15 million and for the underdeveloped countries 20-30 million. Indeed by this way of description he also makes another subjective differentiation within his definition by using the separation of advanced and underdeveloped countries which will also be part of the study in a slightly different sense in the coming parts under the classification of small states with economic terms. Vital, op.cit., p. 8.

<sup>49</sup> In another example, Tom Crowards provides a detailed observational analysis of the small states using different parameters of population size, land area, income and their combinations and compares the results of each parameter and cut-off limits of which he seeks meeting at least two of the size criteria for his particular classification of the small states. In his study which uses the 1995 data, Albania is classified as “small” but with populations larger than 1.5 million’ -which he took as population cut-off level along with its small land area and low GDP figure for qualifying as small. Crowards, op.cit., pp. 148, 152-3, 164, 170-1. See Figure 3, Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, Figure 11, Table 5.

<sup>50</sup> F. M. Liou and C. G. Ding, “Subgrouping Small States Based on Socioeconomic Characteristics”, World Development, vol. 30, no. 7, 2002, pp. 1290-1.

<sup>51</sup> Robert Read, “Growth, Economic Development and Structural Transition in Small Vulnerable States”, World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER) Discussion Paper No. 2001/59, United Nations University, August 2001, pp. 1-2, 4. Accessible at

Leading institutions in small state-related economic research and development projects like the World Bank<sup>52</sup> and the Commonwealth Secretariat,<sup>53</sup> which have specific sections specialising on the subject, use a population-based delimitation of 1.5 million people as the threshold for defining a small state,<sup>54</sup> although this is somewhat flexible, depending upon other indicators.

In contrast to quantitative approach, the qualitative approach to understanding small states highlights the impact of the state at the international level. It is comprised of a state's capacity to rule and secure itself by maintaining its own sovereignty and control over other states' abilities to influence its actions and its own ability to influence the actions of other states. This approach attributes more importance to the capacity-related components of a state that are associated with an understanding of power and power relations.

Despite waves of criticism levelled against the realist school and its crude understanding and overemphasis of the concept of power, power as a concept is indispensable in the discipline of IR for any meaningful comprehension of foreign relations dynamics and the policies of international actors. In order to develop conceptual definitions of small states and great powers, it may be useful to examine the concept of power from a 'capacity-outcome'<sup>55</sup> viewpoint as a factor in

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[http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/working-papers/discussion-papers/2001/en\\_GB/dp2001-59/](http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/working-papers/discussion-papers/2001/en_GB/dp2001-59/).

<sup>52</sup> See The World Bank's Small State web site, <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/html/smallstates.nsf/>

<sup>53</sup> See the Commonwealth Secretariat Small States web site,

<http://www.commonwealthsmallstates.org/>.

Small States are described in the web site as the states "... [which] have populations of less than 1.5 million and are characterised by their vulnerability in the areas of defence and security, environmental disasters, limited human resources, and lack of economic resources" with other common characteristics shared by most of the small states including remoteness and insularity, susceptibility to natural disasters, limited institutional capacity, limited diversification, openness, access to external capital, income volatility and poverty.

<sup>54</sup> Small States: Meeting Challenges in Global Economy, Report of the Commonwealth Secretariat / World Bank Task Force on Small States, April 2000, p. 3. In fact the threshold is flexible as well since both institutions include states more populous than 1.5 million with the reasoning of sharing "many of the same characteristics of smallness".

<http://www.commonwealthsmallstates.org/PDF/taskforcereport.pdf>

<sup>55</sup> Paul Hirst, "The Eighty Years' Crisis, 1919-1999 – Power", in The Eighty Years' Crisis: International Relations 1919-1999, edited by Tim Dunne, Michael Cox and Ken Booth, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1988), pp. 133-4.

relations between actors and then locate this approach within a larger contextual framework, i.e., the international level of state relationships, where the power of state-actors can be elaborated.<sup>56</sup> At this point, it would be helpful to borrow Susan Strange's analytical framework that conceptualises power as either 'relational power' or 'structural power'.<sup>57</sup> Strange defines power as "...simply the ability of a person or group of persons so to affect outcomes that their preferences take precedence over the preferences of others."<sup>58</sup> This definition, Strange claims, is intended to avoid the "logical trap of pinning power to the pursuit of interest," which could be related to the understanding of "power as a means."<sup>59</sup> In thinking about power, Strange differentiates between relational power – which is the power of a state *in relation to other states* – and structural power – which is 'the authority [of a state] – the [state's] 'power over' global outcomes.'<sup>60</sup> The differentiation between relational and structural power is relevant to the analysis of small states and great powers in terms of clarifying the delimitation of their different contextual roles and capacities. In this sense, whereas small states have relational power that is shaped by their limited capacities, great powers possess structural power that gives them the ability to influence outcomes at the structural level of international relations. Some small states may have relatively more power in some

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<sup>56</sup> In fact Laurent Goetschel also underlines the significance of smallness of states in a similar way in relation to notion of power and nature of the international system and in this sense conceptualise likewise the concept of power in a 'positive sense' as 'influence' referring to the capacity of an actor (he actually uses individual and group of individuals) to modify the conduct of other actors in a desired manner and in a 'negative sense' as 'autonomy', the ability to prevent others from affecting own behaviour. Laurent Goetschel, "The Foreign and Security Policy Interest of Small States in Today's Europe", in Small States inside and outside the European Union: Interests and Policies, edited by Laurent Goetschel, (Kluwer Academic Publishers: Boston, 1998), pp. 14-5, and Laurent Goetschel, Small States and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the EU: A Comparative Analysis, (Nationales Forschungsprogramm) NFP 42 Working Papers, Bern, September 2000, pp. 3-4.

<sup>57</sup> Susan Strange, The Retreat of State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Economy, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1996), pp. 17, 20-3, 25-30.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 19, 25. Susan Strange makes a distinction between 'power over' –the authority over global outcomes and 'power from' –the relative power based on capabilities and resources, and argues that what matters is more 'power over' than 'power from'.

issue areas or within their own region, or they may have acquired power in relation to a specific historical circumstance; however, this does not necessarily elevate their status from small state to great power.

Complementary to their relative material characteristics and capacities, how states are perceived and recognized<sup>61</sup> is also important in determining the respective statuses of small states and great powers. For instance, a state cannot become a great power simply by declaring itself to be one; it needs both qualification – i.e., it must possess relative power and material capacity reflected in the international system – and justification – i.e., it must be recognized as a great power in the eyes of other states. Moreover, as Barry Buzan argues, a consideration of the attribution of great power status must extend beyond the sum of state capabilities, declaratory postures and the accordance of formal status by international society to take into account “the idea that states calculate their behaviour in relation to the behaviour of others” – an idea that embodies itself in “how they [the states] behave in a wider sense, and how that behaviour is treated by others.”<sup>62</sup> Hey simplifies Buzan’s argument by proposing that “if a state’s people and institutions generally perceive themselves to be small, or if other states’ people and institutions perceive that state as small, it shall be considered [small].”<sup>63</sup> Hey concludes her analysis of the definition of small states by offering an “I know one when I see it”<sup>64</sup> approach in opposition to rigid, formal definitions.

In terms of both quantitative/qualitative and perceptual approaches, Albania fits in the criteria of a small state. Albania covers 28,748 square

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<sup>61</sup> This also includes self-perception and ‘common consciousness’. Henrikson argues that despite different factors, the overpowering common factor of scale -being small- could be an imposed inescapable burden of commonness, which is to be a widely shared condition, on the small states. Alan K. Henrikson, “A Coming of ‘Magnesian’ Age? Small States, the Global System, and the International Community”, *Geopolitics*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2001, pp. 55-6.

<sup>62</sup> Buzan, *op.cit.*, p. 67. The formalisation of grading of powers especially the great powers is quite problematic as there may be non-correspondence between formal standing and real strength of the states which is subject to change due to alterations in the system or within the states. . Øyvind Østerud, “Regional Great Powers”, in *Regional Great Powers in International Politics*, edited by Iver B. Neumann, (The Macmillan Press: London, 1992), pp. 5-6.

<sup>63</sup> Hey, 2003, *op.cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

kilometres of land,<sup>65</sup> which ranks it 143 among other countries and territories in terms of size.<sup>66</sup> The 2001 census estimated the population of Albania to be 3,069,000, and the 2006 census provided a slightly higher estimate, 3,149,000.<sup>67</sup> Albania ranked 137 among 207 states (including the micro-states) in the population list (September 2007) of the World Bank's World Development Indicators Database<sup>68</sup> and 109 among 183 countries in the database's GDP figures (July 2007), with a GDP of US\$ 9.136 million.<sup>69</sup> The World Bank also categorizes Albania as a developing country in Europe and Central Asia and a "lower middle income country."<sup>70</sup> These indicators are clear in their rough positioning of Albania in a quantitative relation to other countries; however, they are not necessarily by themselves sufficient in defining Albania as a small state. The categorisations are contextual and depend on the variables in relation to the practical purpose of the categorisation.

In terms of qualitative approach, Albania does not have structural power or any related capacity at all to have influence at the structural level of the international relations. It has rather limited relational power related to its limited capacities which becomes relevant as it gets influential in terms of getting power from the specific issues or conjunctures especially in relation with the region it is located and its specific bilateral relations.

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<sup>65</sup> "Albania Country Profile 2007", The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), The Economist Intelligence Unit, London, 2007.

<sup>66</sup> According to the Wikipedia List of Countries and Outlying Territories by Total Area, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_and\\_outlying\\_territories\\_by\\_area](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_and_outlying_territories_by_area) and the List of Countries by Land Mass, [http://www.mongabay.com/igapo/world\\_statistics\\_by\\_area.htm](http://www.mongabay.com/igapo/world_statistics_by_area.htm).

<sup>67</sup> "Albania Country Profile 2007", op.cit.

<sup>68</sup> "Population 2006", World Development Indicators Database, The World Bank, 14 September 2007. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/POP.pdf>, According to the list countries from 152<sup>nd</sup> to the last one, the 207<sup>th</sup>, are have population less than 1 million ranging from 853 thousand to 20 thousand.

<sup>69</sup> "Total GDP 2006", World Development Indicators Database, The World Bank, 1 July 2007, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GDP.pdf>.

<sup>70</sup> "Country Groups", The World Bank, <http://go.worldbank.org/D7SN0B8YU0>.

Albanians recognise and admit that Albania is a small country. They try to shape their policies in relation to this consciousness of the limited capacity of their country. In terms of self-perception and other states' approach to Albania, including the other small states, it is regarded to be in the small state category in the international arena.

#### **2.4 The Context of the Small State – Great Power Relationship**

The definition of context and the context of analysis are important factors in the analysis of small state-great power relations. As the context that determines inter-state relations, the international system is crucial to the nature of relations between states and their relational power. The existing determinants of the international system, such as balance of power or bipolarity, have an important affect on the foreign policymaking of states.<sup>71</sup> Small states and great powers adapt different approaches and strategies in their interactions with each other in relation to international circumstances and the characteristics of the existing international system.<sup>72</sup>

In order to comprehend small state-great power relationships, it is also important to make a distinction between state power, be it relational or structural, and its application in international relations through foreign policymaking. For the most part, the systemic theories that are generally used to understand state behaviour based on the distribution of power in relation to structural changes at the international level<sup>73</sup> are unable to wholly account for the weakness of small states or the strength of great powers. Combining systemic theories with approaches that take into account the domestic determinants of foreign policy and state capacity

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<sup>71</sup> Handel, op.cit., p. 171. The nature of the bipolar system being *tight bipolar* or *loose bipolar* may also have influence on the small state relations with the great powers. Ibid., p. 188.

<sup>72</sup> Bjøl, 1971, op.cit., p. 33.

<sup>73</sup> Robert O., Kohane, "Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics", (Review Article), International Organisation, vol. 23, no. 2, 1969, p. 295.

can be regarded as a convenient method for broadening the understanding of the foreign policymaking of both small states and great powers.<sup>74</sup>

Great powers may emerge as the leading figures of the international system relative to their dominance and supremacy, combining material capabilities and ideological and political dominance with a willingness to define and shape the international order. Not only do great powers determine the features of international politics, they reshape the international order in accordance with their individual interests in order to prolong their dominance and extend their power. This characteristic may be considered a reflection of their structural power.

A common point for the categorization of the small states' relations with the great powers is their relative positions vis-à-vis their international relations. Small states may make different foreign policy choices between, in the roughest form, non-alignment, alliance and neutrality.<sup>75</sup> These choices may vary according to different historical periods. In addition, geographical positions and unusual conditions and circumstances have always been very important determinants in shaping the policies of small states. During times of war, small states adopt a policy of neutrality in order to preserve their independence and sovereignty, retaining impartiality towards and protecting themselves from the belligerent powers so as not to become a battleground for other states' wars. Basically, neutrality involves escaping involvement from a particular war by all means available. Neutrality is also an institutionalised feature of international law that is defined by international treaties and conventions<sup>76</sup> and contributes to the security of states, some of whom have gone so far as to become permanently neutral. Permanent neutrality may be chosen by a state, or a state may have permanent neutrality thrust upon it. Whereas Sweden opted to become permanently neutral after the Napoleonic Wars, Switzerland had the status of permanent neutrality

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<sup>74</sup> Miriam Fendius Elman, "The Foreign Policies of Small States: Challenging Neorealism in Its Own Backyard", British Journal of Political Science, vol. 25, no. 2, 1995, pp. 171- 5.

<sup>75</sup> For a detailed account of neutrality Rothstein, 1966, op.cit., especially pp. 403-18 and Efraim Karsh, Neutrality and Small States, (Routledge: London, 1988).

<sup>76</sup> For the historical development and institutionalization of neutrality in the international law and reference declarations, conventions and conferences see, Karsh, op.cit., pp. 13-9.

imposed upon it by the Great Powers at the Congress of Vienna. However, neutrality does not always provide the aimed-for security: Belgium in the First and Second World Wars and Holland, Finland and Norway in the Second World War all lost their neutrality by force, either through a declaration of war or an occupation.

Following the Second World War, a new type of ‘neutrality’ – ‘nonalignment’ – developed as an international movement, especially among Third World-countries that wanted to avoid becoming a party to the competition between superpowers. Nonalignment, which might also be referred to as ‘neutralism’, differs from the neutrality of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>77</sup> in that nonalignment does not guaranty neutrality during times of war. A state that chooses to remain outside any alliance may be regarded as non-aligned, but it may become involved in a war by taking sides with a particular alliance or individual belligerent.

The benefit of nonalignment for the small state is directly related to the nature of the contextual international system. Specific circumstances create (or fail to create) an environment conducive to sustaining the viability of a small state’s policy of nonalignment. It is in this sense that Rothstein defines nonalignment as “a tactical principle designed to extract the widest range of advantages from a particular kind of power configuration.”<sup>78</sup>

Small states may also opt to form or join alliances with other states or groups of states in order to compensate for the weaknesses that inhibit their capacity to guarantee their own security. Alliances can be characterized by their forms and rationales. The various forms of alliances<sup>79</sup> include bilateral or multilateral alliances, alliances with a great power, alliances established among various small states and mixed, multilateral alliance. Alliances formed against a particular security threat, other alliance or state also makes difference for the small

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., pp. 7, 18, 26-9. Karsh defines the distinction as ‘...neutrality constitutes a jurisprudential institution, integrally linked to the concept of war... –whereas neutralism is no more than a political concept...’. Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>78</sup> Rothstein, 1968, op. cit., p. 247.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

states which is also reflected in the inter-alliance relationships like an asymmetric relation between a small state and a great power.

The foreign policy options of small states are generally evaluated in relation to their security considerations, which may be linked to the inherent weakness of small states.<sup>80</sup> The relationship between weakness and security is one of the major themes in small state foreign relations. In this regard, the concept of vulnerability in terms of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity is often referred to in defining the status of small states within the international system. In the security realm, although great powers define the general lines of international relations, small states have the option of choosing between alternative policies within the broader framework, in accordance with constraints<sup>81</sup> that are directly related to the particular conditions of a specific small state within a specific international context.

With regard to small state-great power relationships, one of the fundamental questions has been whether or not small states have been anything more than the pawns of great powers in the international system. This question stems from the disparity of power and influence between these two categories of states, both in relational and structural terms. Especially at the structural level, describing the international context as shaped by great powers in a way reflects on and characterizes small states as mere instruments of great powers rather than as actors that also contribute to and influence the international environment. However, the instrumental approach taken by great powers to small states should not create an image of small states as dispensable and relatively negligible pieces on the international chessboard. Although the small states' scope of impact may be contestable, they are present, along with the great powers, and within the limits of their relational power, are involved in the contextual shaping of the international environment.

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<sup>80</sup> Olav F. Knudsen, "Small States, Latent and Extant: Towards a General Perspective", Journal of International Relations and Development, vol. 5, no. 2, 2002, p. 187.

<sup>81</sup> Raimo Väyrynen, "Small States: Persisting Despite Doubts", in The National Security of Small States in a Changing World, edited by Efraim Inbar and Gabriel Scheffer, (Frank Cass: London, 1997), p. 43.

## 2.5 Historical Evolution of Small State-Great Power Relations

Within a historical context, the analysis of the small state-great power distinction may be traced to the introduction of the term ‘great power’ in international relations. The shaping of the international order after the Napoleonic Wars is reflected in the attribution of the title ‘Great Power’ to the leading states of Europe participating in the Congress of Vienna,<sup>82</sup> namely, Britain, Austria-Hungary, Prussia, Russia and France. The title reflected their wish to be perceived as equals and to be accorded the same level of treatment – hence the extension of this status to Italy as well. The Great Powers were the leading empires and the states directing the international politics of the time. Their attempt to construct a new Europe and redistribute colonial power at the Congress of Vienna was embodied in the establishment of the permanent Concert of the Great Powers.<sup>83</sup> In the emerging state system, the essential “contrast between the formal principle of sovereign equality and the enormous empirical variation of constituent units”<sup>84</sup> was made clear from the start. At the time the categorisation of states was simple, as the number of the states in the international system was quite limited. The distinction was thus made between Great Powers and small states; basically, the “small states were all those states that were not [G]reat [P]owers.”<sup>85</sup> Moreover, the reflection of the disparity of power and status between states in terms of inequality and subjective treatment has been one of the leading issues in IR since the initial shaping of the international system.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Vandenbosh, op.cit., p. 295.

<sup>83</sup> Webster, op.cit., pp. 143-4.

<sup>84</sup> Østerud, op.cit., p. 3.

<sup>85</sup> Neuman and Gstöhl, 2006, op.cit., p. 5. Small states were known as the small powers at the time.

<sup>86</sup> For an historical quantitative and comparative analysis on the correlation between the international states system and the number of small states in the system see, Matthias Maass, Small but Plentiful: The Proliferation of Small States in the International System of States, 1648-2002, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, (Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University: Medford, 2003).

The Congress of Vienna was never considered to be a Congress of all Europe.<sup>87</sup> In trying to establish a balance among them, the Great Powers imposed their ascendancy over the smaller states, while the small states became involved in issues of international interest to the extent that their presence in terms of resources and armies was considered relevant to the relations between the Great Powers. In fact, not only had the Great Powers supported the independence of the small states when they began popping up as a result of the post-French-revolution wave of nationalism, they later turned into protectors of these countries after they were granted their independence.

The distinction made between great powers and other states was intrinsically connected to the establishment of a new Continental and international order – an order that was basically Eurocentric and colonial. The leading strong states of Europe, i.e., those with the capacity and willingness to shape the international system, got together to do just that. Their priority was the restoration of the international order through the establishment of a balanced web of relationships. Wary that changes in the power configuration could lead to a shifting of balances at the international level, they strove to prevent any rivalries between and radical alterations of the powers possessed by the various states. The Great Powers favoured the preservation of the *status quo*, and they tried to avoid any challenges to the system. In this scenario, the contextual significance of the small powers lay in their contribution to the functioning of the system. Although the small states did not engage in shaping the system that was produced and protected by the Great Powers, their harmonic action within the system was essential to its overall smooth functioning.

The community of Great Powers was shattered after the First World War; however, the concept was reproduced within a new international environment enriched by newly formed nation-states that had emerged from the fragments of dissolved empires.<sup>88</sup> During this period, the small state-great power distinction was

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>88</sup> 20 new states were joined to the community of the independent states after the end of the First World War.

further institutionalized through the establishment of the League of Nations, the international organization that was supposed to sustain peace and stability by representing all the states on a common platform. The victorious Great Powers of the First World War composed the permanent members of the Council of the League of Nations, along with a number of non-permanent small state members.<sup>89</sup> This signified a compromise on the part of the small states, who relinquished the principle of equality of states in exchange for the establishment of the rule of law and order in the international arena. This may also be considered as an attempt on the part of the small states to encourage the great powers to pursue peaceful and cooperative policies in line with the responsibility accompanying their privileged position in the international system.<sup>90</sup> In a departure from the concert system, the small powers were represented in the League of Nations at the council and assembly levels<sup>91</sup> in what was basically selective participation. Not all countries were accepted as members of the League of Nations. Some, like Lichtenstein, for example, were regarded as too small and militarily weak to be sovereign international actors.<sup>92</sup> In this period, the principle of the sovereign equality of states could be exercised neither in its political nor its legalistic sense, as this principle's cohabitation with the great power reality had preserved its continuity since the Congress of Vienna.<sup>93</sup>

The small powers believed the League would guarantee a more secure international environment by handling crises and assisting in the peaceful and

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<sup>89</sup> E. H. Carr, International Relations between the Two World Wars, (Macmillan: London, [1937, 1947], 1985), pp. 99-100.

<sup>90</sup> William Rappard, "Small States in the League of Nations", Political Science Quarterly, vol. 49, no. 4, 1934, pp. 557, 563.

<sup>91</sup> Article 4 of the Covenant of the League of Nations specifies the representation of the countries in the League of Nations framework. Composition of the Council and the Assembly described in this article as the council consisting of four Representatives of Principal Allied and Associated Powers together with representatives of four other members of the League elected by the Assembly with two thirds majority.

<sup>92</sup> Neumann and Gstöhl, 2004, op.cit., p. 6.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

reasonable settlement of disputes.<sup>94</sup> However, it was not possible to establish relations between great power and small powers on the basis of equality at the level of international organizations. Rather, the great powers utilised or paralysed the League in line with their own interests. Ultimately, the occupation of small states by great powers during the interwar period constituted a challenge to the international system and the international order, demonstrating the limits and handicaps of an international collective security organisation.

The overall context of the interwar years was shaped by this attempt to transform the international system from one of a balance of power to one of collective security. However, the great powers were neither ready nor wholeheartedly willing to accept the idea of such a system, which resulted in the total failure of these endeavours. The great powers sacrificed the imminent security needs of the small states under the pretext that satisfying these needs could produce even broader instability at the international level, even to the extent that it might lead to another world-wide war. This sacrifice is reflected in the Great Powers' adoption of a policy of appeasement against the revisionism and expansionist policies of Germany, which, in the end, proved ineffective in preventing the Second World War.

Not only did the spread of the war to different small states, but in the process, some small states endeavoured to make use of their weakness and the existing international context to resist the pressure of stronger powers.<sup>95</sup> In this environment the differences between the small states and the great powers appeared to be in relation with the scope of their attention and related priorities<sup>96</sup>. This led to a change in the great powers' stereotypic perceptions of small states as "helpless pawns" in world politics.<sup>97</sup> Despite their weaknesses, some small states

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<sup>94</sup> F. P. Walters, 1967 [1952], A History of the League of Nations, Oxford University Press, London, pp. 127, 254.

<sup>95</sup> Fox, 1959, op.cit.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 1959, p. 1.

were able to keep out of the war by pursuing policies of neutrality, which, in some cases, proved to be a valid and functional foreign policy tool.

The aftermath of the Second World War presented a drastic and fundamental change in the international system and the way in which foreign policies are made. The international order that had begun to take shape during the war developed into a very tense and competitive bipolar international system. The parameters of power changed with the introduction of nuclear arms, and a new term was coined – ‘superpower’ – to describe those states that possessed them along with strategic global reach combined with massive economic power. The United States and the Soviet Union ended up as the two superpowers whose power far exceeded that of any other country. The confrontation between the two superpowers soon spread to almost all spheres of activity, and security became the major priority for all states. Small states are considered to have been the importers of security during this period,<sup>98</sup> although they were not the sources of insecurity. Cooperation in the security realm became the leading area of mutual and multilateral relations for both small states and great powers during the Cold War-period.

For the small states, developments brought not only insecurity, but opportunities as well, as they tried to compensate for their characteristic military weakness<sup>99</sup> by entering alliances with one of the two superpowers. The nature of these alliances changed on a case-by-case basis from ‘balancing’ – aligning with the opposing great power for protection against the source of danger – to ‘bandwagoning’ – aligning with the threatening power to benefit from its patronage.<sup>100</sup> The new international context expanded the array of policy options of small states, as well as their freedom of action.<sup>101</sup> Parallel to the increase in their bargaining power brought about by the competition for supremacy and security

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<sup>98</sup> Knudsen, 2002, *op.cit.*

<sup>99</sup> Handel, *op.cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>100</sup> Väyrynen, 1997, *op.cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>101</sup> Ronald P. Bartson, “The External Relations of Small States”, in Small States in International Relations, edited by August Schou and Arne Olav Brundtland, (Almqvist & Wiksell: Stockholm, 1971), p. 46.

between the superpowers<sup>102</sup> came a vast increase in the number of attempts by small states to make use of the so-called ‘power of the weak’. Small states joined alliances in an effort to guarantee their security by “sharing the burden”<sup>103</sup> in return for their loyalty to an alliance system, while others opted for nonalignment as a security strategy, hoping to benefit from a declared disassociation with both rival parties in the bipolar international system.

The United Nations (UN) was established as the major international organization of the post-Second World War order. Despite claims that the international society had become more egalitarian than it had been in the past due to the UN’s universal membership,<sup>104</sup> which included the decolonised new states, the great powers maintained their influence in the international arena through permanent seats in the Security Council, which came complete with veto rights. Thus, the great powers were able to maintain their leading roles at the international level, even in the face of a dramatic increase in the number of independent small states represented at the United Nations.

During the heyday of the Cold War, the superpowers focused their attention on increasing their influence by developing close relations with the small states whenever possible. The small states were able to play on the East-West rivalry, hoping to benefit from the international conjuncture, as the Americans and the Soviets aimed to expand their respective spheres of influence to the greatest extent possible by constructing global alliance systems.<sup>105</sup> This process began to wane with the start of Détente in 1969 and the beginning of a rapprochement between the United States and the Soviet Union. As a result, those small states that had not already taken a place in the alliance system of one of the two superpowers began to lose their significance.

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>103</sup> Handel, op.cit., p. 149.

<sup>104</sup> Chris Brown, “Do Great Powers Have Great Responsibilities? Great Powers and Moral Agency” Global Society, vol. 18, no. 1, 2004, p. 8.

<sup>105</sup> Fred Halliday, The Making of the Second Cold War, (Verso: London, 1983), p. 5.

The post-Cold War environment has presented new challenges to international relations, the reactions to which have led to a redefinition of the nature of interactions at the international level. States have experienced drastic changes in the post-Cold-War era, as the international system has basically shifted from the bipolar *status quo*, which had rested on a relatively balanced and equal distribution of power between the two rival camps at the international level, towards a new phase in which the United States has demonstrated an enthusiasm for exerting its power internationally and distinctly hegemonic aspirations. Although the gap between the sole superpower and the other powers has widened, the existence and relevance of different powers is still applicable in the conducting of international relations.

This new era has witnessed further increases in the number of small states.<sup>106</sup> This growth process, which had started during the decolonisation period, began afresh with the post-Cold-War dissolution of communist-party regimes and the dismemberment of federal structures in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia and coincided with international and regional integration processes. As a result, regional cooperation and integration mechanisms and regional security organisations became sources of attraction for small states, especially those in Europe.

The post-Cold War era has created a new environment in which the small states and the great powers have redefined their relations. Although discrepancies in state capacities has continued to be the main determinant of the nature of relations between them, changes in the international system and their impact on states' domestic arenas have also become important factors in shaping contemporary asymmetric interstate relations.

## **2.6 Conclusions**

Albania can be described as a weak, small state in the international arena. It has limited material resources and human capital. From its process of state

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<sup>106</sup> Juan Enriquez, "Too Many Flags?", *Foreign Policy*, no. 116, Fall 1999, pp. 30-2.

formation onwards, Albania has faced various problems related to consolidation and institutionalisation at the domestic level and threats and instability at the regional and international levels. Albania's struggle for state viability, security and economic prosperity as a small state has basically shaped its policies, both domestic and foreign. Departing from the proposition that there is strength in weakness,<sup>107</sup> successive Albanian leaderships took into account the weakness of the Albanian state and tried to utilise the country's relational power and circumstantial position, exploiting contingencies and international conditions to align with regional or great powers in an effort to secure support for the Albanian state from whichever regional or great power was appropriate for their interests at the time. This basically manifested itself in the establishment of asymmetric alliances,<sup>108</sup> a policy that met with different levels of success, depending upon the domestic and international circumstances. At times alignment was able to save Albania from economic break-down or military threat, while at others it required Albanians to sacrifice their sovereignty or act as agents of stronger states, and at still others alignment resulted in foreign occupation. While asymmetry was a constant, the actual level of foreign involvement and influence varied from a patron-client relationship<sup>109</sup> to a relatively balanced alliance relationship, depending on the existing conditions. The one important exception to Albania's characteristic strategy of alliance formation was put in place by Enver Hoxha, who, despite being the most talented employer of this strategy, also realised the most drastic shift away from this approach by applying a strict isolationist policy that closed off the country to all foreign influence and access. Within the framework of Albania's post-Cold-War experience, this thesis will extrapolate whether Albania's tendency to align itself with a great-power patron will persist as part of its foreign policy for as long as its characteristic weakness continues.

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<sup>107</sup> Handel, op.cit., pp. 119-56. See also Albania as an example in p. 137 and end note 61, p. 162.

<sup>108</sup> For the details of the theoretical explanations of the asymmetric alliances see, James D. Morrow, "Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances", American Journal of Political Science, vol. 35, no. 4, 1991, pp. 904-33.

<sup>109</sup> For the analysis of the goals and forms of patron-client relationships see, Christopher C. Shoemaker and John Spanier, Patron-Client Relationships: Multilateral Crises in the Nuclear Age, (Praeger: New York, 1984), pp. 17-44.

## CHAPTER 3

### ALBANIAN FOREIGN POLICY FORMATION: FOUNDATIONS OF A SMALL STATE FOREIGN POLICY

#### 3.1 Formation of Albanian Foreign Policy: Quest for Balancing the Weakness

Albania is a weak, small state in the international arena. From its state-formation process onwards, Albania has faced challenges ranging from consolidation and institutionalisation at the domestic level to threats and instability at the regional and international levels. This thesis argues that Albania's foreign policy was shaped by its struggle to become and to remain a viable, secure and economically prosperous state. Conscious of these needs, successive Albanian leaderships and regimes developed strategies that used the weakness of the Albanian state to appeal to the interests of the prevailing regional or international powers in order to secure their patronage.

The establishment of alliances characterized by a patron-client relationship goes back to the very foundation and consolidation of the Albanian state. As long as Albania remained a weak small state, this approach to foreign policy continued to be viewed as a viable one by different political leaderships, and it was adapted in various forms under different domestic and international circumstances. While this strategy represents a continuous trend in Albanian foreign policy, its outcome was inconsistent.

Albanian nationalism emerged quite late in the process of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in comparison to the other Balkans nations,<sup>1</sup> most of which had already achieved their independence by the time the Albanians were ready to

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<sup>1</sup> Piro Misha, "Invention of Nationalism: Myth and Amnesia", in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, edited by Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer, (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 2002), pp. 34, 40.

disassociate themselves from the Ottomans and unite in the development of a national identity that could be transformed into the foundations of a nation-state.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, unlike other Balkan nations, Albanians had no Great Power patronage to defend their national cause.<sup>3</sup> Rather, nation building and state formation advanced of necessity as a result of the Balkan Wars, which caused a *de facto* break in the geographic connection between the Albanians and the Ottomans. In order to escape partition by other Balkan states, Albanians declared their independence on 28 November 1912, ending almost five centuries of Ottoman rule.

The declaration of independence did not immediately bring stability and sovereignty to Albania. From the very beginning, Albania was faced with problems of vulnerability and survival, leading to its weaknesses as a small state. The two characteristics – vulnerability and weakness – perpetuated each other, increasing the severity of both problems. Albania's vulnerability was accentuated by the territorial claims of neighbouring countries that threatened Albanian territorial integrity,<sup>4</sup> doubts about which were provoked by the new state's difficulties in defining and protecting its national boundaries. Furthermore, as an emerging state, Albania lacked the necessary political, economic and military means to form, consolidate and protect itself. Despite the initial excitement over creating their state, Albanians were politically and socially divided, without a strong political leadership or well-established intelligentsia to lead the country. Neither the domestic circumstances nor the international environment were

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<sup>2</sup> For a detailed account of the development of Albanian nationalism and position of the Albanians during the Ottoman dissolution see; George W. Gawrych, The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians, 1874-1913, (I.B. Tauris: London, 2006), pp. 38-71, 170-202, and Bernd J. Fischer, "Albanian Nationalism in the Twentieth Century", in Eastern European Nationalism in the Twentieth Century, edited by Peter F. Sugar, (The American University Press: Washington D.C., 1995), pp. 26-34. Also see; T. Zavalani, "Albanian Nationalism", in Nationalism in Eastern Europe, edited by Peter F. Sugar and Ivo John Lederer, Third Edition, (University of Washington Press: Seattle, [1969], 1994), p. 55-92.

<sup>3</sup> During the Berlin of Congress in 1878 even the existence Albanians as a nation was questioned and denied by the Great Powers. S. Pollo and A. Puto, The History of Albania: From Its Origins to the Present Day, (Routledge and Kegan Paul: London, 1981), pp. 119-20.

<sup>4</sup> Gus Xhudo, Diplomacy and Crisis Management in the Balkans: A U.S. Foreign Policy Perspective, (MacMillan Press Ltd.: London, 1996), p. 35.

conducive to the creation and sustainability of the new Albanian nation-state. Consequently, Albania sought patrons and alliances to ensure its survival.

Albanian society was divided and diverse, and this diversity played an influential role in the formation of state-society relations. Geographically, the Shkumbi River constituted a dividing line in the western Balkans between the Ghegs in the mountainous north and the Tosks in the lowlands to the south. Indeed, this physical division into two very different environments had been decisive in determining the differences between these two distinct groups of Albanians<sup>5</sup>, each with different dialects and social structuring<sup>6</sup>. Although the dialects were mutually distinguishable, their differences had implications in terms of deciding on a written language and script, and thus represented an obstacle when it came to national unification<sup>7</sup>.

Neither could religion be relied upon as a unifying factor. Albanian society was 70 percent Muslim,<sup>8</sup> 20 percent Eastern Orthodox and 10 percent Roman Catholic,<sup>9</sup> with Orthodoxy widespread among the Tosks in the south, Catholicism

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<sup>5</sup> Isa Blumi, Rethinking the Late Ottoman Empire, (The ISIS Press: Istanbul, 2003), pp. 27-8.

<sup>6</sup> Brandon Doll, "The Relationship between the Clan System and Other Institutions in Northern Albania", Southeast European and Black Sea Studies, vol. 3, no. 2, 2003, p. 149.

<sup>7</sup> Fischer, op.cit., pp. 26-7.

<sup>8</sup> This ratio of the overall Muslims in the Albanian society also includes the Bektashi sect which was also strongly represented in Albania. For the historical origins of the Bektashism in Albania as part of the Sufi movements and orders in the Balkans see; H.T. Norris, Islam in the Balkans: Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab World, (University of California Press: Columbia S.C, 1993), pp. 89-100 and 123-36. For a detailed analysis of politics and Bektashism in Albania see; Albert Doja, "A Political History of Bektashism in Albania", Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions, vol. 7, no. 1, 2006, pp. 83-107. Old but a very interesting account about Bektashis in Albania; Margaret Hasluck, "The Nonconformist Moslems of Albania", Contemporary Review, no. 127, January/June 1925, pp. 599-606. Contemporary reports on Islam in Albania and among Albanians; Miranda Vickers, Islam in Albania, Balkans Series 08/09 Advanced Research and Assessment Group, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, March 2008, for Bektashism especially pp. 3-4, 7-8 and Isa Blumi, Political Islam among the Albanians: Are the Taliban Coming to the Balkans?, KIPRED Policy Research Series, Paper no.2, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Despite the lack of exact figures and information about the impact of the ban of religion by the Stalinist Enver Hoxha regime on faith among Albanians, these rough figures are assumed to represent approximate percentages of believers of different religions in Albania. Robert Elsie, Historical Dictionary of Albania, New Edition, (The Scarecrow Press Inc.: Lanham, 2004), p. 357. For the details of the Islam in Albania ibid., pp. 194-8, for Bektashism pp. 49-55, Orthodoxy pp. 322-5 and Catholicism pp. 83-6. For a brief account of the religion in Albania also see; Antonia Young, "Religion and Society in Present-Day Albania", Journal of Contemporary Religion, vol. 14, no. 1, 1999, pp. 6-10.

among the Ghegs in the north, and the Muslim faith dispersed throughout. Although religion did not represent a basis of conflict among the Albanian population, it was not a key unifying factor as it had been in the evolution of other nationalisms in the Balkans during the nation-building process. Within this context, Albania lacked a sole faith under which to unite its people, a clergy that could act as an organising factor, or a Great Power dominated by the same religious faith that was ready to provide support. On the contrary, rather than religion, ethnicity was essentially emphasized and used to link Albanians; as the Albanian saying goes, “The religion of the Albanians is Albanianism.”<sup>10</sup>

However, essential differences did exist between the northern and southern Albanians in terms of their social organization, values and lifestyles. The Ghegs were socially shaped around a strong tribal organisation that formed the primary aspect of their identity. Due to the inaccessible mountainous terrain in which they lived, they had limited interaction with others, relying basically on their extended families and clans. Moreover, the inaccessibility of their geography provided them with the relative freedom to deal with their own affairs. Enjoying virtual autonomy from central government structures, the Ghegs relied on the application of the *Kanun of Lek*, a body of traditional laws and customs codified by Lek Dukadjin in the 15th century that had been used in Albanian society for centuries.<sup>11</sup>

Both the closed nature of their tribal society and the historically limited presence of government authority were reflected in the underdevelopment of nationalist sentiments among the Ghegs. Furthermore, the economic backwardness of their self-sustaining, agrarian rural lifestyle, the high rate of illiteracy and the existence of tribal rivalries among leading tribes did little to encourage the development and spread of nationalism among them. Shifting the popular loyalty from local tribe to national Albanian identity and adjusting to a unifying central authority characteristic of a nation-state was not going to be an easy task.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Elez Biberaj, *Albania: A Socialist Maverick*, (Westview Press: Boulder, 1990), p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History*, (I.B. Taurus: London, [1995], 2001), pp. 5-7. For the codified text of the Kanun of Lek see; *Kanuni I Lekë Dukagjinit: The Code of Lekë Dukagjini*, (Gjonlekaj Publishing Co.: New York, 1989).

<sup>12</sup> Gawrych, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

The social fabric of the Tosks in the south was entirely different from that of the Ghegs in the north. Rather than tribal influences, the social and economic interactions among Tosks were strongly governed by feudal relations between landowning and peasant classes. Land, agricultural and other production were concentrated in the hands of Muslim landowners known as *beys*. In contrast to the isolated Gheg chieftains, wealthy Tosk landowners had trade links with neighbouring countries and a well-established relationship with the Ottoman government. In this sense, the Tosks were more integrated into the Ottoman state system, serving as both their representatives in the local administrations and as soldiers and statesmen throughout the Empire.

For their part, the Ottomans viewed the Albanian community as loyal and well-integrated into the administrative and social structures of the Empire.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, having already lost power, and, subsequently, territory, in other areas of the Balkans, the Ottomans did their part in trying to keep the lid on any national sentiments that might be developing among the Albanians.

The eventual national awakening of the Albanians<sup>14</sup> was set in motion with the Ottoman defeat in the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878, followed by the Treaty of San Stefano signed on 3 March 1878 and the Berlin Congress and Treaty of Berlin signed on 13 July 1878.<sup>15</sup> This rather late development was embodied in the formation of the League of Prizren<sup>16</sup> on 10 June 1878 and the establishment of the Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the Albanian People.<sup>17</sup> These two

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<sup>13</sup> Many Albanians reached to the top administrative posts in the Ottoman state structures and they were “occupying an outstanding place in the ruling class of the empire” as well as being present in the army in great numbers. Halil Inalcik, “Arnawutluk”, The Encyclopedia of Islam, vol. I (A-B), 1960, p. 656.

<sup>14</sup> Gawrych, op.cit., pp. 48-9, 70.

<sup>15</sup> For a detailed account of the Ottoman decline and ‘the great Eastern Crisis of 1875-1878’ see; F.A.K. Yaseme, Ottoman Diplomacy, (The ISIS Press: Istanbul, 1996), pp. 1-18, 53-72.

<sup>16</sup> Stavro Skendi, “Beginnings of Albanian Nationalist and Autonomous Trends: The Albanian League, 1878-1881”, American Slavic and East European Review, vol. 12, no. 2, 1953, pp. 219-232 and Stavro Skendi, The Albanian National Awakening, 1878-1912, (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 1967).

<sup>17</sup> Edvin E. Jacques, The Albanians: An Ethnic History from Prehistoric Times to The Present, (McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers: Jefferson, North Carolina, 1995), pp. 256-7.

forums provided the opportunity for Albanians to meet and agree upon broad principles, interests and national aspirations in an effort to protect their rights, despite the apparent differences among them concerning their future. The main objective of the Albanian nationalist agenda in the forthcoming years was “to prevent the neighbouring Balkan states from partitioning Albanian territories and to achieve, through European intervention, if not full political independence at least administrative autonomy within the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>18</sup> In the changing environment of the Balkans, the League of Prizren “rekindled the feeling of national identity at the time of mounting nationalism throughout the Balkans and a crescendo in the rivalries of the Great Powers.”<sup>19</sup> The rather late and feeble awakening of Albanian nationalism<sup>20</sup> was unable to achieve a breakthrough in terms of national aspirations for autonomy or administrative unification of the Albanian-populated regions of the Ottoman Empire, namely, the Ottoman *vilayets* (administrative provinces) of Janina, Shkoder, Monastir and Kosovo.

There are two main aspects behind the delay in the development of an Albanian national movement, its weakness and its relatively slow progress both before and after the formation of the League of Prizren. First, the previously mentioned regional, linguistic, religious and social-economic distinctions within the Albanian population represented a major obstacle to the nation-building process. Due to their geographic separation and lack of a common written language,<sup>21</sup> culture, or unified education system using the Albanian language as the medium of instruction, there was relatively limited communication and interaction between the different Albanian groups. Attempts to create a separate

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<sup>18</sup> Christophoros Psilos, “Albanian Nationalism and Unionist Ottomanization, 1908-1912”, *Mediterranean Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 3, 2006, p. 27.

<sup>19</sup> Zavalani, *op.cit.*, p. 66.

<sup>20</sup> Bernd J. Fischer, 2005, “A Brief Historical Overview of the Development of Albanian Nationalism”, Speech at the Wilson Center, 23 March 2005.  
[http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic\\_id=1422&fuseaction=topics.publications&group\\_id=7427](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1422&fuseaction=topics.publications&group_id=7427)

<sup>21</sup> Latin, Cyrillic and Arabic were the scripts that used by different Albanian religious communities writing in Albanian until the ‘Alphabet Congress’ in November 1908 when a 36 Latin letters adapted for writing in Albanian which is still currently in use. Jacques, *op.cit.*, pp. 308-9.

identity and national consciousness by developing a common script, free usage of the Albanian written language or access to separate Albanian schools were very limited.<sup>22</sup> In contrast to this, the common spoken language served as “the great unifying element”<sup>23</sup> in Albanian nationalism despite the existence of differences between the dialects spoken by the Ghegs and the Tosks.

Second, the development of a national identity among Albanians was affected by the attitude taken towards them by the Ottoman administration, which did not recognize Albanian Muslims – who constituted the majority of the Albanian population – as possessing any identity distinct from that of the Turks. As Miranda Vickers argues,

The conversion of so many Albanians to Islam, and the security provided by the Porte against the Slavs and the Greeks, had eventually led to a general identification with Ottoman Turkish, rather than specifically Albanian ideals and aims. Thus the very nature of Ottoman rule delayed the rise of an Albanian national consciousness and a subsequent national movement, and ensured that the Albanians became the last Balkan nation to achieve their independence from the Ottoman Empire.<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, Vickers suggests that the cultural and political advancement of the Albanians were also negatively influenced by the Ottoman attitude towards them<sup>25</sup>.

The Ottoman Empire was perceived as the main suppressor of Albanian nationalism by the Albanian nationalists. Ottoman governments were very cautious in preventing the rise of any Albanian cultural or political entity that aimed to organise a united, national movement for self-government that would merge the Albanian-inhabited regions of the Empire. The Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II, who even initially supported the defensive motives of the League of Prizren against the invasion of the Albanian populated regions of the Empire,

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 276-87, 308-19, 325.

<sup>23</sup> Barbara Jelavich, History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century, Volume 2, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1983), p. 85.

<sup>24</sup> Vickers, op.cit., p. 31.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

prevented the impact of Prizren League among the Albanians transforming into a political movement that would challenge the sovereignty of the Empire in the Balkans<sup>26</sup>. However, it was also hard to talk about a developing national movement united as a single political force to liberate the Albanians, rather it was a divided movement in accordance with differentiating interests of different Albanian groups.<sup>27</sup> As a result, the Albanian national movement was deprived of a central leadership with the acknowledged authority and ability to direct nationalist activity throughout the Albanian territories.<sup>28</sup> Besides, the division that existed between those Albanians who favoured sovereignty and those who supported the *status quo* because their own interests were closely aligned with those of the Ottoman state inhibited the creation of any unified front that might search out a patron ready to offer support for the formation of an Albanian nation-state. In fact, it was the Albanians' different reactions to the loosing of the privileges and the concessions that were granted to the local Albanians after in the process of the weakening Ottoman authority in the Balkans that had created the rift among the Albanians which also separates the formation of Albanian nationalism from other previously developed nationalisms in the region.<sup>29</sup> Albanians was reacting to loosing their privileged status and the Ottoman government's attempts to re-centralise the administration, however in this process they continued to keep their struggle within the boundaries of the Ottoman state's domestic transformation as it

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<sup>26</sup> Nuray Bozbora, "The Policy of Abdulhamid II Regarding the Prizren League", in Turkish Review of Balkan Studies, Annual 2006 11, (Bigart: Istanbul, 2006), p. 67.

<sup>27</sup> Noel Malcolm emphasizes three different political demands shaping among Albanians at the time. First one was making reference to regaining the Albanians' traditional rights of virtual government as part of the Ottoman reforms, while a second one supported by some of the Catholic clans to creating their autonomous or independent principality and the third one to favouring full independence for an overall Albanian state. Noel Malcolm, Kosovo: A Short History, (Papermac: London, 1998), pp. 217-9. Even geographically there was not a centre that a possible common leadership that would shape among the Albanians could act the Prizren League was divided into two branches existing at Prizren and in southern Albania. Skendi, 1953, op.cit., p. 221.

<sup>28</sup> Jelavich, op.cit., p. 89.

<sup>29</sup> Nuray Bozbora, Osmanlı Yönetiminde Arnavutluk ve Arnavut Ulusçuluğunun Gelişimi (Albania and the Development of Albanian Nationalism under the Ottoman Administration), (Boyut Kitapları: Istanbul, 1997), p. 20.

is was the case with the transition to the constitutional monarchy in which the Albanian political élite took significant role.<sup>30</sup>

Ultimately, Albanians had no choice but to stick with the Ottomans for the protection they provided against ambitious neighbours and Great Powers, none of whom were themselves ready to offer recognition or support, as they had already associated themselves with other states in the region and the Albanian cause was simply not enough to tempt their interests in the Balkans. The most eager were Austria-Hungary and Italy, which had competing interests in the Adriatic and the Balkans<sup>31</sup>. The island of Sazan (Sesano) across from the harbour town of Vlora in the south of Albania held strategic importance in terms of controlling the Adriatic Sea, which was of particular interest to Italy. Although Austria-Hungary had been acting as the protector of the Albanian Catholics,<sup>32</sup> neither it nor Italy<sup>33</sup> were ready to challenge the *status quo* in the Balkans by supporting the Albanian national cause against Ottoman territorial integrity. Rather, these two Great Powers marked out their interests in Albania through several treaties,<sup>34</sup> in which they also agreed not to challenge each other for possession of Sazan, but not to allow the island to fall into the hands of another Great Power, either. For its part, Russia, in spite of having championed the Slavic and Greek causes in the Balkans and having actively contributed first to the autonomy and then to the independence of Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, played no part in supporting the Albanian national movement.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Banu İşlet Sönmez, II. Meşrutiyette Arnavut Muhalefeti (Albanian Opposition to the Second Constitutionalist Period), (Yapı Kredi Yayınları: İstanbul, 2007), pp. 67-91.

<sup>31</sup> Skendi, 1967, op.cit., pp. 238-56.

<sup>32</sup> F. R. Bridge, “The Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire, 1900-18”, in The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire, Second Edition, edited by Marian Kent, (Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, London, [1984], 1996), p. 41.

<sup>33</sup> Jacques, op.cit., p. 360.

<sup>34</sup> R. J. B. Bosworth, “Italy and the End of the Ottoman Empire”, in The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire, Second Edition, edited by Marian Kent, (Frank Cass & Co. Ltd: London, [1984], 1996), p. 64.

<sup>35</sup> Barbara Jelavich, Russia’s Balkan Entanglements 1806-1914, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1991), p. x.

With neither the economic means nor the foreign support necessary to create and sustain the requisite state structures, the Albanian state could only be formed during a time of political turmoil and ongoing war. The Balkan Wars, followed by the First World War, added to the uninterrupted chaos in the Balkans, but it took the actual physical break-up of the geographic connection to the Ottoman state and the invasion of some of the Albanian-populated regions in the Balkans to provoke the Albanians to action. On 28 November 1912, Albanian delegates gathered at a national convention in Vlora to proclaim the independence of Albania, and, simultaneously, to declare the new state's neutrality in the ongoing Balkan War.<sup>36</sup>

However, this proclamation of sovereignty did nothing to alleviate the newly founded Albania state's vulnerability to foreign occupation. Initial attempts to secure formal international recognition of Albanian sovereignty and state boundaries failed, thus threatening Albania's very survival as an independent state.

Disorder reigned in the Balkans, and Albania's existence was not a priority for the Great Powers of the time. Albania was a matter of interest only to the extent that it formed part of the struggle for spheres of influence and strategic divisions among the Great Powers, whose initial reactions to Albania's declaration of independence varied. Austria-Hungary and Italy were supportive, as long as control of Albania and its Adriatic ports would not be handed over to another country. Russia took into account the territorial interests of the Slavic states in Albania, and France sided with Russia, whereas Germany opposed the Pan-Slavist tendencies and their supporters who had their eyes on Albania.<sup>37</sup> Of all the Great Powers, Austria-Hungary and Russia were the two most opposed to Albanian self-determination and would sacrifice the formation of an Albanian state in favour of

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<sup>36</sup> It was the Albanian leader Ismail Qemal who declared the independence of Albania and led the provisional government of Albania until January 1914 when the International Commission of Control took the authority to transfer the governing authority later to the appointed prince of Albania in March 1914. Renzo Falaschi, "Ismail Qemal Bey Vlora and the Making of Albania in 1912", in *Perspectives on Albania*, edited by Tom Winnifirth, (St. Martin's Press: New York, 1992), p. 110 and Jacques, *op.cit.*, pp. 320, 323 and 334-46.

<sup>37</sup> Jacques, *op.cit.*, p. 323.

their allies' interests in the Balkans.<sup>38</sup> These circumstances provided encouragement to the main regional powers of the time – Italy, Greece, Montenegro and Serbia (subsequently the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) – to realise their territorial aspirations with regard to the Albanian-populated regions of the former Ottoman territories.

Once Albania declared its independence, its formal recognition became an issue for the Great Powers as well as for the regional actors, thus spurring the Great Powers of the time – Great Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy – to convene the Conference of Ambassadors<sup>39</sup> on 17 December 1912 at the Foreign Office in London<sup>40</sup>. The aim of the Conference was to work out the international status, organisation and boundaries of the sovereign state to which the Albanians were laying claim.<sup>41</sup>

Initially, the Great Powers agreed, in principle, to guarantee Albania's autonomy under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Sultan and the neutrality of the Albanian state under their joint control,<sup>42</sup> and they secured some strategic parts of

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<sup>38</sup> M. E. Durham, "Albania and Powers", Contemporary Review, no. 119, July/December 1919, p. 41.

<sup>39</sup> The Conference of Ambassadors with its composition and functioning as an *ad hoc* mechanism in the Balkans after 1912 until mid-1920s could be regarded as the predecessor model of the contemporary Contact Group which is established in early 1994 following the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia (ICFY) by the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the Russian Federation, Germany and later joined by Italy (in 1996) for managing crises and facilitating resolution of conflicts in the Balkans. For an account of the activities of the Contact Group and its role within international and the European institutional structures see; "The Contact Group and Its Impact on the European Institutional Structure", The Institute for Security Studies Western European Union Occasional Papers, no. 16, June 2000.

<sup>40</sup> The conference discussions were agreed to be informal and secret without keeping minutes and the Conference would issue statement as agreements on specific issues had been reached. For the details of the discussions during the Conference of Ambassadors see; Bledar Islami, British Diplomacy and the Making of Albania, 1912-1914, Albanian Institute for International Studies (AIIS) Working Paper Series no. 4, Tirana, 2003, especially "Chapter II: Albania and the Conference of Ambassadors in London", pp. 23-53.

<sup>41</sup> Vickers, op.cit., p. 70.

<sup>42</sup> Owen Pearson, Albania in the Twentieth Century: A History, Volume I: Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic and Monarchy, 1908-1939, (The Centre for Albanian Studies in Association with I. B. Tauris: London, 2004), p. 36.

Albanian territory, such as Shkoder, against foreign occupation.<sup>43</sup> Then, as the Conference meetings progressed, the Great Powers agreed on 29 July 1913 to change Albania's status to that of "autonomous principality," abolishing the bond of suzerainty with the Ottoman State, and to formalize their guarantee of Albanian neutrality.<sup>44</sup> The Conference also established the International Commission for Control of Albania to oversee the civil administration and finances of Albania. This commission would be reporting to the Great Powers about the related developments for 10 years. The Conference also began the process of defining the borders of the new Albanian state<sup>45</sup>, which were officially finalised by the *ad hoc* International Commission of Delimitation of the Southern Frontier of Albania on 17 December 1913 in the Protocol of Florence.<sup>46</sup> But the contents of the Conference's decisions related to the frontiers of Albania satisfied neither the Albanians nor their neighbours: the Albanians lost the Kosovo towns to the Serbs; the Montenegrins had to leave Shkoder to the Albanians; the Greeks also had to hand over Korca, Girakoster and Saranda to the Albanians; and the Serbs were left without any outlet to the Adriatic.<sup>47</sup>

In another Conference decision, the Great Powers installed a German, William of Wied, as Prince of Albania in a desperate attempt to create a new monarchic state in Europe. The idea was futile from the start, as the character of the new prince and the conditions of the new state were sorely incompatible. Prince William was a total stranger to the realities and the politics of Albania, and the failure of the Great Powers to deliver on their promises of financial and military support left him without the resources needed to establish a viable throne.

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<sup>43</sup> Great Powers took action against Montenegrins for forcing them to withdraw from Albanian town Shkoder in April 1913 by forcing a naval blockade. For details of the international operation, see; E. A. Schmidl, "The International Operation in Albania, 1913-1914", International Peacekeeping, vol. 6, no. 3, 1999, pp. 1-9.

<sup>44</sup> Pearson, op.cit., pp. 43-4.

<sup>45</sup> For the details of the Delimitation of the Northern and Northeastern Border see; Islami, op.cit., pp. 25-37, for the Delimitation of the Southern Border see; ibid., pp. 37-49.

<sup>46</sup> Pearson, op.cit., p. 52, Jacques, op.cit., pp. 337-8 and Islami, op.cit., p. 50.

<sup>47</sup> Vickers, op.cit., p. 80.

The Prince was also unable to muster the necessary diplomatic support for Albania – or for himself – in the international arena. Although Albanians had initially regarded William’s presence as a clear sign of their recognition, in time they lost interest in their prince, since his existence did nothing to contribute to their country’s security or development. Eventually, just after the start of the First World War, the culmination of ongoing developments and unrest in the country forced the Prince into exile, leaving a power vacuum in Albania during the First World War.<sup>48</sup>

During this war, various parts of Albanian territory were occupied by no less than seven different foreign armies – Serbian, Montenegrin, Italian, Greek, Austrian, French and Bulgarian. Albania became the subject of secret treaties like the April 1915 Treaty of London signed between Italy and the Allied Powers, Great Britain, France and Russia, and the July 1919 Greek-Italian post-World War agreement for the partition of Albanian territory.<sup>49</sup> War-time occupation and secret treaties that aimed to share Albania would result in a far smaller Albanian state under Italian protection; however, this idea was opposed by the United States, and was thus unsustainable. Albanians attribute significant respect to the United States and, in particular, to President Wilson<sup>50</sup> and his Fourteen Points,<sup>51</sup> which were reflected in U.S. opposition to the division of Albania during the Paris Peace Conference. The Albanians credited the supportive and sympathetic attitude taken

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<sup>48</sup> For a detailed account of the short reign of the Prince William of Wied (February-September 1914) see: the Prince’s Private Secretary Major D. Heaton Armstrong’s manuscript recently published as a book Duncan Heaton-Armstrong, The Six Month Kingdom: Albania 1914, (I.B. Tauris: London, 2005).

<sup>49</sup> Leften S. Stavrinou, The Balkans since 1453, (New York University Press: New York, [1965], 2000), pp. 710-2.

<sup>50</sup> The Albanian representative in the United States at the time C. A. Chekrezi underlines the moral influence of America and the personal role of the President Wilson in mobilizing liberal forces in Europe to resist the partitioning of Albania. C. A. Chekrezi, “How Albania Won Independence”, Current History, vol. 13, no. 3, 1920, pp. 534-5.

<sup>51</sup> Although Wilson’s points do not contain any direct reference to the status of Albania or the Albanians unlike some other Balkan states -Montenegro, Romania and Serbia, it could be argued that the Americans’ emphasis on the self-determination principle and the denouncing of the secret diplomacy provided support for Albanian causes. Wilson’s New Diplomacy rhetoric and emphasis on guarantees of political and territorial integrity not only for Great Powers but also for small states were particularly admired by the small states. Roger MacGinty, “War Cause and Peace Aim? Small States and the First World War”, European History Quarterly, vol. 27, no. 1, 1997, pp. 47, 50.

towards them by the United States during the Conference as the main factor in securing the existence of the Albanian state at that time.<sup>52</sup> It is this belief that lay at the foundation of the sense of appreciation that the Albanians felt towards the United States and which continued to constitute an important source of pro-American sentiment in Albania during the post-Cold War era.

Albania's state-formation process was a long one. After gaining formal recognition in the international arena and official clarification of its borders,<sup>53</sup> Albania still had to address the weaknesses in its domestic realm that prevented consolidation of the state into a stable, legitimate, functioning entity. Politically, the élite were divided both by region – the north-south divide – and by sources of economic legitimacy – rural land owners vs a newly coalescing urban elite. Economically, due to the lack of capital and the limited scope of economic life, the new state could not create the financial resources necessary to establish the administrative structures that would allow it to maintain its legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens. Under these circumstances Albania's overall political and economic weaknesses led to its vulnerability, requiring a foreign policy that took into account domestic weaknesses as well as the strength of Albania's neighbours, who were vying with each other for influence over the new state.

In August 1920 Albanians forced Italians to leave the country with an anti-occupation uprising. Italians withdrew their forces, except keeping their troops on Sazan Island, and recognised independence of Albania on 2 August 1920 which also helped the Albania's ongoing admission process to the League of Nations as a sovereign country.<sup>54</sup> On 17 December 1920, Albania became a member of the post-World War international organisation the League of Nations, further

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<sup>52</sup> Pearson, *op.cit.*, pp. 120, 128-9, 142. Albanians even proposed to have a United States mandate over the disputed southern border regions with Greece as a 'disinterested Power' if the Peace Conference would decide on granting a temporary mandate for the area. *Ibid.*, p. 126. But despite the support and the sympathy the official recognition of the Albanian government by the United States came later in July 1922.

<sup>53</sup> The delimitation of the Albanian territories also imposed the division of Albanians in the Balkans leaving important number of them outside the newly defined borders of the Albania proper basically in Kosovo, western Macedonia, southern Montenegro and northern Greece, Chameria.

<sup>54</sup> H. Wickham Steed, "Italy, Yugoslavia and Albania", *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1927, pp.172-3.

confirming its *de jure* sovereignty as an independent state in the international arena.<sup>55</sup>

As a small state, Albania had large expectations from this new organization in terms of calling international attention to its causes and attaining their resolution. Upon its membership, Albania immediately brought the issue of defining its national borders to the League's agenda.<sup>56</sup> On 9 November 1921, the Conference of Ambassadors reaffirmed its 1913 delimitation of Albania's boundaries, with the exception of some relatively small areas, which it agreed to determine after an assessment by the League of Nations.<sup>57</sup> In fact, the Conference also recognised Italian interests in Albania by giving Italy the responsibility, under the authority of the Great Powers, to restore the territorial integrity of Albania should its border ever be violated. In short, Italy was basically given "a virtual protectorate over Albania."<sup>58</sup>

Even after all Yugoslav and Greek troops had left Albanian territory, it was not possible to completely finalize Albania's national borders until the second Protocol of Florence, prepared by the League of Nations' International Boundary Commission<sup>59</sup> on 27 January 1925, was ratified by the delegates of the Conference of Ambassadors and the representatives of Albania, Greece and Yugoslavia on 30 July 1926.<sup>60</sup> This constituted the completion of a very important phase in Albania's state-formation process, paving the way for Albanians to concentrate on

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<sup>55</sup> Pearson, op.cit., pp. 157-8. H. Charles Woods, "Albania and the League", Contemporary Review, no. 121, January/June 1922, pp. 41-7.

<sup>56</sup> For the details of the delimitation negotiations of Albanian borders at the League of Nations see; "The Frontiers of Albania", League of Nations – Official Journal, vol. 2, September 1921, pp. 722-39 and Edwin L. James, "Albania's Demands Divide the Nations", New York Times, 22 September 1921.

<sup>57</sup> Pearson, op.cit., pp. 175-6.

<sup>58</sup> Bernd Jürgen Fischer, King Zog and the Struggle for Stability in Albania, East European Monographs, (Boulder, Columbia University Press: New York, 1984), pp. 85-6.

<sup>59</sup> For a detailed account of the work and the technical details of the International Boundary Commission on Albanian borders with Greece and Yugoslavia see; Frank L. Giles, "Boundary Work in the Balkans", The Geographical Journal, vol. 75, no. 4, 1930, pp. 303-10.

<sup>60</sup> Pearson, op.cit., pp. 241-2, 260.

the domestic consolidation of their country and the establishment of a functioning central authority and state institutions.

The delimitation of its borders was one of the most significant problems that Albania faced during the initial years of its existence. The overlapping claims to “historical lands” made by various Balkan nations led to competition for certain territories within the region, and Albanian-populated areas were no exception. The newly established Albanian state prioritised the international recognition of its boundaries in order to secure itself against the irredentist ambitions of its neighbours. As a result, it had to go so far as to leave a considerable number of Albanians outside its national territories, as was the case with the Albanians living in Kosovo.

### **3.2 The Interwar Period: Origin of a Cliental Foreign Policy**

At the outset of the interwar period, Albania’s domestic political field was the scene of fierce competition. Albania virtually had no functioning government during the War. After the War, Albanian leaders convened the Congress of Lushnja on 21 January 1920 in order to form a stable central government to represent and defend the rights of all Albanians especially in the ongoing process of the Paris Peace Conference<sup>61</sup>. But after the Congress the Albanian political arena remained so chaotic and unstable that in the period from February 1920 to February 1924 eight different governments came to power.<sup>62</sup> The political spectrum was divided between conservative and reformist political forces, the former supported by the traditional rural élite composed largely of landowners and influential clan leaders who had “a vested interest in the maintenance of socio-economic *status quo*”<sup>63</sup>, while the latter emerged from among the foreign-educated and progressive figures in the country. The reformist élite challenged the vastly

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<sup>61</sup> Jacques, op.cit., p. 367-8.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 369-79. The overall toll for the Albanian governments reached to fourteen between declaration of independence in 1912 and Ahmet Zogu’s final coming to power in 1925.

<sup>63</sup> Robert C. Austin, “Greater Albania: The Albanian State and the Question of Kosovo, 1912-2001”, in Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe, edited by John R. Lampe and Mark Mazover, (CEU Press: Budapest, 2004), p. 240.

traditional and conservative society and their representatives, who were essentially trying to preserve their existing advantageous status during the shaping of the new state. The two opposing political élites were engaged simultaneously in a power struggle with each other and in addressing the challenges involved in forming a functional state and protecting it against outside challenges. The primary issue on the agenda was determining the shape of the regime – either a constitutional monarchy or a republic – and ensuring its legitimacy. However, without a well-established national authority, it was difficult to establish trust between the state and its citizens and to shift the loyalty of the population from local representatives to the central authority in Tirana. Unconsolidated state structures, economic backwardness and the inexperience of the Albanian population and political élites with democratic practices and political pluralism fed each other, perpetuating the political weaknesses of the new state. Although elections were held, political power often shifted as a result of political crises, leading to changes of government – sometimes by force.

In the early 1920s, the two contending political groups were led by Fan Stilian Noli, a Harvard-educated Orthodox clergyman who had founded the Albanian Orthodox Church in Boston,<sup>64</sup> and Ahmet Zogu, leader of the important Mati tribe. Initially, Zogu and his Popular Party came to power on 16 December 1922 as the result of political turmoil that had led to a power vacuum in Albania in the early post-World-War years. Despite strong support for his government from conservative political forces, mainly the tribal leaderships, growing public discontent left Zogu's hold on power tenuous. This enabled Noli, as the leader of the Democratic Party, a new political entity shaped around liberal ideas, to come to power with the so-called 'June Revolution' of 1924. The volatile political situation in Albania escalated with the attempted political assassination of one of Noli's colleague in April 1924, leading to a public revolt and eventual change of government. Zogu fled to Yugoslavia,<sup>65</sup> and Noli was appointed prime minister on

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<sup>64</sup> For the political role of Fan S. Noli and his influence on the Albanian politics see; Bernd J. Fischer, "Fan Noli and the Albanian Revolutions of 1924", *East European Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 2, 1988, pp. 147-58 and Robert Clegg Austin, *From Crisis to Crisis: The Rise and Fall of Fan Noli's Vision for Albania*, Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, (University of Toronto: Toronto, 1997).

<sup>65</sup> Vickers, *op.cit.*, pp. 110-1.

16 June 1924. Noli aimed to introduce radical reforms in the country by applying an ambitious 19-point political program,<sup>66</sup> at the heart of which lay the uprooting of feudal relations and abolition of the privileges enjoyed by landowners that would strip them of their political power through democratisation of the country. Despite his zeal for change, Noli's liberal and modernistic commitments and pace of change were incompatible with existing realities,<sup>67</sup> and he was unable to bring about the transformation he desired, particularly with regard to the essential land and agrarian reforms. Although his term in government has been described as "Albania's brief experiment with 'democracy,'"<sup>68</sup> Noli was unable to hold elections to legitimize his rule, nor could he get foreign support for his rule. Lacking legitimacy, financial support and international backing, Noli's government fell to Zogu and his supporters, who combined their tribal forces with Yugoslav military supplies and troops to regain power in Albania.<sup>69</sup>

When Ahmet Zogu entered Tirana on 24 December 1924, the lack of any credible political opposition signalled the victory of the conservative movement in Albanian politics. Zogu hoped to consolidate his authoritarian-style rule and establish a strong, centralized state to replace the "anarchic, tribal, oligarchic parliamentarianism"<sup>70</sup> that dominated Albanian politics of the time. Initially, in January 1925, Zogu changed the structure of the political regime from principality to republic. In September 1928 he instituted a second change, from republic to monarchy, and transforming himself from President Zogu to King Zog I. In both incarnations, his rule was fraught with difficulties.<sup>71</sup> Albania's limited economic

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<sup>66</sup> Pearson, op.cit., pp. 225-6.

<sup>67</sup> Joseph Rothschild, East Central Europe Between the Two World Wars, (University of Washington Press: Seattle, 1974), p. 361.

<sup>68</sup> Vickers, op.cit., p. 114.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>70</sup> R. J. Crampton, Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century – and After, Second Edition, (Routledge: London, 1997), p. 145.

<sup>71</sup> For a personal account of a foreigner who had the opportunity to very closely observe Albania and the King Zog's reign see; J. Swire, Albania: The Rise of a Kingdom, (Williams & Norgate LTD: London, [1929], 1971), and J. Swire, King Zog's Albania, (Robert Hale and Company:

resources and fragile domestic political environment made it very hard for Zogu to sustain the legitimacy of his authoritarian regime. In order to overcome economic hardship in Albania and the challenges to his rule, he was in desperate need of economic aid that would provide him with the resources needed to actually govern the country.

Although both the Noli<sup>72</sup> and Zogu governments had, on various occasions, applied to the League of Nations for loans in order to establish a viable national economy, their requests were refused on the grounds that Albania was politically unstable, economically backward and lacked any capacity for repayment.<sup>73</sup> Zogu was left with no choice but to turn to one of the Great Powers or a regional power or neighbouring country. With the exception of Italy, none of the Great Powers or any other wealthy country was interested in Albania, or, if they were, they refrained from involvement out of respect for what they considered part of the Italian sphere of influence.<sup>74</sup> Great Britain, for instance, limited its involvement in

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London, 1937). First book also contains detailed information about the Albanian national awakening and the formation of the Albanian state.

<sup>72</sup> Fan S. Noli in his address to the League of Nations on 10 September 1924 as the Prime Minister of Albania desperately asked for a reduced amount of loan of 100 million gold francs which would permit Albania 'to stand on her feet'. For the text of the 'Speech to the League of Nations' see; Peter R. Prifti, Unfinished Portrait of a Country, East European Monographs, (Boulder, Columbia University Press: New York, 2005), pp. 252-6.

<sup>73</sup> Except for some basic aid and sending a financial adviser to Albania the League of Nations did not provide any economic assistance. A December 1922 Report of the Commission of Inquiry in Albania reflects the economic situation and the need for economic assistance as '... on ... occasions the Albanian Government has expressed the urgent need of the country for an external loan. The Government has also requested the Commission to ask the League of Nations to assist Albania to obtain the desired loan, declaring itself willing to submit to any control the League may decide upon. No doubt a foreign loan, if received on satisfactory conditions and properly used would be a great boon to Albania, but it seems more and more clear that the endeavour to improve the economic status of the country ought to begin with a reform of its internal economy and administrative organisation. ...economic haemorrhage can hardly be remedied by any transfusion of money, i.e., by a loan nor by any indigenous financial device'. "Report of the Commission of Enquiry in Albania", League of Nations – Official Journal, vol. 4, January 1923, pp. 115-7. It is interesting to observe how the League of Nations' approach reflected in its report towards Albania in early 1920s has some similarities with the post- Second World War international financial institutions' approach towards the weak and developing countries in the recent times embodied in their criticisms and conditional policies towards them.

<sup>74</sup> For an analysis of the mutual social construction of the asymmetrical relationship between Albania and Italy reflected in social, cultural and political environments, see; Nicola Mai, "The Cultural Construction of Italy in Albania and Vice Versa: Migration Dynamics, Strategies of Resistance and Politics of Mutual Self-Definition across Colonialism and Post-Colonialism", Modern Italy, vol. 8, no. 1, 2003, pp. 81-5.

Albania to oil exploration rights, signalling that it would otherwise bow to Italian interests. In this environment, Albania was left to choose from among its neighbours and regional powers for support. It was a delicate situation; the decision as to with whom to develop close economic ties was very much dependent on the broader circumstances shaping the region and, consequently, Albania's specific relations with each of the surrounding countries.

In the end, Zogu chose to develop closer economic relations with Italy for a number of reasons. First, as part of its regional policy, Italy was willing to provide loans to Albania on economically reasonable terms. Second, Italy had the capacity to provide Albania with the necessary economic resources on an ongoing, long-term basis<sup>75</sup>. Finally, Albania preferred to develop a relationship with a country that was not directly on its border and which could provide a measure of security against its immediate neighbours. In fact, Italy did not realistically possess the military capacity needed to satisfy this need, but it was preferable to both Yugoslavia and Greece, whose relationships with Albania were made unstable by their mutual irredentist aspirations and regional rivalries, which were linked to international circumstances as well as to direct competition in the Balkans. In this regard, Albanians also considered Italian support to be useful for their own irredentist claims.

As far as Italy was concerned, particularly after Mussolini's rise to power, it began leaning away from the balance of power it had instituted with Yugoslavia vis-à-vis the Balkans and towards increasing the Italian presence in Albania at the expense of the Yugoslavs.<sup>76</sup> In this regard, central to Italy's interests was the expansion of the exclusive influence over Albania it had been granted by agreement in the 1921 Conference of Ambassadors. Perceiving Albania as a convenient source of raw materials and agricultural products as well as a place to

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<sup>75</sup> Roselli provides a very detailed account of the Alba-Italian economic relations in the interwar period. Alessandro Roselli, Italy and Albania: Financial Relations in the Fascist Period, (I. B. Tauris: London, 2006).

<sup>76</sup> H. James Burgwyn, Italian Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period, (Praeger: Westport, 1997), pp. 40-2, 53.

settle the growing Italian population, Italy chose to invest in those sectors and infrastructure projects that it believed would ensure further Italian penetration.

The strengthening of Alba-Italian economic relations began with the Commerce and Navigation Agreement of January 1924, by which Albania granted 'most-favoured-nation status' to Italy.<sup>77</sup> In March 1925, the two countries signed an economic agreement that resulted in the founding of both the National Bank of Albania, which was financed and controlled by Italy,<sup>78</sup> and the *Società per lo Sviluppo Economico dell'Albania* (SVEA), an economic development company whose purpose was to regulate and direct the spending and repayment of loans,<sup>79</sup> thereby institutionalizing the Alba-Italian investment mechanism. With a June 1931 agreement that aimed to finance the Albanian budget, balance-of-payment deficit and investments<sup>80</sup> through a 10-year interest-free loan with no fixed term for repayment,<sup>81</sup> the Italians further expanded the level of their involvement in the Albanian economy to the point where they began to take direct control. Mussolini's initial policy of "*penetration pacifique*"<sup>82</sup> in Albania was just the beginning of his "long-term intention to establish a virtual monopoly of power in the Adriatic and the Balkans."<sup>83</sup>

While the relationship had its ups and downs, overall, Italy's presence and influence in Albania over the long term gradually grew, with the Italian fascist regime investing in strategic sectors and infrastructure, demanding monopolies and concessions, and defining the priorities of bilateral relations according to its own interests. The ever-developing relations brought economic benefits to Albania – payments of earlier loans were postponed with moratoriums, and new loans were

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<sup>77</sup> Pearson, op.cit., p. 216.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 246 and Roselli, op.cit., pp. 33-9.

<sup>79</sup> Roselli, op.cit., pp. 40-2.

<sup>80</sup> Pearson, op.cit., p. 329.

<sup>81</sup> Roselli, op.cit., pp. 56-7.

<sup>82</sup> Aristotle A. Kallis, Fascist Ideology: Territory and Expansionism in Italy and Germany, (Routledge: London, 2000), p. 70.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

introduced – while allowing the Italians to take more and more control over strategic aspects of the Albanian administration, such as customs and excise.<sup>84</sup>

In June 1925, Italy realized its goal of turning deepening economic relations into political and security advantages by signing three pacts, including a secret military alliance. The scope of these relations was further intensified with the signing of the Pact of Friendship and Security between Albania and Italy in November 1926. The terms of the Pact of Tirana brought the Italian commitments to an entirely new level by authorizing Italian intervention in Albania's external as well as domestic affairs, should such an intervention be requested. In essence, the Pact transformed Italy's virtual protectorateship over Albania that had been recognized by the Great Powers in November 1921 into an actual one.<sup>85</sup> Alba-Italian relations reached yet another peak in November 1927 with the Defensive Alliance Treaty, a supplementary agreement to the Pact of Tirana that further expanded the scope of military cooperation between the two countries and extended the duration of the alliance for an additional 20 years.<sup>86</sup>

Although the intensification of relations brought economic and security benefits to Albania, they came at a cost. As the scope of the alliance deepened, so did Albania's economic and political dependence on Italy. In establishing close economic relations with Italy, Albania had hoped to strike a balance that would prevent it from becoming dependent upon foreign influence. Contrary to these initial intentions, the scope and content of the Alba-Italian economic and financial relations exceeded Albania's original expectations and put the country's sovereignty into question. Albania became effectively tied to Italy in economic terms in the forthcoming years of the interwar period,<sup>87</sup> as Albania's backward economy would not allow it to deal with the increasing amount of debt and the gradual transfer of resources and economic control to Italy. As a result of this gradual but constantly increasing Albanian dependency on Italy, the Pact attracted

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<sup>84</sup> Roselli, *op.cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>85</sup> Pearson, *op.cit.*, pp. 263-4.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 280-2.

<sup>87</sup> Fischer, 1984, *op.cit.*, p. 91.

the attention of the neighbouring countries, in particular Yugoslavia, which perceived it as a move against the regional balance. Italian domination over Albania had become an obvious fact in the international arena<sup>88</sup> and increased the discontent among the Albania public, which was already frustrated with King Zog's authoritarian regime. In this environment, King Zog attempted to protect Albanian political independence and put a limit on Italian penetration by trying to diversify sources of economic and political support. He tried to attract British interest towards Albania as a balance to the Italians, but the British deferred to what was now accepted to be within the Italian sphere of influence,<sup>89</sup> limiting their involvement to oil concessions in the economic sphere and the training of an Albanian Gendarmerie by retired British army officers in the military sphere,<sup>90</sup> neither of which could be considered to have any impact in balancing Albania's relationship with Italy.

Despite their unhappiness with the situation, the Albanians had little leverage in their relationship with Italy, on whose economic support they had come to depend, and for which no alternative was available. Albania had not gathered sufficient economic strength to stand on its own feet, nor had it any alternative foreign source to cover its losses if it were to try and shift away from Italian economic domination. An attempt by King Zog to test the limits of resistance by refusing to renew the 1926 Pact of Tirana after its expiration in 1931 did not do much to change the nature of relations between the two countries, as economic realities necessitated that the Albanians eventually accede to Italian demands. Albanian reluctance to further integrate their economy into that of Italy resulted in the failure of Alba-Italian negotiations for a customs union agreement that had begun in March 1932, which in turn led Italy, in April 1933, to suspend

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<sup>88</sup> Hiram Motherwell, "Albania under Domination of Italy", Current History, vol. 28, no.3, June 1928, pp. 431-5.

<sup>89</sup> Jason Hunter Tomes, King Zog of Albania: Europe's Self-Made Muslim King, (New York University Press: New York, 2004), p. 86. For a detailed analysis of the British misperception and miscalculation of the Italian designs towards Albania that culminated in the invasion of Albania see; Dawn M. Miller, "Dark Waters: Britain and Italy's Invasion of Albania, 7 April 1939", International Journal of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence, vol. 16, no. 2, 2003, pp. 290-6, 310-1.

<sup>90</sup> Pearson, op.cit., p. 260.

the annual disbursements of the 1931 loan.<sup>91</sup> However, from 1935 onwards, Albanian economic relations gradually returned to their former intensity with a series of new loan agreements signed in March 1936, as economic necessity forced Albania to reconcile with Italy “at the price of fresh concessions and increased political intervention.”<sup>92</sup>

King Zog was playing a delicate game of balance with the Italians, trying to get as much as possible of the financial support he needed to remain in power while doing his utmost to preserve Albanian sovereignty. However, Albania’s inherent vulnerabilities – including threats of an internal insurgency, severe financial crises and diplomatic isolation – left him very little room to manoeuvre. Struggle for control continued throughout the 1920s and 1930s, as Albania tried to preserve its political independence in the face of enormous Italian influence and actual penetration. In the end, the historical irony of King Zog’s reliance on Italian assistance for the protection of Albanian independence became clear when the Italians, convinced that taking full control of Albania required an outright invasion, became the agents of Albania’s ultimate loss of sovereignty.<sup>93</sup>

Amid the rising political tension, revisionism and territorial aspirations that characterized the interwar period, Albania became a priority for the ambitious foreign policy of Mussolini’s son-in-law, Count Galeazzo Ciano, who was made foreign minister of Italy in June 1936. Count Ciano persuaded Mussolini to invade in order to transform Italy’s indirect administration of Albania to direct rule. Initially, Ciano worked on plans to invade Albania together with the Yugoslavs; however, discussions over a possible partition of Albania ended in disagreement, and the Italians made the decision to act alone to achieve the goal of unifying Albania with Italy.<sup>94</sup> On 25 March 1939, the Italians backed King Zog into a corner with an ultimatum, demanding that Albania sacrifice its sovereignty and

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<sup>91</sup> Roselli, *op.cit.*, pp. 57-60.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>93</sup> Bernd J. Fischer, *Albania at War, 1939-1945*, (Purdue University Press: West Lafayette, 1999), p. 7.

<sup>94</sup> Stavro Skendi, *The Political Evolution of Albania, 1912-1944*, Mid-European Studies Center Mimeographed Series No. 19, New York, 1954, p. 13.

becoming an Italian protectorate.<sup>95</sup> In an attempt to buy time, King Zog tried to appease the Italians while simultaneously asking for international support, but his efforts were unable to stop the Italians, who invaded Albania on 7 April 1939.

There was little significant Albanian military resistance to the invasion and occupation, whose economic dimension was formalized in subsequent economic, customs and currency unions between Albania and Italy, for whom Albania represented insurance of Italian influence in the Balkans and a first step towards Italian expansion throughout the Mediterranean.<sup>96</sup> Considering the timing – it was close to six months before the beginning of the Second World War – there was little opposition to or condemnation of the invasion in the international arena. Whereas Albania had previously been reluctant to join the League of Nations’ decision to impose sanctions on Italy after the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in November 1935, it was now the League of Nations and its members who were reluctant to condemn the Italian occupation of Albania and the forced unification of the two monarchies under the Italian king. In fact, prompted by the Italians, Albania withdrew from the League of Nations shortly after the invasion.<sup>97</sup>

Despite their deep penetration in Albania prior to the invasion, neither the Italians nor their collaborators in the local government managed to attain popularity or legitimacy in the eyes of the Albanian population.<sup>98</sup> Later, a similar rejection would be extended to the Germans, who in September 1943, became the occupying force in Albania, replacing the Italians, who, defeated in the Second World War, failed to accomplish their expansionist plans in the Balkans.

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<sup>95</sup> Pearson, op.cit., p. 428.

<sup>96</sup> For a review of the shaping of the Italian interests in the Mediterranean in relation with Albania during the interwar period see; George Glasgow, “Italy, Albania and the Mediterranean”, Contemporary Review, vol. 155, January/July 1939, pp. 540-51.

<sup>97</sup> Fischer, 1999, op.cit., p. 31, “Communication Concerning the Withdrawal of Albania from League of Nations”, League of Nations – Official Journal, vol. 20, March-April 1939, p. 206.

<sup>98</sup> In addition to the Fisher’s book (1999) for further information about Albania during the Second World War see; Reginald Hibbert, Albania’s National Liberation Struggle: The Bitter Victory, (Pinter Publishers: London, 1991) and Owen Pearson, Albania in the Twentieth Century: A History, Volume II: Albania in Occupation and War: From Fascism to Communism, 1940-1945, (The Centre for Albanian Studies in Association with I. B. Tauris: London, 2005).

### 3.3 Conclusion

Albania started its existence in the international state system as a weak, small state. Indeed, the weakness of the new state and its quest for survival fed each other in a cyclical manner, constituting the two main problems that had to be faced during the formation of the Albanian state. As a small state, Albania needed to develop a foreign policy that would allow it to compensate for weaknesses that left it vulnerable in terms of territorial integrity and sovereignty. Domestic and foreign threats to its survival and stability led Albania to look for external support to compensate for its weaknesses. However, its options were constrained by the regional and international context, which did not provide an environment conducive to the development of a flexible foreign policy line. In order to sustain its existence, Albania developed a series of asymmetrical relationships with a stronger party to balance its own inherent weaknesses as a small state. In the first instance of what was to become a pattern of patron-client relationships, Albania forged an alliance with Italy, a nearby Great Power that it used to fill a domestic power vacuum. Italy provided much-needed economic and political support to Albania, which in return was required to give concessions in the economic, political and diplomatic spheres. Over the course of time, the nature of the Alba-Italian relationship changed until it reached a point at which Albanians were so dependent on Italy that they could do very little to resist the course of events and become an Italian protectorate. The challenge that Italian penetration posed to Albanian sovereignty represented the crux of Albania's ongoing foreign policy dilemma: as a weak small state, Albania was unable to survive without relying on external support – but it was also unable to manage the ever-increasing influence of a Great Power that had designs on the state whose survival it was asked to guarantee. While its domestic weaknesses limited its ability to survive on its own, the international environment limited its options for shifting from one patron to another. As the following chapters demonstrate, despite this initial experience with Italy, successive Albanian leaderships and different political élites continued on the same foreign policy path, trying to secure external support to balance Albania's inherent weaknesses as a small state.

## CHAPTER 4

### FROM SHIFTING ALLIANCES TO ISOLATION UNDER ENVER HOXHA

#### 4.1 Shifting Foreign Policy of a Weak Small State: Playing on Asymmetry through Alliances

In the process of the Italian surrender during the Second World War, the Germans were forced to become involved in Albania and eventually occupy it against their will in order to prevent an Allied occupation of Albania that would directly “threaten the German position in Eastern Europe as a whole.”<sup>1</sup> German priorities lay in ensuring control over Albania with the least possible force and presence, and as a result, rather than attempting to establish their authority through the direct presence of German governing officials, they made use of local collaborators and their governments. Contrary to the Italians, the Germans wanted to win the hearts and minds of the Albanian people and obtain their support for the German presence in the country. Thus, they played up the idea that Germany had actually saved the Albanians from the yoke of the Italians and would bring about the unification of all Albanians in the region around ethnic boundaries, which basically meant uniting Albania with Kosovo.<sup>2</sup> Although the Germans put an end

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<sup>1</sup> Bernd J. Fischer, Albania at War, 1939-1945, (Purdue University Press: West Lafayette, 1999), pp. 260-1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 167, 258. In fact, in May 1941, the Italians had occupied the eastern and southern parts of Kosovo (other parts of Kosovo in the north had been occupied by the Germans and in the east by the Bulgarians) and attached them to Albania, which they had already invaded. Thus, through the annexation, the Italians had brought together practically all the Albanians in the region before Germany expanded its occupation to these areas. Miranda Vickers, Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo, (Hurst & Company: London, 1998), p. 121 and Noel Malcolm, Kosovo: A Short History, (Papermac: London, 1998), pp. 291-2.

to Albania's union with Italy and declared Albania "free, neutral and independent," in reality, Albania was far from being either neutral or sovereign, as the Germans were actually no more than a "patronising colonial rule" in the country.<sup>3</sup>

A loosely integrated and economically fragile Albania was hardly in the position to easily develop a local resistance movement against the German occupation during the Second World War, and the Allied contribution to those Albanian resistance efforts that were in operation was so limited as to be almost insignificant, particularly when compared to the Allied support given to most other indigenous resistance movements across Europe.<sup>4</sup> Although the British appreciated the strategic significance of Albania and the actions of the local resistance, first against the Italians and then against the Germans, they were unable to provide the necessary resources to incorporate the local Albanian movements under the British military missions organised by the Special Operations Executive (SOE).<sup>5</sup>

Under these circumstances, it was left to local Albanian communist groups to come together, which they did in September 1942, to form the "broadly based, patriotic, popular resistance movement" known as the National Liberation Front (LNC).<sup>6</sup> The LNC emerged out of the Albanian Communist Party (APC), which had been founded on 8 November 1941 "under the tutelage of the Yugoslav

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<sup>3</sup> Fischer, op.cit., pp. 171-2.

<sup>4</sup> For details see; Bernd J. Fischer, "Resistance in Albania during the Second World War: Partisans, Nationalists and the S.O.E", East European Quarterly, vol. 25, no. 1, 1991, pp. 21-47 and Gani Manelli, "Partisan Politics in the World War II Albania: The Struggle for Power, 1939-1944", East European Quarterly, vol. 40, no. 3, 2006, pp. 340-6.

<sup>5</sup> For personal accounts of British personnel in the field see; Julian Amery, Sons of the Eagle, (Macmillan & Co., Ltd.: London, 1948) and David Smiley, Albanian Assignment, (The Hogarth Press: London, 1984). Also, for a recent discussion on the SOE's approach to the nationalist and the communist resistance movements in Albania during the war and its impact on the communist takeover of Albania after the Second World War see; Roderick Bailey, "Smoke without Fire? Albania, SOE and the Communist 'Conspiracy Theory'", in Albanian Identities: Myth and History, edited by Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer, (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 2002), pp. 143-53. For American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and SOE activities in Albania during the War also see; Roderick Bailey, "OSS-SOE Relations, Albania 1943-44", Intelligence and National Security, vol. 15, no. 2, 2000, pp. 20-35.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Rothschild and Nancy M. Wingfield, Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II, Third Edition, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, [1989], 2000), p. 70.

Partisans.”<sup>7</sup> The LNC became the most organised and capable of the resistance movements, which included the republican-nationalist National Front (Balli Kombëtar) and the royalist Legaliteti. The national resistance movement was led by APC guerrillas, whose leader, Enver Hoxha, would become president of the Albanian provisional government established after the Second World War.

The wartime experience of the Albanian communist resistance was distinct among the resistance movements in Central and Eastern Europe in the sense that the success of the Albanians can be attributed to the “indigenoussness” of their movement, which was broad-based and dependent upon domestic rather than Western resources and organisation or a government in exile.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Albania was the only occupied state in Central and Eastern Europe liberated by neither the British and Americans nor the Soviets in which a communist regime was installed after the Second World War.<sup>9</sup> The Allies did not recognize the ‘independence of Albania’ against the Italian occupation until as late as December 1942,<sup>10</sup> and the British, US and Soviet governments did not recognize the communist-led, post-War Albanian Provisional Government until 10 November 1945<sup>11</sup> – almost a year after the LNC’s proclamation of victory and formation of the government on 28 November 1944.<sup>12</sup> The relative self-sufficiency and international neglect of Albania during and immediately after the war provided the new Albanian regime

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Fischer, 1999, op.cit., pp. 245, 253. Fischer as well emphasizes the material and moral aid from the Allies, in particular the British, along with the importance of the indigenous character of the resistance; however, he also argues that this contribution to the resistance cannot be considered decisive in the success of the movement. Ibid., p. 267.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>10</sup> Owen Pearson, Albania in the Twentieth Century: A History, Volume II: Albania in Occupation and War: From Fascism to Communism, 1940-1945, (The Centre for Albanian Studies in Association with I. B. Tauris: London, 2005), pp. 217-8, 223.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 477-8.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 412-3. The liberation of whole of the Albania with the departure of the last German troop was declared on 4 December 1944 by Enver Hoxha.

and its leader, Enver Hoxha, an important source of domestic legitimacy<sup>13</sup> and relative flexibility in conducting international relations.<sup>14</sup>

After the Second World War, the communist-led LNC, renamed the Democratic Front, easily took control of the country through the provisional government, as any other organised political group that might have been a potential contender for power had left Albania as a result of their failure in the competition to lead the resistance in liberating the country. The Democratic Front subsequently won a landslide victory in the first post-War elections for a Constituent Assembly, held on 2 December 1945, although there were allegations of massive fraud and intimidation during the election process.<sup>15</sup> On 11 January 1946, the new government declared Albania a People's Republic.

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, Albania and its new communist regime had to deal with a wide variety of problems that required diplomatic support in the international arena. The first item on the agenda was to obtain international recognition of the new regime and integrate it into the post-War international system and new international institutions, particularly the United Nations. Over the course of time, the Albanian application was evaluated and discussed at various levels in the United Nations in order to determine whether or not Albania was qualified to become a member of the organisation. Although the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia backed the Albanian causes, political problems between Albania and Britain and Greece, in particular, caused a delay in Albanian membership. Albania applied for admission to the United Nations on 25 January

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<sup>13</sup> Indeed, Enver Hoxha exaggerated the relative success of the communist-led local resistance movement and extensively propagated the myth of the heroic partisan war, initially, in order to ensure the commitment and loyalty of the Albanian people needed to legitimise his regime, and, later, to help spread the growth of an "isolationist state-of-siege nationalism." Bernd J. Fischer, "Perceptions and Reality in Twentieth-Century Albanian Military Prowess", in Albanian Identities: Myth and History, edited by Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer, (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 2002), p. 142.

<sup>14</sup> Despite the local and relatively independent character of the resistance during and in the aftermath of the Second World War, the West perceived the new Albanian regime to be within the 'Slav Orbit'. Stavro Skendi, "Albania within the Slav Orbit: Advent to the Power of the Communist Party", Political Science Quarterly, vol. 63, no. 2, 1948, pp. 269-71.

<sup>15</sup> Miranda Vickers, The Albanians: A Modern History, (I.B. Taurus: London, 1995), pp. 163-4 and Pearson, op.cit., pp. 485-6.

1946; however, despite Soviet and Yugoslav support, opposition from the United States, Britain, Greece and others managed to delay Albanian membership almost 10 years. As a result of political wrangling, Albania was not admitted to the United Nations until 15 December 1955.<sup>16</sup>

Albania had to deal with Greek claims on its southern territories – referred to by the Greeks as the ‘Northern Epirus’ – and clear itself of Greek accusations that Albanian troops had taken part in the Italian invasion of Northern Greece. Athens was attempting to link these charges with its ongoing demands for the regions in southern Albania, where the Greek minority was concentrated, and, with British and US support in the international arena, continued to press for a rearrangement of the borders that would unify the Northern Epirus with Greece. In addition, there were the issues of Albania’s support for the Greek communist guerrillas fighting a civil war against the Greek government and Greece’s mass expulsion of Albanians living in the Chameria region at the end of the Second World War.<sup>17</sup> Over the following years, the ongoing tension and the ‘state of war’ between Albania and Greece<sup>18</sup> constituted an important element of bilateral relations and a significant foreign policy concern for the new communist regime in Albania.

Albania was in conflict with the British as well due to the Corfu Channel mining incident of 22 October 1946 that resulted in damage to British Navy vessels and the death of British military personnel. The British accused the Albanians of laying new mines in the channel, which British minesweepers had supposedly cleared following the Second World War. The case was taken to the

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<sup>16</sup> Owen Pearson, Albania in the Twentieth Century: A History, Volume III: Albania as Dictatorship and Democracy, From Isolation to Kosovo War 1946-1998, (The Centre for Albanian Studies in Association with I. B. Tauris: London, 2006), pp. 5 and 500. In fact, it was the Yugoslavs that had completed the application to the United Nations for the Albanian government.

<sup>17</sup> For a short historical background of the issue see; Miranda Vickers, The Cham Issue: Albanian National and Property Claims in Greece, Conflict Studies Centre, 2002.

<sup>18</sup> The state of war between Albania and Greece, which technically started when the Italians invaded Greece from Albanian territories on 28 October 1940, continued until 28 August 1987. Diplomatic relations between the two countries could only be re-established on 6 May 1971.

International Court of Justice (ICJ), which ruled against Albania,<sup>19</sup> however, Albania refused to pay the compensation awarded by the ICJ.<sup>20</sup> In response, the British confiscated Albanian gold reserves that had been transferred to Italy after the Italian occupation of Albania and later seized by the Allies after the Second World War.<sup>21</sup> These events caused a long delay in the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations between Albania and Britain. Despite their cooperation against the Italian and German opposition during the Second World War, Enver Hoxha and the British leadership took negative approaches towards one another, with the British provoking Hoxha by trying to change the regime in Albania and supporting Greek claims on Albanian territory and the Albanians responding by escalating tension in the Adriatic with the Corfu Channel incident.

In fact, Hoxha was challenging a weakened Great Power in what could be considered a calculated risk on the part of Albania as a small state to attract the attention of potential allies at a critical moment in the formation of the post-War world order. By increasing tensions with the British and the Americans, the Albanians garnered the support of the communist regimes in Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, the former a regional and the latter an international power with which Albania shared similar ideological and political stances. Had Hoxha not obtained the support he expected, the tension between Albania and those Great Powers that were posing a threat to Albania's existence may have increased and even led to a regime change. In this environment, Albania became a major playground for the conflicting Great Powers.

In the period following the Second World War, Albania gained support for its causes in the international arena from Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, while

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<sup>19</sup> For an account of the Corfu Channel dispute between Albania and Britain see; Leslie Gardiner, The Eagle Spreads His Claws: A History of the Corfu Channel Dispute and of Albania's Relations with the West, 1945-1965, (William Blackwoods & Sons LTD: Edinburg, 1966).

<sup>20</sup> For the details of the Corfu Channel Case (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland v. Albania) -application, proceedings and judgements of the International Court of Justice- see, <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?p1=3&p2=3&k=cd&case=1>

<sup>21</sup> In time, the Albanian gold issue turned into the major hindrance before the establishment of diplomatic relations between Albania and Britain. Although Albania and Britain resumed diplomatic relations in May 1991, the issue could only be resolved in February 1996 with the return of US\$ 30 million worth of gold to Albania.

facing increasing conflict and opposition from Britain and the United States, with whom Albania was also at odds. The new regime in Albania was unwilling to recognise bilateral treaties and agreements that it had signed with the United States before the Italian invasion on 7 April 1939. On 13 August 1946, the Albanian government refused a request by Washington to assure the validity of all treaties and agreements that had been presented as the prerequisite for the continuation of diplomatic relations.<sup>22</sup> In response, in early November 1946, the US suspended diplomatic relations being conducted by a US Special Mission in Tirana.<sup>23</sup> The US later attempted to re-establish bilateral relations with Albania by offering economic aid within the framework of the Marshall Plan; however, the offer was refused by Albania on 10 July 1947.<sup>24</sup> Between 1949 and 1952, Albania became the target of Anglo-American subversive operations aimed at changing the communist regime<sup>25</sup> to one more friendly to the West.<sup>26</sup> These operations further enflamed the deep suspicions regarding the US and Britain that Hoxha had harboured since the resistance and which he continued to harbour through the post-War period. While Hoxha may have truly considered the US to be a “bullying, aggressive and imperialistic enemy” that aimed to invade and change the regime in Albania, at the same time, he exaggerated the image of Albania as a nation standing proudly against the mighty US, the enemy of Albania, in order to garner domestic support and unite Albanians against a common threat.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Pearson, 2006, op.cit., p. 68.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 111-3, 118.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp. 193-4.

<sup>25</sup> All the Anglo-American operations that aimed to create an opposition in order to topple the communist regime failed because the Soviets leaked information to the Albanians. For details regarding the failure of these operations and the role of the famous spy Kim Philby; Nicholas Bethell, The Great Betrayal: The Untold Story of Kim Philby's Biggest Coup, (Hodder and Stoughton: London, 1984).

<sup>26</sup> The Americans perceived Albania to be a small but important Soviet satellite that not only contributed to the spread of Soviet influence and propaganda in the Balkans and wider Mediterranean, but one that put pressure on Yugoslavia as well. Vladimir Dedijer, “Albania, Soviet Pawn”, Foreign Affairs, vol. 30, no.1, 1951/1952, pp. 103, 107-10.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas Less, “Seeing Red: America and Its Allies through the Eyes of Enver Hoxha”, in The Balkans and the West: Constructing the European Other, 1945-2003, edited by Andrew Hammond, (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2004), p. 65. For Enver Hoxha's personal account of his and Albania's

In shaping the foreign policy line of the new political regime, Enver Hoxha took into account Albania's weakness and the urgent necessities of both the country and the political regime within the changing domestic and international environments. The major determinants of the new regime's foreign policy were nationalism, domestic stability, ideology, economic necessity<sup>28</sup> and security. Rather than making independent use of each determinant, Hoxha combined them in order to achieve his foreign policy goals.

Once in power, Hoxha aimed "to maintain himself and the Communist Party in power; to establish effective party control over all aspects of Albanian life; to modernise the country and construct socialism in accordance with a Leninist-Stalinist model; and to protect the independence and territorial integrity of Albania."<sup>29</sup> Both Hoxha and the new communist party regime were in need of recognition and consolidation, and while the Albanian partisans had played the most important role in the organised resistance movement against the German occupation, the new regime still had to gain popular domestic support and legitimacy in the eyes of the Albanian people. Without popular backing, the new communist regime might not have much chance of survival.

In addition to domestic support, an economically backward and politically unstable Albania needed foreign support to survive and to implement the drastic transformation being planned for the country by the communist party rule. Hoxha profited from the balanced interplay between domestic and foreign factors, i.e., Hoxha's ability to attract foreign support helped ensure domestic stability, and his ability to provide domestic stability allowed him relative ease in designing Albania's foreign policy.

Enver Hoxha's own personality and preferences were also important factors in determining the path of Albanian foreign policy during his long reign.

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relations with the British and the Americans during the Albanian resistance in the Second World War, see his memoirs; Enver Hoxha, The Anglo-American Threat to Albania, (The '8 Nentori' Publishing House: Tirana, 1982).

<sup>28</sup> Elez Biberaj, Albania: A Socialist Maverick, (Westview Press: Boulder, 1990), p. 85.

<sup>29</sup> Nicholas C. Pano, "Albania", in The Columbia History of Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century, edited by Joseph Held, (Columbia University Press: New York, 1992), p. 34.

Despite the existence of official state institutions responsible for foreign policy, in fact, it was Hoxha, as leader of the APC and as first secretary of the Party of Labour of Albania (PLA), the name taken by the APC in 1948, who was the real decisionmaker in terms of shaping Albanian foreign policy<sup>30</sup> and the primary figure behind the actual decisions regarding the formation of Albania's various alliances. In giving shape to these alliance relationships, Hoxha kept in mind that Albania was a small state that had already had one negative experience with a Great Power and, thus, while taking into account Albania's need for sustained foreign support for its survival, he always wanted to maintain the greatest degree of influence and control, albeit limited, over Albania's alliance relationships.

As leader of the guerrilla movement that had liberated the country, Hoxha was well-positioned to make use of nationalism as part of his foreign policy strategy. Within this framework, Hoxha portrayed foreign powers as threats to Albanian political independence and made frequent reference to the oppression of fellow Albanians in neighbouring states in order to unite the Albanian people behind him and his party. At the same time, Hoxha made use of tension and crises in the international environment to attract much-needed foreign support, thereby securing Albania's political independence under a communist regime designed in accordance with his personal decisions and choices.

In addition to nationalism, the Hoxha regime used its communist ideology as a source of political legitimacy and as a basis for determining the nature of Albania's relations with other countries, including which country would make a suitable ally. To compensate for the country's weakness, Hoxha applied a strong, ideological rhetoric, politicising Albania's foreign policy. However, although the new Stalinist leadership made strong references to the ideological aspects of their foreign policy, the political rhetoric served more for gaining domestic and international legitimacy rather than defining Albania's actual foreign policy goals.

In essence, the continuity in Albania's weakness limited the policy options of the new regime, with Albanian foreign policy choices shaped by concerns over security and the continuation of economic support. In addition to opening up the

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<sup>30</sup> Stefanos Katsikas, "An Overview of Albania's Foreign Policy-Making in the 1980s", *Slavo*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2004, pp. 93-4.

country's strategic assets, Hoxha tried to exchange political backing for foreign aid and loans in order to ensure a flow of economic support to guarantee Albania's security and political independence. The Albanian leadership considered ensuring the security and political independence of the country as essential, and tried to reach this goal by entering into alliances.

The adaptation of a pragmatic foreign policy line that relied on the support of a strong regional or great power in order to compensate for the weakness of the Albanian state was further institutionalised in this period. Although Albania had to make sacrifices in terms of limiting its sovereignty in order to fulfil the needs of its alliance relationships, Hoxha was able to play with these alliances, shifting loyalty from partner to partner whenever the costs began to outweigh the benefits – especially when these relationships began to directly threaten Albania's political independence and territorial integrity, or Hoxha's own political survival. In this way, Hoxha managed to preserve Albania's political independence and territorial integrity. Peter Prifti explains the shifts in Albania's alliance relationships as “understandable when they are seen as the unceasing efforts of the country to regain political equilibrium and preserve national independence.”<sup>31</sup> P. F. Brown contributes to this last point, describing Hoxha as a survivor “inspired by both his political philosophy and his strategy”<sup>32</sup> in dealing with his stronger allies, with his survival instincts outweighing both his nationalist and communist ideals.

## **4.2 Art of Shifting Alliances: Enver Hoxha Shapes Post-Second World War Albanian Foreign Policy**

### **4.2.1 Albania-Yugoslavia: From Harmony to Break-up of Comrades**

The Yugoslav Partisans had been the main supporters of the Albanian communist resistance movement, providing crucial aid and assistance in their fight

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<sup>31</sup> Peter R. Prifti, Socialist Albania since 1944: Domestic and Foreign Developments, (The MIT Press: Massachusetts, 1978), p. 242.

<sup>32</sup> J. F. Brown, Eastern Europe and Communist Rule, (Duke University Press: Durham, 1988), pp. 372-3.

against the occupiers during the Second World War, as well as support when the Albanian communists later attempted to take power in the country. Because the Yugoslav Communist Party was directly involved in the formation of the APC, the Albanian communists were dependent on the Yugoslavs and acted as if they were the representatives of the Yugoslav Communist Party.<sup>33</sup> Although the Yugoslavs were the dominant party in the relations, there were strong ideological and political bonds between the fellow partisans of the two neighbouring countries. Indeed, ideological attributes and parallel propagandistic rhetoric would form the major component of Hoxha's foreign policymaking in the years to come.

In the period between 1944 and 1948, Yugoslavia became Albania's major ally, providing economic aid, technical support and backing in the international arena. From the beginning, the nature of relations between Albania and Yugoslavia was asymmetrical. Yugoslavia's supremacy in the ideological, political and economic spheres left Albania as the secondary actor in defining the nature and depth of relations. Although Enver Hoxha was fully aware of the repercussions of the Alba-Italian alliance during the interwar period, there was nothing he could do to change the similarly imbalanced nature of Albania's relations with Yugoslavia. During the initial phases of the relationship between the two countries and their respective regimes, there was a strong belief on the part of the Albanians in the good intentions of their stronger ally. Considering the references made to the possible unification of Albanians in the two countries – particularly those in Kosovo joining the Albanians in Albania proper – and Yugoslavia's provision of desperately needed economic aid as well as diplomatic support for Albanian causes in the United Nations and at the Paris Peace Conference, Hoxha believed that the Yugoslavs intended to remain supportive and respectful of Albania's sovereignty and independence.<sup>34</sup>

The Yugoslav-Albanian Treaty of Friendship, Collaboration and Mutual Assistance signed on 10 July 1946 and the adjacent Economic Convention laid the official foundation of close bilateral relations between Albania and Yugoslavia.

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<sup>33</sup> Stavro Skendi (ed.), *Albania*, (Frederic A. Praeger: New York, 1956), p. 19.

<sup>34</sup> James S. O'Donnell, *A Coming of Age: Albania under Enver Hoxha*, East European Monographs, (Boulder, Columbia University Press: New York, 1999), pp. 17-20.

These agreements included articles concerning bilateral military commitments against foreign aggression and a customs union supported by currency parity and unified pricing, the latter of which provoked speculations about a possible Yugoslav-Albanian federation.<sup>35</sup> On 27 November 1946, the two nations signed the Treaty on Coordination of Economic Plans, Customs Union and Equalisation of Currencies, which integrated their economies to such an extent that Albania was practically transformed into a province of Yugoslavia.<sup>36</sup>

In line with Yugoslavia's war-time perception of Albania as "too small and too weak to stand on its own after the war,"<sup>37</sup> Yugoslavia wanted to extend its growing presence in Albania, not only in terms of economic and technical aid, but by stationing combat troops in Southern Albania to offer protection against any developments that might jeopardise the growing Yugoslav interests in the country. Although the troops were ostensibly provided in response to perceived designs on the region on the part of Greece, the move was undertaken simultaneously to the introduction of a plan for the union of Albania with Yugoslavia on a federal basis on 5 December 1947.<sup>38</sup> If the unification, or annexation, had been successful, Albania would have become the "Seventh Republic of Yugoslavia".<sup>39</sup> Moreover, in a direct, personal threat, the Yugoslavs challenged Hoxha in the domestic arena by supporting an alternative, pro-Yugoslav leadership within the PLA, which, once in control of the country, would pave the way for merging Albania with Yugoslavia.<sup>40</sup>

The above-mentioned plan awoke Enver Hoxha's suspicions regarding Yugoslavia's intentions for the future of Albania.<sup>41</sup> He realised that the nature of

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<sup>35</sup> Pearson, 2006, op.cit., p. 52.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>37</sup> O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 19.

<sup>38</sup> Pearson, 2006, op.cit., pp. 242-3.

<sup>39</sup> O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 31.

<sup>40</sup> Vickers, 1995, op.cit., pp. 172-3.

<sup>41</sup> Jon Halliday, The Artful Albanian: Memoirs of Enver Hoxha, (Chatto & Windus: London, 1986), pp. 106-8.

Alba-Yugoslav bilateral relations was swinging along a path very similar to the one that Albanian-Italian relations had taken in the previous decade, and, like King Zog before him, he also tried to limit the scope of Albania's dependency, this time on Yugoslavia, which had begun to threaten Albania's sovereignty. However, Yugoslavia was too geographically close and too militarily powerful to be challenged until the deterioration of Soviet-Yugoslav relations resulted in Yugoslavia's expulsion from the Communist Information Bureau, the Cominform, on 28 June 1948.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, it was Yugoslavia's ambitions for regional dominance in the Balkans, primarily embodied in the Yugoslav attempts to send troops to Albania in order to impose their will on the country, that drew reaction from the Soviet leadership and ultimately led to the deterioration in Soviet-Yugoslav relations.<sup>43</sup> Albania immediately used this opportunity to distance itself from Yugoslavia, touting the ideological rhetoric of revisionism in an attack on the policies of the Yugoslav leadership, particularly on Josip Broz Tito.<sup>44</sup> Hoxha expelled Yugoslav technical staff and advisors from Albania, purged the pro-Yugoslav figures in the regime<sup>45</sup> and declared all bilateral treaties invalid, with the exception of the Treaty of Friendship, Collaboration and Mutual Aid.<sup>46</sup>

After the break-up of Albanian-Yugoslav relations, Hoxha made extensive use of both the ideological differences between the Albanian and Yugoslav communists and his personal rift with Tito for domestic political purposes, as well as in shaping Albania's foreign policy. These ideologically based attacks proved useful in Hoxha's search for a new patron to replace Yugoslavia, as Albania's economic weaknesses and vulnerable security situation dictated that there be no delay in securing continuing foreign aid.

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<sup>42</sup> Pearson, 2006, op.cit., p. 287.

<sup>43</sup> Jeronim Perović, "The Tito-Stalin Split: A Reassessment in Light of New Evidence", Journal of Cold War Studies, vol. 9, no. 2, 2007, pp. 34, 42. For details of the Soviet's reactions to Yugoslav-Albanian relations see; ibid., pp. 48-52.

<sup>44</sup> "Albania and Tito", The Economist, 1 January 1949, p. 22.

<sup>45</sup> Anton Logoreci, "Albania and Yugoslavia", Contemporary Review, no. 177, 1950, p. 362.

<sup>46</sup> O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 27.

#### 4.2.2 Albania-Soviet Union: Superpower Patronage and the Challenge of the Weak

The variety and gravity of the problems on the Albanian diplomatic agenda and the hostile attitudes of the neighbouring countries,<sup>47</sup> as well as Albanian economic dependency on foreign aid, led Albania to look to the Soviet Union as the most appropriate option to fill the vacuum formed after breaking off its alliance with Yugoslavia. Enver Hoxha was conscious of the role and importance of Soviet support for Albania, even if access to significant support did not truly begin until after the end of the Second World War. In spite of the fact that the Soviet contribution to the wartime Albanian resistance movement had been limited – even more limited than that of the British and the Americans – Hoxha made a point of emphasizing the role of the Soviet Union in winning the Second World War and the contribution it made to the security and continuing existence of small states, including Albania. According to Hoxha:

Our country owes her liberation to the Soviet Union [which] is the most reliable protector of *small countries*, their sovereignty and their independence... The Government will do all in its power to strengthen the economic, social, and political ties with the Soviet Union.<sup>48</sup>

The strict Stalinist approach Hoxha was following in Albania suited both states. For the Soviets, the ideological harmony between Moscow and Tirana helped Moscow to respond to Yugoslav challenges to the Soviet leadership role in the Balkans. For the Albanians, the Soviets held greater prestige than the Yugoslavs, so that the switch in patrons was viewed as a move up “from the status of a sub-satellite to that of a satellite.”<sup>49</sup>

Although the Soviet Union would be a geographically distant patron, their capacity to satisfy Albanian security needs made them a preferable ally, especially considering Albania’s two threatening precedents of aligning with regional and

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<sup>47</sup> “Albania in Isolation”, *The Economist*, 13 May 1950, pp. 1069-70.

<sup>48</sup> Emphasis added. Pearson, 2006, *op.cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>49</sup> Skendi, 1956, *op.cit.*, p. 26.

neighbouring powers. The Soviet Union also had the technical capacity and economic resources to easily help Albania in terms of development. Conversely, by providing bases for Soviet strategic forces and submarines in the Mediterranean, Albania could contribute to the protection of the Soviet Union's global strategic interests<sup>50</sup> in the process of guaranteeing its own security.

The Soviet's hoped Albania would be their "outpost in the Adriatic,"<sup>51</sup> whose loyalty could be maintained at minimum political and economic costs.<sup>52</sup> Albania was assured of economic and technical aid without any difficulties, although there was a disagreement concerning investment priorities, with the Albanians asking for aid to be channelled into industry, whereas the Soviets preferred to invest in the Albanian agricultural sector. After becoming a member of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) in February 1949, Albania was able to use Soviet funding to improve its backward economy. In the security sphere, the presence of Soviet forces in Albania offered it a sense of safety in the face of threats from Yugoslavia<sup>53</sup> and elsewhere, including the United States and Britain, whom Hoxha suspected of plotting to invade Albania. In the rapidly polarising international environment, the alliance with the Soviet Union secured

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<sup>50</sup> In 1952, the Soviets established a submarine base on the island of Sazan that was very important in terms of obtaining a strategic advantage within the emerging Cold War environment. The submarines of the time were diesel-electric powered, and their area and duration of operation was limited. The base on Sazan gave the Soviet submarines operating and patrolling capability in the Mediterranean and freed them from the necessity of navigating the Straits to return to their bases in the Soviet Union for supplies. This made the submarine base on Sazan an essential part of the Soviet Union's strategic interests in the Mediterranean.

<sup>51</sup> "Outpost in the Adriatic", The Economist, 18 July 1953, pp. 181-2.

<sup>52</sup> "Talleyrand of Tirana", The Economist, 29 January 1955, p. 377.

<sup>53</sup> After breaking up with the Yugoslavs, the Albanian leadership took a very critical stance against Yugoslavia. Interestingly, not only were the Soviets happy to have a proxy that was fiercely condemning the Yugoslav leadership for being "revisionists and opportunists," when the Yugoslavs complained that, as a small state, they were the victim of Russian "interference, imperialism and exploitation" the Russian leadership was able to use the case of Albania to remind the Yugoslavs that they were "in no position to throw stones". "Albania Steps up the Attack", The Economist, 20 April 1957, p. 235. Although the Albanian complaints about Yugoslavia at the time were very similar to the Yugoslav complaints about the Russians, Yugoslav penetration into Albania was considered to be much more complete than that of Soviet efforts in Yugoslavia, especially in terms of the expansion into many areas of economic activity. Marshall I. Goldman, Soviet Foreign Aid, (Frederic A. Praeger, Publishers: London, 1967), p. 16.

Albanian interests at the regional and international levels, especially after Albania joined the Warsaw Pact on 14 May 1955.

However, the status of the Alba-Soviet alliance proved susceptible to domestic developments in the Soviet Union. Stalin's death in March 1953 led to changes in the nature of Soviet-Albanian relations, as Stalin's successor, Nikita Khrushchev, shifted the Soviet Union's ideological stance and political choices. These changes were directly reflected in a decline of Soviet interest in Albania and a simultaneous increase in attention towards Yugoslavia. More disturbing than the Soviet's decrease in economic aid to Albania was the Soviet-Yugoslav rapprochement and subsequent Soviet insistence that Albania restore its relations with Yugoslavia.<sup>54</sup> At the time, the nature of Soviet-Albanian economic relations in terms of Albania's vulnerability to Soviet economic pressure had reached a point very similar to that of Albanian-Yugoslav relations during the break-up of that alliance<sup>55</sup> Khrushchev personally pressured Hoxha to reconcile with Yugoslavia, but his efforts did not have the hoped-for consequences. On the contrary, the Soviet demands led to a further deterioration in relations. Clearly, the ideological shift and de-Stalinisation process in the Soviet Union represented a direct threat to Hoxha, a committed Stalinist, with the Soviet leadership throwing support behind a pro-Soviet clique within the PLA in an effort to challenge Hoxha's leadership as well as his policies in a manner similar to what the Yugoslavs had tried when they had been in alliance with Albania.

The ideological and political rifts between the Albanian and Soviet leaderships deepened steadily over the course of the 1950s. The Soviet's policy of 'peaceful co-existence' in its developing relations with the non-communist world led to a reaction from Enver Hoxha.<sup>56</sup> As the irreconcilability of the ideological and political differences between Hoxha and Khrushchev became clear, Albania began to look for other potential allies. Coincidentally, this period was one of

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<sup>54</sup> David Floyd, "Why Albania Left the Camp", Contemporary Review, no: 202:1161, 1962, p. 189.

<sup>55</sup> Robert Owen Freedman, Economic Warfare in the Communist Block: A Study of Soviet Economic Pressure against Yugoslavia, Albania, and Communist China, (Praeger Publishers: New York, 1970), p. 63.

<sup>56</sup> Wayne S. Vucinich, "The Albanian-Soviet Rift", Current History, vol. 44, May 1963, p. 299.

rising tensions between the Soviet Union and China, a result of border problems between the two countries as well as Soviet attempts to make China recognise Moscow's role as leader of the Communist Bloc.

Albania initially developed bilateral relations with China in order to secure the long-term loans it needed to offset declining Soviet economic aid.<sup>57</sup> Sino-Albanian relations developed in parallel with the deterioration in Albania's alliance with the Soviet Union, whose reluctance to completely let go of Albania bought Hoxha the time he needed to establish and improve relations with the Chinese. The similarities in the Albanian and Chinese ideologies eased the process. Albania appeared as a major supporter of the Chinese position within the community of communist states, while Chinese support for Albania became one of the central issues in the Soviet-Chinese rift.<sup>58</sup> For Moscow, Albania represented "the visible demonstration to the Communist world that the tiniest of all Bloc countries, if supported by Beijing, could defy the Russians with impunity."<sup>59</sup> This was a very serious challenge to Soviet prestige and power.

The increasingly ideological tone of Tirana's criticisms, which centred on revisionism and anti-Marxism, took the Soviet-Albanian alliance to the brink of collapse. On 9 December 1961, the Soviets finally broke off diplomatic relations with Albania and began to leave the country.<sup>60</sup> This led Albania to lose its main anchor of security, as its membership in the Warsaw Pact was *de facto* suspended, although it officially continued to be a member until its withdrawal on 12 September 1968.<sup>61</sup> Relations hit a new low after the Soviet's recalled all their

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<sup>57</sup> William E. Griffith, Albania and the Sino-Soviet Rift, (The M.I.T. Press: Cambridge, 1963), p. 39.

<sup>58</sup> Stavro Skendi, "Albania and the Sino-Soviet Rift", Foreign Affairs, vol. 40, no. 3, 1962, pp. 471-8.

<sup>59</sup> Donald S. Zagoria, "Khrushchev's Attack on Albania and Sino-Soviet Relations", The China Quarterly, vol. 8, October-December 1961, p. 8.

<sup>60</sup> "Russians Go Home", The Economist, 16 December 1961, p. 1109.

<sup>61</sup> Once diplomatic relations between Albania and the Soviet Union were terminated, Albanian representatives were no longer invited to attend official meetings of the Warsaw Pact and Albania was no longer represented at the organisational level within the Pact.

technical assistants, closed the submarine base and terminated economic aid in April 1962.<sup>62</sup>

Of all Albania's alliances, the one with the Soviet Union was probably the most asymmetric in terms of the comparative power of the two sides. In spite of this, the Soviet Union's actual potential to threaten the independence and sovereignty of Albania was quite limited. Despite Soviet attempts to support the activities of the Moscow-leaning Albanian opposition, they were unable to leverage this support into an actual change in the ruling leadership, or, as in the case of Hungary in 1956, a direct takeover by military intervention.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, it has been argued that the Soviet failure to control Albania as it had its other communist allies was not only a reflection of the ineffectiveness of Soviet strategies such as reducing economic aid, lowering security assistance and challenging local leadership, but of the shakiness of the Soviet position as the sole policy-dictating authority within the Communist Bloc.<sup>64</sup>

Albania's breaking off of its alliance and curtailing of relations with the Soviet Union was followed by a deterioration in Albanian relations with the other communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe and further alienation in the international arena. Not only was the number of countries with which Albania maintained diplomatic relations extremely limited, Albania was on very bad terms with both superpowers, with whom it had simultaneously broken off diplomatic relations. In a period of constant Cold-War tension, this was an extraordinary situation for a small state. Despite the vast parity gap in the alliance with the Soviet Union, Albania skilfully utilised the circumstances in the international arena, combined with its own relational power, to create the opportunity to shift its alliance relationship in order to guarantee both security and the flow of economic

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<sup>62</sup> O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 53.

<sup>63</sup> In fact, the Albanian regime also took the Hungarian uprising seriously as a domestic movement directed against the regime, and it increased its control against any 'anti-revolutionary' inspirations in Albania. Luan Malltezi, "The Echo of the Hungarian Revolution in Albania-1956", The National Interest: Albanian Political Science Quarterly, no. 1, 2007, pp. 67-75. Albanians also denounced the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. "We're off", The Economist, 21 September 1968, p. 34.

<sup>64</sup> O'Donnell, op.cit., pp. 58-9.

aid. Moreover, after breaking with the Soviets, the Albanians managed to secure an ally without permitting a vacuum to develop that might threaten Albanian domestic stability and national security.

#### **4.2.3 Albania-China: Distant Ally and Alliance of Convenience**

In its final phase of alliance-hopping, Albania transformed its bilateral relations with China into an alliance that, despite its clear nature, was never confirmed by an official alliance treaty; rather, the Sino-Albanian alliance was characterised by an informal process of policy coordination on an *ad hoc* basis.<sup>65</sup> Albania and China shared similar ideological stances of anti-revisionism, anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism and Marxism, as well as problematic relations with the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and the West, especially the United States.<sup>66</sup> Both Albania and China also maintained a strongly ideological approach to foreign policy. In particular, their ‘dual advisory’ approach towards the Soviet Union and the United States was the reflection of a common threat perception stemming from these countries.<sup>67</sup> Both Albania and China considered the two superpowers as equal sources of threat to peace and security. Peter Prifti describes the logic of the ‘dual advisory doctrine’ for Albania and China as follows:

The doctrine rests on the conviction that the United States and the Soviet Union are two equally aggressive and equally dangerous superpowers, bent on world hegemony. The two distinctive features of United States-Soviet relations are collaboration and rivalry. The superpowers are by nature aggressive, perfidious, and greedy for power. To maintain and expand their dominant position in world affairs, they continue to oppress, exploit, manipulate, threaten, and blackmail the smaller and weaker nations.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Elez Biberaj argues that the absence of an alliance treaty was a result of the fact that the commonly perceived interests of the two nations were conditioned by different factors. Elez Biberaj, *Albania and China: A Study of an Unequal Alliance*. (Westview Press: Boulder, 1986), p. 48.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 71.

<sup>68</sup> Prifti, *op.cit.*, p. 247.

Albania and China were brought together, in part, by their common threat perceptions and ideology-based foreign policy stances; however, their alliance took a casual form, as China was geographically distant and had limited ability to reach out to Albania in the case of an urgent security threat. Conscious of the limited nature of China's guarantees, Albania took greater liberties in shaping its own security and foreign policies. Despite the asymmetry in their relationship, Albania did not become a totally subordinate client of China, but behaved more or less as an equal partner in an alignment whose costs were far outweighed by the benefits of economic and military aid. Moreover, as a small state, the Albanian regime used its alliance with 'the world's most populous nation' as a means of projecting strength, "stability and an image of self-confidence abroad."<sup>69</sup>

China also gained prestige from the alliance, as it showcased Beijing's ability to replace Moscow as the ally of choice in the Balkans, an area that had traditionally been within the Soviets' sphere of interest and influence.<sup>70</sup> Albania was committed to supporting China in international organisations where, in most cases, China was not represented. Albania became the voice of China, working for China's membership in the United Nations. Starting in 1963, Albania took the lead in defending the Chinese cause, and with the help of co-signatory countries, brought the issue of China's membership to the United Nations on eight separate occasions, until China was finally granted membership, as well as a permanent seat on the Security Council, on 25 October 1971.<sup>71</sup> Giovanni Armillotta argues that despite such other factors as the US change in attitude in favour of the People's Republic of China in 1970-1971, the Chinese admission to the United Nations must be recognized as a remarkable accomplishment for Albanian

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 244.

<sup>70</sup> Daniel Tretiak, "The Founding of the Sino-Albanian Entente", The China Quarterly, no. 10, April-June 1962, p. 143.

<sup>71</sup> Giovanni Armillotta, "Albania and the United Nations: Two Cases from a Diplomatic History Perspective", International Journal of Albanian Studies, vol. 1, no.1, 1997, pp. 69-81, Pearson, 2006, op.cit., p. 628.

diplomacy in the international arena,<sup>72</sup> and, indeed, an important development in terms of small state diplomacy.

On the other side of the alliance, Chinese aid was crucial for the Albanians, especially in terms of filling the large gap created by the withdrawal of Soviet economic and technical aid.<sup>73</sup> Although the quality of Chinese aid never attained the calibre of the former Soviet aid, it was essential for Albania's survival. Throughout the years of the alliance, China persisted in providing economic and technical aid without much of a problem. It also invested in industrial infrastructure in line with the Albanian leadership's demands, unlike the Soviets, who had tried to impose a division of labour between the two states with regard to production. The situation with the Chinese was very favourable for the Albanians, who had a relatively free hand in shaping their economic development goals according to their own preferences. These positive economic conditions kept the Albanians committed to the alliance, despite emerging disagreements in political and ideological matters.

In this process, the Albanian leadership was also influenced by policies adopted by the Chinese in the cultural sphere. Between 1966 and 1969, following the 'Cultural Revolution' in China, the Albanian regime implemented similar purges and adopted deep changes in the country.<sup>74</sup> In 1967, the regime took the Albanian cultural revolution to its extreme by imposing a total ban on religious worship, making Albania the first officially atheist country in the world.<sup>75</sup> Albania not only adopted the Cultural Revolution for itself, it also became the main supporter of Chinese causes in the international arena. In this sense, Albanian

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<sup>72</sup> Armillotta, op.cit.

<sup>73</sup> Anton Logoreci, "Albania and China: The Incongruous Alliance", Current History, vol. 52, April 1967, p. 229. In fact, Chinese economic aid to Albania up until 1961 was as low as US\$14 million. Goldman gives US government estimates of Soviet aid to Albania in the form of loans, debt cancellation, releases of Joint Stock Companies and reparation reductions from 1957 to 1960 as US\$ 246 million. Goldman, op.cit., pp. 46, 23-4.

<sup>74</sup> For a broader analysis of the social and cultural transformation policies of the Enver Hoxha regime, including the 'Cultural Revolution', see; Isa Blumi, "Hoxha's Class War: The Cultural Revolution and Class War, 1961-1971", East European Quarterly, vol. 33, no. 3, 1999, pp. 303-26.

<sup>75</sup> Robert Elsie, Historical Dictionary of Albania, New Edition, (The Scarecrow Press Inc.: Lanham, 2004), pp. 39-40.

support for the Chinese Cultural Revolution constituted another important aspect of the Sino-Albanian relationship, whereby Albania's open backing of China contributed to the enhancement of bilateral relations and highlighted the relationship between the two countries as a special one.<sup>76</sup>

The Chinese-Albanian alliance began to weaken when the Chinese, in an attempt to overcome their isolation in the international arena, gradually abandoned the 'dual adversary' foreign policy stance that they had shared with the Albanians. In 1970, China established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and started to address the problems existing between the two countries. At the same time, China hoped to develop closer relations with Yugoslavia. China's shift in policy, as witnessed in Beijing's attempts at rapprochement with two former Albanian allies whom Tirana still regarded as major foreign policy concerns, started to ring alarm bells for the Albanian leadership.<sup>77</sup> However, other than showing its reaction by limiting official visits and lowering the scope of cooperation on some nonessential issues, Albania had little leverage that would allow it to respond directly to China's new moves, as Chinese support was still indispensable for Albania.

The *coup de grâce* came in July 1971 with the initiation of the Chinese-American rapprochement. China's move to establish diplomatic relations with the United States and the subsequent policy of détente came as a shock to the Albanians, whom the Chinese had neither consulted nor informed in advance of this drastic change in policy. US President Richard Nixon's historic visit to China in February 1972 was also noted with silent disdain by the Albanians. Despite the fact that China's diplomatic moves to establish relations with Albania's international adversaries were viewed as major blows to Albania's alliance with China and its fundamental foreign policy principles, the Albanian leadership was unable to immediately reflect its discontent; rather, Hoxha was required to act

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<sup>76</sup> Xiaoyuan Liu and Vojtech Mastny, "The Effects of Cultural Revolution on the Relations between China and Eastern Europe, 1966-1969", China and Eastern Europe, 1960s-1980s: Proceedings of the History of Chinese-East European Relations from the 1960s to the 1980s, Center for Security Studies (CSS), ETH Zürich, 2004, p. 83.

<sup>77</sup> Xiaohe Cheng, Can Asymmetry Stand for Long? The Rise and Fall of China's Alliances, Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, (Boston University: Boston, 2006), p. 376.

pragmatically so as not to alienate China and risk a loss in economic support. As a result, relatively little mention was made of Albania's disapproval of China's establishing relations with the 'revisionist and imperialist states,' and a distinction was drawn between inter-party and inter-state relations in the hope that the worsening of relations between the two communist parties would not be directly reflected at the level of inter-state relations.<sup>78</sup>

As China increasingly opened itself to world affairs, Albania's political value for Beijing began to decrease.<sup>79</sup> Albania's threat perception was already on the rise as a result of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in August 1968 and the introduction of the Brezhnev Doctrine later that year. The gradual deterioration in relations and emerging ideological differences with China, especially after the death of Mao Zedong in September 1976, further increased Albania's sense of insecurity. In addition, the Sino-Albanian relationship was influenced by the post-Mao power struggle within the Communist Party of China (CPC). The loss of power and removal from office of the 'radical wing' of the CPC Politburo, with whom the Albanian leadership was politically close,<sup>80</sup> perpetuated the drop in Albania's value for Chinese foreign relations. After this point, the Albanian leadership increased the tone of its criticisms, assuming that the alliance would not return to its heyday when the two countries shared the same ideological, political and diplomatic stances.

In spite of this, the Albanians waited for the decision to terminate the alliance – and the relations – to come from the Chinese. As with the Soviets, the Albanians hoped to squeeze the last drops of economic and technical support for ongoing industrial projects out of China, although, in fact, aid and credit had already fallen to very low amounts by the time the Chinese turned their attention away from Albania towards other regions. In the process of winding down relations, China advised the Albanians to take care of themselves by seeking other

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<sup>78</sup> Geoffrey Stern, "Chinese-Albanian Relations: The End of an Affair", Millennium: Journal of International Studies, vol. 6, no. 3, 1977, p. 272.

<sup>79</sup> O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 70.

<sup>80</sup> Prifti, op.cit., p. 245.

donors, particularly once it began directing its attention and consequently its foreign aid programmes to other countries in the third world.<sup>81</sup>

As part of the process of cooling off relations with the Chinese, the Albanians gradually increased the tone of their criticisms. In July 1977, Albania, fired its first bullet with a long article in the PLA daily<sup>82</sup> that challenged the Chinese in the political arena by openly criticising Mao Zedong's 'Three Worlds' theory that classified the world into superpowers, industrial Western countries and developing nations.<sup>83</sup> The article underlined the irreconcilability of the two countries' different approaches to the understanding of contemporary international relations. In 1978, Albania "gratuitously and emphatically"<sup>84</sup> endorsed Vietnam in its conflict with Cambodia, a Chinese protégé. With this move, Albania was taking a stance against Chinese interests in their own backyard, and consequently forcing a reaction from Beijing. Ultimately, on 7 July 1978, the Chinese government declared its decision to suspend all economic and military relations with Albania. In a diplomatic note, the Chinese explained that they were taking such a radical step because Albania had "pursued policies detrimental to its ally [China]."<sup>85</sup> Albania responded by denouncing the suspension of Chinese aid in a statement that defined the Chinese decision as a "reactionary act from great-power positions, a repetition in content and form of the savage and chauvinistic methods of Tito, Khrushchev and Brezhnev, which China also condemned."<sup>86</sup>

Despite the asymmetry between the two countries China had been a generous and relatively casual partner for Albania throughout the course of their

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<sup>81</sup> Vickers, 1995, op.cit., p. 201.

<sup>82</sup> At the time, the specific article published in the daily *Zeri i Popullit* was suspected to have been written by Enver Hoxha himself. "Albania and China: Myself Alone", The Economist, 16 July 1977, pp. 55-6.

<sup>83</sup> Pearson, 2006, op.cit., p. 635. For the details of the ideological dispute between China and Albania concerning the 'three world theory' see; Louis Zanga, "The Sino-Albanian Ideological Dispute Enters a New Phase", Radio Free Europe Research, RAD Background Report/222 (Albania), 15 November 1977.

<sup>84</sup> Rothschild and Wingfield, op.cit., p. 177.

<sup>85</sup> Pearson, 2006, op.cit., p. 636.

<sup>86</sup> "Albania: Goodbye and Hello", The Economist, 5 August 1978, p. 36.

alliance, even if China's limited capacities had not allowed it to fully satisfy Albanian security needs. Regardless of their geographical remoteness, the relationship between Albania and China continued harmoniously to the extent that both countries continued to share similar ideological and political positions. When international circumstances necessitated readjustments in their positions, the two parties distanced themselves from each other; however, in the final analysis, both Albania and China, though in varying degrees, benefitted from the alliance relationship and maintained diplomatic ties, albeit at a low level, even after their alliance was terminated.<sup>87</sup> Unlike previous patrons, "China had not actually penetrated Albania."<sup>88</sup>

### **4.3 Going It Alone: The Isolationist Foreign Policy Period**

In its years of alliance-hopping, Albania accumulated certain capacities for coping with its weaknesses. At the same time that Hoxha tried to use patron support to develop Albania's infrastructure in an effort to make the country economically self sufficient, he initiated political purges to eliminate any potential source of domestic opposition or challenge to his leadership.<sup>89</sup> After totally consolidating the totalitarian regime, the Albanian leadership felt less politically vulnerable. Although security remained the priority on the international level, developments like the East-West talks, the disarmament process, the Helsinki Accords and the relative stability in the Balkans lowered "Albania's perception of a hostile external environment"<sup>90</sup> and immediate needs for a patron to provide security. Under these circumstances, Hoxha took the unorthodox step of isolating Albania and his regime, using the specific circumstances of an international

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<sup>87</sup> Louis Zanga, "Minimum Albanian Diplomatic Representation in Peking", Radio Free Europe Research, RAD Background Report/72 (Albania), 28 March 1979.

<sup>88</sup> Rothschild and Wingfield, op.cit., p. 177.

<sup>89</sup> John Kolsti, "Albania: Retreat toward Survival", Current History, vol. 81, no. 478, 1982, p. 379-80 and Vickers, 1995, op.cit., pp. 207-8.

<sup>90</sup> Elez Biberaj, "Albania and Albanians in the Post-Communist Period", in The Volatile Powder Keg: Balkan Security after the Cold War, edited by F. Stephen Larabee, (The American University Press: Washington, 1994), p. 29.

environment shaped around the changing Cold War conditions and regional developments.

The Albanian leadership tried to respond to the loss of another important ally by two policies that were essentially conflicting, namely, maintaining a strict Stalinist position while trying to improve relations with countries that were politically incompatible with this position. First and foremost, preserving the strict Stalinist political line was indispensable for Enver Hoxha's regime. The Albanian leadership considered themselves to be the "arbiters of Marxist-Leninist purity"<sup>91</sup> and the only real socialist country in the world, branding the rest either imperialist or revisionist.<sup>92</sup> However, after the official break-up of relations with China, Albania had run out of politically compatible strong states with whom it might be possible to establish an alliance relationship. Given this situation, Albania tried to compensate for the loss of the economic contribution from its former ally by intensifying distanced diplomatic relations and limited trade links with countries in Western Europe and the Balkans. At the same time, Albania concentrated on becoming self-sufficient in order to limit the scope of foreign influence, which was perceived as jeopardising Albania's sovereignty and security and the stability of the regime. Hoxha's aim was to minimise Albania's dependency and diversify the sources of supply of all essentials that could not be produced or obtained domestically. Ultimately, Hoxha took political and economic independence to its extreme by adopting a policy of economic self-reliance,<sup>93</sup> autarchy<sup>94</sup> and total political isolation of the country. The self-imposed isolation that closed Albania to foreign influence put an end to the long trend of consecutive alliance formation that had characterized Albanian foreign policy since the mid-1920s. For the first

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<sup>91</sup> Nicholas C. Pano, "Albania", in Communism in Eastern Europe, Second Edition, edited by Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, (Manchester University Press: Manchester, [1979], 1984), p. 213.

<sup>92</sup> Katsikas, op.cit., pp. 92-3.

<sup>93</sup> For Albania's self-reliance policy see, Berit Backer, "Self-Reliance under Socialism: The Case of Albania", Journal of Peace Research, vol. 19, no.4, 1982, pp. 355-67.

<sup>94</sup> For the economic principles of Albania in this period see; Articles 25-28, "The Constitution of the People's Republic of Albania", Review of Socialist Law, vol. 3, 1977, pp. 233-4.

time in decades, Albania was without any protector or patron.<sup>95</sup> The break in this trend would continue until the end of the communist party rule in Albania in the early 1990s.

The boundaries and the principles of isolation were decided upon and secured by Enver Hoxha, who had laid the legal groundwork for Albania's economic isolation with a new constitution promulgated in 1976, before the official break-up of Albania's alliance with China. Article 28 of the 1976 Albanian Constitution prohibited granting concessions, creating joint economic and financial institutions with foreign establishments and states and accepting foreign credit from capitalist, bourgeois and revisionist monopolies.<sup>96</sup> In the years to come, the legislation in the Albanian Constitution would form the major obstacle to the establishment of closer economic relations and trade with other countries. The inability to access foreign – mainly Western – funds or make use of patrons capable of providing direct economic and financial support exacerbated the problems caused by a lack of hard currency.

Parallel to its crumbling alliance relationship with China, from the early 1970s onwards, Albania began to gradually improve its cultural, trade and diplomatic relations with other countries, including Yugoslavia, despite the ideological polemics and tough criticism it continued to level at Western and other Balkan countries.<sup>97</sup> This represented a pragmatic move on the part of Albania to ensure that it continued to have a space for contact with other countries even after it shifted to an isolationist policy. Interestingly, despite this shift, Enver Hoxha also pointed out that, as of 1976, Albania had diplomatic relations with 74 countries – a relatively large number, considering the ideological limitations on inter-state relations during the heyday of the Cold War.<sup>98</sup> Although the newly

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<sup>95</sup> Vickers, 1995, op.cit., p. 203.

<sup>96</sup> Chapter I, Article 28, “The Constitution of the People’s Republic of Albania”, op.cit., p. 234.

<sup>97</sup> Prifti, op.cit., p. 248. Enver Hoxha went so far as to state that if an intervention were to aim at Yugoslavia, the Albanians would fight alongside the Yugoslavs to resist it. “Albania: Hoxha’s Happy Land”, The Economist, 14 May 1977, p. 54.

<sup>98</sup> Louis Zanga, “Albania’s Unique Foreign Policy”, Radio Free Europe Research, RAD Background Report/234 (Albania), 15 November 1976.

developing economic relations could not fill the void in foreign economic aid<sup>99</sup> left by Albania's previous patrons, they were still crucial for Albania. Michael Kaser estimates the overall foreign aid from Albania's three alliances between 1945-1978 to have totalled US\$1.26 billion: US\$33 million from Yugoslavia; US\$156 million in direct economic aid, US\$100 million in military aid and US\$133 million in COMECON aid to Eastern European countries from the Soviet Union; and US\$838 million from China.<sup>100</sup> This represented a serious foreign contribution to a weak, small state that could easily be considered marginal in the international arena.

Throughout the 1970s, Albania steadily normalised its relations with Yugoslavia,<sup>101</sup> especially in the area of trade. Improvements in the condition and status of the Kosovo Albanians after the mid-1970s also contributed to the advance in bilateral relations between Albania and Yugoslavia. However, the expansion of economic interaction in the following years<sup>102</sup> did not prevent Albania from continuing its harsh ideological rhetoric in terms of criticising Yugoslavia's revisionism and its role in shaping the policies of the non-aligned movement in the international arena.

In June 1970, Albania negotiated and signed a trade agreement with Greece, which paved the way for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states on 6 May 1971 after long years of closed official channels of communication.<sup>103</sup> Albania also expanded the scope of its previously limited economic cooperation with Italy, France and Austria<sup>104</sup> and opened up new

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<sup>99</sup> For an analysis of the impact of foreign aid on Albanian economic development see; Adi Schnytzer, Stalinist Economic Strategy in Practice: The Case of Albania, (Oxford University Press: New York, 1982), pp. 90-103.

<sup>100</sup> Michael Kaser, "Economic Continuities in the Turbulent Albanian History", Europe-Asia Studies, vol. 43, no. 4, 2001, p. 631.

<sup>101</sup> Vickers, 1995, op.cit., p. 197.

<sup>102</sup> Louis Zanga, "Major Yugoslav-Albanian Economic Agreement", Radio Free Europe Research, RAD Background Report/176 (Albania), 17 July 1980.

<sup>103</sup> Pearson, 2006, op.cit., p. 627.

<sup>104</sup> Ramadan Marmallaku, Albania and the Albanians, (C. Hurst & Company: London, 1975), p. 123.

relations with other Western European countries,<sup>105</sup> with the notable exception of Great Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>106</sup>

Despite the limited openings towards selective states in the economic realm, Enver Hoxha remained persistent in his attitude towards the two superpowers in terms of prolonging the ‘dual adversary’ policy. He refused Soviet-leader Leonid Brezhnev’s proposal for the normalisation of relations on 25 October 1976<sup>107</sup> and similarly rejected attempts by Washington to establish any grounds for the renewal of relations,<sup>108</sup> retaining Albania’s strict foreign policy line against the United States.

Albania also continued its firm approach against international projects initiated by either of the two superpowers, such as the 1975 Helsinki Conference on European Security. Albania was the only European country that did not participate in the Helsinki process, which aimed to bring together all European states to reach a consensus on principles for security and stability in Europe and create a platform for ongoing discussions of the continent’s security issues. Similarly, Albania refused to join in the subsequent Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) due to its general opposition to the establishment of international mechanisms under the auspices of the superpowers, which Albania considered to be merely instruments of US and Soviet imperialistic policies.

Albania stuck strictly to its isolationist foreign policy until the death of Enver Hoxha on 11 April 1985. In order to protect the regime and Albanian

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<sup>105</sup> Albania’s establishment of diplomatic relations with Switzerland and Denmark was perceived as the initial step in ending its diplomatic isolation in the international arena. “Albania: Good Neighbours Make Good Fences”, The Economist, 2 May 1970, p. 25. At the time, Albania is regarded as being isolated in the sense that it did not have diplomatic relations with many countries. However, *de facto* isolation had occurred after Albania had broken its former alliances with regional and great powers and closed itself off to foreign influence, despite the greater number of countries with which Albania had diplomatic relations at the time.

<sup>106</sup> The issues of the Corfu Channel and Albanian gold still remained unsettled between Britain and Albania, and problems existed with West Germany concerning Albanian claims for reparations following the Second World War. Katsikas, op.cit., p. 96.

<sup>107</sup> Elsie, op.cit., p. 365.

<sup>108</sup> John Nelson Washburn, “The People’s Republic of Albania: Shall We Now Enter an Era of Negotiation with It after Twenty-five Years of Confrontation?”, International Lawyer, vol. 6, no. 4, 1972, and Marten H. A. Heuven, “Normalisation of Relations with the People’s Republic of Albania: A Slow Process”, International Lawyer, vol. 9, no. 2, 1975, pp. 324-5.

sovereignty from foreign influence and threats, Hoxha had closed Albania's doors to any foreign influence and involvement. In line with this, the Albanian Constitution forbade the stationing of foreign bases and military forces in Albania in order to prevent any threats to the national sovereignty.<sup>109</sup> Even after his death, the Albanian regime continued to maintain tight control on the scope and scale of its foreign relations with an isolationist policy that bore the strong imprint of Enver Hoxha.

#### **4.4 Albanian Foreign Policy in Transition 1985-1989: Ramiz Alia Introduces Pragmatic Change**

Upon Hoxha's death, his handpicked successor, Ramiz Alia, immediately took over as the First Secretary of the PLA. Alia was a committed follower of Hoxha's policies from the younger generation of the Albanian communist leadership of the Second World War<sup>110</sup> who had survived various waves of political purges and who had been tasked by Hoxha with the actual governing of the country, under Hoxha's superior leadership role, since the early 1980s.<sup>111</sup>

Enver Hoxha's institutional and political legacy remained strong after his death, and isolationism limited the amount of foreign influence on the country. However, the country's economic performance had not improved since the alliance with China had been broken off and foreign aid and credit instruments outlawed. In fact, self-sufficiency as a policy was not working. The autarchic Albanian economy had been performing poorly and in stagnation since the early 1970s and continued on this track throughout the 1980s.<sup>112</sup> It was this economic decline that led to a change in Albania's foreign policy, in spite of the possibility that such change might harm domestic stability. Even though the regime held rigid control

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<sup>109</sup> Chapter III, Article 91, "The Constitution of the People's Republic of Albania", *op.cit.*, p. 245.

<sup>110</sup> John Kolsti, "Albania's New Beginning", *Current History*, vol. 84, no. 505, 1985, p. 363.

<sup>111</sup> "Albania: Enter Alia", *The Economist*, 22 October 1983, pp. 69-70.

<sup>112</sup> Per Sandström and Örjan Sjöberg, "Albanian Economic Performance: Stagnation in the 1980s", *Soviet Studies*, vol. 43, no. 5, 1991, p. 942.

over the population, economic problems had the potential to stir up unrest in Albanian society, which could eventually lead to opposition and a challenge to the communist party regime.

Despite the economic necessity, the pace of change would be slow for the new Alia leadership. Alia made this point clear from the very beginning, assuring the Albanian public and political élite that he would not initiate any sudden or drastic changes.<sup>113</sup> Circumstances were forcing a change, but there was a dilemma as to how to move away from Hoxha's rigid policies without alienating the hard-liners or drawing a reaction from within the PLA leadership that might pose a threat to Alia.<sup>114</sup> In this environment, the shift in Albanian foreign policy would have to be gradual. Applying "flexibility" in the conduct of its foreign affairs and moving away from "self-imposed constraints," especially in terms of ideological limitations, would significantly enhance Albania's policy options in the post-Hoxha era.<sup>115</sup> Thus, in Alia's formulation of foreign policy, "pragmatism was given priority over ideology."<sup>116</sup>

But pragmatism in this new era had its limits. The 'dual adversary' policy remained in effect, which demonstrated a clear continuity in Albania's consistent refusal to enter into any relationship with either the Soviet Union or the United States. Despite the willingness of the new Soviet leadership to re-establish relations with Albania, Alia did not compromise the existing foreign policy line in this regard.<sup>117</sup>

Ramiz Alia continued to improve Albania's relations with Western countries and with its neighbours, especially in the spheres of trade and culture. In a June 1987 speech, Alia gave important signs of change, as he announced his plan to expand diplomatic relations in what was perceived as a demonstration of

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<sup>113</sup> "A Peek into the Alia's Fortress", The Economist, 20 April 1985, pp. 43-4.

<sup>114</sup> Biberaj, 1990, op.cit., p. 43.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>117</sup> "Soviet Union Renews Its Calls for Normal Ties with Albania", New York Times, 30 November 1986, p. A.4.

“Tirana’s determination to normalize to a great degree the country’s foreign policy stance.”<sup>118</sup>

Despite Albania’s claim to self-sufficiency, the country was always in need of industrial products, spare parts and consumer goods. As a pragmatist, Alia was aware of the fact that Albania needed to establish links, particularly with neighbours like Greece, if it was to develop economically.<sup>119</sup> Although Albania and Greece resumed diplomatic relations in 1971, it wasn’t until 28 August 1987 that Greece finally put an official end to what was technically an ongoing state of war between the two countries.<sup>120</sup> By the second half of the 1980s, Greece had become one of Albania’s leading economic partners, along with West Germany, Italy and Yugoslavia.

Since the 1970s, Albania’s relations had been better with Yugoslavia, who became its main trading partner. Despite their ideological differences, the perception of Yugoslavia as a threat had diminished in the eyes of the Albanian leadership since its position within the non-aligned movement forbid it from entering an alliance relationship with either superpower that might challenge Albania’s security. Moreover, after the Soviet interventions in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Afghanistan in 1979, Albania and Yugoslavia shared similar security threat perceptions as two “disloyal socialist states” that might arouse the Soviet appetite for another military intervention.<sup>121</sup> Improvements in the status and respect for the national identity of Albanians in Yugoslavia also contributed to the further development of relations between the two countries. Nevertheless, these relations remained susceptible to changes in the circumstances of Albanians living in Yugoslavia and could easily be jeopardised, as was the case with the 1981 riots

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<sup>118</sup> Louis Zanga, “Ramiz Alia’s Latest Foreign Policy Speech”, Radio Free Europe Research, RAD Background Report/110 (Albania), 6 July 1987.

<sup>119</sup> Gus Xhudo, “Tension among Neighbors: Greek-Albanian Relations and Their Impact on regional Security and Stability”, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, vol. 18, 1995, p. 124.

<sup>120</sup> “Greece at Peace with Albania”, New York Times, 29 August 1987, pp. 1,3.

<sup>121</sup> Katsikas, op.cit., p. 94.

in Kosovo and subsequent unrest in the province.<sup>122</sup> Despite the problems related to its Albanians, Yugoslavia continued to be Albania's main trading partner in this period.

By remaining flexible and willing to compromise on its strict, pre-determined foreign policy principles, Albania was able to continue increasing the variety of its relations with Western countries. After three years of negotiations, Albania established relations with West Germany in July 1987 in exchange for dropping claims for reparations stemming from the Second World War.<sup>123</sup> West Germany instantly became an important economic partner for Albania, with the two countries signing economic agreements for cooperation in industrial and agricultural production and the expansion of trade relations.<sup>124</sup> Albania also established diplomatic relations with Canada<sup>125</sup> and Spain and improved its already existing diplomatic and economic relations with Italy, France and Turkey in this period.<sup>126</sup> These changes can be read as initial signs of a shift from the earlier "fortress mentality" of Albanian foreign policy.<sup>127</sup>

In what was "the clearest indication of Alia's determination to return his country to mainstream international politics,"<sup>128</sup> in February 1988, Albania took part in a regional cooperation initiative for the Balkans. This important move signified a notable shift from Hoxha's foreign policy line towards a new phase in Albanian foreign policy under Alia. Albania's participation in the Yugoslav-

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<sup>122</sup> Elez Biberaj, "Albanian-Yugoslav Relations and the Question of Kosovë", East European Quarterly, vol. 41, no. 4, 1982, pp. 501-5.

<sup>123</sup> David Binder, "Albania Planning West German Ties", New York Times, 5 July 1987, p. A.7.

<sup>124</sup> Katsikas, op.cit., p. 97.

<sup>125</sup> Albania and Canada established diplomatic relations on 10 September 1987. Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos, "A Reluctant Gesture: The Establishment of Canadian-Albanian Diplomatic Relations", East European Quarterly, vol. 31, no. 3, 1997, pp. 399-413. "Hello Tirana", The Economist, 19 September 1987, p. 44.

<sup>126</sup> As of early 1986, there were only four Western European countries remaining with whom Albania still did not have diplomatic relations, namely, Britain, Ireland, Spain and West Germany. "Albania Tired of Being Alone", The Economist, 22 March 1986, p. 64.

<sup>127</sup> Miranda Vickers and James Pettifer, Albania: From Anarchy to a Balkan Identity, (New York University Press: New York, 1997), p. 15.

<sup>128</sup> Biberaj, 1990, op.cit., p. 94.

initiated Balkan Foreign Minister's Conference in Belgrade and Alia's offer to host the following Balkan Foreign Ministers meeting in Tirana represent an important departure from Hoxha's suspicious and exclusionary attitude towards regional cooperation efforts.<sup>129</sup>

As part of the process of softening its strict isolationist policy, Albania took several steps to rehabilitate its relations with the other communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe – with the standing exception of the Soviet Union. Albania made broad use of the annual United Nations General Assembly sessions to make contacts with other states, since Albanian participation in other international institutions and processes was very limited. In September 1986, Albanian Foreign Minister Reiz Malile met with his East German counterpart Oskar Fischer on the sidelines of the 41<sup>st</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. This was an exceptional development, marking the first high-level meeting between an Albanian official and a Soviet-Bloc foreign minister since 1961.<sup>130</sup> The Albanians continued to normalize diplomatic relations and economic and technical cooperation with other communist countries like Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary as part of their policy of pragmatism.<sup>131</sup>

Throughout Albania's gradual opening up of its foreign affairs, it persistently maintained its central foreign policy tenet of refraining from any contact with the two superpowers, which remained outside the process of improvement in Albanian diplomatic and economic relations. Due to their existing deep suspicion towards the superpowers, the Albanian leadership insisted on keeping both the Soviet Union and the United States at bay in order to protect themselves from the political and ideological threats they perceived to be coming from these two states.

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<sup>129</sup> Louis Zanga, "Albania to Attend Balkan Conference", Radio Free Europe Research, RAD Background Report/192 (Albania), 21 October 1987.

<sup>130</sup> Louis Zanga, "Albania's Relations with Some Foreign Countries", Radio Free Europe Research, RAD Background Report/141 (Eastern Europe), 2 October 1986. After it broke from the Soviet Bloc, Albania's relations with Romania remained the best among all the Bloc countries.

<sup>131</sup> Louis Zanga, "Albania Normalizes Relations with Communist Countries", Radio Free Europe Research, RAD Background Report/207 (Eastern Europe), 14 October 1988.

## 4.5 Conclusions

As demonstrated by this analysis of Albanian foreign policy content and patterns from the post-Second World War era until the end of the communist party rule in Albania, the defining feature in the formation of Albanian foreign policy has been Albania's weakness as a small state. Its various attempts to compensate for this weakness and guarantee its sovereignty and political independence by forming alliance relationships with regional or international powers represents a continuity in Albanian foreign policy since its formation as a new state. The new post-war Albanian leadership was forced to continue the strategy of entering into an alliance relationship in return for the political, diplomatic and economic support it needed to survive.

Nationalism, domestic stability, ideology, economic necessity and security were the major determinants of the foreign policy of the Hoxha regime during this period. Albanian policymakers turned an already close relation with a neighbour, Yugoslavia, into an alliance, only to discover that despite their ideological affinity, the asymmetrical nature of their relationship allowed Yugoslavia to transform it from an alliance into a protectorateship, working against its own *raison d'être* and demonstrating to the Albanian leadership the problems inherent in establishing an alliance with a neighbouring state.

By taking advantage of the international environment, Albania was able to shift its alliance from Yugoslavia to the Soviet Union and to continue to use its relational power stemming from the Yugoslav-Soviet rivalry to benefit from Soviet security guarantees, economic aid and technical assistance. This most asymmetric of alliances highlighted the pros and cons of entering into an alliance as a small state: while the economic and security contributions from a strong ally may be vital for the survival of a small state, they come at a cost to sovereignty and political manoeuvrability in the international arena.

When the costs became too high, Hoxha was able to switch the Albanian alliance from the Soviet Union to China, whose initial ideological and political compatibility as well as capacity for providing economic assistance made it a reasonable ally for Albania. The alliance with China evolved as the Hoxha leadership gained experience in handling alliance relationships. However,

changing priorities and ideological positions led to the eventual break-up of the Sino-Albanian alliance as well.

In the case of Albania, the lack of a suitable alliance partner to follow on the heels of China led Enver Hoxha to adopt an unprecedented foreign policy line of total isolation in order to secure Albania's survival. However, placing such extreme limitations on foreign interaction and trying to remain wholly self-sufficient proved unworkable in the long run. Especially for a weak, small state like Albania, whose resources were limited, it would be difficult to sustain such a system without increasing the suffering of the people and consequently the viability of the regime and the state itself. In fact, economic necessity forced Hoxha's successor to slowly abandon Albania's isolationism. Ramiz Alia was pragmatic in his gradual and reluctant opening up of relations, first on the regional and then on the international level, moving cautiously so as not to jeopardise domestic political stability. Alia wanted a controlled and gradual shift, but with a more "dynamic and realist foreign policy" line than his predecessors, which, consequently, would not yield quick, immediate benefits for the Albanian people.<sup>132</sup> In time, however, as overall political, economic and diplomatic changes began in the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, the international circumstances forced Alia to take a faster pace, albeit with a reactionary, rather than proactive approach.

Despite a brief period of isolation, the continuity in Albania's weak character as a small state and its long experience in forging alliances with regional and international powers signified that Albania as a state maintained significant potential for developing alliance relationships, regardless of changes in the domestic leadership or political regime. This fact had a definite influence on the international relations and foreign policy Albania would develop during the post-Cold War era.

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<sup>132</sup> Louis Zanga, "More On Albanian Foreign Political Activities", Radio Free Europe Research, RAD Background Report/175, 30 September 1987.

## CHAPTER 5

### BREAKING THE ISOLATION: ENSURING SURVIVAL AND RETURNING TO THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA

#### 5.1 Regime Change and Albanian Foreign Policy, 1990-1992

Despite the strong state control over society and the miniscule amount of foreign interaction, isolationism was unable to preserve the regime. During this period, Albania's weakness continued to be an important factor in defining the nature, content and pace of change in the country. Transition in the domestic economic and political realms, as well as the social transformation of Albanian society, were intertwined and had a direct effect on the reformulation of Albanian foreign relations and Albania's foreign policy line in the post-Cold War era.

Throughout the 1980s, Albania sealed itself against penetration by any foreign political or economic influence. Communication channels and interaction with the outside world were extremely limited and considered a matter of privilege restricted to and by the communist party élite. As a result, in contrast to the situation in other communist party rules in Central and Eastern Europe, the Albanian public remained unaware of both the substance and the content of the changes in the Soviet Union that had begun in the mid-1980s. The regime in Albania was already habitually and categorically denouncing the ideological stance and policies of the Soviet Union long before it embarked on any transformations related to *perestroika*, *glasnost*, or any of the other reforms attempted during this period. Ramiz Alia remained opposed to the revisionist changes in the Soviet Union<sup>1</sup> and emphasized Albania's commitment to the

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<sup>1</sup> Edvin E. Jacques, The Albanians: An Ethnic History from Prehistoric Times to The Present, (McFarland & Company Inc., Publishers: Jefferson, North Carolina, 1995), pp. 637-8.

Stalinist party line in the hope of preventing any possibility of the changes that had begun to take place in Central and Eastern Europe from materializing in Albania.<sup>2</sup>

The Albanian communist party rule was well consolidated and in total control of state-society relations, and Albanian society was kept under tight surveillance by the secret police.<sup>3</sup> The state was in control of and able to define almost all aspects of life in Albania, including cultural as well as political activities. Unlike other Central and Eastern European countries, Albania historically had a weak intelligentsia, and the Albanian communist party rule did nothing to promote the development of any such group that might later have played a role in the transition of the country. In fact, the regime would not tolerate any degree of communication between the few Albanian dissidents among the stifled national intelligentsia and Western intellectual circles.<sup>4</sup> The absolute nature of the regime's isolationist policies and control over society were enormously influential in retarding the development of any forces of change in the country.

Despite the rhetoric of the PLA, Albania did not achieve much in terms of economic development under the party's long and uninterrupted reign. Albania suffered from stagnation, which was exacerbated by the policy of isolation, and which continued to worsen even after Alia's coming to power and Albania's subsequent adoption of a more flexible attitude towards economic relations with the outside world.<sup>5</sup> When it eventually began to undergo a transformation in the 1990s, Albania was considered to be the poorest country in the whole of Europe.<sup>6</sup> Excessive centralisation combined with inefficient and unnecessarily massive investments in development, especially in out-of-date and unproductive heavy

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<sup>2</sup> Louis Zanga, "Alia's Latest Rejection of Reforms", Radio Free Europe Research, RAD Background Report/229 (Albania), 22 December 1989.

<sup>3</sup> James S. O'Donnell, "Albania's Sigurimi: The Ultimate Agents of Social Control", Problems of Post-Communism, vol. 42, no. 6, 1995, pp. 18-22.

<sup>4</sup> Miranda Vickers and James Pettifer, Albania: From Anarchy to a Balkan Identity, (New York University Press: New York, 1997), p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Per Sandström and Örjan Sjöberg, "Albanian Economic Performance: Stagnation in the 1980s", Soviet Studies, vol. 43, no. 5, 1991, pp. 931-2.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony Clunies-Ross and Peter Sudar, Albania's Economy in Transition and Turmoil, 1990-97, (Ashgate: Aldershot, 1998), p. 1.

industry,<sup>7</sup> prevented the Albanian economy from developing in line with its successive five-year plans. The food supply in the country was below the level of self-sufficiency, and the agricultural sector was in “an unambiguous trend of decline.”<sup>8</sup> Since collectivisation had gathered together all land and production under state control, there was no room for private food production, and people, especially in the rural areas, were living at subsistence levels.<sup>9</sup> In such an economic environment, strict state measures were used to control any possible social unrest that might arise from the lack of food and other necessities.

With regard to any changes in the political, economic, or social spheres, the Albanian state lagged behind the other communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Albania was not a part of the Soviet Bloc, and thus remained more or less untouched by the wave of change that had sparked regime changes in Bloc members. However, neither isolationism nor the limited changes permitted by Alia as part of his policy of controlled and gradual change could prevent the substantial transitions taking place in other European communist party rules from infiltrating and impacting on Albanian society. In this process, Albania could not escape becoming the final European communist party rule to embark on the process of transition – nor could it rid itself of the existing political and economic weaknesses that would act as significant impediments to the transformations of the period.

In December 1989, local demonstrations in the northern town of Shkoder set off unrest in the country. Although the demonstrations were limited and easily controlled by the government, they sparked a popular protest movement against the regime, particularly when the news reached Albania of the bloody incidents taking place in Romania – namely, the toppling of Nicolae Ceaușescu, his

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<sup>7</sup> Gramoz Pashko, “The Albanian Economy at the Beginning of the 1990s”, in Economic Change in the Balkan States: Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia, edited by Örjan Sjöberg and Michael L. Wyzan, (St. Martin Press: New York, 1991), pp. 129-34. The primary example of the ambiguous investment in heavy industry was the metallurgical plant built in Elbasan.

<sup>8</sup> Örjan Sjöberg, “The Albanian Economy in the 1980s: Coping with a Centralised System”, in Economic Change in the Balkan States: Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia, edited by Örjan Sjöberg and Michael L. Wyzan, (St. Martin Press: New York, 1991), p. 121.

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed account of the rural economy and agriculture in Albania during the communist regime see; Örjan Sjöberg, Rural Change and Development in Albania, (Westview Press: Boulder, 1991), pp. 81-144.

execution, and the regime change in Romania.<sup>10</sup> The events gave hope to the Albanian public by showing that a popular uprising could bring about regime change even in a country as severely dictatorial as Romania, whose state apparatus and leadership were as ruthless in the immense control they wielded over society as the regime in Albania. This encouraged a show of dissatisfaction against the Albanian regime's policies and the disastrous economic situation, which awoke Alia to the realization that he would have to seriously commit himself to a process of reform.<sup>11</sup> The Albanian communist leadership eventually came to understand that they could no longer continue to rule if they maintained the approach that "Albania would be able to follow its own path and insulate itself from international developments,"<sup>12</sup> and Alia was forced to change his reluctant and rejectionist attitude towards the reforms that he had once categorically criticized.<sup>13</sup>

On 25 January 1990, Alia announced modest decreases in central planning and limited openings for personal economic incentives.<sup>14</sup> Although these changes represented the initial steps of reform, they were considered to be "too little and too late."<sup>15</sup> The real turning point, especially with regard to the direction of Albanian foreign policy, can be found in Alia's statement at the 10<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the PLA Central Committee in April 1990, in which he announced that Albania was willing to restore relations with both the United States and the Soviet Union. This decision constituted a major departure from one of the central policy lines of Enver

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<sup>10</sup> "Albania News Covers Ceausescu's Ouster", Boston Globe, 24 December 1989, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Louis Zanga, "Alia Criticizes Reforms and Yugoslavia", Radio Free Europe Research, RAD Background Report/118 (Eastern Europe), 30 June 1989 and Louis Zanga, "Alia's Latest Rejection of Reforms", Radio Free Europe Research, RAD Background Report/229 (Albania), 22 December 1989.

<sup>12</sup> Vickers and Pettifer, op.cit., p. 15.

<sup>13</sup> Nicholas C. Pano, "The Process of Democratisation in Albania" in Politics, Power, and the Struggle for Democracy in South-East Europe, edited by Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrot, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997), p. 302.

<sup>14</sup> Clunies-Ross and Sudar, op.cit., p. 56.

<sup>15</sup> Elez Biberaj, "Albania: The Last Domino", in Eastern Europe in Revolution, edited by Ivo Banac, (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1992), p. 193.

Hoxha that had shaped Albanian foreign policy<sup>16</sup> and put a *de facto* end to Albania's isolationism.

In this period, the Albanian government more actively demonstrated its commitment to return Albania to the international arena by joining in international organisations that it had formerly avoided, thereby increasing Albanian representation at the international level and facilitating the end of its isolationist policy. Albania would face new domestic as well as international challenges, like the need for food and economic aid, and diplomatic support for issues like Kosovo; enhancing the country's options for support and assistance in the international arena would help Albania to cope with these challenges.

The first initiative in this direction was Albania's application for membership in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in early 1990. However, the CSCE was initially reluctant to admit Albania to the Helsinki Process because of reservations concerning Albania's poor human rights record and lack of a multi-party democratic system. Allowing opposition parties and holding multi-party elections became important conditions for the enhancement of Albania's relations with the CSCE and other international organisations, as well as for establishing official diplomatic relations with other countries. As a result of its failure to meet these requirements, although it became an observer on 5 June 1990, Albania had to wait for over a year until 19 June 1991 to become a CSCE member.<sup>17</sup>

In response to rising domestic discontent stemming from economic difficulties and the requirements put upon him for integration with the outside world, Alia made a number of concessions in terms of granting more individual rights to Albanian citizens. The penal code was revised, the ban on religious worship removed, the acquisition of passports and possibilities for foreign travel were liberalised, initial steps were taken for the decentralisation of economic planning and management, price control mechanisms were relaxed, limited private

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<sup>16</sup> Elez Biberaj, "Albania and Albanians in the Post-Communist Period", in The Volatile Powder Keg: Balkan Security after the Cold War, edited by F. Stephen Larabee, (The American University Press: Washington, 1994), p. 31.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Bideleux and Ian Jeffries, The Balkans: A Post-Communist History, (Routledge: London, 2007), p. 36.

sector activity was allowed<sup>18</sup>, joint ventures and foreign investment in Albania were permitted and the Ministry of Justice, abolished in 1965, was finally reinstated.<sup>19</sup> However, these gradual steps were unable to satisfy the rising demands in the country, especially in terms of freedom of speech and political organisation.

In the beginning of July 1990, the first major crisis for the Alia government erupted and lasted almost two weeks. On 2 July, Albanians seeking to go abroad began applying for passports and visas to Western countries. The number of people who forced their way into embassies to seek asylum soon reached the thousands, which was far beyond the capacity that these embassies could cope with in such a contingency. In addition to those trying to storm the embassies, others rushed to Albania's Adriatic ports with the aim of getting on board any vessel departing for Italy. The number of incidents and protests quickly grew to such an extent that they became an international issue, and the government had to declare a partial state of emergency. Troops were stationed on the streets to control the situation; however, the government refrained from ordering them to intervene against the demonstrations. Finally, the government backed down, granting amnesty to all those who had participated in the demonstrations or broken into Western embassies<sup>20</sup> and allowing those asylum seekers who had managed to enter an embassy to leave the country.<sup>21</sup> The incidents indicated to the Albanian regime the limits of government control over the public during an outbreak of popular discontent and revealed to the world the weakness of Albania as a state, the

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<sup>18</sup> The New Economic Mechanism was introduced for improving the existing economic system through allowing self-financing enterprises in May 1990 which is followed by the legalisation of private handicrafts and family trade businesses in July 1990. Derek Hall, Albania and Albanians, (Pinter: London, 1994), p. 220.

<sup>19</sup> Pano, op.cit., p. 302 and Clunies-Ross and Sudar, op.cit., p. 56.

<sup>20</sup> Vickers and Pettifer, op.cit., pp. 27-8.

<sup>21</sup> For a detailed analysis of the crisis-related and regular outflows of Albanian migration see; Russel King, "Albania as a Laboratory for the Study of Migration and Development", Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans, vol. 7, no. 2, 2005, pp. 133-55. For the 1990 'embassy crisis' see; ibid., p. 137. Also see; Julie Vullnetari, "Albanian Migration and Development: State of the Art Review", IMISCOE Working Paper, no. 18, September 2007, pp. 31-2.

fragility of its regime, and its potential to become a source of regional instability in the days to come.

Throughout 1990, Albania continued its efforts to integrate into international organisations and re-establish diplomatic relations. On 11-14 May 1990, United Nations Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar visited Albania.<sup>22</sup> This was the first visit ever by a UN secretary-general, and it became an important sign of Albania's abandoning of isolationism. Later on, in August 1990, Albania signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and on 29 September 1990, Alia addressed the United Nations General Assembly in New York. On 30 July 1990, Albania resumed its diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and exchanged ambassadors in another important step signifying Albania's departure from its ideological, Cold-War foreign policy that had identified the Soviet Union as an 'adversary'. Albanian diplomatic activities continued with the hosting of the Balkan Foreign Minister's Conference in October 1990, which became the first international political meeting to be held in Albania since the end of the Second World War.

December 1990 started off with student demonstrations in Tirana. The initial protest was begun by a group of students demanding improvements in their living conditions; however, support for the demonstrations soon spread throughout the Albanian society, first in Tirana and then in other cities, and the demands were quickly raised to include the institutionalisation of a multi-party system in Albania. Such demands went far beyond the very limited and restricted participation of citizens in the elections planned for early 1991 that had previously been agreed at the 12<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the Central Committee in November 1990.<sup>23</sup> Under the continuing public pressure, on 11 December 1990, Ramiz Alia backed down from his adamant opposition to the legalisation of opposition parties, and the People's

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<sup>22</sup> Owen Pearson, Albania in the Twentieth Century: A History, Volume III: Albania as Dictatorship and Democracy, From Isolation to Kosovo War 1946-1998, (The Centre for Albanian Studies in Association with I. B. Tauris: London, 2006), pp. 651-2.

<sup>23</sup> Pano, op.cit., p. 304.

Assembly agreed to officially register political parties other than the PLA.<sup>24</sup> The next day, the Democratic Party of Albania (DP) was established as Albania's first opposition party since the coming to power of the PLA in 1944.

Sali Berisha became the leader of the newly established opposition party, which had been founded by students and intellectuals. A cardiologist by profession, Berisha had served as a mediator during the student demonstrations and had been a member of the communist party. Other leading figures in the DP were economist Gramoz Pashko, who had close relatives in the communist party leadership, and some other independent intellectuals. The DP took a political approach favouring the establishment of a pluralistic political system that supported the rule of law, human rights, the swift institutionalisation of a functioning free-market economy and close alignment with Western Europe and the United States in international relations.<sup>25</sup>

During this period, a new party élite was also taking shape within the PLA to lead the party in this changing political environment. Fatos Nano, a reformist economist within the PLA, was given the responsibility of applying the reforms necessary for economic liberalisation and establishing the mechanisms required by the market economy. Nano's responsibilities expanded in February 1991, when he became prime minister in the provisional government and took charge of bringing the country to its first multi-party elections.

Originally scheduled for 10 February, the country's first multi-party elections were postponed to 31 March 1991 in order to give the newly founded opposition parties more time to prepare for the polls. In the period leading up to the elections, the Albanian leadership continued its relatively slow return to the international arena and, despite domestic challenges and apparent unrest, was able to keep its hold on the society and the reins of government, avoiding a Romanian-type violent regime change. Although Alia had not initiated the opening of the political scene to multi-party competition, he responded to the demands of society

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<sup>24</sup> Alia tried to apply conciliation and coercion as he was giving some concessions and releasing the tight state control over the society and the political space, he was also trying to stay in the control of the developments. "Albania: Et Alia?", *The Economist*, 22 December 1990, p. 58.

<sup>25</sup> Pano, *op.cit.*, p. 307.

in an effort to buy time for his party and the party leadership to adjust to the evolving political environment in order to prolong the privileged position of the communist leadership for as long as possible. Indeed, it was with the hope of challenging the new parties before they were able to organise and reach out to the people that had prompted the PLA to push for swift elections in the first place. Once the legal arrangements had been implemented to allow the formation of opposition political parties, five new political parties came into being in Albania: the DP, the Republican Party, the Ecology Party and the Democratic Union of the Greek Minority (Omonia).<sup>26</sup> It was indeed in this particular period that the leadership of the PLA (later renamed the Socialist Party) and the DP began to take shape, with Fatos Nano and Sali Berisha coming into power in their respective parties. Nano and Berisha would continue their roles as the two rival personalities to uninterruptedly dominate the Albanian domestic political arena in the years to come.

In the spring of 1991, with the elections approaching, Albania faced a second migration crisis even larger than the first. The ongoing public dissatisfaction burst out in renewed student demonstrations, this time with the goal of removing Enver Hoxha's name from Tirana University<sup>27</sup> and putting an end to the compulsory courses in Marxist-Leninist theory.<sup>28</sup> Demonstrations soon turned into riots and led to the toppling of Enver Hoxha's statue in Tirana's central Skanderbeg Square – an act that would be repeated with other Hoxha statues in other leading towns. In the end, the Albanian communist party rule had to concede to some of the students' demands. Abandoning some of the symbols of the cult of

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<sup>26</sup> The Greek minority in southern Albania organised as a political party in an effort to promote their rights. Omonia's ethnic identity and its close relations with the Greek authorities provoked a reaction from the Albanian nationalist parties.

<sup>27</sup> The official name of the University was "Enver Hoxha University of Tirana" which was originally founded in 1957 as the University of Tirana. Then after Hoxha's death in 1985 his name included in the name of the university. Following the demonstrations this name changed again by removing Hoxha's name back to "University of Tirana".

<sup>28</sup> Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History*, (I.B. Taurus: London, 1995), p. 219. These constituted important symbolic gestures symbolising Albania's the break up with the Hoxha's cult and the regime he had founded that himself had become the central figure representing the Albanian version of Stalinism.

personality that had developed around Enver Hoxha as the founder of the regime was not only a sign of the drastic changes occurring in the country, it also signified the dissolution of the communist party rule's control over the state and the society and its loss of legitimacy in the eyes of the Albanian people.

In spite of these concessions on the part of the regime, public unrest remained constant, as economic conditions worsened, creating yet another wave of migration out of Albania. Desperate, people rushed to the Adriatic ports of Durres and Vlora, where they seized any vessel they could find to make the sea crossing to the closest Italian port in Brindisi. This mass exodus of so-called 'boat people' brought more than 25,000 Albanians to the shores of Italy.<sup>29</sup> This unexpected migration created serious problems for Italy, which provided food and health services to those Albanians who managed to land in Brindisi, while at the same time trying to prevent any more Albanians from reaching the Italian shores. Most of the Albanians who made it to Italy were given refugee status and remained in the country – a response that was in stark contrast to Italy's later repatriation of around 20,000 asylum-seekers who would flee Albania just a few months later in August after the multi-party elections were held in April.

Italy soon realised that a weak Albania had the potential to destabilise Italy through migration and, as would happen later, with illegal trafficking of drugs, arms and human beings across difficult-to-control borders. The urgency of the situation brought Albania and Italy together to develop a mechanism to help stabilise Albania and prevent the illegal flow of Albanian migrants to Italy and other countries in the region. As a weak state, Albania needed the help of foreign forces operating within its territory to distribute foreign food and emergency aid, and on 26 August 1991, Albania and Italy signed the agreement for 'Operation Pelican', which deployed Italian soldiers to poverty-hit regions in Albania to deliver and distribute humanitarian aid.<sup>30</sup> The move, which was more one of containment than of engagement on the part of Italy, was in line with the general

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<sup>29</sup> King, *op.cit.*, p. 137.

<sup>30</sup> Paolo Tripodi, "Let the Conscripts Do the Job", *Security Dialogue*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2001, p. 158.

approach of the international community towards Albania.<sup>31</sup> Operation Pelican extended nearly two years from 17 September 1991 to 3 December 1993,<sup>32</sup> during which time 5,000 unarmed Italian soldiers, supported by the Albanian military,<sup>33</sup> served a rotating duty delivering and distributing 300,000 tons of food and emergency aid.<sup>34</sup> Italian officials estimated the costs of the operation and humanitarian aid to be approximately US\$800 million over three years.<sup>35</sup> Italy's humanitarian operation in Albania made it the leading donor, providing one-third of all aid distributed in the country.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, Albania also appealed to the Group of Twenty-Four (G-24), which provided the country with US\$150 million in emergency aid.<sup>37</sup>

The deterioration of the domestic economy forced people to leave Albania, mostly by illegal means, for work abroad. Many of those who remained in Albania became dependent on the remittances sent by family members working in neighbouring countries like Greece or in Western European countries like Italy, Germany and Switzerland for their economic survival.<sup>38</sup> Remittances, along with black-market revenue, became an important component in the financing of the domestic economy, which suffered desperately from a lack of accumulated

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<sup>31</sup> "Pan-Albanianism: How Big a Threat to Balkan Stability", International Crisis Group Europe Report No. 153, Tirana/Brussels, 25 February 2004, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> Tripodi, op.cit., p. 167, end note 18.

<sup>33</sup> Mema argues that the Albanian army worked as hard as the Italians to oversee the delivery of humanitarian aid and to provide security for the Italian aid convoys. Fatmir Mema, "Did Albania Really Need Operation 'Alba'?", Security Dialogue, vol. 29, no. 1, 1998, p. 60.

<sup>34</sup> Paolo Tripodi, "'Alba': Italy's Multinational Intervention in Albania", Contemporary Review, vol. 271, no. 1581, 1997, p. 180.

<sup>35</sup> Gus Xhudo, Diplomacy and Crisis Management in the Balkans: A U.S. Foreign Policy Perspective, (MacMillan Press Ltd.: London, 1996), p. 164, Chapter 3, end note 34.

<sup>36</sup> Joseph M. Codispoti, "Fallen Eagle: An Examination of Italy's Contemporary Role and Relations with Albania", Mediterranean Quarterly, vol. 12, no. 1, 2001, p. 84.

<sup>37</sup> Vickers and Pettifer, op.cit., p. 72.

<sup>38</sup> For a detailed account of the impact of emigrant remittances on the Albanian economy and society see; Ilir Gedeshi, "Role of Remittances from Albanian Emigrants and Their Influence in the Country's Economy", East European Economics, vol. 40, no. 5, 2002, pp. 49-72.

capital.<sup>39</sup> While remittances would come to have significant influence on the Albanian economy as the main source of funding for the country's economic transition and development in the years to come,<sup>40</sup> by themselves they were unable to provide a remedy for the inherent weaknesses in the Albanian economy. As long as this economic fragility continued, Albania retained its potential as a destabilising factor in the region, thus maintaining the attention of international actors.

Albania's first multi-party elections took place in three rounds on 31 March, 7 April and 14 April 1991. Fatos Nano and the PLA had shaped their campaign around "a package of Gorbachev-type economic reforms" to be applied with "experience and competence," whereas Berisha and the DP promised "a European future and a special relationship with the United States."<sup>41</sup> Omonia, for its part, stressed democratic transformation and specified rights for the Greek minority. The PLA, as part of its election tactics, played on the fears of a public made anxious by change and worried about the future in order to perpetuate the party's hold on power. Indeed, the election results were an indication that the Albanian public was cautious and unsure about the ongoing changes in the country: the PLA won 169 of the 250 seats in the People's Assembly, constituting more than a two-thirds majority, enough to elect Alia as the new president of Albania. Of the remaining seats in the assembly, 75 went to the DP, five to Omonia and one to the National Veterans Organisation.

The results also revealed the sources of the votes for the different political parties. Whereas the PLA dominated in the rural regions and in southern Albania, the traditional home of the PLA cadres, including Enver Hoxha and the

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<sup>39</sup> The amount of remittances increased from US\$ 150 million in 1992 to US\$ 1 Billion in 2004. "Albania: Selected Issues", International Monetary Fund (IMF) Country Report No. 06/285, July 2006, p. 48. This IMF report contains very detailed information on the important role of remittances in the Albanian economy in a chapter titled 'The Impact of Remittances on Development and the Budget', ibid., pp. 44-55.

<sup>40</sup> In his article, Korovilas links the important role of remittances in the Albanian economy during the economic transition to the subsequent pyramid investment schemes scandal of early 1997. James P. Korovilas, "The Albanian Economy in Transition: The Role of Remittances and Pyramid Investment Schemes", Post-Communist Economies, vol. 11, no. 3, 1999, pp. 399-415.

<sup>41</sup> Vickers and Pettifer, op.cit., p. 53.

contemporary PLA leader Fatos Nano, the DP had the support of the urban centres and the north, which was the home of the DP leadership cadres, including Berisha. Although the initial phases of the political competition were characterized by divided voting patterns and split bases of support for the two leading parties, over time, the parties' bases began to fluctuate as the voting preferences of the electorate started to shift, despite the continued existence of a general polarisation in Albanian political life.

The new parliament initially adopted an interim constitution law – the Law on Major Constitutional Provisions – comprised of a draft constitution with basic provisions; however the urgency of making changes did not leave much of a choice but to agree on a transitional law.<sup>42</sup> With the new constitution, the country received a new name, the Republic of Albania; the role of the PLA and Marxist-Leninism as the official state ideology were dropped; and the state was redefined as “democratic and judicial, based on social equality, on the defence of freedom and the rights of man and on political pluralism.”<sup>43</sup>

A new government was established with Fatos Nano as prime minister; however, Nano had no time to implement any policies, as he was immediately faced with a strike by a newly reorganised trade union federation demanding economic and social rights. The strike began on 16 May 1991 and paralysed working life and the country in general, as students joined the strikers in protesting the government. Nano was forced to step down on 4 June 1991, and Albania was left without a government, as efforts were concentrated on establishing an interim government that could handle the crisis without getting bogged down in the problems that existed among the various political parties.

On 12 June 1991, a Government of National Stability formed under the leadership of Ylli Bufi. As the new premier, Bufi had the support of six political parties, and although he and the majority of ministers were from the PLA, renamed

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63. Due to differences between the Democrats and the Socialists that kept them from agreeing on the contents and drafting a constitution, it was not possible to replace the interim constitution with a new one until 1998. During the preparation process, a constitution prepared by the DP was refused in a popular referendum in November 1994.

<sup>43</sup> Bideleux and Jeffries, *op.cit.*, p. 40.

the Socialist Party of Albania (SP) on 13 June,<sup>44</sup> the important economy-related posts were given to the DP representatives, including Gramoz Pashko, who became responsible for the Albanian economy.<sup>45</sup> The major aim of the interim government was to stabilise the country, whose economic difficulties would become exacerbated by new problems eventually leading to the August 1991 immigration crisis. Albania became desperately dependent upon foreign humanitarian and financial aid as the result of its deep economic problems.

In contrast to the deterioration in the domestic economic sphere, Albanian diplomatic relations were expanding rapidly. The United States restored diplomatic relations with Albania on 15 March 1991, just before the Albanian national elections.<sup>46</sup> Vickers argues that the timing of the American decision was related to the PLA's assurance that multi-party elections would be held.<sup>47</sup> The first US diplomatic delegation to Tirana since 1946 arrived in March 1991,<sup>48</sup> and the US Embassy in Tirana was opened on 1 October 1991, with Christopher Hill as the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim<sup>49</sup> until the arrival of Ambassador William E. Ryerson in December 1991. Following the elections, Great Britain also re-established diplomatic relations with Albania on 29 May 1991<sup>50</sup> after negotiations settled the

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<sup>44</sup> At the 10<sup>th</sup> Party Congress of PLA members, not only did the party change its name to the Socialist Party of Albania, the decision was made to turn the party into a European-style social democratic party. Nano became the first leader of the renamed party. Biberaj, 1994, op.cit., p. 34.

<sup>45</sup> Gramoz Pashko was the leading economist that became responsible for the economic transition of the country during the initial stages of the transformation of Albania. He was ardent supporter of the 'shock therapy' type of swift change for the Albanian economy and later he attributed the failures of the Albanian economic problems to the failure of the application of the quick transformation strategies after he left the office. Interview with Gramoz Pashko, 7 September 2005, Tirana.

<sup>46</sup> Raymond G. H. Seitz, "U.S. and Albania Re-establish Diplomatic Ties after 52 Years", The New York Times, 16 March 1991.

<sup>47</sup> Vickers, op.cit.

<sup>48</sup> David Binder, "U.S. Diplomats Prepare for Return to Albania", The New York Times, 29 March 1991, p. A.3.

<sup>49</sup> Christopher Hill was one of the top US diplomats in the Balkans in the 1990s. After serving in Tirana, he served as Richard Holbrook's deputy at the Dayton Peace negotiations in 1995, as the US ambassador to the Republic of Macedonia from 1996 to 1999 and as the US Special Envoy to Kosovo in 1998 and 1999. He speaks Albanian as well.

<sup>50</sup> Xhudo, op.cit., p. 40.

Corfu Channel incident compensation issue. Albania joined the CSCE on 19 June, and on 20 June, diplomatic relations were established between the European Community (EC) and Albania.<sup>51</sup>

On 22 June 1991, Albania witnessed an important visit by United States Secretary of State James A. Baker that is vividly remembered by those who participated in the welcoming ceremony in Tirana's Skanderbeg Square and has been described as 'historic' by almost all Albanians. In an article that appeared in the New York Times the day before Baker's visit, Sali Berisha, who was leader of the opposition at the time, referred to Woodrow Wilson's contribution to Albania's survival after the First World War in explaining why the Albanian perception of the United States "has always been synonymous with freedom and democracy."<sup>52</sup> In what he described as the essence of the visit, Berisha stated that Baker's presence in Albania would mark "one more step in my country's march toward freedom."<sup>53</sup>

The Americans were in a victorious mood following the initiation of regime changes in Central and Eastern Europe and the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc. Although Albania had not actually been part of the Bloc since the late 1960s, Albania's movement towards a multi-party democratic system and market economy were part of a bigger picture that showed off the success of the United States and its ideological supremacy over its Soviet rivals. In this picture, Albania was perceived from outside as "the last bastion of communism" or "the last domino,"<sup>54</sup> and the Albanian reaction to the US Secretary of State's visit was seen as an indication that this bastion was also soon to fall.

In his memoirs, Baker enthusiastically tells the story of his short but influential visit to Albania and his astonishment at the interest shown him by the Albanian people.

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<sup>51</sup> Pano, op.cit., p. 317.

<sup>52</sup> Sali Berisha, "The Last Domino", The New York Times, 20 June 1991.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., and Biberaj, 1992 op.cit.

When we arrived at the Skanderbeg Square, where I was to give a speech, we slowly proceeded into sheer bedlam. The square was packed with somewhere between a quarter and a half million people – in a country just over three million and a town of 250,000.

We had anticipated a large crowd, but this was absolutely incredible. In the 15 years I had spent in national politics, I had never seen anything like this... It reminded me of the joyous crowds and the outpouring of emotion that I had seen in newsreel footage of WWII. For the Albanians, having lived under 47 years of the most despotic, isolationist Communist regime in the world, I suppose it was like the end of a war. I never felt more privileged to represent my country and never understood better how, for much of the rest of the world, even if we sometimes take it for granted, America is the embodiment of hope and freedom, truly a 'shining city on a hill', as President Regan used to say.

Stepping onto the make shift stage, I was greeted with chants of 'U.S.A., U.S.A., U.S.A.' and 'Bushie, Bushie, Bushie' I began simply: 'On behalf of President Bush and the American people, I came here today to say to you: Freedom works.' After the translation the crowd went berserk. 'At last, you are free to think your own thoughts,' I continued.<sup>55</sup>

Albanians welcomed Secretary of State Baker with great excitement and joy. For many, the visit was a symbol of a *de facto* break with their country's past isolation and its integration with the Western world to which they felt they belonged. In this sense, Baker's visit represented the first close contact with the West at home, embodied by the presence of the United States in the form of its Secretary of State, and, equally important to the Albanian people, symbolised not only Albania's return to the world scene, but also signified the United States' specific interest in Albania. Albanians expected the United States to continue to provide economic and political assistance beyond its initial delivery of approximately US\$ 6 million in humanitarian aid. Washington made it clear that the continuation of this relatively modest start in aid was conditional on the continuation of Albania's pursuit of political and economic liberalisation.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> James A. Baker III, The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War and Peace, 1989-1992, (G. P. Putnam's Sons: New York, 1995), p. 485. On 18 June 2004, the Washington D.C.-based National Albanian American Council (NAAC) awarded James Baker the 'Hands of Hope' Award on the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his 1991 visit to Albania as US secretary of state. In his speech for the award ceremony, Baker repeated the words he had said back in June 1991 in Tirana. For Baker's speech see; <http://www.naac.org/events/2004/baker.html>.

<sup>56</sup> Minton F. Goldman, Revolution and Change in Central and Eastern Europe: Political, Economic, and Social Challenges, (M. E. Sharpe: New York, 1997), p. 77.

The very positive image the United States enjoyed among the Albanian public was in part a knee-jerk reaction to the communist party rule's portrayal of the United States as an enemy of Albania and a threat to its independence. The popular reaction against this particular description of the United States has been explained by Albanian writer Fatos Lubonja as emerging in response to the mythification of enemies in the state propaganda of the communist party rule.<sup>57</sup> Despite the efforts of the regime, Albanians have generally recalled the United States as the country that defended the existence of the Albanian state at the time of its foundation. In this new era, the Albanian people's identification of America with democracy and prosperity and their wish to become a 'little America' because America represented those things that the Albanians wanted to achieve for themselves were at the root of their desire for a 'special relationship' with the United States.

Albanian politicians recognised that portraying themselves as close associates and supporters of the Americans represented an important asset in the domestic political arena. As the US role and influence in Albania increased, politicians associated more and more significance to their relationship with Washington and its representatives. A picture with an American official or a specially arranged state visit to the US capital could have the utmost political impact on the American-leaning Albanian public.

James Baker's visit was particularly important in terms of domestic politics. In spite of the fact that Baker had met privately with Ramiz Alia and addressed the People's Assembly, Sali Berisha was able to use the opportunity that sharing the stage with the US Secretary of State in Skanderberg Square at the centre of the capital, Tirana, provided to portray himself as the leader who would integrate Albania to the West. Berisha presented himself as the partner of the United States for the future American support and cooperation in Albania. In doing so, Berisha wanted to use America's indirect backing to suggest that US support for Albania would be assured if the DP was brought to power. Berisha's strategy of trying to monopolise American attention by associating himself with the US made a strong impression on the Albanian public, which took Berisha's

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<sup>57</sup> Interview with Fatos Lubonja, 1 May 2007, Tirana.

appearance with Baker in Skanderberg Square as a sign that the US supported the new opposition party against the old regime. In fact, when Berisha and his colleague Gramoz Pashko had been invited to the United States as guests at the signing ceremony held in Washington D.C. for the official restoration of US-Albanian diplomatic relations on 15 March 1991, Pashko<sup>58</sup> had on several occasions told the national and international press that he had received promises from the Americans – particularly from the State Department – that a ‘blank cheque’ from the US was waiting should the DP come to power in Albania after the forthcoming elections.<sup>59</sup> Clearly, the DP leadership was giving the impression that they had secured US support for their party and any government they would form in the future.

In October 1991, Albania joined both the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank and immediately started talks with the IMF for financial support. This opening up to financial and technical assistance from international financial institutions under the interim government represented another important transition away from the communist party rule’s adamant rejection of foreign credit and participation in international financial programs. In the diplomatic sphere, following the Kosovar Albanian’s declaration of independence in late October, Albania became the only country that recognised the ‘Republic of Kosova’<sup>60</sup> representing another opening in its foreign relations – this time towards fellow Albanians in Kosovo.

In early December 1991, Berisha withdrew his DP ministers from the cabinet, criticising the slow pace of reform. A new caretaker National Stability government replaced the Bufi government, which had been unable to oversee any economic progress, and had, in fact, barely managed to succeed in keeping Albania afloat. President Alia set 22 March 1992 as the date for new elections, and

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<sup>58</sup> Indeed, the Berisha-Pashko cooperation ended due to political and economic differences between them leading the rift between the two leaders. Eventually, Berisha consolidated his power in the party and Pashko was expelled from the DP in June 1992.

<sup>59</sup> Elez Biberaj, *Albania in Transition: The Rocky Road to Democracy*, (Westview Press: Oxford, 1999), p. 97, see also end notes 79 and 80 to Chapter 3 on p. 111.

<sup>60</sup> Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo*, (Hurst & Company: London, 1998), p. 254.

a new interim government headed by Vilson Ahmeti took the responsibility of temporarily governing the country and taking it to the elections.

The year 1991 was an economically disastrous one for Albania. This was reflected in the country's economic indicators for the following year, almost all of which were negative. The already low industrial and agricultural output fell between 20 to 30 percent from the previous year, inflation reached 216 percent and unemployment rose to 27.9 percent.<sup>61</sup> As the country approached elections, the Albanian economy had largely collapsed,<sup>62</sup> and the state had been brought to the brink of a total collapse as a result of the extreme economic hardship and deepening popular unrest. Although not clearly recognised at the time, it is possible that the Albanian state could have failed at this very early stage in its transition. It was only with international aid and their expectations for the future that Albanians were able to stand the hardships at the time.

The campaign process became the scene of competition among political parties as well as a struggle among foreign powers for influence in Albania. The US support for the DP was clear throughout the entire election process, with US Ambassador William E. Ryerson participating in election activities together with Berisha and declaring US support for the opposition DP.<sup>63</sup> In expressing the "US support for the new Albania," Ryerson, who went so far as to directly address Albanian voters, "appeared to be overstepping considerably the limits of a normal diplomatic role."<sup>64</sup>

The Americans were also actively involved in the election process through non-governmental organisations (NGO), including the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI).<sup>65</sup> Although the NDI's

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<sup>61</sup> Bideleux and Jeffries, *op.cit.*, p. 42 and see the table 2.1; Albania: Selected Economic Indicators 1990-2005 in p. 44. Also see; Pano, *op.cit.*, p. 336, Table 8.4, Indicators of Economic Trends in Albania since 1989 [until 1995 estimates].

<sup>62</sup> Bideleux and Jeffries, *op.cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>63</sup> Biberaj, 1999, *op.cit.*, p. 136.

<sup>64</sup> Vickers and Pettifer, *op.cit.*, p. 80.

<sup>65</sup> For general information about NDI see its web page <http://www.ndi.org/>, and for IRI see <http://www.iri.org/>.

stated aim was simply “to promote citizen political participation, election monitoring, and the development of political parties and emerging political leaders,”<sup>66</sup> analysts such as Biberaj<sup>67</sup> argue that both American NGOs provided “significant assistance to the opposition” in the election process, supplying them with materials and election-related organisational know-how at the expense of the Socialist Party. However, Robert Austin argues that considering the Socialist Party’s advantageous position in terms of available material resources, US help for the opposition may be regarded as a balancing factor that helped level the playing field and bring about fairer elections. This idea is challenged by Vickers and Pettifer,<sup>68</sup> who argue that contrary to the “substantial foreign assistance” the DP received, the Socialists had “none”, and thus their campaign remained limited. Even Austin recognizes the remarkable impact that Washington’s statement regarding US aid being conditional upon a DP victory had on the election outcome.<sup>69</sup>

While the Americans were viewed as overtly supporting the opposition, Berisha claimed that the Italians were very closely associated with the Socialists and were supporting the SP in the election campaign, just as the Benedetto Craxi government had supported the PLA, whom it had wanted to remain in power, in the previous elections.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, the Italians were very influential between July 1991 and March 1992,<sup>71</sup> and were considered to have made their “unhappiness with the Democratic Party’s pro-American enthusiasm” clear in the election process.<sup>72</sup> The Italians wanted to regain their former influence in Albania, which was important not only as a gateway to the Balkans, but as an existing source of

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<sup>66</sup> For the NDI programs in Albania see <http://www.ndi.org/worldwide/cee/albania/albania.asp>, for the NDI reports on Albanian elections see the same web page.

<sup>67</sup> Biberaj, 1999, *op.cit.*, pp. 130, 136.

<sup>68</sup> Vickers and Pettifer, *op.cit.*, p. 79.

<sup>69</sup> Robert Austin, “What Albania Adds to the Balkan Stew”, *Orbis*, vol. 37, no. 2, 1993, p. 268.

<sup>70</sup> Vickers and Pettifer, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>72</sup> Biberaj, 1999, *op.cit.*, p. 136.

instability very close to home. Moreover, the Italians, who were by far the biggest donor in Albania, felt that their contributions did not receive the recognition they deserved in terms of reciprocal political influence in Albania, especially when compared to the significance the Albanians attributed to US aid.

The Albanians developed different approaches towards the United States and Italy, which they looked upon as a regional power indispensable with regard to economic relations and as Albania's link to Western Europe. Although the Italians, as a regional power, had always dominated the Albanian economic sphere in terms of aid, trade and investments, and Italian culture had traditionally been widely popular in Albania, the contemporary Italian political influence in Albania remained limited in comparison to the welcome with which American influence was received.

The Albanians hoped to keep the influence of regional powers and neighbours as limited as possible in this new period. The role and influence of Italy and Greece varied in accordance with the changing conditions in the Balkans and the domestic transition process in Albania. In this regard, the problems related to the political representation and demands of the Greek minority in Albania became a matter of concern in the election process. Initially, when the Omonia candidates attempted to register, they were disqualified due to a new electoral law that placed a ban on "regionally, ethnically or religiously based political parties."<sup>73</sup> This created a difficult situation that was ultimately overcome by the founding of a new political party – the Union for Human Rights – which replaced Omonia's Greek nationalist ethnic references with a minority rights perspective.

The elections were settled in two rounds on 22 and 29 March 1992 and resulted in a landslide victory for the DP, which received 62.1 per cent of the vote and secured 92 seats in the parliament.<sup>74</sup> The SP suffered a sharp defeat, receiving only 25.7 per cent of the vote and 38 seats in the People's Assembly. The remaining seats were shared among the Social Democratic Party (SDP) with seven

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<sup>73</sup> Pano, *op.cit.*, p. 318.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 320. Table 8.2 Parliamentary Elections in Albania, 1992.

seats, the Union for Human Rights with two seats and the Albanian Republican Party with one seat.

## **5.2 The Democratic Party and the Transition Process in Albania**

The transfer of power following elections took place smoothly and rapidly. Ramiz Alia resigned on 4 April 1992, and Sali Berisha was elected by the new People's Assembly as the new president of Albania on 9 April. On 14 April, Alexander Meksi established a coalition government, with seven members of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and one member of the Republican Party taking ministerial positions in a 19-member cabinet. The unchallenged election process and easy formation of the government signalled a relatively good start for the new multi-party, democratic regime. The Albanian people had high expectations that the new democratic environment and new government would support the enhancement of democratic rights and freedoms while taking steps to bring about economic prosperity. The DP leadership had promised change, and now they were in power with a majority large enough to rule the country with relative ease.

Despite the limited powers of the presidency, Sali Berisha became the real figure behind the formulation of all new policies after the regime change, taking the reins from the Meksi government to become actively involved in Albanian policymaking. For Berisha, the political and economic choices to be applied in the new era were clear: in the political realm, the political legacy of the communist party rule would be dismantled through the consolidation of a functioning pluralistic democratic regime,<sup>75</sup> while in the economic realm, an immediate and swift transition of the Albanian economy to a capitalist, free market order would be undertaken. Berisha's goal was to remove the obstacles before the capitalist transformation of Albania, and ensure the economic progress of the country as soon as possible. In order to achieve this goal, Berisha planned to eradicate the entire economic legacy of the communist party rule, which he saw as the major hindrance to economic change in the country.

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<sup>75</sup> Elez Biberaj, "Albania's Road to Democracy", *Current History*, vol. 92, no. 577, 1993, p. 381.

Changing from an isolationist and autarchic economic legacy to a new and completely liberalised economic policy would be a drastic challenge for the new government. The economic transition programs applied in Albania conformed with the strategies developed by international financial institutions to transform other ex-communist economies in Central and Eastern Europe in accordance with neo-liberal policies. The Berisha leadership was eager to adopt radical reforms for the rapid transformation of the whole structure of the country's economy. However, instead of the 'shock therapy' that the Democrats, in particular Pashko, favoured as the most appropriate transition strategy for overcoming economic weakness and ensuring economic development in Albania in the new era, the strategy put in place was more in line with the 'gradualist approach' to transition that had been applied in some of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Rather than yielding a substantial economic reformation in Albania as was hoped for, it was, in fact, the slow pace of transition, required by the persisting strong state involvement in the economy, that the Democrats considered to be the real obstacle blocking the country's economic progress.<sup>76</sup>

Considering that the low level of production and severe lack of capital had brought the Albanian economy almost to a halt, Berisha's vision was in line with that of international financial institutions. Radical reforms were begun in June and July 1992, and in August 1992, Albania signed its first Stand-by Agreement with the IMF.<sup>77</sup> Albania thus became a leading example of the application of 'shock therapy,' with structural reforms introduced to put in place the three pillars of transition to a market economy: liberalization, privatization and stabilization.

From a planned economy almost entirely under state control, the reform process transformed the Albanian economy into one in which the state had a limited role and market forces directed the economy. Prices and foreign trade,

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<sup>76</sup> Gramoz Pashko, "Obstacles to Economic Reform in Albania", *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 45, no. 5, 1993, p. 918.

<sup>77</sup> The first stand-by agreement between Albania and the IMF covered the period from 26 August 1992 to 14 July 1994. Of the agreed upon US\$ 20 million, US\$ 13,125 million was used. This was followed by an Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility, agreed on 14 July 1993 for a 3-year period, of which US\$ 31,060 million was used. 'Albania: History of Lending Agreements as of September 30, 2000', [www.imf.org](http://www.imf.org).

which had previously been the exclusive purview of the state, were liberalised,<sup>78</sup> and the Albanian currency, the Lek, was permitted to be exchanged freely and was floated in financial markets with ensured convertibility. Restrictions on the labour market and wages were removed, and subsidies to state enterprise were terminated. Private property rights were reintroduced, and assets that had been confiscated by the communist party rule were slowly returned to their previous owners. Privatisation was introduced,<sup>79</sup> and state-owned enterprises, housing and land were sold or transferred to private or corporate owners using a variety of methods.<sup>80</sup> The tax system was revised, and an income tax introduced. On 4 August 1992, the Albanian parliament passed its first Foreign Investment Law regulating the authorisation and guarantee mechanisms related to foreign direct investment in Albania.<sup>81</sup> In addition to these various economic arrangements, fiscal discipline measures – an essential element of the transition strategies introduced by the international financial institutions – aimed at first controlling and then drastically reducing inflation<sup>82</sup> and limiting the budget deficit were introduced into the Albanian economy.

As noted in a March 2006 presentation by the IMF Resident Mission in Albania, from September 1992 through November 2005, Albania was involved in

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<sup>78</sup> “Albania: Too Broke to Mend”, The Economist, 4 July 1992, p. 46. Initially, prices of some essential food products such as bread and milk and some state monopoly prices like electricity were excluded from this liberalisation.

<sup>79</sup> In fact, privatisation had started before the DP came to power with the passing of the Law on Privatisation in August 1991 and the establishment of the National Agency for Privatisation as provided for in the Law.

<sup>80</sup> For an in-depth analysis of the privatisation programs and strategies and their implementation see; Iraj Hashi and Lindita Xhillari, “Privatisation and Transition in Albania”, Post-Communist Economies, vol. 11, no. 1, 1999, pp. 99-125.

<sup>81</sup> For the details of the adaptation of the foreign investment laws in Albania, see; Scott Norman Carlson, “Foreign Investment Laws and Foreign Direct Investment in Developing Countries: Albania’s Experiment”, International Lawyer, vol. 29, no. 3, 1995, pp. 586-98.

<sup>82</sup> The drastic reduction in the inflation rate, which was 226 per cent in 1992, was one of the success stories of the Albanian economic transition in terms of fiscal performance. Philipp C. Rother, “Inflation in Albania”, Post-Communist Economies, vol. 14, no. 1, 2002, pp. 85-107, Sulo Haderi, Harry Papapanagos, Peter Sanfey and Mirela Talka, “Inflation and Stabilisation in Albania”, Post-Communist Economies, vol. 11, no. 1, 1999, pp. 127-41.

a total of five fund-supported programs for 121 months out of 159.<sup>83</sup> Despite this relatively uninterrupted application of IMF-led policies and the attached conditionalities, the Albanian economy was unable to overcome its overall fragility. Not only did the lack of local capital force Albania to constantly apply to international institutions and other foreign financial sources, Albania's perpetual economic vulnerability negatively impacted on its continuing weakness as a state, which remained a factor in Albania's domestic stability as well as its foreign relations.

### **5.3 Forming the Two Pillars of Albanian Foreign Policy in the Early 1990s: The Quest for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Bilateralism**

Albania developed a two-pillar strategy for attracting foreign support for its economic recovery and security that pragmatically balanced integration into Euro-Atlantic structures with reviving its historical foreign policy pattern of developing bilateral relations with a strong power. The Democratic Party government continued the policy of expanding Albania's foreign relations by developing special relationships, particularly with Europe and the United States, in order to bring Albania 'back to the Western World' as it had promised during its election campaigns. As in the domestic arena, President Berisha put his personal imprint on the formulation of Albanian foreign policy, taking an active role in Albania's re-integration into the international economic system and Western security structures. This would be essential if Albania was to obtain the foreign financial resources needed by the country's economy and the security guarantees required in the rapidly destabilising Balkans. Moreover, Albania could use international support for its foreign policy concerns – the priority among them being the problematic status of the ethnic Albanians in the region – which it lacked the economic, political and diplomatic capacity to handle on its own. Indeed, the domestic economic and political problems associated with transition had the potential to turn Albania into another source of trouble in the Balkans.

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<sup>83</sup> Linda Spahia, "IMF in Albania: An Overview of the Past Involvement and Challenges for the Future", Lecture for the Faculty of Economics, University of Tirana, 27 March 2006.

Under the difficult circumstances of the early 1990s, Albania shaped its foreign policy preferences and inclinations in terms of two broad policy lines. As its first foreign policy pillar, Albania adopted a broad policy of Euro-Atlantic integration, which entailed developing close relations with the EC/EU and NATO, with visions of membership in both organisations. After years of isolation, integration into the EU would constitute both institutional and symbolic integration with Europe and the West, to which Albanians had always mentioned they belonged. Moreover, Albanians perceived an EU membership perspective as a means of obtaining financial and technical support beyond the humanitarian aid and grants the EU had already provided to Albania.

Following the DP's coming to power, the security aspect of Euro-Atlantic integration became another priority in Albanian foreign policy. NATO, as the major defence organisation in Europe, was viewed as an important source of security for Albania, and thus NATO membership became the major goal in terms of Albania's security perspective. As a small state, Albania wanted to benefit from the institutional protection of NATO, which offered the political and defence capabilities as well as a say, albeit limited, on broader security matters in Europe in general and the Balkans in particular. Albania acted quickly, and in December 1992 it became the first former Warsaw Pact country to request membership in NATO,<sup>84</sup> which, at the time, had yet to develop any concrete strategy or mechanism for integrating those countries into the Alliance.

At the same time, Albania returned to its tried-and-true policy of searching for a regional or great power to act as a patron in terms of providing security and economic aid. Albania's new generation of political leaders favoured developing 'special relationships' with a 'great power', and the Albanian public backed their leaders' expressed intentions of soliciting foreign support. This time, the Albanians looked to the United States to become a strategic partner – preferably an ally – to guarantee Albanian security and back Albanian causes in the Balkans. Having emerged as by far the leading power after the Cold War, with its global reach and interests and the 'structural power' to shape international and regional

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<sup>84</sup> "Albania Seeks Tie to NATO, and Protection", The New York Times, 17 December 1992, p. A22.

politics in various parts of the world, the United States had a special place in the eyes of both the Albanian leadership and the Albanian people, who considered America to be a model as well as a centre of attraction. The Albanians considered the United States to be central to their interests, especially in light of Washington's support for regime change and provision of economic aid at the outset of the Albanian-American bilateral relationship. As stability in the Balkans began to deteriorate, Washington became a vital actor in terms of Albanian security, with US support viewed as crucial for Albania's Euro-Atlantic integration as well as for the resolution of the problems of ethnic Albanians elsewhere in the Balkans. Moreover, strong US patronage for Albania would help to balance the influences of Italy and Greece, each of which had economic and political motives for wanting to expand its influence in Albania, whereas Albania preferred to limit its relationships with these two regional powers to ones of economic partnership. The bulk of Albania's foreign trade was with Italy and Greece, which were not only the greatest investors in the Albanian economy, but were magnets for large numbers of Albanian economic migrants, whose employment remittances were vital to the Albanian economy. With the United States showing a strong presence in Albanian politics, it would be relatively easy for Albania to prevent the spread of Italian and Greek dominance in economic affairs from spreading into the sphere of politics.

The transformation in the Balkans taking place in the new, post-Cold War environment was rapidly leading to conflicts that would have regional impact, with the process of the dissolution of Yugoslavia constituting the most important challenge to regional peace and stability. The dismemberment of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was initiated in 1991 with the declarations of independence from two of its constituent republics, Slovenia and Croatia, which were internationally recognised in January 1992. However, ongoing Serbian resistance to dissolution escalated into armed conflict among the Yugoslav republics. These conflicts had an impact on the foreign policy of Albania, which could not remain indifferent to the suffering of ethnic Albanians living in Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and around the Preshevo valley in Serbia. Albania had been very much involved in Yugoslavia due to the significant numbers of Albanians in Kosovo, where tensions had been high since the early 1980s, when the Kosovar Albanians' demands for further rights came into conflict with growing

Serbian nationalism. Since 1989, when the Kosovar Albanians began to pursue a goal of independence, Serbian policies towards them became increasingly more repressive, and they turned to the existing Albanian nation-state for support, initiating contact with politicians in Tirana and becoming involved in Albania's domestic politics. Critical of the PLA regime's reluctant policies towards Kosovo, they backed the emerging opposition, particularly the DP, in their quest to seize power from the PLA/SP in the elections during the process of the regime change in Albania<sup>85</sup>.

As conflict emerged in the Balkans in the early 1990s, the so-called 'Albanian Question' moved to the forefront of the international agenda with regard to the region. The dispersion of ethnic Albanians across Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Greece was perceived as a part of the wider regional problem, and within the context of a fragmented and conflict-hit Balkans, Albanians were considered by various countries to be a potential source of instability. In light of these perceptions, Tirana tried to refrain from involvement in armed conflict while providing vocal support for the rights of ethnic Albanians in the region.

After enhancing Albania's bilateral ties with other countries and international organisations following the regime change, Sali Berisha hoped to cash in on Albania's democratic transition. Albania had already begun to receive economic assistance from the IMF and World Bank, and on 11 May 1992, Albania diversified its sources of financial aid and support by signing the Trade, Commercial and Economic and Co-operation Agreement with the EC.<sup>86</sup> Once the

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<sup>85</sup> The Kosovar leader Ibrahim Rogove and his party Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) strongly supported Berisha and the DP. Robert C. Austin, "Greater Albania: The Albanian State and the Question of Kosovo, 1912-2001", in Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe, edited by John R. Lampe and Mark Mazover, (CEU Press: Budapest, 2004), p. 244. Even the communist party leadership reacted to the Kosovar Albanian leaderships' open support for the DP by accusing them for interfering in the Albania's internal affairs. Elez Biberaj, "The Albanian National Question: The Challenges of Autonomy, Independence and Separatism", in The New European Diasporas: National Minorities and Conflict in Eastern Europe, edited by Michael Mandelbaum, (Council on Foreign Relations Press: New York, 2000), pp. 245.

<sup>86</sup> Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Republic of Albania, on Trade and Commercial and Economic Cooperation, Official Journal L 343, 25/11/1992 P. 0002 – 0009.

agreement came into force on 4 December 1992, Albania became eligible for EU funding under the PHARE programme.<sup>87</sup> The EU subsequently became an important provider of aid and grants to Albania, which received the most EU assistance per capita among all the former Soviet Bloc countries,<sup>88</sup> with grants totalling almost ECU 400 million in the 1991-1995 period, as well as US\$ 420 million in humanitarian aid and US\$ 135 million to improve the balance of payments<sup>89</sup>.

In June 1992, Berisha visited Washington D.C. as the first Albanian leader to pay a state visit<sup>90</sup> to the United States. During this trip, US President George Bush announced a US\$ 95-million loan package – almost triple the previously promised amount – as a sign of the US administration’s endorsement of the Albanian government and the reforms they had initiated.<sup>91</sup> Presidents Bush and Berisha also signed a bilateral trade agreement, and Bush urged the US Congress to grant Albania trading preferences.<sup>92</sup> This led to a congressional resolution granting Albania most-favoured-nation (MFN) status,<sup>93</sup> which was signed by President Bush on 26 August 1992, and renewed by his successor, President Bill Clinton, in 1994 and 1995. Later in 1995, Albania and the US would enhance their

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<sup>87</sup> As its name implies, the Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Reconstructing their Economies (PHARE) programme was originally created by the EC in 1989 to provide assistance to Poland and Hungary. This program was later extended to other European countries with EU accession perspectives, including Albania.

<sup>88</sup> Derek Hall, “Albania in Europe: Condemned to the Periphery or Beyond?”, *Geopolitics*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2001, p. 114.

<sup>89</sup> Paulin Kola, *The Search for Greater Albania*, (Hurst & Company: London, 2003), p. 284, footnote 163 referring to European Commission Press Release: Memo/95/75, 24 July 1996.

<sup>90</sup> Biberaj, 1994, *op.cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>91</sup> Pano, *op.cit.*, p. 321.

<sup>92</sup> David Binder, “Albanian Leader Tells Bush of His Fear of Serbia”, *The New York Times*, 16 June 1992, p. A-10.

<sup>93</sup> “Most-favored-nation Status for Albania”, *U.S. State Department Dispatch*, vol. 3, no. 35, 31 August 1992, p. 679.

bilateral economic relations by signing the Bilateral Investment Treaty for liberalising investment conditions for both countries.<sup>94</sup>

After the regime change, US-Albanian relations were on the rise, with the Americans clearly supporting Berisha and the new government in power. Alongside the rapid development of US-Albanian relations after the regime change and the expanding scope of Albanian relations in the international arena, Berisha also took the controversial foreign policy step of applying for Albanian membership in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The application created hot debates in a secular country with a majority Muslim population in which religion had never played a part of the foreign policy tradition. The rationale for membership was questioned by the secular Muslim circles as well as Albania's Catholic and Orthodox communities, who feared that membership in the OIC would put an Islamic label on the country and distance it from Europe.<sup>95</sup> Berisha answered these criticisms by explaining the pragmatic rationale of the application, namely, the possibility of economic and political support from the Muslim world. After signing the OIC Charter in Jeddah on 3 November 1992, Albania was able to successfully utilise the OIC to get both diplomatic support for the Kosovo issue from the Islamic countries<sup>96</sup> as well as some level of economic aid.

With the aim of enhancing its relations with other countries in the region, in June 1992, Albania became a founding member of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Pact (BSEC), a platform for regional cooperation in the wider Black Sea region, with the inclusive attitude of Turkey. Albania continued to join other regional initiatives in the Balkans, reflecting its foreign policy goal of diversifying its relations and obtaining representation in international and regional organisations.

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<sup>94</sup> "Message to Senate Transmitting the Albania-United States Investment Treaty", Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, vol. 31, no. 36, 11 September 1995, pp.1510-1.

<sup>95</sup> Remzi Lani and Fabian Schmidt, "Albanian Foreign Policy between Geography and History", International Spectator, vol. 33, 1998, no. 2.

<sup>96</sup> In the November 2000 Islamic Conference in Qatar and October 2003 Islamic Summit Conference in Malaysia, the members of the IOC passed resolutions concerning the situation in Kosovo. Resolution No. 11/9-P(IS), Doha 2000 and Resolution No.3/10-(IS), Putrajaya, 2003.

Despite its enduring weakness as a small state, Albania turned its contextual potential and strategic position into part of its relational power in the particular context of the Balkans of the 1990s, where the general instability created a stabilising role for Albania in line with the interests of the major international powers vis-à-vis the Balkans. As the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia began to intensify in 1993, Albania further attracted the attention of Western countries trying to contain the armed conflicts in the Balkans. During the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, Albania's importance grew, as strategically it began to appear to have an essential role in preventing the conflict from spreading to others regions in the former Yugoslavia. The continued presence of ethnic Albanians in the rump Yugoslavia, especially in Kosovo and Macedonia, was perceived as holding the potential for unrest that could turn Kosovo and Macedonia into new sites of struggle that could further complicate the resolution of already intensive conflicts in the Balkans.

Lacking the fighting capability to resist Serbian security forces that remained powerful despite being occupied with conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, the Kosovar Albanians needed diplomatic and political support from the West in order to move their cause onto the international agenda. However, the US and other members of the Contact Group<sup>97</sup> established to deal with the crises and facilitate a resolution of the conflicts in the Balkans<sup>98</sup> hoped to keep Albanian nationalism under control and pressure the Kosovar Albanians to refrain from opening another front in the ongoing wars within the borders of the old Yugoslavia that would further expand the conflict in the region.

The US and other leading Western countries aimed to convince Albania not to support any attempts at an Albanian nationalist uprising in Kosovo or Macedonia, and this included the provision of any moral support or political encouragement to Albanian nationalists, inside or outside Albania, for the initiation of any armed fight, especially one against the Serbs. Moreover, Tirana

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<sup>97</sup> The Contact Group is comprised of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the Russian Federation, Germany and Italy.

<sup>98</sup> The Contact Group was founded in early 1994 after the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia (ICFY). See also Chapter 3, Footnote no. 39.

was expected to both refrain from supplying arms to Albanian groups and prevent them from smuggling arms through Albanian territory. In exchange for Albanian cooperation in helping to maintain the *status quo* in the Balkans, the US and others were ready to provide Tirana with whatever economic and political support was necessary.

Albania's need for foreign support was so critical that in spite of the Kosovars' high expectations from the DP government, Berisha, who had close contacts with the Kosovar Albanians, especially the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), could not risk openly backing the nationalist cause.<sup>99</sup> Despite the nationalistic rhetoric and references to Albanian unification used in his election campaign, upon coming to power, Berisha was confronted with Albania's catastrophic economic situation and thus had to quickly readjust his priorities in accordance with the harsh realities of the country.<sup>100</sup> To the disappointment of his fellow Albanians in Kosovo, Berisha had to calm his nationalist sentiments and tone down the nationalistic rhetoric he had employed in Albanian domestic politics.

During this period, Albania was able to formulate a balanced foreign policy in relation to the Kosovo issue. On the one hand, Tirana helped the Kosovar Albanians to internationalise their issue and obtain sympathy and moral support for their cause, and Berisha tried to convince the international community to take measures against the Serbs and, eventually, to launch a peacekeeping operation in Kosovo. On the other hand, Albania acted in line with Western policies by trying to convince the Kosovar Albanian leadership not to resort to arms in order to resolve their problems with the Serbs in Kosovo.<sup>101</sup> President Berisha's Chief of Staff Edmond Seferi neatly summed up Albania's concentration of efforts on

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<sup>99</sup> Elez Biberaj, "The Albanian National Question: The Challenges of Autonomy, Independence and Separatism", in The New European Diasporas: National Minorities and Conflict in Eastern Europe, edited by Michael Mandelbaum, (Council on Foreign Relations Press: New York, 2000), p. 246.

<sup>100</sup> Vickers, op.cit., p. 258.

<sup>101</sup> "Albania: Keeping out", The Economist, 21 May 1994, pp. 42-3.

containing the Yugoslav conflict in close cooperation with the Western powers with his statement, “[a]s a small nation, we try to form alliances.”<sup>102</sup>

Albania’s application for membership to NATO was not accepted by the Alliance, since it was not prepared to accept new members at the time; however, Albania joined the Partnership for Peace (PfP), a new mechanism designed to establish security relationships between NATO and those countries that wanted a closer relationship with the security organisation within an institutional framework. Albania signed the PfP Framework Document on 23 February 1994. The Albanians considered this to be an important initial step in realising their “ultimate strategic goal of joining the Alliance” by working to transform Albania’s security structure and military capabilities parallel to NATO standards.<sup>103</sup>

Albania wanted to ally itself with the West, in particular, with the United States, with whom Albania hoped to develop a special relationship, especially in the security realm. Albania was able to accomplish initial steps of this with the signing of a military agreement, the Memorandum of Understanding for Military Relations between the Department of Defense of the USA and the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Albania, on 8 and 14 October 1993. This agreement, “the first of its kind with a former Communist country,” shaped US military cooperation with Albania<sup>104</sup> and included the assignment of military attachés, organization of training programs for Albanian soldiers and visits and exchange programs for both militaries. The establishment of military cooperation with Albania was viewed by the Americans as the extension of “US military connections in the Balkans.”<sup>105</sup> The close cooperation between the US and Albania soon came to include military intelligence operations directed towards Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro. The US military used the Gjader Air Base

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<sup>102</sup> Henry Kamm, “Albania Chief Urges to Send Troops To Kosovo To Prevent War”, The New York Times, 31 May 1993.

<sup>103</sup> George Katsirdakis, “Albania: A Case Study in the Practical Implementation of Partnership for Peace”, NATO Review, vol. 47, no. 2, 1998, p. 22.

<sup>104</sup> David Binder, “U.S. and Albania Sign a Military Agreement”, The New York Times, 21 October 1993.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

near Lezha in northwest Albania to launch reconnaissance and intelligence-gathering operations conducted by Predator unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Vickers and Pettifer argue that the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) started to use the disused air base for their operations as early as spring 1993.<sup>106</sup> Stephan Marx also mentions the existence of two remotely piloted vehicles (basically UAVs) in Gjader in September 1994,<sup>107</sup> although other sources say operations were conducted only between July and early November 1995<sup>108</sup>. Regardless of the exact time frame, it is very probable that the American military and intelligence presence in Albania in the mid-1990s was considerable, in view of the rising intensity of the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

Albania became an important strategic asset for the Americans during the ongoing armed conflicts in the Balkans. In this period, advisors from the US government and private industry helped with the reorganisation of the Albanian armed forces.<sup>109</sup> On 20 April 1994, General Robert Oaks, the commander of the US Air Forces in Europe, made the first visit to Albanian by a high-ranking US official. Oaks's visit was followed by stops by US warships at Albanian ports,<sup>110</sup> and in the spring and summer of 1995, Albania and the US conducted joint military medical and naval exercises.<sup>111</sup> In the following year, Albanian forces again joined with American forces in the major multinational exercise, 'Operation

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<sup>106</sup> Vickers and Pettifer, *op.cit.*, pp. 218-9.

<sup>107</sup> Stefan Marx, "Reforms under the Double-Headed Eagle", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, vol. 6, no. 9, 1994, p. 394.

<sup>108</sup> Open Media Reserach Institute (OMRI) Daily Digest II, No. 211, 30 October 1995.

<sup>109</sup> For an interesting personal account from an unofficially seconded American defence advisor about the reform attempts in the Albanian army in 1995-1996, see C. Denison Lane, 2002, "Once upon an Army: The Crisis in the Albanian Army, 1995-1996", Conflict Studies Research Centre G 114, September 2002.

<sup>110</sup> Marx, *op.cit.*

<sup>111</sup> "Defence Minister on Army's Cooperation with NATO and US Forces", British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB), Eastern Europe (EE), 2208, B/1, 23 January 1995, "Joint Military Exercise with US Army", BBC, SWB, Eastern Europe (EE), 2214, B/1, 30 January 1995 and "Joint Albanian-American Exercise under Way in Albania for Next 10 Days", BBC, SWB, Eastern Europe (EE), 2252, B/1, 15 March 1995.

Peaceful Eagle'.<sup>112</sup> On 5 December 1995, US forces were deployed to Albania in preparation for the NATO Implementation Force's (IFOR) mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina,<sup>113</sup> and in September 1996, Albania joined IFOR with a 33-member peacekeeping force that became the first-ever deployment of Albanian military outside Albanian borders.<sup>114</sup> The IFOR mission provided an opportunity for Albania to show off its contribution to regional stability and was perceived as a sign of Albania's willingness to cooperate with NATO for future integration.

Albanian-US relations peaked during the NATO bombing of Bosnia and Herzegovina, when Albania offered "all the necessities that the US and NATO might have" as a show of its willingness to be a strategic ally to the US.<sup>115</sup> It was in this positive mood of bilateral cooperation that President Bill Clinton received Sali Berisha at the White House on 12 September 1995, just several weeks before the Bosnian peace talks opened at the Wright-Patterson Airbase in Dayton, Ohio on 1 November 1995. Berisha conveyed to the US and the other members of the Contact Group a request from Albania and the Kosovar Albanians to include Kosovo on the agenda of the Bosnia peace talks.<sup>116</sup> However, despite the "excellent" condition of Albanian-US relations,<sup>117</sup> the Kosovo issue was not brought to the table in Dayton, as adamant Serb opposition could jeopardise an agreement to end the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This incident not only constituted a great disillusionment for the Kosovar Albanians, it showed Albania

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<sup>112</sup> Vickers and Pettifer, *op.cit.*, p. 219.

<sup>113</sup> Ryan C. Hendrickson, "Albania and NATO: Regional Security and Selective Intervention", *Security Dialogue*, vol. 30, no.1, 1999, p. 111.

<sup>114</sup> Albanian Ministry of Defense web page, Peace Keeping Missions, Bosnia, <http://www.mod.gov.al/>

<sup>115</sup> Christina Nifong, "Poor but Strategic Albania Tries Hard to be a US Ally", *Christian Science Monitor*, vol. 87, issue 205, 18 September 1995.

<sup>116</sup> Kola, *op.cit.*, p. 312. Although the Kosovar Albanian had welcomed the initiation of the peace talks they were disappointed as they also want to negotiate with the Serbs about their status. 'Kosova Government Statement on Ohio Talks', Kosova Communication, no. 240, 3 November 1995. Kosovar Albanian's tried to convey their message as "There can be no lasting peace in the Balkans without peace in Kosova" but this message could not make it to the agenda of the Dayton peace talks. 'U.S. will Pursue Comprehensive Balkan Settlement', Kosova Communication, no. 242, 20 November 1995.

<sup>117</sup> Nifong, *op.cit.*

the limits of its 'excellent' relations with the United States, as the demands of Albania and the Kosovar Albanian's were sacrificed as part of a compromise to reach a solution in the Bosnian conflict. Here, US interests as a great power for the immediate stabilisation of the Balkans took priority over the immediate resolution of the Albanian problem in the region.

In retrospect, leaving aside the content and validity of the US position that disregarded other potential problems in order to end the armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania still had little influence in terms of changing US policies. Not only did Albania lack sufficient leverage over the US, the international conjuncture simply necessitated the resolution of the Bosnian problem, which was the number-one priority at the time. Albania was unable to use the relational power that stemmed from its contextual and circumstantial importance to convince the US to deal with the Kosovo issue at that time. Basically, the strategic significance Albania had enjoyed during the course of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the NATO bombing decreased during the peace talks, was further reduced following the restoration of peace, and remained low until the outbreak of the next armed conflict in the Balkans – this time in Kosovo.

#### **4.5 Conclusions**

As it put an end to its communist party rule, Albania underwent a difficult transition that was made even harder by its years of isolation. Albania's weakness was an important factor in defining the nature, content and pace of change in the country as it began to adopt a pluralist democracy and a market economy. Despite its attempt to initiate swift changes, Albania's existing weaknesses continued, especially in the economic realm. To cope with these weaknesses, Albania once again returned to its previous foreign policy pattern of looking for foreign support in the form of an alliance with an influential foreign patron to guarantee the country's survival.

During this period, Albanian dependency on foreign economic support continued in the forms of humanitarian and financial aid, as political and humanitarian crises negatively impacted on the stability and security of Albania

and its immediate region. Developments in the Balkans that coincided with the worldwide transformation of international politics also had a direct impact on the shaping of Albanian foreign policy. Fragmentation in the Balkans led to the emergence of new small states and conflicts in the region, and the “Albanian Question” rose to the international and regional agendas, becoming an important part of the ‘*problematique*’ of the Balkans after the end of the Cold War. These circumstances had an impact on Albania’s role in international affairs. As a weak small state, Albania tried to use its relational power to prop up its security and economic recovery in its new environment.

To rid itself of the harmful aspects of isolationism and obtain support for its continued survival, Albania adopted a two-pillar foreign policy strategy, aiming to support the transformation of Albanian economic, political and security perspectives with Euro-Atlantic integration on the one side and bilateral relations with the United States on the other. As the leading financial contributor to Albania’s humanitarian and economic needs, the EU became a very influential actor in Albania’s economic and political transition. In terms of security, NATO membership became a priority goal for Albania, which, alongside its attempt to secure itself through international organisations, reconstituted its traditional policy of relying on a great power patron – in this case, the United States – to contribute to its survival. The latter strategy of developing an asymmetric alliance continued to represent a viable policy option for Albania, which continued to remain a weak small state.

## CHAPTER 6

### INTERLACING ASYMMETRIC RELATIONS

#### 6.1. Diverging Paths

Contrary to the DP's pre-election promises to consolidate democracy and expand personal rights, the new period of DP rule quickly turned into a phase of "reproduction of the authoritarian rule"<sup>1</sup> that had become the pattern in Albania's post-communist-regime history, and as the transition became more and more problematic, Berisha became irritated and more and more authoritarian. He started a campaign against the old PLA leadership within the framework of the post-election de-communisation of Albania. First, PLA property that had been transferred to the SP was confiscated by the state. Then, Ramiz Alia stepped down from the presidency and was removed from all other political posts, and in September 1992, Alia was accused of abuse of power and corruption and placed under house arrest. He was sentenced to nine years in prison in July 1993, although this sentence was reduced through consecutive appeals, and he was released in July 1995. Similarly, Enver Hoxha's widow Nexhmije Hoxha was sentenced to 11 years in prison in May 1993 for the misuse of government funds, and Hoxha's son was sentenced to house arrest for a year in June 1995. The former interim Prime Minister Vilson Ahmeti and some other previous ministers were also unable to escape sentences of various lengths. However, it was the arrest and conviction of Socialist leader Fatos Nano that had the strongest and the most direct impact on domestic politics. Nano was arrested in July 1993 on the charge of

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<sup>1</sup> Dilaver Arıkan Açar, *Albania: Anatomy of a Traumatic Transition*, Unpublished M. Sc. Thesis, (Middle East Technical University: Ankara, 2000), p. 53.

misappropriating state funds and falsification of documents, for which he was found guilty and sentenced to 12 years in prison in April 1994.<sup>2</sup>

The campaign to bring to justice those responsible for the repression of the communist era peaked in September 1995 with the passage of the Law on Genocide and Crimes against Humanity Committed during the Communist Regime in Albania for Political, Ideological and Religious Motives.<sup>3</sup> This law paved the way for the prosecution of the former communist leadership and banned senior officials of the regime from holding public office until 2002. This law was followed by the Law on Verification of Moral Character of Officials and Other Persons Connected with the Protection of the Democratic State, which also aimed to ban officers of the Sigurimi, the communist regime's security service, and their collaborators from seeking public office. These two pieces of legislations were basically used in the course of the forthcoming elections to ban opposition party candidates from running for seats in parliament. The political purges in Albania during this period are considered to be some of "the most sweeping action against the alleged perpetrators of communist-era injustices seen in any former communist state."<sup>4</sup> In fact, the laws went far beyond their supposed intention; rather than serving to constructively deal with the communist party regime's past by applying 'transitional justice' in Albania, they were abused by the DP for political purposes as part of the 'de-communisation' campaign.<sup>5</sup>

Albania's experience with the separation of powers was far from exemplary under the Berisha leadership. The official authority of the presidency was relatively limited in comparison to Berisha's political ambitions. In line with his idea of a strong leadership that "would easily adopt the necessary policies of the transition process ...[if it was not] hindered by the weak and ineffective

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<sup>2</sup> "Albania: Just for Show", The Economist, 9 April 1994, pp. 39-40.

<sup>3</sup> Roger East and Roger Pontin, Revolution and Change in Central and Eastern Europe, (Pinter: London, 1997), pp. 217-8.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>5</sup> Robert C Austin and Jonathan Ellison, "Post-Communist Transitional Justice in Albania", East European Politics and Societies, vol. 22, no. 2, 2008, pp. 384-91, 398.

structure of the Albanian state,”<sup>6</sup> Berisha wanted a stronger presidency that would exercise more power. For this reason, the DP drafted a new constitution that would expand the executive power of the president, but the opposition was against the idea, and since the DP on its own did not have the majority needed to adopt this new constitution, Berisha took it to a referendum in November 1994. However, in what was a major blow to Berisha, the draft constitution was rejected by 53.9 per cent of voters.<sup>7</sup>

In spite of this setback, Berisha remained actively involved in the governance of the country, exercising the executive powers available to him with the support of the legislature, which was dominated by his party. But Berisha also wanted to have influence over the judiciary, which was in the process of undergoing a systemic reform. An impartial judiciary would be essential if Albania was going to be able to consolidate democracy and break with its totalitarian past, and Berisha’s attempts to influence the selection of judges politicised the judiciary and hampered the image and the actual independence of the judiciary at a time when Albanian society had the greatest need of being able to place its trust in the judicial system. Acting against these interests, Berisha manipulated the selection of judges for political purposes and went as far as to dismiss the head of the Supreme Court.<sup>8</sup> This led to the further perpetuation of authoritarianism. In fact, throughout the transition period, attempts by politicians to intervene in legal processes and put pressure on judges and prosecutors represented an important problem that negatively affected the institutionalisation and functioning of the legal system in Albania as it underwent transformation.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Açar, *op.cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>7</sup> A new constitution could only be adopted in 1998 following the change in the government after the 1997 Crisis in Albania. For the analysis of the constitutional system in Albania and the features of the new constitution see; “Of Courts and Rights: Constitutionalism in Post-Communist Albania” *North Carolina Journal of International Law and Commercial Regulation*, vol. 25, 2000, pp. 485-517.

<sup>8</sup> Berisha continued to have problems with the judiciary. Later in 2006 he also wanted to change the General Attorney which created another political crisis further complicating the already uneasy relations between the executive and the judiciary powers. “Debates Continued in the Parliament as the Sollaku’s Dismissal Underway”, *Albanian Daily News*, 19 April 2006.

<sup>9</sup> For the evaluation of the transition period and the analysis of the changes in the Albanian legal system in the initial phases of Albania’s transition see; Winston P. Nagan, Artan Hoxha and Paul J.

Although the transfer of power from the DP to the SP went smoothly, the Albanian political space did not succeed in democratisation. Political confrontation and tension continued to rise after the DP came to power, as the political élite engaged in a struggle for the redistribution of power, wealth and state assets. The political divisions sharpened, first within the parliament and the state cadres, and eventually within Albanian society. The political competition between the DP and SP brought on a clear polarisation in party politics, with the opposition attempting to challenge and undermine the legitimacy of the DP's rule, resorting to tactics such as boycotting the parliament and refusing to fulfil their legislative responsibilities in the People's Assembly. Nepotism, clientalism, corruption and discrimination in state enterprises continued and led to further political polarisation. When faced with disappointment in the transition process, Berisha's uncompromising personal style inclined towards even stricter authoritarianism. Despite the existence of a multi-party political regime, as far as the Albanian people and the opposition were concerned, the democratic credentials and the functioning of the new regime were suspect.

The parliamentary elections of 26 May 1996 became the major test for not only the political parties, but for the regime as well. The extremely tense campaign period reflected the political divisions between the DP and the SP-led opposition. In the midst of election-day polling, the SP-led opposition, which had formed an election alliance, withdrew from the elections, challenging the election process and accusing the DP of intimidation and fraud. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) mission had the task of monitoring the elections. In their initial report dated 26 May 1996, they stated that they had spotted serious breaches of election law and improper procedures during the polling and counting of votes as well as instances of intimidation of voters, candidates and election officials.<sup>10</sup>

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Dirks, "Strengthening the Rule of Law in Albania: Impartiality, Independence and the Transformation of the Legal Profession", *Review of Central and East European Law*, vol. 20, no. 6, 1994, pp. 677-98.

<sup>10</sup> "Post - Election Statement", The Organisation for Security and Cooperation (OSCE), Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), 26 May 1996.

Due to the contested results, a second round of elections took place on 2 June 1996 in a limited number of constituencies where participation had been below 50 per cent in the first round. The OSCE's overall assessment of the elections that followed the completion of the second round of polling was similarly critical and detailed many instances of clear violations of the election law.<sup>11</sup> In the name of the EU, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement demanding a repetition of elections in compliance with the elections rules,<sup>12</sup> whereas the US administration initially refrained from criticising the election process.<sup>13</sup> Only later, on 1 June, did the US State Department react to the irregularities in the Albanian parliamentary elections by describing the process as "a significant step backward" from the previous elections and calling on the Albanian authorities to investigate the irregularities and repeat the elections wherever necessary.<sup>14</sup> By July, the State Department had hardened its stance against what it considered to be fraudulent elections and shortcomings of democracy and was "urging the Albanian government to open a political dialogue with the opposition as a first step to holding free and fair elections, adopting a new constitution, and holding new parliamentary elections at the earliest opportunity" while simultaneously announcing that the US would initiate "a thorough review of its relationships with Albania, including assistance programs."<sup>15</sup>

Eventually, on 16 June, elections were repeated in 17 constituencies. The final results showed a landslide victory for the DP, which won 55.5 per cent of the vote and 122 of the 140 seats in parliament. The remaining were split between the Socialists, with 20.4 percent of the vote and 10 seats; the Republican Party, with

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<sup>11</sup> "Observation of the Parliamentary Elections Held in the Republic of Albania", The Organisation for Security and Cooperation (OSCE), Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), 26 May 1996 and 2 June 1996.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Bideleux and Ian Jeffries, The Balkans: A Post-Communist History, (Routledge: London, 2007), pp. 49-50.

<sup>13</sup> "Democracy Denied in Albania", The New York Times, 30 May 1996.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, Albanian Parliamentary Elections, 1 June 1996, referred in Elez Biberaj, Albania in Transition: The Rocky Road to Democracy, (Westview Press: Oxford, 1999), pp. 300-1, and Chapter 8, end note 68.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 301-2.

5.7 per cent of the vote and 3 seats; the National Front, with 5 per cent of the vote and 2 seats; and the Union for Human Rights, with 4 per cent of the vote and 3 seats.<sup>16</sup> Regardless of the irregularities, it was generally argued that had the elections taken place under normal circumstances without political intimidation and fraud, the DP would still have won, although not with a landslide margin.

On 20 and 27 October 1996, Albanians again went to the polls, this time to elect local representatives. The domestic political arena did not cool down during this inter-election period, as the negative events of the previous elections had repercussions on the new elections. Despite improvements in the pre-election and polling-day procedures, the October local elections were far from able to establish trust in representative democracy or erase the impact of the manipulation and abuse of the democratic system. The DP had yet another sweeping election victory, gaining 58 out of 64 mayoral posts to the SP's four,<sup>17</sup> as well as the largest number of seats in the majority of municipalities and communes.

The May and June 1996 parliamentary elections in Albania became a turning point with regard to international actors' perceptions of the DP's authoritarian rule. Whereas prior to the elections Berisha had enjoyed almost *carte blanche* in terms of international cooperation and support, after the elections, he rapidly began to lose favour in the eyes of both the Americans and the Europeans. While the US had made no "outright endorsement of the DP", by arranging high-level visits to Albania by US Defense Secretary William Perry, Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs Timothy E. Wirth and others and organising a meeting between Albanian Foreign Minister Alfred Serreqi and Secretary of State Warren Christopher only three months before the elections, Washington had indeed made it clear that it would like the DP to remain in power.<sup>18</sup> By contrast, after the elections, US policymakers freely expressed their disappointment with the

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<sup>16</sup> The American NGO International Republican Institute also observed this election just as the previous election in Albania, this time they also underlined 'serious but not widespread irregularities on election day' and the role of DP's 'increasing lack of tolerance for its political opponents'. "IRI Report on the Albanian Parliamentary Elections May 26, 1996", International Republican Institute, 1996, p. 1. For the details of the results see; ibid., pp. 33-4.

<sup>17</sup> Biberaj, op.cit., p. 313.

<sup>18</sup> Biberaj, op.cit., p. 293.

unfairness of the election process and raised the tone of their criticisms levelled against the increasingly authoritarian rule of Berisha and the DP. In response to a New York Times article that claimed America had for years muted its criticism of Berisha because it needed his moderation in Kosovo and Macedonia and that criticised the US for not joining in the calls for new elections,<sup>19</sup> a letter to the editor from State Department Undersecretary Wirth stressed that one of the foremost objectives of the United States with regard to Albania was to promote democratic development and reform, which included holding new elections.<sup>20</sup> In fact, contrary to most of their European counterparts, US diplomats in Tirana had not participated in the opening session of the new Albanian parliament following the May elections as a sign of their disapproval and dissatisfaction with the election process.<sup>21</sup>

The Americans eventually began to distance themselves from Berisha and the DP in the second half of 1996. Although the US still did not want to see the opposition SP come to power in Albania, they did not want to see authoritarianism prevail, either. In the immediate aftermath of the Dayton Agreement, Berisha's role as a regional actor helping the US to contain potential problems that might be initiated by Albanians in the former Yugoslavia had begun to diminish. The Americans had solved their primary problems by ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and had shifted their attention towards the post-conflict involvement in the region. Thus, not only was his increasing authoritarianism causing the perception of Berisha as a trustable partner to rapidly fade in the eyes of the Americans, the need for his cooperation was becoming increasingly unnecessary. Later, the successive US administrations that had provided constant political support to Berisha were criticised by some analysts on the grounds that they had

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<sup>19</sup> "Albania's Old Habits", The New York Times, 26 October 1996.

<sup>20</sup> Timothy E. Wirth, 1996, "Albania's Democracy had Full Support of U.S.", The New York Times, 9 November 1996.

<sup>21</sup> Miranda Vickers and James Pettifer, Albania: From Anarchy to a Balkan Identity, (New York University Press: New York, 1997), p. 286.

made “the critical mistake of backing one political force rather than supporting a pluralistic political process.”<sup>22</sup>

On the US break up with Berisha, Paulin Kola brings forth Albanian journalist Mero Baze’s argument of the “alleged influence of the Greek lobby in the United States on Bill Clinton’s administration.”<sup>23</sup> In the first part of the 1990s, Albanian-Greek relations were strained, basically as a result of a clash between nationalisms in which references were not only made to the Greek minority in southern Albania and Albanians working illegally in Greece, but to the wider context of conflicting historical claims to areas on both sides of the border. Baze claimed that in 1997 the Greek lobby effectively disrupted Berisha’s “favoured status in Washington” and Albanian influence in the US administration, diverting the US position and leading to Berisha’s subsequent downfall. Kola, in contrast, highlights the “u-turn” made by Berisha at the December 1996 OSCE Lisbon Summit that redirected Albania’s foreign policy priority away from the US and identified “Europe as Albania’s destiny” as the definitive moment signifying the final phase in the deterioration of US-Albanian relations.<sup>24</sup>

Considering that even before he had taken office Berisha had planned to develop a very close relationship – more specifically, an alliance relationship – with the US, his adoption of a very pro-American stance in terms of Albanian foreign policy formulation should not have come as a surprise. Although the Euro-Atlantic pillar had existed within Albania’s foreign policy framework since the changing of the regime, the US had always preserved its primary and distinct position. During this period, Albania was clearly in favour of re-establishing its asymmetric cliental policy by allying itself with the US. With this in mind, Albania tried to harmonise its policies with that of the US vis-à-vis the Balkans, with the expectations that as a state acting parallel to the US foreign policy line, its chances for receiving economic and security benefits from the US would improve. The international context and regional circumstances created an environment

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<sup>22</sup> Fred Abrahams, “Albania”, *Foreign Policy in Focus*, vol. 2, no. 33, May 1997, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Paulin Kola, *The Search for Greater Albania*, (Hurst & Company: London, 2003), p. 328.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.

conducive to this policy, and in general, Albania received the strong support it needed from the US, especially in the political arena. In time, Berisha increased his demands for US support, but the US did not want to put all its eggs in one basket. Rather than stake its interests solely on Berisha's presence on the Albanian political scene, the US chose to expand the scope of its relations to other political actors. As Albania's transition began to go wrong both economically and politically, the US did not hesitate to distance itself from Berisha and the DP. The US had defined its position towards Albania in a broader context, and it would enter a relation with Albania in accordance with its wider interests, which went beyond its commitment to Berisha.

## **6.2. The 1997 Crisis: The Descent from Weak to Failing State**

Although the 1996 election win had increased the DP's parliamentary majority, this was a pyrrhic victory, as the party's legitimacy was increasingly contested in the domestic arena and both its reputation and its legitimacy eroded in the international arena. The severity of the problems associated with Albania's transition increased through the end of 1996. The political scene was almost entirely dominated by the Democratic Party. The opposition was inadequately represented, and there was little space for the people to express their discontent with the DP's rule, especially with both the judiciary and security forces under the strong influence of the party and the media under enormous state control. Opposition figures and what alternative media that did exist also came under strong pressure from the DP. The intense polarisation of the political arena that stemmed from the authoritarian practice of Berisha and the DP left insufficient room for political dialogue, particularly since the DP and SP, at opposite ends of the political spectrum, were not keen on dialogue in the first place.

On the economic scene, despite the introduction of reforms under the guidance of international financial institutions, the Albanian population had witnessed little improvement in their daily lives. Transition was having an impact on Albanian society, which was experiencing a deep transformation. Unemployment was a constant problem ever on the rise, despite the similarly constant outward migration. At the same time, there was significant urban-to-rural

migration. The economy was in flux, and production remained below 1989 levels. Albania's obsolete industries and backward agricultural sector were unable to attract much attention from investors, and the low levels of industrial and agricultural production led to an increasing gap between production and consumption that had to be filled by increasing imports.

Despite the fast creation of a favourable environment for privatisation and foreign investment in line with IMF and World Bank policy advice, funds did not flow to Albania. The lack of accumulated local capital remained as severe a problem as ever, and even had the capital existed, the legal arrangements needed for the regulation of financial transactions and the banking system had not been put in place. Despite the rapid liberalisation, an institutional infrastructure for a functioning market economy had not been created, and the financial sector was almost non-existent. As a result of this very weak financial sector, funding for the private sector could not be created through legal means. The legal financial institutions that existed, mainly the banks, were unable to collect savings, accumulate capital, or provide loans to finance the private sector. The emerging private sector was also very weak, and as the Albanian market was relatively small, its spending capacity was low, and the cost of investment loans was high. People with links to state circles were able to get a share in the speedy privatisation of small enterprises. Overall, however, the private sector was small in scale and made a limited contribution to the economy.

Tight monetary policies cut public spending that in turn reduced or eliminated social services formerly provided by the state. The cost of daily necessities rapidly rose beyond the average Albanian income, making remittances from abroad the main source of income and therefore vital to the survival of the Albanian people and the Albanian economy. Illicit trading and other illegal economic activities also became an important source of revenue. Albanians made money out of the conflicts surrounding their territory, as sanction-busting became an important source of national finance.

Albania was also dependent on foreign aid and credits. Albania's debt stock grew rapidly at this time, increasing the country's susceptibility to foreign

influence over the economy.<sup>25</sup> The increased economic vulnerability of the country made it even more weak and dependent on foreign funding for its existence. Because Albania has been economically and politically weak since its foundation, it had not inherited any experiences related to a democratic culture or familiarity with capitalist economic relations that might have helped to ease the country's transition. Neither the authoritarian regime of the interwar period nor the strict totalitarian, Stalinist regime that followed could be regarded as favourable grounds on which to construct a pluralistic democracy in the short period of time since the regime change. The political cadres who led the country after the regime change were, in fact, part of the old élite, so that their authoritarian inclinations did not come as a surprise. While this 'new' élite was quick to adapt to the capitalist system in terms of managing the resource allocation process, they were reluctant to act according to democratic principles.

The accumulation of deficiencies related to the overall transition process led to a further consolidation of Albania's weakness, making Albania's transformation from an isolationist, Stalinist regime to a liberal democracy with a market economy one of the most problematic among other similarly tailored transition processes. The Albanian leadership strongly supported rapid change and a 'shock therapy'-type programme, under the guidance of international financial institutions, to establish a free-market economy. However, the IMF and World Bank's introduction of economic stabilisation and structural adjustment reforms for Albania were unable to prevent a crisis from erupting in the country's financial sector. With the banking system still largely unregulated, the revenue flowing into Albania from remittances, illicit trade and sanction-busting began searching for investment areas. At this point, the informal financial mechanism of 'pyramid investment schemes' emerged to fill the vacuum.

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<sup>25</sup> The total external debt of Albania rose from US\$ 511.5 million in 1991 to US\$ 781.4 million in 1996. The external debt peaked in 1994 raising to US\$ 954.4 million. Reference Table 16: External Debt, *Country Profile: Albania, 1997-1998*, (The Economist Intelligence Unit: London, 1997), p. 38 and Reference Table 16: External Debt, *Country Profile: Albania, 1998-1999*, (The Economist Intelligence Unit: London, 1998), p. 38. Despite the steady increase of the foreign debt in the first part of the 1990s, the Economist Intelligence Unit explains the relative drop in the amount of the debt after the peak in 1994 with a sharp fall in the country's short term debt. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

In fact, pyramid investment schemes were nothing new to economists. The schemes function by attracting money by offering high interest rates and financing the costs of the interest by luring new investors to the scheme.<sup>26</sup> The flow of new capital is essential for maintaining the scheme. As long as new investors and capital are taken in, the pyramid continues to expand, but when the flow stops, the system collapses. In Albania, owning a pyramid was a lucrative business that did not require much professional knowledge or infrastructure, but the competition in the market was high, as capital was limited and constantly on the move in search of higher interest rates, which were driven upwards by the intense competition. Prior to their emergence in Albania, pyramid schemes had arisen in various forms in some of the other countries in transition in Central and Eastern Europe; however, the scale and proliferation of these schemes in Albania far exceeded the other examples in terms of their forthcoming repercussions.

As Albania underwent its capitalist transformation, the Albanian people began dreaming of getting rich, and getting rich quick. The remittances flowing into the national economy from abroad represented a significant amount of money. According to the official figures between 1993 and 1996 the remittances transferred to Albania reached up to 15 percent to 22 percent of the GDP without the unrecorded money transfers, and people started to direct this newly accumulating capital to the new investment space of the pyramid schemes.<sup>27</sup> Despite the obvious dead end of this unregulated form of investment, the pyramid schemes were allowed to operate freely as part of the capital accumulation process. Despite the poverty and economic trouble in Albania, the influx of remittances created a false euphoria in society, and the Albanian people were under the illusion

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<sup>26</sup> For information about the general logic of how the pyramid investment schemes functions and previous cases see; Chris Jarvis, "The Rise and Fall of the Pyramid Schemes in Albania", IMF Working Paper, WP/99/98, July 1999, p. 16, Box. 3, Pyramid Schemes Old and New and p. 32, Appendix I, Life Cycle of a Pyramid Scheme.

<sup>27</sup> Ilir Gedeshi, "Role of Remittances from Albanian Emigrants and Their Influence in the Country's Economy", East European Economics, vol. 40. no. 5, 2002, p. 64. In a survey 55 percent of the respondents who send remittance money to Albania stated that they invested in the pyramid investment schemes. Ibid., p. 65. In fact it is also argued that before the 1997 pyramid investment schemes crisis the annual remittances flowing to Albania was much higher than the IMF estimation of US\$ 400 million but US\$ 700 million. James P. Korovilas, "The Albanian Economy in Transition: The Role of Remittances and Pyramid Investment Schemes", Post-Communist Economies, vol. 11, no. 3, 1999, p. 399.

that the new wealth coming from the unrealistically high interest rates was actually the instant benefit of the market economy and the capitalist system. Political circles developed close relationships with the pyramid investment scheme owners, who were considered respectable business people whose schemes formed part of the successful economic transition and reform programs in Albania.

The government and the economic bureaucracy were impressed by the increased economic activity and believed that the market economy had begun to function and that the economy was making progress. Ironically enough, although the country's economy was fragile and its financial sector on the brink of collapse, Albania's economic transformation was perceived as one of the success stories of economic transformation under the guidance of international financial institutions. In an open letter responding to a critical article published in *The Economist* that had argued Albania's economy was in "grisly shape" and the country was suffering from high unemployment, could not pay its foreign commercial debts and had a messy budget despite having more economic advisors per head than anywhere in the world,<sup>28</sup> one World Bank official claimed that "amongst all the transforming countries of Eastern Europe, Albania [was] recognised by most interested parties, including the Bretton Woods institutions [the IMF and the World Bank], as one of the most successful."<sup>29</sup>

Daniel Vaughan-Whitehead, in his well-documented economic account of the Albanian economic crisis, criticizes the misperceptions regarding the condition of the Albanian economy after the introduction of international financial institution-guided reforms and describes the state of the country's economy as it neared the crisis as follows:

[t]he willingness of the Berisha Government to implement reforms and to comply with the IMF and World Bank requirements, coupled with the not unrelated willingness of external experts to present Albania as a success story, seems to have masked a reality in which apparent economic success depended in large part

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<sup>28</sup> "Out of Frying Pan, into Fire", *The Economist*, 2 April 1994, p. 43.

<sup>29</sup> Michel Noel, "The Albanian Model", *The Economist*, 7 May 1994, p. 8.

on remittances from foreign workers, large-scale smuggling and money-laundering, and illusory short-term profits from pyramid schemes.<sup>30</sup>

By the end of 1996, Albania and the Albanians were confronted with economic reality, as one of the leading pyramid investment companies, Sude, reached its saturation point and unable to attract new capital, it stopped its interest payments on 19 November 1996. This became the spark that ignited the huge crisis that followed.

The international financial institutions' perception of the Albanian economy at the time of the crisis and their understanding of the main sources of the crisis was later described by Carlos Elbrit, the head of the World Bank's Residence Office in Albania at the time, as follows:

Albania was doing well until the crisis exploded—at least it appeared so on the surface. Its GDP was growing fast (albeit not so fast as claimed by the government), inflation had dropped to single digits, and even after surging in 1996 it remained relatively low, at about 17 percent. The currency (the Lek) was stable. Relative to the country's size and wealth, foreign investment has started to pick up significantly. But institutions were extremely weak, and they were not improving or gaining strength. Civil society was basically nonexistent, with the exception of some foreign foundations. The private sector was vibrant, but the public sector was unable to deliver what it was supposed to. Since the fate of a society depends, in the end, on the strength of its institutions, its public sector, and its civil society, it should not be surprising that Albania had tremendous problems. The country will continue to have problems if institutions such as the judiciary and the bureaucracy remain weak. It is not true that development is a problem of institutions in the first place—it is a problem of institutions in the first place, the second and the third...!<sup>31</sup>

It is not clear how both the international financial institutions and the local Albanian leadership could have failed to see the dangers of the growing informal credit and investment market and the coming collapse of the pyramid schemes. Despite the fact that there were a variety of economic, political and social problems that led to the crisis in Albania, the role of international involvement in the Albanian economy was barely considered, and international financial

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<sup>30</sup> Daniel Vaughan-Whitehead, *Albania in Crisis: The Predictable Fall of the Shining Star*, (Edward Elgar: Cheltenham, 1999), p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> Carlos Elbrit, "Albania under the Shadow of Pyramids", *Transition Newsletter*, The World Bank, 1997, <http://www.worldbank.org/html/prddr/trans/so97/albania2.htm>.

institutions were not even held partially responsible for the development of the crisis, whereas it was very easy to place the burden on the weakness of local institutions and bureaucrats. Even some critical accounts of the 1997 crisis put forward the IMF's warnings to Berisha in the international financial institutions' defence, allowing the IMF to "claim the cleanest record"<sup>32</sup> in the process leading up to the crisis, whereas in fact, these warnings did not come until early October 1996,<sup>33</sup> only just a few months before the pyramid schemes imploded. A few local commentators openly brought the issue of the international financial institutions' responsibility to the forefront, as in the following article published in the local *Gazeta Sqiptare*, by Andrea Stefani:

Prestigious financial institutions with long experience, and strong forecasting ability were present during this ongoing march of Albanians to their catastrophe and did not warn of it. Why? In the best cases, because they were blind to it. If this were the case, does it not constitute a scandal in itself? The IMF experts made their concern over the pyramid investment schemes public by the end of [1996], when it was too late. By that time, their words were not alarm bells but the death knell. This goes to show that the tragedy that had already begun cannot carry the exclusive label 'Made in Albania'.<sup>34</sup>

A post-crisis IMF report admits only to having misjudged the informal lending companies as "benign, and indeed making important contribution to growth," whereas the formal banks were unable to offer credit to fund investments.<sup>35</sup> "It was not until August 1996," the report continues, "that a strong warning was given" by the IMF and the World Bank.<sup>36</sup> According to the report, the IMF and World Bank's inability to successfully differentiate between the informal credit market actors such as the pure pyramid investment schemes and other companies that similarly collected savings and invested part of their capital

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<sup>32</sup> James Pettifer and Miranda Vickers, *The Albanian Question: Reshaping the Balkans*, (I.B. Tauris: London, 2007), p. 46.

<sup>33</sup> "Albania's House of Cards", *The Economist*, 12 October 1996, p. 112.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Biberaj, *op.cit.*, p. 345, Chapter 9, end note 19, Andrea Stefani, "Pyramids and the Collapse of Albanian Economy: Did IMF Betray Us?", *Gazeta Sqiptare*, 29 April 1997, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Jarvis, *op.cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

in legitimate businesses, neither of which were licensed or supervised by state institutions,<sup>37</sup> also prevented these institutions from noticing what should have been obvious indicators of the looming economic crisis.

Serious miscalculations regarding the state of the Albanian economy on the part of the local political élite and the representatives of the international financial institutions transformed Albania's initial experience of economic transformation and integration into an unprecedented national crisis that negatively affected all aspects of life in Albania. The crisis began to gradually intensify until it reached a point where its repercussion could be felt by almost all parts of society, since the majority of the Albanian population had gotten involved one way or another with the pyramid investment schemes. Finally, the crisis spread to the political arena, as government leaders began to realise that their initial underestimation of the situation and their reluctance to deal with it as it emerged was contributing to the crisis's spiralling out of control. Eventually, the Albanian government was forced to take steps to contain the crisis; however, by this point, not only had the crisis and the public discontent grown beyond the government's control, the measures it had begun to take to limit the repercussions of the crisis were actually exacerbating it.

When the Albanian government realised the gravity of the problems that the bankruptcy of the pyramid schemes would have on the Albanian economy, they tried to limit the damages by halting their activities and confiscating their assets, including the schemes' deposits that remained in the banking system. However, the discrepancy between the amounts invested and the amount taken under control by the state was huge, and people quickly realised that without state-guaranteed banking insurance, which was non-existent in Albania, they would only be able to recover a very limited part of their investments. From the middle of January 1997 onwards, the unrest among the population was channelled into public protests. The demonstrations initially started in the southern town of Vlora, where two of the leading pyramid investment schemes, Xhafferi and Populli, were based. When these two schemes went bankrupt, the demonstrations turned violent and began to spread to other parts of Albania. By February, the situation began to

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

slide beyond the control of the central authority in Tirana. When confronted with the fact that they had lost most or all of their savings, people focused their reactions on the government and state institutions. The situation worsened despite attempts by Berisha and the government to calm the population and bring the crisis under control. The protesters increased the intensity of their reactions, organising against the government and calling for its resignation, the establishment of a technocratic government and new elections. When the government refused to meet these demands, the demonstrations turned into riots. At this point, a growing number of international actors, including the US, began to call for new elections and a new constitution, although some, like the French and the Italians, still perceived Berisha as the strong figure to work with in Albania.<sup>38</sup>

In the beginning of March 1997, the government completely lost control, as demonstrators took up arms against government forces and tried to take control of southern towns like Vlora and Saranda after having looting the state arms depots and arsenals for small arms and heavy armament, including a few tanks. The rioters fought with the Albanian army and the security forces, who in some instances were forced to withdraw, abandoning the cities to the hands of the local residents.<sup>39</sup> Attacks on government facilities, looting and murder became commonplace in the security vacuum that was spreading throughout the country.

As Albania descended into complete chaos, the state authority disappeared. The Albanian state and its institutions were too weak to cope with the domestic unrest and uprising against the state authority, and as a result, with the exception of the DP strongholds in northern Albania and the capital Tirana, the government lost the power to exercise its rule and authority. In some cities, National Salvation Committees organised by local rioters or other opportunist organised criminal

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<sup>38</sup> “Albania: Bad to Worse”, *The Economist*, 15 February 1997, p. 44.

<sup>39</sup> For an account of the transition of the Albanian armed forces in the first part of the 1990s and its reflections on the failure of the Albanian army during the 1997 crisis see; Denny Lane, “Albania, March 1997: The Disintegration of the Albanian Army”, *Mediterranean Quarterly*, vol. 9, no. 2, 1998, pp. 16-29. Lane makes an interesting comparison among the Soviet Union, People’s Republic of China and the United States about their attempts to change and shape Albania (and the Albanian Armed Forces) in accordance with their own way disregarding the special conditions of this small country. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

groups began to take charge as the security forces fled.<sup>40</sup> The political opposition increased the tone of its criticisms and demanded the resignation of the DP government, which the opposition viewed as solely responsible for the crisis.

It was within this environment that Berisha, despite the mounting pressure on him and his party, was re-elected by the parliament on 3 March to a new term as president.<sup>41</sup> However, the ongoing developments in Albania did not permit Berisha to sustain the DP's political control over the country, and he was quickly forced to agree to demands that the DP government step down. On 9 March, the DP government was replaced by a caretaker government of national unity that was to lead the country to new elections that were scheduled for the following June. Securing this agreement required the mediation of Franz Vranitzky, the former Austrian chancellor, who had arrived in Tirana on 8 March as the OSCE's special representative to Albania in what was the first initiative taken by the international community to try and contain the crisis.<sup>42</sup> On 12 March, an interim Government of National Reconciliation was formed with six DP cabinet ministers, six ministers from the SP and nine ministers from a total of seven other parties. Bashkim Fino of the SP became the prime minister, and the government went to work on 14 March after receiving a vote of confidence from the Albanian Parliament.

At this stage, army depots in northern Albania were looted, and the riots spread to what had been a relatively calm part of the country. Considering that the north was the stronghold of Berisha and the politically shaken DP, this was viewed as a significant development, and it was feared that the crisis might grow to take

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<sup>40</sup> For a very detailed account of the uprising and chaos in March 1997 see; Pettifer and Vickers, 2007, op.cit., pp. 19-35 and the map 'The Uprising in Southern Albania, 6-11 March 1997', p. 78 and for an analysis of the crisis and personal account of the post-crisis experience in southern Albania; Beryl Nicholson, "The Beginning of the End of a Rebellion: Southern Albania, May-June 1997", East European Politics and Societies, vol. 25, no. 3, 1999, pp. 543-65.

<sup>41</sup> At the time due to the deteriorating security situation Albanian government declared a state of emergency in the country. "Parliament Approves State of Emergency", BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB), EE, 2858, B/1, 4 March 1997.

<sup>42</sup> Under the existing European security arrangements OSCE was the major institution responsible for mediating in the internal conflicts thus Franz Vranitzky was appointed as the envoy to mediate between Berisha and the opposition. Fabian Schmidt, "Upheaval in Albania", Current History, vol. 97, no. 617, March 1998, p. 129. The official title of Franz Vranitzky was Personal Representative for Albania of the [OSCE] Chairman-in-Office.

on the form of a north-south conflict. However, despite speculations among the opposition that Berisha, hoping to gain political leverage to balance the increasing threat to his rule posed by the rioters in the SP-dominated south, was behind the spreading of arms in the north, the crisis never reached the level of a regional conflict within Albania.

### **6.3 International Involvement in the Crisis: Reviving Albania**

In line with the prevailing economic chaos and public disorder that in some places bordered on anarchy, Berisha and the new government decided to make an appeal for international assistance in restoring order and dealing with Albania's economic problems.<sup>43</sup> The Albanian government wanted the Western security organisations NATO and the Western European Union (WEU) to assist them in bringing security and stability to the country.<sup>44</sup> Vranitzky, too, supported the idea of deploying an international force to contribute to the country's stabilisation. By this time, upon Tirana's request,<sup>45</sup> the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) had gathered and issued a statement asking for the continuation of political dialogue and efforts by the international community, particularly the OSCE, to find a peaceful solution to the crisis.<sup>46</sup> However, neither NATO nor the EU was willing to become militarily involved in the ongoing crisis by sending troops into a chaotic situation "with no clear outcome or credible Albanian government."<sup>47</sup>

At a North Atlantic Council gathering on 12 March 1997, the United States, Britain and Germany made clear their objections and prevented NATO from responding to the crisis because they felt that the risks to be taken exceeded

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<sup>43</sup> "Albanian Leaders Agree to Ask West for Help", Albanian Telegraphic Agency (ATA), 13 March 1997.

<sup>44</sup> "Albania Urges NATO to Help End Anarchy", Financial Times, 14 March 1997.

<sup>45</sup> "Letter Dated 13 March 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council", S/1997/215, 13 March 1997.

<sup>46</sup> "Statement by the President of the Security Council", S/PRST/1997, 13 March 1997.

<sup>47</sup> Robert Frank, "Talks Fail to Silence Fighting in Albania as Crisis Continues", The Wall Street Journal, 17 March 1997.

the Alliance's capacity and, moreover, they were reluctant to assist Berisha, who they also held responsible for the crisis.<sup>48</sup> The Americans, in particular, had defined Berisha as the main problem<sup>49</sup> and were very much concerned that an international military intervention might end up salvaging Berisha's political future and keeping him in power.<sup>50</sup>

The unwillingness to deploy NATO forces in Albania could also be explained by the heavy responsibility that the Alliance had undertaken in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the Dayton Agreement. NATO's ongoing post-conflict security and reconstruction responsibilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina distanced most members from the idea of intervening in Albania, which would entail creating a brand-new mission in the Balkans that they did not feel up to. The major exceptions to this reluctance to become directly involved in Albania were Italy and Greece, which were both already directly impacted by the crisis. The Italian government worked especially hard to try and activate NATO and the EU-related European security institutions, pressing for the initiation of a military intervention in Albania. Despite their efforts, the majority of EU members decided against taking military action in Albania when they discussed the issue on 15-16 March 1997.<sup>51</sup> Instead, they committed themselves to continuing humanitarian assistance only, and, in relation to security, sending an advisory mission to work with the Albanian police and military.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Sean Kay, "From Operation Alba to Allied Force: Institutional Implications of Balkan Interventions", Mediterranean Quarterly, vol. 10, no. 4, 1999, p. 74.

<sup>49</sup> In this period, some comments brought the indirect responsibility of the US governments in the existing crisis in Albania to the forefront relating this to the US policy of promoting Berisha for a very long time despite apparent the signs of his authoritarianism. Fred Abrahams, "U.S. Promoted Albanian", The New York Times, 26 March 1997.

<sup>50</sup> Pettifer and Vickers, 2007 op.cit.

<sup>51</sup> Foster argues that despite the initial EU rejection of involving in a military intervention, as the *ad hoc* intervention is realised by the European states it could be considered as a success for the Europeans. Also for the details of the disagreements among the EU and WEU members about the military intervention to Albania see; Edward Foster, "Ad Hoc in Albania: Did Europe Fail?", Security Dialogue, vol. 29, no. 2, 1998, pp. 213-7.

<sup>52</sup> "Declaration by the Presidency of the European Union on Albania", Brussels, 17 March 1997. Also for initial concerns of the EU about the situation in Albania see; "Statement by the Presidency of the European Union on Albania", Brussels, 7 March 1997.

The clear intention on the part of NATO and the EU not to become involved in Albania was a disappointment to Albania as well as to the surrounding countries affected by the repercussions of the crisis. The Americans, together with some other countries, also closed the doors to the OSCE's organising any military action when the OSCE met in an emergency session on 15 March 1997.<sup>53</sup> In fact, in all the European political and diplomatic platforms where it was represented, the US took an active stance to block any international military intervention in Albania.

By mid-March 1997, Western countries including the US had started to evacuate their citizens from Albania.<sup>54</sup> Although US Secretary of State Madeline Albright was intent on expanding US military operations in Albania to secure the airport near Tirana and the port in Durres during the evacuation process, she faced opposition from the Department of Defense, and ultimately went along with the administration's position of not taking any military risks in Albania.<sup>55</sup> At the time, the US had troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia, and the US administration was not keen on stretching their presence further to deal with either the existing crisis in Albania or the increasing tension among the Albanians and the Serbs in Kosovo.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, it was unsure whether or not the US Congress would give the green light for US participation in another military mission in the region, especially when even the administration did not believe there was any impending risk of the crisis spilling over into other areas of the Balkans.<sup>57</sup>

At the same time, the US did not oppose the idea of establishing an international force to intervene in Albania – with UN Security Council authorisation and the participation of the concerned states. The Italians took the

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<sup>53</sup> Kay, op.cit., p. 75.

<sup>54</sup> "Americans Evacuated", The New York Times, 13 March 1997.

<sup>55</sup> Steven Lee Myers, "In Talks on and Airlift out of Albania, Albright Rattled Her Saber", The New York Times, 21 March 1997.

<sup>56</sup> "Hope, and Danger, for Ethnic Albanians", The Economist, 29 March 1997, p. 54.

<sup>57</sup> Ettore Greco, "Delegated Peacekeeping: The Case of Operation Alba", Columbia International Affairs Online, Working Paper, 1998, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/gre01/gre01.html>.

lead in the formation of this so-called ‘coalition of the willing’<sup>58</sup> to send military forces to Albania. Although the Clinton administration maintained its position of wanting to keep US forces from becoming involved in the crisis, it was willing to sign the draft resolution to send an international force to Albania. The EU similarly supported the approach of assembling a “multinational protection force under an appropriate international aegis” in response to the Albanian government’s request for help in creating a secure environment in the country.<sup>59</sup> The official process began with a decision taken by the OSCE Permanent Council on 26 March 1997 to establish an OSCE presence in Albania to work on democratization, supporting the media and human rights, and preparing for and monitoring elections.<sup>60</sup> In the following days, the Albanian government made an official request to the UN Security Council to authorise the stationing of a foreign military or police force in Albania.<sup>61</sup> The Albanian state made it clear in its letter that it was “looking forward to the arrival of such a force.”<sup>62</sup> Later, Albania, together with 20 other co-signees, including the US,<sup>63</sup> submitted a draft resolution to the UN

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<sup>58</sup> International intervention to Albania has constituted an important precedent and a test case for the formation of future coalitions of the willing. Mustafa Türkeş, 1998, ‘Geçiş Sürecinde Krizden İsyana: Arnavutluk Örneği’ (From Crisis to Rebellion in the Transition Process: The Albanian Case), Dış Politika Enstitüsü Dergisi Monogramlar Serisi II, (Dış Politika Enstitüsü, Ankara). For the analysis of the ‘Coalition of the willing’ concept and various regional applications of the *ad hoc* coalitions as the military enforcement forms in the post-Cold War era see also; Gary Wilson, “UN Authorized Enforcement: Regional Coalitions versus ‘Coalitions of the Willing’”, International Peacekeeping, vol. 10, no. 2, 2003, pp. 89-106.

<sup>59</sup> “Albania: Conclusions of the Council of the European Union”, 24 March 1997, Brussels.

<sup>60</sup> Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe Permanent Council, 108<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting, Decision no. 160, PC.DEC/160, 27 March 1997.

<sup>61</sup> “Letter Dated 28 March 1997 From the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council”, S/1997/259, 27 March 1997.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Draft resolution was submitted by Albania, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. S/1997/260. 19 June 1997.

Security Council, which voted on 28 March 1997 to adopt<sup>64</sup> UNSC Resolution 1101.<sup>65</sup>

UNSC Resolution 1101 laid the groundwork for the deployment of the Multinational Protection Force (MPF) under the leadership of Italy by clearly stating the scope and duration of the mandate. As stated in Article 2 of the Resolution, this was “to establish a temporary and limited multinational protection force to facilitate the safe and prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance and to help create a secure environment for the missions of international organizations in Albania.” Article 3 clarified that the rules of engagement and operations for the international force would fall under Chapter VII of the UN Charter in terms of the security and freedom of movement of its personnel, and Article 6 stated that the duration of the MPF’s field operations would be three months. On 30 March 1997, the Albanian parliament established the legal grounds for the deployment of the international force to Albanian territories by quickly enacting the law on “Admission to Albania of a Multinational Military Force in Support of Humanitarian Operations.”<sup>66</sup> Later, as the end of the mandate approached,<sup>67</sup> the UN Security Council voted on 19 June to approve Resolution 1114, extending the presence of the Multinational Military Force for another 45 days in order to facilitate and observe the elections scheduled for 29 June and 6 July 1997.<sup>68</sup> This UN Security Council authorisation for the *ad hoc* military involvement of individual states with particular interests in the crisis in Albania became an

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<sup>64</sup> Resolution passed with 14 votes for and one abstention. Interestingly China was the abstaining country that indeed Albania had assisted to join the UN and get the permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

<sup>65</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1101 (1997), S/RES/1101, 28 March 1997. For an in depth analysis of the adoption process and the legal basis of the UN Security Council Resolution 1101 see Dino Kritsiotis, “Security Council Resolution 1101 (1997) and the Multi-national Protection Force of Operation Alba in Albania”, Leiden Journal of International Law, vol. 12, 1999, pp. 511-47.

<sup>66</sup> “Cabinet Discusses Law on Foreign Force”, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB), EE, 2882, B/2, 2 April 1997.

<sup>67</sup> “Letter Dated 16 June 1997 From the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council”, S/1997/464, 16 April 1997.

<sup>68</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1114 (1997), S/RES/1114, 19 June 1997.

important precedent for non-United Nations peace-related operations in the post-Cold War era.<sup>69</sup>

On 15 April 1997, Italian troops began to arrive in Albania as the first of the Multinational Protection Force troops to be deployed in what became known as Operation Alba.<sup>70</sup> The MPF was organised under the leadership of the Italians and with the participation of 11 other interested parties willing to contribute to the safe distribution of humanitarian aid in Albania. These included two regional countries, Italy and Greece, that were directly affected by the crisis-related security problems, and four countries from the region or adjacent regions with historical ties to Albania, namely, Turkey, Romania, Slovenia and Austria. Other countries included France, which was the only UN Security Council-member to participate; Denmark, which was the OSCE chairman at the time; and Spain, Belgium and Portugal, which were active participants in the other regional international missions at the time. At the end of the day, even though the coalition mandate was provided by the UN and participation was open to all UN member-countries, the only ones willing to join the coalition were all European.<sup>71</sup> Initially, 6,556 troops were deployed to Albania, with a peak deployment of 7,215 during the elections.<sup>72</sup> Italy provided the greatest number of troops (3,778), followed by France (938), Greece (797), Turkey (758), Romania (398), Spain (342), Austria (110), Denmark (56), Slovenia (24) and Belgium (14), as well as a military transport plane crew provided by Portugal.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Georgios Kostakos and Dimitris Bourantonis, "Innovations in Peace-Keeping: The Case of Albania", *Security Dialogue*, vol. 29, no. 1, 1998, pp. 49-50 and 55-6.

<sup>70</sup> Alba means 'dawn' in Italian and refers as a short version of Albania.

<sup>71</sup> In fact the OSCE Ambassador to Tirana Daan Everts described the impact of the existence of the international mission which was extensively composed of NATO member countries' military forces in Albania as "It seems Albania is becoming NATO's first protectorate". 'Albania Might Become NATO Protectorate', *Albanian Observer*, vol. 5, no. 5, 1999, pp. 10-1.

<sup>72</sup> Paolo Tripodi, "Operation *Alba*: A Necessary and Successful Preventive Deployment", *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 9, no. 4, 2002, p. 98.

<sup>73</sup> "Eleventh and Final Report to the Security Council on the Operation of the Multinational Protection Force in Albania", S/1997/632.

A Steering Committee composed of the troop-contributing countries and under the chairmanship of Italy determined the working principles of the mission. This *ad hoc* political committee was a flexible as well as pragmatic arrangement that proved to be successful in handling the emerging needs of the operation in Albania.<sup>74</sup> The relatively good level of cooperation between the MPF and the international organisations in Albania contributed to the success of the international efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance. When the Multinational Military Force finally withdrew, it was considered to have been successful in fulfilling the tasks defined for it by the UN Security Council, namely, helping to bring about the gradual re-establishment of state authority in all parts of the country and the relative normalisation of life in Albania.<sup>75</sup> Operation Alba is regarded by analysts as a good example of preventive military deployment by the international community that helped to stabilise a country and prevent a local crisis from further escalating and spreading through the region.<sup>76</sup> Problems related to the reluctance among other states to become militarily involved in an intra-state conflict were overcome by the formation of a ‘coalition of the willing,’ which provided a framework within which regional and international actors could contribute to peace and stability in Albania and the surrounding region. Italy, for its part, had proved itself capable of handling the leadership role of such an operation by successfully stemming the flow of refugees from Albania. Despite its history of military occupation of Albania and the close geographic proximity

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<sup>74</sup> Gabriel Partos, “Albania Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management”, Columbia International Affairs Online, Working Paper, December 1997.

<sup>75</sup> The UN Security Council stated the success of the international military mission in Albania as “The Security Council notes with appreciation that the mandate of the multinational protection force, as set out in its resolutions 1101 (1997) and 1114 (1997) has been successfully fulfilled. The presence of the multinational protection force has contributed to the facilitation of safe and prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance in Albania. Its presence has also helped to create a secure environment for the missions of international organizations in Albania, as part of the efforts of the international community, particularly the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union, to find a peaceful solution to the crisis and to assist international organizations in their role in the electoral process in close cooperation with the Albanian authorities.” Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/1997/44, 14 August 1997. “Eleventh and Final Report to the Security Council on the Operation of the Multinational Protection Force in Albania”, S/1997/632. 12 August 1997.

<sup>76</sup> Tripodi, op.cit., pp. 100-2 and Greco, op.cit.

between the two states that perpetuated Italy's direct interests in Albania, Italy was able to accommodate its own interests and re-establish stability in Albania within the context of the UN-mandated military operation.<sup>77</sup> Italy's achievements in Operation Alba positively contributed to enhancing its role not only in Albania, but also in European affairs in general.<sup>78</sup>

From Albania's point of view, when the government appealed to NATO, the WEU and the UN Security Council for the deployment of an international military force on its territory, it was expecting a force that would use all means necessary to impose peace and stability and allow local security forces to regain control. However, instead of addressing the Albanian government's priority of public order and security, the interested parties of the international community designed a task force that was almost purely humanitarian.<sup>79</sup> Indeed, in a statement made after the intervention began, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) stressed that "the most urgent needs in Albania *are not of a humanitarian nature*" and that "international military and political efforts should *focus on restoring law and order, re-establishing the national administration and putting State and commercial distribution systems back in operation.*"<sup>80</sup> Clearly, it was not that other states were unaware of the realities on the ground at the time, it was simply that the calculated risks of realising such an operation in Albania exceeded their capacities. For this reason, the security-related issues mentioned in the

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<sup>77</sup> Ted Perlmutter, "The Politics of Proximity: The Italian Response to the Albanian Crisis", International Migration Review, vol. 32, no. 1, 1998, pp. 204, 219-20.

<sup>78</sup> Carole Hodge, "Albania, Italy and Greece: Some Geopolitical Considerations" in War and Change in the Balkans: Nationalism, Conflict and Cooperation, edited by Brad K. Blitz, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2006), p. 226.

<sup>79</sup> In fact the relevance of the formulated mandate of the international force to the necessities in the field and the overall success of the Operation Alba became subject to criticism after it was completed. Fatmir Mema, "Did Albania Really Need Operation 'Alba'?", Security Dialogue, vol. 29, no. 1, 1998, pp. 59-62.

<sup>80</sup> Italics added. In their assessment report of May 1997 The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) clearly stated the situation in the field as "[t]he ICRC has repeatedly stressed that *the most urgent needs in Albania are not of a humanitarian nature*. International military and political efforts should focus on *restoring law and order, re-establishing the national administration and putting State and commercial distribution systems back in operation*. Once this is done, needs will decrease and the situation in humanitarian terms will rapidly improve." "The ICRC Operation in Albania", International Peacekeeping, vol. 4, no. 3, 1997, p. 121.

resolution were limited to the provision of security to allow for the distribution of humanitarian aid as well as the actual delivery of that aid.

Although disappointed with the level of commitment provided by the UN Security Council resolution, the Albanian state more than welcomed the international force, as the situation was turning desperate for both the regime and the population. Moreover, given that NATO, the EU and the US had not responded to their calls for help, the Albanians had no choice but to go with the only viable alternative, i.e., an international military force composed of interested states. For this reason, the Albanian government had not hesitated to join in sponsoring the draft resolution, despite its limited mandate. In this action, Albania constituted an extraordinary example of a state insistently inviting an international military force to intervene in the country in order to help it cope with domestic insecurity and state failure.

By March 1997, Albania's enduring weakness had reached its nadir, and desperation prevailed over all policy options. Despite its limited mandate, the international military force made an important contribution to improving security and stability in Albania. The MPF troops did not execute any operations to arrest or disarm specific individuals who represented a security threat, nor did it conduct patrols to secure specific areas of the country; however, their mere presence in the country together with international organisations like the OSCE had a psychological impact on the Albanian population as well as the Albanian state that was in itself enough to encourage a peaceful resolution and the restoration of order.

Another important element that contributed to the relative success of the international military and civilian presence in Albania was the support they received from the political élite and almost all other parts of society. There was a consensus among the élite over the necessity of deploying an international force to secure Albania, as security was the *sine qua non* for the normalisation of political processes in the country. The political élite was willing to cooperate with the OSCE in order to achieve reconciliation in the political arena, and the relative stability realised after the deployment of the MPF helped create an environment conducive to addressing the political problems and preparing for the elections. Parliament was dissolved, the election system rearranged, and on 21 May 1997 the

parties started to campaign for elections that were scheduled to begin at the end of June.

The elections,<sup>81</sup> which were dominated by discussions over compensation for the losses from the pyramid schemes, were held as planned on 29 June and 6 July 1997 without any major incidents. The OSCE and the Council of Europe monitored the elections, and despite some problems faced in the second round, the OSCE declared the elections to be “acceptable given the prevailing circumstances.”<sup>82</sup> The SP and its officially pardoned leader Fatos Nano won the elections with relative ease, with the DP suffering heavy losses in terms of total votes as well as seats in the parliament. With 52.71 per cent of the votes, the SP won 101 seats in the 140 seat parliament; the DP, 25.82 per cent and 24 seats; the Social Democratic Party, 2.49 per cent and nine seats; the Union for Human Rights, 2.71 per cent and four seats; Balli Kombetar (the National Front), 2.34 per cent and three seats; the Legality Movement, 3.28 per cent and two seats; the Democratic Alliance, 2.73 per cent and two seats; five seats were shared between three other parties; and three seats went to independents.<sup>83</sup> Berisha accepted defeat and left the presidency.

The last units of the international military force left Albania on 11 August 1997 after the election process was complete, whereupon domestic politics once again became polarised, falling into the familiar habit of parliamentary boycotts, politically motivated assaults and tough discussions over a new constitution. The new government was still faced with economic and political problems. In the economic sphere, the Albanian population, most of whom had lost their savings as a result of the pyramid schemes, expected the new government to offer them some kind of compensation or pay them back for their losses. However, the Albanian

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<sup>81</sup> Interestingly, in a parallel referendum the Albanians voted for whether or not to restore the monarchy in the country as the King Zog’s son Leka Zog participated in the political campaign to attract votes for his cause; however, he could not realise his aim as the voters voted 66.74 percent against changing of the regime and 33.26 for the monarchy. “Final Results of the Referendum”, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB), EE, 2972, B/1, 16 July 1997.

<sup>82</sup> “Final Report Parliamentary Elections in Albania 29 June-6July 1997”, p. 1, [http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/1997/08/1181\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/1997/08/1181_en.pdf).

<sup>83</sup> Human Development Report Albania 1998, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), p. 67.

government had barely enough resources to finance the necessary government spending, and the only funds available for compensation were those in the frozen assets of the pyramid schemes, which would cover only a small amount of the losses and require time to be made available.<sup>84</sup> Politically, institutional changes were needed to strengthen the Albania judiciary and law enforcement in order to preserve stability and prevent the country from rolling back into another severe domestic crisis. Strengthening the weak state institutions was seen as essential for a sustainable recovery, and to do this, foreign support was essential, as Albania was too weak to rely on its own capacity.

Thus, in the post-conflict recovery process, Albania became very dependent on the presence and assistance of international actors. In the political and administrative realms, the OSCE had been actively involved in the elections, helping to mediate between the political parties and coordinate international efforts in the country. The EU helped Albania by providing economic aid and establishing a WEU Multinational Advisory Police Element (MAPE) mission for training and capacity-building of the police.<sup>85</sup> The international financial institutions assisted the Albanian government in terms of macro-economic policies and structural economic reforms. The Albanian government made clear its intentions of requesting the necessary foreign financial assistance and its willingness to work with the international financial institutions for the restoration and development of the economy after the crisis.<sup>86</sup> The IMF provided Albania credit under an

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<sup>84</sup> Albanian government hired international auditing firms Deloitte & Touche in November 1997 to audit and liquidate assets of the biggest pyramid investment schemes and later hired Coopers & Lybrand firm for to work on the smaller ones. The estimated amount for the money refunds for the investors would be 10-15 percent. "Dismantle with Care", *The Economist*, 9 May 1998, p. 112. Also see Jarvis, *op.cit.*, p. 19-21.

<sup>85</sup> The WEU Council decided on the establishment of the MAPE mission in Albania and later after the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between WEU and Albanian authorities on 24 June 1997 the WEU staff began training and advise on reconstruction of the Albanian police force.

<sup>86</sup> The Prime Minister Fatos Nano in a statement at the IMF-World Bank Meeting stated that the external financial support as critical factor to achieve success in fiscal policy and in general, doing the structural adjustments in Albania. Statement by Fatos Nano, Board of Governors Annual Meeting, Hong Kong, 3 October 1997.

Emergency Post-Conflict Assistance fund and supported the government's economic program.<sup>87</sup>

Given that the priority of the Albanian state was simply to survive after the disastrous crisis it had experienced, its foreign policy goals were shaped around securing whatever support it could to help in the country's recovery. International organisations, although very much controlled by other states' policies towards Albania, became the major instruments in providing humanitarian and economic assistance and mediating in the domestic political arena. Later, as the regional balances began to shift with the rising tension in Kosovo, the involvement of international actors expanded. In September 1998, under the co-chairmanship of the OSCE and the EU, the Friends of Albania was formed as an informal, open-ended grouping of interested donor-countries and international organisations.<sup>88</sup> International actors were intent on ensuring that Albania did not experience any new crisis of a magnitude of the 1997 incidents, especially once the Albanian Question began to move to the forefront of the regional agenda in the Balkans.

By far the foremost incident in the post-crisis political environment in Albania was the violent protests of DP supporters that followed the murder of the prominent Democratic Party MP Azem Hajdari on 12 September 1998. The DP supporters claimed the murder was part of an attempted *coup d'état*,<sup>89</sup> and the subsequent riots led to a brief power vacuum in the country. The government was ultimately able to control the incidents and remain in power; however, Fatos Nano lost his political credibility as a result of his ineffectiveness during the political crisis, and he resigned from office on 28 September 1998. Nano was

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<sup>87</sup> "IMF Approves Emergency Post Conflict Assistance for Albania", International Monetary Fund, Press Release 97/51, Washington D.C., 7 November 1997.

<sup>88</sup> In the Friends of Albania Group Terms of Reference text the founding aim of the group was described as "to reinforce and focus international attention in supporting Albania in its efforts to consolidate the democratic process, achieve stability and security and further economic development" and the group would work for as an informal forum for consultation and policy coordination. Friends of Albania Group Terms of Reference, Friends of Albania Meeting, Brussels, 30 October 1998. The group was initially consisted of 24 countries and 8 international organisations and regularly met six times until 2002. Then the mechanism was left for the Stabilisation and Association Process of the EU.

<sup>89</sup> For the details of the incidents and the attempted *coup d'état* see; Pettifer and Vickers, 2007, op.cit., pp. 158-70.

replaced as prime minister by Pandeli Majko, who was one of the leading representatives of the younger generation of SP members. The coup attempt and its repercussions highlighted, once again, the fragility of the Albanian political space and the country's potential for instability.

#### **6.4 Albania and the Kosovo Crisis: Creating Opportunity out of Crisis**

As tensions rose in the Balkans, the major concern with regard to Albania was what policy it would adopt towards Kosovo, because Albania's answer to this question would have wider repercussions in the region. In fact, after the 1997 crisis, Albania was weakened to the point where it was barely able to act in the international arena in any way other than that related to its own domestic stability and economic recovery. Until the establishment of the Friends of Albania group in early 1998 and its securing of a place on NATO's agenda, Albania felt alone and isolated in the international arena.<sup>90</sup> The escalation of armed incidents in Kosovo represented a clear security problem for Albania. The Albanian government did not have the capacity to cope with a possible perceived military threat from Serbia, and it could not in itself provide the political support that fellow Albanians in Kosovo required in the international arena. However, as the US became increasingly concerned with the situation in Kosovo, Albania began to regain its importance for the Americans.

In fact, the 'hands-off' policy pursued by the US and NATO in relation to Albania proved to be temporary, coming to an end once domestic stability had been reassured and the government had changed hands following the elections.<sup>91</sup> Although Washington had not had close contact with the SP since the regime change, it did not hesitate to work together bilaterally with the party when it came to power as a result of the 1997 elections, which happened to coincide with the escalation in the Kosovo conflict. Thus, once again, Albania was able to attract the

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<sup>90</sup> "Albania Feels Lonely", The Economist, 9 May 1998.

<sup>91</sup> Ryan C. Hendrickson, "Albania and NATO: Regional Security and Selective Intervention", Security Dialogue, vol. 30, no.1, 1999, p. 112.

attention of a great power due to the changing international conjuncture and rising instability in the Balkans.

As the armed clashes in Kosovo began to spread, the Kosovar Albanians were subjected to constantly growing repression on the part of Serbian security forces and the Milošević regime.<sup>92</sup> Those Kosovar Albanians who were able to escape the conflict began to cross the border between Albania and Kosovo to seek refuge. At the same time, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), the guerrilla group fighting the Serbian security forces, was using Albanian territory to train and to procure weapons.<sup>93</sup> The Albanian government had minimal control over Albania's borders with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), and as a result, the Kosovar Albanians were easily able to cross the border, as were the Serbian security forces, which occasionally infiltrated Albania to pursue KLA guerrillas.

In early May 1998, NATO members discussed their options regarding military assistance to Albania and the deployment of a force to help the Albanians by operating aerial reconnaissance flights to monitor the border with the FRY, a task that was realised under Operation Determined Falcon. On 15 June 1998, 85 aircraft from 13 NATO countries took off from 15 bases across Europe and carriers in the Adriatic Sea to conduct flyover exercises around Albania and Macedonia's border regions with Serbia as a show of support for Albania.<sup>94</sup> In response to requests from Tirana, NATO also opened a PfP Cell in Albania on 1 June 1998 to increase the level of cooperation. Although NATO did not deploy troops to Albania as part of a ground attack on Kosovo or to deter a Serbian assault

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<sup>92</sup> For an in depth analysis of the Slobodan Milošević and the Serbian security forces' strategic and political approaches, and military strategies towards Kosovo see; James Gow, The Serbian Project and Its Adversaries: A Strategy of War Crimes, (Hurst & Company: London, 2003).

<sup>93</sup> As of September 1997 the initial Ministry of Defense estimates concerning damages to military arms facilities and the lost arms during the 1997 crisis was; 1,200 military depots were destroyed, with around 652,000 weapons of different calibres, 1.5 billion rounds of ammunition, 3.5 million hand grenades, 3,600 tons of explosive devices and one million mines were looted from these depots and substantial number of these arms were sold in the illegal market and ended up in Kosovo and in the hands of UÇK guerrillas. Turning the Page: Small Arms and Light Weapons in Albania, Center for Peace and Disarmament Education and Safer World, December 2005, pp. 6-9.

<sup>94</sup> NATO officials described exercise as "intended to demonstrate the alliance's commitment to peace and stability in the region and [our] ability to project power into the region," Operation Determined Falcon, [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/determined\\_falcon.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/determined_falcon.htm).

on Albania, Albania was included in NATO's strategic planning when the Alliance started its air strikes on Kosovo with Operation Allied Force.

Albania followed a difficult and cautious policy during the escalating tension in Kosovo,<sup>95</sup> attempting to maintain a balanced position by providing all possible political, diplomatic and humanitarian support to the Kosovar Albanians while at the same time trying not to provoke any further intensification of the conflict. Aware that it was the great powers that would determine the outcome of the Kosovo conflict, Tirana adopted a policy that was closely aligned with those of Western governments, in particular, the US. Despite the internationalisation of the issue, the US and the Western countries made it clear that they were against any idea of independence or unification of Kosovo with Albania.<sup>96</sup> The Albanian government made it clear that while it was not interested in unification with Kosovo, it supported the Kosovar's right to self-determination in the future.

During the summer of 1998, international involvement in finding a solution to the Kosovo conflict rose in parallel to the increasing tensions. Despite UN Security Council attempts to contain the conflict<sup>97</sup> and the deployment of an OSCE verification mission to monitor a brokered agreement for the substantial reduction in Serbian forces in the region and create an opportunity to negotiate for greater self-rule for Kosovo,<sup>98</sup> the security situation did not improve. NATO threats of a possible military intervention in Kosovo were unable to influence the progress of the conflict in the field. In a final attempt to achieve a negotiated settlement between the parties to the conflict, an international conference was convened in

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<sup>95</sup> Miranda Vickers, "Tirana's Uneasy Role in the Kosovo Crisis (March 1998-March 1999)", in Kosovo: Myths, Conflict and War, edited by Kyril Drezov, Bülent Gökay and Denisa Kostavicova, Keele European Research Centre, Southeast Europe Series, 1999, pp. 31-2.

<sup>96</sup> İlhan Uzgel, "Kosovo: Politics of Nationalism and the Question of International Intervention", Turkish Review of Balkan Studies, vol. 4, 1998, p. 226.

<sup>97</sup> UNSC passed two resolutions in March (UNSC Resolution 1160) and September 1998 (UNSC Resolution 1199) mainly condemning the Serbian violence and calling for ending of use of force in Kosovo as well advising to take necessary measures to restore peace and stability in Kosovo. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1160, S/RES/1160 (1998), 31 March 1998 and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1199, S/RES/1199 (1998), 23 September 1998.

<sup>98</sup> "Another Chapter Opens in Kosovo", The Economist, 17 October 1998, pp. 49-50.

Rambouillet. The Rambouillet talks started on 6 February 1999 and continued into March 1999, ending just before the NATO intervention in Kosovo.

The Rambouillet conference brought the Serbs, the Kosovar Albanians and the international community together in an attempt to resolve the Kosovo crisis. Albania provided diplomatic support to the Kosovar Albanians, and in doing so, Albania's political leaders maintained close contact with the US and other Western governments.<sup>99</sup> Not only did the Rambouillet process bring Albania and the Kosovar Albanians closer together, it also contributed to the enhancement of Albania's role as an actor in the international arena.

When the NATO campaign in Kosovo started on 23 March 1999, Albania was faced with a massive influx of Kosovar Albanian refugees. Coping with more than 430,000 refugees was an enormous economic, political and logistical challenge for the weak Albanian state,<sup>100</sup> and it was the US that was first to react by sending immediate humanitarian aid to Albania and military support personnel to both Albania and Macedonia to help in the ongoing NATO air operations.<sup>101</sup> Shortly thereafter, NATO launched Operation Allied Harbour, the initial forces of which began arriving in Albania on 9-10 April 1999. Within the framework of Operation Allied Harbour, the NATO force established a humanitarian mission to Albania, the AFOR, whose headquarters were based in Durrës.<sup>102</sup> The US also

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<sup>99</sup> Pettifer and Vickers, 2007, *op.cit.*, p. 205. Albanian Foreign Minister Paskal Milo personally involved in persuading the Kosovar Albanian delegation to sign the Rambouillet Agreement when there was disagreements among the delegation. Tim Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge*, Second Edition, (Yale Nota Bene: New Haven, [2000], 2002), p. 216.

<sup>100</sup> After the Kosovo crisis the G-24, EU and international financial institutions assessed the economic impacts of the Kosovo crisis on Albanian economy and created some funds for helping the Albanian economy to overcome the negative ramifications of the crisis. For the details of the economic assessments see, "The Impact of the Kosovo Conflict on Albania" Report prepared by the European Commission, World Bank and the IMF, Albania: Emergency Joint G-24/Consultative Group Meeting, Brussels, 26 May 1999; and "Albania: Impact of the Kosovo Crisis" Report prepared by the Europe and Central region of the World Bank for Sector Donors Meeting, 9 July 1999. For the Albania's approach to the economic impact of the crisis see the Albanian Minister of Finance's article; Anastas Angjeli, "The Impact and Economic Cost to Albania of the Crisis in Kosovo", *Mediterranean Quarterly*, vol. 10, no. 3, 1999, pp. 7-14.

<sup>101</sup> "Letter to Congressional Leaders reporting on the Decision to Send Certain United States Forces to Macedonia and Albania", President William J. Clinton, 4 April 1999.

<sup>102</sup> United States, Britain, Italy, France, Germany, Greece, Turkey, Austria, Slovakia the United Arab Emirates, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Hungary, Canada, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland participated the operation. For

deployed a force to contribute to NATO attacks on Serbia and to help with AFOR activities, which included humanitarian aid and medical support to refugees. The US military force, Task Force Hawk, was comprised of AH-64A Apache attack helicopters and other security support units based in Rinas Airport, Tirana.<sup>103</sup> When the US force deployment ended in May, the Apache crews started training for deep-strike missions against Serb forces in Kosovo; however, in the end, this force was never used in the Kosovo military operations.

The already good public image the US enjoyed among Albanians was dramatically raised by the lead taken by the US in the NATO operation in Kosovo, the US military presence in Albania and its provision of direct humanitarian aid, added to which was the airlift of around 20,000 Albanian refugees to the US. Once again, the US had become the trusted great power for Albania and the Albanians. Thus, the Kosovo intervention and the developments that followed created a favorable environment in which Albania was able to move forward to further ally itself with the US.

## **6.5 Conclusions**

Of all the countries undergoing transition processes in the post-Cold War period, Albania experienced one of the most traumatic. Not only did regional problems create difficulties for a weak Albania, the domestic attempts to transform the country politically and economically went so drastically wrong that Albania itself became a problem and a source of instability in the Balkans. As a result of economic breakdown, by early 1997, state authority had disappeared and domestic disorder prevailed in almost all parts of Albania. These developments were, in fact, the manifestation of Albania's transition from a weak small state to a

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the details of the Operation Allied Harbour and AFOR activities in the field between 9 April-31 August 1999 period see the related web site;  
<http://www.afsouth.nato.int/operations/harbour/default.htm>.

<sup>103</sup> The US deployed around 5,000 US military personnel in Albania as part of the Task Force Hawk.

dysfunctional one – a ‘failed state’<sup>104</sup> in Europe whose survival was once again at stake.

In spite of Albania’s attempts to develop a two-pillar foreign policy, when the pyramid-schemes crisis broke, neither the Euro-Atlantic structures nor the US were initially willing to become directly involved. Eventually, however, foreign intervention was required to help stabilise the country and provide humanitarian aid. International military intervention in Albania’s domestic crisis came at the request of the Albanian state. International organisations and the ‘coalition of the willing’ proved vital for the restoration of stability and order in Albania, which was transformed into a virtual protectorate of the international community, on which it became economically, politically and militarily dependent.

Just as its domestic crisis was coming to an end, Albania was faced with problems related to what became known as ‘the Albanian Question’ in the Balkans. Despite its weakness, Albania was able to make use of the conflict in Kosovo as it evolved into a regional crisis in order to obtain additional support and improve its relations with the US. In doing so, Albania benefitted from its small state foreign policy experience and the regional conjuncture; however, as the subsequent circumstances indicated, it is still the great powers that are in charge of the direction of their relations with small states. As US priorities shifted, so did US policy towards Albania. However, as long as it would be able to manoeuvre its policies to coincide with those of the US within the framework of regional and international developments, Albania, as a small state, would succeed in its quest for support from the US.

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<sup>104</sup> The piece in the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) publication *Strategic Comments* published in May 1997 described Albania in crisis as a failed European state. “The Crisis in Albania: A Failed European State”, *Strategic Comments*, vol. 3, no. 4, May 1997, pp. 1-2.

## CHAPTER 7

### REPRODUCING ASYMMETRIC RELATION: BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES; AND THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS

#### 7.1 Pro-Americanism in Albanian Foreign Policy

The post-pyramid-schemes crisis and Kosovo intervention periods appeared as a phase in the rehabilitation of Albanian-US relations. Although bilateral relations had never reached a point of direct political confrontation or conflict of vital interests between the two countries, the already lukewarm relations between the DP and the United States cooled even further as the US reacted to Berisha's ever-increasing authoritarianism. Despite the fact that the US did not want to play a particularly active role in the process of international response to the 1997 crisis, Albanians did not make this an issue in their approach to relations with Washington.

Following the pyramid schemes crisis, the US began to take a more balanced approach towards the Albanian domestic political arena, moving away from the DP, to which it had been inclined since the beginning of the regime-transition process. The SP and the US administration had not had a close relationship, as the US was clearly committed to supporting the DP, whereas the SP, which continued to harbour remnants of the anti-US position of the previous regime, remained cold to the US. However, with the major political changes that followed the crisis, the SP's subsequent rise to power, and the heightening tension in Kosovo,<sup>1</sup> what had been a far from cordial relationship between the SP and the

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<sup>1</sup> Ryan C. Hendrickson, "Albania and NATO: Regional Security and Selective Intervention", *Security Dialogue*, vol. 30, no.1, 1999, p. 113.

US began to improve. Washington officials acted pragmatically, conveying signals to the new government that they were willing to work with it in the new era.

In abandoning their preferential treatment of the DP, the Americans created a more neutral atmosphere that would increase their chances of working harmoniously with different governments. This unexpected shift in US policy contributed to a change in attitude on the part of the SP cadres, which were conscious of the political and economic importance the US held for Albania as well as for their government. Initially, Berisha and the DP criticised the US for failing to provide the support that would have helped them to remain in power; however, the political realities would not allow them to remain distanced from the US, which was perceived as the most influential foreign political actor in the Albanian domestic political space. This perceived importance of the Americans obliged all the political parties and politicians in Albania to do their utmost to give the Albanian public the impression that they had the support of the US.

The US move to a more balanced approach towards the two leading political parties also helped the DP and SP to move towards consensus in their foreign policy lines. Eventually, with the support of other political parties, they arrived at a bipartisan foreign policy in which Euro-Atlantic integration and relations with the US that came as close as possible to a strategic partnership were established as Albania's primary foreign policy goals.<sup>2</sup> This consensus worked well during the Kosovo crisis and the subsequent international intervention, as the SP-led coalition government acted together with the US and its allies.

The Kosovo intervention boosted the already good image of the US in the eyes of all Albanians. The Kosovar Albanians trusted the US and wanted its support for their cause. Despite the disappointment of Dayton, Albanians viewed the US as the country that could make a difference in Kosovo. The Europeans had

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<sup>2</sup> The government program for 2005-2009 clearly states the Albanian commitment to the Euro-Atlantic integration as “[t]he whole of the Government’s program is designed and will be implemented with the determination to achieve all the required standards that will lead to full membership in the European Union and in NATO, in the near future” and the US support for appear as critically important for Albania to achieve this foreign policy objective. Article 40, “Government Program 2005-2009 Presented in the Albanian Parliament”, 08 September 2005, Tirana, for the text see; Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs web site, [http://www.mfa.gov.al/english/programi.asp#\\_Toc114360482](http://www.mfa.gov.al/english/programi.asp#_Toc114360482).

a bad record during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and had since been unable to regain the respect of the Balkan nations. In contrast, the US-led intervention perpetuated the already high level of warmth and trust felt for the US among all Albanians in the Balkans. Already possessing the reputation as saviour of the Albanian state during the time of its formation, the US extended its prestige, this time as the saviour of the Kosovo Albanians from Serbian repression. It was as if US-Albanian relations were experiencing another 'Wilson Era,' only this time, it was with Bill Clinton as US president.<sup>3</sup> The reputation of the US would later be further extended thanks to the strong support it gave to the Kosovar Albanians' political cause of declaring independence and breaking from Serbia.

As the pro-American sentiments grew among Albanians, so did their relations with the United States, which became the major supporter of Kosovo's independence within the Contact Group. The intensified relations gave the US the opportunity to establish a base in Kosovo at Camp Bondsteel, which was founded in southeastern Kosovo as a base for American soldiers serving in KFOR. The camp became the first of its kind for the US in the Balkans and constituted an important strategic asset in the changing strategic environment.<sup>4</sup> In spite of the fact that Albania had persistently and enthusiastically invited the US to set up a similar military facility within Albania proper, the Americans had opted for Kosovo as a

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<sup>3</sup> Kosovar Albanians love the US president Bill Clinton whom they see as the leader behind the initiation of the NATO intervention to Kosovo and they embrace his presence every time he visits Kosovo and as a show of their appreciation one of the main boulevards of Prishtina is named after him as 'Clinton Boulevard' and his statue raised there as well. Marc Lacey, "Clinton, Saluting Kosovo Albanians, Urges Forgiveness", New York Times, 24 November 1999, "Thousands Greet Bill Clinton in Kosovo", Associated Press, 19 September 2003, "Kosovo to Honor Bill Clinton with Statue", Reuters, 23 May 2007. The visits of the highest level US statesmen always welcomed and attract wide support of the Albanians as it was the case with the Secretary of State James Baker's visit to Albania in 1991 and Bill Clinton's visits to Kosovo in 1999 as president and in 2003 as an ex-president. Even the last visit was made long after Bill Clinton had left the office, he attracted too much attention and cheers from the Albanian crowds in Kosovo.

<sup>4</sup> US made agreements with Bulgaria and Romania to have new bases in the region on top of the Camp Bondsteel as part of new military reorganisation that aims more flexible force structure based in strategically located 'forward operating sites'. "After Iraq, New U.S. Military Model", International Herald Tribune, 26 December 2006. The new US bases in the region are hosting the Joint Task Force-East which has the task to maintain a U.S. military presence near the Black Sea and Caucasus. "U.S. Troops Head for Bulgaria, Romania in Summer 07", Albanian Daily News, 19 March 2007. Recently Camp Bondsteel appeared in the news as one of the suspected US military and intelligence operation destination containing a Guantanamo type detention facility inside. "US Denies Guantanamo-style Prison in Kosovo", ABC News Online, 27 November 2005.

strategic choice for the long-term.<sup>5</sup> Still, their inability to persuade Americans to open a base in Albania did not deter the Albanian leadership from pursuing the US as their major source of foreign support or alter their belief in the possibility of developing a cliental relationship with the US similar to Albania's former relationships with Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union and China.

In most instances, the post-Cold War issues related to the Albanian Question were resolved in favour of the Albanians in the region. Although the Kosovar Albanians had long suffered from the extensive brutality of the Serbian security forces and had been largely ignored during negotiations over the future of the severed parts of the former Yugoslavia, in the end, the conflict between the Kosovar Albanians and Serbs was transformed in favour of the Albanians, who were able to draw international actors, particularly the US, to their side.

Shortly after the Kosovo crisis, the Albanians living in Macedonia became involved in a similar clash with the Macedonian state over their rights and status in the country. In March 2001, the rising tension in Macedonia turned into a hot conflict, as Albanians took up arms against the Macedonian security forces. The Albanians were demanding not only an enhancement of minority rights, but a common state with the Macedonians, whereas the Macedonian state was willing to offer substantial improvements in political and social rights for the Albanian minority that would bring them to the highest minority standards. But the disagreements continued and a consensus could not be reached, once again, ethnic tension stemming from Albanian demands took another small state in the Balkans to the brink of chaos and civil war.

The crisis in Macedonia was perceived as yet another episode in the lingering Albanian Question in the Balkans. The international community became involved in first containing and then ending the armed conflict in Macedonia by convincing the parties to resolve the issue at the negotiation table. Through the moderation of US and EU representatives, a cease-fire was brokered in July 2001.

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<sup>5</sup> In an analysis of the future Kosovo foreign policy which was raised in a round-table discussion, one of the four long term objectives of independent Kosovo's foreign policy objectives is referred as '[b]uilding a privileged partnership with the United States of America'. Lulzim Peci, "Kosovo's Foreign Policy: Strategic Factors, Objectives and Challenges" in Kosovo's Foreign Policy: Kosovo's post-status Foreign Policy, Prishtina, 2007, p. 36.

On 13 August 2001, the Macedonian government and the representatives of the Albanian community signed the Ohrid Framework Agreement,<sup>6</sup> which put an end to the armed conflict, ensuring the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Macedonian state while improving the civil rights of Albanians and their representation in multi-ethnic state structures through “constitutional amendments and other legislative modifications” that were guaranteed under the framework agreement.<sup>7</sup>

The situation of the Albanians in the Balkans has been a concern among the regional states as well as international actors since the early 1990s. At the heart of the matter has been the Albanian national question – the problems related to the division of Albanians in the region and the concurrent suspicions regarding an Albanian irredentism that might aim to unify them. The idea of a so-called ‘Greater Albania’ became a major issue in regional and international politics, with the Serbs and Macedonians, in particular, raising concerns about Albania’s designs on the Albanian-populated regions in Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro and even Greece. Rising Albanian nationalism was perceived by Albania’s neighbours as a major threat to their territorial integrity and sovereignty as well as to regional peace and security. While the ethnic Albanians in different countries took a variety of positions on unification under a single Albanian state, international actors were almost united in their firm opposition to such a design, which was considered a change substantial enough to shift the regional *status quo* and alter the uneasily maintained balances in the Balkans. Even the US and other Western powers that were providing political and economic support to Albania and were contributing strongly to the realisation of Kosovar Albanian independence were against any unification of ethnic Albanians and the establishment of a Greater Albania.

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<sup>6</sup> For the text and the details of the implementation process of the Framework Agreement see the official web page of the Government of Republic of Macedonia Secretariat for the Implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement; <http://siofa.gov.mk/default-en.asp> or alternatively for the text log on [http://faq.macedonia.org/politics/framework\\_agreement.pdf](http://faq.macedonia.org/politics/framework_agreement.pdf). For analyses about the armed clashes, negotiations and initial implementation of the Ohrid Agreement see; Ohrid and Beyond: A Cross-ethnic Investigation into the Macedonian Crisis, (Institute for War & Peace Reporting: London, 2002). Also see; “Macedonia: No Room for Complacency”, International Crisis Group (ICG) Europe Report No. 149, Skopje/Brussels, 23 October 2003.

<sup>7</sup> See the Annexes A and B of the Framework Agreement.

However, as far as the Albanian nationalists were concerned, the reunification of the Albanians, who had been split apart by the arrangements of neighbouring countries and their great power allies, would correct an historical mistake by providing them with their well-deserved state encompassing all the territories historically inhabited by Albanians. In this sense, the nationalists reject the idea of Greater Albania because for them, indisputably, Greater Albania *is* Albania.

Although debates over a Greater Albania were rising, the Albanian government was careful not to pursue an official policy of support for the unification of Albanians in the Balkans, since this would have provoked a reaction from the international community. Considering that Albanians had been separated and lived in today's Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece, unification was unrealistic. The communication and interaction between the Albanians of Albania proper and the Albanians living in neighbouring countries was limited, and the political and social developments of the different Albanian communities had followed different historical paths under different regimes and state policies.

Despite the romantic aspect of nationalism that bound together the Albanians, at the end of the day, the differences between their communities and their political priorities emerged as important obstacles to unification. In the current "highly decentralised" Albanian space, organising Albanians under a coordinated political authority when they are, in general, used to the idea of separate Albanian entities in the Balkans would not be easy,<sup>8</sup> as their interests seem to lie in preserving their separate entities and enhancing cross-border relations among them. In this sense, rather than Greater Albania, current concepts such as 'pan-Albanianism' and 'the new Albanian space' are better able to describe the interaction among Albanians in the contemporary Balkans.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> James Pettifer and Miranda Vickers, The Albanian Question: Reshaping the Balkans, (I.B. Tauris: London, 2007), pp. 263, 265.

<sup>9</sup> For a critical review of the 'Greater Albania' understanding of the Serbs and the Western countries see; ibid., pp. 257-66.

In fact, the ideal of a Greater Albania has mainly been supported by Albanian nationalists living outside Albania.<sup>10</sup> From Albania's communist regime onwards, the creation of a Greater Albania has never been the official policy of the Albanian state. Not only has the idea been seen by contemporary Albanian decisionmakers as unrealistic, it has been viewed as having the potential to negatively affect Albania's goals of Euro-Atlantic integration and its bilateral relations with neighbouring countries, the US and other Western states that support the *status quo* in the region.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, not a single mainstream political party in the Albanian space has publicly advocated the idea of unification of all Albanians under a Greater Albanian state.<sup>12</sup>

True, at the initial stages of the regime change in Albania, nationalist politicians regarded the possibility with enthusiasm, as the following statement by Berisha from early 1991 demonstrates:

The Democratic Party of Albania cannot accept the division of the Albanian nation as eternal; therefore, it will struggle by peaceful means and within the context of the processes of integration in Europe to realise their rights for progress and national unity.<sup>13</sup>

However, no Albanian government has ever been powerful or committed enough to pursue such a policy, and any politicians to adopt such sharp nationalistic rhetoric have felt obliged to change their stance after coming to power. Although support for the independence of Kosovo has existed among the public in Albania, the same has not been the case for the Albanian separatist movements in southern

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<sup>10</sup> Paulin Kola, 2003, The Search for Greater Albania, (Hurst & Company: London, 2003), p. 394.

<sup>11</sup> Robert C. Austin, "Greater Albania: The Albanian State and the Question of Kosovo, 1912-2001", in Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe, edited by John R. Lampe and Mark Mazover, (CEU Press: Budapest, 2004), p. 246.

<sup>12</sup> Tim Judah, "Greater Albania?", Survival, vol. 43, no. 2, 2001, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> Berisha's statement published in the party's newspaper Rilindja Demokratike, on 5 January 1991 referred in Elez Biberaj, "The Albanian National Question: The Challenges of Autonomy, Independence and Separatism", in The New European Diasporas: National Minorities and Conflict in Eastern Europe, edited by Michael Mandelbaum, (Council on Foreign Relations Press: New York, 2000), p. 246.

Serbia or Macedonia.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, any solid, overall influence of the Albanian state over the various Albanian-inhabited areas in the Balkans tends to be more symbolic than real.<sup>15</sup>

Albania's enduring weaknesses as a state, combined with the regional conflict in the Balkans and the intensive international conjecture that ran simultaneous to Albania's transition process, were not conducive to the development and implementation of a pan-Albanian nationalist policy line. On the contrary, Albanian governments denied that the idea of Greater Albania had any place on their agenda and tried to distance themselves from any attempt to link them to this idea. In a publication of the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Minister Paskal Milo repudiated the idea that Albania had any interests in unifying Albanians under a common state:

In the official policy of the Government of Albania there is not, nor has been, any reference to or any aim at the creation of a 'Greater Albania'. On the contrary, there have been clear and unequivocal statements that such an idea is counterproductive and contrary to the objectives of Albania to be integrated into a United Europe.<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, despite the hesitancy felt by the majority of Albanians or the reluctance of the Albanian state to implement a nationalistic policy, the idea of a Greater Albania has not necessarily been permanently removed from their agendas.

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<sup>14</sup> "Pan-Albanianism: How Big Threat to Balkan Stability?", International Crisis Group (ICG) Europe Report, no. 153, Tirana/Brussels, 25 February 2004, p. 12. Albanians who are living in the southern Serbia also have problems with the Serbian state and a paramilitary group named Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (UCPMB) gets in occasional clashes with the Serbian security forces.

<sup>15</sup> Miranda Vickers, "The Role of Albania in the Balkan Region", in Is There an Albanian Question?, edited by Judy Batt, (Chaillot Paper no. 107: Paris, 2008), p. 24.

<sup>16</sup> Paskal Milo, Greater-Albania—Between Fiction and Reality, (Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Tirana, 2001), quoted in Austin, 2004, op.cit., p. 250. Paskal Milo also emphasizes the importance of regional security and stability as a priority for Albania. Interview with Paskal Milo, 9 September 2005, Tirana. Albanian diplomats are also very careful not to give any impression of being supportive of any idea involving unification of Albanians in the Balkans. Interview with Lisen Bashkurti Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Head of Analysis and Prognosis Department, 6 September 2005, Tirana.

As far as international actors are concerned, the US and other Western countries, as well as Russia, have been very cautious in their approach towards the Kosovo issue in the aftermath of the Kosovo intervention. Apart from the Russians, who had closely associated their Kosovo policy with that of the Serbs, the other members of the Contact Group took a positive approach to the Kosovar Albanians' position of independence as a solution to the Kosovo problem. However, regardless of their position concerning an independent Kosovo, all the international parties involved in working for a solution – including Albania – were firmly against any unification of the Albanian-inhabited territories in the Balkans. Serbia, Macedonia and Russia were adamantly opposed to the idea of independence for Kosovo and breaking off any parts of Macedonia inhabited by ethnic Albanians, as well as any subsequent unification of these areas with Albania, whereas the US and most Western countries, while supporting Kosovo's independence, opposed any similar movement on the part of Albanian minorities in the region, especially in Macedonia, that might jeopardise regional stability.

The position of the Contact Group was made clear in October 2005 at the beginning of the negotiations over the future status of Kosovo. In its initial guiding principles, the Group made it clear that regional security and stability would not be affected by the process and that there would be no change in Kosovo's borders. Guiding Principle No. 6 states:

The settlement of Kosovo's status should strengthen regional security and stability. Thus, it will ensure that Kosovo does not return to the pre-March 1999 situation. Any solution that is unilateral or results from the use of force would be unacceptable. *There will be no changes in the current territory of Kosovo, i.e. no partition of Kosovo and no union of Kosovo with any country or part of any country.* The territorial integrity and internal stability of regional neighbours will be fully respected.<sup>17</sup>

This principle was later adopted by the United Nations Office of the Special Envoy for Kosovo (UNOSEC), which was responsible for carrying out negotiations between Serbia and the Kosovo Albanians over the future status of Kosovo, and

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<sup>17</sup> Italics added. "Guiding Principles of the Contact Group for a Settlement of the Status of Kosovo", Contact Group's Ten Guiding Principles for Ahtisaari Settlement of the Status of Kosovo, 7 October 2005.

included in the UNOSEC Final Comprehensive proposal for a Kosovo Status Settlement, as follows:

Article 1.8 Kosovo shall have no territorial claims against, and shall seek no union with, any State or part of any State.<sup>18</sup>

After the independence of Kosovo on 17 February 2008, this principle would be inserted into the newly promulgated Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, which was to enter into force on 15 June 2008 and that stated:

Chapter 1 (Basic Provisions), Article 1 (Definition of State), 3. The Republic of Kosovo shall have no territorial claims against, and shall seek no union with, any State or part of any State.<sup>19</sup>

In designing Kosovo's constitutional arrangements, the international community aimed to make absolutely sure that Kosovo would not merge with Albania and that no steps would be taken towards realising a Greater Albania. In the process of negotiating the future status of Kosovo, which at the time remained under UN administration, both the DP and SP led Albanian governments backed the Kosovar Albanian position on independence while supporting the international community's attempts to settle the issue.

Once the NATO intervention had concluded and Kosovar had been placed under an international administration, the international environment favoured the Kosovar Albanians, who had gotten the upper hand in shaping the future of Kosovo. In this situation, Albania did not need to do much in the international arena apart from expressing its support for the Kosovar Albanians' demand for independence. Albania was cautious not to be seen as promoting Albanian nationalism, but rather, tried to present the image of a state wishing to uphold stability, security and the inviolability of borders in the Balkans. Albanian

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<sup>18</sup> "Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement", UNOSEC S/2007/168/Add.1, 26 March 2007. For further information about the United Nations Office of the Special Envoy for Kosovo (UNOSEC) and the Special Envoy for Kosovo, Martti Ahtisaari, see official web page <http://www.unosek.org/unosek/index.html>.

<sup>19</sup> For text of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo see, <http://kushtetutakosoves.info/repository/docs/Constitution.of.the.Republic.of.Kosovo.pdf>.

politicians emphasized the importance of developing closer ties among all ethnic Albanians in the political, economic and social spheres, but they rejected any inclinations to change any border in the region.<sup>20</sup> Rather than the physical unification of Albanians in the Balkans, Albanian governments preferred to talk about the significance of enhancing cross-border communication and cooperation ‘within the Albanian space’. Above all, Albania stressed Euro-Atlantic integration and the development of closer relations with other regional states as its foreign-policy priorities.

Declaring solidarity and support without directly becoming involved in the various problems related to the Albanian minority in the Balkans was better suited to Albania’s overall foreign policy strategy, and the US appreciated Albania’s approach to these problems in general and to the Kosovo issue in particular. The State Department underlined the “moderating role” that Albania played in providing its “full support for the UN mediation efforts in Kosovo.”<sup>21</sup> Albania focused its attention on improving business, economic and cultural ties with Kosovo while it was under the UN administration<sup>22</sup> and, in line with the international community’s approach, supported conditional independence as the solution for Kosovo.<sup>23</sup> For the US, Albania regained the role it had had during the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state contributing to regional stability by not provoking Albanian nationalism in the region. The US approach to Albania added to the massive prestige and admiration felt towards the United States by all Albanians, and this popularity did not go unnoticed by Washington, as seen in a State Department background note on Albania, which acknowledged that “pro-US

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<sup>20</sup> “Pan-Albanianism: How Big Threat to Balkan Stability?”, International Crisis Group Europe Report No. 153, Tirana/Brussels, 25 February 2004, p. 11.

<sup>21</sup> “The U.S. Department of State Background Note: Albania”, The U.S. Department of State, January 2008, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3235.htm>.

<sup>22</sup> “Albania: State of the Nation”, International Crisis Group (ICG) Europe Report No. 140, Tirana/Brussels, 11 March 2003, p. 13.

<sup>23</sup> “Albania Country Profile 2006”, The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), (The Economist Intelligence Unit: London, 2006), pp. 17-8.

sentiment is widespread among the [Albanian] population.”<sup>24</sup> As one American analyst put forward, in a country with such an exceptional level of appreciation and admiration for the United States, it was appropriate for Washington to take the lead in supporting Albania in its efforts to integrate with Europe and Euro-Atlantic institutions.<sup>25</sup>

## 7.2 Reshaping of the Albanian-US Relations

Although its involvement in the Balkans had varied in intensity throughout the 1990s, the US had always been in the region to some extent. However, the terrorist attacks against the US on 11 September 2001 changed the United States’ foreign policy and security priorities on a worldwide basis, and as these priorities changed, the US presence and scope of involvement in the Balkans began to decrease.<sup>26</sup> US foreign policy began to focus on the ‘War on Terror,’ and policymakers shifted their attention to those regions and states that they associated with terrorism. The relative stability in the Balkans also allowed the US to pull out of the region and hand over the initiative to the Europeans and to the European Union. Thus, the US withdrew from Bosnia Herzegovina – but not from Kosovo, where the US was committed to keeping its forces.

Although US interest in the region may have declined, for the Albanians, the importance of the US has not lessened. As stated in the Political Program of the Albanian Government for the Period 2002-2005 prepared by the SP:

The partnership with the US is a constant priority of our foreign policy. Cooperation with American institutions, American representatives in international institutions or organizations, the expansion of space for absorbing American

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<sup>24</sup> “The U.S. Department of State Background Note: Albania”, The U.S. Department of State, January 2008, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3235.htm>.

<sup>25</sup> David L. Philips, “Albania”, American Foreign Policy Interests, vol. 27, 2005, pp. 312, 314.

<sup>26</sup> In the 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States America neither Balkans nor Southeast Europe ever referred. In the 2006 National Security Strategy of the United States America Balkans is only once mentioned in the context of NATO’s role in the region. National Security Strategy of the United States America, September 2002, and National Security Strategy of the United States America, March 2006.

capital in the Albanian market and the close cooperation with the specialized American agencies in development and in the fight against terrorism, organized crime or illegal trafficking will be further deepened.<sup>27</sup>

The DP Government Program for 2005-2009 similarly emphasizes the strategic significance of Albania's bilateral relations with the US and the Albanian government's clear intention of regarding Albania as a crucial ally to the US:

Relations with the United States remain of a *primary strategic importance* to us. The United States of America is an *indispensable ally* of Albania's new democracy. Albania will continue to offer its contribution with all its means in the Antiterrorism Coalition. With regard to the bilateral relations between two countries, there do exist all the conditions for a greater presence of American capital in the Albanian economy. The substantial assistance offered by the United States to Albania so far in the field of institution building and democracy and consolidation of the free market need to be complemented by American direct investments in the country, in particular in the strategic sectors of our economy. This objective will be a main priority of our bilateral relations with the United States of America.<sup>28</sup>

Albania has received substantial US aid since the beginning of the post-Cold War transition process. According to the US State Department, since 1991, Albania has received more than US\$ 616 million in aid, as well as additional food aid from the US Department of Agriculture.<sup>29</sup> Although the EU tops Albanian's donor list, American aid has been considerable and timely, particularly in the case of the vital economic assistance provided to Albania at the early stages of transition that helped guarantee the country's survival.

Despite the clear intention of 'absorbing' American capital, as stated in the Albanian Government's Political Program, the US share of foreign investment in Albania has been relatively small, particularly when compared to the United States' political significance for the country. Apart from large-scale infrastructure

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<sup>27</sup> "Political Program of the Albanian Government for the Period 2002 – 2005", Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs web page, (accessed and saved on 17 January 2004), <http://www.mfa.gov.al/english/programi.asp>.

<sup>28</sup> Italics added. "Government Program 2005-2009, Presented in the Albanian Parliament", 8 September 2005, Tirana, for the text see; Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs web site, [http://www.mfa.gov.al/english/programi.asp#\\_Toc114360482](http://www.mfa.gov.al/english/programi.asp#_Toc114360482)

<sup>29</sup> "The U.S. Department of State Background Note: Albania", The U.S. Department of State, January 2008, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3235.htm>.

investment by companies like Lockheed Martin and Bechtel,<sup>30</sup> the rather limited US investment and economic activity in Albania<sup>31</sup> has cast a shadow over the intense political relations between Albania and the US.<sup>32</sup> The US is not ranked among Albania's top foreign trade partners<sup>33</sup> – with shares of only 0.66 per cent and 0.79 per cent, respectively, of total import and total export in 2007, the US ranked only 21<sup>st</sup> in total volume of bilateral trade with Albania,<sup>34</sup> and as of 2005, according to the Southeast Europe Investment Guide, US investors accounted for only 2.4 per cent of the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) stock in Albania.<sup>35</sup>

Clearly, for Albania, the value of the US lies in the political and security spheres. Albanian governments have constantly sought US political support for Albania's Euro-Atlantic integration as well as for Albanian-related issues in the Balkans, especially in terms of diplomatic support for the Kosovar Albanians. For their part, the Albanians have supported and have tried to act in line with US policies regarding specific issues in the region.

As a small state, Albania has the policy option of expanding its influence by applying a nationalistic agenda in the adjacent regions and states in which

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<sup>30</sup> "Intensive Development of Economic and Trade Relations Albania-USA", Albanian Telegraphic Agency (ATA), 8 June 2007.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with the Ambassador of the United States to Tirana, Marcie B. Ries, 8 September 2005, Tirana.

<sup>32</sup> In fact in some instances even some of the rare long standing US investments have left Albania as it was the case with the American Bank of Albania whose majority of stakes sold to the Italian Sanpaolo IMI Group by the Albanian-American Enterprise Fund (a private investment fund established by the United States Government) in 2006. The Albanian Bank of Albania was a successful investment initially funded by a US government grant worth of US\$ 30 million which in time had become the single largest lender in Albania. "Sanpaolo IMI to Buy Albania Bank", Associated Press, 20 October 2006.

<sup>33</sup> 'Main Trading Partners Statistics'. "Albania Country Profile 2007", The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), (The Economist Intelligence Unit: London, 2007), p. 49.

<sup>34</sup> Albanian Centre for International Trade (ACIT), Foreign Trade of Albania, Foreign Trade by Countries, The United States, [http://www.ftdb.acit-al.info/cnt\\_det.php?cnt=US&val=1&vit=2007](http://www.ftdb.acit-al.info/cnt_det.php?cnt=US&val=1&vit=2007), (Accessed April 2008). For further details about the volume and the structure of the bilateral trade between Albania and the US see; Albania 2007 Trade Report, (Albanian Centre for International Trade (ACIT): Tirana, 2007), p. 49.

<sup>35</sup> Southeast Europe Investment Guide 2007, Sixth Edition, (Bulgaria Economic Forum: Sofia, 2007), p. 14. For information about the US investors in Albania see American Chamber of Commerce in Albania web page, <http://www.amcham.com.al>.

significant numbers of Albanians reside. However, considering the much higher costs of such a policy, given the conjecture in the Balkans, Albania sees no prospects in investing in nationalism or the ambitious idea of unifying all Albanians in the region. Rather, acting as a trustworthy ally to the US and a good partner for the EU makes more sense to Albanian decisionmakers in terms of Albanian state interests. Thus, Albanians have expended intense efforts in creating the image of Albania as a stable country that is working to overcome any possibility of becoming a source of instability or a threat to regional peace. In this vein, Albanians have cooperated with the US and Europeans to try and eliminate corruption, organised crime and illegal trafficking, which have been perceived as prevalent in Albania.

Whereas the US has provided funding,<sup>36</sup> material assistance and expertise to Albania in dealing with these problems,<sup>37</sup> Albania has supported the US in its anti-terrorist operations. Tirana is considered by US officials to be very closely cooperating with the US in terms of information-sharing and investigating terrorist-related groups.<sup>38</sup> In a 2008 background note, the US State Department referred to Albania's contributing to the 'US global war on terrorism' by "freezing terrorist assets, shutting down non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with possible links to terrorist financing, expelling extremists, and providing military and diplomatic support for the US-led actions."<sup>39</sup> Thus, developments in the international arena have continued to shape Albania's relations with the US under new circumstances.

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<sup>36</sup> The US funds Albania with the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) programs which focuses on promoting economic reform, strengthening democratic institutions and good governance, and combating organized crime and corruption. Julie Kim, Albania: Current Issues and U.S. Policy, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for the Congress, 15 September 2005, p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Debating National Security: The Case of Albania: Border Security, Religion and Security, Corruption, (Albanian Institute for International Studies: Tirana, 2004), pp. 32-3.

<sup>38</sup> Steven Woehrel, Islamic Terrorism and the Balkans, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for the Congress, 26 July 2005, pp. 6-7. As of 2005 Albania had ratified all 12 UN International conventions and protocols relating to terrorism which is a sign of Albanian commitment to be active in the anti-terrorist activities which has been on the rise in the US and international agenda.

<sup>39</sup> "The U.S. Department of State Background Note: Albania", The U.S. Department of State, January 2008, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3235.htm>.

### **7.3 Payback: Albanian Support for the United States in the International Arena**

Albania continued to try and use the changes in the international arena in its favour even after US attention shifted from the Balkans to Afghanistan and Iraq as part of the 'global war on terror'. Albania made very good use of the conjuncture to create an opportunity for deepening the scope of its bilateral relations with the US in order to get their increased support. With its small state reflex, Albanian assessed the changing international political environment and determined that given the US foreign policy objectives of combating terrorism and forced changing of regimes perceived as hostile to US interests, the environment was conducive to exchanging strong support for and legitimisation of US foreign policy for US support for Albania's own foreign policy goals. In the process, Albania was able to realise its aim of transforming the US into an 'indispensable ally' and developing a strategic relationship with it.

The domestic conditions of Albania were also suitable for achieving Albania's foreign policy goal of an alliance with the US, which the Albanians also believed would help speed the realization of their second foreign policy pillar, that of Euro-Atlantic integration. At this point in time, Albania had survived the repercussions of the 1997 Crisis, the Kosovo intervention was over and the Kosovar Albanians were secure under a UN administration. The Kosovar Albanians had expanded their political authority in order to take over the reins in Kosovo, and the Albanians in Macedonia had gained substantial rights, despite the conflict that had alarmed the international community into thinking a new episode in the long-term conflict in the Balkans was beginning. With the exception of the still unsettled status of Kosovo, Albania was in a relatively good position with regard to the overall Albanian Question. In the domestic arena, despite the polarised political competition and fluctuating tension, Albania was quite stable, particularly when compared to the chaotic 1990s. These conditions created a favourable situation in which Albania could focus on its Euro-Atlantic integration.

### 7.3.1 NATO Integration and Albanian Support for the US in Iraq and Afghanistan

NATO integration has been Albania's number-one security priority since the changing of the communist party rule. Despite unanimous bipartisan consensus and enthusiasm and the progress achieved within the framework of the Partnership for Peace program and Albania's Membership Action Plan adapted in April 1999, as of early 2003, NATO membership was still looked upon by Albanians as a relatively distant goal. Albania had not been among the Central and Eastern European countries invited to start membership talks at the 2002 NATO Prague Summit in the second wave of enlargement in this region following the admission of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic in 1999.

Although not a NATO member, Albania had forces serving under the NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and as part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force<sup>40</sup> (ISAF) in Afghanistan. In addition to its presence in these international stabilisation missions, Albania had from the beginning given strong support to the United States in its fight against terrorism.<sup>41</sup> While it had shown its commitment to the US even before US forces invaded Iraq, the looming invasion gave Albania the opportunity to develop a policy of actively supporting the US and later participating in its operations. Just prior to the invasion, the Albanian parliament decided unanimously to open the country's air and naval bases to NATO in case of a war with Iraq, and Albanian

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<sup>40</sup> Albania first participated to the ISAF II phase of the NATO operation in 16 August 2002. Albanian Ministry of Defense, Albanian Peacekeepers, Afghanistan, <http://www.mod.gov.al/index.php?crd=0.15.3.0.0.111.Lng2&mode=print&uni=20080526232016882521971346366>, Albania in accordance with the NATO demands increased its number of troops in Afghanistan. "Albania to Beef Up Its Contingent in Afghanistan", *Albanian Daily News*, 28 May 2007. Currently Albania is one of the 14 non-NATO member troop contributor nations in the ISAF with a presence of 140 troops in the field. ISAF Troop Contributing Nations 1 April 2008, [http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/isaf\\_placemat.pdf](http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/isaf_placemat.pdf). In the 2007-2008 period, Albania took part in one UN Peacekeeping Operation, United Nations Observation Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) with 3 observers. In that period Albania also represented in Afghanistan/ISAF with 138 troops, in Bosnia and Herzegovina/EUFOR-Operation ALTHEA with 70 troops, in Iraq with the US-led Coalition/MNF-I-Operation Iraqi Freedom with 127 troops. James Hackett (ed.), *The Military Balance 2008*, [The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)] (Europa Publications, 2008), pp. 431-2, 421.

<sup>41</sup> "International Contributions to the War against Terrorism", *Fact Sheet*, U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Public Affairs, Washington D.C., 14 June 2002.

legislators backed the US stance by describing Iraq as a potential threat to peace and security.<sup>42</sup> With Europe divided over its approach to a US-led military intervention in Iraq,<sup>43</sup> Albania was among eight European states to declare their support for the US cause against Saddam Hussein's regime. In addition to being a signatory to a jointly written public statement voicing support for the US, Albanian Prime Minister Fatos Nano declared his country's "total and unconditional" support for the US on the Iraq issue in a letter to US President George W. Bush.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, Prime Minister Nano, in two letters published consecutively in the *Boston Globe* and the *Wall Street Journal*, underscored the role of the US in the liberation of Europe during the Second World War and in the NATO campaign in Kosovo, drawing parallels between Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq and the regimes of the Nazis and Slobodan Milosević.<sup>45</sup>

Albania went beyond simply offering its military facilities and diplomatic support to the US and sent troops to Iraq after parliament voted its approval on 13 March 2003.<sup>46</sup> Ambassador Shaban Murati of the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained his country's position and policy as a 'small state' with regard to its participation in the 'coalition of the willing' in Iraq as follows:

Through this participation, Albania is understanding and discovering *a more effective and more concrete role that small states can play in international relations and global security*. This is an important element of the real democratisation of the relations between states and of the need to consider more and more the voice of the smaller countries in international problems, institutions and organisations. In a letter to Albanian Prime Minister Fatos Nano on 19 March,

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<sup>42</sup> "Albania to Open Bases to NATO in Case of War on Iraq", *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, 4 March 2003.

<sup>43</sup> Pablo Gorondi, "Eight European Countries Affirm Solidarity with the United States against Saddam", *Associated Press Newswires*, 30 January 2003.

<sup>44</sup> Lllazar Semini, "Albania Ready to Join U.S.-led anti-Iraq Coalition", *Associated Press Newswires*, 30 January 2003.

<sup>45</sup> Fatos Nano, "A Salute to Brave American Spirit", *The Boston Globe*, 9 February 2003 and Fatos Nano, "Letters to the Editor: The Silent Witnesses of the Normandy Beach", *The Wall Street Journal*, 13 February 2003.

<sup>46</sup> Lllazar Semini, "Albanian Commandos Ready for Postwar Iraq Mission", *Associated Press*, 26 March 2003. Vernon Loeb, "In Albania. Rumsfeld Praises War Support", *Washington Post*, 11 June 2003.

President George W Bush stated that the United States highly regarded Albania's willingness to support the coalition and its role as an important contributor to regional and global security.<sup>47</sup>

Although Murati mentions the expanding space for small states as international actors and the roles they can play in the international arena, in fact, the context of the Iraq invasion could also be regarded as quite threatening in terms of the potentially negative effects of increasing unilateralism on small states, despite the existence of coalitions of states. In the case of Albania, aligning its own position with that of the US has contributed to Albania's role in the international arena. However, whether or not the role played by small states in international interventions contributes as a rule to the democratisation of relations between states or to improved representation of the small states in international organisations is quite debatable and very much likely dependant on the specific cases and international circumstances. In fact, Albania was not the only small state to support the invasion of Iraq, but it became one of the leading small states to give "outright diplomatic support for the American-led official position on war against Iraq," thereby serving, in a way, to justify this position in the international arena.<sup>48</sup> In the words of US Ambassador to Tirana Marcie B. Ries, who has recognized and appreciated the role that Albania wants to play in the international arena, "Albania is a small country, nevertheless, in Afghanistan and Iraq it has already demonstrated it can play a role well beyond its physical size."<sup>49</sup>

Small states were of use to the US in building up its coalition in Iraq, which the US struggled to enhance with as many states as possible in order to create legitimacy and justification for the military intervention. Small states, including Albania, saw this as an opportunity to punch above their weight and benefit from

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<sup>47</sup> Italics added. Shaban Murati, "Why Albania Joined the 'Coalition of the Willing'", Southeast European Times, 14 May 2003.

<sup>48</sup> For an analysis of the behaviour of the Central and East European small states during the Iraq crisis of 2002-2003 see; Rick Fawn, "Alliance Behaviour, the Absentee Liberator and the Influence of Soft Power: Post-communist State Positions over the Iraq War in 2003", Cambridge Review of International Affairs, vol. 19, no. 3, 2006, pp. 465-80.

<sup>49</sup> Ambassador of the United States to Tirana, Marcie B. Ries, "Remarks at Conference 'NATO's Past, Present and Future'", Tirana, 7 March 2006.

the recognition and support of the US, the major great power of the time. As US policies became less and less popular across the globe, the public reaction against them forced some of the governments that had supported the US objectives in Iraq to shift their positions and limit or withdraw this support. In contrast to this, the positive image of the US and approval for its policies did not appear to diminish among the Albanian population, which allowed the Albanian leadership to follow a committed pro-American foreign policy and offer steady support for the US invasion of Iraq. In view of their recent experience of the US-led NATO intervention in Kosovo, the vast majority of Albanians have remained enthusiastic supporters of US interventions in general. In this sense, Albanians having retained the memory of the positive outcome of an international intervention, drew parallels between their own experience of Kosovo and the new incidences of intervention and thus expected similar results. In the case of Afghanistan, surveys reveal exceptionally high rate of support among Albanians for the US-led military intervention.<sup>50</sup> In fact, in a 2001 poll conducted by Goldsmith, Horiuchi and Inoguchi, the massive approval of the Albanians for the US-led military action in Afghanistan skewered the results to such a degree that the responses of Albanians (as well as Israelis) could not be considered together with the responses of citizens of other countries.

Albanian governments have viewed their support for international interventions as a reflection of Albania's transformation from a nation that consumed security to one that contributes to global security and international initiatives.<sup>51</sup> This theme of the transformed nature of Albania's role in the international arena has become common in the rhetoric of Albanian government officials wishing to emphasize the stability in the country as a reflection of the Albanian state's having overcome its weakness as well as a manifestation of its integration into the international system and the expanding role it can play as a

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<sup>50</sup> Benjamin E Goldsmith., Yasaku Horiuchi, and Takashi Inoguchi, "American Foreign Policy and Public Opinion: Who Supported the War in Afghanistan", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 49, no. 3, 2005, p. 414.

<sup>51</sup> Aaron Klein, "Albania ready to join 'international community': Prime Minister Talks of Troops in Iraq, fighting al-Qaida and EU Membership", *WorldNetDaily*, 1 June 2005.

small state. In this context, Prime Minister Nano pointed to Albania's participation in the international missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Afghanistan as well as the 'coalition of the willing' in Iraq as signs of Albania's "huge transformation from consumer of stability to reinforcer of regional and global stability."<sup>52</sup> The current Albanian minister of foreign affairs, Lulzim Basha, has also emphasized Albania's participation in the fight against terrorism as a sign of its transformation, as in the following speech from May 2007: "[Now,] Albania is not regarded as a consumer, but a contributor to security in the region and beyond. Our troops serve with dignity on the side of US and European troops in the fight against terrorism".<sup>53</sup> This ongoing trend of "steadfast support of US policy in Iraq" and involvement as "an outstanding partner of the United States in the Global War on Terror" on the part of Albania has been noted with appreciation by the Americans.<sup>54</sup>

In terms of actual troop contribution, Albania's participation is a reflection of its limited capacity; however, the political and diplomatic impact of the presence of Albanian troops far exceeds their quantitative and qualitative contributions in the field. Albania's support for US policies in Afghanistan and Iraq have been particularly valuable because of Albania's almost singular nature as a country with a Muslim majority and a tolerant multi-religious society that is also a strong supporter of US policies. In this context, Albania's presence in the 'coalition of the willing' serves to increase the US-led coalition's legitimacy in the international arena.<sup>55</sup> Albanians also like to present themselves historically as a well-functioning example of religious harmony in the international arena, where,

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<sup>52</sup> Press Conference Secretary of State Colin L. Powell with the Albanian Prime Minister Fatos Nano Tirana, Albania, 2 May 2003.

<sup>53</sup> Address by Lulzim Basha, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, at the Policy Forum, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C., "U.S.-Albanian Relations and Albania's Progress Toward EU and NATO", 7 May 2007.

<sup>54</sup> Remarks by the Ambassador of the United States to Tirana, Marcie B. Ries, "Albania Today: Looking Toward the Future", Institute of Balkan Studies, Thessaloniki, 17 October 2005; 'The U.S. Department of State Background Note: Albania', The U.S. Department of State, January 2008, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3235.htm>.

<sup>55</sup> "Albanian Premier Writes to President Bush on 'Strong, Clear Message' in Address", BBC Monitoring European, 29 January 2003.

recently, religious difference has exhibited increasing potential to be a source of problems. Furthermore, the US finds Albania a useful example with which to highlight religious accord in a society with a Muslim majority.

Just as the Albanian communist party rule had defended the foreign policy lines of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China at the time of their close alliances with Albania, post-communist Albania has acted prominently as a remarkably strong and consistent ally of the US throughout the US-led intervention processes. In an opinion piece published in the Washington Times in March 2005 following Albania's decision to increase the number of its troops in Iraq, Albanian Ambassador to Washington Fatos Tarifa expressed the country's support and pro-American sentiment with utmost clarity, declaring Albania to be "probably the most pro-American country on Earth."<sup>56</sup>

### **7.3.2 US Influence on Albania's NATO Integration**

Washington has been supportive of Albania's membership in NATO.<sup>57</sup> In line with this approach, in May 2003, the United States took an important initiative by signing the Charter of Partnership among Albania, Croatia, Macedonia and the USA,<sup>58</sup> known as the Adriatic Charter,<sup>59</sup> in an effort to contribute to the NATO-membership preparations of these countries. The timing was critical, as the signing of the Charter followed Albania's declaration of support for the US intervention in

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<sup>56</sup> He said; "The announcement several days ago Albania - a small country with limited resources - was sending an additional 50 well-trained troops to Iraq came as a surprise to some observers. But it really should not have surprised anyone. Albania was one of only four countries to send combat troops during the operation Iraqi Freedom. Albania is probably the most pro-American country on Earth. It showed its support of the United States early, when it initially sent 70 commandos to join the Coalition of the Willing's effort to bring peace, stability and free elections to Iraq". Fatos Tarifa, "Opinion: Albania Stands with the U.S. in Iraq", The Washington Times, republished in Albanian Daily News, 28 March 2005.

<sup>57</sup> "U.S. Urges NATO Membership for the Balkans", Transition Online, 1 July 2003.

<sup>58</sup> The Charter of Partnership among Albania, Croatia, Macedonia and the USA, (B. Grafika: Skopje, 2004).

<sup>59</sup> Alban Bala, "Albania: Tirana Signs 'Article 98' Agreement, Adriatic Charter with the U.S.", RFE/RL Feature Article, 6 May 2003. Alban Nala, "Albania: Rumsfeld Says Looks forward to Closer Military Cooperation", RFE/RL Feature Article, 11 June 2003.

Iraq and the US decision to send combat troops to Iraq and coincided with another important bilateral agreement between Albania and the US over the non-surrender of their citizens to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The Adriatic Charter represents a specific sign of US commitment and support for these countries' NATO candidacies in line with the Alliance's 'Open Door Policy'.<sup>60</sup> The signatory small state Balkan countries, which became known as the 'A-3', wanted assurances of US support for their security, and the Adriatic Charter was thus created as a mechanism for the provision of institutional support for the transformation of their defence and security capacities. The charter was intended to be a complementary mechanism to the Membership Action Plan and provide help with capacity building and integration of these countries into Euro-Atlantic structures. The charter was a proven path towards NATO integration, with a similar mechanism, the Baltic Charter, having been formed for the small states in the Baltic region and signed by the US, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on 16 January 1998.<sup>61</sup> With the Baltic Charter, the US not only declared its commitment to preserving the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of these states, it also stated that it would work actively to support their membership in the Alliance.<sup>62</sup> By responding to the A-3 countries' call to back their security concerns, the US strengthened its position in the Balkans and gained important support from the governments as well as the publics of these countries. In this regard, Albanians were no exception in their appreciation of the Washington's support for their national security.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Ivan Gredešić, "US-Adriatic Charter Partnership: Securing the NATO Open Door Policy", *Politička Misao*, vol. 41, no. 5, 2004, pp. 104-6.; About the Albania's military transformation attempts in line with the NATO integration process see; Ryan C. Hendrickson, Jonathan Campbell and Nicholas Mullikin, "Albania and NATO's "Open Door" Policy: Alliance Enlargement and Military Transformation", *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, vol. 19, 2006, pp. 243-57.

<sup>61</sup> For the text of "A Charter of Partnership among The United States of America and The Republic of Estonia, Republic of Latvia, and Republic of Lithuania" see; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia web page, <http://www.am.gov.lv/en/?id=4495>.

<sup>62</sup> For an analysis of the Baltic States' Euro-Atlantic integration from a small state perspective see; Jeremy W. Lamoreaux and David J. Galbreath, "The Baltic States as 'Small States': Negotiating the 'East' by Engaging the 'West'", *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2008, pp. 1-14.

<sup>63</sup> Fatos Tarifa, "The Adriatic Europe: Albania, Croatia and Macedonia", *Mediterranean Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 4, 2005, pp. 8-19.

Following the signing of the Adriatic Charter, the A-3 countries initiated cooperation among themselves as well as joint cooperation with other countries. In August 2005, the A-3 organized and deployed a 12-member Combined Medical Team to Afghanistan. They also met with the Baltic Charter members, which had undergone a similar process in their bid for NATO membership, for purposes of cooperation and consultation.

Furthermore, within the framework of its NATO bid, Albania hired former US Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge as a private consultant in order to widen its channels of communication and facilitate the membership process. While Ridge's exact contribution to Albania's membership process was unclear, beyond advising on matters of security, NATO and investments, his presence as a consultant ensured Albania close links to the US Administration and Washington policy circles<sup>64</sup> and reinforced the image that the US administration was backing Albania's membership bid.<sup>65</sup>

Albania showed its appreciation for the support Washington had provided through the Adriatic Charter by backing US policies in the international arena. In a reciprocal agreement, Albania and the United States agreed to exempt each other's citizens from delivery to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, as provided for by Article 98 of the Treaty of Rome.<sup>66</sup> While European Union officials sharply criticized Albania for agreeing, along with many other countries, to the United States' policy of bilateral non-surrender, the agreement had the avid support of all

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<sup>64</sup> Benet Koleka, "Albania to Employ Ex-Homeland Security Chief Ridge", [Reuters](#), 4 September 2006, "Albanian Premier Welcomes ex-US Governor's Appointment as Government's Advisor", [BBC Monitoring](#), 4 September 2006, "Ridge Willing to Help Albania's Integration Process", [Albanian Daily News](#), 23 October 2006.

<sup>65</sup> "Bush's Representative to be Berisha's Adviser", [Albanian Daily News](#), 6 September 2006.

<sup>66</sup> "U.S., Albania Sign International Criminal Court Article 98 Agreement: Secretary of State Powell, Albania's Prime Minister Nano sign in Tirana", U.S. Department of State's Office of International Information Programs ([www.usinfo.state.gov](http://www.usinfo.state.gov)), 2 May 2003, "Powell, Albania Sign Court Agreement", [The Washington Times](#), 2 May 2003, "Powell Given Hero's Welcome in Tirana", [Financial Times](#), 2 May 2003.

Albanian political parties.<sup>67</sup> Despite the reactions from the EU, the Albanians stuck to their position, perceiving the agreement to be a well-made concession and a small price to pay in exchange for crucial US support for NATO membership.<sup>68</sup>

Albania also provided exceptional help to the United States by granting asylum to several detainees at Guantanamo Bay whom the US wanted removed from its territory and resettled in a new host country.<sup>69</sup> The detainees, five ethnic-Uighur Chinese citizens who had been suspected of having links to Al-Qaida but were later deemed not to pose a terrorist threat and labelled ‘No Longer Enemy Combatants’,<sup>70</sup> could not be deported to China because they faced possible persecution for suspected links to the separatist East Turkistan Islamic Movement in the Xinjiang region. Albania responded to the US call for help in its time of need – and was the only country to do so – because, in the words of Albanian Deputy Foreign Minister Edith Harxhi, “We help whoever asks [for] help for supporting freedom.”<sup>71</sup> The US State Department also voiced its appreciation for

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<sup>67</sup> EU spokesperson Emma Udwin, called on Albanian members of parliament not to ratify the agreement by saying, “We would like that this agreement not enter into force and in fact we would like it not to be signed. We are disappointed with the attitude of Albania”. Later Albanian Foreign Minister Ilir Meta after his correspondence with the European Commission President Romano Prodi and Commissioner Chris Patten, said that “We didn’t consider the signing of such an agreement as a choice between the EU and the United States” and “[i]t was realized in the framework of bilateral co-operation with the United States, which requested such a thing. We decided to undertake this step, being aware of the importance which the American presence and engagement in Albania and in the region has for stability”. Orest Erzeni, “ICC Agreement Wins Strong Support for Albanian Political Parties”, *Southeast European Times*, 2 July 2003.

<sup>68</sup> The US Secretary of State expressed the US gratitude to the Albanian government for concluding the agreement as; “Article 98 Agreement was an important one for us. We are not signatories of the Rome Treaty any longer, and Albania is, but this was a case where we came to an understanding of our mutual interest and our needs were such on the Article 98 Agreement, which is consistent with the Rome Statute. So Mr. Prime Minister, I thank you for your understanding and for this expression of friendship toward the United States, and pleased to be able to reciprocate”. ‘U.S., Albania Sign International Criminal Court Article 98 Agreement’, The U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Information Programs, 5 May 2003.  
<http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2003/May/20030505111827relhcie0.7209436.html>

<sup>69</sup> “Five Chinese Citizens Applied for Asylum in Albania”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania, Department of Press and Public Diplomacy, 5 May 2006, “Five Chinese Muslims once Held in Guantánamo Gain Asylum in Albania”, *The Associated Press*, 26 July 2006, “Albania takes the Men No One Wants”, *New York Times*, 16 August 2006.

<sup>70</sup> “Detainee Release Announced”, U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense News Release, 5 May 2006.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Edith Harxhi, Deputy Minister, Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2 May 2007, Tirana.

what it considered an “important humanitarian gesture.”<sup>72</sup> Albania later continued to receive other detainees with problematic statuses of other nationalities and provide them with asylum.<sup>73</sup> Considering the overall controversy over Guantanamo Bay and the international outcry against Washington’s manner of catching so-called ‘Enemy Combatants’ and treating them as part of its ‘war against terror’, Albania’s actions saved the US from further embarrassment and difficulties in the international arena. In so doing, Albania demonstrated its support for the US in general and its strategies in particular, showcasing Tirana’s willingness and ability to act as a reliable ally to Washington.<sup>74</sup>

When US President George W. Bush began his brief, eight-hour visit to Albania on 10 June 2007, neither he nor world public opinion expected such a lively and welcoming embrace as the one provided by the Albanian people and the Albanian state<sup>75</sup> at a time when America’s public image abroad and international support for its policies were at their lowest – although the warm reception came as no surprise to the Albanians and followers of Albanian-related issues, including the US diplomatic corps.<sup>76</sup> The visit was perceived as a smart move on the part of the Americans as a means of parading a positive local reaction before the eyes of a largely negative world public. As the first visit by a US president to Albania, Bush’s stopover was described as “the most significant diplomatic activity in the

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<sup>72</sup> Sean, McCormack, 2006, “Release of Five Ethnic Uighurs from Guantanamo”, The U.S. Department of State Press Statement, 5 May 2006.

<sup>73</sup> The three new asylum seekers were an Algerian national, an Egyptian national and another ethnic-Uzbek. “Three Detainees at Guantanamo are Released to Albania”, Albanian Daily News, 20 November 2006.

<sup>74</sup> In this process Albania has not hesitated to risk the deterioration of its relations with China with whom it had allied long years ago and recently having normal relations. “China Cancels Tirana Beijing Meetings”, Bulgarian Economic Forum, 15 May 2006.

<sup>75</sup> Foreign journalists stoke by the public interest to George W. Bush they face in Albania. For the international comments on the visit see; Jennifer Loven, “Bush Receives Hero’s Welcome in Albania”, The Guardian (Unlimited), 10 June 2007, Michael A. Fletcher, “Albania Welcomes Bush with Enthusiasm, Affection”, The Washington Post, 11 June 2007.

<sup>76</sup> Peter Lucas, “Albania’s Love Affair with America”, The Boston Globe, 14 June 2007.

history of Albania in these last 100 years”<sup>77</sup> and the culminating event in US-Albanian bilateral relations that was “an acknowledgement of the gratefulness of the Albanian nation for the irreplaceable role that the US has played since the recognition of the Albanian state until the present day.”<sup>78</sup> The state of relations between the two countries was considered to be “excellent” by the Albanian leadership, and the Albanians were committed to always “stand side by side with the United States.”<sup>79</sup> For Albanians, who were proud of being ‘probably the most pro-American country in the world’, it was time to offer thanks to the US for the support it received and to boast of how a small state like Albania could be of significance to the world’s superpower.

The efforts of the A-3 countries appeared to have borne fruit when, at the April 2008 Bucharest NATO summit, Albania and Croatia (the Republic of Macedonia was left out due to Greek opposition) were invited to begin accession talks in the final step in the process before NATO membership.<sup>80</sup> The strong US backing for Albania’s membership at the summit can also be seen as reciprocation for Albania’s efforts to act like a supportive US ally and to have paved the way for Albania NATO accession in 2009.

There has been a remarkable consensus among the Albanian political élite and indeed, among the entire population of Albania,<sup>81</sup> in favour of achieving this

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<sup>77</sup> The previous Albanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Besnik Mustafaj described the essence of President George W. Bush’s visit to Albania as; “the most significant diplomatic activity in the history of Albania in these last 100 years”. “Interview: ‘My Resignation not related to Ruling Policies’, Former Minister”, Albanian Daily News, 2 May 2007.

<sup>78</sup> “Albania Hails Pending Visit by Bush”, Radio Free Europe/radio Liberty (FRE/RL) Newline, vol. 11, no. 78, part II, 27 April 2007.

<sup>79</sup> “Bush’s Visit is Result of Albania’s ‘Excellent’ Relations with USA – Premier”, Albanian Daily News, 26 April 2007.

<sup>80</sup> Bucharest Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Bucharest on 3 April 2008, [http://www.summitbucharest.ro/en/doc\\_201.html](http://www.summitbucharest.ro/en/doc_201.html)

<sup>81</sup> In a survey carried out by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation on March-May 2007, Albanian public opinion support was as high as 89.4 percent while opposition was quite low at 2.3 percent for the NATO membership. Albanian Perceptions on NATO Integration, (Institute for Democracy and Mediation: Tirana, June 2007), p. 20, Figure 5.

important foreign policy goal.<sup>82</sup> Surprisingly, even Nexhmije Hoxha, the widow of Stalinist dictator Enver Hoxha and herself once among the top echelons of the communist party regime, who had been adamantly opposed to both NATO and superpower influence in Albania, gave her blessing for Albania's membership in the Alliance. In an interview with the Financial Times before the Bucharest Summit, Nexhmije Hoxha expressed her hopefulness regarding Albania's NATO membership and the contribution it would make to Albania's Western orientation:

My experience has shown that it's hard for small countries to survive. Whether you want it or not, you have to accept the support of big powers. Albania has to move in a western direction, towards NATO and the European Union, [and] I think we deserve an invitation, and I have no doubt we will be a reliable ally.<sup>83</sup>

Nexhmije Hoxha's experiences clearly reflect the continuity in the approach to Albanian foreign policy taken by the Albanian political élite and the Albanian public in general. Albanians achieved important progress towards reaching their foreign policy goal of Euro-Atlantic integration by closely allying themselves with the United States, trying to utilise their relational power to extract from the superpower as many benefits as possible in exchange for their support for US policies. An invitation to join NATO, which would provide institutional security and better representation in the international arena, meant Albania had met first phase of the strategic goal of Euro-Atlantic integration. However, Albania's expected NATO membership did not seem to change the role of the US as the centre of support in security and political matters, as indicated in a recent survey, which found 60 percent of Albanians would support a possible alliance with the US compared to 25 percent who would support one with the EU to protect their country in case of a threat.<sup>84</sup> Not only do Albanians continue to trust the US as an ally that it can act together with to achieve the country's foreign policy goals, they also consider US support to be an important element in the second pillar of their foreign policy, EU relations and the EU integration process.

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<sup>82</sup> "Albanian NATO Entry: Leaders Jubilant, Opposition Hails its Contribution", BBC Monitoring, 4 April 2008.

<sup>83</sup> Kerin Hope, "Albania' Ex-First Lady Backs NATO Entry", Financial Times, 30 March 2008.

<sup>84</sup> Albanian Perceptions on NATO Integration, op.cit., p. 30, Figure 19.

## 7.4 European Integration: Development of the Second Pillar

The post-Cold War period paved the way for the enhancement of the European integration process. In this new era, the European Union agenda has been shaped by the processes of deepening and widening, as perceptions of the EU as a source of political stability and economic prosperity have made it the centre of gravity for the former communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Albania is no different from the other candidate countries in its perceptions of the EU; its ambitions to become a member correspond directly with its perceived Western orientation.

Support for EU integration is very high among Albanians. A 2003 survey of well-educated representatives of businesses, local NGOs, the public administration and the media found levels of support for EU membership to be as high as 98.31 per cent.<sup>85</sup> In a 2007 survey asking respondents how they would vote if a referendum were held on Albania's EU accession, 93.8 per cent of Albanians said they would vote 'yes,' and only 2.4 per cent said they would vote 'no'.<sup>86</sup> This strong support for EU membership is reflected throughout Albanian society, irrespective of socio-economic differences.<sup>87</sup>

Albania's institutional relations with the EU started in December 1992 with the signing of a Trade and Co-operation Agreement and were elevated in January 2003 with the opening of negotiations for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), which brought Albania into the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) developed by the EU to help potential members in what the EU

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<sup>85</sup> Albania and European Union: Perceptions and Realities, (Albanian Institute for International Studies (AIIS): Tirana, 2003), p. 42, Figure 35.

<sup>86</sup> Rethinking EU Integration: Albanian Perceptions and Realities, (Albanian Institute for International Studies (AIIS): Tirana, 2003) p. 20, Figure 1.

<sup>87</sup> Albania and European Union: Perceptions and Realities, *op.cit.*, p. 5 and Rethinking EU Integration: Albanian Perceptions and Realities, *op.cit.*, Table 1.

now referred to as “the Western Balkans”<sup>88</sup> to adapt themselves to the conditions of membership.<sup>89</sup> As stated by the European Commission in its Second Annual Report on the Stabilisation and Association Process for South East Europe, “The unification of Europe will not be complete until it includes its south-eastern part.”<sup>90</sup> This commitment on the part of the EU to integrate the countries of the Western Balkans paved the way for Albania to become “a potential candidate for EU membership” through the SAP.<sup>91</sup>

The basic EU entry requirements defined for the Western Balkan countries comprise the same political, economic and institutional criteria applied to all other countries as established by the Copenhagen European Council in 1993.<sup>92</sup> The path to EU membership represents a massive project that requires candidate countries to adapt themselves to numerous conditions in fulfilment of the requirements laid out in the ‘Copenhagen Criteria’ before they can be granted accession. The EU monitors in detail the political and economic developments in every sector in each country to determine its compatibility and compliance with EU membership criteria. In the case of Albania, at the early stages of the SAP the areas of assessment and screening outlined in the Stabilisation and Association Reports were: democracy and rule of law; human rights and protection of minorities;

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<sup>88</sup> European Union introduced the term ‘Western Balkans’ which describes the remaining countries in the Balkans that could not develop membership vision and included in membership processes. This group of states is composed of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and Kosovo.

<sup>89</sup> As a difference in the strategy applied to the East Central Europe, self evident at the name, the EU makes stabilisation predominate in its support for European perspective within its approach toward the Western Balkans. Wim van Merus and Alexandros Yannis “The European Union and the Balkans: From Stabilisation Process to Southeastern Enlargement”, Center for Applied Policy Research and ELIAMEP, September 2002, p. 3.

<sup>90</sup> Report from the Commission: The Stabilisation and Association Process for South East Europe Second Annual Report, Commission of the European Communities, COM (2003) 139 Final, Brussels, 26 March 2003, p. 4.

<sup>91</sup> Commission Staff Working Paper: Albania 2007 Progress Report, Commission of the European Communities, SEC(2007) 1429, Brussels, 6 November 2007, p. 4.

<sup>92</sup> Report from the Commission: The Stabilisation and Association Process for South East Europe Third Annual Report, Commission of the European Communities, COM (2004) [Number not specified] Final, Brussels, [Date not specified].

regional and international cooperation; economic situation; existence of market economy and structural reforms; and management of public finances.<sup>93</sup>

When compared to EU standards, Albania presents an unstable picture. In the initial evaluation reports of Albania, the EU identified those areas that Albania urgently needed to address as follows: fighting organised crime, trafficking and corruption; strengthening the judicial system and public administration; ensuring the proper functioning of democracy (including elections) and preserving the political stability necessary for speedy reform implementation; improving human and minority rights; and further formalizing and reforming the economy, as well as increasing fiscal sustainability through more efficient customs and tax administrations and a stronger legal framework.<sup>94</sup> Recent Progress Reports indicate that the problems with regard to Albania's compatibility with EU political and economic criteria and European standards are concentrated, in general, in areas related to democracy and the rule of law, corruption, organised crime, migration and national infrastructure, revealing that not much has changed in Albania over the past few years.<sup>95</sup>

Indeed, the areas of concern basically illustrate the weak areas of the Albanian state and represent the failed elements of its transition. Having been unable to transform itself in the post-communist era, Albania more or less voluntarily left the transition processes in the hands of international institutions and influential foreign countries. In cases such as this, the transition process is not determined by the consent and consensus of the country in question; rather, the international actors – be they the European Union, the international financial institutions, or individual influential countries – put forward their own strategies and conditions for transition. Financial, organisational and technical assistance are linked by conditionality to the adoption of certain strategies and particular policy

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<sup>93</sup> Commission Staff Working Paper: Albania: Stabilisation and Association Report 2004, Commission of the European Communities, SEC (2004) 374/2 Final, Brussels, [Date not specified].

<sup>94</sup> Commission Staff Working Paper: Albania: Stabilisation and Association Report 2004, Commission of the European Communities, SEC (2004) 374/2 Final, Brussels, [Date not specified], p. 19.

<sup>95</sup> Commission Staff Working Paper: Albania 2007 Progress Report, Commission of the European Communities, SEC(2007) 1429, Brussels, 6 November 2007.

choices. In the case of the EU, countries are shaped along the lines of conditions defined in terms of the EU's values of liberal democracy and a free-market economy.<sup>96</sup> Within the context of the Balkans, EU conditionality is designed to be a "multi-dimensional and multi-purpose instrument, geared towards reconciliation, reconstruction and reform."<sup>97</sup> For Albania, EU conditionality relates primarily to the areas of justice and home affairs, administrative capacity building, economic and social development, environment and natural resources and democratic stabilisation,<sup>98</sup> and EU financial aid and technical assistance are provided to support progress in these spheres.<sup>99</sup> Through its established aid and financial structures, the EU has been much more deeply involved in Albanian reconstruction and policy recommendations when compared to other bilateral and multilateral partners.<sup>100</sup>

In fact, the EU's policy towards the Western Balkan countries is broadly shaped around a regional coordination perspective that aims to work out each country's individual membership perspective to harmonise with the SAP and Stability Pact.<sup>101</sup> In other words, European integration for the Western Balkans countries is expected to be achieved by first establishing cooperation among these countries themselves to ensure stability and economic development at the regional

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<sup>96</sup> For a discussion about the European Union's political conditionality and democratization in Albania see, Arolda Elbasani, "Democratization Process in Albania: Manipulation or Appropriation of International Norms?", Socrates Kokkalis 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Student Workshop Paper, 2004. <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/kokkalis/GSW7/GSW%206/elbasani.pdf>.

<sup>97</sup> Othon Anastasakis, and Dimitar Bechev, EU Conditionality in South East Europe: Bringing Commitment to the Process, (European Centre St. Antony's College: University of Oxford, April 2003), p. 3.

<sup>98</sup> Albania Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006, European Community CARDS Programme, 31 November 2001, p. 6. The Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) has been the main instrument for European Union to cooperate with Albania since 2001. €187.4 million have been allocated for Albania by this mechanism. p. 33.

<sup>99</sup> The Western Balkans in Transition, European Commission Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs Occasional Papers, No. 5, January 2004, p. 33.

<sup>100</sup> Ailish M. Johnson, "Albania's Relations with the EU: On the Road to Europe?", Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans, vol. 3, no. 2, 2001, p. 175.

<sup>101</sup> Mustafa Türkeş and Göksu Gökğöz, "The European Union's Strategy towards the Western Balkans: Exclusion or Integration?", East European Politics and Societies, vol. 20, no. 4, 2006, pp. 659-90.

level and then proceeding with integration at the EU level which indeed reflects the EU position that would like to keep these countries' intentions alive to accomplish the EU desired changes while not clearly defining the schedule for their membership or the context of their future relationship.<sup>102</sup> In the words of Albanian Deputy Foreign Minister Pëllumb Xhufi, "Albania's compatibility with the Stability Pact stems from its strategic objective for Euro-Atlantic integration and the fact that the goal of the Stability Pact itself is to bring Albania and the whole of the Southeast European region closer to Europe."<sup>103</sup> Albanian policymakers perceive the Stability Pact and the SAP as complementary processes,<sup>104</sup> which is in line with the perspective of the EU representative in Tirana, Michael Perretti, who considers the Stability Pact to be "a perspective of rapprochement" in the region contributing to completion of the SAAs.<sup>105</sup> Within this context, the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) signed among the Balkan states, as well as bilateral free trade agreements between individual countries in the region, are the most apparent manifestation of this regional cooperation which indeed serves for the EU purposes of shaping countries in the region through the regional integration.<sup>106</sup>

From the European perspective, Albania possesses a significant potential for destabilisation, as seen in the 1991 and 1997 mass exoduses of Albanians to EU countries. Ongoing migration to the EU from Albania as well as major illegal trafficking along the same route represent disturbing trends. Considering Albania's shared border with EU-member Greece and its proximity to EU-member Italy,

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., pp. 677-81.

<sup>103</sup> Pëllumb Xhufi, "Albania in Stability Pact", Stability Pact: Just around the Corner, (Albanian Institute for International Studies: Tirana, 2000), p. 14.

<sup>104</sup> Ermelinda Meksi, "The Albanian Dimension of Integration", Albanian Institute for International Studies, Tirana, 2003, p. 21.

<sup>105</sup> Michel Perretti, "The Stability Pact and Its Role in Albania's Road towards Integration with the European Union", Stability Pact: Just around the Corner, (Albanian Institute for International Studies: Tirana, 2000), p. 37.

<sup>106</sup> Apart from CEFTA, Albania signed free trade agreements with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo under the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro. Albanian Centre for International Trade (ACIT), Free Trade Agreements, [http://www.acit-al.org/fta\\_en.html](http://www.acit-al.org/fta_en.html).

these issues represent problems not just for Italy and Greece, but constitute a source of insecurity for the EU in general, making stability in Albania a priority among other EU interests. Furthermore, Albania's location in the Balkans and the dispersion of ethnic Albanians throughout the region gives the country strategic importance. Having experienced the bloody dismembering of Yugoslavia, EU members do not want to have to deal with any new conflicts in the region, nor do they want to have to cope with the repercussions of another state failure in Albania along the lines of the one that occurred with the collapse of the pyramid investment schemes in 1997. In order to avoid such incidents and succeed with integration, the European Union has provided support to strengthen Albania; however, the success of the country's economic and political reforms has been hampered by the fragility of its domestic political stability.<sup>107</sup>

Albanians recognize the European Union as a means of integration with the international system, a source of economic assistance for development and a potential labour market to be opened up upon future integration. The EU has been the single largest donor to Albania,<sup>108</sup> and EU-member countries constitute Albania's most important economic partners in terms of trade as well as investment.<sup>109</sup> Through various mechanisms, the EU has played an instrumental role in the domestic consolidation of the Albanian state, which has not in and of itself shown the motivation to instigate the changes necessary. Because Albania

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<sup>107</sup> Third Annual Report, Commission of the European Communities, , p. 1.

<sup>108</sup> The European Commission (EC) Assistance to Albania between 1991 and 2006 reaches to € 1,262 million including CARDS, Macro-financial Assistance, European Community Humanitarian aid Office (ECHO) and European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) funds. Commission Decision C(2007)2245 of 31/05/2007 On a Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (MIPD) 2007-2009 for Albania, p. 9, Table 2.

<sup>109</sup> "The EU is by far Albania's main trading partner. Albania's exports of goods to the EU accounted for around 88 percent of the total exports of goods in 2006. Imports from the EU accounted for approximately 63 percent of total imported goods." Commission Staff Working Paper: Albania 2007 Progress Report, Commission of the European Communities, SEC(2007) 1429, Brussels, 6 November 2007, p. 25. Italy and Greece are the most prominent trading partners of Albania. Albania exported to Italy with an average of 71 percent of all its exports and imported with an average of 32 percent of all its imports in 1999-2007 period. The numbers for Albania's export average to Greece is 11 percent and for the imports 22 percent. Centre for International Trade (ACID), Foreign Trade of Albania with Italy; [http://www.ftdb.acit-al.info/cnt\\_det.php?cnt=IT&val=1&vit=2007](http://www.ftdb.acit-al.info/cnt_det.php?cnt=IT&val=1&vit=2007), Centre for International Trade (ACID), Foreign Trade of Albania with Greece; [http://www.ftdb.acit-al.info/cnt\\_det.php?cnt=GR&val=1&vit=2007](http://www.ftdb.acit-al.info/cnt_det.php?cnt=GR&val=1&vit=2007).

has been hitherto unable to manage the consolidation of the state and succeed in the transition process, the EU is perceived within Albania as the most important force by which to implement the post-communist-era changes in the country.<sup>110</sup>

Albania does not have an asymmetric relationship with the European Union in the sense of the essentially asymmetric small state-great power type relationship that it has with the US. The scope and content of Albania's relationship with the EU are different than the scope and content of its relationship with the US.<sup>111</sup> Although Albania receives a substantial amount of money from the EU and conducts the bulk of its trade with EU countries, the priority in its foreign relations lies with the US. Since Albania's current relationship with the EU exists as an institutional relationship through the regional integration and SAP processes, Albania cannot be said to have an asymmetric relationship with the EU at the bilateral level. Institutional association with the EU is not a quick and responsive type of relationship that could answer to Albania's immediate political necessities. In this sense, the EU represents the economic aspect and long-term prospects of Albanian interests in Europe, and its role does not correspond to the role that the US plays in Albanian foreign policy.

Despite the Albanians' desire to join the EU, which represents an important part of Albania's attempts to be part of the Western world and Europe in general, the EU integration process has been stalled as a result of the Union's own internal problems. At the moment, internal EU discussions about enlargement and the capacity of the Union to absorb new members represent the greatest external barrier to Albania's future integration with the EU. Despite the existence of the

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<sup>110</sup> See The National Plan for the Implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement 2007-2012, Republic of Albania Council of Ministers, September 2007.

<sup>111</sup> At this point it is useful to recall the discussion concerning the 'structural power' of the great powers. It is debatable and it has been debated whether EU could be considered as an actor in the same league with the great powers. The EU could have power and has the capacity to influence the global outcomes in different contexts and issue areas or in specific circumstances; however, its structural power at the systemic level could also be contested due to its own structure which is comprised of different states. Unless EU gets authority and mandate from the composed parts which might have particular interests and considerations, its capacity to influence the global outcomes may be useless or irrelevant thus unlike individual states that are great powers, EU might not be in asymmetric relation with (small) states like Albania.

Stabilisation and Association Agreement<sup>112</sup> signed between Albania and the EU on 12 June 2006, there is no clear timeline for the inclusion of the Western Balkan countries in the EU. In view of this situation, the Albanians, while sticking to their commitment to EU membership, have not rushed headlong into implementing any transformations in the hopes of overcoming the domestic obstacles to Albania's EU integration.

## **7.5 Conclusions**

In the aftermath of the 1997 crisis, Albania tried hard to recover from the worst phase of its weakness. The subsequent crisis in Kosovo gave Albania the opportunity to regain the support it very much needed through an increase in the country's strategic and political significance. Albania used this opportunity to fix its already damaged image and rehabilitate its bilateral relations, especially with the US. In this period, Albania tried to act as an important and responsible actor in the conflict-ridden Balkans. Albania played a careful game in the specific context of the Kosovo conflict, carefully avoiding the provocation of any Albanian national sentiments while helping the international actors involved in the issue. Rather than elevate tensions by utilising the potential of Albanian nationalism, Albania provided support to its fellow Albanians in the region in line with the international actors' approach to the Balkans, which was shaped around security and stability priorities. The NATO military intervention in Kosovo further increased Albania's significance and the already high popularity of the US among Albanians as the leader of the NATO intervention.

With relative stability prevailing in Albania, the Euro-Atlantic integration moved to the forefront of Albania's agenda. Although US global interests and priorities had moved away from the Balkans towards other regions, Albania attempted to use its relational power to enhance its relations with the US. In this context, Albania became one of the leading states to support US policies related to its 'war on terror' and its subsequent military interventions. Despite its character as

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<sup>112</sup> Council of European Union, "Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and Their Member States and the Republic of Albania", 8164/06, 22 May 2006.

a small state, Albania was able to make use of the international conjuncture at a time when the US was in need of international support and justification for its policies, providing political backing to the US and even contributed to US-led coalitions. At a time when pro-American sentiments among Albanians were at their peak, Albania reproduced its bilateral asymmetric relations, as both parties provided each other with mutual support – with the US helping Albania to realise one of its leading foreign policy goals by strongly advocating Albanian membership in NATO.

In this period, Albania also developed its relations with the EU, as both parties signed the SAA. Albania focused its attention on the second pillar of its foreign policy in order to obtain the financial and technical assistance it needed to realise the changes necessary for EU integration, thus making Albania part of the Western World. However, despite the significance of the EU for the Albanians, Albanian-EU relations did not turn into another asymmetric bilateral relation like Albania's relationship with the US.

Since the turn of the century, Albania has successfully managed to re-adopt its foreign policy tradition of developing an asymmetric relation with a great power by working towards becoming an ally of the US. Although the scope of relations has been determined predominately by specific regional and international conjunctures and the US priorities at the regional and global levels, Albania has managed to carve out a niche for itself in the US foreign policy context as a pro-American ally and, as a result, has been assured US support for its own needs.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CONCLUSION**

Small states in general are not at the centre of international politics, and studies in the IR discipline tend to mainly analyse the foreign policy of all states from a great-power-centred IR approach. However, studying small states can provide a different perspective that may better our understanding of international relations. In this sense, Albania represents an important case of a weak small state that has managed to survive in the international arena by establishing asymmetric relationships with great powers.

Albania has been a weak small state since its establishment. As such, it faced severe problems in defining and preserving its territory and maintaining its sovereignty and political independence as a state. The issues that accounted for Albania's weakness at the time of its formation as a state left their imprints on the formation of early Albanian foreign policy. Since that time, survival has continued to be an important issue influencing Albania's foreign policy. The Albanian political leadership has been aware of the fact that as a small state, Albania's space and capacity for formulating foreign policy are relatively limited. Both the existence and the awareness of Albania's economic and political weaknesses led to the formulation of a foreign policy line based on acquiring the support of great powers in order to survive.

In the asymmetrical relationships between small states and great powers, it is the great powers that are the dominant actors, defining the scope and content of their relations with the small states. Because the great powers possess structural power, they have the capacity to influence the context and nature of the international environment. They also have control over the nature of their relations with the small powers, and they use their relational power to shape the small states in support of broader structural changes. However, the small states are not merely pawns in this game; rather, within the limits of their relational power, which will

vary according to specific circumstances, small states have the autonomy to maintain some influence over the context, scope and duration of their relations.

In playing the 'asymmetric game' with regional and great powers, Albania tried to utilise its relational power and circumstantial position in order to obtain the support it needed to overcome its weaknesses and survive in the international arena. It used the negative disparity of power and capabilities as an advantage and source of attraction, taking advantage of the international conjuncture to exploit contingencies in its favour. Although Albania's policy of developing asymmetric relations with regional and great powers represents an overall continuity, in each case, Albania had different experiences.

Albania's initial experience with asymmetric relationships came during the interwar period, shortly after its formation as a state. Economic weakness and domestic political instability prompted the Albanian leadership to seek foreign support in order to consolidate the state and the country's authoritarian political regime. In trying to obtain economic and political support from Italy, which was the influential regional power at the time, Albania became dependent on foreign aid and eventually developed a patron-client-type relationship with Italy. Meanwhile, Italian strategic interests in the Balkans and ambitions to expand in the region made Albania central to Italian policies. Whereas Albania had entered into an alliance with Italy hoping to receive as much support as it could while preserving its sovereignty and territorial integrity, contrary to these expectations, Italy's influence as a great power expanded to the extent that Albania eventually lost its political independence. Albania's alliance with Italy became an important test case illustrating the negative aspect of the small state-great power relationship, in which the great power is able to threaten the very existence of the small state instead of helping it to survive.

After the Second World War, the rule of a communist party with strong Stalinist credentials was established in Albania. Despite this regime change, the new political élite developed a foreign policy line that was similar to that of the interwar years. This time, Albania turned to Yugoslavia for support. Yugoslavia was Albania's neighbour and a regional power with which Albania shared a similar ideological stance. Albania was in need of foreign economic aid for its recovery following the Italian and German occupations as well as political

assistance to help it achieve recognition in the international arena. Albania and Yugoslavia quickly expanded the scope of their relations into an alliance; however, the deepening relations brought problems as well as aid. Yugoslavia's aspirations for regional domination led to the intensification of its already considerable influence over Albania to the point where Yugoslavia became directly involved in Albania's domestic politics and security. Despite the ideological closeness between the two regimes, the alliance again brought Albania to the edge of losing its political independence.

Albania's weakness and, consequently, its need for foreign assistance remained constant; therefore, when its political independence was challenged by its regional-power ally, Albania felt it necessary to find a new ally in order to preserve its sovereignty without interrupting the flow of foreign aid essential to its survival. An opportunity to shift its loyalty from Yugoslavia to a new alliance with the Soviet Union arose as a result of a clash of interests between these two countries. This change represented the beginning of the institutionalisation of alliance formation and the tendency to shift it when necessary as a foreign policy strategy for Albania. In view of the Albanian political élite's suspicions regarding the intentions of neighbouring states, establishing an alliance with a more distant but mighty great power with a formidable global reach was quite valuable. Furthermore, an alliance with an ideologically close state represented an important asset in the ever-increasing political tension of the international Cold-War environment. Given this environment, the Soviet Union considered Albania to be both a politically loyal ally and a strategic asset. Regardless of the remarkable economic and technical contributions provided by the Soviet Union, Albania could not escape the negative impact of the increasing influence of its great power ally. Albania continued to maintain a close relationship with the Soviets to the extent that they were able to provide desperately needed economic aid and a guarantee against any challenge to Albania's security from its neighbours. However, when changes in the Soviet Union's ideological stance and its foreign policy towards Yugoslavia began to threaten Albania, the Albanian leadership once again reacted by shifting away from one of its most asymmetric alliance relationships in favour of a new one.

By this time, the Albanian leadership had honed its alliance-formation skills and its ability to balance the effects of powerful allies by shifting loyalties when it felt its sovereignty and territorial integrity was about to be threatened. Thus, when Albania distanced itself from the Soviet Union, China was available to fill the post as Albania's new ally. China was geographically distant but willing to provide economic and political support to Albania, and both countries shared a similar ideological attitude that conflicted with that of the Soviet Union. Albania filled an important gap for the Chinese by taking on the role of defender of Chinese interests and supporter of the Chinese political position in international organisations. Albania maintained its foreign policy line of asymmetric alliances until its relations with China deteriorated in line with China's changing role in international politics and its improving relations with the two superpowers, which China, like Albania, had previously considered to be its enemies.

As the Chinese began to decrease their level of economic and technical assistance and leave Albania alone in the international arena, the Albanian leader, Enver Hoxha, made an important diversion in the Albanian foreign policy line. Hoxha broke Albania's foreign policy trend towards institutionalising alliance formation and moved Albania onto a strict isolationist line. Hoxha did not opt for a new alliance, as there was no suitable candidate to fill the role last taken by China; the international context and the particular circumstances were not conducive to another alliance, and, from Hoxha's point of view, Albania's position was not flexible enough to make ideological compromises in exchange for foreign support. Hoxha tried to minimise the consequences of Albania's limited relational power in the international arena with the unorthodox move of reducing Albania's presence and the scope of its interactions at the international level. Thus, Albania tried to survive by its own means, closing itself to all foreign influences for more than a decade, despite some minor relaxation in policy after Hoxha's death.

The post-Cold War period brought important changes for Albania. The communist party rule was unable to withstand the pressure of economic, political and international change, and, as a result, Albania transformed its regime to a multiparty democracy and adapted a liberal economic system. During this painful and difficult transition process, Albania abandoned its isolationist policy and began to reintegrate into the international system. The transformation of the

international political arena required Albania to readjust its foreign policy, and as the regime changed, the new Albanian élite shifted Albania's foreign policy line back to that of establishing close relations with great powers and alliance formation. Albanian decisionmakers sought to develop a very close strategic relationship with the US in order to increase their security in the conflict-hit Balkans as well as to have access to the economic aid that was desperately needed for the country's survival. As the most influential actor in the international system with particular interests in the Balkans, the US was perceived as the most suitable candidate for the role of ally, given that Albanian and US foreign policy priorities coincided and that the US was willing to offer Albania its support.

As the major great power with the structural power to reshape developments at a global level, the US maintains its own interests and priorities at the regional level. In the post-Cold War international environment, the US has wanted to transform Central and Eastern Europe, including the Balkans, as part of an overall global transformation in line with its neoliberal policies. In this context, the small states appeared as both the ground for neoliberal US policies, as well as instrumental in their implementation. In this sense, Albania did not remain outside the scope of this particular design for reshaping the states in the region, and the Albanian transition has occurred in no other form than that of US-led neoliberal policies. In fact, Albanians enthusiastically adopted these policies for transition in the hope of reducing the country's weakness; however, not only did the transition policies prove counterproductive, in 1997, they led, to one of worst crises in Albanian history.

While the Albanians wanted to develop a close relationship that extended to an alliance with strategic credentials, the US preferred to keep the scope and intensity of its relations with Albania under control, which have been shaped by US priorities and policies at both the regional and global levels. At the same time, Albania has been able to make use of regional issues to attract support from the US, which viewed regional security and stability in the Balkans as crucial. Although the US has been the main party to determine the scope of US-Albanian relations, Albania managed to use the conflicts in the Balkans and the existence of the Albanian Question to bring its policies closer in line with those of the US, and its ever-increasing pro-American stance allowed Albania to benefit from US

support. Not even Washington's indifference and non-involvement in the 1997 crisis or the limited nature of economic relations could shake the Albanian commitment to work on pushing its bilateral relations with the US to the level of close strategic cooperation. Even after US foreign policy priorities shifted away from the Balkans, the Albanians were able to enhance their relations with the US in line with one of the two pillars of Albanian foreign policy by making use of their relational power, becoming close supporters of US policies at a time when the Americans needed international backing to legitimize their military interventions. In this sense, Albania managed to develop its relations with the US by providing support for US policies in the international arena.

In most instances, Albania has skilfully played the game of obtaining much-needed support from its asymmetric relations with regional and great powers by utilising contextual opportunities. Despite the fact that the great powers have been the determining actors in their bilateral relations with Albania, Albania has been able to accommodate its interests during the course of its alliances. When the benefits of its alliances were negated by the threat of a possible loss of sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity, Albania tried to manipulate the existing circumstances in its favour in order to shift to a new alliance relationship. As Albania's enduring weakness made foreign support indispensable, and the means of sustaining this support was realised through the establishment of alliance relationships with regional and great powers, shifting alliances when necessary became a crucial Albanian foreign policy trait. In this sense, a relationship can be observed among weakness, foreign support and the formation of alliances, which were open to change in accordance with the international context and specific issues related to Albania's survival.

As a small state, Albania mainly utilized particular conditions and historical instances to secure support through alliances. In exchange, Albanians could offer diplomatic backing in the international arena, as they did with the Chinese; they could become a source of ideological and strategic support, as they were for the Soviets; or, they could allow their territory to be used as an important foothold in the Balkans in order to exercise region-wide influence, as it was in the case of Italy and Yugoslavia. Albania's strategic location, Albanian-related issues and other problems in the Balkans, ideological and political competitions during

the Cold War, the post-Cold War transformation of Europe and changes in the international environment all created suitable contexts to be used by different Albanian leaderships to establish cliental relationships with regional and great powers – and to shifts these relations to new patrons, when necessary, in order to continue to attract support.

The trend of obtaining support from regional and great powers represents continuity in Albania's foreign policy line, despite the varying degrees of success and failure of this alliance-formation policy. The only exception to this historical course has been the major change represented by a period of self-imposed isolation. However, after the post-Cold War regime change and the end of communist party rule, Albania re-adapted its previous foreign policy line. In an environment in which Albania's weakness as a small state once again necessitated foreign support, the Albanian political élite easily reproduced the formerly well-applied policy of aligning with a great power as one of the main strategies of their new foreign policy line.

A number of lessons can be drawn from the Albanian experience with alliances in the post-Second World War period. First of all, in entering an alliance, a small state must take carefully calculated risks and monitor its relations to ensure that the benefits continue to outweigh the costs, which may be as high as a total loss of sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity. A political regime can only stay in power in a weak and small state to the extent that it is able to prevent its stronger ally from intervening in and manipulating the domestic politics of the small state – if necessary by changing the political leadership or even the regime to suit its own interests – and using the weakness of the small state to extract further concessions. There may also be an 'optimum distance' for a prospective strong ally – one that is close enough to provide economic aid and security guarantees, but not so close as to pose a threat to the small state. Political and ideological affinities are also important, but they are not the most prominent determinant in a harmonious alliance relationship that can provide security to the small state. Overall, the destiny of the alliance relationship is very much related to the international and regional circumstances that have direct bearing on the priorities of the allied states. As long as the conditions apply, a weak, small state may shift alliances in order to maintain its relational power; however, the weak

small state is not the determining, dominant actor in an alliance relationship with a great power.

As the case of Albania highlights, the nature of small state-great power relations is very much influenced by the particular circumstances in the international arena as well as by the great power's ability to exercise its structural power in the international arena to shape the small state in accordance to its own preferences. However, as long as the small states continue to constitute the vast majority of states on the globe, their relations with the great powers will continue to be an important part of their foreign-policy priorities. While relations between small states and great powers will continue to be determined by the asymmetry of their relational and structural power, which favours the great powers, the small states can still enhance their relative influence in the international arena as the result of the expansion of the various issue areas and particularly utilising the power of the weak in the international arena.

This study aimed to contribute to the better understanding of the small states in the international arena and their particular relationship with the great powers. Despite there is still lack of a comprehensive and exclusive approach to analyse small states and their relations with the great powers, as suggested in the thesis and applied in the analysis of the particular case of Albania as a small state and its relations with different regional and great powers, the relational power and structural power distinction and the relevant conceptualisation could be utilised for this purpose in other cases as well. Small states studies and literature could be enhanced by studying different cases as well as applying different approaches and focusing on different subfields of the IR discipline as there are many other small states which could be further studied to contribute to the understanding of the small states and their foreign relations.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### TURKISH SUMMARY

##### ASİMETRİK OYUNU OYNAYAN KÜÇÜK DEVLET: ARNAVUTLUK DIŞ POLİTİKASINDA DEVAMLILIK VE DEĞİŞİM

Arnavutluk devleti kurulduğu Kasım 1912'den itibaren zayıf bir küçük ülke olarak uluslararası arenada var olma savaşı vergelmiştir. Arnavutluk'un kuruluşundan itibaren gerek iç gerek dış sorunlarla baş etmeye çalışarak hayatta kalma çabası küçük devletlerin dış politikasının oluşumunun incelenmesi açısından önemli bir örnek teşkil etmesinden hareketle bu tezin genel çerçevesi çizilmiştir. Bu bağlamda, tezde temel olarak Arnavutluk dış politika oluşum süreci ve daha sonra geçirdiği tarihsel evreler bu örnek dahilinde Arnavutluk'un dış politikasına odak oluşturan zayıflıklarının bölgesel ya da büyük güçlerle yakınlaşarak ve bu yakınlaşmanın derinliğini ikili itifak ilişkileri seviyesine getirerek üstesinden gelmeyi amaçlayan yaklaşımının incelenmesi sonucunda zayıf ve küçük devletlerin genelde dış politikalarının oluştururken göz önünde bulundukları tercihleri ve bu minvalde daha özelde de büyük güçlerle olan ilişkilerinin yapısı ve doğasının anlaşılmasında literatüre katkıda bulunmak amaçlanmıştır.

Uluslararası ilişkiler disiplininin genel gelişim süreci içerisinde devletlerin aralarındaki boyutsal temelli farklılaşmalar çerçevesinde incelenmesi görece geç bir zamanlamayla başlamıştır. Bu gecikmede aslen yine kendisi de geç ayrılmış ve şekillenmiş olan uluslararası ilişkiler disiplini içerisinde uluslararası ilişkilerin anlaşılması için büyük güçlerin ve onların uluslararası sistemdeki rol ve

hareketlerinin anlaşılmasının merkez alınması önemli rol oynamıştır. Bu önem zaman içerisinde farklı boyutlardaki devletlerin uluslararası sistemdeki varlıklarının uluslararası ilişkiler çalışanlarca ayırtına varılması ve konu üzerine çalışmaların başlatılmasına rağmen azalmamış, güncel çalışmalarda büyük güçlerle ilintili yaklaşımlar ağırlıklarını sürdürmektedirler.

Küçük devletlerin uluslararası ilişkiler tahlilleri çerçevesinde gündeme girmeleri İkinci Dünya Savaşını takip eden süreçte olmuştur. İkinci dünya savaşı sırasında tarafsız kalmış küçük devletlerin bu süreçteki siyasetlerini inceleyen bir kitabın 1959 yılında basılması küçük devletlerin disiplin içerisinde farklı bir kategori olarak algılanması ve konu üzerine çalışmaların başlangıcı açısından dönüm noktasını oluşturmuştur. 1960 ve 1970li yıllar küçük devletler üzerine çalışmaların yoğunlaşmaya başladığı yıllardır. Konuya ilginin artmasında bu dönemde uluslararası alanda sömürsüzleştirme sürecinin başlamasıyla uluslararası sisteme önemli sayıda yeni küçük devletin katılmasının yanında küçük devletlerin etkinlik alanı olarak yine bu dönemde yaygınlaşan uluslararası örgütler nezdinde kendilerini görece ön plana çıkartma şansını bulmaya başlamaları önemli rol oynamıştır. Küçük devlet çalışmaları dönemin baskın uluslararası ilişkiler yaklaşımları olan (neo)realizm ve çalışma alanı olarak da güvenlik merkezli yapılmaya başlanmıştır. Erken dönem küçük devlet çalışmaları özellikle İskandinav ülkeleri ve küçük ada devletlerinin konu üzerine olan çalışmaları desteklemesi ve uluslararası ilişkiler disiplini içinden de büyük güçleri merkez alan bakış açısına alternatif yaklaşımların uluslararası ilişkilerin ve özelde de küçük devletlerin daha iyi tahlil edilmesi amacıyla geliştirilmesinin konu üzerine çalışan bazı uzmanlarca kabul görmeye başlamasıyla gelişme şansı yakalamıştır.

Fakat küçük devletlere olan ilgi 1980lerin ortalarına kadar yavaşça azalmış, uluslararası ilişkiler disiplini içerisinde ülkelerin boyutlarını ve buna bağlı uluslararası ilişkileri ve devletlerin dış politikalarını oluşturma süreçlerine dair genel kapsamlı açıklamalar üzerinde fikir birliğine varılamaması ve ilgili kabul gören kuramların geliştirilememiş olması bu azalmanın ön plana çıkan nedenleri olarak gösterilmiştir. Bu noktada küçük devletlerin anlaşılması hususunda öncelik genel uluslararası ilişkiler kuramlarına –yeni gelişen neolibelizm dahil, verilmiş ya da duruma göre küçük devletler farklı konu başlıkları altındaki genel yaklaşımlar çerçevesinde değerlendirmeye alınarak anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır.

Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönem küçük devlet çalışmalarına olan ilginin yeniden gündeme gelmesine şahitlik yapmıştır. Bu dönemde Sovyetler Birliği ve Yugoslavya'nın dağılma süreçleri ve Çekoslovakya'nın bölünmesi gibi gelişmeler sonucunda uluslararası alanda küçük devletlerin sayısında tekrar önemli bir artış yaşanmış ve yine uluslararası alanda Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesiyle yaşanan rahatlamanın sonucunda bu yeni küçük devletlerin uluslararası sistemle uluslararası ve çok taraflı, ekonomik ve güvenlikle ilgili örgütlere katılma sürecine girerek bütünleşmeye yoğunlaşmaları küçük devlet çalışmalarının yeniden artış eğilimine girmesine yol açan nedenler olmuşlardır. Avrupa Birliği bütünleşme süreci ve farklı bölgesel bütünleşme çalışmaları yanında yeni dönemdeki farklılaşan ve artış eğilimindeki güvenlik sorunları küçük devletlerle ilgili çalışmaların uluslararası ilişkiler disiplini içerisinde konuya olan ilginin yeniden gündeme gelmesine yol açmıştır. Bu gelişmelere ve disiplinindeki yapısalcılık gibi yeni fikri açılımlara paralel küçük devletler kimlik ve normlar gibi referans noktaları ve insan hakları, çevre ve barışı koruma ve inşa gibi farklı konu başlıklarında da incelemelere konu olmaya başlamıştır. Bu bağlamda küçük devlet çalışmalarının daha önceki periyotlarla karşılaştırıldığında uluslararası siyaset ve dış politika incelemeleri konularında gelişme eğilimi içerisinde olduğu rahatlıkla söylenebilir.

Daha önce de kısaca değinildiği üzere küçük devlet çalışmalarındaki en önemli sorunların başında küçük devletlerin tanımlanması gelmektedir. Yıllar içerisinde uluslararası ilişkiler disiplini içerisindeki çalışmalarda devletlerin boyutlarının devletlerin siyasetlerinin ve uluslararası alandaki yaklaşımlarının anlaşılması noktasında literatüre yapabileceği katkılar ve küçük devlet kavramsallaştırmasının uluslararası ilişkilerin daha iyi anlaşılabilmesi yönünde bir 'analitik araç' olarak yapabileceği katkı hususu önemli bir tartışma konusu oluştura gelmiştir. Aslen uluslararası ilişkilerin daha iyi anlaşılması yönünde küçük devlet çalışmalarının yaptığı katkı temel olarak küçük devlet kategorileştirmesinin uluslararası ilişkilerin ve devletlerin uluslararası alandaki siyasetlerinin daha küçük boyutlara bölünmesi yoluyla daha detaylı incelenmesi ve daha iyi anlaşılmasına yol açmasına yardımcı olmasıyla açıklanabilir. Ayrıca uluslararası ilişkiler disiplininin geleneksel odak noktası olan gelmiş büyük güçleri temel alan 'tek boyutlu' yaklaşımının ötesine geçilmesi de uluslararası ilişkilerin

daha geniş bir perspektif ve boyutta ele alınmasına ve daha anlaşılır olmasına katkıda bulunan bir etmen olarak görülmektedir. Tüm devletlerin anlaşılmasında büyük güçlerin yaklaşımlarını, çıkarlarını ve hareketlerini temel alan yaklaşımların konuyu açıklamakta sınırlı kalmasından hareketle, küçük devletler ayrışımı ve bu devletlere has özelliklerin de göz önünde bulundurulduğu tahlillerin devletlerin dış ve birbirleriyle olan ilişkilerinin daha iyi incelenmesine katkıda bulunduğu söylenebilir.

Bu noktada küçük devletlerin kavramsal farklılaşımının anlaşılması önem arz etmektedir. Baştan da belirtildiği üzere kavramı açıklayan biricik ve üzerinde oydaşılmış bir tanımlama yoktur ve bunun eksikliği küçük devletler çalışmalarının genel kabul görmüş bir gerçekliği olarak algılanır olmuştur. Konu üzerine çalışan uzmanlar küçük devletlerin özellikle büyük güçlerle karşılaştırılması ve görecelilikleri bağlamında bir ayrışmadan hareket etmektedirler. Ancak uluslararası ilişkiler disiplini bu konuda ilgilendiren husus devletler arasındaki basit boyut farklılaşımının ve devletlerin birinin diğeri ile karşılaştırıldığında bulunan göreceli ayrışımın ötesinde daha yapısal farklılıklarının olmasıdır. Kabul edilmiş terminoloji farklılaşmalarının yanında bu tez çerçevesinde küçük devletlerin farklı karakteristik özellikleri, uluslararası alandaki rolleri ve genel dış politika uygulamaları ve özelde de büyük güçlerle ilişkileri Arnavutluk örneğinde incelemeye konu olmaktadır. Bu bağlamda küçük devlet kategorileştirmesinin tek, kesin ve tümleşik kapsayıcı bir tanımının sunumundansa küçük devlet yaklaşımının ilgili konu ve inceleme örneği çerçevesinde tanımlanması ve netleştirilmesi çok daha anlamlı olmaktadır. Bu minvalde tez bağlamında küçük devlet yaklaşımının devletlerin özellikle zayıf ve küçük olarak nitel özelliklerinin ön plana alınması ve temelde de birbirlerini kapsayacak ve yerlerine kullanılacak biçimde ortak bir sınırlılık tanımlamasıyla karakterize edilmektedir. Her ne kadar 'küçük devlet' (ya da küçük güç) tanımlaması devletin boyutunun nitel yönüne atıfta bulunan bir anlam, 'zayıf devlet' tanımlaması ise nitel bir atıfta bulunan bir anlam içerse de son tahlilde her iki kavram devletlerin sınırlı kapasiteleri ve güçleri noktalarında birleşmektedirler. Küçük ve zayıf devlet tanımlamalarının her daim eş anlamlı olmadıkları açık olmakla beraber, ilgili tanımların istisnaları ve ayrışık örnekleri ve mikro devletler gibi alt kategorileri de bulunmaktadır ancak bunlar küçük devlet kategorisinin küçüklük ve zayıflık bağlamlarında devletlerin

sınırlı fiziki ve maddi özelliklerini kapsar anlamda kullanımına bir engel teşkil etmemekte ve bu doğrultuda ilgili tez çerçevesinde Arnavutluk örneğini incelemesinde sınırlı devlet gücünün ‘bağıntısal (relational)’ özelliklerine atfen kullanılmaktadır.

Küçük devlet tanımının muğlaklığına rağmen kavramın ve kategorinin tanımlanmasında kullanılan yaklaşımları iki ana, nicel ve nitel; ve bir bütüncü algısal yaklaşım olarak nitelendirilebilir. Nicel yaklaşım devletlerin fiziki boyutları ve maddi özelliklerini; yüz ölçümü, nüfus, ekonomik gelişkinlik göstergeleri ve maddi kaynaklar gibi ön plana çıkartır. Ancak bu yaklaşım da kendi başına sorunsuz değildir. Özellikle nicel özelliklerin görece farklılaşım için temel alınan değerler ve bunların belirlenmesi kaçınılmaz olarak isteğe bağlı olarak yapılmakta, alt ya da üst değerler farklı değerlendirme ya da ihtiyaçlara istinaden saptanmaktadır. Bu değerler değişime açık olmalarının yanında bazı durumlarla kombine olarak da nitel özelliklerin tespitinde kullanılmaktadır.

Nicel yaklaşımın aksine nitel yaklaşım küçük devletleri ayırtırmak için devletlerin uluslararası seviyedeki etkilerini göz önüne almaktadır. Devletlerin bu etkisinin kaynağı devletlerin kendilerini bağımsız ve egemen olarak var ve güvende kılmalarının yanında diğer devletlerin kendi hareketlerini yönlendirebilme amacı güden üzerlerinde kurabilecekleri muhtemel hükümlerini engellemek ve aynı şeyi diğer devletler üzerinde uygulayabilecek yetkinliğe/kapasiteye sahip olmakla tanımlanabilir. Bu yaklaşım devletlerin güç ve güç ilişkilerine ilişkin yetkinliklerine/kapasitelerine önem atfetmektedir.

Tez çerçevesinde uluslararası ilişkiler disiplininin güncel yaklaşımları çerçevesinde zaman zaman güç kavramının en geniş ve kaba manâda kullanımı ve bunlara yoğun atıfları nedeniyle neo-realist yaklaşım eleştirilere maruz kalmasına rağmen, güç kavramı küçük devletler ve büyük güçler arasındaki kavramsal ayrışımı ortaya özellikle de ‘yetkinlik/kapasite – sonuç alma’ bağlamında bu aktörler arasındaki ilişkinin devletlerin uluslararası sistem çerçevesindeki ilişkilerinin anlaşılabilmesi için daha geniş bir kavramsal düzlemde tahliline imkan sağlaması bakımından hala anlamlı olan bir kavramdır. Bu noktada Susan Strange’in gücü ‘bağıntısal (relational)’ ve ‘yapısal (structural)’ güç ayrışımı üzerinden kavramsallaştıran analitik yapısı tez çerçevesinde küçük devlet-büyük güç tanımlamalarının netleştirilmesinde kullanılmaktadır. Strange’nin güç

tanımlaması basitçe bir kişi ya da gurubun bir konuda alınacak sonuçlarda kendi tercihlerinin diğerlerinin tercihlerinden üzerinde kabul görmesini sağlamaya yönelik yeterliliğe haiz olması olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır ki bu tanım yine Stange'in değimiyle güç kavramının safi çıkar peşinden koşmakla eş tutulması mantığına takılıp kalmaktan ve gücün bir araç olarak algılanmasından kaçınılması gerekliliğini yansıtmaktadır. Strange 'bağıntısal (relational)' gücü bir devletin diğer devletlere bağıl gücü ve 'yapısal (structural) güç ise bir devletin küresel sonuçlar üzerindeki nüfuzu olarak tanımlamaktadır. Bu güç tanımı temelli ayrışım tez kapsamındaki küçük devlet – büyük güç ayrışımı ve durumsal rol ve yetkinlik farklılaşımının bu bağlamdaki kullanımı için de temel oluşturmaktadır. Bu manâda küçük devletler sadece sınırlı yetkinlikleriyle ilintilendirilebilen bağıntısal bir güce haiz devletlerken, büyük güçler kendilerine uluslararası ilişkilerle alâkalandırılan sonuçlar üzerinde yapısal seviyede etki sahibi kılan yapısal güce sahip devletler olarak tanımlanır. Küçük devletler uluslararası ilişkilerdeki bazı konularda durumsal etkiye ya da bölgesel çerçevede nüfuza sahip olabilmelerine, yahut tarihsel bir özel bir durumda ve koşullar altında güç sahibi hale gelebilmelerine rağmen hiç bir zaman bu durum onların statülerini küçük devletten büyük güç noktasına yükseltmek için yeterli olamayacaktır.

Devletlerin nicel ve nitel özellikleri ve kapasitelerini yanında nasıl algılandıkları ve tanındıkları da tanımlamalarını bütüncü yaklaşım olarak oldukça önemlidir. Devletlerin küçük devlet ya da büyük güç olmaları devletlerin kendilerini nasıl algıladıkları kadar başka devletlerce nasıl algılanıp tanındıklarıyla da alâkalıdır. Bu anlamda büyük güç olmak devletlerin sadece kendini büyük güç ilan etmeleriyle olacak şey değildir, bu durum bir devletin hem nicel vasıfları karşılması – gerekli bağıntısal güce ve kapasiteye sahip olması yanında, bu durumun diğer devletlerce de meşru kılınıp tanınmasıyla kabul görmüş sayılabilir. Benzer yaklaşım küçük devletler için de geçerli olup, bir ülkenin kendisini kurumsal olarak küçük devlet olarak tanımlaması ve insanların da devletlerini aynı şekilde görmeleri de devletlerin küçük devlet sayılmalarında rol oynar. Bu yaklaşıma ek olarak küçük devlet çalışmalarında daha serbest yaklaşımı savunanlar küçük devletleri “gördüğümde bilirim” şeklinde de tanımlamak taraftarıdır.

Arnavutluk bütün bu kavramsal - nicel, nitel ve algısal yaklaşımlar çerçevesinde küçük devlet olarak tanımlanabilmektedir. Gerek nüfus, yüz ölçümü, ekonomik gelişkinlik gibi çeşitli nicel ve kurumsal tanımlı ölçütleri babında gerekse de Arnavutluk'un uluslararası alandaki yapısal etkinliğine çok uzak çoğunlukla güncel bağlamla ilintili bağıntısal gücü ve yine uluslararası arenada küçük devlet olarak tanınması ve kabul görmesi yanında yine bu şekilde devlet olarak kendisini algılaması ve halkı tarafından da algılanması Arnavutluk'u bu şekildeki bir kategori içerisinde tanımamızı haklı çıkartan sebepleri oluşturmaktadır. Arnavutluk sınırlı kapasitesini yansıtan sınırlı bağıntısal güce sahip bir küçük devlettir ve bağıntısal gücü özgül koşul ve tarihsel olaylar çerçevesinde çoğunlukla da bulunduğu bölge ve coğrafyasının özel durumlarda getirdiği stratejik önemle ve ikili ilişkilerinin özellikleriyle alâkalı bir önem kazanmaktadır.

Tezin önde gelen odak noktalarından biri de küçük devletlerin büyük güçlerle olan ilişkilerinin bağlamıdır. Bu ilişkinin bağlamı ve çerçevesi Arnavutluk gibi bölgesel ve büyük güçlerle yakın ilişkiler kurmayı zaman içerisinde gelenekselleştiren bir devletin dış politikasının anlaşılmasında önem arz etmektedir.

Küçük devletlerin büyük güçlerle olan ilişkilerinin anlaşılmasında bu ilişkinin kendi özellikleri yanında uluslararası sistemin incelemeye tâbi dönem çerçevesindeki yapısal özellikleri de önemlidir. Küçük devletler ve büyük güçler var olan uluslararası sistemin yapısı ve içinde bulunulan koşulların kendine özgü nitelikleri de göz önünde bulundurulduğunda hayata geçirdikleri siyaset ve yaklaşımlar farklılıklar gösterir. Küçük devletler ve büyük güçler arasında uluslararası siyaset çerçevesinde uygulanan yaklaşım ve siyasetleri yalnız başına yapısal seviyede gücün dağılımını göz önünde bulundurma eğilimdeki sistemsel kuramlarla açıklamak mümkün değildir. Bunun ötesinde küçük devletlerin zayıflıklarını ve büyük güçlerin etkinliklerini anlayabilmek için sistemsel yaklaşımları, ve dış politikanın içsel etkenlerini ve devletlerin kapasitelerini de bütünleştiren bir yol izlenmesi daha küçük devletlerin ve büyük güçlerin dış politikalarının anlaşılmasının genişlemesi için anlamlı ve uygun bir yöntemdir.

Büyük güçler maddi imkan ve kapasitelerini, ideolojik ve siyasi baskınlıkları ve uluslararası sistemi tanımlama ve şekillendirme hususundaki isteklilikleriyle bir araya getirerek uluslararası sistemin üstünlükleri sayesinde

önde gelen aktörleri olurlar. Büyük güçler uluslararası sistemin özelliklerini tanımlamanın yanında aynı zamanda uluslararası düzeni de çıkarları çerçevesinde kendi baskın konumlarını sürdürmek ve güçlerini muhafaza etmek amacıyla yeniden şekillendirirler. Büyük güçlerin bu özellikleri aslen onların yapısal güçlerinin bir yansıması olarak ortaya çıkar.

Küçük devletlerin büyük güçlerle olan ilişkilerinin genel uluslararası ilişkilerine yaklaşımlarındaki özgül konuları çerçevesinde ortak noktalarda buluşturmak mümkündür. Bu manâda küçük devletlerin büyük güçlerle olan ilişkilerinde tercih edebilecekleri seçenekleri kaba hatlarıyla bağlantısızlık, ittifak ve tarafsızlık olarak tanımlanabilir ki bu tercihler özgül tarihsel durumların yanında coğrafi koşullar göz önüne alındığında da değişkenlik gösterebilir. Örneğin savaş koşullarında küçük devletler tarafsızlık konumunu tercih ederek zayıf oldukları bir savaş durumunda bağımsızlık ve egemenliklerini bu yolla korumayı sağlamaya çalışabilirler. Ya da savaş zamanı olmasa da küçük devletler kendilerini başka özellikle de büyük güçlerle yakından ilintilendirecek durumlarda bulunmamak için bağlantısızlığı tercih edebilirler ki Soğuk Savaş şartları içerisinde şekillenen Bağlantısızlar Hareketi küçük devletlerden kendine önemli katılımcılar bulmuştur. Tarafsızlığın barış zamanında da sürdürülmesini ön gören siyaset tercihi olarak bağlantısızlık aslen uluslararası konjonktüre ve uluslararası sistemin özel dönemlerindeki durumlarının özelliklerine oldukça bağlıdır. Küçük devletler uluslararası özgül durumlardan kendilerine azami getiriye elde etmek için bağlantısızlığı tercih edebilirler.

Öte yandan küçük devletler diğer devlet ya da devlet gruplarıyla da zayıflıklarının üstesinden gelmek amacıyla ittifak oluşturmak tercihinde de bulunabilirler. İttifakların da ikili ya da çok taraflı; büyük güçlerle yapılanları, küçük devletlerin bir araya gelmesiyle oluşturulanları, ve ya küçük devletler ve büyük güçleri buluşturan karışık yapıları çeşitleri mevcuttur. İttifaklar belirli bir güvenlik tehdidine ya da başka bir ittifaka ya da başka bir devlete karşı kurulabilir ki bu durum ittifak içi ilişkinin niteliğini küçük devletle büyük güç arasındaki asimetric ilişki boyutunda da yansıtır.

Küçük devletlerin dış politika seçenekleri genellikle bu devletlerin güvenlik öncelikleri göz önde bulundurularak değerlendirilir ki bu durum çoğunlukla küçük devletlerin doğasında bulunduğu farz edilen zayıf durumlarına

afedilerek açıklanır. Zayıflık durumu ve güvenlik arasındaki ilinti küçük devletlerin dış politikasının önde gelen temalarından birini oluşturur. Bu manâda savunmasız – saldırılara açık olma durumu bağımsızlık, egemenlik ve toprak bütünlüğü bağlamlarında çoğunlukla küçük devletlerin uluslararası sistem içindeki durumlarını tanımlamak amacıyla kullanılmaktadır. Güvenlik alanında uluslararası ilişkilerinin genel durumunu büyük ölçüde büyük güçler belirliyor olmasına rağmen, küçük devletlerin de özgün uluslararası bağlamdaki özgün koşullarına istinaden görece daha büyük bir çerçevede içinden kendilerine uygun olabilecek alternatif politikalar arasından seçim yapma şansları da bulunmaktadır.

Küçük devlet büyük güç ilişkileri minvalinde temel sorulardan birisi de bu çerçevede küçük devletlerin büyük güçlerin piyonları olmaktan öteye bir durumda olup olmadıklarıdır. Bu soru her iki kategorideki devletlerin arasındaki bağıntısal ve yapısal güç farkı ve etkinliğinin ayrımının büyüklüğünden gelmektedir. Özellikle yapısal seviyedeki farklılaşmanın getirdiği uluslararası bağlamın büyük güçler tarafından şekillendirildiği yargısı küçük devletlerin uluslararası ortama katkısı da bulunan aktörler gibi değil de sade büyük güçlerin araçları olarak nitelendirilmesi durumunun ortaya çıkmasına neden olmaktadır. Hâlbuki büyük güçlerin küçük devletleri araçsal algılamasına yönelik yaklaşımları küçük devletlerin uluslararası arenanın harcanabilir ya da görece ihmal edilebilir aktörleri imajı yaratmamalıdır. Aksine, küçük devletlerin görece etki ve etkinliklerinin boyutları sorgulanabilir olsa da, bu devletler uluslararası alanda büyük güçlerin yanında var oldukça bağıntısal güçlerinin sınırlılığı içerisinde uluslararası bağlamın şekillenmesiyle bir şekilde ilgili ve etkili kalmaya devam edeceklerdir.

Arnavutluk uluslararası sistemdeki varlığı kurulduğu zaman itibariyle zayıf bir küçük devlet olarak başlamıştır. Aslen bu yeni devletin zayıflığı ve var olma çabası zaman içerisinde birbirlerini döngüsel olarak takip eden iki temel sorun olarak devletin kuruluşundan itibaren süregelmiştir. Arnavutluk küçük bir ülke olarak baştan itibaren egemenliğinin ve toprak bütünlüğünün tehdit edilmesine açık bırakan zayıflıklarını telâfi edecek bir dış politika kurgusunu geliştirecek bir siyasete ihtiyaç duymuştur. Bu doğrultuda ülkenin istikrarını ve var oluşuna tehdit oluşturabilecek iç ve dış tehditler Arnavutluk'un zayıflıklarını dışarıdan temin edeceği destek yoluyla bertaraf etmesi tercihini geliştirmesine sebep olmuştur. Bu yaklaşımın temelleri özellikle Arnavutluk'un kuruluş yıllarındaki hukuki varlığını

uluslararası alanda kabul ettirme ve aynı zamanda da toprak bütünlüğünü sağlama çabalarının ana öncelik olarak ortaya çıktığı yıllardaki durumun yaratmış olduğu zaruriyet çerçevesinde şekillenmeye başlamıştır.

Balkan savaşlarının ve hemen akabinde patlayan Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nın ortaya çıkarttığı tablo Arnavutluk'un bu sınırlı ancak yeni kurulmakta olan bir devlet için hayati olarak addedilebilecek gereksinimlerini tek başına göğüslemesini olanaksız kılan bir durum yaratmıştır. 1913'te Londra'da toplanan önderliğini zamanın büyük güçlerinin yaptığı Büyükelçiler Konferansı Arnavutluk'un devlet olarak uluslararası alanda varlığının tanınması ve buna paralel sınırlarının belirlenmesinde hayati rol üstlenmiştir. Başlangıçta *ad hoc* olarak oluşan bu toplantı zaman içerisinde Arnavutluk ile ilintili sorunların varlığını sürdürmesi ve farklı boyutlara ulaşması nedeniyle neredeyse bir sürece dönüşerek Arnavutluk'un devlet olarak varlığını pekiştirmek ve daim kılmak için çaba sarf ettiği devlet kuruluş döneminde uluslararası aktörlerin ülke üzerindeki etkinliklerinin en net vücut bulduğu siyasi ve diplomatik alan olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu süreçte özellikle Arnavutluk'un bölgesel ve sınırdaş komşularının açık ve gizli olarak yürüttükleri Arnavutluk üzerinde hakimiyet kurma ve topraklarını paylaşma çabaları Arnavutluk'un kendisi için çok da uygun olmayan uluslararası konjonktür çerçevesinde şekillenen gelişmelerin özellikle de Birinci Dünya Savaşı'na sona erdiren anlaşmalar sürecinde kendisinden tarafa dönmesi sayesinde durdurulabilmiştir. Bu dönemde Amerika Birleşik Devletleri Başkanı Wilson'un Paris Barış Konferansı sürecinde toplumların kendi kaderlerini tayin hakkını gözetken prensibini de içeren siyasetinin parçası olarak verilen Arnavutluk'un egemenliğinin korunmasına yönelik Amerika Birleşik Devletleri desteği, Arnavutluk'un bu dönemden varlığını koruyarak çıkmasında önemli bir etmen olmuştur. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin Arnavutluk devletinin varlığını sürdürmesinde çok önemli bir yer tutan bu desteği, bu noktada Arnavutluk'un ayakta kalması için dış destek sağlanmasının hayati bir gerçek olarak algılanması yanında daha sonraki yıllarda Arnavutluk devleti ve Arnavut halkının Amerika Birleşik Devletlerine olan minnet duygusuyla oluşan sempati ve güveninin de ortaya çıkmasındaki temel etkiyi oluşturmuştur.

Bunların yanında çeşitli kereler toplanan ve Arnavutluk'un geleceğinin şekillenmesinde önemli rol oynayan Büyükelçiler Konferansı çerçevesinde büyük

güçlerin Balkanlar'daki etkinliğine benzer şekilde Soğuk Savaş sonrasında yine bölgede görülen istikrarsızlık ve çatışmaların yoğunlaştığı ortamda güncel büyük güçlerin ve bölgede etkin devletlerin Contact Group adıyla farklı bir formda ancak benzer etkinlik yoğunluğu ile ortaya çıkmış olması kayda değer bir gelişme olarak not edilmelidir.

Arnavutluk iki savaş arası siyasi olarak dönemde varlığını sağlamlaştırma ve sınırlarına son halini verme işlerinde çok önemli ilerlemeler kaydetse de ülke içindeki siyasi çalkantılar ve ekonomik az gelişmişliğin getirdiği sorunlar Arnavutluk'un zayıflığından kurtulmasını sağlayamamıştır. Arnavutluk siyasi rejimi baştan itibaren dış güçlerin dayattığı yabancı bir soylunun altında prenslik yönetimi, kısa dönemli çok partili siyasi partilerin olduğu demokrasi denemesini de içeren parlamenter karışıklık dönemi ve sonrasında Ahmet Zogu'nun kişisel yönetimini yerleşikleştirdiği cumhuriyet ve ardından mutlaki monarşi yönetimleri gösterdikleri otoriter yaklaşım sürekliliğine rağmen ülkenin içinde bulunduğu zayıflıktan Arnavutluk'u çıkartmada tek başlarına başarılı olamamışlardır. Bu dönem sonucunda Zogu'nun kendisini krallığını ilan etmesi sonrasında iç siyasi alanda otoriter yönetiminin sonucu olarak görece bir istikrar sağlanmış olsa da ve Arnavutluk savaş arası sürecin başlarındaki savaş yorgunluğunun getirdiği uluslararası dengenin faydasını görüyor olsa da yerleşik zayıflıkları Arnavutluk'un varlığını güvenle sürdürmesi için yeterli ortamı sağlamaktan uzak görünmekteydi. Arnavutluk siyasi seçkinleri özelde de Karl Zog çeşitli vesilelerle yeni kurulan Milletler Cemiyeti'ne özellikle zayıf devletleri için maddi yardım ve uygun kredi ve borç fırsatları tahsis edilmesi amacıyla yapmış oldukları başvurulara aldıkları olumsuz yanıtlar çerçevesinde yüzlerini konu ile ilgilenecek ve Arnavutluk ile ilişkileri geliştirmekten karşılıklı fayda sağlaya sağlayacak devletlerle çevirerek çok ihtiyaç duyulan maddi desteğe ulaşmanın yollarını aramaya başladılar. Bu nokta Arnavutluk'un bölgesel ve büyük güçlerle hami-bağımlı (patron-client) tarzında bir ilişki geliştirmeye ve bunu dış politikasının asli unsurlarından biri olarak yerleşikleştirmeye başlamasının çıkışını oluşturmuştur. Bu bağlamda Arnavutluk temas ettiği çeşitli büyük devletler arasında Arnavutluk ile bu tarzda yakın bir ilişki kurmaya ve özellikle ekonomik destek vermeye istekli devlet İtalya olmuştur. Arnavutluk'un kuruluş sürecinden itibaren ülke üzerinde farklı vesilelerle etki yaratmaya ve hükümlük kurmaya çalışan, ve yine zaman zaman

Arnavutluk topraklarını işgal etmiş olan İtalya'nın bu hususta gösterdiği istek her ne kadar Arnavutlarda gönülsüzlük yaratsa da maddi desteğin aciliyet ve önemi bu konunun İtalyanlar ile ilişkilerin hızla yakınlaşması önünde bir engel teşkil edememiştir. 1920lerin ortalarından itibaren Arnavutluk ve İtalya arasında gelişen ilişkinin yapısı Arnavutluk'un daha sonraları da bölgesel ve büyük güçlerle geliştireceği bir küçük devletin kendi zayıflığını telafi etmeyi amaçlayan kendinden çok daha güçlü taraflarla geliştirdiği asimetrik tarzdaki ilişkilerin ilk örneğini teşkil eder. Bu gelişim ve tercihte iç güç zafiyetleri gibi dinamiklerin yanı sıra özellikle bu tarz ilişkinin geliştirileceği ülkenin seçiminde bölgesel ve uluslararası ortamın durumu önemli belirleyici bir etmen olarak ortaya çıkmıştır.

Arnavutluk İtalya'dan ihtiyacını duyduğu maddi ekonomik ve politik desteğin karşılığında zaman içinde iktisadi, diplomatik ve siyasi imtiyazlar verme durumuna gelmiştir. İtalya kendi bölgesel çıkar ve planları çerçevesinde Arnavutluk ile ilişkisini siyasi ve askeri uzanımına çevirerek iki ülke arasında bir ittifak ilişkisinin kurulmasına zemin hazırlamıştır. Arnavutluk hükümeti ve Kral Zog da ihtiyaç duyulan dış desteğin sürekliliğin sağlanması bağlamında ilişkinin bu çerçeveye oturtulmasına olumlu yaklaşmışlardır. Ancak İtalyanlar zaman içerisinde ilişkilerin içeriği ve derinliğini Arnavutların arzuladıkları ve tezahür ettikleri seviyenin çok ötesine taşımaya yönelik çalışmalarını yoğunlaştırarak ülke içindeki etkinliklerini önemli ölçüde arttırmışlardır. Arnavutlar dış yardıma olan bağımlılıklarının artmasına hemzemin İtalya'nın etkinliğinin ülkede gittikçe daha derine nüfuz etmesine hemzemin İtalya'nın kontrolü, idaresi ve koruması altında bir müstemelekeye/protektoryaya (protectorate) dönüşmesine karşı koyamamıştır. Zamanında İtalya'nın Arnavutluk'a nüfuz etmesinin Arnavutluk'un egemenliği üzerindeki etkisi babında ortaya çıkarttığı Arnavutluk'un zayıf bir küçük devlet olarak dış yardıma olan muhtaçlığı ile yaptığı yardımlarla ülkenin varlığını sürdürebilmesinin teminatını sağlayan büyük güçlerin zaman içerisinde artış eğilimine giren etkinliklerin çelişkisinin oluşturduğu dış politika ikilemi sonraki yıllarda da Arnavutluk dış politikasının şekillenmesinde etkisini hissettiren önemli bir etken olmuştur.

Arnavutluk İtalya ile olan ikili ilişkilerinin egemenliğini tehdit eden konuma evrilen gidişatını zaman zaman bu durumu dengelemek amacıyla bazı yeni açılımları yavaşlatmak ve farklı ülkeleri benzer rollerle ülkeye çekmek için

çalışsa da İtalya'nın ikili ilişkilerdeki etkinliği ve belirleyici konumu bu çabaları boşa çıkartmıştır. Arnavutluk üzerindeki etkinliklerinin yeterli ve arzuladıkları kolaylıkla hayata geçiremediklerinden dem vuran ve buna paralel Balkanlarda etki alanı oluşturma çabalarını yoğunlaştırmakta olan İtalyanlar ise sorunlarını kökten halletmek amacıyla çözümü Arnavutluk'u işgal etmek ve ülke yönetimini kendine bağlamak yoluyla sağlamaya çalışmıştır. Arnavutluk kendi iç ve dışa yönelik güçsüzlüklerinin ülkede yaratabileceği istikrarsızlık ve buna bağlı tehlikeler oluşmaması ve ülkenin toprak bütünlüğü ve egemenliğinin tehlikeye düşmemesi amaçlarıyla hayata geçirmeye çalıştığı büyük güçlerin desteğini sağlayarak varlığını sürdürme siyasetinin temel amacının tam tersi bir sonuca ulaşarak Arnavutluk'un Nisan 1939'da işgale uğraması ve egemenliğini kaybetmesine sebep olması ilerideki yıllarda bu yaklaşımın Arnavutluk dış politikasının farklı liderlikler ve siyasi rejimler altında da devam ettirilmesine engel olmamıştır. Sonraki dönemlerde Arnavut dış politikasını şekillendirenler bir yandan kendilerinden önceki dış politika uygulamaları tecrübelerini göz önünde bulundurarak ülkenin zayıflıklarını dış destek yoluyla telafi etmeye çalışırken diğer yandan da uluslararası ve bölgesel konjonktürleri de göz önünde bulundurarak hami devletler arasında geçişkenlik eğilimini yerleşik kılma yönünde çabalarını yoğunlaştırmışlardır.

Arnavutluk İkinci Dünya Savaşına işgal altında girmiş ve savaş sürecinde işgal gücü İtalyanlardan Almanlara geçmiştir. Savaş içinde yerel direniş kuvvetleri arasında etkinliği ele alarak öne çıkan Enver Hoca önderliğindeki komünist güçler olmuş ve savaş sonlarında Arnavutluk İşçi Partisi iktidarını tesis ederek ülke yönetimini ele almıştır. Savaş sonrası dönemde de Arnavutluk'un genel zayıflığındaki devamlılık yeni iktidarı da tekrar dış yardım temin etmeye yönlendirmiştir. Bu dönemde Arnavutluk'un ittifak oluşturarak dış destek sağlama siyasetinin kendine taraf olarak bulduğu ülke savaş sürecinden beri Arnavut komünist partisiyle yakın ilişki ve işbirliği içinde olagelmiş Yugoslav partizanlarının yönetiminde buldukları komşu ülke Yugoslavya olmuştur. Arnavutluk Savaş sonrasında ülke yönetiminin ideolojik yönelimi ve savaş sonrası özellikle Britanya ve Amerika Birleşik Devletleri gibi büyük güçlerle ve Yunanistan gibi komşularıyla ortaya çıkan çeşitli sürtüşmeler yanında uluslararası alanda ihtiyaç duyduğu yeni uluslararası örgüt Birleşmiş Milletler'e katılarak

tanınma gerekliliği çerçevesinde de önemli ölçüde dış diplomatik desteğe gereksinimi bulunmaktaydı. Ayrıca savaş sonrasında ülkenin acil insani ve ekonomik yardıma ihtiyacı da vardı. Bu noktada Yugoslavya bu ihtiyaçların karşılanmasında Arnavutluk'a destek veren en önemli uluslararası aktör olarak ön plana çıktı ve yeni Arnavutluk yönetimi de ideolojik ortak bakış açısına sahip oldukları bu ülke ile olan yakınlığı ittifak seviyesine getirmeye çalışırken, iki ülkenin uygun koşullar altında belki de Arnavutluk'un "Yugoslavya'nın yedinci cumhuriyeti" şeklini alarak birleşmesi konusunda fikir yürütmeye bile başlandı. 1944 ve 1948 arasında Yugoslavya Arnavutluk'a ekonomik yardım, teknik destek ve diplomatik yardım sağlayan ve bu süreçte çeşitli ikili ittifak anlaşmalarının imzalandığı önemli ortaklar haline geldiler.

Enver Hoca Arnavutluk'un önceki ittifak ilişkisini de göz önünde bulundurarak zaman içerisinde artma eğilimindeki Yugoslav etkisini ancak Yugoslavya'nın bölgesel boyuttaki iktidarının Sovyetler Birliği'nin Balkanlara olan politikasıyla çelişmesi noktasında oluşan fırsatı kullanarak engelleme ve tehlikeye düşen iktidarını ve ülkenin bağımsızlığını koruma yoluna gidebilmiştir. Yugoslavların Arnavutluk'taki yönetim kadrosunu değiştirmek ve ülkenin kontrolünü kendilerine yandaş siyasi kadroları iktidara taşımak yoluyla hayata geçirmeyi düşündükleri ülkenin savunmasını asker bulundurarak ele geçirme planı, Hoca'nın oluşan konjonktürü başarıyla kendi lehine kullanarak ülkenin ittifak ilişkisini ve sadakatini Yugoslavya'dan konuya sıcak bakmaya başlayan Sovyetler Birliği'ne çevirmesiyle engellenmiş oldu. Hoca'nın Arnavutluk'un ittifak bağlılığını çok hızlı bir şekilde bir müttefikten diğerine çevirmesi özellikle kesintiye uğramamasının hayatiyet arz ettiği dış yardımın devamının sağlanması bakımından Arnavutluk için oldukça önemliydi. İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası dönemde yeni rejim dış politikasını belirleyici etkenler olarak milliyetçilik, iç istikrarın sağlanması, ideoloji, ekonomik ihtiyaçlar ve güvenlik ön plana çıkmıştı ve Hoca da bu etkenleri göz önünde bulundurarak ülkenin dış politikasını ve ittifak ilişkilerini ülkenin durumu, bölgesel dengeler ve uluslararası konjonktüre göre kurgulamaktaydı.

Arnavutluk'un ittifak ilişkileri içerisinde en asimetric olanı zamanın iki süpergücünden biri olan Sovyetler Birliği ile yaptığı müttefiklik olmuştur. Sovyetler Birliği, Yugoslavya ile olan ittifakın sonlandırılması ve sonrasındaki

süreçte Arnavutluk için gerek ihtiyaç duyulan yardımın kesintisiz ve istenilen düzeyde sağlanması açısından gerekse de ittifakın siyasi ayağının da oturduğu Stalinizmi temel alan paylaşılan ideolojik konumları nedenleriyle olası en uygun müttefik adayı olarak ortaya çıkmış ve Hoca tarafından bu yönde değerlendirilmiştir. Öte yandan Sovyetler Birliği coğrafi olarak uzak bir hami olmasına rağmen küresel erişimi ve bölgesel etkinliği nedeniyle güvenlik hissi yaratmakta ancak bölgesel olmayan konumu ile Arnavutluk için Yugoslavya'ya benzer bir tehdit potansiyelinden de uzak bir müttefik olmuştur. Ayrıca bu ittifak ilişkisi Arnavutluk'a prestij de kazandıran bir gelişme olmanın yanında Sovyetler Birliği'ni uluslararası boyutu olan sorunlarda açık şekilde yanına almak hızla kutuplaşan uluslararası siyaset çerçevesinde Arnavutluk için olumlu bir gelişme olmuştur. Bunun karşılığında Arnavutluk Sovyetler Birliği'ne uluslararası ortamda siyasi destek vermenin yanında ve Sovyet denizaltı filosuna Akdenizde sağladığı üs imkanlarıyla stratejik bir katkıda da bulunmuştur. Ancak yine ideolojik yaklaşımların kesişimine yardımıyla kolaylaşan ittifak ilişkisi benzer şekilde Sovyetler Birliğinde Stalin sonrası dönemdeki siyasi değişim ve buna istinaden uluslararası alandaki önceliklerin yeniden tanımlanmaya başlaması ile birlikte Arnavutluk gerek Stalinizme olan bağındaki ısrarı gerekse de Yugoslavya ile olan kopuk ve sorunlar ihtiva eden ilişkisini Sovyetlerin istediği şekliyle yeniden kurmaya zorlanması sonucunda bu ittifak ilişkisinde de sorunlar yaşamaya başlamıştır. Ancak yine değişen uluslararası konjonktür içerisinde Arnavutluk için ittifak ilişkisi siyasetini farklı bir ortakla şekillendirebileceği yeni bir fırsat penceresinin potansiyelinin ortaya çıkma sürecine girmesiyle birlikte, Arnavutluk ittifak bağı yeni bir hamiye yönlendirme ve ikame etme çalışmalarına başlamıştır. Yeni müttefik rolü için aday Sovyetler Birliği ile Arnavutluk'a benzer ideolojik ayrılık içerisinde bulunan ancak aslen Sovyetlerin komünist blok içerisinde kendilerine biçmeye çalıştığı rolden memnun olmayan ve üstüne sınır sorunlarının bir türlü çözülmediği Çin Halk Cumhuriyetiydi. Arnavutluk'un Sovyetlerle olan ilişkisi kötüleştikçe ve Sovyetler ekonomik ve teknik yardımlarını azaltıp ülkedeki varlığını 1961'in sonlarına kadarki sürede geri çekerken, Arnavutluk da Sovyetlere ve Kruşçev yönetimine olan ideolojik revizyonizm ve Marksizm karşıtlığı merkezli eleştirilerini daha yüksek perdeden dile getirmeye başlamasına paralel Çin ile olan ikili ilişkilerin geliştirilmesine karşılıklı olarak

önem verilmeye başlanmıştır. Arnavutlar süpergüç hamiliğinden başka bir büyük devletin hamiliğine geçerken kendilerine için çok hayati ve gerekli olan ekonomik ve teknik yardımı güvenceye almayı da ihmal etmediler. Arnavutluk siyasi liderliği komünist blok içerisindeki yerini, ülke güvenliğinin temel çapası olarak kabul ettikleri Sovyet askeri garantilerini ve Varşova Pakti üyeliğini kaybetmelerinin yanında diğer Blok ülkeleriyle olan ilişkilerinin de kötüleşmesiyle zaten sınırlı olan uluslararası varlığını, tehlikede hissettiği güvenliğini ve önemli ekonomik yardım kaynaklarını kaybedilmiş olunmasına rağmen bunları farklı formlarda Çin'den temin etmeyi öncelik olarak belirlemiştir.

Arnavutluk ve Hoca liderliği zaman içerisinde dış politikanın yerleşik siyasetinin temel parçalarından biri haline getirdiği ittifaklar arasında sekme işinin son ayağında Çin ile olan müttefikliğini resmi anlaşmalara hiç bir zaman dökmese de taraflar birbirlerini zaten kendileriyle ilişkide fazla sayıda ülke olmaması nedeniyle derinleştirerek uluslararası alandaki yalnızlıklarını ve temsiliyet sorunlarını aşmaya çalıştılar. Arnavutluk Çin'den aldığı ekonomik ve teknik yardımların ve siyasi desteğin karşılığında Birleşmiş Milletlerde ve diğer uluslararası örgütlerde temsil edilemeyen Çin'in bu platformlardaki sesi olmanın ötesinde Birleşmiş Milletlerdeki yerini almasının önde gelen girişimcisi olarak önemli katkıda bulunmuştur. Bu dönemde Arnavutluk ve Çin Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Sovyetler Birliği'nin küresel siyasetteki baskın konumlarına beraberce “çifte düşmanlar” yaklaşımıyla karşı durmaya çalışmışlardır. Arnavutluk Soğuk Savaşın zirve yaptığı zamanlarda aynı anda her iki süpergüç ile diplomatik ilişkisi bulunmayan ve ilişkileri kötü olan muhtemelen tek küçük devletti.

Arnavutluk'un müttefiki Çin ile olan ilişkileri de zaman içerisinde yavaş yavaş kötüleşme sürecine girmiştir. Bu gelişmede Çin'in uluslararası alanda yalıtılmışlığından kurtulma çabası geliştirmesi ve bu bağlamda uluslararası örgütlerdeki temsiliyetini sağlamsının yanında 1971'den itibaren “çifte düşmanları” ile diplomatik ilişkiye geçmesi ve Tiran'a sağladığı yardımları azaltmaya başlaması önemli rol oynamıştır. Arnavutluk gündeme alabileceği tüm potansiyel müttefik adaylarını tükettiğinden ve yardım ihtiyaçlarının sürekliliğinden ikili ilişkileri yardım boyutu devam ettiği sürece ideolojik ve siyasi eleştirileri sınırlı boyutta tutmak suretiyle gittiği noktaya kadar götürme stratejisini uygulamıştır. Bu gelişmelere paralel Arnavutluk liderliği kendi ayakları üzerinde

durma ve kendine yeterli bir ekonomik ve siyasi kurma çabasına eş olarak bölgesel ve ideolojik olarak sorun yaşadıkları ülkelerle –Batı Avrupa dahil, ilişkilerini geliştirme yolunu seçmişlerdir. Tüm ekonomik ve siyasi ilişkilerin 1978 ortalarında Çin tarafından askıya alınmasıyla beraber bu ittifak ilişkisi de sona ermiş ve Arnavutluk için bu noktada yeni bir dış politika süreci başlamıştır. Bu süreç zaten dışa sınırlı bir açıklığa sahip ve dış ülkelerle fazla ve derinlikli yerleşik ilişkiye sahip olmayan Arnavutluk Hoca liderliği uluslararası ilişkilerde eşine çok da rastlanmayan bir kararla ülkeyi uluslararası alandan yalıtma/izolasyon siyasetini uygulayacağını açıklayarak yerleşik bölgesel ve büyük güçlerle ittifaklar kurmaya dayalı şekle dönüşen Arnavutluk dış politikasından çok önemli bir ayrılmayı hayata geçirmeye çalışmıştır.

Arnavutluk yıllara yayılan ittifak kurarak zayıflıklarını telafi etmek ve yardım sağlama sürecinde kendi kendine yetebilme yeteneği ve imkanlarını geliştirme amacını da güderek geçmişle karşılaştırıldığında görece bazı alanlarda kendine yeter yetkinlik ve kapasiteler geliştirmiştir. Ancak bu gelişim ülkenin her alanını kapsamamasını yanı sıra diğer ülkelerle tüm ilişkilerin kesilmesinden çok ülkenin içe dönerek dışarıdan Arnavutluk’a yönelik herhangi siyasi bir etkinin oluşmasını engellemek amacı gütmekteydi. Enver Hoca’nın anayasal düzenlemelerle güvence altına aldığı bu yaklaşım Nisan 1985 yılında ölmesinin ardından yerini alan selefi Ramiz Alia tarafından zaman içerisinde gevşetilerek uygulanmaya devam edilmiştir. Ancak özellikle ekonomik alanda tezahür eden temel gıda maddeleri ve yedek parça temini gibi zaruriyetler yüzünden bu yaklaşımdan tavizler verilmiş ve ikili ilişkilerin kurulduğu ülkelerin çeşidi arttırılmaya gayret edilmiştir. Alia bu gevşemeyi siyasi alanda taviz vermez bir görüntü ile gerçekleştirmeye çalışmış ancak Arnavutluk’un Soğuk Savaşın sonu ile birlikte komünist parti yönetimleri tarafından idare edilen ülkelerdeki değişimlere uzak kalmasını sağlayamamıştır.

Arnavutluk 1990 yılından itibaren Orta ve Doğu Avrupa’daki gelişmelere paralel bir dönüşüm süreci tecrübe etmeye başlamıştır. Bu bölgelerdeki genel iktisadi ve siyasi değişimlerin ortak uygulama alanları ve stratejileri zaman içerisinde daha kapalı bir yapıya sahip olan Arnavutluk’a da sirayet etmiştir. Bu dönem Arnavutluk’un uluslararası arenaya geri dönüşüyle önem kazanmıştır. Arnavutluk sadece diplomatik ilişkileri olmadığı ülkelerle değil, uluslararası

alandaki parçası olmadığı Avrupa Güvenlik ve İşbirliği Konferansı gibi süreçlere ve Avrupa Konseyi gibi uluslararası örgütlere üye olmak ve ilişkilerini geliştirmek hedefini izlemiştir. Başlarda Komünist Parti yönetiminin başlattığı bu süreç yönetim değişikliği ve çok partili demokrasiye geçilmesi ardından iktidara geçen yeni hükümetlerce de hızlandırılarak devam ettirilmiştir. Bu vesileyle uygulanmaya çalışılan ülkenin yalıtılmışlığı siyasetinden hızla uzaklaşarak ülkenin yeni dönemle birlikte değişen ve dönüşen uluslararası sistemle bütünleşmesi sağlanmaya çalışılmıştır.

Arnavutluk siyasi ve iktisadi dönüşüm süreçlerini oldukça çalkantılı ve son tahlilde travmatik şekilde tecrübe etmiştir. Özellikle iktisadi alandaki güncel eğilimlere paralel hızlı ve kontrolsüz liberalleşme süreci ülkenin kurulmasından bu yana ülkenin zayıflıklarının önemli parçalarını oluşturan iktisadi geri kalmışlık ve kapitalist sistem deneyiminin bulunmayışının siyaset alanında otoriter yönetimler altında demokratik tecrübe olmadan geçen yıllarla birleşmesiyle oluşan karışık ortam bu dönemde ülkenin istikrar, refah ve huzura kavuşmasının önündeki engelleri oluşturmayı sürdürmüştür.

Yönetime gelen yeni iktidarlar ülkenin uluslararası ilişkileri ve dış politikasını düzenlerken daha önceden başlatılmış olan uluslararası sistemle entegrasyonu iki ana kutup üzerinden şekillendirmeyi uygun görmüşlerdir. Bunların bir tanesi yine Orta ve Doğu Avrupa ülkelerinin ki büyük çoğunluğu küçük devletlerdir güncel eğilimlere paralel olarak Avro-Atlantik bütünleşmesi süreçleri çerçevesinde NATO'ya ve Avrupa Topluluğu/Birliğine üyelik diğeri ise yine bu süreçleri de etkileyecek ama bunların da dışında ülkeye gereken iktisadi, siyasi ve askeri desteği sağlayacak bir büyük güçle yakın tercihan ittifak ilişkisi kurulması olarak şekillendirilmiştir. Bu noktada Hoca'nın ilan ettiği yalıtımcı dış politika ile devamlılığı sekteye uğrayan bölgesel ve büyük güçlerle ittifak yoluyla ülkeye destek sağlama siyasetine bir geri dönüşten söz edilmeye başlanabilir. Nitekim bu amaçla uygun görülen ülke de eskinin kadim düşmanı Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'den başka bir ülke değildir. Arnavutluk siyasi eliti ve halkı bu dönemde ABD'yi kedilerine en yakın ve ihtiyacını duydukları desteği sağlayabilecek ülke olarak görmüşlerdir. Bu algıda tarihsel olarak ülkenin kuruluş dönemindeki etkileri, içinden çıktıkları komünist parti yönetiminin ABD'yi

düşmanlaştırma yaklaşımına olan tepkilerinin yanında ABD'yi günün en güçlü ülkesi, tek süpergücü olarak yardım yapabilir görmeleri de rol oynamıştır.

Arnavutluk dönüşüm sürecinde ekonomik geri kalmışlık ve siyasi çalkantıların yanında uygulanan dış kaynaklı iktisadi politikaların olumsuz yansımaları nedeniyle önemli krizler atlatmıştır. Bu krizler özellikle neden oldukları insani sorunlar ve göç dalgaları nedeniyle bölgesel istikrarı etkileyecek boyutlarda etkiler bırakmışlar ve özellikle Arnavutluk'un komşularını etkilemişlerdir. Bu nedenlerle ülkeye insani yardım ve istikrarı sağlama amaçlı uluslararası güçler konuşlandırılmıştır. Öte yandan bölgedeki dönüşüm süreçleri içerisinde en sorunlusu olan ve Yugoslavya'nın dağılma sürecinde vücut bulan dönemde Arnavutluk oluşan istikrarsızlığın yönlendirdiği bölgesel kriz sarmalları içerisinde göreceli istikrarlı kalmak ve var olan krizlerin bölgedeki Arnavutluk dışında yaşayan diğer Arnavutların yaşadıkları bölgelere sirayetinin önlenmesi ya da bilinçli olarak sıçratılmaması amacıyla bölgedeki sorunlardan etkilenen ve de bölge üzerinde söz sahibi olan büyük güçler tarafından desteklenerek güvenli ve istikrarda kalması sağlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Arnavutluk içinde bulunduğu coğrafyanın ve bölgedeki özel konumunun yaratmış olduğu konjonktürde küçük devlet olarak bu durumdan kendisine azami katkıyı elde etmek için çalışmıştır. Bu süreçte Arnavutluk ABD'ye özel önem atfetmiş ve ABD'de ülkedeki dönüşüm sürecine ve iktidara gelen yeni hükümete baştan beri destek vererek bölgesel etkinliğini arttırma yoluna gitmiştir. Bu bağlamda Arnavutların kendileri için son derece önemli buldukları ve güven atfettikleri Amerikan devletiyle ilişkileri her zaman yakın tutmaya çalışmışlardır. Bu bağlamda zamanın ABD dışişleri bakanı James Baker'in 191'deki gezisinden Başkan Bush'un ABD'nin dış politika uygulamalarının ve müdahalelerinin en yoğun eleştirilere maruz kaldığı zamanda yaptığı kısa gezide aldıkları büyük destek ve takdir Arnavutluk devleti ve halkının ABD'ye verdikleri önemin birer göstergesi olmuşlardır.

Öte yandan Arnavutluk 1996 sonunda patak veren ve Mart 1997'de zirve yapan çok önemli bir iç kriz yaşamıştır. Bu kriz temelde iktisadi dönüşüm sürecinin bazı boyutlarının özellikle de bankacılık ve mevduatı da içeren sermaye boyutunun çok kötü yönetilmesi sonucunda ortaya çıkan kaçak bankerlik ya da diğer adıyla piramit yatırım yapılarının ülkedeki insanların pek çoğunun yatırımlarını batırmasıyla başlamış ve zaman içerisinde tüm devlet kurum ve

yapısının temelden sarsıldığı ve devlet otoritesinin ülke çapında büyük ölçüde sekteye uğradığı bir krize dönüşmüştür. Arnavutluk kısa süre içerisinde sivil otoritenin yol olduğu işlemez hale gelmiş bir ülkeye başka bir deyişle bir başarısız devlet örneğine dönüşmüştür. Arnavutluk bu derin krizden kendi başına çıkamayacağını gördüğü için uluslararası camiadan yardım istemiş, krizden doğrudan etkilenen bölge ülkelerin de inisiyatif almasıyla birlikte Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi kararı çerçevesinde uluslararası toplum gönüllülük prensibi çerçevesindeki katılım yoluyla Arnavutluk'a insani yardım dağıtımını güvenceye alarak istikrara katkıda bulunacak uluslararası bir gücün gönderilmesine birlikte düzen yavaşça sağlanmıştır. Bu süreçlerde ABD müdahil ve katkıda bulunmuş olmamasına rağmen ülkedeki Amerikan yandaşlığı erozyona uğramamış, kriz sonrası oluşan yeni siyasi ortamda ABD etkinliğini daha geniş bir yelpazeye yayarak arttırmıştır. Ancak asıl sempati ve destek patlaması ABD'nin Bosna Barış sürecine bilerek dahil etmeyerek ötelemeye çalıştığı Kosova sorununun 1997'den itibaren uluslararası gündeme girmesi ardından Kosova Arnavutları'nın yanında onları destekleyen bir tutum uyarlamış olmasıdır. ABD hariç Batılı devletlere Bosna Hersek'teki savaş sürecindeki edilgen ve mağdurları daha mağdur eden isteksiz ve ihtiyatlı politikaları nedeniyle güvenmeyen Arnavutlar için ABD'nin Kosova'ya yapılan NATO müdahalesinde öncü rol oynamış olmaları çok önemli bir gelişme olmuş ve tüm Arnavutlar ve Arnavutluk devleti ABD'ye olan güven ve minnetlerini her ortamda dile getirir olmuşlardır. Arnavutluk yine Kosova sorununun bölgede oluşturduğu durumdan ve krizden kendisine yarar çıkartmış ve NATO müdahalesi öncesi ve sonrasında ABD ve diğer müttefik ülkelerle ilişkilerini geliştirme fırsatı yakalamış aynı zamanda krize askeri olarak taraf olmayarak da bölgesel istikrar katkıda bulunmaktan dolayı takdir elde etmişler ve sonraki süreçlerde kullanacakları avantajlar yaratmışlardır. Makedonya'daki 2001 krizinde de benzer tutum sergileyerek bu durumlarını pekiştirmişlerdir. Bu süreçlerde Arnavutluk'ta zaten önceden beri var olan Amerikan yanlısı tutum pekişmiş ve gelişmiş sonuç olarak da ABD'nin yaptıkları karşılığı kabul edilebilecek şekilde özellikle ABD'ye 11 Eylül 2001'de yapıla saldırılardan sonra ABD'nin küresel düzeydeki politikalarına ve müdahaleci yaklaşımına azami destek vermişlerdir. Bu bağlamda Arnavutluk'un küçük devlet olarak özellikle askeri anlamdaki katkılarından daha çok ABD'nin hayata geçirdiği

politikalarına uluslararası düzeyde meşruiyet kazandırılması boyutunda Arnavutluk'un sağladığı destek anlamlandırılmıştır. ABD bu yaklaşımdan oldukça hoşnut olmuş; konjonktürün ve Arnavutluk'un çabalarının desteklediği ancak stratejik boyuttan çok yakın ikili ilişki merkezine oturan, işbirliği içeren ve var olan ilişkileri daha da iyileştiren bir noktaya getirmiştir. Bu gelişmelerin yansımaları ABD'nin Arnavutluk'un NATO bütünleşmesi sürecine verdiği açık destekle kendini göstermiştir. Arnavutluk'un NATO'ya üyeliğinin kabulü sonrasında Arnavutluk önceliğini Avro-Atlantik bütünleşmesinin Avrupa Birliği yönüne yoğunlaştırmıştır. Avrupa Birliği Arnavutluk tarafından daha çok kurumsal ve yapısal dönüşümün sağlanması ve ekonomik destek boyutlarıyla ön plana çıkmaktadır. Arnavutluk özellikle AB gibi yapıların küçük devletlere sağladığı temsiliyet alanı imkanları çerçevesinde AB bütünleşmesini önemsemekte ve AB'nin bütünleşme süreci çerçevesinde koşulluluk politikalarıyla Arnavutluk'u dönüştürme sürecine destek vermekte ve stratejilerini hayata geçirmeye çalışmaktadır.

Arnavutluk kuruluşundan itibaren zayıf bir küçük devlet özelliğini korumuş ve bu durumundan zaman içerisinde çeşitli bölgesel ve büyük güçlerle ittifak boyutunda yakın ilişkiler kurarak dış destek sağlamaya çalışmıştır. Farklı güçlerle farklı boyutlarda ilişkiler kurarak kısa yalıtımcı politika süreci haricinde genel olarak liderlik ve rejimlerden bağımsız sayılabilecek bir dış politika eğilimi kurgulayarak Arnavutluk'un uluslararası sistemde var olmasını sağlamaya çalışılmıştır. Bu bağlamda Arnavutluk'un dış politikası büyük güçlerle kurguladığı asimetrik yapıli ilişkileri boyutuyla bir devamlılık göstermektedir.

Arnavutluk örneği küçük devlet büyük güç ilişkilerinin anlaşılması açısından da ilginç bir örneklem teşkil etmektedir. Bu manâda bu ilişkilerin yapısı bir yandan uluslararası ortam ve özgül konjonktürlerin özellikleriyle bağlantılı olmasının yanında küçük devletlerin bağıntısal gücü ve büyük güçlerin ise yapısal güçleri çerçevesinde uluslararası arenayı ve diğer devletleri kendi tercihleri yönünde dönüştürebilme etkisine bağlı olarak tanımlanabilir. Bu ortamda küçük devletler uluslararası alanın çoğunluğunu oluşturan devletler olmaya devam ettikçe uluslararası ilişkilerinde büyük güçlerin önemi ve öncelikli konumları sürecektir. Öte yandan küçük devletlerin büyük güçlerle olan ilişkileri bağıntısal güç ve yapısal güç arasındaki nicel ve nitel asimetri büyük güçlerden yana tanımlıyor olsa

bile, küçük devletler yine de kendi bağıntısal güçlerini görelî olarak arttıracakları ve güçsüzün gücünü kullanabilecekleri uluslararası alandaki farklı alanlar bulacaklardır.

## APPENDIX B

### CURRICULUM VITAE

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Açar, Dilaver Arıkan  
Citizenship: Turkish (TC)  
Date and Place of Birth: 2 March 1974, İzmir  
e-mail: darikana@gmail.com

#### EDUCATION

| Degree      | Institution  | Year of Graduation |
|-------------|--|--------------------|
| M.Sc.       | Middle East Technical University,<br>International Relations, Ankara | 2000               |
| B.Sc.       | Middle East Technical University,<br>International Relations, Ankara | 1997               |
| High School | Bornova Anadolu Lisesi, İzmir  | 1992               |

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

| Year                  | Place   | Enrolment                   |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1998-2005             | Middle East Technical University,<br>Department of International<br>Relations | Research Assistant          |
| July-November<br>2004 | OSCE Mission in Kosovo  | Anti-Fraud Officer          |
| July-November<br>2002 | OSCE Mission in Kosovo  | International Trainer       |
| July-November<br>2001 | OSCE Mission in Kosovo  | Voter Services Supervisor   |
| November 2000         | OSCE Mission in Bosnia and<br>Herzegovina                                     | Polling Supervisor          |
| September 1998        | OSCE Mission in Bosnia and<br>Herzegovina                                     | Advanced Polling Supervisor |

#### FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

#### RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

1. April-May 2007; Conducted field research in Albania with the research scholarship provided by the Middle East Technical University Center for European Studies as part of the Comparative European Research Project (CES-CER).

2. January 2005-January 2006; Visiting Research Fellow at the King's College, London; International Peace and Security Programme, Department of War Studies with Jean Monnet Scholarship.

3. September 2005; Conducted field research in Albania on the topic of Albanian Foreign Policy as a research project funded by the Middle East Technical University Scientific Research Project Program.

4. April- May 2000; Conducted field research in Albania extending to Kosovo and Macedonia with the scholarship provided by the Prime Ministry of Republic of Turkey, Turkish Agency for Cooperation and Development (TİKA).

#### **PUBLICATION**

Article; Açar, Dilaver Arıkan and Rūma, İnan, "External Pressure and Turkish Discourse on Recognition of the 'Armenian Genocide'", Southeast European and Black Sea Studies, vol. 7, no. 3, 2007, pp. 449-65.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14683850701566419>