

ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION AROUND THE WATER SOURCES AS AN INTERNAL SECURITY THREAT IN MACEDONIA

ЕТНИЧКИОТ СОСТАВ НА НАСЕЛЕНИЕТО ОКОЛУ ВОДНИТЕ ИЗВОРИ КАКО ВНАТРЕШНА БЕЗБЕДНОСНА ЗАКАНА ВО МАКЕДОНИЈА

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ABSTRACT

Water is undoubtedly the most important ingredient for life and the survival of humans and all living beings on Earth with great importance for the uninterrupted running of all biological processes and functioning of the human social and economic systems, hence it is one of the key factors for security. Given the territorial distribution of the population around water sources and its ethnic diversity, in terms of the complex inter-ethnic relations the main question in this article is about the impact of this correlation on the security. The purpose of this research is the analysis of the relevance of the ethnic composition of the population around water sources as a factor of security threat in Macedonia. The introductory section starts with the scientific and theoretical considerations of the importance of water and access to water sources for security by exposing and explaining the possible ways of endangering safety as it sets up the theoretical framework through which will be examined examples and actual events. The second part covers cases of Vevchani protests in 1987, shutting off the valves on Lipkovo Dam and Lake Glazhnja in 2001 and protests against the construction of the regional water-supply in Patishka Reka in 2007 and 2010 reviewed in terms of their relation to the ethnic composition of the population and interethnic relations. The research continues by elaborating other possible crisis areas around water sources and water supply systems in several other cities in Macedonia such as Skopje, Bitola, Veles, Struga, Gostivar, Kicevo along with the real potential threats of occupation of Rasche spring in 2001, and closing the regional water supply system Studencica due to the ethno-political tensions about the territorial reorganization of Kicevo in 2012. Finally, the research concludes by assumptions about most expedient and most successful methods to overcome and resolve this type of security threat.

Key words: water sources, water supply, ethnic composition of population, security threat, Macedonia

АПСТРАКТ

Водата несомнено е најважната состојка за животот и опстанокот на човекот и сите живи суштества на планетата Земја со огромно значење е за непреченото одвивање на сите биолошки процеси, како и за делувањето на човековите општествени и економски системи, па оттаму таа е една од клучните чинители за безбедноста. Имајќи ја предвид територијалната разместеност на населението околу водните извори и неговата етничка разновидност, во услови на сложени меѓуетнички односи се поставува прашањето околу влијанието на овој заемен однос врз загрозувањето на безбедноста. Целта на ова истражување е анализа на релевантноста на етничкиот состав на населението околу водните извори како фактор за безбедносна закана во Македонија. Воведниот дел се осврнува на научно и теоретско разгледување на значењето на водата и пристапот до водните извори за безбедноста со изнесување и објаснување на можни начини на загрозување на безбедноста при што со тоа се поставува теоретската рамка преку која ќе бидат разгледани примерите и реалните настани. Вториот дел ги опфаќа случаите на протестите во Вевчани во 1987, затворањето на вентилите на Липковската брана и езерото Глажња во 2001 како и протестите против изградбата на регионалниот водовод во Патишка Река во 2007 и 2010 година разгледни од аспект на нивната поврзаност со етничкиот состав на населението и меѓуетничките односи. Истражувањето продолжува со разгледување на други можни кризни жаришта околу водните извори и системите за водоснабдување на повеќе други градови во Македонија како Скопје, Битола, Велес, Струга, Гостивар, Кичево меѓу кои се опфатени и реално потенцијалните и најавени закани за запоседнување на изворите Рашче кај Скопје во 2001, како и затворањето на вентилите на регионалниот водовод Студенчица по повод укинувањето на општината Другово и територијалната реорганизација на Општина Кичево во 2012 година. Конечно, завршниот дел вклучува претпоставки за најцелисходното и најуспешното надминување и разрешување на овој вид безбедносни закани.

Клучни зборови: водни извори, водоснабдување, етнички состав на населението, безбедносна закана, Македонија

INTRODUCTION

Beyond the physical characteristics making the water an essential living compound on the planet Earth, its immense importance is also recognized in an institutional context, being a predominant “element for social contract” (Alterman & Dziuban, 2010) in today's modern societies. Significance of the water is enormously important for every person regardless of their ethnic, national, religious, racial or political and ideological affiliation. However, water sources worldwide are insufficiently or unequally available to all people, even within the same country. Respective to its geographical position, Macedonia is abundantly rich of fresh water, primarily due to the extensive mountainous relief and diverse geological composition of the soil. From this aspect, the threat to the national security resulting from water scarcity – either internal or external can be considered of limited severity. Nevertheless, the multi-ethnic and religious divisions of the Macedonian society, low civic awareness and fragile inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations, always, even today with the recent cases of interethnic violence in 2012, contextualizes the water in one of the biggest internal security threat.

Given the territorial distribution and complex heterogeneous structure of the population, as well as several cases of inter-ethnic tensions and problems about water supply from the recent history of Macedonia, as the theme of this short research imposed the territorial ethnic composition of the population around or near water sources as internal security threat of the national security. The relevance of this topic stems directly from the fact that fragile inter-ethnic relations in Macedonia increasingly show their devastating impact on all public policies, especially in terms of economic development that includes water supply as a key factor for normal life of every citizen. Reflecting this concept in a research connotation, this paper brings a novel perspective in determining the possibility, relevancy and plausibility of water-supply security threat for Macedonia considering the ethnic composition of the population around the water sources and water supply systems of major and important cities, economic, industrial and military facilities.

WATER AND WATER SOURCES AS A STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT OBJECT FOR THE SECURITY

The water as a substance, is vital and most important for the life and survival of all living beings on Earth, man, animals, and the plants. Without water no one can speak for normal life of every living human being and biological systems in general. Despite the fact that two thirds of the human body is composed of water, fresh water is essential for hu-

man existence and survival in direct and indirect manner. In a direct way, the need of fresh water for unfettered life of man is necessary for drinking and consumption in the body, it is invaluable for digestion, the functioning of cells and organs in the human body, dissolving the nutrient needed materials, improve and refine the circulation and blood flow, and the need for an external water is necessary for cleaning, which is again very important in the prevention of (deadly) diseases, infections and epidemics. In an indirect way, the fresh water is essential for human life through its use in irrigation and cultivation of land crops that are essential for food production, the method of preparing food, heating in residential and commercial buildings, then water is essential in the production of electrical energy and industrial processes and industrial production, which is to say that it essentially is the most important resource for human survival. In the context of human societal life, the strategic importance of the fresh water is recognized in fact that the access to water resources was the pivotal factor determining the establishment of settlements, and even entire countries (Vankovska, 2011). This assertion bears its support from the historical facts that the first human civilizations (Chinese, Indian, Mesopotamian-Babylonian and even Macedonian) developed near and between the flows of major rivers and water sources and water masses. In such elementary socio-existential circumstances, the significance of water sources stems itself within the security policies and strategies, in particular in the concepts of environmental and energy security, and their strategic importance and attraction for subversive and terrorist acts by competing and hostile groups. Regarding this, it should be mentioned that there is a long history of the use of water as a tool for political or military purposes from 2500 years ago (Gleick, 2006), instantiating conflicts fought and waged over the distribution, dispersion and possession of water and water sources (Kotovchevski, 2011). Fresh water sources and water supply systems are attractive targets for subversion due to its critical importance for an immediate existence, corroborating that the lack of any water or disasters like floods (especially demolishing dams) in the most serious extent could threaten human society with unforeseeable consequences suffering (Gleick, 2006: 482). Although the perceptions about the strength of the conflict potential of the (lack) water are different, the importance of water and water sources for national and international security remains eternally relevant, considering the predictions that the water in the future will be a serious source and reason for starting war conflicts (Kotovchevski, 2011: 445). Namely, although analysts believe that the lack of water does not have a potential for starting a war as it is the case with oil, nevertheless it is considered as a factor that exacerbates the dynamics of conflicts started by another reason

and may be used as a “weapon controlling the sources of drinking water” for the settlements (Vankovska, 2011:218-219). From that perspective, it is evident that the fresh water resources in a broader security context are plausible subject to external and internal threats/attacks. Whether it is inter-state war or conflict, the fresh water sources can be targeted for capture or sabotage, diversions and subversive actions of the opposing forces and internal or external terrorist groups with two main reasons. The first is to gain better negotiating position through shutting water supplies for civilians which will force authorities to agree to and fulfill the demands or goals of that group, and the second reason can be direct and immediate intention to destroy the civilian population with particular ethnic, racial, religious affiliation because of irrational greater-state territorial plans or feelings of hatred. Acts that can be taken by terrorist groups and foreign (domestic) military and paramilitary formations by capturing water sources or water supply systems range from simple decrease and shutting water supplies for civilians and all other economic, military and social facilities through the complete destruction of the technical facilities or pollution (poisoning) of water in the most extreme cases (Howard & Bartram, 2003). To these considerations, we can add the variable of the ethnic composition of the population living in the vicinity of water sources as a possible threat to security, especially important for the Republic of Macedonia and Macedonian multiethnic society. The ethnic differences, troublesome history between the groups and the banality of ethnic clashes may lead to obstruction in the supply of “ones” if “others” are those leaving closer to a water source, thus considering it as their possession. Such obstruction or opposition could lead to an escalation of the inter-ethnic conflict and transformation into a major armed conflict that could seriously undermine the internal security of a state. Another possible threat scenario can be identified where the local population of a certain ethnicity leaving near the water sources gives a committed support to the extremist and terrorist separatist paramilitary formations in the seizure and capture of the water supply infrastructure to major urban centers or other settlements and facilities. In such cases, the population itself – whether voluntary or forcibly - can provide support through civil disobedience or interference to the security forces in the provision of water sources. The local population of the particular ethnic group that lives potentially works on water supply critical infrastructure may intentionally participate in the execution of sabotage in water supply and even the work of the overall hydro system employed in production of electricity or irrigation. From this we can conclude that the ethnic composition of the population in the vicinity of water sources has a double effect in threatening the national security of the Republic of Macedonia – first,

through the opposition of the population for “giving” water to towns and citizens from other ethnic (and religious) affiliation that might further lead to an inter-ethnic conflict and civil war at worst, and second, utilization of the geographical positions within armed conflicts already started to capture the water supply critical infrastructure as a strategic tool for achieving internal causes by forcing the Macedonian authorities for concessions. In support to this argument, known cases of both types witnessed in the Macedonian history will be outlined in the next part of this short research. Interesting to mention is the fact that in terms of inter-ethnic relations in Macedonia, the construction of water supply and improvement of water supply of ethnically mixed areas are used as a political tool to appease (and somewhat resolve) the inter-ethnic conflicts and tensions in some places, though not always successfully in addressing the real causes of inter-ethnic clashes. From the above mentioned a conclusion holds that the access to fresh water sources considered in conjunction with the interethnic relations have a significant impact and sensitive implications endangering the national security of the Republic of Macedonia.

CASES OF INTER-ETHNIC CLASHES OVER WATER SOURCES AND WATER-SUPPLY IN THE RECENT HISTORY OF MACEDONIA

In the recent Macedonian history, despite the many conflicts in water use between people of different ethnicity and religion, we can single out three major cases with a greater impact and significance to the interethnic relations and security. The scale of ethnic clashes for fresh water and water sources ranges from banal fights up to serious armed clashes. One example of inter-ethnic incidents of use and access to water, relates to the fight for crop irrigation use between villagers Macedonians and Albanians in the village of Velushina near Bitola in July 2008 with one seriously injured villager (Zdravkovska, 2008). Another example is related to the neighboring village Lazhec - known for interethnic and interreligious tensions over construction of a mosque - where the construction of the water-supply system is used as a political tool to ease ethnic tensions and relationships (Zdravkovska, 2006). Apart from these low intensity exemplars, the three outstanding cases of inter-ethnic clashes over fresh water sources and water-supply refer include the Vevchani events in 1987, shutting the dam valves Glaznja (case “Lipkovo dam”) in the military conflict in 2001, and protests in Patishka Reka in 2010.

VEVCHANI EVENTS OF 1987

During the year of 1987 - when Macedonia was still part of Yugoslavia - the village of Vevchani was center of the protests against the plan for extending the water supply infrastructure towards the neighboring village Oktisi. Besides the consent of both local councils, the connection of the Oktisi water system on the Vevchani fresh weather springs - scheduled to happen during the night hours - on 05.25.1987 was not carried out because of the organized violent opposition of the part of the population of Vevchani mostly by elder people, children and women (Stefanovski, 1987). Despite the efforts for overcoming the situation, the rumors that the Vevchani Springs will be supplying even the town of Struga with the tourist resort Elen Kamen leaving the village of Vevchani without water, the efforts for persuasion of the population by the Union of workers organizations (SSRNM) were in vain and construction activities were withdrawn. After the assessments and preparatory activities of the authorities and the inclusion of the possibility for using force by the law enforcement officials if violent organized resistance occurs again, it was decided to start the operating activities for connection of the village of Oktisi to Vevchani Spring on 6th of August 1987 (Stefanovski, 1987:11).

However, the construction workers were met at the entrance of the village Vevchani by 500-600 residents who have made a barricade of trees and rocks, carried pictures of Josip Broz Tito, chanting "We give our lives, but not our water" and "We give our lives, but we will not leave Vevchani", refrained to obey to calls of the police officers to leave the place, armed with sticks, agricultural tools and other items (Stefanovski, 1987:11)

During the same day, the construction site in Vevchani was occupied by the villagers, and the church bell rang to summon citizens to gather and hinder the construction (Stefanovski, 1987:11). The next day, around 10 am, 23 workers were again thwarted by a group of 500-600 villagers that have set 5 barricades at the village entrance, forcing the police to intervene with electric and rubber truncheons, which in turn lead to clashes with the residents leading to 23 civilians and 11 policemen injured and 19 residents Vevchani (3 of which were women) have been detained (Stefanovski, 1987:12). Besides the organized rally, hunger strike by a group of youths and telegrams sent to the governing authorities at state and federal level, as of 18.08.1987 the construction works have been completed and the water from the Vevchani to Oktisi has finally flowed (Stefanovski, 1987:12). These events ruffled the broader Macedonian and Yugoslav society and received an unusually wider political dimensions and implications. The local council of Vevchani received telegrams of support for the demonstrated resistance, raising this event on the federal assembly-hearing level, even there

was a protest letter from the Slovenian Writers' Association to the organization and the participants of the 26th Struga Poetry Evenings – aftermath consequences solely attributed to the Vevchani residents (including the ones emigrated particularly in Slovenia) by then authorities (Stefanovski, 1987:13).

In context of these acts, attention should be devoted to the religious structure of the population of the two villages, as an important fact and a possible background of these events. Vevchani's entire population is Orthodox Macedonians (Trifunovski, 1980:188), while Oktisi is populated by Macedonian population that is predominantly Muslim and to a lesser extent Orthodox Christian (Trifunovski, 1980:185). Muslim Macedonians from the Struga region consider themselves as a separate ethnic group and have quite different lifestyle and national feelings from Christians with whom they speak same language and have the same origin (Trifunovski, 1980:91). The national feelings of Muslim Macedonians in this region from the end of Ottoman rule in 1912 until today are mostly based on the religious affiliation (Trifunovski, 1980:91) being a rationale for the recent trends for the creation and recognition of a separate ethnic group named "Torbeshi" (especially as a political activity of the Fiat Canoski's political party PEI), as well as their declaration as Turks or Albanians, followed by a partial process of Albanianization. Christian and Muslim Macedonians from Struga region do not have very close relations, which on the contrary, the closer ties are based on a religious basis between the Muslim Macedonians and Muslim Albanians, evidenced in the recent years with an evident spread of radical Wahhabi Islamic teachings among Muslim Macedonians. Although both villages of Vevchani and Oktisi are populated with ethnic Macedonians, a problematic history and relationships exists between the Christian and Muslim Macedonians in this wider region dating from the Ottoman rule up today, as it was also corroborated by the recent events of inter-ethnic-religious conflicts in the end of January 2012, centered around the villages of Vevchani, Oktisi Labunishta, Boroec and town of Struga.

"LIPKOVO DAM" CASE – SHUTTING THE VALVES OF GLAZHNJA DAM IN 2001

During the 2001 armed conflict between the Macedonian security forces (ARM and MVR) and the Albanian terrorist-extremist groups (KLA-UCK) taking place in the crisis area of Kumanovo region, an unprecedented terrorist act in Macedonia happened when the Albanian terrorists captured and closed the valves of the Glaznja dam and Lipkovo reservoir, leaving the city of Kumanovo and the surrounding villages without water supplies for a longer period. After the initial clashes between the Macedonian security forces and the Albanian terrorists

in Tanushevci during late February, and in Tetovo during the middle and end of March 2001, with an incursion of a larger number of terrorists from Kosovo an crisis area outburst in Kumanovo at the beginning of May. From the very beginning of 04.05.2001, the vicinity of the reservoir Glaznja had been occupied by the terrorists (Balaban, 2001). After the disbanding of UCMPB and end of Preshevo Valley insurgency on 25.05.2001, many UCMPB fighters (114 Brigade with about 175 fighters) were legally transferred over the "humanitarian charity NGO's" in the neighboring villages in Kumanovo-Karadak region, where the village of Lipkovo as a municipal center and the remotest village in that area was established as command center of NLA, raising the real danger of Lipkovo dam demolition for the first time (Petrovski, 2006). In this period, while the population (mostly Macedonians and Serbs, and to a lesser extent Albanians) was leaving these villages, one Albanian was killed on the road checkpoint between the villages Otlja and Matejche, resulting in a retreat of the police forces from the northern part of Matejche, due to the threat of retaliatory attacks. The police forces left the station in Lipkovo Lake (with 27 officers) and joined the Army units that were on positions in Alashevce village (east of the dam) (Petrovski, 2006: 87-88). Shortly after this, the terrorists had captured Lipkovo dam on the Glaznja lake (2 km from Lipkovo and 12 from Kumanovo) in early June, closing the valves for fresh water supply of Kumanovo in the midst of summer high temperatures. After several days of water restrictions of first, second and third degree, Kumanovo was left completely without water on 3rd and 4th of June due to the reduced amount of water in the filter station. The water shortage resulted due to the fact that the terrorists have not allowed the teams from the water management company to turn the valves on (Daily Newspaper Vest, 2001a). After 40 days of constant restrictions – out of the required 220 liters per second for this time of year, only 40 liters in the morning and 10 liters before noon were delivered - 100,000 residents of Kumanovo and its surroundings were left without fresh water. The negotiations between the OSCE and International Red Cross and the terrorists for coming an ethnic Albanian expert (in collaboration with Tetovo water company) for proper and professional turning the valves without the threat of flood, did not give any results (Daily Newspaper Vest, 2001b). Because of the combat actions and the siege, similar problems with the water supply occurred in the village of Arachinovo, while Kumanovo was on the verge of a humanitarian and environmental disaster (Daily Newspaper Vest, 2001a). By the decision of the National Institute for Health Protection citizens of Kumanovo began to be supplied with drinking water from designated water cisterns, while all surgeries at the medical center in Kumanovo have been cancelled due to lack of water (Daily Newspaper Vest, 2001b). After the

electricity was turned back on in Lipkovo on 10.06.2001, terrorists have opened the valves and the flow of water in Kumanovo was expected to be realized in 10 days (Ilievski, 2001). Given the fact that in the Kumanovo-Lipkovo crisis area fierce battles were waged throughout the entire summer - especially after evacuation and transfer of the terrorists from Arachinovo to Nikushtak and other villages in Kumanovo region with the support of NATO (Petrovski, 2006:115) - the water supply problem have been repeated several times during July and August (Daily Newspaper Vest, 2001c). This classic act of terrorism and unprecedented war crime against 100,000 civilians was prosecuted by the Macedonian Public Prosecution in the case called "Lipkovo dam" and later was submitted to the International Tribunal in Hague, which returned it along with all the other cases against members of terrorist NLA. Due to the political bargaining for coalition deal about making government between the VMRO-DPMNE and DUI, the case "Lipkovo dam" along with the other cases for war crimes of NLA were covered by the amnesty law through the "authentic interpretation" of the Parliament in July 2011. Although this case was in an investigation proceeding, the Criminal Court has closed it (ad acta) on 20.09.2011 (Duvnjak, 2011)

This case explicitly shows the essence of the different ethnic composition around water sources as a source of a security threat. The municipality of Lipkovo - where Glaznja reservoir from which water is supplied to Kumanovo is located - is inhabited almost exclusively by Albanians making up 97.42% of the population. Macedonians and Serbs, expelled and displaced in the clashes in 2001, still and highly unlikely will never return to their homes and properties due to extreme chauvinism and intolerance of the Albanian population towards them and inability of the institutions to guarantee their safety, although that it is a provision of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. The fact that the main suspects for the "Lipkovo dam" case are the commanders of the terrorist units - Sadula Duraku, nicknamed "Koman-dant Ventili" (meaning Commander Valves - derived precisely because of these events) and Hajrula Misini, nicknamed "Shpati" - are residents of this region and the previous one is the incumbent mayor of Lipkovo indicates that the local population was actively involved in these activities through their organization, planning, command and execution (Trajkovska, 2008).

Despite the fact that the locals living around the water source were involved or helped in shutting off the dam valves, large part of the population was not critical against this act leaving 100,000 people of Macedonian, Albanian, Serbian and Roma nationality in Kumanovo without water. Problems with the water supply of Kumanovo from the Glaznja reservoir appeared again in 2002 (Bozhinovski, 2006) and even reappear today in the moment

of writing this short research. The unsettled relations between the water-supply enterprises "Vodovod Kumanovo" and the "Vodostpanstvo Kumanovsko-Lipkovsko Pole" led to disruption and problems with supplies of water of Kumanovo on 19.02.2012 (Daily Newspaper Nova Makedonija, 2012). Construction of new water-supply system for Lipkovo - drawing water from the reservoir Glaznja - further complicates the already problematic water supply of Kumanovo. This situation need to be closely observed in future because of the sensitivity of the interethnic relations and the complex ethnic structure of the population of this region as to avoid any straining of relations and possible problems due to conflicts over water, which would seriously disrupt the order, peace and security of the citizens of the region with opportunities for spillover into neighboring regions.

PATISHKA REKA PROTESTS IN 2007 AND 2010

The most recent case of water supply problems with an inter-ethnic background relates to the protests and obstruction to the construction of a regional water-supply pipeline for the Municipality of Sopsishte by the residents of Patishka Reka village. The idea for construction of a regional water-supply system in the Sopsishte Municipality that should solve the difficulties of water-supply for 13 villages inhabited by Christian Macedonians (Rakotinci, Gorno and Dolno Solnje, Barovo, Nova Breznica, Govrlevo, Jabolci, Markova Sushica), Muslim Macedonians (Drzhilovo) and Albanians (the villages of Sveta Petka, Jabolci and Chiflik) was nearly a decade old, but with the announced construction of the Sun City residential complex in mid-2007 all administrative procedures were finally completed enabling start of the construction. Namely, since the beginning of August 2007, the envisaged construction start - engineered to draw water from over 30 springs (Vasilevski, 2010) above the village on the top of Pepeljak peak on Karadzica mountain from where Patishka and Markova rivers originate - was delayed by obstructions and protests of the Albanian population of the village Patishka River in the vicinity of the springs (Daily Newspaper Vecher, 2007). The initial protests of the Albanian population provoke father demands requesting construction of water supply to start in 10 villages of the municipality inhabited by Macedonians. After 3 years from the initial protests and following the change of Sopsishte mayor, the construction started again, however, reactivating the protests and the tense atmosphere. On 24.09.2010, pretexted that their water will be taken to supply 10 other villages, the villagers of Patishka Reka tried to violently obstruct the construction works taking place under heavy police guard (Daily Newspaper Utrinski Vesnik, 2010). The protest continued with a boycott of school classes, receiving

wide support from the political party New Democracy aiming to seek help from the then EU Ambassador Erwan Fouere (Daily Newspaper Shpic, 2010). Besides several days of barricades and protests, the construction works continued under extensive police guard. On 28.10.2010, a small group of residents of Patishka Reka (mainly immigrants in Italy) held a protest in front of the Macedonian government - supported by the NGO "Realiteti" - identifying the construction as an ethnic cleansing of the Albanians in the village and the municipality (The Journal, 2010). Allegations argue that by the hollowing the road and private properties usurpation, Sopishte mayor Jovan Gjorgjoski intends to expel them out from Patishka Reka, and that the reason was not water-supply, but the ethnic cleansing of Albanians that harass Sopishte Municipality (The Journal, 2010). The same day, Macedonian government came out with support for the construction reminding that it is an obligation from the memorandum signed with the Sopishte Municipality envisaging sewage and ambulance construction in Patishka Reka, extension of the local road section R-104 leading to the village and paving of several streets (The Journal, 2010). Following these protests, no further relating incidents were recorded. Though the water-pipeline is intended to serve 13 villages and 2 tourist settlements populated by Macedonians and Albanians from the water springs near Patishka Reka. this case shows a conflict potential on a smaller scale. Furthermore, this example indicates the light instrumentalisation of such needs for political party objectives with an ethnic character. The open support from the political parties and the NGO's that the residents received in their association of the water supply construction with an action for ethnic cleansing is very worrying and alarming. This conclusion indicates that in the implementation of the bloody scenarios and ethno-nationalist agendas, certain political and social factors could use such cases (construction of water-supply pipeline) which they will characterize as "ethnic cleansing" to mobilize people, supporters and critical mass which would start or would actively be involved in eventual civil and interethnic violent (armed) conflict at the local or state level.

POSSIBLE FUTURE CRISIS AREAS – ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION AROUND WATER SOURCES FOR SUPPLY OF OTHER CITIES IN MACEDONIA

From the examination of the example cases of different ethnic structure of the population around water sources as a threat to national security we can conclude that our past experience indicates and confirms the existence of a serious conflict potential. From this aspect we need to consider possible future trouble spots in other areas of the Republic of Macedonia without intending to amount serious assumptions but simply to point out those

places that someday in the future could result in conflicts and security threats. The capital city of Skopje as the largest urban conglomeration in the country with the biggest and most important strategic significance is supplied of water from the Rashche spring. With an immediate surrounding exclusively inhabited by Albanian population, during the armed conflict in 2001 heavy combat and military activity took place in of Rashche's neighboring village, Radusha. During the ceasefire on 06.07.2001, police forces with complete control on the terrain have been deployed in Rashche village, but esteeming the strategic significance of that area - especially the springs in Rashche - the Command enhanced the defense of Skopje with the 8th Infantry Brigade of Veles units as to be deployed in Rashche area and surroundings (Petrovski, 2006: 139). Meantime, on 09.08.2001, a day after the police retreated for 2 km southwards and leaved the police station with a small number of officers, large number of terrorists from Kosovo captured Radusha village (Petrovski, 2006: 186) which is adjacent to the Rashche springs. These actions of the terrorists were tactical to force Macedonian government as soon as possible to sign the Framework Agreement, but after several hours fighting and air strikes, terrorists were defeated and fortunately, the springs and water-supply of Skopje have not fallen in their hands. That the terrorists openly planned and prepared to attack and occupy the village of Rashche testify the document from the intelligence services of KFOR sent to Macedonian authorities titled "Information for attack of Saraj", which facsimile of the original is published in the book "Testimonies 2001" written by the then chief of Staff of ARM, the active participant and strategist of the key actions in the conflict, general Pande Petrovski. Namely, just before the signing of the Framework Agreement, the foreign intelligence provided information that at Veternik facility near the village of Gorno Svilare, NLA has deployed unit numbering 300-400 terrorists, armed with AP, PM 12.7 mm caliber probably having mortars, which was tasked to launch an attack on the direction Dolno Svilare - Kondovo - Saraj, and additionally to attack the Rasche village. The later task was primarily delegated to the NLA unit deployed in the village Dvorce near Radusha, numbering around 600 fighters with weapons as mortar 82 and 120 mm caliber, under the command of a person Alit form Dolno Svilare who had completed training in Albania in Peshkopi (Petrovski, 2006: 206). Furthermore, the document states that the doctor of the unit was a person from Rasche, and that the houses of the villagers who were not loyal to NLA were marked with towel and soap - meaning that the once collaborating with Macedonian security forces are going to be physically liquidated (Petrovski, 2006: 206). Although the attack was planned to be executed on 13.08.2001, it was postponed for the next day, but it did not happened at all. Even

though the document was sent with a map of NLA units in villages of Gorno and Dolno Svilare, Kopnica and Dvorce including possible routes of action, General Pande Petrovski believed that this information from foreign intelligence were just a way to intimidate and push the Macedonian government to sign the Framework Agreement on 08.13.2001 (Petrovski, 2006: 201). Despite the military operations held in the close proximity of the Rashche Springs, they were not seized and Skopje have not faced water crisis as it was the case in Kumanovo. According to the controversial territorial organization of 2004, the village of Rasche with the wider area became part of the City of Skopje as a result of the political bargaining for Albanian population to reach 20%, hence the city of Skopje to become bilingual. However, this decision led to some benefit given that the territory where the sources of water supply for the city of Skopje are located is now under the direct jurisdiction and administration of the mayor of the city of Skopje, which previously was not the case because the then Municipality Kondovo including the Rashche Springs and village were outside the city jurisdiction. The city of Skopje is still with a predominantly Macedonian majority and ethnic Macedonian mayor, which certain chauvinistic circles can use as argument that "others rule" with "our water", but the dual administration over the village – now within the Municipality of Saraj with Albanian majority and ethnic Albanian mayor - is a good political argument for disclosure of any such malicious false facts, whose possibility is not excluded especially after the experience and example of ethno-political abuses in Patishka Reka.

Until the beginning of the XXI century, the city of Veles, 92.12% populated by Macedonians (State Statistical Office, 2002: 79), was supplied with water from the wells near the right bank of the Vardar river and with a temporary direct water intakes from the Topolka river sources (Veles Municipality, 2014) that are located near the villages of Gorno and Dolno Jabolciste inhabited by Albanians (Panov, 1998:77 & 105). Nowadays, Veles is supplied with water from the hydro-dam "Lisiche" built on the estuary of the river Vranovska in Topolka Lisiche near the Lisiche village, populated exclusively by Macedonians (Panov, 1998:180). So far any incidents, problems or conflicts over water and water-supply have not been recorded, despite that the villages around springs of Topolka and Vranovska River (Gorno and Dolno Jabolciste, Gorno Vranovci) are populated by Albanian and Muslim Macedonian population and the dam is located in Lisiche village with Christian Macedonian population. Interethnic relations are good on high level and no problems have been reported so far.

Struga - inhabited by Christian and Muslim Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish and Roma population - and several villages in its vicinity populated with Macedonians (Mislehevo,

Draslajca, Vranishta, Volino, Lozhani, Radozda) and Albanians (Veleshta , Delegozhda, Dobovjani, Zagrachani, Livada) are supplied with water from the gravitational sources in the villages of Radolista (springs Vrbi and Zulamova Vodenica - Albanian population) (Trifunovski, 1980:169) and Radozda (Macedonian population), and by pumping from springs near the village Shum (Albanian population) and "Sv. Nedela" in Tashmarunishta (Macedonian population) (Struga Municipality, 2007). Although this region is characterized by interethnic and interreligious tensions already having problems over the joint water-supply of some villages - exemplified by Vevchani and Oktisi case - no problems or interethnic clashes over access and supply of water is recorded, despite the diverse ethnic structure of the population around water sources. The company for water-supply and protection of the Ohrid lake "PROAQUA" is jointly established by the municipalities of Ohrid and Struga, and the recent announcements of Ohrid mayor for establishing a separate water utility enterprise leaves no opportunity for manipulation and interethnic tensions with security threats because the joint water enterprise is supplying both cities from different sources.

Bitola, with a Macedonian majority of 88.29% (State Statistical Office, 2002: 80) as the second largest city in the country with contemporary and historically strategic importance along with the surrounding areas is supplied with water from the hydro-system "Strezevo". Vicinity of the dam and reservoir are inhabited by a majority of Macedonians, but there are also very few Albanians (in villages Lera, Obednik, Ramna, Dolenci populated with both Macedonians and Albanians) and Vlachs (village Gopesh) (Panov, 1998: 101, 176, 216, 253, 72). So far, there were no interethnic incidents around the water supply that would endanger the order and security because the number of inhabitants in these villages is very small (averaging about a hundred) and inter-ethnic relations are at a good level. As previously noted, the Bitola region experienced incidents on a very small (insignificantly minor) scale: one over water utilization between people of different ethnicities Velushina village and another with the construction of water-supply system in Lazhec village used as a method to ease ethnic tensions in the village which have different background.

Gostivar, inhabited by Macedonian (33.15%), Albanian (47.12%), Turkish (12.72%), and Roma (5.3%) population (State Statistical Office, 2002:87) is supplied with water from the river Vardar in Vrutok village, populated by Macedonians and Albanians (Panov, 1998: 63). Although Gostivar has had problems in water-supply in terms of quality and purity of water, there were no ethnic tensions over water resources and there were no incidents - even in 2001 - when heavy military activities took place in adjacent Tetovo region.

On the springs of Studenchica River, located on the eastern slopes of Bistra mountain, a water-supply system was built to supply Kichevo, Prilep, Krushevo, Makedonski Brod, the municipalities of Plasnica, Dolneni, and the thermo-electric plant "Oslomej", covering a region with 150.000 inhabitants (Studnchica Water Supply Enterprise, 2010). The sources are located near the Gorni Dobrenoec village, inhabited by Macedonians, while the regional water-supply system serves ethnically different population composed of Christian and Muslim Macedonians, Albanians, Roma, Vlachs, Bosniaks, Turks. With the territorial reorganization of 2013 the location of the springs and village that have previously been part of the ethnically Macedonian (86,69%) dominant Drugovo Municipality (State Statistical Office, 2002:99) became part of the reorganized Kichevo Municipality with a slight Albanian majority and mayor. The plan for abrogation and merging of the municipalities Drugovo, Vraneshtica, Zajas and Oslomej to Kichevo - delayed twice in 2004 and 2008 - had risen the ethnic-political tensions that involved Studenchica water-supply system. As a sign of opposition, the civic association "Idnina" advocating preservation of the Drugovo Municipality announced that as a radical step in fulfilling their goal they will shut the vales of Studenchica hydrosystem (Trajkovska, 2012). Fortunately, the threat for water crisis for Kichevo, Prilep, Makedonski Brod and Krushevo did not happened despite the reformation of the Kichevo Municipality with an Albanian majority that may prove to be a wrong decision with a possible repetition of this threat in eventual deterioration of the inter-ethnic relations, due to the extremely nationalist feelings that most recently and vividly were reflected in the local elections campaign for Kichevo in 2013.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS AND METHODS FOR OVERCOMING THIS TYPE OF SECURITY THREAT

The foregoing elaboration suggests that the ethnic composition of the population around water sources was closely related to the specific incidents that openly influenced a threat to the security of Macedonia. The methods to overcome and fundamentally resolve this kind of threats are limited and very complicated in today's conditions. Namely, in totalitarian, authoritarian and undemocratic regimes typical for the past, such problems could be overcome with a strong and open repression, violence over the population around water sources, as well as, forced displacement and expulsion of "unsuitable" people from particular ethnic group and colonization of people around water sources from other "suitable" ethnic group. The Constitution of independent Republic of Macedonia established a political system

of parliamentary democracy with the citizens as holders of sovereign power with human rights, civil liberties, national equality and legal equality guaranteed at the highest levels (Kotovchevski, 2011: 72-82). As a democratic country, the Republic of Macedonia must not consider undemocratic methods towards resolution of such problems and security threats. Misconceived and inappropriate use of force in resolving such problems in already complex ethnic composition of the population and fragile interethnic relations with high conflict potential can only complicate the situation and lead to a greater crisis and a serious deterioration of the national security. Therefore, as to overcome these problems, the state should take preventive and repressive measures characteristic of the security function of the state to an appropriate extent and well prepared for the particular situation. The state authorities should actively implement educational, social, cultural and economic policies in these areas, as well as constantly improving the infrastructure and living conditions in order to maintain excellent interethnic relations, increase the loyalty and identification of the citizens with the state as to limit any possible conflicting actions utilizing the water resources. Also, they should have an active policy of inclusion and employment in the administration of water-supply of the locals living nearby water sources. However, the management, planning and maintenance of water supply systems and enterprises should be based solely on high professionalism irrelevant of any ethnic and political criteria. These measures would have a fundamental preventive role in overcoming the problems of access to water and water sources. In any case, the water sources and the water-supply systems in regions inhabited by a diverse population – associated with troubled history and interethnic conflicts over water i.e. the case in Kumanovo - should always be closely supervised and guarded by security services. The police surveillance and safeguarding of the water resources and water-supply systems should be well laid out, clearly arranged and designed as to leave no opportunity for clashes and incidents with the local population, because of their presence. Presence, safeguarding and surveillance are needed for readily and quickly act and intervention in a possible occurrence of accidents, conflicts and clashes of a more serious nature. These measures could be characterized as repressive, but they should be used in the final and most extreme cases against the threats for security of water sources and water-supply systems. The main role in preventing threats of this nature should be placed on the measures of preventive nature affecting the educational, cultural and economic levels, which are factors by which the citizens could be most easily manipulated and mobilized in order to actively participate in such conflicts.

CONCLUSION

The discussion relative to the impact of the ethnic composition of the population around water sources as internal security threat in Macedonia, several conclusions can be drawn. Water is undoubtedly the most important resource for human life and survival and as such, it has a significant impact on the national security. From the examined three cases from the recent Macedonian history of close interrelation of ethnicity with water-supply problems - caused or being part of the current ethnic and armed conflicts - a conclusion holds that the ethnic composition of the population around water sources is an important variable and relevant factor for endangering national security in Macedonia. Directly or indirectly provoked interethnic conflicts, as well as politicization and mobilization of ethnicity in cases of problems with the water-supply in areas with mixed ethnic composition of the population, is not an unknown phenomenon in Macedonia. Capture and subversive activities on water sources and water-supply systems in order to pressure the Macedonian government by terrorist groups have also been recorded during the armed conflict of 2001. These examples confirm the assumption in regards the endangering impact of the ethnic structure of the population around water sources on the security. The examples of the potential trouble spots around the water-supply in a multiethnic populated regions, accompanied with intimidations such as in Rashe and Kichevo (Drugovo), we can infer that any inter-ethnic conflicts or inadequate monitoring of conditions and actions of state institutions could create serious threats to the security of different regions throughout Macedonia, with a serious character and great conflict potential. The third conclusion from this short survey concerns the ways to resolve and overcome this kind of security threats. From the several exposed methods, the most expedient and most successful ones for Macedonia are the activities of the state authorities through educational, educational, cultural, economic, infrastructural policy and dialogue with a close monitoring of the situation by the competent security authorities. These findings also bring a different perspective to the final conclusion. Water is essential and equally important for the life and survival of every human being, regardless of his religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, political affiliation - therefore, all of these divisions are trivial and unreasonable at times of major environmental disasters, growing scarcity and thirst for water globally in the world. The sooner the humanity realizes that the water needs are all are same and equal among the people, the earlier the idea for peaceful and prosperous world will come true.

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