

Macedonia's Foreign Policy Between Two Suns



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03-15-2025 ~ At the Munich Security Conference in February 2025, Macedonian Prime Minister Hristijan Mickoski was the only European to applaud the speech by US Vice President JD Vance. From Munich, Mickoski went to Washington, DC, for the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC). At CPAC, he [said](#) that Macedonia could be used by the United States to manoeuvre against Russia and China. A small country, in other words, offered itself as the battlefield for the great powers.

Upon his return to Skopje, journalists asked whether this marked a shift in Macedonia's foreign policy, which had so far been dictated by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the European Union (EU). His response [was](#): 'We are among the first to take to the pitch. That is my style; there is no second chance to make a first impression. We are on the pitch, and others can come behind us. We must find a place for ourselves in the new normal.'

But what exactly is the 'new normal' for a country on the periphery of Europe? Until recently, Macedonia had no major foreign policy dilemmas simply because it had no foreign policy! Elites followed Brussels's directives. NATO and EU

membership became substitutes for the former socialist ideology – more than that, they became a secular religion, a dogma that no one dared to question. Just before joining NATO, following an unconstitutional and imposed change of the country's constitution and name, a representative of the ruling coalition (later a deputy prime minister) stated: '[For us, the sun rises in the West!](#)' But now, it seems there are two suns – both rising in the West – leaving small and dependent states facing an impossible choice.

Trump's 'second coming' has shattered the illusion of Western unity, exposing deep fractures within what was once considered a monolithic Atlantic bloc. His (still hypothetical and undeveloped) peace plan for Ukraine has thrown NATO into disarray—if not outright paralysis. Some analysts already speak of a [post-NATO world](#). Others describe the alliance as a '[zombie](#)' structure, a [relic](#) of the first Cold War, while still others predict its partial or complete [transformation](#). NATO's fate, like so much else, now hinges entirely on the will of the United States.

The frequent summits of select European countries, forming structures that are neither fully NATO nor entirely EU, only add to the confusion. Some EU member states have rushed to align with different factions within the transatlantic divide, reflecting the growing disunity. At the same time, the EU has lost its moral compass and strategic purpose, shifting from a welfare to a warfare agenda.

The ongoing confusion in Macedonia is not just a matter of foreign policy; it is deeply rooted in domestic politics as well. Elites incapable of building a sustainable state that functions in the collective interest have relied on the promise that 'NATO will defend us, and the EU will feed us.' In religious terms, this would be akin to waiting for the afterlife, where all earthly suffering will be overcome.

Indeed, since 2020, Macedonia has become a NATO member, but EU membership is now more distant than [ever](#). This is especially evident given that Brussels has begun accession talks with Ukraine in the midst of a war, while Macedonia faces demands for constitutional changes that have no connection to the Copenhagen criteria and are practically impossible to fulfil. The aspiration for NATO and EU membership also served as a pacifier for internal tensions. Every conflict had a standard resolution: look forward to European integration, forget the past, and even ignore the grim present.

During the Polish ambassador's address to the Macedonian Parliament on 10 March 2025 regarding Poland's EU presidency priorities, an opposition MP noted that the word 'enlargement' was not mentioned at all. He then concluded, 'While listening to the ambassador, I realise that the EU's fantasies revolve around another war with the Russian Federation.' Meanwhile, the deputy speaker of Parliament Antonio Milošoski, from the ruling conservative party VMRO-DPMNE (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization - Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity) attempted a diplomatic quip. Milošoski urged Poland and other member states to restore the transatlantic dialogue as soon as possible, emphasising that on the question of 'whom we support', the best answer now [is](#): 'We are for Donald (meaning Trump and Tusk)' - referring to Donald Tusk, the Prime Minister of Poland.

The new Foreign Minister has announced a ['three-pillar' policy](#): NATO, the EU, and the USA. However, this supposedly new formula is not the result of strategic thinking but rather an attempt to avoid choosing between two competing Western factions - one that insists on prolonging the war in Ukraine (the EU) and another that grudgingly accepts the 'new geopolitical reality' and seeks a peace settlement with Russia (the United States). Macedonia's elites have simply emphasised an additional 'pillar' (i.e. the United States) within the fractured Western bloc, pretending they can balance between diverging interests.

The fundamental problem is that none of these three pillars are stable. There is no common Western strategy on any major issue. The three entities on which Macedonia has staked its future - NATO, the EU, and the US - are themselves deeply divided, consumed by internal contradictions, and driven by short-term transactional logic. All three rely on and sustain the military-industrial complex. The US empire is undergoing internal erosion. NATO and the EU are over-militarizing and indebting themselves—and worse, they are not sleepwalking but rushing toward a global war.

This small country, Macedonia, which has already paid a bizarre yet deeply painful [price](#) for NATO membership - sacrificing its constitutional sovereignty, changing its state name, and altering its national identity - now faces mounting demands, regardless of which Western faction it turns to. Each power center demands loyalty and sacrifice, yet none offers anything in return. Macedonia lacks strategic resources, rare metals, or economic leverage. It cannot fulfil US demands to increase military spending for NATO - not because its elites wouldn't

comply, but because the [country](#) is over-indebted and impoverished. Cynically speaking, it can hardly provide 'cannon fodder,' as its young population is steadily emigrating. Yet, the Defense Minister announced that six new military equipment contracts with the US were passed at a closed government session. It is obviously a way to meet Trump's transactional scheme and appease him.

The Macedonian government is not the only one grappling with the unresolvable dilemma of trying to 'have your cake and eat it too'. The answer is simple for those willing to pull their heads out of the sand: the sun, after all, rises in the east (with a small 'e'), and the world has four directions where new friends can be found.

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