



Kosovo Conflict: Greece

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1 Historical Ally of Serbia

Greece has an extensive track record in supporting Serbia and Serb minorities in Kosovo.

Historically this relation is based on their common heritage as former parts of the byzantine empire and their shared eastern orthodox faith. In more recent history, they fought together in the first and second Balkan wars (1912-1913) against the ottoman empire and later against Bulgaria. During the first world war Greece initially stayed neutral but eventually took Serbia's side, granting refuge to the Serbian army on Corfu.

In the 1990s when the Yugoslav wars broke out, Greece was the only EU member to support Serbia and voted against NATO air strikes on Serbian positions. Greece also reportedly continued facilitating the transport of food, oil and arms to Serbia despite a total embargo that was placed on Serbia by the UN in 1992. On top of that, Greece is suspected to have leaked classified NATO military plans to Serbia during the conflict.

On the humanitarian side, especially the orthodox church of Greece has supported Serb minorities in the Balkans throughout all major conflicts, both monetarily and with shipments of food and medicine. Greece is also one of the biggest supporters for Serbia becoming an EU country. [1]

2 Conflict of Interest

Despite the popular support of Serbia, as a member of both the EU and NATO Greece is in a significant conflict of interest. During the Yugoslav wars, while they were still backing Serbia, Greece actively fought on NATO's side against Serbia. Even though that meant fighting against a historical ally, only one captain refused to board and commandeer his ship to take part in a blockade for which he is now considered a national hero to many Serbians. [2]

This conflict continues with the relation to the EU. The EU officially recommends all its member states to recognize Kosovo's independence which puts pressure on Greece to follow suit. The result of this conflict of interest is that Greece voted for Kosovo to become a member of the IMF and reportedly supported Kosovo's membership in the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development all while continuing to take Serbia's side and not recognizing Kosovo as an independent country. [3]



Fig. 1: Geographical Location of Greece and Serbia

3 References

- 1 Greece - Serbia Relations
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece%E2%80%93Serbia_relations
- 2 Interview with Marinos Ritsoudis
<http://thesrpskatimes.com/exclusive-intervies-marinos-ritsoudis-the-soldier-who-was-awarded-because-he-refuse-to-kill/>
- 3 Greece - Kosovo Relations
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece%27s_reaction_to_the_2008_Kosovo_declaration_of_independence