

Dimensions of the Greek-Macedonian Name Dispute

The independence of the Republic of Macedonia upon the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991 inflamed nationalist passions in Greece. Greeks of all major political parties united in their demand that their neighbors to the north cease calling themselves Macedonians, no longer call their state the Republic of Macedonia, and refrain from any use of names or symbols taken from Macedonian antiquity. The Greek position was quite clear, Macedonia was, is, and always will be Greek. The Macedonian position, on the other hand, is mainly an extension of their state tradition within the Yugoslav federation, established at the end of World War Two. This includes use of an official, standardized Macedonian literary language in public life, the use of names and symbols that identify the people as Macedonians, and an understanding of history that, at the very least, connects their society to documented medieval roots that date back to the 9th century.

All major Macedonian political parties are united in their refusal to alter their identity to satisfy Greek demands, particularly when those demands have not been supported by other nations. Their position is that the name dispute is essentially a Greek-Macedonian problem, since over 120 nations recognize the Republic of Macedonia under its constitutional name. In the most recent period, however, the name issue has become a concern of other nations due to the upcoming votes in NATO and the EU on Macedonian membership. Greece has threatened to veto Macedonian entry if the name dispute is not resolved to their satisfaction. The chief concern of other states is the further destabilization of the Balkans that continued Macedonian exclusion might cause at a time when many serious issues, such as the future of Kosovo, require regional cooperation..

These two Balkan peoples have been on a tragic collision course for over a hundred years. This course leads directly to the name dispute today. The positions of both peoples are diametrically opposed and intransigent. International mediators have barely moved either side in almost two decades of on again, off again negotiations.

Most recently the Greek Premier Costas Karamanalis has complained bitterly

in public of "FYROM's" (acronym for Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) or "Skopje's" (after the capital city since Greeks refuse to utter the words "Republic of Macedonia") uncompromising attitude. However, his government has itself shown little flexibility on the issue. That government rests on a shaky two member parliamentary majority that could easily be lost if any significant number of Greeks decide that their government has failed to act in their interests. The fact of the matter is that most Greeks take a very hard line on the name issue. Angus Reid Global Mountain: Polls and Research reported recently that a survey of some 800 Greeks in late February of 2008 found that 83% thought that Greece should veto Macedonia's entry into NATO if the name dispute is not resolved to their satisfaction.

The Macedonian government, led by Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski of the VMRO-DPMN Party and President Brank Crvenkovski, formerly of the rival SDSM Party, has an equally determined public to answer to. They are quite clear that any compromise that would threaten their established ethnic identity as Macedonians is totally unacceptable. Even such compromise names as "New Macedonia", "North Macedonia", "Vardar Macedonia" or "Upper Macedonia" are considered a threat to that identity, because they could call into question their identity, if others began to refer to them as "new Macedonians" or "northern Macedonians or "upper Macedonians".

Macedonians see all of the Greek demands as unjust, and they do not see how their small state of two million people, with its small army and limited resources, could pose any real threat to Greece. Yet, in their view their southern neighbors seem to be doing everything in their power to destabilize their country and deny them the right to their self-identity. They have left them with very little room for further compromise after Macedonian concessions to end a crippling Greek economic embargo in 1995. That agreement included a change in the Macedonian flag, a denial of any territorial claims and further negotiation over their name while accepting a temporary name in the UN. Many Macedonians suspect that Greece would just as well use the name dispute as an excuse to deny NATO and EU membership to their neighbor for as long as possible. If they cannot destroy the country outright or control it, at the very least, their veto power should allow them to keep the Republic of Macedonia as isolated as possible from European economic and political union. A weak, impoverished and isolated RM is still preferable, if they must tolerate the country's existence at all. On the other hand, Greeks have invested substantial sums in Macedonian industries in recent years.

For nearly a century Greece was too busy merely assimilating its Macedonian

territory, acquired in the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 to bother with the old name. They referred to the region as the new territories and the northern districts for many years. It was only in the late 1980's that Greek authorities decided to demand that all things Macedonian, ancient and modern, were theirs alone. This led in mid 1990 to their decision to impose an economic blockade on their newly-independent, land-locked northern neighbor to force the Republic of Macedonia to alter its identity. As mentioned, to end the crippling blockade the Macedonian state signed an interim accord with Greece in 1995 that obligated the Macedonians to further negotiation over the future name of their state and required the Macedonians to relinquish the right to use of the ancient symbol, the 16 -rayed Star of Vergina, that had been placed on the new state's flag, and to make no claims on present-day Greek territory. In return for these concessions Greece promised to allow Macedonian entry into international organizations under the temporary name of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

One dimension of the name dispute concerns the use of ancient names and symbols. Both Macedonia and Greece would like to extend their roots back to include ancient glory. Both modern societies, however, bear no more real relation to the ancient societies that once existed on their soil than Italians bear to the ancient Romans, or modern Israelis to the ancient Hebrews, or modern Egyptians to the ancient Egyptians. Their identification with the famous ancient people who once dwelt on the land that the modern people now inhabit is a source of obvious pleasure and pride, and it is certainly a source of tourist dollars, as well as symbols that help strengthen a sense of shared modern identity, but the intervening centuries have dramatically altered any linguistic, cultural or even genetic inheritance from the ancients.

This might be illustrated by one small example from a recent feature film made by the prominent American director Oliver Stone about the life of Alexander the Great. Both Greeks and Macedonians were quite interested in whether Stone would portray Alexander as a member of a people who conquered a foreign neighboring Greek people or as one of the conquerors of his southern Greek kin. Stone's interpretation, based upon his and his advisors' reading of the ancient history, drew mixed reviews from prominent historian Dr. Eugene Borza. He dismissed much of the film as historically inaccurate and sensationalized. On one point though, as Borza pointed out in his critique of the film, modern Greeks and Macedonians were in full agreement. Both were disturbed by the prominence given in the film to the bisexual behavior of Alexander and his ancient companions. Both of the modern societies, under the influence of Christian morality, found the scenes that depicted homosexual behavior quite disturbing and distasteful. The

ancient pagan inhabitants of Macedonia clearly should not be confused with the present-day people. 1

Another dimension of the name dispute is the history of bad blood between the two peoples. Some would trace the troubles all the way back to Macedonian King Philip's conquest of the ancient Greek city states in the fourth century B.C. Others would point to the terrible mutilation of Macedonian Tsar Samuel's soldiers after a battle with Byzantine Emperor Basil's army in the eleventh century A.D., when the Byzantines blinded some 15,000 of Samuel's captured soldiers. However, their dispute primarily stems from much more recent history. The Balkan wars of national liberation of the 19th century freed Serbia and Greece from Turkish rule in the early 1800's and Bulgaria in the 1870's. These new states would not have gained their independence without Great Power intervention.

The people of Macedonia understood that their own freedom from Turkish rule was only a matter of time, and they took all possible measures to hasten that day. There were internal Macedonian rebellions in 1878, 1881 and 1903. The Saint Eijah's Day or Ilinden Uprising of 1903 was the largest and best-organized of these. Over 30,000 fighters took to the field and liberated large areas of territory. However, once the Turkish authorities realized that the rebellion was not as widespread as they had assumed, they were able to concentrate their forces in the central Macedonian Bitola region and drive the rebels out of the towns they had occupied. While guerilla war continued for years after that, the poorly armed village-based rebels could not drive the Turks out on their own. 2

That is why a combined effort of the armies of the neighboring independent Balkan states would eventually be required in 1912 to achieve victory over the Turks in Macedonia. That victory, however, only led to continued conflict among the victors, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece, over division of Macedonia among them. At this point, the Great Powers of Europe organized a peace conference in London in March of 1913 in order to end the war among the southern Balkan states. This conference, however, failed to properly take into account the needs and concerns of the people of Macedonia. The leading intellectuals of the Macedonian colony in St. Petersburg, Russia tried to make the plight of their fellow countrymen clear to the leaders gathered at the conference in a letter that included the following:

Instead of proclaiming Macedonia an autonomous state, its new liberators have decided to divide it among themselves; we are convinced and deeply believe that the aware and democratic sections of the Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian people have not participated in this fratricidal partition of the

Macedonian people. Yet Macedonia has all the natural and historical rights to self-determination. Over the centuries it has been an autonomous political unit or included in the structure of other states. This has resulted from its geographical location and individuality. The borders of Macedonia are clearly marked by the mountain chains that surround it and by the coast. This geographical whole and the whole system of fertile valleys and fields arrayed like a fan also determine the economic wholeness and indivisibility of the country.

Also the population of the country is homogeneous. According to the data of various authoritative researchers, 2/3 of the population of Macedonia belong to a particular Slav group. In order to avoid any friction among the peoples adjacent to Macedonia in future, in order to give the less significant groups of other nationalities mixed in the Slav majority - Albanians, Greeks, Wallachians, Turks and Jews - the chance of having a free and unobstructed national life, the only way is to establish a free independent Macedonia. Thus, it is more suitable for all the neighbours of Macedonia that this country remain undivided, since by any division, sections of our living compatriots will remain under foreign authority and will perish.

The Macedonians have won their right to self-determination over their whole recent history, as well. They fought for centuries in the name of independence and freedom, and particularly after the Treaty of Berlin, they organized innumerable insurrections and distinguished themselves by determination and courage. During the past war the Internal Macedonian Organization and the 27 emigrant brotherhoods formed a large number of Macedonian units, which had a great influence upon the course of the war and captured through their bravery Ynver Pasha's army of 12,000 men.

At the critical moment for the Serbian army near Kumanovo, when it started withdrawing, 6,000 Macedonian fighters appeared and with bombs in their hands attacked the rear of the Turkish army. The Turks fled in panic, leaving everything to the victors. The Serbs and Bulgarians deliberately say nothing about these huge Macedonian victories and permit nobody to write about them. In addition, the Macedonians have more than once shed their own blood for Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian freedom and have thus won their rights as a fighting force. The Macedonian army is at the moment fighting along with the allies and numbers some 70,000 fighters and soldiers. Horrible terror now reigns in Macedonia, the 'freedom' of the allies has no limits, none of the Macedonians has the right to travel outside Macedonia in order to protest before the European states. Whoever attempts to do this is either murdered or put in prison. The armies of the allies have surrounded the whole of Macedonia with an iron band.

As a result of all this, the Macedonian Colony in St. Petersburg, fulfilling its sacred duty towards its fatherland and conscientiously applying

the slogan "Macedonia to the Macedonians", protest and cannot remain indifferent when the allied Balkan states (Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece) - our brothers in blood and faith - aim to dismember our fatherland, which stands on the same cultural level as them, and which is also by the number of its population (three and a half million inhabitants) greater than Serbia or Greece separately. The Colony cannot look without pain at the disintegration of its unfortunate fatherland, at the burial and destruction of the political and spiritual life of the whole nation. The partition of Macedonia by its brothers is the most unjust act in the history of peoples, a violation of the rights of Man, a disgrace to the whole Slav race.

The Turkish subjugation has been replaced by Christian subjugation. 3

The Great Powers of Europe ignored their plea, and Greece has denied the existence of a pre-World War Two Macedonian national consciousness to this day. Macedonia has been the apple of discord among southern Balkan nations for over a century now. The continuing conflict over Macedonia was a significant factor in the alignment of Balkan states in both World Wars, and it was a major factor in the Greek Civil War of 1947-49. Greeks continue to declare the Macedonian nation and state an artificial creation of Tito's communist Yugoslavia. This Greek denial of any Macedonian history of resistance to foreign occupation is at the very heart of their problem with their northern neighbor, but few Greeks are willing to acknowledge this to the present day. 4

Another dimension of the name dispute is Greek xenophobia. Americans are secure enough today to quite openly discuss the injustices that accompanied the European colonization of the Americas. This has even led to some redress of Native American grievances, including economic compensation for losses due to treaty violations by the US government. It was not that long ago, however, that that was not the case. The belief in a 'manifest destiny' of the American nation and a 'natural' white supremacy is not a thing of the distant past. Most Greeks continue to deny that their treatment of their Macedonian neighbors and a Macedonian minority in northern Greece can be described as racist, despite the growing number of reports by international human rights monitors documenting that treatment. (See appendix, for documentation included with the letter from Vinozhito, the Rainbow Party of Greece)

Gene Rossides, President of the American Hellenic Institute and former Assistant Secretary of the Treasury recently wrote an editorial on the name dispute. This statement by a Greek American of some political prominence and a leader of an important Greek American organization, demonstrates

how this issue has even crossed the ocean to America. It contains some of the central Greek arguments for a change of the name. Several of his major points, however, are only convincing if one accepts the Greek claim that there is no old, settled, indigenous ethnic Macedonian population in Greece today and that ancient Macedonians were Greeks. He argues that: *It is not proper for a country which is part of a region to define itself in an official manner as representing the whole region. Macedonia, like the Americas and Europe, is a region. Just as no country in North and South America would call itself the "American Republic," and no European country would call itself the "Republic of Europe," the Skopje regime in naming itself cannot assume the mantle of all of Macedonia. ...Since 1945, Skopje has mounted a propaganda campaign against Greece claiming all of Macedonia for the so-called "Macedonian people." However, there is no such separate ethnic group. There are people speaking a Slav dialect living in the parts of Macedonia controlled by Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Serbs say these people are Serbs, Bulgarians say they are Bulgarians. The ancient Macedonians were Greeks, as all historical and archaeological evidence demonstrates.* " (See appendix for full text)

Greek politicians also raise this issue in the US when the opportunity arises. For example, Dimitrios Katsoudas, Secretary General for European Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece gave a speech on January 15, 2008 at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in which he declared that Greece was prepared to use the Macedonian request for membership in NATO to attempt to force the Macedonian government to accept a change of their country's name. The harsh tone and hard line expressed by him is characteristic of their approach to their neighbor on this issue : *My country has reached the very limit of its patience. ...The issue is now entirely in the hands of the Skopje Government.* 5

One particularly interesting dimension of the name dispute in recent times has been a connection to the American presidential campaign. Greek Americans have been working to tie the Obama presidential campaign to the name dispute. A website of the Greeks for Obama Committee links candidate Obama with the beliefs of the Greek author of the statement in the following way: *Given the desire from Skopje to join a modern Europe, the fact that it clings to irredentist postures that can only remind one of 19th century/ early 20th century Europe are cause for concern. ...The Bush Administration's decision to unilaterally recognize FYROM as Macedonia in violation of the UN brokered interim agreement between Greece and FYROM was extremely*

*short sighted and part of a foreign policy that sacrificed too much to bolster a failed Iraq policy. ...I support efforts by the United States Congress - including the resolution sponsored by my Senator and political mentor Barack Obama - that call on FYROM to cease all provocative actions and commit to a framework that leads to a mutually acceptable official name for FYROM. ...Moreover, I urge all US Senators (and especially the remaining Presidential candidates) to support the aforementioned resolution and to avoid using the incorrect official name for FYROM.*⁶

However, other US politicians have offered the Macedonians support during this most recent period of political maneuvering concerning their candidacy for NATO and the EU. Congressman Peter Welch, a Democrat from Vermont, read the following into the Congressional Record on February 13, 2008: *Macedonia has made incredible strides since its independence in 1991, achieving membership in the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the World Trade Organization, and to NATO's Partnership for Peace and Membership Action Plan. Macedonia is a candidate for European Union membership and may soon be invited as a full member of NATO, hopefully as soon as April of this year. I look forward to the continued strengthening of the United States and especially Vermont's partnership with the Republic of Macedonia.*

Another American participant in the on-going debate over Macedonian recognition and acceptance in recent years is the United Macedonian Diaspora organization. It is an organization of mostly young, college-educated first and second generation Macedonian-Americans who have taken it upon themselves to act on behalf of their homeland in the halls of power in Washington DC. They sent a letter to the US Secretary of State prior to a February meeting with Macedonian and Greek representatives in which they voiced their support for the Macedonian position in the name dispute. Their letter begins: *Dear Secretary Rice:___The United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD) urges you to reiterate America's recognition of Macedonia's constitutional name, support for Macedonia's NATO admission, and position that the "name dispute" between Greece and Macedonia is immaterial to Macedonia's NATO bid during your upcoming meeting with the Greek Foreign Minister on February 14, 2008.*

The UMD addresses many of the issues raised by Greek American lobbyists such as Gene Rossides. For example, to counter Rossides' argument that a nation within a region should not refer to the entire region in its name, they point to the name, United States of America, as a name that includes reference to an entire region, America, without causing any problem for

other states included within that region. 7 (See appendix for the full text of the letter.)

The UMD has tried to articulate other key points of the Macedonian argument in the on-going debate as it has unfolded leading up to the NATO summit in April of 2008. A UMD position paper published in late February of 2008 addresses several key points. One of these they explain is that: *Under Article 11 of the Interim Agreement, the Hellenic Republic must allow Macedonia's entry into any international organization provided that Macedonia enters under a certain provisional reference term used at the UN to refer to it. The Interim Agreement is in full force and Macedonia is willing to accede to NATO under the provisional reference.*

The UMD position paper also points out Macedonia's cooperation with and contribution to the alliance: *NATO military experts and diplomatic officials agree that Macedonia has met the benchmarks established for all states wishing to join NATO and Macedonia's solid contributions to NATO operations across the globe are hailed throughout the alliance.*

Both the Macedonian and the Greek side closely follow any statements by historians and scholars of ancient Macedonia that might bolster their position in the name dispute, such as the following, posted at the website Macedonia.info, that support the Greek view of Macedonian history:

"The Macedonian people and their kings were of Greek stock, as their traditions and the scanty remains of their language combine to testify." _` {John Bagnell Bury, "A History of Greece to the Death of Alexander the Great", 2nd ed.(1913)_

"Clearly, the language of the ancient Macedonians was Greek"_{Prof. John C. Roumans Professor Emeritus of Classics Wisconsin University}_

"There is no doubt that Macedonians were Greeks." _ (Robin Lane Fox "Historian-Author" In Interview with newspaper TO BHMA)

The Macedonians, on the other hand, enjoy hearing statements such as the following by Eric John Ernest Hobsbawm: *The most usual ideological abuse of history is based on anachronism rather than lies. Greek nationalism refused Macedonia even the right to its name on the grounds that all Macedonia is essentially Greek and part of a Greek nation-state, presumably ever since the father of Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia, became the ruler of the Greek lands on the Balkan peninsula. Like everything about Macedonia, this is a far from purely academic matter, but it takes a lot of courage for a Greek intellectual to say that, historically speaking, it is nonsense. There was no Greek nation-state or any other single political entity for the Greeks in the*

fourth century BC, the Macedonian Empire was nothing like a Greek or any other modern nation-state, and in any case it is highly probable that the ancient Greeks regarded the Macedonian rulers, as they did their later Roman rulers, as barbarians and not as Greeks, though they were doubtless too polite or cautious to say so. 8

Statements that support the Macedonian understanding of the ancient history also include the following by professor of history, Eugne Borza: *On the matter of language, and despite attempts to make Macedonian a dialect of Greek, one must accept the conclusion of the linguist R. A. Crossland in the recent CAH, that an insufficient amount of Macedonian has survived to know what language it was. But it is clear from later sources that Macedonian and Greek were mutually unintelligible in the court of Alexander the Great. Moreover, the presence in Macedonia of inscriptions written in Greek is no more proof that the Macedonians were Greek than, e.g., the existence of Greek inscriptions on Thracian vessels and coins proves that the Thracians were Greeks... II... what did the Macedonians say or think about themselves? Virtually nothing has survived from the Macedonians themselves (they are among the silent peoples of antiquity), and very little remains in the Classical and Hellenistic non-Macedonian sources about Macedonian attitudes. III. What did others say about the Macedonians? Here there is a relative abundance of information from Arrian, Plutarch (Alexander, Eumenes), Diodorus 17-20, Justin, Curtius Rufus, and Nepos (Eumenes), based upon Greek and Greek-derived Latin sources. It is clear that over a five-century span of writing in two languages representing a variety of historiographical and philosophical positions the ancient writers regarded the Greeks and Macedonians as two separate and distinct peoples whose relationship was marked by considerable antipathy, if not outright hostility. 9*

Such statements from international scholars that challenge the Greek claim to sole ownership of ancient Macedonian history, plus the broad international support for the Macedonian right to their self-identity demonstrated by the 120 nations worldwide who recognize the Republic of Macedonia under its constitutional name, have encouraged the Macedonians to resist Greek pressures in the name dispute. This has even emboldened the Macedonian side to hint at countermeasures if Greece exercises its right to veto Macedonian membership, strictly on the basis of the name dispute. The following, threat was leaked to the press by government spokesman Ivica Bocevski on February 4, 2008: *...any such [veto] action on the part of Greece will nullify the interim agreement, allowing Macedonia to officially revoke it. With the interim agreement null and void, Macedonia then will have the right to:*

Make an official request to the United Nations to register Macedonia's name as Macedonia.

Pass a law through a referendum where no one can change the state's name without holding a referendum.

Take appropriate measures to reinstate the original sixteen ray flag.

Remove all constitutional amendments made since 1992 resulting from Greek demands.

Take appropriate measures to pressure Greece to recognize the Macedonian minority living in Greece and start legal procedures to have properties returned to those Macedonians who have been exiled from Greece.

Name streets, highways, buildings, stadiums, sports halls and squares after ancient Macedonian personalities.

Develop closer ties with Turkey, Northern Cyprus, the USA, etc.

Another party with direct interest in the Greek-Macedonian name dispute is the Macedonian ethnic minority in northern Greece. While tens of thousands of Macedonians left Greece under pressure to assimilate following the Balkan Wars and even more fled to escape punishment after fighting on the losing side in the Greek Civil War, a significant number remain in Greece to this day, and in recent times some of them have been bold enough to self-organize and make their complaints known to the world. The following is from a letter sent to the US Secretary of State in mid February of 2008, on the eve of an important meeting with her Greek counterpart: *Dear Dr Rice, My name is Pavlos Voskopoulos and I am a member of the European Free Alliance – Rainbow, the political party of the ethnic Macedonian minority of Greece. ...I am writing to you in relation to the so-called "name dispute" between our country, Greece and the neighbouring country, the Republic of Macedonia. While we are not the direct subject of those discussions and wish not to act as a "spokesperson" for the Republic of Macedonia, we feel obliged to say a few words on the issue. The denial by the Greek state of the right of a neighbouring people and state to be called by the name which it has chosen for itself, indirectly influences our Macedonian identity.* 10 (See appendix for full text)

While there is a considerable degree of consensus among Macedonian politicians, there is an on –going internal debate over the best course of action in the dispute. Vlado Buchkovski, a former Prime Minister in the Macedonian government, writing in the *Vreme* newspaper, February 14, 2008, criticized the present Macedonian government for failing to recognize that there was a gathering of forces to pressure Macedonia into a

compromise. These have recently included the influential Slovenian Premier Janez Jansha, who has begun to use the words "Macedonia needs to be flexible." He also noted a similar pressure from the US. A member of the opposition, SDSM Party, Buchkovski expresses a certain pessimism felt by those who imagine that the present ruling party could have taken more effective measures to shore up support for the Macedonian position.

The editor of the Macedonian daily newspaper, *Vest*, a witty and astute observer of all things Macedonian, wrote the following in an editorial on February 13, 2008. It reflects some commonly held Macedonian opinions that all Macedonian politicians must take into consideration when deliberating about the name dispute with Greece.: *On Tuesday the world will come to an end. Mediator in the name dispute, Matthew Nimetz will offer a new proposal. And Macedonia doesn't dare refuse it if it wants entrance into NATO. Ridiculous. Greece has managed to transmit its own national hysteria over this issue to us. My dear people, do you have a problem with our name? None. Greece has a problem. Why then do we have to do anything to solve somebody else's problem? Don't we have enough problems of our own? Greece wants us to change our name before they will accept us into NATO. They are a member of NATO. They are stronger and bigger than us, and more importantly, they can do this if they want. But they already did this some 17 years ago. The US recognized us under our constitutional name, the Republic of Macedonia, in 2004. That means that they don't have any problem with the name. Macedonia. They tell us that the name is not one of the criteria for entrance into NATO. But Greece threatens to veto. That means that Greece has managed to make the name an issue for the US and for NATO. So now both Washington and Athens put pressure on us. And if I were in their shoes, I would do the same. They have a problem and they want to resolve it. But as much as I try, I can't figure out why we should resolve Greece's problem with NATO.*

There is internal debate within Greece as well. The Greek newspaper, *Kathimerini*, published a commentary by Nikos Konstandaras in the February 18 issue that addresses a Greek dilemma in this dispute: *On the Macedonia issue, Greece has been exposed as being woefully incapable of persuading its friends of the rectitude of its positions in order to achieve any success – right from the days when it was the only "Western" country in the Balkans to the present day, when it has no special advantage. When the name dispute began, Athens demanded more than Skopje could agree to. Today, we cannot even secure the compound name that we ourselves once rejected. The United States, Russia and China – along with some 100 other countries – have already recognized our neighbors as the Republic of Macedonia. Now we*

expect Nimetz to propose a solution that Greece will not be able to accept, thus forcing Athens to veto Skopje's NATO aspirations. The pressure that Washington will bring on Athens will be unbearable, especially if we consider the argument that is already being heard: Kosovo's independence is likely to create new turbulence in the Balkans and therefore NATO accession is a necessary bulwark for our small neighbor.

On February 17, 2008, UN mediator Matthew Nimetz presented his most recent set of proposed names for the two sides to consider. All were compound names that included the name Macedonia. Unlike the earlier Greek position, Greek Foreign Minister Bakoyannis suggested that a compound name containing the word Macedonia could be acceptable to the Greek side. However, the compound names that he proposed included names possibly acceptable to the one side, but not the other. Of the five proposed names: Democratic Republic of Macedonia, Constitutional Republic of Macedonia, Independent Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Upper Macedonia or Northern Republic of Macedonia, only the Democratic Republic and the Independent Republic could possibly be acceptable to the Macedonian side, while these appear to be unacceptable to the Greek side, which favors one of the other proposed names.

An international law expert from the Republic of Macedonia, Professor Ljubomir Frchkovski, expressed his alarm at the proposal in an interview in the Macedonian press on February 22, 2008. He believed that the proposed changes could deny Macedonians the right to identify themselves as ethnic Macedonians in the world. Certain terms of the agreement and a new name might be used, just like the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has been used by the Greeks, to deny them the use of the identifying name Macedonian people in the world arena. This denial of the national identity is, in his opinion, the primary purpose of the Greek demand for a change to the name, and any change will give them grounds for demanding that no one in the future recognize the Macedonian ethnic identity internationally. The Macedonian representative to the negotiations, Nikola Dimitrov, reiterated this concern on March 3, 2008, when it was announced that the talks in New York were stalled. At that time he said that giving up the Macedonian identity was too high a price to pay for entry into NATO or the EU, and the proposal on the table at that time would require just that. The Macedonian Prime Minister, Nikola Gruevski, also made it clear that there could be no resolution of the dispute through a change of the country's name without a referendum of the Macedonian people on the name of their country. As he said on February 18, 2008: *I think that Macedonia's name in any instance should be decided only by its citizens, not by the politicians, ... the country's leadership*

have "no moral right" to do so." Thus implying that no quick resolution to the dispute would be possible. 11

A balanced presentation of the positions of the opposing parties in the Greek – Macedonian name dispute is itself a challenge. By the mere use of the name Macedonian in the title of my paper, I will have offended the Greek side in this dispute. They have tried, mostly without success, judging by the many countries that recognize Macedonia under its constitutional name, to insist that the proper designation for use internationally is the temporary designation until the name issue is resolved, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, or FYROM, as they prefer to call it. Skopje is the other favored Greek designation that allows them to avoid reference to Macedonia or Macedonians when referring to their neighbors. This designation and the Greek insistence on its use have led to endless quarrels at international venues. A Greek contestant in an international beauty pageant even tried to tear off the sash of the Macedonian contestant with the word Macedonia written on it, not long ago. It has also been a factor in such sad spectacles as the Greek refusal to allow Macedonian fire crews to come help them put out the fires that raged in Greece during a recent summer, and the Greek refusal this year to allow Macedonian Orthodox Church leaders to attend the funeral of a Greek Orthodox fellow church leader.

The name dispute clearly has international dimensions. Some observers have expressed particular concern that the Republic of Macedonia, excluded from NATO and the EU, could be destabilized if economic conditions and internal ethnic tensions should worsen. A prominent Balkan expert at the Woodrow Wilson Institute in Washington D.C. Dr. Martin.Schlesinger, recently suggested that Kosovo independence could easily lead to a war over the further secession of the predominantly Albanian regions of western Macedonia in the near future. This was one of the reasons why he found it hard to believe that Greece would exercise its right to veto Macedonian membership in NATO over the name. It would simply be too irresponsible. He also pointed out that even an EU member state like Belgium risks division in the future, but EU membership does improve a state's chances of survival. 12 Even if the worst case scenarios do not come to pass in Macedonia, the Republic of Macedonia will certainly not be able to play as positive a role in regional politics without membership in major European organizations.

The unresolved issues that Greece has with its neighbor are grave and serious, despite any appearance of silliness of the name dispute. As mentioned earlier, one of these unresolved issues is the lack of public recognition of ethnic minorities in Greece. This means that there is little

discussion of human and civil rights for ethnic minorities or issues of racism. In the absence of public engagement on this issue of the kind that occurred in the US during the civil rights movement of the 1960's, there is little hope for much movement on the Greek side in their dispute with their northern neighbor. There is, as I have mentioned, history that must be openly discussed in order for the two sides to come to any new understandings of who the Greek people and the Macedonian people are. The essential events of that history that must be examined are laid out by my co-author Chris Stefou, in a recent book. 13 He explains that, after Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia declared war on Turkey and invaded Macedonia in 1912 and then divided it among themselves according to terms of the Treaty of Bucharest in 1913: *...over time, the Macedonian people were either forcibly assimilated into the new folds or forcibly expelled from their own ancestral lands. ...*

Macedonia's hopes were dashed again at the conclusion of the Great War (WW I) in November 1918, when Macedonians were not allowed to attend the Versailles France Peace Conference. Up to this time Macedonia's partition was illegal and not sanctioned by the Powers. With the stroke of a pen in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles, England and France sealed Macedonia's fate by ratifying the principles of the Bucharest Treaty and officially endorsing the partition of Macedonia.

This, unfortunately, encouraged Greece to further pursue forced expulsions and denationalization of Macedonians, to begin mass colonization of Macedonia and by the Neuilly Convention, transplant "potential Greeks" into the Macedonian territories. About 70,000 Macedonians were expelled from the Greek occupied part of Macedonia to Bulgaria and 25,000 Greek-speaking people were transplanted from Bulgaria to Greek occupied Macedonia.

By the Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923, the Greco-Turkish war came to an end. Greece and Turkey signed a population exchange agreement. By the stroke of the pen some 380,000 Muslims were exchanged for something like 1,100,000 Christians. The total population in Greece, between 1907 and 1928, rose from 2,600,000 to 6,200,000. After the Greek occupation of Macedonia in 1912, for instance, by their own accounts the Greek elements in Greek occupied Macedonia had constituted 43 percent of the population. By 1926, with the resettlement of the refugees from Asia Minor, the Greek element had risen to 89 percent.

The next major event in Macedonia's history started with high hopes but unfortunately ended with tragic consequences for the Macedonian people. While the Macedonians in the Vardar region of Macedonia had gained some concessions and were re-building their lives after the conclusion of World War

II, the Macedonians in Greek occupied Macedonia were engaging in someone else's war. World War II rekindled Macedonian hopes for freedom, but the Greek Civil War shattered them.

The consequences of the Greek Civil War are a major factor in the present day name dispute between Macedonians and Greeks. 14 The Greek victors in that war brutally and severely punished the ethnic Macedonians of Greece, the vast majority of whom had sided with the losing Partisan communist side. Their schools and other social or cultural institutions that had been established during the war were closed. All Macedonians were and still are suspect if they do not publicly deny any and all identification with a Macedonian ethnicity. Many thousands of Macedonians died in the war, and many more who participated in the war on the Partisan side suffered imprisonment or exile. The Macedonian people's tragic history of war and conquest and forced assimilation in Greece is not ancient history. It is within the living memory of many who suffered.

Black people suffered from slavery and racism in the US. Many white people profited from their suffering, and, therefore, many whites were unwilling to admit to the ugly truth of that history or its consequences for over a hundred years. The Greek people profited in recent times at the expense of the Macedonian people. Macedonian rights activists are brutally suppressed in Greece to this day. 15 The history of Macedonians in Greece and their separate ethnic identity continues to be denied by Greek scholars, politicians, and statesmen. Their compulsion to put pressure on their Macedonian neighbors to give up their ethnic identity as Macedonians is directly related to this denial. The eventual acknowledgement of the existence, history and mistreatment of ethnic minorities in Greece is a crucial element in the eventual resolution of the Greek-Macedonian name dispute. 16

At the time of this writing negotiations between the Macedonians and the Greeks over the name issue remain stalled, just as they have been for 17 years now. The UN mediator Matthew Nimetz made his most recent proposal for a compromise solution in late February of 2008 and the two sides have been unable to agree on that proposed compromise. The Greek side continues to declare that they will veto NATO entry if there is no name compromise acceptable to them, and the Macedonian side has declared that the proposed name compromise threatens the Macedonian identity and that that is too high a price to pay for entry into any international organization. That places the problem back in the hands of NATO and the EU. There is considerable pressure being put on both sides by European, and particularly by US diplomats, to come to some agreement before the NATO summit in

Bucharest in early April.

If Greece breaks the agreement they made in 1995 to allow Macedonian entry into international organizations under the temporary designation FYROM and there are no consequences for Greece, NATO will certainly lose some of its credibility. It will most certainly lose credibility with Macedonians, who have taken so many measures in recent years to meet the criteria for membership, including participation in a number of NATO military operations. Already, as of March 3, 2008, the Macedonian Human Rights Movement International has called for such action from NATO. The president of the MHRMI, Bill Nicholov, stated in their press release that, *"Instead of trying to convince Greece not to follow through on its threats, other NATO members must make clear to Greece the consequences of its nationalist and xenophobic actions. We call on NATO to immediately publicize the actions it will take should Greece block Macedonia's entry."*

There will certainly be similar calls from other Macedonians, as well as some of their friends or allies in the days to come. Greek politicians, like their Macedonian counterparts, however, will likely remain locked in the position dictated by the will of the vast majority of the citizens of their country. 17 In the absence of mutual respect and understanding by the two peoples, very little real progress seems possible in this dispute. 18

It is hard to imagine any major breakthrough in the on-going negotiations on the name dispute by the April 2008 meeting of NATO representatives in Bucharest, and an internal crisis within the Macedonian government has further complicated matters. An important Albanian party partner has withdrawn from the ruling coalition of Prime Minister Gruevski two weeks before the meeting. This will certainly divert considerable energy and attention from the Macedonian campaign to win NATO membership. On the other hand, it could lead to new cooperation among the competing Macedonian parties, as they rally around the national interest in a time of crisis. It is nearly impossible to predict the course of events today, just as no one could have predicted the rapid disintegration of the Soviet Eastern Bloc and the Soviet Union itself in the late 1980's, and the recent rapid expansion of a Western European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization into Eastern Europe.

Dr. Michael Seraphinoff, March, 2008.

Examiner Responsible for Macedonian and academic advisor to the

International Baccalaureate Organization of Cardiff, Wales, UK. His 1993 doctoral dissertation through the University of Washington, Seattle, was published as *The 19th Century Macedonian Awakening*, University Press of America, Lanham and London, 1996.

Notes

1. "Expert Says Hollywood 'Alexander' Gets a Lot Wrong, Stone may have been thrown by historians' lack of agreement", by Rebecca J. Ritzell -- *Intelligencer Journal*, December 03, 2004

2. Professor Krste Bitovski in *The Epic of Ilinden*, (1973) page 105, wrote on this subject: *There were undoubtedly several basic reasons for the failure of the Uprising. It had not been properly prepared and therefore could not cover the whole of Macedonia. Even in the district of Bitola, which was somewhat better equipped, there were few guns, and those available were extremely primitive. It did not take long after the start of the Uprising for the Grande Porte to realise that the main rebel force was in the district of Bitola and that this was where the bulk of the Turkish troops should be sent; and this it would certainly not have been able to do if the Uprising had been carried out with the same intensity all over Macedonia as it was in the Bitola district. On the other hand, the Macedonian people were placed in a situation in which they themselves had to fight against the Turkish Empire. It is well known that the Serbs, Greeks and Bulgarians, when fighting against Ottoman rule, won their freedom largely thanks to the fact that they received military and diplomatic aid from some of the great foreign powers, chiefly from Tsarist Russia...*

3. *St. Petersburg, 1st March 1913. Authorized representatives of the Macedonian Colony (The Memorandum was signed by the representatives of the Macedonian Colony - Dr. G. Konstantinovich, N. Dimov, D. Chupovski and A. Vezenkov.)*

4 Anastasia Karakasidou, has received death threats and Cambridge University Press came under threat after agreeing to publish her book, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood* (1997) Chicago, due to her open discussion of history such as the following: *[We] listened to the president articulate to the council that in accordance with the decision [#122770] of Mr. Minister, General Governor of Macedonia, all municipal and township councils would forbid, through [administrative] decisions, the speaking of other idioms of obsolete languages within the area of their jurisdiction for the reconstitution of a*

universal language and our national glory. [The president] suggested that [the] speaking of different idioms, foreign [languages] and our language in an impure or obsolete manner in the area of the township of Assirios would be forbidden. Assirios Township Decision No. 134, 13 December 1936". (page 162).

5. *The Greek News* from January 28, 2008 recorded some of Katsoudas' additional remarks that further indicate the hard line Athens was preparing to take on the issue:

"...my country has reached the very limit of its patience and, unless a solution is found by March, we are fully determined not to allow the entry of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia either into NATO or, to come to my competence, to the EU, late... The Greeks have shown to their neighbors, by all means possible, their resolute friendliness and they have extended all sorts of help. I believe that the two peoples dream of nothing but a friendly future, hand-in-hand, together. The issue is now entirely in the hands of the Skopje Government. It will either cover the remaining ground and reach a solution, or become responsible vis-à-vis its own people, both Slav-Macedonians and Albanians, for denying them a Euro-Atlantic future.

6. Chicago, Ill.- Illinois State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias, National Chairman of Greeks for Obama Committee, issued ...his positions on Greek national issues. Treasurer Giannoulias was one of Senator Obama's earliest supporters during his candidacy for the United States Senate, and has been in the forefront of the Obama presidential campaign, consistently surrogating for the Senator, fundraising for the campaign, and organizing field operations.

7. Letter to Secretary Rice signed by UMD President Metodija A. Koloski.

8. Eric John Ernest Hobsbawm (born 1917) is a British historian and author. This is an excerpt from a paper given as a lecture opening the academic year 1993-4 at the Central European University in Budapest. It was addressed to a body of students essentially drawn from the formerly communist countries in Europe and the former USSR. Hobsbawm went on to say the following in that same speech: *These and many other attempts to replace history by myth and invention are not merely bad intellectual jokes. After all, they can determine what goes into schoolbooks, as the Japanese authorities knew, when they insisted on a sanitised version of the Japanese war in China for use in Japanese classrooms. Myth and invention are essential to the politics of identity by which groups of people today, defining themselves by ethnicity, religion or the past or present borders of states, try to find some certainty in an uncertain and shaking world by saying, 'We are different from and better*

than the Others.' 7

9. Professor Emeritus, ancient history, Eugene Borza (Abstract from a paper presented at the 1996 Annual meeting of the American Philological Society).

10. The Macedonian Rainbow Party of Greece enclosed the following with their letter:

- Letter to Mr Matthew Nimetz, Special representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, 5 November 2007.

Read:

http://www.florina.org/html/2007/2007_letter_to_Nimetz_us.html

- Letter to Carla del Ponte, Chief Prosecutor at the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, July 2005.

Read: http://www.florina.org/html/2005/2005_del_ponte_letter.html

- The Macedonians of Greece - Denying Ethnic Identity, Human Rights Watch, 1994.

Read: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/g/greece/greece945.pdf>

- The Hellenic tail must not wag the European dog, Marko Attila Hoare, 31 December 2007.

Read: <http://henryjacksonsociety.org/stories.asp?pageid=49&id=473>

11. Balkan Insight. February 18, 2008. Web edition. .

12. *Utrinski Vesnik*, February 23, 2008 edition. "Interview with the Director of Eastern European Studies at the Woodrow Wilson Institute."

13. *This Land We Do Not Give, a history of Macedonian resistance to foreign occupation*, (2008), Seraphinoff and Stefou, pp. 256-257.

14. Several years ago the International Crisis Group published a position paper with the optimistic title: *Macedonia's Name: Why the Dispute Matters and How to Resolve It*, ICG Balkan Report No. 122, 10 December, 2001, which claimed to address all of the relevant issues concerning the name dispute, but chose to ignore the consequences of the Balkan Wars or the Greek Civil War as factors in the present-day dispute. It failed to see the

relevance of the ethnic Macedonian minority population in present day Greece in the dispute

15. This is not an issue of concern only to Macedonians in Greece. The Federation of Western Thrace Turks in Europe published a position paper in 2007 in Germany, available on-line, that described the discriminatory treatment of the Turkish minority entitled "The Problems of the Turkish Minority of Western Thrace in Greece".

16. On February 29, 2008 the leadership of the political party of the Macedonian ethnic minority in Bulgaria, Stoyko Stoykov and Botyo Vangelov, Copresidents of OMO "Ilinden"-PIRIN wrote a letter to UN mediator Matthew Nimetz in which they laid out some of what Greece must do in order to create the conditions for what Macedonians would consider a true compromise. Unlike the International Crisis Group, they see a major issue to be the redress of Macedonian grievances that remain from the Greek Civil War. They stated: *We believe that the dispute from the beginning is placed incorrectly – it has always been focused on the claims of the Republic of Greece towards the Republic of Macedonia and all the proposals including your last one discuss what the Republic of Macedonia must change but not even slightly consider what Greece should do to stop the suspicions from itself for the claims towards Republic of Macedonia and the Macedonian nation. We assume that it is absolutely necessary in these negotiations Republic of Greece to be asked the followings:*

- *The Greek government to declare officially that it recognizes and does not dispute the existence of Macedonian nation, language and identity;*
- *The Macedonian minority in Greece to be recognized;*
- *To allow the Macedonian refugees from the civil war to go back or visit their home places in Greece;*
- *To resolve the question about the confiscated property of the Macedonian refugees;*
- *Greece to regulate the names of its regions so not to cause a suspicion for claims towards neighbouring countries in which there are also parts of Macedonia .*

(See appendix for full text of letter of OMO Ilinden Organization)

17. *The Guardian* on-line News Blog had an article by Mark Tran entitled "Greeks see red over Macedonia name" (March 6, 2008) that included some quite interesting blog entries by Greeks and Macedonians. Some were calm and reasoned. Others were angry and accusing, from both sides. One of the

most interesting was a blog entry by a Greek who used the name MikeSta. His entry conveys much of the fear that many Greeks feel, and a very common Greek understanding of their history that interested parties in the name dispute should be aware of: *Take for instance the Name issue of Greece Vs FYROM. Do you honestly think that the Greeks will care any if just the name was all it is???? Never mind that FYROM actually has very marginal geographical connection to the Historic region of Ancient Macedonia but take a stroll to any of FYROM's sponsored sites. Spend some time in the kiosks and bookshops in Skopje. Do some homework before you come here and project the anti-Hellenic Stereotype you are nowadays routinely fed on in the modern West!_All you will see is explicit statesmen's of BLUNT TERRITORIAL claims towards the integrity of Greek State! The revision of International treaties like the 1913 Bucharest one etc etc Even their Prime Minister Gruevski when visited one of their heroes monument he paid tribute to the Map of 'United Macedonia' showing its capital not Skopje BUT THESSALONIKI! A monstrous destabilisation plans the true Pandora's box! This is gentlemen the TRUE face of what you have recognised as 'MACEDONIA'. _Within this monstrous master plan (that many of the progressives of you may actually IMPLICITLY condone) comes the historical forgery that this Slav nation is somehow direct decedents of Ancient Macedonians Alexander the Great, Aristotle etc etc etc! The name of Republic of Macedonia is just the icing of this ugly cake and the natural wrapping of the package! _But the question of course is routinely posed: Is Greece really scared of tiny FYROM?_To this in conjunction to EU and NATO the answer comes as follows.*

1) Having accepted as truth that FYROM and its Diaspora do state unhistorical and utterly destabilisation territorial expansion plans but are somehow too weak to make them happened then in order any country to accept officially as a allies and comrades countries is doing so NOT BECAUSE are too WEAK AS ENEMIES but because are TRUSTWORTHY FRIENDS!!!_2) These people were weak all along! This did not stopped them to exploit the opportunity when Greece were in perilous state (Nazi Occupation-Civil War) to side first with the NAZIS then with the Communist for no other reason other than GRABBING the Land of Macedonia! History tells us to be cautious as this is not science fiction. All those who cry for Human Rights against the bad Greeks behaved with the most brutal way either as part of the Fascist Komitat or the Ohrana Battalions in Macedonia and with this term of course I mean Greece! And when they are thinking of revising the Bucharest Treaty of 1913 we immediately remember what Pejov, Mitrovski, Keramitjiev, Gotse try to do in 1948!

18. The BBC interviewed a Professor of history at Leipzig University, Stephan Trebst on March 13, 2008, concerning the Greek-Macedonian dispute. He said at that time: *The present demands of Greece concerning the name are totally unjustified. But there is a Greek dimension, which is connected to serious problems concerning the identity of the Greeks, and the question, what is a Greek, is more complicated than that concerning Macedonians. The traumatic events of the 20th century, the Second World War and the Civil War of the 1940's have never been dealt with by their society, and the Civil War, besides the ideological component, had an ethnic-political dimension. Slavs and Macedonians on the one side, and Hellenism on the other. Thus, the roots, the origins of much of the fear connected to Macedonia doesn't come from the present day Macedonia or the former Yugoslavia, but from Greece itself. That is something that can only be resolved within Greek society itself.*

Appendix

Letter from the United Macedonian Diaspora:

Dear Secretary Rice:___The United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD) urges you to reiterate America's recognition of Macedonia's constitutional name, support for Macedonia's NATO admission, and position that the "name dispute" between Greece and Macedonia is immaterial to Macedonia's NATO bid during your upcoming meeting with the Greek Foreign Minister on February 14, 2008. ___The United States of America, as well as NATO members Turkey, Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Poland, Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Canada, and approximately 120 other nations, including China and Russia, all recognize Macedonia by its constitutional name. ___In keeping with its petulant stance towards Macedonia, Greece promises a veto of Macedonia's NATO bid unless Macedonia capitulates to Greece in the "dispute." A veto of Macedonia's NATO admission on such a scurrilous basis is contrary to American and NATO interests, will diminish NATO's prestige in southeastern Europe, and will impede regional stability. ___America does not have one ally in southeastern Europe but several and neither American nor NATO interests can be advanced in the area without Macedonia in NATO. Every state in the Balkans is crucial to regional stability and any claim that one state is more important than another in securing such stability is dangerous and naïve. Macedonia's admission to NATO, along with its fellow candidates Croatia and Albania, will further integrate

southeastern Europe with NATO and will enable the maintenance of lasting regional peace. ___Macedonia has been and is at the forefront of NATO efforts in the Balkans and has earned its place in NATO. Macedonia served as the key staging area for NATO's 1999 Kosovo intervention and provided refuge to hundreds of thousands of Kosovars during said intervention. Macedonian forces are now deployed alongside American troops in American-led efforts in Iraq and in NATO operations in Afghanistan; Macedonia is also home to logistical support operations for KFOR forces in Kosovo and is participating in international missions in Bosnia and Lebanon. Macedonian soldiers have proudly served, and some have even lost their lives, for the advancement of peace, stability and freedom in NATO and other international missions. Most importantly, Macedonia enacted and implemented the necessary reforms required for NATO membership. Macedonia's military is a professional all-volunteer force equipped with the latest military technology that meets or exceeds NATO standards and is ready for rapid deployment. ___On the political front, in an amazingly short time Macedonia has risen from the failed communist country of Yugoslavia to an independent democratic nation. Macedonia's meteoric progress even caused U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Macedonia Gillian Milovanovic and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Kurt D. Volker to refer to Macedonia as an "exporter of security" around the world. ___In setting forth American policy regarding Macedonia's potential NATO membership, Undersecretary of State, Nicholas Burns asserted in testimony before the Subcommittee on Europe of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on November 14, 2007 that Greece cannot veto Macedonia's accession to NATO or any international organization as long as Macedonia joins under the Provisional Reference, and that Macedonia's NATO admission must be based on the merits of its application and not the "dispute" with Greece. It is quite clear that America does not view Greece as Macedonia's "passport" to NATO. ___American policy on Macedonia's NATO admission is in alignment with Article 11 of the Interim Accord, which bars Greece from impeding Macedonia's accession to international bodies, including NATO, as long as Macedonia accedes under the Provisional Reference. A veto of Macedonia's NATO admission based on Greece's objection to Macedonia's name would nullify the Interim Accord. Such a pernicious outcome is contrary to American and NATO interests as the final status of Kosovo looms over the region. ___As you know, Greece instigated the "dispute" over Macedonia's name in 1991. The 1995 Interim Accord between Macedonia and Greece normalized relations, ended an illegal Greek trade embargo, and allowed Macedonia's admission to the United Nations under the provisional reference term, "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (the "Provisional Reference"). ___Macedonia has made several

concessions since 1991 and simply cannot be asked to concede more. Macedonia changed its flag, amended its constitution, agreed to the Provisional Reference, and even proposed a "Double Formula" to resolve the "dispute" under which the international community would use Macedonia's real name and Greece would use its own term for bilateral relations. In recent weeks, Macedonia again assured Greece that it does not harbor territorial claims against Greece and proposed a joint declaration by both nations affirming their commitment for neighborly relations. The proposed declaration also called for the formation of a joint Macedonian/Greek commission to examine historical matters with due regard for the sensitivities of both nations. Macedonia's most recent efforts, just like all of its past concessions, were rebuffed and belittled by Greece. Greece, however, has not made a single compromise to resolve the "dispute." Greece rejected the "Double Formula," will not atone for its illegal embargo, misrepresents the nature of the Provisional Reference by creating a derogatory acronym for referring to Macedonia, and will not forswear territorial claims against Macedonia. This is most disconcerting given recent irredentist calls by Greek Orthodox Church leaders for the annexation of portions of the Republic of Macedonia to Greece. While claiming that Greece wants good relations with Macedonia, Greek border police harass Macedonian citizens and refer to them with racial epithets. Greece will not even allow American citizens who were born in Greece but are ethnic Macedonians to enter Greece and visit their birthplaces. Greece's actions belie its disingenuous words and demonstrate which nation is truly "intransigent" in this "dispute." Claims that Greece is now willing to compromise by adding a modifier to the Republic of Macedonia's name distinguishing it from parts of geographic Macedonia within Greece only reflect Greece's desire to save face in a diplomatic debacle of its own creation. Moreover, those other nations that include parts of geographic Macedonia, Albania, Bulgaria, and Serbia, do not object to Macedonia's name and do not seek any "compound name" for the Republic of Macedonia. Some in this nation, along with the Greek government, seek a reversal of America's recognition of Macedonia's name. These groups are advancing baseless claims to American officials including that the proper name for Macedonia is "Vardarska Banovina," that the communist dictator Tito "invented" Macedonians, and that the Republic of Macedonia cannot use the term "Macedonia." "Vardarska Banovina" is not a proper name for the Republic of Macedonia's territory. This term was instituted during the reign of Serbian King Alexander I in the 1929 administrative reorganization of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. This reorganization changed 33 "oblasts" (provinces) into 9 "banovinas," all named after rivers and geographic features, of the newly-named "Kingdom of Yugoslavia." If Macedonia is "Vardarska Banovina," then Croatia is "Sava Banovina," and

Slovenia is "Drava Banovina," as they were called then. ___Macedonian national consciousness and identity were well established long before Tito was even born, as reflected in the Macedonian revolutionaries working to free Macedonia from Ottoman rule in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and by the descendents of those Macedonians who immigrated to America well before Tito's communist state was formed. According to Ellis Island records, approximately 15,000 Macedonians entered the United States of America between 1895 and 1925. Furthermore, in the 1920 U.S. Census the Macedonian language was one of the options to the principal foreign language question. _ _The myth that Tito "invented" the Macedonians seemingly fits with a statement by former Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., regarding Macedonia. Secretary Stettinius' statement is understandable given the time in which he served – the beginning of the Cold War and the Greek Civil War. However, the world today is not the world faced by Secretary Stettinius and those who cite to his statement would truly honor his legacy by encouraging Macedonia and Greece to work within the UN framework that he worked to build. ___Finally, some claim it is improper for a country that is part of a geographic region to define itself in an official manner as representing the whole region; therefore, no nation can be called the "Republic of Macedonia" or the "United States of America." Under this theory, Belgium, which includes a province of Luxembourg, can force its independent neighbor, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, to change its name. Likewise, all the nations in North, Central and South America should have objections to the name of the United States of America.___The frenetic arguments against Macedonia's name and Macedonian identity are best understood as what they truly are: distractions masking Greece's mistreatment of its ethnic Macedonian minority. Greece's horrendous treatment of its minorities, including Macedonians, Albanians, Roma, and Turks, is well documented by such bodies as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Greek Helsinki Monitor, and the State Department. The European Court of Human Rights has even entered judgments against Greece for denying human and civil rights to ethnic Macedonians in Greece. ___Greece can redeem itself by recognizing the Republic of Macedonia's name, affording its minorities the human and civil rights that all people deserve, and by welcoming the Republic of Macedonia into NATO._ _Again, UMD urges you to clearly inform the Greek Foreign Minister that (1) the United States of America recognizes the Republic of Macedonia by its constitutional name, (2) the United States of America supports the Republic of Macedonia's NATO membership, and (3) a resolution of the "name dispute" between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia is not a condition for Macedonia's NATO accession.___

Thank you for taking the time to consider UMD's concerns and for your service to our great nation and to the American people. ___Sincerely,___Metodija A. Koloski_President

*Letter from the Rainbow party of Greece:
Dr Condoleezza Rice*

Secretary of State

United States of America

2201 C Street NW

Washington, DC 20520

Dear Dr Rice,

My name is Pavlos Voskopoulos and I am a member of the European Free Alliance – Rainbow, the political party of the ethnic Macedonian minority of Greece.

I am writing to you in relation to the so-called "name dispute" between our country, Greece and the neighbouring country, the Republic of Macedonia.

While we are not the direct subject of those discussions and wish not to act as a "spokesperson" for the Republic of Macedonia, we feel obliged to say a few words on the issue. The denial by the Greek state of the right of a neighbouring people and state to be called by the name which it has chosen for itself indirectly influences our Macedonian identity.

As members of the ethnic Macedonian minority of Greece, we feel it is of crucial importance for our continued existence that our national identity and distinctiveness is respected. We believe that we too should be able to freely choose our identity, to enjoy that right and to be respected. If Macedonian identity is denied generally, then so is the case with our own identity. Unfortunately such a denial is being done by the state which we are citizens of. The right to self-determination and choosing one's own identity is based on universal principles of respect for human and minority rights.

As you are aware, the Greek state denies the existence of a Macedonian minority within its borders. Moreover, in line with Greek nationalist ideology, successive Greek governments have failed to acknowledge the existence of a

distinct Macedonian ethnic identity and Macedonian language.

We believe in order to have a lasting peace, good neighbourly relations and solidarity between the Balkan countries, the larger nation-states, specifically, Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria, must finally come to terms with the right of the Macedonian people to full self-determination, respecting at the same time the rights of the ethnic Macedonian minorities within their borders. At the same time, the minorities in the Balkans should reject to be instruments for irredentist policies of states, which unfortunately was the case in the last decades with the wars in the former Yugoslavia.

It is true that when the international community constituted that there were violations of basic human rights in the wars in Bosnia and Hercegovina, and Kosovo, it decisively took action and intervened by military means with UN consent. The purpose of this intervention was to protect the local population, to stabilise the region and also to teach a 'lesson' to a totalitarian and undemocratic regime, as was the Milosevic regime in the former Yugoslavia.

In the case of the Macedonian question we feel that the international community can (in this context, the UN too) play a key role when it comes to peace, stability and the future of the region. Greek policy, unfortunately, in the last decade or so, has been extremely destabilising in the Balkan region, firstly by giving support to the Milosevic regime in the 1990s and secondly by denying the right of its neighbouring country, the Republic of Macedonia and people to choose its own name, i.e. its identity.

Such behaviour, luckily, has not had any negative consequences in relation to the cohesion and stability of the Republic of Macedonia, thanks to the support of the international community towards this relatively young state. However it is a fact that Greek policy indirectly in the last 15-20 years was an 'obstacle' on the road of the Republic of Macedonia to European and world integration.

In this context, we trust that the international community will not make the mistake of supporting aggressive Balkan nationalisms, specifically in this case Greek nationalism, by denying Macedonian identity. We know that this state antagonism at the beginning of the last century together with the denial of Macedonian identity by the Balkan states 'fed' this antagonism for the purpose of territorial expansion of the Balkan states at the time. Unfortunately, the international community back then did not respect the will of the Macedonian people for national and state emancipation which would have resulted in the formation of a Macedonian state with a separate ethnic

and national identity. As a consequence of those Balkan policies there was much hardship and suffering occurred, as documented and described by international reports such the Carnegie Commission. We sincerely hope that history will not be repeated.

For these reasons, we believe that the international community should finally send a clear political message in relation the existing negative position of our state, Greece, regarding the Republic of Macedonia. We believe that this will assist in the task of beginning a progressive ideological reform of the Greek state and indeed of Greek society, which are essential in order to make Greek policy in the region positive and constructive. This is of particular importance for the peace and stability of our region, especially given that the "Yugoslav crisis" is coming to an end with the imminent decision on the future status of Kosovo.

We believe that the United States has made a significant contribution towards achieving stability in our region. In this connection we trust that you will once again play a positive role in the so-called "name dispute" and on the issue of recognition of the Macedonian minority of Greece.

We have attached a number of documents which we strongly urge you to read prior to your upcoming meeting with our Foreign Minister, Dora Bakoyanni. In particular, we encourage you to examine our most recent letter to Mr Nimetz (5 November 2007) which exposes the fundamental flaws in the Greek position. [websites with letters supporting their position were included. See notes.]

I trust that this is information will be of some use to you, and please do not hesitate to contact us for further information.

Yours sincerely, Pavlos Filipov Voskopoulos, Member of the Political Secretariat, Member of the Bureau of the European Free Alliance – European Political Party

Letter from the "OMO Ilinden PIRIN Party of ethnic Macedonians in Bulgaria:

Blagoevgrad 29.02.2008

Bulgaria

To Mr Matthew Nimitz,
Special Representative of the Secretary General of the UN

United Nations, New York

Dear Mr Nimitz,

OMO 'Ilinden' – PIRIN is a party one of which main goals is to protect the rights and identity of the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria . Therefore we always follow with great interest the so called 'dispute for the name' of Republic of Macedonia started years ago by Republic of Greece .

Let us briefly to share our position on that matter which was again actualized after your latest proposal.

1. The dispute was initiated by The Republic of Greece in its intentions to establish exclusive right upon the name 'Macedonia' and all its derivatives. These intentions are obvious even by the simple fact that while Greece itself named three of its regions Macedonia as well one of its ministries, is disputing the same right to the R Macedonia. The latter insists on disputing the change of the name of Republic of Macedonia but not on the names of its own regions.

2. Considering that only part of historical Macedonia is located in Greece and the 'rights' of Republic of Greece on the Macedonian heritage are at least disputable from scientific point of view and non-existent according to the international law and politics, we think that the engagement of UN with this dispute is alarming. With allowing this dispute to engage its institutions UN actually institutionalizes the ambitions of the nationalistic mythology and enhances the arguments of the ethnic nationalism on international level.

3. We believe that the dispute was not initialised by any practical and real need of Republic of Greece but to use the ethnic nationalism for certain, daily inner political goals. This has been proven by the fact that the Macedonian state existed for 47 years in the Yugoslavian federation under the name 'Macedonia' and that never caused any complaints or has been disputed by Republic of Greece (talking about that it must be said that the Republic of Macedonia uses the name 'Macedonia' way too longer than the Republic of Greece in its administration!)

4. We think that the dispute which the Republic of Greece leads does not consider just the right on the name, besides the official declarations of the Greek Government. The fact that Republic of Greece does not object any use of the names 'Macedonia' and 'Macedonian' (including that of Alexander the Great and Philip of Macedon) by third parties or other countries speaks for itself. Such example is Republic of Bulgaria where the names 'Macedonia' and 'Macedonian' are very common and widespread because of hundred of thousands refugees and their relatives who live in Bulgaria and were driven away from their homes in nowadays Northern Greece by the Greek Governments during 1912-1913, 1922-1930, 1940-1946 in 20th century. Thousands of streets, squares and other public places are named 'Macedonia' or bear the adjective 'Macedonian' or are named after kings, heroes or places from ancient kingdom of Macedonia. There are hundreds of cultural and political organizations which name consists the word 'Macedonian', there is even a party represented in the Bulgarian parliament - Inner Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-BND. We have to conclude that the real reason for the undertaken activities of the Greek Government against the name of Republic of Macedonia is to dispute and undermine the Macedonian national and ethnic identity. There are the following proves for this:

- The denial of Greece of the existence of the numerous Macedonian minority on its territory;
- The dispute of the right of using the name Macedonia and its derivatives, as well persons from the past who are part of the cultural and historical heritage of Macedonia, only to Republic of Macedonia – the state founded by the Macedonian nation and not to any other country.

Therefore we think that for Republic of Macedonia is much more important to preserve its name rather than it is for Republic of Greece to change it, because the change intimidates the core of the Macedonian identity but not the Greek one.

5. We believe that the dispute conducted by the Republic of Greece directly affects the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria and its national and ethnic identity and the fundamental right of self determination.

6. We believe that the tolerating from UN of the absolutely groundless claims of Republic of Greece causes more intolerance, encourages the ethnic nationalism on the Balkans and also those who deny the Macedonian identity in this number – the government's politics of denial of the Macedonian minority led by the Republic of Bulgaria.

7. We believe that the dispute from the beginning is placed incorrectly – it has always been focused on the claims of Republic of Greece towards the Republic of Macedonia and all the proposals including your last one discuss what Republic of Macedonia must change but not even slightly consider what Greece should do to stop the suspicions from itself for the claims towards Republic of Macedonia and the Macedonian nation. We assume that it is absolutely necessary in these negotiations Republic of Greece to be asked the followings:

- The Greek government to declare officially that it recognizes and does not dispute the existence of Macedonian nation, language and identity;
- The Macedonian minority in Greece to be recognized;
- To allow the Macedonian refugees from the civil war to go back or visit their home places in Greece;
- To resolve the question about the confiscated property of the Macedonian refugees;
- Greece to regulate the names of its regions so not to cause a suspicion for claims towards neighbouring countries in which there are also parts of Macedonia .

8. The claim that Republic of Greece is threaten by territorial aspirations from its Macedonian neighbour is absolutely groundless nonetheless because the military and economically power of the latter is far less beyond the capacity of the Greek Army and economy. But the entire nonsense of that claim is becoming obvious through the obstacles which the Greek Government puts on the way of the integration of Republic of Macedonia in NATO and EU, beside the fact that only full integration could erase any fear or danger of

future irredentism.

9. The lack of respect from Republic of Greece to the international law was already seen by the single fact that this country uses all its influence to establish double standards in UN in the accession of new members and mostly in the two year economical blockade which it imposed on its northern neighbour in order to make it give up its name. Now we are alarmed by the threads coming from Republic Greece that it will impose a veto on the accession of Republic of Macedonia in NATO. This will not only prevent the whole integration of the Balkan Peninsula in NATO but also creates a risk for the peace in the region in such a sensitive moment of declaring the independence of Kosovo.

10. The lack of respect for the standards of the international law and also towards the interests of the neighbouring countries in the region, using power for imposing nationalistic points of views from Republic of Greece should not be encouraged by UN and any other international institution.

11. We believe that it is undesirable, not useful, neither rightful to be imposed any change in the name of Republic of Macedonia what so ever, which was democratically chosen by its own citizens, neither to be implemented limitations or to be given exclusive rights for the use of the name 'Macedonia' to any one.

Giving briefly light to our point of view on this dispute we kindly ask you to keep in mind in its resolution as well the interests of the Macedonian minority in Republic of Bulgaria.

With respect

Stoyko Stoykov

Botyo Vangelov

Copresidents of OMO "Ilinden"-PIRIN

Greek News on Greek – Macedonian Name Dispute, January 28, 2008:

By Gene Rossides

The United States actions since 1992 regarding the FYROM name dispute has constituted an American foreign policy blunder which has damaged U.S. interests in the Western Balkans and damaged Greece, our key ally in the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean, for no sound reason.

I emphasize that there is no sound reason for the U.S. to support the Skopje regime on the name issue. Further, for the U.S. to support Skopje against Greece, a loyal ally, a member of NATO and the European Union (EU) and the key nation in the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean for the projection of U.S. power and U.S. diplomatic, economic and political initiatives, is gross diplomatic negligence.

In February 1993, I wrote a memorandum titled "Twenty-five reasons why it is not in the interests of the United States to recognize the Skopje regime under the Greek name of Macedonia." The following paragraphs are from that memo.

There is no unqualified universally accepted rule of international law that authorizes a state to name itself anything it wants.

It is not proper for a country which is part of a region to define itself in an official manner as representing the whole region. Macedonia, like the Americas and Europe, is a region. Just as no country in North and South America would call itself the "American Republic," and no European country would call itself the "Republic of Europe," the Skopje regime in naming itself cannot assume the mantle of all of Macedonia.

Tito changed the name of the Skopje area in 1944 from Vardar Banovina to Macedonia.

Greece is of extreme importance to the national security interests of the United States as demonstrated by her coalition role in the Desert Shield/Desert Storm Persian Gulf War. The Souda Bay NATO naval base in Crete is essential for the U.S. Sixth Fleet's projection of power in the Eastern Mediterranean; the U.S. Air Force base at Souda Bay, Crete, is of great importance for the projection of U.S. air power in the Eastern Mediterranean; Greece authorized 32,000 overflights during the Desert Shield buildup of coalition forces in the Persian Gulf; Greek shipping tonnage also provided major support for the buildup of arms and supplies to the Persian Gulf. Greece is the strategic key to the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Skopje regime is of no importance to the national security interests of the United States.

The northern province of Greece, which borders the Skopje regime, is Macedonia.

The usage of Macedonian as a nationality was an invention of Tito in 1944. Tito, the communist dictator of Yugoslavia, created a false Macedonian ethnic consciousness among his south Slavic citizens for a number of reasons, including his campaign against Greece to gain control of Greece's province of Macedonia and the major port city of Salonika. (See article by C.M. Woodhouse, a noted historian, in the Christian Science Monitor, October 28, 1992, p. 19.)

Skopje's actions and Greece's reactions must be seen in the context of Moscow's and Tito's support of the communists in Greece's civil war in 1946-49. Tito supplied arms and food to the Greek communists and gave them bases in the Skopje region of Yugoslavia with the full support of Stalin.

The United States opposed the use of the name Macedonia by Tito in 1944 and we should continue to oppose it now. In a Circular Airgram (Dec. 26, 1944) Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., stated:

This government considers talk of Macedonian "nation," Macedonian "Fatherland," or Macedonian "national consciousness" to be unjustified demagoguery representing no ethnic nor political reality, and sees in its present revival a possible cloak for aggressive intentions against Greece. Stettinius' airgram was prophetic because Tito and Stalin did initiate aggressive action against Greece.

Greece's defeat of the communist insurgencies in the Greek Civil War (1946-49) with Greek blood and United States aid was a major turning point in post-World War II Cold War history in the containment of communism. It prevented the communists' takeover of Greece, and thereby prevented the communist domination of the Aegean Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean and the strategic encirclement of the oil resources of the Middle East, including the Persian Gulf area.

Greece played a key role in the Allied victory in World War II. Greece's reply of "OXI!" (No!) to Mussolini's demands for capitulation on October 28, 1940, and her defeat of Mussolini's armies compelled Hitler to divert valuable troops and equipment to Greece, thereby delaying by several weeks his invasion of the Soviet Union which was a substantial factor in preventing Hitler's defeat of the U.S.S. R. Greece's actions can be considered a turning point in that war.

Since 1945, Skopje has mounted a propaganda campaign against Greece claiming all of Macedonia for the so-called "Macedonian people." However, there is no such separate ethnic group. There are people speaking a Slav dialect living in the parts of Macedonia controlled by Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Serbs say these people are Serbs, Bulgarians say they are Bulgarians. The ancient Macedonians were Greeks, as all historical and archaeological

evidence demonstrates.

Greece has no claim to the territory of the Skopje regime.

Greece, a major United States ally in the Persian Gulf War and in this century (in WWI, WWII, in the historic defeat of the communists in 1946-49 and in Korea) has earned the full support of the United States in this matter. It is in the interests of the United States to give that support. (See Exhibit 4, article by Leslie Gelb, foreign affairs columnist for the N.Y. Times, June 12, 1992, p. A25.)

Taking Greece for granted

The Executive Branch under the Clinton administration 1-20-93 to 1-20-01 and the Bush administration 1-20-01 to date, has had a habit of taking Greece for granted. These administrations have looked upon Greece as a Western nation and ally that will not rock-the-boat and will follow what the U.S. and the major NATO nations desire. That has been unfortunate and has created unnecessary problems- such as the FYROM name issue.

Taking Greece for granted attitude has been particularly harmful to American interests in problems dealing with Greek Turkish relations in the Aegean and Turkey's continuing occupation of Cyprus. Taking Greece for granted is coupled with appeasing Turkey and applying a double standard on the rule of law for Turkey on the argument that Turkey is a Muslim nation and a Middle Eastern nation and difficult to deal with.

The Imia islets crisis in January 1996 is an example of the appeasement of Turkey and failure to apply the rule of law to Turkey.

FYROM name issue and NATO

The FYROM name issue is coming to a head soon. It is expected that the application of FYROM to join NATO will be discussed at the March 6, 2008 NATO foreign minister's meeting in Brussels. The U.S. wants FYROM admitted with the name Macedonia. Greece obviously objects to admission with that name.

Greece has recently made a major compromise by proposing "a compound name for the country; a name that will distinguish it from both the Greek and Bulgarian part." (See speech of Dimitrios Katsoudas, Secretary General for European Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece on January 15, 2008 at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars)

Mr. Katsoudas further stated:

"I think it is time the U.S. recognized the need to counsel Skopje now in order to cover its own grounds for reaching a solution....

In any case, my country has reached the very limit of its patience and, unless a solution is found by March, we are fully determined not to allow the entry of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia either into NATO or, to come to my competence, to the EU, later.

The Greeks have shown to their neighbors, by all means possible, their resolute friendliness and they have extended all sorts of help. I believe that the two peoples dream of nothing but a friendly future, hand-in-hand, together. The issue is now entirely in the hands of the Skopje Government. It will either cover the remaining ground and reach a solution, or become responsible vis-à-vis its own people, both Slav-Macedonians and Albanians, for denying them a Euro-Atlantic future."

Call and write to President Bush and Secretary of State Rice and tell them it is in the interests of the U.S. to support its long-time and proven ally Greece in the FYROM name issue.

Gene Rossides is President of the American Hellenic Institute and former Assistant Secretary of the Treasury

Addendum: from the memorandum entitled "Twenty-five reasons why it is not in the interests of the United States to recognize the Skopje regime under the Greek name of Macedonia."

- o There is no unqualified universally accepted rule of international law that authorizes a state to name itself anything it wants.

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- o Skopje's actions and Greece's reactions must be seen in the context of Moscow's and Tito's support of the communists in Greece's civil war in 1946-49. Tito supplied arms and food to the Greek communists and gave them bases in the Skopje region of Yugoslavia with the full support of Stalin.

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