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ОБЕДИНЕТА МАКЕДОНСКА ДИЈАСПОРА

July 15, 2011

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
The Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Re: Greece's Misdeeds vis-à-vis the Republic of Macedonia and Macedonians

Dear Madame Secretary,

I write to you in anticipation of your upcoming trip to Greece and respectfully ask that you keep in mind (and act upon) the points I raise herein when meeting with representatives of Athens. I also wish to inform you of the continuing deep disappointment of the more than half a million Americans of Macedonian background, as well as of Macedonians and friends of Macedonia around the world, that you have not yet visited (and met with representatives of the government of) the Republic of Macedonia on behalf of the United States government. I respectfully request that you undertake such a mission as soon as possible.

As you know, Congressional representatives, Pentagon, and State Department officials publicly acknowledge Macedonia's material commitment of blood and treasure on behalf of missions that support the fundamental values of both the United States and Macedonia. They also recognize the rapid progress that Macedonia has made in developing a pluralistic, representative democracy -- characterized by implementation of free market principles and the rule of law -- during its now 20 years of independence. Last fall, nineteen House Representatives and four Senators sent letters to President Obama urging his administration to support Macedonia's accession to NATO. Moreover, the United States recognizes Macedonia's constitutional name: the Republic of Macedonia. An additional 131 other countries also recognize Macedonia by the rightful name its citizens have chosen for their country.

In stark contrast, Greece -- directly and through adjuncts such as the American Hellenic Institute (AHI) (via, most recently, AHI's July 12, 2011 letter to you) -- falsely calls Macedonia "a potential threat to stability in the Balkans and to the detriment [sic] of U.S. interests" because Macedonia rejects Greece's "unambiguous" and "cooperative" position regarding Macedonia's name. Athens continues to use the concocted "name dispute" as a supposed basis to block Macedonia's accession to NATO (and the EU), all the while jeopardizing the financial well-being of the entire world community through its profligate government spending and fabricated accounting and financial misstatements. Similarly, Greece's block in 2008 at the Bucharest NATO summit of Macedonia's accession into the Alliance was a blatant violation of Greece's obligations under the 1995 Interim Accord with Macedonia. Under Article 11 of the Interim Accord, Greece "agrees not to object to the application by or the membership of [Macedonia] in international, multilateral and regional organizations and institutions [e.g., NATO] of which [Greece] is a member; however, [Greece] reserves the right to object to any membership referred to above if and to the extent [Macedonia] is to be referred to in such organization or institution differently than in paragraph 2 of the United Nations Security Council resolution 817 (1993)." Macedonia, in applying for NATO membership, was not to be referred to differently

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than the manner Greece demanded – i.e., Macedonia would be referred to pursuant to the foregoing resolution 817. Greece, nonetheless, and entirely in bad faith, refused to fulfill its major quid pro quo under the Interim Accord. Greece’s detestable act is now the subject of litigation before the International Court of Justice in The Hague.¹

In addition, Greece continues its centuries-long, grisly campaign of cultural genocide of Macedonian identifying people, whether they are Greek citizens or not, and both within Greece’s borders and abroad. This brutal and shameful pogrom is well-documented, including by a 1994 monograph from Human Rights Watch/Helsinki and by the 2009 Report of the UN Human Rights Council’s Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Gay McDougall, in each case based on interviews of Greek citizens with a Macedonian identity, who are residents of significant portions of northern Greece (or elsewhere).²

In AHI’s letter, Mr. Larigakis callously and uninformedly implies that Macedonians are somehow Greeks or Bulgarians, and that a separate Macedonian culture does not exist. By denying reality, Greece not only appears foolish -- as Macedonians most certainly possess a distinct culture, history and language -- but, also, denies Macedonians the fundamental human right to self-determination. In so doing, Greece brazenly violates *jus cogens* norms, as well as international treaties to which Greece is a party. For example, Article VIII of the Helsinki Accords -- which Greece signed -- and Article I of the United Nations Charter both guarantee all people the right to self-determination. Greek officials continue to breach human rights norms by forcing Greek citizens with a Macedonian identity to identify according to Greek desires, thereby holding them hostage within their own country.

As the two reports referenced in footnote 2 (and other documents) make clear, Greece routinely violates minority rights even within its borders. The U.S. State Department’s most recent human rights report notes Greece’s pattern of practiced ignorance and abuse toward minority populations. Greek courts uniformly refuse to register – as legal entities -- organizations adopting the term Macedonia or Macedonian within their names. In addition, Greek officials repress Macedonians’ linguistic and related cultural (e.g., musical) rights, and Greeks commonly publicly (sometimes violently) harass and discriminate against anyone identifying as Macedonian. Greece also denies Macedonians the right to freedom of assembly, freedom of association and equal protection under the law, thus contravening Article 11 of the European Convention.³ Ms. Gay McDougall, the UN’s Independent Expert on Minority Issues, remarked that: “Greece [should] withdraw from the dispute over whether there is a Macedonian . . . minority in Greece and focus on protecting the rights to self-identification, freedom of expression, and freedom of association of those communities. Their rights to minority protections must be honoured in accordance with the Declaration on Minorities and the core international human rights treaties. Greece should comply fully with the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, specifically those decisions that associations should be allowed to use the word[] ‘Macedonian’ . . . in their names and to express their ethnic identities freely.”⁴

Greece’s stubbornness and total disregard for its obligations under the 1995 Interim Accord with Macedonia have resulted in Macedonia wrongfully being blocked from accession into NATO. Mr. Larigakis so charitably writes in the AHI letter that Macedonia “is of little or no strategic significance to the national security

¹ See International Court of Justice (ICJ) Press Release, *The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia institutes proceedings against Greece for a violation of Article 11 of the Interim Accord of 13 September 1995* (November 17, 2008), available at <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/142/14881.pdf>.

² For definitive evidence of Greece’s continuing cultural genocide, see, e.g., *Denying Ethnic Identity: The Macedonians of Greece*, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki (formerly Helsinki Watch)(1994), available at <http://www.macedoniantruth.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/05/denying-ethnic-identity-the-macedonians-of-greece.pdf>. See also UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Gay McDougall : addendum : mission to Greece (8-16 September 2008)*, 18 February 2009, A/HRC/10/11/Add.3 [UN Human Rights Council Report], available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/49b7b2e52.html>.

³ See, e.g., *Sidiropoulos and Others v. Greece* (1995), Application Number: 26695/95; and *Ouranio Toxo and Others v. Greece* (2005), Application Number: 74989/01.

⁴ See fn2, UN Human Rights Council Report, at 2.

interests of the United States.” This ignorant and/or purposely disingenuous statement ignores Macedonia’s substantial contributions to stability in Southeast Europe and elsewhere. Macedonia has always been the crossroads of Southeast Europe and the key to stability in this region.

Macedonia acted as the key staging area for the NATO intervention in Kosovo (KFOR) and offered refuge to over 360,000 Kosovars during the conflict. Furthermore, NATO utilized Macedonian airspace for airstrikes into Yugoslavia. Since the Kosovo conflict, Macedonia has assumed command of NATO’s former KFOR logistical support coordination center for Kosovo. Macedonia also deployed an army special forces contingent for many years to Iraq in support of the Allied mission there. Currently, Macedonia contributes the fourth most per capita to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, unlike the Greek government, which, according to the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress, provides minimal aid.

Macedonia should receive deserved recognition for its material contributions to NATO, including by its accession into that important alliance. Finally, but importantly, Greece seems to ignore the effect on its own security that its continued intransigence vis-à-vis Macedonia may have; put another way, Greece should want secure and prosperous neighbors on all of its borders, and it should recognize that embargoes and illegal blocks on Macedonia’s accession to NATO, the EU and the like tend to cause economic and related hardships, as well as political turmoil, thereby destabilizing its neighbor, with obvious, potential negative collateral effects on all of Southeast Europe.

Madame Secretary, the United Macedonian Diaspora urges you to keep these facts in mind as you visit Greece. Contrary to AHI’s rhetoric, Greece has not championed democracy and human rights in Southeast Europe, and represents neither political nor economic stability. The State Department, USAID and high-ranking U.S. officials have recognized Macedonia’s contributions to global security, regional stability and economic integration. In fact, your husband former President Bill Clinton wrote to UMD last month commending Macedonia’s independence and progress.

Macedonia has fulfilled the requirements for EU candidacy and NATO membership. Greece’s ludicrous issue with Macedonia’s name remains the singular impediment to accession. Rather than continuing these infantile fruitless games regarding the Republic of Macedonia’s accession into multilateral organizations (and to violate its obligation under the 1995 Interim Accord to not object to Macedonia’s entry into NATO when using the term to which the parties agreed when they went before the UN in 1993), and to abuse its own Macedonian identifying citizens, Greece should rise above its xenophobia and concentrate its energies on solving its dire, internal political and economic crisis. Your direct intercession on behalf of the Republic of Macedonia to make clear to the government of Greece that its continued misdeeds are not only unacceptable but if left unchecked, will have material, negative ramifications, could make all the difference in assuring stability and prosperity in a region that is not historically disposed to such progressive notions.

Thank you, kindly, for your consideration of the points I have made in this letter, as well as for the steadfast moral and material support that our great nation the United States of America has provided (and continues to provide) to the Republic of Macedonia.

Sincerely,



Metodija A. Koloski
President

Copies to:

The Honorable Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations
The Honorable Philip T. Gordon, Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia
The Honorable Alexander Vershbow, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs
Ms. Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Europe
The Honorable Daniel Bennett Smith, U.S. Ambassador to Greece
The Honorable Philip T. Reeker, U.S. Ambassador to Macedonia