

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 1, 2010

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

This November, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) leaders will gather for the Lisbon Summit to discuss the future of NATO. We urge the Administration, at the Summit, to actively encourage our NATO allies to offer Macedonia a formal invitation to become a member of the alliance.

Macedonia's future in Euro-Atlantic institutions, as well as the security and stability of Southeast Europe, must no longer be negatively affected by bilateral issues with Greece. Macedonia has met all the criteria for membership in NATO, and the name dispute issue does not bear on membership criteria. Macedonia should be invited to join NATO now under the designation used in the 1999 Membership Action Plan. We understand that direct bilateral discussions between Macedonia and Greece on the name dispute issue will continue, but we believe NATO membership should not be linked to the final outcome of these talks.

Although Macedonia is not a member of NATO, its contributions to peace, democracy, stability, and security in Southeast Europe and elsewhere make it clear that Macedonia is a close U.S. ally and has been acting as a *de facto* NATO member for some time.


Macedonia demonstrated its commitment to NATO by serving as the key staging area for the NATO intervention in Kosovo (KFOR) in 1999, as well as by offering refuge to over 360,000 Kosovars during that conflict. Macedonia has since assumed command of NATO's former KFOR logistical support coordination center for Kosovo. Macedonia participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom from July 2003 to December 2008, during which many of the Macedonian soldiers were highly decorated by U.S. military commanders for showing special courage, meritorious achievements, and protecting U.S. personnel. In Afghanistan, Macedonia is among the top four largest troop contributors per capita to ISAF, and its 255 soldiers have been deployed to patrol the ISAF headquarters in Kabul. Macedonia also contributes peacekeeping forces to UNIFIL in Lebanon and the EU-led ALTHEA mission in Bosnia.


This direct support for NATO and other operations highlights Macedonia's commitment as a responsible exporter of security and underscores the high level of international respect accorded to Macedonia's military forces. The United States and our NATO allies should respond positively to these efforts by supporting Macedonia's aspirations to be formally integrated into NATO.

We urge a clear expression of this support at the Lisbon Summit, and believe it is in the United States' interests to actively encourage our NATO allies to formally invite Macedonia to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.


Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

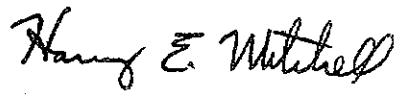

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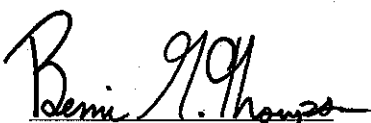

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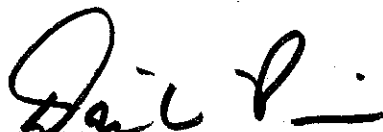

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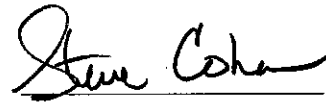

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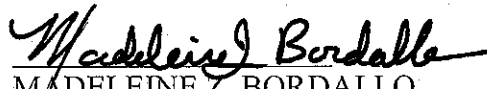

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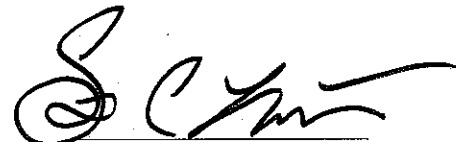

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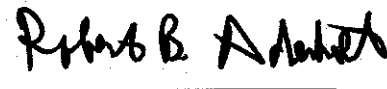

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