



UNITED
MACEDONIAN
DIASPORA
ОБЕДИНЕТА МАКЕДОНСКА ДИЈАСПОРА

November 16, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama
The President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: Macedonia's Admission to NATO

Dear Mr. President:

Nineteen members of Congress sent you a letter, dated October 1, 2010, urging your administration to actively encourage NATO allies to offer Macedonia a formal invitation to become a member of the NATO Alliance at the upcoming Lisbon Summit. AHI¹ sent you a letter, dated October 25, 2010, regarding the October 1st Congressional letter. On behalf of the membership of the United Macedonian Diaspora in the United States (and worldwide), I write in response to AHI's letter.

As the 19 members of Congress stated in their letter to you, 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. Contrary to claims by AHI, Macedonia has met all the criteria for membership in NATO. The so-called "name dispute issue" -- invented by Greece to impede the accession of the Republic of Macedonia to NATO and the EU -- does not and should not bear on membership criteria. Also contrary to AHI's letter, the government and the citizens of Macedonia have made herculean efforts and demonstrated remarkable patience -- **over a period of almost 20 years** -- to find a solution to the foregoing artificial issue. Nonetheless, Greece time and again has demonstrated its unwillingness to close this issue out. Instead, it has insisted on a moving target of concessions intended to string the matter out ad infinitum. Macedonia, in good faith, has made numerous concessions to placate Greece.² However, patience has an end; time has run out on Greece's intransigence and, importantly, its flouting of what is best for NATO and Southeast Europe.

Macedonia's invitation to join NATO should no longer be delayed, and Macedonia should be invited, forthwith, to join NATO. 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 member of NATO for some time.

¹ Currently known as the American Hellenic Institute.

² Consider, e.g., that Macedonia in 1995 took the dramatic steps of changing its flag and amending its constitution to appease Greece vis-à-vis its unwarranted demands.

1101 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW, 6TH FLOOR
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

WWW.UMDIASPORA.ORG
INFO@UMDIASPORA.ORG
PHONE: 202.756.2244
FAX: 202.756.7323

AHI claims that Greece's efforts in Afghanistan are much more significant than those of Macedonia – as if that assertion, if it were true (which it is not), would be a basis for not welcoming Macedonia into the Alliance. In a letter from the Heritage Foundation in December 2009, Greece is singularly mentioned as a “reluctant contributor to the mission in Afghanistan”, despite its capacity to do more. The Heritage letter gives a number of specific examples of why that is the case: in 2003, Athens refused a request from NATO for additional helicopters due, supposedly, to the financial pressures of hosting the 2004 Olympic Games; in 2007, it joined France, Germany, Spain and Turkey in again turning down a NATO request for additional helicopters. NATO has since contracted commercial helicopters to compensate for military shortfalls.³ Additionally, in a study by the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress titled “Mobilizing NATO for Afghanistan and Pakistan”, the following was noted about Greece's involvement in Afghanistan:

Greece has the 8th-largest combat helicopter fleet in NATO (193 combat helicopters plus 15 Eurocopter Super Puma helicopters recently purchased from France). Some of these helicopters should be made available for the transport of combat troops. Some of the helicopters may require upgrades for protection performing in the operating environment in Afghanistan—upgrades that can be made if enough political will exists. While many of the Greek helicopters are being used for firefighting missions in the Greek islands, those helicopters can be deployed to Afghanistan after the wildfire season ends in the fall. This is one way to boost Greece's commitment to Afghanistan, which is currently one of the lowest in NATO.⁴

Again, we ask that our government clearly and forcefully express to our NATO allies that Macedonia should be formally invited to join NATO at the upcoming Lisbon Summit.

Thank you, Mr. President, for your steadfast support of Macedonia, as well as your consideration of the United Macedonian Diaspora's request as set forth in this letter.

Sincerely,



Metodija A. Koloski
President

Copies to:

The Honorable Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defense
The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State

³ <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2009/12/nato-allies-in-europe-must-do-more-in-afghanistan>.

⁴ http://www.thepresidency.org/storage/documents/Mobilizing_NATO_for_Afghanistan_and_Pakistan-An_Assessment_of_Alliance_Capabilities.pdf.