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Washington, DC 20515-2003

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Philip H. Gordon, Assistant Secretary
Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs
United States Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520-0099

Dear Secretary Gordon:

I am writing regarding the upcoming NATO Summit taking place in Lisbon on November 19th through the 21st, where the Alliance will adopt a new Strategic Concept. While the Summit is meant to focus on NATO's current threat assessment, undoubtedly other important matters will arise.

One such matter is the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's insistence that it be allowed to join NATO in contravention of the Alliance's legal framework. Since its creation in 1949, the sole basis for decision-making in NATO is by consensus. This means that a NATO-decision must embody the collective will of all the members of the Alliance. *FYROM certainly knows that, under the governing rules of the Alliance, its admission to NATO is impossible as long as NATO member Greece objects, which it does so rightly based on FYROM's refusal to comply with the United Nations brokered Interim Agreement. The Interim Agreement requires Skopje to negotiate a mutually acceptable name for the country with Athens. Nevertheless, Skopje ignores its legal obligations, treats Greece's valid objections as irrelevant, and cynically invites others to take the same position – flouting in every respect the letter and spirit of NATO's fundamental protocols.*

The need for consensus among the allies is rooted in the understanding and the deep conviction that NATO allies are called upon to sacrifice on behalf of one another. While the conventional perspective is that NATO came in to being to protect the physical territory of the North Atlantic Community from the Soviet threat, the deeper purpose of NATO is the joint defense of democratic societies. On this point, I underscore the loss of life and destruction suffered by those nations that stood up to Fascism. It is no small matter of history that, by 1941 and until others joined the fight, only Great Britain and Greece stood against Hitler and Mussolini in the aftermath of the Nazi Blitzkrieg.

From the shadow of WWII, the allies organized NATO to counter the Soviet threat. Through this shared struggle against Fascism and Communism, the NATO allies embraced and promoted the universal democratic values that our Western security architecture aims to preserve and protect. It is this shared sense of purpose that encourages NATO members to subordinate

their national interests for the common good of the Alliance. It is also the basis for requiring consensus for NATO-decisions. History has shown that NATO is well served when its members have a common sense of purpose and moral direction.

Immediately after WWII, a Communist military campaign was unleashed in Greece that pushed the country into civil war until 1949. Yugoslavia's government, headed by Josip Broz Tito, was determined to bring about a Communist victory in Greece. It was during this period that what was originally known as Vardarska, was renamed by Tito as the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. It is through this renamed region that Tito pursued his Communist designs against Greece's Macedonian region. The ferocity of the Greek Civil War affected Greek society to such an extent that the conflict resonates to this very day.

Without due consideration to NATO's legal framework, and without due respect for Greece's historical sufferings, FYROM maintains that it satisfies NATO's membership criteria. This betrays a dangerous ignorance of NATO's basic function. NATO allies swear to defend the territorial integrity of their fellow members and uphold universal democratic values. Rather than satisfy the criteria for NATO membership, FYROM actually offends them by harboring irredentist ambitions against NATO member Greece.

FYROM has published currency usurping Greek national symbols. It has printed maps incorporating nearly all of Northern Greece as being a part of "Greater Macedonia." FYROM has gone so far as to develop a baseless national myth to support its irredentist ambitions. It can hardly be said that FYROM has conducted itself with good neighborly relations toward NATO member Greece. In fact, there have been extreme incidents where the Greek flag, and Greek leaders, have been depicted as Nazis. This is particularly offensive to the people of Greece who lost 10% of their population to the Nazi occupation, and who valiantly delivered the first defeat to an Axis power.

Skopje has also failed to acknowledge the will of all its citizens. A super-majority of ethnic Albanians support a name change to advance entry into the EU and NATO. Indeed, Skopje could help improve the climate for an acceptable name compromise with Athens if it would refrain from hyper-nationalist domestic propaganda. By way of analogy, the propaganda advanced by FYROM would, if advanced by individuals, constitute an act of identity theft. If it were advanced by business concerns, it would constitute trademark, copyright, and patent infringement. It is unreasonable for anyone to expect that Greece will stand idly by when another nation is acting to usurp its historical identity and threatens to destroy its economic interests. By harboring irredentist ambitions against NATO member Greece, and by propagating a nationalist agenda domestically, it can hardly be said that FYROM shares the universal democratic values of the NATO alliance.

Despite these irredentist provocations, Greece did not object to NATO extending a Membership Action Plan to FYROM. What Greece objects to is FYROM joining NATO before the name issue is resolved. As you know, NATO is not involved in the direct discussion on the name issue, because the direct discussion is taking place under the auspices of the United Nations. I emphasize here that the President, the Vice-President, and the Secretary of State have all previously called on FYROM to work with the United Nations and Greece to achieve the

longstanding United States' and United Nations' policy goals of finding a mutually acceptable official name for FYROM by signing on to S. Res. 300. I also note that 119 bipartisan members of the House of Representatives cosponsored H. Res. 356, which calls upon FYROM to comply with the Interim Agreement.

Your public affirmation of United States policy in remarks made to the Center for Transatlantic Relations that FYROM will join NATO "once the dispute over its name is resolved," accurately reflects the legal process for entry into NATO. Indeed, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said, "The NATO decision is that accession talks with Skopje can start when a mutually satisfactory solution to the name issue has been found," and "that all decisions in NATO of course require consensus."

In closing, NATO has proven itself a valuable forum for the advancement of democracy and human liberties. By protecting universal democratic values and by requiring compliance with its long established legal framework, NATO will endure and prosper. Ultimately, that will benefit aspiring allies such as FYROM develop a shared sense of purpose and commitment toward these universal democratic values.

Again, you have my appreciation for your recent statement affirming that resolution of the name dispute must occur before FYROM can join the NATO Alliance. I wish you and your colleagues well during the upcoming Summit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John P. Sarbanes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress