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

Dear Secretary Clinton:

We write on behalf of the nationwide membership of the American Hellenic Institute (AHI), and in accordance with promoting the best interests of the United States, in order to express our serious concerns regarding the cover story published in the U.S. Department of State's April 2010 issue of *State Magazine*. The feature article in question is titled "Skopje, Ancient Macedonia builds modern democracy," by Stephanie Rowlands. We respectfully request clarification of certain inflammatory and irredentist content of the article.

While in Senate, Barack Obama was one of three original lead co-sponsors of S.Res.300 in the 110th Congress. The resolution urged FYROM to work with Greece within a UN framework to reach a mutually acceptable official name. Presidential Candidate Obama reaffirmed his position as a presidential candidate in an October 2008 campaign statement. *State Magazine's* article directly contradicts the letter and spirit of S.Res.300, which states, *inter alia*, that FYROM should "observe its obligations under the 1995 Interim Accord to prohibit hostile activities and propaganda by state-controlled agencies..." Specifically, we identified five points of contention that are serious flaws presented in Rowlands' article.

1. The article's reference to Macedonia as a geographic region falsely asserts that major parts of "Macedonia" lie within neighboring countries.
2. The utilization of the term "ethnic Macedonians" is misleading. The author cites examples during a period of Hellenic history and its cultural traditions (including images of Orthodox churches) and identifies them as "Macedonian," but makes no attribution to their Hellenic heritage.

¹ Items 1 through 4 can be found on page 22.

3. Its claim that the “Republic of Macedonia” has been a tolerant actor in the regional “debate” over its history and culture. The author fails to cite any examples of FYROM’s intransigence in the search for a UN-brokered solution or its acts of provocation against Greece.
4. It asserts “Macedonia” is undergoing a process of “peaceful development” in an attempt to become a democratically stable country; however, this process is hindered by its neighbors.
5. It states that FYROM has been an important and faithful strategic partner to the US; an alliance that has extended on multiple levels of cooperation between the two countries.²

The five points exemplify the deceptive efforts FYROM has enacted to politically manifest its false identity. Hence, facts must be presented to correct the record of Ms. Rowlands’ misleading article.

Geography

Today, geographic Macedonia is within the borders of at least three countries. Only a small portion of geographic Macedonia lies within FYROM, whose population is one-third Albanian and two-thirds Slavic in origin. The largest part of geographic Macedonia lies within Greece in the Greek province of Macedonia. To claim that “major portions of historical Macedonia lie within the neighboring countries” is simply false. Equally alarming is that this claim is a hostile statement toward Greece’s national sovereignty. Does the State Department condone this claim?

“Macedonian” Ethnicity

Moreover, the author makes reference to “Macedonians” being an ethnicity in an effort to formulate a ‘national consciousness’ which is based on false historical and political claims. FYROM’s frantic search to create a national identity appropriating classical Macedonia’s Hellenic heritage is due to the pressures of Albanian nationalism in the aftermath of Kosovo’s independence; its failure to implement the 2001 Ochrid power sharing agreement with the Albanian minority amounting to one-third of its population; and Bulgarian claims that FYROM’s Slavic inhabitants are of Bulgarian cultural heritage, much like the ‘Macedonian Patriotic Organization’ advocated until the late 1980s.

FYROM as “Tolerant” Player in the Region

The third point addresses the incorrect description of FYROM as the ‘tolerant’ actor in the regional debate over its identity. S.Res.300 stated: “some textbooks, including the Military Academy textbook published in 2004 by the Military Academy ‘General Mihailo Apostolski’ in the FYROM capital city, contain maps showing that a ‘Greater Macedonia’ extends many miles south into Greece to Mount Olympus and miles east to Mount Pirin in Bulgaria[.]” Rowlands fails

² Page 24.

to provide the full picture which suggests that provocative behavior is merely sourced through such ambiguous claims, i.e. that FYROM is a tolerant player. In this manner, FYROM not only promulgates propaganda by claiming portions of Greek territory, but it also usurps Greek national identity and culture. “Tolerance,” therefore, is a characterization that would be more suitable for the Greek side. On a number of occasions, Greece has shown the political willingness and has led the efforts to diplomatically negotiate to find a solution. In return, Greece is still subjected to political aggression and nationalist propagandistic claims.

FYROM’s Actions Don’t Reflect “Peaceful Development”

This situation is found in sharp contrast to the preceding claim that FYROM is seeking to build itself upon elements of “peaceful development” and its efforts to become a “democratically stable” country. Once again, the assertions in *State Magazine’s* article contradict S.Res.300, which was co-sponsored by then-Senator Obama and states: “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia should stop the utilization of materials that violate provisions of the United Nations-brokered Interim Agreement between FYROM and Greece.....” Such provocative behavior and irredentist attitude can only suggest the opposite—that FYROM is seeking to provoke Greece. Most alarming is the author’s claim that this process is hindered by its neighbors, and namely Greece, which by “objecting to the country’s name” has resulted in the “postponement of Macedonia’s inclusion in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union accession talks.” This is a completely unacceptable statement. While the author takes no notice of FYROM’s political provocations, she further fails to mention Greece’s role in FYROM’s development and the political support in resolving ‘Macedonia’s’ name dispute. Greece is the largest foreign investor in FYROM leading to the employment of over 20,000 persons—not an insignificant number given that country’s population. Greece is also FYROM’s third largest trading partner and one of the largest foreign aid contributors.

Furthermore, Greece has 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.’ Greece’s position is unambiguous. It has gone the extra mile. It wants a negotiated, mutually acceptable solution that will be valid internationally, in accordance with the U.N. Security Council resolutions. The previous and current Greek government publicly expressed Greece’s readiness to accept a compound name. This is a bold shift of tremendous importance from Greece’s initial position, and it demonstrates Greece’s significant political will to find a solution because it was not a popular position among certain facets of Greek society and the Diaspora. Unfortunately, this gesture was not reciprocated by FYROM. The time is ripe for FYROM to demonstrate the maturity and the responsibility that a truly ‘peaceful’ and ‘democratic’ and state needs in order to become a member of the Alliance.

U.S.-FYROM “Strategic Partnership Exaggerated

Lastly, with respect to the US-FYROM “strategic partnership” the author presents an exaggerated version of reality. Suggesting that FYROM “has been a steadfast security partner, sending soldiers to Iraq and Afghanistan” is an overstatement for two reasons. First, FYROM has a small army. Second, the total number of soldiers that serve on behalf of FYROM to all the NATO-run International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is 165 with an expected additional 79

soldiers to join the Force³. Furthermore, the suggestion that the U.S. has been heavily investing in FYROM's "transition to a free-market democracy, build a civil society [...], modernizing education and strengthen the rule of law" serves as another example of propaganda. FYROM's propaganda violates the U.N.-brokered Interim Accord, as stated in Article 7 paragraph 1 of the Accord, signed in New York, September 13, 1995, between Greece and FYROM. If FYROM truly embraces its partnership with the United States, it should not be proactively offending a NATO ally, its neighbor, Greece. Rather, FYROM should be acting as a law-abiding democratic state because it claims to be one. The assertion that "Macedonia and the United States are cultivating the leaders of today and tomorrow" is another hyperbole especially as FYROM's educational system is constructed upon historical and cultural fallacies. Hence, this 'so-called' coordinated effort has a questionable and biased intention.

The State Department's decision on November 4, 2004 to recognize FYROM as the "Republic of Macedonia" was counter-productive and made FYROM more obstinate in its will to negotiate a new name, and it fueled FYROM's desire to continue its provocative propaganda against Greece.

Secretary Clinton, it is imperative for the U.S. to extend its influence upon FYROM for an immediate settlement of its name issue in a way that is mutually acceptable to both Greece and FYROM. The final name must apply for all internal and international uses (*erga omnes*). This will allow the United States' strongest ally in the Balkans, Greece, to be the driving force for FYROM's membership to NATO and ultimately the EU. Also, this will create stability for U.S. interests in the Balkans. Therefore, we ask that you persuade FYROM to negotiate in good faith with Greece and cease immediately their illegitimate propaganda.

If FYROM refuses to cooperate, the U.S. must consider withdrawing its 2004 recognition of FYROM as the "Republic of Macedonia." Once a mutually acceptable denomination for FYROM has been reached in the UN-sponsored talks, we call on our government to recognize that state by that denomination only.

Secretary Clinton, the purpose of *State Magazine* may very well be to provide the latest developments on administrative policies affecting State Department employees or to highlight the experiences of our Foreign Service officials at the myriad of diverse diplomatic postings across the globe at which they serve. The latter may have been the intention with Ms. Rowlands' cover story on FYROM. However, *State Magazine* must take into consideration the geo-political implications of publishing an article that presents extremely sensitive issues (especially to Greece, a NATO ally) that are one-sided and in the process of negotiation just in an effort to "spotlight" a diplomatic posting. As published, "Skopje, Ancient Macedonia builds modern democracy" will only contribute to FYROM's ongoing intransigence to solve an issue of vital importance to U.S. interests. Furthermore, it leads one to question if the content of *State Magazine* is to be taken as official policy of the Obama Administration.

³ "Troop Numbers & Contributions." ISAF- International Security Assistance Force *Official Site*. Fri.23 Apr. 2010. <http://www.isaf.nato.int/en/troop-contributing-nations/the-former-yugoslav-republic-of-macedonia/index.php>

We look forward to your clarification of the five points presented. Thank you.

Respectfully,



Aleco Haralambides
President



Nick Larigakis
Executive Director

CC: Deputy Secretary of State James B. Steinberg
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