

# Newsletter

## Congress Letter to Secretary Clinton

On May 5th, 15 Members of Congress sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recognizing Macedonia as a one of the United State's most staunch allies and trusted partners. Led by Congressmen Bill Pascrell of New Jersey and Mark Souder of Indiana, all 15 Representatives described Macedonia as a stable, multi-ethnic democracy peacefully transformed from a failed communist state.

In the letter the Representatives urged "the new administration to review Macedonia's contribution to stability in the southern Balkans and its contribution to America's foreign policy objectives there and in Afghanistan, Kosovo, and the Middle East."

The Representatives also underlined the difficulties that Macedonia has been facing because of the name issue with Greece. They also praised the pledge by the new Macedonian President, Gjorge

Ivanov to work with Greece to resolve the differences and name dispute.

The Representatives also gave their support to Macedonia's NATO integration stating that Macedonia has met all the criteria for membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as well as participated in NATO combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and provided strategic and logistical support during the NATO intervention in Kosovo.

## Deputy Secretary of State Mr. James Steinberg visits Macedonia

Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg visited Macedonia on May 18th where he met with President Gjorge Ivanov and Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski. Steinberg reaffirmed to the Macedonian officials that the new American administration remains Macedonia's strategic partner and its domain is to advance the process of the talks on the name issue.

Prime Minister Gruevski said "We have discussed the bilateral relations between the US and the good cooperation that we have. America is our strategic partner and cooperation between us is excellent. The US supports Macedonia and we jointly participate in



Mr. James Stainberg and PM Gruevski Nikola Gruevskir

several missions, including Afghanistan."

Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg stated for the Macedonian press "The US is supporting the efforts of Mr. Matthew Nimetz to help the Republic of Macedonia and Greece to come to a mutually acceptable solution and our main role is to support that process and encourage both sides to find a mutu-

al resolution of this problem"

Deputy Secretary Steinberg also said that the US and Europe would like to strengthen the democracy, open markets and stability of the whole region.

# Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Jones visits Macedonia

"The Macedonian-American bilateral relations are excellent" stated Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia, Stuart Jones. At the meeting with Prime Minister Nikola



Mr. Stuart Jones and PM Nikola Gruevski

Gruevski on May 10th, Jones congratulated him on the successful presidential and local elections and stated that the US is grateful for the support of the Macedonian army in Afghanistan. As for the name issue, the last obstacle for Macedonian membership to NATO, Jones stressed that talks between Athens and Skopje should focus

solely on the name issue. "Athens and Skopje should resume finding a solution, mediated by Matthew Nimetz, because there is a chance for

progress following the European elections in Greece. We urge both parties to demonstrate maximum flexibility, so that the name issue remains in the past, whereas Macedonia can assume its deserved NATO spot," said Jones. According to him, Macedonia's NATO accession remains a U.S. priority.

## NATO Summit

Despite being blocked by Greece last April at the NATO Summit in Bucharest, Macedonia was pleased to see Adriatic Charter partner countries Albania and Croatia join NATO as official members at NATO's 60th Anniversary Summit in Strasbourg, France and Kehl, Germany in April. Despite having met all criteria for NATO membership at the last summit - something all NATO members agree on - Macedonia was kept out as Greece objected to Macedonia's membership because of the so-called name dispute. However, Macedonia continues to remain committed to becoming a member of NATO, and all politicians in the country remain steadfast in their desire to join. Polls of citizens, too, show a consistently high percentage of support for Macedonia's membership.

## Macedonia in NATO, priority for the new US Ambassador to NATO

One of the main priorities for the new American Ambassador to NATO, Ivo H. Daalder, will be the integration of Macedonia into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization by the next NATO summit in 2010 in Lisbon. Daalder, also an advisor to then-Senator Barack Obama during the election campaign, said that he will use all diplomatic channels to collaborate with Athens in order to bring Macedonia into NATO.



# Macedonian officials at name talk's discussion

**A**fter the inauguration of the new president Ivanov, the Macedonian leadership on May 14th had a meeting on fostering Euro-Atlantic integration of the country. At the meeting, the strategy of future activities in this respect was discussed. According to the declaration from the NATO summit in Bucharest, Macedonia fulfilled all the criteria for an



From left to right: Martin Protogjer, Nikola Gruevski, Dr. Gjorge Ivanov, Antonio Miloshevski and Zoran Jolevski

invitation. The process was blocked due to Greek objections to the name of the country. At the new Presidential palace, President Gjorge Ivanov welcomed Prime-minister Nikola Gruevski, his Chief of Staff Martin Protogjer, Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonio Milosovski, and the special envoy on the name talks Ambassador Zoran Jolevski.

## EU Report on Macedonia Requests Opening of Talks This Year

**M**embers of the European Parliament on March 12 voted 478 to 92 in favor of setting a date to open talks with Macedonia on EU membership this year. The EU Observer noted that the European Parliament "regrets ...that, three years after it was granted the status of candidate for membership of the EU, accession negotiations have not yet started, which is an unsustainable situation having demotivating effects for the country, and risks destabilising the region." The adopted resolution additionally "urges the Council to accelerate this process by deciding on a date for the beginning of accession negotiations, during the current year." With respect to the name issue Greece has with Macedonia, the adopted text in paragraph 12 also made a point of noting that "such outstanding bilateral issues in the Balkans should not obstruct accession or take precedence over the process of European integration." The Parliament also welcomed the progress made on visa issues and urged the European Commission to liberalize the visa regime so that Macedonians can enter Europe more readily and travel more freely throughout the union. In December of 2005 Macedonia was granted the status of EU candidate.

## Honorary Consul of the Republic of Macedonia in New Jersey, Slavko Madzarov, received the "Humanitarian of the Year" award

**O**n May 20th, at the Fourth Annual Archbishop Gala for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark, NJ, Archbishop Myers presented the Humanitarian of the Year award to Slavko Madzarov for his charitable acts and contributions.



left to right: Dr. Phillip Frese, Archbishop Myers, Slavko Madzarov and Henry Amoroso

Dr. Freese, President and Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Charities said "We are proud to honour Slavko Madzarov as the Humanitarian of the Year. Success has not gone to his head, but to his heart" In his speech, the Honorary Consul, thanked Archbishop Myers for the honour, accepting the award in the name of the people whose daily work for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark serves, feeds and heals those in need. Ambassador Jolevski, in his address to the audience, expressed the honour of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia for having such a humane Macedonian American.

# Prime Minister Visits Washington, DC

**P** rime Minister Nikola Gruevski visited

Washington, DC February 4 and 5 to attend the annual National Prayer Breakfast, organized by the US Congress. US President Barack Obama was this year's featured speaker at the

breakfast, generating intense interest among attendees to the annual event. On the sidelines of the breakfast, he met and spoke briefly with Vice President Joseph



Biden and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Also while in Washington, Prime Minister Gruevski held important bi-lateral meetings with a number of influential Senators and Congressmen. On the Administration side, the Prime Minister met with Tony Blinken,

National Security Adviser to Vice President Joseph Biden at the White House and US Assistant Secretary of State Dan Fried.

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# Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Visit Washington, DC

**F** inance Minister Trajko Slaveski and Vice Prime Minister Zoran

Stavreski visited Washington, DC the last week of April for the spring session of the IMF and World Bank. The latest economic figures for Macedonia, from both the Government and IMF, show that at a time when belt-tightening and budget rebalancing is going on in many countries, Macedonia will be no

different but the impact will not be as severe as it is on other neighboring countries. Macedonia is predicting a growth rate of 1% for



World Bank, Washington, DC

the year and has the option of drawing up to \$100 million from the Fund without a new arrangement. Macedonia re-paid its last Fund arrangement in 2007.

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