

Newsletter

Macedonian Foreign Minister Visits Washington D.C.

Macedonian Foreign Minister Antonio Milososki visited Washington DC, December 12-14, 2007. The Minister held meetings with high US officials, including Deputy Secretary of State John D. Negroponte, Assistant to the President for Strategic Initiatives and External Affairs Barry Jackson, Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried, Deputy National Security Adviser at the NSC James Jeffrey, Senator Mel Martinez, Congressmen Mark Souder, Bill Pascrell, Harry Mitchell and Robert B. Aderholt, as well as representatives of the



(from left to right) Ambassador Zoran Jolevski, Macedonian Foreign Minister Antonio Milososki and Deputy Secretary of State John D. Negroponte

American Jewish Committee and members of the Rotary Club in Leesburg.

Minister Milososki presented the achievements of the Macedonian Government in implementing the reforms towards NATO membership, including adoption of crucial legislation before the NATO Summit in Bucharest next year. US officials expressed their support for Macedonia's defense accomplishments and the remarkable progress the country has made in the political field. At the

same time, US officials extended gratitude to Macedonia for the decision to double its troop contingent in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The American Jewish Committee Praises Macedonia for Historic Holocaust Restitution Accord

The American Jewish Committee praised Macedonia for concluding an agreement in December 2007 with the country's Jewish community that resolves all unsettled claims for Holocaust-era communal and heirless private property. In a letter to the Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, the President Richard Sideman and the Executive Director David Harris of AJC greeted this agreement, while underscoring that [this accord] represents an important milestone in efforts to resolve the material claims that have arisen from Holocaust-era seizures.

We congratulate you on taking these steps and hope that they will also serve as an example for other countries to follow."

Under the agreement, Macedonia will allocate 17 million Euros (about 25 million U.S. dollars) for the completion and initial operational expenses of the Memorial Center now under construction in the capital city of Skopje. The center, which is located on restituted former Jewish property, will serve as a memorial and museum that recounts the story of the Holocaust in Macedonia, and also will provide facilities for cultural and communal programs.

"This historic agreement closes an extraordinarily painful chapter for the remnant Jewish community of Macedonia," said Rabbi Andrew Baker, AJC's director of international Jewish affairs. He has visited Skopje regularly and played a pivotal role in the negotiations.

AJC has maintained a long and close relationship with the small, but vibrant, Jewish community in Macedonia. With this new agreement, Macedonia is one of only a few countries that has settled claims against heirless Jewish properties. More than 7,000 Macedonian Jews, representing nearly 95 percent of the community, were murdered during the Holocaust.

Ambassador Christopher Hill Recipient of the September 8th Decoration

President Branko Crvenkovski decorated Christopher Hill, the US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs and the first US Ambassador to Macedonia, with the September 8th Decoration. The award is a recognition of Mr. Hill's outstanding contribution to the development and strengthening of Macedonia-US friendly relations during his mandate as a US Ambassador from 1996 to 1999. Mentioning Ambassador

Hill's engagement in Kosovo, Dayton Accord negotiations, Macedonia-Greece Interim Agreement, President Crvenkovski pointed out that: "In this period, Ambassador Hill, a career diplomat, had not only left his personal seal in the Republic of Macedonia, but was one of those who were practically creating the history on the Balkans by his participation in most significant developments in our region." Mr. Hill extended his gratitude for this high honor, while praising Macedonia's



Ambassador Christopher Hill and President Branko Crvenkovski at the award ceremony

development as a modern and democratic European country, "I am coming back after eight years and see the progress that was made

here. I am very pleased to see that the country I love so much has really succeeded," Mr. Hill said.

Macedonian Government Launches a Campaign on Education

On December 2, 2007, the Macedonian Government launched a campaign, titled Knowledge is Strength, Knowledge is Power, Knowledge is Treasure. The goal of the campaign is to raise public awareness about the value of education. Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski pointed out that next year's budget funds, earmarked for the educational sector, would be increased from 3,5 percent of the GDP to 5,9%. The campaign includes TV spots,



Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and members of Government at the campaign launch ceremony

printed media coverage and public debates as part of the Government's project to upgrade the country's educational system. The public faces of the campaign are three prominent world-

renowned Macedonians, Mr. Mike Zafirovski, CEO of Nortel, Mr. Milcho Mancevski, Oscar-nominated filmmaker and Mr. Simon Trpceski, world famous piano virtuoso. So far, the Government has launched projects for modernizing the educational system, public-private partnership for construction of 100 schools and 180 gyms in schools across the country.

American Medals Awarded to Members of the Macedonian Contingent in Operation Iraqi Freedom

On December 14, 2007, the Deputy for Coalition Operations from Camp Victory in Baghdad, Colonel Bradley Barker, presented Meritorious Service Medals to members of the Macedonian contingent who participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

During the awards ceremony, it was pointed out that the United States greatly value Macedonia as an ally in the coalition, underlining that Macedonian troops have served with the American



Awards ceremony presentation of medals to members of Iraqi Freedom

troops since the early days of reconstruction in Iraq. Furthermore, it was emphasized that undoubtedly Macedonian partnership with the United States underscores Macedonia's successful transition to being an "exporter of security." The award ceremony was attended by the Defense Minister Lazar Elenovski, General Miroslav Stojanovski and the US Ambassador to Macedonia Gillian Millovanovic.

U.S. Government Donates Equipment to the Macedonian Ministry of the Interior

The US Government presented equipment and training materials to the Macedonian Ministry of the Interior during a ceremony held at the Ministry headquarters on November 29, 2007. This donation was made possible through the U.S. Department of Justice International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program, the Southeastern European Cooperative Initiative FBI representative, U.S. Department of Defense European Command and the U.S. Department of State Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program. This contribution is a follow-up to a previous donation in training and equipment, donated to the Government of Macedonia in January 2007. The equipment and training will further increase Macedonia's law enforcement capacity by addressing the needs of the law enforcement units involved in countering organized crime, cross border crime, corruption and terrorism.

Macedonian Parliament United in Adopting NATO Agenda Laws



During its session on December 3, 2007, Macedonian Parliament adopted three new laws: the Law on Public Prosecution, Law on Public Prosecutor's Council and Law on Committee on Interethnic Relations. This new legislation was adopted in compliance with the criteria for a NATO membership invitation for the Republic of Macedonia. The Macedonian Parliament was united in passing this important legislation which was adopted by a majority vote. The EU Mission and the US Embassy in Skopje greeted the adoption of the legislation as a significant step towards the country's NATO and EU integration processes.

Johnson Controls Factory Opens in Bunardzik

Johnson Controls—the US based global leader in production of seats, batteries and other automotive interior—opened its production site in the Technological and Industrial Development Zone, Bunardzik, in December 2007. At the opening ceremony, Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski put into operation first of the six production lines. "It is my great pleasure to attend the opening of one of the most significant investments in Macedonia, the Johnson Controls factory,



Prime Minister Gruevski at the ribbon-cutting ceremony

a global leader in the car industry. This investment is extremely beneficial for Macedonia's economy; the number of jobs it will provide will increase up to 500 by the year 2013, it

will introduce new technologies and improve market competitiveness," Prime Minister Gruevski said at the opening ceremony. "Johnson Controls" partners include car giants "General Motors", "Daimler-Chrysler", "Fiat", "Ford", "Honda", "Mazda", "Renault", "Peugeot", "Volkswagen", "Toyota" etc. The company has an annual turnover of US\$ 20 billion.

Johnson Matthey to Build New Emission Control Catalyst Plants in the Republic of Macedonia and the US

In December 2007, the Company Johnson Matthey announced that it will build two new emission control catalyst plants to serve rapidly growing demand for its products in Europe and North America. The first of these major projects is a state of the art manufacturing facility that is to be constructed in the Bunardzik Technological and Industrial Development Zone. The new plant will be built to a modular design and the initial phase will incorporate highly auto-



(left to right) Johnson Matthey official Collin Geoffrey and Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski at the signing of the cooperation and investment memorandum

mated production lines for both light duty diesel auto-catalysts and selective catalytic reduction (SCR) catalysts for heavy duty diesel vehicles. The initial investment in the Macedonian plant will be approximately £34 million (€48 million) and it will have capacity to produce 4 million catalysts per year. The plant, which will have capacity to produce over one million of these large, complex heavy duty diesel catalysts per year, will be highly automated and use Johnson Matthey's latest production technology from around the world.

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Boris Trajanov

Maestro Boris Trajanov Performs at UNESCO Concerts in Paris and New York

Macedonian baritone and UNESCO Ambassador Boris Trajanov had a successful solo performance in the lead role in the opera "The Italian Girl in Algiers" within the concerts gala "Music for Peace" organized by UNESCO in Paris and New York on November 26th and December 3rd, respectively. Maestro Trajanov's performance was accompanied by soloists from Russia, France and Brazil. The Macedonian musician Dragan Dautovski played in the traditional orchestra of folk instruments from all over the world.



Ovations for Simon Trpceski in Philadelphia

The Macedonian piano virtuoso Simon Trpceski performed with the world-renowned Philadelphia Symphonic Orchestra in December, 2007. Antonio Papano, the musical director of the London Royal Opera "Covent Garden," expressed his delight about working with Trpceski, marveling that "Simon possesses incredible virtuosity and skill to create such beautiful colors with the piano."