

# State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

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Committee on Housing  
and Municipal Government

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May 8, 2010

Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary  
United States Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

I was disappointed to read the article entitled "Skopje: modern democracy III" in the April issue of *State* magazine. The author of the piece, Stephanie Rowlands, is the wife of the public affairs officer at the U.S. embassy in Skopje. While the article presumed to speak of historical and cultural issues related to the heritage of the ancient Macedonian people, it offered little but a recitation of the ethnocentric nationalist ideology of the current government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

It is disturbing to see this kind of anti-Hellenic narrative casually adopted in the pages of a magazine which is funded by the United States taxpayers. It appears that our nation's policy in the region is to build stronger ties with the FYROM government through fawning appreciations of their efforts to link the ancient Macedonians to the Slavic-speaking majority in FYROM today. These efforts lack any footing in historical fact and if representatives of the United States government are going to support such efforts, it should be done on their own time and in forums which do not carry the imprimatur of the U.S. government.

The FYROM government's aggressive, ethnocentric nationalist ideology represents a strategic security threat to Greece and threatens to create further ethnic tensions in the Balkans. Given that government's poor track record in terms of human rights violations and disregarding the rights of various ethnic groups within their own territory, I believe the United States has an obligation to question the manner in which FYROM is being governed rather than blindly supporting the policies of its leaders in the hopes of building a new alliance. I believe maintaining the strong ties between Greece and the United States is more important than pursuing a partnership with a FYROM government that has done nothing to establish itself as a reliable force for democracy and freedom in the region.

It is my hope that under your leadership, the Department of State will move away from a policy of providing unquestioning support to the FYROM government and all of its efforts to arbitrarily incorporate Greek and Bulgarian heritage and history. Such a policy will only lead to dangerous instability in the region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leonidas P. Raptakis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Leonidas P. Raptakis

Cc R.I. Congressional Delegation