

**Response to "Shame On Greece: Messing With Macedonia" by The**

**Editorial Board April 3, 2008, 4:59 pm**

Hellenic Electronic Center (HEC)

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The real shame is not on Greece as the Times implies in the April 3 editorial on its blog. The real shame is that propaganda at the Times is manifesting itself under the cover of journalistic opinion. The real insult is not that NATO has rejected the candidacy of the government at Skopje, but that of the editors of the New York Times toward loyal ally Greece that has sacrificed much as a loyal ally and friend of the United States. During the Second World War, ten percent of the Greek population died from starvation or as a result of Nazi reprisals while Orthodox Greeks gave shelter and protection to their Jewish neighbors. In the immediate post war period, Greece defeated a Communist insurgency supported by Dictator Marshall Tito who sought to annex the Greek province of Macedonia.

Despite the voluminous evidence presented by Athens that document the unrelenting claims and hostile propaganda by Skopje, Times Editors have failed to specifically refer to even one of the countless transgressions that prove territorial aspirations by Skopje at the expense of the territorial integrity of Greece. Recently, Skopje named its airport after Alexander the Great, a fact which proves Slav extremists covet the territory of Macedonia, which is a Greek province. Since 1991, Skopje placed the Macedonian Sun of Vergina on its flag. Officials from Skopje and their representatives abroad have simultaneously pretended to disavow claims to Greek territory in public forums, while claiming the territory and heritage of Macedonia at home.

Greece is a sovereign country with a democratically elected government, a fact that the Times

apparently finds inconvenient The basis of the NATO alliance is that an attack on one member, is an attack on all. Athens is well within its rights to veto the candidacy of a prospective member that openly desires its dismemberment. The Greek position is based on historic and present day realities, and on the right to self defense that all free nations are entitled to.

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**Shame On Greece: Messing With Macedonia**

By The Editorial Board

[The Macedonians walked out of the NATO summit on Thursday and we can't say we blame them.](#)

Croatia and Albania were granted membership in the western alliance at a leaders' meeting in Bucharest, but Macedonia was barred for an absurd reason: Greece doesn't like its name.

That decision shames Greece and it dishonors NATO, which has far more serious problems and challenges to worry about.

The name "Macedonia," is shared by the former Yugoslav republic and by northern Greece. From the moment the former-Yugoslav Macedonia declared independence in 1991, the Greeks — reflecting byzantine Balkan politics — vehemently objected to the new state's use of a name and symbols they regard as theirs.

As a result, the United Nations provisionally designated the country as "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" — or, rather uneuphonically: FYROM.

Athens has since normalized relations and many countries, including the United States, have abandoned the clumsy FYROM in favor of Republic of Macedonia, which is what

Macedonia  
calls itself.

A United Nations mediator tried to work out a compromise but in the end, Greece — a NATO member since 1952 — exercised its veto. The alliance operates on consensus.

Tiny Macedonia doesn't threaten Greece under any name. In fact, bringing it into the NATO fold would enhance regional stability. Now, there are concerns Macedonia's failure to gain alliance membership could fan nationalism and anti-Western sentiment as well as jeopardize its ability to join the European Union.

President Bush and European leaders should have worked harder at finding a solution to this corrosive problem before Greece exercised its veto.

Now they must ratchet up the pressure on Greece to achieve that compromise so that NATO's insult to Macedonia is reversed as quickly as possible.

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