

Hellenic Electronic Center (HEC)

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James Morrison's March 5 analysis of Greece's position regarding Skopje's candidacy for the NATO alliance omits many crucial facts. With Yugoslavia's dissolution in 1991, elements in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) distributed maps that included the Greek province of Macedonia as part of a greater FYROM, while currency in Skopje depicted the image of the tower of Thessaloniki. In 1992, FYROM displayed the Sun of Vergina on its flag -- a symbol unearthed in the Greek province of Macedonia. Despite goodwill exhibited by Greece, such as establishing diplomatic relations with Skopje,

and bestowal of economic support, Skopje maintains a hostile posture. Recently, they attempted to name their airport "Alexander the Great," further evidence of territorial aspirations against the Greek province of Macedonia, but also of attempts to co-opt Greek history as evidenced in consistent provocations since 1991. As a member of the NATO alliance, Greece rightly insists on the end of such unacceptable displays of aggression from its neighbor. FYROM's government has had seventeen years to negotiate in good faith with Greece and to

renounce any claims to the Macedonian heritage which is indisputably Hellenic. As a result of its posture towards Greece, Skopje's leadership has undermined its own efforts to enter NATO, an alliance intended to protect member states from external

aggression by outside parties.

Exercise of a Greek veto is but an act of self defense by Athens which intends to eliminate

a threat. Greece has the right to expect support from its NATO allies. Theodore G. Karakostas Member of HEC EC www.greece.org

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THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Embassy Row

By James Morrison
March 5, 2008

Greek chorus

Nearly one-fourth of the members of the House of Representatives backs Greece in its war of words with Macedonia, and **Greek Ambassador Alexandros P. Mallias** is going to Capitol Hill tomorrow to say "Thank you."

The ambassador will meet with **Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney**, New York Democrat, who introduced Resolution 356, which calls on Macedonia to stop "hostile acts or propaganda" against Greece in the 15-year-old dispute over the name of Greece's northern neighbor.

The measure — co-sponsored by Florida Democrat **Robert Wexler, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Europe subcommittee**, and California Republican

Elton Gallegly

, the senior minority member — has attracted 100 supporters in the 435-member House.

"On behalf of Greece, we are extremely grateful for the tremendous support from the elected representatives of the American people," Mr. Mallias told Embassy Row yesterday. "This resolution is very important at this juncture."

Macedonia wants to be invited into NATO when alliance members meet April 2-4 in Bucharest, Romania. NATO foreign ministers meet tomorrow in Brussels to discuss the agenda for the summit.

The country was admitted to the United Nations in 1993 under the name of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) because of Greek objections to the use of a name historically associated with Greece's northern province of Macedonia. Greek and Macedonian representatives have been in periodic negotiations over a name that will be acceptable to both nations. Greece fears that the use of the name Macedonia implies territorial claims to its northern province.

However, the United States in 2004 decided to recognize FYROM as Macedonia. The United Nations, the European Union and other international organizations still use the acronym.

Mr. Mallias noted that Greece will oppose any effort at the Bucharest summit to invite Macedonia to begin NATO membership talks until it changes its name. Greece has clout in the Western alliance as a 55-year member and with 2,000 troops serving in NATO missions, including Afghanistan and Kosovo.

"A solution to the name issue is a precondition" for Greece's support of Macedonian membership in NATO, the ambassador said.

"Greece's position is clear," he added. "No solution, no invitation."