

## Hellenic Electronic Center (HEC)

### A Non-Profit Organization Registered in the US

with 39,000 Hellenes as members and 36 Hellenic

### associations in the US and abroad

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It is with outrage and dismay that we have learned of the most offensive and provocative gesture undertaken by a member of the State Department. We are of course referring to Ms. Stephanie Rowlands who seems to have confused ancient Macedonian history and culture with the pseudo Republic dominated by Slav elements from the former Yugoslavia who have sought to obtain international recognition through the systematic theft and dissemination of historical and political inaccuracies by claiming the name of Greece's Northern Province of Macedonia. We are prepared to believe that Ms. Rowlands has been misinformed by the regime in Skopje, and obviously not being an expert in Classical, Byzantine, Ottoman, Balkan, or modern Greek history was easily misled by the regime in Skopje. We believe there should be a retraction of the article and a public affirmation by the State Department that the Macedonian heritage, culture, and territory belong to the Greek nation, a fundamental fact that

can be verified by a visit to the province of Macedonia and to the relevant archeological sites with their Greek inscriptions and other indisputable evidence. We remind the department that former Secretary

Henry Kissinger (a man who will never be mistaken as a friend of the Greeks) has publicly stated his agreement with Athens over Skopje in this matter. The State Department has as its duty to represent

the interests of the United States of America and its citizens, and not to allow itself to be hijacked by a fringe political movement of extremists who having been completely isolated from the world during

several decades of Communist totalitarian rule, are entirely ignorant of authentic history, as well as the working of academics and how history is actually learned and taught, by going to the sources.

The article written by Ms. Rowlands and published by the State Department is at a minimum what could only be construed as a "hate crime" directed toward not only the people of Greece, but toward

all Americans of Greek ancestry. It is an assault on the values and history of Greeks everywhere. At a maximum this article threatens to harm relations with Greece, a country that is becoming increasingly

important from a strategic and political point of view considering its proximity to the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean in light of the radical upheaval under way in Turkey, which has now become

a defacto ally of Tehran.

Greece has been by the side of the United States in every major conflict during the twentieth century. During this horrendous century where the cruelty of men toward each other was manifested through the

rise of horrific regimes in Germany and Russia, the Greeks made sacrifices side by side with Washington. During the First World War, the Greeks were with America (and this incidentally, after the bloody and heroic struggle for freedom by the Greeks of Macedonia who achieved their determination to unite with mother Greece during the Balkan Wars). During the Second World War, when Greece was under Italian and Nazi occupation, Macedonia was occupied by Hitler's Bulgarian allies. Greece as a whole suffered horrendously as a result of Nazi massacres during the occupation, and hundreds of thousands of Greeks starved to death.

During the Nazi occupation when Bulgaria cooperated with the Nazis in deporting Jewish Greeks from Macedonia and Thrace to Auschwitz, the Greek people and the Orthodox Church of Greece extended their support to their Greek brothers and sisters of Jewish faith. The Metropolitan of Thessaloniki (capital of the Macedonian province) Gennadios is recognized by the Yad Vashem as a righteous among the nations as are many other Greeks (clergy and laity alike) for extending their support to the Jewish community. Greeks have been at the forefront in assisting the United States and humanity in the fight against oppressive tyrants, and have shed their blood for freedom that the Western world as a whole enjoys.

As with the resistance to the Nazis, the Greeks likewise fought against the Communists with the support of the United States. The Truman administration expressed its support for the Greek fight to

defend its territory in Macedonia against Tito's Yugoslavia. Why does the State Department today reverse the well established position taken decades earlier to support Greece and its territory against foreign Communist aggression?

During any period in history one can see that Macedonia has been an indisputable part of Greek civilization and culture. This includes not only the ancient Greek past under Alexander

(who is claimed

by the Slavs of Skopje) and the ancient Macedonian Sun of Vergina (which the Skopjans attempted to place on their State flag in 1992), but the Byzantine past as well. The Macedonian Dynasty at

Constantinople which ruled the Byzantine Empire for two centuries is celebrated as the most successful dynasty in the Empire whose apogee occurred during this dynasty's reign.

Skopje has deceitfully claimed the great and noble brothers Cyril and Methodios the Greek Saints of Thessaloniki who are responsible for the Christianization of the Slavic people in Serbia, Bulgaria, and

ultimately Russia. The Macedonian heritage is indisputably Greek as is the territory of Macedonia. The offending article put forward by the State Department should be perceived as an affront to our great

and noble ally, Greece.

In 1821, after the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence, Americans enthusiastically supported the Greeks. Many Americans volunteered and fought on the Greek side for the struggle for freedom. American officials then were well educated, and well versed in the history of Classical Greece. They admired the ancient Greeks, and that admiration led them to sympathize with the contemporary Greeks who were fighting against oppression.

American officials then could not have been deceived by the laughable propaganda coming from the likes of the government in Skopje. There is a difference between real history and propaganda. It is utterly

embarrassing for Ms. Rowlands and the State Department to be disseminating as actual history, the illusions and falsehoods emanating from a country that evidently has still not recovered from its decades

long isolation and continues to disseminate hatred and ignorance, in addition to territorial claims on Greece, America's closest and most reliable ally in the region.

We believe some apologies are due to Americans of Greek ancestry, as well as to the government and people of Greece, a country that has been unique for its contributions as an American ally in the past,

and which will emerge yet again as Washington's true friend and supporter in the new century as the chaos of the Middle East engulfs Turkey.

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HEC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE