

THE HISTORICAL SOLUTION TO THE FYROM/MACEDONIA DILEMMA

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A 1939 Yugoslavia postage stamp titled: “Jugoslavija” (I.E., “land of the southern Slavs”), depicts the eight provinces of the then-Federation: Dravska, the northwest region fed by the Drava, an important tributary of the Danube River; Hrvatska; Vrbaska; Drinska, the western region fed by the White Drin tributary emanating from the River Drin in Albania; Dunavska, the eastern region fed by the Danube River; Hcravska; Zetsca; and, Vardarska, the southernmost region crossed by the Vardar River.

The Yugoslavia Federation was established after World War I -- originally as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians, known as “Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaka.” If a “Macedonian” **nation** had existed, it would have been the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, Slovenians and Macedonians. However, no such nation existed. The Kingdom was dissolved in 1941 at the German invasion. If, therefore, World War II had not occurred, or if after the War the Communist Party had not ruled, there would not be a “Macedonia” issue today.

The border between Greece and Serbia was defined in 1913 on the basis of the advances of the armies of the two nations during the 1912-1913 Balkan wars. The border between Greece and Bulgaria was defined at the treaty of Bucharest, and the border with Albania by the treaty of London. Since then, the borders of the four nations had remained the same.

Be it as it may, the land of “Macedonia” was part-and-parcel of the ancient

Greek system of city-states. The inhabitants of Macedonia identified themselves as Greeks, believed in the same gods, shared the same cultural and athletic activities, and spoke the same language: Greek. It is also of major significance that the ancient Greeks had placed the habitat of their gods on Mount Olympus in Macedonia. It would have been totally inconceivable for the Greeks to have placed the habitat of their gods in a non-Greek, “barbarian” territory.

Above the land of the ancient Greeks of Macedonia were the lands of the ancient Dardanians.: Dardania. It was in Dardania that the Slavs descended into the Balkans and from Dardania to the lower Balkans, in Macedonia, in the 6th Century, A.D. For three centuries, the Slavs spoke their Slavic tongue – not language, which had no written or reading form. It was not until the 9th Century that two Greek brothers, Cyril and Methodius, both of whom were monks, illuminated them on Orthodox Christianity and grammatically taught them their own Slavic language. Cyril is credited with inventing the Cyrillic alphabet – a modified version of Greek to accommodate some of the particular non-Greek sounds -- thereby providing for them the tool to learn to read and write their own tongue. Accordingly, therefore, the Slavs can not and do not have **any** historical connection with Macedonia before the 6th Century, nor **any** political bond prior to the 9th Century.

Unless we accept the absurd notions of the late Turkish Prime Minister and President, Turgut Ozal { who, in his book: Turkey in Europe, asserts that Homer as well as Aristotle were Turks), the Macedonians, like all Greeks had their own regional identification and leaders: Pericles the Attican, Epaminondas, the Boeotian, Homer the Chian, Pyrrhus

the Epirote, Leonidas the Lacaedemonian, Philip and Alexander the Macedonians, and so on, including in later times Domini(os) Theotokopoulos the Cretan who signed his great art as “El Greco.”

The “Macedonia question” became an issue in late 1944, and a turbulent controversy after the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. In 1944, with the predominance of the Communist Party in then-Yugoslavia, Marshall Tito, for reasons of geopolitical expediency for territorial expansion southward toward a warm water port in the Mediterranean, arbitrarily renamed the area officially until then “Vardarska” – as shown on the 1939 Yugoslav postage stamp – but also known as South Serbia, to the “Socialist Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and its inhabitants “Macedonians.” Tito’s action was a consequence of the 1921 Moscow resolve by the “Comintern” (the Communist International) and the Balkan communist parties to pursue autonomy for the Macedonia region in order to eventually include the most strategic territory into the Communist camp.

Tito’s pronouncement of a “Macedonian nation” on December 26, 1944 was swiftly denounced by the United States. Then-U.S. Secretary of State Edward Stettinius dispatched immediately “Circular Airgram (868.014)” determining America’s foreign policy in opposition to Tito’s reprehensible action:

“The Department has noted with considerable apprehension increasing propaganda rumors and semi-official statements in favor of an autonomous Macedonia, emanating principally from Bulgaria, but also from Yugoslavia Partisan and other sources, with the implication that Greek territory would be included in the projected state. This Government considers talk of Macedonian ‘nation,’ Macedonian ‘Fatherland,’ or

Macedonian ‘national consciousness’ to be unjustified demagoguery representing no ethnic or political reality, and see in its present revival a possible cloak of aggressive action against Greece,”

to which the then-Soviet Union’s arch-Communist, Joseph Stalin, boasted in 1946:

“They do not have Macedonian consciousness, but they will.” However, the statement by former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger suffices to acknowledge once more what the Pontus-born, Roman-era historian and geographer, Strabo, wrote: “Macedonia, therefore, is Greece.” Dr. Kissinger declared in Paris in 1992:

“ I believe that Greece is right to object and I agree with Athens. The reason is I know history, which is not the case with most others, including most of the Government and Administration in Washington.”

In the final analysis, therefore, U.S. recognition of a state with the pseudonym

“Macedonia” would be tantamount to a Communist victory after the end of the Cold War, on an issue that our nation opposed them during the Cold War.

Upon the dissolution of Yugoslavia following the fall of Communism in the early 1990s, the remnant leaders of Tito’s “Socialist Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” dropped the “Socialist Yugoslav” for the obvious reasons and announced their breakaway state “The Republic of Macedonia.” Immediately, they announced that the portions of the Macedonian region within Greece, Bulgaria and Albania were under foreign “occupation”; printed the famous “White Tower” of Thessaloniki in Greece on their monetary notes; named the city of Thessaloniki (which they call “Solun”) as their nation’s “capital” under Greek occupation; printed schoolbooks and started teaching their

childre that Macedonia outside their current borders is under foreign occupation; depicted the “Sun of Vergina,” discovered during excavations of King Philip’s tomb in the late 1970s, as the symbol for their “national” flag; and, among myriad other usurpations, pronounced Alexander the Great their historical ancestor.

Lack of national identity for the Slavs of “FYROM” does not justify their desire to develop one by usurping someone else’s. In addition, aside from the fact that they, themselves, are not “Macedonians,” the large Albanian and Bulgarian minorities also do not wish to be identified as such, for they know they are not. The Albanian minority comprises about 1/3rd of FYROM’s population, and the Bulgarian minority about 1/4th. Some 250,000 of the Bulgarian minority recently applied for Bulgarian passports, desiring to be identified as Bulgarians, since Bulgaria is on the road to membership in the European Union, which FYROM is not primarily due to its falsified name.

FYROM’s total area of only 13,578 square miles (146 miles east-to-west and 93 miles north-to-south) comprises a strip which is a mere 20 miles wide north-to-south from the Greek border, and just 1/5th of its total territory. FYROM’s remaining 4/5ths is located outside the Macedonian **region**, including its capital, Skopje.

Historical backgrounds and ethnic identities indicate clearly that FYROM in its entirety cannot be accepted as “Macedonia.” That its southern 1/5th portion of 20 miles wide be called its “Macedonia Province,” similarly to the one in Greece, would be proper and should not only be acceptable, but also a very fair compromise.

The solution of the FYROM/Macedonia dilemma is for the **portions** of the 7 southern

counties (of the country's 28 total) which fall within the area of the Macedonia **region** (I.E., Resen, Bitola, Prilep, Kavadarci, Negotino, Gevgelija, and Strumica) to comprise the nation's "Macedonia **Province**." The remaining areas can also have their own "province" identification, in existence today as in the past: "Planina" to the west, where the majority of the population is ethnic Albanian and borders with Albania; "Plackovica" to the east, where the majority of the population is ethnic Bulgarian and borders with Bulgaria; and "Jakupica," the central and northern portion, to include the nation's capital, Skopje, which is inhabited by Slavs, perhaps even almost entirely by Serbs. Thus, the "Macedonia Province" will contain mostly the so-called "Slavomacedonians."

The official name of the country, with its four provinces and twenty-eight counties, can then be called by its **true** identity: "Vardarska," as applied officially before World War II, or "Dardania," if the inhabitants of the entity wish to identify themselves with some historical past. Certainly they should be able to discover some Dardanian historical past in the 4/5ths of the land where the ancient Dardanians lived, rather than attempting to usurp Macedonia's Greek identity of more than five millennia.

Resolving the "name issue" with proper identification would also have many immediate and long-term benefits for the Balkan Peninsula; the Mediterranean Region; the European Continent; and for the world at large.

For the Greeks, it will eliminate their current concern that FYROM is attempting to usurp a significant part of their Hellenic national identity, and that no longer will a "Vardarska" or a "Dardania" be seeking to expand its borders by absorbing the remainder

of the Macedonia region, as they currently advocate and teach in their schools. The many and enormous global problems that the world is facing today due to extremist teachings of the Koran by Islamist “fundamentalists” (a misnomer rather than “fanatic extremists”), are serious enough to require understanding and cooperation to prevent future conflicts. Continuing to teach “The Falsification of Macedonian History” (a most apropos book title by the former Governor of the Macedonia Province in Greece, the Honorable Nikolaos Martis), will create a tumultuous “Balkan” problem in the decades to come, similar to the racial tensions faced by Europeans in general and the French in particular today.

Kosovo, with its twin ethno-religious problem of Albanian Moslem versus Serbian Christian animosity, and the unsettled Bosnian triangle of Croatian Christians versus Serbian Christians versus “Bosnian” Moslems and also Croatian Catholic versus Serbian Orthodox are dangerous enough, not to mention FYROM’s own Albanian Moslem versus Slavic Christian differences. Solving the problem **now**, therefore, will ensure order and peace for Skopje’s future.

For the people of present-day FYROM, a name consistent with their own **true** identity – not someone else’s – will, at least eventually, develop a genuine **national** “consciousness,” thereby giving **some** credibility to their then-idol Joseph Stalin’s statement. Moreover, once it has its **proper** name, the country will have a “true” identity in the United Nations; enjoy the total support of Greece for membership to both NATO and the European Union; and have Greece’s unlimited promotion for security of its borders, and of its territorial integrity, against any potential aggressors, or even internal

turmoil it may not be able to contain itself. And, with proper name identification leading to good relations with its neighbors, especially under the protection of considerably powerful Greece, its people will begin to develop a solid economic infrastructure away from the chrysalis of Communism, and prosper.

It is therefore of immense and utmost importance that the world's powers, especially the industrialized societies of Europe and America, (not to mention their own national interests), instruct, convince and lead present-day FYROM to adhere to international law by which it was "provisionally" admitted into the United Nations under the "**temporary**" name of FYROM, until a suitable name "in agreement with Greece" would be found. After more than a decade of intransigence, it is ultimately in FYROM's best national interests to compromise in line with the stipulations it accepted to become a provisional U.N. member.

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