



# AHI

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March 27, 2008

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Dr. Cristian Samper  
Acting Secretary  
Smithsonian Institution  
P.O. Box 37012  
SI Building, Room 205 MRC016  
Washington, D.C. 20013

Dear Dr. Samper:

On behalf of the nationwide membership of the American Hellenic Institute (AHI) I write to strongly urge you cancel the forthcoming lecture, under the auspices of the Smithsonian Resident Associate Program, scheduled for April 25, 2008, titled "A Glimpse into Macedonia, Past and Present," by "native Macedonian Aneta Georgievska-Shine," due to the historical inaccuracies that this lecture will present.

Details of the lecture, proclaim that "...the Republic of Macedonia is a country of rich and complex cultural identity. From antiquity, when Alexander the Great created an empire that reached as far away as India, to the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when this country finally gained its present-day borders, Macedonia has been one of the most contested geopolitical prizes in southeastern Europe."

Since 1993, Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) have had an ongoing dispute with the name 'Macedonia,' which is also the name of Greece's northern province. It has now reached acute proportions because at next week's NATO Summit in Bucharest, the decision to admit FYROM to NATO will most likely be discussed. Greece obviously objects to admission without a resolution to the name issue, and has stated it will use its veto.

Unfortunately, FYROM refuses to negotiate in good faith with Greece and has maintained an intransigent and provocative attitude.

FYROM continues to provoke Greece, usurping history which has been Hellenic for thousands of years. Actions over the years such as distortion of geographic maps, naming its airport "Alexander the Great," revisionists textbooks in schools, and inflammatory comments by top government officials, and general hostile propaganda, encourages new generations in FYROM to cultivate hostile sentiments against Greece.

Does the Smithsonian also wish to be a willing accomplice to distortion of history?

According to the Smithsonian Institution's mission, "it is to diffuse and increase knowledge among people," not to distort historical truth.

For your information, there are 115 members of the Congress who have signed onto H.Res. 356, calling on FRYOM to cease its "hostile activities and propaganda" against Greece. Three Senators, Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Olympia Snowe (R-ME), and Barack Obama (D-IL) have co-sponsored the Senate version, S. Res. 300.

One of the co-sponsors of H.Res. 356 is Representative Doris Matsui (D-CA), who also happens to be on the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

By way of a short historic background, Macedonia is a Greek name in origin. Its use in Ancient Greece as the Kingdom of Macedonia of Philip II and Alexander the Great, even then denoted a region, not a nationality. Macedonian, like Athenians, Spartans, people from Crete were Greeks.

The usage of Macedonia as a nationality was an invention of Tito in 1944. Tito, the communist dictator of Yugoslavia, changed the name of the southern most province in Yugoslavia from Vardar Banovina to Macedonia and created a false Macedonian ethnic consciousness among his south Slavic citizens for a number of reasons, including his campaign against Greece to gain control of Greece's province of Macedonia and the main prize of the major port city of Thessaloniki.

The United States opposed the use of the name Macedonia by Tito in 1944. In a Circular Airgram (Dec. 26, 1944) Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., stated:

*This Government considers talk of Macedonian "nation," Macedonian "Fatherland," or Macedonian "national consciousness" to be unjustified demagoguery representing no ethnic nor political reality, and see in its present revival a possible cloak for aggressive intentions against Greece.*

*The approved policy of this Government is to oppose any revival of the Macedonian issue as related to Greece."*

There is no separate "Macedonian" ethnic group. The ancient Macedonians were Greeks, as all historical and archaeological evidence demonstrates. Today the, the breakdown of population estimates in the FRYOM region vary between 25 and 40 percent of Albanians, up to 10 percent Greek, 10 percent others, and the remainder 40-55 percent are Slavs.

As an Institution dedicated to preserving and facilitating historical truths and facts, the Smithsonian's reputation and integrity will be highly compromised and come under scrutiny if you permit this lecture to take place.

By allowing this lecture to occur, the Smithsonian Institution will be aiding and abetting in FYROM's irredentist propaganda against Greece and distorting historical truths.

Thank you for your consideration regarding this matter.

Sincerely,



Nick Larigakis

cc: Ms. Barbara Tuceling, Director, Resident Associate Program  
Rep. Doris Matsui, Member of the Board of Regents, Smithsonian Institution