



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Delivered by Deputy Representative Douglas Davidson
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 16, 2003

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Like others before us, we would like to welcome Ambassadors Jenness and Chiarini to the Permanent Council today and we would also like to applaud the hard work that they have been doing in Skopje. In particular, we would ask Ambassador Jenness to convey our appreciation to his staff for all that they have accomplished in seeking and helping with the full implementation of the Framework Agreement.

Mr. Chairman, let me begin by expressing our concern about unlawful activities occurring in Macedonia. These are clearly blatant attempts to create instability and such actions undermine the interests of all citizens.

The United States is also disappointed to see interviews in Radio Free Europe and Gazeta Shqiptare by the leader of Macedonia's largest ethnic Albanian opposition party, Arben Xhaferi, suggesting that ethnic division is the only option for Macedonia. Such irresponsible comments undermine the Framework Agreement, which is the only option for Macedonia.

Division or redrawing of borders is neither acceptable nor feasible. Such ideas are anathema to Macedonia's European future, which lies in membership in NATO, the European Union, and other Euro-Atlantic institutions. We are here to assist in that process.

As Ambassador Jenness stated, the fight against crime in Macedonia must indeed continue. Efforts taken by the OSCE to train more than 1,000 non-majority police recruits have resulted in a more ethnically diverse force. This development, and community policing initiatives, both have been significant confidence-building measures.

The OSCE has done an excellent job in this regard. Nevertheless, strengthening trust between the largely ethnic Albanian population in the former conflict areas and the police remains a work in progress. We would support further OSCE assistance in the training of minority police cadets if requested by the government.

OSCE-EU cooperation on policing in Macedonia also in our view deserves praise. We appreciate Ambassador Jenness' vision for 2004, and we hope that continued close OSCE-EU relations will help develop a clear division of labor if the EU decides to enhance its police advisory role there as a follow-on to Operation Concordia. We must however endeavor to avoid any duplication of effort.

The United States shares Ambassador Jenness' concerns with respect to Macedonia's need to reach political compromises and agreement on legislation regarding the use of community symbols, decentralization, municipal redistricting, and financing of local self-government, as called for in the Framework Agreement.

We would also like to see more progress in re-integrating schools segregated since the 2001 crisis, for Macedonia's future as a multiethnic democracy will be determined in large part by the experiences of this generation.

We will continue to work with Macedonian authorities and in tandem with our international community partners here in the OSCE, in NATO, and in EU, in order to ensure that progress toward full implementation of the Framework Agreement continues. Macedonia's elections in Autumn 2004 will be another significant milestone on this path.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.