

Statement delivered by Mr Kiro Gligorov
The London Conference
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Honorable Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank Lord Carrington for his efforts to find a just, peaceful, and lasting settlement of the crisis in former Yugoslavia. I would also like to thank Monsieur Badinter for his efforts to demonstrate that the future of Europe is not in war but in the respect of law.

There are great expectations in the Republic of Macedonia that this Conference will strengthen the peace process in the Balkan region and create preventive conditions for surpassing new potential foci of crisis. In the opposite case, violence and war in that area will be an introduction into a wider and ultimately senseless Balkan and European war.

One of the serious causes stimulating instability which can put peace in the region under question is the manner and essence by which for more than six months, the international recognition of the Republic of Macedonia is continuously being postponed.

The Republic of Macedonia, in a peaceful and legitimate way, gained its independence without war. At the general referendum, it voted yes for a sovereign and independent state. The free, multiparty elections which were carried out and the new civilian Constitution which was adopted are the foundations on which our democratic government is constituted.

Inter-ethnic equality and understanding are the confirmation of the legitimacy of a small nation to self-determination and to its own state.

Since the beginning of the Yugoslav crisis and war, the Republic of Macedonia is a force for peace and political dialogue in the region. We refused to participate in the bloody inter-ethnic war. The Yugoslav Army has left the Republic of Macedonia and without incidents or conflicts.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the Republic of Macedonia has based its peaceful policy on a number of basic principles:

- 1) Inviolability of the frontiers between the Republics of the former SFRY and the other countries in the immediate region as internationally recognized and guaranteed state frontiers;
- 2) political dialogue and peaceful methods as the only possible way to resolve the relations among these independent states;
- 3) guarantees for human rights and the rights of national minorities, as the only guarantee for peace and democracy in the ethnically-mixed Balkans.

In the Republic of Macedonia, there is a permanent open dialogue with the national minorities and they participate directly in the administration of the Constitution of the Republic. This is one of the greatest reasons for the preservation of peace in the Republic of Macedonia.

- Free movement of people, goods, and ideas, open frontiers, good neighbourliness, and general cooperation among the Balkan states, as a condition for its adjustment to the European integrative processes and politics.

So, what are the results of such an internationally known and confirmed policy of the Republic of Macedonia? We have acquired our independence and sovereignty and we control our own frontiers, we have preserved peace and internal stability within the Republic. This situation has prevented the escalation of war so that it could not reach the frontiers of the neighbours of the Republic of Macedonia. As a result, the arbitration commission of Dr. Badinter stated in its report of 15 January 1992 that "only the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Macedonia fulfil the conditions to be internationally recognized" and that the "name 'Macedonia' does not imply any territorial claims". That is the only possible legal and just conclusion which could have been reached.

After that, a new typically Balkan affair started which, unfortunately, by the power of its dealings,

had dragged the European Community with it, and created a precedent unknown in international relations by testing the basic principles of the new European architecture and the elementary and sovereign rights of a small and peaceful nation to self-determination. For the peace and democracy for which the Republic of Macedonia has received high marks by the whole international community, it has also gained silently an unseen punishment: it remained the last to await recognition. And, by the last Lisbon Declaration of the European Community it got an offer: to change the name so that it can be recognized!

A small nation of about 2,100,000 inhabitants is pushed into uncertainty, through strong methods of economic pressure, blockades by certain neighbours and isolation as well: an unrecognized state has no right to membership in the international finance organizations and institutions.

The humanitarian and economic assistance offered is most often symbolic, and it remains as a sole question to the unquiet international consciousness. The request then that it change its name, to deface itself, is not only outside of any principle of international law and practice, but is also a defeating fact, where we were not only isolated in the possibility to present our argument equally for a longer period, but we were facing a new phenomenon -- the whole international mechanism up to the United Nations was stopped to consider the recognition of the Republic of Macedonia. This fact is insulting for our national pride and a defeat as an example of the rights and justice for the small nations.

We are aware of the principle of consensus in the EC and of the logic of protection and solidarity with the internal interests of certain of its member-states. But, is it possible that this is the cover for making it impossible for a nation to have the right to self-determination, for its economic and social suffocations, for the creation of a new, potentially military, focus? Unrecognized Macedonia means application of the logics of the Balkan wars, a century old already. Today, it means an adventure with military consequences and wider European involvement.

I am repeating today our persistently expressed good will and readiness to find a solution. We have been cooperative during the whole time, and constructive within the activities of the EC. We have initiated, and we are even now ready for equal, friendly, and open discussions. But, we cannot accept solutions which will destabilize Macedonia and would create a new focus of conflict in the Balkans with the danger of expansion of the war.

Immediately after our request to the EC to be internationally recognized, and at the request of the Badinter Commission, we have stated that we have no territorial claims towards any of our neighbours, and that we do not want to interfere in the internal affairs of our neighbours. Not only this, not to remain only on declarations, but we have also undertaken concrete changes in the constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, which is the only example in the world, with such provisions, that we have no territorial claims towards any of the neighbors and we shall not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. In spite of the strongest declaration, the constitutional guarantee, we have adopted in connection to this a special declaration of the Parliament and we have proposed signing a bilateral agreement with the Republic of Greece providing European guarantees on the inviolability of the frontiers and for friendship and cooperation which is a practice in the whole world and an acquisition.

The Republic of Macedonia will continue on the path of peace and dialogue. Because of that we support the activities for the establishment of peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We support the decision of the CSCE for sending missions in the foci of this crisis and observers in the neighboring countries. We support all the activities of preventive diplomacy, so as to avoid escalation of the war into other areas, especially in Kosovo. In these efforts, we are even now with a full goodwill and readiness for friendship and cooperation with all our neighbors. Such an atmosphere is already prevailing in our relations with some of our neighbors. We are prepared for discussions with the Republic of Greece and for cooperation with the EC.

In this respect, we have started a really constructive dialogue with the President of the EC. The Republic of Macedonia should receive its international recognition. Not only because of the principle of law and justice, but because of the international political interest, too, for peace in that region of the Balkans. In this framework, the act of its international recognition is an essential

element of the preventive diplomacy on the peace process in the Balkans.

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