



Philip T. Reeker

Remarks at Ceremony for Presentation of Credentials

September 29, 2008



Mr. President, friends and colleagues: It is my honor to present to you the Letter of Recall for my predecessor, Ambassador Gillian Milovanovic, and to present the Letter of Credence appointing me as the United States Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Macedonia. I bring you greetings from the President of the United States. I am proud and honored to take up my duties as the fifth Ambassador of the United States of America to Macedonia.

I believe that Macedonia has had no better friend than the United States. Our close ties, reaffirmed and underscored in May when Secretary Rice and Foreign Minister Milososki signed the Joint Declaration of Strategic Partnership and Cooperation, reflect our common values and aspirations for peace and prosperity.

America and Macedonia share the strengths of diversity, pride in tradition, and pursuit of innovation and improvement. We are strong partners who have shown that we can count on each other as we face the challenges of the 21st Century.

America maintains an enduring commitment to a Europe whole, free, and at peace. We view Macedonia, a multi-ethnic, stable democracy, as a vital part of that Europe. Our support for Macedonia's prompt accession as a NATO ally is clear and firm. Your membership in the Alliance will mean that Macedonia's future as a European country is secure. We continue to support the United Nations mediation process to resolve the name dispute.

We greatly appreciate the valuable role Macedonia has played in contributing to international peace and stability and are profoundly grateful for the bravery and dedication

that Macedonia's armed forces have brought to critical missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Bosnia. During my recent service at the United States Embassy in Baghdad, I was honored to meet with Macedonian troops serving should to shoulder with American soldiers in the Multi-national Force.

The citizens of Macedonia have faced many challenges since independence and have chosen to pursue a course of democracy and economic reform that has brought this country ever closer to the ideals and standards of the Euro-Atlantic community. Together we can build upon the work of my distinguished predecessors to further enhance the strong cooperation and friendship between our two countries.

I pledge my full support, and that of my team at the Embassy, toward this goal. I am confident that, with this commitment to build a better future, Macedonia will succeed in overcoming the challenges you face.

I am pleased and deeply honored to return to Macedonia. I look forward to working with you and to reacquainting myself with this beautiful country and its people.