



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES

SKOPJE • MACEDONIA



Ambassador Reeker Visit to Tetovo

American Corner; October 3, 2008

Press availability

Ambassador Reeker: Mirdita. Dobar den na site. Zdravo. Une flas shqip vetem pak. So, since it is Friday, bidejki e petok, mozam da zboruvam angliski. I would like to thank the people of Tetovo for a warm welcome. It is very nice to come back to Tetovo for the first time after about ten years. I have seen the city has grown, much larger, but I am happy to see that a number of the important sights of cultural heritage of Macedonia located in this city have not changed. The Painted Mosque was a beautiful thing to see and to visit the Hamam- gallery. I was very proud to know that funds from the U.S. Ambassador's project for cultural heritage helped to restore the Hamam and turn it into the beautiful gallery that it has become. I had an opportunity today to pay a call on the mayor, on mayor Lika. I very much enjoyed the opportunity to meet him and, of course, as you know for the United States, for the American people local government and mayors are a particularly important part of democracy, that local government is responsive to its people and I look forward to meeting many other mayors as I travel around Macedonia. Then I had an opportunity to meet with Mr. Thaci, representative of the DPA party, as I will meet with many political party leaders. I also then, of course, met with Mr. Ahmeti, who is in coalition. I enjoyed my first chance to speak and meet with both of those leaders and look forward to further opportunities. So, it is a pleasure for me to be in Tetovo today. I have to get back to Skopje for other business, but again I want to than everybody around Macedonia for the very warm welcome to myself and my wife in our first week back in Macedonia. I think I have time for maybe two questions.

VOA Albanian: Ambassador Reeker...

Ambassador Reeker: Hi! Kako si?

VOA Albanian: Thanks. Ambassador Reeker, have you discussed with the authorities in Skopje about the issue of recognizing Kosovo and what were your discussions today with the political leaders?

Ambassador Reeker: Today was an opportunity for me to meet and get to know both political leaders- Mr. Ahmeti, whose party is in government, and Mr Thaci, whose party is in opposition. We discussed the importance for Macedonia of its future in NATO, in the EU, of continuing with the Ohrid Agreement and its implementation, of economic development, and I discussed those things with the mayor as well. These are topics I discussed with the leaders in Skopje as well during my first week and we know how important all of those things are for the future, for security, for prosperity of this country, and that is in the interest of my country as well. Recognition of Kosovo, we believe, is an important thing and we believe that that will come in due course from Macedonia. That will be important in terms of stability for the region and we do want to see that. I look forward to continuing my conversations with political leaders throughout the country, both in government and in opposition on a whole variety of topics.

Ambassador Reeker: One more question?

Deutsche Welle: What is your opinion, can the internal political stability of Macedonia be damaged if the Hague cases are processed?

Ambassador Reeker: We understand that those are sensitive cases. They need to be reviewed and handled in an appropriate process and a fair and transparent resolution of that process is what we look for. So, we believe that there are structures in Macedonia to deal with and review this, and I know that the leaders are taking this into consideration with utmost importance.

Thank you all very much. Dobar vikend na site!