



THE PRIME MINISTER

Athens, 17th July 2008

Mr. Prime Minister,

As you are aware for the last fifteen years Greece and your country, pursuant to the relevant decisions of the UN Security Council, have committed themselves to negotiations in the framework of the United Nations regarding the name issue which "needs to be resolved in the interest of the maintenance of peaceful and good neighbourly relations in the region" as stipulated by the Security Council in Resolution 817.

In the past few weeks the Special Envoy of the United Nations Mr. Matthew Nimetz presented some ideas that could move the negotiations forward. I regret that it is precisely at this critical moment in the negotiating effort that you have chosen to send your letter dated July 10th, 2008.

I take this opportunity to underline Greece's firm commitment to the promotion of friendly and good relations with all its neighbouring countries, especially with the countries of the Western Balkans, and the creation of the necessary conditions that will allow them to join, in the near future, the Euro-Atlantic and European families.

Greece, since 1993 has demonstrated good will, under the auspices of the U.N., to find a mutually acceptable solution on the name issue, which would take into consideration the legitimate interests and sensitivities of both our countries. This is within the mandate of the relevant U.N. Security Council Resolutions, but also the wish of all countries participating in the Euro-atlantic and European institutions as was also unequivocally stated in the Bucharest NATO Summit and in the EU European Council in Brussels respectively.

Mr. Prime Minister, your letter far from promoting the negotiations and the good neighbourly relations with my country raises a number of non-existent and unsubstantiated issues that militate against the strenuous efforts made by Greece. It also aims at interfering in the domestic affairs of a neighbouring state and deviates from the objectives of the ongoing negotiations.

*His Excellency
Mr. Nicola Gruevski
Prime Minister of the Former Yugoslav
Republic of Macedonia
Skopje*

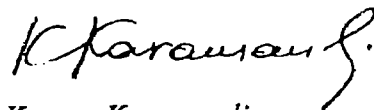
There is no "Macedonian" minority in Greece. There never has been. In this respect, any allegations regarding the existence of such a minority are totally unfounded, politically motivated and disrespectful of the historic realities of the Region. As for any properties issue, any individual could make use of any legal recourse before the Courts, including the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

Mr. Prime Minister,

Times have changed. I am convinced that the future of the Balkan countries lies within the European and Euroatlantic institutions and not in nationalist formulas of a bygone era which must be left behind once and for all. Greece remains firmly committed to working towards that goal.

History judges leaders by how they rise to the challenge and assume their responsibilities. Much will depend on your positive attitude and constructive spirit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'K. Karamanlis', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kostas Karamanlis