



February 19, 2008

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Subject: "NATO –Bucharest and Beyond " Conference

Between the period of 17th and 19th of February the **"NATO – Bucharest and Beyond" Conference** was held, organized by the **OHRID Institute for Economic Strategies and International Affairs** and the **Assembly of Republic of Macedonia**. The Conference was organized for the Chairpersons and representatives of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committees from the NATO member countries, Adriatic group countries and the PFP countries of the region as well. The Conference was open by the President of the Defence and Security Committee of Republic of Macedonia Mr. Vladimir Gjorcev, followed by welcome addressing by the President of the Parliament of Republic of Macedonia Mr. Ljubisa Georgievski, the President of the Government Mr. Nikola Gruevski, the Ambassador of Macedonia in USA H.E. Mr. Zoran Jolevski, H.E. Mr. Alain Brian Bergant, Ambassador of Republic of Slovenia in Macedonia, contact Embassy NATO, and Mrs. Flora Kadriu President of the Foreign Affairs Committee. The first session of the Conference NATO in the new global security environment (fight against terrorism) was moderate by the founder and President of the Project on Transitional Democracies Mr. Bruce Jackson, and as distinguished speakers on this particular session were Mr. Antonio Milososki, Mr. Bob Simmons and Mr. Ian Brzezinski. On the second session "NATO's role in Securing the South – Eastern Europe and Beyond" one of the hosts, Mr. Vladimir Gjorcev was moderator, whereas keynote speakers on this topic were Mr. Solomon Passy, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament of the Republic of Bulgaria and Mr. Ilijas Halimi, Deputy Minister of Defence of the Republic of Macedonia. The third session Lessons Learned – "On NATO's Doorstep, Successful Last Steps" was led by Mr. Ian Brzezinski, Former US Deputy Defence Secretary, and as keynote speakers on this session were introduced Mr. Bruce Jackson, Mr. Stanislav Vidovic and Mr. Jan Hamacek. The fourth session "The Role of the Parliamentary Committees for Foreign Affairs and Defence in the Implementation of NATO Goals and Policy" was a kind of conclusion and embodied the crucial meaning of the Conference. Moderator on this part of the Conference was the Vice President of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia and the Head of Delegation to NATO Parliamentary Assembly Mr. Besim Dogani, whereas as keynote speakers were Mr. Anton Anderlic, Chairman of the Committee on Defence of the Parliament of Slovenia, Mr. Murat Merdzan, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Turkey and Mr. Zsolt Nemeth, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Hungarian Minority Abroad Committee. The Conference aroused many fruitful discussions regarding the NATO Integration of the Adriatic group, the support of the NATO member countries was clearly expressed, and as recommendation the member



countries shared their experience thus indicating the road which Macedonia, Albania and Croatia should follow and use for more success in the NATO integration process.

Many attitudes and beliefs were stated regarding the invitation for membership of the three countries, which were inferred as fast contract ratification for official membership by the National Parliaments. A confirmation for Macedonia fulfilling all given criteria for membership in NATO, gave Mr. Bob Simmons, NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Security, Cooperation and Partnership. Mr. Bruce Jackson one of the moderators and keynote speakers on the Conference, share the same opinion as Mr. Bob Simmons and added that Macedonia is prepared to get the invitation for joining the Alliance. One of the messages shared on the Conference was that through the NATO integration of the Adriatic group of countries, the other countries from the region would accept the note that the West Balkan has a Euro Atlantic perspective.

The discussion led, referred to adjustment of national legislations in accordance to NATO membership requirements; development of parliamentary mechanisms and practices for effective democratic control of armed forces; dialogue among parliamentarians on major foreign relations and defence and security issues; parliamentary awareness and understanding of key security issues and NATO policies; greater transparency of NATO policies.

The Conference "NATO –Bucharest and Beyond" was made and organized in crucial moment for Macedonia, in the moment when the support of the other member countries is the most needed, and on the road when all criteria are getting fulfilled and all reforms implemented. The guests on the Conference were more than satisfied of the roused debate and the Macedonian hospitality, thus expressing the support and confidence in Republic of Macedonia.

No matter of the political residing, all Members of the Parliament of Republic of Macedonia present on the Conference, shared same ideas, aspirations, and showed that they can work together to make Macedonia more stable country with secure Euro Atlantic future.