

## **Prime Minister Zoran Zaev's Article in *Newsmax***

Much was said in Prime Minister Zoran Zaev's article in *Newsmax* entitled "Prime Minister of Macedonia: U.S. Has Ally in Balkans". To keep our opinion short and in line with LOMA's mission, we will focus on Mr. Zaev's use of the word *Macedonia* – or rather, *how* he used the word *Macedonia*.

Indeed, Mr. Zaev used *Macedonia* about ten times in his article. You may be thinking, 'What's wrong with that? Isn't that what we want Macedonia's leaders to be doing – referring to Macedonia as *Macedonia*?' Well, it's not that simple.

In eight of those instances, he referred to Macedonia as the *Republic of Macedonia*. On the surface and in isolation, there's nothing wrong with referring to Macedonia as the Republic of Macedonia: it is Macedonia's constitutional and long-form name. However, Mr. Zaev referred to many other countries in his article – all of them Macedonia's neighbors – and referred to none of them by their constitutional or long-form names. Not once. He referred to the Hellenic Republic as *Greece*, the Republic of Serbia as *Serbia*, the Republic of Bulgaria as *Bulgaria*, and the Republic of Albania as *Albania*.

Take, for example, this sentence: "*By the start of 2017, 10 years of authoritarian rule in the Republic of Macedonia created internal divisions and external tensions with neighboring countries including Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Kosovo, and Albania.*" Here, by only referring to Macedonia by its long-form name, Mr. Zaev indeed put an asterisk next to Macedonia's name.

So, what is Mr. Zaev trying to accomplish here? Is he trying to clear up any potential confusion about whether his article deals with the country of Macedonia or the Greek region of Macedonia? This seems unlikely. The article's subject is unambiguous: it is referring to Macedonia the country and no other Macedonia; and besides, if this was Mr. Zaev's true concern, he would need only one sentence to refer to Macedonia as the Republic of Macedonia in order to clear up any potential reader confusion. After all, *Newsmax's* title for the article says *Macedonia* and not *Republic of Macedonia*, so it must have not been confusing for them or a *Newsmax* policy on the use of *Macedonia*.

What is likely, however, is that Mr. Zaev tried to appear compromising to Western observers, as well as appeasing to Greek demands, by continuously referring to Macedonia as the *Republic of Macedonia* and not just *Macedonia*. But he instead appeared foolish. By treating Macedonia differently than the other Balkan countries in his article – by constantly referring to Macedonia by its long name and only referring to other countries by their short names – Mr. Zaev demonstrated that not only is he willing to yield on the name of his country, but that Macedonia does not deserve to be treated equally to other countries.

Mr. Zaev's article makes it difficult for Macedonians to succeed in demanding that Macedonia be treated equally and fairly in the international arena because it proves that not even Macedonia's leading politicians will treat Macedonia's name with the respect, fairness and equality it deserves. We hope that Mr. Zaev realizes the damage he is causing to the Macedonian country and people by taking such a weak and self-defeating stance on Greece's dispute with Macedonia's name.