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Balkan Update

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		10 January 2007
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Macedonia Developments

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Former Defense Minister Found Guilty of Corruption

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Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski's government probably will use the guilty verdict of former Defense Minister Ljuben Paunovski to tout the government's progress in prosecuting corrupt

This report was prepared by the Office of Russian and European Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Manager, OREA

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officials regardless of party affiliation. Paunovski served as Defense Minister during 2000-01 in the then Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) government and left office amid allegations of corruption. According to press reports, Paunovski was sentenced last week to three years in prison on charges of embezzlement and abuse of office during his tenure as defense minister.

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- [redacted] repeatedly warned Macedonian officials that the government must successfully prosecute several high-level corruption cases by mid-2007 in order to improve Macedonia's bid for a NATO invitation by 2008 [redacted]

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- Gruevski has publicly stated that there will be zero tolerance for corruption and made eliminating corruption a central point of his campaign during the legislative election in 2006. [redacted]

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