

**Ομιλία Υπουργού Εξωτερικών κας Ντόρας Μπακογιάννη στο London
School of Economics**

London, 5 November 2007

Dear Members of the Faculty,
Dear Students,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here.

I would like to thank the staff of the Hellenic Observatory and particularly Professor Kevin Featherstone for extending me the kind invitation to address this distinguished audience. Through its innovative research, academic work and comprehensive policy analysis, the Hellenic Observatory stimulates constructive debate adding significant value to the public dialogue on modern Greece's challenges.

It is only fitting that the Observatory, is built around the Eleftherios Venizelos Chair of Contemporary Greek Studies and is -to a great extent- inspired by his ideals. Venizelos, Greece's greatest statesman, a personal friend of Lloyd George and a man who understood the British well, had the historic privilege to have been quoted by Winston Churchill himself in one of his most famous and eloquent speeches. In 1942 Churchill stated, and I quote, "The late M. Venizelos observed that in all her wars England – he should have said Britain, I suppose – always wins one battle, the last."

Both Churchill and Venizelos were proven right of course.

This is a key lesson learned for Greek foreign policy.

Our two countries share a long common trajectory of political, strategic and ideological kinship. Over the course of the twentieth century Greece and the United Kingdom, have cherished the same ideals and fought the same wars defending freedom in the seas of the world, in the Balkan Mountains, and in the deserts of Africa.

We are friends. We are allies. We are partners. Moreover, given Greece's geo-strategic position, regional influence, political and economic stability, this is quite a valuable relationship. Trade, and our mutual love of the sea bring us even closer.

Today we work in partnership in an effort to face many major global

challenges. We are united in the fight against terrorism in its multitude of forms. At times we may approach this battle in a different manner, yet ultimately, we share the same goal: the right to live free from fear.

Ladies and gentlemen:

Classical values form the basis of the Enlightenment. Many of our modern world's principles and values derive their inspiration from them.

- Freedom and democracy.
- Critical thought.
- The Aristotelian notion of "moderation."

This is a true human-centered approach. It is not a coincidence that higher institutions of learning can trace their origins to such noble ideas; even transcending intellectualism per se. From Plato's Academy to your own London School of Economics, intellectual establishments come to address dire needs and greater wants.

We live, Ladies and Gentlemen, in a tough and maybe cynical world. Our values however, still lie at the heart of our policies. And this is a conscious choice.

Greece, within its means, extends a helping hand across the four corners of the world. Our aim is to be consistent, efficient, and effective. To this end, we have identified 19 countries for priority development assistance. We also offer humanitarian assistance to the best of our ability wherever there is need. I was particularly proud of this government's swift mobilization in response to the Tsunami. Or when in the summer of 2006, Greek vessels sailed first into Lebanese ports delivering aid and evacuating close to three thousand nationals from 54 countries.

In this spirit, tonight I would like to focus on three areas of particular interest for Greek foreign policy: First, our support for the integration of South Eastern Europe in the European Family; Second, the quest for peace and stability in the Middle East; Third, climate change and the need for an international collective effort.

Dear students,

Your curriculum includes international negotiation and conflict resolution seminars. Can you think of a better example of conflict prevention than the one that has taken place in Europe since the Second World War?

The European Union has successfully tied former enemies together in strong bonds of shared interests. The European Union has made the first half of the last century look even more distant than it actually is.

I have said it before and I will say it again. For most, if not all, the prospect of membership in the EU has acted as a great stimulant for change. It has encouraged and supported governments in the long and difficult road towards a free-market economy and democracy that values diversity, respects minorities, encourages differences of opinion and accepts criticism of government policies.

It is in this light that Greece has strongly supported the integration of the whole of South East Europe into the European family. Our overall political direction is based on a very simple principle: if we are to have peace and prosperity on the Continent, European integration cannot be fragmented. We believe the new Europe that is being born will be even richer, stronger, and more enduring if it includes the whole of South-Eastern Europe.

We made this policy a cornerstone of our European Council Presidency back in 2003. We supported the EU's so called "big-bang" enlargement to include ten new member states and the Treaty of Accession was signed in Athens.

At the beginning of the year we were happy to welcome Bulgaria and Romania in the European Union. We encourage the candidacy of Croatia and Turkey. It is important to stress the region's European perspective. Although the region is not boiling - as it was in the 1990s – it is certainly simmering.

At the heart of the European continent, Kosovo's stability concerns us all. This is a European problem that demands a European answer. The day after – any day after- will find Kosovo's future linked to that of the European Union.

Two points need to be raised:

First, time is always a factor. However, we should not jeopardize the chances of a viable and functional settlement for the sake of meeting a pre-set arbitrary deadline. We must not be carried away by artificial tight schedules. Second, multilateralism is the name of the game. Any unilateral initiatives could weaken international legitimization and threaten stability in the long term. At the moment the Troika is doing its best to arrive at a solution both sides can live with. The international community must encourage everyone concerned to enter the talks in good faith and with an open mind. We need clarity: clarity of thought, and clarity of purpose.

Turning to Serbia, I believe everyone agrees that this is a crucial country for stability in the Balkans. No Balkan equilibrium can ignore Serbia. Serbia's enhanced European perspective is the only vehicle for Belgrade to overcome the burden of its past. Many of us in Europe have known Juntas. We cannot ask a democracy - and a young one at that - to pay for the sins of a dictatorship. This is going to be a difficult winter for Serbia and the Western Balkans.

Our purpose should be twofold.

On the one hand, it is clear that we would like to see concrete results when it

comes to bringing the suspected war criminals to Justice. On the other hand we must keep Serbia on the "European track," by signing the Stabilization and Association Agreement and thus upgrading its relations with the EU as soon as possible.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There is one lesson that we have learned in the Balkans: We have to face our problems head on. Shoving concerns, issues or questions under the carpet is never an answer. There is too much history for us to bear even under normal circumstances.

When it comes to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, our neighbor to the north, Greece has repeatedly showed its goodwill and eagerness to support FYROM both politically and economically. We have spared no effort to respond to the country's quest for economic growth and stability. Suffice it to say that Greek investments have reached 1 billion Euros. As I am sure most of you know Greece has real and concrete concerns over our neighbors' name.

Geographically, Macedonia is a wider region, more than 50% of which belongs to Greece. There are today more than two point five million Greeks who consider themselves proud Macedonians. Skopje's attempt to construct a pan-Macedonian theory to support their identity and their crude and provocative actions are an anachronism. They use the language of the 19th century and hope to be understood in the 21st.

Yet, we cannot build the future on feet of clay.

Let me be absolutely clear: This is neither a psychological nor an emotional issue. It is a question of good neighborly relations. It is a question of regional stability. And we cannot let this question hover. Under the UN auspices Greece has come to the table, with a clear objective: a mutually acceptable – composite- solution that makes the mark. This reflects the letter and the spirit of the UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and of the 1995 Interim Accord. We have engaged in this process with an open mind. Greece has shown its good will. Our friends in Skopje must also cover some ground however. No military alliance or intimate partnership can be formed between countries if it is not based on mutual trust and good neighborly relations.

Skopje has but one route to NATO and the European Union: The route, of a mutually acceptable solution.

Dear friends,

The road to Europe is rewarding, yet long, demanding, and oftentimes difficult. Greece supports Turkey's European orientation. Greece is among the most steadfast supporters of Turkey's accession to the EU.

Turkey's European perspective is conducive to regional peace, stability and

prosperity. Nevertheless, Turkey must show in practice that it can conform to the institutional, political and economic *acquis* of the EU. There is no Europe-a-la-cart.

Our message is clear: full compliance should lead to full membership for Turkey. Our bilateral relations have followed a new path of rapprochement in the last few years. Cooperation between our two countries covers a wide spectrum of fields, and is steadily expanding. Such co-operation naturally helps improve the political climate between the two countries.

Unfortunately, Turkey's military activity in the Aegean remains a cause of serious concern for us and hinders our efforts. At the same time, Turkey must comprehend that the implementation of the *acquis* standards plays a pivotal role in integration negotiations.

As you all know, freedom of religion is a hallmark of EU values. The outcome of our democratic impulse.

Consequently, we are constantly disappointed by Turkish authorities' denial to accredit the Ecumenical Patriarch, the spiritual leader of more than 300 million Christians across the globe. Another issue that puts in question the country's positive disposition toward religious tolerance is Turkey's unwillingness to reopen the Halki seminary. I should stress that this would be primarily to the benefit of Turkey itself. It could serve as a shining example of Turkey's moderation and compliance with EU criteria, thereby enhancing its own EU perspective and international standing.

The Cyprus issue is naturally linked to our relations with Turkey; yet it retains its strong independent character. At this moment, we are dealing with a sad paradox. A member state of the European Union is occupied by a candidate for accession. Our government remains steadfastly committed to reaching a just and viable solution for the reunification of Cyprus. Partition is not – I repeat not- an option. The principles that must guide us in seeking a fair, functional, and viable solution are clear: consideration of the work done by the UN; international law, and all the relevant Security Council Resolutions.

Last, but not least, the *acquis communautaire*.

We cannot overlook the fact that Cyprus is now a full member of the European Union and that both Greek and Turkish Cypriots must function within the European framework.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Being the most turbulent corner of our globe, Middle East has lost its semantics. Once cherished as a crossroads of flourishing civilizations, the Middle East has now become a battlefield of unprecedented malice.

Our strong ties with the peoples of the South-Eastern Mediterranean have made peace and stability in that region a priority for Greece. All issues in the

Middle East, and the wider area as far as Afghanistan, are closely interrelated. All actors in the Middle East are influenced by one another. Simply said, there is no way of permanently solving an issue in the Middle East while ignoring another.

This is why we need an integrated strategy that would involve all actors in the region, as well as the international community.

The Arab-Israeli conflict is at the heart of the Middle Eastern conundrum. Its parameters span beyond the two territories' confines and fuel tension in the wider area. Greece supports the two-state solution to the Palestinian issue. To this end, we see with confidence the current process of direct talks.

At the same time we spare no effort in rekindling international concern. Indeed, during our Presidency of the UN Security Council in September 2006 a special Security Council meeting at the level of Foreign Ministers, the first after 20 years, took place. We hope that in the forthcoming Annapolis meeting all parties will work towards mutual understanding and cooperation.

We support the unity and territorial integrity of Lebanon. We also support Lebanon's democratic forces. I hope that a President of the Republic will be elected soon and that the constitutional stalemate will be overcome.

Lebanon can be once again a model of peaceful coexistence between different religious communities. But, to fully develop and prosper, Lebanon must have the means to exercise full sovereignty over its territory.

Last but not least, gradual reasoning and patient attitude are also in demand for managing Iran's nuclear power. EU has repeatedly stated that nuclear technology employed for peaceful means poses no threat. However, nuclear weapons are a direct threat for regional stability and cannot be tolerated. We have engaged Iran in dialogue in search of a diplomatic solution. The EU must spare no effort of mediation.

At the end of the day, the gap between Iran and the International Community must be bridged.

We do not have the room to fail.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Allow me to turn to a subject that is close to my heart.

As UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki Moon suggested regarding the situation in Darfur, climate change exacerbates conflict. As a consequence of climate change, land and water resources will become all the more scarce. Agricultural production will be gradually reduced, as will drinking water. Pre-existing conflicts, poverty, unequal access to resources, weak institutions, food insecurity, and the appearance of infectious diseases due to temperature increase, are all likely to have a significant impact on the peace and security

of the world.

We need a bottom-up approach.

Overabundance has carried with it a series of 'by-products' which irrevocably threaten our planet and our societies.

It is time for a shift in life-styles. At the same time there is a demand for a new role for governments.

Governments must create incentives and counterincentives for individuals and businesses in order to enhance and promote environmental consciousness.

Within the EU we have tried to combine protecting the environment with continuing economic growth; this is no small challenge.

We have come a long way.

And the decision of the Union to unilaterally establish new minimum emissions targets to facilitate the post Kyoto negotiations is paving the way for a brave response by the whole world -developing and developed- in the talks to come.

Mitigation itself though is not enough and adaptation goes beyond local or national necessity. The international community is responsible towards the least developed countries, such as small island states. Countries that are the least to blame for climate change, yet bare the consequences. People living in vulnerable regions, in fragile economic, social and environmental conditions and lack the adaptive capacity to respond to the perils of climate change.

This is why Greece, having the Chairmanship of the Human Security Network this year, decided to focus on the effects of climate change on human security, in vulnerable regions and for vulnerable groups of people, especially women, children and those forced to flee their homes due to natural disasters.

This is why we believe that development assistance should be revisited and re-planned, so as to take into consideration the impacts of climate change in least developed countries. This is why we join our voice with those arguing that climate change threats make the millennium development goals, all the more difficult to attain and urgent mobilization of all our efforts is called for.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This is of course the annual Vyron Theodoropoulos lecture. The ambassador is with us this evening. Ambassador Theodoropoulos' political and diplomatic acumen is, I think, well known. His Foreign Service career was as meaningful as his writings. Now, I am sure the Ambassador will agree that we can draw useful lessons from the past.

I was always struck by the fact that, during his exile, Venizelos chose to

occupy himself by translating Thucydides from ancient to Modern Greek. In this translation one can find an excellent definition of civic duty.

In his famous funeral oration Pericles declared:

"For we alone," he stated, "regard the man who takes no part in public affairs, not as one who minds his own business, but as good for nothing; we Athenians" -Pericles continued- "decide public questions for ourselves or at least endeavour to arrive at a sound understanding of them, in the belief that it is not debate that is a hindrance to action, but rather not to be instructed by debate before the time comes for action".

I do not repeat these words today simply as a proud former Mayor of Athens. These are words that echo through the ages and are still relevant today. They form a belief that always finds ways to turn into a cause. A belief that fuels movements of change.

As Winston Churchill once said: "All great things are simple, and many can be expressed in single words: freedom, justice, honor, duty, mercy, hope.

These are our common values. This is our "soft power."

Thank you very much for your attention.