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Control and Coordination at the Centre of Government
(Some Thoughts on Kevin Featherstone's Lecture)

Nov. 11, 2010

Mr. Ambassador,
Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Let me firstly confess how delighted I am with tonight's event organized by the LSE alumni association of Greece. I thank you very much for extending this kind invitation to me. It brings me back to the years of my study in London – *Ich bin ein Londoner* student myself, too.

It is also great pleasure and I feel honored indeed to stand here next to my distinguished colleague Professor Kevin Featherstone of the LSE, whose insightful introduction to the topic of our discussion we just enjoyed and have all benefited from it. My satisfaction is doubled by the presence of the learned journalist Mr. Alexis Papachelas whose comments and delving remarks I am anxious to listen to.

What I intend to do in my brief intervention is, firstly, to underline some of the key points put forward by Professor Featherstone in his seminal lecture as I understood them; secondly, add two more points based on the historical experience of Greece and the constitutional confines of the prime minister's role and authority; thirdly, I will raise a question on the likely implications of further

increasing and augmenting the prime ministerial power, and finally, I will conclude with a more modest proposal of mine.

Hopefully, all that can be done and delivered within the next ten or fifteen minutes! But don't worry, if I see you watching the clock, I'll stop right away.

2. Kevin Featherstone addressed in unmistakable terms a crucial issue of governance in Greece. That is the limited institutional capacity that is available at the centre of Government and in particular under its headmaster, the prime minister. A capacity to exert control and bring about coordination in policy design and implementation on the part of a highly differentiated, if not fragmented, government machinery.

According to his diagnosis of the problem, the institutional, organizational and managerial resources at the disposal of the prime minister are weak and insufficient. As a result, the prime minister looks like an emperor without clothes – as far as policy control and coordination is concerned. A further consequence of this sort of institutional bareness at the primeministerial level is that policy tends to be poorly implemented, executed and coordinated, especially those policy initiatives that are reform oriented, I might add.

He did also remind us that this kind of control and coordination deficit is of a perennial nature in the Greek system of governance and public administration. It is evident in the domineering or heroic political figures of Eleutherios Venizelos, Karamanlis the elder and Papandreou the senior. And it becomes even more alarming in the administration on the part of less charismatic and more ordinary political leaders and heads of government. In the latter case it may and often does spring up in a more acute and threatening form.

In the light of all this, the conclusion is well sustained that organizing in a more professional and systematic manner the primeministerial office looks like an

urgent necessity. To that end, the team of international experts that the current Prime Minister has convened has already submitted certain proposals. Kevin was, understandably, careful enough not to reveal them, save the caveat that they have not so far been fully accepted nor implemented.

As a result, I would surmise, the emperor continues to remain unclothed!

3. May I turn now to the two points of mine.

Firstly, the one based on historical experience. In the history of the 92 prime ministers of Greece from Ioannis Kapodistrias who assumed office in January 1828 up to the current prime minister there have appeared dominant political figures and minor ones. It would hardly surprise you if I said that the former are less numerous than the latter. Indeed out of the 92 prime ministers since independence only 5 or 6 may be considered as major ones, in terms of length and duration of office, legitimate and effective governance and administration.

It is not hard to agree that in this category there may be included such great political personalities as the first Governor of Greece, Ioannis Kapodistrias, who is credited with the immense task of state building in the most adverse historical conditions; Charilaos Trikoupi in the second half of the 19th century is rightfully considered as the father of the parliamentary system of governance and a great promoter of modernization of the state; Eleutherios Venizelos dominated politics and governance in the first half of the 20th century, doubled the size of the country and launched measures of reform in various sectors of public life; Constantine Karamanlis in the 2nd half of the 20th century not only exercised power for a longer period than anyone else (for more than 13 years), but advanced rapid growth of the economy in the 1950s and 60s, secured the accession of Greece to the then European Economic Community and contributed as no one else to the modernization of the political system after the collapse of the colonel's regime in

the 1970s; last but not least, Andreas Papandreou, who was much loved and admired by the people at large, further promoted the democratization and opening of the political system as a whole.

The reason I am making this historical reference is to point to a paradox that is of interest to our discussion. Despite the fact that the above great political leaders exercised power for rather longish periods of time and reached decisions of immense historical significance (state building, modernization and democratization, rapid growth, international associations, etc.) none of them was equipped in his gubernatorial capacity with an extensive staff of assistance at his immediate succour. Nor did they face serious problems of coordination and control on the part of the ministers and the departments of state answerable to them; and if they did, the response was swiftly and appropriately delivered. They were great political figures with a clear vision of aim and strategy who did barely realize the need of an articulate central office to support them in the exercise of their duties. Personal charisma and prestige (even fear) counterbalanced the lack of management and institutionalization at the prime minister's office. They were emperors vested with clothes of authority, but also with the necessary sticks and whips at their hands. To use Machiavelli's memorable metaphor, they were acting both as "lions and foxes" according to the need to mobilize and persuade their government and party in order to lead the country towards policy ends of major significance.

May we then reach a sort of a provisional conclusion: namely, the more dominant and imposing the political personality assuming the office of the prime minister, the less has been the need for a delicate and extensive staff of assistance to him besides that already available in the various departments of state; on the contrary, the less imperial and more conventional the figure of the top executive, the more in need he will be of an appropriate system of control and

coordination of policy design and implementation by the line departments, that need to be watched and monitored in their performance.

It comes of no surprise then that it was during the Mitsotakis and the Simitis premierships in the 1990s that there were drafted more elaborate systems of central control and coordination of government policy (ample evidence to that was provided in Kevin' s speech a little while ago).

4. I will proceed now with the second point of mine that refers to the constitutional and legal framework of legitimate governance in Greece. I guess that most people would agree with the idea that governance in a democracy has of course to be efficient and effective, but also faithful to the constitutional boundaries of the exercise of power and authority. Governance has to be constitutional governance, that is to comply as much as possible with the letter and above all with the spirit of the Constitution. Otherwise, its claim of legitimacy is undermined.

What does then the existing Constitution provide for the appropriate form of governance in Greece? According to the standing constitutional requirements, the legitimate source of authority for running the country and setting the general policy of it is not the President of the Republic, as it is the case in France or the United States, nor the Prime Minister himself, alone: it is the Cabinet. Thus according to the article 82 § 1 of the Constitution, “*The Government determines and directs the general policy of the Country...*”.

If you are still wondering what at last is “the Government”, then the previous article of the Constitution (81 § 1) provides the answer: “*The Government is the Council of Ministers, which is comprised of the Prime Minister and the Ministers*”. That is to say, the government is not the prime minister alone, nor of course the ministers by themselves. The government is the Cabinet (the prime

minister and the ministers collectively). The constitutionally legitimate form of governance in Greece is Cabinet Government much as it is the case in Britain. The general policy of the country is shaped by the Cabinet, not the Prime Minister alone or exclusively. According to article 82 § 2 of the Constitution, “*The Prime Minister secures the unity of the Government and steers its activities, along with them of public services in general for the implementation of governmental policy within the framework of the law*”.

It is certainly the case that the Prime Minister himself is vested with the discretionary authority and the sole prerogative to determine the composition of the Cabinet, since its members are appointed or dismissed on the basis of his proposal. But once the composition of the Cabinet has been set, it becomes the centre of governance – at least as far as the Constitution is concerned. The Constitution provides for the collective, that is the Cabinet form and system of governance, not the monocratic (‘prothipourgokentriko’) or presidential one.

Whilst the members of the cabinet in a presidential system of governance, for instance that of the USA, are essentially no more but a team of advisors to the President, in parliamentary systems they are decision makers themselves both as members of the collective body (the Cabinet) that sets the general policy of the country, and as the heads of the particular Departments of State in respective policy areas which they shape and direct. They are the policy managers and executors par excellence, not merely the advisors to the Prime Minister.

Furthermore, in parliamentary systems the members of the Cabinet are usually key political figures of the party with a distinctive career in politics and Parliament before and after their accession to a cabinet position. And once there, they act as a team of equals, if not rivals, as Abraham Lincoln would have thought, to the Prime Minister in order to meet people’s problems. In presidential systems they are technocrats providing a professional input to policy that is finally set by

the President himself. The latter is responsible for the choices made during his administration, whereas in parliamentary systems the Cabinet is collectively responsible for the policy of the government as a whole. The ministers are legislators and appliers of policy that is basically designed within the Departments they direct.

The ultimate authority of governance in parliamentary systems lies with a collective body not a single person. Collective bodies are known to be important to deliberation, consultation and even compromise; not so much to swift action, secrecy and dispatch. These may be merits of a solitary or one member institution but not to collective ones. That may go a long way explaining perhaps the tendency to primeministerial aggrandizement and overreaching distinct in the Greek system of governance. However, the constitutional provision of article 82 § 2 that enhances the Prime Minister with the authority to steer or even direct the activities of the Government cannot be taken to mean anything less than leading and coordinating it to the desired policy ends; but I would not risk interpreting it as investing the head of the government with the exclusive authority to make policy choices and decisions himself alone. Leadership in government is important as it is in many walks of life; but it cannot be overstretched to entail elimination of deliberation, persuasion and criticism in the collective body that is supposed to be led. Good reasoning before decision making is a condition not only for the legitimacy but also for the quality of the decisions taken and their effectiveness.

5. I am fully aware of the fact that in practice and for a number of reasons that cannot be explained here, we are witnessing a shift of focus in the operation of Government and the political system as a whole towards a more concentrated model or type. The office of the Prime Minister has evolved as a separate and supreme centre of power and authority in the operation of the political system and

the functioning of government itself. It has taken almost the whole of the *core executive* and has become or seeks to become *primus solus* in the parliamentary system of governance, as we say in more legal terms. There is, in brief, ample evidence for a tendency of convergence with a more presidential style and type of governance and administration.

The phenomenon of the latent presidentialization of cabinet government and the increasingly gubernatorial role assumed by prime ministers is something that I had the chance myself to study a few years ago when I was writing my book on *Prime Ministers of Greece* since independence. But I remained then as I remain today wary about the likely implications of this phenomenon not only in terms of the Constitutional arrangements, but also with regard to the danger of excessive concentration of political power in a sole base or a few hands.

The question then can be raised as to whether recent developments that shift the core executive in the process of governance from the Cabinet to the Prime Minister alone would be further aggravated by measures and proposals to even more augment the primeministerial authority with staff, resources and policy monitoring tools and instruments. In other words, dressing the emperor with even more power has certain risks as far as the quality of democracy is concerned. That is something that cannot be not overlooked. Nor would be welcome that distrust or fear of ministerial inertia and departmental autonomy should entail erecting a primeministerial bureaucracy to counterbalance it or as a defense against it. The major risk to that is for the primeminister's office to get involved in routine administration and muddling through. It is not unlikely that confusion not coordination is created when too much is being done at the top. Hence, the core managerial value of delegation that is applicable to primeministerial job, too.

6. I would submit, and here I reach my conclusion before I see more eyes turning to the watches, that we had better conceive of the policy resources available at the centre of Government in more analytical and less material terms; not so much in terms of the size of the staff and the control they exert, but rather in more qualitative terms of forward thinking and thorough analysis beforehand. May I also add that the centre of policy analysis that is indispensable to contemporary governance should not necessarily be placed at the Prime Minister's office only but rather at the Cabinet office.

To be more concrete, I believe that what we really miss in Greece is a more regular operation of the Cabinet or collective system of Governance supported by something similar perhaps to the Central Policy Review Staff that existed in Britain in the 1970s. Namely, an institutional means to assist the Cabinet collectively and in advance of its deliberation on matters of policy with in depth analysis of forthcoming policy initiatives and evaluation of the actual results of decisions taken. The policy papers prepared by this staff ought to be available beforehand to all members of the Cabinet, namely the heads of the various Departments of State, who should regularly be invited and encouraged, as it is their constitutional right and duty, to participate in the deliberations and debate on the policy options discussed in the Cabinet. Once policy decisions are reached and agreed upon, their implementation may be expected to follow suit and coordination of action is more likely to emerge, since earlier participation does not only form a prerequisite for the quality of decision and action, but also an intrinsic value of the Cabinet system of governance. And coordination of the Cabinet cannot mean subjugation nor neglect, but cooperation and confidence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It can be hardly disputed today that better governance cannot be secured by traditional party political practices of clientelism and amateurism. Enhancing the analytical and professional dimension of policy making and implementation at the centre of Government is of the outmost necessity. But the centre of government in parliamentary democracies is not placed in the priministerial office exclusively, but in the Cabinet collectively. The gist of the role of the prime minister is to secure that the Cabinet comprises of the best talent available in the party, if not in the country, and that in their functioning they equally share the best available analysis and information on matters of policy.

May I also add that in a democracy we are not so much in need of “emperors” (clothed or unclothed) as with leaders able to guide and direct, inspire and harmonize the tunes and instruments of collective action towards the common wealth. After all, the essence of management rests with the capacity to “get thing done” (basically, through others); and coordination in modern policy and administration is not so much a top down or hierarchical command system, but rather a horizontal analysis, debate and creative synthesis of opinion and choices. Subordinates may be coordinated by orders and command, but a team of equals or even rivals can only be coordinated by discussion, deliberation and debate, preferably on the basis of professional policy advice and documentation. The role of the Prime Minister is then something similar to what Sir Robert Peel once described as an “*uncommon man of common opinions*”, or to what Plato in his *Politicus* would have considered as the essence of leadership, that is “*networking the threads of policy and action*”.

I am grateful to professor Featherstone for raising the whole issue in his seminal paper and inviting us to think critically about it.

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Firstly, the one based on historical experience. In the history of the 92 prime ministers of Greece from Ioannis Kapodistrias who assumed office in January 1828 up to the current prime minister there have appeared dominant political figures and minor ones. It would hardly surprise you if I said that the former are less numerous than the latter. Indeed out of the 92 prime ministers since independence only 5 or 6 may be considered as major ones, in terms of length and duration of office, legitimate and effective governance and administration.

It is not hard to agree that in this category there may be included such great political personalities as the first Governor of Greece, Ioannis Kapodistrias, who is credited with the immense task of state building in the most adverse historical conditions; Charilaos Trikoupi in the second half of the 19th century is rightfully considered as the father of the parliamentary system of governance and a great promoter of modernization of the state; Eleutherios Venizelos dominated politics and governance in the first half of the 20th century, doubled the size of the country and launched measures of reform in various sectors of public life; Constantine Karamanlis in the 2nd half of the 20th century not only exercised power for a longer period than anyone else (for more than 13 years), but advanced rapid growth of the economy in the 1950s and 60s, secured the accession of Greece to the then European Economic Community and contributed as no one else to the modernization of the political system after the collapse of the colonel's regime in

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The reason I am making this historical reference is to point to a paradox that is of interest to our discussion. Despite the fact that the above great political leaders exercised power for rather longish periods of time and reached decisions of immense historical significance (state building, modernization and democratization, rapid growth, international associations, etc.) none of them was equipped in his gubernatorial capacity with an extensive staff of assistance at his immediate succour. Nor did they face serious problems of coordination and control on the part of the ministers and the departments of state answerable to them; and if they did, the response was swiftly and appropriately delivered. They were great political figures with a clear vision of aim and strategy who did barely realize the need of an articulate central office to support them in the exercise of their duties. Personal charisma and prestige (even fear) counterbalanced the lack of management and institutionalization at the prime minister's office. They were emperors vested with clothes of authority, but also with the necessary sticks and whips at their hands. To use Machiavelli's memorable metaphor, they were acting both as "lions and foxes" according to the need to mobilize and persuade their government and party in order to lead the country towards policy ends of major significance.

May we then reach a sort of a provisional conclusion: namely, the more dominant and imposing the political personality assuming the office of the prime minister, the less has been the need for a delicate and extensive staff of assistance to him besides that already available in the various departments of state; on the contrary, the less imperial and more conventional the figure of the top executive, the more in need he will be of an appropriate system of control and

coordination of policy design and implementation by the line departments, that need to be watched and monitored in their performance.

It comes of no surprise then that it was during the Mitsotakis and the Simitis premierships in the 1990s that there were drafted more elaborate systems of central control and coordination of government policy (ample evidence to that was provided in Kevin' s speech a little while ago).

4. I will proceed now with the second point of mine that refers to the constitutional and legal framework of legitimate governance in Greece. I guess that most people would agree with the idea that governance in a democracy has of course to be efficient and effective, but also faithful to the constitutional boundaries of the exercise of power and authority. Governance has to be constitutional governance, that is to comply as much as possible with the letter and above all with the spirit of the Constitution. Otherwise, its claim of legitimacy is undermined.

What does then the existing Constitution provide for the appropriate form of governance in Greece? According to the standing constitutional requirements, the legitimate source of authority for running the country and setting the general policy of it is not the President of the Republic, as it is the case in France or the United States, nor the Prime Minister himself, alone: it is the Cabinet. Thus according to the article 82 § 1 of the Constitution, “*The Government determines and directs the general policy of the Country...*”.

If you are still wondering what at last is “the Government”, then the previous article of the Constitution (81 § 1) provides the answer: “*The Government is the Council of Ministers, which is comprised of the Prime Minister and the Ministers*”. That is to say, the government is not the prime minister alone, nor of course the ministers by themselves. The government is the Cabinet (the prime

minister and the ministers collectively). The constitutionally legitimate form of governance in Greece is Cabinet Government much as it is the case in Britain. The general policy of the country is shaped by the Cabinet, not the Prime Minister alone or exclusively. According to article 82 § 2 of the Constitution, “*The Prime Minister secures the unity of the Government and steers its activities, along with them of public services in general for the implementation of governmental policy within the framework of the law*”.

It is certainly the case that the Prime Minister himself is vested with the discretionary authority and the sole prerogative to determine the composition of the Cabinet, since its members are appointed or dismissed on the basis of his proposal. But once the composition of the Cabinet has been set, it becomes the centre of governance – at least as far as the Constitution is concerned. The Constitution provides for the collective, that is the Cabinet form and system of governance, not the monocratic (‘prothipourgokentriko’) or presidential one.

Whilst the members of the cabinet in a presidential system of governance, for instance that of the USA, are essentially no more but a team of advisors to the President, in parliamentary systems they are decision makers themselves both as members of the collective body (the Cabinet) that sets the general policy of the country, and as the heads of the particular Departments of State in respective policy areas which they shape and direct. They are the policy managers and executors par excellence, not merely the advisors to the Prime Minister.

Furthermore, in parliamentary systems the members of the Cabinet are usually key political figures of the party with a distinctive career in politics and Parliament before and after their accession to a cabinet position. And once there, they act as a team of equals, if not rivals, as Abraham Lincoln would have thought, to the Prime Minister in order to meet people’s problems. In presidential systems they are technocrats providing a professional input to policy that is finally set by

the President himself. The latter is responsible for the choices made during his administration, whereas in parliamentary systems the Cabinet is collectively responsible for the policy of the government as a whole. The ministers are legislators and appliers of policy that is basically designed within the Departments they direct.

The ultimate authority of governance in parliamentary systems lies with a collective body not a single person. Collective bodies are known to be important to deliberation, consultation and even compromise; not so much to swift action, secrecy and dispatch. These may be merits of a solitary or one member institution but not to collective ones. That may go a long way explaining perhaps the tendency to primeministerial aggrandizement and overreaching distinct in the Greek system of governance. However, the constitutional provision of article 82 § 2 that enhances the Prime Minister with the authority to steer or even direct the activities of the Government cannot be taken to mean anything less than leading and coordinating it to the desired policy ends; but I would not risk interpreting it as investing the head of the government with the exclusive authority to make policy choices and decisions himself alone. Leadership in government is important as it is in many walks of life; but it cannot be overstretched to entail elimination of deliberation, persuasion and criticism in the collective body that is supposed to be led. Good reasoning before decision making is a condition not only for the legitimacy but also for the quality of the decisions taken and their effectiveness.

5. I am fully aware of the fact that in practice and for a number of reasons that cannot be explained here, we are witnessing a shift of focus in the operation of Government and the political system as a whole towards a more concentrated model or type. The office of the Prime Minister has evolved as a separate and supreme centre of power and authority in the operation of the political system and

the functioning of government itself. It has taken almost the whole of the *core executive* and has become or seeks to become *primus solus* in the parliamentary system of governance, as we say in more legal terms. There is, in brief, ample evidence for a tendency of convergence with a more presidential style and type of governance and administration.

The phenomenon of the latent presidentialization of cabinet government and the increasingly gubernatorial role assumed by prime ministers is something that I had the chance myself to study a few years ago when I was writing my book on *Prime Ministers of Greece* since independence. But I remained then as I remain today wary about the likely implications of this phenomenon not only in terms of the Constitutional arrangements, but also with regard to the danger of excessive concentration of political power in a sole base or a few hands.

The question then can be raised as to whether recent developments that shift the core executive in the process of governance from the Cabinet to the Prime Minister alone would be further aggravated by measures and proposals to even more augment the primeministerial authority with staff, resources and policy monitoring tools and instruments. In other words, dressing the emperor with even more power has certain risks as far as the quality of democracy is concerned. That is something that cannot be not overlooked. Nor would be welcome that distrust or fear of ministerial inertia and departmental autonomy should entail erecting a primeministerial bureaucracy to counterbalance it or as a defense against it. The major risk to that is for the primeminister's office to get involved in routine administration and muddling through. It is not unlikely that confusion not coordination is created when too much is being done at the top. Hence, the core managerial value of delegation that is applicable to primeministerial job, too.

6. I would submit, and here I reach my conclusion before I see more eyes turning to the watches, that we had better conceive of the policy resources available at the centre of Government in more analytical and less material terms; not so much in terms of the size of the staff and the control they exert, but rather in more qualitative terms of forward thinking and thorough analysis beforehand. May I also add that the centre of policy analysis that is indispensable to contemporary governance should not necessarily be placed at the Prime Minister's office only but rather at the Cabinet office.

To be more concrete, I believe that what we really miss in Greece is a more regular operation of the Cabinet or collective system of Governance supported by something similar perhaps to the Central Policy Review Staff that existed in Britain in the 1970s. Namely, an institutional means to assist the Cabinet collectively and in advance of its deliberation on matters of policy with in depth analysis of forthcoming policy initiatives and evaluation of the actual results of decisions taken. The policy papers prepared by this staff ought to be available beforehand to all members of the Cabinet, namely the heads of the various Departments of State, who should regularly be invited and encouraged, as it is their constitutional right and duty, to participate in the deliberations and debate on the policy options discussed in the Cabinet. Once policy decisions are reached and agreed upon, their implementation may be expected to follow suit and coordination of action is more likely to emerge, since earlier participation does not only form a prerequisite for the quality of decision and action, but also an intrinsic value of the Cabinet system of governance. And coordination of the Cabinet cannot mean subjugation nor neglect, but cooperation and confidence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It can be hardly disputed today that better governance cannot be secured by traditional party political practices of clientelism and amateurism. Enhancing the analytical and professional dimension of policy making and implementation at the centre of Government is of the outmost necessity. But the centre of government in parliamentary democracies is not placed in the priministerial office exclusively, but in the Cabinet collectively. The gist of the role of the prime minister is to secure that the Cabinet comprises of the best talent available in the party, if not in the country, and that in their functioning they equally share the best available analysis and information on matters of policy.

May I also add that in a democracy we are not so much in need of “emperors” (clothed or unclothed) as with leaders able to guide and direct, inspire and harmonize the tunes and instruments of collective action towards the common wealth. After all, the essence of management rests with the capacity to “get thing done” (basically, through others); and coordination in modern policy and administration is not so much a top down or hierarchical command system, but rather a horizontal analysis, debate and creative synthesis of opinion and choices. Subordinates may be coordinated by orders and command, but a team of equals or even rivals can only be coordinated by discussion, deliberation and debate, preferably on the basis of professional policy advice and documentation. The role of the Prime Minister is then something similar to what Sir Robert Peel once described as an “*uncommon man of common opinions*”, or to what Plato in his *Politicus* would have considered as the essence of leadership, that is “*networking the threads of policy and action*”.

I am grateful to professor Featherstone for raising the whole issue in his seminal paper and inviting us to think critically about it.

Thank you for your attention.

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Control and Coordination at the Centre of Government
(Some Thoughts on Kevin Featherstone's Lecture)

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Mr. Ambassador,
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Let me firstly confess how delighted I am with tonight's event organized by the LSE alumni association of Greece. I thank you very much for extending this kind invitation to me. It brings me back to the years of my study in London – *Ich bin ein Londoner* student myself, too.

It is also great pleasure and I feel honored indeed to stand here next to my distinguished colleague Professor Kevin Featherstone of the LSE, whose insightful introduction to the topic of our discussion we just enjoyed and have all benefited from it. My satisfaction is doubled by the presence of the learned journalist Mr. Alexis Papachelas whose comments and delving remarks I am anxious to listen to.

What I intend to do in my brief intervention is, firstly, to underline some of the key points put forward by Professor Featherstone in his seminal lecture as I understood them; secondly, add two more points based on the historical experience of Greece and the constitutional confines of the prime minister's role and authority; thirdly, I will raise a question on the likely implications of further

increasing and augmenting the prime ministerial power, and finally, I will conclude with a more modest proposal of mine.

Hopefully, all that can be done and delivered within the next ten or fifteen minutes! But don't worry, if I see you watching the clock, I'll stop right away.

2. Kevin Featherstone addressed in unmistakable terms a crucial issue of governance in Greece. That is the limited institutional capacity that is available at the centre of Government and in particular under its headmaster, the prime minister. A capacity to exert control and bring about coordination in policy design and implementation on the part of a highly differentiated, if not fragmented, government machinery.

According to his diagnosis of the problem, the institutional, organizational and managerial resources at the disposal of the prime minister are weak and insufficient. As a result, the prime minister looks like an emperor without clothes – as far as policy control and coordination is concerned. A further consequence of this sort of institutional bareness at the primeministerial level is that policy tends to be poorly implemented, executed and coordinated, especially those policy initiatives that are reform oriented, I might add.

He did also remind us that this kind of control and coordination deficit is of a perennial nature in the Greek system of governance and public administration. It is evident in the domineering or heroic political figures of Eleutherios Venizelos, Karamanlis the elder and Papandreou the senior. And it becomes even more alarming in the administration on the part of less charismatic and more ordinary political leaders and heads of government. In the latter case it may and often does spring up in a more acute and threatening form.

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The reason I am making this historical reference is to point to a paradox that is of interest to our discussion. Despite the fact that the above great political leaders exercised power for rather longish periods of time and reached decisions of immense historical significance (state building, modernization and democratization, rapid growth, international associations, etc.) none of them was equipped in his gubernatorial capacity with an extensive staff of assistance at his immediate succour. Nor did they face serious problems of coordination and control on the part of the ministers and the departments of state answerable to them; and if they did, the response was swiftly and appropriately delivered. They were great political figures with a clear vision of aim and strategy who did barely realize the need of an articulate central office to support them in the exercise of their duties. Personal charisma and prestige (even fear) counterbalanced the lack of management and institutionalization at the prime minister's office. They were emperors vested with clothes of authority, but also with the necessary sticks and whips at their hands. To use Machiavelli's memorable metaphor, they were acting both as "lions and foxes" according to the need to mobilize and persuade their government and party in order to lead the country towards policy ends of major significance.

May we then reach a sort of a provisional conclusion: namely, the more dominant and imposing the political personality assuming the office of the prime minister, the less has been the need for a delicate and extensive staff of assistance to him besides that already available in the various departments of state; on the contrary, the less imperial and more conventional the figure of the top executive, the more in need he will be of an appropriate system of control and

coordination of policy design and implementation by the line departments, that need to be watched and monitored in their performance.

It comes of no surprise then that it was during the Mitsotakis and the Simitis premierships in the 1990s that there were drafted more elaborate systems of central control and coordination of government policy (ample evidence to that was provided in Kevin' s speech a little while ago).

4. I will proceed now with the second point of mine that refers to the constitutional and legal framework of legitimate governance in Greece. I guess that most people would agree with the idea that governance in a democracy has of course to be efficient and effective, but also faithful to the constitutional boundaries of the exercise of power and authority. Governance has to be constitutional governance, that is to comply as much as possible with the letter and above all with the spirit of the Constitution. Otherwise, its claim of legitimacy is undermined.

What does then the existing Constitution provide for the appropriate form of governance in Greece? According to the standing constitutional requirements, the legitimate source of authority for running the country and setting the general policy of it is not the President of the Republic, as it is the case in France or the United States, nor the Prime Minister himself, alone: it is the Cabinet. Thus according to the article 82 § 1 of the Constitution, “*The Government determines and directs the general policy of the Country...*”.

If you are still wondering what at last is “the Government”, then the previous article of the Constitution (81 § 1) provides the answer: “*The Government is the Council of Ministers, which is comprised of the Prime Minister and the Ministers*”. That is to say, the government is not the prime minister alone, nor of course the ministers by themselves. The government is the Cabinet (the prime

minister and the ministers collectively). The constitutionally legitimate form of governance in Greece is Cabinet Government much as it is the case in Britain. The general policy of the country is shaped by the Cabinet, not the Prime Minister alone or exclusively. According to article 82 § 2 of the Constitution, “*The Prime Minister secures the unity of the Government and steers its activities, along with them of public services in general for the implementation of governmental policy within the framework of the law*”.

It is certainly the case that the Prime Minister himself is vested with the discretionary authority and the sole prerogative to determine the composition of the Cabinet, since its members are appointed or dismissed on the basis of his proposal. But once the composition of the Cabinet has been set, it becomes the centre of governance – at least as far as the Constitution is concerned. The Constitution provides for the collective, that is the Cabinet form and system of governance, not the monocratic (‘prothipourgokentriko’) or presidential one.

Whilst the members of the cabinet in a presidential system of governance, for instance that of the USA, are essentially no more but a team of advisors to the President, in parliamentary systems they are decision makers themselves both as members of the collective body (the Cabinet) that sets the general policy of the country, and as the heads of the particular Departments of State in respective policy areas which they shape and direct. They are the policy managers and executors par excellence, not merely the advisors to the Prime Minister.

Furthermore, in parliamentary systems the members of the Cabinet are usually key political figures of the party with a distinctive career in politics and Parliament before and after their accession to a cabinet position. And once there, they act as a team of equals, if not rivals, as Abraham Lincoln would have thought, to the Prime Minister in order to meet people’s problems. In presidential systems they are technocrats providing a professional input to policy that is finally set by

the President himself. The latter is responsible for the choices made during his administration, whereas in parliamentary systems the Cabinet is collectively responsible for the policy of the government as a whole. The ministers are legislators and appliers of policy that is basically designed within the Departments they direct.

The ultimate authority of governance in parliamentary systems lies with a collective body not a single person. Collective bodies are known to be important to deliberation, consultation and even compromise; not so much to swift action, secrecy and dispatch. These may be merits of a solitary or one member institution but not to collective ones. That may go a long way explaining perhaps the tendency to primeministerial aggrandizement and overreaching distinct in the Greek system of governance. However, the constitutional provision of article 82 § 2 that enhances the Prime Minister with the authority to steer or even direct the activities of the Government cannot be taken to mean anything less than leading and coordinating it to the desired policy ends; but I would not risk interpreting it as investing the head of the government with the exclusive authority to make policy choices and decisions himself alone. Leadership in government is important as it is in many walks of life; but it cannot be overstretched to entail elimination of deliberation, persuasion and criticism in the collective body that is supposed to be led. Good reasoning before decision making is a condition not only for the legitimacy but also for the quality of the decisions taken and their effectiveness.

5. I am fully aware of the fact that in practice and for a number of reasons that cannot be explained here, we are witnessing a shift of focus in the operation of Government and the political system as a whole towards a more concentrated model or type. The office of the Prime Minister has evolved as a separate and supreme centre of power and authority in the operation of the political system and

the functioning of government itself. It has taken almost the whole of the *core executive* and has become or seeks to become *primus solus* in the parliamentary system of governance, as we say in more legal terms. There is, in brief, ample evidence for a tendency of convergence with a more presidential style and type of governance and administration.

The phenomenon of the latent presidentialization of cabinet government and the increasingly gubernatorial role assumed by prime ministers is something that I had the chance myself to study a few years ago when I was writing my book on *Prime Ministers of Greece* since independence. But I remained then as I remain today wary about the likely implications of this phenomenon not only in terms of the Constitutional arrangements, but also with regard to the danger of excessive concentration of political power in a sole base or a few hands.

The question then can be raised as to whether recent developments that shift the core executive in the process of governance from the Cabinet to the Prime Minister alone would be further aggravated by measures and proposals to even more augment the primeministerial authority with staff, resources and policy monitoring tools and instruments. In other words, dressing the emperor with even more power has certain risks as far as the quality of democracy is concerned. That is something that cannot be not overlooked. Nor would be welcome that distrust or fear of ministerial inertia and departmental autonomy should entail erecting a primeministerial bureaucracy to counterbalance it or as a defense against it. The major risk to that is for the primeminister's office to get involved in routine administration and muddling through. It is not unlikely that confusion not coordination is created when too much is being done at the top. Hence, the core managerial value of delegation that is applicable to primeministerial job, too.

6. I would submit, and here I reach my conclusion before I see more eyes turning to the watches, that we had better conceive of the policy resources available at the centre of Government in more analytical and less material terms; not so much in terms of the size of the staff and the control they exert, but rather in more qualitative terms of forward thinking and thorough analysis beforehand. May I also add that the centre of policy analysis that is indispensable to contemporary governance should not necessarily be placed at the Prime Minister's office only but rather at the Cabinet office.

To be more concrete, I believe that what we really miss in Greece is a more regular operation of the Cabinet or collective system of Governance supported by something similar perhaps to the Central Policy Review Staff that existed in Britain in the 1970s. Namely, an institutional means to assist the Cabinet collectively and in advance of its deliberation on matters of policy with in depth analysis of forthcoming policy initiatives and evaluation of the actual results of decisions taken. The policy papers prepared by this staff ought to be available beforehand to all members of the Cabinet, namely the heads of the various Departments of State, who should regularly be invited and encouraged, as it is their constitutional right and duty, to participate in the deliberations and debate on the policy options discussed in the Cabinet. Once policy decisions are reached and agreed upon, their implementation may be expected to follow suit and coordination of action is more likely to emerge, since earlier participation does not only form a prerequisite for the quality of decision and action, but also an intrinsic value of the Cabinet system of governance. And coordination of the Cabinet cannot mean subjugation nor neglect, but cooperation and confidence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It can be hardly disputed today that better governance cannot be secured by traditional party political practices of clientelism and amateurism. Enhancing the analytical and professional dimension of policy making and implementation at the centre of Government is of the outmost necessity. But the centre of government in parliamentary democracies is not placed in the priministerial office exclusively, but in the Cabinet collectively. The gist of the role of the prime minister is to secure that the Cabinet comprises of the best talent available in the party, if not in the country, and that in their functioning they equally share the best available analysis and information on matters of policy.

May I also add that in a democracy we are not so much in need of “emperors” (clothed or unclothed) as with leaders able to guide and direct, inspire and harmonize the tunes and instruments of collective action towards the common wealth. After all, the essence of management rests with the capacity to “get thing done” (basically, through others); and coordination in modern policy and administration is not so much a top down or hierarchical command system, but rather a horizontal analysis, debate and creative synthesis of opinion and choices. Subordinates may be coordinated by orders and command, but a team of equals or even rivals can only be coordinated by discussion, deliberation and debate, preferably on the basis of professional policy advice and documentation. The role of the Prime Minister is then something similar to what Sir Robert Peel once described as an “*uncommon man of common opinions*”, or to what Plato in his *Politicus* would have considered as the essence of leadership, that is “*networking the threads of policy and action*”.

I am grateful to professor Featherstone for raising the whole issue in his seminal paper and inviting us to think critically about it.

Thank you for your attention.

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Control and Coordination at the Centre of Government
(Some Thoughts on Kevin Featherstone's Lecture)

Nov. 11, 2010

Mr. Ambassador,
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Let me firstly confess how delighted I am with tonight's event organized by the LSE alumni association of Greece. I thank you very much for extending this kind invitation to me. It brings me back to the years of my study in London – *Ich bin ein Londoner* student myself, too.

It is also great pleasure and I feel honored indeed to stand here next to my distinguished colleague Professor Kevin Featherstone of the LSE, whose insightful introduction to the topic of our discussion we just enjoyed and have all benefited from it. My satisfaction is doubled by the presence of the learned journalist Mr. Alexis Papachelas whose comments and delving remarks I am anxious to listen to.

What I intend to do in my brief intervention is, firstly, to underline some of the key points put forward by Professor Featherstone in his seminal lecture as I understood them; secondly, add two more points based on the historical experience of Greece and the constitutional confines of the prime minister's role and authority; thirdly, I will raise a question on the likely implications of further

increasing and augmenting the prime ministerial power, and finally, I will conclude with a more modest proposal of mine.

Hopefully, all that can be done and delivered within the next ten or fifteen minutes! But don't worry, if I see you watching the clock, I'll stop right away.

2. Kevin Featherstone addressed in unmistakable terms a crucial issue of governance in Greece. That is the limited institutional capacity that is available at the centre of Government and in particular under its headmaster, the prime minister. A capacity to exert control and bring about coordination in policy design and implementation on the part of a highly differentiated, if not fragmented, government machinery.

According to his diagnosis of the problem, the institutional, organizational and managerial resources at the disposal of the prime minister are weak and insufficient. As a result, the prime minister looks like an emperor without clothes – as far as policy control and coordination is concerned. A further consequence of this sort of institutional bareness at the primeministerial level is that policy tends to be poorly implemented, executed and coordinated, especially those policy initiatives that are reform oriented, I might add.

He did also remind us that this kind of control and coordination deficit is of a perennial nature in the Greek system of governance and public administration. It is evident in the domineering or heroic political figures of Eleutherios Venizelos, Karamanlis the elder and Papandreou the senior. And it becomes even more alarming in the administration on the part of less charismatic and more ordinary political leaders and heads of government. In the latter case it may and often does spring up in a more acute and threatening form.

In the light of all this, the conclusion is well sustained that organizing in a more professional and systematic manner the primeministerial office looks like an

urgent necessity. To that end, the team of international experts that the current Prime Minister has convened has already submitted certain proposals. Kevin was, understandably, careful enough not to reveal them, save the caveat that they have not so far been fully accepted nor implemented.

As a result, I would surmise, the emperor continues to remain unclothed!

3. May I turn now to the two points of mine.

Firstly, the one based on historical experience. In the history of the 92 prime ministers of Greece from Ioannis Kapodistrias who assumed office in January 1828 up to the current prime minister there have appeared dominant political figures and minor ones. It would hardly surprise you if I said that the former are less numerous than the latter. Indeed out of the 92 prime ministers since independence only 5 or 6 may be considered as major ones, in terms of length and duration of office, legitimate and effective governance and administration.

It is not hard to agree that in this category there may be included such great political personalities as the first Governor of Greece, Ioannis Kapodistrias, who is credited with the immense task of state building in the most adverse historical conditions; Charilaos Trikoupi in the second half of the 19th century is rightfully considered as the father of the parliamentary system of governance and a great promoter of modernization of the state; Eleutherios Venizelos dominated politics and governance in the first half of the 20th century, doubled the size of the country and launched measures of reform in various sectors of public life; Constantine Karamanlis in the 2nd half of the 20th century not only exercised power for a longer period than anyone else (for more than 13 years), but advanced rapid growth of the economy in the 1950s and 60s, secured the accession of Greece to the then European Economic Community and contributed as no one else to the modernization of the political system after the collapse of the colonel's regime in

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It comes of no surprise then that it was during the Mitsotakis and the Simitis premierships in the 1990s that there were drafted more elaborate systems of central control and coordination of government policy (ample evidence to that was provided in Kevin' s speech a little while ago).

4. I will proceed now with the second point of mine that refers to the constitutional and legal framework of legitimate governance in Greece. I guess that most people would agree with the idea that governance in a democracy has of course to be efficient and effective, but also faithful to the constitutional boundaries of the exercise of power and authority. Governance has to be constitutional governance, that is to comply as much as possible with the letter and above all with the spirit of the Constitution. Otherwise, its claim of legitimacy is undermined.

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It is certainly the case that the Prime Minister himself is vested with the discretionary authority and the sole prerogative to determine the composition of the Cabinet, since its members are appointed or dismissed on the basis of his proposal. But once the composition of the Cabinet has been set, it becomes the centre of governance – at least as far as the Constitution is concerned. The Constitution provides for the collective, that is the Cabinet form and system of governance, not the monocratic (‘prothipourgokentriko’) or presidential one.

Whilst the members of the cabinet in a presidential system of governance, for instance that of the USA, are essentially no more but a team of advisors to the President, in parliamentary systems they are decision makers themselves both as members of the collective body (the Cabinet) that sets the general policy of the country, and as the heads of the particular Departments of State in respective policy areas which they shape and direct. They are the policy managers and executors par excellence, not merely the advisors to the Prime Minister.

Furthermore, in parliamentary systems the members of the Cabinet are usually key political figures of the party with a distinctive career in politics and Parliament before and after their accession to a cabinet position. And once there, they act as a team of equals, if not rivals, as Abraham Lincoln would have thought, to the Prime Minister in order to meet people’s problems. In presidential systems they are technocrats providing a professional input to policy that is finally set by

the President himself. The latter is responsible for the choices made during his administration, whereas in parliamentary systems the Cabinet is collectively responsible for the policy of the government as a whole. The ministers are legislators and appliers of policy that is basically designed within the Departments they direct.

The ultimate authority of governance in parliamentary systems lies with a collective body not a single person. Collective bodies are known to be important to deliberation, consultation and even compromise; not so much to swift action, secrecy and dispatch. These may be merits of a solitary or one member institution but not to collective ones. That may go a long way explaining perhaps the tendency to primeministerial aggrandizement and overreaching distinct in the Greek system of governance. However, the constitutional provision of article 82 § 2 that enhances the Prime Minister with the authority to steer or even direct the activities of the Government cannot be taken to mean anything less than leading and coordinating it to the desired policy ends; but I would not risk interpreting it as investing the head of the government with the exclusive authority to make policy choices and decisions himself alone. Leadership in government is important as it is in many walks of life; but it cannot be overstretched to entail elimination of deliberation, persuasion and criticism in the collective body that is supposed to be led. Good reasoning before decision making is a condition not only for the legitimacy but also for the quality of the decisions taken and their effectiveness.

5. I am fully aware of the fact that in practice and for a number of reasons that cannot be explained here, we are witnessing a shift of focus in the operation of Government and the political system as a whole towards a more concentrated model or type. The office of the Prime Minister has evolved as a separate and supreme centre of power and authority in the operation of the political system and

the functioning of government itself. It has taken almost the whole of the *core executive* and has become or seeks to become *primus solus* in the parliamentary system of governance, as we say in more legal terms. There is, in brief, ample evidence for a tendency of convergence with a more presidential style and type of governance and administration.

The phenomenon of the latent presidentialization of cabinet government and the increasingly gubernatorial role assumed by prime ministers is something that I had the chance myself to study a few years ago when I was writing my book on *Prime Ministers of Greece* since independence. But I remained then as I remain today wary about the likely implications of this phenomenon not only in terms of the Constitutional arrangements, but also with regard to the danger of excessive concentration of political power in a sole base or a few hands.

The question then can be raised as to whether recent developments that shift the core executive in the process of governance from the Cabinet to the Prime Minister alone would be further aggravated by measures and proposals to even more augment the primeministerial authority with staff, resources and policy monitoring tools and instruments. In other words, dressing the emperor with even more power has certain risks as far as the quality of democracy is concerned. That is something that cannot be not overlooked. Nor would be welcome that distrust or fear of ministerial inertia and departmental autonomy should entail erecting a primeministerial bureaucracy to counterbalance it or as a defense against it. The major risk to that is for the primeminister's office to get involved in routine administration and muddling through. It is not unlikely that confusion not coordination is created when too much is being done at the top. Hence, the core managerial value of delegation that is applicable to primeministerial job, too.

6. I would submit, and here I reach my conclusion before I see more eyes turning to the watches, that we had better conceive of the policy resources available at the centre of Government in more analytical and less material terms; not so much in terms of the size of the staff and the control they exert, but rather in more qualitative terms of forward thinking and thorough analysis beforehand. May I also add that the centre of policy analysis that is indispensable to contemporary governance should not necessarily be placed at the Prime Minister's office only but rather at the Cabinet office.

To be more concrete, I believe that what we really miss in Greece is a more regular operation of the Cabinet or collective system of Governance supported by something similar perhaps to the Central Policy Review Staff that existed in Britain in the 1970s. Namely, an institutional means to assist the Cabinet collectively and in advance of its deliberation on matters of policy with in depth analysis of forthcoming policy initiatives and evaluation of the actual results of decisions taken. The policy papers prepared by this staff ought to be available beforehand to all members of the Cabinet, namely the heads of the various Departments of State, who should regularly be invited and encouraged, as it is their constitutional right and duty, to participate in the deliberations and debate on the policy options discussed in the Cabinet. Once policy decisions are reached and agreed upon, their implementation may be expected to follow suit and coordination of action is more likely to emerge, since earlier participation does not only form a prerequisite for the quality of decision and action, but also an intrinsic value of the Cabinet system of governance. And coordination of the Cabinet cannot mean subjugation nor neglect, but cooperation and confidence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It can be hardly disputed today that better governance cannot be secured by traditional party political practices of clientelism and amateurism. Enhancing the analytical and professional dimension of policy making and implementation at the centre of Government is of the outmost necessity. But the centre of government in parliamentary democracies is not placed in the priministerial office exclusively, but in the Cabinet collectively. The gist of the role of the prime minister is to secure that the Cabinet comprises of the best talent available in the party, if not in the country, and that in their functioning they equally share the best available analysis and information on matters of policy.

May I also add that in a democracy we are not so much in need of “emperors” (clothed or unclothed) as with leaders able to guide and direct, inspire and harmonize the tunes and instruments of collective action towards the common wealth. After all, the essence of management rests with the capacity to “get thing done” (basically, through others); and coordination in modern policy and administration is not so much a top down or hierarchical command system, but rather a horizontal analysis, debate and creative synthesis of opinion and choices. Subordinates may be coordinated by orders and command, but a team of equals or even rivals can only be coordinated by discussion, deliberation and debate, preferably on the basis of professional policy advice and documentation. The role of the Prime Minister is then something similar to what Sir Robert Peel once described as an “*uncommon man of common opinions*”, or to what Plato in his *Politicus* would have considered as the essence of leadership, that is “*networking the threads of policy and action*”.

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Thank you for your attention.

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Control and Coordination at the Centre of Government
(Some Thoughts on Kevin Featherstone's Lecture)

Nov. 11, 2010

Mr. Ambassador,
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1. Let me firstly confess how delighted I am with tonight's event organized by the LSE alumni association of Greece. I thank you very much for extending this kind invitation to me. It brings me back to the years of my study in London – *Ich bin ein Londoner* student myself, too.

It is also great pleasure and I feel honored indeed to stand here next to my distinguished colleague Professor Kevin Featherstone of the LSE, whose insightful introduction to the topic of our discussion we just enjoyed and have all benefited from it. My satisfaction is doubled by the presence of the learned journalist Mr. Alexis Papachelas whose comments and delving remarks I am anxious to listen to.

What I intend to do in my brief intervention is, firstly, to underline some of the key points put forward by Professor Featherstone in his seminal lecture as I understood them; secondly, add two more points based on the historical experience of Greece and the constitutional confines of the prime minister's role and authority; thirdly, I will raise a question on the likely implications of further

increasing and augmenting the prime ministerial power, and finally, I will conclude with a more modest proposal of mine.

Hopefully, all that can be done and delivered within the next ten or fifteen minutes! But don't worry, if I see you watching the clock, I'll stop right away.

2. Kevin Featherstone addressed in unmistakable terms a crucial issue of governance in Greece. That is the limited institutional capacity that is available at the centre of Government and in particular under its headmaster, the prime minister. A capacity to exert control and bring about coordination in policy design and implementation on the part of a highly differentiated, if not fragmented, government machinery.

According to his diagnosis of the problem, the institutional, organizational and managerial resources at the disposal of the prime minister are weak and insufficient. As a result, the prime minister looks like an emperor without clothes – as far as policy control and coordination is concerned. A further consequence of this sort of institutional bareness at the primeministerial level is that policy tends to be poorly implemented, executed and coordinated, especially those policy initiatives that are reform oriented, I might add.

He did also remind us that this kind of control and coordination deficit is of a perennial nature in the Greek system of governance and public administration. It is evident in the domineering or heroic political figures of Eleutherios Venizelos, Karamanlis the elder and Papandreou the senior. And it becomes even more alarming in the administration on the part of less charismatic and more ordinary political leaders and heads of government. In the latter case it may and often does spring up in a more acute and threatening form.

In the light of all this, the conclusion is well sustained that organizing in a more professional and systematic manner the primeministerial office looks like an

urgent necessity. To that end, the team of international experts that the current Prime Minister has convened has already submitted certain proposals. Kevin was, understandably, careful enough not to reveal them, save the caveat that they have not so far been fully accepted nor implemented.

As a result, I would surmise, the emperor continues to remain unclothed!

3. May I turn now to the two points of mine.

Firstly, the one based on historical experience. In the history of the 92 prime ministers of Greece from Ioannis Kapodistrias who assumed office in January 1828 up to the current prime minister there have appeared dominant political figures and minor ones. It would hardly surprise you if I said that the former are less numerous than the latter. Indeed out of the 92 prime ministers since independence only 5 or 6 may be considered as major ones, in terms of length and duration of office, legitimate and effective governance and administration.

It is not hard to agree that in this category there may be included such great political personalities as the first Governor of Greece, Ioannis Kapodistrias, who is credited with the immense task of state building in the most adverse historical conditions; Charilaos Trikoupi in the second half of the 19th century is rightfully considered as the father of the parliamentary system of governance and a great promoter of modernization of the state; Eleutherios Venizelos dominated politics and governance in the first half of the 20th century, doubled the size of the country and launched measures of reform in various sectors of public life; Constantine Karamanlis in the 2nd half of the 20th century not only exercised power for a longer period than anyone else (for more than 13 years), but advanced rapid growth of the economy in the 1950s and 60s, secured the accession of Greece to the then European Economic Community and contributed as no one else to the modernization of the political system after the collapse of the colonel's regime in

the 1970s; last but not least, Andreas Papandreou, who was much loved and admired by the people at large, further promoted the democratization and opening of the political system as a whole.

The reason I am making this historical reference is to point to a paradox that is of interest to our discussion. Despite the fact that the above great political leaders exercised power for rather longish periods of time and reached decisions of immense historical significance (state building, modernization and democratization, rapid growth, international associations, etc.) none of them was equipped in his gubernatorial capacity with an extensive staff of assistance at his immediate succour. Nor did they face serious problems of coordination and control on the part of the ministers and the departments of state answerable to them; and if they did, the response was swiftly and appropriately delivered. They were great political figures with a clear vision of aim and strategy who did barely realize the need of an articulate central office to support them in the exercise of their duties. Personal charisma and prestige (even fear) counterbalanced the lack of management and institutionalization at the prime minister's office. They were emperors vested with clothes of authority, but also with the necessary sticks and whips at their hands. To use Machiavelli's memorable metaphor, they were acting both as "lions and foxes" according to the need to mobilize and persuade their government and party in order to lead the country towards policy ends of major significance.

May we then reach a sort of a provisional conclusion: namely, the more dominant and imposing the political personality assuming the office of the prime minister, the less has been the need for a delicate and extensive staff of assistance to him besides that already available in the various departments of state; on the contrary, the less imperial and more conventional the figure of the top executive, the more in need he will be of an appropriate system of control and

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It is certainly the case that the Prime Minister himself is vested with the discretionary authority and the sole prerogative to determine the composition of the Cabinet, since its members are appointed or dismissed on the basis of his proposal. But once the composition of the Cabinet has been set, it becomes the centre of governance – at least as far as the Constitution is concerned. The Constitution provides for the collective, that is the Cabinet form and system of governance, not the monocratic (‘prothipourgokentriko’) or presidential one.

Whilst the members of the cabinet in a presidential system of governance, for instance that of the USA, are essentially no more but a team of advisors to the President, in parliamentary systems they are decision makers themselves both as members of the collective body (the Cabinet) that sets the general policy of the country, and as the heads of the particular Departments of State in respective policy areas which they shape and direct. They are the policy managers and executors par excellence, not merely the advisors to the Prime Minister.

Furthermore, in parliamentary systems the members of the Cabinet are usually key political figures of the party with a distinctive career in politics and Parliament before and after their accession to a cabinet position. And once there, they act as a team of equals, if not rivals, as Abraham Lincoln would have thought, to the Prime Minister in order to meet people’s problems. In presidential systems they are technocrats providing a professional input to policy that is finally set by

the President himself. The latter is responsible for the choices made during his administration, whereas in parliamentary systems the Cabinet is collectively responsible for the policy of the government as a whole. The ministers are legislators and appliers of policy that is basically designed within the Departments they direct.

The ultimate authority of governance in parliamentary systems lies with a collective body not a single person. Collective bodies are known to be important to deliberation, consultation and even compromise; not so much to swift action, secrecy and dispatch. These may be merits of a solitary or one member institution but not to collective ones. That may go a long way explaining perhaps the tendency to primeministerial aggrandizement and overreaching distinct in the Greek system of governance. However, the constitutional provision of article 82 § 2 that enhances the Prime Minister with the authority to steer or even direct the activities of the Government cannot be taken to mean anything less than leading and coordinating it to the desired policy ends; but I would not risk interpreting it as investing the head of the government with the exclusive authority to make policy choices and decisions himself alone. Leadership in government is important as it is in many walks of life; but it cannot be overstretched to entail elimination of deliberation, persuasion and criticism in the collective body that is supposed to be led. Good reasoning before decision making is a condition not only for the legitimacy but also for the quality of the decisions taken and their effectiveness.

5. I am fully aware of the fact that in practice and for a number of reasons that cannot be explained here, we are witnessing a shift of focus in the operation of Government and the political system as a whole towards a more concentrated model or type. The office of the Prime Minister has evolved as a separate and supreme centre of power and authority in the operation of the political system and

the functioning of government itself. It has taken almost the whole of the *core executive* and has become or seeks to become *primus solus* in the parliamentary system of governance, as we say in more legal terms. There is, in brief, ample evidence for a tendency of convergence with a more presidential style and type of governance and administration.

The phenomenon of the latent presidentialization of cabinet government and the increasingly gubernatorial role assumed by prime ministers is something that I had the chance myself to study a few years ago when I was writing my book on *Prime Ministers of Greece* since independence. But I remained then as I remain today wary about the likely implications of this phenomenon not only in terms of the Constitutional arrangements, but also with regard to the danger of excessive concentration of political power in a sole base or a few hands.

The question then can be raised as to whether recent developments that shift the core executive in the process of governance from the Cabinet to the Prime Minister alone would be further aggravated by measures and proposals to even more augment the primeministerial authority with staff, resources and policy monitoring tools and instruments. In other words, dressing the emperor with even more power has certain risks as far as the quality of democracy is concerned. That is something that cannot be not overlooked. Nor would be welcome that distrust or fear of ministerial inertia and departmental autonomy should entail erecting a primeministerial bureaucracy to counterbalance it or as a defense against it. The major risk to that is for the primeminister's office to get involved in routine administration and muddling through. It is not unlikely that confusion not coordination is created when too much is being done at the top. Hence, the core managerial value of delegation that is applicable to primeministerial job, too.

6. I would submit, and here I reach my conclusion before I see more eyes turning to the watches, that we had better conceive of the policy resources available at the centre of Government in more analytical and less material terms; not so much in terms of the size of the staff and the control they exert, but rather in more qualitative terms of forward thinking and thorough analysis beforehand. May I also add that the centre of policy analysis that is indispensable to contemporary governance should not necessarily be placed at the Prime Minister's office only but rather at the Cabinet office.

To be more concrete, I believe that what we really miss in Greece is a more regular operation of the Cabinet or collective system of Governance supported by something similar perhaps to the Central Policy Review Staff that existed in Britain in the 1970s. Namely, an institutional means to assist the Cabinet collectively and in advance of its deliberation on matters of policy with in depth analysis of forthcoming policy initiatives and evaluation of the actual results of decisions taken. The policy papers prepared by this staff ought to be available beforehand to all members of the Cabinet, namely the heads of the various Departments of State, who should regularly be invited and encouraged, as it is their constitutional right and duty, to participate in the deliberations and debate on the policy options discussed in the Cabinet. Once policy decisions are reached and agreed upon, their implementation may be expected to follow suit and coordination of action is more likely to emerge, since earlier participation does not only form a prerequisite for the quality of decision and action, but also an intrinsic value of the Cabinet system of governance. And coordination of the Cabinet cannot mean subjugation nor neglect, but cooperation and confidence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It can be hardly disputed today that better governance cannot be secured by traditional party political practices of clientelism and amateurism. Enhancing the analytical and professional dimension of policy making and implementation at the centre of Government is of the outmost necessity. But the centre of government in parliamentary democracies is not placed in the priministerial office exclusively, but in the Cabinet collectively. The gist of the role of the prime minister is to secure that the Cabinet comprises of the best talent available in the party, if not in the country, and that in their functioning they equally share the best available analysis and information on matters of policy.

May I also add that in a democracy we are not so much in need of “emperors” (clothed or unclothed) as with leaders able to guide and direct, inspire and harmonize the tunes and instruments of collective action towards the common wealth. After all, the essence of management rests with the capacity to “get thing done” (basically, through others); and coordination in modern policy and administration is not so much a top down or hierarchical command system, but rather a horizontal analysis, debate and creative synthesis of opinion and choices. Subordinates may be coordinated by orders and command, but a team of equals or even rivals can only be coordinated by discussion, deliberation and debate, preferably on the basis of professional policy advice and documentation. The role of the Prime Minister is then something similar to what Sir Robert Peel once described as an “*uncommon man of common opinions*”, or to what Plato in his *Politicus* would have considered as the essence of leadership, that is “*networking the threads of policy and action*”.

I am grateful to professor Featherstone for raising the whole issue in his seminal paper and inviting us to think critically about it.

Thank you for your attention.

Anthony Makrydemetres
Professor of Public Administration
University of Athens

Control and Coordination at the Centre of Government
(Some Thoughts on Kevin Featherstone's Lecture)

Nov. 11, 2010

Mr. Ambassador,
Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Let me firstly confess how delighted I am with tonight's event organized by the LSE alumni association of Greece. I thank you very much for extending this kind invitation to me. It brings me back to the years of my study in London – *Ich bin ein Londoner* student myself, too.

It is also great pleasure and I feel honored indeed to stand here next to my distinguished colleague Professor Kevin Featherstone of the LSE, whose insightful introduction to the topic of our discussion we just enjoyed and have all benefited from it. My satisfaction is doubled by the presence of the learned journalist Mr. Alexis Papachelas whose comments and delving remarks I am anxious to listen to.

What I intend to do in my brief intervention is, firstly, to underline some of the key points put forward by Professor Featherstone in his seminal lecture as I understood them; secondly, add two more points based on the historical experience of Greece and the constitutional confines of the prime minister's role and authority; thirdly, I will raise a question on the likely implications of further

increasing and augmenting the prime ministerial power, and finally, I will conclude with a more modest proposal of mine.

Hopefully, all that can be done and delivered within the next ten or fifteen minutes! But don't worry, if I see you watching the clock, I'll stop right away.

2. Kevin Featherstone addressed in unmistakable terms a crucial issue of governance in Greece. That is the limited institutional capacity that is available at the centre of Government and in particular under its headmaster, the prime minister. A capacity to exert control and bring about coordination in policy design and implementation on the part of a highly differentiated, if not fragmented, government machinery.

According to his diagnosis of the problem, the institutional, organizational and managerial resources at the disposal of the prime minister are weak and insufficient. As a result, the prime minister looks like an emperor without clothes – as far as policy control and coordination is concerned. A further consequence of this sort of institutional bareness at the primeministerial level is that policy tends to be poorly implemented, executed and coordinated, especially those policy initiatives that are reform oriented, I might add.

He did also remind us that this kind of control and coordination deficit is of a perennial nature in the Greek system of governance and public administration. It is evident in the domineering or heroic political figures of Eleutherios Venizelos, Karamanlis the elder and Papandreou the senior. And it becomes even more alarming in the administration on the part of less charismatic and more ordinary political leaders and heads of government. In the latter case it may and often does spring up in a more acute and threatening form.

In the light of all this, the conclusion is well sustained that organizing in a more professional and systematic manner the primeministerial office looks like an

urgent necessity. To that end, the team of international experts that the current Prime Minister has convened has already submitted certain proposals. Kevin was, understandably, careful enough not to reveal them, save the caveat that they have not so far been fully accepted nor implemented.

As a result, I would surmise, the emperor continues to remain unclothed!

3. May I turn now to the two points of mine.

Firstly, the one based on historical experience. In the history of the 92 prime ministers of Greece from Ioannis Kapodistrias who assumed office in January 1828 up to the current prime minister there have appeared dominant political figures and minor ones. It would hardly surprise you if I said that the former are less numerous than the latter. Indeed out of the 92 prime ministers since independence only 5 or 6 may be considered as major ones, in terms of length and duration of office, legitimate and effective governance and administration.

It is not hard to agree that in this category there may be included such great political personalities as the first Governor of Greece, Ioannis Kapodistrias, who is credited with the immense task of state building in the most adverse historical conditions; Charilaos Trikoupi in the second half of the 19th century is rightfully considered as the father of the parliamentary system of governance and a great promoter of modernization of the state; Eleutherios Venizelos dominated politics and governance in the first half of the 20th century, doubled the size of the country and launched measures of reform in various sectors of public life; Constantine Karamanlis in the 2nd half of the 20th century not only exercised power for a longer period than anyone else (for more than 13 years), but advanced rapid growth of the economy in the 1950s and 60s, secured the accession of Greece to the then European Economic Community and contributed as no one else to the modernization of the political system after the collapse of the colonel's regime in

the 1970s; last but not least, Andreas Papandreou, who was much loved and admired by the people at large, further promoted the democratization and opening of the political system as a whole.

The reason I am making this historical reference is to point to a paradox that is of interest to our discussion. Despite the fact that the above great political leaders exercised power for rather longish periods of time and reached decisions of immense historical significance (state building, modernization and democratization, rapid growth, international associations, etc.) none of them was equipped in his gubernatorial capacity with an extensive staff of assistance at his immediate succour. Nor did they face serious problems of coordination and control on the part of the ministers and the departments of state answerable to them; and if they did, the response was swiftly and appropriately delivered. They were great political figures with a clear vision of aim and strategy who did barely realize the need of an articulate central office to support them in the exercise of their duties. Personal charisma and prestige (even fear) counterbalanced the lack of management and institutionalization at the prime minister's office. They were emperors vested with clothes of authority, but also with the necessary sticks and whips at their hands. To use Machiavelli's memorable metaphor, they were acting both as "lions and foxes" according to the need to mobilize and persuade their government and party in order to lead the country towards policy ends of major significance.

May we then reach a sort of a provisional conclusion: namely, the more dominant and imposing the political personality assuming the office of the prime minister, the less has been the need for a delicate and extensive staff of assistance to him besides that already available in the various departments of state; on the contrary, the less imperial and more conventional the figure of the top executive, the more in need he will be of an appropriate system of control and

coordination of policy design and implementation by the line departments, that need to be watched and monitored in their performance.

It comes of no surprise then that it was during the Mitsotakis and the Simitis premierships in the 1990s that there were drafted more elaborate systems of central control and coordination of government policy (ample evidence to that was provided in Kevin' s speech a little while ago).

4. I will proceed now with the second point of mine that refers to the constitutional and legal framework of legitimate governance in Greece. I guess that most people would agree with the idea that governance in a democracy has of course to be efficient and effective, but also faithful to the constitutional boundaries of the exercise of power and authority. Governance has to be constitutional governance, that is to comply as much as possible with the letter and above all with the spirit of the Constitution. Otherwise, its claim of legitimacy is undermined.

What does then the existing Constitution provide for the appropriate form of governance in Greece? According to the standing constitutional requirements, the legitimate source of authority for running the country and setting the general policy of it is not the President of the Republic, as it is the case in France or the United States, nor the Prime Minister himself, alone: it is the Cabinet. Thus according to the article 82 § 1 of the Constitution, “*The Government determines and directs the general policy of the Country...*”.

If you are still wondering what at last is “the Government”, then the previous article of the Constitution (81 § 1) provides the answer: “*The Government is the Council of Ministers, which is comprised of the Prime Minister and the Ministers*”. That is to say, the government is not the prime minister alone, nor of course the ministers by themselves. The government is the Cabinet (the prime

minister and the ministers collectively). The constitutionally legitimate form of governance in Greece is Cabinet Government much as it is the case in Britain. The general policy of the country is shaped by the Cabinet, not the Prime Minister alone or exclusively. According to article 82 § 2 of the Constitution, “*The Prime Minister secures the unity of the Government and steers its activities, along with them of public services in general for the implementation of governmental policy within the framework of the law*”.

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