



## NEW DEMOCRACY AND THE PRESPA AGREEMENT – A POINT OF VIEW

Abalinx 19 February 2019 Peter Adamis

I was invited by a mate Kostas Sgourdas, (a former regional president) along to witness my first political meeting as a freelance journalist.

The aim was to gain an insight on one the major political parties to see for myself how they compared to the Australian political scene. Kostas and I had driven from [Pellana](#), a village known for its ancient ruins that once housed [Helen of Troy](#) and her husband [Menelaus, Master of the war Cry](#). A city that was once the capital of ancient Lakonia long before the arrival of the Dorians who developed into the feared Spartans.

On arrival, Kostas as usual did the rounds of the table where he was well known and it was good to see another Pellaniote of the name John Rassias being present taking an interest. It was a cold and bitter evening with the [Parnon](#) and [Taygetos mountain](#) ranges covered in snow, thus creating a refrigerated environment in the Evrotas furrow where Sparta and many towns are located.

The meeting held in [Sparta](#) itself was well attended and the ballroom was jam packed with people from all over Lakonia. Unlike Australian political functions where dinner is served at a cost, last night's meeting there was no food or drinks other than one could purchase coffee, at a small cost. It appears that the right of centre political party in Greece appropriately named [New Democracy](#) is poised to win the Greek Elections believed to be held as early as May of this year. Riding on the wave of protests against the Prespa Agreement with the Former Republic of Yugoslavia, (Now renamed North Macedonia), New Democracy is reaching out to its traditional supporter base and bringing them up to date with what is happening in parliament and behind the scenes.



The Lakonian New Democracy representative [Arthur Davakis](#). Arthur is well known in Lakonian circles, speaks English perfectly and is well liked and supported by his constituents.

Arthur served his military service in the Hellenic Air Force as a reserve lieutenant (1984-1986). He served as Deputy Minister of National Defence from 26/6/2013 to 10/6/2014.

He is an Honorary Member of the Spartan Spiritual Party, a member of the Parnassos Literary Association, the Society of Lakonian Studies, the Society of Friends of the People and the National and Historical Museum. From April 2008 to September 2009.

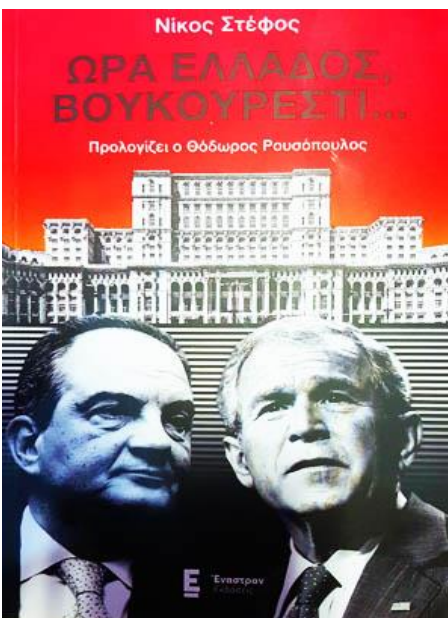
[Arthur Davakis](#) was also the Chairman of the Organization for Agricultural Training in Vocational Training and Employment (DEMETRA). He is a member of the Athens Bar Association (1986) and works (occasionally) as a lawyer. He has been awarded the Cross of Honour and Honour for the provision of distinguished services in the course of his duties as Deputy Minister of National Defence. His hobbies include gardening, reading, orienteering and swimming.



Other speakers were journalists, author of a new book and an academic. Each speaker was given a set period upon which to provide their point of view followed by the main speaker at the end who was well versed in the history of Hellenic Foreign Affairs with emphasis on the Prespa agreement. The speaker in this instance gave numerous examples of historical

significance that could well may affect the sovereignty of Greece and potential territorial advances by nations to the North.

One scenario that he gave was that: it is possible at some time in the future, that those in power in Skopje, may overturn the decisions of the [Prespa Agreement](#), insist on territorial acquisition based on ethnic, language, culture and history. This scenario is entirely possible he went on to say because that is exactly what occurred during the defining of borders between Greece and the emergence of the Great Albania to the North West. A Greek analysis by an academic provides a window into Greek thought on [the Prespa Agreement](#).



He said stated that Greece lost ground known to be historically a part of Greece and only agreed to the agreement at the time that those thousands of [Greeks](#) would be allowed to live as Greeks, using their own language, retain their ethnicity and cultural norms. History has demonstrated just how brutal those in power in Tirana, [Albania](#) can be.

On the other hand he was questioning why the current Greek President Tsipras went begging so to speak to [President Erdogan in Turkey](#). Was it to ratify the Prespa Agreement, was it to seek his approval and was it to merely pass on messages from other nations whose diplomatic channels have failed.

These statements may sound odd to some but knowing the Greek mind, such theories may be the stuff of legends and yet they are always a welcome interlude from the struggles of life and a subject for further discussions around the numerous taverns, restaurants, coffee shops, cafes and hotels that are found in Sparta, and towns and villages that are found all over mountainous [Lakonia](#).

It was of interest to note that those present came with a purpose. Those present had travelled over vast distances from all corners of Lakonia to hear the New Democracy guest speakers in order to return and spread the word according to what they believed they heard, were told privately or discussed during the evening.



Every speaker drew a round of applause and depending on their timing, raising of their voice, filled with emotion, evoking the ghosts of heroes long gone and creating an atmosphere of kinship, nationalism, unity, the motherland and invoking the saints to their cause.

I could just imagine what it must have been like during the pre-War of Independence where Greek struggling under the yoke of their Ottoman landlords.

Last night's meeting was no exception. Presently, it would appear that no matter who is to win government at the next elections and form government, they will not be able to do it alone. Some are hedging their bets that New Democracy will make deals with the Potami and Pasok political parties, both of who are considered in one format or another conservative in nature when compared to the extreme left Communist, (KKE) and or the left wing Syriza political parties.

As for forging links with the extreme right wing Golden Dawn, is anyone's guess. What is true is that Syriza has and continues to lose ground at the polls with a surprise boost to New Democracy and Golden Dawn. Elections are expected to be an interesting period that is for sure.



Following the speeches, the floor was open to questions where the panel responded to each question, these elongating the meeting past its expected set deadline.

Seeing that nothing else could be gained by remaining, Kostas and I left for dinner, late as it was. Dinner was at a restaurant run by the daughter of John (Fasaria) Filipopoulos daughter and her husband Kyriakos.

Both a lovely couple. Their restaurant is located adjacent to the ancient memorial dedicated to [King Leonidas the Spartan king](#) who led a force of 300 Spartans and 700 Thespians to their death to delay a Persian invasion force at [Thermopylae](#).

The drive home on the new highway that was officially opened in April 2017, helped us return home within 15 minutes through the cold and bitter evening was indeed a journey I don't wish to make often. Yet despite the bitter cold, the back drop of the mighty Taygetos mountain range with its white snow covered tops glimmering in the darkness stood out beautifully.

Prior to the new highway being built, it would have taken us using the old road at least half an hour through the valleys, hills and plains leading to Sparta. In 1973 when I stationed in Singapore/Malaya with [The 6th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment](#), I returned to my place of birth for a holiday.



The journey at that time by a rickety old bus took over an hour through rough roads, dirt tracks, streams, hills and mountain passes.

I can still remember looking through the window, down below at the steep cliffs during some parts of the journey. Yes, much has changed in 46 years.

Arriving back home at the cottage. The security lights shining brightly illuminating the uphill driveway and seeing the Hellenic flag fluttering in the gusty wind.

As I approached the security door, I looked the three other flags (Hellenic, Australian and New Zealand) flying proudly amongst the [Hellenic ANZAC Gardens monument](#) and felt a sense of pride that even here I felt at home amongst my ancestors. Life is whatever we make it and I have made my choices in life that have led me to my place of birth after years of living back home in Australia. Yes Australia is home to me and too many thousands of other Australians of Greek heritage.



As I closed the door and walked into the warmth of the cottage, my mind went to the 25 March 2019 ([Greek War of Independence](#)) where a small ceremony would be held followed by another ceremony on the 25 April 2019 to commemorate [ANZAC Day](#).

Much work needs to be done in preparing for both days. Military mates will also be arriving soon and I am certainly looking forward to their company and hearing Aussie language once again.

Apologies for errors of grammar, but life being what it is we all make mistakes whether we like it or not. Cheerio for now, stay strong always, fight the good fight and make the best of what has to offer.



[Peter Adamis is a Freelance Journalist/Social Media Commentator and writer.](#) He is a retired Australian military serviceman and an Industry organisational & Occupational (OHS) & Training Consultant whose interests are within the parameters of domestic and international political spectrum. He is an avid blogger and contributes to domestic and international community news media outlets as well as to local and Ethnic News. He holds a Bachelor of Adult Learning & Development (Monash), Grad Dip Occupational Health & Safety, (Monash), and Dip. Training & Assessment, Dip Public Administration, and Dip Frontline Management. Website: [abalinx.com](http://abalinx.com) Contact via Email: [abalinx@gmail.com](mailto:abalinx@gmail.com)