



DELPHI ECONOMIC FORUM

GREEK FIRE

The Lasting Impact of the Greek Revolution
on American Culture and Politics

Introduction: A Greek Fire, two hundred years on

Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt “U.S. involvement was founded on values and our shared democratic commitment”

The power of the Classics: American Philhellenism and Cultural Politics

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Introduction

While planning for the 2021 [Delphi Economic Forum](#), we felt obliged to include a special segment dedicated to the bicentennial anniversary of the Greek Revolution of 1821. We considered this as an ideal opportunity for reflection but also a chance to organize a principled - albeit selective - discussion on the different issues which make up the identity of this historic event and reveal its impact in the next two centuries.

One of the most interesting issues we discussed was the interaction between the Greek Revolution and the American War for Independence, the American Revolutionary War (1776-1783). The ancient Greek democracy inspired America's Founding Fathers. And their own struggle against tyranny became a beacon of hope and conviction for the Greek revolutionaries, some decades later. This cross-fertilization of ideas between the US and Greece continued its fascinating journey throughout the history of the two newly nascent nations.

It is therefore with great joy that we present, in cooperation with the US Embassy in Athens, a collection of five essays based on the discussions which took place during the 2021 Delphi Economic Forum, titled: "Greek Fire: The Lasting Impact of the Greek Revolution on American Culture and Politics". The essays were edited and drafted by Katerina Sokou, to which we owe our sincere gratitude.

This compendium represents but a humble contribution to the commemoration of the bicentennial of the Greek Revolution. We hope you find it to be an enjoyable and useful read.

Yiannis Thomatos



Katerina Sokou

A Greek Fire,
two hundred years on

On the occasion of Greece's bicentennial in 2021, there has been a plethora of opportunities to learn more about the history of the Greek Revolution of 1821, and how it connects to the world. In the context of US-Greece relations, new light is shed on the role of the American Philhellenes who supported and even participated in the Greek Fight for Independence, as the Greek Revolution truly captured the imagination of early Americans.

Less well known are the many ways in which the Greek cause left its mark on US society and politics. It inspired a fervent wave of support that was aptly named Greek Fever, or Greek Fire. In partnership with the Delphi Economic Forum, with the support of the U.S. Embassy and the contribution of a multidisciplinary team of experts, a namesake seminar in May 2021 explored how the "Greek Fire" has shaped America to this day: It helped influence U.S. foreign policy, inspired the American tradition of providing foreign aid, offered a prototype for grassroots movements that propelled social reform, and defined the image of Greece, Hellenism, and Philhellenism in America... including the looks of its capital, Washington D.C.

The uprising of the Greeks cemented the young Republic's cultural connection to Greece, not only to its ancient democratic ideals that inspired the American Revolution but also to its modern-day strive for freedom. In particular, the Philhellenic movement uniquely linked the inspiration of ancient Greece to the fate of modern Greece through the advocacy of the first American Classicists. In turn, the wide grassroots movement that emerged in support of the Greek cause helped influence some of the unique features of U.S. foreign policy, shaped U.S.-Greece relations on the societal and intellectual level and inspired the American reform movements which define American society and culture to this day.

Katerina Sokou



Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt

“U.S. involvement was founded
on values and our shared
democratic commitment”

The U.S. Ambassador to Greece **Geoffrey Pyatt** opened the seminar noting that American society has truly been enriched from its earliest days by its relationship with Greece and the Greek people. As he put it, the legacy of the philhellene movement in the United States “touches on so many aspects of what defines our international personality: the tradition of civic engagement, which in many ways began with the philhellenic committees in cities like New York and Philadelphia and Washington DC. Some of the first foreign assistance that the United States provided internationally was in the form of shiploads of medical and food relief that came from the east coast of the United States to help the struggling Greek independence fighters. And the legacy of the philhellenes helped to drive a narrative of liberty and equality that eventually led to the women’s suffrage movement and the abolitionist movement in the United States, forever changing the fabric of American democracy and American society.”

Ambassador Pyatt argued that the U.S. role in the Greek Revolution is unique. As he put it, unlike the great powers of the day, who fought against the Ottomans to support the Greek independence movement for reasons of great power politics, “our involvement was founded on values, our shared democratic commitment, and our founders’ attachment to the ideals of Athenian democracy.” And he stressed the role of American philhellenes, “who from the first days of the Greek republic helped to strengthen cooperation between our peoples and had an important impact on the early development of U.S.-Greece relations, which is carried on today through our robust people-to-people ties.”

He noted that the U.S. Embassy in Athens is using its own commemoration “USA and Greece: Celebrating 200 Years of Friendship,” to share some of the stories “of the brave American women and men who 200 years ago stood up to support the Greek

freedom fighters and their struggle for the same values that its own founders held high: democracy, independence, self-determination”.

From his part, he highlighted some of the lesser-known figures who were important to the early days of the US-Greece relationship. People like James Williams, an African American seafarer from Baltimore, who fought in the battle of the Gulf of Lepanto to help liberate the Greek people. Or philanthropists like Emma Willard, who established schools in Greece to educate Greek women, directly leading to the legacy that we celebrate today with flagship American educational institutions like the American College of Greece, Anatolia College, and the American Farm School in Thessaloniki.

As Ambassador Pyatt concluded, “these are stories which demonstrate what the American philhellenes knew well: that the foundation of our societies and our democracies is uniquely intertwined, inspired by the same democratic ideals and values... and the understanding that democracy is an ongoing project, and that a commitment to democracies compliments our democratic values at home.” To that end, he noted President Biden’s statement that “what really binds us are our values” and stressed that the relationship between the US and Greece will continue to be defined by those values.



Map of Greece, Samuel Gridley Howe



Mr. Velentzas, Katherine Fleming, Panagiotis Roilos

The power of the Classics: American Philhellenism and Cultural Politics

The moderator of the discussion on the power of the Classics, the President of the Philhellenic Museum **Constantine Velentzas** highlighted the inspiration of Lord Byron in American Philhellenism. Mr. Velentzas noted the influence of Lord Byron's best-seller book, *Childe Harrold's Pilgrimage*, and of the revolutionary wish that he formulated in it, "that Greece, the birthplace of western civilization, might still be free again," in inspiring generations of charismatic figures of American Philhellenism. He singled out Edward Everett, who became "the heart and the brain of the American Philhellenic movement" after travelling to Greece before the Greek revolution, embracing the ideals of Lord Byron.

As Mr. Velentzas noted, the impact of the Greek Revolution on American culture and politics is a corner stone of the special exhibition on American Philhellenism at the Philhellenism Museum in Athens. Among some of its prominent examples, he mentioned the determining role of Dr. Samuel Howe in raising funds and delivering the biggest foreign aid that the Greek revolutionaries ever received, the feminist activism of his wife Julia Ward, who was a great Philhellene as well as a pioneer social activist, pacifist and suffragette, and the immense impact of Hiram Powers' statue "the Greek slave", which was inspired by the story of Garyfalia, a young girl from Psara who was rescued by the American Consul in Smyrna and became a central symbol of the anti-slavery movement in America. He noted that in a symbolic tribute to American Philhellenism, the Society for Hellenism and Philhellenism awarded its inaugural Lord Byron Prize to a direct descendant of the Chair of the legendary philhellenic committee of Boston Thomas Winthrop: former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry.

In his contribution, **Panagiotis Roilos**, the George Seferis Professor of Modern Greek Studies and Comparative Literature at Harvard University, focused on the role of Harvard in cultivating the tradition

of Hellenic Studies and its unique connection to Philhellenism, which was sparked by the Greek Revolution and helped spread the teaching of Hellenic Studies in U.S. academic institutions.

He also noted the importance of Philhellenism as a cultural phenomenon that was a major factor for the success of the 1821 Revolution, together with the sacrifices of the Greeks and the contribution of the Diaspora. Indeed, he argued that some early manifestations of American Philhellenic Idealism combined with political pragmatism may be traced back at least to the activities of Thomas Jefferson, who in his letter to John Paige on Aug. 20, 1785, wrote about his meeting with Adamantios Korais in Paris. As he noted, Jefferson “viewed the possibility of independence of the Greeks within the broader synchronic European political context on the one hand, and in light of dominant idealizing approaches on Greek culture on the other.”

Professor Roilos described the beginning of Hellenic Studies in America, noting that in January 1828, as Ioannis Kapodistrias arrived in the Peloponnese, Alexandros Negris, a nephew of Alexandros Ypsilantis, began teaching Modern Greek at Harvard, and later published a grammar of modern Greek that has its own cultural value. He also highlighted the contribution of the first Hellenist, Sophocles Evangelinos Apostolides, who began teaching at Harvard in 1842 and in 1860 was promoted to full professor. He connected both to Philhellenism in that, as he argued, neither would have thrived in Harvard “if that American institution had not become a hospitable institution for all things Greek, due mainly to the enthusiastic and genuine Philhellenism of Edward Everett.”

A child-prodigy, Everett was only 13 years old when he was admitted in Harvard with a deep interest in contemporary Greece, language, and culture. Influenced by their idealization by Lord Byron and

Adamantios Koraes, he wrote in 1813, at 19 years old, about what he called his cultural political approach to the Greek case, embracing Koraes' view that cultural progress and freedom go hand in hand. As Roilos underlined, his approach was shared by the majority of Greek literati and Philhellenes, "in whose imaginary Greece present and past was shaped by Enlightenment and Romanticism." Ten years later, at the heart of the Greek Revolution, his perspective focused on more pragmatic considerations, writing that the Greeks deserve American sympathy and support, not based on the need to resuscitate their ancestors' cultural glory but because theirs was "an archetypal struggle of slaves against an atrocious, uncivilized master." Professor Roilos noted that this polarization in imagery reflected the Republicanist values of his fellow Americans and the American ideal of liberty.

Finally, he added that Harvard also produced another fervent Philhellene, Samuel G. Howe who after graduating from Medical School in 1824 went to Greece and offered his service to the Greek army as a doctor. Once back, he not only raised a great amount of funds in support of the Greek Fight, but he also published, in 1828, his best-selling book "An Historical Sketch of the Greek Revolution" and remained an enthusiastic friend of Greece until the end of his life in 1876.

A Philhellene herself, the Provost and Professor of History at New York University **Katherine Fleming** noted that Professor Roilos is following in his professional position at Harvard "in the long history of Hellenism being embedded in the academic ideals of American academia, at a time when it is under fire and in question."

In her own presentation about the power of the Classics, she noted that as the United States capital was built, over the course of the 19th century, its architects looked to ancient Greece for inspiration

– in just the same way that the architects of modern Athens looked to ancient Greece for inspiration as the city Athens was expanded at exactly the same historical moment. Indeed, the two cities – Athens and Washington, DC – even shared some of the same architects. Professor Fleming also noted, however, the “paradox” of this Greek inspiration in that it was filtered through the expertise of architects who were not themselves Greek.

As she explained, “in the Revolutionary moment of the early 1800’s, there was a distinctive Greek Fire that undergirded revolutionary movements and their aftermaths, from the United States to the Eastern fringes of Europe. As nations struggled to emerge, they looked toward and at Greece – both literally and figuratively.” In the case of Washington, this also meant looking like Greece.

According to Professor Fleming, “as the Greek revolution raged, the US was busy building its new capital... on the imagined classical past of Greek antiquity... Its first urban planner, Frenchman Pierre L’Enfant, wanted the city to look like Paris, and prominent in his designs and in those of subsequent architects was the spirit of Greece. So, even as the Greek revolution was being discussed in real time in Congress, Greece’s ancient glory was being conjured, and some thought reconstructed, in the architecture of America’s emerging new capital.” To this day, Washington DC’s neoclassical architecture “gestures to the shared revolutionary spirit and has led Americans to embrace it over the centuries,” as well as the idea that in order to be a true democracy, you have to look Greek too. As she put it, “the idea that to be truly democratic means to look Greek has proven to be a really enduring one in American politics.”

In the discussion on Philhellenism that followed, she argued that there is a greater sense of commonality with the Greeks in American Philhellenism compared to that of Western Europe, “a sense of

brothers in arms.” According to Professor Fleming, “the American Revolutionaries feel themselves to be like the Greeks, in that they find great commonality with the Greek cause, it is highly relatable for them - not in the nature of the French Revolution, which is a very different internal political movement, but in the nature of the American Revolution that can be conceptualized in terms not dissimilar to the Greek revolution”. She noted that this sense of brothers in arms was based in historic persons such as the brother of Alexandros Ypsilantis, Dimitrios, who headed a Greek battalion fighting next to George Washington in the battle of Monmouth in 1778, his name subsequently given to three American towns in his honor.



Greek Slave (After Hiram Powers), Philhellenism Museum, Athens



Maureen Connors Santelli, Elpida Vogli

Exploring the concept
of “Cross-fertilization:
U.S. reform movements and
Hellenic Heritage in America”

The moderator of the second panel, the George Washington University Professor of Political Science **Charis Mylonas**, highlighted the impact of the Greek Revolution in the reform movements of the 19th century and beyond, in the development of American reform movements since. At the same time, he noted the influence of the Greek refugees and migrants during and after the Greek Struggle for Independence in defining the image of Hellenism in America, but also in influencing the definition of America itself. In particular, he wondered about the ways that the Greek Independence celebrations in the US reflect both the historical evolution of the role of the Greek diaspora, and that of bilateral relations between the U.S. and Greece.

The Associate Professor at the Northern Virginia Community College **Maureen Connors** Santelli focused on the social impact of American Philhellenism, in the several ways that the “Greek Fire” of support for the Greek Revolution prepared the way and gave rise to the social reforms of the 19th century that have shaped America to this day. The author of a namesake book, she noted that the American philhellenic movement emerged as a fully defined entity separate from its European counterpart by 1824 - and enjoyed popular support on a national scale. This enthusiasm was based “on a transnational consciousness that assumed the Greeks were historically and intellectually connected to the United States.”

Still, she argued that when the leaders of the Greek relief societies began to alter the focus of the Greek cause to encompass a benevolence element, where aid would be raised for civilians instead of the Greek army, the expanded relief effort made participation in the movement an especially appropriate outlet for women. It also appealed to other Christian and charity-based reform groups. As such, the Greek Revolution “proved to play an important part in the development of American reform movements and became an important aspect

of reformist rhetoric in both the abolitionist and women's rights movements.”

Those movements adopted some of the rhetoric used by the Philhellenes, especially as regards to slavery and the subjugation of women in the Ottoman Empire, to amplify the influence of their own arguments. Professor Santelli also mentioned Hiram Powers' statue “Greek Slave” as emblematic of that influence. As she noted, it was the first nude statue ever displayed publicly in the United States, and beyond the sympathy it created at the time for the Greek struggle it also became a symbol of both women's rights and the emancipation movement.

Even though she noted that this alignment with the goals of the Philhellenic societies was short-lived and that not all of their supporters evolved to radical supporters of the emancipation movement or of the fight for women's rights, the memory of the Greek Fire kept playing a pivotal role in American reform movements during the 19th and at the start of the 20th century. As Professor Santelli stressed, early Americans defined the Greek Revolution in terms of politics, religion, race, and reform, forever linking the Greek cause with these topics throughout the antebellum era.

Exploring the celebrations of the Greek Independence as an image of Hellenism in the US, the Associate Professor of History at the University of Thrace **Elpida Vogli** noted that the Greek American cultural bonds that have been developing since 1821 constitute an almost unexplored topic of the interdisciplinary literature. They are linked to the symbolic values and national celebrations of Greeks, Americans, and Greek Americans alike, creating a sense of common liberal tradition between the two countries. However, as she noted its influence cannot be satisfactorily understood unless we rediscover its meaning by resituating it in its historical context: all celebrations

change and acquire new meaning over the historical span in which they take place.

Professor Vogli noted that March 25th was designated as the Greek National Day in 1938 by King Otto, at a crucial political juncture for his government reforms, and it aimed to connect the celebration of the beginning of the War of Independence with his promise to build an emblematic orthodox church as the homeland of the Greek Orthodox nation, thus symbolically linking religion to Greek nationalism. It is in this ideological framework that the Greek Independence Day gained its influential role as the start of the Greek Revolution but also, more widely, the regeneration of a Christian liberal nation whose democratic heritage appeared as its most valuable asset in the modern time. This is both true for Greek emigrants' self-perceptions as a Hellenic Diaspora but also on the American perceptions of their image as representatives of Hellenism.

As for the definition of Hellenism and the conceptualization of the term 'Hellenism in America' as a synonym for a particular Greek Diaspora group, Professor Vogli noted that there is no doubt that the term Hellenism goes beyond the boundaries of a national community. It is a term that was invented around the middle of the 19th century by prominent philosophers and historians (Greek or European admirers of the ancient Greek civilization) in an attempt to connect the Modern Greek history inaugurated in 1821 with its distant and glorious past – and used ever since to describe the expanded Greek cultural entity beyond the limited boundaries of the Greek kingdom.

As she noted, Diasporas and their celebrations are considered as bridges or mediators between their home and their host countries and expand the definition of domestic politics to include not only politics inside the homeland state but also inside the “imagined community” of the nation. Hence, throughout time, celebrations become forums

where new ideas, symbols and strategies are exchanged. In the US in particular, the Greek Independence Day became the keystone of a wide spectrum of exchanging ideas between the Greek and American political cultures. And as she noted, the high symbolism of their national celebrations shows how much closer the Greek and American political cultures came after Greece's entrance in the WWII on the side of the liberal and democratic Powers.





Paul Glastris, Aristotle Tziampiris

The Greek Fire on
U.S. Foreign Policy:
From the Monroe
Doctrine to Senator Menendez

Opening the panel on the U.S. foreign policy response to the Greek Revolution and the ways that Philhellenism has played into U.S. foreign policy since, the moderator and seminar organizer Katerina Sokou set the framework for the discussion by explaining its title: “From the Monroe Doctrine to Senator Menendez.” As she noted, the Monroe Doctrine set the stage for American neutrality and non-intervention on European affairs, which delayed the recognition of Greek independence. However, this was not a policy that was popular with U.S. public opinion. The latter’s influence is reflected in a tradition of fervent Philhellenism in the Congress, from Daniel Webster’s famous speech in 1823 asking for a resolution so that the President may send a U.S. envoy in Greece to the support of Senator Robert Menendez today. As for the perennial question whether US-Greece relations are defined by values or interests, she noted that historically, Philhellenism has been most active in periods of hardship, but that its values-based influence has been greatest at the times when the interests of the two countries are most aligned, such as today.

The editor in chief of Washington Monthly **Paul Glastris** analyzed what U.S. President Joe Biden can learn from the U.S. role in the Greek Revolution. Glastris noted that the Greek Revolution was one of the first international events that put the US in front of a recurring foreign policy dilemma: should it promote democracy and human rights abroad, or should it only focus on defending its own interests? His take is that by defending those values abroad, President Biden will also promote one of his key priorities at home, namely, to address inequalities within American society.

As Paul Glastris noted, in ways no one could have foreseen, America’s engagement in the fight for Greek Independence “accelerated necessary confrontations with our own society’s wrongs.” He added that the same dynamic played out in later conflicts: The need for

mass mobilization in World War II compelled the US government to integrate white ethnic communities into the mainstream culture. The need to counter Soviet propaganda during the Cold War opened the way to civil rights advances for Black people.

Still, he argued that in 1823, the U.S. “missed an opportunity to make an official statement to the world that it stood against the rising tyranny of the time”. Such a statement might have proved helpful to the many independence movements in Europe and elsewhere. Even as President James Monroe was positive to the idea of Greek Independence, he sided with his Secretary of State John Quincy Adams and did not formally recognize the new Greek government, as he considered it safer to keep the neutrality declared in his namesake doctrine¹ so as to keep the Great Powers out of Latin America, and not undermine the efforts for a trade agreement with the Ottoman Empire (the latter did not happen, however, but after the creation of the Greek state).

He noted, however, that President Monroe expressed his belief that the Greeks would liberate themselves, while the American people continued to collect funds for the Greek cause. As he noted, the humanitarian aid that was sent, under the protection of the US Navy, saved countless lives in Greece. And the discussion over the President’s neutral position in the Congress led to one of the earliest and most masterful congressional speeches ever delivered on the need for the United States to stand for democracy and human rights in its foreign policy, when Senator Webster asked: “Is it not a duty imposed on us, to give our weight to the side of liberty and justice?”

¹ The Monroe Doctrine declared that the United States would consider any attempt by a European state to oppress or control any country in the Western Hemisphere a hostile act. It was intended as a warning to the colonial powers not to restrict the potential spread of democracy in Central and South America nor press any claims on North American territory, thereby clearing the way for US westward expansion. The doctrine also stated that, in return, the United States would not involve itself in the affairs of Europe – a vow meant to protect the ability of American merchants to trade freely on an equal footing without being caught up in Europe’s endless commercial intrigues.

The latter also argued that as a practical matter, the views of average citizens needed to be considered in charting America's foreign policy, as "the public opinion of the civilized world is rapidly gaining an ascendancy over brute force."

In the end, Congress adjourned without voting on the proposal. Still, the Greek Revolution brought into the fore two parameters that influence U.S. foreign policy to this day: the discussion over ethical values and the power of public opinion. And as Glastris notes, the parallels between 1821 and 2021 are worth paying attention to. "Now as then, authoritarianism is on the march. The need to balance the demands of principle and practicality in foreign affairs is as great now as it was two hundred years ago, if not greater. President Biden will have to find that balance as he navigates a host of individual foreign policy challenges. To do that, he needs a doctrine of his own – a comprehensive and workable strategy that can both advance American economic and security interests and defend democracy against resurgent authoritarianism."

The director of the American Studies Program at the University of Piraeus **Aristotle Tziampiris** agreed that the U.S. recognition of the Greek Independence was delayed due to wider foreign policy considerations but noted that what is truly surprising is how close it came to formally recognizing the Greek revolutionary effort in 1823. He noted that according to the diary of John Quincy Adams, the first draft of the Monroe Doctrine included the recognition of Greek independence.

Professor Tziampiris noted that at the start of the 19th century, American was not the colossus dominating global politics that we know today. The US had a small standing army, a population akin to Greece's in the 21st century and comprised of fewer than half the States that are in the Union today. Hence, he argued that

although the issue of American recognition was important to the Greek revolutionaries, from the perspective of the then international distribution of power it was not as decisive as the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine in the 20th century. At the same time, the still young American republic had to face, often from a position of relative weakness, a host of inter-connected foreign policy challenges and decisions pertaining to Great Power international politics. Greece constituted only one, admittedly important, aspect of a complex, multifaceted diplomatic environment.

Still, he added that the Greek Revolution erupted about half a century after the American Revolution. The memories and to an extent the ‘Spirit of ‘76’ were still alive, as were several of the major Founding Fathers. This legacy was consequential for the support of the Greek cause. On the other hand, he cautioned that any approach to interpret US diplomacy on revolutionary Greece through the prism of actions pursued by “philhellenes” or “anti-Greeks” should be resisted as simplistic and entirely misleading—especially at the top decision-making levels.

Hence, he draws the following lessons for bilateral relations and the understanding of U.S. foreign relations to this day: 1. There has always been “an awesome asymmetry of power in Greek-American relations even when the US was almost at its weakest. 2. Public opinion in US foreign policy making may be of significant importance, but it has not always been decisive. 3. From a US perspective, Greek American relations have never been just or even primarily about Greece – during the Greek Revolution, the non-recognition was a result of the enunciation of the 1823 Monroe Doctrine to avert the Holy Alliance’s feared actions in Spanish America, after the WWII American engagement came in the context of the Truman Doctrine to contain communism around the world, and today’s closer relations

are viewed through the prism of Great Power Competition. 4. Doctrines matter. The Monroe Doctrine, in particular, supported a tradition of neutrality for reasons of domestic but also international concern. Still, he added that the policy of neutrality should not be mistaken for a policy of isolationism. Whenever it applied to specific policy decisions and official documents, it usually came with sufficient diplomatic wiggle room, exceptions, and a healthy dose of pragmatism.

As for the Glastris' argument that the U.S. lost an opportunity to make a statement against a rising wave of tyranny, they agreed that this is a counter-factual whose transformative effects can only be hypothesized. As for the impact of the Greek Fire on US relations with the Ottoman Empire, they both noted that it delayed an official trade agreement, even as trade relations continued and were significant enough for that to weigh in on the decision to also delay the recognition of Greek independence - with Congress estimating their value at 800,000 dollars in 1823, notwithstanding the proceeds from the profitable Opium trade.



Nikiforos Diamandouros

From Metakenosis to
Dialogue: Modern Greece's
relationship with the West
in macro-historical perspective

At his keynote address, the Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Athens **Nikiforos Diamandouros** analyzed Greece's relationship with the West from a macro-historical perspective, describing it as a tumultuous journey from Metakenosis to Dialogue. As he noted, Metakenosis is a difficult word that was coined by the intellectual father of the Greek War of Independence Adamantios Koraes. He was the one who envisaged a flow of information on culture and education from the West to Greece to help the latter recapture its links with the Western civilization, and as a throwback to classical times. As he noted, the concept of Metakenosis implies a sense of late development and retardation, of an intellectual, social, political, and other underdevelopment. As the title of his lecture suggests, however, he traced the trajectory from this early stage of underdevelopment to today's Dialogue, defined as "a much more equal and fruitful exchange."

The first level of his analysis was the intellectual climate in Greece's relations with the US and the West, which by definition refers to the intellectual, cultural, and scholarly works. On a second level, he noted that at a societal level the contact between Greece and the US and Western Europe were very deep and dynamic and deserve to be explored in parallel with the intellectual development. It is on this societal level, he argued, that American involvement was most obvious and prominent, particularly during the later period of the Greek Revolution. As the war effort petered out, the destitution and destruction in Greece in the war fronts led to a much more direct involvement from American society, such as the ships with humanitarian supplies that expressed an important mobilization of American society, especially following the death of Lord Byron and the fall of Mesolongi.

Relations peaked at the end of the 1820s but stayed active for almost a century thereafter, both at the intellectual and the societal level.

Philhellenism remained alive in the US and there was a constant intellectual flow to Greece. Yet from the end of the 19th century, the flow reversed on the societal level, as Greece participated in the big migration flow from Europe to the US. This flow fostered and further cultivated the exchange of ideas in the US, however Greece remained at the receiving end of this flow of ideas with the West.

A notable change and evolution took place following WWII, at a time when the US emerged as the undisputed world power and leader, and when, given the confrontation with Soviet Union and the Cold War, Greece became the frontline for the West, leading to the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine and the overwhelming presence of US in Greece. At the height of US presence in Greece, he noted that the regrettable collapse of democratic institutions and imposition of military rule sent a large number of Greeks abroad, and Paris became a center for intellectual reaction and fermentation in favor of democracy human rights and rule of law. Yet in the US too, he noted that this is a moment of significant shift in the intellectual content of scholarly production in major US universities, as the late sixties and early seventies were also moments of great tumult and ferment in the US in favor of democracy and human rights.

He was a PhD student at Columbia University at the time, and he noted that the intellectual production resonated with a novel approach to how Greece and its history was perceived. As a result, a new type of literature came forward that was more socially and politically conscious and was trying to put forward research and methodological instruments that were in line with the latest developments in social sciences in the US and Europe.

The next big milestone came in 1974 with the fall of the military regime and the emergence of the most stable and secure liberal entrenched democratic regime Greece has ever known. He noted that

even as this draws inspiration from the War of Independence and the legacies that came through Metakenosis, 1974 also marks a rupture with the past, as Greece is no longer the object of Metakenosis. And as Greece enters the EU, “it is no longer the underdeveloped country in need of transfer of knowledge but becomes an equal partner in a two-way conversation.” Following EU membership, he noted that Greece also developed a different, equally beneficial, but more equally based relationship with the US, which he also attributed to some enlightened American diplomats such as Monty Stearns and Edward Kelly, who understood the shift and nurtured it forward, thereby embedding a new relationship between Greece and the US that endures to this day.

Professor Diamandouros noted that this latest climate only stands to benefit from the administration of Joe Biden and expressed the hope that relations continue in the current trend, thereby “completing and solidifying Greece’s long, torturous, turbulent and difficult trip from Metakenosis to Dialogue with its partners in the EU, in NATO, and of course in its important connection to the US, as true partners at both the societal and intellectual level”.

