

## Kaminis' Lightning Quick NY City Trip

Mayor of Athens Spoke on Gov't At Columbia Univ.

TNH Staff

NEW YORK – Even during a crisis, Greece – and even some of its politicians – can rise to the occasion and present the world with examples of good governance.

Athens' Mayor Giorgos Kaminis was invited by Columbia University to speak last week about transparency and corruption in government at a conference titled "Global Cities: Joining Forces Against Corruption."

"I was honored to be invited and what I heard was very interesting – I hope others found what I said to be interesting," he told TNH, about the trip that followed his 2014 visit when he received an award and more than 1 million euro for his city from Bloomberg Philanthropies as the winner of its 2014 Mayors Challenge.

The Bloomberg award and funding was for the initiative known as "Synathina, a Public Platform for Engaged Citizens."

Mayor Kaminis met with Archbishop Demetrios on April 24 and he also had the opportunity to speak with some of the many people he came to know while he lived in New York, where he was born, but not as many as he would have liked during what he called a "lightning-like" trip. He told TNH he planned to rectify that during his next visit.

Kaminis also said that he briefed the archbishop "about what we are doing, including cooperation with the Church. Even though it is something we should always be doing, in these times it is absolutely necessary."

He also highlighted his meeting with Panos Adamopoulos, the president of the Athenians' Society, which he thanks for its moral support and material contributions to the needy of Athens. "Any time we have asked for something, the Society has helped us," he said.

Kaminis, encouraged by Demetrios, who stood nearby, said he very much wants to meet with the community's thriving professional and young professional groups during his next visit.

Regarding initiatives to help businesspersons – and especially young entrepreneurs – to start and grow their firms, the mayor said there is a disposition to move forward in Athens, and more generally in Greece.

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## HALC & AJC Panel about Cooperation

By Constantine S. Sirigos  
TNH Staff Writer

NEW YORK – The Hellenic American Leadership Council (HALC) in cooperation with the American Jewish Committee (AJC) presented a panel discussion on Greek-Cypriot-Israeli cooperation and the deepening of relationships on both sides of the Atlantic at Cyprus House in Manhattan on April 22.

The panel, which was moderated by Nikolas Katsimpras, HALC Senior Fellow, featured David Harris, Executive Director, AJC, Dr. Aristotle Tziampiris, the author of the newly-released book, *The Emergence of Israeli-Greek Cooperation, and Cyprus' UN Ambassador Nicholas Emiliou.*

Endy Zemenides, HALC's Ex-

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TNH/THEODORE KALMOUKOS

The Greek-American community of New England celebrated Greek Independence with passion and messages of solidarity with Greece, but without their Metropolitan. Parade weekend was also the occasion for a number of honors bestowed upon TNH for its 100th anniversary.

## Boston's Greeks Hail Independence

By Theodore Kalmoukos  
TNH Staff Writer

BOSTON, MA – Beneath partly-cloudy skies in Boston, the 21st annual New England Greek Parade was held on April 26 with ethnic passion and joy.

Just like the start of the New York Parade in New York on March 29, a not-widely-reported incident occupied the attention of the police department. The police cordoned off the area in front of the landmark Boston Public in Copley Square, along the Parade's route. TNH inquired and learned that while there was no bomb threat, someone in the area was behaving strangely.

Present at the parade was former Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis, Petros Galatoulas, the president of the Federation of Hellenic Societies of

Greater New York, which organizes the Parade on Fifth Avenue, and Karyn Polito, Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts.

"This is a great day for New England," and added she was pleased to be able to represent Massachusetts' Governor Charlie Baker and the state government and "to celebrate Greek culture and the contributions of Greek-Americans to Massachusetts. They work hard and are good family people."

Polito noted that she is Greek "by marriage" and said "I have a fantastic Greek husband. Our children are Greek and I appreciate what my family does to celebrate their heritage."

Dukakis said that "this parade makes me remember my childhood and celebrating March 25th." When he was asked about the situation in

Greece, Dukakis replied "as I have said in other interviews, austerity will not solve the problem...President Obama is trying to say to the Europeans that their policies are not helping Greece."

He said the new Greek government is doing exactly what it needs to do, but that it must also fight tax evasion and corruption.

The Parade commenced with the roar of police motorcycles and Chief of Police William B. Evans told TNH he was thrilled to be there "to celebrate Greek Independence Day. It is always a good day for the city and I am happy to see so many people... celebrating their Greek heritage.."

Mayor Martin J. Walsh, who was a Grand Marshal, arrived

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## Greece Feels the Heat, Moves toward Reforms To Unblock Loan Flow

ATHENS – Hopes for a deal on Greece's bailout rose after Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said he expected an agreement could be reached within two weeks and the European Union reported a pick-up in the negotiations.

Greek stocks rose and its sovereign borrowing rates dropped, a sign that international investors are less worried about the country defaulting on its debts in coming weeks.

The European Union said that Greece's talks with its creditors were "being made more EU Commission spokeswoman Anika Breidhardt said the pace of talks has "intensified" since a weekend meeting of Eurozone finance ministers, where Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis came under intense pressure from his colleagues.

That led to Varoufakis effectively being sidelined after Tsipras shook up the negotiating team ad brought in Euclid Tsakalotos, Minister of International Financial Relations and a close ally to Tsipras, to lead the talks.

Tsipras said in a television interview that he expected a deal would be reached by May 9, in time for the next Eurozone meeting.

Greece has to repay the International Monetary Fund a total of almost 1 billion euros by May 12. It is expected to have enough money to make that, if it manages to raise as much as it hopes from a move to grab cash reserves from local entities like hospitals and schools.

But it faces bigger repayments in June it will struggle to honor without more bailout cash.

Breidhardt refused to elaborate on reports of the sidelining of Varoufakis as the prime contact in the bailout talks beyond saying ministers were happy to talk to any Greek representative, "as long as they have a mandate to negotiate."

Varoufakis has been blamed by several officials as the main cause for the lack of progress in the bailout talks. At a Eurozone

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Six Years in Prison for Fr. Adam Metropoulos

Fr. Adam Metropoulos in court in Bangor, ME where he was sentenced to 6 ½ years in prison for sex crimes. He was found guilty on four counts of sexual abuse of young boys.

## Kotzias Meets US, UN Officials, and Community

By Constantine S. Sirigos  
and Demetris Tsakas

NEW YORK – Nikos Kotzias, the Foreign Minister of Greece, met with U.S. and UN officials as well as leaders and members of the Greek-American community during a four-day visit to New York and Washington last week.

Kotzias said the visit was creative and constructive and exceeded expectations based on his past experiences, despite feeling that the atmosphere was somewhat "strange" when he first arrived.

On the afternoon of April 24 Kotzias visited the Archdiocese of America and that evening he was the guest of honor at a re-

ception at the nearby Greek Consulate.

He also met with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, with whom he discussed hopes for progress in the upcoming new round of Cyprus talks, and with Matthew Nimetz, UN Special Representative for the dispute between Greece and FYROM.

The foreign minister also met with Stanley Bergman, president of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and David Harris, its executive director, with whom he discussed progress in relations between Greece, Cyprus and Israel.

Present with Kotzias at the meeting with Archbishop Demetrios of America were

Michalis Kokkinos, the General Secretary for Greeks Abroad, Ambassadors Michel Spinellis and Katerina Boura of Greece, and Amb. George Iliopoulos, Consul General of Greece.

Archbishop Demetrios said "we had a very nice exchange of ideas. The foreign minister touched on the fundamental concepts of Hellenism and Orthodoxy in a proper and beautiful way, especially the notion of spirituality as a central element in the lives of people and communities, and in the life of our nation."

Kotzias said the gathering was characterized by pragmatism, spiritual joy and intellectual vigor, and he thanked

Demetrios for a discussion "filled with love and respect."

"SLEEP ON" HIS MESSAGES

During the reception at the Consulate, Kotzias presented an overview of his visit, saying he presented Greece's perspectives to the Americans and that he is confident that after sleeping on the issues they will have a better grasp on matters.

Amb. Iliopoulos expressed the honor and joy he felt in welcoming Kotzias and Kokkinos and told them he and his staff have been encouraged by their presence to continue their efforts to engender unity and generosity among Greek-Americans

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## Amb. Tsilas Reminisces and Inspires

By Constantine S. Sirigos  
TNH Staff Writer

NEW YORK – The delicious dinner served at the inaugural "Trailblazers Dinner Series" of the Association of Greek American Professional Women (AGAPW) honoring Ambassador Loucas Tsilas for his 50 years of public service was a mere intellectual appetizer for those who cannot wait for the distinguished public servant to write his memoir – an end toward which he was presented the symbolic gift of a pen.

The informative and entertaining talk over dinner and dessert proved a delightful experience in the private dining room of the new Limani restaurant at Rockefeller Center. Dr. Elena Frangakis-Syrett moderated the discussion and Dr. Aphrodite Navab was the event's Emcee.

Retiring after his successful 15-year tenure as the Executive Director of the Onassis Foundation (USA) following a distinguished career as a Greek diplomat, Amb. Tsilas is now a professor at Queens College.

The ambassador offered fascinating observations about the lives of diplomats – the consensus of a brief discussion about the origin of the word was that it is related to "diploma" and pertains to the documents ambassadors present when they arrive at their posts.

He said a diplomat's function can be summed up in one word: understanding, and one activity: "the effort to understand and be understood."

When a diplomat arrives in a country, his job is to observe and understand what is going on there and to explain and give

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BILL PETROS

## AHEPA National Banquet Returns to Washington, SNF Honored

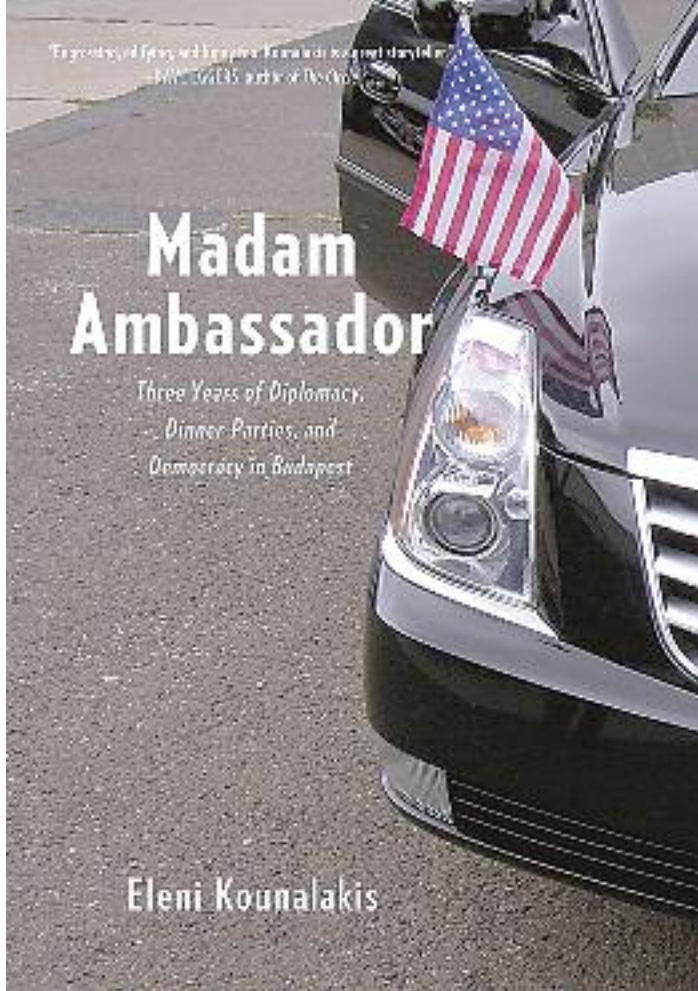
The Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) was presented with the Archbishop Iakovos Humanitarian Award at AHEPA's 41st Biennial National Banquet in Washington, DC on April 29. (L-R): Vasilios Tsamis, SNF's CEO, Amb. Vasilios Kaskarelis, Sr. Advisor to the SNF Board, AHEPA Supreme President Phillip Frangos, and Stelios Vasilakis, SNF Dir. of Programs and Strategic Initiatives.

## The Possible Future(s) of Orthodoxy

By Steve Frangos  
TNH Staff Writer

CHICAGO- Of all the many cultural institutions Greeks brought with them to North America none will prove more lasting than their efforts at permanently establishing in this nation the Eastern Orthodox Church. To be sure, Greek immigrants did not accomplish this goal alone, nor were they even the first among the various branches of the Eastern Orthodox faithful to do so. Yet it is also clear, to any who attend church even on an irregular basis that we are now every much in a period of transformation. Two issues occupy the conversations Greeks have among themselves concerning church the ever growing presence of converts and the current total

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## Amb. Kounalakis' Memoirs Published this Week

TNH Staff

Eleni Tsakopoulos Kounalakis was the U.S. Ambassador to Hungary from January 7, 2010 to July 20, 2013. From the date of her appointment, she was the highest-ranking Greek-American in the Obama Administration, until April 24, 2013, when Sylvia Mathews-Burwell was appointed Director of the Office of Management and Budget (and the following year, appointed Secretary of Health and Human Services).

Her memoir, to be released May 5, is titled *Madam Ambassador: Three Years of Diplomacy, Dinner Parties, and Democracy in Budapest*. From the Publisher's notes: "Have you ever wondered what it takes to be a US Ambassador? In *Madam Ambassador* (May 5, 2015) we follow Eleni Kounalakis—mother of two, first-generation American, and first-time diplomat—as she finds herself posted in Budapest.

"A charming and entertaining tour guide, Kounalakis sees the world of international relations through fresh eyes. With



Eleni Tsakopoulos Kounalakis

no background in diplomacy (Kounalakis had previously worked as a property developer), she endures a grueling vetting

process in which she's asked if she'd ever cheated on her husband or sent an embarrassing email, and attends ambassador 'charm school,' a two-week intensive training session with other prospective diplomats. But

when she finds herself at the helm of a medium-sized US Embassy in a former Soviet satellite nation, she realizes that nothing could have prepared her for the realities of this new life in Hungary.

"With startling candor, Kounalakis recounts the triumphs and gaffes of her newly-public life. Along with glamorous dinners and meetings comes the strain of fitting in. Her husband, a respected journalist, finds that he's discouraged from attending gatherings organized by the diplomats' spouses club, traditionally seen as women's events. "Kounalakis' children, accustomed to American-style discipline, are surprised at the realities of their new school. But Kounalakis meets all challenges head-on, and is soon welcoming a parade of visits by high-ranking U.S. government officials including Condoleezza Rice, Nancy Pelosi and Hillary Clinton.

"Part foreign policy memoir and part all-American story, *Madam Ambassador* is a thoroughly entertaining and inspiring example of leadership."

Kounalakis has a long and distinguished career in politics and academia. She and her husband, Markos Kounalakis, founded two university chairs in Hellenic studies: the Markos and Eleni Tsakopoulos Kounalakis Chair at Georgetown University, and the Tsakopoulos Kounalakis Chair in honor of former Greek Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis at Stanford University. The couple also established the Tsakopoulos Kounalakis lecture series at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

For her near-decade of service as Trustee of the World Council of Religions for Peace (WCRP), Kounalakis was awarded the medal of St. Paul by the Greek Orthodox Church, the highest honor the Church bestows on a layperson.

A staunch Democrat who was a delegate to the National Convention four times, Kounalakis has been a strong supporter of Hillary Clinton and has already begun helping – by having a fundraiser in her home – for Clinton's 2016 presidential bid.

## Ambassador Loucas Tsilas Reminisces and Inspires at AGAPW Dinner

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a profile of his own country and its interests.

While a nation's strength rests on its armed forces and economy, Amb. Tsilas said its cultural resources should not be underestimated. Among his regrets is that Greece never committed – even in good times – sufficient funds to promoting its rich cultural profile. "In Washington, DC you need a strong budget, and we never had one."

On the other hand, he was thrilled to have been able to promote Hellenism at the Onassis Foundation though generously funded events and academic programs of high quality throughout the Western Hemisphere, thanks to the generous support from its Board under

official as he was about to board a plane to Athens to brief the new Greek leader about the status of Greece-U.S. relations.

Shocked that Tsilas was leaving, the American said, "Don't you know you are on the verge of war with Turkey?"

Washington knew what Athens apparently did not, that Turkey was preparing to attack Greece, and Amb. Tsilas felt he had to personally convey what he knew to Simitis.

Greece had not realized that Ankara interpreted Athens's actions not as a defense of Greek sovereignty, but as an attempt to extend its territorial waters from six to 12 miles, an act Turkey had declared to be a casus belli that would trigger an attack.

"Developments were so rapid

a daughter.

The bittersweet reality includes opportunities to make countless many friendships, only to lose most of them and maintain the rest only by great effort across the miles and time zones.

Amb. Tsilas concluded by expressing his appreciation for AGAPW's acknowledgement of his wife, Penelope (Penny) Tsilas. Ambassadors' wives play important roles and Tsilas smiled as he said "In Washington I was known as Penny's husband."

He said they are both proud to have been a supporter of the organization from the beginning.

Nikos Papaconstantinou, who just retired from the Greek diplomatic service, spoke warmly of his work with Amb. Tsilas. "I call him my ambassador; he will always be my ambassador."

Alexakos invited guests representing the Onassis Foundation to speak about Amb. Tsilas' leadership. Dr. Maria Sereti, who was his Director of Educational Affairs for 10 years, called him an inspiration and said "this is his essence: he is an amazing combination of idealism and pragmatism."

Amb. Ioannis Vrailas, Deputy Head of the EU delegation to the UN, said Amb. Tsilas "was not just a legend or a role model but a constant source of inspiration, ahead of the times, an outside the box thinker."

Amb. Tsilas holds degrees in law and economics from the University of Athens, and a Master's in Political Science from the State University of Louisiana, New Orleans. He began his career as an attorney in Athens, Greece in 1963 – Mrs. Tsilas is also an attorney – and entered the Foreign Ministry in 1965.

He served as Greece's Ambassador to America during a critical period when relations improved and his numerous high level positions in Greece included membership on the committee which organized the successful bid for the 2004 Athens Olympics.

Among the dignitaries – speakers regretted the list was too long to mention all of them – were Amb. Vassilios Philippou, Consul General of the Republic of Cyprus in New York and his wife, Anthi Philippou; Nikos Papaconstantinou, Director of the Greek Press Office and his wife Marina, Nancy Papaioannou, President of Atlantic Bank and the Hellenic American Chamber of Commerce; Dr. Kathryn Yatrakis, Dean of Academic Affairs, Columbia University; Dr. Thomas Papatomas, Dean Rutgers University; and Dr. John Xethalis.

One of the highlights was a performance of a Mikis Theodorakis song by Soprano Flora Kyrou.

Alexakos invited Mrs. Tsilas



PHOTOS: MARIA TOLIOS

Ambassador Loucas Tsilas (4th from R) holds court as the featured speaker at AGAPW's "Trailblazers Dinner Series" on Apr. 23. AGAPW founder Dr. Olga Alexakos is 3rd from R.

to close the event and she chose to praise AGAPW for promoting networking among Greek women. She also urged the

community to teach the younger generation to be sensitive to what is going on in Greece. "In these hard times we must stick

together," she said, quoting the ancient aphorism "I ishis en ti enosi – there is strength in unity."



Amb. Loucas Tsilas, who recently retired as Exec. Director of the Onassis Foundation (USA), chats with AGAPW founder and president Olga Alexakos at Limani restaurant in Manhattan.

the leadership of Antonis Papademetriou.

While diplomats revel in sumptuous dinners and receptions, he said the substance of diplomacy is to "make or preserve peace, create conditions for the promotion of your country's interests, and to create the basis for mutual understanding and benefit."

The consequences of failure can be immediate and catastrophic: War.

Sometimes, even presidents and prime ministers don't realize they are on the brink of destruction.

A horrific war almost broke out between Greece and Turkey over the tiny islet of Imia in 1996. Although some observers believe Turkey's then-premier Tansu Tsiller tried to take advantage of the transition to a new government in Greece (Costas Simitis had just become prime minister) to squeeze concessions from Greece, Tsilas sees it as an example of potentially deadly misunderstandings.

A series of incidents culminated in Greeks and Turks alternately raising their own flags on the uninhabited islands.

In the midst of the crisis, whose danger was apparently not fully grasped by Greece, Tsilas was stopped by an American

that...despite hotlines between the two capitals... only America, with its satellite reconnaissance technology observing Turkish forces, grasped what was going on," and was feverishly working to prevent a clash he said

One of his saddest experiences was having to attend the funeral at Arlington National Cemetery of Richard Welch, the CIA employee who was murdered by November 17, but among the many positive elements of his career was seeing how much Greece and Greek culture was appreciated around the world.

"Hellenic principles are part and parcel of Western Civilization and are universal," he said.

He spoke of charismatic people who he met – especially Nelson Mandela and a young Fidel Castro in 1970, and President Bill Clinton – and those who were disappointing, like Mikhail Gorbachev.

There were also moments of personal insight. Tsilas said that while a career in foreign service is rich with glittering events and political action, diplomats also struggle with the mundane – as parents they are especially concerned with the lives and education of their children as they adjust to frequent moves to very different places. Ambassador and Mrs. Tsilas have a son and



(L-R) Dr. Maria Sereti, Penelope Tsilas, Aspa Bitis, and Marianthe Rouhotas. The Ambassador's wife paused for a photo with past and current Onassis Foundation (USA) staffers.

ΧΑΡΟΥΜΕΝΗ ΜΕΡΑ ΤΗΣ ΜΗΤΕΡΑΣ

Celebrate Mother's Day at Thalassa

The most special day of the year has finally arrived. Celebrate Mother's Day Sunday May 10 and enjoy the most exceptional seafood New York city has to offer!

Brunch & Dinner

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