

# **LEARNING TACTICS AND STRATEGIES FROM THE STRONGEST LOBBY OF THE WORLD**

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If I had to compare all the lobbies in Washington D.C, one would stand out, that being the Jewish lobby. The Jewish lobby is the strongest and best organized and for this reason it has achieved the most for its mother country, that of the state of Israel. A small community of Jewish Americans estimated to number about 6 million in North America have proven worthy in projecting their cultural history, identity and homeland issues into the Washington D.C power elites. Additionally, they have been able to ensure that Israel is the recipient of billions of dollars of US military aid annually. How is all that been accomplished? It has been achieved by having adequate financial resources and having the right people under a strong set of organizational structures that is self governed and self regulated. One of these organizations is the American Jewish Committee and the other is The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). “ I won’t mention the Jerusalem street one because it is a fairly a new association that still faces many issues with the American Jewish Diaspora concerning the handling of Israeli policies vis-à-vis the Arab Israeli conflict.”

Nevertheless to be fair, I must say, that the Holocaust committed by Nazi Germany against the Jews has also contributed in their overall policy of defending the safety of the Jewish State of Israel. The image of being hunted down and exterminated by Hitler’s Nazi hordes has also increased and aroused the Jewish esoteric psyche to resist all future aggressors. The phrase “Never Again”, says it all. But overall that alone, could not have helped them succeeding in their endeavors, if their leadership and organizational skills were static and regionally divided. Not to mention disagreement and internal political squabbles with the mother country.” A recipe

alone enough for any future disaster to follow”. Something that Athens and Greek Americans have refused up to date to avoid successfully.

Having said all that, the Greek Lobby (AHEPA) in its entire history, has achieved certain victories for Hellenism and its national Interests. But in the big picture, Athens foreign policy and AHEPA’S regional divisions have stymied its original role. The purpose of this article is not to criticize the Greek lobby, but how to learn from its mistakes and help it revitalize itself for the coming battles that economically hurt Greece will face from its external or internal enemies, that are currently knocking at its gates.

*The ominous events that are unfolding in Greece’s neighborhood requires an organization with **strong leadership** and a well built structure that will be able to project Hellenic issues to the right channels in Washington DC. It must make evident to the American Leadership that Greek interests coincide with US policies in the Balkans.* Currently the Greek community in the USA seems to be apathetic and this stems to a certain extent from the political leadership of Greece that has transmitted its’ inability to govern and their lack of vision, selfishness and unwillingness to work with the Greek Diaspora’s leadership.

*Ironically only independent actors in the US or the rest of the world are currently taking action to achieve something in the whole picture of protecting Greek national interests.* Part of the solution however, seems to be closer where previously it might have been thought as inconceivable to achieve. Turkey’s alienation with Israel and its desire to be a regional power and the protector of Islam in the Levant and the Balkans, has opened a window of opportunity to Greeks in the US to seize on the chance of full time cooperation with the Jewish Lobby for a common cause. This mutual cooperation will open the Greeks’ horizons in implementing new strategies in the arenas of political lobbying. Turkey in the past was able to influence American policy, ironically with even the absence of a substantial Turkish Diaspora in the US. They were successful in defeating many Cypriot and Greek agendas from reaching the Right US policy centers by using superior strategies, and influencing the right people and power centers.

Greek American organizations must immediately open communication with AIPAC and AJC. *They must appoint full time liaison officers that are implanted into each other’s centers of command, and are constantly active in all aspects of partnership and agendas that require the two communities to coordinate their common interests.* The Greek American lobby must also promote leadership that has experience in International relations or involvement in US politics. Dynamic Greek American personalities like ex Senators/Representatives or former US military officers or civilians that have played an active role in US government must

take charge. Businessmen should be responsible for the economical part of the Organization. They lack the stamina to represent Hellas in the international arena.

***The right person for the right job must be the motto, plus the regional offices must come under one command scheme that is smaller and easier to control.*** All of them should be placed under one umbrella and eliminate the picture which resembles that of ancient Greek city states. Having each of them act independently for their own cause or agenda is not appropriate. In addition AHEPA must bear in mind how many active US presidents or US State secretaries take part in Jewish American Conferences. That alone is a powerful statement that Greeks in the US must learn to adopt. The help is there. They just have to ask. They have nothing to lose from sharing and adopting strategies from AIPAC or AJC. In contrast, both groups having a common agenda and speaking as one on the Washington stage would have a much better chance in influencing US policy.

It would of course be unfair not to mention the Armenian Lobby that despite its Diaspora size in the US has proven more successful lately than the Greek one. Why? Again the main reason lies in the organizational skills plus the fact that the Jewish and Armenian Diasporas have a vision. In other words they know what they want. After all Greeks and Armenians shared an Empire, that of Byzantium, why not share also experiences and resources for their common agendas.

***Lastly AHEPA must create one powerful think tank that is independent*** from the tentacles of political Bonapartism that stems from Greece. Athenian politics and corruption must stay away. It should be noted that this state of mind is a major cause of Greece's foreign and economical blunders. I won't go into a deeper analysis but Hellenic American organizations must not become prisoners of Athens' microcosm and inability to arouse national consciousness, an issue that Ankara is using successfully for her own interests in the Balkans. ***The Greek lobby must remain consistent in their vision of how to protect Greek and American interests in the Mediterranean, along with combining and supporting the interests of their new ally, the state of Israel. It is a historic opportunity that must not be missed.***

Concluding with an appropriate phrase taken from the Apocrypha: I Macc.,12.21. that has a strong meaning to those who are willing to listen:

***“{I}t has been found in writing, concerning the Spartans and the Jews, that they are brethren, of the stock of Abraham.”***

