

A “GREECE FIRST” NATIONAL STRATEGY IS IT POSSIBLE?

Tassos Symeonides
(RIEAS Academic Advisor)

Copyright: Research Institute for European and American Studies (www.rieas.gr)
Publication date: 2 May 2020

Note: *The article reflects the opinion of the author and not necessarily the views of the Research Institute for European and American Studies (RIEAS)*

With the pandemic upending the global-politico-economic system, Greece finds herself in an unenviable position: bankrupt and inundated with semi-insurrectionist illegal immigrants; with unemployment rising again; with the coronavirus impact promising continuing debilitating dislocation of society and economy; with neighboring Turkey hyperventilating in a orgy of aggression, hostility, and expansionism and feeding a proxy war in the Aegean and the Evros frontier; and with the EU sliding irrevocably toward severe “intra-union” friction, and, perhaps, fragmentation, Greece must gather the courage to move in unexplored paths—or sink in *permanent existential and national oblivion*.

The Greek political class has proved itself beyond redemption (and the current self-congratulating administration is not an exception to the rule, if one looks closer at its methods and tactics). The post-junta decline of democracy, the crushing burden of a dysfunctional, corrupt, and debt-generating public sector, the generalized incompetence and self-serving chaos surrounding the country’s political parties, to name but a few of the national festering wounds, leave precious little space for the same ole circus experimentations.

Greece must *re-invent her international, political, and strategic relations in a revolutionary manner if she wants to survive as an “independent” national state* in the post-pandemic global environment.

This is a feat only the brave and the true patriots can achieve. And, provided we can somehow discover, or even invent, this group of determined, willing, and able leaders, Greece must adopt radical changes and abandon her traditionally parochial, cowering and obedient disposition. To boot:

1. It is obvious Europe’s EEC/EU experiment with the phantasm of a “federal union” is fizzling out fast. Already, member states form “sub-union” loci to defend against the German-dominated Brussels conclave.

2. The pandemic has simply accelerated this “insurrection” by member states fed up with Germany’s imperial behavior raising the real possibility of the asphyxiating coronavirus pressure could [fracture and disintegrate the “supranational” EU](#).
3. Decades of “integration” have failed to quash the inner psyche of individual European nations that have preceded the EEC/EU construct by *centuries*. National sovereignty, supposedly on its way out, thanks to the technocratic fantasies of pursuing an “ever closer union,” is making a strong return—and with-it age-old differences resurface to severely test the very idea of a future “united states of Europe.”
4. Greece, thanks to the monumental incompetence and corruption of her political class, was sunk in the 2010 bankruptcy only to be pushed even deeper by Germany’s draconian austerity demands which impaled the Greek economy and chained the country inside debtor’s prison.
5. And to add insult to injury, Greece saw her northern borders sealed by her “union comrades” so that it can become an open-air holding pen for the phalanxes of Afro-Asian undocumented aliens pushed by Turkey as proxy cross-border invaders to crush Greek sovereignty.
6. Against this backdrop, Greek “leaders” must realize there is no more room for dilly dallying. As the EEC/EU/NATO Atlanticism model shudders and cracks, it is high time for a Hail Mary politico-strategic shift to redefine national goals and *attempt* to balance national priorities in the direction of viable sturdy new bilateral alliances.

Fortunately, in recent years, Greece, almost by accident, has began to build closer relations with the State of Israel, *the only country in the East Med region with strategic interests that often coincide with those of this hoped-for “different” Greece First policy shift.*

Israel’s predicament is “challenging,” to say the least, as the Jewish state remains blocked from all azimuths by hostile Arabs and, more recently, by the virulence and fundamentalist hate of the Iranian Islamists looking for an opportunity to attack and destroy it.

It is thus conceivable that Greece and Israel, faced with similar intense security challenges, and sharing common goals in enhancing regional security, **can conclusively choose to close ranks and strike a comprehensive alliance** to work side by side in defeating hostile power plans in the East Med region.

Rogue Islamist Turkey augments her piratical activities in the East Med, as she seeks to grab the whole of the area’s underwater natural gas discoveries. Greece and Israel thus have a unique opportunity to build a methodical *Entente Cordial* to tackle Turkish piracy based on the already developing tripartite [Eastern Mediterranean Partnership](#), which also includes the Republic of Cyprus -- and has attracted strong USA interest as a “stability and security initiative” vis a vis new threats from Russia, China, and Islamist extremism in the region.

A close alliance between Greece and Israel, pushing out of the way antiquated objections by various Greek arteriosclerotic political lobbies, and allowing the two countries to substantially expand both their economic and defense ties, will be a boon to both Athens and Jerusalem.

Greece needs fresh economic methods and ideas to manage and minimize the EU-imposed debt slavery, not to mention defense know-how to combat Turkey's hostility and threats of war; and Israel will continue to expand its use of Greek sovereign space for improving and augmenting her defense capabilities by moving freely within ample geographical limits. The two countries can also build on their strong cultural affinities to open ever more areas of technical and cultural cooperation and mutual learning.

“Greece First” via different alliances should be approached as the *only viable option* in the coming extremely challenging post-pandemic world. With the EU “integrationist” dynamic all but fizzling out under a barrage of objections and open national rejections; and hostility towards Athens openly expressed by various European “partners,” it is high time Hellas selected *a different more independent path*—or choose to remain *passive-inactive* within a European bubble that is increasingly growing poisonous for a country already taken out to hang and dry by her “partners.”