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*the case of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese  
of North and South America*

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# Political advocacy along ethnic and national lines: the case of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America

Athanasios Grammenos

## Abstract

The Greek Orthodox Church of America has demonstrated a significant degree of political mobilisation in critical moments, especially during the 37-year tenure of the late Archbishop Iakovos (1959-1996). As the prelate of the Archdiocese in the Americas, he contributed to the growth of the Greek-American community and helped it become an active segment of American society. Among his achievements was his robust advocacy for civil and human rights, marching abreast with Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma, Alabama. For his pioneering work, he was held in high esteem by his counterparts in the US which earned him access to decision-makers in Washington, DC. Later, Iakovos used his recognition to lobby US Presidents and garner support for his 'homeland' in critical circumstances, strengthening Greece's relations with the United States. But, apart from Greece, Iakovos had also to take care of issues related solely with the Greek-American community as an integral part of American society. The purpose of this paper is to explore Iakovos' involvement in American politics related to Greece and the Greek-American community - both at the parish or citizen level, and to evaluate his work in the framework of international relations.

**Keywords:** Diaspora, Greek Orthodox Church, Greek Americans, Archbishop Iakovos, foreign policy.

## Introduction

The Greek Orthodox Church of America (formerly of North and South America) is the bedrock of the Greek-American community. Founded in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in a period when more and more immigrants from Greece were traveling to the US for a better life, it remains the oldest Greek-American institution, with a network expanding throughout the United States. Over the past century the Church has broadened and expanded its reach beyond religious pursuits to include education, social and administrative work as well, reflecting changing socio-political and cultural tides in the US. In the course of time, it forged a socially active character, ready to respond to modern challenges, based on the principles and values of Eastern Orthodoxy. The architect of this attribute was Archbishop Iakovos, a progressive clergyman who envisioned a Church fully engaged in society and its problems, as an active part of the American life. Simultaneously, he was attached to his country of origin, Greece, and Hellenic values, such as the language, family, history and culture. He was also committed to facilitating Greek-American relations in the critical years of the Cold War. The

following pages will consider the dual work of Iakovos, both in relation to his community in the US, and foreign policy issues vis-à-vis Greece. The purpose of the paper is to offer a new perspective linking the actions of the Archbishop with the emerging social capital of the Greek-American community. To that aim, the research aspires to enrich the existing literature by analysing the original material found in various archives and especially the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in New York. Before delving into this material, the theoretical framework of diaspora politics will be briefly outlined to help understand and evaluate the patterns of political mobilisation and social engagement of Iakovos for issues related to Greece (ranging from geopolitics to charitable giving to the homeland).

### **Diasporas in politics**

In politics, diasporas can be broadly defined as organised ethnic groups that arose due to migration,<sup>1</sup> either enforced or voluntary, preserving an active interest and involvement in the affairs of the country of origin (Grammenos, 2018a). Those groups are transnational actors whose political activism has visible impact on national and international politics. The study of the diaspora concept has received increasing attention in the last decades, and especially since the end of the Cold War due to the increased transnational mobility towards developed states, and the acceptance of the notion of diversity in both the academy and civil society in multi-ethnic democracies (Tölölyan, 2012). However, most of the scholarship deals with issues related to immigration policy and control, integration policies, social and economic organisation of immigrants' lives, and diaspora-homeland relations. This paper examines the topic from a different 'intra-diaspora' angle.

On the sociology of diaspora, Armstrong (1976) proposes two types of diasporic communities: first, the proletarian diasporas, which, as their name implies, have a low economic and social status. They are substantially discriminated against, but they do show high internal cohesion and their members are determined by their country of origin. Second, the mobilised diasporas, which are significantly assimilated to the societies they live in and enjoy higher status. Their members occupy important positions in the system (professional or political), they have higher overall levels of education and the power to lobby. Therefore, when the group grows and rises socially, as has been the case with the Greek-Americans since the 1960s, national characteristics are subdued and replaced by an ethnic identity adapted to the conditions of the host country.

Accordingly, it has been argued (Délano Alonso & Mylonas, 2017) that diasporas are not static communities, but change and evolve within a given society. They are shaped by collective patterns, recently referred to as the micro-foundations of diaspora politics, related

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<sup>1</sup> If, however, a group's homeland and residence happens to be outside the national borders, then it is not considered a diaspora; for this case, the paper suggests the term *homogeneia* (of the same ethnic origin; Greek: *ομογένεια*), for general application. Homogeneia reflects national identity, and in most cases such groups are recognised by international law as national minorities with special status (Cohen, 1996).

to their regular activity in the host country working as factors for dual identity-building. The challenge of assimilation and identity determination are two important issues for a diaspora. Diasporas are concerned with the 'management of change' and most empirical variations show that they choose a path of mild adaptation that transforms their national identity into an ethnic one (Sheffer, 2003: 23-24). In the Greek case, this means that the new generation is a cohort of Americanised citizens with a consciousness of their ethnic background, taking part in the social life of their respective communities (Anagnostou, 2010). The Church (as well as various other institutions) plays a critical role in this process, assisting diasporas to integrate without losing their ethnic consciousness.

Politically, diasporas do not constitute a pressure group per se, but political pressure requires a set of problems to be addressed and a basic organisational structure. As Kaloudis (2008: 41) has suggested, political activism requires (a) ethnic unity; (b) existence of other ethnic groups portrayed as 'enemies', and; (c) confidence in the morality and righteousness of the cause. Furthermore, it goes without saying that a pressure group will be welcome when it is not posing requests opposite to the declared policy and interests of the host country.

### **Profile of the Greek-American diaspora**

To assess whether Iakovos' efforts focused primarily on foreign policy lobbying or on domestic issues related to the Greek-American people, the character and needs of the community have first to be outlined.

The Greek presence in the United States is the result of three major immigrant waves. The first wave of Greek immigration took place from the late 1890s to 1920, notably due to the raisin crisis in the Peloponnese.<sup>2</sup> The emigrants travelled to any place friends or relatives had previously settled, or anywhere where work was available for them. As a result, many immigrants took low-skilled work such as shoe glazer, dishwasher, miner, industrial worker or worker in the railway infrastructure. Between 1911-1920, more than 184,000 Greeks moved to America (excluding the Greeks from the then Ottoman Empire).

The second wave began in 1965 (Alexiou, 2013), when the new Immigration Act abolished previous limitations and eventually opened the door to 15,000 Greeks annually, from 1966 to 1971 (Jurgens, 2015). That wave created the "Greek towns" like Astoria in Queens, New York, and the Western-Lawrence area, in Chicago. The Greeks of the second wave worked under better conditions and soon they had their own business, primarily in mass catering (restaurants, bars, and coffee shops) and also flower shops, dry cleaners, painting and maintenance, and taxis. The second wave coincided with the second generation of Greek-Americans, those American born Greeks who generally attained a higher level of education, did well in social and economic affairs and influenced the American foreign policy after the

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<sup>2</sup> Raisin exports during this period covered the biggest part of Greek exports and the instability of prices provoked a serious crisis (see Moschopoulos, 2010)

Turkish invasion in Cyprus (Kitroeff, 1994).

The third and last wave arrived in the 1980s, it was relatively smaller in population but it included qualified scientists and professionals who occupied positions in universities and big enterprises. This “brain-drain” for Greece offered to the Greek-American community a new group of highly skilled emigrants traveling to the US under different and more favourable conditions.

The diversity among the three waves’ socio-economic status underscores the different needs and priorities of the community in the course of time and will guide the paper through Iakovos’ efforts to address the second and the third ones. For example, those in the first wave imagined their residence in the new land as temporary, and their purpose was to earn money and return to their families in Greece. This idea helped them preserve a nostalgic memory of what they left behind, defending their ethnic identity and national characteristics. These people, however, faced discrimination and racism by hard-core American supremacists who used to target, among others, immigrants from the Balkans and Southeast Europe. To safeguard their position, these immigrant communities gathered around parishes and later established cultural associations as means of protection, solidarity and adaptation to a challenging environment (Doxas, 1972: 77).

The second wave met an already established ethnic community, fully assimilated in the US. The challenge for this group was to get out of the “Greek-American ghetto,” integrate into American society as an active and integral part with shared values and interests. The Greek diaspora became more upwardly mobile, socially and economically, and became involved in the political process (Moskos, 1980: 111-115). Greek-Americans sought recognition as a viable political entity, being a significant minority group embedded in the US. The Church was integral in this pursuit and continued to grow in significance within the community (Makedon, 1989).

When the third wave arrived, the Greek-American community was already sophisticated and thoroughly enmeshed in the US. Nonetheless, the third wave, with its many academics, further heightened the reputation of Greek-Americans and prompted the community to further evolve.

### **Iakovos for the Greek-American community**

Iakovos was elected Archbishop of North and South America in 1959, and he was the first to be chosen from the ranks of the American clergy. His service began approximately the same period as the steady transition of the Greek-American community to a higher status with the arrival of the second wave of immigrants. When he arrived in New York, he found an integrated community that had achieved middle class, upwardly mobile status. Many of its members were thriving in social and professional life, in business, academia and politics

(Petropoulos, 1980: 87-95). In addition, the Eastern Orthodox faith had been already recognised by some states as the fourth major faith in the US.<sup>3</sup>

Given the Greek-American community's appreciable social status, when Iakovos became the leader of the Archdiocese, he had some sound basis to work and lobby the politicians about community issues. And as the Greek-Americans were enjoying a better social status, he was able to turn his attention to other efforts such as to organise the Church to support community needs, such as the Greek schools, charities and services for the elderly. However, he did not travel to America merely to be the administrative leader of the Archdiocese, but he aimed much higher: to lead the Greek-American community to a new progressive era of civic pride in the US.

To understand how he perceived his role, a document he released as early as 1964 is rather indicative of his vision for the future of Hellenism in America. In his report to the 1964 clergy-laity that took place June 28 - July 3, 1964, in Denver, Iakovos stated that the Church could no longer afford to remain merely a spectator and listener. He underscored that:

Our Church must remove itself from the side-lines and place itself fully in the centre of American life. It must labour and struggle to develop its spiritual life, and thus assume its place among the other Churches as a living, thriving, courageous church ready to accept responsibilities and eager to submit to sacrifice. The mission of our Church [...] is that of retaining us and future generations within the fold of Orthodoxy, while becoming one of the strongest and largest American Churches. (Iakovos Archbishop, 1998)

With these valiant words, Iakovos declared his ambition to render the Greek Orthodox Church a champion of social affairs, expressing his readiness to offer his services in American society. Accordingly, he dreamt of a higher social status for the Greek-American community and for the Church to take a leading role in pressing social issues. The following cases aim to make his thought more explicit.

### *The Civil Rights Movement*

The Archbishop's support for Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement put into action his words from 1964. When, in March 1965, Dr. King invited Iakovos and other religious men to attend the memorial services of Jimmie Lee Jackson and Rev. James Reeb in Selma, Alabama,<sup>4</sup> Iakovos made the decision to attend the ceremony despite severe reservations from his advisors connected to security risks in the Selma area due to tensions (Grammenos, 2016).

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<sup>3</sup> For the ascension of Orthodoxy to major faith see: GOARCH, Box W2, Folder NN.

<sup>4</sup> Telegram sent to Archbishop Iakovos by Robert W. Spike, on March 13, 1965, in: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Archives (GOARCH), Box E24, Folder CK.

On March 15, together with his Chancellor, Father George Bacopoulos, and several other distinguished clergymen of the Commission on Religion and Race, Iakovos landed near Selma and proceeded to Brown Chapel which was already fully crowded. The Archbishop was directed to a distinguished seat as the highest ranking clergyman present and King offered him a warm welcome when he entered the church. Later, when it was announced that the Federal Judge had permitted the people to walk in procession to the Dallas County Courthouse (Harakas, 1981: 187), Iakovos and King led the march of 3,500 people, despite provocations by local white supremacists (Branch, 2006: 325-332). As the marchers arrived at their destination, King walked up the steps of the courthouse with Iakovos. That moment was captured by a Life Magazine photographer and later, on March 26, it was published on the front cover of the issue. With that image, it became clear that the Orthodox Church had established its place in the United States.

Iakovos' action had a meaningful impact on the character of his Church. Until then, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America was limited to serving the immigrants coming from Greece and Asia Minor. That first community of Greek-Americans was a mainly poor, and, not surprisingly, was introverted and unintegrated. When Iakovos was appointed to lead the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, the situation was very different as many of his communicants were already socially and economically upwardly mobile by that point.

### *Community affairs*

Iakovos travelled extensively to acquaint himself with the conditions his constituency lived in. He managed to increase the Archdiocese's funds significantly, engaging more wealthy Greek-Americans with his *Leadership 100* endowment fund. The idea was to provide an opportunity for Greek Orthodox leaders to support the life-sustaining ministries of the Church. In education, he elevated the status of the Holy Cross Theology School, he increased the daily and evening Greek language schools and he offered an increasing number of scholarships. In the mid-1960s he witnessed the transition of the Greek community to an American ethnic group and he introduced the limited use of English in the holy liturgy. Later, in 1970 he argued for the use of English language equal to Greek, having realised fewer and fewer members of the flock could functionally use and understand Greek. However, the reactions from the community and the Ecumenical Patriarchate de facto cancelled his proposal (Kitroeff, 2019).

### *The Greek National Day*

In another characteristic case, Iakovos sought the recognition of the Greek-American community as an integral part of American society. Eventually, he finally achieved the recognition of the Greek Independence Day as a national day in the US. In 1986, along with the help of a few Greek-Americans, Iakovos convinced the Reagan Administration to support the establishment of a National Day of celebration of Greek and American Democracy. This

way, they could honour Greek-American relations and simultaneously secure a direct link with the President. Although it is not customary for ethnic groups to have a designated national day, Congress, by Public Law 99-532, on October 26, 1986, designated March 25, 1987, as Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy “to pay special tribute to the democratic values that the United States, together with its friends and allies such as Greece, are committed to defend” (Reagan, 1987).

### **Iakovos and the Greek-American relations**

Iakovos became Archbishop with the help of the Greek Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis. Initially, the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate expressed a robust preference for someone else, but Karamanlis sent an emphatic letter arguing that whoever goes to New York would have to fulfil special national interests, and that he considered Iakovos as the most suitable (Svolopoulos, 1994: 204-205). The Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, who was elected in 1949 with the help of President Truman, was dependent upon the support of Greece given tensions with Turkey, thus he obeyed to the Greek government’s request.

#### *The Turkish invasion of Cyprus*

After the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, Iakovos in cooperation with Greek-American activists, organised a rule of law campaign demanding Congress impose an embargo on arm sales to Turkey (Archbishop Iakovos, 2008: 169). That campaign gained enormous traction in the Greek-American community and it ultimately came to President Ford’s attention. More precisely, on October 7, 1974, Ford and Secretary Kissinger asked Iakovos to calm the Greek-Americans down and stop pressing Congress to vote for the embargo. Iakovos replied that it is up to the Administration to condemn the invasion first, and then the Greek-American community would become more amenable. Kissinger refused and Iakovos left unconvinced. Later, he contacted Greek Premier Karamanlis whom he advised to keep the good relations with the US because it would be the prerequisite for future vindication of Greece’s position. The Greek Government, he added, shouldn’t escalate tension with Washington DC. It was agreed that a meeting between the two State Secretaries should be sought in order to address the next steps of the Cyprus problem isolating Turkey. The Archbishop also reassured Karamanlis that the Greek-American community would keep protesting any possible way.

In parallel, Iakovos founded the United Hellenic Council, predecessor of the Chicago based United Hellenic American Congress, which coordinated most of the Greek-American organisations and federations in congressional efforts. Simultaneously, many members of the community assembled in the Chapels’ basements to phone bank and prepare political action. The Greek Orthodox network proved very strong and Iakovos seized the momentum sending letters to Ford, arguing that the US had an ethical and legal obligation to support freedom

and independence of Cyprus. That lobbying pressure resulted in a 3-year embargo on arms sales to Turkey, despite Kissinger's fierce opposition to this due to NATO's strategic objectives (Kitroeff, 1994; Watanabe 1993).

Later, in 1983, the Turkish Cypriots proclaimed independence with immediate recognition from Turkey. The US was reluctant in recognising the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" but that option was not "off the table". In Greece, the socialist government of PASOK was isolated because of the non-aligned foreign policy declared by its leader, Andreas Papandreu. Acting fast, Iakovos visited the UN Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar to address the issue. The same day he flew to Washington and met with the Secretary of State George Shultz warning him that the days of 1974, with massive Greek-American rallies in the capital's streets, would come back if the US recognised a Turkish-Cypriot state. Later, he wrote a letter to Reagan asking him to protect peace, justice and democracy (Archbishop Iakovos, 2008: 311). The President eventually condemned the provocative proclamation from the occupied Cyprus and via his Deputy State Secretary, Richard Burt, replied to Iakovos stating that he would not accept an action that undermined the UN efforts. He also informed him that he would suggest other allied countries to do the same.

### *The Greek-Turkish dispute*

In March 1987, Greece and Turkey nearly started a war over ownership of mineral rights in the continental shelf in the Aegean Sea. The decisiveness of the Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu, who mobilised the entire Greek army with an order to engage in a conflict, deterred Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal, who asked his research vessels, which were sent in disputed area to conduct survey with an escort of Turkish warships, to retreat. In the aftermath of the Aegean crisis, the two leaders decided to take action to ease tensions. They agreed to open a direct telephone line and to set up working groups on political and economic affairs. Iakovos - who was asked by Özal to mediate a meeting with Papandreu as early as 1985 - convinced the Greek Premier to agree to this proposition. The rapprochement began in 1988 at the World Economic Forum at Davos where the two leaders signed the "Davos Declaration," a no-war agreement with tentative moves to improve ties. Iakovos, who was consulting Papandreu, said he was satisfied with the progress but reminded Özal that he had to do something about human rights violations in Turkey, especially with the oppression of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Greek minority in Istanbul, as well as the reopening of the Halki Seminary.

### *The modern Macedonian Question*

The Macedonian Question can be traced back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but in its modern form it starts at the end of the Second World War when Tito created the Socialist Republic of Macedonia (SRM) - on August 2 1944 - as a federal member of Socialist Yugoslavia. This development strengthened the nation building process in SRM but neighbouring countries

considered the “Macedonian” nation to have appropriated elements of their historical and cultural identity. At the same time, SRM contained the seed of revisionism because it claimed that the Greek and the Bulgarian areas had been violently separated from the national backbone and should be united in one state.

This ideology was exported to the US and Canada by Slavic Macedonian migrants and their newly established “Macedonian Church”. Iakovos followed closely the moves of this Church which initially was recognised by the Serbian Patriarchate in 1967. However, it proclaimed independence and was excommunicated as schismatic. He focused on encouraging the cohesiveness of his congregation and tried to protect it from any other influence. He was in direct contact with the Greek diplomatic authorities, who were concerned with the political views from Yugoslavia (perceived as irredentist), and who kept a watchful eye on the activities of the Slav Macedonian clergy and laity. When he was addressing American officials, Iakovos highlighted that from his point of view these provocations were part of the Yugoslav communist propaganda against a NATO member.

After the disintegration of Yugoslavia, and the self-proclamation of the “Republic of Macedonia” in 1991, Greece regarded that the name, identity and constitutional provisions of its neighbour posed territorial threats and immediately blocked its international recognition. Iakovos supported this view and lobbied President Bush, asking him to help Greece. His approach was aligned with the maximalist stance of the Greek side losing his previous sense of realism; he insisted that it would be a mistake for the US to support former communist patterns, such as a “Macedonian” state. Iakovos said that there was only one Macedonia, the Greek, and proposed that Bush instead endorse the name, “Republic of Skopje”. He was primarily concerned with the historical argument and the heritage of ancient Macedonians, ignoring the strategic dimensions of the conflict in Yugoslavia and the high demand for stability in the region. He remained steadfast in his initial position, even after Bill Clinton became President, asking him to press the former Yugoslav Republic to abandon the Macedonian name, too (Grammenos, 2018a: 232).

### **The Church of America beyond Iakovos**

The question of whether the Church leader should be involved in the political sphere can be traced back to Iakovos’ tenure. Most liberal secularists would proclaim the distinguished roles of Church and state, but a classical realist would hardly deny that Iakovos’s charismatic personality was too big for politicians to omit. He built his own political project which was endorsed by the American political system and was awarded in 1981 the Presidential Medal of Freedom (Archbishop Iakovos, 2008: 282). Be that as it may, that political leverage of the Greek-American community in Congress and with various administrations, did not survive his tenure. There are some reasons for this. The new Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, elected in 1992, was not keen on political engagement by the Church. Moreover, the leadership of the Ecumenical Patriarchate had decided on different priorities for the Church and it was felt

that they would be best served by an Archbishop of a different character. To this end, huge pressure was exerted on Iakovos until he was forced to resign in 1995.

Soon afterwards, things got very bad and Patriarch's new strategy turned into a huge crisis. The new Archbishop Spyridon, previously Metropolitan of Italy who ascended to office in America in 1996, did not settle easily into the new role or Iakovos' shoes and soon the harmony which used to characterise the Greek-American community was frayed. The turbulence led to the apparent organisational decline of the Archdiocese (and organisations close to the Archdiocese) and the downturn in the political influence of the Greek-American community in Congress and with various administrations. By 1999 a new leader was chosen, Demetrios, Titular Metropolitan of Vresthena. However, the damage to the political heritage of Iakovos was already considerable by that point.

## Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to compare Iakovos' advocacy for Greece and the advancement of the Greek-American community alongside his wider advocacy of social justice causes in the US. It was argued that the Greek-American community had become well-established since the first wave of immigrants had arrived in the US, and were on a solidly upwardly mobile course.<sup>5</sup> Socio-economically, the Greek-Americans continued this upward climb through the generations. When the 'Iakovian' era started, the community was well established in the middle class and efforts were dedicated to advance the Greek-American community as a socially conscience entity, active in American society. Iakovos was committed to take the lead and leave his footprint in this process.

This was made possible because the Greek-Orthodox Church was the touchstone of Greek-American life. The community was built around the Church and its institutions, which rendered the role of the Primate pivotal. His heritage was praised 23 years after his retirement, on May 11, 2019, by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on the occasion of the appointment of Elpidophoros as the new Archbishop of America.<sup>6</sup> Since its establishment, the Church has been endowed with some very charismatic leaders with conscience of duty and helped their constituency grow and achieve high levels of assimilation and even excellence. Archbishop Iakovos, with his political character and his communication skills sought to go a step further and advocate in the name of the Greek-American community on issues of

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<sup>5</sup> The Greeks in the US and Canada faced prejudice and discrimination during the early years of their settlement in the respective countries. Certain case studies can be found in: Kitroeff 2012; Grammenos 2018b; Gounardes and M. Avgitidis Pyrgiotakis, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> The Patriarch said: "We expect from you to strengthen the holy bonds of your Archdiocese with the Center of our ecclesiastical foundation, to organize pilgrimages here from time to time, as your predecessor Iakovos of blessed memory used to do, to come back here often to keep us informed, be re-baptized in our springs of spirituality, and collaborate with the competent Synodical Committee for problems you may encounter there from time to time" See *Orthodoxie.com*, May 15, 2019. Available on: <https://orthodoxie.com/en/speech-on-the-occasion-of-the-appointment-of-archbishop-elpidophoros-as-the-new-archbishop-of-america-ecumenical-patriarchate/>.

national concern. He was responsive to Martin Luther King Jr. and he dared to openly support him, pushing a part of his flock beyond its conservative sphere, bearing the costs and the fruits of his vision. For his work, he was honoured with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which, in his view, was an award to the Greek-American community itself. Later, with vigilance and goodwill he argued and succeeded in creating the Greek Independence Day a National Day for the US.

Relations with Greece was another important topic for Iakovos. Greece was very important for the US from a geo-strategic perspective, located just underneath the Balkan “iron curtain”, bordering communist and unfriendly countries. Iakovos enjoyed trust from both sides, the American and the Greek, and he frequently acted as intermediary. In most cases, however, he acted autonomously using his networks with the policy-makers. He supported Greek-American relations, and he knew how to present his opinion in the Cold War framework, appealing to the anti-communist sentiments of the American policymakers. In his correspondence with the Presidents, he did not hesitate to explain how loyal Greece had been in all occasions and what an important US ally it remained.

Finally, Iakovos played a significant role in enhancing Greece’s relations with Turkey. Mediating and advising on various issues he helped both sides better understand each other and avoid risks that could have led to undesired results. His mediation complemented traditional political methods and diplomacy opening new doors of communication at the highest level.

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# The Greek Diaspora Project at SEESOX

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## Mission statement

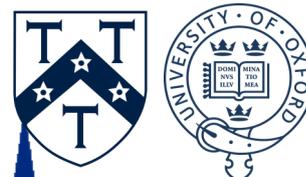
The Greek Diaspora Project (GDP) was set up at SEESOX with the overall aim to serve as a nexus between academic research and policy, and to help identify ideas to maximise the developmental impact of the Greek diaspora on contemporary Greek politics, economy and society. The project studies the relationship between Greece and its diaspora within the context of the current economic crisis and beyond.

## Project objectives

- Become the preeminent forum for debate between the wider diaspora scholarship and scholarship dedicated to the Greek diaspora;
- Relate Greece and its diaspora to other similar countries and conduct in-depth comparative studies;
- Be a port of call for anyone interested in contemporary aspects of the Greek diaspora, in terms of its library and archival resources, activities, institutional affiliations, policy relevant research;
- Analyse the new trends characterizing the current Greek diaspora in conjunction to the historical context, socio-economic change, varieties of cultural affinities;
- Assess the developmental impact of the diaspora on the Greek economy and identify policies that can maximize its contribution;
- Inform Greek public debate and Greek policy makers on the Greek diaspora, its evolution and the policy implications of actual and potential interactions between the diaspora and Greece;
- Secure funding and research opportunities for a young generation of scholars dedicated to the study of the Greek diaspora.

## About SEESOX

South East European Studies at Oxford (SEESOX) is part of the European Studies Centre (ESC) at St Antony's College, Oxford. It focuses on the interdisciplinary study of the Balkans, Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. Drawing on the academic excellence of the University and an international network of associates, it conducts academic and policy relevant research on the current multifaceted transformations of the region. It follows closely regional phenomena and analyses the historical and intellectual influences which have shaped perceptions and actions in the region. In Oxford's best tradition, the SEESOX team is committed to understanding the present through the *longue durée* and reflecting on the future through high quality scholarship.



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