



**The Twentieth International Symposium**

**20** Years  
**G.A.A.E.C**  
1991- 2011

Education, Dialogue, Advocacy

**“Transatlantic Security and Financial Crisis”**

2<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> of December, 2011

Venue: Amphitheatre of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece, Academias 1

***Ambassadors Forum (summary)***

Since 1991 geopolitical changes in the Transatlantic area, as well as in the Southeastern Europe and the Mediterranean, have brought new challenges and opportunities for security and stability. Ambassadors of the Country-members of the UN Security Council (United States, Germany and United Kingdom) discussed upon the lessons taught by history to predict the future of the next two decades.

**Theodoros Psalidopoulos, Vice Mayor of Kallithea Municipality, Secretary General Greek-Russian Association** delivered the opening speech sent by **Ambassador Yiannis Alexios Zepos, the Secretary General of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs** and Member of the Group of Experts- contributors to the NATO’s New Strategic Concept. Ambassador Zepos in his message underlined the importance of stability and coherence of the European and Euro-Atlantic defense and security systems, even under the current difficult financial circumstances and added the importance of cooperation with the developing countries and advancing powers.

**Christos Panagopoulos, CEO of SKAI Media Group and one of the Founding Members of G.A.A.E.C.**, introduced the Ambassadors and contributed thoughts to the Forum.

**Ambassador of the United States in Greece Daniel Benett Smith**, looked at the Trans-Atlantic relationship and naturally related it to NATO, as the key mechanism of addressing the threats of the 21st century. Mr. Smith also underlined that NATO is a unique institution which combines the military and economic strength of many of the most powerful nations on earth, and takes action only on the unanimous agreement of each one its members. It has set the global standard for providing security and defence within democratic societies. And increasingly, it is becoming a “global hub,” through which capable Asian and Middle Eastern states cooperate to address shared security concerns. Ambassador also reflected on Libyan crisis saying that what has happened in Libya over the course of this year demonstrates vividly how the United States and Europe worked together at the onset of a crisis, came together along with other global partners at NATO to act, and will work together during the future transition. The Ambassador closed his speech by telling that we should look for ways to enhance and expand the partnership both with those countries outside NATO that are capable militarily, as well as those who strive to be more capable.

**Ambassador of Germany Dr. Ronald Wegener** in his speech referred to the history of NATO from the perspective of Germany, which was divided after World War II and moreover was a frontline state during the Cold War; and later to the change of the threats after the fall of Berlin Wall. Today’s main challenge, identified as economic crisis on the opinion of the Ambassador “took us by surprise. After the cold war our economic system seemed to be fit to meet all existing challenges.” Dr. Wegener evaluated the weaknesses of this system, among which he underlined the interconnecting effects that take place. As example he remembered the European consequence of US banking crisis in 2008. Ambassador called “to restore confidence of investors in the markets, reinforce our commitment to sound financial management and



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review the deficiencies of the financial system of the Eurozone”, as this action, on his opinion required to overcome the new type of crisis that the world faces today.

**The Ambassador of the United Kingdom, Dr David Landsman** started with the statement of British Prime- minister Cameron : “our national security depends on our economic security”, and continued speaking about the corresponding security challenges that come as a result of fast economic, demographic, environmental changes. Economic crises could not be an excuse for an isolationist or inactive security policy. The Ambassador recognised that debt is an immediate problem and referred to the need for Europe to also tackle more fundamental issues of growth and competitiveness. He went on to stress the importance of the Atlantic Alliance for our security and the need for NATO to adapt and reform, as well as enhance its relationships with partners.