



The Twentieth International Symposium

20 Years

G.A.A.E.C

1991-2011

Education, Dialogue, Advocacy

“Transatlantic Security and Financial Crisis”

2st – 3rd of December, 2011

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

Session: “South Eastern Europe & Mediterranean: Threats & Opportunities in a Transforming Region” (Summary)

Solomon Passy, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, raised the issue of a common European Defense. On the speakers opinion the goal of building it the big decisions must be made. Dr. Passy sees the opportunities in the economic crisis are the fresh ideas which will bring wisdom to the governments. In conclusion he referred to the Lisbon Treaty which created new opportunities and prospects for the region.

Arian Starova, the Vice Minister of Defence of Albania and the President for the Atlantic Association of Albania the second speaker, marked that the security situation in Western Balkan is stable. The reason and indicator is that the region has seized to be the source of security. The common operations in Afghanistan and Somalia justify this. The issues of Kosovo, Bosnia and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia must be taken in account since these countries will determine the future of the region.

Regarding the Arab spring, Mr. Starova said that it proved to the Arab world that those countries share the common values of human rights, democratic rights.

The Former Minister of Defense of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Lazar Elenovski talked about a more general perspective of the crisis. He referred to general ideas concerning processes in Eastern Europe and the Arab Spring. The most important role in his speech was given to the media. Mr. Elenovski said that the global media played a major role in the Arab Spring by questioning of what freedom and democracy means. Concerning the Balkans, these countries have always wanted to be part of the big European project. Social stability in the region should be the major priority; however, the allies should look also to other directions such as external control of Iran’s nuclear program.

Ambassador Omer Akbel, President of the Atlantic Council of Turkey, talked about people demanding freedom and social justice; he specifically said that ‘*transformation will mark history*’. In terms of the Arab Spring, Social media largely have an effect on this process. Speaking about Turkey, Ambassador said that his country can play the role of the stabilizer of the region, as one of the dominant states which yet belongs to the Islamic world. As democratization, historical, geographical and cultural ties are the elements shared by Turkish nation and other people of the region.

Panteion University Professor Alexandros Koutsis talked about Islamic liberalism and the role of ideology which has been developed in the Islamic world for the past decades. He said that the new generation which grew in this Arab world has been humiliated, has passed regime brutality, corruption, with inexistent public service and no public sector, confirming: “*Basically, population in the Middle East is terrorized.*” Prof. Koutsis named the lack of goods import, the food deficit and, what is more important, illegitimate governments, as the elements of Revolutions. The question which Mr. Koutsis raised was “Democracy – is it compatible with Islam?” and referred the audience to the Declaration of Islamic Human Rights. The professor also expressed his opinion that the region will only get peace if there is a solution for the Palestinian issue.