

## THE VISION OF LASTING GREEK-TURKISH SOLIDARITY

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We know the antecedents of this lofty concept; it started in the years just before the fall of Constantinople, 1453. It became in a way the unofficial political philosophy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate during the Ottoman centuries and of a part of the Fanariot elite. The Greek Revolution marks a repudiation of the Greco-ottomanism/Greco-turcism. Freedom loving Greeks, guided by Filiki Etaireia, demonstrated that never again Ottoman rule over them. Georgios Typaldos - Iacovatos, an intellectual and politician of the Ionian islands, was in the latter part of the 19th century fervent supporter of an imaginary Ottoman/Greek state. In the beginning of 20th century significant figures of the Greek public and intellectual life, like Ion Dragoumis, were favoring a Greco-Ottoman alliance against the Slavs of the Balkans and beyond. To no avail. The Treaty of Lausanne (1923) established Greece as a maritime/naval power and post-imperial Turkey as a land-, a continental power. In the early 30s, talk - romantic talk for sure - of a con-federation of Greece with Turkey gained some currency. Dimitri Kitsikis, coined in the late 1970s the vision of «intermediate region” of the planet, including among other areas of the orthodox Balkans, Greece and Turkey. Constantinople (Istanbul) stands out in this vision as the natural hub, the geographical and geo-cultural centre of this mega region.

Kitsikis passed away four years ago, worried that the lack of co ordination between Ankara and Athens would spell a geopolitical disaster for both countries.

Let us revisit the notion of Turko - Graecia nowadays; are societal foundations strong enough to sustain a venture of this kind?

Ours is a predominantly Christian, mediterranean European society, imbued with the principles of the American and French revolutions. Modern Greece was created in negation of everything ottoman. There is no pragmatic prospect for co habitation of Turkey with Greece, other than to aspire at a durable detente between them. Anything more lies beyond the realm of pragmatism. It is important to safeguard peace and ensure prosperity of the citizens of both countries. Greek people might not be trigger happy, but they care a lot about democracy and human rights. They disapprove of the incursions of Turkey across the border with Syria and Iraq, not to speak about the continuing occupation of the north of Cyprus. We realize that, however you examine things, sociological foundations for a deep rooted joined march to the future of Greece and Turkey are lacking. Oligarchic trade interests do not suffice to be a substitute for genuine understanding among the people of these nations.

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Under the circumstances, with a dangerously assertive and expansive Turkey, there is no prospect for the ideas of Georgios Trapezountios (15th century), Ion Dragoumis and Dimitri Kitsikis to blossom. Yet, Greece should be steadily able to extend an olive branch to both the government and the citizens of Turkey. After all, we Greeks cherish the historical physiognomy of the space of Turkey. This reality implies that we have to methodically and persistently strive for a workable understanding between Greece and Turkey, in the spirit of good neighborhood, without unrealistic expectations at least in the foreseeable future.

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