

We had very friendly and useful talks with President Nazaryan and Prime Minister

Σχέδιο αντιφωνήσεως κ. Πρωθυπουργού  
σε επίσημο δείπνο Ινδού ομολόγου του  
(5 Φεβρουαρίου)

Vatspai  
I thank the Indian government for its warm welcome and its hospitality. I want to express again my sympathy to the Indian people and to the families of the victims

Mr. Prime Minister, distinguished guests,

I would have liked to begin my address to you, by expressing my satisfaction for being your guest in this fascinating country that India is. But the so recent event of the devastating earthquake, which has stricken North-Western India and resulted in the tragic loss of thousands of lives, prevents any kind of rejoicing. I wish to convey to you my sincere condolences and through you the sympathy and solidarity of the Greek government and people to the people of India for this unexpected suffering.

Our sadness, though, cannot prevent me from expressing to you our appreciation for your warm welcome, your kind words and your hospitality. We are grateful for being here, in India, one of the most ancient cradles of civilization. Your country, while respecting its old traditions, has wisely combined them with modern development, scientific progress and technological expertise, thus attracting the admiration of the whole world. Adding to those achievements the fact that today's India is a multicultural democracy, where different religions, ethnic groups and so many different languages have all their rightful place and respect, one can understand why you enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century confident about your important role and influence in world affairs.

With this great country and its people, Greece has the privilege to enjoy a long-standing friendship and excellent political relations. This is reflected in both our close cooperation within international organizations and our mutual understanding in regional problems, that our countries face and for which they are seeking solutions.

Mr. Prime Minister,

Excellent as our bilateral relations are in the political field, I feel that both our countries should intensify their efforts to fully develop the existing great potential of their cooperation in trade, investment, information technology, agriculture, merchant marine and the economic sector in general. For this reason, I am accompanied in this visit by

This is possible

ΔΙΠΛΩΜΑΤΙΚΟ ΓΡΑΦΕΙΟ ΠΡΩΘΥΠΟΥΡΓΟΥ

businessmen in order to enable them to examine possibilities of cooperation. I hope that my visit will prove fruitful in this respect.

I would like also to express my satisfaction for the level of our cultural exchanges. A substantial step took place last September, with the establishment of the "Dimitrios Galanos" Chair for Hellenic Studies at the Nehru University in New Delhi. It is one more happy occasion, where two great and ancient civilizations meet.

Mr. Prime Minister,

Greece supports a just and peaceful solution in Kashmir. The principles included in the Lahore Declaration of Feb. 1999 can provide, I believe, the basis for a lasting solution [which will bring peace and stability in the region. In this context I would like to stress that Greece condemns terrorism whatever its origin and positively considers the Indian initiative for a U.N. Convention to combat International Terrorism. Furthermore, my country has welcomed with satisfaction your initiative for a cease-fire in the State of Jammu and Kashmir as well as its recent extension as announced by your Excellency.

I will take this opportunity to reiterate here my Government's position concerning the U.N. reforms. I firmly believe that half a century after the U.N.'s establishment, the Organization should reflect existing international realities. As India plays an important regional and international role, Greece supports your aspiration to become a permanent member of the enlarged Security Council.

Greece believes that India deserves a strong and privileged relationship with the European Union. The existing Trade and Cooperation Agreement constitutes a solid basis. As an E.U. member-state, Greece will actively contribute to further enhance these relations, with decisive actions and concrete programmes in order to increase economic exchanges, in the follow up of the important E.U.-India summit last year in Lisbon.

*Call. is now one the great economic powers of the world. A closer cooperation with India is necessary*

Mr. Prime Minister, distinguished guests,

In the Balkans, an important European region which experienced war and suffering, Greece is striving to promote democracy, economic development, and stability, both in cooperation with our E.U. partners as well as on a bilateral basis. We have initiated, in 1997 in Crete, the South-Eastern Europe Cooperation Process, which brings us at the same table with our Balkan neighbours.

*Greek Turkish relations are improving following Greek initiative*

We are also working on improving our relations with Turkey. Talks in specific fields, such as tourism, environment, trade, combating crime, have been held. Several agreements have been signed. Turkey has been recognized, in 1999, as a candidate to the E.U. – thus acquiring rights and undertaking obligations as well. However, we believe that Turkey should be encouraged towards substantially improving her relations with us, and significantly changing her stance vis a vis Greece.

I would like to mention, at this point, the Cyprus issue. We highly appreciate the position of India and its continuing contribution in this respect. Cyprus marks considerable progress in its negotiations for accession to the E.U. At the same time Greece has spared no effort to maintain the momentum created during the recent rounds of proximity talks under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General. Our goal is a just, viable and comprehensive solution of the Cyprus problem by establishing a bizonal, bicomunal Federation as provided for in the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions. Greek-Turkish relations cannot go very far, if the present situation on the island remains unchanged.

Mr. Prime Minister,

I believe it is hard to identify two countries that share more than India and Greece do. The official visit to Athens of H.E. the President of India, next April, will mark another, very significant moment in our excellent relations. The Greek people along with President Stephanopoulos and my Government are looking forward to giving him a warm reception.

I raise my glass to the good health of President Narayanan and of yours, Mr. Prime Minister.

I raise my glass to India, a great Democracy and a great civilization.

I raise my glass to the Indian people, wishing them peace, progress and prosperity.

*Common values, History tradition  
create a common language  
between Greece and India. The Euro-  
pean developments and Greece's  
role Balkan open new perspectives  
and strengthening our relations is  
priority*