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Greece's Socialists Triumph In Election

*Opposition Concedes;
Simitis Set to Hold His
Majority in Parliament*

Reuters

ATHENS — Greece's governing Socialists won national elections Sunday, confirming Costas Simitis as prime minister.

The opposition leader, Miltiades Evert, quickly conceded defeat and said he was resigning as the head of the conservative New Democracy Party.

The Panhellenic Socialist Movement, or PASOK, led by Mr. Simitis running his first national campaign, won 41.5 to 42 percent of the vote, television exit polls showed.

"This is the first time PASOK has won a national victory without Andreas Papandreou. I am very touched," said George Papandreou, son of the late Socialist party founder Andreas Papandreou, who forged the movement from an array of leftist parties after the fall of a brutal seven-year military junta in 1974, died in June.

Mr. Simitis had called early elections confident of an easy victory over the feuding conservatives. But Mr. Evert rallied his forces and staged a vigorous campaign, closing the gap in opinion polls. A staunch pro-European technocrat, Mr. Simitis took over as prime minister from an ailing Mr. Papandreou in January and was elected leader of the party after Mr. Papandreou's death.

His victory will strengthen his grip on the party and within the country, and give him a four-year mandate to carry out a reform program that he says will make Greece an equal and respected partner of the European Union.

■ Campaigning Before the Mirror

Anne Swardson of The Washington Post reported earlier from Athens:

This was the first truly modern election in the history of the birthplace of democracy. Though government control of television broadcasting was lifted by 1993, the year Mr. Papandreou returned to power, there were few channels and they were fairly restrained.

This campaign featured extensive coverage of the candidates and the issues on Greece's principal stations, not to mention innumerable panel discussions and the first national debate between candidates in Greek history.

The two parties essentially agree on most of the major issues. They both support further integration of Greece

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within the European Union, including a single currency by 1999.

Greece is unlikely to get its economy in shape in time to join the first nations in that club, but both political parties favor joining the second wave.

That is an important point of agreement because it means both parties are in accord on the need for austerity in government spending and other measures to reduce inflation, none terribly popular with the Greek public.

Both parties are friendly toward the United States and support the continued

presence of U.S. bases in Greece. They differ slightly on Greece's old adversary, Turkey.

Mr. Evert, as challengers often do, advocates a harder line. Mr. Simitis favors negotiation.

In January, a crisis over Turkish occupation of an uninhabited Greek island was defused with U.S. help, and Mr. Simitis was heavily criticized during the campaign by Mr. Evert for retreating.

Mr. Simitis needed to show he can command a majority on his own in order to beat back dissidents from Mr. Papandreou's wing of the party and to minimize inroads by a smaller leftist party.

A British and German-trained commercial law professor, Mr. Simitis lacks the kind of charisma that made Mr. Papandreou such an enduring figure.

Mr. Evert also was running for the first time, and needed a convincing majority to show the faithful that he should retain the helm of New Democracy.

The parties themselves were redefining their roles. Under Mr. Papandreou, Greece went on a spending and borrowing spree in the 1980s that it is still trying to cool today. His successors, while still calling themselves Socialists, are shaping themselves as pro-market progressives.

"We are more in the liberal American tradition," said Mr. Papandreou, the late prime minister's son and currently education minister in the Simitis government. "The idea of the classic welfare state exists, but there is also a strong anti-state strand of thinking in our party."

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

Οι Έλληνες σοσιαλιστές θριαμβέβουν στις εκλογές

Οι Έλληνες κυβερνώντες σοσιαλιστές κέρδισαν τις εκλογές την Κυριακή επικυρώνοντας τον Κ. Σημίτη σαν πρωθυπουργό.

Ο αρχηγός της αντιπολίτευσης γρήγορα παραδέχθηκε την ήττα του και παραιτήθηκε από επικεφαλής της Ν.Δ.

Είναι η πρώτη φορά που το ΠΑΣΟΚ πέτυχε μια εθνική νίκη χωρίς τον Ανδρέα Παπανδρέου. "Είμαι πολύ συγκινημένος " είπε ο Γ. Παπανδρέου, γιος του ιδρυτή των Σοσιαλιστικού Κόμματος Α. Παπανδρέου που έφτιαξε το κίνημα από ένα σύνολο αριστεριστικών κομμάτων μετά την πτώση της χούντας το 1974.

Η νίκη του Κ.Σ. θα ενισχύσει τη δύναμή του στο κόμμα και στη χώρα και θα του δώσει την εντολή για 4 χρόνια προκειμένου να εφαρμόσει ένα μεταρρυθμιστικό πρόγραμμα με το οποίο όπως ισχυρίζεται θα κάνει την Ελλάδα ένα ισότιμο και αξιοσέβαστο έταίρο στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση.

Στη συνέχεια έχει άρθρο από την Washington Post στο οποίο αναφέρεται ότι ήταν οι πρώτες πραγματικά μοντέρνες εκλογές στην ιστορία του τόπου που γεννήθηκε η Δημοκρατία και περιγράφει την πρώτη συζήτηση μεταξύ των υποψηφίων.

Τα 2 κόμματα κυρίως συμφωνούν στα περισσότερα θέματα. Και τα 2 στηρίζουν την ενοποίηση της Ελλάδας στην Ε.Ε. που περιέχει και το εννιαίο νόμισμα το 1999.

Η Ελλάδα είναι απίθανο να εναρμονίσει την οικονομία της και να μπει με τις πρώτες χώρες σ' αυτό το club, αλλά και τα 2 πολιτικά κόμματα θέλουν να είναι στο δεύτερο "κύμα". Είναι ένα σπουδαίο σημείο συμφωνίας γιατί αυτό σημαίνει ότι και τα 2 μεγάλα κόμματα συμφωνούν στην ανάγκη αυστηρότητας στις δαπάνες της Κυβέρνησης και άλλα μέτρα μείωσης του πληθωρισμού.

Και τα 2 μεγάλα κόμματα είναι φιλικά προς τις ΗΠΑ.

"Συμφωνούμε περισσότερο προς τη φιλελεύθερη αμερικάνικη παράδοση" είπε ο Γ. Παπανδρέου. "Η ιδέα του κλασσικού κράτους ευημερίας υπάρχει αλλά υπάρχει και μία ισχυρή αντίθετη γραμμή σκέψης στο κόμμα μας".