

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

Remarks at a Greek Independence Day Reception

March 24, 2025

[Prior to the President's remarks, Archbishop Elpidophoros Lambriniadis, primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, made remarks introducing the President, presented him with a Holy Cross, and posed for photographs.]

The President. Thank you so much. Wow. That's so beautiful. Thank you very much.

Archbishop Elpidophoros. Of course.

The President. I didn't know that was going to happen—*[laughter]*—but I'll take it.
[Laughter] Thank you so much.

Greek Independence Day. Wow.

I'm delighted to welcome to the White House the hundreds of proud, hard-working Greek American patriots. I know so many of you. I like most of you. Some I don't like. They get to be very tough. *[Laughter]* Some pretty tough people out there, but that's okay.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. We love you.

Audience member. We love you, Mr. President!

The President. We love you all.

In a few moments, I'll sign the proclamation to officially recognize tomorrow, March 25, 2025, as Greek Independence Day, celebrating 204 years—that's right—celebrating 204 years of glorious Greek sovereignty and freedom. That's a long time. That's a great thing we're doing, and such an honor to have you.

Archbishop Demetrios. Thank you.

The President. So having His Eminence, the Archbishop, with us is very special. And I've been doing this from the very beginning. We missed 4 years, unfortunately. Bad things happened. *[Laughter]* A lot of bad things happened.

Audience member. It was stolen!

The President. And the world wasn't doing so well for 4 years, but we're doing well now. We're doing better now than we've ever done. We have things happening with our country that are incredible.

Audience member. Yeah!

The President. And in terms of businesses coming in, I think we're close to \$4 trillion now. Nobody's ever even heard of anything like that. And they're coming in, Archbishop. They're coming in at levels that we have never seen.

And we're doing well, and the Greeks are doing well. They'll always do well. And I want to thank some of the wonderful Greek Americans working tirelessly by my side, members of my administration, friends of mine, and just incredible people.

The President of Science and Technology Policy [Assistant to the President for Science and Technology Policy; White House correction] Michael Kratsios. Where's Michael? Hello. Hello, Michael. Thank you, Michael.

And Deputy Secretary of State Michael Rigas. Michael, thank you very much. Thank you very much.

I also want to thank Greeks for Trump. Greeks for—those are the ones I really like, back there. Christos Marafatsos. Christos. Where's Christos? Good looking guy he is.

Audience member. He's over here!

The President. Thank you very much.

And we also have some very powerful Greek politicians, like Gus. Gus, will you please stand up? Nobody sees you. Gus Bilirakis. He is a great friend of mine, and he's doing well. You're doing well. Aren't you, Gus? Huh?

Representative Gus M. Bilirakis. I'm doing good.

The President. Yeah. I always say, "Stand up a little higher, Gus." [*Laughter*] I'm only—and Mike Haridopolos. Mike, thank you very much.

Audience members. He's over here.

The President. Where's Mike? Mike, thank you very much. Appreciate it. Thank you for everything.

Lance Gooden. Where's Lance? I don't know if—I don't know how much Greek you have in you, Lance. Do you have—

Representative Lance Gooden. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Oh, the Greek—you do have. That's the ultimate. You're right.

And Joe Wilson. Our friend, Joe Wilson. Joe, thank you. Thanks. Thank you, Joe.

And EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin, who has got a big job. Thank you, Lee. He's got a big job. He's got to get those permits out fast, because China gives fast permits, right? They don't even do permits. They just say: "Build. Don't worry about it."

Chief Financial Officer of Florida, Jimmy Patronis, who is running in a big race. He's running in a big race, and I hear you're doing well in the polls. You got to win that one. But they got to get out and vote. Right, Jimmy?

Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis of Florida. Yes, sir. Yes.

The President. But you're doing great.

And my former Chief of Staff, who is a terrific guy, Reince Priebus. Reince. Hi, Reince. Yes, Reince is a terrific guy.

And another terrific guy and woman, by the way—we have John Catsimatidis, number one, and his beautiful wife Margo—and I want to thank you. And your daughter Andrea is here. Good. Wow, that's good. That's—we have the whole family. He's done a fantastic job—the family has—with ABC, and they have the biggest radio show and biggest station, I think, in New York. So good. So we have to really be nice to them when we think we're going to win New York— [*laughter*—and if you have him on your side. But it's a great family. Thank you very much. My friends for a long time. Thanks, John.

Let me also extend a special welcome to Ambassador Nassika from Greece and Ambassador Savva from Cyprus, two very friendly rivals. [*Laughter*] Thank you both very much.

And the bond between the United States and modern Greek nation goes back more than two centuries. On March 25, 1821, Greek patriots began their noble fight to reclaim their destiny from the grip of a foreign empire, a very powerful foreign empire.

President James Monroe said, at the time, that the whole civilized world had a deep interest in a victory for the Greek people. President Monroe understood that Americans were bound by history and culture to the birthplace of democracy and the cradle of Western civilization.

From the pages of our Constitution to the architecture of this capital city—this wonderful city of ours that we're fixing up; it's starting to shape up very nicely, isn't it, huh?—to the very words of the English language, the legacy of the Greeks is all around us. It encircles us.

But perhaps the greatest gift we have inherited from that amazing culture is our incredible Greek American community that is now more than 3 million strong.

I worked very hard on getting your votes, but we didn't need to because we got them by a lot, right? *[Laughter]* We won by a lot. And we love them, and they love us.

But we're joined today by one extraordinary Greek American citizen, Alex [Alek; White House correction] Skarlatos. And you know the story of Alex [Alek]. Inspired by his grandfather, who fought against the Nazis in the Greek resistance, Alex [Alek] joined the National Guard after high school. Ten years ago, following a deployment to Afghanistan—you all read about this—Alex [Alek] and his friends were on a train from Amsterdam to Paris when a bloodthirsty, radical Islamic terrorist began shooting innocent people all over the train. They were falling left and right. In an act of tremendous valor, Alex [Alek] and his comrades charged the gunman, despite being completely unarmed, and beat him into submission.

And where is Alex [Alek]? He's around here someplace. Get up here, Alex [Alek]. Get up here. Come on, Alex [Alek]. Get up here, Alex [Alek].

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Before providing lifesaving aid to an American who was shot and hurt so badly, Alex's [Alek's] bravery helped save countless innocent lives that day. And today he continues to serve his country as a member of the Oregon State Legislature.

So, Alex [Alek], come up here for a second. I at least want to shake your hand. Come up here.

That's a big story. You had a lot of courage—I don't think I would have done that. I don't know. I'm not sure. *[Laughter]*

Come here.

Oregon State Representative Aleksander R. Skarlatos. Thank you. I appreciate it.

The President. Do you want to say something? Go ahead.

State Rep. Skarlatos. Oh, well, one of the last times I was here was actually to watch our movie that Clint Eastwood directed, and we watched it with the President.

The President. Yes.

State Rep. Skarlatos. And that was, yes, I think, February of 2018. And I honestly was surprised, because I thought the President would watch about 10 minutes and then leave. And he stayed for the whole movie, which I was very impressed by, because we played ourselves in the movie, and the acting wasn't the best—*[laughter]*—but it was a very accurate movie.

And the best part was, when it came to the part where we were beating up the terrorist, the President hit me on the shoulder and was like, "Right on." [Laughter] And I was like, "Whoa." So that's one of the top-tier memories for me, so I just wanted to say thanks so much.

The President. Thank you very much.

State Rep. Skarlatos. And great to see you again.

The President. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

State Rep. Skarlatos. Thank you.

The President. Thank you. Thank you, Alex [Alek].

We're also joined by another Greek American, who first came here from Athens with \$75 in his pocket after becoming an American citizen, Steve Veletsis. Where is Steve? Steve, that's a good story, Steve. You've got plenty of cash now. [Laughter] So you started off with \$75, and today you have a lot of money. [Laughter]

But Steve built one of the most respected catering companies in Washington and all around the East Coast, and they have proudly catered the inaugural banquet in the U.S. Capitol for every President since Ronald Reagan. And I must tell you, he just did ours. He did three. The one, we didn't show up to because something happened. He was ready to do three, but something happened on the middle one. But—and we did awfully well that day, I will tell you.

But he just did one on January 20, 2025, and everybody is still talking about the great food and the great service. And you did a fantastic job. There were a lot of people.

Thank you very much, Steve and your family. Thank you.

Also, many of you know Steve's daughter Alexandra, as the Director of the White House Visitors Office. Congratulations to Steve and Alexandra. Great job. Great job. Thanks, Alexandra. Great job you do. You do a fantastic job at the White House.

Also, with us in person and a person that really is a great friend and been a great friend for a long time—I've known this woman—although, she's very young, yet I've known her for a long time. She came here, and she loves our country, and she loves Greece, and now she's going to be the future Ambassador to the Hellenic Republic, Kimberly Guilfoyle.

And I'm going to say, Kimberly, come on up and say a few words. Kimberly, come.

She's really a good person. She represents the Greek culture very well, I will tell you. She's very proud of it. Kimberly, please.

Audience member. We love you, Kimberly.

The President. Thank you, sweetheart. Come.

U.S. Ambassador to Greece—designate Kimberly A. Guilfoyle. Good afternoon. Thank you so much of everyone being here. And I tell you, this is the honor and privilege of a lifetime to serve this country and to serve a country that I love so much, that is so near and dear to my heart, with Greece, and to do it under the guidance, the leadership, the most important, powerful President that this country has ever seen, a man of integrity. I know the measure of the man and his character and his strength. And I know his love for the people of Greece, the birthplace of democracy.

And today we celebrate and cherish our rich history and our enduring bond—the United States and Greece—and the founding of the Hellenic Republic. And under President Trump, know: Sleep well at night and wake up in the morning feeling hopeful and optimistic for a man

that will fight for the economy of this country and of Greece, for religious liberty and freedom, and for the enduring alliance of Greece and the United States.

God bless you all. Thank you for having me.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. [*Laughter*] Four more years.

Thank you, Kimberly. We are well represented with Kimberly. Do we agree? Thank you, Kimberly.

From Washington to Chicago, from New York to Detroit, from Philadelphia to the famous Tarpon Springs—you know all about Tarpon Springs, Florida—Greek Americans have blessed our country with exceptional courage, patriotism, and tremendous skill.

Under this administration, we will continue to honor the virtues, ideals, and spirit of this magnificent heritage—and it is indeed magnificent—that has flourished for thousands of years, from the Golden Age of ancient Greece to the golden age of America. That's where we are right now: the golden age of America. Right, John?

Once again, let me wish you all a very, very happy Greek Independence Day. It's an honor, again, to have—Your Eminence, it's an honor to have you with us. I appreciate it very much, and I appreciate that magnificent cross. It will be with me always.

And I'd just like to finish by saying you are a very, very special people. I wouldn't have missed this. I was very busy today. I had something; they took me away, and I said, "Well, isn't that the same day we're celebrating Greek Independence Day?" They said, "Yes." I said, "Cancel the other one." It was a very big deal. [*Laughter*] It was not easy to do, my friend. It was not easy to do, but we did it.

And it's now my honor to sign the proclamation. Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

[*At this point, the President signed a proclamation titled, "Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 2025."*]

Okay. That was a good one.

Archbishop Elpidophoros. Wonderful. Wonderful.

[*The President handed Archbishop Elpidophoros the signing pen.*]

The President. That's for you. That's——

Archbishop Elpidophoros. Thank you.

The President. Okay.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:43 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Michael J.K. Kratsios; Christos Marafatsos, founder and chairman, Greek Americans for Trump; Reps. Mike Haridopolos and Addison G. "Joe" Wilson; John A. Catsimatidis, founder, Red Apple Group; Spencer Stone and Anthony Sadler, who, along with State Rep. Skarlatos, subdued gunman Ayoub El Khazzani, in the August 21, 2015, Thalys train attack outside Oignies in Pas-de-Calais, France; and Steve Veletsis, cofounder, Design Cuisine. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on March 25.

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Names: Bilirakis, Gus M.; Catsimatidis, Andrea; Catsimatidis, John A.; Catsimatidis, Margo; Elpidophoros Lambriniadis, Archbishop; Gooden, Lance; Guilfoyle, Kimberly A.; Haridopolos, Mike; Khazzani, Ayoub El; Kratsios, Michael J.K.; Marafatsos, Christos; Nassika, Ekaterini; Patronis, Jimmy; Priebus, Reinhold R. "Reince"; Rigas, Michael J.; Sadler, Anthony; Savva, Evangelos; Stone, Spencer; Veletsis, Alexandra; Veletsis, Steve; Wilson, Addison G. "Joe," Sr.; Zeldin, Lee M.

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