

Mr Ambassador of the US and Mrs Pyatt, Mr President of the Propeller Club and Mrs Xiradakis, Ladies and Gentlemen

Thanksgiving may not be a traditional Greek celebration. But through the years of spending this day with our friends from the Propeller Club and our American friends we have come to appreciate the occasion. We consider all the things that we should be thankful about, we recognize our good fortune and we gather here to express our gratitude and prayer among friends. I see great value in recognizing and appreciating the material and spiritual possessions we enjoy today as prosperity and well-being should never be taken for granted, which is why it makes sense to take the time to reflect on the world and our position in it.

After years of crisis and austerity, we are out of the Memoranda agreements, at least in the severe form that the supervision of the Institutions was exercised in the country, and we now have a chance to regain our financial independence and take control of our fate.

For this chance, we should be thankful to our lenders and friends, for their support during this difficult time and for their continuing insistence to provide the necessary space so that Greece remained part of the Eurozone and the common market. We should also remember the positive interference of our American friends, during the difficult years, when they persuaded the European and Greek leaders to reconsider the circumstances that would have driven the country to poverty and disaster. And above all we should be thankful to our fellow citizens that realized and accepted the necessity for personal sacrifices and continued to support the state with their taxes and hard work, although one third of our people live today below the poverty line. We should not take it for granted that given these conditions and unemployment rates that reached 30% other less fortunate and tolerant societies might have faced severe unrest and revolts.

It is our duty now to exceed ourselves in the effort to create wealth for the country and new jobs so that everybody has equal opportunity to work for the prosperity of their families and in order for all of us to continue to enjoy living in this beautiful country with democracy and freedom of speech.

Since this is the last Thanksgiving dinner that I am attending as President of Amcham, I would also like to express my personal thanks to all the people that supported the fulfilment of my vision for the Chamber. The exceptional friends at the executive committee and the Board of Directors for their ideas and guidance, the staff that managed to pull through all the crazy plans and events that we imagined and Elias who became a friend as much as a colleague and whose work has made everything possible. I am definitely thankful for the luck to know and work with Ambassador Pyatt an ally to all our missions and plans with the dedications of an exceptional team at the Embassy. Above all I would like to thank my family for putting up with my long absence from home and Peggy who never carried out her threat and she was always there supporting our home and me.

Closing I thank you all very much for your trust and support all those exciting and productive years,