

Good evening! Simos, George, it's a great honor for me and Mary to enjoy Thanksgiving with you tonight. It's one of our favorite holidays, and it represents some of the best American values. There is a lot for us to be grateful for this year as American diplomats in Greece. And it's a pleasure for us to share this holiday with you tonight as you have been such a key part of the US-Greece relationship, and understanding the American and Greek contexts and what's best in both. Thanksgiving is, of course, about giving thanks - and tonight I would like to express my gratitude to each of you for your support and assistance to the Embassy and the bigger US-Greek bilateral relationship.

I am particularly grateful that together with our partners from the American Hellenic Chamber of Commerce we put together a Thessaloniki International Fair that I think will be remembered as a real milestone in the US-Greece relationship. And through your partnership in this endeavor, US-Greece relations have hit the high water mark; riding on that momentum, I hope that moving forward we will be able to take it to new heights. Next month, we launch the United States Strategic Dialogue in Washington with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and with Minister Katrougalos. The U.S. side is going to be very focused on how we build on the momentum from TIF. We have made a commitment to investing in the US-Greece diplomatic relationship, people-to-people and business relationship

The Strategic Dialogue will be a whole government exercise with strong support from the White House, the Pentagon, from the Department of Energy's Commerce Department. We will have a participation not only from Secretary Pompeo, but from senior officials who were present in Thessaloniki: Under Secretary Menezes, and Michael Kratsios of the Office of Science and Technology, White House. It's not a coincidence as this is leveraging the relationships that began at TIF and why that was a benchmark in the US-Greece alliance. That's what we look forward to in the coming months. But for today, we celebrate Thanksgiving.

Tonight, I would like to tell you why I'm so thankful to be here as Ambassador to Greece. First and foremost, I am grateful for the time we have spent together, working towards common goals, demonstrating the depth of friendship between our two nations. At the end of the day, it's not just about what we've done, it's about the relationships that we're shaping along the way, and I'm thankful for the opportunity to continue those relationships with you over the next year. And as I look forward to 2019, I'll be doing everything I can to cement the gains we've made in our bilateral relationship. Also, on a personal note, I'm thankful to the many people Mary and I have the fortune to meet here in Greece-and to be able to count many of you in this room as friends.

Now, I would like to wish everyone a very happy Thanksgiving and the best to all of you and to your families as we begin this holiday season. And now for the most delicious part of the holiday, our Thanksgiving meal! Good Appetite!