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Dear Fellow AHEPANS:

I salute AHEPA as it commemorates the valiant Greek struggle to cast aside the shackles of imperial oppression. For those who believe in life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, March 25, 1821, resonates through the annals of history as a seminal moment in the epoch of democracy.

Like America today, Greece stood at the center of the ancient free world where democracy reigned supreme. From Athens, the world came to speak of Cleisthenes, Themistocles, Pericles, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and countless more.

When our founding fathers contemplated the foundation on which the United States of America would be established, they looked across time and geography to the shores of ancient Greece. There in Athens, at the foothills of Mt. Olympus, Thomas Jefferson and others who knew well the work and teachings of the ancients saw the formula for a just and free society.

In 1776 the sacred flame of liberty illuminated the shores of America. When in 1821, the mother of democracy awoke and sought to liberate herself from the dark conquest that had befallen her, America cheered her on. The founders of the "Friendship Society" were honored in America with the establishment of Ypsilanti, Michigan. The bonds of fidelity between Greeks and Americans can be seen everywhere by the appellations in American towns like Ithaca, New York, Athens, Georgia and Annapolis, Maryland. Indeed, it is difficult for anyone to stroll through our nation's capital and fail to recognize the homage the founding fathers have paid to ancient Greece.

From the ashes of destruction, the majesty of freedom inspired valiant Greeks to rise up and live free as their ancestors did before them. This day, March 25, 1821, inspires all freedom loving peoples across the world to seek out and cherish the freedom and liberties of life.

**ZHTΩ Η ΕΛΛΑΣ! ZHTΩ Η ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΑ!!**

John P. Sarbanes  
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