



## ATHANASIOS KONTOGEORGIS

### “Sailing with a new crew”

*Hope and optimism will not return if we use them as figures of speech and rhetoric tricks, as it has been regrettably done during the recent election campaign. They will return only if we work as a team on the things that ought to be done, with no regard to any political costs whatsoever.*

Our life appears to be changing.

The economic crisis poses survival questions to the Greek economy and society as a whole. No one can stand uninfluenced by the intensity of this crisis. We ought to re-define our priorities as well as our needs. We are already living the present in distress and addressing the future in doubt and pessimism. This is an only human reaction, similar for most people. A consequence of the radical developments. Very few expected them, and even fewer warned the rest about them. Still, we preferred not to listen to those sober calls and now we can merely hope that in the future there will not be any recurrence of the personal accountabilities and the collective mistakes of the past.

Everything seems to be changing and tomorrow emerges exigent. It will take consistency, perseverance and integrity. The present Administration has to get equipped with such principles, before long. Before the new circumstances, the Government must be the first one to respond and adjust to them. Agility and strenuous work in order to handle the crisis, are traits that have to be retained hereafter.

It is for the historian of the future to appraise this effort and its outcomes, since he alone will be able to proceed with the recording of the facts undisrupted by the tension that each event and development causes/brings. However, the Prime Minister is obliged to go through with his own assessment. After having defined and analyzed the new reality, it is his duty to decide on how, in which direction and with whom he will proceed. Selecting the people which will be summoned to help the country regain its national self-esteem, is of critical importance.

Dire times call for qualified faces. The circumstances call for experience. The country's political personae that have dealt with the state affairs efficiently, the ones that have displayed their mastery of the nation's economic and developmental needs, cannot be marginalized. Even if the marginalization in focus has been imposed by necessity pertaining to political or communicative expedience, I cannot see a political necessity more urgent than the country's rescue.

The present article is not aiming to impute responsibilities concerning of the past. I do consider, though, that the political leadership, and society, even more, have the maturity, the sobriety and the memory needed to discern who succeeded and who did not. Those who attended to our common future and the ones who could not care less. Those who were positively anxious to change our country and the ones who were only anxious about their personal welfare. As weak as our memory might be, there will always be people, writings and irrefutable proof to remind us of these differences, lest we forget.

The circumstances call for us to exceed ourselves. Accepting and acknowledging, without hesitation, any mistake in the selection of crew members in the past, and their immediate

replacement, will add in validity, credibility and public endorsement. The parliamentary group of the party in power includes individuals whose skills in public administration have been tested, and that are capable of working strenuously as well as effectively. The Prime Minister knows who they are. So let him use them to everyone's advantage.

The circumstances call for consistency, perseverance and integrity. We are not in a position to deviate from our commitments to the European Commission, the European Central Bank and to the International Monetary Fund. Retraction and procrastination in making decisions will result in the total failure of the endeavour. The political cost of the financial measures is sure to be heavy. And the cost that the Greek people will be asked to pay is overwhelming and painful. But it cannot be even compared to the cost they will have to pay, should the endeavour fail.

If, in the first light of hope, we relapse into the same patron-client relations, the deficiencies, pathogenic characteristics and established mentalities that have brought this country to a deadlock then it will be impossible for Greece to ever recover. Hope and optimism will not return if we use them as figures of speech and rhetoric tricks, as it has been regrettably done during the recent election campaign. They will return only if we work as a team on the things that ought to be done, with no regard to any political costs whatsoever.

Today, more than ever, there is the need to listen to and believe in a realistic political proposal that will secure and strengthen the present and the future of this country. In order for us to believe in it, though, the ones who lay it out and will bring it to life, have to believe in it as well. The circumstances call for characters. More often than not, we hear of highly esteemed people and greatly respected by the public, who would be able to contribute in the Government's endeavour. I am certain that many of them are considering it and would probably even want it. Their only presumable hesitation is the viability of their presence. They need to know that, if called upon, they will be able to do what is asked of them, undisrupted and unimpeded by expediencies and malevolent actions. More important, they need to enjoy the necessary political support by the Prime Minister, in order to make themselves useful to the country. They need to believe that they will not be pointed at as scapegoats in a policy that might as well fail, since the circumstances are far from normal. They need to be shown, on the part of the Prime Minister political choices which attest to the fact that all prerequisites shall be met, in order for them to work effectively. It's high time that an "eagerness alliance" were formed. It is in the hands of the Prime Minister to assume that responsibility.

\* \* \*

*Athanasios Kontogeorgis has studied law and public policy at Harvard University (Kennedy School of Government). He is a PhD Candidate in Political Science at the University of Athens. A previous version of this article was published in the May edition of Metarithmisi.*

*Email: [athanasioskontogeorgis@gmail.com](mailto:athanasioskontogeorgis@gmail.com)*