



Ελληνική Επιτροπή για τη Διεθνή Υφεση και Ειρήνη
Greek Committee for International Detente and Peace

Θεμιστοκλέους 48 - 106 81 Αθήνα- Τηλ. 210 38 44 853 - 54 Fax: 210 3844879
48 Themistokleous str. 106 81 Athens - Greece - Tel. +30 210 38 44 853 - 54 FAX: +30 210 3844879

www.eedye.gr — eedye@otenet.gr

Speech of **Thanassis Pafilis**, Member of the National Council of EEDYE and General Secretary of the World Peace Council (WPC) at the closing rally of the 40th Peace Marathon March at the Ministry of National Defense of Greece in Athens on 22nd May 2022

Fellow fighters for Peace

Friends,

Here, today, outside the Ministry of National Defense, we are giving our decisive response against the imperialist war in Ukraine! Against the involvement of Greece in the belligerent imperialist plans and the vulgar Euro-Atlantic propaganda. We voice loudly and protest our opposition to the participation and deployment of Greek armed forces and military equipment abroad. We demand here and now the closure and removal of the American-NATO bases from our country, the abolition of the despised and dangerous Greek-American “Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreement”, which puts our country and our people in great adventures!

We greet all of you who are giving a dynamic presence today in the 40th Peace Marathon March, but also all those who participated in the various mobilizations and actions throughout the country, in the context of the Panhellenic Two-Day Anti-Imperialist Action of EEDYE.

This year's 40th Peace Marathon March coincides with the day of the assassination of the medical doctor, Balkan Athletic Games winner and vice-president of EEDYE Grigoris Lambrakis. All of us, therefore, who are at today's rally organized by EEDYE and supported by hundreds of trade unions, self-employed associations, women's associations, student associations and other entities of the popular movement, send our own message of disobedience to the government. The Euro-Atlantic parties want to align us behind the interests and aspirations of the bourgeoisie, business groups, behind the murderers of the peoples US-NATO-EU. From today's mass rally, we make it clear once again in every direction:

WE WILL NOT CHOOSE A ROBBER CAMP - OUR ONLY HOPE IS THE STRUGGLE OF THE PEOPLES!

Fellow peace fighters

Friends,

The unjust imperialist war that has been raging for nearly three months in Ukraine, after the unacceptable Russian invasion, the intensification of rivalries between the US, NATO, EU and Russia, the developments with the enlargement of NATO and the planned accession of Sweden and Finland, the events on the battlefield, the fuel that has been accumulated all the previous years, the huge concentration of firepower, increase the risk of a generalized war. They are an alarm for the people who will be called to pay the price of their competition with their lives.

The government of ND, continuing on the road paved by the previous government of SYRIZA and with the support of other bourgeois parties, takes the involvement of Greece to another level in the slaughterhouses of the USA - NATO - EU. Our country has become a military base. From Alexandroupolis to Crete and from the Aegean to the Ionian Islands, Greece has become an American-NATO shooting range field with the bases of death not only in full operational readiness but also actively participating in war plans in Ukraine against other peoples. The land, the sea, the air of our country, all the military but also the political infrastructure - highways, ports, airports - have been included in the Euro-Atlantic plans. This is revealed by their use all this time for the transfer of military forces and heavy equipment to the battlefield in Ukraine, the participation in dozens of US-NATO exercises, which are essentially nothing less than war rehearsals!

The debate in Parliament last week on the ratification of the Greek-American "Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreement", which initially extends for five years and then indefinitely, enhancing the existing bases and creating new ones in Alexandroupolis, Larissa, Stefanovikeio and Litochoro, the Prime Minister's visit to the USA and his meeting with the US President Biden make one thing clear: the government and the Euro-Atlantic parties are in agreement and identify themselves with, pay tribute to US-NATO-EU interests. The needs and life of the people enter into the grip of their energy, business and war interests. This is the conclusion from the Prime Minister's visit to the USA. The government and the parties of capital endorse in all ways the Greek involvement. After all, it could

not be done otherwise, since over time they received the baton of engagement from each other and went up the track every time. Any individual differences and asterisks they set, cannot hide their strategic convergence.

But they should not fool themselves! They may have voted for the despised and dangerous Greek-American "Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreement", but thousands of people in Attica and throughout Greece resolutely expressed their opposition, through the Action Committee against the Greek-American Agreement, in which EEDYE also participates, along with trade unions, self-employed associations, student associations, the Women Federation OGE and dozens of entities of the popular movement. One thing should become clear: the tide of condemnation of the anti-popular policy and the policy of involvement will become even stronger in the near future and we will do everything in our power for that! It is this people's struggle and indignation they fear and try to impose silence on either by intensifying the repression against the movement or through their vulgar propaganda.

The government and the parties of Euro-Atlanticism incense us every day with the argument of the geostrategic upgrade of Greece, its transformation into an energy, transit, and military hub, revealing that energy, business, and war plans go hand in hand. They are drenched in sweat from the exploitation of the workers. They are stained with the blood of the people. That is why we ask: what does all this have to do with the real needs and interests of our people? The answer is absolutely none. They serve only the interests of corporate business groups, the pursuit of capitalist profit, at the expense of peoples.

SYRIZA's attitude is hypocritical and dangerous. It did not vote –it claims - for the Greek-American Agreement and is skeptical about the Greek Prime Minister's trip to the USA, because - as SYRIZA claims - our country did not receive enough compensatory benefits! What these benefits are? The creation of additional bases in Skyros, Karpathos, and other Aegean islands! That is to say, SYRIZA is more pro-NATO than NATO itself! It is audacious and it is provocative for SYRIZA to try to present itself as a supposedly peace-loving force, when during its term as government it:

- inaugurated the Strategic Dialogue with the US, even reaching the point the former Prime Minister Tsipras hilariously describing the former US President, Trump, as "devilishly good"

- not only did he prepare the new Greek-American Agreement, but before it was even signed by the ND government, it had put into operation the new bases in Alexandroupolis, in Larissa, in Stefanovikeio
- set up the famous NATO armada in the Aegean, supposedly to control the refugee flows - those that are the result of the imperialist wars and interventions, in which our country also participates - while reality proved that the presence of the armada was embedded in the military operations in Syria, Libya, Yemen, but also in the encirclement of Russia by NATO
- Participated in all military exercises of Russia's encirclement. Voted for all NATO decisions
- grabbed a pew at the U.S. embassy and lounged about with the former U.S. ambassador, Payat, across the country promoting a series of business and military plans.

They are so hypocritical that they have said they did not take part in any US-NATO missions during their tenure in government. And we wonder: who sent Navy ships to the Persian Gulf? Which government was celebrating because it took over the supervision of the airspace of the Western Balkans? But in all these, if you look at it, answers the US Secretary of State, Blinken, who thanked all Greek governments for their participation with a military force of 3,500 people in Afghanistan during all the years of operations there, but also by the farewell message of Ambassador Payat, who in the face of SYRIZA recognized a "remarkable and important partner".

No matter how much the government and the parties of capital try to convince us that the further involvement ensures the security, the defense, the sovereign rights of our country, the reality itself is tearing apart their arguments like a paper towel, proving that Greece is transforming in a magnet of dangers, in a retaliation target. After all, the Russian leadership has warned many times not only in the past but also throughout this period that all countries that have US-NATO bases on their territory and are participating in the imperialist war in Ukraine are potential targets for military strikes. At the same time, Turkey is escalating its aggression even further. Overflights, violations of the sea and airspace reach a climax, as well as its claims within the doctrine of the "Blue Homeland", at a time when the so-called "peaceful" - as they try to present it - NATO does not say a word.

So, for what security and defense are they talking about? NATO does not recognize borders in the Aegean Sea. It speaks of "NATO

territory” and is ostentatiously deaf when it does not contribute in its own way to foster Turkish claims. It promotes the division of Cyprus. It is NATO that supplies arms to two otherwise "allied" countries. Their sole purpose, and goal is to ensure cohesion in NATO's South East Wing, and the co-management of energy wealth in the Aegean Sea under Euro-Atlantic supervision.

This purpose is served by the vast armaments, the so-called "purchase of the century", which have nothing to do with the defense of our homeland and the protection of its sovereign rights. At a time when the acute problems torment the Greek people, when the popular family counts and re-counts the slashed salaries and pensions that aren't enough to get by for a month, the congratulations of NATO are a challenge because Greece comes first in terms of percentage of GDP for armaments expenditure between NATO's Member States.

The Greek people are already paying a heavy price for their involvement through the high cost of basic necessities, energy poverty, and unemployment. It turns out that the harsh reality that grinds in the millstones of profit and exploitation, the life of the popular family, is the other side of the coin of engagement. It is alien to our interests and needs. That is why the popular response must be raised even more vigorously, even more decisively. Our slogan is as relevant as ever:

**CLOSE THE BASES - NO PARTICIPATION - NO INVOLVEMENT
IN NATO'S WAR**

Fellow peace fighters and friends,

From this step here today we address the workers, the unemployed, the self-employed, the women, youth, the Greek people, all those who are justifiably concerned about all these developments and we invite you to walk the path of the struggle together. To strengthen in every workplace, in every neighborhood, in every school and University the struggle of the anti-imperialist, anti-war movement, the popular movement as a whole.

We are addressing the new generation that is suffocating under the rotten system of exploitation and that does not bow its head, does not submit, but organizes its struggle: we call on you to walk together on the path of overthrow. We are confident and confirmed by your pioneering action that:

**THE YOUNG GENERATION HAS IDEALS— NEITHER IS IT SOLD
— NOR DOES IT KNEEL**

We are addressing in particular the soldiers, who in various letters denounce and condemn the Greek involvement in the US-NATO-EU belligerent plans, but also to the members of the armed forces and we invite you to think: whom do the the huge military expenditures serve, on whose behalf are they being done? Whom does it serve dozens of US-NATO-EU imperialist missions in which you are being invited to participate? What can wash in return the blood from the involvement of the Greek armed forces in US-NATO plans? That is why we call on you to fight so that no soldier, sheds his blood for the interests of the bourgeoisie. Do not turn against other peoples. We voice loudly from here today:

THE SOLDIERS ARE THE PEOPLE'S CHILDREN - OUTSIDE THE BORDERS HAVE THEY HAVE NO JOB

There is a need today to further strengthen the anti-imperialist, peace movement. To unite other forces that are against barbarism. In the face of this demand are a number of Syriza-backed elements who have been absent and silent for years, supporting the US-NATO-EU and provoking, as always, trying to "castrate" the anti-imperialist peace movement from its anti-imperialist orientation.

They are talking about a new anti-war movement.

Who speaks without shame?

Those who supported governments and especially Syriza who supported and voted for all NATO war decisions.

Even for the withdrawal from the agreement on No First Strike of nuclear weapons.

The government that gave new bases to the USA, which washed away the murderous NATO by promoting the position that it has changed its character.

They use figures like Grigoris Lambrakis and other fighters.

They think they will get a militant recognition.

But Lambrakis and other fighters, the peace movement was against NATO and the then EEC, today's EU.

But they stand by with NATO and EU.

They talk about a "new peace movement" without naming the causes and those responsible for war.

But the anti-war movement will either be anti-imperialist or it will not be anti-war but a laundry of imperialism.

They know how to do the “job” very well. The same happened in older times, the same in the 90s when they welcomed the new world of “peace and prosperity”, which is, the rule of capitalism. That's why they sided with the International Peace Bureau (IPB) which they set up against the WPC. They will not succeed. We call on all progressive well-meaning people not to fall into the trap. Beyond individual disagreements to rally together in the ranks of EEDYE.

EEDYE, in its 67 years of life and action, from the very first moment of its establishment, opposed the membership of our country in NATO and the then EEC. It has developed and continues to develop rich action against the imperialist wars. For us, the struggle for disengagement, for the condemnation of imperialist interventions and wars, is inextricably linked to the struggle for decent living wage, free education, and for social insurance, so that the people can live with dignity. Throughout its history, EEDYE, precisely because it had this direction and orientation against the system of exploitation, forged in the heat of the struggles broad ties with the people and the popular movement, of which it is a part. Among them, personalities such as Grigoris Lambrakis, Nikos Nikiforidis, and thousands of other fighters emerged. The fruit of this line of struggle, which recognized that "one is the enemy, imperialism" and which kept EEDYE upright - especially after the 1990s - when other powers surrendered to the victory of the counter-revolution and created illusions about a so-called peaceful world would be guaranteed by the US and NATO. It was the great anti-imperialist, anti-war mobilizations against the war in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan, but also later in Syria, Libya, that brought together wider popular forces.

As in all these years, today also EEDYE condemned from the first moment the unacceptable Russian invasion and the imperialist war between the US - NATO - EU with Russia in Ukraine. Through the Peace Committees in every neighborhood and city, along with the rest of the popular movement, we pioneered by developing various actions condemning the imperialist war and the Greek involvement throughout Greece.

EEDYE was and remains at the forefront of the anti-war movement, it gives meaning and substantial content to the development of modern anti-imperialist action. This is the best way to actually honor the memory of Lambrakis, Nikiforidis and thousands of other fighters.

Fellow peace fighters,
Friends,

We are proud because we choose to side with the peoples. The peoples who have nothing to divide with each other, but instead are united by the struggle against exploitation, antagonisms, war and exploitation, for their right to work, to education, to life, so that they can live peacefully, with relations of friendship, solidarity, relations of mutual benefit, outside NATO, the EU and any imperialist alliance. The peoples who are omnipotent when they decide to come to the forefront of history and take their lives into their own hands.

We are on the side of the peoples. And from this forum, today, we express our internationalist solidarity with the peoples of Palestine, Cuba, Ukraine, Russia, with all the struggling peoples of the world. We express our solidarity with the immigrants and refugees.

The right side of the history is and will be this and only that! Because there are objective possibilities in the 21st century for our people and other peoples to be able to live by satisfying their contemporary needs, so that each people can become a master in its homeland.

In this direction we continue resolutely, strengthening and escalating our struggle. In this struggle, we call on each and every worker to take his/her place, strengthening the struggle of the anti-war - anti-imperialist peace movement, of the popular movement as a whole, that can and must put its stamp on the developments!

" TO IMPERIALISM NO SUBMISSION - THE ONLY SUPER
POWER IS THE PEOPLES "