

## A Personal Tribute

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On February 27, RIEAS honored me with The Minas Nomikos Award for Security Research Excellence 2020 and a Certificate of Appreciation, a gesture I deeply appreciated.

RIEAS and I share a long association and cooperation based on a strong friendship with RIEAS's tireless president John Nomikos. John and I met in the late 1980s and soon we were discussing the idea of a research group aimed at Greek and international security studies against the backdrop of the Greek-US alliance.

These early talks carried on against the backdrop of total absence of financing. While I was impressed by John's enthusiasm, I was equally concerned about finding the means necessary to set the foundations of this initiative.

"Where there is a will there is a way," they say, and the adage applies perfectly to John. We kept in touch through the long years as he worked tirelessly to create and build RIEAS. It took him time and tremendous effort – and many setback—but it all paid off. I helped as much as I could mainly by providing analytical and opinion writing.

Today RIEAS is a vigorous, active, and reliable hub connecting dozens of similar institutions, researchers, and younger scholars from around the world. Its publications far outstrip – in numbers and quality – those of similar local initiatives possessing far more technical means and hefty financing. RIEAS's success is all the more remarkable given a Greek environment where only the politically connected, and *ready for compromises* in exchange for steady financing, dominate the field. But whereas those others expend most of their time congratulating themselves during

coffee breaks, and delivering “politically correct” sermons in support of dubious “principles,” RIEAS labors on *practical, action-oriented, focused initiatives* attempting primarily to strengthen security relations between Greece and potential allies and friends in the Eastern Med.

This is a time fraught with lethal risks for Hellas. Turkish war-mongering and the unstoppable tidal wave of illegal immigration, the latter sponsored and energized by trafficker gangs working in harmony with the Erdogan regime and ever-present NGOs of dubious legitimacy and purpose, present this country with insurmountable problems. As we speak, Greece is being invaded by tens of thousands of primarily Asian undocumented aliens. With the EU a mere spectator enforcing the closure of the Greek northern border to stem the flood aiming at its rich members, this invasion carries onto Greek soil “invisible” jihadist terrorists and other criminals posing a clear and present danger to Greece security and stability. Few of Greece’s “friends and allies” seem to care about this Greek predicament as the unwilling holding pen of hundreds of thousands of illegal arrivals that the country simply cannot support. ***This lethal crisis cannot be ameliorated with good wishes and spokesmen statements but only by concrete dynamic action to oppose those feeding the fires of terrorism and war.***

RIEAS, despite its limited means and reach, continues to dedicate all its energies in providing *true information* about Greek security and seeking avenues of dialogue and cooperation with potential allies who can help. The job is daunting, and some would say impossible, but the fight goes on.

There is no other way.