

## **US ambassador Pyatt: 'We also recognize importance of Orthodoxy to Greek culture and Greek people'**



**Sessions of an international conference on religious diplomacy, entitled “Religion in the Contemporary World: Challenges and Prospects for Dialogue and Peace”, concluded this week. The conference was held under the auspices of the Archdiocese of Athens, the Greek ministry of foreign affairs, the Greek Foreign Affairs Magazine, and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.**

**The sessions of the conference opened with a message by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, who noted, among others, that “...Peace is an eternal quandary and a task that is never fulfilled, nor safeguarded in perpetuity; it demands constant struggle.”**

**The US ambassador to Greece, Geoffrey Pyatt, also addressed the same conference on Tuesday.**

**He underlined from the conference’s podium that “...We also recognize the importance of Orthodoxy to Greek culture and the Greek people**

. Orthodoxy preserved Hellenism through Ottoman occupation and has been key to keeping Greek society together during the economic crisis. Greek Orthodoxy also plays a significant role in strengthening our people-to-people ties and connecting the Greek American Diaspora to their homeland.”

Pyatt added “... **In the United States, there is deep respect for the Greek Orthodox Church**, which played a key role in our civil rights movement and continues to promote our commonly held values of religious freedom and tolerance... The United States is committed to working with Greece and other democratic partners to defend religious freedom abroad.”