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Obama to reassure US allies about Trump's commitment to NATO



President Barack Obama said on Monday he would reassure US allies during his trip overseas this week – starting on Tuesday in Greece – that Republican President-elect Donald Trump plans to maintain core US strategic relationships around the world, including with NATO.

Obama, speaking ahead of a trip to Europe and Latin America, said one of the most important things he could do during his visit was to reassure US allies who may be concerned following Trump's victory over Democrat Hillary Clinton last week. Trump slammed NATO allies during the campaign for not paying enough for their own defense and suggested the United States was paying a disproportionate amount that was too much given the changes in the world. He also told the Washington Post the United States could not fund NATO at current levels.

Trump's comments echoed longstanding US complaints that too many NATO allies do not live up to their pledge to spend 2 percent of gross domestic product on defense. Only the US and four other NATO allies – Greece, Britain, Estonia and Poland – met the goal last year. France and Turkey have been close.

Despite Trump's criticism of NATO spending during the campaign, Obama said the president-elect, who takes office on January 20, had indicated he was committed to maintaining ties with US allies. "In my conversation with the president-elect, he expressed a great interest in maintaining our core strategic relationships," Obama told a news conference before his departure. "So one of the messages I will be able to deliver is his commitment to NATO and the trans-Atlantic alliance."

"One of the most important functions that I can serve at this stage ... is to let them know that there is no weakening of resolve when it comes to America's commitment to maintaining a strong and robust NATO relationship and a recognition that those alliances aren't just good for Europe, they're good for the United States and they're vital for the world," he said. The European Union agreed on a new defense plan on Monday that could see it sending rapid response forces abroad for the first time, a move seen as giving it the ability to act without the United States if necessary. The action appeared to be galvanized in part by Trump's criticism. Obama is visiting Greece, Germany and Peru on his last trip abroad as president. He is expected to meet German Chancellor Angela Merkel and other European leaders in Germany and Greece. In Peru he will see Chinese President Xi Jinping and other Pacific leaders at an economic summit.

Obama said US foreign policy remained quite stable despite changes in administration, in part because of the breadth of US government interactions with other nations.

NEW ARCHONS



It is with great pleasure that the "O" introduces to you the new Archons of 2016, which includes our two newest Metropolis of Chicago Archons:

John A. Hilaris, Archon Asekretes, Elmhurst, Illinois, a Mechanical Engineer

John Spiro Koudounis, Archon Eftaxias, Chicago, Illinois, a Financial Investor

As part of the Annual Archon Weekend held in New York from October 14-16, 2016, the Investiture of our new Archons took place on October 16, 2016 at the Archdiocesan Cathedral of The Holy Trinity. It was a most moving and inspiring honor to witness. A total of 20 Archons were Invested as we proclaimed AXIOS!

ELENA KOUNDOURA'S VISIT TO LAS VEGAS ON TIGHT BUDGET

From October 15, 2016 through October 20, 2016, Greek Tourism Minister Elena Kountoura and several members of her staff visited Las Vegas, Nevada to attend the IMEX International Convention. This convention was about promoting and advancing international convention business.

The convention was held in Las Vegas, Nevada because it is the dominant convention city in the world. Las Vegas also hosts a majority of the largest conventions in the world.

Business conventions are pursued by every major destination city and country in the world, because business travelers typically spend five times more money than the regular tourist. Minister Kountoura has a goal of doubling the existing business convention business held in Greece. So, while in Las Vegas, Minister Kountoura and her staff held 42 different meetings with different company CEOs and tour companies in order to promote Greece for convention business.

We discovered that Minister Kountoura and her staff flew into Las Vegas with coach tickets and they stayed at three-star Treasure Island Casino. When we asked Minister Kountoura why the frugal accommodations she responded "the people of Greece are going through very difficult financial times and budget cuts. Therefore, the Tsirpas - Kammenos government has urged all governmental officials to travel on tight budgets. I completely agree with this policy and have implemented this policy at my Ministry. We can not ask the Greek people that voted for us to live with austerity, while we live in comfort. We are all in this together. Therefore, as long as I am Minister of Tourism, the days of private limousine limousine service and six star hotels are over!"

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THE PLATFORM OF THE GREEK PRESS

- 1.To applaud the achievements of our ethnic group
- 2.To support the ideas of the Hellenic-Christian tradition
- 3.To promote the preservation of the Greek language
- 4.To encourage all worthy Community causes
- 5 To assist all the Greek-American fraternal, cultural patriotic and religious organizations
- 6.To install Americanism in the Greek-American community
- 7.To advance the just causes of Hellenism.
8. To promote the ideals Greece has given to humanity.

ELENA KOUNDOURA'S VISIT TO LAS VEGAS ON TIGHT BUDGET

(Continued from p. 1)

During her frantic 9 AM to 9 PM daily schedule, Minister Kountoura met with top business and political leaders. Despite her full schedule, she even made time to attend Sunday liturgy at the St. John Greek Orthodox Church in Las Vegas and to address a crowd of 300 church worshippers.

Minister Kountoura also met with top officials of the Las Vegas Convention Center, including its president Rossi Ralenkotter, chief financial officer Rana

Lacer, and its head of operations William Flangas. These officials informed Minister Kountoura that each year, Las Vegas receives an economic benefit of approximately \$5 billion from the Convention business and has created approximately 100,000 jobs from the convention business. To obtain more convention business, it was recommended that Greece improves its convention business by creating larger convention halls, having those convention halls close to hotels, aggressively marketing that Greece is open for convention business, and trying to get more direct flights into Greece from major international cities.

Minister Kountoura thereafter met with Las Vegas Mayor Carolyn

Goodman and US Congresswoman Dina Titus, to explore the possibility of establishing direct flights between Las Vegas and Athens, Greece. As Mayor of Vegas, Ms Goodman has input into such a decision. And, as an important member of the US Congressional Committee on Transportation issues, Congresswoman Dina Titus, also has an important role in such a decision. After meeting with Mayor Goodman and Congresswoman Titus, both women expressed their support for creating direct flights between Las Vegas and Athens, Greece. Therefore, it was agreed that an official process will begin to explore the possibility of direct flights between Las Vegas and Athens. In reaching this agreement, Mayor Goodman told Minister Kountoura "you are the first Greek official to approach us about creating direct flights between Las Vegas and Athens. I commend and congratulate you for your vision and efforts to assist your country. I will support your good ef-



Minister Kountoura with US Congresswoman Dina Titus, powerful member of the US Congressional committee on transportation, who agreed to support establishing direct flights from Las Vegas to Athens.

Senator Reid responded " we have many good Greek- American friends that have encouraged us to stand with Greece. We stand with Greece because you are our friends and allies. President Obama and I support the Tsipras government and the Greek people during these difficult times, and we are here to assist your country in the future."

At 11:30 PM on October 20, 2016 Minister Kountoura left Las Vegas for Toronto, Canada. From there, she was taking a direct flight to Greece. When we asked her if she would take some time off upon arriving in Greece, Minister Kountoura stated " unfortunately no. Upon arriving in Athens, I will go to Dubai for several days to encourage more tourism between the Arab world and Greece. My country and its people suffered greatly in the previous years and now we are leading a national effort to make changes and open new roads for growth. I will not rest until I do everything possible to improve the lives of the Greek people. By getting more tourists and convention business coming to Greece, I will be able to create thousands of new jobs. These new jobs will assist my country and its citizens to live better. So, after I accomplish my mission, I will be able to rest". **PETER PALIVOS, ATTORNEY AT LAW.**



C. Sheila Jackson Lee-Senior Whip of the Democratic Caucus, Member of Homeland Security House Committee

Athens, Lesbos mayors on list for world title

Their efforts to humanely address the refugee crisis have put Athens Mayor Giorgos Kaminis (photo) and Lesbos Mayor Spyros Galinos on a short list of 15 local authority leaders from around the world contending for the title of World Mayor 2016.



The 15 finalists have been proposed for their response to the European refugee crisis and include mayors from Spain, Italy, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Poland, Germany, the USA, Canada as well as Syria and Turkey. The winner is to be announced at the end of the year.

Those interested in influencing the verdict can participate in an online vote online at

www.worldmayor.com/contest_2016/world-mayor-shortlist-2016.html.

Meanwhile the coast guard was put on alert Wednesday after a smuggling boat foundered off the coast of Thassos in the northern Aegean, leading to four people drowning while another 15 were rescued.

The drownings came after a period of relative calm, with arrivals from neighboring Turkey sharply reduced since March, when Ankara signed a deal with the European Union to crack down on human smuggling in the Aegean.

However, there is still concern about growing tensions at overcrowded reception centers on the Aegean islands.

In the birthplace of democracy, Obama extols its virtues



Closing his two-day trip to Athens on Wednesday, after visiting the Acropolis and its museum, US President Barack Obama delivered a spirited valedictory speech praising democracy, noting the threats that it faces, and urging the world's citizens to work for solutions in the future.

Speaking at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center on the capital's southern coast, Obama addressed the world, noting that this was his last foreign trip as president. But he also addressed Greece, noting the suffering and sacrifices caused by the economic crisis. Above all, however, Barack Obama stood before history and presented his understanding of a world which he helped shape over the past eight years and which is now at a critical point, demanding solutions to pressing problems that many nations face – alone and collectively.

Here are excerpts from his speech:

As many of you know, this is my final trip overseas as president of the United States, and I was determined, on my last trip, to come to Greece – partly because I've heard about the legendary hospitality of the Greek people – your philoxenia, partly because I had to see the Acropolis and the Parthenon, but also because I came here with gratitude for all that Greece – “this small, great world” – has given to humanity through the ages.

...We're indebted to Greece for the most precious of gifts – the truth, the understanding that as individuals of free will, we have the right and the capacity to govern ourselves. For it was here, 25 centuries ago, in the rocky hills of this city, that a new idea emerged. Demokratia. Kratos – the power, the right to rule – comes from demos – the people. The notion that we are citizens – not servants, but stewards of our society. The concept of citizenship – that we have both rights and responsibilities. The belief in equality before the law – not just for a few, but for the many; not just for the majority, but also the minority. These are all concepts that grew out of this rocky soil.

Of course, the earliest forms of democracy here in Athens were far from perfect – just as the early forms of democracy in the United States were far from perfect. The rights of ancient Athens were not extended to women or to slaves. But Pericles explained, “Our constitution favors the many instead of the few... this is why it is called a democracy.”

Athenians also knew that, however noble, ideas alone were not enough. To have meaning, principles must be enshrined in laws and protected by institutions, and advanced through civic participation. And so they gathered in a great assembly to debate and decide affairs of state, each citizen with the right to speak, casting their vote with a show of hands, or choosing a pebble – white for yes, black for no. Laws were etched in stone for all to see and abide by. Courts, with citizen jurors, upheld that rule of law.

Politicians weren't always happy because sometimes the stones could be used to ostracize, banish those who did not behave themselves.

But across the millennia that followed, different views of power and governance have often prevailed. Throughout human history, there have been those who argue that people cannot handle democracy, that they cannot handle self-determination, they need to be told what to do. A ruler has to maintain order through violence or coercion or an iron fist. There's been a different concept of government that says might makes right, or that unchecked power can be passed through bloodlines. There's been the belief that some are superior by virtue of race or faith or ethnicity, and those beliefs so often have been used to justify conquest and exploitation and war.

But through all this history, the flame first lit here in Athens never died. It was ultimately nurtured by a great Enlightenment. It was fanned by America's founders, who declared that “We, the People” shall rule; that all men are created equal and endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights.

Ideals challenged

Now, at times, even today, those ideals are challenged. We've been told that these are Western ideals. We've been told that some cultures are not equipped for democratic governance and actually prefer authoritarian rule. And I will say that after eight years of being president of the United States, having traveled around the globe, it is absolutely true that every country travels its own path, every country has its own traditions. But what I also believe, after eight years, is that the basic longing to live with dignity, the fundamental desire to have control of our lives and our future, and to want to be a part of determining the course of our communities and our nations – these yearnings are universal. They burn in every human heart...

Now, democracy, like all human institutions, is imperfect. It can be slow; it can be frustrating; it can be hard; it can be messy. Politicians tend to be unpopular in democracies, regardless of party, because, by definition, democracies require that you don't get a hundred percent of what you want. It requires compromise. Winston Churchill famously said that democracy is the worst form of government – except for all the others. And in a multiethnic, multiracial, multicultural society, like the United States, democracy can be especially complicated. Believe me, I know. But it is better than the alternatives because it allows us to peacefully work through our differences and move closer to our ideals. It allows us to test new ideas and it allows us to correct for mistakes...

And so here, where democracy was born, we affirm once more the rights and the ideals and the institutions upon which our way of life endures. Freedom of speech and assembly – because true legitimacy can only come from the people, who must never be silenced. A free press to expose injustice and corruption and hold leaders accountable. Freedom of religion – because we're all equal in the eyes of God. Independent judiciaries to uphold rule of law and human rights. Separation of powers to limit the reach of any one branch of government. Free and fair elections – because citizens must be able to choose their own leaders, even if your candidate doesn't always win. We compete hard in campaigns in America and here in

[Continued p. 4\)](#)

Can Donald Trump get what he wants?

As Donald Trump prepares to take the presidential oath of office, it's time for his campaign rhetoric to meet with the cold, hard reality of governing.

Mr Trump made a great many promises in his run for the presidency - some concrete, some vague and some contradictory.

The test now will be for the newly minted president to keep his coalition together as he tries to follow through on what he identifies as his top policy priorities. Mr Trump ended his campaign rallies with the song You Can't Always Get What You Want by the Rolling Stones. Here's a look at what he wants - and the likelihood that, if he tries, sometimes, he just might find he gets what he needs.

Building the Wall

The “impenetrable, physical, tall, powerful, beautiful” wall along the US-Mexico border was a central part of Mr Trump's campaign, from the moment he stepped off his golden escalator and into American hearts. The wall itself was enshrined in the Republican Party platform, which promised that it would cover the “entirety of the southern border” and be “sufficient to stop both vehicular and pedestrian traffic”. Just recently, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich said promising that Mexico would pay for said barrier was a “great campaign device”. Campaign devices don't pay for concrete and rebar. Then, in his first interview as president-elect, Mr Trump acknowledged that part of that wall may be a big, beautiful fence. Such is the reality of trying to build things along a 2,000-plus mile border that includes mountains and desert.

Outlook: The wall was a very tangible promise Mr Trump made and stuck by, even when he was subjected to criticism and ridicule for it. He'll have to make sure he has something to show for his efforts, if only to give himself a nice backdrop to stand against for the inevitable photo-op. Chances of a monumental Great Wall of Trump ever becoming a reality, however, seem slim.

Dismantling Obamacare

For more than six years the Affordable Care Act has been the great white whale for Republicans, and now they finally have it lined up in their harpoon sights. Senate Democrats will try to construct procedural roadblocks to slow Republicans down, but Mr Trump has unilateral steps he could take as president and enough votes in Congress to make the current system painfully unworkable. That would likely leave tens of millions of Americans without health insurance, however, which is why Mr Trump has said that he may be more interested in reforming the law than straight-up killing it. In the past, Republicans have talked about tearing up Obamacare “root and branch” and left it at that. They'll need more than catchy rhetoric if they want to avoid some painful fallout from their actions, however.

Outlook: Obamacare is on life support, but Republicans likely lack the political will to fully pull the plug. They may ease some of the government-ordered standards for insurance coverage, quietly remove the provision covering women's contraceptive services and make it much easier for individuals and companies to obtain religious exemptions. With full control of the government, however, they are going to be responsible for whatever mess they create going forward, which means in the end “reform” looks considerably more attractive than “repeal”.

Infrastructure investment

“We are going to fix our inner cities and rebuild our highways, bridges, tunnels, airports, schools, hospitals,” he said. “We're going to rebuild our infrastructure, which will become, by the way, second to none.” It shouldn't come as much of a surprise that the man who made his name in the construction business is focused on construction, to the tune of \$1 trillion in new spending over 10 years, according to earlier proposals.

Outlook: Infrastructure spending gives Trump an early opportunity to tout bipartisan co-operation while having a tangible end result he can take credit for. Republicans may drag their heels, but they'll be hard-pressed to deny him from putting an early campaign promise in the “kept” column.

Deportation

At various times during his campaign, Mr Trump promised to deport all 11 million undocumented workers living on US soil. “They will go out,” he said. He's since walked back such sweeping pronouncements, emphasizing that removals will be focused on those with criminal records, such as drug-dealers, murderers and gang members. In a recent interview he said that number would total between 2 million and 3 million individuals - which is significantly more than the roughly 180,000 undocumented migrants with criminal convictions the US government currently says remain on American soil.

Outlook: Mass deportations - numbering in the millions - seems to be one of the campaign promises Mr Trump is determined to stand by. In the face of reluctance from Congress and financial obstacles, however, it will be tough for him to make the numbers add up.

Tax reform

If there's one topic that has been near and dear to the hearts of traditional Republicans, it's cutting taxes. One of Mr Trump's more conventional conservative campaign promises was his proposal to reduce rates for individuals and corporations across the board. He will find a Republican-dominated Congress more than willing to help him accomplish that. Democrats during the Obama administration succeeded in rolling back many of the tax cuts pushed by Republican President George W Bush, including the estate, personal and capital gains tax breaks. Look for them to be restored.

Democrats in the Senate will likely fight these proposals, calling them a gift to the wealthy, but they won't have the votes by themselves, as the chamber's rules only require a simple majority to enact budget changes.

An interesting question for the Trump administration will be how aggressively it pushes the childcare tax credit Mr Trump unveiled in September. Some measures, such as guaranteed six-week paid maternity leave and efforts to compel employers to provide childcare, run counter to conservative orthodoxy.

Outlook: If Republicans control the levers of power, chances are very good a tax cut is coming. What it looks like, and who benefits the most, is still an open question. If Mr Trump's efforts veer too much toward helping the wealthy, he risks alienating the working-class voters who delivered the presidency to him.

In the birthplace of democracy, Obama extols its virtues

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my administration will do everything we can to support the smoothest transition possible – because that’s how democracy has to work.

And that’s why, as hard as it can be sometimes, it’s important for young people, in particular, who are just now becoming involved in the lives of their countries, to understand that progress follows a winding path – sometimes forward, sometimes back – but as long as we retain our faith in democracy, as long as we retain our faith in the people, as long as we don’t waver from those central principles that ensure a lively, open debate, then our future will be OK, because it remains the most effective form of government ever devised by man.

It is true, of course, over the last several years that we’ve seen democracies faced with serious challenges. And I want to mention two that have an impact here in Greece, have an impact in the United States, and are having an impact around the world.

Globalization

The first involves the paradox of a modern, global economy. The same forces of globalization and technology and integration that have delivered so much progress, have created so much wealth, have also revealed deep fault lines. Around the world, integration and closer cooperation, and greater trade and commerce, and the internet – all have improved the lives of billions of people – lifted families from extreme poverty, cured diseases, helped people live longer, gave them more access to education and opportunity than at any time in human history.... The world has never, collectively, been wealthier, better educated, healthier, less violent than it is today. That’s hard to imagine, given what we see in the news, but it’s true. And a lot of that has to do with the developments of an integrated, global economy...

What we’ve also seen is that this global integration is increasing the tendencies towards inequality, both between nations and within nations, at an accelerated pace. And when we see people – global elites, wealthy corporations – seemingly living by a different set of rules, avoiding taxes, manipulating loopholes – when the rich and the powerful appear to game the system and accumulate vast wealth while middle- and working-class families struggle to make ends meet, this feeds a profound sense of injustice and a feeling that our economies are increasingly unfair...

... In advanced economies, there are at times movements from both the left and the right to put a stop to integration, and to push back against technology, and to try to bring back jobs and industries that have been disappearing for decades. So this impulse to pull back from a globalized world is understandable. If people feel that they’re losing control of their future, they will push back. We have seen it here in Greece. We’ve seen it across Europe. We’ve seen it in the United States. We saw it in the vote in Britain to leave the EU.

But given the nature of technology, it is my assertion that it’s not possible to cut ourselves off from one another...

Course correction

We cannot sever the connections that have enabled so much progress and so much wealth. For when competition for resources is perceived as zero-sum, we put ourselves on a path to conflict both within countries and between countries. So I firmly believe that the best hope for human progress remains open markets combined with democracy and human rights. But I have argued that the current path of globalization demands a course correction. In the years and decades ahead, our countries have to make sure that the benefits of an integrated global economy are more broadly shared by more people, and that the negative impacts are squarely addressed. And we actually know the path to building more inclusive economies. It’s just we too often don’t have the political will or desire to get it done...

These are the kinds of policies, this is the work that I’ve pursued throughout my time as president. Keep in mind I took office in the midst of the worst crisis since the Great Depression. And we pursued a recovery that has been shared now by the vast majority of Americans... Now, I say all this not because we’ve solved every problem. Our work is far from complete. There are still too many people in America who are worried about their futures. Still too many people who are working at wages that don’t get them above the poverty line. Still too many young people who don’t see opportunity. But the policies I describe point the direction for where we need to go in building inclusive economies...

Greek crisis

Here in Greece, you’re undergoing similar transformations. The first step has been to build a foundation that allows you to return to robust economic growth. And we don’t need to recount all the causes of the economic crisis here in Greece. If we’re honest, we can acknowledge that it was a mix of both internal and external forces. The Greek economy and the level of debt had become unsustainable. And in this global economy, investment and jobs flow to countries where governments are efficient, not bloated, where the rules are clear. To stay competitive, to attract investment that creates jobs, Greece had to start a reform process.

Of course, the world, I don’t think, fully appreciates the extraordinary pain these reforms have involved, or the tremendous sacrifices that you, the Greek people, have made. I’ve been aware of it, and I’ve been proud of all that my administration has done to try to support Greece in these efforts. And part of the purpose of my visit is to highlight for the world the important steps that have been taken here in Greece...

At the same time, I will continue to urge creditors to take the steps needed to put Greece on a path towards sustained economic recovery. As Greece continues to implement reforms, the IMF has said that debt relief will be crucial to get Greece back to growth. They are right. It is important because if reforms here are going to be sustained, people need to see hope, and they need to see progress. And the young people who are in attendance here today and all across the country need to know there is a future – there is an education and jobs that are worthy of your incredible potential. You don’t have to travel overseas, you can put roots right here in your home, in Greece, and succeed.

And I’m confident that if you stay the course, as hard as it has been, Greece will see brighter days. Because, in this magnificent hall and center – this symbol of the Greek culture and resilience – we’re reminded that just as your strength and resolve have allowed you to overcome great odds throughout your history, nothing can break the spirit of the Greek people. You will overcome this period of challenge just as you have other challenges in the past.

Ensuring rights

So economics is something that will be central to preserving our democracies. When our economies don’t work, our democracies become distorted and, in some cases, break down. But this brings me to another pressing challenge that our democracies face – how do we ensure that our diverse, multicultural, multiracial, multi-religious world and our diverse nations uphold both the rights of individuals and a fundamental civic adherence to a common creed that binds us together.

Democracy is simplest where everybody thinks alike, looks alike, eats the same food, worships the same God. Democracy becomes more difficult when there are people coming from a variety of backgrounds and trying to live together. In our globalized world, with the migration of people and the rapid movement of ideas and cultures and traditions, we see increasingly this blend of forces mixing together in ways that often enrich our societies but also cause tensions...

So, just as we have to have an inclusive economic strategy, we have to have an exclusive political and cultural strategy. In all of our capitals, we have to keep making government more efficient, more effective in responding to the daily needs of citizens. Governing institutions,

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Does Trump matter for the Greek economy?

NICK MALKOUTZIS

Given Greece’s position, lumbered with a public debt that is almost twice the size of its annual economic output, the idea of someone who has described himself as the “King of Debt” being elected US president would, under normal circumstances, spark the hope that a kindred spirit will inhabit the White House.

Donald Trump’s assertions that he is “great with debt” and that he has “made a fortune by using debt” make him sound like the kind of person you would want on your side when you are struggling to make ends meet. It is doubtful, though, that the US president-elect would want to invest time in the Greek issue. At the height of the frantic negotiations between Athens and the rest of the eurozone, Trump said he felt that the euro was “set up to hurt the United States” and that he had little concern for Greece’s predicament.

“I’d let Germany handle it,” he told Fox Business. “We have enough problems; let Germany handle it. Germany will take care of it. This is peanuts for Germany. They’ll take care of it. Frankly, [Russian President Vladimir] Putin probably comes in to save the day, if Germany doesn’t.”

Based on this, it appears that Athens should expect minimal engagement from a Trump administration regarding the Greek debt issue.

There is also a fear, based on Trump’s efforts to connect with the white working class in the US, that his arrival in the White House will signal a broader retrenchment from Washington on global economic issues that will propel the return of protectionism.

Although he has not homed in on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the free trade deal that the US and the European Union have been trying to secure (with some difficulty), Trump has said that he would like to withdraw the US from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and to impose tariffs on some imports.

Some economists are concerned that this would lead to a recession and spark an international trade war. Others believe that economic reality will prevent Trump from sparking a global race to raise trade barriers.

“We live in a world of supply chains where imposing tariffs on Mexican or Chinese imports will raise costs of United States businesses and make it hard for them to compete,” wrote Harvard economics professor Dani Rodrik in The New York Times last week. “Mr Trump is a businessman, and he will understand soon, if he does not now, the senselessness of blanket protectionism.”

The economic threat of a Trump presidency for Greece may lie elsewhere, though. Speaking to a parliamentary committee last week, Alternate Finance Minister Giorgos Houliarakis set out some of his concerns.

The first potentially damaging factor he identified is the uncertainty that Trump brings to the global economy. Uncertainty can be a nebulous concept but for Greece’s fragile economy it presents a very clear danger. If we needed a reminder of how vulnerable the Greek economy is and how even the slightest shock could have a damaging effect, the August unemployment figures published last week provided it. Despite another strong tourism season, the unemployment rate actually edged up to 23.4 percent in August, with 1,700 people being added to the list of 1.13 million that are without jobs.

Last week, the European Commission predicted in its fall economic forecasts that the Greek economy will contract by 0.3 percent this year before growing 2.7 percent next year and 3.1 percent the year after. Clearly, though, to get anywhere near meeting these ambitious targets, driven by strong increases in investment and exports, Greece needs a stable European and international economic environment. If that stability is not there, the strength of the recovery, if not the recovery itself, will be in doubt.

“Following Brexit and Trump’s victory, we expect increasing apprehension about the various political events coming up in Europe over the next 12 months,” said Deutsche Bank senior economist Marco Stringa last week.

“This uncertainty will constrain the euro-area recovery, underscore our expectation for a slowdown in euro-area 2017 GDP growth and further complicate the European Central Bank’s task,” he added, seeming to confirm Greek concerns.

Houliarakis also made a couple of other, more specific, points that are worth contemplating. He said that if Trump goes through with his pledge for a 1-trillion-dollar public investment program, this will have an impact on the US’s current account and lead to the dollar weakening against the euro.

“The policies Trump can implement immediately without the approval of Congress are on trade and immigration, and these could push the US into recession,” Megan Greene, the chief economist at Manulife Asset Management, told Kathimerini English Edition. “If that is the case, the Federal Reserve [the US central bank] would not be able to hike rates further and the dollar would weaken.”

A weak dollar would pose a new challenge to Greece’s recovery. Much has been made of Greece’s painful internal devaluation effort since the beginning of the crisis but it has also taken place against the backdrop of a falling currency. The euro stood at 1.44 against the dollar at the start of 2010, before Greece signed its first bailout, and has since fallen steadily, even dropping below 1.10 this year. This process has made Greek exports cheaper and Greece more attractive to tourists from the US. Anything that reverses this trend will be an added burden in the efforts to haul the Greek economy onto the road to recovery.

The final factor identified by Houliarakis is the possibility of the Federal Reserve tightening its monetary policy by raising interest rates if it deems Trump’s policies to be inflationary. This would affect liquidity abroad as well as in the US, which the government official believes would be a blow to economic recovery in Europe and other parts of the world.

For now, there is little that Greece can do. Like the rest of the world, it can only wait and hope that a Trump presidency will not trigger the kind of economic reverberations to match the political shock waves caused by his electoral victory.

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whether in Athens, Brussels, London, Washington, have to be responsive to the concerns of citizens. People have to know that they're being heard.

Here in Europe, even with today's challenges, I believe that by virtue of the progress it has delivered over the decades – the stability it has provided, the security it's reinforced – that European integration and the European Union remains one of the great political and economic achievements of human history. And today more than ever, the world needs a Europe that is strong and prosperous and democratic.

But I think all institutions in Europe have to ask themselves: How can we make sure that people within individual countries feel as if their voices are still being heard, that their identities are being affirmed, that the decisions that are being made that will have a critical impact on their lives are not so remote that they have no ability to impact them?...

In closing, our globalized world is passing through a time of profound change. Yes, there is uncertainty and there is unease, and none of us can know the future. History does not move in a straight line. Civil rights in America did not move in a straight line. Democracy in Greece did not move in a straight line. The evolution of a unified Europe certainly has not moved in a straight line. And progress is never a guarantee. Progress has to be earned by every generation. But I believe history gives us hope.

Twenty-five centuries after Athens first pointed the way, 250 years after the beginning of the great American journey, my faith and my confidence, my certainty in our democratic ideals and universal values remain undiminished. I believe more strongly than ever that Dr King was right when he said that "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." But it bends towards justice not because it is inevitable, but because we bend it towards justice; not because there are not going to be barriers to achieving justice, but because there will be people, generation after generation, who have the vision and the courage and the will to bend the arc of our lives in the direction of a better future.

In the United States, and in every place I have visited these last eight years, I have met citizens, especially young people, who have chosen hope over fear, who believe that they can shape their own destiny, who refuse to accept the world as it is and are determined to remake it as it should be. They have inspired me.

In every corner of the world, I have met people who, in their daily lives, demonstrate that despite differences of race or religion or creed or color, we have the capacity to see each other in ourselves. Like the woman here in Greece who said of the refugees arriving on these shores: "We live under the same sun. We fall in love under the same moon. We are all human – we have to help these people." Women like that give me hope.

In all of our communities, in all of our countries, I still believe there's more of what Greeks call *philotimo* – love and respect and kindness for family and community and country, and a sense that we're all in this together, with obligations to each other. *Philotimo* – I see it every day – and that gives me hope.

Because in the end, it is up to us. It's not somebody else's job, it's not somebody else's responsibility, but it's the citizens of our countries and citizens of the world to bend that arc of history towards justice.

And that's what democracy allows us to do. That's why the most important office in any country is not president or prime minister. The most important title is "citizen..."



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Cyprus president visited Athens Last Wednesday



Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades arrived in Athens last Wednesday for talks with Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, Cypriot government spokesman Nikos Christodoulides tweeted recently.

The meeting comes as the Cyprus leader is engaged in the latest phase of United Nations-backed negotiations with Turkish-Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci. Anastasiades is expected to brief Tsipras on the progress of negotiations and to meet with Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos and other top Greek officials.

Recently, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said the talks are a “last opportunity” and that five-party negotiations which should include Turkey, Greece and the United Nations ought to start swiftly.

Negotiations between Anastasiades and Akinci will resume on November 20.

Supermoon lights up the Parthenon



The full moon rises over the Parthenon in Athens Monday. The splendid supermoon – whose technical name is perigee-syzygy of the Earth-moon-sun system insist – was the biggest in the last 68 years, according to scientists, who say that the last time the moon was this close to Earth was in January 1948 and that the next time will not roll around again until November 2034. Earth’s only permanent natural satellite appeared 30 percent brighter and 14 percent bigger than it usually does, scientists said.

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GREEK NEWS

Remarks from Obama visit to Greece



US President Barack Obama reviews a presidential honor guard in Athens Tuesday, during the official welcoming ceremony at the Presidential Mansion.

On the eve of his last foreign trip as US head of state, President Barack Obama on Monday outlined the purpose of his visit to Greece and Germany, saying that this is part of an effort to help stabilize the global economy. In Greece Tuesday, in remarks with President Prokopis Pavlopoulos and Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, the American president spoke also of issues that are important for Athens: the Greek economy and the need for debt relief, efforts to solve the Cyprus issue, the refugee crisis and NATO. Below are excerpts from President Obama's remarks.

Purpose of the trip

Our work has also helped to stabilize the global economy... I'll spend this week reinforcing America's support for the approaches that we've taken to promote economic growth and global security on a range of issues.

I look forward to my first visit in Greece. And then, in Germany, I'll visit with Chancellor Merkel, who's probably been my closest international partner these past eight years. I'll also signal our solidarity with our closest allies, and express our support for a strong, integrated and united Europe. It's essential to our national security and it's essential to global stability. And that's why the Transatlantic Alliance and the NATO Alliance have endured for decades under Democratic and Republican administrations...

In my conversation with the president-elect, he expressed a great interest in maintaining our core strategic relationships. And so one of the messages I will be able to deliver is his commitment to NATO and the Transatlantic Alliance. I think that's one of the most important functions I can serve at this stage, during this trip, is to let them know that there is no weakening of resolve when it comes to America's commitment to maintaining a strong and robust NATO relationship, and a recognition that those alliances aren't just good for Europe, they're good for the United States, and they're vital for the world.

(Press conference in Washington on November 14, 2016)

Greece and the US

I've always wanted to come to Greece and I'm delighted to be able to make this part of my last trip overseas as president of the United States.

I think we all know that the world owes an enormous debt to Greece and the Greek people. So many of our ideas of democracy, so much of our literature and philosophy and science can be traced back to roots right here in Athens.

I'm told there's a saying from those ancient times, kalos kai agathos, when someone or something is good and beautiful on the outside, but is also good and noble on the inside in terms of character and in terms of purpose. And I think that's a fine description of the friendship that exists between the Greek people and the American people.

Now, the ideas of ancient Greece helped inspire America's founding fathers as they reached for democracy. Our revo-

lutionary ideas helped inspire Greeks as they sought their own freedom. And Americans came here to help fight for Greek independence. At the dawn of the Cold War, when President Truman committed the United States to the defense of Greece, he said, "I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way."

To this day, the United States is profoundly grateful for our friendship and alliance with Greece. And I'm personally very grateful to my many friends in the Greek-American community, sons and daughters of Ellines who have found success in every walk of American life.

(In remarks with Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras)

Support for Greece

Obviously, Greece has gone through very challenging economic times over the last several years. And it has been the policy of my administration to do everything we can to work with the Greek government and the Greek people to restore growth and optimism and to alleviate hardship. And we are glad to see that progress is being made, although we recognize that there are significant challenges ahead, and we intend to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Greek people throughout this process.

And finally, whether it's dealing with terrorism, addressing some of the challenges that are occurring in the Middle East, hosting our naval vessels, cooperation in the Aegean Sea, the strong NATO relationship between the United States in Greece is of the utmost importance. And I want to reaffirm not only our appreciation for the Greek people in that alliance, but underscore how important we consider the Transatlantic Alliance.

Support for Europe

We believe that a strong, prosperous and unified Europe is not only good for the people of Europe, but good for the world and good for the United States.

And we also believe that it's important that all people have opportunity and inclusion in growth inside of Europe. And part of my message as I travel not just to Greece but to meet with other European leaders is to encourage a process that ensures opportunity for all, particularly for the youth of Europe and youth here in Greece.

The refugee crisis

I also want to extend the world's appreciation for the humanitarian and compassionate manner that Greece has dealt with the severe migration and refugee crisis that's been taking place.

As I said at the UN Summit on Refugees that I hosted in September, it's important that we don't have any single country bear the entire burden of these challenges – that all of us are contributing and participating in alleviating suffering and dealing with migration in an orderly and compassionate way. And we have been very glad to partner with the Greek government in managing this situation appropriately.

The need for debt relief

Our argument has always been that when the economy contracted this fast, when unemployment is this high, that there also has to be a growth agenda to go with it. And it is very difficult to imagine the kind of growth strategy that's needed without some debt relief mechanism. Now, the politics of this are difficult in Europe. And I think in fairness to some of the governments up north that I know are not always popular here in Greece, it's important to recognize that, you know, they have their own policies and their populations and their institutions often are resistant to some of these debt relief formulas.

But I think that having seen Greece begin many of these difficult steps toward structural reform, having shown a commitment to change, with the Greek people having endured some significant hardships for many years now, there should be an opportunity I think for both sides to recognize that if we can come up with a durable solution as opposed to each year or every six months having a new negotiation, that that could potentially be good for everyone.

And now that the Greek economy is growing again, the timing may be right.

We spent much of our time discussing the economic situation here in Greece and how Greece can continue to move forward. I know this has been a painful and difficult time, especially for Greek workers and families, pensioners and young people.

This crisis is not an obstruction, but has had a very concrete and devastating impact on the lives and livelihoods of millions of people across this country...

I've been clear from the beginning of this crisis that in order to make reforms sustainable, the Greek economy needs the space to return to growth and start creating jobs again. We cannot simply look to austerity as a strategy and it is incredibly important that the Greek people see improvements in their daily lives so that they can carry with them the hope that their lives will get better.

And in this context, as Greece continues reform, the IMF has said that debt relief is crucial. I will continue to urge creditors to take the steps needed to put Greece on a path toward a durable economic recovery because it's in all of our interests that Greece succeeds. We all want the Greek people to prosper, to be able to provide a good life for their families and their children. That would be good for Greece, that would be good

(Reply to a question in press conference with PM Tsipras)

NATO

Beyond economic issues, we discussed the pressing security challenges that we face as NATO allies. I want to take this opportunity to commend Greece for being one of the five NATO allies that spends 2 percent of GDP on defense, a goal that we have consistently set but not everybody has met. Greece has done this even during difficult economic times. If Greece can meet this NATO commitment, all our allies should be able to do so.

Six arrested as police, protesters clash in Athens

Six people were arrested late Tuesday as Greek police clashed with demonstrators protesting a visit by US President Barack Obama, in central Athens.

Riot police fired tear gas and stun grenades at protesters demonstrating just a few kilometers from the presidential mansion where Greek officials were hosting an official dinner for the American leader.

The violence broke out as protesters tried to break through cordon lines to reach the Parliament and the US embassy. Some protesters threw two Molotov cocktails at police before dispersing into nearby streets.

House speaker, SYRIZA officials lay wreath at Polytechnic memorial

House speaker Nikos Voutsis, Education Minister Costas Gavroglou and SYRIZA party secretary Panayiotis Rigas on Wednesday took part in a wreath-laying ceremony at a memorial for the November 17, 1973 student uprising against the military dictatorship.

"Battles that must not be forgotten were fought here and they have to be a reference point for the difficult times we are going through," said Voutsis after depositing a wreath in front of the historic premises of the National Technical University of Athens, then Athens Polytechnic, where a protest by students was violently quashed by the junta regime.

"The honor always belongs to these heroes," he said.

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Jesus Christ's Soon Return: Part 4

By: Louis A. Palivos

Here are additional signs of the times and a limited interpretation of a few of the signs.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 51. False Prophet a Jew | Rev. 13:11-18; Jn.5:43 |
| 52. False Prophets | Duet. 18:21-22; Math. 24:11; 2 Tim. 3:13 |
| 53. The Way of Balaam | 2 Pet. 2:2-4, 15-16 |
| 54. Ten (10) Regions/Kings/ Kingdoms | Dan. 7:1-23; Rev. 17:12-14 |
| 55. John > Polycarp> Iraneus> Hippolytos > Theophilus | Overthrow Egypt, Lybia, Ethiopia (Sudan) |
| 56. World Government | Rev. 13:7; Dan. 7:23 |
| 57. United Nations | |
| 58. U.S.A. | Ez. 38:8, 13 |
| 59. Nations | Gen. 11:1-9; Acts 17:26-27 |
| 60. Who is Babylon the Great | Rev. 17:18; Ez:16 |
| 61. Economic System | Rev. 13:16-17 |
| 62. Redistribution of Wealth | Dan. 11:24 |
| 63. Cashless Society | Rev. 13:17 |
| 64. Mark of the Beast | Rev. 13:16-17 |
| 65. New World Order | |
| 66. A World Leader | |
| 67. Nuclear Technology | Math. 24:22; Is. 1:7-9; Is. 24:6; Zeph. 1:15-18; Jer. 50:32; Ez. 25:5,12; 38:19-20; Joel. 2:4-8; Zech. 14:12 |
| 68. Worldwide Christian Church | Rev. 13:12; 17:3-6 |
| 69. Worldwide Believe Lie | Gen. 3:4-5; Rom. 1:25 |
| 70. Strong Delusion | 2 Thes. 2:11 |

#55. Consistent with some Apostolic Fathers, Joel Richardson, in his two books, "Mid-east Beast," and "The Islamic Antichrist," identifies the coming coalition of core nations that will usher the Antichrist as Turkey, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Egypt, Ethiopia, Syria, Lebanon and not Jordan. One has to note that this core coalition of nations is anti-Jerusalem and anti-Israeli centered. This is particularly worthy to note as all prior beast/kingdom empires: Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Alexander/Grecian, Roman and Islamic wanted to conquer Jerusalem and the Jewish country, Palestine, as well as, the Revived Islamic Caliphate. Richardson believes that (Daniel, Ch. 2), the feet of iron and clay; the horns of the fourth beast of Daniel Ch. 7; and the 7th head of Revelation Ch. 17, the Lion, Leopard and Bear, point to an Islamic Empire and the eighth King as the healed head of the seventh kingdom, that is, the Revived Islamic Empire.

#57. The United Nations is a worthy institution that strives for peace, security, resolution of mass immigration of displaced people, education of humanity, promotion of a world ethos and financial assistance through the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.



The United Nations, however, inherently is flawed, as the Five Permanent Members: The United States, Russia, China, France and Great Britain, have veto power. These Permanent Members have incongruous interests politically, culturally, financially and religiously. Perhaps this flaw is its inherent check on world domination. In part, having a world ethos is good for humanity, especially regarding the planet, the victims of genocide, mass starvation and containing pandemics. However, part of this world ethos involves the issues of Jesus Christ and the Holy Bible. The world ethos regarding Jesus Christ and the Holy Bible is a different view than the Biblical Christian view.

Father Arsenios Vliagoftis wrote that the New Age believe the following:

1. Jesus Christ is not the only Son of God and is not the only Christ;
2. There is no personal God;
3. Jesus Christ did not die for our sins;
4. There is no sin or distinction between a good and an evil person. All of us are innocent. The only sin that the New Age accepts is the unsuccessful attempt by an individual to realize by nature he/she is God;
5. There is no Holy Trinity;
6. The Holy Bible is full of mistakes. This position is progressive. First they say the Holy Bible is noble. Later, they say the Holy Bible is lower than other Holy Writings and in the end they say the Holy Bible is full of errors;
7. There is no hell or heaven;
8. Every person by nature is god. When the person realizes this, he/she has his/her Second Coming, (to blasphemous state: "I am God.");
9. Christians are the Antichrists; and
10. Jesus Christ and Christ are two separate realities.¹

So this ethos becomes the basis of the new world religion. Aside of Christians, who would dispute Father Vliagoftis' ten point assessment of the world's view of the Holy Bible and Jesus Christ?

1. Maximus Varvaris, a monk, "The Revealing of the Lawless One." Agios Kosmas O Atelos, Athens, Greece, 2013, quoting Father Arsenios Vliagoftis' book, "Modern Heresies, A Real Threat," Parakatatheke, 2004, the above quote was translated from Greek to English by the Author.

Europe in the Age of Trump

At a moment when America needed someone like Teddy Roosevelt to steer it safely through an increasingly chaotic world replete with complex threats, Americans voted in The Donald. One thing is sure though, the US will be moving toward a major repositioning of its foreign policy.

The election of Donald Trump to top job in the US was a slap across the face of professional politicians, pollsters, the media, gender equality, established etiquette and the campaigning rules and niceties of the post-WWII liberal order. It is a reminder too, that the shock waves of the 2007 financial crisis are still influencing events, almost a decade down the line.

The day that America's European allies hoped would never come is here. The elevation of Trump to the position of president elect has made the world a less stable and more uncertain place. Until the full implications of his victory are absorbed and Republican foreign policy strategists codify US foreign policy, a la Trump, his election is likely to spark off a series of crises around the globe.

Europe is already dealing with the deep uncertainty generated by the Brexit vote in the UK. The European Union economy is not showing signs of improvement and many eurozone countries are languishing under interminable austerity. It is in this climate that the Italian referendum next month and the French and German elections in 2017 will take place. Trump will cast a shadow over these electoral contests. He has shown that unrestrained rhetoric, narcissism and attacks on the weakest sections of society can be the most profitable electioneering tools. The concern is that his victory may legitimize such tactics. Furthermore, such a political strategy indicates that, to many voters, narrow horizons, isolationism and protectionism are preferable to altruism, compassion and open-mindedness. Let us be under no illusions here, Trump's victory is a triumph over social inclusion and economic and political liberalism – it is the revenge of a languishing petite bourgeoisie over the educated middle and upper middle classes.

European stability is likely to be tested by Trump's attitude to NATO, a military alliance that only last summer he described as "obsolete." From today, the European NATO allies would be wise to accept that the future of the alliance will be one of a state of flux. It is not so much that Trump will not wish to continue with a US engagement with NATO, but rather, as he put it: "You can't forget the bills... They have an obligation to make payments. Many NATO nations are not making payments, are not making what they're supposed to make." Under President Trump the Europeans will have to pay their full due, around 2 percent of gross domestic product, for American protection. If they don't want to rock NATO, they'd better start reviewing their defense budgets as soon as possible and step up their commitments. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg will have to show himself to be equal to Manlio Brosio in diplomatic skills to prevent the US and the European NATO allies from rehashing the mutual recriminations not voiced since the mid-1960s over the Vietnam War. In the Trump era, NATO's Article 5, activated in the event of an attack on a member-state, may be less automatic than it was thought to be.

Russian President Vladimir Putin appears to be one of the few leaders genuinely pleased with the result of the American presidential election and he has declared his willingness to restore Russo-American relations to a friendlier footing from their currently poor shape over the war in Syria. If one accepts Trump's stated willingness to cooperate with Putin over Syria, then Europe is facing the specter of a Trump/Putin world in 2017. As America has now taken a more authoritarian turn, German Chancellor Angela Merkel's message of congratulations to Trump was replete with subtext. She stressed to him that Germany's close cooperation with the US would be dependent on commitments to democracy and to equality of rights for all. Merkel's concerns over a Trump/Putin world stem not just from her problems with the populist and xenophobic Pegida Party in Germany, but also from Trump's statement in a NYT interview that he may not be willing to provide military assistance to the Baltic countries – Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania – if they come under threat. The interview brought to the surface concerns about regional instability and questions about NATO, especially since Estonia is one of the few European NATO member-states paying its full dues to the alliance.

More shocks to Europe may emerge as well if President Trump decides on an accommodation with Russia over Syria and also, if he acts on his publicly declared "number one priority" to "dismantle the disastrous deal with Iran." The Middle East is on tenterhooks. War in Syria is destabilizing Turkey and Lebanon. Issues such as security, terrorism and the mass movement of populations dominate all debate on the region. The search for regional stability seems more forlorn than ever and Trump's assurances that he has a secret plan to "knock the hell out of ISIS" do not lessen these insecurities.

An America First policy on environmental issues is certain to lead to a clash with European states. The Paris Treaty and its ambitious environmental security provisions, a centerpiece of President Obama's legacy, are certain to be challenged by a die-hard climate change denier such as Trump.

At a moment when America needed someone like Teddy Roosevelt to steer it safely through an increasingly chaotic world replete with complex threats, Americans voted in The Donald. One thing is sure though, the US will be moving toward a major repositioning of its foreign policy. The blueprint is not clear right now and may not even exist apart from what is in Trump's head. A lot will depend on his ability to lure back to his foreign policy team all those extremely capable Republican foreign policy experts who deserted him in droves in the runup to the election and who vowed never to work for him or with him. In the meantime, until the contours of Trump's foreign policy are detailed clearly, the world, and Europe in particular, will exist in an uncertain and unstable environment.

* Effie Pedaliu is fellow at LSE IDEAS and specializes in international history.