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Faithful Angels

Part 2

By: Louis A. Palivos



As was written in the Author's Part 1 article, about the Two Kingdoms, ancient mankind believed in a Spirit World of good and bad angels. The Holy Bible is full of stories of Faithful Angels: the cherubim, Gen. 3:4; angels visited Abraham, Gen. 18:2; an angel restrained Abraham's hand, Gen. 22:11; Hagar comforted by an angel, Gen. 21:17; Jacob saw angels, Gen. 28: 12-13; an angel led the Israelites, Ex. 23:20; an angel guided Gideon, Jud. 6:12-18; Prophet Isaiah saw heavenly angels, Is. 6:1-3; Prophet Daniel was protected by an angel, Dan. 6:22; Archangel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias, Lk. 1:11-19; Gabriel talked to Mary, Lk. 1:26-27; angels appeared to the Shepherds in Bethlehem, Lk. 2:13; angels proclaimed the resurrection, Matt. 28:5-6; angels appeared to the disciples, Acts 1:9-11; and angel appeared to St. Peter, Acts 5:19; and to Cornelius, Acts 10:3-8. Other references exist in the Holy Bible of Faithful Angels, as well. Faithful Angels advance Almighty God's will, guide, instruct and protect God's people.

The Holy Fathers, St. Anthony, St. Dionysios the Areopagite, St. Basil the Great

and St. Gregory the Theologian, in their experience, wrote about Faithful Angels. St. Dionysios established the Faithful Angels in nine orders: Heralds, Archangels, Powers, Dominions, Principalities, Authorities, Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim. See also, Col. 1:14; and I Pet. 3:22.

What are Angels? Angels were created bodiless, immaterial, with free will, travel instantly vast distances, faster than the speed of light, but cannot be at two places at once.

Faithful Angels inter-phase from the third heaven to the second heaven and earth,

the first heaven. Faithful Angels are restricted by Fallen Angels; see how a Faithful Angel was prevented from visiting the Prophet Daniel for 21 days until the angel Michael intervened, Dan. 10:13; time and space. In the Holy Bible, the angels are described as males. They can communicate instantly. Faithful Angels and Fallen Angels do not die.

In the Holy Bible, the very first verse of Genesis states:

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth," Gen 1:1. Please note that more than one heaven was created. God created the "heavens". Based on the revealed truths in the Holy Bible, it appears that there is the third heaven of
(coninued p.2)

1821: the significance of the Greek revolution

Most historians insist that the Greek Revolution was a nationalist movement for the establishment of a Greek nation-state. In reality it was a grass root movement for human rights and freedom, a vertical movement that united most social classes under a common goal.

When the Greek Revolution broke out in the early months of 1821, it brought with it the revival of an idea that seemed to have gone astray after the French Revolution.

The Revolutionaries themselves stated in their declaration of independence that they were fighting for liberty, equal rights and human emancipation.

"We are fighting against tyranny, despotism, and the darkness of slavery," they declared.

A few months later, in their first constitution, the French revolutionaries abolished social distinctions and redistributed wealth, gave equal rights to poor and rich alike, established a functional system of distinct authorities and declared that reason and freedom go hand in hand. A slave cannot be a thinking human being, they proclaimed.

It was indeed a momentous event after the undisputed victory of the conservatives against Napoleon and the consolidation of the political status quo in Europe with the Council of Vienna in 1815.

No change in borders nor any change in the political regimes throughout Europe was the decision taken by the nobles and the diplomats of the all great dynasties of the period.

Even the Russian Tsar insisted that there should be no change in the political map. Paradoxically, this included Russia's major enemy, the declining Ottoman Empire, which secured its shrinking borders and its sovereignty over its subject nations.

So when the Greek Revolution broke out, the conservative European alliance found its very authority questioned and challenged. When the Greeks declared their independence they gained the hostility of the established European powers and the admiration of the common people. Indeed this was a revolution of the common people against despotism and the oppression of an autocratic ruler who could not understand the changes that were happening around him.

Most historians insist that the Greek Revolution was a nationalist movement for the establishment of a Greek nation-state. In reality it was a grass root movement for human rights and freedom, a vertical movement that united most social classes under a common goal: the establishment of a public sphere in which human beings could interact with equal rights, dignity, justice and solidarity.

It is interesting to remember that public opinion was immediately favourable to the revolution, and the press, so heavily censored, could not hide its deep admiration for the confused news emerging from the region.

Indeed other historians have presented the revolution as being organised by the middle class merchants for the Greek Diaspora, who had formed secret societies, on the model of the Masonic lodges.

Yet all these societies disappeared the first day of the revolution; we have no information about them after the day the Greeks emancipated themselves from the role of the enslaved nation.

Others have insisted on romantic philhellenism that permeated the post-Enlightenment Europe; yet these were contributing factors, not the fundamental reasons.

The first declaration by Alexandros Ypsilanti stated "Fight for Faith and Motherland! The time has come, O Hellenes.

(Continue p. 2)



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- 1.To applaud the achievements of our ethnic group
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- 7.To advance the just causes of Hellenism.
8. To promote the ideals Greece has given to humanity.

Faithful Angels

From p. 1

God and the Faithful Angels, the *second and first heaven* of the Fallen Angels.

Today, Quantum Physics Scientists have proven that objects separated by a great distance can instantaneously affect each other's behavior. They suggest that entangled particles seem to have correlated states faster than the speed of light.¹ Thus, perhaps Quantum Physics helps to understand the spirit function of angels.

An Orthodox Scholar, quoting St. John Damascene, wrote that the Faithful Angels, "do not appear exactly as they are to the just and to them that God wills them to appear to. On the contrary, they appear under such a different form as can be seen by those who behold them."²



This same scholar wrote that Faithful Angels were created immortal, imperfect, innumerable, have names (Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Salathiel, Jegudiel and Barachiel), share in God's blessedness, glory, grace, love and are in charge of certain areas.

The Holy Tradition God-bearing-fearing Fathers and Mothers comfort Believers that they have a Guardian Angel for their journey in life. The Lord Jesus Christ's taught that little children have Guardian Angels. Matt. 18:10. A Faithful Angel freed St. Peter from jail and the disciples thought that it was his Guardian Angel. Acts 12:15.

Faithful Angels have wings, Dan. 9:21, unlike Fallen Angels that seem to walk, Matt. 12:43; Faithful Angels do not inhabit inside persons, unlike Fallen Angels that inhabit inside persons, Mk. Ch. 5 and Lk. 8:2; and Faithful Angels have access to God Almighty's *third heaven* throne, but Fallen Angels have been cast down to the *second and first heaven*. Rev. 12; Eph. 6:12; and Jude 6.

Faithful Angels will pass the test of testing the spirits; "Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God." I Jn. 4:2-3.

Like Faithful Believers, Faithful Angels strive toward *Theosis*; like humans, Faithful Angels need more of the Holy Spirit to achieve *Theosis*; like humans, the more Faithful Angels strive for holiness, the more the Holy Spirit fills them with holiness.

Lastly, at death, the Saved Person's soul is received by Faithful Angels and "taken to the Kingdom of God, whereas the Unserved Person's soul is grabbed by demons and taken to Hades, waiting the Last Judgment."³

Onward Soldier!

1. John Markoff, "Sorry, Einstein. Quantum Study Suggests 'Spooky Action' Is Real." www.nytimes.com, Oct. 21, 2015.

2. Protopresbyter Michael Pemazansky, "Orthodox Dogmatic Theology." St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1983

3. G. Koris and A. Parake, *Demons: Traps and Tricks*, Liakopoulos, Thesaloniki, Greece, 2004. (The Author translated the quote from Greek to English.)

1821: the significance of the Greek revolution

(from p.1)

Long ago the people of Europe, fighting for their own rights and liberties, invited us to imitation ... The enlightened peoples of Europe are occupied in restoring the same well-being, and, full of gratitude for the benefactions of our forefathers towards them, desire the liberation of Greece."

It was a wake-up call; Greeks were not simply fighting for faith and motherland but for their rights and liberties; indeed these ideas coexisted in the mind and the various trends amongst them and later caused enormous trouble and disunity.

After so many centuries of enslaved existence, freedom was an unfeasible dream for those who grew up in conditions of repression and fear.

The father of Greek nationalism, Adamantios Koraes, from his diasporic position in Paris, sent his own edition of Aristotle's Politics to the revolutionaries with a long letter recommending a program of social reforms and the introduction of a system of checks and balances in order to regain, as he stated, "our human nature".

He suggested that our humanity was in its expression a political issue, a question that had to be resolved through dialogue and negotiations.

It is obvious that the Greek revolution was a great promise in an era of conservative rule and diminished expectations.

It was not simply a nationalistic movement; it was predominantly a political and social uprising which disrupted the domination of autocracy and totalitarianism.

It renewed the great promises of the American and French revolutions, and brought their ideas for the first time into Eastern Europe and the Balkans, accelerating thus the process of fragmenting the surviving medieval empires by introducing the ideas of self-determination and self-government.

Like any other revolution however the Greek revolution remained incomplete. It established an independent state which in its function undermined and finally abolished the promises of the revolution.

Most revolutionaries were imprisoned, or died in utter poverty. The Revolution itself became a national myth, de-politised and de-radicalised, with racialist undertones and quasi-religious character.

Today we can critically revisit the legacy of the early days and years of the revolution; we honour the visionary projects and empowering ideas; we admire the courage and the self-negation of the individuals; and yet feel rather sad with what followed.

But the legacy remains declaring again and again that the struggle for human freedom, dignity and justice never ends and we have to carry it on from generation and generation and win again and again what the great people of the past have struggled to achieve for us.

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Μία από τις επιτυχεστέρες Υπουργούς της Κυβέρνησης ΑΝΕΛ-ΣΥΡΙΖΑ είναι προφανώς η δραστηρία Υπουργός Τουρισμού, η κα. Έλενα Κουντουρά, η οποία έχει καταφέρει να ανεβάσει ποιοτικά και ποσοτικά τον Ελληνικό Τουρισμό, την μόνη υπάρχουσα Βιομηχανία της Πατρίδας, που όχι μόνο δεν υπεχώρησε στα χρόνια της οικονομικής κρίσης, αλλά και κάθε χρόνο σπάζει ρεκόρ επισκεψιμότητας ξένων τουριστών, αλλά συναλλάγματος που είναι μια μεγάλη βοήθεια στην χειμαζόμενη, κατά τα άλλα, πατρίδα. Σε συνέντευξη που έδωσε η κα.Υπουργός στα Ελληνοαμερικανικά μέσα ενημέρωσης είχαμε την ευκαρία να ακούσουμε τα μακρόπνοα σχέδια και οράματα της αεικίνητης Υπουργού για ένα λαμπρό μέλλον του Ελληνικού Τουρισμού.



Μέρος από τους εκλεκτούς καλεσμένους στην δεξίωση. Στο πρώτο πλάνο ο Μητροπολίτης μας, η κα Πρόξενος και η Υπουργός κα Έλενα Κουντουρά.



Η Υπουργός Τουρισμού με την οικογένεια της κυρία Προξένου.



Η Υπουργός, Η Γενική Πρόξενος και το Προσωπικό του Γενικού Προξενείου.



Ηρώ και Μιχάλης Αμοιρίδης, Ιατρός Σιάννης και Γιάννης Δαλάπας.



Η Υπουργός και η Γενική Πρόξενος Σικάγου.



Η Υπουργός, Η Ηρώ και ο Μιχάλης Αμοιρίδης, ο Μιχάλης Πολίτης, ο Βασίλης Ματαράγκας, και ο Κώστας Χανιωτάκης.

WORKING FROM HOME WITH SERIOUS INTERRUPTIONS

Working from home can have its advantages. But when there are major interruptions, from children to wayward farm animals, finding silence is hard.

This week, I spent part of my morning working from my parked car inside my



dark garage. The lights and heat were off, even though it's winter in Chicago. I had no choice; I needed total silence to record a podcast for work, but my two young children were home and I couldn't risk interruption.

I always knew I wasn't the only one attempting to pull off spy-calibre manoeuvres in the name of working from home. Robert Kelly, political science professor and international relations expert, had the misfortune of being uber-interrupted on live television while conducting an interview with the BBC on the very serious topic of the impeachment and removal of South Korea's president.

Like the millions of us who telecommute, Kelly and I have something in common: we use smartphones and computers to work remotely and — even if we have a dedicated office — it's usually not a soundproof space for those calls that require total silence.

And it isn't always precocious children interrupting. Christine Benton, a senior director at communications firm Burson Marsteller, has had to explain another kind of intrusion. When her horse started neighing at the office window to get her attention during a conference call, Benton turned her computer camera on Coco grazing in the yard and apologised for the distraction. That's not something soon forgotten.

"If you talk to the client, they would remember that," says Benton, who has worked from home for the past 13 years and owns a rural property near San Diego in California. But, she says, when Coco does make herself known, it's served to be a way to bond with clients. Even so, distractions can create a more stressful situation and make for some awkward moments. When Kelly was interviewed for BBC News this week, from his home office in Seoul, the video went viral as his children barged

in to the shot. The comments on social media were largely sympathetic. Parents around the world identified with the plight and weighed in on how they would handle the situation. Others thought he seemed a bit too aggravated about the distraction.

No longer a career hazard

Being called out for these types of distractions is not as career-derailing as it once was. "Co-workers and clients understand that life can get in the way," says Jill Jacinto, a New York-based career coach who specialises in helping millennials. "There's less of a stigma."

Working remotely can seem like a stress-reducer — no commute, fewer distractions from colleagues, the hum of a coffee shop to work in. But, a joint report from Eurofound and the International Labour Organization found that 41% of employees who describe themselves as highly mobile complained of stress, versus 25% of employees who described themselves as office workers.

Few of us are likely to encounter distractions on live television. But, to prevent embarrassment, veteran telecommuters suggest warning colleagues about potential distractions. Often times, Mark Oser, New York-based founder of Anteris Consulting Group, tells clients ahead of a call that he has children in the house, which can make later disruptions less of a surprise.

The traditional model is shifting

Oser also allows his two school-age children to enter the room when he's working, but only when he's talking with associates that are familiar with his work-at-home setup, but tells them to be quiet and stay out of the room when speaking to newer clients. But even that's not a perfect solution, he admits.

"If the kids start a fight during the middle of me making a presentation, I hit mute and say 'excuse me.' Then I take the kids out to [tell them to stop] really quickly and turn on the TV for them," he says.

Understanding varies

As companies struggle to retain talent — especially younger workers — even larger firms are more understanding of the issues that crop up in a work-from-home setup, says Chris Layton, a managing director at Manpower Group, a global human resource consulting firm in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in the US.

Working parents are much more understanding, but younger people are not. It's not so different, he contends, as the adjustments you have to make when you're working with people in different parts of the world. "The traditional model is shifting," he says.

Of course, not everyone is so understanding about work-from-home distractions, warns Lynn Wu, assistant business professor at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. In her research, Wu found that younger workers without children may not be able to identify on a personal level and assume child-related distractions are unprofessional, she says.

"Working parents are much more understanding, but younger people are not," she finds. "They thought, 'that is very unprofessional to take care of your kids and work at the same time'." **Alina Dizzik.**



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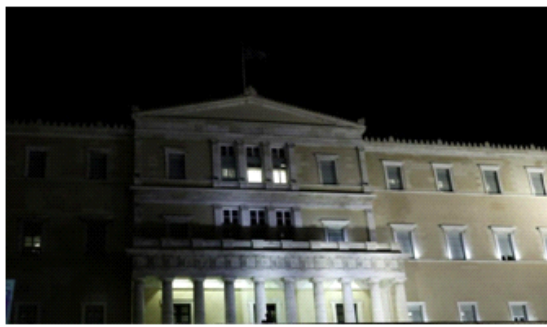
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Another warning for the gov't on the economy

In its annual report delivered to House Speaker Nikos Voutsis on Friday, the Parliamentary Budget Office issued a clear warning to the government that the economy needs its help if it is to recover.



“Unless uncertainty regarding the course of future policy is eliminated and the governance rules change, the economy will not recover,” the report states.

It also attributes great significance to the implementation of essential reforms, highlighting that 2017 has begun “with new delays in the application of the program,” pointing to another difficult year ahead.

On the reforms in the program, the Budget Office economists estimate that “they lay the foundations for averting the consolidation of a situation dominated by an increasing burden on the private sector, a reduction of incomes in the public sector, limited capital flows, the exodus of educated young people and malfunctioning state structures.”

The report addresses the issue of Greece’s debt by saying that “a permanent solution for its sustainability would eliminate an important factor of uncertainty regarding the future of the economy and investment prospects. It would also pave the way for the country’s participation in the European Central Bank’s quantitative easing program, reduce borrowing interest rates and facilitate [the country’s] return to the markets.”

In terms of the social security system, the report notes that “as long as the necessary reforms are postponed, the bill will keep growing,” and that “the margin for the fair distribution of the burden is diminished.”

The Budget Office also calls on the government to conduct an overhaul of state expenditure, demanding more systematic political interventions so as to save more money.

On taxation, it notes that the increase in tax rates discourages hard work and entrepreneurship and therefore dims hopes of a return to sustainable growth. “The constant tax hikes are sawing at the branch of production and the economy,” the report reads.

It further refers to labor issues, asking for legislative interventions regarding the process involved in calling a strike, company-specific collective labor contracts and others.

Exports start year on a high, rising 24 pct



Greece’s external trade has started the year with a rise, and the balance remains positive even when certain factors that distort the real picture of exports and imports are excluded.

The total value of exports in January 2017 came to 2.12 billion euros, against 1.71 billion in January 2016, posting an increase of 23.9 percent. According to the Panhellenic Exporters Association, most of that massive increase was due to the delivery of new ships from Asian shipyards, while the valuations of fuel imports and exports at considerably higher rates in the first month of the year also played a role.

Excluding fuel products, the increase amounted to 6.3 percent, while excluding the ships it came to 4.4 percent.

The impact of the ship transactions was even greater on imports. This sent the total value of imports soaring 52.1 percent year-on-year to 4.46 billion euros, from 2.93 billion in January 2016. Excluding fuel, the rise reached 44.4 percent, while when ships are taken out of the equation the increase came to 11.4 percent.

It therefore appears the omens are good for 2017, although no one can predict what will happen in the coming months.

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GREEK NEWS

Bank of Greece: Deal, or momentum is lost

The Bank of Greece is sticking to its forecast which sees the economy expanding 2.5 percent this year, according to its



annual report presented yon Friday by Governor Yannis Stournaras, though he warned that the economy will face a series of uncertainties unless an agreement is reached swiftly by the government and the country’s creditors.

Addressing a general meeting of the central bank, Stournaras warned that those uncertainties could be exacerbated if Greek state bonds do not find their way into the European Central Bank’s quantitative easing (QE) program. If the uncertainty is extended, it will also serve as a deterrent for foreign investments that are a necessary condition for growth, he added.

“However we could have some [good] results in a very short period of time,” Stournaras said in his speech, noting that a solution to the impasse in the talks is possible if both sides show flexibility.

“Risks are emerging from the delays and the postponements in the implementation of reforms decided and by the anti-competitive market distortions that may damage crucial sectors of the economy,” the report reads.

The central banker reiterated Greece’s commitment to the eurozone and the European Union and made it clear that the bailout program is setting the country on a growth course.

“The 2016 performance reveals the prospects of the economy,” he said, stressing that the Bank of Greece’s forecast for 2.5 percent growth in the economy this year is conditional on the conclusion of the current bailout review, which resumes on Tuesday.

The report notes that the 2016 primary budget surplus will amount to 2 percent of gross domestic product and expects the target of 1.75 percent for 2017 to be attainable.

On the banking system, Stournaras warned that the bad-loan reduction target (by 40 billion euros up to end-2019) will be put at risk unless the review is rapidly sealed, and confirmed reports that January witnessed an acceleration in the creation of fresh nonperforming loans along with a reduction in the response by debtors to the proposed settlement plans.

Half of Germans against debt relief for Greece



Around half of Germans are against granting debt relief to Greece and around three in 10 want it to quit the eurozone, a survey showed on Friday.

The INSA poll for the Bild newspaper showed 46.4 percent of people living in Germany, Europe’s paymaster, thought giving Greece debt relief would be unfair for other eurozone countries.

That compared with around a fifth (18.4 percent) who did not share that view and 9.1 percent who said they did not care.

Athens and its creditors agreed on Monday to resume talks on a long-stalled review of Greece’s bailout, but only after Greece accepted examination of its reforms for 2019 onward.

The head of the IMF, Christine Lagarde, said on Wednesday that Greece does not need a haircut on its debt at the moment but added that debt restructuring and interest rate cuts on bailout loans were necessary.

The German government, preparing for an election on September 24, is against debt relief for Greece.

The case for security For the last seven years



Greece’s negotiations with its international lenders have frequently entered phases of uncertainty that have simply prolonged domestic antagonisms, with the opposition slamming whichever government happened to be at the helm at the time. In turn, the government called out the “irresponsibility” of its political opponents.

It’s the same old story played out again and again, and the same old drama.

And this goes on even though Poul Thomsen outlined in full detail the tactics he would pursue with regard to Athens and Berlin in an e-mail to Delia Velculescu, the current IMF mission chief in Greece.

According to Thomsen, threatening Greece with economic asphyxiation and the application of coercive pressure on Germany ahead of elections there would be the catalysts for a deal.

The leak of this communication came as a shock to many, but in the process they forsook the content of the mail. Today we see how it is being implemented in practice.

Given this, eurozone leaders and ministers could be considered the whipping boys of IMF bureaucrats. But, for now, the shots in Europe are being called by the technocrats.

The difference now is that there is another far more serious factor of instability at play, because it concerns not just the economic future of Greece, but its very security – on account of the spike in tensions between Athens and Ankara.

These tensions are being fueled on a daily basis as a result of Turkish President Recep Tayyip

Erdogan’s quest to secure votes ahead of the April 16 referendum to expand his executive powers.

At the most crucial junctures in any nation’s history, it is patriotism and not just material forces that ensure that a foreign danger is successfully kept at bay.

“Patriotic” rhetoric for domestic purposes is a parody, exposing the weaknesses and shortcomings of a political system. And there is a danger that a random event could lead to a serious incident that even politicians who engage in irresponsible rhetoric do not wish for.

Of course we will not be able bring anyone to their senses. And no politician – in Greece or Turkey – will take a determined stance to reverse the trend that has been created, which burdens relations between the two countries on a daily basis.

The danger of being called a traitor is very real given that the term “treason” has been used for far less important matters.

What should not pass unnoticed is that Washington, according to information garnered by Kathimerini, has urged Ankara to reduce tensions.

The fundamentals must not be lost on anyone while a country’s security is at stake and before a European army is created.

TUI Germany reports 30 pct bookings rise as its Greek hotel portfolio grows

TUI will launch a global pilot program on Crete aimed at associating tourism with the agricultural sector. It will include the promotion of specific agricultural products through the island’s hotels.

Holiday bookings for Greece through German tour operator TUI are showing a 30 percent increase this year, which not only concerns popular tourism resorts but other destinations too, according to the company’s head, Marek Andryszak.

Andryszak came to Greece for TUI Germany’s annual meeting with Greek hoteliers in Thessaloniki, and told Kathimerini that the two main reasons Greece is showing such im-

pressive growth in bookings are the low demand for neighboring Turkey and Spain’s failure to match its growth in demand with more beds following last year’s increase.

The TUI official argued that Greece has the opportunity to make the most of its real potential as a destination this season, which it did not do in 2015



and 2016 owing to external factors.

Regarding Greek hotel prices, Andryszak estimated that “this year the average rate will come to a higher level than last year.” He explained that “this will be mainly due to the earlier reduction in hoteliers’ offers than in previous years as contract rates are slightly increased.”

He also referred to the volume of hotels his company cooperates with in Greece, saying that “TUI has the biggest portfolio it’s ever had in Greece” and attributed the choice of Thessaloniki for the meeting with the Greek hoteliers to the tour operator’s objective being “the recovery of our momentum in the market of northern Greece that has declined since the start of the 2000s.”

Andryszak further revealed to Kathimerini that TUI has decided to launch a global pilot program from Greece – starting on Crete – aimed at connecting tourism with the agricultural sector. A series of actions will be targeted, including the promotion of specific agricultural products through the hotels. The program will be officially announced at the ITB fair in Berlin that opens on Tuesday.

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THE WORLD IS FACING A GREAT HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

The world is facing its largest humanitarian crisis since 1945, the United Nations says, issuing a plea for help to avoid “a catastrophe”.

UN humanitarian chief Stephen O’Brien said that more than 20 million people



faced the threat of starvation and famine in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and Nigeria. Unicef has already warned 1.4m children could starve to death this year. Mr O’Brien said \$4.4bn (£3.6bn) was needed by July to avert disaster. “We stand at a critical point in history,” Mr O’Brien told the Security Council on Friday. “Already at the beginning of the year we are facing the largest humanitarian crisis since the creation of the United Nations.” “Now, more than 20 million people across four countries face starvation and famine. Without collective and coordinated global efforts, people will simply starve to death. Many more will suffer and die from disease “Children stunted and out of school. Livelihoods, futures and hope will be lost.

Mr O’Brien’s comments follow on from a similar appeal made by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres last month. At that time, he revealed the UN had only received \$90m (£74m) so far in 2017, despite generous pledges. Like Mr O’Brien, he urged more financial support for the four countries. But why are they in such dire need?

Yemen

The pictures were among the most shocking of last year: emaciated children, clinging on to life with what little strength they had left. Four-year-olds not bigger than infants. And mothers unable to do anything to stop their children dying.

It is thought a child dies every 10 minutes in Yemen from a preventable disease, while half-a-million children under five are suffering from severe acute malnutrition. The UN estimates some 19 million people - or two thirds of Yemen’s population - is in need of some sort of humanitarian help following two years of war between Houthi insurgents and the government, which is backed by a Saudi led coalition.

What’s hampering aid? Continuing fighting, lack of rule of law, poor governance, under-development. A naval embargo imposed by the Saudi-led coalition, fighting around the government-controlled port of Aden and air strikes on the rebel-held port of Hudaydah, have severely reduced imports since 2015. A lack of fuel, coupled with insecurity and damage to markets and roads, have also prevented supplies from being distributed.

South Sudan

Media captionRavaged by war, now famine has hit South Sudan UN agencies say 100,000 people are facing starvation in South Sudan, while a further million are classified as being on the brink of famine. It is the most acute of the present food emergencies, and the most widespread nationally. Overall, says the UN, 4.9 million people - or 40% of South Sudan’s population - are “in need of urgent food, agriculture and nutrition assistance”.

Nigeria

The UN has described the unfolding disaster in north-eastern Nigeria as the “greatest crisis on the continent” - the full extent of which has only been revealed as extremist militant group Boko Haram is pushed back. The UN estimated in December there were 75,000 children at risk of starving to death. Another 7.1 million people in Nigeria and the neighbouring Lake Chad area are considered “severely food insecure”.

Rex Tillerson is the opposite of Donald Trump. Will he have any sway?



Rex Tillerson is the antithesis of his boss, the Disrupter-in-Chief Donald Trump.

He is also, in some respects, the antithesis of his predecessor, the garrulous former Secretary of State John Kerry. For the man who is the public face of US diplomacy, Tillerson keeps a remarkably low profile. Which has left staff at the State Department, and the journalists who cover it, wondering how he will fare against competing power centres in the White House, and how he will represent America to the world.

Early signs have not been promising.

For the entire first month of the Trump administration the State Department has given no public briefings. It’s just been announced that they’re set to resume early next month after an unprecedented six-week hiatus. It was not just the matter of being absent from the cacophony of a new order asserting itself in Washington. It was the noticeable absence of an American voice to the world, a tool of diplomacy that has regularly inserted US positions into the internal debates of allies and foes alike.

Tillerson himself has rarely spoken publicly. This reticence is consistent with both his corporate background as former head of Exxon Mobil, and his personal style - a lifelong Eagle Scout who values actions more than words. He does at least avoid the pitfalls of Kerry, who thoroughly embraced the public role of top diplomat, but whose shoot-from-the-hip style sometimes left his aides backtracking after he’d departed the podium.

Tillerson hurts himself with this quiet diplomacy approach, because Washington is not a quiet town. Tillerson’s recent absence from Donald Trump’s meetings with key foreign leaders has left many questioning just how much influence he has. State department officials point out that his acting deputy Tom Shannon was in the room for the visits of the Canadian and Japanese Prime Ministers. Yet while they were at dinner, the White House appeared to blindside him with suggestions it might depart from a long-standing insistence on a two-state solution to the Mideast conflict. “If there’s going to be a policy change, the State Department needs to know about it,” a US official told the BBC. To a large degree, Mr Tillerson’s understated performance reflects this confusion in the administration over who’s in charge.

The National Security Council has been paralysed by staffing shortages and a leadership change. Meanwhile alternative centres of power with undefined parameters have emerged: Trump’s Chief White House Strategist Steve Bannon has set up a “strategic initiatives” thinktank to inform policy making. And his son-in-law Jared Kushner has been tasked with taking the lead on foreign policy issues like Middle East peace, with no formal connection to established State Department channels.

Tillerson has his own channel to the president, says his aide, RC Hammond: “The secretary and the president are in frequent contact, meeting in person and speaking regularly over the phone.” The secretary has, however, reportedly been frustrated with the administration over staffing appointments. The president had promised to let him pick ambassadors for many of the top-tier postings, two people close to the transition process told the BBC. But they said White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus circumvented the arrangement by winning Trump’s approval for at least 10 nominees before Tillerson was confirmed. These are still going through the vetting process.

Battles between the administration and government ministries over appointments are not necessarily unusual. The White House did not approve Tillerson’s initial choice for a deputy and almost all of the high-level State Department jobs are still vacant. Just two out of the 116 requiring congressional confirmation have been filled. Shake-ups on the top floor are standard practice during transitions, but former State Department officials say this one was done with a particularly heavy hand. Some were given only 48 hours notice to vacate their offices and none were left to backfill until new appointments could be made, which is the normal procedure.

Tillerson’s role in these decisions was not clear, as much of it happened before he was confirmed. We are “treading water” said one career diplomat, noting the difficulty of getting guidance on even routine policy decisions from the top floor. Tillerson had wanted Elliott Abrams to serve as his deputy, but he was disqualified due to negative comments about Trump. He came in strong with an opening speech that said all the right things - promising to make full use of the expertise on hand and suggesting that he’d have an open mind about dissenting opinions. That is what he seems to be doing, working his way through the building in methodical consultations that include not just senior officials but mid-level officers, as he navigates the steep learning curve from CEO to diplomat. This approach has been well received, although I understand there are concerns that he is not as accessible as was hoped.