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BONDAGE

Part 5

By: Louis A. Palivos

So how do evil spirits or demons enter into a person? The person has to give *ground*, *open doors*, *make vows* or other *spiritual signatures* that give “legal rights” to the demon(s). Once *ground* is given, a demon(s) makes a “*nest*” in a person’s mind or body. The demons become like *squatters* with no title, no contract or right to a person. As was pointed out in a prior article by the Author, the Satanic Kingdom is organized and it monitors all of humanity. The “god of this world” has his secret agents watching and reporting human activity. After the observations, persons become targets for demonic spirits to gain *ground* in a person through sin; occult; being a member of a cult; unforgiveness; life circumstances; disobedience; rebellion; childhood experiences, like rejection, sexual abuse, physical or emotional abuse; and/or inheritance of ancestral sins.

The Prophet Moses wrote a list of 9 abominations that give *ground* and must be avoided,

“there shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.” Deut. 18: 10-11.

St. Paul wrote a list of 17 ‘works of the flesh’, of sins that give *ground* to demons,

“now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Gal. 5: 19-21.

Extreme caution must be exercised so as not to think that behind every physical or mental problem is caused by demons. Medical science is a mandatory prerequisite to diagnose and treat ailments, but once a scientific or medical limit is reached, what’s next? Again, extreme caution must be exercised not to think that behind every ailment, dream, vision or shadow there is a demon. However, the opposite extreme also must be avoided as a disbelief in unclean spirits will lead to ignorance, apathy, inaction and/or passivity.

Demonic symptoms *may* be manifested further in the following areas:

1. Emotional Problems: resentment, hatred, anger, fear, rejection (feeling unwanted and unloved), self-pity, jealousy, depression, worry, inferiority and insecurity;

2. Mental Problems: mental torment, procrastination, indecision, compromise, confusion, doubt, rationalization and loss of memory;

3. Speech Problems: lying, cursing, blasphemy, criticism, mockery, railing and gossip;

4. Sex Problems: fantasy sex experiences, masturbation, bestiality and pedophilia, (added by Author), lust, perversions, homosexuality, fornication, adultery, incest, provocativeness and harlotry;

5. Addictions: smoking, alcohol, drugs, medicines, caffeine and food;

6. Physical Infirmities: many diseases and physical afflictions are due to spirits of infirmity, see Luke 13:11;

7. Religious Errors: (a) False religions, e.g., eastern religions, pagan religions, philosophies and mind sciences, (b) Christian cults that deny the salvation work of the Lord, Jesus Christ, (c) Occults, and Spiritualism, see Deut. 18:9-15, and (d) False Doctrine, see I Tim. 4:1; and/or

8. Supernatural Manifestations: super human strength, see Mark Ch. 5, or speaking in foreign tongues or speaking a foreign language forward or backward, levitation of objects or bodies, or movement of objects or marks and contusions on the human body or revealing of hidden knowledge or manifestations on objects.

A Godly Old Man, Gerontas, Paisios, now a Saint, said:

“A person who gives ground to temptation is controlled by his/her passions, and if one allows his/her passions to conflict him/her, then the demons come and influence the person to sin. We must forgo the temptations; because, from temptation

(coninued p.2)

Metropolitan Iakovos of Chicago Falls Asleep in the Lord



The Chicago area Orthodox Christians Mourn the Loss of His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos. With the heaviest of hearts and profound sadness, we mourn the sudden loss of His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos of Chicago. As shepherd of our Metropolis, His Eminence passionately spread the Word of Orthodoxy and uplifted our hearts unto our Lord. He recognized the value of education and understood its important role in bringing us closer to our faith and culture. As a former President of Holy Cross School of Theology, he ensured that our future priests and lay assistants not only knew the tenants of the Greek Orthodox faith, but lived them as shining examples of Christ’s love for His people. Every moment spent with him was a teaching moment. Be it in his sermons, writings or in his remarks at a church function or community event, he imparted his wisdom about the meaning of life, his love of Christ, and what awaited us in Heaven. He encouraged and inspired the youth to be their best, to honor their heritage, and to live their faith. He reminded us that our identity was rooted in our heritage and our spirituality. In his 38 years as the Metropolitan of the Metropolis of Chicago, His Eminence has left a lasting impression and a rich legacy as our spiritual leader.

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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.

BONDAGE

Part 5

By: Louis A. Palivos

(From page 1)

begins everything and if it's difficult to do this, then, forgo the curiosity so that no images pass in front of us that are paraded by demons."

St. Nikodemus of Mount Athos, wrote:

"Learn beloved that Satan pursues nothing else but our destruction and does not fight persons with only one method. He classifies persons into the following categories: A) Those enslaved to sin but do not wish to free themselves. B) Those enslaved to sin who wish to free themselves but do not start the effort. C) Those who believe that they are proceeding to perfection. D) Those who learn the road of virtue and stay on the road to virtue. E) Those who know virtue but turn virtue to a cause for evil. ²

As humanity approaches the Second Coming, the Lord Jesus Christ, in Matt. Ch. 24; Lk. Chs. 21 and 17; Mk. Ch. 13; St. Paul, as cited above, as well as, Godly Fathers and Mothers, warned Believers that deceiving spirits will infest humanity and the "Church," with an avalanche of false doctrines. Dave Hunt, reposed, a Protestant, in his 1985 book, *The Seduction of Christianity*³, documented numerous deceptions and apostasy, to wit, paganism, sorcery and scientism, shamanism, idolatry, and psychological salvation.

Also, Seraphim Rose, reposed, an Orthodox, in his 1975 and reprinted in 2013 book, *Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future*, documents this "new religious consciousness" from a Patristic viewpoint based on age old deceptions. "God" universal will be espoused; the Deity of Jesus Christ will be attacked; the Holy Spirit will be similar to the spirit of the ages; The Holy Bible will be attacked; Creation will be attacked; there will be a movement toward Spirituality in Self; the Resurrection of Jesus Christ will be denied; a general increase in Lawlessness; and an Amalgamated Ecumenism, that the sum total of the, in part, truths, shall lead to the total truth. Lastly, Father Rose wrote that, in part, "the new religious consciousness" is to "make available to Christians the demonic initiations hitherto restricted to the pagan world." p.188. He further wrote that what has brought humanity to this state "is the loss of the grace of God which follows on the loss of the savor of Christianity."⁴ p.189.

Afflicted Believers and Unbelievers must break demonic strongholds by repenting of their sins, renouncing the unclean spirits and putting their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Onward Soldier!

1. Frank and Ida Mae Hammond, *Pigs in the Parlor*, Impact Books, Inc. 1973 reprinted 2016.

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

3. Dave Hunt and T.A. McMahon, *The Seduction of Christianity, Spiritual Discernment in the Last Days*, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 1985.

4. Fr. Seraphim Rose, *Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future*, Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, Platina, Cal., 1975 and reprinted numerous times to 2013.

**ΛΥΣΤΕ ΤΟ ΠΡΟΒΛΗΜΑ ΤΩΝ "ΠΑΡΑΣΙΤΩΝ" ΣΤΑ ΡΑΔΙΟΦΩΝΙΚΑ ΜΑΣ
ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΑ. ΑΚΟΥΣΤΕ ΜΑΣ ΑΠΟ ΤΟ ΚΟΜΠΙΟΥΤΕΡ ΣΑΣ
ΠΕΝΤΑΚΑΘΑΡΑ ΚΑΙ ΜΑΛΙΣΤΑ 24 ΩΡΕΣ ΤΟ 24ΩΡΟ.**

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The Greek Philotimo

By Stav Dimitropoulos

The exact meaning of philotimo is hotly debated, given that the word belongs to the pantheon of Greek lexical items that defy easy explanation. 'Love of honour', its official translation, is a utilitarian yet insufficient attempt to convey the constellation of virtues squeezed into the word's four syllables. When I asked various Greeks about their own perception of philotimo, I received very different responses.

"Doing the right thing," Pinelopi Kalafati, a doctor, told me. "Loving and honouring God and your society," said priest Nikolas Papanikolaou. "Striving for perfection," answered actor Kostis Thomopoulos. "Stepping out from your comfort zone to help someone in need," suggested Tatiana Papadopoulou, a volunteer in Malakasa detention camp for refugees.

It seems that not only does the word remain untranslatable, but even Greeks themselves have trouble agreeing on a single definition.

"The mythology that accompanies this elusive concept is without precedent. Indeed, the word cannot be translated precisely to any other language," said Vassilios P Vertoudakis, lecturer in Ancient Greek philology at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. "All the same, philotimo has become one of the building blocks of the Greek disposition because of the unique standing of Greece in relation to what we call the West."

Even Greeks themselves have trouble agreeing on a single definition

He explained that philotimo comes from the Ancient Greek word philotimia of which the first attested written reference dates to the dawn of the Greek classical period (6th and 7th Centuries BC) in the writings of lyric poet Pindar. For Pindar and other early writers, the word meant love of honour or distinction, or ambition, but often in a negative way. In mythology, for example, Achilles' philotimo was wounded when King Agamemnon took away Queen Briseis, his prize for bravery on the battlefield.

It was only after the consolidation of democracy in classical Athens around the 4th and 5th Centuries BC, when competition was replaced by co-operation, that the word gained a more positive connotation. At that time, "a man with philotimo signified someone who loves to receive the praises of his city, but first serves the community," Vertoudakis said.

The concept really took off around the 15th Century in the High Middle Ages, when Ottoman rulers enslaved Greece, forced a large part of the population into subsistence farming through heavy taxation and limited education, and cut each region off from both the rest of the country and Western Europe.

"While the West was experiencing Enlightenment and developing modern states that tied together individuals under the rule of law and an abstract sense of responsibility, the subjugated and inward-looking Greeks were bound by pride, localism and interpersonal relationships," Vertoudakis said. "Instead of developing the kind of institutional consciousness seen in Western Europe, Greek communities were imbued with philotimo, which was triggered not by law and logic but intense emotion and some degree of intimacy."

And this emotional side to the national character can be seen throughout modern Greek history. In May 1941, when the Axis powers launched an airborne attack on the legendary Minoan island of Crete, locals not only grabbed kitchen knives or unsophisticated weapons to go out and fight the enemy, but also trudged through the towering, rugged mountains and steep gorges of Crete to find the best hideouts for the British and Australian soldiers. Neither the fact that they were half-starved due to the Nazi-induced Great Famine nor the death penalty for sheltering soldiers fazed them; their sense of duty, honour and courage took precedence.

Almost 76 years later, locals on the islands of Lesbos, Chios and Kos, places renowned for their beauty and touristic prowess – yet all in years of deep recession – have been jumping in boats to rescue refugees reaching the Eastern Aegean shores in droves. Some have even been witnessed plunging in icy waters as the rickety boats approach the islands.

"Why are you congratulating me, my children?" asked 86-year-old Emilia Kamvisi when journalists asked her why she and her friends, 90-year-old Efstratia Mavrapidou and 86-year-old Maritsa Mavrapidou – who were later nominated for the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize – go to the coast of Lesbos every day to help weary female refugees and their children. "What special am I doing? Wouldn't you do the same?" she continued.

We may not return with our nets full of fish, but our hearts are warm

Also nominated was 41-year-old fisherman, Stratis Valiamos, who often takes his tiny wooden boat into the Aegean to rescue people off his own accord. "I'm out fishing, I can see people shouting for help. What can I do? Pretend I can't see? Pretend I can't hear? That's the right thing to do".

"We may not return with our nets full of fish, but our hearts are warm," Diamantis Zannikos, a fisherman-rescuer from Chios told me. "We have philotimo."

I am sure Kamvisi, Valiamos and Zannikos are all uninterested in whether philotimo is an emotional crutch or an indefinable cultural trait. For the hundreds of fishermen, housewives, retirees, teachers, volunteers, artists and students who wait by the beach every day to offer dry clothes, water, food and shelter, and open their arms and homes to people fleeing war and terror, the emotional and moral satisfaction drawn from exhibiting philotimo far outweighs any attempt at conceptualising it. For them, philotimo is simply a way of being.

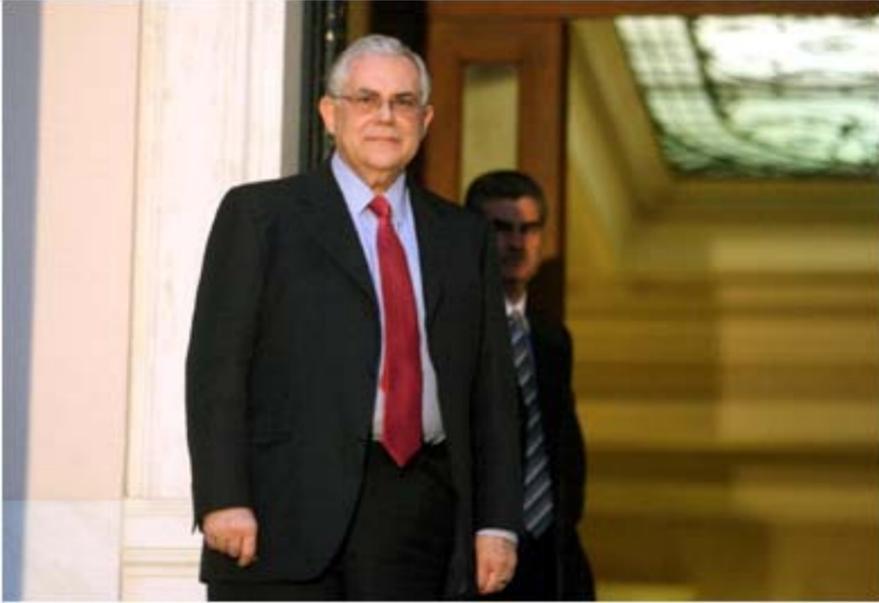
The emotional and moral satisfaction drawn from exhibiting philotimo far outweighs any attempt at conceptualising it Deffner, meanwhile, is packing his suitcases for one more summer holiday with Grandma Vangelio and family.

"What is your definition of philotimo?" I asked John.

"Two or three positive thoughts, one litre zest for life, 500 grams of hospitality, 10 drops of sympathy, an ounce of pride, dignity and your inner guide," he replied.

Nikos Konstandaras

Lucas Papademos is a symbol for us all



Sadly but perhaps not unexpectedly, Lucas Papademos became a symbol of the crisis that plagues our country's public dialogue and public life. The blind rage of extremists that greeted the former vice president of the European Central Bank when he was chosen to lead a broad coalition in late 2011, when George Papandreou's government was at an impasse, was perhaps the greatest accolade for a person who throughout his career has put the national interest above his own. Lucas Papademos would accept to play a leading role in our politics only at the head of a multiparty coalition, only when circumstances demanded it, only when his mission was to stabilize the country at a moment of danger. His term, between November 2011 and May 2012, proved this.

Papademos stuck to his mandate, conscientiously and with great dignity he stayed outside of political games. He did not grab the opportunity for personal political gain. He accepted the summons of the political parties at a time of great danger, when only a coalition under a mutually acceptable leader could stabilize the political system and keep Greece in the eurozone. He succeeded, but had the misfortune to see his coalition undermined from within, even as opponents of the governing parties poured abuse on him. Some of those in government today were among his fiercest abusers. Papademos attracted even more hatred and rage than the politicians who bore responsibility for the country's troubles – precisely because he represents that which his critics cannot understand: He is a true patriot, he does not engage in trade-offs with them, he supports institutions and respects the law, he can negotiate with foreign partners without playing to the domestic gallery.

Such people are always alone and vulnerable in our country.

Terrorism has its own sick logic. The murderer wants his victim's identity to be enough to make the killer a hero in the eyes of supporters. At a time when lawlessness is tolerated by many, Lucas Papademos became the perfect target. The lovers of violence, who mushroom in confusion and darkness, in lawlessness and dark bargains, cannot deal with such a foreign body. And they believe many agree with them.

That is why Lucas Papademos, apart from a respected compatriot and president of the Academy of Athens, is a symbol for all of us. Will we accept the attack on him as just another step toward deeper darkness, or will each of us, and society as a whole, stand up and shout, "Enough"?



S-backed Syrian forces have advanced into the western part of so-called Islamic State's "capital" of Raqqa, they and a monitor report.

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said the move had opened up a second front inside the Syrian city. They entered the eastern part earlier this week. Its fighters were engaged in fierce clashes with the jihadists, it said.

The SDF, supported by US-led coalition air strikes, has spent months encircling the city. "The SDF captured the western half of the Al-Sabahiya neighbourhood and are reinforcing their positions there," the head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group, Rami Abdel Rahman, told AFP news agency on Saturday. "They then advanced north to the adjacent district of Al-Romaniya and are fighting IS there."

Capital Control Era - What are the consequences?

Capital Controls Restrictions in Greece were first implemented in July 2015. Nearly two years later, they are still very much in effect, although somewhat less restrictive.

What's new in Capital Control Restrictions? While limited cash withdrawals are still in effect, there have been some changes and these are the main points you should be aware of:

- Cash withdrawals of up to 420 Euros per week or 840 per two-week period may be made
- Funds may be transferred within the Greek banking system without significant restrictions
- Funds up to 1,000 Euros per month may be transferred abroad without special permission.
- ATM cards linked to non-Greek bank accounts are restriction-free for cash withdrawals.

How can I open a Greek Bank Account? Opening a bank account in Greece has indeed become a challenge. They can be opened under specific circumstances and only with the person wishing to open the account being present, with very few exceptions. Of particular interest to residents abroad, it is possible to open a Greek bank account if the bank account is funded with at least 10,000 Euros (or equivalent in another currency) from abroad (i.e. outside the Greek banking system). This is particularly relevant for our clients who are considering buying property in Greece.

What documents are required? While the documentation required to open a bank account in Greece may vary depending on the bank and the reason for opening the account, here is an indicative list for residents abroad:

- Photocopy of Passport
- Photocopy of Driver's License and Social Security Card (for U.S. Citizens)
- Non-Greek Tax Returns/Declarations for the past two years (with Apostille Certification)
- Greek Tax Declarations for the past two years, if applicable
- Proof of Greek Tax Number (Αριθμός Φορολογικού Μητρώου - Α.Φ.Μ.) For more details on how to open a bank account in Greece, make sure to download the "[Greek Bank Information for the Post Capital Control Era](#)" handout prepared by Attorney Arsinoi Lainioti.

Have a question?

Visit www.ksirouni.com and we will get back to you! **DISCLAIMER:** The information provided in our newsletters is general and may change or not apply in all cases and should therefore NOT be considered as advice or consultation to act upon.

Airbnb to help host 35,000 refugees in houses across Greece



Short-term property rental platform Airbnb has announced that it will be helping to find housing for some 35,000 asylum seekers trapped in Greece, a representative for the company told the Concordia Europe Summit in Athens.

According to the representative, Airbnb is developing a special platform, airbnb.com/welcome, where property owners can offer their house or apartment to refugees for as long as desired or needed.

The company hopes that its campaign, which is Europe-wide, will help house a total of 100,000 people across the continent.

The initiative is run with the help of the nongovernmental organization Solidarity Now.

Draw in Bosnia keeps Greece in contention

Greece secured a precious goalless draw at Bosnia on Friday for the 2018 World Cup qualifiers, to remain second in its pool and keep the Bosnians behind. Greece's defense and midfield held the hosts, while the heroics of goalkeeper Orestis Karnezis made the difference in the end.

The national team was predictably defense-minded for a second match in a row, after the 1-1 draw in Brussels with group leader Belgium in March. However it will need to score more in the four remaining games if it wants to qualify.



At Zenica Greece manager Michael Skibbe placed great emphasis on the midfield as he opted for two defensive midfielders (Alexandros Tziolis and Zeca) and three attacking ones behind lone striker Costas Mitroglou.

In attack Greece was quite poor, but its midfield held the Bosnians with a frustrating effect, often silencing the home crowd as the hosts had problems in transition from defense to attack.

Central defenders Costas Manolas and Sokratis Papastathopoulos had plenty of work and contained the prolific Bosnians, and when called to the task Karnezis stood firm. He stopped the hosts twice in the first half depriving them of a certain goal. He then repeated this feat with two great saves late in the second half, denying Edin Dzeko and Toni Sunjic.

The match marked the national team debut of Tasos Donis of Nice OGC who came on as a second-half substitute for injured Tasos Bakasetas.

Donis and Mitroglou combined for Greece's biggest chance on the 82nd minute, but Donis's cross from the left was not converted by an unmarked Petros Mantalos just inside the box: He sent the ball over the bar.

Notably the Bosnian booing at the Greek anthem before kick-off was so loud that made it inaudible.

Belgium is on 16 points, Greece has 12 and Bosnia is third with 11. The top team qualifies to the World Cup finals and the runner-up will negotiate a home-and-away play-off.

THE WORLD OF PICTURES



Αναζητώντας την βασίλισσα. Ο Βυί Duy Nhat από το Βιετνάμ είναι από τους ελάχιστους στην χώρα του που μπορεί να προσελκύσει τις μέλισσες και να φορά μόνο ωτοασπίδες. Το μυστικό του; κρύβει την βασίλισσα πάνω του.



Σκελετός στο φως. Το τεράστιο έργο «Κοσμικός μαγνήτης» είναι ξαπλωμένο στο Forte Belvedere με φόντο την πανέμορφη Φλωρεντία. Αν βρεθείτε εκεί , επισκεφθείτε και την έκθεση «Ytalia. Energia, Pensiero, Bellezza», να το δείτε.



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Debt relief could mean creditors waiting for 123 bln euros

HELLENIC POST # 343



A Greek debt relief scenario that put back interest payments until 2048 would mean the nation's eurozone creditors deferring receipt of up to 123 billion euros, according to a forecast by Germany's Finance Ministry.

The ministry's calculations, which were contained in a letter to a member of parliament seen by Reuters on Friday, contemplated the various restructuring scenarios laid out by the eurozone bailout fund, the European Stability Mechanism (ESM).

"With such an interest deferral, it would de facto be a new loan with a volume that depends on the development of interest rates," the document said. "The estimated volume of the deferred interest up until 2048 would be around 118-123 billion euros."

The Finance Ministry declined to comment specifically on the paper. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says it cannot contribute loans to Greece's current bailout unless it gets assurances that its debt will be sustainable.

The Fund has estimated that the Greek economy will only grow by 1 percent per year on average and that Greece will return to a primary surplus of 1.5 percent from 2023 after five years at 3.5 percent.

Greece needs about 7 billion euros in loans from its 86-billion euro rescue package to repay debt maturing in July, but the disbursement hinges on its lenders' assessment of its bailout progress, the conclusion of the so-called second review.

Members of the Hellenic Post 343 of the American Legion who visited the Greek American Rehabilitation Center, Wheeling, IL and donated \$2,000.00. Post 343 holds their Annual Memorial Day Service at the site of their Veterans Monument at Elmwood Cemetery.



Plenty of grapes in the editor's vineyard..... for the squirrels



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Excellence and Pride at ACS Athens Alumni Award Dinner



Timothy Ananiadis, Suheil Sabbagh, Dr. Stefanos Gialamas, Dr. Anna Kaltsas, Dr. Scott Parazynski, Nicholas Karambelas

NEW YORK - One of Manhattan's most enchanting spaces was filled with appreciation, inspiration, and fellowship on April 30 when the American Community Schools (ACS) Athens hosted its first Alumni Awards Dinner at the Loeb Boathouse in Central Park.

Guests who learned about the school for the first time that day marveled at the affection among alumni and faculty for the Halandri-based school and for one another that was reflected in conversation at tables and on the video screens. A video and photo montage highlighted special moments - from its 1945 founding through the past 12 years under the presidency of Dr. Stefanos Gialamas - of the distinguished PreK-12 school based on American principles and whose language of instruction is English.

Pride was also the order of the day as two beloved alumni were honored. Dr. Scott Parazynski, a member of the US Astronaut Hall of Fame, received the Lifetime Achievement Award presented by Nick Karambelas, Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees in the USA.

Dr. Anna Kaltsas, an infectious disease specialist with teaching appointments at Weill Cornell Medical College and the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, was presented the Emerging Young Leader Award by Timothy Ananiadis, Vice Chairman of the Board in Greece.

Three concession contracts signed for Greek hydrocarbon utilization



The government has sent a positive message to the global oil industry just days after ExxonMobil and Total officials visited Athens. Environment and Energy Minister Giorgos Stathakis on Thursday signed concession agreements for the onshore blocks in Arta-

Preveza and the northwestern Peloponnese with Hellenic Petroleum (ELPE), and in Aitolocarnania with Energean Oil & Gas. These agreements had been pending since February 2016.

Stathakis announced that the government will soon also sign the concession contracts for the Ionian 2 offshore block with the Total-Edison-ELPE consortium and for the Ionian 10 block with ELPE.

He indirectly confirmed the interest of ExxonMobil and Total in Greek hydrocarbons: "We have also started a round of talks with international oil companies for other areas besides the Ionian Sea," he said.

He went on to announce that after the acquisition of new seismic data and the reprocessing of old data - a project that Hellenic Hydrocarbons Resources Management SA will undertake - the ministry intends to gradually announce tenders for other onshore and offshore blocks.

During the signing ceremony, the minister said the interest of oil multinationals in Greek hydrocarbon surveying constitutes a vote of confidence in the Greek economy, and added that the ministry is about to supplement the institutional framework on hydrocarbons by taking into account best practices of other states such as Cyprus. In this context, he said, an effort will be made to drastically reduce the time between the expression of interest and the signing of contracts. However, Stathakis noted, the ministry will not compromise its policy to adhere to all environmental rules in hydrocarbon surveying.

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GREEK NEWS

Kammenos takes jab at Turkey on trip to Cyprus

Defense Minister Panos Kammenos Friday denounced Turkey as “the beasts on the other side who murdered without even respecting the rules of war and continue to do so today.”

Kammenos, who is also the leader of right-wing populist junior coalition partner Independent Greeks (ANEL), made his remarks during a visit to Cyprus to attend a formal ceremony marking the handover of the remains of 17 Greek soldiers killed in 1974, when Turkey invaded the Mediterranean island.

“It is the duty of our nation that your sacrifice becomes a legacy for future generations,” Kammenos, said during a ceremony in Nicosia that was attended by Greek-Cypriot leaders and relatives of the victims.

The remains were identified after DNA analysis.



Court rules against indictment of former ELSTAT chief.

A council of appeals court judges Friday ruled against the indictment of the former head of Greece’s statistics agency ELSTAT, Andreas Georgiou, who has been accused of artificially inflating the size of Greece’s budget deficit in 2009.

It was the second time the council has ruled against indicting Georgiou, and two other former employees of ELSTAT, to stand trial on charges of making a false statement.

Criminal charges were first brought against Georgiou in 2013 after ELSTAT employees accused him and other ELSTAT officials of artificially inflating Greek budget figures in 2009 to force the country into an international bailout.

He denied the charges, which were dropped following an investigation. But a subsequent motion by a Supreme Court prosecutor called for him to face criminal charges after all. The council ruled against that motion again on Friday.

Greece seeks allies ahead of Eurogroup as IMF seen losing confidence



The government was still licking its wounds on Friday after the disappointment at Monday’s Eurogroup but was reportedly busy planning for the next gathering of eurozone finance ministers on June 15 aiming for the best possible deal.

With this in mind and in search of alternative proposals to break the deadlock with its international creditors, Athens is banking on the support of countries such as France and Italy which threw their weight behind Greek positions at Monday’s Eurogroup.

The participation of the International Monetary Fund and its demand for

Greece’s debt to be made sustainable remains a thorn in discussions as Germany and the IMF are at odds as to when and how this will happen.

However, it’s not just Germany’s positions on Greek debt that are holding back the Washington-based organization, but the lack of trust in the Greek government and its commitment to implement reforms, according to a high ranking IMF official cited by CNBC news channel on Friday.

“If we had a Greek [Emmanuel] -Macron, then we’d join [the Greek bailout] right now,” the official said.

Papademos attack probe reveals contradictory claims, security shortfalls



As the Greek Police’s counterterrorism department on Friday examined the remains of a letter bomb that detonated in the hands of former premier Lucas Papademos on Thursday, it remained unclear how the letter came into Papademos’s hands while there were indications of security lapses.

One of the two Bank of Greece employees who had been with Papademos when the bomb went off in his car told police on Friday that he had collected the envelope from the offices of the Academy of Athens, of which Papademos is president, and subsequently checked it in the x-ray machine of the central bank, which did not indicate anything suspicious.

Police sources, however, appeared uncertain about the account of the employee, who has been in charge of Papademos’s security detail for several years. One of the reasons for their doubts was the account of another former premier, Antonis Samaras, after he visited Papademos in hospital. Samaras said Papademos told him the envelope had been delivered to his home in Psychico, not to the Academy of Athens.

According to one police source, there were two suspicious envelopes – one delivered to Papademos’s home and one to the Academy of Athens. The source did not determine which of the two envelopes contained the bomb or what became of the other envelope.

A Bank of Greece source indicated on Friday that the envelope given to Papademos had first been passed through the x-ray machine in the Parliament building, but staff at the House rebuffed that claim.

Papademos’s condition was said to have improved on Friday but he remained in the hospital for precautionary reasons. The

two BoG employees who were hurt in the blast with him were to be discharged later.

Joe Biden: A Cyprus peace deal is ‘within reach’



A Cyprus deal could ‘help maximize the economic benefits of Cyprus’s offshore hydrocarbon reserves,’ says Joe Biden. A Cyprus deal could ‘help maximize the economic benefits of Cyprus’s offshore hydrocarbon reserves,’ says Joe Biden.

“The discovery of natural gas in Cyprus, Israel and Egypt, and the potential for discoveries in Greece and Lebanon can bring economic prosperity in the aforementioned countries, but also strengthen security in the broader region,” former US vice president Joe Biden has said.

In an interview with Kathimerini, Biden says that a solution to the Cyprus issue – an objective on which he has worked in the past – “lies within reach,” adding that reunification could maximize benefits from the Mediterranean island’s hydrocarbon reserves.

Biden, who will be in Athens for the Concordia Summit on June 6 and 7, talks about the efforts of the Obama administration to prevent Greece’s financial collapse, which, he deems, would have had “very serious long-term consequences” for Greece and the rest of Europe.

Finally, Biden criticizes the Trump administration for its controversial foreign policy moves. “Unfortunately, there are some who take security and prosperity in Europe for granted – questioning the value of our alliances, and indeed of the rules-based international order that the United States, Greece, and other countries painstakingly helped to build over many decades after the Second World War,” he says.

Summer calm before the storm

Even though Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras hailed last week’s Eurogroup deal as step in the right direction, Greece still has many rivers to cross as the agreement secured in Luxembourg fell far short of the goals set by the government.

First and foremost, Tsipras will have to deal with dissent emanating from SYRIZA MPs that had agreed to vote through a batch of tough legislation last month with the understanding that, in exchange, Greece will be granted debt relief and access to the European Central Bank’s quantitative easing (QE) program.

However, contrary to the government’s aims at the Eurogroup, debt relief talks were deferred to 2018, while Greece’s inclusion in the QE seems highly unlikely before that.

Although analysts believe that dissenters may not raise the ante during the summer – due to the tourist season and relief provided by the release of a bailout tranche – the government is expected to come under new pressure in the fall when Tsipras drafts the 2018 budget, which must stipulate a primary surplus of 3.5 percent.

Given the huge difficulties to achieve this target, Athens will find it hard to convince representatives of the country’s creditors that it will be able to achieve this target without the need for yet more measures.

The Greek PM will also struggle in the fall to clear the hurdles leading to the completion of the country’s third bailout review, which will also involve the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The review’s focus will be on streamlining the Greek public sector, from which SYRIZA has drawn a large chunk of votes in the past and would not like to rock the boat. Another sticking point could be Tsipras’s promise to bring back growth, when forecasts for 2017 see an anemic rate of 1.5 to 1.8 percent.

According to reports, the left-led coalition is banking on elections taking place in June 2018 at the earliest so that it avoids having to implement pension cuts in 2019, as it had agreed with creditors and passed into law.

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On the other had, some reports

Kushner 'discussed secret line to Moscow'



Donald Trump's son-in-law attempted to set up secret communications with Moscow a month after Mr Trump's election, US media say. Jared Kushner wanted to use Russian facilities to avoid US interception of discussions with Moscow, the Washington Post and New York Times said.

He is said to be under scrutiny by the FBI as part of its inquiry into Russian interference favouring Mr Trump's win. Reports in the US say investigators believe he has relevant information, but he is not necessarily suspected of a crime.

Imagine, for a moment, that Jared Kushner and Michael Flynn had succeeded in setting up secure communications with Russia that bypassed US government channels. The past few months might have turned out very differently. Mr Flynn's late December contact with Ambassador Sergei Kislyak to discuss the recently imposed punitive sanctions on Russia for meddling in the presidential election likely would not have been intercepted up by US intelligence surveillance. Without that intercept there would have been no urgent meeting between acting attorney general Sally Yates and Trump administration officials to discuss Mr Flynn's possible susceptibility to Russian blackmail.

There would have been no leaks to the US media that eventually exposed Mr Flynn as having been less than forthcoming about those conversations to the public and Vice-President Mike Pence. Mr Trump likely wouldn't have felt compelled to fire Flynn from his national security adviser job in mid-February - a move the president reportedly still regrets.

In this scenario Mr Flynn - who accepted money to advocate for Turkish interests last year and is currently under FBI investigation - could be in a top White House post to this very day. The most recent reports - which cited unnamed US officials as sources - said Mr Kushner had spoken with Moscow's Ambassador to the US, Sergei Kislyak, about setting up a back channel using Russian diplomatic facilities in America. The meeting was held in early December at Trump Tower in New York - Mr Trump's power base. According to both reports, Mr Trump's first national security adviser Michael Flynn was present at the meeting. The secret channel was supposed to be used to discuss Syria and other policy issues during the transition period between Mr Trump's election in November and his inauguration in January 2017.

The Washington Post says the proposal surprised Mr Kislyak as it meant Americans using Russian facilities at their diplomatic missions in the US. The New York Times said the line was never established. The US and Moscow have always had a hotline - popularly referred to as the Red Phone, even though it was not a telephone. This was meant to enable the two superpowers to avoid nuclear catastrophe during the Cold War.

Mr Kushner appears to be proposing a similar set-up. But what is unusual is that this would be a channel using Russian hardware. So this would have been outside official communications normally used by a team about to assume the leadership of the US - meaning US leaders were using Russian channels instead of their own.

And, significantly, these communications would not form part of documented US policy-making. Is the timing significant? Very. Remember that Russian allegations of interference to sway the election in favour of Donald Trump emerged in May 2016 with the first reports of hackers targeting the Democratic Party.

What followed were reports that US intelligence agencies had traced the breaches back to Russian hackers. In August, Wikileaks released 20,000 internal emails of members of the Democratic National Convention (DNC), stolen by the hackers.

Mr Trump's then campaign manager, Paul Manafort, resigned after being accused of accepting millions of dollars in cash for representing Russian interests in Ukraine and US. In October, the US intelligence community released a unanimous statement formally accusing Russia of being behind the DNC hacking. So, by December when the alleged Kushner-Flynn-Kislyak meeting was held, the Trump team would have had grounds to believe in the existence of an investigation into the Russian links.

Is Kushner accused of any wrongdoing? The Washington Post had already reported FBI investigators were focusing on meetings Mr Kushner held last year with Mr Kislyak, as well as a banker from Moscow, Sergei Gorkov. Mr Gorkov is the head of Vnesheconombank, which has been subject to sanctions imposed by the Obama administration in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea and its support for separatists in eastern Ukraine.

The bank is under the control of Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and other members of the government, and has been used to fund major projects such as the 2014 Winter Olympics in the southern Russian resort of Sochi. Kushner's lawyer said his client will cooperate with the investigation.

Could Trump be guilty of obstruction of justice?

By Joel Gunter BBC News,



Reports that Donald Trump asked former FBI director James Comey to shut down a federal investigation into former national security adviser Michael Flynn have added weight to a possible obstruction of justice case against the president, law professors say.

According to a New York Times account of a memo written by Mr Comey, Mr Trump told the FBI director during a private Oval Office meeting in February: "I hope you can see your way clear to letting this go, to letting Flynn go... He is a good guy. I hope you can let this go."

Allegations of obstruction of justice were first levelled in the Comey affair last week, when Mr Trump fired the FBI director and admitted he had taken the "thing with Trump and Russia" into account in his decision. But the case was clouded by a string of contradictory explanations from the White House.

"It was hard to make the obstruction of justice case with the sacking alone," said Alex Whiting, a Harvard Law professor and former federal prosecutor. "The president had clear legal authority and there were arguably proper, or at least other, reasons put forward for firing him. But with this development, that argument becomes much harder to make."

Mr Trump's apparent attempt to lean on Mr Comey to close the investigation was "very close to obstruction of justice", Mr Whiting said, "but still isn't conclusive". The White House disputed the Times report, claiming it was "not a truthful or accurate portrayal of the conversation".

A question of intent

Under the law, obstruction of justice is any interference with a judicial or congressional proceeding. It is commonly applied in cases where someone has tampered with evidence, intimidated a witness, or failed to report a crime, but the statute requires there to be a corrupt intent behind the action.

There are cases in which an official might legitimately request that prosecutors drop a case, in order for example to avoid the disclosure of classified information. Mr Trump's comments, and the context in which he said them, would have to be assessed for evidence of intent, said David Sklansky, a Stanford law professor. "This isn't a smoking gun on its own, but I'm not sure you can ever have a smoking gun when it comes to intent," he said. "You prove intent by putting together what someone said with circumstantial evidence and what we know about their actions."

"Circumstantially, the president has several times expressed dissatisfaction with the FBI's Russia investigation. Last week, after the White House said Mr Comey was fired because of his conduct in the Hillary Clinton email affair and not the Russia investigation, Trump appeared to reverse the story, telling NBC News: "And in fact, when I decided to just do it, I said to myself, I said, 'You know, this Russia thing with Trump and Russia is a made-up story'."

"The memo from Mr Comey seems to be consistent with the president sacking him and saying later that he had Russia in mind when he made the decision," said Michael Gerhardt, a law professor at University of North Carolina who testified at the Clinton impeachment hearings.

"It sounds now as if those events are connected, and that makes the whole situation more disturbing. Was the president using his unique office to suggest to the head of the FBI that he should stop an investigation?" The Comey memo shifted the legal burden towards the president to explain his actions, Mr Gerhardt said, and put a "heightened burden on Congress to investigate".

A route to impeachment

Obstruction of justice is a criminal offence, but criminal proceedings against the president are highly unlikely, said Mr Sklansky. "If there is going to be some kind of legal action against the president it will be an impeachment."

Of the three presidents who have faced impeachment proceedings, two have been accused of obstruction of justice: Richard Nixon in 1974 and Bill Clinton in 2000. Nixon resigned before he could be impeached. The Senate voted on Mr Clinton's impeachment over the Monica Lewinsky scandal but fell 17 votes short of removing him from office. The constitution states that for an impeachment, Congress must find that a president has committed "high crimes and misdemeanours". A successful impeachment requires a majority vote in the House and a two-thirds vote in the Senate, with a trial in-between. With both chambers currently controlled by the Republican party, on purely political grounds an impeachment of Mr Trump, as things stand, seems unlikely. "Right now this is a president behaving extraordinarily badly," she said. "But if it becomes clear that the president is trying to obstruct justice and Congress does nothing, that moves us towards a constitutional crisis."