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## The Soul

**Louis A. Palivos**

**Part IV**

**The Soul After Death: Life after Life**

<http://www.newsbomb.gr>



Over 4000 of *revealed* truth in the Holy Bible, the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, the life of the 12 Apostles, the life of the 70 Disciples and in the life of the God bearing fearing Fathers and Mothers of the faith, mankind has been *revealed* the truth on the soul after death, though, “through a glass darkly” I Cor. 13:12 .

The journey of the soul begins even before death.<sup>1</sup> The dying person sees what others do not see, that is, the other spiritual world. This other spiritual world has both angels and demons.

After death, the soul begins to see those spirits that it was inclined to in the physical world, that is, either toward the angels or toward the demons.

The soul for a few days is allowed by Almighty God to roam on the earth, with the angels, but on the third day it moves into another “sphere.”

On the third day the soul passes through a legion of evil spirits which obstruct its path. Holy Fathers and Mothers speak of 20 “toll-houses” or obstacles which test the sins of the person. Sts. John Klimacus and Athanasios taught that the “toll-booths” are after the moment of death when every demon is trying to get a person’s soul to apostatize, to hate God, to try to make a person’s soul cling to pride and arrogance, to stop from letting go of everything, so as to love God and save one-self.<sup>2</sup>

However, other Writers, Archbishop Lazar Puhalo, dispute the “toll-houses” as a “cancer,” “anti-scriptural,” “gnostic”; that the concept was not taught by the early Fathers, like St. Ephraim the Syrian; that the demons cannot prevent the soul from proceeding to Jesus Christ; that the demons do not have the power to tempt the soul; and that the Orthodox teaching on heaven, hell, redemption and the victory of Jesus Christ are put into question. Archbishop Puhalo was refuted by the Holy Synod of the Russian Church Abroad. Other Writers say the “toll-houses” are spiritual, a myth, neo-Gnostic or metaphorical.<sup>3</sup>

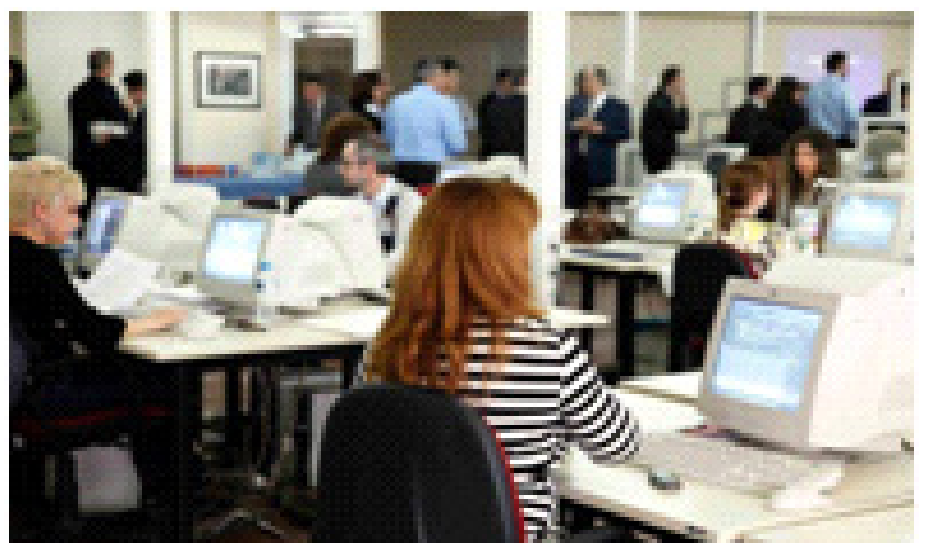
Assuming that the soul passes these toll-houses, for 37 more days, it may visit heaven or hell not knowing where it will remain.

After the 40 days, the soul finds itself either in the foretaste of joy and blessedness or in the fear of eternal torture.

( Continued p.2 )

ALEXIS PAPACHELAS

## The 'guards' are waiting



One of the biggest problems of this government is its managerial inadequacy. I am really struggling to think of an area where the government has achieved any success, or some important work.

From public transport to public broadcaster ERT, it is obvious that the only criteria in management are: a) if the managers are “our people” and, b) how many we can appoint. Nothing more, nothing less.

Today, the country is being run by a combination of “pink guards,” officials of the old PASOK, and friends and relatives.

The fact that the state is still standing is due to a few exceptions and, most importantly, to a backbone of some 10-15 percent of employees at each ministry who systematically and quietly carry out their work, burdened with a heavy and disproportionate load.

If these people were not there, the state would have collapsed long ago. Ministers who comprehend the reality on the ground find these people and rely on them, even if they disagree with them politically. The rest prefer to trust cousins and party members.

The issue is whether the situation will change when another government comes to power. The leader of the opposition knows all about the state’s shortcomings and is closer to the definition of a prime minister-manager.

However, the hordes of party executives, friends and relatives waiting to be appointed to hospital administrations, state organizations and other positions are terrified.

Even more terrifying is the need – deeply embedded in the culture of New Democracy and PASOK – to cater to clientele needs. Let’s not fool ourselves: No one can take on the deep state; no matter how many memorandums are passed, old habits won’t disappear.

The challenge is a big one. Can the parties that seek power commit not to appoint party officials to executive positions in the wider public sector? That they will revive the OpenGov initiative without any compromises?

But let’s say they do manage to tame their worst selves wearing an institutional straitjacket that will stop them from backtracking at the crucial moment.

Where exactly will the people who will make the difference be found? The right/left populism led to huge wage cuts for state executives. The salaries are a joke now.

Fear of the prosecutor looms as does the prospect an online lynching. In order for these people to contribute, they must be somehow fortified, so that decency is not considered a handicap in today’s jungle of public life.

If we don’t pull it off, then the “pink guards” will become blue and green, and we will continue recycling party habits stretching back decades.

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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.

# The Soul

**Louis A. Palivos**  
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( From p.)

Various Fathers and Mothers stated that on earth the living should be praying for those in repose so as to affect their condition. Those on earth offer prayers both public (Liturgy) and private, especially for those souls in hell. See *The Life of the Nun Athanasia and St. Theodora's Journey*, "The 20 Toll Houses," on YouTube. Also, *Orthodox after life: a man who returned from hell and repented*.

*Until the Last Judgment, the soul goes through a particular judgment awaiting the Last Judgment for eternity!*

The Holy Bible gives hints to the above, "That God is not a God of the dead but the living." Lk. 20:38. "Lazarus was taken by angels to Abraham's bosom," Lk.16:22. The parable of the foolish rich man, "Fool thou soul this night shall be required." Lk. 12:20. And at the end of the world, the Lord will send His angels to "separate the wicked from among the just." Matt. 13:49.

However, secular writers have touched upon this *issue of toll-houses, with either pleasant or frightful experiences of their patients*, not knowing the above truths, writers such as Dr. Kubler-Ross, Dr. Raymond A. Moody, and Drs. Osis and Haraldson.

A recent research was done at Hadassah University in Jerusalem, on 264 people, who gave details experiences of what the Researchers coined, "Life Review Experience", or "LRE". One wrote: "There is not a linear progression; there is lack of time limits... It was like being there for centuries. I was not in time/space so this question also feels impossible to answer.

"A moment, and a thousand years... both and neither. It all happened at once, or some experiences within my near-death experience were going on at the same time as others, though my human mind separates them into different events".

Another common feature were extremely emotional experiences - often from somebody else's point of view. One respondent said: "I could individually go into each person and I could feel the pain that they had in their life... "I was allowed to see that part of them and feel for myself what they felt".

Another said: 'I was seeing, feeling these things about him (my father), and he was sharing with me the things of his early childhood and how things were difficult for him'. Every person in the study said they were left with a new perspective on their life events and on significant people in their lives.

Researchers said that the phenomenon could be caused by the parts of the brain that store autobiographical memories like the prefrontal, medial temporal, and parietal cortices.<sup>4</sup>

A very powerful book written by an M.D. speaks to how he became a Christian based on the evidence of after death data. Dr. Maurice S. Rawlings', reposed, books are "To Hell and Back" and "Beyond Death's Door." See Dr. Rawling's video posted on You tube, "Dr Maurice Rawlings - NDE - To Hell and Back".

Dr. Rawlings was an extremely accomplished man and a self-professed atheist, that is, until he had a very unusual experience with a patient who complained of chest pains, and by direction of Dr. Rawlings, underwent a cardiovascular "stress test". While going through this "stress test" which required that the patient walk, jog, and then run on a treadmill, while the doctor records the rhythm of the heartbeat, Rawlings recalled that the patient had a cardiac arrest and dropped dead right in his office. As Dr. Rawlings described it, "instead of fibril-

lating (twitching without a beat), the heart just plain stopped. He crumpled to the floor, lifeless." As the body was going through a series of scattered muscle twitching and convulsions, his body was gradually turning blue. As this happened, Dr. Rawlings began another procedure. He found that the man's heart was completely blocked. Trying to bring the patient back to life, Dr. Rawlings attempted to install a pacemaker. After working with trying to install the pacemaker, and nurses around the patient doing all they can to help Dr. Rawlings revive him, Rawlings recalled that the patient began "coming to," and amidst this, this happened. According to Rawlings, "...whenever I would reach for instruments or otherwise interrupt my compression of his chest, the patient would again lose consciousness, roll his eyes upward, arch his back in mild convulsion, stop breathing, and die once more." So what makes this experience more different than any he has ever had? Rawlings explained "each time he regained a heartbeat and respiration, the patient screamed, "I am in hell!" He was terrified and pleaded with me to help him. I was scared to death. In fact this episode *literally* scared the hell out of me! It terrified me enough to write this book. He then issued a very strange plea: "Don't stop!" You see, the first thing most patients I resuscitate tell me, as soon as they recover consciousness, is "take your hands off my chest; you're hurting me! I am big and my method of external heart massage sometimes fractures ribs. But this patient was telling me, "Don't stop!" Rawlings continues on with his experience saying, "then I noticed a genuinely alarmed look on his face. He had a terrified look *worse* than the expression seen in death! This patient had a grotesque grimace expressing sheer horror! His pupils were dilated, and he was perspiring and trembling—he looked as if his hair was "on end." Then still another strange thing happened. He said, "don't you understand? I am in hell. Each time you quit, I go back to Hell! Don't let me go back to Hell!" Rawlings began being irritated by this man's behavior. He recounted that, "I dismissed his complaint and told him to keep his "hell" to himself. I remember telling him, "I'm busy. Don't bother me about your hell until I finish getting this pacemaker into place." Rawlings goes on "but the man was serious, and it finally occurred to me that he was *indeed* in trouble. He was in a panic like I had never seen before. As a result I started working feverishly and rapidly. By this time the patient had experienced three or four episodes of complete unconsciousness and clinical death from cessation of both heartbeat and breathing. After several death episodes he finally asked me, "how do I stay out of hell?" Immediately, Rawlings recalled that shards of what he was taught in Sunday school many, many years ago began rushing to his mind. Rawlings recounted that the patient asked Rawlings to pray for him, and Rawlings told him "what *nerve!* I am a doctor, not a preacher." So the patient continued to plea for Dr. Rawlings to pray for him, and so, from the back of his memory, Rawlings began praying something that sounded like this..."Lord Jesus, I ask you to keep me out of hell. Forgive my sins. I turn my life over to you. If I die, I want to go to heaven. If I live, I'll be 'on the hook' forever." It may have been a rough prayer, but it did something for the patient who did not want to return to Hell. That experience prompted Rawlings to go home, dust off his Bible, and read it. He wanted to know exactly what hell was supposed to be like. Amidst his researching of the Bible, Rawlings found that what he experienced scientifically was supported Scripturally. Before this episode, and with an atheistic frame of mind, Rawlings recorded that, "I had always dealt with death as a routine occurrence in my medical practice, regarding it as extinction with no need for remorse of apprehension." But then after this episode he said, "now I was convinced there was something about this life after death business after all. All of my concepts needed revision. I needed to find out more. It was like finding another piece of the puzzle that supports the truth of the Scriptures. I was discovering that the Bible was not merely a history book. Every word was turning out to be true. I decided I had better start reading it very closely." Dr. Rawlings became a Christian.<sup>5</sup> Dr. Rawlings became a gateway between science and the spirit world with his books and film documentaries.

The secular writers have written on "resuscitation", "near death experience", "consciousness", "beings of light", "meeting others", "out of body experiences", "spirit beings", "a super light" and deceiving manifestations of "peace and tranquility" so as not to fear death or Judgment.

But, according to the Holy Scripture, someday after death, "we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ." Rom. 14:10 and the "Book of Remembrance," Mal. 3:16, the "Book of Life," Rev. 20:15, and the "Books" of "Works," Rev. 20:12-13, shall be opened!

Should you wish to read further, read St. Ephraim the Syrian, St. Athanasios the Great, St. Macarius the Great, St. Gregory the Great, St. John Damascene, St. Basil the Great, St. Mark of Ephesus, Fr. Seraphim Rose's book, "The Soul After Death" and Heirotheos' ch., *The Taxing of the Soul, in Life After Death*.

Let us not lose our eternal souls. Repent. There is Life after Life for Eternity!

1. Father Seraphim Rose, reposed, *The Soul After Death*, Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1998.
2. Father Thomas Hopko, reposed, *Life after Death. Mysteries beyond the Grave*, a talk given on Oct. 1999, Brisbane, Australia.
3. V. Rev. Dr. Michael Azkoul and Irene Matta, M.Th., *The Toll House Myth: New Age Gnosticism of Fr. Seraphim Rose*, Synaxis Press, Dewdney, B.C., Canada.
4. Laura Donnelly, *Your life really does flash before your eyes before you die*, study suggests, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/01/29/life-really-does-flash-eyes-die-study-suggests/>.
5. Rob W. Case, <http://makingsense.proboards.com/thread/208/dr-maurice-rawlings-reality>.

**ΓΙΑ ΛΟΓΟΥΣ ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΚΟΥΣ ΠΕΡΙΚΟΨΑΜΕ  
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ΜΕΧΡΙ ΤΙΣ 11.**



# The agreement on the name could get 200 votes



There was information, speculation or leaks – it does not matter which – that the European Commission asked that the majority required for the Greek Parliament to ratify any agreement signed with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) be increased to 180 votes – that is with the agreement of three-fifths of the deputies.

Whether or not this was indeed requested – officially or

behind the scenes, only from the government or from the opposition too – it would be good to focus on the essence and not on petty calculations that each political party might be making with respect to the issue.

Europeans and others who support an agreement that normalizes the situation in the Balkans want it to include binding elements that will ensure its viability and effectiveness. In this context, Greece is demanding – and rightly so – that FYROM change its constitution.

It also wants the approval of the UN to make the deal more binding.

It is true that if it is ratified by a marginal majority in the Greek Parliament it will not be underpinned by the same spirit of commitment in the long run. This is where direct or indirect pressure is being put on the opposition to support the deal.

It is a fact that, apart from the two respective governments in Greece and FYROM, opposition parties also have a role and responsibilities, as exponents of a significant section of the two peoples, and as potential future governments.

As far as Greece is concerned, New Democracy leader Kyriakos Mitsotakis recognizes the “window of opportunity,” but cannot be called upon to bear the political cost alone.

However, one can think of “creative” ways of helping to ensure a solution with ND’s support without having the latter pay an unfairly high price.

If the agreement provides for a transitional period and depends on internal processes in FYROM – elections and/or a referendum linking the changes in the constitution with NATO and EU membership – then the non-acceptance of the agreement by New Democracy at that stage could work as a safeguard for the Greek side, without hindering the path to a solution.

The main opposition could pledge to vote for the deal when FYROM changes its constitution in the transitional period – in which case all conditions set by Athens would have been fully met – either as a government or as an opposition party. That process could be part of the interim agreement.

If that were to happen the majority in the Greek Parliament in the second vote could even exceed 200 votes, satisfying not only the needs of the two countries involved but also every sincere third party.

# IMF's Thomsen urges swift solution on Greek debt, says still time for Fund to join program



In comments on Tuesday, the director of the International Monetary Fund's European department called for a swift agreement regarding Greece's debt and said there was still time for the IMF to join the country's third bailout before it expires in August.

Presenting the IMF's report on the European economy, Thomsen said there was still time to active a debt relief plan for Greece.

"Time is running out but if there is agreement at the Eurogroup meeting in May then there will be enough time for us to active the program and for it to coincide with the remainder of the ESM program which will expire in August," he said. Thomsen said that although there were "some different assessments of growth," differences have "narrowed."

He added that officials were examining mechanism for providing more debt relief if growth is weaker than European officials predict. On Greek debt, he said there has been progress towards an agreement but that some aspects of the issue remain unresolved and that he hopes for an agreement soon."

# Erdogan: Turkey could return Greek soldiers if 'Turkey's 8' are extradited



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said his country will consider returning the two Greek soldiers who have been detained in Turkey if Greece extradites the eight Turkish servicemen who sought protection in the country after the foiled coup attempt in July 2016, AFP reported.

This is the first time Erdogan directly links the two cases, verifying fears they could be used as a bargaining chip. "They (Greece) ask us to give back the Greek soldiers and we told them 'if you make such a demand, you should first give us FETO soldiers involved in a coup against our state'," Erdogan reportedly said in a live interview with NTV television, according to AFP.

"If they are handed to us, we will consider" the situation on Greek soldiers, he said. FETO refers to a movement led by US-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen who Ankara accuses being behind the failed coup attempt.

Turkish authorities have kept the Greek servicemen in pre-trial detention in a prison in Edirne since early March after they entered Turkish territory by accident. No official charges have been filed against them.

In the same interview, Erdogan called for peace with Greece, according to a report by the state-run Anadolu agency.

"We need peace now. Besides, our peace with you is like no other," Erdogan was quoted as saying on Turkey's NTV channel.

He also reportedly referred to Greece's Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras as a "young, dynamic" leader with a desire "to take a new step." He was quoted as saying he believed President Prokopis Pavlopoulos was "in the same spirit."

In a report earlier Saturday, Anadolu said Turkish Justice Minister Abdulhamit Gul had written to his Greek counterpart Stavros Kontonis saying "Greece is becoming a gathering place for criminals" after a court ruling releasing one of eight Turkish servicemen seeking asylum in Greece.

# ‘Couldn’t have gone better,’



A few hours after Greece's Olympic shooting champion Anna Korakaki won the gold medal in the 10 metre air pistol competition at the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Rifle/Pistol 2018, held in Fort Benning, in the United States, she spoke about her achievement and in setting a world record.

"Now I can say the tension is gone and I am enjoying it. It couldn't have gone better," she said.

"It was above my expectations. The truth is, I was better during training [now] than I was before the Olympic Games in Rio, so it would have been a shame not to have won a medal. But what made me happier was the world record," she added.

Korakaki achieved a world record with 578 points during the qualifying round and 243.7 points in the final. She was followed by Serbia's Zorana Arunovic and Thailand's Pim-On Klaisuban who came in third.

The athlete, who won bronze in the same event at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and gold in the 25m pistol, will be travelling to Munich, Germany on May 21 for the last game of the World Cup.

"It will be the most difficult of all. All top shooters are participating. My aim is to reach the finals," she said.



# Jerusalem embassy: Why Trump's move was not about peace

By Barbara Plett



"Our greatest hope is for peace." Those were the words of Donald Trump in a recorded message at the Jerusalem ceremony. But the opening line in White House talking points cut straight to the top priority: "President Donald J Trump keeps his promise."

Mr Trump decided to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem because he likes to keep campaign promises made to his base. He also likes to make big bold historic moves, especially if that means delivering where his predecessors did not. So far so good on the principles of Trumpian foreign policy.

In this case, his base also lobbied hard for the move. That included right-wing American Jews whose message was amplified by the conservative orthodox Jews dominating Mr Trump's inner circle. It also included evangelicals whose voice was amplified by the devout Christian in the White House, Vice-President Mike Pence.

"God decided Jerusalem was the capital of Israel more than 3,000 years ago during the time of King David," I was told by Dallas evangelical pastor Robert Jeffress, who cited Biblical history. He and another leading voice in the pro-Israel part of the Christian world delivered prayers at the opening ceremony.

"The United States remains fully committed to facilitating a lasting peace agreement," Mr Trump also said in his recorded message. He has declared an interest in solving the "toughest deal of all" and, despite the outrage over Jerusalem, the White House is still intent on rolling out a detailed initiative of a settlement it thinks is achievable. Its authors - Mr Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and his lawyer Jason Greenblatt - concluded that shaking up the status quo could help their efforts by giving the Palestinians a dose of reality, says former Mid-East negotiator Aaron David Miller.

They also thought the Palestinians would eventually rally and resume contact after their initial shock and anger, according to the New York Times. So far they have not. And the Palestinian deaths in Gaza make that prospect even less likely.

The administration argues it is simply recognising the obvious in accepting Jerusalem as Israel's capital and that the city's final boundaries can still be determined in negotiations.

But confusingly, Mr Trump has also said he has taken the issue "off the table". And he has failed to say anything about Palestinian claims to East Jerusalem. So whatever the intent, he appears to have sided with Israel on one of the most volatile issues in the peace process and prejudiced the final outcome of any talks.

## Does this mean an explosion?

The Trump administration has also sided with Israel in its response to the deadly violence on the Gaza border. The White House accused Gaza's Hamas leaders of "intentionally and cynically" provoking Israel in an attempt at "gruesome propaganda" but, unlike European countries, it did not call on the army to exercise restraint.

Hamas has been directing the weeks-long protest campaign by Palestinians frustrated with Israel's economic blockade of Gaza. Analysts said it was a chance for the militant Islamist movement to shift the blame for its own poor performance in government. The question now is whether the hundreds of casualties will trigger an uprising, or intifada, that spreads to the West Bank.

The Jerusalem decision itself did not do so and there are many reasons why the Gaza violence may not. That includes divisions in the Palestinian leadership and the high cost for Palestinians of a return to sustained conflict. But it is a volatile situation fuelled by a sense of Palestinian hopelessness that could lead to further escalation.

The Israelis have not annexed the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority continues security co-operation, in effect helping Israel police its own people.

The framework is held up by an American mediator that is seen by many as somewhat credible, if not neutral.

Every previous US administration has been pro-Israel but made some effort to understand and respond to the Palestinian narrative, says Mr Miller.

This one is so "deeply ensconced" in the Israeli narrative it has crossed a red line, he says.

If so, it will be difficult for it to keep propping up the framework, with unpredictable results.

It is true that key Arab countries seem more willing to sanction a settlement less favourable to the Palestinians than before because they want Israel as an ally against Iran.

But Mr Trump's decision on Jerusalem, and Israel's heavy-handed approach in Gaza, reduces their room for manoeuvre.

# Cafe mentality

MARIA KATSOUNAKI



There was nothing in the latest report from the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) regarding Greek education that came as a surprise, that we didn't know from personal experience or has been widely debated for years on end. Yet there was one finding that was admittedly very impressive: 99 percent of high school seniors attend evening classes at private cramming schools or have private tutorials, or both.

In other respects, the specter of evaluations for teachers and for schools, which the ruling leftist SYRIZA party stubbornly rejects, has returned to the fore. The report also highlighted the absence of initiatives to link the country's public universities to the job market, while also stressing the fact that Greek education continues to focus more on teaching a curriculum than in developing skills.

What stands out most about the report, however, is that we are talking about the same old problems yet again, and they only seem to be getting worse, drawing attention to the lack of continuity in public administration and contempt of education ministers for the work done by their predecessors. Every new minister who steps into the post seems to come with his or her own fixed ideas regarding the needs of the Greek education system, and is unwilling to consider anything else. Regardless of whether reforms and interventions are genuinely intended to initiate change or simply to make a positive public relations impression, the system will swallow them and spit them out. But in most cases, ministers simply go through the motions as they actually spend their time servicing unionist demands and torpedoing any essential reform effort.

Here's a question: How are children educated in this country, not just in terms of knowledge but also in the values and mentality that education cultivates?

Here's a case in point: A group of young men hanging out and drinking coffee on a remote Aegean island are suddenly seized by the idea of taking a speedboat out to a bunch of islets to take selfies as they plant Greek flags on them. What's to stop them? Instinct, common sense, knowledge, an ability to interpret the circumstances, an understanding of reality (and which one?), society, politics?

And here's an answer: This case is no exception. Generations of Greeks have been more influenced by developments over a glass of cold frappe than at their desk. Should we ban frappe then? Of course not. But we should at least ponder the fact that allowing people not to think of the consequences makes them lazy and lackadaisical, that conversation without a meaningful debate cultivates populism of all kinds, that abandoning public education to its fate paves the way for aggressive ignorance.

## Zaev says deal closer than ever as name talks to resume



A few days before talks resume between officials from Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) about the latter's officials name, FYROM premier Zoran Zaev has said that Athens and Skopje have never been closer to a solution.

"I believe the conditions have never been better for us to achieve a comprehensive and lasting agreement," Zaev told Agence France-Presse, adding however that failure to reach a deal would not be "the end of the world."

Talks are to resume on Wednesday amid concerns about a loss of momentum in a United Nations-mediated drive to settle the name dispute between Greece and FYROM.

Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias and his FYROM counterpart Nikola Dimitrov will also meet with United Nations mediator Matthew Nimetz in Vienna. Key points of contention are FYROM's constitution and the scope of use of its new name.

Last week Kotzias said there was not enough time for FYROM to join NATO at the alliance's summit in July, chiefly because Skopje has said that it intends to put any deal reached to a referendum.



# Tsakalotos cuts expectations within ruling party

Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos poured cold water on Thursday on governing party officials' high expectations for a post-program emancipation from obligations such as reducing pensions as of January 2019 and achieving high primary surpluses of 3.5 percent of gross domestic product by making it clear that such prospects are impossible and the priority at the moment lies in completing the program.



"The Greek government's position is that this is not a good time for such a discussion," he said when asked about the possibility of avoiding the pension cuts, leaving no scope for doubt about the application of the measure, which has also been incorporated into the European Commission forecasts issued yesterday.

Tsakalotos, who recently caused some discontent in his party after revealing that the post-program surveillance would entail three to four visits per year by the country's creditors, added that the government currently has its eyes firmly fixed on the target, which is the completion of the fourth bailout review, the deal on the post-program monitoring and a solution to the debt issue.

On the possibility of trimming the primary surplus target, he responded, "We will see in the coming years," depending also on the course of negotiations regarding the future of Europe with less austerity.

He even corroborated the International Monetary Fund on the issue of pensions, saying that they should not substitute the welfare state. Grandmothers aren't supposed to use their pensions to pay their children's rent, he said, adding that Greece cannot spend almost the same on pensions as the most advanced countries, without leaving anything in the coffers for social expenditure.

The minister admitted that Germany wants the easing of the Greek national debt to be associated with terms and conditions, which runs counter to the intentions of all of the country's creditors, including the IMF. In any case, he stated, the debt-easing measures will turn Greece from an excessively overindebted country to a normally overindebted country.

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# Gaza blast targets Palestinian PM Hamdallah's convoy



Rami Hamdallah attended a ceremony in Gaza after the explosion

Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah has escaped unharmed after an explosion targeted his convoy in Gaza. No group has said it carried out the attack, which injured several guards.

The Palestinian Authority said it was an assassination attempt and that it held the militant Hamas movement, which dominates Gaza, responsible. Hamas said the attack was an attempt to damage Gaza's security and "deal a blow to efforts to finalise reconciliation" between the main Palestinian factions. Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank have been ruled separately since a rift between Hamas and President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah faction erupted in violence in 2007.

Hamas won parliamentary elections in the occupied territories the previous year, and reinforced its power in Gaza after ousting Fatah from the enclave.

Last October, the rivals signed a reconciliation deal that was meant to see Hamas hand over administrative control of Gaza to the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority. But disputes have delayed the deal's full implementation.

A Palestinian security official said Mr Hamdallah and the head of intelligence, Majed Faraj, appeared to have been targeted by a roadside bomb.

The explosion damaged three cars in their convoy, which had just entered Gaza through the Erez Crossing with Israel.

Several security guards were hurt by the blast, which left a crater in the tarmac.

Image copyright Reuters

Image caption One of the vehicles in the convoy appeared to have its windows blown out by the blast

Shortly afterwards, Mr Hamdallah spoke at the opening of a wastewater treatment plant in Gaza and pledged to continue reconciliation efforts.

"The explosion will not stop us from completing the national reconciliation and will not stop us from coming to Gaza," he said in a televised speech.

Mr Hamdallah later returned to the West Bank.

President Abbas called the attack "a desperate attempt that serves the interest of those who want at this critical period to liquidate the Palestinian cause and to deny the Palestinian people their right to achieve freedom and independence".

Image copyright Reuters

Image caption The explosion in the Beit Hanoun area left a crater in the ground Mr Faraj said: "It is too early to accuse anyone, but those who are in charge shoulder the full responsibility for security on the ground."

Hamas condemned what it called an "ugly crime" and said it had launched an investigation.

Spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said it believed the attack was carried out by the same people who last year assassinated Mazen Fuqaha, a commander of Hamas' military wing, and attempted to assassinate Maj Gen Tawfiq Abu Naim, the head of Gaza's internal security forces.

The UN Special Co-ordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay



Mladenov, also condemned the attack, saying it had to be promptly investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice.

"Until the legitimate Palestinian Authority is fully empowered in Gaza, Hamas has the responsibility to ensure that the government is able to carry out its work in the strip without fear of intimidation, harassment and violence," he added.

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Early elections in Turkey give Greece the jitters



Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s decision to call for snap elections on June 24 is of direct consequence to Greece, more than at any other time, as the Turkish president increasingly espouses a nationalist stance and invests in the political gains this brings him.

His convergence with the far-right Nationalist Movement Party of Devlet Bahceli confirms that this explosion of nationalist fervor is a strategic decision made by Erdogan. There is good reason why Athens and Nicosia are troubled by the extreme stance he has adopted in recent months, which is not restricted to rhetoric but is also reflected in the military operation he initiated in Syria, as well as in the aggressive behavior in the Aegean and toward Cyprus. More so as a pre-election period offers itself for nationalist posturing and public proclamations, and also moves of exaggerated patriotism by both the government and the opposition.

The stance that has so far been adopted by the Kemalist opposition – which often raps Erdogan for being too soft toward Athens and accuses him of “giving up” too many Aegean islands to Greece – is exacerbating the situation and confirms the fears of the Greek and Cypriot leaderships.

Regardless of whether all this is for domestic consumption – as Erdogan sees it strengthening him politically – or whether the Turkish leader truly believes that Turkey is a regional superpower that is “trapped” in the confines of its present borders because of past international treaties that do not correspond to the “borders of his heart” and thus need to be revised or updated, this outbreak of nationalism is creating an extremely dangerous situation in the Aegean. It is telling that even third countries, the United States among them, are publicly voicing concern over the danger of an “accident.”

On the other hand, one could also argue that if the elections were to take place on November 3, 2019, as originally planned, the situation could become even more perilous in that this spike in tensions, in the Aegean as well as in Cyprus’s exclusive economic zone, would have extended over a full 18 months.

In either case, Greece’s only reaction to the volatile environment that will take shape during the pre-election period in Turkey can be none other than keeping the international community briefed on all developments, maintaining close cooperation with its partners and allies abroad, and, on the domestic scene, keeping the armed forces in a state of operational readiness, while the political leadership must behave in a calm and responsible manner.

Greece busts cancer drug theft gang, 21 arrests include doctors

Greece has broken up a criminal gang that stole cancer drugs from hospitals and smuggled them to other European countries for resale at a premium, potentially

depriving patients of life-saving medicine, police said on Friday.

Twenty-one people aged between 22 and 70 have been arrested, among them doctors and nurses, according to the police.

They are suspected of using forged prescriptions to get hold of the drugs which they then sent to warehouses in Italy, Germany and Switzerland where they were sold at a big mark-up.

The nature of the crime suggested "particular contempt for society", police spokesman Theodoros Chronopoulos said. "They were guided by nothing but profit."



Most cancer drugs are available in Greece only through state hospitals because of their relatively high cost, and those are subsidized by the state.

The gang is believed to have been active since 2013, the peak of a debt crisis that sapped Greece’s economic output and slashed spending in vital sectors including healthcare.

Police said gang members would forge prescriptions for contrived medical conditions, and they were also investigating whether any bona fide cancer patients were short-charged by getting smaller quantities of medication than prescribed.

Once shipped to other countries, the drugs would be sold at more than double the price to a regular clientele, police said.

The value of the drugs sent abroad was estimated at 25 million euros, Chronopoulos said, and the damage to the state was at least 13.7 million euros.

The gang had also set up a pharmacy to export the medicine, produce fake receipts and find steady customers, police said. [Reuters]

Protests greet prime minister on Lesbos



During his visit on Thursday to Lesbos, which was marred by clashes between demonstrators and riot police during protests over the government’s and the European Union’s migration policy, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras acknowledged that mistakes have been made with regard to the refugee crisis.

“Mistakes have been made and there are [infrastructure] shortages,” he said while also seeking to attribute the rallies which drew some 2,500 protesters to “those that aim to create a cli-

mate of terror.”

Speaking at the Regional Development Conference of the Northern Aegean, Tsipras took a swipe at the protesters for not attending the event to voice their concerns. “If they were here we would listen carefully but would ask them to make proposals,” he said, adding that those who did not come to the event “have no solutions to offer.”

“They chose the road of tension in an environment already burdened by three years of an international refugee crisis,” he said at the conference, which he said was aimed at boosting economic prospects and quality of life on the islands.

Strikes brought Lesbos to a grinding halt on Thursday in protest at the 2016 EU-Turkey agreement which stipulated that migrants and refugees arriving on the island will be deported back to Turkey unless they are granted asylum in Greece.

However, thousands have been stranded on the eastern Aegean island where they live in overcrowded and squalid conditions.

Hundreds of people, some waving black flags, chanted slogans in solidarity with migrants but were blocked by police from approaching government officials.

Earlier in the day, on a visit to neighboring Lemnos, Tsipras sought to send a message of Greek determination to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan amid a spike in bilateral tensions.

“Our primary duty is security and protecting our borders and territorial integrity,” he said. “Particularly today in a period of destabilization with a neighbor who often resorts to acts of provocation without realizing that they do not lead anywhere, only deadlock.”

Greece will continue to be “a stabilizing force” in the broader region, he said.

Ankara wants ‘to try new way’ to resolve Cyprus issue

Turkey believes that “it is time to try a new way” to resolve the decades-long Cyprus division, the country’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Hami Aksoy said

on Thursday, commenting on the prospects of a resumption of negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations.

Aksoy didn’t provide details on



what this “new way” could be; however, he stated that unifying the island as a federation may not be possible based on the “mind-set” of Greek Cypriots.

He described talks between the two sides as a process that has continued for 50 years. “However, it has become a vicious cycle and no outcome has been achieved,” he said.

Aksoy was essentially following the line of Turkish-Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci, who accused Greek Cypriots of invoking “nonexistent” documents, namely that dated July 4, 2017, which describes UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres’s framework for the talks.

Yacht Show held in Piraeus

The 17th East Med Yacht Show began on Thursday, presenting a fleet of professional yachts at Zea Marina, near the port city of Piraeus, aiming to promote Greek sea tourism.

“With the East Med Show, we show that shipping and tourism are two key pillars for the Greek economy and the future is bright for sea tourism,” Antonis Stelliatis, president of the Hellenic Professional Yacht Owners Association, told Xinhua.

Visitors can explore a wide variety of professional Greek boats, including 20-meter high-speed boats, catamarans, sailing yachts, traditional boats and mega yachts of 50-60 meters.

The event, which concludes tomorrow, aims to boost competitiveness, upgrade the services leisure boats offer and improve Greece’s position in the global tourism market. [Xinhua]

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# The compelling case for working a lot less



Mastering 'active rest' is far harder than it looks, but there are good reasons why we should keep working at it.

When I moved to Rome from Washington, DC, one sight struck me more than any ancient column or grand basilica: people doing nothing. By law, every European Union country has at least four weeks of paid holiday, and in Italy there are 10 additional public holidays.

Even so, the apparent belief in balancing hard work with *il dolce far niente*, the sweetness of doing nothing, always struck me. After all, doing nothing appears to be the opposite of being productive. And productivity, whether creative, intellectual or industrial, is the ultimate use of our time. But as we fill our days with more and more 'doing', many of us are finding that non-stop activity isn't the apotheosis of productivity. It is its adversary.

Researchers are learning that it doesn't just mean that the work we produce at the end of a 14-hour day is of worse quality than when we're fresh. This pattern of working also undermines our creativity and our cognition. Over time, it can make us feel physically sick – and even, ironically, as if we have no purpose.

The brain is very much like a muscle in this respect. Set up the wrong conditions through constant work and we can accomplish little. Set up the right conditions and there is probably little we can't do. Many of us, though, tend to think of our brains not as muscles, but as a computer: a machine capable of constant work. Not only is that untrue, but pushing ourselves to work for hours without a break can be harmful, some experts say.

The idea that you can indefinitely stretch out your deep focus and productivity time to these arbitrary limits is really wrong. It's self-defeating. One study found businessmen who took fewer holidays in midlife were more likely to die earlier and have worse health in old age. One meta-analysis found that long working hours increased the risk of coronary heart disease by 40% – almost as much as smoking (50%). Another found that people who worked long hours had a significantly higher risk of stroke, while people who worked more than 11 hours a day were almost 2.5 times more likely to have a major depressive episode than those who worked seven to eight. In Japan, this has led to the disturbing trend of *karoshi*, or death by overwork.

## Productivity provenance

It's easy to think that efficiency and productivity is an entirely new obsession. But philosopher Bertrand Russell would have disagreed. "It will be said that while a little leisure is pleasant, men would not know how to fill their days if they had only four hours' work out of the 24," Russell wrote in 1932. That said, some of the world's most creative, productive people realised the importance of doing less. They had a strong work ethic – but also remained dedicated to rest and play. Even US founding father, Benjamin Franklin, a model of industriousness, devoted large swathes of his time to being idle. Every day he had a two-hour lunch break, free evenings and a full night's sleep. Instead of working non-stop at his career as a printer, which paid the bills, he spent "huge amounts of time" on hobbies and socialising. "In fact, the very interests that took him away from his primary profession led to so many of the wonderful things he's known for, like inventing the Franklin stove and the lightning rod," writes Davis.

Even on a global level, there is no clear correlation between a country's productivity and average working hour. As for Italy, that home of *il dolce far niente*? With an average 35.5-hour work week, it produces almost 40% more per hour than Turkey, where people work an average of 47.9 hours per week. It even edges the United Kingdom, where people work 36.5 hours.

The reason we have eight-hour work days at all was because companies found that cutting employees' hours had the reverse effect they expected: it upped their productivity. During the Industrial Revolution, 10-to-16-hour days were normal. Ford was the first company to experiment with an eight-hour day – and found its workers were more productive not only per hour, but overall. Within two years, their profit margins doubled.

But 'rest', as some researchers point out, isn't necessarily the best word for what we're doing when we think we're doing nothing. The part of the brain that activates when you're doing 'nothing', known as the default-mode network (DMN), plays a crucial role in memory consolidation and envisioning the future. "It helps you recognise the deeper importance of situations. It helps you make meaning out of things. Perhaps most importantly of all, if we don't take time to turn our attention inward, we lose a crucial element of happiness. But as anyone who has tried meditation knows, doing nothing is surprisingly difficult. How many of us, after 30 seconds of downtime, reach for our phones? Another highly effective method of repairing the damage is meditation: as little as a week of practice for subjects who never meditated before, or a single session for experienced practitioners, can improve creativity, mood, memory and focus. Time out.

Whether it's walking away from your desk for 15 minutes or logging out of your inbox for the night.

IAN BREMMER

# An increasingly divided world

Workers everywhere fear lost jobs and wages. Citizens fear new faces crossing borders, and terrorists and criminals who kill for reasons no one can understand. They fear that government cannot or will not protect them.



Then the call for help is answered. Populists like Donald Trump and right-wing politicians challenging establishment politics in Europe have a gift for drawing boundaries. They offer a vision of separation, of "us vs. them," of the citi-

zen fighting for his rights and protections against those who would steal them. Depending on the country, "them" may mean rich or poor people, foreigners or minority groups, politicians, bankers, or journalists. The populists are speaking to people who fear they are losing their sense of security and standard of living, and that their nations are losing their identities.

There's a larger crisis coming. The storms creating turmoil in the US and Europe – including technological change in the workplace and a deepening sense of grievance at income inequality – are now crossing into the developing world, where governments and institutions aren't ready. Developing countries are especially vulnerable, because their institutions and social safety nets aren't as strong as in wealthier countries. They face an even wider gap between rich and poor. They are less well-prepared for technological change.

Successful emerging-market countries follow a similar pattern of development. They begin as poor countries with large numbers of people living in the countryside. The young begin moving toward cities, where they hope to earn higher wages. They arrive ready to work, and this sudden surge of inexpensive labor attracts manufacturers who own factories in countries where workers are more highly paid. Word of new jobs reaches rural areas, creating an even bigger wave of young people headed for the cities. This story has played out hundreds of millions of times in China, India, and across Southeast Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America.

The next stage of development begins as these once-poor workers demand higher wages and better working conditions. Consumer classes appear in countries that have never had them. Higher pay makes the country less attractive for foreign companies, but those with capable, reform-minded governments can adapt. New technologies—purchased, invented, or stolen—allow them more productivity from each worker and more sophisticated, higher-value-added goods and services that push wages still higher. A middle class is born.

But the virtuous circle that depends on good demographics, labor mobility, economic growth, and political reform is beginning to break down. Technological change in the workplace, even on a limited scale, will sharply reduce the low-wage advantage that helps poor countries and poor people climb the ladder.

The increasing automation of the workplace, advances in machine learning, and the broad introduction into the economy of new forms of artificial intelligence will ensure that jobs of the future require ever higher levels of education and training. Those who can pay will get the education, and those with the knowledge and skill set will have opportunities for good-paying jobs. Those who lack these things face a dark future.

As difficult as this transition may be in the US and Europe, it will be much tougher on emerging countries. If automation reduces wages in developing countries, it may become impossible for workers to gain the education needed to succeed in a world where advanced AI generates a bigger share of economic growth. Lower growth means less government revenue—and, therefore, less money to spend for education and services, for infrastructure, and for all the other things that middle classes expect from government. The virtuous circle becomes a vicious circle.

It's too soon to know whether the tech revolution will kill more jobs than it creates. But as in the rich countries, we know the new jobs will be very different from the old ones, that education and training for these new forms of work will make new demands on workers, and that some people won't make the leap from the old world to the new.

Where do all those energetic, ambitious young people go? The youth bulge we see in many developing countries can move from economic advantage to political threat as their path out of poverty is blocked. If they never join the active workforce, they will never have access to the education and training needed to earn twenty-first-century jobs, and they know their children will fare no better. Those able to keep their jobs may discover they must work for less pay and fewer (if any) benefits. It's an open question where those who lose from this next wave of change will declare their political allegiance – or whether they will declare war on the entire system.

The result may be a full reversal of the world's most important story of the last fifty years: the wealth convergence between rich and poor countries. It is the wealthy countries that have access to the game-defining technologies, the education systems that prepare citizens to adapt to new economic and social realities, the resources to spend on retraining workers, and the strong social safety nets to cushion the blows inflicted by change. That may become the biggest story of our time.

\* Ian Bremmer is the president of Eurasia Group and author of the forthcoming book "Us vs. Them: The Failure of Globalism."