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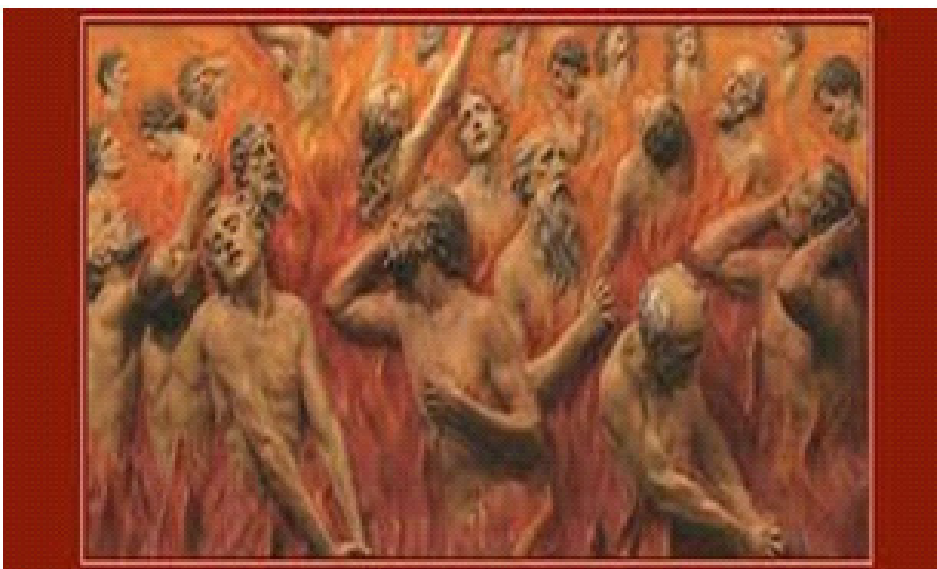
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What is Hades or Hell?

Louis A. Palivos



Very descriptive words are used in the New Testament to describe Hell, “Everlasting punishment,” Matt. 25:46; “Everlasting fire,” Matt. 25:41; “Outer darkness,” Matt. 25:30; “Hell (Gehenna) fire,” Matt. 5:22; “Whipping and gnashing of teeth,” Lk.13:28 and “Fear involves torment,” I Jn. 4:18. Also, Hades is referenced to as Gehenna, (Hebrew, *Gç-Hinnôm*) (Greek, Ἅϊιά), the place of fire, in Jerusalem, a garbage dump which burned continuously with fire and drew worms, or Tartarus, Greek, Ὠϊότάρω, is the dungeon for torment and suffering for the wicked and a prison for the Titans.

St. Ephraim the Syrian wrote:

The Gehenna (hell) of the wicked consists in what they see, and it is their very separation that burns them, and their mind acts as the flame. The hidden judge which is seated in the discerning mind [i.e., the conscience] has spoken, and has become for them the righteous judge, who beats them without mercy with torments of contrition... it is this which separates them out, sending each one to the appropriate place, perhaps it is this which grasps the good with its just right hand, sending them to that right hand of mercy, and it (the conscience) again which takes the wicked in its upright left hand, casting them into the place called “The Left” it is this (the conscience) which silently accuses and quietly pronounces sentence upon them... this inner intelligence has been made the judge and the law, for it is the embodiment of the shadow of the law and it is the shadow of the Lord of the Law.¹

St. Isaac of Nineveh wrote:

I also maintain that those who are punished in Gehenna are scourged by the scourge of love. Nay, what is so bitter and vehement as the torment of love? I mean those who have become conscious that they have sinned against Love suffer greater torment, thereby then by any fearsome punishment which can be conceived. For the sorrow caused in the heart by sin against love is more piercing than any torment. It would be improper for a man to think that sinners in Gehenna are deprived of the Love of God. Love is the offspring of knowledge, of the truth which, as is commonly confessed, is given to all. The power of Love works in 2 ways: it torments sinners, even as happens here when a friend suffers from a friend, but it becomes a source of joy for those who have observed its duties. According to my understanding, this is the torment of Gehenna, bitter regret. But love inebriates the souls of the sons of Heaven by its delectability. Someone asked, “When shall a man know that he has received this remission of his sins?” He answered, “When in his soul he shall be conscious that he has completely hated them with his whole

(Continued p.2)

MARIA KATSOUNAKI

A botched facelift



Katerina Papacosta, a former conservative minister, recently attacked ruling SYRIZA during a speech in Parliament saying, “you are not serious, you are irresponsible, get over your leftist delusions.” She sounded different on Friday. This time speaking as minister of a SYRIZA-led government and not as a member of the political opposition, Papacosta emphasized that political labels such as left-wing, right-wing and centrist were now “misleading.” Papacosta added that as deputy minister of citizens’ protection, she will work for Greece and all Greeks.

A similar comment came from the lips of Digital Policy Minister Nikos Pappas who said that, “the end of the bailout programs dictates that we do not necessarily have to disagree over the future with those with whom we disagreed over the past.”

Groucho Marx famously said, “those are my principles, and if you don’t like them... well, I have others.” His quote is always timely but in this particular case it is also outdated, because the subtle irony and humor smack against a thick wall of amorality. Sarcasm is not the way to deal with the reality we live in. Our politicians do not have a permanent political shape. Instead they adapt their ideas depending on political convenience and expedience. So the question is how does their changeability impact on our politics, on our society, on the way we think and live?

Meanwhile, our politicians have to manage their botched political facelift. This can take many forms: Some have to edit inconvenient details (involving their previous tenure in rival political parties) out of their CVs. Others tend to reduce their political credo to a “love-of-the-country” logic. In some cases, their being catapulted into power – without any reasonable justification – is advertised as “giving an opportunity to fresh faces,” and so on. The only problem is that, as so many cabinet reshuffles have shown, “fresh” is usually understood as endless transfiguration, until every recognizable feature is erased.

All this horse-trading is perceived by citizens as further evidence of the government’s advanced decline. Society tends to react to such hypocritical transformations and ideological masquerades in two ways: Voters either turn their back on the political system at large and snub the election process or they vote for nasty, extremist parties in a bid to punish the system. The question is not which of the alternatives is worse. In fact, the “worst” is already in front of us – and it is still in a state of transformation.

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- 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.

US military to cancel \$300m in Pakistan aid over terror groups



US military to cancel \$300m in Pakistan aid over terror groups

Pakistan has previously rejected US accusations that it provides a safe haven for militants. The US military says it is cancelling \$300m (£230m) in aid to Pakistan over what it calls Islamabad's failure to take action against militant groups.

President Donald Trump has previously accused Pakistan of deceiving the US while receiving billions of dollars. Pentagon spokesman Lt Col Koné Faulkner said the US military would aim to spend the money on other "urgent priorities"

The move, which needs to be approved by US Congress, is part of a broader suspension announced in January.

The US state department has criticised Pakistan, a key ally, for failing to deal with terrorist networks operating on its soil, including the Haqqani network and the Afghan Taliban. "We continue to press Pakistan to indiscriminately target all terrorist groups," Col Faulkner said in a statement on Saturday, adding that the \$300m aid - which had earlier been suspended - should be used elsewhere due to "a lack of Pakistani decisive actions" in tackling the issue. The announcement comes just days before US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is due to visit Pakistan to meet the country's new prime minister, Imran Khan. The US and others have long complained that Pakistan provides a safe haven to militant networks, allowing them to carry out cross-border attacks in Afghanistan - something that Islamabad denies. The military responded to January's suspension by arguing that it "never fought for money but for peace", and had targeted all militants at a "heavy cost of blood and treasure".

Who are the militants Pakistan is alleged to support?

The Haqqani network is a militant group that focuses most of its activities on neighbouring Afghanistan, which has complained for years that Pakistan allows it to operate unimpeded from its soil across the border. The group is linked to the Afghan Taliban - a hardline Islamist movement that poses a major threat to the Afghan government. Pakistani Taliban groups, while associated with the Afghan Taliban, focus on attacks within Pakistan. Both the Haqqani Network and the Afghan Taliban have launched attacks in Afghanistan that have killed US forces, and US officials have long argued that Pakistan, and specifically its ISI intelligence service, provides safe havens to them. Pakistan has long been accused of using the Afghan Taliban to further its foreign policy interests in the country. The ISI first became involved in funding and training militants in Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion in 1979.

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Louis A. Palivos

(From p. 1)

heart, and when he shall govern himself in his external actions in a manner opposed to his former way of life. Such a man, as heaven already hated his sin, is confident that he has received remission of his sins by reason of the good witness of his conscience which he has acquired, after the saying of the Apostle, "A conscious uncondemned is a witness of itself." Rm. 2:15.²



St. Basil the Great likewise wrote:

I believe that the fire prepared in punishment of the devil and his angels is divided by the voice of the Lord. Thus, since there are two capacities in fire, one of burning and the other of illuminating, the fierce and scourging property of the fire may await those who deserve to burn, while its illuminating and radiant warmth may be reserved for the enjoyment of those who are rejoicing.³

However, some Orthodox Fathers make a distinction between Hades and Hell. Hippolytus wrote:

Hades is a place in which all souls are detained until the time that God has determined. At Hades the unsaved soul, experiences emotional misery, torment, unable to partake in God's Love, and outer darkness. As Irenaeus has stated, "It's like a person who chooses to lock themselves in a dark room and does not allow the sun to shine." Further, in Hades one encounters grotesque people, no sleep, no rest, no deliverance from conscious misery, degrees of torment, worms and an awful stench.⁴

Consistent with Patristic Tradition: Hell is not at all "place" but rather a state of being separated from Christ and God. Moreover, this condition of separation results not from God's desire or a need to punish us, but rather from our own free choices which God simply respects for all of eternity. We choose to be separated from the source of Love and Light, and so we are, but we must then spend all eternity having our choice respected, because God loves us and respect is a mark of Love. This is Hell, everlasting separation from Love, from Light, and from Life itself. It is a living death where we find the true nature of the worldly happiness we sought for in our earthly life, and discover that it was really bondage to the passions that we were seeking and now we have it for all of eternity, devouring us like a worm that never ceases to gnaw and never manages to devour.⁵

There's an informative parable of the rich man and Lazarus. After death, the rich man's soul and Lazarus' soul behold the same "reality", the vision of Christ, but in the world the rich man had pleasure and happiness whereas Lazarus was suffering and tormented internally. Lk. 16:19-31. The rich man is ego centered and egotistical in his passion for happiness. His conscious is seared and cannot outgrow this bondage. However, Lazarus who was poor in this world, will grow rich in God's uncreated grace and uncreated glory. The rich man will stagnate in growth. Lazarus will grow in *Theosis*.

Professor John Romanides, wrote:

The illumination that shines on the righteous and the fire that burns the sinners, emanates from God and are uncreated. The illumination that shines on the righteous is the illumination energy of God and the fire that burns the sinners is the burning energy of God. The righteous are living illumination and *Theosis* with the synergy of the (uncreated) grace of God, whereas the sinners have not purged their sins and are living the synergy (uncreated) grace of God as fire.⁶ Thus, for the Unbelievers this side of eternity is the only Heaven they will experience; because, they will spend eternity in Hell. For the Believers, this side of eternity is the only Hell they will experience; because, they will spend eternity in the Kingdom of God. For those who haven't accepted Jesus Christ as Lord, repent, for the Kingdom of God awaits you!

1) Saint John Chrysostom, Homily 76 on Matthew.

2) Ibid, Homily 84

3) Ibid, Homily on Psalms, 28:6

4) Joseph Habib, *Orthodox Afterlife: 2,000 Years of Afterlife Experiences of Orthodox Christians and a Biblical and Early Christian View of Heaven, Hell, and the Hereafter*, Saint Mary and Saint Moses Abbey Press, 2016.

5) Archbishop Lazar Puhalo, *On the Nature of Heaven and Hell According to the Holy Fathers*, Synaxis Press, Dewitney, Canada, 2011.

6) Father/Professor John Romanides, *Paradise and Hell, Progress and Stagnation*.

Dr. Alemis’ seminar reaches capacity crowd in Nafplio, Greece



Dr. Alexander G. Alemis, a leading Chicago dentist and founder of the Family Dental Care Group, presented to a capacity crowd at The Amalia Hotel in Nafplio, Greece, regarding one of his books, ‘Intelligence: Discover the 63 Traits of Intelligence.’ Earlier this year, Dr. Alemis presented at the National Hellenic Museum in Chicago, IL, USA. He presented his first two books, ‘Intelligence: Discover the 63 Traits of Intelligence.’ and ‘Political Systems and their Relationship to the Economy and Freedom.’ Like the seminar in Nafplio, the seminar was filled to capacity with standing room only. Both books can be found on [Amazon.com](#) by searching “Dr. Alexander Alemis”. Dr. Alemis can be contacted via [www.DrAlemis.com](#).

Paul Vallas: frontrunner for Chicago Mayor



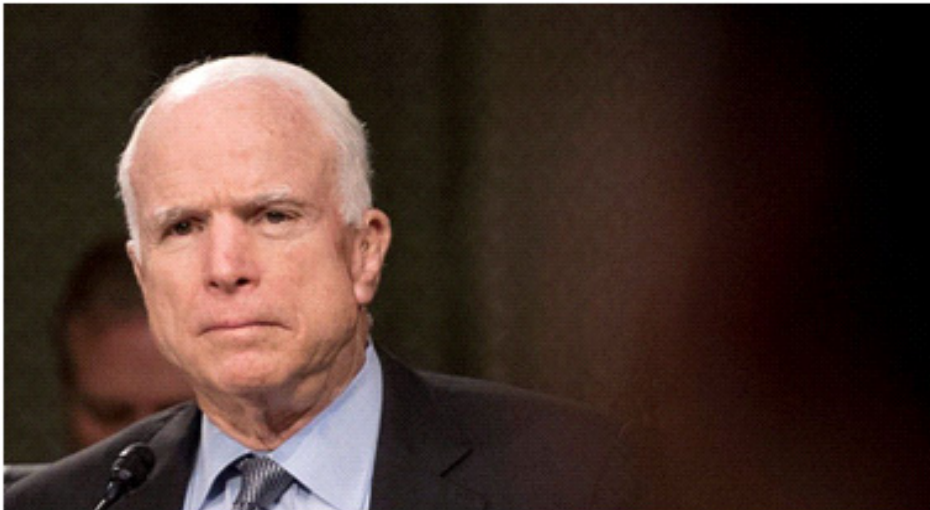
Without Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel to run against, other candidates recalibrate their campaigns.Chicago Needs a Problem Solver, Not a Politician Public service means something different to Paul Vallas. From his tenure as the superintendent of Chicago Public Schools to his management of post-disaster education reform in both New Orleans and Haiti, Paul has demonstrated that, to him, public service means commitment to solving the toughest problems. Tireless application of expertise and out-of-the-box thinking to devise creative solutions.That’s a breadth of knowledge, experience and running complicated city departments that nobody in the race has, Paul Vallas included,” Lightfoot said. “I’m the only person who has that level of experience.”

In another shot at Vallas, Lightfoot, another candidate for Mayor, said she was building a citywide campaign, “not talking about what I did 20 years ago,” a reference to his tenure as former Mayor Richard M. Daley’s budget director and Chicago Public Schools CEO.

Vallas, who had shown a willingness to mix it up with Emanuel, wasted no time in responding to Lightfoot. He laughed at how Lightfoot had equated deputy positions under Daley to his experience as budget director and CPS CEO, not to mention his time running school districts in Philadelphia, New Orleans and Bridgeport, Conn. In total, Vallas said, he spent 14 years managing multibillion-dollar budgets between his time at City Hall and various school districts.

“I don’t know how to respond to someone who was the deputy procurement officer. How many budgets has she balanced?” Vallas said of Lightfoot. “With the exception of McCarthy, who was police superintendent, how many budgets have any of the rest of these people balanced? How many collective bargaining agreements have they negotiated? How many schools have they built? How many bond rating upgrades have they achieved? I hired procurement officers — probably about 12 of them. I’ve had law departments that worked for me. I rebuilt an entire school system after Hurricane Katrina — an entire school system. Come on.”.

John McCain: a great human being



Born on the eve of World War Two, John McCain came of age with the dawn of the US as a global superpower.

His lifetime spanned an arc across what Henry Luce once predicted would be the American Century - a time when US political, military and cultural power was unrivalled across the globe.

He fought in Vietnam and suffered the ravages of captivity as the US itself was wracked by doubt and anger over an inability to achieve victory in South-East Asia.

He became a rising star in US politics, only to nearly succumb to the temptations and corruptions of money and influence in American democracy.

He mounted an anti-establishment presidential campaign that presaged the anger and longing for authenticity that would later sweep through US politics.

He won the Republican presidential nomination as that fervour began to curdle, turning against him and the established order in his party.

In McCain's last days, he offered a full-throated defence of the idea that an internationalist, engaged American nation could serve as a guide to friends and a bulwark against foes - and railed against the man, Donald Trump, who campaigned against this world view.

McCain exits the stage at what is, perhaps, the twilight of the American century, when the nation has focused inward, concerned about potential dangers of immigration, the entanglements of multilateralism and the challenges of a global economy.

Here are six moments of McCain's life that reflect the American history he lived through.

14 March 1973

The image is striking. A gaunt McCain, aged 36, dressed in rumpled civilian clothes, marching along with fellow American prisoners of war to a US military transport plane that would take them to freedom.

More than five years of captivity in a Vietnam prison had aged him. McCain's hair had been dark when his jet was shot down by a surface-to-air missile during a mission over Hanoi. Now it was grey and white.

He walked with a limp - the product of injuries sustained from ejecting from his damaged plane, as well as torture at the hands of his Vietnamese captors. At a White House reception a month later with President Richard Nixon, McCain relied on crutches to walk.

He never fully recovered from his wounds. The limp would mostly disappear, but for the rest of his life he was unable to raise his arms above his head

Intact late Minoan tomb found in Crete



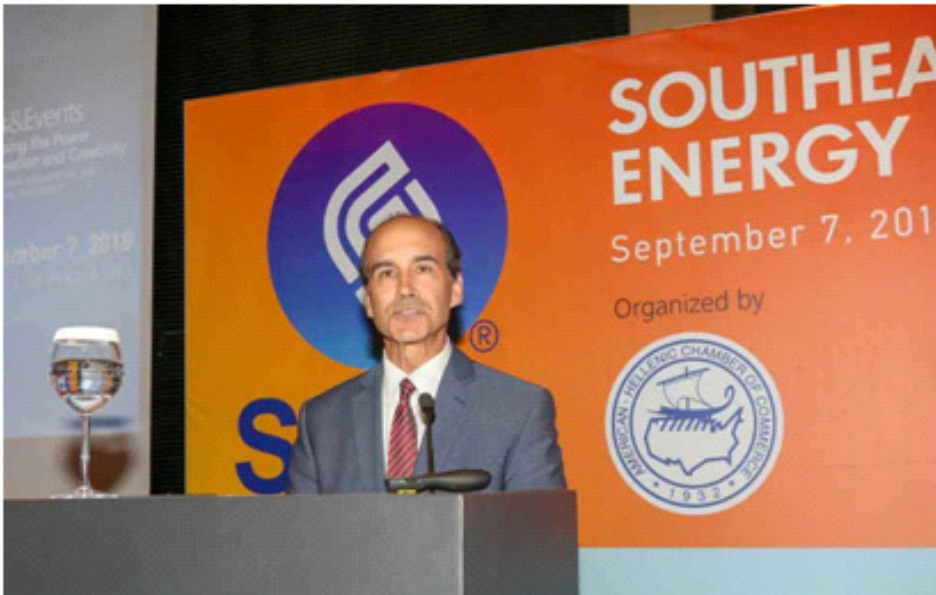
Archaeologists in Crete have discovered an intact Minoan-era tomb containing a well-preserved adult skeleton as well as funerary vessels.

An initial inspection of the ceramics found in the tomb allowed it to be dated to the late Minoan period, or 1400 to 1200 BC, a statement from the Ministry of Culture said.

The tomb was discovered during an emergency excavation in an olive grove outside the village of Kentri, in the eastern prefecture of Ierapetra, the statement added.

A local resident had alerted the local archaeology ephorate to the possible existence of a tomb at the site.

Energy deals with US giants announced in Thessaloniki



Mark Menezes addressed the AmCham energy conference in Thessaloniki on Friday. Major energy deals involving Greek and US interests were announced at Friday's American Hellenic Chamber of Commerce conference held in the context of this year's Thessaloniki International Fair, which officially opens on Saturday.

In the presence of US Under Secretary for Energy Mark Menezes, US Ambassador in Athens Geoffrey Pyatt and ExxonMobil representative Tristan Aspray, Greece's Energy Minister Giorgos Stathakis announced the completion of negotiations for the concession contract regarding the surveying and utilization of hydrocarbons south and southwest of Crete with the Total-ExxonMobil-Hellenic Petroleum consortium. He added that the contract will be signed next week.

In the context of the conference in Greece's second city, Public Gas Corporation (DEPA) and Gastrade also signed the agreement for the participation of DEPA with a 20 percent stake in the terminal floating storage regasification unit (FSRU) that Gastrade is developing off Alexandroupoli in Thrace. Sources say some issues on the price and the approval of board members are still pending, while DEPA's final stake could change, depending on the other holdings that may emerge.

DEPA chief executive Dimitris Tzortzis further announced the confirmation of a contract with US company Cheniere concerning a liquefied natural gas (LNG) spot cargo due to be delivered in 2018. "We have cooperated for many months with the top US natural gas exporter, and this cooperation is unique in that it concerns a virtual pipeline through the Atlantic," said Tzortzis.

Menezes stressed US support for the so-called South Corridor pipelines: the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP), the Trans Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) and the Interconnector Greece-Bulgaria (IGB). He also conveyed the strong opposition of US President Donald Trump and his administration to projects such as Nord Stream II and TurkStream, which, as he said, will strengthen the quasi-monopolistic position of Russia in the broader region.

E-ticket for Greece's and sites gaining ground



The newly launched e-ticket for Greece's museums and archaeological sites is gaining ground, according to figures from Archaeological Resources Fund (TAP) presented by the Culture Ministry on Thursday. Initially launched on July 5 in pilot phase, the e-ticket is currently only applicable to 11 popular archaeological sites and museums in Attica, Crete and the Peloponnese. According to the Culture Ministry, from July 5 to August 5, 5.5 million visitors, generated revenues of 9.3 million euros at Greece's archaeological sites and museums. In the two-week period from July 19 to August 5, meanwhile, e-tickets accounted for 145,000 euros.

The Acropolis, the Temple of Olympian Zeus, the Ancient Agora, Hadrian's Library, the Ancient Cemetery of Kerameikos, Aristotle's Lyceum and the Roman Agora in Athens, together with the Minoan settlement Knossos and the Iraklio Archaeological Museum, in Crete, and the site and museum of Ancient Messini in the southwestern Peloponnese, accounted for 40 percent of all visitors and 55 percent of total revenue from the scheme in its first month of operation. The Culture Ministry's plans to expand the program to other sites including Olympia, Delphi, Lindos, Delos and Akrotiri by the end of the year, with the final list of locations to be announced at the Thessaloniki International Fair next month.

E-tickets can be purchased online at etickets.tap.gr.

Crazy Rich Asians' puts spotlight on region's inequalities



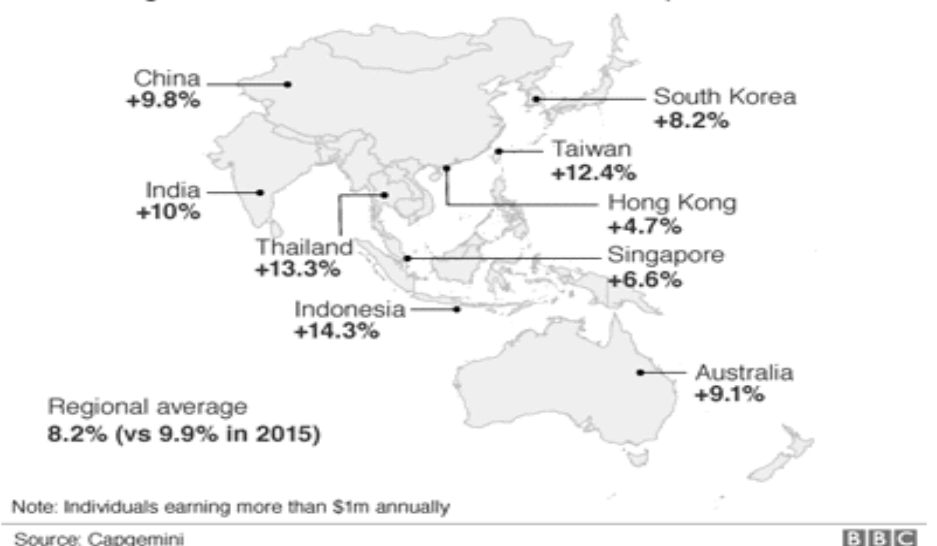
Constance Wu at the premier of the movie Crazy Rich Asians

The film Crazy Rich Asians hit the box office this month, and the glossy rom-com has put a spotlight on the region's growing number of super-rich. Just go to any shopping mall in Singapore - where the movie is based - and you will see designer shops full of customers carrying bags from Prada, Gucci and Louis Vuitton.

But the region, which was once considered a model of equitable growth, has also seen increased inequality. According to Oxfam the number of super-rich in the Asia-Pacific has surpassed that of North America and Europe. It is also home to the greatest number of millionaires and billionaires in the world, but also hosts nearly two-thirds of the world's working poor. "Wealth inequality has reached alarming levels in a number of countries in the region," said Mustafa Talpur, who heads the inequality campaign in Asia for Oxfam.

Asia's rich: How much has their wealth risen?

Percentage increase of individual wealth compared with 2015



With 585 billionaires, the US still tops the table of the mega-rich, according to Forbes. Mainland China is not far behind with 373. But if you look at the Asia-Pacific region as a whole, then it has overtaken the US with 600 billionaires, according to Oxfam's analysis of data from Credit Suisse Global Wealth Databook 2017. Also, the Asia-Pacific region has the greatest number of high net worth individuals in the world, or people who have more than \$1m on top of the value of their main residence. The region accounts for 34.1% of high net worth individuals globally versus 31.3% for North America, according to a Capgemini report from 2018.

Asia-Pacific also accounts for 30.8% of their total wealth versus 28.2% for North America. As China enjoyed annual growth of between around 8% and 11% between 2008 and 2012, the US and the eurozone licked their wounds after devastating financial crises. "This strong growth through the years has been aided by robust GDP and equity markets growth especially in the emerging markets of China and India.

Who are the richest people in Asia?

Ma Huateng, also known as Pony Ma, is Asia's wealthiest person and number 17 in the world, according to the 2018 Forbes list. He is the chief executive of China's tech giant Tencent Holdings, which owns WeChat, an enormously popular messaging app in China. He has a net worth of \$45.3bn. Also among Forbes' top 20 billionaires is Jack Ma, chairman of Alibaba, the Chinese e-commerce giant. Alibaba is one of the world's most valuable companies, and its shares nearly doubled in value last year. His net worth was \$39bn. Also in the top 30 are Hong Kong's Li Ka-shing and China's Wang Jianlin, whose net worth was \$34.9bn and \$30bn respectively on the Forbes list. Li Ka-shing retired from leading his business empire earlier this year and is handing the reins to his eldest son. Li Ka-shing's CK Hutchison Holdings and CK Asset Holdings are involved in sectors including retail, telecoms and power.

Last year, 79% of the wealth created in China went to the richest 1% of the population, while 73% of the wealth created in India went to the top 1%, according to Oxfam's analysis. As a result, the top 1% of China's population owned 47% of its national wealth in 2017, while in India they owned 45% of the country's wealth. In Thailand - a highly unequal country in South East Asia - 96% of the wealth created last year went to the top 1% of the population.

Astronauts tackle air leak on International Space Station



The Russian Soyuz spacecraft (L) brought a new crew to the International Space Station (ISS) in June

Astronauts on the International Space Station (ISS) are having to deal with an air leak from a possible collision. It has been traced to a small hole in a capsule that was used to deliver a new crew to the laboratory 400km (250 miles) above the Earth in June. It is thought the damage was caused by the impact of a high-speed rocky fragment flying through space.

Mission controllers in Houston, Texas, and Russia's capital, Moscow, say the six-strong crew are in no danger. Impacts from tiny meteoroids are a permanent threat to the orbiting platform and it was built to withstand the constant bombardment from the dusty fragments that whizz about above the Earth.

Mission controllers were first alerted to the issue by air pressure sensors on board the station. The astronauts were asleep at the time, but when they rose for their day's work on Wednesday they were instructed to search for the leak.

They found it in the Russian Soyuz vehicle used to bring three crewmen to the station on 8 June, among them Europe's Alexander Gerst, who is set to take command of the outpost. "Overnight and in the morning there was an abnormal situation - a pressure drop, an oxygen leak at the station," chief of the federal space agency Roscosmos, Dmitry Rogozin, was quoted as saying by news agencies.

"A micro-fracture was found; most likely it is damage from the outside. The design engineers believe it is the result of a micrometeorite," he said.

Germany's Gerst confirmed the presence of the hole by running his finger over it. An immediate fix was implemented using a sealant and tape to cover the hole, which is said to measure a couple of millimetres in diameter.

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Thessaloniki fair a symbol of deepening Greek-US relations



The American side appears keen on making the 83rd Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF), which starts this weekend, a symbol for a deepening of relations between Greece and the United States. To that end these past few months there has been a flurry of activity from the State Department bureaucracy aimed at securing the highest possible American presence at the event, where this year the United States is the honored country.

The US participation will be led by Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, who has invested in Greece in the past in a private capacity. The possibility of him being present at the fair was floated last October during Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras’s visit to Washington. Efforts were also made to secure the attendance of Vice President Mike Pence, though they did not bear fruit. Either way, this year’s TIF represents an expectation by both sides of a stronger American presence in Greece.

High-ranking State Department officials who deal with the region – Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Wes Mitchell first and foremost, and, of course, Ambassador to Athens Geoffrey Pyatt – have made it clear in public comments and private briefings that Washington is determined to see Greece become a true pillar of stability in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans. As such the US believes it shares many common interests with Greece in the region. Part of the thinking in Washington has to do with the development of the northern Greek ports of Thessaloniki and Alexandroupoli so that they become major transit routes for commercial goods, as well as American, Israeli, Cypriot and Egyptian gas, to the Balkans and beyond.

Moreover, during his recent visit to Athens and his meeting with Chief of the Hellenic National Defense General Staff Admiral Evangelos Apostolakis, the chairman of the US military’s Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine General Joseph Dunford, spoke of the possibility of an upgraded role for Greece’s military bases and ports, confirming that the relationship in the area of defense is already deepening and gradually moving from an initial interest to the implementation phase.

For such plans to come to fruition, however, Greece needs to have a healthy economy, and in this regard the focus is on investments that will boost growth and strengthen the country’s standing so that it can play a more decisive role in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean.

The prevailing sentiment at TIF and the present circumstances in the region offer an opportunity for mutual benefits. It is up to the Greek government and the US ambassador and his team to make the most of this opportunity. The most pressing challenge is to attract serious long-term private American investment that will generate jobs and contribute to an economic rebound, while at the same time increasing Greek exports to the world’s biggest market – something that, of course, is not helped by the harsh imposition of tariffs that seriously damage a strategic partner and ally in a volatile region.

Acropolis Museum in TripAdvisor's Top 10



The Acropolis Museum in Athens ranked No 6 in TripAdvisor's annual Travelers Choice Awards for 2018, coming one spot above the Louvre in Paris and one below Madrid's Prado.

Designed by Swiss architect Bernard Tschumi and inaugurated in 2009, the building, says the review, “is as stunning as the treasures it houses.”

Topping the list of the Travelers Choice Awards for Best 25 Museums in 2018 is Paris's Musee d'Orsay, New York's National 9/11 Memorial and Museum and Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the British Museum in London.

Islands seek sustainable mobility



Several Greek island municipalities are in the process of drafting plans to promote sustainable transport and tackle the effects of a surge in the population from summer visitors.

The so-called Sustainable Island Mobility Plan (SIMP) aims to offer flexible solutions that improve mobility, such as limiting the use of cars (mainly by tourists), introducing electric vehicles, promoting carpooling, reducing speed limits and improving the use of parking spaces.

“The demand for sustainable mobility on the islands is objectively different in relation to large urban centers or mainland municipalities. For example, on the islands we have a very large population fluctuation between summer and the rest of the year,” Kosmas Anagnostopoulos, coordinator at CIVINET CY-EL, the Greek chapter of the CIVITAS network of cities dedicated to sustainable urban transport, told Kathimerini.

“Also, concerning the means of transport, the islands do not have fixed tracks or motorways. At the same time, there are great variations between 117 inhabited islands.”


Islands are ideal test beds for innovations in mobility as they offer a limited geographic space, Anagnostopoulos said.

“The first SIMP in Europe will be designed for Sifnos and will be followed by Naxos, the Small Cyclades and Kea. The work being done for the Greek islands has attracted interest at a European level, and now the next revision of the European directives on the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan will also include the dimension of insularity,” he added, referring to the isolated nature of many islands.

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GREEK NEWS

Eurozone pours cold water on pension cut talk



The eurozone tried on Friday to contain Greek government rhetoric on suspending upcoming pension cuts, saying that any discussions on that matter are premature, and sending a clear message that Athens should not reverse reforms, particularly in the field of labor.

Responding to strong rumors in recent days that the measure’s suspension would be discussed at next Thursday’s Eurogroup meeting, a senior eurozone official stressed this is not true. The issue will only be raised once the representatives of the country’s creditors return to Athens later in September for the first post-program inspection.

“Any such discussion is premature,” the eurozone official stated, adding that there is an agreement for a primary surplus of 3.5 percent of gross domestic product that may not require the pension cuts now but “I do not know whether they will be needed when the economic cycle changes.”

The same official also informed reporters in Brussels about how the first inspection after the end of the bailout program will be carried out, stressing that it will be very different to those of the previous eight years and to the quarterly visits to other countries that emerged from similar programs.

America can help Greece's recovery, PM says at opening of US pavilion at TIF

The United States can help Greece breathe new life into its economy, particularly in the areas of innovation and startup businesses, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said on Saturday, at the inauguration of the American pavilion at the Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF).

Speaking to an audience that included US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, American Ambassador to Athens Geoffrey Pyatt, members of the American-Hellenic Chamber and representatives of leading American businesses with a presence at the TIF, where the US is the guest of honor this year, Tsipras also stresses Greece's role as a “pillar of stability and security” in the broader region.

He said that a stronger strategic partnership between Greece and the United States would form the best possible “foundation for new prospects for Greece and for the broader region.”

Majority of Greeks still believe in 'evil eye,' study finds



A study carried out by the Society for Headache and Migraine Patients has found that the majority of Greeks still believe that the so-called “evil eye” (“mati”) is responsible for making their head hurt.

The study, which was carried out on a sample of 10,000 people to gauge public awareness of the causes and cures for headaches, found that 60 percent of respondents blame their headaches on ill-wishers and 40 percent believe that they can be cured with an incantation known as “xematiasma.”

“There is a prevalence of misguided theories concerning headaches and their cure,” said Dr Dimos Mitsikostas, an associate professor of neurology at Athens University and head of the society, said ahead of World Migraine Day on September 12. “It is important to dispel these prevalent myth and to break certain taboos, like fear of visiting a neurologist.”

“Headaches are discounted by the boss, the romantic partner and often even by the doctor,” Mitsikostas said, explaining how patients suffering from headaches and migraines are often misunderstood. “Most people associate headaches with some psychological factor when they are, in fact, cause by a biological disorder of the brain.”

The expert notes that while susceptibility to migraines and headaches may be genetic, there is a variety of factors that can bring them on, from consumption of certain foods and alcohol, to weather conditions and even a change in routine.

He also notes that women tend to be more susceptible than men. “We found that two-fifth of women have a genetic predisposition, while 8.2 percent of the population suffers from headaches and migraines,” Mitsikostas said.

US commerce secretary says TIF turnout a sign of confidence in Greek econom



he presence of major American companies at this year's Thessaloniki International Fair is a sign of trust in the future of Greece's economy and of America's desire to be a part of it, US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross said in a brief address to an event organized by the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce on Friday night.

Ross, who is in Greece for the TIF, where the US is the country of honor this year, added that bilateral trade between Greece and the United States is at more than 2 billion dollars a year and is “growing dynamically” and that Greece is the fastest-growing destination of American foreign direct investment. The American trade chief also hailed the TIF for providing “huge opportunities” to expand commercial ties between the two countries.

Tsipras pledges lower property tax, VAT in post-bailout era

Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras announced on Saturday his plans to lower the value added tax (VAT)

and the property levy ENFIA as of 2021 and 2019 respectively in a speech at the 2018 Thessaloniki International Fair, aimed at signalling a new era for Greece after the end of the third bailout.

“Greece today is a different country. A country that, after a clean exit from the memorandums, is standing on its feet again, relies on its own strengths and can look forward to the future with confidence,” he told attendees.



"We are determined to fulfil the agreed [fiscal] targets in the coming years. We will not allow Greece to return to the era of deficits and fiscal derailment." Presenting the government’s political strategy for the next four years, he said it includes a reduction of the higher VAT from 24 pct to 22 pct and the lower from 13 pct to 12 pct, that will take effect as of January 2021.

The government will also pass law by the end of the year gradually reducing the property levy ENFIA by up to 50 pct for lower-income households. The measure will be completed in two phases: the first in January 2019 and the second in January 2020.

Tsipras also pledged to lower the social security contributions for the self-employed and farmers by up to 35 pct as of next year.

By exceeding its target for a primary surplus, the government believes it has the opportunity to strengthen the three pillars which it considers as the main priorities for the post-bailout period: fair growth, the welfare state and boosting employment.

Commenting on the much-contested planned pension cuts that the government hopes to avoid implementing in January 2019, the prime minister said he is “certain” the target for a 3.5 percent primary surplus can be achieved without slashing pensions further.

He said the government will wait for the statistics data to verify the surplus and then it will present its point to the country’s European partners

when Greece submits its 2019 budget in October.

ND: Tsipras’s ‘false hopes’ have been dashed

Greece’s conservative opposition has criticized Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras’s speech at Thessaloniki International Fair Saturday, in which he laid out the leftist-led government’s economic program for the coming year, describing it as a “swan song by a cynical prime minister who has deceived, humiliated, impoverished and divided the Greek people.”

“Mr Tsipras’s false hopes have been dashed,” New Democracy, which has a solid lead in opinion polls, said in a statement. “Mr Tsipras has already gone down in history for the huge and unnecessary disaster that he has brought upon the country. No one listens to him anymore, simply because no one believes him anymore,” it said.

On Saturday, Tsipras announced plans to lower the value added tax (VAT) and the property levy ENFIA as of 2021 and 2019 respectively in a speech aimed at signalling a new era for Greece following its formal exit from the bailout programs. Conservative leader Kyriakos Mitsotakis will deliver a speech at TIF next weekend. Meanwhile, a new public opinion poll published Sunday gives New Democracy an 11 percent lead over ruling SYRIZA, with 29.9 percent of respondents saying they would vote for the conservative party if elections were held now, against 19 percent who voiced support for the incumbent leftists.

Greece arrests two Turkish service members at border

A Greek army spokesman says two Turkish military personnel have been arrested for allegedly crossing into Greece illegally. The spokesman told The Associated Press the arrests took place along the border in northeastern Greece on Sunday. He denied Greek media reports that gunfire was exchanged during the incident. The spokesman requested anonymity because the case is under investigation. He says it's not clear how the Turkish service members entered Greece or what their ranks are. The Greek army is investigating if others attempted to come into the country.

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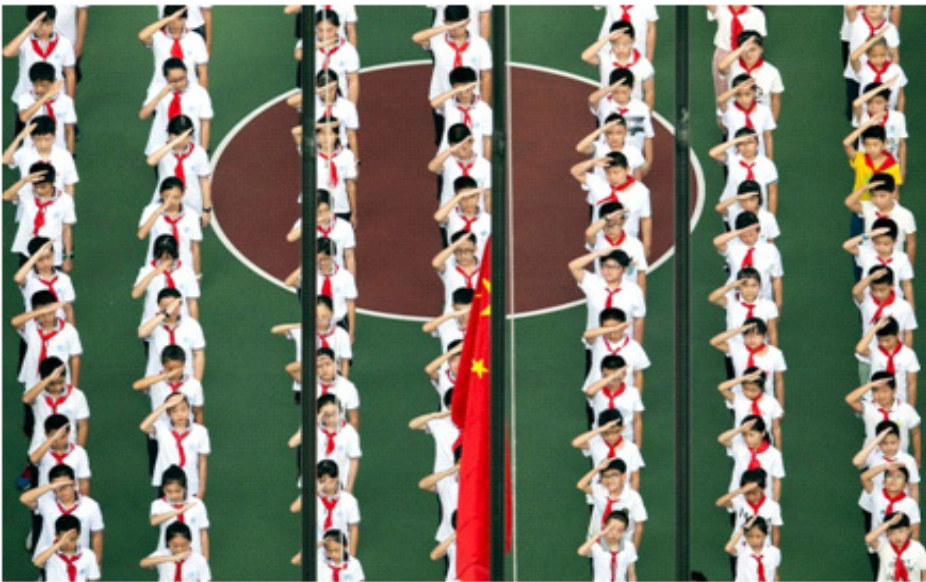
PICTURES OF THE WORLD



An activist celebrates after the Supreme Court's verdict to decriminalise gay sex in India. The ruling overturns a 2013 judgement which upheld a colonial-era law, under which gay sex was categorised as an "unnatural offence"



The Villarrica Volcano, seen at night from Pucon town, Chile. The 2,840m (9,320ft) high Villarrica is an active volcano with a lava lake in its crater.



Children line up for a flag-raising ceremony on their first day back at school after the summer holidays in Shanghai, China.



A woman walks along a road which was heavily damaged after a powerful 6.7-magnitude earthquake struck the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido, triggering landslides and widespread disruption.

A Turkish headache for the West



Turkey matters to the West but the question now being asked in Washington and in several European capitals is "just how much?" Some US commentators go even further, wondering if Turkey should rightly be described as a strategic ally of the United States at all. Turkey is a prominent member of Nato. Its military bases are important for current US air operations in the Middle East.

It straddles a huge swathe of territory on Nato's eastern flank, at a time when Russia's resurgence means the Black Sea region is of growing strategic importance. Turkey is also among the European Union's most important eastern neighbours. Its progress towards joining the EU may have badly stalled, not least due to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's growing authoritarianism.

But Ankara remains a vital partner for Europe, playing a crucial role in helping to stem the flow of migrants westwards. Turkey itself is host to more than 3.5 million refugees from the fighting in neighbouring Syria.

The economic problems may be largely Erdogan's own making: a dash for growth, fuelled by major construction projects, all funded by loans. But the row with the US - which focuses in part on the imprisonment of a US pastor, Andrew Brunson, accused by the Turks of activities hostile to the state - has become a battle of wills between President Erdogan on one side and President Donald Trump on the other. And punitive US economic sanctions are doing further damage to Turkey's fragile economy.

Turkey election: Erdogan win ushers in new presidential era. So how bad could it get? Might Turkey's membership of Nato be called into question? Nato actually has no mechanism to expel an existing member: Ankara would have to decide that it wanted to leave. During the Cold War, Turkey, with its huge armed forces, was always the anchor of Nato's eastern flank. In more recent times it has also been a significant contributor to the alliance's mission in Afghanistan.

But there have often been times when Turkey has been a problematic ally. Its frequent sparring with its historic enemy Greece in the Aegean has prompted tensions, but generally has been contained by their shared membership of Nato.

On occasions, Turkey has felt less than valued by its partners. They only agreed to deploy second-line aircraft to Turkey during Operation Desert Storm in 1990-91, when Ankara called for support to guard against retaliation by Saddam Hussein's regime.

But the Syrian War underscores the shift in Turkey's position. It has sought to become a major regional player, strongly backing rebel - and sometimes Islamist - groups on the ground, eager to overthrow the Assad regime.

Now with that policy in tatters, it is trying to secure its interests by working more closely with Moscow.

Its relationship with the US was further complicated by the fact that Ankara resolutely opposed US support for Kurdish fighters in Syria. At times there was a real possibility of US and Turkish proxies coming to blows or worse, US and Turkish units coming under fire from each other.

Ankara's decision to purchase a Russian air defence system even as it seeks delivery of 100 F-35 jets, the latest warplane in Washington's arsenal, again underscores Turkey's unusual approach to alliance affairs.

But whatever Turkey's current tensions with Washington and by extension with Nato, it is hard to see a Russian link providing the same level of prestige, security guarantees or technical know-how.

What then of ties between Ankara and the EU? Could US-Turkish tensions be an opportunity for the Europeans? On the one hand, many EU states are highly critical of authoritarianism and human rights abuses in Turkey. But the EU is intimately linked with Turkey's economy.

And for his part, there are clear signs - the recent release of two Greek soldiers and the local head of Amnesty International - that suggest President Erdogan does not want to have a full-blown crisis with the EU at the same time as he is at daggers-drawn with President Trump.

The EU is well aware that the migration deal it struck with Ankara has done much to reduce the flow of refugees into the union since 2016. Turkey received significant economic aid in return, and is unlikely to want to disrupt this relationship at a time of burgeoning crisis at home.

So in the short-term, relations between the EU and Turkey may improve as its relationship with Washington becomes more strained.

But in the longer term, Turkey's current direction of travel is, in some sense, away from the West.

This may be inevitable in a multi-polar world where Washington no longer has the regional prestige it once had. The Europeans may seek temporary advantage given Washington's problems.

In crude terms, Ankara has some strong cards to play when confronting Brussels. But fundamentally, Mr Erdogan is taking Turkey in a direction away from European values and liberal democracy. And that ultimately will condition his relationship with the EU.