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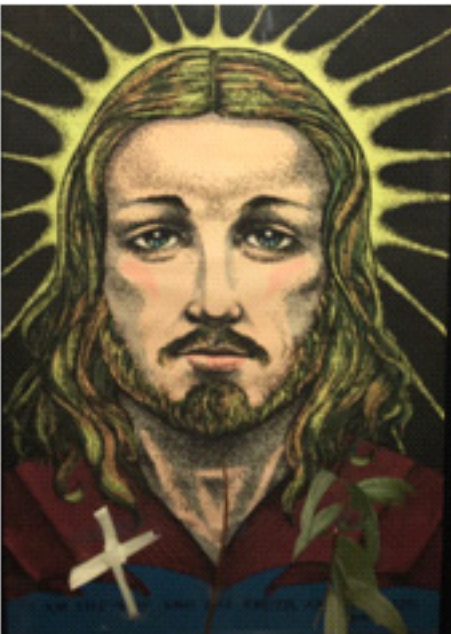
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Salvation

Louis A. Palivos

What is salvation? Salvation, Gk. Soteria, Σωτηρία, denotes deliverance, preservation, and eternal existence. Salvation is used in the New Testament to mean, (a) of material and temporal deliverance from danger and apprehension, (b) of the spiritual and eternal deliverance granted immediately



by God to those who accept His conditions of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom along it is to be obtained, (c) of the present experience of God's power to deliver from the bondage of sin, this present experience on the part of Believers is virtually equivalent to holiness, and (d) of the future deliverance of Believers at the Parousia of Christ for His saints, the object of their hope.¹ Who is salvation for? How does a person get salvation? Salvation for what purpose? Does salvation mean an eternal state of bliss or nirvana? Can a person work, earn or pay for eternal salvation? Salvation is based on a person's repentance and faith, directed to the Person of Jesus Christ and it is received as a free gift of God's uncreated grace!

Jesus Christ was crucified and had two other robbers crucified with Him. One thief on Jesus' right and the other thief on His left. Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." Lk. 23:39-43

Was the robber who Jesus told, "Today you will be with Me in paradise," an Orthodox, a Catholic, a Protestant, or from any other Christian denomination? We know that he was a robber, but we can infer much more. The robber repented just before he was about to take his last breath. He knew he would die not just from the crucifixion but from having his legs broken. "The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other." Jn. 19:32

Clearly both robbers would die quickly after the breaking of their legs by the professional Roman executioners. By having their legs broken, the two robbers would not be able to breathe and therefore would die. To be sure, both robbers knew that the Roman method of execution by crucifixion was certain death.

Yet, one robber repented, and the other robber mocked Jesus Christ. "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us." The repentant robber rebuked the mocker, "Do you not even fear God?" This mystery of why one robber repented, can perhaps be understood best, that in the exercise of the robber's free will, God invited him to be synergistically connected to Jesus Christ. He put his faith in the person of Jesus Christ. This repentant robber was saved by God's uncreated grace.

The earliest Gospel Writer, Mark, wrote that, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved." Mk. 16:16. The Holy Scripture does not mention

(Continue p. 2)

Turkish court rules to let Hagia Sophia return as mosque



Turkey's highest administrative court issued a ruling recently that paved the way for the government to convert Istanbul's iconic Hagia Sophia – a former cathedral-turned-mosque that now serves as a museum – back into a Muslim house of worship.

The Council of State threw its weight behind a petition brought by a religious group and annulled a 1934 cabinet decision that changed the 6th century building into a museum. The ruling allows the government to restore the Hagia Sophia's previous status as a mosque.

The decision was in line with the Turkish president's calls to turn the hugely symbolic world heritage site into a mosque despite widespread international criticism, including from the United States and Orthodox Christian leaders.

The decision could deepen tensions with neighboring Greece, which also called on Turkey to maintain the structure's status as a museum.

The religious group had contested the legality of the 1934 decision by the modern Turkish republic's secular government ministers and argued that the building was the personal property of Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II, who conquered Istanbul in 1453.

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PUBLISHER
SOTIRIS REKOU MIS
EDITOR
DENISE REKOU MIS
LAYOUTS
JOHN REKOU MIS
CONTRIBUTORS

**DR. STAVROS BASSEAS, JOHN REKOU MIS,
DENISE REKOU MIS, DR JORDAN TSOLAKIDIS,
CHRIS MERENTITIS DR. LOUIS PALIVOS**

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Salvation

(From page 1)

whether or not the repentant robber was previously baptized, but he would still die on the cross. However, did the repentant robber have another type of baptism? Yes, he did! He was baptized on the cross by the Holy Spirit. The repentant robber believed the Gospel as an act of faith and was saved by grace and “not of works, lest any person should boast.” Eph. 2:9. The repentant robber was born again spiritually on the cross just before he died physically. “Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” Jn. 3:3.

Did Jesus Christ die for me and for you so that by you or I by living a good life, we retain salvation? This type of Christianity would be impossible to live so as to retain salvation. Only one human being has ever lived a perfect life and no other. It is time to stop trying to live in our own strength and ask Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to empower the Believers. Today, is the day for sincere seekers of salvation to repent and put their faith in Jesus Christ!

While there is still time, we can draw close to Him; seek Him; thirst for Him; and hunger for Him; just like the robber who repented on the cross. This repentant robber drew close to Jesus and Jesus drew close to him, in a way that is incomprehensible, as Jesus can do the same for anyone who repents. St. Paul best described this relationship as, “co-workers (synergoi Theou) with God.” 1 Cor. 3:9. Synergistically working with God!

This life is short, but eternity is long. Persons become Christians not by manipulation by this Church or that Church or by that Pastor or that Priest but, like the repentant robber, put their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Thereafter, Jesus Christ promises to each person who makes this decision that the Holy Spirit will empower them to live lives of holiness.

The first Christians had it right. They had the symbol of the fish, in Greek, the word fish is an acronym for Jesus Christ God Son Saves, Gk. ΙΧΘΥΣ. This symbol was in use by the second century, by Tertullion, the “Shepherd of Hermas” and by Clement of Alexandria.² The first Christians put their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. Thereafter, they practiced their faith with good works and holiness. “Faith without works is dead.” \

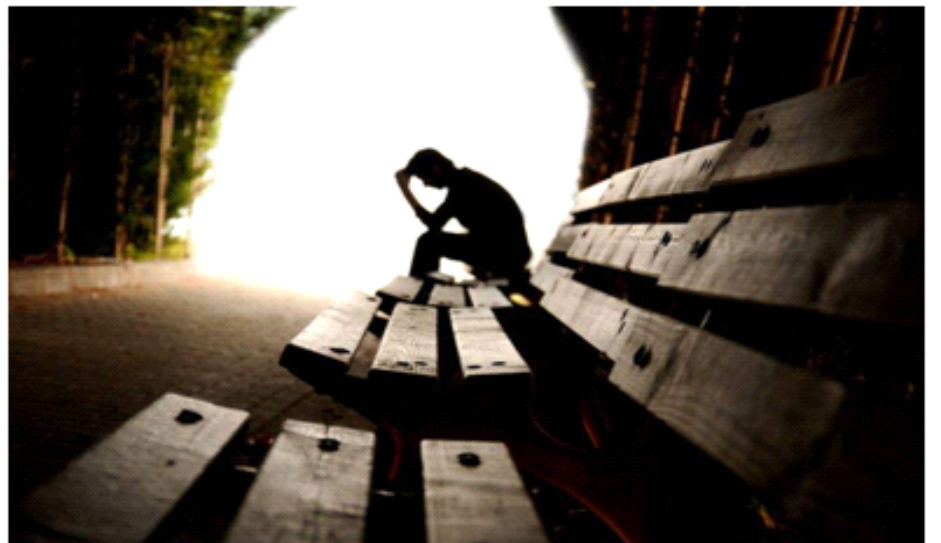
As we advance closer and closer to The Second Coming and The Apostasy that is coming, like never before, please laser your eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ. The repentant robber’s decision, like our decision, will have eternal consequences. What decision are you going to make? “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. 6:23.

Come, let us reason. Islam requires total submission to attain salvation. Hinduism requires innumerable life cycles of reincarnation working out salvation from life to life to life. Buddhism requires the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, to end cycles of suffering and to abolish desire. Jewish people work out salvation by keeping the Law, Torah. The explosion of worldwide cults, Jonestown, Heaven’s Gate, Order of the Solar Temple, Villa Baviera, Raelians, and numerous others, required merit or works for salvation. Many cults even call upon their members to commit mass suicide. These religions and cults all require some type of works and merit to obtain salvation. Christianity allows persons the freedom to exercise their free will, to accept or reject salvation!

The repentant robber did not partake in sacraments, rituals, fasts, water baptism, or any other act of works or merit for salvation. He simply repentant, put his faith in Jesus Christ, and he was saved! His heart was flooded with the love of Jesus Christ! “For where two or three are gathered

in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Mt. 18:20. The greatest event in human history is the Gospel. An excellent example is of the repentant thief, who believed and repented on the cross. Can persons today believe, repent, and put their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior? Yes, they can! What is crazy, absolutely insane, is that an infinite All Powerful God cares enough about an infinite small person like you and me to have died on the cross for us! It’s extremely hard to comprehend this act of love, yet it is even more incomprehensible to understand why any person would reject salvation by grace.

The traumatized self



The number of incidents that appear to be related to mental health issues is on the rise across the world. Recently, a 59-year-old bus driver died in Bayonne in southwest France after he was attacked by passengers who refused to wear face masks. In Greece, meanwhile, a man wielding an ax attacked employees at a tax office in Kozani in the north, leaving three people seriously injured.

The coronavirus pandemic has no doubt “triggered mental processes and adverse shifts in vulnerable and non-vulnerable individuals,” as confirmed by a survey carried out by the Dianeosis think-tank in Greece. The study was based on data drawn from the country’s psychological support helpline 10306. As every big change tends to transform the ground we stand on into quicksand, the traumatized self can often veer into uncontrolled territory, often resulting in a trail of horror and death.

In the case of Greece, the coronavirus outbreak came in the wake of a lengthy financial crisis already considered as the cause of a nationwide de-



pression, as it were. In this case, fear, combined with grief and surprise, have created an explosive mix that triggers pathological anxiety and painful depression.

The emotional mood ushered by the pandemic is extremely unhealthy and the psychological impact is becoming all the more unpredictable.

The issue of mental health is as pressing as the economy, the labor market and national security. Democracies cannot survive or prosper unless they realize that mental pain requires support and treatment; unless they understand the need for a public health system that can provide patients with help and meaningful prospects.

Mental health hotlines and other technologically advanced services are certainly welcome and necessary, but they are not enough.

The pressure cooker has been boiling for some years now. The rattling valve will occasionally give in to the pressure, giving way to acts of unthinkable violence. Families and communities will sweep under the rug individual actions that evidently pose a threat to society.

Every man reacts to the challenge of the time in their own way. However, every manifestation of an ailing condition – from crude cynicism to delinquency, and from profound cruelty to furor – can easily remove that safety valve. And that’s when the mental issue becomes a social and, eventually, political issue.

Scotland to Athens in 7 weeks - on a bike



Even after hundreds of miles into his two-wheel journey, Kleon Papadimitriou says he still wasn't sure he'd make it home. The 20-year-old Greek college student had been stuck in Scotland, where he studied, with no way to return to Athens while flights were shut down due to the pandemic.

So he decided to bike the roughly 3,500-kilometer route instead.

"It's just now dawning on me how big of an achievement this was," he says of his 48-day journey. "And I did learn a lot of things about myself, about my limits, about my strengths and my weaknesses. And I'd say I really hope that the trip inspired at least one more person to go out of their comfort zone and try something new, something big."

Papadimitriou, now about to embark on his third year of studies at the University of Aberdeen, says it was in the last few days of March when he decided to look for an earlier flight home, in hopes of beating the rapidly spreading effects of coronavirus across Europe. Most of his friends had already left, but he says he lingered back to make sure he wouldn't miss any lessons. He booked three flights -- but all were canceled.

"By the first of April I knew that I would spend at least the next month in quarantine in Aberdeen," he said.

But then he got his idea. Canned sardines, a bike and a tent

Stuck thousands of miles away from his family and itching for an adventure, Papadimitriou says he began researching what it would take to make the trip on two wheels. He says he had competed in a race in 2019 and had briefly trained this year for several weeks -- but that was about all the biking experience he carried with him.

Initially, he says the idea was more of a "pipe dream." But soon he began purchasing the equipment he'd need. He purchased a bike, told his friends and broke the news to his parents. They agreed, he says, mostly because "they thought it was just an idea that I would eventually let go of."

His dad offered one condition for the trip: they'd set up an app which would allow his family to be able to constantly track him and know where he is. On May 10, armed with canned sardines, peanut butter and bread, a sleeping bag, a tent and equipment for his bike, he began his journey.

Dozens of miles each day. Papadimitriou told CNN he'd travel anywhere between 35 to 75 miles per day, crossing initially through England and then onto the Netherlands. He biked along the Rhine in Germany for several days, passed through Austria and cycled down along the eastern coast of Italy before he took a boat to the Greek port of Patras -- and from there biked to his Athens neighborhood.

Throughout his trip, he'd set up camp in fields and forests. He spent the last few moments of each day writing down his progress, tracking the next day's path and checking in with family and friends. As the weeks passed, he said more people caught word of his journey and tuned in, receiving updates from his friends and family. While he made his way through different countries in Europe, Papadimitriou says he would sometimes reach out to friends or acquaintances who would offer a bed and a shower -- a sweet alternative to his usually woody overnight stops. "As a relatively introverted person, I was forced to kind of get out of my comfort zone in the sense that if I did not do some things, I would not have a place to stay, I would not have water," he said. "It forced me to kind of have those interactions and reach out."

On June 27, nearly 50 days since he first got on the road, he arrived back home, where his family along with dozens of friends -- as well as complete strangers who had been tracking his progress -- were waiting to celebrate his arrival. "It was very emotional," he said. "Coming from a family from two parents that were very adventurous in their younger years, seeing me kind of follow in their footsteps, I think is very emotional to them and obviously gives me a lot of meaning." But I think if anything, they felt relief," he added.

'Set the bar really high' Now back in Greece, Papadimitriou has left Athens to work a summer job and says he's still reflecting on his seven-week bike ride. "I think I improved as a person, I'm more confident in myself, I'm more confident in my abilities," he says. "If I didn't know that I've done the trip and you asked me now if I could it, I would say no, how could I do all those things?" But yet, knowing he successfully completed what he set out to do, Papadimitriou says he's now looking forward to the "next big thing."

And he's got a piece of advice for those who (rightly) think a 48-day bike trip is a huge undertaking. "When you set the bar really high and you attempt to reach a really ambitious goal, whether you achieve it or you don't, you will have improved," he said.

"You will learn things about yourself and you will surprise yourself."

Traffickers used sailboats to ferry migrants to Italy



Greek police have arrested six people who were trafficking migrants from Greece to Italy using sailboats and were searching for five more suspects, police said Saturday.

One suspect was arrested Friday offshore from the island of Corfu, the Greek island closest to the Italian mainland, on a sailboat that carried 23 migrants and was headed to Italy. The others were arrested in Athens.

Police say members of the trafficking ring had bought at least four sailboats, 10 to 15 meters (32 to 49 feet) in length, each capable of carrying a minimum of 15 migrants. The boats were registered in the names of Bulgarian citizens who were not the actual owners.

The ring, active at least since June 2019, moved the sailboats around in Greek marinas to avoid detection, police said. At least three trips to Italy, including Friday's, have been established but there may have been more, police say.

The trafficking ring members transported the migrants to Corfu in groups of three or four by car or bus to avoid raising suspicions and paid for their lodging at local hotels. Each migrant had to pay 5,500 euros (\$6,280) for the trip, police said.



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Athens mulls options for defense boost



Faced with growing Turkish aggression in the Eastern Mediterranean, Greece is keen to move forward with plans to boost its defense capabilities with talks between Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and French President Emmanuel Macron so far having focused on the acquisition of two state-of-the-art Belh@rra frigates. The key obstacle to a deal, which would secure the delivery of the first frigate in 2024 and the second after that, is the price tag of 3 billion euros, given Greece's current fiscal constraints.

Greece's coffers will allow it to pay off the frigates in annual installments of no more than 300 million euros, Kathimerini understands.

The advantages of the French vessels are the technological superiority they would give Greece over the countries in the region, including Turkey, which is constantly ratcheting up its territorial claims and expanding its plans for hydrocarbon exploration, notably with its accord with Libya which encroaches on Greece's continental shelf. The negative aspect of the French deal is that the vessels would be constructed entirely in France, depriving Greek shipyards of lucrative work. In the meantime, Greece's priority is to ensure that its existing navy and air force fleets are ready to head off a possible challenge by Turkey. With this in mind, missile procurements are under way and deals are in the works for the support of weapons systems for fighter jets and helicopters as well as drones.

Another priority for the Hellenic Navy is upgrading four MEKO-type frigates for which there is American interest. This foresees an upgrade of the four frigates by Lockheed Martin and the construction of four new MMCS frigates by 2025.

Compromise and honorable understanding



There's an ocean separating what Greeks understand by the term "compromise" and what is understood in other parts of the West.

In Greece, compromise means concession and retreat – in short, defeat. It is seen as such from personal relationships and commercial transactions all the way to the management of international relations, where a compromise may even be misconstrued as a sellout or even a national betrayal. Compromise is rarely seen as a process of understanding, but rather as absolute concession to the other's position, even when the facts do not support such an assessment.

It is common in Greece for politicians to accuse each other of giving everything to the other side or to demand they their rivals are brought to task for accepting certain terms in order to reach an agreement.

In the United States, in contrast, I would hear politicians happily announcing that they had reached a compromise that would allow some project or another to go forward, albeit not exactly as they would have hoped for. They would see its actual realization as a much better outcome than it never getting off the ground. The issue was to get an agreement, even if this fell a bit short of expectations.

In Greece, a compromise is perceived as a victory for the other side – elsewhere in the West, the exact opposite is true. A compromise signifies that you convinced your rival to accept many of your positions.

In diplomacy, as in commerce, agreements are the product of a mutually accepted compromise that ensures benefits for both sides. Greece has repeatedly and via different governments made clear that it will not cede any of its sovereign or territorial rights, that it will not accept a dishonorable or exploitative compromise.

At the same time, successive Greek governments have been publicly stating their willingness to discuss and reach an honorable understanding, based on international law. This should be the compass of Greece's approach. Grasp what such an understanding means, embrace it, and follow it steadfastly. Peaceful resolution of differences between rivals, as actually between friends, can only be accomplished through a process of understanding. In any case, given how sensitive the period we are going through is, we should avoid dismissing somebody's positions or proposals too hastily, making glib accusations and, most importantly, challenging others' sense of patriotism.



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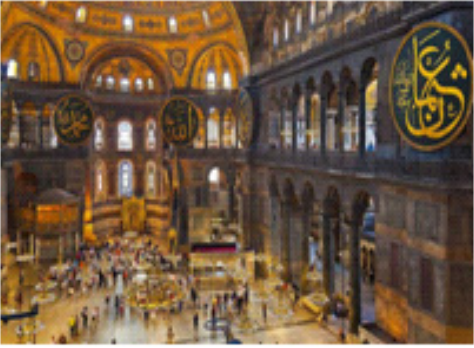
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NEWS FROM GREECE

AHI: US appeasement of Turkey must end



The American Hellenic Institute (AHI), a non-profit Greek American think tank, has called on the US Administration and Congress to express outrage at Turkey's reconversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque.

AHI released the following statement late Friday:

The American Hellenic Institute (AHI) strongly condemns Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's formal action that changes Hagia Sophia from a museum into a mosque. The Congress and the Secretary of State must vocally and unambiguously express the outrage of the American people at this sordid act.

"Members of the U.S. Congress, in both chambers, and Administration officials, who profess to be persons of faith and advocates of religious freedom must immediately implement every policy at their disposal to demonstrate that this act is intolerable," AHI President Nick Larigakis said.

Hagia Sophia is a UNESCO World Heritage Site of "outstanding universal value." By this deplorable act, Turkey adds to its pattern of rejecting international norms, international institutions, laws, and treaties. Erdogan has exiled from the political and social life of Turkey any notion of religious tolerance.

Organizations such as AHI have repeatedly publicized the fact that Turkey is erasing its religious and cultural heritage by suppressing of the freedom of its religious minorities to worship as they see proper. In a February 11, 2020 statement, AHI condemned a Turkish administrative court's ruling in which the court that denigrated Turkey's Christian heritage. AHI presciently stated that, "The decision is an ominous precedent for any church that later served as a mosque, particularly Hagia Sophia." Today, Erdogan has made this prediction a reality.

AHI has long maintained that Turkey violates U.S. principles and law on freedom of religion as they are set forth in Section 2804 of the FY98 Omnibus Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act (PL 105-277). This law calls for the Turkish government to safeguard the Ecumenical Patriarchate, its personnel, and its property, and to reopen the Halki Patriarchal School of Theology.

Furthermore, Turkey violates every tenet of the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA). The IRFA mandates that the President hold Turkey accountable for such violations. The President make take one or more of 15 enumerated actions against a country which so blatantly acts against religious freedom.

When the United States International Commission on Religious Freedom (USCIRF) issued its 2020 report

on Turkey, AHI contended Turkey should have been designated as a "country of particular concern." Today's action by President Erdogan further justifies that designation for Turkey in the Commission's report next year.

The United States' and international community's appeasement of Turkey must end. Otherwise, Turkey will continue with its provocative acts, such as today's reconversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque, which are egregious and without fear of repercussion.

EU leaders groping for a solution to re-



covery fund impasse

New proposals on the recovery fund are expected today, the second day of the EU summit, to address the concerns of Austria and the Netherlands, who insist that the disposal of funds should be unanimously agreed, instead of by qualified majority, as most of the other countries want.

On Friday, the 27 EU members failed to agree on fundamental issues, such as the size of the fund, on how much of the aid should be given as loans or grants and on the conditions for disbursing the aid.

The summit restarted at 11 a.m. Brussels time. Ahead of it, European Council President met with French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the Prime Ministers of Italy and Spain Giuseppe Conte and Pedro Sanchez and EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte and, to a lesser extent, his Austrian colleague, Sebastian Kurz, appeared ready Friday to veto a decision if their tough terms for use of the recovery fund — unanimity, conditionality of loans, no grants if possible — were not adopted.

Minister: Russian statement on Hagia Sophia 'almost hostile'



Alternate Migration and Asylum Minister Giorgos Koumoutsakos said Sunday a Russian spokesman's statement on Hagia Sophia Friday was "almost hostile".

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Friday, in a radio interview, that Turkey's decision to reconvert the iconic Hagia Sophia Byzantine cathedral in Istanbul to a mosque would not harm relations between Moscow and

Ankara and that he understood the move is an internal affair.

Hagia Sophia, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, had been a museum since 1934. It was a Christian church, the Byzantine Empire's most important one, from the 6th to the 15th centuries, and a mosque from 1453.

"There were rather expensive tickets to Hagia Sophia, but now there will be no tickets, admission will be free. In this regard, our tourists will win," Peskov said.

"This statement was almost a hostile one," Koumoutsakos, a former diplomat, said in a TV interview Saturday. He added that Ankara's decision intentionally poisoned relations with Greece and said the European Union must take faster steps to counter Turkish provocations, of which Hagia Sophia's status is just one.

The EU's Turkish 'vaccination'



Erdogan's Turkey is offering the European Union a valuable opportunity to develop into a substantial power, to prove that, as the United States withdraws from the international scene and China is on the rise, the countries of Europe are determined to secure peace and prosperity through consensus and democracy. For the EU to achieve this, though, it must show that besides its "soft power" it is ready to defend its security, and that of the broader region, by all means necessary.

Turkey's growing belligerence might just provoke the reaction which will strengthen the EU's member-states before they have to face even greater challenges. Turkey, in other words, could serve as a "vaccination" that will accelerate European defense cooperation. This will, in turn, strengthen EU diplomacy so that it can meet more serious threats.

The Turkish challenge is useful because although very real, it is, to a great extent, the result of European tolerance and blissful indifference. If the European Union imposes its own conditions on Turkey, the threat will be limited; if the appeasement of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan continues, then the member-states will show that they do not have the will to defend their security, their principles and their quality of life. They will prove that they are open to every threat.

Following Brexit, France is the EU's greatest military power. President Emmanuel Macron understands the need to meet the Turkish challenge head-on, whereas NATO appears indifferent to the fact that its boundless tolerance of Turkey's behavior is threatening the alliance's cohesion. If European defense cooperation does not develop, the EU members' security and economic prospects will be

threatened. If France gains support in its clash with Turkey — as Greece did at the beginning of the year at its borders — then all of Europe gains. Otherwise, the whole of Europe loses.

Germany is now called on to play a leading role in reinforcing Europe's defense, in addition to strengthening its economy through greater solidarity among members. Greece's contribution to greater security will be to stay clear-headed in the face of provocations, to treat migrants and refugees with humanity, to present realistic proposals for the region's stability.

Turkey must be forced to act like an EU member rather than being allowed to dictate the terms of its relationship with the bloc.

Privatizations earn Greece a billion euros per year



Greece's privatization program has boosted the country's GDP by about 1 billion euros annually on average in the period 2011-2019, according to a survey released this week by the Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE).

Over the same period, the average impact on employment was close to 20,000 full-time jobs, researchers estimated, according to an e-mailed press statement issued by the Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund (TAIPED).

The strong positive socio-economic impact of the privatization program on the Greek economy during a particularly difficult period for the country, according to the study, is not limited to the time of completion of each transaction but extends to the future and in many cases strengthens over time, resulting in significantly more robust economic activity.

Experts noted that the new shareholders have brought significant investments and changes to the business model, pointing to the privatization of the Piraeus Port Authority (OLP) as a case in point.

China's Cosco Shipping acquired a majority stake in OLP in 2016 following an international tender and has already started changing the

The Chinese company's subsidiary Piraeus Container Terminal (PCT) has been managing the port's container terminals since 2009, posting remarkable results as well.

"The privatization of Greece's largest port has already led to a tremendous increase in the volume of transported containers, leading it to 4th place in Europe (from 17th place in 2007) and 1st place in the Mediterranean Sea," read TAIPED's press release.

PM faces battle on two fronts at EU summit



Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis faced a battle on two fronts at Friday's European Union leaders' summit in Brussels, the first physical meeting in the era of the coronavirus, determined to secure Greece's share of a European recovery fund for the fallout of the pandemic, while also pushing his peers for a stern response to growing Turkish aggression.

According to a Greek government source, Mitsotakis called on EU leaders to take a clear position and institute "tough sanctions" against Turkey in response to its continuing provocations against Greece and Cyprus.

Referring to Turkish transgressions in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Greek premier reportedly stressed that Turkey should not be permitted to violate the sovereign rights of two member-states without meeting with a strong reaction. Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades struck a similar note.

Mitsotakis also referred to the Turkish government's provocative decision to convert the UNESCO World Heritage site of Hagia Sophia into a mosque, saying that it demonstrates Ankara's regard for international agreements, the notion of mutual respect and interfaith dialogue.

He also called for EU-Turkey relations to be discussed at greater length. It later emerged that EU leaders had accepted a proposal by European Council President Charles Michel for a special session on the EU's strategic relationship with Turkey in September.

Earlier in the day, Mitsotakis referred to the recovery fund, stressing the need for a deal to be reached without delay. Over the past three months, EU leaders made strides in coming up with an "ambitious response" to the Covid-19 crisis, he said, adding that "there is absolutely no reason why we can't get a deal done at this summit." "What is at stake are the principles of European unity and European solidarity," he said.

The outcome of the summit, which is to continue on Saturday and possibly also on Sunday, was unclear. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, whose country holds the EU's rotating presidency, admitted on Friday that "very large differences" remain and that the negotiations would be "difficult."

French President Emmanuel Macron said EU leaders were obliged to strive for a compromise that supports those harder hit by the financial fallout of the pandemic, while Michel said a deal would require "political courage."

Face mask made obligatory in supermarkets as of Saturday



Supermarket employees and customers will have to wear face masks as of Saturday (July 18), according to a joint ministerial

decision issued on Friday.

The news was announced by the Secretary General of Commerce and Consumer, Panagiotis Stampoulidis.

Those not wearing masks face a fine of 150 euros.

"It shouldn't be difficult to apply the measure," said Deputy Minister of Development and Investments Nikos Papathanasis.

Wearing a mask at supermarkets by customers had been recommended, but not enforced, until now.

Turkey seen undermining global heritage

The decree issued on Friday by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for the re-conversion of Istanbul's former Greek Orthodox cathedral of Hagia Sophia into a mosque was seen as a message to both a domestic and international audience. Erdogan said in an address to the Turkish nation on Friday evening that the first prayers at the Hagia Sophia will take place on July 24.



Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias, during a teleconference with colleagues in the European People's Party ahead of Monday's Foreign Affairs Council, described the decision to change Hagia Sophia's status from a museum as a challenge to global culture and UNESCO. Erdogan's move came just hours after the decision of Turkey's top administrative court, which annulled the November 24, 1934 law of the government of the country's secular founder Kemal Ataturk, with which Hagia Sophia was originally turned into a museum.

Shortly after the Turkish court's ruling was announced, Erdogan signed a decree turning Hagia Sophia into a mosque, transferring it to the State Directorate of Religious Affairs, which is also responsible for places of worship in Turkey.

Then in quick succession, the decision was made public in the government gazette, indicating the speed with which Erdogan wanted the conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque to proceed. Even the accounts of Hagia Sophia, a UNESCO World Heritage site, on social networks that presented it under its previous status were almost immediately scrapped. Although the Hagia Sophia case is not a Greek-Turkish dispute, the issue is expected to make it even more difficult for Athens and Ankara to establish effective and candid channels of communication. However, Friday's decision did not catch Greece by surprise, especially after the reading of the Islamic prayers in Hagia Sophia during the anniversary celebrations of the Fall of Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) on May 29.

Erdogan's move, which cancels a highly symbolic decision by Ataturk in the context of the secularization of Turkish society, was seen as a message to his critics at home who in recent days questioned his determination to go through with the conversion, given the intense pressure from Washington, Moscow and Brussels.

The move also met the demands of extremist radical Islamic elements in Turkey. The presidential decree was read in the Turkish National Assembly to a standing ovation from deputies of the ruling AKP and the ultra-nationalist MHR, who are part of the governing coalition. Similar enthusiasm was shown by groups gathered outside the Hagia Sophia.

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Nikos Konstandaras NIKOS KONSTANDARAS

Wretched relics or her-alds of a dark future?

The special relationship between Donald Trump and Recep Tayyip Erdogan is a throwback to the distant past, when powerful men decided the fate of



nations without giving account to anyone else. The Turkish president appears to be playing his American counterpart, by-passing all US services and institutions. One would have expected these revelations by reporting legend Carl Bernstein to have alarmed even Trump’s supporters. And yet the issue

seems to have been forgotten after a couple of days, as if most people now expect such behavior. This raises the question: Are these leaders sad relics of the past or heralds of a dark future?

A few years ago the question would have been unthinkable. But Trump, Vladimir Putin, Erdogan, Jair Bolsonaro and others have shown that autocratic behavior, brutal hostility toward human rights, rivals and experts, combined with incessant propaganda and bigotry, are leading us back to the age that preceded the multidimensional system of international governance and cooperation. China, with its one-party state, is a special case. At one point it seemed to be working toward filling the void left by the United States in the global system of governance; today it is acting with ever greater self-confidence, indifferent to the reactions of anyone else. It is exploiting the prevailing climate, strengthening further the feeling that we are entering a period of “strong men” and brutal behavior.

Today’s supporters of autocratic government are all men. It is no coincidence that (according to Bernstein’s revelations) Trump is most condescending toward women, as when addressing Theresa May and Angela Merkel, leaders of the United States’ closest allies. His behavior seems to be determined solely by how he feels about those he is talking to: He has a special weakness for “tough guys,” for those who are indifferent to the rights of their own people and others; he bullies those who care about details such as expertise, rights and cooperation.

Technology today empowers a small number of people to control the rest of us. That is why it is imperative that the American citizens react against Trump, that the liberal democracies of the European Union ally themselves immediately against Erdogan and others who would trample on rules and institutions. If they do not, a miserable future is inevitable.

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Hagia Sophia: World Council of Churches appeals to Turkey on mosque decision



Image caption The Hagia Sophia opens for Muslim prayer on 24 July
The World Council of Churches has called on Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to reverse his decision to turn the celebrated Hagia Sophia museum back into a mosque.

In a letter to Mr Erdogan, the Council, which counts 350 churches as members, said the move would sow division. The Unesco World Heritage site in Istanbul has been a museum since 1934. The president announced his decision on Friday following a court ruling which annulled its museum status. The Hagia Sophia was built 1,500 years ago as an Orthodox Christian cathedral, but was converted into a mosque after the Ottoman conquest in 1453. It was converted to a museum on the orders of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founding father of modern, secular Turkey.

Since then religious services have been banned at the site, but devout Muslims have long campaigned for worship to be allowed.

What does the letter say? The Geneva-based World Council of Churches says it represents more than 500 million Christians. The letter is from Ioan Sauca, interim general secretary, who says the Council feels "grief and dismay". "By deciding to convert the Hagia Sophia back to a mosque you have reversed that positive sign of Turkey's openness and changed it to a sign of exclusion and division." He writes that the decision "will inevitably create uncertainties, suspicions and mistrust, undermining all our efforts to bring people of different faiths together at the table of dialogue and co-operation". "In the interests of promoting mutual understanding, respect, dialogue and co-operation, and avoiding cultivating old animosities and divisions, we urgently appeal to you to reconsider and reverse your decision," the letter continues.

What has President Erdogan said?
The case was decided by the Council of State, Turkey's highest administrative body, following a petition from an NGO - the Association for the Protection of Historic Monuments and the Environment. It argued that the building had been the private property of Ottoman Sultan Mehmed, responsible for turning the church into a mosque. The issue has highlighted the clash between those who want Turkey to remain secular, and President Erdogan's conservative religious base. He defended his decision on Friday by stressing that the country had exercised its sovereign right in converting the building back to a mosque. The first Muslim prayers would be held on 24 July. "Like all our mosques, the doors of Hagia Sophia will be wide open to locals and foreigners, Muslims and non-Muslims," he said. Today Turkey had "435 churches and synagogues open for worship",.

Unesco expressed deep regret at the move and called for Turkey to open dialogue "without delay." The head of the Eastern Orthodox Church has condemned the move. Greece, home to many millions of Orthodox followers, called it an "open provocation to the civilised world". The Church in Russia, home to the world's largest Orthodox Christian community, immediately expressed regret that the Turkish court had not taken its concerns into account when ruling on Hagia Sophia.

Hagia Sophia's complex history began in the year 537 when Byzantine emperor Justinian built the huge church overlooking the Golden Horn harbour. With its huge dome, it was believed to be the world's largest church and building. It remained in Byzantine hands for centuries apart from a brief moment in 1204 when Crusaders raided the city. In 1453, in a devastating blow to the Byzantines, Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II captured Istanbul (formerly known as Constantinople) and the victorious conqueror performed Friday prayers inside Hagia Sophia. The Ottomans soon converted the building into a mosque, adding four minarets to the exterior and covering ornate Christian icons and gold mosaics with panels of Arabic religious calligraphy.

Markets are mistaken, the new normal is here to stay



Medical personnel wait to examine people for Covid-19 in Athens, Friday.
Pandemic response. The economic recovery will not be until 2024-25 at the earliest, and bigger government is one of the long-term changes now under way.

We are in a crisis. Nobody would deny that. At some point we will all face the reality that disruption is with us for some time. The largest social disruption in the US since the 1960s, sparked by the racially charged and tragic killing of George Floyd. The worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. The greatest public health threat since the Spanish flu.

All connected, all amplifying each other. Yet we have reopened, through policy and protest alike. And no matter how uncomfortable it may make us, we must understand and challenge this "new normal" accordingly.

Markets, which we have come to view as all-encompassing judges of risk and opportunity, are reading this crisis wrong. Sharemarket optimism should be ignored. Its high-flying mood is nothing more than a punt on the flow of free money.

First, the economy. Just as they did after the 2008 scare, consumers are loading up their savings – so economies won't likely get off their backs on consumer spending. We may well get a fairly brisk recovery in places where public finance can be wheeled in freely and to effect. In already overloaded debtor nations, that will only make matters worse.

All up, I expect a credit crash in the next economic wave. The virus is still spreading and in some places it will run amok. Thankfully that is not the case in Greece but as the borders open to tourists the situation will have to be monitored closely. The extent of that risk is so great that we really can't assume pre-Covid-19 mobility before we achieve near universal immunity, presumably from a vaccine.

Given the time required to confirm the safety of a vaccine and to then produce it in vast quantities, I think the earliest we can expect a low point or base in this crisis is 2023. The earliest recovery would then be in 2024-25. Even this picture relies on big ifs. Such as: if we get a true vaccine, which itself is no small challenge, made tougher by Covid-19 mutations that effectively require specific vaccines. Changes that have already occurred in our lives are likely to be baked in

Travel, for example, won't go back to the way it was for a very long time. So tourism will be different. Countries like Greece, that rely on tourism, will have to adapt. Mass tourism will go away so the new model will need to be one of prioritizing quality over quantity. In fact, a whole range of human, consumer and business behaviors of a sustained kind are under way.

Covid-19 accelerated the digital effect, boosting the interactions and commerce of digital means to levels a long way above the pre-pandemic experience.

Work has changed. In Greece and elsewhere pandemic containment measures have fallen heavily on those who work in customer-experience roles such as hospitality, travel and tourism. These often are also minimum-wage jobs, their loss creating profound effects for people who have few options.

We simply have to act to protect people most affected by the pandemic, not least because other forces at work will heighten risks to their welfare. The United States and China were already headed for collision, and Covid-19 has made matters worse. China wants global leadership, but not for a mutual benefit.

That is a simple choice for US or Chinese companies, but tough for countries such as Australia and Canada and even tougher for countries like Greece. Their choices will be made harder by the fact that the US is likely to focus on its own interests for at least a decade or two. In the end, most Western-based companies prefer the American way of doing things. For the West, however, I think capitalism and democracy are going to have a sort of divorce after what has been a very much market-defined marriage. Governments are going to have a big role. They must step in to deal with schisms and inequality that are a blight on society.

They must underwrite strong, accessible health and education systems. They must act to manage outcomes for the wider community, to give citizens a fair share of what can be a highly prosperous period.

A new innovation agenda in countries responding to the Covid-19 impact will do better than we have done in creating new work, valuable work that engages technology and skills in ways that are both sustainable and rewarding. Personally, I have been encouraged by the Covid-19 experience in its stimulation of community. People protecting each other. People acting for the common good. People taking time to share and help at a basic human level. We've learnt we can count on community. It's a powerful idea. Now we can act also on the other big issues. We can take care of the planet. And we can work on organizing society for balance and fairness and opportunity.