

national hellenic FREE PRESS

VOL. 44

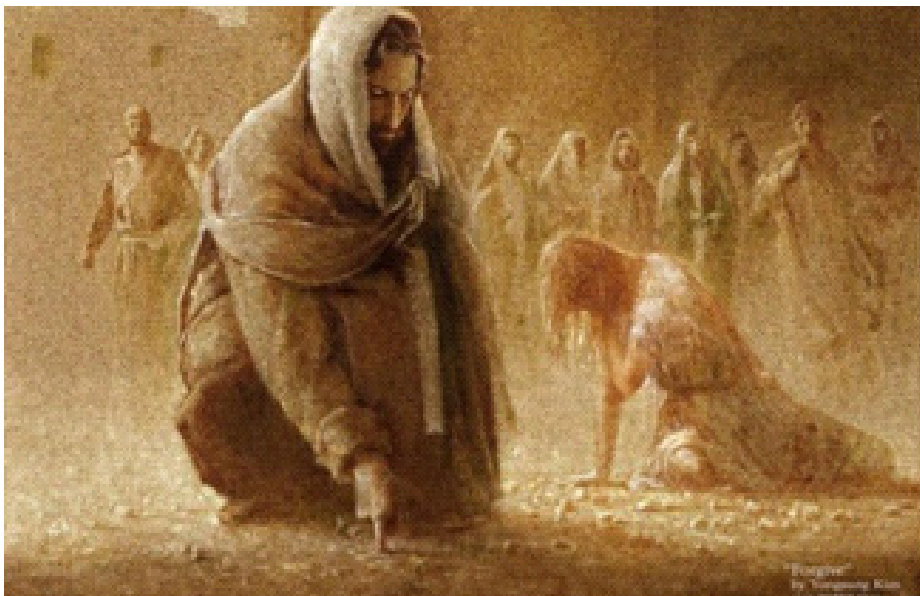
NO. 416

CHICAGO, IL.

JANUARY, 2021

Did Jesus Christ Write Anything?

Louis A. Palivos



During the live radio program with Mr. Rekoumis, on December 21, 2020, a woman asked the question, “Did Jesus Christ write anything, and in what language?” There is evidence from the Holy Scripture and from Tradition that the Lord Jesus Christ wrote, probably in Greek, Aramaic, or Hebrew. The Lord Jesus Christ wrote twice with his finger on the ground and once to Abgarus, Ruler of Edessa, Syria, today in modern Turkey.

Holy Scripture

There was a woman who was caught in the act of adultery. This woman was brought by The Scribes and the Pharisees, Jewish leaders, to the Lord Jesus Christ. They said to Him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?” This they said, testing Him, that they might have *something* of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with *His* finger, as though He did not hear. So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.” And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard *it*, being convicted by *their* conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest *even* to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.” Jn. 8:4-11

This is the only time in Holy Scripture that the Lord Jesus Christ wrote with his finger twice on the ground. Obviously, He wrote in a language that was understood by the Scribes and the Pharisees. At that time, they spoke Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic. Jesus question provoked them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her,” exposing their filthy conscious from the eldest to the youngest of their sinful nature which compelled them to drop the stone. They were ready to execute this sinful

(Continue p. 2)

Biden inauguration: How the White House gets ready for a new president



The last vestiges of the Trump presidency will be swept away on Wednesday, as the Bidens move into the White House. Desks will have been cleared out, rooms scrubbed clean and the president's aides will be replaced by a new team of political appointees. It's part of the massive transformation that a new presidency brings to the heart of government. One evening last week, Stephen Miller, a policy adviser and central figure in the Trump White House, was lounging in the West Wing.

Miller, who has crafted speeches and policies for the president since his early days in office, is also one of the few members of the president's initial team still with him at the end. Leaning against a wall and chatting with colleagues about a meeting scheduled for later that day, he seemed in no hurry to leave.

The West Wing usually hums with activity but it seemed deserted. The phones were quiet. Desks in empty offices were cluttered with papers and unopened letters, as if people had left in a hurry and would not be coming back. Dozens of senior officials and aides quit in the wake of the Capitol riots on 6 January. A handful of loyalists, like Miller, remain.

As the conversation began to wind down, he broke away from his colleagues. When I asked him where he was headed next, he smiled. "Back to my office," he said and sauntered down the hall.

'It's very rocky'

On inauguration day, Miller's office will have been cleaned out, swept of signs that he and his colleagues had ever been there, ready for the Biden team to move in. The cleaning out of West Wing offices, and the transition between presidents, is part of a tradition that dates back centuries. It's a process that has not always been imbued with warmth.

Another impeached president, Andrew Johnson, a Democrat, snubbed Republican Ulysses S Grant in 1869 and skipped the inauguration. Grant, who had backed Johnson's removal from office, was hardly surprised.

This year, however, the transition stands out for its acrimony. The process usually starts straight after the election, but it started weeks late after Trump refused to accept the result. And the president has said he will not attend the inauguration. Most likely, he will instead travel to his Mar-a-Lago

(Continued p.2)

NATIONAL HELLENIC
FREE PRESS

PUBLISHER
SOTIRIS REKOUMIS
EDITOR
DENISE REKOUMIS
LAYOUTS
JOHN REKOUMIS
CONTRIBUTORS

DR. STAVROS BASSEAS, JOHN REKOUMIS,
DENISE REKOUMIS, DR JORDAN TSOLAKIDIS,
CHRIS MERENTITIS DR. LOUIS PALIVOS

THE PLATFORM OF THE GREEK PRESS

- 1.To applaud the achievements of our ethnic group
- 2.To support the ideas of the Hellenic-Christian tradition
- 3.To promote the preservation of the Greek language
- 4.To encourage all worthy Community causes
- 5 To assist all the Greek-American fraternal, cultural patriotic and religious organizations
- 6.To install Americanism in the Greek-American community
- 7.To advance the just causes of Hellenism.
8. To promote the ideals Greece has given to humanity.

Did Jesus Christ
Write Anything?

woman with the method of stoning. However, Jesus’ statement pierced each one to their guilty core! Each person was exposed by the writing on the ground of their own sin. Each of their sins would condemn each one to their death. Holy Scripture does not tell us their sins, but a reasonable inference, based on the question and response of each, is that they were each guilty of serious sins deserving death, when they were on the verge of executing the woman. Another reasonable inference is that if each was not guilty of adultery, then each was guilty of a comparable sin for which the penalty was death by stoning.

An Orthodox Bishop wrote that their sins were: stolen treasure from the Temple; adultery with his brother’s wife; perjury; struck his father; sodomy; and worshiping of idols.¹

The Lord Jesus Christ’s words that He wrote on the dirt ground would soon be erased. However, each of the Scribes and Pharisees sins would be a secret between the One who knows all of their secrets and themselves, who were all guilty and deserving death.

Tradition

Eusebius of Caesarea in his *History of the Church, circa 340 A.D.*, wrote an Epistle that was sent by Abgarus, Ruler of Edessa, Syria, present day Turkey, via his courier, Ananias, to the Lord Jesus Christ. Abgarus begged the Lord Jesus Christ to come to Edessa; because, he had an incurable disease and asked to be healed. Here is the language of the two Epistles:

Abgarus, ruler Of Edessa, to Jesus the excellent Savior who has appeared in the country of Jerusalem, greeting. I have heard the reports of thee and of thy cures as performed by thee without medicines or herbs. For it is said that thou makest the blind to see and the lame to walk, that thou cleansest lepers and castest out impure spirits and demons, and that thou healest those afflicted with lingering disease, and raisest the dead. And having heard all these things concerning thee, I have concluded that one of two things must be true: either thou art God, and having come down from heaven thou doest these things, or else thou, who doest these things, art the Son of God. I have

therefore written to thee to ask thee that thou wouldst take the trouble to come to me and heal the disease which I have. For I have heard that the Jews are murmuring against thee and are plotting to injure thee. But I have a very small yet noble city which is great enough for us both. So come to Me, dear friend Jesus, stay in my city and in my country! Here the whole world will come to You and praise You loves. I am waiting for you with

great anticipation in my heart! The answer of Jesus to the ruler Abgarus by the courier Ananias. “Blessed art thou who hast believed in me without having seen me. For it is written concerning me, that they who have seen me will not believe in me, and that they who have not seen me will believe and be saved. But in regard to what thou hast written that I should come to thee, it is necessary for me to fulfill all things here for which I have been sent, and after I have fulfilled them thus to be taken up again to him that sent me. But after I have been taken up I will send to thee one of my

Did Jesus Christ
Write Anything?

disciples, that he may heal thy disease and give life to thee and thine.”

Eusebius further wrote that after the Lord Jesus Christ’s Ascension, His Disciple, Judas also called Thomas, sent Thaddeus, one of the Seventy Disciples, to Abgarus. Thaddeus, placed his hands on Abgarus and in Jesus’ name healed him. Abgarus marveled that he was healed without medicine or herbs, but by the mercy of Jesus Christ.

A Greek Author further wrote that Thaddeus also brought the Holy Mandylion to Abgarus. This Holy Mandylion contains the blood and sweat of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Garden of Getheseme. The Lord Jesus Christ used the Mandylion to clean his blood and sweat that left his face imprint on it. Tradition traces the Holy Mandylion from Thomas to Thaddeus to Constantinople to General Montaldo to Genoa, Italy.²

In closing, there is Biblical evidence that the Lord Jesus Christ wrote with His finger on the ground twice. Also, there is extra Biblical evidence that He replied to Abgarus’ Epistle. Both of these writings were, probably, in Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew, or Syrian.

1. Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich of Orchrid, *What was Christ’s Writing on the Ground?*, Orthodox Life, 1985, No. 2.
2. Angelo Panagiotis Sakketos, *Jesus Christ, Hellenism-Christianity*, Liakopoulos, Thessalonika, Greece, 2004.

Biden inauguration: How the
White House gets ready for a
new president

club in Florida. Still, the handover is taking place, just as it has in the past. "The system is holding," says Sean Wilentz, a professor of American history at Princeton University. "It's very rocky, it's very bumpy, but nevertheless the transition is going to occur."

Even in the best of times, the logistics of a transition are daunting, involving the transfer of knowledge and employees on a massive scale.

Stephen Miller is just one of 4,000 political appointees hired by the Trump administration who will lose their job and be replaced by individuals hired by Mr Biden.

During an average transition, between 150,000-300,000 people apply for these jobs, according to the Center for Presidential Transition, a nonpartisan organisation based in Washington. About 1,100 of the positions also require Senate confirmation. Filling all of these positions takes months, even years.

Four years of policy papers, briefing books and artefacts relating to the president's work will be carted off to the National Archives where they will be kept secret for 12 years, unless the president himself decides that portions may be released early. Will they wear masks? What you need to know about the inauguration

Biden plans decree blitz to dump Trump policies

Moving day

On a weekday evening during Trump's last week in office, the door to the office of Kayleigh McEnany, the president's press secretary, was partly open.

McEnany has been one of the president's most high-profile defenders. Impeccably groomed, she is a precise speaker who maintains her composure amidst chaos. White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnanyimage copyrightReuters

Her office, too, was organised in a meticulous manner, even as she prepared to leave. A mirror stood on her desk, and several fireplace logs were wrapped in clear plastic and packed up.

Generally, the last few days are "controlled chaos," says Kate Andersen Brower, who has written a book about the White House, *The Residence*.

Furniture in the White House, such as the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office, most of the artwork, china and other objects, belong to the government and will remain on the premises. But other items, like photos of the president that hang in the hallway, will be taken down as the White House is transformed for its new occupants.

Staffers are already moving some items out of the building. One White House staffer, a woman in sturdy heels, was lugging several images of First Lady Melania Trump out of the East Wing. The pictures are known as "jumbos" because of their extra-large size, she says, and they will be taken to the National Archives.

The Trumps' personal belongings, such as clothes, jewellery, and other items will be moved to their new residence, most likely at Mar-a-Lago in Florida.

And this year, the place will be deep cleaned.

The president, as well as Mr Miller and dozens of others at the White House, were infected with the coronavirus over the past several months, and the six-floor building, with its 132 rooms, will be thoroughly scrubbed down. Everything from handrails to elevator buttons to restroom fixtures will be wiped and sanitised, according to a spokeswoman for the General Services Administration, the federal agency that oversees the housekeeping effort.

Biden inauguration: How the White House gets ready for a new president

Incoming first families usually do some redecoration. Within days of arriving at the White House, Mr Trump had chosen a portrait of populist president Andrew Jackson for the Oval Office. He also replaced the drapes, couches and a rug in the office with ones that were gold-coloured.

On inauguration day, Vice-President Pence and his wife will also make way for Kamala Harris, and her husband, Doug Emhoff. They will be settling into their official residence, a 19th Century residence on the Naval Observatory grounds, a couple of miles from the White House.

Closing a chapter

Policy adviser Stephen Miller may have lingered in the West Wing, but others were ready to go. At the White House, people were lugging thick manila envelopes, framed photos and bags from a gift shop. "It's my last day," says one man, smiling as he took a photo of his sons on the north lawn. A bulging backpack was slung over his shoulder.

A group of National Security officials posed in front of the West Wing, asking me to take their picture. "Make sure you get the marine guard," says one of the officials, referring to a marine who stands in front of the doorway when the president is in the Oval Office. The officials were in high spirits, joking and vamping for the camera.

The political appointees at the White House were in a good mood for a reason. For weeks, they had been caught in an in-between world. Their boss was denying the validity of the election, but they knew that their days were numbered. Now they could plan openly for their future, and they seemed almost giddy.

One political appointee, a man dressed in a dark suit, was already making plans. He ran into a colleague outside the Palm room, a reception area on the ground floor. "See you on the flip side," he said, brightly. He was referring to the time after the inauguration, when they will both be out of their White House jobs. He mused about where they might meet again. "Hopefully in the Greek isles or somewhere."

"Oh, yes. That is for sure," said his colleague, laughing. They smacked a high-five and then parted ways.

Parliamentary debate on territorial waters extension given extra day



A debate in Parliament on a Foreign Ministry bill extending Greece's territorial waters in the Ionian Sea was granted an additional day, with the vote now expected on Wednesday instead of Tuesday.

According to the Athens-Macedonian News Agency, the discussion was extended to two days from one to give lawmakers wishing to present their position on the issue ample time to do so.

The legislation, Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias said in his opening remarks when presenting the bill, represents the first time that Greece will extend its territorial waters since 1947 and concerns an area of more than 13,000 square kilometers, including the area inside bays.

"Considering that the country's entire area is around 135,000 square kilometers, the scope of this expansion is evident," Dendias said, hailing the opposition parties that supported the legislation at the committee level ahead of the plenary debate.

The legislation, he added, "has an element of historicity and I would like to warmly thank the parties for their cooperation."

The legislation will extend Greece's territorial waters from six to 12 nautical miles along the entire length of the Ionian Sea.

ALEXIS PAPACHELAS The wick is still lit

The citizens of a country were justifiably angry with their political system and leadership. But suddenly they felt an unprecedented feeling of liberation. It was fully accepted that you could verbally abuse or even throw a yogurt at a politician. It was no longer taboo. Suddenly you could "meet" other angry fellow citizens and share your anger. Not in the café, as before, but on Facebook, where nothing was considered extreme or taboo. The crazier, and wilder, the better.

Facebook and YouTube opened new roads for you, almost inexorably. You went in to look for something and next to it they suggested you watch a video that propagated extreme views and some conspiracy theory. The big tech companies did it to make money and because they could measure your anger. They knew where to find customers, where to send them and what to feed them. They did not care at all if their own profit gnawed at democracy, if they circulated hatred and blind fanaticism, if they led some desperate people to acts of violence.

Everything made sense. The Greek bailout was a well-orchestrated scam because some people made money from it, because the Germans wanted the oil in the Aegean Sea, because, because... There were also solutions to the problem, but some people were hiding them. There was cheap money to borrow, even the bond from the Bank of Anatolia. There was no answer to the question of why an entire political system chose to commit suicide by following a plan to blow itself up. And no one cared, to be honest. What mattered was that we had found "paradise": cheap, seemingly convincing conspiracy theories.

In the meantime, some people deconstructed the media, passionately and angrily. They were all, they argued, sellouts and lied to people all the time. The sins of the media were indeed many. But the world of the internet and social media was neither more angelic nor – most importantly – more transparent. On the contrary. Some people built careers. They used the new communication techniques and made the most of people's anger, without limits and without caring where this downhill leads. When they came to power, they understood what we always say: that whoever feeds the beast of unbridled populism gets bitten too. The same responsibility lies with those who once fed the same beast in the form of Bucephalus.

What started here in 2010-11 led to what happened the day before yesterday on Capitol Hill, in Washington, DC. We went through it early. Given the economic crisis, we have shown enormous maturity and resilience. But we need to be careful. In America, they say that Trump is gone but Trumpism will remain. In Greece too, "Trumpism" has spread everywhere, in the form of conspiracy theories, blind rage and anti-systemicism. The wick is still lit and the "fuel," the despair of the new economic crisis and the pandemic, is still plentiful and ready to ignite.



Residential Services



Commercial Services



Emergency Flood Services

Since 1999

DIAMAN

services



Αναλαμβάνουμε επιτόπου οικολογικούς καθαρισμούς:

ΧΑΛΙΩΝ • ΤΑΠΕΤΣΑΡΙΩΝ & ΑΝΑΤΟΛΙΤΙΚΩΝ ΧΑΛΙΩΝ

Ειδικευόμαστε επίσης σε:

- POWER WASHING
- TILE & GROUT CLEANING
- FLOOD RESTORATION

ΚΑΛΕΣΤΕ ΜΑΣ ΓΙΑ ΜΙΑ ΔΩΡΕΑΝ ΕΚΤΙΜΗΣΗ

847 - 366 - 9054

www.DIAMANSERVICESOFCHICAGO.COM

It's my life too, stupid



Seeing people crowding in streets and public squares, and hearing about people gathering at homes in defiance of coronavirus restrictions, you cannot help but ask how stupid can some people be?

Even if you try to understand the people who have doubts about the effectiveness of the Covid-19 vaccine or are afraid of the possible side-effects (their concerns are respected but we ought to follow the instructions of the scientists, the overwhelming majority of whom underscore the exigency of safety measures and mass immunization) there should be absolutely no understanding or tolerance for the irresponsible behavior of Covid deniers. They are unjustified, foolish and dangerous, not just to themselves but, more importantly, to other people who take safety measures, wear masks and choose to stay at home.

At the end of the day, it's not too much to ask people to stay in. Imagine that we had to take refuge inside a shelter because the outside air was contaminated. This is what our response should be to this unprecedented situation. It's a war. Scientists' warnings are the sirens, and our homes are the bunkers.

So it's a war of sorts, and we do what is necessary to save ourselves and protect lives. Only in this case, our life depends not only on our own behavior, but also on that of others. And irresponsible behavior can be criminal. To paraphrase a famous slogan of the Clinton campaign: "It's my life too, stupid."

This phenomenon is not exclusive to Greece, of course, and to be fair, the Greeks have shown a greater level of maturity than many other people on the issue.

Only 40 percent of the French population want to have the coronavirus vaccine, according to a recent poll carried out by Ipsos Global Advisor in partnership with the World Economic Forum. This puts France behind other laggards such as Russia (43%) and South Africa (53%). The most willing to be vaccinated, the poll found, were the Chinese (80%), the Brazilians (78%), the British (77%) and the Americans (70%).

On a more positive note about the outgoing year, we ought to welcome the responsible and mature attitude of Greek political leaders in the management of the pandemic, as demonstrated by their consensus on the issue of inoculation.

We should keep in mind that such a serious and responsible attitude to the pandemic and its management has been sadly missing from many governments and party leaders in other countries, including the world's superpower. TOM ELLIS

President lauds Bekatorou for 'breaking the silence'



prosecutor has invited Bekatorou to make a deposition Wednesday despite the fact that the alleged crime cannot be prosecuted due to the statute of limitations. Judicial authorities are, however, hoping it will encourage other rape victims to come forward.

The world under Biden will not be different than before



US President-elect Joe Biden attends a briefing to deliver remarks on the US response to the coronavirus outbreak, at his transition headquarters in Wilmington, Delaware, on December 29. [Jonathan Ernst/Reuters]

Joe Biden will be the next US president, to the dismay of millions of Americans and the delight of millions more. Supporters and critics alike are expecting the Biden administration to usher in big changes for the world. That's not likely to happen, and for a variety of reasons.

Start with the US at home. November elections proved yet again that this is a country more deeply divided than any other advanced industrial democracy, a particular problem for a country that's supposed to be leading the world order abroad. Left vs right, establishment vs anti-establishment, pandemic worriers vs pandemic skeptics, etc – these political divisions have yielded an American public and political class less interested in being the world's policeman and the military adventurism that requires. These same political divides have also hit the US public's appetite for free trade, as struggling groups in the US have become more focused on securing a bigger piece of the global economic pie for themselves rather than growing the pie larger for everyone. The sum result is a US public that is no longer interested in the type of global leadership the US offered in the latter half of the 20th century on either the economic or security fronts. While Biden will prove to be a less divisive figure than his soon-to-be predecessor, these are structural challenges that no US president could realistically address in a single presidential term (or even two).

But even if the US public and political establishment were keen for the US to reassume its global leadership role, the world itself has changed so tremendously from the late 20th century that it wouldn't make as much difference. The EU remains fixated on its own internal divisions, as ever: Brexit aside, the latest revolves around Hungary and Poland attempting to scuttle the EU Recovery Fund process over political objections to "rule of law" provisions. Russia continues to be a country in decline that sees more value in complicating matters for other geopolitical powers rather than working constructively with them. And then there's China: a global power getting stronger, but one that fundamentally takes issue with the liberal democratic order that shaped the 20th century. But China is in no position to fashion a world order of its own (at least not yet) – China's state-capitalist and authoritarian political models have proven much less appealing as exports than free-market democracy was in the 20th century. The result is a declining liberal world order that continues to struggle to accommodate a rising China, fracturing it even further.

Finally there are those multilateral institutions (think NATO, WHO and the UN Security Council) that make our global order work better together. During his four years in office, Trump correctly identified these institutions' failings and exploited them for his own political purposes at home, but did little to actually fix any of them. At the heart of the matter is that these institutions better reflect the power dynamics of 1950 than 2020; when you add in the fact that many of the world's most pressing long-term challenges today – the rise of China, cyberattacks, climate change, drone warfare and data privacy issues, to name just a few – didn't even exist when these institutions were originally created, you begin to understand the scope of the problem. Biden will certainly help by voicing support and funding multilateral efforts to address these challenges, but these institutions need fundamental and comprehensive reforms, a daunting task under normal circumstances, let alone in the middle of a world-wide pandemic. This is a challenge for a generation of policymakers, not just the next US presidential administration.

The arrival of Joe Biden to the White House matters – much-needed change to diplomatic rhetoric aside, Biden's focus and genuine urgency toward addressing climate change will be very much welcomed. And once in power, Biden and his team can work with like-minded allies to set the world down a path towards the kind of institutional reforms and cooperation it desperately needs.

But all this will take effort, money, compromise, and ingenuity. It will also take patience and time.

Ian Bremmer is the president of Eurasia Group and GZERO Media and author of "Us vs. Them: The Failure of Globalism."

NEWS FROM GREECE

UK moved to Civil Aviation’s non-EU countries list

The United Kingdom has been added to the list of non-EU countries from which citizens are allowed entry to Greece as of next week, the Civil Aviation Authority said in its latest notam on Saturday.



Therefore, according to the new notam, citizens flying to Greece from Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Rwanda, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom can enter Greece as of midnight on Thursday January 7.

The inclusion of UK nationals in the list of non-EU citizens is aligned with the necessary changes brought along by the Brexit agreement having taken full effect on January 1, the authority added.

Dozens of buildings get new lease on life in Greek capital



Crews of the Athens municipality have removed tons of trash since last March from more than 60 buildings that were under occupation by squatters or used as a hideout by petty thieves and drug users.

Many of these buildings had been evacuated in recent months in police operations, but the evictees left behind waste of all kinds, mixed with loot and food scraps, clothes and utensils.

In many areas, neighbors had often complained that the buildings were health hazards and they contained flammable material that could catch fire at any given moment and spread.

In the same period, from March last year until Monday, more than 30 unused plots filled with waste and rubble were also cleaned in many neighborhoods, including Ambelokipi, Patissia and Kolonos.

These plots were abandoned by their owners and functioned essentially as makeshift garbage dumps.

Taming the social media monster

YANNIS PALAIOLOGOS

The governments of democratic states must clarify what the rule of law means in the digital world and make sure that there are mechanisms in place to enforce it, says Marietje Schaake, who is also president of the Cyber Peace Institute. [Red Searcey]

Western democracies must win back control of the boundaries of public debate from social media giants, Marietje Schaake suggests in an exclusive interview with Kathimerini.

Schaake, a former member of the European Parliament, is now international policy director at Stanford University’s Cyber Policy Center and international policy fellow at Stanford’s Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence. She spoke to Kathimerini about outgoing US President Donald Trump, the digital footprint of the European Union, and how public policy can tame the monster that social media has turned into.

Trump’s social media ban, Schaake tells the newspaper, “made many people realize the actual power of Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and other platforms.” The companies’ decision raises “many questions,” she says. “Why, for example, did they ban the American president but not other international leaders that post very controversial or harmful content?” However, Schaake says, “the real question is not whether this was a good or bad decision, but why we allow privatized governance of our democratic debate.”

How can the public sphere reassert control over this debate? “We must first of all demand that these firms be much more transparent with the policies on which their decisions are based. These [policies] cannot be a response to pressure or to outcry coming from their own employees. These policies must hinge on international or European standards regarding the freedom of speech and its limitations; and there must be independent monitoring that will certify the degree to which these companies fulfill their commitments. I was struck by the fact that

Twitter has since January 8 deactivated more than 70,000 accounts associated with the QAnon [far-right conspiracy] – and that this happened after QAnon had been banned.”

According to Schaake, this shows how hard it is to monitor a platform’s content on a rolling basis, as offshoots of banned groups keep coming into being.

Role of governments

“The governments of democratic states must have a strong say in this,” says Schaake. “They must clarify what the rule of law means in the digital world and make sure that there are mechanisms in place to enforce it,” she says. She says authorities must have access to algorithmic methodologies and decide on clear sanctions against firms that fail to comply. “Regulatory authorities must have the knowledge, the staff and the resources they need to deal with the armies of lawyers that the companies bring to the table,” she says. But doesn’t the problem run deeper than that? Does it not lie with the social media firms’ business model, which seeks to monopolize users’ attention to the benefit of their clients who advertise on their platform?

Schaake does not challenge the claim. However, she stresses that if the situation has spun out of control, it is “due to a long period of basic inaction on the part of democratic governments, particularly in the US.” Bringing the anarchic landscape under control, she says, presupposes immediate action on a series of fronts: anti-trust policy, protection of privacy, personal data, and so on.

What is Schaake’s opinion of the Digital Services Act, the regulation proposal put forward last month by the European Commission? Does the blueprint contain the elements that will make the dominant online players assume responsibility over the content shared on their platforms?

“I think it will help a lot and I hope that it will remain largely intact – we already see the companies scaling up their lobbying efforts against these proposals,” Schaake says. “It is important that the bigger a company, the greater its responsibility over content monitoring; also, it is important that the European Commission takes responsibility for defining harmful content – which had until recently been left with the companies,” she says.

‘Right instincts’

The EU has “the right instincts” and has “played a leading role” in efforts to impose order on the chaos of the digital sphere, particularly in recent years where “the US has been totally absent,” says the Dutch expert. However, there are weaknesses in the European approach, most importantly the absence of any geopolitical dimension from its digital policy.

Schaake mentions the case of Huawei and 5G networks. “On the one hand we have the promise of a single digital market; on the other, each of the 27 member-states can make an individual decision on whether an investment poses a threat to national security and thus stop it,” she says. “It took a year to set up a toolbox on the basis of which investments of that sort would be reviewed. These processes must be improved. Meanwhile, the European Commission’s White Paper on Artificial Intelligence made no reference to the military uses of AI – an issue which is impossible to avoid,” she says.

New terms of debate

Schaake stresses that companies have so far managed to impose their own terms on the debate about the regulation of the social media landscape. “We talk about regulating the internet, while we should be talking about regulating Facebook,” she says. However, the issue is now a key priority, there is political pressure to thoroughly examine the issues that have emerged. “Technology is everywhere – hence we must all be better informed on how it affects our lives as citizens,” she says.

Ankara issues threats ahead of dialogue

MANOLIS KOSTIDIS

Just a week before the resumption of the 61st round of exploratory contacts between the two countries, Turkey’s Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu accused Greece of “provocations” and “illegal militarization of islands,” warning that “if Athens insists on not cooperating, then the responsibility for any tensions will be on its shoulders.”

“Greece continues its provocations, takes steps that violate the demilitarization regime of the islands, constantly conducts military exercises or announces [navigational warnings] and then doesn’t carry them out,” he said during a joint news conference with German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas in Ankara.

Cavusoglu also reiterated Ankara’s position that the issue of the Eastern Mediterranean and the maritime zones should not be the only issues up for discussion.

“There are issues with the Aegean, territorial waters, airspace, issues of maritime jurisdiction. It is not right for [Greece] to choose an issue and declare that we are making exploratory contacts,” he stated.

He also decried recent comments by Greek Archbishop Ieronymos, who told Open TV in an interview on Saturday that “Islam is not a religion but a political party” and that the people of Islam “are the people of war.”

“We also saw the statements of the archbishop. We know the purpose of these moves. They want to provoke Turkey to take similar steps, and they will say to Europe, ‘Look, Turkey is continuing its negative steps,’ and they will ask for sanctions,” Cavusoglu said, while the Turkish Foreign Ministry issued a statement condemning the remarks.

The fact that such a statement was made at a time when preliminary preparations are being made for the exploratory talks is of particular importance and an unfortunate step that undermines the process.

The Archdiocese of Athens later clarified that it did not mean all of Islam but its extremes.

Year 1 CE (as in ‘Covid Era’)



Since March, the world resembles a disaster movie. For their plot, screenwriters follow a proven model: scientists warn about a threat—an earthquake, a volcano, a virus, a meteor, or a terrorist attack; politicians ignore the warning because of ignorance, stupidity, or opportunism;

when the disaster occurs, some heroes save the day. Accustomed to this model, we are finding it difficult to reconcile ourselves with the fact that the screenwriters of the drama, in which we have found ourselves as actors and audience at the same time, have yet to make their minds: will there be a happy ending? And is this a feature movie or the first of a series?

2020 was a remarkable year, by any standards. We saw how the pandemic, like every crisis, served as a magnifying glass for characters and behaviors, highlighting the greatness, self-sacrifice, and responsibility of some and the shallowness, egoisms, and irresponsibility of others. The cautious words of scientists, who have the honesty and courage to say ‘perhaps’ and ‘I don’t know’, competed with the uncontrolled circulation of conspiracy theories, half-truths, and lies through the social media. Scientists, who measure time in decades and centuries, were on a collision course with politicians, for whom only the time between elections counts. The conflict between science and religious groups of every denomination brought us back to the Dark Ages. We saw states with federal structures unable to co-ordinate measures. The European Union of cacophony failed both to implement a uniform policy against the pandemic and to assume a leading role in a world that urgently needs the leadership of democratic states and not of autocracies. We saw the President of the USA undermining both international organizations and trust in the most elementary function of a democracy: a free election. We saw more clearly than ever the supremacy of the new Great Powers that have replaced hegemonic states —Amazon, Facebook, and Google. We saw the world resisting the simple truth that there are no local solutions for global problems such as climate change, hunger, poverty, migration, and, now, a pandemic.

All this is remarkable but not new. History has often seen the collapse of democratic institutions, the success of conspiracy theorists, the conflict between religion and science, and the rise and fall of autocratic, corrupt, and populist leaders. The truly new phenomenon in 2020 that makes it a turning point in world history is the fact that for the first time so many people, all over the world, have spent and will continue spending so much time in front of a screen. The screen of the computer or the smartphone has become the stage of interpersonal contacts, scientific exchange, education, artistic expression, culture, entertainment, and protest. It is as if the globe has taken the shape of a two-dimensional screen—the quadrature of the sphere, as it were. The truly unprecedented phenomenon—unprecedented in these dimensions—is the addiction of hundreds of millions of people to the illusions that unavoidably emerge when cyberspace replaces the physical space as the stage of life.

I am referring to the illusion that cyberspace is a universal popular assembly, when in fact it only is a cheap substitute for real political participation; the illusion of access to data, when algorithms, subject to manipulation, determine the result of internet searches; the illusion of freedom of speech in a virtual forum in which trolling is protected by anonymity; the illusion of information, when the circulation of fake news is uncontrolled; the illusion of playing, when human contact is missing; the illusion of teaching, when a teacher is unable to bend over the shoulder of a student struggling to deal with an exercise; the illusion of social relations with hundreds of ‘friends’ that one knows through manipulated photos and filtered news. Addicted to the cheap virtual substitutes of togetherness, we are afraid to accept the fact that the occasional pain of loneliness and loss is an intrinsic part of the human condition.

Chances are good that 2020 will be remembered not as a date but as a symbol, like 1984 or 9/11. Its greatest winners are the internet and the social media. Not unlike any other achievement of human inventiveness, the internet can be used for good or for bad. How such a powerful medium is used depends on the awareness and the critical thought of its users; ultimately, it depends on education. The continually increasing and unstoppable dependence on the internet should be outbalanced by interaction in physical spaces. More than anywhere else, this is needed in education. Education requires physical spaces where characters and personalities are shaped through the interaction among three-dimensional people. If 2020 has taught us something, it is that nothing can really replace teaching, lecturing, and exchanging ideas with the physical presence of those whose are engaged in this interaction. It should be a top priority of all relevant authorities and institutions to make this possible, now and in the future. Today, more than ever, investment in education, from the kindergarten to the highest level of research-oriented academic teaching—investment by state institutions and private sponsors alike—is the only investment without risks and with a guaranteed payback.

Angelos Chaniotis is Professor of Ancient History and Classics at the School of Historical Studies, Institute of Advanced Study, Princeton University.

Four universities agree to campus security



Four major universities have so far agreed to accept a protection team that will help stamp out chronic lawlessness at the country’s campuses.

The teams will be introduced in the University of Athens, the National Technical University of Athens, the Athens University of Economics and Business and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), while the University of Patras may also join the list.

The so-called University Institutions Protection Team (OPPI) will have police powers, receive special training and wear a special uniform. Its officers will patrol the premises of the institution and alert police in case of violence, from where they will receive instructions on how to act.

Kathimerini understands that the leadership of the Ministry of Education is adamant that the members of the OPPI should answer to the Hellenic Police (ELAS) and the Ministry of Citizens’ Protection, and not the university.

The relevant regulation, which is ready to be submitted, provides for the placement of 1,000 people in the universities of Athens and Thessaloniki where incidents of violence are more acute.

Universities will also have a security service whose members will be responsible for supervising and guarding their premises and control who enters the campus.

“The way the universities will organize their security service - [either] with their own employees, a security company or whatever - is their own issue,” a senior official of the Ministry of Education told kathimerini on Friday.

Healthy Teeth & Gums for Life!

IFANTIS
DENTAL CARE
IMPLANT, COSMETIC, AND ORTHODONTIC FAMILY DENTISTRY
DR. JOHN IFANTIS, D.D.S.

Gentle Doctor,
Friendly & Professional Staff,
Relaxing Environment,
Convenient Appt. Times

NEW PATIENT OFFER
\$39 Reg. \$200 Save \$230!
Complete Exam • Personalized Consultation
All Necessary 3D Digital X-Rays
Professional Cleaning*

847.443.8243
9251 WAUKEGAN RD. | MORTON GROVE
WWW.IFANTISDENTALCARE.COM

*Unless certain dental conditions exist. Expires 7/31/18. SaveXt

Greeks studying in UK, because of Brexit, will need visas



The United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union has created a new environment for EU, and by extension Greek, students at the country’s universities.

Indicatively, a visa will be required for the next academic year, while tuition fees will be determined by each individual academic institution. These fees will differ according to the field and level of studies.

On the other hand, in many cases, so-called “international” students’ tuition fees will not far exceed those that apply for Britons, while there will be scholarships for European students instead of student loans.

What’s more, from the summer of 2021, international students who graduate will have the opportunity to stay, to search and find work, for two years, and PhD holders for three years.

There are more than 10,000 Greeks studying at British universities.

THE LAW OFFICE OF GEORGE C. XAMPLAS • 25 E WASHINGTON ST, SUITE 700, CHICAGO, IL 60602 • (312) 345-0510



Xamplas

Helping our clients navigate the labyrinth of Greek law

• GREEK REAL ESTATE	• GREEK INHERITANCE & WILLS	• POWER OF ATTORNEY
• GREEK TAX ISSUES	• IMMIGRATION & PASSPORT	• GREEK BUSINESS LAW

www.xamplaslaws.com



Greek American members of Congress on raid on



Three members of the US Congress of Greek descent, who were at the US Capitol in one of the historic building's darkest moments, Democrats John Sarbanes and Dina Titus, and Republican Nicole Malliotakis, talk to the Media about their ordeal, the political implications, and the day after.

The two Democrats criticize Donald Trump for using a rhetoric that incited the mob raid that cost five human lives and widespread damage, and for in essence attempting to destroy US democracy and prevent the traditional peaceful transfer of power.

For her part, Mrs Malliotakis strongly condemns the violence but sticks to the arguments about voting irregularities.

Indelible images of mob

"Last Wednesday's events were extremely unsettling. They shook our nation to its collective core. The imagery of our Capitol being overrun by hostile lawbreakers is hard to put into words – those images will remain with us forever" says Sarbanes, who was first elected in the state of Maryland in 2006.

"However, in the face of President Trump's dangerous rhetoric and the violent actions of his supporters, we persevered. Late into the night and early into the morning, we fulfilled our constitutional duty and counted the Electoral College votes. We demonstrated that American democracy is resilient".

As far as the "day after" is concerned, the 58 year old Sarbanes notes: "Moving forward, we must ensure that our fragile democracy becomes even more resilient. That's why I am firmly committed, as our first order of business this year, to pass H.R. 1, the For the People Act – a transformational anti-corruption and clean elections reform package that will strengthen our democracy, return power back to the American people and restore public trust in our government.

"With the combined efforts of our reform agenda and the restorative dimension of the Biden Administration, I am hopeful that we can begin to heal our country and bring Americans together."

In the same spirit are the words of Nevada Congresswoman Dina Titus. "On Wednesday, Congress did its job despite the violent interruption from lawless domestic terrorists encouraged by the President of the United States who attempted to destroy U.S. democracy and prevent the peaceful transfer of power. They did not succeed. We reconvened to count the votes and respect the results of the free and fair election. My staff and I are safe. Our union, however, is fragile and I will do my part to make sure it endures. I congratulate President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris on their victory and look forward to working with them to accelerate vaccine distribution, bring back jobs in Southern Nevada, and strengthen our democracy."

"In the 2020 election, Americans made their voices heard in a free and fair election. I am grateful to the election officials and poll workers who put their own health at risk for the sake of our democracy. The objections to counting electoral votes from Nevada and other states made by Republicans in Congress were an abhorrent attempt to silence voters. Those who seek to undermine faith in our elections by making provably false claims are playing a dangerous game with our republic. Elections are decided by voters, not by politicians or violent mobs".

Worried about voting irregularities

Newly elected New York Congresswoman Nicole Malliotakis, takes a different approach. She condemns the violence and the destruction that occurred last Wednesday, but when it comes to the substance of the rallying cause for some, the allegations of election fraud, she follows President Trump's line.

"Being in that chamber at that moment, when the Capitol Police had rushed in they told us to reach for our gas masks. You have to understand that earlier in the day there were bomb threats. My office building had been evacuated as well. So we weren't sure what was happening at that exact moment," says Malliotakis, who thanked "the brave men and women of the United States Capitol Police for their work to keep Members and staff safe during yesterday's horrific events on the Capitol complex."

The 40 year old Congresswoman condemns "in the strongest of terms those who participated in violence and lawlessness. Their actions were unconscionable, unacceptable and un-American – each should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

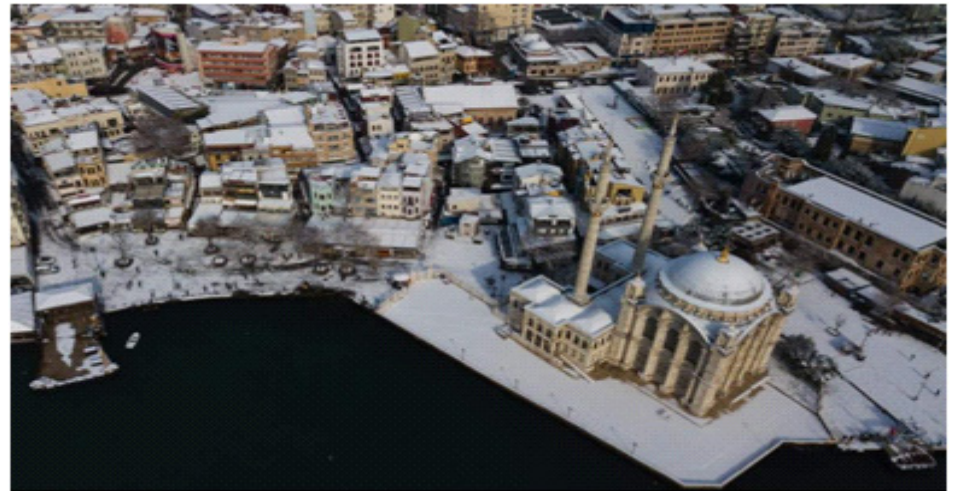
Then, she turns to the issue of voting irregularities: "I, along with millions of Americans, are concerned with the number of voting irregularities reported in Arizona and Pennsylvania and voted against certifying their electors. This was not an attempt to overturn an election, but instead to highlight the need for a proper hearing into unconstitutional rule changes, irregularities and alleged fraud. I took an oath to uphold the U.S. Constitution and I will not turn a blind eye to those who violate it."

The common voice of Democrats and Republicans is confined to the condemnation of the violent events that shocked America and the world. And even this mainly from the politicians, not the voters, as the latest PBS NewsHour-Marist poll indicates that 18% of Republicans were in favor of Trump supporters breaking into the U.S. Capitol.

In any case, the Republican party is split between its traditional establishment and a new, more aggressive right wing that identifies with Trump.

Tom Ellis TOM ELLIS

Exploratory Talks: Reserved expectations



In a much-debated development, Greece and Turkey are about to resume exploratory talks following a five-year lull. This new round will be held amid a tense atmosphere, mostly due to Ankara's revisionist policy, now driven by the Blue Homeland dogma which is being put forward with unusually aggressive rhetoric. However, this foreign policy goal by Ankara can form neither the basis, nor any part, of a negotiation between the two sides as it essentially overturns the region's geostrategic landscape, while challenging Greece's internationally recognized borders with Turkey, and in the long run potentially with other countries too.

In light of the above, it's hard to be very optimistic about the prospects of the upcoming exploratory contacts.

Recent weeks may have seen a relative calm as Turkey has refrained from threatening moves like those witnessed during the summer. However, there's no sign that Turkey is willing to make a radical policy shift.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan appears to be on a bridge-building mission with the EU and the US. The Turkish strongman realizes that he cannot threaten or be in conflict with everyone. US sanctions are damaging his country. And he probably sees the January 25 meeting as part of a broader strategy that aims at getting closer to the EU.

In any case, the meeting between Greek and Turkish officials in Istanbul does not mark the beginning of formal talks between the two sides. It is rather just a first contact designed to record the positions and gauge the intentions of each side.

It is a welcome meeting which could, under certain conditions, create a more positive atmosphere and open the way for a rapprochement. Unfortunately, rhetoric across the Aegean – repeated yesterday by Foreign Minister Cavusoglu – so far leaves scant hope for genuine progress.

On the contrary, it shows that Ankara's objective is not to reach a solution (with the most logical outcome being to refer the issue of maritime zone demarcation to The Hague tribunal) but to play the blame game against Greece.

But such an approach cannot be the starting point of a sincere dialogue between two neighbors. Instead, they should be willing to shed maximalism and threats, and pursue a well-intentioned effort to peacefully coexist in an environment that would prove beneficial to both.

The goal is the country's strategic autonomy

Greece must become strategically self-sufficient. Alliances are fine, but even finer, and more effective, is our own force that does not depend on others.

We went through too long a period during which we did not take security matters seriously. We downgraded the machinery of state, hierarchies, the defense industry – whatever, that is, a state needs to function and to be respected by its adversaries. We did it with relish and it was understandable after the maelstrom of the dictatorship. But we overdid it.

Now, fortunately, the pendulum is swinging back where it should be. The threat is far too visible to allow for frivolity. The government has shown that, under the right leadership, the Greek state can become effective, despite its shortcomings. In the same way that the culture of insouciant inaction, partisanship and degradation of management in public enterprises led to dissolution, the culture of professionalism and seriousness embraced by the current government raised the level and awakened a sense of obligation. The message always comes from the top.

The leftist governance also helped dissolve the stereotypes created by the Left and the hyper-populist narrative of the post-dictatorship era about the armed forces and the security forces. The leftist government did nothing extraordinary to solve the accumulated problems in defense. But, starting from the position of "Is all that necessary?" it ended up choosing some serious people who managed difficult situations with a certain professionalism.

On a purely symbolic level, leftist SYRIZA's alliance with the populist, hard-right defense minister brought back, if excessively, images and symbols that had been banished. Paradoxically, this had a positive effect in reconciling the Left with security. The Left matured, as we all did. And if it chooses to fall back into the immature slogans of the past, it will find it will not be followed by the overwhelming majority of public opinion.

Now, the aim should be our own strategic autonomy. We should stop whining when our partners or allies don't do the job for us. We have a lot of ground to cover, but we are in the right direction.