



# HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

No. 111 February–March 2020

EDITORS: Constantine Tzanos, S. Sakellarides

<http://www.helleniclinkmidwest.org>

P.O. Box 3, Park Ridge, IL 60068-0003



## Upcoming Events

### The Greek Economy and the Challenges and Endeavors in the Bilateral Greek-US Economic Relations

On Sunday, February 9, 2020, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Dimitris Petropoulos—Head, Economic and Commercial Office, Greek Consulate in Chicago—on a lecture titled *"The Greek Economy and the Challenges and Endeavors in The Bilateral Greek-US Economic Relations"*. The event will take place at 3:00 pm in Room 1610, at the Oakton Community College, 1600 E. Golf Road. Admission will be free.

*Dimitris Petropoulos* will present a picture of the characteristics of the Greek economy as well as a history of its development in the 20th century. There will be particular coverage of the euro sovereign crisis to enable a Greek American audience to understand the architecture and dynamics of the European monetary union and the reasons behind the imbalances that led to the problems of Greece within the Eurozone.

He will discuss the external trade potential of the economy, its strong export sectors and investment opportunities.

Then, he will cover the history of Greek economic relations, the role of the Greek American diaspora in helping the development of the country, and the current bilateral economic and trade reality.

*Dimitris Petropoulos* graduated with an honors law degree from the University of Thrace and holds an Executive MBA degree from the Athens University of Economics and Business. He was also an Erasmus scholar of the European Union at the University of Essex where he studied English and European Law. After his military service and legal practice in his hometown for 5 years he entered the National School of Public Administration, Greece's school for top public servants in 2000. After his graduation from the Commercial Attaché class he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and worked initially in the Humanitarian Aid Division. He subsequently served as commissioner in the Greek Embassies in Bucharest, Romania, Berlin, Germany, and Kiev, Ukraine. Between 2011 and 2014 he served in Athens in the Business Development Division. In January 2014 he was assigned on a special mission to Kuwait in preparation for a Greek business mission visiting the country that same month. Currently he serves as Head of the

Economic & Commercial Office of the Greek Consulate General in Chicago.

### Greece: Challenges and Perspectives

In Celebration of the Greek Independence Day, on Sunday, March 15, 2020, Hellenic Link–Midwest, presents Ambassador Ekaterina Dimakis, Consul General of Greece in Chicago in a presentation titled *"Greece: Challenges and Perspectives"*. The event will be held at 3:00 pm in Room 1610, at the Oakton Community College Des Plaines Campus, 1600 E. Golf Road Des Plaines, IL 60016. Admission will be free.

After a decade of crisis, recession and deep socio-economic problems, Greece is emerging stronger with new perspectives ahead, but also new challenges. Its financial and economic situation has been moving forward. All indicators are promising for the years to come. Economic growth is already here. Attracting foreign investments is still a challenge and an issue that will help significantly the growth strategies of the country. Establishing new companies and startups in Greece is considerably facilitated.

Greece is building very strong relationships with neighboring countries and is a pillar of stability in the area of South East Mediterranean. The country is a firm supporter of international law - of its respect and enforcement in the international relations. We always seek to find peaceful and viable solutions to possible differences with neighbors.

Its strategic relations with the U.S.A and its membership to the European Union guarantee the profile of Greece as a stability factor and a "predictable" player in our wider periphery.

One of the biggest challenges of Greece and of the world today is immigration. Greece faces a grave situation being the first EU country to receive immigrants mainly through Turkey. Immigration is a phenomenon that is not foreseen to decline. On the contrary, it is on the rise and will continue aggravating in the years to come. Greece needs the support of the international community and the European Union to face this challenge in an efficient way.

*Ambassador Ekaterina Dimakis*, a career diplomat, is currently the Consul General of Greece in Chicago and the Mid-West. From 2014 to 2017 Ambassador Dimakis served as the Director of the Department for International Multilateral Economic and Financial Organizations at the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Earlier in her career,

Mrs. Dimakis served as Consul General of Greece in Hamburg, Germany, as political and cultural counsellor at the Embassy of Greece in Vienna, Austria, as Consul at the Consulate General of Greece in Adelaide, Australia, and as Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Greece in Oslo, Norway. She also served at the Mission of Greece to the United Nations.

She is a Law School graduate and Political Sciences graduate of the University of Athens and holds a postgraduate degree in International Law and the Law of the Sea.

## ***In Brief***

### **Is Turkey Friend or Foe of the U.S.?**

In an interview with Tobin Harshaw of Bloomberg Opinion, Chuck Wald, a retired 4-star Air Force general who served as deputy commander of the U.S. European Command in the 2000s, responded as follows to the question “*is Turkey friend or foe of the U.S.?*”

Tobin Harshaw: General, I know that given the current tensions between Turkey and the U.S., you have qualms about the NATO presence at Incirlik. Can you explain?

Chuck Wald: Under Erdogan, Turkey has been a thorn in our side for the last half decade. Throughout 2014, Ankara adamantly refused to grant the U.S. permission to use Incirlik for our military operations against ISIS, which was sweeping across Syria and Iraq at an alarming pace. Eventually, after a year of prodding, the Turks begrudgingly gave in; however, we still had to contend with their sporadic demands to halt operations. When the coup attempt happened in 2016, Erdogan ordered all U.S. assets grounded for several days while he accused us of masterminding the attempt to remove him from power.

While these issues took place a few years ago, we saw recently how Erdogan routinely threatened to attack our Kurdish allies in Syria even while U.S. forces were still operating in those areas. Then, when our troops were in the process of withdrawing, reports emerged that Turkish forces started firing on those positions. Consequently, Turkey’s actions should be raising serious questions about whether U.S. and NATO forces should remain at Incirlik.

TH: If NATO did pull those assets out, where would they relocate in a way that wouldn’t harm European security or cause logistical nightmares?

CW: A few years ago, I wrote an op-ed calling for the building of a new airfield in Iraq, specifically in territory controlled by the Kurdistan Regional Government, as part of our efforts then to defeat ISIS and drive it from the country.

I think that the most pressing concern for the U.S. now is that we have nuclear capabilities at Incirlik that no longer serve the same strategic purpose that they did in the past. Given the growing strain of anti-Americanism in Turkey and

Erdogan’s willingness to move closer toward Russia, we urgently need to relocate those weapons. Ideally, their new home should be on European soil, with one option being Aviano Air Base in Italy. From a logistical standpoint, this shouldn’t be too difficult.

The U.S. also has the 39th Air Wing stationed at Incirlik. These forces, too, should be up for relocation. Readily available basing alternatives exist in Cyprus and Greece. The Greeks, in particular, have been clamoring for a deeper U.S. military presence over the last few years and have increasingly demonstrated that they want a greater role within NATO. Therefore, relocating the 39th Air Wing to Greek soil would effectively kill two birds with one stone.

TH: One of the great successes of NATO, beyond the obvious of protecting Western Europe from the Soviet Union, was keeping Turkey and Greece off of each other’s throats. Would a rebalancing of assets along the lines you suggest threaten to re-ignite that dangerous rivalry?

CW: First, I think that there’s a misperception that NATO has kept Greece and Turkey at arms’ length. In fact, Athens and Ankara almost went to war in 1964, but for President Lyndon B. Johnson’s direct intervention. Ten years later, they did, and NATO stood on the sidelines because it deemed that Article V, the mutual defense pact, did not apply to conflicts between member states. Today, Greece has taken many steps to demonstrate to NATO that it can be its “new southeastern bulwark,” such as holding military exercises in increasing frequency, size and complexity. The contrast couldn’t be starker between how Turkey has moved further away from NATO in the last five years.

Will rebalancing assets re-ignite tensions? That’s hard to say, because tensions aren’t exactly stone-cold right now, given Turkey’s continued naval provocations in Cypriot waters and Erdogan’s regular complaints about the sovereignty status of some Greek islands that are located close to the Turkish shoreline.

TH: More broadly, how can Turkey stay in NATO if it can’t be trusted at Incirlik?

CW: Unfortunately, the truth is NATO doesn’t have a suspension or ejection mechanism for its members. Incirlik aside, we’ve seen how Turkey has been actively operating against NATO interests for far too long now, buying Russian S-400s despite repeated warnings, allowing foreign fighters free passage en route to joining ISIS in Syria, etc.

I think that Turkey’s case should push NATO to put in place a long overdue system for handling those rare instances where a member is demonstrably no longer acting in accordance with NATO values or, worse, now presents a threat to the organization’s security interests.

TH: Trump lauded Turkey’s contribution to NATO at his press conference with Erdogan on Wednesday. How effectively do you think the administration is dealing with

Turkey issues? Do you think the president opened the door to Turkey's incursion into northern Syria?

CW: The fact that Turkey is acting counter to the best interests of the U.S. and NATO regarding Syria and the Kurds is an added reason for us to hold Turkey accountable for their actions. For example, we should not give an inch regarding the S-400/JSF issue.

TH: The Turkey problem aside, what is the greatest threat Europe and NATO face right now?

CW: Russia.

TH: Was expanding NATO to include the post-Soviet states in the early 2000s a mistake? It certainly angers Russian President Vladimir Putin.

CW: No, at the time it seemed to be the exact right thing to pursue. Subsequently, Putin's actions and objectives have run totally counter to those of the U.S. and the NATO alliance. We all would like things to return to what we considered normal a few years ago, in a more collaborative world. The reality of today's geopolitics must be addressed and nations we previously hoped to count as allies, or at least friends, have now become adversaries.

## ***From Our History***

### **Excerpts from the monumental work of the Byzantine historian, Speros Vryonis: "*The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century*"**

As the subject of this book is the cultural transformation of Greek Anatolia between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, one must begin with a descriptive analysis of Byzantine society in the peninsula on the eve of the Turkish invasions. *Administrative Institutions of the Byzantine Empire*

Certain political, economic, and religious institutions characterized Anatolian society prior to the drastic upheavals of the eleventh century which caused serious dislocation of this society. These institutions produced an element of homogeneity in the life of the inhabitants of this immense area and at the same time integrated them effectively into a Constantinopolitan-centered organism. The system of the themes (military/administrative division), by which the civil administration became subordinate to the thematic strategus (general), dominated the administrative and military activity of the Anatolians (people of Asia Minor). At the time of the death of emperor Basil II (1025), there existed in Anatolia approximately twenty-five provinces, mostly themes but including also duchies and catepanates, largely under the direct control and administration of the strategoi (generals). Though the administrative apparatus placed the provincial bureaucracy under the tutelage of the military, it also acted as a partial check on the absorption of the free peasantry by the landed

magnates and thereby assured the empire of military, social, and fiscal strength. The thematic system served as a vital impetus to and support of the existence of the free peasant society, which in turn not only served as a balance to the landed aristocracy, but fought the Arabs and was a major contributor to the imperial tax collectors.

The strategus, as supreme authority in the theme, was a veritable viceroy. Nothing could be done in his province, save for the assessment and collection of taxes, which were effected by agents directly under Constantinople, without his consent. His most important function was to command the army of the theme. Much has been said about the efficacy and importance of these local armies drawn from the inhabitants of the provinces. Beside the men the government recruited from the local soldiery, there were other sources of military personnel in the provinces. These included a variety of ethnic groups that the emperors settled as distinct military bodies throughout Anatolia.

The success of Byzantine arms against the Arabs during the Arab-Byzantine wars, 7th to 11th century AD, is in part to be explained by the effectiveness of this Anatolian manpower, and the importance of these Anatolian forces emerges from the obvious correlation between thematic decline and the Turkish invasions in the eleventh century. The professional mercenaries who took the place of the indigenous thematic soldiers in this period of crisis were ineffective replacements and were unable to halt the Turks. The military apparatus in Anatolia had an important role in the provincial economic life. It contributed to the local economy by paying out salaries in gold to the officers and soldiers who lived in Asia Minor, and stimulating local industry, commerce, and agriculture by its expenditures. The government was able to feed into the business life of the Anatolians a comparatively steady and significant sum of coined money in the form of the military roga.

The pay of the thematic soldiers in comparison with that of the officers was quite small, and yet the overall expenditure on military salaries was very substantial. The soldier was also entitled to part of the spoils of war, and in many instances, pensions were given to disabled soldiers and to the widows of the slain.

The army and navy required supplies, armament, and provisions on their frequent expeditions. Though the government undoubtedly acquired many of the necessary items by taxes in kind on the populace, the authorities also paid out cash to artisans and merchants to provide a wide assortment of items and services. Craftsmen were hired to make weapons of every type for the armed forces, to sew the sails for the ships, to caulk the boats; merchants sold the government the cloth for the sails, rope, bronze, wax, lead, tin, oars, foodstuffs, and other necessary

*(to be continued)*

## *From the Riches of Our Cultural Heritage*

### **Ποίηση Γιώργου Σεφέρη**

ΜΕ ΤΟΝ ΤΡΟΠΟ ΤΟΥ Γ.Σ.

Όπου και να ταξιδέψω η Ελλάδα με πληγώνει.

Στο Πήλιο μέσα στις καστανιές το πουκάμισο του Κενταύρου  
γλιστρούσε μέσα στα φύλλα για να τυλιχτεί στο κορμί μου  
καθώς ανέβαινα την ανηφόρα κι η θάλασσα μ' ακολουθούσε  
ανεβαίνοντας κι αυτή σαν τον υδράργυρο θερμομέτρου  
ώσπου να βρούμε τα νερά του βουνού.

Στη Σαντορίνη αγγίζοντας νησιά που βουλιάζαν  
ακούγοντας να παίζει ένα σουραύλι κάπου στις αλαφρόπετρες  
μου κάρφωσε το χέρι στην κουπαστή μια σαΐτα ταναγμένη ξαφνικά  
από τα πέρατα μιας νιότης βασιλευμένης.

Στις Μυκήνες σήκωσα τις μεγάλες πέτρες και τους θησαυρούς των  
Ατρείδων  
και πλάγιασα μαζί τους στο ξενοδοχείο της «Ωραίας Ελένης του  
Μενελάου»·  
χάθηκαν μόνο την αυγή που λάλησε η Κασσάντρα  
μ' έναν κόκορα κρεμασμένο στο μαύρο λαιμό της.  
Στις Σπέτσες στον Πόρο και στη Μύκονο  
με χτίκιασαν οι βαρκαρόλες.

Τι θέλουν όλοι αυτοί που λένε  
πως βρίσκονται στην Αθήνα ή στον Πειραιά;  
Ο ένας έρχεται από τη Σαλαμίνα και ρωτάει τον άλλο μήπως  
«έρχεται εξ Ομοιοίας»  
«Όχι έρχομαι εκ Συντάγματος» απαντά κι είν' ευχαριστημένος  
«βρήκα το Γιάννη και με κέρασε ένα παγωτό».  
Στο μεταξύ η Ελλάδα ταξιδεύει  
δεν ξέρουμε τίποτε δεν ξέρουμε πως είμαστε ξέμπαρκοι όλοι εμείς  
δεν ξέρουμε την πίκρα του λιμανιού σαν ταξιδεύουν όλα τα καράβια·  
περιγελάμε εκείνους που τη νιώθουν.

Παράξενος κόσμος που λέει πως βρίσκεται στην Αττική  
και δε βρίσκεται πουθενά·  
αγοράζουν κουφέτα για να παντρευτούνε  
κρατούν «σωσίτριχα» φωτογραφίζονται  
ο άνθρωπος που είδα σήμερα καθισμένος σ' ένα φόντο με πιτσούνια  
και με λουλούδια  
δέχονταν το χέρι του γερο-φωτογράφου να του στρώνει τις ρυτίδες  
που είχαν αφήσει στο πρόσωπό του όλα τα πετεινά τ' ουρανού.

Στο μεταξύ η Ελλάδα ταξιδεύει ολοένα ταξιδεύει  
κι αν «ορώμεν ανθούν πέλαγος Αιγαίον νεκροίς»  
είναι εκείνοι που θέλησαν να πιάσουν το μεγάλο καράβι με το  
κολύμπι  
εκείνοι που βαρέθηκαν να περιμένουν τα καράβια που δεν μπορούν  
να κινηθούν  
την ΕΛΣΗ τη ΣΑΜΟΘΡΑΚΗ τον ΑΜΒΡΑΚΙΚΟ.

Σφυρίζουν τα καράβια τώρα που βραδιάζει στον Πειραιά  
σφυρίζουν ολοένα σφυρίζουν μα δεν κουνιέται κανένας αργάτης  
καμιά αλυσίδα δεν έλαμψε βρεμένη στο στερνό φως που βασιλεύει  
ο καπετάνιος μένει μαρμαρωμένος μες στ' άσπρα και στα χρυσά.

Όπου και να ταξιδέψω η Ελλάδα με πληγώνει·  
παραπετάσματα βουνών αρχιπέλαγα γυμνοί γρανίτες...  
Το καράβι που ταξιδεύει το λένε ΑΓ ΩΝΙΑ 937.

IN THE MANNER OF G. S.

Wherever I travel Greece wounds me.

On Pelion among the chestnut trees the Centaur's shirt  
slipped through the leaves to fold around my body  
as I climbed the slope and the sea came after me  
climbing too like mercury in a thermometer  
till we found the mountain waters.

On Santorini touching islands that were sinking  
hearing a pipe play somewhere on the pumice-stone  
my hand was nailed to the gunwale by an arrow shot suddenly  
from the confines of a vanished youth.

At Mycenae I raised the great stones and the treasures of the house  
of Atreus  
and slept with them at the hotel Belle Helene de Menelas;  
they disappeared only at dawn when Cassandra crowed,  
a cock hanging from her black throat.  
On Spetses, Poros and Mykonos  
the barcaroles sickened me.

What do they want, all those who believe  
they're in Athens or Piraeus?  
Someone comes from Salamis and asks someone else whether he  
`issues forth from Omonia Square'.  
`No I issue forth from Syntagma,' replies the other, pleased;  
`I met Yianni and he treated me to an ice cream.'  
In the meantime Greece is travelling  
and we don't know anything, we don't know we're all sailors out of  
work,  
we don't know how bitter the port becomes when all the ships have  
gone;  
we mock those who do know.

Strange people! They say they're in Attica but they're really nowhere;  
they buy sugared almonds to get married  
they carry hair tonic, have their photographs taken  
the man I saw today sitting against a background of pigeons and  
flowers  
let the hands of the old photographer smooth away the wrinkles  
left on his face by all the birds in the sky.

Meanwhile Greece goes on travelling, always travelling  
and if we see `the Aegean flower with corpses'  
it will be with those who tried to catch the big ship by swimming  
after it  
those who got tired of waiting for the ships that cannot move  
the ELSI, the SAMOTHRAKI, the AMVRAKIKOS.

The ships hoot now that dusk falls on Piraeus,  
hoot and hoot, but no capstan moves,  
no chain gleams wet in the vanishing light,  
the captain stands like a stone in white and gold.

Wherever I travel Greece wounds me,  
curtains of mountains, archipelagos, naked granite.  
They call the one ship that sails AG ONIA 937.