

Will U.S. Help Greece End Years of Misery?

The following message from Theodore Katsanevas, founder of the Greek Drachma Five party and former Member of Parliament (1989-2004), recorded Feb. 8, for delivery to the Schiller Institute conference in New York City Feb. 14.

I am Theodore Katsanevas, professor at the University of Piraeus in Greece. I think you in the LaRouche movement and the Schiller Institute know me. I was happy to be with you several times, and now I have the pleasure to discuss with you the current situation here in the country, which, again, once more attracts international attention.

It appears that it's our fate, to attract this attention, in this period of time.

In any case, at this very moment, we are in the middle of very tough negotiations between the newly elected government of Syriza, of Alexis Tsipras, whom we support, and with our European so-called partners, headed by the Berlin government, Mrs. [Chancellor Angela] Merkel and Mr. [Finance Minister Wolfgang] Schäuble. As it appears now, after many meetings that Alexis Tsipras and the Minister of Economics, Mr. [Yanis] Varoufakis, had in European capitals, according to my view, things appear to be very tough.

In the beginning it appears that the Americans are playing the good cop. You know how they say here in Greece, that there's the good and the bad cop. The Americans play the good cop, and the Germans play the bad cop. So, the Americans in the beginning, and Obama also, sent a very warm message to the Greek government; and we all said here that we have the Americans behind us, to support us.

But at the end of the day, it appears that Mrs. Merkel decided to intervene, and everything appears that the



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whole negotiation follows in a very, very, very very tough line.

So, Mrs. Merkel is asking from the Greek government to abolish all claims against the so-called Memorandum, this policy that led us to Hell, all these years. For six years now. Six years of poverty, misery, unemployment we're having in Greece. But Merkel insists on the same line.

Alexis Tsipras says that I am not going to accept what Mrs. Merkel and the European partners want me to do. We want to go out of the Memorandum, of the so-called Memorial, and we don't want the Troika here in Greece.

Of course, both parties say good words, diplomatic nice

words, but up to now, it seems that things are very bad.

Also, the European Central Bank [head] Mr. [Mario] Draghi recently announced that the European Central Bank is not going to buy Greek bonds, which means that very soon the Greek banks will lose the possibility of having money. So, we might have a very, very, very tough situation very soon, and under these conditions, the Greek government must decide what to do.

Who Will Do a 'Kolotumba'?

There are two ways: Either to take back all its claims, all what they promised to the Greek people, and for which they have been elected. We have in Greek a word which has been used internationally; it is called *kolotumba*, which means that we turn all the way around. If Alexis Tsipras follows the *kolotumba*, the so-called *kolotumba*, then the Greek people are going to get rid of him. He's going to be finished.

On the other hand, we see, and we are realistic, if Mrs. Merkel does a *kolotumba*, and accepts what Tsipras and the Syriza government propose, then they are in a very bad situation, because unfortunately, at present, in

the south of Europe, the governments of Spain, Portugal, Italy—they would not like to see something to change the basic German policy of austerity. If this happens, for example, the Podemos movement in Spain is going to smash Mr. [Mariano] Rajoy in the same country.

The same will happen in all of Europe, and in the end, Greece will come up to Berlin, and even now, as you know, Mrs. Merkel and Mr. Schäuble, they have a stronger position for many parts of Europe, and even within Germany.

So, there is a very, very tough bargaining condition, and indeed we don't know what is going to happen. What we propose is that, in case the negotiations will not come to a compromise, which is most possible to happen; we propose to have a referendum here in Greece, with the simple question: Yes or no to the Eurozone.

We believe that, provided that the mass media—which, you know, belongs to the oligarchs, and they support the euro, they support the rich, they support what you know they support—if they keep equal lines between the two positions, we believe that the Grexit [Greek exit from the euro—ed.] will win.

In any case, Grexit is on the way, and even a temporary Grexit. As a professor of economy, the famous German economist Hans-Werner Sinn, has proposed recently, this might be a good, clever compromise, not to smash Merkel's policy, and at the same time, to see what the Greek people really want. If the Greek people decide to get us out of the Eurozone, then we have all the future in front of us to govern our country. Of course, learn from our mistakes—because it is true that we have made a lot of mistakes in the past, the Greek governments made a lot of mistakes—and, create an antagonistic economy by the devaluation of the national currency, the drachma, against the foreign currencies.

But, on the other hand, if the Greek people decide that the Eurozone is best for them, then the Berlin government can ask anything—it's all the same direction of poverty, unemployment, and so on, that goes on in Greece.

But one problem is—and I left it to the end, to stress it, and I'm sure that you're interested here: One problem is that the Berlin government and the United States took this confrontation, of course, a confrontation between the West—Germany and the United States—towards small Greece. What a confrontation is this! Small Greece cannot fight, and cannot win in such a confrontation. Unless there's something behind it. And this is the threat of Russia.

If Greece will be left to fall under the umbrella of Russia, which, for them, is something that they want very, very deeply, this is something that the United States, the Americans and the Germans—but basically, Americans—will have to think very, very carefully about.

What I want to say, what I'm trying to say, is that if the West—this includes Germany and the United States—pushes Greece to the end, then nobody knows what is going to happen, including the possibility that Greece will be the first country to go with the BRICS, with Russia.

Will America Back Its Good Ally?

I don't know. I hope the best for our country, the best for all the world. I hope that this will not create, or will not lead us to difficult conditions, and even a war. Who knows? I'm not the one who can advise the American people, but according to my opinion, I would like to remind them that Greece has always been a very good ally with the American people and the government of America, through the centuries. We fought against the Germans in the past, and we are still here.

And I think that we could demand the support of the American people, and of the American government, and towards the hope of creating this country to be developed in a better way. Let us stop the poverty, the unemployment, the misery, that we've had all these years. And the Americans can do something about it. And I have to remind them, that after the Second World War, they created the Marshall Plan. They helped countries like Greece to stand on their feet.

Also, I have to remind them that the Germans never paid us for all the things they did during the Second World War. They still haven't paid us back for our loans that we gave to Germany during these years. And I have to remind the American people, that in the year of 1953, most of the German debts were ended, under a new development of that era.

I think that, if you take into consideration the fact that the problem of Greek debt, and the debt of other countries, is not only due to our mis-government, but it also comes out of the national capitalism. Of course, the Glass-Steagall problem, [eliminating] Glass-Steagall, has something to do with it.

So, I gather that the American people and the American government have to intervene and stop this misery, and stop this confrontation.

I wish I would be with you, but I send you my greetings, and the hopes, hopes for a better tomorrow.