

The Refugee Crisis Looms: “A New Idea, Turn Greece into a Concentration Camp,[Powder Keg]!”

By [Dimitris Konstantakopoulos](#) and [Peter Koenig](#)

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Introduction by Peter Koenig.

In this extraordinary essay, Dimitris Konstantakopoulos illustrates what is currently happening in Greece. Dimitris, is a renowned journalist and founder of the Delphi Initiative (website of the Delphi Initiative: <http://www.defenddemocracy.press/>), a group of Greek and international intellectuals who met last June in Delphi – the birthplace of ‘Democracy’ some 2,500 years ago – in the hope of finding alternatives to the current systematic destruction and looting of Greece by the nefarious so-called troika, the European Central Bank (ECB), the European Commission (EC) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as to the political decay of Europe.

The forum came up with a few ideas, that – I believe – could have saved Greece from the massacre it is going through since 2010, and especially since early 2015, when the nominally left-wing Syriza coalition, with Alexis Tsipras a President, won the elections. But the Tsipras Government, did not listen. They were under the gun, perhaps literally threatened, to do what the troika and troika’s masters in Washington said they must do, or else – destroying Greece, her people and obliterating her social fabric; and while doing so, letting foreign sharks steal the remaining Greek assets by privatization, concessions and sheer fire-sales.

Thousands of people have died as a result of austerity imposed by the troika on the very social safety net Greece along with the rest of Europe had built after WWII. The thinking then was ‘never again war’. Little did they know, that the US-led NATO cells ‘to protect Europe’ from an imaginary enemy from the east, would never allow lasting peace in Europe.

Under the troika regime of economic strangulation, social budgets had to be cut, schools closed or privatized, health services reduced, again and again; hospitals had to be shut or privatized, imports of medications were cut, pensions and unemployment benefits were reduced multiple times. Unemployment among young people hovers between 60% and 70%, GDP has shrunk by almost a third since 2010. People are starving and dying from lack of access to medical services and medication. The exact numbers will never be known. It is not a linear statistic. This is a troika style massacre which affects the mind. It is not only annihilating Greece and her people, but has and is killing all hope. If there is no hope, there is no energy to fight for one’s rights – there is only fear – and anxiety on how to survive the next day.

Now the criminal and un-solidary European Union has launched a new weapon to further smother Greece: The refugees. The corrupt, immoral, unethical and puppet EU (there are

hardly words strong enough to describe the character of the leaders of today's EU), led by the UK, Germany and France, have 'bought' Turk Sultan Erdogan with some 3 to 6 billion euros – get to know the real figure by looking what's happening under the table! – to keep the refugees within the confines of Turkey. Let me call these poor souls instead of the western sanitized term 'refugees', victims of the bloody wars waged by the west, meaning the Empire of Chaos in Washington with its NATO and Middle Eastern vassals.

Will Erdogan abide by this corrupt agreement? Hardly. It's not in the character of a Machiavellian murderer, liar and traitor. In any case Turkey's borders to the Aegean Sea are porous, and the Aegean Sea is full with hundreds of Greek Islands, reachable for better or for worse, by the war victims' rickety dinghies. The fate of these battle-scarred people, in a country that thanks to the troika can hardly feed itself, is best described by my friend Dimitris, who in a recent phone call suggested to correct the title of his essay to "A New Idea: Turn Greece into a Powder Keg".

A New Idea: Turn Greece into a Concentration Camp, [Powder Keg]!

Dimitris Konstantakopoulos

28 February 2016

It is the triumph of Samuel Huntington and of his project, hidden inside his prophecy of a "Clash of Civilizations". It is also a triumph for neoconservatives who have engineered all western interventions in the Middle East (and also in Ukraine), during the last 15 years. They can now use their results and consequences, in the form of refugees, immigrants and terrorists, in order to try to alter European geopolitics and even attempt "regime change" in the "first world".

Globalization, "la mondialisation heureuse" (happy), as its French supporters used to call it, was often confused with ... easy traveling by international middle class and the use of iPads. It's not about them. Every TV news watcher can easily understand now that the era of "globalization" is nothing but a state of permanent, destructive war of everybody against everybody. A Social War, against the poorer classes and nations of Europe, a Hot War, "against Islam", a Cold War against Russia (tomorrow China). And the culmination of all that, the "War of Wars" against Nature itself.

Greece is shrinking under the weight of refugees and immigrants. Thousands of them are now living in terrible conditions around the country, in squares in the center of Athens or everywhere they can find a temporary (?) shelter. Even inside the "Hot Spots", created for them, the situation becomes explosive, as the refugees do not want to stay in these establishments. They wish to continue their travel to Germany or Scandinavia and they are afraid they will be trapped indefinitely inside them. Often, they violate external fences and begin walking towards the frontiers. The main National Road of Greece, linking Athens to Salonica and then to the border, is now full of hungry and thirsty people, walking hundreds of km to reach only the first of the frontiers they need to cross. Groups of volunteers try to help them by distributing water and food, finding shelters for them to spend the night or help to provide emergency medical assistance.

The situation becomes rapidly surreal. You may find even some *Golden Dawn* [extreme right, or Nazi party] militants helping Syrian refugees. Or unscrupulous merchants selling a

bottle of water for three euros and attacking violently the volunteers, who insist on distributing for free food and water, impeding them to make profit out of the persecuted, as happened in one incident near the town of Larisa. Or you may see, opposite to people walking to the North, buses transporting the refugees, who found the border closed, to the South, back to Athens. Both Greek authorities and the people look extremely confused and shocked by what is happening to their country. Europe and its nations seem to have lost completely their orientation and the same is true with simple people.

Greece can hardly feed, or provide with proper medical care for all its citizens, having been the victim, for six years now, of “bail-out” programs imposed by its European “partners” and the IMF (1). With the massive refugee influx, it has to cope with an unprecedented situation, threatening directly its already shaken social stability and ethnic and national cohesion. The refugee crisis has had so far a cost of about one billion euros, while Athens has received only about 30 million from Europe. Nobody knows if and how important will be the repercussions to tourism, one of the few industries in the country having survived the economic war launched against it by the German and other European governments, EU institutions and the IMF.

But this is nothing compared to what is coming, as the Erdogan regime in the East goes on with sending thousands of people every passing day and the FYROM (2) and also Albanian authorities in the North, under the direct influence and control of Vienna, Ankara and Washington, decided to close hermetically the frontier, even to Syrian refugees whom the EU had said it is ready to accept and who have all the required documents. Hundreds of thousands of refugees risk to be “trapped” inside the Greek borders, further destabilizing the Greek nation-state and adding a new quality to the “death spiral” that Greece is locked in already for six years.

Is all this a mistake or an intended and planned result? We are right in asking the question. As the Wall Street Journal reveals in a recent article, there is already a plan to propose to Greece money to keep the refugees. First you ruin a country, a traditional nation-state, then you propose to transform it into homeland for the part of world population you have turned into nomads, because of the policies you apply in the Arab and the Third World in general! (3)

Maybe you will ask who are they, as different governments are protagonists of different episodes of the whole story. The US were responsible for invading Afghanistan and Iraq in a way that produced an unbelievable chaos there, as President Obama has publicly recognized (he was even elected because of that). Sarkozy was used for the destruction of Libya, Hollande and all the rest for supporting the Islamic State in Syria. In “debt wars”, the German government took the initiative of the financial “debt” war which created the Greek chaos, in alliance with “markets”, EU and the IMF. Erdogan ‘s government was used against Russia and to send the refugees to Europe. Merkel helped the situation by inviting one million refugees to become *Gastarbeiters* [temporary workers], of limited rights and salaries. Even SYRIZA has emitted, by its mere presence in power and its rhetoric, a signal that everybody is welcome.

It seems what we have here is a collection of what we may call “partial players”. They have only limited understanding of the complex world strategic (geopolitical and economic) environment. They are often trying to give only tactical answers to the challenges they face, but they are unable to really ponder the strategic consequences of their action. A classic

example is how the neoconservatives, who do have a global and coherent strategy, as they were facing, after Afghanistan and Iraq, the opposition of a considerable part of US establishment, were able to move the destruction of Libya to Paris, using the Sarkozy government!

I understand well the reasons many people in the West with good intentions don't want to accept and believe this disaster scenario and how they feel. They would probably like to believe they live in a better world, but they don't. The sooner they realize it, the better. It seems there is quite a hidden Order inside the present Chaos. As it is a terrible order, we prefer often to disregard it, until we feel its consequences in our own life, or in our countries. But then it is often too late.

Greece again guilty of all sins

It is in fashion these years to accuse Greece and Greeks of everything. In 2009-10, international mass media, controlled as never before by international Finance, launched a quite successful communication campaign to present Greeks and Greece as the main culprits of the huge financial and political problems Europe is facing. This provided the "markets" with the pretext they needed to attack financially Greece and European governments and institutions, and also the IMF, with the justification to impose to Greece the economic program that led to its destruction and continues, by the way, to do so.

Now it became a fashion to accuse Greeks of mistreating the refugees, or of not protecting the borders of the Union. It is exact that there was a delay on the part of the Greek government to build the "hot spots" – which prove already useless. But after, all the government, afraid of the consequences of any delay, mobilized the army, building them before the deadline expires.

A sensational revelation came from the Athens daily "Efimerida ton Sintakton". It published documents substantiating its claim that high ranking EU officials falsified technical reports of EU inspectors sent to the islands, in order to prove that Greece is not fulfilling its obligations to the EU and thus prepare the ground for expelling Athens from the Schengen area. If true, that means there is already a mechanism inside the EU apparatus, working to prepare the next attack against Greece, as has already happened in numerous occasions since 2009.

But the main accusation repeated from different politicians around Europe is that Greece is not protecting well the frontiers of the Union. The accusation is accompanied by threats to expel it from the Schengen zone (reminiscent of the ever present threat of expelling it from the Eurozone). But this accusation is based on a complete distortion of the facts.

The great majority of refugees and immigrants are leaving now with small boats from the Turkish coast of Minor Asia, which is in a short distance, of some nautical miles, from the Greek islands of Eastern Aegean and the Greek island of Kastelorizo in the Mediterranean Sea. As soon as their boats enter Greek territorial waters, they sink their boats. Then the Greek authorities have to save them and transport them to the land. There is no more fundamental provision in the Law of the Sea and the international humanitarian right than to save under any circumstances persons in danger of life. After saving them, the Greek authorities have the obligation to transport them to the nearest land and this is Greek, as they sink their boats inside Greek territorial waters. Anyway, Turkey does not accept for the refugees to get back to its territory.

Under these conditions, the only way the Greek state could “protect better” the “frontiers of the Union”, as some European politicians suggest, would be to drown the refugees, or let them die in the sea without any help. Maybe some people in Europe would like such a radical “solution”, but one can easily imagine what they would say worldwide about Greece, just the next day, if Greek authorities were to follow such advice.

But there is a state which could very easily stop, or at least diminish in a very significant way, the flow of refugees to Europe. Its name is Turkey. It has the means to do it. Refugees are preparing openly their journey at the Turkish coast. Everybody knows it and everybody, including international televisions, can see it. The Turkish Army, Gendarmerie and secret services control very well their national territory. Maybe even too well. Maybe some boats will leave finally from Turkey, but it would be easy for the Turkish coast guard to stop and return them back. And finally, Ankara could accept back even the refugees and immigrants from Greek territorial waters.

European governments are begging Ankara to do it and the EU has agreed to give Turkey three billion euros for that purpose, in addition to some important political gifts to Turkey. Ankara is asking for major concessions in the Kurdish question and a lot of other things. Turkey agrees and then doesn't fulfill the agreements, even the ones signed previously with Greece and the EU of accepting back the immigrants.

European governments and the EU have a lot of means to exert pressure on Turkey. But they don't want really to do it to the extent necessary. They are afraid of harming their exports to the Turkish market. Paris, Berlin and London want to safeguard their “special relationship” with Ankara. The Turkish regime is very useful for various “dirty jobs” in the Middle East or against Russia and, last but not least, they obey, more or less, the American desiderata. Washington remains, more than ever, the geopolitical master in the Mediterranean. Germans, French or the European Commission can be very tough towards small countries like Greece, Cyprus or Portugal, sometimes even Spain or Italy. But they bow in front of the United States of America, even when European interests are in clear opposition to American ones.

For the above reasons, instead of pressing Turkey, European governments and the Union want now to transfer all the burden of the refugee crisis to a member of their own Union, already destroyed by the economic and social policies they imposed on it, and isolate it at the same time inside the Union of which it is a part.

Would you bet your money on the survival of such a “Union”?

A monstrous project: create a refugee and immigrant “state” in Europe

Not wishing to accept any more refugees, not wishing to exert the necessary pressure on Turkey, not wishing also to revert their Middle Eastern policy, which has created an unbelievable amount of ruins in a large region of the world, the European Union is converging to the idea of transferring again the whole pressure it receives to the weakest of its members, transforming Greece into a giant concentration camp. By doing this, it is adding new factors to the already very severe economic and social conditions which push Greece towards a possible collapse of its state structures, chaos and, potentially, even civil war.

The idea is to invoke the “humanitarian emergency”, trying, at the same time, to exploit

once more the weakness of the Greek government, which is acting under the blackmail of its creditors, the latter asking for new severe pension reductions (the 12th consequent reduction of Greek pensions, since the beginning of the “bail-out” programs) and other terrible measures which will destroy what remained of both middle classes and social security system in the country.

The SYRIZA-An.EI [Syriza coalition] Government, having capitulated without a battle in July, is facing now enormous pressures from both, the creditors and the social strata which begins to revolt. In addition, there is pressures by the Americans through the EU to make concessions in Greek foreign policy, always without any coherent strategy, but very much relying on US interests, though the Syriza coalition does not understand where these dubious allies are pushing it. It does not seem on the other hand, competent in handling an, anyway, extremely difficult situation.

The method Washington and the EU want to use is very similar to what they did with Greece regarding financial issues. By transferring all the burden of the 2008-09 financial crisis to Greece (and to a lesser extent to other South European countries), they were able to avoid taking any action to control a fraudulent international financial system. They avoided also to face the reality of the consequences of the ill-conceived systems of “globalization” the EU have adopted with the euro concept, except for a wing of German Christian Democrats, who had a plan to expel Greece from the Eurozone as an “answer” to Greece’s problems. The way they attempted to apply their plan, was inflicting great political self-defeat on Germany, the most serious one since 1945. Even if they attain their goal, Berlin risks to be held finally responsible for ruining all Europe, for the third time in a century.

By destroying Greece after 2010, a process which continues, they bought some time of apparent “stability” for both the financial and EU system. Of course the problem was not solved. It is just waiting to explode again.

The same will happen if this “method” is applied in the refugee crisis. Greece will be pushed further to the abyss, the European Union will continue to lose any *raison d’être* and the refugees will, sooner or later, find their way to Europe, either by crossing the mountains of Northern Greece and the Balkans, or by trying to escape through the Adriatic Sea to Italy.

What should be done?

Refugees and immigrants deserve all our solidarity, if we wish to remain humans. Especially as we supported, or did not oppose enough, military interventions in their countries which made them refugees (or the economic and “climatic” policies which turned them into immigrants). Still, is it really a solution, for them and for us, to have half of the Middle East and Africa emigrate into Europe, in order to avoid the consequences of the disasters we helped accumulate in their countries? We contributed very much to destroying them, are we going now to complete this process with the emigration of their best educated and more active citizens into Europe?

It is obvious, at the same time, that both the refugee crisis and the terror threats, and also the generalized confusion about their roots and possible solutions, are used to influence in a radical way European politics. These very totalitarian forces, like neoconservatives and their [financial] allies, are mainly responsible for creating the crisis, especially by engineering military interventions in the Middle East, through their influence in the US, French, British and other states and governments. Who could have imagined, only some months ago, that a

country like France, the motherland and the symbol of European Liberty, during the last few centuries, would enshrine martial law into its Constitution?

To face the situation, without being destroyed in its fundamentals and keeping its cohesion, unity, possibility of independence, but also its own democracy, Europe has to do two things in the short run. First, organize the accommodation for people having already crossed its borders and do it in an equitable and just way between EU members. Second, exert the necessary pressure on Turkey to stop the influx of more refugees into Europe through Greece. Measures should be taken to help refugees where they are now, waiting for conditions of safe return in their countries to be established. Such a policy is now absolutely necessary. Still it is not enough.

We need to reverse radically course in the Middle East. We need to stop destabilizing all independent Middle Eastern powers, we need to help immediately stop the war in Syria and help restore its territorial integrity, we need massive economic help to permit the reconstruction of the countries we demolished or helped demolish. In the long run we need also to exert the necessary pressure for a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Many people will say that all this is nice but unrealistic, “utopian”. Ok, we can try to avoid such policies. But we should be conscious of the real, “realistic” alternative. And the real, “realistic” alternative is to import into Europe the Middle Eastern chaos, permitting, at the same time, the very same forces who provoked the chaos, to continue their destructive work (and in reality to impose their regime) on our continent.

We are not speaking about abolition of the nation-state. It remains, but it remains as a sheer formality, with the real power taken away from its institutions. Such an experiment requires also a demographic change which is already happening with massive emigration of young well educated Greeks abroad and the dramatic falling of new births as a result of the bail-out program. A man with an enormous intuition, as all great artists, like Mikis Theodorakis, told me in an interview, back to 2012, when I asked him what is the aim of the program, he said, it wants to create “a Greece without Greeks”. After all, since the times of Pericles, we know that sovereignty follows the people.

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(1) After six years of applying a program supposedly to “help”, imposed by German and other European governments, EU and the IMF, under the “guidance” of international finance, put under the quasi-direct rule of a Troika of Creditors, Greece has lost nearly 30% of its GDP, two thirds of its young people are unemployed, social benefits are massively cut, investment has fallen more than 50% and its debt is rapidly increasing. These numbers represent by far the biggest economic and social disaster in capitalist Europe after 1945, the material losses of the country being superior (in relative terms) to those suffered by France or Germany during the First World War.

(2) FYROM is the official name used by UN and EU for what is widely known as “Republic of Macedonia”. Greece is not recognizing the name “Republic of Macedonia”, considering that its use betrays territorial claims on its own province, named also Macedonia and implies that the historic and multinational region of Macedonia, now belonging to four Balkan countries, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece and FYROM, should belong only to the latter. This difference has not permitted so far to FYROM to become a member of NATO.

(3) By the way, such prospects tend to confirm a number of analysts who expressed, during recent years, the opinion that in Greece we don't have just another, albeit extremely harsh, neoliberal "adjustment program" but an "experiment" aimed at destroying the very heart of a "nation-state" – its state and popular (democracy) sovereignty and the social protection system usually associated with nation-states. By the way, during the EU debates about the refugee crisis, a draft providing for the possibility of Frontex to act even without the consent of the country where it would operate, was accepted as basis for further discussion. Nobody asked the simple question for what purpose such a provision was deemed necessary.

Dimitris Konstantakopoulos is a philosopher, journalist, writer. He has written many book, uncountable articles and is the founder of the Delphi Initiative – <http://www.defenddemocracy.press/>.

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