

THE CLOCK IS TICKING

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Publication date on 5 April 2015

The Greek prime minister, Alexis Tsipras, is caught in an impossible situation. Pressed to exhaustion by Greece's lenders, he needs to wiggle his way between a rock and a hard place: ensuring that Greece somehow financially hobbles along under a rain of blows from her EU «partners» while all the while discovering avenues of trying to deal with the enormous humanitarian crisis the country faces because of the «bailouts.»

Mr. Tsipras has done the unthinkable of attempting to challenge the German view of «happiness» which hinges on perennial austerity and the destruction of vital parts of a society in order to save it. This exercise has earned him permanent enmity from Berlin and virulent grumbling from the rest of Greece's German-dominated EU «partners.»

Mr. Tsipras has also taken the unprecedented step of approaching Russia as a possible counterweight to what it amounts to a naked Berlin/Brussels attempt to destabilize his government and put him out of business. The Russian overture has Greece's «partners» raising their hackles and demanding that Greece does not break (non-existent) European «solidarity.» Mr. Tsipras though has already arranged his meeting with Mr. Putin.

As he struggles with impossible odds, *the Greek PM needs to also deliver a strong dose of domestic reform besides his foreign diplomacy.* Greece's malaise emerges, first and foremost, from her lethargic and unproductive public sector. While the private sector has been literally left to collapse after the onset of the crisis, government «workers» have enjoyed an almost scandalous immunity from the barbarous cutbacks that are bleeding the country white. This must change – and now is the *only* time.

Greece has run out of grace and space. Mr. Tsipras needs to confront his own SYRIZA party over public sector reform, a Herculean task given the various left tendencies comprising SYRIZA. But the clock is ticking and the PM must move immediately.

Under the circumstances, the (desperate) Russian maneuver is tactically welcome as it throws an admittedly small, but bothersome enough, wrench into the innards of a European «union» that increasingly seems dedicated to finding ways of pushing Greece down the chute. And if Mr. Tsipras discovers the magic wand that would allow him to break the public sector's stranglehold on Greece, his chances could be miraculously revived and strengthened beyond the present suffocating time limits imposed by the lenders.

One thing though that Mr. Tsipras **does not have** is time. He needs to confront the domestic front head on as we speak. This is literally his last chance. Foreign and domestic moves must be joined into a single determined thrust that, in all likelihood, would be the last for Greece before a descent into an Apocalypse orchestrated by European «solidarity.»