

IS THERE A WAY OUT OF THE VOID?

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In ancient Greek mythology, Chaos (Χάος), a dark, formless, underground void, was the element that gave rise to the spirits which, eventually, populated a diverse and beautiful universe with their descendants – gods, demi-gods and humans -- a universe that is studied to this day for the powerful, unparalleled and ever-lasting wisdom that it engendered.

Such transformations are relatively easy to create in mythology – but next to impossible to replicate in real life.

As we speak, Greece is wallowing in an environment that is a direct and immediate descendant of the original Greek Chaos. The core essence of this present void is political. Hit by a truly apocalyptic, all-round crisis, Greece has discovered that her political forces are not only corrupt caricatures of what is generally defined as a “political class,” but also completely incapable, on top of being unwilling, to *collectively* figure out ways and means to take the country out of Chaos and to fill the void with new, meaningful and workable initiatives and policies of national reconstruction.

Desperation triggers crazy thoughts, it is often said, and the present case of Greece is not only a case of desperation, but, also, a case of complete impasse. How could this impasse be broken? How could a “new element” be introduced so that Hellas may obtain the opportunity to survive and make a comeback with a reasonable expectation of survival and a fresh start?

There are two main conditions that define the present Greek deadlock: first, democratic politics has irreversibly broken down as the means for national consensus and, second, social and economic collapse is dangerously close to the point of no return. In light of this cataclysmic effect, some are wondering whether the time has come to look for “salvation” *outside the boundaries of Greece*.

At first glance, this thought seems surreal, to say the least. Yet, its (few) proponents point out that there is a historical precedent that serves as a point of departure for discussing such a possibility.

Modern Greece came into being thanks to foreign intervention. At a time when the Greek struggle for independence from the Ottoman yoke was on its last throes, the Battle of Navarino (October 20, 1827) which pitted a combined British, French and Russian naval force against the Sultan's fleet anchored in Navarino Bay, put an end to the Ottoman effort to suppress the Greeks by destroying the Sultan's squadrons and leading, eventually, to the creation of the Kingdom of Greece as an independent nation.

The parallel here is (almost) obvious. With present-day Greece hanging over the precipice – and with domestic actors unable to create the dynamics for pulling the country back onto safe ground -- an international initiative could be the *only possibility* for preserving Greece as a recovering, sovereign and “independent” national entity.

Unfortunately for the proponents of this theory, 2015 is far too far from 1827.

To begin with, unlike the early 19th century, the current Greek affair commands little sympathy among her “friends” and “partners” in the European “core.” The Philhellenism that permeated the ruling elites of the Great Powers at the time of the Greek Revolution ([George Canning](#) comes to mind) is today non-existent.

Since 2010, when the debt crisis crashed onto the scene, Greece has been subjected to a steady campaign of denigration and ridicule, often not-too-quietly promoted by “fellow” EU governments eager to shield their banks from Greek “contagion” and hammer the weasel Greeks, who pursue, so the familiar myth goes, the good life at the expense of the hard-working, honest northern European taxpayers. And, after decades of stories of corruption flowing from the “cradle of democracy,” western European public opinion is unwilling to entertain “salvation” thoughts – an attitude that further affects the rest of the “decadent” and “unreliable” European Southern rim. On top of all, the “bailout” strategy dictated by Berlin, complete with brutal austerity and refusal to take into account the horrific human costs associated with it, makes *any* initiative for reconciliation, and an honest “partnership” to save the day, next to impossible.

In theory, the foreign intervention idea could center on a multilateral conference to focus on the Greek debt crisis as a key component of attempting to resolve the still raging pan-European politico-economic crisis, fed Germany's intransigence and policies of calculated fiscal extermination. But, such ideas require *intellectual robustness* and

political desire to move forward instead of idling in place lest the “markets” react in the negative. Both these elements are simply not present among the current crop of European “leaders.”

As for the Greeks, they need to go back to the drawing board right away – in the futile effort to discover a Holy Grail of national survival.