

Greek premier defiant on debt talks

German-led creditors reject restructuring demands until the country promises more austerity moves.

By STEVEN ZEITCHIK

BERLIN — Having acknowledged that the Syriza-led Greek government couldn't reach an immediate deal with European creditors, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras took to the airwaves to sound a defiant note on the failed talks.

In a nationally televised address to the Greek Parliament on Friday evening, Tsipras rebuffed the European Commission and the German-led creditors who hold much of Greece's debt.

"The government is not going to give in to absurd proposals," he told lawmakers in Athens. This is "a bad negotiating trick."

He also warned against those who would "humiliate" Greece, a reference to what many in Athens perceive as scolding treatment from the institutions, and particularly German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble.

Greece is seeking a debt restructuring that would alleviate the burden of its mas-



THANASSIS STAVRAKIS Associated Press

GRAFFITI in Athens depicts a zero euro coin. Greece is seeking a debt restructuring that would alleviate the burden of its massive financial obligations and release about \$8 billion in previously agreed-upon bailout funds.

sive financial obligations and release about \$8 billion in previously agreed-upon bailout funds, in turn preventing a default and potentially exit from the euro currency.

The German-led creditors are refusing to meet Greece's demands until the country makes prom-

ises of more austerity moves and labor modifications.

Tsipras's Syriza, however, was elected in January on a strong anti-austerity platform.

The battle has come to a head in the last few weeks because of Greece's June 5 deadline for a \$325-million debt payment to the International Monetary Fund, a payment Greece had said it wouldn't make.

After several days last week when it seemed like a deal between Greece and the lending institutions was at least a possibility, the talks stalled Thursday. Tsipras's government formally requested, and was granted,

an alternate payment schedule that would give Greece several weeks to make the \$325-million payment.

The request to the IMF, though rare, was a fairly straightforward way for Greece to buy more time. But it did little to alleviate the underlying issue, and will now obligate Greece to write a check to the IMF in excess of \$1.7 billion in total debt payments by the end of the month, also the time when the current bailout agreement expires.

Tsipras's pronouncements on Greek television were largely waved off by Greek commentators as

more rhetoric from a leader who has not been shy about such statements.

Still, they underscored Tsipras's tightrope walk.

The Greek leader has long been caught between two flanks of his party: the more mainstream group that favors staying in the Eurozone, and the so-called Left Platform, the roughly 30% that is more open to an exit. Tsipras's sharp remarks Friday were seen as an attempt to placate that wing, which has expressed concern that he and Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis will capitulate too easily to German demands.

Tsipras also had a phone

conversation Friday with Russian President Vladimir Putin concerning potential energy collaborations, a gesture that was also seen as appealing to Syriza's radical flank, which favors a shift away from Europe.

Still, Tsipras made sure to move only so far in that direction Friday. In his speech to Parliament, he also called for a "conclusive solution" and warned of an economic disaster that would become a "self-fulfilling prophecy" if exit talks heat up.

Markets are watching the talks closely, with the prospect of a so-called Grexit reigniting fear of global contagion that began at the start of the debt crisis more than five years ago.

The nation of 11 million has been mired in a financial crisis that the ongoing debt problems have only worsened.

Tsipras has sought to walk a line between appealing to Greeks' national pride in resisting a deal and not making it seem as if German negotiations and a larger financial limbo would become a permanent condition.

Whether Greeks have felt reassured is an open question.

"There's a feeling among the people of Greece that this has been stagnant for a long time and needs to come to a resolution soon," said Roman Geromiden, an expert on modern Greek affairs at Bournemouth University in England.

"One way or another, there has to be some conclusion, because they feel they can't continue with the uncertainty."

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FOR THE RECORD

Oil field water: In the May 3 Section A, an article about the use of recycled oil field water in California agriculture said that samples contained acetone and methylene chloride after treatment. Acetone was found in testing in 2014, but not in a March 2015 test. An accompanying graphic cited the levels of three chemicals found in untreated oil field water: oil, 240,000-480,000 parts per million; acetone, 440-530 parts per billion; and methylene chloride, 82-89 parts per billion. However, the graphic omitted the levels found in tests of treated water: oil, 130-1,300 parts per million; acetone, 57-79 parts per billion; and methylene chloride, 28-56 parts per billion.

Drought politics: An article in the June 6 California section about efforts in Congress to address the drought referred to Rep. Jim Costa (D-Fresno) as Robert Costa.

Joe Biden: In the June 6 Section A, an article about

Vice President Joe Biden and his emphasis on family reversed the order in referring to two of the daughters of his son Hunter. Naomi Biden is the oldest of Hunter's children, Finnegan the middle child.

Rocky Chavez: In the May 31 California section, an article about GOP Assemblyman Rocky Chavez of Oceanside, who is running for U.S. Senate, stated that he is the Legislature's sole Latino Republican. In fact, Chavez is one of two; the other is Assemblyman Eric Linder of Corona.

Industry election: An article in the May 31 California section about the City of Industry's first council election in 17 years said that the city sprawls along the 10 Freeway. It should have said the 60 Freeway.

Lucky Brand: An article in the May 31 Business section about Lucky Brand Chief Executive Carlos Alberini said that the clothing com-

pany has annual sales of about \$500,000. The sales number should have been about \$50 million.

SeaWorld: In the June 6 Business section, in an article about SeaWorld Entertainment Inc.'s efforts to rebound from allegations in the documentary "Blackfish" that its parks mistreat killer whales, the last name of Wayne Pacelle of the Humane Society of the United States was misspelled as Parcell. Additionally, the organization was incorrectly called the Humane Society of America.

Grand Park exhibit: In the May 31 California section, an article about a photo exhibit of survivors of the Armenian genocide referred to the height of the sculptures on which the photos were mounted as nearly 7 feet. They range in height from 8 to 15 feet.

"Sense8": In the June 5 Calendar section, a review of the new sci-fi series "Sense8"

on Netflix said that a character played by Naveen Andrews, an actor familiar from an earlier, similar TV series, "Lost," is potentially the "sansel" of "Sense8." The intended word was *sensei*, "teacher" in Japanese.

Hot Property: In the May 31 Business section, a graphic highlighting homes for sale for about \$750,000 included a home in Eagle Rock that was incorrectly referred to as a Laurel Canyon residence.

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