

ASPECTS OF GREEK AMERICAN RELATIONS
ON THE EVE OF THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE*

Through the fall and winter of 1946, affairs in Greece went from bad to worse. The purpose of this study is to clarify and place within its historical context the policy of the United States towards Greece, and at the same time analyze the reasons which led the American government to take a more active role in Greek affairs. Moreover, an attempt will be made to show the grave problems which Greece was faced with.

Greece's problem was due to a combination of great internal weaknesses and external pressures. The slow recovery of her economy was largely the result of political instability and strife, as well as to Greek government's ineptness and lack of courage in dealing with the economic and financial questions. Well-supplied guerrilla bands, also threatened Greece with financial and economic collapse. Greece faced two major problems: how to avert a collapse from within, and how to prevent aggressions from outside forces. The Greek government hoped to solve the first problem with economic and military aid from the United States, the second with the help of the United Nations. But, by 1947, despite frantic appeals from Greece for credits and loans, the situation was still in doubt. Great Britain lacked necessary resources. The United States, although sympathetic to the Greek predicament, could not move to a definite commitment until the proper legislative steps had been taken.

In the meantime, while the American government was trying to find ways to help Greece, the plebiscite in Greece as scheduled, took place on September 1, 1946. Out of a total of 1,700,000 registered voters, 69 % voted in favor of the king and 31 % against his return¹. The announced results led to allegations that the returns had been falsified. In areas which the communists counted as their strongholds, such as Piraeus, Thessaloniki and Macedonia generally, the vote was suprisingly even². Events during the summer, however, had shown that the Greek government would try to return a monarchist majority no matter how the people really felt. Ambassador Lincoln MacVeagh noted

* This article is part of a larger study concerning Greek-American relations in the post-World War II period which will be published upon completion.

1. United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the U.S., Diplomatic Papers, 1946, The Near East and Africa*, Vol. VII, Washington, D.C., 1969, Report on the Observation of the Greek Plebiscite, 7 September 1946, pp. 204-07. (Hereafter cited as FR, 1946, VII).

2. C.M. Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-1949*, London 1976, p. 193.

that the official tendency was to consider all persons communists unless royalists; to protect former Metaxists and collaborators; and to accept armed assistance from disreputable elements professing royalism³.

The British and American chiefs of mission appointed to observe the plebiscite reported that "at a number of polling stations the representation of political parties was inadequate, and there is an indication that influence was used by the supporters of the Government to prevent representatives of the opposition from functioning... There is no doubt in our minds that the party representing the government's view exercised undue influence in securing votes in support of the return of the King, but without that influence we are satisfied that a majority of votes for the King's return could have been obtained"⁴. The plebiscite gave the false impression that the country was divided between Monarchists and Republicans. This picture was distorted and wholly imaginary. In the first place, the Greek people by preference were liberals and republicans, and fear and hatred of a communist takeover had forced them to look to the return of the king as the lesser of two evils. The result of the plebiscite was generally viewed as anti-communist rather than pro-monarchy. There was a feeling that a vote against the monarchy could have been a vote for the Greek Communist Party (KKE). This danger from the KKE was not imaginary and could be seen from the increased scale of guerrilla activity during the summer⁵. In August 1946, the Greek government publicly stated for the first time that Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania were assisting the KKE guerrillas in northern Greece⁶. The KKE, at this point, was determined to achieve power by any means. In August they sent Markos Vaphiadis to the mountains to organize the guerrilla forces⁷.

To the American government the outcome of the plebiscite had been much of a surprise. The Americans warned the Greek government that its policy should be a moderate one, aimed at consolidating the varied political views of the great majority of the Greek people, and that they would not look with favor on a Greek government which would follow the plebiscite with a policy of terror or repressive measures against all Greek political elements

3. FR, 1946, VII, MacVeagh to Byrnes, Athens, August 3, 1946, p. 187.

4. FR, 1946 VII, Report on the Observation of the Greek Plebiscite, 7 September, pp. 204-207.

5. D. Zaphiropoulos, 'Ο 'Αντισυμμοριακός' Αγών 1945-1949 [The Antiguerilla Struggle 1945-1949], Athens 1956, pp. 173-76. Also, Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece*, pp. 184-5.

6. William McNeill, *The Greek Dilemma*, Philadelphia 1947, p. 244.

7. Nikos Psyroukis, 'Ιστορία της Σύγχρονης Ελλάδας 1940-1967 [History of Contemporary Greece, 1940-1967], Vol. I, Athens 1975, p. 302.

unfriendly to the Government⁸. In spite of the american warnings rightist terror continued to grow, in the period after the plebiscite, and legislative steps were taken by the Greek government which suspended habeas corpus, and arrests without warrant were again permitted. Even though communist-led guerrilla bands had intensified their attacks in the countryside these measures against political opposition could only worsen the situation by adding to the causes which were driving men and women into opposition to the authorities and so would eventually strengthen the number of those who were taking against the Government⁹.

On September 11, the Central Committee of the KKE in a communique declared that chaos would grow and popular resistance would become stronger and spread more, and civil strife would end in the destruction of Greece, if the government policies continued. The only way out of this awful development was to accept the Communist demands. These consisted of non-recognition of the results of the plebiscite and non-return of the king; the setting up of a coalition government which would include EAM representatives; a general amnesty; friendly relations with the People's Republic of southeastern Europe; new elections for a constituent assembly; and, as an indispensable precondition for all the above measures, the withdrawal of the British troops¹⁰. According to KKE, the Greek government had either to accept the Communists' demands and see Greece become a People's Republic, or be prepared for civil war which would lead to the destruction of Greece.

In the weeks following the plebiscite, the scale of guerrilla activity increased. The KKE in Athens openly acknowledged its connection with the guerrilla bands, and claimed that 10,000 men had taken to the hills of Greece forming a new Democratic Army which would combat the Monarcho-Fascist government of Greece¹¹.

On September 22, two thousand guerrillas captured the village of Des-kati on the border between Thessaly and Macedonia¹². A spokesman from the English Foreign Office on September 25 said that the situation in northern Greece had become very serious, that a small scale civil war was under way, and that the British government had received evidence that the guerrillas were getting arms from Yugoslavia and Albania¹³. The Greek government,

8. FR, 1946, VII, Memorandum of Conversation between Loy Henderson and the Greek Chargé d'Affaires Paul Economou-Gouras, September 5, 1946, p. 200.

9. Geoffrey Chandler, *The Divided Land*, London 1959, p. 146.

10. *Rizospastis*, September 13, 1946.

11. McNeill, *The Greek Dilemma*, p. 241.

12. Zaphiropoulos, 'Ο Ἀντισυμμοριακὸς Ἀγών, p. 181.

13. C.M. Woodhouse, *Apple of Discord*, London 1948, p. 270.

in order to deal with the increased guerrilla activities, put the gendarmerie under the orders of the Army which became the main instrument in maintaining internal security¹⁴.

Because of the intensified guerrilla activities, the Greek government, on September 15, told the British that it was essential that the Greek armed forces be increased by 30,000 men. Prime Minister Tsaldaris requested the British government to agree to this increase of the Greek army and to provide the necessary arms and equipment¹⁵.

At this time the Greek government was not only asking for an increase in the armed forces but was also demanding more economic aid from the United States and Great Britain. The intensified guerrilla activities inside Greece were having a great effect on economic conditions there. The government could not develop an effective economic policy and the flow of refugees from the villages to the big cities put a heavy burden on the budget. The guerrilla activities interfered with communications and with the transport of goods and threatened Greece with economic collapse.

The deterioration in Greece posed a dilemma for the United States. The Americans had either to avoid further involvement with Greece and run the risk of seeing Greece becoming a People's Republic or to become more involved in Greek domestic affairs by pressuring the Greek government to take immediate and energetic measures to solve its economic difficulties. The United States Government was fully aware of the grave difficulties which beset Greece. It hoped, however, that the Greek government, by taking firm action and at the same time being confident of outside assistance, would be able to lead Greece on the road toward economic recovery.

In the fall of 1946 serious concern over worsening internal conditions in Greece and increasing tension along the northern Greek borders led to a re-evaluation of American policy toward Greece. On September 12, 1946, William Clayton, the acting Secretary of State, suggested that in view of the policy which the Soviet Union appeared to be pursuing of endeavoring to undermine the stability and to obtain control of the countries in the Near and Middle East such as Greece, Turkey, and Iran, the United States should make certain changes to her policy on arms sale and be prepared to sell arms to Greece, should the latter request it¹⁶. A little later James Byrnes, the Secretary of State, specifically mentioned Greece and Turkey as friends who needed assis-

14. Zaphiropoulos, 'Ο Ἀντισυμμοριαχὸς Ἀγών, p. 177, and Woodhouse, *The Struggle for Greece*, p. 187.

15. Stephen Xydis, *Greece and the Great Powers 1944-1947*, Thessaloniki 1963, p. 363.

16. FR, 1946, VII, Clayton to Byrnes, 12 September 1946, pp. 209-13.

tance because of the menacing attitude of the Soviet Union¹⁷. Earlier, at the Paris Peace Conference Byrnes had agreed with the British government that Greece must look to Great Britain rather than to the United States for arms and military equipment while the United States would endeavor to strengthen the economic position of Greece¹⁸.

On September 3 the Bank of Greece asked the Federal Reserve Bank of New York for a credit of 10,000,000, against transfer of sterling to the credit of the Federal's account with the Bank of England. At first the Federal Bank refused to enter into the transaction¹⁹. Later on, however, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York reflecting the attitude of Byrnes granted Greece a 10,800,000 credit²⁰.

At this point farther indication of State Department concern over the Greek situation was Loy Henderson's memorandum—25 September—regarding Greece. Henderson, the Director of the State Department's office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, wrote that many signs indicated that Greece was becoming a focal point in strained international relations and that its fate during the next few months may be a deciding factor in the future orientation of the Near and Middle East. The memorandum discussed the deteriorating condition of the Greek economy, the low public morale as a result of hatreds engendered by partisan cruelties and strife. These hatreds were being kept alive by the harsh intransigence of certain extreme right members in the Government and by the activities of an apparently well-organized and armed communist dominated minority supported by the U.S.S.R. and Soviet satellites. Next he emphasized that the strategic importance of Greece to U.S. security lied in the fact that it was the only country of the Balkans which had not yet fallen under Soviet hegemony. Moreover, Greece and Turkey formed the obstacle to Soviet domination of the Eastern Mediterranean, which was an economic and strategic area of vital importance. Were the Greek mainland and the Greek islands allowed to come under Soviet influence, the Soviet Union would be in a position to exert irresistible pressure upon Turkey. Therefore the United States could not afford to stand idle in the face of maneuvers and machinations which indicated an intension in the part of the Soviet Union to expand its power by subjecting Greece to its will, and then using Greece as an important stepping-stone for a further expansion of Soviet power.

17. FR, 1946, VII, Byrnes to Clayton, 24 September 1946, pp. 223-24.

18. FR, 1946, VII, pp. 262-263; Thomas Paterson, *Soviet American Confrontation: Post-war Reconstruction and the Origins of the Cold War*, Baltimore 1973, p. 188.

19. *Snyder Papers*, Greece folder, Overby to Secretary of the Treasury Snyder, September 6, 1946, housed at Truman Library.

20. *Ibid.*, September II, 1946; FR, 1946, VII, p. 232.

American policy, continued Henderson, should make it clear to the world that they were determined that Greece remain independent and in charge of her own affairs and that they were prepared to take suitable measures to support the territorial and political integrity of Greece as important to U.S. security. Finally, although Henderson recognized that Great Britain had primary responsibility in furnishing military equipment to Greece, he believed the United States should be prepared, in case of British inability, to sell to Greece sufficient arms for the maintenance of internal order and for the defense of Greek territorial integrity. Also, recommended that the Export-Import Bank grant economic assistance to Greece, the immediate dispatch to Greece of an American economic mission, and the United States government take the necessary steps to assist Greece in finding export markets and in acquiring essential goods in the American markets²¹.

Henderson's memorandum which clarified and formalized American policy toward Greece was approved by Byrnes²². By the fall of 1946 the United States had underlined its growing interests in the eastern Mediterranean and had shown that they regarded the oil resources in the Middle East and the strategic location of Greece and Turkey of vital importance.

Although economic aid continued to be discussed during the fall of 1946, there were numerous indications that the United States were willing to consider military as well as economic aid to Greece. In early October at the Paris Peace Conference, Prime Minister Constantine Tsaldaris met with Secretary Byrnes. The American secretary told Tsaldaris that the United States would send an American economic mission to survey the Greek economic conditions, that Greece would get a liberal share of post-UNRRA aid, and that the American government would do what it could to make surplus military equipment available to Greece²³. Tsaldaris, in a memorandum to the Secretary of State, requested a \$ 50,000,000 loan from the United States. Without such a loan, the memorandum stated, Greece would fall into a condition of extreme economic distress²⁴.

In Greece, by mid-October, the military and economic situation had become very serious. Refugees from the countryside came to Athens and Thessaloniki, foreign exchange was exhausted, and a deep sense of panic infected the country. Because of rising military expenditures the cost of living was increasing. The British government confronted with the Greek request for more arms in order to increase the strength of the army, refused to comply because

21. FR, 1946, VII, Henderson's Memorandum regarding Greece, pp. 240-245.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 240.

23. James Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, New York 1947, pp. 299-300.

24. P. Economou-Gouras, *Tò Δόγμα Τρούμαν* [Truman Doctrine], Athens 1957, p. 26.

Britain could not undertake the obligation to support a larger Greek army²⁵. On the other hand, the United States sent eight American army officers to Athens to join the staff of the military attaché. The *New York Times* reported that the sending of these officers to Greece indicated the growing American interest in the worsening situation in northern Greece²⁶.

At this point the American government was very much concerned with the political situation in Greece. The Americans were looking for ways to counsel the Greek government to pursue a policy of moderation. They thought that the best thing to do was the American Ambassador to have a conversation with the king. Indeed, on October 11, MacVeagh visited the king and suggested that the king should provide personal leadership, insist on the political leaders getting together to form a broadly representative government, promote widespread tolerance, justice and mercy, permit difference of political opinions and prosecute nobody except for definite commission of crime, and finally free all those imprisoned for political crimes. If such a program were put into effect, MacVeagh stated, seventy per-cent of the existing "banditry" would disappear²⁷.

The American government having reevaluated its general policy toward Greece thought that it should be made clear to the king and the Greek government officials that active American support of Greek independence and territorial integrity was based on the assumption that the Greek government should repudiate its aggressive policies, and that the extreme right should inevitably move toward the center. That the security of Greece was of vital importance to the United States was stated in a letter from President Truman to king George. The letter mentioned that to enable Greece to fight for its independence and the preservation of its territorial integrity, the United States was prepared to grant substantial aid and supplies. The President suggested that the Greek government should help persuade American public opinion that the rulers of Greece constituted no oligarchy of reactionaries, that democratic institutions were fully functioning in Greece, and that the entire Greek people, except the communists, were united. Should the American people be so convinced, they would be prepared, to submit to new economic sacrifices that aid to Greece would entail. President Truman suggested that the best way for persuading the American people was to broaden the Greek government, to avoid excesses, and speedily to reorganize the Army²⁸. Thus, by the end of October 1946, the United States intended to give direct aid to Greece, going beyond

25. C.M. Woodhouse, *Apple of Discord*, p. 274.

26. *New York Times*, October 22, 1946.

27. FR, 1946, VII, MacVeagh to Byrnes, Athens, October 11, 1946, pp. 233-235.

28. Xydis, *Greece and the Great Powers*, pp. 400-401.

mere moral support and show of force with naval visits. The Greek ambassador reported shortly after Truman's message from Washington that the defense of Greece was indeed a concern of the United States. The Americans had assured the Greek government that the integrity of Greece was a basic point of American policy in the eastern Mediterranean. This policy's implementation would become more effective if Greece formed a government of national unity. The Americans very naively thought that the conditions which favored the growth of communist strength would disappear if economic and political reforms were undertaken by a coalition government of centrist and social democratic parties.

On October 31, in line with the American suggestion, efforts were made to form a coalition government. The leaders of the opposition parties, Panayotis Kanellopoulos, George Papandreou, and Themistocles Sofoulis, agreed to coalesce behind Tsaldaris; but they demanded the portfolios of Foreign Affairs, Economic Coordination and War. When the Populist Party refused to give up these portfolios, the negotiations broke down. Tsaldaris, on November 4, formed another government almost identical with his original administration²⁹.

Although the Americans were not yet directly intervening in Greek internal affairs, nevertheless they emphasized to the Greek government the need for governmental reforms as precondition of any economic aid. This was very clearly implied in an Acheson memorandum outlining steps which the Americans thought were essential before Greece could accomplish any degree of economic stability. Acheson suggested that "in order to expedite Greek recovery it appears most important that steps should be taken: (A) to stimulate exports; (B) to maximize domestic production of essential commodities; (C) to reduce non-productive government expenditure in order to make funds available for reconstruction, and effect reforms in government administration and in taxation; (D) to obtain control of and utilize effectively foreign exchange earned by the national economy; and (E) to prepare a reconstruction program which puts first things first and is within the means of the Greek economy, and to carry out reconstruction up to the limits of the means available"³⁰. The United States government believed that the conception prevailing in Greece that foreign assistance could be effective without drastic measures of internal policy constituted a major obstacle to recovery. The Americans were moving toward the granting of economic aid but they were very much troubled by its failure to form a coalition and to institute reforms.

29. Economou-Gouras, *Tò Δόγμα Τρούμαν*, p. 29.

30. FR, 1946, VII, Acheson to Venizelos, October 29, 1946, pp. 250-54.

By early November 1946, it was quite evident to the Greek government that the integrity of Greece was considered a vital point in American policy in the Mediterranean, and that America was aware of the dangers that threatened Greece from the countries of the north. According to Philip Dragoumis, Minister of War, American officers at the Pentagon had told the Greek military attaché in Washington that Communist pressure would be intensified in the winter and spring and the war in Greece would become more intense. The United States, they said, had decided to help in the strengthening of the Greek Army. In order to avoid delay it was more convenient to channel such aid through the existing British services in Greece. This aid would include not only military material but also economic aid³¹. At this very same time, November 6, Under-Secretary Dean Acheson told James Forrestal that the United States expected the British to furnish arms to Greece. But, if the British were unable to do so, the American government would provide arms needed to make the transfer³².

Throughout November, the Greek government realizing that it had to depend completely upon American support intensified its pleas to the United States authorities for economic and military aid to strengthen the army. The Greek government constantly stressed the point to the Americans of the need to support Greek military forces in view of the Soviet presence on the Mediterranean. On November 29, Prime Minister Tsaldaris sent to Washington a letter requesting arms and military material in order to increase the Greek armed forces by 80,000 men³³. By this time Greece badly needed economic and military aid; Greek was fighting Greek, civil war was now a reality. Murders and massacres by both sides became such a commonplace occurrence in Greek life that they aroused little attention. The fighting emptied the villages and created a large number of refugees who were a heavy financial burden on the state. The Greek government believed that the leftist forces were receiving supplies of arms and equipment from Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania; in addition, when it suited them, they were withdrawing into the territory of these countries to rest and reform before continuing their operations. The Americans were afraid that foreign complicity of fomenting Greek internal disorders and the great anarchy which existed may result in communist move to split north Greece from the rest of the country thereby endangering general peace³⁴.

31. Economou-Gouras, *Tò Δόγμα Τρούμαν*, pp. 35-36.

32. W. Millis (ed), *The Forrestal Diaries*, New York 1951, p. 216; FR, 1946, VII, Acheson to MacVeagh, Washington, November 9, 1946, p. 262-3.

33. Economou-Gouras, *Tò Δόγμα Τρούμαν*, p. 41.

34. FR, 1946, VII, MacVeagh to Byrnes, Athens, November 18, 1946, p. 265.

The Greek army was not large enough to give protection to all towns and villages. It had to protect the larger towns and keep communications open between them, which meant that a large number of troops was constantly committed to guard and convey duties. The leftist forces could not secure a permanent foothold within Greece itself, although their grip on parts of the countryside was growing. Their immediate tactical objective in 1946 was not to capture, occupy and consolidate certain areas, but only to make swift strikes, achieve local results, and then withdraw rapidly to distant strongholds on foreign soil. The KKE aim was to delay reconstruction and prevent the return of normal conditions in Greece. The KKE leaders believed that the Greek government would collapse from its incapacity to put its house in order. After the collapse the KKE would take control of the country. On October 28, 1946, several guerrilla chiefs, including Markos Vaphiadis, met in the village of Tsouka in the Antihassia mountains and "having examined the whole internal problem of Greece reached the unanimous decision to form the High Command of the Democratic Army of Greece"³⁵. Transformation of guerrilla forces into self-declared army with a High Command implied centralized direction and the power to coordinate and control the activities of all the units under its command.

After the establishment of the High Command the democratic, army increased greatly its operational activity. The policy was to pick a town or village, concentrate superior forces and then attack. On November 13, a force of seven hundred men attacked the village of Skra on the Greek-Yugoslav border. The guerrillas who had clearly come over the border attacked Greek Army detachments with high casualties on both sides. Fighting continued until the guerrillas withdrew to Yugoslavia. This attack brought to the Greek government the sudden realization of the seriousness of the situation³⁶.

On November 26, *Rizospastis* published a resolution of the Central Committee of the KKE stating that the Tsaldaris government had reached an economic dead end and bankruptcy. The Central Committee demanded that the British leave Greece. It also rejected the assertions that Greece's northern neighbors were threatening the country's independence and its northern frontiers. In conclusion, the Central Committee called for the formation of all-party government with the participation of EAM³⁷.

The escalation of civil war alarmed greatly the Americans. Ambassador MacVeagh "cabled in early December that the Soviet Union wanted complete

35. E. Joannidis, *Bloody but Unbowed*, London 1949, p. 111.

36. Geoffrey Chandler, *The Divided Land*, pp. 185-86.

37. *Rizospastis*, November 26, 1946.

control of Greece and would interfere with all positive steps by the Greeks to save themselves”³⁸. In the view of the State Department Russia and its satellites, Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria wanted “1) to embarrass the Greek Government, 2) to cut off Greek Macedonia from Greece and bring it into the Yugoslav Federation, 3) to obtain Western Thrace for Bulgaria in order to give that country and the Soviet Union an outlet on the Aegean Sea, and 4) to place the Soviet Union in a more strategic advantage on the Aegean side of the Turkish Straits”³⁹. It is evident that the United States feared for the security of the entire Middle East. They considered Greece the weakest link in the chain of threatened countries in the area. The Americans knew that Greece needed direct military aid which would require congressional approval. Therefore, no military agreement could be reached with the Greeks. At this time the American government could only provide diplomatic support at the United Nations.

In November 1946, Greece was in danger of losing the war without fighting it. The country was faced with danger from within and from without. These two dangers were interlocked; if one was realized, the other would be also realized. The only salvation for Greece would be to nullify both of these dangers. In order to prevent the threat of being crushed from outside forces, Greece sought the assistance of the United Nations Security Council in restraining Greece’s three northern neighbors from aiding the guerrillas. And, to avert a collapse from within, the Greek government again appealed to the United States for economic and military aid.

On December 3, 1946, Greece complained formally to the Security Council that the guerrillas were being armed and trained on foreign soil, and that Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia were harboring Greek fugitives from justice and lending their support to the violent guerrilla warfare being waged in northern Greece against public order and the nation’s territorial integrity. This situation was likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. The complaint included a request that these charges should be investigated by the United Nations. The Greek government was confident that in this way the charges brought by it might be confirmed authoritatively and the means thus provided for the settlement of the question⁴⁰.

The Greek complaint was placed on the agenda of the Security Council on December 10, 1946. Two days later, Prime Minister Tsaldaris presented

38. Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, New York 1969, p. 199.

39. FR, 1946, VII, Memorandum of incidents on the Northern Greek Frontiers, Washington, December 9, 1946.

40. United Nations Security Council, *Official Records*, 1st Year, 2d Series, New York, 1946, pp. 170-72.

his views. He stated that acts of aggression against Greece were being committed on the basis of a systematic plan aimed at separating Greek Macedonia from Greece and establishing in Greece a People's Republic contrary to the wishes of the Greek people. The tactics of this plan were, first, intensive propaganda in favor of the incorporation of Greek Macedonia in the Federal Yugoslav State of Macedonia and, second, active assistance to the revolutionary guerrilla bands which were using the territory of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania as operational bases for their raids into Greek territory⁴¹. The following day the representatives of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania rejected the accusations made by the Greek government and stated that the accusations were intended only to confuse the long-suffering people of Greece and to mislead democratic public opinion throughout the world⁴².

On December 18, Herschel Johnson, the representative of the United States, stated that the United Nations must arrive at a satisfactory solution. Border violations could not be ignored by the Council. Its responsibility for maintaining peace required the Council to deal with the situation. For these reasons Herschel Johnson repeated the earlier—September 18, 1946—American proposal that the Security Council set up a commission to ascertain the facts relating to the border violations, with authority to conduct investigations in all four countries involved and to report the result to the Security Council⁴³.

On December 19, Andrej Gromyko, the Soviet representative, charged that the Greek government was threatening neighboring countries and oppressing the Greek people. Gromyko urged the Security Council to hear not only representatives of the Greek government but also those people who represented the Greek democratic parties and organizations, who had no means of expressing themselves except through the press. Gromyko, referring to the American proposal, stated that he had no objection to the Security Council establishing a commission and sending it to investigate the situation⁴⁴. The United States' draft resolution was unanimously adopted by the Security Council on December 19, 1946⁴⁵.

The adoption of the resolution was, however, no sign of real agreement between the rival Great Powers. This resolution only postponed the consideration of Balkan and Greek affairs until the commission could report its findings. Three months earlier, Andrej Gromyko had vetoed a U.S. resolution

41. *Ibid.*, pp. 565-70.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 570-95.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 629-31.

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 640-45.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 662.

which proposed the establishment of a commission for investigating on the spot the situation along the northern Greek border. Suddenly, three months later, the Soviet Union changed its mind. Why this sudden change? Secretary Byrnes believed it was due to his power of persuasion. The Secretary told Molotov that the Soviet Union and the United States shared responsibility for maintaining the peace. Byrnes felt certain that Molotov could relieve the Greek situation by using his influence with Yugoslavia, Albania, and Bulgaria. The Russian replied that the Greek government was responsible for the situation in Greece. Byrnes suggested that, since their information was so different, the sensible thing for them to do was to get the facts and then agree upon the remedy. To Byrnes' surprise, Molotov instructed his representative on the Security Council to support the resolution for an investigation⁴⁶. Byrnes, however, may have attributed too much to his persuasive abilities. The acceptance of the commission may simply have been regarded as a necessary concession to public opinion; moreover, it also gave the Soviet Union and its Balkan satellites the opportunity to attack the Greek government's position with massive propaganda and to use the commission to publicize government abuses in Greece⁴⁷.

The Soviet Union, in December 1946, was very much aware of the United States' growing interest in Greece. Russia was afraid of direct American intervention there. Hence, on December 3, 1946, Radio Moscow stated that, according to informed sources the British were negotiating with the Americans to obtain consent for the dispatch of at least a small American force to northern Greece, to ease the British position and to create a pretext for the further stay of British troops in Greece⁴⁸. On December 6, another Radio Moscow broadcast again gave credence to such reports and stated that American capital was trying to turn Greece into an American colony. American newspapers were allegedly preparing American public opinion for a more active intervention of the United States in the internal affairs of Greece by circulating provocative rumors fabricated by the Tsaldaris government, namely, that Greece was threatened by an attack on the part of her northern neighbors. In conclusion, the Soviet broadcast attacked Anglo-American politicians, who publicly liked to swear allegiance to the ideals of democracy, the equality of men and the high principles of the U.N. Charter, while in actual fact they trampled underfoot these principles. Moved as always by narrow,

46. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, p. 303.

47. C.E. Black, "Greece and the United Nations", *Political Science Quarterly* (December, 1948), p. 553; also W. McNeill, *America, Britain and Russia: Their Cooperation and Conflict*, London 1953, p. 742.

48. Radio Moscow Broadcast, quoted by Xydis, *Greece and the Great Powers*, p. 423.

selfish, calculating interest, these politicians tried to impose their domination on other peoples⁴⁹. In light of such lively Soviet reports, the Soviet Union had clearly approved the investigating commission because it gave Russia the opportunity to intensify its charges against the Greek government; more importantly, it prevented the United States from taking any measures in Greece. To the Americans this Soviet vote was part of a strategy of delay, aimed at giving time to the guerrillas to undermine the Greek economy, cause the collapse of the Greek government and seize power for the Communists. According to Secretary Byrnes, the investigating commission from the beginning met difficulties and delays — which the American representatives charged primarily to Greece's neighbors. During this time the Greek government continued to complain of more attacks from across its borders⁵⁰.

In the meantime, while the Security Council was debating the Greek complaint, Prime Minister Tsaldaris continued his pleas to the United States for economic and military aid, in order to avert a collapse from within. Tsaldaris, in early December, went to New York and met with Secretary Byrnes. He described the desperate plight of the Greek people and told him that the British had warned the Greek government that, because of financial difficulties, the British would soon be forced to withdraw their troops from Greece. For these reasons Greece needed economic aid and military supplies for its armed forces. The Secretary repeated that the United States might furnish aid but only through the British. Byrnes then invited Tsaldaris to Washington for further consultations⁵¹.

The State Department, on December 11 — after the Byrnes-Tsaldaris meeting — announced that an economic mission headed by Paul Porter, a State Department official, would go to Greece to look into the economic conditions and report what measures were necessary for the restoration and development of the national economy⁵². The *New York Times* regarded this mission as a significant move by the United States in support of Greece⁵³.

At that time Greece had no use for a fact finding mission; it needed instead economic and military aid in order to survive. To get this support, Tsaldaris, accompanied by Greek Ambassador Paul Economou-Gouras, journeyed to Washington to give Truman and Secretary Byrnes an aide-memoire. The aide-memoire pointed out the crisis the Greek government would face in the coming year because of cessation of UNRRA aid. The Prime Minister

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 423-24.

50. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, p. 303.

51. James Byrnes, *All in a Lifetime*, New York 1958, p. 385.

52. FR, 1946, VII, Acheson to MacVeagh, Washington, December 12, 1946, p. 278.

53. *New York Times*, December 12, 1946.

urged that the Export-Import Bank give Greece short term credit in order to buy consumer goods from the United States and for reconstruction purposes. Tsaldaris also demanded military aid for the Greek armed forces⁵⁴. In conversation between Tsaldaris and Under-Secretaries of State Dean Acheson and William Clayton, it became apparent that the Greek economic, financial, and administrative system was quickly approaching complete chaos, and needed money and arms on a large scale⁵⁵.

When Secretary Byrnes and President Truman quietly took up the matter with the Export-Import Bank, the directors informed them that under statute they could not make a loan unless they had reasonable assurances of repayment and they doubted whether this condition could be met by Greece considering the unsettled conditions there. Although the directors said they would consider an application by Greece, there was little hope for a loan unless the law was changed⁵⁶.

Meanwhile, MacVeagh was pressing the American government for a speed up in assistance, without awaiting the results of the economic mission's survey. In his view the United States had to intervene in Greek affairs, thus he proposed that America should equip the Greek Army as soon as possible⁵⁷. Secretary Byrnes concurred with MacVeagh's suggestion and immediately instructed him to forward a list of requirements so they may be studying the items and determine in advance what the American government could supply if the British were unable to furnish⁵⁸.

On December 23, the State Department issued a communique concerning the visit of Prime Minister Tsaldaris. In it the American officials assured the Greek Prime Minister that the American government would urgently explore all possibilities of rendering immediate as well as long-range economic assistance to Greece. Also it stated that, during conversations with the Prime Minister, the United States government renewed assurances of support for the independence and integrity of Greece⁵⁹.

According to Secretary Byrnes the American government had every sympathetic view toward Greece, as well as a strong desire to contribute to Greece's economic recovery within the President's constitutional rights. However, the American officials were unfavorably impressed by Tsaldaris' lack of precision and by complete absence of any well-prepared data to substantiate exag-

54. Economou-Gouras, *Tò Λόγμα Τρούμαν*, p. 43.

55. Joseph Jones, *The Fifteen Weeks*, New York, 1955, p. 75.

56. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, p. 300.

57. FR, 1946, VIII, MacVeagh to Byrnes, Athens, December 16, 1946.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 283

59. *State Department Bulletin*, January 5, 1947.

gerated demands. Tsaldaris' visit to Washington brought to the fore the grave situation in Greece and also the inability of the American government to help Greece avoid economic collapse and Communist control without having authorization from Congress.

In retrospect, by the end of 1946 the Americans faced a major crisis in Greece which they perceived as part of a Soviet plan to turn Greece into a People's Republic. In recent years "revisionist" historians reject as unfounded the American fears about such a threat. They argue that there was no danger from the Soviet Union, and that Stalin opposed from the start the Greek communist attempt to seize power. Generally, there is no evidence to suggest that in 1946 Stalin did not want a communist take-over in Greece, nor that preparing for the "third round" the Greek communists were following Soviet instructions. There is, however, a definite possibility that Russia did not object to KKE bid for power in the summer of 1946, because she wanted to exploit the Greek civil war for its propaganda value. Stalin changed radically his attitude towards the Greek civil war only after the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine. It is known, for example, from Djilas' conversation with Stalin that in February 1948 he told the Yugoslavs that the "uprising in Greece has to fold up"⁶⁰. Neither Djilas nor Vladimir Dedijer state anywhere in their works that Stalin opposed the Greek uprising in 1946. Indeed, Djilas states that "the Soviet government took no direct action with respect to the uprising in Greece, practically leaving Yugoslavia to face the music in the United Nations, nor did it undertake anything decisive to bring about an armistice—not until Stalin found it to his interest"⁶¹. In short, Djilas' conversations with Stalin do not indicate in any way that Stalin opposed the Greek uprising in 1946. They show only that Stalin objected to the Greek civil war after the American intervention in 1947 when he realized that the Greek communists had no real chance for success.

Mitsos Partsalidis, a leading member of the Central Committee of the KKE, in his conversation with Stalin, Molotov, and Malenkov, in January 1950, gives added evidence that Stalin did not oppose the Greek civil war in 1946. At that meeting Zachariadis' position, that he would have never started the armed struggle if he knew in 1946 that Tito would betray the KKE, was severely criticized by Molotov who pointed out that there was Bulgaria and Albania. Moreover Malenkov added that if it were necessary to start again the armed struggle, the Greek communists should not consider an obstacle

60. Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin*, New York, 1962, p. 181. This passage from Djilas is considered by a number of analysts as Stalin's clearest indication of his opposition from the start to the Greek Communist bid for power.

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

the stand of Yugoslavia⁶². Partsalidis' conversations with the Russians do not imply that in preparing for the "third round" the Greek communists were following Soviet instructions.

62. Avgi, "Mitsos Partsalidis' Reminiscences, March 2, 1976", p. 3. The quotation in Greek is as follows: «'Αν ξέραμε από τὸ 1946 ὅτι ὁ Τίτο ἦταν «προδότης» ἢ ἂν μπορούσαμε νὰ προβλέψουμε, ἀπὸ τὸ 1946, τὴν «προδοσίᾱ» του, τότε δὲν θὰ ἀρχίζαμε τὸν ἑνοπλο ἀγῶνα. Ὅπως καταλάβαμε στὴ συνάντησή μας ἐκείνη μὲ τὸν Στάλιν, οἱ Σοβιετικοὶ εἶπαν ἀντίθετοι σ' αὐτὴ τὴν ἀποψη. Καὶ μᾶς τὸ εἶπαν καθαρὰ. Ὁ Μολότωφ καταδίκασε ἀπερίφραστα τὴ θέση μας ὅτι ἂν ξέραμε ἀπὸ τὸ 1946 τὸν «ρῶλο» τῆς Γιουγκοσλαβίας δὲν θὰ ξεκινούσαμε τὸν ἑνοπλο ἀγῶνα καὶ μᾶς εἶπε χαρακτηριστικά: 'Υπῆρχε ἡ Βουλγαρία καὶ ἡ 'Αλβανία'. Κι ὁ Μαλένκωφ πρόσθεσε: 'Κι' ἂν χρειαστεῖ νὰ ξαναρχίσετε τώρα', ἐννοώντας ὅτι ἂν χρειαζόταν νὰ ξαναρχίσουμε ἑνοπλο ἀγῶνα δὲν ἔπρεπε νὰ θεωρήσουμε ἐμπόδιο τὴ στάση τῆς Γιουγκοσλαβίας».