



Establishing Defence Studies in Greece? It's high time...

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Summary

- This Policy Paper will argue that it is imperative, for Greek national defence, to develop defence studies in Greek universities and think tanks.
- Among other reasons, post-junta aversion in Greek universities to the military and acceptance of secrecy relating to issues of national security have severely inhibited the development of defence studies and of defence-related dialogue in Greece.
- In turn, the lack of a well-developed defence studies discipline in Greece has benefited status quo forces and thus contributed to the delay of the modernisation of Greece's armed forces; has impoverished public debate on national defence, thus being a factor to the public's unawareness of the erosion of the nation's military deterrence; has denied Greece's civilian and military leadership of innovative, defence-related intellectual input.
- Defence studies in Greece should focus on two priorities, namely demystification and comparison. By demystification, we mean that scholars should bring to national defence the type of analytical tools that have long been utilised on other underperforming policy domains in Greece such as public health and state education. By comparison, we mean that scholars should compare Greece's weapons acquisition, armed forces structure and doctrine, and defence-related R&D, with countries facing similar national security challenges to Greece, such as Taiwan, Sweden and Israel.

Introduction

“... national defence, which is the ultimate public good that a sovereign nation-state is called upon to produce, is severely under-researched in Greece.”

This Policy Paper will seek to establish the need for a research unit to be established in Greece exclusively dedicated to defence studies. Due to its strategic rivalry with Turkey Greece is a top spender, relative to GDP, within NATO, with defence related spending consistently exceeding 2 % of GDP even during the fiscal crisis. Yet, and despite the fact that defence studies have been established as a discrete subject of academic Inquiry at least since the 1950's in the UK and subsequently elsewhere, Greece does not possess a research unit or university department exclusively dedicated to defence studies. Consequently, national defence, which is the ultimate public good that a sovereign nation-state is called upon to produce, is severely under-researched in Greece both in itself and in comparison to other leading public goods, such as public health and state education.

The chief rationale of this policy paper is that robust, high quality, publicly available academic inquiry, is both suitable to a democratic polity such as the Greek one, in matters relating to national defence, as much as indispensable to the ability of such a Greek polity to develop and implement an effective national defence policy over time.

The Policy Paper will unfold as follows:

In the first section we will give a brief outline of the limitations of current defence studies output and institutionalisation in Greece.

In the second section, we will analyse these limitations in the context of a review of the intensive public debate principally generated by the rising Greco-Turkish friction of the last ten months. We start with the signing of the Turkish-Libyan agreement in December of 2019 and end with the recent deployment of Turkish and Greek naval forces due to the exploratory activity of the Oruc Reis (press articles on the preceding two years will also be referenced in a few special cases).

In the third section, we will seek to establish that national defence, in the context of a robust defence studies inquiry in Greece should be demystified. By that we mean that national defence should be examined, in many of its crucial aspects, just like any other public good provided by the Greek state such as public health and state education. We will also relate defence studies in Greece to the comparative perspective as that is established both by the national defence policies of other nation-states and by the scholarship that these policies have generated. We will then relate the 'demystification' and comparative perspectives to the current Greek government's recently pronounced priorities relating to Greece's national defence.

In the fourth and last section we will briefly review the complementarities between defence studies and other fields of scholarly inquiry in Greece.

Where and why are defence studies today where they are?

To our knowledge there is no department or research center established in a public university exclusively dedicated to defence studies. Defence studies do appear in international relations research centers of state universities but their output is scant and their staff expertise thin on the ground. Scholars with a defence studies background are

“We will advance four reasons why we believe defence studies in Greece are in such an impoverished state.”

found in the international relations departments of public universities but they are isolated and not surrounded by graduate programmes of study producing a steady stream of post-graduates and PhDs dedicated to defence studies. Relatedly, there does not seem to be a critical mass of Greek academics in universities and research centers abroad, with a defence studies orientation, actively engaged in the Greek national defence scholarship and policy and public debate and/or returning to Greece to occupy defence study positions thus replenishing the discipline. With very few exceptions, it seems that armed forces cadet and mid-career officer schools have not employed and/or produced leading defence studies scholars with an internationally notable publications record and an active presence in the public dialogue relating to national defence.

Importantly, publications and websites dedicated to the armed forces do provide a steady stream of information, analysis and commentary, on Greece's armed forces and national defence policy. However, the intellectual apparatus either in the public university or think tank sectors has neither the inclination nor the analytical depth to separate the wheat from the chaff and thus make the use of this output which is inevitably of highly variable quality in terms of the quality of the expertise made available and the credibility of those producing this output.

It is important to speculate on the reasons behind this underperformance in defence studies. Identifying the reasons will take us least half way towards addressing them and overcoming them after all. We will advance four reasons why we believe defence studies in Greece are in such an impoverished state.

First, the legacy of authoritarianism in university campuses during the military junta of 1967-1974, which made any associations with the armed forces toxic for Greek higher education and social sciences in particular. As has been noted, reaction to state repression in Greek state universities rendered campuses sui generis legal jurisdictions whereby a range of opinions and subject matters would be considered illegitimate, particularly by left wing students factions and thus their examination and debate physically disrupted¹. Consequently, academics would exercise self-censorship and refrain from engaging with subject matters and fields of inquiry that would engender such reaction. To give an example, it is the opinion of this author that a course in national defence policy, say entitled 'From hot incident to all-out war: national defence in the present age', having as attending students army officers and inviting in its lectures uniformed and Ministry of Defence (MoD) civilian policy makers, simply could not be offered in a Greek state university without causing immense controversy and even physical altercations².

Second, this lack of engagement from state universities has probably spilled over to the cadet and mid-career officer schools as well as to the non-profit think tank sector. The former have not been compelled to match the depth and excellence of the state universities in defence studies, as such depth and excellence does not exist, thus focusing on the narrowly technical aspects of their curricula and attracting less than noted defence studies scholars. The latter have not benefited from the establishment of a robust defence studies discipline that would supply them with a steady stream of high quality defence studies scholars and render research in defence studies visible,

¹ See, Grigoriadis, I.N. and Kamaras, A. 2012. 'Reform Paradoxes: academic freedom and governance in Greek and Turkish higher education' *Southeastern European and Black Sea Studies*, 82: 135-152.

² Panteion University, where one of Greece's leading IR think tanks belongs, IDIS, has suffered extensively from student physical disturbances, with one of Greece's leading experts on Greek-Turkish relations, Professor Angelos Syrigos, actually being physically assaulted for taking exception to an unfolding incident of graffiti in the campus premises.

prestigious and thus attractive to philanthropic funders.

Third, as defence is not funded by the European Union but by and large by national resources, Greek social scientists could not anchor their research, on the transparent flows of EU funding and the policy objectives which such funding streams are meant to facilitate, on a variety of domains, ranging from research and development (R&D) objectives to urban regeneration to social welfare. Relatedly, defence is excluded from the purview of organisations such as OECD – say in contrast to education and health – which produce a rich stream of data, comparative analysis and policy recommendations for all member-countries, Greece included. NATO is, for the purposes of this analysis, a somewhat comparable organization to the EU, due to its multi-state membership and its mission which aims at institutional and performance-oriented convergence of its member states (in terms, in its case, of the development of commonly agreed defence policies and the achievement of interoperability between the armed forces of member-states). Still, the publicly available NATO data and analyses, comparisons and policy recommendations are no match, in terms of engendering and anchoring academic inquiry, to organisations such as the EU and the OECD.

Last but not least, the widespread assumption within elite and public opinion in Greece that secrecy should surround military affairs has also restrained defence-related inquiry. This is a factor which we will also address in our analysis of the public debate on national defence of the last ten months.

From the Turkish-Libyan Agreement to naval brinkmanship: what does public debate tell us about defence studies in Greece

A major policy challenge, unfolding over time, commanding top policy makers attention and dominating the news, inevitably draws to public debate a critical mass of bureaucratic and scholarly expertise that inheres in a country. This has been very much the case in the period commencing with the signing of the Turkey-Libya maritime agreement, in December 2019, up to the point of writing of this policy paper with Greece's navy facing off the Turkish navy which accompanies the Oruc Reis in its seismic research in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Briefly, the policy domains that public debate covered in the ten month period, at the center-right *Kathimerini* and the center-left *To Vima* and *Ta Nea*, that we reviewed were the following: maritime law and related Greek and Turkish strategies; the politics, the technical aspects and the economics of natural resource exploitation in the Eastern Mediterranean; competitive alliance building by Greece and Turkey; the interaction of foreign and national defence policy; and Greece's existing and future defence capabilities in view of Turkey's determination to advance its interests through the use, or threat of use, of armed force in the region.

In general, issues of maritime law and of the related Greek and Turkish strategies have received a thorough, forensic in its intensity examination by an assortment of ex-policy makers and ex-diplomats as well as politicians in thorough command of their brief, reflecting both the legal training and experience, decades in the making, of Greek scholars, diplomats and policy makers. A particularly vigorous debate took place regarding the pros and cons of past foreign policy approaches with regard to Greece seeking a peaceful resolution of its maritime disputes with Turkey. Issues relating to natural resource exploitation have also received a thorough airing from a variety of sources including IR specialists and technocrats, whether resident or diaspora Greeks,

from the energy sector. IR scholars, ex-diplomats and policy makers dealt thoroughly with competitive alliance building and the interaction between foreign and defence policy³.

The subject of Greece's existing and future defence capabilities was considerably less adequately covered, in our judgment. High ranking retired officers were, by and large and perhaps inevitably, reticent in their op-eds in subjecting to critical scrutiny the armed forces' preparedness and deterrence capability⁴. Defence reporters avoided, with few notable exemptions, to analyse Greece's procurement and weapons acquisition practices and their imprint on Greece's current military capabilities. Only two scholars affiliated with a Greek academic institution, one from a Greek state university and one from the land forces cadet school, articulated and advocated for some of the desiderata of a future armed force but conspicuously failed to explain what are the defining features of the armed forces that we have at our disposal today, warts and all, and how did we get to acquire them⁵.

“... politics has prioritized not combat effectiveness but interest group accommodation via monetary transfers, with potentially catastrophic consequences for national defence.”

The counterfactual – the public debate that we could have had and should have had – was substantiated by two sui generis personalities, ship owner and major benefactor of the Hellenic Navy, Panos Laskaridis, and long retired, and well-known for his blunt speaking, former center right politician, Stefanos Manos. Briefly, they both offered a coruscating critique of the state of Greece's armed forces focusing on: how time consuming Court of Auditors' ex ante, archaic audit processes have crippled the availability of fighter jets to the Greek Air Force; how surplus to requirements army camps as well as ill-positioned armed forces units – due to local pressures – have denied resources and optional positioning near the theater of operations to the Greek Army and Navy; how operational expenses have been burdened by rank inflation in the Greek officer corps (too many chiefs, not many Indians); how alternative weapons acquisitions, with a possible bigger 'bang for the buck' have not been properly considered; and so on⁶.

Importantly, and despite the fact that these two vigorous opinion-makers are neither scholars nor analysts, there was an implicit interpretation in their critique⁷. Namely, that politics has prioritized not combat effectiveness but interest group accommodation via monetary transfers, with potentially catastrophic consequences for national defence. In other words, Messrs. Laskaridis and Manos virtually alone offered a coherent as a blunt critique of why we are where we are today in terms of our armed forces deterrent capabilities, in the leading print media we reviewed.

³ See indicatively, Rozakis, Ch, Where is the Turkish illegality located, *Ta Nea*, 5-6 September, 2020, Venizelos, E., Strategic Coherence, *To Vima*, 16th of August 2020, Moisis, R., Hydrocarbons and Treasures, *Kathimerini*, 18 August 2019, Filis, K. East Med under the microscope, *To Vima*, 29 December 2019, Rozakis, Ch., Is Hague a way out or an illusion?, *Kathimerini*, 24 February 2020, Ioakimidis, P.K. European Union, Turkey and the Hague, *Ta Nea*, 11 February 2020, Tsakons, P. Policies of immobility, mobility and temperamental hypermobility, *Ta Nea*, 2 September 2020.

⁴ See Hinofotis, P. The Power of Deterrence, *Kathimerini*, 16 August 2020, and Skarvelis, D. The significance of military power, *Kathimerini*, 6 June 2020, where these two ex Chiefs of the Joint Chiefs of Staff underline the importance of military deterrence but avoid going into the specifics in terms of vulnerabilities in Greece's armed forces and the remedies that need to be implemented.

⁵ Indicatively, Professor Manos Karagiannis of the University of Macedonia in an op-ed in *Kathimerini* suggests needed improvements in Greece's armed forces, see Karagiannis, M. For a new perspective of national defence and security, *Kathimerini*, 25 April 2018, and at another op-ed at TA NEA suggests changes needed in Greece's defence doctrine, see Karagiannis M., The two choices of Greece, *Ta Nea*, 22 January 2020. Professor Konstantinos Grivas, at the Army Cadets School at his op-ed at *Ta Nea*, The last card of Athens, *Ta Nea*, 28 August 2020, argues that Turkish armed forces do not possess an advantage over Greek armed forces so the country should not shy away from exercising its military deterrence.

⁶ Indicatively, Manos, S. Defence Expenditures: Instructions of rationalization and modernization, *Kathimerini*, 4 December, 2017, and Laskaridis, P. Our relations with Turkey and national defence: are we serious, 30th of September, 2019, Self evident truths, *Kathimerini*, 12 July 2020.

⁷ Thanos Dokos and Christos Kollias have earlier made similar recommendations to those of Panos Laskaridis and Stefanos Manos but their treatment of the subject has not included a political economy perspective analyzing the political constraints obstructing the implementation of their trenchant policy recommendations, see Dokos, Th., and Kollias, Ch., *Greek defence spending in times of crisis: the urgent need for defence reform*, ELIAMEP Thesis, March 2013.

By contrast, as we mentioned above, not sui generis personalities but a diversified cohort of specialists, of expert policy makers and scholars, offered a coherent critique of the vital issue of maritime disputes with Turkey. We refer to the critique of the abandonment, for political reasons, by the ND government, led by Kostas Karamanlis, of the Helsinki process instituted by the predecessor PASOK government. According to this analysis, had there been policy continuity between the then PASOK and ND governments, Turkey would have been obliged to accept international arbitration for the resolution of its maritime disputes with Greece as part of its obligations as a candidate EU member country.

“... there was no sophisticated analysis of the state of the Turkish Armed Forces, despite the existence of significant non-Greek scholarship on the politicization and factionalism of the Turkish officer corps.”

No such extensive postmortem has been offered on how policy choices by successive governments, over the past 10-20 years, have resulted in the present state of Greece's armed forces. Yet it could be argued that just as the continuation of the Helsinki process might have forestalled Turkey's current military aggression, the same outcome might have been achieved had Greek governments been steadfast in maintaining Greece's military deterrence at peak performance, say, through a ruthless rationalisation programme implemented during the fiscal crisis which would have secured sufficient resources for essential operations and weapon systems.

Importantly, the public debate as we analysed it also exhibited the same patterns of analysis of the Turkish threat to Greece. A critical mass of International Relations and Turkey specialists from the academia, international law jurists and energy technocrats, satisfactorily analysed the drivers and objectives of Turkey's geopolitical and energy strategy and of the domestic dynamics shaping the behavior of Turkey's current leadership. However, there was no sophisticated analysis of the state of the Turkish Armed Forces, despite the existence of significant non-Greek scholarship on the politicization and factionalism of the Turkish officer corps. Nor was there a special focus placed on the impact on Turkish military capabilities of Erdogan's post 2016 coup purges, which has also been investigated by non-Greek scholars⁸. Turkey's growing military & industrial complex was registered in the Greek press but again there was no sophisticated analysis on offer on its possibilities and constraints as much on its future trajectory. The author of this Policy Paper has failed to identify a single, internationally notable, Greek expert on the Turkish Armed Forces despite the fact that these Armed Forces constitute Greece's main national security threat at least since the early 1970s, i.e. for nearly half a century.

The press coverage of this ten-month period brought to the surface two additional issues. First, and despite the thin literature which is the outcome of the absence of a well-developed defence discipline in Greece, there have been peer reviewed publications by Greek scholars on such important themes as the impact of the fiscal crisis on Greek defence budgetary allocations, the authors of which did not present their informed views in the print media we reviewed⁹. Second, as we mentioned above, there is a mass of evidence generated by less visible military related websites and journals echoing and specifying to great detail the critique of Messrs. Laskaridis and Manos, evidence that has by and large not been filtered and presented by defence reporters in

⁸ See, Waldman, S and Caliskan, E., Factional and Unprofessional: Turkey's Military and the July 2016 Attempted Coup, *Democracy and Security*, 2019 and Bagci, H., and Kurc, C., Turkey's Strategic Choice: buy or make weapons, *Defence Studies*, 17:1, 38-62, 2017.

⁹ See, Dimitraki, O. and Kartsaklas, A., Sovereign debt, deficits and defence spending: The case of Greece, *Defence and Peace Economics*, 29:6, 712-727, 2017.

the prominent papers we reviewed¹⁰.

We draw the following conclusions from our analysis:

“The lack of a robust defence studies discipline in Greece has not habituated the Greek public to an honest, evidence-based debate on the state and purpose of the country’s armed forces.”

1. The lack of a robust defence studies discipline in Greece has not habituated the Greek public to an honest, evidence-based debate on the state and purpose of the country’s armed forces.
2. This lack of insitutionalisation of defence studies not only has limited scholarship on defence-related matters but it has also meant that what scholarship there is lacks the links with Greece’s leading media through which to render their research accessible.
3. Leading media – newspaper editors and defence reporters – are generally weary of sharing with the public what they surely know on Greece’s armed forces. Alternatively, they chose to share such knowledge by proxy, in the case of one newspaper, by granting access to the views of unimpeachable, highly independent personalities, in particular Messrs. Laskaridis and Manos, who are not constrained in ‘calling a spade, a spade’.
4. There is no conceivable national security reason for Greece’s quality print media not to subject to critical scrutiny the state of Greece’s armed forces, as they regularly do in other policy domains such as public health and state education, as this information is already available to Greece’s main strategic rival, Turkey. In particular, due to the proliferation of defence-related specialist publications and websites in Greece any diligent interested party, and certainly any third country intelligence service, can develop a granular understanding of the capabilities and shortcomings of all three of the branches of the country’s armed forces. The only one left uniformed on the state of Greece’s armed forces is the Greek citizenship.

The negative consequences of the lack of sustained, diverse as well as high level scholarship and policy relevant research are multiple, significant and highly pertinent in the current juncture where Greece’s military deterrent capabilities are instrumental to the country’s foreign policy objectives as much as to the defence and inviolability of its sovereignty. We mention indicatively:

1. The lack of informed debate on national defence means that status quo-oriented stakeholders, ranging from local communities dependent on defence spending to military officers vested in particular weapon platforms and military tactics and strategies, can effectively resist change that is necessary for the effectiveness of national defence.
2. The lack of public and elite awareness and/or knowledge of the range of options and possibilities that the country has in reforming its armed forces, means that vital and actionable policy recommendations are either not articulated or that the elite and public consensus necessary for such type of recommendations to be implemented does not come into being.
3. Valuable voices of reform of Greece’s defence policy – indicatively reform-minded active and retired officers, MoD civil servants, managers and investors in

¹⁰ See indicatively <https://www.navalanalyses.com/2019/09/hellenic-navy-brief-analysis-of-current.html> which analyses the aging of the main battleships of the Hellenic Navy.

Greece's defence sector – are absent from public discourse and only present, if at all, at marginal publications and websites.

4. Armed Forces cadet colleges and midcareer schools of the three branches, army, navy and air force, are at risk of intellectual stagnation as their faculty and students do not engage with cutting edge, comparatively informed debate and research taking place outside the walls of their institutions but within Greece.
5. Unlike the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where distinguished international relations and international law scholars support, as advisors or deputy ministers, the political leadership and renew the thinking of the professional diplomatic corps, the political leadership of the MoD cannot likewise renew institutional thinking, as well as strengthen their own policy deliberations, by bringing in high caliber defence studies scholars. Consequently, ministerial advisors to the MoD political leadership are mostly there to help their political masters at the Ministry run the 'access game', ranging from politicised officer appointments, to the choice of weapons systems, to accommodating constituents demands on conscripts' military unit selection.
6. Policy failures and shortcomings – indicatively, in timely upgrades of weapon systems and / or in a timely and effective weapon purchasing policy and process, in the adequate manning of the Greek armed forces, particularly so in the case of the Army - are not methodically identified and highlighted and thus not addressed, raising risks in terms of the country's ability to neutralize challenges to its sovereign rights and even to its territorial integrity.

Defence Studies two critical objectives: demystify and compare national defence

In our opinion were defence studies to be systematically developed in Greece, both in public universities and at think tanks like ELIAMEP, they should focus in two directions.

First at demystifying, and by that we mean the deployment of well-developed scholarly lines of inquiry on Greece's political economy, overall state performance, administrative practices, state and party relations and so on.

Second, in comparing and contrasting key aspects of past and current Greek defence policy and practices with that of defence policies and armed forces of other nation-states. This can be done by utilizing both the excellent international scholarship and the voluminous strategy and planning documents of ministries of defence of various states.

On demystification, a necessary starting point is the commonality that Greece's defence policy has with all other high spending domains in Greece – certainly with state education and public health – whereby the priority of the political system is to accommodate distributional expectations at the cost of effective policy delivery. The four key channels through which this priority is enacted, at Greece's armed forces are: a) promotions, tenure and pension entitlements, b) support of employment at state-owned Greek manufacturing firms and shipyards that supply or upgrade the Greek armed forces with major weapons platforms, c) support of local economic demand through the maintenance of army camps and other personnel-rich military installations, d) sequential limits to conscript service at suboptimal levels, a form of unsustainable series of 'tax' cuts (the 'tax' being the time offered for free by male conscripts to the armed forces' three branches).

“...a necessary starting point is the commonality that Greece's defence policy has with all other high spending domains in Greece. ”

International, policy- and scholarship-informed, comparison would involve critical features of Greece's defence policy and armed forces such as: armed forces doctrine and structure, weapons procurement process, weapons procurement and international alliances, the professional / conscript mix, the development of a domestic defence-related industry and the partnership of the national defence establishment with the nation's research community.

To give but a few examples of the value of such comparison: an examination of Australia's MoD recent publication of its defence doctrine and armed forces structure, which addresses China's rise as a military power, would pose the question why the Greek MoD does not engage in a similar exercise, thus relating and committing to the Greek citizen to implement the measures it understands as necessary to defend Greece's territorial sovereignty and other national interests¹¹; a comparative study of the institution of conscript service, including not only Israel, but also states such as Korea, Singapore, Switzerland and Sweden, will highlight the circumstances under which conscript service does not decay under a variety of actual and perceived national security challenges¹²; the examination of Israel would be highly useful in developing an understanding of how a small state which is relied upon the US for its main weapons systems, not unlike Greece, has managed to develop a local defence-related industrial capability which both enhances its military prowess and contributes to the international competitiveness of its economy¹³. In an Annex we will throw further light on the benefits of going comparative on national defence studies by looking at two highly pertinent features of the China-Taiwan case, namely weapons acquisitions under asymmetric defence and the US security guarantee.

To render even more concrete the utility of a robust defence studies programme in Greece, in the present context, we can relate such a programme, and its lines of inquiry, to the Greek Prime Ministers' programmatic commitments on national defence, enunciated in Thessaloniki on September 12, 2020¹⁴. We commend on the four out of six of the Prime Minister's defence-related decisions and deliberations (the Prime Minister's announcements are in italic):

1. *The acquisition of 18 French Rafale fighter jets*. There is highly applicable literature on nation-states' incentives in diversifying their fighter aircraft fleets, including Egypt and India which have acquired Rafales, despite the significant diseconomies of scale that such choices create in terms of training, spare parts acquisitions, upgrades and so on¹⁵. As Greece has consistently opted, in the post 1974 period, to acquire weaponry from more than one supplier country – say in contrast to Israel or Japan where the US is their dominant advanced weapons supplier – it is imperative that Greek defence studies evaluate, via a comparative lens, this pattern in major weapons acquisition.
2. *Elevate the availability and effectiveness of existing weapons platforms through upgrades (frigates, attack helicopters, fighter jets) and purchasing of advanced munitions (relevant to submarines, fighter jets and tanks)*. Here, defence studies needs to examine the tendency of Greek governments to privilege highly visible public investments – e.g. buildings, advanced equipment, infrastructures – in all

¹¹ See, Australian Government -Department of Defence, *2020 Force Structure Plan, 2020*

¹² See indicatively, Matthews, R., Zhang Yan, N., Small Country 'Total Defence': A Case Study of Singapore, *Defence Studies*. 7:3, 376-395, 2007.

¹³ See indicatively, Broude, M., Deger, S., Sen, S., Defence, Innovation and Development - The case of Israel, *CAIRN*, No 12, pp. 37-57, 2013

¹⁴ See, <https://primeminister.gr/2020/09/12/24760>

¹⁵ See indicatively, Rounds, R.K., *Sourcing Air Supremacy: Determinants of change in the international fighter jet network*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Georgetown University, 2019 and Vucetic, S. and Duarte, E., New Fighter Aircraft Acquisitions in Brazil and India: Why not buy American, *Politics and Policy*, Volume 43, No 3 (2015): 401-425.

policy domains but to then fail to commit to their effective operation through adequate maintenance, equipment upgrades, effective personnel mix, public health being a particularly notable example.

3. *With regard to conscript service, the government is examining the possibility of raising to 12 months in the Land Forces and instituting induction of all conscripts at the age of 18.* ELIAMEP, in particular, has dealt with this policy issue in the past but, as we mention above, there has not been a systematic comparison of the way conscription has evolved over time and in different countries and the distinctive national security priorities that conscription has meant to address. Indicative of the poverty of scholarly investigation, in this critical pillar of Greek national defence, is the fact that when both *Ta Nea* and *Kathimerini* addressed this issue, by inviting the opinions of supporters and critiques of the PM's pronouncement, none of the four individuals thus engaged was a defence studies scholar who has investigated this issue in the past¹⁶.
4. *Strengthening of the indigenous defence industry.* Again, as mentioned above, there is a significant international literature on this issue, with Israel being the lodestar. Furthermore, Greek scholarly debate can link the issue of Greece's indigenous defence industrial sector with the overall failure, which receives increasing scholarly interest, of Greece's manufacturing sector to link up with the country's universities and research institutes for R&D purposes.

Finally, the timing of the Prime Minister's announcements – amidst high risk military brinkmanship engendered by Oruc Reis' exploration activities – highlights the Greek 'paradox' which deserves high quality scholarly investigation. This 'paradox' entails the perceived necessity by the Greek political system to commit to high level, multiyear defence commitments, due to a near military confrontation with Turkey which lasts days or at most months (but which exposes the years-long, build-up of deficiencies in Greece's military deterrence). We believe, as suggested above, that first this 'paradox' should be situated in the overall tendency of the Greek polity to opt for a fiscal policy that privileges transfers (e.g. salaries, pensions and so on) over capital expenditures and the funding of operations (i.e. minus personnel costs) meaning that preventative policies are denied the resources they require to be effective. After all, a persistent theme of the fiscal crisis years was the gusto with which successive Greek governments cut the Public Investment Programme.

“...when Greece is maximally threatened by Turkey, it seeks to 'buy' some measure of Great Power protection immediately, by ironically committing to future-oriented, multiyear arms acquisition programmes.”

To highlight further the fact that defence is not the exception but the rule in this bias in Greek fiscal policy, for transfers versus policy delivery, we could no worse than point out at how the coronavirus pandemic found Greece with a per population number of intensive care units well below the EU average.

What also requires investigation is whether this bias in fiscal policy, in effect decisively shapes an unstated, national security crisis playbook and national defence doctrine.

In terms of the unstated national security crisis playbook, fiscal policy biases by creating weaknesses in national defence which are periodically exposed by Turkish military aggression, possibly privilege 'defence diplomacy' imperatives. On those occasions when Greece is maximally threatened by Turkey, it seeks to 'buy' some measure of Great Power protection immediately, by ironically committing to future-oriented, multiyear arms acquisition programmes.

¹⁶ See, *Kathimerini*, The dilemma of obligatory conscript service at 18, 16 September, 2020, and *Ta Nea*, Yes or No at army service at 18, 17 September, 2020.

“Turkey for reasons of its own, at any given point in time, might decide to either credibly threaten or implement escalation, beyond the fiscally constrained capabilities of Greek military deterrence and despite Great Power intervention.”

In terms of the unstated national defence doctrine, fiscal policy biases by producing armed forces which suffer from perennially low stocks of advanced munitions, outdated weapons platforms and undermanned land forces (due to the lowering of the ‘tax’ in time that is the conscript service), entrench the policy makers’ assumption of a short - measured in days not weeks or even months – military conflict with Turkey, by and large involving the navy, the air force and the special forces, and resulting into an initial draw. After such a draw, Great Power intervention is envisaged which would impose a cessation of hostilities, long before Turkey would be able to deploy its quantitative advantage in personnel and materiel, particularly in Greece’s land border.

To the extent that fiscal biases, in addition to lower conscription service which is also determined by the same political cost and benefit calculus that shapes fiscal policy, produce such an unstated defence doctrine, it is incumbent on Greek defence studies to flesh out the risks for Greek national defence and foreign policy objectives. These risks are precisely due to policy makers’ awareness of the limitations placed on Greece’s deterrence capabilities by the distributional priorities of the country’s fiscal policy.

We note in passing that such national defence assumptions on Great Power intervention might have proven to be pragmatic in the past – e.g. during the Imia crisis – or even currently, considering both France’s and the US’s distinct support of the Greek position; however, they might not be so in the future. Let us be reminded of the US Pentagon’s saying, that ‘the enemy gets to vote too’. Turkey for reasons of its own, at any given point in time, might decide to either credibly threaten or implement escalation, beyond the fiscally constrained capabilities of Greek military deterrence and despite Great Power intervention. History is replete with such military misadventures which have indeed boomeranged catastrophically to their instigators - but not before bringing close to ruin those countries which failed to make contingencies for them, so as to either deter or nip in the bud military aggression¹⁷.

Focused but also interdisciplinary

A focused programme of defence studies, developed in Greece’s public universities and leading thinktanks such as ELIAMEP, will **not** be an exercise in silo thinking; on the contrary, it will significantly enrich, and be enriched by, other disciplines and directions of scholarly inquiry in Greece. Indicatively:

- The debate on Greece’s new economic model, and the relevant policy recommendations, as in the case of the Pissarides Report, can benefit from research on how conscript service can aid human capital formation and how a defence-linked research community can contribute to the renewal of Greece’s industrial base.
- The study of Greece’s fiscal policy trends and tendencies are crucial to understanding patterns shaping military expenditure (e.g. the ratio between salary costs and capital expenditure) as well as in studying how resource scarcity should shape procurement choices on the basis of ‘biggest bang for the buck’ considerations.
- Area and country studies, primarily but not exclusively of the Middle East and Turkey, are a necessary complement to research on Greece’s defence policy, as it relates to Turkey’s intent and capabilities, the security implications of the

¹⁷ Indicatively, see Snyder, S., *Myths of Empire – Domestic Politics and International Ambition*, Cornell University Press, 1991, on how a combination of nationalist populism, unstable modernization trajectories and logrolling or competition for scarce resources within naval and land forces, led Germany and Japan to the war path in WWI and WWII respectively.

exploitation of natural resources in Eastern Mediterranean, Greece's military alliances and the regional dynamics affecting the probability of Turkey becoming a nuclear-armed state.

- European and IR studies, whether they relate to the evolution of the EU's defence identity, to the foreign and national security policies of such member states as France and Germany, or to the US's evolving global leadership, are also critical fields of inquiry from the perspective of Greece's defence policy.
- Women studies, and in particular studies on prevailing perceptions on gender roles in Greece, are critical in terms of the potential of female participation, via conscript service, in the country's armed forces.
- The study of civil service reform, and in particular of the depoliticization of civil service, is highly relevant to the issue of meritocratic appointments in the country's armed forces.

Concluding Remarks

“...knowledge is a necessary if not a sufficient condition, in a democratic polity such as Greece, for the production of a much more effective policy of national defence.”

Knowledge, its high-quality production and systematic dissemination, is not a sufficient condition of reform in public policy either in the realm of national defence or elsewhere. After all, Greece is bedeviled with major policy shortcomings and failures in policy domains which are much better researched than national defence, most prominently in public health and state education. Nor is the myth of the Cassandra timelessly as well as globally relevant for nothing.

That being said, this policy paper argues that knowledge is a necessary if not a sufficient condition, in a democratic polity such as Greece, for the production of a much more effective policy of national defence than the one that the country has found out to have in its periodic crises, which invariably feature military brinkmanship with its powerfully armed neighbor, Turkey.

Advanced knowledge, produced by an indigenous but comparatively informed defence studies scholarly community, can raise the political costs of a national defence failure by locating in advance responsibility, at the institutional, party and yes personal level, for the build-up of shortcomings in national defence, thus encouraging timely remedies; it can frame the public debate and render concrete the prerequisites of an effective national defence and thus expand the political space for reform-minded ruling party politicians from the PM downwards; it can supply the bureaucracy and the political leadership with thoughtful and sophisticated practitioners and advisers who can flesh out an advanced defence policy and become instrumental in its implementation. Last and definitely not least, such an advanced defence studies discipline, through its dissemination in public debate, can enable Greece's citizenship, which is ultimately responsible for the adequate defence of the country's territory and national interests, to decide whether it really is determined to shoulder the burden of being adequately and professionally protected from any and all external threats.

Considering the renewed national security challenge that Greece has faced in these last few months, it is indeed high time that the country acquires the intellectual capability to confront it, now and in the future.

ANNEX

What can the China vs Taiwan case tell us?

Taiwan's defence, against a possible Chinese effort to force unification via military means, has produced significant amounts of sophisticated analysis, primarily in the US¹⁸. This analysis has focused on two domains that are highly relevant to Greece. First, how should Taiwan's weapons procurement, armed forces structure and defence doctrine adapt to the growing disparity in military spending between Taiwan and China (Taiwan spends less than 10% than China does on its armed forces). Second, whether the US should issue an explicit security guarantee to Taiwan, to come to the latter's assistance in case of Chinese military aggression.

The debate on Taiwan's armed forces – procurement, structure, doctrine – is relevant to Greece because of commonalities due to Taiwan being an island; due to 'buck for the bang' arguments, with analysts arguing that Taiwan should avoid expensive, prestige weaponry, such as fifth generation airplanes, and opt instead for cheap but effective systems that can inflict damage to the Chinese military, such as land to sea missiles; due to the analysis of motivation of interests groups in Taiwan's armed forces privileging conventional but highly prestigious weapon systems and/or systems that guarantee their parity with competing branches, e.g., the navy and air force fighting their corner against a defence doctrine and procurement choices that would render dominant the land forces. The point here is not to take a position on this debate – but rather to highlight how a comparative case, Taiwan, can throw light onto the dilemmas of Greece's defence policy as well as the interest group dynamics that might shape such a policy.

The debate on the pros and cons of an unambiguous US security guarantee, to come to Taiwan's defence, is also very useful as it throws light on the type of debates, and dilemmas, that France's policy makers must be having in relation to Greece, as the latter faces off an increasingly aggressive Turkey. Indicatively US IR scholars argue whether such a guarantee itself might not embolden Taiwan's pro-independence political forces thus causing the military conflict with China that the security guarantee is meant to forestall; whether the US might not be more effective in neutralizing the Chinese military threat to Taiwan by intensifying efforts to improve the island's defences; and whether such a security guarantee might not destabilize the US's relationship with other countries in the region, such as Japan, which are vested in Taiwan's territorial integrity but do not want to risk being dragged into a conflagration with China. As with defence procurement, structure and doctrine, we mention this debate, in the briefest of forms, not to suggest a preference. In actual fact the author of this policy paper believes that France's robust posture in the East Mediterranean has been entirely helpful in advancing the cause of international arbitration of Greek-Turkish disputes. Rather, we highlight how the Greek policy debate and policy making can benefit, in grasping French policy deliberations vis a vis Greece's national defence, by thoroughly examining the US scholarly and policy dialogue on the comparative case – i.e. similar in some ways and dissimilar in others – of the nature of the US's security guarantee to Taiwan.

¹⁸ See indicatively, Turner, J.M, The Cost of Credible Deterrence in Taiwan, *War on the Rocks*, January 13 2016 at <https://warontherocks.com/2016/01/the-cost-of-credible-deterrence-in-taiwan/>, Foreign Affairs, *Dire Straits – Should American support for Taiwan be Ambiguous*, September 24 2020, at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-09-24/dire-straits> and Greer, T., Taiwan's Defense Strategy Doesn't Make Military Sense – But It Does Make Political Sense, *Foreign Affairs*, September 2019.