



## **Joint Operations in the Greek Armed Forces: Much to be desired, much to be achieved**

SECURITY & FOREIGN POLICY

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### Summary

- A series of operational debacles suffered by the US Armed Forces created the political will in the US to enforce a comprehensive jointness agenda through the passing of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986.
- Arguably, these reforms were a critical element in the resounding success of US Armed Forces in Operation Desert Storm in 1991, and set the jointness standard worldwide.
- Civilian leaderships in other democracies have wavered in their determination to implement jointness in their militaries. Diverse levels of threat perception, the need (or not) to be interoperable with US Armed Forces, and country-specific civil-military relations are some of the factors that have affected the evolution of jointness in Armed Forces internationally.
- In Greece, the poisonous legacy of the 1967–1974 military junta undermined meritocracy and technocracy in the Armed Forces, rendering any comprehensive Armed Forces reform infeasible.
- The Imia islets crisis, which brought Greece and Turkey to the brink of war in 1996, revealed substantial operational shortcomings on the Greek side, but a lack of informed civilian interest in military affairs limited subsequent reorganization measures.
- Currently, if Greece is to effectively deter a newly assertive Turkey, it is imperative that the civilian leadership takes ownership of the task of rendering the Armed Forces substantively joint.

## Introduction

This policy paper will evaluate the state of joint operations, which recently evolved to include multi-domain operations, in the Greek Armed Forces. The concepts of joint and multi-domain operations refer, respectively, to the ability of a state's Armed Forces to effectively combine and integrate its Army, Navy and Air Force as well as its operations in the cyber and space domains. More specifically, jointness has been defined as "the ability of the three services to plan, train and operate in a synergistic manner"<sup>1</sup>. Within NATO, there are eight activities that are recognized as being joint: namely intelligence, movement and maneuver, fires, information, protection, sustainment, command and control, and civil military cooperation. The modern origins of jointness can be traced back to WW I and land armies' need to combine arms—artillery, infantry and, in the later stages of the war, armor—in order to neutralize advances in defensive warfare<sup>2</sup>. During WW II, extensive amphibious operations and Close Air Support (CAS), provided by air forces to ground troops laid the foundations of joint operations as we know them today, with inter-Service collaboration becoming a dominant feature of global conflict<sup>3</sup>.

For reasons of brevity, this paper will focus on the post-WW II period and specifically take the Goldwater-Nichols Act passed by the US Congress in 1986 as its starting point.

The first section will briefly review the Goldwater-Nichols Act's intent and impact. The Act is widely considered to have laid the institutional and organizational foundations of joint operations for the US Armed Forces, following suboptimal performances in at least three significant US military operations. As such, it not only made possible the optimal development of joint operations in the US Armed Forces, it also provided a compelling model for other armed forces to follow, be they allies or rivals of the US.

In the second and third sections, we will review the scholarly and analytical examination of how other civilian-led Armed Forces, belonging to non-NATO and NATO member-countries respectively, pursued or failed to pursue jointness, following the implementation of the Goldwater-Nichols Act by the US Armed Forces.

In the fourth section, we will examine the state of jointness in the Greek Armed Forces since the democratic transition in 1974, with a particular focus on the Imia islets crisis of 1996, what it revealed and the responses it led to.

In the fifth section, we will elaborate on the structural causes and consequences that have restricted the development of jointness in the Greek Armed Forces.

In the sixth section, we will connect our analysis of the US and the selected non-NATO and NATO member countries in order to further refine our analysis of the state of jointness in the Greek Armed Forces and situate it in an appropriate comparative context.

The policy paper will conclude, in section seven, with the relevant policy recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> A. Mukherjee, Fighting Separately: Jointness and Civil Military Relations in India, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2017, Vol. 40, 6-34

<sup>2</sup> E. R. Lucas and T. A. Crosbie, Evolution of Joint Warfare, Centre for Joint Operations / Institute for Military Operations, Royal Danish Defense College, 2021

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

## The Goldwater-Nichols Act and the drivers of jointness in the US Armed Forces

The failed Eagle Claw operation to save the US Embassy hostages in Iran during the Carter Administration in 1980, mishaps occurring during operation Urgent Fury in Grenada in 1983, and the bombing of the Marine Corp barracks in Beirut the same year, during the Reagan Administration, cumulatively revealed serious operational shortcomings in the US Armed Forces. These included a lack of joint training, with the Army, Navy and Air Force units entrusted with saving the US hostages meeting for the first time in Iran without having previously established command and control procedures and clear lines of authority; an inability to communicate, with army units in Grenada being unable to establish radio communication with the ships from which the invasion was launched; ineffective command arrangements, with the marines in Beirut reporting to the US Marine Corps leadership, their Service Command in the continental USA, and less so with the European Command which had nominal responsibility over the mission in Lebanon<sup>4</sup>.

These successive failures led the US Congress to conduct extensive hearings and a review undertaken by a Blue Ribbon Commission established by the Reagan Administration in 1985, which informed the Goldwater-Nichols Act passed in 1986. The main features of this Act were<sup>5</sup>:

*...for the leadership of a democratically-accountable superpower such as the US, failure in military operations carries a high political cost.*

1. Strengthening the authority and staff of the Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in his status as the military leader of the US Armed Forces and as the principal military advisor of the US President. This was done at the expense of the Service Chiefs.
2. Making the Joint Chiefs of Staff responsible for training and equipping the Armed Forces but not for managing operations. Hence the Commanders of the various geographical commands of the US Armed Forces became the undisputed leaders of the operations undertaken by their commands and of the Service components which were put at their disposal in order to prosecute joint operations more effectively. This resolved what has been defined as the core matter of jointness: namely, “the control and ownership of assets in the theater of operations”<sup>6</sup>.
3. Making participation in joint operations an indispensable criterion for promotion to higher rank of officers in all Services (Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps).
4. Improving the joint education of officers so they are intellectually prepared for their participation in joint commands in such subject matters as national military strategy, command and control of operations under a unified command, combined operations with military forces of allied nations.
5. Establishing mechanisms to ensure that when the Services develop capability requirements and acquisition programs, they do so in a way that advances their joint operations.

Importantly, the reforms that the Goldwater-Nichols Act set in motion were seen as passing the supreme test of a major military conflict—specifically, Operation Desert Storm in 1991, which, led by the Bush Administration, resulted in the decimation of Iraqi forces at very little

<sup>4</sup> See, K. J. McInnis, Goldwater-Nichols at 30: Defense Reform and Issues for Congress, *Congressional Research Service*, 2.6.2016

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> A. Mukherjee, Fighting Separately: Jointness and Civil Military Relations in India, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2017, Vol. 40, pp.6-34

cost in US and Allied casualties. This success allowed for the further deepening of the Goldwater- Nichols reforms, as well as making them a paradigm for US allies and rivals alike.

*Service resistance to jointness is not simply an outcome of institutionally selfish turf battles, but inherent in the distinct nature of each Service.*

In terms of the political incentives which underpinned the Goldwater-Nichols Act, we note that for the leadership of a democratically-accountable superpower such as the US, failure in military operations carries a high political cost; the debacle of the Iran hostage rescue operation is widely considered a major factor in President Carter's failure to win a second term. Specifically, the deficiencies it revealed in joint operations became a factor in the outcome of competitive democratic politics<sup>7</sup>. Additionally, the strengthening of the US Armed Forces enjoys cross-party support in the US Congress, where even in the recent period of extreme polarization, defense appropriations continue to enjoy bipartisan support. The US Armed Forces' more or less constant engagement on various battle fronts, also means that the political incentives for effective joint military operations are a constant in US politics, which militates against Service parochialism. It should be noted that these factors which increased civilian engagement and interest in the structure and organization of the Armed Forces were and are necessary, given fierce opposition to major change in the Services themselves. In the case of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, such opposition was demonstrated most prominently by the US Navy and US Marine Corps<sup>8</sup>.

*...the state of jointness of a given country's Armed Forces is explicable in terms of the general status of civil-military relations in that nation.*

More broadly, it has been noted that Service resistance to jointness is not simply an outcome of institutionally selfish turf battles, but inherent in the distinct nature of each Service in terms of how it conducts warfare, the equipment it manages, the doctrine under which it operates, the training it employs and so on<sup>9</sup>. Arguably, these intrinsic Service-specific distinctions make civilian oversight and periodic intervention--"civilian arbitration, participation, intervention"<sup>10</sup>--indispensable for advancing jointness, not least by empowering those members of an Armed Forces officer corps who fully embrace joint operations and are intimately aware, as only professional officers can be, of its indispensability. Such officers are able in turn to confer legitimacy within their peer group on the specifics of jointness embraced by the civilian leadership. Consequently, achieving jointness becomes over time a "core function of civil-military relations"<sup>11</sup>; indeed, the state of jointness of a given country's Armed Forces is explicable in terms of the general status of civil-military relations in that nation. An example from the U.S. which demonstrates the quality and depth of civilian commitment to and responsibility for its military's jointness is the U.S. Congress legislating to allocate funding for, and essentially ordering the US Air Force to run, simulated tests to evaluate its relative strengths and weaknesses in CAS, the joint activity par excellence, of the A10 and F35 air planes. In effect, the US Congress adopted the advocacy of the CAS community of the US Army and the US Air Force which fervently believed in the retention of the A10, an airplane that had been in service since 1976 and was designed solely for CAS missions. By doing so, the US Congress went against the countervailing preference of the top leadership of the US Air Force to push for the retirement of the A10s, so that resources could be freed up for the F35 fleet<sup>12</sup>.

The civilian leadership's indispensable role in, and thus responsibility for, advancing jointness has been reaffirmed in the US in recent years<sup>13</sup>. The modernization of the Armed Forces of

<sup>7</sup> A. Finlan, A. Danielson & S. Lundqvist, Critically engaging the concept of joint operations: origins, reflexivity and the case of Sweden, *Defense Studies*, 2021, Vol. 21, pp. 356-374

<sup>8</sup> J. S. Hamre, Reflections: Looking back at the need for Goldwater-Nichols, *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 27.1.2016

<sup>9</sup> A. Mukherjee, Fighting Separately: Jointness and Civil Military Relations in India, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2017, Vol. 40, pp. 6-34

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> J. Trevithick, A-10 Vs F-35 Close Air Support Flyoff Report Finally Emerges, *The War Zone*, November 1.11.2023

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of the US Armed Forces reforms necessitated by the US adversaries' armed forces modernisation programmes, and the civilian ownership they require see, T. Greenwood and P. Savage, In search of a 21<sup>st</sup> century joint warfighting concept, *War on the Rocks*, 12.9

the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China--military modernizations driven by the demonstration of US military supremacy in the first Gulf War and entailing the development of long-range, precision fires (mostly missiles assisted by sophisticated sensors and information networks)--has required the US Armed Forces to embark on a thorough transformation. This transformation encompasses new technologies, doctrinal and training regimes, and new ways in which the US Navy, Air Force and Army can operate jointly. As the enormously controversial transformation of the US Marine Corps has demonstrated, changes of such comprehensiveness and enormity—involving *inter alia* divestment from legacy weapon systems and changes in existing force structures—are highly contentious within a single Service, let alone between Services<sup>14</sup>. In the absence of a powerful and informed political will, such changes would either not take place or be designed and executed sub-optimally. We highlight two conclusions that have emerged from this ongoing US debate on Armed Forces jointness which are also relevant to our purposes: 1) the need for future-oriented operating concepts to be anchored in a commonly agreed problem within prominent joint combatant commands (e.g. how can US forces emerge victorious in a warfighting scenario involving a Chinese invasion of Taiwan?); 2) the need to set up structures and processes overseen by the top civilian leadership of the Department of Defense, so that the answer to the problems thus posed can be translated into effective decisions, overcoming parochial Service interests which are resistant to *inter alia* new technologies, new procurement priorities, and new force structures. In a nutshell, the US national security establishment—which is composed of reform-minded military leaders, US Congress legislators, Administration officials, defense scholars and think-tankers, and of course defense sector corporations—is currently in the process of reinventing the jointness reforms enacted by the passing into law of the Goldwater-Nichols Act almost 40 years ago.

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### Jointness and non-US, non-NATO Armed Forces

Much as in the case of the US, the interaction between, on the one hand, military conflicts, geopolitical dislocations and generally crises involving armed forces, and, on the other, civil-military relations, have highlighted the challenge of implementing joint operations in other countries' Armed Forces. This interaction is the primary locus of critical scrutiny in our effort to understand why and how jointness has materialized, to what degree or at all, in Armed Forces worldwide.

A useful contradistinction with the US case study is provided by India, a democracy which possesses the third largest armed forces in the world, is a nuclear-armed state, and has been involved in a number of military operations, ranging from stabilization missions to interstate military conflict. And yet, as the preeminent scholar of the Indian Armed Forces has noted, none of these features, alone or in combination, had proven decisive for decades in enabling Indian military and civilian policy makers to agree and enact a jointness agenda. Consequently, India's Armed Forces remained stuck in a suboptimal 'coordination' model, whereby Services are "free to plan, train, equip and prepare for their respective missions and agree to 'coordinate' their operations when required"<sup>15</sup>. This modus operandi prevailed until the Modi reforms of 2020, which were partly spurred by the rise of the China threat. These reforms will not, however, be reviewed here<sup>16</sup>.

2019, R. G. Angevine, Time to revive joint concept development and experimentation, *War on the Rocks*, 23.1.2020 and P. Benfield and G. Grant, Improving Joint Operational Concept Development within the U.S. Department of Defense, *CNAS*, October 2021.

<sup>14</sup> R. Work, Marine Force Design: Changes overdue despite critic's claims, *Texas National Security Review*, Volume 6, Issue 3 (Summer 2023)

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>16</sup> See, *The Economist*, Narendra Modi is remaking India's 1.4 m strong military--The goal is to close the gap with China, 29.11.2023

*This complex set of factors undermined the ability of reform-minded politicians and officers to overcome the inertia of both Service parochialism and the political system.*

The explanation for this state of affairs lies in a complex set of political, institutional and historical factors<sup>17</sup> which include: a) civilian dominance over the military, established in the post-Independence period, which precludes the creation of an officer corps which is trained and entrusted with having a voice in the wider issue of how institutional and organizational reforms, together with major procurement decisions, within the Armed Forces can best serve India's national security needs; b) yet civilian reluctance, which took root after the defeat of Indian Forces by China in 1962, to 'own' the outcomes of military conflicts, thus derogating the management of the operational aspects of particular military engagements to the Services; c) a tradition of manning the Indian Ministry of Defense with a thin layer of rotating elite Indian Administrative Service staff who are generalists and have no expertise in defense matters, or with other non-specialist seconded civil servants. It is critical to note that India's civilian dominance over the military includes the power of the purse, which has not, however, been employed in an informed way to promote jointness through relevant procurement decisions. A convincing interpretation of what ultimately tilted the scales in favor of inaction, prior to the onset of anxiety over China's rising military prowess, in addition to the factors identified above, is that India's large size and nuclear status convinced its politicians that its Armed Forces were good enough as they were, warts and all<sup>18</sup>.

This complex set of factors undermined the ability of reform-minded politicians and officers to overcome the inertia of both Service parochialism and the political system. Consequently, even after major failures in India's intervention in the Sri Lankan civil war in 1987–1990 and in the 1999 Kargill conflict with Pakistan, reform efforts soon stalled, producing no meaningful results. During the Sri Lanka operations, Air Force and Navy component commanders preferred to report back to their Service Chiefs, liaising with, rather than being commanded by, the operational headquarters established in Sri Lanka and led by an Army General. In Kargill, the absence of Forward Air Controllers and lack of communication between ground units and air force jets resulted in an inability to conduct CAS. The failures at Kargill did not relate only to the lack of adjustment to the exigencies of battle—for example, by not establishing a joint headquarters that would have ensured alignment between operations in the air and on the ground. Rather, they extended, in the years prior to the conflict, to an avoidance of committing resources to jointness, as in the case of the Indian Air Force experimenting with laser designators, which are critical to CAS, in the early 1980s, but later giving up on the effort.

It is interesting to note in this respect that a non-NATO member country (for now, at least), Sweden, entered the jointness and multi-domain operations fray in the post-Cold War period. Anxious to make a contribution to NATO's out-of-area operations as a way to maintain US interest in Europe's defense, Sweden's ultimate security guarantee against possible renewed Russian aggression, the country left its Service-prejudiced culture behind, publishing its joint doctrine in 2005 and participating in a series of stabilization missions, most prominently in Afghanistan<sup>19</sup>. Sweden simultaneously developed jointness capacity: (a) under the interoperability imperative in the European theater via an MoU agreed with NATO, under the terms of which it provided Host Nation Support to NATO forces; and (b) through the operationalization of its defense alliance with Finland, which was also nominally non-aligned at the time. Specifically, the jointness capacity was developed in the first case through Sweden joining NATO's Interoperability Platform and the Air Situation Data Exchange in the European Arctic and Baltic Sea region, and in the second case by cofounding

<sup>17</sup> A. Mukherjee, Towards control and effectiveness: The Ministry of Defense and civil-military relations in India, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2022, Vol. 45, no 6-7, pp. 820-842

<sup>18</sup> A. Mukherjee, Fighting Separately: Jointness and Civil Military Relations in India, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2017, Vol. 40, pp. 6-34

<sup>19</sup> A. Finlan, A. Danielson & S. Lundqvist, Critically engaging the concept of joint operations: origins, reflexivity and the case of Sweden, *Defense Studies*, 2021, Vol. 21, NO 3, pp. 356-374

*Sweden's smaller size compared with India, combined with a serious external threat, led its civilian leadership to emulate the practices of its external provider of security, the US.*

and operating the Sea Surveillance Cooperation Finland-Sweden system. As described in the literature, in so doing Sweden adopted and operationalized the presupposition that “shared situational awareness information quality and interoperability through networked command and control systems are imperative to plan and execute joint operations”<sup>20</sup>. Sweden’s smaller size compared with India, combined with a serious external threat, led its civilian leadership to emulate the practices of its external provider of security, the US, via collaborative arrangements short of membership with NATO, participation in US-led NATO out-of-area operations, and by operationalizing its common defense interests with its neighbor, Finland.

In our third non-NATO case, that of Japan, the impetus to enhance jointness was provided by a domestic crisis, and only became suited to geopolitical shifts at a later date<sup>21</sup>. The Chief of Joint Staff Office (JSO) of the Japan Self Defense Forces (JSDF) realized during the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011 (which resulted in the Fukushima nuclear disaster), that the JSO, and himself personally, were hard pressed to manage the JSDF’s involvement in the major civil emergency while simultaneously conferring and coordinating with its civilian masters as well as the US military authorities, Pacific and US-based, about dealing with the emergency. Importantly for the purposes of our analysis, the lessons learned from this major civil emergency were able to overcome inhibiting WW II legacies of a powerful command structure which was perceived, post-WW II, as conducive to Japan’s disastrous imperial gambit. Likewise, concerns that the establishment of a Permanent Joint Headquarters separate from the JSO would duplicate JSO functions and/or absorb staff from the respective staff offices of the JSDF, were marginalized. Externally, the rise of the China threat, which resulted in the redefining of Japan’s national defense doctrine, an ambitious procurement program, enhanced or added JSDF capacities and the need to maintain interoperability with the US Armed Forces, has underlined the validity of the JSDF enhancing its joint operations through the establishment of a JSDF Permanent Joint Headquarters.

### Jointness and NATO member countries

As we saw above in the case of a non-member, Sweden, interoperability and jointness within NATO are mutually constituted. Specifically, interoperability is defined as the ability of Armed Forces from different member countries and other allies to “act together coherently, effectively and efficiently to achieve tactical, operational and strategic objectives”<sup>22</sup>. In essence, national Armed Forces are called upon to do what they are able to do on their own, meaning operate jointly, in their allied capacity with other Allied armies. For example, in a hypothetical scenario, Italian aircraft should be able to provide CAS to Greek infantry units through the coordination of a sophisticated allied joint command headquarters. Interoperability is institutionalized through joint NATO headquarters. As mentioned above, eight critical activities are conceived and executed as joint functions: movement and maneuver, fires, information, protection, sustainment, command and control, and civil military cooperation<sup>23</sup>. Such interoperability is achieved through the ability of participating national contingents to participate within a common command and control architecture. Thus, in order to be interoperable, national contingents need to emanate from Armed Forces which have invested, via procurement and training, in joint operations. It is worth mentioning that the jointness imperative which has been shaped by innovation of US origin, extends to multi-domain operations which add and integrate the cyber and space domains

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> I. Koichi, Japan’s perspective on command and control issues in the in the Japan-US alliance, *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 22.6. 2023 and J. W. Hornung, Japan’s play for today: too much? Just right? Or never enough?, *War on the Rocks*, 31.10.2023

<sup>22</sup> J. Watling and D. Roper, European Allies in US Multi-Domain Operations, Occasional Paper, *Royal United Services Institute*, October 2019

<sup>23</sup> E. R. Lucas and T. A. Crosbie, Evolution of Joint Warfare, *Centre for Joint Operations / Institute for Military Operations*, Royal Danish Defense College, 2021



to those of the land, air and sea. Thus, for all US allies to be interoperable with the US is coterminous with their mastering, to various degrees, the joint multi-domain challenge.

In the case of NATO member countries participating both in US-led out-of-area operations and in expeditionary missions of their own—namely, the UK, France and Germany—we note country-specific factors which either facilitate or impede joint operations<sup>24</sup>. That being said, unlike India, NATO member countries operate within a solid joint structure adopted at the instigation of the US and featuring Joint Force Commands.

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In the case of the UK, we observe a sequence of actions in the post-Cold War period that evince the nation's determination to keep up with the US in terms of being able to field joint armed forces able to complement US operations, within the context of the country's resource constraints. The 1998 Strategic Review, the creation on the basis of that Review of the Joint Doctrine and Concepts Doctrine and the development of the Bowman Combat Infrastructure Platform enabling network centricity, speak of this determination. NATO's Combined Joint Task Force concept, adopted from the US in the 1990s, also helped inform UK thinking on jointness<sup>25</sup>. In the case of France, NATO's Multinational Digitized Interoperability Exercises focused on networks facilitating combined and joint operations, catalyzed interest in how equipment could facilitate jointness. The systems ultimately fielded were not as effective as those employed by the British, due to the French Army's narrower priorities compared with the ambitions of the UK Ministry of Defense's procurement agency. In the case of Germany, though the appropriate analytical steps were taken—the publication of the 2006 Defense White Paper, the creation of the Bundeswehr Transformation Coordination Group—thought was not translated into action due to a lack of wider political commitment to force projection and deployment in third countries explicable in terms of the country's post-WW II pacifist tradition.

In contrast, the determination of the UK and France to define their international role and identity via their militaries, underpinned by military-industrial complexes able to act in concert, produced the tangible results mentioned above. From a military-industrial complex perspective, it is worth noting that 60 % of the UK Armed Forces' 500 equipment projects in the early 2000s were network-related<sup>26</sup>. Not incidentally, for both these countries, this evolution of jointness incorporated both the desire to be able to effectively complement US operations, primarily in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also to be able to conduct expeditionary operations of their own as in the case of Sierra Leone for the UK and Mali for France. Thus, the post-Cold War phase of expeditionary operations was compatible with the political consensus in these two countries either to retain their utility to US force projection or to prove that advances in the US conduct of warfare did not render their own militaries outdated. Additionally, their own Armed Forces and Services traditions in expeditionary warfare and definitions of national interest, ranging from liberal interventionism to stability in Africa mandating an active involvement in ex-imperial spaces, was well-suited to this period's expeditionary turn.

In another case, the cart was put before the horse when interoperability and jointness were catalyzed only after the decision was taken to participate in the Afghanistan stabilization mission and not years prior to it. Their participation in peace-keeping operations in Afghanistan compelled the Italian Armed Forces to respond to demanding interoperability conditions with US and other third-country forces by mastering skills including how to

<sup>24</sup>See, D. J. Galbreath, *Western European Armed Forces and the Modernisation Agenda: Following or Falling Behind?*, *Defense Studies*, Vol. 14, No 4, pp. 394-413, 2014 and J. Watling and D. Roper, *European Allies in US Multi-Domain Operations*, Occasional Paper, *Royal United Services Institute*, October 2019

<sup>25</sup> T. Farrell, *The Dynamics of British Military Transformation*, *International Affairs*, July 2008, Vol 84, No 4, pp. 777-807

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

contribute to and benefit from a common operating picture generated by UAVs, as well as from data generated by other sources<sup>27</sup>. Essentially, resource constraints in force until then were lifted as Italy's civilian leadership addressed the need for their contingent in Afghanistan to perform adequately and securely by equipping it satisfactorily for a task organized through interoperability and jointness imperatives.

...the restrictive national caveats adopted in out-of-area operations such as Afghanistan have resulted in specific national contingents not gaining expertise in the use of joint NATO structures.

On the other hand, for many other NATO member-states, the restrictive national caveats adopted in out-of-area operations such as Afghanistan have resulted in specific national contingents not gaining expertise in the use of joint NATO structures, such as NATO LANDCOM, which actuates and shapes multi-domain operations. This has meant that contingents operating under restrictive caveats have been unable to transfer such expertise to the doctrine, training and equipping of the Armed Forces to which they belong. In other words, those countries that demanded more limited caveats for their contingents were not presented with incentives of the sort Italy had in Afghanistan to acquire 'on the job' interoperable jointness capabilities.

Within NATO, additional impediments to jointness convergence via interoperability relate to the resource constraints facing the less wealthy among the frontline states, with training to the point of failure avoided so as not to embarrass these member countries by publicly exposing their shortcomings<sup>28</sup>.

We infer that NATO membership in and of itself cannot secure a jointness capability for each and every one of its members.

Additionally, as in the case of India, the Ministries of Defense of various NATO member countries, including Spain and Poland, lack civilian officials with expertise in defense matters, undermining the ability of the civilian leaderships to overcome Service parochialism and push forward the jointness agenda<sup>29</sup>. In Poland, this lack of civilian expertise originates in the democratic transition, under which power was divided between the President and Prime Minister, with the President enjoying direct access to the country's military leadership--access institutionalized in the form of his National Security Bureau, which also produces the country's major national security strategy documents. In the case of Spain, the nature of the post-Franco democratic transition may have been such that military matters were devalued and involvement in defense issues rendered a non-prestige vocation for both scholars and politicians—as a result of which, the Ministry of Defense has remained excessively militarized. Clearly, such an imbalanced relationship between the expertise and responsibility of uniformed and civilian staff undermines civilian control of national militaries<sup>30</sup> which cannot in turn be employed effectively in order to develop jointness.

We highlight the fact that civilian staffs are powerfully represented in influential policy-setting positions in the Ministries of Defense of the US, France and the UK. In the US, of the 60 civilians in top positions, 37 were in essential strategic positions, in the UK 10 out of 16 were in such positions, and in France 12 out of 19. In all these benchmark countries which have been at the forefront of jointness and multi-domain operations, there is a rich civilian defense ecosystem of university departments, think tanks, experts supporting parliamentary scrutiny, and vibrant defense industrial sectors invested in military innovation and funding

<sup>27</sup>F. Cottiglia, and N.M. Moro, Learning from others? Emulation and change in the Italian Armed Forces since 2001, *Armed Forces & Society*, 2016, Vol 42:4, pp. 696-718.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> D. Pion-Berlin, I. Acacio and A. Ivey, Democratically consolidated, externally threatened, and NATO aligned: finding unexpected deficiencies in civilian control, *Democratization*, 2018, Vol 26:6.

<sup>30</sup>A. Mukherjee & D. Pion-Berlin, The fulcrum of civilian control: Re-imagining the role of defense ministries, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2022, Vol. 45, pp. 783-797.

defense-related expertise in the think tank and academic communities. Indeed, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), one of Washington DC's leading think tanks, played a meaningful role in the case of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, having been assigned one of the studies which underpinned the Act's reforms<sup>31</sup>.

## Joint Operations in the Greek Armed Forces: Much to be desired

According to the structure of the Greek Armed Forces, tactical commands belong to each Service: thus, indicatively, IV Army Corps, is the Hellenic Army (HA) formation which forms the first line of defense at the Greek-Turkish land border, ASDEN is the HA formation responsible primarily for the defense of the eastern Aegean islands, adjacent to the Turkish Mediterranean Coast, the Fleet Headquarters and the Hellenic Tactical Air Force Command being respectively operational commands of the Hellenic Navy (HN) and the Hellenic Air Force (HAF).

*This lack of joint operational command in the eastern theater of operations, where Greece faces its gravest national security threat, coexists with a Chief of the Hellenic National Defense General Staff (HNDGS) who is the uniformed leader of the Armed Forces.*

This lack of joint operational command in the eastern theater of operations, where Greece faces its gravest national security threat, coexists with a Chief of the Hellenic National Defense General Staff (HNDGS) who is the uniformed leader of the Armed Forces. Since 2010 and the passing into law of Law 3883/2010, the Chief of the HNDGS has enjoyed 'full command' of the country's Armed Forces. In practice, this has meant that the Chief of the HNDGS enjoys clear command authority over the Chiefs of the General Staffs of the Hellenic Army (HAGS), the Hellenic Navy (HNGS) and the Hellenic Air Force (HAFGS), as well as the single Service Commands mentioned above. This command authority covers both operations and routine management issues pertaining to the three Service Branches, if the Chief of the HNDGS chooses to involve himself in them. As we will see in our historical analysis, the effectiveness of the command authority of the Chief of the HNDGS, both prior and subsequent to Law 3883/2010 has inevitably been suboptimal, due to the lack of a comprehensive jointness structure.

Following Greece's transition to democratic rule in 1974 in the wake of the seven-year military dictatorship instigated and led by middle ranking HA officers in the main, the priority was establishing civilian dominance over the officer corps. This goal was comprehensively achieved by the end of the first term of the center right New Democracy (ND) party in 1981. Nonetheless, when the center left PASOK took over, the new administration distorted command arrangements, either out of genuine fear of military involvement in democratic politics or in order to instrumentalize Greek society's coup fears for partisan reasons (with PASOK-friendly officers validating these fears to advance their careers)<sup>32</sup>. Pertinently to our investigation, this led to the dissolution of a Special Forces Division, due to the role assigned to it in NATO scenarios of organizing resistance in the event of Greece being overwhelmed by Warsaw Pact forces--scenarios which were portrayed in the period of democratic transition as disguised plans for the suspension of democratic rule by a disloyal praetorian guard<sup>33</sup>. While we will not express a view on the operational advisability of this decision to

<sup>31</sup> J. S. Hamre, Reflections: Looking back at the need for Goldwater-Nichols, *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 27.1.2016

<sup>32</sup> For an account of how guarding against a coup shapes command arrangements, training and appointments, thus undermining military effectiveness, see C. Talmadge, *The Dictator's Army: Battlefield Effectiveness in Authoritarian Regimes*, Cornell University Press, 2015. Although, as the title suggests, Talmadge's definitive analysis focuses on authoritarian regimes, both the causes and consequences he identifies are also highly relevant to democratic regimes fearful of military coups.

<sup>33</sup> This account is based on Σ. Βλάχσης, Τρεις δεκαετίες πριν: η κατάργηση της ΙΙΙ Μεραρχίας Ειδικών Δυνάμεων, (Α' Μέρος), Δούρειος Ίππος, 01.09.2019 [S. Vlassis, Three decades prior: the dissolution of III Special Forces Division, 1<sup>st</sup> Part, Doureios Ippos] and Σ. Βλάχσης, Τρεις δεκαετίες πριν: η κατάργηση της ΙΙΙ Μεραρχίας Ειδικών Δυνάμεων, (Β' Μέρος), Δούρειος Ίππος, 22.09.2019 [S. Vlassis, Three decades prior: the dissolution of III Special Forces Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> Part, Doureios Ippos]. The baleful influence of Greece's seven-year military rule on Armed Forces reform can still be felt almost fifty year after its collapse. As the late HA General Michael Kostarakos confided to the author, while serving as

dissolve the Special Forces Division, we will underline the grounds on which it was enacted: namely, the need to 'coup proof' democratic rule.

*Arguably, the Armed Forces were the rule rather than the exception in this conflating of technocratic imperatives and rationales in the state machinery with authoritarian rule during the democratic transition.*

In addition, PASOK aggressively promoted officers it considered loyal to its rule, trumping meritocratic considerations in order to establish its civilian supremacy. Inevitably, the lack of meritocracy, compounded by clientelistic motives, also weakened the officer corps' ability and willingness to advocate command arrangements to its civilian masters that would optimize military effectiveness, or, conversely, to argue against command arrangements that would undermine military effectiveness. Arguably, the Armed Forces were the rule rather than the exception in this conflating of technocratic imperatives and rationales in the state machinery with authoritarian rule during the democratic transition<sup>34</sup>.

During the Imia crisis of 1996, when Greece and Turkey came to the brink of war when the Turkish Armed Forces challenged Greek sovereignty over the islets, the cumulative and interacting consequences of this politicized disregard for operationally optimal command arrangements and force structure choices came to the fore. Although, close to 30 years after the Imia crisis, it is still difficult to disentangle blame shifting narratives between the civilian and military leadership and between different commanders and Services, we can still highlight some prominent dysfunctions<sup>35</sup>:

1. The then Chief of the HNDGS pointed out that, in a compressed timeframe, he had to both consult with and interact with the civilian leadership, manage the tactical situation with his subordinate staff and theater commanders, and implement general mobilization plans in case the Imia crisis escalated into an all-out conflict. From the point of view of our analysis, it was inevitable that his leadership of the joint operations in the theater would be inefficient, given his multiple roles, the fact that he was unaware of materially important aspects of the tactical situation, as in the preparedness of various critical component units of the joint operations, and could not, by his own admission, exercise joint leadership as he thought best, given individual Service resistance to his requests. Last but not least, we can infer that his involvement in tactical matters prevented him from developing the degree of detachment necessary to fulfill his role as the civilian leadership's principal military advisor in policy deliberations where the strategic dimension was rightly and inevitably multivariable as much as political.
2. Relatedly, the absence of a long-standing and well-led operational joint headquarters revealed knowledge gaps between the Services in the availability and preparedness of key units, fuzzy and conflicting lines of command between the individual Services General Staffs and the Chief of the HNDGS, and the subsequent culminating inability of the Chief of HNDGS to present the civilian leadership with

*...the absence of a long-standing and well-led operational joint headquarters revealed knowledge gaps between the Services in the availability and preparedness of key units.*

Chief of HNDGS (2011-2015) he could not convince his civilian masters to revamp the HA's Military Police to perform key functions such as critical facilities protection, due to political fears of a public backlash engendered by the public memory of the role the Military Police playing in civilian repression during the 1967-1974 dictatorship.

<sup>34</sup> See Δ. Β. Σωτηρόπουλος, Η κορυφή του πελατειακού κράτους: οργάνωση, στελέχωση και πολιτικοποίηση των ανώτερων βαθμίδων της κεντρικής διοίκησης στην Ελλάδα, 1974-2000, Ποταμός, 2001, [D.V. Sotiropoulos, The summit of the clientelistic state: the organization, manning and politicization of the higher ranks of the central government in Greece 1974-2000, Potamos, 2001] for a definitive account of how the democratic transition in Greece led to the undermining of bureaucratic efficiency and technocratic management in the machinery of state, because loyalty to democratically-elected governments became the decisive factor in higher-level appointments.

<sup>35</sup> The following reportage by what was Greece's leading investigative TV program at the time, and the podcast by a respected Greek defense journalist, investigate key claims and counterclaims and/or include testimony from key participants, Φάκελοι Εκπομπή για την Κρίση των Ιμίων, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=talj4trjXr4>, [Files: Programme on the Imia Crisis], Δούρειος Ίππος, podcast # 007, 29 χρόνια από την κρίση των Ιμίων, η πτυχή των Ειδικών Δυνάμεων, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=An4TWMi281c> [Doureios Ippos podcast 29 years from the Imia Crisis: the Special Forces Aspect]

actionable options. We emphasize here the long-standing civilian responsibility for this state of affairs, which we explored above.

3. Within this lack of jointness, a range of suboptimal approaches to the management of the crisis were reported or articulated by participants, ranging from unwillingness to deploy Special Forces units by the Chief of the HAGS, according to the Chief of the HNDGS, to a self-declared overeagerness on the part of an HN theater commander to exploit their tactical advantage over Turkish navy vessels in the area. This reported spectrum, from non-participation by one Service to ‘go it alone’ by another, is of course the antithesis of jointness. As such, during the Imia crisis, this variety of approaches reflects the lack of training, plus the non-inculcation into the spirit of jointness, demonstrated by high- and very high-ranking Greek officers.

What did the Imia crisis lead to, with regard to jointness in the Greek Armed Forces? We highlight the following:

- Although investigative reporting, the published memoirs of key civilian and military protagonists, and various academic publications noted the diverse shortcomings that led to the outcome of the crisis, no official declassified inquiry was conducted by either the Ministry of National Defense and/or the Hellenic Parliament’s Standing Committee of Defense and Foreign Affairs to establish and delineate the need for reforms in command and force structure arrangements, and thus set clear benchmarks for future reforms.
- The need for well-equipped and managed Special Forces, however, was imprinted on both civilian and military mindsets. Importantly, we note the realization that no future Greek PM would survive a repeat of an Imia-type incident. Consequently, an elite Special Forces unit, Z MAK, was set up in 1997, trained and equipped to deal with an Imia-like situation in the future<sup>36</sup>. Subsequently, first under the initiative of an ex-Army Deputy Minister for Defense in the ND administration of 2004–2009, and then under the leadership of the current Chief of the HNDGS, himself a Special Forces officer, special forces units were further consolidated and their equipment and training improved. Currently, the newly-established Special Warfare Command (SWC) incorporates all special forces units from all Services, primarily the HA and HN; its equipment and helicopter air transport is upgraded and organic to the SWC<sup>37</sup>. However, since the SWC comes under the direct command of the Chief of the HNDGS, this arrangement ties the Chief still further to the tactical management of a future crisis incident.
- On the minus side, the issue of creating an operational joint command separate from the HNDGS was not tackled. It is speculated from reports on the debate concerning the transfer of command of the HA Marines Brigade to the HN that this proposal was used by the HN to strengthen its claim to tactical joint command of ASDEN; the recorded counterarguments point to the fact that these Marines were not meant to serve in an expeditionary capacity—as the US Marine Corps and British Royal Marines are called upon to do—but rather to reinforce existing island HA

*...the issue of creating an operational joint command separate from the HNDGS was not tackled.*

<sup>36</sup> On Z MAK see, Z MAK, Η Άγνωστη ελίτ των Ειδικών Δυνάμεων, in.gr, 10.1.2023 [Z MAK the unknown elite of the Greek Special Forces, in.gr]

<sup>37</sup> See, Σ. Βλάσσης, Τρεις δεκαετίες πριν: η κατάργηση της ΙΙΙ Μεραρχίας Ειδικών Δυνάμεων, (Β' Μέρος), Δούρειος Ίππος, 22.9.2019 [S. Vlassis, Three decades prior: the abolition of the III Special Forces Division, Doureios Ippos, 2] and Σ. Βλάσσης, Τελετή Συγκροτήσεως και ενεργοποίησεως της Διοίκησης Ειδικού Πολέμου, Δούρειος Ίππος, 28.6.2021 [S. Vlassis, Ceremony of Establishment and Activation of the Special Warfare Command, Doureios Ippos].

units<sup>38</sup>. Be that as it may, as has been pointed out, the issue goes well beyond the Service Branch of a future joint operations commander and extends *inter alia* to training, education at all levels imbuing officers with the spirit, and knowledge, of jointness, and the staff composition and interaction of a joint operational command<sup>39</sup>.

*...in the absence of an overall jointness mindset and command and force arrangements, there will inevitably be friction when the Chief of HNDGS opts to exercise his leadership forcefully over the Services, an exercise of leadership.*

- Last but not least, it is noted that in the absence of an overall jointness mindset and command and force arrangements, there will inevitably be friction when the Chief of HNDGS opts to exercise his leadership forcefully over the Services, an exercise of leadership\_which, in such a vacuum, will inevitably be personalized and/or may be conflated with his own Service interests.

### Failing to adopt the jointness paradigm: Causes and Consequences

It is well worth observing that Imia took place ten years after the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986 and five years after Operation Desert Storm in 1991. Which is to say that, by the time Imia took place, Greek military and civilian policy makers had a clear template for the implementation of jointness in the Greek Armed Forces.

However, at that time, the Ministry of National Defense lacked (and still does at the point of writing) civilian technocrats with an expertise in defense matters. Consequently, the post-Imia civilian leadership could not rely on such expertise to design and execute a jointness agenda in alignment with reform-minded higher-ranking officers. Civilian staff perform administrative functions devoid of policy significance and, at best, Greek Ministers of National Defense would be supported by one or two non-permanent civilian advisors with a background in defense or international studies. We would locate the lack of civilian expertise in defense matters in the lack of legitimacy of defense studies as a field of academic inquiry in Greek state universities, a lack of legitimacy whose origins can be traced back to Greece's seven years of military rule<sup>40</sup>. As there is no regular pipeline through which a constant flow of civilian defense experts can emerge to fill positions in the Ministry of National Defense, but also in the think tank community and in universities themselves, the civilian masters of the Ministry of National Defense have no choice but to rely on the officer corps as their sole authoritative source of advice. The lack of civilian expertise in defense matters outside the Ministry of Defense also feeds into the lack of demand for such expertise by the Ministry's civilian leadership. Simply put, there is no sustained expert scrutiny, popularized by the media and/or adopted by the opposition, of such policy domains as jointness but others as well, such as procurement, force structure and so on, that bear on jointness. Consequently, the civilian leadership of the Ministry of National Defense is not compelled to 'tool-up' by hiring civilian experts in defense matters who could address the issues raised in public discourse.

*...despite the strong technocratic bent of the PASOK government of 1996-2004 led by PM Simitis, the response to the Imia crisis involved no meaningful armed forces reform-*

Considering this civilian ignorance of defense-related matters, it comes as no surprise that, despite the strong technocratic bent of the PASOK government of 1996–2004 led by PM Simitis, the response to the Imia crisis involved no meaningful armed forces reform--though it did lead to a weapons acquisition spree which substantially upgraded the main weapon

<sup>38</sup> Σ. Βλάσσης, ΑΣΔΕΝ, Στόλος, πεζοναύτες και ο «τρόπος του ναυτικού», [S. Vlassis, ASDEN, the Fleet, the marines and the "Navy way"]

<sup>39</sup> Αντιπτέραρχος ε.α., Ε. Γεωργούσης, Κάτι δεν πάει καθόλου καλά με την διακλαδικότητα στις ΕΔ κι ένας Πτέραρχος εξηγεί γιατί, [militairenews.gr](http://militairenews.gr), 1.6.2021 [Air Marshall (Retd.) E. Georgousis, Something is not going at all well with jointness and an Air Marshall explains why, [militaire.gr](http://militaire.gr), 1.6.2021]

<sup>40</sup> See, A. Kamaras, Establishing defense Studies in Greece? It's high time, ELIAMEP Policy Paper 41, October 2020

systems of all three Services<sup>41</sup>. Simitis' own record as someone who actively resisted the military dictatorship and was forced to leave Greece to avoid arrest during its seven-year rule is indicative of the generational fracture between Greece's reform-minded elites and the country's Armed Forces which would prove so damaging for the effectiveness of the Armed Forces.

The negative impact of the lack of civilian knowledge on military matters has surely extended the post-1974 norm and practice of civilian supremacy which features partisan and cleintelistic practices. As a publication authored by an ex-Chief of HAGS has demonstrated, from the late 2000s to the mid 2010s, successive Greek governments played havoc with the promotion process of higher-ranking officers during a period of political instability engendered by the country's fiscal crisis<sup>42</sup>. The highly insecure governments of that period either took advantage of the instability, or were swayed by unfounded rumors of the military's involvement in politics, to effectively suspend promotion processes established by law and generate volatility in officer appointments at the Services General Staffs and HNDGS levels. We must stress that, as was the case during the period of democratic transition after 1974, in a context of non-meritocratic appointments and a highly arbitrary officer promotion system, the issue of military reform, and most definitely the type of reform necessitated by the challenge of jointness, is rendered null and void by the resulting organizational instability.

But while an analytically-grounded demand for jointness did not develop top down from the civilian leadership to the military, neither did it develop bottom up from the officer corps to the civilian leadership. The Staff Colleges of the Armed Forces, whose nominal mission it is to train mid-level and higher-ranking officers in jointness, namely ADISPO and SETHA, have themselves been heavily influenced by non-defense-studies scholars from state universities, for whom these Staff Colleges are a source of supplementary income. As mentioned above, the lack of legitimacy of core defense studies as an acceptable field of academic inquiry means that there are precious few civilian scholars resident in Greece who are qualified to provide instruction in such core defense subjects as jointness<sup>43</sup>. This means there is no strong scholarly defense studies cohort of international renown in Greece to delineate and defend its discipline--by *inter alia* ensuring the quality of the education it provides to its students, be they civilians or Armed Forces officers.

This is a recipe for compromised standards, a loss of integrity and a lack of focus on the actual defense studies discipline itself. Indicatively, individuals familiar with the governance of these two Staff Colleges have shared a range of major issues with the author, including: a) an unwillingness to invite Greek scholars from the diaspora whose discipline specialization is actually defense studies to deliver lecture series or course work; b) interventions by academics-turned-prominent-politicians resulting in the Staff Colleges partnering with their formers' Greek, state universities despite the lack of relevant expertise in the said universities; c) the short tenures of the officers leading these Staff Colleges, and d) an indifference to scholarly integrity and rigor<sup>44</sup>. It is telling of the Staff Colleges' overall loss of direction that in the 56 volumes of the ADISPO journal, only three contributions touch on joint warfare itself, and out of these three only one examines Hellenic Armed Forces jointness-related command arrangements. Rather, the periodical focuses heavily on geopolitics, foreign policy and military issues such as leadership and IT, which are not,

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<sup>41</sup> See, A. Καμάρας, *Εκσυγχρονιστές και Εθνική Άμυνα*, GR Diplomatic Review, May 2021 [A. Kamaras, *Modernizers and National Defense*, GR Diplomatic Review]

<sup>42</sup> Κ. Γκίνης, *Πολιτικο-Στρατιωτικές Σχέσεις στην Ελλάδα της Κρίσεως (2008-2025) και το δίλλημα της Κηδεμονίας, Στρατηγείν*, 2019, Τεύχος 1, σελ. 1-32 [K. Ginis, *Civil-Military Relations and the Dilemma of Tutelage, Stratigein*, 2019, Vol. 1, pp. 1-32]

<sup>43</sup> On the lamentable state of defense studies in Greece see, A. Kamaras, *Establishing Defense Studies in Greece?...it is high time*, ELIAMEP Policy Paper 41, October 2, 2020

<sup>44</sup> Based on a conversation the author had with a retired high-ranking officers and Greek diaspora defense scholars specializing in defense.

however, connected to jointness<sup>45</sup>. Officer attendees at the two Staff Colleges do not seem to have analyzed operational challenges that are core to Greece's actual territorial and national defense challenges, such as the role that amphibious operations, a typical joint operation, play in the defense of Greece's multitude of islands<sup>46</sup>.

*An additional reason why the US jointness template has been ignored is the Greek civilian leadership's historical aversion to sending military detachments into harm's way.*

An additional reason why the US jointness template has been ignored is the Greek civilian leadership's historical aversion to sending military detachments into harm's way in the context of Greece's allied obligations. Due to this risk aversion on the part of the civilian leadership, as a retired higher-ranking officer relayed to the author, there is currently not a single serving officer or NCO in the Greek Armed Forces who has participated directly in actual combat. Naturally, as higher-ranking officers are perfectly able to grasp their civilian masters' aversion to any risk of military casualties, they themselves become risk averse to protect their careers, and less than keen to argue for participation in risky operations, grant permission for risk-taking in the field, or undertake risk when in the field<sup>47</sup>.

The invasion of Cyprus in 1974 by Turkey's Armed Forces, which also included fighting on the part of opposing Greek military units, led to Greece's exit from the military wing of NATO and, overall, to a deep alienation on the part of the Greek public from western structures, which even extended to the EU<sup>48</sup>. This alienation rendered left-wing opposition to any out-of-area engagement by the Greek Armed Forces post-1989 particularly potent. NATO's Article 5 on collective security, the foundation of the NATO alliance, could be invoked by all NATO members (and, implicitly, even for non-NATO members functionally integrated into the NATO alliance, like Sweden and Finland), but proved to be inoperable for Greece as its main security threat emanated from a fellow NATO member country, Turkey; this threat was revived by the Imia crisis.

Thus, in relation to the most long-lasting out-of-area mission, ISAF, which is also the most transformative for participating Armed Forces, Greece sent a support detachment with a strict caveat to operate only in Kabul<sup>49</sup>. It is telling that of all the NATO member countries, at the point at which ISAF was established, Greece, together with Iceland and Luxemburg, whose armed forces are tiny, was the only country not to suffer a single fatality in Afghanistan in the period 2001–2014. As a result, there was no opportunity for the Greek Armed Forces to develop a cadre of officers with experience in joint operations in the context of the interoperability between the different national detachments in ISAF and under US doctrine and command and control arrangements<sup>50</sup>. Nor was the civilian leadership of the Greek Ministry of National Defense acclimatized to what the jointness of the Greek Armed Forces would demand in terms of equipment and operations in conditions of protracted armed conflict.

Relatedly, the NATO or EU Commands located in Greece following considerable lobbying on the part of the Greek government, either for prestige purposes or to counter the influence

<sup>45</sup>See, <https://adispo.mil.gr/periodiko-scholis/>, where all the volumes of the ADISPO journal are uploaded.

<sup>46</sup> See, Π. Γκαρτζονίκας, Οι Έλληνες πεζοναύτες στο Αιγαίο – Όπλα και ρόλος, SLPress, 17.7.2022 [P. Gartzonikas, Greek marines in the Aegean – weapon systems and role, SLPress, 17.7.2022].

<sup>47</sup> Interview the author conducted with a high-ranking retired Army officer.

<sup>48</sup> See G. Pagoulatos, Believing in National Exceptionalism: Ideas and Economic Divergence in Southern Europe, *West European Politics*, January 2004, Vol. 27:1, pp. 43-68, who argues that Greece's economic policy divergence in the 1980s within the EU was partly rooted in the trauma of the Cyprus invasion.

<sup>49</sup> For an analysis of the nature of the participation of Greek Armed Forces in international operations, as well as in ISAF in particular, see S. Boskou and K. Engelbrekt, *Keeping a low profile: Greek strategic culture and International Military Operations*, in M. Britz, (ed.) *European Participation in International Operations*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

<sup>50</sup> For an account of how participation in ISAF combat operations acted as a catalyst for modernization of equipment and of operations, see F. Cottiglia, and F.N. Moro Learning from others? Emulation and change in the Italian Armed Forces since 2001, *Armed Forces & Society*, 2016, Vol. 42:4, pp. 696-718.



Turkey exercises through the Commands it hosts or leads in out-of-area NATO missions, are themselves underutilized. As Greece is not willing to send detachments of any size into harm's way, it cannot use the Commands it hosts to assume responsibilities in complex operations and thus gain insights that can then be transmitted to its Armed Forces<sup>51</sup>. According to observations relayed to the author by a retired high-ranking officer, this lack of international joint staff experience is compounded by the very short tenures of Greek officers in General Staff assignments (i.e. individual Service Staffs and HNDGS) in Athens, due to the perception that these are comfort posts and officers should be quickly rotated out to operational units, for reasons of equity.

Moving from the operationalization of jointness to its production, we note: (a) the absence of a Joint Chiefs of Staff structure composed of a primus inter pares Chief and the three Service Chiefs, and (b) an outdated General Directorate of Defense Investments and Armaments (GDDIA) staffed mainly by officers on short three-year stints before they return to field and staff positions. This combination makes it impossible for the procurement process to be integrated, and thus capable of serving the jointness imperative. A Joint Chief of Staff would be able to produce a common understanding among the Services of the procurement choices that would support joint operations. A civilianized GDDIA composed mostly of highly scientific non-military staff would be in a position to respond to the challenges of contemporary procurement, particularly as these relate to interacting with a Greek Research and Development ecosystem that is growing in strength. In the absence of such structures, Greece's civilian leadership cannot exercise its indispensable role in the production of jointness via procurement, in adjudicating between Service interests, and in empowering those officers who have a clear vision of jointness in the Greek Armed Forces.

*...jointness cannot be enforced by one man alone; indeed, the very notion of 'one man rule' is antithetical to jointness, which is a multi-actor enterprise.*

More generally, the lack of division of responsibilities between a Joint Chiefs of Staff and an operational joint command inevitably underestimates the demands placed upon the Armed Forces Services' leadership to prepare the Armed Forces for joint warfare by investing time and effort in *inter alia* the training of the Armed Forces, their doctrinal and operational development, their balanced sustainment, the determination of their funding needs and the drafting of the relevant budgeting proposals made to the civilian leadership. Needless to say, for this need to be recognized and adequately institutionalized would require a civilian leadership invested in the substantive, and not just nominal, capability of the country's Armed Forces. Only such a civilian leadership could in turn confer on a future Chief of a Joint Chiefs of Staff the prestige and power that would make such a position superior to a separate, joint operational command, and thus attractive to highly ambitious and competent officers.

Lacking a common conceptual and operational grasp of the challenges of jointness, Greece's national defense system has defaulted, as we mentioned above, to granting the Chief of HNDG the authority to prevail over all Service Chiefs and tactical commanders, and to giving him a reasonably well-equipped and trained Special Forces component to prevent a repeat of an Imia-like incident. However, jointness cannot be enforced by one man alone; indeed, the very notion of 'one man rule' is antithetical to jointness, which is a multi-actor enterprise premised on: a) officers and other ranks trained, educated and experienced in joint operations over time and at ever-higher levels of scale and complexity and thus able to arrive at a common understanding of their joint response in a crisis situation and to act on the basis of this understanding; b) civilian leaders, aided by both reform-minded officers and civilian defense technocrats not invested career-wise in any of the three Services, being motivated and equipped to employ their democratic mandate to push through the inevitably

<sup>51</sup> For a forceful critique on this issue, see Π. Γκαρτζονίκας, Με το ένα πόδι η Ελλάδα σε συμμαχίες και στρατιωτικές αποστολές..., SLPress, 24.4.2023 [P.Gartzonikas, Greece with one foot in alliances and military missions ...,SLPress, 24.4.2023]

contentious reforms that evolving jointness requires, and to secure the scarce fiscal resources without which jointness cannot be equipped with the material capabilities it requires.

*Last but not least, limiting the post-Imia response to upgrading the rapid reaction Special Forces element limits the Greek Armed Forces' concept of operations.*

Last but not least, limiting the post-Imia response to upgrading the rapid reaction Special Forces element limits the Greek Armed Forces' concept of operations<sup>52</sup>. This emphasis on Special Forces would be problematic at any time, but it is even more so at a time when the capabilities of the Turkish Armed Forces are expanding in parallel with Turkey's great power pretensions. Turkey's gradual detachment from the western camp, itself part of a global trend which has seen the emergence worldwide of middle powers able and willing to enforce their will beyond their borders, further calls into question the wisdom of relying on the notion of a ceiling, imposed either by Turkey itself or by great power intervention, in any Greek-Turkish conflict<sup>53</sup>. Relatedly, it seems that Greek policy makers have not noticed a worldwide shift from an emphasis on Special Forces operations to enhancing the capabilities of Land Armies in general precisely because of states' increasing tendency to contest or ignore American interests and pursue their ambitions, even to the extent of engaging in peer-to-peer conflict, involving territorial conquest<sup>54</sup>. All in all, such an expansion of means and ambition by Turkey, as one of the world's most assertive middle powers, requires a concept of operations on the part of Greece's civilian and military leaders that addresses the probability of escalation beyond a point in place, say an invaded, small Greek island, which could be capped by air and naval assets supported by Special Forces if need be<sup>55</sup>—and thus demands a capacity to conduct joint warfare across the country's eastern front. Furthermore, the Greek Armed Forces' current upgrading or acquisition of weapon systems that materially increase their technological ability to operate jointly—as in the case of the upgrade of its F16s to the Viper configuration and the acquisition of Rafale fighter jets and Belharra frigates, whose systems enable powerfully distributed information and the coordination of fires from land, air and sea—makes enhanced jointness the ultimate value-for-money proposition.

### The Greek jointness challenge in an international context: comparisons and interpretations

Notwithstanding the 'full command' authority granted to the Chief of HNDGS in 2010, underlying weaknesses mean that Greece, like India prior to the 2020 Modi reforms, has failed to institutionalize jointness. We would argue that the fact the signature achievement of the current Chief of the HNDGS has been the consolidating of the Special Forces within a single SWC arrangement is definitive proof of his limited ability to promote the jointness agenda in the absence of civilian backing. After all, the main Greek Armed Forces formations we mentioned above have remained stubbornly single-Service during his tenure. Not incidentally, the creation of the SWC also fitted in with the civilian leadership's priority of having a reasonably well-equipped and trained Special Forces command at their disposal to prevent their being subjected to another Imia-like humiliation. As such, the SWC ties the Chief of the HNDGS to a tactical commander role which is as outdated as it is problematic,

<sup>52</sup> For an astute critique of the conceptual and operational limitations revealed by the creation of the SWC see, Π. Γκαρτζονίκας, Εκτός από εξοπλισμούς το αξιόμαχο απαιτεί και στρατιωτική σκέψη..., SLPress, 13.9.2022 [P. Gartzonikas, In addition to procurement, combat worthiness demands military thought..., SLPress, 13.9.2022]

<sup>53</sup> For a recent analysis of Turkey's world power pretensions see, C.S. Chivvis, A. Coskun, B. Geagham-Brenier, Turkiye in the Emerging World Order, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 31.10.2023

<sup>54</sup> J. Kallberg, Time to radically downsize the West's Special Forces, CEPA, 29.11.2023

<sup>55</sup> On the redundancy of this conception, see Π. Γκαρτζονίκας, Εκτός από εξοπλισμούς το αξιόμαχο απαιτεί και στρατιωτική σκέψη..., SLPress, 13.9.2022 [P. Gartzonikas, In addition to procurement, combat worthiness demands military thought..., SLPress, 13.9.2022]

and which the US abandoned post-Goldwater-Nichols. The most famous, and potentially catastrophic, precedent of this conflation of the tactical and the strategic occurred during the Cuban Missile Crisis, when the leaderships of the US Navy and US Air Force in particular advocated escalatory responses to the Soviet Union to President Kennedy. When reading about the Cuban Missile Crisis, what comes to mind is that it would be inconceivable for any contemporary Chief of the US JCS to offer a sitting US President advice so crude and divorced from its wider politico-military implications<sup>56</sup>.

*...being the uniformed Chief of an Armed Forces, and thus responsible as the highest-ranking soldier for overall military strategy, procurement, budgeting, jointness and the provision of advice to the country's leadership, is a full-time job which cannot carry the additional burden of operational responsibilities.*

It is revealing in that Greek civilian leaders after Imia, unlike their Japanese counterparts after the civil emergency at Fukushima, did not take on board the lesson that the operational command of the Armed Forces needs to be separated from the overall command, given that it is impossible--in a crisis situation--for one person to be the principal military advisor to the government, the overseer of the overall military mobilization effort, and the operational commander dealing with the crisis. Nor has it been grasped in Greece that being the uniformed Chief of an Armed Forces, and thus responsible as the highest-ranking soldier for overall military strategy, procurement, budgeting, jointness and the provision of advice to the country's leadership, is a full-time job which cannot carry the additional burden of operational responsibilities. Even more so when this additional burden undermines the ability of the Chief to fulfill his role as the principal military advisor to the civilian leadership, a role which, as we noted above, requires a degree of detachment from operations.

This lack of reflection on the part of Greece's civilian leadership points to the fact that the country's Armed Forces, much like India's prior to the alarming rise in China's military assertiveness, suffer from civilian complacency. The civilian complacency in Greece is not, of course, like India's underpinned by either the size of the country or a nuclear armed status; rather it rests in the conviction that Turkey's aggression vis-a-vis Greece has a ceiling provided by the US. US intermediation during the Imia crisis proved this to be the case. Thus, to the extent the Greek Armed Forces can hold the line in an Imia-like situation with the help of such peripheral tinkering as the creation of the SWC, the belief is that the cavalry will come to the rescue. By extension, at both the elite and public level, what is prized is the propensity of the US to unilaterally intervene in cases of Greek-Turkish conflict. Of course, it is understood by Greek policy makers that US investment in averting a Greek-Turkish conflict is inseparable from that nation's supreme interest in maintaining the integrity and credibility of the NATO alliance itself<sup>57</sup>.

Yet, as we discussed above, the alliance itself as a mechanism of collective defense, lacks the credibility required to compel fully-fledged engagement by Greece's Armed Forces, up to and including participation in life-risking operations. Thus NATO and its operations are correspondingly devalued, notwithstanding the fact that such operations serve US interests and Greek Armed Forces participation in them can increase Greece's leverage over US national security policy while also enhancing the joint capabilities of the Greek Armed Forces. Instead, weapons procurement from the US, granting basing rights to US forces in Greece, and the ability of the Greek American lobby to enhance bilateral relations are privileged. These three elements are seen as politically-acceptable means of enhancing national security, as it is assumed that they secure US intervention in the case of Turkish military

<sup>56</sup> See, L. Freedman, *Command: The Politics of Military Operations from Korea to Ukraine*, Oxford University Press, 2022.

<sup>57</sup> We note, however, that the Greek military junta underestimated the risk of Turkey invading Cyprus in 1974, the calculation of Greece's military rulers at the time being that Turkey's leaders would not risk instigating war with Greece and thus destabilize NATO's southern flank. As we now know, this was a risk which Turkey's leaders proved all too willing to take, see A. Παπαχελάς, 'Ένα Σκοτεινό Δωμάτιο 1967-1974, Μεταίχμιο, 2021 [A. Papahelas, A Dark Room, *Metaihmio*, 2021]

aggression. In contrast, putting the lives of Greek soldiers in harm's way through participation in NATO out-of-area operations, a policy that would contribute to the country's ability to fight its corner on its own, is considered prohibitively risky in domestic political terms. The case closest to that of Greece within NATO, particularly among the countries we examined, is Germany due to the post-WW II constraints in place on its conducting military operations other than territorial national defense, with less capable countries (fiscally, at least) such as Italy not thus being limited.

This complacency is underpinned by the lack of civilian expertise which, as we have established, is particularly necessary in advancing jointness, as civilian leaders need to adopt and push for a jointness agenda that is technocratically sound yet not captive to any of the Services' parochial interests. After all, this is the value added in jointness terms that civilian leaders and technocrats bring: namely, the ability to arbitrate between Service interests and impose priorities, even when doing so runs contrary to vested Service interests. Greece, as the literature cited here notes, is of course not unique in this regard within NATO and the EU, as the Ministries of Defense of countries as diverse as Poland and Spain are also dominated by military officers, each for their own reasons. Presumably, there are no countervailing forces to individual Service biases in these countries either.

While Greece does not have India's non-aligned status, the distinction we noted of its being threatened by an allied country, Turkey, has meant that, as in India, the most potentially transformational experiences in the field of its Armed Forces have been undertaken on its own and not together with allies. This was the case with the invasion of Cyprus in 1974 and the Imia incident in 1996. However, despite their significance and their recurrence—and, indeed, the future expectation of recurrence—, these experiences of military conflict have not proven sufficient to catalyze reforms in the country that would embed jointness in its Armed Forces unlike, say, the military mishaps that brought about Goldwater Nichols in the US.

*Greece has found in France a defense partner with which it can work to address its distinctive territorial defense needs.*

The mutual defense alliance the current Greek government signed with France, which also included a credible mutual assistance clause—more credible, in fact, than NATO's Article 5—in the event of one of the signatory parties being attacked by a third party, did create a Greek commitment to commit troops to French stabilization operations in Africa. However, the deeply embedded aversion to suffering human casualties on another country's behalf, which originated in Greece's break with the US and the West at large engendered by the 1974 invasion of Cyprus, still made itself felt. The Greek PM, who masterminded the deal with France, all but committed in the Greek Parliament, when challenged by the leader of the far-left Syriza party, that the Franco-Greek Treaty would not lead to Greek military casualties. At any rate, at the point of writing, France has exited Mali, so there is no imminent prospect of Greek detachments being exposed to cutting edge France-led joint operations. On the other hand, it seems that the Greek Armed Forces, through the provisions of the Franco-Greek Alliance, can and do train with the French Armed Forces, on scenarios that are suitable to Greece's national defense (i.e. deterring and/or repelling a Turkish attack) and which combine interoperability with jointness. Just as Sweden and Finland, prior to pursuing their NATO membership path, promoted interoperability and jointness between themselves and with NATO structures and member-countries, Greece has found in France a defense partner with which it can work to address its distinctive territorial defense needs. This is in contrast with the protracted tussles within NATO in the South East Mediterranean, with Greece and Turkey seeking to enhance their competitive positions and Greece putting on the backburner the opportunities which NATO membership provides to advance the jointness capabilities of

the Greek Armed Forces through participation in regional commands and exercises.

*...the respective Staff Colleges in both countries have severely underperformed in forging a common conceptual grasp of joint operations among attending officers.*

A culture of secrecy, sustained by the lack of sophisticated defense-related expertise in the Greek polity—its universities, think tanks, quality media, the Greek Parliament—, has meant that neither Cyprus nor Imia generated formal, non-confidential commissions of inquiry.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, as mentioned above, non-official post mortems have not received the attention they deserved and required if they were to act as catalysts of change. The trickle of informed analysis and debate on defense in Greece stands in stark contrast with the flood of parliamentary inquiries, think tank analyses, active officers' published articles and theses that characterizes discourse on defense matters in Western Europe and Australia—and, most prominently of all, in the US, where this public and highly diverse deliberation has proved instrumental in shaping and turning into legislation the reforms now known as the Goldwater-Nichols Act. Indeed, as mentioned above, a similar dynamic seems to be in place in the US today with regard to redefining jointness in the sphere of Sino-American competition.

*...extensive experience in demanding joint operations with other countries would have created a cohort of instructors and students who could have acted as agents of change in the Staff Colleges.*

Returning to our India-Greece comparison, the respective Staff Colleges in both countries have severely underperformed in forging a common conceptual grasp of joint operations among attending officers. It seems probable these two weaknesses—lack of experience participating in operations with allies that have mastered the art of joint operations and the absence of a sophisticated and demanding Staff College education in jointness—are mutually reinforcing. In an alternative scenario, extensive experience in demanding joint operations with other countries would have created a cohort of instructors and students who could have acted as agents of change in the Staff Colleges. In a virtuous circle, an advanced Staff College education in jointness would have added value to the experience of Greek or Indian officers in joint operations with other countries.

The expectation that Turkey's aggression has a ceiling determined by US intervention has also meant that the Greek Ministry of National Defense, unlike its—admittedly fiscally less limited-counterparts in France and the UK has not instigated a partnership with the Greek defense sector aimed at developing solutions suited to conducting joint warfare along its sea and land borders with Turkey. As we noted above, in both France and the UK the challenges of joint warfare have led to considerable investment and innovation in systems and platforms capable of facilitating effective joint operations. It is telling in that regard that, as there are no identifiable command arrangements that would address the challenge that joint warfare represents for Greece's archipelagic defense, the Greek defense sector has not developed technologies and/or weapon systems uniquely suited to such archipelagic defense, either, in partnership with the Ministry of National Defense.

We thus recall that in terms of the production of jointness, a necessary condition for its effective operationalization in our template cases—the US, of course, but also the UK and France—is the strong techno-scientific involvement of civilians in both procurement and strategic planning. A civilianized GDDIA—and here, France's Directorate General for Armaments as well as the European Commission's DG Reform could offer vital technical advice—would make it possible for the civilian leadership of the Ministry of National Defense to set these directions and make the important procurement decisions that would service

<sup>58</sup> More recently, the flooding of the HA's Aviation base, the explosion of munitions at HAF's main F16 base and a loss of life of a military detachment in Libya have not led to the conduct of official, non-classified inquiries submitted to the Greek Parliament, see A. Καμάρας, Πρέπει να μιλήσουμε για το στρατιωτικό απόρρητο, TA NEA, 27.9.2023 [A.Kamaras, We need to talk about military classification, TA NEA, 27.9.2023].

*...in both France and the UK the challenges of joint warfare have led to considerable investment and innovation in systems and platforms capable of facilitating effective joint operations.*

the jointness imperative<sup>59</sup>. In addition, a powerful strategic planning division composed of both expert civilian and military staff would provide the kind of objective advice to the civilian leadership that would enable the Ministry of National Defense to align procurement choices with a rapidly transforming contemporary battlefield.

Last but not least, in our international comparisons with Greece, we return to the United States' ongoing effort to reinvent jointness nearly 40 years after the passing into law of Goldwater-Nichols. This intensively collaborative effort involves reform-minded military and civilian leaders, the research community, and even new entrants to the defense & industrial complex. This US effort is driven first and foremost by China's growing military capacity and political will to become the unchallenged regional hegemon, which is displays most prominently with regard to the status of Taiwan and conflicting sovereign rights in the South China Sea. It is also informed by the recognition that much painful and arduous change needs to take place to render the US Armed Forces capable of responding to this seismic shift in adversary capacity and will. As Greece confronts a historical rival, Turkey, which is undertaking a China-like transformation in political will and military capacity, the one driving the other, its civilian leaders cannot build upon, and be inspired by, a successful track record in compelling jointness reform in the country's Armed Forces, in the same way that those in favor of military reformer in the US can, thanks to the legacy of Goldwater-Nichols. Rather, Greece's civilian leaders are being called upon to do something unprecedented, at least in the country's post WW II history: acquire a firm grasp of the essentials of Armed Forces reform and empower reform-minded officers to co-design and implement these reforms, most prominently in the domain of jointness.

### Much to be achieved: Concluding remarks and recommendations

The Greek Armed Forces are not presently constituted to operate as optimally as they can in a joint fashion, given their resource constraints. Not only is the authority granted to the Chief of the HNDGS insufficient in itself to enable the three different Services to operate in a joint fashion, it is actually counterproductive in the absence of: i) operational experience in joint operations; (ii) a rigorous education in joint operations at Staff Colleges; and (iii) command arrangements which divide the strategic from the operational leadership of the Armed Forces.

Clearly, the creation of a permanent joint operational command or headquarters must be given serious consideration, irrespective of which Service would assume its rotating leadership at any given time, were such command to be instituted. Indeed we would argue that the more the Armed Forces' officer corps is educated, trained, and operates in the field, in a joint manner—and, ideally, with allies in expeditionary operations, too--the less important the Service origin of the rotating leader of such an joint operational command would be.

As jointness is an endeavor without end, incorporating new technologies as well as new domains in an environment of scarce resources requires judicious and informed arbitration

<sup>59</sup> On the challenges of defense procurement for France see, J.P. Devaux and G. Schnitzler, Defense Innovation: new models and procurement implications – The French Case, *Armament Industry European Research Group*, Policy Paper 63, September 2020. On the need to reform Greek defense procurement see, A. Καμάρας, Ελληνική Αμυντική Βιομηχανία: Απαιτείται μια επείγουσα επανάσταση, *Liberal.gr*, 28.11.2023 [A. Kamaras, Greek Defense Industry: an urgent revolution is required, *Liberal.gr*]

between the Services. This means that, ultimately, only the civilian leadership can guarantee that jointness is achieved and that it evolves at a satisfactory pace. Achieving, maintaining and progressing jointness is thus a key component of the job description of the Greek Minister of National Defense. In turn, for the Minister to be able to fulfill this part of his/her job description, he or she will need to inject a high quality civilian cohort into the bureaucracy of the Ministry of National Defense—a cohort knowledgeable about both technological and strategic issues and free of the inevitable priorities and parochial interests of the individual Services.

*Achieving, maintaining and progressing jointness is thus a key component of the job description of the Greek Minister of National Defense.*

The polity at large bears ultimate responsibility for the Ministry of Defense performing his/her duties in ensuring that the Armed Forces operate under command and control arrangements and a force structure that maximize the country's deterrence. Just as highly informed debate is warranted about the structure and funding of the health service, justice system or state education, so it is with regard to national defense. Greek universities and think tanks, its Press and Parliament, should become the main building blocks of a critical scrutiny that remains ever vigilant vis-a-vis this and other critical facets of the Greek Armed Forces.

Considering the above, this policy paper will make the following recommendations:

1. Review international best practice, as the several country cases cited in this paper demonstrate, and consider establishing a Joint Operational Command separate from the HNDGS. This joint operational command could command all the operational units from all three Services. As per the policy discussion on a forward-looking operational concept necessitated by dynamic threats, this Joint Operational Command should be able to input into the deliberations on the force structure of the Armed Forces, their procurement priorities, training and so on. The idea is that this Joint Operational Command would have an informed view of the challenge that it has to meet and the optimal means with which to meet it.
2. Consider transforming, again on the basis of observed best practice, the present HNDGS into a Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), whereby the Chief of such a JCS, together with the three Service Chiefs who would be the other three members of the JCS, would assume and determine the key tasks with regard to the budgeting process, the determination of procurement priorities, the training and education of the officer corps and other ranks, the officer promotion and selection process, and the key goals and destinations of the transformation of the Armed Forces doctrinally, operationally, technologically--and not least through an effective relationship with *inter alia* the Greek Defense industrial Technological Base. In a jointness framework, the Chief of such a JCS, as the *primus inter pares*, would be called upon to deliver with the Service Chiefs: (i) sufficiently joint Armed Forces to the Joint Operational Command, and (ii) advice to the civilian leadership on the type of mission that such a Joint Operational Command could undertake. In terms of the chain of command, we note that diverse practices have been adopted. In the US the Combatant Commanders of the geographical joint commands report directly to the Secretary of the Department of Defense, whereas in other Armed Forces the officer leading the joint operational command reports to the Chief of the JCS.

3. Pursue all available opportunities to participate in allied-led international operations which feature sophisticated jointness and interoperability requirements with detachments that will not operate under the strictest caveats. Such operations include, but are not limited to, the activation of NATO and EU Commands on Greek territory. There is no getting around this: without participating in operations, some of which are bound to result in Greek fatalities and serious injuries, our professional officers, NCOs and contract soldiers will never gain the level of expertise necessary for the principal mission of our Armed Forces, which is to deter--and if necessary defeat--a powerful and increasingly aggressive rival: Turkey.
4. Seek to systematize interoperability and joint operations between the French Armed Forces and the Greek Joint Operational Command, if such a Command is indeed established. Doing so would both render effective the mutual defense clause contained in the Franco-Greek Treaty and serve as a means of transferring know-how from the French to the Greek Armed Forces in the conduct of joint operations in a peer-to-peer conflict scenario.
5. Radically improve the quality of the Staff Colleges by selecting and appointing high-quality defense studies scholars, principally from the Greek diaspora, lengthening the tenure of the Staff Colleges Armed Forces Officers/Directors, and appointing civilian defense studies scholars of indisputable international caliber as Deans of Studies. Ensure that the curriculum of the Staff Colleges follows international best practice, not least by rebalancing both curricula design and the theses subjects chosen by attending officers in favor of core defense studies.
6. Partly civilianize the strategic planning and procurement functions at the Ministry of National Defense by appointing high-quality civilian defense technocrats and scientists—dozens not a handful—to undertake these two functions. This would give the Ministry's civilian leadership access to a wide range of advice in relation to jointness-related decisions, allowing Ministers and Deputy Ministers to counter the inevitable Service preferences and vested interests that stand in the way of a Joint Armed Forces.
7. Bring an end to the abuse of the norm of civilian supremacy which has resulted in unstable and non-meritocratic appointments to the higher ranks of Greece's officer corps. Introduce reforms of the officer promotion system that would guarantee meritocratic selection and reliable career paths for Greece's officer corps. This would allow the officer corps to focus its energies on forging a relationship with their civilian masters that is more conducive to the conception, design and implementation of ceaseless reforms, most prominently in the field of jointness.