

In Defense of «Free Peoples»: The Truman Doctrine and its Impact on Greece During the Civil War Years, 1947 - 1949

Theodosis Karvounarakis*

The purpose of this article is firstly to examine the events and decisions that led to the proclamation of the Truman doctrine in March 1947 and secondly to assess the latter's impact on the Greek state during the Greek civil war. It is not intended as an exhaustive analysis but rather as a comprehensive overview.

Doubts within the Truman administration as to how to interpret and respond to the challenge of post-war Soviet behavior subsided, when in February 1946 George Kennan's Long Telegram reached the State Department. Responding to a request for a comprehensive appraisal of Soviet foreign policy Kennan, deputy Chief of Mission at the Moscow Embassy and an expert on Soviet affairs, pointed out that for the Soviet leaders there could be no permanent modus vivendi with the United States. They were prepared to undermine and weaken the stronger western governments as well as topple all those governments which resisted Soviet demands. But the Soviet Union was «highly sensitive to logic of force. For this reason it can easily withdraw - and usually does - when strong resistance is encountered at any point». The western nations would therefore have to draw together in a more cohesive block led by the United States.¹

Kennan's hugely influential analysis expertly articulated thoughts that were already on the minds of many Washington officials and

provided the intellectual basis for a new policy of firmness that was soon to manifest itself in new areas of crisis. The opportunity arose first in Iran which British and Soviet troops had occupied in 1941 to prevent the conclusion of an Iranian - German Pact. Under the terms of the occupation treaty, foreign troops were to leave Iranian soil by March 2, 1946 at the latest. The Soviets' unwillingness to comply led, with Britain's encouragement, to an Iranian complaint at the opening session of the Security Council in January 1946. In response the Soviets questioned the British presence in countries such as Greece and Indonesia and refused to withdraw. Further American and international pressure, as well as American moral and material support for the Iranian government resulted in the withdrawal of the Soviet troops and the suppression of the Soviet -backed separatist movement in Azerbaidzhan by the end of the year.

Soviet reaction was limited to strongly worded protests - ignored by the Iranians with American encouragement - as Stalin was not willing to jeopardize, for the sake of his Azerbaidzhani comrades, an oil concession agreed upon by the Iranian government, pending ratification by the Iranian parliament.

Once again the Soviets' Iranian policies were frustrated when, in large part because of American influence the Parliament, by a vote of 102 to 2 rejected the agreement in October 1947. A country whose oil fields - together with those of Saudi Arabia and Iraq - were considered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to be «absolutely vital to the security of this

* Theodosis Karvounarakis is Lecturer in Diplomatic History at the University of

(the US) country»,² had been saved from Soviet influence. Getting tough with the Russians, responding aggressively to their every challenge seemed to be working.

Turkey was another testing ground for the new foreign policy approach. In March 1945 Moscow announced its intent not to renew its 1925 Treaty of Friendship with Turkey unless «real» guarantees about joint control of the Straits, Soviet bases on Turkish soil in the event of war and revision of the Turkish - Soviet boundary were agreed upon.³ The US supported a defiant Turkey and promoted international control of the Straits waterway. In early 1946 the Soviet war of nerves turned ominous with troop movements on the Turkish border. The United States ambassador in Turkey Edwin C. Wilson concluded that the Soviets' goal was «in short domination of Turkey».⁴ The United States encouraged Turkey to resist. Diplomatic exchanges, visits by US warships and financial aid were employed. In August 1946 the Russians once again demanded the revision of the Straits status insisting that control over the Dardanelles come under the authority only of Black Sea countries, not of an international agency. Another show of force was staged by the Soviet army and Navy.⁵

The Americans were alarmed. A memorandum drafted by top State, War and Navy Department officials stated that «...the primary objective of the Soviet Union is to obtain control of Turkey». This would «in the natural course of events, result in Greece and the whole Near and Middle East, including the Eastern Mediterranean, falling under

Macedonia.

Soviet control and in those areas being cut off from the Western World».

After the Soviet Union had established itself in the Near and Middle East «it will be in a much stronger position to obtain its objectives in India and China». The only thing that could stop the Russians was «the conviction that the United States is prepared if necessary to meet aggression with force of arms»; and such preparedness should be made known to the USSR, Turkey and all other powers. President Harry Truman approved the recommended policy.⁶

Truman urged the Turks to reject the Soviet demands and informed the Soviets of his opposition to their proposals, noting that Turkey alone should be responsible for the defense of the Dardanelles. Although at the end of the year the issue remained unresolved, there had been no military attack⁷ and the Turks had resisted the Soviet intimidation campaign, which was actually relaxed in October. It was becoming obvious, however, that Turkey's weak economy could not indefinitely bear the large military expenses required for responding to the Soviet threat. According to Ambassador Wilson «more extensive economic aid from the United States might be necessary».⁸

The crises in Iran and Turkey seemed not only to uphold Kennan's analysis but also to legitimize the get tough approach as the only effective way of dealing with a patently aggressive and expansive Soviet Union. In fact, during 1946 the overall attitude of the United States in its relations with the Soviet Union hardened. Secretary of States James Byrnes made sure that conference delegations included vociferous republicans who had no qualms about attacking Soviet behavior in

Eastern Europe and elsewhere. Soviet proposals on peacemaking issues were rejected outright. In the economic and financial realm, the American aim was «to stabilize all economies outside the Soviet sphere of influence, thereby making them less susceptible to communist influence». Conditions attached to the availability of US credits «killed the Soviet passion for American money». In June 1946 negotiations on the subject were called off. Credits earmarked for the Soviet Union were largely directed toward France which was struggling to overcome its economic difficulties. A total of 5,700 million dollars in financial aid was made available to countries outside the Soviet camp in 1946.⁹

During 1946 developments in Eastern Europe and in the Middle East convinced most policy makers within the Truman administration that the Soviet Union was indeed pursuing a policy of global expansion which had to be opposed by the United States.

Characteristic of such views was the Clifford Report of September 1946, a detailed analysis of Soviet - American relations, prepared on Truman's orders by Clark Clifford, his trusted advisor. Based on wide-ranging consultations within the administration, the report revealed a remarkable convergence of views among government officials along the lines of Kennan's «Long Telegram». According to the report the Soviets believed that conflict with the capitalist world was inevitable. Their aim therefore was to prepare for the conflict by increasing their power. This would be attempted by direct and indirect means including subversion of non-communist governments but also «atomic and biological warfare». The United States should be prepared to defend military areas vital to

its security and assist all democratic countries threatened by the Soviet Union. But military assistance would only be «a last resort». Economic support for struggling economies was «a more effective barrier to communism». The report concluded that stern policies would have to be adopted by the United States to counter Soviet activities and called for preparedness to deal with the division of the world in distinct if not rival power blocks which, under the circumstances could not be precluded.¹⁰

Those in the administration still hopeful and in favor of a Soviet - American understanding found themselves hopelessly isolated. Henry Wallace, secretary of Commerce and Vice President under Roosevelt, caused an uproar in the media and in government circles when in a speech in September 1946 he urged for a more open-minded and objective policy toward the Soviets. Truman asked for and received his resignation.¹¹

However, neither the American people nor their representatives in Congress seemed likely, less than two years after a major war, to accept the sacrifices required for the implementation of a new foreign policy, an enlarged army and extensive financial assistance abroad. The Republicans in particular who won majorities in both Houses at the 1946 elections were adopting an ambivalent approach. While criticizing the Government for being soft on communism, they refused to bear the burden that a tough policy would entail. Having won the elections by promising substantial cuts in government expenditure, they intended to cut by one sixth Truman's proposed 1947 budget and reduce the

military allocation by \$2 billion.* Meanwhile in Europe, severe financial and economic problems, harsh weather conditions, poverty and bleak prospects for the future painted a picture fraught with danger. If conditions did not improve, embattled governments and a demoralized public would sooner than later succumb to a communist onslaught.

Only the specter of imminent communist expansion could convince the Republicans in Congress to relax their tight fists and support the President's expensive foreign policy initiatives. This was certainly the case with Congressional approval of a \$3.75 billion loan to Britain in mid 1946 which was secured only after the loan was linked to the strengthening of Britain's resolve to resist communist influence.¹²

The opportunity for employing a similar strategy albeit with much more far-reaching results presented itself again on February 21st 1947 when British Embassy officials notified the State Department that, due to economic difficulties British assistance to Greece and Turkey would cease as of March 31, 1947. The hope was expressed that the United States would step in to fill the gap.

Since the end of WWII the United States was avoiding direct involvement in Greece which it considered a British responsibility. There was concern, however, over the deteriorating political and economic situation, bad to begin with after four years of German occupation and the violent confrontation in 1944-45 between the communist-dominated Left and the traditional political forces of the Center and the Right. British military intervention had prevented the triumph of a left-

* Out of a total federal budget of only \$41 billion.

wing coalition under the wartime resistance movement, the National Liberation Front (EAM) and had helped reestablish in power the pre-war, western-oriented political elite. But economic chaos, government incompetence, communist agitation and the rightist excess against the Left had created an atmosphere of crisis and uncertainty which American as well as British officials feared would lead to collapse and a communist takeover. By December 1945 the US ambassador in Athens, Lincoln MacVeagh was warning his government that Greece could become a «Soviet Puppet». ¹³

During 1946 there were obvious signs of increased US interest in the fate of Greece. In January 1946 a \$25 million loan was agreed (upon) with the Greek government. Units of the US Mediterranean fleet visited the port of Piraeus. Americans participated in the Allied mission that observed the first postwar elections in Greece in March 1946. More financial as well as material aid was extended. In the summer it was agreed with Britain that the United States would provide Greece with economic aid, while Britain will continue offering military assistance.¹⁴ The Greek government was criticized for its anti-Communist excesses and handling of the country's economy, but conscious efforts were also made not to alienate it. When at the Paris Peace Conference in August 1946 Greece was attacked for its territorial claims against neighboring states, Byrnes reminded the conference of Greece's wartime heroism and pointed out that «our debt to the people of Greece» should not be forgotten.¹⁵

Meanwhile the situation in Greece was getting worse. In March, on the eve of election day, a gendarmerie post near mount Olympus was attacked by communist guerrillas, signaling the beginning of a communist uprising that quickly spread with village raids and sabotage in most parts of the country. According to reports reaching American and British officials, the guerrillas were assisted with training and equipment by Greece's communist neighbors, Bulgaria, Albania and Yugoslavia . On October 15 Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson informed MacVeagh that US policy toward Greece would henceforth be one of positive support on all fronts «on the grounds that the United States could no longer risk the downfall of the government while it was under attack by Communist forces supported from Yugoslavia and Albania».¹⁶

In the same month, a memorandum prepared by the State Department's Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs pointed out that «the USSR is aggressively attempting to bring under its control an ever-increasing number of nations.... Greece and Turkey form the sole obstacle to Soviet domination of the Eastern Mediterranean which is an economic and strategic area of vital importance. If the Greek mainland and the Greek islands were allowed to come under Soviet influence, the Soviet Union would be in a position to exert irresistible pressure upon Turkey.... There can be no question - the memo, which was approved by the Secretary of State, further asserted - that the USSR is providing military assistance to elements seeking to cause the fall of the Greek government. An important part of this assistance is the maintenance of

large armed forces by the Soviet Union and her satellites in countries contiguous to Greece. Many armed bands operating in Greek territory are based in Yugoslavia and Albania and supplied from sources within these two countries. Such military threat against stability in Greece makes it urgent that the United States increase and intensify its political and economic assistance promptly, lest it come too late».¹⁷

In the minds of US officials there seemed to be little doubt that the communist uprising in Greece was Moscow-inspired. Stalin's aggressive foreign policy, Greece's strategic importance and his unquestionable influence over the Albanian, Yugoslav and Bulgarian regimes led almost naturally to such a conclusion. In addition, Greece and its government was the subject of constant attacks by Soviet propaganda, whereas the Soviets' interest in acquiring a naval base on the Dodecanese could not but reinforce suspicions about their intentions.¹⁸ In fact, however, the situation was not that simple. In May 1947 Andrei Zhdanov, Stalin's close associate and likely successor, turned down a request by the Greek communist leader Nikos Zachariades for Soviet financial and military assistance. Zachariades then decided to make a direct appeal to Stalin, which actually secured some material support for the Greek guerrillas in the form of military equipment, while Soviet propaganda continued to degrade the Greek «monarcho-fascist» government and its foreign backers.

But Stalin believed that the war in Greece could not be won. At a Moscow meeting in February 1948 with two prominent Yugoslav communists, while American assistance and American advisors had

started to arrive in Greece as a result of the Truman doctrine, he argued that it was «nonsense» to think «that Great Britain and the United States will permit you to break their line of communication in the Mediterranean sea!.... The uprising in Greece must be stopped and as quickly as possible». ¹⁹ Since his «percentage» agreement with Churchill in October 1944, Stalin had conceded Greece to the West and had remained faithful to that decision. He now feared that the continuation of the Greek uprising would deepen American involvement in the region, endangering in this way «already won positions». Of course Stalin would have liked to benefit from a communist victory in Greece. The costs, however, of active involvement seemed to outweigh the benefits. Perhaps he was reluctant to encourage the creation of another communist regime in the Balkans «in circumstances when not even the others were reliable and subservient». ²⁰

Finally his positive response to Zachariades's request for military assistance was probably a reaction to Tito's strong backing of the Greek insurgents. Stalin did not want to appear less revolutionary than his challenging Yugoslav comrade thus losing face within the communist movement. ²¹

On December 11, 1946 Acheson announced that in response to a request by the Greek government, an American economic mission under Paul A. Porter, a «New Dealer» with substantial experience in administrative and financial matters, would go to Greece to assess the country's reconstruction and development needs, including «the extent to which Greece will require assistance from foreign and international

sources».²² On December 28, Acheson notified MacVeagh «that a relief program was being prepared for Greece's critical economic situation, although Congressional consideration and the necessary appropriations would take at least two or three months».²³ On January 18, 1947 the Porter mission arrived in Greece, to the satisfaction not only of the country's right-wing government but also of its liberal press.²⁴ Porter found the situation worse than anyone in Washington had imagined. The economy was on the verge of collapse, with rampant inflation and widespread black marketing and profiteering. The civil service was «a depressing force». His view of the government, by now reconstructed to include members of the liberal opposition, was that of a «loose hierarchy of individualistic politicians, some worse than others, who are so preoccupied with their own struggle for power that they have no time, even assuming capacity to develop economic policy».²⁵

Porter's assessment of a nation in deep crisis was shared by MacVeagh and Mark Ethridge, the American member of the United Nations commission set up to investigate allegations by the Greek government that Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Albania were assisting the communist guerrillas (see n.17). Judging by local conditions and the behavior of commissioners representing communist states, Ethridge was convinced «that Soviets feel that Greece is ripe plum ready to fall into their hands in a few weeks». The impact of such a turn of events would not be confined to the Near East. European countries such as France and Italy could be next.²⁶ The French commissioner had told Ethridge that «France could not withstand pressure if Greece through inadequate

support by Britain and America fell into Soviet orbit».²⁷ On February 20 Porter, Ethridge and MacVeagh cabled General George Marshall who, since January 21 had replaced Byrnes at the State Department that to regard Greece's collapse «as anything but imminent would be highly unsafe».²⁸

The alarming situation in Greece, vividly depicted in a series of telegrams from the three officials in Athens, prompted Acheson to prepare a memo for the new Secretary of State. In this document dated February 21, after pointing out that «areas under the control of guerrilla bands... are increasing», Acheson warned that «unless urgent immediate support is given to Greece, it seems probable that the Greek government will be overthrown and a totalitarian regime of the extreme left will come to power». The domination of the country by the Soviets through victory by their Greek proxies «might eventually result in the loss of the whole Near and Middle East and Northern Africa». Acheson recommended that a special bill «on an urgent basis for a direct loan to Greece» be presented to the Congress, that US aid policy to Greece be reconsidered and that a decision be made «to assist Greece with military equipment».²⁹ On the same day, before the arrival of the British notes, Marshall instructed Acheson to take action required for the implementation of his recommendations.³⁰

By February 21, therefore, the decision to assist Greece in a substantial manner had matured in the minds of American officials. What the impending termination of British support did was to intensify a sense of immetrygency that seems to have been developing in the State

Department. In the words of Joseph Jones, an official with substantial involvement in the handling of the crisis, «the probability of Greece's early fall was now transformed into a certainty unless the United States should act to prevent it».³¹ Acheson instructed the staff at the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (NEA) to prepare over the weekend an aid program that could be submitted to Secretary Marshall on Monday morning. Turkey as well as Greece was to be included, an unsurprising decision considering US perceptions of Turkish - Soviet relations. In a memo expressing the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Army Chief of Staff Dwight Eisenhower warned that «the danger remains that Turkey, unless given positive assurances including concrete assistance, might so interpret the possibilities of the future as to yield to Soviet pressure short of direct military measures». If Turkey succumbed it would be «highly probable that all the Middle Eastern countries would then come rapidly under similar Soviet domination».³²

The chances of an aid program for Turkey being approved by the Congress and the American public were considerably enhanced by making it part of an aid package that included Greece. Turkey lacked popular appeal and in the minds of many people it was associated with enmity to Christianity and the persecution of minorities. Greece, on the other hand, because of its ancient past, successful war of independence in the 1820s and heroic stance and suffering during WWII evoked feelings of sympathy and a sense of moral obligation to assist it. Furthermore the symbolism of Greece, the birthplace of democracy, in

danger of succumbing to the forces of totalitarianism could not be lost to the American people.*

Between February 24 and 26 the general program of assistance that was eventually put together by Loy Henderson the head of NEA and Acheson won the approval of Marshall, the military and President Truman.³³ The objectives of US policy in Greece were also discussed and clarified. They were to:

- 1) Equip the Greek army so that it can restore order
- 2) Reduce army after order has been restored
- 3) Bring about reconstruction of Greek economy and administration so that country can be self-supporting.³⁴

But for the government to proceed with its plans, legislation would have to be enacted, including the appropriation of the necessary funds. This was easier said than done. The Republican dominated, largely isolationist Congress had come to power in November 1946 by promising to drastically reduce public expenditure. The difficulties of obtaining Congressional approval were obvious to Secretary Byrnes when, in January 1947 he told Greek Prime Minister Constantine Tsaldaris to disregard information that a Greek loan would be approved by Congress. Even a Congressman or Senator who felt kindly toward

* The urgency and seriousness with which the Greek situation was viewed seems to have also played a crucial role. According to George S. Harris «...congressional approval of aid to Turkey was assured primarily because of association with concern over Greece». George S. Harris «Troubled Alliance» American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, Washington D.C. 1972 p.26

Greece «would have to stand with the majority of his party when the issue came to a vote».³⁵ To «sound out» the Legislature's intentions, Truman invited Congressional leaders to a meeting at the White House on February 27. Secretary Marshall presented the problem to them and the Executive's recommendations on how it should be tackled. But Marshall's «summary and cryptic presentation» confused rather than convinced his listeners. Questions such as «Isn't this pulling British chestnuts out of the fire?» or «What are we getting ourselves in for?» were certainly pointing to that effect.

At that point Acheson decided to intervene and requested permission to speak. Having witnessed the success of the «red scare» strategy during congressional debates on the English loan, Acheson now decided to employ similar tactics. The Soviet Union has gone on the offensive, he argued. «It was clear they were making the most persistent and ambitious efforts to encircle Turkey and Germany and thus lay three continents open to Soviet domination». Turkey had held them off «and the move against Iran had for the time being failed... Now communist pressure was concentrated on Greece» where, reports indicated «that complete collapse might occur within a matter of weeks».³⁶ Acheson's argument climaxed in an early, rather folksy rendition of the Domino Theory: «Like apples in a barrel infected by one rotten one, the corruption of Greece would infect Iran and all to the East. It would also carry infection to Africa through Asia Minor and Egypt and to Europe through Italy and France, already threatened by the strongest domestic Communist parties in Western Europe».³⁷ The action

proposed «was not to pull British chestnuts out of the fire; it was to protect the security of the United States ... For if the Soviet Union succeeded in extending its control over two-thirds of the world's surface and three-fourths of its population, there could be no security for the United States».³⁸

According to Jones's detailed and apparently reliable account of the meeting, no one present «registered opposition.... All had apparently been deeply impressed». No commitments were made at this meeting but «the very definite impression was gained that the Congressional leaders would support whatever measures were necessary to save Greece and Turkey». Acheson's stratagem seems to have been the right approach. On leaving the meeting, senator Arthur Vandenberg, chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee told Truman: «Mr President, if that's what you want, there's only one way to get it. That is to make a personal appeal before Congress and scare hell out of the country».³⁹ Truman promised to follow Vandenberg's suggestion to present to the Congress and the American people «in the same frank terms» the issue of aid to Turkey and Greece as well as the larger situation of which events in the two countries were a part. There seemed to be no doubt in the minds of the President's advisors that the only way to win the public's support for what amounted to a policy of far-reaching overseas involvement was to emphasize ideology. «Communism vs democracy should be the major theme».⁴⁰ Henderson argued that unless it was made plain to the American people that a world-wide communist conspiracy was under way, «Congress would not

have the support necessary for the passage of the required legislation».⁴¹

Meanwhile, a note describing the form of assistance that Greece required was drafted by the State Department and sent to the Greek government. The Greeks were to submit it, as their request for assistance, to the US government. Among other things Greece was supposed to request «the aid of experienced American administrative, economic and technical personnel, not only to assure the effective utilization of the financial and other assistance given to Greece, but to help to restore a healthy condition in the domestic economy and public administration».⁴² The presence of American experts who were to assume a commanding position in the running of the Greek state, was deemed necessary not only due to the real need for guidance during Greece's reconstruction but also because of the Americans' complete distrust of the Greek administrative apparatus. Furthermore, Congress would have to be satisfied that funds made available would be spent as intended, in conditions of complete accountability.

The Greek government dutifully complied and submitted the note without changes, as instructed.⁴³

On March 12, after ten days of meticulous drafting and redrafting by State Department officials and White House staff, President Truman delivered his message to a joint session of the Congress on foreign policy and the situation in Greece and Turkey. He described the grim economic situation and living conditions prevalent in Greece and pointed out that «the very existence of the Greek state is today threatened by

the terrorist activities of several thousand armed men, led by Communists». Greece, whose government had made a formal request for assistance from the US must have such assistance «if it is to become a self-supporting and self-respecting democracy». And with Britain announcing its withdrawal from Greece by March 31, the United States was the only country that could provide it.

To forestall public criticism of support for a corrupt, reactionary regime, which was how informed Americans, including government officials viewed the Greek government, he emphasized his administration's disagreement with excesses and mistakes committed by the Greeks.⁴⁴ But he also pointed out that through fair elections and a broadly based government, democracy was alive in Greece and that «under democratic processes (defects) can be pointed out and corrected». There was no mentioning of democracy in the case of Turkey. Turkey also needed financial assistance - that Britain could no longer provide - «for the purpose of effecting that modernization necessary for the maintenance of its national integrity. That integrity is essential to the preservation of order in the Middle East».

Truman then proceeded to demonstrate why events in far-away places such as Greece and Turkey should matter to the average American. Freedom from coercion for the nations of the world was vital for international peace and therefore the security of the United States. That was the reason for America's involvement in the war with Germany and Japan. Another similar emergency had now arisen. Countries such as Poland, Rumania and Bulgaria «have recently had totalitarian regimes

forced upon them against their will». The peoples of the world were now called upon to choose between alternative ways of life. «One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.

The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections and the suppression of personal freedoms».

Truman then explained what his country's response to the new challenge should be: «I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures». This, Truman hastened to add, should be done primarily through economic and financial aid.⁴⁵ Greece, under attack by a foreign-supported armed minority was certainly a case in point. And if Greece collapsed, the President continued, Turkey, also under pressure, would follow. The effect to the East, where «confusion and disorder» could spread throughout the entire Middle East, or to the West where struggling European countries might lose their will «to maintain their freedoms and their independence» would be «far-reaching». Urging «immediate and resolute action», the President requested congressional approval for aid to Greece and Turkey consisting of \$400 million,* as well as the

* of which Greece would receive \$300 million and Turkey \$100 million.

dispatch to the two countries of personnel that would assist in reconstruction, supervise the use of the available funds and train their local counterparts. Anticipating resistance to the United States' first peace-time involvement in the affairs of a foreign country outside the western hemisphere, Truman admitted that «this is a serious course upon which we embark. I would not recommend it except that the alternative is much more serious... The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms». He concluded: «If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own Nation».⁴⁶

Truman's speech was an appeal to the Americans' quintessential belief in freedom and their treasured assumption that their country's foreign policy ought to and actually did have the defense of that ideal at its core. Ideology was at the center of its argument. If we don't act promptly, Truman declared, Communism would triumph over Democracy, enslaving a great number of hopeless people. There was also an implicit warning: if liberal democracy loses ground around the world, then our own way of living will be imperiled.

To avoid controversy and confusion among the public, more involving reasons for the new foreign policy course were not mentioned. There was a hint of geopolitics but no reference to the balance of power rationale that was also at the core of America's participation in WWII: The possibility of a single major power controlling an inordinate share of the world's landmass and its natural resources. Indeed an addition made to the draft of the speech by White

House staff, referring «to the great natural resources of the Middle East which should not be under the exclusive control of any single nation» was deleted.⁴⁷ For mainly strategic but also business reasons the United States had developed a keen interest in the oil reserves of the Middle East. Greece and Turkey held the key to controlling them. «These raw materials have to come over the sea» secretary of the Navy James Forrestal explained privately, and «that is one reason why the Mediterranean must remain a free highway».⁴⁸

There was also concern about the effect of communist expansion on the US economic system. Another addition, also deleted, read: «If by default we permit free enterprise to disappear in the other nations of the world, the very existence of our own economy and our own democracy will be gravely threatened».⁴⁹ There was nothing suspect in this approach. Economic interests are inextricably entwined with security considerations and as such they have to be taken into account by policy makers. Political expediency simply kept them out of the President's speech.

Helped by rising anti-communism,⁵⁰ Truman's thinly veiled call for a determined anti-communist posture won general public approval.⁵¹ Congress isolationists and «penny pinchers» were «mouse-trapped» into supporting Truman's aid program. Doing otherwise would have put in doubt their anti-communist credentials and jeopardized their career. The tone of Truman's message «almost like a Presidential request for a declaration of war» also left them little choice but to rally behind the country's Chief Executive.⁵²

There was criticism too, a great part of it concentrating on the exclusion from the aid-providing process of the United Nations which Americans had been led by President Roosevelt to consider as the prime guarantor of international peace and security. Of course the UN did not have the authority or the resources to accomplish the complex political,, military and economic task envisaged and its involvement could be easily thwarted by the Soviet veto. But a concession was made in the form of an amendment to the legislative act providing assistance to Greece and Turkey, which would be terminated if the Security Council or the General Assembly so requested.⁵³

There were questions inside and outside Congress regarding the extend of Truman's anti-communist commitment. The New York Times argued that the new policy «if Congress does not write in definite reservations, commits the United States to unlimited expenditure for an unlimited future and to whatever economic and military consequences may accrue».⁵⁴ During Congressional hearings begun on March 24, Senator Vandenberg remarked that passages in Truman's speech «seem to suggest...that we find it necessary to defend the United States against what might be called the chain reaction of aggression wherever it occurs in the world». In his reply, Acheson, while not denying the global scope of Truman's pronouncements, pointed out that US reaction did not have to be the same in all cases. «What you could do in one case you cannot do in another case». He used as an example the situation in Hungary about which the United States was protesting, implying that there was nothing more that could be done. The United States was concerned

about communist coercion whatever it occurred but that did not necessarily mean direct US intervention, especially on a scale such as in Turkey and Greece.⁵⁵

Finally, it was unclear exactly who the «free peoples» deserving assistance «to maintain their free institutions» were. The choice of Greece and Turkey as primary examples was not an auspicious one. There was considerable opposition to assisting Greece's reactionary, oppressive government while even Truman in his speech had avoided defining Turkey as democratic. Truman would confront his critics by asking what was preferable: «totalitarianism» or «imperfect democracies»? Although not unreasonable under the exigencies of the early Cold War years, the United States' limited concern for the politics and practices of its proteges would prove to be the most enduring weakness of the new foreign policy. In the words of Stephen Ambrose, for the next generation and beyond, Truman's anti-communist call to arms «came close to shutting the door against any revolution, since the terms 'free peoples' and 'anti-communist' were thought to be synonymous. All the Greek government, or any dictatorship, had to do to get American aid was to claim that its opponents were Communist».⁵⁶ The aid to Greece and Turkey bill was approved by the Senate and the House with substantial majorities. Truman signed it into law on March 22.

From the beginning attention was focused on the global implications of the President's message. The United States was not merely going to send aid to Greece and Turkey but «to support free

peoples» around the world who were «resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures». That was taken to be the essence of Truman's speech, the «Truman Doctrine» as it soon came to be known. There is however some doubt regarding the significance of the President's message as well as its true meaning. According to the New York Times, the Truman Doctrine was the long-contemplated «global anti - communist policy which the President asked Congress to inaugurate with loans and grants to Greece and Turkey».⁵⁷ State Department officials working on the different aspects of the aid program felt that «a new chapter in world history had opened». In their assigned tasks «they found release from professional frustrations of years».⁵⁸ On march 11 Acheson informed MacVeagh of the administration's intention to intervene on a large scale in the Greek crisis. «This of course represents major decision in US policy», he added.⁵⁹

One also gets the impression by studying the text of the President's speech that a foreign policy statement of broad application was on the minds of those who drafted it. For Robert Frazier «the Truman Doctrine marked the actual beginning of the Cold War», in part because «it was the first time the divergences between East and West were tied firmly to ideology», which was the defining characteristic of that conflict.⁶⁰

But C.J. Bartlett points out that «in practical terms the Truman Doctrine led only to American aid to Greece and Turkey, countries which the Russians were already largely disposed to accept as lying within the

western world.... In the longer term the Truman Doctrine was only one among many factors shaping the Cold War». ⁶¹ A more restrictive interpretation of the Truman Doctrine is also put forward in the contemporary comment of the London Times: «Mr Truman's speech does no more than extend the prospect of American support to a new area, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East». ⁶² John Lewis Gaddis argues that the Truman Doctrine was no real turning point in the foreign policy of the United States. The decision to resist Soviet expansion had already been made in early 1946; and it was only the Korean War in 1950 which led to a real and irreversible commitment to the containment of communism on a global scale. Participants in the decision - making process such as Acheson and Jones believed that a major change was taking place because of the way in which decisions were being made «quickly, efficiently and decisively» and because of their actual importance. ⁶³

Louis Halle suggests that pure chance might have played a part in the eventual significance of the Truman Doctrine. He maintains that the main concern of the Truman administration «was to obtain congressional authorization and appropriations for aid to Greece and Turkey... Later those who had been responsible would be surprised and delighted to find out how they had made history». The actual phrase that was considered to signal a new foreign policy course was taken from a Subcommittee on Foreign Policy Information report on Basic United States Policy. It did not stand out in any way.* And was «so

* It also made clear that what it described was not a new policy.

negligently placed in the text and so negligently composed that it could go quite unnoticed». ⁶⁴

Frazier shares similar views: «At the end of 1946, there was a definitive desire in administration circles to take a stronger attitude towards the Soviet Union». But «there is no firm evidence that the crusading language of the Truman Doctrine speech was intended to do more than convince a reluctant Congress to provide money for Greece and Turkey. Perhaps only when he read the reports of his speech in influential newspapers did Truman realize that he had set America on a new course in international relations». ⁶⁵

Despite such variety of views, however, there can be little doubt of the Truman Doctrine's major role in the evolution of American foreign policy. In the eyes of the world and the American people, the United States had pledged openly and solemnly to oppose communist expansion on a global scale and had demonstrated its will to do so with a groundbreaking gesture: «For the first time in its history, the United States had chosen to intervene during a period of general peace in the affairs of peoples outside North and South America». ⁶⁶

With the Truman Doctrine, the notion of an adversarial relationship with the Soviet Union became part of the American conscience and shaped the attitudes of politicians and policy - makers. Action taken in Greece and Turkey would serve as model for future landmark engagements such as in Korea and Vietnam. ⁶⁷

The specific goal of the Truman administration's intervention in Greece was the «defeat of Soviet efforts to destroy the political

independence and territorial integrity of Greece». ⁶⁸ This required a two-pronged strategy: a) Enabling the Greek armed forces through material assistance and technical advice to defeat the insurgents b) Promoting reconstruction of the Greek economy and administrative apparatus which, through the ensuing prosperity and good government would eliminate the causes of support for the communist movement as well as make the country self-sufficient. With little or no faith in the Greek government and civil service, the Americans concluded that to succeed in their endeavor and make sure that their substantial investment was not squandered by unscrupulous politicians and administrators, they would have to be involved not only in decision-making of the highest government levels, but also in the day to day running of the state affairs.

Thus, members of the American Mission for Aid to Greece (AMAG) which initially, in July 1947, consisted of about forty people and by mid-1948 had risen to over one thousand, were given «free access... for the purpose of observing whether such assistance is utilized effectively and in accordance with the undertaking of the recipient government».⁶⁹ In practice this meant that American officials in Athens and Washington would acquire a controlling influence over most aspects of Greece's public affairs. A good measure of the American involvement is provided by a State Department directive which attempts to define the jurisdiction of the American ambassador Lincoln MacVeagh as opposed to that of the head of AMAG, Dwight Griswold. MacVeagh was supposed to be primarily responsible for areas such as «changes in the Greek Cabinet,

the holding of national elections, changes in the supreme command or in the size of the Greek armed forces, major questions involving Greek foreign relations, relations with the British and United Nations affairs, major questions involving the Greek government's policies toward political parties, trade unions, subversive elements, rebel troops, their punishment, amnesties and related matters».⁷⁰ Griswold, however, refused to limit himself to economic and administrative matters⁷¹ and continued to interfere in most of the above areas, trying to influence the Greek government in ways that brought disagreement with the more tactful MacVeagh. In the end, domestic United States politics dictated MacVeagh's sacrifice. He was «quietly removed» from his post in Greece and reassigned as ambassador to Portugal.⁷²

A basic precondition, however, for the success of the American aid program was the establishment in Greece of a credible government. Americans were far from happy with the politicians in whose hands Greece's fortunes rested. «Small men, old men and men entirely lacking in the sense of realism which the situation requires» is how the Embassy in Athens had described them in October 1946.⁷³ But within such confines there was room for improvement. In particular the vindictive, divisive policies of the ruling rightist coalition were unacceptable. A more moderate government including the liberals but excluding right-wing extremists had therefore been promoted. In January 1947 MacVeagh's influence had resulted in the replacement of the Populist leader Constantine Tsaldaris as prime Minister by the more moderate Dimitrios Maximos, supported by a broader coalition of political forces.

Although more palatable than its predecessor, the new administration fell short of American expectations. In July 1947 Secretary of State Marshall told Griswold and MacVeagh to work toward the establishment of a more centrist government whose members «should be drawn from the political parties of the left, the center and the right, but not so far to the left that they are disposed to make concessions to, or deals with, the Communists, or so far to the right that they would refuse to cooperate with non-Communists for the good of Greece».⁷⁴ Such government could command wide support among non-communist Greeks, revitalize the war effort, be more amenable to American reform efforts and silence critics in the United States and abroad who attacked the Truman administration for assisting a reactionary regime. Under direct American pressure in the form of a visit to Athens by a high-ranking State Department official and following the collapse of the Maximos regime, a Populist-Liberal coalition government headed by the Liberal leader Themistocles Sophoulis was finally formed in September 1947, «the first in the postwar period to enjoy a significant measure of popular support».⁷⁵ Although revised and reconstituted several times the Liberal-Populist power-sharing was maintained for more than two years and brought the war to a successful conclusion.

From the beginning the Americans' work in Greece run into serious difficulties. Powerful economic interests and the inadequacy of the Greek bureaucracy worked against the introduction of a more equitable taxation system. Streamlining and improving the efficiency of

the civil service run against the age-old tradition of political patronage and the fact that since the German occupation, extreme economic hardship had turned employment by the state into a kind of relief measure. Government members were reluctant to take decisive action for fear of jeopardizing their appeal to their political clientele. Moreover, some of the methods employed by Americans were inappropriate for local conditions. Eventually officials like William Colman, an executive member of AMAG, came to adopt a more pragmatic approach. Writing in April 1949 «his central point was... that the United States must be more realistic in implementing an aid program. It was unreasonable to expect other governments to completely acquiesce in the demands of the United States. The objectives should be set 'at a very conservative level». ⁷⁶

Reconstruction was further impaired by the exigencies of the war. By the end of 1947 \$23 million of the original \$300.000.000 of American aid to Greece had been shifted from the economic to the military component of the program. ⁷⁷ «Staggering» amounts of money were spent on relief for war refugees who, by 1949 had reached 700.000, approximately one tenth of the country's population. According to a report submitted to Congress, «funds intended to stabilize the economy were being 'milked' for this purpose and in the circumstances reconstruction was impossible». ⁷⁸ Furthermore, the need to repair extensive damage inflicted by the insurgents on private and public property, put an additional strain on the available funds.⁷⁹ Problems were compounded by the low morale of the Greek people.

Years of conflict and deprivation seemed to have robbed them of their ability to look forward to and work toward a better future. In the words of one American official: Greece was «punch drunk, demoralized, hungry and mentally almost a case for a psychiatrist. War, Occupation, Rebellion and Inflation are the particular Four Horsemen that have wrecked and demoralized the country». ⁸⁰

In mid 1947, a small American military mission, the United States Army Group in Greece (USAGG), arrived in Greece «to act in a strictly advisory and training capacity». A British military mission and a token British force of a few thousand troops^{*1} remained in Greece. In addition, the British continued to provide most of the military equipment, now in substantially increased amounts paid for by the Americans, and most of the training.

Following the poor performance of the Greek National Army (GNA) and the formation by the insurgents of a «free Greece» government in late December 1947 which might (could possibly help them) have helped them secure overt international support, the American government adopted recommendations that «there be established in Greek National Army units a group of United States Army Observers with the duties of energizing operational action, restoring the offensive spirit and advising on planning and operations». ⁸¹ As a consequence, the Mission's personnel was substantially increased, a new agency, JUSMAPG,^{*2} directly responsible to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was

^{*1} A symbol of the West's commitment rather than a significant military factor.

^{*2} Joint United States Military Advisory and Planning Group.

created and a new Mission chief, General James Van Fleet, better qualified to steer the Greek army toward victory, arrived in Athens in February 1948.⁸²

The degree of American interference in Greek military affairs was astonishing. According to John Iatrides, it became the responsibility of the JUSMA(P)G, in close consultation with higher military authority in the United States, to determine the desired size and proper equipment of the Greek army, its proper organization and structure, its key commanders, and its large-scale operation plans».⁸³

The enormous amount of military equipment provided by the Americans, their operational advise, psychological boost, championing of able commanders as opposed to incompetent political appointees and limiting of political interference, had a decisive impact on the fighting ability of the Greek National Army and ultimately enabled it to defeat the communist forces, the «Democratic Army». Victory, however, proved elusive for the first two years of American involvement, despite the overwhelming superiority of the government forces in materiel and manpower-approximately ten to one. This was due to the peculiar circumstances of the conflict. The insurgents had all the advantages of a guerrilla force that could strike at will and then melt away in the mountainous terrain that greatly impeded the deployment of regular forces. Furthermore, they could count on the logistical support of neighboring communist countries, especially Yugoslavia, where they could also withdraw when in danger of encirclement by the enemy. The GNA, on the other hand, was held down by extensive guard duties such

as the defense of a nearly four hundred and fifty mile frontier and the protection of public services and urban centers which limited its mobility and numbers available for campaigning. In addition low morale, problems of organization and equipment⁸⁴ and undue political interference in the making and execution of military decisions, prevented the government forces from realizing their full potential.

Sparked by the announcement in mid 1947 of plans to withdraw the remaining British forces from Greece (which were not followed through) and sustained by the poor performance of the government forces as well as the perceived risk of a major foreign effort to assist the insurgents, there began a debate (a debate began) among American officials on the merits of dispatching to Greece US combat troops. Opinions were divided within the State Department, with Henderson supporting such action for its wider implications, as a means of demonstrating to the world at large the American commitment to the anti-communist struggle. Kennan opposed it fearful of complications regarding the troops' actual role and ability to withdraw once they were sent in and because it was a decision that depended on a broader assessment of US security concerns in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were also against it, essentially objecting to the commitment in Greece of scarce military resources that could be needed in other parts of the world, more important in the East-West conflict. Although considered on several occasions, the deployment of combat troops in Greece was never authorized.⁸⁵

By the end of 1948, political instability and lack of sufficient progress on the military and economic fronts, led some Americans to support drastic political solutions that would have made a mockery out of the Truman Doctrine's high-minded pledge to defend freedom against arbitrary regimes. Two high-ranking officials from the Economic Cooperation Administration, which was in charge of implementing the Marshall Plan in Greece and in the rest of Europe, approached the favorably predisposed king Paul, to discuss the issue of a strong extra-parliamentary government under General Alexandros Papagos. They privately approved the king's plans which involved, if necessary, the dissolution of the parliament and the establishment, in essence, of a Papagos dictatorship. Such views, however, did not represent official US policy. With assistance from his British counterpart, ambassador Henry Grady who had succeeded MacVeagh the previous July managed to dissuade the king from persisting with his plan which «might ultimately result in the king's joining other ex-sovereigns on the Riviera». Papagos remained unenthusiastic about the proposal.⁸⁶

Gradually the GNA overcame its problems and developed the appropriate tactics to defeat a guerrilla force. Although already a «reasonably reliable force» by the fall of 1947, the army's efficiency was markedly improved after January 1949 when, with American encouragement, the government appointed Papagos as Commander-in Chief. Papagos, the architect of the victorious Albanian campaign against the Italians in 1940-1941 was given virtually dictatorial powers in the running of the armed forces including freedom from political

interference in strictly military matters such as military operations, appointments and promotions. By the end of August 1949 the main body of the Democratic Army was cornered and destroyed in the remote Grammos - Vitsi region, next to the Albanian border. The communist insurgency was over.

A number of reasons account for this result: Solid popular support for the anti-communist cause, more effective government after September 1947, improved morale and a better-trained, better-led, battle-worthy army were of particular significance. But it was massive American aid and American political influence that eventually enabled non-communist Greeks to make the most of their national resources and achieve the final victory.⁸⁷ At the same time, though very effective as a guerrilla force, the «Democratic Army», with its light weaponry, limited manpower and tremendous logistical problems, was never a serious challenge for the regular formations of the Greek National Army. Finally, internal divisions, wrong tactics and, most important, the closure of the Yugoslav border in the summer of 1949 due to the Greek communists' support for Stalin in the Stalin - Tito split, sealed the fate of the insurrection.⁸⁸

Although militarily America's Greek venture had been an undeniable success, administrative and economic reform was officially admitted to be only «moderately successful» and according to a knowledgeable observer «proved beyond American capacities».⁸⁹ However, with American aid and guidance a great deal was achieved in Greece that set the country on a course to economic prosperity and

political stability: Massive road construction and expansion of the electrical grid, significant progress in agricultural production, relatively improved finances and a somewhat better civil service.* Moreover, «a large segment of the population felt much more secure and confident of the future now that Greece had found such a powerful benefactor».⁹⁰

American policies were not free from negative effects. Eager not to jeopardize the Greek government's war effort which necessitated the tightening of internal security, the Americans tolerated harsh anti-communist measures that often hurt innocent people.⁹¹ American emphasis on security rather than democratic government enabled many ultra-conservative elements to remain influential in public affairs and led to the stifling of progressive voices that could have helped create a more liberal and fair post-war society. Emboldened by victory, freedom from political control, and the special attention that the military was receiving from the Americans, reactionaries whose fanatical anti-communism had secured their place within the officers' corps came to believe that more than anyone else they could determine what was in their country's best interests. In April 1967 army conspirators from the Civil War generation engineered a coup that toppled the country's legitimate government «to save the nation from the rule of the corrupt».

The Truman Doctrine and its application in the Greek Civil War were the first unmistakable signs of America's commitment to the containment of Soviet expansion. The new policy, however, was not one

* The full extend of the American contribution to reconstruction efforts became apparent several years later.

of indiscriminate, all-out reaction but one of measured response, in accordance with the special circumstances that defined each case. The Americans, therefore, went into Greece knowing that they were not infringing upon Russia's vital interests because Greece was not within the Soviet sphere of influence. Moreover, they decided against the use of American troops, in part to avoid provoking the Soviets and their Balkan satellites. They also realized that although their first priority was through military action to restore government authority and a sense of security in the Greek people, the eventual defeat of the communist movement was equally dependent on political, economic and administrative reform.

Success in Greece provided encouragement and was used to justify direct US intervention in other parts of the world where communism was challenging the established order. Thus, to President Truman Korea was «the Greece of the Far East». Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson drew parallels between the anti-communist struggle in Greece and the mounting American involvement in Vietnam. Failure in South-East Asia due to a host of special circumstances that were never encountered in the case of Greece, showed that such comparisons might have been meaningful from a political or ideological standpoint but meant little when it came to results in the field.

FOOTNOTES

¹ McCauley, Martin «The Origins of the Cold War1941-1949» Longman, London 1995. p. 72. Yergin, Daniel «Shattered Peace» Penguin, New York 1990 pp. 168-171.

² Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1946 vol.VII p.524 Henderson to Acheson 8 October 1946.

³ McGhee, George «The US - Turkish - NATO Middle East Connection» St. Martin's Press New York 1990 p.14.

⁴ Quoted in Paterson, Thomas «Soviet - American Confrontation» Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, Baltimore 1973 p. 191.

⁵ McGhee p. 17.

⁶ FRUS 1946 VII, pp.840-842 15 August 1946.

⁷ Not that one was expected: «I find it hard to conceive that the Soviet Government could be planning overt aggression against Turkey at this juncture» wrote Kennan from Moscow on March 17 1946, as Soviet armored columns were moving in the direction of the Turkish border. Kennan to Acheson quoted in McLellan, David «Dean Acheson. The State Department Years» Dodd, Mead and Company, New York 1976 p. 91.

⁸ Paterson p. 193.

⁹ McCauley pp.78-79.

¹⁰ Woods, Randall and Jones, Howard «Dawning of the Cold War». Univ. Of Georgia Press, Athens, Georgia 1991 pp. 136-137.

Kuniholm, Bruce «The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East» Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, NJ 1980 pp.369-371.

Truman himself seems to have accepted the necessity of a more determined stance vis a vis the Soviet Union. In July 1946 he told

Clifford that «he was tired of being pushed around. The Soviets were 'chiseling' from the United States, 'here a little there a little', and he felt that the time had come to make a stand». He went on to ask Clifford to prepare the report. Kuniholm p. 369, n. 185.

¹¹ McLellan pp. 105-106.

¹² ibid pp. 94-95 Woods 122-123 Paterson 168-169.

¹³ Paterson p. 185.

¹⁴ ibid p. 188. FRUS 1947 v p.31 Acheson to the Secretary of State 21 February 1947.

¹⁵ Jeffery, Judith «Ambiguous Commitments and Uncertain Policies. The Truman Doctrine in Greece, 1947-1952». Lexington Books, Lanham, Maryland 2000 p.35

¹⁶ McLellan p. 112 based on FRUS 1946 VII pp.235-237 Acheson to MacVeagh.

¹⁷ FRUS 1946 VII p.242-243. As a result of a complaint to the Security Council by the Greek government, a Commission of Enquiry was sent to Greece in January 1947 to investigate allegations that Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria were supporting guerrilla warfare against it. The Commission's majority report verified the Greek claims, especially in the case of Yugoslavia which was found not only to arm guerillas but also to train them in camps inside its territory. The Soviet and Polish representatives on the Commission did not agree with the majority view, arguing instead that a large-scale civil war was actually taking place in Greece, for which the reactionary Greek government was solely responsible. See Luard, Evan «A History of the United Nations» vol. I St. Martin's Press New York 1982 pp.118-131.

¹⁸ Taubman, William «Stalin's American Policy» Norton, New York 1982 p. 150 Kuniholm p. 351.

¹⁹ Djilas, Milovan «Conversations with Stalin» Harcourt, Brace. New York 1962 p. 182

²⁰ ibid.

²¹ Zubok, Vladislav and Pleshakov, Constantine. «Inside the Kremlin's Cold War» Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge MA 1996 pp.127-128 Woods 244-245 Djilas 181-183 Kuniholm 351-352. On Soviet material assistance to the Greek insurgents in late 1946 and during 1947 see also document 27 in Kondis Vassilios Sfetas Spyros «Civil War. Documents from the Yugoslav and Bulgarian Archives» (in Greek) Paratiritis. Thessaloniki 2000.

²² Press release, 9 January 1947, quoted in Jeffery p.45

²³ Kuniholm p. 405. Since the end of WWII Greece had received \$417 million in various forms of US assistance. This sum, however, was far from enough to make any significant difference given the country's enormous needs and abysmal economic circumstances. Even as late as 1950, after four years of direct American involvement, one fourth of Greece's national income came from the Marshall Plan. Paterson p. 205 n.125.

²⁴ Jeffery p. 46.

²⁵ FRUS 1947 v pp. 17-22 Porter to the Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs William Clayton, 17 February 1947. All was not lost, though. «The situation in Greece... is very discouraging but not hopeless», Porter observed. «Guidance and financial aid from the United States will be telling contributions in the struggle against Greek bankruptcy».

²⁶ Both countries had large communist parties, in the case of France the largest in Parliament, and were considered vulnerable to communist pressure.

²⁷ FRUS 1947 v. pp. 23-25 Ethridge to the Secretary of State, 17 February 1947.

²⁸ FRUS 1947 v pp.28-29 MacVeagh to the Secretary of State. British officials, although themselves concerned, did not share their American colleagues' alarm. FRUS 1947 v pp. 26-27 Gallman (in London) to the secretary of State, 19 February 1947.

²⁹ FRUS 1947 v pp. 29-31 Acheson to the Secretary of State.

³⁰ Jones, Joseph «The Fifteen Weeks» Harcourt, Brace New York 1955 p. 131. Kuniholm p. 408.

³¹ «The Fifteen Weeks» p. 132

³² 13 March 1947. Quoted in Brands H.W. «The Devil We Knew» Oxford Univ. Press Oxford 1993 p.18.

³³ Kuniholm pp.409-410.

³⁴ FRUS 1947 v p. 67 Report on the Meeting of the State - War - Navy Coordinating Committee Subcommittee on Foreign Policy Information, 28 February 1947.

³⁵ FRUS 1947 v p.2 Memo of a conversation by the Secretary of State, 4 January 1947.

³⁶ «The Fifteen Weeks» pp. 138-140.

³⁷ Acheson's book, «Present at the Creation»quoted in Kuniholm p. 411.

³⁸ «The Fifteen Weeks» p. 141.

³⁹ Quoted in Kuniholm, p. 412 n.88.

⁴⁰ «The Fifteen Weeks» p. 151.

⁴¹ Quoted in Frazier, Robert «Anglo-American Relations with Greece» St Martin's Press New York 1991 p. 158.

⁴² FRUS 1947 v p.70 Marshall to the Embassy in Greece, 28 February 1947.

⁴³ Text of the Greek request for aid in Jeffery Appendix 3.

⁴⁴ For instance the Greek government had been responsible for the «harassment of the veterans of the war-time leftist resistance groups» which «had been among the most powerful contributing factors in the violence that erupted after 1946» Iatrides, John «American Attitudes Toward the Political System of Postwar Greece» in Couloumbis T., Iatrides J. (eds) «Greek American Relations. A Critical Review» Pella, New York 1980 p. 66.

⁴⁵ The emphasis, however, in the Greek and Turkish aid program was on the military. Of the \$400,000,000 approved, only \$128,150,000 consisted of economic aid. Paterson p. 202.

⁴⁶ Text of the Truman Doctrine speech in Jeffery Appendix 4.

⁴⁷ «The Fifteen Weeks» p. 156.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Bernstein, Barton (ed) «Politics and Policies of the Truman Administration» Quadrangle Books, Chicago 1970 p. 56. By 1953 American companies were producing 70% of the Middle East's oil. Paterson p. 206 n. 125.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Paterson p. 198, n. 96. See also comments by Clayton and Jones in Bernstein pp. 57-58.

⁵⁰ The day before Britain announced its decision to withdraw from Greece and Turkey, George Kennan was deplored «the hysterical sort of anti-communism which, it seems to me, is gaining currency in our country». The election of a staunchly anti-communist Republican Congress in November 1946 also bears witness to such trends. Yergin pp. 284-285.

⁵¹ The Soviet Union was never mentioned in Truman's address, while «communist» was mentioned only once, in relation to the Greek insurgents. Instead the word «totalitarian» was used.

⁵² La Feber, Walter «America, Russia and the Cold War 1945-1990» 6th Edition McGraw-Hill New York 1991 p.56.

⁵³ Essentially a «window dressing» solution since the United States could easily master the votes to prevent any unfavorable decision. See Paterson p. 202.

⁵⁴ Arthur Krock in the N. Y. Times, 23 March 1947

⁵⁵ «The Fifteen Weeks» pp. 190-194.

⁵⁶ Ambrose, Stephen «Rise to Globalism» 7th Edition. Penguin New York 1993 p. 82

⁵⁷ «'Must' Is The Key Word In New Foreign Policy» New York Times 23 March 1947.

⁵⁸ «The Fifteen Weeks» pp. 146-147

⁵⁹ Quoted in Yergin p. 282

⁶⁰ Frazier p. 159

⁶¹ Bartlett, C.J. «The Global Conflict 1880-1970» Longman, London 1986 p. 264

⁶² Quoted in Halle, Louis «The Cold War as History» Harper and Row, New York 1975 p. 122

⁶³ Frazier pp. 161-164 Kuniholm 420-422

⁶⁴ Halle pp. 117-122 FRUS 1947 v pp. 76-78 3 March 1947

⁶⁵ Frazier p. 171

⁶⁶ Ambrose p. 83

⁶⁷ For instance in 1966 Secretary of State Dean Rusk used verbatim the Truman Doctrine phraseology to justify American intervention in Vietnam: « I believe it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures». Jones, Howard «A New Kind of War» Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford 1989 pp. 234-235

⁶⁸ Iatrides, John «Britain, the United States and Greece 1945-9» in Close D.H. (ed.) «The Greek Civil War, 1943-1950» Routledge, London 1993 p.202

⁶⁹ Act to Provide Assistance to Greece and Turkey. Public Law 75, 22 May 1947 Section 3. In Jeffery Appendix 5 p. 281. The mission included experts in areas such as «foreign exchange and banking, law, labor, trade and supply, relief and welfare, agriculture, reconstruction, public health and civil government» idem p. 112.

⁷⁰ Iatrides, John «Greece and the Origins of the Cold War» in Koumoulides, John (ed.) «Greece in Transition» Zeno. London 1977 p. 251.

⁷¹ A striking example of American authority over such matters can be found in Iatrides «Britain, The United States and Greece 1945-9» note 56.

⁷² «Greece and the Origins of the Cold War» p. 251

⁷³ «American Attitudes...» p.59

⁷⁴ Iatrides, John «Greece and the United States: The Strained Partnership» in Clogg R. (ed.) «Greece in the 1980s» St. Martin's New York 1983 p.157. Jeffery pp. 113-114.

⁷⁵ Iatrides, John «Civil War, 1945-1949. National and International Aspects» in Iatrides, John (ed.) «Greece in the 1940s. A Nation in

Crisis». Univ. Press of New England, Hanover, N.H. 1981 p. 210. Loy Henderson, the visiting State Department official actually told Tsaldaris and Sofoulis that American aid would be suspended if they did not cooperate. Kondis Vassilios «Anglo - American Policy and the Greek Problem: 1945-1949» (in Greek) Paratiritis Thessaloniki 1986 p. 288.

⁷⁶ Jeffery p. 125

⁷⁷ ibid p. 150. More money was made available later through the Marshall Plan and special appropriations for military aid.

⁷⁸ The Wyman Report, April 1949, paraphrased in ibid p. 192

⁷⁹ According to Greek government sources, in October 1947 alone communist insurgents «had attacked and pillaged 83 villages, destroyed 218 buildings, blown up 34 bridges and wrecked 11 railway trains». O'Ballance, Edgar «The Greek Civil War 1944-1949» Praeger, New York 1966 p. 156 n.1

⁸⁰ Hubert Gallagher, quoted in Jeffery p. 122

⁸¹ Report by Major General Stephen Chamberlin on the military situation in Greece, quoted in ibid p. 144

⁸² General Van Fleet was a highly decorated WWII veteran, with a strong personality and extensive combat experience.

⁸³ «Britain, the United States and Greece, 1945-9» p. 207

⁸⁴ On the Americans' failure to appreciate the need for and deliver promptly certain types of military equipment, see Woodhouse, C.M. «The Struggle for Greece 1941-1949» Hart-Davis, MacGibbon London 1976 p. 237

⁸⁵ Public opinion too seems to have been against it. In a public opinion survey conducted in February 1948 only 25% of those questioned «were in favor of sending American troops - even 'if it appeared that Russia might get control' of Greece». «A New Kind of War» p. 137.

⁸⁶ Grady also credits Lord Mountbatten, Britain's last Viceroy of India, who was a guest at the palace at the time, with a decisive role in changing the king's mind. «A New Kind of War» p. 194 «American Attitudes Toward the Political System of Modern Greece» p.68 Kondis pp. 369-371. See also FRUS 1949 VI pp. 237-238 Harriman to Grady, 13 January 1949 FRUS 1949 VI p. 240 Grady to the Acting Secretary of State, 18 January 1949. Grady in fact did not rule out American acceptance of an extra-parliamentary regime if a change in the situation in the future so required. He added, though that «Papagos government should not be precipitated into office with even tacit US encouragement in disregard normal parliamentary process». FRUS 1949 VI p. 234-235 Grady to the Acting Secretary of State, 5 January 1949. Spyros Markezinis who was to share power with Papagos in the proposed government confirms the King's intentions as well as Papagos's reluctance to cooperate. «I have lived through two dethronements, I have no intention of seeing a third one», the general supposedly muttered when the plan was discussed in his presence at the palace. Markezinis, Spyros «Contemporary Political History of Greece» (in Greek) vol. II (1944-1951) Athens, Papiros 1994 pp. 313-316.

⁸⁷ Furthermore, through bilateral diplomacy and its dominant position in the United Nations, the United States sought to deny the insurgents international assistance and succeeded in preventing the recognition of a rebel government. On American efforts to forestall recognition by Yugoslavia see document 24 in Kondis V. Sfetas S. Note of a conversation between the Yugoslav Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs and the American ambassador in Belgrade, 25-12-1947.

⁸⁸ «Civil War, 1945-1949» pp. 216-219.

⁸⁹ William McNeill «The Metamorphosis of Greece Since World War II» Blackwell, Oxford 1978 p. 94. McNeill argued that Americans had «naively assumed that Greek society was essentially the same as United States society and needed only a few pointers in order to duplicate the

American New Deal». In fact, neither the Greek politicians nor the Greek people were willing to disavow political patronage and clientism which kept the former in power and enabled the latter to satisfy their personal interests at the expense of public good. idem pp. 94-95. McNeill was actually referring to the 1950-1952 period during which American efforts in Greece concentrated on reconstruction with funds provided, since April 1948, via the Marshall Plan. His comments, however, are equally applicable to the preceding years of direct American involvement.

⁹⁰ «American Attitudes Toward the Political System of Post-War Greece» p. 66

⁹¹ See Laurence Wittner «The Truman Doctrine and the Defense of Freedom» *Diplomatic History* 4(2) Spring 1980 pp. 161 - 187. By September 1949, when the process came to a halt an estimated 3, 136 prisoners had been tried and executed by the government for their participation in the insurgency. Large-scale executions were also carried out by the Communists. O'Ballance p.192 n.1