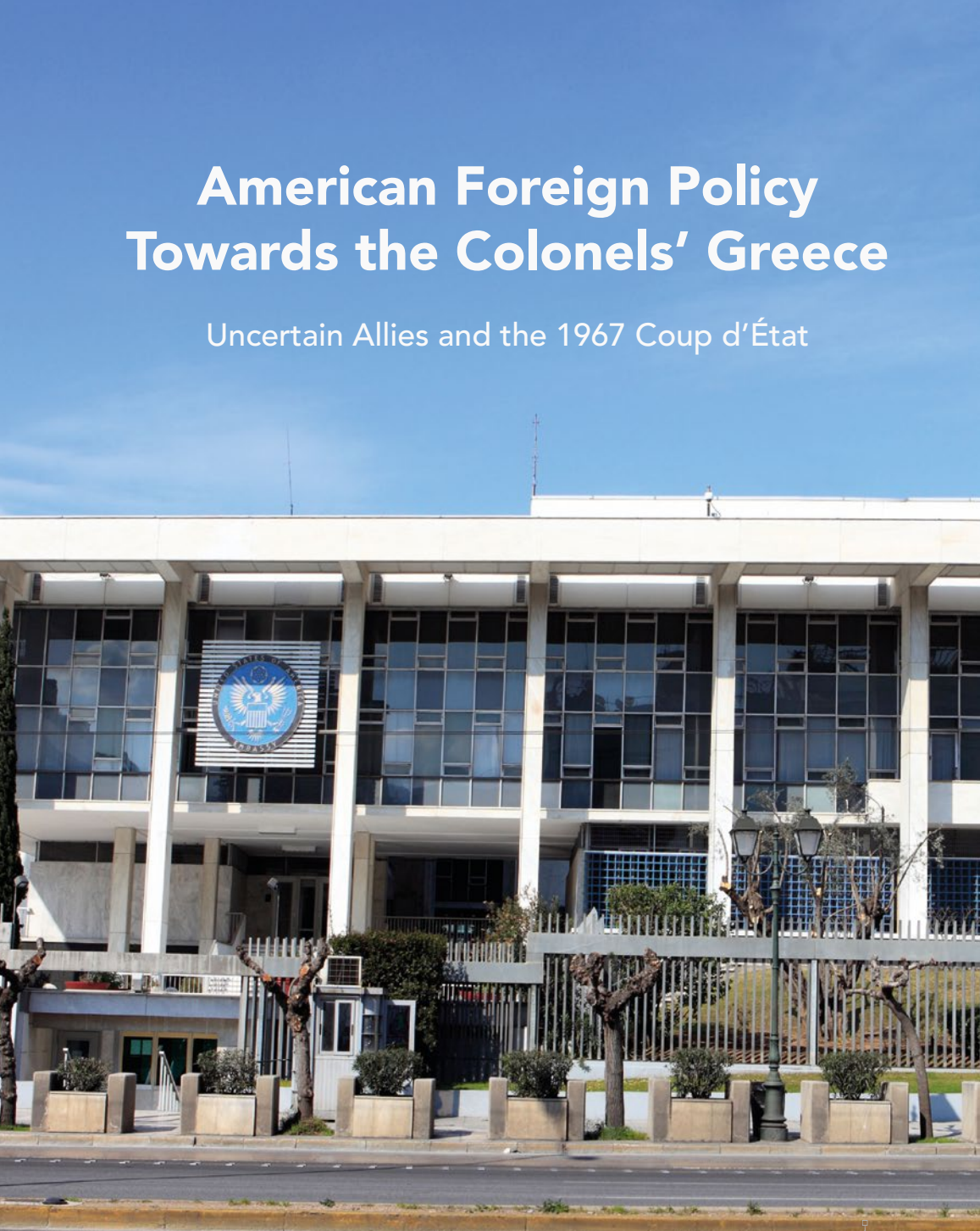
American Foreign Policy Towards the Colonels' Greece

Uncertain Allies and the 1967 Coup d'État



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For Giovanni

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CHAPTER 1

Political Instability and Breakdown: The Historical Context

Public opinion polls confirm that Greeks are one of the most anti-American publics in Europe, with roughly over ninety percent of its people holding critical views of the United States. One reason for the pervasive anti-Americanism is the commonly held belief that the United States was actively involved in launching and maintaining in power the military regime that ruled the country from 1967 to 1974. For half a century, this perception of American complicity has been common both in the public imagination and in the popular and more scholarly literature on the topic.[1] The view is also nearly universally held by many of the country's political and military elites. The words of several former members of the Greek parliament, nearly thirty years after the launching of the coup, are illustrative of Greek public opinion:

> [We] know that the coup in Greece was launched with the help of the Americans, and we know that, without US assistance, the coup would not have been successful. … [A]s I said, the dictatorship happened for US political interests.[2]

[1] See Gatopoulos (1999), Karkayiannis (2002), Papandreou (1973), Rousseas (1968), Kofas (2003), Katris (1971), Stefanidis (2016), and Stern (1977). For alternative views, see Couloumbis (1998) and Maragkou (2006).

[2] Personal interview, Athens, 2 November 1993.

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Another Greek parliamentarian summed up the view thus: "the dictatorship … was one hundred percent American. … There was nothing Greek about it."[3] Indeed, such views have been so widespread in Greece that even US President Bill Clinton, recognizing that Greeks take American complicity as fact, echoed this prevailing perception when he virtually apologized for America's role on a 1999 visit to Athens:

> When the junta took over in 1967 here, the United States allowed its interests in prosecuting the Cold War to prevail over its interests—I should say its obligation—to support democracy, which was, after all, the cause for which we fought the cold war. It is important that we acknowledge that.[4]

Given the close historical relationship between the US government, the Greek right and the Greek military establishment during the 1950s and 1960s, and particularly the conduct of US foreign policy during the years of dictatorship, one can easily understand the origin and plausibility of such beliefs. However, despite nearly universal Greek acceptance of US involvement in the coup, and while much has been alleged regarding American involvement in the colonels' regime, there has heretofore been relatively scant documentation from the historical record. This book seeks to provide such an analysis. Utilizing official US government and other sources—with a heavy emphasis on US State Department records—we analyze the evolution of US foreign policy toward Greece beginning with the emergence of deep political instability there in the mid-1960s, to the overthrow of democracy in April 1967, to the collapse of the military regime itself in July 1974.

The goal of our analysis is to arrive at a fuller understanding of what exactly US policy toward Greece was in this period and, by extension, to contribute to a more nuanced answer to the vexed question of actual US involvement in the overthrow of democracy there. We do this fully aware of the potential pitfalls and shortcomings—the most important of which is that an analysis of State Department documents may tell only part of the story and perhaps not even the most important part at that. If, for instance, as many Greeks believe, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was the prime mover behind the coup, still classified CIA documents may contain the real "smoking gun" of US involvement. For this reason,

[3] Personal interview, Athens, 24 March 1994.

[4] Clinton (2000, 2122).

our analysis cannot by itself be taken as the final word on the matter. However, the story that emerges from these documents is relatively clear and substantiated to a large degree by others who have examined not only US documents, but also those from the foreign ministries of Britain, Germany, and Greece.[5] It shows that consecutive US administrations of the early to mid-1960s were concerned about the maintenance of political stability in Greece as a critically important part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) defensive position in the southeastern corner of Europe. However, as political stability began to break down in Greece—particularly after 1964—and as rumors of potential or imagined coups began to swirl in Athens, official documents show that the US Department of State consistently opposed "extra-parliamentary solutions" to Greece's problems and communicated this opposition to an overthrow of democracy to those closest to the embassy in Athens. As we illustrate, despite the Greek right's warnings of a "communist takeover," while concerned, the US seemed remarkably unconvinced and regularly discounted such a possibility.

Perhaps for that reason, the military coup of 21 April 1967 came as a surprise to the United States who was, we argue, opposed to the overthrow of democracy. While the US was often told that certain circles within the military were plotting coups—ones which, as we will illustrate, the US consistently warned Greek elites against—the 1967 coup by a group of colonels acting outside the normal chain of command came as a surprise and even as an embarrassment to the United States. In the end, it was domestic Greek actors, reflecting their deep anxiety over the Greek political reality of the time and acting on their own, who took the decisive steps to overthrow the country's constitutional order.

This book not only examines the prelude to the coup, but also details the US policy response to it, focusing on aspects of that policy as it developed over the next seven years. Specifically, we focus on how, surprised by the overthrow of democracy and uncertain about how likely the regime was to last, the United States initially reacted cautiously, unsure of what its response should be. However, once it became clear that the regime's hold on power had consolidated—and that very little active opposition existed to threaten the regime and bring about a quick return to democracy—the US made a strategic decision to settle into a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, it made repeated calls—both publicly, but

[5] On Britain, see Nafpliotis (2013) and Maragkou (2010); on Germany, see Pelt (2006).

more often privately—for the colonels to put the country on a track back to democratic rule. As a result, the regime was encouraged to release political prisoners, lift martial law, reinstate suspended articles of the constitution, and move toward the holding of democratic elections. On the other hand, however, these calls for a path back to constitutional rule were carefully and strategically balanced by an overriding US concern to maintain the security integrity of NATO on its southeast flank at a time of growing Soviet presence and influence in the region. The "democratic problem" posed by the Greek colonels was thus balanced by the "security problem" posed by the perceived Soviet threat. Indeed, as we will show, over time, the security problem not only underpinned the US position, but also came to fully predominate. As the realpolitik of the Nixon administration—and Henry Kissinger in particular—came to set the contours of US foreign policy, the security importance of maintaining a loyal strategic ally in Greece would overshadow democratic concerns entirely. What had begun as an attempt to balance two contradictory positions was largely resolved in favor of prioritizing the security concern above all else.

This chapter begins by detailing the growing instability of Greek politics in the 1960s—as the seemingly stable, yet defective, democracy of the 1950s and early 1960s gave way after 1964 to a period of political turmoil that ended with the April 1967 coup. It discusses the US's approach to the key events of this period, showing how the US—while largely supportive of the conservative Greek political, royal, and military establishment—also recognized (perhaps reluctantly) the emergence of an invigorated center and moderate left as a natural part of the development of Greek democracy and one that the US—unlike its strong allies on the Greek right—did not particularly fear. It also shows how the US consistently counseled Greek interlocutors against the execution of a constitutional deviation and how, as the coup rumors became increasingly common and plausible, the US warned about how damaging such an event would be to Greece, arguing that the Greek public would not support such a "solution."

Succeeding chapters then consider the US response to the coup that did eventually come and how that policy changed over time. In Chapter 2, we analyze the US reaction to the *fait accompli* of the coup of 21 April. We discuss how, faced with a military seizure of power they had not expected, US policy makers had to quickly formulate a foreign policy response to the new regime. Proceeding cautiously at first, the

US adopted a "cool but correct" approach to the colonels—an approach that took the new regime by surprise given its expectation that the US would treat it as a welcome ally against communism. Over time, that initially cool approach would develop into a two-pronged policy that would survive, in different forms, the entire period of the junta. On the one hand, the United States would, both as a pragmatic matter and also on principle, seek to pressure the colonels to move toward the restoration of democracy. On the other hand, the security importance of Greece as an anchor of NATO in the Eastern Mediterranean was a strategic interest of the US that was to be preserved at all costs. These two prongs, always in tension, formed the fundamental basis of US foreign policy toward Greece for the next seven years.

Chapter 3 picks up the story of the development of that two-pronged approach as it played out under both the Johnson and Nixon administrations. It specifically focuses on how the tension between the two objectives was never fully resolved. The democratization goal—one successfully resisted to the end by the colonels—seemed in direct conflict with the security interest in maintaining Greece's key role in NATO. This chapter illustrates how, over time, the balance between these goals shifted. The initial effort by the Johnson administration to pursue both goals would be transformed to a nearly exclusive concern by the Nixon White House with maintaining a close security relationship with Greece, eschewing any American "interference" in Greece's internal affairs.

In Chapter 4, we show that, despite the general shift from a balanced approach to one prioritizing the US-Greece security relationship, significant differences existed *within* each administration. Specifically, the State Department under both Johnson and Nixon generally favored greater pressure on the colonels than did the ambassador in Athens and, in the Nixon administration, the White House. Thus, both ambassadors—Phillips Talbot and especially his successor, Henry Tasca—placed a much greater emphasis on maintaining harmonious relations with the Greek regime, which in practice meant reduced pressure on the colonels to democratize. This reluctance to pressure the regime would reach the point at which, under the influence of Henry Kissinger in the White House, the United States would essentially decouple the security objective from the goal of democratization over the opposition of a State Department wishing to keep both objectives as key elements of US policy toward Greece.

Chapters 5–7 then turn to specific aspects of US foreign policy toward Greece. In Chapter 5, we consider the role played by both opponents and supporters of the Greek regime in the US Congress. As we point out, a key concern of US policy makers in both the White House and the Department of State was the vocal opposition to the colonels in the US Congress and the potential damage that such opposition could do to the US-Greek security relationship, particularly through a threatened congressional cutoff of military assistance to Greece. This chapter analyzes the role of Congress in detail, showing how numerous Senators and Congressmen sought to push US policy more strongly against the colonels, while, at the same time, the junta had several important and vocal congressional supporters whose advocacy was informed and promoted by various Greek–American organizations. As we argue, throughout the entire junta period, the attitudes of members of Congress would be a key consideration of both administrations and one of the primary causes for the pressure the US did in fact exert on the Greek regime.

Chapter 6 then considers another critically important source of opposition to the colonels' regime: the criticism coming from certain northern European members of NATO, particularly Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands. In this chapter, we show how this criticism was of great concern to the United States, which saw criticism of Greece from within NATO as potentially damaging to the unity and cohesion of the alliance as a whole. Moreover, the US was also concerned lest public sanction of Greece within NATO lead to its walkout from ministerial meetings, or even withdrawal from the alliance itself. Given these concerns, the United States went to great lengths to pressure its NATO allies not to publicly criticize the Greek regime or take any action that would impair Greece's role within the alliance. In this respect, we see clearly the ways in which the security imperative as represented by Greece's role in NATO clearly trumped the otherwise desirable, but notably secondary, goal of democratization.

Chapter 7 then considers an important element often overlooked in analyses of the junta period in Greece: the active, strategic behavior of the Greek regime itself in seeking to shape US foreign policy toward it. Rather than being a passive object of US foreign policy, the Greek junta displayed a great deal of agency in its relationship with the United States. Accurately recognizing that the United States was, above all, concerned with maintaining a close security relationship with Greece within the framework of NATO, the Greek junta was active and forceful in

pressuring the US. Specifically, it utilized an ongoing strategy of promises, complaints, and thinly veiled threats to the privileged US position in Greece to pressure the US to limit its criticism of the Greek regime, to temper its calls for constitutional reform, and to ensure the flow of US military assistance despite fierce criticism of the regime from Congress and from other NATO countries. In so doing, the regime showed itself to be a strategic actor in its own right, seeking to shape US perceptions and policies toward it.

We then conclude by considering US foreign policy in this period in Greece as a paradigmatic example of how US Cold War foreign policy struggled to reconcile the irreconcilable. That is, we focus on how a country committed to the practice of liberal democracy, and fighting a worldwide struggle against what it perceived as the expansionist danger of totalitarianism, felt compelled, in the interests of its own security, and that of the "free world," to tolerate and provide key military support to a regime that denied those very democratic principles to its own people.

The US Role in Postwar Greece

We begin with the background to the coup of 1967 and the pattern of US foreign policy prior to it. As has been extensively discussed in numerous other studies, at the end of the Second World War, the United States found that the political future of Greece had essentially been bequeathed to it as an issue of prime concern. While Britain had historically played an outsized role in Greek affairs, with its withdrawal from most of its extended foreign policy and military commitments after the war, Greece was essentially handed off to the United States at the time of the start of the Greek Civil War in 1946.[6] From that point on, the primary point of foreign reference in Greece—a country with a long history of overweening foreign influence—came to be the United States.

The story of US intervention in Greek affairs thus largely begins with the Civil War of 1946–1949. Coming as it did in the early days of the emerging Cold War, the Greek Civil War has not incorrectly been considered the first of the many battlegrounds between east and west that

[6]On the British and US roles, see Frazier (1991), Alexander (1982), Xydis (1963), and Woodhouse and Clogg (2003).

characterized that entire period.[7] Greece was one of the first instances in which the famous "domino theory" was used to characterize an internal struggle—in this case, should Greece be lost to the communists, Turkey and Southern Europe would likely follow. As Loy Henderson, head of the Near Eastern and African desk in the State Department, articulated this view in January 1948:

> Those of us who are working on day-to-day problems with Greece are … convinced that unless we decide that our determination to prevent the conquest of Greece by the Soviet Union or its satellites is to be stronger than that of the would-be aggressors to take Greece and unless we make this fact clear to the Soviet Union, the Soviet satellites, and the Greek people themselves, either (*a*) Greece and the whole Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, not to speak of Europe, will be lost to the Western world, or (*b*) the neighbors of Greece will have gone so far before realizing the extent of our determination that they cannot draw back and there will be the beginnings of a new World War. … Greece is the test tube which the peoples of the whole world are watching in order to ascertain whether the determination of the Western powers to resist aggression equals that of international Communism to acquire new territory and new bases for further aggression.[8]

The Truman Doctrine was a key articulation of the approach that the US would come to the assistance of countries under threat from armed communist insurrections—with Greece being the first and most important case of its implementation. Through a combination of military assistance and the aid of the Marshall Plan, the United States thus poured an estimated $1.2 billion into Greece during this period to ensure the victory of the pro-US, anti-communist forces and to begin the process of reconstruction—all in an effort to prevent Greece's fall to communism.[9]

[7] Within a large literature on the Civil War, see Close (1993, 2015, 2016), Gerolymatos (2016), Hondros (1983), Iatrides and Wrigley (1995), Iatrides (1981, 2016), Carabott and Sfikas (2004), McNeill (1947), and Voglis (2002).

[8] "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (Henderson) to the Secretary of State," Top Secret, 1/9/48, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, Eastern Europe; The Soviet Union, Volume IV, eds. Rogers P. Churchill, William Slany and Herbert A. Fine (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1974), 10, 12.

[9] Gallant (2016, 254).

This intervention of the US in the Greek Civil War set the stage for further deep US involvement throughout the 1950s.[10] At the turn of that decade, Greece was a country devastated by years of Axis occupation and civil war. The decimated populace was destitute, and the economic and physical infrastructure of the country had been virtually demolished. However, Greece was not simply any poor country, ravaged by invasion and war, desperately in need of economic reconstruction and political stabilization. It was seen in Washington as a critical linchpin in the defense of the Eastern Mediterranean. In the words of National Security Council (NSC) 103, in February 1951:

> It continues to be in the security interest of the United States that Greece not fall under communist domination. Greece occupies an important strategic position which, in the hands of an enemy, would be a threat to the Eastern Mediterranean, the Suez, Turkey and the Turkish Straits. Communist domination of Greece would serve as a springboard for communist penetration, political and military, into the Eastern Mediterranean and Near East area. … Communist domination of Greece could only be viewed as one in a series of military and political consequences which would gravely threaten the security of the United States.[11]

Consequently, the way to defend Greece from communist domination was active US intervention in Greek affairs:

> The United States should continue publicly to manifest deep interest in the independence and integrity of Greece in order to deter the USSR and/or its satellites from initiating aggressive action against Greece … The United States should assist in every appropriate manner to strengthen Greek society against communist subversion, including the encouragement of democratic political procedures, the acceptance of wholesome social

[10] On various aspects of postwar US-Greek relations, see Couloumbis and Iatrides (1980), Couloumbis (2008), Couloumbis et al. (1976), Hatzivassiliou (2006), Iatrides (1980), Kofas (2003), Miller (2014), Papahelas and Karapanagiotis (1997), Pollis (1975), Rizas (2001, 2002), Sakkas (2007), Stefanidis (2002, 2004), and Wittner (1982).

[11] "Draft Statement of Policy Proposed by the National Security Council," NSC 103, Top Secret, 2/6/51, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1951, The Near East and Africa, Volume V, eds. John A. Bernbaum, Paul Claussen, Joan M. Lee, Carl N. Raether, Lisle A. Rose, Charles S. Sampson, and David H. Stauffer (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971), 451.

objectives, and the elimination of unimportant differences among Greek political leaders.[12]

It was this interventionist stance that set the tone for the deep involvement of the United States in Greece throughout the 1950s, when the US role there was not only one of a patron, but also, very importantly, one of external control. As a result, US involvement in Greek affairs during this time was sustained, deep, and pervasive. The US took a deep—even overweening—interest in all aspects of Greek government affairs, even to the point of having disproportionate influence over the choice of cabinet members, Greek economic policy, and the operation of the Greek military and security services.[13] This level of US intervention in Greek political and social affairs was made possible in large part by the deep financial and military dependence of Greece on the US. While the level of assistance would decline dramatically over time, the large amount of funds distributed first as Marshall Plan aid, then as other forms of economic and military assistance, gave the United States a disproportionate role in the political, economic, and security life of Greece.

Despite—or perhaps, because of—this pervasive US role in Greek politics, the 1950s were a period of reconstruction and political stability—albeit within a political system that "divided Greeks into 'nationally minded' and 'suspect' citizens" and was characterized by "selective repression and discrimination against the [civil] war's vanquished by its victors."[14] On the surface, Greece had become an economically growing, socially modernizing country under the stable leadership of the political right—first under the Greek Rally of General Alexandros Papagos, the hero of the fight against the Italian invasion of 1940, and then under the National Radical Union (ERE) of Constantine Karamanlis. Particularly under the technocratic leadership of Karamanlis, who held office from 1955 to 1963, the country began to rebuild from the effects of war and to modernize socially, establishing itself within the ambit of the West, becoming a member of NATO in 1952 and an associate member of the EEC in 1961.[15] Underneath this apparently democratic and developmental

[12] "The Position of the United States with Respect to Greece," NSC 103, 2/6/51, Records of the National Security Council, Policy Papers 100–109, RG 273, USNA.

[13] See, for example, Couloumbis (1983, 17–18).

[14] Karakatsanis (2001, 4); see also Samatas (1986).

[15] Genevoix (1973), Tsatsos (1989), and Woodhouse (1983).

surface, however, deep political tensions—primarily the fundamental struggle between left and right, between the victors and the vanquished of the Civil War, and the even older struggle over the role of the monarchy (the National Schism of the interwar years)—remained not only unresolved, but also repressed by a political system designed to politically marginalize and repress those on the left, or suspected of being so.[16] These divisions were to come to a head in the events of the mid-1960s and most dramatically with the coup of 1967.

As mentioned, the 1950s were characterized by political stability (within a limited democracy), as the political right dominated the decade under the premierships of Papagos and Karamanlis. The fragility of this stable façade, however, would come to be apparent, beginning with the elections of 1958. While Karamanlis's ERE took 171 of 300 seats on the basis of 41% of the vote, the United Democratic Left (EDA), widely believed to be a front for the outlawed Communist Party of Greece (KKE), received 24% of the vote and emerged as the second strongest party in parliament with 79 seats.

For some in the conservative establishment, the surge in EDA support seemed to portend a dangerous left-wing trend. In Washington, however, the view was rather more sanguine. While noting the significance of the shift to EDA, the CIA in an internal assessment noted that a "substantial factor in EDA's growth is discontent over conditions of chronic unemployment, low living standards and lack of economic opportunities."[17] While the Director of Central Intelligence, Allen Dulles, "expressed the concern of his Agency over the display of EDA strength,"[18] the CIA also estimated that "any EDA bid for power would almost certainly be blocked through establishment of a Palace-backed anti-communist coalition, or possibly by creation of an authoritarian

[16] Clogg (1969, 168). On this period generally, see Alivizatos (1983), Linardatos (1987), Mazower (2016), McNeill (1978), and Featherstone and Katsoudas (1987). On the Greek military, see Hatzivassiliou (2009).

[17] "National Intelligence Estimate: The Outlook for Greece's Stability and Foreign Position," NIE 32-58, Secret, 9/23/58, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1958–1960, Eastern Europe; Finland; Greece; Turkey, Volume X, Part 2, eds. Ronald D. Landa, James E. Miller, William F. Sanford, Jr., and Sherrill Brown Wells (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1993), Document 243.

[18] "Memorandum for the Files: OCB Consideration of Progress Report on Greece," Secret, 5/14/58, *FRUS*, 1958–1960, Document 239.

regime based on military support,"[19] and, thus, did not appear overly concerned. In fact, Dulles himself raised the question of whether it might be in the US's interest to change its position regarding the illegality of the Communist Party of Greece. He argued that US policy "should be kept under continuous review" and that "instances may arise where it might be better to see communist parties such as the KKE kept legal in order that a better check might be kept on them. He said that this had always been our position in this country with respect to our own domestic politics."[20]

While the KKE's legalization was not forthcoming—and would not take place until after the restoration of democracy in 1974—it was clear that the United States was not overly concerned about the rise of EDA in 1958. Nor was it concerned about the growing popularity of ERE's centrist opponents. A month before the October 1961 election, Ambassador Ellis Briggs commented in a cable to the Department of State on the "increased prospect that [George] Papandreou … may succeed in forming [a] combined opposition. (This of course will be all to the good—if it in fact develops.)"[21] In the event, the center did rebound: George Papandreou and his newly formed Center Union party received 34% of the vote in 1961 and 100 seats, EDA being reduced to 15% of the vote and 24 seats. The big winner, however, was Karamanlis. ERE garnered an absolute majority of the vote (51%) and, thanks to an electoral law constantly reengineered to benefit the ruling party, increased its total of seats to 176.

This election—or, more precisely, its aftermath—can be seen as the real beginning of the political and parliamentary instability that would culminate in the 1967 coup. Alleging that the 1961 election result was the result of "violence and fraud," George Papandreou embarked on a "relentless struggle" against a dark conspiracy of the political right, the monarchy, the military, and the security forces that had perpetrated the

[19] "National Intelligence Estimate: The Outlook for Greece's Stability and Foreign Position," NIE 32-58, Secret, 9/23/58, *FRUS*, 1958–1960, Document 243.

[20] "Memorandum for the Files: OCB Consideration of Progress Report on Greece," Secret, 5/14/58, *FRUS*, 1958–1960, Document 239.

[21] Athens to State, Secret LimDis, 9/1/61, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1961–1963, Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, ed. James E. Miller (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1994), Document 315.

fraud.[22] At the heart of his argument was the notion that Greece was controlled by a sinister establishment (the parastate) that, threatened by the rise of EDA in 1958, had reacted with intimidation, fraud, and subterfuge to ensure a resounding ERE victory. Over time—and certainly with the overthrow of democracy in 1967—this narrative would come to include the United States as an essential prop of the establishment. Given the role played by the US in Greek politics, particularly in the immediate post-Civil War era, the charge of US complicity and support of the violence and fraud seemed plausible to many.

Yet, the State Department's internal reporting paints a different picture—one in which the US acknowledged that the elections had not been fair (though not unfair to the extent alleged by Papandreou) and argued that Greece in fact needed to move beyond such practices toward a more authentic democracy. A prime example is a March 1962 cable to the State Department from H. Daniel Brewster, the political counselor at the Athens embassy. Brewster concluded that, "while there was no widespread adulteration of the civilian vote, the administration of the elections was poor and open to abuse by all parties" and that it was more a case of "nonfeasance" by the civil administration, rather than "malfeasance."[23] However, Brewster did point the finger at the military, particularly the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Vassileios Kardamakis, and the security services for directly intervening to suppress the left-wing vote: "the Army leadership was overly involved in the campaign and inadequate restraints were placed on the activities of the internal security forces in the pre-electoral period."[24] He would later speak of how this "use of the army and security forces against a legitimate political party—even an avowed leftist one—raises disturbing questions about the improper use of the country's military forces."[25]

It is important to note, however, that, rather than instinctively defending the Greek political system—one in part constructed by the US and dominated at that point by its strongest conservative allies—Brewster warned that the army and security forces were seen by many in Greece to be dangerously interventionist. This perception, he argued, led

[22] For an account of Papandreou in the 1960s, see Paraskevopoulos (1988).

[23] Athens to State, Confidential, 3/23/62, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, Document 330.

[24] Athens to State, Confidential, 3/23/62, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, Document 330.

[25] Athens to State, Confidential, Airgram A-724, 3/6/65, POL 12 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

many Greeks to sympathize with Papandreou's attacks, not necessarily out of support for him or the Center Union politically, but from a general agreement with his critique of the overweening power of the rightist establishment. In short, without using the term, Brewster asserted that the system was facing a growing crisis of legitimacy and that important changes to the political practices of the repressive post-Civil War period were necessary. Thus, far from US officials blindly supporting Greece's limited democracy, much less urging it to take tougher measures to fight a supposed communist threat, Brewster's comments reveal an awareness by some US officials that, whatever had happened in the past, fundamental reforms were needed for Greece to become a mature democracy. As Brewster himself put it:

> Greece, it is often said, is in mid-passage, but the phrase is usually used to describe a stage in the country's economic development. It is less widely understood that Greece is also in mid-passage socially and politically. Methods of administration appropriate to the conditions of prewar Greece; habits of thought suitable to the period of the Bandit War; royal prerogatives which survived in the atmosphere of an earlier and less enlightened time; these are a few of the anachronisms whose continued existence vexes the public and will trouble the Government until they are resolved. These are real issues. … Basic reforms are long overdue in Greece's internal security legislation, in the way the country conducts its elections and in the way the Royal Family comport themselves.[26]

Despite such views, however, key elements in the Greek right failed to see or act on the need for reform as their hold on power unraveled. With the departure of Karamanlis from the premiership in June 1963 as a result of a dispute with the palace and his self-imposed exile in France, Greek political life began to move toward the center—or, as seen by the right, to the left. The elections of November 1963 failed to produce a majority government, but gave Papandreou's Center Union a narrow plurality of seats compared to ERE (138 to 132). Papandreou's inability to form a government led to new elections two months later, in February 1964. The result was a resounding success for Papandreou, whose Center Union won nearly 53% of the vote and 171 of 300 seats, bringing to an end the eleven years of political power by Greek conservatives.

[26] Athens to State, Confidential, 3/23/62, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, Document 330.

Democracy Under Threat: 1964–1967

The rise and fall from power of the Center Union, followed by the events of the next several years, would lead directly to the overthrow of democracy in April 1967. In brief, the centrist government of George Papandreou was to prove short-lived. Despite having a majority of seats in parliament, the party was a diverse coalition of centrists, disaffected conservatives, and moderate leftists who often had very little in common to hold them together. Given such factionalism, the party all too easily split when faced with the confrontation between Papandreou and the monarchy.

This dispute—which ultimately brought the Papandreou government down—was most proximately between the prime minister and the young King Constantine over who would fill the position of minister of defense, but was freighted with much broader meaning regarding the powers of the crown vis-à-vis elected governments in a constitutional monarchy. Specifically, in 1965, news broke of an alleged left-wing conspiracy within the army, known by the acronym ASPIDA, which purportedly aimed to overthrow the monarchy, withdraw Greece from NATO, and take it into the neutralist camp. Most explosive was the charge that the conspiracy involved Andreas Papandreou, the prime minister's son, whom the conservative establishment found to be extremely radical—perceiving him as anti-NATO, anti-monarchy, and anti-American.[27] When Papandreou's minister of defense, Petros Garoufalias, proposed to investigate the conspiracy, including Andreas's role in it, both father and son objected strongly, leading Garoufalias to tender his resignation. At that point, George Papandreou sought to assume the post of minister of defense himself, in addition to being premier—a move the King refused to accept. The result was a stalemate between the King and Papandreou—with the King holding the position that for Papandreou to assume both roles was inappropriate (particularly as he would then be in charge of the ASPIDA investigation involving his son) and Papandreou arguing the right of a democratically elected government to choose its own ministers. In the end, Papandreou resigned—or, in his supporters' view, was sacked by the King.

Democracy in Greece would last two more years, albeit in a climate of growing social and political strife. The fall of the Papandreou

[27] On Papandreou, see Draenos (2012).

government was succeeded by two failed attempts at forming governments before Stephanos Stephanopoulos was able to cobble together a group of "apostates" from the Center Union, along with some conservative support, to form a government that would last until December 1966 amid strikes, protests, and the ever-increasing vitriol of the Papandreous' new "unrelenting struggle" against the "constitutional coup" of the King. This was then followed by the short-lived Paraskevopoulos government of early 1967, which also lacked parliamentary confidence, followed by the Kanellopoulos caretaker government that was preparing for May elections when the coup occurred. All told, there were five governments in those turbulent 21 months—none of which was able to secure a vote of confidence in parliament.

Behind the scenes of growing parliamentary and governmental instability, the traditional establishment was growing increasingly alarmed—so alarmed, indeed, that rumors of plots and coups became ever more common and believable as reported in both the Athenian press and, importantly, in US embassy cables to the Department of State. As the prospect of a Papandreou victory in the 1964 elections seemed more and more certain, particular elements in the conservative political and military establishment began to visit the embassy seeking tacit US consent for a possible military coup designed to either forestall the upcoming elections or to prevent the Center Union from coming to power should it win those elections. The right's anxiety only deepened when its representatives failed to receive "consent" from embassy officials and the Center Union actually came to power. This would only be a precursor to the succeeding three years, when the US was routinely sounded out to ascertain its level of support for a wide range of proposed solutions—some of a parliamentary nature, but many involving schemes of coups.

Here, we turn our attention to the US role during this turbulent period. We argue that, contrary to the prevailing popular understanding of this period, it was *Greek* political and military elites—not foreign agents—who played the predominant and direct role in the events leading to the colonels' coup. These elites, anxious about what they perceived to be a drifting of Greek political life toward the left of the political spectrum, approached the embassy regularly to both consult with its officials as well as to request advice and support—with some arguing for a military overthrow of government. Despite such meetings, attendant rumors, and a great deal of information about possible coup attempts, embassy officials continued to advise Greek protagonists

against the taking of extra-parliamentary measures and continued to believe—virtually to the moment of the coup itself—that such a deviation from democratic politics was not truly in the offing.

Approaches to the Embassy

As the historical literature on Greece has detailed, the Greek right, the military, and the palace were deeply concerned about the ascendance of George Papandreou and the Center Union to power. Indeed, in the years prior to 1967, the US embassy became a favorite stop of politicians of all stripes (except the left), as well as military officers and palace officials, seeking US support, attempting to influence American policy and, in general, trying to bring the "American factor" to bear on their side of politics.

As the 1964 election drew near, the rightist political establishment made its distress increasingly clear to US embassy officials. For example, the monarchy, which was already concerned about what a Papandreou victory would mean for its future, found its concerns heightened by the death, on 7 February 1964, of centrist leader Sophocles Venizelos, whom it believed would have restrained Papandreou from making any anti-monarchical moves. From the King's perspective, any restraint or deterrence that Venizelos would have provided was removed with his death, and the monarchy was thus left unprotected.

The Greek military, like the monarchy, had also become deeply distressed about a possible Papandreou victory. Pointing to his seemingly relaxed attitude toward Greek communists, to a series of retirements in the top military command initiated by Papandreou soon after coming to office, and to an allegedly resultant decline in the morale of the security forces, rightist officers and their conservative allies exhibited increasing anxiousness. In one particularly dramatic example, Ambassador Henry Labouisse cabled the Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, in April 1963 to warn him of the "possibility of an overturn in Greece some time in the coming months." This was prompted by a meeting with the aforementioned General Kardamakis, now retired as Chief of Staff of the Army, who had notified the embassy that a bloc of "truly patriotic" officers was about to launch a coup to prevent a combination of left-leaning politicians (presumably the Center Union) and communists from seizing power. The agitation for a coup, the general reported, was particularly strong among more junior officers. According to the US embassy,

"rightist elements [were] continuously keeping before U.S. eyes the fact that Papandreou's method of operating with dangerous stress on 'democracy and freedom,'[was] playing dangerously into [the] hands of the Left."[28] This was to be a constant conservative refrain for years to come.

However, traditional Greek establishment figures were not the only ones reporting concerns to American officials in the run-up to dictatorship. In a 1965 letter that was sent to friends in America and circulated to US government officials in Washington, Margaret Papandreou, the American-born wife of Andreas Papandreou, also reported on the widespread rightist belief that George Papandreou "ha[d] allowed communists [and, particularly, Andreas] to infiltrate his government." According to Margaret, this belief had aroused suspicion and led to social and political instability in Greece, ultimately contributing to the disagreement between the King and the prime minister over Garoufalias's dismissal. Arguing that her father-in-law would resign from government if the King refused to dismiss Garoufalias as demanded by Papandreou, Margaret predicted that:

> This will throw the country into chaos, and possibly civil war. … [George Papandreou's] resignation will touch off a series of strikes, riots and marches. Many of these will be truly democratic forces, but the communists will be waiting to take advantage of the situation. … If a new government can be formed immediately, it will have the responsibility of taking action against this disturbance of the peace. … <u>But</u>, if no government can be formed, or the new government finds itself inadequate to the task, a military takeover will occur.[29]

Given such views, supporters of the Center Union also visited the embassy with increasing frequency, emphasizing that the only solution to the deepening political impasse was the return of Papandreou to office and requesting that the embassy intervene by warning King Constantine not to consider launching a military coup. One proponent of this view was Andreas Papandreou who himself consulted with embassy officials

[28] Athens to State, Secret, Airgram A-31, 7/9/64, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[29] Letter from Margaret Papandreou, 7/8/65, POL 15 Government, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA (emphasis in original).

and referred to the likelihood of civil war if a solution to the deadlock was not found.[30]

Indeed, in August 1966, George Papandreou himself warned American Ambassador Phillips Talbot that, if the present course was permitted to persist, dictatorship and revolution, led by the communists but supported by non-communists, would result. Indeed, by April 1967—the very month the colonels acted to forestall elections—Papandreou told the American embassy that, if his son were arrested in connection with the ASPIDA affair, demonstrations would likely break out throughout Greece, leading to the imposition of a dictatorship. Indicating that, to forestall such a turn of events, he would be willing to cooperate with the King by appointing a defense minister who would be mutually acceptable, Papandreou was reported to have requested the embassy's assistance: "What is needed at [the] present critical moment is help by [the] Americans. [The] US could use [its] influence to help [the] King see [the] need for abandoning [the] road leading to dictatorship. Action on [the] American side would not be considered intervention."[31]

Such meetings between the embassy and Greek political and military elites continued throughout the entire pre-coup period with increased frequency and regularity. This included members of the monarchy (King Constantine, Queen Mother Fredericka, advisors to the King, and other members of the royal court), Greek military officers, extreme right-wing and more moderate members of ERE, and members of the Center Union (both pro- and anti-Papandreou factions)—everyone, essentially, except the left. Each of these groups approached the embassy with a different goal. While some tried to feel out where the embassy stood on current Greek affairs, others more actively tried to recruit the embassy to their plans. As we will see below, some—mostly on the extreme right—wanted to see how amenable the US would be to a military overthrow of democracy.

In short, then, with the exception of the Greek left, virtually all other political forces approached the US embassy during this period. Given America's historical relationship with Greece and the dependent status of that country throughout the postwar period, these "approaches"

[30]Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 122, 7/24/65, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[31]Athens to State, Secret LimDis, Telegram 713, 8/11/66, POL GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

reveal the extent to which Greek political and military elites had come to rely upon the United States for advice, support, and even direct intervention in the country's internal affairs. Given America's role in Greek domestic affairs to that point, it is not at all surprising that Greeks regularly approached embassy officials in this manner. Indeed, this factor—the extent and regularity with which Greek political and military elites sought out the US embassy in Athens—is an important element in our interpretation of the period. As this chapter and Chapter 7 show, Greeks exercised a great deal more agency vis-à-vis the US than many accounts acknowledge. In fact, the documentary evidence makes clear that, in the case of the immediate pre-coup Greece, it was not a matter of a hyperactive US running the show with Greeks playing a docile, willing role in the background. On the contrary, the reverse took place: Some elements in the Greek right and military were actively planning a coup; others (including many centrists) were saying that they really would like the US to become involved in the situation; and the official Washington response was that, unlike in the past, when America had a very "intimate" relationship with Greece, the United States was now moving toward a less interventionist role in internal Greek affairs. As the embassy described this to the Department of State:

> In terms of influence and [prestige][32] [the] U.S. has [a] unique role in Greece. Massive U.S. aid during the 1940's and 1950's, [and] the extremely close relationship between our two countries since World War II, has inclined Greeks to look for support and guidance to [the] U.S. In view of this special relationship, Greeks although loudly decrying foreign interference invariably seek [to] enlist U.S. support for respective solutions. At [the] present time [the] embassy is being pressed to take [a] role in breaking [the] current impasse. … Until now [the] embassy has been reasonably successful in avoiding active involvement.[33]

In response, the State Department restated the principle that the relationship between Greece and the US had changed to the point where the best solution would be the one arrived at by Greeks themselves. As the crises of 1965 unfolded, the State Department told the embassy:

[32] Original reads: presitgue.

[33] Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 122, 7/24/65, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> [We a]ppreciate [the] intense nature of [the] pressures being employed to force American involvement in [the] current crisis. However, [we] believe [the] response to any further approaches of [the] type [you] mentioned … should be [a] reiteration that [the] ultimate solution will be healthier politically and more permanent if Greeks work it out without interference. This does not mean [that] as [a] friend and ally we are not seriously concerned, and hope that some satisfactory early solution will be found.[34]

American or Greek Worries?

In addition to wanting Greeks to "work out" their own problems, it is also interesting to note that, contrary to what most observers have argued regarding this period, the US did not appear to be overly concerned regarding the various problems about which Greeks were approaching and warning it. For example, many rightists (and even center-rightists) approached embassy officials to express their grave concern that communism was on the rise and that a "leftward drift" was underway in the country as a result of the Center Union's lenient attitudes toward communism and the left.[35] Despite such warnings, US officials did not appear terribly alarmed about the increasing strength of the left and center-left in Greece. Indeed, in its reporting on the very Papandreou policies that alarmed Greek rightists (e.g., the dismantling of the anti-communist "informational and security apparatus," the partial abolition of certificates of national-mindedness that had been issued to Greek citizens since the end of the Greek Civil War, the release of communists from prison, the increased repatriation of Greek communist exiles from behind the Iron Curtain, and the banning of certain rightist youth organizations such as Elpidoforoi Neoi and EKOF), the embassy appeared fundamentally unalarmed. This calmness was despite the fact that the US recognized that important changes in the Greek political landscape had taken place, clearly aware that the center of gravity in the Greek political spectrum had moved away from the right, that the left was enjoying a greater degree of respectability, and that the violent

[34]State to Athens, Secret, Roger Channel, Telegram 164, 8/12/65, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[35]Athens to State, Confidential, Airgram A-361, 11/4/64, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA; Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 1862, 6/18/65, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

anti-communism of the 1950s was becoming increasingly discredited. Indeed, even as the embassy acknowledged that the right's prestige had declined in recent years as attacks against the military and palace had grown, it noted in its cables to the Department of State that the electoral strength of EDA had not substantially increased, and indeed, as discussed above, the gradual normalization of Greek democracy was something to be expected and desired. If elections were called, the embassy concluded in 1965, EDA would not poll appreciably more votes than it had in February 1964.[36] Thus, even though the embassy concurred with rightists' interpretations that leftist influence was growing in Greece, it did not find the phenomenon grave enough to pose a direct challenge to the Greek establishment or to US interests in Greece. According to US embassy reports, while EDA's "respectability" may have grown during the first few months of the Papandreou government, it did not find that the party's political or electoral strength was similarly expanding. In its view, there was insufficient cause for alarm.

A pervasive matter about which many Greek elites approached the embassy at this time was concern over George Papandreou and the belief that he and his party were flirting with communism. Contrary to the prevailing view that this was also a concern of the US government, embassy reports to Washington reveal the embassy's position that Papandreou was neither a communist nor a threat to American interests. Indeed, embassy officials painted him as a reasonably moderate and nationalist politician. Even before the elections of 1963 that brought Papandreou to power, an internal State Department analysis of Greece concluded that "[t]here is no reason to fear that a Center Union government or a coalition government excluding EDA would, at least in the foreseeable future, represent a threat to Greece's pro-Western foreign policy."[37] Later, Talbot would report to the State Department on meetings with George Papandreou in which the latter indicated that he did not share his son's views regarding American interference in current Greek affairs and acknowledged that, while there had been open US intervention in Greek politics in the past (e.g., under the previous US ambassador), there had been no such intervention recently. Talbot emphasized to

[36] Athens to State, Confidential, Airgram A-361, 11/4/64, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[37] "U.S. Policy and the Political Outlook in Greece," Secret, 7/15/63, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, Document 350.

the State Department that this view had been subsequently repeated by Papandreou in a UPI press interview. When asked whether the United States intervened in the internal affairs of Greece, Papandreou replied: "Unfortunately there was—in the past. … During the last period however, as far as I know at least, the United States Embassy made no intervention. And it never encouraged deviation."[38]

Claiming that Papandreou did not pose the purported leftist threat that many Greeks claimed, the embassy also maintained that it did not find Papandreou's 1965 reorganization of the top military command to have been "extravagant or frivolous." On the contrary, while it acknowledged that "some officers of genuine merit" had indeed been retired by the reorganization, it concluded that Papandreou had "justifiable suspicion deriving from partisan political activity directed against the Center [Union] party" to retire other officers.[39] Appearing unalarmed by any potential impact that a future Papandreou victory might have on US-Greek relations, the embassy estimated that, while a return of ERE to office would guarantee a "policy of close cooperation between Greece and the U.S.," similarly "close" relations could be expected under a Center Union government, despite its calls for a more independent foreign policy. According to the embassy, the "situation in which Greece finds itself in the world seems to require any nationalist government to follow [a] policy of close ties with the U.S."[40] Thus, it concluded that "there is no reason to expect any major crisis in Greek affairs or in Greek-U.S. relations."[41] Even in its reporting on the Greek rightist view that the struggle was increasingly one between communist and nationalist forces in Greece and that a dictatorship would therefore be preferable to a return of the Papandreou government to office, the embassy suggested that electoral fears might be behind the right's panic:

[38]Athens to State, Confidential, Airgram A-491, 3/22/67, POL 12-6 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[39]Athens to State, Secret, Airgram A-31, 7/9/64, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[40]Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 1212, 2/12/64, POL 14 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[41]"Greece: Outlook for Crises – 1965-68," Confidential, 10/6/64, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (NEA), Office of the Country Director for Greece (NEA/GRK), Records relating to Greece, 1964–66, Box 5, RG 59, USNA.

> We find [this] type of sentiment and analysis … dangerous. … Conservative elements insist that it will be impossible to hold free elections until the countryside can be relieved … of the Left in general and the Lambrakis [leftist] youth organization in particular. In some cases this is simply a subterfuge for delaying elections which they fear they cannot win. …
>
> We believe any effort to resort to an extra-parliamentary solution would constitute a grosser miscalculation since the facts and conclusions which would justify an extreme solution have not yet been proven to the point where they are likely to be accepted by the vast majority of the population.[42]

A related but perhaps even greater concern of those approaching the embassy seeking an extra-parliamentary solution was the political emergence of Andreas Papandreou. In this regard, while most opponents of George Papandreou realized—"albeit grudgingly," according to the embassy—that he was an anti-communist, "there was no such confidence in the political philosophy of the younger Papandreou," whom the embassy characterized as the "éminence grise" of government.[43] Surmising that Andreas was "extremely gullible and probably emotionally unstable," the embassy reported that he had surrounded himself with "unsavory characters" known to hold hostile views toward the US. According to US officials, Andreas had spread "the canard" that the US had forced his resignation from his father's government because he was pro-Makarios and had "stood up" to the Americans on other occasions. As the embassy concluded, this "canard" had "achieved a surprising degree of currency" in Greece:[44]

> His assumption of a highly critical line towards the United States and NATO, his decisive role in preventing an Inonou-Papandreou meeting and in killing the so-called Acheson Plan, his support of leftist elements within the labor movement, his attempt to assume leadership of leftist forces

[42] Athens to State, Secret, Airgram A-197, 9/13/65, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[43] Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 974, 12/15/64, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA; Athens to State, Confidential, Airgram A-323, 10/8/65, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[44] Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 974, 12/15/64, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> within his father's party, and finally, his alleged association with ASPIDA, combined to convince not only the opposition, but many leading elements with the Center Union Party that Andreas Papandreou was a dangerous force in Greek political life.[45]

The perception that Andreas Papandreou was dangerous persisted and, indeed, intensified with the passing of time. By the eve of the dictatorship, Andreas's attacks on the "oligarchy," the palace, the right wing, the "interventions of foreigners," and the Americans became increasingly acerbic. His claim that the country was under the "tutelage" of NATO and that NATO would not allow Greece to move unencumbered in its policies vis-à-vis the Balkans, the Near East, and Africa[46] indicated to many that his positions, if translated into policy, would threaten not only the conservative Greek establishment but also Greece's membership in NATO and US interests in Greece. As if to emphasize the danger, by spring 1967, Talbot reported on a conversation between himself and George Papandreou, where the latter declared that his son "would like nothing better than to be arrested" and would "relish the role of martyr."[47] Apologizing for his son's rhetoric, George Papandreou revealed to Talbot that, had Andreas not been his son, he would have expelled him from the Center Union by now.

By this time, deputies within Papandreou's own party also began to register their concern to the US regarding the future of democracy in Greece as well as their own political futures in the face of Andreas Papandreou. Deputies John Tsouderos, Alexandros Spanorrigas, Petros Garoufalias, and others shared their concern with American officials that George Papandreou was making plans to "turn his power and prestige [over] to his son before he depart[ed] from the political scene."[48] This concern was serious enough that, by autumn of 1965, a "steady stream of visitors" to Washington—including some parliamentary deputies

[45] Athens to State, Confidential, Airgram A-323, 10/8/65, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[46] Athens to State, Confidential, Airgram A-444, 2/18/67, POL 15-1 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[47] Athens to State, Confidential, Airgram A-491, 3/22/67, POL 12-6 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[48] Athens to State, Confidential, Airgram A-304, 11/3/65, POL 6 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

(Spanorrigas, Trikoupis, and Papaconstantinou are named in official documents)—visited the State Department to express alarm: "Two things that they all seem to concur on, usually very emphatically, are the need to 1) get rid of the Papandreous and … 2) postpone national elections until Papandreou's popularity has declined sufficiently to make his re-election improbable."[49] Their angst over the rise of Andreas became particularly acute following an edema attack suffered by the elder Papandreou in June 1966, when centrist deputies suspected that the latter had stepped up the grooming of Andreas for the party leadership. Compounded by the fact that, by this time, Andreas was traveling the country with groups of CU deputies, making speeches whose tone had become stridently anti-monarchical, the embassy reported on an August 1966 meeting at which US officials urged Andreas to soften his attacks on the palace in order to facilitate the holding of elections.[50] As the attacks on the palace and oligarchy continued, the embassy concluded that "[i]f nothing else … [Andreas] has clearly established himself as the most controversial personality in Greek politics"—so much so that his opponents "who consider him at worst a Communist or at best a neurotic, seem to be developing an almost pathological urge to destroy him politically."[51]

Despite this judgment, however, even as late as March 1967, the ambassador in Athens did not appear to have given up hope that Andreas could be moderated and continued to meet with him. A case in point is an 11 March 1967 meeting with Andreas, where Papandreou expressed frustration and concern that "the palace and its allies" intended to limit if not halt his participation in politics. Talbot reminded him that, for the last nine months, he had been urging him to adopt a more moderate position in order to assuage political passions and foster conditions that would have facilitated elections. It is important to note, however, that despite Andreas's increasingly bitter rhetoric, the embassy did not appear overly concerned. In its view, as long as George Papandreou

[49] Barham to Vigderman, Confidential, 10/29/65, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (NEA), Office of the Country Director for Greece (NEA/GRK), Records relating to Greece, 1964–66, Box 5, RG 59, USNA.

[50] Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 713, 8/11/66, POL GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[51] Athens to State, Confidential, Airgram A-76, 8/12/66, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

could control his son (which, it believed, he could), the monarchy would not be threatened. This view was strengthened by the fact that, in private conversations with embassy officials, including with the ambassador, Andreas Papandreou assured the Americans that he neither intended to destroy the monarchy nor to cooperate with EDA, his electoral rhetoric notwithstanding. Even in regard to the highly controversial ASPIDA affair and Andreas's alleged personal involvement in it, the embassy went so far as to muse in its cables to the State Department that the entire affair had been exaggerated by Greek rightists since its objectives "seem to be neutralist and republican rather than communist" in nature.[52] In fact, on the evening of 20 April 1967, the day before the coup took place, the State Department cabled Talbot, encouraging him to seek a rapprochement between the palace and the Papandreous as a way to "stay [the King's] hand from imposing dictatorship in [the] event [the] CU wins [a] majority" in the upcoming elections. Reiterating that the US was "fully aware of [the elder] Papandreou's devotion to democracy, his long history of anti-Communism, and his dedication to [the] welfare of his country," the State Department suggested a compromise that would exchange Papandreou's assurances that he would not carry out a purge of the military for the King's commitment not to seek Andreas's arrest over the ASPIDA affair.[53] In short, as was the case with the increased respectability of the left, the embassy did not appear to be alarmed by the prospect of a George Papandreou electoral victory, nor particularly worried about his son, the alleged "éminence grise" of the Center Union.

Finally, embassy officials did not appear to be terribly concerned about growing anti-Americanism in Greece either. This is despite the fact that, as 1964 came to a close, American officials both at the embassy in Athens and the consulate in Thessaloniki noted with increased frequency that anti-Americanism was on the rise in the country, attributing this trend in part to the Center Union's flirtatious relationship with the left.[54] Noting that Andreas Papandreou's actions and rhetoric, in

[52]Athens to State, Secret, Airgram A-197, 9/13/65, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[53]State to Athens, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 179151, 4/20/67, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[54]Thessaloniki to State, Limited Official Use, Airgram A-4, 7/10/64, POL 14 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

particular, had contributed greatly to popular anti-American perceptions, the embassy concluded that a Papandreou electoral victory would have implications for US-Greek relations. Unlike George Papandreou, "who has repeatedly declared that he is unaware of any U.S. intervention in his ouster," Andreas "has suggested that the U.S. Embassy and particularly the 'CIA' played a major role in his father's fall from power." Given such pronouncements, the embassy predicted that Andreas would encourage a more "independent" foreign policy, which would eventually lead the country to develop closer ties with nonaligned and communist-bloc countries. Having complained of "NATO 'infringement' of Greek sovereignty," Andreas would also probably attempt to decrease Greece's commitments to NATO.[55]

Surprisingly, despite such conclusions, the embassy maintained that what Andreas was calling for—a more independent Greece—was probably natural and to be expected: "[T]here is no reason to expect any major crisis in … Greek-US relations provided … [that t]he United States withdraws from its avuncular role gracefully."[56] Thus, as late as March 1967, the embassy restated its long-held view:

> Andreas is sniping at the United States with increasing vigor, and perhaps this reflects a personal animosity that bodes ill for Greek-American relations if he becomes either the official or the shadow Prime Minister. It may, however, be the calculated act of a shrewd politician who has realized that the "conventional wisdom" which still accepts the United States as deeply involved and [an] inevitable supporter of the Greek State and economy is no longer axiomatic, and we are fair game as a whipping boy. Our day-to-day relations with Greek people and officials remain friendly, and probably easier than those of any other foreign mission, but there are any number of signs that we can no longer expect our point of view to be accepted with little or no argument. *It would be odd if this were otherwise, considering the almost monotonous regularity with which we have been forced since 1963 to say no to Greek requests. … This is not to argue for a new renewal of that relationship; it is rather, a suggestion that we recognize the*

[55] Athens to State, Confidential, Airgram A-321, 11/8/65, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[56] "Greece: Outlook for Crises – 1965-68," Confidential, 10/6/64, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (NEA), Office of the Country Director for Greece (NEA/GRK), Records relating to Greece, 1964–66, Box 5, RG 59, USNA.

simple fact that our economic cards have been mostly played, and the Greeks now are coming to realize it.[57]

This view—that a more independent Greece was both natural and to be anticipated—was revealed in the official documents on a number of occasions. For example, Talbot reported on a conversation between himself and Andreas Papandreou, where he told Andreas that he should be aware of the "extent to which the United States Government has been endeavoring in recent years progressively to withdraw from the intimate participation in Greek affairs which had occurred as a result of the circumstances of the immediate post-war era in Greece."[58] Believing that this stance for a more independent Greece was, in fact, the natural response to the United States' own policy of active extrication from such an intimate relationship, the embassy speculated that, in the coming years, Greece would likely establish closer relations with the Common Market, further loosening its ties to the US. Interestingly, this distancing between the two historical allies was seen as a natural outgrowth of the times and not of particular worry.

In short, then, the documentary record shows that the US embassy in Athens did not appear overly concerned by the variety of tensions in precoup Greek political reality. Officials were not alarmed by the coming to power of the Center Union and did not find either George Papandreou or his son, Andreas, particularly dangerous. Finally, neither the increased prestige of the left nor the concomitant decrease in strength by the right alarmed embassy officials to the point of desiring a decisive intervention into Greek politics. The same can also be said about the increased electoral strength and dominance of George Papandreou and the Center Union. Even Andreas Papandreou, who was clearly seen as potentially troublesome by embassy officials, did not alarm them to the point of suggesting any undemocratic moves. As we will see below, this would not be the case for the Greek protagonists of 1967.

[57] Athens to State, Confidential, Airgram A-499, 3/25/67, POL 14 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA (emphasis added).

[58] Athens to State, Confidential, Airgram A-507, 3/30/67, POL GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

Likelihood of a Coup?

As just stated, the Athens embassy appeared largely unalarmed in the pre-coup period. Not only were embassy officials generally not distressed at this time, but they also did not particularly believe that a coup was terribly likely—despite the fact that many Greek political and military elites came to the embassy on a regular basis to either speculate or warn of a coup and/or to enlist the United States' support for one.[59] Specifically, by the summer of 1965, a "number of" senior military officers had begun to express concern to embassy officials regarding the "drift" in the Greek political situation. For example, retired General Sakellariou, who had been ousted as Army Chief of Staff by George Papandreou, told embassy officers that "it is essential Papandreou be 'overthrown' before he drags [the] country down to destruction." Given the view that Andreas Papandreou was a "leftist sympathizer who might lead Greece out of [the] Western camp if he ever came to power," military officers, like Sakellariou, began to increasingly call for an extra-constitutional solution.[60] However, even in the face of such visits, the embassy remained unconvinced of the possibility, claiming that, even though the military might desire the move, the King would not support it. In the embassy's view,

> Before the Military leadership would attempt such a move, it would almost certainly seek [the] palace's approval. There are no indications, however, that [the] king would be willing to go along with an extra legal solution at [the] present time, despite the strong anti-Papandreou propaganda he is [undoubtedly][61] subject to from various rightwing sources.[62]

So long as King Constantine remained opposed to an extra-parliamentary solution, the embassy believed that the military would not take action to overthrow democracy in Greece. Moreover, as long as top military officers remained unconvinced of the need for a coup, a military

[59] One notable exception was the approach to the embassy by General Kardamakis, reported to the State Department by Labouisse and referred to above and below.

[60] Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 1862, 6/18/65, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[61] Original reads: undoubteldy.

[62] Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 1862, 6/28/65, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

overthrow of the democratic order would, in the embassy's estimation, never happen. The following assessment provided by the embassy to the US Department of State in July 1964 reflected this view:

> The Embassy does not believe the situation for a military coup [to be] any riper at this point than it was before the national elections in February 1964 when there were wild rumors that the Left might make great gains, or at the time of shifts in senior military assignments in early 1964 when voices of doom predicted dramatic action. … In assessing [the] chances of [an] attempt by the military to take over, we estimate [that the] top Greek military leaders are not currently sufficiently aroused to provide leadership for such a move. Others at lower levels who might be toying with the idea would probably need far more alarming signs of imminent communist take-over before they gambled. …
>
> [Thus,] the Embassy believes that although there are a few ingredients for a coup in the present-day Greek political cauldron, there is no greater likelihood of a military coup being attempted at this time than there was last winter.[63]

Still later, as late as October 1966, the embassy's assessment had not substantially changed:

> [T]he King and the Army are key factors regarding the question of dictatorship. There is no evidence now that the leadership of the Army favors a deviation from the constitution. … There is also no evidence that the King personally is inclined towards the imposition of dictatorship. On the contrary, it is generally believed that he wants to avoid it. … In the Embassy's view, the King will probably continue to resist the arguments of these rightists and instead will play for more time.[64]

In fact, less than a month before the actual coup, the embassy continued to believe that the King was the critical factor—that without his leadership, the military was unlikely to make a move. This view was expressed again in a 24 March 1967 dispatch to the Department of State:

[63] Athens to State, Secret, Airgram A-31, 7/9/64, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[64] Athens to State, Confidential, Airgram A-229, 10/26/66, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> In our view, a plan probably does exist for certain actions by [the] military in [the] event of a dictatorship, but there is no evidence that [the] Army leadership is actually plotting to create conditions leading to [a] deviation from [the] constitution. On [the] contrary, we hold to [the] opinion that [the] military would not seek independently to impose a dictatorship; but it would support a dictatorship if [the] King decided in favor of such a regime.[65]

In sum, as long as the King and army leadership did not favor a deviation, an overthrow of democracy was not seen as likely. Thus, the embassy remained unconvinced of a coup likelihood throughout this period and until the coup itself actually happened.

A Coup? "Not a Solution"

But while the US did not find a coup very likely, perhaps the most important question is its attitude toward one—that is, what signals did it give over its potential support for such a move? Throughout virtually the entire pre-coup period, not only did the embassy not believe a coup to be imminent, but actively discouraged coup activity at every opportunity, trying instead to achieve compromise among the various antagonistic factions to avert it.

Ample and consistent evidence that the embassy was not in favor of an extra-parliamentary solution is provided in cables between Athens and Washington. A clear example was the US response to the report it received in 1963 from General Kardamakis about an imminent coup (described above). Labouisse found this information so "disturbing" and the "fateful consequences to Greece of this contemplated action" so dangerous that he proposed sending his military attaché back to Kardamakis to dissuade him strongly of such a move.[66] The State Department response came from the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs—Phillips Talbot—who would soon succeed Labouisse in Athens. Arguing that "Greece with a totalitarian government in the Balkans would be a staggering blow to the cause of democracy in the area," Talbot wrote:

[65] Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 4335, 3/24/67, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[66] Labouisse to Rusk, Top Secret, 4/5/63, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, Document 343.

> We agree with your analysis there is no justification for the type of action Kardamakis proposes. We concur that it jeopardizes much of what has been accomplished in Greece's economic as well as military advancement. Such a "solution" would be regarded as a blemish on Greece's good name, particularly here in the United States. In view of our long involvement and large investment in Greece, we could not stand idly by and witness the creation of a Latin American type of totalitarian government in Greece, nor do we want a return to the Metaxas kind of tyranny. We are therefore unalterably opposed to such a "solution" in Greece.[67]

Later, as the disagreement between George Papandreou and the King reached a boiling point and the embassy began to report that the King had come to believe that he must remove the Papandreous (especially Andreas) from government in order to keep the armed forces loyal to him,[68] the embassy also began to report on a number of very specific scenarios that had been put forward to it as possible solutions to the impasse. For example, the embassy reported that "certain political personalities," among them Constantine Rodopoulos, who had served as the president of parliament under a former ERE government, as well as former conservative prime minister Panayiotis Pipinelis, had approached it to propose solutions that were "ostensibly based on Parliamentary approval but actually resting on military force." Desiring to avoid elections which would return the Papandreou government to power while, at the same time, restricting the Greek left, Rodopoulos proposed that the King might charge someone to form a government that would, in turn, seek parliamentary approval to declare martial law and adjourn parliament for six or more months. According to Rodopoulos, the majority of parliamentary deputies would be willing to approve such a government as it would provide a possible way out of the impasse and forestall elections. The solution would also allow deputies to keep their parliamentary seats and salaries. Interestingly, the embassy appeared unwilling to countenance this extra-parliamentary solution and reported that it had strongly discouraged it. Norbert Anschuetz, the interim chargé d'affaires in Athens, wrote to the Department of State that:

[67] Talbot to Labouisse, Top Secret, 4/22/63, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, Document 344.

[68] Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 80, 7/16/65, POL 15-1 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> Aside from [the] obvious question of democratic principle involved, I made clear to Rodopoulos my grave reservations as to [the] efficacy of such a solution and my doubt that Greek opinion would, in fact, support such an action which, moreover, might provide the Communists with a pretext to resort to some sort of armed resistance.[69]

An alternative solution to the Rodopoulos plan was proposed by one of the Center Union "apostates" and then-Defense Minister Stavros Costopoulos. According to the embassy, the Costopoulos scenario involved the arrest of the twenty-two EDA deputies in parliament, who would be detained following violent, communist-provoked riots. Once arrested, a vote of confidence for a new prime minister and government would be called since, with their removal, the anti-Papandreou forces would then outnumber those supporting him. According to the embassy, Costopoulos was interested in learning how the "American public" would react to such a turn of events in Greece. Again, Anschuetz's response appears to have been unequivocal: "I replied that this formula would probably strike international opinion as rather contrived and that I was not at all confident that Greek opinion would accept it without some violent repercussions."[70]

Apparently believing that such a coup would be counter to US interests and therefore would not be treated as a purely Greek internal affair, the Department of State instructed the embassy to be more explicit about the US government's opposition. Therefore, in the words of one embassy document:

> [The] Embassy remains hopeful that [a] head-on collision will be averted through [the] realization by both sides that confrontation [is] not in their best interests, and we are taking every opportunity to point out that [such a] confrontation would be damaging to [the] nation's interests.[71]

Indeed, even as late as March 1967, just weeks before the colonels overthrew democracy, when the King had asked whether he could "count on

[69] Athens to State, Secret, Airgram A-197, 9/13/65, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[70] Athens to State, Secret, Airgram A-197, 9/13/65, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[71] Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 1917, 6/30/65, POL 15 GREECE, 1964–66 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

United States support should he be forced to undertake a constitutional deviation,"[72] Talbot's response was consistent with the American position throughout the pre-coup period. The documentary records show that American officials expressed their view internally—and to Greek elites—that a coup would be bad for Greece and bad for US interests, counseling them that such an act should be avoided. When asked, Talbot informed King Constantine that the United States would not support a coup, detailing the reasons why such an overthrow of democracy would be a bad idea. Emphasizing the United States' "traditional opposition to dictatorial solutions," Talbot stressed that extra-parliamentary solutions "were wrong in principle" and had rarely been successful when tried elsewhere. In fact, in a complete reversal of the colonels' justification for a coup to *save* Greece from communism, Talbot argued that a coup could actually *advance* communist aims: "A dictatorship in Greece might cause short-term upheavals, leading to more repressive measures, and to [a] coalescence of opposition forces which in turn could be penetrated and dominated by international communist agents." Moreover, "adverse international reactions would not be limited to the communist apparatus but would include supporters of democracy … [and c]onsiderable criticism could be expected in [the] United States." Talbot then restated that the "guiding principle of United States [policy] in [the] Eastern Mediterranean" was to "encourage progress and stability in Greece and to maintain close relations with Greece"—both of which, he believed, would be jeopardized by any extra-parliamentary deviation.[73] Having thus put itself on the side of democratic government, the ambassador would continue to encourage "conciliation and compromise," warning the King and others "with increasing plainness" of the dangers associated with extra-constitutionalism.[74]

In short, then, there is no evidence in the documents analyzed that the US embassy clearly saw the coup coming. Instead, since the generals and King Constantine did not favor a military overthrow of government, embassy officials continued to believe until the very end that a coup was

[72] Athens to State, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 4574, 4/9/67, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[73] Athens to State, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 4574, 4/9/67, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[74] Athens to State, Secret/Personal for the Secretary from Ambassador, Telegram 4651, 4/14/67, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

neither imminent nor very likely. Perhaps more importantly, there is also a great deal of evidence which shows that the US was in principle opposed to a coup and made this clear to Greek political and military elites. In fact, when the coup finally happened in April 1967, the embassy was caught by surprise—just as were Greek political elites and the monarchy. Faced with an unexpected turn of events, embassy officials had to figure out very quickly how to react to what was essentially a *fait accompli*. It is to this reaction of US government officials that we now turn.

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CHAPTER 2

A *Fait Accompli*: The US Reaction to the Greek Military Coup of 1967

The launching of the military dictatorship proved to be a decisive turning point in relations between Greece and the United States. Accordingly, this chapter picks up the story with 21 April 1967. It considers how the United States initially reacted to the events of the coup, as well as how, over the next several weeks and months, the US attempted to arrive at a longer-term policy toward the colonels. Thus, there are two main issues that we address here: (a) the initial US reaction to the coup (which in part sheds additional light on the degree to which the US was aware of or prepared for it, one of the key questions considered in Chapter 1) and (b) the initial formulation of a foreign policy approach, as it became increasingly clear that the colonels were likely to last in power for some length of time.

The Initial US Reaction

As already outlined in Chapter 1, the United States was highly skeptical that a coup in Greece was in the offing in early 1967. While rumors had been swirling for months that such an event might occur, the actual timing and course of events seem to have taken the embassy by surprise. Perhaps because such rumors and potential plots had been floated so repeatedly in the past, the American embassy in Athens had actively discounted—and even became somewhat dismissive of—the notion that a coup was imminent. Thus, the coup on the morning of 21 April 1967

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seems to have come as a genuine surprise.[1] This was particularly true with respect to the way in which the coup occurred: while many observers in Greece and abroad believed that a "deviation" from constitutional rule was possible, and while the embassy had reported to Washington on various such scenarios, few if any in Greece or in the Department of State seem to have been prepared for a coup by a group of middle-ranking army officers—particularly as opposed to the more likely candidates, the King and/or top generals.[2] Thus, when the coup occurred, the US found itself surprised and scrambling for both information on what was happening, as well as trying to formulate an on-the-spot response to an event for which it was clearly unprepared. On the afternoon of 21 April, the Near East desk at the State Department reported to Secretary of State Dean Rusk:

> Shortly after midnight this morning a military group seized power in Athens, arrested the Prime Minister and various party leaders (including George and Andreas Papandreou) and then announced over the Athens radio that the Army had "taken control" of the country. … According to Embassy Athens, the coup appears to have been staged by middle and lower grade officers, who presented [a] fait accompli to the King and the military high command. The King's position is still somewhat ambiguous although he reportedly will swear in the new government, he may be under duress, and reportedly his aide de camp has been seized (although later released). A clearer indication of the King's position should be obtained following [a] meeting scheduled for this afternoon … between the King and Ambassador Talbot.[3]

Primarily, the US government's uncertainty revolved around who among the military had launched the coup, the King's role in the overthrow and, if he was not involved, what his position vis-à-vis the new regime

[1] On the dictatorship itself and this period, see Antoniou et al. (2017), Athenian (1972), Barkman (1989), Brown (1980, 1986), Clogg (1982), Clogg and Yannopoulos (1972), Couloumbis (1968, 1974, 2004), Danopoulos (1983, 1984, 1985), Kassimeris (2006), Klarevas (2006), Kornetis (2016), Kouki and Antoniou (2017), Meletopoulos (2000), Murtagh (1994), Nikolakakis (2017), Panourgiá (2009), Papandreou (1970), Rizas (2002), Schwab and Frangos (1973), Stavrou (1976), Sulzberger (1970), Tsoucalas (1969), Veremis (1987, 1997), Vournas (2003), Woodhouse (1985), and Xydis (1974).

[2] For an embassy official's view of the coup, see Keeley (2011).

[3] Battle to Rusk, Secret, 4/21/67, #121, "Greece, Memos and Misc. [2 of 2], Vol. II, 1/66-7/67," Country File: Cyprus, Greece, NSF, Box 126, LBJ Library.

would be. This uncertainty was clear in a memo to President Lyndon Johnson on the 21st which stated: "Reports are still fragmentary. Ambassador Talbot is of the view that a small army group triggered the coup. But the State Department specialists suspect the King was in on it from the beginning. … Principal political figures have been arrested. … Talbot is urging military leaders not to liquidate those political opponents they now hold in custody."[4]

As implied by these and other documents, a key contributor to the fact that the US was caught off guard was its miscalculation of the King's influence over the military—and in particular, the strength (or, more precisely, the weakness) of the Greek military's chain of command. Indeed, a variety of embassy assessments in the pre-coup period indicated that, were a coup to take place, it would almost certainly happen with the knowledge and backing of the King or be launched and directed by him personally. The fact that the actual coup bypassed the King and happened without his knowledge reveals the degree to which the US was not only surprised by the events of 21 April, but also had actually misunderstood and overestimated the level of influence the King had over important sections of the military.

In fact, a week after the coup took place, Brigadier Stylianos Pattakos, the authoritarian regime's minister of the interior, confirmed to Talbot that King Constantine—the one person many believed would have been a potential coup-plotter himself—did not know anything about the colonels' coup.[5] The same could be said for the leaders of the mainstream right. In the days after the coup, the embassy reported that moderate rightist politicians, including ERE leader Panayiotis Kanellopoulos and others, had been hoodwinked by the colonels and effectively "duped not by their own enemies but by groups with roughly similar anxieties about strong leftist trends in Greece."[6] After visiting Kanellopoulos under house arrest on April 24, for example, an embassy official reported that he was "still in [a] state of shock over [the] coup" and that "he had no, absolutely no, warning

[4]Rostow to Nixon, Confidential, 4/21/67, #119, "Greece, Memos and Misc. [2 of 2], Vol. II, 1/66-7/67," Country File: Cyprus, Greece, NSF, Box 126, LBJ Library.

[5]Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 5016, 4/28/67, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[6]Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 4856, 4/23/67, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

of [the] coup and no choice but to surrender to soldiers who came to his house" to arrest him. Kanellopoulos had been taken to the Ministry of Defense (known also in Greece as the Pentagon) where he "immediately realized that [the] coup was engineered not by senior military officers." He later met briefly with the King and suggested that perhaps he could summon all the senior officers present at the Pentagon and order the arrest of those who had carried out the coup. The King replied that this would likely lead to bloodshed, something he was not willing to risk. Given the King's unwillingness to confront the coup-makers directly, Constantine's only option, in Kanellopoulos's view, was "to compromise and play along with [the] junta in [the] hope of influencing it in [the] direction of [a] return to normality." Kanellopoulos then offered his own assessment of where US policy should lead:

> [He] said he appreciated that [the] USG [US Government] was in [a] difficult position and that there was no easy answer [as] to what attitude it should adopt. For his part, he had always been and always would be against dictatorships, but what had happened had happened.[7] We are faced with [a] fait accompli. In any case, he hoped that [the] USG would not decide to di[s]continue military assistance. He had no great confidence that [the] triumvirate could be influenced to follow [a] course leading to [a] return of normality, but [at] least one could have hope.[8]

Once the initial shock was over, the US was then faced with the task of crafting a response to the events of 21 April. The initial reaction can best be characterized as tentative and cautious. Talbot's own view was that due to the "pervasive" nature of US-Greek relations on many levels, particularly the significant US military presence in the country, the United States had to quickly arrive at a settled policy toward the regime. In the short run, Talbot cabled that he intended to maintain contact with the new regime at the working—as opposed to the official—level unless instructed otherwise by the State Department. But, he argued, "We must either prepare to resume [normal relations] or to oppose the

[7] The original reads: "but what had happended had happended."

[8] Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 4891, 4/24/67, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

new government by suspension of military assistance, defense planning, and other cooperative programs."[9]

The immediate response of the Department of State was that Talbot should adopt an attitude of "aloofness and coolness" toward the colonels' regime.[10] As the State Department instructed, the short-run goal was to assess the stability of the new situation, while maintaining quiet working contact and pressing the regime to respect human rights and work toward a restoration of constitutional rule. Thus, the Near East desk instructed the embassy in nearly identical terms:

> [T]o continue this policy of coolness and aloofness toward the Greek Government and … not dissipate our considerable leverage (and that of the King) without obtaining major concessions in return. We have also stressed that the Ambassador reiterate to the Government our concern for the wellbeing of the political prisoners. … We plan to suspend, on a selective basis, MAP[11] shipments headed for Greece until the situation is clarified. This is not a formal discontinuance of MAP but simply [a] selective suspension of delivery.[12]

Thus, in the immediate aftermath of the coup, the US suspended large-scale military assistance to Greece and froze long-term military planning, but maintained relations at the subministerial level.

By so doing, the US adopted a cautious, somewhat ambivalent, wait-and-see attitude, continuing to communicate with the new regime quietly, attempting to gather information about the colonels and to discern whether the new government was likely to last, while communicating its in-principle opposition to the imposition of military rule in a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member state and its desire for a swift return to constitutional government. The Department of State reiterated that it agreed with the embassy's approach:

[9] Battle to the Acting Secretary, Secret/ExDis, S/S 6895, 4/24/67, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[10] State to Athens, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 183001, 4/26/67, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[11] Military Assistance Program.

[12] Battle to the Acting Secretary, Secret ExDis, S/S 6895, 4/24/67, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> of remaining cool and aloof towards [the] GOG [Government of Greece] … and we recommend that you continue it. … Therefore you should continue to retain [a] cool attitude towards [the] govt., at [the] same time keeping lines of communication open.[13]

Faced with this chilly attitude, the reaction of the colonels' regime was to be shocked at the US's less than enthusiastic response. At virtually every meeting between US and Greek officials in the early days after the coup, Greek officials expressed their deep disappointment and bitterness at the hesitant American reaction to the coup. The embassy reported that members of the regime were truly distressed, displaying "great sensitivity"—even incredulity—that the US did not fully sympathize with its aims and see the necessity of its actions. Talbot reported:

> Like [a] 1958 model Ayub, they declare themselves [a] thousand percent pro-American and are urgently seeking any hint of American understanding of what they're doing. … Until now [the] embassy has indicated [its] readiness to stay in communication with [the] new government and top military leadership but has coldly pointed out [the] American reaction to [the] overthrow of parliamentary government of a NATO ally by [a] military establishment trained and equipped by Americans. We have been all but rude to [Lt. Gen.] Spandidakis and others in cross-examining their assertions that they and other properly constituted commanders are actually in control of [the] army.[14]

The next day Talbot would repeat that the colonels were taken aback by the embassy's reaction to the coup. Specifically, Colonel Nikolaos Makarezos was reported to be:

> deeply [disturbed][15] by [the] negative reaction of [the] embassy to [the] coup and [the] embassy's failure to understand [that] such drastic action was essential 'to save the nation'. Specifically, [Greek] leaders have [the] impression that [the] embassy is maneuvering in some undefined way against them in favor of another 'scheme'.

[13]State to Athens, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 181282, 4/24/67, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[14]Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 4901, 4/24/67, POL 23-8 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[15]The original reads: "distrubed."

In the same cable, Talbot reported that the deputy prime minister and defense minister, Lt. Gen. Grigorios Spandidakis, had complained that it was difficult for him to understand the US's misunderstanding of the obvious reasons for the coup—given that, in the Turkish military's 1961 coup, "government leaders were 'strung up by their necks,' yet U.S.-Turkish ties remained strong." He was particularly frustrated given that, in his words, the "objectives" of the new government were "identical to those of the U.S." Spandidakis claimed that "[H]e recognized U.S. repugnance at [a] military coup, stating [that] Greece felt the same way, but emphasized that [the] entire army considered this far preferable to [a] communist takeover." In the cable, Talbot reported to State that "[t]hroughout [the] discussion, Spandidakis appeared sincerely puzzled and deeply disturbed over [the] U.S. reaction, and pled for 'understanding and support'."[16]

A similar reaction—this one of Greek defense officials at their meeting with American JUSMAGG[17] officers on 22 June—was reported by the American embassy to State. At that meeting, Lt. Gen. Napoleon Paleologopoulos, the Deputy Chief of the Hellenic National Defense General Staff, "while personally amiable, expressed his extreme and increased bitterness at the US." "Speaking as a friend, but a very bitter one," Paleologopoulos said, "I will always love [the US] in my heart but I cannot understand the policy it is following." He reportedly went on to make a number of points. Paleologopoulos argued that since 21 April, the "US has gone out of its way to offend Greece … [and] seemed to search for ways to 'punish us'." Arguing that US personnel had failed to show common courtesy to the Greek military, Paleologopoulos cited as an example a recently arrived US army attache who made no effort to call on him. Instead, the two men had met by chance in a hall of the Greek Pentagon. According to Paleologopoulos, in contrast to the cold reception of the US, the "UK and FRG[18] had immediately established [the] warmest relations with the GOG. … [For example, the] UK army attache had recently given [a] 'very lovely' party to which senior Greek military were invited and [the] FRG attache had given [a] 'very

[16]Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 4875, 4/24/67, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[17]The Joint US Military Aid Group to Greece.

[18]Federal Republic of Germany.

friendly' reception to which all senior Greek military had been invited." Paleologopoulos concluded: "You obviously do not like us and in such cases we would normally declare people who do not like us as 'persona non grata' and give them 48 hours to leave the country." He closed by repeating that "he was speaking as a friend, but a very bitter one." The 22 June meeting ended with Admiral Spyridon Avgeris, the Chief of the General Staff, "express[ing] the thought, though indirectly, that 'you should either be with us or get out.' … [A]s have so many Greek military personnel, [he] expressed his complete inability to understand why [the] US took no action against Turkey after its revolution where 'they chopped off the peoples' (sic) heads,' and [yet] has reacted so violently to the recent conditions in Greece."[19]

This paralleled the rough ride Talbot had received a month earlier in a meeting with the junta's prime minister, Constantine Kollias. Talbot recounted:

> Our exchange started with some rather starchy references by Kollias to United States "misunderstanding" of Greek military action to save Greece. At first Kollias was edgy and visibly upset … Greeks, Kollias said, are "very sorry" and he feels "great bitterness" because [their] American friends do not seem to realize [the] great necessity for change and continue [their] unfavorable criticism on top of which they have also cut military assistance. Greeks many times have shown [that] they can live on cats and mice rather than betray [an] ideal in which they believe. … He himself had starved and fought as a simple solider in [the] cause of liberty and had now given up [a] judicial career of forty years to assist in [the] service of his country. He would never agree to serve a cause whose purpose was [the] imposition of a dictatorial regime. Rather this government's purpose is to establish real freedom and democracy in order to save [the] country from [the] chaos and catastrophe that was about to befall it. [The] Revolution of April 21 was perhaps [the] most civilized, most liberal and most bloodless revolution ever to occur. … After twenty minutes of similar oratory I managed to riposte that having listened with close attention I was greatly disappointed to realize that [the] GOG apparently had not understood [the] major points [the] USG had been seeking to make.[20]

[19]Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 5995, 6/23/67, DEF 19 US-GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[20]Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 5377, 5/21/67, POL 15-1 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

Put simply, such bewilderment on the part of the coupmakers and their close associates indicates their own clear miscalculation of how the US would react to the overthrow of Greek democracy. Their obvious expectation that the US would welcome their move to contain the communist "threat" was clearly dashed and their frustration continued to mount as their closest ally was hesitant, failing to understand "the necessity" of the military overthrow.

An important part of the US's initial hesitation in the early days of the coup was its desire to gauge the reaction of King Constantine and what effect his potential actions—ranging from approval of the new regime to a countercoup of his own—would have. The King's position was deeply uncertain, both to him and to the United States, as reported by Talbot on 22 April:

> I have just had [a] two-hour talk with King Constantine at [the] royal palace at Tatoi. He believes he faces [an] immediate showdown on signing [the] royal decree establishing martial law and suspending certain articles of [the] constitution. If he continues to refuse to sign [the] decree, his advisers believe his remaining hours as monarch may be very few. He is concerned about [the] wellbeing of his wife, who is to have [a] baby next month, and other members of his family. He does not consider himself in control of [the] Greek military or of [the] government, and is not sure he is at present [a] free agent. When I left Tatoi he had not yet decided whether to capitulate. While our contacts today with government sources have not exposed any immediate intention to move against [the] King we are unable to estimate what [the] instigators of [the] colonels' coup would do if [the] King should persist in [his] refusal to sign [the] decree.[21]

While concerned about the King's position, the US was, however, not about to take any military action to restore his control and the normal military chain of command, as the King requested. In fact, the most the State Department appeared willing to do was to actively assist in the evacuation of the royal family from Greece should they feel that their lives were in grave danger, and on 21 April it was "actively looking into [the] whereabouts of [a] helicopter that might be able to evacuate" them.[22]

[21]Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 4882, 4/22/67, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[22]State to Athens, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 180319, 4/21/67, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

Such assistance of a personal nature, however, clearly did not extend to any military action intended to restore the King's political power. As the Department cabled the embassy:

> As to [the] question of [a] possible landing of US marines to help him and [the] generals re-assert their control over the armed forces, we would hope that that was more a rhetorical question than a real one. If the King should return to this question, you should disabuse him of any hope on this score.[23]

Moreover, the State Department also ruled out any secret air operation to rescue the royal family on the grounds that, were they to be shot down, the US would be complicit in their deaths. If an evacuation did prove unavoidable, the US would instead use the Queen's late-stage pregnancy as a justification. It is important to note, however, that despite its willingness to assist in the royal family's evacuation, the State Department strongly preferred the King to remain in Greece in order to "continue to exert leverage" on the regime.[24]

Specifically, the US wanted to see how the King would respond to the coup, basing its own policy on the success or failure of his efforts. Initially, the embassy wondered if the King would, in fact, be able to reassert his control over the armed forces, perhaps by launching his own countercoup against the colonels. While chapter one's analysis of the run-up to the coup of 21 April reveals that the US was opposed to any constitutional deviation and had directly warned the King (and others) of the dangers of such a move, the American attitude appears to have shifted once the colonels' coup actually took place. Now, the US appeared to have preferred a royal countercoup against the colonels. Under those particular circumstances, a royal coup—which the US had opposed pre-21 April—suddenly seemed more attractive for the primary reason that the King was closely associated with the US and could, the State Department believed, be relied upon to move in ways consonant with US interests in Greece. At the very least, the US believed that the King's "position vis-a-vis the military officers controlling the government

[23]State to Athens, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 180319, 4/21/67, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[24]State to Athens, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 180838, 4/24/67, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

is stronger than he appears to think and that he should use what we consider to be their considerable need for him to extract from them the maximum concessions."[25]

However, such pressure by the King—or indeed a countercoup by him or another group within the military—never materialized in the early days of the new regime.[26] Instead, two days after the coup, on 23 April, the embassy informed the Department of State that:

> Sixty hours after [the] coup [the] embassy estimates that [the] new authoritarian government is solidly in control [and] no repeat no significant opposition exists to [the] present control of the armed forces. Chances of [a] countercoup, never bright, have sunk hour by hour and now seem virtually nil. [The] King, whose surprise at and opposition to [the] coup is becoming increasingly widely recognized here, presumably is also recognizing [the] coup as [a] fait accompli.[27]

In short, within two days of the putsch, it had become apparent that the coup was here to stay.

To this, the State Department replied by counseling the embassy that it would likely have to work with the regime, but that the King should be allowed to take the first steps. The US could then follow his lead.

> We concur in [the] continuation [of] normal working relations with [the] GOG at [the] sub-ministerial level … We also concur that we[,] like the King[,] will need a modus vivendi with this Government but believe that [the] establishment of ours should await [the] establishment of his. … [We] believe that we should hold off on going to [the] bargaining table [with the GOG] for [the] moment, leaving it to [the] King to press for broadening [the] basis of Government. We hope that he will work to decrease [the] extensive security measures now in force and continue [to] encourage men of stature and ability to come into Government.[28]

[25]State to Athens, Secret, Telegram 180648, 4/22/67, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[26]The King did eventually launch an unsuccessful countercoup attempt in December 1967.

[27]Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 4856, 4/23/67, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[28]State to Athens, Secret, Telegram 181462, 4/24/67, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

The King was important to the US's early strategy for at least two reasons. First, the fact that Greece was a constitutional monarchy obviated the problem of US formal diplomatic recognition of the military junta. As the US ambassador was accredited to the King, and not to the government of the day, there was no thorny issue of diplomatic recognition to resolve so long as the regime was at least nominally serving as the King's government. However, as will be discussed in more detail below, the US found itself on the horns of a dilemma that would present itself for the next seven years. On the one hand, the national security interests of the US lay in maintaining good relations with Greece, an important anchor of the NATO presence in southeastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. As already outlined in Chapter 1, in the context of the Cold War,[29] the maintenance of a pro-Western, pro-NATO, pro-American regime in Athens was a top priority. Thus, despite what were clear US misgivings about the colonels' regime, it was, in a sense, the hand that the US was dealt. On the other hand, as argued below, there was a keen awareness on the part of the State Department and embassy that any appearance of US recognition of, much less support for, the colonels would invite bitter criticism in the US and throughout Western Europe.

The fact that the US did not have to recognize the junta as the legitimate government of Greece since the ambassador was accredited to the King removed at least that one problem. In fact, not only was a US dilemma solved in this way, but also the colonels were happy to receive what they took as implicit recognition of their regime. At his first meeting with Talbot, Kollias asked him to confirm a recent AP report quoting a State Department spokesman that there was no question regarding the recognition of the government in Greece since the American ambassador in Athens was accredited to the King. Talbot confirmed this to be the case and Kollias—rather unnecessarily—conveyed his personal thanks and those of his government.[30]

A second reason for the early US emphasis on the King was that the US clearly felt that the King would potentially provide the United States with its best potential source of leverage on the colonels. As discussed above, while the US had actively discouraged any deviation from parliamentary democracy in the months leading to April 1967, once such a deviation actually occurred, the Department of State seems to have

[29] On the place of Greece in Cold War politics, see Maragkou (2014).

[30] Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 4964, 4/26/1967, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

initially preferred that its close ally, the King, be in a position of power. Thus, while the US was willing to evacuate the royal family from Greece, its clear preference in the early days was for the King to remain and use his position—as head of state, commander in chief of the armed forces, and, of course, part of the right-wing political establishment in Greece—to influence the new government. In a State Department cable to the embassy one day after the coup took place, for example, the Department stated the view that it was "essential that the King remain in Greece. … We think that his efforts vis-a-vis the coup officers should be toward reaching a compromise of [the] type which will make it clear to [the] Greek people that [the] King has not capitulated but has forced military leaders to make significant concessions. … [I]t is our view that if he capitulates he will have lost all opportunity for leadership."[31]

Importantly, this hope—that the King would provide a source of significant influence and leverage on the new regime—quickly proved to be false. Instead, on 25 April, the King arrived at a largely concessionary *modus vivendi* with the new government: With his decision to swear in the new dictatorial cabinet and preside over its first meeting, his real ability to influence the course of the regime (if he actually had any) virtually vanished. The colonels accepted this as an indication that he would not actively work to oppose them and were happy to project his actions to the Greek public as an implicit blessing of their regime. From that point on, the King's political influence waned dramatically.

Constructing a Longer-Term Policy

At virtually the same moment, however, the US began to accomplish its own reconciliation with the facts on the ground in Athens. Both Ambassador Talbot and the State Department began a transition from a very brief initial phase of hesitation and uncertainty in US policy toward a second phase in which a longer-term approach to the regime developed. First, Talbot took the position that it was time to move toward more normal relations with the colonels. On 25 April, he cabled the State Department that he was prepared to formally meet the junta leaders: "In light of [the] King's decision [to swear in the new cabinet] I see little to be gained by not responding to [Prime Minister Kollias's]

[31]State to Athens, Secret, Telegram 180648, 4/22/67, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

request [for a meeting]." He went on to add that he would use the opportunity to pressure the government for a return to democratic rule:

> It is my intention to make it abundantly clear to the [prime minister] that the degree of future cooperation between [the] USG and [the] GOG will be determined step-by-step by the public obligations and tangible actions which [the] GOG takes to restore representative government and civil liberties.[32]

This cable presaged what would become a two-pronged approach toward the colonels over the succeeding months and years, even surviving in its basic form the change from the Johnson to the Nixon administration. The first part of this approach was a willingness to work with the colonels as a means of maintaining US influence in Greece and southeastern Europe, particularly given Greece's strategic proximity to Turkey, the Middle East, and North Africa. As noted earlier, in the context of the Cold War, the overriding concern of US policy makers was not—as became evident in Greece—the promotion of democracy in and of itself, but rather the promotion of US strategic interests through ongoing support for pro-Western, pro-NATO regimes. Despite their flaws, the colonels were vehemently anti-communist and, particularly in the early days of the regime, very committed to the Western alliance. This fact, the colonels rightly assumed, meant that their regime would receive the benefit of the doubt; as later argued in this book, with no other alternative at hand, the US believed it was essentially in a position of having to work with the colonels.

The second prong of the US approach, however, was to push—with one eye squarely on public opinion in the US and in Western Europe—for a public commitment from the junta that it intended to move Greece back toward constitutional rule, preferably on a set timetable. While this approach may appear to be at odds with the first prong's emphasis on US strategic interests in the Eastern Mediterranean, the State Department and the embassy in Athens saw a necessary linkage between the two parts of the policy. Specifically, US strategic interests were seen as hinging in large measure on public support for NATO in the various countries of the alliance. Particularly with respect to Northern European members of NATO, the US was very concerned

[32]Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 4941, 4/25/67, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

that a prolonged period of military rule in Greece would fundamentally undermine public support for NATO, tarnish the standing of the US in the court of world opinion, weaken cohesion between NATO members, and potentially push some member governments toward moves to isolate and sanction the Greek regime. Thus, while a more prosaic commitment to democracy and human rights was ostensibly behind the US desire for a return to constitutional rule in Greece, as the NATO chapter will illustrate, the strategic danger to the internal cohesion and strength of the NATO alliance should this not occur quickly was a critically important complementary motivation.

In what would prove to be a key statement of early US policy toward the colonels, Daniel Brewster, the head of the Greek desk at the State Department, outlined in a 28 April memo the key areas of US concern and began looking to the long-term future of US policy toward Greece. First, he argued that with the King's apparent *modus vivendi* with the regime—with his statement of cooperation with it and subsequent posing for a photograph with the members of the new regime—there seemed to be no longer any prospect that the King might stage a countercoup in the immediate future. Thus, Brewster argued, the American government must now try to answer the following questions: how it would deal with the regime, what the US wanted from it now, and where it would like the regime to go in the future. From his perspective—one that would become standard among US policy makers over the succeeding years—the appearance of American policy in the eyes of the rest of the world was critical. It was absolutely imperative, he believed, that American policy toward Greece, no matter how focused on US military and strategic interests in the Eastern Mediterranean, not lose sight of public opinion in the US and Western Europe. The image of the United States and of NATO itself was thus dependent upon the US studiously cultivating the appearance that it was only reluctantly working with the colonels' regime, and always with the goal of moving Greece back toward constitutional democracy. As Brewster put it:

> [T]here are two main considerations that we must take into account: protecting the image of the United States in the world community and the retaining of maximum leverage with which to influence the new Greek Government. With regard to our image, it seems self-evident that we must not become so closely identified with the new regime to the point that the impression is created that we participated in the coup or acquiesed

> (sic) in it. … It is to our advantage to reinforce the impression that we had no foreknowledge of the coup, that we did not approve of it when it occurred, and that only reluctantly, and after being convinced that the coup managers intended to move in the general direction of constitutional democracy, did we agree to collaborate with the government. We may expect growing criticism of the new dictatorial regime in Greece from NATO governments. … In all countries of the Alliance the image of NATO will suffer from the presence in the pact of a country governed by a dictatorship.

Based on the inevitable public criticism, it was important for the US to publicly state its regret at the overthrow of democracy and to advocate for its restoration. Brewster continued:

> Therefore, at some early point we must go on record with a statement to the effect that we deeply regret the suspension of constitutional procedures in Greece and that we look forward to an early return to parliamentary democracy (the latter phrase was used by the King himself and we should not hesitate long in following his lead). … Concerning the retaining of our maximum leverage with the new government, we must walk a narrow line between resisting its embrace and at the same time cooperating with it sufficiently to serve our national interests, which includes gradually moving the government towards constitutional government.

Moving the colonels toward democracy would not be an easy course, however. The US had an overriding national security interest in southeastern Europe—one that could be definitively damaged by a rupture in relations between the US and Greece. In this respect, Brewster displayed an acute sensitivity to the possibility that the colonels might become hostile to the US should it push too hard for democratic reform. In so doing, he presaged a concern that would recur repeatedly in the cables of Ambassadors Talbot and Tasca, discussed in later chapters of this book. In direct contrast to the popular image—particularly in Greece—of a seemingly omnipotent United States calling the political shots in Greece, setting up and deposing governments at will, and imposing its foreign policy goals on the country, the truth is that the US felt itself vulnerable to the mood and attitudes of the military junta. The sense of vulnerability, as just mentioned, would persist throughout the entire tenure of the military regime. While this might seem a somewhat curious concern given Greece's economic and military dependence on the US at the time and

given the colonels' intense wish for US approval of their government, Brewster nevertheless argued that an overly aggressive pro-democracy stance could harm US interests. As he put it:

> As I view Greek-U.S. relations over the next six months to a year, they will almost necessarily be uneasy ones, since we will be an ally albeit not an intimate one, and since we will be constantly exerting pressure to move the government in the direction we want. However, while we must avoid its embrace, at the same time we must avoid driving it into a position of hostility. …. [T]o protect themselves they could be driven to acts of desperation against us, if they became convinced that we aimed at destroying them. We are, of course, vulnerable to the new regime on a number of accounts; in addition to Greece's role in the southeastern anchor of NATO, we have a significant investment in installations vital to our national security in Greece which we must protect at all costs. Therefore, the how of our relationship should be a policy of alliance but not intimacy, accompanied by constant pressure on the regime towards our desired ends.

How, then, to go about this? The answer was to secure a statement—and optimally a firm timetable—from the regime's strongman, Colonel George Papadopoulos, for the restoration of democracy.

> This brings us to the second question: What do we want from the new Greek government? It seems to me that on the short-run basis, our first goal should be a declaration from the new government that it intends to move eventually towards a government based on the will of the people—towards parliamentary democracy. Secondly, we might consider encouraging the King to urge the government to form a broader-based Cabinet in place of the collection of colonels and political nonentities that comprise it at the present time. Thirdly, (and this is vitally important), we must impress upon the regime the need for early release of the political detainees. … [W]e should suggest as a kind of quid pro quo a declaration of intent by the government to return eventually to a constitutional basis. … Assuming that this was done, we could then proceed to the question of resuming our military assistance, which has been suspended in the case of significant military items. This could be linked to satisfactory assurances and/or action regarding the political prisoners. Assuming these hurdles were jumped, we could then embark on our long-term program of encouragement of the restoration of civil rights and the return to parliamentary democracy.

In all of this, Brewster maintained that US policy must be about creating an *impression* of a temporary deviation from democracy—one that would be rectified quickly and according to a definite plan. Again, in so doing, Brewster accurately signalled a key concern of US policy for the next seven years:

> The important thing, it seems to me, is to create the impression of progress towards the desired goals. An essential element in this is the drawing up—and the publishing—of a timetable to which the government would be committed. … In sum our overall policy must encompass the following points:
>
> (1) avoidance of close U.S. identification with the coup and the new government,
> (2) maintenance of a cool but correct attitude toward the new government in order not to drive it into a position of hostility toward the U.S.,
> (3) continuous pressure on the new government to move toward a return to constitutional government through exertion of our leverage,
> (4) seek adequate treatment of the political prisoners and the eventual release of all or most of them,
> (5) encourage the new government to demonstrate its intent to move toward constitutional government by public announcement of a timetable, etc.,
> (6) encourage the King to assert his role as leader of <u>all</u> the Greek people.[33]

As subsequent US actions and policies would reveal, this basic strategy remained fairly intact for the next seven years. The US reiterated as a matter of principle—but with a keen sensitivity to public opinion and the internal cohesion of the NATO alliance—its commitment to a restoration of democracy. This took the form of pressure on the colonels to declare their intentions to return to constitutional government—ones, it must be said, which grew increasingly implausible as time wore on with virtually no real movement in that regard.

[33] Brewster to Rockwell, Secret, 4/27/67, POL 1 GREECE-US, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA (emphases in original).

For example, in early May, Talbot met with the junta's foreign minister, Pavlos Economou-Gouras, and told him that "it would come as no surprise to him that [the] military coup had been [a] rude shock to Americans, who had not expected to see MAP equipment used this way in Greece." He told Economou-Gouras that he "should be aware of two areas of deep American concern."

> One was [the] situation of political detainees … [The] second was [the] question of returning to constitutional rule and representative government. We had heard statements of intent, but had seen no clear blueprint. Even [the] Turks … [had] announced [a] seven-man constitutional committee four days after their 1960 coup. [The] United States [was] still examining its policies toward [the] new situation in Greece, and would be greatly helped if clear and credible steps were taken to start Greece back toward [a] constitutional path. In [the] meantime, our review of assistance programs, notably MAP, remained in process.[34]

A few days later, Talbot also had his first meeting with Papadopoulos. When Papadopoulos complained "that [the Greek] government is handicapped by [a] lack of knowledge of how much assistance it can count on from its 'great ally', the United States," Talbot used this opportunity to send a pointed message,

> [c]omment[ing] that … it was important [for the regime] to move swiftly in defining its goals and in establishing priorities. This could not be done, however, without setting target dates for [the] completion of its objectives. [The s]ooner dates could be fixed, [the] better I emphasized it would be for [the] new government in terms of both domestic and international opinion. … I also reminded Papadopoulos that military leaders in many countries … had discovered that prolonged involvement in public administration tended to have [a] corrupting influence on [the] army and that it was essential for [the] integrity of the military to end its involvement as rapidly as possible. … Our conversation ended on my note that, just as [the] new government was now planning for [the] future, Washington was carefully reviewing U.S.-Greek relations, including [the] question of military assistance, in light of recent developments, and that it was for this reason that we are deeply interested in learning [the] intentions of [the] government.[35]

[34]Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 5108, 5/4/67, POL 15-1 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[35]Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 5191, 5/10/67, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

The same message was delivered in Talbot's meeting with the regime's first prime minister, Constantine Kollias, quoted above. After the meeting, Talbot reported that he had sought clarification regarding the form of government the colonels were likely to establish, making it clear to Kollias that the US preferred a representative form of government and urging that concrete steps be taken in that direction:

> [The] USG is not concentrating on the past; it is not suggesting that [the] clock could be turned back. Rather, it is looking to [the] present and future. What direction is this government going to take? If it is to move along [the] lines of military governments fastened on some Arab countries, for example, Americans could be expected to react. … If on other hand this government pursues [the] objective of restoring representative government as quickly as possible, we could expect American policies to move in another direction. [The p]roblem is one of being convincing. As [the] Prime Minister [is] aware, [the] announcement of [a] plan to form [a] constitution-revision committee and submit its product to [a] plebiscite after review by [the] government was [a] favorable step. Yet that simple declaration [was] not enough to persuade international opinion in [the] face of other things that have happened in Greece. … We do not want to see [the] GOG isolated from [the] world. … That is why we are so much interested in persuasive evidence that [the] GOG will indeed move briskly toward constitution revision and representative rule.[36]

As the above examples illustrate, in the early months of the regime, the embassy and State Department applied pressure on the Greek government to democratize, but did so ever so gently so as not to alienate the colonels.

Specifically, while making it known to the colonels that the US preferred a democratic ally, in the end the US was willing to settle for, and work with, a regime that was, at its core, anti-communist and pro-Western. At no time, for instance, do the extant documents reveal any discussion on the part of US officials about actively opposing, much less undermining, the junta. In fact, the evidence shows quite the opposite. American officials were of the view that the collapse of the colonels' regime might actually lead to something worse—perhaps a neutralist, left-leaning regime, potentially led by that *bête noire* of the right, Andreas Papandreou. The fact that such a regime might have had

[36]Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 5377, 5/21/67, POL 15-1 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

popular support—and thus democratic legitimacy—was immaterial. The current undemocratic, but pro-American, regime was preferable to a potentially democratic, but neutralist, one. Given that fact, the US would not seek to take—much less encourage—any action that might precipitate the early collapse of the colonels, at least not without a realistic alternative.

Secretary of State Dean Rusk, in a 2 May meeting with the British ambassador to the US, Sir Patrick Dean, stated the point clearly:

> We wish to moderate [the] coup leaders without at [the] same time provoking [a] revolution against [the] new govt. While we do not wish to do anything which might assist [the] aspirations of Andreas Papandreou, we plan to bring our influence to bear to get [the] govt on [the] road to democratic processes[,] and one of [the] means of leverage vis-a-vis [the] new govt is our military assistance program.[37]

The British government was of a similar mind and followed a largely similar path.[38] Sir Patrick stated that, in his government's view, the "coup govt is firmly entrenched for the immediate future and … nothing would be served by repeated condemnation of the coup. [The n]ew GOG … will undoubtedly be influenced by [the] attitudes expressed by govts and public opinion in NATO countries." In the end, Sir Patrick argued, the "current GOG cannot be 'pushed' off extremist positions but rather must be eased off."[39] As Talbot would restate the policy a week later, by suspending certain deliveries of specific military items, the US government was effectively supporting the overall policy of coolness and aloofness toward the colonels without disrupting the two countries' military cooperation which, he argued, was and would continue to be a "very important element in [the] maintenance of U.S. security interests in [the] Eastern Mediterranean."[40]

[37] State to Athens, Secret, Telegram 187449, 5/3/67, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[38] See Nafpliotis (2013), Conispoliatis (2007), Maragkou (2010, 2013), and Pedaliu (2007).

[39] State to Athens, Secret, Telegram 187449, 5/3/67, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[40] Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 5221, 5/11/67, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA (emphasis added).

A Way Forward

In the end, then, the coup found the United States attempting to balance two somewhat contrary objectives. Out of principle and with a deep concern of growing public outcry over the continued absence of democracy in Greece, the US attempted to use the leverage it had—particularly the granting or withholding of military assistance—to urge the liberalization of repressive measures and an eventual return to parliamentary democracy. However, its overriding concern was to maintain Greece in the NATO camp, serving as a key focal point for US interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. Given that concern, as well as the fear of American policy makers that too much pressure on the regime might either make it hostile to the US or, perhaps worse, strengthen the hand of its leftist opponents, the US was led to adopt a policy of applying quiet pressure, while returning very quickly to usual political and military relations. As Philips Talbot put it, his objective and that of the US government was "to get broadened participation and forward motion in [the] present Greek GOG, *rather than to break it*."[41]

Thus, we find that the US was genuinely surprised by the colonels' coup—perhaps expecting, despite prior warnings, a coup from the King, should one prove necessary. However, once it became clear that Papadopoulos and his men were in power to stay—and crucially once the King made his peace, at least initially, with them—the US accepted the less-than-ideal *fait accompli* and proceeded, in a matter of only days, to work with the new government. Adopting the attitude that the current undemocratic, but pro-NATO regime was preferable to any more democratic, but anti-American alternative, the US cast its lot with the colonels, eventually restoring good relations with the regime, while quietly (but ultimately quite unsuccessfully) repeating its desire for the restoration of democracy. As the colonels themselves must have deduced from a very early stage, the security logic of the Cold War was ultimately to prevail over the idealistic principles of protecting and promoting democracy.

[41] Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 5221, 5/11/67, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA (emphasis added).

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CHAPTER 3

Johnson, Nixon, and Athens: Changing Foreign Policy Toward the Greek Military Dictatorship

As detailed in Chapter 2, in the early days after the coup of 21 April, the United States quickly settled on a policy of working with the colonels' regime, while at the same time gently prodding it to make democratic reforms—not only as a matter of principle, but also in the interests of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) unity and to counter congressional and European criticism of the colonels and their relationship with the United States. Using what it believed to be its most readily available source of influence over the colonels, the US turned to the Military Assistance Program (MAP) to effect change in Athens. Implementing a partial suspension of military aid, the US postponed the delivery of about $34 million worth of major military items, including aircraft, ships, tanks, tank recovery vehicles, armored personnel carriers, and missiles. However, this suspension was calibrated in ways to express US opposition to the overthrow of democracy in Greece, while at the same time keeping the US-Greek military relationship alive. Thus, while the delivery of heavy military items was suspended, the US allowed for the delivery of about $29 million worth of spare parts and other equipment to continue.

This chapter will detail how, over the course of the next five years, first the Johnson administration and, later, that of Nixon, grappled with how to effectively bring about desired change in Athens. What we illustrate here is the United States' two-pronged approach—one advocating for the return of democracy, on the one hand, while prioritizing the importance of Greece to US and NATO strategic interests in the Eastern

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Mediterranean, on the other. Significantly, however, we show that the relative balance between these two objectives was neither static nor uniform. Instead, the relative weight of each prong varied across the different agencies of government (which we further explore in Chapter 4 of this volume) as well as between the two administrations.

We begin our analysis with the Johnson administration's tactics, focusing on the administration's efforts to encourage change in Greece through the use of MAP, as well as its response to King Constantine's abortive countercoup of 13 December 1967. We illustrate how the Johnson administration initially sought to balance US strategic interests with a principled stance on democracy. As time passed, however, the administration quickly placed US strategic concerns over its desire for the return of democracy. Still later, in January 1969, when the newly elected Nixon administration took office, the change in government heralded no dramatic or immediate difference in US policy toward the colonels' Greece. In fact, particularly in its first year, the administration largely continued the two-pronged approach of its predecessor—maintaining the security relationship with Greece as a primary objective while, secondarily, pressing the Greek government for progress on political liberalization and moves toward constitutional government. However, this chapter shows how, over time, the first of these prongs—the emphasis on a good relationship with Greece as a key to security and NATO influence in the Eastern Mediterranean—came to predominate, so much so that the White House would come to specifically declaim constitutional progress as an important aspect of US policy and in which its ambassador in Athens would come close to playing the role of apologist for the colonels. We commence in 1967, as the Johnson administration grappled with how to effectively use MAP to bring about change in Athens.

The Johnson Administration's Policy Toward Greece

As stated above, the Johnson administration envisioned the use of MAP as a primary policy instrument to effect change in Athens. In the early days of the coup, it made clear that the suspension of heavy shipments would only be lifted once real progress on democratic reform had been made. In this vein, Talbot informed King Constantine that a resumption of MAP would be linked to Greek government actions and warned that even additional MAP sanctions were not beyond the realm of possibility. As he stated, "Clearly [the MAP issue] cannot be resolved

satisfactorily before this government has indicated firm constitutional plans. Without such an indication in [the] near future, [the] possibility of [a] *general suspension* of military aid could not be ignored."[1] Since MAP seemed to be one of the few means of leverage the US had over the colonels, military assistance because a centerpiece of the Johnson administration's policy efforts. As put in a telegram sent by Talbot to the Department of State:

> [The c]urrent review of United States MAP is clearly [an] important factor in keeping pressure on [the] GOG for constitutional progress. [A l]imited suspension [of] deliveries of specific items … effectively supports U.S. policy without disrupting Hellenic-American military cooperation which is and, I believe, will continue to be [a] very important element in [the] maintenance of U.S. security interests in [the] Eastern Mediterranean. Since our objective is to get broadened participation and forward motion in [the] present GOG, rather than to break it, much depends on our skill and delicacy in using this pressure to best effect and not overplaying it.[2]

While the suspension of MAP was intended to cajole the colonels into making moves toward constitutionalism, it became clear within months that such moves toward democratic reform were not at all imminent. No sooner did this become obvious than the State Department cabled Athens expressing its deep concern over the failure of the new regime to make progress in a constitutional direction. Pointing to signs of increased repression, the Department of State again linked the resumption of full military aid to real progress toward liberalization:

> [W]e are nonetheless disturbed by … steps taken by [the] new government, as well as by [the] comment by Min[ister] Papadopoulos and press organs close to him which appear to indicate that [the government] does not rpt not intend to return to parliamentarianism in [the] near future. … [W]e are disturbed by certain other developments which seem to suggest a step-up in repressive measures. … [The p]ossibility of returning to normal Greek-U.S. relations, including [a] resumption of MAP, will be directly

[1] Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 5135, 5/5/67, POL 15-1 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA (emphasis added).

[2] Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 5221, 5/11/67, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> influenced by [the] new govt.'s progress in returning to constitutional processes and its handling of political prisoners.[3]

It is important to note, however, that while the Department of State talked tough, the US also sought to reassure Greek officials—who, as noted previously, had become bitter and resentful of the cool US response toward the coup—by softening the blow of the MAP suspension. An example of this was the following statement delivered to Greek military officials in June:

> [We] wish to assure you that these items have not been deleted or cancelled from the current program, which is a part of our long range planning designed to bolster the Greek defense capability against external threats. These items have only been temporarily suspended pending completion of this review. [We] also wish to emphasize that the action taken to suspend temporarily delivery of these items does not affect any other items in the program. Essential support items such as spare parts, ammunition, communications equipment, motor vehicles, small arms, etc., continue to arrive as programmed and are being delivered to the Hellenic forces. We recognize that we are in a period of uncertainty during which many important projects must remain in a state of suspension. We consider it essential, however, that we make progress in those areas where progress is possible.[4]

Despite its status as essentially the centerpiece of American policy toward the colonels' regime during the Johnson administration, it is important to note that policy on MAP was not uniform and began to change over time, evincing greater flexibility and nuance. This transformation appears to have come about in part at King Constantine's and other conservative opposition members' urging, but was primarily the result of US concern over the effect of MAP suspension on Greek military preparedness and therefore on NATO and US security interests in the Eastern Mediterranean.

[3] State to Athens, Secret, Telegram 205238, 5/31/67, POL 15-5 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[4] Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 5995, 6/23/67, DEF 19 US-GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

In June 1967, for example, the King made the case to an embassy source[5] that the regime had begun to take steps toward democratization, had revealed good intentions, and was becoming extremely irritated by US policy and was thus considering the renunciation of US military aid. Indeed, he suggested that the colonels were likely to turn to General de Gaulle and the French for military assistance:

> In [the] King's opinion no more leverage can be obtained for either strengthening [the] King's position or [the] position of [the] USG by continuing [the] withholding [of] mil[itary] aid. [The r]elease at this time of mil[itary] aid would help his position and also improve US-Greek relations. [The] King opined that [a] turn to France for mil[itary] aid would probably lead to an eventual withdrawal of Greece from NATO.[6]

Arguing that to continue to offend and provoke the colonels "will result in a serious breach in US-Greek relations," the embassy reported that, according to the King, the United States "should now release the military items which are being withheld."[7] Apparently taking such advice to heart, the embassy began to argue for a more flexible MAP policy:

> Despite most serious reservations concerning [the] intentions [of the] junta, we believe that it is essential [that the] MAP program be handled on a more flexible basis and hope that [a] change in current policy can be handled [in] such a way as to reinforce the position of the King as well as to [reiterate] our concern for sincere progress toward [the] restoration of parliamentary government.[8]

Soon, this push for a resumption of aid would become a consistent theme in cables from Athens to Washington. The embassy argued that MAP suspension not only had little to no appreciable effect on the colonels, but was actually irritating them to such a degree that the US-Greek security

[5] According to the embassy telegram, the source was a US army officer with close personal ties to the King.

[6] Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 6175, 6/29/67, POL 15-1 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[7] Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 6026, 6/25/67, POL 15-1 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[8] Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 6175, 6/29/67, POL 15-1 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

relationship might be endangered. Put differently, whereas the MAP suspension had been intended in the early days to be a source of pressure for constitutional reform, by the summer of 1967, embassy officials had conceded that reforms were not likely in the near term, and they began to urge that aid be delinked from constitutional reform and thus resumed.

For example, on 7 July, Norbert Anschuetz in Athens wrote:

> I recommend resumption of MAP deliveries not because we have great confidence in [the] junta's alleged pledge to return to parliamentary government in two years, but because we believe that our present MAP policy might provoke [the] coup leaders into some irrational act with dangerous implications for US-Greek relations and because we doubt whether [a] continuation [of the] present policy would, in fact, accelerate [the] type of evolution which we seek.[9]

Given such conclusions, the embassy would continue to pressure the Department of State for the resumption of military aid during the spring and summer of 1967. By this point, Talbot too had begun to advocate for a full delinking of military aid from evidence of democratic progress. As he wrote:

> If we are to achieve our objective of bringing about the progressive reestablishment of genuine constitutional government in Greece, and without damage to our vital security interests … we should complete the disassociation of the U.S. military assistance program from our internal political objectives in Greece by resuming the full range of MAP deliveries.[10]

For its part, throughout this period, the State Department was less certain of a delinking, responding that it was "considering [the] adoption [of a] more 'flexible' policy in implementing MAP deliveries."[11]

The issue of MAP, which dominated US (and Greek) thinking for most of this period, was unexpectedly sidelined by the problem of official regime recognition following King Constantine's failed countercoup in December 1967—a coup that was poorly planned and even more poorly

[9]Athens to State, Confidential/LimDis, Telegram 188, 7/7/67, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[10]Athens to State, Confidential, Airgram A-883, 11/1/68, POL 1 GREECE-US, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[11]State to Athens, Secret, Telegram 216899, 6/27/67, POL 15-1 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

executed. This again brought to the fore the issue of formal regime recognition, which, as discussed in Chapter 2, had conveniently been avoided in April 1967 on the basis that the US ambassador was accredited to the King, rather than to any particular government of the day. In short, so long as the King enjoyed his constitutional position, US recognition of his government remained unaffected.

However, the events following the King's unsuccessful countercoup raised that issue anew. With the King going into exile in Rome and a regent appointed by the junta in his absence, it was not at all clear that the appointment of the regent had been done constitutionally. If it had not been a legal act, then the regime itself might have effectively lost the veneer of constitutionality it had enjoyed since 21 April—a veneer the King had supplied by swearing in the first dictatorial cabinet and working with it since. With the King gone, the US (like other countries) briefly considered whether it had to formally reassess its diplomatic recognition of the junta government. Thus, the day after the countercoup attempt, on 14 December 1967, the State Department's legal adviser concluded that:

> The actions of the Junta in appointing a Regent and arranging for the appointment of a new Prime Minister were not in conformity with the [1952 Greek] Constitution; thus the regime holding power in Greece today is an extra-constitutional regime. … Accordingly, United States recognition of the Greek Government does not automatically continue; we are confronted with the question of whether to accord recognition.[12]

It is interesting to note that, as with the case of MAP, this principled legal uncertainty, however, very soon gave way to a pragmatic acceptance of the status quo. A week after the coup, the State Department clearly signaled that, despite its historically close relations and support for the Greek monarchy, it did not intend to allow the issue of formal recognition to influence its working relationship with the Greek government. It thus cabled the embassy in Rome on 20 December, instructing officials there to inform the King that the recognition issue would be resolved essentially independently of him and his position. The embassy was to tell that King that, while "a continuing basic problem for us is the lack of sufficient progress toward the restoration of a constitutional situation in Greece[,] … we cannot commit ourselves to … [a] formula which would

[12]Meeker to the Acting Secretary, Secret, Memorandum 21325, 12/14/67, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

require us to stipulate the King's return … as a requirement for our recognition" of the government.[13]

Thus, as in the early days of the junta in April 1967, it became clear that the dictatorial regime, now *sans* King, was "the only game in town." As other NATO countries began to resolve the issue in favor of the regime that was in place, the US also moved quietly but quickly to also establish formal relations with it. Thus, the State Department cabled the embassy on 13 January 1968:

> We have decided to move in the near future to a working relationship with the regime in Athens. … [Our d]ecision is based on [the] fact [that the] regime is in control of the country, [on the] belief [that] we have extracted as much benefit as we [can] likely obtain from [the] present policy, and [the] fact [that] we have interests in Greece which require attention. … We do not intend [to] make [a] formal announcement, and will seek [to] avoid publicly discussing [the] question of whether we have recognized [the] GOG. We plan [to] say [that] we [are] resuming [a] working relationship based on [the] de facto situation of control.[14]

Ten days later, the State Department informed Talbot that the time had come to make his first official call on the regime since the King's countercoup attempt, particularly given that several NATO allies had arrived at the same conclusion that the regime was here to stay and that normal relations should resume. (For instance, the embassy in Rome speculated that, by resuming contacts, the "Italians probably hope working relations will ultimately evolve naturally into full contact and [the] question of recognition will simply not pose itself.")[15] Thus, in instructing Talbot, the State Department wrote:

> Consultations with NATO partners and others on [the] question of [a] formal call on [the] Foreign Minister have now taken place. There have been no demurrals with [a] large majority anxious to move in [the] same direction. [The] Germans and Turks have already called on [the] Foreign

[13] State to Rome, Secret, Telegram 87180, 12/20/67, POL 15-1 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[14] State to Athens, Secret/ExDis/For Ambassador, Telegram 98446, 1/13/68, POL GREECE-US, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA (emphasis in original).

[15] Rome to State, Confidential, Telegram 3810, 1/22/68, POL 16 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> Minister. [The] Canadians particularly pointed out that calls on other key Ministers should follow soon. [The] British are completely in step with us and want to time their visit promptly after ours. You are hence authorized to seek [an] appointment with Foreign Minister Pipinelis.[16]

Upon receiving authorization to resume normal contacts, Talbot wasted no time reestablishing relations. On the same day, he cabled back to Washington:

> Two hours after [the] embassy had requested [an] appointment, [Foreign Minister] Pipinelis received me at this office at 1230 local [time] today. Welcoming me "always, and most especially today," he expressed gratification at [the] conclusion of [the] awkward period just past when he was prevented from contacts with [the] embassy … I expressed my own pleasure at "resuming official contacts," and explained that when questioned by [the] press about my call I would use that phrase rather than referring to or an[s]wering questions about technical issues of "recognition."[17]

Talbot's "pleasure" at resuming relations with the colonels stemmed from his sense that the United States was essentially in a position of having to work with the regime, despite the fact that the junta's promises of democratic reform had become increasingly hollow as time wore on. The State Department too—despite its usual desire to exert more pressure on the regime—had essentially drawn the same conclusion. In fact, by April 1968, one year into the coup, an internal State Department intelligence study pointed to the lack of any real alternative to the junta, to the disorganization and ineffectiveness of any domestic opposition to the regime, and to the growing criticism of the United States both by the regime and its opponents. Given the situation, the Department of State concluded that the US had very little influence on the regime:

> Since the coup of April 21, 1967, the military junta has established itself firmly in power. The last rival power center, the Crown, was effectively eliminated with the failure of the King's counter-coup in December 1967. The opposition within Greece is still largely disorganized, and the

[16]State to Athens, Confidential/LimDis, Telegram 102829, 1/23/68, POL 16 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[17]Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 3285, 1/23/68, POL 16 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> confidence of the junta has been increased by internal developments as well as by the gradual normalization of Greece's relations with its major NATO partners. External pressures for a return to constitutional government have been answered by the junta with gestures whose purpose is more to create a favorable image abroad than to restore democratic processes. The regime is committed to hold a plebiscite on a new constitution in September, but elections may still be far in the future. At present no alternative to the military regime is visible on the Greek political scene.[18]

In Athens, too, Ambassador Talbot would consistently state his view that he saw no alternative to the policy line the United States was pursuing. Arguing that "U.S. policy has comparatively little room for maneuver," he increasingly critiqued the notion that the US had it within its power to bring down the junta, if only it would actively oppose it:

> A thesis has been expounded in certain quarters, notably by Andreas Papandreou, that if we "turn our backs" on the present regime by cutting all further military assistance and internationally condemning the junta, it would shortly fall of its own weight. We regard his proposition as invalid as well as risky. Rather than collapsing, we are persuaded the Government would be much more likely to become more intractable and oppressive. We could thereby force Greece into precisely the descending spiral of instability, probably ending in civil strife, which should be avoided as unquestionably disadvantageous to our interests and those of the NATO alliance.

Talbot reiterated the central, overriding theme that the US's hands were tied by the need to keep Greece a reliable Cold War ally. He thus concluded that the likely effect of applying too much pressure on the regime would be a diminution of any influence the US actually had.

> Our hands would of course be freer to try to force the present Greek government to conform to the demands of democratic idealism if we could write off our military installations here and discount the growing Soviet threat in the Eastern Mediterranean … Even in these circumstances, however, the question would remain whether any actions within the range of acceptable United States policy would have the effect of dislodging the

[18] Hughes to the Acting Secretary, Secret/No Foreign Dissem/LimDis, Intelligence Note 254, 4/11/68, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> present regime in Greece and replacing it with a government more consonant with contemporary Atlantic community standards or, alternatively, would merely salve the American conscience while reducing the significance of the United States as a factor in the Greek situation.[19]

In short, a year into the colonels' regime, both the Department of State and the US embassy in Athens had reached the same conclusion: There was little the US could do to push the colonels toward democracy. It was better to maintain relations with an undemocratic government in Greece, they thought, than to jeopardize those ties and, in the process, threaten US and NATO strategic interests in the Eastern Mediterranean.

It is important to note, however, that despite this general agreement that the US had no choice but to work with the present regime, Washington continued to take a cautious, wait-and-see approach to the lifting of MAP, attempting to wring as much effect as possible out of the suspension, while facing great congressional opposition to the prospect of a MAP resumption. For that reason, well into 1968, the MAP suspension remained in place despite repeated inquiries and vehement protestations from the Greek government. The reasons given for this policy remained uniform—with the State Department's "constant position [being] that [the] lifting of [the] suspension [of] MAP items [be] linked with concrete evidence [of] further progress toward [a] return to constitutionalism."[20] However, in response to questions from Michael-George Mazarakis, Counselor at the Greek embassy in Washington, about the US timetable for lifting the suspension, State Department official Stuart Rockwell maintained that the US government was facing "extraordinary difficulties involved in restoring military aid to Greece" and blamed US domestic politics, explaining that the administration "had to fend off pressures to cut off Greek military aid entirely," while citing the "need for concrete developments [in Greece] on which to base [the] lifting of MAP suspension." Rockwell stressed that:

> [The United States] would need Greece's help in order to help Greece, pointing to [the] establishment of [a] free press, [the] release of prisoners,

[19]Athens to State, Secret, Airgram A-558, 4/29/68, POL 2 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[20]State to Athens, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 37293, 9/14/67, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> and setting a date for a plebiscite on [the] constitution as steps which would help create conditions for a resumption of MAP. [The US] could not set a timetable because the timetable was essentially in the hands of [the] GOG. … [I]t was therefore important to have convincing evidence of progress, not simply a statement of intentions, on which to peg future US actions. [A r]esumption of MAP was not something which could be done overnight but which had to follow on concrete steps taken by the Greek Government.[21]

Soon, this balancing act of calling for "convincing evidence of progress" while, at the same time, arguing that domestic US politics were largely at fault for the suspension would become even more common in Washington and Athens. For example, in May 1968, Rockwell repeated much of this when asked—this time by Ambassador Christos Xanthopoulos-Palamas of Greece—whether the question of MAP resumption had been referred to the White House for a decision. Citing "serious domestic political implications" as impeding the resumption, Rockwell explained that "the Executive Branch had kept the suspension policy under continuing review to see whether it might be modified and had found great difficulty in proceeding when there had been so little progress by the Greek Government."[22] In short, a common refrain of American government officials at the time was that MAP continued to be "under review" and that Greece should therefore not expect immediate action. However, according to the State Department, the United States "hoped for a Greece which would regain full political normalcy, where there were no political arrests, no curbs on free expression, [and] where there were free elections in which the Greek people could choose their own government."[23] Thus, while putting it delicately to Greek officials who were pressuring for a lifting of the suspension, US government representatives repeatedly emphasized that progress was ultimately dependent on the extent of political evolution in Greece.

However, it is important to note that pressure for the resumption of MAP deliveries did not come solely from the Greek regime but also from

[21] State to Athens, Confidential, Telegram 108132, 2/1/68, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[22] Memorandum of Conversation, Confidential, 5/24/68, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[23] State to Athens, Confidential, Telegram 134513, 3/22/68, POL 15-5 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

within the US government itself. For instance, in a 29 February 1968 memorandum, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Earle Wheeler, argued that the US should promptly lift the suspension, citing strategic US interests: "USCINCEUR[24] … considers that our failure to lift the suspension is seriously eroding our valuable security association with Greece. His particular concern is the ultimate loss of combat effectiveness of the Royal Hellenic Air Force. … The result will be a low-quality end product in NATO-committed Greek squadrons. … I am convinced that we must act now to resume Military Assistance to Greece."[25]

This argument—that MAP suspension should be lifted in the name of Greek and NATO preparedness—would become the subject of numerous internal US government memoranda in early 1968. For example, an internal Department of Defense study contended, following an unusual line of argument, that "the selective lifting of suspensions could benefit the President by restoring the effectiveness of suspensions as a political tool to prod forward momentum toward democratic processes such as a constitutional plebiscite during the summer. In 11 months of disuse this tool is becoming dull."[26] The study cited a number of benefits enjoyed by the United States in Greece, the implication being that these benefits could be secured for the future by a more forthcoming policy on aid. Among these were Greece's willingness to serve as a "safe haven" for evacuees from the Middle East during the June 1967 Mideast crisis, its willingness to withdraw its troops and stand down during the 1967 Cyprus crisis, and its readiness to allow the United States unimpeded access to Greek territory for its own operations, including two Voice of America radio stations, the Greek naval repair facilities at Souda Bay, a special intelligence site on Crete, as well as the use of facilities on Crete to launch US Navy surveillance flights over the Eastern Mediterranean. Finally, echoing what would eventually become the mantra of the Nixon administration, the Defense Department concluded that the suspension of MAP was having a negative impact upon Greece's ability to contribute to the NATO alliance not only in real terms, but also psychologically:

[24] US Commander in Chief, European Command.

[25] Wheeler to McNamara, Secret, Memorandum CM-3063-68, 2/29/68, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[26] Assistant Secretary of Defense Background Paper, "Political Consideration in Greek MAP Policy," Secret, 3/15/68, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

"The most serious effect on NATO … is probably a growing feeling among the Greek military that we really don't care much about their role in NATO, if we are willing to withhold so much of the promised MAP equipment which was to update their NATO capability."[27]

This focus—the strategic US and NATO interests for restoring MAP—would subsequently be emphasized in a State Department memorandum prepared for President Johnson, which pointed to the fact that, in the Department of State's estimation, "[t]he Colonels are firmly in control and may well remain in power for several years."[28] Thus, "under normal circumstances," the State Department indicated that it would recommend that the administration proceed with the release of MAP to Greece. However, as we further illustrate in Chapter 5, US domestic considerations prevented the State Department from making the recommendation:

> A few Members of the Senate and House … have long been opposed to any assistance to the Greek Colonels. … [T]hey may decide to take their dissatisfaction out on the [1969 Foreign] Aid Bill. … Important though the Greek MAP program may be, it is not worth paying the price of no Aid Bill.

Wanting to study the situation further, the Department of State recommended that the US should be prepared to proceed with a limited resumption. Thus, it "authorized obligating the balance of the FY 68 grant MAP funds for the Greek program."[29] Clearly, by this time, the US was beginning to lean toward a resumption of MAP, believing that such a policy shift would be in the strategic interests of the United States. Talbot, too, who had earlier insisted on proof of liberalization before MAP could be lifted, was now of the opinion that the US government's insistence on "evidence of greater progress in returning to constitutional government [was] no longer useable." Given the completion of a draft Greek constitution and its pending referendum, Talbot concluded that the "next increment … [was] up to [the] US."[30]

[27] Assistant Secretary of Defense Background Paper, "Political Consideration in Greek MAP Policy," Secret, 3/15/68, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[28] Katzenbach to Johnson, Secret, Memorandum 7731, 5/21/68, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[29] Katzenbach to Johnson, Secret, Memorandum 7731, 5/21/68, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA (emphases in original).

[30] Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 4023, 3/21/68, DEF 19 US-GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

Despite this gradual change of heart, it would not be until the essentially rigged constitutional referendum of September 1968 when the State Department would finally recommend a partial resumption of MAP. While recognizing that the referendum was but "at best a small step toward a return to constitutional government," State maintained that it was "about all the [US could] expect for some time, given the Colonels' determination not to relinquish power."[31] Citing once again US strategic interests in Greece and the fact that the "suspension ha[d] become a sharp irritant" in US-Greek bilateral relations, the State Department maintained that it was important to move toward a partial restoration. Talbot, of course, had already arrived at that conclusion at least a year earlier, by which time he had come to the point of advocating for a "U.S. policy which has as its aim the protection and preservation of U.S. strategic and national interests in Greece rather than specific evidence of [a] return to constitutionalism."[32]

Despite the decision on national security grounds to resume MAP, it is important to note that the goal of democratic reform was not completely abandoned, at least not in principle. Informing Papadopoulos of the MAP resumption in late October, Talbot explained that:

> [The MAP] determination had been made primarily because of NATO considerations and recent developments in Eastern Europe, stressing that in reaching [the] decision to resume certain shipments [the] USG regards [a] return to representative government in Greece as no less important than before and indeed will continue to press for this.

Importantly, however, the Johnson administration's approach to the colonels never fully resolved the contradictions and complexities involved in trying to reconcile what was ultimately irreconcilable. These tensions were nicely encapsulated by a memo in which National Security Council (NSC) staffer Harold Saunders gave a particularly succinct interpretation of the Johnson administration's approach:

[31] Katzenbach to Johnson, Secret, Memorandum 13273, 10/3/68, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[32] Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 6145, 7/31/68, DEF 19-8 US-Greece, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> The Johnson Administration policy was an effort to bridge a dilemma: the US had to do business with the effective government of a NATO ally but wanted to keep alive its relationship with those Greeks who oppose military government by saying it supported the return to constitutional (representative) government. This policy grew from three factors: a. [The n]eed to take account of vociferous opposition by American liberals (and their Greek friends) to military government. … b. A judgment that the military government would at some point have to return the reins to civilian leaders because Greeks would one day run out of patience with it. c. An estimate that the long-term political and economic trend in Greece is away from the right, represented by the military, and … a desire not to cut ourselves off from the mainstream of the future. This result was a compromise: do business with the Junta but do it with some show of reluctance.[33]

The New Administration

In January 1969, a newly elected administration, under President Richard Nixon, came to office. The new administration heralded no dramatic or immediate change in US policy toward the colonels' Greece. In fact, particularly in its first year, it largely upheld the two-pronged approach of its predecessor—to maintain the security relationship with Greece as a primary objective while pressing the Greek government for progress on political liberalization and moves toward constitutional government. However, as we will see below, over time, the first of these prongs—the emphasis on a good relationship with Greece as a key to security and NATO influence in the Eastern Mediterranean—would come to predominate, particularly as articulated and practiced by the White House and Henry Kissinger's NSC.

However, despite the growing emphasis on assuring a strong relationship with Greece, the desire for democratization—both as a matter of principle and, perhaps more importantly, as a way to defuse criticism of the Greek regime in Congress and within the NATO alliance—never disappeared entirely. As we will see below, there was, however, a noticeable shift in tone and emphasis from the Johnson to the Nixon administration, and from the ambassadorship of Philips Talbot to that of Henry Tasca—one which, over time, would progress to the point where the White House would specifically declaim constitutional progress as an

[33]Saunders to Kissinger, Confidential, 4/8/69, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 593, USNA.

important aspect of US policy and in which Ambassador Tasca came close to playing the role of apologist for the regime. At the end of the day, however, the divided aspect of US policy never disappeared entirely. The contradictory motivations of NATO security vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and the need for Greek democratization were never fully resolved in the Nixon administration, with mixed signals coming from different parts of the administration throughout most of its period in office.

The arrival of a new administration of different political stripes in Washington in January 1969 did not bring about a radical shift in US foreign policy, at least not toward the regime in Greece. In fact, the previous fall, vice presidential candidate Spiro Agnew, when asked about the US approach to the colonels, had taken a line basically indistinguishable from that pursued by the outgoing Johnson administration. As quoted in the Washington Post and relayed by the Department of State to the Athens embassy, Agnew had raised both the security issue and the desire for a return to democratic government:

> Noting that Greece "has always been a good friend of ours" and was "most responsive to U.S. needs in the Middle East" during [the] Arab-Israeli conflict, Agnew said [that] "our only interest in Greece and obligation to Greece is to do what we can to encourage a truly representative [government] with elections clearly documenting that independence exists."[34]

In fact, once in office, the Nixon State Department in a cable to the embassy in mid-1969 echoed very similar concerns to those the Johnson State Department had expressed since April 1967—in particular, how to square the NATO imperative with democratization:

> Your letter points up the dilemma we face in determining our policy towards Greece. On the one hand we see an autocratic government denying basic civil liberties to the citizens of Greece. We think [that] such an internal order does not coincide with the best interests of Greece, whose stability in the long run, we believe, depends upon the free play of democratic forces. We have been pressing this viewpoint upon the Greek Government, and our policy on military assistance has been motivated by our desire to see Greece evolve toward representative government. On the other hand, Greece is a NATO ally which has scrupulously fulfilled

[34]State to Athens, Limited Official Use, Telegram 243524, 9/23/68, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> its treaty obligations. It is important to our strategic interests in the Mediterranean area and has extended full cooperation in this field. This, then, is the dilemma—how to deal with an ally with whose internal order we disagree yet who is a loyal NATO partner working closely with the United States in furtherance of the purpose and obligations of the NATO treaty.

The telegram added, however: "Our policy toward Greece is now under review."[35]

This policy review signaled what would turn out to be a gradual—and at times inconsistent and uneven—shift in policy tone and substance in the Nixon administration. In many ways, as the quote above indicates, the Nixon administration found itself on the horns of the very same dilemma faced by its predecessors: How to get an allied, strategically important, yet often obstreperous, government to move toward a democratization program that the US believed would ultimately benefit Greece, US interests there, and the unity of NATO as a whole. As an American diplomat in Rome put it to Italian Foreign Minister Pietro Nenni in May 1969, "[T]he US [has] used every occasion … to tell the Greeks that we hoped for concrete progress toward [the] restoration of democracy in Greece."[36] However, the State Department's response to the report of this conversation, while reiterating the fact that the US government had "made clear" to the Greek government "on many occasions" that it wished to see progress toward democratization, introduced what was essentially a new approach—one that would become increasingly dominant, particularly under the influence of Henry Kissinger. Put simply, internal politics were essentially none of the US's business: "it is our view that it is up to the Greek parties concerned to resolve their domestic problems and not a matter for direct US responsibility."[37] Once in office, the predilections of the new administration, coupled with international events, would only serve to consolidate this shift. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, its intervention in the

[35] State to Athens, Limited Official Use, Telegram 131321, 8/6/69, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[36] Rome to State, Confidential Telegram 2837, 5/10/69, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[37] State to Athens, Confidential, Telegram 07487, 5/12/69, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

Middle East crisis of 1970, and the Soviet push for greater influence in the Mediterranean highlighted the strategic importance of Greece and exacerbated the United States' fear of pushing a strategically important, but unwilling and bitterly resistant, ally too far. Given that fundamental dilemma between constitutional progress and regional security, the Nixon administration progressively sought to explicitly delink the two.

This was the approach that would come to be taken by the new US ambassador to Athens, Henry Tasca. Nearly a year had passed since Philips Talbot's departure on Inauguration Day, 1969—a hiatus that led to grumbling from the Greek government that the new administration was slighting Greece by dawdling on appointing a successor.[38] When Tasca did arrive and held his first formal meeting with Papadopoulos, the prime minister assured him "that Greece's role in NATO and especially its relationship with the U.S. was of utmost importance." However, he also warned that "Greece's friends must realize that the Greek Government will not allow its NATO role to be tied in any way to the Greek internal situation. There was absolutely no room for compromise on this and if necessary Greece would put its defense relationship with [the US] on a bilateral basis."[39] This warning—and the regime's extreme sensitivity to any perceived slight to Greek national pride—would lead Tasca to increasingly argue that US pressure should be scaled back in the name of a good working relationship with the Greek regime.

At first, however, Tasca actually expressed some concern that the administration's intentions about democratization would not be taken seriously by Papadopoulos. For instance, shortly after he arrived in Athens, he wrote to the State Department advising against a visit by the Apollo 11 astronauts to Greece on the grounds that such a visit would signify American approval of the Greek government and leave it with the impression that US pressure for democracy was "essentially pro forma." (He was

[38]Agnew to Kissinger, Confidential, 7/1/69, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 836, USNA; Kissinger to Agnew, Confidential, 7/12/69, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 836, USNA.

[39]"President's Wednesday Briefing," Secret/LimDis, 1/27/70, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 593, USNA.

overridden by Kissinger with a handwritten note in the margins of the memo: "But that's what the President wants.")[40]

Such worries seem to have rapidly dissipated, however. By May, Tasca had written a detailed analysis of the various ways in which the Greek government had made "progress" toward liberalization in the previous four years, arguing that congressional critics of the Greek regime were misguided and even pointing out that the phrase "rule of the colonels" was no longer accurate since the coup leaders had all given up their military commissions.[41] He followed this a few days later with a cable to the US Mission to NATO in which he singled out the European critics of Greece as hypocrites for condemning the Soviet Union for its intervention in the internal affairs of its satellites while advocating that the US should do the same to Greece:

> I wonder if [the] time has not come to point out to [the] senior level [in the] governments [of] Norway and Denmark [the] crass incongruity of [a] NATO quarrel involving intervention in [the] internal affairs of Greece, a NATO ally, publicized by [the] world press at [the] same time as [the] proposed NATO communique for [the] Rome meeting asserts [the] principle of non-intervention in [the] internal affairs of sovereign governments aimed against [the] Brezhnev Doctrine in Eastern Europe.[42]

In this way, under Tasca's influence, the US approach toward the colonels' regime began to shift. Throughout his tenure—and indeed throughout the Nixon administration generally—US policy essentially revolved around three key propositions: (1) Greece was a key player in the defense of NATO against Soviet aggression in a volatile and vulnerable part of the world; (2) pressure on the Greek government for democratization was actually counterproductive, causing it, in the name of national sovereignty and pride, to dig in its heels and actively resist any perceived outside "interference;" and (3) the best course of action was to emphasize the security relationship with Greece and only raise issues

[40]Watts to Kissinger, Confidential/ExDis, 1/27/70, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 593, USNA.

[41]Athens to State, Confidential/LimDis, Telegram 2233, 5/10/71, POL 2 GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA; Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 2444, 5/14/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[42]Athens to US Mission NATO, Confidential/LimDis, Telegram 2393, 5/13/70, 5/14/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

of internal reform gently and privately for the purpose of improving Greece's international image, removing a source of disunity in NATO ranks, and silencing Greece's critics in Congress, the press and academia. As Tasca succinctly put it,

> I believe the answer clearly must be for the U.S. to take the position that we are for democracy everywhere in principle, but that essentially democracy and representative government are "do it yourself" propositions. We shall have to cease singling out Greece among all the countries of the world as a target for [a] U.S. policy imperative that it return promptly to representative government.[43]

Perhaps the best example of this policy in action was the 1971 visit of Vice President Spiro Agnew to Greece. Agnew was scheduled to attend the Shah of Iran's celebration of the 2500th anniversary of the Persian monarchy, but the decision was made to add stops in Turkey and Greece on his return trip (the latter in large part based on his Greek descent). Clearly, this visit was freighted with great significance. For the Greek government, it was clearly seen—and publicly promoted—as evidence that the US had given the regime its official stamp of approval. For the US, it was an opportunity to reaffirm its ever-closer security relationship with Greece, while, at the same time, assessing the degree to which private, gentle pressure on the regime could help move it in a liberalizing direction—one that might help mute the criticism of the regime coming from congressional and NATO circles.

A briefing paper submitted to Agnew by Kissinger laid out the White House's view of the policy objectives of the trip. At the end of the day, it argued, the security relationship was paramount and the United States was not going to dictate anything specific that it required of the Greek regime. However, Kissinger hoped that Agnew might be able to convince the colonels that, given the vociferous opposition to the regime from some Democrats in Congress, as well as from several Scandinavian countries, some concrete gestures of liberalization would be in the best interests of not only the United States and NATO, but of Greece as well. As he put it,

> The objective is to strike a balance between the near-term requirements of our security relationship with Greece and the longer term requirements of

[43] Athens to State, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 3350, 6/15/72, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

> a more normal Greek relationship with Europe and the US. This emphasizes the need to avoid providing fodder to ultra liberal advocates of reform while not at the same time giving offense to a regime the stability of which we must insure (sic). … Our security interests in Greece require special attention to the sensibilities of the present leaders. … The tone in all of this would be concern over how Greece solves Greece's problems—not that Greece should solve these problems to make our life easier with our Congress. … If asked for your views, you might respond along the following lines: … We have an interest in the political and economic development of Greece, but we are not going to press for anything specific. We recognize that Greece, in the final analysis, must determine its own future and simply hope that this will be consistent with Greece's own strong interest in a close relationship with Europe and the US. … If pressed on how you feel about the present regime in Greece, you can say that it is not our habit to comment on the political character of other governments. The Government of Greece has set as its objective the return to constitutional government. It is for Greeks to work out how and when that objective is achieved.[44]

In other words, democratic reform would be immensely helpful and very welcome from the point of view of the United States. However, while it was still occasionally said that the US was in favor of democracy as a matter of principle, the most important justification for democratization was the improvement it would bring to Greece's standing both in US domestic politics and among its fellow members of the NATO alliance, several of which (Norway and Denmark in particular) had long been agitating for significant political change in Greece. As subsequent chapters detail, the United States continually worried that, without some evidence of constitutional progress in Greece, critics of the regime in the US Congress would place further restrictions on military aid and divisions over Greece within NATO would threaten the unity of the alliance.

Agnew followed this policy line quite closely. Even before his arrival in Greece, while still in Iran, he met with King Constantine, who had been living in exile in Rome since his abortive countercoup. In his conversation with Agnew, the King professed his desire to "persuade the present Greek regime to return to normal political life" and indicated that "the time for force might well come." In such a case, he assured Agnew, "he

[44] Kissinger to Agnew, Secret, 10/9/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

would not seek material aid but would require a US moral commitment to support him." Reflecting the degree to which the United States had thrown in its lot with the colonels' regime—and particularly the degree to which it saw no feasible alternative to it—Agnew entirely rebuffed the King's feelers of support: "The Vice President indicated in the strongest possible way that the US would not support the overturn of the present GOG by force under any circumstances nor was any sort of moral commitment at all likely."[45] Moreover, he warned the King that he was not about "to [visit] Greece in a public posture which would indicate that he came to pressure the GOG to take any particular steps … [and] that he was determined under any and all circumstances to avoid the trap of undermining NATO."[46]

Once in Greece, Agnew did as he promised—he presented himself to Papadopoulos as a true friend of Greece and as an ally interested in the mutual interests of both their countries. In his tour around the country—widely reported in Greek newspapers as evidence of American approval of the regime—as well as through his steadfast refusal to criticize the regime publicly, the vice president seemed to cement the increasingly good relations between the regime and the Nixon administration. He did, however, expend a considerable amount of energy in private attempting to convince Papadopoulos that it was in his interest, and that of Greece in NATO, to move toward liberalization. Again, the logic was clear: The critics of Greece in the American Congress and in NATO had the potential to do harm to Greece's interests, not least by threatening US and Western military assistance. The way to defuse these critics was to make some concrete steps toward the democratic restoration that Papadopoulos and the regime had been promising since 1967. This very argument had been expressed by Joseph Sisco, the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, in a telegram to Tasca earlier in 1971:

> We are unquestionably faced with [the] increasing isolation of Greece from its friends and allies. This is certainly not in the best interests of any of us. We have no intention or desire to interfere in Greek internal affairs.

[45] Haig to Eliot, Secret/NoDis, Memorandum 34468, 12/13/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

[46] "Vice President's conversation with King Constantine of Greece, October 15, 1971, in the King's tent, Persepolis," no classification, no date, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

> This has been made amply clear. However, we must accept that we and the other allies have [a] legitimate concern with internal developments in Greece as they affect our own interests. We have therefore in [a] friendly and cooperative spirit continued to urge the Greek Govt to move more quickly toward its own announced goals. … We have, we believe, been as helpful as possible to the Greek govt over the past four years but in retrospect it seems to us [that] we have made all the compromises at no small cost to our other interests. We would hope that the Prime Minister also will be able to make some concessions. At this time some concrete evidence of the govt's avowed democratic purpose seems to us essential.[47]

Indeed, this would prove to be the approach—minus the complaints about US concessions without Greek reciprocation—that Agnew would take with Papadopoulos in Athens. The vice president told Papadopoulos privately that "their mutual objective was … to ascertain how best to disarm opposition at home and opposition to [the] present regime." He told the prime minister that

> he personally was very disturbed by the possibility that criticism in Congress and elsewhere would not only persist but be intensified … [and] he hoped the Prime Minister would continue to search for the "flanking action" which could be so helpful. He asked again that the Prime Minister believe that the situation with regard to support in our Congress had become very serious and almost certainly would worsen.[48]

Papadopoulos's response, however, was, as had been consistently the case for years, much less than what the American administration hoped for. He told Agnew in strict confidence—asking him only to share it with Nixon—that he simply could not say how long it would be until the promised elections were actually held. In so doing, he not only rejected Agnew's entreaties for constitutional progress, but put the Nixon administration on notice that US hopes for change and reform in Greece were, despite the regime's promises, largely illusory.

In a report to Kissinger after the vice president's trip, NSC staff member Samuel Hoskinson gave his impressions of the Greek regime in terms

[47] Sisco to Tasca, Confidential/ExDis, Telegram 134509, 7/23/71, POL 1 GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[48] "Vice President's conversations with Prime Minister Papadopoulos, October 17, 1971," no classification, no date, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

that largely reflected the thinking of Tasca, the White House, and the NSC:

> Papadopoulos is firmly in the saddle of power and has every intention of remaining there. … He seems, however, to realize [that] he cannot hope to control the situation over the longer term without opening up the political system to greater popular participation. This is the essence of his problem, and he is still groping for a solution that will not involve either his own political demise or a return to the political problems of [the] immediate pre-coup period. He is a highly competent and dedicated man and just may succeed, but at his own pace and in his own way.[49]

And as the State Department summarized in a cable to the embassy in Rome:

> We view the Vice President's visit as having successfully served to further both objectives. On one hand his presence in Greece and cordial talks with Greek leaders emphasized [the] importance we attach to [a] close security relationship which [is] essential to [the] credibility of [the] NATO deterrent in [the] vital southern flank. [The w]armth of [the] reception given to [the] Vice President underlined Greece's continuing strong commitment to the Alliance and [the] endurance of important close ties between Greece and the U.S. On other hand, we have avoided [a] tactic of confrontation with [the] Greek regime in our efforts [to] encourage it to move toward representative government and sought [to] establish [a] relationship of confidence in which our quiet, thoughtful and helpful approaches would carry some weight. In this contest, the Vice President succeeded admirably in establishing a warm personal rapport with the Greek leadership. The psychological atmosphere that was created by his visit and the talks he held with Greek leaders will in the long run we believe further the objectives of our two-pronged policy.[50]

For the rest of the Nixon presidency, this fundamentally two-pronged approach would continue to characterize the administration's policy. Importantly, however, the two prongs were not of equal weight.

[49]Hoskinson to Kissinger, Secret/NoDis, Memorandum 33468, 11/8/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

[50]State to Rome, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 204889, 11/9/71, POL 7 US/AGNEW, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

As numerous internal documents indicate, the security interests of the US and NATO, represented by a strong Greece well integrated into the Atlantic alliance, were increasingly preeminent. In Sisco's words, the US gave "overriding attention to [the] mutual security element in our relationship" with Greece.[51] Reflecting the paramount importance of the security relationship, the following year, Nixon approved a proposal to "homeport" the Sixth Fleet in Greece. In an effort to improve morale and retention in the Mediterranean fleet, as well as to more easily maintain the US forward position there, the proposal involved the permanent stationing of the fleet in Greece and the residence of several thousand Navy personnel and their families in the Athens area. Predictably, the critics of US policy in Greece attacked the proposal as signifying US approval of the regime, while the colonels trumpeted it for essentially the same reason. While never implemented, the homeporting proposal was another good example of the priority of security interests in US policy making toward Greece.

As time went by, the policy of securing US strategic interests further solidified. By 1973, in fact, Tasca went so far as to suggest that Nixon should have a formal meeting with Papadopoulos. While this meeting never occurred, Tasca's reasoning was instructive. He invoked both the desire for democratic reform and the US security interest in Greece:

> [T]he time has come when our national interests in Greece strongly suggest [the] desirability for the President to arrange to meet with President Papadopoulos. … In order to keep up [the] momentum toward democratic government and to reinforce [the] U.S. position in this key country in the Eastern Mediterranean, I suggest the White House consider an early joint announcement with the Greek Government that President Nixon will meet with President Papadopoulos at a place and at an early date to be fixed.[52]

This preeminent concern with US and NATO security would hold even as the Papadopoulos regime collapsed in 1973, to be replaced

[51] Sisco to Tasca, Confidential/ExDis, Telegram 134509, 7/23/71, POL 1 GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[52] Athens to Sec State, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 7035, 10/10/73, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

by that of the junta hardliner, Dimitrios Ioannidis, following the Polytechnic University uprising. On 17 November 1973, Papadopoulos used military force to eject students who had been protesting at the Polytechnic. A week later, under the pretext of saving the "revolution" from public disorder, Ioannidis seized power, and martial law was imposed. While a detailed analysis of the US reaction to the Ioannidis coup and crackdown is beyond the scope of this study, the comments of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Rodger Davies to Greek Ambassador Ioannis Sorokos in early December are abundantly clear. As reported in a State Department document:

> Mr. Davies said we have consistently expressed our strong interest in our relations with Greece, and there has been no change in that attitude. The peoples of Greece and the U.S. have a shared interest on many levels, not the least of which is in security matters. … Our policy towards Greece has been made quite clear in the past. We consider that our relations are between our two countries, not with any particular regime in Greece. We believe a constitutional base provides the best assurance for stability, but this is a Greek problem, not for outsiders to resolve. … We will try not to take positions that will make Greece's problems any more difficult.[53]

Thus, despite what proved to be a real turning point in the regime itself—in fact, what turned out to be the last gasp of the dictatorship as regime hardliners came to power and martial law returned—US policy appeared firmly fixed. Not even the brutal events of November 1973—events which clearly extinguished US hopes that the regime would usher in democratic reforms—would change it.

The Issue of Military Aid Under Nixon

As discussed in detail above, large-scale military aid to Greece had been suspended following the coup of 21 April 1967. The Johnson administration initially took the view that the cutoff of aid under MAP was important both as a sign of US concern over the imposition of dictatorship and as an inducement to the regime to move toward democratization. By the time Johnson left office in 1969, the MAP suspension still

[53]Memorandum of Conversation, Confidential, 12/3/73, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

held. Though Johnson had, in October 1968, approved a one-off release of about forty percent of suspended items (particularly spare parts), the ban on heavy items (especially tanks and aircraft) continued. However, also as discussed above, the administration had begun to review the effectiveness of the MAP suspension with clear indications that a lifting of the ban was forthcoming.

The Nixon administration recognized that MAP was, in many ways, a potent symbol of the United States' relationship with Greece. As Sisco commented to Secretary of State William Rogers, "the question of U.S. military assistance to Greece is a controversial one. It has now become the most important element in our bilateral relationship with Greece as well as a symbol of that relationship."[54] The significance of military aid was not lost on the Greek regime either, which felt the suspension of military aid was a particularly bitter insult to a supremely loyal ally.

As Peter Peterson, the American consul general in Athens, recounted a 4 July 1969 meeting with Papadopoulos:

> I said I understood that negotiations had been opened to purchase equipment from France. …. [Papadopoulos] replied that negotiations have not been opened because "we cannot negotiate unless we know your answer is going to be 'no'. But it is true that we have been approached by Britain, Germany, and France who wish to sell to the Government of Greece 'on very favorable credit terms.'" "It is strange," he remarked, "that as hostile as Britain is towards us, the British are perfectly willing to sell the very types of equipment that the US Government withholds." He said he could not understand how the US Government can withhold such equipment for political reasons rationalized, partially at least, on grounds that some of our NATO allies, including the British, pressure us to do so when at the same time they are perfectly willing to sell such items.[55]

Despite the significance of military aid both practically and symbolically, however, the Nixon administration's approach to military aid was decided very early on and quite precipitously. It bore few of the hallmarks of a bureaucratic process involving analysis, deliberation, and the weighing of multiple alternatives by multiple policy players.

[54] Sisco to Rogers, Secret, Memorandum 9693, 6/21/69, POL 1 GREECE-US, 1967–69 SNF, RG 50, USNA.

[55] Athens to State, Secret, Airgram A-279, 7/1/69, POL 15-1 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 50, USNA.

The issue first came to the attention of the White House, and the president in particular, in mid-1969. The NSC had been working on a review of policy options related to MAP, which it planned to present to the president for his consideration later in the year. However, in June, Kissinger wrote to Nixon about the possibility that the US could conclude a one-off $20 billion agreement to sell spares and other non-suspended items to Greece. There was, however, a complicating factor: The 1968 Reuss Amendment to the Foreign Military Sales Act prohibited sales to "military dictators who are denying social progress to their people" unless waived by the president in the interests of national security. Kissinger told Nixon that while the State Department could legally handle the waiver issue itself, "because of the political sensitivity of the military aid to Greece, we want to put the issue to you."[56] What followed was quite extraordinary.

Kissinger presented a memo to Nixon with three options regarding military aid to Greece. The first was to "[c]ut it off altogether." The second was "[s]hipping non-major items but continuing the suspension of major items." As Kissinger explained this option,

> [t]he rationale for maintaining the partial suspension last fall was to indicate our continuing displeasure over the slow pace at which the military government is moving back toward constitutional government. The rationale of the past Administration in trying to keep some pressure on the military government was to respond in some way to congressional critics of the program while at the same time trying to maintain our NATO relationship with Greece.

The third option was the "[r]esumption of full military aid." Kissinger then proceeded to analyze the options:

> Since January 20, the Greek Government has mounted a persistent campaign to persuade us to remove the pressure for return to constitutional government and to resume a full military aid program. … In NATO terms this make sense, but in deciding on this course, we would have to consider its effect on all of those here and in Western Europe who are pressing to have Greece suspended from its formal membership in European organizations. I believe the real choice is between options 2 and 3 above. … No one in the Executive Branch has recommended that we cut off our military supply program altogether. Although this is obviously in the minds

[56] Kissinger to Nixon, Secret, 6/14/69, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 593, USNA.

> of some of the Congressional critics of our maintaining a working tie with the military government, the majority of Congress seems to recognize the need to maintain that tie. … [Option 2] would commit us to the flow of at least $20 million in spares and non-major items. I believe we have to do at least this much in order to preserve our NATO relationship with Greece, but you should be aware that there are those in Congress who would prefer our getting out of the military aid business altogether in Greece.

Kissinger then gave his formal recommendation for option two, with perhaps more aid to come in the future. He recommended that Nixon "concur in the finding that it is important to our security to maintain at least this minimal military aid relationship with Greece. … Then we shall hold a full-scale review for you of the choice between options 2 and 3." The president was then presented with the choices "Approve," "Disapprove," or "Other" for him to select and initial. Rather than initialing any of these lines, however, Nixon crossed them all out and wrote in his own hand "RN—approves option 3."[57] Thus, in one fell swoop, even before the NSC had had a chance to present a detailed, reasoned analysis of the military aid issue, the president personally resolved the issue in favor of the full resumption of military aid.

The final formal administration decision regarding MAP came in National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) 34, dated 14 November 1969. In it, the administration decided to tell Papadopoulos that the US would resume normal military shipments. However, the ambassador was also directed to tell Papadopoulos that progress toward constitutional reform would "ease US problems in speeding the release" of the suspended items. Again, the two-pronged approach made its appearance: "US security interests were the principal factor in the decision to lift the suspension." However, "[t]he US Government will continue urging the government to move toward a constitutional situation."[58]

However, this two-pronged approach raised an additional issue—one that revealed a difference of approach between the White House and Ambassador Tasca, on the one hand, and the Department of State, on

[57] Kissinger to Nixon, Secret, 6/14/69, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 593, USNA.

[58] "US Policy Toward Greece–Military Assistance," Secret/NoDis, National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) 34, 11/14/69, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 593, USNA.

the other. That issue was the extent to which the release of full military aid to Greece would be conditional on the achievement of constitutional progress. NSDM 34 was not clear on this issue: The two-pronged approach was mentioned, but it did not explicitly tie the release of aid to democratic progress in Greece. For the next year, as preparations for the full resumption of aid moved forward, this issue would be discussed. On the one side were the White House and Tasca. In a briefing paper for the president's meeting with Tasca in December 1969, Kissinger asked the president to clarify to the ambassador that "[y]ou regard the release of the suspended equipment as unconditional" and that "[t]he main reason for your decision is the overriding interest the US has in its military rights and installations in Greece."[59]

Tasca, however, needed no such convincing. In fact, he had become a staunch advocate of the immediate, unconditional release of full military aid to Greece—not only in the name of international security, but also as a way of removing the chief obstacle to his good relations with the Greek government. In April 1970, for instance, he argued that Soviet interventions in the Eastern Mediterranean rendered the quick resumption of aid a national security imperative:

> I am certain [the State Department is] aware that current press comments on Soviet pilots operating directly against [the] Israelis in UAR air space underlines [the] critical importance of [the] Greek role in [the] defense of US and NATO interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. This should improve [the] climate regarding [the] urgency of quickly eliminating discrimination against [the] GOG in [the] provision of badly needed military assistance to this NATO ally.[60]

The following month, Tasca gave suggestions on how the public announcement of MAP resumption could be made in the most low-key and uncontroversial way possible. He argued that the "[r]easons given for restoring aid should be based exclusively on [the] security situation in [the] Eastern Mediterranean and [the] U.S. interest in maintaining at full strength defense [the] capabilities of a NATO ally in a critical sector." However, he also maintained:

[59]Kissinger to Nixon, Secret/NoDis, Memorandum 5654, 12/19/69, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 593, USNA.

[60]Athens to State, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 2105, 4/30/1970, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> No repeat no connection should be indicated between [the] issue of constitutional progress in Greece and [the] level of U.S. military aid. … At the same time, though unrelated to the military aid situation, expression should be given to [the] continued interest of [the] USG in [the] early movement of the GOG toward [the] implementation of its constitution and [the] expectation of [the] USG that [the] GOG will genuinely carry out its assurances to that effect. If some useful statement from the GOG becomes available for publication about the same time, it should be used, but again without direct linkage to [the] issue of military aid and preferably with enough of a time lapse to increase the chances of dissociating the two subjects.[61]

In short, Tasca had clearly come to favor fully delinking the resumption of MAP from any democratic progress in Greece.

It is interesting to note, however, that the State Department did not agree with Tasca's approach. In October 1969, in a memo to Nixon, Secretary of State Rogers had advocated for a conditional approach to military aid to Greece:

> Before making a decision on the question of whether to resume full military deliveries to Greece, I believe that we should attempt to persuade the Greek Government, in its own interest and in the interest of facilitating the release of suspended military items, to take some meaningful steps towards political reform. I would have our Ambassador discuss the matter with the Greek authorities, in a friendly and constructive atmosphere, along the following lines: a. The U.S. would like to have better relations with Greece and to resume full military shipments, but this is not possible unless we get some help from the Greek Government. b. Examples of the kind of help we have in mind would be such steps as abolition of the courts martial, establishment of the Constitutional Court, and validation of the suspended articles of the Constitution. … I further suggest that we should await Ambassador Tasca's reports, and his recommendations, before deciding what to do about the suspended military shipments.[62]

[61] Athens to State, Confidential/LimDis, Telegram 2150, 5/1/70, DEF 19 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[62] Rogers to Nixon, Secret/ExDis, 10/30/69, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 593, USNA.

In short, State remained concerned. Even as the decision on unconditional aid seemed to be moving forward, in August 1970, Rodger Davies at the Near East desk argued:

> Although the language of NSDM 67[63] … does not clearly establish a condition for lifting the suspension, we have taken the position that we need some substantial evidence of liberalization of the Greek regime in order to reply to the inevitable criticism which [the] resumption of full aid shipments will provoke from the Congress, the press and from many of our allies. … If the Greeks can follow up with an announcement lifting martial law we believe we will be able to move ahead. We would be willing at this point simply to accept the assurances of the Prime Minister that his announcement would follow soon after we make our decision public.[64]

In the end, the prime minister made no such announcement and the MAP resumption went ahead anyway. The unconditional White House/Tasca policy had clearly prevailed over the conditional State Department approach, and in September 1970, the administration publicly announced the resumption of MAP. In its press release, it highlighted the point that the decision to resume aid rested on national security concerns:

> This decision was reached primarily in recognition of compelling security considerations. Greece offers strategic advantages to the NATO Alliance and to the United States which are of great importance to the security of the West. This importance has been sharply accentuated in recent months by events in the Eastern Mediterranean.[65]

However, while no conditions were set on the resumption of aid, the linkage to constitutional progress was not entirely ignored either. Primarily to deflect as much as possible any criticism that the administration had given up on the restoration of democracy in Greece, the press release also gave an unduly optimistic view of progress supposedly underway:

[63] NSDM 67 was a follow-up to NSDM 34, outlining procedures for notifying Papadopoulos of the resumption of aid.

[64] Davies to the Acting Secretary, Secret, 8/26/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[65] Acting Secretary to Nixon, Secret, 8/31/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> Although the United States had hoped for a more rapid return to representative government in Greece, the trend toward a constitutional order is established. Major sections of the constitution have been implemented, and partial restoration of civil rights has been accomplished. The Government of Greece has stated that it intends to establish parliamentary democracy. The United States shares the concern of its NATO allies for steady progress toward restoring the country to political government. This is a policy to which we remain firmly committed.[66]

However, despite this rosy assessment of the prospects for democratic reform, the reality was that the decoupling of military aid from Greece's internal situation would be maintained under the Nixon administration for the remainder of the junta's tenure in power.[67]

In conclusion, from its initial, hesitant formulation in April 1967, the policy of the United States toward Greece struggled to reconcile what were, at the end of the day, two irreconcilable goals: to keep Greece as a strong and loyal member of the NATO alliance, while at the same time effectively promoting the restoration of democracy there. As we have seen, throughout both the Johnson and Nixon administrations, this two-pronged goal remained the cornerstone of US policy. However, as the colonels' regime consolidated its power and proved remarkably resistant to US and other foreign pressure to reform, the United States began to progressively scale back its democratic aspirations for Greece. Constitutional government as a goal of US policy was, in some sense, negotiable—at least in the degree to which it would be emphasized and the timeframe under which it would be restored. The position of Greece as a key to NATO security in the Eastern Mediterranean was not. Thus, when the two prongs of US policy proved incompatible, the democratic objective was progressively pushed out of the center of US concerns. The shift was gradual and, as this chapter has indicated, not uncontested. But the shift—from "continuous pressure on the new government to move … to constitutional government through exertion of our leverage" in 1967 to "domestic political structures … [are] not our concern" in 1973—was real nonetheless.

[66]Sisco to Rogers, Secret, Memorandum 12442, 9/12/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[67]Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 1070, 3/9/71, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

CHAPTER 4

Internal Divides: The White House, State Department, and the Athens Embassy

In much of the public rhetoric surrounding US policy toward the Greek military regime, and indeed even in some of the scholarly literature, there is a tendency to reify the state and assume a single US foreign policy position. That is, it is easy to assume that there was a single US foreign policy attitude toward the Greek regime, thereby reducing what in reality was a much more complex, even at times contradictory, foreign policy stance into a single blanket statement: most often, "support for the colonels." However, as is discussed in detail throughout this book, American policy toward Greece during the period of dictatorship was far more nuanced and complex, attempting to deal with the seemingly irreconcilable demands of maintaining a close security relationship at the same time as promoting the reestablishment of constitutionalism. As we have argued, these attempts at reconciling the seemingly irreconcilable changed shape over time—as the Johnson administration gave way to the Nixon administration, the security ties between the US and Greece came to be explicitly privileged over the ideals of democratic restoration.

However, even this description of American foreign policy is oversimplified. It too reduces the complexity of real-world foreign policy making to the formulation that the Nixon administration was less willing to jeopardize the US-Greek security relationship for the sake of democratic progress. While, as discussed in Chapter 3, this was undoubtedly the case, it overlooks the very real differences that emerged *within* each administration as to the proper balance of interests in American policy toward Greece.

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What we have seen in previous chapters is a common thread running implicitly through both administrations: In general, the State Department was more likely to favor the exertion of pressure on the Greek regime to move in the direction of democracy and constitutional restoration—whether it be the release of prisoners, the lifting of martial law, or, most frequently, the fixing of dates for the implementation of the constitution and the eventual holding of parliamentary elections. This State Department desire for pressure was generally resisted, however, by the embassy in Athens—by Ambassadors Talbot and, to a greater extent, Tasca—and, particularly in the Nixon administration, by the White House itself, and especially the National Security Council (NSC) under the leadership of Henry Kissinger.

Despite this general pattern, one could argue that a temporal development took place. That is, internal US policy making went through four distinct phases: (1) the first in which general agreement prevailed in the early aftermath of the colonels' coup; (2) to be followed by a period of increasing disagreement between the Athens embassy under Talbot and the State Department over the extent to which pressure should be applied on the colonels; (3) followed by an even greater divergence of views between State and the embassy under Tasca; (4) to be replaced toward the end of the junta period with a reconvergence of opinion around a policy of American non-intervention.

Specifically, the initial reaction to the colonels' coup shows a US foreign policy establishment largely in agreement on the need for a cautious approach. As discussed in Chapter 2, the April 1967 coup appears to have taken the US embassy in Athens and the State Department by surprise. While rumors of some sort of "constitutional deviation" had swirled throughout the 1960s, and in particular in the wake of the governmental crises of 1965, the actual coup engineered by relatively low-ranking officers—and not from the more likely suspects, the generals or the palace—left the US government in the difficult position of having to make up its policy approach to the new regime virtually overnight. As we have seen, in the wake of the coup the State Department and the embassy settled on a "cool but correct" approach—one that surprised the colonels, who had apparently expected a warm welcome by the US, and caused no small degree of bitterness and consternation on their part.

In these early days, the documents analyzed for this book show the State Department, on the one hand, and the Athens embassy and Talbot, on the other, largely in agreement that the United States' security interests demanded that the US maintain some sort of relations with what was, despite its undesirability on democratic grounds, a pro-Western, loyal North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ally in a strategically important part of the world. However, those relations—at least at the beginning—were unavoidably complicated by the regime's fundamentally undemocratic nature, to say nothing of the public outcry against it both in the United States and in NATO countries across Europe. Thus, the documentary evidence shows a great deal of communication between the embassy and the State Department in which the two largely agreed on the proper position to take: the US maintaining basic, correct relations, but doing so at what might be characterized as arm's length, certainly compared to what existed prior to 21 April 1967.

This early period of agreement quickly shifted to a phase in which Talbot's views increasingly diverged from those of State Department officials. As detailed in the previous chapter, Talbot began to take the position that there was no realistic alternative to dealing with the colonels, given the critically important strategic position of Greece on the southeastern flank of NATO, as well as the lack of a credible, organized opposition in Athens able to take power and lead Greece back to constitutionalism. As Talbot began to realize that the colonels were in power for the foreseeable future, he increasingly came to argue that the security relationship must be privileged above all else. In particular, he began to ever more clearly argue that the provision of military aid needed to be delinked from the issue of constitutional reform in Greece. Moreover, given the colonels' keen sensitivity to any perceived slight and their bitterness over the US coolness to their seizure of power, Talbot argued that too much pressure for democratic reform could actually produce the opposite reaction from the regime, pushing the US away and thus damaging the all-important security relationship.

The State Department saw it differently, however. Given the vociferous opposition to the junta in some NATO countries, as well as on Capitol Hill, State Department officials generally took the position that *more* pressure needed to be placed on the colonels to move them toward constitutionalism and thereby remove an obstacle to NATO unity and full US support. In the end, the Johnson administration

came to an end before these differences became particularly stark. With just less than two years of the Johnson administration coinciding with the Greek junta, these differences—particularly on MAP, as discussed in the previous chapter—would never be fully worked out. They would be inherited by the incoming Nixon administration to resolve.

A New Foreign Policy Line

This chapter thus addresses these divergent approaches as they manifested themselves in increasingly stark terms in the third phase, characterized by real disagreement between the State Department of William Rogers, on the one hand, and the views of Henry Kissinger in the White House and Talbot's successor, Henry Tasca, in Athens, on the other. Put simply, Tasca and the White House shared the same fundamental perspective: That, at a time of growing Soviet influence in the Mediterranean, the issue of constitutional progress in Greece needed to be disassociated from, and not allowed to fundamentally affect, the close US-Greek security relationship. The State Department, however, more consistently maintained its line from the previous administration that the US could not, and should not, completely abandon pressuring the colonels for reform. The result was a situation in which the US ambassador was led to make common cause with the NSC to some extent against the views of his own superiors in the State Department—even to the point of using a secret backchannel of communication outside the formal State Department messaging system. In the end, given Henry Kissinger's and the NSC's central role in foreign policy making in this period of the Nixon administration, Kissinger's approach, and that of Tasca, generally prevailed.

In the fourth period, the sharp embassy/White House vs. State Department disagreement came to an abrupt end—with Henry Kissinger becoming secretary of state, as well as national security advisor. With Kissinger's personal ascendance to both positions, and the institutionalization of his view in both policy-making bodies, disagreements became much more muted, as his realpolitik approach came to predominate—one with which Tasca was largely in agreement. Thus, in the final months of the military regime in Athens, US foreign policy was dominated by the explicitly stated view that domestic politics were affairs for the Greeks themselves, with the US interest lying in maintaining a close security relationship with Greece, irrespective of domestic political concerns.

Deepening Disagreements in the Early Nixon Years

The differences between the State Department and the Athens embassy that had existed in the Johnson administration took on an additional dimension with the newly elected Nixon administration, which took office in January 1969. That added dimension would be the role of the National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, as a foreign policy player who sought to control the administration's foreign policy direction and largely did so—effectively overshadowing the secretary of state, William Rogers. Under Kissinger, foreign policy was largely set in the White House, under his direct leadership.[1] On issues like the colonels' regime in Greece, Kissinger took the clear line that the internal affairs of other countries were not the business of the United States, unless they implicated key US interests. The result was an approach to the colonels that emphasized the security relationship above all else and only considered the issue of democratic reform insofar as it generated unwelcome pressure from congressional critics and certain NATO allies. In this approach, Tasca, the new ambassador, largely concurred. On the other side was Rogers who, like his predecessor, Dean Rusk, tried to strike the balance referred to throughout this book between the security imperative and the desirability of democratic reform. Unlike Rusk, however, Rogers had to contend with Kissinger in the White House—someone with whom the ambassador in Athens largely agreed. The result was a period in which the disagreements deepened substantially.

This divergence between the Department of State and the White House/Athens embassy was something the Greeks themselves sought to exploit early in the new administration. Indeed, Foreign Minister Panayiotis Pipinelis implicitly drew a distinction between the White House and State Department in an April 1969 meeting with Kissinger:

> The Foreign Minister … said that he felt it is not productive for the U.S. Government to continue to press the present Government for an early return to full constitutional Government. He noted that the Vice President and officials in the State Department had continued to press this point and that the question of continued U.S. military assistance to Greece had become involved in it. He suggested that the U.S. Government should

[1] See, for instance, Siniver (2008), Dallek (2007), Haney (1994), George (1980), Kissinger (1979), and Kohl (1975).

> help its NATO partner with military assistance regardless of its political system.

It is interesting to note that, in response, Kissinger attempted to reassure Pipinelis—not explicitly rejecting the State Department approach, but putting it in the context of the new administration's approach. Under the previous administration, there had been an inherent tension between the practical need to maintain good relations with Greece and the principled support for democracy that many in the Johnson administration felt compelled to push. Kissinger clearly stated his reordering of these principles, placing US interests even more clearly at the center and only concerning himself with such issues as domestic politics to the extent that they had an impact on US interests. Thus, in his response to Pipinelis,

> Dr. Kissinger said that he could report categorically that the policy of the President is for the United States not to involve itself in the political affairs of other countries. There was one qualification to that—when the political affairs of Greece became an issue which others in NATO used to weaken the alliance, then we had to take account of that. For the most part, the policy of the President is for the U.S. to concern itself only with the foreign policy of another country.[2]

Despite Kissinger's position as outlined above, the fact remained that officials in the State Department still had views much more consonant with the balancing approach of the previous administration than with the realpolitik of Kissinger. Several weeks later, Harold Saunders, a member of the NSC staff, wrote a memo to Kissinger, discussing the problem raised by this interbureaucratic difference and proposing that an effort be made to resolve it:

> [A]s you said to Pipinelis, our policy is to stay out of other governments' political disputes, although we have to take note of them when they are used to disrupt important elements of our policy like NATO. As you know, the differing positions of the White House and State Department create an ambiguity in our response. I think we should discuss the problem openly with State. … The simple line to take is that this is a problem which only

[2] Memorandum of Conversation, Secret, 4/11/69, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 593, USNA.

> Greeks themselves can solve. The harder question … is whether we would be totally silent, moderately friendly in our public statements, or outspokenly for or against. It is the second question which we have to … settle among ourselves.[3]

Members of Kissinger's NSC staff were not the only ones noticing the interdepartmental inconsistencies. In fact, a month later, the NEA director at the State Department, Joseph Sisco, sent a memo to Rogers also referencing differences within the executive branch and laying out the State Department's position. On 21 June 1969, referring to an upcoming meeting between Rogers and Vice President Agnew, he wrote that:

> [The Vice President may raise a]n apparent discrepancy between the President's attitude, as the Vice President understands it from Mr. Kissinger, that the domestic political situations in foreign countries are not a matter for U.S. Government concern, and the Department's policy of indicating to the Greek Government the U.S. desire for the restoration of a constitutional situation in Greece.

Sisco then proceeded to reiterate the State Department's long-standing policy—under both administrations—essentially contradicting Kissinger's line that the internal affairs of other countries were their own, not the US's, business. He pointed out that the US had to take into account opposition to the Greek regime emanating from various sources and was bound to inform Greek leaders when their policies presented obstacles to a healthy relationship between the US and Greece. In particular, Sisco advised:

> You may wish to express the view that the U.S. should indeed not attempt to tell other countries how to manage their domestic affairs. You would leave to the Greeks the working out of their internal problems. However, the situation in Greece, and the problems of the present government, have been received unfavorably by some elements in Congress, the press, and academic circles, and these quarters have used their influence in an effort to persuade the U.S. Government to adopt a hostile attitude towards the Greek regime. We do not believe this would be wise or constructive, but

[3] Saunders to Kissinger, Secret, 5/6/69, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 593, USNA.

> we must take account of the views of critics of the Greek regime which are the traditional ones of America where it is a case of democracy versus authoritarianism. We also believe that in the long run the stability of Greece will be better ensured in a constitutional situation. Thus, while we do not attempt to force our views on another government, we see no reason not to let it know our thoughts, especially when it complains about obstacles in U.S.-Greek relations created by political repercussions in this country stemming from the very acts and politics of the Greek regime.[4]

In short, Sisco's view—that it was in the US's interests, as well as in Greece's, to prod the colonels toward democracy—continued to prevail in the Department of State.

Once Tasca took up his post in Athens in January 1970, it became clear that he shared his predecessor's views that the most effective *modus operandi* with the Greek regime was to eschew public criticism of it, and only pressure the regime to move in a democratic direction privately, and always with a view to dampening down congressional or European criticism. Over time, however, this put him at increasing odds with Rogers, Sisco, and others in the Department of State, who consistently argued for a stronger line.

For example, on 4 August 1970, the State Department sent a telegram to the embassies in London, Brussels, the Hague, and Bonn—copying all other NATO capitals—instructing them to seek out ways in which those governments could begin to put increased pressure on the colonels' regime. Using language at near-total odds with Kissinger's views expressed above, the telegram began with a restatement of the need to see constitutional progress, especially given public opinion in the West and in the US:

> Our policy toward Greece is based squarely on [the] thesis that U.S. long and short-term interests are best served by such developments in Greece as will peacefully lead to the restoration in full of civil liberties and parliamentary democracy. The U.S. is therefore ranged on the side of those who want to see change in the political arrangements which now prevail in Greece. Reinforcing this policy is the threat to NATO cohesion created by the deep antipathy of public opinion in some NATO countries to the presence in NATO of a Greece ruled as it currently is. … NATO usefulness as

[4] Sisco to Rogers, Secret, Memorandum 9693, 6/21/69, POL 1 GREECE-US, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> a deterrent depends in substantial part on its being a cohesive treaty organization with a sense of common purpose, and this solidarity being reflected in its public image.[5]

Given this position, the State Department proposed a coordinated program of discreet, private pressure to be placed on the government of Greece (GOG) using the NATO cohesion argument as the key to the entreaties that would be made. The Department, however, emphasized that these approaches should be quiet and discreet, without publicly embarrassing the Greek government and thereby pushing it further away from its NATO allies.

> We believe other NATO gov[ernmen]ts which have the possibility of influencing events in Athens should also be diligent to seize appropriate opportunities to impress on the GOG the effect of the Greek domestic situation on European opinion, and how the interests of Greece as well as the interests of the Alliance are jeopardized by the continued threat of crisis created by impatience with GOG progress so far. We do not rpt not believe a concerted approach would be useful lest its impact be weakened or even destroyed by Greek resentment of "ganging up", but we believe it would be helpful if other NATO countries would also take [an] active role in privately urging GOG to progress towards democracy. Since all NATO members would benefit from easing of [the] Greek problem in [the] Alliance, they should be willing to take up some of [the] burden, rather than leaving pressure on this point solely to [the] U.S.[6]

To this suggestion, the Bonn embassy replied on 6 August that they had been in touch with the German foreign ministry, and the Greek Affairs officer there "stated that the Federal Republic fully agrees with the US view and had made this publicly clear last year in the WEU [Western European Union] meeting on Greece. Since then the [Foreign Office] … had missed no opportunity of telling Greek reps here of the desirability of a restoration of civil liberties and constitutionality in Greece."[7] For its part, the American

[5] State to Athens/Bonn/Brussels/The Hague, Secret, Telegram 125415, 8/4/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[6] State to Athens/Bonn/Brussels/The Hague, Secret, Telegram 125415, 8/4/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[7] Bonn to State, Secret, Telegram 9065, 8/6/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

embassy in Paris also indicated its support for a French appeal to the Greek government. On 7 August, it cabled the State Department:

> While [the] French government may hesitate to make [a] demarche as forcefully as we might wish, it is definitely in our interests to make [an] approach here. [A] GOF [Government of France] representation to [the] GOG, if they were willing to make one, would add considerable weight to [the] concert of NATO nations, and we do not feel that we should let [the] GOF abdicate their share of the responsibility to add their voice, nor provide "sanctuary" for [the] Greek regime to continue holding off the return to a parliamentary solution.[8]

However, in Athens, Tasca reacted in strong opposition to the suggestion of a French intervention. While declaring his support for continued pressure on the Greek regime, on 10 August, he warned of the dangers of a too-organized approach, particularly if the French let the Greeks know that the US had coordinated the international pressure. As he put it:

> [W]e are somewhat concerned that [the] French approach could backfire. … [W]e suspect that [the] French will not hesitate to inform Greece, if they do agree to make [an] approach, that they are doing so on [the] basis [of a] U.S. suggestion. We share [the] department's belief that a "concerted approach" would not be useful since if [the] Greeks thought [that the] U.S [was] in effect leading [a] crusade against them we would defeat our own purposes. In these circumstances …, we urge [the Paris embassy to] hold off until [the] matter can be given further consideration in Washington in light [of the] danger [that the] French here will reveal [the] U.S. as [the] source of [the] suggestion to [the] Greeks and exploit this fact to their own advantage.[9]

Despite Tasca's entreaty that the French not be asked to appeal to the colonels, the State Department responded on 12 August with a clear directive to engage the French in this effort. To this end, Sisco emphasized in the telegram the growing discomfort within NATO over the lack of constitutional progress in Greece as a reason for the US to urge more concerted action.

[8] Paris to State, Confidential, Telegram 10528, 4/7/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[9] Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 4390, 8/10/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> [The] Dept recognizes [the] possibility [that the] GOG may learn of US approaches to European allies urging [that] they exert influence on [the] GOG. We believe [that] approaches [are] appropriate since political conditions in Greece [are] of vital concern to all in view [of the] continuing menace of [a] divisive crisis in NATO provoked by intra-alliance antipathy to [the] Greek regime. [The] French attitude toward [the] present political arrangements in Athens has not hitherto been constructive. If [the] French were to agree to make [a] bilateral effort to encourage [the] GOG to return to democratic norms it would carry considerable weight. … [W]e believe [that the] value of such an approach would probably outweigh [any] possible risks of French exploitation.[10]

He then proceeded to express a great deal of frustration over the obvious lack of any progress in Greece toward democracy and evinced a willingness to apply pressure on Greece that went far beyond that which Tasca in Athens would generally support. Most importantly, he directly linked continued US support to tangible steps from the Greek regime and went so far as to say that prodding should occur both "privately and publicly," even if it were "offensive" to the Greeks:

> [The] U.S. has made clear its position to [the] GOG on [the] need for real progress in [a] return to popularly based government. We have also repeatedly informed our allies, [the] American public and the Congress that we are actively pressuring the Greeks in this regard. … [I]n [the] interest of credibility and in accord with our sincere desire [to] see [the] restoration [of] constitutional government in Greece, it will be necessary to take steps both privately and publicly which may be offensive to [the] GOG. But [the] GOG must understand [the] necessity of setting [their] house in order if they wish unconditional acceptance.[11]

Over the wishes of Tasca, Sisco then proceeded to direct the Paris embassy to proceed with its approach to the French.

Another particularly clear example of disagreement within the executive branch arose over Vice President Agnew's proposed visit to Greece. In regard to his itinerary—specifically, whether he should make a stop in Greece on his return from a state visit to Iran—Rogers sent a memo on 2 September 1971 to the president with his own

[10] Sisco to Athens, Confidential, Telegram, 131022, 8/12/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[11] Sisco to Athens, Confidential, Telegram, 131022, 8/12/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

recommendations. Chief among them was a very negative view of a visit to Greece, at least without significant conditions attached. Rogers recommended that Agnew not visit Greece unless the US was able to extract significant commitments from the Greek regime to move toward constitutionalism. In his memo to Nixon, Rogers's frustration with the lack of democratic progress in Greece was made evident:

> A visit to Greece would be worthwhile in several respects, but I would recommend against it without indications in advance that the Greek Government was moving towards a political normalization. … Greece has traditionally been a staunch NATO ally and has cooperated fully with the United States in bilateral mutual security arrangements. At the same time, the Greek government despite continued pressure from the United States, others of its allies, and the international press has made little genuine progress toward returning the country to political normality. What little progress there has been seems to have been in response to pressure from abroad. After four years in power, the Greek regime continues martial law in force, dissidents are still subject to arbitrary arrest, and key articles of the Constitution providing for civil liberties remain suspended or otherwise inoperative. The growing impatience of our Congress with the dilatory tactics of the Greek regime could result in legislation seriously hindering our ability to continue a useful security relationship with Greece. … In these circumstances, a visit by the Vice President to Greece carries the potential for severe criticism from Congress, some of our allies and important segments of the press. However, criticism could be moderated considerably if the Greek regime were to announce some significant step toward the restoration of representative government before the visit took place or soon afterward, and if the Vice President were to reaffirm, in his statement to Greek leaders and the press, our interest in seeing Greece return to parliamentary rule. … Without some indication of willingness to move toward a political normalization, I would be against a Vice Presidential visit to Greece.[12]

In addition to opposing a vice presidential visit to Greece, Rogers also included a proposed set of instructions, in which Tasca was to tell Papadopoulos that a visit would only be possible if he were able to give

[12] Rogers to Nixon, Secret, Memorandum 7113488, 9/2/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

clear assurances that significant liberalizations would be made. Rogers wanted Tasca to be instructed:

> You should arrange [an] appointment with [the] Pri[me] Min[inister] at [your] earliest convenience and explain that the Vice President would welcome [an] invitation to visit Greece … but that under [the] present circumstances [a] visit would provoke severe criticism which would not be in the interest of the administration or of the Greek regime. You should inform the Pri[me] Min[ister] that criticism of the visit could be kept at a manageable level only if the Greek government were able to take some convincing steps towards a restoration of normality in Greece such as lifting martial law and reviewing courts-martial sentences. To have the greatest impact, these steps should be taken prior to the visit. If that is impossible, we would accept assurances that they would be taken soon afterward.[13]

Rogers's letter to Nixon was followed by a memo from Henry Kissinger to Nixon asking for his decision on the matter. In his memo, Kissinger wrote that the "issue on (sic) the Vice President's visit to Greece is whether, as State recommends, Tasca should tell Prime Minister Papadopoulos that a visit could be manageable only if the Greek government were to take some convincing step toward political normality in connection with it."

However, Kissinger made it clear that he disagreed with Rogers: "Ambassador Tasca's last talk with Papadopoulos suggests that such a condition might kill the visit. The alternative would be for the Vice President to go unconditionally and, without exaggerated expectations, see what he might persuade Papadopoulos to do." He concluded by recommending that "the Vice President go unconditionally."[14] This is the option Nixon approved. Kissinger then followed up on 18 September with a directive to Rogers, informing him that "the President has decided: That the Vice President should go to Greece if that can be arranged with the Greek Government … and [t]hat nothing should be said to the Greek Government in proposing the visit which would imply

[13]Rogers to Nixon, Secret, Memorandum 7113488, 9/2/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

[14]Kissinger to Nixon, Secret, Memorandum 32147, 9/17/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

political conditions for the visit."[15] As Chapter 7 further details, the White House view on the visit had clearly prevailed—and, in the end, Agnew made his visit without conditions or any assurances of reform on the part of the Greek regime.

While the embassy and Washington occasionally had such sharp disagreements over specific policy decisions, more often the differences were of tone, emphasis, and delivery. On one side, the State Department generally expressed its frustration at the slow pace of constitutional progress in Greece and the need to keep the pressure on. On the other, Tasca never wavered from his line that the Greek government was very sensitive to what it perceived as outside interference in its domestic affairs, and that the most fruitful approach was to support Greece's security capabilities within NATO while quietly reminding the junta of the political difficulties that their lack of progress presented to the US domestically and within the alliance.

Along those lines, a 15 June 1972 telegram from Tasca to Rogers represents a clear articulation of Tasca's approach—and his boldly stated desire to rein in what he saw as the State Department's damaging and unproductive criticism of the Greek regime. With the subject line "Greek-US Relations: Increasing Greek Sensitivities," Tasca revealed a growing frustration with what he perceived as the overly critical message coming from Washington. He argued that the extreme hypersensitivity of the Greek regime made US pressure not merely ineffective, but even worked against US interests. Given the regime's rejection of any American pressure as undue "interference" in its domestic affairs, Tasca argued that the US needed to clearly and unequivocally adopt a policy of disengagement from the internal political affairs of Greece. As he emphasized:

> The regime fails to realize or appreciate [the] importance to Greece of public opinion in a democracy like ours. They are determined not to brook outside interference or criticism (which they equate with interference), both of which the military regime finds humiliating. … [I]n a period of detente between east and west, led by the U.S., one of whose cardinal elements is the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other

[15] Kissinger to Rogers, Secret/NoDis, Memorandum 32147, 9/18/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

> countries, [the] regime undoubtedly finds continued U.S. pressure for internal political normalization especially unpalatable. … We should, of course, privately continue to advise [the] regime of the common interest of the alliance in political normalization. We should make clear to our European friends that while we of course ardently hope for an early return of representative government in Greece, we cannot accept responsibility for democracy in Greece. … As at present, our military aid would continue to be related to our priority security interests and we would once and for all make clear to all that [the] U.S. cannot and will not accept responsibility for internal political developments in a NATO ally, particularly one with such an enormously complicated political history of achievement and failure in the field of self government.[16]

In short, by 1972 Tasca had clearly arrived at a policy of near-total non-intervention. As we shall see below, these views dovetailed almost perfectly with those of Henry Kissinger, whose influence would come to take center stage at the Department of State.

Reconvergence of Views

Tasca's views, as expressed in the cable above—particularly his strong assertion that the US needed to decisively disengage from questions of internal Greek politics—were by this point in near-complete agreement with those of Henry Kissinger. Thus, when Kissinger assumed the position of secretary of state in September 1973, the views of Tasca, the NSC, and the State Department came to be largely aligned. Individual officers within the State Department, particularly Joseph Sisco, may have had dissenting views, but they found themselves on the losing end of many policy debates.

For example, after several weeks in his new position as secretary of state, Kissinger was visited by a delegation that included the Greek foreign minister, Phaedon Cavalieratos. During the meeting, Cavalieratos "claimed [to see a] 'slight discrepancy' between Greek relations with [the Department of Defense] and State, contrasting [the] cordial military relationship with States' (sic) reluctant support [of the] present government. [He then u]rged [a] unified and friendly U.S. policy." For his part,

[16]Athens to State, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 3350, 6/15/72, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA (emphasis added).

Kissinger was quick to put any notion of a discrepancy to rest, setting his own stamp on the State Department's approach, as he had at the NSC. He "reaffirmed [the] U.S. regard for [the] Greek role in [the] alliance, noted developments in Greece in recent weeks, and assured Cavalieratos that, in most circumstances, domestic political structures abroad would not rpt not be our concern unless they affect our national interest."[17]

Barely a month later, this newly stated position of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries would be put to the test by the most dramatic events in Greece since 1967. As mentioned in Chapter 3, on 17 November 1973, the Papadopoulos regime employed military force to remove protesting students, workers, and other Athenians from the Athens Polytechnic. Eight days later, hard-liners under the leadership of Brigadier Dimitrios Ioannidis ousted the Papadopoulos regime, reinstated martial law and, in so doing, clearly signaled the emergence of a much more hardline, coercive regime that made no pretense, as Papadopoulos had done, of any interest in democratic reform.

The response by Tasca in Athens was to be alarmed at what he clearly recognized was a significant turning point in the nature of the regime. He cabled Washington on the afternoon of the day of the Ioannidis coup, 25 November, to seek authorization to make contact with the regime and find ways of protecting vital US interests in Greece. Employing a personal and emotional tone not found in his other cables, he declared that the "Greek people want and need our help." He argued that the history of close US-Greek relations, coupled with the souring of Greek relations with other NATO allies over the previous several years, gave the United States a special position of influence vis-à-vis Greece and, as a result, a special responsibility to intervene in the name of "restoring political normalcy to this troubled and key country." In contrast to his usual hands-off approach to the regime, he instead proposed using "indirect means at my disposal, military to military, to convey [a] clear message emphasizing [the] earnest hope of [the] U.S. … for [the] urgent formation of [a] government of national unity." Interestingly—particularly given the events following the fall of the Ioannidis regime in July 1974—Tasca expressed his "strong personal

[17]State to Athens, Secret/NoDis, Telegram 200227, 10/9/73, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

view and hope … that Karamanlis could come back, … [thereby] holding the country together and saving it from polarization and chaos."[18]

Tasca's telegram formed the basis of a long memorandum from Sisco to Kissinger, laying out possible options for a US response to the Ioannidis coup. These ranged from a passive policy of "non-interference" and "monitoring," to private pressure "to move toward the restoration of parliamentary government," to "a strong use of our influence to urge … the formation of a government of national unity … with wide support." In the end, Sisco himself argued for the middle option of refraining "from criticism of the Greek regime," but authorizing Tasca to urge "a return of parliamentary government if he is approached by an emissary of the new Greek government." Perhaps reflecting his own views of the new regime, he prefaced his analysis by pointing out that the new "behind-the-scenes leader, Dimitrios Ioannides, has consistently taken a negative position on elections, [the] release of political prisoners, and the lifting of martial law. The Greek Military Police, of which Ioannides is head, has developed a notorious reputation in Greece because of its alleged torturing of political prisoners."[19]

Kissinger's response was concise and unmistakable. Despite what was, in diplomatic terms, a highly unusual and impassioned plea from the ambassador in Athens for intervention in the Greek political situation, and in the face of what was clearly a turn to an oppressively harder-line regime in Athens, Kissinger held firm. He decisively rejected both Tasca's and Sisco's suggestions of any pressure on the new dictators and instructed Tasca to tell representatives of the new Greek regime that internal affairs were essentially their own concern and that the US would not seek to impede their actions. Almost perfunctorily, at the end of the memo, Tasca was also authorized, if pressed, to state the US's traditional in-principle support for democratic politics. Kissinger wrote:

> I appreciate your assessment of the delicate situation … arising out of the November 25 coup. However, I am opposed to the notion of telling other countries how to run their internal affairs and our posture will continue

[18]Athens to State, Secret/NoDis, Telegram 8233, 11/25/73, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 595, USNA.

[19]Sisco to Kissinger, Secret/NoDis, Memorandum 7322405, 11/26/73, POL GREECE-US, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> to reflect this. … Should you be approached by an emissary of the new leadership, you should take the following line: … We have no intention of intervening publicly or otherwise in Greece's internal political evolution. … We will be watching developments closely and sympathetically and will seek to avoid statements which might make the task of the new leadership more difficult. … You should not seek to give unsolicited advice, but if your views are asked regarding present and future developments, you should point out that the U.S., as a matter of principle, is committed to the concept of parliamentary democracy.[20]

Indeed, with Kissinger's decision, the United States would not only take the line of non-intervention in Greek domestic politics, but would even watch events "sympathetically" from afar, committing itself to not publicly oppose the new regime in ways that would make its exercise of power "more difficult."

The views revealed in this exchange between Tasca, Sisco, and Kissinger were further expounded in a meeting that took place several months later in Washington. On 20 March 1974, four months after the Ioannidis coup, Tasca found himself in Washington to testify before House Foreign Affairs Committee. In preparation for that testimony, Tasca met with Kissinger, Sisco, and Kissinger's special assistant, Winston Lord, to discuss US policy toward Greece. The participants met in part to discuss an internal State Department paper which raised the concern that US policy needed to be more clearly delineated, particularly as the more hardline and uncooperative nature of the Ioannidis regime had become apparent.

The report of this meeting makes for fascinating reading insofar as it shows the principals' range of views on what US policy should be. On one end of the spectrum was Sisco, who confessed his continuing desire that the US keep up pressure on Greece. On the other was Kissinger, who was clear that the US had no business telling other countries how to run their internal affairs. In the middle was Tasca who—perhaps naturally, given his position over the previous four years—defended the two-pronged, balancing US policy, though always with the security relationship paramount.

[20]State to Athens, Secret/NoDis, Telegram 236011, 12/1/73, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 595, USNA.

For his part, Tasca recounted that the US policy had been essentially one of prioritizing the security issue, while at the same time acknowledging the need for constitutional progress—as a way not only to defuse congressional criticism, but also to deflect any threat to NATO unity. As he put it:

> [T]he way I've interpreted it [US policy], [is] protecting the higher part of our security interests—but, at the same time, making it clear that the United States has a part in Greece which, I also submit, cannot be compared with any other country—because they are a nation which has a history and a cultural tradition and a place that's different.

Unsatisfied with this rather ambiguous interpretation of US policy, Kissinger interrupted Tasca with: "I still don't understand what you think our policy is." To this, Tasca replied that the policy was "[s]aying publicly that we're for democracy in Greece, the way we've said in the past." He pointed out that, given this long-stated policy orientation, the administration would run into a host of problems in Congress were he to be asked "if we're still publicly for democracy in Greece and I say we think it would be nice to do it [but] it's their business." To which Kissinger responded: "Which is pretty close to my convictions."

A few moments later, Kissinger asked Sisco what his views were. Sisco replied,

> Well, I'm not entirely satisfied with our present policy, and I have never been entirely satisfied with the totally hands-off policy that we have pursued. I feel that our present policy does not sufficiently and clearly enough disassociate ourselves from Greece in this respect. … [I]t seems to me that the policy of, I believe, too close association with this present crowd is going to cause difficulty for us.

Kissinger then asked, "Why is it in the American interest to do in Greece what we apparently don't do anywhere else—of requiring them to give a commitment to the President to move to representative government?" Asking a very similar question to that which had been asked repeatedly of American officials by the Greek junta leaders themselves, Kissinger wanted to know why the United States held Greece to a seemingly higher standard than it did other countries: "And [why do] we hold [this] view with Greece—not Yugoslavia, Morocco, Algeria. How about Algeria?"

Saying that he was playing devil's advocate, Kissinger pointed out that the

> Department of State doesn't have a Political Science Division. It conducts the foreign policy of the United States. It deals with any government—communist or non-communist—within the context of the foreign-policy objectives of the United States. That way you don't get caught with each individual government in giving approval and disapproval. Why is that wrong?

To this, Tasca replied that Greece was essentially different, given the importance of the "foreign factor" there since 1821, and particularly the more recent role of the United States. Given that deep involvement, "we're part of their political process. And we ought to get out of it. But it's going to take time to get out." To which Kissinger pointed out that "if we're going to be manipulating their domestic structure, we're not going to be able to get out."

Finally, Tasca sought some guidance from Kissinger over what the US policy toward the Ioannidis regime was, and what he was expected to say when asked. He emphasized that "no statement has been publicly made on this subject" since the departure of Rogers as secretary of state. Tasca told Kissinger that he had told Ioannidis that "it's their business," although "from the standpoint of bilateral relations and [the] cohesiveness of the NATO Alliance, there ought to be some real advantages in their moving ahead" in a democratic direction. Tasca then added something that, perhaps more than anything else, reveals the shift that had occurred in American foreign policy over the past seven years: "But it's their business, without any question of deadline or dates."

However, Tasca still wanted to know what he was to say if questioned, particularly by members of Congress. To this, Kissinger responded with a short exposition of his fundamental foreign policy orientation:

> Basically we conduct foreign policy here, not domestic policy. We don't muck around with the countries. … That is my posture. It's one that I've tried to impose on Sisco when he didn't slide cables past me when I was in the White House … (Laughter.) … which he did, not without success, from time to time. (Laughter.)[21]

[21] "Minutes of Secretary of State Kissinger's Regional Staff Meeting," Secret/LimDis, 3/20/74, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976*, Volume XXX, Greece; Cyprus; Turkey, 1973–1976, ed. Laurie Van Hook (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2007), Document 12.

In short, the implication was that under the new secretary of state, there would be even less interference in the domestic affairs of Greece.

Thus, as the junta moved toward its eventual denouement in July 1974, it was clear that the US was not about to make any active, much less damaging, moves against the regime. Even in the aftermath of the Polytechnic uprising in November 1973 and the hardline Ioannidis coup that followed, US foreign policy remained more firmly rooted than ever in the approach shared by Kissinger and Tasca that US security interests demanded a close relationship with the Greek regime, its obvious lack of any progress toward democracy notwithstanding. United States foreign policy, then, had changed in remarkable ways over the last seven years: from agreement within the Johnson administration in the early days of the junta on the need for a clear linkage between US support and constitutional progress to deepening disagreement between the embassy and State Department over how explicit those linkages should be, to the eventual conclusion and agreement within the Nixon administration that no such connection should be made.

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CHAPTER 5

A View of the Colonels from the US Congress: Supporters and Opponents of the Greek Regime

> [I]f some ragtag group, including some Communists, had taken over Athens in the darkness of night, surely Secretary of State Dean Rusk and the Department of Defense would have sent in some of our planes and airborne troops to protect American lives. … And yet, what difference is there in the way the tyrants, whether Fascists or Communists, rule? …
>
> The Fascist clique now ruling Greece has suppressed personal freedom, established control over press and radio, abrogated the constitution and cancelled free elections. To date we have accepted these actions. … If instead of rightwing generals, a ragtag group of leftwing extremists and Communists had staged a coup d'etat (sic) and established a Communist government or quasi-Communist government in Greece, without a doubt, officials of our State Department and our Defense Department would have immediately taken measures to oust them. The Fascists deserve no less. … To continue to recognize this criminal regime would be a blight on our honor.[1]

These were the words of a US senator, a staunch critic of the colonels' regime, in December 1967, following King Constantine's failed countercoup. Joined by other senators in urging the US government to support the King's countercoup and to condemn the Greek junta,

[1] US Senate. "The United States Should Break Diplomatic Relations with Fascist Greek Usurpers." December 14. 36824. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Senator Stephen Young, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 27.)

N. M. Karakatsanis and J. Swarts,
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his proclamation—that "[t]o continue to recognize … [the colonels' regime] would be a blight on [America's] honor"—is but one example of the many condemnations of US government policy in the US Congress during the seven years of military rule.

As we have seen, during the entire period of the junta, a key problem faced by the Johnson and Nixon administrations was the public outcry against the 1967 coup and the succeeding authoritarian government. Both administrations were faced with the ongoing challenge of how to maintain a supportive attitude toward Greece for Cold War strategic reasons in the face of often strident criticism from members of Congress, human rights organizations, and many of the US's European allies, all of whom frequently lamented "the rape of Greek democracy." As A. G. Xydis wrote during the dictatorship, "there has developed a very large body of public opinion in Western Europe, and a growing one in the United States, morally and politically opposed to the regime ruling Greece."[2] For various reasons—not least the symbolic incongruity of dictatorship in the "birthplace of democracy"—opposition to US policy in Greece became a *cause célèbre* for many during this period, as they tried to pressure the US government to cut its ties with the Greek regime at the same time the US sought to strengthen that strategic and military relationship. Indeed, some of the most strident opposition originated in the US Congress. Moreover, congressional criticism of the strategic relationship between the US and Greece was often used by members of the executive branch in an effort to convince the colonels' regime that it should set a timetable for a constitutional referendum and democratic elections. Thus, the "threat of congressional action" was a key part of the arguments used by American policy makers in their attempt to moderate the colonels by amplifying the message that "the regime in Athens must help us to help it," arguing that congressional quarters were staunchly hostile to the authoritarian government.[3] As one State Department official told Greek ambassador Xanthopoulos-Palamas in March 1968, Congress had a "major voice" when it came to MAP funding. As such, it would reduce or eliminate aid

[2] See Xydis (1972, 195).

[3] State to Athens, Confidential/ExDis/For Ambassador, Telegram 108450, 2/1/68, POL GREECE-US, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

programs altogether if the executive branch made decisions with which Congress disagreed.[4]

And yet, despite staunch congressional opposition to the colonels, the severing of ties between the US and Greece failed to occur. As we argue in this book, as the Johnson and Nixon administrations formulated their respective policies toward the junta, it became clear that the US sought to press the regime—to varying degrees—to move toward constitutionalism. Much of the impetus for this pressure came from congressional opposition. However, the fundamentally friendly relationship between the US and Greece would remain intact, with the United States choosing to support its strategic Cold War ally despite much public opposition at home and in Western Europe.

Through a close reading and analysis of congressional debates, this chapter presents the arguments made in the US Congress both by those who supported and those who opposed US policy toward Greece. It shows that, while much opposition to the colonels' regime existed in both houses of Congress, at the end of the day, congressional supporters of administration policy—who focused on US strategic interests, rather than on arguments of morality and principle—tended to prevail. Thus, in Congress as in the executive branch, Cold War pragmatism trumped an ideological commitment to democracy. In addition, we also illustrate attempts by outside groups to influence the policy-making process. In this regard, we briefly illustrate how two members of Congress, in particular, seemed especially in tune with certain vocal Greek–American constituencies—journalists, businesspeople, and interest group leaders—who helped shape and reinforce the image that members of Congress held of the colonels. We begin with the arguments made by the opponents of the colonels' regime—those "liberals in Congress" who regularly critiqued the policies of both the Johnson and Nixon administrations—before turning to those more supportive of strong US ties with the Greek regime.

[4]State to Athens, Confidential, Telegram 134513, 3/22/68, POL 15-5 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

The Liberal Opposition in Congress

As alluded to in previous chapters of this book, throughout the entire rule of the colonels, much criticism was directed by Congress against both the military dictatorship itself as well as the US government's friendly relations with that regime. Members of Congress regularly pointed to the repressive nature of military rule, the regime's imprisonment of the political opposition, and the inhumane treatment of political prisoners, among other denunciations, criticizing both administrations' diplomatic and military ties with Greece.

Numerous cables between the Department of State and the US embassy in Athens reveal the degree to which both the Johnson and Nixon administrations were concerned about the vocal opposition in Congress to US policy toward Greece. They show both administrations' keen sensitivity to congressional criticism over such issues as the recognition of the colonels' regime, the appointment of an American ambassador to Athens, as well as the level of military assistance. For their part, congressional critics of US policy repeatedly called on both administrations to cut US aid to Greece and to take other measures to sanction the military government in Athens. In the fall of 1967, for example, a bipartisan group of 52 members of the House of Representatives signed a letter calling for a cutoff of all US assistance to Greece. This was paralleled by similar objections to funding in the Senate. In the words of Senator Wayne Morse, a Democrat known for opposing his party's leadership on many issues, including the war in Vietnam, who was a particularly outspoken critic of the junta:

> Let no one in this country, or in Greece, be fooled about the why we send this aid to Greece. It has nothing to do with democracy; nothing to do with freedom of the Greek people; nothing to do with advancing the cause of personal freedom through constitutional limitations on government action. We do not stand for those things any more in Greece, just as we do not stand for them in many parts of the world.
>
> The only object of our aid program in Greece is to keep a strong pro-American military government in power that will accede to whatever requests the Pentagon makes of it, especially with respect to NATO.[5]

[5] US Senate. "Greece." October 9. 28277. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Senator Wayne Morse, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 21.)

And,

> In Greece, we stand only for the furnishing of several hundreds of thousands of Greek bodies for the NATO army. That is the total interest of the United States in Greece, for to obtain those solders we have sold out constitutionalism, we have sold out personal liberty, and we have bought any Greek Army officer who can deliver soldiers to NATO.[6]

Morse and other members of Congress argued that by continuing to work with the junta rather than overtly opposing it, the United States' image as a defender of freedom was being badly tarnished. They maintained that the continuation of arms shipments to Greece created strong anti-American feelings there and that the short-term strategic advantage of the shipments would be outweighed by the long-term political and strategic damage they would cause.[7] To make the point, members of both houses of Congress cited examples from the media—or conveyed to them by the Greek opposition—that a perception of US support for the colonels was widely held in Greece. Such widespread perceptions, they argued, would ultimately prove detrimental to the US's future interests in Greece and would result in "a diminution of U.S. influence."[8] As one senator pointedly argued, "If the United States should implicate itself with this Government, we will have a bitter harvest of mistrust to deal with when democracy is finally restored."[9] The establishment of normal relations with the military government in Athens and the continued flow of US military assistance to it were said to do real damage to US interests. As Morse argued in a debate on the issue of aid to Greece:

[6] US Senate. "Suspension of Civil Works and Certain Military Construction." October 6. 28132. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Senator Wayne Morse, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 21.)

[7] Strasbourg to Athens, Unclassified, Airgram A-57, 4/27/72, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[8] US Senate. "Democracy in Greece—Toward a New Beginning." August 21. 23373. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Senator Joseph Clark, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 17.)

[9] US Senate. "Opposition to Restoration of Military Aid to Greece." May 29. 15631. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1968. (Senator Joseph Clark, 90th Congress, Vol. 114, part 12.)

> [Does its] manpower and geography make it worthwhile to keep Greece on the payroll … when her government is an illegitimate collection of militarists who prosper from the Communist bugaboo and use it as a pretext for strangling liberty in their own country? I say that to keep such a government afloat with U.S. arms and aid of any kind does more harm than good to American interests.[10]

Or as Congressman Don Edwards put it, "a democratic Greece will make for a healthier NATO ally than a Greece under a dictator's heel."[11]

These opponents of normal US-Greek relations focused their arguments on the symbolic importance of opposing the colonels, highlighting moral justifications as a key part of their appeals. They argued that their proposals—often amendments to bills intended to cut military aid to Greece—would serve as a signal to Greeks and to the rest of the world that the United States stood behind liberal democracy. In their view, the equivocal, even contradictory, US foreign policy position—condemning the deviation from democracy while supporting the country militarily—had the effect of positioning the US squarely on the side of dictatorship. During a debate on the loan of naval vessels to a number of countries, including Greece, Minnesota Congressman Donald Fraser made this point succinctly. He argued that refusing to loan the vessels to Greece would be an important symbolic gesture: "We ought to make clear to the rest of the world that the United States believes in what it says it believes in. We ought to demonstrate that we believe certain things are wrong and that we believe in freedom."[12]

Likely aware that the moral argument would have little sway with those in government who were most concerned with the importance of Greece to US strategic interests in the Eastern Mediterranean, members of Congress repeatedly pointed out that such measures as cutting

[10] US Senate. "Greece." November 20. 33202. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Senator Wayne Morse, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 24.)

[11] US House. "Greece Under Dictatorship: Zorba Must Rise Again." November 30. 33308. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Congressman Don Edwards, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 24.)

[12] US House. "Authorize Loan of Certain Naval Vessels." October 2. 27498. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Congressman Donald Fraser, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 20.)

off military aid would actually have little real effect on Greece's capabilities within NATO. Thus, while calling for condemnation of the Greek regime and for moves to restore democracy there, the congressional critics of US policy were careful to reassure their colleagues that the measures they proposed were not likely to have a detrimental impact on Greece's ability to carry out its security commitments within the NATO alliance in the Eastern Mediterranean.

An example of this was Senator Claiborne Pell's proposed amendment to the 1969 Foreign Assistance Act that would have limited military assistance to Greece. Pell argued that, if approved, the amendment would have at most a "very small" impact on military preparedness, since it only prohibited additional grants of military aid beyond those which had already been promised to Greece and were already in the pipeline. As he argued, his aim was to put the Senate on record as opposing the dictatorship and the significance of his measure lay in its symbolism:

> What the amendment does is to clearly demonstrate to the Greek people that even if the executive branch will not say that they object to the presence of the present totalitarian government in Greece and object to the use of torture as a means of political intimidation, at least Congress takes that position.[13]

A similar argument—that publicly withdrawing US support would have little effect on military preparedness but would rather send an important message to Greece and beyond—was made some months later during the Senate debate on the Hartke Amendment—which, if passed, would also have prohibited funds for military weapons or services to Greece. While the amendment was ultimately rejected by a vote of 50–42, its supporters argued that, even if funds for military weapons and services were cut, it would have a negligible strategic effect. As Pell pointed out to the opponents of the Hartke Amendment during a Senate debate:

> Mr. President, is the Senator aware that if the pending amendment is agreed to that, because of the assistance presently in the pipeline and the leeway given to the President, there need be no actual stoppage in shipments of equipment to Greece?

[13]US Senate. "Foreign Assistance Act of 1969." December 12. 38711. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1969. (Senator Claiborne Pell, 91st Congress, Vol. 115, part 29.)

> If the present Greek regime actually moves even a step in the direction of elections and states that it intends to hold them by a specific date, the shipment of munitions can be resumed within a year. There would be no stoppage in that event.[14]

Downplaying the practical effect of the amendment, the moral and political signal it would convey was emphasized as being of paramount importance:

> The indispensable first action we must take … is adoption by the Senate of the pending amendment. An immediate cutting off of military aid and gifts to the Greek dictatorship would … signal clearly to the Greek people and to our democratic allies throughout the world that the junta can no longer count on American support.[15]

And, as Senator Vance Hartke himself argued,

> To pass the amendment would be to serve public notice that the United States will not condone the development of a dictatorship in Europe. It would reaffirm our allegiance to the principles of democracy and freedom at a time when that reaffirmation would mean so much to Greek citizens now struggling under this oppressive regime.[16]

Perhaps the best example of how congressional measures were meant to be symbolically instrumental, rather than effectual, was the Hays Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1971. Specifically, in August 1971, Ambassador Henry Tasca was reported to have had an "amicable and constructive" conversation with Representative Wayne Hays regarding his amendment, which banned any military assistance or sales under the Foreign Military Sales Act to Greece as long as the country

[14] US Senate. "Order of Business: Amendment No. 648." June 29. 22013. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1970. (Senator Claiborne Pell, 91st Congress, Vol. 116, part 16.)

[15] US Senate. "Order of Business: Amendment No. 648." June 29. 22002. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1970. (Senator Vance Hartke, 91st Congress, Vol. 116, part 16.)

[16] US Senate. "Order of Business: Amendment No. 648." June 29. 22014. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1970. (Senator Vance Hartke, CR-Senate, 91st Congress, Vol. 116, part 16.)

remained under a military dictatorship.[17] However, in that conversation with Tasca, Hays reportedly confirmed to the ambassador that he would not object to an amendment that would actually remove some of the restrictions being placed on military assistance to Greece. Accordingly, during a subsequent debate on the amendment, "the expectation" that President Nixon would exercise a presidential waiver to restore military assistance to Greece as well as the parameters by which this was to take place were discussed.[18] This was spelled out in a memorandum prepared for Nixon regarding a meeting he was to have with Tasca in August 1971:

> Ambassador Tasca stated that the House Committee understood that the President would exercise the waiver and intentionally provided for this contingency in the draft amendment.[19]

This understanding—that the president would utilize a waiver—was further explicated in a Department of State telegram to the US embassy: "[I]n voting for [the] Hays Amendment almost all members [of the] Foreign Affairs Committee expected [the] President to exercise [the] waiver and *thought he should*."[20] In a memorandum to Nixon, Henry Kissinger also confirmed the symbolic nature of the committee's vote: "The House Committee understands that you are likely to exercise that waiver but felt it useful to put its displeasure on the record."[21]

Another example of the symbolic nature of such congressional votes was the 1970 Senate debate regarding the loan of a submarine to Greece. In that debate, Senator Daniel Inouye proposed an amendment that would have denied the loan to the colonels. However,

[17] State to Athens, Secret, Telegram 143169, 8/5/71, DEF 19 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[18] State to Athens, Secret, Telegram 143169, 8/5/71, DEF 19 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA. See also Hicks to Kissinger, Secret, 7/30/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 815, USNA.

[19] Haig Memorandum for the President's Files, Secret/Sensitive, 8/4/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

[20] State to Athens, Secret, Telegram 143169, 8/5/71, DEF 19 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA (emphasis added).

[21] Kissinger to Nixon, Secret, 8/4/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

this "denial" was purely symbolic because the submarine was already engaged by the Greek Navy in antisubmarine warfare service. Indeed, Inouye himself acknowledged that, even if the amendment were passed, the "ship [would] remain in Greece's hands, [and thus it would] continue to bolster our security in the eastern Mediterranean." Despite this fact, however, Inouye contended that the Senate should deny the extension of the loan "as a symbolic gesture":

> I do not expect my amendment to have any massive political, diplomatic, or military repercussions; but what I hope to accomplish today through this symbolic gesture—I repeat, this symbolic gesture—is a reaffirmation of the American commitment to democratic ideals. My amendment offers an opportunity to all Members of the Senate to express their opposition to dictatorship, without undermining in any way our own security in the eastern Mediterranean.[22]

Indeed, as a Department of State telegram confirmed to the US embassy in Bonn regarding a similar House committee amendment, "[T]he main intent of the … Amendment was to register moral disapproval of the Papadopoulos Government, and not to cut off military assistance to Greece. The legislation was worded in such a way as to allow Presidential flexibility in this matter."[23] Thus, it is important to note that even in February 1972, when Congress finally voted to cut off military aid to Greece, it purposefully included a waiver clause in the legislation that allowed the president to restore aid if he believed that it was in "the over-riding requirements of the national security" of the US to do so. Accordingly, Nixon restored aid promptly, on 17 February, and congressional committees were informed of this restoration on 2 March 1972. Thus, even those members of Congress who criticized the colonels and cast votes to cut military spending or deny loans of military equipment to Athens were primarily engaged in symbolic voting that, in reality, would have little real effect on either administration's military assistance program for Greece.

[22]US Senate. "Extension of Certain Naval Vessel Loans." December 4. 39965. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1970. (Senator Daniel Inouye, 91st Congress, Vol. 116, part 30.)

[23]State to Bonn, Confidential, Telegram 146164, 8/10/71, DEF 19 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

As illustrated, much opposition to the colonels and to US policy toward Greece was expressed in both houses of Congress. Arguing that the US's association with the junta was a blight on US honor and harmful to the country's long-term strategic interests, the critics of this policy made the argument that opposition to the regime was demanded by the values of liberal democracy. As a result, these opponents to a friendly US foreign policy toward the regime attempted to symbolically pressure the colonels by voting against military aid. However, to head off any concern that the US was actually weakening a key Cold War ally in the Mediterranean, opponents also argued that the symbolic steps would have no real consequence on the regime's capabilities within NATO and therefore would not harm US strategic interests. Thus, even for these staunch opponents of US policy toward Greece, US strategic interests remained paramount.

Despite such strong congressional opposition to US government policy—an opposition, as we have seen, both administrations were deeply concerned about—the supporters of the status quo prevailed. As detailed in previous chapters, following a brief period of caution, military funding was restored, an ambassador to Athens was appointed, the King's countercoup went unsupported, and the Johnson and, later, Nixon administrations settled into a *modus operandi* with the colonels' regime. Thus, we now turn to the arguments made in Congress by those advocating support for the colonels. We will see that, unlike those who justified the cutting of ties by pointing to the repressive, undemocratic nature of the regime, its supporters underscored US strategic interests, making a pragmatic argument for continued good relations. To illustrate the later position, we again draw on statements made during congressional debates.

The Supporters of US Government Policy Toward the Junta

Supporters of US policy toward the junta regularly involved the Greek–American press and a number of Greek–American and Greek–Canadian cultural organizations, pointing to them as backers of the colonels and of the US government's policies toward Greece.[24] Indeed, Roman Pucinski,

[24]On the role of the Greek–American community, see Coufoudakis (1993), Moskos and Moskos (2017), and Saloutos (1975).

a Democratic congressman from the northwest side of Chicago, was an outspoken supporter of the junta who often quoted Greek–American sources in support of his position. For instance, Pucinski revealed in September 1967 that he had been invited by the president of the Pan Arcadian Federation of America to be the federation's guest at its convention in Athens during the preceding summer. While in Athens, he reportedly met with Papadopoulos and other leaders of the military government. According to his own account, those meetings convinced Pucinski that the Soviet Union was increasingly threatening the Mediterranean and had a "grand design" to take over the Middle East and Africa.[25]

Pucinski was not the only public official to be invited to Greece as a private citizen to be briefed by junta leaders. Republican Congressman Ed Derwinski, representing a south suburban Chicago district, also accepted an invitation and, while in Greece, met with members of the colonels' regime, the US ambassador, members of the press, former parliamentarians, and private Greek citizens. His invitation came from Andrew Fasseas, a leader of the Greek–American community in Chicago, publisher of the conservative Greek–American newspaper, the *Greek Star*, an archon of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Supreme President of the Order of AHEPA, the country's most influential Greek–American cultural organization. As evidence of his closeness to the Greek regime, in 1969 Fasseas was awarded the cross of the Commander of the Royal Order of the Phoenix[26] by the junta.

Perhaps because of his association with Fasseas, Derwinski would regularly insert into the Congressional Record editorials and other articles appearing in the Greek–American press—particularly Fasseas's *Greek Star*—in praise of the junta. In July 1967, for example, just three months after the launching of the Greek dictatorship, Derwinski

[25] US House. "Debate of U.S. Aid Bill." July 18. 22092. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1968. (Congressman Roman Pucinski, 90th Congress, Vol. 114, part 17.); US House. "Extensions of Remarks." "Strong Support for Greek Constitution Indicates Desire by Greek People for Return to Normalcy." October 9. 30347. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1968. (Congressman Roman Pucinski, 90th Congress, Vol. 114, part 23.)

[26] The cross of the Commander of the Order of the Phoenix is bestowed on Greek citizens who have excelled in the arts, public administration, business, or industry. It is also bestowed on citizens of other countries who have raised the international standing of Greece.

inserted a *Greek Star* editorial into the Congressional Record arguing that Greece was "the most reliable ally that America could ever count on" and that the two countries had "always been found facing the common enemy," that is, communism. The editorial also urged the US to resume its shipments of heavy military equipment to Greece following the Johnson administration's immediate postcoup suspension.[27] Indeed, throughout the seven years of military rule, Derwinski continued to regularly incorporate into the Congressional Record anti-communist, pro-junta newspaper articles that extolled the virtues of the colonels' regime. Without offering any evidence, he even went so far as to assert that the *Greek Star* "very accurately reflect[ed] the sentiments of Greek-Americans" living in the United States.[28]

In addition to arranging visits to Greece for Derwinski and Pucinski, the Pan Arcadian Federation also invited another ten congressmen, along with their wives, to visit Greece for two weeks in 1969 to attend the organization's annual convention in Athens. While there, meetings were arranged with Papadopoulos, Pattakos, and Makarezos, among others. Upon their return to the United States, these congressmen then shared stories about the happy, contented, and prosperous people of Greece whom they had met during their trip. One of them, Representative Lawrence Williams, reported that the "overwhelming opinion" of the "hundreds of Greek people" they met on their visit was that the colonels were doing an "excellent job."[29] Another maintained that, while he did not condone any dictatorship, he would rather have in place a dictatorship friendly to the US than a Communist government "like the one in Cuba."[30]

Supporters of continued good relations with the junta also highlighted the attitudes of certain members of the Greek–American

[27] US House. "The Truth About Greece." July 25. 20020. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Congressman Ed Derwinski, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 15.)

[28] US House. "Extension of Remarks." "Greek Government Solid After 1 Year in Power." May 3. 11760. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1968. (Congressman Ed Derwinski, 90th Congress, Vol. 114, part 9.)

[29] US House. "Report on Trip to Greece." December 11. 38558. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1969. (Congressman Lawrence Williams, 91st Congress, Vol. 115, part 28.)

[30] US House. "Extension of Remarks." "Greece: A Communist Goal." September 16. 25696. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1969. (Congressman J. Herbert Burke, 91st Congress, Vol. 115, part 19.)

community. For example, lawmakers routinely included into the official record or highlighted during congressional debates resolutions that had been passed by Greek cultural organizations supportive of the colonels. Congressman Derwinski, for example, inserted into the record a letter he had received from AHEPA Supreme President Fasseas, along with a statement unanimously adopted as official AHEPA policy, which urged "that the United States continue its military and economic aid and assistance to Greece."[31] Later, following a 1971 vote in the House of Representatives to cut military aid to Greece, a formal resolution that had been passed unanimously by the Order of AHEPA at its forty-ninth Supreme Convention in Los Angeles was also included into the Congressional Record. It placed its members on record as "deploring" the cutting of military aid to Greece, calling on the US Senate to reject that portion of the foreign aid bill, and making an appeal to the Senate that it "restore and continue" full military aid to the country. The resolution stated:

> [I]n the unfortunate event that the Congress of the United States, (sic) should succumb to specious, inaccurate, irrelevant, confusing, and downright misleading propaganda of the enemies of the present Greek Government and perhaps the western world, and not restore this military aid to Greece, we, the recognized spokesman of 2,000,000 Americans of Greek descent in the United States, hereby petition and request the President of the United States … to find that restoration of military aid to Greece is in the "overriding national interest" of our country and to restore the same forthwith.[32]

Parenthetically, it is important to note that, earlier, in June 1968, Fasseas had already sent the "official policy" of AHEPA, unanimously adopted in October 1967, to Vice President Spiro Agnew. Urging the administration to continue its military and economic aid to Greece, the statement proclaimed:

[31] US House. Letter sent by Andrew Fasseas to Derwinski, dated 21 May 1968. Quoted in "Extension of Remarks." "Order of AHEPA." May 23. 14984. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1968. (90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 10.)

[32] US House. "Order of AHEPA Resolution to Restore Military Aid to Greece Programs—49th Supreme Conventions." September 9. 31174. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971. (92nd Congress, Vol. 117, part 24.)

> Many of our officers and members have recently visited Greece. They have found that law and order prevail and that conditions for visitors and tourists are most pleasant. If a European came to the United States and told the American people what type of government we should have, or whom to elect as our President, we would rightfully reject it as an unwarranted interference with our internal politics. The members of the Order of Ahepa feel that the type of government in Greece is a matter that concerns the Greek people only. As Americans, our concern is that whatever Greek government Greece has should keep Greece as a member of NATO and a faithful ally of the United States.[33]

Based on this AHEPA stance, a number of senators and congressmen declared that Greek organizations in the United States and Canada were unhappy with Congress's decision to limit military assistance to Greece. They argued that, in addition to AHEPA, the Society of the Castorians of New York "Omonoia," the Panepirotic Federation of America and Canada, and the Pan Arcadian Federation unanimously voted to urge the Senate to restore Greece's military aid.[34] The Panepirotic Federation even went so far as to call upon senators to "go on record as favoring Greek aid … irrespective of internal reforms [in Greece]."[35]

It is also worth mentioning that, in August 1967, Archbishop Iakovos, the primate of the Greek Orthodox Church of North and South America, initially appeared sympathetic to the regime in Athens.[36] Following a trip

[33] Order of AHEPA, Press Release: "Ahepa Urges United States Continue Military and Economic Aid and Assistance to Greece," 10/17/67, POL GREECE-US, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[34] US House. "Extensions of Remarks." "Military Aid to Greece Debate." November 4. 39466. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971. (Congressman Ed Derwinski, 92nd Congress, Vol. 117, part 30.)

[35] US House. "Resolutions of Members of the Panepirotic Federation of America and Canada, Inc." Quoted in "The Strategic Importance of Greece to Security of the United States." September 30. 34379. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971. (Congressman Ray Blanton, 92nd Congress, Vol. 117, part 26.)

[36] This position would evolve so that by May 1968, Archbishop Iakovos would meet with officials in the Department of State to share his concerns regarding developments in Greece, including the junta's governmental policies, the state of the Greek economy, and a decline in tourism, among others. He also expressed concern that the regime in Athens might attempt to take political advantage of the church's Clergy-Laity Congress scheduled to take place in Athens during the summer of 1970. (Memorandum of Conversation, Confidential, 5/21/68, POL GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.)

to Greece in summer of 1967, Iakovos visited the Department of State to meet with Lucius Battle, the assistant secretary at the NEA desk, to give his impression of the colonels' regime. During the meeting, Iakovos reportedly stated that "the present regime in Greece could and should be helped and that the alternative to it in the present context would be chaos." Having himself successfully negotiated with the regime on behalf of certain opposition members who had been imprisoned and subsequently released, Iakovos argued that the regime was responsive to advice and that its motivations were sincere. He predicted that with the appropriate "prodding and encouragement," the regime would eventually move toward the restoration of democracy.[37] This early position of Iakovos regarding the regime was corroborated by the chancellor of the archdiocese, Fr. George Bacopoulos, who in a similar meeting with State Department officials indicated that, while Iakovos had worked hard to maintain the neutrality of the "American Orthodox community" vis-à-vis the coup, the archbishop believed the regime could make many needed reforms in Greece and that he viewed the coup with "prayerful delight."[38] Given Iakovos's position as head of the Greek Orthodox Church in the United States and his influence over Greek clergy and laity alike, such views that painted a favorable image of the colonels' regime in Athens surely affected the views of some congressional leaders in the US.

In short, those who supported friendly relations between the United States and the colonels' regime appear to have been influenced by the positions of various Greek–American organizations, influential Greek–American elites, as well as conservative segments of the Greek–American press. Unlike the congressional opposition to the colonels' regime—which largely made arguments based on moral justifications and democratic principles—supporters of the US government's policies argued that the United States should continue on its course of diplomacy with the colonels based on America's strategic interests, on non-intervention into the affairs of other states, as well as on a belief that the colonels were fighting communism and would eventually democratize Greece. Ultimately, it would be the arguments of such supporters that would prevail in Congress.

[37] Memorandum of Conversation, Confidential, 8/31/67, POL 2 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[38] State to Athens/Ankara/Istanbul, Confidential, Airgram CA-9933, 6/21/67, POL GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

Congressional Supporters of the Colonels

As just mentioned, supporters of the US government's policy toward Greece maintained that America's strategic interests required continued good relations with the colonels. According to this view, a good working relationship between the two countries was essential since the colonels were strong supporters of both the US and NATO. Given worsening crises in the Middle East at this time, as well as increased Soviet influence in the Mediterranean region, many members of Congress maintained that having a trustworthy and loyal ally in this part of the world was of utmost necessity. They insisted that the colonels were proving themselves such an ally.

Specifically, Greece's continued support of the United States and NATO was said to be critically important given the number of communist countries in that part of the world—many of them on Greece's northern border. Moreover, with the Soviet Union's increasing interest and influence in the Mediterranean, they argued that the US needed to act with utmost caution, fearing that, should the colonels be ousted, Greek communists would likely come to power. Such an outcome could provide the Soviets greater access to the Mediterranean and force the US Sixth Fleet out of the region. This, in turn, would give the Soviet Union greater influence in the Middle East and more direct access to Africa. As Derwinski argued, the "Soviet foothold in Egypt, Syria and other Arab nations … magnifies the strategic location of Greece as our ally."[39] Thus, when the United States decided to temporarily suspend military assistance in 1967 as a result of the colonels' coup, Pucinski forcefully argued that it was in America's interest to renew military aid as part of the NATO defense structure. As he put it, "Let no one kid you—there are powerful Communist forces at play in this area, and NATO needs all the help it can get. … I submit, Mr. Speaker, America needs Greece today a great deal more than Greece needs us."[40]

In fact, many members of Congress argued that every decision taken by the US government in regard to Greece since the start of the dictatorship had been for vital strategic purposes. In the 1971 House debate

[39] US House. "Greece Deserving of Aid." October 4. 27746. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Congressman Ed Derwinski, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 21.)

[40] US House. "The United States Should Renew its NATO Military Aid to Greece." September 14. 25656-7. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Congressman Roman Pucinski, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 19.)

on the Foreign Assistance Act, for example, Derwinski argued that, during the Czechoslovakian crisis of 1968, the Johnson administration had restored limited military aid to Greece in the interest of the "Western World" and of NATO. According to Derwinski, in 1970 too, the resumption of military aid to Greece "had a direct relationship to Middle East complications in Jordan and problems affecting Israel." The decision to resume military aid was taken in the interest of NATO and "in the interest of the practical concept that we must support in the eastern Mediterranean." It was "a very pragmatic approach based on the best interests of the United States and the free world." Emphasizing that Greece hosted the easternmost Mediterranean bases available to the US Navy, while other bases in the Mediterranean and particularly that of Malta were increasingly being closed off to the United States, Derwinski maintained that this made the "continued relatively free use of Greek ports most desirable." He reported that 52% of the port visits made by the Sixth Fleet during the first six months of 1971 were to Greek bases, which had proved an important morale boost to servicemen and their families.[41] Thus, the value of continued good relations with the Greeks could not be overemphasized.

The strategic importance of Greece was also highlighted during Senate debates as well. Pointing to the inroads that the Soviet Union was making in Egypt and Algeria, Senator Richard Russell argued that "[t]his was not the time to be kicking in the teeth of the military dictatorship."[42] Similar arguments were also made during the 1969 debates on the Foreign Assistance Act. Senator Thomas Dodd argued for the importance of Greece's cooperation within NATO:

> If we now lose access to the air and naval bases at Athens and in Crete and our anchorages in the Aegean Islands, it would completely unhinge our entire defensive position in the eastern Mediterranean.

[41] US House. "Foreign Assistance Act of 1971." August 3. 29082. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971. (Congressman Ed Derwinski, 92nd Congress, Vol. 117, part 22.)

[42] US Senate. "Extension of Certain Naval Vessel Loans—Conference Report." December 11. 35697. Washington: Government Printing Office 1967. (Senator Richard Russell, 90th Congress, Vol 113, part 26.)

> And if we insist on treating the Greek Government as an enemy instead of an ally, the possibility cannot be excluded that we will drive them into the arms of Nasser … [and] it would probably be a disadvantage to the people of Greece because it would reduce our ability to influence the course of internal events in that country. … [O]ur national interest dictates the need to enter into agreements and alliances with all those nations and governments … [that are] prepared to cooperate in the common resistance to Communist expansionism.[43]

Soon, homeporting, a measure that was in part aimed to alleviate the US Navy's problem with family separation and its impact on reenlistment rates, would also be added to the list of potential strategic interests in Greece. Indeed, as one White House memorandum prepared for President Johnson estimated at that time, homeporting would involve the permanent stationing of 6000 naval personnel and over 3000 of their dependents in Athens. This would amount to a 150% increase in the American presence in the city. Thus, a key argument in support of good relations with Greece was that, to secure homeporting, continued good relations with the colonels' regime were necessary. The approach was perhaps best exemplified by Congressman John Schmitz who commented in 1972 that "U.S. military assistance is not given as a reward for someone's idea of democratic excellence in government but for the attainment of our own strategic purposes."[44]

Related to the pragmatic, strategic arguments most often made in support of the Johnson and Nixon administrations' policies were the claims that the colonels had proven themselves loyal, dependable allies of the United States and thus deserved continued support. Members of Congress pointed out that in both word and deed the colonels had maintained Greece's commitment to the United States and to NATO and, in return, deserved US assistance. As Congressman Pucinski put it in late 1967, the "present regime [had] repeatedly stated its complete

[43] US Senate. "Foreign Assistance Act of 1969." December 12. 38710–38711. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1969. (Senator Thomas Dodd, 91st Congress, Vol. 115, part 29.)

[44] US House. "Extensions of Remarks" "Military Aid to Greece." March 28. 11207. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1972. (Congressman John Schmitz, 92nd Congress, Vol. 118, part 9.)

friendship to the United States."[45] For example, during the 1967 Six-Day War between Israel and its Arab neighbors, Greece had provided unrestricted overflight facilities, had given blanket permission for Sixth Fleet visits, and had also made itself available as a safe haven for thousands of Americans evacuated from the Middle East. Moreover, both Derwinski and Pucinski pointed out that the colonels willingly entered into discussions with the Turks over the Cyprus dispute in 1967 and had accepted the US suggestion that Greece withdraw troops from the island, thereby resolving the immediate dispute with Turkey and avoiding war. The regime's willingness to take such steps demonstrated, they argued, the importance the colonels attached to the "idea of maintaining the power and the unity of NATO."[46]

Closely related to the notion that the colonels were friendly allies of the United States was the contention that, while admittedly undemocratic, they were strongly anti-communist, something of paramount importance during this period of the Cold War. Because the colonels had every intention of returning Greece to democracy, as they themselves repeatedly claimed, Pucinski regularly called on the United States to restore normal relations with the junta. Like a number of other members of Congress, he believed that the colonels had saved Greece from a communist takeover and from becoming "another Vietnam." He maintained that, in addition to moral support, Greece needed a great deal of practical assistance from the United States if it were to "fortify" itself against the threat of her communist neighbors. According to Pucinski, the United States should do everything in its power to "assist" the Greek colonels to restore democracy in Greece.[47] Accordingly, the "free nations of the world ought to recognize the efforts of Prime Minister Papadopoulos and Deputy Prime Minister Pattakos to restore democratic

[45] US House. "The Attempted Coup in Greece." December 14. 36544. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Congressman Roman Pucinski, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 27.)

[46] US House. "The Attempted Coup in Greece." December 14. 36545. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Congressman Roman Pucinski, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 27.); US House. "Trip to Greece." September 26. 26836–26837. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Congressman Ed Derwinski, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 20.)

[47] US House. "Greek Government Pledges Elections for Return of Constitutional Government." October 17. 29132. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Congressman Roman Pucinski, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 21.)

rule … and help this nation on this course, rather than sit back on the sidelines and undermine her efforts."[48]

In short, then, Pucinski and others considered it important for the United States to "help" the Papadopoulos regime "in its efforts to restore democracy," all the while maintaining that it would be entirely inappropriate for the United States to take any action in opposition to the colonels. To oppose the colonels would be an inappropriate "interference" in Greek affairs. This position was held by many in Congress, who argued that to oppose the regime would amount to undue "intervention" and an attempt to impose the US form of government on that country.

We draw again from the 1967 congressional debate regarding the authorization of naval vessels to Greece, which the Pentagon determined to be in the national interest of the United States, to illustrate a particularly pertinent example of this position. During the congressional debate on this issue, Congressman Jim Bates argued that, not only had Greece been a loyal postwar ally and therefore should receive a loan of one submarine and two destroyers, but also that "it is not right to try to fashion every country in the world in our image here in the United States."[49] Representative L. Mendel Rivers agreed, emphasizing that he too did "not believe we can impose pax Americana on every people and nation on earth. Somewhere down the line we are going to have to let somebody else run his own country instead of us dipping our nose into it."[50]

Perhaps what is most interesting about this position is its definition of "intervention." In this view, the continued flow of financial and military support to Greece constituted non-interference in Greek affairs, while a congressional vote against aid or to refuse the appointment of an ambassador to Greece would amount to interference in the domestic

[48] US House. "Extensions of Remarks." "Greek Regime Pledges Early Return to Democracy." August 2. 25230. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1968. (Congressman Roman Pucinski, 90th Congress, Vol. 114, part 19.)

[49] US House. "Authorize Loan of Certain Naval Vessels." October 2. 27497. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Congressman Jim Bates, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 20.)

[50] US House. "Authorize Loan of Certain Naval Vessels." October 2. 27499. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Congressman Mendel Rivers, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 20.)

affairs of another nation. Such behavior, they argued, would be "highly improper" since the US should "let them run their own country."[51] As Congressman Robert Sikes argued,

> Whether or not we like the present government is immaterial. Bitter experience should have taught us that U.S. efforts to meddle in the internal affairs of other nations usually has (sic) done more harm than good. … We should let well enough alone and not invite chaos and communism.[52]

And in the words of Representative J. Herbert Burke:

> I had hoped that if the past few years had taught us anything about the conduct of our foreign policy, it was that the days of our playing policeman for the world should be over; that the days when we made it our business to meddle in other countries' affairs are best left in the past; that our mission as a Nation to make the world safe for democracy was as dated as Versailles and the League of Nations.
>
> Yet, irony of ironies, what do we see before us today? A group of self-appointed consciences of the Nation are trying to dictate through economic pressure the internal political course the Greeks should be following. … I think it is time that we stop using our foreign policy and our foreign aid as leverage to force other countries to take orders from us.[53]

In the Senate, some tried to highlight this somewhat paradoxical definition of "intervention." As Claiborne Pell contended:

> My definition of not interfering is "doing nothing." But, I guess what we have now is the new Alice in Wonderland look—not to interfere means to have a massive aid program—to interfere is not to have such a massive aid program. Be that as it may, the net result of the actions … of our Senate is

[51] US House. "Authorize Loan of Certain Naval Vessels." October 2. 27499. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Congressman Mendel Rivers, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 20.)

[52] US House. "Foreign Assistance Act of 1971." August 3. 29111. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971. (Congress Robert Sikes, 92nd Congress, Vol. 117, part 22.)

[53] US House. "Foreign Assistance Act of 1971." August 3. 29111. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971. (J. Herbert Burke, 92nd Congress, Vol. 117, part 22.)

> that the Greek people now realize that the Greek regime is … the object of acceptance and support by our own Nation.[54]

Despite such arguments highlighting this irony, few, if any, were swayed. The arguments in support of "not interfering"—that is, in offering continued support to the colonels—prevailed. For example, as Richard Russell pointedly argued, "[W]e may not approve of the form of government that a number of countries around the world may have, but it is not our privilege or our prerogative to change their systems."[55] Senator Gail McGee agreed, maintaining that the United States should not cut off foreign aid to Greece for, in doing so, the US would be intervening into the country's domestic affairs because the US Senate does not "condone" the Greek government's ideology. As he put it, "I do not condone the policies of the Government of Greece. I do not condone the suppression of dissent by force or imprisonment. I raise the very serious question of whether it is proper foreign policy to legislate this kind of action from the floor of the Senate."[56] This argument was similarly made when it came time to confirm a US ambassador to Athens. At that time, Senator Dodd argued that the year-long delay of the Senate to make such a confirmation constituted "a kind of intervention in the internal affairs of Greece."[57] His argument, amplified by many in Congress across a number of similar issue areas, ultimately prevailed over those advocating for a break in relations with the colonels.

Thus, despite heated congressional debates regarding US foreign policy toward the Athens regime—debates which provided some of the most outspoken criticisms of the US government and which irritated two consecutive presidential administrations—in the end, the US government would continue to conduct business as usual in Athens. In analyzing the

[54] US Senate. "Ambassador." December 19. 40118. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1969. (Senator Claiborne Pell, 91st Congress, Vol. 115, part 30.)

[55] US Senate. "Extension of Certain Naval Vessel Loans—Conference Report." December 11. 35697. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967. (Senator Richard Russell, 90th Congress, Vol. 113, part 26.)

[56] US Senate. "Foreign Assistance Act of 1969." December 12. 38713. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1969. (Senator Gail McGee, 91st Congress, Vol. 115, part 29.)

[57] US Senate. "Ambassador." December 19. 40126. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1969. (Senator Thomas Dodd, 91st Congress, Vol. 115, part 30.)

arguments set forth by both congressional supporters and opponents of continued relations with the regime, in this chapter we have attempted to illustrate that, while many members of Congress argued for a breaking of ties and a public condemnation of the colonels, ultimately those who supported continued relations with the dictatorship prevailed. Thus, arguments focused on the importance of "nonintervention" and on a short-term understanding of US strategic interests in the context of the Cold War prevailed over philosophical or moral arguments regarding the value of liberal democracy. As the next chapter will further illustrate, the United States' dealings with its European allies in NATO similarly highlight the priority of pragmatism over democratic principle in shaping foreign policy toward Greece during this period.

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CHAPTER 6

US Diplomacy Within Europe and NATO on the Greek Question

In much the same way that the Nixon and Johnson administrations faced opposition from Congress to their *modus vivendi* with the Greek colonels, they also were forced to contend with significant opposition from America's allies in Europe, particularly from within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance, where virtually every member state saw the Greek military dictatorship—one that was viewed with even greater revulsion by their electorates—as deeply problematic. Indeed, as was the case with the US Congress, in Europe too there appeared to be a clash between those states that were more "pragmatic" in their approach to the colonels and the more "idealistic" states that focused on democratic principles and human rights.[1] As Arne Treholt explained in 1972:

> For the past five years the Greek case has clearly demonstrated a clash between two schools of European thought in foreign policy. On the one hand, there is the pragmatic school. … According to this school, Greece ought to be supported, regardless of its regime, and as good and friendly relations as possible established with the Colonels. Even if we dislike and distrust the present Greek regime, there is no reason why we should change our policy.

[1] On NATO toleration of the colonels, see Maragkou (2009).

N. M. Karakatsanis and J. Swarts,
American Foreign Policy Towards the Colonels' Greece,
https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-52318-1_6

> On the other hand, we find those who favour a more idealistic course toward what they consider to be a disgrace to Europe. They are not willing to accept "hard realities" as put forward by the pragmatists.[2]

Thus, while a number of NATO states (e.g., the UK, West Germany, and Portugal) had reconciled themselves to more or less friendly relations with the Greek regime as a matter of expediency, others in Scandinavia (particularly Norway and Denmark) were a source of vocal and quite articulate opposition to any accommodation of the colonels.

Specifically, Europeans saw Greece as a pariah state and, as a US Mission NATO report summarized, they "remain[ed] allergic to it."[3] Many Europeans believed that Greece should be expelled from NATO, just as its association agreement with the European Economic Community had been frozen in 1967 and the country had been forced to withdrawal from the Council of Europe in 1969. Given that the preamble of the North Atlantic Treaty states that "[t]he Parties to this Treaty … are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilizations of their peoples founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law,"[4] many in Europe pointed to the irony of allowing an authoritarian NATO government to go largely unreprimanded. While the Scandinavians were the most fervent critics of the Greek government, virtually every NATO member (with the exception of France and Portugal, the latter of which was also under authoritarian rule) was critical of the Greek government. A particularly important contributing factor in each state's position was the domestic pressure from its own electorate with which each had to contend. As Treholt argued, "Under the pressure of a strong domestic public opinion there has been no choice for many of them other than to take a strongly critical and actively hostile attitude towards the Greek regime."[5] In fact, so great was the controversy over the continued membership of an authoritarian state in NATO that in Norway, both the electorate and

[2] Treholt (1972, 210).

[3] US Mission NATO to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 74, 10/23/67, POL GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA. On European attitudes, see Becket (1970), Coufoudakis (1977), Pedaliu (2016), and Pesmazoglou (1999).

[4] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "The North Atlantic Treaty," Washington, DC. 4 April 1949. https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm. Retrieved 28 November 2017.

[5] Treholt (1972, 210).

elected officials called for the country's withdrawal from NATO should steps not be taken to suspend the Greek colonels. This led the US to fear a domino effect—that if the Norwegians were to leave, the Danes would follow. And as British Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart reportedly indicated to American officials, "there would be serious implications for the British, to say nothing of the Italians."[6] Accordingly, the United States was convinced that the Greek issue posed an exceedingly high risk to the cohesion of NATO.

The issue of Greece's membership in NATO was complex, however, and confronted its member states with a serious dilemma. On the one hand, while NATO's liberal democracies wanted an early restoration of representative government in Greece, they also feared a break with the Papadopoulos regime given the country's strategic importance in the Mediterranean. On the other hand, the most outspoken critics of Greece argued, not incorrectly, that the continuation of a military regime in that country was damaging to NATO. Max van der Stoel, who served as the rapporteur on Greece to the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe, listed some of the commonly identified problems:

a) [the junta] effects (sic) the credibility of NATO as an alliance for the defense of freedom. And this in turn leads to a diminishing of popular support for the alliance, especially amongst the younger generation;
b) it creates anti-NATO and anti-American feelings amongst sections of the Greek population which so far were staunch supporters of NATO;
c) the effectiveness of the Greek armed forces has diminished as a consequence of the purges amongst officers who were considered critical towards the regime.[7]

Consequently, van der Stoel and many other Europeans saw Greece's ouster from NATO as the means by which to further isolate the colonels and push Greece back toward democracy. However, their stance—that Greece was and should be treated as a pariah within the alliance—alarmed many in the US government who were diametrically opposed

[6]Sisco to the Secretary and Under Secretary, Secret, Memorandum 8224, 6/5/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[7]Max van der Stoel, no date, "GREECE," Mogens Camre papers (private archive), Copenhagen.

to Greece's ouster and who recognized the dictators as at least "ardent NATOists."[8] Given this view, managing and placating the more vocal opponents of the Athens regime became a primary task of US diplomacy within NATO, with both the Johnson and the Nixon administrations working behind the scenes to quell formal criticism of the colonels, believing that such public condemnation would impair NATO's unity and cohesiveness, something that could not be risked in the face of ongoing Cold War threats.

Given this backdrop, this chapter shows how US diplomacy operated in three distinct ways. First, American diplomats in NATO member states were tasked with coordinating the positions and actions of member states so that the allies would adopt as far as possible a common approach to the Greek problem. In this regard, US diplomats urged America's allies to exercise restraint at NATO ministerial meetings and to keep discussions of Greece to bilateral channels only. Should this fail and a common alliance-wide approach to Greece not be secured, the second approach—one approved by the United States—would allow NATO's Secretary General, Manlio Brosio, to trigger a procedure that would shut down any formal debate within alliance meetings on Greece. Third, the American embassy in Athens (and the embassies of other NATO states in Greece) were to continue to urge the Greek regime to move along the road toward constitutionalism, while also impressing upon it the importance of showing restraint and moderation at the biannual meetings of the alliance. How each approach was pursued within the NATO context, often in contravention to the vocal critics of Greece, is the focus of this chapter.

Greece Within NATO

As has been repeated throughout this book, the US viewed Greece as a strategically indispensable partner on NATO's southeastern flank at a time of growing Soviet interest and influence in the region. As a result, the US believed that any public criticism within NATO ministerials of Greece's domestic policies would pose a substantial destabilizing risk for the alliance. Expressing the Johnson administration's position, Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford contended that Greece was a long-standing

[8]Foreign Office meeting, 3 May 1967, FO 800/968, Foreign Office Archives, The National Archives of the UK (TNA), quoted in Pedaliu (2011, 102).

member of NATO and an old ally, and that "the obligations imposed on us by NATO are far more important than the kind of government they have in Greece or what we think of it."[9] "Whatever its inadequacies," the Greek military regime, which was "firmly in the saddle," would have to be worked with, cajoled and, as we illustrate in the following chapter, even pandered to, if necessary. Because American officials believed that there was little to no likelihood that the colonels would be overthrown without "unacceptable and unpredictable risks," they argued that intensified public pressure on the colonels' regime would only weaken the more moderate of its members, slow and perhaps halt liberalization efforts altogether, and possibly bring more radical members of the military to government.[10] In the words of one Department of State official:

> We believe that what influence we have with the Greeks is most effectively exploited privately and discreetly. … [W]e are doing so at every reasonable opportunity. Some critics of our policy here and abroad no doubt would prefer open criticism of the Greek regime's resistance to liberalization. But we are convinced that public scourging of the regime would not be constructive. It could easily lead to the alienation of the Greeks from the sources which can influence them.[11]

Given such assessments, publicly pressuring the colonels' regime—especially in a concerted effort with other NATO allies—was definitely out of the question so far as the United States was concerned.

In addition, in the early years, the US embassy in Athens also argued (and attempted to persuade its allies) that the colonels *were* taking steps to liberalize the Greek government. Citing such examples as the promulgation of a new constitution that, in his view, provided for a representative, albeit restricted, democracy, as well as the gradual release of political detainees, Tasca assured the State Department that the regime had given "repeated assurances at [the] highest level … that it intend[ed] to implement its 1968 Constitution." He pleaded, "Let us give this country … a

[9]Quoted by Andreas G. Papandreou in a press conference in London, 7/24/68, Mogens Camre papers (private archive), Copenhagen.

[10]Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 2444, 5/14/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA; State to London/Bonn/Brussels, Secret, Telegram 63542, 4/28/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[11]State to Bonn/Brussels/London/The Hague, Secret, Telegram 125415, 8/4/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

chance to find its way back to democracy."[12] Given this view, US officials believed that the only feasible alternative was for the US and certain of its allies to privately urge the colonels to implement the 1968 Constitution. Thus, the US had to convince:

> other NATO countries [to] respect and assist this effort … [that is, the] insistence that [the] GOG continue [the] process it has already begun and has repeatedly proclaimed its intention to pursue, of implementing [the] 1968 Constitution. I am convinced that therein lies [the] best assurance of harmonious participation in the Alliance and avoiding a harmful and sterile conflict within NATO along the way from which only our Communist opponents would profit.[13]

As Secretary of State Rogers put this in a telegram to all NATO capitals:

> Our policy continues to be to use our influence in Greece constructively, to encourage rather than discourage, to urge rather than threaten. … We believe that adopting a hostile, contentious attitude toward the Greek regime will only lead it to become further insulated from the opinion and influence of the friends and allies of the Greek people. We would hope that *all those friends and allies would adopt a constructive attitude toward the situation in Greece, [and] abandon attempts to direct the course of events in Greece through denunciation and recrimination.*[14]

Given the United States' opposition to public criticism of the regime, it set out to urge its European allies to exert "constructive" influence on the colonels. In doing so, however, it counseled patience, warning that the interests of the alliance would be jeopardized by those NATO allies that too openly voiced their impatience with the colonels' lack of constitutional progress.

US policy makers—and especially Henry Tasca—were opposed, however, to any form of openly concerted approach among NATO allies. According to the Department of State, such an approach could

[12]Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 2444, 5/14/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[13]Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 2444, 5/14/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[14]State to all NATO capitals, Confidential, Telegram 178031, 10/29/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA (emphasis added).

make Greece resentful of its allies "ganging up" on it.[15] Thus, the State Department believed the only feasible option was for NATO states to *privately* and *patiently* urge the Greeks toward progress. To accomplish this, most American ambassadors in NATO capitals were instructed to counsel their host governments to quietly coax and press the junta toward democracy. However, there were at least two important exceptions to this. One was the Scandinavians, whose strident tone, the US believed, would anger Greece and, therefore, should not be approached. The other was France, a country that had not suspended its relations with Greece following the coup and which, according to US officials, did not seem particularly interested in the democratization of the country and whose position toward the junta was described as being one of "reserve without hostility."[16] Thus, despite the fact that some State Department officials believed a French bilateral effort to encourage democratization would carry considerable weight in Athens given France's continued good relations with the colonels, Tasca was opposed to such an approach. As we have seen in Chapter 4, the Athens embassy, which was circumspect of such a French move, encouraged against it, arguing that the "French … will reveal [the] U.S. as [the] source of [the] suggestion to [the] Greeks and exploit this fact to their own advantage."[17] In fact, so intense was this suspicion that Tasca proposed that, if France had already been approached by American officials, he would alert the colonels of the approach, telling them that it was for the purpose of finessing an upcoming NATO Defense Planning Committee (DPC) meeting in Greece's favor. However, in contrast to France and Portugal, most other NATO states adopted policies that were either equivocal or that showed an acceptance of the *fait accompli* in Athens. Only Denmark and Norway, whose foreign policies were historically based on "principled humanitarianism" and who had very little financial interest in Greece at the time, would prove to be the exception. Both demonstrated unequivocal opposition to the colonels from the start.[18]

[15] State to Bonn/Brussels/London/The Hague, Secret, Telegram 125415, 8/4/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[16] Paris to State, Confidential, Airgram A-1586, 3/6/68, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[17] Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 4390, 8/10/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[18] Pedaliu (2011).

Taking place just a few weeks after the colonels' seizure of power in Greece, the 9 May 1967 NATO DPC meeting would come to foreshadow future US diplomacy within NATO. When Danish Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jens Otto Krag attempted to raise the issue of Greece at the May 1967 NATO meeting, "his move was bluntly rejected by the Secretary General Manlio Brosio as an unacceptable interference in the internal affairs of a member country. It was claimed that the Greek *coup d'état* was a purely Greek matter and in no way affected the alliance as such."[19] As Pedaliu writes, Brosio, who, like the Americans, had as a primary goal the preservation of NATO unity, worked closely with the US permanent representative to NATO, Harlan Cleveland, to ensure the Greek issue would not be raised formally. Urging great restraint, both Brosio and Cleveland instructed NATO permanent representatives that the issue of regime legitimacy should not be raised at the DPC. Despite the fact that US Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, met with the junta's defense minister, Lt. Gen. Grigorios Spandidakis, and articulated American disquiet regarding the situation in Greece, to NATO officials McNamara emphasized that any disapproval of the regime should be communicated bilaterally and not through concerted efforts within the alliance. Importantly, this message—that *bilateral rather than orchestrated efforts* through NATO should be the means by which the Greek issue ought to be discussed—was conveyed by US diplomats and NATO officials prior to each consecutive biannual meeting of the alliance for the seven years of military rule in Greece. As Pedaliu writes, "By using this procedure, contentious issues were kept off [NATO] *communiqués* and away from the public. This procedure was ritually applied to the issue of Greece with varying success, until the collapse of the regime in 1974."[20]

While 1968 and 1969 were relatively quiet years for Greece within NATO due to more pressing issues—including the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the Qaddafi military coup in Libya—the Greek issue resurfaced as a significant problem following Greece's forced withdrawal from the Council of Europe in December 1969 as a result of proceedings brought against it by Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden, accusing it of gross human rights violations. Fearing that

[19] Treholt (1972, 217).

[20] Pedaliu (2011, 105).

the next step for its staunchest critics would be the pursuit of Greece's expulsion from NATO, in January 1970, the Department of State instructed all American embassies in NATO capitals that US ambassadors should inform their host governments that "the United States considers the need to maintain NATO unity overriding, and that raising the Greek question in NATO would obviously threaten that unity and set back efforts to reinforce the Alliance's political solidarity and military strength."[21] Two factors help explain the US's staunch opposition to the raising of the Greek question. First, Greece was of course a critical ally in the Mediterranean. In the face of the Arab-Israeli conflict, anti-Western trends in the Arab States, a growing Soviet military presence and influence in the Eastern Mediterranean, political uncertainty in Malta, and the potential for further trouble in Cyprus, there was increased concern over the Eastern Mediterranean. In this context, it was believed that Greece's territory as well as the military facilities housed there were of paramount strategic importance to NATO. Thus, "any gesture by other Allies that tended to reduce the Greek regime's military cooperation with the Alliance could damage the Western defensive position on the southern flank."[22] The second reason was that any debate on Greece within NATO would harm the internal unity of the alliance, whose credibility was dependent on its cohesion and sense of common purpose. Having this solidarity reflected in NATO's public image was of paramount strategic importance. In short, the US believed that the NATO deterrent in the Eastern Mediterranean was largely dependent upon the strategic and tactical advantages offered by Greece's prime geographic location and the need to maintain cohesion and unity within the alliance.

Given these assessments, the US's stated concern was to limit the divisive effect the Greek issue could have on the alliance—one which, if raised, would likely lead to a damaging internal debate and potentially the withdrawal of the Greek delegation. Given the established procedure of unanimity in council decisions, a Greek withdrawal would in turn lead to a constitutional question within the organization. Moreover, the Department of State firmly believed that the inevitable press coverage of such a debate would

[21] Eliot to Crane, Confidential, Memorandum 2446, 2/13/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[22] State to London/Bonn/Brussels, Secret, Telegram 63542, 4/28/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

damage the alliance's unity and the political and military cooperation so essential to maintaining the credibility of deterrence.

To prevent any such imbroglio, the United States sought to coordinate the actions of its closest NATO allies—particularly the UK and the Federal Republic of Germany, who viewed the Greek issue in much the same way as did the US. Working with these two close partners, the US was determined to establish a parallel but coordinated approach that would make demarches to the Scandinavian and other NATO capitals to urge their governments not to raise the issue of Greece in any form during North Atlantic Council (NAC) ministerial or DPC meetings. To this end, the Department of State instructed the US embassy in London to express the United States' hope that British Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart would convey his concern to Poul Hartling, Denmark's foreign minister, that the Greek issue not be raised during council discussions, as planned by the Scandinavians. Sharing the US's view that the expulsion of Greece from NATO was to be avoided at all costs, the British, who believed that the regime was firmly entrenched and that there was little to gain from public condemnation of it, made repeated representations to the Danes, urging them not to raise the issue of Greece. The hope was that similar demarches would come from the German and Italian governments as well.

An example of one such effort to contain open criticism of Greece was the January 1968 coordination between the UK and the US to stop an Italian initiative within the NAC. Learning that the Italian minister of foreign affairs, Amintore Fanfani, intended to place the issue of democracy on the next NAC agenda, the US and UK coordinated their response. Each would approach the Italians to convince them not to go forward with their plans. Believing that such a "discussion could quickly turn into an acrimonious, unproductive exchange of polemics," the Americans were concerned that the reaction by an offended Greek regime might be to postpone any democratic reforms or, worse, that it might consider "a spectrum of irrational acts."[23] Whatever the reaction, the US believed that to publicly discuss issues of internal politics within the NAC—which in all likelihood meant criticism of the Greek regime—would not be in the interests of NATO. Fanfani's initiative would pose "intolerable strains on the Alliance" and would run the risk of splitting it.

[23]State to Rome, Confidential, Telegram 99114, 1/16/68, POL 23-9 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

In Brussels, too, the US ambassador called on Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel to discuss the Greek question and to urge that Belgium not raise the issue of Greek domestic politics at an upcoming ministerial meeting. Despite Belgium's distaste for the Greek regime and its opposition to the holding of NATO military maneuvers in Greece (which it believed would be portrayed by the colonels as a sign of approval by the allies), Harmel assured the US that he would not raise the issue of Greek domestic politics at the May 1970 Rome ministerial. In fact, he would also work to convince others that they too must refrain from raising the Greek question as, in Belgium's view, NATO was not the appropriate forum for doing so. According to Harmel, the Netherlands too would not pose a problem. The only countries that might raise the issue were Norway and Denmark. Harmel concurred with the American view that the foreign minister of Denmark was particularly dangerous because he might try to use the issue to garner support from Danish voters who had strong feelings about the military dictatorship. However, he indicated that he would do what he could to influence the Scandinavians.

In addition to engaging in diplomacy with those allies who more or less agreed with the American approach, US diplomats also made direct approaches to other governments, such as Denmark's, which were not agreeable. As Tasca expressed in a telegram to the Department of State,

> I am of the opinion that the time has come to talk pointedly and seriously to these governments at [the] highest level and urge them to go through some of the difficult and responsible reasoning we have had to go through in arriving at our present policy toward Greece. I personally find the implication in their attitude that [the] USG is totally indifferent to the desirability of democratic government in Greece offensive.[24]

To that end, Tasca urged the State Department to remind the Scandinavians of Greece's contributions to NATO and to let them know that their criticisms of the Greek regime amounted to interference in the internal affairs of a loyal NATO member. Indeed, he maintained that

[24]Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 2444, 5/14/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

their criticisms of the regime were threatening to prejudice Greece's contributions to the defensive strength of the alliance at a critical moment in the Middle East.[25]

Fearing that, if Denmark and Norway raised the issue of Greece at the upcoming Rome ministerial, a line in the sand might be drawn that would then pressure other European states to side with the Scandinavians, the US NATO Mission proposed to the Department of State that:

> In the end [the] most effective course of action may be a message from [the] highest levels [of the] USG to Norway and Denmark providing our view of the Greek situation, emphasizing [the] high premium we place on maintaining the Alliance, and [the] grave view we would take of [the] Greek issue being raised in Rome.[26]

Indeed, in a meeting with Rogers, Prime Minister Hilmar Baunsgaard of Denmark argued that the Greek issue was one of the most difficult issues facing Western Europe at the time. He emphasized that the Danish public—irrespective of political orientation—was deeply troubled by the presence of a military dictatorship in Greece. Likely alluding to rumors that the United States was contemplating a lifting of the Military Assistance Program (MAP) suspension, as well as a NATO report under discussion (see below) that encouraged increased military assistance to Greece, Baunsgaard argued that opposition to the Greek regime was particularly strong among Social Democrats, who questioned how NATO countries and particularly the United States could "assist" the colonels by "delivering weapons" to them. Baunsgaard maintained that while he could understand the military arguments in favor of such assistance, the problem had to be considered within a political framework. Told by Rogers that the US hoped there would not be an "uproar" at the next NATO meeting, Baunsgaard assured the Secretary that he did not want to cause problems. However, if steps were not taken by the colonels to liberalize Greece, then Danish

[25] Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 2444, 5/14/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[26] US Mission NATO to State, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 1567, 4/25/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

public opinion would demand that the issue be raised in NATO. According to Baunsgaard, this would also be the case for Norway.[27]

Discussions with the Danes continued in earnest. In May 1970, the American embassy in Copenhagen informed the Department of State that it had conveyed the "strong personal hope" of Secretary Rogers to Baunsgaard and his foreign minister that "his government will not decide it must raise questions of Greek internal policies in formal sessions of [the] Council." Told that the foreign minister would have "ample opportunity" to have bilateral conversations with NATO ministers "on the margins of the ministerial" in Rome and therefore should refrain from raising the issue formally in session, the foreign minister replied that he actually *would* raise the Greek question *formally* at the Rome ministerial council.[28]

Given such resistance by the Scandinavians, the State Department began to lose confidence in the effectiveness of its approach of pressuring NATO allies to refrain from criticizing Greece formally in ministerial meetings. As a result, US officials, working with Brosio, conceived of a contingency plan—a second approach—that they believed would "limit [the] damage and avoid [an] abrasive and disruptive debate harmful to [the] public image of Alliance solidarity."[29] Specifically, the plan required any minister wishing to raise the issue of Greek internal policies within a ministerial meeting to inform the secretary general in advance. Having been forewarned, Brosio would then be prepared to raise a procedural objection where he would interrupt the minister on a point of order, remind him that the internal policies of member states were historically excluded from NAC discussions, ask that the record reflect the omission of the minister's remarks about the internal affairs of a member state, and then return the floor to the speaker. If, however, the minister's remarks were so "offensive" as to cause a walkout of the Greek delegation, Brosio would interrupt the minister before the Greeks left the room and call for a recess of the

[27]State to Athens/US Mission NATO, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 56380, 4/16/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[28]Copenhagen to State, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 1677, 5/19/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[29]State to US Mission NATO/Athens/Bonn/Copenhagen/The Hague/London/Oslo/Rome, Secret, Telegram 73017, 5/13/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

meeting. After resuming the meeting, he would proceed to remind those present that the internal policies of member states were excluded from council discussions and ask that their comments be omitted from the official record. The State Department also suggested that should either of the above scenarios occur, other ministers in attendance should request the floor to support Brosio's ruling.

While the above plan does not appear to have ever been implemented, it points to the extent of concern among American diplomats that a Greek walkout be prevented at all costs. Given the junta's bitterness at its forced withdrawal from the Council of Europe, the possibility of a similar walkout from a NATO ministerial appeared very real to many. Indeed, on 13 May 1970, a telegram sent to the US NATO Mission and to the American embassies in other NATO states confirmed that the embassy in Athens had been told by Greek Foreign Minister Panayiotis Pipinelis that, should the Greek internal political situation be raised in Rome, Pipinelis would indeed withdraw the Greek delegation, believing that from a legal standpoint the withdrawal of any member state would force the NAC to recess indefinitely. Tasca concluded that "Pipinelis' threat … [was] not an idle one."[30]

In an effort to prevent such a walkout, the United States decided to share Brosio's contingency plan with the Greek government, exhorting the Greek foreign or defense minister who might be in attendance that, should a public criticism of Greece be launched, he should refrain as much as possible from either an impassioned exchange with the critic or from walking out. Instead, the Greek minister was to "content himself with [a] brief and temperate reply to critics."[31] This position of the US government was made abundantly clear to the colonels on 21 May 1970, when the following was sent from the secretary of state to Pipinelis:

> I know you share my concern that at the NATO meeting in Rome next week one or more delegations may raise the question of Greece and democratic government. I would very much regret it personally if at a meeting whose proper concern is the defense of the West we should allow

[30]Athens to US Mission NATO, Confidential/LimDis, Telegram 2393, 5/13/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[31]State to US Mission NATO/Athens/Bonn/Copenhagen/The Hague/London/Oslo/Rome, Secret, Telegram 73017, 5/13/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> our attention to be diverted even for a moment to affairs which are quite clearly an improper subject for discussion at such a meeting. We have made our view of this absolutely clear to those who seem ready to use the NATO forum as an occasion for venting anxiety about the internal affairs of other countries.[32]

Given the significance of this issue, Tasca also visited Papadopoulos at his beach house to further discuss the Rome ministerial. At the meeting, Tasca advised Papadopoulos that his government must "keep its cool at Rome." Emphasizing that NATO was not the Council of Europe, Tasca told Papadopoulos that the strongest member states of the alliance, as well as Secretary General Brosio himself, were prepared to argue that any discussion having to do with the internal affairs of a member state was inappropriate. Warning Papadopoulos that a Greek walkout would be a serious setback to NATO effectiveness and to US leadership and would count as a victory for Greece's enemies abroad, moderation and self-control were strongly encouraged. Should the issue of Greece's government be raised in the NAC, Tasca advised that Pipinelis should make "a *calm, low-key statement* … explaining the history, problems, objectives and progress of [the] GOG in its movement back to parliamentary democracy."[33]

At the US mission in Brussels too, American diplomats met with the Greek permanent representative to NATO, Phaedon Cavalieratos, to share information about the procedural safeguards that had been developed and, further, to emphasize restraint, warning against any emotional or irrational reaction to an attack on Greece by the Scandinavians. Similar to Tasca's advice to Papadopoulos, Cavalieratos too was advised that the Greek delegation should reply with "dignity," focusing its response on the regime's achievements, the difficulty of creating a viable democracy given Greece's historical past, as well as the regime's intention to return to democracy in the future.

Finally, in addition to disclosing the contingency plan and advising the Greeks on what their reaction to criticism should look like, Tasca was also instructed by the Department of State to approach

[32] State to Athens, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 78303, 5/21/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[33] Athens to State, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 2596, 5/25/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA (emphasis added).

Greek government officials at the highest level, encouraging them to take steps that might calm discussions of Greece at Rome or at the upcoming DPC ministerial in June. To this end, the Greek government was encouraged to take further liberalizing actions, such as the release of prisoners or the reduction of their prison terms. If the junta could possibly be prodded to take such initiatives, or others like them, the NATO proceedings were expected to go more smoothly. As the Department of State telegram put it:

> If [the] GOG has any of [the] foregoing in mind (or can be prodded into taking action on [the] ground that to do so is to help itself over [the] hurdle of NATO meetings) obviously now is the time. [The] GOG should appreciate that [the] anger in [this] situation, though affecting all of NATO, is most particularly dangerous for it.[34]

Interestingly, on the very next day, 14 May 1970, Tasca wrote to the State Department to say that such "tactical concessions" were essentially "palliative" initiatives of "doubtful value" and, moreover, that the Greek colonels were unlikely to heed such advice. According to Tasca, not only would such moves not satisfy Greece's "hardline critics" in Norway and Denmark but were, instead,

> more likely to whet [the] appetite of their internal left-wings, including [the] Communists, who would conclude that they had the US and Greek regime on the run and [that] more pressure and more isolation would thereby further weaken the GOG. This would inevitably encourage them to up the ante, and [the] whole process could lead to a disruptive conflict in NATO which could undercut the alliance to [the] ultimate benefit of Communists.[35]

Were such a disruption to occur, the defensive position of NATO in the Eastern Mediterranean would be seriously jeopardized.

Connected to the Greek question within NATO were two related issues—that of the resumption of US military aid to Greece as well as

[34]State to US Mission NATO/Athens/Bonn/Copenhagen/The Hague/London/Oslo/Rome, Secret, Telegram 73017, 5/13/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[35]Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 2444, 5/14/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

the approval of a NATO report that called for increased military aid to Greece by those NATO states in a position to offer it. With regard to the resumption of US military assistance, Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco characteristically recommended to Nixon on 5 June 1970 that the resumption of heavy arms shipments to Greece be postponed until there was "convincing progress toward a restoration of democracy." According to Sisco, this would "avoid precipitating a damaging crisis in NATO" that could occur given "the widespread concern among my NATO colleagues" of such a resumption. Sisco explained:

> The Europeans believe, in effect, that the United States is being maneuvered by Greece into an early resumption of arms aid without receiving any return. They fear that as a consequence of such an American decision there will be severe and lasting repercussions throughout NATO, a deep and ugly scar upon the American and NATO image, and a sharp setback to your entire European policy.[36]

Warning the White House that a Greek blowup within NATO could only be avoided for so long, Sisco further argued that:

> We were able by hard work to muffle the actual NATO discussion of the Greek issue in Rome, and the NATO meeting was not seriously disturbed as a result. I am not sure how often we can do this. … [W]e must face the prospect of twice-yearly NATO meetings held in the shadow of a threatened quarrel over Greece.[37]

A separate telegram sent to Tasca further emphasized that "after close study of the question … [we believe that] we would suffer grave damage to our NATO position if we took action to resume shipments before the second NATO meeting on June 11."[38]

Not surprisingly, Sisco's warnings would go largely unheeded. By September 1970, the White House had decided to resume normal military shipments to Greece, arguing that this would improve the ability

[36]Sisco to the Secretary and Under Secretary, Secret, Memorandum 8224, 6/5/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[37]Sisco to the Secretary and Under Secretary, Secret, Memorandum 8224, 6/5/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[38]State to Athens, Secret, Telegram 82138, 5/28/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

of Greek military forces to fulfill their responsibilities within the alliance. Thus, early in 1970, the Department of State, seeing resumption as a likely possibility and wanting to dampen any negative reverberations within Europe where such a resumption, if it was not preceded by or made contingent upon liberalization in Greece, would bring about a strong public reaction, was beginning to contemplate how best to inform its NATO allies.[39] Realizing that such an announcement would be the cause of some consternation, the US fully expected strong reactions in Norway, Denmark, Italy, and the Benelux countries; moderate ones in the UK, West Germany, and France; and a negligible one from only Portugal. How to inform its NATO allies of the pending resumption became the focus of much planning in Washington, Athens, and Brussels.

Imaginatively, both Tasca in Athens and the US Mission to NATO in Brussels urged the Department of State to conceal the MAP resumption from America's allies until "a respectable period beyond" the 1970 NAC and DPC meetings.[40] After some consideration and strategizing, the decision was made that the State Department would wait to announce the resumption of MAP until three days after the September DPC meeting, when a report calling for increased military assistance from NATO countries to Greece would have already been considered. However, the US mission urged that the announcement should be further delayed for an additional week beyond 22 September. It maintained that to announce the decision only 96 hours after the 18 September DPC would "be taken as a direct slap in the face" by many NATO allies, but especially by the Danes, Norwegians, and Dutch. The mission argued that these states would believe that the United States pushed them to accept the DPC compromise at the September meeting so that the US could announce the full resumption of military aid to Greece in advance of a pending visit by Nixon to the Mediterranean, where he would visit NATO's Southern Command: "A week's delay in making our announcement will, at least, make it appear that our decision was not so directly related to and dependent on—the DPC decision of

[39]State to US Mission NATO, Secret, Telegram 34802, 3/10/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[40]US Mission NATO to State, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 1881, 5/15/70, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

the 18th."[41] The mission contended that not to delay the announcement would cause grave harm to US credibility within NATO. Parenthetically, despite this request, the State Department decided the announcement should be made on 21 September, following the DPC, not a week later.

In addition to carefully planning the exact timing of the announcement, how and to whom the announcement would be made was also fastidiously choreographed—again to limit potential blowback. To this end, the US Mission to NATO suggested that, rather than informing the allies through the NAC, which could lead to acrimonious debate, each country's permanent representative should receive the news individually and separately delivered by a NATO official on the same day. Each visit would take place several hours in advance of the formal announcement that was to be made publicly in Washington. Accordingly, the Department of State instructed US officials in all NATO capitals to inform each country's respective NATO delegation of the decision first thing on the morning of 21 September. Each delegation would also be asked to keep the decision confidential until its formal announcement in Washington occurred the following day.

It is interesting to note that, while European states would be notified in this manner on 21 September, in Athens, Papadopoulos was informed almost a week earlier, on 14 September. Told that the public announcement would be made on 22 September, he was asked to keep the US intention confidential until it was publicly announced. If asked by Papadopoulos why the 22 September date was chosen, Tasca was instructed by the State Department to tell him that the United States decided to wait until after the DPC of 18 September so as not to "unravel the delicate and carefully worked out compromise" struck on behalf of Greece for that meeting.[42]

Despite the carefully choreographed plan, the 18 September DPC meeting proved to be a diplomatic wrangle. Specifically, a dispute broke out over the NATO report on the Greek military situation that recommended increased military aid to Greece by NATO states that were in a position to give it. Not surprisingly, the Norwegians,

[41] US Mission NATO to State, Secret, Telegram 3325, 9/17/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[42] State to Athens, Secret, Telegram 150171, 9/14/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

Danes, and Dutch would not agree to the report. The situation appeared to be particularly problematic for Norway's government, whose parliament had passed a nearly unanimous resolution (but for one vote) that called for a cutoff of all bilateral military aid to Greece. Given such domestic political dynamics, Norwegian support of a NATO report recommending an increase in military aid to the Greek regime would have been very difficult politically. The Norwegian position was matched by Denmark and, somewhat less vigorously, by the Netherlands. In Denmark, Krag told Baunsgaard, who was preparing to visit Nixon in Washington, to urge the president not to lift the suspension of arms to the junta, pointing to a December 1969 resolution of the Norwegian Parliament that unanimously directed its government "to take steps to induce the NATO-governments (sic) to stop their arms deliveries to the regime in Athens."[43] To deal with the thorny issue of the NATO report, another set of demarches had to be sent by the US, the UK, and the Federal Republic of Germany to Oslo and Copenhagen urging them to agree to the report in the interest of NATO unity.

This report—which focused in part on strengthening the Greek armed forces, which were deemed to be inadequately equipped and in need of increased military assistance—was submitted to the DPC on 18 September 1970. Because this section of the report was so problematic for the Norwegians, the Dutch, and the Danes, a strenuous diplomatic maneuver had to be orchestrated once again. Only after tremendous effort were these states finally able to agree to the inclusion of a footnote that disassociated the three of them from the portion of the DPC report that endorsed military assistance to Greece. However, given the political maneuvering it had taken to secure this concession, the United States feared that the compromise with the three countries regarding the NATO report would be endangered were the US to announce its own resumption of military aid to Greece prior to the meeting. As Kissinger articulated in a memorandum to Nixon, "The tactical issue is how to *stage resumption* so as not to trigger a sharp reaction in NATO capitals."[44] However, it is important to note that the

[43] Letter from Krag to Baunsgaard, 4/10/70, Mogens Camre papers (private archive), Copenhagen.

[44] Kissinger to Nixon, Secret, 6/17/70, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 593, USNA (emphasis added).

"staging" of the resumption was further complicated by the fact that postponing consideration of the report beyond the 18 September meeting was also unacceptable, as this would anger the Greeks who insisted that the report be considered on the 18th. Papadopoulos had warned Tasca that he would take no further steps to liberalize his regime until the report was approved by the DPC and threatened to walk out of the meeting if the report was further postponed. As Sisco put it in a report to Kissinger:

> Postponement of the meeting, against the Greek wish, would lead to some form of "walk-out" by the Greeks from the DPC, and could precipitate a "constitutional" crisis in NATO. The best course, therefore, seems to be to postpone public announcement of the resumption of aid until after the September 18 meeting, informing our NATO allies of our action before a public announcement is made. This gets us safely by the September 18 meeting, although it will, of course, be the cause of some irritation among NATO members opposing aid to Greece that we concealed our intention to resume aid until after the September 18 meeting.[45]

In the end, the "footnote solution" disassociating Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands from the portion of the DPC report that endorsed military assistance to Greece worked—the report was endorsed, and a Greek walkout was prevented.

Finally, it is important to note that, while the controversy over Greece remained ever present in NATO throughout the seven years of military rule, the colonels managed to escape formal censure as the Americans, two consecutive secretaries general of NATO (Brosio and his successor, Joseph Luns), and, to a lesser extent, the British and German governments worked in concert to keep the divisive issue of a Greek censure from being raised in final proceedings. As A. G. Xydis wrote during the dictatorship:

> In NATO, more than half the member countries (Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Italy and Canada) repeatedly and in various sessions of the Council and other organs raised the problem of Greece's participation in the alliance, only to be countered by such pressure by the United States, inside and outside the conference

[45] Sisco to Rogers, Secret, Memorandum 12442, 9/12/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> room, that their strongly expressed doubts were watered down to general expressions of concern in the final communiqués.[46]

Arne Treholt, in describing what occurred at NATO's June 1971 Lisbon meeting, takes an even more critical stance of member states' actions against Greece. Referring to a "performance" made by Norway's foreign minister, Treholt writes:

> On this occasion the newly appointed Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andreas Cappelen, was alone in speaking about principles. In the end he was half-heartedly supported by his Danish colleague. But on this occasion too there was no indication that Norway, for instance, was willing to draw the appropriate conclusions from its rhetoric. There were no concrete threats such as Norway refusing to take part in NATO military maneouvres for as long as the US remained unwilling to put pressure on Greece. Nor were there any indications that the unanimity rule might be invoked to block all multilateral aid to Greece, or threats on the part of any of the allied countries that either they or Greece must withdraw from NATO as long as the situation in the country remained the same. The raising of the Greek question in NATO has therefore more or less taken the form of a farce, where words have been given one value, deeds quite another. …
>
> [Thus t]he many powerful verbal reactions have not been followed up on a practical political level with regard to matters such as a boycott of trade, investment and military co-operation, the essential preconditions for the survival of any regime. It seems quite clear that an attitude of strong moral condemnation has not been an obstacle to close co-operation in many fields. If there has been a choice between what has been morally right and what has been expedient the latter has always won. Moral indignation has never been allowed to affect the self-interest of the countries involved.[47]

In short, so successful were the efforts of those who supported Greece in NATO that the opponents of the colonels' regime were wholly disheartened by what they perceived to be a total lack of progress. A letter from Mogens Camre, a Danish Social Democrat and political friend of the Papandreous, to Margaret Papandreou reflected the despair of the regime's opponents:

[46] Xydis (1972, 195).

[47] Treholt (1972, 218–225).

> It is becoming still more difficult to keep up interest on the Greek question because we have so little information from Greece. There are so many ugly things happening in the world and it is not so easy to attract the attention of the population and of the politicians as nothing happens on the surface of quiet Greece. … The Danes are concerned primarily with Vietnam, South America and Jordan. … So you will understand that we need some clear manifestations in Greece to make our government act in the Nato-council (sic).[48]

And in a letter to Andreas Papandreou on 20 November 1970, Camre further emphasized,

> [T]he situation is serious. The world is forgetting Greece, there is no real resistance activity that can threaten the junta and it is very difficult to make the Scandinavian governments act in Nato, because there is no alternative to the junta to make … U.S. policy difficult.[49]

In the end, such opponents of the junta would lose heart. To them, it appeared as if the colonels were being emboldened and empowered by the continued support of the US government in NATO. It is to this perceived empowerment of the Greek regime—one that often appeared as if Greece had the upper hand in its relationship with the United States—that we now turn.

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[48]Letter from Mogens Camre to Margaret Papandreou, 10/6/70, Mogens Camre papers (private archive), Copenhagen.

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CHAPTER 7

Agency in Athens: The Greek Colonels' Strategy Toward the US

All too often, accounts of US foreign policy frame the relationship between the United States and other countries as largely a one-way street—with US power and influence dynamically acting on other countries that are implicitly portrayed as static, powerless, and passive. While the relationship between great and lesser powers is certainly uneven, too often foreign policy analyses ignore the agency of smaller states, treating them as incapable of exerting effective influence on the bilateral relationship. Perhaps nowhere has this tendency been stronger than in standard accounts of Greece in the junta period, in which Greek agency, initiative and action have been largely ignored, if not erased from view altogether.

In contrast, this chapter seeks to correct that omission, placing the active, strategic agency of the Greek dictatorship at the heart of our analysis. What we argue is that, far from being passive objects of US influence and policy, the colonels' regime actively sought to strategically shape and manipulate its relationship with the United States. In a complex mix that involved appeals to historic ties of friendship, inducements of even closer security cooperation, complaints about unfair and un-collegial US treatment, and thinly veiled threats to "look elsewhere" for support, the regime's leaders were active, strategic agents in shaping their relationship with the United States. As this chapter will show, their efforts met with remarkable success, as US policy makers in the Department of State and the White House came to display a keen sensitivity to Greek sensibilities, wishing to avoid any open rupture with the

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regime, particularly with US strategic and military interests at the forefront of their thinking.

While many instances of Greek agency and influence can be gleaned from the historical record, we offer here a few important illustrations to illumine the complexity of the Greek–American relationship during this crucial time. We argue that at the root of much of the regime's forcefulness vis-à-vis the United States—a forcefulness that seemed to intensify with the passing of time—was the colonels' perception and, particularly that of Papadopoulos himself, that the US was increasingly inserting itself into Greek internal affairs by insisting on liberalization. We show that, rather than passively accepting US criticism and pressure to liberalize, Papadopoulos's reactions and acerbic rhetoric toward the US ambassador in Athens indicate a significant degree of agency that has heretofore been largely ignored. We attempt to shed light on that agency by assessing Papadopoulos's responses on a number of issues. Finally, we also take a close look at the foreign policy-making process on the other side of the Atlantic, where the US—both the Department of State and, particularly, the White House—worked to appease the regime by downplaying the US criticism of the colonels, altering the government's stance on a number of issues to soothe Papadopoulos's anxiety, and changing US policy to concede to the dictator's demands. To illustrate this relationship between the US and Greece at this time, we look at three distinct issues that confronted US policy makers: the lack of constitutional progress in Athens, the US Military Assistance Program (MAP) to Greece, and the vice presidential visit by Spiro Agnew to the country.

The Lack of Constitutional Progress: An Inconvenient Truth

As emphasized elsewhere in this book, the lack of constitutional progress in Athens was a vexing problem for American policy makers in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as it led to harsh criticism of Greece in the US Congress, within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and across the states of Europe. No sooner had the colonels launched the dictatorship than American policy makers, meeting with members of the colonels' regime, began pressuring Athens to democratize. In 1969, for example, when Greek Ambassador Xanthopoulos-Palamas met with the secretary of state and

asked for a message to take back to his government in Athens, Rogers promptly responded by "expressing hope for a speedy return to a parliamentary system in Greece," stating that this would serve to improve relations between the two countries.[1] Indeed, throughout 1967, 1968, and 1969, this would be the message consistently expressed by officials in the State Department, the US embassy in Athens, and the White House. The vice president too, in meetings with General Odysseas Angelis, commander of the Greek armed forces, and with Pipinelis, the foreign minister, expressed his concern regarding the lack of democratic government in Greece and encouraged a return to parliamentary government. He argued that "the problem of United States-Greek relations would be greatly eased and critics' arguments squarely countered if the Greek Government would place itself in the position of holding office on the basis of elections rather than by military coup."[2] Indeed, one of the most direct expressions of US discontent regarding the political situation in Greece occurred at a 1 April 1969 meeting between Rogers, Pattakos, and Xanthopoulos-Palamas. At that meeting, Rogers is reported to have declared that Greece was not moving quickly enough toward a representative form of government and that this state of affairs heightened American and European public discontent. Asked what progress could be expected and when elections might be held, Pattakos's response was anything but committal. As the memorandum of conversation describes it: "The Deputy Prime Minister replied that the Greek Government would have to evaluate the situation. It could make no promises; elections would be held at the proper time."[3] Similarly, Nixon too gently pushed for democracy in a meeting with a later Greek ambassador, Basil Vitsaxis, arguing that "a regime based on individual rights seemed the objective of most democratic systems," including the US.[4]

[1] State to Athens, Confidential, Telegram 99631, 6/18/69, POL GREECE-US, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[2] Memorandum of Conversation, Confidential/LimDis, Memorandum 5886, 4/11/69, POL GREECE-US, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[3] Memorandum of Conversation, Confidential, Memorandum 5047, 4/1/69, POL GREECE-US, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[4] Memorandum of Conversation, Secret/NoDis, Memorandum 17996, 11/18/69, POL 17 GREECE-US, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

A briefing paper prepared for Nixon in early 1970 that reported on a meeting in Athens between Tasca and Papadopoulos summarized the problem for the White House. During their meeting, Tasca expressed to Papadopoulos that the United States was finding it increasingly difficult to maintain a normal relationship with Greece due to the continued lack of democracy there, which was also opening it up to criticism within NATO. As would become increasingly characteristic of the Greek response, Papadopoulos retorted that:

> [I]t would not always be possible to listen to "our great friend" on questions of Greek internal development. He said that Greece's role in NATO and especially its relationship with the U.S. was of utmost importance. But Greece's friends must realize that the Greek Government will not allow its NATO role to be tied in any way to the Greek internal situation. There was absolutely no room for compromise on this and if necessary Greece would put its defense relationship with us on a bilateral basis.

Having summarized this response, the briefing concluded that Tasca "[o]bviously … has a most difficult and sensitive job to do with an increasingly defensive regime."[5] A few months later, the regime's defensiveness would resurface. At the time of congressional debates over whether the US should limit MAP, Tasca conveyed to Papadopoulos that the House committee vote on Greek military aid was evidence of the "strength of [the] American public reaction to the lack of real Constitutional progress" in Greece. To this Papadopoulos retorted that "implementation of the constitution [was] a decision to be made by the Greek people, and that external pressure only impede[d] progress." Proceeding to question Tasca's recent Fourth of July statement in praise of democratic values, Papadopoulos characterized Tasca's reference to democracy as "not helpful and as encouraging the opposition."[6] Thus, by 1970, there is ample evidence that Papadopoulos was increasingly unmoved by appeals to even consider liberalizing his regime. In fact, as the year progressed, he grew even more assertive on the issue. Told again

[5] "President's Wednesday Briefing," Secret/LimDis, 1/27/70, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 593, USNA.

[6] "Morning Summary of Significant Reports," Top Secret/ExDis, 7/27/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

by Tasca that Greece's lack of democracy was leading to an erosion of the country's support in Congress, Papadopoulos dismissed the notion altogether, asserting that military assistance to Greece was in "fulfillment" of NATO obligations. As Tasca described it,

> The Prime Minister replied that aid to Greece was not a matter of friendship: It was the fulfillment of our obligations under the Alliance and in our own security interests. He noted that Alliances did not necessarily depend upon friendship.[7]

Proclaiming that Greece would not tolerate interference in its domestic affairs, Papadopoulos went on to assert that Greece was not a "protectorate." Arguing that congressional interference in the domestic affairs of his country was "completely unacceptable," he even went so far as to compare the US role in Greece to that of the Soviet Union in Czechoslovakia, claiming, in fact, that he had cancelled his plans to lift martial law everywhere but in Athens and Thessaloniki because of the House of Representatives' decision on military aid. According to Papadopoulos, to lift martial law in light of such congressional criticism would appear as if he were caving in to American pressure, an impression he sought to avoid at all costs.[8] Tasca reported that:

> [I]n a period of détente between East and West, led by the U.S., one of whose cardinal elements is the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries, [the colonels'] regime undoubtedly finds continued U.S. pressure for internal political normalization especially unpalatable.[9]

Endeavoring to convince the US that pressure to democratize was wholly unacceptable, Papadopoulos made it clear that he was determined to complete the "Revolution" and his government's mission "at all cost (sic)," arguing that if American military aid to Greece were cut, he would look for assistance elsewhere. In fact, in

[7] Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 04368, 8/21/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

[8] Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 04368, 8/21/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

[9] Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 03350, 6/15/72, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

what could easily be interpreted as a veiled threat, Papadopoulos went so far as to claim that, if he could not secure US assistance, he "would take whatever other solutions were necessary." According to General Alexander Haig, the deputy national security advisor, Papadopoulos threatened that his government "would not act adversely to Greek national interests … for any reason whatsoever." Thus, while Papadopoulos understood the value of NATO to Greece, he also made it clear that he would not seek to solve NATO's problems at the expense of Greek national interests: "If his allies chose to abandon him, he would rather struggle alone than to do what he knew was wrong for his country."[10]

This sensitivity of the regime to what it perceived as American meddling in its internal affairs was a staple of the US-Greek relationship in coming years. The following incident, which took place in early summer 1972, is but one example. In June, the Greek government lodged a strong formal protest with the US in both Athens and Washington over a briefing attended by three junior Greek officers at the US Army Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth. At the briefing, a State Department official had referred to "deficiencies in Greece's current political system." In response to Athens's protest, Defense Secretary Melvin Laird in a confidential letter to Rogers complained that the "incident may have jeopardized … [an] important avenue for influence in Greece" and said that he "hope[d] we [could] do everything possible to prevent incidents of this nature in the future."[11] Thus, rather than discounting the complaints of the Greek government as a case of oversensitivity, the incident was noted at the highest levels of the American administration and corrective measures were taken to prevent a similar future occurrence. A clear message thus was sent by the Department of Defense: Government officials should take great care not to raise the hackles of the Athens regime with critical statements about it.

[10]Haig to Eliot, Secret/NoDis, Memorandum 34468, 12/13/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

[11]Laird to Rogers, Confidential, 4/1/72, DEF 19-9 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

Tasca's own analysis of the Greek colonels' anxiety pointedly addressed the sources of the regime's distress and predicted that it would continue to resent such US pressure in the future:

> We shall have to face the fact that the Greek regime will react with increasing vigor to what it has long considered U.S. intervention in the internal affairs of Greece. The regime resents strongly any appearance that [the] USG or Congress [is] seeking to tell Greece that it must return forthwith to representative government. This attitude … has been developing over a period of many months. Moose and Lowenstein['s] activities in Athens on behalf of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as well as the Hackett visit and [the] subsequent unauthorized release of his personal report, irritated [the] GOG greatly. Various statement (sic) of the Dept of State spokesmen have also exacerbated feelings. Further irritants have been the Congressional debates and the limitation on aid to Greece. The waiver of the ten percent MAP requirement for Spain and Turkey but not Greece was particularly galling. Finally, the failure of Secretary Rogers to visit Greece … has now emerged as a further irritating point for [the] GOG. … I believe the regime will become increasingly annoyed and seek ways and means of expressing this annoyance.[12]

Given this growing annoyance, as quoted in Chapter **3**, Tasca recommended that the US stop "singling out Greece" from other authoritarian states by calling for its prompt return to democracy. As he put it, "I believe the answer clearly must be for the U.S. to take the position that we are for democracy everywhere in principle, but that essentially democracy and representative government are 'do it yourself' propositions."[13] Thus, by the early 1970s, US policy makers were growing increasingly aware that Papadopoulos was unmovable when it came to US pressure to democratize his government. In fact, as we will see below, regardless of the criticism, cajoling, and prodding that his regime faced, he refused to budge. As a result, policy makers in the United States were forced to change tack, focusing instead on maintaining the US-Greek relationship for strategic and security considerations. We refer once again to MAP to illustrate the complex dynamics between the two allies.

[12] Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 03350, 6/15/72, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

[13] Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 03350, 6/15/72, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

The Military Assistance Program

As discussed elsewhere in this book, many within the US government believed that the steps to move Greece closer to democracy were extremely important to the well-being and longevity of MAP. In fact, MAP was so central to the US-Greek strategic relationship that even the lifting of its suspension in 1970, something that should have greatly pleased the colonels' regime, had to be considered and formulated in light of the regime's sensitivities. First, as discussed in Chapter 3, there was the issue of whether the lifting of MAP should be connected to liberalization efforts and potentially postponed until positive steps toward democracy were taken. However, in a June 1970 memorandum, Sisco warned that a delay in the resumption of military assistance based on the absence of democratic movement—something many in Congress advocated—would risk a significant deterioration in US-Greek relations. Underscoring the fact that the Greek regime had grown increasingly impatient at how long it was taking the US government to lift the military embargo, Sisco argued that Greece had believed the suspension would be lifted without the attachment of conditions. Since the colonels believed the United States would accept the steps they had already taken or were promising to take in the future, Sisco maintained that the US could:

> therefore expect the regime to react with pained surprise at the news that arms shipments were not to be resumed without some action on the part of the Greek regime beyond what it has so far taken and projected. It will regard the United States position as unacceptable pressure. It will insist that the United States, yielding to the blackmail of the Scandinavians and others, has lost sight of the basic security needs of the United States and Greece.[14]

The possibility of angering Greece on this issue caused substantial concern among State Department officials, as they noted potential Greek retaliation—for instance, that the United States could be told "to gather up (our) sails and go"—should the partial suspension of arms deliveries be allowed to continue.[15] While, as Sisco maintained, requiring Greece

[14] Sisco to Rogers, Secret/NoDis, Memorandum 8224, 6/5/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[15] Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 3107, 7/23/69, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA (parentheses in original).

to take steps toward further liberalization was unlikely to cause the colonels to withdraw from NATO (something that had to be avoided at all costs), the regime could take other steps to retaliate against the US. Sisco foresaw such pressure being exerted in a number of ways. First, the colonels could make the US's use of military installations and facilities in Greece much more difficult. For example, access to Greek ports, which heretofore had been freely available to the Sixth Fleet, could be jeopardized if Greece decided to withdraw "from [its] present entirely cooperative position on the timing of and conditions on fleet visits." Since fleet visits had become much more difficult in other parts of the Mediterranean, it would pose considerable problems for the United States Navy were Greece to make its ports unavailable. The colonels could place conditions upon the United States and NATO for the use of a number of other critical installations, including a demand for rent payments (something that had not been required in the past) or even a renegotiation of the existing agreements for the facilities. As Sisco put it, "There is in fact no limit, except the Greek imagination, to the variety of harassing activity which could be taken." Finally, Greece could also seek to procure from others the military equipment that the United States was withholding. In such a case, the United States' influence "of Greek military dispositions" would weaken.[16] Given such calculations by the State Department, it is not at all surprising that the Nixon administration decided to resume MAP deliveries to Greece in February 1972, despite the fact that steps toward democratization were nonexistent.

It is also important to note that when the determination to resume MAP deliveries was made, the wording of the announcement regarding the resumption was carefully revised after the Athens embassy objected to the original formulation that "[t]he resumption of the full military assistance program for Greece does not, of course, constitute an endorsement of the Greek regime or its domestic policies."[17] Claiming that this wording would be considered "'critical and insulting', and that it might engender a strongly adverse reaction to the prejudice of United States-Greek relationships and continued Greek cooperation" with the US, Tasca maintained that the Greek regime would interpret this statement

[16]Sisco to Rogers, Secret/NoDis, Memorandum 8224, 6/5/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[17]State to Athens, Secret, Telegram 141480, 8/28/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

as a "deliberate and direct affront."[18] Initially, the Department of State's reaction to the embassy's criticism was rather defensive, maintaining that the:

> GOG may be upset somewhat by [the] tone and substance [of the announcement], … [However, the] announcement is phrased to deal with our problem in Congress, press and NATO not rpt not to flatter [the] GOG.[19]

Despite this initial reaction, however, the offending statement was subsequently revised to read that the "decision to resume the shipments of suspended items *rests entirely on these [security] considerations*," thereby carefully disassociating the US from any public statement that could be construed as critical of Athens or calling for a return to democracy.[20]

Further, it is important to note that on the issue of the resumption of military assistance to Greece, officials in the State Department were quite cognizant of the thorny situation in which the US found itself. On the one hand, it was clear that the US needed to maintain a close relationship with Greece based on US security interests, and thus they did not wish to alienate the colonels further. On the other hand, these same officials believed that the administration had to react to the increased pressure it was facing from Congress, NATO, and the press. As one State Department telegram emphasized, the suspension of US military aid was the "one bit of tangible evidence" that US policy makers could point to as evidence of dissatisfaction with the lack of democratic movement in Greece. By abandoning that policy and resuming MAP shipments—a decision that had already been finalized by this time—the credibility of the argument that the US truly wanted to see a return to democracy in Athens would be seriously damaged. As the telegram put it, "It will be … difficult to persuade critics that our interest in [the] restoration of [a] popularly based govt in Greece is unabated, and that the U.S. is

[18] Eliot to Kissinger, Secret, Memorandum 11997, 9/2/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[19] State to Athens, Secret, Telegram 141480, 8/28/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[20] Eliot to Kissinger, Secret, Memorandum 11997, 9/2/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA (brackets in original; emphasis added).

in fact continuing its active efforts towards the goal of rapid evolution … toward a more acceptable situation."[21] Despite such concerns, however, not only did the United States decide to resume MAP deliveries to Greece, but also acquiesced by softening its language regarding the resumption of MAP.

Yet another illustration of US policy makers' careful attention to Greek displeasure related to a provision in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1971 that required recipients of US military assistance or excess US military equipment to deposit ten percent of the value of that aid in an account to be used by the US to fund its educational and cultural exchange programs in those countries. No sooner had the Greek government learned of the levy than it expressed its deep concern to the US embassy in Athens as well as through its ambassador in Washington. In a series of telegrams to the State Department, the US embassy not only conveyed Greece's concerns regarding the tax, but also offered its own appraisal, arguing that the US government would be justified "in terms of [the] substance of [the] matter" in finding a way to exempt Greece from the ten percent requirement.[22] In Washington too, the Greek ambassador, Basil Vitsaxis, attempted to impress on the Nixon administration that the ten percent levy would pose political difficulties for his government once news of it became public knowledge in Greece. Seeking a way to help the regime avoid public criticism at home, US officials made several attempts to develop an exemption to the ten percent requirement. One proposed solution was to allow the Greek government to use "services provided" as payment toward the ten percent owed. Another possibility proposed by Vitsaxis was that of prepaying outstanding US loans to Greece at a rate that would offset the costs of US educational and cultural programs in Greece, and thereby justify waiving the ten percent deposit requirement.[23] Attempting to find a compromise solution, the State Department reported to the Athens embassy that they were examining whether Vitsaxis's approach might be grounds

[21] State to Athens, Secret/NoDis, Telegram 115473, 7/18/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[22] Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 2581, 5/9/72, DEF 19 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[23] State to Athens, Confidential, Telegram 085453, 5/16/72, DEF 19 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

for a waiver of the tax.[24] Throughout the summer of 1972, US policy makers weighed such options in the hope of finding a way to release the colonels' regime from the ten percent requirement—all in an effort to dampen Greek domestic criticism once the ten percent levy became known there.

Despite a number of such efforts, in the end, a waiver did not materialize. As the State Department told Tasca, while the Foreign Assistance Act provided for a potential presidential waiver, the administration actually preferred to eliminate the ten percent levy altogether in future legislation rather than risk a backlash from Congress through use of the presidential waiver.

> After careful consideration of all alternatives we see no practical way to overcome [the] ten percent requirement for Greece. While we appreciate [the] seriousness of this conclusion, [the] department believes [that] seeking a presidential waiver to cover the requirement could jeopardize not only the FY73 program but possibly also the President's waiver authority. [The] Administration [is] seeking [to] repeal [the] deposit requirement … in FY73 legislation. However, we [are] not in [a] position at this time to indicate what action Congress will take, or when.[25]

Thus, there seemed no way to exempt Greece from the requirement. However, this example illustrates how US officials in the Department of State worked with the Athens embassy to find a solution that might have exempted Greece from the legislative requirement—all in an effort to satisfy the colonels.

One final word on MAP is due here. While the Nixon administration resumed military deliveries to Greece in February 1972, those deliveries would prove to be short lived. By the early 1970s, American policy makers were seeking to have US allies take greater responsibility for their own security needs as well as paying an increased share of their own defense expenditures. As a result, efforts were underway to move nine states, including Greece, China, Liberia, and six Latin American countries, from grant military assistance (such as MAP) to Foreign Military

[24]State to Athens, Confidential, Telegram 085453, 5/16/72, DEF 19 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[25]State to Athens, Confidential, Telegram 056932, 4/4/72, DEF 19 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

Sales (FMS) in either credit or cash and, eventually, to commercial sales. To phase in this plan, the State Department recommended to Nixon in October 1972 that MAP be phased out for all nine states during 1974. Accordingly, MAP assistance to Greece would be terminated at that time, and only small military training programs would be funded in the future.

However, when word of the planned phaseout mysteriously reached Papadopoulos, he quickly sent a letter to Nixon, emphasizing the historic ties of friendship between the US and Greece and presenting Greece as a country that had always responded favorably to American requests. However, in an act of unanticipated assertiveness, the letter abruptly announced that, going forward, Greece would no longer accept US grant aid:

> We realize … that the allocation for Grant Aid is reaching a level so low that it cannot any more serve the important purpose for which it was initiated. Having weighed all the elements of the problem, we have reached the decision to forego in the future and beginning in 1973 the U.S. financial assistance offered under the heading "Grant Aid."[26]

Thus, Papadopoulos renounced the aid altogether, asking for its termination to go into effect retroactively, on 1 January 1973.

This clearly caught Washington off guard. Stunned that Papadopoulos would turn down US aid one year early and, in so doing, forgo millions of dollars of assistance, the State Department speculated that Papadopoulos was insinuating that his regime was being "unjustly treated and criticized" despite its important defense contributions to NATO and to the United States. The analysts concluded that the letter revealed Papadopoulos's determination to take any necessary steps to redress what he saw as unfair treatment of his country:

> We do not believe that the Greek decision to cut off U.S. grant aid ($6.7 million in FY 73) follows logically from the Prime Minister's line of argument as summarized from his letter. … [T]he argument that the amount of grant aid has become relatively small is not a convincing rationale for a decision to "renounce" it altogether—without advance consultation. … Considering these amounts and the absence of a relevant explanation, we

[26] Eliot to Kissinger, Secret, Memorandum 7301903, 2/5/73, DEF 19 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> suspect that there are *un-avowed motives and intentions* underlying the Greek decision.[27]

Among the possible explanations for Papadopoulos's decision was that he may have been trying to preempt criticism from the more radical members of his government—those who believed that Greek pride was wounded by congressional and other criticism abroad and that any compromise with the United States amounted to a diminution of Greek sovereignty. Yet another possible explanation was that the Papadopoulos government may have been trying to build the case that Greece was involved in an uneven relationship with the US—one in which it was giving far more than it was receiving. According to this theory, the accusation of inequity in the bilateral relationship was intended to lay the groundwork for bigger future demands ("a quid pro quo") on the United States by Greece. In this regard, analysts speculated that Greece could go so far as to request an indisputable show of endorsement for the Papadopoulos government, including perhaps a US presidential visit. Finally, the memorandum conjectured that Papadopoulos's renunciation of aid might also have been intended to illustrate to Congress that criticism of Greece could lead to serious repercussions that would be damaging to US security interests. Given that American policy makers could not be sure of Papadopoulos's exact motives for renouncing US aid, as well as the fact that Washington was caught by surprise by the dictator's renunciation, it determined that the best reaction would be the maintenance of "a calm, low-profile, business-like posture," one that did not quiz Papadopoulos's motives but instead implemented his decision without question.

The Vice Presidential Visit to Greece

Like the thorny issues surrounding MAP, the decision to send Vice President Agnew on a formal visit to Greece in October 1971 also posed substantial difficulties for US policy makers. Curiously, while the colonels relished visits of high-ranking US officials because such visits gave the appearance of American approval of the Greek junta, Papadopoulos initially appeared ready to forego Agnew's visit altogether in order to assert

[27] Spiers and Sisco to Rogers, Secret, Memorandum 7301902, 1/31/73, DEF 19 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA (emphasis added).

his control over how it would take place. In this regard, two issues stand out: (1) the Greek insistence that the vice president refrain from discussing the regime issue while in Greece and (2) the Greek demand that no opposition leaders be invited to the embassy reception that would be given for the vice president in Athens. As we will see below, on both counts, Papadopoulos was essentially successful in getting his way with the US.

First, there was the issue of direct pressure on the regime to democratize. According to the State Department and, indeed, Secretary Rogers himself, this was an issue the vice president *should* raise with the colonels. To not raise it, the State Department argued, would provoke congressional and European criticism particularly from those who were against such high-ranking visits to Greece in the first place. To placate media, congressional and other critics regarding the visit, many officials in the Department of State believed Agnew's visit should be used to pressure the regime to take democratizing steps. Noting the regime's hardening stance toward further liberalization—particularly Papadopoulos's late 1970 announcement that there would be no further constitutional developments, and his statements that "1972 would be a year for administrative reforms rather than political change," Rogers was concerned that an Agnew visit would invite severe public criticism of the Nixon administration.[28] However, as discussed in Chapter 4, Rogers noted that such criticism could be moderated if Greece were to announce in advance substantial steps toward parliamentary democracy and if the vice president himself were to publicly reaffirm America's desire to see Greece return to parliamentary rule. Rogers thus sought approval from Nixon to tell Papadopoulos that the US would welcome an invitation but that:

> [C]riticism of the visit could be kept at a manageable level only if the Greek government were able to take some convincing steps toward a restoration of normality in Greece such as lifting martial law and reviewing courts-martial sentences. To have the greatest impact, steps should be taken prior to the visit. If that is impossible, we would accept assurances that they would be taken soon afterward. Indeed, in deference to the Greek desire to avoid the appearance of giving into foreign pressures, we would accept confidential assurances that the [prime minister] would

[28] Rogers to Nixon, Secret, Memorandum 7113488, 9/2/71, POL 7 US/AGNEW, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> announce these steps in his state-of-nation speech this December and would at that time strongly reaffirm [the] regime's goal of restoring representative government in Greece.[29]

Clearly, Rogers and the State Department were squarely on the side of linking the vice president's visit to democratization in Athens.

However, in contrast to State's push for evidence of liberalization, the White House's stance seemed rather muddled, as Tasca appeared to be receiving unclear direction regarding how to approach Papadopoulos. In an effort to shed some light on the administration's position, Kissinger was asked to clarify to Tasca the extent to which Nixon wanted Papadopoulos to set a date for elections as a precondition for the vice president's visit. As Harold Saunders wrote to Kissinger: "My own view is that connecting the two may sour both, but I know the Vice President thinks he might pull this off. Maybe the President wants to let him try. It would be surprising if it worked."[30] In hindsight, it appears that the vice president actually wanted to link his visit with a push to democratize the colonels' regime. However, Nixon preempted him by deciding that no political conditions should be set for his visit. Characteristically, Nixon appeared much less concerned about democratization in Greece, noting to Tasca "that the compulsion in Washington to inflict changes in government upon Greece was on the whole self-defeating."[31] Accordingly, by mid-August, the president himself had approved that Agnew should go to Greece unconditionally and without "exaggerated expectations."[32]

Once this decision was made, a feeler was sent through a "discreet and reliable channel" to inquire whether Papadopoulos would be willing to extend the invitation. Papadopoulos's response was affirmative,

[29] Rogers to Nixon, Secret, Memorandum 7113488, 9/2/71, POL 7 US/AGNEW, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[30] Saunders to Kissinger, Secret/NoDis, Memorandum 31222, 8/5/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

[31] Haig Memorandum for the President's Files, Secret/Sensitive, 8/4/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

[32] Kissinger to Nixon, Secret, Memorandum 32147, 8/17/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

answering through the same channel that he would welcome such a visit. However, he also set firm conditions right from the start: He wished "it to be understood that the Vice President would not in the course of the visit intervene in Greek internal affairs." According to the US embassy, Papadopoulos had heard from three different sources that Agnew was planning to apply pressure on the regime to move more quickly toward democracy. As a result, Papadopoulos wanted to make it clear that he did not wish to be pressured on the issue of domestic reform.[33]

Given this stance—as well as, perhaps, the White House's opposition to pressuring the regime—officials in the State Department shifted their position that the US should link proof of liberalization with the visit and, accordingly, instructed Tasca to inform Papadopoulos that Agnew was prepared to accept Greece's invitation, with or without a commitment to liberalization. In fact, in what amounted to an about-face, Tasca was directed to assure Papadopoulos that there would be an understanding between the two countries that neither would place conditions on the other. Instead, the purpose of the visit would be to "strengthen our relations rather than to cause difficulties or embarrassment to [the] GOG. … Insofar as any public statements … emanat[e] from [the] visit, they would not go beyond those expressed by [the] President and Secretary of State and known positions on both sides."[34] Satisfied with the US's response, Papadopoulos extended the formal invitation on 24 September 1971, inviting Vice President Agnew to "raise *privately* any matters of mutual interest."[35]

Having thus received the formal invitation, the State Department now turned its attention to preparing briefings for American officials who would likely be questioned by the press regarding the visit. Expecting substantial media coverage and "hostile" editorial comment, as well as specific questions about whether the vice president would urge the colonels to move toward parliamentary democracy, the Department of State prepared the following possible answer to give the press:

[33]Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 5025, 9/22/71, POL 7 US/AGNEW, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[34]State to Athens, Secret, Telegram 175788, 9/23/71, POL 7 US/AGNEW, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[35]Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 5079, 9/24/71, POL 7 US/AGNEW, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA (emphasis added).

> It is not the policy of this Administration to tell other governments how to run their affairs. It is not precluded that Greek leaders might discuss some of the things they have in mind, but the Vice President is not going to try to suggest what those steps should be.[36]

Parenthetically, it is interesting to note that, heartened by the official US position regarding Agnew's visit, the pro-junta press in Athens increasingly echoed the colonels' line that Greece was not about to tolerate foreign intervention, insinuating that the US government knew and accepted this fact, and citing US government statements similar to the one above as proof that the US had no influence upon Greece. *Nea Politea*, one such pro-junta paper, reported, for example, that "aside from [a] few platonic admonitions, made mainly as [a] sop to [the] polemics of leftist congressional circles, [the] U.S. will do nothing more to attempt [to] influence Greek political developments, [the] shaping of which belongs exclusively to [the] Revolution and its leader, George Papadopoulos."[37] While US officials were clearly irritated by such editorializing (in newspapers they viewed as mouthpieces of the regime), the administration nevertheless failed to take steps to alter such perceptions. Instead, the Athens embassy and Tasca, in particular, were very engaged in trying to placate Papadopoulos.

In this regard, Tasca argued that some of Papadopoulos's "extreme sensitivity" could be attributed to a number of issues, including the "action and threats" stemming from the US Congress's efforts to tie military aid to internal political conditions, as well as the fact that King Constantine and Agnew would meet in Iran prior to Agnew's trip to Greece. According to Tasca, this meeting may have contributed to the impression that the vice president was coming to Greece to serve as a mediator between the regime and the King, and thereby intervening in Greek domestic affairs. Finally, and most importantly, Tasca surmised that Papadopoulos was empowered by Greece's strategic position with NATO:

> The PM is also fully aware of the importance of Greece to NATO, the Southern flank and the Eastern Mediterranean. He is also convinced this

[36] Eliot to Kissinger, Secret, Memorandum 7115186, 9/27/71, POL 7 US/AGNEW, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[37] Athens to State, Unclassified, Telegram 5439, 10/12/71, POL 7 US/AGNEW, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> gives him sufficient bargaining power to maintain a strong stance regarding intervention in the internal political situation.[38]

In the end, Kissinger wrote to Agnew, suggesting the following approach:

> [W]ithout being offensive you will want to avoid creating the impression that we think all is well in Greece's relations with Europe and the US while at the same time reaffirming our alliance tie with Greece. Perhaps this is as much achieved through what you do not say as through what you say.[39]

Advising Agnew that he would need to moderate the talking points provided to him by the State Department so as "to avoid offending the sensitive Greek leaders," Kissinger suggested that the tone of his conversations with Papadopoulos should be one of concern over how Greece solves its own problems without implying that Greece should solve them simply to make the Nixon administration's life easier with Congress. As Kissinger put it, "[T]his approach could convey our interest in their political situation without leaving an impression of interference."[40] However, it appears that Agnew was advised to stop short of asking for any specific steps from the colonels or even giving the impression that he had come to Greece to do so.

Seemingly taking this advice to heart, Agnew took great pains not to offend the colonels' regime but, instead, gently broached the topic of liberalization in private. In a private meeting with Papadopoulos on 16 October 1971, for example, he emphasized that he "came in true friendship without [the] slightest intention to criticize or intervene." He also promised that he would not publicly reveal that the two had discussed Greek domestic politics. Instead, he wished to "explore" with Papadopoulos what might be done to "disarm critics and strengthen [the] Alliance."

[38] Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 5026, 9/23/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

[39] Kissinger to Agnew, Secret, 10/9/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

[40] Kissinger to Agnew, Secret, 10/9/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

For his part, Papadopoulos thanked Agnew for his "pledges of friendship, secrecy, and non-interference" and agreed to discuss these issues with the vice president. Declaring that he would "love" to "hold elections tomorrow" if he could, he argued that elections "would have no purpose" if they meant a return to the economic and political problems Greece faced in 1967. Instead, the country would *eventually* implement the 1968 constitution, but both internal and external factors complicated his ability to do so. American congressional criticism especially prevented him from lifting martial law because to do so would engender "pressure from abroad [and] … encourage the critics of Greece, the Communists, and subversive elements" to increase their attacks on the regime.[41]

In the course of their private conversations, Agnew reiterated several times that if Papadopoulos did not wish to discuss issues of democratic progress—if he felt this issue was not any of the vice president's business—he would understand. Furthermore, he reassured Papadopoulos that he would not use the occasion of his visit to embarrass him, promising that he would not publicize the fact that Greece's domestic politics had been discussed. Indeed, when Agnew privately questioned Papadopoulos whether there might be some steps that could be taken to weaken Greece's critics *without harming the regime's objectives*, Papadopoulos skirted the issue and did not offer a single concession to his guest.

Realizing that Papadopoulos was "unbending" when it came to domestic political reform, US policy makers decided to "come to grips with the reality of the Greek political situation." In real terms, this meant that, when it came to Papadopoulos, the US had concluded that "to do things that anger[ed] him only jeopardize[ed] the substantial US security interests in the eastern Mediterranean."[42] As Samuel Hoskinson, a staff member on the National Security Council (NSC) who traveled with Agnew, told Kissinger:

> I for one, after having seen the situation at first hand, seriously doubt that we could move Papadopoulos any faster toward democracy under

[41] Athens to State, Secret/NoDis, Telegram 5590, 10/18/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

[42] Hoskinson to Kissinger, Secret/NoDis, Memorandum 33468, 11/8/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

> any circumstances. More realistic is the course of protecting our working relationship with [the] Greek regime without necessarily endorsing or rejecting its approach to internal politics.[43]

In short, protecting the United States' working relationship with Greece ultimately trumped the desire to see Greece democratize. The colonels had successfully exploited their position of influence over the United States.

In addition, there was a second issue on which Papadopoulos essentially succeeded in pressuring the US. In addition to his insistence that Greece not be pressured to democratize, Papadopoulos also took an "adamant stand against [the] inclusion" of any members of the Greek political opposition at a reception the US embassy planned to host as part of Agnew's formal program in Greece. Intended to be an event where Agnew would have the opportunity to speak with members of the Greek opposition, a decision was initially made to invite both Americans and Greeks, including members of the non-communist Greek opposition. However, following Greek government objections, the embassy and the Department of State later agreed to reevaluate, first, whether a reception should be held at all and, second, who should be invited to it. Tasca originally recommended that the "Vice President would be well advised to invite the distinguished members of the opposition to my reception at [the] end of [the] official visit without communicating the list of guests to the government" because this would be in keeping with the embassy's "practice of inviting members of both the government and opposition to my July Fourth reception." He pointed out to the State Department that to not invite the opposition to a large embassy reception now would be taken as a snub.[44] Indeed, Tasca reported that he would be having a tête-à-tête at the home of Papadopoulos on the evening of 6 October and that he would take the opportunity to emphasize the importance of maintaining contacts between the embassy and "all democratic elements in the country," pointing out that such personalities would

[43] Hoskinson to Kissinger, Secret/NoDis, Memorandum 33468, 11/8/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

[44] Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 5314, 10/5/71, POL 7 US/AGNEW, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

"be part of [the] political scene" in Greece once the 1968 constitution was implemented.[45]

In Washington, policy makers initially agreed in principle. In a 6 October 1971 State Department telegram to the embassy, Tasca was told to pursue his plans of inviting "representatives and prestigious persons from the democratic non-communist opposition."[46] While the US did not want to anger the Greeks by "doing anything during the visit to muddy the atmosphere," Saunders at the NSC gave Kissinger the following arguments in favor of inviting the opposition:

> (1) We do not accept the principle that American representatives in another country should cut themselves off completely from any element in the political spectrum which operates legally by the procedures of that country. …. (2) Our normal posture is that our Ambassador is a representative to the whole Greek people and does not interfere in internal affairs. If that is the case, then siding with one government to the exclusion of those who may be members of a future government sets a counter precedent. We do not restrict the Ambassador of Greece here if he wishes to talk to members of the Democratic Party.
>
> The attached telegram would authorize Tasca to invite a selected number of respectable political leaders to the Vice President's reception. Without any intention of having the Vice President's visit take on an anti-government cast—none of us want that—I feel that we cannot accept efforts to restrict the President's representation in Greece.[47]

Interestingly, while the recommendation was initially approved by the State Department, the recommendation was later withdrawn.

What explains this about-face? It appears that policy makers in Washington were persuaded by Tasca's own change of mind on the issue. Writing just one day after the decision was made to authorize inviting the opposition, Tasca announced that the question had "clearly been

[45]Athens to State, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 4049, 10/5/71, repeated in State to US Mission to UN, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 183343, 10/6/71, POL 7 US/AGNEW, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[46]State to Athens, Confidential, 10/6/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

[47]Saunders to Kissinger, Confidential, Memorandum LDX #073, 10/7/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

dealt with by the Greek government, which ha[d] unequivocally decided against inclusion [of the] opposition." Reporting that the Greek foreign ministry's chief of protocol had raised the issue with the embassy, Tasca emphasized that the chief of protocol "hoped that nothing would be done to disturb [the] harmony of [the] visit" and that the Greek government would not "be put in [a] position where it might have to react to [a] disturbing element." The foreign ministry official had emphasized that this would be the case if "persons unacceptable to [the] Greek government" attended, indicating that the prime minister and other members of his government would be obliged to walk out of the reception in that case.[48]

Thus, as in what amounted to a clear reversal, Tasca not only proposed that the opposition be excluded from the list of invitees, but also that the embassy's reception for the vice president be cancelled altogether:

> Unless [the] Department wishes to reopen this issue with [the] GOG [the] Embassy assumes that U.S. reception will not be held. … It is … clear that [the] Government intends [to] take [a] rigid position that anyone not cooperating with [the] GOG, even if right wing and pro-NATO, [is] unacceptable to play any role in connection with [the] VP's visit.[49]

Interestingly, exactly one day after receipt of the above telegram, Rogers cabled the embassy, agreeing that it would be "inappropriate" (later revised to "impossible") for Agnew to meet with the opposition while on his official visit. However, any visit with members of the opposition during the vice president's *private* portion of the trip, "while clearly posing difficulties," could be considered after his arrival in Athens.[50] However, rather than cancelling the embassy reception altogether as Tasca had recommended, the State Department advised that a formal reception be held, but that invitations should only go out to members

[48]Athens to State, Confidential/ExDis, Telegram 5406, 10/8/71, POL 7 US/AGNEW, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[49]Athens to State, Confidential/ExDis, Telegram 5406, 10/8/71, POL 7 US/AGNEW, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[50]State to Athens, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 186316, 10/9/71, POL 7 US/AGNEW, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

of the Greek government, American officials, and prominent members of the American community in Athens. Thus, the American reception would parallel the Greek government's reception for the vice president and would be on a much smaller scale than originally planned. Such a reception:

> would be correct from protocol point of view: [the] Greek government could not object, and [the] absence of [the] opposition would not be so evident as in [the] case of [a] large reception at which virtually everyone else of note would be present.[51]

In short, Agnew's visit to Greece was choreographed in such a way that it was virtually delinked from the topic of liberalization—all in an effort to appease the Greek regime.

Despite such accommodations, however, the issue of whether the vice president should meet privately with members of the opposition in other settings continued to be scrutinized by US policy makers. In one such instance, Tasca raised the issue of a discrete, private meeting when former Center Union minister Stylianos Houtas inquired about the possibility. Believing that a private meeting would be a more suitable forum for discussion than the embassy reception, Houtas had in mind a small group of no more than five right and center senior politicians to facilitate what he referred to as "an exchange of opinions." This small group would include Panayiotis Kanellopoulos, George Mavros, Evangelos Averoff, George Rallis, and himself. Given the State Department's reluctance to invite opposition members to the formal reception, Tasca concluded that such a meeting would not be desirable or possible.[52] In the end, his judgment prevailed, and no such meeting was held.

As the above example illustrates, the colonels had come to object to *any* contacts between American officials and members of the Greek opposition—even with members of the staunchly conservative Greek establishment. While this was certainly the case with such contacts in Athens, it also was true for meetings in Washington and in other European capitals. Take, for example, August 1970, when a question

[51]Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 5413, 10/11/71, POL 7 US/AGNEW, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[52]Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 5407, 10/8/71, POL 7 US/AGNEW, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

arose regarding whether former prime minister Constantine Karamanlis, who was in self-imposed exile in Paris, should be informed in advance about the US resumption of military supplies to Greece. Tasca suggested to the State Department that it would not be useful or appropriate to inform the former prime minister given the regime's extreme sensitivity to such contacts with the Greek opposition. According to Tasca, if the colonels were to find out that the US had informed Karamanlis of the MAP resumption before informing them, it "could both undermine [the] positive impact of resumption and jeopardize whatever prospect remain[ed] of [the] US continuing to have [a] positive influence on satisfactory political evolution" in Athens.[53] Indeed, large numbers of US embassy, State Department, and White House documents reveal Papadopoulos's annoyance at any contacts between Tasca and members of the opposition. In fact, a meeting in Paris between Tasca and Karamanlis was said to have caused a "furor" and so much "rancor" in Athens that Kissinger later disapproved a visit by former Foreign Minister Evangelos Averoff, a staunch conservative, to the State Department to meet with Sisco to discuss Greece and to share ideas about the return to democracy there.[54] A similar decision was also made regarding possible contacts between King Constantine and US officials in Rome. Fearing that the King's entourage had been penetrated by agents of the junta, the White House sent blanket instructions that American officials were to keep contacts with him to a minimum. In fact, Tasca's proposed visit to the King provoked Kissinger to scrawl on the memo: "Totally, utterly unacceptable."[55]

In short, the documentary evidence clearly shows that Tasca was well aware of Papadopoulos's anger regarding contacts with members of the Greek opposition and had made Washington aware of it. As he would report to the Department of State, Papadopoulos:

[53]Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 4793, 8/29/70, DEF 19-8 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[54]Saunders to Kissinger, Secret, Memorandum 33235, 11/29/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA; Memorandum of Conversation, Confidential, 11/5/71, POL 7 US/AGNEW, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[55]Kennedy to Kissinger, Top Secret/NoDis, 1/7/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

> [c]riticized my contacts with [the] opposition, whom he described as enemies of [the] regime, and … [h]e hoped I would cease such contacts, which made Greece look like a protectorate with me as proconsul.[56]

Tasca argued that contact with the opposition would create the impression that the United States did not fully accept the legitimacy of the colonels' regime, and he attempted to explain why the regime was so sensitive to this: "I believe [the] position of [the] GOG regarding contacts is one more example of [the] extreme sensitivity of [the] primin [prime minister] at present towards what he feels amounts to intervention in Greek internal politics."[57] In the end, Tasca, Agnew, the State Department, and the White House all acceded to Papadopoulos's wishes. Contacts with the Greek opposition were kept to a minimum, if they occurred at all.

Tailoring Policy to Greek Sensitivities

What the above examples illustrate is that US policy makers often displayed great flexibility in tailoring their policy with a view to keeping the colonels in Athens content—in the end, to protect the US-Greek military relationship. Recall, for example, the timing of the announcement of American resumption of military aid to Greece in 1970. As discussed in Chapter 6, the announcement of the resumption of MAP was painstakingly choreographed to follow the NATO discussion of the Defense Planning Report of 18 September 1970, that called on member states to increase their military aid to Greece if they could afford to do so. As that chapter details, while the United States preferred to postpone the discussion of that report to avoid further intra-alliance division on the issue of Greece, Papadopoulos's insistence that the meeting not be postponed beyond 18 September, and his threat that the Greek delegation would walk out of the DPC should postponement occur, compelled the United States to give in to Greek demands. Fearing that a Greek walkout could lead to a constitutional crisis within NATO, the US decided to postpone its announcement of the resumption of military aid to follow, rather than precede, the meeting.

[56]Athens to State, Secret, Telegram 04368, 8/21/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

[57]State to US Mission UN, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 183343, 10/6/71, POL 7 US/AGNEW, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA. Telegram repeating Athens 4049, 10/5/71.

Examples such as those detailed in this chapter lead us to ask: Why were American policy makers so willing to accommodate a small group of colonels whom most observers assumed were themselves heavily reliant on US support? The documentary evidence we have analyzed points to a symbiotic relationship that developed between the US and Greece during this period. That is, given the US's dependence upon Greek cooperation for its own security interests during that period of the Cold War, as well as Greece's geostrategic importance to the US and NATO generally, American policy makers sought to accommodate the colonels' sensitivities as much as possible. Thus, while it may be an exaggeration to say that the "USG was paralyzed by fear that the colonels would take Greece out of NATO," as Italian Foreign Minister Pietro Nenni once told the US ambassador to Italy, there was a certain fear nonetheless. As the ambassador's response to Nenni exemplifies: "If there were any limitations on our position … it stemmed … from a conviction that we could not be effective in exerting pressure on the regime. *Our levers were inadequate*."[58] And, as Kissinger wrote in a memorandum to Agnew prior to his visit to Greece: "Our security interests in Greece require special attention to the sensitivities of the present leaders."[59] In fact, Kissinger concluded that, given Papadopoulos's powerful position within the ruling junta, as well as the fact that he did not intend to increase the pace of implementation of the 1968 constitution or call for elections any time soon, Agnew's visit could not be expected to improve the internal situation. As a result, the decision was made that little should be asked of Greece.

Indeed, such security considerations would prove to be predominant throughout the seven years of military rule, leading to a certain degree of American paralysis vis-à-vis the colonels. Evidence of this emerged early on when, following the King's countercoup, Papadopoulos warned that, if his government were not internationally recognized by 20 January 1968, he would interpret this as a de facto expulsion of Greece from NATO. Recognizing the threat Papadopoulos's position posed to US security interests in Greece, Talbot cabled Washington: "If [the] Greeks in their offended dignity, frustration and impatience should happen to

[58] Rome to State, Confidential, Telegram 2837, 5/10/69, POL 23-9, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA (emphasis added).

[59] Kissinger to Agnew, Secret, 10/9/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA.

flail out and rupture connections with NATO, [the] costs to our interests would obviously be heavy. Therefore, … we will do whatever we can … to forestall precipitate Greek moves."[60] Many such security considerations would follow.

Take, for instance, the ten percent levy on MAP deliveries to Greece discussed earlier. Tasca justified his opposition to the levy by emphasizing to his colleagues in Washington that Greece had for many years been a loyal ally. He argued that the country had provided facilities and support to US military forces for many years "free of charge" and listed about twenty such US facilities throughout Greece, including ones located at Athens Airport, an air base at Elefsis, the naval communications station at Nea Makri, the security service facility at Iraklion, the Souda Bay naval port, and a port facility at Piraeus, with a number of smaller installations, including ones at Katsimidhi, Keratea, Koropi, Erithrai, Argyroupoulis, Perivolaki, Yiannitsa, Tanagra, and Araxos. In making his case, Tasca further pointed out that anchorage and other facilities in Greece saved significant port costs for the Sixth Fleet, particularly compared to ports in Italy. He emphasized that the response time of US forces to the Middle East was greatly improved by utilizing Greek facilities compared to Italian ports. He also pointed out that, in addition to the above facilities, which occupied about 900 acres of land, the office of the Joint United States Military Aid Group to Greece (JUSMAGG) occupied two floors of a building in downtown Athens, accounting for more than 76,000 square feet of prime office space: "At current prices, the space we now occupy and use on a rent-free basis is estimated at $209 million."[61] Thus, the US had valuable interests in Greece—ones that it was keen to protect.

In addition to the dependence brought on by US reliance on such facilities, the US perceived its vulnerability in other ways too, particularly as it benefitted financially from a number of other concessions. The Greek government waived utility fees, had constructed access roads, and had built buildings for use by US forces, all at its own expense. In addition, all landing fees at Greek airfields were waived (with the exception of Souda Bay), and the Sixth Fleet was not charged for anchorage,

[60] Athens to State, Secret/ExDis, Telegram 3238, 1/19/68, POL 16 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[61] Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 1626, 3/23/72, DEF 19 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

landing rights, or port visits in Greece. The US Marine force that was attached to the Sixth Fleet was able to exercise regularly on Greek soil free of charge. Moreover, at Piraeus, the US had access to a 160,000 square foot commercial pier complex at no cost, and the 558th Artillery had the free use of barracks, transportation, recreation, and other facilities. As Tasca emphasized:

> The present arrangement for U.S. military facilities in Greece has enabled us to meet our military objectives with a minimum of cost for bases infrastructure and, in many instances, has permitted us to keep operating costs at a relatively low level. The Greeks on their side have been grateful for the large amounts of U.S. military assistance provided over the years. This arrangement has worked to our mutual satisfaction. The question now arises as to whether or not we wish to change the nature of the relationship … particularly as we start to negotiate for additional facilities. … The risks are obvious and could lead, although reluctantly we believe, to a GOG desire to review the terms of our military facilities agreement with the objective of reducing costs on the Greek side. *For the small amount of money the Greeks will be required to deposit ($4-5 million annually) we do not believe the risk of losing rent-free use of $209 million worth of property is worth taking.* We urge strongly that the Greek case be considered carefully and believe that a strong case does exist to exempt the GOG from this c[h]arge as grant aid diminishes to zero.[62]

Given all of the above strategic benefits to the United States, as well as the fact that in 1972 the US was involved in homeporting negotiations that would have further enlarged the US military presence in Greece, Tasca appeared keenly aware of the importance of not alienating Papadopoulos.

Conclusion

In short, then, this chapter has argued that, contrary to prevailing notions of Greek impotence vis-à-vis the US, the colonels' regime exercised a great deal of agency and exerted a significant degree of influence over the US, often forcing policy makers in Washington to concede to its demands. Seen from this perspective, one might even argue

[62]Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 1626, 3/23/72, DEF 19 US-GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA (emphasis added).

that, from time to time, the colonels got the upper hand in their relations with Washington. Far from this state of affairs going unnoticed in Washington, US officials often pointed to their own perceived limitations in influencing the Greek regime. As early as November 1968, for example, an internal "Country Policy Appraisal" argued:

> The leverage available to the U.S. to bring about … progress is limited, since we no longer give Greece economic aid and cannot afford, by continuing to withhold on MAP, to jeopardize either our access to military facilities on Greek territory, or the effectiveness of Greece's contribution to the defense of NATO's southern flank. … We will therefore have to rely primarily on the psychological weight of Greece's underlying desire for U.S. official and public approval and support to impel the Greek regime to return at an acceptable rate to government-by-the-consent-of-the-governed.[63]

From the earliest days of the junta, then, American policy makers were keenly aware of the limited capacity of the United States to bring about democracy in Greece. Feeling that the US had very little leverage, it appeared to many in Washington that all the US could do was to cajole and gently persuade the regime toward democracy. However, as we have repeatedly argued, this proved almost wholly ineffective. As the Moose and Lowenstein Report, prepared for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, correctly detailed:

> The policy of friendly persuasion has clearly failed. The regime has accepted the friendship, and the military assistance, but has ignored the persuasion. Indeed, the regime *seems to have been able to exert more leverage on us* with regard to military assistance than we have been willing to exert on the regime with regard to political reform. We see no evidence that this will not continue to be the case.[64]

And, as an NSC report that was prepared after Agnew's visit to Greece clearly articulated, American persuasion fell on deaf ears in Athens:

[63] Athens to State, Confidential, Airgram A-883, 11/6/68, POL 1 GREECE-US, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[64] Strasbourg to Athens, Unclassified, Airgram A-57, 4/27/72, POL GREECE, 1970–73 SNF, RG 59, USNA (emphasis added).

> Papadopoulos was *unbending* on the internal Greek political situation. … What this seems to boil down to in policy terms is that in general it makes sense to come to grips with the reality of the Greek political situation. For better or worse, Papadopoulos has now consolidated his position and to do things that anger him only jeopardizes the substantial US security interests in the eastern Mediterranean. Moreover, I for one, after having seen the situation at first hand, seriously doubt that we could move Papadopoulos any faster toward democracy under any circumstances. More realistic is the course of protecting our working relationship with the Greek regime without necessarily endorsing or rejecting its approach to internal politics.[65]

And, finally, as a Department of State Intelligence Note highlighted:

> Ever since the US first became deeply involved with Greece during the civil war, the Greeks have considered that it had an important role to play in their internal affairs. … This conviction has led most Greeks to assume that the US could and would influence the choice and tenure of governments in Greece. Actually, of course, present American ability to influence the internal situation in Greece is much less than the Greeks believe it to be.
>
> It is doubtful whether US policy has ever been less understood in Greece than it is today, and criticism of the US is increasing. The junta is dissatisfied because the US had not given it the support it desires. The junta's opponents blame the US for the coup and accuse it of aiding the junta. They firmly believe that the US could overthrow the junta but instead is currently exploring ways to resume business as usual with the regime.[66]

In short, then, the US-Greek relationship had come full circle. While many assumed that much could be done to return Greece to democracy should the US act against the colonels' regime, in Washington and in the Athens embassy, policy makers had largely resigned themselves to a kind of passive inaction vis-à-vis the colonels. Thus, just as it appears that the colonels' regime had ascended to power through its own initiative, so it would fall from power in the same manner. Unfortunately, however, this fall and the democratization of Greece would come to involve a failed

[65] Hoskinson to Kissinger, Secret/NoDis, Memorandum 33468, 11/8/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Name Files, Box 837, USNA (emphasis added).

[66] Hughes to the Acting Secretary, Secret/No Foreign Dissem/LimDis, Intelligence Note 254, 4/11/68, POL 15 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

coup d'état in Cyprus, the overthrow of Archbishop Makarios there, a near war between Greece and Turkey, as well as a division and occupation of the island state that still exists over forty years later.

CHAPTER 8

Assessing US Foreign Policy in the Junta Era

This book began with a quote from a Greek parliamentarian, expressing a sentiment that is still remarkably common when discussing the US role in the colonels' Greece: "The dictatorship … was one hundred percent American. … There was nothing Greek about it."[1] The notion that the United States actively supported the colonels' regime—and, perhaps more significantly, had a direct interest and role in bringing it about—has stood the test of time, despite increasing numbers of scholarly works that have sought to bring nuance and context to our understanding of this period. This book fits directly into that larger body of academic work, as it has sought to contextualize and deepen our understanding of exactly what the role of the United States in Greece was prior to 1967, what its reaction to the coup of 21 April was, and how over the next seven years it arrived at a foreign policy approach that itself changed and developed over time and between administrations.

In this concluding chapter, we seek to summarize the key findings and interpretations of this book by focusing on several key questions: What have we seen, and what can we conclude from the documentary evidence considered here? And, perhaps as important, what have we not seen—what remains inaccessible and unexplored about the colonels' regime and US foreign policy to it? We begin with the key findings and conclusions we have reached in this book, focusing on the US policy role

[1] Personal interview, Athens, 24 March 1994.

N. M. Karakatsanis and J. Swarts,
American Foreign Policy Towards the Colonels' Greece,
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as revealed in the available documents and considering how it changed over the course of the colonels' regime. We then turn to a discussion of what we have not been able to conclude—either through limitations of space or, more significantly, the inaccessibility of still-classified or otherwise closed records. In so doing, we make a broader call for continued work on this critically important topic—one central to the shape of Greek society today, to the ongoing relationship between Greece and the United States, and to our understanding of American foreign policy as it developed and was implemented in the context of the superpower rivalry that was the Cold War.

What Have We Seen?

This book has considered US foreign policy toward Greece beginning primarily with the severe parliamentary crises of the mid-1960s—especially following the Center Union "apostasy" of 1965—and continuing to the final months of the colonels' regime in 1974. In addition to reviewing the main contours of US policy in this period, we have also analyzed selected aspects and themes of US policy. Among these themes have been differences between—and within—the Johnson and Nixon administrations with respect to their Greek policy, controversies within North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) over the colonels' regime and US efforts to forestall punitive actions against Greece in that arena, US domestic and congressional hostility to (and support of) the colonels, and the strategic ways in which the colonels themselves leveraged their propitious geostrategic location and security value to the United States to steer US policy away from public criticism or pressure. What, then, have we seen from these analyses?

US Opposition to a Constitutional "Deviation"

Our analysis in Chapters 1 and 2 clearly indicates that, in the run-up to the coup of 21 April, foreign policy officials in the State Department, White House, and US embassy in Athens were consistently opposed—both as a matter of principle, but also on pragmatic grounds—to any kind of "deviation" from constitutionalism in the tumultuous several years before the coup d'état of 1967. As plots, rumors, and predictions of coups swirled around Athens in the 1960s, the United States

regularly counseled its Greek interlocutors—many of whom had come to the embassy to "sound out" the US's views, or even to enlist US support for a variety of schemes and plots—to avoid any coup against the constitutional order. This opposition sprang both from an oft-repeated in-principle opposition to undemocratic deviations from constitutionalism, but perhaps more importantly from the US view that a coup in the Greek context would likely produce a far worse outcome for Greece—and the US—than the parliamentary intrigue and instability gripping the political scene in the mid-1960s. Though American support was solicited on numerous occasions for various coup schemes—usually involving some combination of senior military officers or rightist politicians, with or without the King—the US consistently argued that the track record of military coups carried out in the name of "national cleansing" was extremely poor. In fact, the very thing that occurred in Greece—especially the longer-term damage to the military's prestige as it was tainted by the vicissitudes of politics and governing—was precisely what the US warned about.

Our analysis has shown that this opposition to a coup was also based on the US's fundamental skepticism that the left posed a significant threat to US interests there. A key part of some interpretations of this period is that the United States shared the Greek right's hatred and fear of communism, specifically, and the broader left, more generally, to such an extent that it preferred a deviation from democracy rather than see the Center Union—and Andreas Papandreou—come to power in the elections scheduled for May 1967. Simply put, the documentary evidence reviewed for this book simply does not support this interpretation. While the US was no friend of Andreas Papandreou politically, and while the left was always an aspect of American concern everywhere in the Cold War period, the record shows that the US actually concluded years before that the most hyperbolic assertions of leftist danger were overblown. As detailed in this book, the US believed that a Papandreou victory in 1967 was manageable within US and NATO interests and that Andreas was not the dire threat he had been portrayed. In fact, US policy makers treated with scorn and derision the colonels' justification that their coup had been necessary to "save Greece from communism." In short, we have seen the US relatively unconcerned about the rise of the Center Union, but certainly opposed to a constitutional deviation in the name of stopping the Center Union from coming to power.

US Surprise and Coolness to the Coup of 21 April

Despite US warnings that a coup would not be in the interests of Greece, a group of largely middle-ranking officers nonetheless seized power on the morning of 21 April 1967. As we have argued from the available evidence, the United States was genuinely surprised by the colonels' coup—and consequently had to quickly devise a foreign policy approach to the unexpected new regime. That policy, in the early days, would be one of "coolness and aloofness."

Despite the many rumors of possible coups that had been circulating in the months prior to April 1967, the United States seems to have not been convinced that any of the plots were likely to be carried out. Even in the days and weeks immediately prior to 21 April, communications between Athens and Washington reveal no extraordinary anxiety or alarm that a coup was in the offing. The usual rumors continued to circulate and while the embassy in Athens did register its increasing concern that a deviation might occur, it completely failed to foresee the one that actually did take place. As a result, when the coup occurred, the US's response was first surprise, followed by an initial coolness toward it.

This reaction is perhaps the strongest evidence against the notion that the United States supported, much less had a hand in engineering, the colonels' coup. As we have shown in this book, US officials were surprised—first, that a coup had happened at that point, but more significantly, that it had come at the hands of mid-level officers apparently operating outside the chain of command and without the knowledge or blessing of the palace (from whom a coup had been judged much more likely). In fact, a later internal Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) commentary on the coup would even speak of the agency's embarrassment at its failure to see it coming: "It was an intelligence failure which hurt the CIA's pride but which was also the result of the effective conspiratorial methods of a small, secure cabal."[2]

Once the surprise abated, the US adopted a "cool but correct" attitude in which American officials routinely questioned, doubted, and came close to snubbing members of the new regime. The documentary evidence—of which we have presented only a selection here—is replete with reports of the genuine frustration and anger expressed by senior

[2] George Constantinidis, Review of *The Wrong Horse*, Confidential, Studies in Intelligence 22:1, Spring 1978, RDP80-00630A000100020001-7, CREST System, National Archives at College Park.

regime officials and military officers that the US had not welcomed their intervention, but, in the words of one US report, had been "all but rude" in response. That the US had not only failed to welcome the coup, but appeared so hesitant in coming to a working relationship with the new regime, was a source of unending bitterness on the part of the Greek regime. As a June 1967 cable from Athens to Washington put it:

> [The] US position has irritated [the] coup leaders who seem to be puzzled and deeply annoyed [that the] US has not openly applauded their actions. In their simplistic way they believe [that the] US should rejoice … that power is in [the] hands of [a] fervently anti-communist group. [The] coup leaders seem to feel that [the] US … is in effect penalizing them for "saving" [the] nation from [the] communist abyss.[3]

This reaction speaks directly to notions of US involvement or support for the coup itself. Had the US played an active role in engineering or promoting the coup, its own reaction—to say nothing of that of the colonels' regime—would have been quite different. Moreover, if (as will be discussed below) agencies such as the CIA had covertly, and without the knowledge of the State Department, promoted or fomented the colonels' coup, the colonels themselves could hardly have maintained such a façade of incredulity and disaffection with the official American response. In short, what we have seen is a US foreign policy establishment surprised at the colonels' coup of 21 April and reacting with aloofness to it as the US formulated its own longer-term policy toward the new regime.

The Development of the Longer-Term Policy

Once it appeared obvious that the colonels' regime had stabilized its control and was settling in for the long term—something the United States concluded had happened within days of 21 April—the US set about crafting a foreign policy toward the regime. This policy would evolve and develop over the years—going from "coolness and aloofness" to a "modus vivendi," to the reestablishment of military assistance, and ending with a policy of virtual "non-interference" in domestic Greek

[3]Athens to State, Secret/LimDis, Telegram 6219, 6/30/67, DEF 19-8 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

affairs. We have argued that, as this policy developed, a two-pronged approach could be discerned. On the one hand, the United States, both as a matter of principle, but also to head off criticism of its relationship with the colonels, consistently argued that the Greek regime needed to take concrete steps to move the country back toward constitutionalism and democracy. On the other hand, however, the United States consistently held that its own security interests, and those of NATO, made Greece a strategically important ally in the Eastern Mediterranean—one whose security and military importance was growing given increased Soviet activity in the region.

These two prongs were in constant tension—and went through varying phases in which one prong came to be emphasized more than the other. In general, an overall pattern can be seen. In the early days of the colonels' regime, the Johnson administration attempted to strike some sort of balance between the competing objectives of pressing for democratization in Greece while, at the same time, keeping Greece within the NATO fold as an active and effective member of the alliance. Thus, as numerous documents show, Phillips Talbot and others would routinely meet with junta officials, seeking to promote US and NATO security interests in Greece while, at the same time, applying pressure to the regime to move in a liberalizing direction. In fact, in the State Department especially, these two prongs were seen as largely complementary: Greece's effectiveness as a security partner of the US and NATO would actually be enhanced by moves toward constitutionalism, as this would serve to dampen the heated criticism of the Greek regime coming from members of the US Congress and from various NATO allies in Northern Europe.

This speaks to another important aspect of the analysis in this book: the way in which the two administrations attempted to deal with what was often vociferous and sustained criticism of the colonels' regime and the US policy of accommodation toward it. Both with respect to Congress, and also in regard to such NATO members as Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands, both the Johnson and Nixon administrations made significant efforts to head off, dampen down, and otherwise obviate such public criticism. As discussed in Chapter 5, with respect to Congress, in regard to criticism took the form of certain members of Congress who spoke out against the "rape of democracy" in Greece and went on the offensive against what they felt were misguided US policies tolerating and even supporting the regime. The congressional threat was felt

most strongly by both administrations with respect to the all-important military assistance to Greece. As a key factor in sustaining Greece's military and security role in southeastern Europe, the suspension of large-item Military Assistance Program (MAP) assistance was used first by the Johnson administration as a potential lever to extract concessions from the Greek regime. As it became increasingly clear that MAP suspension had thoroughly failed to extract any such concessions, but instead was irritating the regime to the point of seeking military support elsewhere, the US reinstated MAP and began to ever more clearly delink military assistance from evidence of democratic progress. This paradoxically increased the danger coming from congressional critics of Greece—with military assistance being both a tangible expression and visible symbol of US support for Greece as a security ally, the threat by some members of Congress to curtail any assistance to Greece was one to which both administrations paid close attention.

In the end, the congressional threat proved more verbal than real. Despite the threat to cut off all US aid to Greece, congressional action was limited to public condemnation of the colonels, with little practical effect. Legislation cutting various forms of aid contained clauses allowing the president to waive the restriction in the name of national security—provisions that were, in fact, utilized. Even the sponsors of anti-junta legislation were careful to point out that they did not intend to take any action that would impair Greece's ability to play its role as a full member of NATO. Despite this, however, State Department, embassy, and White House officials in both administrations were consistently aware of congressional opinion regarding their policies and regularly used the threat of congressional action to urge their Greek counterparts to make constitutional reforms.

A similar concern for the potential effects of anti-junta criticism existed vis-à-vis the critics of Greece in other NATO countries. In Chapter 6, the strenuous efforts of the United States to head off public criticism of Greece in NATO meetings were discussed. From the point of view of the United States, the greatest potential threat to Greece's ability to fulfill its security role in NATO was the potential for "disunity" and conflict within the alliance over whether Greece should be publicly sanctioned. Such criticism, it was feared, could produce an intra-alliance split that would only serve to weaken NATO on its vulnerable southeastern flank. Moreover, public criticism of Greece could possible lead to a Greek walkout of ministerial meetings, and perhaps even withdrawal from the alliance itself. For these reasons, the United States was

determined to head off such criticism, working behind the scenes to prevent any public denunciation of Greece and encourage such countries as Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands to temper their opposition to the colonels. Plans were even made to manipulate the procedures of NATO ministerial meetings to cut off debate should it head in an anti-junta direction.

At the same time, the relative balance in the two-pronged approach described above began to shift. While both the democratization and security objectives had been pursued more or less in complementary fashion by the Johnson administration, we see a decided shift under the Nixon administration. Particularly as the influence of Henry Kissinger came to dominate American foreign policy, the objective to push the colonels toward democratization (something, it became clear to the US, the regime had no intention of pursuing) receded further and further into the background, while the security importance of Greece came to increasingly predominate. This can be seen in two ways.

First, as US officials came to echo Kissinger's fundamental notion that the internal affairs of other countries were not a foreign policy concern of the United States, the issue of democratic reform in Greece for its own sake was progressively dropped, with the only remaining justification being that democratization would aid in silencing the critics of Greece in Congress and abroad. Second, the issue of MAP shows the clear shift in approach, as the initial linking of MAP aid to constitutional progress gave way to a progressive separation of the two, with the end result being an explicitly stated delinking by the Nixon administration when it resumed MAP in the face of absolutely no evidence of democratic reform. This shift was especially promoted by the Nixon White House and Henry Tasca in Athens against the wishes of those such as William Rogers and Joseph Sisco in the State Department. As discussed in Chapter 4, a consistent pattern, seen to some degree in the Johnson administration, but particularly under Nixon, was for the State Department to generally urge more pressure on the junta, to be more skeptical of claims of constitutional progress, and to wish to retain as much leverage (through MAP, for instance) as possible over the regime. On the other side was the embassy in Athens and the Kissinger National Security Council (NSC), who argued that US security interests demanded that the US support its Cold War ally and refrain from "interference" in Greece's internal affairs. Once Kissinger assumed the position of secretary of state in the fall of 1973, however, this internal division was largely resolved—in favor of the

policy of "non-interference." In this way, we have seen how what began as two prongs in relative balance ended up with the security prong being privileged to the near-total exclusion of the other.

The Colonels' Strategic Agency

Importantly, this shift did not happen in a vacuum solely as a result of the decisions and calculations of US decision-makers. As we argue in Chapter 7, a view of US power implying a kind of overweening control vis-à-vis a relatively impotent Greece is deeply flawed. Instead, the colonels' regime displayed a great deal of agency in its relationship with the United States, pressuring, remonstrating, complaining, and even threatening the US in a way designed to serve its own interests. Thus, even as the US sought to put pressure on the colonels (albeit intermittently and to varying degrees), the colonels themselves were quite active in resisting it through pressure tactics of their own.

The key to the regime's strategic resistance was its awareness of the keen US sensitivity to Greece's geostrategic role as the anchor of NATO's southeastern flank. While the colonels fundamentally misread the American attitude toward a military coup, once it took place, they very accurately discerned that the national security role of Greece was of overriding importance to the United States. Armed with that knowledge, the Greek regime rather skillfully utilized it to its own advantage. This most often took the form of blunt warnings to the US that "interference" in the domestic affairs of Greece would not be tolerated—with the barely veiled threat being that, should the US cross the line of what the colonels felt was acceptable, the special position of the United States in Greece could be jeopardized. Moreover, the regime also allowed the US to believe—and at times openly stated—that Greece could always look "to others" for support (particularly military equipment) should the US prove unacceptably difficult.

The reaction to this at times subtle (but often not so subtle) pressure was that American policy makers did their best to, in essence, keep the colonels happy. Whether it was US maneuverings to keep Greece off the agenda of NATO ministerial meetings, the restoration of MAP in response to growing Greek hostility, the gradual disengagement of the US from the King, the commitment that Agnew would not publicly criticize the regime on his visit to Greece, or the embassy keeping the Greek opposition at arm's length—to name but a few—the United States

evinced a willingness to take whatever steps were necessary to ameliorate Greek complaints. In numerous cables over the seven years of the dictatorship, the Athens embassy repeatedly warned the Department of State about the frustration, anger, or recalcitrance of the regime *and the potential damage* that this could cause US-Greek relations. As detailed in Chapter 7, Tasca even went so far as to send Washington a very detailed list of the many military installations and other facilities enjoyed by the United States in Greece at little or no cost, pointing out the advantages of Greece compared to other Mediterranean countries and warning of the damage that could be done were Greece to curtail or revoke American privileges there. As the documentary record shows, much of the concern felt by US policy makers that they could lose a friendly ally in Greece was the result of these repeated threats, insinuations, and complaints by the Greek regime. In short, what we have seen is that, far from being docile objects of US foreign policy, the Greek regime demonstrated a great deal of agency and strategic action in seeking to shape US policy to its own advantage.

What Is Left to See?

This concluding chapter has detailed a number of key areas in which important conclusions can be drawn about US policy toward the colonels' Greece. However, there are a number of other areas that we have only briefly addressed and deserve a fuller treatment. This relates both to the limitation of space given the extent of the relevant documents that are available, but also to the large number of documents and other materials still inaccessible to researchers. What those documents might hold could confirm, or conceivably, radically alter the interpretation given here.

The Role of Other Countries

Given this book's focus on US foreign policy, the foreign policy position of other countries toward the colonels' regime has been mentioned only in passing. However, as indicated in several places throughout the book, the positions of other countries toward the Greek regime played an important role both in helping US officials orient their own positions and responses, but also in informing the Greek regime's approaches to the US. What our documentary review, and the work of others, shows is that most of the United States' most

important allies responded in a very similar manner to the colonels' regime. While the US's closest allies did not necessarily share a similar history of interaction and intervention with Greece over the years, they all faced a similar challenge after the coup of 21 April: how to craft a response to Greece that protected their own interests and advanced the collective security goals of NATO, while at the same time promoting the ideals of liberal democracy on which these societies were also based. What we see—but what could be more closely examined in future work—is the remarkable similarity between countries in both their foreign policy choices, as well as the timing of many of their decisions. While—for obvious reasons, given the US's preeminent political, economic, and military power in the Cold War period—US foreign policy has been the focus of most observers' interest (and hostility), the foreign policies of such allied countries as Britain, West Germany, France, and Italy toward the colonels were remarkably similar. In some cases—France, for instance—others came to a *modus vivendi* with the colonels' regime much more quickly and without nearly the reluctance demonstrated by the United States.

The responses of these allies were closely watched by both the US and Greece. American diplomats regularly reported to Washington on meetings with their colleagues in other embassies in Athens and abroad, comparing notes and to some extent working to coordinate their approaches. Moreover, US officials used these meetings to judge and assess their own policy approaches in the light of others' policies. A good example is the issue of recognizing the Greek regime following the King's failed countercoup in December 1967, discussed in Chapter 3. A key impetus for the US in moving to swift recognition of the regime in January 1968 was the fact that its allies had decided to do the same. The same could be said for military assistance. The US decided to resume MAP deliveries in part because others, such as France and Germany, were already selling arms to Greece and the US feared being sidelined on such an important issue. Meanwhile, the Greek regime was itself keenly aware of other countries' foreign policies—and how they compared to that of the US. Indeed, the documentary record shows numerous instances in which Greek officials complained to US diplomats that the US was being more difficult or more demanding of them than were other NATO countries. These complaints in some cases became implicit threats, as officials such as Papadopoulos suggested that Greece could look "elsewhere," perhaps to Britain, France, or Germany, for the weapons the US seemed reluctant to provide. In short, how the foreign policies of these allied

nations compared to that of the United States is a potentially rich topic for future research.

The Domestic Factor

The influence of domestic politics on foreign policy making made numerous appearances throughout this book, but deserves its own treatment. In Chapter 5, one aspect of the US domestic political scene—the US Congress and pressure from Greek–American organizations—was discussed. As argued there, the Johnson and Nixon administrations were keenly aware of public opinion about the colonels—both pro and con—particularly as it had an impact on congressional deliberations about Greece.

However, public opinion both in the US and abroad played a role that went beyond congressional debates. In the United States, prominent Greek–American organizations such as AHEPA and the Greek Orthodox Church were deeply involved in debates surrounding the Greek regime and the proper US response to it. Cities with large Greek–American communities such as New York and Chicago were the sites of numerous activities, organizations, and events calling for US support of, or opposition to, the colonels. At the same time, Greek opposition leaders—Andreas Papandreou and Melina Mercouri being the most prominent—attempted to use their connections with leading US and European academics, journalists, and artists to mobilize opposition to the colonels. Such efforts were widespread and ongoing throughout the junta's seven years and had a strong impact on public opinion, particularly in northern Europe. Indeed, public opposition to the colonels was extremely strong in countries such as Norway, with demonstrations and public campaigns calling for the ouster of Greece from NATO. As discussed in Chapter 6, so significant was this public pressure that governments in these countries struggled to find ways to express their publics' opposition to the Greek regime, while at the same time accommodating US pleas that they not take any action likely to anger the colonels. This interplay between public opinion and foreign policy both in the US and abroad is an important topic that has yet to be fully analyzed.

Other US Governmental Agencies

We now turn to what is often the most commonly raised aspect of US foreign policy toward the Greek junta: the alleged or potential role of

other US governmental agencies, particularly the CIA.[4] To put it simply, those who believe the 1967 coup was engineered or in some way fomented by the United States to stop the Center Union and Andreas Papandreou from coming to power in the May 1967 elections usually attribute this to the role of the CIA as the "real" foreign policy maker in this period. The CIA is said to have played such a key role in the post-war politics of Greece that it essentially operated its own Greek policy, separate from, and in many ways, counter to the "official" policy run from the Department of State. The fact that some members of the Greek junta—particularly Papadopoulos—had been part of the Greek intelligence service (KYP), and thus had close contacts with the CIA, is used as key circumstantial evidence that the colonels were in some way doing the CIA's bidding. This theory of CIA culpability has enjoyed wide popularity in Greece and elsewhere, particularly as it was assiduously promoted by Andreas Papandreou and others close to him. Even the colonels themselves appear to have encouraged the impression that the US fully supported them and their coup, particularly in their early days.[5]

Simply put, this book is not in a position to definitively address such potentialities. What we have done is to argue from available documentary source materials that the evidence does not show a role by the State Department or other US government agencies in encouraging or supporting the overthrow of Greek democracy in 1967. In fact, State Department officials themselves denied such a role in formerly classified documents, calling them "myths."[6] For example, in response to a June 1968 speech by Papandreou in Sweden in which he claimed that the "American military-intelligence-industrial complex" was behind the coup, Talbot wrote the State Department:

> Andreas … steps into [the] realm of pure fantasy when he charges: "The dictatorship (in Greece) is clearly the result of interference of [the] American military-intelligence complex in [the] internal political affairs of Greece" … In making his allegation…, Andreas seems to have overlooked [the] fact that except for West Germany, [the] US is [the] only

[4] See, for example, Roubatis and Wynn (1978).

[5] For a very perceptive early evaluation of these issues that continues to ring remarkably true today, see Goldbloom (1972, 238–241).

[6] Hughes to Rogers, Secret/No Foreign Dissem/Controlled Dissem, Research Memorandum RNA-29, 7/1/69, POL 2 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

> government in [the] world that has taken any material, as opposed to propagandistic, action against [the] junta, i.e., suspension of delivery of all major items of military assistance under our MAP, a policy still in effect much to [the] bitterness of [the] colonels.[7]

Talbot's acerbic comment echoed a succinct State Department message to the US embassy in The Hague, flatly denying Papandreou's assertions of a CIA plot: "On [an] appropriate occasion you should make clear to [the government of the Netherlands] that there is no truth to [his] statement re[garding] any CIA involvement in [the] April 21 coup."[8] Such statements by themselves, of course, are not conclusive. However, were such a covert role played by clandestine agencies such as the CIA, it would have had to have been executed with such a degree of secrecy that it failed to make it into the heretofore declassified materials.

For this book, we have reviewed only those State Department, NSC, White House, and other agency documents that have been declassified to date. Indeed, we have only been able to review a relatively small number of CIA documents on Greece, given that most remain classified. Not surprisingly perhaps, the few CIA documents reviewed fail to provide much additional detail not already discernable in other US government documents. Because our analysis has been limited to the currently declassified materials—ones in which CIA and other intelligence agency documents are only sparely represented—we cannot draw any definitive judgment as to whether the US, through a deeply covert operation, in fact encouraged or fomented the colonels' coup.

We believe, however, that we can make a tentative assessment of such possibilities—one that could prove quite wrong, once additional materials are declassified. From our review of the documentary record, it seems to us highly unlikely that the CIA or other US agency carried out a covert plan to execute the April 1967 overthrow of Greek democracy. That is not to say such plans might not have existed. It is certainly not to say that various Greek coup plotters—whom the embassy regularly reported on—did not have such plans and might not have liaised with the CIA

[7] Athens to State, Confidential, Telegram 5796, 7/11/68, POL 30 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

[8] State to The Hague, Confidential, Telegram 155172, 4/29/68, POL 30 GREECE, 1967–69 SNF, RG 59, USNA.

or other agencies in furtherance of them. However, a direct CIA role in planning or promoting the April 1967 does not appear likely—at least from the available evidence.

For us, certain pieces of evidence from the available record seem to discount the possibility of such a CIA role. Chief among them is the openly and oft-expressed bitterness of Greek officials at their "cool and aloof" treatment by US diplomats. As discussed above, Greek officials appear in embassy reports to have been at turns genuinely mystified and angry that the United States did not immediately jump to the support of a coup that, in their minds, was so obviously pro-Western, pro-American, and anti-communist. From Papadopoulos and Pattakos to Spandidakis and Angelis, Greek junta leaders expressed their deep frustration and even personal hurt that the US did not seem to understand that their anti-communist motives and intentions coincided with those of the US and NATO. Even the CIA itself noted in a June 1967 report that "[t]he new regime has viewed the US response to the government as cool and has hinted that the lack of a more forthcoming attitude could result in relations taking a more hostile turn."[9]

Were the "CIA theory" to be true—had the CIA actually worked in concert with these leaders to bring about the April coup—these remonstrations and expressions of bitterness would have had to be staged for the benefit of embassy officials. While such a possibility cannot be entirely ruled out, it would nonetheless have had to be a conspiracy of playacting spanning multiple junta leaders in multiple settings over many years. In addition, other US policies—particularly the suspension of MAP—make much less sense if a covert US operation were actually behind the coup. The suspension of MAP shipments likewise caused a great deal of bitterness among the colonels toward their "great ally," to say nothing of the tremendous amount of time and energy US officials spent over the next several years debating the pros and cons of the suspension and its lifting. Had the US covertly fomented the coup, the MAP suspension could only be explained as the policy of a State Department wholly unaware of the CIA plot—but one also approved by a White House that either was also unaware of the plot or had chosen to suspend MAP shipments as a diversionary, covering device. Finally, the declassified internal CIA commentary mentioned above speaks of

[9]Directorate of Intelligence, CIA, Central Intelligence Bulletin, 6/22/67, RDP79T00975A010000190001-9, CREST System, National Archives at College Park.

the embarrassment felt within the agency over its failure to foresee the colonels' coup. Put simply, for the CIA theory to hold, such possibilities would require an infinitely more complex explanation of what is reported in the currently available documents—evidence, it might be added, that largely coincides with that found by scholars in other archives.

In short, the available evidence cannot definitively exclude the possibility of such a CIA role. Nor can we. A definitive resolution, if one can be had, will only come with the opening of a much larger set of declassified documents.

The Predominance of National Security

We are thus left with what we believe we do know. The origins of the coup itself notwithstanding, it is clear that, once the coup took place, the US found itself in the position in which it believed it had little choice but to support its Cold War ally—grudgingly at first, and never without tension and irritation. Over the next seven years, the ideals of democracy and human rights ran squarely into conflict with the perceived security imperatives of the Cold War. It was a tension that was never fully resolved, though the nature of the balance changed significantly over time. From the early days of guarded optimism that perhaps US and other foreign pressure could help bring about change in Athens, the balance slowly but dramatically shifted. By 1974, the democratization objective had been all but abandoned—both because US officials had long since concluded that the regime had no intention of ever democratizing, but also as the Kissinger brand of realpolitik came to dominate US policy.

As undesirable as the regime was—and as intransigent and inflexible as it increasingly became—it was the regime with which the US had thrown in its lot. Whatever democratic scruples the US might have had, the perceived security demands of the Cold War ultimately determined American policy toward the colonels' Greece. As Kissinger succinctly put it in a memo to Nixon, "[W]e … continue to recognize the importance of our security relationship with Greece and this must remain the overriding factor in our dealing with the regime."[10]

[10]Kissinger to Nixon, Secret, 8/4/71, Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security Council (NSC) Files, Country Files—Middle East, Box 594, USNA.

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