

ington, calls for no emphasis. After all Moses Hadas as late as the summer of 1944 had been arguing that "of all the Allied powers America alone seems disinterested in the internal political concerns of Greece..."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Moses Hadas memorandum ("Not to be shown to the British") on "Greek attitudes to the British," 5 June 1944, OSS Records RG226 XL 991.

## The 1956 Reshaping Of Greek Foreign Policy: The Balkans And The Beginning Of The "Detachment" Policy

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By the late 1940s, the experience of civil war, the Cold War climate, the unfortunate legacy of conflict in the history of South-eastern Europe, the desperate – and inseparable – needs for security and economic development created among Greek policy makers an atmosphere of constant anxiety. Still, the country's efforts were successful: within some years, the problem of security was to a large extent ameliorated, mainly thanks to NATO membership, while Greece experienced a spectacular economic take-off, which enabled it to attain association in 1961, and later full membership in the European Communities.

In the early post-war years, Greek foreign policy may be seen as passing through two stages: the search for security, from 1949 to 1953; and the search for a long term perspective, namely political and economic – not only military – integration in the western world, from 1956 onwards. The first period ends with the country's entry in the Atlantic Alliance in 1952 and the conclusion of the 1953 defense agreement with the US, according to which US bases were installed on Greek soil. The country did not stop facing great security problems after that; but it certainly felt more free to promote what could easily be described as a "new look" of foreign policy, the main characteristic of which was the policy of "detachment" of Greece from its Balkan

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social, political and economic context and its integration in the west, especially in Western Europe.<sup>1</sup> This new orientation amounted to an enrichment – rather than a reappraisal – of Greek aims, and was greatly facilitated by the emergence in the helm of the country, late in 1955, of a new Prime Minister, Constantinos Karamanlis, as well as of a new generation of statesmen, who dominated Greek political life for years: to name a few, Constantinos Tsatsos, Georgios Rallis, Evangelos Averoff-Tossizza, Panayis Papaligouras.

Karamanlis's first electoral victory in February 1956 consolidated the power of this new generation of policy-makers in Athens and was followed by a reshaping of Greek foreign policy, especially after the emergence in May of a new Foreign Minister, Averoff-Tossizza. Moreover, a reform of policy became necessary because the Cyprus question got out of control, when, in March, the British deported Archbishop Makarios. During 1956, Greek diplomacy became more active and outward looking, and this process continued in the following years: always declaring its attachment to NATO, Athens pursued the case of the Greek Cypriots, accelerated its contacts with the US and the countries of Western Europe, made an opening to the Arabs, and responded to Soviet overtures for the expansion of commercial relations between the two countries.<sup>2</sup> It also tried to further its two mini-

<sup>1</sup> See also Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, "Greek Policy in the Balkans, 1923-1981: Toward a Synthesis of Greek Bibliography," *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 12 (1996).

<sup>2</sup> For a presentation of Greek foreign policy in 1956-61, as well as for a collection of primary sources see Κωνσταντίνος Καραμανλής: *Αρχείο, Γεγονότα και Κείμενα* (Constantine Karamanlis: Archive, Facts and Texts, hereafter *Karamanlis*) (general editor Constantinos Svolopoulos), vol. 2-3 (edited by Constantinos Svolopoulos), and 4 (edited by Evanthis Hatzivassiliou) (Athens, 1993-1995). On the stepping up of Greek diplomatic activity in 1956, Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, "The Suez Crisis, Cyprus and Greek Foreign policy, 1956: A View from the British Archives," *Balkan Studies*, 30 (1989), 107-29. Especially on Greek-Soviet bloc relations and on Greek-Arab relations, see, by the same author, "Greek-Bulgarian and Greek-Soviet Relations, 1953-1959: A View from the British Archives," *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook*, 8 (1992), 119-137; "Greece and the Arabs, 1956-1958," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 16 (1992), 49-82. Finally, on another subject, idem, "Security and the European Option: Greek Foreign Policy, 1952-1962," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 30 (1995), 187-202.

mum aims in the Balkans: regional stability and the development of commercial relations.

For the historian, to try to trace the beginning of a new era of Greek foreign policy in the aftermath of the February 1956 election presents all the dangers inherent in the process of defining periods in history. After all, 1956 does not seem to correspond to a significant break in the country's early post-war history. Its entry in NATO was a greater watershed. A similar mark may be traced in 1959, when the solution of the Cyprus question not only allowed Greek diplomacy to channel its efforts to association with the EEC, but also involved the creation of another "brother" state in the Eastern Mediterranean. A third turning point could be found in Greece's 1961 Treaty of Association to the EEC.

Yet, it is for a variety of reasons that this author points to the significance of 1956 for the evolution of Greek foreign policy. First, because Greek diplomatic activity was dramatically stepped up on many levels following the 1956 election: Cyprus, Greek-US relations, Western Europe, the Arab world, the USSR, and – the subject of this article – the Balkans. There was no similar intensification of activity, at least on this scale and on so many "fronts," after 1952 or 1959. Indeed, it may be possible to describe Greece's diplomatic awakening of 1956 as the natural and somehow belated consequence of its achievement of relative security in 1952-3.

Secondly, 1956 is important because the Cyprus settlement or the rapprochement with the EEC did not come out of the blue: the 1959 Cyprus agreements were the result of an extremely harsh diplomatic struggle, during which the country's strengths were severely tested and during which Athens repeatedly had to seek new sources of support; similarly, the movement toward association with the EEC did not start suddenly in 1959, but was preceded by Athens's live interest in the EFTA negotiations, by the 1958 Greek-West German rapprochement, or, indeed, by the country's spectacular economic development, many crucial stages of which were the fruits of the previous period.

In sum, this author suggests that the 1956 reshaping of Greek policy represents a visible transition from the search for security, to a more refined search for long term perspective in the framework of the western world: without that, it is difficult to imagine that there would have

been a 1959 or a 1961 to compare it with. Of course, not everything changed in 1956: Karamanlis and his ministers represented too pragmatic an attitude to believe that they could plan everything in advance and change nothing in the process. Greece's policies evolved, but always in the direction of a long term end, the country's integration in the western system. It is this process that started in the aftermath of Karamanlis's first electoral victory. From this point of view, it is better to regard 1952, 1956, 1959, and 1961 as "stepping stones," rather than "turning points."

The foundations of the new look of Greek policy in Eastern Europe after 1956 can be traced in a minute by the new Foreign Minister, Averoff, to Karamanlis. It was drafted shortly before the visit in Athens of the Soviet Foreign Minister, Dmitri Shepilov, in late June 1956, which itself would have been unthinkable in previous years. Averoff stressed that there did not seem to be any "change of Soviet aims" since Stalin's era, but also remarked:

Despite this ... one has to note that we cannot, as a small country in a geographically crucial position in the cross-road of continents, interests and great roads, ignore the fact that we are near a real colossus, the size, political and material development of which has reached a stage which had never been reached before, and continues to grow. Indeed, the Soviet Union politically reigns in areas which in the past were hostile to it, while today it is highly regarded on other neighbouring regions (Yugoslavia, Arab countries, Far East), and economically experiences an unprecedented take off. The reports of our Ambassador in Moscow, a good observer, are quite characteristic regarding economic development, and he believes that after the forthcoming sixth Five Year Plan Russia's economic capabilities will be immense. Considering also that a balance in thermonuclear weapons seems to be reached, it is obvious that one needs to deal with the future of one's relations with the Soviet Union with extreme care and concern.

I of course have to categorically stress that there is for me no question of loosening our alliance bonds. Perhaps what I have noted above lead me to the conclusion that we must

strengthen our alliances; but no doubt we must also develop, as far as this is possible, better relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup>

This minute seems to describe quite accurately Greece's attitudes in the next years not only toward Moscow but toward Eastern Europe in general. Of course, there can be little doubt that Cyprus was in the back of Averoff's mind when he wrote it. But, simultaneously, together with the country's strong sense of insecurity, some measure of confidence as well as a more flexible attitude toward the east was apparent in Averoff's thinking. These elements were also reflected in Greek policy in the Balkans. It is indicative that in 1956, Greece signed commercial agreements with all eastern countries, save Albania.<sup>4</sup>

This article aims to outline the Balkan dimension of Greek diplomatic activity in the crucial year of 1956. The fact that Athens chose to try to "detach" itself from the Balkans did not mean that it was in a position to ignore developments in its immediate vicinity; on the contrary, it must always be remembered that despite NATO membership, Athens considered that it kept facing a severe security challenge from the eastern bloc, and this made Greek governments anxious about the maintenance of balance in South-eastern Europe. Indeed, the success of "detachment" greatly depended on the preservation of that balance.

Security, in the early Cold War era, meant for Greece that ways should be found to contain the Soviet bloc powers in the Balkans and especially Bulgaria. Sofia, a traditional regional rival in the context of the Macedonian question, had attacked Greece three times in thirty years: 1913, 1915 and only recently in 1941, occupying parts of Greek Macedonia and Thrace. Furthermore, by the early 1950s Bulgaria had emerged as the main regional ally of the Soviets and was excellently armed; Athens feared that perhaps Sofia could in the future count on superpower support in its effort to claim Greek lands.<sup>5</sup> Greece's entry

<sup>3</sup> Averoff to Karamanlis, no date, *Karamanlis*, Vol. 2, (Athens, 1993), 114.

<sup>4</sup> Sotiris Wallden, *Ελλάδα και Ανατολικές Χώρες, 1950-1967: Οικονομικές Σχέσεις και Πολιτική* (Greece and the Eastern Countries: Economic Relations and Politics), Vol. A, (Athens, 1991), 137; the Greek-Soviet agreement was concluded in early 1957.

<sup>5</sup> Hatzivassiliou, "Security and the European Option: Greek Foreign Policy, 1952-1962."



into NATO, in 1952 (together with Turkey) and the conclusion of the 1953-54 Greek-Turkish-Yugoslav Balkan Pacts seemed to restore balance in the region. However, the Balkan Pacts were neutralized in 1955, when the Soviets approached Tito and when Greek-Turkish relations deteriorated because of the eruption of the Cyprus question and because of the September 1955 anti-Greek riots in Istanbul and Izmir.<sup>6</sup>

### 1. The Soviet bloc

Despite fears about long-term Soviet intentions, in 1953-55 Greece established commercial relations with Eastern European states, most notably including East Germany,<sup>7</sup> but with regard to Bulgaria it adopted a cautious attitude. Diplomatic relations with Sofia were resumed in 1954, but Athens insisted on reaching an agreement about Bulgarian reparations (due according to the 1947 Peace Treaty), before exchanging ambassadors. The Greeks regarded Bulgarian compliance with these provisions as a test of Sofia's "sincerity," and repeatedly stressed, to Sofia as well as to Moscow, that a settlement on reparations was the testing ground for the creation of "positive bases for good relations." Sofia, however, seemed to fail to realize this and tried to spin negotiations out indefinitely. In turn, the Bulgarian attitude simply confirmed Greek fears: Sofia was being armed contrary to its Peace Treaty, and refused to implement the financial obligations arising from the same document: from Athens's point of view this attitude was reminiscent of inter-war Bulgarian revisionism, which had tragically led to the 1941 invasion. In this atmosphere, the prospect for Greek-Bulgarian relations was not very bright.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> On the 1953-54 Balkan Pacts, see John O. Iatrides, *Balkan Triangle: Birth and Decline of an Alliance across Ideological Boundaries* (The Hague, 1968).

<sup>7</sup> Greece was the first Western country to do so. See Hagen Fleischer, "Post War Relations Between Greece and the two German States: A Re-evaluation in the Light of German Unification," *The Southeast European Yearbook*, 1991, 163-78.

<sup>8</sup> Hatzivassiliou, "Greek-Bulgarian and Greek-Soviet Relations"; a typical outline of the Greek position on the importance of the reparations issue with regard to relations with Sofia can be found a conversation between Spyros Theotokis, the Foreign Minister, and the Soviet Ambassador in Athens, on 30 March: see Theotokis (memorandum), 30 March 1956, *Karamanlis*, vol. 2, pp. 34-35.

It took almost another decade, until 1964, for the full normalization of relations between the two countries. In 1956 little progress was made in this respect, although a bilateral commercial agreement was signed, which envisaged the doubling of commercial exchanges. In March 1956, moreover, a Greek-Yugoslav-Bulgarian agreement on health matters was also concluded, which provided for a kind of multilateral co-operation between Balkan states with different international orientations; yet, its subject was too narrow and its adoption did not have any political significance. This agreement should be seen as an exception to the rule, rather than as a move toward inter-Balkan co-operation.

Greek-Albanian relations were perhaps the most difficult case: a state of war still existed between the two countries; the Albanians were always suspicious that the Greeks would try to annex Northern Epirus (Southern Albania); the Greeks of Albania were maltreated by the Hoxha regime. All these continued to be important issues dividing Athens and Tirana. Yet, in 1956, Greece appeared more willing than before in resuming relations with Albania.

In February, Athens named 220 Greek soldiers held in Albania, whose release would be a prerequisite for the beginning of negotiations, which according to the Greeks, should first deal with the conclusion of a Peace Treaty.<sup>9</sup> Tirana at first appeared reluctant to accept conditions, but in summer, after the Greeks asked for the good services of the International Red Cross, these persons were repatriated. Greek-Albanian negotiations then started between the Ambassadors of the two countries in Moscow.<sup>10</sup> These discussions failed to produce results, other than the clearing of the Corfu Channel in 1957 and the release of more Greeks held in Albania. This failure should be attributed firstly to the suspicion of Tirana with regard to Greek intentions over Northern Epirus, and secondly to the fact that the Albanians tended to refer all questions to the Soviets, who had more important preoccupations to deal with. As a result, no important decision could easily be made by the Albanian side. At the same time, Athens's insistence on the conclusion of a Peace Treaty before the

<sup>9</sup> Lambert to Young, 7 February 1956, London PRO FO 371/123815/1.

<sup>10</sup> Athens to FO, 14 April 1956, FO 371/123815/4; BBC monitoring report (Tirana Radio), 21 August 1956, FO 371/123815/5.

resumption of normal diplomatic and commercial relations also contributed to the lack of progress. It seems, anyway, that Tirana was not in a hurry to strike a deal with Athens, while the Greeks tried to get as many concessions as possible – especially over the clearing of the Corfu channel, which was important for the island's tourism – now that Albania was still in the mood for negotiations.<sup>11</sup>

Things with Romania were more simple: for Athens, it was important that it had not been at war with this country, that there was a number of Greeks still living in Bucharest (including children taken during the Civil War), and that a settlement was needed regarding the confiscation of the property of the Greeks of Romania by the Bucharest government.<sup>12</sup> Since 1953, however, Athens had made it clear that it would not agree to the resumption of diplomatic relations, prior to a financial settlement. This, in fact, meant that Athens put forward stiffer conditions to Romania rather than Bulgaria: after all, relations with Sofia were resumed *during* the negotiations on reparations. When the Americans enquired about this difference, the Greek government replied that Bulgaria was a neighbor and an old enemy: Athens had to keep a sharp eye on it, for which it needed representation in Sofia.<sup>13</sup>

By early 1956, the Greek–Romanian negotiations had reached a delicate point. Bucharest wanted immediate resumption of relations, while it was willing to compensate for the damage of Greek interests during the war, and simply discuss Greek financial claims for post-1945 nationalisations.<sup>14</sup> The pace of the Greek–Romanian negotiations was stepped up immediately after the February Greek election. On 10 March, through their Hague Embassy, the Romanians invited a Greek delegation to Bucharest, to negotiate the outstanding financial issues; they also expressed hopes for the full normalization of relations.<sup>15</sup> Athens replied in early April, making clear that prior to the restoration of diplomatic relations, Romania should acknowledge its

<sup>11</sup> Mackenzie (Athens) to Galsworthy, 17 May 1957 and FO minute (Goodall), 21 May 1957, FO 371/129997/2.

<sup>12</sup> FO minute (Harrison), 14 October 1953, FO 371/107510/2.

<sup>13</sup> Schnee (Athens) to State Department, tel. 461, 20 November 1954, Washington DC, National Archives, Record Group 59, Decimal File 666.81/11-2054 (hereafter decimal file number only).

<sup>14</sup> Elting (Athens) to State Department, tel. 551, 7 December 1955, 666.81/12-755.

<sup>15</sup> Bucharest to FO, 19 March 1956, FO 371/123856/1.

obligation to settle Greek financial claims and agree to a satisfactory settlement on the way of payment.<sup>16</sup> Bucharest appeared anxious to achieve normalisation of relations and gave way. In May, negotiations on the question of compensation opened in Athens, with a high-ranking official of the Romanian Foreign Ministry, Al. Lazareanu, leading the Romanian delegation.<sup>17</sup>

The negotiations progressed slowly but steadily. Indeed, the British referred to the “tough bargaining” which took place in Summer.<sup>18</sup> The Romanians reluctantly accepted the Greek claim for the payment of \$6 million: \$3 million would be paid according to the Romanian Peace Treaty; the rest would be compensation for the confiscation of the Danube shipping. Agreement was also reached in principle that Bucharest would compensate for loss of private and commercial property of the Greeks of Romania. The Romanian state would buy the houses of 5,000 Greeks who had fled the country and would compensate for commercial assets found in them. A Mixed Commission would settle these issues in the next years. Thus, the two countries agreed to settle Greek claims for losses during the War and to define the mechanism for settling those which occurred after 1945. Diplomatic relations would be resumed prior to the settlement of the latter. The Greek government had toyed with the idea of waiting for the completion of the Mixed Commission's work before the exchange of ambassadors, while the Greek refugees from Romania protested that the agreement would not provide for full compensation for their losses. Yet, it was obvious that the completion of the Mixed Commission's work was going to delay, and the Greek Foreign Ministry finally decided that an agreement would be easier if they had a diplomatic mission in Bucharest. The settlement was announced at the end of August.<sup>19</sup> In November 1956, a commercial Protocol was signed in Athens, which provided for the doubling of commercial exchanges between the two countries.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Athens to FO, 2 April 1956, FO 371/123856/2.

<sup>17</sup> Bucharest to FO, 17 May 1956, FO 371/123856/3.

<sup>18</sup> Athens to FO, 31 August 1956, FO 371/123971/2.

<sup>19</sup> Wallden, vol. A, pp. 204-205; Lambert to Selwyn Lloyd, 6 September 1956, FO 371/123971/3; Elting to State Department, tel. 133, 31 August 1956, 666.81/8-3156. The British were surprised by the willingness of Bucharest to concede all Greek claims: FO min (Goodinson), 29 August 1956, FO 371/123971/1.

<sup>20</sup> Bucharest to FO, 15 November 1956, FO 371/123971/9.

## 2. Turkey

An important instrument of Greek policy since 1930, the Greek-Turkish axis had been damaged at least for that moment, because of the Cyprus question and the 1955 anti-Greek riots in Turkey. This was a development which the Greek government saw with concern, because it regarded Greek-Turkish friendship as indispensable for both countries, which were strategically interdependent with regard to challenges from the eastern bloc.

Early in 1956, while the negotiations between the British and Archbishop Makarios were taking place in Cyprus, it appeared that a settlement in the island could soon be reached. At that moment, Athens appeared prepared to agree to the holding of a Balkan Pact Council of Foreign Ministers, between Greece, Turkey, and Yugoslavia, without insisting that Turkey should first compensate the Istanbul Christians for the damage they had suffered during the 1955 riots.<sup>21</sup> But this new meeting of the Council did not take place, because of the new deterioration of Greek-Turkish relations after the collapse of Anglo-Cypriot negotiations and Makarios's deportation, in early March.

Trouble in relations between Athens and Ankara continued to come from two quarters: first, because of the Turkish policy of resorting to threats each time it appeared that a settlement on Cyprus would be reached which would open the way to the application of self-determination in the island (indeed, in June the Turks even mentioned war in case of *Enosis*);<sup>22</sup> secondly, because the Greek authorities had evidence that Turks had planted the bomb in the Turkish Consulate in Thessaloniki which had been the pretext for the 1955 anti-Greek pogroms. Indeed, Greek courts were about to try these persons, including a member of the Muslim minority of Greece, Octay Engin, while Turkish diplomats were about to be charged for their involvement in the affair. The government tried to interfere in the judicial process and drop the charges, causing an uproar in the country. Finally, the Turkish diplomats were acquitted, although Octay Engin was con-

<sup>21</sup> Roberts (Belgrade) to FO, 20 January 1956, FO 371/123808/1.

<sup>22</sup> Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, "Britain and the Future Status of Cyprus, 1955-9: A Study in the International Dimensions of the Problem", Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1991, 121.

victed. He "escaped" to Turkey later in the year.<sup>23</sup> (Indeed, the Americans reported this putting the word "escape" within quotes.<sup>24</sup>) Thus, even in an unconventional manner, at least this complication in Greek-Turkish relations was put out of the way.

The Greeks then tried to deal with the Turkish objections to self-determination of Cyprus. In June, at a meeting of Karamanlis, Cabinet Ministers and diplomats in Athens,<sup>25</sup> it was decided to give substantial guarantees to Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots in case of *Enosis*: NATO would decide limits on Greek troops in Cyprus, there would be free ports in the island for the conduct of Turkish trade, while extensive minority guarantees would be given to the Turkish Cypriots. Among others, the latter would have the right to opt for dual nationality and would be exempted from service in the Greek army. Greece communicated such ideas to British and Americans in summer and autumn 1956, making clear that it was going as far as it regarded possible in easing Turkish anxieties over an eventual union of Cyprus with Greece. But toward the end of the year, the new Turkish line to demand the partition of the island definitely showed that the two countries were in conflicting courses.<sup>26</sup> The Turks had become Britain's major ally in the Middle East and thus they could ask for what they wanted in Cyprus directly from London, not through Athens. It took another two years for Ankara to realize that London's power was not enough to replace such a strategically placed link of Turkey to the West as Greece.

## 3. Yugoslavia and the Balkan Alliance

It was on Yugoslavia that the new look of Greek policy became more apparent. This was natural, because Balkan balances greatly depended on the attitude of non-aligned Belgrade. Greece and Yugoslavia had found themselves at conflicting courses in the late 1940s, when Belgrade came very close to achieving Balkan domination, but things had changed after Tito's 1948 split with Stalin. Friendship with

<sup>23</sup> See Lambert to Young, 5 April 1956, FO 371/123858/20; Lambert to Young 20 June 1956, FO 371/123858/24.

<sup>24</sup> Ireland (Thessaloniki) to State Department, tel. 40, 26 September 1956, 781.00/9-2656.

<sup>25</sup> The meeting was recorded in Giorgos Seferis, *Μέρες, 1951-1956*, (Days) (Athens, 1986), 222-4.

<sup>26</sup> Hatzivassiliou, "Britain and Cyprus, 1955-59", 122-57.



Yugoslavia helped Tito preserve his independence from Moscow, thus blocking the road to the formation of a Moscow-backed Belgrade–Sofia axis, which could pose a severe threat to Greek security. Anyway, at a period when relations with Turkey had deteriorated, a connection with Yugoslavia could help Greece's efforts to safeguard Balkan balances, and could also provide support for the Greek case in Cyprus. Indeed, in these years Greek–Yugoslav contacts took place at the highest level, an indication of the desire of both countries to maintain the closest possible relationship in the years of the Soviet peace offensives. The formation of the Greek–Yugoslav axis in 1956–57 was also greatly facilitated by the fact that the federal administration in Belgrade had by now succeeded in containing the extremists in Skopje. Greece remained reserved regarding Yugoslav policy in this issue;<sup>27</sup> but for Athens it was important that, contrary to the trend of previous or later years, no mention was made of the "Macedonian" question by federal officials from 1953 to 1961, the "golden age" of Greek–Yugoslav relations.

In 1954–55, the Yugoslavs had shown some discomfort about the Greek preoccupation with Cyprus. Belgrade felt that the Cyprus question was a distraction from the real challenge, namely East–West relations. Yet, in September 1955 during a successful visit of King Paul to Belgrade, relations seemed to be cordial.<sup>28</sup>

Yugoslavia regarded the Balkan Pacts as a crucial element in its foreign policy. Yet, in the aftermath of the Soviet opening to Tito, and as Moscow continued to show a moderate face in international affairs, Belgrade tended to attach more importance to the non-military rather than to the military clauses of the 1953–54 Pacts. On this, Yugoslav views were much closer to the Greek, rather than the Turkish perceptions. As the British remarked, "the Greeks have usually tended to be more understanding of the Yugoslav attitude."<sup>29</sup> The cancellation of the Balkan Pact Council meeting in March 1956 did not change much in Greek–Yugoslav relations. In April, the two coun-

<sup>27</sup> For 1956, see for example Minute (Foreign Ministry), 22 November 1956, Athens, Constantin G. Karamanlis Foundation, Karamanlis Archive (hereafter KA), file 2A.

<sup>28</sup> This was reported by the British Ambassador to Athens, who had also served previously in Belgrade: see Peake to Selwyn Lloyd, 23 March 1956, FO 371/123844/1.

<sup>29</sup> FO minute (Young), 27 February 1956, FO 371/123808/10.

tries concluded a Supplementary Protocol to the 1953 economic agreement.

In July, Tito visited the Greek Royals in Corfu. Karamanlis and Averoff also went to the King's resort to have discussions with the Yugoslav guest. Averoff then gave the British an account of the talks. It was an exchange of views on international affairs, rather than a search for a specific agreement. Tito appeared anxious to maintain his connections with Greece, as he needed an indirect link to NATO. The Greeks, Averoff continued, would gladly revive the tripartite Pacts of 1953–54 after a Cyprus settlement had been reached; but if relations with Turkey continued to deteriorate, the Greek government would be prepared to abandon the tripartite framework, in favor of a bilateral Greek–Yugoslav alignment. The reference by the Greeks to Tito's willingness to discuss a bilateral connection with Athens was strongly resented by the British. London regarded that Tito did not intend to follow such course, but he had gone to Greece hoping that he could facilitate the amelioration of Greek–Turkish differences. Indeed, the Yugoslavs told the British that Tito did not wish to weaken the tripartite Pacts, nor did he talk on military questions "with anyone, not even the Greeks, despite the very friendly state of Greek–Yugoslav relations." Still, during his November 1956 visit to the US, Karamanlis mentioned to Herbert Hoover and the US Under-Secretary of State, Robert Murphy, that Tito appeared willing to discuss the conclusion of a bilateral defense agreement with Greece in case the reactivation of the tripartite Balkan Pacts proved impossible.<sup>30</sup>

It is not easy to establish the accurate position of Athens or Belgrade on this subject: the Yugoslavs were probably willing to have bilateral co-operation with Greece on many levels, including defense (indeed, there were many exchanges of visits of Greek and Yugoslav military in 1956–60), although they might not be prepared to agree to the conclusion of a *formal* bilateral defence arrangement. Yet, there is no doubt that Greece itself preferred the tripartite Pacts to a bilateral Greek–Yugoslav alignment; Athens simply was examining what could be done if the absence of a Cyprus settlement blocked the road to the revival of the Balkan Alliance. Therefore, there is no reason to doubt,

<sup>30</sup> Lambert (Athens) to FO, 31 July 1956, FO 371/123860/4; Roberts (Belgrade) to FO, 9 August 1956, FO 371/123860/7; *Karamanlis*, vol. 2, p. 197.

that in Corfu, Karamanlis and Tito agreed to search ways to reactivate the Balkan Pacts. In the following months, the Greeks put forward their ideas for easing Turkish anxieties over the self-determination of Cyprus, which, Athens hoped, might lead to the re-establishment of Greek-Turkish relations as well as the revival of the Balkan Pacts. But, in his conversations with British and Americans, Averoff continued to hint that a bilateral arrangement could be pursued, if the Greek attempt failed. Belgrade assured the British that it did not favour such course.<sup>31</sup>

At that moment, the difference of views between Athens and Belgrade, if any, was rather theoretical, for the Greeks also hoped that a Cyprus settlement would soon open the way for the revival of the Balkan Pacts. By late autumn, however, any difference of views passed into second place, because of the Hungarian and the Suez crises. Indeed, after the Soviet invasion of Hungary, Tito appeared anxious to come closer to Greece, thus maintaining an indirect link to NATO, without at the same time compromising his neutralist rhetoric.<sup>32</sup> As Karamanlis and Averoff were going to pay an official visit to Yugoslavia in December, Belgrade did its best to ensure that the visit would be a success.

The Greeks, on their part, tried to combine the visit with their aim to play a regional role as a NATO power, of a "link" to Belgrade: according to a minute in the Karamanlis archive, the US Embassy asked the Greek Prime Minister to access Yugoslav views on probable Soviet reactions in Berlin (especially whether Moscow would use force to prevent Allied access to the city), on the troubled Yugoslav-West German relations, as well as on Yugoslav policy regarding Albania and the USSR, especially after the Soviet opening to Tito in the previous year.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Roberts to Young, 11 and 14 September, FO 371/123860/12; Lambert to FO, 14 September, and Hayman (Belgrade) to FO, 12 October 1956, FO 371/123860/14.

<sup>32</sup> Despite its non-aligned international position, throughout the Cold War Belgrade appeared anxious to maintain an indirect connection with the western alliance, through Greece. This was why, in times of strain in Greek-NATO relations, such as 1958 and 1974, Yugoslavia urged Athens to remain in the alliance. See Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, "The Greek-Yugoslav Relationship During the Cold War," in *Die Balkanländer im Europa der Gegenwart* (Institute for Balkan Studies: Thessaloniki, 1994), 83-91.

<sup>33</sup> See minute (no date), KA, file 2A.

At the same time, Turkey seems to have tried to prevent a Greek-Yugoslav rapprochement, which would isolate Ankara within the Balkan alliance: during his conversations with Tito in Belgrade, Karamanlis referred to a "recent" Turkish idea of holding a meeting of heads of governments of Greece Turkey and Yugoslavia, which Greece had brushed aside, pointing out that such meetings have to be carefully prepared in advance, in order not to prove counterproductive. Indeed, for a statesman with Karamanlis's mentality, the picture of Turkey proposing summit meetings at a time when it was threatening Greece with war, could not be taken seriously.<sup>34</sup>

The intensification of Yugoslav insecurity because of events in Budapest and the fact that Greece and Yugoslavia had taken similar positions on the two major international crises of autumn 1956, formed the background of the Greek-Yugoslav discussions and could be found in the basis of their special relationship formed in the aftermath of the visit. The Yugoslavs publicly paid lip service to the importance of the tripartite Pacts: during his speech at the formal luncheon, Vice-President Edward Kardelj, together with assuring the Greeks for Yugoslav support over Cyprus, emphasised the importance of the Balkan alliance, and stressed that the policy of the tripartite Pacts can always contribute to stability and peace in the region. In his reply, Karamanlis was quick to agree, but also to stress that the Pacts had "reached a stalemate," as "one of its members failed to display allied feelings."<sup>35</sup>

At any rate, as Greek-Turkish relations were still at a low point, the Soviets had already crushed a revolt in Eastern Europe and anxiety prevailed again in the region, Greeks and Yugoslavs could not but draw closer. The records of the talks between Karamanlis and Tito strongly display their belief that their countries shared a community of interests in the sense at least that they wanted to keep out of the turmoil that appeared both to the north and south. It is true that, in mid-December, facing the protests of the Turkish Ambassador in Belgrade, Tito implied that Karamanlis left him no choice but to agree to a bilateral rapprochement.<sup>36</sup> This was only partly true, for Tito himself appeared anxious to achieve such a rapprochement. Anyway, the

<sup>34</sup> See Record (Karamanlis-Tito), 6 December 1956, *Karamanlis*, vol.2, pp.232.

<sup>35</sup> Roberts to FO, 6 December 1956, FO 371/123860/15.

<sup>36</sup> Roberts to FO, 10 December 1956, FO 371/123860/18.



Yugoslav anxiety to have excellent relations with Athens became obvious in the next years as well.

During the discussions, Karamanlis reminded Tito that the Balkan Pacts had been neutralized because of Turkish actions and threats. In Corfu they had agreed to seek ways to restore the Pacts; since then, however, the Turkish position had not changed, while Ankara had threatened Greece with war over Cyprus. The Greek Prime Minister stressed that, in the absence of a Cyprus settlement, any move toward reactivation of the Pacts could even prove counterproductive: in that case, in any further crisis in Cyprus the tripartite Alliance would inevitably be destroyed. It was better therefore to keep the 1953-54 Pacts "in reserve," waiting for an improvement in Turkish policy. In any case, he continued, the intention of Greece was to maintain excellent relations with Belgrade. For their part, Tito and Kardelj agreed with Karamanlis's analysis and went a bit further, suggesting that an improvement in Greek-Yugoslav relations would be indeed a proof that the 1953-4 Pacts were still active, even if in the present circumstances they "meant nothing." It was agreed that the two countries should step up bilateral military co-operation as well as frequently exchange views on the political field.<sup>37</sup>

The success of the visit lay the foundations for the establishment of a Greek-Yugoslav entente in the south of the Balkans.<sup>38</sup> This process was completed in 1957: facing difficulties regarding Cyprus and engaged in conflict with two allies, Britain and Turkey, Athens needed to acquire precious regional support in Belgrade; at the same time, the Yugoslavs also appeared anxious to safeguard their Greek connection. In April, returning from a trip to the Middle East, the Deputy Prime Minister of Yugoslavia, Svetozar Vukmanovic-Tempo, visited Athens; the British, indeed, regarded the visit as a further chance for Greece to isolate Turkey regionally.<sup>39</sup> In autumn, during Kardelj's

<sup>37</sup> Records (Karamanlis-Tito), 5-6 December 1956, *Karamanlis*, vol. 2, pp.224-233.

<sup>38</sup> It is interesting that the US Embassy in Athens initially failed to realise the importance of the visit's results: see Elting to State Department, 13 December 1956, 681.00/12-1356. However, in 1957, the US noted that one of Greece's regional roles as a NATO power was exactly to maintain a link to the Titoist "heresy." Washington DC, National Archives, NSC-5718/1, 5 August 1957.

<sup>39</sup> Lambert to Selwyn Lloyd, 12 April 1957 and FO minute (Goodall), 16 April 1957, FO 371/130026/2.

visit to Athens, the two countries again appeared anxious to maintain channels for the exchange of views on international affairs and also agreed to promote their economic co-operation.<sup>40</sup> Greece and Yugoslavia did not always see eye to eye on all issues: for example they assumed different positions regarding the 1957 Romanian proposals for a Balkan Conference. But they appeared willing to co-operate actively. According to the British Embassy in Belgrade,

There is a genuine community of interest between Greece and Yugoslavia, arising not least from the fact that Greece finds herself a somewhat rebellious member of NATO [because of Cyprus] and Yugoslavia ... is in an analogous position.<sup>41</sup>

In 1957-61, bilateral contacts, including the exchange of military visits, became quite frequent – so much, that in 1958, when asked by the British whether they would pursue a bilateral defense Treaty with Yugoslavia, the Greeks replied that there was no need for this.<sup>42</sup> This bilateral axis was partly destroyed only in 1961-2, because of the first mention for many years by a Yugoslav federal official (the Foreign Ministry spokesman) of the "Macedonian" question.<sup>43</sup>

The Greek-Yugoslav "special relationship" was born out of the insecurity of both countries about the intentions of the Soviet bloc. A bilateral axis was hardly an example of smooth regional co-operation; but for Athens and Belgrade it was the next best thing they could get.

#### 4. Conclusions

In the context of an overall reform of policy after its first electoral success, the Karamanlis government seemed prepared to improve relations with all Balkan states. Yet, this effort had its limits, many of

<sup>40</sup> Records (Karamanlis-Kardelj), 22 and 23 October 1957, *Karamanlis*, vol. 2, pp.439-449; see also Allen to Selwyn Lloyd, 1 November 1957, FO 371/130026/7. This process led to the conclusion of the Greek-Yugoslav agreements of June 1959.

<sup>41</sup> Hayman to Addis, 2 November 1957, FO 371/130026/7.

<sup>42</sup> Athens to FO, 2 July 1958, FO 371/136232/4.

<sup>43</sup> On the 1961-2 crisis, see Sotiris Wallden, *Ελλάδα-Γιουγκοσλαβία: Γέννηση και Εξέλιξη μιας Κρίσης* (Greece-Yugoslavia: Birth and Evolution of a Crisis) (Athens, 1991).

which were beyond Greece's control: the lack of mutual confidence between the two blocs was the most serious of these. At any rate, Athens distinguished between two levels of contacts. As far as the Soviet bloc states were concerned, Athens asked for the settlement of financial questions, as a sign of these countries' good intentions towards Greece. The success of Greek-Romanian negotiations showed Greece's line in the Balkans quite clearly: unlike Bulgaria, Romania had not tried to evade its financial obligations. And yet, it was mainly from Bulgaria that the Greeks needed this sign of "sincerity." Still, even in the absence of a Greek-Bulgarian settlement, commercial relations between Greece and Eastern countries (including Bulgaria) improved greatly.<sup>44</sup> As the Americans also noted, 1956 became the turning point for the acceleration of Greece's commercial contacts with the Soviet Bloc:

Toward the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, Greece's attitude has undergone an accelerated process of softening up in the past year and a half and she less frequently asks for or accept our advice in her dealings with the Bloc.<sup>45</sup>

Since these lines were written in November 1957, the beginning of that period of "year and a half" coincides with the aftermath of the February 1956 election and the advent of Averoff in the Greek Foreign Ministry.

On the other level, that of the Balkan alliance, Greek policy passed through various stages, depending on the state of Greek-Turkish relations. Athens was prepared to follow up Yugoslav suggestions to place more emphasis to the non-military aspects of the tripartite alliance. Indeed, these aspects kept alive a framework of multilateral co-operation in the region, even on a limited basis. In summer, the Greeks noted that without improvement in Greek-Turkish relations over Cyprus, the tripartite framework of 1953-54 could be of little use. Athens tried to improve Greek-Turkish relations and consequently revive the Balkan alliance. It was even prepared to sweep under the carpet evidence of Turkish planning of the 1955 Thessaloniki bomb-

<sup>44</sup> See for more Wallden, *Ελλάδα και Ανατολικές Χώρες*, vol. A, especially 137-140.

<sup>45</sup> See Penfield (Athens) to State Department, 4 November 1957, 611.81/11-457.

ing which had triggered the anti-Greek pogroms in Istanbul, and to sketch a Cyprus settlement which gave unprecedented guarantees to Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots.

These Greek overtures led nowhere, for Turkey was a large peripheral power, which (wrongly perhaps, but strongly) felt that it could achieve its objectives in Cyprus without caring about Greek arguments concerning ethnological realities in the island. No matter how much Athens wanted the improvement of Greek-Turkish relations, it was not prepared to achieve this by accepting the partition of the island, forcible removal of populations and a new wave of uprooted people, even of "limited" numbers such as 200,000. In November 1956, as the crises were mounting in the Middle East and in Eastern Europe, the search for the revival of the Balkan alliance was turned into a Greek effort to acquire Yugoslav friendship on a bilateral basis. Karamanlis was successful in establishing closer ties with Belgrade, during his visit in December. Greece had substituted Turkey with Yugoslavia as its regional partner, avoiding isolation in the Balkans. This would prove important for the outcome of the Cyprus crisis in 1959: at that crucial moment, Greece had an alternative regional partner in Belgrade, while the Turks had lost theirs, Iraq, after the 1958 revolution in that country. Ankara had to come to terms with Athens to avoid regional isolation.<sup>46</sup>

In the beginning of its new diplomatic efforts in the mid-1950s, Greece was willing to develop a network of bilateral relations in the region, including commercial contacts with Moscow's allies. It was also willing to revive tripartite co-operation in the Balkan alliance. But it stopped short of endorsing multilateral co-operation of all regional powers, expanding on the political level. As became apparent in the case of the 1957 proposal of the Romanian Prime Minister, Chivu Stoica, for a Balkan Conference, Greece felt that such a move could have no practical use, at a period when confidence between the states of the region was lacking.<sup>47</sup> Confidence was the most important element for the Greeks. Athens's approach was a gradualist, pragmatic one: the time was not yet ripe for a breakthrough in the affairs of the region.

The Balkans was not a field of impressive successes for the new look of Greek foreign policy after 1956. A recent study perceptively

<sup>46</sup> See Hatzivassiliou, "Britain and Cyprus, 1955-59."

referred to a "limited opening" by the Greek government to Eastern Europe in 1956, also pointing out that this opening suffered a temporary slow-down in the immediate aftermath of the Hungarian crisis.<sup>48</sup> The commercial agreements with all the eastern countries (save Albania), the settlement with Romania, the establishment of a "special relationship" with Yugoslavia, or the clearing of the Corfu channel were important developments, but not diplomatic achievements, let alone triumphs; the most spectacular results of the "new look" of Greek policy must certainly be sought in the country's relations with – and indeed its position in – the western world. But, anyway, in the mid-1950s Greek diplomacy did not aim to inaugurate a new era of Balkan relations. Its efforts involved only a minimum and predominantly defensive aim: consolidation of the existing balance and therefore safety for the country's borders. Yet, this diplomatic activity in the Balkans was indeed crucial. It would have been practically impossible for Athens to achieve its main aims – develop its economy and seek a position in the new Europe and the western world – without having its back covered with regard to Balkan affairs: this, in the end of the day, was the very essence of "detachment." Athens' main aim in the mid-1950s was attained. It was only in the mid-1970s – when the international climate became favourable to an imaginative initiative, and when confidence had been restored, at least between the states of the Balkan mainland – that Greece took the lead in trying to realise its maximum aim in the region – the setting up of multilateral co-operation in South Eastern Europe.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> That was in fact the main argument of the Greek reply to the Romanian proposal: see Karamanlis to Stoica, 23 September 1957, *Karamanlis*, vol. 2, p.421.

<sup>48</sup> Wallden, *Ελλάδα και Ανατολικές Χώρες*, vol. A, 121-122.

<sup>49</sup> It is indeed possible to suggest that since the conclusion of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, Greek policy in the Balkans followed a pattern: the country had a maximum and a minimum aim. The first was peaceful multilateral co-operation of all regional powers. However, when this was impossible, because of the expansionist or hegemonist tendencies of a Balkan state, Greece sided with the conservative countries of the region, aiming to achieve its minimum aim, the preservation of balance in South-eastern Europe, which would ensure security for the country itself. See Hatzivassiliou, "Greek Policy in the Balkans, 1923-1981: toward a Synthesis of Greek Bibliography". On the Greek initiative in 1975-80 for the setting up of multilateral Balkan co-operation, see Constantinos Svolopoulos, *Η Ελληνική Πολιτική στα Βαλκάνια, 1974-1981* (Greek Policy in the Balkans, 1974-1981) (Athens, 1987).

## The Hellenic Diaspora and the Macedonian Issue

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### Introduction

The dissolution of communism in the Eastern bloc as well as the disintegration of former Yugoslavia found Greece unprepared to tackle the complex issues that emerged in the Balkan region. In fact, Greece has neither a clear-cut vision of, nor long-term plans for, the region's future. In this article, I argue that the Macedonian issue has been a symptom of the difficult ongoing relationship between the so-called "national center"<sup>1</sup> (Greece) and the Greek community (its Diaspora)<sup>2</sup>. The case in point is the Greek diaspora in the United States of America, a host country which has always played and will continue to play a

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<sup>1</sup>As Professor Kazakos aptly points out, "the terms "national center" was used as a term by governments in Greece which pursued different policies and had different philosophies vis-a-vis Hellenism. On the one hand, the 1967-1974 military regime used the term in its dispute with Cyprus while, on the other hand Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) used it when in power to justify its own foreign policy decisions." See Panos Kazakos, "Greek Diaspora and National Issues," *Greek Political Science Review*, Vol.3, April 1994, (*Reference No.1*)

<sup>2</sup>The term "Greek Diaspora" refers to all the Greeks who live outside the Greek territory, with the exception of certain areas which have historically been integral parts of the Greek nation. According to this definition Greeks in Cyprus and in Northern Epirus (the southern part of Albania) as well as those few still residing in Turkey, should not be considered as Greek diaspora. For this clarifications see "Introduction" in *The Greeks Abroad*, Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs Publications, (Athens, n.d.)