

Article Book Review

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Van Coufoudakis, Harry J. Psomiades, and Andre Gerolymatos, editors. *Greece and the New Balkans: Challenges and Opportunities*. New York: Pella Publishing Company, Inc., 1999. Pp. 478. \$30.00.

A significant number of the many edited volumes on the post-Cold War Balkans have tended to sacrifice scholarly rigor in favor of either journalistic coverage or ideological agenda. Such is not the case with *Greece and the New Balkans: Challenges and Opportunities*, a collection that is the seventh book-length publication from the Modern Greek Research Series of the Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies at Queens College of the City University of New York. *Greece and the New Balkans* offers the reader a remarkable compendium of articles that explore Greece's position in and relationship to the Balkans. The informative and provocative contributions demonstrate the authors' notable command of the historical issues and contemporary elements of Greece's place in the Balkans, and the complementarity of the articles and the cohesiveness of the volume reflects the editors' capabilities and vision.

Editors Coufoudakis, Psomiades, and Gerolymatos were inspired to organize the volume by virtue of the convergence of contemporary and historical factors. In terms of current conditions, the editors aimed to encourage research that would identify and investi-

gate the major challenges facing Greece in the fluid context of post-Cold War Southeastern Europe. In terms of history, the editors took note of the 200th anniversary, in 1998, of the death of Rhigas Velestinlis (Pheraios), as reminder of the sustained resonance of his ideas on Balkan political cooperation, democracy, social liberation, and individual rights over the last two centuries in Southeastern Europe. Indeed, the editors have successfully compiled a rich, inter-disciplinary analysis of the overarching theme that unites all of the contributions, namely, the nature of Greece's role in past and ongoing attempts at Balkan cooperation, as well as the regional and external factors that have influenced Greece's efforts.

The book is comprised of seventeen chapters organized into four parts. Part One explores the historical background, Part Two investigates economic and cultural relations, Part Three discusses foreign and security policies, and Part Four is devoted to studies of the security challenges facing Greece. The volume begins with a brief introductory preface and a substantial epilogue, both authored collectively by the editors. While all but one chapter contain fairly extensive notes, the book also includes a supplemental bibliography compiled by Nikos Christodoulides and drawn from the works cited in the individual contributions. Finally, the book offers a thirteen-page appendix of basic statistical data on all the states of Southeastern Europe, with the exception of Slovenia and the inclusion of Turkey.

Consisting of three chapters, Part One is the shortest section of the book. The three contributions place the issue of Greece and Balkan cooperation within an historical, evolutionary context. In the book's inaugural chapter, Constantinos Svolopoulos presents a solid distillation of the issue of "Cooperation and Confrontation in the Balkans: An Historical Overview," highlighting the chief phases in efforts at Balkan political cooperation in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Svolopoulos offers sufficient evidence to support his argument that Greece has played a constructive and generally positive role in the promotion of political solidarity in Southeastern Europe over historical time. He also effectively identifies the chief external and domestic factors that led to the failure of such regional cooperation projects. Externally, the divisive and desta-

bilizing involvement of the Great Powers in the Balkans had a crushing, negative impact on local conditions that might otherwise have been receptive to cooperation. Internally, reflecting European norms and increasingly intertwined with Great Power politics, the power of nationalism among the Balkan peoples ultimately undermined all prospects for sustained regional unity.

Where the introduction falls short is in the emphasis on narrative at the expense of analysis. For example, Svolopoulos correctly identifies the origins of ideas about Balkan cooperation with the writings and activities of Rhigas Pheraios, and he accurately notes that the Balkan radical's "ideas were inspired by the French Revolution and connected the idea of the nation to the principle of democracy" (p. 16). Yet, Svolopoulos ignores the internal contradictions and associated implications of Pheraios' thinking on regional cooperation, the nation, and democracy. On the one hand, Pheraios offered a vision of a liberal revolution in which all subject peoples of the Balkans would rise up to end the oppressive sectarian rule of the Ottoman Empire and replace it with a popular, secular democracy. On the other hand, the revolutionary French model upon which Pheraios based his views — and which subsequently informed many Balkan revolutionaries' thinking — was premised on the notion of the unity and reflexivity of nation and state. In short, the application of the French model to Balkan liberation movements led to the emergence of ethnic fragmentation and, ultimately, to interstate rivalry and conflict, rather than regional cooperation and integration. Furthermore, the origins and evolution of Balkan nation-states presented significant challenges to the consolidation of popular, secular democracies in the region.

The contradictions in Pheraios' ideas as applied to the Balkans are critical to understanding the trajectory of state development, as well as the failure of efforts at regional cooperation, in Southeastern Europe up to the present. It is in the ideological contradictions, rather than the primordial conditions, of the Balkans that one uncovers the causes of conflict and collapse within and across nation-state boundaries in the region. Had Svolopoulos given some attention to this contradiction, his assessment of Greece's positive record in promoting regional cooperation would have underscored the country's remarkable successes in overcoming many of the

structural constraints that continue to handicap the progress of other Balkan states. Moreover, seen through the prism of this internal contradiction, the example of Greece points to the ability of Balkan states to make, often in the face of powerful contrary forces, rational policy choices based on the principle of cooperation.

The second and third chapters devoted to historical background catapult the focus of discussion to the last decades of the twentieth century. The contribution, "Greece and the Balkans in the Post-Cold War Era," by Thanos Veremis, opens with an excellent review and analysis of the attempts at Balkan multilateralism in the 1980s and the character of security challenges during the 1990s. Specifically, Veremis argues that since 1990 the major threats to security in the Balkans have come from within the region's states themselves rather than from external threats posed by ideological or military blocs, and that such internal threats have undermined earlier trends towards cooperation. Moving forward in this framework, the essay examines the evolving contours of Greece's most contentious foreign policy dilemma during the early 1990s, the revived Macedonian Question, and the decidedly negative implications of the issue for Greek diplomacy options and interstate Balkan cooperation. The study by S. Victor Papacosma, "NATO, Greece, and the Balkans in the Post-Cold War Era," examines an equally complicated set of issues. Following a concise historical account of the vicissitudes of the Greek-NATO relationship during the Cold War period, Papacosma presents a fascinating assessment of the role of post-Cold War Balkan conflicts in the process of NATO's mission redefinition and related consequent adjustments in Greece's strategic relationship with NATO. In short, Papacosma argues that Greek strategic planners look upon membership in NATO very favorably and are working to utilize and enhance the alliance system's collective security dimension to reinforce Greece against revisionist threats from Turkey and from destabilizing pressures posed by certain Balkan states.

The book's Part Two, comprising five chapters, is the lengthiest of the volume's four sections. This part's lead piece, and the book's fourth and largest chapter, "Greece and the Balkans: Economic Relations," by Axel Sotiris Wallden, offers a highly detailed treatment of Greece's role as an economic actor in Southeastern Eu-

rope. Wallden reviews interwar and Cold War era Greek economic involvement in the Balkans before focusing his chief attention on the period after 1989. This work masterfully integrates a host of issues, creating one of the most comprehensive treatments of its subject. In analyzing the political and institutional framework of Greek-Balkan economic relations during the early and mid-1990s, Wallden examines, among other things, the nature of Greek bilateral relations in the region, European Union (EU) relations with the Balkan countries, trade and the product structure of trade, investment, trade and investment policies, and bilateral aid. The text's analysis of these areas is also quantified through thirteen informative tables and charts. Going beyond these matters, Wallden extends his discussion to incorporate assessments of transport, energy, migration and tourism, water economy, and cross border cooperation. In his conclusion, Wallden notes that Greece has achieved significant successes in establishing a veritable economic sphere of influence in the south Balkans. Although he argues that on the whole Greece has profited from economic integration with the Balkans, Wallden cautions that the economic opening to the Balkans carries certain risks, such as the potential qualitative downgrading of Greek production, to serve the comparatively easy outlets of the Balkans, and a consequent move away from the demanding standards of the EU marketplace. Furthermore, Wallden posits that Greece, through its economic, political, and strategic clout as Southeastern Europe's only EU member, has an important role to play in the rehabilitation and reintegration of the other Balkan countries into the European mainstream or else face regional marginalization itself.

The two chapters that follow the preceding study are connected to many of the issues that Wallden introduces into the book's larger landscape. Greek economic links both in the Balkans and extending beyond the peninsula to neighboring areas are examined in the essay by Yiannis Valinakis, "Greece and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Group." Established in 1992, the eleven-state Black Sea Cooperation Group (BSEC) initially drew very little interest from Greece, the organization's only EU member. However, by 1995, Greek attitudes towards the BSEC had become more enthusiastic and this shift led to active involvement in the organization.

Valinakis proposes that this development was in response to the BSEC's growing credibility as an effective regional cooperation with a demonstrated potential to complement the EU and serve the interests of European integration. In "Recent Developments in Greece's Balkan Diplomacy Networks," Dimitrios Triantafyllou evaluates Greek foreign policy as an instrument for the political and economic cooperation, and eventually integration, of the states of Southeastern Europe. This chapter includes a useful overview of Greek bilateral relations with Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia, respectively, since 1974, but the work's most analytic component is found in its excellent discussion of Greece's multilateral initiatives in the Balkans during the 1990s. Essentially, Triantafyllou argues that Greek participation in multilateral economic and development "initiatives stems from the realization that problems in the area (Southeastern Europe and the Black Sea region) can only be solved through regional frameworks that stress economic integration and cooperation" (p.159). This view, coupled with the same commitment to interstate political cooperation, resonates throughout the book's diverse writings as the only viable means for Greece to secure its goals of stability, democratization, security, and prosperity in the region.

Reflections on the recent transformation of Greek diplomacy in the Balkans are set out in "Greece, the European Union and Southeastern Europe: Past Failures and Future Prospects." In this insightful chapter, P. C. Ioakimidis identifies and analyzes the sources of Greece's foreign policy failures in the first half of the 1990s: unrealistic expectations of EU support for Greek national objectives; a foreign policy orientation anchored too heavily in history; and the lack of effective institutionalized structures and procedures for policymaking. Nonetheless, Ioakimidis writes that in 1995 Greek policy experienced a reversal that transformed the country's approach to the region and put its diplomacy on a more successful course. This change in direction was produced by the desire to check Greece's growing isolation *vis-a-vis* the Macedonian Question, the Greek private sector's increasing involvement in Balkan markets, concerns over Turkey's expanding influence in the region, and the emergence of a new modernizing pro-European political elite. This new political leadership, formalized in 1996 un-

der the prime minister Costas Simitis, implemented the current Greek policy towards the Balkans which "can be summarized by two basic strategic objectives: the promotion of interregional cooperation as a means of fostering stability and prosperity in the wider area of Southeast Europe, and the gradual integration of Southeast Europe into a new European architecture, primarily the European Union and NATO" (p. 182).

The eighth chapter (misabeled as chapter thirteen), the last piece in Part Two of this volume, considers the Greek cultural imprint in Southeastern Europe from the vantage point of the 1990s. This contribution, "The Greek Cultural Presence in the Balkans," by Paschalis M. Kitromilides, is a thoughtful, succinct historical and intellectual discourse on the social bases and forms of expression of its subject, as well as a frank overview of the recent ambivalence and ambiguities surrounding the Greek cultural heritage of Balkan society. Kitromilides' analysis offers a decidedly original interpretation of these issues by placing them in their current political context and by arguing that Greece faces significant dilemmas but also a remarkable opportunity in post-communist Southeastern Europe. Greece's dilemma centers on how to respond effectively to the challenges produced by recent changes in the region. In discussing simultaneous opportunity, Kitromilides finds an historical paradigm to make sense of Greece's present situation. He writes that "Greek culture is expected to function as a medium of modernization, and to provide outlets of intellectual and ideological change that might contribute to the reconstruction of societies and mentalities devastated, physically, psychologically, and morally, by communism. In a way, the expectation involves a re-enactment of the role played by Greek culture in the Balkans in the period of the Enlightenment and national 'revival' in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century" (p. 208).

Devoted to foreign and security policies, Part Three of the book begins with an uneven contribution, "Greek Policy Responses to the Post-Cold War Balkan Environment," co-authored by Dimitri Conostas and Charalambos Papasotiriou. A preoccupation with notions of military power, and a consequently skewed view of *realpolitik* approaches, detracts from the chapter's otherwise reliable review of the basic developments in Greek foreign policy dur-

ing the 1990s. Indeed, the authors' analytic framework leads to curious, if not simply fatuous conclusions. For example Conostas and Papasotiriou assert that "in the long run, Greek interests are better served by the Yugoslav disintegration. It is to Greece's interest to border on several weak states instead of one strong power. The old Yugoslavia was the only Balkan state that came close to Greece in military strength.....therefore, it was the only Balkan power capable of threatening Greek interests" (pp. 227-228). This simplistic perspective ignores certain fundamental realities. Greece, whose entire foreign policy strategy is predicated upon the principle of respect for existing borders and the international rule of law, and its interests cannot be served by the dismemberment of any state and subsequent regional chaos and conflict, as was the case in Yugoslavia. Revisionist and unstable states, regardless of their size, bordering Greece pose serious defense, economic, and humanitarian problems that only complicate and add burdens to Greece's overall security architecture and position in Southeastern Europe. Finally, Greece is not doctrinally interested in, nor, given the military imbalance *vis-a-vis* Turkey, capable of using its military superiority in the Balkans as a practical foreign policy instrument. Fortunately, a much more sound look at military and security issues is found in chapter ten, "Greek Defense Doctrine in the Post-Cold War Era," by Thanos P. Dokos. The central contention of this study is that Turkey is the main concern of Greek security policy and the driving force behind most of Athens' foreign policy activities. Dokos casts his clear analysis onto a host of interrelated issues, including Greek national security policy, Greece's relationship with NATO, and the Greek defense establishment.

The other two chapters comprising Part Three of the volume address Greece and the Great Powers in the Balkans. John O. Iatrides is to be commended for his impressive essay, "The United States, Greece and the Balkans." An excellent match between author and topic produces this extraordinary and concise history of American foreign policy in Southeastern Europe since the end of the Second World War. Although his careful study stresses the United States' involvement in the region, Iatrides also considers Greece's potential to play a prominent role, within the context of American initiatives, as a stabilizing factor in the Balkans. Nadia

Alexandra Arbatova has contributed an interesting work, "Russia and Greece After the End of Bipolarity," that appears as chapter twelve. Arbatova argues that both Greece and Russia are skeptical, for their own respective reasons, about American-dominated NATO's propensity to act as Europe's *de facto* security guarantor. In fact, the major problem facing Russia and the rest of Europe is that no new security structures have emerged since the end of the Cold War that could create alternative interstate relationships and tackle a new international security agenda. Thus, despite the striking similarities of Greek and Russian security perceptions and concerns in the Balkans and Black Sea region, the prospect for a Greek-Russian partnership lacks a solid foundation.

Security challenges facing Greece in the post-communist period is the subject of the book's Part Four. This section begins with a contribution, "Greek Security Concerns in the Balkans," by F. Stephen Larrabee. The author argues that by the close of the 1980s, Greece, having fostered a stable and cooperative security order in the Balkans since the mid-1970s, was well-positioned to play a leading role in the region. However, the collapse of communism, the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and the resulting regional chaos, shattered the foundations of Greek-led efforts at late-Cold War era Balkan cooperation. The disintegration of Yugoslavia, in particular, produced a complex web of destabilizing problems for Greece: the re-emergence of the Macedonian Question; the prospect of Turkish penetration of the Balkans; the rekindling of the Albanian national question; economic disruption; and tensions with the United States over Washington's policies that often translated into indifference to Greek security concerns. Like many of the other contributors to this book, Larrabee gives considerable attention to, and offers a positive assessment of, the major shift in Greek foreign policy in 1994-1996 associated ultimately with the new leadership of Prime Minister Costas Simitis. In fact, Larrabee argues that since 1995, Greek diplomacy has not only produced significant improvements in bilateral relations with Albania, Bulgaria, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), and Romania, respectively, but that Greece is once again playing an increasingly active role in promoting multilateral regional cooperation in the Balkans.

Chapter fourteen, "Albania's Rocky Road to Democracy: The Impact on Relations With Greece," written by Nikolaos A. Stavrou, offers a highly detailed examination of its subject through an interesting blend of analytic narrative and, where relevant, first person account. Emphasizing the critical two-year-period preceding Albania's multiparty elections of 1991, this essay presents a superb history and frank dissection of the attempts of the last communist regime in Albania to preserve its power, often at the expense of the country's scapegoat Greek population. The persecution of the Greek minority as a tactic of political diversion continued under, and became a common feature of, the post-Stalinist government headed by Albania's ultra-nationalist president, Sali Berisha. Obviously, these tactics, as well Berisha's generally bellicose approach to Albania's neighbors did not curry the favor of Greece. In fact, despite post-communist Albania's economic dependence on Greece — by 1993 Greece was Albania's largest source of development aid and host to some 300,000 migrant workers whose earnings were necessary to keep Albania's economy afloat — Berisha played the nationalist card when it suited him and Tirana's relations with Athens thus remained deliberately shaky. Bringing his narrative to a close, Stavrou reflects on the crisis of 1997, the year that saw the collapse of the Albanian economy, the disintegration of the state's authority, and nation-wide anarchy on the heels of a financial crash produced by the corruption and incompetence of the Berisha government. As Berisha's power plummeted in this climate, his chief political opponent, the apparent moderate, Fatos Nano, was elected prime minister. Relations with Greece immediately improved under Nano's practical-minded direction. Nano's positive attitude towards Greece could probably be understood as a function of Greece's importance in restoring stability and establishing normalcy in Albania. Stavrou, in fact, convincingly argues that "Greece has emerged as the most substantive contributor to Albania's tortured road to democracy" (p. 359). The thorniest foreign policy dilemma confronting Greece in the Balkans during the 1990s was the Macedonian Question, triggered in its most recent incarnation by the independence of FYROM from Yugoslavia in 1991. More has been published about this issue than any other area of Greek diplomacy in the decade of

the 1990s. Indeed, the proliferation of works on the Macedonian Question has made the issue a veritable cottage industry for scholars and policymakers interested in Southeastern Europe. Serious Balkanists, however, have long recognized the analytic power and historical precision of Evangelos Kofos' scholarship on the Macedonian Question. Given this, it is enough to state that Kofos' contribution to this volume, the chapter entitled, "Greece's Macedonian Adventure: The Controversy Over FYROM's Independence and Recognition," — an exhaustive exploration of the evolution of Greek foreign policy regarding the recognition of FYROM — constitutes another notable addition to his extraordinary body of research.

Despite its title, "Greece and the Minorities in the Balkans," the short essay by Byron Theodoropoulos attempts to address much more than minority questions. A host of grand issues from the global rise of free market economies, to European concepts of sovereignty and its transfer, to historical models of nation-state formation, to the progress of democratization in the Balkans, to Turkey as an aberrant polity are all apparently meant to flow together in this piece. In the book's final chapter, "Strategic Consensus in Greek Domestic and Foreign Policy Since 1974," Theodore A. Couloumbis considers in cogent and concise fashion the conditions informing Greek foreign policy formulation and orientation. In identifying the unique circumstances confronting Greece, Couloumbis writes that "Greece belongs institutionally to the pole of stability but, unlike its remaining EU partners, borders on a region of fluidity and real or potential conflict north and east of its frontiers. Therefore, since the mid-1980s all of Greece's political parties as well as the overwhelming majority of public opinion, have increasingly supported the process of Greece's multidimensional integration into the mechanisms and institutions of the Western family of nations" (p. 413). In short, Greece's foreign policy is premised on the principle of cooperation and multilateralism. In terms of its chief foreign policy priorities, since 1974 Greece has been committed to, first, the consolidation of democracy and the advancement of EU economic and political integration, and, second, the safeguarding of the country's territorial integrity *vis-a-vis* Turkey's revisionist threats in the Aegean and elsewhere. Further-

more, "given Greece's foreign policy priorities.....the country emerges today as a satisfied, status quo, strategically located, medium-sized power whose main objective is to engage heavily in institutionalized multilateral arrangements such as those of the EU and NATO that consolidate a structure of cooperation and peace in its troubled neighborhood" (p. 418). Finally, given the foreign policy consensus that exists between both major political parties in Greece, the governing socialists and the opposition conservatives, it is clear, according to Couloumbis, that Greece's pro-EU, pro-NATO, and pro-Western stance will remain cemented fixtures of Greece's relations with its Balkan neighbors and the international community.

The editors' epilogue is a well-written punctuation of the main point of inquiry in the volume. Coufoudakis, Psomiades, and Gerolymatos offer an impressive summation of the foreign policy challenges and opportunities that face Greece since the collapse of state socialism in Europe. Furthermore, they are convincing in the argument about "Greece as a Factor of Stability in the Post-Cold War Balkans," based on the country's position as the only full-fledged democracy and non-revisionist state in Southeastern Europe. Taken as a whole, *Greece and the New Balkans* is an important addition to the expanding body of works on Greece's role in the contemporary Balkans, and this volume is likely to become standard reading for both scholars and policymakers interested in the problematic of regional cooperation and stability in Southeastern Europe.

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