
The United States and its Aegean Odyssey

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IN CONFRONTING THE SITUATION OF RECURRING CRISIS BETWEEN Greece and Turkey, the United States has sought to advance its national interest by following a policy of "balance," that is, to make two geopolitically perceived unequal states — Greece and Turkey — an equal interest. In light of the difficulty, United States policy has been problematical. Since the international setting confronts the United States with a spectrum of often ambiguous challenges to its interests, contradictions do emerge and affect the pursuit of balance within the context of political choice.¹

How does America's Aegean odyssey reflect its pursuit of balance? The answer to this question is by no means simple, given the context of recurring crisis between the NATO allies, the reality of the incongruity of sovereign state interests, and the mutuality of interest in collective defense. Conceptually, however, to grasp the complexity of the problem, we may view Greek and Turkish security interests as opposites: each constitutes a pole on a continuum. Each pole establishes a level of maximum support; between these two poles United States policy can be located. Confronted with a potential crisis between Greece and Turkey, United States policy may move toward one direction or the other. The continuum reflects the fact that there are different degrees of American support. A specific United States response to a given crisis may be distributed somewhere along the continuum depending upon a number of variables that influence a move in either direction. Within Andrew Wilson's "composite" description of the Aegean dispute,² arguably, the policy of the United States had moved toward the Greek pole in the crisis of March 1987 and, earlier, toward the Turkish pole in the Cyprus crisis of July 1974. Obviously domestic and alliance factors have influenced the United States in any of its positions on the continuum, given its regional and global concerns.

¹Arnold Wolfers, "'National Security' As An Ambiguous Symbol," *Discord and Collaboration* (Baltimore, 1962), pp. 147-66.

²Andrew Wilson, *The Aegean Dispute* Adelphi Papers No. 155 (London, 1980), p. 2.

Similarly, we may view collective defense and individual state security as opposites, each constituting a pole on a mutuality of interest continuum. Confronted with a perception of threat, a state tends to move toward one pole or the other, depending upon the situation and the nature of the perceived threat. These two continua offer choices that confront the United States (and Greece and Turkey) in its pursuit of balance in the Aegean. "Our aim," states Secretary of State George Shultz, "must always be to shape events and not be the victim of events."³ Thus for the United States in terms of its NATO superintendency, the challenge in the recurring crisis between Greece and Turkey, as well as other alliance matters, is to channel conflicting forces and to prevent the contradictions between policies that aim at equally valid objectives from creating an imbalance. According to Stanley Hoffman, American policies can at least attain a degree of coherence by "their management, indeed their good use," despite the contradictions.⁴

The purpose of this essay is not to narrate play-by-play events involving the United States in the Aegean dispute. Perceptions, the reality of an Aegean balance, alliance realities, American realities — these are the points we will explore.

In the spring of 1987, Secretary of State George Shultz, once again stressing the American position regarding the strategic importance of Greece and Turkey to the West, characterized both states as valued members of the NATO alliance. According to Mr. Shultz, "the United States sees itself as a genuine friend to both nations."⁵ The ritual of reaffirming a position since Franklin Roosevelt's declaration, in December 1941 (that the defense of Turkey was vital to American security interests and, with Greece through the Truman Doctrine, assumed importance in the United States effort to contain Soviet expansionism)⁶ is curiously arresting because little has changed regarding the interests of the United States. However, since Greece and Turkey share a mutually hardened perception of threat to their national security, what makes the ritual of reaffirmation necessary is the continued value of both states to the Western alliance and the balance the United States

³George P. Schulz, "Power and Diplomacy in the 1980s," *The Presidency and National Security* (New York, 1984), p. 5.

⁴Stanley Hoffman, "A View from At Home: The Perils of Incoherence," *Foreign Affairs* 57 (1979) 463.

⁵*New York Times* (March 31, 1987), p. 14.

⁶Lewis V. Thomas and Richard N. Frye, *The United States and Turkey and Iran* (Cambridge, Ma., 1952), pp. 143-44.

strives to achieve in what appears, at times, to the antagonists as a Janus-faced position. The question is, why?

A useful hypothesis regarding the American position toward Greece and Turkey is that the basic underlying objectives of post-World War II policy have remained fundamentally unaltered, despite some serious strains over the years between the two states, as well as changes in the international setting. In the latter, for instance, the nature of East-West relationships are more complex today, "with the two sides engaging in trade and pursuing arms control even as they pursue incompatible aims."⁷ Both the post-war trend of the diffusion of American power and the accomplishing of major objectives of the Western alliance in collective defense have encouraged a "resistance" to United States leadership and initiative in some areas among the allies.⁸ The desire to avoid excessive dependence upon the United States is a new reality within the NATO alliance.

The context, then, is one of change and of changing perspectives; of Aegean matters which affect Greece and Turkey merging with divisions within both states as the dividing line between domestic and foreign policy seemingly fades; of their intertwined historical legacies reinforcing their collective memories of the past whenever tension and discord manifest themselves over bilateral matters of importance; of the real danger of the symbolic aspects of Greek and Turkish and American policies overshadowing the substantive component contributing to collective defense. As James Rosenau reminds us, "politics everywhere it would seem are related to politics everywhere else." It appears that United States policies toward Greece and Turkey, in their Aegean dispute, are very much a part of that "linkage phenomena."⁹

To begin with, several realities are at play and they illustrate the scope and stakes of the American interest in balance. One reality is the triangle about which Theodore Couloumbis has written in analyzing its problems.¹⁰ It evolved from the Second World War and its aftermath, and the mode of thinking directly associated with the diplomacy of the period. Its origins are linked to the international politics that gave rise to a bipolarized world, to the security problems it posed for the internal systems of Greece and Turkey, and to the strategic interests of the United States. It was a reality in which the politics of survival may be said to have transcended another reality at a time when the

⁷George P. Shultz, "Power and Diplomacy in the 1980s," p. 7.

⁸Glenn P. Hastedt, *American Foreign Policy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1988), p. 13.

⁹James N. Rosenau, ed. *Linkage Politics* (New York, 1969), p. 2.

¹⁰Theodore A. Couloumbis, *The United States, Greece and Turkey* (New York, 1983).

redefinition of international politics, and of strategic interests in the eastern Mediterranean, fostered perceptions of threat to the self-preservation of the Greek and Turkish states. Thus one reality, a triangular relation of the United States and Greece and Turkey, created in the interest of collective defense during the Cold War, manifested and seemingly eclipsed another reality, the conflict and discord which had existed between the Greek and Turkish nations and states — on and off — for over 150 years.¹¹

In the long-range view of nation-to-nation and state-to-state relations, the current state of affairs between Greece and Turkey begs the question of how influential the United States has been or can be in reconciling what other great powers earlier could not. What seems to cloud over the picture of any American effort in achieving balance is not only the United States' own institutional differences over foreign policy, but the circumstantial competing with the essentials of history. In the latter case, for example, the entente (or reconciliation) under Eleftherios Venizelos and Kemal Ataturk, in the 1930s, and the post-World War II ventures in collective defense,¹² have come to appear circumstantial, that is, less as turning points in Greek-Turkish relations, and more as parentheses between conflicts; intermissions, so-to-speak, in a pattern of nation-to-nation enmity and state-to-state discord and conflict.¹³ Thus the phenomenon of their respective memories of the past is a reality that influences the language, sets the style and provides the syllabus for the recurring crisis. It can be said that the reaffirmation of friendship by the United States attempts to address that phenomenon.

¹¹For an analysis of the 19th and early 20th century conflict and discord, see Llewellyn Smith, *Ionian Vision* (New York, 1973).

¹²Besides the Turkish-Greek reconciliation through the Treaty of Neutrality, Conciliation, and Arbitration of 1930, and the Cordial Friendship Pact of 1933, Greece and Turkey joined Romania and Yugoslavia, in February 1934, in signing a convention known as the Balkan Entente, a mutual defense treaty primarily directed against Bulgaria. In the post World War II period, and exclusive of their respective bilateral arrangements with the United States, Turkey and Greece joined NATO in 1952; joined with Yugoslavia, in February 1953, in signing a Treaty of Friendship and Assistance, which articulated only consultation, collaboration and nonaggression; and, with Yugoslavia, in August 1954, concluded the Balkan Defense Pact. The Balkan Defense Pact, the alliance "across ideological boundaries," as John Iatrides described it, was short-lived in any meaningful sense. See John John O. Iatrides, *Balkan Triangle: Birth and Decline of an Alliance Across Ideological Boundaries* (The Hague, 1968).

¹³In this regard, the first intermission was attributable to the extraordinary leadership of both Venizelos and Ataturk who succeeded in imposing upon the elites of their respective states reasonable responses to domestic, bilateral and regional interests, given the character of the international setting. The second intermission, the post World War II period,

The nature of the discord between Greece and Turkey, which at times affects the United States (and NATO) more directly, is not unique. Conflicting interests among member states of any alliance are the ever present realities that have on occasion caused discord, especially during periods of prolonged peace. Under the circumstances, any intensification of divergent interests can affect a state's perception of its primary adversary and its understanding of the alliance's commitment to its legitimate claims. Such has been the experience of Greece and Turkey with the United States and within the framework of NATO. The fact is that these two states, allies in collective defense, seemingly distrust each other more than they distrust a potential adversary of the alliance. They have, in effect, too often defined the immediate threat from within, not from without. And nothing has been more difficult for Americans to assimilate regarding this aspect of Greek-Turkish relations than the fact that even antipathy is complex and makes the balance sought by the United States even more difficult to pursue and to achieve.¹⁴

"In the absence of war," writes Arnold Wolfers, "enmity may continue indefinitely and may be expressed in several ways, from a mere cessation of friendly intercourse to exchanges of any of the many types of inimical acts that fall short of war in the technical sense of hostilities involving the use of regular military force. On whatever level the inimical confrontation takes place, it is bound to have far-reaching consequences both for the nations directly involved and for the other members of the multistate system."¹⁵ As a consequence, the United States' relations with Greece and Turkey are affected by more than the typical bilateral relation of the United States with other NATO states. For Greece, Turkey is unmistakably a consideration in its relations with the United States. Nor can Turkey in its relations with the United States easily dismiss that intrusive because of its perception of the so-called Greek lobby, with its underpinning in the Greek-American community and in American Philhellenism: both have historically influenced perceptions and relations between the United States and the Greek state. What has developed from this situation is a set of circumstances which

especially the years 1945 to about 1960 and in spite of the escalating differences over Cyprus, was attributable to the collateral of domestic politics and the bipolarized context of international politics. This intermission in discord was achieved, firstly, by the United States and linkage to Greece and Turkey and, secondly, by the American initiative in globalizing Greek and Turkish bilateral and regional interests.

¹⁴Andrew Borowiec, *The Mediterranean Feud* (New York, 1983), especially Chapter 2. Panayote Dimitras, "Greece: A New Danger," *Foreign Policy*, 58 (Spring 1985) 134-50.

¹⁵Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration*, p. 31.

strongly suggest that a bilateral relation between the United States and either Greece or Turkey may not be adequately assessed without the calculus of the other state. According to Greece's Premier, Andreas Papandreou, "Greek-American relations pass through Ankara."¹⁶

If the perception of Greek-American relations passing through Ankara influence Greece's behavior, then conversely we may assume there is a perception among the Turks of Turkish-American relations passing through Athens and the comparatively influential Greek-American community in the United States. For example, in 1978, the Prime Minister of Turkey, Bulent Ecevit, described Turkey's "overdependence" on one source of armaments as "risky" policy "particularly if that source happens to be the United States [where] ethnic lobbies can be influential."¹⁷ The point is, as W.I. Thomas has observed, "If . . . [leaders] define situations as real, they are real in their consequences."¹⁸ And, among the political consequences of the perceptions by Greek and Turk, in which the United States is a principal factor, is the continuation of a collective frustration which gives pause to the mutuality of interest in collective defense through the American pursuit of balance.

As with most matters which concern security and involve Greeks and Turks, past differences weigh heavily. Mutually formed perceptions of Turkish expansionism, on the one hand, and of Greek irredentism, on the other, perpetuates the psychological framework within which all disputes of a substantive nature between them, as well as the procedural basis upon which they must be addressed, pass.¹⁹ In support of these summary remarks, we need only turn briefly to the Aegean dispute and focus on the level of political communication as a factor in the most recent crisis.

The origin of the current state of affairs may be traced to the granting of exploration rights by Ankara to the Turkish State Petroleum Company, in 1973. The justification of Turkey's action was its unilateral demarcation of the continental shelf, which conflicted with the area

¹⁶Cited in Theodore A. Coulombis, *The United States, Greece and Turkey*, p. 203.

¹⁷Cited in Andrew Wilson, *The Aegean Dispute*, p. 41, fn. 56.

¹⁸"The Relation of Research to the Social Process," *Essays on Research in the Social Sciences* (Washington, D.C., 1931), p. 189.

¹⁹Andrew Wilson, *The Aegean Dispute*, p. 7. In January 19, 1975, Turkey's Foreign Minister Essemel was quoted in *Cumhuriyet* as defining Turkey's policy interest in the Aegean as a "reaction to Greece's Great Idea Policy." [p. 39, fn. 16] And Greece's Premier, Andreas Papandreou has described the Aegean dispute and the Cyprus issue as "the products of Turkish expansionism." *The Times*, London (March 2, 1982), p. 1.

of the continental shelf claimed by Greece. Greece, a signatory state to the Geneva Convention of 1958 in the Continental Shelf,²⁰ rejected the legitimacy of Turkey's claim and protested its actions. In May 1974, the research vessel, Candarli, escorted by warships of the Turkish navy, carried out its exploration for oil. (The Candarli was followed, in June 1975, by the vessel Goel I and, between March and August of 1976, by the Sizmik I research vessel, which, in March 1987, again entered disputed waters bringing Greece and Turkey to the very precipice of war.) Within one month's time, Ankara granted additional licenses for exploration, this time in the vicinity of the waters around Greece's Dodecanese Islands. As the situation in the Aegean intensified, the political events in Cyprus, in the summer of 1974, quickly overshadowed the differences in the Aegean. Yet their linkage was unmistakable. The question of sovereign rights over the continental shelf in the Aegean, of territorial waters claimed by each state (as well as Greece's reserved right to extend the territorial sea limit), and of civil and military air traffic control corridors in the region, and the stalemate over Cyprus have influenced actions by Greece and Turkey that have complicated not only their bilateral relations but, also, their respective relations with the United States in collective defense (for example, the military fortification of the Greek islands of the eastern Aegean following Turkey's invasion of Cyprus and Turkey's creation, in 1975, of the Fourth Army at Izmir, the so-called "Army of the Aegean," which is a new command outside the framework of NATO.²¹ Since historical legacies remain tethered to the political and legal disputes, the question of Orthodox (Greek) minorities in Istanbul, on the islands of Gockeada (Imbros) and Bozcaada (Tenedos), and Moslems (Turkish) in western Thrace is also related to events in the Aegean dispute, giving the term a "composite" character, as Andrew Wilson has noted, in its application to distinct yet related issues between Greece and Turkey.²²

Thus, as the chronicle of events indicates, the NATO alliance was faced with its Aegean anomaly of mutually formed perceptions of threat between allies; of mobilization of segments of their armed forces; of Turkish military aircraft violating Greece's airspace and provoking in-

²⁰Both the Greek and Turkish positions on the issues of the continental shelf, territorial waters and air traffic are discussed by Andrew Wilson, *The Aegean Dispute*, pp. 22-24. The Greek perspective is considered by Thanos Veremis, "Greek Security: Issues and Politics," *Adversity in Alliance*, Jonathan Alford, ed. (New York, 1984), pp. 1-42. The Turkish position is treated by Duygu Bazoglu Sezer, *Turkey's Security Policies*, (London, Adelphi Papers No. 164, 1981).

²¹Duygu Bazoglu Sezer, *Turkey's Security Policies*, p. 22.

²²Andrew Wilson, *The Aegean Dispute*, p. 2.

interception; of claims and counterclaims; in short, there is a situation of recurring crisis with criticism of American deportment throughout, as the alliance protagonist whose policies bear considerable culpability. To be sure, American behavior at times exacerbated the situation and provided "more reason to worry about actions that antagonize a doubtful friend than about those that hurt a trusted ally."²³ In sum, as the main actor in NATO and, based upon the perceptions of the antagonists, the United States has not played its part well in terms of either Greek or Turkish alliance interests. The record of their respective responses to United States policy is clear in this matter.²⁴

Yet, interestingly, from 1973 to 1981, the channels of communication were sufficiently open between Greece and Turkey despite the continued tension over their unresolved differences in the Aegean and over Cyprus.²⁵ Although, in the end, the level of dialogue was to prove unproductive, in November 1976, Greece and Turkey had reached a mutually declared position on procedure concerning the issue of the continental shelf, good faith negotiations and future consultation, among other things.²⁶

Rent as they were with positions politically hardened, the pattern of politics in the Aegean dispute was symptomatic of the situation of recurring crisis: deteriorating levels of communication, followed by renewed discussions, followed by deteriorating communications. Despite the episodes of tension, however, both states continued sending and receiving messages which were instrumental in avoiding war, even as dialogue and relations between them measurably declined. By comparison, the level of communication in matters concerning the Aegean, for most of the 1980s (with the noted exception of an exchange of letters preceding the Davos meeting and communique of Premiers Ozal and Papandreou),²⁷ has been noticeably absent of any intercourse.

Dialogue is requisite for sending and receiving messages.²⁸ Without it, messages cannot be read or estimates of intentions accurately made. The absence of dialogue was a lamentable fact when, in March of 1987,

²³Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration*, p. 194.

²⁴For example, Greece's withdrawal from NATO's integrated military command (1974-80), and the takeover by Turkey of United States bases in response to the American arms embargo (1975-78).

²⁵Andrew Wilson, *The Aegean Dispute*, Appendix 1, p. 30.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷*The Economist* (February 6, 1988), p. 45. The text of the Davos Communique is printed in its entirety in the *Greek American*, New York (February 6, 1988).

²⁸For an analysis of the role of communications in politics, see Karl W. Deutsch, *Nerves of Government* (Glencoe, NY, 1963).

Greece and Turkey nearly engaged in war. It created a blind spot that facilitated crisis. Since direct communications did not exist and, since they existed earlier but were interfered with and permitted to atrophy, there clearly was, in the March confrontation, a danger of something mildly important being overrepresented and something significant underrepresented. Consequently, when Greece moved to nationalize the North Aegean Petroleum Corporation, Turkey reacted without the benefit of the critical facets of communication. As Karl Deutsch reminds us, the process includes assessing situations on the basis of an information flow screened at various levels, detecting blind spots or adjusting for them, evaluating intentions and outcomes in calculation before decisions are made. Greece's intent, to preclude an incident, was incorrectly estimated because of Turkey's misperception. The message was sent, but not received, thus precipitating the crisis. This time, with United States and NATO "intervention" in the incident, the outcome achieved was desired. The fact is that at that moment in time Athens and Ankara had engaged in "two parallel monologues," each "directed at equally chauvinistic domestic constituencies and toward Washington, but never toward each other."²⁹

The dynamics in communication focus, firstly, on the principals in the Aegean dispute and, secondly, on the United States and NATO. What of the next incident? With the reception of communication by Athens and Ankara, at least, we may now assume that a next time may be avoided, since the Davos communique of Papandreou and Ozal tends to reduce the ratio between a change in probability of an outcome and risks incurred in producing it. Thus it may be argued that a step has been taken to make an unlikely outcome less likely to happen. The grim reality is that without the communication initiative and its positive outcome, the ability of the principals themselves or the "interventionalists" to make an unlikely outcome more likely to happen, increases in probability. History is clear in these matters."³⁰

In considering the American dilemma in the Aegean dispute, we begin by examining the conceptual framework within which United States policymakers proceed — namely, the concepts geostrategic and geopolitical in the overriding national interest: the security of the United States. According to Saul Cohen, "a hierarchically-conceived framework for geopolitical analysis should distinguish between divisions

²⁹*New York Times* (March 30, 1987), p. 2.

³⁰Ferenc A. Vali, *Bridge Across the Bosphorus* (Baltimore, 1971), p. 204, fn. 102.

that have global extent, and those that have regional extent." Hence, in the former, the term geostrategic and, in the latter, geopolitical. When they are expressed as regions, for instance, "the geopolitical is a subdivision of the geostrategic." The distinction between the two is important, since "confusing their characteristics and functions may result in an overestimation of the capacity of geostrategic regions for political and economic unity, or in an underestimation of the capacity for unity within geopolitical regions." The concepts, Cohen points out, originated with Europe's colonial empires when "carving out spheres of influence in the 'exploitable' world, began to take on global or geostrategic connotations." Extended into the post World War II era, they describe United States and Soviet geostrategic interests "to gain unified control over Maritime Europe and the Mediterranean . . . to fulfill goals of political unity within and among geographical regions, and therefore took on geopolitical overtones."³¹

Thus the United States' geostrategic interest is global, its interest in Greece and Turkey is geopolitical. The distinction is not without linkage and is meaningful, as we shall see, since they have to do with the strategic planning and managing of strategy developed by the policymakers. As Dankwart Rustow recently noted, "from the early days of the Cold War . . . Washington's strategic analysts were agreed that Turkey and Greece formed an indispensable barrier to Soviet moves around Europe's southern flank into the Mediterranean."³² In other words, in geopolitical terms, Turkey and Greece formed a synergism in American strategic planning, an indispensable addition to the NATO power node geostrategically. In the aggregate, NATO's role is strategic, whereas in the Aegean region, Greece and Turkey, interconnected, play a tactical role.

That current strategic conceptions of the synergistic value of Turkey and Greece are consistent with those which facilitated their entry into NATO, in the early 1950s, rests heavily upon the truism in collective defense which Harry Psomiades points out: that "the defense of Greece and the Greek islands is greatly influenced by the defense of Turkey and the Turkish Straits; and that, conversely, the defense of Turkey and the Turkish Straits is intimately related to the defense of Greece and the Greek islands."³³ Arguments to the contrary ignore the reality

³¹Saul B. Cohen, *Geography and Politics in a World Divided*, 2d ed. (New York, 1973), pp. 64-65.

³²*Turkey: America's Forgotten Ally* (New York, 1987), p. 91.

³³"American Images of Greece and Turkey Since 1945," *Greek-American Relations*, eds. Theodore A. Couloumbis and John O. Iatrides (New York, 1980), p. 97.

of this synergy.³⁴ Moreover, they ignore the equally important fact that the defense of NATO's central region cannot be divorced from the defense of the southern flank.³⁵

Among the problems the United States faces in coping with the reality of the geopolitical synergism of Turkey and Greece is dealing with its own multiple and conflicting perspectives. In the flow of information to Washington, for example, how much of it mirrors the predilection and advocacy of "those responsible for monitoring events and representing interests in Greece and Turkey."³⁶ In part, the problematical in United States planning in collective defense of the southeast flank, for some policymakers, is in the factitious equation in which the sum of the parts in the Aegean can be greater than the strategic whole. Presented differently: the value of Greece in the matter of collective defense is not questioned, but the differential is clearly in Turkey's favor.

The danger in this form of thinking is in its gaining currency, if an increase in conventional forces becomes a compensating factor for the reduction of strategic forces. It can foster the concept to which successive policymakers become socialized thus affecting the molding of the national interest for the American public, the consumers of their beliefs. Karl Deutsch calls this the "politics of dogma" — the mind set which, more or less, ignores certain information in favor of existing beliefs that simply sustain the inertia of habit in policymaking.³⁷ This form of conceptualism fosters the perspective characterized by an American diplomat this way: "Let's say Greece is Denmark and Turkey is Germany. We may be fonder of the Danes, but we need the Germans more."³⁸ Thus seeing Greece through the prism of inequality has the capacity to blind United States policymakers to the synergism and to the fact that the other components of Turkey's strategic link to the Middle East, minus the Aegean littoral secured, are unquestionably compromised.³⁹

³⁴Bruce Kuniholm, "Turkey in the World," *The Middle East in Turkish-American Relations*, ed. George Harris (Washington, D.C., 1984), p. 11.

³⁵Richard Burt, "Turkey and the Reagan Administration," *The Middle East in Turkish-American Relations*, p. 18.

³⁶James A. Nathan and James K. Oliver, *Foreign Policy Making and the American Political System*, 2nd ed. (Boston, 1986), p. 11.

³⁷Karl W. Deutsch, *Politics and Government*, 3d ed. (Boston, 1983), p. 19.

³⁸Cited in Laurence Stern, "Bitter Lessons: How We Failed in Cyprus," *Foreign Policy*, 19 (Summer 1975) 74-75.

³⁹Andrew Borowiec, *The Mediterranean Feud*, p. 11. Bruce Kuniholm, "Turkey in the World," *The Middle East in Turkish-American Relations*, p. 10.

Another facet of the problem of balance confronting the United States is the question of "reliability," that is, in the case of Greece, the casting of doubt about its dependability in fulfilling its responsibilities in the Atlantic alliance. The message may appear in subtle form, such as Greece's steady drift away from the West,⁴⁰ or may be stated more categorically, as Greece the "somewhat unpredictable ally."⁴¹ The effect tends to project images of unreliability at the expense of reality — the mutuality of interests in collective defense.

As with Odysseus, the odyssey of American policy has its dialectical dimension; namely, the pursuit of collective defense manifesting insecurity. Since the quest for balance between the two antagonists is not without risk, a question arises: are the risks increased or decreased with any major shift in the position of the United States?

First, as has been indicated, there is no gain either geostrategically or geopolitically for the United States without balance. The axiom that points of strength are simultaneously points of weakness is applicable in the Aegean. Thus, in strategic terms, the efficacy of a "fortress Anatolia" would be compromised in the best of circumstances or, in the worst of circumstances, reduced to an irrelevancy by circumvention and technology. Second, Turkey's proximity to the Soviet Union reflects not only the American perception of its strategic link between Europe and the Middle East, but also the Turkish perception that the Soviet Union's ability to inflict damage upon them may be greater than the United States' ability to assist them.⁴² The geographic vulnerability of Turkey, in terms of the axiom above, may also foster perceptions about American reliability. The Turks, according to Barry Rubin, believe Washington "lacks staying power and consistency in following through on a policy."⁴³

Third, in addressing the question, American policy analysts need to consider the partisans carefully, since language as well as logic is apt to get muddled in a process that could override the deeper reality; the familiar conflict between aspiration and reality could turn into one between different aspirations. The fact is that just below the surface

⁴⁰See the Preface by Edwin J. Feulner, Jr., President of The Heritage Foundation, *The Middle East in Turkish American Relations*, p. v.

⁴¹For example, see the Foreword by Bernard Lewis in Dankwart A. Rustow, *Turkey: America's Forgotten Ally*, p. viii.

⁴²Duygu Bazoglu Sezer, "Turkey's Security Policies," *Greece and Turkey: Adversity in Alliance*, p. 66. G. Etzel Pearcy and Russell H. Fifield, *World Political Geography*, (New York, 1954), p. 295.

⁴³Barry Rubin, "U.S. Middle East Policy in the Turkish Context," *The Middle East in Turkish-American Relations*, p. 79.

of domestic politics there harbors in both Greece and Turkey an anti-Western sentiment centuries in the making that can be cultivated by extreme nationalists in each state.⁴⁴ The idea of a tilt may seem less pressing than the more complex effort of achieving and maintaining balance. In one sense, the greatest risk to the geostrategic interest of the United States may not be in the loss of Greece or Turkey to the Atlantic alliance because of too great a reliance upon one or the other, but in the loss of both states. As great powers earlier learned, the region's history suggests caution without a dominant single imperium.⁴⁵ As Robert Kaplan so poignantly reminds us, when all is considered the reality is that the "United States position in Greece often appears a little worse than it really is, while in Turkey it often appears a little better than it really is."⁴⁶

In order to shape events, American policymakers must face the reality that "building alliances is also a system maintaining function."⁴⁷ If the Greek thesis on national security and collective defense is confronted by the Turkish antithesis and both are well documented, then the superintending interest of the United States, in its Aegean odyssey, is to be found somewhere in the synthesis: that Turkey is not able to fulfill Greece's role in NATO nor Greece Turkey's.

⁴⁴Panayote E. Dimitras, "Greece: A New Danger," *Foreign Policy*, No. 58 (Spring 1985) pp. 135-50. T. R. Milton, "The Military Importance of Turkey to NATO and U.S. Security" (Washington, D.C., 1979), pp. 33-39.

⁴⁵Harry Psomiades, "American Images of Greece and Turkey Since 1945," *Greek-American Relations*, p. 97.

⁴⁶*The Wall Street Journal*, New York (February 17, 1987).

⁴⁷Inis Claude, Jr., "The Common Defense and Great Power Responsibilities," *Political Science Quarterly*, 101/5 (1986) 725.