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Greece after Papandreou coup: Soviet satrapy or civil war?

by Phocion

The last semblance of government by law crumbled in Greece last March 30, felled by the legicide hand of that nation's prime minister, the magniloquent Andreas Papandreou, when a pathetic, frightened man, one Christos Sartzetakis, was forced almost at bayonet point to take the oath of office and become the President of a republic which hardly knows him, replacing the venerable if often errant Constantine Caramanlis in the palace at Herod Atticus street.

That swearing-in ceremony marked the conclusion of an unfolding legal coup d'état by Papandreou which began on March 9, 1985, a few days after his three-day-long visit to Moscow. That legal coup d'etat began with a memorable speech by the Socialist prime minister to the central committee of his party, the PASOK, in which he announced his intention to revise the Constitution of the country without going through the constitutionally prescribed route of first holding general elections to elect a Constituent Assembly, the only body according to law invested with powers to revise the constitution. Target of Mr. Papandreou's intended constitutional revision is to either curtail or eliminate the powers of the office of the President, hitherto the regulator and guarantor of the state.

At the same time, Prime Minister Papandreou announced that he would oppose the re-election of then-President Constantine Caramanlis, also the principal author and inspirer of the constitution. He then put forward a virtual unknown and political non-entity, Christos Sartzetakis, as his candidate for the presidency. The following morning, March 10, President Caramanlis resigned in order "not to be a party in what is about to be perpetrated."

In the three weeks which followed, three successive ballotings in parliament eventually produced a vote which, Papandreou claims, elected Christos Sartzetakis President of the Republic for the next five years. Legal opinion among constitutional jurists is virtually unanimous that these elections for Sartzetakis are invalid. Neither the constitutionally mandated secrecy of the ballots was observed, nor the constitutionally required number of votes were cast for the candidate. Sartzetakis, himself a jurist, had also expressed the opinion that his own election was illegal but, according to reports, he was coerced by Papandreou into agreeing to take the oath of office.

The opposition party, New Democracy, refused to participate in the illegally conducted balloting in parliament and has announced that it does not recognize Sartzetakis as President.

The chill of civil war

Contrary to what anyone at the Department of State will admit, the principal purpose of Papandreou's legal coup d'etat is to realign Greece on the side of the Soviet Union within this year. This realignment will take the form of a formal termination of Greece's membership in NATO, an expulsion of the American military bases from Greece, and a form of association either with the Comecon or, *in extremis,* with the Warsaw Pact.

In no other area of policy except this had there been any profound disagreements between Papandreou and Caramanlis to prompt the former to launch his current campaign against both the presidency and the constitution.

The crowds outside the parliament building at the time in which the legal coup d'etat was being consummated with the swearing in of Sartzetakis, were a frightening sight from the past: Old-timer Communist Party toughies, Papandreou's parliamentary allies, were brandishing red flags and celebrating "The Change," which, in their terminology, denotes "The Revenge," in reference to their 1949 defeat in the last civil war. Thousand-drachma bills were being distributed to these demonstrators from thick wads in the hands of functionaries from the prime minister's office. The crowd of veteran Communist civil-war combatants were reminiscent of a similar crowd which had gathered almost exactly one year ago to the day at the nearby all-white-marble Panathenean Stadium.

In that gathering of one year ago, the Communists were the invited guests at the first party congress of Mr. Papandreou's PASOK. Two interesting individuals were Papandreou's guests of honor: alternate member of the Soviet Politburo Vladimir Dolgikh, and Greek Communist Party guerrilla commander "General" Markos Vafeiadis, recently returned to Greece from almost 30 years of voluntary exile in the Soviet bloc. Papandreou's keynote speech primarily addressed these two individuals.

That speech at the time became a sensation in the international press: In it, the Greek prime minister, a presumed NATO ally, characterized the United States as the primary imperialist menace in the world today and fell short of calling it the principal enemy of Greece. The crowds gathered at the stadium became frantic with enthusiasm. The one man who received the crowd's constant attention and repeated standing ovations was Gen. Markos Vafeiadis who, during the 1945-49 civil war, had led the combined Bulgarian and Greek Communist bands in an orgy of bloodletting against the Greek population and the state.

Vafeiadis, after his military defeat, had withdrawn to Tashkent, U.S.S.R., where for many years he operated as a Soviet security officer and received extensive further military training. He returned to Greece in the late 1970s, among thousands of other KGB and GRU-trained Communist ex-guerrillas, all beneficiaries of Constantine Caramanlis's democratic constitution and ensuing amnesty.

Vafeiadis and his crew of murderers stand, today, as the military defenders of Andreas Papandreou's March 29, 1985 legal coup d'état against the constitution.

Preparing for the confrontation

From the first day of his legal coup d'etat, Andreas Papandreou has been conducting a systematic purge of the top ranks of the armed forces. Over 50 general rank officers and over 150 colonels have been replaced in the army. All general rank officers in the law-enforcement agencies have been purged. Further activities by Papandreou and his close associates in the government indicate that the prime minister does not intend to submit to any popular verdict in the coming October general election which might be against him. According to our information, his legal coup d'etat is to be complemented by full-scale martial law if necessary. Whether this will succeed or not is a different matter.

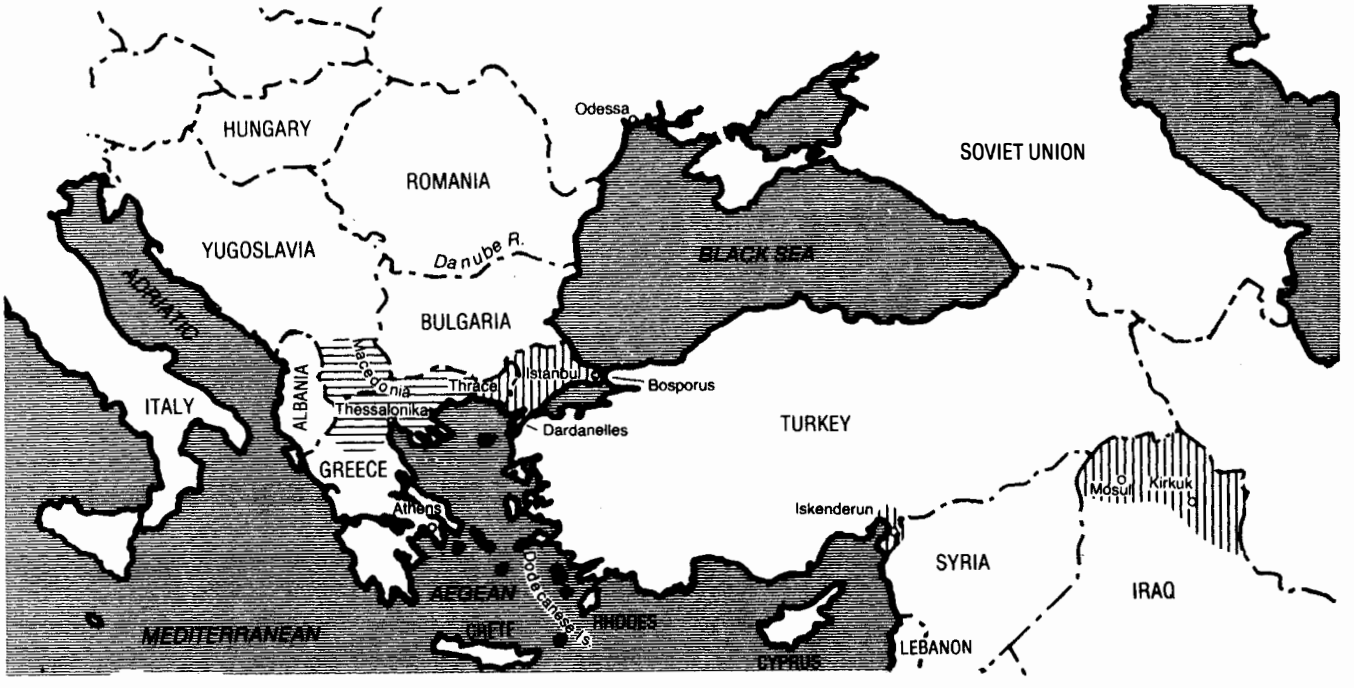
Papandreou so far has relied on a very narrow circle of individuals who helped him carry out his legal coup. This circle is primarily composed of Interior Minister Menios Koutsocheras, an intimate of Mrs. Margaret Papandreou of over 20 years, the American Mrs. Margaret Papandreou née Chadd, and the inner "Marxist troika" of PASOK: Tsochatzopoulos, Gennimatas, and Laliotis.

The rank-and-file parliamentary deputies of PASOK were, on the whole, blackmailed, intimidated, and railroaded into going along with Papandreou's coup. Their electoral base, mostly made up of traditional middle-of-the-road liberal *pater familias*, were left in a state of shock in the aftermath of the coup. A wave of cold fear has swept the mass of voters who once gave Papandreou his electoral victory in 1981, as they saw their once champion of democratic institutions ruthlessly trample under the constitution, parliamentary order, and elementary political decorum, all for the sake of a political alliance with the Communists of Markos Vafeiadis.

The opposition New Democracy party has made dramatic gains among these former Papandreou voters, but Papandreou seems unperturbed by this development. In fact, he appears to have pre-discounted such losses before embarking on this adventure. It appears that Papandreou is convinced that this fight shall not be resolved at the ballot boxes, but rather at the level of raw power.

The instruments on which he shall depend most are the following: 1) the hard core of Markos Vafeiadis' Soviet-trained ex-guerrillas, already tightly organized and well predeployed—all they shall need is arms from local weapons depots; 2) the cells of PASOK's local party organizations, which are already terrorizing the population, especially in the countryside; 3) certain select, isolated army and navy units which have been culled out of the main body of the armed forces for their loyalty to Papandreou; and 4) the thoroughly corrupted air force.

Papandreou knows that the bulk of the Army and the Navy are traditional loyalists and thoroughly anti-Communist. His immediate objective will be to neutralize them, rather than either win them over or challenge them head on. Similarly with the rank-and-file of the police and gendarmerie. As his principal instrument for neutralizing these forces, Papandreou is counting on the traditional inertia of bureaucratic organizations, which tend to follow orders from above, especially when those orders instruct them to *not* act rather



than act on any given matter.

The armed forces would be capable of moving against Papandreou and of restoring constitutional order if they were induced to do so by the following institutional powers: the old leadership of the Army now in retirement; the exiled King Constantine; and ex-President Constantine Caramanlis. Each of these three has, in recent years, maintained a distinct political identity, often at odds with the other two. Should these three forces agree to unite around a perspective of national salvation, the Papandreou anomaly could quickly be rectified and Greece be returned to lawful government, normalcy, and the West.

So far, Caramanlis, King Constantine, and the old army leadership have remained silent. A significant portion of officers on active duty, stunned by Papandreou's tearing up of the constitution, no longer think of themselves as owing any loyalty to either the prime minister or to his illegally chosen President. What considerations might induce Caramanlis or King Constantine or the retired old army leadership to move and issue to the active service army the kind of marching orders which might stop Papandreou's course?

The greater game at the State Department

Whatever Papandreou and his close circle of collaborators may think they are doing, they are simply pawns in an effort by Moscow to overturn the old 1945 Yalta Conference arrangements and redraw the map of Europe on the 40th anniversary of Yalta. In the greater scheme of conferences such as Yalta's which periodically redraw the political map of the world, the Greek state has played a signal role since the 1815 Congress of Vienna.

With respect to Yalta, in particular, Greece was selected by Moscow to be a test case. Right after the Stalin-Churchill-Roosevelt agreements on their respective "spheres of influence," Stalin decided to launch a Communist insurrection in Greece in order to test how far his partners were willing to go to defend the prerogatives accorded to them at the conference table. Five years and a few hundreds of thousands dead and maimed later, the United States with its "Truman Doctrine" demonstated that it was fully committed to preserve Greece's independent status outside of the Russian Empire.

Papandreou's current legal coup d'etat, as orchestrated behind the scenes by Soviet Ambassador Igor Andropov, is meant to probe whether or not the United States retains that old commitment of the immediate postwar period. Matters have now become more complicated because the unspoken State Department consensus under George Shultz is that the United States should retrench and should abandon that region of the world to Russian imperial suzerainty.

This matter goes back to an August 1982 meeting between George Shultz, then just nominated to be secretary of state, and Henry A. Kissinger in the Redwood Forest in

California. There, Kissinger and Shultz discussed the need to have the American "sphere of influence" worldwide reduced to "approximately 25% of its postwar extent." The matter has been extensively reported in the past. Under the rubric of Lord Carrington's "New Yalta Deal," it has been slipped through as the actual if unspoken foreign policy of the U.S. State Department, contrary to what President Reagan believes his foreign policy to be.

The State Department will of course vehemently deny that its intended policy objective is to shrink the American sphere of influence to just 25% of what it once was. Lord Carrington will formally deny the concealed intent of his "New Yalta" deal, too. Even Papandreou will deny that his current operating objective is to enter the embrace of the Soviet bloc. The known facts speak otherwise.

The rationalizations at the State Department for abandoning Greece to Moscow's new test of the validity of old Yalta are similar to the ones the Carter administration was concocting to justify the sacrifice of the nation of Iran to Brzezinski's "Arc of Crisis" theory. Lord Carrington and his collaborators in this, German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti, who jointly pull the strings over Papandreou and his Foreign Minister John Charalambopoulos and Deputy Foreign Minister Carolos Papoulias, belong to a group of demented Western European political leaders who are obsessively committed to the idea that they have entered into a "gentlemen's agreement" with the dynastic successors of Andropov, whereby a London-led Western Europe will establish a condominium with the Russian Empire at the expense of the last remnants of American power.

Since the autumn of 1983, Lord Carrington personally played a central role in preparing and guiding Andreas Papandreou in his slide toward Moscow. In fact, since Lord Carrington assumed the office of the general secretary of NATO last spring, as though by coincidence, an ancient network of Levantine families throughout the Eastern Mediterranean went to work to bring about a transfer of imperial suzerainty over that part of the world to the resurgent Russia. These families, inclusive of the Papandreou family, tend to have their geographic origins more or less coincident with the 12th- to 16th-century domains associated with the old Republic of Venice. They are active on the Adriatic coasts of both Italy and Yugoslavia, Greece's Ionian islands, Crete, Cyprus, Rhodes, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, the Alexandria-centered political factions of Egypt, and elsewhere. Swiss banking and Venetian cultural affinities are the connecting glue of this tribe.

As they have in past centuries arranged the transfer of imperial suzerainty of the Eastern Mediterranean from Alexandria to Rome, from Rome to Constantinople, from the Byzantine Empire to the Ottoman Empire, from the Ottomans to the British Empire via the Congress of Berlin, so now they are orchestrating the transfer from the "American sphere of influence" to the expanding Russian Empire. Personalities such as Carrington or Shultz are the merely symbolic presiding figures over the operation. The molecular work on the ground is carried out by the old Levantine families. The Russian imperial administration in Moscow has simply placed as proconsul in Athens the efficient Igor Andropov to enhance and orchestrate the process.

No doubt, the Russians' intentions are different from those of Carrington, Kissinger, Shultz, and others of their Western co-players.

Our best estimate of Russian intentions as betrayed through available information is more or less as follows:

A Greek civil war or, better, incorporation into the East bloc, will inaugurate a period of drastic map redrawing in the Balkans. Yugoslavia is to be broken up to make room for the creation of a Macedonian state under Bulgarian protection; Bulgaria is to be expanded to include parts of Greece's present North Aegean coast and present day Turkish Eastern Thrace; Turkey will be allowed to compensate for the loss of the European bank of the Dardanelle strait by grabbing the Dodecanese from Greece, consolidating its hold over Cyprus and entertaining territorial claims over Iraq's Kirkuk and Mosul areas; Syria in turn will be encouraged to lay claims over Turkey's Iskenderun naval base, and so forth.

Russian control over the Balkans will be consolidated with a massive Danube-to-Aegean canal system which is planned to provide continuous navigation between Odessa and Thessalonika, bypassing the Bosporus and Dardanelle straits; the Middle Eastern game of perennial tribal and sacerdotal warfare will continue to be played on the basis of rules set in Moscow. The entirety of the old North African, Near Eastern, and Balkan domain of the Ottoman Empire is to be turned into a string of Russian-controlled vilayets.

Continental Western Europe's southern underbelly will be a project complementing the drive to establish Russian hegemony over the West.

These projected results are at present disputed by Carrington, Shultz, Kissinger, and others who privately advocate a shrinkage of U.S. influence by means of an "orderly" deal with Moscow. So long as these gentlemen, and the State Department bureaucracy with them, cling to the delusion that such a deal with Moscow is possible, American foreign policy toward Greece will be hopelessly confused, divided, and contradictory.

If Greece's nationalist forces, institutionally represented by Caramanlis, King Constantine, and the old army leadership wait for a "clear signal from Washington" before they break their silence vis-à-vis Papandreou's legal coup d'etat, they shall wait for a very long time. They shall either make decisions on their own, fight on their own, and reverse the course of events by their own labors and sacrifices, or they and their nation shall perish.