HELEN CONISPOLIATIS

Facing the Colonels:
British and American diplomacy
towards the Colonels' Junta in Greece,
1967-1970

PhD Thesis

LEICESTER 2003
To my parents,
Nicholas and Anastasia
Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to illuminate the foreign policy making of Britain and the United States towards Greece during the first three critical years that the military dictatorship of the Colonels ruled the country (1967-1970).

The introductory chapters review the general foreign policies of and interrelationships between the United States and Britain towards Greece during the Cold War. Through a mainly chronological structure the thesis is subsequently arranged in nine chapters, each divided into two parts, which examine alternately the American and the British attitude on the same key issues: doing business with the dictatorship, deciding on the arms supplies to Greece, dealing with opposition to the regime at home and in the international organisations, supporting the Greek King, facing the internal pressures on the question of the welfare of Greek prisoners. In the conclusion, the study reveals that the American foreign policy-makers placed more emphasis on the US security-military considerations following a so-called 'cool but correct' attitude towards the regime, while Britain gave priority to her political objectives adopting a 'working relationship' with the colonels.

The study mainly draws on the data and the information collected from the archives of the LBJ Library in Austin, the National Archives II in Maryland, and the Public Records Office in London.
Abstract

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Acknowledgments

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Abbreviations

ADC  aide de camp
AID  Agency for International Development
BBC  British Broadcasting Corporation
CAS  Controlled American Source
CENTO Central Treaty Organisation
CIA  Central Intelligence Agency
CINC  Commander in Chief
CINCEUR  Commander in Chief, Europe
DCM  Deputy Chief of Mission
OPD  Defence and Overseas Policy Committee
DPC  Defence Planning Committee
DRC  Defence Review Committee
EAM  Hellenic Resistance Front (Εθνικόν Απελευθερωτικόν Μέτωπον)
EDA  Union of the Democratic Left (Ενωσιά Δημοκρατικής Αριστεράς)
EEC  European Economic Community
FCO  Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FMS  Foreign Military Sales
FO  Foreign Office
FRG  Federal Republic of Germany
FY  Fiscal Year
GOG  Government of Greece
HAF  Hellenic Air Force
HMG  Her Majesty’s Government
HNDGS  Hellenic National Defence General Staff
ICRC  International Committee of the Red Cross
IG  Interdepartmental Group
ILO  International Labour Organisation
IMAHG  Interdepartmental Mediterranean Ad Hoc Group
INR  Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
IPMG  Interdepartmental Political-Military Group
ITF  International Transport Federation
JUSMAGG  Joint United States Military Advisory Group, Greece
KYP  Greek Central Intelligence Agency (Κεντρική Υπηρεσία Πληροφοριών)
LIEO  Liberal International Economic Order
MAP  Military Assistance Program
MP  Member of Parliament
NATO  North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<td>North Atlantic Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEA</td>
<td>Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Department of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIEO</td>
<td>New International Economic Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSC</td>
<td>National Security Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSCIG</td>
<td>National Security Council Interdepartmental Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSDM</td>
<td>National Security Decision Memorandum</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSSM</td>
<td>National Security Study Memorandum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEC</td>
<td>Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries</td>
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<td>RAF</td>
<td>Royal Air Force</td>
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<td>RHAF</td>
<td>Royal Hellenic Air Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>RHN</td>
<td>Royal Hellenic Navy</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBA</td>
<td>Sovereign Base Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEATO</td>
<td>Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIG</td>
<td>Senior Interdepartmental Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAR</td>
<td>United Arab Republic [Egypt and Syria]</td>
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<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>USCINCEUR</td>
<td>United States Commander in Chief, Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>USIA</td>
<td>United States Information Agency</td>
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<td>USRO</td>
<td>United States Regional Office of the US Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and European Regional Organizations</td>
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<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
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<td>VOA</td>
<td>Voice of America</td>
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<td>WEU</td>
<td>Western European Union</td>
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Agnew, Spiro: Greek-American, Republican, Vice-President of the USA, 1969-1973
Ambatielos, Betty: British wife of Antonios Ambatielos
Angelis, General Odysseus: Greek Army officer, Chief of the General Staff, Greek Armed Forces, 1967-1968; Commander-in-Chief of Defence Forces, 1969-73
Averoff-Tositsa, Evangelos: Greek, Foreign Minister of Greece, 1956-1961
Barnes, John E.W.: British, Head of Western Organisations Department, FO, 1962-69
Battle, Lucius D.: American, Assistant Secretary for NEA, 1967-1968
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Bendall, David V.: British, Counsellor to HM Embassy in Washington DC, USA, 1965–69; Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Western Europe, FCO, 1969–71
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Beswick, Lord Frank: British, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth affairs, 1965-67; Government Chief Whip, House of Lords, 1967–70
Bohlen, Charles E.: American, Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, 1967-69
Boothby, Basil E.: British, UK Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe, 1965-69
Brandt, Willy: German, Foreign Minister, 1966-69; Chancellor of the FRG, 1969-74
Brewster, Herbert Daniel: American, Director of the office of Greek affairs, Department of State, 1966-1969
Brosio Manlio: Italian, Secretary-General to NATO, 1964-71
Brown, George: British, Labour MP, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1966-68
Burchinal, General: American, Deputy US Commander in Chief for Europe
Burrows, Sir Bernard A.B.: British, Permanent UK Representative to NATO, since 1966
Caradon, Lord: British, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and also Permanent UK Representative to the UN, 1964-70
Chalfont, Lord Alun G.J.: British, Minister of State, FCO, 1964-70; UK Permanent Representative to WEU, 1969-70
Christian, George: American, President Johnson's Press Secretary, from 1966
Churchill, Winston: British, Prime Minister of the UK and Minister of Defence, 1940-45; Leader of the Opposition, 1945-51; Prime Minister, 1951-55
Clark: American Senator, Democrat, Pennsylvania
Cleveland, Harlan: American, Permanent US Representative to NATO, from September 1965
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Constantine II: King of Greece, 1964-1973
Costar, Sir Norman: British, High Commissioner in Nicosia, Cyprus, 1967-69; he retired on 1.8.69
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Denney, George C., Jr.: American, Deputy Director, INR, Department of State

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Gore-Booth, Sir Paul H.: British, Permanent Under Secretary, FO, since 1965

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Grivas, Lt-General George: Greek Army officer, Commander of post-independent Greek Cypriot National Guard, 1964-1967

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Hohler, Henry A.F.: British, Assistant Under-Secretary of State, FO, 1966-67

Hood, Lord Samuel: British, Deputy Under Secretary of State, FO, and UK Permanent Representative to the WEU, 1962-1969

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<table>
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<th>List of Persons</th>
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<tr>
<td>Humphrey, Hubert H.: American, Democrat, Vice President of the USA, 1963-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iliou, Ilias: Greek, leader of the Democratic Left Party (EDA) from 1956</td>
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<td>Jay, Douglas: British, Labour MP, President of the Board of Trade, 1964-67</td>
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<td>Kanellopoulos, Panayotis: Greek, Prime Minister of Greece, 1967</td>
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<td>Karamanlis, Konstantinos: Greek, Prime Minister of Greece, 1955-63</td>
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<td>Katzenbach, Nicholas: American, Under Secretary of State, 1966-1969</td>
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<td>Makarezos, Lt-Colonel Nikolaos: Greek, military conspirator, Minister of Coordination, 1967-71</td>
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<td>McCone, John A.: American, Director of the CIA, 1961-65, and friend of Constantine II</td>
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</table>
List of Persons

Owens, John P.: American, Assistant Secretary to the Office of Greek Affairs, State Department, 1966-68

Pachios, Harold C.: Greek-American, Associate White House Press Secretary, principal aide to Press Secretary Bill Moyers, in 1965.

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Papadopoulos, Lt-Colonel Georgios: Greek military conspirator; Minister in Prime Minister's office, 1967; Prime Minister of Greece, 1967-73

Papandreou, Andreas: Greek, Minister to the Greek Prime Minister, February-November 1964, Alternate Minister of Economic Coordination, February-July 1965

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Rippon, Geoffrey: British, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1970-72

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Snodgrass, John M.O.: British, First Secretary, FO, 1967-70
Spandidakis, Lt-General Grigoris: Greek army officer, Chief of General Staff, 1965-67; Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, 1967
Stewart, Michael: British, Labour MP, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1968-69
Stewart, Sir Michael: British Ambassador in Athens, Greece, 1967-71
Symington: American Senator, Missouri
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Theodorakis, Mikis: Greek, celebrated as a popular musician
Tomkins, Sir Edward: British, Counsellor to HM Embassy in Washington DC, USA, 1967-79
Thomson, George: British MP; Joint Minister of State, FO, 1967; Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs, 1967-68; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1969-70
Thant, U: Burmese, UN Secretary-General, 1961-71
Verykios: Greek, Ambassador in London, UK
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Wheeler, General Earle: American Army officer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
Wilson, Harold: British, Labour MP, Prime Minister of the UK, 1964-1970
Winnick, David J.: British, Labour MP (Croydon South), 1966-70
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Introduction:

The United States of America, 
the United Kingdom, 
and Greece 
into the vortex of Cold War
1. American policies during the Cold War

1.1 Cold War: The United States versus the Soviet Union

In the aftermath of World War II, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics dominated the international scene, dividing the world into two camps: the capitalist west and the communist east. The patterns of these two societies, communist and capitalist, grew up behind the forward trenches of the armies sent out by the differing economies. Yet, although the hostility of the two 'superpowers' caused continuous disputes and confrontations, open clash was avoided. This state of affairs was described by the term 'Cold War,' a term that entered general usage in 1947 and was popularized by the US columnist Walter Lippmann.

Arguably, the Cold War stemmed from the Russian revolution of 1917, which sought not only to establish socialism in Russia but to stir up an international proletarian revolution as well. International capitalism, increasingly under the leadership of the USA, regarded the Bolshevik belief that communism would deterministically prevail in the whole world as an obvious threat. Therefore, according to Williams, the 'Cold War' developed as the next phase of a more general conflict between the established system of western capitalism and its internal and external opponents.

The imperative need to defeat Hitler's Germany caused the western countries and the USA to ally with the Soviet Union against the common enemy. After their victory over the Axis powers, however, the latent tension rose to the surface. The USSR regarded the USA as the worst alternative of capitalistic imperialism, fearing that the Americans would expand their hegemony over those parts of the globe that were not occupied by the Red Army. Conversely, the West foresaw in the Soviet Union the prospect of a new

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1 Barraclough, 1993, p. 292-293.
3 Hobsbawm, 1995, p. 63.
expansive dictatorial regime. The appointment of communist governments in Eastern Europe and the revolution of Mao Tse-tung in China (1949) created an apparently solid bloc from Europe to the Pacific Ocean. Thus America’s suspicions of Russia grew into fear.

As a result, President Harry Truman formally enunciated his ‘doctrine’ in March 1947, which in turn led to the rebuilding of Europe on American money and the containment of communism across the globe by aid and arms. Furthermore, the USA created defensive organisations—NATO in Europe in 1949, SEATO in South-East Asia in 1954, CENTO in the Middle East in 1959—and a series of military bases around the Soviet perimeter. In turn, the USSR and China responded by supporting militarily and politically the anti-colonial and national movements against the ‘world imperialism’ in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Moreover, the Soviet Union created in 1956 its own military alliance, the Warsaw Pact.

The two adversaries never confronted each other directly, however. Once the Soviet Union exploded its first nuclear bomb in August 1949 and its hydrogen bomb in 1953, the two superpowers plainly abandoned the option of war as a policy tool against each other. In fact, they accepted the unequal world partition, and made every effort to settle demarcation disputes without an open clash between their armed forces that might lead to a war between them. Furthermore, in contrast with their Cold War rhetoric, both sides trusted in the other’s moderation whenever a serious incident occurred (i.e. during the Korean War [1950-1953] or at the missile crisis in Cuba in 1962).

As a result, the Cold War was conducted not openly, but with spies and secrecy, with threats, and with subversive actions; in other words, it was a war by proxy. Both sides tried to expand their spheres of influence, exploiting—or even provoking—local conflicts, providing the opponents with arms, offering technical support and education, but without engaging in direct fight.

In Europe, the dividing lines between the opposite camps were explicitly drawn by Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin in 1943-1945. Thus, the situation stabilized relatively quickly in that region. In the rest of the world, however, things proved much more fluid, especially since the instability caused

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5 Calvocoressi, 1996, p. 3-4.
by the expansion of the communist power took place at a time when the colonial rule was being shaken by nationalist convulsions. The orientation of the new states remained ambiguous, as the anti-colonial nationalist movements in the developing world exploited the appeal and potency of communism. Consequently, the two superpowers continued their competition for support and influence in the Third World. Yet, the USSR never attempted to extend its range of influence further by military force, and neither did the USA intervene in the zone of accepted Soviet hegemony.

1.2 The US pursuit of power

In connection with the foreign policy strategy of the USA, Jentleson argues that four core goals defined the US national interest, the so-called ‘four Ps’: Peace, Prosperity, Principles, and Power. During the 45 years of the Cold War, the emphasis placed on and the strategies chosen for each of these goals contained elements of both continuity and change, and defined the varying patterns of the US foreign policy options.

According to Jentleson, the goal of Peace between the USA and the USSR was pursued continually, but the strategies for its achievement changed during the different sub-periods of the Cold War. More particularly, the United States tried to keep the peace first principally by creating the multilateral structure of the United Nations, and then in the 1970s ‘realistically’ through the bilateral superpower diplomacy of détente. In the same way, Prosperity was firstly secured by the LIIEO, but then it was shaken by OPEC, NIEO, and other 1970s economic shocks.

With regard to Principles, the Cold War was firstly based on the conception that it was the result of deep ideological bipolarity and not of typical great-power politics. In that way, the Third World ‘ABC’ (Anything But Communism) rationale was thought to be equivalent to democracy. During the 1970s, however, Nixon questioned the ‘ABC’ approach arguing that the

9 Jentleson, 2000, p. 10, 120.
USA could feasibly work with states of differing -even antipathetic- social systems as long as they shared the American interests in countering the challenges to global security.

Finally, the core goal of Power was pursued through strategies of containment starting in Europe and then extending to Asia and more globally until the 1970s. More particularly, the American National Security Policy shifted from Kennan’s original strategy of containment to Kennedy-Johnson’s ‘flexible response’, by which the USA and the USSR sought to have a wider choice than the one they were faced with, which was either humiliation or all-out nuclear war. On the other hand, deterrence was firstly seen as a matter of maintaining the image of the US nuclear superiority by winning the arms race.

In the 1970s, however, in view also of the American defeat in Vietnam, the Nixon administration recognized the multidimensional nature of power, which meant that any ‘gains’ for one side did not invariably mean ‘losses’ for the other. Consequently, the key for deterrence was mutual restraint, carried out in practice through the arms control strategy: in 1969, the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks took place, while in 1970, agreement was reached for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

In sum, according to Forsythe, the American foreign policy demonstrated an ethical and a power tradition, with an increasing shift towards the latter after 1945. In that way, the American anticommunism progressively became primarily not a moral crusade but a power struggle. In the 1960s, for example, what the USA feared most was not communism, which was fragmented, or the Soviet Union, which was committed to détente, or even China, which was impotent, but rather the threat of embarrassment and humiliation. Yet, given the strong ethical tradition in American history, the pursuit of power was either rationalized in terms of an ultimate good or made to fit with specific policies concerned with ethics or rights.

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2. The position of Britain during the Cold War

2.1 British prime concerns after 1945

The end of World War II found Europe divided, financially devastated, and its democracies apparently threatened by Communist subversion within and Russian aggression without. In contrast, the United Kingdom seemed admirably free from internal divisions.

In fact, Britain emerged after the War as the major economic and military power in Western Europe, with her national institutions and most of her empire intact. As one of the three principal Allied victors, she had no incentive to reflect on the possibility of a reduced future position. On the contrary, as Winston Churchill observed in 1948, Britain’s primary overseas interests lay in three interlocking ‘circles’: in the ‘special relationship’ across the Atlantic, in the Empire and the Commonwealth, and in Europe. The homogeneity of the political elite, the well-organized bureaucratic system, the two-party system, which held back radicalism, and the fundamentally conservative public opinion worked in favour of a consensus among party leaderships, which discouraged drastic innovations and supported the continuity both in Britain’s domestic arrangements and in her pragmatic, non-ideological foreign policy of maintaining the country’s Great Power status.

Yet, UK’s continuing efforts to project this world role were confounded over the years by a series of changes in Britain’s external environment: the rise of the superpowers and the shift of the fulcrum of power from Europe; the rise of nationalism outside Europe, which resulted in the rejection of imperial rule and in opposition to the exploitation of natural resources by industrialized states; and the technological revolution affecting both weapons systems and civilian industry. The overriding constraint that profoundly affected all of Britain’s postwar foreign policy however was the relative decline of its economic base. This economic decline in turn engendered a progressive

15 Frankel, 1975, p. 310-311; Young, 1997, p. 146.
16 Frankel, 1975, p. 12.
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diminution in the ability of successive governments to project a world military role.\textsuperscript{17}

As a result, the British efforts to sustain the ‘three circles’ foreign policy strategy became increasingly overextended. The consequent process of imperial postwar withdrawal began technically with the decolonisation of India and Pakistan in 1947-48. In the late fifties, when Macmillan’s ‘wind of change’ brought a second and more far-reaching wave of decolonisation, the retreat from empire really gathered momentum. By the mid-1960s the major process of decolonisation had ended; in 1971-72, British military forces were finally withdrawn from ‘east of Suez.’ At the same time, the Commonwealth gradually disintegrated as vehicle for British influence, and its economic value waned.

Meanwhile, the British concern with the Soviet threat and the consequent need to take appropriate action as and when required to persuade Washington to maintain its European presence forced the UK to overstretch its defence capability, and make the Anglo-American relationship the cornerstone of Britain’s Cold War foreign policy. Conversely, fixation with its English-speaking orbits blinded much of Whitehall to the significance of moves for European integration, which finally resulted in the creation of the EEC without British participation.\textsuperscript{18}

Yet, Britain’s retreat from empire and her consequent declining ability to project a world military role rendered her less able to assist American efforts to protect the general global interests of the West.\textsuperscript{19} In the same way, her old traditional balancing role was reduced.\textsuperscript{20}

Within that context, the claim to Great Power status, which had hitherto been resolutely defended but was by now manifestly at odds with the facts, was reluctantly abandoned, but not forgotten: in the heightened awareness of changing circumstances, Whitehall sought for an alternative conception of ‘greatness.’ In the same way, long entrenched ideas about Britain’s

\textsuperscript{17} Sanders, 1990, p. 288.
\textsuperscript{18} Ovendale, 1998, p. 80, 103; Sanders, 1990, p. 71-72.
\textsuperscript{20} Boardman etc., 1973, p. 8; Greenwood, 2000, p. 192-3.
psychological, geological, institutional, and commercial separation from the European mainland had to be reappraised.\textsuperscript{21}

Britain's turn to Europe seemed irreversible: European orientation in defence had been established by NATO and completed by the British withdrawal from East of Suez; trade with Western Europe had grown much more rapidly than with any other trading partners; and the solidarity of British and of Western European interests had become apparent in many fields.\textsuperscript{22} Whitehall's attention therefore shifted towards the accelerating moves for economic and political union in Europe, wishing to improve Britain's international standing.\textsuperscript{23} Britain finally managed to enter the European Economic Community in 1973; she remained however a 'reluctant' European: Britain continued to favour a freer trade system, wished to minimize the loss of sovereignty to centralized institutions, and tried to use the Community to strengthen her national impact on world affairs. In other words, the UK was left committed to the European future but with little relish for the task.\textsuperscript{24}

2.1 The British 'special relationship' with the USA

Britain and the USA have had an unusual accord over time, measured not so much by treaties or other specific agreements, as by a broad and sustained unity of outlook between the two countries. That more general and inclusive common viewpoint can be traced to a large number of points of connection: language and culture, diplomatic and foreign relations, economic links, political values - but different practices and institutions - many personal and ethnic connections, interrelated strategic and military concerns, broadly shared international and foreign policy interests.

Both countries have gone to exceptional lengths to avoid war with each other, even during the transition period when the USA took over from Britain

\textsuperscript{21} Mangold, 2001, p. 8-11, 118-123; Young, 1993, p. 172-173; Boardman etc., 1973, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{22} Frankel, 1975, p. 330-331.
\textsuperscript{23} Young, 1993, p. 14, 107, 165.
\textsuperscript{24} Young, 1993, p. 182-183.
as the world’s richest and most potent nation state. On the other hand, the twentieth century produced also many disputes, bitter disagreements, controversies, and intense diplomatic and political frictions between Britain and the USA. These problems however were controlled, and it became more and more noticeable that both sides were unwilling to follow the normal rules of power politics in their relations with each other. Thus, the term ‘special relationship’ is usually used to define that almost unique nature of relation that exists between the USA and Britain.

With particular reference to the years under study, Bartlett described the Anglo-American relationship during the years 1963-69 as weakening, although early in the Wilson-Johnson era there was little hint of the extent of the decline that was about to take place. Harold Wilson’s first concern was to establish rapport with the president of the day, Lyndon Baines Johnson, thinking it expedient -for domestic and international reasons- to speak of a ‘close,’ not a ‘special relationship,’ one based on matters of substance. By December 1965, the CIA was praising Wilson for his ‘great political acumen,’ his courage, and flexibility in the face of an extraordinary difficult political and economic situation.

Yet, in so far as Washington valued the special relationship it was also for hard-headed reasons of self-interest. The US interest in Britain’s retention of bases and in the deployment of troops, ships, and aircraft in the Persian Gulf, at Aden, in Singapore, and in the Indian ocean deepened as the United States became more deeply and uncomfortably involved in war in South-East Asia, and did not wish to fill yet another vacuum. Second, Wilson’s evident determination to avoid a devaluation of sterling met the American desiderata, since the dollar was itself in a fragile condition, and thus vulnerable to an international crisis which the fall of sterling might precipitate.

The inability of Britain to meet these requirements, in connection with her reluctance to send a token force to assist with the war in Vietnam -as the American effort there intensified- or failing that to give strong diplomatic backing to the United States, caused many Americans to cease to regard her as

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either a powerful or a special ally. The more so since the Federal Republic of Germany, with its nearly one-fifth of the world’s exports of manufactured goods, and with its military forces on the crucial Central Europe front outstripping Britain’s, was replacing the UK as America’s single most important European partner. Consequently, the Six Day War —during which American policy was made with what seemed a very public neglect of any coordination with European partners, including Britain—marked the end of the phase since 1956, when the USA had been concerned to let the United Kingdom’s interests in the Middle East down gently.

When the Nixon administration took office in 1969, Kissinger in particular seemed to go out of his way on several occasions to underline his interest in Britain as a player on the international stage. In practice, however, the UK did not come up to the expectations of the Nixon administration. In 1970 the Conservatives returned to power in Britain, and Heath’s campaign for membership of the EEC began to erode still further what remained of Anglo-American contacts at the highest level. Edward Heath himself spoke of a ‘natural relationship,’ a subtle demotion of Anglo-American relations to somewhere below special but seemingly rather more than ordinary. In that way, he meant that personal affinities, made possible by common language, should not be confused with political realities by which the UK was physically located in West Europe and intimately entangled in its economic and military subsystems.

Yet, Heath’s need to renounce claims to a special relationship with the USA was obviously linked to Britain’s bid to enter the European community. The British Prime Minister was well aware of De Gaulle’s objection that the UK would be a ‘Trojan Horse’ for the United States, providing a surrogate veto for any American administration over European attempts to develop external policies of their own. Pompidou also insisted on reassurances that Britain would not compromise European cohesion by giving priority to its American relationship. On the other hand, except on his own priority of the construction of Europe, Heath showed no desire to rock the Anglo-American

31 Bartlett, 1992, p. 130; Ball etc., 1996, p. 305-309.
boat: for example, in 1973, Britain switched away from attempts to build up South Africa’s role and granted ‘carte blanche’ to the USA to fortify and enhance the facilities of the Diego Garcia base, as it had wished.\(^\text{32}\)

In other words, the Anglo-American relation remained special in quality compared with Washington’s links with other allies. Global collaboration in signals intelligence, the unique nuclear alliance (Polaris), and the habit of close consultation between the two diplomatic and defence establishments all stood out. But, unlike the 1950s, the relationship was no longer special in importance either to the United States or in international politics.\(^\text{33}\)

3. Greece: Events and developments since 1945

3.1 Greece and her Anglo-American protectors

In the eastern Mediterranean at the lower end of the Balkan Peninsula, there is situated a small European country with an illustrious past: Greece. Yet, even though ancient Greece was the birthplace of democracy, the history of modern Greece - until 1974- was one of political instability and repressive governments.

What is more, there were few major governmental actions or domestic crises in the country that were not caused by the interventions or the pressures of foreign powers, or developed in response to an international crisis that allowed for no other course. Greece’s geographic location, level of economic development, and demographic strains made her particularly vulnerable to the pressures of external events and to the direct involvement of foreign states in the Greek political process. In other words, Greece was a penetrated political system.\(^\text{34}\)

\(^\text{32}\) Ball etc., 1996, p. 307.
\(^\text{33}\) Reynolds, 1991, p. 239.
\(^\text{34}\) Legg, 1969, p. 62-64.
One of the foreign powers with predominant influence in Greece was Britain. The United Kingdom’s presence in the Greek affairs dated back from Greece’s liberation in 1821, but in the inter-war period and afterwards the British influence was quite dominant. During World War II, however, although the legitimate government considered itself a client of Britain, the Greek Communist Party, which had quite faithfully followed the turns of the Soviet policy in the interwar period, became an outright agent of the Soviet Union.

More particularly, Lenin’s ‘vanguard party’ was structured in a way that produced a force of disciplined and disinterested cadres, prepared to face extreme situations – i.e. underground activities, persecutions, and war. As a result, the communists especially excelled in the resistance movements against the Nazi occupiers. The same applied to Greece. The war against the Axis was waged essentially by the armed internal resistance, which in turn was dominated by communists. As a result, Britain was much concerned lest EAM, the communist guerilla group, would attempt to fill the power vacuum after the German withdrawal from Greece and appoint a communist government, bringing the country within the Soviet sphere of influence.

The British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, took the initiative. On 7 October 1944 British troops started to land in Peloponnese. In December, fighting broke out in Athens between the British troops and the EAM, which ignored the British order to disarm. On the intervention of Churchill, an uneasy truce was signed between the Greek government, and the Communist Party and EAM on 12 February 1945; it did not last for long, however. When a new uprising broke out in 1946, the sagging Greek government called for British assistance and the fulfillment of its role as Mediterranean policeman. The new Communist insurrection was particularly effective, first because it benefited from widespread discontent with the right-wing government, and second because of the close proximity of supply bases across the border in the neighboring Communist states of Albania and Yugoslavia.

As the civil war continued, the UK felt unable to extend further financial and military support. On 21 February 1947, therefore, Britain informed the USA that she could no longer supply assistance after 31 March

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1947. Since Greece had to have outside aid for internal reconstruction and military support, the American government was forced to assume the responsibility. Besides, as it was argued, the Communist drive could well be the opening stage of a flanking movement, which had both Italy and France, politically two of the more fragile links in the western armour-lying in its direct path, so making any Allied presence in the FRG largely irrelevant.

Consequently, the decision to support Greece caused the preaching of an ideological crusade against the Soviet Union in the form of the ‘Truman Doctrine,’ which in turn began the Cold War. Two years later, having suffered severe military setbacks and no longer receiving aid from Yugoslavia, the rebels in Greece ceased open hostilities on 16 October 1949.

The civil war outlasted the wider war by several years and left a bitter legacy to Greece. It was marked by atrocities on both sides, searing the Greek consciousness for many years afterwards. The left was alienated from, and repressed by, a rightist regime that elevated anti-communism to an official state ideology. Alongside the fairly liberal constitution of 1952, a largely unwritten code operated, which accepted the army as the guarantor of the established social order. In short, the continuance of the civil war to the end of the 1940s was an economic and social disaster, partially relieved by the American aid and by the foreign policy choices of the subsequent Greek governments (entry to NATO, EEC, etc).

Meanwhile, the Korean War convinced Washington that the danger of Soviet expansion was a strictly military one, which could be resisted not by political and economic reforms achieved through the democratic left and centre, but by reliance on the military elements—not merely in strictly military matters, but in politics as well. That militarisation of the American policy was reflected in the induction of Greece and Turkey into NATO on 20 September 1951. In that way, Greece became a cog in the formal alliance of Western Europe with the United States against Eastern Europe and the USSR.

In sum, while in the late 1940s Greece was under British and American control, during the 1950s the Athenian governments were under heavy
American influence.⁴⁰ As the Cold War raged, the US diplomatic representatives interfered quite overtly in the political affairs of Greece whenever political uncertainty seemed to endanger the larger aims of economic stability in the region. As the US involvement became more extensive, threats to withhold American aid were constantly advanced if the proper government stability was not reached, or if a suggested policy was not enacted.⁴¹ Even in the 1960s, when the American interference was less overt, the US Embassy in Athens could not alter the basically military orientation of the American policy, nor did it have the power to control the activities of the military mission and the CIA, both of which had more resources at their disposal than the Embassy, despite the Ambassador's nominal authority over them.⁴² Finally, internal political pressures in Britain and the USA further increased the complexity of relationships between Greece and her protectors.

3.2 The military coup in Greece

The wars of the 1940s had enabled the Greek armed forces to acquire great institutional autonomy and enjoy significant political authority. In fact, the military and the monarchy were the powerful props of the political right, which ruled Greece until 1963.

Despite the rigidity of the Greek political system, a significant socio-economic change took place at that time, when a growing middle class started to look for greater political influence. Yet, any attempt to open up politics to the centre-left risked jeopardising the balance of power, currently exercised by the triarchy of monarchy, army, and parliamentary right, and calling into question the role of the army as custodian of the status quo.⁴³

Consequently, when the left-wing Progressive Centre Union won an absolute majority in the general elections in 1965, the right, and especially the army, were particularly hostile to the new government accusing it of communist tendencies. The situation was further complicated, when Andreas

⁴¹ Legg, 1969, p. 73-74; Nicholakopoulos, 2000, p. 175, 181.
⁴³ Gowland etc., 1995, p. 133-134.
Papandreou, the son of the Prime Minister, was accused of being involved in a left-wing secret organisation within the army called ‘ASPIDA.’

So long as the King and the Prime Minister worked in harmony, there was little chance of a coup. After the Prime Minister’s quarrel with King Constantine over the control of the armed forces, however, there followed a period of squalid manoeuvres accompanied by demonstrations in the streets and strikes. The moderate elements of both the right and the centre came together to put an end to a situation that had begun by the young King’s unconstitutional behaviour, and to hold office pending fresh elections. Yet, the extremists on the right assuming that the Papandreous’ Centre Union party would win the election, resolved that it should not take place.44

In the early hours of 21 April 1967, armoured units surrounded the royal palace, the parliament building, the major ministries, the chief post offices, and the telegraph offices in Athens. Parliamentary and political life was suspended. Thousands of people, including the Prime Minister Panayotis Kanellopoulos, and many leading political figures were arrested and kept in detention. The new ‘National Revolutionary Government’ was sworn before King Constantine in that very night.

After the coup little was heard of the communist threat that was supposed to justify it. The coup instigators were mostly Colonels, a group of rightist army officers, a grade below the top ranks, and outside the upper class that had normally monopolized these upper grades. They owed their advancement to the expansion of the Greek army after World War II as a riposte to the communist threat.

The new Government was largely composed of an outer ring of eminent old judges and lawyers, who provided some appearance of respectability and who, inspired by the King, had committed the regime to political evolution. Yet, their influence was quite limited. The real power was divided between the Revolutionary Committee of officers and the triumvirate of the military coup organizers, who were Colonel Georgios Papadopoulos, Brigadier Stylianos Pattakos and Colonel Nikolaos Makarezos.

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On 13 December 1967, King Constantine staged an incompetent and badly organized counter-coup in an effort to oust the colonels. When his effort failed a few hours later, the royal family fled to Rome. The new regime then replaced the 1952 constitution by one that established a ‘crown parliamentary democracy,’ under which royal authority was exercised by a regent, while Papadopoulos became premier. This became a ‘presidential parliamentary democracy’ in 1973, with Papadopoulos as President.

In the meantime, civil rights remained suspended. Allegations of torture and maltreatment of the Greek prisoners forced the junta to withdraw from the Council of Europe. Repression kept opposition largely contained until March 1973, when students in Athens staged an uprising. In May, a naval mutiny against the colonels failed, and the monarchy was abolished. A further student uprising in November was also brutally repressed.

On 25 November 1973, a new hard-line coup inside the junta brought intensified repression, but did not last for long. On 15 July 1974, the regime staged a military escapade in Cyprus against archbishop Makarios, which incited the Turkish invasion of the island on 20 July. Three days later, the junta withdrew from politics in disarray.45

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Placed within that general framework of Cold War confrontations, regional disputes, and personal ambitions, this study focuses on the foreign policy making of Britain and the United States towards Greece during the first three critical years that the military dictatorship of the Colonels ruled the country.

The existent bibliography on that subject is particularly limited. Most of the books and articles describe superficially the events or appraise them very briefly. More particularly, the Greek books that deal with the period under reference usually narrate the writers’ experiences46 or simply describe or

analyze the events, particularly those affecting the internal scene. Regarding the American foreign policy towards Greece, the few articles that refer to it are mostly based on press reports, personal experiences or interviews and not on original research on the public records. On the other hand, there is no reference to the British attitude towards the Greek regime at all. For these reasons, this study mainly draws on information collected from the official British and American records.

Through a mainly chronological structure, the thesis is arranged in nine chapters, each divided into two parts, which examine alternately the American and the British attitude on the same key issues. The narrative begins at the first hours of the military coup in 21 April 1967, and ends in 1970, just before the political elimination of Makarezos and Pattakos by Papadopoulos during 1971.

In an effort to present clearly the British and the US foreign policy-making process towards the Colonels, the study evolves through the key issues that the diplomatic service of each country was faced with. Such subjects of particular interest to the British and the American foreign services were the state of their relationship with the dictatorship and the Greek King, the question of arms supplies to Greece, and the strong opposition to the regime at home and in the international organisations on the question of the welfare of Greek prisoners.

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49 An exception to that is The rape of the Greek Democracy, but the narration stops in 1967 (Papachelas, 1997).
50 The Greek records of that period have not been released yet.
Chapter I:

21 – 31 April 1967
1. USA: The first decisions

1.1 The American Embassy's reaction to the coup

At about 3 o'clock in the morning of 21 April 1967, the nephew of Kanellopoulos, the Greek Prime Minister, informed the American Ambassador in Athens, Phillips Talbot, that his uncle had been arrested. The Ambassador, after sending a flash telegram to Washington based on this information, called on Mrs. Kanellopoulos, and then went to his Embassy. His next telegram, one hour later, informed the State Department that armored roadblocks were established at the Constitution Square and at peripheral points, adding however that he had no information on King Constantine. At 3.51 Talbot had still no information on the coup instigators, but assumed that the coup ‘must be run by very senior military officers.’

It was not until 11.23, when the Embassy was able to offer some more definite information on what was happening in Greece. In a Country Team Message, Talbot reported that ‘a small army group, not -I repeat- not including high command, King or civilian political leaders’ had triggered the coup, which had taken place that morning. He also added that the military command seemed united and fully committed to the coup, while the King appeared no longer to fear possible arrest. According to Talbot, Constantine was presumably asked about the military leadership, while ‘all have emphasized their fidelity to King and to NATO.’ In conclusion, he reported that so far as the Embassy knew, Athens, Thessaloniki, Crete, and all other parts of the country were quiet and there was no indication of resistance to the coup.

In the meantime, due to rumours that some political prisoners might suffer harm, the Ambassador had the Chief of JUSMAG and the Defence

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Attaché call on Lieutenant-General Papadatos to convey messages that any such action ‘would greatly increase complications of already complicated situation.’ Talbot also sent another Secret telegram to Washington, asking the State Department to refrain from any public comment on the coup, until the situation was clarified. He also advised that the VOA should use extreme caution in the coverage of the Greek developments, sticking to a simple acknowledgement of the announcements by the Greek military radio, and avoiding interpretive or speculative reporting.5

As time passed, the American Ambassador was able to evaluate more accurately the situation. Based on information he received from Mary Carolou, the Palace Lady-in-Waiting, he reported to Washington that she had mentioned Colonel Papadopoulos and Brigadier Pattakos as the coup leaders. He commented that this report lent weight to the Embassy’s belief that the King and the Top Military Leaders were not involved in the coup.6 Another report, which – according to Talbot – tended to support the increasing evidence that middle level officers had triggered the coup, was CINC South Liaison Officer’s account that the atmosphere of Generals in the Greek Pentagon was one of general gloom, while the Junior Officers were elated. The American added that the three officers who seemed to be reasonably prominent were Pattakos, Zoitakis and Papadopoulos. His impression was that they had probably set into motion a plan previously elaborated but the execution of which the Greek Senior Military and the King had not approved.7

In the meantime, the officers in the American Embassy of Athens felt almost helpless at the end of ‘a very long cable line.’ According to the Political Officer in the US Embassy, Robert Keeley, the US Embassy was supplying the State Department all the information it could, working over-time, trying to figure out who the colonels were. Yet, as he added, the officers in Athens had

no useful communications coming out of Washington, which seemed paralyzed by the unexpected events.⁸

Moreover, the Embassy had to face a difficult policy issue in which different elements of the embassy took differing positions. According to Keeley, at least three camps were developed. In the first place, some officers, although not welcoming the coup, found it a more favorable development than any other alternative they could conceive. Others (Keeley, etc) thought that they should reject the coup, refuse to accept it, and try to reverse it. Finally, there was a third group (including Talbot), which was disappointed that a coup had taken place, did not welcome it, but thought that the best course was to accept it and make the best of it. That group wanted to recognize the new government and work with it, hoping to change its means and manner of ruling to a more constitutional and democratic process that would protect human rights.

More particularly, as Phillips Talbot argued in his telegram to Washington three days later,⁹ although the military coup in Greece had demolished the liberal political reputation of that NATO country, oddly enough a failure of the coup—once attempted—would have been an even greater disaster. According to the Ambassador, the coup effort had pushed aside the political moderates and conservatives, as represented by the Kanellopoulos’ Government and its supporters, who were duped not by their enemies but by a group with roughly similar anxieties about the leftist trends in Greece. Consequently, had the coup failed, carrying the conservatives and the moderates down with it, the only beneficiaries would have been the far leftist segment of the Greek political life. Then, Talbot concluded, Greece would have surely gone where the rightists feared Andreas Papandreou was taking it.

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⁸ Foreign Affairs, Oral History Collection, Association for Diplomatic Studies, Georgetown University Washington D.C., Robert V. Keeley.
1.2 The State Department, the Pentagon, and the CIA

Meanwhile, it was a sleepless night for the American officials in Washington. The first Flash Telegram from Athens reached the State Department at 20.30 (local time). A little later, the Greek Country Director, Herbert Daniel Brewster, and his assistants, John Owens and Milner Dunn, were called to rush back to the Operation Centre of the State Department. They set up immediately a three-person task force in their office, while Stuart Rockwell, the Deputy Assistant of the Secretary of State, and Lucius Battle, the Assistant Secretary for NEA, also came in.10

The first question was what attitude the USA should adopt towards the Greek coup. As the Special Assistant to the President, Walt Rostow, argued, no change in the US foreign policy appeared imminent.11 In the first place, the colonels had re-affirmed their loyalty to NATO. The new coup leaders were over-eager to reassure every representative from the American Embassy and the CIA that they intended to honour their NATO obligations, arguing that the coup was held to insure domestic tranquility, loyalty to the King, and Greek allegiance to NATO and Greece’s Western Allies.12

Moreover, the American officials had been reassured from the first that the military takeover was not instigated under the influence of USSR. All the reports they had received also stated that there was no evidence of any leftist opposition. Therefore, it seemed that the main US interests in the area were not in jeopardy: Greece remained a NATO ally dedicated more than ever before –

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10 Foreign Affairs, Oral History Collection, Association for Diplomatic Studies, Georgetown University Washington D.C., John P. Owens.
11 LBJ Archives, Box 126, NSF: Mem Misc II - 1/66-7/67, No. 119.
Part I: 21 – 31 April 1967

according to the proclamations of the coup instigators- to the West, and to the USA in particular.

Yet, the fear that the Greek coup might lead to a new Cyprus crisis remained. The Turkish Government could take an impulsive action to protect what they perceived as their interests in Cyprus -or elsewhere- becoming involved in war with Greece, her NATO ally. Such a war might easily have spread. At the least, it would produce disastrous effects in both Greece and Turkey, damage the US considerable strategic interests in those countries, weaken NATO, and present opportunities for the Soviet Union to exploit. Therefore, Battle instructed the Ambassadors in Ankara and Nicosia to consult as early as possible with the senior officials of the Turkish Government, stressing the need for restraint from all quarters in dealing with that ‘very delicate’ situation.

The American officials in Washington also feared that the coup could be extended to Cyprus. There were approximately eight thousand Greek officers and men of the Royal Hellenic Army on the island, who had infiltrated Cyprus, along with their equipment, since the spring of 1964. Therefore, it could be quite feasible for some colonel to proclaim a coup in the name of the Greek troops stationed on the island. The President of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios, in particular, was conscious of that danger and felt threatened for quite a length of time after the coup.

Yet, the reports from both countries were reassuring. There were no unusual movements among the Greek or the Turkish Cypriots. Neither did any civilian unrest exist on the island. The National Guard and the Turkish Cypriots were on the alert, but there was no panic. Both Makarios and the Turk Cypriot leaders were exercising restraint within their respective communities. Everyone was cool on the Turkish side. Moreover, the American Embassy

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13 LBJ Archives, Box 2, Administrative History, The Department of State, Vol. 1, Chapter 4, Section E: The Cyprus Crises.
15 LBJ Archives, Oral History Interview, Kenneth Torp.
did not feel that a serious or immediate threat of another coup existed at the time. Lieutenant-General Odysseus Angelis also confirmed that a similar coup would not occur on the island, since the whole situation there was entirely different. Apparently, therefore, the American interests in the area were in no imminent danger either, although the State Department continued to watch the situation closely.

During that regional survey, the State Department had also to turn its attention to the Greek regime itself. Yet, the official instructions to the American Embassy in Athens were often overtaken by events or even arrived too late for any action. For example, Phillips Talbot sent a telegram to Washington at 20.30 (Athens time) asking for confirmation of the posture he proposed to take towards the new Prime Minister, Kollias, at his first, after-the-coup appointment with him two hours later. The State Department sent their confirmation six hours later (at 19.36 Washington time) and not before the arrival of Talbot’s new telegram narrating faithfully his conversation with the new Prime Minister. Indicative of the confused situation that existed in the State Department is that the confirmation does not appear to have taken into account Talbot’s last telegram.

It seems, therefore, that Phillips Talbot stated the initial principles of the American policy and then the State Department considered and ratified them accordingly. More particularly, as Phillips Talbot informed Washington on 23 April 1967, the American Embassy's attitude towards the new regime after the coup was to indicate its readiness to stay in communication with the new Government and the top military leadership, yet coldly pointing out at the same time the reaction of the American public to the overthrow of the parliamentary government of a NATO Ally by a military establishment trained and equipped by Americans.

17 LBJ Archives, Oral History Interview, Kenneth Torp.
22 The Deputy Chief of Mission in Athens at that time, N. L. Anschutz, shares the same opinion. (Foreign Affairs, Oral History Collection, Association for Diplomatic Studies, Georgetown University Washington D.C., Norbert L. Anschutz.)
According to Talbot, the Embassy had been all but rude to Spandidakis, the ex-Chief of the General Staff and now Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, and to the others in cross-examining their assertions that they were actually in control of the Army.23 The Ambassador had also spelled out the possible consequences in short words by making sure that the arrival of the Sixth Fleet task group in Greek waters had not gone unnoticed by the top people. As he concluded, 'we haven't educated the mule; at least we have given it those knocks required to get its attention.'24 In sum, his proposed American attitude towards the coup was that the USA should adopt a fairly stiff posture towards the new Greek Government, remaining however in touch with it, and not burn their bridges by threatening to cut off their military aid, unless the Government's performance in the next few days was 'rough and rotten.'25

Meanwhile, in Washington, the American officials were facing the same dilemma that had divided their Embassy in Athens. When Brewster, Dunn and Owens met with Stuart Rockwell, the people from INR, and the CIA personnel, some of them, including Owens, were advocating a tougher line. Owens thought that a tough line -though not a military intervention- would protect the American long-term interests in Greece. Conversely, the Pentagon and the Agency people argued that such suggestions were impractical and idealistic. Stressing that they needed Greece as a NATO ally, they reasoned that it was not for them to determine the justness of the new government as long as it was in power.

According to Owens, the dislike of Andreas Papandreou and what he represented was much stronger inside the Agency and among the military, since they were getting their information all the time from an anti-Andreas line, their counterparts in the Greek military. Therefore, the coup was considered unfortunate, but not a great tragedy, only the lesser of two evils. Furthermore, Johnson's White House was not particularly attentive to that area due to its

own preoccupations with the war's frustrations in Vietnam, and the anti-war movement in the US colleges.\textsuperscript{26}

The military opinion prevailed: The Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, who -according to Owens- had initially the lead on this issue, took the decision and decided on a hands-off policy.\textsuperscript{27} Talbot was instructed to continue to retain a cool attitude towards the regime, keeping, however, the lines of communication open at the same time.\textsuperscript{28} As it was argued, the USA and the King had considerable leverage vis-à-vis the new government, since its success or failure could depend upon the King’s and the United States’ acceptance or rejection of it. Therefore, they should not dissipate this leverage without obtaining major concessions in return.

\subsection*{1.3 The State Department issues a statement on Greece}

When the Special Assistant to the President, Walt Rostow, learned about the coup in Greece, his first reaction was that ‘at some point soon we should express regret—even if softly—that democratic processes have been suspended. I fear that our posture before the Greek Americans and the Greek people will look weak-kneed if we completely avoid judgement. ... However, State logically argues that we should hold off on any substantive comment this morning lest we encourage violence against the coup government.’\textsuperscript{29}

The problem of the US public posture, especially before the intellectual and liberal communities in the United States, was sharpened by the fact that Andreas Papandreou, who had many friends in the academic community in the United States, was under arrest. Consequently, as Rostow stated in his

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\textsuperscript{26} Foreign Affairs, Oral History Collection, Association for Diplomatic Studies, Georgetown University Washington D.C., John P. Owens. \\
\textsuperscript{27} Foreign Affairs, Oral History Collection, Association for Diplomatic Studies, Georgetown University Washington D.C., Robert V. Keeley. \\
\textsuperscript{28} NA, RG 59, Box 1691, Defence 19-8 US and Gr – 1-1-67: Secret, State telegram 181282 to Athens, 24/4/67. \\
\textsuperscript{29} LBJ Archives, Box 126, NSF: Mem Misc II - 1/66-7/67, No. 119: Confidential, Memorandum for the President, by WW Rostow, 21/4/67.
\end{flushright}
memorandum to President Johnson, there were two alternatives: they could either remain silent or state mildly that the United States regretted any change of government by force as a matter of principle.

If they chose the first course, he feared that they might end up looking as if they supported the unconstitutional change of power. According to Rostow, they could not do anything more at the moment to save Andreas, but their silence would leave them open to the charge that they were behind the coup. On the other hand, if they stated their regret, he feared that too quick a reaction by them could precipitate something close to a civil war. According to Rostow, with the situation still in flux and the new leaders still trying to flesh out their government and broaden its membership as much as possible, the USA should not do anything to tip the balance publicly, even though privately it was working to restore the influence of the King.

In the morning of 22 April, Talbot and Battle were ready, if asked, to make a mild statement of regret. At first Rostow saw eye to eye with them, on the grounds that their public disapproval about what had happened in Greece would put the administration in a respectable light with the Greek-American community among other lovers of the Greek democracy. It was therefore agreed—and Talbot had concurred—that the State Department, if asked, would describe their position as follows: 'The duly established Government of Greece has been supplanted by a military coup. The United States, by tradition opposed to the changing of democratic government by force, regrets it as a matter of principle whenever this occurs. The circumstances in Greece are still unclear, however, and pending their clarification, more precise comment would not be appropriate. We are following the situation there as close as possible.'

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Secretary Rusk however overruled them, and ordered continued silence, arguing that, after all, the pressures for an expression of view came from a small group, the personal friends of Andreas Papandreou. Rusk also feared that if they condemned the new government they might set off a civil war. Consequently, no official public announcement was made. The press was only told that the Ambassador had taken up the question of the political detainees with the Greek government and that he had been assured that they would not be harmed.

Any prospect of a counter-coup in the immediate future seemed to vanish when King Constantine issued a public statement – his first since the coup – on 26 April 1967, which indicated that he had finally reached a modus vivendi with the junta. Moreover, the American officials estimated that there would be strong domestic reaction, if they said nothing at all about the coup in Greece. Therefore, Brewster suggested that they should go on the record with a statement on Greece at some early point. Battle also recommended a voluntary statement at the press conference.

The American officials finally agreed on the following text: ‘We have followed closely the situation in Greece since the military take-over there last Friday [April 21]. I am encouraged to see that King Constantine [on April 26] in his first public statement since Friday has called for an early return to Parliamentary Government. We are now awaiting concrete evidence that the new Greek government will make every effort to reestablish democratic institutions, which have been an integral part of Greek political life. I am grateful that Greece will continue its strong support of NATO. I also note that Minister Papadopoulos at a press conference yesterday is quoted as saying that the detained persons connected with the political leadership of Greece will be set free in a few days. I trust that this step will indeed be taken. Ambassador [Phillips] Talbot has made unmistakably clear to the new government our

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34 NA, RG 59, Box 2151, POL 23-9 Gr – 4-1-67: State telegram 180655 to Athens, 22/4 67.
concern for the safety of all political prisoners. He has received repeated assurances that they are well.\textsuperscript{38}

In Talbot's opinion the statement was too mild. As he argued, if the State Department were completely bland, they would undercut his efforts to make the new government realize that they were serious about its return to full civil liberties and constitutional government. A bland statement would also arouse all the people who were concerned about Andreas Papandreou.\textsuperscript{39} Yet, Rusk ignored the Ambassador's proposals. Fearing that too strong a statement would cause trouble, he did not even accept the suggestion to add a sentence expressing the American concern for the serious implications of changing governments by force.\textsuperscript{40} The statement was therefore released unchanged in Secretary Rusk's name to the news correspondents on 28 April 1967.

1.4 The USA uses the Greek King to deal with the Colonels

Just before the military take-over of 21 April 1967, the American officials already knew that the young King Constantine and his senior generals in command position had been considering an unconstitutional move in the event Andreas Papandreou and the Communist Left tried to take advantage of an electoral victory and press for drastic changes by mobilizing massive


\textsuperscript{39} LBJ Archives, NSF, Box 15, Memos LBJ, WWR 1: 26/4/67.

\textsuperscript{40} It appears that Secretary Rusk really feared that the danger of a civil war in Greece had not yet vanished. According to Keeley, Talbot's telegram to Washington, narrating in detail his conversation with Kollias, must have shocked the State Department, because it suggested that Greece had a very unstable government, so lacking in confidence and so worried, that the coup could be reversed with 'a flick of the finger', if they just told the government that it was not acceptable to the USA [Foreign Affairs, Oral History Collection, Association for Diplomatic Studies, Georgetown University Washington D.C., Robert V. Keeley]. Moreover, it was Brewster's opinion that if the extreme rightist government came crashing down, it might create a power vacuum into which the extreme left could move and fill it up [NA, RG 59, Box 2146, Pol 1 Gr – 1-1-67: Secret, Memorandum to Rockwell, by H. D. Brewster, 27/4/67: Future US policy towards Greece]. What is more, Talbot appears to have had the same fears, when he recommended that the Greek Service of the Voice of America should bear in mind the sensitivity of the new regime to any commentary that could be construed as negative [NA, RG 59, Box 2148, Pol 15 GR, 1-2-67: Secret, Athens telegram 4971, by Talbot, 26 4 67]. Consequently, it seems that Rusk, fearing that any change would be for the worse for the American interests in the area, tried to make his statement as harmless as possible.
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Therefore, the State Department at first doubted that Constantine was not in on the coup from the beginning, despite Talbot’s continuing reports to the contrary. The officials in Washington accepted that information as valid only when the CIA verified it.

According to Rostow, the USA hoped that the King would avoid a showdown. Their best hope in the long run was that he could gain control of the situation and guide Greece over time back to democratic government. Until they saw reason for another tack, they decided to encourage him down this path.

On the other hand, they wanted him to know that securing the leadership on the new government was his job and that they were not going to move the Marines in ‘to bail him out’, as he had repeatedly asked them to. Rostow argued that they did not know enough about how the forces lined up to take sides publicly; a misstep could encourage dissatisfied military to strike back, and the fighting could get out of hand. Therefore, Constantine’s urgent appeal to Talbot to land the Marines in order to help him reassert his control over the armed forces was rejected, and the State Department authorised Talbot to try to disabuse the King -if he returned to this question- of any hope he had had on this score.

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At the same time, Talbot was instructed to advise the King to remain in Greece and not depart except under extreme duress. According to the American officials, Constantine should try to reach a compromise of a type that would make it clear to the Greek people that the King had not capitulated but had forced the military leaders to make significant concessions. This did not mean that he might not have to compromise on some issues while showing his own stamp on the situation as he forced others to compromise in as visible a manner as possible.

On the other hand, the State Department contemplated the possibility of an emergency evacuation of the Royal family, deciding to use a helicopter, which could take off from the helicopter pad on the Tatoi palace grounds under the protection of a small security guard loyal to the King. Given that it could not land elsewhere in Greece, nor be refueled at Tatoi, they also decided that one task group of the Sixth Fleet would operate in the South Aegean sea in readiness to sail north towards Athens if an evacuation was required.

Yet, the State Department entertained misgivings about the enterprise. According to Talbot, it was most probable that over-flight clearance would not be granted, and therefore it should not be requested. He also added that any request from the King for an evacuation was likely to come only in extremely dangerous situation, which would probably involve certain irreducible hazards. Therefore, the safety of the flight could not be guaranteed. As a result, the officials in Washington considered carefully and at high level the question of the evacuation of the Royal Family from Greece, and decided that Talbot’s plan for secret evacuation was too risky. If the helicopter were shot down and the King or his family killed, the US would then share the blame for their

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...death. Consequently, the State Department sent another telegram to the Ambassador on 24 April, giving him new instructions on the subject.53

In the first place they stressed that the King and his family should remain, if at all possible, in Greece. Yet, if it did become unavoidable to evacuate, the Embassy should notify the regime that they intended to evacuate the King and, if necessary, warn it against obstructing that humanitarian move. In their view, the Greeks would not risk an attack on a US aircraft in such an action, whereas if the operation was carried out covertly, the junta could claim that they did not know that the King was aboard the aircraft if it were shot down. They also concluded that if the Queen, in a later stage of pregnancy, were to accompany the King, they would be in a somewhat stronger position to overrule any objections of the Greek regime.

Summing up, the US attitude towards the King was to convince him to remain in Greece. As the American officials in Washington saw the situation, it was the King who could exert the maximum direct leverage on the junta to move towards constitutionalism, since they recognized that the new regime was firmly in control. As we have stated above, they based this on their belief that the success or the failure of the new government could depend upon the King’s acceptance or rejection of it. Therefore, according to them, the King should not lightly give up what influence on the course of events his presence might give him (like the restoration of the constitutional safeguards, or the broadening of the Government to include politicians of higher stature and wider appeal). Talbot was instructed to continue keeping close contact with the King, encouraging him at the same time to support vigorously any move towards a more viable government.54

1.5 Recognizing the military regime in Greece

On 24 April 1967, the American Embassy in Athens received the usual circular note from the Foreign Ministry, notifying them that the new government under the premiership of Konstantinos Kollias had appointed Economou-Gouras as the new Foreign Minister. Talbot asked for instructions, recommending his replying in the traditional fashion, but leaving the timing of the reply to his judgment after consulting with the other NATO Ambassadors. However, the State Department officials ordered him not to answer, until further notified. They argued that they planned to delay their reply to him until the situation became clearer.

Nevertheless, neither the American Embassy in Athens nor the State Department in Washington appeared to have any doubt regarding the policy they should follow on the issue of recognition of the new regime. Both sides acknowledged that as long as King Constantine remained Head of State, the question of recognition would not arise. They reasoned also that the new cabinet had been sworn in by the King himself, and therefore it was legally justified.

Three days after the coup, Talbot offered a comprehensive review of the Embassy's contacts with the new regime. On 21 April 1967, the Ambassador called on the new authorities of Greece, principally to protest at the continuing restrictions on the movements of US citizens, without using any ministerial titles that would imply recognition of their new offices. Norbert Anschutz, the Deputy Chief of Mission, held contacts with Farmakis, the unofficial advisor of Georgios Papandreou, but Talbot argued that these had taken place on the basis of existing personal relations with the purpose of eliciting information rather than establishing any formal communication.

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57 NA, RG 59, Box 2152, Pot 23-9 Gr - 4-1-67: Athens telegram 4791, 21/4/67; LBJ Archives, Box 126, NSF: Mem Misc II - 1/66-7/67, No. 121, Secret, Information Memorandum to the Secretary, by Lucius Battle, 21/4/67; Situation Report on Greek Political Situation as of 2 p.m.
Finally, CAS had established the Embassy's sole contact to that date with any of the actual coup instigators, Stylianos Pattakos.

With the beginning of the new working week, questions about the American contacts with the new regime multiplied. Talbot argued that, while the other countries, including their NATO Allies, could stall their decisions on dealing with the current regime, their own pervasive relationships at political and technical level as well as their own significant military presence required prompt adoption of a policy. Therefore, he proposed that, unless instructed otherwise, he would permit the continuation of normal working relations with the regime at sub-ministerial level, allowing also JUSMAGG to pursue their normal contacts except for forward planning.

As for higher-level contacts, he believed that the USA should either be prepared to resume them or oppose the new regime by suspending their military assistance, their defence planning and other cooperative programs. According to Talbot, the latter course would be of value only if there was any possibility that this kind of action would bring down that regime. He could not see at present the consequences of a collapse of the regime under pressure, but he assumed that this would occur only if the King, under pressure of the American disapproval, was to rally some military elements to oppose the tanks of Pattakos. This presumably would mean civil war, in which the King's support in the civilian population might be mobilized primarily by far leftists, thus in effect making the King captive of the communists.

In sum, Talbot concluded that, if the USA and NATO were to maintain a presence in Greece, and if there was to be any hope of restoration of a constitutional government in the country, the USA, like the King, had to find a modus vivendi with the regime. The US current posture of non-involvement, however, hindered that course. According to the Ambassador, the question was what conditions they should lay down for their willingness to work with the Colonels. He suggested that they should not raise the question of recognition but rather the problem of proving to the American public that the regime's objective was to return to constitutional processes as quickly as possible.
The State Department's officials concurred with Talbot's suggestions and proposals, but with some modifications. More particularly, they assented to the continuation of the normal working relations with the coup government at sub-ministerial level. They also concurred that JUSMAG should pursue its normal contacts, but not do any forward planning, especially since long range planning was not very needful at the moment; besides, as they argued, any reluctance from their part to engage in it might be an advantageous tactic for them at that time as a means of influencing the new regime.

Regarding the high level contacts, they believed that for the moment these should be restricted to the purpose of gathering information. Moreover, although they entirely concurred in the American Ambassador's suggestions as to the points they might put forward as a basis of their willingness to work with the regime, they believed that they should hold off on going to the bargaining table for the moment, leaving it to the King to press for a broadening of the basis of the new government.

The State Department ordered this reserved attitude towards the new regime during the first days after the coup, because they anticipated an increasing Congressional and public disapproval of any association with the regime, to say nothing of collaboration with it. The Colonels' use of MAP equipment in staging the coup was also a particularly sore point for the American Administration. Therefore, the USA preferred to use the King in their dealings with the regime, hoping that he would decrease the extensive security measures then in force and continue to encourage men of stature and ability to come into the government, as he had done with Kollias.

1.6 The State Department worries over Andreas' fate

During the first confused hours after the coup, Talbot's main anxiety as an Ambassador of the USA was to ascertain whether any American live or property was in danger. According to McCloskey, the Press officer of the State

Department, there were over 10,000 US citizens in Greece, of whom some 600 were Embassy, AID, and USIA officials with their families. So far, the only disquieting information Talbot had received on that subject was the arrest of Andreas Papandreou. Andreas' activities during the past weeks and his alleged involvement in the ASPIDA affair rendered him the archenemy of the junta. The suspension also of article 18 of the constitution, which prohibited the death penalty for political offences, caused the American Ambassador to have fears for Andreas' life.

Consequently, when Talbot called on the new Prime Minister on Friday night, he stressed firstly the issue of the political detainees. He particularly protested at the continuing restrictions on the movements of American citizens, and expressed his anxiety about the welfare of the people arrested that day. With regard to the Papandreous, Spandidakis assured the American Ambassador that George Papandreou - but not Andreas - would be released. He stressed also that none of the detainees would be physically harmed.

As we have already mentioned, the State Department was too busy to send timely instructions to the American Ambassador during the first critical hours after the Colonels' coup. The telegrams from Washington were completely silent on the attitude Talbot should adopt towards the issue of the political prisoners. He was only prompted to caution the Americans to remain off streets and in their residence as far as possible in the interests of their security.

Yet, the second day after the coup, Washington started to feel uneasy about the fate of Andreas Papandreou. As Rostow informed the President, Andreas' personal friends had been calling the high levels in the State Department all day, asking about his safety. The problem was that Andreas Papandreou was not only the most disputed political prisoner in Greece at that time, but he had been also a professor at the University of Minnesota and at the

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61 Although Mrs. Papandreou and their children were American citizens, Andreas Papandreou had lost the US citizenship in February 1964, when he became deputy in the Greek Parliament.
University of California, Berkeley, and he had served in the American Navy. In fact, Anschutz estimated that the issue of Andreas caused the State Department and the White House to get more interested in the Greek affair than they would have done in a period, when Vietnam was the main problem of the Johnson Administration.\textsuperscript{65} Having lived a long time in the USA, Andreas and Margaret, his wife, had a number of sources and connections in that country, which they used for their political purposes in Greece. Moreover, Andreas had associations with some of the senior economic personalities in Washington. Consequently, the State Department faced frequently reactions, transmitted through those channels.

In this connection, the State Department asked the American Ambassador for his views on the possibility of Andreas Papandreou being released from prison on the condition that he would leave Greece permanently.\textsuperscript{66} In response, Talbot made numerous representations to endeavour to be assured that no harm would come to Andreas, but the regime had not yet decided on how to handle the case. Anschutz was in contact with Margaret, and Talbot was prepared to extend the protection to her family, although he did not believe that the coup group would take any action necessitating such a measure.\textsuperscript{67}

Three days after the coup, the State Department instructed Talbot that he should continue to reiterate to the junta the great concern of the USA for the welfare of the prisoners and their insistence that the coup group would carry through on their pledge that no harm would befall these detainees.\textsuperscript{68} The State Department brought up that subject again during a teleconference with the American Embassy in Athens the same day, asking for the fate of the political prisoners and specifically of Georgios and Andreas Papandreou.\textsuperscript{69} In response to the State Department’s suggestions, Talbot concluded that he saw no

\textsuperscript{65} Foreign Affairs, Oral History Collection, Association for Diplomatic Studies, Georgetown University Washington D.C., Herbert Daniel Brewster, Norbert L. Anschutz.
\textsuperscript{66} LBJ Archives, Box 126, NSF: Mem Misc II - 1/66-7/67, No. 114, Secret, Memorandum for the Secretary, by Lucius Battle, 23/4/67: Situation report No. 4.
\textsuperscript{67} NA, RG 59, Box 2151, POL 23-9 Gr - 4-1-67: Secret, Athens telegram 4841, 23/4/67.
\textsuperscript{68} NA, RG 59, Box 1691, Defence 19-8 US and Gr - 1-1-67: Secret, State telegram 181282 to Athens, 24/4/67.
prospect of the current regime granting permission to Andreas to leave Greece at this time.

As the days passed, the interest in the USA regarding the fate of the political prisoners in Greece, and particularly of Andreas Papandreou, grew. Members of Congress, professors, and others were making numerous inquiries about the welfare of the younger Papandreou and the possibilities for his eventual release. Saunders speculated that Andreas' former associates and acquaintances in high positions in the USA had organized a coordinated campaign of letters and phone calls to everyone in the Administration from the Vice President downwards.\textsuperscript{70}

He also feared that they could cause real trouble to the White House. In their letters, telegrams or phone calls, Andreas' friends used to start with trying to get their friend out of jail and ended up accusing the US government of acquiescing in the 'rape of the Greek democracy'. What is more, the same people who accused the Johnson Administration of violating 'American principles' in Vietnam also cited the Administration's silence in Greece as further evidence of their militaristic bent.\textsuperscript{71}

Under this pressure, the State Department sent instructions to the American Ambassador in Athens cautioning him on the line he should take with the regime on this issue.\textsuperscript{72} The officials in Washington estimated that the image of the junta would depend partly on its treatment of the political prisoners and most importantly on its attitude towards Andreas Papandreou, since he was the Greek politician best known abroad. Therefore, they urged Talbot to submit to the new regime their suggestion for obtaining release of Andreas on the condition that he would go permanently abroad. No one in the State Department believed that the Greek politics could settle down until he was out of the picture, so his expulsion would meet their domestic needs while at the same time it would be a gain for the junta. If this approach failed, Talbot, in his informal contacts, would impress once again upon the Greek regime that the question of the political prisoners was an extremely sensitive issue abroad —

\textsuperscript{70} LBJ Archives, Box 126, NSF: Mem Misc II - 1/66-7/67, No. 109, Secret, Hal Saunders to BKS, 26/4/67.
\textsuperscript{71} LBJ Archives, Box 126, NSF: Mem Misc II - 1/66-7/67, No. 110, Secret, Memorandum to W.W. Rostow, by Hal Saunders, 26/4/67.
\textsuperscript{72} NA, RG 59, Box 2154, Pol 29 GR – 1-1-67: Secret, State telegram to Athens 182331, by Rusk, 26/4/67.
including the USA- and would undoubtedly influence the attitude of the free world towards the new regime.

Particularly disturbing to the Department was the report that special military courts were being set up throughout Greece to try the offenders. As we have stated above, the American officials argued that, if the regime mounted Cuban-type trials, they would be certain to face immediate international condemnation, which the USA could ill-afford. A Reuters despatch from Athens on 26 April announcing that Andreas Papandreou had been charged with treason aroused further the academic community, the members of Congress and others, who were fearful that the reported trial would result in the summary execution of the Greek politician.

It was becoming increasingly clear to the State Department that the execution of Andreas would give the coup regime such a black eye that it might never gain favour of the American public opinion. Specifically, the liberals in the USA sided with Andreas Papandreou, feeling that the King had been out to head off a Papandreou-type democracy and reform at all costs. Consequently, another flash telegram was sent to Athens in the following day instructing Talbot to reiterate again to the coup government that the American public opinion regarding the regime would be very largely determined by the manner in which the charges against Andreas were eventually handled. They concluded that, if the junta were to go as far as to execute Andreas, the public reaction in the USA would be disastrous to the US relations with the coup government.

Given the high position of Andreas' connections in the USA, Rostow informed the President of the issue. He also advised Johnson that, if anyone approached him, he could say with good conscience that they had given top priority to Andreas' safety. Consequently, Galbraith was told that the President himself had taken a direct hand in the Papandreou case. Soon the White House was inundated with letters expressing the relief of the academic

community for the President’s initiative. Rostow commented that they had come off better than he had thought. In his opinion, the letters were useful in heading off for the moment the criticism of their silence on the Greek coup. Moreover, as he argued, any good noise of this kind from the academics was helpful.

Yet this change of attitude from the public could not last for long. Therefore the State Department finally decided to make a public statement on the military take-over in Greece on 28 April 1967. As we have stated above, it was issued in Secretary Rusk’s name and consisted of seven points, three of which referred to the issue of the political detainees. In particular, it mentioned Papadopoulos’ statement that the detained persons would be set free in a few days and it concluded with the assertion that Ambassador Talbot’s representations, which had made clear the American concern for the well being of these prisoners, were answered with assurances of their safety.

1.7 The USA suspends MAP deliveries to Greece

During the weekend after the coup, the Americans in Greece were unloading the currently arriving military assistance shipments on a US-controlled dock, but they were holding them in their custody until the situation was clarified. On Talbot’s instructions, General Eaton, the Chief of JUSMAGG, called on Spandidakis on 24 April 1967 and informed him accordingly. Spandidakis very reluctantly concurred in the American action on the understanding that it was a very temporary measure pending the sorting out of the situation.

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Meanwhile in Washington, the State Department was planning to hold up the delivery of significant military aid items, such as tanks and planes.⁷⁹ According to Rockwell, the Congress resented the coup and presumably this would affect its attitude towards the coup question.⁸⁰

Talbot reacted that any formal suspension of the MAP shipments would be a very serious step, which they should take, if at all, only as a part of a thoroughly considered new policy towards Greece. Yet the officials of the State Department assured him that they were not planning a formal suspension of the military assistance to Greece, but only a hold-up; that is, the general cargo would be permitted to proceed. As they argued, a shipment of tanks was due to arrive on 3 May 1967, and at present they would not want to see the coup regime parading them around.⁸¹

Although the officials in Washington did not wish to discontinue the US military assistance, the arrival of tanks, planes, or other weapons, while the political issue was still unresolved, would be interpreted as an expression of US support for the new regime. Moreover, they were confident that the meaning of such a move would not be lost on the junta and the decision to resume MAP might be an important leverage for them in obtaining concessions later. Therefore, on 24 April 1967 the State Department informed Talbot that they planned to suspend on selective basis the MAP deliveries for Greece, without giving any publicity to that move, until the crisis was resolved.⁸²

Accordingly, when Robert McCloskey, the Department Press Officer, was asked on the subject the following day, he answered that no basic decision had been made regarding the military aid program to Greece, since that issue was under review as a result of the coup. Other Department officers responding to individual questions from members of the press used phrases very similar to McCloskey's.

⁸⁰ NA, RG 59, Box 2151, POL 23-9 Gr – 4-1-67: Secret, Memorandum of Conversation, 24/4/1967: Greek situation
2. UK: The first days after the coup

2.1 The British Embassy's reaction to the coup

On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, the first news about the Greek colonels' coup arrived in London at 5.20 (Athens time) on 21 April 1967.\(^1\) The British Ambassador, Sir Ralph Murray, informed the Foreign Office that a military coup had taken place in the early hours of the morning. He also reported that the Greek Prime Minister and some other political figures, including Andreas Papandreou, had been arrested. Yet the British Ambassador, like his American counterpart, had no news regarding the King or the position outside the Greek capital. It was not until 12.00 when the British Embassy in Athens was in a position to offer some more substantive information on what was happening.

More particularly, in his subsequent telegrams to the Foreign Office, Sir Ralph Murray reported that a group of middle-ranking military officers had taken over power in Greece in the early hours of 21 April 1967. His preliminary view was that the plotters were unrepresentative and might not be sustained for very long, since their measures were inexpert. Yet, he acknowledged that it was not clear to him how much of the Army they controlled, and he had no information on the situation in the provinces.\(^2\)

As the day advanced, however, the Embassy gathered more accurate information. In the evening of 21 April, Sir Ralph Murray was in a position to inform the Foreign Office that the coup had been instigated by a group of colonels, several of which had been former intelligence officers, who had been assisted by Army Generals.\(^3\) Moreover, the Embassy's Air Attaché had managed to get entrance to the General Staff Headquarters at Holargos after

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\(^1\) PRO, FCO 9/124, Doc. 1: En Clair, Athens telegram, Unnumbered, from Sir Ralph Murray, 21/4/67.
\(^2\) PRO, FCO 9/124, Doc. 6: Confidential, Athens telegram 276, from Sir Ralph Murray, 21/4/67.
\(^3\) PRO, FCO 9/124, Doc. 15: Confidential, Athens telegram 284, from Sir Ralph Murray, 21/4/67.
much discussion with the military guards, and saw General Kostakos, the Vice-
Chief of the Air Staff.4

With regard to the King, Sir Ralph Murray estimated that Constantine
was certainly under great pressure, and possibly threat, all day. Yet, the British
official was unable to guess at that stage whether Constantine had accepted to
swear in the new government under duress.5 On the other hand, Sir Pat Dean,
the British Ambassador in Washington, verified Murray's estimations, and
reported to London that, according to the State Department, the coup had been
planned without the knowledge of the King or of the Chief of Staff, although
both had later decided to go along with it.6

On the following day, 22 April 1967, after consultation with the
American Embassy in Athens,7 Sir Ralph Murray informed London that, in
spite of the ludicrous aspect of their government, the plotting Colonels had
secured so much army support, particularly armoured, that there was no
physical force in the country to challenge them effectively. According to the
Ambassador, the Colonels had achieved this partly by good organization and
partly by conveying to the military commanders the impression that the King
approved of the new government, if not necessarily of the coup itself. Sir Ralph
Murray, however, argued that they had failed to obtain political support.
Consequently, even if they succeeded in consolidating their hold on the
country, the Ambassador argued that their regime should be pregnant with an
eventual chaotic outcome, possibly fatal to the British interests in Greece.

As Sir Ralph Murray argued, the only hope of the country to escape from
that process seemed to lie in the possibility of the senior Generals realizing that
they were on a false trail and reasserting their command of, at least, the armour
in the face of the original plotters. As the days passed, however, the telegrams

4 PRO, FCO 9/124, Doc. 8: Confidential, Athens telegram 278, from Sir Ralph Murray,
21/4/67.
5 PRO, FCO 9/124, Doc. 15: Confidential, Athens telegram 284, from Sir Ralph Murray,
21/4/67.
6 PRO, FCO 9/124, Doc. 5: Confidential, Athens telegram 275, from Sir Ralph Murray,
21/4/67; PRO, FCO 9/124, Doc. 8: Confidential, Athens telegram 278, from Sir Ralph Murray,
21/4/67; PRO, FCO 9/124, Doc. 9: Confidential, Washington telegram 1308, from Sir Pat
Dean, 21/4/67.
from Athens betrayed the Ambassador's growing conviction that the Greek Colonels were in full and unchangeable control of the situation in the country.\(^8\)

### 2.2 British anxieties over Cyprus

As soon as the British officials in London were informed that a military coup had taken place in Greece, they were especially concerned lest the situation would affect the state of affairs in Cyprus. For his part, Davidson, Head of the Central Department of the Foreign Office, saw no reason for expecting the British interests to be differently affected by the coup in Athens.\(^9\) Yet, Hohler, the Assistant Under-Secretary of State, argued that, from the British point of view, the most immediate problem was what attitude the new Greek regime would adopt towards Cyprus, where the fighting between the Greeks and the Turks earlier in that week had been narrowly averted by the intervention of the UN—including British forces.\(^10\)

More particularly, as Sir Ralph Murray revealed later, the British Foreign Secretary, George Brown, was particularly concerned lest the new regime in Athens, in its anti-Communist enthusiasm, would consider striking the communists on the island using the Greek Army there for the purpose.\(^11\) Therefore, the Foreign Office communicated immediately after the coup with Nicosia, in order to get the latest news on the situation in Cyprus and on the movements of Grivas, the commander of Greek and Cypriot armed forces on the island.\(^12\)

As the High Commissioner in Nicosia, Sir Norman Costar, reported, the primary effect of the Greek coup was to increase the tension in Cyprus. That meant that the Turkish-Cypriots, the Turks, the Cyprus Government, and the

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\(^9\) PRO, FCO 9/125, Doc. 165: Confidential, Davidson to Hohler, 21/4/67.

\(^10\) PRO, FCO 9/125, Doc. 166: Confidential, Hohler to George Brown, 21/4/67.

\(^11\) PRO, FCO 9/170, Doc. 16: Confidential, Sir Ralph Murray to Sir Michael Stewart, 26 67.

\(^12\) PRO, FCO 9/124, Doc. 73: Secret, FO telegram 468 to Athens, from George Brown, 21/4/67.
Greek Army on the island were more likely to react to any incident, however accidental, that might occur. On the other hand, he estimated that they would all probably be more than usually careful not to provoke any such incident deliberately. The island seemed reasonably quiet. The Turkish Embassy in Nicosia advised the Turkish-Cypriots Press to moderate its comment on the takeover, while the Cyprus Government were taking such military precautions as were within their power to anticipate any coup against them. Sir Norman Costar concluded, therefore, that, unless Grivas tried to make a move against the Cyprus Government, the main risk on the island came from trouble following an accidental incident.\textsuperscript{13}

George Brown, nonetheless, was worried. According to the Foreign Secretary, Grivas was always an unpredictable factor, and the UK could not be sure that the colonels, who had seized power in Athens, did not have their counterparts in Cyprus planning to do something rash. Even reports that this was imminent could lead quickly to a dangerous situation: for example, President Makarios might think it necessary to issue the Czech arms to his police, a move that would cause a very sharp reaction from the Turks.\textsuperscript{14}

In view of these considerations, the Foreign Secretary held a meeting on 25 April 1967 to review the latest intelligence about developments in Greece, and gave the following instructions for action. Firstly, he advised Lord Caradon, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and also Permanent UK Representative at the UN, to urge the Secretary-General of the UN, U-Thant, to do everything possible to ensure that the Czech arms would not be distributed, and generally to deter Makarios from any rash action. Furthermore, he instructed the British Ambassador in Ankara to keep in very close touch with the Turks, to inform them of the British initiatives on all fronts, and to try and ensure that they would take no hasty or ill-considered step. Finally, Sir Pat Dean, the British Ambassador in Washington, was authorised to have a full


\textsuperscript{14} PRO, FCO 9/125, Doc. 107: Confidential, FO telegram 4012 to Washington, from George Brown, 25/4/67.
discussion with the Americans on the situation in Greece and its implications for Cyprus.\textsuperscript{15}

In fact, George Brown wished to know whether the US government had plans for dealing with a situation, in which the Turkish government would be on the verge of military intervention, whether by air strikes only, or by an actual invasion of Cyprus. Although he did not expect that the situation on the island would change in the immediate future, he argued that, with new uncertainties added to an already uncertain situation, it would be best to be in a position to decide quickly on how to avert any insipient conflict.\textsuperscript{16}

The Americans, however, claimed that they had not thought about that. As Kohler, the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, pointed out to Sir Pat Dean and to Sir Michael Stewart, the USA had no evidence of any Turkish contingency plan for such kind of operation, while the likelihood of a Turkish attack on Cyprus had very greatly decreased over the last three years. Furthermore, Kohler informed the British that Grivas had offered his loyal services to the Greek King, asking for a decision before the junta had time to move his officers in the National Guard away from him. Constantine, however, had told Grivas that he needed no immediate help from him, since the situation was improving and there was no plan for any kind of a military counter-coup.\textsuperscript{17}

In consequence, George Brown was in a position to inform the Cabinet on 28 April 1967 that he expected no trouble in Cyprus in the immediate future. He also assured them that there was no link between the plotters in Athens and General Grivas. Nevertheless, George Brown argued that the Greek coup added further uncertainty to the already tense situation over Cyprus.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{15} PRO, FCO 9/124, Doc. 91: Confidential, C. M. MacLehose to Davidson, 25/4/67.
\textsuperscript{17} PRO, FCO 9/125, Doc. 120: Confidential, Washington telegram 1379, from Sir Pat Dean, 26/4/67.
2.3 George Brown eventually resumes official relations with the regime

With regard to the issue of recognition, the British views were very close to the American ones. On 22 April 1967, the British Ambassador in Athens reported to London that his American counterpart, Talbot, had recommended to his government that they should maintain a very stiff attitude towards the Kollias government. Sir Ralph Murray's opinion was that it was in the British government's interest to follow the example of the USA and do likewise. The Foreign Office concurred with Sir Ralph Murray's suggestion, and instructed him that he should not make an official approach to the representatives of the new regime on any matter at that stage without specific authority.

As soon as the King appointed Economou-Gouras as the new Foreign Minister, the British Embassy expected to receive the routine letter informing them of the change in the Foreign Ministry. In the circumstances, however, Sir Ralph Murray proposed to defer any reply until he saw how things developed, keeping also in touch with the American Embassy in Athens. If the situation did not undergo any significant change, he proposed to send in the reply towards the end of the week.

After consulting with the Foreign Office on 25 April 1967, George Brown decided that the question of the British recognition of the new regime in Greece should be deferred to the end of the week, since there was no urgent practical reason for the UK to accord recognition at that stage. The one factor that weighed against a long delay was the unstable situation in Cyprus. The Foreign Secretary continued to have the possibility of trouble on the island in mind, arguing that, in such an event, the UK would wish to be in a position to exert effective pressure on the Greek Government immediately. Yet, the reports from Nicosia and Athens continued to be reassuring. Therefore, the

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Ambassador was instructed not to reply to the Greek Foreign Minister’s letter.\textsuperscript{22}

Meanwhile in Athens, Sir Ralph Murray received a personal visit on 25 April 1967 from Kountouriotis, the Director General of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs.\textsuperscript{23} Sir Ralph Murray did not fail to inform London that, in his opinion, Kountouriotis’ insistence on the question of recognition showed that the Ambassador’s refusal to take the normal steps towards an official relationship with the military regime had been noted.

According to Sir Ralph Murray, if the UK continued its present policy, the military would try to apply pressure on the British Mission in some way. Moreover, as the Ambassador argued, any undue delay in commencing relations, however chilly, might have a disproportionate effect on the regime, which was dominated by violent officers with no experience of foreign relations. Therefore, Sir Ralph Murray stressed that it would not be in their interests to let that dictatorship start its life with an anti-British bias, however much they disliked it, especially when it might be necessary to approach the regime over Cyprus at short notice. The Ambassador’s proposal was to be authorised to reply to the letter no later than 27 April, since the period from Friday to Monday inclusive was the Greek Easter holiday: unless he replied to the Foreign Minister’s letter on 27 April, it would not normally be read until Tuesday, 2 May, which would seem to the new regime to be a very long delay.\textsuperscript{24}

Davidson argued that the new regime in Greece satisfied the usual criteria for recognition, since it was in control of the country and seemed likely to remain so. Moreover, as he added, since the King was functioning, no formal act of recognition was required; the Ambassador had only to reply to Economou-Gouras’ letter, which announced the latter’s appointment.\textsuperscript{25} On the other hand, the Head of Central Department, Alan Davidson, recognized that there was strong Parliamentary feeling in London about the coup in Greece,

\textsuperscript{22} PRO, FCO 9/124, Doc. 91: Confidential, C. M. MacLehose to A. E. Davidson, 25/4/67; PRO, FCO 9/125, Doc. 106: Confidential, FO telegram 481 to Athens, from George Brown, 25/4/67: Greek coup.
\textsuperscript{23} PRO, FCO 9/124, Doc. 90: Confidential, Athens telegram 366, from Sir Ralph Murray, 25/4/67.
\textsuperscript{24} PRO, FCO 9/124, Doc. 100: Confidential, Athens telegram 369, from Sir Ralph Murray, 26/4/67.
\textsuperscript{25} PRO, FCO 9/222: Confidential, Notes for Supplementaries: Recognition.
and from that point of view, the British official thought that they should not be in a rush to enter into relations with the new military regime.\(^{26}\)

In conclusion, Davidson argued that these considerations pointed to action just before the weekend of 29-30 April. The Foreign Office agreed. In particular, Parsons, the First Secretary of the Foreign Office, pointed out that, with regard to possible objections from their NATO allies, it was improbable that the Americans would disapprove, since their Ambassador in Athens had been authorised to call on the new Greek Prime Minister, and consequently had continued to be in official contact with the new government at the highest level.\(^{27}\) Yet, George Brown did not want to proceed without consulting first with the Americans.

On 27 April 1967 the Foreign Secretary sent a telegram to Athens, arguing that, since all the criteria for recognition were fulfilled, it would be helpful to the Greek King, if the UK resumed normal contact. Before that was actually done, however, the Foreign Secretary instructed the Embassies in Washington and Ankara to inform the respective governments to which they were accredited of the British intentions. In the same day, George Brown also informed the Cabinet that he proposed to authorise the acknowledgement of the Greek Foreign Minister’s letter. As he argued, if HM government took the line that the UK was merely continuing relations with a government whose Head of State was unchanged, they could avoid the question of recognition of the new regime or of approval for it. The Cabinet took note of the Foreign Secretary’s statement. As a result, the Ambassador in Athens was instructed to proceed with the necessary steps in the following day -although it was a holiday- and make sure that the Greeks would know that the reply had been delivered as

\(^{26}\) In answering a supplementary question by Whitaker in the House of Commons on 24 April 1967, George Brown had responded that the question of recognizing the new regime did not arise at the moment; nevertheless, he had added that it was quite impossible for the UK to decide about the status of the Greek regime, and, therefore, it would be wise to wait a little while [Parliamentary Debates, Commons 1966-1967, Vol. 745, 17-28 April: Greece (British Nationals), 24/4/67, p. 1159-1160]. Moreover, a Parliamentary Question on Greece was down for answer by Lord Chalfont in the House of Lords on 27 April. Therefore, according to Davidson, that day would not be a suitable opportunity to announce that they had entered into official relations with the new regime on that very day.

\(^{27}\) PRO, FCO 9/125, Doc. 133: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to Hohler, 26/4 67: The new Greek Government.
soon as there was confirmation from the USA that no objection had been raised.\(^{28}\)

The British officials were justified in deferring the reply to Economou-Gouras' letter for the end of the week, because the question of recognition did arise in the House of Lords on 27 April 1967.\(^{29}\) Lord Archibald stressed that there was considerable concern in Great Britain about the developments in Greece, while Lord Rowley asked what the conditions for affording recognition to the regime were. For his part, Lord Beswick, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth affairs, responded that there was no question of affording recognition to the new Greek government, since the Head of State had not changed and there was no other opposing regime claiming to be the government of Greece. As a result, he stressed that the UK had not had any dealings with members of the new government so far only because it had had no occasion for it.\(^{29}\) In that way, Lord Beswick paved the way for recognition.

Meanwhile, in Washington, Sir Pat Dean consulted Rusk personally, who raised no objection.\(^{30}\) Sir Ralph Murray acted on his instructions and sent his reply to the Foreign Minister's letter on 28 April 1967, thus resuming official relationship with the coup government. In London, however, the Foreign Office issued no public announcement, since George Brown wished to play the importance of that action down.\(^{31}\)


2.4 The Foreign Office decides to support Constantine discreetly

When the coup took place on 21 April 1967, the British officials were also concerned for the fate of the King. In particular, Hohler, the Assistant Under-Secretary of State, pointed out to George Brown that the Greek monarchy was in a very dangerous situation: whether or not the King was privy to the coup, everyone in Greece would assume that he was.\(^{32}\)

In the late hours of 22 April 1967, Sir Ralph Murray paid his first, post-coup, call to Constantine at his palace at Tatoi.\(^{33}\) As a result of his meeting with Constantine, the British Ambassador encouraged the BBC World Service (Greek section) to go further and take the line that the plot was hatched in the King’s name without his knowledge; that the plotters acted in disregard of the general officers; and that the King had plainly been under the greatest pressure in agreeing to the appointment of the government under such auspices. Moreover, Sir Ralph Murray suggested that it could be stated categorically that neither Constantine nor the Kanellopoulos government had signed on 21 April the decree declaring martial law and suspending certain articles of the constitution.\(^{34}\)

In the meantime, the British and the American Embassies in Athens were in close contact over developments in Greece. Phillips Talbot kept Sir Ralph Murray informed of his frequent visits to the King, and used to give him a full account of Constantine’s decisions and thinking. In his turn, the British Ambassador reported to London their conversations.\(^{35}\)

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\(^{32}\) PRO, FCO 9/125, Doc. 166: Confidential, Hohler to George Brown, 21/4/67.


Meanwhile, in London, George Brown and the Foreign Office generally agreed that the main base of the British policy was support for the King. As they argued, only the King had had any success in influencing the regime after the coup, with the intention to water down the military and dictatorial characteristics of it. Consequently, the British officials decided that they should do what they could to give him confidence to continue on the same lines. They agreed, however, that they should use the greatest discretion in dealing with him. Moreover, they decided to try to work on the British press and the public opinion, so that they would increasingly reflect an understanding of what the King had been up to.\(^{36}\)

Yet, as the days passed, the Foreign Office felt that it should be more careful with its dealings with the King. Consequently, when Sir Ralph Murray was recalled to London for consultations, he was instructed to see Constantine again only upon his retirement.\(^{37}\) George Brown also argued that they should pursue very cautiously their current policy of trying to influence the press and the public opinion in Britain towards appraising correctly what the King’s position had been and was.\(^{38}\)

### 2.5 Foreign Office and Whitehall

When the coup took place, the British government had to choose between two procedures. They could enter into working relations with the regime or condemn it publicly, refuse to deal with it -possibly even break off diplomatic relations with it- in the hope that the British interests would not suffer unduly and that the UK attitude would help bring about the colonels’ overthrow or at least make them uncomfortable.

As George Brown argued, the second course would have fitted the sense of shock and repugnance that the British people had felt at what had happened

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\(^{36}\) PRO, FCO 9/125, Doc. 178: Confidential, FO telegram 4285 to Washington, from George Brown, 1/5/67: Greek coup.

\(^{37}\) Sir Ralph Murray retired from the diplomatic service on 1 August 1967.

in Greece. On the other hand, however, it would have left the UK with no direct means of speaking their minds to the new leaders. In any case, it was the Foreign Secretary’s opinion that the colonels would not have been affected, in the way the UK wanted, by a policy of standing back and condemning them. Consequently, George Brown chose the first course.\(^{39}\)

At the Cabinet meeting of 27 April 1967, it was argued in discussion that a distinction should be drawn between having continuing relations with the new Greek government, which had overthrown the parliamentary one, and any action that could be construed as signifying approval; the fact that King Constantine had indicated his acceptance of the new regime by presiding over a meeting was not relevant to that point. On the other hand, as we have mentioned, it was the UK’s normal practice to have diplomatic relations with governments that were effectively in power, whether or not Britain approved of them. Given that King Constantine, to whom HM Ambassador was accredited, remained on the throne, no new act of recognition was involved, but merely a continuance of existing relations.\(^{40}\)

The British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, accepted that, since the colonels were the only power in control of Greece, the UK should stick to its constant doctrine of recognizing the government that was obviously running the country.\(^{41}\) Nevertheless, he thought that the reactions of a number of MPs were symptomatic of the concern that was fairly widespread in the country and the party with regard to the developments in Greece. He also pointed out that the Soviets would try to exploit these reactions in their favour. The Soviet papers _Izvestiya_, on 25 April, and _Pravda_, on 26 April, had already concentrated on the demonstrations in front of the Greek Embassies in London, Paris and Canberra,\(^{42}\) while the Soviet Ambassador, who called on 28 April 1967 on Lord Hood, the Deputy Under-Secretary of State in the FO and UK’s Permanent Representative on the WEU Council, urged Harold Wilson to raise

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\(^{42}\) PRO, FCO 9/125, Doc. 118, Restricted, B. J. P. Fall to Central Dept. FO, 26/4/67: Political situation in Greece.
a voice of warning opposing the savage reprisals that had been taken against Manolis Glezos, the leader of the Democratic Left Party (EDA), in Greece.\textsuperscript{43}  

In addition, Harold Wilson stressed that Greece was a member of NATO, situated in a fairly key spot of the Mediterranean, and involved in the Cyprus question. On the other hand, the Colonels had produced an unimpressive government, and, with no recognized politicians, very few Generals, and apparently no King, their situation looked precarious. Yet, even if the Colonels survived and consolidated their hold, Harold Wilson argued that their political base would be so narrow that they could only maintain themselves with open fascism; in which case, the Communists would be the only gainers.

Consequently, the Prime Minister's opinion was that the British government should strengthen Constantine's resistance and discourage any cooperation of the Greek conservatives with the junta. He also added that the UK should try to bring about a return to some form of non-Communist constitutional government before resistance became an exclusively Communist prerogative. In conclusion, Harold Wilson stressed that it was doubtful whether NATO could survive many more dictatorships and still retain the kind of support it needed within Britain.\textsuperscript{44}

George Brown agreed with the Prime Minister that there were strong feelings in Parliament and in the country with regard to Greece. It was also his opinion that they would continue for some time, since developments in that country stirred the British people to an extent that was understandable for historical reasons. Nevertheless, the Foreign Secretary considered these reactions as disproportionate when he thought of the comparative calm with which the military coups in Pakistan (in 1958) and Turkey (in 1960) had been greeted. He concurred, however, that the UK should take the developments in Greece very seriously, firstly because of Greece's key position in NATO and the Mediterranean, and secondly because of Cyprus.

With reference to the support of the military regime in Athens, George Brown stressed that all the information he had received suggested that the Colonels had full military backing. Consequently, the military regime was in

\textsuperscript{43} PRO, FCO 9/127, Doc. 2: Confidential, FO telegram 521 to Athens, from George Brown, 28/4/67: Glezos.  
\textsuperscript{44} PRO, FCO 9/164, Doc. 1: Secret, Harold Wilson to George Brown, 28/4/67: Greece.
full control of the country with no other force existent to challenge it at the time. George Brown also added that, although the junta was very far from having popular support, a lot of Greeks, apprehensive for a new civil war, were prepared to give the Colonels a chance to show whether they could do better than the politicians. According to the Foreign Secretary, this was an important factor, which provided the regime with a strong incentive to pursue policies that would at least maintain the acquiescence of the Greeks.

On the other hand, he did not agree with Harold Wilson's proposal to strengthen the King's resistance and dissuade the Greek politicians from cooperating with the regime. According to the Foreign Secretary, Greece was a particularly dangerous country in which to do any political meddling. Even if the UK intervened successfully on these lines, George Brown thought that the situation would not evolve in the way they wished, but it would probably result to the banishing of the King and to the isolation of the regime in a way that could only make it more dictatorial and fascist.

Consequently, the Foreign Secretary's view was that the best hope lay in seeking to modify the regime by cautious and measured cooperation, both from the King and from the respectable politicians. He also believed that, if the right pressures were exerted on the Greek regime, the colonels might be brought to take the road back to a fully constitutional government within the foreseeable future. According to George Brown, the Greeks were unlikely to do without political activity for long, unless the material benefits under the junta were considerable; yet, the inexperience of most members of the coup government and the measures they had already announced made him doubt whether they would do very well in that direction.

On that basis, he continued, the UK ought to hope that the leaders of the coup would be willing to move quickly towards constitutional reform, and accept that they ought to return to their military functions before too long - rather on the Turkish pattern of 1960 and afterwards. These were also the lines on which the Greek King was working, and George Brown was sure that the UK should give him what support it could unobtrusively.45

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2.6 British subjects under arrest

Immediately after the military take-over of 21 April 1967, Sir Ralph Murray stressed to London that the plotters should be prevented, if possible, from carrying out political executions. As we have mentioned, the American Ambassador met Kollias on the day of the coup, and urged him to avoid the capital punishment for the political leaders. Sir Ralph Murray, however, followed a different line. He argued that he could not follow the example of his American counterpart, because to do so would entail an act of recognition, which was undesirable for the moment. Therefore, he arranged for a suitable deterrent expression of concern to be conveyed to the coup government through a confidential channel.\(^{46}\) The Foreign Office concurred.\(^ {47}\)

Another issue was the position of the British nationals in Greece. On 24 April 1967, George Brown, responding to a Supplementary Question, reassured the House of Commons that, with one exception, there was no information that any British subjects had suffered materially or physically during the events of the coup. The one exception was a report that two brothers, called Olympios, who were British citizens, were arrested for security reasons.\(^ {48}\)

The question appeared anew in the House of Lords on 27 April 1967. Once again the Government representative stressed that no British subjects had suffered in the events of the coup. He also added that the British Consul had visited the two detained men on 26 April 1967.\(^ {49}\) For his part, Sir Ralph Murray thought that, under the circumstances, there was little to be gained from making formal representations to the Greek Foreign Ministry about the fact that two British subjects were being held without charge. According to the Ambassador, since the British Consul had been received by the Greek Minister

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himself, it appeared that the latter was alive to the need to handle the question with care.\textsuperscript{50}

The Foreign Office, however, prompted also by the evident concern in both Parliamentary Houses, made contingency plans for the evacuation of the 5,000 British residents in Greece. Although the British officials recognized that there appeared no reason at the time to assume that such a course would be necessary, they requested the carrier H.M.S. ‘Hermes’, which was at Limassol carrying out exercises, to sail somewhat nearer to Greece and keep within 20 to 24 hours steaming distance of Piraeus during the following days.\textsuperscript{51} There was, however, no plan to introduce British troops to protect evacuees while on Greek territory. The assistance would be limited to transport and communications provided by Royal Navy ships as available (landing craft from Malta, and detachments of signalers and transport aircraft).\textsuperscript{52}

Moreover, George Brown instructed the Embassy in Athens to press on with their attempts to get in touch with the British subjects under arrest. He argued that they should on no account be deterred from taking action in that matter at official level by considerations of protocol (pending recognition).\textsuperscript{53}

As a result, on 29 April, the British Consul saw again the Olympios brothers, in private, at the Public Security Headquarters in Athens.\textsuperscript{54} In the same morning also, the Embassy received an anonymous telephone call to the effect that Betty Ambatielos, a British national and wife of the Greek Communist Antonios Ambatielos, had also been arrested. Consequently, when the Head of the Aliens Bureau in Piraeus confirmed that she had been detained as a British subject, HM Consul in Athens immediately proceeded with making

\textsuperscript{50} PRO, FCO 9/222, Doc. 13: Confidential, Athens telegram 371, from Sir Ralph Murray, 26/4/67.
\textsuperscript{52} PRO, FCO 9/222: Confidential, Greece: Services assisted evacuation plan, Background paper.
\textsuperscript{54} PRO, FCO 9/222, Doc. 15: Confidential, Athens telegram 398, from Sir Ralph Murray, 29/4/67.
representations in order to arrange to see her in accordance with the provisions of the Consular Convention.\textsuperscript{55}

George Brown was much concerned about that issue. This was a case that was liable to produce an emotional reaction in Britain, which would be very prejudicial to Anglo-Greek relations. Already, a question on the case of Betty Ambatielos was down for answer in the House of Commons on 3 May 1967.\textsuperscript{56} As a result, Sir Ralph Murray was asked to telephone to the Greek Foreign Minister and to present the case, in whatever way he thought would be best calculated, in order to secure her release.\textsuperscript{57} By 3 May 1967, the British Consul in Athens had visited her twice and, having been assured that she had no complaints about her treatment, was trying to get her out of detention as soon as possible. The indications were that, once her case was examined, she would either be deported or have specific charges brought against her for maintaining regular contact with all the Iron Curtain Missions in Athens.\textsuperscript{58}

For his part, George Brown instructed Sir Ralph Murray to find an opportunity to speak to the appropriate Ministers about her, and impress upon them that Mrs. Ambatielos' continued detention for political reasons and without any charges being brought against her was a cause of great concern to HM Government and to Parliamentary and public opinion in Britain. The Ambassador should also urge the Ministers to clear up her case at once and hopefully release her. Yet, if charges were brought against her, Sir Ralph Murray was authorised to stress that they should be made clearly and without delay, and that established judicial procedures would be followed in dealing with them.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{55} PRO, FCO 9/222, Doc. 16: Confidential, Athens telegram 404, from Sir Ralph Murray, 29/4/67: British subjects.
\textsuperscript{57} PRO, FCO 9/222, Doc. 24: Confidential, H. A. F. Hohler to the Private Secretary, 1/5/67: Mrs. Ambatielos.
\textsuperscript{59} PRO, FCO 9/164, Doc 18: Confidential, Recommended instructions and guidance for Her Majesty's Ambassador, 3/5/67: Greece.
Chapter II:

1 May – 10 September 1967
1. USA: The Colonels harden their attitude

1.1 Brewster's memorandum on the US attitude towards the Greek regime

On 9 May 1967, Talbot had his first encounter with Colonel Papadopoulos, Minister to the Prime Minister, and according to the American Ambassador, the most influential member of the triumvirate, considered the 'brains' of the coup leaders. The Ambassador had already had his first direct contact with any of the coup leaders on 28 April, when he met with Pattakos.

Meanwhile, the State Department officials were trying to find a consensus on the final attitude they should adopt towards the Greek regime. John Day had been asked to fly to Washington for a brief consultation with the State Department on the Greek situation. Furthermore, Brewster, feeling that it was time to reach a final decision on the Greek issue, wrote a memorandum to the Deputy Assistant, Stuart Rockwell, on the future US policy towards Greece.

More particularly, Brewster estimated that, if the Greek government attempted to rule indefinitely by force, the prospects were for real disaster. The junta's repressive measures would encourage the birth of resistance groups, dominated by Communists, who were better organized and disciplined for underground and guerrilla warfare, as they had done in the Greek resistance against the German occupation. Furthermore, he did not completely discount the danger of a portion of the 50-75,000 former Greek guerrillas slipping back into the country through Bulgaria and Yugoslavia to join forces with the domestic resistance groups. In that way, the extreme left could move easily into

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the power vacuum, which would be brought about if and when the extreme rightist government came crashing down, thus creating a situation contrary to the American national interests. Consequently, Brewster believed that the USA should rapidly adopt and implement a policy that would encompass the following points.

In the first place, Brewster proposed that they should protect the image of the USA in the world community by not becoming so closely identified with the new regime to the point of creating the impression that they had participated in the coup or had acquiesced it. As Brewster suggested, they should walk a narrow line between resisting the regime’s embrace and cooperating with it sufficiently to serve the US national interests.

He proposed therefore that the State Department should reinforce the impression that the USA had no foreknowledge of the coup, did not approve of it when it occurred, and agreed to collaborate with the coup government only reluctantly, and after being convinced that the coup instigators intended to move in the general direction of constitutional democracy. At the same time, he cautioned against driving the junta into a position of hostility, which might turn them against the USA. On the short-run basis, Brewster proposed that the American first goal should be a declaration from the junta that it intended towards parliamentary democracy. As he argued, the important thing was to create the impression of progress towards the desired goals, by publishing a timetable to which the regime would be committed.

Rockwell considered carefully Brewster’s memorandum, and adopted the main lines of it.

1.2 The military coup causes disruption in NATO

The military take-over in Greece could not but cause concern to the other NATO governments. In the days that followed the coup, a number of European posts found themselves in more or less difficult dilemmas in doing business with the regime in Athens and justifying their internal politics and
diplomatic relations with it. The British, the Italian and the Scandinavian
deginations, in particular, seemed to be feeling the greatest zeal for the subject.

Cleveland, the Chief of the US Mission to NATO and European
Regional Organizations at Paris, volunteered to inform Brosio, the Secretary-
General of NATO, and Sir Bernard Burrows, the British Permanent
Representative in NATO, that no question of recognition had arisen for the
USA by the events so far. For his part, Sir Bernard Burrows was instructed to
avoid any action implying recognition. Cleveland, observing the UK attitude
towards the new regime in Athens, did not take the initiative to consult on this
subject, fearing that he would raise unnecessary questions in the regular NAC
meeting.⁵

Therefore, when Brosio and the Belgian Permanent Representative, as
Dean, consulted with Cleveland on who if anybody should say what if anything
about the Greek coup in the regular NAC meeting on 26 April, it was decided
that Brosio would strongly urge the delegations to use extreme caution in any
discussion on the implications of the Athens coup for Greece’s relations with
NATO.⁶ The delegations therefore avoided any undue criticism in the NAC
meeting. Furthermore -according to Cleveland- no delegation showed the
slightest sign of raising even by inference any questions about the eligibility of
a government established by a coup d’Etat for continued association with the
Alliance.⁷

Yet, the overthrow of the Greek Government by the army coup
continued to pose a problem for the NATO allies. The Americans did not have
any reason to doubt that the coup government remained firmly dedicated to
NATO and the West. Nevertheless, a military regime could have serious
consequences for the cohesiveness and the democratic image of the alliance,
unless it could be turned quickly back towards constitutionality. Consequently,
during the Ministerial Meeting on 9 May, the US objective in the informal
discussions was to steer the Greeks in the direction of normalcy by making

⁵ NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol 23-9 GR – 4-25-67: Secret, Paris telegram 17013, by Cleveland,
⁶ NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol 23-9 Gr – 4-25-67: Secret, Paris telegram 17013, by Cleveland,
⁷ NA, RG 59, Box 2151, Pol 23-9 Gr – 4-1-67: Secret, Paris telegram 16958, by Cleveland,
clear to them that in the long run only this course was compatible with the self-interest of the Greek people and acceptable to the members of NATO.

Trying to stress these points to the Greek Government in as clear a manner as possible, the State Department also thought it necessary to arrange a meeting between the Secretary of Defence McNamara and Spandidakis, the Greek Defence Minister. Rusk urged McNamara to stress to Spandidakis the importance of returning to constitutional government on the basis of a timetable. McNamara followed this course in his conversation with the Greek Minister, which took place in the USRO office of the former on 9 May 1967.

More particularly, McNamara pointed out the strong feelings of most of the people in the USA for the suspension of the democratic processes in Greece, adding that it would be extraordinarily difficult for them to maintain the Greek MAP without modification, if there was no acceptable time schedule for the resumption of constitutional processes. He added that the American view would be greatly affected by the degree to which the Greeks indicated a desire to make the change, a schedule for the change, and actions towards the change. McNamara said that the US would be willing to help, i.e. by avoiding any public denunciation, but the Greeks should not underestimate the American concern and the strong hopes for a movement back towards constitutional processes.

Spandidakis remonstrated that a revision of MAP would be dangerous, spelling out the Greek reliance on the US aid. Yet, McNamara retorted that the whole situation was dangerous and would not cease to be so until some action was taken to remedy it. Another attempt by Spandidakis to dissuade him by relating that continuation of MAP would shorten the time required for a return to constitutionalism, equally failed. McNamara insisted that, as the Greek plans along the lines he had described became firmer, the USA could be informed of the progress, and public support for MAP would grow. Refusing also to speculate on what would have happened if Greece had gone communist after

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10 NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol. Affairs & Relations GR-USA – 1-1-69: Confidential, Paris telegram 17886, by Cleveland, 9/5/67.
the elections, McNamara repeated that the important thing was to lay out a course of action for Greece’s return to the constitutional processes.

In that way, McNamara tried to leave the Greek Minister in no doubt about the American viewpoint on the issue of the Greek MAP. Moreover, this bilateral discussion between the American Secretary and the Greek Defence Minister, taking place in the seclusion of the Secretary’s office, satisfied the demand of the American public opinion that the question of the military regime in the Alliance had not been ignored at the NATO meeting, without putting McNamara on the spot to debate the subject in the meeting itself, and provoking the Greeks to react in perhaps walking out of it.

The other delegations followed the American example. A month later, the Permanent Representatives of Belgium, Canada, FRG, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, and Britain, found themselves under domestic pressure to express their concern for the new regime in Greece, and wanted to open up a discussion on the Greek coup and its aftermath at the Luxembourg meeting. Cleveland, however, reminded them of Secretary McNamara’s discussions with Spandidakis, and suggested that they could also express their hope for a return to constitutionalism in bilateral conversations with the Greek Foreign Minister. The suggestion was enthusiastically received and the Permanent Representatives, including Brosio, agreed to act in that way11.

1.3 Worries over the welfare of Greek prisoners

The first reports of maltreatment of the political prisoners in Greece were not slow to reach Washington. First Talbot informed the State Department that, according to rumours, drugs were being administered to the prisoners. He commented that the Embassy had no way to judge whether the reports were true. As he added, 'my impression that medical aspects could be serious is supported by Embassy Doctor, who also observes that use of sedation and other drugs is not unusual in prison administrations of many

countries, including US. ... I am, however, also concerned about propaganda aspects. International campaign charging use of drugs by Greek administration could possibly have desired effect, but I fear it more likely that such a campaign would harden present GOG's resistance to foreign influence. I believe our best line is to continue to insist that no harm come to any of detainees and to urge that they be soon released or tried.\(^{12}\)

True to that line, Talbot repeated his representations regarding the welfare of the prisoners to the Greek high officials he met in the next few days, i.e. to Economou-Gouras, to the King,\(^{13}\) but not to Papadopoulos.\(^{14}\) He was also cautious not to involve the American Embassy in the fate of individual, and particularly communist-linked, detainees. His comment to Washington was that such an effort smacked of propaganda overtones by the instigators.\(^{15}\)

Therefore, when a delegation of Ambassadors (Swiss, Mexican, Yugoslavian, Egyptian, and others) asked him to weigh in with the coup government for the EDA Deputy Iliou on 11 May, Talbot refused, arguing that it would be much more useful if they continued to press the regime to give adequate treatment to all the detainees. With regard to individual cases, such as that of Iliou, he suggested that it would be more persuasive if the Ambassadors with immediate knowledge of his condition met the authorities.\(^{16}\) In the same way he tried to disentangle himself when the Italian and the Yugoslav Ambassadors requested him to intervene and avert the allegedly prospective execution of Manolis Glezos. Talbot guessed that the Italian Ambassador and his Swiss counterpart were merely unwitting instruments through which the others sought to involve the American Embassy in the issue.


Meanwhile, Battle in Washington was concerned with the way the situation evolved in Greece.\(^{17}\) The hostile pressures against the Greek junta were building up in the USA, with urgent references to the fate of the political detainees based on a profound distaste for the coup regime. As a result, Brewster suggested that the USA should continue to make clear to the junta that Washington was watching with great attention the treatment and ultimate disposition of the political detainees. As he argued, nothing would harm the regime more than a series of Cuban-type trials of centre and leftist leaders, in which the verdict of guilty was a foregone conclusion.\(^{18}\)

For its part, the State Department had spoken in general terms to the Greek leaders about the need to lift the restrictions on civil liberties and to return the country to constitutional normalcy, being precise so far only with regard to the detained political figures. The American officials in Washington were pondering whether they should seek to pin the regime down to a definite blueprint of political steps in the direction of normalcy, and if so, what that blueprint should be and how soon they should put it forward. Battle estimated that the price would probably have to be the relaxation of their restrictions on the military aid, and the commencement of normal relations with the coup government, with the resultant disadvantages for the US image.

In the meantime, the junta's attitude did not help either. The political life was sharply proscribed. Persons making anti-regime statements were subject to severe punishment by the military courts. Many of the former political leaders continued to be either under house arrest or closely watched; Andreas Papandreou also remained in an Athens prison awaiting trial on charges of treason.\(^{19}\) In addition, on 17 July 1967 the coup government deprived the well-known actress Melina Mercouri of her Greek citizenship,\(^{20}\) and on 18 August 1967, the distinguished former Greek Foreign Minister

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\(^{17}\) NA, RG 59, Box 2146, Pol 1 Gr – 1-1-67: Secret, State telegram 186592 to Athens, from Rusk, 2/5/67.


\(^{19}\) NA, RG 59, Box 2147, Pol 2-1 GR: Secret, Athens airgram A-661, by Anschutz, 5 6/67; LBJ Archives, Box 126, NSF: Mem Misc II - 1/66-7/67: No. 95a, Secret, CIA Intelligence Memorandum 1255/67, 6/7/67: The situation in Greece.

Averoff was arrested and sentenced in five-year imprisonment, because he held in his house a social meeting, comprising more than five people.21

These inept moves by the coup group, however, worsened the image of the junta in the USA, and the public sentiment against the military regime intensified.22 Members of the academic community, whose personal sympathies and ideological convictions coincided in the case of Andreas Papandreou, were particularly outspoken. They were followed by a large body of public sentiment, including a segment of the Greek-American community, although the bulk of the Greek-Americans seemed still to be apathetic or maintaining a tentative attitude towards the political situation in Greece. Finally, some of the most vociferous anti-coup opinion in the USA emanated from Congressional representatives, and particularly from the Democrat Senators Clark and Pell, and the Democrat Donald Fraser.23

1.4 The King loses ground to the Colonels

In his memorandum, Brewster had proposed that the USA should encourage the King to assert his role as the unifying leader of all the Greek people, without completely identifying himself with the junta.24 The State

23 On the occasion of the Greek King’s visit to Washington, a number of people sent a well-organized set of telegrams urging the American President not to relent on military aid to Greece. The signers were: Melina Mercouri, Jules Dassin, Theodore Stathis, Paul Claudato, Aliki and Paul Nord, A.Vassiliades, D.J. Kostas, Helen Cogo, Stephanie Gersten, A. Gregoriades, Professor K. Goulianos of Princeton University, Judith Alwin, the American Committee for Democracy and Freedom in Greece, the Greek Swedish Committee for Democracy in Greece, the Swedish Greek Association, the Greek Students Association in Sweden, several Members of Parliament and Organizations in Stockholm, 800 Members of Minnesotans for Democracy and Freedom in Greece, the Amnesty International of the USA, and the Council for Democracy in Greece (Irvine, New York) [LBJ Archives. Box 127, NSF: GR-Visit of King Constantine – 9-11-67: No. 5, W.W. Rostow to the President. II 8 67].
Department estimated that much depended on how the King handled the situation. They acknowledged, of course, that the real power rested with the triumvirate. However, the King had not signed the decree suspending the constitution, and he was struggling to achieve greater influence. Moreover, the King had informed the American Ambassador, that following the royal advice the Cabinet had agreed to announce a program that would lead to a revised constitution, which would be subjected to national plebiscite as the basis for holding elections. Consequently, the State Department agreed to support and stiffen the young King in his task of bringing Greece back to constitutionalism, which was also a goal of the American foreign policy.

Yet, a few days later the State Department recognized that the situation did not evolve in the way they had expected. Battle felt that the King seemed to be giving way too rapidly in his relationship with the new regime. He estimated that if the King wanted to continue to be able to ensure meaningful concessions from the junta, he should be withholding more cards at this juncture. Therefore, he urged Talbot to discuss the whole question with the King intimating at the same time that, from a tactical point of view, it might be better if Constantine should move more slowly in reaching an accommodation with the government leaders.

The American Ambassador acted on his instructions and had a lengthy 90-minute long conversation with King Constantine on 4 May 1967. Carefully, Talbot cautioned the young monarch to avoid the appearance of identifying himself with the coup Government, arguing that the conservative and middle-of-the-road elements were deeply worried lest the leftist forces inevitably penetrated and ultimately controlled the opposition to the junta.

28 NA, RG 59, Box 2146, Pol 1 Gr – 1-1-67: Secret, State telegram 186592 to Athens, by Rusk, 2/5/67.
Therefore, as he argued, the King should maintain a posture of separateness
and of restraint in those areas where he had to cooperate with the regime.

Constantine had apparently not thought much about that thesis, but he
agreed with it quickly. The State Department applauded Talbot’s handling of
the situation. They also agreed that the American Embassy should follow the
King’s lead, thus indicating clearly to the coup managers their backing of
Constantine’s efforts.

The US Government’s support for the young monarch was displayed
publicly some days later in Athens. On 20 May 1967, Constantine announced
the birth of his son. The American Embassy then took the opportunity to give
evidence that the USA supported the King who was endeavouring to exercise
constructive influence towards returning Greece to constitutionalism.
Therefore, Talbot arranged for a fly-by of planes from the Sixth Fleet Units
during the festivities for the King’s name day, honouring also the birth of the
Crown Prince. The American Ambassador added that the initiative was also
useful in giving a psychological boost to Constantine.

In his isolation from the power centre, the King also attempted to use
the Palace’s past prestigious position vis-à-vis the military as a leverage for
pressing the junta into restoring the military discipline and taking concrete
action toward returning to constitutional government. Therefore, on 8 June he
started a tour of the military units and installations throughout Greece.
Constantine appeared to be greatly pleased with the support and approval of the
monarchy displayed by the military forces and by the public. Yet, the
Americans estimated that the King’s confidence was unwarranted.
Their information indicated that a confrontation between Constantine and the junta might be brewing.\textsuperscript{35} The colonels were stiffening their attitude towards the King and, ultimately, the USA. Constantine, in particular, more than once urged the Americans to release some of the suspended military items, so as to gain the credit for the resumption of MAP himself, and thus to strengthen his position towards the coup leaders.\textsuperscript{36} As he analyzed the situation to Talbot on 23 August 1967,\textsuperscript{37} the handling of the Averoff sentence and the subsequent royal grace had increased the tensions and dissatisfaction within the junta. The younger officers, feeling that Constantine had intervened too actively, asserted that the time had come to initiate the ‘second stage’ in which Papadopoulos would become Prime Minister and the military regime would take full control of the government and the country.

1.5 \textit{White House, State Department, Pentagon, CIA, and Congress dispute over the resumption of MAP to Greece}

As we have stated above, the State Department decided on 24 April 1967 to suspend on selective basis the MAP deliveries for Greece without giving any publicity to that move, until the crisis was resolved.\textsuperscript{38} Talbot


\textsuperscript{38} The US Government decided to withhold the shipment of the following items (worth some $34 million): aircrafts, ships, missiles, tanks, tank ammunition, tank recovery vehicles, and armoured personnel vehicles. All other shipments of MAP equipment and supplies -such as spare parts, ammunition, communications equipment, mo or vehicles, small arms, etc.- were continuing (worth some $29 million). Yet, the MAP deliveries to Greece totaled $3,160,986.00 in March, $5,286,316.00 in April, and $4,049,411.00 in May. It is obvious therefore that the suspension of these items did not affect largely the MAP. [NA, RG 59, Box 2152, Pol 23-9 GR – 5-1-67: Confidential, State telegram 198359 to Paris, Rome, 19/5/67; NA, RG 59, Box
informed Admiral Avgheris, Foreign Minister Economou-Gouras, and the King of the decision on 4 May.39

Yet, the domestic pressure against the Greek coup urged the officials in Washington to make that decision known to the public. On 15 May 1967, a Press spokesman of the State Department announced that a review was under way on the military aid shipments to Greece. He added that some ‘major items’ of the military equipment, which had been scheduled for delivery to Greece under the US MAP, were being withheld, but other items of the American Military Assistance, like spare parts and ammunition supply, had not been interrupted.40

It appeared, however, that there was general confusion in the departments involved over the interpretation of the policy statement on the arms supply issue. In particular, Talbot reported that the subordinate echelons of the defence supply system were taking widespread action to frustrate the shipment to Greece of a cargo, which had been already permitted by the Defence Department. General Eaton was in communication separately with the supply agencies, as specific cases were brought to their attention. The American Ambassador complained that such administrative and procedural actions would, in effect, establish a policy contrary to the one intended.

Furthermore, JUSMAGG encountered procedural difficulties in operating under the Department’s guidelines, since the multiplicity of its activities with the Greek military admitted little, if any, distinction between current business and forward planning. Consequently, Talbot, with General Eaton’s agreement, recommended that JUSMAGG should be authorized to resume normal military business relations with limited and discreet ancillary social relations.41

For its part, the State Department replied that any longer-range problems ought to utilize a combination of joint planning done thus far and General Eaton's judgment, where required. As it was argued, the Department's object was not to restrict the required day-to-day business contacts, but to avoid, where it was possible, their contacts with the coup government on longer-range matters implying commitments, which they might not be able to fulfill.\textsuperscript{42}

On 5 June 1967, the Six Days Arab-Israeli war erupted, which also pointed up the strategic value of Greece—along with Turkey and Iran—to NATO and the US interests. Talbot was recalled to Washington for consultations, leaving Anschutz in charge of the American Embassy in Athens. Although the Middle East crisis almost blotted the Greek coup form the minds of the officials in Washington, once the war was over, the State Department started to consider the adoption of a more 'flexible' policy towards the Greek regime. Talbot met also briefly with the President on 15 June and they discussed the Greek situation.\textsuperscript{43}

The Greek Colonels were not slow in perceiving the advantages the war offered to them. On 4 June 1967, Talbot informed Washington that the coup government was eager to give to the USA any cooperation it wished, hoping to increase the prospects for the early lifting of the MAP suspensions.\textsuperscript{44} Thus, he perceived no difficulty in obtaining permission for the Sixth Fleet visits to the Greek ports, including Piraeus. Talbot also recommended that, if the operational efficiency of the Sixth Fleet impelled the early port visits, they could go ahead, recognizing, at the same time, that such a move would soften their "correct but cool" stance with the junta.

This was just the beginning. During the Arab-Israeli war and the crisis in the Middle East, the Americans repeatedly relied on Greece. Greece was the only nation that provided staging areas for the US evacuation aircraft, and port facilities for the Sixth Fleet. The CIA and the USIA facilities also operated

\textsuperscript{42} NA, RG 59, Box 1691, Defence 19-8, US and Gr – 1-1-67: Secret, State telegram 200289 to Athens, by Rusk, 23/5/67.


\textsuperscript{44} NA, RG 59, Box 1549, Def GR-USA: Confidential, Athens telegram 5619. by Talbot, 4/6/67.
during the crisis without restriction. Moreover, Greece provided full cooperation for the evacuation and safehaven of more than 3,000 Americans from that troubled area. In turn, the Colonels hardened their attitude, as can be seen by Admiral Avgheris' indirect threat that the USA 'should either be with us or out,' and by further reports that the junta was so annoyed over what they described as severe pressure from King Constantine, the Prime Minister Kollias, and the American Ambassador Phillips Talbot, that they were on the verge of turning to President de Gaulle for military assistance, and eventually withdrawing Greece from NATO.

Anschutz commented that he did not consider these threats to represent any serious body of opinion whether in the Greek military at large or in the Greek public opinion in general. Yet, he was aware that the junta's resentment concerning the current US MAP policy was acute. Therefore, despite his most serious reservations concerning the junta's intentions, he believed that it was essential to handle the Military Assistance Program on a more flexible basis. He also suggested that any change in the current policy could be dealt with in such a way as to reinforce the position of the King as well as to reiterate the US concern for sincere progress towards the restoration of parliamentary government.

Apart from the US Embassy in Athens and the CIA, the State Department received further pressures for resuming the Greek MAP from the Pentagon. On 30 July, General Burchinal, the Deputy US Commander in Chief for Europe, called on Stuart Rockwell and stated emphatically that withholding the MAP to Greece in order to achieve political ends was extremely counter-

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45 LBJ Archives, Box 126, NSF: Mem Misc II - 1/66-7/67: No. 93, Secret, Memorandum for the President, 22/7/67: Beginning to normalize Military Aid to Greece.
46 NA, RG 59, Box 473, AID (US) GR: William B. Macomber Jr. (Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations) to William B. Spong Jr. (US Senate), 20/10/67.
48 LBJ Archives, Box 127, NSF: GR-Cables, Vol III — 8/67-2/68: Secret, CIA Intelligence Information Cable 28405, 9/8/67: Greek military regime confrontation with King Constantine. [Sanitized]
productive. Under these circumstances, the State Department started to consider adopting a more flexible policy in utilizing the MAP as leverage. Under that new concept, they argued that they could respond more quickly to any specific steps forward by the coup government. Furthermore, if the regime was to backslide seriously, and it became obvious that the position of the coup leaders was becoming frozen, it was argued that the US could warn the junta that their actions could lead to an even tighter suspension of the MAP deliveries.

Yet, the State Department had to get also the advise of Congress on any change in their policy. Senator Symington, in particular, was a key person on the Hill who needed persuading. Therefore, the officials in Washington finally decided on a conciliatory formula, which they hoped would satisfy both the Pentagon and the Congress. More particularly, the US Army Officer in Athens asked King Constantine to give assurances from the coup Government of their plans and intentions to return to constitutionalism. After many tiring negotiations, the King met the American Army Officer on 4 July 1967, and reported that the junta had agreed to set a two-year deadline for the return to parliamentary government, on the understanding that the information would be kept highly confidential with no public statements whatsoever. According to the King, if the subject were discussed by anyone in Athens or in Washington, the coup group would deny the agreement. The same assurances and conditions were repeated on 7 July by the Greek Foreign Minister, when he met the Secretary of State in Washington.

Consequently, on 21 July, Dean Rusk submitted a memorandum to President Johnson proposing the resumption of limited MAP shipments to Greece in response to the coup group’s limited steps back towards constitutional government. Having had a number of interdepartmental

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51 NA, RG 59, Box 1690, Def-Def Affairs GR-US — 1-1-67: Confidential, Memorandum of Conversation, 30/6/67: MAP for Greece.
55 NA, RG 59, Box 2147, Pol 7 GR: Secret, State Telegram to Athens 2763, by Rusk, 7/7/67.
56 LBJ Archives, Box 126, NSF: Mem Misc II - 1/66-7/67: No. 93a, Secret, Memorandum for the President, by Dean Rusk, 21/7/67: Normalization of US-Greek relations; LBJ Archives,
discussions on the subject, both in the Regional Group under Assistant Secretary Battle, and in the Senior Group chaired by Under Secretary Katzenbach, with Ambassador Talbot present on both occasions, the American officials agreed to take certain steps in that direction, making clear that any future actions in that regard would be related to the junta’s progress in the restoration of constitutional processes.57

Rusk believed that any adverse reaction in Congress and elsewhere could be reasonably contained if they initially stressed that this was only a minimum step. Rostow also argued that they could make a convincing case on the grounds that the foreign policy considerations should override their understandable distaste for doing business with a military regime in a country like Greece. As he reasoned, Greece, like Turkey and Iran, had emerged as particularly important to the USA, given the uncertainties in the Middle East and the Soviet thrust in that area. Moreover, it was essential that America should maintain Greece as an active and functioning member of NATO under whose umbrella the arms program were developed, avoiding at the same time pressing Greece in the direction of the French with their lukewarm and unhelpful posture in the NATO context. Rostow finally estimated that many of the more liberal members would be impressed by the importance of their position on Greece in connection with Israel.

However, things did not evolve in that way. The concern in Congressional quarters with respect to the arms programs, both sale and grant, was great at the time. The current Congressional review of global military assistance programs was unusually intense. The blunders of the Greek regime did not help either. The continuation of censorship and the lifting of the citizenship of Melina Mercouri worsened the situation and held the Greek regime up to general public ridicule and scorn. Therefore, after McNamara’s testimony before the Senate of Foreign Relations Committee on military assistance programs on 26 July 1967, the White House sensed that feelings on


57 The relaxations were referring to a coastal minesweeper ($2.9 million), one F-104G trainer ($1.5 million), sidewinder missiles and related equipment that were excess to the needs of the Netherlands (no charge), and 175mm cannons ($1.05 million). These items were chosen as having a clear NATO context, and as obviously not lending themselves to the suppression of civil disturbances. They believed that they should not release just yet the tanks, the helicopter, or the other heavy equipment.
the Hill were running high on the issue of the resumption of MAP towards Greece. Consequently, having already to face public criticism for the military effort in Vietnam and for the serious riots caused by the Black American population in several large cities in the USA, Johnson ordered that the military aid to Greece should not be resumed.

In turn, on 14 August 1967, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security Affairs indicated that no action would be taken to lift the suspension of the Military Assistance Program to Greece, until action on the Foreign Assistance Appropriations Bill was complete.\footnote{NA, RG 59, Box 1691, Def 19-8 US-GR – 1-1-68: Secret, Memorandum for the Secretary of Defence, by Earl G. Wheeler (Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff), 29/2/68: MAP for Greece.}
2. British decisions

2.1 The aims of the British policy towards the military regime in Greece

In the evening of 3 May 1967, Sir Ralph Murray met with George Brown in London who wanted to go over the ground personally with him. In the conclusion of their meeting, the Foreign Secretary pointed out that, since the old politicians were out of play, the British government had to deal with the men who were in control of Greece, trying at the same time to get the coup government back into a state of respectability.

More particularly, when Sir Ralph Murray returned to Greece, he was authorised to treat the colonels as he would treat civilian Ministers. Rather than exposing directly or indirectly the British hope of their getting off the political stage before too long, the Ambassador should get on terms with them so that he could deal with them over urgent issues, like the question of British nationals in detention.

Furthermore, George Brown instructed Sir Ralph Murray to meet the new Greek Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, and give them a vivid picture of the feeling that had been generated by the recent events in Greece among the British Ministers in Parliament and in the UK in general. The Ambassador was also authorised to stress that, in the context of the Anglo-Greek relations, political executions in Greece would be disastrous. Furthermore, he should add that the cordial relations between the two countries would be resumed more easily if the junta were seen to be carrying out their stated intention to return to constitutional and parliamentary procedures. Finally, with regard to the political figures outside the coup government, the Foreign Secretary authorised Sir Ralph Murray to do what he could –using extreme caution- to find out how they viewed the situation.¹

¹ PRO, FCO 9/164, Doc 4: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to Hohler, and the Private Secretary, 1/5/67: Greece; PRO, FCO 9/126: Confidential, Record of a meeting between the Foreign Secretary and H.M. Ambassador, Athens, at 5.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 3 May, at the Foreign Office. Present: G. Brown, Sir Ralph Murray, Gore-Both, Lord Hood, H. A. F. Hohler. C. M.
On 4 May 1967, the Cabinet met at 10 Downing Street, and considered again what attitude the UK should adopt towards the Greek regime. George Brown informed the Cabinet that he was in close touch with the American and the German governments, whose views were in accord with the British. As he argued, the UK had no scope for effective action towards the regime, because all the Greeks could expect from Britain was the last installment of industrial goods, being supplied under a defence aid pledge of 1964, and a possible economic aid, which could not in any case be disturbed until the summer of 1968. Consequently, George Brown emphasized that the political appraisals and attitudes of the interested foreign countries should be coordinated, so that they could have the maximum chance of producing the right effect.²

Moreover, he added that, although the prime movers in the coup were disreputable, it did not currently appear that the regime could be overthrown. Therefore, according to George Brown, Britain should achieve the most favourable result possible in the circumstances, without implying approval of the outcome of the coup. Finally, if they were called upon to make a statement of the British attitude towards Greece, the Foreign Secretary proposed to make clear that the UK disapproved of the military coup, and stood by the International Convention of Human Right. The Cabinet concurred.³

As a result, the Foreign Office sent a guidance telegram to HM Missions covering the UK assessment of the new regime in Greece and the British attitude towards it. As the British Embassies were informed, the UK foreign policy towards Greece -following the assumption of official relations with the coup government on 28 April 1967- was to deal with the new regime, but to avoid taking actions that could be misinterpreted as signs that Britain was endorsing it. Although the UK shared the misgivings so widely expressed in the democratic countries about Greece's reversion to military rule, HM government's opinion was that an overdose of official condemnation might have the wrong effect on the regime while it was still in the formative stage.

According to the Foreign Office, the UK did not wish to drive the junta into greater extremism.

In answering any criticism that the UK was condoning the military rule in Greece by dealing with the coup government, HM Missions were instructed to make the familiar point that dealing with a government was not the same thing as approving it. The UK was dealing with the junta both because it was necessary for the protection of the British interests -British subjects under detainment- and because by so doing they could have a better prospect of influencing it.4

The question of Greece arose again at the Cabinet meeting on 11 May 1967. George Brown stated that the UK was keeping in close touch with its allies, who broadly shared the British view that, at that stage, it would be more effective to maintain the pressure the respective Ambassadors were exerting privately on the regime, rather than make known publicly their concern at the military coup. George Brown argued that, on balance, it was to the British advantage for the time being to maintain contact with the current Greek regime, while avoiding any question of appearing to give it explicit recognition. According to the Foreign Secretary, it was questionable how long it would be in the British interests to maintain that position; yet, the Cabinet could not ignore the fact that the UK maintained relations in a number of other countries with governments that had resulted from military coups.

In discussion, however, it appeared that the government's position was difficult to justify to its supporters. As Hohler had reasoned earlier, if the British officials did not take sufficient account of the state of feeling in Britain over the events in Greece, it might not be possible to maintain the grudging Parliamentary and public acceptance of their working relationship with the coup group.5 On balance, however, the Cabinet decided that the UK, in concert with its allies, should maintain its present policy towards the Greek regime for the time being. For his part, George Brown, perceiving the Cabinet's concern,

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suggested to circulate a paper explaining the current British position and setting out the policy that he advocated in the existing circumstances.\(^6\)

George Brown circulated his memorandum on 17 May 1967. As he argued, some days after the Greek coup it became clear that the coup leaders had full military backing and effective control of the country. Furthermore, the King remained Head of State, and diplomatic relations between Greece and the UK continued to exist. Therefore, according to the Foreign Secretary, the British government chose the course of entering into working relations with the junta, believing that it had been—and still was—the right one under the circumstances. By way of reinforcing his argument, Brown stated that most of Britain’s allies had taken the same view, the only exception being the Danes, with some sympathy from the Norwegians. Yet, according to the Foreign Secretary, the efforts of these countries to lead public and official criticism against the Greek regime had not shaken the Greek Colonels, although they had caused some trouble in NATO.

As a result, George Brown argued that the UK had more influence in Athens in the right direction, than it would have had, if the British government had taken the Danish line. At the same time, he added, the UK was doing nothing that would imply approval of the regime’s policies or close cooperation with them; on the contrary, it watched carefully to see whether the colonels’ statements of good intent about the return to constitutional government were translated into action.

In conclusion, the aims of the United Kingdom’s policy towards the new regime as outlined in the Foreign Secretary’s Memorandum to the Cabinet were twofold. In the first place, the UK should be able to do business with the Greek junta in order to protect the British interests, either specific—i.e. the release of Mrs. Ambatielos—or general—i.e. the avoidance of trouble in Cyprus. In the second place, Britain should influence the regime towards a return to parliamentary and democratic procedures and a restoration of civil liberties in the country.\(^7\)

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The same points were repeated to Sir Michael Stewart, HM Ambassador-designate in Athens, when he called on George Brown on 30 June to receive the final guidelines on his behaviour towards the new regime in Greece, where he intended to arrive in mid-July. More particularly, the Foreign Secretary instructed him to try to achieve two things. Firstly, he was to keep Britain in a position to do business with the junta. George Brown argued that the channels should be open, and if the UK had to speak to the Colonels, about Cyprus for example, he ought to be able to do that quickly and effectively.

Secondly, Sir Michael Stewart was asked to keep on making plain to the coup-leaders the feelings in Britain about civil liberties and democratic institutions, pressing at the same time the regime to get on with the return to democracy, and set a timetable for the whole process, which had begun with the setting up of the Constitutional Commission. George Brown asked to be always informed when Sir Michael Stewart made such steps. In that way, he would be able to tell the British people that the government was doing what they judged right to move the regime along the road to constitutionality, and that his views were being expressed to the Colonels frankly and regularly. According to the Foreign Secretary, it was important for Britain that progress should be made by the time of the Labour Party Annual Conference in London in the first week of October. Otherwise, he expected an extreme Resolution on Greece passed by a large majority.8

2.2 Britain decides to sell arms to Greece on conditions

On 4 May 1967, the Cabinet invited the Foreign Secretary, in consultation with the Defence Secretary and the President of the Board of Trade, to consider stopping any further export of arms to Greece.9 That

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9 PRO, CAB 128/42: CC(67)28: Secret, Conclusions of a meeting of the Cabinet, 4 5 67, p. 4-5: Greece.
decision was further discussed on 9 May 1967 at the Arms Working Party meeting, so that all the departments concerned would be aware of it.

During that meeting, it emerged that there were currently two licences already issued for small consignments of samples of propellant for shot guns and revolver cartridges, valued at £15 and £5 respectively. There was unanimous agreement that these small amounts of explosive powder could not be classified as ‘arms’ and that the licences needed not be revoked. Yet, it was also agreed that in the light of the Cabinet decision and pending any further Ministerial guidance, the export of arms to Greece should be banned for the time being, and that any enquiries should be dealt with on a stalling basis until the position would clarify. Finally, the Arms Working Party decided that borderline items should be considered on their merits, while no action would be taken in respect of the Greek inquiries for the supply of 36 Bofors anti-aircraft guns and 100 torpedo cartridges, without prior submission to the Ministers. For his part, George, Second Secretary to the Defence Supply Department, noted that no initiative seemed to be needed in order to implement the temporary arms embargo to Greece; he hoped however that, since that attitude could not go on indefinitely, the embargo would be lifted as soon as possible.¹⁰

In consequence, George Brown informed Sir Bernard Burrows that, in case there was discussion of defence aid and arms sales to Greece in NATO, the British position was the following: with regard to the defence aid, the UK was in the course of implementing its pledge of NATO defence aid made in 1964 to Greece, which was taking the form of the supply of civilian industrial goods up to a value of £1 million. The supply was half completed, and in the normal course of events it would be some time before they would settle the details for the remainder. On the other hand, with regard to arms supplies to Greece, no arms were at the time being supplied and no orders were under consideration. Yet, although the question did not face the UK directly at the

time, the British view was that it would be better not to supply arms or military equipment to Greece for the time being.\(^{11}\)

On the other hand, Barnes, the Head of Western Organisations Department, wondered whether the UK and its allies had decided in the most sensible way, since the sort of weapons that Greece needed for its NATO tasks were precisely the heavier types of equipment, which were apparently being stopped, whereas the weapons that could be turned against Papandreou and his friends were being allowed to go through. Consequently, he advised that Britain should follow the attitude she had adopted towards Portugal during the Angola troubles in 1960-1961, when the UK had tried to discriminate between weapons that could be used by the Portuguese to suppress Angolans, and weapons that they needed for NATO.\(^{12}\)

For his part, Davidson replied that although the UK was withholding approval for the supply of any arms to Greece, in practice that was not making any difference to the British arms exports for the time being, since no arms were in the course of being supplied to Greece from Britain.\(^{13}\)

On 3 July 1967, George Brown sent a letter to Douglas Jay, the President of the Board of Trade, referring again on the question of the arms supplies to Greece. The Foreign Secretary argued that, since the immediate flurry of the Greek coup was over, it was time to give thought to the principles on which they should work in dealing with the regime. According to George Brown, it was necessary that the Ministers in all the departments concerned should continue to scrutinize carefully each application for export licences in respect of arms to Greece. They should also be satisfied that the UK was not helping the regime to take oppressive measures, or giving the Colonels the opportunity to represent themselves as having British backing.

On the other hand, George Brown believed that there were strong arguments in favour of permitting some sales. Once again the Foreign Secretary stressed that Greece was important to NATO not only because of the contribution she made towards the collective strength of the alliance but also

\(^{11}\) PRO, FCO 9/205, Doc. 20: Confidential, FO telegram 953 to UK Del NATO, from George Brown, 10/5/67: Greece; PRO, FCO 9/164, Doc. 33A: Confidential, FO telegram 970 to UK Del NATO, from George Brown, 12/5/67.


\(^{13}\) PRO, FCO 9/205, Doc. 10: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to E. J. W. Barnes, 31/5/67.
because of her strategic position. Consequently, if the military strength of Greece were weakened, that would represent a weakening of the whole southeastern flank of NATO.

Moreover, as the Foreign Secretary pointed out, since the flare up of the Cyprus issue in 1963, the British had been trying to maintain some sort of balance between Greece and Turkey with the aim of minimizing the risk of armed conflict between them over Cyprus. In practice, that policy had not in the past caused the UK to deny requests from either country for arms. Yet, George Brown thought that it would be difficult to keep to that policy in future, if Britain were systematically denying arms to Greece, unless of course they were prepared to make a comparable reduction in supplies to Turkey. Finally, the Royal Navy maintained long-standing links with the Royal Hellenic Navy, which was largely equipped with British vessels; besides, as George Brown argued, the RHN had been less involved in the Greek politics than the Army.

Against that background the Foreign Secretary proposed that in handling the question of arms to Greece, they should work on certain guidelines. George Brown proposed that all applications for export licences to Greece should be submitted for Ministerial decision in the departments, particular attention being paid to their end use. Furthermore, according to the Foreign Secretary, they should continue to make available to the Greeks non-controversial items, such as spare parts for existing equipment, and certain other items, like communication equipment. Moreover, Britain should generally be prepared to agree to orders that followed naturally on inquiries made before the coup, while they should also be prepared to consider favourably new orders where the delivery would not take place for a long time —i.e. naval ships for delivery in several years’ time.  

The Defence Secretary replied on 11 July agreeing to the relaxed policy proposal. Accordingly, the complete ban on arms for Greece was lifted, and Britain went on exercising the closest scrutiny over applications for export licences. In turn, the Arms Working Party meeting on 26 July 1967 took note

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of the relaxation of the total ban on the supply of arms to Greece, and invited
the Chairman to notify the Working Party when the Ministers would finalize
the procedures of implementing that decision. Accordingly, on 15 August
1967, the Chairman of the Arms Working Party Meeting announced that the
Ministers had agreed on the following procedure: licence applications for
Greece should first be considered by the existing machinery and be referred to
the Ministers concerned only if necessary.\textsuperscript{16} Fred Mulley, however, ruled that,
no matter what the other Departments did, all applications should be referred to
a Minister in the Foreign Office.\textsuperscript{17}

The Foreign Office retained that attitude even when the rumored US
resumption of supplies of all kinds of military material to Greece meant that
Britain would lose any chance of influencing the regime without in any way
affecting its policies.\textsuperscript{18} As Lucas, the First Secretary of the Foreign Office,
argued, although the far smaller scale of the British supplies - compared with
the Americans - meant that the UK could hardly use that as a lever, the British
government had to take account of its public opinion.

In conclusion, Lucas authorised the Military Attaché and his colleagues
in Greece to continue normally to promote the sale of British arms and military
equipment. Lucas stressed, however, that they should proceed with discretion
to avoid giving the Greeks the impression that the sale of British arms to them
had no more than a simple commercial significance. Moreover, according to
Gorham, the Second Secretary of the Central Department, the Ambassador
should not tell the colonels that Britain had ‘relaxed’ her policy on arms sales,
since right from the beginning the Foreign Office had made every effort to hide
the existence of the freeze from the Greeks.\textsuperscript{19}

Supply of Arms; PRO, FCO 9/205, Doc 41: Confidential, H. A. F. Hohler to Sir Bernard
\textsuperscript{16} PRO, FCO 9/205, Doc 46: Confidential, Extract from Minutes of Arms Working Party
Meeting, 26/7/67: Supply of Defence equipment to Greece; PRO, FCO 9/205, Doc 52:
Confidential, Extract from Minutes of Arms Working Party Meeting, 15/8/67: Supply of
Defence equipment to Greece.
\textsuperscript{17} PRO, FCO 9/205, Doc 39: Confidential, Minute of H. A. F. Hohler to Fred Mulley, 3/8/67,
Minute of Fred Mulley to H. A. F. Hohler, 7/8/67; PRO, FCO 9/205, Doc 50: Confidential, I.
\textsuperscript{19} PRO, FCO 9/205, Doc 48: Confidential, R. S. Gorham to I. T. M. Lucas, 10/8/67: Arms
supplies to Greece; PRO, FCO 9/205, Doc 43: Confidential, I. T. M. Lucas to D. S. L. Dodson,
16/8/67: Greece-Arms supplies; PRO, FCO 9/205, Doc 49: Confidential, T. J. B. George to
Miss O. J. Thompson, 18/8/67.
2.3 Strong reactions in Britain regarding the welfare of Greek prisoners

On 6 May 1967, the Olympos brothers were deported, and arrived safely in London.\(^\text{20}\) Betty's Ambatielos case, however, remained unclear,\(^\text{21}\) mainly because of a group of tough officers, who were in the coup and opposed her release, producing serious allegations against her of involvement in working for the Russians and other Iron Curtain Missions against Greece.\(^\text{22}\) In London, meanwhile, there was much concern over her release, since she was a British national who had been kept in detention without any charge for some four weeks and —for a while— without being allowed to receive the visits of the British Consul in Athens. Many questions had been raised in the House of Commons regarding her fate;\(^\text{23}\) George Brown was also called to inform the Cabinet on that issue.\(^\text{24}\) Finally after the personal intervention of Papadopoulos, Betty Ambatielos was expelled on 27 May 1967.\(^\text{25}\)

Apart from the cases of British subjects being detained in Greece, the public opinion and other organisations in the UK were also concerned over the political prisoners, who had been arrested on 21 April. More particularly, the Socialist International in London issued a statement that condemned the military overthrow of parliamentary democracy in Greece, affirmed its solidarity with those in Greece struggling to restore democracy and freedom, and demanded the immediate release of all political prisoners. It also appointed a mission to go to Greece and press for the release of the political prisoners.\(^\text{26}\) Furthermore, the International Commission of Jurists also issued a statement.

\(^{20}\) PRO, FCO 9/126, Doc. 194: Confidential, FO telegram 594 to Athens, Immediate, from George Brown, 6/5/67.
\(^{21}\) PRO, FCO 9/222, Doc. 47: Confidential, Athens telegram 501, from Sir Ralph Murray, 10/5/67.
on 9 May 1967 calling attention to the ‘extremely serious situation which had arisen in Greece,’\textsuperscript{27} while the \textit{Daily Telegraph} and the \textit{Guardian} stressed that it would be ‘disastrous’ if the British public opinion were to lose interest in what happened in Greece, since there was the danger of civil war.\textsuperscript{28}

In turn, the Foreign Office used to say in reply to letters raising the topic of political prisoners in Greece that, although they were doing all they could on behalf of the British subjects detained in that country, they could not intervene on behalf of nationals of other countries, since the coup leaders considered cases of that kind to be their internal affair and would resent and disregard official protests. Nevertheless, the British officials assured every interested party that they watched the situation very closely and were confident that the regime was fully aware of the strength of opinion in Britain on the subject of civil liberties and justice.\textsuperscript{29} Furthermore, following Sir Ralph Murray’s advice,\textsuperscript{30} the Foreign Office referred enquiries on the welfare of the political detainees in Greece to the Red Cross in London.\textsuperscript{31}

Yet, the pressure on the Foreign Office regarding Greece continued to mount within Britain. Both in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords, questions about the British attitude towards the political prisoners and Greece’s return to constitutionalism appeared often.\textsuperscript{32} Furthermore, the Foreign

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{27} PRO, FCO 9/227, Doc. 1: Sean MacBride to George Brown, 10/5/67; PRO, FCO 9/227, Doc. 2: Sean MacBride to Sir G. de Freitas, 13/5/67; PRO, FCO 9/227, Doc. 5: Freitas to Member Governments, 22/5/67.
\item \textsuperscript{28} PRO, FCO 9/126: Round-up of Press Comment on Greece, 10/5/67.
\item \textsuperscript{29} PRO, FCO 9/222, Doc. 37: D. I. Morphet to Mrs. M. Williams, 8/5/67; PRO, FCO 9/151, Doc. 3: Confidential, R. C. Samuel to A. E. Davidson, 15/5/67: Greece-Mr. Freeson’s call on Mr. Rodgers.
\item \textsuperscript{30} PRO, FCO 9/126, Doc. 20: Confidential, Athens telegram 514, from Sir Ralph Murray, 12/5/67: Elias Eliou.
\item \textsuperscript{31} PRO, FCO 9/127, Doc. 37: T. E. Bridges to I. T. M. Lucas, 20/5/67.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Office received many joint letters asking the British government to intervene in favour of Greek individuals or politicians under detention in Greece.33

George Brown, trying to appease the concern in his Party, received a deputation of MPs at the Foreign Office on 26 July 1967. On the question of political prisoners, the Foreign Secretary recalled that in the case of the revolution in Turkey in 1960, the Labour Party had decided to stay its hand. Furthermore, when Mendelson, MP (Penistone Division of West Riding of Yorkshire), proposed that a public statement should be issued expressing British disapproval at least of the 45 former members of Parliament being currently under arrest, George Brown commented that it did not always pay to make public demands for release of prisoners. Nevertheless, he promised to think further of Mendelson's suggestion, since the Labour Party Conference in October might afford an opportunity for such a reference if he decided to make one. He was emphatic however that he had no intention of getting involved in backing individual Greek politicians. Finally, the Foreign Secretary stressed that, if the regime's avowed intentions towards a return to constitutionalism were not carried out within a reasonable time, the British government was prepared to think again over the issue.34

2.4 Britain decides not to take action against Greece in the international organisations

Contrary to the British attitude, the Danish reaction to the military takeover in Greece had been quite strong. On 3 May 1967, the Prime Minister of Denmark, Otto Krag, wrote to Harold Wilson raising the idea that Greece should be charged with violating the Convention by virtue of Article 24. On the


Foreign Secretary's advice, however, the British Prime Minister replied that, although it was a good suggestion, he did not think that the moment was opportune for setting in motion a machinery that seemed bound to work slowly. As he argued, it would be wiser to wait and see how things developed, since the new regime had been in power only for a few weeks. Besides, the British Prime Minister thought it more advisable to raise the question firstly with the Greeks through diplomatic channels and possibly in the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. In conclusion, stressing most emphatically that the UK did not approve of what had happened in Greece, Harold Wilson expressed his disinclination to join with Denmark, and possibly Norway and Sweden, in taking action against Greece under Article 24 of the European Commission of Human Rights.35

Subsequently, the question arose again when the Secretary-General of the International Commission of Jurists asked George Brown to support the idea of charging Greece with violating the European Convention on Human Rights.36 Barnes argued, however, that it was one thing to make soothing noises in a private and confidential letter to another Socialist Prime Minister, and quite another matter to send an open letter to the Secretary-General of an international body saying that the UK would be prepared to consider bringing a complaint against Greece under the European Convention of Human Rights.

As it was argued, whatever the British might think of the Greek regime, the UK had recognized it and had to live with it. Moreover, from the point of view of the Defence Department, the UK and Greece were allies in NATO, and therefore Britain should not antagonize the Colonels needlessly. Finally, Barnes argued that, in view of the way a former Greek government had used the Convention against the UK over events in Cyprus, Britain should invoke the Convention extremely sparingly, in order not to give other people the idea of arraigning the UK before the Commission.37 It was finally agreed, therefore, to write a short general reply, which would stress HM government's natural hope of an early return to constitutional and parliamentary procedures in Greece, but making clear at the same time that they were not convinced in the

35 PRO, FCO 9/148, Doc. 17: Confidential, FO telegram 369 to Copenhagen, from George Brown, 9/5/67.
37 PRO, FCO, 9/227, Doc. 4: E. J. W. Barnes to Central Department, 22/5/67.
current circumstances that it would be helpful to invoke Article 24 of the European Convention on Human Rights.\textsuperscript{38}

Meanwhile, in Britain and internationally, the pressures for some form of reaction to the military takeover in Greece mounted up. As the regime started to harden its attitude, some British officials were induced to propose that the UK should take action in international organisations, like the Council of Europe. Furthermore, the Western European Union Assembly adopted an emergency resolution on Greece, which recommended the Council to examine the possible political and military repercussions of the recent events in that country on the European country members of the Alliance and on the operation of the Alliance itself.\textsuperscript{39} Additionally, the pressures in the Council of Europe for action against Greece either by convening an extraordinary session of the Committee of Ministers or either by reporting alleged violations of the European Convention on Human Rights by Greece to the European Commission on Human Rights continued. The Chairman of the International Commission of Jurists had written also to the President of the Consultative Assembly\textsuperscript{40} and that letter had been referred to the Assembly Legal Committee for an opinion.

Parsons, the Assistant Private Secretary to the Foreign Secretary, believed that the Council would avoid any positive action on Greece during the summer months. He warned, however, that, when the Assembly would meet in September, the Foreign office should be prepared \textit{for fireworks}.\textsuperscript{41} Davidson also agreed that the British government would be faced before long with the problem of what attitude to adopt towards that issue in one forum or another of the Council of Europe. In the first place, the Foreign Office concurred that arraigning the Greek junta in the Council of Europe would not be effective, since, according to the Greek Embassy in London, such an action would be regarded as an unfriendly act.\textsuperscript{42} Furthermore, the British officials did not wish to take the lead in publicly condemning the regime. They also agreed that the


\textsuperscript{39} PRO, FCO 9/227, Doc. 40: Unclassified, Paris telegram 94, Saving, from Reilly, 16/6/67: Western European Union.

\textsuperscript{40} PRO, FCO 9/227, Doc. 2: Sean MacBride to Sir Geoffrey de Freitas, 13/5/67.

\textsuperscript{41} PRO, FCO, 9/227: Confidential, Parsons to I. T. M. Lucas, 20/6/67.

\textsuperscript{42} PRO, FCO 9/151, Doc. 8: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to H. A. F. Hohler, 19/5/67.
legal complexities of the procedure under Article 24 of the Convention were such that it would take a long time to complete and was of doubtful effectiveness.43

On the other hand, if the UK were to oppose a majority view in the Council in favour of such a course, without having any alternative to suggest, she would be in an embarrassing situation from the point of view of public opinion in Britain specifically, and in Europe generally. Consequently, as Davidson argued, the UK would be better placed, if it were in a position to say that HM Ambassador had already raised the issue of the breaches of the Convention directly with the coup government.

As a result, when Sir Ralph Murray was to pay his farewell calls on the Greek high officials, he was instructed to stress that, while the UK did not wish to interfere in matters that the Greek government regarded as internal affairs, Britain had to take into account the parliamentary and public opinion not only in the UK but also in the international organisations to which both countries belonged. Furthermore, Sir Ralph Murray was authorised to add that, as both countries were parties to the Convention, Britain wished to discuss with the Greeks any problems arising out of it. In that way, the British officials paved the way for taking up with the Colonels specific cases of infringement of civil liberties, whenever they would wish to do so.44

The British Ambassador in Athens acted on his instructions on 28 June 1967.45 Lord Hood followed the same line with the Greek Charge d' Affairs in London on 26 June.46 The Foreign Office therefore agreed that, if the necessity arose in the Council of Europe, the substance of that exchange –though amounted to a very little- did put the UK in a position to argue that it had already raised the matter with the Greeks upon conviction that the other parties

46 PRO, FCO, 9/120, Doc. 57: Note from the Delegation of Greece to the NATO Ministerial Meeting of Luxembourg, 13 June 1967
of the Convention should raise, in the first instance at least, directly with the Greek regime the issue of breaches of the Convention.47

In sum, as Hohler explained to Sir Michael Stewart, the current British policy towards taking action against Greece in international organisations was based on four considerations. Firstly, the Foreign office thought that such action would be counter-productive. Yet, as Hohler argued, whereas that argument might be valid during the first couple of months after the coup -when the Colonels would simply be bewildered and angered- the prospect of such action in future might produce a more considered and beneficial reaction. The Colonels' volte face regarding Averoff proved, according to Hohler, that the coup government, including the military members, were indeed very sensitive to the public expression of foreign opinion. Therefore, the British official thought that this argument might be losing its force.

The second consideration was that it would be better to avoid disrupting the solidarity of NATO, an argument that according to Hohler remained valid. On the other hand, the last two considerations for not taking action against Greece in international organisations were that the UK should retain a reasonable degree of influence over the junta firstly in relation to Cyprus, and secondly for preserving the British commercial interests in Greece. As Hohler argued, however, these considerations applied only in lesser degree if the UK were simply to take part, rather than have the lead, in any measures against Greece. Moreover, depending on how things developed in that country, Britain might come under strong pressure either in Parliament or from the Western countries in the Council of Europe -or both- to give to proposals for international action against Greece. Consequently, Hohler proposed that the British government should keep a fully open mind, and not let the policy they had followed during the previous few months gel hard, since it had been based on pragmatic considerations that might change.48

47 PRO, FCO, 9/227, Doc. 41: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to D. S. L. Dodson. 21/7/67: Memorandum on Greece and the Council of Europe.

Chapter III:

11 September – 12 December 1967
1. USA: Before the King's coup

1.1 The aims of the American policy towards Greece

The longer-term objectives of the US attitude towards Greece, as set forth in the ‘Guidelines for Policies and Operations—Greece’ (December, 1962) and brought up to date before the April 21 coup by the American Embassy in Athens, consisted of nine points.

The number one long-term objective was an independent and democratic Greece, with a stable political development, and with a healthy and developing economy, increasingly self-sustaining and as independent as possible of the need for direct foreign aid. The continued membership in NATO as a bulwark against the Soviet penetration into the Mediterranean, the improvement of the Greek-Turkish relations through the negotiation and settlement of the Cyprus issue, and the maintenance of the Greek Armed Forces at adequate levels in conformity with the American conception of the Greek Force goals were also included in the objectives of the USA. The American foreign policy towards Greece also aimed at gaining Greek support for the US positions on international issues in world bodies; at creating a more favourable investment climate for foreign and particularly US investment in Greece; at persuading the Greek Government to implement a progressive social and economic policy, which would aim at reducing the income gap between rural and urban populations; at isolating continually the extreme left in Greece, frustrating the Communist goal of obtaining legitimacy and increased respectability; and at encouraging the Greeks to abide by and renew agreements on the US civilian and military facilities in Greece and, where necessary, to grant new and expand old ones.¹

Yet, according to Anschutz, the problems in the Greek-US relations had altered in short-term, immediate aspects. As he argued, the short-term objectives were focused principally on the reestablishment of a constitutional

system, under which the long-term objective number one might be pursued. Consequently, Anschutz concluded that for the immediate future, the objective of the US Government, designed to ensure a speedy return to the constitutional processes, should be the creation of a situation in which the coup managers would feel compelled by their own personal interests to give precise assurances and take concrete actions to implement an irreversible program aiming at the restoration of constitutional government.

Some months later, Talbot sent to Washington a semi-annual US policy assessment with recommendations for the American policies towards Greece for the following six months. His suggestions, although they followed the line that Anschutz had proposed, were more precise and up-to-date.

In particular, the American Ambassador in Athens believed that the protection of the US interests in Greece called for concerted efforts to maintain satisfactory relations with the regime while attempting to persuade it to reduce the repugnant aspects of a military government. He also added that the alternative policy of chilling relations to the point that the Colonels would begin looking for other connections seemed unwise and at that point unnecessary, although any shift of the junta to a full military dictatorship would cause a reassessment.

More particularly, Talbot recommended that the US short-term actions should be related to three dates: firstly, the termination of the US Congressional hearing on the World Wide Military Assistance Program, possibly by late November; secondly, the presentation of the Greek draft constitution, on schedule by December 15; and, thirdly, some actions of the new regime within a reasonable time (i.e. by 15 January 1967), that would indicate to the Greek public what the junta's intentions were with regard to a referendum and the period subsequent to it. In that connection, the American Ambassador also included tactics within Greece, which would contribute in accomplishing the US short-term goal of an early return to parliamentarism, and tactics in international organisations, primarily NATO Councils, which would exert a proper amount of international pressure on the junta, without

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creating a chauvinistic reaction that would only increase the support for the coup group.

Concerning the tactics within Greece, Talbot proposed that, by his diplomatic exertions in Greece and by the public statements at home, the USA should continue the efforts to hold the regime to its public commitments of a final return to constitutional rule. According to the Ambassador, the central US aim should be to establish close contact with key figures of the regime in order to push them in the direction of constructive steps and to deter them from harmful action. As part of the US diplomatic efforts, the USA should also remain in close contact with the King, encouraging him to promote among senior officers the restoration of the normal chain of command in the Greek Army, while resisting the junta's efforts to effect radical personnel changes in it.

Concerning the tactics in international organisations, the American Ambassador recommended that, in the case of attempts to change the venue of scheduled international conferences as a politically punitive measure, the USA should stress that such negative action did not contribute to the positive aim of achieving a return to constitutional rule. On the other hand, in such organizations as the EEC, where the actions were aimed at withholding tangible benefits corresponding to the American MAP suspensions, the USA should attempt to develop a coordination of tactics that would be more of a carrot-and-stick type rather than totally destructive of Greece's economic association with Common Market countries.

1.2 The effect of the US MAP suspensions on the regime and on NATO

The major US policy action since 21 April was the MAP suspensions. Yet, as George Denney Jr., the Deputy Director of INR, commented, thus far the Greek regime had not taken that decision seriously. According to the American official, the regime apparently calculated that the USA, like the junta itself, was more concerned with the image of the regime in America and in the
Western Europe than with what actually occurred. Thus, according to Denney, the US position tended to be viewed more as a measure designed to appease hostile international opinion than as a pressure to force the junta to adopt a specific course of action. Moreover, the regime apparently assumed that the US preoccupation with Vietnam and the Near East crisis would induce the Administration to leave Greece in peace as long as the junta made some move towards the distant goal of ‘constitutional government’.3

Supplementing the estimations of George Denney, Phillips Talbot remarked that the continued suspension of major end items of equipment under the military assistance program was a matter of major but not yet of paramount concern to the coup government. The senior members of the coup group appeared to have accepted the notion that the continued suspension of the US military aid towards Greece was now based primarily on the current Congressional review of the worldwide program prompted by the Middle East crisis. The junta knew that no decisions on MAP were going to be made until after the hearings were over. However, Talbot estimated that, once the debate in Washington had ended and the final action had been taken on the foreign aid legislation, that rationalization of the US reserve would disappear.4

In view of the above, Talbot observed that, if the period after the Congressional adjournment brought about no relaxation in US policy, it was reasonable to expect growing pressure to retaliations against the American interests in Greece, particularly those of a military character. The Ambassador estimated that the retaliation would probably take the form initially of minor harassment, increasing in tempo as the time passed. There was little likelihood that there would be direct interference in essential US operations, but the current freedom enjoyed in the conduct of US military activities would be curtailed on a gradual basis. Moreover, according to the Ambassador, what might start out as minor harassment could grow to a demand for some review of the agreements governing the use of US facilities in Greece. Talbot commented that the coup government was quite aware of the value of the

Greek territory to the American strategic interests, a value that had been emphasized by the public statements of some US officials. Increased Soviet naval activity in the Mediterranean had reinforced that awareness.

Meanwhile, Talbot was conscious of the junta’s efforts to try to find some area in the international security field of sufficient interest or attractiveness to the US -to which the regime could contribute- that could impel the Americans to relax their MAP policy. Offers of assistance for Vietnam and willingness to undertake operations in the Congo were evidence of that attitude, especially when the pressure of the adverse European Community actions was mounting.

The State Department however pointed out that the question of a possible Greek military contribution to Vietnam by the junta would pose an awkward problem for the USA, if it were supposed to be linked to a US quid pro quo. Although the officials in Washington had long thought that the Greeks could and should make larger efforts in Vietnam, they were not interested at that moment because they could not let any contribution affect their posture towards the Greek regime. As a result, Talbot was instructed that, if the junta raised the subject again, he should suggest a medical team, such as the Iranians

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5 NA, RG 59, Box 1549, Def GR-US: Secret, Athens telegram 1552, by Talbot, 30/9/67.
6 The State Secretary of FRG, Lahr, informed the Bundestag on 4 October that Germany would not sign any new trade or weapons delivery agreement with the Greek Government, though agreements then in force would be honoured. The Parliamentary State Secretary Jahn on the same occasion stated that the Government regretted the political conditions in Greece, and would examine what measures might be taken with the other members of the Council of Europe to bring Greece back to a constitutional form of Government [NA, RG 59, Box 2156, Pol Gr-A: Confidential, Bonn telegram 3878, by McGhee, 6/10/67]. This act of the German Government came at a time when adverse events had been piling up out of Greece: the Scandinavian-Dutch (with support from Belgium and Luxembourg) initiative in the Council of Europe to obtain a condemnation of Greece by the Council and the European Commission on Human Rights; the Danish initiative in NATO to have the question of the Greek coup discussed and the reluctance of some NATO members to be associated with the ‘Sunshine Express’ NATO exercise in Greece; the decision by the Executive Commission of the Common Market to recommend that the EIB should deny any further development loans to Greece and the question that such a decision raised as to Greece’s present association with and eventual full membership in the EEC; action to expel the Greek workers’ delegation from the ILO; expulsion of the GSEE from the ICFTU; condemnation of the coup Government by the International Commission of Jurists; adoption by the British Labour Party Congress of a Resolution strongly condemning the Greek regime; actions in the US, such as the statements by 52 Congressmen and the UAW, opposing further military aid to Greece; various initiatives by the Soviet-led communist states to boycott the Athens Festival and the Thessaloniki Fair, to boycott international conferences held in Athens or seek their transfer to other locales (for example UNIDO); campaigns, particularly in the Scandinavian countries, to discourage tourism to Greece. [NA, RG 59, Box 2149, Pol 15-1 GR – 7-1-67: Secret, Athens airgram A-213, by Talbot, 19/10/67: Six Months after the coup: Accomplishments, Problems, and Prospects of the ‘National Government’].
and the Spaniards had in Vietnam at the time, or any other kind of civilian
endeavour in which the Greeks might have a particular talent.\textsuperscript{7}

In the meantime, NATO members were concerned with the impact of
the coup on the efficiency and strength of the Greek armed forces, as well as on
the extent to which the suspension of certain items of military assistance might
affect Greece's ability to fulfill her NATO obligations. Most were sharply
critical of the junta and doubtful of its professions of loyalty to NATO. For its
part, the junta had intimated that if the US aid were not forthcoming, Greece
could seek support from other sources.\textsuperscript{8}

As the American Ambassador commented,\textsuperscript{9} a full-scale debate on
Greece in the NATO Council would put the US on the spot. While some
governments, such as the UK, the FRG, and Canada, might prefer to avoid
such a debate, none would probably take a strong stand against holding one.
Hence, according to Talbot, it was strongly in the US interest to avoid a debate.
The Alliance was still adjusting to the disruption caused by the French
initiative, and might be subject to a further troubled period because of the
growing anti-NATO sentiment in some of the northern allies, especially in
Denmark and Norway, mainly attributable to internal political developments,
which had strengthened the hands of anti-NATO socialist and further left
political elements. As the American Ambassador put it, should the internal
situation in Greece become a bone of contention within NATO, the USA, in its
efforts to maintain harmony in the Alliance and a general commitment to its
continued strength and vitality, might find itself in the unhappy position of
being a lonely defender of the Greek regime; along with Portugal, perhaps,
which would only make things look worse.

Talbot argued that there were two principal selling points in favour of
no action at the time. Firstly, the regime had repeatedly stated that the draft
constitution, which was under preparation, would be submitted to the coup
government on 15 December 1967. Secondly, any criticism of the Greek

\textsuperscript{7} NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol. Affairs & Relations GR-USA – 1-1-69: Secret, Joint
State/Defence telegram 052666 to Athens, by Rusk, 12/10/67.
\textsuperscript{8} NA, RG 59, Box 2148, Pol 15 GR – 6-1-67: Secret, Research Memorandum RNA-40, by
George C. Denney, Jr., 19/9/67: Short-term prospects for Greece.
\textsuperscript{9} NA, RG 59, Box 2149, Pol 15-1 GR – 7-1-67: Secret, Athens airgram A-213, by Talbot,
19/10/67: Six Months after the coup: Accomplishments, Problems, and Prospects of the
'National Government'.

regime would only serve to rally the Greek public behind the Colonels, since the junta would exploit the theme ‘we are Greeks first.’ Moreover, a third point could be the strategic importance of Greece, the Soviet naval incursions into the Mediterranean, and Greece’s contribution to the common defence of the area. The Alliance had weathered the French initiative and NATO was still in the process of adjusting to the effects of that crisis. Therefore, it would not serve the NATO interests to create another confrontation. Finally, Talbot added that the effect on the Greek people of any attempt at action by NATO would be intensified because no NATO action was taken against Turkey, although the conditions were very similar.

Stanley, officer to the US NATO Mission, agreed with Talbot’s proposals. He estimated, however, that most of the NATO members remained allergic to the Greek regime and the best that could be expected from them on that subject was silence. Yet, statements in capitals for domestic political consumption before or after the meeting could not be ruled out. On the other hand, the passage of time, the recognition of special relevance of Greece to NATO security at the time of the Soviet build-up in Eastern Mediterranean, and the general desire to protect the image of the Alliance at the December meeting had produced a tacit agreement to keep the silence. Under these circumstances, Stanley judged that the best course was to let the ‘sleeping dog lie.’

Katzenbach agreed with the approach suggested by Stanley, adding that they would of course review the situation, if necessary, as the Ministerial Meeting drew closer.

1.3 King Constantine comes to Washington

In connection with their forthcoming visit to Canada on 26 August 1967, King Constantine and Queen Anne-Marie had also planned to spend several days privately and informally in the USA.

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In his memorandum to the President, Rostow informed Johnson that they had already planned inviting King Constantine for a State visit in the spring of 1968. Although Dean Rusk thought it better to stick to that plan, Rostow argued that a visit would be useful at any time, since it would serve their purpose of strengthening the King's efforts to return Greece to democratic processes. Moreover, the Greek coup had excited a large number of the Congressional liberals, and the question of sustaining their NATO responsibility with Greece via the military aid was increasingly sensitive on the Hill. Consequently, Rostow argued that, since the Greek King would be passing informally through the US on his way to and from Canada, and since the following autumn would be a tricky political period in Greece, it would be worth hearing Constantine's side of the story.\(^{13}\)

Dean Rusk was finally convinced.\(^{14}\) His recommendation was that the President should receive Constantine in the White House for a small working luncheon with no other ceremonies. The President finally approved the visit for 11 September 1967.\(^ {15}\)

Once the visit was agreed in principle, there was the question of publicity. The American officials in Washington thought that it would be better to avoid saying anything at the moment, since Constantine had not yet announced his trip to Canada. In addition, their reason for avoiding publicity at that stage was to preclude some of his Colonels climbing on the plane and coming to lunch with him.\(^ {16}\) Consequently, they followed the line that, since no details of the King's trip to visit EXPO 67 had been announced, further questions on the King's plans should be directed to the palace in Athens.\(^ {17}\) That line was held until 23 August 1967, when George Christian, the White House

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\(^{12}\) NA, RG 59, Box 2147, Pol 7 GR: Confidential, Athens telegram 589, by Talbot, 30/7/67.
\(^{13}\) LBJ Archives, Box 126, NSF: Mem Misc II - 1/66-7/67: No. 17, Confidential, Memorandum for the President, by W.W. Rostow, 4/8/67: Greek King's visit.
\(^{14}\) LBJ Archives, Box 127, NSF: GR-Visit of King Constantine — 9-11-67: No. 17a, Confidential, Memorandum for the President, by Dean Rusk, 2/8/67: Visit of King Constantine of Greece.
\(^{15}\) NA, RG 59, Box 2147, Pol 7 GR: Confidential, Memorandum for the President, by Dean Rusk, 2/8/67: Visit of King Constantine of Greece.
\(^{16}\) LBJ Archives, Box 127, NSF: GR-Visit of King Constantine — 9-11-67: 14, Memorandum for Dick Moose, by Hal Saunders, 14/8/67: Press Guidance on King Constantine's visit.
\(^{17}\) LBJ Archives, Box 127, NSF: GR-Visit of King Constantine — 9-11-67: 14, Memorandum for Dick Moose, by Hal Saunders, 15/8/67: Re-check on Press Guidance for King Constantine.
spokesman, announced the meeting of King Constantine with the President, adding that the meeting would take place after Labour Day.\textsuperscript{18}

More particularly, at 12.34 on 11 September 1967, the President went to the South Grounds to greet the young King and conducted him to the oval office, where they stayed for half an hour. Half an hour later, they went to the mansion with the King's party, where they had lunch. Present were also the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defence, the Charge d'Affaires ad interim of Greece Alcibiades Papadopoulos, the Grand Marshal of the Greek Court Leonidas Papagos, the Special Assistant to the President, and the Assistant Secretary of State for NEA.\textsuperscript{19} At 3.30 Constantine, accompanied by the Marshal of the Court Papagos and the Greek Chargé, was received by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations\textsuperscript{20} for coffee at the Capitol.\textsuperscript{21} Ultimately, at 5.12, King Constantine, Secretary Dean Rusk, and Walt Rostow held a one-hour meeting in the President's office.

In his conversation with the President, King Constantine described developments in Greece, and particularly inquired as to what the USA were prepared to do in the case of a confrontation. For his part, Johnson explained the problems growing out of such a request, and specifically noted that a US military intervention would not be feasible. With regard to the question of a public statement reaffirming the US support for the King's efforts to return the country to constitutionalism, he argued that it would be studied in the light of circumstances at the time, but he could not commit himself in advance.

Addressing himself to the question of military aid, the King made a plea for the restoration of MAP, noting that the continued withholding of aid

\textsuperscript{18} NA, RG 59, Box 2147, Pol 7 GR: Limited Official Use, State telegram 026580 to Athens, 24/8/67.
\textsuperscript{19} LBJ Archives, Box 12, Diary 7-1-67 – 9-30-67: 11 September 1967.
\textsuperscript{20} Senator J.W. Fulbright (Democrat, Alabama) acted as Host. The following were also present: Members of the Foreign Relations Committee [John Sparkman (Democrat, Ala.), Joseph S. Clark (D., Penna.), Eugene J. McCarthy (D., Minn.), Bourke B. Hickenlooper (Republican, Ia.), George D. Aiken (R., Kansas), Karl E. Mundt (R., S. Dak.), John Shreman (R., Ky.)], other Senators [Minority Leader Everett McK. Dirkson (R., Ill.), Minority Whip Thomas H. Kuchel (R., Calif.), Birch Bay (D., Ind.), J. Caleb Boggs (R., Dela.), Clifford P. Hansen (R., Wyo.), Daniel K. Inouye (D., Hawaii), Gale W. McGee (D., Wyo.), Thomas J. McIntyre (D., N.H.), Stephen M. Young (D., Ohio)], Foreign Relations Committee Staff [Chief of Staff Carl Marcy, Staff Consultant William B. Bader], and also the US Chief of Protocol James W. Symington, and the Country Director for Greece H. Daniel Brewster. The number included also two members of the House of Representatives of Greek-American origin: Nick Galifianakis (D., No. Car.), and Peter N. Kyros (D., Maine).
\textsuperscript{21} NA, RG 59, Box 2147, Pol 7 GR – 9-7-67: Confidential, Memorandum for the Files, 11/9/67: Visit of King Constantine: Coffee Hour with Senate Foreign Relations Committee.
was not achieving the US political objectives and causing serious irritation to the coup colonels. As he argued, some military aid linked to continued loyalty to the constitutional scenario would be helpful. The President however made clear that he could make no commitment to that issue, until legislation was passed.

Johnson and Rostow also rejected any request for US participation in the Greek-Turkish dialogue, and for an economic assistance of $70 million for the reconstruction of the earthquake damaged areas. In connection with the King’s other two requests –namely, permission to use the VOA radio facilities in Thessaloniki or Rhodes, and establishment of efficient two-way communication facilities between the Palace and the US Embassy in Athens—the President remained non-committal.22

In fact, as the State Department had briefed the President, although the USA firmly believed that Constantine should continue to press the junta towards a return to constitutionalism, the King should not push matters to the point of a showdown.

On the other hand, if, despite the King’s best efforts, a confrontation were inevitable, the American officials had stressed that there could be no US military intervention, although possible movements of units of the Sixth Fleet to Greek waters—for political purposes only—might be decided at the time in the light of the existing circumstances. Should the King’s life and that of his family be endangered in such a confrontation, the US would exert their influence on behalf of the safety of the King and his family. Yet, because of the risks involved to the individuals concerned, the American officials had underlined that the US would not attempt to evacuate the Royal family against the wishes of the junta.

In other words, the American line was that, although they did not like the coup government, they thought that the best way for both the King and the USA to handle the issue was to work with the junta and try to nudge it back toward constitutional government. The consequences of a confrontation would be injurious for all, so the American officials wanted the President to talk about how to avoid the showdown. If the question arose, they could not honestly say

what they would do until they saw what the situation was. Yet, they thought that the US interests and the King’s were similar: they did not want civil war; they wanted constitutional government; they did not want US-Greek relations disrupted; but what they could do was limited.

In sum, Dean Rusk believed that the visit of the King served the useful purpose of making clear their profound desire for continued close relations with Greece, as well as their belief in the necessity for an early return to constitutional government. It also provided the opportunity to reassure the King of their support for him, and at the same time to discourage him from moving into a confrontation with the junta.23

In connection with the King’s visit to the US Capitol, the conversation ran on the subjects of the political prisoners, the constitutional reform, and Cyprus. In Constantine’s five-minute statement there was no direct reference to the Military Assistance Program other than the need cited by the King to keep up the defence of Greece within the framework of NATO. According to the memorandum for the files, the King made a good impression by fielding the questions in a very direct and alert fashion, and by being very frank with the Senators.24

The desire for keeping the conversations of the King confidential appears in the News Conference, held in the same day at the White House. George Christian was repeatedly pressed to disclose whether the subjects of MAP or Andreas Papandreou had come up at the meeting. Yet, he only reiterated that he had nothing of substance to report, except that the President and King Constantine had spent about two hours together, including the private luncheon. He added that it was not a policy meeting: the two men had just taken a tour of the horizon on various matters, including NATO, but George Christian did not have any specifics on their conversation.25

24 NA, RG 59, Box 2147, Pol 7 GR – 9-7-67: Confidential, Memorandum for the Files, 11/9/67: Visit of King Constantine: Coffee Hour with Senate Foreign Relations Committee.
Rostow however recommended that they should let out on background that the King had raised the question of their resuming the military aid. As the American official argued, Constantine would like to take the credit for at least raising the subject closest to the junta’s heart, so as not to look as if he had come in Washington on a purely social fling. Both, Senator Pell, who had seen Constantine in Newport, and the Grand Marshal of the Greek Court, Leonidas Papagos, suggested the same. Their purpose was to counter the ‘Washington Post’ headline, which quoted the King saying that the military government ‘is not my government.’

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26 LBJ Archives, Box 22, NSF: Memos LBJ-WWR 3, Vol. 41: No 26, Confidential, Memorandum for the President, by W.W. Rostow, 13/9/67: Further backgrounding on King Constantine.


28 The King had indeed quipped in that way, when Senator Sparkman had referred to ‘your government’ at one point [NA, RG 59, Box 2147, Pol 7 GR – 9-7-67: Confidential, Memorandum for the Files, 11/9/67: Visit of King Constantine: Coffee Hour with Senate Foreign Relations Committee.]
2. **UK: Pressures**

2.1 *The Labour Party criticizes the British policy towards Greece*

On 22 November 1967, the First Secretary to the Central Department, Macrae, confirmed that the British policy towards Greece had not changed since the spring of 1967.¹ George Brown, at his meeting with the Greek Foreign Minister on 25 September 1967, repeated to Economou-Gouras that the longer Greece delayed before establishing a defensible democratic regime, the harder it was for Britain to maintain relations with Greece.²

The Parliamentary Labour Party Meeting in November 1967 offered the opportunity to the Foreign Office for a general round-up of the British attitude towards Greece. The British officials once again stressed that the UK could not have followed another policy towards the Greek regime. Despite the criticisms for having a working relationship with the Colonels, Britain did have a voice in Athens, which enabled HM government to exert its influence in the continuing problem of Cyprus. Moreover, the British officials argued that the general British representations had had some effect, as the release of Mrs. Ambatielos and the relaxation of the Colonels’ practice of using military courts to try civil crimes proved.

Furthermore, they added that any economic sanctions against Greece would be effective only if every country agreed about the objective and the means of enforcing it. Considering the fact that there would not be such agreement over Greece even in Western Europe and the USA -not to mention countries further afield- Britain could not undertake to proceed alone because she would be hurt more than the Greek regime. In conclusion, the British officials stressed that having diplomatic relations with the Greek regime in no

² PRO, FCO 9/165, Doc 73: Confidential, Meeting between the Secretary of State and the Greek Foreign Minister; PRO, FCO 9/172, Doc 16: Confidential, Record of Conversation between the Foreign Secretary and the Greek Foreign Minister, held at the Carlyle Hotel. Present: George Brown, Lord Caradon, D. J. D. Maitland, D. J. Swan, Economou-Gouras, J. Georgiou, 25/9/67.
way implied approval of the political complexion of the government or its policies any more than the recognition of the Peking regime meant that Britain accepted its doctrines or condoned its behaviour.3

Yet, the British policy towards Greece attracted such a strong criticism within the Parliamentary Labour Party that Rodgers felt obliged to hold an informal meeting with a number of MPs on 22 November 1967, both to clarify the policy as he saw it and to discover how, if at all, they thought it should be changed. At first, Rodgers repeated that, although he had just taken another close look at the two possibilities open to Britain regarding Greece—break off relations with the Greeks or express public disapproval in principle without pushing it to a show-down—it was clear to him that the current policy towards Greece was the correct one.

According to the British official, maintaining relations with the regime was essential for a number of reasons. Greek membership of NATO was an important part of the Alliance and it would be against the British interests to weaken it. Moreover, Rodgers argued that the UK relied on the Greek authorities for the safety of many thousands of British subjects and for a large number of overflights. In addition, the Anglo-Greek trade was quite important, since the annual British surplus on visible trade was about £23 million, while the trade with Greece over the previous few years was running by about three to one in favour of the UK. Finally, Rodgers concluded that during the current crisis over Cyprus it was particularly essential to maintain high-level access to the Greek leaders, which only diplomatic relations could provide.

In conclusion, the consensus of the meeting was that the government’s policy was basically correct, but it should be projected more clearly. According to Watkins, Labour MP, it appeared to many people that the British government, by not associating with the Scandinavian initiative, was acquiescing in the regime’s actions. Therefore, it was agreed that Britain should make more public reference to the fact that she was maintaining constant pressure on the regime to return to constitutionality. Eric Ogden,

Labour MP, suggested, and Rodgers agreed, that more use might be made of answers to Parliamentary Questions to show what HM government was doing.  

2.2 Mounting pressures on Britain regarding the Greek question

The debate of the Consultative Assembly on the general policy of the Council of Europe, dealing with a number of diverse political questions – notably Greece, the Middle East, and East-West relations- took place on 25 September 1967. The British and the Scandinavians dominated the discussions, while a number of speakers also touched on the events in the Middle East. The situation in Greece, however, overshadowed the debate and gave rise to considerable passion. Particularly expressive against the Greek government were the UK Labour speakers, who, among other suggestions, even proposed to expel Greece from the Council of Europe no later than until January 1968. The final recommendation of the Consultative Assembly was adopted on 26 September 1967 by an overwhelming majority and, among other things, urged the Committee of Ministers to ‘demand that the Greek government should respect the freedom enshrined in the Statute of the Council of Europe and to establish a Parliamentary system of Government which provides adequate guarantees for those human rights which are a condition of membership of the Council of Europe’.

Furthermore, in the morning of 20 September 1967, the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe received from the Permanent Representative of Greece a letter dated 19 September containing further information relating to the derogation made by the Greek government on 3 May 1967 under Article 15

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of the Convention on Human Rights. In the afternoon of the same day, the Danish, the Norwegian, and the Swedish representatives presented to the Secretary-General identical letters signed by their Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The letters were designed to respond to the relevant Assembly Resolution No. 346, and were accompanied by applications to the Human Rights Commission, pursuant to Article 24 of the Convention. These consisted of a claim to establish that the Greek government had violated its obligations under the Convention, supported by a list of allegations culminating in the contention that the Greek government’s derogation under Article 15 had not been properly sustained or the Secretary-General kept informed in the manner provided for. The Netherlands’ government made a similar application one week later.

Meanwhile, in London, the Scandinavian initiative had been widely publicized with the result that the Foreign Office received a number of enquiries about the attitude of HM government. On 29 September 1967, Rodgers held a meeting at the Foreign Office with Lord Hood and the Central Department to discuss these new developments. They finally decided to follow the line that the debate that had taken place in the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe on 25 and 26 September was welcome as a clear expression of the strong feelings of European and British parliamentarians about what had happened and was happening in Greece; Britain entirely sympathized with the motives of the Scandinavian Governments in making their applications to the European Commission of Human Rights, and shared their objectives -i.e. a speedy return to constitutional rule and democratic institutions in Greece- since the UK had been consistently exerting its influence on the Greek government on that direction and would continue to do so.

That line was followed on various occasions. For example, when the Chairman of the Liberal Party urged HM government to support the

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6 PRO, FCO 9/228: B. Vitsaxis to Peter Smithers, 19/9/67.
8 PRO, FCO 9/228, Doc 117: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to Morphet, 2/10/67: Greece and the Council of Europe.
Scandinavian initiative, Rodgers replied by repeating the above only in a rather shorter form. Furthermore, Parsons instructed Boothby, UK Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe, to speak in the same way at the meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies, which started on 23 October 1967. As he argued, the British policy was very delicately balanced at the time: on the one hand, they certainly did not want to get out in front and sacrifice such influence as they might still retain in Athens by appearing to take the lead in public accusations against Greece; on the other hand, they also could not appear to be conspicuously hanging back in respect of any action proposed by the Scandinavian and the Benelux countries.

For the Foreign Secretary’s use, Davidson added that the UK had no intention to follow the example of the Scandinavian governments in making applications to the European Commission, since the Scandinavian application had already set the machinery in motion. According to the British official, any addition of other applications from other governments would not speed things up—indeed, he thought that they might be slowed down. In the same way, the British government could not associate itself officially in some other respect with the Scandinavian initiative, since the applications had not been circulated officially to other governments. Besides, as Davidson informed George Brown, the three Scandinavian governments had not invited Britain to join in the application they had made; nor had they suggested, since making it, that Britain ought to take some follow-up action. According to Davidson, there was also no sign that the German, French or Italian governments planned to associate themselves formally with what was developing into a Scandinavian/Benelux approach to the problem.

Meanwhile, the Labour Party Conference had proposed a Resolution that condemned the Greek regime and called for the expulsion of Greece from NATO, for the end of all military aid to Greece, and for the ending of Greece’s association with European organisations—like the EEC and the Council of Europe—until the military dictatorship gave way to viable and proper

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11 PRO, FCO 9/228, Doc. 129: Confidential, R. E. Parsons to E. B. Boothby, 16/10 67.
democracy. Finally, it concluded by stating that the Conference supported all action by the Greek working class to bring down the regime.

In George Brown's view, the proposed Resolution of the Labour Party Conference, far from helping to restore democracy in Greece, could make the position far worse. As he argued, Britain would have a grave responsibility, if the steps advocated in the Resolution were to lead to a bloodshed, which the UK would be in no position to avert. Therefore, George Brown asked the Conference not to pass the Resolution. At the same time, he claimed that he did not wish it defeated, but urged the sponsors of the Motion to remit for further consideration, since, in his view, to oppose the Resolution would give the wrong impression in Greece, while to pass it would put a responsibility on Britain that they were not able at the moment to accept. The Resolution was nevertheless put to the vote on 4 October 1967 and was carried by a majority of 269,000.13

Consequently, the Foreign Office sent instructions to Sir Michael Stewart advising him to say—if questioned— that the resolution provided clear evidence of the strength of feeling about Greece in the Labour Party. Yet, George Brown assured the Ambassador not to worry much about the Scarborough vote, since the majority in favour of the Resolution was small in comparison with the total vote.14

Meanwhile, the strong pressures on the Foreign Office and the British government regarding the situation in Greece continued. Parliamentary questions in the House of Commons,15 lengthy articles in the newspapers,16 and letters from MPs showed that the Greek issue continued to concern the British public opinion. More particularly, Humphrey Berkeley, the Chairman of the

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14 PRO, FCO 9/165, Doc 90: Personal & Confidential, D. J. D. Maitland to Sir M. Stewart, 10/10/67.
UN Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, stressed that the machinery of the European Commission of Human Rights should not be considered an alternative to secret diplomacy, but as a part of the diplomatic approach. He argued, therefore, that the British government’s lack of using the protest machinery available under the Convention for such cases as the suppression of Human Rights in Greece would surely weaken its efficacy.\textsuperscript{17}

The view of the British government in general, and of George Brown in particular—as expressed in his letter to Berkeley on 28 November 1967—was that there were two types of approach, which could not best be made by the same government. According to the Foreign Secretary, the Danes, who had from the outset been the leaders of the move to arraign Greece in the Council of Europe, had little influence in Athens for that very reason. Britain, on the other hand, had been able to exert considerable influence in Athens, not only in that connection, but also, and more especially, in the recent Cyprus crisis. In other words, George Brown saw the current European attitude towards the military regime in Greece as a pincer movement, with the Scandinavians and other governments exerting pressure through action in the Council of Europe, and Britain and others doing so through bilateral contacts.\textsuperscript{18}

\subsection*{2.3 New issues confront the British arms sales policy to Greece}

As we have already mentioned, the Foreign Office was under instructions to submit to the Ministers all applications for permission to export arms to Greece. Yet, the US ban on the export of heavy military equipment to that country induced the regime to ask for alternative markets elsewhere, and more specifically in Britain.\textsuperscript{19}

These proposals were quite attractive to the British officials, although they agreed that they raised large problems.\textsuperscript{20} The British Embassy in Athens

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reported that there were three main items in which the Greek Armed Services were interested: the Swingfire wire-guided anti-tank missile, some British ships, and the airborne and ground-based homing and direction finding equipment. Dodson, Counsellor of the British Embassy in Athens, particularly argued that it was best to allow the discussions on these subjects to take their normal course, since none of these were likely to confront the British with an early decision over an export licence, while a refusal would be very obvious to the coup government and might well lead to recriminations. Consequently, given the uncertainty about the political evolution in Greece, and the overall British interest in maintaining markets for its military equipment, it seemed right to Dodson to follow up the discussion in the normal way. He agreed however that more difficult decisions might confront Britain in the near future, if the Greek Armed Services asked British manufacturers for early delivery of small orders. According to Dodson, the British attitude would presumably depend on the type of equipment involved, and also on the attitude of the other countries in NATO.21

That issue arose a little later, when the Greek Military Attaché in London informed the British Ministry of Defence that the General Army Staff in Athens intended to purchase 15 to 20 million rounds of 7.62mm NATO rifle ammunition.22 According to George, the Second Secretary to the Defence Supply Department, it was reasonable to assume that, since the Greek Army had already had sufficient small arms ammunition to deal with any internal difficulties, it could hardly be claimed that Britain was buttressing the regime by agreeing to that extra supply. Furthermore, he argued that it would be difficult to defend a decision to withhold supplies of small arms and ammunition, which the Greek government could very reasonably claim to be in accordance with Greece’s needs as a member of NATO. He also added that, if Britain did not compete for that order, they would see it go by default to another NATO country, an action that would be oddly altruistic. In conclusion, he commented that, although there had been a limitation of the British arms exports to Greece, they had not yet informed the Greek government of the UK

policy regarding arms sales, a fact that seemed to him to take away much of the value of what was essentially a 'moral gesture.'

The British officers went to considerable trouble marshaling arguments, and they had nearly decided on balance to support the supply, when finally they were asked to suspend action on the grounds that the Royal Ordnance Factories would be rather embarrassed if they had to tender. Yet, this exercise proved to Britain how difficult it was to identify arms specially required for a NATO role, when these could be used equally well for 'shooting down Greeks in the streets of Athens.'

Summing up, the British attitude regarding the arms supplies to Greece— as expressed by the British officials on the occasion of the Parliamentary Labour Party Meeting— was to withhold any supplies that could help the regime to keep itself in power. Yet, it was stressed that they did not rule out all exports whatever of military equipment to that country. Greece as a member of NATO could not be denied its legitimate requirements for NATO defence purposes without weakening the Alliance. Furthermore, as we have mentioned, the British officials also took into the account the strong links of the Royal Navy with the Greek Navy, which— incidentally— had been less involved in Greek politics than the other armed services. Consequently, it was in the British interests to maintain these links by supplying certain items of equipment, keeping at the same time a very close eye on all applications to export military supplies to Greece.

2.4 Britain continues to deal with Constantine discreetly

As we have already mentioned, the British attitude towards the young King was rather restrained and careful. In view of the strong criticism of the regime within the UK, and the historical links with the Greek Royal family, the

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Foreign Office did not wish to be identified as advocate of a new government led by the King against the Colonels.  

The British Ambassador’s calls to the Tatoi palace, therefore, were occasional and quite few. The King’s requests to visit London were also turned down, on the grounds that his visit would overlap with the visits of the Turkish President and of the Greek Patriarch. On the other hand, Constantine had frequent visits from British MPs, journalists, and other informants from the UK, who later reported to the Foreign Office and thus kept the London officials informed.

More particularly, Tom Driberg, the MP who had talked repeatedly with Constantine, suggested that Britain should establish as close a relationship with the young monarch as possible, especially since Constantine was quite isolated and badly in need of advice and moral support. As he argued, so far, Sir Michael Stewart had had only a rather formal contact with the King. According to Driberg, it was important that their relationship should develop on a more personal basis. Davidson, however, argued that, although Constantine needed support, it would not, at the time, help him or Britain, if the UK tried to give it.

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25 Unfortunately, the documents that explain the British attitude towards the King more fully have not been released.
27 PRO, FCO 9/167, Doc 57: Secret, A. E. Davidson to Samuel, 31/10/67: Greece-Mr. Driberg’s talks with the King.
Chapter IV:

13 – 31 December 1967
1. USA: Constantine’s counter-coup

1.1 The American attitude towards Constantine before and after the failure of his coup

At a small dinner party in the evening of 12 December, King Constantine, tense and preoccupied, as the American Ambassador later reported,1 took Talbot aside and asked to see him the following morning.2 Accordingly, Talbot arrived at the palace at 9.15, where Constantine, in his field uniform, speaking crisply and rapidly, informed the American Ambassador that he had decided to move against the military regime that very day.3 The King hoped that the junta would accept his command. If they persisted in opposing him, however, Constantine trusted that the USA would use every means in its power to persuade the coup leaders to avoid a military conflict that could result in a civil war. He also added that he would be most grateful for any indication by President Johnson and the American government in support of his effort.

In his telegram to Rusk, Talbot commented that, whether the King was prepared or not, the die was cast.4 For his part, the Secretary of State, who was in Brussels for the NATO Ministerial Meeting, was particularly interested to have as soon as possible all the information especially with respect to the situation in Northern Greece, whence Constantine intended to launch his counter-coup.5 Since the telecommunications between Athens and the provinces were out, it was difficult for the Embassy to know what was happening, especially as rumours circulated freely. According to Keeley, the

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1 NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 12-1-67: Secret, Athens telegram 2749 to the Secretary, by Talbot, 13/12/67.
2 Foreign Affairs, Oral History Collection, Association for Diplomatic Studies, Georgetown University Washington D.C., Robert V. Keeley.
3 NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 12-1-67: Secret, Athens telegram 2719, by Talbot, for the Secretary, flash, 13/12/67.
Embassy staff in Athens held a long meeting, and thought of sending the US Army Officer with the close personal contact with the King to try to find him, since Constantine’s movements and plans were still unknown. Yet, the majority opinion was that the American officer was so well known, that he would not ever get out of Athens. Consequently, Keeley volunteered to go.6

CAS was also attempting to get officers from Istanbul into that area, since the CAS posts at Kavalla had been eliminated two years ago due to economy reasons.7

Although Talbot did not think much of the King’s wisdom in making that move at that time, he claimed that the American interests lay on the side of the King’s success, since his failure would probably not only destroy the monarchy, but also fasten the extreme military junta on Greece for the years to come. It was also his view that in the best of circumstances the USA would find it extremely difficult to deal with a Papadopoulos’ controlled government in the Southern Greece, if the Colonels and the King persisted in partition.8

Consequently, he proposed that, rather than attempting to straddle the issue, the USA might do best by opting strongly on the side of the King as soon as they had any information that he had in fact won the loyalty and support of the preponderance of the Greek Armed Forces. According to the Ambassador, such a decision involved an American declaration of support for the King and instructions to Talbot to join the King and his Cabinet wherever they might be at the earliest opportunity. As he commented, however, this was a grave decision involving their military facilities and total presence in Greece.

For their part, the officials in Washington preferred to finesse for the time being the question of the states of the regime in Athens and of the group with the King. They were inclined to prefer standing on the position they had taken since 21 April, which implied support for the King, but without making entirely clear the difficult legal situation. They added that there were advantages in remaining in a never-never land for a day or so, particularly if it appeared likely that their contact with the coup government could produce

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6 Foreign Affairs, Oral History Collection, Association for Diplomatic Studies, Georgetown University Washington D.C., Robert V. Keeley.
7 A CIA Report on the Greek situation is currently withheld for security reasons. [NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 12-1-67: Secret, CIA 79446, 13/12/67].
8 NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 12-1-67: Secret, Athens telegram 2751, by Talbot, for the Secretary, 13/12/67.
useful results. The officials in Washington concurred also with Talbot in his supporting the goals of the King, but without his going all the way to the place of Constantine's current residence. As they argued, Talbot's decision to move to the North would likely depend on the ability of the King to control the Army and generate public support.⁹

As soon as the State Department officials learned that the King had taken refuge in Italy after the failure of his coup, the US Ambassador in Rome, Reinhardt, was asked to provide detailed information about the King's plans and his relations to the coup Government.¹⁰ Consequently, in the evening of 14 December 1967, the American Ambassador had a 45-minute-talk with Constantine on the latter's initiative.¹¹

The essence of the meeting—and obviously of the King's message to Dean Rusk—was the monarch's plea that the USA would put great pressure on the military junta to make a formal commitment for a constitutional referendum and elections.¹² Constantine repeated daily to Reinhardt this appeal.¹³ He also telephoned to Dean Rusk, expressing once again the hope that the USA would not recognize the coup Government unless he returned as a safeguard that a firm date for the plebiscite on the constitution and for the elections would be implemented. In conclusion, Constantine stated that he even contemplated going back without further negotiation.¹⁴

The State Department instructed Reinhardt to assure the monarch that the USA was not going to act precipitately on the question of recognition of the coup government, but tried to do what they could to encourage the junta to take

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¹⁴ NA, RG 59, Box 2155, Pol 30 GR: Secret, State telegram 086871 to Athens. by Rusk, 19/12/67.
specific steps towards a return to constitutionalism. They added, however, that Constantine should recognize that their influence under the present circumstances was limited.\textsuperscript{15} Rusk also did not commit himself concerning the King’s request to link the US recognition with Constantine’s return to Greece.\textsuperscript{16} As it was argued, despite the Department’s sympathy for the objective of the restoration of constitutionalism in Greece, they could not commit themselves to Constantine’s formula, which required them to stipulate the King’s return under suitable conditions as a prerequisite for their recognition.\textsuperscript{17}

1.2 The USA faces a new situation in Greece

As Talbot saw the US interests in the area immediately after the King’s counter-coup, the first American objective was to get a quick resolution with a minimum of bloodshed.\textsuperscript{18} Consequently, upon hearing about the King’s counter-coup, the Ambassador asked for standby instructions to contact Constantine and the junta leaders in order to express the US strong hope that the government issues in Greece would be resolved without bloodshed. According to Talbot, although it would presumably not be practicable to get that message to the King, there could be utility in conveying it to the coup leaders.

The State Department concurred. Consequently, when the Ambassador met the Colonels at 01.15 a.m. (Athens time) on 14 December 1967, he repeatedly urged the junta to resolve their differences with the King peacefully.

\textsuperscript{15} NA, RG 59, Box 2149, Pol 15-1 GR — 7-1-67: Secret, State telegram 085777 to Rome, Immediate, by Rusk, 16/12/67.
\textsuperscript{16} NA, RG 59, Box 2155, Pol 30 GR: Secret, State telegram 086871 to Athens, by Rusk, 19/12/67.
\textsuperscript{17} NA, RG 59, Box 2149, Pol 15-1 GR — 7-1-67: Secret, State telegram 087180 to Rome, by Rusk, 20/12/67.
\textsuperscript{18} NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR — 12-1-67: Secret, Athens telegram 2739, by Talbot, 13/12/67: Situation Report 1, 16.00 local.
through negotiations, stressing that the US government, and especially Secretary Rusk, were most anxious about the danger of bloodshed and strife.\(^1\)

Meanwhile, Under Secretary Katzenbach urged Rusk to counsel the Turkish Foreign Minister, Ihsan Caglayangil, that Turkey should maintain a hands-off attitude, taking no action likely to increase the existing danger of warfare in Greece.\(^2\) The American Embassy in Ankara took the same line with the Turkish Government,\(^3\) as Katzenbach had done with Melih Esenbel, the Turkish Ambassador in Washington.\(^4\)

When the King’s counter-coup proved abortive on 14 December 1967, Talbot’s first estimate was that the Papadopoulos’ government would now appear to be the undisputed master of Greece, with no potential internal check on its tenure or its programs. With the King out of country, and the clear demonstration that the junta was in ultimate control of the Armed forces that counted, the hardliners would doubtless conclude that there was no obstacle to an indeterminate rule by Papadopoulos and his group.

Talbot accepted that the other pressures, which existed before 13 December and were being exerted towards the restoration of constitutional representative government, continued with undiminished potential. The US Government, NATO, the Western opinion in general, and the international climate presumably could have some effect on the junta’s program for a restoration of normality. He observed however that they had no ace in hole, no possible alternative to the coup group, since a different government could only be imposed by military intervention from abroad; and that was in Talbot’s view apparently inconceivable. Consequently, some elements of the junta would now attempt more confidently to enjoy the prospect of setting their own timetable, with the assurance that no one could forcibly change the schedule or ‘force’ them to do anyone’s bidding.\(^5\)

\(^{19}\) NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 12-1-67: Secret, Athens telegram 2771, by Talbot, 14/12/67 (02.50); NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 12-1-67: Secret, Athens telegram 2751, by Talbot, for the Secretary, 13/12/67.


\(^{22}\) NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 12-1-67: Confidential, Memorandum of Conversation 21299, 13/12/67: King’s revolt in Greece.

\(^{23}\) NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 12-1-67: Confidential, Athens telegram 2807, by Talbot, 14/12/67.
Thomas Hughes, Director of INR, agreed in essence with the American Ambassador. He commented that the military regime had won a striking victory in establishing its power over the country. According to Hughes, the junta was now indisputably the government of Greece, potentially in a stronger position than before the King's abortive counter-coup, and the 'American factor' in Greek politics—according to Hughes, a compound of myth, memory, and money—was likely to be correspondingly less potent as the junta tested its strength in the coming months.

In fact, as Hughes remarked, the junta did have the power to impose its rule in Greece, for the coming months and perhaps years. As he argued, although opposition would continue, and perhaps lead to increased sporadic violence, the junta would enjoy full de facto power and seek to force acceptance from its own subjects and the international community, pointing to a Communist menace in justification. Hughes therefore estimated that difficult choices lay ahead for Greece's allies. In the spring of 1967 it was possible for the US to continue relations more or less as usual because 'legitimacy' had not been impaired. Many possibilities of compromise were then available, but, now, the removal of Constantine had narrowed the focus considerably.

In conclusion, Hughes commented that the USA should first determine whether the junta was able to provide not only de facto rule, but also effective government along desirable lines. If it could not, they should then determine whether it presented a lesser evil to their interests than would a successor government, drawn from opposition elements. At the same time, the USA would have to determine what effect the 'American factor' in Greece could have in bringing about a desired result. Hughes remarked that this would be a continuing and agonizing process of review, unless they were prepared to accept without question the junta's legitimacy as they had done with the King's in the past.

What was almost certain to Hughes, however, was that Greece could not bear an inefficient tyranny indefinitely; sooner or later, both the US and the Greeks would have to face the problem of political modernization and other
far-reaching changes in the country, and what role they both had to play in these processes.24

1.3 The State Department authorizes unofficial relations with the regime

As soon as the State Department was informed of the King’s counter-coup, it authorized Talbot to avoid, if possible, paying calls on high-level officials for the time being, unless he had some important reason to do so. They also added that it would be desirable if he held the necessary contacts at low level. For his part, Talbot remonstrated to Washington that if they were to attempt to influence the triumvirate, no Embassy officer but he could establish the contact. The Department finally concurred, since they did not wish to be cut off from any information on the developments.25

As soon as it was verified that the King was in Rome, the officials in Washington were in a dilemma. According to Saunders, this was a tricky diplomatic issue that would disappear if the King decided to go home. If he remained in exile, however, the USA would be in one of those hard-to-explain periods of wanting to do business with the junta without facing up to the problem of recognition. He argued that they could probably get away with it if neither the King nor the junta pressed.26

The Legal Adviser of the State Department, Leonard Meeker, examining the current situation in Greece from the legal and constitutional point of view, concluded that the actions of the junta in appointing a Regent and arranging for the appointment of a new Prime Minister were not in conformity with the 1952 Constitution, which remained in force, although some of its articles had been suspended; in other words, the regime holding

power in Greece was an extra-constitutional government. Accordingly, the American recognition of the Greek government did not automatically continue. The USA therefore was confronted with the question of whether to accord recognition.

Meeker estimated that the US government faced three choices. Firstly, they could immediately recognize the new regime and instruct the Embassy in Athens to maintain diplomatic relations with it. Secondly, they could withhold recognition from the new regime indefinitely, while continuing to treat King Constantine as the constitutional Head of State. However, he argued, this course could lead to a situation in which, if the junta chose to force the issue, Papadopoulos could require the withdrawal of the American Mission from Greece. Finally, the USA could withhold diplomatic recognition for a time, during which the American officials could seek to obtain from the new regime undertakings regarding a definite plan for the restoration of constitutional government on Greece. During the interim, the American Embassy could maintain practical contacts with the regime, while avoiding actions signifying or implying diplomatic recognition.27

Talbot, for his part, commented that, whether the King stayed away from Greece or returned, the junta apparently commanded the resources to rule Greece for an extended period. He assumed, therefore, that the USA would have to deal with it, despite any contrary opinion in America and the other European countries.

As he argued, so long as the status of the King remained unresolved, it was difficult for the USA to move effectively, especially since there were rumours that the French were getting active in the situation, possibly with the view of making moves that would embarrass the USA and Britain. If the King ruled himself out of the present situation by deciding to stay abroad because the junta’s terms were too harsh, and if the USA were to maintain the American facilities and access to the Middle East that the military regime had afforded in the past and still offered to them, the USA should need to find a way to get over the awkwardness of dealing with a military regency. If the

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27 NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 12-1-67: Secret, Information Memorandum 2125, by Leonard C. Meeker, to the Active Secretary, 14/12/67: Greece.
King returned to Greece, they would still for the time being work with the junta, but under the umbrella of royal legitimacy.

On 19 December 1967, the State Department authorized Talbot to get in touch informally and quietly with Papadopoulos or Pattakos, and state that the current developments had complicated for them their relationship with Greece, which was already difficult. He should also add that the US government saw little chance for a satisfactory relationship until progress was made on removing the problems, which could be described in general as the continuing lack of convincing movements towards the restoration of a constitutional situation. Involved were such issues as firm dates for a plebiscite on the constitution and elections, restrictions on the press, and the resolution of political prisoner cases in accordance with due process of law.

Moreover, he was instructed to reiterate that the strength of opinion of the American people and of their elected representatives on these issues prevented the US government from having a normal relationship with Greece. Therefore, they were anxious to see their ally make decisive progress towards constitutionality. Finally, if the regime asked whether the US intended to recognize the junta, Talbot was authorised to state that no decision had been taken pending clarification of the status of the King. They stressed however that he should leave no doubt that the basic problem for them continued to be the undemocratic nature of the regime itself.

In fact, as officials in Washington commented, they wanted to leave the issue of recognition still imprecise for a while, although they understood that any contact of the Ambassador with Papadopoulos or Pattakos might be considered a step towards recognition. Yet, they hoped that Talbot could act in a manner to minimize such an interpretation.28

On 20 December 1967, Talbot reported that he had titbits of information from several responsible press correspondents that the coup leaders, confident of their newfound strength, contemplated making early and bold steps on the constitutional and the civic rights front.29 Consequently, when Talbot failed to effect a private contact with Papadopoulos, he proposed to

28 NA, RG 59, Box 2155, Pol 30 GR: Secret, State telegram 086871 to Athens, by Rusk, 19/12/67.
delay executing his instructions until the weekend. The above information strengthened his hunch that Papadopoulos might already have decided to make precise pledges on constitutional referendum on 23 December, thus one-upping the King and meeting the US basic demand on his own initiative. Moreover, the Constantine’s decision to make a public statement posed the problem of how to approach Papadopoulos at that moment without looking like the King’s ‘stooges.'

The State Department officials concurred with the Ambassador’s suggestions.

Talbot finally talked with Papadopoulos on 28 December 1967, but the result of their conversation was disappointing. As the Ambassador pointed out, the Prime Minister was less forthcoming about his future plans than on any previous occasion, argued strongly for military assistance levels to be judged on military grounds alone, and virtually rejected his rather lengthy disquisition in support of the proposition that other factors had also to be taken into account even when military considerations were predominant.

Meanwhile, as the time advanced and the King did not appear in Greece, the State Department faced the protocolaire ‘recognition’ issue raised by the 1 January 1968 ceremonies. More specifically, the New Year’s Day program was traditionally regarded as one of the principal events of the official Greek calendar. The presence or absence of Foreign Ambassadors would therefore be viewed as a major demonstration of acceptance of the present government or refusal to acknowledge its legitimacy. In other words, the posture of the USA on 1 January could substantially influence the climate in which the Americans would deal with Greece in 1968 on the broad scope of bilateral issues as well as on the Cyprus and NATO questions.

The Greek Foreign Minister, Panayotis Pipinelis, solved the problem. According to Talbot, the Greek Foreign Minister prevailed upon the coup Government not to extend invitations for the Te Deum ceremonies to the Chiefs of Diplomatic Missions, on the grounds that virtually none of the latter had received any instructions on the subject from their governments. In
parallel, the US Air Attaché had received an official ‘feeler’ reporting that Papadopoulos had decided to hold official invitations in abeyance, because he did not wish to risk a refusal by the great powers to attend.33

The State Department was obviously gratified that the coup Government had decided not to press the issue of the Te Deum invitations. Yet, after weighing all the aspects of the problem and on the basis of consultations with certain NATO partners, the American officials thought it best that, if Talbot received an invitation, neither he nor his diplomatic staff should attend the Te Deum. On the other hand, attendance of JUSMAGG members at the ceremony and at social functions on a limited scale did not create the same problem. Yet, they were instructed not to attend any reception by the Regent at the palace.34

At the same time, the State Department circulated to all NATO capitals a telegram, which summed up the previous US attitude with regard to the New Year ceremonies. The American Ambassadors were also authorized to use the foregoing in any conversation they would have on the subject in the capitals.35

1.4 The State Department claims that the situation in Greece is unclear

As soon as Talbot learned about the counter-coup, he proposed to say nothing that would exacerbate the situation (like prognostications of the relative strengths of the Junta to the King), especially in that initial period, when he still had no indication whether or not the impasse between the two forces might not make it desirable for the USA to undertake some form of intermediary role.36 Talbot also suggested that, until they got better information

33 NA, RG 59, Box 2151, Pol 17-4 GR — 1-1-67: Confidential, Athens telegram 3002, by Talbot, 29/12/67.
34 NA, RG 59, Box 2151, Pol 17-4 GR — 1-1-67: Confidential, State telegram 091207 to Athens, by Rusk, 29/12/67.
35 NA, RG 59, Box 2149, NATO capitals, by Rusk, 3/12/67.
on the King's position, the US stations should merely report the King's appeal as a general news item, rather than broadcasting the actual text.

The State Department officials concurred. They also decided that it would be better to postpone issuing a statement at the 12.30 (Washington time) briefing, since their information on the current situation in Greece was rather sketchy.37

At the second teleconference of that day between the American Embassy in Athens and the State Department, the officials in Washington resolved that the statement they had agreed upon would be issued immediately, without waiting to obtain more information regarding the King's strength.38

The text would run thus: 'King Constantine of Greece has departed Athens and arrived at Larissa in Northern Greece. He has issued an appeal to the people of Greece asking for their support for the restoration of democracy. Since the change of Government in Athens on April 21, the United States Government has urged that steps be taken in Greece to bring about a return to constitutionalism. The United States Government has believed that it is essential that this be accomplished by peaceful means. We urge the people of Greece to work together for the reestablishment of democracy, avoiding bloodshed and civil strife'.39

Yet, Secretary Rusk overruled them. From Brussels, where he was for the NATO Ministerial Meeting, he urged the State Department to await the clarification of the situation in Northern Greece, before issuing the statement.40 More particularly, he cautioned Katzenbach that they were missing any hard and reliable information on what kind of support the King had. Obviously that vital information was highly relevant to any US decision as to what they should say or do. From what the US had heard thus far one could surmise that

Constantine might have important military support including the third armoured corps and much of the Navy and the Air Force. Yet, Rusk argued, these were only surmises and were not enough to base on them governmental decisions, especially if it turned out that the King played his hand without good cards.\textsuperscript{41}

The developments justified Rusk's cautiousness, and the statement was never issued once it became known that the counter-coup had proved abortive. Moreover, the King's retreat to Rome and the consequent legal issue of recognition caused the officials in Washington to be very careful. In the Press Conference of 14 December, McCloskey remarked that the situation was still unclear and complex, since the Department had to take into account important and delicate considerations.\textsuperscript{42} He added, however, that no informal or other contact between the US representatives in Italy and King Constantine had taken place, while Talbot had only informal contacts with the junta.\textsuperscript{43}

1.5 The regime releases Andreas Papandreou

As soon as the coup leaders realized that the King had moved against them, a new wave of arrests took place in Athens within hours after the counter-coup was set in motion.\textsuperscript{44} Meanwhile, in Washington, the first telegrams bearing pressure for the release of the newly arrested political figures started to arrive.\textsuperscript{45} Fearing a new international campaign, the State Department

\textsuperscript{41} NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR — 12-1-67: Secret, Brussels telegram 3335, by Rusk, to Katzenbach, 13/12 67.

\textsuperscript{42} NA, RG 59, Box 2151, Pol 15-5 GR: Limited Official Use, State Telegram 085040 to Athens, US Mission, by Katzenbach, 15/12/67.

\textsuperscript{43} The fact that the Press spokesman was instructed to claim that the US had no contact with the King after his abortive counter-coup, might be due to the fear of arousing further suspicions that the US had colluded with the King to unseat the colonels. Perhaps the officials in Washington wanted also to avoid any rumours that the US was attempting to mediate between the King and the junta.

\textsuperscript{44} NA, RG 59, 253, Pol 23-9 GR — 12-1-67: Confidential, Athens telegram 2758, by Talbot, 13/12/67.

\textsuperscript{45} For example, Vance Hartke, US Senate, wrote to LBJ on 13/12/67: 'Events in troubled Greece concern all of us. As one who was first of our Government to be there after the coup, I realize problems with military junta. Hope you will take all possible prudent steps to restore democracy to land of its birth and seek release of all political prisoners. As leaders of free
officials authorized their Ambassador in Athens to take the earliest opportunity and urge the military regime not to use the detainees as pawns in the current crisis. They were particularly concerned that Andreas Papandreou should not be forcibly exploited for political purposes.\textsuperscript{46}

On 15 December 1967, the US Air Attaché met with the RHAF Chief Kostakos, who assured the American officer that Papadopoulos' declaration granting amnesty to the officers who had participated on the side of the King was sincere.\textsuperscript{47} Pattakos repeated the same assurances to Talbot a few days later.\textsuperscript{48} Finally, on 23 December, Papadopoulos announced that most of the political prisoners would be released, including Andreas Papandreou and the composer Mikis Theodorakis. In particular, he stated that "only the criminal communists of the past and the criminal dynamiters after April 21 will remain under administrative exile."\textsuperscript{49} According to Talbot, Papadopoulos' statement on amnesties included vague and confusing verbiage that hardly justified the initial press estimates of the immediate release of 2,500 prisoners. Yet, as Talbot commented, in any case, the announcement was more substantial than he had anticipated at that stage.\textsuperscript{50}

Five days later, however, it became known that political prisoners considered to be a danger to the state would not be released. Consequently, after the release of about a hundred non-communists prisoners, it was clear that the amnesty would not include the 2,500 prisoners held on Leros and Yiaros.\textsuperscript{51} What interested the Americans most, however, was that Andreas Papandreou was released and allowed to leave from the country.

\textsuperscript{46} NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR — 12-1-67: Secret, (Immediate), State telegram 083880 to Athens, by Katzenbach, 13/12/67.
\textsuperscript{47} NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR — 12-1-67: Secret, USDAo Athens telegram 1522, 15/12/67.
\textsuperscript{48} NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR — 12-1-67: Secret, USDAO Athens telegram 1522, 15/12/67.
\textsuperscript{49} The Economist, International report, Greece: The junta divided, 30/12/67, p. 1284.
\textsuperscript{50} NA, RG 59, Box 2154, Pol 29 GR — 10-7-67: Secret, Athens telegram 2934, by Talbot, 26/12/67.
\textsuperscript{51} NA, RG 59, Box 2147, Pol 2-1 GR: Confidential, Athens airgam A-342, by Talbot, 30/12/67.
1.6 The USA refuses to act against Greece in NATO

As we have stated above, when the King’s counter-coup took place on 13 December 1967, the 14th Ministerial Meeting of NATO was in progress in Belgium. According to Rusk, Constantine’s effort had undoubtedly overwhelming sympathy from the delegations, including their Foreign Ministers, who were ready to support the King, provided of course that there was clearly something to back.\textsuperscript{52}

On the following day, when it was verified that Constantine’s effort to unseat the Colonels had failed, Fanfani, the Italian Foreign Minister, asked Rusk’s views on the possibility of doing something—even informally—during the NATO Meeting in order to indicate that the Ministers were concerned about the latest developments in Greece. As Fanfani explained, given that the Greek King had taken refuge in Rome, the Italian Foreign Minister expected to face very difficult problems of public and parliamentary opinion, especially in the Socialist Party. He commented that some had even gone so far as to suggest Greece’s exclusion from NATO and the termination of the Greek association agreement with the Common Market.

Rusk indicated that he would not favour anything formal being done in connection with the NATO Ministerial Meeting. He acknowledged however that the Greek question, although not formally discussed in the NATO meetings, was very much in the minds of the Ministers. Consequently, Rusk suggested that at the dinner for NATO Ministers in the evening, any Minister who so wished could consult most informally about the Greek problem over coffee and brandy.\textsuperscript{53} Yet, the subject of Greece came up in the NATO Ministerial Meeting during the consideration of the Greek-Turkish relations by the German Foreign Minister Brandt, who took the occasion to express concern


\textsuperscript{53} NA, RG 59, Box 2148, Pol 15 Gr — 6-1-67: Secret, Memorandum of Conversation 21779, 14/12/67: Greece.
regarding the current internal situation in Greece. The Danish Foreign Minister
joined him, but no general debate ensued.54

Some days later, the Italian Socialist newspaper AVANTI reported that
on 15 December 1967 the Italian Foreign Minister Fanfani handed to the
NATO Secretary, General Brosio, a letter asking that the first Permanent
Representatives’ Meeting of the Alliance, after the Ministerial Meeting of 12-
14 December in Brussels, would consider the obligation of all NATO members
to show respect for the ‘principles of legality and of democracy,’ which should
be defended by all the contracting countries, according to the preamble of the
North Atlantic Treaty.55 The letter, without making any specific reference to
Greece, called only for a discussion of the extent to which the members of the
Alliance should live up to the democratic professions contained in the treaty’s
preamble.

Denney, the Deputy Director of INR, commented that a considerable
number of the allies felt themselves linked to some extent with the Greek
affairs, by reason of common membership in NATO, and called upon in some
way to try to preserve the ideological respectability of the organization in the
face of the Colonels’ coup. Yet, as he added, nothing substantial had been done
since April, and nothing substantial was likely to be done afterwards.
Particularly with regard to Fanfani’s letter, Denney commented that, with
Portugal a founding member of NATO, and with the Turkish coup of 1960 a
matter of record, it seemed rather late in the day to try to give significance to
preambular rhetoric. His estimation was that the Italians would probably not
press their initiative very far. Barring a strong lead by the US to sanction the
Greeks in some manner, the discussion called for by Fanfani was likely to be
sterile, even if it ever got going.

Summing up, Denney’s opinion was that those who would take part in
that discussion, in the hope that they could thereby keep up a moral pressure on
Athens to organize elections and restore a more democratic regime than the
present one, or at least give better respect to individual rights, might try to exert

54 NA, RG 59, Box 2152, Pol 23-9 GR – 12-1-67: Confidential, Research Memorandum, REU-
68, BY George C. Denney Jr, to Rusk, 27/12/67: Western Europe and Canada confront the
Greek situation.
55 NA, RG 59, Box 2152, Pol 23-9 GR – 12-1-67: Unclassified, Rome telegram 3223, by
Reinhardt, 18/12/67; NA, RG 59, Box 2152, Pol 23-9 GR – 12-1-67: Confidential, Rome
telegram 3257, by Reinhardt, 19/12/67.
pressure to these ends by circumscribing their participation in the NATO activities in Greece. Yet, Denney estimated that it was questionable whether, given the other problems in the Mediterranean, most members would want Greece to suspend her NATO connections in a huff, or to pull out of the Alliance.\footnote{NA, RG 59, Box 2152, Pol 23-9 GR – 12-1-67: Confidential, Research Memorandum, REU-68, by George C. Denney Jr, to Rusk, 27/12/67: Western Europe and Canada confront the Greek situation.}
2. UK: After Constantine's counter-coup

2.1 London receives the news of the King's counter-coup

The attempted Royal coup of 13 December 1967 took the British Embassy by surprise [Sir Michael Stewart was in Nicosia at the time]. The first telegram from Dodson, the Counsellor of the British Embassy in Athens, reported only that there were unusual troop movements in the Greek capital, while the Embassy’s telephone communication with Salonica appeared suspended.\(^1\) It was not until the Armed Forces Radio issued a proclamation, referring to bloodshed between brothers, that Dodson was able to give some more definite information: namely, that the King was in Thessaly and that units of the Army had risen against the Colonels.\(^2\) By 20.00, Dodson was still unable to form an exact idea of what was going on outside the Greek capital.\(^3\) According to Dodson, the American Embassy in Athens claimed that they had no more hard information on the situation than the British.\(^4\)

Meanwhile, in London, Macrae, the First Secretary of the Central Department, informed Lucas of the situation in Greece arguing that, on the assumption that the majority of the forces in the north were pro-Royalist, the Foreign Office should look at the line-up of forces in Greece. According to the British official, there were approximately 3,800 men with about 105 tanks in Athens, while the total northern forces numbered 100,000 and included an armoured division of approximately 400 tanks. Therefore, as Macrae argued, even if the northern forces could not all be absolutely relied upon, the overwhelming strength appeared to lie in the King’s favour. As a result, the next step in his opinion would be an ultimatum to the government in Athens to

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\(^1\) PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 1: Unclassified, Athens telegram 1326, from D. S. L. Dodson, 13/12/67.
\(^2\) PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 4: Confidential, Athens telegram 1329, from D. S. L. Dodson, 13/12/67.
\(^3\) PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 14: Confidential, Athens telegram 1341, from D. S. L. Dodson, 13/12/67.
\(^4\) PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 17: Secret-Guard, Athens telegram 1345, from D. S. L. Dodson, 13/12/67.
hand over power, which would have little option but to comply since it stood little chance of winning an outright battle.5

In the next day, however, the Foreign Office received Sir Michael Stewart’s reports that the King’s counter-coup had failed. In the following days, the British Ambassador in Athens was in close consultation with the American Embassy over the possible courses their respective governments might take in view of the changed situation in Greece.6

2.2 The Foreign Office sympathetic to Constantine but does not wish to get involved

As soon as the King’s counter-coup proved to be abortive, the British officials in London were faced once again with the dilemma of whether or not to accord recognition to the military regime in Greece. Before that problem was solved, however, the Foreign Office had to decide urgently what attitude to adopt if the King resolved to take refuge in England, as the Foreign Office had reason to believe that London was one of a short list of places, which Constantine was considering.

That estimation was verified when the Greek Ambassador in London, Verykios, rang Gore-Booth, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State, up and asked him what would be HM government’s attitude, if the King did decide to come to London. For his part, Gore-Booth claimed that the situation was a complicated one, but refrained from giving any advice, on the grounds that the question was still a hypothetical one. Furthermore, the Permanent Under-Secretary, after consultation, decided to inform Verykios that, in the absence of the Foreign Secretary to Brussels, he could not give him a reply at the moment on the subject of the King.7 The same answer was given to Royle, MP

7 PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 64: Secret, P. H. Gore-Booth to Beith, 14/12/67.
(Conservative) for Richmond, when he made the same question to Harold Wilson in the House of Commons on 14 December 1967.8

The Foreign Office had considered that question on a contingency basis some months before, and had concluded that, if the King sought asylum in Britain, they would undoubtedly have to give it, since in many ways it was the natural place for him to come and it would be entirely right that the UK should give him refuge with a good grace. If, however, his intention was to set up a focus of serious opposition to the regime abroad or even a government in exile, the British officials had reasoned that such a decision would not be in the interests either of the King or of the British government itself.

According to the Foreign Office, although a lot of people in the UK had been favourably impressed by what Constantine tried to do on 13 December, there were many critics of the Greek regime who would continue to be hostile to him: some because they were opposed in principle to the Greek monarchy, others because they did not regard the King and his family as representing what Greece needed at the time, and others because they blamed the King for his period of co-existence with the Colonels. In consequence, therefore, the British officials argued that, with his purpose and good faith being called in question, it would be difficult for Constantine to achieve in the UK the position he would be seeking to establish as the accepted focus of opposition to the regime outside Greece.

Furthermore, as the British officials argued, since Constantine had not abdicated nor was he technically deposed, the question was not an easy one. Macrae suggested that, if the Greek King were to arrive without warning, the Foreign Office would have to try to treat him without indicating the status in which the British government held him.9 On the other hand, on the assumption that the UK officials decided to continue to do business with the regime, their relations with the Colonels would be considerably embarrassed if the King continued a campaign against them from London.

Consequently, it was finally agreed that in the event of an application by Constantine for asylum in Britain, the Foreign office would tell him that he and

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his family would be most welcome, describing, at the same time, to him the sort of difficulties the Foreign Office foresaw if he made London the base of a campaign against the regime. Moreover, if King Constantine and his party arrived at London Airport, they would be afforded police protection and their arrival would go through smoothly, as if the King had arrived on a private visit of the kind he had paid often in the past.10

Meanwhile, the King and the Colonels had started negotiations for the eventual return of the former to Greece. The British, however, preferred not to get involved, and were kept occasionally informed on the progress of the discussions by their Ambassadors in Athens and in Rome, and by the Americans.11 Furthermore, as the new year approached and the question of sending a message of good wishes to the King arose, Alan Davidson was of the opinion that they would do better to stay out of that particular exercise. John Beith agreed.12

2.3 George Brown in close consultation with the Americans over the issue of recognition

According to the British officials, the net results of the King’s counter-coup on 13 December 1967 were that the regime was strongly in control of Greece; that it had an even more military flavour with Colonel Papadopoulos as Prime Minister; and that the chances of the regime being toppled by a movement that would bring back democracy to Greece were smaller than before. Furthermore, the effect in Britain was that Parliamentary and public

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10 PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 48: Confidential, FO telegram 2566 to Brussels, from the Permanent Under-Secretary to the Private Secretary, 14/12/67; PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 52: Confidential, J. E. C. Macrae to I. T. M. Lucas, 15/12/67; PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 1: Confidential, Cabinet Speaking Notes, 15/12/67: Greece.


feeling against the regime was going to be even stronger. On the other hand, however, it was argued that the Cyprus settlement, which had been made by the Colonels, would not be affected.\footnote{PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 1: Confidential, Cabinet Speaking Notes, 15/12 67: Greece.}

Under these circumstances, the officials in London had to define their future relations with the military regime in Greece, raising first the question of recognition. When the Prime Minister Harold Wilson was asked on the subject on 14 December 1967, he answered that the whole question of the British recognition should be reconsidered in view of the fact that the Head of State, to whom HM Ambassador had been accredited, was no longer in Greece. On the other hand, however, he stressed that the question of recognition was quite different from that of diplomatic relations; as he argued, the British government's traditional practice was to base recognition not on approval of a government but on whether they had control of the country concerned, by whatever means.\footnote{Parliamentary Debates, Commons 1967-1968, Vol. 756, 11 December-19 January: Greece (British Nationals), 14/12/67, p. 633-635.}

In that way the Prime Minister paved the way for according recognition. In fact, the Foreign Office, and in particular Rodgers, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, agreed that, as the junta was in effective control of the country, it was entitled to recognition under the criteria the British government normally followed. Furthermore, he added that there was no need for any formal act or communication, since it would be sufficient for the British Ambassador to resume a working relationship, for example by calling on Colonel Papadopoulos. Sir Michael Stewart shared the same view, adding that, since the Colonels had chosen to present the fiction that Greece was still a monarchy -although under a Regent- he rather doubted whether the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs would ask for a formal recognition of the regime.\footnote{PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 46: Confidential, Athens telegram 1362, from Sir Michael Stewart, 14/12/67.}

Regarding timing, Rodgers was of the opinion that it would be inappropriate to instruct Sir Michael Stewart to do anything that would constitute recognition within the next 48 hours, on the grounds that HM government ought first to be sure that Greece had settled again under the control of the military regime. He argued, however, that it would be a mistake
to delay recognition too long, since the act of resuming a working relationship would then seem to have greater significance and would present more difficulties from the political point of view in the UK.\textsuperscript{16}

On the other hand, George Brown felt that the Foreign Office was perhaps in too much of a hurry over recognition.\textsuperscript{17} Having consulted with Rusk in Brussels, the Foreign Secretary accepted the American suggestion of waiting for a few days longer before beginning to work with the new regime. More particularly, as George Brown argued, if that position was tenable among the NATO Allies, a few days’ extension of the period of non-business - and therefore of non \textit{de facto} recognition - helped him politically in Britain.\textsuperscript{18}

Harold Wilson agreed.\textsuperscript{19} Therefore, the Foreign Office, as instructed by the Foreign Secretary, passed to the State Department the information that Rusk’s suggestion suited George Brown very well. In his turn, Rockwell expressed his satisfaction, adding that the USA had also agreed to postpone any decision until the situation in Greece had further clarified.\textsuperscript{20} The Federal government also adopted the same attitude.\textsuperscript{21}

Meanwhile, the American, the French, the German, and the British representatives in Athens were summoned to call on the new Prime Minister, Colonel Papadopoulos, on 14 December 1967. Sir Michael Stewart, however, declined to attend pleading absence of instructions.\textsuperscript{22} Two days later, the British Embassy in Athens received two Circular Notes from the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the first announcing that General Zoitakis had taken the constitutional oath as Regent, and the second forwarding a list of all

\textsuperscript{16} PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 47: Confidential, FO telegram 2564 to Brussels, from Rodgers to Secretary of State, 14/12/67: Recognition of the new Greek government.
\textsuperscript{17} PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 2: Confidential, D. J. D. Maitland to Beith, 15/12 67.
\textsuperscript{18} PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 3: Confidential, P. H. Gore-Booth to Beith, 15/12 67; PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 54: Confidential, FO telegram 13354 to Washington, from George Brown, 15/12/67.
\textsuperscript{19} PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 2: Confidential, D. J. D. Maitland to John Beith, 15/12 67.
\textsuperscript{20} PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 53: Confidential, John Beith to Private Secretary, 15 12 67; PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 55: Confidential, Washington telegram 3955, from Sir Pat Dean, 15 12 67: Greece.
\textsuperscript{21} PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 61: Unclassified, Bonn telegram 1743, from Roberts, 15 12 67: Greece.
\textsuperscript{22} PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 46: Confidential, Athens telegram 1362, from Sir Michael Stewart, 14/12/67; PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 45: Confidential, John Beith to Central Department, 14/12/67: Greece.
the members of the new government. The Foreign Secretary instructed his Ambassador in Athens to make no response to these notes, and to continue to keep in close touch with his NATO counterparts, reporting any significant development in the recommendations they were making to their governments, and in the guidance they were receiving.

Further reports that Papadopoulos was in communication with the King in Rome added a new complication to the question of recognition. As George Brown argued, if the King returned to Greece, the question of recognition would be resolved; yet, if Constantine did not return, the Foreign Secretary's intention was to leave the question in abeyance until the New Year, unless of course a new crisis in Cyprus or something of that kind intervened.

On 21 December 1967, a Cabinet meeting was held at 10 Downing Street, and Greece was one of the subjects of discussion. The Foreign Secretary informed the Cabinet of the situation in Greece and repeated that, so long as there was no final breach between the regime and the King, there was no need for any British formal recognition; the question would arise only if such a breach occurred. When asked, therefore, George Brown and the British government's representatives used to stress that they were not able to decide their policy towards the new Greek government regarding recognition, until the situation became clearer.

In the meantime, the Foreign Office was preparing a telegram to Washington expressing the view that the UK and the other Western Allies should perhaps decide in principle before the beginning of the Christmas holiday that recognition should be accorded to the Greek regime shortly after

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24 PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 67: Confidential, FO telegram 1821 to Athens, from George Brown, 16/12/67.
25 PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 67: Confidential, FO telegram 1821 to Athens, from George Brown, 16/12/67; PRO, FCO 9 139, Doc 102: Confidential, FO telegram 1864 to Athens, from George Brown, 21/12/67.
it.\textsuperscript{28} That telegram, however, was not sent because it was overtaken by receipt of further reports from Washington showing that the State Department did not expect to make any decision until after Christmas, and possibly the beginning of the New Year. As a result, Davidson pointed out that, since Britain did not wish to be ahead of others -and especially ahead of the USA- in recognizing the Greek regime, there was no other practical alternative, with regard to the way of handling the problem of recognition, to waiting. Rodgers agreed, adding that a decision on recognition would also have to depend in part on what the developments would be over the King, and on whether the regime would proceed with its program of constitutional reform.\textsuperscript{29}

Another issue arose, however, when the Americans touched the subject of British attendance at the Te Deum of 1 January 1968. According to Sir Pat Dean, the State Department did not consider that the American Ambassador's attendance at the Te Deum would imply recognition; the British officials, however, were adamant in their position that it would be difficult to imagine a more formal act than attendance by the Ambassadors in the company of the Regent and the Greek government. Consequently, the Foreign Office instructed the British Embassy in Washington that the UK agreed with the American initiative of securing a common NATO line; on the other hand, the British officials repeated that the latest ministerial decision on the subject was to leave the question in abeyance until the New Year. Therefore, Sir Pat Dean was instructed to point out that, however much most countries might wish to act in concert with the Americans, it would be no easy matter for many of them to take a rushed decision just because of the Te Deum.\textsuperscript{30}

Further reports that the Heads of Missions in Athens would not be invited at the ceremony of 1 January 1968 or at the formal reception afterwards apparently solved the problem.\textsuperscript{31} Sir Michael Stewart, therefore, was authorised

\textsuperscript{29} PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 114: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to Private Secretary, 21/12 67: Greece-Dealings with the regime.
\textsuperscript{30} PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 14: Confidential, FO telegram 13656 to Washington, 28/12 67: Te Deum and Resumption of relations; PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 18: Confidential, Rome telegram 1279, from Maitland to Beith, 29/12 67: Te Deum and Resumption of relations.
to interpret his existing instructions as precluding attendance by any diplomatic
member of his staff—including Service Attachés—at either the Te Deum or the
reception.32

2.4 Britain keeps her relations with the regime at low-level

As soon as the news about the King’s counter-coup reached London, the
British officials recognized that they had to consider whether they would be
content, after a short pause, to resume the kind of relations they had had before
the counter-coup, or whether they wished to show their displeasure even more
strongly by recalling Sir Michael Stewart and leaving a Chargé d’Affairs in
Athens. That gesture, as referring only to the level of British diplomatic
representation in Athens, was quite separable from the question of recognition,
since Britain could withdraw the Ambassador as a mark of disapproval
although recognizing the regime. Yet, when the Foreign Secretary asked him,
Alan Davidson answered that all countries with important interests in Greece,
like Britain, realized that they should have to resume doing business before
long.

More particularly, according to Davidson, one of the most serious
advantages of resuming working relations with the regime was that Britain
could bring in that way her influence to bear in connection with Cyprus. The
recent Cyprus crisis of November 1967 showed clearly how important that
could be. As John Beith, the Assistant Under-Secretary of State, had argued to
André of the French Embassy in London on 14 December 1967, if the British
government had not been able to speak authoritatively to the Greek regime
through an Ambassador of some weight regarding the Cyprus crisis, the UK
would not have been able to make any contribution in defusing the crisis.33

Moreover, so far as the handling of the Cyprus problem and the British
relationship with Cyprus were concerned, the Commonwealth Secretary also

32 PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 21: Confidential, FO telegram 1902 to Athens, from George Brown,
30/12/67: Te Deum.
33 PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 45: Confidential, John Beith to Central Department, 14 12 67:
Greece.
argued that it was most important to continue to maintain the kind of influence with the Greek regime that could only come from diplomatic relations at Ambassadorial level. In particular, George Thomson, the Commonwealth Secretary, pointed out that, although Sir Michael Stewart had done an admirable job in Athens, particularly during the Cyprus crisis, the UK was far from being out of the wood.34

According to Davidson, another argument for resuming doing business with the military regime was that the UK had considerable economic and commercial interests in Greece. As the British official argued, it would be difficult to maintain these—for example against French competition— if the UK had no diplomatic mission in Athens. Furthermore, he added that generally the British officials were in a position to ask for things they wanted from the Greek government, like the extraordinary number of military overflights through the Greek air space, which had been required during the UK withdrawal from Aden. Another advantage of resuming working relations with the Greek government was that Britain could have some effect on the evolution of the regime towards constitutionalism and democracy, since the Greek junta had apparently taken account of some of the British representations in that connection.

In general, Alan Davidson argued that these advantages would be less if the Foreign Office decided to remove the Ambassador. According to the British official, an Ambassador, and especially an experienced one of the calibre of Sir Michael Stewart, could have access to the men in power in a way that was usually denied to a Chargé d’Affaires. What is more, if the Ambassador had been withdrawn as a mark of disapproval, it was even less likely that the Chargé d’Affaires would carry much weight. Summing up, Alan Davidson argued that the less adequate the British representation in Athens was, the less weight the UK would carry there and the less able the UK would be to protect its interests, major and minor, political and commercial.35

In the meantime, the British government had no official dealings with the Greek regime, and their relations with it were in suspense until the question of

34 PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 4A: Confidential, J. R. Williams to D. J. D. Maitland. 18 12 67: Cyprus.
35 PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 8: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to the Private Secretary. 20 12 67: Greece.
the King's return was settled one way or another. Sir Michael Stewart, however, was apprehensive about the consequences if Britain continued to withhold all dealings with the Greek official world at the time. As he argued, some immediate problems would be caused on aircraft clearances, since there could be no further RAF flights over the Greek airspace, while there would be some problems regarding civil flights as well. Furthermore, there were also a number of consular enquiries outstanding, on which the Embassy should normally approach the Aliens Department of the Greek Ministry of the Interior. According to Sir Michael Stewart, none of these enquiries was particularly pressing, but in the current circumstances he would not be able to provide any effective help for British subjects in trouble, where reference to the Greek authorities was needed.

In conclusion, Sir Michael Stewart argued that there was no point for Britain to be more restrictive than her allies over routine contacts. According to the Ambassador, a number of Western Embassies, including the Germans, the French, and the Turks, were taking a less strict attitude, allowing Customs clearances to proceed normally, while the Americans drew a distinction between 'technical' and diplomatic contacts. Furthermore, the American Service Attachés had been authorised to call on the professional Heads of the three Armed Services, and they had already visited them. Consequently, Sir Michael Stewart argued that, unless Britain relaxed her current policy of having nothing whatever to do with any Greek offices, the UK would be left behind in the business of making contacts with the new set-up in Greece. Therefore, the Ambassador sought authority to allow his Service Attachés to make similar calls, and recommended the resumption of Custom clearances and low level contacts on matters affecting British subjects as soon as possible.


37 According to Sir Michael Stewart, the monthly average number of flights over the Greek airspace in the first eleven months of the year was 152 for RAF and 109 for civil flights respectively. [PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 110: Confidential, Athens telegram 1401, from Sir M. Stewart, 20/12/67: Recognition]

The Foreign Secretary agreed with the Ambassador, and after consulting with Freeland, the Legal Counsellor, George Brown introduced the subject at the Cabinet meeting of 21 December 1967. More particularly, the Foreign Secretary repeated Sir Michael Stewart’s recommendations and sought the agreement of his colleagues to a policy of continuing to withhold contact at Ambassadorial level, authorizing however the conduct of day-to-day business with the Greek officials on the understanding that it would not involve any act that could be construed as formal recognition of the regime. The Cabinet concurred.

In turn, George Brown authorised Sir Michael Stewart to re-establish and maintain the contacts between the members of the British Embassy and the officials in the Greek government departments at the working level, covering aircraft clearances, consular matters affecting British subjects, and other non-political matters. He insisted, however, that any implication that the UK was dealing with a government, as distinct from officials, should be avoided. Moreover, he added that he would be prepared to authorise calls by the Service Attachés on the Heads of the Armed Services, on the understanding that such a step was necessary for the conduct of immediate business of a technical character; yet, George Brown felt that such calls would rather not be paid in the immediate future, if there was no specific reason for them other than that the UK might be left behind by the Americans in making contacts with the Greeks.

2.5 The British line on questions for asylum

Reports in the British press about torture of detainees in Greece had aroused widespread indignation and calls for action by HM government.

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41 PRO, FCO 9/114, Doc 110: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to Private Secretary, 21 12 67: Greece-Dealings with the regime; PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 104: Confidential & Guard, FO telegram 1865 to Athens, from George Brown, 21/12/67: Recognition.
42 For example, Cedrick Thornberry's articles in The Guardian, in November 1967.
After the King’s abortive counter-coup, however, the Greek government was feared to become more oppressive and proceed to widespread arrests of political and other personalities.\(^{43}\) The British Chargé d’Affaires in Athens reckoned that the Embassy might in consequence be confronted with a number of requests for asylum, and asked for instructions. Accordingly, the Foreign Office advised him to refer to the directions of the diplomatic service procedures, adding that, in exercising his discretion on deciding how to act in any particular case, he should interpret the instructions liberally rather than strictly.\(^{44}\)

2.6 The British arms sales to Greece under suspension

As we have mentioned, the British policy on arms for Greece was set out in the Foreign Secretary’s letter of 3 July 1967, accepted by Jay, the President of the Board of Trade, and Healey, the Defence Secretary. The events of 13 December, however, made the situation extremely delicate. The diplomatic relations between Greece and Britain were in suspense, and the Naval Attaché himself was permitted only limited contact with the Greek authorities. Therefore, George argued, that, under these circumstances, it would be inappropriate for the British officials to pursue any sales of arms to Greece. He also added that they should avoid publicity for any sales initiatives. As a result, until the general political situation became clearer, any action on the question lay with the commercial firms.\(^{45}\)

\(^{43}\) PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 38: Confidential, Athens telegram 1360, from D. S. L. Dodson, 14/12/67; PRO, FCO 9/167, Doc 73: Alun M. Davies to Goronwy Roberts, 14/12/67; PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 63: Confidential, FO telegram 1815 to Athens, from George Brown, 16/12/67.

\(^{44}\) PRO, FCO 9/139, Doc 51: Confidential, FO telegram 1811 to Athens, from the Permanent Under-Secretary to the Private Secretary, 15/12/67.

Chapter V:

1 January – 20 April 1968
1. USA: Working with the Colonels

1.1 The USA resumes normal diplomatic relations with the Greek regime

As we have stated above, the USA was represented at the 1 January 1968 ceremonies in Athens by General Eaton and the JUSMAGG Section Chiefs. Yet, the problem of how the US should deal substantively with the Greek regime remained. The anomaly of the situation was reflected in the fact that, although the American Embassy in Athens had no policy contact with the Greek Foreign Ministry, the Assistant Secretary in the State Department had received the Greek Ambassador in Washington, and Talbot had been instructed to make representations on Cyprus and conduct other business. The American Ambassador in Athens complained also that backlogs and difficulties were growing in routine business - i.e. citizenship protection cases - including his access to sources that provided the information for his current reportage.¹

In response, the State Department agreed that at some point in the near future they would regularize their relationship with Athens. At the same time, however, they wished to exploit every opportunity to exert constructive influence on the junta before the point of regularization was reached.² As a result, the American Embassy in Athens was instructed that the current period of ‘informal’ relations should not preclude the Embassy from maintaining middle-level working contacts or obstruct the routine consular business and maintenance of access to the information sources. According to the State Department, the Embassy officers should follow a flexible approach in carrying out business contacts and attending social events, while the JUSMAGG service-level work should proceed without interruption. The Ambassador, however, should continue to avoid any official meetings with

² NA, RG 59, Box 2151, Pol 15-5 GR: Secret, State telegram 095291 to Athens, by Rusk, 9/1/68.
Greek ministers or any formal-official social events hosted or sponsored by the regime.

In fact, as the officials in Washington argued, the Embassy should keep in mind the American current wish to retain an ambivalent attitude towards the new regime, while at the same time proceeding with the necessary business. Although such a policy gave rise to some awkwardness in day-to-day relationships, it permitted the USA to attend to routine matters as well as urgent business when necessary.

Meanwhile, the State Department also urged the Embassies in Athens and Rome to meet informally with the Greek Foreign Minister and the King respectively, since the uncertainty of the King's status was an additional complicating factor requiring clarification.

The reports from Rome revealed that the King felt that enough conditions had already been met to permit him to return with honour to Greece, even though his future role in the Greek affairs was likely to be very limited. The American Embassy in Athens, however, reported that Papadopoulos had taken the firm line that the King should return to Greece but not at that juncture, because of the highly antipathetic feelings in the Army and the general population.

In fact, as Talbot reported, a rising tide of apparent irritation and urgency was emanating from the Government leaders. The junta felt discomfort at the ambassadorial rebuffs of the Papadopoulos' summons on 14 December 1967 and of the plans for the New Year Te Deum, culminating in the recent Talbot's refusal of the Prime Minister's invitation to dinner, honouring Admiral Griffing. Furthermore, the belief that the NATO boycott line was breaking down with the German Ambassador's call on Pipinelis—even though it had occurred by mistake— and De Gaulle's reputed personal message

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3 NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol. Affairs & Relations GR-US — 1-1-68: Confidential, State telegram 095290 to Athens, Priority, by Rusk, 9/1/68.
4 NA, RG 59, Box 2151, Pol 15-5 GR: Secret, State telegram 095291 to Athens, by Rusk, 9/1/68.
to Papadopoulos gave the coup leaders the excuse to display high dudgeon that the other Allies continued to refuse contact with them.6

In connection with the above, Talbot also reported a few days later that the Greek reaction to the American request for support in the significant matter of NATO claims against France would not be particularly forthcoming, so long as the US maintained a currently ambivalent attitude towards the Greek regime and De Gaulle meanwhile dispatched private messages of esteem and support to the junta. ‘Consequently,’ he added, ‘that situation is a good example of the kind of price we increasingly risk incurring until normal relations with the Greek Government are resumed.’7

A few hours later, Talbot received a telegram that acquainted him with the Department’s resolution to move in the near future to a working relationship with the Greek regime, on the grounds that the junta was in control of the country. As it was argued, the USA had extracted as much benefit from the policy of ‘informal’ relations as they could likely obtain. Consequently, the US purpose of inducing the regime to move towards the restoration of democratic procedures would be served best if they exercised their influence in Athens through normal, day-to-day contact with the junta, especially since the US had interests in Greece that required attention.8

The American officials also informed Talbot that they did not intend to make a formal announcement, but they would seek to avoid discussing publicly the question of whether they had recognized the Greek junta. In fact, they planned to say only that their decision to resume working relationship with the regime in Athens was based on the de facto situation of control.9

For his part, Talbot stressed that, in planning the procedures for restoring normal relations with the Greek regime, they should remember that at the moment the power resided with Papadopoulos, closely supported by Pattakos and Makarezos. Consequently, Talbot proposed to be authorized to call formally on Pipinelis to discuss a foreign policy -not domestic- issue just

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6 NA, RG 59, Box 2151, Pol 15-5 GR: Secret, Athens telegram 3132, by Talbot to Battle, 11/1/68.
7 NA, RG 59, Box 1587, Def 4 NATO — 1-1-68: Confidential, Athens telegram 3164, by Talbot, 13/1/68.
8 NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR — 1-1-68: Daniel H. Brewster to Lt. Hector Constantine, USN, 2/2/68.
9 NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol Affairs & Relations GR-US — 1-1-68: Secret, State telegram 098446 to Athens, by Katzenbach to Talbot, 13/1/68.
before the American Ambassador left for Germany for the Epsilon I-68 exercise on 24 January 1968. In that way, there would be a natural gap of a six-days-absence from Greece before he could be in contact with the other ministers. By then, Talbot argued, the other nations would have made public gestures and the climate would be acceptable for general governmental contacts.10

Meanwhile, the regime’s efforts to push the Americans to move quickly and accept it continued, culminating in Papadopoulos’ ‘warning’ on 12 January 196811 that if his government was not internationally accepted before 20 January, it could be forced to interpret the Allied boycott as expulsion of Greece from NATO.12 Battle and Talbot passed a variety of signals, indicating that the question of resuming official contacts was in motion.13 Yet, the Ambassador feared that, due to the Embassy’s current stage of semi-contact with the Greek leadership, these signals had not reached their mark. Moreover, he had indications that the strain between Papadopoulos’ leadership and the Ladas-led hardliners over constitutional clauses, the role of the King, and other fiery domestic issues was coming to head.14 Consequently, he proposed to make a telephone contact with Papadopoulos (through the Embassy’s official

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10 NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol. Affairs & Relations GR-US — 1-1-68: Secret, Athens telegram 3220, by Talbot, 17/1 68.
11 The original telegram has not been released. Yet, this situation is referred to in: NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol. Affairs & Relations GR-US — 1-1-68: Confidential, Athens telegram 3246, by Talbot, 19/1/68; NA, RG 58, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 Gr — 1-1-68: Secret, Athens telegram 3513, by Talbot, 10/2/68.
14 A highly censored CIA telegram reports that ‘during the night of 17 January and the early morning hours of 18 January 1968, various movements of armoured cars and tanks took place in Athens (Ampelokipoi) area and its suburbs, while isolated tanks were moving on the Athens—Elefsis road. Also, at approximately 01.00 on 18 January, the Thessaloniki radio station and telegraph office were put under military guard (commandos). ... The above activity was initially interpreted as being a result of a clash between Prime Minister Georgios Papadopoulos and Colonel Ioannis Ladas, Secretary General of the Ministry of Public Order. However, it was later believed to indicate nervousness on the part of the regime over some other, unknown, threat. ... The troop movements indicate that the regime is worried over internal matters rather than international ones. ...’ [LBJ Archives, Box 127, NSF: Cables III - 8 67-2/68: Secret, CIA Intelligence Information Cable IN 32971, 18 1/68].
interpreter) as quickly as possible, in order to forestall any precipitate moves that could rupture the Greek connections with NATO.\(^{15}\)

Having taken permission from Washington, an officer from the American Embassy in Athens telephoned Papadopoulos on Talbot’s behalf on 19 January 1968 and acknowledged the receipt of the message that Papadopoulos had sent to President Johnson on 6 January,\(^{16}\) via private channels (Thomas Pappas and Harold Pachios).\(^{17}\) Furthermore, on 23 January 1968, the State Department authorized Talbot to seek an appointment with Pipinelis before the Ambassador left for Germany, adding that he could also telephone Papadopoulos advising him of the proposed routine operational visit of certain Sixth Fleet units to Souda Bay and Athens, and informing him of his intention to see him promptly upon his return from Germany.\(^{18}\) Following these instructions, Talbot requested an appointment, and two hours later Pipinelis received him in his office.\(^{19}\)

At McCloskey’s press conference on 23 January 1968, the Department’s spokesman, in response to a question, confirmed that the Ambassador had paid an official call on Pipinelis to discuss matters of mutual concern. He also added that the USA had now normal diplomatic contacts with the government of Greece. In response to further questions he stated that ‘we have not felt that a formal act or declaration of recognition is necessary ... the US government continues to regard King Constantine as Chief of State of Greece ... the Ambassador and the American diplomats are accredited to the King. We consider the Government in Athens to be the Government of Greece.’ Finally, he concluded that the relations between the King and the regime in

\(^{15}\) NA, RG 59, Box 2151, Pol 15-5 GR: Secret, Athens telegram 3238, by Talbot to Battle, 19/1/68.
\(^{16}\) LBJ Archives, Box 27, Walt Rostow: Memos to the President, Vol. 57-2 – 16-24 1/68: No. 63b, Letter to L.B. Johnson, by G. Papadopoulos, 6/1/68.
\(^{17}\) NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol. Affairs & Relations GR-US – 1-1-68: Secret, Harold Pachios to L.B. Johnson, 8/1/68.
\(^{18}\) NA, RG 59, Box 1549, Def GR-US: Confidential, State telegram 102829 to Athens, Immediate, by Rusk, 23/1/68.
\(^{19}\) NA, RG 59, Box 2151, Pol 15-5 GR: Confidential, Athens telegram 3285, by Talbot, 23/1/68; NA, RG 59, Box 2148, Pol 15 GR – 1-1-68: Secret, State telegram 105264 to Athens, by Rusk, 26/1/68.
Athens were an internal matter, not properly a subject for comment by the US government.\textsuperscript{20}

1.2 Trying to rebuild US influence in Greece

The initial step of resuming normal diplomatic contacts with the Papadopoulos' regime was taken, when Talbot called formally on the Greek Foreign Minister on 23 January 1968. The next installment for the USA was how to rebuild the situation that existed prior to the King's counter-coup, when the American influence was apparent in issues of particular interest to that great power.

The first step to that direction was a formal visit to Papadopoulos. On 2 February 1968, Talbot paid his first call on the Greek Prime Minister since the resumption of normal diplomatic contacts with the regime, and he was particularly careful to strike the right tone from the outset. As he had been instructed by the State Department, the main theme in essence was that the regime in Greece should help the Americans to help it. Talbot stressed that the US government had to take into account the strongly unfavourable attitude towards the Greek junta held in some Congressional and press quarters, at a time when the weight of the US worldwide responsibilities and the increasing lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Congress for foreign assistance in general, had generally a limiting effect on US financial commitments.

The State Department had particularly insisted that they would be in best position to deal with criticism at home if the regime made meaningful progress towards the restoration of the constitutional processes it had already promised. Consequently, Talbot made clear to Papadopoulos that, without wishing to specify the time limits and without suggesting any return to the \textit{status quo ante}, the junta would establish its \textit{bona fides} in the USA and elsewhere abroad, when it would be clearly on the road of accomplishing the following steps: the restoration of press freedom; the resolution of the cases for

\textsuperscript{20} NA, RG 59, Box 2150, Pol 15-1 GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, State telegram 103455. Circular, Priority, by Rusk, 24/1/68.
political prisoners in accordance with due process of law; the publication of the proposed new constitution; the announcement of a specific date for the plebiscite; the provision of increased freedom for the trade unions; and the declaration of parliamentary elections.\(^{21}\)

In connection with the State Department’s policy to re-establish a more confident relationship with the regime, the Ambassador paid particular attention to Papadopoulos. An example of that attitude was Talbot’s invitation to Papadopoulos to lunch in his capacity as Minister of Defence with Admiral Lambert, the Rear Admiral of the next Sixth Fleet visit scheduled for 8-14 February 1968.\(^{22}\) Ordinarily, that would have been a routine procedure, but in the light of the current circumstances the invitation acquired the importance of affecting the continuation of America’s special relationship with Greece.\(^{23}\) The English newspapers did not fail to criticize it.\(^{24}\)

On 15 March 1968, Papadopoulos announced that a referendum on Greece’s new constitution would be held on 1 September 1968. Talbot commented that Papadopoulos’ announcement went beyond the general expectations in outlining the program for discussing the constitution. Yet, as Talbot added, although the regime had committed itself to a specific timetable leading to the plebiscite, the question of the timing of the elections remained.\(^{25}\)

Meanwhile, in Washington, at the regular press briefing of 15 March, the State Department’s spokesman stated that the USA welcomed the Greek government’s announcement that 1 September had been set as the fixed date for holding a referendum on the new constitution, adding that they were pleased to note that comments by the Greek people and the press on the draft of

\(^{21}\) NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol Affairs & Relations GR-USA – 1-1-68: Confidential, State telegram 108450 to Athens, Immediate, by Rusk to Talbot, 1/2/68.


\(^{23}\) LBJ Archives, Box 127, NSF: Cables III - 8/67-2/68: Confidential, Athens telegram 3394, by Talbot to Battle, 1/2 68.

\(^{24}\) ‘US Navy fetes Greek premier and ministers’, Daily Telegraph, 16/2/68.

\(^{25}\) NA, RG 59, Box 2151, Pol 15-5 GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, Athens telegram 3952, by Talbot, 15/3/68.
that constitution were being encouraged. The statement elicited no questions.

In the meantime, the State Department faced a dilemma. The American Embassy in Athens recommended in effect a continuation of their present policy of correct relations and watchful waiting. The American officials acknowledged that such a course was essentially passive, and in a sense against the regime, since it was interpreted in Greece as showing lack of confidence in the junta. Moreover, the State Department estimated that their continuing failure to lift MAP suspensions would likely cause increasing difficulties between the USA and Greece, since the latter would feel that it had responded to the American pressures without appropriate response. Consequently, while they recognized that an incremental policy on the part of the USA towards Greece continued to be necessary, the next increment was —according to Talbot— up to the US.

According to the Ambassador, in strategic terms they had been on the right track with Greece since April 1967 in emphasizing the importance of return to a constitutional and representative government. Moreover, given the US interests in Greece, the absence of an acceptable alternative to the regime, and their incapacity to legislate Greece’s future, Talbot saw no practical alternative—barring accidents— to continuing on the same course for at least the following six months. Consequently, their current policy-problems were primarily tactical.

The Ambassador agreed that the junta, under the influence of the hard-liners, might in fact be pursuing the constitutional process fraudulently and with the design mainly of misleading the US and the international opinion in order to mask its underlying aim of prolonging its exclusive hold on power. Talbot saw no way at the time to guarantee against that possibility. Yet, the adoption of even an imperfect constitution—indeed, according to Talbot, almost any constitution not patently unacceptable— would be more likely to initiate the

27 NA, RG 59, Box 2151, Pol 15-5 GR — 1-1-68: Unclassified, State telegram 131113 to Athens, by Rusk, 15 3 68.
28 NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol 1 Greece-USA: Secret, State telegram 133784 to Athens. by Rusk, 21/3/68.
29 NA, RG 59, Box 1690, Def-Def. Affairs GR-USA — 1-1-67: Confidential, Athens telegram 4023, by Talbot, 21 3/68.
process of return to a greater measure of representative life, and the external and internal pressures were likely to build up on the regime to permit its entry into force in a reasonable period.

Besides, as Talbot argued, the essential elements on the issue were solid and determined NATO membership on the eastern flank, and comparatively unrestricted availability of US unilateral requirements in the Eastern Mediterranean. These goals included further progress on encouraging the beginning the junta had made in improving bilateral relations with Turkey and in moving towards resolutions of the Cyprus problem. Moreover, Talbot continued, it was essential to pull Greece along to the political posture with which the other NATO countries could live. Consequently, the US had an even more basic interest in attempting to prevent the breakdown of the Greek polity with all the adverse consequences that would follow.

In sum, Talbot proposed that, in view of the above considerations, they should deal with the military regime, supporting it and focusing on its relatively responsible elements, and encouraging—not just lecturing— it to get back on the constitutional track. Although that course did not guarantee success, yet Talbot estimated that it represented the most promising policy-line available to the USA for constructively influencing the Greek situation in its current parlous condition. In that way, the State Department and the Embassy could safely lean harder on the junta than if they abstained from gestures responding to the constitutional steps already taken.30

Meanwhile, however, the house arrests of two ex-Prime Ministers had been a step backwards, which proved that the regime did not have any appreciation of public relations in the international sphere, especially as the US was concerned.31 Consequently, the State Department continued to keep the question of the nature of US policy towards the military regime in Greece open, and arranged a meeting between Battle and Talbot in the American Embassy in London for 22 April 1968.

31 NA, RG 59, Box 2146, Pol 1 GR — 1-1-67: Confidential, Memorandum of Conversation, 17/4/68: Remarks on the Greek Situation.
1.3 The USA needs Constantine no longer

As Talbot had suggested, the State Department authorized Reinhardt to take the initiative and acquaint the King about the US decision to move towards a working relationship with the Greek regime. Reinhardt acted on his instructions on 18 January 1968. For his part, Constantine expressed his understanding without appearing surprised or particularly dismayed. In fact, Rostow commented that the young monarch had been fairly realistic about the US decision.

The question of the King’s return appeared to settle, once the US resumed working contacts with the military regime in Athens. The monarchy’s umbrella was no longer needed for the legitimization and acceptance of the junta abroad. As a result, when King met with General Angelis, the Chief of General Staff, on 2 February 1968, the latter informed Constantine that he had been charged by the junta to make three points to him: firstly, that he should not return to Greece until the general elections; secondly, that he should move out of the Greek Embassy in Rome; and, thirdly, that he should make no more public statements. Constantine decided to accept the second point, and shortly after Reinhardt’s departure, the King and the Queen moved to the Hotel Eden.

With regard to the American posture towards the Regent, the State Department was guided by Constantine’s attitude. Although the correct procedure under Article 49 of the constitution had not been followed in naming

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32 NA, RG 59, Box 2150, Pol 15-1 GR — 1-1-68: Secret, Athens telegram 3210, by Talbot, 17/1/68.
33 NA, RG 59, Box 2150, Pol 15-1 GR — 1-1-68: Secret, State telegram 100451 to Rome, by Rusk to Reinhardt, 18/1/68.
34 NA, RG 59, Box 2150, Pol 15-1 GR — 1-1-68: Secret, Rome telegram 3753, by Reinhardt, 18/1/68.
35 NA, RG 59, Box 2150, Pol 15-1 GR — 1-1-68: Secret, Rome telegram 4210, by Reinhardt, 9/2/68.
36 LBJ Archives, Box 28 (1), WWR, Memos to the President, Vol. 58-3: Secret, Memorandum for the President, by W.W. Rostow, 25/1/68: Acknowledgement of Letter from King Constantine.
37 Box 2150, Pol 15-1 GR — 1-1-68: Secret, Rome telegram 4210, by Reinhardt, 9/2/68.
38 Box 2150, Pol 15-1 GR — 1-1-68: Secret, Rome telegram 4325, by Reinhardt, 17/2/68.
39 NA, RG 59, Box 2150, Pol 15-1 GR — 1-1-68: Confidential, State telegram 115492 to Athens, by Rusk, 14/2/68; NA, RG 59, Box 2150, Pol 15-1 GR — 1-1-68: Confidential, Rome telegram 4210, by Reinhardt, 9/2/68.
Zoitakis as Regent in the night of 13 December, the King himself had accepted both the principle of Regency and the current arrangement. His acknowledgement was clear from his comments to Reinhardt, including his view that the new Ambassadors in Greece should present their credentials to the Regent, who would accept them for the King. Consequently, Talbot argued that, since Constantine had no difficulty in accepting the status of Zoitakis, there was no reason why the Americans should. Yet, the officials in Washington thought it better not to move out ahead of the other key NATO partners, but to keep in stride with them on the question of any special call on the Regent.

1.4 Fanfani's letter

Meanwhile, the Greek question continued to pose special problems for NATO. The Italian delegation received instructions from Rome to insist on putting Fanfanni's letter on the agenda of the private NAC Meeting of 17 January 1968. The Dutch delegation also suggested inducing Greece to come forward voluntarily and make in NAC some sort of statement that would presumably mention an early return to constitutional government, thus providing a safety valve for the release of the anti-Greek pressures in the NATO countries. Brosio called the Permanent Representatives to NATO Grewe (FRG), Burrows (UK), Burgi (Turkey-acting Dean), and Cleveland (USA) to consider what to do. All four thought that pursuing formally in NAC the question of democracy, either in Greece or in general, would damage the Alliance. Moreover, nobody believed that the Colonels would be willing to start a conversation in NATO about their internal affairs. All therefore agreed that the Fanfanni initiative should be somehow headed off at the pass.

40 NA, RG 59, Box 2151, Pol 17-4 GR – 1-1-67: Confidential, Athens telegram 3629, by Talbot, 20/2/68.
41 NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, State telegram 119724 to Athens, by Rusk, 23/2/68.
42 NA, RG 59, Box 1587, Def 4 NATO – 1-1-68: Secret, US Mission NATO telegram 1314, by Cleveland, 14/1/68.
Cleveland in particular took the strongest line, doubting that any internal political benefit in Italy was worth the potential damage to the Alliance. On 13 January 1968, he stressed to the Italian Permanent Representative that the Italians might be responsible for real damage to NATO, at a moment when much constructive defense and political work was waiting to be done. Cleveland also commented later to Washington that, if Fanfani’s letter was admitted in the NAC agenda, they would have, at minimum, an acrimonious exchange in which a number of governments would feel it necessary to criticize the Greek Colonels in order to make clear to their own domestic critics that, when the opportunity presented itself, they did not shirk their moral obligation. At maximum, Cleveland continued, an imbroglio on that subject in NAC could create major crisis if Athens decided to make a big issue of it by walking out, or by threatening to denounce the Treaty.44

For his part, Talbot commented that any discussion within NATO, along the lines that could develop as a result of Fanfani’s initiative, would strike at the junta’s *amour propre* and thus reinforce the younger officers, who wished to push Papadopoulos towards a Franco-type regime, away from close association with NATO. In fact, that issue had become extremely sensitive as part of the struggle within the junta between hardliners and Papadopoulos.45

As the Private NAC Meeting of 17 January was approaching, the State Department sent instructions to their Embassy in Rome to seek —in consultation with the British and the Canadians— an appointment at the Foreign Ministry at a sufficiently senior level. In particular, the American officials in Washington authorized Reinhardt to urge strongly the Italian Government not to raise a discussion of the Fanfani letter in NATO, because the USA believed that it ran the risk of dividing the Alliance at a time when unity was essential.46

Reinhardt followed his instructions and made a firm demarche to the Italian Foreign Office in the evening of 16 January 1968. Moreover, he and his British counterpart did not hesitate to bring informally to the attention of Moro, the Prime Minister, and the President their concern over the Italian initiative;

44 NA, RG 59, Box 1587, Def 4 NATO – 1-1-68: Secret, US Mission NATO telegram 1314, by Cleveland, 14/1/68.
45 NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, Athens telegram 3188, by Talbot, 16/1/68.
46 NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, State telegram 099114 to Rome, Priority, by Rusk, 16/1/68.
Moro endorsed the American concerns. Consequently, the Italian Foreign Minister sent new instructions to his delegation in Brussels, insisting however that his letter should be mentioned. The Americans did not have any objection to that. So, on 17 January Brosio informed NAC that he was studying Fanfani’s letter, and the discussion then passed on to other subjects.

1.5 Another attempt to resume MAP to Greece fails

When the USA took the initial step of resuming normal diplomatic contacts with the Papadopoulos’ regime on 23 January 1968, the question of recognition gave place to the question of the MAP suspensions. The official line regarding the resumption of military aid to Greece was that the US policy on that subject was still under review. In the meantime, the American officials stressed that they were pressing the Greek junta for concrete evidence of further progress towards constitutionalism, which might provide the basis for seeking to lift suspensions.

More particularly, Washington had assured the junta that the US posture towards Greece would be favourably affected if concrete steps were taken along the road to constitutionalism. According to the State Department, some of these steps had been taken. Nevertheless, although the US officials had preserved sufficient flexibility to be able to respond to such moves, they could not change their attitude in the field that mainly counted to the military regime: namely, the MAP suspensions. The American officials reasoned that domestic considerations played a major role in their decision to continue to withhold military aid to Greece. Furthermore, as they argued, they could not make a

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47 NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, Rome telegram 3710, by Reinhardt, 16/1/68.
48 NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, Rome telegram 3711, by Reinhardt, 16/1/68.
49 NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, State telegram 099816 to US Mission NATO & to The Hague, by Rusk, 17/1/68: Greece/NATO.
50 NA, RG 59, Box 2148, Pol 15 GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, US NATO telegram 1450, by Cleveland, 22/1/68.
51 NA, RG 59, Box 1691, Def 19-8 US-GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, State telegram 119385 to Bonn, by Rusk, 22/2/68: Military Aid to Greece.
52 NA, RG 59, Box 1691, Def 19-8 US-GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, State telegram 108132 to Athens, by Rusk, 1/2/68.
favourable gesture on MAP at that moment, since it would be widely regarded in Greece and abroad as US intervention on behalf of a Greek regime whose standing might be slipping at home and whose gesture towards constitutionalism had been rejected by many political leaders.  

Meanwhile, the coup of 21 April 1967, the Cyprus crisis of November 1967, and the King’s abortive counter-coup on 13 December 1967 had altered substantially the Greek-American relationship in the military field. The US suspension of the delivery of end items of military equipment following the coup and the simultaneous cessation of joint military planning reduced the flow of information. During that period, social and official military contacts were limited and even restricted. It was not until February 1968, when Talbot paid his first official call on the Greek Prime Minister Papadopoulos, that a beginning of a more normal relationship in the military area was initiated.

As Earle Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, argued in his memorandum to McNamara, the President had signed the Foreign Assistance Appropriations Bill and the US Government had resumed normal diplomatic relations with the Greek regime. Consequently, the conditions were ripe for the Administration to act promptly in lifting the MAP suspensions. Apart from fears that the current American policy might conceivably induce Greece to leave NATO, a US failure to lift the suspension was seriously eroding the American valuable security association with Greece.

USCINCEUR, in particular, was concerned about the ultimate loss of combat effectiveness of the Royal Hellenic Air Force. The American Consul in Thessaloniki added his impressions of a Hellenic Army facing problems that might well have serious effect on its competency. Talbot’s Country Team message also concluded that, even though the events of 13 December 1967 had not materially affected the ability of HAF to respond vigorously to foreign aggression, nor had their ability to perform their NATO obligations suffered to any appreciable degree, any continuation of the MAP suspensions would have

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53 NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol I Greece-USA: Secret, State telegram 133784 to Athens, by Rusk, 21/3/68.
54 NA, RG 59, Box 1549, Def GR-USA: Secret, Athens airgram A-568, by McClelland, 27/4/68.
an increasingly adverse effect on the combat readiness of all the services, and, with time, would also weigh heavily on the morale and the condition of the forces.\textsuperscript{57}

Apart from the American Pentagon, the NATO Ministers had also expressed concern about the weaknesses of the flanks. The terms of reference of a NATO Defence Review Committee subgroup, formed to study means of strengthening the local Greek forces (DRC/WR(68)5), were discussed on 26 February 1968. One of the issues addressed was foreign aid resulting from bilateral and multilateral agreements.\textsuperscript{58}

In view of the above considerations, as well as the diminishing flexibility available to the President in that matter, in the aftermath of the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, and as the 1968 election approached in the USA, Wheeler was convinced that they should resume Military Assistance to Greece at that moment.\textsuperscript{59} Apart from Wheeler, the OSD staff and CINCEUR stressed also that the suspension of most of the major items of modern equipment was hurting Greece’s contribution to NATO. Moreover, Paul Nitze, the Deputy Secretary of Defence, was concerned that both the $34 million of undelivered equipment and/or the uncommitted FY 68 funds approved for Greece might be diverted to other priority needs, a development that would have long-range effects on Greece’s NATO forces regardless of what government was in power. Therefore, he requested a Senior Interdepartmental Group meeting to air the subject,\textsuperscript{60} and enclosed an assessment of political considerations regarding the US military assistance policy to Greece.

That assessment, drafted by a Pentagon officer, took for granted that the Administration had decided to lift MAP suspensions, and only explored the best timing for announcing that decision. In particular, the drafter argued that any adverse effects on the US elections would be minimized by taking action sooner rather than later in the election year. Moreover, he claimed that, if they did not lift suspensions until after the US elections, their relations with the

\textsuperscript{57} NA, RG 59, Box 1549, Def 6 GR – 1-1-68: Secret, Athens telegram 3684, by Talbot, 23/2/68: Current status of Hellenic Armed Forces.

\textsuperscript{58} NA, RG 59, Box 1549, Def 6 GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, US Mission NATO telegram 1853, by Cargo, 20/2/68: DPC Meeting, Monday 26 February.

\textsuperscript{59} NA, RG 59, Box 1691, Def 19-8 US-Gr – 1-1-68: Secret, Memorandum for the Secretary of Defence, by Earle G. Wheeler, 29/2/68: MAP for Greece.

\textsuperscript{60} NA, RG 59, Box 1691, Def 19-8 US-Gr – 1-1-68: Secret, Paul to Katzenbach, 22 3 68.
regime could be expected to suffer, the moderate elements promoting progress towards constitutionalism could be forced to make concessions to radicals, and the resulting adverse events could be construed as another administration failure. What is more, another argument for taking action sooner rather than later in the election year was that the Congress would be in the heat of the debate on the FY 1969 foreign aid, and any decision to lift suspensions would probably be politically unfeasible.61

Meanwhile, however, the State Department continued to assert that the question of the status of the MAP shipments to Greece was ‘under continuing review.’62 After all, Congress did have a major voice in the matter of MAP suspensions in that it could reduce or eliminate future aid programs if the Executive Branch were to take a decision with which the Congress strongly disagreed.63

1.6 The State Department faces renewed criticism regarding the welfare of prisoners in Greece

As we have stated above, Andreas Papandreou was among those who were freed, when Papadopoulos announced on 23 December 1967 that a number of the political prisoners held in detention would be released. That development was particularly forthcoming for the officials in Washington, who were continually pressed for his fate.

Yet, with Andreas safe and out of jail, that continuing cause of unease had been removed. In the same way, the State Department’s interest for the political prisoners in Greece had diminished as well. When Talbot met with the Greek Foreign Minister Pipinelis informally on 10 January in order to learn the

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61 NA, RG 59, Box 1691, Def 19-8 US-GR – 1-1-68. Secret, Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of Defence, 15 3/68: Political Considerations in Greek MAP policy.
62 NA, RG 59, Box 2150, Pol 15-1 GR – 1-1-68: Limited Official Use, State telegram 131871 to Rome, by Rusk, 18/3 68; NA, RG 59, Box 1691, Def 19-8 US-GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, Briefing Memorandum 4750, by Battle to the Under Secretary, 20/3/68: Your meeting with Greek Ambassador Palamas at 4:00 p.m. today; NA, RG 59, Box 2151, Pol 15-5 GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, State telegram 134513 to Athens, by Rusk, 22/3/68.
63 NA, RG 59, Box 2151, Pol 15-5 GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, State telegram 134513 to Athens, by Rusk, 22/3/68.
regime’s intentions with regard to the process of return to constitutionalism, the Ambassador did not press the question of political prisoners. Pipinelis only mentioned that he had nothing specific to report on the judicial process for the detainees.64

Meanwhile, the Organizations and Committees founded in the USA for the promotion of democracy in Greece continued their work. In particular, representatives from the US Committee for Democracy in Greece met with Stuart Rockwell and Milner Dunn on 3 January 1968, and discussed the Greek question.65 Rockwell, for his part, presented the Department’s views, while the representatives of the Committee explained that their main concerns were how to restore civil liberties and constitutional processes in Greece, and how to help the some 2,000 political prisoners who were being held without legal action. They also observed that the Committee, since it was in a more removed position, could be helpful by speaking out more frequently against those aspects of the military regime that were so repugnant. Victor Reuther concluded that the Department should expect the Committee ‘to make a lot of noise.’66

On 27 February 1968, the Amnesty International issued a report on the political prisoners in Greece. That report was given great publicity in Europe and America, especially because it acknowledged that some detainees were being maltreated and even tortured by certain Greek police officers.67

The American line to the accusations of Amnesty International was that the staff of the American Embassy in Athens, who were in touch with the appropriate services, were endeavouring to check out the story with regard to the specifics mentioned: that is, the names of the eleven police officers identified as the miscreants.68 With regard to the charges that the cruiser *Elli* was being used to house political prisoners, Talbot reported that the Embassy

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64 NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR — 1-1-68: Secret, Athens telegram 3129, by Talbot, 11/1/68.
65 The representatives of the US Committee for Democracy in Greece were: F. Biddle, D. Fraser, V. Reuther, J. Conway, M. Straight, M. Coldbloom, P. Lyons.
67 The document entitled Prisoners, 29/3/68, [NA, RG 59, Box 2154, Pol 29 GR — 1-1-68] is currently withheld for security reasons.
68 NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol GR-USA — 1-1-68: Confidential, Memorandum of Conversation, 20/3/68: Greece.
had not been able to develop any information to substantiate or deny these charges. In general, however, the American Ambassador acknowledged that some torture techniques had been used - according to Talbot, probably not as many as charged - and largely in connection with the investigation of terrorist bombings during the summer and fall of 1967.

Meanwhile, in Washington, in view of that climate of vigorous criticism on the matter of political prisoners, the State Department urged Talbot to make a call on Papadopoulos informing him of his impending trip to London and suggesting the release of some of the political prisoners held on the islands. With Easter and simultaneous first anniversary of 21 April as the occasion for the regime to announce that action, the American officials argued that such a step would be most useful for the junta in terms of its image abroad and particularly in the US.

Yet, when Talbot met with Papadopoulos on 16 April 1968, the Greek Prime Minister said that nothing special was planned for the combined Easter-April 21 anniversary with regard to amnesties, on the grounds that, if the detained communist leaders were to be released, the communist party would reorganise its cells and pursue its nefarious subversive activities. The Greek Prime Minister informed Talbot that the regime planned only to release normally on the following day the group of political detainees who had been thoroughly screened and were no longer considered dangerous.

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69 NA, RG 59, Box 2154, Pol 29 GR - 1-1-68: Limited Official Use, Athens telegram 4116, by Talbot, 29/3/68; NA, RG 59, Box 2155, Pol 29 GR - 7-1-68: Confidential, State telegram 197516 to Oslo, Athens, by Rusk, 6/7/68.


71 NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol GR-USA - 1-1-68: Confidential, State telegram 144308 to Athens, from Battle for Talbot, 10/4/68.

72 NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol GR - 1-1-68: Confidential, Athens telegram 4404, by Talbot, 21/4/68.
2. UK: Trying to deal with the colonels

2.1 Britain resumes normal diplomatic contacts with the coup government

According to the British officials, the American attitude on the question of recognition of the regime in Greece was likely to be decisive, especially since the US Ambassador in Athens was known to think that recognition in the fairly near future was more or less inevitable.\(^1\) For his part, Rodgers argued that, although they should keep in step with the US government, they should also make clear that the Foreign Office had its own definite ideas on tactics and that it was not ready to accept the American decision, when that was made without the fullest consultation with Britain.\(^2\)

In the meantime, the Foreign Secretary was disposed ‘to steer a course between a breach with the regime and any positive new act of recognition’ so long as the British interests did not suffer and so long as the principal NATO allies were in step with the UK.\(^3\) The Foreign Office also authorised the British Ambassadors to avoid any contacts with the Greek Heads of Mission, until the UK was ready to recognize the Greek regime.\(^4\) In the case of Cyprus, however, where there was strong and overriding need for such contacts, the British High Commissioner was instructed that, if there was a compelling case for exchanging views with the Greek Ambassador, the British representative should make clear to the Greeks that in the current circumstances their contacts could be only on a personal basis, since HM government had not yet decided to recognize the authorities in Athens as the government of Greece.\(^5\)

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\(^1\) PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 27: Background, 4/1/68: Greece.
\(^4\) PRO, FCO 9/178, Doc 2: Ian Boag to Burrows, 4/1/68; PRO, FCO 9/178, Doc 3: Confidential, FO telegram 21 to Beirut, from George Brown, 4/1/68.
\(^5\) PRO, FCO 9/178, Doc 5: Restricted, T. Empson to John R. M. Tennent, 4/1/68; PRO, FCO 9/178, Doc 7: Burrows to Boag, 9/1/68; PRO, FCO 9/178, Doc 6: Confidential, CO telegram 73 to Nicosia, from George Thomson, 10/1/68.
As we have mentioned, a misunderstanding on the German side caused the German Ambassador in Athens to call on the Greek Foreign Minister on 8 January 1968. Further instructions from the State Department authorised Talbot to call privately on Pipinelis on 10 January. In that way, the common front hitherto maintained by the NATO governments over the question of recognizing the Greek regime began to break. Sir Patrick Dean reported to London that the State Department wished to consult with the British, fearing that ‘the situation in Athens might become chaotic,’ unless measures were taken to ensure that the ‘focal group’ of NATO countries acted more or less in concert.

Indeed, as we have already mentioned, Rockwell called a meeting of the principal NATO countries on 15 January, and according to the British Ambassador in Washington- the American official asked the representatives of the other countries whether they would go along with the USA in resuming official contacts with Pipinelis. The British officials recommended that the Foreign Secretary should raise the matter in Cabinet on 18 January, thus reaching a decision on the problem of dealing with, and recognizing the Greek government.

In the meantime, a telegram was sent to Washington instructing Sir Patrick Dean to respond to Rockwell that, pending the Cabinet decision, the British attitude on the subject was the following: although the UK agreed that no formal act of recognition was necessary, and that the process of resuming normal relations with the junta could be gradual and non-dramatic, HM government had to treat the decision and the timing of its execution as relating to the question of recognition, which was what aroused public and parliamentary interest in Britain. In other words, the Foreign Office could not

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6 PRO, FCO 9/173, Doc 6: Confidential, Athens telegram 25, from Dodson, 9/1/68; PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 41: Confidential, FO telegram 68 to Athens, from George Brown, 10/1/68; PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 51: Confidential, Athens telegram 40, from Dodson, 12/1/68: Recognition; PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 54: Lord Hood to Central Department, 12/1/68.
9 PRO, FCO 9/177, Doc 90: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to John Beith, 16/1/68: Greece.
blur the issue by talking about 'working relations with the de facto government.'

Meanwhile in London, George Brown referred to the question of Greece at the Cabinet meeting of 18 January 1968. More particularly, he informed his colleagues that the common front of the main NATO allies towards Greece was— as had been expected—beginning to waver, since every country had its own interests to pursue and was under varying degrees of pressure to have dealings with the regime. In these circumstances, George Brown argued, it would be damaging to the British interests to maintain their current policy, since many commercial questions, including one large contract for the sale of sugar—worth about £1 million—could not be pursued without high level contact with the Greek regime.

Furthermore, the Foreign Secretary added that Britain could not lag noticeably behind the French, the Germans, and the other allies, who were also the UK rivals for gaining more influence and commercial markets in Greece. In addition, George Brown stressed that the Cyprus problem had recently become more critical, as a result of the Turkish-Cypriot community’s decision to set up their own separate administration, and of President Makarios’ resolution to hold elections.

In view of these considerations, the Foreign Secretary sought the authority of his colleagues to decide the timing of new instructions to the British Ambassador in Athens, to the effect that he should resume business with the Greek Foreign Minister while refraining from any action that would imply formal recognition of the regime. According to the Foreign Secretary, the timing of these instructions would be related to the attitude of the NATO partners. As he argued, there was no question of moving ahead of them; but, as he continued, it would be against the British interests to be left behind.

In discussion, George Brown’s proposal was supported largely on the grounds that it was important for the UK to be able to exercise proper influence on the events in Cyprus through the Greek regime. Consequently, since this

could be done effectively only if Britain had contacts with the Greek Foreign Minister, the Cabinet approved the policy proposed by the Foreign Secretary.\textsuperscript{12}

In turn, the Foreign Office authorized Sir Patrick Dean to inform the State Department that the UK was prepared to resume doing business with the Greek junta in concert with the US and the other allied governments. The British view on timing, however, was flexible.\textsuperscript{13} As Alan Davidson argued, Sir Michael Stewart was to return to London on 26 January 1967 for a Heads of Mission Meeting on Cyprus, and therefore it was important that he should have at least some contact with the Greek government beforehand.\textsuperscript{14}

On 20 January, the Turkish Ambassador in Athens, acting on instructions, called on the Greek Foreign Minister.\textsuperscript{15} The American Ambassador paid an official call on Pipinelis on 23 January 1968.\textsuperscript{16} The Italian Embassy was also authorised in that day to resume normal contacts with the officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.\textsuperscript{17}

In view of the above, Davidson, the Head of Central Department, proposed that Sir Michael Stewart should seek an appointment with the Greek Foreign Minister within the week, thus resuming normal diplomatic relations with the Greek government, which had been in suspense ever since Papadopoulos had become Prime Minister after King Constantine’s unsuccessful counter-coup on 13 December 1967. Regarding publicity, the British officials agreed not to make any formal declaration of recognition; if asked, however, in Parliament or by the Press, whether HM Ambassador had called on the Greek Foreign Minister, thus recognizing the new government, they should respond in the affirmative. As Rodgers, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, argued, it would be wise to inspire a Written Parliamentary Question in their terms, rather than have the news of resumed relations seep out in a

\textsuperscript{12} PRO, FCO 9/177, Doc 90: Cabinet Speaking Notes & Background, 18/1/68: Greece; PRO, CAB 128/43: CC(68)9: Secret, Conclusions of a meeting of the Cabinet, 18/1 68, p. 3-4: Overseas Affairs-Greece.
\textsuperscript{13} PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 67: Confidential, FO telegram 667 to Washington, from George Brown, 18/1/68: Recognition.
\textsuperscript{14} PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 83: Confidential, Athens telegram 70, from Sir Michael Stewart, 23/1/68.
\textsuperscript{15} PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 73: Confidential, Athens telegram 62, from Sir Michael Stewart, 20/1/68.
\textsuperscript{16} PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 82: Confidential, Athens telegram 69, from Sir Michael Stewart, 23/1/68.
\textsuperscript{17} PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 85: Confidential, Athens telegram 72, from Sir Michael Stewart, 23/1/68.
manner suggesting that they were not being straightforward about their decision.\textsuperscript{18}

George Brown agreed. Consequently, on 24 January 1968 Sir Michael Stewart received a telegram from London, which authorised him to pay an official call on Pipinelis before the British Ambassador’s departure on 26 January.\textsuperscript{19} The appointment with the Greek Foreign Minister was arranged for 25 January 1968, and Sir Michael Stewart duly met Pipinelis at the Greek Foreign Ministry at 10 a.m. (Athens time).\textsuperscript{20}

In the same day, at 12.30 (London time), the News Department made the following statement on the record: ‘\textit{Her Majesty’s Ambassador in Athens Sir Michael Stewart paid a business call on the Greek Foreign Minister, Mr. Pipinelis, on 25 January. This marks the resumption of normal diplomatic contacts with the Greek government.}\textsuperscript{21}’ Furthermore, in response to a Parliamentary Question in the House of Commons regarding recognition, George Brown verified that, since there was no need for any formal act of recognition, HM government were resuming a normal diplomatic relationship with the Greek Government through the Greek Foreign Minister.\textsuperscript{22}

\section*{2.2 Defining the British relations with the government militaries}

Sir Michael Stewart’s formal call on Pipinelis on 25 January 1968 marked the resumption of a normal diplomatic relationship between Britain and the Papadopoulos’ government. Yet, the question of the Ambassador’s relations with the military members of the regime remained. Although the British Embassy in Athens resumed normal dealings with the Greek

\textsuperscript{18} PRO, FCO 9/177, Doc 92: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to John Beith, 23 1 68: Greece-Resumption of Relations; PRO, FCO 9/177, Doc 93: Confidential, W. Rodgers to George Brown, 23/1/68: Greece.
\textsuperscript{19} PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 86: Confidential, FO telegram 182 to Athens, from George Brown, 24/1/68: Recognition.
\textsuperscript{20} PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 87: Confidential, Athens telegram 75, from Sir Michael Stewart, 24/1/68.
\textsuperscript{21} PRO, FCO 9/177, Doc 95: Confidential, FO telegram 189 to Athens, from George Brown, 24/1/68.
Government Departments—and where necessary with Greek Ministers—over the whole range of business and on all subjects, Alan Davidson instructed Dodson to refrain from any dealings with the Prime Minister or the military members of the junta.\(^{23}\)

The same instructions were repeated to Sir Michael Stewart, when he called on George Brown on 31 January 1968. The Foreign Secretary authorised the Ambassador to deal with the Greek Ministers in the government as the occasion arose for purposes of business, but he should refrain from seeking an appointment with Papadopoulos. Furthermore, George Brown reiterated that the Ambassador should keep up the pressure on the regime for a return to democracy. Although the Foreign Secretary realized that this would in any case require a call on the Greek Prime Minister, George Brown wanted to judge the timing of it himself. On the other hand, he agreed that, if Sir Michael Stewart was sent for by Papadopoulos in his capacity as Prime Minister, the Ambassador would certainly go, but he should report the summons immediately to London by telegram. As Davidson explained later, the only inhibiting factor was that George Brown wished particularly to avoid a situation in which he would have to say publicly that the Ambassador had asked for an interview with Papadopoulos.\(^{24}\)

Finally, as Sir Michael Stewart reported to London later, he had given all members of his staff instructions to be extremely careful in any contacts they might have with the Greek officers who had been dismissed from the three Services for taking part in the King's abortive coup. According to the Ambassador, it was inevitable that these officers would be bitter and, being Greeks, would start thinking and talking about organizing means, violent or otherwise, of overthrowing the Colonels. It was the Ambassador's view that any attempt of theirs to conspire against the current Greek government would sooner or later be found out and if there was any reference to any foreign mission—or person in a foreign mission—that mission or that person would find himself in very serious trouble as being a party to the conspiracy. Not caring to

\(^{23}\) PRO, FCO 9/177, Doc 105: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to D. S. L. Dodson, 26/1/68: Dealings with the Greek government.

take that kind of risk, Sir Michael Stewart instructed the Service Attachés to make no move themselves in the direction of these people, especially since they were apparently plotting against a government Britain had recognize.25

2.3 The Foreign Office makes openings to Constantine

On 5 January 1968, Constantine sent to Harold Wilson a letter, asking for the support of Wilson and of the British public opinion in his efforts to restore a democratic way of life in Greece.26 The British officials argued that it would be impolite not to acknowledge the King’s letter. They also agreed that, since Constantine had neither abdicated nor been deposed, there was no reason not to reply to it. On the other hand, they argued that they should be careful to draft the terms of any communication from the Prime Minister in a way that could not be interpreted later as implying support for the King, should the latter decide to establish a government in exile or take any other kind of action outside Greece against the regime in Athens.27 Consequently, Harold Wilson, in his letter to Constantine, thanked the young monarch for his kind message, adding that the attitude of the British government reflected the very wide anxiety of the British people for the restoration of the democratic institutions and procedures in Greece.28

In the afternoon of 18 January 1968, George Brown met in the House of Commons with Lord Lambton, Conservative MP, and a personal friend of Constantine. Lord Lambton informed George Brown that King Constantine would be prepared to come secretly to London and see the Foreign Secretary.29 The young monarch, using various channels to get his message across, sent also a letter to Harold Wilson, expressing his wish to discuss the Greek situation with him, either secretly or publicly, before the latter made any move towards recognition. That wish and the point about recognition were repeated

25 PRO, FCO 9/123, Doc 14: Secret & Guard, Sir Michael Stewart to A. E. Davidson, 6 2/68.
26 PRO, FCO 9/132, Doc 13: King Constantine to Harold Wilson, 5/1/68.
27 PRO, FCO 9/132, Doc 17: Confidential, D. I. Morphet to A. M. Palliser, 9/1/68.
28 PRO, FCO 9/132, Doc 15: Harold Wilson to the King of Hellenes, 11/1/68.
29 PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 76: Miss E. J. Elliott to Central Department, 18/1/68.
at some length when Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh called on Constantine at his request on 19 January 1968.\textsuperscript{30}

The Foreign Office, however, estimated that the King was out of touch with the realities of the situation in Greece, and confused in his thinking about it.\textsuperscript{31} According to Alan Davidson, contrary to Constantine’s belief, continued non-recognition of the government was likely to strengthen the hands of the anti-monarchical extremists against the moderate Prime Minister Papadopoulos, whose position the King himself was reported as saying he did not wish to be undermined. Although the British official agreed that British recognition of the regime \textit{would} weaken the position of the King, it was also his opinion that it would represent only a marginal contribution to a weakness that was inherent in the situation in Greece after the events of 13 December 1967. According to Alan Davidson, there was little likelihood of the King’s early return to Greece and even less that he would be able to do so at that stage on his own terms. In other words, the British official stressed that the King’s position was not so important for the UK as to outweigh the considerations in favour of resuming normal dealings with the government in Athens.\textsuperscript{32}

In the meantime, Constantine’s arguments for withholding recognition had become less valid with the passage of time and after Talbot’s call on Pipinelis on 23 January 1968. In these circumstances, the King’s main reason for visiting Britain fell away as well. The Foreign Secretary’s advice, therefore, was that Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh should be instructed to pass an oral message from the Prime Minister to King Constantine. Meanwhile, George Brown instructed also Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh to warn the King in advance of Sir Michael Stewart’s proposed official call on the Greek Foreign Minister. According to Davidson, in that way Britain avoided the risk that the King

\textsuperscript{30} PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 71: Confidential, Rome telegram 87, from Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh, 19/1/68.
\textsuperscript{31} PRO, FCO 9/132, Doc 23: Confidential, Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh to Lord Hood, 9 1 68; PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 57: Secret, D. S. L. Dodson to A. E. Davidson, 12/1/68: Resumption of relations with the Greek government.
\textsuperscript{32} PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 75: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to John Beith, 18 1 68: Greece-Lord Lambton’s approach to the Secretary of State.
would first learn of that call through the press and before he received the Prime Minister's letter.  

Harold Wilson concurred with these suggestions. Consequently, on 24 January 1968, George Brown instructed Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh to seek an audience with the King as soon as possible and inform him in confidence of the British decision to resume relations with the regime in Athens. A few days later another telegram arrived in Rome containing the Prime Minister's message, which was to be conveyed orally to the King. In that message, Harold Wilson explained the reasons for the British decision to recognize the regime, and expressed the view that a meeting between them would not be productive at the time.

For his part, Sir Michael Stewart, when he was in London, suggested to Paul Gore-Booth, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State, that future advice from the UK to Constantine should be in the direction of his aiming to return to Greece. As Sir Michael Stewart argued, Constantine might well suffer a setback in world public opinion by returning, but this might be his only way of preserving the monarchy. John Beith agreed with that advice, adding that, if Constantine returned to Greece, he might do a little good and perhaps be better placed in the event of a change of regime; he was reluctant however to what extent that suggestion could be fitted into British policy towards Greece.

When Sir Michael Stewart returned to Greece, he realized that the King's chances of returning under any conditions, even those of Papadopoulos, had dwindled to almost nothing. In these circumstances, the British Ambassador in Athens withdrew his suggestion that Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh might discreetly encourage Constantine to return. As a result, Lord Hood, the Deputy Under-Secretary of State, instructed the Ambassador in Rome that at this stage he should not give the King any advice about his return to Athens, or to the effect

33 PRO, FCO 9/132, Doc 36: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to John Beith, 23/1/68; Greece-King Constantine's approaches to HMG; PRO, FCO 9/132, Doc 37: Secret, D. J. D. Maitland to A. N. Halls, 24/1/68.
34 PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 87: Confidential, FO telegram 387 to Rome, from George Brown, 24/1/68.
35 PRO, FCO 9/176, Doc 87: Confidential, FO telegram 387 to Rome, from George Brown, 24/1/68.
that a Papadopoulos government with the King back in Athens as a constitutional monarch was the best that could be hoped for in Greece at the time. As George Brown stressed that was not the view of HM government.

On the other hand, Lord Hood added that this did not mean that Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh would not keep up the King’s morale by inviting him to the Embassy and offering him certain recreational facilities. According to the British official, that attitude would provide opportunities to the Ambassador to try and keep some balance in Constantine’s thinking. Furthermore, the Foreign Office might wish Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh to volunteer advice later on to the King. Consequently, it would be all the easier for the Ambassador to do that effectively, if he had been in touch with Constantine.38

Sir Michael Stewart welcomed that suggestion. He stressed, however, that, since the Greek regime was likely to learn before very long that the King had started frequenting the British Embassy, the UK ran the serious risk of being suspected as planning some plot against the Colonels, especially as it was already mistrusted about its attitude towards them. He proposed, therefore, to try to obtain some sort of clearance for that from the junta.39

Lord Hood concurred, authorizing him to approach Pipinelis in a way that would not in effect offer the Greek Foreign Minister a veto on the meetings between Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh and the King. According to Lord Hood, if the Greek Foreign Minister reacted favourably, all would be well; if not, then they would have to ensure that Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh’s contacts with Constantine would be fairly infrequent, and of a kind to seem that the King was not influenced in his thinking.40

Acting on these instructions, Sir Michael Stewart saw Pipinelis in the afternoon of 9 April 1968. According to the British Ambassador, the Greek Foreign Minister saw no objection to the idea, but welcomed it, arguing that it would be good for Constantine to have somebody experienced to talk to occasionally.41 For their part, the British officials decided that there was no

38 PRO, FCO 9/132, Doc 70: Confidential, Lord Hood to Sir E. Shuckburgh, 8/3 68.
41 PRO, FCO 9/132, Doc 87: Confidential, Sir M. Stewart to Lord Hood, 9 4 68: The King of Greece.
need to say anything to the Americans, since they were not suggesting a series of regular meetings between Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh and the King, nor was there any reason for them to feel aggrieved if they heard that Constantine had been to the Embassy for a game of tennis or a swim.\(^{42}\) Besides, as Sir Michael Stewart argued, the Americans might want to weigh in too, and that would make even Pipinelis wonder whether that Anglo-American approach was up to something more than lending a helping hand.\(^{43}\)

### 2.4 The Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe discusses the Greek question

A two-man delegation from the Council of Europe’s Assembly had left for Greece to make a study of the situation in the country since the coup of 21 April 1967. The delegation included Siegmann, Netherlands Senator, and Samuel Silkin, British Labour MP and Chairman of the Assembly’s Legal Committee.\(^{44}\) It was argued, however, that the Greeks would interpret the Assembly’s action as a wish of the members of the Council to sit in judgement on the Colonels, since the Commission’s semi-judicial procedure had not taken its full course. In fact, as Sam Silkin reported later to Rodgers, the authorities in Greece had been dilatory in arranging interviews during the first few days after his arrival on 16 December, but changed their attitude when Silkin threatened to leave Athens and report to the Council of Europe that they had been obstructive.\(^{45}\)

The delegation stayed in Greece until 24 December 1967, and the Consultative Assembly discussed the situation in that country on 30 and 31 January. According to Macrae, the debate was prolonged and, at times, heated.


\(^{44}\) PRO, FCO 9/229, Doc 177: For the diplomatic Correspondent: Council of Europe Assembly Enquiry on Greece, B(67)79, 18/12/67.

\(^{45}\) PRO, FCO 9/167, Doc 79: Confidential, R. C. Samuel to Central Department, 12/1 68: Mr. Sam Silkin’s visit to Greece.
Further complications occurred when two members of the Amnesty International circulated a paper that went much further than Siegmann's report in the matter of the use of torture. Finally, after much discussion, a resolution was passed, which referred to the possibility of suspending Greece from the Council of Europe. In particular, it stated among other things that the Assembly decided ‘to recommend to the Committee of Ministers, at the latest in the Spring of 1969, the suspension or expulsion of Greece from the Council of Europe if by then an acceptable parliamentary democracy had not been restored in that country, or to do so even before that time if it appeared that the undertakings given by the Greek regime had not been respected.’

According to Boothby, the Permanent British Representative to the Council of Europe, the discussion in the Assembly revealed a polarization on party lines and, because of the dominant role played by the British Parliament delegation, gave a fallacious impression of the state of Parliamentary opinion in the UK in respect of dictatorships. According to the British representative, the large number of abstentions revealed also to the world at large that the Council of Europe was unable to speak with one voice on the Greek problem.

On 26 March 1968, the Scandinavian Countries submitted to the Human Rights Commission their Memorials extending the terms of their original applications to cover alleged breaches of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which stated that ‘no-one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.’ A week later, the Commission decided to treat separately these new allegations, and fixed 13 May as the date by which the Greek government would submit its written observations on their admissibility. Thus, the European Commission of Human Rights was fully seized of the question of violations of civil liberties in

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47 PRO, FCO 9/229, Doc 197: Confidential, Strasbourg telegram 19, from Boothby, 2/2 68.
49 PRO, FCO 9/230, Doc 225: Unclassified, Strasbourg telegram 54, from Boothby. 6 4 68.
Greece, and the merits of the applications were being considered in a sub-committee.\textsuperscript{50}

\textbf{2.5 The British line on the question of civil liberties in Greece}

In the meantime, the very restricted application of the amnesty announced by Papadopoulos in December, and further reports of maltreatment of detainees in Greece continued to disquiet the public opinion in Britain.\textsuperscript{51} Members of Parliament continued to write to Ministers on the subject,\textsuperscript{52} while the British Embassy in Athens warned the Foreign Office that, as a result of the activities of Amnesty International in Greece, it was probable that a booklet would be produced that might revive public clamour in the UK. Consequently, the British officials were faced with the need to formulate a definite policy on that question.

According to Lucas, although neither the Embassy nor the Council of Europe Mission, which visited Greece, was in a position categorically to substantiate the reports that political prisoners were being subjected to torture in Greece, there was good reason to believe that these allegations had some foundation in fact. As Rodgers, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, wrote to Winnick, Labour MP (Croydon South), reports from the Embassy in Athens made clear that obviously ‘\textit{the treatment of some prisoners has been excessive even by local standards.}’\textsuperscript{53} Since 24 November, when Winnick firstly brought the subject to the attention of George Brown, the Foreign Office had been considering whether it could take any effective action to improve the situation revealed by these reports.

One of the possibilities examined was to draw the torture allegations to the attention of the International Committee of Red Cross. Yet, the precedents

\textsuperscript{50} PRO, FCO 9/166, Doc 107: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to Private Secretary, 14/6/68: Greece.
\textsuperscript{51} For example, Cedrick Thornberry’s article in \textit{The Guardian}: ‘Detainees’ evidence on torture’, 31/1/68.
\textsuperscript{52} PRO, FCO 9/141: David Winnick to Goronwy Roberts, 10/1/68; PRO, FCO 9/141, Doc 13: S. C. Silkin to W. T. Rodgers, 26/1/68; PRO, FCO 9/141, Doc 16: Arnold Gregory to W. Rodgers, 30/1/68; PRO, FCO 9/141, Doc 18: D. Winnick to W. T. Rodgers, 31/1/68; etc.
\textsuperscript{53} PRO, FCO 9/141, Doc 10: W. T. Rodgers to D. Winnick, 22/1/68.
for an approach of that kind had not been entirely satisfactory.\textsuperscript{54} Moreover, as Lucas argued, although such a step would look better in domestic political terms because of its publicity value, it was unlikely to yield practical results and would almost certainly offend the junta. The other possibility the Foreign Office considered was to take action with the regime through the British Ambassador in Athens. According to Lucas, since the UK had resumed normal diplomatic relations with the Papadopoulos government, Sir Michael Stewart was again in a position to make direct representations to the Colonels and have a better chance of success.

Combining these approaches, Lucas recommended that the junta could be invited to consider asking the International Red Cross to send a further mission to Greece in order to investigate the allegations of maltreatment of political prisoner. Depending on the Greek reaction, the Foreign Office might subsequently let the ICRC know in confidence that they had made this approach to the regime. In that way, Lucas argued, the British officials could say, if questioned, both that they had spoken to the Greek authorities on the matter, and that they were in touch with the ICRC.\textsuperscript{55}

Rodgers approved the recommendation of Lucas, especially since the pressure on Britain to take some effective action over human rights in Greece had heightened after the issue of the Amnesty International report on 30 January. Therefore, on 9 February 1968, Sir Michael Stewart received a letter of instructions, which authorised him to take up with the Greek Foreign Minister the question of human rights and civil liberties in Greece, including torture. More particularly, he was authorised to refer to the continued restrictions on the freedom of the press, and on the continued detention without

\textsuperscript{54} In 1967, HM government approached the ICRC about reports that the United Arabian Republics had used poison gas in the Yemen; yet, the approach achieved nothing effective. Furthermore, in 1958, the Greek government had brought to the attention of ICRC allegations of ill treatment of Greek-Cypriots by Turkish Cypriots. According to Lucas, that was a good precedent as Britain, the administering power in Cyprus, had given the Red Cross facilities to investigate these allegations; but, as the British official argued, the Greek government had had more standing in the matter than UK had in the recent case of the torture allegations. Finally, as Miss Muriel Monkhouse explained to Arnold Gregory, the ICRC delegates in Greece had never been given access to any prison in which political prisoners were being held for the purposes of preliminary investigation, since ICRC access to detainees was entirely dependant upon the cooperation of the authorities concerned. [PRO, FCO 9/141, Doc 6: Miss Muriel Monkhouse to Arnold Gregory, 29/12/67]

trial of numerous political prisoners in the way that had been suggested by Lucas.\textsuperscript{56} For his part, Sir Michael Stewart argued that if representations on that subject were to prove productive, the ground for them should be carefully prepared.\textsuperscript{57} Therefore, when he met Makarezos on 19 February 1968, he spoke only about the freedom of the press, preferring to wait for a better opportunity for raising the question of the welfare of Greek prisoners.\textsuperscript{58}

On the question of the ill-treatment of the political prisoners in Greece, Sir Michael Stewart and the British Embassy in Athens, in consultation with the Americans, conducted investigations, which—according to the Ambassador—produced quite disagreeable results, although not as bad as the Amnesty International report.\textsuperscript{59}

More particularly, a secret, sanitized minute, dated 19 March 1968, pointed out that there was plenty of evidence of extremely rough handling by the police during interrogations.\textsuperscript{60} According to Sir Michael Stewart, at the time when these reports were written, they were relatively reassuring in the sense that they did not indicate any widespread use of serious malpractices as a matter of routine on all political prisoners, although individual cases had undoubtedly occurred. As the Ambassador argued, these reports tended to confirm the British Embassy's impression that torture was confined to individual cases where the security authorities believed that they were dealing with long-time communists or persons engaged in attempts at armed insurrection.

As Sir Michael Stewart pointed out, however, Marreco, the British member of the Amnesty International, modified that conclusion by establishing that torture was rather more general than had been supposed. The Ambassador acknowledged that a persistent difficulty in evaluating such investigations and other reports was that many of those concerned were known Communists, and


\textsuperscript{57} PRO, FCO 9/129, Doc 215: Confidential, Athens telegram 163, from Sir Michael Stewart.


\textsuperscript{59} PRO, FCO 9/230, Doc 212: Confidential, Sir Michael Stewart to J. G. S. Beith, 11/3/68.

\textsuperscript{60} PRO, FCO 9/129: Secret, Minutes, 19/3/68: Torture-British and American Views. [Sanitized]
it was their wish to blacken the reputation of the regime by any means available to them. Nevertheless, Sir Michael Stewart agreed that the weight of evidence was such that Marreco had effectively proved his case; according to the Ambassador, therefore, these practices should be regarded as unacceptably widespread by any impartial standard.61 A few days later, however, after consulting with the Americans, the Ambassador’s position slightly changed: although he agreed that Marreco had established a prima facie case that torture had been and was being used, only medical examination of the prisoners whom Marreco had seen could be regarded as wholly decisive evidence.62

The second Amnesty International report on the torture of political prisoners in Greece was published in London on 6 April 1968.63 In response to it, and hoping to modify the impressions left by it, the junta released on 8 April the text of a letter from ICRC in Geneva to Papadopoulos about the condition of Greek detainees, which did not make any accusation of torture. As Sir Michael Stewart pointed out, however, the two investigations had been conducted with slightly different purposes: Amnesty International was concerned with questions of torture, whereas the Red Cross brief was wider and covered the general conditions of detention in Greece.64 Meanwhile in London, publicity in the British press about the use of torture in the treatment of Greek political prisoners continued.65

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65 For example, Morning Star, 8/4/68 ('Electric shock torture on Greek ship'), Daily Telegraph, 28/3/68 (Greeks deny torturing prisoners'), The Sunday Times, 16/4/68 ('Amnesty urges Greek ‘torture’ enquiry'), The Times, 11/4/68 ('Torture accusations are smuggled out of Greece'), The Times, 20/4/68 ('How Panayotis Ellis died'), The Times, 2/5/68 ('Politicians under police watch'), The Times, 1/5/68 ('Two former Greek Ministers under house arrest'), The Guardian, 13/5/68 ('Greece admits detainees held on cruiser' by Terens Prittie), The Times, 27/5/68 ('Salonica arrests for opposing regime'), The Sun, 5/6/68 ('Torture on the brink of death'), The Guardian, 16/6/68 ('Manacled corpse in coffin' by Cedric Thornberry), The Guardian, 12/6/68 ('Greeks set up new torture camp' by Terens Prittie), The Guardian, 17/6/68 ('The Greek junta’s methods in Salonica' by Cedric Thornberry), Morning Star, 24/6/68 (Greek prisoners tortured on a large scale'), The Times, 1/7/68 ('Officers gaolied in Greece'), The Guardian, 1/7/68 ('Accused alleges torture'), Daily Telegraph, 4/7/68 ('Torture claim at Athens trial'), etc.
As a result of these developments, the Foreign Secretary received strong pressure from various quarters on the subject of civil liberties in Greece - for example from the British Section of the International Commission of Jurists, from the Liberal Party Organisation, from MPs, etc - while the government’s representatives were called in both Houses to explain what steps Britain had taken with regard to that question. The issue of Greek political prisoners was also scheduled to be raised in the House of Commons on 11 April 1968.

In the light of that debate, the Foreign Secretary held a meeting on 9 April to discuss the British attitude on civil liberties questions. Rodgers’ proposal was to take the opportunity of condemning in strong terms torture insofar as it might have occurred. According to the official, however, the issue was really whether Britain would do any good by raising the question in international organisations, and whether there was an advantage in being virtuous as long as the issue was not affected adversely as a result. His opinion was that they would make it certainly much more difficult for the Ambassador in Athens to make fruitful representations to the Greek government about all aspects of civil liberties. Although he agreed that it was never possible to prove that the normal backstairs methods of diplomacy produced results, he thought

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66 PRO, FCO 9 230, Doc 221: Lord Shawcross to Michael Stewart, 19/3/68.
67 PRO, FCO 9 141, Doc 56: John Pardoe to Harold Wilson, 22/4 68.
that there was good reason to believe that the Colonels had heeded Sir Michael Stewart’s continual representations.\footnote{PRO, FCO 9/129, Doc 268: Confidential, William Rodgers to Michael Stewart, 8 4 68.}

For his part, the Foreign Secretary concurred that Britain should take the line that the Greek junta had a case to answer; that HM government approved of the initiative been taken in the European Commission of Human Rights; that, in the meantime, Britain was pressing the Greek regime in her own way to restore democratic rule and civil liberties; and that HM government openly condemned the military regime in Greece. Furthermore, Michael Stewart stressed that they should not mention arms or aid unless it was necessary to do so.\footnote{PRO, FCO 9/129, Doc 260: Confidential, Notes for the Record, 9/4/68.}

The debate in the House of Commons was largely concerned with the specific subject of what Britain might do with regard to the allegations of torture of prisoners in Greece. In essence, it was suggested that the UK should refer the question of torture to international organisations, such as NATO, the European Commission of Human Rights, and the International Committee of Red Cross.

For his part, William Rodgers, acting on the Foreign Secretary’s guidelines, accepted that most of the allegations of torture had been responsibly made, based on strong \textit{prima facie} evidence of people having been subjected to what one would regard as inhuman treatment under police interrogation. Therefore, he argued, it was up to the Greek regime to convince world opinion either that the allegations were unfounded or that these were deplorable but isolated incidents, which would not be repeated. With regard to the European Commission of Human Rights, Rodgers replied that the machinery of the organisation had been set into motion and the allegations of torture had been brought to the attention of the Commission. Concerning the ICRC, Rodgers pointed out that the organisation had already been actively engaged in the country, having permission to continue the detention centre inspections of Greece, which had started after the coup of 21 April 1967. Finally, in connection with NATO, the British official claimed that action in the Alliance would be an empty gesture, which might vitiate the effectiveness of British representations to the Greek authorities.
In sum, Rodgers stressed that the UK had concentrated on making direct representations to the Greek regime through the British Ambassador in Athens and through the Greek Ambassador in London on the whole range of questions involving human rights and the return of constitutional rule. Although he could not tell that these representations would be decisive, Rodgers pointed out that it was often easier for governments to modify their policies in response to what should essentially remain confidential exchanges than to appear to bow to public protest. Consequently, according to the British official, the role of the UK was complementary to the initiative taken in the European Commission of Human Rights and to the activities of the International Red Cross. As he argued, one line did not exclude the other, but each increased the prospects of results.\footnote{Parliamentary Debates, Commons 1967-1968, Vol. 762, 1-11 April: Greek Political prisoners, 11/4/68, p. 1646-1667.}

2.6 The British arms sales policy to Greece remains the same

When Britain resumed diplomatic relations with the regime on 25 January 1968, the question of arms policy towards Greece was raised again. Gorham minuted that, since the nature of the junta would not apparently change in the short term, it would seem inappropriate to consider a more restricted policy, in view of the fact that Britain had defended Greece's continued membership in NATO and had resumed relations with the junta. As Gorham argued, after the 21 April coup, the British officials had been able to work more or less within the Foreign Secretary's guide-lines because they had not been faced with any major problem of decision-making, nor had they adopted a forward arms sales policy by authorizing Attachés to make approaches to the Greek authorities with a view to promoting British equipment.

Yet, according to the British official, individual firms, the Ministry of Defence, and the British Embassy in Athens were reporting that the Greek military services showed considerable interest in the purchase of British
equipment—particularly naval equipment. Furthermore, the Defence Supply Department had pointed out that, since the Greek forces made a contribution to the support of the right flank of NATO, an embargo on arms supplies would in time gravely damage Greece's ability to play a role in the alliance.

Gorham agreed that, if Departments were to be authorised to pursue vigorously the sale of such arms and equipment as could be regarded as a reasonable requirement by a NATO ally, the Greek authorities could abuse such requirement and use it for oppressing the civilian population of Greece, a development that would conflict with the major part of British policy, which was to see democracy restored to the country. On the other hand, however, he argued that there was no reason why the Departments should not be instructed to submit to the personal consideration of Ministers all the cases that could attract strong criticism within the House of Commons.

In conclusion, Gorham proposed that the Ministers should authorise a modification of the Greek arms policy, such as introducing a NATO clause, without taking the matter to the Cabinet. He also added that it would be desirable if the Departments could secure the authority of Ministers to approve arms exports applications as a general rule, unless a major item of equipment was involved, in which case the whole question would be submitted first.

For his part, Lucas argued that it was not realistic to expect that, in the aftermath of the South African arms affair and in the light of the political feeling on the subject in Britain, Ministers would accept any change in the current policy on the export of arms to Greece. Furthermore, it was his opinion that the existing instructions—interpreted in the way the British officials had been interpreting them—covered adequately the cases that had arisen or were likely to arise in the near future.73

At the same time, the British government was reluctant to take the initiative in sending officials from London to Greece to explore more fully the potentialities of the Greek market. According to John Beith, quite apart from the fact that a move of that kind could give rise to public and Parliamentary criticism, there was also the risk that the activities of the officials would

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prompt the Colonels to order equipment of which the supply would not be permitted by the Ministers.

On the other hand, the Foreign Office had no objection to naval sales to Greece, because these seemed to present the best opportunities not only from the point of view of Greek needs, but also from that of British own political requirements. John Beith, therefore, instructed Sir Michael Stewart to report whether the Greek authorities, after the developments of 13 December 1967, were reconsidering their priorities and changing the allocations of funds to the various Services.74

74 PRO, FCO 9/205, Doc 78: Confidential, John Beith to Sir Michael Stewart, 14 2 68: Greece-Arms policy.
Chapter VI:

21 April – 15 August 1968
1. USA: Disputes

1.1 The Administration postpones decision on MAP resumption to Greece

As we have mentioned, the Johnson Administration, when asked, used to state that the US policy on the question of the arms supplies to Greece was under review.¹ Meanwhile, however, the American officials continued to discuss, at the highest level, the question of whether they should lift their prohibition on the shipment of some of the suspended items.

More particularly, the Senior Interdepartmental Group decided to forward the motion on the resumption of deliveries of selected MAP items to Greece, recommending the release of a number of items -valued at about $5 million- including a minesweeper, a number of used trainers, and other non-combatant aircraft. Furthermore, SIG proposed that the US should obligate the balance of FY 68 MAP grant funds to the Greek program before 1 July, and without advising the Greek regime until then.²

The question of MAP suspensions was also the subject of the discussion Talbot had with Katzenbach, Brewster, and Battle on 22 April in London. Katzenbach commented that the problem he saw in the Greek situation was that the Greek regime was not interested in making genuine progress towards constitutionalism. The junta leaders might be prepared to say that they were taking actions for the purpose of façade, but Katzenbach wanted to make sure that it was the junta’s façade not theirs. For that reason, he authorised Talbot to continue to push the junta on the road back to political

normalcy, quietly stating that the reestablishment of the traditional warmth in Greek-US relations would depend on the return to normal democratic processes\(^3\).

Meanwhile, Rockwell visited Greece, primarily to deal with the BALPA exercise, but also to gain a first hand impression of the Greek situation. He exchanged views with the Embassy officials and with a number of Greeks, while he, for his part, exposed the US policy to the principal junta leaders, favoring a return to constitutionalism in Greece.\(^4\) His opinion, as expressed later to Washington, was that, although the situation was well under control, the junta’s fundamental problem was their feeling of insecurity, since they had no major support aside from the army and, perhaps, the businessmen.\(^5\) Once the junta’s version of the constitution was produced and the plebiscite took place, Rockwell argued that the US would have a better picture of what the regime’s real aims might be.\(^6\)

On 17 May 1968, Clark Clifford, the Secretary of Defence, made a forceful statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the desirability of providing military assistance to Greece.\(^7\) Katzenbach expressed his agreement with Clifford during the questioning of the Under Secretary at the National Press Club luncheon on 21 May.\(^8\) In the same day, Katzenbach also submitted to the President a Memorandum on the US military supply policy towards Greece, arguing in favour of lifting the prohibition on shipment of some of the suspended items. In particular, he stressed the importance of Greece as a NATO member, defending the Alliance’s southern flank. He also underlined the significance of the US military facilities there for maintaining

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\(^3\) NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol GR-USA – 1-1-68: Secret, Memorandum of Conversation 7083, 22/4/68: United States-Greek relations.
\(^4\) NA, RG 59, Box 2150, Pol 5-15 GR – 4-1-68: Secret, State telegram 164979 to Rome, by Rusk, 16/5/68.
\(^5\) NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol GR-USA – 1-1-68: Secret, Memorandum of Conversation between N. Tezel and S. W. Rockwell, M. Draper, 22/5/68: Situation in Greece.
\(^6\) NA, RG 59, Box 2146, Pol 1 GR – 1-1-67: Memorandum of Conversation, 22/5 68: Greece; NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 3-1-68: Confidential, Memorandum of Conversation between P. Fergo and S. W. Rockwell, L. M. Dunn, 27/5/68: developments in Greece.
\(^7\) NA, RG 59, Box 1691, Def 19-8 US-GR – 1-1-68: Secret, Memorandum for the President, by Katzenbach, 21/5/68: Military supply policy towards Greece.
\(^8\) NA, RG 59, Box 1691, Def 19-8 US-GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, Memorandum of Conversation, between C. Palamas, S. G. Stathatos, and S. W. Rockwell, L. M. Dunn, 24 5 68: Suspension of military Assistance; Constitutional developments in Greece.
the US position in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly in light of the increased Soviet activity there.

Under normal circumstances, Katzenbach would recommend to proceed with providing the military assistance to Greece. Yet, the Under Secretary feared that a few Members of the Senate and the House—Senators Clark and Pell, and Congressmen Fraser, Don Edwards and Henry Reuss—who were opposed to any assistance to the Greek Colonels might decide to take their dissatisfaction on the Aid Bill. As Katzenbach argued, important though the Greek MAP might be, it was not worth paying the price of no Aid Bill at all. Consequently, he did a detailed analysis of the effect on the Aid Bill of even a partial resumption of the shipments of suspended items, while at the same time—in order to be prepared should they decide to go ahead—he authorised obligating the balance of the FY 68 grant MAP funds for the Greek program. Since they would not be informing the Greek regime of that decision, and since the items to be supplied were of general utility, Katzenbach argued that they could always reprogram them to another MAP recipient, should the USA decide not to relax the restrictions on Greece.

In accordance with the above, the State Department and the Secretary of Defence sent a joint telegram on 29 May 1968 to USCINCEUR authorizing the funding and the obligation of $41.7 million of the FY 68 Greek MAP on unilateral US basis, without informing the Greeks of the FY 68 ceiling or of the FY 69 MAP requested of the Congress. At the same time, however, they stressed that there should be no resumption of joint planning, nor any discussion of the major end items. The Chief of JUSMAGG obtained also permission to discuss with the Greeks on long-range language and on the technical training, while keeping interchanges to minimum—and with the understanding that the decision had been reached on contingency basis.

These instructions were recalled when the HNDGS asked JUSMAGG for an up-to-date MAP data, in order to meet the end of July NATO deadline.

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10 NA, RG 59, Box 1690, Def-Def Affairs GR-USA — 1-1-67: Secret, Defence telegram 1243 to USCINCEUR, 29/5/68.
for submission of the 1969-1973 force plans. Accordingly, General Eaton was authorized to discuss the content of FY 68 MAP. In the same way, he obtained permission to extend discussions regarding the FY 69 MAP as required, including the program level and the item content. The American officials concluded that this information was for planning purposes only, and did not imply any change in the US policy on deliveries. Should any questions arise concerning the supply of the embargoed items, the Chief of JUSMAGG was instructed to inform the junta that the US policy regarding the deliveries of selected items under suspension remained under continuing review.

On 19 June 1968, the NSC held a meeting on NATO, which underlined—among other subjects—the Soviet threat in the Mediterranean, and recommended increased surveillance. With regard to Greece, Clifford proposed the resumption of US military aid to Greece, since the importance of the American military position there had increased as a result of the Soviet presence in the Mediterranean, which was active and, according to the Secretary, should be carefully watched. The President then asked for comments on the issue of resuming military aid to Greece: Under Secretary Katzenbach, the Vice President Hubert Humphrey, and the Director of the CIA Richard Helms agreed with Clark Clifford.

In the following day, however, after reviewing the likely effect on the Aid Bill, particularly in the House, of even a partial resumption of shipments of suspended military items to Greece, Battle and Katzenbach came to the conclusion that they should not move on any additional major MAP items at the time. Much of the opposition to the concept of any assistance for Greece under the military regime stemmed mainly from a group of liberal Democrats, who normally supported Foreign Aid. Consequently, Katzenbach argued that it would not be prudent to antagonize them at the time the Aid Bill was being debated. After action on the Aid Bill, Katzenbach promised to review the

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13 LBJ Archives, Box 2, NSC Meeting, Vol. 5, Tab 70, – 6-19-68: Secret, Memorandum for the Record, 19/6/68: Summary of NSC Meeting on NATO.
question, keeping in mind the US national interests and the developments in Greece.  

Summing up, therefore, the officials in Washington once again decided to postpone the resumption of the suspended deliveries. As Rockwell informed the Greek Chargé d' Affaires in Washington, the US MAP policy would be reexamined after the September 29 plebiscite in Greece, and the completion of the Congressional action on the Aid Bill, which was estimated to finish by the time of the plebiscite.

1.2 The State Department's line on the question of civil liberties in Greece

The question of the political prisoners concerned the officials in Washington mainly because it affected their decisions regarding the suspended military items to Greece. Quite characteristic of that attitude was the discussion between Talbot and Katzenbach, Battle, Brewster, when the question of the political prisoners in Greece was raised only in the end of the second session on 22 April 1968, and in connection with the SIG decision to release selected MAP items. More particularly, Under Secretary Katzenbach referred only to the house arrest of the two former Prime Ministers, and authorized Talbot to describe to the junta the domestic problems created for the USA, both in Congress and with the public opinion, by their continued detention.

Meanwhile, the question that interested the public opinion and some members of the Congress was the treatment of the political prisoners by the military regime in Greece. The official line of the State Department towards the enquiring Members of Congress was that, although they were unable to

16 NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol GR-USA – 1-1-68: Secret, Memorandum of Conversation 7083, 22/4/68: United States-Greek relations.
form any definite judgement, their own tentative conclusion was that there had been instances of mistreatment of prisoners in individual cases, but such treatment was not widespread nor done with the sanction and the direction of the Greek regime. They also added that the US Government had made a number of representations to the Greek regime for the resolution of the prisoners’ cases in accordance with the due process of law, with the positive result that more than two-thirds of the political prisoners taken into custody since the coup had been released, including Andreas Papandreou.

Nevertheless, further reports, supplying information that torture was employed to the military prisoners in Greece, continued to arrive. As a result, more Members of Congress started to evince concern over the subject in various ways. For example, Donald Fraser (Democrat, Minnesota) addressed a speech in the Congress on 27 May 1968, while the Senators Fulbright, and Claiborne Pell wrote to the State Department asking for information. Moreover, on 1 August 1968, Fraser, Don Edwards, and eight others saw the Deputy Under Secretary Charles Bohlen in order to present their views on the American policy towards Greece. In particular they proposed the suspension of all MAP to Greece, and a reassessment of the US attitude towards that country, since the State Department viewed events in Greece in terms of ‘cold war ideology,’ and —according to Edwards— it was permeated with pro-junta feelings.

On the other hand, Rostow, in an outburst of annoyance for the pressure the State Department received, commented that, although he sympathized with

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17 NA, RG 59, Box 2154, Pol 29 GR – 1-1-68: W. B. Macomber to Frank Thompson, 10 5 68; NA, RG 59, Box 2155, Pol 29 GR – 7-1-68: Lucius D. Battle to Claiborne Pell, 10 7 68; NA, RG 59, Box 2155, Pol 29 GR – 7-1-68: Confidential, State telegram 200611 to Thessaloniki, by Rusk, 11/7/68; NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol 1 GR-USA: S. W. Rockwell to Dr. A. Theologides, 29/7/68.
18 For example: NA, RG 59, Box 2155, Pol 29 GR – 7-1-68: Confidential, Thessaloniki telegram 285, by Hamilton, 10 7 68; NA, RG 59, Box 2155, Pol 29 GR – 7-1-68: Confidential, Thessaloniki telegram 291, by Hamilton, 16/7/68.
19 NA, RG 59, Box 2150, POL15-1Gr – 6-1-68: J. W. Fulbright to Dean Rusk, 28 5 68.
20 Clairborne Pell compiled a list of twenty-six documents and newspaper articles supplying information and descriptions of the torture of political prisoners in Greece since the military coup of April 21, 1967 until May 1968. [NA, RG 59, Box 2155, Pol 29 GR – 10-1-68: Clairborne Pell to William Handley (Acting Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern & South Asian Affairs), 2/10 68: Information on the torture of political prisoners in Greece since the military coup of April 21, 1967]
21 NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol 1 GR-USA: Limited Official Use, Memorandum of Conversation 10911, between C. E. Bohlen, R. S. Dillon, and D. M. Fraser, Don Edwards, etc., 1 8 68: US Policies towards Greece.
those who would like to see democracy in Greece, he still had not heard anyone make a practical proposal as to how they could achieve this. He argued that the assumptions that the US could easily bring about a change of government in Greece were not proposals that guaranteed success. The State Department’s assessments were that the junta was firmly entrenched and would yield little to outside pressure. Moreover, although the Greek population became increasingly restless, the Johnson Administration had still no evidence of any coalescence of forces that could unseat the junta. Therefore, Rostow concluded that, having been up and down that subject continuously for the previous year, the Department had reluctantly decided that their best bet was to go on applying what pressure they could in the full knowledge that nothing they did short of an unlikely military intervention would change the regime’s course very radically.22

22 LBJ Archives, Box 8-2, WHCF: CO 94 Greece: Confidential, Memorandum for Mike Manatos, by W. W. Rostow, 5/6/68.
2. UK: A year after the coup

2.1 Constantine meets Harold Wilson

On 20 April 1968, Constantine met with Tom Driberg, MP [for Barking], and member of the Executive Committee of the Labour Party, and expressed once again the hope he had entertained since 24 October 1967 to have a private meeting with Harold Wilson in London. Tom Driberg urged the Foreign Secretary to accept, stressing that the King was badly in need of wise advice, especially because he seemed more isolated than before. Alan Davidson also recommended that they should not try to discourage Constantine from coming to Britain. John Beith added that in the current circumstances the possibility of having the King in London briefly would not be apt to excite much interest.

For his part, Harold Wilson commented that he did not see at all why Constantine should not come, since 'after all he is not the Greek regime.' It was finally agreed, therefore, that Lord Mountbatten, the personal ADC to the Queen, would bring the Greek King to No. 10 on 27 May 1968 for a drink with Harold Wilson. The meeting was also agreed to be private, enabling the Prime Minister to give the King a completely frank and personal advice.

The conversation between Constantine and Harold Wilson lasted nearly three hours. The Prime Minister repeated that the British government's attitude towards Greece was to promote a return to democracy in the country by exerting discreet and direct pressure on the regime. When he was asked to persuade the Americans to act jointly with Britain in bringing strong pressure to bear on the regime, Harold Wilson did not commit himself, arguing that the US government had brought considerable pressure on the regime already, and in any case they were in a somewhat closer relationship with it than the British.

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Harold Wilson, however, assured the King that what he had told him would reach the President’s ear.

In relation to Constantine’s attitude towards the regime, Harold Wilson advised the young King to walk on a tightrope, avoiding any commitments that could prove embarrassing and damaging, but without holding himself too aloof. In conclusion, the British Prime Minister ensured that Constantine could be confident of the British government’s support. He also expressed the hope that the King would feel free to discuss his problems with the British Ambassador in Rome, and keep in regular touch with Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh, who enjoyed the complete confidence of the Foreign Secretary.5

Michael Stewart’s meeting with the King on 30 May was in fact a courtesy call and lasted only for half an hour, since -as Davidson argued- there was not a great deal to be added to what the Prime Minister himself had said at his long meeting with Constantine on Monday. For his part, the Foreign Secretary said that he would think over the King’s suggestions, and consult with the US Administration about the possible ways of bringing pressure to bear on the regime.6

In sum, as the Prime Minister told Michael Stewart later, the talk had been useful and had given some encouragement to the King, who seemed ‘a very lonely young man, totally bereft of any reliable advice and therefore potentially exposed to unreliable advisers.’ It would be in the British interests to keep in close touch with Constantine and indeed to give him some support, since his broad purposes for his country seemed to harmonize with the British views.7

In connection with the question of publicity, Harold Wilson and Constantine agreed that, while there was no need to issue any formal notice about their meeting, press enquirers could be told that the King had called on the Prime Minister for an informal conversation, on the grounds that it was entirely natural for the King and the Prime Minister to meet during

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5 PRO, FCO 9/133: Secret & Guard, Speaking Notes, Background, & Record of a conversation between the Prime Minister and His Majesty the King of the Hellenes at No. 10, Downing Str., 27/5/68.
6 PRO, FCO 9/133, Doc 119: Secret, A. E. Davidson to the Private Secretary, 29 5 68: Secretary of State’s call on the King of Greece, 3.00 p.m., 30 May; PRO, FCO 9/133, Doc 120: Personal & Secret, D. J. D. Maitland to Sir M. Stewart, 30/5/68.
Constantine's short visit to London. Furthermore, Sir Michael Stewart in Athens was instructed to take an early opportunity of telling Pipinelis that the King had a private and informal conversation with the British Prime Minister, adding also that these talks were a natural extension of the idea of occasional meetings with Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh, which Pipinelis had welcomed.

With regard to the Americans, the British officials argued that, although they would not prefer to give the Americans a copy of the whole record as it stood, there would be advantage in letting them know generally what had passed between the two men, since the British might well wish to be in touch with the USA in the future about what they would hear from the King through that channel. Therefore, Sir Edward Tomkins, the British Counsellor in Washington, was instructed to give an oral account of the talk to the State Department, together with a verbatim extract from the record, which referred to the Prime Minister's undertaking to the King to bring the latter's views to the attention of the President.

Meanwhile, in preparation for the Foreign Secretary's office meeting on 18 June, a working paper was submitted, which referred also to the question of whether Britain should try to promote a more active role for the King. According to the drafters of the paper, the answer to that was a heavily qualified yes. As they argued, the King should remain in the wings for the time being, as the Prime Minister had advised him when Constantine was in London. Yet, it was their opinion that they should take more into account than they had been doing in the months following Constantine's unsuccessful counter-coup - the possibility that he would have an important role to play in the prospective return to democracy in Greece.

Consequently, the British officials proposed that the UK should take advantage of the King's patent desire to have British advice, and build on the link that had been established when Constantine saw the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary in May. By keeping in touch with him in that way, the

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8 PRO, FCO 9/133: Secret & Guard, Speaking Notes, Background, & Record of a conversation between the Prime Minister and His Majesty the King of the Hellenes at No. 10, Downing Str., 27/5/68.
9 PRO, FCO 9/133, Doc 112: Secret, John Beith to Sir Michael Stewart, 30/5/68.
10 PRO, FCO 9/133, Doc 113: Secret, John Beith to E. E. Tomkins, 30/5/68.
drafters argued that Britain could help to ensure that he would preserve his ability to play a useful role in Greece.\textsuperscript{11}

In discussing the question of the Greek King at the Foreign Secretary’s meeting on 18 June 1968, Michael Stewart said that, since Papadopoulos and at least some of his colleagues evidently wanted the King to return to Greece, Constantine had a card in his hand and seemed disposed to play it quite sensibly. In his turn, Sir Michael Stewart pointed out that the King’s recent visit to London had had a good effect in Athens. Provided that he could tell Pipinelis something about the British contacts with the King, Sir Michael Stewart estimated that the effect on the junta would be beneficial, since the voice and the potential influence of the UK in Greece was disproportionately large.\textsuperscript{12}

A telegram was sent, therefore, to Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh informing him of this discussion and instructing him to arrange to get in touch with Constantine -without waiting for the King to take the initiative- and draw him out on the subject of the new constitution.\textsuperscript{13} The same instructions were sent to Rome some four weeks later, including also a message from the Prime Minister, which indicated Wilson’s continuing personal interest in the matters that he and the King had discussed, with particular reference to the constitutional position.\textsuperscript{14}

Certain incidents, however, caused the Foreign Office to re-examine their attitude towards the Greek King. On 25 June 1968, in reply to a supplementary question by John Fraser, Harold Wilson referred briefly to his meeting with Constantine, revealing also that he had discussed with the young monarch matters of political importance, like the British attitude towards the Greek regime and the human rights issue.\textsuperscript{15} That statement caused unfavourable reactions from a number of persons both inside and outside the junta, on the

\textsuperscript{11} PRO, FCO 9/166, Doc 107: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to the Private Secretary, 14/6 68: Greece.
grounds that it had weakened the King's position and had strengthened the opponents of the monarchy.\textsuperscript{16}

In reply to these protests and estimations, the British Ambassador in Athens claimed that, since by the regime's own statements Constantine was still the King of Greece, there was no impropriety if he chose to discuss certain domestic matters with the British Prime Minister as a friend and on a personal basis; the British Ambassador in Rome also added that Harold Wilson had to take account of the state of Parliamentary opinion in Britain about Greece in what he had said.\textsuperscript{17} Yet, the attacks against the British Prime Minister continued in the Athens press, while the Greek newspaper \textit{Estia}, in particular, reverted on 6 July to the complaint that Harold Wilson's interview with the King constituted an attempt to draw Constantine into a secret conspiracy against the Greek government.\textsuperscript{18} Some members of the junta tended to believe these rumours, while Rouphogalles, the Director of KYP, had even got hold of the story that the King was going to Crete with British and American help in order to overthrow the Papadopoulos government.

In view of these developments, Sir Michael Stewart suggested that any further meetings between Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh and the King would better be postponed for a few weeks to let the dust settle in Athens. As the British Ambassador pointed out, any UK contacts with the King would also cause further political trouble that could jeopardize the British commercial interests in Greece. Sir Michael Stewart hoped, therefore, that the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary would agree that for the time being it was in the interest both of Britain and of Constantine that they should not be known or thought to be in contact with each other.\textsuperscript{19}


\textsuperscript{18} PRO, FCO 9/134, Doc 161: Restricted, A. M. Goodenough to J. E. C. Macrae, 11 7 68.

Consequently, the Foreign Office sent holding instructions to Rome on 9 June 1968.\textsuperscript{20} Nevertheless, further consultations over the constitution and over the attitude Constantine should adopt continued to take place between the British Embassy in Rome and the young King in conditions of complete secrecy.\textsuperscript{21} By August, however, the British officials decided to pause for some time these meetings. As Sir Michael Stewart had argued, it would not be possible to keep such contacts secret for long. Having got clearance from the Prime Minister, therefore, John Beith instructed the British Embassy in Rome to take no initiative to contact the King, at least until the Greek referendum on the constitution on 29 September 1968.\textsuperscript{22}

2.2 Reviewing the British policy towards Greece

Following the Foreign Secretary’s talk with Constantine in May 1968, Michael Stewart decided to review the current British policy over Greece soon after his return from Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{23} Accordingly, Sir Michael Stewart was recalled to London for consultation, and a Working Paper on Greece was prepared for the Foreign Secretary’s office meeting, which was scheduled to take place on 18 June 1968.

The paper had the general approval of Sir Michael Stewart, William Rodgers, Lord Hood, and John Beith. The drafters firstly reconfirmed that the regime was in full effective control of the country, because the average Greek feared above all a repetition of the civil war that had erupted twenty years ago. Furthermore, according to the drafters, the only organization that might be able

\textsuperscript{20} PRO, FCO 9/134, Doc 154: Secret, FO telegram 2015 to Rome, from Michael Stewart, 9/7/68.
\textsuperscript{23} PRO, FCO 9/172, Doc 29: Secret & Guard, FO telegram 872 to Athens, from John Beith, 7/6/68.
to organize resistance in the current circumstances was the Communist Party, but it was dispersed, disorganized, and inert to match the non-intervention policy of Greece's communist neighbours and the Soviet Union.

It was also reconfirmed that the Greek Army was the decisive factor. The only people who could usurp control of it from the current government, and thus be able to seize power, were the middle grade officers who had so far been willing to support the military junta, but of whom many were known to favour much tougher policies than the Papadopoulos government was following. The British drafters, therefore, proposed that the UK should try to move the Papadopoulos government in the direct they wished, not to topple it. As they reasoned, although the sincerity of Papadopoulos and his immediate colleagues in the Greek government in what they said about the return to democracy was open to question, their being more than a year in power had increasingly tempered their thinking with realism, and they were certainly not impervious to influence from outside.

In consequence, the British officials pointed out that the policy of speaking their minds directly to the regime yielded good, though limited, results; therefore, that was the most effective line of action open to the UK, and could be applied without serious damage to the British own commercial and other national interests. The only question was whether the UK applied the optimum amount of pressure. According to the British officials, the Greek Ministers had been surprisingly receptive to the approaches made to them so far, and therefore gave the impression that the junta could absorb more criticism and frank talk, provided of course that it was delivered directly through the British Ambassador, thus eliminating any possibility of misunderstanding.

On the other hand, as the drafters of the paper argued, the force of what the Ambassador said would be diminished if he protested too often. Furthermore, the drafters concurred that the UK did not have an entirely free hand in determining the subject matter of their representations, since there were some points, for example the treatment of detainees, which HMG should take up regularly for Parliamentary reasons, while individual cases had also to be given special attention. Yet, the drafters confirmed that the main force of the British representations should be concentrated on the issue that mattered most:
namely, on persuading the Greek regime to fix and stick to a definite timetable for the whole process of restoring democracy in the country, taking tolerably satisfactory measures to that end.

Another question of policy was whether Britain should encourage the US government to apply more pressure. The drafters of the working paper replied in the negative, arguing that as the Americans had recently informed them, they were not prepared to go further than suspending US heavy military equipment to Greece. Consequently, it was proposed that Britain should only coordinate her tactics more closely with the Americans in applying political pressures on the junta. As the drafters argued, although the UK needed not coordinate every move, it would be useful to compare notes with the US more often and more fully. In that way, the British officials would be able not only to enlist American help, if necessary, in persuading some of the other NATO allies to play a more effective part, but also to ensure that the US Administration was exerting its political influence as helpfully as possible.24

In conclusion, William Rodgers minuted separately that HMG had three tasks. In the first place, they should push the current regime in Greece as far and as fast as they could towards the restoration of representative government. Secondly, they should look after their own continuing interests meanwhile, especially in relation to trade. Finally, they should make known, especially in Parliament, the extent of their disapproval of the current regime without prejudicing either the British influence on it or the continuing British interests in the area.

As Rodgers pointed out, the UK had managed to walk that tightrope pretty successfully over the previous year. The Ambassador's representations had had some effect in putting the Greek junta into the preparation of a constitution and towards the holding of a referendum, while it appeared — according to Rodgers- that they had convinced the majority of Members in the House of Commons that the British government were deeply concerned with the issue, doing what they could behind the scenes. Finally, as far as trade was concerned, the British official argued that apparently the UK had not damaged its prospects so far, for example in the manner in which the Swedes had done.

24 PRO, FCO 9/166, Doc 107: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to Private Secretary, 14 6 68: Greece.
Nevertheless, William Rodgers warned the Foreign Secretary that he might face two difficult periods in future, when the Constitution would be published in Greece in July and when the House would return at the beginning of November. Therefore, the Foreign Secretary was urged to consider what alternative courses they might follow on these two occasions.

Rodgers suggested that it might be worth pursuing the whole NATO question. The view previously taken, which was still endorsed by the Americans, was that any criticism of Greece in NATO might lead to a decision on her part to leave. On the other hand, Sir Michael Stewart pointed out that the regime was seriously concerned with the Communist threat in the Balkans, and therefore attached importance to its NATO link. Therefore, provided that any formal action and discussion would be avoided, it was Rodgers' opinion that the UK could arrange concerted but separate representations by the leading NATO powers, or inspire the Secretary-General of NATO to visit Athens and voice informally but vigorously the concern felt in the Alliance.25

The Foreign Secretary was attracted by these proposals. It was agreed, however, that they should first consult Sir Bernard Burrows about the idea of an intervention by Brosio. Michael Stewart felt also sure that the UK should continue with its current policy of direct representations to the regime. He argued that they should have to hold to that line for the time being in dealing with any criticism, while the only plan for effective additional pressure could be the proposals mentioned above.26

Consequently, a letter was sent to Athens on 20 June 1968, which reflected the conclusions of the Foreign Secretary's review and gave instructions to Sir Michael Stewart to match them. More particularly, Michael Stewart instructed the Ambassador to be guided by the following objectives. In the first place, Britain aimed at promoting conditions of stability in Greece, and a return to constitutional rule and democratic liberties. Secondly, she wished to preserve as far as possible the military effectiveness of Greece as a NATO ally. The third objective was to protect generally the British subjects and the British interests, and in particular to pursue the British commercial interests in the

country. Finally, the UK aimed at retaining the ability to influence the junta in matters of foreign policy, i.e. Cyprus.

The first objective was in a sense the overriding one. Greece in her present state constituted a weakness in the Western alliance. According to Michael Stewart, it was their interest and their duty to try to repair that weakness, while the strength of parliamentary and public opinion in the UK made it essential that they should not only try to contribute to the restoration of a healthy democracy in Greece but also to be seen trying. Therefore, the Foreign Secretary stressed that they should pursue the first goal with due regard to the other three objectives and to the realities of the situation in Greece.

Regarding tactics, Michael Stewart argued that it would be useful if the main NATO allies —namely, the USA, the FRG, and Italy— were also persuaded to apply effective pressure directly on the junta, especially if snags and delays arose from the regime over carrying out its timetable. In the meantime, the Foreign Secretary authorised the Ambassador to make the British views plain to the Greek Ministers trying to exert the maximum influence. As Michael Stewart informed the OPD Committee a few days later, Britain retained a disproportionately great influence in Athens, thus being in fact almost uniquely well placed to affect the thinking of the coup leaders. He also added that in practice the UK had been doing more than any other government in that direction, with the US a good second and the rest of the field almost out of sight.

In connection with the second objective, Michael Stewart accepted that, except for new naval construction, Britain had apparently little prospect of making an important contribution to the improvement of the equipment of the Greek armed services. Regarding the third objective, he acknowledged that the Greek market was of significance to the British exporters. Therefore, it was obviously important that the UK should maintain a tolerably smooth working relationship with the junta, in order to hold or -better still- increase the British share of the Greek market.

Michael Stewart believed that the UK could do that without running counter to their principles or neglecting the pursuit of their first objective. The Ambassador, therefore, was instructed to make every effort to promote British
exports to Greece, subject only to two inhibitions: The first applied to certain
arms, while the second inhibition consisted in the need to avoid any action that
would suggest that Britain had ceased to work for a return to constitutional rule
and a restoration of democratic liberties. Michael Stewart realized that from the
point of view of export promotion it might sometimes be desirable to do things
that would better not be done from the political point of view. The Foreign
Secretary, however, was prepared to take some political risks in order to secure
definite and important benefits to the British export drive.

Finally, with regard to the fourth objective, Michael Stewart stressed that
the Greek foreign policy was a field in which the regime could do well but also
easily affect the British interests. Therefore, Sir Michael Stewart was
authorised to be careful in pursuing it, keeping in close touch with Pipinelis,
who was playing a positive and important role in putting Greek-Turkish
relations on a good footing. As the Foreign Secretary argued, the coup of 21
April 1967 had one good result in leaving in control of Greece a government
that could take a relatively independent line over Cyprus and pay more regard
to Greece’s national interest than to Greek emotions.27

On the occasion of the NATO Ministerial meeting, which took place at
Reykjavik on 24-25 June 1968, the Foreign Office considered whether Britain
should proceed with Rodgers’ proposals. For his part, Sir Bernard Burrows saw
no overriding objections to the idea of parallel but concerted approaches by
some of the NATO Ambassadors in Athens, should that become necessary. On
the other hand, he felt that Brosio might be unwilling to undertake the
suggested task, unless a situation had arisen that would seem to him to justify
such a mission.28 It was finally decided that it would be premature to say
anything to Brosio or to the other NATO allies, since the circumstances that
might warrant putting that idea to them had not yet arisen.

On the other hand, Michael Stewart, acting on the conclusions of the 18
June meeting, raised to Rusk the question of close Anglo-American

27 PRO, FCO 9/166, Doc 109: Secret, Michael Stewart to Sir Michael Stewart, 20 6 68, PRO,
FCO 9/166, Doc 113: Confidential, Cabinet Memorandum by the Foreign Secretary, 2 7 68:
Greece.
28 PRO, FCO 9/166, Doc 114: Secret, Burrows to J. G. S. Beith, 2 7/68.
coordination in applying political pressure on the Greek regime. Furthermore, when he met Pipinelis on 21 June 1968, Michael Stewart made representations to him regarding the new constitution and the current form of government in Greece. Finally, the Foreign Secretary circulated to his colleagues in the OPD Committee a memorandum on the reviewed British policy towards Greece, which was in fact a repetition of the letter that had been sent to Sir Michael Stewart on 20 June 1968.

2.3 Wilson’s remark on the civil liberties in Greece

As Sir Michael Stewart had foreseen, the Amnesty International reports produced a period of new difficulties for the UK, given that Marreco was British and that the Amnesty had its headquarters in London. Yet, Harold Wilson’s unfortunate use of the word ‘bestialities’ in the House of Commons on 25 June 1968 went too far for the Greek authorities. On 1 July 1968, the British Embassy in Athens was notified by the representative of Metropolitan Cammell in Athens that, after the Prime Minister’s statement in the House of Commons, the Greek government had no choice but to call off all business under negotiation with Britain. Yet, as there was no official communication from the junta about the cancellation of contracts, Sir Michael Stewart refrained from confirming the report, fearing that any official enquiry might risk formalizing the position still further.

29 PRO, FCO 9/149, Doc 106: Confidential, Brief No. 10: Speaking Notes, NATO Ministerial Meeting, 24-25/6 68: Greece; PRO, CAB 148/35: Confidential, OPD (68) 13th Meeting, 12/7/68: Greece.
30 PRO, CAB 128 44: CC(68)33: Confidential, Conclusions of a meeting of the Cabinet, 27/6/68, p. 4: Greece.
31 PRO, FCO 9 166, Doc 113: Confidential, Cabinet Memorandum by the Foreign Secretary, 2/7/68: Greece; PRO, FCO 9/166, Doc 109: Secret, Michael Stewart to Sir Michael Stewart, 20/6/68.
34 PRO, PREM 13/2141 4W45: Confidential, Athens telegram 496, from Sir Michael Stewart, 1/7/68.
35 PRO, PREM 13/2141 4W45: Confidential, Athens telegram 500, from Sir Michael Stewart, 3/7/68.
The Foreign Office pointed out that this particular incident should not develop into a serious dispute that would result in serious damage to the British commercial interests. The line that the Foreign Office decided to take was to restate the British position in terms that had been used earlier without causing serious offence. At the same time they argued that it would be a mistake to say anything officially to the Greek regime at that stage, since this might only result in provoking an official response from them and a hardening of their position. \(^{36}\) Equally, the Foreign Office judged that it would have the wrong effect to hint that the Greek cancellation of contracts would be likely to change the British attitude on—for example— the possible supply of frigates and patrol boats for the Greek Navy. \(^{37}\)

Meanwhile, the reports that the junta had canceled British contracts gave rise to much parliamentary interest. \(^{38}\) Sir Michael Stewart, however, was of the opinion that Britain had a reasonable chance of getting through the current row about Wilson's reference to 'bestialities.' \(^{39}\) For their part, the Ministers were advised to avoid any further repetition, interpretation, or variation of the words 'bestialities,' 'barbarities,' or 'torture,' which would be offensive to the ears of the Colonels. \(^{40}\) Nevertheless, as Snodgrass commented a year later, the Prime Minister's remark resulted in a loss of British exports valued at about £5 million. \(^{41}\)


2.4 Britain agrees to proceed with the supply of ships to Greece

With regard to the supply of military equipment to Greece, the British Ministers directly concerned continued to follow the guidelines that had been agreed upon in the summer of 1967. In particular, under these guidelines, while continuing to make available to the junta non controversial items, the UK was also generally prepared to agree to orders that followed naturally on enquiries made before the coup, and considered favourably new orders where delivery would not take place for a long time. In practice, however, as Britain had not for some time been a principal supplier of arms to Greece, the Foreign Office had had no occasion to turn down any applications, and had only actually authorised the export to Greece of relatively insignificant items.\footnote{PRO, FCO 9/181, Doc 19: A. E. Davidson to John Beith, 5/7/68: Background Note for PM's reply to Mr. Neil Marten's question.}

Meanwhile, the Greek Navy had been considering for some time the purchase of new frigates from the British firms Vospers and Yarrows. In April, therefore, Vospers asked the British Ministry of Defence for formal approval to proceed with the negotiations for the sale of two frigates. In June, permission was asked for the sale of four patrol boats as well, worth £18 million. As Sir Michael Stewart argued to the OPD Committee on 12 July 1968, both types of ship would be likely to be earmarked for NATO purposes. Since the state of the Greek Armed forces from the NATO point of view was not good, the UK could serve in that way the interests of the Alliance as well as the British commercial interests. Furthermore, the long-standing links between the Royal Navy and the Royal Hellenic Navy would be strengthened, a development that was in the British long-term interests.

On the other hand, some Ministers pointed out that, if Britain did not supply the ships, she might need to increase her own defence effort in the Eastern Mediterranean. The orders might also merely fall to the French. Besides, Britain would always retain the right to cancel the necessary export licences. In sum, Harold Wilson commented that the negotiations between the junta and Vospers were still at such an early state that there was no prospect of the contract being signed before some time had elapsed. Meanwhile, he invited
the Foreign Secretary to warn the firm discreetly that ‘important considerations of policy’ were involved in the sale of warships to Greece.\textsuperscript{43}

In turn, the Foreign Office urged the Ministers not to raise in the House of Commons the question of the British attitude towards the supply of military equipment to Greece, because it would be embarrassing if that kind of information were brought out at that stage.\textsuperscript{44} The Foreign Office also agreed that it would be better not to obtain approval for a new set of guidelines, since it seemed very probable that the existing instructions would be simply reconfirmed or perhaps redrawn more severely, rather than made more liberal.\textsuperscript{45} The British officials wished particularly to avoid such a development, especially when they were informed that the Senior Officers of the Greek Navy were contemplating changing the affiliations of their Navy from American to British.\textsuperscript{46}

Meanwhile, from discussions the Foreign Office had had with the Ministry of Defence, it appeared that the signature of the contracts for the four patrol boats and the frigates was more imminent than it was thought at the OPD Committee of July 1968.\textsuperscript{47} Consequently, another meeting was held on 1 August, where the Foreign Secretary informed his colleagues of that development.

In discussion, the Ministers agreed that it was disturbing that the negotiations between Vospers and the Greek junta had reached such an advanced stage before the Committee had been consulted. Harold Wilson concluded therefore that, before a contract was to be signed in future, there should be time to see how the Greek regime was carrying out its promise to restore constitutional rule. He also invited the Ministers concerned to ensure that no publicity would be given to the Letter of Intent, which might be signed


\textsuperscript{44} PRO, FCO 9/149, Doc 103: Confidential, J. M. O. Snodgrass to Wilkinson, 26 4 68.

\textsuperscript{45} PRO, FCO 9/198, Doc 73: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to D. S. L. Dodson, 14 5 68: Sale of Military Equipment to Greece.

\textsuperscript{46} PRO, FCO 9/199, Doc 76: Confidential, A. E. Davidson to John Beith, 20 5 68.

\textsuperscript{47} PRO, PREM 13/2696: Confidential, Minutes: Michael Stewart to Harold Wilson, 26 7 68: Greece-Sale of Naval Vessels; PRO, PREM 13/2696: Confidential, Burke Trend to Harold Wilson, 31/7/68: Greece-Sale of Naval Vessels.
by the end of August. He also added that no warning should be given to Vospers for the time being. Finally, he asked for a report to be prepared for consideration after the summer holidays.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{48} PRO, CAB 148/35: Confidential, OPD (68) 15\textsuperscript{th} Meeting, 1/8 68: Greece-Sale of Naval Vessels.
Chapter VII:

15 August – 31 December 1968
1. USA: The Czechoslovakian crisis and its results

1.1 The US attitude as suggested by Talbot

On 1 November 1968, the American Ambassador in Athens submitted to the State Department a country policy appraisal, where he defined the objectives of the US attitude towards Greece. More particularly, according to Talbot, the USA should aim at bringing the military regime to restore progressively democratic government. In that way, the cooperative relations between Greece and the USA, the key Western European countries, and the NATO alliance would be insured, and the increased internal polarization in Greece would be avoided. Moreover, the Ambassador added that the American administration should seek, through the best available channels, to make clear to the supporters and opponents alike of the military regime that the commitment of the US government to the principles of democracy and freedom impelled the American officials to seek a return to comparable conditions on the part of a close ally like Greece. Finally, Talbot suggested that the USA should try to foster further improvement in the Greek-Turkish relations through the negotiation and the settlement of the Cyprus issue and of the outstanding bilateral differences over minorities.

With regard to security, Talbot proposed that the Administration should aim at maintaining political and military assistance relations with Greece, which were sufficiently responsive to the country’s legitimate needs. As he argued, the US should enable Greece to play a militarily effective role in NATO as an aid to countering further Soviet penetration of the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean. He also added that the American officials should insure that the USA retained continued access to valuable strategic facilities in Greece, and also decisive influence over the Greek military planning and compatibility in equipment between US and Greek forces. Ultimately, another US objective was to avoid a military confrontation between Greece and Turkey.

Talbot argued that, if the USA were to achieve the objective of bringing about the progressive reestablishment of genuine constitutional government in
Greece without damage to the American vital security interests, then certain changes in the American strategy were indicated. In particular, Talbot pointed out that they should complete the disassociation of the US military assistance program from their internal political objectives in Greece by resuming the full range of MAP deliveries. According to the Ambassador, the withholding of major items of equipment had little promise of further useful leverage, since it had become an increasingly sharp irritant in the American relations with the Greek regime, creating increased frustration in the Greek armed forces and undercutting their NATO effectiveness.

Secondly, the American Ambassador pointed out that the Papadopoulos government was in no mood to liquidate itself by ceding power to some transitional 'government of national unity,' or to jeopardize its continued control by a sudden leap forward to a popular democratic rule. Therefore, Talbot proposed that, for the time being, the most promising exercise of US influence, in coordination with the principal NATO allies (Britain, Italy, and the FRG), would be to urge the regime progressively to widen the areas of freedom in Greece, without seriously weakening its hold on political power. At the same time, Talbot cautioned the Administration against the contingency that the Papadopoulos government might stumble or fall because of internal dissension or inability to cope with the problems of Greece. To that end, he argued that some political assets should be kept in reserve, such as King Constantine and the former Prime Minister Karamanlis.

Under these circumstances, Talbot proposed that the US strategy would have to be two-fold. On the one hand, they should impress upon key members of the regime the difficulties they created for themselves, for the US, and for the other NATO partners by their continued violation of civil liberties and their failure to make convincing progress in returning to representative government. At the same time, the USA should keep the communication channels open with the youthful opponents of the regime who showed leadership potential, as well as with the academic, the intellectual, the cultural, and the journalistic worlds. According to Talbot, the central aim would be to demonstrate that the USA as a nation was still in tune with the thinking people of Greece, and thus it provided an alternative for the younger generation whose antagonism might otherwise incline them towards the extreme left.
With regard to the strategy the US should follow on security, Talbot estimated that the US military assistance, either in the form of grant aid or credit sales, should be the key to the American ability to retain the necessary cooperation and confidence of the Greek military leadership. Regardless of the level of material support the US could provide under MAP, Talbot argued that the USA should seek to insure that the resources available to the Greek Armed Forces were used wisely and in fulfillment of carefully conceived objectives within the NATO framework; a consideration that called for retention of the US maximum advisory role over the Greek military planning.

Yet, in view of the declining level of the American military grant-aid, Talbot stressed that the means available to the USA to prevail upon the regime to mitigate its repressive internal security were becoming limited, and consisted mainly of using the unquestioned psychological weight, which the Greeks attached to official and public attitudes towards them in the US, to apply persuasive pressure on the key power echelons of the regime. Talbot pointed out that the most convincing, and legitimate, grounds on which to base such representations were the serious prejudices to Greece’s image abroad, not the least in the US, and the resulting public and official opposition to the present Greek regime, which the continuation of these unnecessary oppressive policies generated.¹

1.2 The USA authorizes the partial resumption of MAP deliveries to Greece

On 20-21 August 1968, Warsaw Pact troops (Soviet, Polish, East German, Bulgarian and Hungarian) invaded Czechoslovakia and placed the country under Russian puppet rule. The Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev excused the invasion with the so-called ‘Brezhnev Doctrine:’ Communist governments were justified in using force to preserve communism where it was already established. NATO viewed these developments with alarm. The

American President canceled his trip to Moscow, and the arms race between the two powers once again sped on.

The military regime in Greece saw the opportunity for political gain, and offered to increase defense expenditures and place additional forces under NATO command.2 As Talbot pointed out, although the Czech crisis had not precipitated any dramatic or drastic action on the part of the Greek military, it had however provided the rationale for such an offer. On the other hand, Cleveland argued that, as a result of the cutback in US aid, Greece would have difficulty in achieving the NATO force goals, since she depended largely on US MAP for the modernization and replacement of major equipment.3

In sum, the situation, which had arisen as a result of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, had given new emphasis to the military/strategic, as opposed to the political, role of NATO. The general shift of the Soviet military weight into Eastern Europe had made the position of Greece and Turkey to the Southeast flank a source of new concern to the Alliance, while the danger of more trouble in the Middle East was still present. Meanwhile, as Katzenbach argued, the MAP suspension had become a sharp irritant in their bilateral relations with Greece. Consequently, according to the Under Secretary, the USA could ill afford to continue a policy that could —over time- lead the Colonels to reduce the US facilities in Greece and prohibit the easy access of the Sixth Fleet to Greek ports. Given also that the junta had kept its promise holding a constitutional referendum on 29 September 1968, the American officials in Washington started again to consider the possibility of resuming some of the MAP shipments to Greece.4

President Johnson concurred with Katzenbach’s recommendations.5 Due to the anticipated reactions on the Hill, the State Department officials argued for a partial rather than a full resumption of MAP deliveries at that time. In particular, after examining the suspended items —with particular

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3 NA, RG 59, Box 1593, Def 6 NATO – 10-1-68: Secret, US Mission NATO 5050, by Cleveland, 3/10/68.
attention to their NATO support role, to the storage costs, and to the danger of deterioration- the State Department, in consultation with the Pentagon, prepared a list of items for early release worth $19.8 million, which constituted roughly the two-fifths of the total value of all items under suspension. Waiting until the Congress had acted on the FY 69 Foreign Aid, the State Department then proceeded with Congressional consultation. For their part, the Congressional leaders, due to the recent Czech crisis, appeared to be more receptive to the idea of MAP resumption, since it strengthened NATO’s weak South flank.

As a result, on 18 October 1968, the American Embassy in Athens received a joint State-Defence telegram with instructions for the partial resumption of deliveries to Greece of the grant MAP items suspended since shortly after the coup of 21 April 1967. Talbot was authorised to inform the Greek regime of the American decision, adding however that the US attached no less importance to the return of representative government in Greece, but would undoubtedly be influenced by the junta’s progress towards constitutionalism in deciding whether to resume additional deliveries of suspended items. Finally, the American Ambassador was authorised to point out that it would be well if the matter of the partial resumption could be handled in a low-key manner with the press, and within the rationale of the buildup of the NATO defences.

Talbot acted on these instructions on 19 October 1968. The NATO representatives in Washington (British, French, German, Italian, Dane, Canadian, Belgian, Norwegian, and Turk) were finally informed on 21 October by the Greek Country Director, Herbert Brewster, who underlined that the decision was reached because of NATO considerations and due to the recent

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6 The released items were the following: two coastal minesweepers, five F-104-G replacement aircraft, twenty-two F-102 rehabilitated aircraft, three C-119 cargo aircraft with support and spares, twenty T-41 trainer aircraft with support and spares, ten T-133 trainer aircraft, 41,073 rounds of 90 mm. tank ammunition, and twelve 175 mm. guns. [NA, RG 59, Box 1691, Def 19-8 US-GR — 1-1-68: Secret, State telegram 257714 to Athens, priority, by Rusk, 18/10/68: US MAP Policy towards Greece]  
9 NA, RG 59, Box 1691, Def 19-8 US-GR — 1-1-68: Confidential, Athens telegram 7447, by Talbot, 19/10/68.
events in Central and Eastern Europe. With regard to the Greek political situation, the American official made clear that the US interest in seeing progress towards representative government in Greece remained as deep as ever, adding that the USA would continue to press for that. Finally, stress was placed on the fact that this was only a partial resumption.¹⁰

For his part, Talbot commented that with so many elements in Washington, Athens, and all the other NATO capitals being informed, they could expect a leak to occur shortly. Therefore, he suggested that it might be wise for the Department to arrange a press query and official reply as soon as the consultative process was concluded.¹¹ Accordingly, the 22 October edition of the *New York Times* had the following State Department's press guidance: 'During the course of the continuing review of the US military assistance policy for Greece, the need for strengthening the NATO Alliance, in the light of recent events in Central and eastern Europe, and the US desire for progress towards representative government has been taken into account.'¹²

### 1.3 Rusk's noncommittal meeting with Constantine

Having resumed normal working relations with the military leaders, the State Department tended to pay less attention to the King as a means of influencing the junta towards constitutionalism.¹³ For example, when the King asked for US guidance in connection with the Papadopoulos' overture to meet him secretly,¹⁴ the officials in Washington did not enter into particulars, but offered only the general advice that the King should be guided by his own good

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¹⁰ NA, RG 59, Box 1691, Def 19-8 US-GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, State telegram 259147 to Athens, priority, by Rusk, 21/10/68.
judgement. In an effort also to disassociate themselves as much as possible from the King -so as not to raise any suspicions to the junta- they informed the US Embassy in Rome that they would prefer to obtain a copy of the new draft constitution from sources other than King.\textsuperscript{15} Constantine did not fail to perceive that change, complaining that 'not one single American visitor' had stopped to pay respects to him in Rome.\textsuperscript{16}

As a result, Constantine took the initiative and indicated through the American Embassy in Rome that he would like to take advantage of Rusk's presence at the NATO Ministerial meeting in Brussels to have an 'informal, off-the-record chat' with him. Ambassador Talbot pointed out that, although he saw no substantive reason for a meeting between the Secretary and Constantine, he believed that it would serve the useful purpose of indicating that the USA was not solely and irrevocably committed to the Papadopoulos' government after all, but recognized a possible future role for the King. As the American Ambassador reasoned, such interpretation could be helpful and timely, particularly with respect to the attitudes of the smaller NATO partners, in the immediate aftermath of the US decision to resume the delivery of the heavy military equipment to Greece.\textsuperscript{17}

On the other hand, the officials in Washington pointed out that the meeting would be held at a time when some Greek exiles were attempting to rally anti-regime elements under the banner of the former Prime Minister Karamanlis.\textsuperscript{18} As the State Department reasoned, it would be quixotic of the USA to entertain any plan of fostering resistance abroad, given the disparate and conflicting personal and political views of the Greek exiles. Besides, as it was argued, such a course would encourage an even more repressive movement within the junta, undermining the US stated policy of nudging the regime towards representative government. Consequently, such a meeting could feed unwarranted speculation among the anti-regime exiles and also

\textsuperscript{15} NA, RG 59, Box 2150, Pol 5-15 GR - 4-1-68: Secret, State telegram 164979 to Rome, by Rusk, 16/5/68.
\textsuperscript{16} NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR - 3-1-68: Secret, London telegram 14263, by Bruce, 13/11/79: King's Aide de Camp comments on US Greek policy.
\textsuperscript{17} NA, RG 59, Box 2155, Pol 30 GR: Confidential, Athens telegram 7697, by Talbot, 5 11 68.
\textsuperscript{18} NA, RG 59, Box 2147, Pol 7 GR - 1-1-68: Secret, London telegram 13582, by Bruce, 17/10/68: Karamanlis plans to re-enter politics; NA, RG 59, Box 2155, Pol 30 GR: Secret. Rome telegram 9060, by Ackley, 22/10/68; NA, RG 59, Box 2155, Pol 30 GR: Secret. Paris telegram 22988, by Shriver, 26/10/68: Meeting with Karamanlis.
within the junta, which was always hypersensitive to any real or imagined efforts by the King to undermine it.

On balance, therefore, the State Department concluded that the Secretary should see the King in Brussels, but, for the protection of the King’s position, Pipinelis should also be present, or at least, invited. Furthermore, the State Department concluded that the American attitude to approaches in London or Paris seeking to involve the USA in actions against the Greek junta should be non-committal.

The meeting was finally arranged for 16 November in the American Embassy in Brussels, and the discussion ran on the steps to be taken for the return of—at least—a form of constitutional government in Greece. As Rusk observed, the US had acquired a certain amount of experience in that area, since there had been sixty-two coups in the world during his tenure as Secretary. According to Rusk, the first stage was the restoration of basic civil rights, fair administrations of justice, and a removal of the fear of oppression, which led to the second stage, which was not constitutionalism but also it was not totalitarian in its effect on individuals. As to the King’s return, Rusk could not advise Constantine either to return or not, since an eventual arrival of the King in Greece might entrap him implying assurances, which no one had given to Rusk.

1.4 The State Department refuses to intervene in the question of civil liberties in Greece

As the American officials expected, the new draft constitution was overwhelmingly approved in the referendum on 29 September. McClelland,

20 NA, RG 59, Box 2155, Pol 30 GR: Secret, London 13789, by Bruce, 24/10 68: Plytas calls again; NA, RG 59, Box 2156, Pol 30-2 GR: Secret, Information Memorandum 14459, by W.J. Handley to the Secretary, 31/10/68: Former Greek Prime Minister Karamanlis and possible anti-junta move.
21 NA, RG 59, Box 2155, Pol 30 Gr: Secret, Memorandum of Conversation 15159, between King Constantine, P. Pipinelis, and Secretary, R. B. Knight, F.E. Cash, 16 11 68: Secretary’s meeting with King Constantine.
however, acknowledged that by normal western criteria, the referendum was a parody of democratic procedures. Furthermore, the American officials recognised that the referendum in itself did not signify a major step forward, since the new constitution largely remained a promise rather than a fact, and the return to parliamentary democracy was still to be decided by the junta.

Meanwhile, the courts dealt very harshly with individuals involved in acts of political opposition or dissent. Heavy sentences were imposed on twenty-six of the pro-Papandreou demonstrators, and the week of 4 November witnessed the start of two major trials for anti-regime activities: the subversion trial of six prominent citizens in Thessaloniki, and the trial in Athens of Panagoulis, charged with conspiring to assassinate Papadopoulos.

In connection with the latter case, the American officials had concluded that intervention at that point was not desirable. They argued that if a death sentence were passed, they would consider the possibility of informally suggesting to the regime that its image abroad would benefit if they did not carry out the execution. They believed, however, that any efforts by foreign countries to exert pressure on the junta before the sentence was passed would result in a hardened attitude by the regime. As Rusk argued, Panagoulis had admitted attempting to kill the Prime Minister after all.

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23 NA, RG 59, Box 2150, Pol 5-15 GR – 9-1-68: Confidential, Intelligence Note 763, by T. L. Hughes, 27/9/68: Greece holds constitutional referendum on September 29; NA, RG 59, Box 2150, Pol 5-15 GR – 9-1-68: Confidential, Athens telegram 7196, by Talbot, 30 9 68: Results of constitutional referendum; NA, RG 59, Box 2150, Pol 5-15 GR – 9-1-68: Confidential, Intelligence Note 770, by T. L. Hughes, 2/10/68: Greek regime claims legitimacy on basis of constitutional referendum.
24 NA, RG 59, Box 2150, Pol 5-15 GR – 9-1-68: Confidential, Intelligence Note 873, by T. L. Hughes, 9/11/68: New Constitution to be promulgated 10 November.
25 NA, RG 59, Box 2150, Pol 5-15 GR – 9-1-68: Confidential, State telegram 269993 to Athens, by Rusk, 11/11/68.
Part VII: 15 August – 31 December 1968

2. UK: Having trouble in dealing with the Colonels

12.1 The British relations with the regime worsen

As we have mentioned, on 18 June 1968 the British officials had agreed that the UK should bring pressure on the Greek regime by means of concerted but separate approaches from the principal NATO allies or from the General-Secretary. The idea, however, was dropped. After the Czechoslovakian crisis, the other NATO powers were more reluctant to do anything that could tend to have a divisive influence in the Alliance. Furthermore, it was clear that the State Department did not wish to consider any kind of informal but concerted move for the following months, thus causing Sir Michael Stewart to wonder whether they 'would ever succeed in getting the Americans up to the jump.' Especially after Nixon's victory, and the associated election of Spiro Agnew as his Vice-President, the British officials agreed that the Americans would rather not join with them in an approach to Brosio on the lines envisaged. Finally, the British reluctance to act alone in that matter further increased when Sir Michael Stewart reported that the relations of the regime with the UK had become extremely bad as a result of the exchanges in the British parliament on 25 June 1968.

Meanwhile, the general situation in Greece was not quite favourable for the British at that stage. Encouraged by the results of the referendum and by the greater emphasis being put on NATO military preparedness in the wake of the Czechoslovakian crisis, the Greek regime had hardened its attitude considerably. According to Dodson, the government circles in Athens betrayed increased confidence, calculating that international developments

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1 PRO, FCO 9/166, Doc 140: Confidential, T. E. Bridges to A. E. Davidson, 21 8/68.
4 PRO, FCO 9/166, Doc 152: Confidential, Lord Hood to Sir Bernard Burrows, 16 10 68: Greece.
were generally working in their favour, especially since they could now rely on the tacit US support, clearly manifested by the partial resumption of American arms supplies to Greece. Furthermore, the Germans were pursuing an active trade policy -beating also Britain for an order of fast patrol boats- while the French and the Italians were pursuing export orders vigorously.

Against that background of growing acceptance, Britain was suspected of maintaining an uncompromisingly hostile attitude. As Dodson reported, the regime bitterly resented the British reaction to the result of the Greek referendum, despised Amnesty International, and was convinced that the BBC was unwaveringly belligerent. In short, London was still regarded as an island of opposition in an otherwise decreasingly hostile world.

That situation was having an adverse effect on British interests in Greece. According to Dodson, certain members of the Embassy had had difficulty in maintaining any contact with KYP, while, on the commercial side, only one contract of any significance had been won by a British firm in the previous few months. Dodson mentioned also delays over negotiations for contracts, and rejections of the Embassy's invitations, owing perhaps to the belief that if the Colonels could persuade Britain to alter her attitude, their international image would no longer be a cause of major concern to them.\(^5\)

An unforeseen event provided evidence of Papadopoulos' personal suspicion of the British attitude towards Greece. At its meeting in London on 4-5 November 1968, the International Transport Workers Federation decided to suspend the Greek Transport Unions from ITF membership, giving also certain instructions to the General Secretary of the ITF about instituting an international boycott on Greek shipping. The Greek Prime Minister, believing that the British authorities were behind the resolution, reacted strongly, stating that, unless the boycott were lifted, he would ban all British ships and aircraft from coming to Greece.\(^6\)

According to the British Chargé d'Affaires in Athens, the regime's suspicions were strengthened by the unfortunate coincidence that the boycott

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fell in the field of shipping, where British interests were in direct competition with Greek interests, thus causing many Greeks to believe that the UK would be glad to damage the Greek shipping trade in order to profit thereby.\(^7\) The Foreign Office, fearing that the regime might adopt towards the British exports the kind of restrictions that were in force against Sweden, instructed Dodson to deliver to Papadopoulos a personal message from Michael Stewart to the effect that the Federation was an International Trade Union Organisation, over which HM government had no control whatsoever. It was also stressed that the location of the Federation’s headquarters in London and the fact that its General-Secretary and his assistant were British implied no connection whatever with the British authorities.\(^8\)

In view of these developments, the Foreign Secretary held a meeting in his room on 22 November 1968.\(^9\) As it was argued, the British broad objectives of policy towards Greece remained as defined in the Foreign Secretary’s memorandum of 2 July. Nevertheless, due to the fact that the junta was no longer receptive to representations designed to persuade them to hasten the return to democratic rule, the British officials concluded that the British policy towards Greece should be based on the need to normalise Anglo-Greek relations for the time being, while avoiding to exert public pressure on the Colonels altogether.

As a first step to that direction, Sir Michael Stewart was instructed to seek a suitable opportunity to convey to Papadopoulos a message from the Foreign Secretary. Furthermore, the British officials agreed that the message should be accompanied by visible evidence of HM government’s intentions, giving pride of place to strictly British interests.

In the first place, they resolved to concur with Dodson’s suggestions\(^10\) and return a favourable answer to the junta’s request to send Greek policemen

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\(^7\) PRO, FCO 9/870, Doc 12: Confidential, D. S. L. Dodson to R. H. G. Edmonds, 12/11/68; PRO, FCO 9/870, Doc 17: Confidential, J.E.C. Macrae to John Beith, 14/11/68: Greece-The Secretary of State’s meeting with Sir Michael Stewart at 3pm on 18 November (Supplementary brief on recent developments in Anglo-Greek relations).

\(^8\) PRO, FCO 9/916, Doc 6: Confidential, FCO telegram 1227 to Athens, from Michael Stewart, 7/11/68: Shipping boycott.

\(^9\) Apart from Michael Stewart, W.C. Whitlock, Lord Hood, Sir D. Greenhill, Sir Michael Stewart, J.G.S. Beith, D.J.D. Maitland, and R.H.G. Edmonds were also present at the meeting.

for training in the UK. Furthermore, they agreed to do everything in their power to improve their exports performance, including even inviting the Greek Minister of Industry to visit officially Britain in 1969. Finally, the British officials concurred that they should recreate their stock of influence with the Colonels by all means open to them, with the exception of supplying war material that could help the regime to repress the civilian population. These issues still had to be decided by Ministers on a case-by-case basis.

Acting on his instructions, Sir Michael Stewart met with Papadopoulos on 3 January 1969, and conveyed to him the Foreign Secretary’s message, verbatim but orally, so as to avoid giving rise to analyses that might be counter-productive. In particular, the text of the message from Michael Stewart to the Greek Prime Minister was the following: ‘I would like you to know that I accept that the timing of Greece’s return to a democratic system is a matter for the Greek government. Nevertheless, the sooner the Greek government feel able to apply the suspended articles of the new constitution the earlier it will be to re-establish the traditional relationship between the Greek and British peoples. The British people are conscious of the particular part Greece had played in the development of western democracy. There certainly are differences between Her Majesty’s government and the Greek government, but we are anxious to establish a good working relationship with the Greek government. We fully recognise the importance of Greece to the Western Alliance. We admire and continue fully to support the Greek government’s efforts to promote a lasting settlement in Cyprus.’

Some weeks later, Macrae commented that they had been right to make a first priority of trying to establish a good working relationship with the Greek junta. As he argued, the UK was already once more in a position where Sir Michael Stewart could put British views about the restoration of democracy

11 PRO, FCO 9/875, Doc 1: Aide Memoire from the Royal Greek Embassy in London, 21/10/68.
12 PRO, FCO 9/870, Doc 16: Confidential, Southern European Department, 6 11 68: Greece- Greece- The Secretary of State’s meeting with Sir M. Stewart at 3 p.m. on 7 November; PRO, FCO 9/846: Confidential, Note for the Record, from D.J.D. Maitland, 22/11/68: Policy towards Greece.
13 PRO, FCO 9/870, Doc 29: Confidential, Sir Michael Stewart to J.G.S. Beith, 21 12 68.
14 PRO, FCO 9/846: Confidential, Note for the Record, from D.J.D. Maitland, 22 11 68: Policy towards Greece; PRO, FCO 9/870, Doc 26: Confidential, FCO telegram 1313 to Athens, from Michael Stewart, 17/12/68; PRO, FCO 9/870, Doc 27: Confidential, FCO telegram 1314 to Athens, from Michael Stewart, 17/12 68.
across to the Prime Minister, even if that would not lead to startling results, since the British officials agreed that they should not over-estimate the influence they were likely to have on Papadopoulos. Snodgrass agreed, adding that the Greek Prime Minister was certainly only too well aware that the threats to his ‘revolution’ and to his own position were exclusively internal; therefore, he was expected to react strongly to domestic pressures, and not so much to external ones.15

2.2 The British defer decision on the question of Greece’s suspension from the Council of Europe

On 26 September 1968, the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe passed almost unanimously a resolution, which committed the Assembly, among other things, to considering at its session in January 1969 whether to recommend to the Committee of Ministers the suspension of the Greek government from its right of representation in the Council of Europe.16

In Britain, meanwhile, the text of the resolution gave rise to speculation and parliamentary interest.17 When asked, the British officials took the line that the UK was not prepared to propose that Greece should be expelled from the Council of Europe. Apart from the fact that no member government had called for a move of that kind, the British officials also pointed out that, until a recommendation calling for Greece’s suspension from the Council was passed, there was no need for the UK to take any action.

17 The Observer, 15/12/68 (‘Torture case-Greeks may walk out of hearing’); Sunday Telegraph, 15/12/68 (‘MPs ask for ban on Greece, by Alex Macmillan’); The Guardian, 20/12 68 CA ('formidable opponent for Greek junta,' by Cedric Thornberry); The Sunday Times, 19 1/69 (‘Lord Chalfont becomes the fall-guy,’ by J. Barry); The Financial Times, 20 1 69 (Lord Chalfont’s remarks on Greece “consistent”); The Sunday Times, 26/1/69 (‘Touch and go for Greece in expulsion move’); Parliamentary Debates, Commons 1968-1969, Vol. 773, 11-22 November: Written Answers: Council of Europe (Greece), 18/11/68, Col. 181; Parliamentary Debates, Commons 1968-1969, Vol. 775, 9-20 December: Written Answers: Greece (Human Rights), 17/12/68, Col. 351.
In other words, the Foreign Office decided to play that matter long and avoid being drawn into taking a stand as long as they could. Consequently, the British officials used to stress that it would be premature to decide what the UK attitude should be in advance of any recommendation from the Assembly; when that time came, they would decide the British attitude in the light of the circumstances then prevailing, without also forgetting to consider carefully whether the proposed kind of action promoted their main objective: namely the restoration of democratic liberties in Greece. The British posts in the member countries of the Council of Europe capitals were instructed not to initiate discussion on that subject, but to follow the same line if asked.

2.3 Britain keeps in close touch with Constantine

Although Anglo-Greek relations were at low ebb, Britain continued her policy of keeping in discreet but close touch with the King of Greece. On 30 August 1968, Harold Wilson had a telephone conversation with Constantine, who was in London for Princess Marina’s funeral, and repeated to the young King that it would be right to keep in touch with Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh in Rome. In that way, the instructions that had been sent to the Embassy on 9 August were modified, and the meetings between the British Ambassador in Rome and the King were resumed. Apart from these, Constantine had also

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18 PRO, FCO 9/844, Doc 45: Confidential, Edmonds to Lord Hood, 17/1 69: Greece and the Council of Europe.
20 PRO, FCO 9/845, Doc 54: Confidential, FCO Guidance telegram 10 to Certain Missions, 21/1/69: Greece and the Council of Europe.
occasional contacts with other British officials, and on 19 December 1968 he had another conversation with Harold Wilson.

The conclusions the Foreign Office drew from these meetings were, once again, that the King was relatively isolated in Rome and that he lacked wise counsel. According to the Foreign Office, Constantine could well have an important role to play at some time in the future; for that reason alone, they thought it worth seeing that he did not become too isolated. According to Sir Michael Stewart, arguably it was of no particular interest to the UK whether Greece remained a constitutional monarchy or eventually became a republic with a democratic form of government. In short term, however, he believed that there would be advantage both for Britain and for the King if Constantine returned soon, since the King's return would exercise a degree of restraint on the Colonels, and would make Anglo-Greek relations easier.

Consequently, Sir Michael Stewart's advice to the King was to go some way towards making Papadopoulos think that he was not refusing all cooperation. As he argued, Constantine could come back, only if Papadopoulos wanted him and could persuade his associates to agree with him; therefore, unless the King was prepared to go at least nearly all the way to meet Papadopoulos, he would not return to Greece.

2.4 Britain concerned for the American resumption of military aid to Greece

The reports that arrived from Washington to the effect that the Administration was considering the partial resumption of US arms supplies to Greece caused the British officials in London much concern. The Foreign Office was particularly interested in the American intentions since any US

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resumption of arms supplies to Greece affected the UK, not only because of the implications for the British arms sales, but also because it could affect British potential sales to Greece.

According to Macrae, since the cessation of American military aid, Britain had received from the regime a number of enquiries for arms purchases. Yet, the question of arms sales to Greece was a sensitive one for Britain, and each request was given most careful consideration. Furthermore, the Foreign Office was reluctant to embark on the necessary studies for the arms that had attracted the interest of the Greeks, if there was very little chance that this interest would be maintained following any resumption in American military aid to Greece.24

Truly, after the US decision to resume the supply of certain items of heavy military equipment to Greece, there were no developments on the sale of British frigates and patrol boats that entailed early decisions by British Ministers. According to the British officials, one reason for this might be that the Greek Navy was hoping to get ships from the USA, paid for by American aid. In view of these developments, the Foreign Office recommended that, unless there was a pressing reason, the controversial subject of Greece should not be brought before the OPD Committee.25 Another argument in favour of that recommendation was that it enabled the Foreign Secretary to review the Greek problem with the British Ambassador when the latter would be on leave from Athens in November.

24 PRO, FCO 9/864, Doc 3: Confidential, J.E.C. Macrae to I.M.H. Smart, 21 10 68.
25 PRO, FCO 9/870, Doc 24: Confidential, R.H.G. Edmonds to John Beith, 10 12 68 Greece-Defence and Oversea Policy Committee.
Chapter VIII:

1 January – 31 December 1969
1. USA: The Nixon Administration

1.1 State Department and White House at variance

After a painstaking political comeback that astonished political friends and foes alike, Richard Nixon defeated Hubert Humphrey in the election of 1968. As soon as he succeeded Johnson in the presidency, it became evident that he would take a different attitude towards the Greek junta from his predecessor. In the first place, the White House exhibited greater sympathy for the regime. Furthermore, Pattakos, Pipinelis, and King Constantine in their contacts at the White House were repeatedly informed that the new Administration thought it advisable not to throw its weight around so much, adopting a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. Nixon, in particular, stressed to Pattakos, the Greek Deputy Prime Minister, that in its dealings with other countries the USA was principally involved in external affairs rather than in political matters. In other words, the White House indicated that it was for the Greeks to solve their own problems.

Nixon followed the same line in his response to Papadopoulos' letter, which once again urged the American President for the resumption of full MAP deliveries to Greece. Following Kissinger's advice, the American President refrained from following the State Department's recommendation of wishing Papadopoulos well in his program for bringing the constitution in full force. According to Kissinger, such an action would not be in accordance with the Administration's policy of doing business with a NATO ally without getting involved in its internal contests for power. As a result, the President's

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2 NA, NXN, Box 945, Eisenhower – Memos: Memorandum for the president, by H. A. Kissinger, 31/3/69: Courtesy meetings at your reception this evening; NA, NXN, Box 945, Appointment – Pattakos: Confidential, Pattakos, 31/3/69; NA, RG 59, Box 2147, Pol 7 – 1-1-68: Top Secret, Memorandum of Conversation 5592, between the President, H. A. Kissinger, Walters, D. Brewster and Pattakos, 31/3/69.
3 NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol GR-USA – 1-1-68: Secret, State telegram 066870 to Athens, by Rogers, 29/4/69
4 NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol GR-USA – 1-1-68: Confidential, Memorandum of Conversation 5886, between O. Angelis, and the Vice President, K.B. Crane, H. D. Brewster, 11 4 69: Call on the Vice President by General Odysseus Angelis – US-Greek relations; NA, NXN, Box 754,
message to the Greek Prime Minister was informative but non-committal, welcoming Papadopoulos’ pledge of Greece’s loyalty to the Western Alliance, and assuring him that he would be in touch with him as soon as the Administration had completed the overall review of the military assistance programs.\(^5\)

Meanwhile, however, the State Department continued to act in line with the policy adopted since the April coup, indicating to the junta the US desire for the restoration of a constitutional situation in the country.\(^6\) Therefore, in the context of welcoming the announced liberalization steps by Papadopoulos, the State Department spokesman expressed the US hope for an early return to representative government and full restoration of civil liberties. Furthermore, in their calls on the Secretary and the Vice President, Pattakos and the Greek King were repeatedly reminded of the importance of the restoration of constitutional government and civil liberties in Greece as soon as possible.\(^7\)

In view of these discrepancies, Sisco, the Assistant Secretary of State for NEA, undertook to bridge the gap between the two offices, pointing out that, while the USA should not attempt to force their views on another government, there was no reason not to let their thoughts known, especially when they referred to political repercussions in their own country stemming from the very acts and policies of the Greek regime.\(^8\)

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\(^5\) NA, NXN, Box 754, Correspondence – GR: Richard Nixon to G. Papadopoulos, 3/6/69; NA, RG 59, Box 2146, Pol 1 GR – 1-1-69: Limited Official Use, State telegram 090814 to Athens, by Rogers, 5/6/69.

\(^6\) NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol 1 GR-USA: Secret, Briefing Memorandum 9693, by J. J. Sisco for the Secretary, 21/6/69: Your meeting with the Vice President, at 3:00 p.m., June 23, 1969.

\(^7\) NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol 1 GR-USA – 1-1-68: Confidential, Memorandum of Conversation 5047, between S. Pattakos, C. X. Palamas, and the Secretary of State, S. W. Rockwell, D. H. Brewster, 1/4/69: Call on the Secretary by the Deputy Prime Minister of Greece, US-Greek relations; NA, RG 59, Box 2147, Pol 7 GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, Memorandum of Conversation 5048, between S. Pattakos, C. X. Palamas, and the Vice President, H. D. Brewster, K. Crane, 1/4/69: Call on the Vice President by the Deputy Prime Minister of Greece - US-Greek relations.

\(^8\) NA, RG 59, Box 2157, Pol 1 GR-USA: Secret, Briefing Memorandum 9693, by J. J. Sisco for the Secretary, 21/6/69: Your meeting with the Vice President, at 3:00 p.m., June 23, 1969.
1.2 The USA wishes to disassociate itself from Constantine

The new Administration’s policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of foreign countries extended also to the case of the Greek King. This became clear in the matter of the state funeral of the former President Eisenhower, who died in March 1969.

In the day of the funeral, following the White House reception on 31 March 1969, Nixon received Pattakos in a five-minute call, but not Constantine. As Kissinger explained to Pipinelis later, although the President had the ‘highest personal regard’ for the King, he had had to limit himself to seeing Heads of Government. However, Kissinger informed Constantine that, if he were to come to the United State on a private visit, a meeting on a private basis could be arranged with the President.

On 1 April, the King met with Vice President Agnew, and on 2 April, he paid a call on the Secretary of State Rogers; both officials once again stressed that, since the USA had perhaps been too heavy-handed in its past approach to foreign affairs, the new Administration was thinking of taking a different line. Although they added that such an approach to international affairs did not mean that the USA would not seek to use its influence constructively, it was however a hint that the Administration was not inclined to assist the King to regain his throne.

Finally, another characteristic of the US changed attitude towards the King was that, although they pointed out that they did not wish to turn their backs on Constantine, whom the junta still recognized as the constitutional Head of State, the American officials in Washington were very careful to make no commitment either to help him to regain his throne or to keep him informed about the US attitude towards the Greek regime.

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9 NA, NXN, Box 945, Eisenhower - Memos: Confidential, Memorandum for the President, by H. A. Kissinger, 30/3/69: King Constantine of Greece.
11 NA, NXN, Box 945, Appointments – King: Confidential, Constantine II, King of Greece; NA, RG 59, Box 2147, Pol 7 GR – 1-1-68: Confidential, Memorandum of Conversation 4921, between King Constantine, L. Papagos, and the Vice President, S. W. Rockwell, K. Crane, 1/4/69: King Constantine' Call on the Vice President; NA, RG 59, Box 2157. Pol GR-USA – 1-1-68: Secret, Memorandum of Conversation, between King Constantine, L. Papagos. and the
Yet, Kissinger’s message gave to Constantine the opportunity to wish to visit Washington again so as to meet Nixon. McCone, after consulting with Kissinger, tried to discourage Constantine’s suggested trip, arguing that a meeting between the President and the King could hardly escape notice, since Constantine was the object of great interest by the press and the public. Moreover, according to McCone, a trip to the USA would be counter-productive for the King’s relations with the Greek regime, as had been his recent meeting with Pattakos. In light of these developments, the King finally decided not to make the trip.12

1.3 The Administration wishes to resume full MAP to Greece

Since 20 January 1969, the military regime mounted a persistent campaign to persuade the new administration to resume full MAP to Greece.13 When asked, however, the American officials avoided any commitments, replying that the new administration was still examining the whole question of military aid. With particular reference to the Greek case, the State Department used to add that the review process would be facilitated by any signs from Athens of further progress towards the restoration of civil liberties. They would also take into account the position of Greece in NATO, the strategic aspects of the problem, the relationships with the Greek Government, and the traditional friendship for the Greek people. Finally, the Department added that the recommendations of the new American Ambassador in Athens, once appointed and accredited, would be an important factor.14

Secretary, S.W. Rockwell, H. D. Brewster, 2/4 69: Call on the Secretary by King Constantine of the Hellenes – US-Greek relations.
In the meantime, another issue arose, which delayed the NSC Interdepartmental Group for the Near East to present arguments pro and con on the resumption of full military assistance to Greece, as had been asked by Nixon.\textsuperscript{15} The Reuss Amendment to the Foreign Military Sales Act (Section 1, fifth paragraph) expressed the sense of the Congress that foreign military sales, authorized under the Act, should not be approved where they would have the effect of arming military dictators who were denying social progress to their people. The Amendment stated further that the President might waive that limitation, if he determined it would be important to the security of the United States.\textsuperscript{16}

Because of the Congressional interest in the US policy towards military dictatorships, a procedure had been established to examine possible Reuss cases and to insure that any findings thereon were subjected to appropriate review. Sisco of NEA examined the Greek situation in terms of the Reuss Amendment, and concluded that the US interest in NATO and in supporting a key member of the Alliance had not diminished because the events of 1967 produced a change in the Greek regime not entirely to the American liking. As a result, the NEA recommendation was that the Administration should \textit{continue} the Foreign Military Sales to Greece of consumables, maintenance support
items, and major end items, the delivery of which was not suspended under grant MAP.\textsuperscript{17}

The IPMG, including the NSC representative, reviewed the NEA recommendations and concurred in them.\textsuperscript{18} At the same time, there was need to complete action on the Reuss amendment shortly, if the US were to conclude a proposed $20 million Foreign Military Sales credit arrangement with Greece out of the available FY 69 funds.\textsuperscript{19}

For his part, Kissinger submitted to Nixon a memorandum laying out three options with regard to continuing MAP in Greece: firstly, the USA could cut off MAP to Greece altogether, an option that was greatly favoured by Congressional liberals and the friends of the Greek politicians silenced or exiled by the military government; secondly, the USA could continue the basic flow of non-major items and of the major items released from the suspended list in the fall of 1968, but without releasing anything more from the list; finally, the USA could resume full MAP to Greece.

Kissinger laid these options in that way because Nixon's acquiescence in the sale would foreclose the first option. For his part, he argued that the real choice was between the second and the third option, since no one in the Executive Branch had recommended that they should cut off their military supply program altogether. Although that was in the minds of some of the Congressional critics, the majority of Congress – according to Kissinger – seemed to recognize the need to maintain a working tie with the military government in Greece. For his part, Nixon was quite confident and, without waiting to hear the full-scale review of the choice between the second and the third option, decided that they should resume full MAP to Greece.\textsuperscript{20}

Kissinger, however, only informed the State Department that the President had agreed that the FMS to Greece were important to US security,
and therefore they could proceed with the FMS credit arrangement. The State Department, in its turn, informed the American Embassy in Athens accordingly, stressing that the signature of the credit sales agreement on 25 June would be a practical measure designed to help the Greek forces to meet equipment requirements, and it did not modify or prejudge the US suspension policy, which was under current review.

Meanwhile, the NSC discussions and decision on the problem of full resumption of MAP to Greece had been postponed several times, of necessity, by pressure of higher priority matters and other factors, not least of which was Sisco's almost total preoccupation with the Middle East problem. At the same time, the military regime in Athens had started to show signs of impatience towards the US. For that reason, McClelland urged the State Department to make a definite decision by some specific, early date, such as 1 December 1969, arguing that he had serious misgivings about trying to string the regime along much further.

On 26 September 1969, the Chairman of NSCIG/NEA submitted a memorandum to the Chairman of the NSC Review Group, entitled 'US policy towards Greece: Military Assistance-Response to NSSM 52.' In an effort to examine whether the US strategic interests required a full scale US military assistance, the drafter argued that there existed advantages and disadvantages.

More particularly, according to the Interdepartmental Group, the Administration had to face the choice of either continuing the current policy—symbolic suspension of major items, continued flow of lesser items and spares—or removing the suspension. As it was argued, if they followed the first course, the USA would maintain the desired access to the Greek facilities, and would contribute to the junta's efforts to appear to be moving towards representative

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22 NA, RG 59, Box 1549, Def 12-5 GR — 1-1-67: Secret, State telegram 102794 to Athens, by Rogers, 23/6/69; NA, RG 59, Box 1549, Def 12-5 GR — 1-1-67: Secret, State telegram 106184 to Athens, by Rogers, 27/6/69.
government. Moreover, that course would enable the USA to straddle the fence between continuing basic supplies to a NATO partner while maintaining a semblance of disapproval for domestic purposes. Finally, it would enable the US to maintain a bridge to a succeeding representative government, since it proved that the US military aid was exclusively for NATO purposes and did not constitute political endorsement.

On the other hand, as the IG pointed out, the junta was becoming more and more annoyed with that policy, having already begun seeking additional sources of arms, an attitude that would over time erode the cooperative relationship desirable to maintain US access in Greece. Furthermore, the regime had made it clear that it would follow its own timetable regardless of the US position. Consequently, according to the IG, the current US policy was achieving nothing more than to irritate US-Greek relations, and to burden the USA with the storage costs for the suspended items, which were estimated at $950,000 for FY 1970.

In its turn, the NSC Review Group discussed the issues laid out in the IG paper, and by 7 October 1969 had made the following conclusions. In the first place, it agreed that the USA was not going to change the situation in Greece much one way or another. On the other hand, in view of the conclusion that anything the USA did in Greece was to be read by the one group or the other as taking sides, the NSC concurred that the USA should not support sharply any group during the present political dispute in Greece, because that would jeopardize the American position either with the current or with the future government. According to the NSC, the USA should maintain a cooperative relationship with the current government, leaving however the door open to a cooperative relationship with future governments. As it was argued, although the current situation in Greece carried with it the increasing risk over time that the American access to the country would be restricted, it was adequate in the short term for preserving the US interests, especially if a gradual transition was arranged to a more broadly based government.

In consequence, the NSC suggested that the elements of an appropriate US policy would be three. Firstly, the Administration should move slightly from the current US policy, in order to maintain a cooperative relationship with the Greek regime, without dramatically taking sides with it. Moreover, it
should assume the importance of Greek transition back to representative
government, thereby holding the door open to cooperation with the next
government. Finally, the Administration should accept a pace that would not
return Greece too quickly to the instability of 1967.26

However, the NSC conclusions leaked to the Congress. As a result, on
25 November 1969, Nixon received a letter signed by twenty-seven
Congressmen, who urged the President to discontinue all US military aid to
Greece, and make clear the US moral disapproval of the Greek regime.27 For
his part, Saunders argued that the State Department did not want to be accused
of not being forthright, which could happen if they claimed that no decision
had been taken. On the other hand, the State Department did not want to spread
the decision around either, even though it had began to leak. According to
Saunders, perhaps the only way out was to maintain that final decisions on the
nature of the program would not be made until Tasca, the new Ambassador,
reported from Athens, giving Richardson, the Under Secretary of State, the
responsibility for managing the Congressional tactics since that was too tricky
a field to manage from the White House.

He also added that they could also inform key Congressional leaders
that, while a decision in principle had been made to improve the US military
relationships with Greece for security reasons, the final decision on the overall
shape of the US military aid program (quantity, composition, and timing)
would be made only after Tasca reported back from Athens. However,
Kissinger disagreed with the latter suggestion, commenting that they should
not be too specific on the subject.28

As a result, the guidance prepared for the noon briefing of 5 December
1969 on an if-asked basis to the question of whether the Administration had
decided to resume the shipment of military assistance to Greece was the

26 NA, NXN, Box 593, GR Vol. 1-II – 1 69-10/70: Secret, Memorandum for the President,
7/10/69: Military supply policy toward Greece-the issues.
27 NA, NXN, Box 593, GR Vol. 1-II – 1 69-10/70: J. B. Bingham, G. E. Brown Jr., P. Burton,
F. Ryan, J. H. Scheuer, F. Thompson Jr., J. R. Waldie, Senator S. M. Young to Nixon,
25/11/69.
28 NA, NXN, Box 593, GR Vol. 1-II – 1/69-10/70: Secret, Memorandum for Dr. Kissinger, by
following: ‘Before reaching final conclusions regarding the delivery of military equipment to Greece, we desire to have the benefit of reports from Ambassador Henry Tasca after he has arrived in Athens and has had an opportunity to carry on conversation there’.  

Meanwhile, Tasca was authorised to tell Papadopoulos that the President was prepared to resume normal military aid shipments, including all items that had been suspended. At the same time, as means of improving the atmosphere for removing the suspension of military shipments, Tasca was instructed to make clear that any movement towards a constitutional situation would ease the US problems in speeding the release of the suspended equipment. The Ambassador would then report the junta’s response, and, after Nixon’s review of it, shipment of the suspended items could begin gradually, beginning with the less dramatic items. In general, Tasca was authorised to attempt to develop a relationship with the junta leaders, which would permit him to exercise influence for democratic reform, and a relationship with civilian political leaders, which would enable him to maintain a bridge to possible future governments.  

On 20 December 1969, Nixon met with Tasca. As Kissinger’s memorandum to the President shows, the key issue of Nixon’s discussion with the Ambassador was the degree to which Nixon saw a linkage between the release of the suspended items and the Greek movement towards a fully constitutional government. According to Kissinger, even if the Greek junta gave Tasca little satisfaction about its future movement to constitutionalism, the decision for the release of the equipment had been taken. Consequently, Tasca was to use that decision to seek Greek cooperation in improving the atmosphere for that release. In conclusion, Kissinger pointed out that, apart from the fact that the release of the suspended equipment was unconditional, Tasca was to understand that the main reason for Nixon’s decision was the

29 NA, RG 59, Box 1690, Def-Def Affairs Gr-USA – 1-1-67: Confidential, State telegram 197854 to Athens, by Rogers, 5/12 69.  
overriding interest the US had in its military rights and installations in Greece.31

12.4 The American line on the welfare of Greek prisoners

In the meantime, new allegations of torture of the Greek political prisoners appeared in the Look magazine, causing many academics and officials to write to the State Department asking for further explanations. The Department, through the Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations, Macomber, used to respond that they had been deeply concerned by the allegations of torture in Greece, but they did not have the basis to comment. The American official also used to repeat that they had taken—and continued to take—advantage of every opportunity to press the junta for a fair treatment of the prisoners.

Moreover, Macomber used to add that, in an effort to arrive at an evaluation of the charges of torture, which would be as close as possible to the truth, they had also relied heavily on the investigations of the international bodies, since they had no particular bias, and were able to arrive at a reasonably objective finding owing to their general expertise and the facilities available to them. As Macombe stated, the USA was gratified by the efforts that the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Council of Europe were making, in order to investigate these charges. He also used to add that the American officials would also examine the findings and conclusions of the sub-Commission of the European Commission on Human Rights, which had taken extensive testimony in Greece and elsewhere.32

31 NA, NXN, Box 593, GR Vol 1-II – 1/69-10/70: Secret, Information Memorandum 5654 for the President, by H. A. Kissinger, 19/12/70: Your meeting with Ambassador Tasca.
32 NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 1-1-69: W. B. Macomber to H. H. Baker, 28 5 69; NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 1-1-69: W. B. Macomber to W. B. Saxbe, 5 6 69; NA, RG 59, Box 2155, Pol 29 GR – 1-1-69: W. B. Macomber to C. Pell, 9/6/69; etc.
2. UK: Defining her policies in International Organisations

2.1 Greece withdraws from the Council of Europe

On 30 January 1969, the Consultative Assembly adopted with a two-thirds majority a recommendation, to the effect that the Committee of Ministers should draw to the attention of the Greek government within a specified period that the internal situation in Greece was incompatible with continued Greek membership of the Council of Europe; therefore, Greece should withdraw. On the other hand, as the Foreign Office pointed out, although the Assembly made clear its own view that the circumstances were such as to justify the Committee of Ministers in suspending Greece's membership, it did not quite recommend that.¹

The UK Permanent Representative in Strasbourg thought that there would be considerable support by his counterparts if the Committee of Ministers at their March meeting were to make no positive recommendation so long as the questions of alleged violation of human rights were before the Commission.² The Foreign Office agreed, arguing also that the authority of the Commission of Human Rights might be damaged if the Committee of Ministers were to take a decision that could be interpreted as prejudging an issue already being dealt with by the Commission. Consequently, the officials in London recommended that, in order not to take the lead in that sensitive subject, Britain should seek the views of other member governments - particularly her NATO allies - drawing at the same time on the points

² PRO, FCO 9/845, Doc 67: Confidential, E. B. Boothby to J. E. C. Macrae, 30 1 69: Greece and the Council of Europe.
mentioned above. Michael Stewart concurred with that recommendation, and the British Ministers replied to parliamentary questions accordingly.

A week later, the Foreign Office summarized the attitudes of the member governments of the Council of Europe to the Assembly’s recommendation on Greece, and came to the conclusion that, with the single exception of the Swedes, a consensus appeared to be developing in favour of working for a successful outcome of the current proceedings before the European Commission of Human Rights, and meanwhile avoiding a direct confrontation with Greece on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Council of Europe.

In view of these conclusions, the British officials excluded the possibility of proposing the suspension of Greece from the Council of Europe either immediately or at the May Ministerial Meeting. Furthermore, at his office meeting on Greece, held on 17 February 1969, Michael Stewart concluded that Britain should not take the lead either in opposing or in promoting Greece’s suspension from the Council of Europe. He agreed that such a posture might be unheroic; under the circumstances, however, he thought that it was the correct course, since, if there were a strong movement for suspension among the other governments, it would be difficult for Britain to oppose it in view of parliamentary pressure.

Consequently, the British representative at the Council of Europe was instructed to take a minimal part in the discussions at the Deputies’ Meeting in March and in April, pointing out, if necessary, that the question of Greece was

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3 PRO, FCO 9 845, Doc 90: Confidential, R. H. G. Edmonds to Gorham, 6 2 69. Greece and the Council of Europe; PRO, FCO 9 845, Doc 92: Confidential, FCO telegram 85 to Bonn, from Michael Stewart, 7 2 69: Greece and the Council of Europe.


5 PRO, FCO 9 846, Doc 122: Minute, 14/2 69. Attitudes of member governments of the Council of Europe to the Assembly’s recommendations on Greece.

6 PRO, FCO 9 846, Doc 123: R. H. G. Edmonds to Private Secretary, 14 2 69. Greece and the Council of Europe.
a subject best discussed by Ministers themselves. In public, the Foreign Office took the line that the British position regarding the Greek question in the Council of Europe had not been decided yet, since much might happen until the Committee of Ministers’ meeting in May.

At the same time, the British Officials were consulting on how the Greek question should be handled at that May meeting, which would take place in London. Michael Stewart had in mind to take the following line: he proposed that Ministers should ask the Sub-Commission to make available their report on the alleged violations of human rights in Greece before the December 1969 Meeting of the Committee of Ministers; in the meantime, Ministers should keep the Assembly’s recommendation under study. As the Foreign Office argued, the key to that apparently anodyne formula was that it set in effect a time limit, by which the Greek regime would feel obliged either to withdraw voluntarily from the Council of Europe or to make substantial concessions.

As the Ministerial Meeting drew nearer, public interest in the Greek question became stronger. There were also a number of questions down for answer pressing the Foreign Office to reveal the attitude the UK would adopt in the council. For their part, Ministers resisted being drawn into any further comments, arguing that it would be wrong to announce any decisions, before the Greek representative had had the opportunity to tell the council of Ministers what the regime proposed to do about the return to constitutional rule in Greece.

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7 PRO, FCO 9 846, Doc 128: Confidential, N. J. Barrington 17 2 69: Conclusions of a meeting held in the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary’s room at the Foreign and Commonwealth office; PRO, FCO 9 846, Doc 150: Confidential, FCO telegram 28 to Strasbourg, from Michael Stewart, Greece and the Council of Europe; PRO, FCO 9 846, Doc 150: Confidential, FCO telegram 28 to Strasbourg, from Michael Stewart, Greece and the Council of Europe; PRO, FCO 9/846, Doc 200: Confidential, FCO telegram 56 to Strasbourg, from Michael Stewart, 10/4/69: Greece and the Council of Europe.
8 PRO, FCO 9 846, Doc 140: Confidential, R. H. G. Edmonds to F. Brooks Richards, 24 2 69: Greece and the Council of Europe.
9 PRO, FCO 9 846, Doc 186: Confidential, R.H.G. Edmonds to Bendall, 1 4 69: Greece and the Council of Europe.
Finally, on 6 May, the Committee of Ministers passed a resolution, which stated —among other things- that the Committee declared itself ready to take a decision at its next meeting, expressing also the hope that the report of the Commission of Human Rights would be made available to the Committee of Ministers as soon as possible. For his part, Michael Stewart commented that the passage of the Resolution was a satisfactory outcome to the debate. As he argued, it put in effect a time bomb under the Greek regime, since the junta had now six months in which to decide to withdraw, or to make progress towards the re-establishing of democracy in Greece, or to expect to be expelled at the next meeting.

On 7 May 1969, Michael Stewart took the same line both in the House of Commons and in the Cabinet, stressing that the resolution did not mean indefinite postponement, still less evasion, of that important issue, but, on the contrary, set a time limit for the Greek junta to convince European opinion that the evolutionary process towards democracy had either been completed or was within striking distance of fulfilment. His statement on the question of Greece and the Council of Europe was well received on both sides of the House, while the Cabinet took note of the Foreign Secretary’s statement and invited him to circulate a brief note of the position for the information of his colleagues. At the same time, it was pointed out that British relations with the Greek regime had stood up remarkably well under the strain. In effect, the Foreign Office confessed that they had got the result they wanted without the Greek regime holding the UK responsible for it.

For its part, the junta was interested in the possibility of arriving at a ‘friendly settlement’ under Article 28b of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights. Yet, when Schauer, the Counsellor at the

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14 PRO, FCO 9/847, Doc 298: Confidential, Piece for Permanent Undersecretary’s monthly news letter: Greece and the Council of Europe.
German Embassy in London, called to inform the Department of the German proposal that the Greek government should present to the Sub-Commission a concrete and comprehensible timetable for the restoration of Human Rights in Greece, the UK refrained from being associated with the German demarché. As Snodgrass argued, the drawbacks of becoming directly involved in that exercise, at a time when it had such limited prospects of success, outweighed in this instance the advantages of keeping in step with the Germans.\(^{16}\)

Two months before the December meeting, it was quite clear to the British officials that the 'friendly settlement' had no future.\(^{17}\) Furthermore, the junta had given no indication that they would be able to meet, within the December time limit, the conditions laid down at the May meeting of the Committee of Ministers. In addition, the regime was talking openly of contesting the move for their suspension at the Committee of Ministers.\(^{18}\) As Secondé, the Head of the South European Department, argued, such a development would have dangerous consequences: the UK would be bound to vote against Greece, the Anglo-Greek relations would suffer, and Britain would face the possibility of reprisals against her exports (some £40 million a year). On the other hand, if the Greek government voluntarily notified their intention to withdraw before the meeting, these risks would be reduced and the UK would still be able to satisfy all but the most extreme elements of parliamentary and public opinion in Britain.

It was agreed, therefore, that HM government would shortly make representations to the Greeks to the effect that, if the regime gave notice of their withdrawal before the December meeting, the UK would be willing to work for a resolution that would in essence merely note their action. In the meantime, Britain would concert her representations with other WEU countries, seeking in particular to persuade the Germans to take the lead in putting to the regime the arguments in favour of withdrawal. Consequently, Michael Stewart authorised the Ambassador in Athens to emphasise to

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\(^{17}\) PRO, FCO 9 850, Doc 483: Confidential, FCO telegram 431 to Athens, from Michael Stewart, 9/10/69: WEU Permanent Council.

\(^{18}\) PRO, FCO 9 849, Doc 434: Confidential, FCO telegram 392 to Athens, from Michael Stewart, 18/9/69: Greece and the Council of Europe.
Pipinelis that it would be better for all concerned if the Greek question did not come to a vote at all.\(^\text{19}\) The Ambassador acted on these instructions on 28 November, but Pipinelis completely rejected withdrawal.\(^\text{20}\)

Meanwhile, a new factor had been introduced on 18 November with the Report of the Commission on Human Rights, and more specifically, the Proposals that accompanied it, which invited Greece to take certain measures to remedy her position under the Convention, implying also that the Committee of Ministers should give her time to do so. A suggestion of that sort seemed to the British officials to be only too likely to attract a good deal of support among the moderate Council members as well as from the few who would support Greece anyway. As a result, Secondé commented that it was only realistic to consider the possibility that Britain might find herself at Paris in the position of voting with only a small minority—perhaps just the Scandinavians and the Netherlands—in favour of the expulsion of Greece, thus being more vulnerable to commercial reprisals.\(^\text{21}\)

In view of this development, the Foreign Office was called to examine the effect on the Anglo-Greek relations if the UK voted for the suspension of Greece. Sir Michael Stewart commented that the UK needed not be too pessimistic about British commercial prospects. Their export figures to Greece for the first nine months of 1969 were 8.5% higher than the figures for the whole of 1968. In sum, the Ambassador estimated that, although there would be a row, which would leave bitterness and make inter-governmental relations not easy, the line that the Foreign Secretary would take in Paris would not have an extremely harmful effect over the whole range of Anglo-Greek relations. As the British embassy in Athens estimated, the UK could lose £2-3 million of business with state agencies, and £5-10 million on private sector trade in 1970, increasing in subsequent years.\(^\text{22}\)


\(^{21}\) PRO, FCO 9/852, Doc 644: Confidential, R.L. Secondé to Sir Michael Stewart, 21/11/69: Greece and the Council of Europe; PRO, FCO 9/855, Doc 803: Confidential, Analysis of possible courses which the Committee of Ministers might adopt at their meeting, 12/12/69: Greece and the Council of Europe.

\(^{22}\) PRO, FCO 9/849, Doc 429: Confidential, D.S.L. Dodson to J.M.O. Snodgrass, 15/9/69: Greece and the Council of Europe—Possible loss of exports; PRO, PRO, FCO 9 852. Doc 626:
Given that the basic UK policy remained that, if Britain was faced with a motion for the suspension of Greece in December, she should have to support it,\textsuperscript{23} HM government tried to avoid being isolated in a small minority of the more extreme opponents of the regime by continuing to urge to the Germans and to the other WEU countries the merits for a Greek withdrawal.\textsuperscript{24}

Finally, on 11 December 1969, the Federal spokesman announced at his press conference that the Federal government would propose at the Committee of Ministers that Greece should be suspended from membership of the Council of Europe, until she had returned to democratic and constitutional institutions.\textsuperscript{25} As a result, seeing the weight of opinion in favour of suspension, Pipinelis announced the decision of the Greek government to withdraw from the Council.\textsuperscript{26} In turn, the British delegation supported a moderately worded Resolution, which noted withdrawal in sympathetic terms, thus fulfilling their commitment to the Greeks in this regard. In particular, the text of the Resolution stated, among other things, that the Committee of Ministers, understanding that the Greek government would abstain from any further participation in the activities of the Council, concluded that there was no need to pursue the procedure for suspension, and expressed the hope of an early return in Greece of conditions that would enable her to resume full membership of the Council of Europe.\textsuperscript{27}
2.2 Britain tries to form a common NATO policy for the arms supplies to Greece

By January 1969, it had become fairly urgent for the UK to reach conclusions on the question of UK arms sales to Greece, not only because the firms concerned, being aware of their rivals' activities, were anxious to go ahead, but also because the Press were aware of the issues involved.\(^{28}\) The Foreign and Commonwealth Office had talked the *Sunday Times* out of publishing an article, which suggested that the UK would sell frigates to Greece as a contribution to strengthening NATO's south eastern flank,\(^ {29}\) but publication had only been delayed.

Consequently, on 24 January 1969, the Ministry of Defence and the FCO concluded in their joint memorandum that their future arms policy towards Greece should be guided by the following two principles: firstly, they should allow the sale to Greece of arms that she could reasonably be expected to require in order to fulfil her NATO role; secondly, they should prohibit only the supply of those arms intended to repress the civilian population.\(^ {30}\)

For his part, Michael Stewart argued that in so far as restrictions on arms sales were desirable, the criteria should be whether they helped to maintain the regime in power. Furthermore, he added that, a decision not to allow to sell to the Greek junta the arms required to fulfil their NATO role would generally jeopardise the prospects for the British exports to Greece, valued at over £30 million a year, and would be inconsistent with all four of the British policy objectives, which remained the same since July 1968.

Yet, in discussion at the OPD Committee, it was pointed out that the British position at Strasbourg would be difficult if the UK had already agreed to allow arms sales to Greece. Moreover, opinion in Parliament and in the country as a whole had also to be taken into account. According to some Ministers, any British arms sales to the junta meant that HM government was


\(^{29}\) PRO, FCO 9/895, Doc 16: Confidential, W.R. Haydon to Private Secretary, 23 1 69. PRO, FCO 9/895, Doc 17: Confidential, R.H.G. Edmonds to Private Secretary, 24 1 69.

\(^{30}\) PRO, FCO 9/870, Doc 42: Confidential, OPD (69) 3: Memorandum by the Secretaries of State for Defence and the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 24 1 69: Cabinet-Defence and Oversea Policy Committee-Greece.
subordinating their first objective —promote a return to constitutional rule, democratic liberties, and conditions of stability in Greece— to economic and military considerations, since the arms assisted in keeping the current regime in power. As it was argued, so long as the regime did not announce a date for holding elections, the UK should not allow export credits for arms sales to Greece.

On the other hand, the Ministers reasoned that if the UK refused their firms permission to supply those items, not only would they lose these and future military orders, but their decision would affect adversely their prospects of exporting non-military equipment to Greece. Furthermore, it was pointed out that the arms sales were not necessarily inconsistent with the first policy objective, since they should be judged in the context of the balance of world power: In Europe, the Soviet bloc was a greater threat to the cause of liberty than was the Greek regime. Consequently, the question was whether the UK should provide the Greeks with adequate means of external defence, which was essential to NATO and, consequently, to British security. Besides, as some Ministers argued, Britain was prepared to sell similar weapons to regimes much more objectionable than the Greek junta.

For his part, the Defence Secretary stressed the importance of Greece in the NATO context. As he argued, the events in Czechoslovakia had emphasised the importance of maintaining the cohesion in the Alliance, while the increased Soviet activity in the Mediterranean rendered Greece vital to the defence of the south flank of NATO. In further discussion, it was pointed out that, if they laid stress on the NATO argument in favour of arms sales, it would be logical that there should be an examination of the question in the Alliance with a view to establishing a common policy on arms supplies. It was also argued that Britain could hardly expect her NATO allies to continue to give her assistance with her own balance of payments if for political reasons the UK rejected such opportunities as this for improving it.

Harold Wilson, summing up the discussion, pointed out that to refuse to supply British arms was unlikely to affect the internal situation in Greece and would be contrary to NATO interests. Consequently, as he pointed out, the question of arms sales to Greece should be treated as a matter affecting the defence of NATO, while British policies at Strasbourg should be decided in the
light of the moral and other issues involved. On this basis, he concluded that supply of the arms mentioned in the OPD (69) 3 memorandum to Greece should be permitted in principle; yet, they should also seek agreement with the major NATO allies on a common policy for supplies of arms to Greece and on export credits for that purpose, by consulting first with the US and then with the Permanent Representatives of the main NATO countries likely to supply such arms.

Accordingly, on 6 February 1969, Sir Bernard Burrows was instructed to handle the matter with his European colleagues. As the Foreign Office explained to the British Representative, although that course of action and its venue was not suggested to the Ministers by the Secretary of State but was proposed in the course of the discussion, there was no chance of having it changed now. In an effort, however, to overcome the reluctance of the other NATO allies, the Foreign Office advised Sir Bernard Burrows to raise the subject with the major potential suppliers, such as the Germans, the French and the Italians, individually, and without attracting too much attention in NATO.

Tomkins in Washington was also authorized to sound out the State Department on the possibility of developing a common policy on the supply of arms to Greece. He was urged, however, to be reticent about the policy on which Ministers had decided regarding arms supplies to Greece, since any leaks in Washington could give rise to embarrassment in the UK.

In the meantime, the Associated Press report from London of 28 February 1969 about the alleged Anglo-Greek arms deal attracted very little attention in Britain. The line taken by the News Department in reply to questions was that the UK was not a traditional supplier of arms to Greece; that no significant deliveries of arms had taken place since the coup of 21 April 1967; and that

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31 These were a Lightning Aircraft, an air-sea rescue helicopter, an SRN6 Hovercraft, and frigates.
32 PRO, FCO 9 870, Doc 44: Confidential, R.H.G. Edmonds to Lord Hood, 29/1/69: Greece-Speaking Notes; PRO, FCO 9/895, Doc 22: Confidential, Brief for Secretary of State for Defence, 29/1/69: Greece; PRO, PREM 13/2696: Confidential, Burke Trend to Prime Minister, 29/1/69: Greece; PRO, CAB 148 41: Confidential, OPD (69) 2nd Meeting, Minutes, 30/1/69; PRO, FCO 9 870, Doc 48: Secret & Personal, R.H.G. Edmonds to Sir Michael Stewart, 7 2 69: Arms Supplies for Greece.
any applications for export licences for arms for Greece would be considered in the light of the circumstances prevailing at the time.

Off the record, the News Department had discounted any idea of a massive arms deal and stressed that any British decision for any specific item of military equipment would take into account whether its supply to Greece would help to fulfil NATO requirements. The News Department had so far been able to hold that line quite comfortably, as seen from the article entitled ‘British dilemma on sales of arms to Greece’ in The Guardian of 10 March 1969.

Meanwhile, acting on his instructions, the Minister in Washington discussed the question of arms supplies to Greece with Rockwell on 14 March 1969. As the British Embassy in Washington reported, the US policy was the opposite of the British, in the sense that it restricted supplies of certain items of heavy military equipment, which the Greeks might be thought to require for fulfilling their NATO role, but placed no impediment on deliveries of arms that could be used against the civilian population. It thus appeared that, while the Americans had no objections of principle to follow a joint Anglo-American line in the matter, the basis for a common policy did not in fact exist in the current circumstances.

Even though it was made clear that the basis for reaching a common position with the Americans did not exist, the British officials decided that they should try to coordinate a common policy among the other likely suppliers in NATO. In approaching these allies, the Foreign Office proposed that the UK should raise the matter in the Permanent Council of Western European Union. As it was argued, because of Greek membership of NATO, informal soundings of the Permanent Representatives concerned would be embarrassing. Bilateral discussions in the capitals concerned would also be ineffective, since a common position was best reached through multilateral discussion.

36 PRO, FCO 9/864, Doc 34: Confidential, Washington telegram 788, from Freeman, 14 3 69: Arms for Greece.
Accordingly, the WEU Permanent Council discussed the ‘Greek question’ in restricted session on 28 April 1969. With regard to the supply of arms to Greece, it was finally agreed that, although there was not for the moment much prospect of a comprehensive common policy on that issue, it would be useful to take into account the views expressed by the other delegations, following on Lord Chalfont’s statement at the Council meeting on 17 April. Furthermore, the Council concurred to give further consideration to the Belgian suggestion that, in view of the Greek membership of NATO, the governments should unofficially ask the competent military authorities for an assessment of NATO requirements, before a final decision on the subject had been reached.38

The question of arms supplies to Greece was raised again on 5 June at the WEU Ministerial meeting by the Germans this time, who tried to get a blank cheque from their colleagues for the supply of the submarines FRG had contracted to make for Greece.39 As Waterfield, the Head of Western Organisations Department, commented, the discussion was pretty inconclusive on that subject, and all one could say was that it was impossible to achieve an agreed inter-governmental policy on the supply of arms to Greece through consultations either in NATO or in WEU.40

On 19 June, the Foreign Secretary acquainted Harold Wilson with the outcome of the Foreign Office consultations with the NATO allies, concluding that although these had proved to be a useful exercise, the UK could not take them any further. Therefore, Michael Stewart suggested that Britain should continue to be guided by the principle of NATO requirement, subject to the proviso that she should prohibit the supply of arms intended to repress the civilian population. Besides, as the Foreign Secretary commented, the Greeks

40 PRO, FCO 9/860, Doc 7: Confidential, J.P. Waterfield to R.H.G. Edmonds, 9/6 69: Greece-Representations to be made by WEU member governments.
had so little money available for buying arms that it was far from certain that
their interest in British frigates and aircraft would lead to orders.\textsuperscript{41}

In the same day, Michael Stewart held also a meeting in his room in the
House of Commons to review the question of British policy towards Greece.\textsuperscript{42}
In connection with the supply of arms, it was finally decided that the current
UK policy on the subject was as satisfactory as they could achieve. With regard
to British military co-operation with the Greek Armed Forces, the British
officials concluded that, unless there were overriding political objections, they
should continue to co-operate with the Greek forces in NATO exercises, in
which their allies were also taking part.

On the other hand, it was decided that purely bilateral visits should be
avoided unless there were compelling reasons for arranging them. The British
officials stressed that, even in that case, it was most important that the Foreign
Office should be given as much notice as possible, in order to avoid situations
in which the British officials were consulted at such a late stage that it was
almost impossible to object without causing great embarrassment. For the same
reason, the Ministry of Defence was invited to give the maximum notice when
seeking political clearance for miscellaneous military co-operation with Greece
of a minor nature, such as short unpublished visits by members of the Greek
Armed Forces to Britain.\textsuperscript{43}

Finally, regarding publicity, Ministers revealed only the first half of the
British policy ruling, avoiding to make public that the UK was prohibiting the
supply to Greece of military equipment that could be used to suppress the
civilian population.\textsuperscript{44} When the question was raised in the Houses, the
Ministers and the government representatives took the line that, although there
had been no substantial sales of arms to Greece since the coup of 21 April

\textsuperscript{41} PRO, FCO 9/871, Doc 61: Confidential, Michael Stewart to Harold Wilson, 19 6 69: Greece-The supply of arms.
\textsuperscript{43} PRO, FCO 9/871, Doc 57: Confidential, R.H.G. Edmonds to Bendall, 6 6 69: Policy towards Greece; PRO, FCO 9/848, Doc 329: Confidential, Conclusions of a meeting, 19 6 69: Policy towards Greece.
\textsuperscript{44} PRO, FCO 9/854, Doc 782: Confidential, Secondé to Private Secretary, 4 12 69 Foreign Affairs debate-Greece.
1967, any Greek request for an export licence for the sale of British arms to the country in question would be considered in the light of NATO requirements.45

Chapter IX:

1 January – 31 December 1970
1. Reviewing US policy

1.1 Tasca's reports on the question of the civil liberties in Greece

Upon his arrival in Greece in early January 1970, Tasca had his first round of discussions with the representatives of International Organisations. In consequence, Tasca met with Lt-Colonel Dimitrios Ioannidis - a prime mover in the 21 April 1967 coup, and the director of the military police - and described to him the harm that was done to the prestige of the Greek regime by acts, in the name of security, that aroused protests abroad from cultural, scientific, or journalistic group. Ioannidis acknowledged the argument but he defended himself vigorously. Finally, in response to Tasca's strong plea for an Easter amnesty, Ioannidis responded that he would consider so recommending.

With regard to the issue of mistreatment and torture, Tasca mentioned parenthetically in his report to Washington that, whereas some Greek police authorities had undoubtedly been guilty of such practices, the international communist apparatus had been quick to exploit that opening, and had fed a good deal of lurid and unsubstantial material into it. At the same time, when asked from the NATO allies to give an independent evaluation of the allegations of torture in Greece, the Embassy responded that any exchanges on the subject played into the hands of critics of the Greek regime and were not helpful in turning aside the efforts to raise the Greek question in NATO.

Meanwhile, the Sioris case, together with the harsh sentences against the Ethnos proprietors and the exclusion of foreign observers from the democratic defence trial caused Tasca increased concern because it raised the fundamental question of the most effective means of dealing with "that inept

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1 NA, RG 59, Box 2330, Pol 29 GR – 1-1-70: Confidential, Athens telegram 429, by Tasca, 30/1/70: ICRC views on political detainees.
2 NA, RG 59, Box 2334, Pol GR-US – 1-1-70: Confidential, Athens telegram 1076, by Tasca, 7/3/70: Meeting with Lt-Colonel D. Ioannidis.
4 NA, RG 59, Box 2328, Pol 15 GR – 1-1-70: Secret, Athens telegram 2569, by McClelland, 22/5/70.
5 NA, RG 59, Box 2330, Pol 29 GR – 4-1-70: Limited Official Use, Athens telegram 1532, by Tasca, 1/4/70.
and strange government." Yet, Tasca believed that, in order to avoid another self-defeating policy box, neither of these setbacks necessarily indicated that the USA needed or should assume that the junta’s program in implementing the constitution was irrevocably prejudiced. McClelland also agreed that, if they allowed themselves to be deflected by each one of these local ‘happenings,’ they would never get anywhere.7

In contrast, the Embassy in Athens gave emphasis to Papadopoulos’ liberalization moves announced on 10 April 1970, which were, according to Tasca, largely the result of the efforts that the Embassy had been making over the previous months, in order to convince the power establishment in Athens that they should return to constitutional government as soon as possible.8 Moreover, under the pressure of the American Ambassador, Papadopoulos also implemented on 26 May 1970 a new law, which allowed court martial decisions to be appealed under certain circumstances. At the same time, the junta used to release almost every month a number of exiles.9

Finally, with regard to the Greek exiles in Europe, the US attitude was that a truly united front against the military regime in Athens, including the more sober opposition elements in exile, was not possible because it would require ideological and practical compromises unacceptable to the conservative opposition. Consequently, the officials in Washington did not wish to associate themselves in any way with an effort that could not succeed, since -even if it did succeed- it was their belief that it would not hasten the return to democracy in Greece.10

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6 NA, RG 59, Box 2330, Pol 29 GR – 4-1-70: Secret, Athens telegram 1613, by Tasca, 4 4 70.
7 NA, RG 59, Box 2328, Pol 15 GR – 1-1-70: Confidential, Roswell D. McClelland to Alfred G. Vigderman, 13 4 70.
8 NA, RG 59, Box 2325, Pol OR – 1-1-70: Confidential, Athens telegram 1833, by Tasca, 15 4/70.
9 For example, on 20 1/70 five exiles were freed from Leros, on 14 2/70 six exiles were freed from Leros, on 24 2 70 thirty exiles were freed from Leros, on 28 2/70 two exiles were freed from Leros, on 18 3 70 fifty-five exiles were freed from Leros, on 25 3 70 nine exiles were freed from Leros, on 21 4 70 fourteen army officers were freed, on 24 6 70 seventy-three exiles were freed from Leros [NA, RG 59, Pol 29 GR – 4-20-70: Confidential, Athens telegram A-301, by Tasca, 31 7 70: political detention in Greece: Summary and Chronology].
10 NA, RG 59, Box 2333, Pol GR-SWED – 10-8-70: Confidential, State telegram 94668 to Oslo, by Rogers, 16 6 70: Norwegian FomMin’s statement on Greece.
1.2 The USA resumes full MAP to Greece

Since his arrival in Greece in early January 1970, Tasca had his first round of discussions with the Greek officials, emphasizing the value to Greece and to the USA of their moving ahead to implement the new Greek constitution. He also pointed out the difficulties, under the current circumstances, of trying to maintain and strengthen ties on a bilateral basis and within the NATO alliance. With regard to the arms deliveries, Tasca took the line that he was quite hopeful of a positive outcome from Washington, but it would greatly help if the junta showed in fact that it was going to live up to its timetable.\(^{11}\)

On 24 March 1970, the Interdepartmental Mediterranean Ad Hoc Group on the Mediterranean prepared a separate section on Greece and stressed that, for the foreseeable future, the USA would be dealing in one form or another with the military regime. As IMAHG pointed out, the considerations that had led to the decision to resume arms shipments in principle were even more impressive in March 1970 than they were on 14 November 1969, particularly as a result of the denial of the Wheelus Air Force Base to the USA, of the Middle East situation, of the Turkish sensitivity regarding US fleet visits, and of the continuing Soviet activity in the Mediterranean. In other words, IMAHG came to the conclusion that Greece was essential to NATO, while the Greek real estate was important to the US interests elsewhere in the area.\(^{12}\)

Furthermore, on 31 March 1970, Tasca submitted to the State Department his report on Greece, firmly concluding that there was no feasible alternative for the US to pursuing the dual policy of supporting Greece militarily and pressing it politically in the interest of US-Greek friendship to return to constitutional government. Tasca argued that since the regime was not running the country into the ground nor following foreign policies contrary to US national interests, the policy of partial MAP restriction, coupled with quixotic public criticism, tended to be self-defeating. According to Tasca, while the state of affairs in Greece was not without serious inadequacies and

\(^{11}\) NA, RG 59, Box 2334, Pol GR-US — 1-1-70: Confidential, Athens telegram 810. by Tasca. 21/2/70: Talk with Prime Minister Papadopoulos.

\(^{12}\) NA, RG 273, Box 9, NSSM 90: Secret, NSSM 90 Section on Greece, by William I Cargo to H. A. Kissinger, 24/3/70.
certain dangers, especially of political polarisation, real improvement was possible. Moreover, Tasca pointed out that, if the USA did not provide Greece with military aid, the regime would turn to other countries, thus weakening US ties with the Greek military establishment and government.

Consequently, he recommended lifting the suspension on the delivery of military equipment and continuing the grant military aid for Greece at an adequate level. At the same time, he proposed that they should continue to press the Greek regime to return to representative and constitutional government, since the junta attached primary importance to the approbation of the USA. Tasca argued that the Administration should use that far more positive tool in dealing with Athens, rather than the unrelated and counter productive one of restricting military aid. In conclusion, the Ambassador expressed the satisfaction that the military government did indeed intend to move forward, albeit at its own, often reluctant, pace, with its program to return Greece to a more representative form of government.13

In connection with Papadopoulos' response to Tasca's overtures, the former sent a personal letter to the President, for transmittal to the Secretary of State, which related to the restoration of parliamentary government in Greece. The key language in the letter was the Greek Prime Minister's assertion that 'the situation was being led with steadfastness towards political normality and parliamentary government on the basis of the November 15 constitution...'. Moreover, on 10 April 1970, Papadopoulos put into effect the key article No. 10 of the new constitution, thus beginning the process of implementation that he had outlined in greater detail in his letter to the President. Tasca found that the commitment to constitutional progress within a specific time frame, as represented by the letter, and the enforcement of article 10 were encouraging signs.14

Meanwhile, the NSC Under Secretaries Committee was asked to consider courses of action for carrying out the recommendations in Ambassador Tasca's 'Report on Greece.' With respect to NATO, the NSC Under Secretaries Committee concluded that to avoid implying that the NATO

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14 NA, RG 59, Box 2325, Pol GR – 1-1-70: Secret, Athens telegram 1903, by Tasca, 17/4 70: Assurances from Greek Prime Minister on Constitutional progress.
partners of the USA could share the responsibility for the decision to resume arms shipments, it would be better to inform them rather than to consult with them, since they could never secure a favourable NATO verdict on that question.

Furthermore, the NSC Under Secretaries Committee agreed that the intensity of public feeling in the USA and among the NATO allies in Western Europe, and the consequent impact on the Congress suggested the virtue of a joint State-Defence presentation of the decision to the Congressional leadership as well as to the NATO partners, shortly before the public announcement. The Committee recommended also the resumption of the arms shipments to take place after the June 15 NATO meeting, unless it appeared that the resumption of arms shipments would seriously jeopardise any of the legislation in the Administration’s foreign aid program.15

On 25 June 1970, Henry Kissinger signed the NSDM No. 67, which informed the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defence that the President had approved the following instructions as the principal elements in a course of action to implement the decision to resume arms shipments to Greece.

Firstly, Papadopoulos might be told, in advance and in the strictest confidence, of the US intention to resume military shipments after, in the US judgement, such resumption would no longer seriously jeopardise the Foreign Military Sales bill. In that connection, he might be also told that the US target for resumption was about the 1 September 1970.

Thirdly, Papadopoulos could be further informed that the USA anticipated that there would be further specific steps that could be cited as further evidence of progress toward full constitutional government in Greece. Finally, the Prime Minister could be told that the US took at face value and accepted without reservation his assurances on moving towards parliamentary democracy.16

The State Department added that Tasca, in taking action in accordance with the foregoing, should make clear that any leak, which in turn would likely

5 NA, NXN, Box 593, GR Vol. 1-1 – 10 69-10/70: Secret, Memorandum for the President, from the NSC Under Secretaries Committee, 21/5/70: Resumption of Deliveries of Suspended Military Shipments to Greece.
6 NA, RG 273, Box 1, NSDM 67: Secret, Exclusively Eyes Only, NSDM 67, 25 6 70 Military Supply Policy towards Greece.
affect adversely the US strategy on the Foreign Military Sales Bill, would place in jeopardy the Administration’s ability to carry out the above decision. Tasca acted on these instructions on 11 July 1970. Papadopoulos said that he was pleased that the decision had been made, since this would mean a new phase in US-Greek relations.

In the end of August 1970, the Acting Secretary recommended to Nixon to authorise them to proceed with the appropriate consultations with the Congress on the basis of announcing the lifting of the suspension shortly after 1 September 1970, and particularly after the NATO DPC meeting of 18 September. Kissinger also urged Nixon to proceed rapidly with the announcement of the US resumption of the military assistance to Greece, arguing that in view of the Middle East situation this was an ideal time. Moreover, he added that such a decision would also assist in creating a favorable climate in the event the USA had to call on Greek cooperation should a contingency occur.

As a result, Rogers instructed Tasca on 14 September 1970 to inform Papadopoulos that the public announcement of the resumption of deliveries of the suspended military items to Greece would be made in Washington on 22 September 1970. The public statement, read by the Department’s press spokesman on 22 September 1970, ran in the following way: "United States policy towards Greece has been under review by this administration for the past 18 months. During that time the United States has continued to withhold major items of equipment in the Military Aid Program for Greece, a policy established by the previous administration shortly after the coup in Greece in April 1967.

The administration has now decided to resume normal military shipments to Greece. The resumption of such shipments will enhance the ability

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18 NA, RG 59, Box 2334, Pol GR-US — 6-26-70: Secret, Athens telegram 3754, by Tasca, 13/7/70: Meeting with Prime Minister-Military Aid and political development.
19 NA, NXN, Box 593, GR Vol. 1-I — 1/69-10/70: Secret, Memorandum for the President, by the Acting Secretary: Raising Suspension on Deliveries of Major Items of military equipment to Greece.
21 NA, NXN, Box 593, Vol. 1-IV — 1/69-10/70: Secret, State telegram 150171 to Athens. by Rogers, 14/9/70.
of the Greek forces to carry out their responsibilities in defence of the NATO area, and thus contribute importantly to the cohesion and strength of the southern flank of NATO. Greece offers strategic advantages to the NATO alliance and to the United States which are of great importance to the security of the West. This importance has been sharply underlined in recent months by events in the Eastern Mediterranean. The decision to resume the shipment of suspended items rests entirely on these considerations.

Although the United States had hoped for a more rapid return to representative government in Greece, the trend toward a constitutional order is established. Major sections of the Constitution have been implemented, and partial restoration of civil rights has been accomplished. The Government of Greece has stated that it intends to establish parliamentary democracy. The United States shares the concern of its NATO allies for steady progress toward restoring the country to political government. This is a policy to which we remain firmly committed.22

1.3 Fears of disruption in NATO

Although the allies had long since learned to live with the less than democratic Portuguese regime, the argument for ‘democratic purity,’ often raised also as a bar to Spanish admission to NATO, had been vigorously urged by some NATO governments in connection with developments in Greece. While a direct confrontation between the Greek regime and the critics among its Western European allies had been avoided in NATO, the Greek question continued to becloud the NATO horizon, since, in some NATO countries, governments came under strong domestic pressures to proceed against the Greek regime in other forums, or to try to get the flow of weapons to Greece halted. On the other hand, as George Denney, the Deputy Director of INR, argued, none of the foreign governments who criticized the Greek regime was

inclined to exercise much direct leverage on the US, or seriously press for a curtailment of Greece’s participation in NATO.\textsuperscript{23}

For his part, Rockwell’s response to the Norwegian claim of US ability to influence the situation in Greece\textsuperscript{24} was that, although the USA might be able to throw out the Colonels, if it so wished, such a course would destroy all US other interests in Greece. Consequently, Rockwell reasoned that, while they did not agree with the internal order of Greece, they did not think that the way to change it was for the US to enter into a hostile confrontation with the regime, especially when the USA had important considerations there.\textsuperscript{25}

Meanwhile, as the DRC began the discussion of the Greek sub-group report, it became evident that an impasse might result from the recommendation that the Defence Review Committee should invite the Defence Planning Committee to urge nations, willing and able to do so, to take all the appropriate steps for strengthening the Greek and Turkish local forces along the lines indicated in the report. When the time came to approve the report in the DRC, and later in the DPC, the Dutch, the Danes, and the Norwegians appeared as the principal opponents, with the Belgians and the Canadians on the fringe.\textsuperscript{26} In fact, according to Ellsworth, there appeared to be a direct connection in the minds of several representatives between the Greek report and the US resumption of bilateral heavy arms deliveries, since a delay on the Greek report delayed the resumption of arms deliveries.\textsuperscript{27}

On the other hand, the USA wanted definitely to avoid raising the Greek question in NATO. As Rockwell pointed out, NATO would exist after the military regime in Greece was gone, but any break that might take place between Greece and NATO would be difficult to repair. Greece’s withdrawal from the Council of Europe did not alter the basis of US attitude towards the

\textsuperscript{23} NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 8-1-69: Secret, Intelligence Note-737, by G. C. Denney, Jr., to Secretary, 14/10/69: NATO & Greece.

\textsuperscript{24} NA, RG 59, Box 2328, Pol 15 GR – 1-1-70: Secret, Research Memorandum-3, by Ray S. Cline, to the Secretary, 19/1/70: Western Europe: Estimated Attitude of NATO members toward possible resumption of MAP to Greece.

\textsuperscript{25} NA, RG 59, Box 2018, Pol 3 Council of Europe – 11-1-69: Confidential, Memorandum of Conversation, between K. Sverre, S. W. Rockwell, Miss M. K. Mitchell, 26 11 69: Greece and the Council of Europe.

\textsuperscript{26} NA, RG 59, Box 1738, Def 6 GR – 1-1-70: Secret, US NATO telegram 249, by Vest, 24/1/70: Greece and NATO.

\textsuperscript{27} NA, RG 59, Box 1738, Def 6 GR – 1-1-70: Secret, US NATO telegram 2666, by Ellsworth, 20/7/70: DRC report on Greek local forces.
Greek question. Their concern in that respect continued to be that the negative attention focused on Greece in the Council of Europe should not be transferred to the NATO forum.\(^{28}\)

As the American officials argued, such a course of action could well provoke an acrimonious exchange that would inevitably be reflected in press reports, thus damaging the unity of the Alliance and the processes of political and military cooperation that were so important for maintaining the credibility of the deterrent. Consequently, the State Department hoped that all Allies would exercise the utmost restraint and agree to keep any discussion of the Greek issue in bilateral channels.\(^{29}\)

At the same time, Ellsworth urged that the USA should not inform the NATO members—with the exception perhaps of the FRG, Greece’s second largest external arms source prior to the coup of 1967—\(^{30}\) that the Administration had decided to resume heavy arms for Greece, since such an action would force them either to raise the Greek question in the NATO Ministerial meeting in Rome, in a manner that would fully justify Pipinelis’ walking out of the meeting, or to mislead deliberately their own parties, press and parliaments.\(^{31}\) Rogers also warned Nixon that they should expect adverse reactions if they announced the resumption of heavy arms shipments to Greece.\(^{32}\)

For its part, the NSC Under Secretaries Committee estimated that public knowledge in Western Europe of an increase in US military aid to


\(^{32}\) NA, RG 59, Box 2325, Pol GR – 1-1-70: Secret, US Mission NATO telegram 1881, by Ellsworth, 15/5/70: Greece and NATO

\(^{32}\) NA, RG 59, Box 3146, NATO 3 – 1-1-70: Secret, Madrid telegram 2149, from Rogers to Nixon, 28/5/70: NATO.
Greece would damage NATO solidarity and the NATO image, regardless of how the matter was handled tactically. Public opinion in Western Europe generally with respect to Greece had not improved, and there was already mounting political pressure upon some NATO governments (Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands) to raise the question of Greece in NATO, alleging that the undemocratic nature of the regime was a matter of concern for the Alliance.\(^{33}\)

In the light of the above, Rogers informed Tasca that, in order to avoid press leaks, the Congress and the NATO allies would be informed in confidence of the decision to resume military shipments to Greece no sooner than on 21 September.\(^{34}\) Rogers also authorized Tasca to say –if asked– that 22 September was chosen because the USA wished to avoid complicating the arrangements for the delicate and carefully worked out compromise in the DPC on 18 September about the report on Greek forces.\(^{35}\)

1.4 Tasca recommends US disassociation from Constantine

On 3 September 1969, the British Ambassador in Athens called on McClelland to exchange views with regard to the possibility that the regime might depose Constantine, perhaps in favour of young Prince Paul. McClelland, however, was skeptical. As he argued, even if it should later turn out that the junta was seriously contemplating the dethronement of King Constantine, he had some reservations about associating the USA with any British effort to dissuade Papadopoulos.\(^{36}\)

The State Department shared McClelland's reservations. Although there were advantages in Constantine’s retaining the throne, since he continued

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33 NA, NXN, Box 593, GR Vol. 1-1 – 10/69-10/70: Secret, Memorandum for the President, from the NSC Under Secretaries Committee, 21/5/70: Resumption of Deliveries of Suspended Military Shipments to Greece.
34 NA, NXN, Box 593, Vol. 1-IV – 1/69-10/70: Secret, State telegram 152573 to Athens, by Rogers, 17/9/70.
35 NA, NXN, Box 593, Vol. 1-IV – 1/69-10/70: Secret, State telegram 150171 to Athens, by Rogers, 14/9/70.
36 NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 8-1-69: Confidential, Athens telegram 3866, by McClelland, 3/9/69: British concern over possible GOG moves against King.
to have some importance as a symbol of more normal political life, the State Department was not particularly anxious to get drawn into the quagmire of the King's relationships with the junta. 37

In fact, the American officials in Washington had chosen to follow a policy of continuing official disassociation from the Greek King, keeping their contacts with Constantine on a rather informal routine level until it became clear what part he could play. 38 In accordance with that attitude, the newly appointed American Ambassador in Athens, Henry Tasca, made no effort to contact Constantine on his way to Greece, although the Ambassador stayed in Rome for a while. Constantine expressed his concern for that attitude, since it was in contrast to the Belgian and Philippine attitude, whose Ambassadors had paid calls on the Greek King after presenting their credentials in Athens, while the German Ambassador had also requested an appointment for such a call. 39

For his part, Tasca reported to Sisco, the Assistant Secretary of State for NEA, that, despite the widespread belief within the Executive Branch and the Congress that the Greek regime would be in a far better position to normalize its relations with its allies if the King were to return, that course ran into the most formidable obstacle of widespread animosity within the regime towards the King. According to Tasca, feelings ran so high that Papadopoulos could only normalize his relations with the King by running the risk of endangering his own position and, at the least, his program for constitutional progress. Moreover, as Tasca argued, the regime was firmly entrenched; consequently, only through the regime could the USA hope to achieve its objective of making Greece again fully acceptable to the European governments and the American public opinion. 40

In conclusion, Tasca made clear that he was not implying that the King had no role to play in Greece; yet, as he added, that role could only come about when and if the regime felt it should regularize its relations with the monarchy. Consequently, since the first US requirement was that he should return under

37 NA, RG 59, Box 2153, Pol 23-9 GR – 8-1-69: Confidential, State telegram 150055 to Athens, by Richardson, 5/9/69: British concern over possible GOG moves against King.
38 NA, RG 59, Box 2328, Pol 15 GR – 1-1-70: Secret, U. Alexis Johnson to G. Dudley Jr, 28/7/70.
39 NA, RG 59, Box 2329, Pol 15-1 GR – 1-1-70: Secret, Madrid telegram 123, by Hill, 12/1 70.
40 NA, RG 59, Box 2399, Pol 15-1 GR – 1-1-70: Secret, Athens telegram 5172, by Tasca, 17/9/70.
conditions that would not prejudice the American interests in Greece, Tasca
stressed that in no case should it ever appear that the USA was instrumental in
any way in his return.\footnote{NA, RG 59, Box 2328, Pol 15 GR – 1-1-70: Secret, Athens telegram 3586, by Tasca, to Sisco, 6/7/70.}
2. UK: The Heath Government

2.1 Repercussions of the Greek withdrawal from the Council of Europe

The Resolution of 12 December 1969 had charged Ministers’ Deputies to settle the administrative and financial consequences of the Greek withdrawal from the Council of Europe. The British view on the subject was that, although Greece remained formally a member of the Council until 31 December 1969, the practical effect of the Greek notice of withdrawal and of the resolution was that Greece was to be regarded as not eligible, with effect from 12 December 1969, to participate in any of the activities of the Council. Furthermore, the British argued that the continuation of the proceedings on the Report of the European Commission of Human Rights on the Greek case was not affected by the Greek withdrawal from the Council or by their denunciation of the Human Rights Convention.¹

Meanwhile, further reports from Athens claimed that the junta regarded the UK as hostile to the regime. Therefore, Sir Michael Stewart’s opinion was that, from the point of view of British ability to exercise some influence with the regime, it was important that the UK should not be thought for the second time in three months to be taking the lead in the Council of Europe proceedings.²

As a result, the Foreign Office decided that low-key representations by the British representative to the Secretariat of the Council of Europe and a confidential exchange in WEU would make British views known to the interested parties without running the risk of further damage to Anglo-Greek relations. Furthermore, in pursuance of that policy, the UK took a backseat in

¹ PRO, FCO 9/1199, Doc 12: CE Guidance (70)27: Council of Europe-Consultative Assembly, 22-30/1/70: The situation in Greece.
the operation of drafting a resolution for the Committee of Deputies in March.³
In the meantime, it was agreed that the less surface the UK exposed publicly
the better.⁴

The British efforts to normalise Anglo-Greek relations were successful -
almost too much so. As Sir Michael Stewart reported from Athens, articles in
Nea Politia of 3 and 4 March 1970 went out of their way to comment
favourably on Anglo-Greek relations.⁵ According to Sir Michael Stewart, these
articles might prove rather embarrassing, if they were picked by the British
press with harmful parliamentary repercussions.⁶ This change in the Anglo-
Greek relations did not last for long, however. A few days later, Sir Michael
Stewart reported that General Angelis was bitterly critical of the European
countries’ attitude towards Greece in regard to the Human Rights Commission
Report.⁷

For their part, the British officials commented that the UK could now
only await developments, and hope that the minimum damage had been done
to the Anglo-Greek relations by the British vote on 15 April for the Ministers’
resolution in the Council of Europe, and by the Greek interpretation of the part
the UK had played in the proceedings leading up to it, since Britain had in fact
discouraged the Germans from proposing an amendment of it.⁸

After the general elections in the UK, the new British government was
more concerned with Greece’s position in NATO, drawing a clear distinction
between their attitude towards Greece as a NATO ally, and their policy
towards Greece as a member of the Council of Europe. As Rippon, the
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, commented to the Greek Ambassador

³ PRO, FCO 9/1200, Doc 72: Confidential, R.L. Secondé to Bendall, 18/2/70: Greece and the
Council of Europe; PRO, FCO 9/1199, Doc 39: Confidential, R.L. Secondé to Bendall,
12/2/70: Greece and the Council of Europe; PRO, FCO 9/1199, Doc 40: Confidential, FCO
telegram 38 to Strasbourg, from Michael Stewart, 19/2/70: Greece and the Council of Europe;
PRO, FCO 9/1200, Doc 79: Confidential, R.L. Secondé to Baker, 6/3/70: Greece and the
Council of Europe.
⁴ PRO, FCO 9/1201, Doc 103: Confidential, Notes for Supplementarys, 23/3/70: Greece and
the Council of Europe.
⁵ PRO, FCO 9/1217, Doc 9: Confidential, Sir Michael Stewart to R.L. Secondé, 4/3/70: Anglo-
Greek relations.
⁶ PRO, FCO 9/1217, Doc 10: Confidential, J.M.O. Snodgrass to R.L. Secondé, 12/3/70: Anglo-
Greek relations.
⁷ PRO, FCO 9/1200, Doc 84: Confidential, Athens telegram 120, from Sir Michael Stewart,
12/3/70: Greece and the Council of Europe; PRO, FCO 9/1200, Doc 85: Confidential, Athens
telegram 121, from Sir Michael Stewart, 12/3/70: Greece and the Council of Europe.
⁸ PRO, FCO 9/1201, Doc 133: Confidential, J.M.O. Snodgrass to J.E. Powell-Jones, 18/4/70:
Greece and the Council of Europe.
on 16 November 1970, the Conservative Party had not been in full agreement with the way the previous British Government had handled the proceedings on Greece in the Council of Europe. As a result, when the junta decided not to renew the agreement with the ICRC on 5 November 1970, HM government representative only took notice of that decision, adding that the UK had no standing to intervene.

2.2 The British policy towards Greece becomes more flexible

It was agreed at the Foreign Secretary’s Office Meeting on 17 December 1969, that the UK should recognise that the current regime in Athens would remain in power for the time being. It was also concluded that Britain -without being in any way apologetic for the stand she took in Paris on 12 December on the Greek membership of the Council of Europe- should continue to try to maintain a reasonable working relationship with the regime. Finally, Sir Michael Stewart was authorised to convey orally and informally to the Greek Foreign Minister the warm personal regards of the Foreign Secretary, Michael Stewart, and of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, George Thomson. Sir Michael Stewart took this action on 13 January, and reported that Pipinelis showed obvious pleasure.

Nevertheless -as we have already mentioned- there were signs of renewed Greek suspicions about the British attitude towards the regime over the last weeks of February, originating in the activities of the National Front in Cyprus, which were regarded as having the support of the UK. As the British Ambassador in Athens reported, the junta looked upon Britain as ‘being both

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9 PRO, FCO 9/1234, Doc 25: Confidential, Record of conversation between the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Greek Ambassador held at the FCO, 16/11/70: Greece & the Council of Europe.
10 PRO, FCO 9/888, Doc 5: Confidential, Note for Secretary of State’s meeting, 17 12 70: Greece; PRO, FCO 9/837, Doc 70: Confidential, Conclusions of a meeting, 17/12 70: Policy towards Greece.
11 PRO, FCO 9/1234, Doc 4: Confidential, to Bendall to R.L. Secondé, 12 2/70: Greek Ambassador’s call on the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.
the most determined and formidable opponent of the regime." For their part, the British officials estimated that the basis of these suspicions appeared to be emotional and tactical, probably resulting from pressure from the regime’s right-wing supporters. The Foreign Office agreed, however, that, while they could not allow that development to affect British policies unduly, they would be wise to exercise more than usual care in the presentation of these policies.

As we have mentioned, the British efforts to normalise Anglo-Greek relations were successful for some time, but Greek government circles still entertained some private doubts about UK protestations of support for, and admiration of their policy towards Cyprus. According to the British Embassy in Athens, the regime realised that a crisis over Cyprus could threaten its own position at home. As a result, the junta members could never quite rid themselves of the notion that the UK was secretly trying to provoke a Cyprus episode, in order to bring this about.

What is more, as the British Embassy acknowledged, the Greek doubts were further strengthened by the belief that the UK might wish to maintain an atmosphere of tension on the island in order to deflect possible pressure on the Sovereign Base Areas. An example of the regime’s changed attitude towards the UK occurred on 18 April 1970, when Pattakos, comparing unfavourably the British policy towards Greece with the French attitude, accused directly the UK for Communist leanings and hostile activity to the junta.

On 19 June 1970, the Conservative Party won the General Elections in Britain, and Edward Heath became Prime Minister. As Seconde, the Head of South European Department, commented, although Anglo-Greek relations were not at the top of the foreign policy agenda of the new Ministers, the Foreign Office was preparing recommendations for the Foreign Secretary with the aim of improving their working relationship with the regime.

Palmer’s suggestion for improving relations with the junta was to leave the regime in no doubt of the British wish for a good working relationship with them. As a first step towards that direction, Palmer proposed to the Foreign

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12 PRO, FCO 9/1199, Doc 31: Confidential, Athens telegram 71, from Sir Michael Stewart, 17/2/70: Greece and the Council of Europe.
13 PRO, FCO 9/1216, Doc 3: Confidential, Extract from the record of a meeting, 16 3 70: HMG policies towards Greece.
14 PRO, FCO 9/1217, Doc 11: Confidential, J. Powell-Jones to J.M.O. Snodgrass, 21 4 70.
Secretary to seek to remove misunderstandings by sending a friendly message to the Greek government, in response to the congratulatory message from Pipinelis.

Palmer also suggested a Ministerial visit to Britain, continued British support for the endorsement of the NATO sub-group report, a non-committal attitude to the new Council of Europe proceedings, further efforts and ready co-operation with the Greek authorities to run to earth the Greek and British citizens running arms and explosives to Greece, abstention on the Resolution on Greece at the ILO Conference, and a less grudging military co-operation.\(^{15}\)

With regard to the most pressing of these suggestions—the Resolution on Greece at the ILO Conference—Sir Alec Douglas-Home weighed the arguments very carefully before deciding that he did not wish at that early stage to be seen to fly in the face of the European opinion on the situation in Greece.\(^{16}\) On the other hand, he sent a message to Pipinelis on 26 June 1970 thanking him for his congratulations on his appointment as Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, in a tone that was rather more forthcoming than the one used by the Labour government.\(^{17}\)

Finally, with regard to the British broad objectives and policy towards Greece, Sir Alec Douglas-Home agreed that they should remain the same with those set out in the then Foreign Secretary’s dispatch of 20 June 1968. Nevertheless, he confirmed that there would be advantage in adopting a rather more flexible approach to questions of military cooperation with Greece and arms supplies to that country. In other words, although the Heath government made no basic change in their policy towards Greece, there was a change of emphasis and style that could make it easier for Britain to have a ‘working relationship’ with the regime.\(^{18}\)


\(^{17}\) PRO, FCO 9/1216, Doc 4: Confidential, R.L. Seconde to D.V. Bendall, 15 7 70: Greece; PRO, FCO 9/1216, Doc 5: Confidential, J.M.O. Snodgrass to Private Secretary, 21 7 70; PRO, FCO 9/1216, Doc 6: Confidential, R.L. Seconde to D.V. Bendall, 3/7/70: Foreign Affairs debate-Greece.

Consequently, when Bendall met with the Greek Ambassador in London on 16 July 1970, he stressed that the UK wanted a good working relationship with the Greek government. At the same time, however, in view of the euphoric articles in the officially inspired Greek press after the general election in England to the effect that the new government of the UK would impute a complete change of policy and attitude towards Greece, Bendall pointed out that the Heath government were no less concerned than their predecessors to see rapid advance towards the restoration of political freedom in Greece. As he argued, if there were any differences, they were only to the extent that the previous government had to pay greater heed to a vociferous left wing within the Parliamentary party.19

On 30 September 1970, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rippon, held a meeting to discuss British policy towards Greece. In view of the conclusions reached at that meeting, Sir Michael Stewart was instructed, on his return to Athens, to speak informally to Papadopoulos, laying emphasis on the importance the UK attached to Greece’s membership of NATO, on the British anxiety to establish a good working relationship with the Greek regime, and on HM government’s determination to continue their support of the junta’s efforts to promote a lasting settlement in Cyprus. The Ambassador was also asked to mention the difficulties created in Britain by the regime’s continued suspension of certain articles of the new constitution, but without over-emphasizing them.20

The Ambassador acted on his instructions on 5 November 1970. According to Sir Michael Stewart, the upshot of his discussion with Papadopoulos was that Britain was back on net with the Prime Minister: the Ambassador had re-established the special contact with him and his office that he had had up to a year ago, and he reasonably expected to see Papadopoulos when he wanted to. In conclusion, Sir Michael Stewart stressed that Britain

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19 PRO, FCO 9/1234, Doc 14: Confidential, D.V. Bendall to South East Department, 16 7 70: Greece.
20 PRO, FCO 9 1206, Doc 120: Confidential, Conclusions of a meeting, 30 9 70 Policy towards Greece.
would draw a distinction between Greece as a member of NATO, and Greece’s domestic policies.21

As the Ambassador had predicted, however, the opportunities for misinterpretation did not fail to arise.22 By the end of November, the good working relationship of the Heath administration had been upset by the Colonels, who had reacted with quite unwarranted touchiness—according to the Foreign Office—to a series of incidents. These included Sir Alec Douglas-Home’s remarks about the internal situation in Greece during his conversation with Xanthopoulos-Palamas on 20 October 1970,23 John Fraser’s language in the House of Commons on 29 October 1970,24 and the abortive plans for Pattakos to meet Edward Heath in Paris on 12 November 1970.25

Some weeks later, however, Sir Michael Stewart reported that this particular state of affairs was beginning to settle down, since the threat to the unity of the Greek regime was over. It was Sir Michael Stewart’s conclusion therefore that with the usual ups and downs, the UK could manage to deal with this situation.26 For their part, the British officials in London expressed their relief that the latest wave of the junta’s sensitivity seemed to be diminishing. Nevertheless, they indicated that it was not a very encouraging sign of the regime’s political maturity that relations should fluctuate so rapidly for reasons that were so slight.27

Finally, as Secondé concluded, his own hunch was that the current regime would have to harden its attitude in order to prevent itself from disintegrating

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21 PRO, FCO 9 1217, Doc 28: Confidential, Sir Michael Stewart to R.L. Secondé, 6 11/70: Anglo-Greek relations.
22 PRO, FCO 9 1229: Confidential, Sir Michael Stewart to Sir Alec Douglas-Home, 11/9 70: Greece as a military ally.
26 PRO, FCO 9/1217, Doc 60: Confidential, Sir Michael Stewart to R.L. Secondé, 15 12 70: Possible visit to the UK by the Chief of the Greek Armed Services.
from within. As a result, the British official proposed that the UK should keep
the record straight so far as British views about the Colonels' regime were
concerned, while keeping also their eyes on the state of health of the working
relationship, which was chronically subject to nervous tension. Bendall, for his
part, indicated that the UK had very little room to manoeuvre, adding that, on
the whole, space tended to get narrower than wider as the tensions within the
regime grew. Therefore, he saw no other policy than the one Britain was
following at the time.28

2.3 Britain attaches importance to Greece's relations with NATO

After the Greek withdrawal on 12 December 1970, the Foreign Office
feared that the Scandinavian governments might seek to follow up the
proceedings in the Council of Europe by questioning Greece's right to
membership of NATO. The British officials were determined to resist such
proposals, maintaining a clear distinction between the withdrawal of Greece
from the Council of Europe and action against Greece in NATO.

As Michael Stewart argued, discussion of the Greek internal affairs
would have a divisive effect within the Alliance, while the expulsion of Greece
would open a critical gap in NATO's South East flank, thereby putting at risk
democratic institutions and human liberties on a scale wider than in Greece
alone.29 Consequently, the Foreign Secretary stressed to Harold Wilson that,
while the UK should continue to use all possible methods to influence the junta
towards the re-introduction of democracy in the country, this should stop short
of action in NATO, since considerable damage to the alliance could result.30

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28 PRO, FCO 9/1216: Confidential, Minutes: A.E. Palmer 17/12/70, R.L. Secondé 22 12 70,
D.V. Bendall 22/12/70
29 PRO, FCO 9/837, Doc 70: Confidential, Conclusions of a meeting, 17/12/69: Policy towards
Greece; PRO, FCO 9/1204: Confidential, PMV(W)(70)B3: Brief by the Foreign and
Commonwealth Secretary, 7/1/70: Visit of the Prime Minister to Washington and Ottawa, 26-
28/1/70; PRO, FCO 9/1223, Doc 8: Confidential, R.L. Secondé to Bendall, 9/3 70: Policy on
arms sales to Greece and Spain.
30 PRO, FCO 9/1213, Doc 18: Confidential, PM/70/9: Foreign and Commonwealth Office to
Prime Minister, 22/1/70: Greece- Prime Minister's talks in Washington.
Within this general guideline, the Foreign Secretary instructed the British Delegation in NATO that it was in the British interests so far as possible to use their influence to avoid the development of a confrontation with regard to the sub-group report, refraining however from playing too prominent a role in the Alliance as an intermediary between Greece and her critics.\(^{31}\)

When the Ambassador in Athens mentioned that such a low posture attitude might harm the Anglo-Greek negotiations on the nuclear reactor,\(^{32}\) Michael Stewart replied that, although the UK was of course resolved to safeguard her bilateral relations with Greece, the important thing was to keep in step with the major NATO Allies in handling the report, in order to minimise any adverse repercussions in the British interests, and to maintain the cohesion of NATO, which was important.\(^{33}\)

Meanwhile, some criticism of Greece’s continuing membership in NATO took place in Parliament. Ministers, however, repeatedly stated that Greece’s membership of the Council of Europe was not relevant to her participation in NATO.\(^{34}\) The Foreign Office took the same line with the Greek Ambassador in London,\(^{35}\) while Harold Wilson acted likewise when he met with Nixon in Washington on 27-28 January 1970, and with Brandt on 3 March 1970.\(^{36}\)

After the general elections in Britain on 18 June 1970, and the subsequent change of government, Sir Alec Douglas-Home instructed the British Ambassador in Athens to explain, in reply to any enquiries he received, that the

\(^{31}\) PRO, FCO 41/652, Doc 4: Confidential, FCO telegram 28 to UKDel NATO, from Michael Stewart, 26/1/70: Greece and NATO.

\(^{32}\) PRO, FCO 9/1204, Doc 3: Confidential, Athens telegram 49, from Sir Michael Stewart, 2/2/70: Anglo-Greek relations.

\(^{33}\) PRO, FCO 9/1204, Doc 4: Confidential, FCO telegram 38 to Athens, from Michael Stewart, 3/2/70: NATO report on strengthening of Greek Armed Forces.


\(^{36}\) PRO, FCO 9/1204: Confidential, PMV(W)(70)B3: Brief by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, 7/1/70: Visit of the Prime Minister to Washington and Ottawa, 26-28 1 70; PRO, FCO 9/1213, Doc 23: Secret, P. Moon to J.A.N. Graham, 3/2/70: President Nixon on Greece, 27-28/1/70; PRO, PREM 9/3246: GMV(70)\(^{2}\)nd meeting, 3/3/70: Greece.
UK would naturally give early and careful consideration to any official Greek requests for military equipment.37

On 22 June, during an unattributable briefing of press correspondents, the Foreign Secretary replied to a question that ‘the importance in relation to Greece is their participation in the NATO Alliance and I don’t want to see that weakened. But beyond that I wouldn’t have thought there was very much difference in our relationship with the Greek government.’ Furthermore, on 26 June 1970, Sir Alec Douglas-Home sent a message to Pipinelis, where he repeated that he was conscious of the importance of Greece to the Western Alliance.

Against this background, and in conformity with the Foreign Secretary’s remarks, the Foreign Office recommended that the role of Greece in NATO should be made the anchor of British policy on military co-operation with Greece. As Secondé argued, so long as the Greek government’s internal policies remained offensive to public opinion in the UK and in the West generally, Britain had to avoid any appearance of condoning them. On the other hand, he pointed out that the UK should not allow this to prejudice her essential interests or to jeopardize the effectiveness of NATO, since Greece’s position on the South East flank had become even more important to the Alliance since the build-up of the Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean.

Consequently, the Foreign Office proposed that the British forces should continue to take part in multilateral NATO exercises in the Greek territory, without waiting for Ministers’ approval, unless the exercises or visits were on a scale likely to attract public attention. Furthermore, unless there was some over-riding political objection, HMG would agree to proposals for purely bilateral NATO cooperation, after consulting with Ministers. Ministers would be also consulted about proposals for significant and visible cooperation outside the NATO context; other miscellaneous minor items would be approved, without submission to Ministers.

Finally, with reference to the principles and procedures governing the supply of arms to Greece, the Foreign Office proposed to allow the sale to Greece of arms that she could reasonably be expected to require in order to

fulfill her NATO role, while prohibiting the supply of arms that could credibly be used to repress the civilian population. Furthermore, requests for export licences for minor or wholly controversial items falling clearly within the first category would be approved at Departmental level, thus enabling the Foreign Office to give quick replies to the Ministry of Defence. The British officials would also submit to Ministers when an order would be likely to cause controversy in the UK, on account of its size or nature. Finally, the Foreign Office stressed that Ministers should be aware of requests from the Greek regime for items of which the supply could be commercially valuable to the UK, but which for political reasons they would not normally approve.

For his part, the Foreign Secretary agreed with the submission of the Foreign Office, adding that the British officials should take the line that 'the UK would try hard to keep the Greek relation to NATO correct and good.'\(^{38}\) In connection with the arms supplies, Sir Alec Douglas-Home agreed that the current government should go no further than the previous one on that subject, confirming that 'the naval equipment could go forward, but the anti-tank guns should wait for the moment.'\(^{39}\)

Sir Michael Stewart was subsequently informed of the new directives. He was also cautioned to reply any questions about the British policy on arms supplies repeating the basic formula that the issue was under 'careful consideration' in London. Ministers were advised to take the same line if the Greek Ambassador raised the matter with them in the UK.\(^{40}\)

On 30 September 1970 the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Geoffrey Rippon, held a meeting on Greece.\(^{41}\) The discussion at the meeting was focused mainly on Greece's relation with NATO and on the British military co-operation with the regime. As Snodgrass had minuted, it was on the

\(^{38}\) PRO, FCO 9/1216, Doc 4: Confidential, R.L. Secondé to D.V. Bendall, 15/7/70: Greece.
\(^{39}\) PRO, FCO 9/1216, Doc 5: Confidential, Minute: J.M.O. Snodgrass to Private Secretary, 21/7/70; PRO, FCO 9/1206, Doc 120: Confidential, Conclusions of a meeting, 30 9 70: Policy towards Greece; PRO, FCO 9/1216, Doc 13: Confidential, Memorandum by Southern European Department, 28 9 70: Greece.
\(^{41}\) At the meeting, the following were present: Sir Michael Stewart, Anthony Royle, Brimelow, J.P. Waterfield, R.M. Tesh, C.C.B. Stewart, R.L. Secondé, J.M.O. Snodgrass, W.J.A. Wilberforce, M.O'D. B. Alexander, C. Battiscombe, and Mrs. A.L. Willott.
military cooperation side that Britain should hope to be able to streamline her policy, since the UK scope for direct action to counter the Greek irritations towards Britain was quite limited.42

As the Foreign Secretary had ruled that the UK should try to keep the Greek government's relations with NATO 'correct and good,' Rippon concluded that, if in future the Scandinavians spoke in NATO against the Greeks, the British delegation should be prepared to underline the value of the Greek contribution to the Alliance. Furthermore, it was also agreed that UK cooperation with Greece in the military field was particularly important if Britain were to maintain a good working relationship with the regime. With that end in view, the meeting supported the idea of an art exhibition at the British Council in Athens to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Greek War of Independence. It was also proposed that a Greek Minister with a technical portfolio should be invited to visit the UK in the following spring.

In connection with the arms supplies, Sir Michael Stewart was authorised to tell Papadopoulos at a suitable opportunity that Ministers in London had discussed that question, and had agreed that Britain had no objection in principle to the supply of arms to Greece for NATO purposes, adding in particular that there was no objection to the supply of frigates. The Ambassador was instructed to add, however, that, since the British government was at the time preoccupied with other issues, it might be better if the regime waited a few months before pressing for decisions on further possible arms sales.44 Sir Michael Stewart acted on his instructions on 5 November 1970.45

Meanwhile, the US decision to resume the supply of the heavier items of military equipment arms to Greece, caused the Ministry of Defence to propose that the UK should follow suit and allow the supply of British Chieftain tanks. As it was argued, the regime had already concluded a contract to buy French tanks, thus leaving Britain once again standing by her competitors. It was also

43 PRO, FCO 9/1206, Doc 114: Confidential, Brief No.4: Secretary of State's talks with the Italians, 2/9/70: Greece and NATO; PRO, FCO 9/1216, Doc 13: Confidential, Memorandum by Southern European Department, 28/9/70: Greece.
44 PRO, FCO 9/1206, Doc 120: Confidential, Conclusions of a meeting, 30/9/70: Policy towards Greece.
added that the main difficulty lay in the British not being able to sound the Greeks out without giving them in return a clearer indication of the general UK attitude. Yet, as Robert Tesh, the Head of Defence Department, replied, the Foreign Secretary thought that the time was not yet ripe for such a decision.

2.4 The Foreign Office decides to have informal contacts with Constantine

The latest visit of King Constantine to Britain was on 14 November 1969, when he met with Harold Wilson at No. 10 Downing Street, and mainly discussed the developments in the Council of Europe. The British officials agreed that as long as the current regime remained in power, Constantine was becoming a steadily less significant figure in Greece. On the other hand, they argued that, as he visited London regularly, it was difficult to avoid offering to the King the courtesies that he had received on previous occasions. They recognised, however, that for HM government to be seen conspicuously to pay attention to Constantine in the current circumstances did no good to Anglo-Greek relations.

For his part, Harold Wilson raised the subject of the King of Greece with the American Ambassador in London on 16 January 1970, and with President Nixon at the White House in Washington on 28 January 1970. At these meetings, the British Prime Minister informed the Americans that he himself had taken great trouble to maintain relations with the King and prevent him from falling into the hands of extremist expatriates or getting tied up with the

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47 PRO, FCO 9/1223, Doc 89: Confidential, R.M. Tesh to R.L. Facer, 2/10/70: The supply of Arms to Greece.
48 PRO, PREM 13/3246: Record of Conversation between Harold Wilson, Sir Denis Greenhill, Mr. E. Youde, and the King of Greece, Lord Chamberlain (of Greece), 15/11/70.
49 PRO, FCO 9/837, Doc 70: Confidential, Conclusions of a meeting, 17/12/70: Policy towards Greece.
50 PRO, FCO 9/1213, Doc 15: Secret, Record of a conversation between Harold Wilson, C.H.D. Everett, and John Freeman, 16/1/70.
Colonels. As Harold Wilson argued, it was quite easy for him to see Constantine when the latter was in Britain, due to the King's connection with the British Palace and with Lord Mountbatten. The Prime Minister also informed Nixon that they had their own source of contact with the young monarch whenever it was necessary to give him advice. Finally, with reference to Constantine's position, Harold Wilson urged the USA to extend some attention to the young King, in order to show the Colonels that Constantine's position was taken seriously abroad. The President indicated that he would exert some sort of courtesy to the King.

With the change of government in Britain, the attitude of the UK on the question of the King of Greece was altered as well. According to Palmer, Constantine was one of the sources of friction in the British relations with the Papadopoulos regime. As he argued, the young monarch's relationship with the British Royal Family, and that of Denmark, made his position a particularly delicate question for the Danes and for the British. According to Palmer, however, it was his contacts with British Ministers that had caused the most ruffled feelings in the regime. In addition, if the Colonels could establish that the King was involved in the activities of the Greek exiles in the UK, who aimed at overthrowing the junta, then Palmer pointed out that Britain could be seriously embarrassed.52

As a result, at a meeting held by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 30 September 1970, it was agreed that any formal meetings between Constantine and the British Ministers and officials were not in the King's interests or in the interests of the UK. On the other hand, the Foreign Office confirmed that it was valuable for Britain to remain in communication with the young monarch, preferably through discreet 'casual' meetings. Sir Alec Douglas-Home had also minuted that 'arrangements could always be made through friends for Edward Heath to see the King.' In view of these conclusions, Sir Michael Stewart was authorised to point out to Constantine, when he would meet him in Rome in January, that, since formal calls on

British Ministers could damage the King’s position, discreet meetings on social occasions were preferable.53

As soon as Constantine came to London in November 1970 on a private visit, Lord Mountbatten passed on a request from the young monarch to see the Prime Minister while he was in Britain. In view of the above conclusions, however, the British officials argued that the junta would take the greatest exception to any formal meeting with the Prime Minister if their own representative were not also present—and that was of course unacceptable to the King. Hence, the Foreign Office recommended a private, ‘chance’ meeting at a private place, and not at No. 10 Downing Street.54

The British Officials were right in their estimations. When the Greek Ambassador in London called on Rippon on 16 November 1970, he emphasised that if the King were to have a confidential talk with Edward Heath, the repercussions for Constantine would be serious.55 The Ambassador’s remarks, however, did not hinder the Prime Minister from meeting the King at a reception on 17 November, as it had been agreed by the Foreign Office.56

For his part, Sir Michael Stewart remarked that Anglo-Greek relations would no doubt continue to survive with the usual jolts and bumps, even if the King continued to visit London and see the Prime Minister or other Ministers. As he argued, what these meetings did to the King was Constantine’s business and not Britain’s. Yet, in view of the recent crisis within the junta and of the subsequent concessions that Papadopoulos had been forced to make,57 Sir Michael Stewart estimated that, so far as that regime was concerned, the King’s

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53 PRO, FCO 9 1206, Doc 120: Confidential, Conclusions of a meeting, 30 9 70: Policy towards Greece.
54 PRO, FCO 9/124. Doc 23E: Confidential, Brief for the Greek Ambassador’s call on the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 16/11/70.
55 PRO, FCO 9/1234, Doc 25: Confidential, Record of conversation between G. Rippon and John Sorokos, 16/11 70.
56 PRO, FCO 9 1234, Doc 26: Confidential, R.L. Secondé to Sir Michael Stewart, 20 11 70.
political and constitutional death certificate had already been signed; when it would be issued remained to be seen.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{58} PRO, FCO 9/1195, Doc 82: Confidential, Sir Michael Stewart to R.L. Seconde. 25 11 70; PRO, FCO 9/1217: Confidential, A.E. Palmer to R.L. Secondé, 17/12 70: Visit to Greece-7-13/12/70.
Conclusions
1. The US 'cool but correct' attitude towards the Colonels

The American policy towards Greece was based on two principal considerations: the safeguarding of the US interests in the region and the restoration of representative government in Greece.

All American officials seemed to agree that the credibility of the NATO deterrent in the Eastern Mediterranean depended to a great extent upon the strategic and tactical advantages offered to the Alliance by the Greek geography. Strategically situated at the border of three Communist countries (Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria), quite near the USSR, and in possession of more than 3,000 islands, Greece provided an essential link to the Turkish flank guarding the eastern approach to the Mediterranean from the Black Sea, and offering an effective barrier to the Warsaw Pact ambitions in Southern Europe.

With particular reference to specific US interests in the region, Greece made available to the American forces extensive communications and air and naval base facilities that were of growing importance to the Sixth Fleet in the face of the increased Soviet activity in the Mediterranean. In fact, the USA had major facilities at the air base at Hellenikon, just outside Athens, communication activities at Marathon, and a special air force facility at Heraclion, Crete. There were also other facilities, such as Special Weapons sites, and in addition the Navy enjoyed special arrangements at Souda Bay, Crete, and ready port access elsewhere. The maintenance of these facilities was essential to the US position in the Eastern Mediterranean, and provided a potential staging and safe haven area in the face of the unsettled conditions in the Middle East and in Cyprus.

On the other hand, the general American attitude -ever since the USA assumed the responsibility of protecting Greece and the globe against Communist expansion- was plainly to promote open, prosperous, and pluralistic societies, on the grounds that it would be easier to live in a world that approached these ideals. Yet, the protests against the Greek Colonels were even more vociferous than in similar cases since the dictatorship was established in the 'cradle of democracy,' where the ideas, the concepts, and the cultures that shape much of the Western political philosophy had been
developed. Although the bulk of the Greek-Americans appeared apathetic or maintaining a tentative attitude towards the political situation in Greece, a segment of them opposed the military regime and coordinated a campaign against the Colonels enlisting also the help of Congressional representatives — especially the Senators Clark and Pell and the Congressman Donald Fraser — and also members of the academic community, whose personal sympathies and ideological convictions coincided in the case of Andreas Papandreou.

As the archives reveal, President Johnson was not sympathetic to this group, but he had to take account of the fact that they demanded suspension of the US military aid to Greece and threatened to slash the entire Johnson military aid bill if the administration disregarded their views, at a time when the presidency faced also strong opposition due to the continuation of the war in Vietnam.

In an attempt to bridge the gap between these two conflicting interests, the Johnson Administration followed the ‘cool but correct’ policy of withholding the ‘high visibility’ items of equipment to Greece, and at the same time taking the position that full resumption of military shipments would be possible only if it was clear that Greece was returning to constitutional representative government. In other words, the USA did business with the junta but with some show of reluctance.

Yet, the sum of actual US pressure on the regime was more symbolic than real. The US could have cut off the entire flow of military equipment and created an atmosphere in which the American private investment and tourism declined sharply. Instead, it expressed dissatisfaction without exercising enough pressure to risk jeopardizing the US-Greek alliance. Furthermore, from April 1967 through June 1969, the US delivered about $100 million in equipment under grant assistance, which was supplemented by $75 million in US excess stocks and $35 million in sales, including $20 million on credit terms. These represented a significant increase over the pre-coup levels.

By the time Nixon became President, the failure of the Greek regime to take steps that would convince its critics within the Alliance and in the US Congress of its intention to restore representative government in Greece, and the failure of the US to adopt a more visibly energetic policy of encouraging that restoration had lead to reactions within the NATO Alliance, in the
European and the American public opinion, in the European parliaments and in the US Congress. The existence of the authoritarian regime in Greece, which had earned the obloquy of some of Greece’s NATO allies and of important elements of the European and the American opinion, had created impediments, both real and potential, to the preservation of a relationship between the US and Greece, which would protect the US interests.

Moreover, the belief that the USA supported a dictatorship in Greece in order to protect its own narrow security interests, indifferent to the fate of the Greek people, had offered to the critics of the US more ammunition with which to attack the cynicism of the American foreign policy. In addition, the continuing US-Greek relationship, widely interpreted as manifest support for the Greek regime, had resulted in attempts within the US Congress to legislate an embargo on US military assistance to Greece and created strains within NATO, presenting obstacles to the smooth functioning of the Alliance.

More particularly, the situation in Greece was not accepted in NATO as complacently as were the harsh contours of the government in Turkey, and the Greek junta was far from enjoying obscurity, which the disinterest of the other Allies granted to the regime in Portugal. The member governments had clearly to contend not only with the pro forma attacks of the established parties of the left—often given their cue by the Greek exiles—but also with the less manageable protests of students and youth, who considered the Greek case a prime example of the hypocritical foreign policies of their governments. These pressures accounted in large part for the periodic eruptions of ill feeling in Greece’s bilateral relations with such countries as Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and Denmark.

Yet, as time passed, the initial awkwardness these NATO Governments felt about meeting regularly with their Greek counterparts generally softened. The working relationships among the delegations and in the NATO headquarters were apparently little affected by the domestic political situation in Greece. The problem seemed to arise not in the day-to-day business, but at times, when the Alliance business broke through the official surface and projected into public view. In fact, when the Ministers gathered for regular NATO Ministerial meetings or nuclear planning group sessions, the problem
took the form of posturing by those who felt the need to be seen by the public opinion back home of 'doing something' about Greece.

This attitude of the NATO governments was further explained by the fact that the Greek junta had been the beneficiary of a series of external events that had re-emphasized Greece's strategic importance to the NATO alliance, and counter-acted the distaste of many NATO members for the military government in Greece. Not only had the Soviet aggressiveness in Czechoslovakia and the growing Soviet strength in the Eastern Mediterranean heightened Greece's value as an ally, but considerations of trade had also continued to induce many countries—including a number of communist states—to do business with the junta.

More particularly, the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, and the developments which flowed from these two events meant that Greece played even more of a key role in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans, a role which became a primary consideration in formulating the US policy towards the military regime. In the increasingly grave situation the US was facing in the area, Greece proved to be a consistently loyal ally and a committed friend of the USA and NATO. The cooperation the US received from the junta extended not only to the traditional areas of mutual defence against the Soviet aggression but also to all areas of concern to the United States in the Middle East. In the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Greece willingly provided overflight facilities and also made itself available as an important safe haven for evacuated Americans. Some years later, units of the Sixth Fleet made numerous port calls to the Greek ports, while the US aircraft overflights also increased substantially.

These examples demonstrated the practical significance of a credible allied presence in this troubled area, especially when a new and most continuous element had been added to the increased Soviet naval presence in the stationing of the Soviet forces in the UAR, including advanced surface-to-air missile units and Russian-piloted air regiments. With facilities no longer available to the US in Libya, with deteriorating US relations with virtually all the Arab countries of the East Mediterranean, and with a degree of hostility towards visits by the Sixth fleet in many other areas, the USA and NATO had the requirement to maintain normal relations with Greece for strategic purposes. Beyond this, the
changing strategic situation in the Middle East greatly enhanced Greece's possible usefulness in the event that the Arab-Israeli strategic balance became so upset that the very existence of Israel was threatened.

On this basis, the Nixon administration seemed more concerned with the Greek policies towards the US bilaterally and in the foreign policy field than with the internal political situation and its possible liberalization, although the latter continued to be theoretically a primary objective of the American policy. In view also of the President's attitude -as explained by Kissinger- that the domestic political situations in foreign countries would not be a matter for US government concern, the US military aid to Greece curtailed by a partial embargo for 41 months was restored in full in September 1970 in accordance with NSDM 34 of November 14, 1969 and NSDM 67 of June 25, 1970, on the basis of US security interests. In that way, however, the US attitude towards the military junta in Greece became less 'cool' and more 'correct'.

Conversely, the warmer the Administration's relations with the regime became, the colder the US attitude towards King Constantine appeared. Until the failure of his attempt to overthrow the regime on 13 December 1967, Constantine had been clearly embraced by the USA as the chosen instrument of the American policy, being used as a symbol of legitimacy and ultimate restoration of representative government in Greece. Since he began his exile, however, he plainly received short shrift from the USA.

In fact, although the American officials seemed to recognize Constantine as a token of an alternative to the military regime, they also regarded him as one of the principal obstacles to democratization, characterizing him as 'a weak, superficial, vacillating, ill-prepared monarch who had indiscriminately accepted poor advice from his scheming coterie as well as from a domineering and ambitious mother.' Therefore, they apparently preferred not to create any resentment to the ruling authorities of Greece and jeopardize the US interests there by helping Constantine to return, since the US could also be accused of

1 How much this decision was also affected by Nixon's relationship with Thomas A. Pappas, the prominent Greek-American businessman who had acted as the conduit of campaign funds from the Greek junta to the Nixon campaign, is not revealed in the archives. It is a fact, however, that both Nixon and Kissinger used to thank Thomas Pappas for his 'continuing support,' singling out 'the very substantial contribution -both financial and political- that Pappas had made during the campaign,' [NA, NXN, Box 32, [EX] CO 1 GR – 1969-1970: Memorandum for the President, from Henry A. Kissinger, 19/3/69: Appointment with Thomas Pappas. See also: S.M. Hersh, 1983; Tsoukalas, 1974]
advising him to sell out to the regime, in order to strengthen the US position
with it.

The American attitude to the question of human rights in Greece appears
also to have evolved on the same basis of primarily safeguarding the US
interests in the region. The American officials used to stress that the US should
chart a course in the American relations with the regime that would both
preserve the US security relationship and make it possible to exert as much
influence as possible for the restoration of civil rights in Greece and for a
return to a more normal political situation.

Yet, since these objectives were in essence contradictory, the second goal
tended to be overlooked or rather pursued only to the point that it did not put in
jeopardy the first objective. In that way, however, the US policy was barely
active enough to stir up occasional resentment from the regime and not active
either to counter the criticisms of US policy or indeed to convince
members of the junta that the US was seriously committed to a representative
government in Greece. As Talbot recognised, the US policy would
comparatively have more room for manoeuvre, if they could write off their
military installations in Greece, and discount the growing Soviet threat in the
Eastern Mediterranean.¹ In other words, the USA placed more emphasis on the
military rather than the political goal, undermining by half the very
effectiveness of her stated policy.

2. The British ‘working relationship’ with the colonels

On the other side of the Atlantic, the British policy towards the military
regime in Greece was quite similar to the US stated attitude, although it
diverged in tactics, since the interests of the two countries were affected
differently.

¹ NA, RG 59, Box 2146, Pol 2 GR – 1-1-68: Secret, Athens airgram A-558, by Talbot, 29/4/68:
An assessment of the Situation in Greece a year after the April 21, 1967 Coup.
More particularly, the UK had specific military interests on a bilateral basis not so much in Greece as in Cyprus. The British Sovereign Base Areas comprised those parts of Cyprus that had stayed under the British jurisdiction when the 1960 Treaty of Establishment created the independent Republic of Cyprus. Although they were a British Overseas Territory, they were run as military bases, and they covered 98 mls: 47.5 mls around Akrotiri, the Western Sovereign Base Area (WSBA), and 50.5 mls around Dhekelia, the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA), on a total area of 3,572 mls.

The unimpeded use of the SBA and the other facilities in Cyprus was important to the UK because they promoted and facilitated a range of issues including operations, training, manning and equipment. Additionally, air communications with the UK forces in the Persian Gulf, Aden and the Far East largely depended upon what was called the ‘CENTO route,’ and—with regard to Cyprus—on the staging facilities at the Akrotiri SBA. The Sudanese ban for overflights by military aircraft to or from Aden in November 1964, Nasser’s suspension of all British military flights over the UAR, and the ban on overflying Syria and Iraq, as a result of the Middle East war in 1967 made British dependence on the ‘CENTO route’ even greater.

In connection with the above, and apart from the common NATO objective of preserving the military effectiveness of Greece as a member of the Alliance, Britain had not the US handicap of retaining access to military facilities in Greece. Furthermore, in the light of the great importance of the overflying facilities, Britain had made a particular point of supporting the Turkish Government whenever she could. Consequently, Greece and her policies concerned Britain from the military point of view primarily to the extent that they affected the situation in Cyprus.

Yet, although Britain was not a traditional source of arms supplies for Greece, -like the US or Germany-, the UK had important commercial interests in the country. The chronic imbalance in UK/Greek trade was heavily in the British favour, being the fourth largest in the world. British firms also sought to

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3 In fact there were no British servicemen in Greece apart from the British Defence Attachés and the commander RN attached to the NATO staff to COMED (East) Headquarters in Athens. The RAF had kept only a small store of spare parts at Larissa, since 39 Squadron RAF (reconnaissance Canberras) had their war base there. [PRO, FCO 9/209, Doc. 1: Secret, T.E. Bridges to I.T.M. Lucas, 8/5/67: British forces stationed in Greece]
secure large contracts from the Greek government, like the nuclear reactor contract.

On the other hand, since Britain was a member of the Council of Europe, and an applicant country for entry into the EEC, British policies were inevitably affected by the general attitude of these bodies. The Council of Europe, in particular, ever since the military coup in Greece, was specifically concerned with the Greek question, while the machinery of the European Convention of Human Rights was set in motion about the same issue by applications lodged by the Scandinavian countries.

Furthermore, Britain's proximity to Greece caused many Greek exiles to find refuge in the UK and direct their anti-regime campaign from London. Their activities, which aimed at overthrowing the military government of Greece, were further assisted by the strong British public reaction to the coup, which was expressed with demonstrations in the streets, lengthy articles in the British press highly critical of the Greek regime, letters from MPs, and heated debates in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords.

In view of these considerations, the Foreign Office and the Whitehall agreed to maintain a 'working relationship' with the Greek regime, while avoiding any appearance of condoning its internal policies. In particular, they decided to retain at the head of the list of objectives of British policy the aim of promoting the return to Greece of democratic rule in conditions of stability. The other three goals were —according to priority— to preserve as far as possible the military effectiveness of Greece as a NATO ally, to protect British subjects and British interests generally —and in particular to pursue British commercial interests— and to retain the ability to influence the military regime in matters of foreign policy, i.e. Cyprus. These were not made public, even though they were communicated to the Americans.

The Labour government of Harold Wilson was under such considerable pressure from the public opinion in general and from the Labour party in particular to take action against Greece that it found it hard to accept the need to work with the Colonels' junta. For the same reason, it did not hinder the proceedings in the Council of Europe, although Britain was careful not to be among the fore runners either in the proceedings under the statute or in those under the Human Rights Convention. On the other hand, the Wilson
government was unequivocal in Parliament and in NATO itself in resisting criticism of continued Greek membership of the Alliance, constantly emphasizing the distinction that should legitimately be drawn between the Council of Europe proceedings, which had primarily an ideological basis, and the discussion of the Greek internal situation in NATO, which was concerned with Western defence, especially since imponderable political as well as strategic considerations were closely connected in that case.

Harold Wilson’s ‘working relationship’ with the regime was conducted with relative success. Yet, his remark in the House of Commons in July 1968 that ‘bestialities’ had been perpetrated in Greece,\(^4\) gave rise to strong reactions in Athens and threatened the working relationship the UK wished to maintain with the Greek junta. Furthermore, the proceedings in the Council of Europe were another source of friction in the Anglo/Greek relations, especially in view of the regime’s tendency of seeking, largely for tactical reasons, to give other governments the impression from time to time that they were particularly to blame for some international rebuff suffered by Greece.

Meanwhile, as we have mentioned, further developments in the Mediterranean emphasized the geopolitical importance of Greece in NATO, while the loss of the British defence facilities in Libya caused the Ministry of Defence to think of increasing the use of the existing facilities in Greece, since some additional training capacity for the British forces would be needed. Consequently, the conservative government of Edward Heath —when it came into power— decided to retain the objectives and the general policy of the Wilson government towards the regime, but gave primary importance on British military cooperation with Greece, especially since it was not handicapped by internal party pressures.

In the same way, the Heath government maintained the Wilson criterion on arms sales, whereby the UK agreed to supply arms and equipment that would meet the legitimate Greek requirements for external defence in the NATO context, while refusing to supply items that could be used against the civilian population; this principle however was applied more flexibly.

\(^4\) Harold Wilson thought this incident important enough to include it in his memoirs, where he also accused the Opposition that ‘it never failed to disassociate itself from any expression by the government in favour of freedom’ whenever ‘trade matters were involved.’ [Wilson, 1971, p. 542]
Although the worth and the effectiveness of such a policy was apparently doubtful, since neither the Greeks nor the British public ever knew about it, it permitted the British officials to maintain that the UK was not condoning the policies of the junta.

An important element of Harold Wilson's policy towards Greece was his attitude towards King Constantine. So long as the USA was plainly supporting the King and his efforts to broaden the base of the military government and nudge the colonels back into the road of constitutionalism and democracy, Britain retained an aloof attitude. Yet, from the moment King Constantine stopped to attract American attention after his abortive counter-coup, Britain started to show interest in his position, taking into account the possibility that he would have an important role to play in the prospective return to democracy in Greece. Quite decisive to this decision was Constantine's visit in London in 1968, when the young monarch impressed the Prime Minister favourably.

As a result, British policy turned towards ensuring that the King would preserve his ability to play a useful role in the return of constitutional rule in Greece, and the British Embassy in Rome was authorised to have occasional contact with Constantine. Yet, these meetings became less frequent as the Anglo/Greek relations became more strained. In addition, the British links with the King became even looser under the Heath government. Nevertheless, the UK remained in communication with the young monarch, through discreet 'casual' meetings.

The Heath government also tried to remove as many as possible of the misunderstandings that afflicted the Anglo/Greek relations, but with indifferent results. After the death of Pipinelis, the Greek responses to foreign pressures were liable to be a good deal less flexible, thus creating many opportunities for misinterpretation among leaders of the Greek armed forces of the British efforts to reach compromises in common interests. In conclusion, as the Foreign Office and the Whitehall judged, so long as the Colonels maintained their military dictatorship, British relations at the government level would continue to consist of a series of jolts and shifts, with occasional sunny intervals.
3. **General conclusions**

Having reached the end of this general survey of Anglo-American diplomacy towards the military regime in Greece, one realizes the complexity of the issues that affected and eventually defined the policies of each country. The USA and Britain were so closely connected with each other that one would expect that both countries would also adopt the same attitude towards the Colonels’ junta. This did not happen however; although the two countries stated that they followed similar policies, in fact their approach to the issue was different.

As we have mentioned, the USA placed more emphasis on her security-military considerations while Britain gave priority to her political objectives. Even when the Conservative government of Edward Heath succeeded Harold Wilson’s Labour government, the orientation of the British policy towards Greece remained the same, suffering only a slight shift towards the military considerations. So far, we have tried to illuminate the specific issues that influenced the foreign policy making of the two countries and their rulers. In general, however, the world position and the power status of the two countries were equally decisive.

More particularly, the USA, being one of the two superpowers that dominated the world affairs at the time, apparently could not but judge every issue in the light of the Soviet-American hostility and competition. In that way, however, the USA tended to overlook or deal at low level any question that did not greatly affect that strife. Unlike the UK, which made detailed planning in anticipation of certain contingencies, the US did not have a comprehensive Middle East policy. As Battle argued, the US Middle East policy during 1967 was a patchwork of reactions to crises: Yemen and South Arabia in early 1967, the Athens coup in April 1967, the Gulf of Aqaba in May followed by the Six-Day June war, Cyprus and the Vance Mission, King Constantine’s abortive 13 December coup and, completing the circle, a year-end focus on the Yemen.5

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As a result, the Greek issue was not considered as significant in the State Department, and as the time passed, and the White House was consumed with new more pressing matters abroad, the Greek question further sank into bureaucratic oblivion. Had it not been for the strong reaction of a number of Congressmen and public opinion, the Greek issue might not have reached the interest of the top echelons of the White House at all.

Yet, even in that case, the US was less subject than most Western European governments to public pressures on the Greek question. While a substantial body of Congressional opinion urged the Nixon Administration to give 'a clearer sign of US moral and political disapproval of the dictatorship' by curtailing military aid to Greece, another group argued that for strategic reasons the Greek regime should continue to receive strong American support.

Quite different was the British approach. The strong public reaction in Britain caused the Wilson government -and particularly George Brown- to attach some importance in the Greek question. Furthermore, even though the Anglo-Greek relations were not at the top of the foreign policy agenda of the Heath government, the new British government did not venture to follow an openly friendlier attitude towards the Colonels.

What is more, during the period under study, Britain, realizing that her world power was relatively declining, sought her economical and political union with the EEC. Therefore, the British used to take most of their decisions after consulting firstly with the Americans, on the grounds of the 'special relationship' with them, and secondly with the Germans, the French, and the other Western Europeans. The British even provided the Americans with Foreign Office briefs on highly confidential basis.

Yet, such an attitude was very rarely adopted by the Americans, who consulted with the Europeans only when they did not wish to be singled out as the supporters of the Greek regime, as happened in the case of recognition in December 1967. Even in that case, however, the Americans did not so much consult with their allies as presented them with a US fait accompli.

In sum, apart from the specific interests each country had in connection with Greece, the British and the American policy makers were undoubtedly influenced in their decisions and their attitudes by the world status of their respective countries. Yet, the foreign policy systems of the two countries must
have played some additional role in the process of decision-making. If the State Department had not been so overtly pushed aside by Nixon and Kissinger, perhaps the US policy would not have been so obviously supportive of the Colonels. In the same manner, if the Cabinet in Britain had not been so greatly dependent on party pressures, perhaps the British would have adopted a warmer attitude towards the military regime.
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