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Greek-Turkish Relations: The Deadlocked Allies



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An Intelligence Memorandum

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EUR 82-10049
May 1982

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Greek-Turkish Relations: The Deadlocked Allies



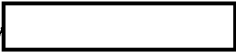

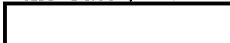
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An Intelligence Memorandum

*Information available as of 1 May 1982
has been used in the preparation of this report.*


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This memorandum was prepared by 
 of the Office of European Analysis. Comments
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Greek-Turkish Relations:

The Deadlocked Allies



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Summary

Although tensions persist between Greece and Turkey, both countries are trying to keep their differences—rooted in mutual distrust dating back several centuries—within bounds. For example, Greek Prime Minister Papandreou, whose rhetoric before and after his accession to power was a major factor in the growing tension, seems to be aware of Ankara's stand that extension of the territorial waters around Greek islands in the Aegean would be a *casus belli*. And there are signs that the Turks in fact would not take military action even if Athens announced such an extension. On other contentious issues as well—Cyprus, NATO-related questions, and other aspects of the Aegean dispute—both sides continue to posture but are avoiding highly provocative actions.

Meanwhile, each side wants the United States to prod the other to be more conciliatory, and the bilateral dealings of each with Washington—the base negotiations between the United States and Greece, for example—will be influenced heavily by abiding suspicions between Ankara and Athens. Moreover, the conflict between the two over Aegean rights is preventing resolution of important NATO command and control arrangements on the southeastern flank. As long as the dispute persists, the region will remain a troublesome link in the Western Alliance.

Greek-Turkish relations could worsen as the Turkish generals begin to loosen the restraints on Turkish political activity next year. The process of restoring civilian rule in Turkey could release nationalist, anti-Greek pressures that the generals have successfully fended off or ignored. This could lead to an early constitutional crisis pitting the new president, possibly General Evren who currently heads the ruling military council, against the new parliament, with Evren counseling moderation and the parliament clamoring for a more aggressive stand against the Greeks.

Prime Minister Papandreou, for his part, probably will agree to resume talks with Ankara, at least on an informal basis, but will continue to use US facilities in Greece as a means of exerting pressure on the United States for a Western security guarantee against Turkey and for more military equipment on concessional terms.

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Although Papandreou's popularity and support probably will remain high, rising inflation and unemployment rates, as well as growing dissatisfaction with the Greek socialist government's inability to implement its costly social policies quickly, may subject the government to increasing criticism from leftists as well as from business and conservative groups. This criticism could cost the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement votes during the nationwide municipal elections in the fall and could prompt Papandreou to rely more than he has on the "Turkish threat" to revive his fortunes.



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**Greek-Turkish Relations:
The Deadlocked Allies**



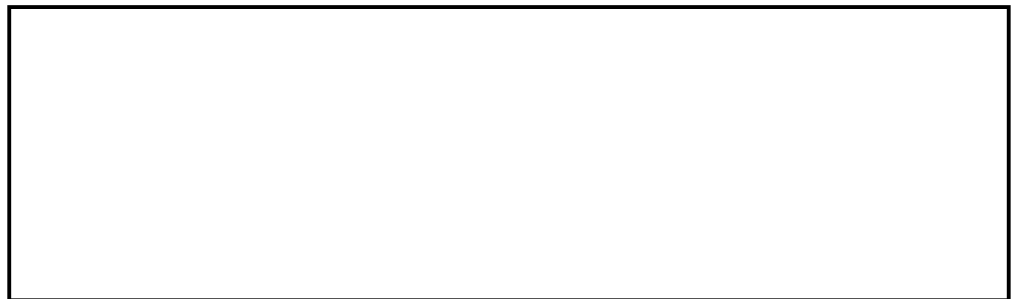
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Introduction

Each of the two Aegean powers remains deeply concerned about what the other may do, despite a decline in the acrimonious rhetoric that has characterized Turkish-Greek relations since Papandreou's election last October. The Turks continue to reject flatly Papandreou's demand that NATO and the United States provide a security guarantee against Turkey—a move Ankara thinks is part of a broader Greek strategy aimed at getting more from the West at Turkey's expense. Suspicions run deep on the Greek side as well, with Papandreou charging publicly that Turkey's aggressive intentions are signaled by the deployment of its Aegean Army opposite Greek islands in the eastern Aegean. If both governments are willing to limit recriminations—and various sources indicate that they want to keep the dispute within bounds—Turkish-Greek relations could return to normal after a lengthy cooling-off period. Mutual fear and suspicion, however, will keep alive the possibility of verbal escalation which, in turn, might lead to a dangerous miscalculation.



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Papandreou has sent out diplomatic feelers that suggest he is softening his stand against negotiations with Turkey, but provocative incidents in the Aegean are extending the war of nerves. Ankara, for example, is sending its warships through disputed waters in the Aegean and sending its military aircraft into the Athens Flight Information Region without prior notification to emphasize that it does not recognize Greek claims. Greece, for its part, continues to intercept some Turkish military aircraft on NATO missions, ostensibly because they violate Greek airspace.



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Contentious History

Greece and Turkey have always been suspicious of each other's intentions. Four hundred years of Ottoman rule left the Greeks convinced that the Turks are bent on domination—a suspicion that has not abated in the century and a half since Greece won its independence from the Ottoman Empire. The Turks, on the other hand, have viewed the Greeks as a people whose territorial aspirations vastly exceed their entitlements. After near

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The Berne Declaration

On the procedure to be followed for the delimitation of the continental shelf by Greece and Turkey.

- (1) Both parties agree that negotiations be sincere, detailed, and conducted in good faith with a mutual consent regarding the delimitation of the continental shelf.*
- (2) Both parties agree that these negotiations should, due to their nature, be strictly confidential.*
- (3) Both parties reserve their respective positions regarding the delimitation of the continental shelf.*
- (4) Both parties undertake the obligation not to use the details of this agreement and the proposals that each will make during the negotiations in any circumstances outside the context of the negotiations.*
- (5) Both parties agree no statements or leaks to the press should be made referring to the content of the negotiations unless they commonly agree to do so.*
- (6) Both parties undertake to abstain from any initiative or act relating to the continental shelf of the Aegean Sea which might prejudice the negotiations.*
- (7) Both parties undertake, as far as their bilateral relations are concerned, to abstain from any initiative or act which would tend to discredit the other party.*
- (8) Both parties have agreed to study state practice and international rules on this subject with a view to educing certain principles and practical criteria which could be of use in the delimitation of the continental shelf between the two countries.*
- (9) A mixed commission will be set up to this end and will be composed of national representatives.*
- (10) Both parties agree to adopt a gradual approach in the course of the negotiations ahead after consulting each other.*



continuous hostilities in the early part of this century, Turkish President Ataturk and Greek Prime Minister Venizelos reached agreements in the 1920s that ushered in a long period of peaceful relations. The Cyprus crisis and Aegean disputes of the 1960s and 1970s, however, inaugurated another phase of deterioration in Greek-Turkish relations—a trend accentuated by the election of Papandreou. Apart from the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974—which prompted Greece to withdraw from the military

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wing of NATO—the key event was the discovery of exploitable oil and other mineral deposits in the Aegean in the early 1970s, a development that eventually led both Greeks and Turks to give the Aegean dispute precedence over the Cyprus problem. [REDACTED] 25

A UN Security Council resolution in 1976 encouraged the two countries to solve their disputes through bilateral negotiations. The resolution was followed shortly in the same year by the Berne Declaration in which Turkey and Greece pledged to resolve the continental shelf issue through negotiation. [REDACTED] 25

The Turks consider the Aegean issue a political problem that must be resolved bilaterally, but the Greeks prefer to view it as a legal problem and to appeal to international forums to bolster their position. Believing that Greece has strong legal justification, the Karamanlis and Rallis governments instituted legal proceedings against Turkey on the continental shelf issue in the International Court of Justice in 1976. In addition, they called for a nonaggression pact. Although the Court dismissed the case in 1978 for lack of jurisdiction, the Greeks continue to insist that international law supports their view on the issue. [REDACTED] 25

Cyprus

Cyprus, long a trouble spot in Turkish-Greek relations, assumed even greater importance in 1974 following the Turkish invasion, which came in response to a coup against Cypriot President Makarios inspired by the Greek junta. The Turkish move exposed Greece's military weakness and crystallized Greek fears of Turkish territorial designs. Successive Greek governments have taken the view that Cyprus, as an independent state, must negotiate its own solutions, but they also have given some material and moral support to the Greek Cypriot administration. Owing to the large Turkish military presence since 1974, Ankara has become more active in the intercommunal talks as well as in the Turkish Cypriot administration. [REDACTED] 25

Prime Minister Papandreou has taken more interest in Cyprus than his predecessors. His visit to the island in February was the first ever by a Greek prime minister, and he has pledged to champion the Greek Cypriot cause in international forums. But despite these moves and Papandreou's postelection promise of "dynamic support" for Nicosia, Cyprus will take a back seat to more immediate concerns such as a security guarantee against Turkey and the negotiation of an agreement on the US bases in Greece—a development the Greek Cypriots ultimately may resent. So far, Papandreou seems determined to avoid actions that might compel the Turks to react militarily in Cyprus. [REDACTED] 25

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The Turks are suspicious of Greek intentions and insist that they must keep a large force on the island to protect the Turkish minority until a final settlement is reached. The presence of 27,000 Turkish troops on Cyprus probably also reflects a Turkish belief that Cyprus would be the first place where the Greeks would test Turkish resolve in case of a general conflict. Maintaining a large force minimizes dependence on the Turkish mainland for reinforcements if trouble comes. Ankara recognizes the overall inferiority of its air and naval forces and, as a result, has been modernizing its units on the island, thereby fueling Greek suspicions that Turkey is increasing its strength in Cyprus significantly. Although the Turks have responded with charges of Greek reinforcements, there are no indications that force levels have changed significantly on either side. [REDACTED]

The Aegean Dispute

The Aegean dispute generally takes precedence over Cyprus in the Turkish-Greek quarrel. The dispute predates Papandreou's ascent to power and entails four separate but related issues—the continental shelf, territorial sea and air limits, control over civil and military air traffic, and NATO command and control arrangements. To both Turks and Greeks, the dispute involves major questions of sovereign rights and, ultimately, national security. [REDACTED]

Turkey considers the Aegean—a semienclosed sea—important for its political, economic, and security interests. Under the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), Greece and Turkey have been using the Aegean commercially on an equal footing. In the early 1970s, Turkey began arguing that the same principle of equity should apply to the continental shelf, airspace, and NATO command and control arrangements. Greece, on the other hand, believes that it should resume its pre-1974 responsibilities in the Aegean, most of which were internationally recognized. [REDACTED]

Territorial Limits and Continental Shelf

Ankara advocates the establishment of a boundary line through the Aegean halfway between the Greek and Turkish mainlands—with the Greek islands close to Turkey being entitled only to small territorial seas. [REDACTED]

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Athens, on the other hand, cites the Geneva Convention on the Continental Shelf (1958) to claim that the islands have their own continental shelf and form a political extension of the Greek mainland. Greek territorial waters currently extend to six miles, but Greece claims a 10-mile airspace around its Aegean islands. Athens reserves the right under international law to claim 12 miles of territorial waters and continental shelf around its islands. If Greece were to accept the Turkish formulation, the equilibrium established by the Treaty of Lausanne would be disrupted, and Greek access to and sovereignty over the easternmost islands could be challenged.

[REDACTED] 25

The Greeks also argue that history, precedent, and territorial security mandate that they control most Aegean rights. They believe that the continental shelf boundary should be roughly the same as the national boundary—that is, the median line between Greek islands and the Turkish mainland. [REDACTED] 25

Negotiations on the continental shelf have been irregular and unproductive. For two years the Greeks parried the Turkish proposals calling for joint exploration or division of the shelf by a median line between the two mainlands. In June 1977, the Greeks put forward their own proposal for delimiting the continental shelf. It consisted of a series of alternating corridors extending from the two mainlands, with the Greek corridors encompassing the easternmost Greek islands, and the Turkish corridors extending between the islands midway into the Aegean. [REDACTED] 25

The Turks countered in 1978 with a proposal that each country retain a coastal shelf encompassing 15 percent of the seabed and that the remainder be exploited jointly. The Greeks came back with a variation of their corridor approach that envisaged smaller Turkish salients but included the principle of joint exploration of the entire shelf. The two sides still could not agree, and neither has since offered any new proposals. [REDACTED] 25

Aegean Airspace

The negotiations over Aegean airspace have been more productive, particularly during the rule of former Prime Minister Demirel's minority government and the successor military government in Turkey. The issue came to the fore during the Cyprus crisis when Turkey issued Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) 714, requiring all aircraft approaching Turkish airspace to report their positions and flight plans upon reaching the Aegean median line. The purpose of the NOTAM ostensibly was to enable the Turkish military radar to distinguish between innocent flights and potential attackers approaching Anatolia. Greece, which has international sanction to supervise all civilian flights in the Aegean, flatly refused this instruction and issued its own NOTAM 1157, declaring the Aegean air routes to Turkey to be unsafe because of the threat of conflicting control orders. [REDACTED] 25

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The deadlock kept the Aegean closed to international commercial traffic for over six years. It finally came to an end in February 1980, when Turkey withdrew its claim for control of civilian aircraft. In 1981, Greece greatly reduced the prohibited military zone it had established over Aegean airspace.

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NATO Reintegration

The Aegean dispute played a significant role in negotiations over Greek reentry into NATO's military wing. Greece had withdrawn from the Alliance's military structure after the Cyprus crisis, claiming that Athens could not be part of an alliance that did not prevent a member state, Turkey, from invading an independent country, Cyprus. Greece's withdrawal gave Ankara the opportunity to seek a new military arrangement in the Aegean that would buttress Turkish claims.

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Subsequent negotiations culminated in the so-called Rogers Plan, under which Greece and Turkey agreed to negotiate Aegean command and control arrangements after Greek reentry into NATO. Although both countries have taken substantial steps toward solving airspace issues, no progress has been made on the command and control issue since Greece's return to the military wing in 1980.

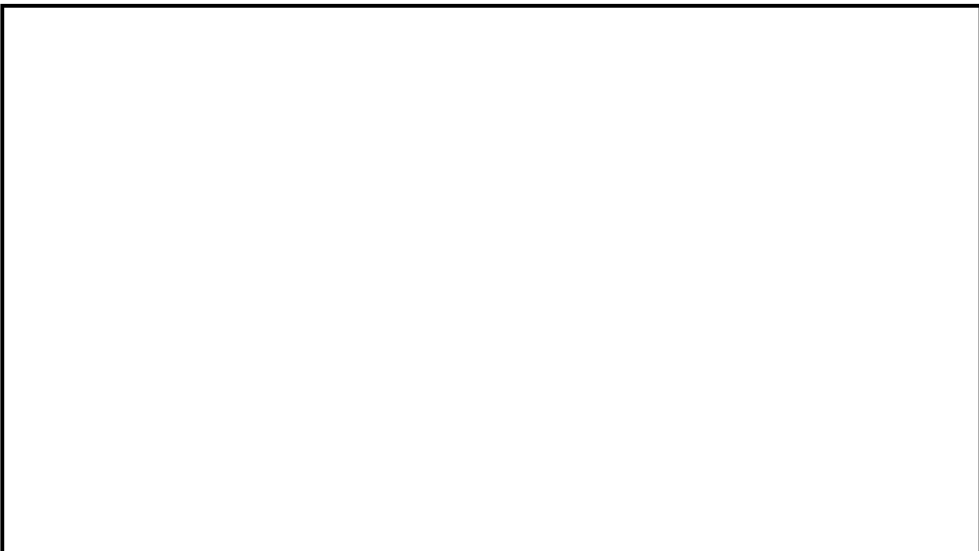
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**The Papandreou
Factor**

The Aegean dispute is a central concern of Papandreou's foreign policy. So far, Papandreou has been accommodating to the Turks in private but unyielding in public. Papandreou's conciliatory approach during his meetings with the Turkish Ambassador to Athens last fall, for example, quickly gave way to a belligerent posture against Turkey. This ambiguous approach may stem in part from his desire to keep Turkey off balance, but it probably also reflects domestic pressure on Papandreou to stand firm.

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Turkish Defense Minister Bayulken, Greek Deputy Defense Minister Drossoyianis, and Greek Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Papan-dreou (left to right). [redacted]



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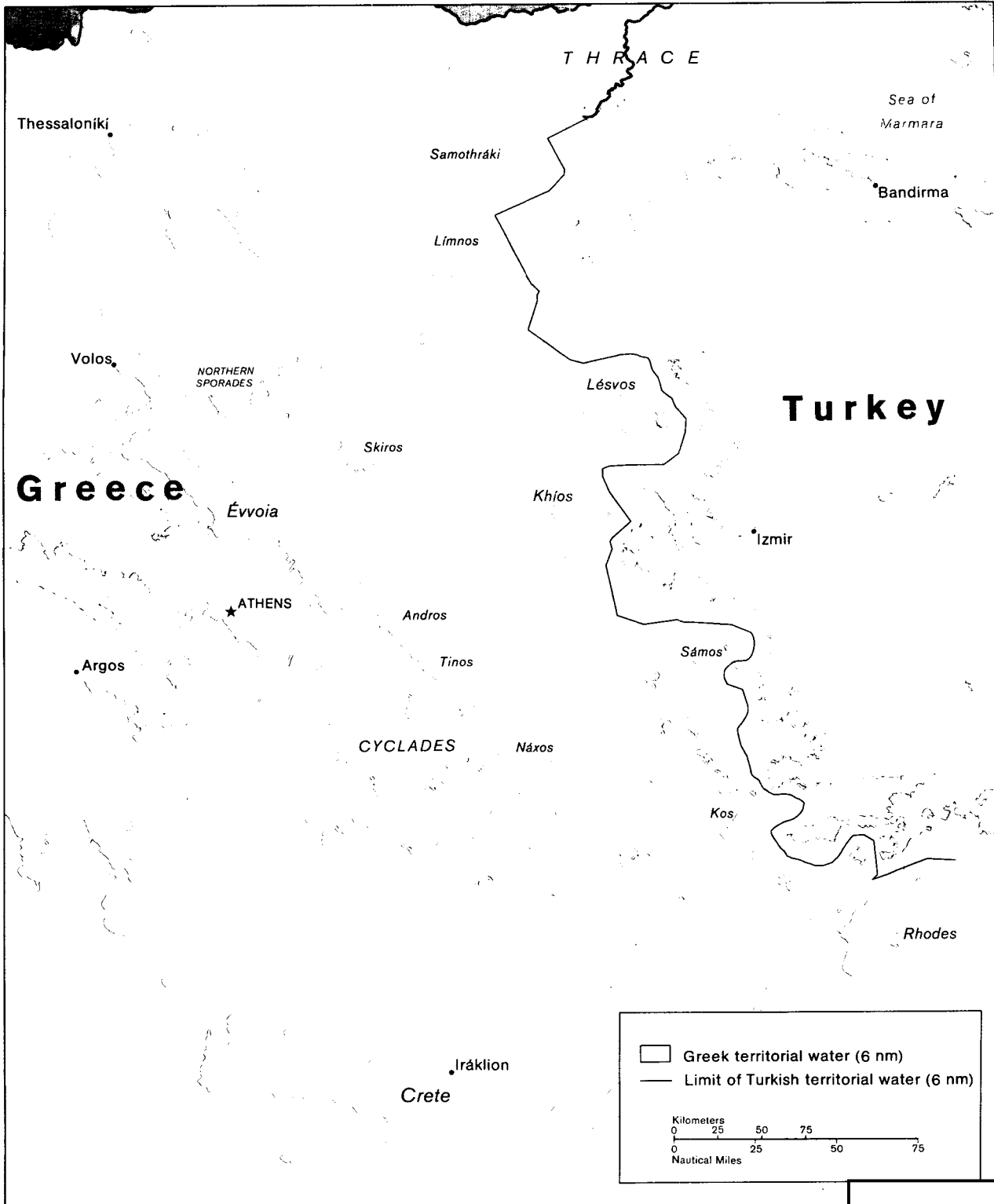
The Greek Government's pronouncements indicate that Athens has gotten the message, and Turkey, for its part, probably is not preparing for military action any time soon. In the eight years since the Turks invaded Cyprus, Greece's overall capabilities have improved to a point where they are roughly equal to Turkey's. While Ankara still maintains the largest standing army among the NATO Allies in Europe, the Greeks have newer equipment, more intensive training, and better maintenance. Moreover, the Turkish armed forces have extensive internal security duties that detract from their ability to perform external missions, and their commitments near Turkey's volatile eastern borders would increase the difficulty of launching offensive operations in the Aegean.¹ Athens probably will continue its high level of defense spending for the next few years, and rough Greek-Turkish parity thus will probably continue well into the 1980s.² [redacted]

Ankara is concerned as well about the militarization of the Greek islands. The Turks complain that Athens has been placing military equipment and units on the islands since the 1960s in contravention of international treaties. Athens is barred permanently from militarizing the Dodecanese Islands by the 1946 Paris Treaty that ceded them to Greece, while the Treaty of Lausanne similarly forbids militarization of the Aegean Islands. Athens maintains, however, that a Greek military presence on the islands close to Turkey is necessary for defensive purposes to counter the threat posed by the Turkish Aegean Army. [redacted]



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Present Territorial Water Limits in the Aegean Sea



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Possible Greek Territorial Water Claims in the Aegean Sea



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The disputes over continental shelf, airspace, and sea boundary issues have been augmented in recent months by renewed controversy over Greece's status in NATO, particularly the Greek stand on Aegean command and control arrangements. Papandreou's electoral promise to reevaluate Greece's position in NATO led him in December to announce to the NATO ministerial that the plan under which Greece rejoined NATO's military wing in 1980 was in "partial suspension." In response, the Turks in January sought a clarification of Greece's status in NATO, noting that the ambivalence over Aegean command and control placed the southeastern NATO flank in jeopardy. Although the Turkish move could have sparked another round of verbal exchanges, Greece defused the controversy—at least temporarily—by reaffirming its commitment to the reintegration plan. The issue could easily flare again, however, because neither side is yet showing the flexibility necessary to negotiate concrete command and control arrangements based on the vague reintegration plan. [REDACTED]

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Implications for NATO and the United States

The verbal sparring between Ankara and Athens will continue to have detrimental effects on NATO. Papandreou's insistence on NATO recognition for Greece's "special security needs" has already created friction in Alliance meetings and in Greek relations with key allies. More important, failure to resolve Aegean command and control problems is hindering integration of NATO-committed forces and preventing NATO planners from allocating areas of responsibility or clarifying coordination procedures. Meanwhile, neither the Greeks nor the Turks have much incentive to resolve the problem because they can exploit it to lobby for more and better military equipment on advantageous terms. [REDACTED]

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Such competition diverts Turkish and Greek attention from NATO's principal threat, the Warsaw Pact. Mutual suspicions about military strength and preparedness cause a siphoning off of Greek and Turkish military resources that could be used to monitor Soviet moves and otherwise strengthen NATO's position. Increased tension in the Aegean, moreover, gives Moscow more opportunities to play off one NATO country against the other. Turkey has worried recently that Moscow's criticism of its military regime represents a Soviet tilt toward Greece in the Aegean and Cypriot disputes. [REDACTED]

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The Greek-Turkish rivalry has also complicated the effort to bring Spain into NATO. Although the Turks have ratified Spanish entry and the Greeks are likely to, both have raised issues that grow out of their bilateral dispute. The Greeks worry, for example, that Spanish participation in Mediterranean defense could hinder efforts to work out an Aegean command and control structure. The Turks, on the other hand, made clear that any NATO concessions to Athens would have led them to drag their heels on Spanish entry. [REDACTED]

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Short-term Outlook

Until both sides show greater willingness to talk and to compromise, Greece and Turkey will continue to be weak and troublesome links in the Western Alliance, and each side will continue to look to the United States with a mixture of hope and distrust. Papandreou's recent efforts to calm the atmosphere probably reflect a concern that Greece has diminished in strategic importance to the United States. The Turks, for their part, view this country as the only ally able and willing to offset declining West European support for the military regime. [REDACTED] 25

In the short term, conflict between the two countries probably will be limited to the sort of minor incidents that have occurred already. Although the Turks have told Athens that they would consider Greek extension of sea boundaries a *casus belli*, they probably would not in fact respond with military action because the Turks are well aware of their military and political limitations. Ankara instead probably would test Greek intentions and press its claims by sending seismic exploration vessels and small naval forces into disputed waters. [REDACTED] 25

Although the chances for war between Greece and Turkey during the next year are slim, the proliferation of incidents—which have been given greater visibility by both Athens and Ankara in their propaganda war—has somewhat increased the chances that a dangerous situation could develop. Both governments, however, believe that a war would be disastrous and appear careful not to carry their provocations to excess. If the highly charged atmosphere were to lead to fighting in the Aegean, both sides would quickly attempt to limit its scope and to end the confrontation quickly. [REDACTED] 25

Roots of Compromise

Some hopeful signs can be found in Greek-Turkish relations. Recent contacts between Greek and Turkish foreign ministry officials suggest, for example, that Papandreou may be willing to authorize a renewed dialogue with the Turks in early summer. But Papandreou's electoral pledge not to negotiate with Ankara means that any overtures would constitute an about-face. His preliminary moves suggest that he will forgo official meetings in favor of informal talks—perhaps held at the same time as the US-Greek base negotiations. [REDACTED] 25

Both sides see it in their interest to avoid war, but neither side would yield beyond a certain point. The Greeks, for example, would not accede to Turkish pressure to demilitarize the islands in the absence of an overall settlement. By the same token, the Turks would not leave unchallenged a Greek declaration of a 12-mile territorial sea, which would effectively turn the Aegean into a Greek lake. [REDACTED] 25

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*Turkish Head of State Gen.
Kenan Evren*



Milliyet

Any compromise would have to involve Greek acceptance of a significant Turkish role in the Aegean. Turkey, for its part, would have to settle for substantially less than the equal rights it seeks. And Greece would have to moderate its proposal that the Athens flight control area coincide with the national boundary and agree to some joint exploration of the continental shelf. The Turks would have to make some concessions on Aegean military command and control as well as commercial rights. Above all, Ankara would have to acquiesce in some formula, however vague, that Greece could interpret as a Western security guarantee for Greece's border with Turkey.

The Longer Term

The moderation that the Turkish generals have shown so far may be tested by domestic pressure in a year or so. A referendum is planned later in 1982 on a new constitution, and resumption of limited political activity probably will be permitted in early 1983. At some point in this process, the generals probably will come under increasing pressure, primarily from the new generation of politicians, to exercise less restraint in responding to Greek provocations. Once civilian rule is fully restored—perhaps in late 1983 or early 1984—the new politicians, anxious to build their reputations, could press for a harder line in dealings with the Greeks—a development that would increase the chances of armed conflict.

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General Evren, who probably will be elected president in a new civilian government, is likely to be the principal force for moderation—a moderation that stems in part from his recognition that Turkish air and naval forces are inferior to Greece's. But his stance could pit him against a new civilian parliament likely to favor a tough stand against Papandreu. It is conceivable that such circumstances might even lead to a constitutional crisis between the executive and legislative branches of government, subjecting the new constitution to premature legal interpretations or tests of consistency and flexibility. [redacted] 25

Papandreu for his part will be increasingly occupied with domestic concerns during the next year, which is likely to see a further deterioration in the Greek economy. Although Papandreu's popularity and support probably will remain high, rising inflation and unemployment rates, as well as growing dissatisfaction with PASOK's inability to implement its costly social policies as quickly as expected, may subject the government to increasing criticism from leftists as well as business and conservative groups. This criticism could translate into a loss of support for PASOK during the nationwide municipal elections in the fall and could prompt Papandreu to rely more on the "Turkish threat" to revive his fortunes. [redacted] 25

A more aggressive posture by Ankara could thus play directly into the Greek Prime Minister's hands. Although Papandreu probably will agree to informal talks between Athens and Ankara later this year, he is likely to cite a more nationalistic Turkish stance as further evidence of Turkey's designs on Greek territory. Turkish saber rattling could nudge Papandreu closer to the United States, but he would still keep up the pressure for a security guarantee against Turkey and use US facilities in Greece as leverage. [redacted] 25

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