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Has the U.S. been unfair?

GREECE'S GRIEVANCE

Athens

WITH THE TWA hijacking last month, the American public's estimation of Greece reached a new low. The Greek government had failed to act upon repeated international warnings about lax security at Hellinikon airport, and thus had no convincing response to charges that it had effectively allowed the hijacking to take place. What's more, it negotiated the release of Ali Atwa, the captured comrade of the Amal hijackers, which violated the West's general understanding about not giving in to terrorist demands.

Greece's image had been in slow decline since 1981, when the outrageous statements of the new prime minister, Andreas Papandreou, started making headlines. Papandreou has said, among other things, that the U.S. is an "imperialist country," that General Jaruzelski is a Polish "patriot" and Solidarity "a dangerous movement," and that the KAL 007 jetliner shot down by the Soviets was on a CIA spy mission. He has also developed a reputation for coddling terrorists by professing solidarity with the likes of Muammar al-Qaddafi and Yasir Arafat.

As Papandreou's most quotable slanders circulated in the U.S. press, Greek anti-Americanism was slowly being transformed into American anti-Hellenism. Thus no one complained much when the State Department issued a "travel advisory" for Greek-bound American tourists—an announcement that resulted in 30,000 canceled bookings, an estimated $100 million drain on Greece's faltering economy. Many editorials said that this was the least Greece deserved.

Most Greeks, however, considered the punishment, and the American media's coverage of Greece's actions, extremely unfair. They questioned whether the terrorists' weapons really were smuggled on the plane in Athens, where there were both Greek security and the extra security personnel TWA had itself hired as backup. American officials seemed to share these doubts. They admitted they were dubious of Ali Atwa's story that his comrades had smuggled their weapons past the two security systems by wrapping them in fiberglass. (X-rays penetrate fiberglass, as any self-respecting terrorist would probably know.) Some Washington officials speculated about a possible "inside job"—Arab spies in the Greek airport ground crew. Amal leader Akef Haidar claimed that the guns and grenades had been placed on the plane during an earlier stop in Cairo.

The Greeks were also angered at how the United States portrayed the release of Ali Atwa. For days after the hijacking the press stated that the Greek government had traded Atwa merely for the seven Greek passengers of TWA flight 847. Only after the last of the hostages were freed and began recounting their experiences of those early negotiations did it report what the Greek government had contended all along: that the Greek ambassador had also successfully negotiated the release of 63 other hostages, most of whom were American women and children. This trade may have been unwise or even cowardly, but it was not, as it was portrayed, a supreme act of chauvinism.

In the days after the hijacking, there were airport terrorist attacks in Frankfurt, Norway, Rome, Tokyo, and Madrid in which a total of eight people were killed; and a flight from Canada to India exploded en route, killing 329 people. The State Department had little to say about any of these incidents. Why, the Greeks asked, were they being singled out at a time when the international nature of terrorism was never more evident? Indeed, days after the State Department's "travel advisory," a young man wearing army fatigues and carrying a rifle walked into the State Department itself and, a few yards from George Shultz's office, shot and killed his mother, a department employee, and then himself. One Greek opposition politician jokingly proposed a ban on Greek Embassy staff visits to the State Department until security is improved.

One does not have to excuse Greece's nonchalance about terrorism to suspect that there were other motivations behind the Reagan administration's "travel advisory." The administration has not objected to Papandreou's rhetoric because he otherwise has given the U.S. nearly everything it's asked for. (He renegotiated the U.S. military bases agreement, although he'd won the election by promising the opposite, and threw in a new AWACs base.) Having held its tongue for so long, the White House could not have been unhappy at the chance to get even. The American press and public shared that unseemly but understandable urge. Greece became a convenient target for the frustration of a president, and a country, unable or unwilling to strike back at the real enemy.

THERE IS A special dimension, though, to the new American anti-Hellenism and the Greek anti-Americanism that preceded it. Unlike other small, poor countries that sling hostile remarks at the U.S., Greece has been one of America's most reliable allies. Greeks and Americans fought together in two world wars and in Korea. Even today anti-Americanism in Greece remains rather half-baked. The Greeks still love the idea that all Western nations have their roots in Greek civilization. With their entrepreneurial ways and embrace of consumer culture, they simply don't bring to their criticisms of America the same violent rejection of modernity that characterizes anti-American movements elsewhere. The most treacherous "anti-Americanism" any U.S. citizen in Greece this summer will likely encounter is a heated political discussion with a Greek over drinks at a *kafenion*—after which the Greek will almost certainly insist on picking up the tab.

Greece's new, self-consciously independent behavior, in other words, is the result of the nation having unlearned to some extent a previous policy of full cooperation with America. This unlearning, as many American officials privately admit, is the result of Greece's experi-

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ence with shortsighted American foreign policy.

That policy began with the Truman Doctrine of 1947, when America replaced waning British influence in Greece. A civil war had broken out between Greek communist-led guerrillas and the shaky new government—nominally led by centrist republicans but dominated by right-wing monarchists and Nazi collaborators. Writers such as Nicholas Gage have vividly documented communist atrocities during the civil war; but atrocities by government forces—including the Security Battalions, Greece's version of right-wing death squads—were just as gruesome. The guerrillas, who were the main resistance force against the Nazi occupation, had shown much interest in democratic political solutions to end the fighting. But American officials, gripped by the new cold war mentality, were in no mood to compromise with communists. The U.S. drifted into closer association with the unpopular Greek monarchy and the right, a tie that would continue for the next 25 years.

The communists were ultimately defeated. But when the Greek public used its newly won freedom to elect a centrist coalition government, the U.S. ambassador, John E. Peurifoy, made his country's displeasure—and its power—known. Distrustful of "fuzzy-headed liberals," Peurifoy threatened to cut American aid unless the government changed the electoral system to assure control by the less popular but more "stable" right. The government had little choice but to concede. "Centrists and leftists felt rejected by the representatives of American foreign policy here," explains Sotiris Papapolitis, a Greek member of parliament with the center-right New Democracy party. Papapolitis's father was a cabinet minister under that early, short-lived center government. He says that Peurifoy would walk into his father's office, and in a perfect gesture of American conceit, put his feet up on the minister's desk: "You can't imagine the humiliation."

For the next 12 years right-wing politicians ran the government, though always at the behest of a "para-state" made up of the Greek palace, the Greek and American military, the American Embassy, and, most notoriously, the CIA. The communist threat had withered; anti-communism, however, remained the official state religion and the excuse the government used to suspend various civil liberties. Yet still most Greeks deeply admired America (where many friends and relatives had gone to seek work) and were acutely aware that their country's economic and defense interests were best served by close association with the United States.

SUPPORT for the American presence only wavered when the Greeks felt that it threatened their national interests. This occurred in 1955, when John Foster Dulles sent a tersely written letter to the Greeks demanding, in essence, that they ignore, for the sake of NATO, Cyprus-related Turkish atrocities against Greeks living in Istanbul and Izmir. Fierce anti-American feelings swept over Greece, from right to left, and died down only as outrage over the atrocities faded. To this day Washington tends to treat Greece's conflict with Turkey—a matter to the Greeks of territorial integrity—as an atavistic tiff between NATO's backward Balkan brothers.

The great challenge to the "para-state" came with the rise of George Papandreou's Center Union party in the early 1960s. Riding a wave of indignation over heavy-handed voter intimidation by the Greek military in the 1961 elections, Papandreou—with his son Andreas, recently returned from the U.S., at his side—won an unprecedented 53 percent of the vote in 1964. But 17 months later, after clashing with Lyndon Johnson over Dean Acheson's plan for the partition of Cyprus, and with the monarchy over control of the military, Papandreou was maneuvered into resigning. Not long after that, an obscure group of colonels seized power. Democracy in Greece, such as it was, disappeared for seven years.

Ask a Greek if he thinks the U.S. had anything to do with the colonels' coup, and he'll look at you with that contemptuous smile the world reserves for American innocents. Indeed, many of the Greek officers involved had been trained by the CIA—the junta's leader, Colonel George Papadopoulos, had been the liaison officer between the CIA and its Greek equivalent, the KYP. The very execution of the coup was based on a NATO-drafted contingency plan. To this day Washington denies it had any idea that the men it was supporting to defend democracy were in fact plotting to undermine it.

Surprised or not, Washington made the colonels feel right at home. While other Western leaders avoided public contact with the brutal regime, the U.S. sent dignitaries such as Spiros Anagnostopoulos (a.k.a. Spiro Agnew) to have their pictures taken with the dictators and assure them of generous assistance. Large American corporations such as Litton Industries and Coca-Cola also courted the colonels, and won access to Greek markets on almost colonial terms. "We in the U.S.," wrote President Nixon to Colonel Papadopoulos, "greatly appreciate the welcome that is given to American companies and the sense of security that the government of Greece is imparting to them." The colonels, eager to create an appearance of legitimacy, spread these and other gushing U.S. tributes across the headlines of the government-controlled press. Thus a whole generation of Greeks learned to make a connection between the American government, multinational corporations, and "capitalist imperialism."

All this pleased the Soviets. "Communist countries cultivated good relations with the junta," recalls Paul Anastasi, the Greek-Cypriot journalist who uncovered the KGB's hidden support for *Ethnos*, the currently popular Greek anti-American newspaper. "The Soviet strategy was that it was in their interest for the dictatorship to last as long as possible, because this would radicalize the population to the left and justify the left-wing cause. They were right."

If American support for the junta assured an anti-American reaction, the Cyprus crisis of 1974 guaranteed that the reaction would be broad and unstoppable. Few Greeks today doubt—nor should they—that Henry Kis-

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singer and the CIA were neck deep in the bloody affair. The junta's insane bid for the Republic of Cyprus, which paved the way for the brutal Turkish counterattack, resulted in roughly the same partition of the island nation Dean Acheson had pressured for ten years earlier.

Humiliated by the Cyprus crisis, the junta collapsed. The job of dealing with the subsequent national outrage fell to the conservative and democratic government of Constantine Karamanlis. Karamanlis jailed the colonels, legalized the Communist Party, and pulled Greece out of the military wing of NATO. But that wasn't enough to hold back the populist left-wing movement coalescing around Andreas Papandreou. When Papandreou's Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (Pasok) was reelected last month after four years in office, it became the first non-right-wing government to survive in Greece in over 40 years.

The American press never tires of observing that much of Papandreou's appeal is due to his ability to exploit popular resentment of the American government. Yet this appeal can only go so far in an otherwise conservative, pro-Western nation like Greece. "There's a sense that the Greeks got their own back against America," observes Paul Anastasi. "But just as the right wing's excessive anti-communism generated an anti-right, anti-American backlash, today the trend is in the other direction." Indeed, opinion polls last year noted a slight ebbing of anti-U.S. government sentiments among Greeks. Foreign policy was hardly an issue in the spring elections. "People are rather fed up with hearing about the American threat," says Anastasi.

That is, until this hijacking fiasco. The Reagan administration's "travel advisory" touched the wrong raw nerve at the wrong time. The administration has promised "retaliation" against the perpetrators of this terrorism, and has so far succeeded only in punishing one of the victims.

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