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INTRODUCTION

The military dictatorship that ruled Greece for seven years (1967–1974) left its distinct mark on the history of the country as one of the three most significant episodes of the twentieth century. It would not be an overstatement to say that the impact that this period had on the social, economic and political life of Greece can be compared only to monumental events such as the Asia Minor catastrophe and the Greek Civil War. As an historic event of such magnitude, the junta (as it is commonly referred to in Greece) still has important repercussions that are being felt today, not only insofar as the obvious implications on international relations are concerned (the Cyprus imbroglio being the predominant one) but also with respect to contemporary Greeks' view of politics and history. That is why a thorough examination of specific aspects of military rule, and especially relations with other countries is of considerable importance.

However, although it is now more than thirty-eight years since the collapse of the military regime, unequivocal answers, in particular in relation to the role of the Great Powers at the time, have not been adequately produced. Clouds of confusion continue to obscure, to a certain extent, US but also general NATO involvement in the coup that brought the Colonels to power, and the role of British governments, whether instigative, compromising, or antagonistic (both in terms of bilateral relations with Greece and within the framework of collective action), in the events preceding and following the establishment of the junta in Greece has not been researched thoroughly.

An investigation of Britain's attitude vis-à-vis the dictatorship is highly important as the British role in Greek history is significant. Britain's

acquired status as a ‘traditional ally’ has enabled it to exert its influence on Greek events on various occasions including creating precedents for intervention (the Metaxas dictatorship, 1936–41, and the years immediately after WWII, for instance). Moreover, Britain’s traditional presence in the Mediterranean, in conjunction with its involvement in organisations such as NATO and (from 1973) EEC and its ‘special relationship’ with one of the superpowers of the period, adds a sense of urgency to a scrutiny of the factors that dictated its policy towards Greece.

This book probes the Wilson and Heath’s governments’ policies towards the establishment, consolidation and actions of the military dictatorship that was in power in Greece from 1967 to 1974. It concentrates on the diplomatic, economic, cultural, and defence relations between the two traditional allies. It also endeavours to explain the factors behind the ‘diplomatic’ handling of the Greek situation by Britain, by examining the general context of the ‘relinquishment of world power status’ as a consequence of the abandonment of the East of Suez policy, and the two countries’ relations with the superpowers and regional powers of the time, within the Cold War framework.

More specifically, the book will examine the question of Whitehall’s previous knowledge and/or possible involvement in the coup of 21 April 1967 that brought the Colonels into power. It will also endeavour to provide a critical analysis of Britain’s response to the seminal events that took place during the seven years’ reign of the Greek junta; namely important domestic developments (such as the progress of the restoration of democracy), as well as the Colonels’ attempts to gain legitimacy abroad by establishing contacts with communist Balkan and African countries, and the effect of British membership of the EEC. The impact of domestic events in Britain, like the financial situation and the 1970 and 1974 national elections, and international ones, such as the Cyprus and the Arab-Israeli conflicts (whose repercussions are still felt today), the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the processes of detente and further European integration on Anglo-Greek relations will also be examined. Furthermore, the book will discuss the question of the British governments’ policy towards the junta on the significant issue of Greece’s participation in NATO and its influence on Anglo-American relations.

The aim of this book is to cover an existing gap in the literature, and provide the first complete account of British policy towards Greece, throughout the period of the Greek military dictatorship; that is from 1967 to 1974. This study is groundbreaking in the sense that it marks the first time that a thorough investigation of the entire period of relations has been undertaken, and the first time that evidence from *both* the UK and Greece (as well as from the US) is used and analysed. Moreover, original claims about the decisive nature of the role of British ambassadors, and the relevance of trade issues to the progress of Anglo-Greek relations are put forth.

More specifically, the main hypothesis is that British governments were in a very weak position both financially and internationally and, therefore, had to follow pragmatic policies that were meant to prove Britain's subordination to NATO and American interests. The degree of continuity in London's dealings with Athens will be assessed, as differences and similarities between the Labour (1967–70 and 1974) and the Conservative (1970–4) government policies are identified and analysed. I maintain that the Wilson government, after an initial inertia, went out of its way to establish a 'good working relationship' with the Greek dictatorship that would permit the former to continue working with the government in Athens, and to make sure that the latter would continue to fulfil its NATO obligations, as a bastion of stability in the sea of turbulence that was (and still is) the sensitive area of the Eastern Mediterranean. The picture of ambiguity of Labour's policy is completed by the differences between its rhetoric and actions, as, for example, providing Greece with arms and condoning it within NATO, while at the same time Labour ministers openly criticized the junta's methods and urged it towards a 'return to constitutional rule' in forums such as the Council of Europe. Wilson, as much as he disliked them, did not sever relations with the Colonels; he recognized them and kept trading with them, thus promoting a policy of 'business as usual', but stopping short of unapologetically conducting warm relations with them and fulfilling all their demands (keeping contacts, including visits, to a minimum, for example). It was only after Labour returned to power following four years in opposition that Wilson appeared more adamant vis-à-vis the (new form of the)

dictatorship, in an effort to illustrate the point that his policy was different from that of his predecessor, and to make good on Labour's pre-election promises.

The Conservatives, on the other hand, due to their political orientation and the absence of a left-wing, appeared 'more realistic', following a pragmatic policy *par excellence*. They concentrated on Greece's allegiance to the Atlantic Alliance, continuing and strengthening a 'good working relationship', including actively promoting trade, and supposedly aiming for a lasting settlement in Cyprus. To achieve this, cooperation in all fields, and most importantly defence, was pursued, with visits on both sides serving the purpose of bringing London closer to Athens. The four basic objectives of policy towards Greece were changed to reflect 'a new spirit' in relations, whereby the government in London would not twist the junta's arm over a return to constitutional rule and democratic liberties. The Conservatives followed what I have termed the doctrine of 'disconnected responsibilities' (introduced earlier by Labour), making clear that the NATO and the Council of Europe contexts were completely different and separate, and that developments in one would not spill over onto the other. However, the 'familiar tight-rope act' of Britain's relations with the junta was also obvious under Heath, insofar as trade figures almost doubled and relations became warmer, but the British also failed to provide sufficient encouragement to the Markezinis experiment, and were constrained by their participation in the European integration process.

Other issues or themes explored are the impact of public opinion on decision-making in Whitehall, the role of Greek and other resistance organizations based in the British capital, and the extent to which British policy was influenced by external factors, such as its alliances with other countries, most importantly the 'special relationship' with the United States and Britain's membership of the European Economic Community. In this respect, it is shown that London, whether under the Labour or the Tories, maintained a very close cooperation with Washington, keeping an 'open line' on significant issues like recognition, NATO, and generally the degree of dealing with the regime, but also chose to differentiate its policy from that of the superpower on a number of occasions, including arms sales and Cyprus. Moreover,

intra-party divisions, whether over the general approach towards the Colonels or specific policy decisions are scrutinized.

Although the main emphasis is on the formulation of British policy towards the Greek dictatorship, a substantial part of this book also deals with decision-making at the Athens end of the Anglo-Greek relationship. Through personal interviews with leading figures and the investigation of recently released documents from the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (used here for the first time) the actions and reactions of the junta concerning Britain are revealed, thus exposing the inner workings of the dictatorship's diplomatic mechanism and throwing light on the Colonels' understanding of Whitehall's policies.

The book is divided into eight chapters presented in chronological order. The starting point of the first chapter, which deals with the first 20 months of the regime, is 1966, when references to a coup to take place in Greece started emerging. It probes the Wilson government's previous knowledge and/or possible involvement in the coup of 21 April 1967 that brought the Colonels into power, and endeavours a critical analysis of Britain's response to the seminal events that took place in the first two, but extremely important, years of the Greek junta; namely the abortive counter-coup instigated by King Constantine, the renewal of tension in Greek-Turkish relations, the attempted assassination of Premier Papadopoulos and its implications, and the referendum on the Greek Constitution. The impact of domestic events in Britain (like the Labour Party conference) and international ones (such as the Six Day War and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia) on the Greek situation is also examined.

The aim of the second chapter is to evaluate British policy towards the junta on two extremely significant issues, Greece's participation in NATO and the country's participation in the Council of Europe. The doctrine of 'disconnected responsibilities', introduced by the Labour government, is examined in relation to the Kotronis case, but most notably in regard to the cases of the international organizations mentioned above. Divisions in the British Cabinet become clearly pronounced during 1969, as the leadership tries to move towards a new direction in relations with the junta. The lead-up to the June

1970 general election and the renewed troubles in Cyprus provide both the backdrop and the opportunity for a showcase of the twofold policy followed by British diplomacy.

Chapter 3 follows the surprising change of government in London and the implications that had on Anglo-Greek relations in 1970. The degree of continuity in Whitehall's dealing with the Greek military régime is assessed, with defence and trade relations examined. A sufficient part of the chapter deals with the new state of affairs in both capitals (in London because of the change in leadership and in Athens because of its enhanced international position), as well as its subsequent impact on relations. Moreover, the Colonels' attempts to gain legitimacy abroad by establishing contacts with communist Balkan and African countries, as it was viewed through the eyes of British officials, is analysed, as well.

Chapter 4 is dominated by British fears in 1971. London was concerned by Papadopoulos' increasing concentration of power but was also preoccupied with a possible overthrow of his regime by extremist elements. Furthermore, the British felt that they should not completely isolate ex-politicians but, at the same time, were under considerable stress to appear willing to work with the Colonels. A quest for a new spirit in relations was pursued on the part of the Heath government, with trade emerging as the most important catalyst for improving relations with the junta. Other fears include London's anxiety over public opinion and, most importantly, parliamentary criticism, in Britain, and, consequently, Athens' reaction to this.

The focus of Chapter 5 is on 1972, an inconclusive year which, however, ushered in relations in the new direction that the Conservatives were hoping for. The main vehicle was again the active promotion of trade in both directions, in conjunction with the first two high-profile visits to Athens. These moves towards establishing a warmer relationship with Greece perfectly reflected the change in priorities of British policy and, in particular, the drawing up of different objectives than those under Labour. The Colonels' efforts to take advantage of the rapprochement in order to secure British contracts was somehow countervailed by the effect future European Economic Community membership had on Britain's foreign relations.

Chapter 6 deals with the most eventful year of the junta's reign, namely 1973, and provides an assessment of the impact of British membership of the EEC on Anglo-Greek relations. A restructuring of policy towards the Greek regime was decided, although expectations did not change before the liberalising measures taken by the Greek Premier in the summer and the formation of the short-lived Markezinis government in the fall. Whitehall's assessment of the naval mutiny, the subsequent abolition of the monarchy and the referendum is provided, as London's dilemma of either promoting closer relations with the military regime with the risk of parliamentary criticism, or giving the Colonels the cold shoulder and thus putting trade prospects in danger, now became more pronounced.

Chapter 7 concentrates on the eventful period of September–December 1973. The British reaction to the seminal events of late 1973 (formation and collapse of Markezinis' government, the Athens Polytechnic uprising, and the new coup d'état by the hardliners) is presented. The chapter focuses on the debate within FCO circles over whether or not to encourage the civilian Markezinis government in Athens, as well as on the perception and the eventual recognition of the Ioannidis regime in late November–December 1973. During this period relations between the two capitals reverted to their previous state of stagnation, as the British once again opted for their known policy of 'wait and see'.

The last chapter focuses on the first half of 1974, including the Ioannidis' regime, the installation of the Sampson puppet government in Cyprus, and the Turkish invasion of the island along with its repercussions on Anglo-Greek relations. A substantial part of the chapter is dedicated to the Labour minority government's relations with the Greek dictators, and especially Wilson's stance while both in opposition and in power. The cancellation of the naval visits to Greece and the downgrading of the '*good*' working relationship' to a '*proper*' one are given prominence. Finally, the view from London of the catalyst for the demise of the junta (i.e. the Cyprus incidents of the summer of 1974) is presented and assessed. It should be noted here that an exhaustive analysis of the 1974 events in Cyprus (although important and, admittedly, connected to a certain degree to developments in London and

Athens) is not attempted here, as it is considered that that would be outside the main scope of this book, i.e. British policy towards Greece. The Cyprus issue is touched upon here only to discuss its implications on relations between Athens and London, when these appear essential to our understanding of Whitehall's policy vis-à-vis the junta.

CHAPTER 1

THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TOWARDS THE COLONELS, 1967–68: SETTING THE TONE

During the last phases of WWII British intervention played a significant role in keeping Greece out of the soviet sphere and thus in the country's approximation to the Western world. After World War II, and especially after the announcement of the Truman Doctrine in 1947 (which meant that Britain would 'pass on responsibility' for Greece to the United States) bilateral relations between London and Athens waned considerably. According to Hatzivassiliou, 1947 was 'a break in the history of Anglo-Greek relations' in the sense that then Britain relinquished its primacy among foreign powers influencing events in Greece.¹ The post-civil war era could be characterized as 'a period of transition', with the British struggling to maintain a level of influence, and, at the same time, trying to come to terms with their diminished position regarding political developments in Greece. Papagos' premiership in the 1950s symbolized a weakening of British economic and political leverage with Greek politicians, and led to a deterioration of the state of relations between the two traditional allies. London and Athens locked horns on the Cyprus issue, even fighting against each other for the first time.² In 1955, Karamanlis became the first Greek politician to become prime minister without having the active

support of the British, and after that Anglo-Greek relations became even more coloured by events on the Mediterranean island. A series of executions of EOKA members contributed heavily to ‘the worst crisis ever’ in relations, and made Greece openly hostile to Britain.³ What is more, Greece openly expressed its disagreement with London’s role in the Suez crisis, mainly because of Athens’ concerns over the sizeable Greek community in Egypt and keeping Arab countries’ votes on Cyprus in the UN on its side.⁴ Britain’s relative decline as an imperial power, in conjunction with Greece’s choice in favour of the EEC in lieu of EFTA, and most importantly, the bitter rivalry created between the two peoples as a consequence of the suppression of Greek-Cypriot independence, guaranteed a cooling off of the traditional Anglo-Greek relationship.⁵

In the late 1950s, however, there was a thaw in relations with the two countries cooperating in the implementation of the agreements over Cyprus. After the declaration of Cyprus’ independence in 1960, and prime minister Karamanlis’ visit to London⁶ the following year, relations seemed to be improving, only to get worse with another visit to the British capital, by the Greek royal family this time, which was in turn connected with Karamanlis’ disagreement with the Crown and his eventual resignation in 1963.⁷ During the early 1960s the Anglo-Greek connection suffered primarily because of London’s unwillingness to commit to NATO funding to Greece. This stance was anchored to the belief that Britain did not have particularly vital strategic interests in Greece (in relation to Middle Eastern countries such as Turkey),⁸ and Whitehall’s realization of its constantly shrinking economic capabilities.⁹ Wilson’s election as prime minister coincided with George Papandreu’s brief stint at the helm of Greek politics. The seminal events of July 1965 and the subsequent (three failed) endeavours for the formation of a government in Athens were viewed with great interest and anxiety in Britain.¹⁰ More specifically, during the crisis of 1965 the British ambassador, Sir Ralph Murray condemned Papandreu’s actions and London (not ignoring British and Greek royal ties) seemed to be clearly taking King Constantine’s side. British fears were not palliated even after Papandreu’s fall, as Stephanopoulos’ government was considered fragile, but relations ameliorated considerably in 1966

with the Greek Foreign Minister expressing the view that they were now more cordial than ever since 1945.¹¹

Before proceeding to an analysis of British policy towards Greece immediately prior, and following, the Colonels' coup, I think a brief synopsis of developments within Greece which led to the imposition of a military dictatorship is in order. During the decade following the end of the Greek Civil War (and after a short break associated with a liberal experiment) Greek politics was dominated by the Conservatives. The government of Field Marshal Papagos (who was seen at the time as a determined and competent leader, largely responsible for defeating the communists) was backed by a large share of the population and, quite importantly, the United States, but soon proved to be somewhat authoritarian in style. Its chief purpose was to lift the country from poverty, and its main characteristics were a large dose of anti-communism and a strong leadership. Papagos' decision to try to re-address the Cyprus issue (under the influence of Greek public opinion), in the mid-1950s, and especially the move to internationalise the issue at the UN level, caused increased bitterness in London.¹²

His successor, Karamanlis, continued the tradition of solid right-wing leadership. After King Paul entrusted him with forming a new government, Karamanlis went on to form a new political party, including liberal personalities, in his effort to bring Greece closer to Europe. In 1958 a small group of majority deputies decided to withdraw their confidence from Karamanlis' government, thus leading to fresh elections and the formation of a new Karamanlis government, with the pro-communist party (EDA) becoming the main opposition party for the first time in Greek politics. The early 1960s were dominated by the prospect of European Economic Community (EEC) membership (along with the harmonization of policies that entailed), and the election of 1961, which gained notoriety after Papandreou's challenging the outcome (amid allegations of violence and vote-rigging) and starting a 'relentless struggle' for new and fair elections. Karamanlis admitted that the state mechanism had interfered in the elections, though to a small and negligible extent, and that it was done in order to curtail EDA's rise.¹³

George Papandreu's crusade against the domination of the Right managed to mobilize not only the electoral basis of his party, but also wider social classes, especially since the demand for fresh elections was coupled with other economic and social demands. By November 1962, the 'relentless struggle' had become a mass phenomenon, also affecting Karamanlis' relations with the crown.¹⁴ A few months later, the king and the queen had come to the conclusion that the prime minister was not welcome anymore, and the Americans were warming up to a Centre Union (CU) government without, though, the support of the Left. A series of dramatic events formed the backdrop to the 1963 election, which resulted in a surprise victory for Papandreu and his party, ending the Conservatives' eleven-year dominance of Greek politics.

It was only in February 1964, however, that the Centre Union managed to get an absolute majority of seats. A 'comfortable' majority helped Papandreu promote a series of liberal reforms, but the main bone of contention between him and the Crown was the army, where 'the king reigned supreme'.¹⁵ A disagreement between King Constantine and George Papandreu over the control of the armed forces, in conjunction with reports that the latter's son, Andreas, was involved in a secret organization of republican officers, led to an acute political crisis in 1965, which culminated in Papandreu's resignation and the king's efforts to carve a government out of CU deputies.¹⁶ The young monarch needed three attempts to succeed in his goal, and yet the government formed had only a wafer-thin majority and eventually collapsed in late 1966. King Constantine was increasingly concerned by the strengthening of Andreas Papandreu's position within his father's party and felt he had to act now in order to prevent a further erosion of monarchical power in Greece.¹⁷ The endgame began when a caretaker government under new Conservative leader Panayiotis Kanellopoulos was formed a few weeks before the Colonels' coup.

The first traces

[Greece is] a country where traditionally every citizen is convinced of his ability and right to be Prime Minister.¹⁸

The first reference worth mentioning in official British documents to a possible coup d'état in Greece emerged from a fortuitous event eleven months before the Colonels actually took control of Athens and less than two months after Labour's (new) electoral win. On 22 May 1966, the 'Communist inspired', according to a Foreign Office official, Marathon Peace March ('a left-wing anti-US, anti-NATO protest rally')¹⁹ took place in Greece, in which, regrettably for the government in London, keen not to antagonise that of Stephanos Stephanopoulos (particularly at a time when negotiations for the sale of a nuclear reactor to Greece were in progress), two Members of Parliament decided to take part as 'representatives of the British peace movement'.²⁰ Reginald Freeson and Peter Jackson, both Labour MPs, visited Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart²¹ after their return to the British capital, in order to give their first-hand accounts of political life and developments in Greece. They diagnosed a '*strong likelihood of a right-wing coup* which would upset the present parliamentary régime, but which the Centre Union and the Left would undoubtedly crush', and, consequently, suggested that their government 'should try to widen [its] contacts with the Opposition [meaning mainly George Papandreu's Centre Union (CU) party] as a policy of reinsurance against such a development' (emphasis added).²² This belief was a consequence of their feeling that Whitehall was 'not exerting a liberal influence sufficiently strong enough to counter the support which the Americans were giving to the reactionary elements in Greece and that [it was] thus condoning the police state methods of the [then] régime'.²³ The expression of anxiety and dissatisfaction over policy towards Greece (even before the establishment of a military dictatorship) by the two MPs continued to appear in the rhetoric of numerous Labour ministers, chiefly through parliamentary questions and statements to the press, throughout the junta's rule.

The first manifestation of concern about a threat to the constitutional integrity of the country that is customarily referred to as 'the cradle of democracy' was to be countered with a rather tactful and suave, but not exactly subtle, response, typical of the ones to follow during the Colonels' tenure of power. As officials of FO's Central

Department stated:

We had had no recent indications that any right-wing *coup* was imminent . . . as long as the King was resolutely opposed to such a coup, *it seemed unlikely that the army leaders could organise one with success* (emphasis added).²⁴

Michael Stewart, who was told by FO officials that the talk of an over-hanging coup was an unfounded rumour instigated by E.D.A. (*Enomeni Dimokratiki Aristera*, that is the Union of the Democratic Left, representing the outlawed communists in parliament), in order to gain supporters for its cause, sought the advice of the British ambassador in Athens, Sir Ralph Murray, on five points: (1) his contacts with the ‘legitimate part of the Opposition’, concentrating thus on CU, (2) King Constantine’s resolution against any ‘extra-parliamentary *solution*’, (3) the public sentiment in Greece, (4) activities that contributed to the characterisation of ‘police state’, and, finally, (5) US policy and in particular ‘to what extent d[id] the U.S. Embassy in Athens and the representatives of the C.I.A. in Greece support the right-wing elements’.²⁵ In relation to the fifth point, as Klarevas has argued, the US government, although well aware of a military plot of some kind²⁶, not only did not support those planning unconstitutional action, but also ‘discouraged conspirators who suggested a military takeover might be the solution to Greece’s political crisis in the mid-1960s’ (emphasis added).²⁷ Furthermore, the similitude of views in Washington and London is quite strikingly apparent in their assessment of a probable military takeover: in March 1967 (less than a month before the coup), State Department officials corroborated their British counterparts’ estimate mentioned above by asserting that ‘there is no evidence that army leadership is actually plotting to create conditions leading to deviation from Constitution’.²⁸ The telegram concluded by stating that [the] military would not seek independently to impose a dictatorship, but it would support a dictatorship if King decided in favor of such a régime.²⁹

The American and the British corresponding evaluations of the precarious situation preceding the rise of the Colonels were based on the false assumption that a coup organized by Generals and sealed

with the authority of the monarch was the only, and not so probable, scenario. The fact that they, as admittedly almost everyone in Greece³⁰ and the US³¹, did not concede or even conceive the possibility that a group of lower rank officials with the support of a General and alleged royal complicity would manage to paralyse the country, facilitated the collapse of democracy in the place where it was born.

The second most important issue that London wanted to know, namely the king's position, was dealt with extensively when the latter met with the British prime minister in November 1966, five months before the advent of the Colonels to power, and after George Brown had moved from the DEA to the Foreign Office. As a memorandum produced for Wilson for the meeting reveals, an 'extra-parliamentary solution' initiated by the Right but opposed by the king, who was, none the less, under considerable pressure from his immediate entourage to yield, was considered a possible reaction to a feared victory of the Centre Union in future elections. It was asserted that it was in the British government's interests that there should be a strong and stable Greek government able to maintain the status quo on four main issues: (1) Cyprus, (2) Greek participation in NATO, (3) British commercial interests, and (4) the containment of the communist threat in Greece. The most striking sentence of the memorandum, though, is the following:

'An extra-parliamentary solution' of present Greek political problems would not necessarily conflict with these interests provided it was successful.³²

This utterance, isolated from its context and blown out of proportion, could falsely serve as proof of London's desire for, or even collusion in, the establishment of dictatorial rule in a Western country and NATO ally. The British government, nevertheless, although secretly aware, as it admitted after the coup, that a resounding victory of the Papandreists would have been 'worrying for us' as it 'might well have led to anarchy in Greece and at least a disturbing weakening of Greece's membership of the NATO alliance',³³ far from fomented the so-called 'Revolution

of 21 April'. The conclusion of the aforementioned document is quite revealing:

But we cannot foretell the consequences of an 'extra-parliamentary solution'. They might be bad from our point of view. On balance *a continuation of the present, albeit delicate, political situation in Greece seems preferable* (emphasis added).³⁴

The Foreign Office seemed to have no confidence in the success of a putsch without the king's active support (which the British did not consider forthcoming) and, so, opted for a more reserved approach. The suggestion that followed the above analysis could be summed up as the weighing of King Constantine's intentions and the espousal of a 'wait and see', as neutral as possible, attitude:

It is suggested that the Prime Minister should encourage the King to give his own account of the situation as he sees it. The Prime Minister may wish to agree with anything the King may say about the desirability of continuing parliamentary and constitutional government, but *without giving any suggestion that Her Majesty's Government favour a particular solution* (emphasis added).³⁵

A month and a half later, an agreement was reached whereby elections in Greece, under a new, caretaker, government, were to be held in May 1967. As the British ambassador informed Brown (who had his hands full with EEC negotiations and Kosygin's impending visit to London, at the time),³⁶ Papandreu's Centre Union party was most likely to win, and its leader appeared willing to have a 'live and let live relationship with the King'.³⁷ Sir Ralph Murray estimated that the then (Paraskevopoulos), or a different, caretaker government would lead the country into the elections. He reported, however, that there were free discussions in the political world about a coup d'état, which should not 'necessarily [be] regard[ed] [...] as disastrous', and which would in all probability occur before the elections, if a Papandreu landslide victory loomed. The ambassador's reaction to the fact that 'there [were]

undoubtedly some officers who like[d] to imagine they [were] plotting the salvation of the country' was that 'there [was] no indication as yet that they [were] serious or that anybody of any political weight approve[d] or back[ed] them'. In the conclusion of his dispatch, Murray turned to the NATO issue and expressed the view that only a government with the participation of Andreas Papandreou was likely 'to go to lengths of irresponsibility which would be seriously *disturbing to us*' (emphasis added), mainly because of the inflammatory nature of the latter's anti-Western rhetoric.³⁸

Andreas Papandreou found himself in deeper and muddier waters when in February 1967 his parliamentary immunity was threatened. Following investigations relating to the ASPIDA affair, the Athens director of public prosecutions requested parliament to lift the immunity of Andreas and Pavlos Vardinoyannis, another former CU minister, on the grounds that they had participated 'in a conspiracy to commit acts of high treason'.³⁹ The Centre Union party reacted by issuing a grave warning: 'it described the action against its two deputies as a scheme by "sinister forces" to delay the elections and eventually impose *some form of dictatorship* in order to prevent Mr. Papandreou's return to power' (emphasis added).⁴⁰

A new, caretaker, government (the fourth in two years) was indeed formed in Athens, under Panayotis Kanellopoulos, the president of NRU (*National Radical Union*), that is the party of the Right, in early April 1967. Sir Ralph Murray's report that time concentrated on his conviction of the CU's looming electoral triumph and the possible expulsion of the king, which 'would have as a concomitant the danger of an anticipatory coup to prevent it'. The political forecast was two-fold: (1) NRU would influence the forthcoming elections in order to perpetuate its hold on power, and (2) there were to be 'devices to avoid the holding of elections for some considerable time'.⁴¹

As can be deduced from the above, London was certain that the CU would win the forthcoming elections, and secretly admitted that this outcome would clearly not be in its best interests. Moreover, in reaction to that, FO officials, through their local contacts and possibly after having consulted their American counterparts or the CIA, suspected an unlawful, military move to annul the democratic trajectory

of the Greek polity. However, the action expected was rather different from the actual one, as fundamental particulars, such as the time and the perpetrators of the coup, were not known to British officials.

Thus it can be said that Britain's position as regards the Greek coup d'état was, at most, that of a 'neutral observer'. One feels compelled to allow the argument that London could have informed someone in the Greek capital about the brewing of conspiratorial proclivity there, but it is true that the political situation and the government in Athens were so unstable and problematic that this precluded any substantial communication, especially of a top-secret type. Besides, rumours about an unconstitutional change of government had already satiated the Greek public, and, so, Whitehall did not consider it expedient to reiterate them (especially since the Americans preferred not to give any information to the Greeks). What seems to be more intriguing is the extent to which London kept its 'neutral' position after the establishment of the military dictatorship, facing severe criticism (following the impetus of the demonstrations against the Vietnam War) on the one hand, and warnings of a perceived communist threat on the other. Consequently, the factors that enabled or persuaded the government in Britain to adopt a specific stance towards the Colonels are of considerable importance.

1967: A coup, a war and a conference

The truth of the matter was that the British ever since 1821 had felt passionately about Greece.⁴²

The military coup d'état, still, even without the active contribution of Britain (and without the collusion of the US, the Palace or any significant political figure, for that matter),⁴³ became a reality on 21 April 1967, as a 'pre-emptive strike' against an election outcome unfavourable to the Colonels. The junta's defence that it was trying to counter left-wing extremism and political instability was readily dismissed as 'tragic stupidity' by outlets in the British press which also urged the king to adopt an attitude of passive resistance to the military bosses in Athens.⁴⁴

The first dispatches from the embassy in Athens to the FO after that date are quite revealing of the extent that Britain was aware of a putsch conceived by lower rank officers. Although Sir Ralph Murray confessed that he knew (as mentioned above) that ‘a group of extremist officers decided in January to go underground and organise military measures to solve the political problem’, information was more than blurry and he held that ‘the plotters [were] unrepresentative and that their measures [were] inexpert and [might] *not be sustained for very long*’ (emphasis added).⁴⁵ Quite indicative of the lack of foreknowledge of the coup by the British embassy was the following telegram from Murray. The British ambassador wrote to London that he had no information whether General Zoritakis and Brigadier Pattakos were also active in the coup.⁴⁶ It was only much later that afternoon (and definitely the following morning) that Murray managed to gather more detailed information on the actual perpetrators.⁴⁷ It appears then, that he and, consequently, Whitehall, were not anticipating a military overthrow of the government of this kind.

A new round of consultations with the US meant dilatoriness in resuming official relations with the Colonels.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, the Labour government considered it necessary to establish at least a working relationship with the men who held power in Athens, in order to safeguard Britain’s interests – the fair treatment of British subjects being the first, valid concern. So, when the issue of recognition arose on 26 April, the British ambassador replied immediately to the Greek Foreign Minister’s letter (an act that meant official recognition), in order not to raise suspicions.⁴⁹ As he said:

I think one must distinguish between the existence of relations, however chilly, and the way they are conducted once they exist. We don’t want this dictatorship, *however much we dislike it*, to start its life with an anti-British bias (emphasis added).⁵⁰

Of course, humanitarian concerns were not the only ones, as a mixture of *Realpolitik* and economics appeared to be the most persistent catalyst for not upsetting the Colonels. Although they overtly professed their interest in Cyprus, where British bases were operating, as

the overarching one, issues of trade (that were to become more acute after the Arab-Israeli war and the devaluation of the pound) and, especially, security (support for a wounded NATO vs. Soviet expansionism in the eastern Mediterranean) loomed in British ministers' minds. What is more, the Colonels' early claims about having prevented a 'new Vietnam' and their expectations of a 'full understanding and immediate assistance from [their] great allies and *especially from Great Britain* which comes among the first of them' (emphasis added), were more than reassuring not only for the government but also for the Conservatives who were in opposition.⁵¹

Nevertheless, though initially Foreign Office officials found that there was 'no urgent practical reason for [them] to recognise and assume a normal working relationship with the new régime'⁵², the decision was taken, again in close consultation with Americans both in Washington and Athens, to postpone the recognition for only a couple of days, thus following US policy that had determined to 'play it cool and burn no bridges'.⁵³ By 1 May, however, the British, as well as the Americans and the Turks, had resumed relations with Athens. A formal act of recognition was not needed since the Head of State, that is the king, to whom British officials were to show their credentials, was present when the military government was sworn in.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Brown told the Cabinet meeting of 27 April that, since all information entering London led to the conclusion that 'the new régime [was] firmly in control of the country and likely to remain so', the junta satisfied the criterion that Britain applied when deciding whether to recognise a new government or not.⁵⁵ At the end of the meeting, it was agreed that 'continuing relations might be common sense' and enable the British to intervene on behalf of those in danger 'without implying any new recognition and certainly not approval'.⁵⁶

It is true that this was the main British policy on the subject of recognition of governments assuming power unconstitutionally, but this was certainly not one without exceptions: the non-recognition for many years of states such as North Vietnam, North Korea and the German Democratic Republic (all of a different ideological orientation compared to Britain, to put it mildly), leads to the conclusion that the 'effective control of the country' principle was merely a guideline,

albeit a significant one, which more than once ‘appeared to yield to political considerations’.⁵⁷ This fact, furthermore, in conjunction with another, namely that ‘there is no obligation to recognize a new government once it effectively rules the state’,⁵⁸ demonstrates that this was a political decision, which ‘as a matter of optional bilateral relations and readiness to undertake normal relations [. . .] depend[ed] precisely on *intention*’⁵⁹ (emphasis added), and as such could have been different, as, for instance, recognition having been made conditional.⁶⁰ This argument is corroborated by the change of policy by the British government in 1980 not to formally recognize governments because ‘the practice has sometimes been misunderstood, and, despite explanations to the contrary, our “recognition” interpreted as implying approval’.⁶¹

Still, despite what Wilson said at the time (‘I don’t think we can treat Greece (however lunatic its politics have been traditionally) on a par with Sierra Leone and Paraguay’),⁶² FO officials discounted the value of pressurizing the junta by setting conditions for recognition and insisted that relations should be recommenced immediately on the grounds that this way they would be able to influence the Colonels towards a return to constitutional rule. However, as Meynaud has argued, these diplomatic manoeuvres of the British cannot obscure the fact that London, like other foreign governments, ‘either due to weakness or opportunism’, recognized the situation that had come about with the coup d’état.⁶³ The same author goes as far as to completely discredit the FO’s argument about retaining the possibility of exerting influence on the regime: the argument was ‘at least an illusion or a convenient self-delusion, if not an impromptu and convenient excuse for such a dishonourable inertia and inaction’.⁶⁴

The next serious consideration of policy towards Greece following the coup came as an immediate response to a change of the political situation in a country considered for many years a traditional ally. Only a week after the tanks had filled the roads of Athens, following the orders of what was to be the omnipotent triumvirate of the ‘Revolution of 21 April’ (as the Colonels preferred to call their ascent to the political ‘throne’), Wilson suggested to Brown, that they should be thinking of how to strengthen the opposition to the regime and to give support to the king, thus, securing, ‘the return of a non-Communist constitutional

government before resistance [became] an exclusively Communist prerogative'.⁶⁵ He also expressed his concern at having a second (the first one being Salazar's Portugal) dictatorship in NATO and the effect that this would have on the organization itself and on feelings towards NATO in Britain. Brown, in his reply, declared that developments in Greece were of major importance for two main reasons: first, because of Greece's 'key position in NATO and in the Mediterranean, and secondly because of Cyprus'. The foreign secretary, however, distinguished his views from Wilson's saying that overt assistance to the king, and indeed, any political meddling would be inexpedient as it would lead the Colonels into further isolation and harden their stance. He, therefore, introduced what was to become the unofficial doctrine of the Foreign Office in relation to Greece for at least the next three years: that cautious and measured cooperation would modify the regime. As far as the king was concerned, the decision, taken after consultation with Dean Rusk, the US Secretary of State, was that he was to be supported fully but 'unobtrusively'.⁶⁶

The British government, however, remained perplexed in its effort to maintain a balanced attitude towards the fledgling military junta and its old friends in Greece (mainly the conservative politicians, who were opposed to the regime from the outset), as was demonstrated by the stress that Foreign Office ministers felt over the issue of invitations to the Queen's birthday party that was to be held by the British embassy in Athens. The fortuitous imminent departure of Sir Ralph Murray, British ambassador, from Athens provided the government with an excuse for not holding an official party. The Foreign Secretary gave permission for only a personal farewell party to take place, and, so, managed to avoid the appearance of offending the Colonels and abandoning former friends.⁶⁷

In his attempt to construct a successful policy, the Foreign Secretary wished to gain access both to first hand information regarding the general attitude of the Colonels and the state of public opinion in Greece. He, therefore, regularly asked Britain's ambassador in Athens for an up-to-date evaluation of the political and social situation. The first major instance of such coordination of views occurred a few days after the coup d'état, and resulted in Sir Ralph Murray's advice of

'do[ing] business with the régime and try[ing] to push them into a suitable political evolution'.⁶⁸ According to him, Britain had three kinds of interests that 'pointed towards dealing with the new régime': (1) commercial, (2) NATO and (3) humanitarian. The ambassador's recommendation to proceed with a *normal working relationship* on the spot was coupled with the possibility of using the strength of feeling in Britain about the coup as one way of pushing the Colonels in the right direction. Brown commented that 'that could be combined with a certain aloofness, for example in having no British Ministers visit Greece [. . .] until the régime had evolved into something more respectable'.⁶⁹

The following day, the Foreign Secretary informed the cabinet of constant consultations with Western allies ('we were in close touch with the United States and Federal German Governments, whose views were in accord with our own') and confirmed that ministerial and other high level visits had been cancelled. Brown concluded that, since the prime movers in the coup were disreputable, Whitehall should maintain 'a somewhat aloof attitude' towards the junta, with the cabinet inviting him to consider stopping any further export of arms to Greece⁷⁰ and urging him to circulate a paper on policy on the country.⁷¹ Moreover, *The Economist* was urging Western countries towards using their influence in order to promote the return to 'real democracy' in Greece, for the additional reason that it was not in their interest 'to confine their opposition to the spread of anti-democratic ideas to the left-wing sort'.⁷² Finally, the revulsion that British officials felt for the military junta and its leaders, although initially muted in official exchanges, was extremely apparent within governmental circles and the FO. More specifically, two Labour MPs who visited Athens in May fulminated against the regime: '[. . .] this fascist-type dictatorship should be ostracised by all civilised nations [. . .] we strongly urge that there be created urgently in all countries – based in London, and, by the general wish of the Greeks themselves, a broadly representative international campaign for the restoration of true democracy in Greece'.⁷³ Finally, Sir Ralph Murray had described Colonel Papadopoulos, Brigadier Pattakos and Colonel Makarezos as 'thugs' or more precisely as 'tough Greek patriots with a streak of thuggery',

and had discerned that Colonel Papadopoulos especially was ‘predominantly tough’ and had some features in common with Nasser.⁷⁴

This negative climate, however, did not last long (at least on the official level), particularly as subsequent international and domestic incidents worked in favour of the Colonels. The Six Day War, whose outbreak came less than fifty days after the coup in Greece, played a significant role in allaying the fears of especially Western, US and NATO, officials. The ‘widespread concern’ that the defence secretary, Denis Healey, had admitted on 31 May that all members of the NATO alliance felt, soon changed to predilection towards the junta, due to its upgraded status as the only tried-and-true Western ally in the wider region apart from Israel.⁷⁵ As FO officials drafting notes for the prime minister’s answer to Winnick’s parliamentary question on NATO and Greece, wrote: ‘the Greek Government were helpful during the recent Middle Eastern crisis in connection with some of our evacuation arrangements … it would be against our interests to cause trouble with them in NATO at this time, or to do anything which would disturb the uneasy situation over Cyprus’.⁷⁶ Moreover, in the wake of the Six Day War, Francis Noel-Baker, sent a number of letters to Brown to say that he was ‘very much distressed by the bad image Greece continues to be given by [the British] Press, and the unfortunate impressions that have gained ground in political circles [in Britain]’; he also sent a letter to the Foreign Minister of Greece, Paul Economou-Gouras, suggesting a discussion about this and ‘also about possible visits to Greece by political and other British personalities’ with him, Kollias and Papadopoulos, as well as providing them with publicity and public relations advice.⁷⁷

A look on a map of the wider region would be all it would take for an FO official with a penchant for geopolitics to infer that Greece was the only country that could play the role of a ‘buffer zone’, a bastion against the expanding tendencies of communism in Europe and the rising of Middle Eastern nationalistic and independent thinking in foreign policy. Greece (and by extension Cyprus), being surrounded by isolationist and pro-Chinese Albania, Tito’s Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria (Moscow’s closest satellite) to the north, Turkey and Syria to the east (and Iraq even further east), Egypt (the latter three being susceptible to

USSR's political and military influence) and Libya (which, after 1969, got rid of American and British facilities along with its monarchy) to the south, and always under the constant surveillance and possible threat of the Soviet naval presence in the eastern Mediterranean, was conspicuously in the eye of the vortex, or rather caught between two maelstroms deemed extremely dangerous to the West.⁷⁸ It was, after all, only three days after the coup d'état in Athens that Leonid Brezhnev 'demanded the withdrawal of the American Sixth Fleet from the Mediterranean'.⁷⁹

Since the people at the helm of Britain's external policy at the time, namely Wilson, Healey and, especially, Brown, were ardent followers of anti-Communist Ernest Bevin, and they had begun to see Britain as 'a medium-sized power'⁸⁰ (or 'a major power of the second rank', as they preferred to say)⁸¹, there was not much space for a different point of view, and consequently, policy towards Greece to be formulated. Indicatively, when (new ambassador) Sir Michael Stewart visited Pattakos, a member of the triumvirate, although a brigadier, and minister of the interior, he expressed his prime minister's primary concern for 'the stability of the Eastern Mediterranean and [for] preventing further encroachment by the Soviet Union into that area'.⁸² Around the same time, a Supplementary Statement on Defence Policy of 1967 had made it clear that the British regarded it as 'essential' to maintain the military efficiency of NATO.⁸³ More importantly, as the permanent under-secretary of the FO revealed, the British economy 'was far too vulnerable to short-term pressures on the balance of payments for a steady external policy to be planned and adhered to',⁸⁴ and, as many scholars have argued, 'London wanted to show solidarity with the Americans, demonstrate its usefulness in the Cold War and so reinforce its own world role'.⁸⁵ As a consequence, the issue of the Cyprus dispute also became a matter of priority for the Western Alliance, which made efforts, especially through the British, to persuade the two parties (i.e. Greece and Turkey at the time) to take bolder steps towards a peaceful settlement.⁸⁶

When the new Greek ambassador had his first meeting with Brown, the British Foreign Secretary suggested that the Colonels discontinue arrests, free political detainees and restore democracy. Verykios' reply

is indicative of the spirit of the regime and its increased confidence: '[...] as far as both countries are loyal to NATO and the western orientation of Greece is one of the basic policies, for which Britain has fought, the revolution should be considered by the British Government as *a gift from God*' (emphasis added). The ambassador concluded his report on the meeting by writing that his personal impression was that Brown was particularly worried lest Whitehall face difficulties over developments within Greece.⁸⁷

Nevertheless, a few weeks later, a considerable blow to the Colonels' already tarnished façade came from the core of one of their closest allies. On 4 October the Labour Party Conference at Scarborough (that is the conference of the party in power in Britain) voted, notwithstanding Brown's plea not to⁸⁸, for the expulsion of Greece from NATO. According to the record, the conference expressed its 'indignation at the seizure of power by the Greek military clique' and called for the expulsion of Greece and the ending of its association with European organisations like the European Economic Community and the Council of Europe until the military dictatorship gave way to viable and proper democracy. Moreover, the resolution pushed the government to further internationalize the issue by referring it to the United Nations Organisation and by affirming support for 'all actions taken by the Greek working class to bring down the régime'.⁸⁹ The representatives of the party seemed to be divided, however, considering that the votes were 3,167,000 for, and 2,898,000 against.⁹⁰ The Greek government responded through the newspaper that was expressing its views, *Eleftheros Kosmos*, which claimed that some members of the Labour Party were influenced by communist propaganda, and had, wittingly or unwittingly, assisted the Soviet State in the past and were now doing so again. The article concluded by suggesting that 'the British people were sensitive about democracy, but they should confine their sensitiveness to their own country'.⁹¹

As a result, and under subsequent pressure from Athens, the British (Labour) government, which by then appeared to have no 'coherent, long term policy or goals', and had become extremely unpopular with the electorate⁹², decided to ignore the resolution of the conference. The Cabinet agreed to take an early opportunity to review policy towards

Greece in November⁹³, with officials deciding, after a meeting with Labour MPs, that their hitherto policy had been ‘basically correct but that [they] should seek to project it more clearly’.⁹⁴ This decision was perfectly in line with the Wilson Cabinet’s disregard of conference resolutions on a variety of foreign policy issues (such as Vietnam, the Nigerian civil war and Rhodesia)⁹⁵, and the general ambience, for ‘throughout the dictatorship it was the various vehicles of public opinion rather than the executive authorities that sustained the resistance’ to military rule.⁹⁶ Furthermore, at least one historian has argued that the Wilson government was willing to take a ‘tough line with Labour and nationalist figures where US, NATO or British interests would benefit’.⁹⁷ Finally, in connection to this, it should be noted that the Greek ambassador in London complained to the FO on at least three instances, from mid-October to early November, about events surrounding the embassy; these events, most of which did not appear in the press, involved a handful of ‘thugs’ demonstrating, holding ‘Save democracy in Greece’ banners, as well as throwing paint on the door and removing the sign of the embassy.⁹⁸

Trouble in Cyprus

A matter of real interest and major importance to the British was Cyprus. So, when tensions reappeared in November 1967, due to skirmishes on the island between the Greek-Cypriot National Guard (commanded by Grivas) and inhabitants of two Turkish-Cypriot villages, London was watching closely.⁹⁹ Brown had questioned Grivas’ being under control and had even personally warned the Greek foreign minister about the ‘gravest consequences’ that any attempt to impose a solution by force would incur.¹⁰⁰ Turkey threatened to invade but the crisis was resolved with the aid of Cyrus Vance, United States’ special representative, and the upshot was the withdrawal of all unauthorised Greek and Turkish troops. Karamanlis told *The Times* that ‘the support of the friends and allies of Greece, *and especially Great Britain*, would be most valuable’ (emphasis added).¹⁰¹ The British claimed a little later that it ‘was very probably Sir Michael Stewart’s personal intervention with the leaders of the military junta on the night of 15 November

which resulted in instructions being sent to the Greek forces in Cyprus quickly enough to restore the situation there before the Turkish air strikes which would almost certainly have taken place at dawn on 16 November.¹⁰² Stewart told King Constantine that, upon hearing the news, Papadopoulos appeared restrained, whereas Pattakos wanted to ‘smash the faces’ of the Turks.¹⁰³

This event, which marked another instance of brinkmanship in relations between the two NATO partners, was seen by Whitehall as a vindication of its policy of maintaining a working relationship with the Greek regime, since it had been able to make a positive contribution to the defusing of the crisis.¹⁰⁴ FO officials concluded that the Cyprus question was ‘not only a British interest … [but] an interest of all who wish to keep the peace in the Eastern Mediterranean which the [November] crisis so nearly shattered’, and, as a consequence, British influence in Athens was imperative.¹⁰⁵ As A. E. Davidson, an FO official, declared: ‘to break off diplomatic relations in these circumstances would be a dramatic gesture. But it would be an empty one’.¹⁰⁶ This view was not only understood in Athens but also used to its advantage, with the Greek ambassador reminding Lord Hood (responsible for NATO at FCO) of the ‘increased significance of Greece’s geographical position after recent international developments and the appearance of the Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean’ (author’s translation). According to the record, Lord Hood agreed and heard Verykios tell him that Greece’s importance to NATO should be acknowledged by all the members of the Alliance - including the Turks, who would find themselves in complete isolation if Greece fell to communism.¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile, the British agreed that, in the event of an attack from Bulgaria on Greece and/or Turkey, the other NATO countries would intervene to assist their allies - but they did not volunteer that information to either country in order to make them think twice before fighting each other.¹⁰⁸

Royal blues

The first serious event which called for a reappraisal of Britain’s relationship with the regime was the abortive counter-coup instigated by

Constantine on 13 December 1967, the upshot of which was that the king fled to Rome and the Colonels tightened their grip on the country.¹⁰⁹ London seemed to be completely unaware of the countercoup and had difficulty even identifying what had triggered off the king's action.¹¹⁰ This, however, does not appear to be the whole truth. The Labour government, accused of a 'royal fixation', was thought of as 'see[ing] the King, with the support of the Right, as the medium for a return from dictatorship'.¹¹¹ Furthermore, as correspondence between the embassy in Athens and the Foreign Office reveals, London was warned about the possibility of a counter-coup well in advance. The British appraisal of the post-coup situation, as far as the disavowal of any immediate reaction to the Colonels' military takeover was concerned, proved to be correct.

However, in 21 September (exactly five months after the coup, and, most importantly, more than two and a half months before the royal counter-coup) the FO did not pay much attention to 'a reliable British source whose confidence must be respected' who was personally informed (albeit 'in rather vague and ill-thought terms') by King Constantine about the latter's 'ordering the General commanding Larissa District to stage a counter coup'.¹¹² According to the British ambassador's assessment of the situation one month later, the king would not 'willingly risk attempting to overthrow [the Colonels] in favour of bringing back some political personality, even supposing that his chances of succeeding in such a move were greater than [at the time] they appear[ed] to be'.¹¹³ It seems, nevertheless, that the king's fascination, contrary to what was argued in the press, had ceased to appeal to British officials, who held that he had lost 'his traditional role as a stabilising factor in national life' by then.¹¹⁴ As a consequence, and lest the British find themselves 'in the middle of a Greek political storm' without helping in the restoration of democracy in the country, Sir Michael Stewart recommended against providing support to Constantine ('... although I have no doubt he needs it, H.M.G. in any form had better keep out of it').¹¹⁵ In addition, London had been informed (less than a month before the actual counter-coup) that the king was '*certainly not ready* for a direct confrontation with the Colonels yet, whether by bringing the Army in or otherwise' (emphasis added).¹¹⁶

The counter-coup did take place, but Constantine failed to achieve his objectives as the Colonels were onto him, and his message (in which he referred to the need for alliances within the Western world)¹¹⁷ reached only a very small part of the Greek public. Whitehall managed to assert, that, despite Constantine's 'very brave attempt', and although the matter of recognition was still pending, Britain 'in practice [would] have to go on dealing with the Junta'.¹¹⁸ The government, after an initial numbness, reacted through a statement by the prime minister in the House of Commons (HoC), saying that King Constantine enjoyed the moral support of the British people and of Harold Wilson personally, in his efforts to re-establish freedom in his country. However, only one week after the prime minister acknowledged the king's letter of gratitude for the genuine expression of the Wilson government in his favour, the Foreign Office informed the State Department that Britain was prepared to resume doing business with the Greek (military) government.¹¹⁹

This time (in contrast to when the Colonels seized power) the question of recognition did arise.¹²⁰ Whitehall, following its well-established 'doctrine of effective control', decided to continue diplomatic relations with Athens, without further delay. A formal act was once again unnecessary as a call by the British ambassador to Colonel (now Prime Minister) Papadopoulos would have been sufficient.¹²¹ Information, however, that efforts were being made to reconcile the king and the Colonels and persuade him to return to Greece, were the cause for a delay of according recognition, justified by London's desire not to weaken the king's position.¹²² The archives of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs reveal that Beith expressed the hope that an agreement for Constantine's quick return would be reached, admitting that this would ease the work of Greece's friends and increase the prestige of the regime abroad.¹²³ Consultations with other NATO allies (the French, the West Germans, and most importantly the Americans), in the light, however, of the anxiety lest the junta began to feel that [it] could exist without [Britain] and, consequently, become 'less inclined in the future to pay heed to what [London said]',¹²⁴ led to the postponement of recognition until after New Year.¹²⁵

When January came, nevertheless, the king's position did not appear to some in Britain to be 'so important [...] as to outweigh the considerations in favour of resuming normal dealings with the Government in Athens'¹²⁶. According to Foreign Secretary Brown, the most important of these was the situation in Cyprus: 'It was most important that we should if necessary be able to exert our proper influence in the event of a new crisis in Cyprus; and we could do so only if we had contacts with the Greek régime'.¹²⁷ In this connection it seems that the prevailing Anglo-American 'special relationship'¹²⁸ played a significant part. On 15 January the US Deputy Assistant Secretary called in representatives of major European countries to discuss Greece. Rockwell said that the time had come to consider some degree of formal contact with the regime in order to be able to carry on a working relationship. The British representative's reply is indicative: he felt his government would not mind 'being dragged' into a new relationship in Athens'.¹²⁹ A few days later, Brown said in a Cabinet meeting that in light of the impending US recognition of the junta, it would be difficult for London not to follow suit, since there were a number of commercial questions which the British could not pursue without high level contact with the regime. Once more, Whitehall's anxiety over trailing behind came to the fore: 'There was no question of our moving ahead of them [Britain's NATO partners]: but it would be against our interests to be left behind'.¹³⁰

London recognized the new junta government on 25 January 1968, two days after the official recognition by the United States. This decision was justified by arguing that British ministers had reached the conclusion that 'it was no longer possible or profitable to try to hold the common line regarding recognition', as some other governments, notably the German and Turkish governments, had already taken some steps towards recognition. The conclusion was that '[t]he policy of holding back [adopted in the context of the immediate post-21 April period], which had no doubt produced good results during the first weeks, was now in danger of being counter-productive and might lead to a serious reduction of Western influence over the régime and to the encouragement of Extremist elements'.¹³¹

The royal counter-coup, being badly organised and swiftly suppressed, did not have the chance to appeal to the Greek public.

Feelings, firstly, of popular dissatisfaction and, then, general indifference seemed to prevail. The upshot was a complete, easily achieved, victory for the junta that offered it a desperately needed success, following its dramatic failure over Cyprus, and direct, unmediated international recognition, without thus having to depend on King Constantine's authority in order to gain legitimacy. A direct consequence of the failed royal venture was the consolidation of the Colonels' regime.¹³² After the failure of the counter-coup a 'window of opportunity' of resisting the Colonels seemed to close, with reactions to the establishment of a dictatorship fading, as a consequence of the junta's consolidation and a series of successive events in the wider region of Eastern Europe and the Middle East: most significantly the Six Day War of 1967, the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, as well as the removal of allied bases from Libya, and anti-American demonstrations in Italy and Turkey in the last quarter of 1969.¹³³

Finally, criticism that the British government was condoning military rule by dealing with the new government began to grow, only to be countered with the familiar expression that 'dealing with a government is not the same thing as approving it'.¹³⁴ This declaration marked the beginning of a series of demarcations that distinguished between adopting a tough stance towards the junta, primarily for public consumption, and fully cooperating with them. The reasons that led London to take that approach in relation to the military dictatorship were not inconspicuous to the Greeks. In January 1968, Britain's financial anaemia was making headlines even in Athens, where journalists were arguing that the country was turning into 'little' Britain and were wondering whether 'God [would] save England'.¹³⁵

1968: 'Business as usual'

The voice of H.M.G. should not sound like a gramophone record being played too often.¹³⁶

1967 was for Britain a 'beastly year by most standards',¹³⁷ with the devaluation of the pound looming large. In Athens, although the second year of the Colonels seemed to have started as they had wished

(they had consolidated their power domestically after King Constantine ‘delivered his people into [their] hands’,¹³⁸ and they had resumed normal diplomatic relations with all their neighbours and the major powers), it also had in store some of the most severe blows to be inflicted on them during their seven year rule. The first, minor, instance, occurred on 11 April when William (Bill) Rodgers, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, said in the House of Commons that there was ‘strong *prima facie* evidence of people having been subjected to what one would regard as inhuman treatment under police interrogation’.¹³⁹ Two days earlier Rodgers had discussed Greece with Michael Stewart. In that meeting it was decided that Rodgers should do three things: (1) say Greece had a case to answer, without, though, accepting torture charges as proved, (2) deplore disappearance of democracy in that country, and (3) explain why the British had not joined Scandinavian action on Human Rights.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, Stewart saw the Greek ambassador a day before Rodgers’ speech, in an effort to express Whitehall’s desire to see democracy restored in Greece and thus send a heads-up to the junta. The Greek ambassador in London, Verykios, said he assumed that ‘the Colonels were men of honour and [would] carry out this pledge to provide a constitution’. However, what worried Stewart and starkly exemplified the difference in mentality between the Greek and the British was Verykios’ final comment: ‘Colonels, [he said,] claim they are honest men, unlike politicians’. The British foreign secretary replied by saying: ‘... I distrust these blanket attacks on politicians – if politicians are swept away what is left but armed force?’¹⁴¹

Decisive, insofar as the estrangement that followed between the British and Greek governments was concerned, was the second instance. Wilson received King Constantine on 28 May 1968. The British prime minister said that his government’s position was for freedom and democracy, and stressed the fact that the recognition of the junta (following the royal counter-coup) had been delayed for two months. Constantine thanked Wilson for being the only one from the ‘Free World’ to openly support him. Harold Wilson concluded by saying that the king had ‘behaved extremely cleverly and very bravely’, and reiterated that he was at Constantine’s disposal.¹⁴² Less than a

month after this exchange, Wilson referred, in his reply to a supplementary question in the House of Commons, to 'bestialities' that had been perpetrated in Greece.¹⁴³ According to reports coming from London and Paris, and cited by Schwab and Frangos, Wilson's statement 'had been prompted by fears' that the proposed new constitution would strip Constantine of all his effective powers.¹⁴⁴ Both instances received a complaint from Verykios, but the latter incident in particular provoked a strong response from the Greek government including threatened action against British commercial interests. Wilson admits in his memoirs that his off-the-cuff remark had been wrong, as what he had meant to say was 'barbarities', which was gratefully accepted by the junta later. As a consequence of the substitution of the less offensive word, honour in Athens was satisfied and Wilson got a chance to criticise the Opposition for 'never – if trade matters were involved-fail[ing] to dissociate itself from any expression by [his] Government in favour of freedom'.¹⁴⁵

A week later, the most seminal and oft-quoted document within the Foreign Office was produced. In his Memorandum of 2 July to the Defence and Overseas Committee, the foreign secretary, Michael Stewart (who succeeded George Brown and who happened to have the same first and last name as the then British ambassador in Athens, *Sir Michael Stewart*), laid down the four main objectives of Britain in Greece. Those were:

- a) to promote a return to constitutional rule and democratic liberties and conditions of stability;
- b) to preserve, so far as possible, the military effectiveness of Greece as a NATO ally;
- c) to protect British subjects and interests generally, and in particular to pursue our commercial interests;
- d) to maintain our ability to influence the Greek Government in matters of foreign policy, for example, Cyprus.¹⁴⁶

Half of these interests were in general terms pursued by the Labour government with success. The second and the fourth points especially, regarding issues pertaining to pragmatic politics were constantly in the

mind of every British official who dealt with the Colonels' regime. The first and the third interests, nonetheless, which did not belong to the sphere of *Realpolitik*, were arguably sometimes neglected and on other occasions considered conflicting. Although Wilson admitted that his government was 'deeply and intimately concerned' over the Colonels' take-over,¹⁴⁷ steps aimed at methodically pressuring the Greek government to hold democratic and, by international standards, acceptable elections not only fell in to a void but Whitehall's anxiety over the future state of the 'plaster-covered' country was also often considered as intervention in the internal affairs of Greece, and was, therefore, rebuffed.

A minor instance that illustrated that there were divisions over Greece in the Cabinet was the 12 July meeting. It was during that meeting that ministers like Richard Crossman and Barbara Castle were opposed to the paper on Greece prepared by Foreign Secretary Stewart, for it was in stark contradiction to Wilson's strong line on barbarities in Greece.¹⁴⁸ The paper suggested that the Colonels' regime was 'the best you could expect in that country' and that, lest a communist coup takes place, London should do nothing publicly which might alienate it. Crossman, Castle, and Edward Shackleton protested at the 'so appallingly right-wing' paper which also announced that Vospers had been authorised to go ahead with an arms deal with the Greek government.¹⁴⁹ In face of ministers' protestations due to the fact that the matter had never been to Cabinet, Wilson said that the frigate deal had been a 'vague idea', and Stewart assured everyone that 'there was every sign that the régime would honour its word and switch over to democracy in the course of the summer'.¹⁵⁰ Vospers would be told not to materialise any sales without the Cabinet's go-ahead and that prompted Castle's comment:

So we have saved this Government not only from a piece of appalling cynicism but from a step which, if it became known, could finally undermine our credibility. One of our best mornings' work.¹⁵¹

The dilemma that Whitehall was facing at the time became even more obvious in another meeting, in August. During this meeting Healey

and Stewart were ‘very strongly’ in favour of the selling of warships to Greece. Tony Benn’s account in his memoirs illustrates the anxiety British ministers felt over the dilemma:

I didn’t say anything and was torn between detesting the Greek Government and feeling that, if we did apply this strict political test to our arms expenditure, we should lose a lot of other civil contracts which would ultimately undermine our economy.¹⁵²

International dimension

Events, however, were to take a slightly different turn and international developments again played a significant role. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in late August to counter the impending reforms of ‘the Prague Spring’, and the increased fear of a continuing communist threat, which this engendered, emphasised in Greece by Soviet naval activity in the Mediterranean, led to a further reconsideration of Britain’s policy towards the Colonels.¹⁵³ Relations between the two countries were already at a low ebb. Back in Whitehall, another heated debate on Greece took place during discussions of the Cabinet’s Overseas and Defence Policy Committee (OPD), with ‘capitulators’ like Wilson and Crosland advocating aid and sales to Greece, and Castle dissenting once again. The prime minister responded by saying the following: ‘We hadn’t cancelled trade with régimes just because we disagreed with them. We hadn’t even done this with Russia over Czechoslovakia’. Denis Healey pointed to the danger of throwing away trade opportunities, and, finally, Wilson judged that the majority view was in favour of going ahead, making the Secretary of State for Employment and Productivity remark that ‘our sell-out on Greece continues apace’.¹⁵⁴ This exchange also serves as evidence that Wilson was *not* ‘one of the most discontented individuals among Cabinet members’, as presented by other historians.¹⁵⁵ It becomes clear that the prime minister was rather pragmatic in his approach to the ‘Greek case’, and his dealings with a military dictatorship in NATO.

In view of recent scholarship on British foreign policy, a general pattern can be discerned as to how Labour reacted to international crises.

The similarities, for example, between London's approach towards the Colonels' regime and the case of Czechoslovakia are striking: The Wilson government, distracted by the pound's devaluation, its efforts to join the EEC, and related internal crises, was taken by surprise by both the 1967 coup and Operation Danube, and followed a contradictory policy in its dealings with the new regimes, condemning the repression (under pressure from parliament and public opinion) but also managing to avoid irritating the Colonels and the Soviets, respectively. According to Hughes, FCO officials concluded that 'there was little the West could say or do to help the liberals in Eastern Europe' and that the UK should keep 'a low profile'.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, Britain soon reverted to a 'business as usual' approach in its relations with the USSR and its clients, and FCO's policy of supporting trade with the Soviet bloc was not affected, although 'such contacts did little to promote any form of domestic "evolution"'.¹⁵⁷

A month after Warsaw Pact tanks entered Prague and while the European Commission of Human Rights was in the process of examining allegations of violations of human rights on the part of Greece, Foreign Office officials thought that it would be helpful if Manlio Brosio, the general secretary of NATO, spoke to the Greek foreign minister about the situation in the country.¹⁵⁸ Lord Hood, however, the following day said that there were certain reasons that made FCO hesitant. These were (1) the fact that there was to be a referendum in Greece by the end of the month and London would like to see its result before it took action, (2) the American attitude, which was then favourable to the Colonels, and (3) the attitude of other NATO powers.¹⁵⁹ Three days later, the under secretary for foreign affairs responsible for international organisations within FCO met the Greek ambassador to discuss the Greek question in the Council of Europe (CoE). Lord Hood assured Verykios that his government was opposed to the expulsion of Greece and that it would make an effort to avoid any discussion on the issue on a governmental level; if that were to fail, London would try to 'bury' the issue at the Council of Ministers, which, in any case, was not scheduled to meet before the following May.¹⁶⁰ It is interesting to note here, that at this stage, British officials were opposed to a voluntary Greek withdrawal from the CoE, with Lord Hood describing it as a

'mistake' that would provide the 'enemies' of the regime the opportunity to claim a victory. The principal reasons given for this were: 'a) because "LES ABSENTS ONT TOUJOURS TORT" and b) because it would be equal to a public acknowledgment of their alleged guilt and their inability to defend their views'.¹⁶¹

Events in Eastern Europe played a significant part, as the war in the Middle East had one year before, in Western perceptions of the Greek dictatorship. The junta was increasingly being seen in a much more favourable light, as it appeared to be a geo-strategically important NATO stronghold. The affirmations of the Colonels about their uncompromising allegiance to the Western Alliance were greeted in the West as a much-sought-after reassurance in the face of 'communist danger'. Britain, in particular, wanting to assert its proximity to American views, could not assume the role of leader in a motion unpalatable to the regime in Athens. Therefore, even the idea of having Brosio discussing human rights issues with members of the junta was not painstakingly followed. As a result of that and in conjunction with the result of the referendum on the Greek Constitution, the Colonels, bolstered by the greater emphasis being put on NATO military preparedness in the wake of the Czechoslovakian crisis, toughened their stance and, especially, their resistance to pressure from their allies on Greek internal matters.

Britain, at the same time, was suspected of maintaining an uncompromisingly hostile attitude. This feeling was sustained by the reports of Amnesty International, comments in the BBC Greek Service, and to some extent by the British press. The fact that the BBC, Amnesty International, and a large number of Greeks opposed to the junta were all operating from London contributed to the feeling in Athens that the British capital had become 'an island of opposition in an otherwise decreasingly hostile world'.¹⁶² Greek ministers gave the appearance of being unwilling to do business with London and the Greek government in general was no longer receptive to representations from the British ambassador.

Against this background, which was enhanced by domestic successes of the regime, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (the Foreign and Commonwealth Offices merged in October 1968) ruled

that it had to make use of ‘different tactics’ if British interests were to be successfully pursued. This decision marked the beginning of a new phase in Anglo-Greek relations, for, as a report by the Southern European Department of the FCO claimed, whereas in the first phase of relations between the two countries after the coup d'état the British government was well placed to affect the thinking of Greek leaders, British officials appeared by then to have ‘shot their bolt’.¹⁶³

The policy of making private representations to the Greek government had contributed to certain improvements in the Greek regime (for instance, the closing of the Yioura prisoners’ camp), but representations to persuade them to hasten the return to democratic rule were no longer likely to be receptive, and could even prove counter-productive. The FCO, therefore, insinuated the notion of condoning the nature and the deeds of the junta, arguing that Britain’s policy should be ‘to give pride of place to strictly British interests, bearing in mind that, however illiberal they may be, the Greek government (unlike Spain or Rhodesia) are not doing H.M.G. any harm’.¹⁶⁴ The above proclamation is quite revealing of the disquietude that Whitehall was feeling as a result of pressures exerted on it within the general, international context of the Cold War, and by the domestic problems (predominantly economic, caused by the 1966–7 financial crises, but also political and identity problems due to the relinquishment of its East of Suez policy and role) that tantalised it.¹⁶⁵ Concepts of self-preservation and self-interest seemed to be its guides in relation to the Greek issue. The so-far oscillating behaviour of the British government appeared to change instantly into an open declaration in favour of the military regime, which was regarded as the sole safeguard in Greece of Britain’s commercial interests.

Although the British concentrated their efforts on ‘normalising relations with the junta and recreating [their] stock of influence with the Greek government with all means open [to them]’,¹⁶⁶ they wished to attain that aim primarily to pursue their national interest but also in order to be in a position that would enable them, as they said, to function as a lever of pressure on the Colonels regarding domestic matters (like the holding of general elections, the treatment of political prisoners and detainees, and human rights issues, in general). Furthermore,

in spite of the British government's decision to 'do everything in [its] power to improve [Britain's] export performance (including inviting the competent Greek ministers to visit the United Kingdom)',¹⁶⁷ the supply of war material that could help the Colonels to repress the opposition was excluded.

As London perceived that it could not hasten Greece's return to democracy until it had been able to rebuild its influence in Athens and that admonishing the military regime in public might well do harm, Sir Michael Stewart was asked to convey to the Greek prime minister the British government's acceptance of the fact that 'the timing of Greece's return to a democratic system [was] a matter for the Greek government', and its synchronous anxiety 'to establish a good working relationship with the Greek government, whose importance in the Western Alliance [it] fully recognise[d].'¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, a Foreign Office minister, anxious to increase dwindling exports to Greece, visited King Constantine to ask him if he would agree to the provision of British frigates to the Greek navy. The king said that he could have 'no objection whatsoever', but also hoped that London would keep pressing for 'normalisation' in Athens.¹⁶⁹

Another major event of 1968 was the attempted assassination of the Greek Prime Minister, Georgios Papadopoulos by Alexandros Panagoulis on 13 August. A plea to Wilson to urge the Greek regime to spare Panagoulis, made by the League for Democracy in Greece¹⁷⁰ and by some Labour MPs, seemed to have had some result as, according to an article in the following day's *The Guardian*, 'the British government, while disclaiming any intention of intervening in Greek affairs or directly appealing for clemency, has pointed out to the Greek embassy in London that a reprieve would favourably affect public opinion [in Britain].'¹⁷¹ This marked a new and quite different approach for London and the FCO, in particular, which in the recent past had spent a lot of time and ink to explain to numerous MPs interested in the conditions of detention of their Greek friends that there was nothing the British government could do in relation to Greek citizens, for this was an internal matter and thus any action was precluded.

While the trial of those alleged to have taken part in the attempt was in progress, and on the same day that the Supreme Court ratified

the results of the referendum on the Greek constitution (91.87 per cent in favour), another crisis, of minor proportions however, in Anglo-Greek relations, broke out. Papadopoulos (who had relinquished his title of Colonel when he became prime minister) telephoned a member of the British embassy to say that 'Greece would regard implementation of the International Transport Workers' Federation decision to expel the Greek Trade Unions affiliated to the Federation and to boycott all Greek shipping as an inimical act'.¹⁷² The British reaction was immediate; the chargé d'affaires delivered a message from the foreign secretary saying that Whitehall had no control over the federation (which was an international organization based in London and whose general secretary was British) whatever and had no foreknowledge of this resolution, thus, assuring the Greek government that the resolution passed by the I.T.F. in no way represented the official policy of Britain.¹⁷³

The dispute over the I.T.F. resolution was the last incident in Anglo-Greek relations for 1968.¹⁷⁴ Its importance lay in the fact that it provided evidence of Papadopoulos' personal suspicion of the British government's attitude towards Greece. As a result, British officials were worried lest the Colonels hold London responsible for the boycott of Greek ships, as, by an unfortunate coincidence, the boycott fell in the area where British interests were in direct competition with Greek interests.¹⁷⁵ The most important consequence of that rift would be instructions by the junta not to award government contracts to any British firms and possibly to adopt restrictions towards British exports generally.

All in all, the British stance towards the dictatorship of the Colonels, during the first two years could be characterised as one of ambiguity.¹⁷⁶ London hesitated in almost every decision it had to take, oscillating between the two poles of its policy: namely, (1) protecting its mainly commercial and strategic interests and its 'special relationship' with Washington, and (2) upholding human rights and promoting a return to democratic rule, basically through trying to influence the regime and sustaining some efforts of the opposition. The initial inertia of the Labour government soon changed to a pragmatic policy of establishing relations with the junta, without, however, appearing to

be too close to Greece's military dictators. The catalyst for this change were three events that took place in 1967; the Six Day War, the crisis in Cyprus, and the failed royal counter-coup. The first demonstrated Greece's augmented significance as a NATO ally in a troubled region, the second proved to the British the value of keeping closer relations with the Greek leaders, and the third confirmed the consolidation of the regime. When 1968 came and Britain recognized the junta anew, it became clear that, despite some instances of criticism of the dictatorship- mainly for public consumption- London was willing to make use of 'different tactics' in order to safeguard its (chiefly commercial and strategic) interests vis-à-vis Greece. The impact of international events was once again decisive as the Prague Spring and increased Soviet naval activity in the Mediterranean were conducive to a reconsideration of British policy towards the Colonels and the adoption of a 'business as usual' approach, thus acting as a prelude to the new era of relations that was soon to follow. More dramatic decisions for London to make lay ahead, as the discussion of the situation in Greece in the Council of Europe, and the issue of the expulsion of Greece from NATO, raised by several European ministers (including members of the British Labour party), were to unfold during the following years.

CHAPTER 2

THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TOWARDS THE COLONELS, 1969–70: A 'NEW ERA OF RELATIONS'

1969: Council of Europe vs. NATO

The year 1969 was a turning point in international politics in many respects. The start of Richard Nixon's presidency in the US was of course a significant change (and one that influenced the foreign policy of the Greek Colonels too) but it wasn't the only one. As far as Britain was concerned, 1969 did not open without noteworthy events. In relation to foreign affairs, a Gallup poll in December 1968 had shown that 'the great majority of the British people were emotionally involved with Biafra' and, to make matters worse, 'in the Labour Party the respected former Colonial Secretary [and former Chairman of the Labour Party] James Griffiths supported Colonel Ojukwu' (the Colonel who had proclaimed the independence of the south eastern region of Nigeria in the summer of 1967¹ and against whom General Gowon, with military supplies from London, fought in the civil war that ensued).² Although there was considerable support for Biafra in the Parliamentary Labour Party and in the Cabinet (expressed, also, through a resolution passed in a Labour Party Conference), the government, with economic interests

and oil considerations looming large, decided to continue supporting the Nigerian Army (along with the two superpowers).³ Moreover, the Wilson government failed to take any initiative with regard to tensions in Northern Ireland, thus driving historians to the conclusion that ‘throughout the crucial period from 1964 until 1969, Wilson was *distracted* by what appeared to be more immediate and pressing issues’ (emphasis added).⁴

Vis-à-vis the Greek junta, the British government was still trying to keep the ambiguous attitude that it had assumed from the start of establishing relations.⁵ Consequently, in the light of the discussion in the CoE (Council of Europe) concerning Greece, which was stimulated by a joint motion by delegates from the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, Britain decided neither to take the lead in Greece’s suspension nor to oppose it. The British ambassador, Sir Michael Stewart, implied that this decision ‘might be unheroic but it was correct in the circumstances’.⁶ The state of Anglo-Greek relations at the time, especially at such an important juncture as the formulation of a ‘make or break’ decision in London concerning the CoE, was really precarious and it illustrated the divisions and the power struggles within both governments, as far as the thorny issue of relations between the two old allies was concerned.

Pipinelis, an extremely experienced and capable diplomat and politician, spent most of his days as Greek foreign minister swerving round the inconsistencies and the anti-Western rhetoric of the Athens military regime, and trying to mollify Greece’s most significant allies by promising constitutional and other policy reforms that most of the time were unacceptable in the eyes of the Colonels in charge. In this particular instance, Pipinelis, in a private talk he had with the British ambassador, indirectly asked that Whitehall should use its ‘good offices to help to secure a neutral recommendation from the Assembly’ so that the Greek delegation would not walk out and ‘*ipso facto* shut the door on any further enquiry into the torture allegations’ that the sub-committee from the Commission of Human Rights was going to examine in a visit to Greece in February.⁷ Sir Michael Stewart seemed to have been of the same mind as the Greek foreign minister and so went on to suggest to Foreign and Commonwealth Office

(FCO) ministers to inform the members of the British delegation on the advantages of a milder course of action.⁸

While discussing the issue of expulsion of Greece from the CoE, divisions within British officials again became prominent, as Conservative MPs preferred to postpone the decision and Socialist MPs were pushing for an immediate condemnation of the Colonels' regime.⁹ Notwithstanding these differences in opinion, official sources in London were quick to deny that Britain, together with the United States, was going to take a position counter to that of the rest of Europe.¹⁰ Moreover, Lord Chalfont, British minister responsible for Greek affairs, rejected reports that his country was against suspension because a large arms deal was being negotiated at the time, and stressed that British delegates were 'entirely free to vote according to their consciences'.¹¹ The Greek embassy, however immediately agreed with *The Times* that Britain 'would in fact oppose any such recommendation, largely because of the importance of Greece as a member of NATO's eastern flank', with Verykios writing to Athens that his personal impression was that Whitehall would do 'anything possible, without, though, exposing itself completely, to undermine any such move'.¹²

When voting day came, British Conservative MPs argued that the Greek junta should not be isolated, much to the displeasure of liberal and resistance circles both outside and inside Britain. Helen Vlachos, a former Athens daily editor and one of the most vocal opponents of the Greek Colonels' regime residing in London, commented one week later by writing that 'they used the familiar cliché objection to isolation that "it makes applying pressure more difficult", as if any visible pressure had really been exerted hitherto'.¹³ However, as the *Guardian* reported, 'the majority felt that the resolution was, if anything too weak'.¹⁴ Most delegates disassociated the Greek regime's moral standing, as it was demonstrated in its human rights record, from the security it provided within the NATO framework, and emphasized their decision by noting that none of the other European dictatorships (that is, Spain and Portugal) was a member of the Council.¹⁵ Nevertheless, as British officials noted, 'no specific recommendation for Greece's suspension [was] made'.¹⁶ According to *The Economist*, 'to

enable the text to be supported by both the tough-line Socialists and the more cautiously critical Christian-Democrats, the word ‘suspension’ was avoided, and the committee of ministers left to draw its own conclusions.¹⁷

In the immediate aftermath of the condemnatory recommendation adopted by the Consultative Assembly in Strasbourg, British officials were anxious to seek the views of their other European counterparts, in order to ascertain what stance Britain’s allies would take. The main reason behind that was that the British did not want to take the lead in what they described as ‘a sensitive subject’.¹⁸ FCO, however, acknowledged the fact that if there was a strong movement for suspension among other governments, it would be difficult for them to oppose it in view of parliamentary pressure. In addition, the foreign secretary made clear that the Greek government should not gain the impression from London’s not taking a firm decision that the British thought that the move to suspend Greece from the Council of Europe was a complete waste of time; ‘in fact’, as he characteristically said, ‘it would solve many problems if [the Greeks] decided themselves to withdraw until they had once again a democratically elected Parliament’.¹⁹ Furthermore, on 28 November 1969, the British ambassador actually called on the Greek foreign minister to say that Whitehall believed that the best solution would be for the Greeks to withdraw from the Council of Europe.²⁰

The ministerial committee of the CoE debated the issue on 6 May 1969 and decided to bring the Assembly resolution to the attention of the Greek government and to postpone the final decision until the next meeting, in December, when the report of the Human Rights Commission would also be published.²¹ The above issue caused trouble for British officials for a considerable amount of time, as it was linked both to the Colonels’ threat to leave NATO as a consequence of Greece’s expulsion from the CoE,²² and to Britain’s commercial interests. The chancellor of the exchequer, Roy Jenkins, took the line that Britain ‘should not suffer economically purely in order to take a resolute, moral stand’,²³ a position vindicated by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, although the amount of trade at stake with Greece was then not very large.²⁴

In yet another instance, the hard realities of high politics and the national interest seemed to prevail over considerations of sensitive global issues such as human rights. Assumptions like those of the chancellor of the exchequer were being taken into consideration. However, the correspondence between FCO officials and the Athens embassy, as well as documents circulating in Whitehall, suggest that the British government's main objective was to maintain good working relations with the Colonels, in order to influence them regarding, first and foremost, Britain's national interests, but also, admittedly to a lesser extent, with respect to Greece's return to constitutional rule. Finally, in the context of consultations with their allies, the primary UK concern was that the Athens regime did not get the impression that 'lot of Europeans [were] excited about Greek issue while across the Atlantic authorities [were] quite relaxed', since the Colonels were considered very sensitive to real or apparent differences of attitudes among members of NATO and were quite capable of trying to 'drive a wedge' between the allies on this subject.²⁵

A number of meetings between the Greek ambassador and FCO ministers, and most importantly between Sorokos and the foreign secretary, in October, illustrate the point clearly. In the long meeting between the Greek representative and Stewart, the latter took advantage of the occasion to express his dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in Greece. He said it was very difficult for British public opinion and parliament to forgive the suspension of democratic rule in the Mediterranean country, and, that, consequently, that had to be Whitehall's view, as well. Moreover, the process of resumption of parliamentary democracy in Greece was deemed 'slow'. Moving on to the CoE question, Stewart made clear that London had not been actively involved yet, and added that the junta's arguments and timetable were not cogent; the only persuasive point, which could block Greece's expulsion, would be the announcement of an election date. The foreign secretary said that since the Greek government had decided to fight in the CoE, Britain's position was extremely difficult. After the spring summit there was no more time to be bought and the walls were closing in, as even bigger countries like Britain or France (over Suez) and the US (over Vietnam) had to take into consideration public opinion

and advice or pressure from other friends or allies.²⁶ It should be noted here that Stewart spoke on the same lines with the US Under-secretary, warning him that ‘if no action were taken against Greece in December opinion in UK would feel more outraged at Colonels and that this would have a damaging effect on NATO’.²⁷

Sorokos responded by saying that the junta expected London’s understanding and real and responsible support, as ‘the theory of Democracy is easy; what is difficult is its real implementation’. On the CoE, he said that Greece could not believe that a responsible British government would subscribe to such frivolous thoughts. ‘On the contrary’, he added, ‘we expect [Britain] to pursue a responsible policy and to influence other countries as well to take into account European unity and the goodwill of Greek people’. The junta was not going to schedule elections because ‘it could not succumb to pressure even from its closer friends, and, primarily, because it needed to prepare the country for true Democracy’. The ambassador’s report on the meeting closed with him informing Athens about Stewart’s ‘complete disagreement’ with the Greek government and his intention to concur in Greece’s expulsion.²⁸

By the end of the year, the wave of dissatisfaction created in most European capitals (including London) by the regime’s repellent treatment of the population reached prodigious dimensions, as, at the end of November, a secret report compiled by the Commission of Human Rights, that condemned the Colonels’ ‘disregard for the rule of law and its practice of torture and imprisonment without trial’, was leaked to the press.²⁹ That fact, in conjunction with America’s unwillingness to press the British over Greece (the US was, nevertheless, worried about possible repercussions in NATO of action in the CoE),³⁰ resulted in Wilson’s announcement, on 9 December, that his government would vote for expulsion: ‘I informed the House that in default of a sudden change of heart by the Greek Government, expressed in a short and specific time-table relating to the restoration both of democracy and human rights, Her Majesty’s Government’s representative had been instructed to vote for the suspension of Greece from membership of the Council’.³¹ The word ‘suspension’ was chosen in order to demonstrate that the decision was not addressed to the Greek people in general, but

to the Greek government, as King Constantine had explicitly asked Wilson to do, earlier.³²

Another, rather consequential, British interest was, as it has been argued, the military effectiveness of Greece in NATO. At the discussions of the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee on 30 January 1969 on arms policy towards Greece, it was decided that Britain 'should in principle permit the supply to Greece of arms which she could reasonably be expected to require in order to fulfil her NATO role' and that only the supply of those arms intended to repress the civilian population should be prohibited.³³ This was reminiscent of Whitehall's arms policy vis-à-vis South Africa during the 1960s³⁴; it was decided in 1963 that there would be a distinction between 'straightforward' items with a clear military use (which could be exported) and items 'which might be readily connected in the public mind' with repression and crowd control (which could not be exported).³⁵ After Labour came to power the issue regained prevalence as Wilson who had pledged not to sell arms to the African country was now having second thoughts. In late 1967, the South African arms controversy divided the Cabinet and took 'a severe toll on both [Wilson's] government and his reputation', as it exposed 'as never before the bitter rivalries at the heart of the government'.³⁶

Turning back to the 1969 meeting on Greece, an agreement with the major allies in NATO on a common policy for supplies of arms and on export credits, first contacting the United States, was also sought, however, with no substantial effect. The basic reason behind that was the fact that US policy on arms supply was the exact opposite of that of Britain: whereas the British, as matter of principle, did not provide the Colonels with material that could facilitate them suppressing civilians (like small arms or grenades), the Americans, traditional suppliers of weaponry to Greece, had chosen to terminate the delivery of items of 'high visibility', like tanks and airplanes, only.³⁷ FCO officials feared that, if their country did not supply that kind of military equipment, 'all four of [their] policy objectives [would] be placed in jeopardy, because [they] would no longer be able to exercise the influence with the Greek government required to pursue them'.³⁸

Additionally, if the British failed to supply the said equipment, their allies would certainly rush to cash in. That was something that the British government knew only too well, as ‘the United States, France and Germany [had] already signed contracts for military supplies to Greece (for example, aircraft and minesweepers from the Americans, submarines from the Germans and patrol boats worth £16 million from the French). The ‘sick man of Europe’ was not willing to sit back and watch things happen; the poor economic condition of Britain made it ‘exceedingly difficult to defend putting at risk export orders of this order of magnitude’.³⁹

Despite that fact, no significant supplies of arms from the United Kingdom had been made since the coup of 1967. Although a number of requests about military equipment by Greece had been received, sales seldom materialised. Permission for negotiations to proceed was refused by FCO for orders of items such as armoured cars, tanks and grenade detonators (with an estimated cost of more than £25 million, excluding the tanks whose quantity was not specified), because they were regarded as capable of being used for civilian population suppression.⁴⁰ British shipyards were tendering (with many chances of success) for the supply of frigates, and the British Aircraft Corporation and Westlands had been authorised to enter into negotiations for the sale of Lightning aircraft and Wasp helicopters, respectively. The British premier, however, asked to be informed on a regular basis on the American position on arms supplies, his point being that ‘the United Kingdom should not appear to give more support to the Greek régime, even in the N.A.T.O. context, than the United States’.⁴¹

At the same meeting, another major distinction in relation to the British government’s stance vis-à-vis the Greek military junta (in the international context this time) was drawn; it was decided that actions to assist the defence of NATO and the British attitude towards Greece in the CoE were two completely different and loosely related issues. According to FCO officials:

our policies in the Council of Europe should be decided in the light of the moral and other issues involved, while questions of military co-operation should be treated in the NATO context.

This distinction reflects the fact that whereas the Council of Europe has a democratic statute which its members are committed to observe, NATO is the product of a military alliance. *If a government is clearly in violation of the statute of the Council of Europe, a time must come when it can no longer be accepted as a member.* But we remain firmly opposed to action against Greece in NATO, in which Greece occupies a key position on the South Eastern flank. Any attempt to interfere with Greek participation in NATO would be strongly opposed by, among others, the United States, German and Turkish governments, and would have a politically divisive effect within the alliance in addition to its military implications. (emphasis added)⁴²

The January meeting on arms policy towards the Greek Colonels' regime also emphasized the dissent within the Labour government.⁴³ Richard Crossman, Secretary of State for Social Services at the time, expressed his strong disapproval of the policy chosen primarily by Stewart and Wilson, a policy that openly asserted that 'there was no incompatibility in declaring that our first interest was to promote the rapid restoration of democracy in Greece and that we must pin up NATO in the Eastern Mediterranean by strengthening the Greek army, navy and air force against the Russians'. Crossman left his personal mark on that 'tortuous meeting', as he described it, with another 'explosion'. According to his diary, he said:

Now, look, don't we get into the greatest difficulties by pretending it is one of our major aims to restore democracy in Greece? Shouldn't we say that our major aim is to strengthen NATO in the Eastern Mediterranean, our second aim is to sell goods abroad for our balance of trade, including arms, our third to look after British nationals, and our fourth, as far as possible, to help Greek democracy to be restored, and that they come in this order, with the last *the one we can do least about?* If we get that clear in Cabinet we can be as hypocritical outside as we like. *Our hypocrisy is another name for diplomacy,* but why do we need to deceive ourselves in Cabinet? (emphasis added)

According to Crossman, most of the ministers present (Tony Crosland, Roy Jenkins, George Thompson and Fred Peart, among others), seemed to agree with him. As for the prime minister and his foreign secretary, they 'sat wriggling with anger and discomfort because they had managed to contrive this *combination of high-minded principle and arms sales ...* They [did] not feel the contradiction. They are smug people who combine ... high moral principle with highly expedient practice' (emphasis added).⁴⁴ However, the 'harsh facts of economic life' and security concerns were the most important factors as far as that kind of decisions were concerned, and, consequently, the necessity for trade prevailed upon moral considerations. Nevertheless, this incident highlighted the divisions within the Wilson government, and proved what Sked and Cook have argued, namely that 'divisions over the major issues of foreign policy' (like Britain's part in the American alliance and NATO, or even British entry into Europe) 'existed within parties rather than between them'.⁴⁵

Quite interestingly and as a typical example of Britain's 'ambiguous attitude', in December 1969, apart from the vote for the expulsion of Greece, there was also a statement by a British minister that aimed to palliate the fact that his government had chosen to condone the behaviour of the Greek Colonels. In the House of Commons, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, George Thompson, stressed that his government had 'never considered that Greek membership of the Council of Europe was relevant to Greece's role in NATO', and continued by arguing that 'actions against Greece in NATO would not necessarily help the Greek people, but would undermine the security of the south-east flank of NATO, thus putting at risk democratic ideals and parliamentary institutions on a scale far wider than Greece'.⁴⁶ Moreover, the Wilson government also tried to influence its allies in treating the 'special case' of the Greek junta in the same way; according to the Italian foreign minister's memoirs, Stewart's pressure on Nenni to drop his campaign to have Greece expelled from NATO reflected Britain's 'deep indifference towards liberty's tragedies'.⁴⁷

The 'doctrine of separated or disconnected responsibilities' dictated by ethical, on the one hand, and military-defensive considerations, on the other, served the British government very well, as it provided it

with a defensive line in the face of criticism from both European and British liberals, and the Colonels. London, furthermore, took some new initiatives in order to re-establish a good working relationship with the regime. Actions like such as the invitation of the Greek Minister of Industry, Kypraios, by the president of the board of trade, to make an official visit to the United Kingdom in May brought about a reversal of the tide in Anglo-Greek relations. The British government was once more 'in a position to raise informally with Greek Ministers matters which they consider[ed] of purely domestic concern'.⁴⁸ The benefits from the desired result of the resumption of warm relations with the junta became extremely apparent especially in matters affecting British interests, for instance, the release of the three British seamen who had distributed anti-regime leaflets, arrested on 31 July.⁴⁹

The most eminent advantage on the commercial side, deriving from the new era of proper relations with the Colonels, was the signature in April of the protocol allowing the purchase by Greece of a nuclear power station from the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority for £30 million.⁵⁰ The purchase, nonetheless, was, to a large extent, dependent on the success of the parallel negotiations for the sale of Greek tobacco to Britain. British tobacco manufacturers, however, were not satisfied with the Greek samples they examined and the contract, mainly due to the inability of the Greek government to pay the whole cost of the deal, was never realised. The failure of the exchange deal to go through was credited by the junta to London, which was considered once again, in December 1969 this time, to be acting at the expense of the military regime.

The British government's vote for the expulsion of Greece from the CoE, alongside with the pressure that it exerted on the Germans about Greek membership, and in conjunction with the falling-out caused by the Kotronis extradition case (see below), steered Anglo-Greek relations once more towards an impasse. This apparent volte-face was estimated to cost Britain 'some £2–3 million a year in orders from Greek State Agencies' and 'a further £6–9 million of private businesses'.⁵¹ The only politicians to escape the wrath of the junta were the Conservatives, and especially Sir Alec Douglas-Home, who had made a speech in the House of Commons on Greek membership of the CoE.

In a letter to the British MP, Ioannis A. Sorokos, Greek ambassador in London, expressed his 'deep satisfaction in realising, once more, that in your person we Greeks can find tangible proof of responsible comprehension in facing such a serious issue as is the actual Greek case'. He went on: 'It is so gratifying to feel, at present, that there are still leading political personalities in your great nation who continue to appreciate the mutual advantage deriving from the maintenance of friendly relations between our two countries'.⁵²

In spite of all that, the proceedings on Greece in the CoE, as far as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was concerned, had turned out to be considerably more satisfactory than its officials had expected. The main recommendation for the future was the following:

Without being in any way apologetic about for the stand [they] took in Paris, [British officials] should continue to try to maintain a reasonable working relationship with them {i.e. the régime in Athens}.⁵³

A message to Pipinelis, the Greek foreign minister, or to Papadopoulos himself, on the lines of the one sent to the latter by the foreign secretary in January 1969 (following the fissure of late 1968), was not believed to be advantageous, and Whitehall limited its reaction to saying that it was grateful for Pipinelis' constructive approach to the Cyprus problem.⁵⁴

Insofar as the political situation in Greece was regarded, the British, although they predicted that 'the present régime would survive for a while, perhaps for as long as *five years or so*' (emphasis added),⁵⁵ decided to 'of course leave it to the Greeks to make the first move towards establishing a more acceptable form of government'.⁵⁶ They remained, however, interested in maintaining ties with the political world of Greece after the Colonels had been removed from power or had ceded it to civilians. A caretaker regime by Constantine Karamanlis, conservative prime minister from 1955 to 1963, was thought to be a generally accepted successor to the junta ('the field must not be left to Mr. Andreas Papandreu'), and, consequently, a meeting between Karamanlis and Wilson or the foreign secretary 'would be quite open

and would give Greeks within and outside the regime a clear indication of the way we would like to see things develop in Greece once the Greeks themselves had taken the necessary preliminary steps'. Conversely, as long as the present regime remained in power, King Constantine was considered by FCO 'a steadily less significant figure in Greece' and the fact that the British government 'was seen conspicuously to pay attention to King Constantine in present circumstances did no good to Anglo-Greek relations, though it might not seriously harm them'.⁵⁷

Two other incidents of lesser magnitude obscured the rapport between the governments in London and Athens. On 24 July 1969, a group of MPs, led by Ray Dobson, exhorted the government to expel the Greek military attaché from London on grounds that he had been sent a top secret document from the Greek Central Intelligence Service in Athens 'urging espionage action in Britain'.⁵⁸ The document allegedly included instructions to Greek service attachés in London and other capitals to, among other things, 'act to frustrate every attempt at subversion' of the Greek regime in other countries, 'place under surveillance persons who are declared anti-Nationalists' in those countries and finally implement the 'POSEIDON' plan.⁵⁹ The Royal Greek embassy in London issued a press release categorically denying having ever received instructions of this kind and the Greek services attaché assured the Ministry of Defence 'as an officer and a gentleman' that the allegations were completely unfounded and mendacious.⁶⁰ The document was carefully examined and investigations revealed a number of points that constituted substantial grounds for questioning its authenticity. In September, the Foreign Office sent a report to the House of Commons, providing evidence of the document's forged nature and urging the Speaker of the HoC not to encourage the motion (which had now been signed by 40 MPs).⁶¹ Therefore no further action was taken on it and the issue was all but forgotten.

The Kotronis case

The Kotronis case was much more complicated and had further repercussions for Britain's relations with the Greek dictatorship. Christos

Kotronis, who was held in Brixton Prison for about two months, had been tried in Greece in his absence in May 1966 for alleged fraud in an export-import business in which he was a partner. The problem was that he also had a 27-year record of support for Left-wing Greek opposition parties and that, since he had arrived in England, in 1967, he had organized meetings and had supported speeches of protest against the Greek government. In April 1969, the Colonels requested his extradition. The rest is narrated by an official of the Nationality and Treaty Department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office:

The F.C.O. passed the request to the Home Office who issued an order for the matter to be dealt with by the Magistrate at Bow Street. The Magistrate heard the case and committed Kotronis for extradition. Kotronis applied for a writ of habeas corpus and his case was heard by the Divisional Court. On 10 July three judges allowed his application by a majority.⁶²

However, the Greek government's appeal, heard in October, was successful and so the only obstacle to Kotronis' delivery to the military regime was the home secretary's signing of the order to hand him over to the Greek authorities.

The application was the first under Britain's extradition treaty with Greece (signed in 1910) since the Colonels had seized power in 1967. Kotronis, 'anathema' to the regime in Athens, claimed that the junta wanted to punish him for his political activities.⁶³ The fact that he had been imprisoned three times in the past -twice in concentration camps- for political reasons without receiving a trial on any occasion, strengthened this belief. As a consequence, the British government found itself in a political-ethical dilemma: either to avoid 'rocking the boat' and extradite Kotronis (no home secretary had until then refrained from implementing the Court's decision to extradite a prisoner to a foreign country since the Extradition Act had been passed in 1870), and thus humour the junta, or to refuse to do so, based on moral and humanitarian concerns, and face the consequences respecting relations with Greek officials. The British government's difficulty in deciding what to do was, according to a number of Labour MPs, the

result of a dispute between the Home Office and the Foreign Office, which had made Kotronis the subject of a fierce tug-of-war.⁶⁴

The FCO initially thought that 'the best way out of our difficulty would be for Kotronis to abscond', for 'the Greek Government would say that we had been negligent in letting him out on bail, or insufficient bail, but we could apologize and this would be less embarrassing than some of the alternatives'.⁶⁵ The possible escalation of the crisis in Anglo-Greek relations with the move to expel Greece from the Council of Europe provided a sombre backdrop for the pending decision on Kotronis. The British, as already mentioned, hoped to minimise the effect that a negative outcome for Greece in Strasbourg would have on relations with the Greek dictators in the wider field, for example in NATO and in commercial affairs. That, however, could be precluded if Whitehall was seen, more or less simultaneously with the action in the CoE, to 'deliberately break our Extradition Treaty with them [i.e. the Greek government] on the sort of grounds that we are contemplating relying on in the Kotronis case', as it would be 'very difficult to persuade them that we are not motivated in both cases by political animus against them'. Accordingly, the final suggestion of FCO officials, dated 20 November 1969, was that 'the balance of advantage, both from the point of view of our relations with Greece and from wider considerations, lies in the agreeing to the Greek request for extradition'.⁶⁶

Yet, less than twenty days after the above statement, and on the same day as premier Wilson declared that Britain would vote in favour of Greece's expulsion from the Council of Europe, the Home Office announced that the home secretary, James Callaghan, had decided that that was 'not the case in which it would be proper to order surrender' and that Kotronis was released.⁶⁷ The British justified this decision by saying that because of 'evidence about the treatment in Greece of persons with a record of such activity' and 'regard to the United Kingdom's obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights', they were not able to acquiesce to the request for extradition. Nonetheless, this resolution, formed under strong pressure from back-benchers, was of considerable significance as it demonstrated Britain's ability to take a firm stand, and created a precedent, though it also resulted in far

less cooperation between the British and the Greek authorities when British subjects got into trouble than before.⁶⁸

However, this case of imprisonment in Britain of a Greek national and the subsequent rejection of the junta's extradition request is also important in the sense that it is not characteristic of the attention that the Wilson government paid to human rights in the formulation of its foreign policy. As Pedaliu has argued, human rights 'came bottom of the list' of Labour's foreign policy priorities; Whitehall's 'mercurial and equivocal' policy vis-à-vis the Greek Colonels was one prepared to accommodate abuses of human rights by the Greek dictatorship, thus exposing 'the hollowness of the human rights dimension in its foreign policy and the distance that existed between rhetoric and government *praxis*'.⁶⁹ Consequently, the Kotronis case, in this respect, seems to be merely the exception that proves the rule.

1970: 'The pendulum is swinging too wide for comfort'

The Kotronis case was the last event to spark a development in Anglo-Greek relations insofar as 1969 was concerned. 1970 was to be quite different in many respects that again had to do with international developments but, more importantly, with the situation in the interior of the two countries. The Greek Colonels had managed to wrap themselves in the veil of a rather extensive political aloofness from the rest of Europe. According to an ambassador of a Western European country 'the image of the [. . .] Greek régime abroad [was] very bad, even worse perhaps than [was] actually justified',⁷⁰ and the Colonels were in a 'vulnerable international position'⁷¹ that did not leave them much room for manoeuvre. The junta's decision to withdraw from the Council of Europe in December 1969⁷², in light of its imminent suspension 'until the restoration of what the Council considered to be democratic freedoms',⁷³ shut it off from most Scandinavian and Benelux countries, and some other Western European countries were forced to re-evaluate their policies towards Greece, albeit it to a certain degree. In view of that and given its sensitivity to foreign opinion,⁷⁴ the triumvirate had to look elsewhere in its endeavour to get crucial outside recognition of its hold of power, as well as legitimacy. As the

Colonels could no longer 'demonstrate to Greeks [and to foreigners alike] that the régime [was] respected by the élite of Europe',⁷⁵ they sought to cultivate better relations with countries of the Soviet bloc and the Third World. According to Woodhouse, 'trade agreements were signed in 1970 to the Soviet Union, East Germany, Bulgaria, Rumania and Albania [and] an *'opening into Africa'* was established by exchanges of official visits with Ethiopia, Libya, Congo-Kinshasa and the Central African Republic'.⁷⁶

Furthermore, Georgios Papadopoulos, the Greek premier, as 1970 progressed, found himself in dire straits, both domestically and internationally. Triggered by the activities of the *National Front* in Cyprus, another crisis was brewing, which was predicted to be as prominent as the one of November 1967⁷⁷ that brought the two NATO allies (Greece and Turkey) close to war, and, eventually, shattered the Colonels' imperialist illusions by unveiling the Greek military's inefficiency. The tension between Athens and Nicosia, due to the dislike of Makarios' independent policies by the hardliners in Greece, reached its apex in March 1970, when an assassination attempt on the Cypriot leader took place. The complicity of the junta, which was hoping to 'enforce some form of enosis, with compensation to the Turks – a policy to which Makarios was the chief obstacle',⁷⁸ was obvious, though not proclaimed. The Cyprus issue, which eventually brought about the demise of the military junta, was the most predominant foreign policy preoccupation of all the dictators (and especially of Ioannidis) throughout their tenure of power, for they thought that 'removing this irritant from Greek domestic and foreign policy and inter-allied relations, was expected to increase the Colonel's prestige at home and end the régime's international isolation'.⁷⁹

The very same crisis had also the noteworthy consequence of having cost the strong man of the regime the loss of confidence of the hardliners, such as Colonels Ladas, Dimitrios Ioannidis (Director of the Greek Military Police) and K. Aslanidis (the General Secretary for Sports).⁸⁰ Papadopoulos' handling of the situation in Cyprus, in conjunction with his initiatives in trying to mitigate foreign critics through 'pursuing a conciliatory line',⁸¹ precipitated cracks within the junta, which appeared at that time to be far from united. The

internal troubles peaked in the summer of 1970 when Papadopoulos (who was already both prime minister and minister of defence) decided, following Pipinelis' death, to assume the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well. Jealously prevailed among Papadopoulos' critics, with the 'concentration of power in [his] hands' being the real issue.⁸² The casualties of the acute internal crisis, which was resolved in September, were the prime minister's ability to confront the hard-liners and his supposed efforts towards the gradual democratisation of the regime.⁸³

This election year for Britain started with the reverberations of the proceedings in the Committee of Ministers of the CoE in December of the previous year still resounding. At the meeting of the Committee in Paris on 12 December, Pipinelis strove to assure them that the Greek 'timetable' for the full implementation of the Constitution by the end of 1970 provided his government with a qualification for continuing to be a member of the Council. Most delegations, including the British, felt that this programme was not enough to fulfil the requirements of the Council's statute. A draft resolution for the suspension of Greece, with the United Kingdom as one of the nine co-sponsors who were later joined by two others, was circulated early in the meeting and led to the Greek foreign minister's announcement of his government's decision to withdraw from the Council and also to denounce the Human Rights Convention. Following the Greek withdrawal (which, as mentioned above, was stimulated by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office), a resolution was tabled and adopted unanimously in the Committee of Ministers, with the foreign minister of Cyprus not taking part in the vote. As Britain's chief delegate to CoE, George Thompson, said on 11 December:

If a member of a club breaks the rules for a limited period, the other members may tolerate it but if he is in persistent violation of the rules, the time must come when the club can no longer accept the situation. My government, *with great reluctance*, has come to the conclusion that this is the situation we are faced with now (emphasis added).⁸⁴

What Thompson declared, albeit with great unwillingness, was clearly what had been in the minds of many Labour and Liberal MPs for a considerable period of time. Moreover, that idea became eminent again, also including action within NATO, when, two days after that public statement, *The Guardian* supported in an editorial that

the Greek government should be told that members of NATO, like members of the Council of Europe, have obligations as well as rights and that a country which wants to stay in NATO must sometimes hold elections. The purposes of NATO ... include not just military security but also human liberty ... It is because the Greeks fail by that test that their future in NATO must be uncertain.⁸⁵

In the light of these developments, British policy towards Greece was again twofold. The typical bifurcation of Whitehall's concerns in relation to the Greek junta was palpable once more in the handling of the report of the European Commission of Human Rights on the Greek case. The main objectives were on the one hand, 'not to expose ourselves to charges of letting the Greek Government off too lightly', and, on the other, 'to minimise the risk of further damage to our bilateral relations with the régime in Athens' as these had 'emerged relatively unscathed from the proceedings in the Committee of Ministers'. Accordingly, the British government suggested low key representations and confidential exchanges to its ministers, as it did not wish to 'appear to the Greeks to be conspicuously in the lead'.⁸⁶

Success, however, in the CoE, as opponents of the Colonels viewed Greece's withdrawal, did not manage to 'over-spill' into NATO, and, so, the American and Canadian anxiety did not materialize. As a prominent historian has argued, the British decision to vote for the expulsion of Greece from the CoE was 'an expression of distaste' for the regime, 'even if [Britain], in common with most other NATO allies, [was] unwilling to pay a real price in terms of compromising [its] defence and commercial interests'.⁸⁷ Numerous members of the opposition to the Greek regime, with some British MPs being the most prominent among them, argued for Greece's expulsion from NATO or, at least,

exerting pressure on the regime within the NATO forum, based on the text of the North Atlantic Treaty, whose Preamble states:

The Parties [. . .] are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.

The British government, however, was ‘determined to resist such proposals’ and justified this position by claiming yet again that ‘discussion of Greek internal affairs would have a divisive effect within the Alliance, and the expulsion of Greece would open a critical gap in NATO’s South East flank’.⁸⁸ It was less than a year before that President Nixon had reiterated the Alliance’s significance as a ‘linchpin of US foreign policy’, or a ‘blue chip investment’ as he had told Wilson.⁸⁹ Moreover, according to Young, ‘NATO was one place where Britain demonstrated its continuing importance to the USA, countering the negative effect of the withdrawal from East of Suez and Wilson’s refusal to send troops to Vietnam’.⁹⁰ In the meantime, Greece’s position in NATO had been reinforced by ‘a new era in the junta’s relations with the United States’, triggered by international events, such as the evacuation of the US Air Force base in Libya after Colonel Gaddafi’s coup and the rise of anti-American feeling in Turkey, and sealed with the appointment, following a hiatus of almost a year, of a US Ambassador in Athens.⁹¹ As it becomes apparent from the above, Wilson did not need to be ‘cautioned’ by FCO officials against risking losing Greece from NATO, as he was quite aware of the country’s importance to the Alliance and was pragmatic enough to see what line he had to pursue vis-à-vis the junta in order to safeguard Britain’s interests in the best possible way. In this light it seems a bit far fetched to say that he submitted to FCO’s line, as implied by Maragkou,⁹² especially if one considers the view (mentioned above) that cabinet members had about the prime minister, as a ‘capitulator’ and a promoter of the government’s ‘sell-out’ on Greece.

Notwithstanding British government’s staunchness concerning Greek participation in NATO, scepticism over its policies towards

Greece was expressed by Greek officials.⁹³ The renewed Greek suspicions seemed to have an emotional and tactical basis and were, thus, attributed to the regime's right-wing supporters. According to the British, the 'ambivalence' in Athens' attitude towards Western countries and Britain in particular ('the régime no doubt imagine that it could be to their advantage to retain a capacity to reassure us at one minute and make our flesh creep the next') was due to tactical considerations but mainly due to the 'real distinction' between the determination of Papadopoulos and Pipinelis, on the one hand, and Ioannidis and the other hardliners, on the other.⁹⁴ It is worth noting here that even Wilson himself was apprehensive about a possible takeover by hardliners in Greece. In his talk with Chancellor Brandt, the British prime minister said that he 'thought that in certain circumstances the Colonels might be replaced by some even more horrible right-wing majors and captains'.⁹⁵ Furthermore, Sir Michael Stewart, based on evidence emanating from various sources, including former Greek politicians (who might have been put up to it by the junta) and the Greek security services, reported that his government was 'regarded as being both the most determined and formidable opponent of the régime'.⁹⁶

A month later, nevertheless, developments in Greece appeared to point to a different conclusion. Articles in governmental newspapers, mainly *Nea Politeia* (New Republic), went out of their way to comment favourably on Anglo-Greek relations.⁹⁷ London was depicted as trying to avoid tension over the Greek issue and its approach to the position of Greece in international organizations such as NATO and the United Nations was characterized as prudent. According to those articles, 'Britain was keenly interested in cooperating with Athens [...] but HMG did not wish to provoke the Left-Wing of its Party which is powerful and has created dangerous headaches over several problems'.⁹⁸ These reports coincided with the meeting in Athens of Greek ambassadors in Western European countries and with meetings between FCO officials and the Greek ambassador in London. All these were regarded as indicative of Anglo-Greek relations being again 'on an even keel'. In particular, Thomas Brimelow's approach to Sorokos was considered 'almost too' helpful.⁹⁹

According to the Greek record of this meeting, Brimelow had reiterated Whitehall's view that the CoE and the Atlantic Alliance were two completely different bodies, and that policy in one did not influence policy in the other. He also wondered why, although it had assumed a 'constructive' stance vis-à-vis Greece within NATO, Britain was still seen with some apprehension by some circles in Greece.¹⁰⁰ More interestingly, Brimelow noted that his country's positive response to Greek proposals for closer cooperation on the sensitive issue of the Greeks exiled in Britain should not be overlooked. To emphasize this, he mentioned the recent decision of a British court, according to which a student had been sentenced to seven years for planting two bombs in the Greek embassy. Sorokos expressed his government's satisfaction over this and British support within NATO, and added that time and future developments would help heal the 'psychological reaction' of the Greek people and government to the British position at the CoE.¹⁰¹

All in all, the Wilson government, shortly before the June elections, was struggling to promote an amelioration of relations with the Colonels, also discrediting Greek 'old' politicians' efforts to bring down the regime; as Sir Michael Stewart told a Greek journalist: 'you should forget the old politicians. The Americans do not want them, we do not want them, and the Greek people do not want them' (author's translation).¹⁰² In the meantime, the British ambassador reassured King Constantine that he approved of his position completely and that the junta would not try to abolish the monarchy because that would create very serious problems for it. Stewart concluded his conversation with the king by supporting that the latter should by no means return having capitulated to the Colonels, as Papadopoulos was 'walking at the edge of the abyss and looking for a solution'.¹⁰³

A note on Cyprus

In spite of the positive climate that was beginning once again to affect relations between the two countries, Greek government circles were still thought to entertain private doubts about the British government's protestations of support for, and admiration of, its policy towards Cyprus. This was basically due to the fact that the Colonels

'realised that a crisis over Cyprus could threaten their own position at home' and to their inability to 'rid themselves of the notion that HMG was secretly trying to provoke a Cyprus crisis in order to bring this about'.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, they believed that Britain might want to 'maintain an atmosphere of tension on the island in order to deflect possible pressure on the Sovereign Base Areas'.¹⁰⁵

The Greek foreign minister, Pipinelis, however, again showed that he highly valued London's advice and support. Worried by the emergence of a pro-enosis terrorist organization, the National Front (responsible for a series of attacks on British property in Cyprus in December 1969 and January 1970), and by the continued impasse in the search for a solution to the intercommunal dispute in Cyprus, he requested Whitehall's assistance in his effort, supported by Papadopoulos, to restore the situation on the island.¹⁰⁶ The FCO's response was the drawing of three aims:

- (A) To do what we can to reduce temperatures all round;
- (B) To encourage Greek action to control mainland Greek elements in Cyprus;
- (C) To avoid acting as middle man for any part in the triangle.¹⁰⁷

Internal problems of the Greek government and the state of relations between the Greek government and Archbishop Makarios (which were going through a bad phase) were recognised as the keys to this 'largely artificial' crisis.¹⁰⁸ In these delicate circumstances, the British, wishing to avoid getting into the crossfire, were less than anxious to intervene more than necessary. After the attempted assassination of the Archbishop, on 8 March 1970, they confined themselves to welcoming the Greek government's assurances that it was in no way involved and hoping that the Greeks would control their own nationals and continue to keep in close contact with the Turkish government in order to dispel its natural anxieties.

The dispute between the Greek and Cypriot governments was the last incident to ignite a response from the Labour government, as the June 1970 elections surprisingly brought the Tories back to power. The 'diplomatic' (to say the least) handling of the issue of the Greek

dictatorship, however, was, in general terms, considered successful even by the Conservatives who chose to continue it (with some conspicuous gestures of support to the Colonels, though). British officials, clearly influenced by overriding concerns deriving from the implications of the Cold War era, ventured, during the first three years of military rule in Greece, to keep a balanced stance towards the junta, going out of their way to maintain a ‘good working relationship’ with it, but also criticising its methods and urging it towards a ‘return to constitutional rule’, in public.¹⁰⁹ Britain managed to condone and even to support the Colonels (within the NATO context), and was successful in ignoring their threats and blackmail, and standing up to them only in a couple of cases (e.g. in the CoE or as regards some arms supplies), and mostly under parliamentary pressure.

More specifically, Whitehall’s ambiguity in its dealings with the junta became even more pronounced in 1969. This time Britain’s dilemma of ethical versus pragmatic considerations had an international setting, as the Greek case was discussed in regional forums. The Labour government was apprehensive from the very start of the ‘internationalization’ of the Greek issue, struggling to assume a neutral position towards the Colonels. This (benevolent to the dictatorship) neutrality was exemplified in Britain’s decision not to take the lead nor oppose moves to expel Greece from the CoE. Although the government in London was in ‘complete disagreement’ with the internal policies of the Colonels, British officials tried to promote a milder course of action vis-à-vis Greece in regional organizations, and to cultivate warmer relations by inviting the Greek Minister of Industry to the British capital. Britain’s ambiguous attitude towards the junta brought to the fore divisions within the cabinet, with Crossman talking about ‘hypocrisy’, and Jenkins clearly giving precedence to economic concerns over moral issues, thus also disagreeing with Callaghan on the Kotronis case.

The solution given to the impasse by the ever practical Wilson was the separation of the two regional ‘spheres’: action in one forum (see CoE) would not influence policy in the other (NATO). Consequently, Whitehall, in an effort to palliate parliamentary criticism, chose to subscribe to the move to suspend Greece’s membership of the CoE,

and at the exact same time reassured the Colonels (and the Americans) that it would safeguard Greece's position in NATO. In this respect, Wilson's decision to 'sacrifice' Greece's presence in a political organisation of lesser significance was designed to function as a 'safety valve' for the automatic release of parliamentary and public opinion pressure when the temperature on the Greek case exceeded the limits. In 1970, Britain's diplomatic efforts were concentrated on limiting and repairing the damage to the Anglo-Greek connection caused at Strasbourg. London was again striving to adopt a twofold policy (not appear to let the junta off too lightly *and* minimise a further regression of bilateral relations), thus following what a future British ambassador would call a 'hot and cold policy' (see p. 182).

However, the Wilson government's life ended in June 1970, giving way to a Conservative restoration, which was expected to affect Anglo-Greek relations. The implications of this on, as well as the degree of continuity in, relations between London and Athens in the post-election period are examined in the chapter that follows.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TOWARDS THE COLONELS, 1970: CONTINUITY VS. CHANGE

June 1970 marked the dawn of a new era in relations between London and Athens. Domestic developments in both countries, and the change in leadership that they entailed, in conjunction with the alterations in the international and regional scenes, brought about the feeling that things were about to become different in many respects: 'In the first place there was a new British government, in the second there had been Government changes of some significance in Greece', as the Greek foreign minister was reported saying to the British ambassador.¹ 1970 was similar to the previous year in its lack of seminal international events such as the 1967 Six Day War or the 1968 Prague Spring, something that was closely related to the atmosphere of lower tensions that seemed to prevail in East-West relations. The important repercussions of the process of détente that was already under way were increasingly being felt, and, to a certain extent, were also compromising the actions of the lesser powers. Developments like the announcement of the Nixon Doctrine, Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, and the beginning of the negotiations that led to the SALT I Agreement were exerting a

countervailing influence even on relations between countries that were on the same side of the Cold War divide.

In Britain, in particular, June 1970 marked a significant break from the recent past and a political surprise of a great magnitude. The general election brought the Conservative party back to power and pushed Labour politicians to the shadows of political life after dominating it for almost six consecutive years.² The results came as a complete surprise to ‘everyone, except Mr Heath himself’ as *The Economist* commented at the time.³ The unexpected defeat of Labour had as a consequence the arrival of new (and some not so new) people at the helm of British foreign policy; namely Edward Heath, the new PM, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, once again as foreign secretary (the previous time being in the early 1960s), and, to a certain extent, Lord Carrington, the new defence secretary.⁴ The new prime minister was openly pro-European and so put all his efforts behind renewing interest in getting Britain in the European Economic Community (EEC). According to *The Economist*, Heath ‘ha[d] always been more identified with the European idea than Mr Wilson, even on his best days, ha[d] been’, and ‘he ha[d] assets which Mr Wilson did not have. He [was] trusted in Europe’.⁵

Also, according to Hollowell, ‘Heath’s heart was not in the Commonwealth … In desiring to place such emphasis on Britain’s position as a European power and to continuously de-emphasise its Commonwealth and American connections, Heath was to alter Winston Churchill’s ‘three circles’ approach to British foreign policy. He was a ‘one-circle’ man’ (emphasis added).⁶ This had some consequences of its own, most importantly the further decline of the ‘special relationship’ with the United States, which, however, was somewhat offset by a newfound rapprochement with the France of Pompidou, who had succeeded the, not-so-friendly-towards-Britain and veto-wielding Charles De Gaulle who died in November of the same year.⁷ Heath had a personal connection to the European ideal and therefore decided to direct the EEC strand of British foreign policy himself, becoming actively involved in the planning and the carrying out of negotiations for entry into the Community.

The rest of the foreign policy-making fell primarily to Sir Alec Douglas-Home, a very seasoned politician who had also acted as prime

minister from 1963 to 1964. His return to Whitehall, and especially to King Charles Street,⁸ admittedly provided his government with the virtues and qualities of his expertise and vast experience in international affairs. He was a very well respected figure (especially within FCO circles) and his qualities were acknowledged by Heath, resulting in a good working relationship between the two of them;⁹ that is quite unlike the one between Wilson and Brown mainly in 1967–8, a period of crisis in Anglo-Greek relations. As a direct consequence, the British government was arguably in a better position to deal with international issues, such as relations with the Greek Colonels' regime. Nevertheless, this did not mean that London was bound to provide stronger resistance to the Colonels or push them more vehemently towards restoring democracy in Greece, as Douglas-Home's conservative credentials were known and universally proven in more than one instance.

'Painful dilemmas'

The election's effects, though, were not limited to the introduction of fresh faces. This period heralded the start of a bipolar nexus of policies governing relations between Athens and London. The first part of the equation that determined the nature and the extent of Whitehall's dealing with the Colonels was the anxiety that members of the government's foreign policy executive felt over two issues. The election outcome caused high expectations in the Greek capital, as the Colonels were expecting the new (Conservative) government to be more friendly, accommodating, and cooperative than the Labour government, chiefly because of its nature and political orientation,¹⁰ but also because of the emphasis it had chosen to put on NATO in its electoral manifesto: 'We will stand by our alliances and strengthen our defences. We will continue to make our contribution to the forces of NATO and will seek to revitalise this organisation which is basic to the defence of Britain'.¹¹ To this effect, the Greek press comments on the elections are quite telling; note especially the leading article in the pro-government *Nea Politeia*, published on 22 June, that claimed that the British election results 'show[ed] that

the swing towards the left in Europe is being halted' and that these developments 'vindicate[d] the 1967 Revolution [sic] and show[ed] that the Greek officers who launched it were the first to understand the message of [the] times'.

More importantly, though, the same newspaper, in a different article in the same edition, examined the attitude of leading Conservative politicians towards the Greece of the Colonels before the election and commented that 'the Conservatives had shown an *impeccable attitude* and had faced the Greek Revolution with *objective understanding*' (emphasis added). The author of the article went so far as to state that Heath, as leader of the opposition, had, in private talks with Greek officials, 'repeatedly offered to help smooth over misunderstandings, had expressed his understanding of the Greek problem and had accepted it as *sui generis*'. Moreover, Douglas-Home, as shadow foreign secretary, in a debate in the House of Commons on 9 December 1969 on the Greek question in the CoE, was reported to have made what was described as 'a particularly moving attempt to persuade Labour to preserve an impartial attitude towards Greece', as the expulsion of Greece would have serious consequences for both NATO and European security.¹² What is more, *Acropolis* (a conservative newspaper) in a front page article headlined 'Change in Direction of British policy', maintained that it was 'regarded as certain that the [British] prime minister [would] review the Labour government's policy of the rapid contraction of British influence in the Mediterranean, East of Suez and elsewhere'.¹³

Moreover, less vocal opposition among governmental circles was considered more likely. As Bendall told Sorokos, although the new government was not thinking of making 'dramatic decisions' on Anglo-Greek relations, the fact that there was no left wing to create problems (as with Labour) could be seen as 'an auspicious point'.¹⁴ On the contrary, some Conservatives were truly preoccupied with not appearing to cave in to pressure from left-wing circles and not have proper relations with the Greek government, as that would permit hard core right-wingers to accuse them of appearing 'soft on communism', by not supporting a right-wing (although military) regime in a NATO member country, and especially on NATO's sensitive southern

flank. They also felt obliged to make sincere efforts to persuade the Colonels that an amelioration of relations was imminent, primarily for the benefits this would have on trade (whose importance to the British cannot be exaggerated, especially when they were in such a dire financial state). On the other hand, Heath's government was anxious not to appear to have extremely good relations with another military dictatorship in Europe and condone it, and even supply arms to it (or at least arms that could be used to suppress the civilian population).¹⁵

This dilemma was indirectly conveyed to the government in Athens on the occasion of the first meeting between Pipinelis (the Greek foreign minister) and the British ambassador in Athens, a few weeks after the elections in Britain. Pipinelis said he was pleased with the results and that 'he knew both Mr. Heath and the Secretary of State and had high respect for both of them', to which Sir Michael Stewart responded by saying that his government 'was still very new' then, but he recalled that 'the importance of Greece to NATO had been firmly asserted on a number of occasions by both Mr. Stewart and Mr. George Thompson'.¹⁶ The ambassador continued with the following statement: 'However, though I was anticipating nothing, we might find this policy *expressed rather more positively* in the future' (emphasis added).¹⁷ Nevertheless, he was quick to qualify that, by adding another dimension in Anglo-Greek relations, namely enhanced British concern over EEC member countries' view of the Athens regime in the context of British negotiations towards entry into the Community:

Continuing I said that though things might become a bit easier in terms of our bilateral arrangements, [Whitehall] would still have to take account of opinion in North-West Europe and I reminded Mr. Pipinelis that Germany and Holland were not only partners of both our countries in NATO but also of the utmost importance to Britain in connexion with the forthcoming Common Market negotiations. Mr. Pipinelis made no comment but his eyes registered that he had taken the point about Germany and Holland.¹⁸

In this instance, therefore, the influence of general foreign policy goals, and the effort to become an EEC member in particular, on the conduct of relations with other countries (in this case the Greece of the Colonels) was quite conspicuous. However, on the question of arms deliveries to South Africa and the likelihood of a change in London's arms policy in general, raised by Pipinelis, Stewart seemed somewhat worried about appearing to provide arms to Greece ('British arms for Greece would presumably also be a very delicate subject if it arose at all, and would have to be handled carefully and in strict confidence'), but told the Greek foreign minister that 'though [he] was not trying to sell British arms at that particular moment, he [Pipinelis] could be sure that any official enquiry from the Greek Government about the availability of British arms for Greece would receive early and careful consideration'.¹⁹

Approximately 1500 miles away, in Athens, the Colonels found themselves in a particularly tight spot. Mainly due to its political isolation from Western Europe,²⁰ the Greek junta was faced with a two-pronged dilemma. The Greek leaders had decided to explore new possibilities in relations with other countries, for the most part focusing on Greece's immediate neighbourhood, the Balkans, and Africa. The establishment of relations with various (mostly sub-Saharan) African states²¹ was largely viewed as an effort to enhance the regime's international standing, but was also pursued in retaliation to the disillusionment with the West caused by, among other things, the expulsion of Greece from the CoE, the termination of arms deliveries from the US, and the freezing of the EEC association that had been initiated in 1961. The 'opening to the Balkans' consisted of an exchange of visits with Romania, an improvement in relations with Tito's Yugoslavia and Zhivkov's Bulgaria, and the re-establishment of relations with Albania in May 1971 as its crown jewel. This last event, the two-headed eagle and the phoenix becoming 'birds of a feather', is a very clear illustration of pragmatic policy-making in a highly polarized region during the Cold War, as the Athens-Tirana rapprochement was pursued by two extremely opposite (as far as the Cold War divide was concerned) regimes, that is a right-wing, staunchly anti-communist military dictatorship in a NATO member country, and

an extremely isolated Stalinist state under the sole protection of Mao's China.²² The Colonels were following a tradition set by previous Greek leaderships after WWII, who had also tried to exploit Soviet interest in Greece to extract more benefits from Western countries, without, though, ever seriously considering changing the country's foreign-policy orientation.²³ Moreover, recent scholarship has shown that the 'opening' was limited and that moves like the rapprochement with Albania were 'rather dictated by motives of traditional foreign policy' (author's translation).²⁴

At the same time, though, the Greek Colonels were willing to pull out all the stops to reassure Western bloc countries of Greece's belief in and allegiance to Western institutions in general, and NATO, in particular. Numerous efforts were made to convince Westerners (especially those, like the British, who were not constantly condemning the regime) that no change in Greece's foreign policy orientation was forthcoming, and that NATO's position in their country and, thus, security in the organisation's southern flank were guaranteed. That would have an effect, however, only as long as the Westerners were willing to sustain the Colonels, who, according to their own view, were protecting Greece from communist infiltration and were acting as a buffer against a domino effect in the region. This is a perfect illustration of what J. L. Gaddis has called 'a compelling form of Cold War blackmail', as the Greek 'domino' was indeed 'advertising its propensity to topple'.²⁵ In other words, the military regime was trying to persuade the West (including Britain) that it needed the Colonels as much as (if not more than) the Colonels needed its (even tacit) support to hold on to power. And, of course, that was not done in secrecy, as even newspapers were citing cynics saying that the junta was 'deftly exploit[ing] international tensions to make itself appear indispensable'.²⁶ The Colonels had 'certainly profited', the same article went on, 'at a time when its survival seemed less certain, by Soviet moves in Czechoslovakia and the Mediterranean which emphasised Greece's position as a NATO cornerstone and helped, incidentally, to muffle the régime's critics at home and abroad'.²⁷ In short, as an Italian observer noted during the time of the dictatorship, '*i colonnelli hanno giocato con estrema abilità la carta atlantica e quella dell'alleanza con gli Stati Uniti*'.²⁸

This scheme of relations and its influence were even more apparent in Anglo-American discussions on the Greek situation. A prominent example was what the British ambassador reported on 20 July; namely that the new US ambassador in Greece, Henry Tasca, left him in no doubt as to that ‘he did not wish or expect to have any particularly close working relationship with [Sir Michael Stewart] of the kind that he understood his predecessor had had’ and that ‘he thought the late British Government’s attitude to the [then] Greek Government was mistaken and in particular that the part which the British Government played in the Council of Europe’s decision [the previous] December had been mistaken and even irresponsible’.²⁹ According to the British ambassador, Tasca’s main theme was ‘an urgent and almost passionate appeal that the new Government in England should give Papadopoulos a helping hand “for fear of something worse”’.³⁰ Therefore, as it becomes evident, governments in both Athens and London faced quandaries (but also external pressures) in their policies towards each other, and made efforts to persuade the other side of their true intentions, to clearly state their position, and have a good working relationship in order to pursue their own agenda.³¹

It was against this general backdrop that Anglo-Greek relations unfolded at the beginning of the 1970s. Now let us examine the actual development of relations between the two countries following June 1970. On the day that Edward Heath was sworn in as new PM, FCO officials reported that the Greek foreign minister, Panayotis Pipinelis, had told the British ambassador that Anglo-Greek relations were ‘not too bad’ and that he ‘hoped that both sides [would] continue to show good sense and appropriate control over their nerves whenever contentious matters came up’.³² His words were interpreted as ‘quite encouraging’, as ‘Mr Pipinelis [was] adopting a relaxed and realistic attitude’.³³

A severe blow, however, was inflicted on the attempt to establish a better understanding between London and Athens: the death of Pipinelis on 18 July. He was a seasoned diplomat and experienced politician who was particularly liked by the British (largely because he was not a military figure), who acknowledged his contribution to the

defusing of the November 1967 crisis over Cyprus.³⁴ Pipinelis' career as foreign minister was dominated by his endeavours to promote talks over the Cyprus dispute and to persuade the West of the regime's 'true' motives, that is, the desire to return to constitutional democracy, as was, supposedly, particularly evident in the timetable that was to be adopted by the Greek government in order to quell concerns raised in the Council of Europe. Pipinelis, who 'acted as liaison between the king and the régime leaders'³⁵ but apparently was won over by the Colonels as he appeared to have faith in their willingness and ability to return to democracy, was succeeded by Georgios Papadopoulos himself.

This resulted in an automatic further accumulation of powers by the former Colonel (he had relinquished his military title by then), who was already prime minister and minister of defence, that was not viewed in the most favourable light by the hardliners of the junta, like Ladas or Ioannidis, for instance. An internal crisis (whose repercussions have been discussed in Chapter 2) ensued during the 'hot summer' of 1970.³⁶ The internal political situation was reflected in the rumours that were going round at the end of the summer that 'this or that commander [was] dissatisfied, that certain members of the original junta [felt] that Papadopoulos ha[d] betrayed the revolution by taking so much power into his own hands, [and] that hardliners resent[ed] his taking more and more civilians into the government's ranks'.³⁷ The hardliners fear is understandable if one takes into account Brooker's argument about the junta being the 'only control device that protects a military dictatorship *internally* – from being expropriated by the military's leader and transformed into a personalist-ruler military régime'.³⁸

The person who was chosen by Papadopoulos to assist him in the conduct of foreign policy was Christos Xanthopoulos-Palamas, who was given the title of under-secretary for foreign affairs and was encumbered with the responsibility for (among other things) 'the fulfilment of the country's obligations deriving from the United Nations' Charter and of its obligations towards NATO', and 'the enlightenment of world public opinion on Greek affairs.' The biographical note prepared about him by FCO officials said that he had 'neither the exceptional strength of character nor the skill and

international stature of Mr Pipinelis', but he was 'a very senior and experienced professional diplomat'.³⁹ Palamas, according to what Markezinis told the British, and with which Sir Michael Stewart concurred, 'though able was totally amoral ... [and] would try to quit at the first moment of serious trouble, but would in the meantime intrigue to strengthen and improve his position with Papadopoulos'.⁴⁰ Notwithstanding that, some British officials, like Andrew Palmer, thought that Palamas' appointment was not a complete disaster considering the alternatives.⁴¹

The British ambassador sent a dispatch to the foreign secretary in order to inform him about the recent developments after Pipinelis' death and the consequences of this event for Anglo-Greek relations. On 2 September he wrote:

The influence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in policy formation will probably decline and the conduct of Greece's foreign relations is likely to be erratic. There is already evidence of this in regard to the Cyprus problem and relations with Turkey [...] A further consequence of Mr. Pipinelis's death is that *we in Britain and particularly in this Embassy have lost a friend*. I believe that we could usually rely on him to represent our policies honestly in the Greek Cabinet and to further our interests in so far as they did not conflict with Greece's own. This was particularly the case in the support he gave us in many minor but necessary matters. We may find that the influence of other Western Embassies, particularly the French, will increase as ours goes down (emphasis added).⁴²

The last inference was corroborated at the NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels where Palamas, as reported by the Athens press, had bilateral contacts with American and Belgian higher officials, as well as with the French foreign minister, with whom Palamas discussed 'matters of mutual interest' and during Palamas' conversation with whom 'the high level of Franco/Greek relations was established and French interest was expressed in Greece and the development of her economy'.⁴³ This gains much more weight if examined alongside the

fact that the Colonels seemed 'to be taking the necessary measures to foster the sense that Greece [could] afford to adopt a more independent line than hitherto', and the numerous 'indications that the [Greek] Government [was] seeking to diversify their arms supplies in order to avoid excessive dependence on the goodwill of the United States'.⁴⁴ Quite influential in taking that line was Palamas, whose anti-Americanism and 'Gaullist' tendencies were well known.⁴⁵

Another relevant development that caused some concern in the British embassy in Athens was the sorry state of the Greek foreign service that Pipinelis' death played a part in exposing:

During Mr. Pipinelis' tenure of the Ministry, it was to a large extent shielded from the effects of the 1967 *revolution*. Unlike other branches of the Greek public service, the Greek Foreign Ministry had imposed upon it no members of the Junta, and there was no significant purge or wave of resignations from the staff. *The only obvious intrusion by the régime into the Ministry's arrangements was the appointment of former generals to be Greek Ambassadors in London and Paris ... It was, however, apparent that the Greek Foreign Service and the organisation of the Ministry needed to be brought up to date* (emphasis added).⁴⁶

The document goes on to detail the changes in Athens and the various Greek embassies abroad that Papadopoulos initiated when he assumed the post of minister of foreign affairs and ends with an interesting conclusion:

It seems fair to assume that Mr. Papadopoulos' objectives in bringing about these changes were to make the Ministry a more effective instrument of his own will, to destroy the immunity and ancient régime character it has previously maintained and to *increase his own patronage for military people*. It is obviously too early to make a final judgement, but our preliminary view is that *the end result of his changes may be predominantly destructive*. It seems likely to *make our normal business with the Ministry more difficult to transact than in the past* (emphasis added).⁴⁷

It was the adoption of measures such as the ones mentioned above that led Woodhouse to reach the following conclusion:

From first to last the Colonels showed a total incomprehension of foreign reactions. It was almost impossible to name any Greek of international reputation – at least after the death of Pipinelis in July 1970- who did not regard them with contempt. This meant that every step they took against their opponents was bound to cause them unfavourable publicity abroad.⁴⁸

A Mediterranean ‘powder keg’

September 1970 was a really important month for the Eastern Mediterranean area. As Woodhouse has observed, the expulsion of the Palestinian commandos from Jordan into Syria augmented the chances of a war in the region and caused serious concern in Washington. In Egypt an increased ‘atmosphere of uncertainty and tension’ prevailed, as Nasser’s successor, Anwar Sadat, appeared at first interested in getting closer to Moscow. All this, in conjunction with the ‘state of political chaos’ that neighbouring Turkey was in, and the erratic control of Libya by Colonel Gaddafi, meant that Greece under the junta could be regarded as ‘practically the only remaining bastion of stability, apart from Israel’.⁴⁹ All these events contributed to a substantial change in Greece’s relations with the superpowers,⁵⁰ exemplified by the decision Washington took at the end of the month to ‘resume normal military shipments to Greece’.⁵¹ One other scholar has argued that ‘US and NATO support to the Greek military rulers was deemed essential to their ability to remain in power and was justified on the grounds of the increasing tension in the eastern Mediterranean [as] the West’s foremost priority in the region was the containment of Soviet communism and radical Arab nationalism’.⁵² Sakkas, moreover, relates the American decision to lift the embargo on heavy arms to Greece to the Colonels’, or rather the prime minister’s, aid to the US provided during the Jordan crisis: ‘During the Jordan crisis the USA asked Greece to grant facilities for passage and refuelling the planes flown to the Middle East to evacuate American nationals from Jordan and make

reconnaissance over Arab countries. Pattakos warned Papadopoulos to refrain from any act that would affect relations with the Arab states, insisting upon Greek impartiality regarding the Arab-Israeli dispute. Papadopoulos brushed Pattakos's recommendations aside and accepted the US request. On 22 September the Americans reciprocated by lifting the embargo on heavy arms to Greece.⁵³ The British were, once again, quick to affirm that 'the South-East flank of NATO, where Greece occupies such a strategic position, is an area where we cannot afford any dislocation of the Alliance' and that 'we should try to keep the Greek Government's relations with NATO correct and good'.⁵⁴ Moreover, in a supplementary statement the Conservative government stressed in October that the 'security of Britain rest[ed] on the strength of the North Atlantic Alliance'.⁵⁵

The Colonels' Greece appeared at the time to be taking some steps towards exiting from its isolation and Palamas was 'quite confident and optimistic about Greece's international position: resumption of US arms deliveries, a lessening of western criticism and a policy of good neighbourly relations with the Balkan countries'.⁵⁶ Three weeks later the Greek government showed Tirana the 'green light' for the resumption of relations with a neighbourly, (interestingly enough) Stalinist state. This marked a watershed in relations between the Greek military dictatorship and communist Albania in so far as it demonstrated both sides' willingness to overcome difficulties and proceed towards a normalisation of relations.

Greece's augmented significance as a player (rather than a pawn) on the Cold War confrontation chessboard was swiftly established and acknowledged by all sides, including the two superpowers, European allies and, of course, the Colonels themselves who were quick to exploit the favourable situation. Sorokos answered Brimelow's concern over the very complicated and extremely dangerous situation in the Middle East by confirming the stability of Greece's foreign policy and asserting its significance as a peace factor in the Balkan and eastern Mediterranean areas.⁵⁷ On the British side, Sir Michael Stewart was one of the first to state that 'at a time of increasing tension in the Middle East and of growing Soviet naval strength in the Mediterranean, [Greece's] importance will ... be thought to have increased'.⁵⁸ The British ambassador

reported to the FCO that this would have two seminal consequences; the first one being the ‘reinforce[ment of] the case for doing everything possible to ensure that the natural concern for Greek constitutional liberties is not allowed to spill over into the councils of the Alliance’, and the second one being his belief that ‘Greek responses {were} liable to be a good deal less flexible than in Mr. Pipinelis’s time’.⁵⁹ Signs of the latter were already becoming evident and were being acknowledged even by the British press.⁶⁰

However, what was particularly worrying the British was the growing influence of the head of the armed forces, General Angelis, to whom ‘the degree to which the Armed Forces [had] become a factor in the political situation’ was largely attributed.⁶¹ The problem consisted of the fact that General Angelis, considered by instinct a moderate in internal affairs, on a number of occasions during 1970 had ‘reacted with exaggerated sensitivity to real or imagined insults to the honour of the Greek Armed Forces, most notably over the Council of Europe proceedings … and over the events in Cyprus [in early 1970]’. The British were acutely preoccupied because Angelis seemed ‘to attribute the authorship of these slights primarily to [them]’. Unfortunately for London this created considerable problems in the relations with the Colonels, as on the General’s orders, ‘the leaders of the Armed Forces [had] in moments of difficulty reduced their contacts with Service Attachés to a minimum’; and the defence attaché ‘had to wait eight months before being given permission to tour the field commands and was then not allowed to visit units’.⁶²

As a result of these developments, tensions were running high in international organizations like NATO, as well. As British officials noted, ‘at successive meetings of the Ministerial Council since the 1967 coup in Greece there has been a danger that attempts by the Danes, Norwegians and Dutch to discuss the internal situation in Greece or even to question Greek membership of the Alliance might prompt a Greek walk-out … [t]his risk has been aggravated by the death of Mr. Pipinelis and by the increasing influence of the hardliners in Athens’.⁶³

It was in this light, clearly illustrated by the British impression that the Greek ‘Chief Military Officers {were} extremely touchy and

suspicious of the attitudes of Western Governments, particularly H.M.G., to the Greek Government,⁶⁴ that the recent re-examining of policy towards Greece was to be reconsidered at the end of September. Apart from the strain on Anglo-Greek relations, the most significant points to be raised were the increasing influence of the army in Greek political affairs ('to an extent which would not have seemed likely a year ago'), the 'unquestionable importance of Greece to NATO', and consequently 'the need for greater cooperation with the Greek Armed Forces to prevent their suspicions from affecting further the successful working of the Alliance'.⁶⁵ The conclusion drawn by J. M. O. Snodgrass (an FCO official working on Greece) is telling: 'We are in for a difficult time in keeping the lid on the issue of Greece & NATO'.⁶⁶

Troubled waters

Almost two weeks later, FCO and Ministry of Defence officials were exchanging views on a possible naval visit to Greece. The visit was initially proposed by Sir Ian Orr-Ewing who had served in the Admiralty with Lord Carrington. Orr-Ewing had sent a cruiser to Athens, in a very difficult period for Anglo-Greek relations (due to trouble in Cyprus), which had resulted in 'rebuilding bridges of friendship and understanding'.⁶⁷ Defence officials considered that, although 'a proposed visit of this nature would not seem to fall clearly within a NATO context', it was probable that it could be arranged the following year, 'especially bearing in mind that the R[oyal] N[avy] presence in the Mediterranean is increasing, as a counter to the growth of Soviet naval activity in the area, and that *many other Mediterranean countries are ruled out for visits purposes on political grounds*' (emphasis added). The catalyst seemed to be the impression that a 'slight relaxation of the Foreign Secretary's recent policy on the question of military co-operation with Greece [might] be under consideration in the relatively near future'.⁶⁸ The Southern European Department of the FCO did not wish to commit itself to Sir Ian, and replied by admitting that a visit in 1970 was not possible but conceded that 'such a visit could certainly be considered for [1971]'.⁶⁹

A high-profile visit to Greece did actually take place and it was the first purely national visit by a high-ranking British officer in almost two years.⁷⁰ Air Marshall W.D. Hodgkinson paid an official visit to Greece in early December 1970, having been invited by General Angelis. According to the British ambassador, the visit ‘was taken *quite justifiably*, by the Greek Government as evidence of the importance which HMG continues to attach to Greece as a military ally whose contribution to the defence of our interests in the Eastern Mediterranean is important and continuous’. Air Marshall Hodgkinson, who was received with great cordiality by his hosts, expressed his hope that ‘the Greek Government would take his presence in Athens as concrete evidence of the importance which HMG and he personally attached to cooperation with the Greek Armed Forces, particularly the air and navy, in the Eastern Mediterranean’. The Greek prime minister replied by referring to the ‘long comradeship in arms of the British and Greek armed forces’ and said that so far as their political differences were concerned he would consider them as ‘quarrels which were normal amongst members of the same family or friends of long standing’. The British ambassador judged the visit to have come at a ‘particularly opportune moment in its timing’ and to have caused the Colonels to feel ‘flattered’. Sir Michael Stewart believed that the Air Marshall made the most favourable personal impression, and concluded by writing in his report the following:

I hope that at regular though not infrequent intervals it will be possible to arrange further national visits by senior British officers to Greece. I also hope soon to be able to put forward a recommendation concerning reciprocal visits by senior Greek officers to the United Kingdom since I consider that increased contact between senior British and Greek officers will have a very beneficial effect here.⁷¹

It was against this backdrop, formulated by developments in Anglo-Greek relations and events on the international (or more importantly regional) scene, that a meeting to discuss policy towards Greece was held on the 30th of September in the Chancellor of the Duchy

of Lancaster's room. The record of this meeting epitomised British policy towards the Colonels under the Conservative party, as it provided a perfect illustration of the priorities of Whitehall, its position on a series of sensitive issues, and, finally, marked a watershed with regard to Anglo-Greek relations in some respects. According to the record, the first item on the agenda was Greece and NATO. The meeting considered the possibility that 'Scandinavian hostility to Greek membership of NATO might cause the Greeks to leave the Alliance'. And it was the person that normally occupied that room that spoke first to say 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'. The new government's stand in relation to two very significant topics, i.e. military cooperation and arms sales, was succinctly expressed:

It was agreed that co-operation with Greece in the military field was *particularly important* if we were to maintain a good working relationship with the Greek Government. HMG's recent agreement to the *supply of frigates* should prove helpful in this connexion (emphasis added).⁷²

On the issue of arms sales two important points were discussed. The first was the predisposition of the Conservative government to reconsider UK policy towards Greece in this respect in the not so distant future (although for the time being they were not willing to go much beyond the policy followed by the Wilson government, mainly because the time was not right). And the second point was, interestingly enough, the effort to convey to Papadopoulos that Whitehall would not, in fact, present any obstacles to the supply of arms (like the afore-mentioned frigates or fighter aircraft, for that matter) to Greece for NATO purposes. However, Sir Michael Stewart was to state to the Greek premier that he 'should bear in mind that the British Government was *at present preoccupied with other issues*, and that it might be better to wait a few months before pressing for decisions on further possible arms sales' (emphasis added).⁷³

At the same time, the desire of British officials to reduce their contacts (and especially the visibility of those contacts) with King Constantine was becoming increasingly apparent. Officials thought, and the foreign secretary agreed, that 'it was neither in the King's nor [their] interests that the King should meet British Ministers and officials formally'. Michael Stewart said that 'arrangements can always be made through friends for Mr. Heath to see the King' and Sir Michael Stewart was instructed to point out to Constantine that 'formal calls on British Ministers could damage his own position' and that 'discreet meetings on social occasions were preferable'.⁷⁴ Earlier the same month Constantine had told under-secretary Royle that Britain should concentrate its powers to influence the US, which was 'out of reality' with issues pertaining to Greece.⁷⁵

The issue of the new ambassador to Athens was also brought up in the meeting, and it was agreed that Sir Michael Stewart's successor should give Papadopoulos a formal message, which could be interpreted as highly representative of the policy of the Conservative government towards the Greek Colonels' regime: The message would 'lay emphasis on the importance [the British] attach[ed] to Greece's membership of the Western Alliance, [their] anxiety to establish a good working relationship with the Greek Government and [their] determination to continue [their] support of the Greek Government's efforts to promote a lasting settlement in Cyprus'. These three points would become the major objectives of UK policy towards Greece in the early 1970s and action taken by FCO would be measured against these basic aims. Quite importantly, the record states that 'the difficulties created in Britain by the Greek Government's continued suspension of certain articles of the new Constitution *might also be mentioned but should not be over-emphasised*' (emphasis added).⁷⁶

The last item on the agenda of this seminal meeting was visits. Palamas, under-secretary for foreign affairs at the time, was to break his journey to New York in London in early October but a meeting with a senior official would not be possible due to the Conservative party conference taking place at Blackpool. It was agreed that a meeting with the permanent under-secretary would be sought on Palamas' return from the US. Finally, a Greek minister (especially one with a

technical portfolio) would be invited to the UK in early 1971, as the last official invitation had been some 18 months earlier.

'As much business as possible'

The meeting finally took place on 7 October, and it was between Palamas and Sir Denis Greenhill. The two sides agreed that 'bilateral relations ... were good', with the Greek representative expressing his hope that 'they could be developed',⁷⁷ and the British side being 'anxious to maintain a good working relationship'⁷⁸ with the Colonels, 'which could be built on later'. Furthermore, Palamas asserted Greece's determination to 'play her part in NATO', and added to Greenhill's assurance that Britain 'attached great importance to the place and role of Greece in NATO' the following:

We should concentrate on the role of NATO as a defence alliance and not allow it to be distracted by problems that were not central to its purpose.

On the issue of arms sales to Greece, Sir Denis Greenhill said that his country wished to do 'as much business as possible with Greece'. He added that 'this could include the sale of arms and equipment that would enable Greece to carry out its NATO role' and he made specific reference to supplying ships for the Greek Navy.⁷⁹ The Greeks viewed this quite positively, for the additional reason that Athens was under the impression that London was not willing to sell it tanks, as was illustrated a few months before.⁸⁰ According to the British ambassador, Whitehall had rejected proposals at that time because the political climate had not been suitable, while now there was a change and a willingness to cooperate on the issue of arms sales.⁸¹

One of the top items on the agenda was Cyprus, as 'Palamas appeared quite eager that [the British] do something about [it]', to which he received a 'duly qualified response'.⁸² In view of the situation on the island, that is with Archbishop Makarios following a constructive approach and the Turks' attitude changing for the worse (including pressure for a federal solution), according to Palamas, the Greek official wondered whether

the British ‘did not see it as in their interests to lend a hand in bringing matters to a successful solution’.⁸³ Bendall, one of the British officials present, interpreted that as an effort to get Britain to ‘lean on the Turks to make concessions’.⁸⁴ He and Greenhill replied that London ‘had always thought it best to stand aside from the dispute’ and that Britain would only contribute to a solution ‘if *all* the parties concerned wanted [its] help and advice’, as it ‘did not intend in any way to impose [itself]’.⁸⁵ Palamas insisted by arguing that what was required was a *pragmatic approach to the problem, of the sort with which the name of Britain was associated*’ (emphasis added), and that he thought that Archbishop Makarios would then be more prepared for Whitehall to be involved. Greenhill’s reaction was to say that ‘in the right circumstances, [the British government] would look carefully at a request for help’. The background notes shed some light on what this statement could have meant:

The Greek Government have previously mentioned that an initiative by us might be welcome if and when the talks reach an impasse. At that stage, a proposal by us for *the appointment of a ‘moderator’ to assist the parties in the talks* might be well taken. But we would only wish to take such action if all sides wanted us to. Meanwhile, the idea is better kept to ourselves and in reserve (emphasis added).⁸⁶

The meeting ended with Palamas contemplating a meeting with a more senior official, and preferably with Douglas-Home in New York, where they would both be present for the United Nations General Assembly.

And only two weeks afterwards the two ministers did meet, in the Waldorf Towers hotel, just a few blocks away from UN headquarters. There, Douglas-Home began by stating that the United Kingdom valued a lot its relationship with Greece and that, despite difficulties, particularly in NATO and in parliament, London hoped for closer relations in the future. His tone, however, changed when he expressed his hope that ‘it would soon be possible for Greece to have a democratic government’. Palamas reacted immediately by saying that ‘if by democracy Sir Alec meant the full application of a constitution endorsed by the Greek people containing a balance between the authority of the

government and the will of the people, between human rights and freedoms, then this was the goal Greeks were working for'. This was the moment that the British foreign secretary dropped the '*E bomb*': 'Sir Alec Douglas-Home commented that the focus was on *elections*' (emphasis added). Palamas found himself with his back to the wall and responded defensively by stating the following:

[E]lections would come, but it was impossible for the government to name a day since *a political campaign would destroy the day-to-day working of the government* ... Britain must recognise that the Greek Government had genuine problems about introducing an election even with appropriate checks and balances (emphasis added).⁸⁷

At this point, Palamas added another statement that seemed to encapsulate the very spirit of Greek foreign policy and Greek officials' perception of Greece's foreign relations at the time. Palamas said that 'since Greece has left the Council of Europe, bilateral relations with its members had improved. This showed that *governments were really interested in their own relations with Greece – not in general democratic ideals and principles*' (emphasis added). Apart from Douglas-Home's confirmation that it was the policy of his government to supply arms to Greece for NATO purposes, no other reaction was recorded on the part of the British officials attending the meeting.

Lastly, on the Cyprus issue, the Greek under-secretary said that, also in light of Soviet expansion in the Eastern Mediterranean, he hoped that 'Britain would not withdraw and would continue to co-operate with the United States in the area'. When asked, he also indicated that Makarios 'had no objection' to the British bases in South and South-East Cyprus, that the President of the Republic of Cyprus 'indeed liked the British there', as well as that, 'although he used to be Britain's enemy, he was now [Britain's] ally'.⁸⁸

This meeting had not insignificant reverberations, felt, to a much higher degree, in Athens than in London. According to the British, Douglas-Home's decision to receive Palamas was 'particularly welcome to the Greek Government'.⁸⁹ Moreover, it is very interesting to trace

the Greek newspapers' reports of the talks. The following excerpt from *Nea Politeia*, which expressed the government view, is revealing as to how the Colonels' regime wanted to portray the meeting and use it for propaganda purposes:

The interest expressed by the British Foreign Secretary Sir Alec Douglas-Home . . . in the further promotion of relations between the two countries shows the *strong international position of Greece* as well as the *realistic spirit* of British foreign policy under the Conservative government. The time when the British Prime Minister spoke unbecomingly about the leaders of the Greek revolution in the House of Commons and British parliamentarians voted for the exclusion of Greece from the Council of Europe is now far away. Britain no longer supports those who seek Greece's isolation. On the contrary, she manifests her wish to strengthen further ties with Greece. This causes a well founded satisfaction to the Greek people who with great sadness saw their old friend and ally playing a leading part, until recently, in the unjust polemics against Greece (emphasis added).⁹⁰

However, Palamas appeared to have been upset by Douglas-Home's references to the domestic affairs of Greece and the Greek embassy in London was 'clearly keen to be able to report to Athens that there must have been some misunderstanding' of the foreign secretary's remarks in New York.⁹¹ The Greek under-secretary appeared to have found Douglas-Home 'a little hard', especially as he had insisted on elections and the position of the king.⁹² Secondé, a Foreign Office official, told the Greek ambassador in London, Sorokos, that he was surprised that Palamas became upset over this, for Sir Alec 'had merely been showing a natural interest in these things and had asked Mr. Palamas for his views'. To resolve the incident, the British official tried to calm Sorokos by asserting that:

the fact that the Secretary of State had questioned Mr. Palamas on these matters did not mean that they were uppermost in H.M.G.'s mind against the background of the many other matters

of common interest between us. Indeed, I would say that *this was less of the case now than it had been in the past* (emphasis added).⁹³

After that affirmation of sympathy and simultaneous differentiation from Labour policy, the Greek representative ‘looked relieved at all this and said that he was glad to have this explanation’. The British had reverted to their ‘familiar tight-rope act’⁹⁴ in conducting relations with the junta.

Another very clear indication of this appeared, though on a more high profile level, around the same time. In the end of October a minor crisis erupted, when, at question time in the House of Commons, John Fraser (Labour MP and Chairman of the Parliamentary Group for Democracy in Greece) asked Heath to confirm that the Greek junta consisted of ‘not only Fascists but liars’.⁹⁵ This was sparked by an earlier article of *Nea Politia* that had referred to private discussions the British PM was reported to have had with Greek officials in London before assuming his post.⁹⁶ Heath responded by saying that he had ‘no recollection of having had discussions with anybody at the Greek Embassy throughout the five years that [he] was Leader of the Opposition’. One week later, though, Heath remembered that he actually had met the Greek ambassador in London in February 1970 and informed Fraser that Sorokos’ call was similar to many paid on him by newly-appointed ambassadors and that there was ‘no discussion of any substance’.⁹⁷ According to the files of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however, Sorokos claims that he had met Heath in February to inform him on Greece’s position vis-à-vis international issues (NATO, CoE, Cyprus and the Middle East), and that the meeting took place in Heath’s office in the HoC, and in the presence of the then parliamentary under-secretary Kershaw, and the under-secretary for foreign affairs, Brimelow. Interestingly, the Greek ambassador wrote in his report to Athens that ‘nowadays there are many exceptions’ to traditional British parliamentary and political ethics that do not allow discussion of matters of substance between a foreign representative and the leader of the opposition. He conceded, though, that ‘Heath’s reticence about the said meeting, especially in conjunction with his lack of reaction to Fraser’s accusations, might give the impression that the prime minister did not have *nor wanted to have*

contact with the Greek government because of its nature' (author's translation).⁹⁸ Sorokos complained about the 'unethical attitude' of Fraser and the 'unacceptable tolerance' of Heath to FCO official Moon, asking him to convey his deep dissatisfaction to his prime minister.⁹⁹ Sorokos concluded by reminding his interlocutor of Fraser's earlier pejorative remarks about the junta (in February he had referred to it, again in the HoC, as 'political mafia'),¹⁰⁰ and by adding the following: '[...] the British Government must realise that constant tolerance and submissiveness in relation to people like Mr Fraser makes them even more insolent and aggressive, and a day will come when, if their mischief is not stopped early enough, their lack of restraint will no longer be able to be controlled'.¹⁰¹

By late 1970, disillusionment with the West seemed to have had reached the upper echelons of the Greek regime, including Papadopoulos himself. Palamas was instructed to let the British ambassador know that 'Greece's future relations with NATO and West European countries must inevitably be determined to an important extent by the attitude of these countries towards Greece and the present Greek Government'. Sir Michael Stewart said that he regretted this and tried to calm the Greeks by admitting that some NATO countries were not satisfied with the situation in Greece and that some NATO countries were a problem for Greece, but what was important was that 'common interest... far exceeded [their] differences'. The ambassador's final remark in his letter to the FCO was that 'Papadopoulos' threat [was] almost meaningless and it show[ed] [them] the man whom [they] believe[ed] [was] the best of a poor lot in a poor light'.¹⁰²

On the same day (16 November 1970), a meeting between the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Greek ambassador took place at Whitehall. Rippon, who firstly stressed the fact that 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', said that the current government and 'the previous Administration were in complete agreement on the need of Greece to continue to play a full part in NATO'. The Greek ambassador said that he had been aware of the Tories' stance at the time and thought that they had been 'more realistic' in their approach. He also

agreed with Rippon that ‘it was often counterproductive to criticize another government too directly or insistently’. Moreover, although Rippon admitted that the nature of the Athens regime was not helping the British to keep ‘the Greek Government’s relations with NATO correct and good’, he also asserted that their ‘overriding concern would remain that of maintaining the security of the Mediterranean flank’ of the Atlantic Alliance.¹⁰³ It is worth mentioning that Sorokos’ record of the meeting emphasizes Rippon’s personal view of the junta: more specifically, the chancellor is reported as characteristically stating that he was ‘one of those opposed to Greece’s withdrawal from the Council of Europe, and that he saw, then and now, its strategic importance in the Eastern Mediterranean region’ (author’s translation).¹⁰⁴

In addition, only a week later, Greece’s importance to NATO was once more acknowledged, by the Western Organisations Department this time. The briefs for the NATO ministerial council to take place in early December in Brussels are revealing of the priorities and the anxieties of not only the British but also the other Europeans. The most controversial issues had to do with authoritarian South European regimes, namely Portugal and Greece, which were members, and Spain, which was contemplating an informal association with NATO. The British general comment was that they ‘should not allow extraneous political controversy to interfere with the normal working of the Alliance’, and the specific comment, as regarded Greece, was that they hoped that the matter would not be discussed at all, as, although they accepted that they were looking forward to the restoration of Greek democracy, they also thought that ‘NATO [was] not the right forum to pursue this’ and that it was particularly important that ‘NATO should present a united front in defence of its sensitive Mediterranean flank’.¹⁰⁵ Let it be noted that Conservative MPs had expressed the same opinion in relation to the CoE’s stance (thought ‘strange, ridiculous and wrong’) towards Greece and Portugal even before the 1970 elections:

The Council should be careful lest the expulsion of Greece and the snub to Portugal turn it unwillingly into a communist instrument.¹⁰⁶

Attacks were made on Greece at the December NATO meeting of ministers, but those came once more from the ‘usual suspects’, the Scandinavians, and were received much more philosophically in Athens than those delivered at the Rome meeting the previous May. In relation to this, the British ambassador was sure that ‘[t]his greater confidence regarding their position in NATO on the part of the Greek Government reflects of course the development of United States and British policy regarding defence co-operation with Greece during the year, and at the year’s end Greece’s position in the Alliance was stable’.¹⁰⁷

Despite all this, Athens did not seem to be completely persuaded that London was doing all it could to build a strong rapport between the two governments. Although the positive British stance towards Greece in NATO was acknowledged fully by the Greeks, the relationship on the political level could not go beyond the stage of ‘good working relations’, in spite of the junta’s willingness to restore the traditionally warm atmosphere. MFA officials, in their exchanges with their British counterparts, noted that Greek public opinion was surprised by Britain’s absence from the economic and cultural fields. Palmer assured Mazarakis that, on the part of his government, a greater interest in, and a better understanding of, the situation in Greece would develop with time.¹⁰⁸

The end of the year also marked a change in the representation of the UK to Greece. Sir Robin Hooper (who came to Greece in March 1971) was appointed as the new ambassador to Athens replacing Sir Michael Stewart. The latter, in his last annual review of Greece, noted that Anglo-Greek relations (‘overcharged with emotion as these tend to be on both sides’) ‘fluctuated disturbingly’ during 1970; he expressed the view that relations showed ‘some signs of steadyng in the latter part of the year’ but would ‘continue to require *delicate handling*’, as Britain’s ‘traditional position of influence in Greece [was] in some danger of erosion’ (emphasis added). More specifically, during the early part of 1970, Sir Michael Stewart and his staff were ‘conscious of the deep resentment and sense of injury caused by the Council of Europe episode, of which the United Kingdom bore the brunt’, as Papadopoulos avoided seeing the ambassador until November, thus

making relations with the junta look as though they had ‘foundered permanently’.¹⁰⁹

Two events were acknowledged by Stewart as being helpful in easing the tensions between London and Athens; namely the outcome of the UK general election (which ‘was greeted with relief and enthusiasm by the régime who assumed at once that a new page could now be turned in our relations’) and the informal communication that the ambassador was authorised to make to Papadopoulos on 5 November. In that meeting, the British representative once again emphasized the importance attached by his government to ‘Greece’s membership of the Western Alliance, [the] anxiety to establish a good working relationship with the Greek Government and [the] determination to continue [the] support of the Greek Government’s efforts to reach a lasting settlement in Cyprus’. Interestingly enough, and although the Heath government had expressed its general will to follow more or less the policy of Labour on Greece, what used to be the first objective of the British Labour government in its contacts with the Colonels, that is ‘to promote a return to constitutional rule and democratic liberties and conditions of stability’, was completely absent from this exchange. Contrastingly, the decision that the British government had ‘no objection in principle to the supply for NATO purposes of arms for Greece’ (and in particular frigates) was stressed in order to promote Britain’s commercial interests.

1970 was judged to be ‘another good year’ for Anglo-Greek trade (‘total [UK] exports were ‘probably a little down, but if ships [were] excluded there [would] have been a substantial increase’, and Greek exports showed ‘a large increase’).¹¹⁰ In 1970, UK total exports to Greece amounted to £57.2 million (a slight decrease in relation to 1969 figures which, however had marked an almost 70% increase of exports compared to 1966 and 1967). Ship exports to Greece amounted to only £2.8 million (it should be noted here, however, that this was more than quadrupled the following year). UK imports from Greece reached their peak during the Colonels’ regime at £19.6 million the same year (also approximately 70% higher than 1966–7 levels), to be surpassed only when Britain joined the EEC in 1973.¹¹¹ The most significant disappointment, nevertheless, was the failure to get a contract for a

generating plant, for negotiations over a nuclear power station with the British Atomic Energy Authority came to a halt after three years. British firms trying to get a foothold in the Greek market thought that they were being blocked for political reasons and repeatedly asked the FCO for political support for their bids. Hooper wrote later that year that he believed that was 'certainly an over-simplification' and his rationalization was the following:

Anglo-Greek relations went through some bad patches during the year but I do not believe that they were ever so strained that the Greeks would have turned down an offer from us if it was more attractive (especially financially) than anything offered by our competitors. Unfortunately this was never the case where generating plant was concerned; and if our prices continue to rise at the present rate we shall have great difficulty in getting any business in this field, whatever the state of our political relations.¹¹²

This inference, which was used to show that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the course it followed towards Greece was not to blame for the inability of British firms to get business contracts in that country, further demonstrates a mixture of external factors that influenced decision-making; namely, the anxiety of FCO officials to serve the commercial interests of not only the public but also the private sector, the pressure those firms were putting on the people encumbered with the conduct of relations with the regime in Athens, and, in general, the sorry financial state of the British nation at the time, as well as the effect that had on foreign policy actions. Another reason for justifying the low penetrability of the Greek market for British firms was the Colonels' 'indifference to, or lack of feeling for, public relations', as well as the 'Byzantine style of negotiation' employed by the government in Greece, which was 'understood and no doubt enjoyed by an Onassis, but not much appreciated by American and European corporations', and made Greece not particularly attractive to foreign investors.¹¹³

In the same report, Hooper was also quick to disentangle, to a certain extent, FCO and himself from the difficulties that were surrounding

Anglo-Greek relations during that period. Accordingly, he ascribed a past and future 'series of shifts and jolts, with occasional sunny intervals' in relations to his belief that the Colonels 'would dearly like the approval and positive friendship of Her Majesty's Government and since they cannot have it tend to find satisfaction in attributing their difficulties to us'. The ambassador also considered it important to cultivate better relations with the Greek people in the cultural, commercial and consular fields and that they should 'do more in cultural matters if [they were] to regain [their] position with the more cultivated Greeks', and 'continue to work hard on the improvement of defence co-operation'.¹¹⁴ This, however, did not mean that the British were eager to openly support any political, resistance or other group of Greeks against the regime, as Hooper considered 'that given the maintenance of existing policies towards Greece by the United States, the United Kingdom and other major Western countries, this country can be relied upon to maintain its present alignment for the foreseeable future'; in other words, he thought that the Colonels, despite some of their rhetoric and minor actions, would toe the NATO line and, therefore, would serve British interests to a considerable extent. The concluding remark by the ambassador on the longevity of the dictatorship is telling:

I do not see Greece returning to a democratic system of government as understood in Western European countries for many years and evolution even to a form of guided democracy such as the colonels have in the past seemed to envisage is evidently going to be slow and uncertain.¹¹⁵

1970 was a very interesting year as far as Anglo-Greek relations were concerned. The change in leadership made Papadopoulos, who was amassing government posts, have greater expectations regarding Britain's policy towards Greece. The nature and composition of Heath's government meant that the obstacle of parliamentary pressure would be reduced substantially. However, two new barriers to closer relations would make their appearance; namely the Greek leadership's intransigence, due to the country's 'unquestionable' importance (especially

after September) to NATO and the Mediterranean, and the emergence of a Gaullist under-secretary for foreign affairs in Athens. These two new parameters, in conjunction with Britain's dire financial situation, led London to a new direction of its policy towards the junta. Increased military cooperation was envisaged to function as the lubricant for warmer relations, with visits and supply of arms to Athens reflecting the change in status of relations, and illustrating British anxieties to conduct as much business as possible with the regime. Moreover, the Conservatives stressed their disagreement with Labour on Greece's expulsion from the CoE, asserting that their policy was 'more realistic', and that their overriding concern was NATO.

CHAPTER 4

THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TOWARDS THE COLONELS, 1971: MESSAGES, MEETINGS AND VISITS

January 1971 marked the opening of year long celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the Greek War of Independence. On the Anglo-Greek scene, it marked the continuation of gradual British efforts to persuade Greeks in positions of responsibility to develop a better relationship with London after the tensions of 1967 and 1970. The three most important events in that respect were the messages exchanged between the foreign secretary and Papadopoulos in March, the meeting between the Lord President of the Council and Pattakos in June, and the visits of Palamas and General Angelis to London (in September and October, respectively). Sir Robin Hooper thought that the visits served as ‘a positive indication of goodwill’ on Britain’s part, and that the last two events were ‘something of a landmark in the process’.¹

The situation within Greece, though, was brewing at that particular juncture. The British embassy in Athens knowing that ‘foreign policy can never be abstracted from the domestic context out of which it springs’,² was trying to analyse the dynamics within the regime and sketch possible future developments. Sir Michael Stewart, in his

valedictory dispatch, was reporting that the regime had come to stay and he was basing his opinion on discussions with colleagues of his ('including the Communists', as he wrote), former Greek politicians (like Averoff and Markezinis), and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) officials, such as Byron Theodoropoulos.³ The ambassador mentioned that Papadopoulos gave him a promise, which he asked him to report to the British government, that he would restore parliamentary government in Greece under the 1968 constitution, without, however, revealing when he would do so or by what means.⁴ Stewart admitted that the strong man of the junta might have been lying to him, but he was persuaded that the Greek premier was 'making a statement of his intention' and that it may even be that in two or three years there will be a façade of Parliamentary democracy in Greece.⁵ Furthermore, as Maragkou has argued, it was the line of both the US and Britain in NATO that the Colonels 'deserved the right of being allowed reasonable time' to live up to their promises of rapid return to democracy, mainly as a consequence of their loyalty to the alliance and Greece's strategic position.⁶

Finally, the British representative was successful in foreseeing a new cycle of internal troubles within the military regime, as well as the downfall of Papadopoulos himself:

There are a great many officers in the régime whose support is essential to Papadopoulos and who have no use for Parliamentary Government in any form nor any intention of promoting its return. It is presumably Mr. Papadopoulos' intention, if he was speaking the truth to me, to get rid or neutralise these men. I doubt whether he will be able to do it. In fact though he has lately become more self-assertive in his public utterances, I believe that his freedom of manoeuvre and action is considerably less than it was a year or six months ago.⁷

Extremists and 'policy of scold'

It is worth mentioning two important points here: first that the British feared a takeover by young extremist officers (often collectively referred

to as ‘Nasserites’), and, second that in the event of Papadopoulos falling from power, the most possible solution to the deadlock of dictatorship in Greece would be the Nasserites taking control.⁸ Andrew Palmer, head of the Greek section of the FCO, commenting on Stewart’s dispatch, speculated that if Papadopoulos could not hold, a similar regime under Makarezos or Angelis would be ‘less dangerous to Western interests in the short term’ than a take-over by ‘Nasserites’, but ‘albeit at some cost in short term stability, the latter alternative would be more likely to break the logjam’.⁹ ‘This assumes’, Palmer went on, ‘that { . . . } a régime headed by young extremist officers would not last long’ and ‘their departure could be followed by a “bridge” régime which would be more disposed than Mr Papadopoulos to return Greece to “real” democracy’.¹⁰ A strikingly similar position was adopted by a member of the ‘Greek Committee against Dictatorship (GCAD)’ resistance organization, which was based in London. In a personal interview with the author he said that the argument put forth by the FCO that extremists would come to power if they pushed the Colonels was ‘unsound’ – and even if that happened it would mean that the end of the dictatorship would be close.¹¹

Sir Michael Stewart conceded that Greece was a ‘police State’, but he also stressed the not insignificant level of popular acceptance, ‘not only because the people know that they have to accept what they cannot change but also because the Greeks today, both in town and country, are living better’.¹² He qualified that by stating that the junta ‘does not deserve much real credit for this in terms of its own economic policies over the last three years but it has done some good work at least in the countryside and has had some luck’.¹³ Nevertheless, that was one of the reasons that made the ambassador believe that the regime was ‘unlikely to disintegrate from within, and that, even if it [did] its successors would be kept in power by the same machinery of control and would be similar in character’.¹⁴

The ambassador closed that paragraph by drawing a comparison between Greece under the Colonels and Franco’s Spain, finding the former ‘very much like’ the latter and for ‘very much the same reasons’.¹⁵

A serious eventuality that could topple the regime was prophetically recognized in an external factor, namely the Cyprus issue: ‘a repetition of the crisis of November and December 1967 or still more *a direct military clash with Turkey over Cyprus, in which Greece would inevitably be defeated, would finish the Colonels*’ (emphasis added). Stewart thought that Papadopoulos was aware of this, and that was illustrated by the ‘extreme anxiety shown by the Greek Government just before and at the time of the attempt on Archbishop Makarios’ life in the spring of 1970 and Papadopoulos’ subsequent and frequent reiteration of his wish for good relations with Turkey’. The British representative was right in emphasizing the importance of the Cyprus imbroglio (especially, in the light of the special role that it had in the minds of the hardliners of the regime) and its decisiveness in bringing about the demise of the junta, and he was also right in recognizing a pattern of serious crises over the island approximately every three years:

It is not however sure that Mr. Papadopoulos will always be able to control his stupider and more militant followers. *Cyprus may therefore blow up in his and our face at any time; perhaps this year; the cycle seems to be a severe crisis about every three years* (emphasis added).¹⁶

Still, the Foreign Office thought that the then leader of the junta was ‘less likely’ to allow the situation to deteriorate rapidly ‘than any of the immediate alternatives to him as Prime Minister of Greece’. The above quote by Stewart gains further significance if later events are taken into account: although Papadopoulos had already left the scene (or rather had been forced to leave by hardliners led by Brigadier Ioannidis) by July 1974, the military junta disintegrated and finally collapsed due to Cyprus. Moreover, it was about three and a half years after this report was drafted that the most severe and final (for the junta) crisis took place on the island. As Andrew Palmer put it:

I am sure it is right to put *Cyprus at the top of the list of possible foreign crises that could topple the régime*. The cycle of crises [. . .] does indeed seem *rather menacing* (1960, 1963, 1967 . . .) (Emphasis added).

Sir Michael Stewart was equally, if not more, critical when he referred to the regime's relations with Western Europe in the same report. He wrote that although Papadopoulos and Angelis were 'sound', the latter's 'touchiness' in respect of the role of Westerners (especially Scandinavians and British) in international organizations was 'typical of the ignorance of the nature of international politics and relations which characterise[d] most of the present military rulers of Greece'. In the event of another crisis (whether a minor one like the CoE in December 1969 or a major one like Cyprus in November 1967), he added, 'it is very likely that only Mr. Papadopoulos will stand between the further estrangement of Greece from Western Europe, which is good for neither Greece nor Europe, or some ignorant or violent reaction urged on him by his nominal subordinates'.

The ambassador concluded by arguing that, until the Greeks find a way out, London would have to accept the then political reality. In his view, the policy that Britain was pursuing vis-à-vis Greece was 'about right'. Stewart's final official words as Britain's ambassador in Athens were the following:

We and other Western allies have sometimes to say things to the Greek Government which should be said but to do this we must be able to talk to Mr. Papadopoulos and even to some of his unattractive political and military toughs: there is little future in what Lord Salisbury called 'a policy of scold'.¹⁷

On his way back to London, Sir Michael Stewart paid a farewell call on King Constantine in Rome. Foreign Office officials were once again trying not to appear closely associated with the king, as they thought that, although Constantine 'with the powers and duties assigned to him under the 1968 Constitution could if he chose certainly make a valuable contribution to Greece', he unfortunately 'not only did nothing to assist his own return or his country at this juncture but *continued to act unwisely*' (emphasis added).¹⁸ It was little wonder, then, that Douglas-Home himself would advise against encouraging the king to go to London in order to meet the new British ambassador to Greece. Furthermore, the foreign secretary instructed that 'Hooper should not

see the King in Rome on his way to Athens and that he should delay seeing him in Rome for at least two or three months after his arrival in Athens'.¹⁹ More telling was the reaction of the warden of University College, Sir John Maud, who was 'vigorously allergic' to the idea of the king taking a course in Modern European History and Political Science at Oxford, because of the student demonstrations and security issues that would entail.²⁰ Moreover, FCO was also negative towards the prospect of Constantine studying at a British university, lest 'other activities' centred on Rome be transferred to Britain, in which case FCO would 'no doubt be in difficulties'.²¹

Another development that made the British more wary in their effort to keep a balanced stance between the king and the Athens regime was the publication of an article entitled 'Britain's role in king's attempted return', in *Tribune*, on 8 January 1971. The author, Peter Lane, claimed that the British government had 'played a significant role in the king's efforts to persuade the colonels to allow him to return and to secure American backing for the idea'. Lane noted the 'timing of Constantine's last visit to Britain, followed by unusual British diplomatic activity in Athens' as firmest indications of that, and went on to state that the king tried to find out (first from Sorokos and then) from the British how the Colonels viewed his latest request to return.²² Once again, British officials tried to distance themselves from the issues and not get involved in the tug-of-war between the king and the Colonels. To illustrate this point, when Constantine asked for a meeting with the new British ambassador to Greece to take place in London, Foreign Office officials thought that such a meeting under the official auspices of the Greek ambassador in London would appear 'irregular and suspicious' to the Greek government, who would not only 'think that the King was up to no good, but that [the British] should be involved too in what might become an imbroglio of misunderstanding'.²³

The aforementioned *Tribune* article was brought to the attention of the prime minister, Edward Heath, by an MP, Tom Driberg, a few days after its publication. Heath dismissed Lane's article as 'quite wrong' in suggesting that Britain had played any role in the king's alleged efforts to return to Greece, and reiterated what was often said in diplomatic circles: that the king's 'best course [was] to bide his time', for there was

no sign that the junta ‘would be prepared to allow him to return in the near future, on any terms’.²⁴ The prime minister concluded by saying that ‘it might be wiser for him not to make too many concessions to [the Colonels] now; though equally to preserve his hope of returning, [Heath thought] he should beware of being seen to commit himself to their opponents’.²⁵

It was in June when the British ambassador was finally given permission to meet King Constantine in Rome, mainly because Whitehall did not wish to give him grounds for feeling that the new ambassador might be ignoring him. FCO officials admitted that they did not ‘in any case wish to sever contact with the King’; primarily since he ‘could one day become a political force again’. They noted, nevertheless, that the contacts would require ‘careful handling’, as ‘at the same time, there remain[ed] many in the Greek régime who [were] suspicious and sensitive about contacts’ between the British and Constantine.²⁶ The meeting, which took place on 19 July, ‘went off much as [FCO officials] had hoped’, as ‘the King refrained from seeking [their] advice on matters in which [they] prefer[red] not to involve [them]selves’, like the possibility of his sending a message to Papadopoulos.²⁷ According to the same source, the meeting attracted minimal publicity and there was no evidence that it had had an ‘adverse effect’ on Anglo-Greek relations. The importance of that lay in the fact that the American ambassador’s meeting with Constantine some days before was given exaggerated publicity, and in Hooper’s wish not to give the appearance of following Tasca’s lead in that matter.²⁸ A characteristic example of the neutral coverage of the story is the article in the *Guardian*, entitled ‘Envoy to king’: ‘The British Ambassador to Greece, Sir Robin Hooper, arrived in Rome yesterday for a meeting with King Constantine who is living in exile in the city’.²⁹ London’s treatment of the king did not go unnoticed at the time. A member of a London based resistance organization acknowledged later that Constantine ‘was rather forgotten by the British’.³⁰

The first significant development in Anglo-Greek relations took place towards the end of March. That was the time when the people typically in charge of the foreign policy of the two countries exchanged personal messages, with the goal of improving relations. On the

occasion of the arrival to Athens of the new British ambassador, Sir Robin Hooper, Papadopoulos received Douglas-Home's message and, in his reply, made it clear, in blunt language, that he wished for better and closer contacts with the British:

I was glad to note in your message the importance you attach to close relations between our countries. We also attach great importance to the continuous improvement of these relations in all domains.

The Greek premier also emphasized, once again, his country's role in NATO, and, asked for British help in finding a solution to the Cyprus problem:

I fully agree that is essential, both for the Atlantic Alliance and for our two countries, that our Governments work together so that we can face, with mutual confidence, international problems of common interest. As regards, in particular, the Cyprus question, I wish to assure you that my Government continues to make all possible efforts towards the achievement of a peaceful and just solution to this problem, and that it would appreciate your help to this end.³¹

The bridge

While, however, the date of the regime's fourth anniversary was approaching, Anglo-Greek relations were no cause for celebrations as a cloud was making its appearance over relations between London and Athens, mainly due to a series of articles published in the British press. The *Observer* entitled one of its articles 'The Colonels play for keeps', and *The Times* went even further in publishing a leading article on Greece bearing the title 'The embarrassing régime in Greece' and describing the junta as a 'tyranny which relies on informants and arbitrary arrests'.³² The regime's reaction was immediate; Sorokos sent a letter to the newspaper reminding its readers that his government had 'proved the firmness of their intentions to institute parliamentary democracy

by implementing a whole series of measures', like the release of a 'vast' number of detainees or the restriction of jurisdiction of court martial, announced a few days before. Interestingly, Wilberforce, a Foreign Office official, wrote the following comment next to the word 'firmness' on a cutting of the article: 'It [i.e. the Greek government] has also cast doubt on it by abandoning another series – the "timetable".'³³ In yet another instance the Greek junta demonstrated its aim of promoting 'phoney democratization' in order to gain legitimacy.³⁴

The importance of these articles, nevertheless, lies in the fact that these were the first newspaper reports indicating that Papadopoulos had begun 'talks' with former deputies. Although there were rumours going around about Papadopoulos' possible intention of setting up his own political party, the British embassy's view was that 'little [was] likely to come of this', as politicians like Averoff and Varvitsiotis did not 'foresee any early move' or much 'prospect of a change in the situation'.³⁵ In the same letter, the supposed dissension between the strong man of the Athens regime and General Angelis was dispelled as 'only a rumour'.³⁶ The Greek premier, however, continued his contacts with former Greek politicians, as the titles of articles in British newspapers illustrated,³⁷ but that was interpreted by Hooper only as 'a sign of his realisation of the impasse reached although their inclusion in the Government is unlikely to be on any basis other than submission to the régime'.³⁸

Nevertheless, the British thought it would be a bad idea to isolate ex-politicians, especially ones that were in negotiations or rather discussions with the Colonels' regime. In this light, Evangelos Averoff, foreign minister of Greece for most of the period 1956–63, was received by Douglas-Home on 16 June 1971.³⁹ A call by Averoff, who had gained the respect of the British and who had also managed to remain on terms with the junta, in spite of a number of critical statements about them, would require careful handling, would not be publicized and the Greek ambassador would be notified before the meeting. The call was considered important because the 'bridge' (i.e. the solution that Averoff advocated, envisaging an interim government drawn from the junta and former politicians, which would prepare the country for a return to full democracy) was 'a possibility to be kept in mind, and in the longer term it could prove valuable to keep a line open to

Mr Averoff'.⁴⁰ The meeting, which did not produce any spectacular results, was allowed to take place because the British did not think that it would create any major turbulences in Anglo-Greek relations, mostly due to 'a good deal of attention' that they were paying to the Papadopoulos regime in 1971:

The Greek Government are obsessively suspicious, but they have now had ample demonstration of our wish to maintain a good working relationship with them, and a call by Mr Averoff should not impair this.⁴¹

In the meantime, attention was drawn to Greek-Turkish relations on the occasion of a Papadopoulos interview with a *Turkish* newspaper. The Greek leader, whose tone throughout was 'conciliatory' and 'statesmanlike', according to British officials, said to the *Milliet* journalist that 'he believed developments were leading to a federation of Turkey and Greece which might take 20 or 50 years to accomplish but which would be realised some time'. He also stressed the 'common aims of both countries in the fields of tourism, economics and cultural relations and went on to propose some form of economic unity between the two countries which he described as a 'concrete proposal'. Papadopoulos added that 'efforts were being made to that end but it was first necessary to remove the Cyprus obstacle which was harmful to both countries' interests'.⁴² Greek historians have put forward the thesis that Athens was at the time willing to give priority to the amelioration of Greek-Turkish relations and put aside the Cyprus question, through an agreed solution on the issue of regional autonomy and 'double enosis' as a possible outcome in the longer term.⁴³ Although the Greek premier firmly rejected the idea that Ankara and Athens could solve the Cyprus problem over the heads of the two communities, the British reported that Greek Cypriots were becoming increasingly nervous at the possibility that the Colonels 'might agree to engage in a substantive dialogue on the Cyprus problem with the Turkish Government'. Finally, the British official dealing with Cypriot-Greek relations concluded that 'it is far from clear what aim the Greek Government is at present pursuing'.⁴⁴

Only a couple of days after Papadopoulos' statement that the problem of Cyprus should not stand in the way of improved Greek-Turkish relations, a news bombshell hit the Colonels from London. Sir Hugh Greene, former director-general of the BBC, announced the 'formation of a European Atlantic Committee on Greece [EAACG] to help bring pressure to bear for the restoration of democracy in Greece'. During a press conference he gave in London, Greene said that the aim of the organization was to 'stop the *public lovemaking* between the colonels' junta and visiting politicians' (emphasis added), and that it hoped to 'see an end to visits to Greece by high-ranking NATO officers and perhaps even see an end to joint NATO exercises with Greece and to arm supplies for the junta'.⁴⁵ The Committee, which was formed largely of parliamentarians of Western countries (including Britain), was also hoping to influence the EEC, after Britain and Denmark had become members, to suspend its 'frozen' association agreement with Greece.⁴⁶ Greene added that the committee 'had been conceived to build on the Council of Europe's achievement in forcing Greece to withdraw its membership',⁴⁷ and he described the military dictatorship there as 'a blot on the political map of Europe'.⁴⁸

Sir Hugh Greene was quick to emphasize that the committee's declaration, signed by 31 British politicians and trade unionists, including MPs of the three major parties, was 'pro-NATO'.⁴⁹ He then added the following:

What we are all agreed on is the urgency of arousing public opinion and pressing our Governments to act both individually, and through the International organisations to which they belong, so that the military dictatorship in Greece may feel increasingly isolated and ostracised, and the Greek people may feel the support of world opinion.

His conclusion was rather interesting:

The point is keeping the Greek issue alive. I think it is a good thing *to run one's head against a brick wall* rather than doing nothing (emphasis added).⁵⁰

The first Greek reaction, albeit unofficial, was given through the daily *Eleftheros Kosmos*; according to the newspaper that often reflected the views of Papadopoulos, the committee was the work of ‘idle men in western countries’, who ‘instead of busying themselves with solving the problems of their countries, they are endeavouring to undermine security in Europe and the United States’.⁵¹ A number of editorials in the pro-junta press followed, chiefly taking the general line that the committee was insignificant and would have no effect on the Colonels. To be more specific, *Nea Politeia* described the foundation of EAACG as ‘Don Quixotism of the worst kind’ and wrote off its members as ‘either fellow travellers or nonentities’, *Eleftheros Kosmos* made reference to ‘Sir Hugh Greene’s lie factory’, and *Estia* described the signatories of the declaration as ‘minor politicians’ and accused Greene of giving the BBC ‘a leftist character’.⁵² On the other hand, prominent ex-politicians, like Canellopoulos, Mavros and Ziddis, welcomed the creation of EAACG,⁵³ and even made public the following statement of support:

The formation of the Committee strengthens decisively our struggle for democracy and for the respect of human rights in our country ... Nations, countries and different political and social systems still have frontiers. Truth and justice do not. The solidarity of the signatories of the declaration of the 1 June with the Greek people, who are deprived of their political freedom and the guarantees of justice is a fact that inspires fine hopes for the future of humanity.⁵⁴

The statement sparked a response, again in the form of an article in *Eleftheros Kosmos*, by Savvas Konstantopoulos (a journalist but also one of the ideologues of the regime) this time, ‘undoubtedly represent[ing] real annoyance in government quarters about the formation of the Action Committee and to an even greater extent at the Canellopoulos statement’ (emphasis added). British embassy officials, in assessing the effects of Greene’s initiative, thought that he had ‘clearly succeeded in annoying a good many people, though Palamas took a fairly relaxed view of his activities when the Ambassador saw him’. The

final conclusion, however, was that ‘although the initiative is unlikely to achieve its stated objects, it may do considerable damage in other directions’.⁵⁵

The formation of EAACG was of high significance mainly because of the credentials of the people involved. Even officials of the regime had deemed Greene a serious figure and initially well disposed towards the problems the junta was facing.⁵⁶ It was a ‘thoroughly Establishment group’,⁵⁷ and its leader did not think that NATO ‘had anything to do’ with the Colonels’ advent to power, and, moreover, absolved the CIA ‘from conniving at the birth of the military régime’.⁵⁸ Having said that though, Sir Hugh Greene had publicly expressed his desire to put pressure, through EAACG, on NATO and Common Market governments ‘to take away the military and economic props’ that, in his opinion, were supporting the Greek Colonels’ regime.⁵⁹ This specific point made the committee particularly disagreeable to the British government, which was following the example of its Labour predecessors who ‘always insisted that Greece’s withdrawal from the Council of Europe was no argument for its expulsion from Nato’.⁶⁰ According to FCO officials:

The Declaration correctly suggests that, until democracy is restored there, Greece will remain a threat to the cohesion and image of NATO. But the Declaration also contains views that are *most unwelcome to us*. In particular, its call for action against Greece within the NATO forum is *directly contrary to our own policy*, of which one of the chief aims is to ensure that Greece continues to play a full part in the Alliance (emphasis added).⁶¹

The News Department of the FCO decided to respond to enquiries about the declaration by following the familiar Whitehall line of keeping the Greek issue out of NATO:

We certainly sympathise with the Committee’s hope that democracy will soon be restored in Greece ... We cannot, on the other hand, accept that action within NATO would be helpful. To call in question Greek membership of the Alliance would jeopardise

the security of NATO without bringing any benefit to the Greek people. To weaken the Alliance would of course threaten democracy in other countries also.

Moreover, the British rushed to reassure their allies that EAACG's actions would not have a big impact within the UK:

We have told Wentker [of the German Embassy] and Gordon King of the US Embassy that, although the Papadopoulos régime continue to create an unfavourable impression here, we doubt whether the Committee will succeed in 'arousing public opinion' in Britain.⁶²

Finally, the British were also quick to mark the declaration as inaccurate in respect to its claim that the Greek armed forces had been weakened since the 1967 coup. Reports from the British defence attaché in Athens, Brigadier Baxter, indicated that the morale of the Greek army had 'improved notably' and that the problem of under-equipment was, in 1971, 'less severe' than it was before.⁶³ Even a year later, in late March 1972, the attaché's confidence in the high morale of the Greek armed forces⁶⁴ and in their overall efficiency was 'directly contrary to Sir Hugh Greene's contention that Greece ha[d] become a less effective NATO ally since 1967'.⁶⁵

While the Foreign Office was busy evaluating the significance of the EAACG, a member of the triumvirate that started the so-called 'Revolution' of the 21st of April 1967 was having contacts with the British embassy in Athens. Pattakos, deputy prime minister and minister of the interior at the time, lunched at the embassy on 3 June to meet the Lord President of the Council. Whitelaw explained that 'although the declaration [of the EAACG] had been signed by a number of Conservative MP's, this did not of course mean that the organisation enjoyed government support'. Pattakos was confined in saying only that the main difference between the junta and the previous governments was that he and his colleagues 'regarded the interests of the Greek people as paramount, and were not the tools of foreign powers or outside interests'.

The true intentions of the ex-Brigadier were more acutely revealed when he was asked when elections would be held in Greece; he answered that 'he did not think the Greek people wanted elections' at the time, as he was convinced from his provincial tours that his government enjoyed 'substantial popular support'. He went on to stress that 'the continuing communist threat was an important factor' but he added that he and his colleagues had no wish to stay in power indefinitely, and had a plan for their eventual withdrawal'. As regards Anglo-Greek relations, Pattakos, who described himself as an Anglophile, brought up the Cyprus question and that gave Whitelaw the opportunity to 'express appreciation of the present policy of the Greek Government over Cyprus, and their efforts to reach an understanding with Turkey'. The Greek minister replied by assuring Whitelaw that 'Greece would never be the first to use force'. According to the record of the meeting, the conversation concluded with a suggestion by Mr Pattakos that Greece's allies would have more effect on the Greek situation by *persuasion than coercion*' (emphasis added). The conversation, which was deemed frank and cordial by the British ambassador, was important in that it made perfectly clear to the British that the Colonels had 'no intention of holding elections in the near future', and in making Pattakos feel 'evidently please [sic] and flattered to have been given this opportunity of an informal and uninhibited discussion with a senior British Cabinet minister'.⁶⁶ Sir Robin Hooper appreciated the meeting as a possible 'useful step towards our objective of achieving a better working relationship with the Greek Government',⁶⁷ and Secondé expressed the view that it 'benefited Anglo-Greek relations in the way we had hoped, without being publicised'.⁶⁸

The Greek authorities, on their part, were delighted with the meeting, which they considered 'astutely planned'.⁶⁹ Athens wondered only why such meetings had to be treated as confidential. The Colonels were aware of the British government's wish to avoid controversy in parliament but they also needed to show to the Greek public and the international community that were not treated like pariahs. As the Greek ambassador told Sir Thomas Brimelow: 'Athens would like contacts with this country [i.e. Britain] to be open'.⁷⁰ Pattakos, in particular, sent a letter to Whitelaw to thank the British for the pleasant

atmosphere and the constructive dialogue, but also to warn them of the adverse effect actions (like the EAACG declaration) would have on Anglo-Greek relations:

We are aware that *innate weaknesses of the British political system* afford opportunities on British territory for *impermissible attacks on Greece*. But *we hope that your Government will in future see its interest in preventing such attacks as far as possible*, since despite all the Greek Government's efforts they have an unfavourable effect on our people's attitude towards Britain (emphasis added).⁷¹

This point seemed to upset the British somewhat, as Sir Alec Douglas-Home suggested to Whitelaw that Pattakos should not be allowed to get away with his suggestion that the freedom people enjoyed in Britain to express views on a wide range of subjects was 'an innate weakness of the British political system'.⁷² The Lord President of the Council indeed clarified that point by telling Sorokos that 'there was no means which [his] Government had at its disposal, even if it wished to use it, to stop the kind of criticisms of the régime to which Mr. Pattakos referred to in his letter'. Whitelaw added the following:

There was a large body of opinion in this country which, rightly or wrongly from the Greek point of view, was in favour of holding of early elections. However well-informed this opinion was about Greek affairs, it was in general a sophisticated body of opinion whose reactions it must be of advantage for the Greek Government to take into account as best it could.

He concluded by saying that he thought 'there was a good understanding of the respective points of view and certainly no bar to good relations on the personal level'.⁷³

Finally, Pattakos' letter, although 'an important statement of the Greek Government's present attitude both towards the United Kingdom and towards an internal political evolution',⁷⁴ according to Hooper, was left unanswered because Whitehall did not wish to encourage the Greek deputy prime minister to try to develop 'a

relationship which could become embarrassing.⁷⁵ This decision was largely affected by reports reaching the Foreign Office suggesting that Pattakos was interested in replacing Papadopoulos as an indication that he would receive the support of Greece's allies and in particular that of Britain. As a result, British officials expressed the view that 'this and other indications that Pattakos is at odds with Papadopoulos re-emphasise the need for caution in our dealings with him', and that they 'should now leave things as they are'.⁷⁶

At that time relations between London and Athens were considered 'satisfactory' by the British.⁷⁷ Exchanges and meetings between officials of the two governments had been intensified. One meeting between the Greek ambassador in London and Lord Carrington provided the occasion for a reiteration of the Conservatives' policy towards the Greek Colonels. The UK's objectives towards Greece remained the same four that the Labour government had outlined in 1968: but with one significant difference. The three objectives, namely, b) the preservation of the military effectiveness of Greece as a NATO ally, c) the protection of British subjects and British interests generally, and in particular Britain's commercial interests, and d) the preservation of the ability to influence the Colonels in matters of foreign policy, and especially on Cyprus, were immutable. The objective mentioned first, however, that is, a) the promotion of the return to Greece of constitutional rule and full democratic liberties in conditions of stability, was, for the first time, qualified or rather downgraded:

The Greeks should not be allowed to forget that Anglo-Greek relations would benefit from the restoration of democracy. *But, in reminding them of this, we have to take account of their sensitivity and the possibility that the pursuit of this objective might prejudice those at b, c and d* (emphasis added).

In other words, the Conservative government had decided to merely pay lip service to Greece's return to a democratic system of government, lest any action or word going further than this harm Britain's other, more important, interests, like NATO cohesion or bilateral trade. The subordination of what under Labour had been named objective

a) illustrates a clear breach with the previous government in Britain, with regard to Greece. In pursuit of these objectives, the general policy of Heath's government was 'to maintain and develop *a good working relationship* with the Greek Government, but to avoid any appearance of condoning the régime's internal policies' (emphasis added). The speaking notes for Lord Carrington's meeting with Sorokos called for the defence secretary to reaffirm that his government was 'resolutely opposed to any suggestion that the internal situation in Greece should be discussed in NATO', and that London desired Anglo-Greek relations to be 'good and constructive and that they should be strengthened, especially in NATO'.

The most striking development, however, would have to do with the last item on the agenda of the meeting, namely arms sales to Greece. The speaking notes are indicative of the new attitude of the Conservative government towards that sensitive issue:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has agreed that our policy on arms sales to Greece should be adjusted in the direction of *a more positive effort to sell arms to Greece*. The Greeks were aware of our previous policy, under which we were prepared to allow the sale to Greece of arms for NATO purposes. *We now wish actively to promote such sales*, although we must still be cautious about the supply to Greece of arms that could be used against the civilian population, or are associated with this e.g. tanks. Lord Carrington will not of course wish to mention this latter aspect of our policy, but could be *encouraging about arms sales generally* (emphasis added).⁷⁸

As becomes apparent from the above, the Heath government, chiefly because of the dire financial state of Britain and, second, because of its desire to strengthen Greece militarily in the face of the perceived Soviet threat in the Mediterranean, decided to alter its policy and go out of its way in order to promote, in an active way, sales of arms and other military equipment to the Colonels' Greece. Besides, London was interested in boosting its arms industry, as the 1970s were 'lean years for British arms exporters', with Britain's declining international status

and the subsequent collapse of the ‘special relationship’ making it ‘a less attractive supplier’.⁷⁹ The caveat of not selling arms that could be used against civilians was still there, although it was to be hidden and kept secret from the Greek government, lest it hinder the warming of relations between London and Athens.

The trigger that sparked this change of policy (in relation to arms sales) was, once again, economic in nature. The problematic state of the British economy and the urgent need for trade contracts to boost revenue was exerting its influence on the diplomatic field, which is traditionally vulnerable to this kind of pressure. In this particular instance the hard facts of reality became more obvious under the light of the power of competition. The failure of British firms to secure contracts in Greece, mainly attributed to the ‘Byzantine style of negotiations’ of the Greeks and the primacy and advantage of the US over arms shipments to the country, was extremely accentuated at the end of March 1971.

The date 25 March 1971 was an important one as it marked the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Greek independence. The military parade that traditionally takes place in Athens every year on that date also marked a watershed in many respects: Papadopoulos, both prime minister and minister of defence, paradoxically did not attend, and this was one of the rare occasions where, at a celebration of the anniversary of the uprising against the Ottoman empire, hostile references to the Turks were absent. In British eyes the most striking feature of the parade was none of the above but the presence of French advanced medium tanks. The fact that the AMX-30 tanks displayed on Constitution Square had been ordered before the resumption of the US aid programme did not keep Douglas-Home from feeling that a change in UK policy was in order:

I have read in today’s Times of the sale of the latest French tanks to Greece.

I think we are *handicapping ourselves too much* and we should *go out for business* with them particularly in the air and naval fields (emphasis added).

As a response to this statement, FCO officials dealing with Greece decided that the time was now ripe for the reconsideration of directives on arms sales that was first discussed at Rippon's Office meeting on Greece in September 1970 (mentioned above). More specifically, Secondé recognized that there was a 'certain political risk attached to supplying the Greeks with arms which are associated with internal repression'. 'Though our policy remains essentially that of the previous Administration', he added, 'there is an area where it can safely be given a *less restrictive interpretation*' (emphasis added). He also recommended implementing a change in *emphasis* and redrafting the directive as follows:

We should allow the sale to Greece of arms that she could reasonably be expected to require in order to fulfil her NATO role. But we should be cautious about the supply of arms that could be used against the civilian population.⁸⁰

This paragraph became the official directive on arms sales to Greece with the addition of these two small paragraphs, some weeks later:

2. Proposals in this latter category should be referred to Ministers for decisions at the earliest appropriate stage.
3. Other proposals may be dealt with by the Department, who should however keep Ministers informed of any prospective orders of a scale likely to attract public attention.⁸¹

In response to Secondé's submission, the parliamentary under-secretary, noted that the 'the reason for caution was to avoid a clash over Greek arms whilst the South Africa arms issue was still a major political issue in the UK'. Although he agreed to the recommendation he considered that Whitehall should still move cautiously in regard to tanks'.⁸²

Papadopoulos' doubts reappear

Back in Athens, Papadopoulos was trying to persuade the British ambassador that he was 'the captain of the ship', and that, also because he was under 'constant pressure, both at home and abroad

to revert to parliamentary rule', Hooper could rest assured that Papadopoulos would 'steer his vessel safely into port'. However, 'how and when de did it was his responsibility'. When conversation turned to Cyprus, Papadopoulos expressed his bitter disappointment at the Turkish response to his interview with *Milliyet*, and went on to say that 'if the British could do nothing else, at least they could try to induce the Turks to be more cooperative'. Hooper reiterated Britain's position on the subject, namely that it 'wanted to see a peaceful and lasting settlement in Cyprus, but there were limits to what [it] could do'; to this, Papadopoulos gave no other reply but 'a rather sceptical grimace'. Then, the Greek premier gave a lecture on Malta, making the point about 'the great powers not recognising and dealing with a dangerous situation when they saw it'. He wondered why the British intelligence service had not got rid of Mintoff long ago, explaining that 'it would only cost "a few million dollars" to demolish his one-man majority'. Hooper defended the British position by saying that Mintoff was in power only for a fortnight and that his attitude or demands were not clear yet; the only thing that appeared to be clear in British eyes was that he would ask for a great deal more money, to which Papadopoulos replied: 'if money was the difficulty, the rest of NATO ought to help [the British] out'. This remark meant that it was now the ambassador's 'turn for sceptical faces'.

As regards Anglo-Greek relations, the Greek premier said that 'there was no lack of goodwill on the Greek side'. To this he added that 'he wondered, however, whether it was reciprocated to the same extent on [Britain's] side'. The ambassador was forced to make the point about public opinion in the Britain, saying that 'it might be wrong and misguided', but he also acknowledged that 'it was the duty of both sides to work to remove misconceptions and misunderstandings'. Hooper made it clear to Papadopoulos that Whitehall had to take account of public opinion: 'it was no good trying to take one step forward, only to be pushed two steps back', as he characteristically said. The premier's reaction was 'rather po-faced'. On the constitutional issue, the ambassador (and the interpreter) got the impression that he had done 'about as much pushing about elections

and a return to constitutional government as the traffic [would] bear for the moment'. Overall, the conversation was deemed as being 'an amicable if at times quite hard-hitting exchange', and maybe 'a step towards building up a relationship with *that strange little man*' (emphasis added).⁸³

Papadopoulos' complaints as far as relations between London and Athens were concerned, were rebuffed by Foreign Office officials. Both Secondé and Palmer thought that the premier was less than fair on the British, given that there wasn't much more they could have done in improving contacts, and with the prospect of the Angelis visit to London considered 'a pretty substantial demonstration of goodwill on [their] side'.⁸⁴ Papadopoulos' complaints about London's reluctance to intervene in Cyprus were considered 'perhaps inevitable'. The 'trouble', however, on this was that Papadopoulos continued to see British 'help' 'simply in terms of the execution of one-sided pressure on the Turks'.⁸⁵

Papadopoulos' complaint about the unwillingness of the British to appear even friendlier towards his regime, as well as the 'opening into the Balkans', seemed to serve its purpose. It was only a week after the British ambassador met the Greek prime minister that the former suggested that Douglas-Home meet Palamas in London for an exchange of views on the situation in the Mediterranean, including Cyprus and Malta and developments in East-West relations, particularly in the Balkans. This suggestion (originally put forward by Sorokos) would be the first important step towards the new direction that Hooper was trying to give to Anglo-Greek relations; Sir Robin Hooper had told the FCO that 'we should try to seek more opportunities within the limits of existing policy to demonstrate our interest in Greece'.⁸⁶ Conversely, an FCO official thought that although the 'good working relationship' formula was 'somewhat part-worn by now', it remained 'the most practical means of attaining the *delicate and often elusive balance* we like to see in Anglo-Greek relations' (emphasis added). Palmer added that he was surprised to read Hooper's suggestions that Britain was still looking for a *modus vivendi* with the Colonels, as he would have thought that it was recognised on both sides that they already had one.⁸⁷

Under the pressure of developments in the Mediterranean, and the subsequent strengthening of the Colonels' geo-strategic position, the British felt forced to accommodate the regime on this particular occasion; ambassador Hooper, upon meeting with King Constantine, seemed 'rather impressed' by the government in Athens.⁸⁸ Additionally, the FCO was left in no doubt about the Greek domino's 'propensity to topple'; as Sorokos had said: 'it would be dangerous to give the Greek Government the impression that they were still being cold-shouldered'. Moreover, Hooper thought that Palamas' meeting the foreign secretary (and not the permanent under-secretary, as had happened in October 1970) in London would be an 'extremely useful corrective to all the current Greek activity with the Balkan states, and would do much to correct any impression which Papadopoulos may have that we are not taking enough trouble about Greece'. As far as publicity was concerned, the British were not that worried as they hoped that the fact that Palamas would be in London in transit to New York 'would perhaps reduce the danger of troublesome criticism by Sir Hugh Greene and others of that ilk, and I have little doubt that Palamas would very much welcome such an opportunity'.⁸⁹

The Southern European Department of the FCO recommended in favour of the proposed meeting, with Secondé saying '[w]e like the idea',⁹⁰ and Wilberforce adding the following:

Our relations with the Greek Government are happily balanced at present, and call for no additional effort in cultivating them. But Mr Palamas' passage through London on his way to New York is a convenient opportunity of maintaining regular Ministerial contact, without incurring public criticism through inviting Greek Ministers on special visits here or through our own Ministers making official visits to Greece.⁹¹

Initially, Sir Alec Douglas-Home did not appear excited with the prospect of meeting Palamas, as his programme for New York was already quite full.⁹² Furthermore, FCO officials were worried that, on top of the foreign secretary's busy schedule, if he were to commit to meeting the Greek representative, it might be difficult for him to avoid

seeing the Turkish and Cypriot foreign ministers as well.⁹³ However, the foreign secretary changed his mind and decided to meet with Palamas in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 20 September 1971. Before he did so, though, FCO officials provided him with two important caveats: comments on the internal situation in Greece, and a possible invitation for Douglas-Home to visit Athens.

On the first point, FCO warned the foreign secretary that the Greeks were at the time in 'a prickly mood', thanks largely to the moves in the US Congress to suspend military aid to Greece. They also reminded Douglas-Home that when he mentioned the internal situation in Greece to Palamas during their conversation in the United States almost a year earlier, the latter 'reacted sensitively'. For those reasons, the following directions were given:

Remarks about it should therefore be prefaced with the qualification that it is not for us to tell the Greeks how to run their internal affairs. But they should not be allowed to forget that feelings here about Greek internal policies must affect relations between our two countries.

In relation to a possible invitation of Douglas-Home to stop off in Greece in his way to the Middle or Far East in 1972, officials thought that he should give a non-committal reply, as 'an official visit to Athens by a British Minister could give rise to quite serious political difficulties here'.⁹⁴

When the meeting finally took place, Douglas-Home confined himself in asking only if the Colonels had in mind 'a firm timetable for a return to democracy, *which could be used to offset external criticism*' (emphasis added).⁹⁵ Palamas bluntly replied that 'there was no such timetable', and tried to justify his government's position by saying that 'there had recently been a considerable advance towards normalisation'. On the subject of a possible visit to Athens, Douglas-Home thanked Palamas for the invitation and said that he would have to consider it carefully. The British foreign secretary closed the meeting by asking whether he had any suggestions for further improving Anglo-Greek relations. Palamas took the opportunity to reiterate his

desire for British support on Cyprus, and to specifically ask for London to ‘do what it could to persuade the Turks towards compromise on constitutional issues or at least towards the adoption of new procedures for negotiation’. Finally, he said that an extension of British commercial interests in Greece would be welcome, and added the following to persuade Douglas-Home:

There were certain countries, whose policies towards Greece were unhelpful, who were doing good business here. The Greek Government wished to re-direct commercial opportunities towards its true friends. There was much economic progress in Greece and an increased British contribution would be valued.⁹⁶

The quest for a new spirit in relations

Palamas continued his efforts of reducing his country’s isolation in relation with Western Europe after his meeting with Douglas-Home. Two days later, on 22 September, he told the Greek service of the BBC that there was a considerable improvement in Anglo-Greek relations, which was underlined by his presence in London, and that the talks with the British foreign secretary had been ‘constructive and most helpful’.⁹⁷ The following day’s meeting between Palamas and Sir Thomas Brimelow seems to have been even more cordial and promising as regarded relations between the two capitals. Both men expressed their gratitude to the opposite side for proving support on a particular occasion: the Greeks were grateful for British support for an allocation of funds from NATO Infrastructure Slice XXI for fortification projects in northern Greece (and hoped Britain would similarly place no reservations on Greek fortifications in slice XXII), and Brimelow thanked Palamas for the Colonels’ agreement to make staging and refuelling facilities available at Souda Bay (in Crete). These were meant to provide an alternative to others in Malta, where Mintoff had temporarily imposed restrictions on duty-free fuel.⁹⁸ On other matters, Palamas expressed his government’s wish to expand cultural exchanges and bilateral economic relations with the

UK. Given the Colonels' desire to align more closely their economic with their political relations with other countries, and considering the improvement in relations with London, Makarezos (who had been sworn in as second deputy prime minister during the Greek government changes on 26 August)⁹⁹ and Papadopoulos had made it clear to Palamas, and he, in turn, made it clear to the British, that they hoped 'it would be possible to give British firms a better share of business in Greece'. Specific mention was made to a lignite-burning power station, submarine coaxial cables between Athens and Crete, and 45 diesel locomotives. Makarezos' wish to give preference to British firms, and hope that British capital investment in Greece would increase were reported. Brimelow ended the meeting by thanking the Greeks for the commercial assurances offered.¹⁰⁰

Following the same line, Konstantopoulos, published an article in *Eleftheros Kosmos*, approximately a week later. The article, with the minimal title 'Athens-London', referred to Palamas' talks in London and acknowledged many mistakes made in Anglo-Greek relations on both sides, 'but mainly on the British side'. Most importantly, though, it marked a change in the Colonels' view of Britain and reaffirmed the new, warmer state of relations between the two countries. Konstantopoulos expressed the view that London's cool stance (bordering on hostility) towards the Greece of the Colonels had now been dispelled and was a thing of the past. According to him, Britain was displaying political realism, as Conservatives and Labourites – the former to a greater extent than the latter – were realising that Greece's political regime was an internal affair and that Greece, 'irrespective of its form of government, was an invaluable pillar in the defence structure of the Free World.' The author also expressed his relief that British political leaders 'realised their mistake' and were no longer influenced by people willing to make a fuss over the internal affairs of a foreign country, for propaganda purposes or for the sake of party interests. Late 1969 was identified as one of the turning points.

The conclusion of the article is characteristic of the regime's desires but also indicative of the typical manipulation of events on the side of the Colonels, for both internal and external 'consumption', that is, to show to the Greek public and the world in general that important

Western countries had no qualms about having relations with them, and to encourage other Western countries to follow Britain's pragmatic approach:

During his talks in London Mr. Xanthopoulos-Palamas *ascertained the new position of British policy towards Greece*. It is to be wished that this policy be continued and broadened ... *All the Allies should take notice of Britain's stance towards Greece. It is not dictated by selfish British interests.* It originates from a realisation of the true situation and from a desire to help in the efforts to strengthen the cohesion and unity of the countries of the Free World (emphasis added).¹⁰¹

Nevertheless, it was not just Palamas' visit to Britain and 'newspaper diplomacy' that signalled London's drawing closer to the Colonels. The visit of the Commander-in-Chief of the Greek armed forces, General Angelis, was another link in this chain.¹⁰² Angelis' visit to London (the first by a Chief of the Greek armed forces since the 1967 coup) took place during the second week of October, and its special importance lay in the fact that there was '*a distinct warming in [Britain's] relations with the Greek Armed Forces Command in consequence*' (emphasis added). The visit, which included a meeting with defence secretary, Lord Carrington, was deemed successful by the British; an embassy official reported that the 'impression here is that [it] went well from all points of view',¹⁰³ the ambassador wrote to Douglas-Home that 'the visit passed off extremely well',¹⁰⁴ and the British defence attaché thought that it had 'generated much goodwill' and hoped that Britain would 'derive benefits from [it] for some number of years to come'.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, it was considered quite helpful as regards Anglo-Greek relations, in that it gave the British government 'a useful opportunity to explain its policy towards Greece and [did] not give rise to further controversy', as the event attracted little public criticism.¹⁰⁶ Quite demonstrative of London's anxiety to develop warmer relations with the junta was the fact that no objections to the visit were voiced, even though (as stated by Northedge) the under-secretary of state for defence for the Royal Navy, Peter

Kirk, 'had been outspoken' in his opposition to the Greek regime in the Consultative Assembly of the CoE.¹⁰⁷

At this point it should be mentioned that, as a consequence of London's determination to maintain the effectiveness of NATO, it was regular British practice to take part in NATO exercises in Greece, and that there was also bilateral cooperation between the armed forces of the two countries. However, Britain's relations with the Greek armed forces *markedly* improved during 1971, with the major factor being undoubtedly the decision to invite General Angelis to visit London as the guest of the Chief of the Defence staff, Admiral Sir Peter Hill-Norton. The British were, nonetheless, not entirely satisfied with solely the cultivation of good inter-service relations. As Hooper wrote in his report: 'naturally one would like to see it result in the purchase of British military equipment'.¹⁰⁸ Much to the dismay, though, of both the British ambassador and the defence attaché, Brigadier Baxter, who was hoping that UK suppliers could help the Greeks solve their problem of under-equipment,¹⁰⁹ the prospects of arms sales to Greece were 'uncertain' at that stage.¹¹⁰ Factors like the foreign exchange problem in Greece (linked to the efforts to repay French and West German loans for tanks, fast patrol boats and submarines), and, mainly, the familiarity of all the armed services with American equipment were identified as the main obstacles to British military sales to Greece.¹¹¹ However, the ambassador concluded by arguing that this situation did 'not exclude the possibility of sales of equipment of a specialised character', and by adding that his service attachés continued to be 'on the look-out for suitable opportunities'.¹¹² The defence attaché added that the service attachés were constantly trying to secure contracts, and that the fact that Britain's arms sales record was 'poor despite a more favourable HMG policy', should be attributed to two additional reasons. The first was the reluctance on the part of British firms due to the 'Byzantine negotiations' involving both commercial and military projects in one deal, and the second reason was Greek reluctance 'to be seeing going other than American', in case this should affect US policy over military aid. Finally, the West German, and especially, the French exceptions were underlined as possible examples to be followed by the British and as possible future competition.¹¹³

On a more general note, Brigadier Baxter asserted that Anglo-Greek relations on the military side had been ‘warm and a pleasant contrast to the immediately preceding years’. Strong support for NATO was identified as a major tenet of Papadopoulos’ policy, as the importance attached to membership of the alliance by the Greek government was more than evident during 1971. Interestingly, the growing strategic importance of Greece in Greek eyes had increased Greek confidence in their position in NATO and they had learned to be less irritated by ‘pinpricks’, like sniping in the political committee by the Scandinavians. Other observations made by the defence and military attaché referred to morale being of the highest order in all services, which was attributed to meritocracy in the promotion of young officers, to the relatively high social status that the services were enjoying, and to the support for the regime in the armed forces as an ‘inevitable result’. His final conclusion was that:

[…] the Armed Forces compare very favourably in training, morale, will to fight and general efficiency with the Armed Services of the smaller NATO allies, but that the continuing severe limitations in modern weapons and equipment suggest only a limited ability to sustain operations against a well equipped modern army.¹¹⁴

December 1971 was dominated by two important changes in Greek foreign policy, namely a new Greek ambassador in London and the resignation of Palamas. Sorokos, taking over the embassy in Washington, was replaced by General Nicolas Broumas, deputy chief of the Greek General Staff. Sorokos had been chosen to replace Verykios because of his loyalty to the regime and as a result of displeasure over the latter’s insufficiently vigorous defence of the junta.¹¹⁵ It is worth mentioning here that Sorokos was thought both to have won his spurs and to some extent to have disengaged himself from his military background.¹¹⁶ His contribution to the steady improvement of Anglo-Greek relations was acknowledged as important, and FCO officials hoped Broumas would ‘play a similar role’.¹¹⁷ London Greeks were reported as being ‘sad’ to see Sorokos go, and ‘not enthusiastic’ about

the prospect of having a general without diplomatic experience occupy the sensitive London post.¹¹⁸ As for the reason of his change of post, Sir Robin Hooper, who referred to him as 'an old personal friend', thought that it had to do with the dynamics within the Colonels' government:

But clearly Sorokos was too closely identified with the former régime for the taste of the present one: and he no doubt thought it better to go quietly before he was pushed.¹¹⁹

As far as Palamas was concerned, he seemed to have been victimized by Papadopoulos in the latter's efforts to mollify the hardliners within the regime. Papadopoulos, demonstrating his (highly praised by FCO officials)¹²⁰ skilful managerial powers in holding the balance between the various factions in the junta, decided to proceed with the appointment of further generals to diplomatic posts. This move seemed to have been the last straw for Palamas, as rumours of his wish to resign were circulating for quite some time and he had taken a 'pretty gloomy line' about Cyprus in private. According to what Averoff told the British, Palamas out of loyalty to the diplomatic service felt that he must resign rather than accept these appointments.¹²¹ On 20 December Palamas handed in his resignation, and that made Averoff repeat his comment that the Greek government would have great difficulty in finding anybody with the qualifications and experience to replace him.¹²² However, a minor government reshuffle took place in January 1972 and Palamas was persuaded to stay on and was also appointed alternate (or deputy) minister of foreign affairs, with Panayotakos assuming the post of under-secretary.¹²³ Nevertheless, Palamas would eventually leave the government eight months later, but not before he announced the acceptance of home porting facilities for the US sixth fleet, and participated in talks between Greece and the EEC on the repercussions of British membership, thus setting the tone for his country's general orientation and specific concerns over developments in Anglo-Greek relations, respectively.

1971 marked a watershed in Anglo-Greek relations as it was the year that saw the largest amount of contact between the governments of the two countries. An exchange of messages and visits and a

higher frequency of meetings between officials, in conjunction with a rise in UK exports, resulted in forging a closer relationship between Whitehall and the Colonels, despite setbacks such as the formation of EAACG or Papadopoulos' anxiety over Britain's attitude.

More specifically, the British feared a takeover by extremist elements within the regime, and thus following a pragmatic policy *par excellence* decided to accept the political reality in Greece, and help in Papadopoulos' consolidation in power, as the person considered most trustworthy in Athens. This was reflected in the exchange of personal messages between the Greek leader and Douglas-Home in March. At the same time, and in the British tradition of hedging against a (not so probable) change of government, London wished to maintain contacts with 'old politicans', without, however, worrying about repercussions of this on relations with the junta for it was paying a good deal of attention to the regime. Conversely, British officials continued to keep King Constantine at a distance, opting for a particularly cautious handling of relations with him. Although the junta reiterated its unwillingness to hold elections, contacts between the two governments intensified during 1971, thus reflecting the Conservatives' desire to strengthen relations (especially in NATO) and to encourage and actively promote arms sales, and defence cooperation, in general. As it becomes apparent, the Heath government had only three objectives towards Greece (NATO, Cyprus, trade), as it chose to downgrade the promotion of the return of democracy in that country to a simple reference, to be made rarely and in passing. The Tories' more positive effort to cultivate warmer relations with the Colonels brought its first dividends quite early: commercial assurances were offered to Britain, relations between the armed forces of the two countries markedly improved, and a quid pro quo (British support for allocation of NATO funds to Greece for British use of facilities in Crete) was achieved.

All in all, all this increased diplomatic activity, apart from highlighting the difference of approach of the Greek case between Labour and Conservatives, also served as the first important step in ushering in a new period of warmer relations between Britain and the junta, in 1972.

CHAPTER 5

THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TOWARDS THE COLONELS, 1972: TOWARDS A NEW DIRECTION?

An inconclusive year

It is difficult to arrive at a conclusion about a year which has been in all essentials so inconclusive.

This is how the British ambassador concluded his annual review for 1972, a year that marked the first visit by a British minister, the first big student demonstrations, and further divisions within the regime, which, although it had consolidated its position internationally, showed 'faint but perceptible signs of a flagging of self confidence, of some degree of self-questioning'.¹

The two most seminal events affecting relations between London and Athens in 1972 happened only after Palamas' final resignation. Those were two high-profile visits (one unofficial and one official), the first, by Lord Carrington, minister of defence, taking place on 6–7 September, and the second by Lord Limerick, parliamentary under-secretary for trade and industry, in late October–early November. The visits themselves and the items discussed are

equally (if not more) significant as the two visits by Greek dignitaries (Palamas and Angelis) in late 1971, and were largely carried out as a gesture of returning favour to the Greeks. The portfolios of the two members of Heath's government are revealing as they tell a large part of the story of Britain's relations towards the Colonels in 1972, that is, the emphasis put by the Conservative government on the major fields of defence and trade.

The British official who personified this spirit best was the ambassador in Athens, Sir Robin Hooper. Without wishing to appear that Britain was openly condoning the regime, he thought that his country should do more in terms of increasing its influence on the government in Greece and expanding trade prospects and defence cooperation. He was, of course, content to acknowledge progress in Anglo-Greek relations by stating that 'the good working relationship, which has been defined as a policy objective is in good order'. And he was happy to report that he and his senior staff were 'on easy terms' with most government ministers and senior military officers, and that 'Greeks in position of responsibility are aware that the British Government is trying gradually to develop a better relationship after the tensions of 1967 to 1970'. Writing his first annual review, however, he made a call for a more active and demanding policy towards Greece:

... There are obvious limitations on HMG's freedom of action. But it seems to me that even without those limitations, *we are being a bit unimaginative and doing less than we could or should to keep our relationships with the Greek Government in repair*. Unless we make a determined effort not only to do this but to put ourselves positively on the map, we shall lose out politically – and slip back economically and culturally – under pressure from rivals with less inhibitions (emphasis added).²

Officials at the Southern European Department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office had a slightly different approach, though, taking into account also the possibility of a press, and more importantly, a parliamentary backlash against the government if seen to be too close to the Colonels. Responding to the ambassador's comments mentioned

above, Palmer wrote that the 'necessary balance in Anglo-Greek relations is a delicate one' and he thought that with the Fleming affair³ following on the heels of the visits of Palamas and General Angelis, the British 'were lucky to begin 1972 on an even keel, both in our dealings with the Greek régime and with their critics here'.⁴ Another FCO official, Wigggin, noted Hooper's disappointment that no future build-up of relations with Athens was on the stocks, and wrote to him conceding that they '[would] try not to be too stuffy when [he had] new suggestions to put forward', simultaneously stressing the importance of weighing the risks of stirring up too much criticism in Britain.⁵ As became obvious, FCO staff based in London were much more susceptible to domestic pressures, usually instigated by anti-junta organisations such as the European Atlantic Action Committee on Greece (EAACG) and the League for Democracy in Greece, and expressed either through articles in the daily press and/or parliamentary questions. On the other hand, ambassador Hooper was in Athens, unable to experience for himself the effect opposition circles had on British public opinion and MPs, but in a perfect position to hear and feel what the Athens regime required and expected from Britain, in order to sustain the 'good working relationship' and even to enhance it.

The time now, nevertheless, seemed ripe for a different approach to be taken. In the immediately preceding years, public opinion in Britain had 'put difficulties in the way of a more unequivocally forthcoming policy' towards the Colonels. In late 1971 to early 1972 though, the situation seemed slightly in favour of the leaders in Athens, as there was 'little public fuss' in the UK about Greece, which was attributed to a 'low-profile policy' on relations and a wane of public interest in the Mediterranean country.⁶ Moreover, the Colonels were happy to see their international position getting stronger and stronger, as even the new secretary-general of NATO, Joseph Luns, admitted. He was reported to have said that 'Greece was an essential link in NATO'.⁷

It was in this light that the British ambassador tried to persuade his government that a more active policy towards Greece was needed. More specifically, he identified the Colonels' disappointment over the reluctance of British ministers to visit Athens and encouraged such

visits as the first step towards a further amelioration of relations between the two capitals.

The catalyst seems to have been the French foreign minister's visit to Athens in late January 1972, 'to discuss political affairs in general terms and to appear willing to hear Greek view on the EEC relationship'.⁸ The importance of the visit lay in the fact that Jean de Lipkowski was the first minister from a Western European democracy to pay an official visit to Greece since the coup d'état of April 1967; moreover, it followed in the footsteps of the visit to Athens of American vice president Spiro Agnew in October 1971.⁹ As the British defence attaché noted: 'By securing a stream of Ministerial visitors from the West, the régime have scored considerable success'.¹⁰ Hooper, having already made up his mind that 'with the Greeks, as no doubt with others, one has to run quite hard to stay in the same place, let alone advance', informed the FCO that de Lipkowski's visit would 'leave the French one up on [Britain]' and thus bring them closer to the Colonels and to trade prospects.¹¹ This was perfectly reflected in Greek trade figures, and especially the one indicating market share. According to that, the period of January–February 1972 marked the first instance in the junta years when Britain's position was fourth among Greece's five most important trading countries, having a meagre 8% of Greece's market share; Britain's downward trend line was juxtaposed to the rising shares of Germany, Italy, France, and the US, which had 20, 11.7, 8.7, and 7.8% of market share, respectively (see Appendix, Figure 1).¹² Of course, as mentioned earlier, UK exports to Greece had reached a record high in 1971 and remained strong in 1972, and imports from Greece were considerably higher than in 1966–8, but that was not transformed into a larger market share. This was something both the embassy and the central department of the Foreign Office were worried about, especially in light of Britain's difficult financial situation and its urgent need to expand external trade. As the British ambassador noted, 'British exports to Greece continue to hold up, though our share of an expanding market is still less than it should be'.¹³

The means to redress the somewhat bleak prospects presented above was, according to Hooper, for the British to follow the example of their French neighbours, by organizing a high-profile visit to mollify Papadopoulos and his ministers. The Colonels had already more than hinted at such a move, with their 'propaganda machine' suggesting that it was time for Britain to follow suit.¹⁴ Keeping in mind that 'if we are to maintain our gains and consolidate them, we must keep the momentum going', and in conjunction with efforts to 'restore our position in this country', Hooper proposed that Lord Carrington, defence secretary, (who usually spent his summer holidays in Greece) 'might be prepared to consider spending a few days in Athens ... and taking advantage of this to meet the Prime Minister and a few other prominent figures'. The ambassador was 'sure this would go down extremely well here [in Athens].'¹⁵ The Foreign Office's reply to Hooper was cautious and advocated circumspect action to be taken in the future:

[Hooper] argues that we need to 'restore our position' in Greece. We have already pointed out to him that, as seen from here, *we have been more than 'modestly successful'... in maintaining our relations with the Papadopoulos government*. The necessary balance is a delicate one, and could be upset if it is expressed so demonstratively as to prompt hostile criticism here (emphasis added).

The upshot of this exchange was to keep in mind the possibility of an FCO minister visiting Athens officially while awaiting a really suitable opportunity before activating it.¹⁶ This was conveyed to the Greeks, along with the acknowledgment that there was a willingness on both sides to improve relations. Hence it was decided not to press the issue just then but to wait to do so later.¹⁷ Against this backdrop, King Constantine's efforts to persuade Douglas-Home to influence US policy towards Greece all but fell in a void. Douglas-Home told Constantine that Nixon was giving a clear impression that he not only did not want to pressure the junta, but not even to displease it. The foreign secretary said that although he was finding the situation in Greece 'intolerable', he could neither see a real resistance within Greece nor the junta moving towards any kind of normalization.¹⁸

A couple of days later, a meeting was held in Anthony Royle's office to discuss policy towards Greece. As far as the internal situation was concerned, Papadopoulos' determination to remain at the helm, his ability to deal with opposition within Greece, and his 'remarkable talent for political management in holding the balance between different tendencies' among the armed forces, were all acknowledged. In relation to King Constantine, officials thought that 'it was hard to see how he could return'; they 'clearly could not sever contact with him, but his meetings with Ministers should continue to be discreet and "casual"'. More importantly, the Heath government's direction in policy towards the Colonels was clearly illustrated, and the (formerly four and now) three objectives were solidified and set in stone:

It had to be recognised that the retention at the top of the list of our policy objectives of the 'promotion of the return to Greece of constitutional rule and democratic liberties in conditions of stability' had become inappropriate. This was regrettable: we naturally continued to regard the early restoration of democracy in Greece as highly desirable, as much for the cohesion of NATO as for the Greek people. But it was clear that outside pressure was not going to achieve this. *It would therefore be more realistic to confine our objectives to the three* approved by the Secretary of State in July 1970, i.e.:-

- a. To preserve as far as possible the military effectiveness of Greece as a NATO ally;
- b. To protect British subjects and British interests generally, and in particular to pursue our commercial interests;
- c. To retain our ability to influence the Greek Government in matters of foreign policy, for example, Cyprus (emphasis added).

The only true obstacle barring the British from having full relations with the Colonels, criticism within Britain, was singled out, and directives to prevent and tackle it were promptly offered:

We should beware of projects which could prove counter-productive by attracting damaging criticism ... *Our objectives, and any*

change in them, are not made public in these terms. We should still make clear in Parliament our hope that democracy would soon be restored in Greece. Ministers would continue to take the line that the Greek Government were well aware of our view that, while it was not for us to tell them how to order their internal affairs, we looked forward to the early return of democracy there.

It should be noted here that the only reference to the erstwhile top priority of promoting the return of democracy in Greece was made almost in passing, further downgrading it:

We should also continue to use suitable opportunities *discreetly* to remind the Greeks of our hope for the early restoration there of constitutional rule and full democratic liberties (emphasis added).¹⁹

Quite conversely, the significance of the (now) top objective was once more emphasized, and Britain's actions in relation to it were delineated:

We should continue to resist attempts by the Danes and Norwegians for action against Greece in NATO, and try to dissuade other NATO Governments from joining the Scandinavians' campaign.

Whitehall appeared, therefore, to be taking a more pro-active stance regarding Greece's position in the Atlantic Alliance, refusing to stand idly by and watch the developments unfold, and offering its assistance to the Colonels' cause.²⁰

Bolstered by the decisions taken at the February meeting, Hooper stood his ground and insisted on the benefits of a visit of a senior British minister. Informing London of the fact that Douglas-Home's visit to Francoist Spain did not go unnoticed in Athens, he came back to his original position:

I see the force of the argument that too much 'public love-making' may be counter-productive. But subject to all that, and "as seen from here" we have succeeded over the past eighteen

months in building up a degree of rapport with a Government which, whatever we may think of its internal policies – and they can be in no doubt about what we do think – is likely to be around for some time to come, which is important to us politically, strategically and economically, and with which we must therefore keep our contacts in repair. The objectives in para. 4 (a), (b) and (c) of the 11 February record will be much easier to achieve if we do so.²¹

The most cogent argument in favour of Hooper had appeared earlier that month in the form of a signature. The signing of the (sizeable) contract between the Public Power Corporation and John Brown Engineering Ltd for the supply of two gas turbine generators for a power station in Crete on 1 March was clearly linked by the Colonels' regime with Britain's increased willingness to establish good working relations. The fact that the British decided to 'reluctantly, but ... realistically', lower their sights by giving a low priority in their basic policy objectives to 'the promotion of the return to Greece of constitutional rule and democratic liberties in conditions of stability' seemed to have started paying dividends, first and foremost in the critical commercial sector. As the ambassador cynically admitted:

... we have made some further headway in taking the emotional overtones and double standards out of our relations with the régime, and putting these more closely on a footing with the relationships we maintain with other régimes whose internal policies we deplore, but with which for better or worse we have to live.²²

In the matter of arms sales, prospects were also looking up as the risk of parliamentary criticism of supplying arms to Greece 'was reduced now that the controversy over arms for South Africa had subsided' and even British policy on the supply of arms to Franco's Spain had become more relaxed.²³

Beware of Greeks bearing gifts

In the meantime developments in Greece were following their own course. March 1972 saw Papadopoulos assuming another role, that of regent, after dismissing General Zoitakis from the post.²⁴ The British, who thought that the Greek premier was 'clearly as reluctant as ever to relinquish power', interpreted his political manoeuvring as preparation for the 'institutionalisation' of his rule and the 'eventual establishment of a Republic with himself as President'.²⁵ On the same day as the announcement of the change of regent, another member of the triumvirate of the Colonels, second deputy prime minister (and minister for economic coordination until August 1971) Makarezos, received a letter from the Greek ambassador in London discussing possible orders placed in Britain and 'how to exploit those better diplomatically'.²⁶ In the letter Sorokos reiterated the agreement made with the directors of Public Works companies, such as the Public Power Corporation, that any deal on the provision of materials from foreign countries would be closed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (taking into consideration the factor of diplomatic relations), which would then give the green light for the public companies to proceed with the signing and the details. On the issue of arms sales, Sorokos informed Makarezos of concerted British efforts to attract deals and added that those proved the British were 'ardently' pursuing arms sales to Greece. The ambassador's suggestion was the following:

If and when the General Staff decides – again on the basis of economic-technical facts – that such and such item of British materiel is good for us, it should not, for God's sake, tell anyone. It should be trusted to the government and given to the ministry of foreign affairs first, so that the ministry makes good use of it, politically and diplomatically. (No less than an unambiguous promise of a ministerial visit to Athens).

The rationale behind this suggestion was that Sorokos thought that the British, perceiving the Greek intention, 'would do anything possible both to secure the order through the salami method and to avoid giving a promise for a visit'.²⁷

Five weeks later, against the backdrop of student demonstrations taking place outside Athens University and a diplomatic incident with West Germany (instigated by Professor Mangakis' flight to Germany, shortly after his release from prison), the new under-secretary for foreign affairs of Greece, Professor Tsakonas, visited London. While there, he paid a call on Anthony Royle. The British parliamentary under-secretary, receiving a Greek minister for the first time officially, expressed his satisfaction over progress in efforts to develop Britain's relations with Greece which 'were now friendly', and paid tribute to the work of Sorokos. Tsakonas, when asked about elections ('might it be reasonable . . . to expect them in two or three years?') avoided giving a specific reply and offered his personal view that elections would be held 'very much earlier than many people outside Greece thought', and his personal assurance that democracy in Greece would be established 'speedily'.²⁸ The Greek under-secretary, who also thought that Anglo-Greek relations were better then²⁹, went as far as to say that it was unfair to compare Papadopoulos with Hitler or Mussolini, as 'Ataturk was a fairer parallel'.³⁰

The importance of this meeting, though, did not lie in the comparisons of personalities of leaders but in the fact that this was the first instance when the question of the European Economic Community (EEC) was discussed in the context of Anglo-Greek relations. The occasion that presented the opportunity to introduce this as a subfield of relations was the vote in the House of Commons that evening on the timetable for the European Communities Bill. Royle, who introduced the topic, said that the British were not then in a position to ease relations between the Colonels and the EEC, nor could they give any assurance of being able to do so on achieving full entry. The British minister concluded by saying this:

But, if the Greeks could accelerate whatever programme they had for the restoration of democracy, their friends in the enlarged Community would have a much easier task if the Greeks needed assistance in working for the full implementation of their association agreement.³¹

The prominence of the question of EEC in the foreign policy of Britain was obvious to the Greek side. The Greek ambassador noted that UK's entry into the European Communities had been the main objective of British diplomacy and the most serious issue that troubled the British nation in 1972.³² The personal involvement of prime minister Heath in this process, as well as the loosening of the 'special relationship' with the United States, was also acknowledged by the Greeks who were worried about developments in the EEC and their future in Europe, in general. The British in turn, acknowledged the Greeks' justifiable anxiety over the working of their Association Agreement with the EEC, and that was bound to have repercussions on the relationship between Athens and London, as well. More specifically, the Foreign Office had the impression that 'whatever its new composition in 1973, the EEC Commission is likely to persist in its hostile attitude towards Greece'. As a consequence of that:

The Greeks are already looking for support and on achieving full membership we must expect further pressure from them. There is, however, little we can do, especially as Denmark and Norway – two of the Greeks' main European critics – will be joining at the same time.³³

The difficulties presented on the relationship between Athens and Brussels were far more complex than the discussion of the Greek issue in the NATO forum. That, in conjunction with the precarious status of the British within the regional organization (they were not an important founding member as in NATO, and they had been declined entry on two occasions), meant that London was not that keen on taking up the Greek cause and pushing the Greek Colonels down the throat of the rest of the six (and soon to be eight) Europeans – or at least those of them who regarded the regime with some contempt. Therefore, Royle made the above statement that made it clear that it was for the Greeks themselves to remove the cause of these troubles. Moreover, this was also the time when the US decided to make it clear to its European friends that it could not accept responsibility for democracy in Greece: '[...] the chips

will fall where they will, both for the Greeks, ourselves, and the Alliance'.³⁴

In the meantime, opposition to the Colonels in the UK was becoming increasingly vocal again after a short period of indifference. The reason behind this was a hardening in the line pursued by Papadopoulos within Greece, mainly attributed to his efforts to palliate the hardliners and keep a balance within his government. Opposition, however, was not only confined to left-wing demonstrators and expatriates from Greece. Christopher Montague Woodhouse is not only the author of the best known book on the Colonels' Greece but he was also one of the few Conservative MPs who were openly critical of the junta. Woodhouse, having established contacts in, but also having personal experience of, Greece, was recognised as having played a big part in the Resistance in Greece during World War II, and being one of the 'best informed contemporary British authorities' on that country. For these reasons his opinion, frequently stated in the London press but also in parliamentary questions, was much appreciated by the Foreign Office. That is exactly why, when he decided to become an active member of European-Atlantic Action Committee on Greece (EAACG) and to join Sir Hugh Greene in giving a press conference before the ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels in December 1971 (calling for action to be taken against Greece in NATO), FCO officials were more than listening. The Committee was trying to persuade NATO governments to adopt a more hostile attitude towards the Colonels and to express this in the NATO forum. FCO's predictable (see discussion of three objectives above) reaction was the following:

this is directly contrary to the chief objective of our policy towards Greece.

We disagree with a number of the Committee's other arguments, e.g. that concerted and visible international criticism is likely to help the Greek people, and that the Greek Armed Forces have become less effective under the present Government (emphasis added).³⁵

This is another instance when the British government, a Conservative one this time, emphasized its belief that pressure in NATO was

unlikely to accelerate the restoration of democracy in Greece, as Papadopoulos was thought to greatly resent appearing to act under foreign pressure, and the cohesion of the alliance was, in their view, the overriding factor.³⁶ Despite its complete disagreement with the EAACG, the Foreign Office had to concede that it ‘represent[ed] a highly articulate (if small) sector of British and international opinion that remains concerned about the situation in Greece’ and that the frequency of parliamentary questions on that country had ‘increased markedly’ since its formation.³⁷

The Greek view on the subject of opposition in Britain and on British society, in general, became evident as it bore the brunt of ambassador Sorokos’ report on the May municipal elections in England and Wales. Labour emerged as the victor of the elections (principally because the public had become disillusioned with price rises and high unemployment), but what interested the Greek ambassador the most was not the outcome; he concentrated his fire on the ‘indolent “socialist” society that Labour had created’ and on ‘contemporary anarchic and nihilistic tendencies’. Closing his letter, Sorokos hinted that this ‘reaction’ was sparked by the modernising policies of the Heath government, which was trying to strengthen the ‘spoiled socio-economic organism of Britain’.³⁸

Pragmatism prevails

Meanwhile, FCO officials were busy measuring the consequences of the aforementioned Mangakis incident, which served as a ‘vigorous reminder of how hysterically the régime can react to what they regard as attempts to interfere in their domestic affairs’. Although considered ‘of relatively superficial importance’ (in relation to the unprecedented expressions of criticism from the universities), the incident was seen as an indicator of a swing towards a harder internal line. The impact of this new approach on Anglo-Greek relations was assessed promptly:

If {the Colonels} do not soon achieve some substantial internal move – which could range from unashamed window-dressing to the panacea of a date for elections – the Greek

Government's international difficulties, notably their relations with the EEC, will be exacerbated. Inevitably, this will have unwelcome fall-out for us. The current trend could also embarrass Anglo-Greek relations if the Greeks remain more than usually sensitive about representations on behalf of political prisoners.

Palmer's conclusion was characteristically pragmatic, verging on cynical:

At the same time, I regard the basic parameters of the Greek internal situation, and the aims of our policy towards the régime, as unchanged by the events of the past two months. The pendulum of repression will continue to swing; Greece's allies will continue to take their turn in the dog-house.³⁹

A few days later, two more FCO officials repeated the position taken by Palmer. Brooke Turner bluntly asserted that 'our policy towards the Greek régime is determined in the light of the interests we have in Greece'. He went on to say that he did not consider the pursuit of these should be affected by the undoubted evidence of a recent hardening in the regime's internal policies, and concluded by adding that Palmer's dispatch did not 'provide a warrant for changing our policy of maintaining a working relationship with the régime'.⁴⁰ Almost identical was the opinion of another official, Charles Wiggin, who, although he admitted that the Colonels had been getting 'a worse press abroad than usual', thought the British should continue with their 'case by case approach', as they were 'already as cautious as [their] main Allies, indeed more so than most'.⁴¹

In what looked now as a sudden volte-face, the officials of the Southern European department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office seemed to have been converted by the ambassador in Athens, who in turn was starting to develop doubts about closer relations with the junta at that particular point. Earlier in 1972 the foreign secretary had suggested that, in view of the desire to maintain good working relations, there could be an advantage in having a senior minister

visiting Greece. The case of Lord Carrington, who used to holiday in the Aegean in the summer (mentioned above) seemed ideal for some informal meeting with Greek ministers. The defence secretary had agreed in principle when Hooper started expressing ‘slight doubts’ about the timing of the visit on account of the bad press the regime was getting.⁴² The main reason behind the ambassador’s signs of hesitation was the thought that he would otherwise be considered *too ‘pro-Colonel’* by ministers in London. Wiggin managed to set his mind at rest on this, ‘by assuring him that Ministers still endorse the *cautious middle-of-the-road policy* we have been adopting for a year and more past’ (emphasis added).⁴³ The final conclusion, after a short period of consultations, was (with Hooper’s agreement now) that the scales still tilted towards going ahead as planned, lest the three British objectives be compromised:

We do not want Greece to become isolated; some of our major allies are not being as cautious about Ministerial visits to Greece as we are; and all we have in mind by way of official activity is an ‘informal’ 24 hours in Athens.⁴⁴

However, Whitehall recognized that a visit, by a British minister to the Colonels’ Greece would risk prompting hostile commentaries in the press and the House of Commons ‘on a scale that could outweigh the benefits of the visit’. As a means of getting round this, a ‘device’ was devised: ‘[. . .] the device of arranging for such Ministers to pay courtesy calls in Athens if they go *on holiday* to Greece’ (emphasis added).⁴⁵ Therefore, Lord Carrington, chiefly because of his portfolio and the fortuitous choice of destination for his summer holidays, was considered the ideal candidate for a visit that would be kept informal.

The visit, which according to the FCO ‘was not a “semi-official” visit but essentially a private one’,⁴⁶ finally took place on 6–7 September, having been announced only a few days in advance.⁴⁷ Lord Carrington’s visit should be viewed against the background of Whitehall’s desire to maintain contact with senior members of the Greek regime on more central political and defence issues, particularly if the British were ‘to

keep pace with others such as the French and Americans'.⁴⁸ According to FCO officials preparing the briefs:

[The private nature of the visit] offers the opportunity to do this and should do much more to assuage Greek susceptibilities ... It pays the Greeks the compliment of showing readiness to meet them on their own ground, while minimising the risk of hostile criticism here.⁴⁹

The visit, which was characterized by an FCO official as 'something of a land-mark in Anglo-Greek relations since the coup',⁵⁰ represented for the British an advance in relations with Athens and 'one which in spite of some pressure from the régime, we had hitherto withheld'. It comprised calls on Papadopoulos, Pattakos and Palamas (who delayed his retirement in order to carry out his part of the talks). According to the British record, the defence secretary's discussions with the Greek prime minister and his first deputy 'produced less of substance from the Greek side than might have been expected', as both the ex-Colonel and the ex-Brigadier failed to take the opportunity to press Lord Carrington on British support for Greece's relations with the EEC.⁵¹ Pattakos, in particular, put his emphasis on economic relations between the two countries, complaining about the four to one ratio (for Britain) in the balance of trade. Lord Carrington pointed out in reply that that did not take into account the invisibles (including expenditure in Greece by British tourists) and, more importantly, informed Pattakos that London 'would be *very willing* to supply whatever arms Greece required for NATO purposes' (emphasis added). He also made reference to the 'considerable concern' caused in Britain by the issue of political prisoners in Greece.⁵²

Upon meeting Papadopoulos, the British defence secretary said that his visit, as well as the forthcoming official visit of Lord Limerick, demonstrated his government's 'wish to develop good working relations'. However, clearly influenced by the bad press the regime was getting, he also reiterated Whitehall's *hope* for the restoration of democracy in Greece, and asked the prime minister for an indication of intentions regarding the implementation of the 1968 constitution. Papadopoulos' reply was that he agreed there had been 'a satisfactory

recovery in Anglo-Greek relations in the economic and defence fields, though this had yet to be extended to the political level'. Furthermore, he reaffirmed his undertaking to restore democracy in Greece by the implementation of the 1968 constitution, without, nevertheless, being able to say when this might take place. His justification of the vagueness of his response is rather interesting:

If the Greek people could somehow be endowed with the civic virtues of the British it would be much easier to make progress in this direction, but this would need *the intervention of the holy ghost* (emphasis added).⁵³

Naturally, the British had the impression that the conversation with Palamas was 'altogether on a higher level'.⁵⁴ The main item on the agenda was the Cyprus situation. Palamas admitted that Makarios was 'a real stumbling block' to Athens' policy and that Greek attempts earlier in the year to persuade him to 'transfer his activities to a wider international stage' had failed. The British record shows that 'no British help in intervention was immediately requested', but Palamas hoped London would be 'ready to help in obtaining a settlement at a later stage'. It is worth noting here that London was still following its policy of 'watching from afar'; according to the background briefs for the visit:

We do not wish to become directly involved in working out the form of a settlement. This is for the parties to the dispute to negotiate. Consequently, we support the intercommunal talks and we hope that the parties will make full use of the talks' renewal on an enlarged basis in order to make progress towards a settlement. As guarantors of the 1960 agreements, including the Constitution, we would be willing to support any solution which is acceptable to all concerned.⁵⁵

The only eventuality that would cause a more active policy on behalf of Britain was the following:

we do not wish ... to stand unnecessarily in the crossfire between the parties. This line has served us well hitherto, and

may continue to do so. But a situation could arise which threatened major British interests in the area and in particular the long-term viability of our Bases, (e.g. Graeco/Turkish collusion in an attempt to partition the island). In such circumstances a more active policy would be necessary.

On the issue of the king, the British were aware of the Colonels' extreme sensitivity about any contacts with him, and therefore, had been very discreet and, as a consequence, able to claim that any meetings had been 'casual' or by chance.⁵⁶

In a nutshell, Lord Carrington's talks with the Greek leaders, albeit 'unremarkable', enabled him to express recognition of Greece's contribution to NATO and to make clear to Papadopoulos and Pattakos his government's desire for good working relations.⁵⁷ According to the Dutch ambassador, this British move showed that the Conservatives were willing to go 'a little further', as economic considerations had 'no doubt played a role'. The visit was deemed successful by the British, as its object was 'not so much to transact particular items of business as to provide the basis upon which [the British] could in the coming months develop [their] economic, defence and political interests in this country'.⁵⁸ It was said to have struck just about the right balance for British interests and it could be regarded as the first step in implementing the policy agreed at Royle's office meeting of 6 September.⁵⁹

The meeting (the second in 1972 to review Anglo-Greek relations) was called shortly after Papadopoulos' Salonika fair speech that 'seemed to confirm that the [junta] were digging in for a long (15 year) haul'. It was agreed that the objectives of British policy towards Greece 'should remain unchanged for the present', and that the British should proceed cautiously, 'concentrating on those areas where co-operation with the Greeks was not particularly contentious, in particular the defence and commercial fields'. Nonetheless, even cooperation in those fields was appearing problematic: a source suggested that the Athens regime was dissatisfied with London's 'unforthcoming' attitude to ministerial visits, and took the view that 'trade relations could only prosper in an atmosphere of friendly political relations'. The answer concocted

during the meeting was to counter-attack and claim that the Greek argument on visits was ‘two edged’:

We might argue in return that the declining share of the Greek market which Britain enjoys (the absolute volume has not fallen) could be regarded as the best yardstick of the value which the Greeks place on their relations with us; this declining share did not make Ministerial visits to Greece any more palatable to the British public; and if the Greeks really valued their relations with us and our efforts on their behalf in NATO and elsewhere, *they should see that some significant public contracts came our way* (emphasis added).

As if that was not lucid enough, a clear example was given to illustrate the point made:

{A possible official visit by Paymaster General, Lord Eccles} should be looked on *as much as a reward for commercial favours as a means of winning them*, and should be considered in this context (emphasis added).⁶⁰

The reception of Lord Carrington’s visit was mixed. *The Times*, quoting diplomats in Athens, wrote about the ‘establishment of “a working relationship” with the Greek rulers’, rather than a ‘restoration of normal relations’, also emphasising pressures put on the Greeks to restore democracy.⁶¹ The *Daily Telegraph* went as far as to say that Lord Carrington was ‘wise’ to call on Papadopoulos, as ‘Greece, because of her key position, [was] one of the most important members of Nato’.⁶² Conversely, *The Guardian* chose to stress the issue of arms sales, and particularly, the difference between the Conservative government’s decision to sell any arms necessary in a NATO context and the policy of the Labour government which refused tanks to the regime.⁶³ Meanwhile, the impact of the visit did not create many adverse currents in Athens. Of course, resistance circles were not thrilled with the event and voiced their concern through anti-regime newspapers⁶⁴ such as *To Vima*, which referred to the visit (and the upcoming arrival of

Lord Limerick) as ‘the British serial of sudden friendship for Greece’, with the author of the article even quoting Disraeli:

I don’t know why but I am reminded of Disraeli’s words in Parliament in 1845: ‘A Conservative British Government is an organised hypocrisy’.⁶⁵

Furthermore, Sir Hugh Greene, in his capacity of president of EAACG, sent a circular letter to MPs complaining about the visit, which, according to him, seemed ‘*a particularly gratuitous favour* to the Greek régime and must not be allowed to pass without *strong parliamentary criticism*’ (emphasis added).⁶⁶ In that respect, the British were aware of the ‘considerable disappointment’ that this mark of recognition to the Colonels caused to the junta’s opponents, but they noted that the feeling reflected was ‘sorrow rather than anger’, as opposition groups did not consider the Heath government to have joined in ‘any outright support for the régime’.⁶⁷ What is more, the pragmatic credentials of some FCO officials were proven again as Prendergast expressed the opinion that his colleague Powell-Jones placed ‘too much importance’ on relations with opponents of the Colonels, ‘if we accept that the régime or something very like it is with us for the foreseeable future’.⁶⁸ Finally, the larger part of the Greek press was ‘restrained and responsible in stressing the NATO and defence aspects of the visit’, leaving London satisfied that the visit was not ‘exploited by the press or by the Greek régime to an embarrassing extent’.⁶⁹

Juxtaposed with the good news of the Greeks not making propaganda out of Lord Carrington’s visit ‘as further evidence of their international respectability to a degree which would arouse hostile comment in Britain’ was the fact that there was already enough material to provide the basis for critical questions in parliament this time.⁷⁰ As expected, some criticism appeared in the form of parliamentary questions briefly after the defence secretary’s return to London but he managed to ‘deal with his questioners without difficulty’.⁷¹ On 18 September, Lord Carrington, asked, in the House of Lords, by Lord Brockway about entering ‘into military arrangements with a

totalitarian State', reverted to the rhetoric commonly used to justify relations with the Colonels' Greece:

My Lords, there are many countries in the world whose internal policies we would not endorse but with whom we maintain normal external or defence relations. I should have thought that if the noble Lord viewed the strategic situation in the Eastern Mediterranean he would have some regard to the fact of how important Greece and Turkey are in that area.

Lord Carrington elaborated on his last phrase by saying that he thought that 'Greece and Turkey [had] a very significant role to play in the defence of the Western World'.⁷² And he reiterated his view again, a month later, while interviewed for the BBC, epitomising British foreign policy under the Conservatives towards Greece as follows:

It never seemed to me to be necessary that you should approve of the politics or the manner of a régime in order that you should have ordinary relations ... So *this doesn't seem to me to be really a very exceptional circumstance*. I also – and my country – happen to think that *Greece is a very important part of NATO* – and what happens in the South East of Europe and the survival of Greece and of Turkey is a matter of enormous substance to NATO, and therefore as Greece is a member of the NATO Alliance and so are we, *we must be friends* (emphasis added).⁷³

Meanwhile developments in Greece were pointing towards better relations with Britain. The commander of the Greek Navy, Admiral Margaritis paid an official visit to Britain from 8 to 15 October, and four days before Lord Carrington's interview, a new alternate foreign minister was sworn in in Athens.⁷⁴ Phaidon Kavalieratos, formerly the Greek representative to NATO, replaced Palamas, ending thus 'a period of uncertainty' in the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the lack of a senior minister for foreign affairs below Papadopoulos 'had already presented considerable practical difficulties and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was suffering from a lack of direction'.⁷⁵

On the same day, the second significant visit for 1972 was announced. Lord Limerick, the parliamentary under-secretary of state for trade and industry, was the first British minister to go to Greece on an official visit after the Colonels' coup of April 1967.⁷⁶ According to the London press, the visit was expected to improve Britain's competitive position in the Greek market, increasing British firms' chances of obtaining large scale contracts.⁷⁷ Moreover, FCO officials stated that the aim was 'to improve Anglo-Greek relations and thus [British] commercial prospects in Greece, in particular for contracts in the public sector'.⁷⁸ The British embassy in Athens (and Hooper himself) recommended that 'Lord Limerick should confine his discussions to commercial, economic and trading subjects and avoid touching on political matters', for Britain's position on political subjects had been stated recently by Lord Carrington.

The British were keeping a watchful eye on visits by Western ministers to Greece, and were quick to learn from the 'mistakes' of their allies:

We should ... avoid the excesses which followed the recent visit by the Secretary of State at the German Foreign Ministry Dr Frank, when the Greek press gloated over what they regarded as confirmation of Greece's international respectability.⁷⁹

And elsewhere:

The crux of the matter is whether Lord Limerick is to say anything to Greek Ministers about what HMG think about the nature of the régime here ... The French were able to say much less when M. Galley came in the summer and they got away with it very successfully. Galley, rather than Frank, would seem to be our best model.⁸⁰

According to an FCO official, the press excesses mentioned above would be prevented by the 'specific advantage of concentrating on technical subjects':⁸¹ this would be twofold, as the visit 'would lend substance to the [British] wish to reinforce the working relationship' and would bring

up for discussion 'substantive matters of common concern ... in the economic and commercial field'.⁸² Moreover, the embassy would seek to 'pitch Greek press coverage at the right level'. The final item on the briefs prepared for the visit was EEC. Lord Limerick was warned of the importance that the Greeks would place on the issue, and especially on their hope that Britain (after its entry) would help them overcome their difficulties with the Commission, and was told that it would need 'careful handling'.⁸³ The line to take (only if asked) could be summarized thus:

We are *sympathetic* over Greek difficulties with the EEC. But the Greek Government will be aware that no single country will be able to decide the policy of the Nine, and until we formally become members of the Community we are *not well placed* to influence the policy of the Six.

Finally, British interests were said to be at stake during Lord Limerick's visit, for Greek conclusions about British willingness to help might have consequences for Anglo-Greek relations generally, and because London believed it was important for Greece to continue to be involved in the process of European integration, in view of its strategic position, commonly acknowledged within the NATO context.⁸⁴

Lord Limerick arrived in Greece on 31 October 1972 and the following day a dinner to honour him was given by the government. In his speech the British minister set the tone for his visit as well as Anglo-Greek relations as viewed from Whitehall:

It seems to me very natural, and only proper, that Anglo-Greek relations should be as good and constructive as they are ... We are allies now in NATO, where the Greek contribution to the common defence is greatly appreciated by my government ... the prospects for increased trade between us are already good, and British entry into the European Community should bring further commercial and economic benefits to us both.⁸⁵

During his stay in Athens, the parliamentary under-secretary had discussions with quite a few Greek ministers and officials, including

Makarezos, the minister of national economy Nikolaos Efessios, and Michalopoulos, then under-secretary for foreign affairs.⁸⁶ He informed Makarezos that Britain wanted to ‘regain her rightful place in the “league table” of suppliers of the needs of Greece’, as the British relative share in the Greek market had fallen from just under 10% (9.8%) to about 8%.⁸⁷ As mentioned earlier, Britain had slipped from second in 1970 to fourth place (only 0.2% ahead of the US) of Greece’s market share in 1971–2.⁸⁸ According to Hooper, ‘existing members of the Common Market have been the gainers at our expense … the British record in winning public sector contracts has been poor during a time of rapid economic development in Greece, when British knowledge and technology might have been expected to be in demand’.⁸⁹

Lord Limerick’s expression of interest in a number of specific private and public contracts was received with sympathy, and he was content to hear Makarezos confirm that ‘favourable consideration would be given to British bids for public sector contracts provided they [we] re competitive’. On the other side, Makarezos expressed Greek interest in the expansion of exports to Britain (which had been slower since the big growth achieved in 1969 and, especially, 1970) and greater British investment in Greece, which would ‘considerably facilitate future expansion of Anglo-Greek trade’, as he hinted.⁹⁰ The British minister, impressed by the account he heard of Greece’s current development plans, found that there were ‘more opportunities than they [we]re problems in the field of Anglo-Greek trade’.⁹¹ It should be noted here, however, that UK manufacturers continued for years to be extremely reluctant in buying Greek tobacco (despite constant Greek efforts), claiming that it was ‘unacceptable to UK palates’, and that Greek wine was not imported in such significant quantities into the British market to allow London to exert some influence on the EEC regime to be applied to that product.⁹²

The most important consequence of the visit, as acknowledged by Hooper, was that ‘it brought out into the open what [was] likely to become the major long term problem in Anglo-Greek relations’. The ambassador himself remarked that Britain’s accession to the Community ‘inevitably [brought the British] into a new relationship with Greece’. He also said that Lord Limerick’s visit marked the end of

reticence, caused by the Colonel's failure to press this point effectively and Whitehall's reluctance to precipitate its discussion.⁹³

On this subject it was C. J. Michalopoulos that made the junta's thoughts known to the British:

The Greek view was that the Association needed to be reanimated and in this respect Greece sought the help of Britain on entry. Britain could also play a helpful part in the current negotiation of the additional protocol.

In concluding the conversation, Michalopoulos reiterated the view that 'the decisions taken in Brussels in 1967 or 1968 about Greece had been wrong and the Greek Government's hope was that Britain, on entering the Community, would help to correct this'.⁹⁴ As becomes obvious, the Colonels were expecting a lot from London, in terms of lobbying for 'the Greek cause' within the EEC, and they made that extremely explicit to the British. As the defence attaché, Brigadier Baxter, characteristically noted in his annual report, '[t]he régime look[ed] to Britain to pull her chestnuts out of the fire in Brussels'.⁹⁵

The emergence of the EEC question in discussions between Athens and London had also deeper consequences, substantially affecting relations between the two capitals, inasmuch as it was the principal cause for the adoption of different approaches:

However, the visit has shown very clearly that there is *a difference of approach* between ourselves – whose objectives are primarily commercial and concerned mainly with bilateral trade – and the Greeks, whose objective, apart from the development of relations which the visit signifies, has been predominantly to secure our support, after we enter the EEC, in achieving their aims there (emphasis added).⁹⁶

The British ambassador, increasingly apprehensive about the course of his country's policy towards the Colonels, also noted that Lord Limerick had skilfully avoided any 'undesirable commitments' in that direction, and repeated that a 'very careful handling' would be

necessary if he and his colleagues were to avoid raising expectations ‘which [were] likely to be disappointed and thus risking damage to [British] interests’ in Greece.

He did not, furthermore, fail to note the quid pro quo that the Greeks explicitly proposed:

... the Greeks no doubt wished to suggest that our chances of getting a greater share in public sector contracts here depend upon the degree of political support we can give them in the EEC ... the sympathetic noises about showing consideration to Britain were presumably subject to *the implicit proviso that we are ‘on probation’ until the Greeks see what practical help we can give them in their European policies* (emphasis added).

In relation to Greek aspirations in the EEC, it was immediately recognized on the British side that London’s room for manoeuvre was narrow, as the British were expecting to have ‘more important fish to fry’ in the early months of membership. The ambassador suggested now the rather different course of ‘a policy of wait-and-see’ for the following ‘six months or so’, ‘leav[ing] the Greeks to make the running’. Clear, and possibly hard, decisions on the general conduct of relations with Athens would need to be taken after that period, and the importance of the return of Greece to a more democratic system of government was acknowledged. The most powerful forces pulling in that direction were identified in the ‘magnetic attraction’ which the Community exerted on the Greek government. Hooper, recognizing this for the first time, concluded his dispatch to the foreign secretary by writing this: ‘Perhaps we should leave these forces to work for a while’. It is worth noting here, nevertheless, that the Greeks were not willing to recognize the existence of a political barrier in their relations with EEC because of the nature of their regime. Greek ministers thought of that ‘as of little consequence and as an issue which it is inappropriate to raise in “an economic organisation”’ (emphasis added).⁹⁷

As far as reception was concerned, the first official visit by a British minister, albeit important per se, did not set the Colonels’ propaganda machine in such a motion as to present it as a confirmation of Greece’s

international respectability, ‘possibly because of [Greek] reservations about its character’. According to the British, press coverage was ‘adequate, though not very prominent’.⁹⁸ However, there were some critical articles in opposition newspapers, both left and right, on the political side and on the economic and commercial objectives, with *To Vima* even using a quotation from Goldsmith’s ‘Traveller’ to castigate the Heath government’s policy towards Greece: ‘Honour sinks where Commerce long prevails’.⁹⁹

While these deliberations on what stance to adopt towards the junta were taking place in London, members of the Colonels’ regime were becoming increasingly worried over the Conservative government’s chances of remaining in power in the not so distant future. According to a journalistic source, the Greek cabinet was not appearing particularly forthcoming in relation to major transactions with the British because its members thought that, if ‘a socialist government’ returned to Whitehall, it would have no compunction about cancelling any arms sales concluded by the Conservatives.¹⁰⁰ The Colonels’ anxiety was clearly reflected in Pavlides¹⁰¹ reporting:

... the Greek Government perhaps thought of the current time as a ‘*a pleasant interlude*’ under the Conservatives, but that in her relations with Greece, Britain might well revert under a Labour Government to the *coolness* that had existed during the last administration (emphasis added).

The Greek perception that Wilson would soon return to No. 10 was based on reports from Sorokos, claiming that Labour ‘would be in a powerful position to fight the next election’.¹⁰² Sorokos, however, in personal exchanges with British officials, assured them that Labour leaders (citing Wilson as an example) ‘usually sobered up’ when in office and confronted with the facts and responsibilities of life. The Greek ambassador put FCO officials’ minds to rest by asserting that, with the constant improvement of relations with Britain, ‘a point would be reached at which it would be difficult if not impossible for a hypothetical future left-wing British Labour government to “*unscramble the omelette*” of the “good working relationship”, even if it wished to do so’ (emphasis added).¹⁰³

In order to dispel the Greek suspicions over British willingness to go ahead with major arms sales -whose prospects were not good in any case, because of the dominant position of the Americans in this field (the British often referred to the 'US/Greek military "special relationship")¹⁰⁴ - the British could not do much but try to persuade the new Greek ambassador, Broumas, 'of the soundness of the British polity and economy', and reiterate, when thought appropriate, their willingness to supply Greece with arms to be used for NATO purposes.¹⁰⁵ To that effect, the MOD sales manager, Thexton, who was on a visit to Greece with the vice-president of BAC in order to promote the sale of missiles and frigates, expressed London's anxiety lest the Greeks were being hesitant to buy material from Britain because of fears of Labour taking over. Thexton reiterated Lord Carrington's statement concerning Whitehall's willingness to resolutely support all arms sales to Greece and to assist British companies in offering good terms to the Greek armed forces. The British also reassured the Greeks that any government in London (whether Conservative or Labour) would fulfil the obligations of an arms sales contract. The Greeks' response to that was that there was no issue of 'unwillingness' or 'doubts' on their side, and that they were merely studying and weighing all offers.¹⁰⁶

The Foreign Office, admitting that 'the Colonels [we]re too unloved' and that this was not a unique case (there were similar problems with Spain and Portugal), realized that they could not give false assurances about a possible future Labour policy or mislead the Greeks about the (historically proven, though, high degree of) continuity on essential issues in foreign policy between one administration and another.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, it was decided that this was a matter on which the Greeks 'must be left to make their own judgement'.¹⁰⁸ This accords with Hill's view that 'the prospect of changes of government, democratic or otherwise, makes any foreign policy-maker cautious about what he or she can promise to outsiders', as 'ultimately no government can tie the hands of its successors on the major issues of foreign policy, whatever the particular constitutional provisions'.¹⁰⁹

1972 was an inconclusive year also in the sense that it merely introduced the issue that would dominate Anglo-Greek relations in

the 1970s, namely the EEC factor. Britain would officially become a full member of the regional organization on 1 January 1973, and the British knew that this meant that relations with Greece (although not a priority on the general agenda) would take on 'a new dimension', chiefly because the Community had 'in its gift something which the régime badly want[ed] and need[ed]'. Hooper concluded his annual review for 1972 with the following indicative words:

The question of British support for Greek objectives in the EEC will be one which will be in the forefront of Greek preoccupations in the coming year; and how we are to confront and, if possible, turn to our own advantage the pressures to which we shall certainly be subjected will be one of the major problems – if not the major problem – of Anglo-Greek relations in 1973.¹¹⁰

During 1972 the Athens-London relationship took a new direction, as the time was now ripe for a different approach to be taken as far as British policy towards the Colonels was concerned. Public fuss over Greece had subsided in the UK and the junta's international position was getting stronger and stronger- a fact graphically illustrated by the first visit of a Western European minister and the US Vice-president's presence in Athens. The British employed similar tactics in their effort to pursue a more active policy. The visits of Lords Carrington and Limerick were conceived to put emphasis on two not particularly contentious fields that London wanted to expand: defence and trade cooperation. Nixon's desire not to displease the junta, in conjunction with the declining British share of Greece's market, meant that the Conservatives' three objectives would be set in stone. Therefore, and although opposition (even within the party in power) started becoming vocal again, Britain consistently resisted attempts by Scandinavian countries for action against Greece in NATO, and ardently pursued arms sales to the Colonels, negotiating rewards to them for commercial favours. The only factors holding back relations were Papadopoulos' fears that the 'pleasant interlude' would end soon and Labour would take over once again, and the impact of Britain's future EEC membership.

CHAPTER 6

THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TOWARDS THE COLONELS, 1973: OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS

The year 1973 was one of the most eventful, and in this sense different, years of the junta's reign in Greece. Sir Robin Hooper comparing it to the previous one (on the whole, 'quiet and inconclusive') wrote that 1973 was definitely not quiet but certainly inconclusive, as, despite the seminal events that took place within these 12 months, it was 'still by no means certain in which direction Greece [was] heading'. This 'baffling and frustrating' year started with five months of social, political and economic difficulties, culminated in an abortive naval mutiny and its concomitant abolition of the monarchy early in the summer, followed by the appointment of an extremely short-lived civilian government, bloody clashes between the army and students, and another bloodless coup, carried out by hardliners.¹

The British view of the Greek junta at the beginning of this turbulent year was mostly serene, as no serious threat to the government or its leader was recognized and, moreover, the regime was thought of having '–albeit it to a limited extent– consolidated its position internationally'. As mentioned in the previous chapter, according to Hooper, the only lesson to be drawn from 1972 was that it was gradually borne on the Colonels that 'Greece's future [lay] with an economically and,

in the long-term, politically united Europe, and that Greece [could not] hope to play her full part in this unless she return[ed] to at least some politically acceptable semblance of Parliamentary Government'.² Greece's relations with the European Economic Community were acknowledged as being of major importance: according to an FCO official: 'Greek preoccupation with Community matters [would] loom even larger in 1973 than it did in [1972]' and that it would 'present them [i.e. the Greeks] (and us, for that matter) with some knotty problems'.³ However, the stability that the Colonels had provided was praised as 'the régime's principal -and sometimes underrated- contribution to this sorely tried country', and the ambassador's final remark in his report was that 'the present state of affairs can therefore last for quite a long time: and while it does, *we have to live with it*' (emphasis added).⁴

This last inference clearly illustrates Britain's (and other Western countries') dilemma over relations with the Colonels, in general, and assisting them within the EEC, in particular. On the one hand, it would be a major political gain to Britain 'if, instead of the dictatorship of *a narrow, military clique*, isolated from Western European parliamentary democracies, there existed in Greece a stable, democratic régime', with 'stable' being 'the operative word' (emphasis added). On the other hand, though, the nature of an eventual successor regime in Athens kept troubling the British, who did not think that they should just assume that this would be 'the sort of orderly, liberal, western-orientated set-up that would suit [them]'. In terms of commercial dividends, it was asserted by the British that 'if we were to give the present Greek régime overt political support in the EEC we might expect to get over a period of time a share of the civilian public contracts'.

The commercial dividends were extremely significant as Whitehall was particularly worried about Britain's sliding position in the Greek list of foreign trade and the success of their rivals:

Finally, the French are, with the United States, the natural Western partners for the Greeks to choose in any major and sensitive (e.g. defence or aerospace) contract, and while the Greeks may be worrying about the *perfidy of Albion* in regard to arms

contracts, they do not seem to have drawn similar conclusions from French behaviour to Israel after the Six Days' War (emphasis added).⁵

How much the British were agitated by lagging behind their allies in dealing economically with Greece was aptly demonstrated: 'We doubt ... whether the comparable British figures for investment and credits would be much above a tenth of the French level'. However, they also had to face the matter realistically and acknowledge that, as long as the Colonels were in power, 'it would be wrong to give the Greeks the impression that [they] could do anything substantial to help them overcome the fundamental (i.e. institutional) obstacles in the way of their eventual full membership of the Community'; especially, when they knew that the lost ground in trade was 'unlikely to be made up solely through political gestures' and that 'non possumus' was probably 'the most effective external pressure which might bring progress towards democracy within Greece'. Nevertheless, Hooper suggested a continuation of the policy of 'normal relations', taking the French line of conducting contacts discreetly and with tact, in order to serve British hopes of 'substantial, national commercial dividends' in Greece.⁶

On the issue of the Colonels' proposed *quid pro quo*, whereby they would award contracts in the public sector for a more favourable attitude from EEC member states (including the British), London was apprehensive but also largely accommodating:

Unpalatable though this may be, we shall stand a better chance of getting such contracts if we appear reasonably forthcoming ... we might, if we thought it right, do something to meet the Greeks.

More specifically, the example of Greek wine exports to the EEC is telling, as at COREPER on 25 January Sir Palliser expressed himself in favour of the compromise proposals the Greeks were prepared to accept, and the British (who, however, had only a slight direct interest in the subject in view of the meagre consumption of Greek wine in Britain) were expecting to be able to support the Greeks in the Council

of Ministers, as well.⁷ Moreover, as Royle told the Greek ambassador a few months later, the British government was trying to help the Greeks in the issue of wine, and that was acknowledged and appreciated by the junta.⁸

'Europeanization' of Anglo-Greek relations

The question of the European Community and Greece's relations with it, was to play a lead role in Anglo-Greek relations in more ways than expected by either Athens or London.⁹ Quite indicative of this were the two moments of crisis in relations with the Colonels in the first half of 1973, both caused by domestic events in the British capital; namely the high visibility of the Greek domestic situation, and the first debate (during the Heath government's tenure) on Greece in either of the Houses.

As is well known, 1973 is a milestone for British politics as it marked the start of the British membership of the EEC. To celebrate the occasion an official gala at Covent Garden was organised on 3 January. The troubles for Whitehall began when the famous British actor, Lord Laurence Olivier read a letter written by an anonymous Greek political prisoner (later revealed to be Professor George Mangakis). The author referred to the Greeks' isolation by their 'jailors', and looked to Europe to 'play her role'.¹⁰

The 'Covent Garden incident' was picked up by the Greek regime and became the main subject of interest in the Athens press during the first days of 1973. On 5 January, *Acropolis* carried the headline: 'Attack against Greece in the presence of Queen Elizabeth and British Prime Minister', and, on the same day, ambassador Broumas called on Sir Dennis Greenhill to express his surprise and embarrassment.¹¹ The permanent under-secretary reacted by saying that he had been surprised himself and asked Broumas to reassure his government that 'it was in no way subject to government approval or endorsement'. He also made extensive use of his diplomatic skills, asserting that 'things happened from time to time which caused both sides problems', and that British and Greeks would have to do what they could to 'keep relations on the stable and fruitful course they had followed

in recent months', adding that 'certainly, British policy towards Greece remained unchanged'.¹²

Douglas-Home reaction to the incident was immediate: 'It was deplorable. How did we miss it or didn't we get a preview of the programme?' As far as the British government's foreknowledge of the reading of the letter was concerned, FCO documents reveal that an account of the contents had been given to the private secretary of the prime minister 48 hours in advance, which caused Heath to query the reference to Greece. However, it was agreed that 'it was then too late to do anything about it', and, therefore, the FCO had not been informed.¹³

Cavalieratos, the only official of the Greek Foreign Ministry who did not help 'fan the initial flames',¹⁴ asserted that public opinion was an important factor in diplomatic relations, and called for assuaging public opinion and minimizing the affair as far as possible, in order to avoid an unpleasant impression which could be damaging.¹⁵ British officials, who were by all means trying to avoid giving the impression that Greece had been 'deliberately pilloried with the acquiesce, if not the active approval',¹⁶ of Whitehall, expressed the hope that the fuss about the incident would not create a lasting damage to Anglo-Greek relations and that it would soon 'die down'.¹⁷ One of the casualties of this, however, proved to be the intensification of defence cooperation between Athens and London. The idea of 'bilateral' training by the British Army in Greece (put forth by Hooper), although considered generally attractive (for it would offer a further useful link with the Greek armed forces) had to be postponed for a year so as 'to prevent a recrudescence of public polemics', which might damage Anglo-Greek relations, including British commercial interests.¹⁸

Admittedly, though, 'valuable lessons were learnt', as the incident 'sharply reminded [officials in London] of Greek sensibilities' and proved that the basis of a 'good working relationship' was much more fragile than they thought. Moreover, it showed the new Greek ambassador, Broumas, and the Greek mission in general, in a very unfavourable light. Broumas' handling of the crisis 'did not inspire confidence' on the British side, for it reflected his inexperience of diplomacy and his imperfect command of English.¹⁹ The British were satisfied to see

the junta play the issue down ‘fairly determinedly’, but had the feeling that ‘Lord Olivier’s five minutes on stage may in the end prove rather expensive’, for they could cost Britain contracts in the public sector, such as the Marconi tender for a £4–5 million ship-to-shore radio station.²⁰

In the run up to the decision for that contract, the Colonels tried once again to twist Britain’s hand over the EEC and other commercial matters, causing a strong reply by Hooper. In this context, members of the junta, such as Makarezos, had earlier informed Western ambassadors that ‘the road to the ministry of National Economy ran through the ministry of Foreign Affairs’.²¹ The British ambassador thought it advisable to ‘react vigorously’ at that juncture, ‘though without referring specifically to Marconi or- at this stage anyway- making the legitimate point that so far [the British] had seen very few concrete results from [their] cultivation of a “good working relationship”’. He made the point, however, that ‘any attempt to apply to Britain, which had consistently tried to build up a sound working relationship with Greece, the principle that commercial benefits followed political concessions would create a deplorable impression’ and would ‘jeopardise’ the whole relationship.²² It is also noted here that ‘the weakness of the economy during 1973 was becoming all too obvious’,²³ as there was ‘repeated evidence’ that it was not properly under control.²⁴

Meantime, nevertheless, attention was turned to the second internal crisis of this relationship; that is the House of Lords debate of February 1973. As mentioned in previous chapters, the Heath government was well aware of parliamentary criticism concerning its policy, especially on arms trade, towards Greece. That is why in January 1973 it did not agree to the sale of Shorland armoured cars (fitted with machine guns and smoke grenade dischargers), which were mainly used for riot control.²⁵

The two visits to Athens in 1972, however, seemed to have revived parliamentary interest in Greece, exemplified in the form of a motion initiated in the House of Lords by Lord Beaumont of Whitley on 15 February. The motion urged the government to influence the Athens regime towards a restoration of political freedoms in Greece. Notwithstanding this, the government remained adamant about its

belief that 'outside pressure was not going to achieve this', and was conscious of the 'adverse effect' the adoption of such a motion would have on relations with the Colonels, since it would practically mean a new development in policy towards them.²⁶ In light of the fact that a defeat in the Lords would have been less damaging in terms of Anglo-Greek relations 'but quite bad enough', FCO officials considered proposing an amendment, which in the event was not necessary, for the motion was withdrawn at the end of the debate.²⁷

The debate did take place with Lady Tweedsmuir intervening to support Greece's participation in NATO, thus bringing the international security issue to the forefront once again: 'Any weakening on the flank of NATO would be particularly unfortunate in present circumstances. In the strategic field the relatively recent Soviet military presence in the Mediterranean has added a new dimension to the problems inherent in the area'.²⁸ To complement this speech, Anthony Royle called the Greek ambassador to make it clear that both debates in the House of Lords, and Lord Beaumont himself, were 'of little significance'. Moreover, the parliamentary under-secretary reassured Broumas that his government had not sought the debate and that this did not indicate any change in its attitude towards Greece, and that Lady Tweedsmuir's speech was the only one to which the junta should pay attention. Broumas answered that he knew who was promoting that kind of debate, which was 'not representative of British public opinion but of the views of two or three organisations only', indirectly referring, mainly to the activities of EAACG.²⁹

Notwithstanding these assurances, Athens (both government and opposition) was not thrilled by Lady Tweedsmuir's two speeches on 16 and 17 February. On one side, the liberal opposition complained ('more in sorrow than in anger') that 'the principle of non interference in Greece's internal affairs [was] a pious half-truth', and *To Vima* argued that there seemed to be a sort of 'understanding towards the Greek Government'. On the other side, 'semi-official government comments' were 'rather grudging', with a minister of the Greek embassy appearing distressed by two points:³⁰ first that Lady Tweedsmuir did not object to insulting remarks made by certain peers about the Greek regime, and, second, that, while trade relations between the two countries

were characterized as ‘good’, political relations had remained, for three years, at the level of ‘constructive’.³¹

The British, however, reinforced by the US ambassador’s high opinion of the speeches (‘what she had said went for US policy too’), drew the conclusion that they had ‘come out of what might have been an awkward situation *without losing any feathers or unduly ruffling those of others*’ (emphasis added).³² They also made the gloomy realization, though, that relations with the junta had reached a deadlock: London, on the one hand, was finding it increasingly difficult to upgrade the ‘good working relationship’ (especially in the context of the late February student unrest and its ‘predictably clumsy’ handling by the Colonels),³³ and on the other, could not downgrade (let alone sever) relations with Athens, as that would entail a big blow on British commercial prospects and would thus prove utterly counter-productive. Nowhere was this stalemate more obvious than in matters concerning Greek association with the EEC. The British understood that appearing to block Greece’s association agreement would harm their primary objectives re Greece (as formulated in September 1972), but were equally aware that lifting any restrictions on Greece would most likely remove ‘the one real incentive’ for the Colonels to normalize the political situation. To exemplify this point, an official of the European integration department of the FCO, wondered (while referring to the ‘freezing’ of the association agreement) the following:

Do we really want to thaw it without securing some kind of *quid pro quo* from the Greeks? I see no reason to throw this card away for nothing. Are we not in favour of some kind of return to democracy in Greece?³⁴

The dilemma faced by the British was clearly manifested in a letter by Hooper, in anticipation of the first office meeting on Greece in 1973. In that letter the ambassador identified the central question as being that ‘in our policy towards Greece we have so far been trying to have the best of both worlds’, performing a balancing act between economic and other interests. Hooper admitted that the answer to this dilemma had been the formula of the ‘good working relationship’,

with ‘normal but unostentatious’ contacts in the commercial, defence and cultural spheres backed up by ministerial contacts in a low key. He also acknowledged, nevertheless, that, although this policy had prevented any further deterioration in relations, positive results had so far been ‘unimpressive’. As a consequence, he restated the predicament in the form of opting between making ‘a much bigger effort’ to get on terms with the junta (accepting thus domestic criticism), and (bearing in mind that Greece is ‘anyway a small, disproportionately difficult, and unrewarding market’) carrying on with the working relationship ‘at more or less its present level’.³⁵

However, as far as British influence in pushing the Colonels to restore democracy in Greece was concerned, British officials were encountering insurmountable difficulties. The Southern European Department of the FCO occasionally pushed the Athens staff to remind the regime of Britain’s hope ‘that democracy will be restored’, even though that had ceased to be one of Whitehall’s primary objectives towards Greece shortly after the advent of the Conservatives to power.³⁶ The officials of the Athens embassy were quick to emphasize the limitations they were facing, stressing that ‘very few such opportunities’ arose in the course of their normal dealings with the junta. According to Tomkys:

Those with whom we mainly come into contact ... do not exercise any effective influence on this aspect of Greek Government policy. On the other hand, talking to those who really do make – or influence – decisions on such matters is liable to be an unrewarding exercise.

The British official also referred to the consideration that reminders like these ‘do not mix very well with, and may well impede, the day-to-day conduct of business’,³⁷ ‘particularly since Broumas might well misunderstand and misreport what was said to him’. Moreover, he recognised the desirability to make reference to the aforementioned British hope, ‘for presentational reasons’, but also expressed his personal hope that it would be understood that ‘there are limits to what we can – and indeed ... should do’.³⁸

The same conclusion was reached in the office meeting on Greece that took place on 4 April 1973. According to the record, ‘it was pointed out that while it remains our wish to see a stable democracy in Greece, which would be desirable on a number of counts, notably in regard to Greece’s relations with the EEC, there were limits to what could in practice be done’.³⁹ Therefore, it was decided that there was ‘no reason’ to make any major changes to the British objectives, as officials thought that ‘events have not undermined the assumptions that underlie them’.⁴⁰ The only change would be in the form of a re-wording and re-ordering of British policy objectives towards Greece as follows:

- (a) to preserve as far as possible the military effectiveness of Greece as a NATO ally;
- (b) to retain our ability to influence the Greeks in matters of foreign policy, in particular over Cyprus;
- (c) to protect and further our commercial interests.⁴¹

As Hooper’s memorandum on the meeting explained, the main change was in the *order* of priorities:

Important though our commercial interests in Greece are, the need to keep Cyprus quiet, thereby preserving the stability of the south-eastern flank of NATO, must be overriding. The Greek role in this is important.⁴²

Yet again, the significance of the Colonels’ trump card of security was acknowledged by the British, and this was also manifested explicitly in the case of NATO’s ACE Mobile Force (AMF) exercise, which was programmed to take place in Athens in June 1973. During the last exercise in Greece in 1971, British troops were photographed marching under banners acclaiming the 1967 coup, and that resulted in letters by Sir Hugh Greene and MPs. In spite of the danger of inciting criticism anew, it was decided that troops should take part in both the exercise and the parade, as this would provide ‘concrete evidence of NATO’s solidarity’, and was ‘important for the morale of the vulnerable flank countries’.⁴³ Charles Wiggin made that even more explicit

by adding: 'we do not want the Greek régime to start having doubts about NATO, least of all in this year of CSCE and MBFR'.⁴⁴

As regards the 'especially difficult' question of the EEC (which was, alongside visits and defence cooperation, one of the means of promoting British policy), it was agreed that it was 'presentationally important' for London to help the Colonels in Brussels, and make clear to them that their troubles there were not of Britain's making. As part of this suggested *quid pro quo*, the British thought that, while remaining careful not to give empty promises, 'it should nonetheless be possible to extract some advantage from such help as we might be able to give'.⁴⁵ More specifically, Hooper suggested a 'helpful and sympathetic attitude' towards the Greeks and their problems, believing that this would safeguard British interests, including prospects of obtaining public sector contracts, and would 'ensure that [Britain's] principal competitors (the French and Germans) do not have the advantage'. He clarified his point further, leaving little doubt about Britain's policy on this sensitive subject:

{ . . . } we should take full credit and extract what return we can whenever we speak up for the Greeks. We can support them on such matters as may arise within the Community affecting their interests but not impinging on important interests of other member states.⁴⁶

No change whatsoever was put forth in relation to arms sales, as it was agreed that London 'should continue to pursue an active policy on arms sales for NATO purposes',⁴⁷ notwithstanding the limiting factors of American dominance in this field, and Greek doubts about whether contracts would be honoured by a possible future Labour government. At the time, the only categories of defence sales about which the British were cautious were those (such as small arms or CS gas) which could be used for internal repression, and were thus likely to arouse parliamentary criticism in London. A further relaxation of this policy was considered and finally rejected in view of a backlash in the British capital, although ministers had already approved the sale of 'minor' arms 'in a number of border-line cases'. In terms of major defence contracts, British shipyards were in the running for a £70 million order of four

frigates for the Hellenic Navy, causing the Athens embassy staff to try to influence the junta ‘in the right direction’.⁴⁸

On the issue of visits, however, the British decided to adopt a tougher stance and counter-attack in order to deal with Papadopoulos’ demands. A few days before, the Greek premier had fulminated against some European countries, telling Hooper that ‘Greek economic policy towards her trading partners would be governed by the political attitude which these adopted towards her’. The ambassador retaliated by saying that his government would ‘react very unfavourably to any attempt to bargain trading concessions against political support’.⁴⁹ Papadopoulos’ ‘intransigent mood’ made the British stiffen their position vis-à-vis the Greeks and keep their cards closer to their chests. Goodison’s view is quite revealing about how this was received at King Charles Street:

{ … } this reinforces the tactical need to bring home to the Greeks that, in real terms, it is they who are the *demandeurs*, and that we will not be inclined to do them favours until we have been given grounds to do so. Until this has sunk in, we should reserve our trump cards.⁵⁰

Quite revealing of the British’ less compromising attitude towards relations with the Greek Colonels was the following caveat, which accompanied the policy objectives:

We should continue to be careful *not to go too far and too fast* in prompting and consolidating the ‘good working relationship’ with the Greek Government (emphasis added).

Even more telling, however, was the newfound British desire to set specific terms in their relationship with the junta, and make it more performance- (or rather commercially) based. To illustrate the point, a visit by a Greek trade minister, in return for Lord Limerick’s to Athens the previous November, was to be considered but only after the Greeks had kept their part of the diplomatic bargain; that is

{ … } only when a formal decision had been taken (probably in June) by the Greeks on the contract for the Athens ship-to-shore

communications centre. The Greeks had indicated that it would go to Marconi and the decision would be a test of their attitude towards us in commercial matters.⁵¹

As regards the Marconi contract, which was regarded as a reward for the Lord Carrington and Lord Limerick visits, Papadopoulos had informed Hooper that 'the decision to give preference to a British firm had been political in origin'.⁵²

Whitehall was left in no doubt about Athens' 'exaggerated expectations' as regarded progress in Greece-EEC relations, and viewed disapprovingly (or rather grudgingly) Papadopoulos' effort to use what leverage he had at his disposal ('notably the award of contracts in the public sector') to obtain a more positive attitude from member states, including Britain. As a consequence of that, a visit by Douglas-Home, so much coveted by Greek ministers, was to be 'reserved to mark either a major improvement in Anglo-Greek relations or some significant move by the Greeks towards democracy'.

Apart from the difficulties in direct relations mentioned above, the British reaction had also roots in domestic developments in Greece. Notwithstanding the 'present system of mild repression, with periodic lapses which strain[ed] relations with Western countries', the British thought that the Greek leader seemed 'firmly in the saddle', and expected his regime to 'be with [them] for the foreseeable future'. Once again, 'democratic' opposition was discredited, and the only possible threat to his authority was identified in the armed forces:

If there were to be an effective challenge to his control in the near future, it would most probably come from the Army: from discontented officers, or following *a debacle in Cyprus* (emphasis added).⁵³

Hooper also embarked on a *tour d'horizon* of possible future Greek political developments and alternatives to the junta. The possibility of a return by King Constantine was deemed 'remote'. He wasn't considered to command much support among Greeks (chiefly because

'he had made too many mistakes'), and therefore the monarchy's best chance of survival was thought to lie in a solution on 'Spanish lines'.⁵⁴ According to Hooper's estimation, the most probable alternative was 'a further military coup resulting in a regime even more authoritarian than the present one'.⁵⁵ The ambassador's evaluation was based on a general toughening of the regime, mainly owing to the opposition to liberalization by Papadopoulos' more authoritarian supporters in the army, whose hand was strengthened by the student unrest. The final conclusion of the ambassador's report was dismal:

Real progress towards a restoration of democracy is clearly less likely now than ever.⁵⁶

This is the atmosphere that prevailed in Greece immediately before the summer of 1973. The situation was to come to a head with developments sparked by the Velos mutiny in late May. However, British increasing disapproval of the regime's domestic practices was acutely illustrated a few days before that incident. The opportunity arose this time from a new wave of arrests in the Greek capital. As a reaction to this, 'a flood of letters' was received in Great Charles Street, and Whitehall in general was 'impressed by the concern widely expressed in the United Kingdom *by responsible people* (emphasis added) about the arrests'.⁵⁷ The fact that the issue reached the British Parliament made Royle call the Greek ambassador to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to discuss it. In particular, during the meeting, Royle said that Athens should be aware of the strong feeling expressed by MPs about the arrest of Professor John Pesmazoglou,⁵⁸ who had close links with Britain. The British minister informed Broumas that London, albeit anxious to continue with the close working relationship, was finding it difficult to defend the actions of the junta against across-the-board parliamentary criticism, and called for actions to ease the situation:

[...] pressure in Parliament (*even from supporters of HMG*) might well build up for a change in Government policy or for a move to block the Supplementary Protocol adapting the EEC/Greece Association Agreement to take account of enlargement. We

should greatly regret and of course resist this; but *we hoped to see the situation defused by actions in Greece* (emphasis added).⁵⁹

Nevertheless, one should not go as far as to interpret these actions by the Conservative government as exercise of influence in order for democracy to be restored in Greece merely for ethical reasons. This shows quite clearly the effect of the concept of Europeanization on relations between Athens and London. The fact that, as acknowledged above, the EEC/Greece association and future prospects served as arguably the most effective incentive for (at least) Papadopoulos to liberalize the regime and take bolder steps towards establishing a parliamentary democracy, in conjunction with Britain's newly found role as an (aspiring leading) member of the EEC, and the concomitant desire for London not to rock the European boat upon its entry, introduced a new dimension in Anglo-Greek relations. It was this context, then, which, coupled with (sometimes intense) domestic criticism, led the British to reconsider their stance towards the Greek junta.

This was the first time (in the three years that he had been responsible for relations with Athens) that Royle had to speak in this way to the Greek ambassador, and he explained that that was because his government was suffering from 'grave embarrassment'. Finally, Royle asked Broumas to inform Athens of the 'grave concern' felt in Britain about the Pesmazoglou case. The Greek ambassador confined his answer to blaming the 'two principal societies' in Britain working against the regime: the League for Democracy in Greece and the European Atlantic Action Committee for Greece (EAACG); according to Broumas, the first was aiming at establishing communism in Greece and the latter was an agent of international socialism. The ambassador added that 'the Greek Embassy were the victims, trying to defend themselves against these two organisations'.⁶⁰ In any case, this was another incident in the series of 'nothing but trouble' the Greek ambassador complained he had had since his arrival in London (first the Olivier affair, then the House of Lords debate, and now the Pesmazoglou case). As a consequence of this, the new second Chancellor at the embassy at Upper Brooke Street lamented to an FCO official that relations seemed limited to NATO and the economic sphere, to

get the answer that Whitehall ‘did not have it in mind at the moment to change its policy towards Greece’, and that Royle had not summoned Broumas to announce such a change.⁶¹

It should not be inferred, however, from this case that the British became supporters of Pesmazoglou or that they decided to strengthen the opposition to the regime overnight. As mentioned above, it was parliamentary pressure imposed on the Heath government (given that the Greek professor had many friends and acquaintances in numerous European countries, including Britain, due to his past role as Greece’s chief negotiator with the EEC) that had forced Royle to discuss this issue with the Greeks, not sympathy for his political, or other, views. This point is particularly enforced by the content of the exchanges of FCO officials about Pesmazoglou, in the context of student unrest a few months before. More specifically, John Pesmazoglou, who had asked to be in touch with the British embassy, had told Tomkys that the regime was losing its credibility and any support it had had previously, and that it was the responsibility of Greece’s friends abroad to help the process of the return of democracy in the country. When Pesmazoglou met Tomkys again in late February to discuss the student revolt and to urge London to exert pressure on the junta, British officials were highly critical of some of his postulations. His basic proposition was deemed neither ‘feasible [n]or desirable’, as he was thought of ‘building up hopes which {were} likely to be unjustified’, and (to use their usual and over worn argument) the British were of the opinion that ‘formal intervention by foreign governments {was} unlikely to do any good’.⁶² London’s disapproval of Pesmazoglou’s proposed course of action was made even more explicit with the directions sent to the Athens embassy from the Southern European Department of the FCO:

{ … } we find rather disquieting [Pesmazoglou’s] efforts to embroil us. We see no advantage in becoming involved – on the contrary, to do so would almost certainly damage British interests. But you are clearly well aware that we cannot allow ourselves to be used by Pesmazoglou and that it would be dangerous to get too closely involved with him. We should be grateful if you would continue to be highly cautious.⁶³

Nevertheless, the Colonels' reaction to Royle's discussion with Broumas over the Greek professor was immediate and acute: they were resentful about the informal and unpublicized representations made to their ambassador about this case. Moreover, when a British official met a special adviser of Papadopoulos who had been educated at LSE, Anthony Kefalas justified the regime's reaction by saying that the prime minister, 'himself a moderate, was subject to many pressures' and, consequently, tried to govern by consensus. As explained by Kefalas, that meant that if Papadopoulos wanted to push through certain important issues 'he had to give way to colleagues who had different views on other issues' (adding that in this connection, 'the importance of the influence of Colonel D Ioannides [sic] was overdone').⁶⁴ On the question of Pesmazoglou, Papadopoulos' advisers were said to be pushing for full amnesty.

Only three days after the meeting at Royle's office, news of an attempted naval mutiny reached London. The abortive naval coup was received in the British capital as 'an amateurish and clumsy operation', involving only a small number of people, and being dealt with promptly and efficiently by the security services of the junta.⁶⁵ The next day it became known that the Greek destroyer *Velos* (arrow), which was situated off Sardinia, withdrew from the NATO exercise in which it was participating and, after anchoring off Fiumicino near Rome, its commander, Pappas, asked for political asylum for him and another 30 members of the ship's company. An extradition request for them was rejected by authorities in Rome, thus exacerbating the junta's frustration.

Apart from its seminal repercussions within Greece, the attempted naval mutiny and the *Velos* incident were of considerable importance for London's relations with Athens, inasmuch as they were to be followed by a large British naval visit on 2 June. The upcoming visit was destined to expose Whitehall to criticism 'from the usual quarters in London', who would argue that the traditional justification for maintaining a working relationship with the Colonels (i.e. Greece's efficiency and significance as a NATO member) no longer held good, as the reliability of the Greek navy would now be in doubt. Ambassador Hooper's suggestion was to go

ahead with the visit as planned (as would also the Americans) for the following reason:

Cancellation would be a public declaration of no confidence, which would be deeply resented here (not only in government circles) and might affect not merely Anglo-Greek relations but also Greek relations with NATO.⁶⁶

Moreover, the British ambassador considered likely that the junta (also under considerable pressure from the hardliners) would draw the inference that they must exercise an even tighter control over the country. Hooper, furthermore, acknowledged the fact that, if the regime chose to resort to repression and compulsion in order to tackle the mounting economic, social and political problems it was facing, that would both embarrass the British in their relations with it and would increase the pressure on them to distance themselves from it. Notwithstanding all these, he did not cease to believe that Whitehall, for the time being, should not proceed hastily to a radical change of direction towards the Colonels, and that it would have to 'await developments'. The justification for his rationale was given in this form:

{ ... } the justification for our present policies is the assumption that the régime are here to stay, and that while they do, we must do business with them. Over the next few weeks and months, this assumption is likely to be put to a quite considerable test; but on the evidence so far available, I would hesitate to say that the position of the régime had yet weakened to an extent which would warrant our hedging our bets by reducing the already rather tenuous content of the 'good working relationship'.⁶⁷

The three epochs of relations

The incidents of late May functioned as a cue for Papadopoulos to introduce new and unexpected political and constitutional developments that had been conceived some time before: the Greek monarchy was

abolished and a presidential republic, with Papadopoulos as president, declared. A referendum on the constitutional issue was announced and parliamentary elections were promised before the end of 1974,⁶⁸ since, according to Hooper, 'an important motive in Papadopoulos' liberalisation strategy was to gain acceptance in Western Europe and a thaw in the implementation of the Association Agreement'.⁶⁹ All these announcements took place on 1 June 1973, a date that marked the starting-point of a new era in Anglo-Greek relations. According to the Greek ambassador in London, 1973, the following Greek domestic developments, could be divided into three phases:

- a. The period from the start of the year until 1 June, or the period of 'depressed anxiety'. During this time political relations were stagnant and the British were anxious to see signs towards the restoration of democracy in Greece. This British desire was communicated to the Greeks by both the government and the opposition, from within or outside the parliament, officially or unofficially, directly or indirectly. Moreover, Britain was giving signs that it would not hesitate to use the EEC if it decided to pressure Athens.
- b. The period from 1 June to mid-November, or of 'propitious wait'. As it will be shown below, the British were fairly satisfied by political developments, including the assumption of the premiership by Markezinis, as well as the emphasis he chose to put on relations with the EEC, and Britain, in particular. Furthermore, actions by the opposition to the regime and pressure by public opinion and the press in London were subdued.
- c. The period from the Athens Polytechnic uprising and, especially, the 25 November change of leadership, to the end of the year, or the period of many questions and 'mistrustful wait'. This last part marked a return to the stagnation in relations of the first months of 1973 and left the British wondering about the direction and the rate of further democratic developments in Greece.⁷⁰

The second period in 1973 was ignited by the attempted mutiny, which was used by the regime as a pretext to take the king completely out of the picture, using him as a scapegoat for its inefficiencies. The

1 June announcements were specifically targeted at the monarch and the constitution of monarchy (which, however, was not particularly deep rooted in Greece and, as stated above, did not enjoy as much support as in Britain). The *Velos* incident, from the Colonels' point of view, could not have come at a better time, as it served as a 'convenient pretext' for the abolition of the monarchy, which would be used to dispel 'the atmosphere of restlessness' which made change desirable. Economic and social problems, exemplified in dissatisfaction with the rising cost-of-living, rumours of corruption, and turmoil in the universities, coupled with mounting foreign criticism, created an extremely dangerous mixture threatening the regime's stability, if not its very survival. It is important to note, nevertheless, as the British ambassador did immediately, that the main threat for Papadopoulos remained 'a collapse from within, a falling-out of members of the "junta", and [that] to this the royal question [was] irrelevant'.⁷¹

As far as the king was concerned, he could see what was coming. The fact that the mutineers were no doubt monarchist in sympathy alerted King Constantine to the possibility of a move against the monarchy. In his effort to engineer a pre-emptive strike against the Colonels, he contacted the Queen of England, in the aftermath of the late May events. According to FCO sources, he asked that Hooper be instructed to inform Athens that the British endorsed the line followed by Karamanlis' statement issued on 23 April. The Foreign Office, however, was adamant in its objection:

[...] we saw no possible merit in the course of action the King had proposed nor was it clear how it would help the King. He was in effect asking us to inform the Greek Government that we wished to see a change to a democratic régime, possibly headed by M. Karamanlis, the recall of the King to Athens, and no reprisals against those in power.⁷²

The British had formed the opinion that King Constantine had 'no foreknowledge' of the mutiny,⁷³ and were not entirely convinced that a radical constitutional change was now inevitable.⁷⁴ Hooper himself doubted whether Papadopoulos wished to do away with the king but

also acknowledged the ‘considerable pressure’ from the hardliners, and the possibility that he may have to ‘throw the monarchy to the wolves’ to protect his own position and the solidarity of the junta.⁷⁵

Recognition unbound

The abolition of the monarchy meant that the issue of recognition and accreditation would arise for the third time during the Colonels’ regime. The fact that ambassadors were supposed to present their credentials to the head of state resulted in Hooper having no official status for a brief time. The British ambassador suggested to London that it was important to maintain links in Athens and not appear to be hesitating; the best course was thought to be that of maintaining relations ‘as though there had been no change in the government of Greece, as [was] indeed in reality the case’. Moreover, Hooper recommended conducting, to the extent possible, ‘business as usual’ avoiding for then the problems arising in relation to recognition.⁷⁶ The British ambassador’s actions and reports were heavily influential in relation to the decision regarding recognition.⁷⁷

In this instance it became once again obvious how much weight London attributed to its allies’ opinion, as well as its desire for consultations with them before taking important decisions vis-à-vis the Athens junta. The difference from other similar instances lay in the fact that this time Britain paid particular attention to its European friends, as it was now a member of the EEC, and that this process was institutionalized in a forum different to that of NATO. More specifically, Douglas-Home informed the embassy in Athens that ministers had directed that no decision on recognition should be taken prior to consultation with Britain’s EEC partners. The first opportunity to discuss the issue would be in the margin of the meeting of European Foreign Ministers in Luxembourg on 4 and 5 June. In the meantime, embassy staff should avoid any action which could imply recognition of a new head of state.⁷⁸

Informal discussions with European allies did take place and, on 10 June, Sir Robin Hooper received a telegram, entitled ‘Recognition of Greek Republic’ and signed by his foreign secretary, instructing him to inform the Colonels ‘in strict confidence’ that Britain had decided

to resume business with them on the 13th. The ambassador would explain to the government to which he was accredited that 'since the majority of friendly governments whom [the British] have consulted do not appear to consider any specific act of recognition necessary it does not seem feasible to arrange a precisely concerted approach to this matter'. The personal instructions given to Hooper included 'play[ing] down the recognition aspect to the maximum extent and avoid[ing] using the word if possible' when talking to foreign ministers or the press.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, when faced with a point blank question regarding London's stance, he would have to confirm that Britain recognized the regime by answering the *note verbale* sent by the Greek Foreign Ministry two days earlier. The point was to stress that the British were merely continuing business in the normal way with those in power in Greece, with whom they in fact did business before. This way they were trying to show that there had been no significant change in practice and that, since the people in charge in Athens had not changed and since the regime still fulfilled the conditions for recognition followed by Whitehall, this was not a big issue. The criteria to be met by the Colonels in order to gain British recognition were the same as in previous instances: 'the Government must be held to enjoy, with a reasonable prospect of permanency, the obedience of the mass of the population and the effective control of much of the greater part of the national territory'. London, despite increased grievances illustrated in the student revolts, continued to think that the Colonels' regime 'clearly met' these criteria.⁸⁰

The above utterance was also used to defend the Heath government's decision in the face of parliamentary and other criticism. On the same day as the announcement of the recognition,⁸¹ Callaghan asked Sir Alec Douglas-Home in the House of Commons when the ambassador would be 'coming home'. The foreign secretary replied that there was no need for something like that, for 'they [the Colonels] are in control of the country, and therefore we recognise them'. Later in the same session, Douglas-Home asked to correct a slip of the tongue he had made in picking up a phrase of Callaghan's when he talked about the junta: 'I think I said he rightly called it "the illegal régime in Greece"', said the foreign secretary.⁸²

The events were caught by opposition circles in London, with the European Atlantic Action Committee on Greece (EAACG) publishing a rather mordant bulletin to comment on Whitehall's treatment of them.

The indecent haste with which the British government recognised the newly declared Greek Republic on 13th June was a gratuitous favour to Papadopoulos and was rightly the subject of critical questioning in the House of Commons by the Opposition's Shadow Foreign Secretary. That the government felt some embarrassment over the decision was indicated by a revealing 'slip of the tongue' made by Sir Alec Douglas-Home in referring to the Greek régime as 'illegal'. Unfortunately, however, the action itself, strongly condemned in an official Labour Party statement, was in line with the policy of the government, which persists in a 'business as usual' approach and refuses to acknowledge that there is anything it can do to back up its 'hope' of a return to democracy.⁸³

A month before the publication of the bulletin, Douglas-Home had enquired about the composition of the EAACG; he was informed by FCO that British signatories included 'energetic critics' of the junta, Peter Calvocoressi and MPs John Fraser, C. M. Woodhouse and Airey Neave. The list also included the names of five other Conservative MPs (Sir Bernard Braine, Sir Henry d'Avigdor-Goldsmid, Hugh Fraser, David Lane and Miss Mervyn Pike).⁸⁴

Another organization based in the British capital, the League for Democracy in Greece, complained along the same lines about the 'premature recognition' by the Conservatives. Its honorary secretary, Errington Thubron, sent a letter to Downing Street to say that its members were 'deeply shocked' that the British government seemed actually 'to have taken the lead' in recognizing the new republic.⁸⁵ This last utterance made reference to the fact that Britain was the first country to extend its recognition to Papadopoulos' presidential regime. The Foreign Office's reaction to the above statement was that, although it acknowledged that some of the League's members were

respectable, 'it was not usual to enter into substantive correspondence with communist front organisations'.⁸⁶ Complaints were also received from MPs and other organizations, ranging from the Young Conservative Organisation to the National Union of Mineworkers, only to get the answer that it was necessary to maintain a satisfactory working relationship with those in power because of Greece's strategic importance in NATO, and because it was not British practice to refuse to work with established governments 'on grounds of moral or political disapproval'.⁸⁷ The British alacrity of extending recognition was also caught by the international press, with *The New York Times* even interpreting the move as 'having a bolstering effect on the army-backed Greek Government', and referring to suggestions that hopes of large-scale business contracts were behind it.⁸⁸

However, the rising tide of grievances meant that FCO officials were expecting replies to parliamentary questions for some time to 'take a stronger line' against the Greek government than they or the ambassador might prefer to recommend. This realization was based on three specific aspects: 'the difficulty with which Ministers have brought themselves to recognise the new régime, the force of their current antipathy for Mr Papadopoulos and his associates, and their consciousness of the opposition in Parliament to the maintenance of a good and constructive relationship with Greece'. According to Goodison, that meant that Greek requests for international support (referring thus to the EEC) stood 'no chance of a more favourable reply than that we will go along with our allies'.⁸⁹ This was increasingly obvious in Strasbourg, where the vice-president of the Commission responsible for external relations, Briton Sir Christopher Soames, had expressed, a week before, the Commission's 'grave concern' over developments (and particularly arrests) in Greece.⁹⁰

In the light of recent developments in Athens, and their impact in London, Hooper felt he had to clarify his position vis-à-vis the junta, once again. He said he realized that, also because of Britain's special relationship with Greece for more than one hundred years (especially from the latter's independence in 1830 to the annunciation of the Truman doctrine in 1947),⁹¹ ministers held 'very strong views', and that '(as always in Greek affairs) a measure of emotion is involved'. He

made it clear that there was no love lost between the embassy and the Colonels:

Let me also make it quite clear, *in case anyone thinks I am rooting for the Colonels*, that we here don't like what goes on any more than anyone does in London – perhaps we like it less, as it is after all we who see the *ugly face of Papadopoulism* in close-up, and it is our personal friends who are vanishing into goal or the arms of the military police (emphasis added).

However, the British ambassador appeared extremely pragmatic, presenting to FCO two sets of practicable choices regarding relations with Athens in the short term: carrying on with the 'working relationship', more or less in the same form as before -hoping that a democratic government would emerge- or cool it off, accepting though the price of losing the ability to influence the regime and, in general, losing out to other Western countries in political position and, consequently, commercial gains. Hooper, arguing that a whole-hearted freeze would impair the pursuing of Britain's objectives, clearly preferred the first choice and said that the British job for the moment was 'to get through the present period with the *minimum damage* in the long term to Anglo-Greek relations and [their] interests' in Greece (emphasis added). The ambassador closed his letter by providing his rationale for his suggestion, saying that a 'hot and cold policy' (quite like the one used by Labour) would not bring any dividends:

What I chiefly want to avoid is that we should drift [...] into a position where we are trying to combine being ostentatiously beastly to the Colonels in public with attempting to make drafts on their goodwill in private. The last Government tried this policy. It didn't work for them, and it wouldn't work for this one either.⁹²

On the question of the EEC, the ambassador suggested that the policy to best serve the British and Western European interests, in

general, would be 'a quiet policy of wait-and-see'. He also went so far as to say that London should not exclude even supporting within the Community the unfreezing (though probably not the acceleration) of the Association Agreement, provided that the regime fulfilled its timetable for elections.⁹³ According to his suggestion, Britain should take a back seat and leave the initiative to the Colonels: '[. . .] over the next 18 months or so we should wait and see – as you say, anything else would be premature – and give the régime a chance either to live up to its professions or condemn itself by its own words and actions'.⁹⁴ In a nutshell, Hooper advocated that British commercial interests and common concern over Cyprus (although London's position towards both was limited due to the United States' predominance) dictated a course of continuation of the working relationship.

Goodison concurred and added that the junta 'should consider our actions as much as our words'. On the issue of recognition, the FCO official said that Britain should use to its benefit the general impression given by the haste with which London acted (especially since Britain had recognized the republic deliberately on the day before the NATO foreign ministers' meeting in Copenhagen):

It is generally understood that HMG were the first government formally to recognise the Greek Republic and, although this may be inaccurate seen under the magnifying glass of international lawyers, I see no reason why you should not make some play with the point if necessary.⁹⁵

Finally, Goodison agreed that there was 'a good deal of confusion around' about Britain's aims and objectives, and (in consultation with Wiggin) decided to accept Hooper's advice that the time was not ripe for any review of policy towards Greece.⁹⁶ The view that Whitehall should wait until the dust had settled was further confirmed with the arrest of Averoff in early July. It was then decided that the British could 'wait till the autumn', also letting the EEC lever work in favour of restoration of democracy in Greece.⁹⁷

The news of the former foreign minister's arrest, on charges of conspiring to overthrow the Greek government, reached London,

and more specifically the House of Commons, immediately. On 4 July, Whitehead, a British MP, in view of the news, asked Julian Amery, minister of state for foreign and commonwealth affairs, to describe the regime as what it was; namely ‘a guttersnipe crew of small-time fascists’ whom Britain should not be recognizing.⁹⁸ The arrest was even discussed in a Cabinet meeting the following day. According to the official record, Amery said that it was likely to attract critical comment in parliament, where Averoff was well known to a number of members. Amery also stressed that this might be more untimely in that the former king of Greece was about to pay a private visit to Britain and might even be intending to settle there.⁹⁹

Reports in newspapers and elsewhere in relation to Constantine’s decision to settle in Britain had started surfacing only a few days after the announcement of the abolition of the monarchy by Papadopoulos.¹⁰⁰ The king himself had discussed such a prospect in an interview with *Panorama* on 4 June: ‘But if I decide to come to your country it will be a pleasant decision for me as my family is very fond of Britain and the British people and of course we have close ties with the Royal Family and I am very fond of them’. FCO officials did not think that King Constantine’s residing near London was likely to raise significant problems for Anglo-Greek relations, as they believed that the Athens regime would not complain to them about something that would be in accordance with British traditions.¹⁰¹ In this respect they mentioned Constantine’s uncle, King George, who had been exiled twice in Britain in the 1920s and was known as the King of Claridge’s ‘where he resided under the somewhat open pseudonym of “Mr Brown”’.¹⁰² The only apparent problem with the move to Britain presented itself in the form of immigration control. FCO and Sir Alec Douglas-Home personally hoped that normal practice would not be followed for such a ‘wholly exceptional case’, and that it would not be necessary for the king and the queen to be admitted for a limited period or to require them to register with the police. The rationale behind this was that ‘to treat a former Head of State with close ties with this country as an ordinary immigrant would expose us to embarrassing and avoidable [sic] criticism, not least

from supporters of Her Majesty's Government'.¹⁰³ The home secretary agreed and said it would be right to admit them 'without question and without condition'.¹⁰⁴

The 'referendum'

The last important event of this 'pretty gruelling summer', as far as the domestic scene of Greece was concerned, was the referendum on the amended Greek constitution.¹⁰⁵ The junta had warned the British that they should not judge the referendum by British standards and members of the international press had expressed the certainty that it would be 'a farce'. Mario Modiano, who like Kefalas himself, thought that the decision to abolish the monarchy had been taken a long time ago, told the British that the Colonels would not permit a repeat of the results of the 1968 plebiscite, in order to make them appear genuine: 'If as seems likely they fudged the figures, they were likely to choose a more plausible percentage (*like for example 78%*) (emphasis added).'¹⁰⁶ This was also the opinion of some FCO officials who had realized, as early as in June 1973, that there was 'little doubt as to the outcome of the referendum, although the government, who were believed to be embarrassed by the very high yes-votes in 1968, might prefer a rather smaller percentage in their favour this time'.¹⁰⁷ The British conceded that it was 'very easy' to predict the outcome of the referendum, with the Colonels still controlling the levers of power and not being able to afford to lose.¹⁰⁸ And after Stamatopoulos told them that 'a "yes" vote of about 70% would be necessary to be convincing', it did not take them much effort to reach the prediction of 70–80%.¹⁰⁹ As Martin admitted shortly before the referendum, 'few observers doubt that the figure has been decided in advance to within a few per cent'.¹¹⁰ Polling took place on 29 July to approve the new republican constitution and the appointment of Papadopoulos as president (reserving for him exclusive powers over defence, foreign affairs and internal security) and Angelis as vice-president. The final results showed that 'yes' got the 78.4% of the vote,¹¹¹ which was considered 'a respectable looking percentage' in London. The British embassy's own estimate had been 78%.¹¹²

The British, however, were in no doubt that there had been ‘a good deal of malpractice’, as they were aware that before the referendum the junta had ‘used all its very considerable influence to ensure the desired result’. They also did not fail to notice that ‘something perhaps ha[d] changed’, as the regime had been taken by surprise by the strength of feeling against it, and that could result in the toughening of its attitude to palliate the hardliners. The British representative concluded his report on the events by writing that ‘one [could] not have much confidence that Greece [was] yet firmly on the road leading back to anything that Western Europe would recognise as democracy’.¹¹³

The election of Papadopoulos as President caused new headaches in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, mostly in connection with conveying a message of congratulations. Douglas-Home acknowledged that there would be ‘obvious embarrassment’ in recognizing that the Queen should send a message to Papadopoulos, so that, in yet another instance of desire for international coordination, he asked for information about the opinion of the EEC member countries’ embassies and the Americans.¹¹⁴ It is interesting that Douglas-Home asked Hooper to ‘express the hope that other governments will not leave us exposed by doing more than strict protocol demands’.¹¹⁵ The ambassador consulted his EEC colleagues and reported that there was ‘a general lack of enthusiasm’ for congratulating Papadopoulos and general agreement to do no less (but certainly no more) than what strict protocol demanded.¹¹⁶ As concerned the Americans, they thought that ‘no West European government wants a major quarrel with Washington over Greece, regardless of the character of Athens’ régime’,¹¹⁷ and two weeks later their embassy informed the British in confidence that President Nixon had sent a message to Papadopoulos ‘referring to the friendly ties between the two countries and wishing him success’.¹¹⁸ On the same day, the presidential inaugural ceremony took place, with the British representative delivering, as instructed by the foreign secretary, the following oral message: ‘I am instructed by Her Majesty’s Government to send you their good wishes on the occasion of your inauguration as President of the Republic of Greece’.¹¹⁹

In hindsight the first three quarters of 1973 seem like a prelude to the seminal events of later that year. The importance of regional organizations, such as NATO and the EEC, to British policy towards Greece became even more pronounced, and parliamentary pressure on Whitehall led to a brief toughening of London's position vis-à-vis the Colonels. The developments that occurred during the summer, though, raised new expectations on the British side, which were to fail due to events in Greece during the following few months.

More specifically, British policy towards the regime remained unchanged. A brief deadlock in relations, in conjunction with the Conservative government's realization that it had to live with the junta, contributed to a British balancing act between economic and other interests. London saw no reason for major changes in its dealings with the dictatorship in Greece, and continued its active policy on arms sales, trying to sell frigates to the Hellenic navy. The only alteration was in the form of a re-ordering of objectives regarding Greece, with additional attention paid to the Cyprus issue. The introduction of a new element in relations between Athens and London, namely the EEC, provided an even more clear illustration of the nature and the priorities of British policy towards Greece: London was hoping to extract some advantage from its helpful (to the Greeks) attitude in EEC, by initiating a quid pro quo with the junta whereby the British would be awarded contracts in the public sector for an exchange of a more favourable attitude towards Greece in the regional organization. Papadopoulos' intransigent mood led to a stiffening of the British position, which, however, only lasted for a very short period of time. The abortive naval coup reminded Whitehall that since the Colonels were in control, it had to do business with them. Therefore, London decided to play down the issue of recognition and become the first country to extend it. The rationale behind the decision was given in the form of its usual argument about Greece's significance in NATO, but British officials went a bit further this time in their effort to extract an extra advantage from the fact that they were among the first to recognize the junta in this instance. Relations between London and Athens, however, were to go through an even more interesting patch and fluctuate more in the next few months to come.

CHAPTER 7

THE CONSERVATIVES, THE EXPERIMENT THAT FAILED, AND THE HARDLINERS COUP, SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER 1973

It was right immediately after Papadopoulos' inauguration that things looked to be taking a different turn. In a rapid succession of moves 'altogether at variance with the cautious pragmatism with which he had till then proceeded', the new president announced a general amnesty, the lifting of martial law, the formation of a civilian government in October and the holding of parliamentary elections in 1974. In terms of foreign policy, the Greek president denounced Grivas for the first time, fully aligning his policy with that of Cypriot President Makarios. The Greek government officially denied that this was due to foreign pressure, and Hooper himself admitted that 'it would be over-sanguine to give much credit for this to our influence, which is, and seems likely to continue to be, limited'.¹ This 'astonishing series of initiatives'² also meant an escalation of troubles for Papadopoulos for, as the British noted, these 'alarmed and, as it subsequently proved, alienated the support of [his] former colleagues and important sectors of the forces without winning the approval of the old Parliamentary leaders or conciliating the students'.³

These changes were seen rather positively outside Greece but also by the British embassy in Athens, where officials noted that Papadopoulos,

'however devious his motives, ha[d] moved further in the direction of liberalisation than observers had thought possible'. It was also suggested that Britain should promote its commercial and other interests by showing 'qualified approval' of the formation of the new government.⁴ The same spirit prevailed over the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, as well. The first reaction of the officials who were preparing an office meeting on Greece at the time, was to recommend Douglas-Home to 'make generally encouraging noises' to the Greeks.⁵ It should be stressed here, though, that positive developments within Greece were not solely responsible for the British volte-face; more importantly, there had been a number of important developments in Anglo-Greek relations, with most noteworthy a considerable increase during 1973 in trade in both directions. More specifically, British exports to Greece were running at an annual rate of just under £100 million in comparison with the levels of £67 million in 1972 and £72 million in 1971 (which had marked the record high since the advent of the Colonels).⁶ With regard to imports from Greece, these amounted to £26.6 million only for the period from January to September, marking a 53.7% increase from the total of the previous year, and being more than double the figures of each of 1966, 1967 and 1968 (see Appendix, Figures 2 and 3). Apart from this explosion in trade figures (even without the benefit of any tariff changes coming from the enlargement protocol to Greece's EEC Association Agreement, which had not been signed and ratified yet), London had other reasons to celebrate, as well, on the commercial side this time. Marconi was finally selected for exclusive negotiation with the Hellenic Telecommunications Organisation (OTE) on the ship-to-shore communication contract mentioned above, a further 'useful' £2.5 million contract in the public sector was signed with Standard Telephones and Cables (STC) for an underwater cable link between Attica and Crete, and British banking interests in Greece had expanded with banks opening branches in Athens and Piraeus.⁷

To capitalize on these gains and in order to have maximum effect on the Greek regime, embassy officials supported the idea of making the most of what they could, and were willing to offer, by presenting a 'package' on the occasion of Hooper's first call on the new Greek premier. The 'package' would consist of two basic elements, visits and

defence cooperation.⁸ More specifically, two visits were envisaged (one outward and one inward), with Sir Thomas Brimelow taking 'a leaf out of the French book' and going to Athens⁹ and a Greek minister (ideally with responsibility for trade) visiting London in the spring of 1974. The latter visit would then seem less embarrassing for the British since the formation of a civilian government under Spyridon Markezinis would exclude the possibility of the nomination of an unacceptable junta figure, such as Pattakos'. On defence cooperation, the package would include reassuring Papadopoulos of British willingness to sell frigates and arranging defence staff talks as well as a visit for the Chief of the Hellenic army. According to Denson, the object of the package would be to give the Greeks 'a private, and as it were, unattributable, indication that we recognised there had been a change, and serve our interests thereby without attracting publicity'. In terms of British interests, this move would be beneficial in many respects:

If we can make a gesture, albeit qualified, of support to Markezinis we may buy time in the European context, evading pressure to support Greece without damaging our commercial prospects here. We may marginally improve our prospects of selling frigates or earning another public sector contract and reinforce our limited ability to exercise influence in foreign affairs.¹⁰

Denson's package offer was seriously considered in the Office meeting on Greece that took place at FCO in 20 September 1973, also in the presence of Sir Robin Hooper who was visiting London for holidays and consultation. The meeting also produced a paper on policy towards Greece and reached some very interesting conclusions. Although it was initially acknowledged that Papadopoulos' moves were encouraging, it was decided that any act of significance in response would have to await Greek elections, as the British wanted to be surer of a lasting improvement in the character of government in Greece. In this context, a visit by the parliamentary under-secretary or an FCO minister would have to take place only after the 1974 elections.¹¹ However, the helpful attitude over Cyprus and improvements in direct relations

with London mentioned above persuaded Whitehall that ‘some modest forward movement’ was desirable at this stage to ‘encourage the Greeks to continue their liberalising measures’. Thus, the visit of a trade minister and the Chief of the Hellenic army, as well as the sale of the frigates, were to proceed normally, given that there were no political objections from the FCO. In relation to the sale of grenades, London did not wish to give a firm refusal and requested more information from the Ministry of Defence, choosing to ‘play for time, as a deliberate policy’. Britain’s ‘helpful and sympathetic’ attitude towards Greece (without taking any initiative, though) in the EEC context was similarly reaffirmed, and it was agreed that Britain should neither hurry to put the Order (see below) to parliament nor be the last to ratify it.

The most important development, nevertheless, had to do with British policy objectives towards Greece. The existing objectives would remain but there would be a significant addition in the form of a specific objective; namely, ‘the need discreetly to *encourage progress towards democracy*’ (emphasis added). According to the record of the meeting, ‘not only [was] this desirable in its own right but such progress should reduce Parliamentary opposition to the Order in Council on the enlargement Protocol’.¹² The most pressing reason for encouraging the Greeks to liberalize was to abate parliamentary hostility to the Order which would require an affirmative resolution on completion of negotiations on a protocol to extend the Greek-EEC Association Agreement to the Community’s new members. According to an FCO official, it would also ‘reduce the constraints which currently prevent full and constructive Anglo-Greek relations, and should therefore facilitate the pursuit of our other policy objectives’, such as commercial interests and foreign policy. Goodison’s following words are quite revealing of FCO’s view of the EEC at the time and its consequences for relations with Athens:

Our attitude is that, for the rest of the decade at least, the Community should not be distracted from the tasks laid down in the Paris Summit communiqué by a further bout of enlargement. But, fortunately, Greece is unlikely to be within

striking distance of full membership until the mid-80s. Our aim should meanwhile be to establish as close a political and economic relationship as is permitted by the political situation in Greece, and the more democratic it is the closer that relationship can be.

In relation to the introduction of the new objective the following caveat was added: 'we should be cautious in pursuing this objective because over-activity might be regarded as interference in their own affairs and could therefore prejudice our other objectives'. It was also offered as clarification that 'it would be wrong to formulate British policy in terms of democracy in Greece as an end in itself rather than as a means to furthering British interests'.¹³ In other words, the British government led by Heath (the same one that had removed the aforementioned objective in February 1972, see Chapter 5) decided, not to change its main policy towards Greece, but to 'go a stage further'¹⁴ and add another element (that was to be subordinate to other British interests in the country) to its dealings with the Athens regime. And it decided to do so not because it was suddenly hit by the realization that its policy was not moral enough, but because it estimated, in view of domestic (see intense parliamentary criticism) and international (see EEC and, to a certain extent, Cyprus) developments, that its interests would be better served by adopting such an approach.

All the above was succinctly incorporated in the new objective, to be named *policy objective d*) and to be subordinated to the others that had to do with a) *NATO*, b) foreign policy and mainly *Cyprus*, and c) British *commercial* interests:

To encourage progress towards democracy in Greece so far as we can without hindering our other objectives; since a greater degree of democracy in Greece would allow us to pursue these other objectives more openly and whole-heartedly, and under less attack (not least in Parliament, where approval of the Order in Council on the Greece-EEC Association Agreement must be secured).¹⁵

Although Goodison acknowledged that Britain's capacity to influence events in Greece was 'limited' and that, therefore, 'this was not an objective in the same sense as a), b) and c)',¹⁶ its adoption still marked a significant point in Anglo-Greek relations. What functioned as a further catalyst for this were the changes in governmental faces in Greece; with figures like Pattakos (who was not loved by the British) and Makarezos out of the picture, and the formation of a civilian political government by (anglophile) Markezinis, things looked to be picking up for relations between London and Athens. It was thus that relations moved deeper into their second phase (as mentioned in the previous chapter), which made the British feel 'fairly satisfied' with the advent of a political figure they knew too well, and with the emphasis he placed from the start of (what proved to be) his brief stint in power on Greece's link with Europe, and especially Britain.¹⁷

Markezinis' swearing in as prime minister on 8 October kick-started the last quarter of 1973, which, according to the British ambassador, 'saw more political developments than the preceding six years'.¹⁸ Rumours about Markezinis assuming the premiership had reached British ears as early as July, with Hooper arguing that Papadopoulos might turn to him as he had 'nowhere else to go'.¹⁹ Another embassy official confirmed that by expressing the view that Markezinis was 'the only politician of real standing to have come out in support of even a qualified collaboration with the government'.²⁰ Papadopoulos' move towards liberalization was largely 'designed to woo back much needed foreign investment capital and assuage European hostility to Greece's bid for full membership in the Common Market'.²¹ And his efforts initially seemed to be bearing fruit. The British, like the USA and other European countries, concluded that the Markezinis venture was 'deserving of sympathy as affording a somewhat better prospect of a return to a measure of democracy than any of the likely alternatives'.²² More specifically, letters from the Athens embassy were suggesting offering outright support to the old politician:

I do not think we should dismiss the value of help to Markezinis at this stage; he may be an opportunist and without a major

political following, but the stronger his position becomes, vis-à-vis Papadopoulos, the better the hope for a return, however slow and limited, toward democracy.²³

Whitehall, again after consultation with the embassies of other European countries,²⁴ decided that it could 'afford to be reasonably generous'. While considering a message to be sent to Markezinis upon his appointment as prime minister, FCO officials thought 'it would be wrong' to limit themselves with the low key message they had sent to Papadopoulos on his inauguration as president, for circumstances now were very different. As Goodison argued, 'indeed, by adopting a more forthcoming tone over Mr Markezinis' appointment, we would show the Greek Government that we attach importance to {the series of more welcome} developments in Greece'.²⁵ The upshot was the decision to send a 'fairly encouraging' message to Markezinis from Heath: 'Please accept my congratulations and best wishes on the occasion of your appointment as Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic'.²⁶ It was hoped that, rather than embarrassing Markezinis, its form and content would point to the importance the British attached to progress towards democracy in Greece.²⁷

Furthermore, the view in Athens was that relations with Western countries were largely improving. The progress towards a civilian government, most members of which were chosen by Markezinis and had also worked with him in the past, meant that Western hopes were revived. The Greek premier had the feeling that Westerners (chiefly the Dutch, Germans and Turks) were now supporting the regime. The only reservations were identified in Markezinis' ability to succeed due to domestic pressures and the lack of support of the two big political parties, NRU and CU.²⁸

The moves towards liberalization and the formation of a civilian government in Greece did not mean, however, that opposition was silenced, as the mixed reception of the British PM's message (which had been given prominence in Athens) was to show. The message, on the one hand, attracted some waspish comments from the opposition press, arguing that Markezinis was merely the nominee of a dictatorship.²⁹ On the other hand, though, Markezinis himself was gratified

by Heath's message and appeared keen on playing 'the Britain card'. On his first meeting with Sir Robin Hooper, he expressed his desire to bring the two countries as close together as possible:

He said that for the first time for many years, Greece had a Prime Minister who was a whole-hearted friend of Britain. *He hoped that Britain would realise this and take full advantage of it.* He regarded the improvement and intensification of relations with the United Kingdom as one of his *first priorities* (the clear but unspoken implication being that he wanted a counterweight and complement to American influence) (emphasis added).

The new Greek prime minister, though, was also interested in extracting significant (both symbolic and substantial) benefits from a closer relationship with London. When the British ambassador floated a trial balloon in order to ascertain his reaction to the proposals discussed at the last Office meeting on Greece on 20 September (visits of service chiefs and a possible return match by an economic minister for Lord Limerick's visit), Markezinis seemed 'even more voluble than usual'. He said that a visit by a Greek economic minister would be taken in Athens as evidence that the British were half-hearted in their approach to the 'new deal' and that they were only interested in trade. He insisted that 'any exchanges, to be effective, must be on the political level, and the highest political level at that' and expressed his willingness to invite Heath or at any rate Douglas-Home to Athens. Hooper replied that visits at that level 'were not on at present', as British public opinion would have to be given 'time to evolve' and, that, until then, the government was trying to avoid anything that might complicate its parliamentary problems. What particularly struck the ambassador was the impression that Markezinis was 'extremely anxious to get some major manifestation' of British approval for his return, and that the British would most likely be pressed hard on this. His genuine admiration for Britain was not put into question but, as Hooper wrote, 'the intention to use us as a counterweight is clearly at the back of his mind, and we shall have to be careful not to let him play us

off against the Americans'. Hooper, however, reserved serious doubts about Markezinis' ability to get the free hand he wanted and to keep the peace with Papadopoulos. The British representative's assessment of the meeting was concluded with the following words: '{... } I think that though we shall be pressed hard for earnest of good will, we have made a reasonable start. Markezinis seems convinced that he needs us and this may up to a point be useful'.³⁰

To encourage or not to encourage

The month between Hooper's meeting with Markezinis and the fiery events of mid to late November was dominated by an animated debate (chiefly between Goodison at the Southern European Department of FCO and Hooper in Athens) on the extent of encouragement to be given to the so-called 'Markezinis experiment'. Goodison, based on the Greek PM's 'radically democratic' moves after the 20 September meeting, was favouring a more encouraging and less cautious, attitude towards Greece, whereas Hooper and his chancery (no doubt influenced by the reluctance of the vast majority of the opposition to participate in future elections or give Markezinis the benefit of the doubt) thought that Britain should stick firmly to the line that 'the Greek government should be judged by its actions, not its promises'.³¹ The former believed that the case for a dramatic gesture of friendship from London was not so much on commercial grounds (as Colville had implied after a talk with Markezinis),³² but that, in their own interests, the British should not let the Markezinis experiment founder for lack of acceptance abroad. He also proposed that Palamas should be officially invited to London and that ministers should say something encouraging in public about developments in Greece, and disagreed with the British ambassador on the direction of policy: 'we must place the emphasis not on "wait and see" but on the real achievements (e.g. the amnesty) as hopeful signs that things are moving in the right direction'.³³ It was also reported that Markezinis had 'a very poor opinion' of Hooper and was hoping to secure his early removal.³⁴ A Greek source close to Markezinis reveals that the Greek premier was increasingly anxious about not getting enough support from foreign governments.³⁵

On the other hand, the British embassy staff thought the Southern European Department (SED) of FCO was 'veering towards dangerous naivety'. As a SED official wrote: 'They already think we're being too optimistic about the Markezinis experiment and that we have started to depart from the idea that our policy should be directed principally at avoiding a fuss in Britain'.³⁶ This showed a complete reversal of views on policy towards Greece in relation to the period when Papadopoulos was prime minister; then, as mentioned in a previous chapter, it was SED that was arguing against (while Hooper was arguing for) closer relations with the regime due to parliamentary pressure against it at home. Hooper was adamant now, as he strongly believed that Markezinis was 'setting his sights much too high in regard to visits etc'.³⁷

Given the divergence of views on the subject it was thought expedient not to consider the issue further without a clear indication of the person who in the past had led parliamentary criticism of the junta, Conservative MP, Christopher Montague Woodhouse;³⁸ if he would appear relaxed, the matter would be certainly considered in more detail.³⁹ In the meantime, though, another (much bigger) wave of student disturbances had started taking Athens by storm, culminating in the events of the Athens Polytechnic uprising and the army intervention to quell it on 16–17 November. According to the British ambassador, the army's methods were 'hardly in accordance' with British methods of controlling civil disturbance, as 'the lack of proper riot equipment –ascrivable at least in part to the West's refusal to supply the Colonels with the means of repression- may, ironically enough, have left the military with no alternative to *cracking a nut with a steam hammer*' (emphasis added).⁴⁰

As expected, the disturbances were greeted with much parliamentary hostility, with two early day motions, one of which, sponsored by Woodhouse, collected 130 signatures in a week. The British MP had been 'bitterly hostile' to the Markezinis government even before these events, which naturally intensified his hostility. In his view, sounded by FCO, Athens was trying to erect a façade behind which authoritarian rule would continue very much as before, and Papadopoulos could be toppled by a refusal of all cooperation whether from local

opposition to stand in elections or from Whitehall in the international field. Goodison believed, quite conversely, that 'only the Army [was] likely to be able to destroy Papadopoulos, and that they would not set up a democracy'. Events in Greece meant that a reconsideration of policy was to be postponed for a few weeks' time, and that current policy would inevitably need to be more cautious, as even Goodison was to admit:

It will be in our interests to encourage the Greek Government to resume their political programme, as long as we consider that it is possible for them to do so. This means that we should still be ready to speak publicly in favour of the course they have set themselves. *But, as for more positive gestures, parliamentary attitudes now dictate greater caution.* (emphasis added).⁴¹

The debate about supporting Markezinis did not stop even after the fall of his government, with even officials within the FCO having different views. This division is clearly depicted in the correspondence between Cornish and Baker, for example, the first arguing that if the British had offered more substantial support they might have helped Greek public opinion accept the Markezinis venture, thus preventing the hardliners from seizing power, and the latter replying that that would not have made much difference.⁴² Goodison's position on this was that the Greek opposition had 'thrown away their first opportunity since 1967 of trying for a peaceful transition to a form of Government which even they should have found more acceptable'. He concluded with an acerbic question: 'There is no sign for another opportunity. If one should arise, is there any hope that the opposition have learnt that their advantage might lie in giving it a chance?'.⁴³

The mid-November bloody uprising in Athens (a number of deaths was reported)⁴⁴ was even discussed at 10 Downing Street, during a Cabinet meeting on 22 November. While most of the cabinet was preoccupied with European policies⁴⁵ and issues such as Northern Ireland and the shortage of oil supplies, Douglas-Home said that the disturbances represented 'a serious setback to the attempts that were being made to restore a greater measure of democracy', and he noted

that there would no doubt be renewed criticism of the Greek regime on the part of some members of NATO.⁴⁶ On the same day, the British ambassador in Greece sent a letter to the FCO, insisting on his (in the light of recent developments, now strengthened) usual policy of wait-and-see. He suggested waiting to see on the Athens end 'whether and in what form' the Markezinis experiment could survive, and on the London end whether Whitehall could take the 'parliamentary temperature'. Hooper ended his letter by saying that '(especially at the moment) six months is a long time in Greek politics', thus showing that he expected developments soon.⁴⁷ It only makes sense then, that a Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs official and son-in-law of Markezinis would write in his memoirs that reactions to events from abroad ranged from moderate to bad, with the British appearing 'more pragmatic'.⁴⁸

The 'invisible dictator' and the 'Greek Kalends'

It took only three days, nevertheless, for a profound change in Greek politics to take place. After the army had restored order, on 25 November 'a swift, bloodless, and highly efficient', military coup d'état (the second in approximately six and a half years) took place.⁴⁹ Papadopoulos was deposed with General Gizikis⁵⁰ taking his place and Androutsopoulos⁵¹ forming a government 'of civilian mediocrities'. The British however, did not fail to notice immediately that the man pulling the strings was none of the above. Brigadier Ioannidis (head of military police, to be known as 'the invisible dictator') was identified as the 'somewhat shadowy figure' behind the new government.⁵² Simultaneously, it was also recognized that the Markezinis venture, which might have offered a possibility of a return to 'something like democracy', 'never had a chance' because 'too many people [including students, old politicians, the 'extreme left', and 'soldiers'] were gunning for it'.⁵³ Hooper was keen on emphasising the role of 'the old Parliamentary leaders', as he called them; in December 1973 he wrote that 'they must bear their share of responsibility for what has happened',⁵⁴ an opinion corroborated by a minister of the junta⁵⁵ and *The Economist*.⁵⁶ He also believed that, despite Western support,

Markezinis was in such a vulnerable position due to pressures from all directions that it only needed an episode like the Athens Polytechnic events to bring his government down. More specifically, the British ambassador himself had foreseen such a development nine months earlier (when Markezinis was not in the picture yet) while commenting on the February student disturbances:

[...] the Army might ditch Papadopoulos and Co. if the reputation of the régime began to stink in Greece. Persistent attempts to crush the students by force could presumably contribute to such a stink, *particularly if they were to involve serious bloodshed.*⁵⁷

Particularly interesting is also the prediction made by Hooper's predecessor, Stewart, as early as in December 1969: '[...] the immediate successors of the Papadopoulos régime [at the time identified as 'Nasserist' captains expected to adopt an anti-NATO line] would only remain in power for *a very short period*, as their seniors would not tolerate them. They could do *a fair amount of damage* while they were in power' (emphasis added). In any case, the new coup d'état, which was initiated because the hardliners were of the opinion that Papadopoulos had betrayed the ideals of the 1967 coup and because they were genuinely alarmed at the direction in which he was leading the country, meant that 'back to 1967 seem[ed] to be the order of the day'. Hooper also noted that, on the evidence of the new government's statements, there was nothing to prevent the regime postponing any advance towards democracy to 'the Greek Kalends'.⁵⁸

That seemed to be the impression also back in London, as illustrated by parliamentary questions only a few days after the new coup. More specifically, John Fraser asked under-secretary Royle whether the FCO would ask for assurances of a restoration of democracy in Greece before recognizing the new regime, and hinted at using the NATO forum to urge the restoration of liberty and the rule of law. Anthony Royle answered that the government was at the moment assessing the question of recognition and reiterated his past House statement (made shortly before the plebiscite) that Athens was aware of Whitehall's hope that Greece would be restored to full democratic processes. He

foreshadowed British policy, though, by concluding that his government had ‘no *locus standi* to make representations to any foreign government, even after the question of recognition ha[d] been decided, about the way in which they run their internal affairs’.⁵⁹ In relation to the NATO issued raised by Fraser, Royle refrained from referring to it in his answer in the House of Commons but the notes prepared beforehand for this question illustrate clearly the Conservative government’s stance:

We have no reason to suppose that the new régime will not continue, like its predecessors, to play an important role in NATO . . . *the argument that Greece should be expelled or suspended from NATO seems to mark a fundamental miscalculation of what foreign policy and security are about.* Greece is very important to the Western Alliance. To call in question or undermine Greece’s position in NATO would jeopardise the security of NATO and would, by weakening the alliance, put other countries at risk (the previous administration shared this view) (emphasis added).⁶⁰

Notwithstanding all this, the British (and least of all those in Athens) did not fool themselves about the nature and the capabilities of the new government. As early as the following morning, the British ambassador observed that the new government was not impressive⁶¹ and that General Gizikis was merely a figurehead.⁶² On the same day the procedure of assessing whether to extend recognition started, with Douglas-Home asking Hooper to consult with his NATO colleagues fully. The ambassador replied promptly that the regime appeared to satisfy London’s usual criteria ‘to the extent that it enjoy[ed] the obedience of the mass of the population and ha[d] effective control’. More important, however, was Hooper’s assessment that ‘the possibility of a further reaction within the armed forces or by the population at large cannot yet be entirely excluded, and the “reasonable prospect of permanence” [was] therefore still in some doubt’.⁶³

Despite that, Hooper pushed for an early decision to recognise the new regime by alluding to Greece’s significance to NATO: ‘. . . to delay recognition overlong might provoke a reaction in a government the

external political orientation of which is still not clear'.⁶⁴ He discredited arguments like using the Greek need for international respectability as a means of extracting commitments by them to political developments, writing that he doubted whether the regime would react favourably to exhortations from outside. He also supported his argument for recognizing them immediately by admitting that the British 'could hardly go it alone in such a course', and by asserting that, as 'the attitude already taken by most of our allies effectively deprives them of the means of exerting pressure on these lines', the arguments for early action outweighed those for delay.⁶⁵ Furthermore, it was expected that most, if not all, of Britain's allies would have resumed business with the Greeks within the following two or three days and, therefore a delay from Whitehall would be perceived in Athens as highly suspicious: 'It would be unfortunate if at that point we were left out on a limb (rather as we were in June) simply because our doctrine of recognition differs from that of most of our partners'.⁶⁶ Finally, the British ambassador referred to the Greek prime minister's speech the following day to support his argument that Androutsopoulos' emphasis on the obligations of Greece's allies and on the unacceptability of foreign intervention confirmed his own view that nothing was to be gained by trying to bargain promises of political development for recognition. The ambassador also noted that the references to Greece's international relations and to the Cyprus question (which troubled London the most) were 'unexceptionable and therefore, up to a point, reassuring'.⁶⁷

The statement that Greece would remain loyal to its international obligations and alliances (most importantly NATO) was enough to win over even the somewhat sceptical SED of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Goodison referred to Britain's first objective in its policy towards Greece to justify his opinion that there were grounds for early recognition and that it was 'clearly desirable that [London] should recognise without unduly delay'. Goodison, who seemed to be more receptive to Hooper's arguments this time, also noted that parliamentary reaction to the change of government in Greece had not been markedly hostile, mainly because the coup took place without bloodshed or widespread arrests (as was the case in Chile) and because the ousted regime was 'a highly unpopular one'.⁶⁸

The FCO official, however, still preoccupied with domestic reactions, thought that London should not recognize the new régime straightaway as that might have been regarded there as 'acting with unwarranted haste'. He suggested waiting a bit longer than the only five days that had elapsed by then to see if the prime minister's statement would create any significantly hostile reaction before concluding that the régime had a reasonable prospect of permanency. If no such reaction came from either London or Athens over the following few days, then Hooper would be instructed to acknowledge the *note verbale* he had received from the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, thus implying recognition. Finally, this act would not be made public as the British did not want to attach great significance to the acknowledgement of a note nor emphasise to the Greeks that there was a period when they did not recognize them.⁶⁹

These suggestions were accepted by the government, which, after discussion at a Cabinet meeting on the same day, decided to extend recognition to the Ioannidis régime on 4 December 1973, despite the new government's lack of democratic credentials:

The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs said that the new régime in Greece had issued a statement which made clear that there was to be no early resumption of democratic government. The régime was coming under criticism in the North Atlantic Alliance but it was essential to retain Greece as a member, and instructions had now be sent to our Ambassador to take action which would, in practice, amount to recognition of the régime. [. . .]⁷⁰

This action by Whitehall came only nine days after the coup, making this the second fastest act of recognition of changes of governments through coup d'états in the late 60s- early 70s period. According to a study by the FCO, Latin American governments (in Argentina, Peru and Chile) were recognized after 10–14 days. Around the same time (12 days) was needed for London to recognize Papadopoulos (with the abolition of monarchy certainly playing a role in British decision making) in June 1973. The confused constitutional situation after

Constantine's counter-coup in December 1967 was the reason why the British delayed a record 43 days to make formal contact with the junta. In the other two instances, though, in April 1967 and November 1973, when the question of recognition arose due to military coups, it only took London six and nine days respectively to acknowledge the régime's note.⁷¹ This illustrates clearly the haste in the British capital to minimize the hiatus of not having proper relations with Athens, mainly due to the latter's significance and role in NATO. Whereas both Labour and Conservative governments needed more than ten days on average to proceed to a normalization of relations with Latin American countries -which were neither military allies of (in the sense of a belonging to the same military organization), nor geographically close to, Britain - relations with the régime of the Greek Colonels and Brigadiers were, on both occasions, not discontinued for more than a week or so. The only problematic factor as far as the British were concerned was the role of the monarchy in Greece and that explains why the same (Labour) government needed six days in April and *seven times* that period in December 1967 (when the position of the king was threatened).

As regards this instance, the British, in their effort to quell domestic criticism, made it clear that they would have to stick to the line that their policy was based on an assessment of the facts and that it did not imply a moral judgement. They also retained the view, also supported by Labour, that the Greek issue should not be discussed in NATO, despite Norwegian, Danish and Dutch willingness to do so: '... whatever we think about the Greek régime, we should not allow feelings about it to threaten the cohesion of the Alliance'.⁷² To EAACG's appeal to 'use every possible influence' to secure the release of political prisoners,⁷³ FCO recounted that they had no locus standi to approach the Greeks formally about their internal affairs. This policy followed by the Conservatives was appreciated by the junta; Christoyannis, counsellor in the Greek embassy, remarked that the Heath government was 'more aware' than some others of the need to avoid pronouncements that could be taken as interfering in the internal affairs of Greece. The same official, when reminded about the British hope for restoration of democracy in Greece, informed his interlocutor

that he felt optimistic about that '*in the long run* (with gloomy and significant emphasis on the last phrase)', leaving him in no doubt as to the political orientation of the new regime.⁷⁴

The nature, announcements and first moves of the Androutsopoulos government made even Sir Robin Hooper have no illusions about the gloomy outlook for both Greek politics and Anglo-Greek relations. The British representative acknowledged that Papadopoulos, for all his shortcomings and errors, had given Greece 'six and a half years' stability – of a sort – and quiet in which the country continuing its post-war economic revival, prospered as never before', and thought that disillusionment with his successors might make people 'begin to look back to that period with a certain nostalgia'. According to some anonymous observers mentioned by Hooper, though, the deteriorating economic situation of 1973, coupled with political uncertainty, meant that Greece was 'moving back to her own turbulent history of the twenties and thirties' or 'Praxicopematics', i.e. the Greek science of perpetrating coups. This prospect was considered dreadful by the ambassador as Greece's effectiveness as a NATO ally and its ability to conduct a coherent foreign policy – on Cyprus, and on its relations with the EEC- were 'bound to be called into question'. What troubled Hooper most (and, it should be noted, for the first time) was the diminishing value of Greece's forces for war:

The opponents of the régime have always maintained that political interference by the Papadopoulos régime had destroyed the efficiency and morale of the Greek forces. Up to now they have, I think, been wrong. But there can be little doubt that the massive purges which followed the recent *coup* must have thrown the forces into a confusion which will be worse confounded if the process is repeated.

In relation to Anglo-Greek relations, Hooper was similarly ominous. In terms of policy objectives, those were presumably still to preserve Greece as an effective NATO ally; to work for Greek foreign policies, notably over Cyprus (which were in conformity with British interests);

and to promote British commercial interests in Greece. It was added, once again, that the British should also, without prejudicing their other objectives, use such influence as they had to promote the return of democracy in the country. It was recognized, however, that the advent of the new regime had 'made none of these objectives any easier to achieve', especially since its cooperation in NATO or its value to it could no longer be taken for granted as in the past. Equally, British commercial interests were expected to suffer, as the discouraging economic climate and restrictive government policies would force Britain to work hard to maintain and develop its position. As regards direct contacts with this '*régime* of inexperienced and largely unsophisticated men with some xenophobic tendencies' (whose chances of surviving the following months were deemed problematic), they would need to be fairly cautious:

... we have to bear in mind the risk that with this Government, even more than with the previous ones, moral exhortation from abroad may produce violent and petulant anti-Western reactions, however damaging these may be to Greece's real interests.

Finally, the ambassador suggested following once more a policy of 'wait and see', without rushing in to condemn the regime and its policies:

We cannot at this stage be sure that we shall be able to get along with {the régime}; but I submit that we and our NATO allies should not be over-hasty in assuming that we cannot. We cannot expect to control the reactions of public opinion and I do not suggest that we should try. But at least until the new régime has made its policies more clear, let us not jeopardise our political, strategic and commercial interests in this area by being over-ready with official censure or admonition.⁷⁵

The lucid analysis of the situation in Greece and the dismal predictions for future developments in Anglo-Greek relations made by Hooper were corroborated in both capitals. In the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, officials agreed that the future was 'gloomy', as the new regime

did not inspire confidence either in dealing with the enormous problems it was facing in several directions or in its ability to stay in power. The final conclusion was that there was no reason to change the objectives of British policy; however, public opinion, which was always considered a factor to give serious consideration to, in conjunction with the doubts that Whitehall was now entertaining about the ability of the new government to cope, dictated caution.⁷⁶ And it was on the same day that another FCO official remarked that Britain's policy towards Greece raised 'many contentious issues', using this phrase to justify the avalanche of adverse (parliamentary, press, and other) criticism that seemed to be heading towards the Heath government because of its decision to recognize the Athens regime: questions had been put down in both Houses,⁷⁷ the Labour party had issued a statement in which they 'deeply regretted' that Britain had once again 'chosen to identify itself with military repression in Greece', and *The Guardian* had carried an 'unhelpful and inaccurate' article⁷⁸ about the method of recognition.⁷⁹ All this 'apprehension' in Britain about the Greek regime was expected to act as 'a significant constraint' on the ways in which diplomats sought to pursue British policy objectives, leaving them with 'little room for manoeuvre'. Goodison's conclusion seems prophetic in hindsight: 'We must also bear in mind that an inexperienced and unsure Government facing awesome difficulties may act unwisely and may not be able to retain power'.⁸⁰ Finally, the reaction that the recognition issue caused within Britain also had deep implications for FCO practice insofar as it sparked a reassessment of its recognition policy towards the direction of aligning it with that of the other EEC members. The 'state not governments' formula that countries like France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Ireland were following protected their governments from the criticism that British policy was attracting, and rendered any precisely concerted approach not feasible.⁸¹

These developments did not go unnoticed by the Greeks. The third phase of Anglo-Greek relations, as described by the Greek ambassador in London, was marked by 'a return to the stagnation of early 1973, followed by many question marks and a somewhat mistrustful wait as regarded the direction and the rate of further democratic developments

in Greece'. The recognition, which was thought to have been made according to known British criteria, presented an opportunity for discussion and comments about the situation in Greece, and for British officials to reiterate their hope for the return of democratic procedures to the country. Broumas noted the Conservative government's return to the 'known policy of WAIT AND SEE' (capitals in English in the original), as well as the intensification of the Labour opposition's reactions and attacks against the Athens regime. What the Greek ambassador was most bitter about, though, was the absence of developments in two fields of Anglo-Greek relations: the fact that no political visits were scheduled or proposed, and that no progress was made in the British ratification of the extension of Greece's Association Agreement with the EEC.⁸² What is more, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was receiving reports from the London embassy stressing that the only good phase in Anglo-Greek relations in 1973 had been the stint of the Markezinis government.⁸³

The effects of anti-Americanism

The people in charge of the regime, however, were not the only ones in Athens feeling somewhat disillusioned with the West towards the end of 1973. London, often receiving reports that made reference to the rising tide of anti-Americanism in Greece, became to worry a lot more about the effect that would have on Greece's relations with NATO as well as on its domestic politics after the Ioannidis coup. In January 1974, Hooper noted the following:

... as disillusion with the successor régime deepens, the CIA has come to be seen as not only the engineer of Papadopoulos's creation and maintenance in power, but also as the instigator of his fall. The arguments for the CIA theory are absurd. But the unfortunate fact is that *even intelligent and otherwise quite reasonable Greeks believe that the US is responsible for everything that happens here*. Unreasonable and ill-founded though it may be, there is in consequence more anti-American feeling in Greece than there has been for years (emphasis added).

What Hooper was mostly worried about was consequences of the above for Britain:

If the new government follows a repressive line, the odium for this will rub off not only on the Government itself but on the US *and her partners* – a situation which will be exploited by the extreme Left and which is fraught with danger for the Western Alliance (emphasis added).⁸⁴

The first reports of the reappearance of anti-Americanism had reached the British capital in the beginning of 1973 (sparked by the negotiations for 'home-porting' facilities for the Sixth Fleet), with the ambassador writing about a wave 'of a kind which had not been seen for many years'.⁸⁵ A month later (at the time of the initial student disturbances), Hooper, following the defence report of Brigadier Baxter, noted that NATO and the West were being blamed for the junta's continuance in power by the opposition, which also thought that it was more important for the Western Alliance that Greece should be stable internally and strong militarily than that it should be free. Furthermore, he warned London that, should the stability of the junta be threatened by domestic events (such as a student revolt), then some of the unpopularity which the regime would incur would be directed not only towards the Greek armed forces but also towards the Western Alliance itself.⁸⁶ By the end of 1973, anti-American feeling was considered by the British as a considerable threat to their interests in Greece insofar as it was reported to have 'reached a disquieting level' and not to be 'confined to any particular point of the political compass'.⁸⁷

It was against this background that Whitehall decided to reconsider some of the aspects of its defence relations with Greece. In December 1973 the Southern European Department of FCO informed the Ministry of Defence that it had no objection to the sale of smoke bombs, mortars, and gas masks to the Greeks. Goodison believed that, although both the masks and the smoke bombs might be associated by the public with riot control, they had a clear NATO use and that the sale could be justified.⁸⁸ The sale did not go ahead,

however for, a week later, the defence department of FCO informed the Ministry of Defence that ministers were not willing to authorize the sale now, as they considered that the British should gain more experience of the new regime before deciding on the matter; it was agreed that the matter would be looked at again ‘in about three months time’⁸⁹ (that would mean after the next British general election had taken place).

At the same time, another reconsideration was taking place at King Charles Street, in relation to defence cooperation this time. More specifically, the subject was whether the Anglo-Greek Staff Talks, which were to take place in Britain at the end of January 1974, and the proposed visit to Britain by the Greek National Defence College should go ahead as planned. Goodison argued that, despite ‘justifiable concern’ in London about the new government in Greece, the two events should take place inasmuch as they were an integral part of pursuing Britain’s objective of maintaining the military effectiveness of Greece as a NATO ally. Adverse publicity was considered unlikely and the events easy to justify, and so the ‘green light’ was given promptly, with Goodison arguing that it was time to repay the Greeks for their regular helpful and hospitable treatment of annual visits by students of the Royal College of Defence Studies to Greece.⁹⁰ His suggestion was approved this time, with the stipulation, though, that if there were further developments which might initiate further serious parliamentary or public hostility towards the junta, the ministers would reconsider both actions.⁹¹ On the other hand, however, the failure of the moves towards liberalization in the summer of 1973 forced the British to ‘put into cold storage’ the consideration of ministerial visits and other more conspicuous expressions of their efforts to build up ‘a good working relationship’.⁹²

With the seminal November events looming large in British minds, 1973 closed in an atmosphere of dreariness; as Hooper commented in a premonitory sentence: ‘One can say very little in favour of 1973 in Greece except that the worst has not happened’⁹³ Moreover, the tone for 1974 was set early on; FCO officials recognized that the new leaders of Greece were ‘even more touchy’ about ‘foreign interference’ than

their predecessors, and that, consequently, the FCO should accept that although it might come under increasing pressure to speak out against the regime, to do so could affect its allegiance to NATO. Anglo-Greek relations were expected to continue to be ‘primarily a matter of going as far as [possible] within the limits imposed by public and parliamentary opinion’.⁹⁴ Goodison’s take on the new regime was that ‘so far they have done very little which is welcome to us’, and he held, therefore, there was no need to revise basic British policies, also for the additional reason that both uncertainties in Greece and parliamentary and public attitudes in Britain dictated caution in pursuit of them; he ended his letter to Hooper thus: ‘We may well face a difficult year’.⁹⁵

The brief period of time examined in this chapter is rife with events and diplomatic activity. The first part saw a series of initiatives on the Greek side that truly astonished the British and made them consider giving their qualified approval to the new government. Modest ways of promoting relations and encouraging Markezinis in his new task were discussed, and a considerable increase in trade and British financial activity in Greece was achieved. Once again, the EEC factor played a role in Anglo-Greek relations, as parliamentary hostility in relation to the additional protocol led the Conservative government to discreetly encourage progress towards democracy in Greece. However, this was not recognized as an objective in the same sense as the ones dealing with NATO, Cyprus, and trade, but was merely a means to further British interests. This was also the first time that London professed that its capacity to influence events in Greece was limited and the first time that it appeared careful not to be played off against the US. The animated debate that ensued between FCO and the Athens embassy over whether to be less or more cautious towards Markezinis was abruptly terminated by the Athens Polytechnic Uprising. As a consequence of developments in Greece, the British decided to adopt once more a wait-and-see policy, with greater caution dictated by parliamentary attitudes that were unfavourable to Ioannidis.

Nevertheless, Greece’s importance as a NATO partner contributed to the British haste to minimize a hiatus in relations and recognize

the new, unimpressive post-coup government. Despite that, though, the future of Anglo-Greek relations did not seem so rosy, as British commercial interests were expected to suffer, and Labour (while in opposition) was expressing its strong disagreement with British policy vis-à-vis the junta.

CHAPTER 8

CONSERVATIVES, LABOUR AND THE JUNTA, 1974: THE ENDGAME

In stark contrast with what was expected, the annual review for 1974 ended with the conclusion that, after all, it was ‘a good year for Greece’.¹ But how were the tables turned? As the new British ambassador to the country noted, this year could be divided very clearly into two parts; ‘up to 23 July Greece was governed by an increasingly incompetent military dictatorship’, whereas ‘from 24 July it was governed by an increasingly secure Karamanlis’.² How the British went from feeling almost completely disillusioned with the junta, and consequently ‘not contemplating any particular gesture of friendship towards them’,³ to the ‘substantial improvement in Anglo-Greek relations across the board’⁴ in just seven months will be examined in the last part of this chapter.

Following the popular saying that ‘things have to get worse before they get better’, two turning points can be identified as far as relations between Athens and London were concerned. The most obvious and significant was, no doubt, the collapse of the military dictatorship and the restoration of democracy in Greece, in such a dramatic way, in the summer of 1974. On the British side, though, another development, which was to affect Anglo-Greek relations possibly more deeply than ever, came before that. The return of Harold Wilson to Downing

Street, and especially his party's stance towards Greece while in opposition in the early 1970s, meant that policy towards the military rulers residing in Athens would be considered in a different light. The most seminal event in that respect was not the general election of 28 February⁵ per se, but the decision, taken two weeks later, for the cancellation of British naval visits to Athens, a decision that 'helped raise Britain's prestige abroad'.⁶

On the same day that Pavlos Vardinoyiannis met a British diplomat to express his hope that the new Labour government would take a different line on Greece to its predecessor,⁷ ministers decided that the informal visit by HMS Tiger and HMS Charybdis to Athens, which had been arranged under the previous government and was due to begin on 15 March, should not take place.⁸ Among the indications for this volte-face there were two distinct ones: first, Wilson himself in a speech on 19 February had drawn attention to the then government's 'tolerance and support of the Greek dictatorship', in contrast with what might be expected from a Labour government;⁹ and second, a week before the election, FCO officials had warned the Greek embassy that, after the immediate post-election period, 'the Labour government would proceed in statements and actions to criticise the political situation in Greece, in order to both show its disapproval of the régime and satisfy its left wing' (author's translation).¹⁰ The ambassador in Athens was instructed immediately to inform the Greek authorities of the decision and of his government's concern over the political situation in the country, but also to avoid discussing Anglo-Greek relations further. He was only permitted to say, if necessary, that London expected to have a 'variety of continuing business' to discuss with the Greeks which they would hope to conduct 'in a business-like way'.¹¹ Hooper, however, directly expressed his disagreement with the proposed terms of informing Athens, inasmuch as he thought that, 'given the suspicious and ultra-nationalist complexion' of the regime, it might embark on 'immediate retaliation' against British interests in Greece.¹²

In the next telegram to the FCO, the ambassador accepted the new government's desire to exert its influence to see an early restoration of

democracy in Greece; but he did not fail to readily present two considerations. First, he made clear that if London wanted to bring about a change for the better, the British had to accept that 'acting alone or even in conjunction with those of our NATO and EEC partners (e.g. the Dutch and Scandinavians) who think likewise we can exercise *very little influence* in this direction' (emphasis added). And he went on to affirm US preponderance in the junta's foreign relations, and the cost of British involvement in such an endeavour, thus underlining the subordination of Britain's 'European role' in the general context of the Cold War and especially in the financially (and otherwise) troubled 1970s:

Only the US government disposes of sufficient means – strategic, military aid and financial and political involvement – to make pressure effective. If we act on our own or even in conjunction with the like-minded Western Europeans, we run the risk not only of failing to achieve our objective but of seeing what we are bound to lose commercially and in other ways picked up by others (e.g. the French and Japanese) who are less scrupulous politically. In my view, therefore, the process should begin in Washington.

In this way, Hooper seemed to reaffirm his belief that Britain could not afford, mostly commercially (but also security-wise), to sever the 'good working relationship' with the military rulers of Greece. Moreover, this time, in view of the stated Labour government's policy change with regard to Greece, he argued that, even if Britain ignored the risks involved and pressed ahead with pushing the junta to promote democratization, its actions would still be to no avail for it was only up to the United States to take that decision and to pursue that policy effectively. Finally, the British representative asked for further clarification of the policy to be pursued, simultaneously warning London that reverting to the one pursued by Labour during the first years of the Colonels' reign (i.e. 'a minimum relationship with the Greek régime as such and the maintenance of a distinction between it and

Greece as a NATO ally') would not be compatible with maintaining a 'business-like relationship'.¹³

Taking the heat

No matter what he thought personally, Hooper still had to follow orders and inform the Greeks. Knowing the importance and the impact of the issue, as well as the character of the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he chose not to go directly to the Greek foreign minister but to see the secretary general, Vlachos.¹⁴ His reaction was to say that his government would be 'extremely resentful' both of the decision and of the manner in which it had been taken. Although Vlachos agreed to do his best to limit the damage and keep the matter in a low key, he thought that Anglo-Greek relations were bound to be severely affected and he did not exclude the possibility of a formal protest, as 'this was not the behaviour that Greece expected of an ally'.¹⁵ Furthermore, he appeared clearly apprehensive about the reactions of ministers and still more about those of the military behind them, illustrating thus, once again, the true nature and hierarchy of the regime.

The next day, however, Vlachos was away on official business, leaving the political director for Europe and America, Migliaressis, to express Athens' wish to protest strongly at the cancellation of the visits in a way that constituted 'an inadmissible interference in Greece's internal affairs and seriously jeopardising the Atlantic Alliance'.¹⁶ Hooper explained that the Labour government, given its consistent attitude when last in office and while in opposition, could do no less than that and could not take action which could be construed as casting doubt on its position. The ambassador ended 'a very difficult interview' by issuing the plea that no precipitate action should be taken by the Greeks, for Whitehall was in the process of a comprehensive review of policy, including Anglo-Greek relations.¹⁷ That, however, did not prevent foreign minister Tetenes from giving a press conference to accuse Britain of interfering in the internal affairs of another country, and announce that an official complaint had been made. That was the exact opposite of what most

'old politicians' thought. On the same day, the Centre Union leader, George Mavros, was arrested for his statement that the cancellation was justified. He had said:

Any move by our Allies aiming at the restoration of democracy in this country, far from being an intervention in our internal affairs, is an international obligation. It is impossible for the political, economic and defence organisations of the Western world to survive as long as their members flagrantly violate the basic principles which these organisations were created to protect.¹⁸

According to an official statement Mavros was to be deported to an island concentration camp because his statement had 'invited the intervention of foreigners in our internal affairs'.¹⁹ The treatment of Mavros sparked a series of statements by other politicians, including the last parliamentary prime minister (and old rival of Mavros) Canelopoulos, who said:

I firmly believe that it is not possible for any country belonging to what is termed the Western world to ensure for long its independence, if it loses the solidarity of the governments, and particularly, the public opinion of those foreign countries, whether big or small, where the political institutions of liberal democracy are in operation.²⁰

Furthermore, another former Centre Union minister, John Zigdis, in his testimony to the US House Foreign Affairs European Subcommittee called the British action 'the greatest investment of goodwill in Greece', which 'created a burst of anger among the dictators but simultaneously relieved and gratified the Greek people'.²¹ All in all, the British were quick to note that the opposition to the junta was 'predictably delighted' with the moves, but was, at the same time, taking care to give its public support to Mavros rather than to the cancellation itself or to 'outside intervention' in Greek internal affairs.²² On the same day, Hugh Greene sent a letter to Callaghan to congratulate him on

his return to office and to express the EAACG's belief that the cancellation was 'very timely as a demonstration that Greece still had friends in Europe'.²³ A few days earlier, the resistance organization had urged Whitehall to make an important contribution to the return of democracy in Greece by encouraging other leading powers to exert pressure on the dictatorship both in the EEC and particularly within NATO.²⁴

Other reactions on the Greek side varied from strong headlines in Athens dailies (like 'Wilson intervention in our internal affairs'²⁵) to the markedly more sober attitude of some government officials. *Estia* made reference to the 'disgraceful' British behaviour in Northern Ireland²⁶ and Konstantopoulos, in a front page editorial of *Eleftheros Kosmos*, used fiery rhetoric to denounce the British decision, also referring to Wilson's minority government:

It is comic to see Britain, a building in flames, interesting itself in what is happening in Greece ... it would be sounder for Mr Wilson to wait until the fate of his government is settled in the House of Commons ... Greece, in the past, has suffered immense harm from the intervention of foreign powers in its internal political life.²⁷

On the contrary, Broumas adopted a very restrained attitude, expressed full understanding of the reasons for cancelling the naval visit, and even volunteered that he had said to his own government that they had overreacted.²⁸ Moreover, the deputy chief of the Hellenic navy received Hooper amicably and said that the chief recognized the political nature of the move, and that as far as he was concerned the normal and traditional good relations between the navies of the two countries would remain unaffected.²⁹ With regard to commercial relations, though, Hooper was informed that the British firm *Yarrows* had been taken off the final short list for the contract to construct frigates for the Greek navy.

The threats issued by the junta in retaliation to the cancellation had been considered 'fairly empty', as the sale of frigates had already been in doubt (due to Athens' inability to muster the required amount of

£42 million or more), and the Marconi contract had already been in the balance for the same reason. In that respect, it was expected that the Greeks, who might anyway have been looking for a pretext to get out of a project they could ill afford, might yet seize on the excuse afforded by the cancellation to back out.³⁰ The decision not to consider *Yarrows'* tender for frigates did not come to the British as a surprise. What seemed to trouble them more were the measures against them contemplated by the Greeks in the field of defence cooperation. The 'clear threat' of retaliating by refusing permission for Royal navy 'informal' and 'routine' visits was judged 'more serious', as was also the possibility of the Greeks extending their retaliatory action to the Royal air force.³¹

At the same time, a further insight into the way the junta perceived the incident was presented to the British in the form of an oral account. According to a secret source, Brigadier Ioannidis was under considerable pressure from the majority of those around him clamouring for reprisals against the Wilson government for the cancellation of the visits: 'Some [including even Markezinis³²] were calling for the withdrawal of Ambassadors, or even urging that Greece should break away from NATO. Mr Tetenes, the Foreign Minister, was taking a tough line (possibly hoping to replace the Prime Minister whose position is weak). What is more, Ioannidis himself was reported as threatening the US, *through the CIA*, that, if it didn't treat Greece as a NATO ally, the home-porting arrangements would be cancelled. According to the same source, he hoped that the Americans would press London to 'refrain from exasperating the Greek junta further'.³³

The official reaction, though, was less stringent. On the rare occasion of a press conference dedicated to Anglo-Greek relations, the under-secretary to the prime minister and government press spokesman, Karakostas, rebutted the suggestion that Greece had entered on a particularly difficult stage in relations with Britain as a result of the recent 'episode': 'The bonds uniting the two countries are so strong that anything to the contrary is a mere incident. Such incidents have of course significance, when judged in the light of circumstances. On each occasion the Greek Government will itself judge

the manner in which it will react.' More importantly, Karakostas went on to provide a clear distinction between the policies pursued in the past by the Conservatives and now by Labour vis-à-vis Greece. Replying to a remark that Lord Carrington had also stated, in 1972, Britain's hope to see democracy restored in the country, the Greek official emphasised that this was different from the 'concrete political act' of March 1974.³⁴ Furthermore, he stated that the Greek reaction had been 'less provocative than the act itself', and disclosed that similar incidents had also occurred in the past but had not disturbed relations between the two countries, and, as a consequence, it did not seem that they would do so in this case. As far as the FCO was concerned, it looked as if Hooper's representations had had an emollient effect as the protest had been 'watered down' from a written to an oral one,³⁵ even though the Greeks initially had seemed to be more adamant.³⁶

The US card

Karakostas' remarks were very well received by the British.³⁷ The Athens embassy staff was happy to note that the remarks had made it more likely that the Greek regime would try to avoid escalation into 'a run of mutually damaging demonstrations of hostility or independence'. Moreover, the conclusion was inferred that the junta might be more worried about what London thought than might be supposed. The British were not only relieved by the lenient Greek reaction, but also, gathering strength from what they perceived as a freeze in relations between Washington and Athens, believed they were in a better position to deal with the junta:

[The junta] would certainly be anxious lest, given present indications that home porting may be less important than at one time seemed the case, a new 'Atlanticist' British Government might tip the scales and persuade the US Administration to win political credit by taking a risk and working to bring down the régime and restore Parliamentary democracy. Our readiness to

speak to the US in this sense would give us something of *a card to play* if we so wished (emphasis added).

Tomkys went even further, considering whether Britain joining the Danes, the Norwegian and the Dutch in attacks against Greece in NATO, while simultaneously working for US and German assent to such a campaign, would worry the Greeks and lead to pressure to change Greece's political disposition as a result. It should be noted, however, that, even in this instance, the British were not willing to provide unqualified support to the opponents of the regime or to all but discredit it internationally. The reason this time was not so much what Britain had to lose in terms of trade but fear about what would succeed the regime in Athens. If an anti-Greece campaign (at whatever, financial and political cost to Britain) were mounted and were to have a major effect on Greek policies (to achieve which, it was acknowledged, it would surely also have to have US or wider European support), then the results would be unpredictable: 'A Qaddafi reaction and a further military coup are at least as likely as the restoration of Parliamentary democracy by a chastened and contrite revolutionary junta'.³⁸ Hooper did not hesitate to share sincere British views of the dictatorship with Greek officials he knew were not staunch supporters of it. For example, he told Tzounis: 'we had all been saying "it can't go on like this" ever since this lot came in. But somehow or other things *did* go on – no doubt because everyone realised that any change was more than likely to be for the worse'.³⁹

This fear was closely connected to the British assessment of the situation within Greece, and was concentrated particularly on the level of leadership. The regime's inability to cope with economic problems, coupled with differences of opinion within it, was expected to lead to 'a major showdown in one form or another' before long. As a consequence of the perceived precariousness of the regime, the apprehension reappeared that a group of ultra-nationalistic young officers, who might favour extreme left-wing anti-Western solutions, might emerge as the dominant force within the junta. Despite the pressure from those 'dissenting factions' that favoured a break-away from NATO, however, the

British did not think that the bulk of the regime would consider it to be in its interests to isolate itself from the West in this way. Retaliation for the cancellation of naval visits was expected to be confined to the fields of defence and defence sales (see frigates), and the British were happy to say that it looked as if the Greeks would not widen retaliation to cover the whole of trade between the two countries (for example, by limiting imports from the UK – at the time about £100 million a year – to balance Greek exports to Britain – about £46 million a year), as was initially feared.⁴⁰

The British ambassador mustered the courage to see the Greek foreign minister only after a cooling-off had taken place. According to Hooper, Tetenes spoke mainly *pour acquit de conscience* with the tone being, on the whole, ‘Mummy isn’t angry, she’s only terribly, terribly hurt’ [sic]. What Tetenes basically told him was that the British ought to be grateful not only for his efforts to keep the affair in a low key (which was quite the opposite of what Hooper had reported at the time – see above), but also for his magnanimity in not replying in Britain’s own coin to what had been ‘a flagrant interference’ in Greek internal affairs by making specific references to the cases of Northern Ireland and Cyprus. Much more important to Hooper was the realization, made after the meeting, that the British had got over the immediate reaction ‘with less damage to working relationships than might at first have been expected’. He added that only time would tell whether the considerable shock administered to the Greeks had been a salutary one, and observed that reaction in the country at large was hard to assess;⁴¹ in this respect, Zigidis had informed London that there was ‘a fund of latent goodwill for Britain, though most Greeks felt that this country was *pretty powerless* as a result of its preoccupation with domestic problems’ (emphasis added).⁴² The representative closed his letter by arguing that Greek indignation, though muted at the time due to the plethora of troubles the regime was facing, could ‘easily flare up again’. He, therefore, advocated going carefully, with the British avoiding putting themselves in the position of *demandeurs*, and, above all, not getting themselves into the ‘impossible and undignified position of damning the Greeks in public and asking them for favours in private’, which,

grosso modo, was the policy that the previous Labour government had pursued towards the Greek Colonels.⁴³

'A *proper* working relationship'

In the aftermath of the cancellation of the visits, the then Wilson government (aware that most governments in Europe at the time were socialist) seemed to be more determined to adopt a harder line towards the Greek military dictatorship.⁴⁴ After careful consideration, British ministers reached the conclusion that they should change the status of Anglo-Greek relations, slightly altering the wording from a '*good* working relationship' to a '*proper* working relationship'. The official responsible for Greece at the FCO, though, was quick to palliate Greek fears immediately, saying that this was a positive statement and that it was certainly the British intention that such a working relationship should go forward. Moreover, Goodison replied to Diamantopoulos' anxiety over Britain's attitude vis-à-vis Greece at NATO by claiming that relations would remain mostly unaffected, the only substantial change being in terms of appearances:

This did not mean, however, that there would be any change in our attitude towards Greece in the practical work of the Alliance, where they could expect us to cooperate with them fully ... I said that I foresaw *no change in 90 per cent of our relationship*, but the Greek Government must expect the British Government to be *more demonstrative* than their predecessors in their criticism of the Greek régime (emphasis added).⁴⁵

This concurs with what former ambassador Sorokos had said to a Greek academic a few months earlier, namely, that 'Western governments, for example the *British*, say one thing for domestic consumption and quite another when talking personally to the Greek ambassador'.⁴⁶

Greek reactions to the change of phrasing varied predictably. Broumas in London believed that it was FCO-inspired and that it was deliberately vague in order to both satisfy some strands within

the Labour party and to show to the public that the Wilson government was determined to continue its relations with the regime but on a different footing than its Conservative predecessor. The Greek ambassador also thought that the British were having second thoughts about the cancellation of the naval visits, as he reported that Cornish had told him that that move was a ‘flexing of muscles’, and that Whitehall was now considering the effect it would have on Anglo-Greek relations.⁴⁷ Foreign Ministry officials in Athens were quick to pick up and ask the implications of the use of the formulation ‘proper working relationship’. Goodison told John Tzounis (political director of the Greek Foreign Ministry) that the word had been extremely carefully chosen, to which the Greek official responded by urging the British to look to the long term, inasmuch as the junta ‘would not last forever’, and, therefore, to avoid any action that would antagonize the Greek people as a whole. Vlachos commented on the cancellation itself, saying that it had been felt as ‘particularly painful’ by the Greeks. What surprised the British more, though, was the reticence of their Greek interlocutors over the issue of the EEC.⁴⁸ This last point did not ‘unduly distress’ the British since, as they revealed to Broumas, the Wilson government was at the time mainly preoccupied with reassessing and renegotiating Britain’s membership of the regional organization.⁴⁹

March and April 1974 were marked by the polarizing effect they had on Anglo-Greek relations. The annual reception at the Greek embassy to celebrate the national holiday of 25 March was a clear illustration of the division (chiefly in terms of appearance and not substance) between the two political parties of Britain in their dealings with Ioannidis’ junta. Broumas noted that, whereas the government was represented only by Roberts who was the last in order at the Foreign Office, the Conservatives had sent both former foreign secretary Sir Alec Douglas-Home and his under-secretary Amery, as well as a number of MPs, who almost unanimously expressed their regret for the move and the manner of the cancellation of naval visits by Labour. At the same time, FCO officials had embarked on an endeavour to ‘sweeten the pill’ for the Greeks, trying to persuade them that things could have been a lot worse for them. At the same reception, the Greek ambassador was

told that the Labour government was pushing for a different phrasing, namely ‘proper *businesslike* relations’, and that it was only the FCO’s insistence that convinced them to change that to the finally adopted ‘proper working relations’.⁵⁰ Furthermore, a few weeks later, Goodison, ‘clearly distressed’, explained to Broumas that the Labour government would ‘give pain’ (stated in English) to the regime, mostly because it wanted to give the impression that it was following its pre-electoral commitments. According to Goodison, however, his government would do so ‘more in words than in actions’.⁵¹

A variant that made its appearance more acutely in 1974, and was to affect relations between the military regime in Athens and its Western allies was Greek-Turkish relations and, more specifically, the dispute over the Aegean.⁵² The bone of contention this time was not Cyprus but exploitable oil off the Greek island of Thassos, which is situated close to the Greek-Turkish border. The first reports in the Greek press surfaced in early 1974, sparking an exchange of notes between Athens and Ankara on drilling for oil in the Aegean.⁵³ The British stationed in the two capitals realized very quickly that the issue ‘clearly ha[d] the makings of a major and avoidable Turkish/Greek row’. They also attributed some of the fuss to the Ioannidis regime, which, in its desperate need for some good news, had been exaggerating the importance of the find for political reasons.⁵⁴ After consulting some experts within the FCO, the British realized that, although ‘oil was naturally the most pressing consideration’, another two very important problems were arising: (1) division of the resources (and hence the geography) of the sea-bed and continental shelf, and (2) the limits of territorial waters, especially around the islands. On the former the difficulty was identified as the location of the line between Greek and Turkish areas, and on the latter, as whether the Greeks would extend their territorial waters to a limit of 12 (as opposed to the then 6) miles around their islands. The specialist’s opinion was that the Law of the Sea, sea-beds, continental shelves, The Hague and Geneva conferences were all matters in which the British should beware of treading, and that the Aegean was certainly becoming an area of Greco-Turkish dispute in which they should not get involved.⁵⁵

Diplomacy over the Aegean

The dispute seemed to be acquiring increasingly greater proportions as time went by, and both Greek and Turkish ministers were making inflammatory, uncompromising statements. By May, Hooper was referring to the danger that 'a minor incident could escalate into a major one'.⁵⁶ The British, seeing that the situation was at least 'potentially serious', as both governments involved were considered 'inexperienced and nationalistic',⁵⁷ decided to contact NATO and the Americans; London expressed its continuing concern to Washington and Dr Joseph Luns, secretary-general of NATO, hoping that he would urge caution on the two sides.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the Americans saw no need to take any action at that stage.⁵⁹ What had particularly worried the British was the 'fierce language' officials of both countries had used in talks with them, and especially the repeated use of the word 'confrontation' by the Turks, in relation to the question of oil rights in the Aegean rather than Cyprus. In meetings with their Turkish counterparts, British diplomats appealed to them (since their armed forces were much stronger than the Greeks', and they had a 'properly organised democratic' government) to be patient and forbearing with the Greeks, in the interests of the West as a whole. However, and although this seemed as the best argument they could use, it 'did not cut much ice', and left Britain wondering what else it could do apart from remonstrating both in Athens and Ankara. The conclusion was all but familiar; only US leadership was thought capable of putting an end to this:

It may well be that the only hope of avoiding serious trouble lies in the personal intervention of *Dr Kissinger* which might reasonably be expected in the early stages of a real crisis, though not before. *I doubt whether anybody else can really keep these two traditional foes apart* (emphasis added).⁶⁰

Kissinger, however, did not seem ready to dive right into the Aegean dispute, and the British were left in no doubt as to his intentions. He was reported as being reluctant to see the US get involved, primarily

due to the desire not to add to the problems which it already had in the eastern Mediterranean area (the most prominent one being the Arab-Israeli conflict). He was also of the opinion that public displays of indignation against the Greek regime did not help, and that any change for the better should be left for the Greeks to bring about themselves.⁶¹ Notwithstanding Kissinger's clear views, the British embassy in Washington did not think that the general opinion of the Greek junta there was 'so very different' from that in the UK; what was acknowledged was a difference of view about the effectiveness of any external intervention.⁶²

The British were working in close cooperation with the Americans and were regularly comparing notes with them on Greece, as on many other matters, ever since before the advent of the military dictatorship in Greece.⁶³ At this particular juncture, and with the threat of war between two NATO allies looming large, the height of their coordination of views was the meeting between Roy Hattersley, minister of state for foreign and commonwealth affairs, and Arthur Hartman, assistant secretary for European affairs at the State Department. The British minister said that his government was facing a general dilemma over politically sensitive countries, with Greece presenting the most difficult and immediate problem. The two interlocutors agreed that Ioannidis' regime was 'a singularly unpleasant one', that it was becoming less stable, and that consequently its value as an asset to NATO was diminishing daily. Hartman conveyed the American belief that the Greeks were looking for outside disputes which they could exploit domestically, stating the Aegean oil dispute and, possibly, Cyprus, as examples.⁶⁴ Finally, Hartman suggested, and Hattersley agreed, that the British and the Americans should work out a joint position on Greece, with particular reference to the American idea of making contact with some of the disaffected military officers in Greece.⁶⁵

The British also requested American consultation and support in connection with what effective pressures might be brought to bear on the junta to mend its ways. London was particularly interested in knowing whether the Americans were contemplating some action to that end, for (as mentioned earlier) it was believed in the British capital that the junta was more likely to listen to Americans than anybody

else. Britain's own ability to influence the Greeks in the right direction was, according to Callaghan, 'unfortunately very limited'.⁶⁶ Kenneth Rush, deputy secretary in the State Department, told the foreign secretary that it was difficult to approach the Greek government without appearing to interfere in Greek domestic affairs. Callaghan's reply is rather interesting in hindsight: '... if there was trouble with the Turks this would provide an opportunity'.⁶⁷ The following day, Rush got into an argument with Hattersley, who suggested that NATO should not tolerate such authoritarian regimes as those in Greece and Portugal. The American diplomat referred to the case of the recent coup d'état in Portugal to illustrate his point for not interfering, only to receive Hattersley's reply that had the West exercised stronger pressure on Portugal at an earlier stage, the coup might have come earlier and might not have left the Communists in such a strong position to exploit it. The final conclusion of the meeting was, once again, that British and American objectives were much the same, though the British might differ over the means to achieve them.⁶⁸

The main reason why the British were at that time considering exercising pressure on the Greeks was again domestic; ministers in London were coming under 'increasing pressure' to speak out in NATO against the failure of the Greek regime to restore democracy. The main driving force behind the campaign to persuade them to act was identified in the person of Sir Hugh Greene, the president of the London-based *European Atlantic Action Committee on Greece* (EAACG). Greene had had the opportunity to suggest to ministers that Whitehall should pursue 'severe measures', such as placing the Greek issue formally on the NATO agenda, threatening drastic scaling down of NATO military cooperation with Greece, and/or the collective suspension of arms supplies.⁶⁹ FCO officials, although they agreed with much of EAACG's assessment of the situation in Greece, did not believe that concerted action in NATO would further rather than damage British interests, such as national defence. Moreover, diplomats acknowledged the validity of the point that action proposed by EAACG would alarm the Greek armed forces and would certainly put pressure on the junta, but were not as confident as the members of the Committee about the end result of action of this kind (to support this they used as evidence

the further tightening of control following the events of autumn of 1973).⁷⁰

The issue was discussed in more detail when a delegation of EAACG met with Roy Hattersley and Frank Judd at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. While discussing possible alternatives to the junta, Hattersley put it crudely to Greene:

... did the Committee think that *any* successor régime would be better than the present one? Might not a successor régime be even worse? Sir Hugh Greene said that this might well be the case. But he had for some time felt that *things might have to get worse in Greece before they could get better* (emphasis added).⁷¹

The president of the Committee looked for 'a strong British initiative' on the occasion of the NATO ministerial meeting that was to take place in Ottawa on 18 and 19 June. Greene expressed the opinion (fortified by the revolution in Portugal and the urgency of the increased instability of the regime and the dangerous confrontation with Turkey) that NATO should agree on non-cooperation with Greece, though without going so far as to expel it from the organization.⁷²

The reply of the British MPs was that they would not hide their 'distaste' for the dictatorship, which was thought as 'morally discredited'.⁷³ However, any action considered against the junta on London's side would necessarily hit the wall of British uncertainty about the successor regime according to earlier FCO reports, 'the more probable result, if any change of Government did ensue in Greece as a result of heavy Western pressure, would be a still more unpleasant military-based régime, perhaps Qaddafi-type, or conceivably a period of chaos leading to another totalitarian régime of one sort or another'.⁷⁴ Moreover, Callaghan himself had expressed his concern saying that it was not unreasonable to fear that under Ioannidis things in Greece might 'drift from bad to worse', and that eventually an even more unattractive successor might emerge, which would not necessarily even be 'NATO-orientated'.⁷⁵ Judd expressed his sympathy for what the delegation of EAACG had said and tried to assuage its concern by pointing out that his government's policy was to draw a clear

distinction between bilateral cooperation with Greece and the strict operational requirements of NATO; according to him, Labour looked ‘with a very critical eye’ at any cooperation with Greece which fell outside the latter category. On the question of putting pressure on the Greeks within the Alliance, though, FCO officials reiterated their belief that ‘what mattered was the attitude of the US Government’, as the only country thought capable of doing so successfully. To this John Spraos, a professor of economics at University College London and a significant figure of the British strand of opposition to the junta, answered that the role of Whitehall should be to get the Americans to move ‘in the right direction’, with the smaller members of NATO following the British lead.⁷⁶ The conclusion of the meeting was that the government shared EAACG’s general aim of restoring democracy in Greece (and would continue to say so in public) but did not agree on the way to pursue this.

In the event, the American suggestion prevailed, at the Ottawa meeting, as ‘considerable care was taken to avoid issues regarded as potentially divisive’: remarks were made only indirectly, with Dr Mario Soares, the new Portuguese foreign minister, being the most outspoken critic of the junta. Callaghan was reported as having commended the Portuguese example ‘in terms clearly implying [his] concern over Greece’.⁷⁷ According to the same source, the Greek delegate asserted that the restoration of democratic institutions would be effected ‘at the earliest possible moment’, and the secretary-general, Dr Luns, ‘carried his shielding of the Greek régime to outrageous lengths’.⁷⁸

19 June did not only mark the end of the Ottawa meeting. In London, the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee of the Cabinet was to discuss relations with politically sensitive countries. The paper prepared for the meeting (and found ‘generally acceptable’ by Wilson⁷⁹) is quite revealing about Whitehall’s general attitude towards trade with and, more importantly, arms sales to, countries such as Chile, South Africa, Spain, and Greece. In respect to trade relations, the British were worried that they might gain a reputation as an uncertain supplier, and stay behind their competitors (who were ‘only too ready’ to put commercial advantage first and other considerations a long way behind). Britain was a nation heavily dependent on trade and

investment overseas and that meant that it was more vulnerable than most to the sudden loss of export markets.⁸⁰ Arms sales in particular were deemed important to Britain not only because of their contribution to total exports (almost £500 million per year), but also because they bore a substantial share of the overhead costs of British defence industrial capacity which was required to support the armed forces. As a general directive, Britain, in its effort to strike the right balance, might have to restrict the sale of arms which could be used for internal repression (such as small arms, armoured cars), but not those with strictly external use (such as submarines, air defence missiles). A clear example of that regarding Greece, was London's decision not to agree to the issue of export licences for the supply of 23 armoured security vehicles to the Greek police, in February 1974; on that occasion it was considered that Anglo-Greek relations were likely to suffer more from parliamentary criticism than from upsetting the Greeks, and, therefore, the sale (whose economic case was 'strong'⁸¹) did not take place for political reasons.⁸²

According to the paper, Greece was thought able to do relatively little economic harm to Britain, if it decided to do so. The main reason for this was the fact that the amount of trade between the two countries was comparatively small: in 1973 exports to Greece were £99.2 million, imports from Greece only £46.6 million and British investment in the country 'negligible'. In comparison, Spain (another Southern European authoritarian state, but not a NATO member) accounted for £227 million in British exports, £233 million in imports to Britain, and at least £80 million in British investments. Consequently, the importance of Greece was not due to its standing as a trading partner but to its politico-strategic position in both NATO and Eastern Mediterranean contexts: '[...] the consequence of Greece leaving NATO and/or pursuing reckless policies over Cyprus and towards Turkey could be very serious'. The final suggestion of the paper was that exports in general should be promoted 'to the maximum extent possible', with arms sales promoted only if there was a demonstrable NATO purpose; cases of military equipment with a 'civil disturbance' role should be referred to ministers and be judged on a case-by-case approach early on.⁸³

By that time (June 1974), the overall situation on defence sales was summarized as being 'friendly and reasonably close but unproductive'.⁸⁴ The only sale the British had high hopes for was that of frigates to the Greek navy. The prospect of a sale of two frigates (worth some £70 million) was thought increasingly strong up to the moment it was cancelled, as a result of the junta's disillusionment with London over the cancellation of the British warship visits to Athens. The Greeks, who wanted to buy 4–5 frigates but lacked the financial resources to do so, had returned the tender to the Scottish firm *Yarrows* but had not been impressed with the front-running American ships, thus leaving the British hoping to get a second chance.⁸⁵ The firm asked FCO for guidance 'before the opportunity becomes irrevocably lost', and Goodison, arguing that the frigates would be designed for NATO use and that the Greek navy 'need[ed] them badly' for this purpose, recommended that no objection be raised to negotiations.⁸⁶

Another delicate aspect of relations that was troubling British officials at the same time was the question of the EEC protocol. As early as February, the Greeks had informed the European Commission that they were ready to conclude negotiations for the additional protocol, adapting it to the enlargement of the Community. At that time, the British were anxious to prevent matters coming to a head before the middle of March, in order to avoid both controversy over this in the election campaign, and an early embarrassment for the new British government. London's representatives in Brussels were quite confident they could achieve that, especially if Sir Christopher Soames, who was responsible within the Commission for relations with Greece, could be persuaded to delay matters.⁸⁷ Although there is no concrete evidence on this, this tactic seemed to have worked inasmuch as the Commission did nothing until July 1974, when the Greeks told the Community formally that they were prepared to sign a protocol to extend their Association Agreement with the Six to the three new member states. This time the British were contemplating letting matters take their course or not. The trading benefit of sharing the Six's preferences in the Greek market (which was 'of considerable importance' to the British since the Greek market was third in order of

importance after Spain and Israel among the Mediterranean countries) would be offset by domestic political criticism. Furthermore, the option of working deliberately for delay was rejected because it might easily provoke Greek retaliation against British exports to Greece. The final recommendation of the European Integration department within FCO was to follow the simplest course of letting work on the protocol take its course in Brussels.⁸⁸ By October of the same year, Adaptation Protocols had been agreed with at least eight other Mediterranean countries but not Greece.⁸⁹

Cyprus

It was only a week later that developments in Cyprus started to unfold.⁹⁰ As a consequence of actions prompted by the regime in Athens, the whole of British (but also international) attention was shifted eastwards to the island of Cyprus, where the Wilson government was faced with 'a serious crisis'.⁹¹ The first reports about outbreaks of fighting in Nicosia reached London on 15 July.⁹² According to information gained during the first hours, it was looking 'increasingly like a coup organised by Greek contingent/Greek-officered elements of National Guard'.⁹³ The most shocking news appeared to be the alleged death of Archbishop Makarios, broadcast by the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), and conveyed to London by the British high commissioner, Olver.⁹⁴

Back in the British capital, the reaction was immediate. A parliamentary question on the situation on the island and possible action by Britain gave Callaghan the opportunity to make an extensive statement on the subject. He gave information to the House of Commons about the events and referred to the action he had taken, namely that he had drawn the attention of the Greek and Turkish governments to the recognition and maintenance of independence as well as the territorial integrity and security of Cyprus. Callaghan also said that he had urged the need for restraint on all sides and had asked for their urgent views on the situation.⁹⁵ Sir Alec Douglas-Home joined the foreign secretary in the 'utter condemnation' of the 'brutal and senseless' alleged assassination of the Cypriot head of state, and expressed his hope that Athens and Ankara would jointly take action to calm

'an explosive situation'. Callaghan replied that this was 'a potentially explosive situation' that required 'very great statesmanship and restraint' by both communities on the island in order to avoid even worse trouble.

Lena Jeger, who had posed the initial question in the House, referred to article four of the Treaty of Guarantee which pointed out that each of the three guaranteeing powers (Greece, Turkey and Britain) reserved the right to take some action, if common concerted action was not possible. Callaghan admitted that the treaty gave Britain rights but appeared less urgent to suggest any concrete action as it was too early to judge the situation fully:

We are in the very early hours of this event. It happened only this morning. A declaration has been put out by those who led the coup saying that foreign policy will not change and that Cyprus will maintain friendly relations with all nations while pursuing a policy of non-alignment as happened in the past. I do not know how much reliance at this stage we should attach to any of the declarations that are forthcoming.

Callaghan, although he claimed in the House that he did not know then whether the actions of the Greek officers and the National Guard had been taken by themselves or had been inspired from elsewhere, said that he hoped Amery's statement that 'the goal of enosis should not be rushed at but should be delayed' would be borne in mind by those who had responsibility for these affairs 'on the mainland'.⁹⁶

In order to help defuse the crisis the foreign secretary prepared a telegram detailing directions to British representatives in Athens, Ankara, Washington, Brussels, and New York.⁹⁷ His message to his Greek counterpart expressed his 'grave concern' over the situation: '[...] it is undoubtedly very dangerous with serious implications for the stability of the Eastern Mediterranean and for the cohesion of the Atlantic Alliance. I am sure you share my concern that the independence, territorial integrity and security of Cyprus should be maintained. I should be grateful to have urgently your comments on the situation as the Greek Government sees it'. A similar message was to be

delivered to the Turkish capital as well, with the hope that the Turks would avoid 'any kind of precipitate action or intervention' at that stage, as it was 'clearly essential', if the conflict was not to spread, for the Turkish government to display 'exemplary patience' in those circumstances.⁹⁸ Washington was to be informed about the content of the two messages, and Dr Kissinger to be approached with an oral message from Callaghan asking his view, any information on action which he might contemplate, and any information on events on the island itself.⁹⁹ The British delegation to NATO was asked to invite Dr Luns himself to consider sending messages to the Turks and the Greeks, and the British mission at the UN was told to suggest to Dr Waldheim the convening of an emergency meeting of the contributors to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).¹⁰⁰

However, this suggestion was not met with great enthusiasm on the other side of the Atlantic. The Americans were opposed as they felt that any meeting at the UN would be likely to 'internationalise' the situation 'in an undesirable manner'.¹⁰¹ The British were also to become the object of pressure from other directions, including even the Soviets. The Soviet counsellor inquired about the British reaction to Moscow sending troops to restore the situation in Cyprus, to which Olver replied (on a personal basis) that 'it would be undesirable for the large forces already on the island to be further augmented from outside'.¹⁰² In Cyprus the high commissioner received requests for British intervention from pro-Makarios Cypriots (including the Bishop of Kitium), which he 'of course rejected'.¹⁰³ Back in London, professor Spraos tried to persuade FCO officials that it was for Britain to take the lead in the Security Council, adding that he and those who thought like him 'would feel desperately let down if [the Labour government] stood idly by'. Spraos, when told that little hard information about events in Cyprus was available, encouraged the British not to wait any longer as 'the time for international action was now'; he concluded by saying that 'otherwise it would simply be a case of shutting the stable door after the horse had bolted'.¹⁰⁴

Prime minister Wilson did ask for advice on whether Britain should take that initiative at the UN, on the same day. Goodison opined that the grounds on which that could be done would have to

be that the situation constituted a danger to international peace and security, which could be justified only by the possibility of Turkish armed intervention. His final suggestion was the following: 'We must take no action which makes this possibility greater or points a finger publicly at Turkey. A Security Council meeting now, while the situation is still very unclear, could encourage the parties concerned to make provocative statements in public, which could make the situation worse, not better'.¹⁰⁵

What is particularly interesting, nevertheless, is that the British were being informed about junta involvement in the coup by sources as distant and distinct as Greek, Cypriot, American, and Soviet. The Russians had 'firm information' of Greek involvement, Spraos talked about 'invasion by one country in the affairs of another', Greek sources consulted by Greene said that opinion in Athens was convinced of the junta's complicity (and saw Tetenes' resignation as evidence of this), and the Cyprus high commissioner, Ashiotis, refuted Callaghan's view by arguing that events were clearly due to foreign intervention from Athens and that Sampson's appointment as president of Cyprus was a 'tragedy'.¹⁰⁶ Even more interesting is the American position towards the issue, with the US embassy in Cyprus telling the British that it had 'no firm evidence' of the involvement of the Greek national contingent in the attempted coup, and the State Department saying that it had 'no doubt' that the junta was behind it. Washington was hoping to avoid having to say that in public allegedly because it saw 'a serious danger of the Turkish Cypriots being drawn into the fighting'.¹⁰⁷ Finally, in Athens, Hooper confronted the Greeks with the information that in a number of countries they would be cast as 'the villain of the piece', and the hope that they would be able to refute any such charges. Foreign minister Kypraios'¹⁰⁸ reply was that his government was not fully informed about the situation and that it shared the British concern.¹⁰⁹

The Labour government's willingness to meet with representatives of the EAACG does not only show their more favourable (in comparison with the Conservatives) disposition towards organizations of that kind, but also sheds light on British decision-making at that critical time. When Sir Hugh Greene met Hattersley at the House of

Commons on the day following the coup, he told him it was clear that it was 'a foreign adventure by the Greek régime'. Hattersley answered that his government was not yet ready to commit itself to that reading of events, and that Whitehall thought that Athens should be given time to put into practice the 'not unsatisfactory statement' it had made in the meantime about Cyprus.¹¹⁰ Hattersley also believed that it would be better for president Makarios, who was reported as being alive and in one of the Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) at the time, to leave Cyprus in order to avoid the 'very dangerous situation' that would develop if the insurgents tried to get him out of the SBA area. Greene said that that would amount to 'throwing in the sponge' and conveyed Greek public opinion's hope for British intervention. The response was again dilatory: 'Mr Hattersley said that if this meant military intervention, that was not on the cards at the moment, though there could be circumstances in which it would be right and necessary. For the moment we had to wait calmly'. On the contrary, the Committee thought that intervention was necessary before the position in Cyprus had stabilized with the result that Turkey would be provoked into war. The final conclusion of the meeting was (as in the past) that, although the views of the government and EAACG on what would be a desirable outcome were 'identical', there was a disagreement on which of the available options London should take at that juncture.¹¹¹

The next day, Bülent Ecevit, visited London to seek British agreement for a Turkish invasion of the island, supposedly to protect the Turkish minority there.¹¹² The British refused to allow the Turkish prime minister to use the sovereign bases at Akrotiri for that purpose (an 'impossible proposition', according to Callaghan),¹¹³ with a 'courteous but declaratory "No".'¹¹⁴ According to Wilson's senior policy advisor, the PM was 'very hawkish, but the chiefs of staff [we]re worried' about British citizens on the island.¹¹⁵ British efforts concentrated now on removing any pretext for a Turkish invasion. To achieve this, foreign secretary Callaghan worked to increase converging pressure on Athens by Britain, the European Community, and by NATO – chiefly the Americans, who had 'much more influence on both countries than Britain'.¹¹⁶

Endgame

The Turkish invasion of Cyprus on the 20th of July served as the final catalyst for the events set in motion by the coup against Makarios, inasmuch as it spelled disaster for the objectives of the Greek junta regarding the island, and it marked the end of the ‘anachronistic’¹¹⁷ military dictatorship in Greece. Only a couple of days later, while the British were preoccupied with the Geneva conference on Cyprus, reports reached London that the junta was about to fall and that Gizikis had summoned ‘old’ politicians (Mavros, Canelloopoulos, Markezinis, Stephanopoulos, Zolotas, Averoff, Palamas, and Garoufalias were mentioned) to discuss the formation of a civilian government.¹¹⁸ The circulating story that Karamanlis was to be recalled was corroborated by King Constantine who rang Wilson’s office to say that he had advised the former prime minister to return to Athens and that the latter had accepted the king’s advice.¹¹⁹ The scenes of ‘extraordinary jubilation’ in the centre of Athens (which was reacting ‘very much as though Greece had won the World Cup’¹²⁰) intensified even further after the announcement that the military junta would hand power over to a political administration, and euphoria culminated upon Karamanlis’ arrival in the early hours of the following day, with the crowd calling on him to ‘save Greece’.¹²¹ Shortly before that pro-Enosis demonstrators had smashed the windows of the British embassy in Athens.¹²²

Karamanlis was immediately sworn in as prime minister and, as a result, the British ambassador was instructed to deliver him a message (highly indicative of London’s satisfaction over the change in Athens and its concern and sense of urgency over Cyprus) from Wilson:

I am delighted at the news that you have taken office as Prime Minister. Please accept my warmest congratulations. I have no doubt that your high reputation as an international statesman and your long experience will make an invaluable contribution at this critical time. I am sure that you will agree that it is of paramount importance that talks between the parties concerned

in the Cyprus dispute should start as quickly as possible. I hope that you will be able to send a member of your government to Geneva tomorrow.¹²³

The new Greek premier's reply was in the same spirit:

{ ... } In the difficult task of restoring and consolidating democracy in Greece the eradication of the unfavourable consequences for Cyprus of the recent crisis shall play a vital role. I am sure that I can rely on your personal understanding and assistance in this respect. Sharing your feelings about the importance of the talks, the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution on Cyprus should start as soon as possible, I am sending Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Mavros to Geneva where he will be arriving tomorrow afternoon.¹²⁴

Callaghan thought that with the arrival of a democratic government in Greece, 'British policy acquired a new element', as 'it was important for the Greek people and for international relations that Greek democracy should be strengthened'.¹²⁵ The British thought they should 'certainly welcome' the return of Karamanlis ('a politician of real status with popular following in the country'), but not become 'over committed' at that stage to his government, as it was considered able to stay in power only if it could 'deliver the goods'.¹²⁶ The British were content to see that the new government had 'a strong pro-NATO pro-Western Europe bias' and had been greeted with relief by supporters of the two major parties. As Hooper reported to FCO: '[t]he present Government is *as good as we are likely to get* but it is far from being the "ecumenical" Government which some hoped for after the return of Karamanlis' (emphasis added). What troubled him, though, were the negative aspects of Greek political life: 'The bickering and factionalism endemic in Greek politics has alas begun to reappear, and it is much to be feared that even in the present critical situation the politicians inside the Government will soon start squabbling. Those outside are unlikely to refrain from destructive criticism'.¹²⁷ The foreign

secretary commenting on the events on Cyprus in his memoirs wrote the following:

Nevertheless, when I look back on that fateful and absorbing period there were some rewards. Democratic government in Greece was an uncovenanted bonus and I believe Britain did a great deal to assist its consolidation in those first days of uncertainty.¹²⁸

1974 marked a watershed in Anglo-Greek relations; the two turning points were Labour's return to government and the eventual collapse of the military dictatorship in Greece. Wilson was now keener to take a moral stand towards Greece than during the late 1960s. Labour had criticized the Conservative government's tolerance and support of the junta, and (under the increased influence of its left wing) opted to continue its relations with Greece's rulers merely in a business-like way. The new policy vis-à-vis Greece was exemplified in the cancellation of the naval visits that were to take place in Greece. However, London realized that it could not afford to completely sever relations with the junta for fear of worse (another coup d'état), and thus chose to simply downgrade relations from a 'good working relationship' to a 'proper working relationship', explaining to the Greeks that the only substantial change would be in terms of appearances. Britain also decided to keep away from the crisis that was brewing over the Aegean, hoping it would not have to get involved in a Greco-Turkish dispute, and reiterating its perception that its ability to influence Greece was very limited. The Cyprus crisis led to increased levels of consultation with the US (identified as the only country that could influence the junta), which, nevertheless, resulted only in dilatoriness on the part of the British.

CONCLUSION

All in all, Greece's exit from 'seven years in a military strait-jacket'¹ was 'warmly welcomed', with FCO officials admitting that the country had emerged from the dictatorship 'in better shape' than they had expected. By the end of 1974, British interests were thought aligned with supporting the Karamanlis government, which was as 'sensible, moderate and pro-Western' as any they could expect to see in Greece.² The new ambassador in Athens, F. Brooks Richards, believed the time had come to revise the state of Anglo-Greek relations, and he suggested a series of 'quite modest developments', as a sign of British recognition of the change that had taken place in Greece. His conclusion was 'so far so good': 'The re-establishment of democracy here is an achievement; its consolidation will be a major task'.³ However, going ahead with major political gestures towards the Greeks was thought difficult mainly because of the Cyprus crisis which had inevitably affected Anglo-Greek relations.⁴ Brooks Richards assessment in 1975 is quite indicative:

The conviction that we failed as a guarantor Power in Cyprus lingers. Our wider responsibilities there, together with the need to maintain tolerable relations with Turkey both intrinsically and in the Anglo-American context have made us less popular among Greece's Western friends and allies than some less actively engaged, notably France. The spurious charge of collusion with the Turks, which in the dying hours of the Junta was the pretext for the officially inspired attack on the Chancery, was never effectively nailed; and we are still suffering from the

effects, mainly with the Hellenic Navy. A further effort to clear the air will be necessary.⁵

Greece was readmitted to the Council of Europe on 28 November 1974. Earlier, on 14 August, the Greek government had decided to withdraw from the military organization of NATO; this was viewed in London as a temporary 'political gesture', directed mainly against the Americans for their failure to put sufficient pressure on the Turks. Luns told Callaghan that the Greeks seemed 'both naïve and ignorant' of the implications of that action, while the British foreign secretary (more aware of the link between foreign policy and domestic political considerations) replied that 'what was necessary was to soothe the Greeks, not to face them with the need to take difficult decisions'.⁶ The NATO response that the British envisaged was a 'judicious mixture of the stick and carrot'.⁷

Nevertheless, in terms of relations between London and Athens, there generally was a 'substantial improvement' as a consequence of the appointment of a civilian government and the end of seven years of military rule. The British encouraged Greece's re-integration into Western institutions, by supporting its readmission to the Council of Europe, welcoming a proposal put to a meeting of the Nine to study the question of the reactivation of the Association Agreement between Greece and the EEC (which had been 'frozen' following the 1967 coup), and urging the return of Greek armed forces to the Atlantic Alliance.⁸

This book is a significant addition to the historiography of the subject as it provides, for the first time, a comprehensive account of British foreign policy towards the Greek military dictatorship, from the first traces of the junta to its eventual fall in 1974. By a study of primary and secondary sources from both the UK and Greece, this book attempts an analysis of relations between the two countries from various perspectives (diplomatic, economic, cultural and defence) and in the context of Britain's transition from world to regional power. The extensive use of evidence, in the form of diplomatic documents from London, Athens, and (in some cases) Washington, and oral accounts, enhances the originality of this research, as the thoughts and motives

behind foreign policy decisions are provided, and the inner workings of the diplomatic machinery of both countries are revealed for the first time. By critically assessing and expanding the scope of the existing literature a more concrete image of Anglo-Greek relations at the time is provided.

More specifically, this study claims that it was London's weak position both financially and internationally (in the general context of 'marked British retreat') that dictated its pragmatic policy towards the Greek military dictatorship, and proved Britain's subordination to American interests. Both Wilson and Heath governments realized that they needed exports to improve their finances and that they were in a dependent position vis-à-vis the United States, and opted for a 'good working relationship' with the Athens regime, by both promoting trade with it and condoning it within NATO. The strategic importance of Greece for the Western Alliance, which was augmented during this period, mainly because of international and regional developments that stressed Cold War rivalries, was manipulated by the Colonels in order to enhance their status abroad and cultivate better relations with countries like Britain. These factors led to Whitehall's pursuing a reactive policy after 1967 with a lesser influence on Greek affairs. During the latter part of the period examined, the preponderance of the Anglo-American connection is replaced by the impact of British EEC membership, which left a distinct mark on relations between Athens and London, and showed a slight change of direction in British foreign policy orientation, and in particular towards Greece.

British policy towards Greece in the late 1960s–mid 1970s period was dominated by domestic events in the Mediterranean country. The presence and actions of the military junta in Athens meant that London would, for the most part, be confined to a less active role in relations. Whitehall's reactive role is clearly illustrated throughout this study, from the perpetration of the original coup in 1967 to the dramatic events of 1973–4. In most cases British officials found themselves in the position of struggling to establish, maintain or repair a 'good working relationship' with Greek military leaders, setting their objectives as they were doing so, and trying to pursue them in the

face of blackmail from the junta and criticism at home and abroad. The degree of continuity between the Labour and the Conservatives' treatment of the so-called 'Greek issue' was quite high, as no spectacular differences can be identified. Both parties' belief in Greece's significance in NATO remained unwavering despite efforts (in some instances even from within the parties themselves, as with the 1967 Labour conference) to help general condemnation of the regime's practices to spill over from other forums and organizations into the Atlantic Alliance.

However, differences existed and they are too important to be overlooked. Labour, on the one hand, followed an ambiguous attitude, going out of its way to maintain 'a good working relationship' with the junta, but also openly criticizing its methods on more than one occasion, and urging a return to constitutional rule when thought expedient. There were considerable internal divisions within the Labour Party over the degree of relations with a military dictatorship. The leadership, however, decided that since the Colonels appeared to be there to stay, and since they were not doing London any harm, it should not rock the boat and 'suffer economically purely in order to take a resolute, moral stand'. Whitehall, therefore, oscillated between efforts to cultivate good bilateral relations with the junta and efforts not to expose itself to charges of letting it off too lightly. Both parties when in power were faced with dire financial conditions and were preoccupied with security concerns over NATO's sensitive southern flank, and thus chose to tolerate the Colonels within the context of collective defence. Wilson, nevertheless, chose to stand up to them in, admittedly, less important forums, such as the Council of Europe.

On the other hand, high profile visits took place in both capitals and, subsequently, trade between the two countries substantially improved, as the Heath government followed a 'more realistic' approach to relations with the Colonels. Arms sales were *actively* promoted in the early 1970s and the Conservatives did not hide the fact that they were interested in upgrading the state of their relations with the Greek government. Defence and trade-related considerations seemed to prevail throughout the junta's reign, but it was even more so during the almost four years after the June 1970 election that brought the Tories

back to power. Differences would have been even more conspicuous had it not been for the countervailing influence of the EEC factor, which became apparent from 1972 onwards. The prospect of Britain's membership of the European Economic Community functioned as a trump card in the hands of the British who, although not able to act in favour of the Colonels within the regional organization, could use it as leverage to push the Greek leadership towards a more liberal direction, crucially without assuming sole responsibility for that initiative, and without taking the heat alone. Through the use of such tactics, Whitehall could revert to its 'familiar tight-rope act' in pursuing its objectives towards Greece under a military dictatorship.

Greece's efficiency as a NATO ally was consistently the most marked and publicized objective of Whitehall vis-à-vis the Greek Colonels. It is quite unambiguous that the British condoned the junta in NATO, despite severe criticism from other members of the alliance. Both parties in power struggled (albeit with varying degrees of enthusiasm) to convince critics at home and abroad of the necessity to recognize the regime that had effective control of the country. This bipartisan recognition for the junta is obvious in the careful handling of the Greek issue in the aftermath of Greece's withdrawal from the CoE (so that it did not spill over into NATO), in the 'doctrine of disconnected responsibilities' introduced by Labour and followed by the Conservatives as well, and in the general stance of the British in relation to condemning the Greeks in the forum of the Atlantic Alliance. Throughout the Colonels' tenure of power, London, in clear consultation with the US, sustained its belief that the stability that the junta was offering within the context of the troubled Mediterranean was vital for all members of NATO and, consequently, more important than a possibly left-leaning successor democratic government.

As regards the sensitive issue of Cyprus (given the two countries' guarantor status), it remained, throughout the whole seven years, one of the basic priorities (and officially one of the four, and later three, objectives) of British policy vis-à-vis the Colonels. The fact that there was a military, nationalistic junta in Athens, which included many members with unmistakable pro-Enosis sentiments, and which was desperate at certain points to achieve a success outside Greece's borders

in order to compensate for its deficiencies at home, in conjunction with the Colonels' undisputed ties with Grivas and their manifest aversion to Makarios, sparked British fears of a potential forced change of the status quo on the island. Therefore, Whitehall's chief concern was to attempt to reduce temperatures all round, without, though, becoming too entangled in the Cyprus imbroglio and Greco-Turkish differences.

Arms sales to Greece was another highly controversial issue - no less so due to prior complications over trade with South Africa. The Wilson government drew a distinction (similar to the one employed vis-à-vis the apartheid regime), whereby large items which could be used for NATO purposes, such as tanks, could be exported, whereas 'light' items, like grenades and small rifles, which could be used for internal repression could not be sold to Athens. The Labour government tried to handle this delicate and potentially explosive question in strict confidence, thus exemplifying its twofold policy of keeping relations with the Colonels on a satisfactory level and at the same time avoiding hostile criticism, especially within parliament. This 'combination of high-minded principle and arms sales', as one member of the Cabinet termed it, provided an impetus for attacks on Whitehall (for the most part from its left wing), which defended its choices by returning to the *Leitmotif* of the dismal financial situation of Britain that was in desperate need of exports, and the importance of the arms industry with regard to the jobs it provided.

Consequently, when the Conservatives came to power, a continuation of the status quo concerning arms sales was the minimum expected. In fact, the Heath government used its predecessor's policy as a springboard for the active promotion of sales in order to boost its trade with Greece. London made its desire to sell arms to the junta more distinct, by arranging the exchange of visits of people involved, on a variety of levels, in arms sales. Most importantly, British ministers kept reiterating their willingness to provide frigates and, after an initial hesitancy, even tanks to the military dictatorship in Athens, in a policy that culminated in Lord Carrington's visit to the Greek capital. Despite Whitehall's active policy of attracting arms deals, sales seldom materialized. FCO documents reveal that the British attributed that

to the 'Byzantine style of negotiations' of the Greeks and their unwillingness to appear to 'go other than American'. Greek documents show that the junta was more interested in appearing to be in negotiations with the British (in order to enhance its international respectability) than proceed with sales, for the additional reason that, in the most significant cases (such as the frigates), Athens lacked the necessary funds. Therefore, while Britain was preoccupied with supporting its arms industry and generally improving its trade in a desperate effort to reverse its financial decline, the Greeks' main concern was to use any contracts secured for political exploitation.

As shown above, the issue of arms sales was inexorably connected with trade. One of the most important British objectives for the whole duration of the Greek dictatorship, it played a key role in relations between the governments in London and Athens. Under Labour, imports from Greece steadily improved (with the sole exception of 1968 when there was a slight decrease) reaching their climax in 1970. More dramatic was the rise in exports to Greece in the late 1960s, almost doubling from 1967 to 1969. The Conservatives' policy of actively promoting trade prospects (including high-profile visits of ministers to Greece) meant that trade relations between the two countries would enter a new phase after 1970, and especially during the last two years of the junta's reign. Imports from Greece remained in 1971–2 at least 50% higher than 1967 and 1968, culminating in 1973 when they were more than double the figures of the late 1960s. The image of exports is quite telling, with figures marking a steady increase after 1970 and reaching three times the levels of 1967 in 1973. It becomes clear, therefore, that the Heath government not only had fewer qualms over dealing with the junta on a political level, but also pursued, and largely succeeded in, a policy of actively promoting trade with a military dictatorship.

In a nutshell, British foreign policy towards Greece during the junta years could be characterized as a triumph of *Realpolitik*. It is an instance in the Cold War where the leaders of a relatively small country exploit its geo-strategic importance to gain recognition and credibility, blackmailing bigger powers to cooperate with it by advertising its propensity to topple. Successive Labour and Conservative governments

gave second place of interest to moral and legal (see the preamble of NATO treaty) concerns in their effort to keep the Atlantic Alliance and their trade prospects intact. By mostly ignoring cries (especially under Heath) to promote the restoration of democracy in Greece by pushing the Colonels in that direction, and by opting for a policy of 'business as usual' with them, Whitehall tolerated the military rulers of Greece and acquitted itself of any responsibility for them by maintaining that Britain could not react differently as it was in an extremely precarious financial situation and because the only ones that could really do anything to influence the junta were the Americans.

This study has shown that there were some differences between parties and that there were divisions within the Cabinet, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and both Houses over the Greek issue. It has also highlighted the role the Colonels themselves and their diplomatic machinery played in making London pursue specific policies. Most importantly, though, it has shed some light on the decision-making process behind the formulation of Britain's objectives towards the junta, and has illuminated the thoughts, concerns and debates regarding Anglo-Greek relations in both capitals, as well. By trailing this process, the fundamentals of each government's foreign policy orientation have come to the fore, along with the practicalities that ushered relations in the chosen direction.

APPENDIX

THE PERCENTAGE OF THE GREEK MARKET BY COUNTRY (IMPORTS AND EXPORTS)

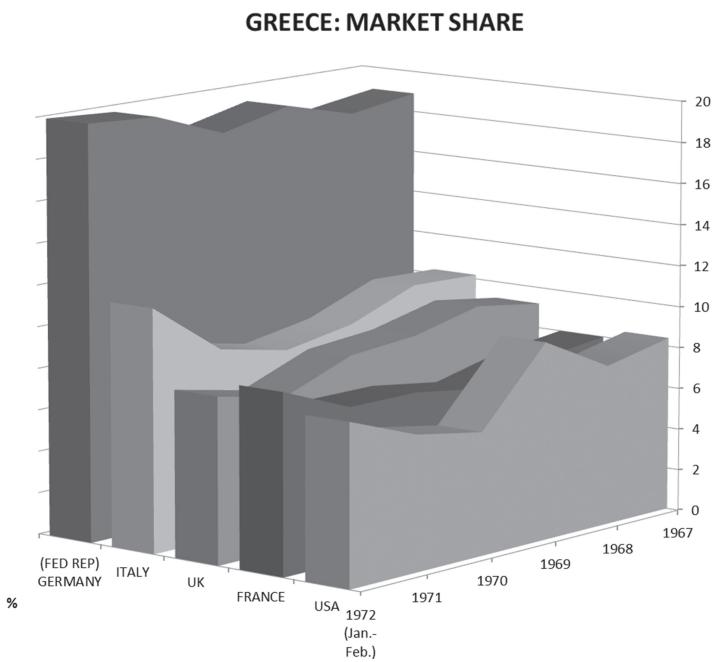


Figure 1

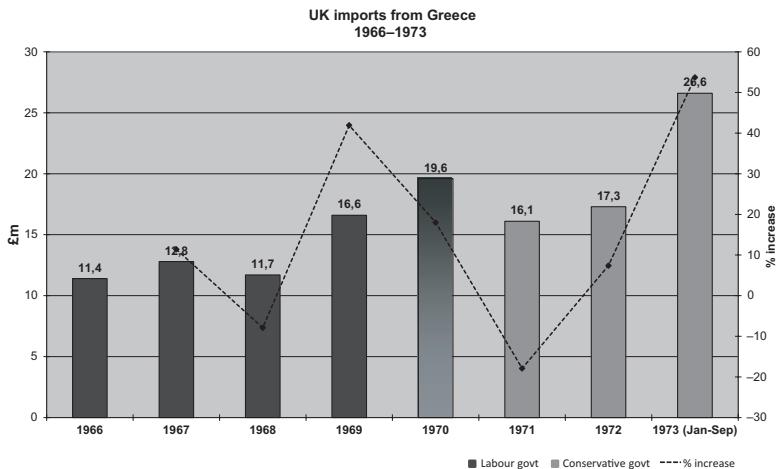


Figure 2

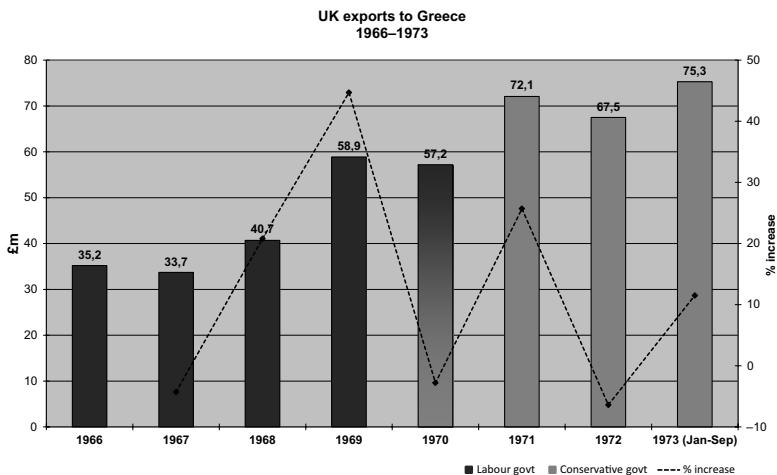


Figure 3

NOTES

Chapter 1 The Labour government's policy towards the Colonels, 1967–68: Setting the tone

1. Hatzivassiliou, 'Heirs of the King-Makers: The British Embassy in Athens, 1951–61', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 2007 18(3), p.574.
2. Ibid, p.577.
3. Ibid, p.579. See also debate in House of Commons, *Hansard*, Vol.551, Coll.1772–3.
4. Sakkas, 'Atlantic Alliance, Détente and Greek diplomacy, 1961–1967', Vassilakis (ed.) *From relentless struggle to dictatorship* (in Greek), p.177.
5. Svolopoulos, *Greek Foreign Policy, 1945–1981* (in Greek), vol.2, Athens: Estia, 2007, p.115.
6. See 'Greece – Britain', *Kathimerini*, 14 February 1961.
7. Svolopoulos, *Greek Foreign Policy*. On this see also Rizas, *Greece, the US and Europe, 1961–1964* (in Greek), Athens: Patakis, 2001 and especially pp.106–7.
8. See, for example, references in William Mallinson's books, *Cyprus: Diplomatic History and the Clash of Theory in International Relations*, London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010, p.96, and *Britain and Cyprus: Key Themes and Documents Since World War II*, London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011, p.23.
9. Rizas, *Greece, the US and Europe*, pp.102–3.
10. For a sober discussion of the July 1965 events and the lead-up to the junta, see Meynaud, *The Political Forces in Greece* (in Greek), Athens: Savvalas, 2002, and especially pp.72–210. For a protagonist's take on events see Andreas Papandreou's account and especially his reference to the British being 'openly hostile' to him and his father in the immediate pre-coup period (*Democracy at Gunpoint* (in Greek), Athens: Livanis, 2006, p.362).

11. The National Archives of the United Kingdom (hereafter TNA): Foreign Office files (hereafter FO) 371/185666 Record of conversation, George Thompson and Ioannis Toumbas, 12.09.1966, cited in Maragkou, 'Anglo-Greek relations in the short 1960s', Vassilakis (ed.) *From relentless struggle to dictatorship* (in Greek), p.226.
12. Rizas, *Greek politics after the Civil war: parliamentarism and dictatorship* (in Greek), Kastaniotis: Athens, 2008, especially pp.130–70.
13. Rizas, *Greek politics*, p.225.
14. Ibid. pp.269, 272.
15. Mark Dragoumis, *The Greek Economy: 1940–2004*, Athens: Athens News, 2004, p.39.
16. For a detailed account of these events (including correspondence between Constantine and Papandreu see Spyridon Markezinis, *Contemporary political history of Greece, Vol.3, 1952–1975* (in Greek), Athens: Papyros, 1994, pp.114–37.
17. Rizas, *Greek politics*, p.330.
18. TNA: Foreign and Commonwealth Office files (hereafter FCO) FCO9/136 Letter from Sir Ralph Murray, Athens to George Brown, Foreign Office, 29.06.1967.
19. Murtagh, *The rape of Greece: the king, the colonels and the resistance*, London: Simon & Schuster, 1994.
20. TNA FO371/185677/CE1631/6 'Participation by two Labour M.P.'s in a Greek Demonstration' by A. E. Davidson, FO, 18.05.1966.
21. This was Michael Stewart's first term as foreign secretary, which ended in August 1966. His second spell at this position lasted from March 1968 to June 1970.
22. TNA FO371/185677/CE1631/6 Letter, H. A. F. Hohler, FO to Murray, Athens, 27.06.1966.
23. Ibid.
24. TNA FO371/185677/CE1631/6 Hohler, FO to Murray, Athens, 27.06.1966.
25. Ibid. For more information on the 'special relationship' during this period see James Ellison, 'Stabilising the West and looking to the East: Anglo-American relations, Europe and détente, 1965 to 1967', Ludlow (ed.), *European Integration and the Cold War: Ostpolitik-Westpolitik, 1965–1973*, London: Routledge, 2007.
26. A de-classified field information report entitled 'Rightist Greek Military Conspiratorial Group' that identified numerous of the later members of the junta, such as George Papadopoulos, was produced as early as March 1966 ("Field Information Report," Athens, March 7, 1966, *FRUS XVI*, Document No.225 in Klarevas, *Were the Eagle and the Phoenix Birds of a Feather? The United States and the Greek Coup of 1967*, Discussion Paper No.15, Hellenic Observatory-European Institute, LSE, 2004, p.18).

27. Klarevas, *The Eagle and the Phoenix*, p.28.
28. 'Telegram from the Embassy in Greece to the Department of State,' Athens, March 24, 1967, *FRUS XVI*, Document No.264. in Klarevas, *the Eagle and the Phoenix*, p.19.
29. Ibid.
30. Andreas Papandreou admitted that all the politicians and the common people 'had been taken by surprise' and 'caught napping' (*Democracy at Gunpoint: The Greek Front*, London: André Deutsch, 1971, p.19).
31. Klarevas, *The Eagle and the Phoenix*, p.23.
32. TNA Prime Minister files (hereafter PREM): 13/2139 Memorandum on the Greek political situation, attached to A.M. Palliser, FO to Harold Wilson, Downing Street, 08.11.1966.
33. TNA PREM13/2140 Record of a meeting between Michael Stewart and Murray, 03.05.1967.
34. TNA PREM13/2139 Memorandum on the Greek political situation, attached to Palliser to Wilson, 08.11.1966.
35. Ibid.
36. London was encumbered with the intricate processes of 'probing' EEC views, in the light of its formal application to join the EEC, and mediating between the superpowers over a settlement in Vietnam, in the first quarter of 1967 (Ponting, *Breach of Promise: Labour in Power, 1964–1970*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1989, pp.208 and 223–6). On the question of Labour and the EEC see Daddow (ed.) *Harold Wilson and European Integration: Britain's Second Application to Join the EEC*, London: Frank Cass, 2003; Parr, *Britain's Policy Towards the European Community: Harold Wilson and Britain's world role, 1964–1967*, London: Routledge, 2006; and Pine, *Harold Wilson and Europe: Pursuing Britain's Membership of the European Community*, London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007.
37. TNA FCO9/120 Election Prospects in Greece, Murray to Brown, 31.01.1967.
38. Ibid.
39. 'New Greek crisis feared after move against two M.P.s', *The Times*, 26 February 1967.
40. Ibid.
41. TNA FCO9/120 Murray to FO, tel.no.229, 06.04.1967.
42. TNA FCO9/172 Sir Michael Stewart to FO, tel.no.855, 31.07.1967.
43. For a brief analysis of foreign involvement in the coup see Maragkou, 'The Foreign Factor and the Greek Colonels' Coming to Power on 21 April 1967', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 2006 6:4.

44. See 'New Nemesis', *The Economist*, 29 April 1967. The Colonels' justification for their action was the one usually employed by military dictatorships (see Brooker, *Non-Democratic Régimes*, Hampshire, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p.137).
45. TNA FCO9/124 Murray to FO, tel.no.275, 21.04.1967. A month later he conceded that he 'became aware in January of a Colonel Papadopoulos plotting, having declared that the time for military action had come' (TNA FCO9/126 Memorandum on Coup in Greece, Murray to Brown, 23.05.1967).
46. TNA FCO9/124 Murray to FO, tel.no.276, 21.04.1967.
47. Ibid, tel.no.284, 21.04.1967, and tel.no.295, 22.04.1967.
48. NARA RG 59: POL 33 GREECE-US, Rusk to Athens, tel.no.183175, 27.04.1967.
49. Inasmuch as the Easter holidays in Greece were about to start, any action taken after 27 April would reach Greek officials with much delay and would thus incite scepticism with regard to Britain's intentions.
50. TNA FCO9/125 Murray to FO, tel.no.369, 26.04.1967.
51. TNA FCO9/125 Letter from Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Athens to the Greek Embassy, London, 26.04.1967.
52. TNA FCO9/125 Brown to Athens, tel.no.481, 25.04.1967.
53. TNA FCO9/125 Dean to FO, tel.no.1379, 26.04.1967.
54. See TNA CAB128/42, CC(67).23rd Conclusions, 27 April 1967.
55. TNA FCO9/125 'Cabinet: 27 April, The New Greek Government', 27.04.1967.
56. Castle, *The Castle Diaries, 1964–70*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984, p.247.
57. Shaw, *International Law*, 4th edition, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p.304.
58. Peterson, 'Political Use of Recognition: The Influence of the International System', *World Politics*, Vol.34, No.3, (Apr. 1982), p.325.
59. Shaw, *International Law*, p.96.
60. That is recognition 'subject to fulfilment of certain conditions', like the treatment of minorities or the respect for human rights (Brownlie, *Principles of Public International Law*, 4th edition, Oxford: Clarendon, 1990, p.312).
61. Brownlie, *Principles*, p.106.
62. TNA PREM13/2140 Prime minister's personal minute, Wilson to Brown, no.M46/67, 28.04.1967.
63. Meynaud, *Political Forces*, p.525.
64. Ibid, p.526.
65. TNA PREM13/2140 Wilson to Brown, no.M46/67, 28.04.1967.
66. TNA PREM13/2140 Minute, Brown to Wilson, 01.05.1967.

67. TNA FCO9/224 Murray to FO, tel.no.547, 17.05.1967 and Sir Michael Stewart to FO, tel.no.370, 13.05.1968.
68. TNA PREM13/2140 Record of a meeting between Brown and Murray, FCO, 03.05.1967.
69. Ibid.
70. TNA CAB128/42, CC (67).28th, 4 May 1967.
71. TNA CAB128/42, CC (67).30th, 11 May 1967. Interestingly, only two days earlier Brown had informed missions abroad that the Colonels did not seem to have acted from 'disreputable motives', since they were supposedly trying to avert the dangers of chaos or a communist take-over. As the foreign secretary wrote: 'Such dangers could not be discounted, although the leaders of the coup may have exaggerated them' (TNA FCO9/872 Brown to UKDEL NATO, Guidance no.96, 09.05.1967).
72. 'Marching back to the good old days', *The Economist*, 13 May 1967.
73. LSE/Shore/7/31 Report on a visit to Greece by M.K.MacMillan and Arnold Gregory, 18.05.1967.
74. TNA PREM13/2140 Record of a meeting between Brown and Murray, FCO, 03.05.1967.
75. See *Hansard* Col. 87/7 and TNA FCO 9/148 Oral answer from Healey to Gardner, 31.05.1967; Murtagh, *The Rape*, p.155; Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p.162 and Sakkas, 'The Greek dictatorship, the USA and the Arabs, 1967–1974', *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 2004 6(3), p.252.
76. TNA FCO9/165 Speaking notes on Greece and NATO: Parliamentary question by Winnick, n.d. For an account on the events and the diplomacy of the Cyprus issue up to 1967 see Mallinson, *Cyprus: a modern history*, London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005 and Rizas, *Union, Partition, Independence: the US and Britain in search of a solution for the Cyprus issue, 1963–1967* (in Greek), Athens: Vivliorama, 2000.
77. Archives of the Greek Ministry for Foreign Affairs (hereafter AGMFA): London embassy files (hereafter LE)/1967/2.4 part 1/2 Letter from Francis Noel-Baker, London to Paul Economou-Gouras, Athens, 06.06.1967.
78. Xydis, 'Coups and Countercoups in Greece, 1967–1973 (with a postscript)', *Political Science Quarterly* 89 (1974), p.524.
79. Laqueur has argued that Moscow 'had little to lose from a war fought [in the region] by proxy' (The road to war, 1967: the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, [1968]), p.53).
80. Coker, 'Foreign and Defence Policy' in Hollowell, (ed.) *Britain Since 1945*, Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2003, p.3.
81. As the 1969 Duncan Report asserted (see Michael Stewart. *Life and Labour*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1980, p.142).

82. TNA FCO9/172 Letter from Sir Michael Stewart to Hohler, 03.08.1967.
83. *Cmnd 3357, Supplementary Statement of Defence Policy 1967* (London: HMSO, July 1967), p.4 in Ritchie Ovendale, *British defence policy since 1945*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994, p.142.
84. Gore-Booth, *With great truth and respect*, London: Constable, 1974, p.330.
85. Young. 'Britain and 'LBJ's War', 1964–68', *Cold War History* 2002 2(3), p.65. See also Abadi, 'Great Britain and the Maghreb in the Epoch of Pan Arabism and Cold War', *Cold War History*, 2002 2(2), pp.136–7; Ponting, *Breach*, p.215 and Medlicott in Bartlett, *British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1989, pp.122–3.
86. Murtagh, *The Rape*, pp.155–6.
87. AGMFA LE/1967/2.4 part 1/2 no.4941/ST/2-A/1 Verykios, London to Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Athens, 12.09.1967.
88. TNA FCO9/165 Brown's speech to the Labour Party Annual Conference, 04.10.1967.
89. AGMFA LE/1967/3.3 part 1/2 Labour party conference resolution on Greece, Agenda p.72, n.d.
90. Vournas, *History of Contemporary Greece: Junta – Cyprus Dossier (1967–1974)* (in Greek), Athens: Patakis, 2003, pp.87–8.
91. TNA FCO9/148 Sir Michael Stewart to FO, tel.no.28, 17.10.1967.
92. Ponting, *Breach*, p.183.
93. TNA CAB128/42, CC (67).67th, 9 November 1967.
94. TNA FCO9/165 Record of Rodger's meeting with M.P.s by R.C. Samuel, 22.11.1967.
95. Ponting, *Breach*, p.321 and Young, 'LBJ's War', pp.82–3.
96. Woodhouse, *The rise and fall of the Greek Colonels*, London: Granada, 1985, p.40.
97. Wrigley, 'Now you see it, now you don't: Harold Wilson and Labour's foreign policy 1964–70', R.Coopey, S.Fielding, and N.Tiratsoo, (eds), *The First Wilson Government 1964–70*, London: Pinter, 1993, p.132.
98. AGMFA LE/1967/2.1 part 1/2 Verykios, London to MFA, no.5798/ST/2, 16.10.1967; no.6215/ST/2, 04.11.1967 and no.6278/ST/2, 06.11.1967.
99. On the November fighting, as well as the September talks that preceded it, see Uslu, *The Cyprus Issue as an Issue of Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish-American Relations, 1959–2003*, New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2003, and Bahcheli, *Greek-Turkish relations since 1955*, Boulder: Westview, 1990, pp.71–5.
100. TNA FCO9/165 Speaking notes for Meeting between the Secretary of State and the Greek Foreign Minister, n.d.
101. Svolopoulos. *Konstantinos Karamanlis: Archive, facts and texts* (in Greek), Vol. 6, Athens: Ekdotiki Athinon, 1994, pp.54 and 56.

102. TNA FCO9/139 Memorandum on Greece, Davidson to private secretary, 20.12.1967.
103. Papagos, *Notes: 1967–1977* (in Greek), Athens: Goulandris-Horn Foundation, 1999, 16 November entry, p.31.
104. TNA FCO9/139 Letter from John Beith to FO, 14.12.1967.
105. TNA FCO9/165 Speaking notes for Socialist International Party Leaders' Conference, n.d.
106. TNA FCO9/165 Notes for Parliamentary Labour Party Meeting, 07.11.1967.
107. AGMFA LE/1967/2.1 part 1/2 Verykios, London to MFA, no.6550/ST/2, 17.11.1967.
108. TNA FCO9/214 Brown to Athens, tel.no.1668, 29.11.1967.
109. 'Junta in Greece Firmly in Power After Coup Fails', *The New York Times*, 15 December 1967.
110. TNA FCO9/139 Speaking notes on Cabinet meeting on Greece, 14.12.1967.
111. 'Greek Pressure Points', *The Guardian*, 26 September, 1967.
112. TNA FCO9/120 Sir Michael Stewart to FO, tel.no.1007, 21.09.1967. The same source claimed that the king's plan was triggered by his feeling that the Colonels would ask him to replace at least some civilian members of the government with military men. On this see also Papagos. *Notes*, 6 December entry, p.43, where Constantine's concern about the dismissal of army officers is reported.
113. TNA FCO9/120 Memorandum on 'The Greek Internal Scene', Stewart to Brown, 19.10.1967.
114. Ibid.
115. TNA FCO9/120 Letter, Sir Michael Stewart to Sir Paul Gore-Booth, 24.10.1967.
116. TNA FCO9/120 Letter, Sir Michael Stewart to G. S. Beith, 17.11.1967.
117. Constantine's message, accessible at <http://www.greekroyalfamily.gr/assets/King%27s%20declaration%20-%2013%20December%201967.pdf>, accessed 13.09.2009.
118. TNA FCO9/139 Sir Michael Stewart to FO, tel.no.1362, 14.12.1967.
119. TNA PREM13/2140 Brown, FO to Washington D.C., tel.no.667, 18.01.1968.
120. See 'I governi atlantici mantengono per ora una posizione d'attesa', *L'Unità*, 15 December 1967.
121. TNA FCO9/139 Rodgers, FO to Brown, Brussels, tel.no.2564, 14.12.1967.
122. TNA FCO9/139 Brown to Athens, tel.no.1821, 16.12.1967. See also 'Junta May Send Minister To Constantine', *Sunday Telegraph*, 31 December 1967.

123. AGMFA LE/1967/2.1 part 1/2 Verykios, London to MFA, no.8071/ST/2, 30.12.1967.
124. TNA FCO9/139 Sir Michael Stewart to FO, tel.no.1406, 20.12.1967.
125. See also 'Western Powers rebuff Greek Bid for Recognition', *The New York Times*, 16 December 1967 and 'Impasse Reached on Return of King', *The New York Times*, 27 December 1967.
126. TNA FCO9/132 Davidson to Beith, 18.01.1968.
127. TNA CAB128/42, CC (67).74th, 21 December 1967.
128. On the US-UK 'special relationship' during this period, see Reynolds, 'A "Special Relationship"? America, Britain and the International Order Since the Second World War' in *International Affairs*, 1985–1986, 62(1), pp.13–5.
129. NARA RG 59: POL 1 GREECE-US Circular 98588 by Rusk, 15.01.1968.
130. TNA CAB128/43, CC (68).9th Conclusions, 18 January 1968.
131. TNA FCO9/132 Sir E. Shuckburgh, Rome to FCO, tel.no.87, 19.01.1968.
132. Meynaud, *Political Forces*, pp.670–1.
133. Svolopoulos, *Greek Foreign Policy*, p.169.
134. TNA FCO9/132, Telegram no.102, 30.01.1968.
135. 'The end of Empire', *Empros*, 20 January 1968.
136. TNA FCO9/166 Working paper on 'Review of Policy by the Secretary of State' by Davidson, 14.06.1968.
137. *The Times*, 29 December 1967, quoted in Sandbrook. *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties*, London: Abacus, 2007, p.501.
138. TNA FCO9/838 Annual review for 1968, Sir Michael Stewart, 10.01.1969.
139. TNA FCO9/835 House of Commons speech, 11.04.1968.
140. Young, 'The Diary of Michael Stewart as British Foreign Secretary, April–May 1968', *Contemporary British History*, 2005 19(4), p. 487.
141. Ibid, p.488.
142. Papagos, *Notes*, 22 May–1 June entry, pp.92–4.
143. TNA FCO55/80 Oral answer from Wilson, to John Fraser, 25.06.1968 and *House of Commons Debates*, Vol. 767, cols 1499–503.
144. Schwab and Frangos, *Greece under the junta*, p.71.
145. Wilson, *The Labour Government: 1964–70: a personal record*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson: Joseph, 1971, p.686. For an account of the British line on civil liberties in Greece see Conispoliatis, *Facing the Colonels: British and American diplomacy towards the Colonels' junta in Greece, 1967–1970*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leicester, 2003, pp.194–200.
146. TNA FCO9/870 Memorandum by Michael Stewart, 02.07.1968.

147. Wilson, *a personal record*, p.685.
148. Crossman, *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister, Volume Three*, Secretary of State for Social Services, 1968–70, London: Hamish Hamilton and Jonathan Cape, 1976, p.132.
149. Castle, *Castle Diaries*, 1964–70, p.484.
150. Crossman, *Diaries of a Cabinet Minister, Volume Three*, p.132.
151. Castle, *Castle Diaries* 1964–70, p.485.
152. Benn, *Office without power: Diaries 1968–72*, London: Hutchinson, 1988, 1 August entry, p.96.
153. TNA FCO9/870 Memorandum for the Secretary of State's meeting with Sir Michael Stewart, 07.11.1968. See also Svolopoulos, *Archive, facts and texts*, Vol. 6, p.80.
154. Castle, *Castle Diaries* 1964–70, 17 September entry, p.514.
155. See p.311 of Konstantina Maragkou PhD thesis, and her article ‘The Wilson Government’s Responses to “The Rape of Greek Democracy”’ in *Journal of Contemporary History*, 2010 45:1, p.175.
156. Geraint Hughes, ‘British policy towards Eastern Europe and the impact of the ‘Prague Spring’, 1964–68’, *Cold War History*, 2004 2(4), p.124.
157. Ibid, p.134.
158. TNA FCO9/166 Memorandum on Greece and NATO by Davidson, 17.09.1968.
159. TNA FCO9/166 Letter from Hood to Sir Bernard Burrows, 18.12.1968.
160. AGMFA LE/1969/5.1 part 1 no.7153/ST/2 Verykios, London to MFA, Athens, 21.12.1968.
161. Ibid.
162. TNA FCO9/870 D.S.L. Dodson to R.H.G. Edmonds, FCO, 01.11.1968.
163. TNA FCO9/870 Memorandum for the Secretary of State's meeting with Sir Michael Stewart, 07.11.1968.
164. Ibid.
165. Pickering, *Britain’s Withdrawal from East of Suez: the politics of retrenchment*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998, p.150. See also ‘Politics and “Black Tuesday”: Shifting Power in the Cabinet and the Decision to Withdraw from East of Suez, November 1967–January 1968’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 2002, 13(2) by the same author. On the same subject see also chapter nine of Dockrill, *Britain’s retreat from east of Suez: the choice between Europe and the World?, 1945–1968*, New York: Palgrave, 2002.
166. TNA FCO9/870 Memorandum for the Secretary of State's meeting with Sir Michael Stewart, 07.11.1968.
167. Ibid.
168. TNA FCO9/870 Record of a meeting on Greece, Maitland, 22.11.1968.

169. Papagos, *Notes*, 28 November entry, p.140.
170. 'U.S. Plea to Save Panagoulis', *Daily Telegraph*, 21 November, 1968.
171. TNA FCO9/830 Sir Michael Stewart, Athens to FCO, tel.no.1266, 22.11.1968.
172. TNA FCO9/838 'Annual review for 1968' Sir Michael Stewart, Athens to Stewart, London, WSG 1/20 (23704), 10.01.1969.
173. Ibid.
174. For its repercussions during 1969 see 'Shipping Boycott: Stalemate' *The Greek Observer*, No.1, March 1969.
175. TNA FCO9/874 Brief by J.E.C. Macrae, 14.11.1968.
176. Woodhouse, *The Colonels*, p.69.

Chapter 2 The Labour government's policy towards the Colonels, 1969–70: a 'new era of relations'

1. On 30 May, approximately one month after the Greek Colonels' coup in Athens.
2. Childs, *Britain Since 1945: A Political History*, London: Routledge, 2000, p.139.
3. For Whitehall's policy towards Nigeria and the seceded state of 'Biafra', see Alexander, 'A Tale of Two Smiths: The Transformation of Commonwealth Policy, 1964–70', *Contemporary British History*, 2006, 20(3), pp. 313–5.
4. Sandbrook, *White Heat*, p.736.
5. Woodhouse, *Colonels*, p.69.
6. TNA FCO9/871 Record of a meeting on Greece by N.J. Barrington, 17.02.1969.
7. TNA FCO9/845 Letter by Sir Michael Stewart in Athens to Edmonds at FCO, 21.01.1969.
8. Ibid.
9. See 'A matter of conscience for western democracy', *The Greek Observer*, No.1, March 1969.
10. 'Touch and go for Greece in expulsion move', *Sunday Times*, 26 January 1969.
11. 'Verdict on Greece', *The Guardian*, 27 January 1969.
12. AGMFA LE/1969/5.1 part 3 no.521/ST/Z Verykios to MFA, 26.01.1969 (author's translation).
13. 'Putting on the pressure', *Spectator*, 7 February 1969. For Vlachos' role during the junta see her memoirs: *Fifty something ... vol. 3, the anti-Greeks' struggle* (in Greek), Athens: Eleftheroudakis, 2008.
14. 'Strasbourg vote for Greece's suspension', *The Guardian*, 31 January 1969.
15. Ibid.

16. TNA FCO9/845 Letter by Edmonds to Gorham, 06.02.1969.
17. 'Slapped, not shoved', *The Economist*, 21 February 1969.
18. TNA FCO9/845 Letter by Edmonds to Gorham, 06.02.1969.
19. TNA FCO9/871 Record of a meeting on Greece by Barrington, 17.02.1969.
See also 'Slapped, not shoved', *The Economist*, 21 February 1969.
20. TNA FCO9/1192 Annual review for 1969, Sir Michael Stewart, 20.01.1970.
21. Wilson, *a personal record*, p.842 and C. M Woodhouse, *Modern Greece. A short history*, 3rd edition, London: Faber and Faber, 1984, p.68.
22. A bluff or rather a 'bluster' as FCO documents characterised it at the time and as time proved later (TNA FCO9/871 Letter from Barrington to E. Youde, 10 Downing Str., 06.08.1969).
23. TNA FCO9/885 Record of a meeting on Greece, Barrington, 17.02.1969.
On the topic of moral constraints on foreign policy-making see Martin and Garnett, *British Foreign Policy: Challenges and Choices for the Twenty-first Century*, London: Pinter, 1997, pp.64–81.
24. British exports were valued at over £30 million a year –more specifically, £33.2 million in 1967 and £39.9 million in 1968 (TNA FCO9/892 Letter from G.A. Barry to J.M.O. Snodgrass, CRE 27683/G, 02.10.1969). See also Appendix, Figure 3.
25. NARA RG 59: POL 23–9 GREECE Annenberg, London to William P. Rogers, Washington D.C., tel.no.7242, 11.09.1969.
26. AGMFA LE/1970/4.4 no. 6532/ST/2 I.A. Sorokos, London to MFA, 18.10.1969.
27. NARA RG 59: POL 23–9 Elliot L. Richardson, London to Rogers, D.C., tel. no.9187, 08.11.1969.
28. AGMFA LE/1970/4.4 no. 6532/ST/2 Sorokos to MFA, 18.10.1969.
29. Woodhouse, *Modern Greece*, p.69.
30. TNA FCO9/883 Speaking notes by Snodgrass for Calvocoressi's call on the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 01.12.1969.
31. Wilson, *a personal record*, p.918.
32. Papagos, *Notes*, 14 November entry, pp.214–5.
33. TNA FCO9/880 FCO Memorandum on arms for Greece, NV (69) A24, 20.02.1969.
34. On this see Young, 'The Wilson government and the debate over arms to South Africa in 1964', *Contemporary British History*, 12(3), pp.62–86.
35. Phythian, *The politics of British arms sales since 1964*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000, p.5.
36. Sandbrook, *White Heat*, p.507. See also Denis Healey, *Time of My Life*, London: Michael Joseph, 1989, pp.334–6 and his reference to 'Byzantine intrigues of Westminster' on p.339.

37. TNA FCO9/871 Minute on the supply of arms to Greece by Michael Stewart, PM/69/42, 19.06.1969.
38. TNA FCO9/870 Speaking notes for the Defence secretary, 04.02.1969, attached to memorandum by Foreign and Defence secretaries, OPD(69) 3, 24.01.1969.
39. TNA FCO9/870 Memorandum by Foreign and Defence secretaries, OPD(69) 3, 24.01.1969.
40. TNA FCO9/871 Letter from J.A.N. Graham to Youde, 04.09.1969.
41. TNA FCO9/871 Letter from Youde to Graham, 28.07.1969.
42. TNA FCO9/885 Memorandum on policy towards Greece, WSG3/548/25, 16.06.1969.
43. See Castle, *Castle Diaries, 1964–70*, 2 February entry, p.600.
44. Crossman, *Diaries of a Cabinet Minister, Volume Three*, 30 January entry, p.347.
45. Sked and Cook. *Post-war Britain: a political history*, London: Penguin, 1993, p.237. Moreover, Young has noted that ‘the divisions ran right into the Cabinet, where a particular focus of criticism was Michael Stewart’ (Young, ‘LBJ’s War’, p.80).
46. TNA FCO9/1199 Parliamentary questions, 16.12.1969. For a Greek view of this see ‘Britain toes the U.S. line now’ *The Greek Observer*, No.10, January 1970.
47. Nenni, *I conti con la storia. Diari 1967–1971* (Milan 1983), pp.305–6, cited in Favretto, ‘The Wilson Governments and the Italian Centre-Left Coalitions: Between ‘Socialist’ Diplomacy and *Realpolitik*, 1964–70’, *European History Quarterly*, 2006, 36(3), p.435.
48. TNA FCO9/885 Memorandum on policy towards Greece, WSG3/548/25, 16.06.1969.
49. According to FCO sources the decision ‘was taken by Papadopoulos himself, who overruled his officials after receiving urgent representations from H. M. Ambassador’ (TNA FCO9/871 Minute by Michael Stewart for the prime minister, 23.07.1969).
50. ‘The 4th of May Demonstration in London’, *The Greek Observer*, May 1969.
51. TNA FCO9/871 Record of a meeting on policy towards Greece, 17.12.1969.
52. AGMFA LE/1969/4.3 Letter from Sorokos to Douglas-Home, no.2983, 10.12.1969.
53. TNA FCO9/871 Record of a meeting on policy towards Greece, 17.12.1969.
54. Ibid.
55. It should be noted that FCO’s ‘prophesy’ was considerably precise as the military rule in Greece was terminated on 23 July 1974; that is, approximately *four years and seven months* after that prediction was made.

56. TNA FCO9/871 Record of a meeting on policy towards Greece, WSG 3/548/7, 17.12.1969.
57. Ibid.
58. ‘Sack Army Chief in Greek ‘Spy Plot,’ MPs Urge’, *Daily Sketch*, 25 July 1969. See also Maria Karavia, *The London Journal: notes of the dictatorship era* (in Greek), Athens: Agra, 2007, p.77.
59. TNA FCO9/908 Letter from Snodgrass to D.V. Bendall, WSG10/30, 14.08.1969 and ‘Greek Embassies centres of organised intimidation’, *The Greek Observer*, July 1969.
60. TNA FCO9/908 Letter from Snodgrass to Bendall, WSG10/30, 14.08.1969.
61. AGMFA LE/1970/4.4 no.6374/ST/2 Sorokos to MFA, 15.10.1969.
62. TNA FCO53/85 ‘Greek request for extradition of Christos Kotronis’ by R.G. Smedley, FCO, 01.08.1969.
63. He was a member of EDA (United Democratic Left), the Greek political party that had strong affiliations with the Greek Communist party.
64. See ‘The Fugitive: Cabinet Dilemma –Should Callaghan Ignore the Law?’, *The Sun*, 27 November 1969 and ‘Greek is Set Free by Callaghan’, *The Times*, 12 December 1969.
65. TNA FCO53/85 ‘Greek request for extradition of Christos Kotronis’ by Smedley, FCO, 01.08.1969.
66. TNA FCO53/86 FCO Memorandum on extradition of Kotronis, 20.11.1969.
67. TNA FCO53/86 Press release by the Home Office, 09.12.1969. See also CAB 128/44, CC (69)55th Conclusions, 4 December 1969.
68. TNA FCO53/87 Snodgrass, FCO to P.L. O’Keefe, Athens, GNX3/LOT/C, 23.12.1969.
69. Pedaliu, ‘Human Rights and Foreign Policy: Wilson and the Greek Dictators, 1967–1970’, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 2007 18(1), p.206.
70. Barkman, *Ambassador in Athens, 1969–1975: the evolution from military dictatorship to democracy in Greece*, London, 1989, 17 January entry, p.13.
71. Rizas, *The United States, the dictatorship of the Colonels and the Cyprus issue, 1967–1974* (in Greek), Athens: Patakis, 2002, p.60.
72. According to Stylianos Pattakos (the only Brigadier of ‘the dictatorship of the Colonels’ and both deputy PM and minister of the interior at the time), the Greek foreign minister, Pipinelis, encountered a ‘sinister disposition’ in Strasbourg and when, following a diplomatic manoeuvre, he succeeded in withdrawing Greece from ‘the coffee house named “Europe”’, he was received by the junta as a winner and a national hero (Pattakos, *21 April 1967: Why? Who? How?* (in Greek), Athens: Viovivl, 1993).

73. Schwab and Frangos, *Greece under the junta*, New York: Facts on file, 1970, p.125.
74. Athenian, *Inside the Colonels' Greece*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1972, p.193.
75. Ibid.
76. Woodhouse, *The Greek Colonels*, p.299.
77. Rizas, *The Cyprus issue 1967–1974*, pp.67–9.
78. Woodhouse, *The Greek Colonels*, p.76.
79. Coufoudakis, 'Greek Foreign Policy, 1945–1985: Seeking Independence in an Interdependent World – Problems and Prospects', Featherstone, *Political Change in Greece before and after the Colonels*, London: Croom Helm, 1987, p.233.
80. Rizas, *The Cyprus issue 1967–1974*, p.77.
81. For instance, the release of 55 alleged Communists from detention in March and of over 300 detainees in April 1970 (Woodhouse, *The Greek Colonels*, p.77).
82. Woodhouse, *The Greek Colonels*, p.81. See also Bermeo's references to 'a highly personalist government' and 'Papadopoulos' "asphyxiating centralization of power'" ('Classification and Consolidation: Some Lessons from the Greek Dictatorship', *Political Science Quarterly*, 1995, 110(3), p.443).
83. Rizas, *The Cyprus issue 1967–1974*, p.86.
84. As quoted in Schwab and Frangos, *Greece under the junta*, p.127.
85. Schwab and Frangos, *Greece under the junta*, p.130.
86. TNA FCO9/1199 'Greece and the Council of Europe', R.L. Secondé to Bendall, 12.01.1970.
87. Young, *The Labour Governments 1964–70, vol. 2, International policy*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, p.124.
88. TNA FCO9/1215 FCO Memorandum on Greece, 06.01.1970. See also Woodhouse, *The Greek Colonels*, pp.78 and 83.
89. Cited in Hanhimaki, 'Searching for a balance: The American perspective', Ludlow ed., *European Integration and the Cold War*, p.153.
90. Young, *Labour Governments 1964–70*, p.135.
91. Woodhouse, *The Greek Colonels*, pp.74 and 84. See also 'U.S. Policy On a Knife Edge in Greece', *The New York Times*, 21 December 1969.
92. Maragkou, 'The Wilson Government and the Colonels' Greece, 1967–1970', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2006, pp.277–8.
93. According to the Dutch ambassador, relations between Greece and the UK had 'cooled off somewhat' because of the British attitude in the CoE, and all attention was now focused in the United States (Barkman, *Ambassador in Athens*, p.14).
94. TNA FCO9/1208 'Greek foreign policy', Palmer, FCO to Snodgrass, 20.02.1970.
95. Benn, *Office without power*, 3 March entry, pp.245–6.

96. TNA FCO9/1216 'Anglo/Greek relations', Secondé to T. Brimelow, 25.02.1970. This was also corroborated by Markezinis (see Papagos, *Notes*, 8 March entry, p.243).
97. TNA FCO9/1216 'Anglo/Greek relations', Secondé to T. Brimelow, 25.02.1970.
98. TNA FCO9/1217 Letter from Goodenough, Athens to Palmer, FCO, WSG 3/548/4, 04.03.1970.
99. TNA FCO9/1217 Letter from Snodgrass to Secondé, FCO, 12.03.1970.
100. AGMFA LE/1970/4.4 no.933/ST/2-ST/K Sorokos to MFA, 27.02.1970.
101. *Ibid.*
102. Karavia, *London Journal*, p.139.
103. Papagos, *Notes*, 4 March entry, p.241.
104. TNA FCO9/1216 Record of a meeting on Greece, 16.03.1970.
105. *Ibid.*
106. TNA FCO9/1162 Letter from Sir Michael Stewart, Athens to Secondé, FCO, WSG 3/358/2, 25.02.1970.
107. TNA FCO9/1162 Stewart, FCO to Athens, tel.no.61, 02.03.1970.
108. *Ibid.*
109. The doctrine of 'disconnected responsibilities', distinguishing between dealing with a government and approving it and between moral and pragmatic considerations, was quite indicative of the British position.

Chapter 3 The Conservative government's policy towards the Colonels, 1970: continuity vs. change

1. TNA FCO9/1193 Letter from Sir Michael Stewart, Athens to Secondé, FCO, 07.07.1970. On the Greek government reshuffle see 'Specialists added to Athens Cabinet', *The New York Times*, 29 June 1970.
2. According to Healey, the election 'was lost by the Government rather than won by the Opposition' and that was 'as big a surprise for the Conservatives as it was for us' (Healey, *Time of My Life*, p.345).
3. 'Ted at Number 10', *The Economist*, 20 June 1970.
4. On this see William Wallace's view of Carrington as a 'second Foreign Secretary, discussing topics which ranged far beyond his strictly departmental responsibilities with, for instance, the Greek, Nigerian, and Kenyan governments' (cited in Hill and Lord, 'The foreign policy of the Heath government' in Vall and Seldon, (eds) *The Heath Government, 1970–1974: A Reappraisal*, London: Longman, 1996, p.312).
5. 'Ted at Number 10', *The Economist*, 20 June 1970.
6. Hollowell, 'From Commonwealth to European Integration', Hollowell, (ed.) *Britain Since 1945*, Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2003, p.80.

7. For more information on Heath's foreign policy orientation see Bartlett, *British Foreign Policy*, p.109; Hill and Lord, 'The foreign policy of the Heath government', Vall and Seldon, (eds) *The Heath Government, 1970–1974*, pp.285–314; and Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled: British Policy and World Power in the Twentieth Century*, Harlow: Longman, 2000, pp. 224–233.
8. That is where the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) building is situated.
9. Shlaim, Jones, and Sainsbury, *British foreign secretaries*, pp.152–5.
10. The Greek foreign minister made 'no attempt to conceal his pleasure at the election results in England' when he met Sir Michael Stewart (TNA FCO9/1193 Letter, Stewart to Secondé, 07.07.1970).
11. 'A Better Tomorrow' manifesto of the Conservative Party for the 1970 election, accessible at <http://www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/man/con70.htm>.
12. *Nea Politeia*, 21.06.70, p.1 cited in TNA PREM15/144 Stewart to FCO, tel. no.321, 22.06.1970.
13. *Acropolis*, 21.06.70, cited in TNA PREM 15/144 Stewart to FCO, tel.no.321, 22.06.1970.
14. AGMFA LE/1970/3.4 part 1/2 no.3361/ST/20 Sorokos to MFA, 17.07.1970.
15. This was a highly sensitive issue, especially because of the situation over delivering arms to South Africa. On this subject, see for example 'If they won't listen', *The Economist*, 25 July 1970.
16. TNA FCO9/1193 Sir Michael Stewart to Secondé, 07.07.1970.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. TNA FCO9/1193 Sir Michael Stewart to Secondé, 07.07.1970.
20. On this see Svolopoulos, *Greek Foreign Policy*, pp.174–81 and Valinakis, *Introduction to Greek Foreign Policy, 1949–1988* (in Greek), Athens: Sideris, 2005, pp.118–26.
21. On this see Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive (E.L.I.A)/ Dimitris Tsakonas Papers/File 1.3: Interview to Cairo's newspaper *Fas*, 30 June 1971, where it is stated that the junta was considering subsidies to merchant marine ships to Gaddafi's Libya, and the creation of an Institute of African Studies in Athens.
22. For more on this, see Nafpliotis, 'The 1971 Re-establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Greece and Albania: Cooperation and Strategic Partnership within Cold War Bipolarity?', *Greece in the Balkans: Memory Conflict and Exchange*, Anastasakis, Bechev, and Vrousalis (eds), Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009, pp.118–137.
23. See, for example, a discussion of Karamanlis' similar tactics a decade earlier in Stefanidis, *Asymmetric partners: US and Greece in the Cold War, 1953–1961* (in Greek), Athens: Patakis, 2002, pp.106, 119, and 344–5.

24. Walldén, *Unseemly Partners: Greek Dictatorship, Communist Régimes and the Balkans* (1967–1974) (in Greek), Athens: Polis, 2009, p.121.
25. In the words of the American historian: ‘... What they could do, though, was encourage fears that their régimes might fall if their respective super-power sponsors did not support them. The “dominos” found it useful, from time to time, to *advertise* a propensity to topple’ (Gaddis, *The Cold War*, London: Penguin, 2007, p.129).
26. ‘Greece’s military rulers seeking new friends’, *The Scotsman*, 20 May 1971.
27. Ibid.
28. ‘The Colonels have played the Atlantic card and that of the alliance with the Americans with extreme ability’, Lugato, ‘Grecia: una dittatura senza corona’ [Greece: a dictatorship without a crown], *Civitas* 1973 24(6), p.6.
29. TNA FCO9/1213 Letter from Sir Michael Stewart to Secondé, 20.07.1970.
30. Ibid.
31. Britain’s dilemma was quite similar to the one facing the United States at the time. Couloumbis *et al.* have described the latter as a ‘painful dilemma’ (Couloumbis, Petropoulos and Psomiades (eds) *Foreign Interference in Greek Politics: an historical perspective*, p.137).
32. TNA FCO9/1205 Letter from O’Keefe, Athens to Snodgrass, FCO, 19.06.1970.
33. Snodgrass’ handwritten note on TNA FCO 9/1205 Letter from O’Keefe to Snodgrass, 19.06.1970.
34. See TNA FCO9/1198 ‘Mr. Panayiotis Pipinelis’ diplomatic report no.428/70, Stewart, Athens to Douglas-Home, London, 02.09.1970.
35. ‘Obituary, Mr Panayotis Pipinelis, Foreign Minister of Greece’, *The Times*, 20 July 1970.
36. See, for example, Barkman, *Ambassador in Athens*, pp.32–4 and 43.
37. ‘The Greek colonels have ridden out the storm’, *The Economist*, 5 September 1970.
38. Brooker, *Non-Democratic Régimes*, p.156.
39. TNA FCO9/1410 Bibliographical note on Xanthopoulos-Palamas, November 1971.
40. TNA FCO9/1193 Powell-Jones to Snodgrass, 14.08.1970.
41. Note the characterization of Palamas as ‘a downy old bird, without any great depth’ by a British official (TNA FCO9/1233 Letter from Bendall, London to Stewart, Athens, 09.10.1970).
42. TNA FCO9/1198 Stewart to Douglas-Home, 02.09.1970.
43. TNA FCO9/1206 Letter from J. E. Powell-Jones, Athens to J. Wilberforce, FCO, 30.11.1970.

44. TNA FCO9/1229 'Greece as a military ally' diplomatic report no.441/70 by Sir Michael Stewart, 11.09.1970.
45. Walldén, *Unseemly Partners*, p.199.
46. TNA FCO9/1208 Powell-Jones, Athens to Secondé, 27.10.1970.
47. Ibid.
48. Woodhouse, *Modern Greece*, p.300.
49. Woodhouse, *The Greek Colonels*, p.84. On this see also Metaxas, *History of the Greeks, Vol.14: Modern Hellenism from 1949 to the Present* (in Greek), Athens: Domi, n.d., pp.227–8.
50. See Xydis, 'Coups and Countercoups in Greece, 1967–1973 (with postscript)', *Political Science Quarterly*, 1974 89(3), p.524.
51. Woodhouse, *The Greek Colonels*, p.83.
52. Sakkas, 'The Greek dictatorship, the USA and the Arabs, 1967–1974', *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 2004 6(3), p.248.
53. Ibid. p.253.
54. TNA FCO9/1206 'Greece and NATO' in Secretary of State's talks with the Italians, 02.09.70.
55. Cmnd 4521, *Supplementary Statement on Defence Policy 1970* (London: HMSO, October 1970), p.4 in Ovendale, *British defence policy*, p.147.
56. Barkman, *Ambassador in Athens*, p.33.
57. AGMFA LE/1970/4.4 no.4417/ST/2 Sorokos to MFA, 23.09.1970.
58. TNA FCO9/1229 'Greece as a military ally' diplomatic report no.441/70 by Sir Michael Stewart, 11.09.1970.
59. Ibid. See also TNA FCO9/1206 'Greece and NATO' in Secretary of State's talks with the Italians, 02.09.70.
60. See, for instance, 'The Greek colonels have ridden out the storm', *The Economist*, 5 September 1970.
61. TNA FCO9/1229 'Greece as a military ally' report by Stewart, 11.09.1970.
62. Ibid.
63. TNA FCO9/1206 Brief for NATO ministerial meeting, 24.11.1970.
64. TNA FCO9/1229 Letter, A.L. Willott, FCO to Snodgrass, 15.09.1970.
65. Ibid.
66. Handwritten note, dated 16.09.70, on TNA FCO9/1229 Willott to Snodgrass, 15.09.1970.
67. TNA FCO9/1229 Letter from Sir Ian Orr-Ewing to Lord Carrington, 24.09.1970.
68. TNA FCO9/1229 B.W. Fitzgerald, Ministry of Defence to Willott, ref.no.D/D85/8389/GREECE, 02.10.1970.
69. TNA FCO9/1229 Willott to Fitzgerald, 07.10.1970.
70. The last visit of such importance was Air Marshall Gordon Jones' visit to Athens in January 1969.

71. TNA FCO9/1229 Stewart to Douglas-Home, 09.12.1970.
72. TNA FCO9/1206 Notes on FCO meeting entitled 'Policy towards Greece', 30.09.1970.
73. TNA FCO9/1206 Notes on FCO meeting entitled 'Policy towards Greece', 30.09.1970.
74. Ibid.
75. Papagos, *Notes*, 2 September entry, p.276.
76. TNA FCO9/1206 Notes on FCO meeting entitled 'Policy towards Greece', 30.09.1970.
77. TNA FCO9/1233 Record of conversation between the permanent under secretary and the Greek under secretary for foreign affairs, 07.10.1970.
78. TNA FCO9/1233 Background notes on Mr Xanthopoulos-Palamas' call on the Permanent Under Secretary, Secondé, 06.10.1970.
79. TNA FCO9/1233 Record of conversation between the permanent under secretary and the Greek under secretary for foreign affairs, 07.10.1970.
80. AGMFA LE/1972/4.1 no.4700/ST/2 Sorokos to Armed Forces headquarters, Athens, 09.10.1970, and Sorokos to N. Broumas, Athens, 05.10.1970.
81. AGMFA LE/1972/4.1 Sorokos to Broumas, Athens, 05.10.1970.
82. TNA FCO9/1233 Bendall, London to Stewart, Athens, 09.10.1970. On how Palamas' approach to Cyprus differed from Pipinelis' see Rizas, *The Cyprus issue 1967–1974*, pp.88–90.
83. TNA FCO9/1233 Record of conversation between the permanent under secretary and the Greek under secretary for foreign affairs, 07.10.1970.
84. TNA FCO9/1233 Bendall to Stewart, 09.10.1970.
85. TNA FCO9/1233 Record of conversation between the permanent under secretary and the Greek under secretary for foreign affairs, 07.10.1970.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.
88. TNA FCO9/1233 Record of conversation between the foreign and commonwealth secretary and the Greek under secretary for foreign affairs, 20.10.1970.
89. TNA FCO9/1526 Memorandum on Greece, addressed to C D Wiggin, 29.03.1972.
90. *Nea Politeia*, 22 October 1970, cited in TNA FCO 9/1233 Stewart, Athens to FCO, 22.10.1970.
91. TNA FCO9/1233 Palmer, FCO to Goodenough, Athens, 30.10.1970.
92. TNA FCO9/1233 'The Secretary of State's Conversation with Palamas', Secondé to Wilberforce. 29.10.1970.
93. Ibid.
94. TNA FCO9/1233 Palmer to Goodenough, 30.10.1970.
95. TNA FCO9/1388 'Greece: Annual review for 1970', diplomatic report no.16/71, Stewart to FCO, 01.01.1971.

96. *Nea Politeia*, 21.06.70, p.1 cited in TNA PREM 15/144 Stewart to FCO, tel. no.321, 22.06.1970.
97. TNA PREM15/144 Heath to Fraser, 11.11.1970.
98. AGMFA LE/1971/12.3 part 1 no.5146/ST/2 Sorokos to MFA, 03.11.1970.
99. Ibid, no.5221/ST/2 Sorokos to MFA, 05.11.1970.
100. On this see Ibid, no.719/ST/2 Sorokos to MFA, 12.02.1970.
101. AGMFA LE/1971/12.3 part 1 no.5221/ST/2 Sorokos to MFA, 05.11.1970.
102. TNA FCO9/1206 Stewart to Secondé, 16.11.1970.
103. TNA FCO9/1206 and 9/1234 Record of conversation between the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Greek Ambassador, London, 16.11.1970.
104. AGMFA LE/1970/3.4 part 2/2 no.5468/ST/2 Sorokos to MFA, 17.11.1970.
105. TNA FCO9/1206 Brief for NATO ministerial meeting, 24.11.1970.
106. AGMFA LE/1970/4.1 part 1/3 no.1953/ST/Z Sorokos to MFA, 22.04.1970.
107. TNA FCO9/1388 'Greece: Annual review for 1970', no.16/71, Stewart to FCO, 01.01.1971.
108. AGMFA LE/1970/3.4 part 2/2 M. G. Mazarakis, 09.12.1970, attached to E. Lagakos, MFA to London, 11.12.1970.
109. TNA FCO9/1388 'Greece: Annual review for 1970', no.16/71, Stewart to FCO, 01.01.1971.
110. Ibid.
111. TNA FCO9/1514 'Greece: Annual review for 1971' by R W J Hooper, Athens to Sir Alec Douglas-Home, FCO, 31.12.1971 and AGMFA LE: 1973/3.8 'Annual review for 1973'; 'Greek-British Economic and Commercial relations' Zafiroopoulos, 0445/8/AS3916, 03.10.1973.
112. TNA FCO9/1514 'Greece: Annual review for 1971' by Hooper to Douglas-Home, 31.12.1971.
113. Ibid. The point about the bureaucratic rigidity is corroborated by Greek sources, such as Meletopoulos, *The dictatorship of the Colonels: society, ideology, economy* (in Greek), Athens: Papazisis, 2000, p.409.
114. TNA FCO9/1514 'Greece: Annual review for 1971' by Hooper to Douglas-Home, 31.12.1971.
115. Ibid.

Chapter 4 The Conservative government's policy towards the Colonels, 1971: messages, meetings and visits

1. TNA FCO9/1514 Greece: Annual review for 1971, 31.12.1971.
2. Hill, *Changing Politics of Foreign Policy*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003, p.37.

3. TNA FCO9/1385 'Greece 1967–1971', diplomatic report no.122/71, Sir Michael Stewart to FCO, 25.01.1971.
4. Ibid.
5. TNA FCO9/1385 'Greece 1967–1971', no.122/71, Stewart to FCO, 25.01.1971.
6. Maragkou, 'Favouritism in NATO's Southeastern flank: The case of the Greek Colonels, 1967–74', *Cold War History*, 2009 9:3, p.353.
7. TNA FCO9/1385 'Greece 1967–1971', no.122/71, Stewart to FCO, 25.01.1971.
8. A former Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs official confirms the validity of the British fear, as there was a 'real danger' of the hardliners taking over. According to the same source, Papadopoulos (as more moderate) seemed like the best solution for foreign governments (Author's interview with Mr X, 11.09.2007).
9. TNA FCO9/1385 'Greece: Sir Michael Stewart's despatch of 25 January', Palmer, FCO, 03.02.1971.
10. Ibid.
11. Author's interview with member of GCAD, London, 31.01.2008.
12. Ibid.
13. TNA FCO9/1385 'Greece 1967–1971', no.122/71, Stewart to FCO, 25.01.1971.
14. TNA FCO9/1385 'Greece: Sir Michael Stewart's despatch of 25 January', Palmer, 03.02.1971.
15. TNA FCO9/1385 'Greece 1967–1971', no.122/71, Stewart to FCO, 25.01.1971.
16. Ibid.
17. TNA FCO9/1385 'Greece: Sir Michael Stewart's despatch of 25 January', Palmer, 03.02.1971.
18. TNA FCO9/1383 Stewart to FCO, tel.no.5, 04.12.1970.
19. TNA FCO9/1383 Douglas-Home to Athens, tel.no.358, 31.12.1970.
20. TNA FCO9/1383 Palmer to Secondé, 07.01.1971.
21. TNA FCO9/1383 Stewart to Secondé, 21.01.1971.
22. 'Britain's role in king's attempted return', *Tribune*, 8 January 1971.
23. TNA FCO9/1383 'The King of Greece', Secondé to FCO, 14.01.1971.
24. TNA FCO9/1383 Edward Heath to Tom Driberg, 25.01.1971.
25. Ibid. All this had been conveyed to the king by Douglas-Home the previous month (see Papagos, *Notes*, 5–30 December entry, pp.302–3).
26. TNA FCO9/1383 'The King of Greece', Secondé to FCO, 08.06.1971.
27. TNA FCO9/1384 'The King of Greece', Wilberforce to Wiggin, 28.07.1971.

28. On this see for example TNA FCO9/1384 Hooper, Athens to FCO, tel. no.275, 09.07.1971, and TNA FCO9/1384 'US Ambassador's Call on the King of Greece', J F R Martin, Athens to Palmer, FCO, 14.07.1971.
29. 'Envoy to king', *The Guardian*, 20 July 1971. This 26-word long statement article was greeted by FCO official Andrew Palmer as 'just the right amount of coverage!' (TNA FCO9/1384 Handwritten note by Palmer on *The Guardian* press cutting, 20.07.1971).
30. Author's interview with GCAD member, London, 31.01.2008.
31. TNA FCO9/1415 'Personal message', Papadopoulos to Douglas-Home, 24.03.1971.
32. 'The Colonels play for keeps', *The Observer*, 18 April 1971 and 'The embarrassing régime in Greece', *The Times*, 22 April 1971.
33. 'Intentions of the régime in Greece', *The Times*, 24 April 1971 and PRO FCO 9/1385. Wilberforce's note on *The Times* press cutting, 27.04.1971.
34. On seeking legitimacy and its electoral means (including the plebiscitary form of choice employed by the Greek regime) see Brooker, *Non-Democratic Régimes*, pp.132–9.
35. TNA FCO9/1385 Letter by Palmer, FCO, to Wilberforce and Secondé, 04.05.1971.
36. Handwritten note on TNA FCO9/1385 Palmer, to Wilberforce and Secondé, 04.05.1971.
37. See, for example, 'Greek Premier seeks vies of politicians', *The Times*, 29 May 1971; 'Junta bridge', *The Guardian*, 4 June 1971; and 'Optimism among former Greek politicians after talks with Mr Papadopoulos', *The Times*, 14 June 1971.
38. TNA FCO9/1385 'Greece: first impressions' diplomatic report no.348/71, Hooper, Athens to FCO, 30.06.1971.
39. Rizas, *The Cyprus issue 1967–1974*, p.142.
40. TNA FCO9/1414 Secondé, FCO to Wiggin, London, 07.06.1971. See also Papagos, *Notes*, 7 January, pp.313–4.
41. *Ibid.*
42. TNA FCO9/1400 'Greek-Turkish relations', O'Keefe, Athens to FCO, 02.06.1971.
43. See, for instance, Metaxas, *History of the Greeks*, pp.232–3.
44. TNA FCO9/1400 'Cypriot-Greek relations', P R Fearn, FCO to Secondé, 09.06.1971.
45. 'Former BBC chief opposes the colonels', *Morning Star*, 2 June 1971. See also Barkman, *Ambassador in Athens*, 23 June entry, pp.49–50.
46. 'Sir Hugh Greene call to "disturb" Greek régime', *The Times*, 2 June 1971.
47. 'Sir Hugh Confronts Colonels', *The Guardian*, 2 June 1971.

48. 'Sir Hugh squares up to the Greek Colonels', *The Scotsman*, 2 June 1971.
49. 'Former BBC chief opposes the colonels', *Morning Star*, 2 June 1971.
50. 'Sir Hugh squares up to the Greek Colonels', *The Scotsman*, 2 June 1971.
51. Cited in "Idle men in the west' attacked', *The Times*, 7 June 1971.
52. TNA FCO9/1397 'European Atlantic Committee on Greece', O'Keefe, Athens to Palmer, FCO, 09.06.1971. On the junta's perception of BBC see 'BBC "anti-Greek rogues"' *The Greek Observer*, No.4, June 1969.
53. See 'Greek parties welcome declaration', *The Times*, 3 June 1971, and Papagos, *Notes*, 10 June entry, p.354, for example.
54. Cited in TNA FCO9/1397 'European Atlantic Committee on Greece', O'Keefe to Palmer, 09.06.1971.
55. TNA FCO9/1397 'European Atlantic Action Committee for Greece', O'Keefe to Palmer, 16.06.1971.
56. AGMFA LE/1972/3.2 no.2891/ST/2 Sorokos to MFA, 16.06.1970. In an earlier report, Sorokos had praised Greene for his seriousness, prestige and conservative values (AGMFA LE/1972/3.2 no.1380/ST/2 Sorokos to MFA, 23.03.1970).
57. 'Greene v. Greek Colonels', *New Statesman*, 4 June 1971. See also TNA FCO9/1397 Barrington to P J S Moon, London, 10.06.1971.
58. EUS400 LNB863 1822: Greek: by Alan Harvey in London, Reuter AH/RDN, 1 June 1971.
59. 'Sir Hugh squares up to the Greek Colonels', *The Scotsman*, 2 June 1971.
60. 'Greene v. Greek Colonels', *New Statesman*, 4 June 1971.
61. TNA FCO9/1397 Barrington to Moon, 10.06.1971.
62. TNA FCO9/1397 Palmer, FCO to O'Keefe, Athens, 04.06.1971.
63. TNA FCO9/1397 Barrington to Moon, 10.06.1971.
64. This was attributed by Baxter to the policy of promoting young officers on merit to responsible posts (TNA FCO9/1530 Palmer to Moon, 10.06.1971).
65. TNA FCO9/1530 'State of Greek Armed Forces', C C C Tickell, London to T Cullen, London, 29.09.1972.
66. TNA FCO9/1385 Hooper, Athens to FCO, tel. no.216, 04.06.1971.
67. TNA FCO9/1385 Hooper, Athens to FCO, tel. no.217, 04.06.1971.
68. TNA FCO9/1401 'Contacts with members of the Greek régime' from Secondé to Wigggin, 18.08.1971.
69. TNA FCO9/1415 Palmer to FCO, 15.06.1971.
70. TNA FCO9/1401 Brimelow to Hooper, 13.08.1971.
71. TNA FCO9/1415 Letter by S Pattakos to Lord President of the Council, 10.06.1971.
72. TNA FCO9/1415 Graham, Private Secretary's Dept. to J Ardley, Office of the Lord President of the Council, 21.06.1971.

73. TNA FCO9/1415 'Note of meeting between Lord President of the Council and Greek Ambassador', P.L.P. Davies, 23.06.1971.
74. TNA FCO9/1415 Hooper, Athens to Secondé, FCO, 13.07.1971.
75. TNA FCO9/1415 Secondé to Hooper, 16.07.1971.
76. Ibid.
77. TNA FCO9/1415 'Policy towards Greece' FCO memorandum, 11.06.1971.
78. Ibid.
79. Phythian, *British arms sales*, p.19.
80. Cited in TNA FCO9/1404 'Greece: Arms supplies', Secondé to Wigggin, 02.04.1971.
81. TNA FCO9/1404 Revised directive on arms sales to Greece, 21.04.1971.
82. TNA FCO9/1404 D.B.C. Logan to Tickell, 05.04.1971.
83. TNA FCO9/1401 Hooper to Secondé, 30.06.1971.
84. TNA FCO9/1401 Secondé to Hooper, 09.07.1971. See also PRO FCO 9/1401 Palmer to Secondé, 07.07.1971.
85. TNA FCO9/1401 Secondé to Hooper, 09.07.1971.
86. TNA FCO9/1401 Hooper to Secondé, 06.07.1971.
87. TNA FCO9/1386 Palmer to Wilberforce and Secondé, 07.07.1971.
88. Papagos, *Notes*, 19 July entry, p.366.
89. TNA FCO9/1401 Hooper to Secondé, 06.07.1971.
90. TNA FCO9/1401 Secondé to Hooper, 09.07.1971.
91. TNA FCO9/1401 Wilberforce to Brimelow, 20.07.1971.
92. TNA FCO9/1401 Douglas-Home, FCO to Athens, tel.no.203, 11.08.1971.
93. TNA FCO9/1401 Secondé to Wigggin, 10.08.1971.
94. TNA FCO9/1401 'Call by the Greek Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs on the Secretary of State', memorandum by the Southern European Department, 17.09.1971.
95. PRO FCO9/1401 Record of conversation between the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Greek Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 20.09.1971.
96. Ibid. On this see also TNA FCO9/1410 Wilberforce to Brimelow, 23.09.1971.
97. TNA FCO9/1391 Monitoring of BBC Greek Service, 22.09.1971.
98. TNA FCO9/1391 Record of a meeting between Brimelow and the Greek Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 23.09.1971.
99. Pattakos was the first deputy prime minister.
100. TNA FCO9/1391 Record of a meeting between Brimelow and the Greek Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 23.09.1971.
101. 'Athens-London', *Eleftheros Kosmos*, 1 October 1971.
102. 'NATO and the Colonels', *New Statesman*, 3 December 1971.

103. TNA FCO9/1392 O'Keefe, Athens to J H Moore, FCO, 11.11.1971.
104. TNA FCO9/1530 Hooper to Douglas-Home, FCO, 02.03.1972.
105. TNA FCO9/1530 'Defence Report', Brigadier Baxter, 02.03.1972.
106. TNA FCO9/1392 O'Keefe to Moore, 11.11.1971.
107. Northedge, *Descent from power: British foreign policy, 1945–1973*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1974, p.ix.
108. TNA FCO9/1530 Hooper to Douglas-Home, 02.03.1972.
109. TNA FCO9/1530 'Greece: Defence Attaché's Annual Report', Palmer, 23.03.1972.
110. TNA FCO9/1530 Hooper to Douglas-Home, 02.03.1972.
111. Ibid. As Brigadier Baxter noted: 'it is difficult to re-introduce British weapons and equipment into the Greek Forces which are almost totally US orientated' (TNA FCO9/1530 'Defence Report', Brigadier Baxter, 02.03.1972).
112. TNA FCO9/1530 Hooper to Douglas-Home, 02.03.1972.
113. TNA FCO9/1530 'Defence Report', Brigadier Baxter, 02.03.1972.
114. Ibid.
115. NARA RG 59: POL 17 GREECE-UK Athens Embassy to Rogers, D.C., tel.no.2894, 09.07.1969 and POL 30-2 GREECE Rogers to Madrid, Airgram CA-6298, 24.11.1969.
116. TNA FCO9/1396 'Greek Foreign Ministry', Hooper to Wiggin, 15.12.1971.
117. TNA FCO9/1740 Record of conversation between the Greek ambassador and the Parliamentary under-secretary at FCO, 18.01.1973.
118. 'New ambassador', *Evening Standard*, 20 December 1971.
119. TNA FCO9/1740 Hooper to Graham, Washington, 11.12.1973.
120. See, for example, TNA FCO9/1386 'Greece: Internal Political Situation', Palmer to Wilberforce and Secondé, 10.09.1971, and FCO 9/1386 Secondé to Hooper, 10.09.1971, where it is said that 'one has to admire the man's managerial talent'.
121. TNA FCO9/1386 Powell-Jones to Wilberforce, 24.11.1971.
122. TNA FCO9/1396 'Greek Foreign Ministry', Hooper to Wiggin, 15.12.1971.
123. TNA FCO9/1709 'Greece: Annual review for 1972', diplomatic report no.27/73, Hooper to Wiggin, 02.01.1973.

Chapter 5 The Conservative government's policy towards the Colonels, 1972: towards a new direction?

1. TNA FCO9/1709 'Greece: Annual review for 1972', tel.no.27/73, Hooper to FCO, 02.01.1973.
2. TNA FCO9/1514 'Greece: Annual review for 1971' by Hooper to Sir Alec Douglas-Home, 31.12.1971.

3. Lady Amalia, widow of Sir Alexander Fleming, was found guilty for attempting to free Panagoulis who had tried to assassinate Papadopoulos in August 1968. The fact that she had dual British and Greek nationality led to her deportation to London, unfavourable publicity there, and angered the British who had not been informed by the Greek authorities beforehand (on this see, for example, 'Kicked out–then Lady Fleming stages sit-in', *Daily Express*, 15 November 1971 and TNA FCO9/1391 'Lady Fleming', Wilberforce, FCO memorandum, 26.11.1971).
4. TNA FCO9/1514 'Greece', Palmer, FCO to Fearne, Wilberforce, Wiggin, FCO, 13.01.1972.
5. TNA FCO9/1514 Wiggin, FCO to Hooper , 17.01.1972.
6. TNA FCO9/1728 'Greece', Record of office meeting in parliamentary under-secretary's office, 06.09.1972.
7. "Deterioration" in Mediterranean", *The Guardian*, 10 September 1971.
8. TNA FCO9/1732 Denson to Goodison, 06.09.1973.
9. See 'Agnew and Papadopoulos Hold Meeting', *The New York Times*, 18 October 1971.
10. TNA FCO9/1738 Annual report on the Hellenic armed forces by H J P Baxter, Athens to Hooper, Athens, 20.02.1973.
11. TNA FCO9/1532 Hooper to Wiggin, London, 19.01.1972. Hooper was thus playing on year-long Foreign Office fears which had been particularly pronounced over arms sales to South Africa in 1963 (See Phythian. *British arms sales*, p.5). For more on de Lipkowski's visit see Varsori 'L'Occidente e la Grecia dal colpo di stato militare alle transizioni alla democrazia (1967–1976)' in *Democrazie. L'Europa meridionale e la fine delle dittature*, Florence, Le Monnier, 2010.
12. TNA FCO9/1520 Supplementary briefs to 'Visit by Lord Limerick to Greece', A Brooke Turner, London to Brimelow, London, 12.10.1972.
13. TNA FCO9/1709 'Greece: Annual review for 1972' diplomatic report no.27/73, Hooper, 02.01.1973.
14. TNA FCO9/1532 'Visit by the French under secretary for foreign affairs', Hooper to FCO, 09.02.1972.
15. TNA FCO9/1532 Hooper to Wiggin, 19.01.1972.
16. TNA FCO9/1532 'Possible ministerial visits' Brooke Turner to Brimelow, 08.02.1972.
17. AGMFA LE/1974/5.11 no.4111.4/1/AS7 Sorokos to MFA, 31.01.1972.
18. Papagos, *Notes*, 2 February entry, p.408.
19. TNA FCO9/1728 'Greece', Record of office meeting in parliamentary under-secretary's office, 11.02.1972.
20. Ministers were to 'remind Dr Schmelzer of our views' when the Dutch foreign minister visited London in March 1972 (TNA FCO9/1728 'Greece', Record of office meeting in parliamentary under-secretary's office, 11.02.1972).

21. TNA FCO9/1532 Hooper to Brook Turner, London, 09.03.1972.
22. TNA FCO9/1709 'Greece: Annual review for 1972' no.27/73, Hooper, 02.01.1973.
23. TNA FCO9/1728 'Greece', Record of office meeting in parliamentary under-secretary's office, 11.02.1972.
24. See 'The Poly-Papadopoulos', *Time*, 3 April 1972.
25. TNA FCO9/1526 B Hitch, London to Goodenough, London, 02.06.1972.
26. AGMFA LE/1972/4.1 Letter from Sorokos to N. Makarezos, Athens, 21.03.72.
27. AGMFA LE/1972/4.1 Letter from Sorokos to Makarezos, 21.03.1972.
28. TNA FCO9/1526 Record of conversation between the parliamentary under-secretary and the Greek under-secretary for foreign affairs, 02.05.1972.
29. E.L.I.A./Dimitris Tsakonas Papers/File 1.3: Interview to the BBC, February 1972.
30. For the Greek record of the meeting, see AGMFA LE/1974/5.11 Tsakonas, London to MFA, 02.05.1972.
31. TNA FCO9/1526 Record of conversation between the parliamentary under-secretary and the Greek under-secretary for foreign affairs, 02.05.1972. See also the Greek report in AGMFA LE/1973/3.7 Annual review for 1972, Sorokos to MFA, 10.01.73.
32. AGMFA LE/1973/3.7 Annual review for 1972, Sorokos to MFA, 10.01.73.
33. TNA FCO9/1526 Hitch to Goodenough, 02.06.1972.
34. NARA RG 59: POL GREECE-US, Tasca, Athens to Rogers, tel.no.3350, 15.06.1972.
35. TNA FCO9/1526 'Greece' memorandum, unnamed FCO official to Wiggin, 29.03.1972.
36. TNA FCO9/1533 Briefs for Defence Secretary's visit to Athens, FCO to Cullen, London, 29.08.1972.
37. TNA FCO9/1526 'Greece' memorandum, unnamed FCO official to Wiggin, 29.03.1972. Quite influential on this was also Lady Fleming who was trying to influence prominent figures in the US, such as J.W. Fulbright and Edward Kennedy (See E.L.I.A./Amalia Fleming Papers/File 29-Correspondence: Fulbright to Fleming, 30.03.1972 and Kennedy to Eisenberg, 13.03.1973).
38. AGMFA LE/1973/2.7, no.4112/3/135 Letter from Sorokos to MFA, 04.05.1972.
39. TNA FCO9/1526 Palmer, London to Wiggin, London, 20.06.1972.
40. TNA FCO9/1526 Handwritten note by Brooke Turner on Palmer to Wiggin, London, 23.06.1972
41. TNA FCO9/1526 Handwritten note by Wiggin on Palmer to Wiggin, London, 27.06.1972.

42. TNA FCO9/1526 R J Andrew, London to The Lord Bridges, London, 05.07.1972.
43. TNA FCO9/1526 Wiggin, London to Hitch, London, 22.08.1972.
44. TNA FCO9/1526 P H Grattan, London to Andrew, London, 04.07.1972.
45. TNA FCO9/1526 A Royle, London to Anthony Grant, Esq., London, 23.02.1972.
46. TNA FCO9/1533 Royle, London to Alrey Neave, Esq., London, 22.09.1972.
47. See 'Carrington to visit Greece', *The Observer*, 3 September 1972.
48. TNA FCO9/1533 Briefs for Defence Secretary's visit to Athens, FCO to Cullen, London, 29.08.1972.
49. TNA FCO9/1533 Briefs for Defence Secretary's visit to Athens, FCO to Cullen, London, 29.08.1972.
50. TNA FCO9/1533 K Prendergast, FCO to Hitch, 19.09.1972.
51. TNA FCO9/1533 Powell-Jones to Douglas-Home, 13.09.1972.
52. TNA FCO9/1533 Powell-Jones to FCO, tel.no.472, 07.09.1972.
53. TNA FCO9/1533 Powell-Jones to FCO, tel.no.471, 07.09.1972.
54. TNA FCO9/1533 Powell-Jones to Douglas-Home, 13.09.1972.
55. TNA FCO9/1533 Powell-Jones to FCO, tel.no.470, 07.09.1972.
56. TNA FCO9/1728 'Greece', Record of office meeting in parliamentary under-secretary's office, 06.09.1972.
57. TNA FCO9/1533 Powell-Jones to Douglas-Home, 13.09.1972.
58. Barkman, *Ambassador in Athens*, p.85.
59. TNA FCO9/1533 Brooke Turner to Powell-Jones, 21.09.1972.
60. TNA FCO9/1728 'Greece', Record of office meeting in parliamentary under-secretary's office, 06.09.1972.
61. 'Britain presses Greece to restore democracy', *The Times*, 8 September 1972.
See also 'Carrington reaches some agreement in Athens', *Financial Times*, 8 September 1972.
62. 'Durable Greek Colonels', *Daily Telegraph*, 8 September 1972.
63. 'Carrington's talks with the Greeks', *The Guardian*, 8 September 1972.
64. Taking advantage of the partial liberalisation of the regime during that time.
65. 'British serial story', *To Vima*, 18 October 1972.
66. TNA FCO9/1533 Hugh Greene to Neave, London, 06.09.1972.
67. TNA FCO9/1533 Powell-Jones to Douglas-Home, 13.09.1972.
68. TNA FCO9/1533 Prendergast to Brooke Turner, 19.09.1972.
69. TNA FCO9/1533 Powell-Jones, to Douglas-Home, 13.09.1972.
70. Ibid.
71. TNA FCO9/1533 Brooke Turner to Powell-Jones, 21.09.1972.
72. TNA FCO9/1533 'Greece: Defence Secretary Talks', 18.09.1972.
73. TNA FCO9/1533 Text of Lord Carrington's interview with the BBC, 16.10.1972.

74. 'Former envoy to Nato joins Greek Cabinet', *The Times*, 13 October 1972.
75. TNA FCO28/1520 Brooke Turner to Brimelow, FCO, 17.10.1972.
76. On this see Vlachos' caustic remarks in *Fifty something*, pp.242–3.
77. See, for example, 'Greek trade visit', *Financial Times* and 'Visit to Athens', *The Guardian*, both 13 October 1972.
78. TNA FCO9/1534 Prendergast to Brooke Turner, 26.09.1972.
79. TNA FCO9/1534 'General political brief', attached to Brooke Turner to Brimelow, 12.10.1972.
80. TNA FCO9/1534 Powell-Jones, to Brooke Turner, 05.10.1972.
81. TNA FCO9/1534 Brooke Turner to Brimelow, 12.10.1972.
82. TNA FCO9/1534 'Lord Limerick's visit to Greece', Hooper, Athens to Douglas-Home, FCO, 08.11.1972.
83. TNA FCO9/1534 Brooke Turner to Brimelow, 12.10.1972.
84. TNA FCO9/1534 'General political brief', attached to Brooke Turner to Brimelow, 12.10.1972.
85. TNA FCO9/1534 'Speech by Lord Limerick at Greek Government dinner', 01.11.1972.
86. TNA FCO9/1535 'Statement by Lord Limerick on departure from Greece', 03.11.1972.
87. TNA FCO9/1534 Record of conversation between Lord Limerick and Makarezos, 02.11.1972. See also 'Greek trade visit', *Financial Times*, 13 October 1972.
88. TNA FCO9/1534 'Greece: market share', attached to Brooke Turner to Brimelow, 12.10.1972.
89. TNA FCO9/1534 'Lord Limerick's visit to Greece', Hooper, Athens to Douglas-Home, London, 08.11.1972.
90. TNA FCO9/1534 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.581, 03.11.1972.
91. TNA FCO 9/1535 'Statement by Lord Limerick on departure from Greece', 03.11.1972.
92. TNA FCO9/1534 'Balance of trade' and 'Greece and the EEC', attached to Brooke Turner to Brimelow, 12.10.1972.
93. TNA FCO9/1534 'Lord Limerick's visit to Greece', Hooper to Douglas-Home, 08.11.1972.
94. TNA FCO9/1535 Record of conversation at the Greek Foreign Ministry, 01.11.1972.
95. TNA FCO9/1738 'Annual report on the Hellenic Armed Forces – 1972' by Baxter to Hooper, 20.02.1973.
96. TNA FCO9/1534 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.581, 03.11.1972.
97. Ibid. On this see also TNA FCO9/1534 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.581, 03.11.1972, where objections in Brussels are described by Athens as 'of minor importance'.

98. TNA FCO9/1534 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.581, 03.11.1972.
99. Cited in TNA FCO9/1534 'Lord Limerick's visit to Greece', Hooper to Douglas-Home, 08.11.1972.
100. TNA FCO9/1526 Tomkys, Athens to Prendergast, London, 19.10.1972.
101. He was the editor of *Hellenews*, an economic and commercial periodical.
102. TNA FCO9/1526 Tomkys to Prendergast, 19.10.1972.
103. TNA FCO9/1526 Hooper to Brooke Turner, 26.10.1972.
104. TNA FCO9/1526 Prendergast to Hitch, 06.03.1973.
105. TNA FCO9/1526 Brooke Turner to Wiggin, 29.11.1972.
106. AGMFA LE/1972/4.1 no. 512/601813–605 'MOD representative visit' report attached to Mourikis, Armed Forces headquarters, Athens to MFA, 13.11.1972.
107. TNA FCO9/1526 Supplement by Wiggin, 30.11.1972 on Brooke Turner to Wiggin, 29.11.1972.
108. TNA FCO9/1526 Rose to Logan, 13.12.1972 .
109. Hill, *Changing Politics of Foreign Policy*, p.223.
110. TNA FCO9/1709 'Greece: Annual review for 1972' no.27/73, Hooper to Douglas-Home, 02.01.1973.

Chapter 6 The Conservative government's policy towards the Colonels, 1973: overtaken by events

1. TNA FCO9/1998 'Annual review for 1973' diplomatic report 56/74, Hooper to Douglas-Home, 07.01.1974.
2. TNA FCO9/1709 'Annual review for 1972' no.56/74 Hooper to Douglas-Home, 02.01.1973.
3. TNA FCO9/1709 Goodison to Hooper, 12.01.1973.
4. TNA FCO9/1709 'Annual review for 1972' no.56/74, Hooper to Douglas-Home, 02.01.1973.
5. Ibid.
6. TNA FCO9/1734 Hooper to Brooke Turner, 03.01.1973.
7. TNA FCO9/1734 Butler to Wright, 30.01.1973.
8. AGMFA LE/1974/5.11, Memorandum, Broumas, London to MFA, Athens, 22.05.1973.
9. On this see Pesmazoglou, 'The Greek dictatorship (1967–1974) and EEC: economy, politics, ideology', Athanasiou, Rigos *et al.* (eds), *The dictatorship: 1967–1974*, pp.92–114 and Rizas, *Greek politics*, pp.456–9. On the 'profound effect' that EC membership had on policy-making in London, see Young, *Britain and the World in the Twentieth Century*, London: Arnold, 1997, pp.193–7.
10. TNA FCO9/1729 'A letter from a Greek Political Prisoner', attached to Brooke Turner to Elliot, 06.01.1973.

11. TNA FCO9/1729 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.5, 05.01.1973. For British press reports see, for example, 'Lord Olivier draws the Greeks fire', *Daily Express* and 'Complaint by Greece on Olivier reading', *The Times*, 06 January 1973.
12. TNA FCO9/1729 Douglas-Home to Athens, tel.no.3, 05.01.1973.
13. Cited in TNA FCO9/1729 Morgan to Reddaway, 09.02.1973.
14. TNA FCO9/1729 Brooke Turner to Hooper, 11.01.1973.
15. TNA FCO9/1729 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.10, 06.01.1973.
16. TNA FCO9/1729 Hooper to Brooke Turner, 10.01.1973.
17. TNA FCO9/1729 Brooke Turner to Hooper, 11.01.1973.
18. TNA FCO9/1737 'Defence relations with Greece' memorandum, Brooke Turner, 08.01.1973.
19. TNA FCO9/1729 Brooke Turner to Hooper, 11.01.1973 and FCO 9/1729 Hooper to Brooke Turner, 10.01.1973.
20. TNA FCO9/1729 Hooper to Brooke Turner, 10.01.1973. See also FCO briefs on Broumas' call on Royle, attached to FCO 9/1740 Wiggin to Goodison, 17.01.1973.
21. TNA FCO9/1731 Brooke Turner to Wiggin, 03.01.1973.
22. TNA FCO9/1729 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.70, 24.02.1973.
23. Sked and Cook, *Post-war Britain*, p.258.
24. Morgan, *Britain since 1945: The People's Peace*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p.343.
25. It should be noted, though, that the value of this particular contract was comparatively small (it would range from £185,000 to £462,500), and, consequently, not thought worth the risk of exciting criticism (TNA FCO9/1735 Prendergast to Tomkys, 16.01.1973).
26. TNA FCO9/1731 Goodison to Wiggin, 01.02.1973.
27. TNA FCO9/1731 Douglas-Home to Athens, tel.no.55, 14.02.1973.
28. TNA FCO9/1731 Douglas-Home to Athens, tel.no.57, 15.02.1973.
29. TNA FCO9/1731 Call on Royle by Broumas, 14.02.1973.
30. TNA FCO9/1732 Martin to Prendergast, 28.02.1973.
31. TNA FCO9/1732 Goodison to Wiggin, 23.02.1973.
32. TNA FCO9/1732 Martin to Prendergast, 28.02.1973.
33. TNA FCO9/1732 Goodison to Wiggin, 29.03.1973.
34. TNA FCO9/1734 Hall to Hitch, 12.03.1973.
35. TNA FCO9/1732 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.103, 29.03.1973.
36. TNA FCO9/1728 Goodison to Tomkys, 16.03.1973.
37. TNA FCO9/1728 Tomkys to Goodison, 21.03.1973.
38. TNA FCO9/1732 Record of meeting on Greece, 04.04.1973.
39. TNA FCO9/1732 Comments on draft record of meeting on Greece, Hooper to Goodison, 10.04.1973.

40. TNA FCO9/1732 Hooper's comments attached to Goodison to Logan, 30.03.1973.
41. TNA FCO9/1732 Record of meeting on Greece, 04.04.1973.
42. TNA FCO9/1732 Hooper's comments attached to Goodison to Logan, 30.03.1973.
43. TNA FCO9/1719 Goodison to Wiggin, 02.03.1973.
44. TNA FCO9/1719 Wiggin to Goodison, 05.03.1973.
45. TNA FCO9/1732 Record of meeting on Greece, 04.04.1973.
46. TNA FCO9/1732 Hooper's comments attached to Goodison to Logan, 30.03.1973.
47. TNA FCO9/1732 Record of meeting on Greece, 04.04.1973.
48. TNA FCO9/1732 Wiggin to Nash, 15.03.1973.
49. TNA FCO9/1732 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.93, 23.03.1973.
50. TNA FCO9/1732 Goodison to Wiggin, 29.03.1973.
51. TNA FCO9/1732 Record of meeting on Greece, 04.04.1973.
52. TNA FCO9/1732 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.93, 23.03.1973.
53. TNA FCO9/1732 Hooper's comments attached to Goodison to Logan, 30.03.1973.
54. TNA FCO9/1732 Comments on draft record of meeting on Greece, Hooper to Goodison, 10.04.1973.
55. TNA FCO9/1732 Record of meeting on Greece, 04.04.1973.
56. TNA FCO9/1732 Hooper's comments attached to Goodison to Logan, 30.03.1973.
57. TNA FCO9/1729 Record of conversation between Royle and Broumas, 21.05.1973.
58. Pesmazoglou had been the chief official responsible for the negotiations of Greece's association agreement with the EEC in the early 1960s, and a prominent figure of the resistance to the Colonels' regime.
59. TNA FCO9/1729 Record of conversation between Royle and Broumas, 21.05.1973.
60. TNA FCO9/1729 Record of conversation between Royle and Broumas, 21.05.1973. See also the Greek record of the meeting in AGMFA: LE/1974/5.11, Broumas, London to MFA, Athens, 22.05.1973.
61. TNA FCO9/1729 Hitch to Tomkys, 30.05.1973.
62. TNA FO286/1455 Tomkys to Prendergast, 21.02.1973.
63. TNA FO286/1455 Goodison to Tomkys, 28.02.1973.
64. TNA FO286/1456 'Internal political situation', Martin, 05.06.1973.
65. TNA FO286/1456 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.164, 24.05.1973.
66. TNA FO286/1456 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.173, 29.05.1973.
67. TNA FO286/1456 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.178, 30.05.1973.

68. TNA FCO9/1732 'Abolition of the Greek monarchy', Hooper to Douglas-Home, 14.06.1973.
69. TNA FCO9/1998 'Annual review for 1973' diplomatic report no.56/74, Hooper to Douglas-Home, 07.01.1974.
70. AGMFA LE/1973/3.7, 'Annual review for 1973', 0445/1/AS90, Broumas, London to MFA, Athens, 14.01.1974.
71. TNA FCO9/1732 'Abolition of the Greek monarchy', Hooper to Douglas-Home, 14.06.1973.
72. TNA FO286/1456 'The King of Greece', unnamed FCO official to Douglas-Home, 29.05.1973.
73. This was inferred from a discussion between the king and the assistant military attaché of the British embassy in Rome at a private supper party of 27 May. The king was reported saying that those events 'had taken him completely by surprise' (TNA FCO9/1742 Hancock, Rome to Athens, tel.no.369, 01.06.1973).
74. TNA FO286/1456 Martin to Prendergast, 31.05.1973.
75. TNA FO286/1456 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.178, 30.05.1973.
76. TNA FO286/1456 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.184, 01.06.1973.
77. See Papagos, *Notes*, 7–8 July entry, p.517.
78. TNA FO286/1456 Douglas-Home to Athens, tel.no.154, 01.06.1973.
79. TNA FO286/1456 Douglas-Home to Athens, tel.no.163, 10.06.1973.
80. TNA FO286/1456 Goodison to Denson, Athens, 08.06.1973.
81. 'Britain Recognizes the Proclaimed Greek Republic; Some Await Greek Vote', *The New York Times*, 14 June 1973.
82. *Hansard* Vol.859, No.126, 13 June 1973.
83. European Atlantic Action Committee on Greece Bulletin no.7, 03.07.1973, p.6.
84. TNA FCO9/1723 Goodison to Wiggin, 07.06.1973.
85. TNA FCO9/1714 Errington Thubron to Douglas-Home, 14.06.1973.
86. TNA FCO9/1714 Goodison to Wiggin, 19.06.1973.
87. TNA FCO9/1714 Royle to Hugh Dykes, London, 18.06.1973.
88. 'Britain Recognizes the Proclaimed Greek Republic', *The New York Times*, 14 June 1973.
89. TNA FCO9/1714 Goodison to Hooper, 15.06.1973.
90. 'Conditions in Greece must change before closer link with EEC can ever proceed-Sir C Soames', *The Times*, 7 June 1973.
91. On this see Rizas, *Greek politics after the Civil war*, pp.53–4.
92. TNA FCO9/1714 Hooper to Goodison, 21.06.1973.
93. TNA FCO9/1732 'Abolition of the Greek monarchy', Hooper to Douglas-Home, 14.06.1973.
94. TNA FCO9/1714 Hooper to Goodison, 19.07.1973.
95. TNA FCO9/1714 Goodison to Hooper, 22.06.1973.
96. TNA FCO9/1714 Goodison to Hooper, 29.06.1973 and 13.07.1973.

97. TNA FCO9/1732 Goodison to Hooper, 06.07.1973.
98. *Hansard* Vol.859, No.141, 4 July 1973.
99. TNA CAB128/52, CM (73). 35th Conclusions, 5 July 1973..
100. See, for example, 'King Constantine to make new home in England', *Daily Mail*, 6 June 1973.
101. TNA FCO9/1742 Goodison to Wiggin, 22.06.1973.
102. 'King Constantine to make new home in England', *Daily Mail*, 6 June 1973.
103. TNA FCO9/1742 Grattan, FCO to Butcher, Home Office, 31.07.1973.
104. TNA FCO9/1742 Right, Home Office to Grattan, FCO, 07.08.1973.
105. TNA FCO9/1741 Hooper to Goodison, 10.07.1973.
106. TNA FO286/1456 'Internal political situation', Martin, 05.06.1973 and Hooper to Macpherson, 04.06.1973.
107. TNA FCO9/1714 Martin to Prendergast, 14.06.1973.
108. TNA FCO9/1714 Martin to Prendergast, 12.07.1973.
109. TNA FCO9/1714 Denson to Martin, 10.07.1973.
110. TNA FCO9/1714 'Markezinis and the referendum', Martin to Hitch, FCO, 26.07.1973.
111. TNA FCO9/1714 Hooper to FCO, 31.07.1973.
112. TNA FCO9/1714 'Greece:-Referendum' tel.no.650, Athens to FCO, 31.07.1973.
113. TNA FCO9/1714 'The Greek Referendum of 1973' report no.6/73, Hooper to Douglas-Home, 09.08.1973.
114. TNA FCO9/1730 Douglas-Home to Athens, tel.no.216, 08.08.1973 and 17.08.1973.
115. TNA FCO9/1730 Douglas-Home to Athens, tel.no.216, 08.08.1973.
116. TNA FCO9/1730 Denson, Athens to FCO, tel.no.292, 10.08.1973.
117. Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter FRUS), 1969–1976, Volume XXX: 'National Intelligence Estimate', NIE 29.1–73, Washington, 19.07.1973.
118. TNA FCO9/1730 Denson to FCO, tel.no.304, 23.08.1973.
119. TNA FCO9/1730 Denson to Goodison, 28.08.1973 and FCO9/1730 Douglas-Home to Athens, tel.no.222, 17.08.1973.

Chapter 7 The Conservatives, the experiment that failed, and the hardliners coup, September–December 1973

1. TNA FCO9/1998 'Annual review for 1973' no.56/74, Hooper to Douglas-Home, 07.01.1974.
2. TNA FCO9/1717 'Praxicopematics: or the fall of Papadopoulos' memorandum no.516/73, Hooper to FCO, 06.12.1973.

3. TNA FCO9/1998 'Annual review for 1973' no.56/74, Hooper to Douglas-Home, 07.01.1974.
4. TNA FCO9/1732 Denson to Goodison, 06.09.1973.
5. TNA FCO9/1732 Hitch to Denson, 07.09.1973.
6. TNA FCO9/1732 Denson to Goodison, 06.09.1973 and AGMFA LE/1973/3.8 'Annual review for 1973', 'Greek-British Economic and Commercial relations' Zafiropoulos, 0445/8/AS3916, 03.10.1973.
7. TNA FCO9/1732 Denson to Goodison, 06.09.1973.
8. Ibid.
9. This refers to Lipkowski's visit to Greece in 1972 (see Chapter 5), which helped the French improve bilateral relations with the regime 'while doing in practice very little for the Greeks in the EEC'.
10. TNA FCO9/1732 Denson to Goodison, 06.09.1973.
11. This, however, was not to be mentioned to the Greeks for the moment.
12. TNA FCO9/1733 Record of meeting on Greece, 20.09.1973 attached to Goodison to Wiggin, 24.09.1973.
13. TNA FCO9/1733 Goodison to Wiggin, 28.09.1973.
14. TNA FCO9/1733 Goodison to Denson, 09.10.1973.
15. TNA FCO9/1733 Goodison to Wiggin, 28.09.1973 and Goodison to Denson, 09.10.1973, where it is stated that ministers agreed with the adoption of the objective.
16. TNA FCO9/1733 Paper by Goodison on Royle's meeting with Hooper, attached to Goodison to Wiggin, 19.09.1973.
17. AGMFA LE/1973/3.7, 'Annual review for 1973', 0445/1/AS90, Broumas, London to MFA, Athens, 14.01.1974.
18. TNA FCO9/1998 'Annual review for 1973' no.56/74, Hooper to Douglas-Home, 07.01.1974.
19. TNA FCO9/1714 Martin to Prendergast, 12.07.1973.
20. TNA FCO9/1714 Martin to Hitch, 26.07.1973.
21. 'The Smiling Juggler', *Time*, 15 October 1973.
22. TNA FCO9/1998 'Annual review for 1973' no.56/74, Hooper to Douglas-Home, 07.01.1974.
23. TNA FCO9/1732 Denson to Goodison, 06.09.1973.
24. See, for example, TNA FCO 9/1716 Cornish to Goodison, WSG 1/13, 04.10.1973 and FCO 9/1730 Cornish to Goodison, WSG 3/548/2, 04.10.1973.
25. TNA FCO9/1716 Goodison to Wiggin, 01.10.1973.
26. TNA FCO9/1716 Douglas-Home to Athens, tel.no.263, 09.10.1973. See also Markezinis' account in his *Contemporary political history of Greece, Vol.3, 1952–1975*, p.185.

27. TNA FCO9/1716 Douglas-Home to Athens, tel.no.258, 04.10.1973.
28. Author's interview with Mr X, Athens, 11.09.2007.
29. TNA FCO9/1716 Tomkys to Cornish, 11.10.1973.
30. TNA FCO9/1730 Hooper to Goodison, 16.10.1973.
31. TNA FCO9/1733 Goodison to Wiggin, 01.11.1973.
32. Colville reported that Markezinis had expressed 'acute disappointment' that Whitehall was adopting an over-cautious and reserved attitude towards the new government in Greece (TNA FCO 9/1733 'Anglo-Greek relations: Mr Jock Colville', Wiggin to Goodison, 24.10.1973).
33. TNA FCO9/1733 Goodison to Wiggin, 01.11.1973.
34. TNA FCO9/1733 Wiggin's note, 06.11.1973 attached to Goodison to Wiggin, 01.11.1973.
35. Helmis, *The troubled two-year period, 1973–1974: from the personal diary of an eye witness* (in Greek), Athens: Kastaniotis, 2006, p.81.
36. TNA FCO9/1733 Cornish to Baker, 07.11.1973.
37. TNA FCO9/1733 Hooper to Goodison, 22.11.1973.
38. TNA FCO9/1733 Goodison to Wiggin, 13.11.1973.
39. TNA FCO9/1733 Goodison to Hooper, 16.11.1973.
40. TNA FCO9/1717 'Praxicopematics: or the fall of Papadopoulos' memorandum no.516/73, Hooper to FCO, 06.12.1973.
41. TNA FCO9/1733 Goodison to Hooper, 23.11.1973.
42. TNA FCO9/1717 Cornish to Baker, 12.12.1973 and Handwritten note by Baker, 18.12.1973.
43. TNA FCO9/1717 'Praxicopematics', Goodison to Hooper, WSG 1/14, 19.12.1973.
44. See 'Nine deaths in Athens as tanks go on shooting', *The Times*, 19 November 1973.
45. The upcoming Summit of the Nine (member countries of the EEC) loomed large and was also an item on the agenda of Heath's discussions with French president Pompidou who had visited London while events in Athens were taking place (see TNA CAB128/53, CM (73).57th, 22 November 1973).
46. TNA CAB128/53, CM (73).57th, 22 November 1973. On this see also 'The colonels go back to square one', *The Times*, 19 November 1973.
47. TNA FCO9/1733 'British policy towards Greece', Hooper to Goodison, 22.11.1973.
48. Helmis, *The troubled two-year period*, pp.89–90.
49. 'Military coup in Greece removes Papadopoulos', *The New York Times*, 26 November 1973.
50. See his obituary in *The New York Times*, 30 July 1999.
51. Read an analysis of his first policy pronouncement in 'Dismal Start', *The New York Times*, 3 December 1973.

52. TNA FCO9/1998 'Annual review for 1973' no.56/74, Hooper to FCO, 07.01.1974.
53. Ibid.
54. TNA FCO9/1717 'Praxicopemetics: or the fall of Papadopoulos' memorandum no.516/73, Hooper to FCO, 06.12.1973
55. Professor Tsakonas, an old friend of Hooper's, told him that Papadopoulos and Markezinis' failure was largely due to the 'irreconcilable personal hostility' to them both of the 'old' politicians, who had a lot to answer for (to which the ambassador remarked later: 'he can say that again!') (TNA FCO9/1717 Hooper to Goodison, 13.12.1973). Even Mitsotakis, who had wished Markezinis' success, was not optimistic about the new government and was somewhat sceptical about participating in the next election (Mitsotakis Archive: DICTAT/5888/5302 Interview to Greek service of French Radio, October 1973 and POLOG/2000/080.7 3290 Interview to NET, 31.01–01.02.2000). Moreover, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs official took the view that Markezinis committed a series of mistakes, such as not securing the support of NRU and CU, underestimating the power of the hardliners, as well as overestimating Papadopoulos' ability to restrain them (Author's interview with Mr X, 11.09.2007).
56. 'It's hard to unfreeze', *The Economist*, 24 November 1973.
57. Cited in TNA FO286/1455 Goodison to Tomkys, 28.02.1973.
58. Cited in TNA FCO9/1208 'Greek foreign policy', Palmer to Snodgrass, 20.02.1970.
59. *Hansard* Col. 385, Vol.865, 28 November 1973.
60. TNA FCO9/1733 'Notes for supplementaries', attached to Goodison to Wiggin, 26.11.1973.
61. TNA FCO9/1717 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.414, 26.11.1973.
62. TNA FCO9/1717 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.415, 26.11.1973.
63. TNA FCO9/1717 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.416, 27.11.1973.
64. Ibid.
65. The Americans had already informed the British that they would continue day-to-day relations with the Greeks and the position of the other NATO countries was (as in June) that they recognized states and not governments, and that therefore no problem was arising (on the US see TNA FCO9/1717 Cromer to FCO, 26.11.1973).
66. TNA FCO9/1717 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.416, 27.11.1973.
67. TNA FCO9/1717 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.426, 29.11.1973.
68. TNA FCO9/1717 'Greece: recognition' memorandum WSG 1/4 by Goodison, 29.11.1973.
69. Ibid.

70. TNA CAB128/53, CM (73).59th, 4 December 1973.
71. TNA FCO9/1717 'Recognition' WSG 1/14, Cornish to Baker, 06.12.1973.
72. TNA FCO9/1717 'Background note' to House of Lords question, 11.12.1973.
73. TNA FCO9/1717 Thubron to Douglas-Home, 03.12.1973.
74. TNA FCO9/1717 'Recognition', Baker to Denson, 07.12.1973.
75. TNA FCO9/1717 'Praxicopematics: or the fall of Papadopoulos' memorandum no.516/73, Hooper to FCO, 06.12.1973.
76. TNA FCO9/1717 Cornish to Baker, 12.12.1973.
77. See, for instance, Lord Milford's question in House of Lords: Vol.347, No.21, 11 December 1973, and Whitehead and Judd's questions in *Hansard*: Col.1338, vol.866, 19 December 1973.
78. The article made references to 'recognition by the back door' and 'Anglo-American softness' towards the Colonels, and traced British involvement back to the 'summer cruise' in the Greek islands of Lord Carrington a year before ('Shy Sir Alec Blesses Greeks', *The Guardian*, 5 December 1973).
79. TNA FCO9/1717 Goodison to Wiggin, 12.12.1973.
80. Ibid.
81. See TNA FCO9/1717 'Doctrine of recognition of other governments employed by EEC states', D J Wright, Western European dept. FCO to Bone, Research dept., FCO, 17.12.1973 and Cornish to Wright, 21.12.1973.
82. AGMFA LE/1973/3.7, 'Annual review for 1973', 0445/1/AS90, Broumas, London to MFA, Athens, 14.01.1974.
83. Helmis, *The troubled two-year period*, pp.129–30.
84. TNA FCO9/1998 'Annual review for 1973' no.56/74, Hooper to Douglas-Home, 07.01.1974.
85. TNA FCO9/1709 'Annual review for 1972' no.27/73, Hooper to Douglas-Home, 02.01.1973.
86. TNA FCO9/1738 Hooper to Douglas-Home, WSG 10/9, 21.02.1973
87. TNA FCO9/1717 'Praxicopematics: or the fall of Papadopoulos' memorandum no.516/73, Hooper to FCO, 06.12.1973.
88. TNA FCO9/1735 'Greece: arms sales', WSG 10/2, Goodison to Wiggin, 14.12.1973.
89. TNA FCO9/1735 Munro, Defence dept. to Wood, MoD, 20.12.1973, and Munro to Ormerod, MoD, 21.12.1973.
90. TNA FCO9/1737 'Defence cooperation with Greece', WSG 10/5, Goodison to Wiggin, 17.12.1973.
91. TNA FCO9/1737 Douglas-Home to Athens, tel.no.320, 27.12.1973.
92. TNA FCO 9/2013 Brief for Broumas' call on Peter Blaker (parliamentary under-secretary of state), Goodison to Guest, 21.01.1974.

93. TNA FCO9/1998 'Annual review for 1973' no.56/74, Hooper to Douglas-Home, 07.01.1974.
94. TNA FCO9/1998 Cornish to Baker, 14.01.1974.
95. TNA FCO9/1998 Goodison to Hooper, 22.01.1974.

Chapter 8 Conservatives, Labour and the junta, 1974: the endgame

1. TNA FCO9/2226 'Annual review for 1974' no.72/75, F Brooks Richards to James Callaghan, 07.01.1975.
2. TNA FCO9/2226 'Greece: annual review 1974' memorandum by S T Corcoran, 10.03.1975.
3. TNA FCO9/2015 Goodison to Wiggin, 25.01.1974.
4. TNA FCO9/2014 Note on Anglo-Greek relations by Goodison, 28.08.1974.
5. Healey remarked that '[a]s in 1970, the Opposition did not win the election; the Government lost it' (Healey, *Time of My Life*, p.370).
6. Childs, *Britain Since 1945*, p.182.
7. TNA FCO9/2013 'Vardinoyannis', Martin to Cornish, 13.03.1974.
8. TNA FCO9/2005 Callaghan to Athens, tel.no.49, 13.03.1974 and TNA CAB128/54, CM (74).3rd Conclusions, 14 March 1973. See also James Callaghan, *Time and Chance*, London: Collins, 1987, p.338.
9. TNA FCO9/2004 EAACG Memorandum on 'Opportunities to confront the Greek problem', attached to Thompson to Callaghan, 15.03.1974. See also Greek reaction to this in AGMFA LE/1974/5.11, 1516/3/263, Broumas to Athens, 14.03.1974. It should be noted here, however, that it was only the Liberal Party that included a mention of Greece in its manifesto before the election of February 1974.
10. AGMFA LE/1974/5.11, 4112.63/1/AS36, Broumas to Athens, 22.02.1974.
11. TNA FCO9/2005 Callaghan to Athens, tel.no.49, 13.03.1974. See also AGMFA LE/1974/5.11, 4111.4/1/AS62, Broumas to Athens, 14.03.1974.
12. TNA FCO9/2005 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.56, 14.03.1974.
13. TNA FCO9/2005 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.57, 14.03.1974.
14. Helmis, *The troubled two-year period*, p.135. Angelos Vlachos, a cousin of Helen Vlachos who had escaped to London, was one of the very few officials who were held in high esteem by their British colleagues (See TNA FCO9/2015 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.58, 14.03.1974).
15. TNA FCO9/2015 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.58, 14.03.1974.
16. TNA FCO9/2015 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.63, 15.03.1974.
17. TNA FCO9/2015 Goodison to Goulding, 18.03.1974.
18. TNA FCO9/2015 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.66, 16.03.1974.

19. TNA FCO9/2015 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.67, 18.03.1974. When Mavros later met Callaghan at Geneva he told him: 'You took the action, I paid the price' (Callaghan, *Time and Chance*, p.348).
20. Cited in TNA FCO9/2015 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.70, 19.03.1974.
21. Cited in Bulletin of *European Atlantic Action Committee on Greece (EAACG)*, no.9, 6 July 1974, p.8.
22. TNA FCO9/2015 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.73, 19.03.1974.
23. TNA FCO9/2004 Greene to Callaghan, 19.03.1974.
24. TNA FCO9/2004 EAACG Memorandum on 'Opportunities to confront the Greek problem', attached to Thompson to Callaghan, 15.03.1974.
25. *Eleftheros Kosmos*, 17 March 1974.
26. 'Editorial', *Estia*, 18 March 1974.
27. *Eleftheros Kosmos*, 17 March 1974, cited in TNA FCO 9/2015 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.67, 18.03.1974. See also *Eleftheros Kosmos*, 20 March 1974, where it is stated that 'Mr Wilson's government does not express the will of the British people'.
28. TNA FCO9/2015 Goodison to Hooper, 13.04.1974 and Killick to Goodison, 21.04.1974.
29. TNA FCO9/2015 Hooper to MoD, 18.03.1974.
30. TNA FCO9/2015 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.64, 15.03.1974.
31. TNA FCO9/2015 Goodison to Wiggin, 18.03.1974.
32. Helmis, *The troubled two-year period*, p.136.
33. TNA FCO9/2015 Goodison to Wiggin, 18.03.1974.
34. Cited in TNA FCO9/2015 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.75, 20.03.1974.
35. TNA FCO9/2015 Peck to FCO, tel.no.137, 20.03.1974.
36. AGMFA LE/1974/5.11, 4111.4/6/AS419, MFA to London Embassy, 15.03.1974.
37. AGMFA LE/1974/5.11, 4111.4/4/AS72, Broumas to Athens, 22.03.1974.
38. TNA FCO9/2015 Tomkys to Baker, 20.03.1974.
39. TNA FCO9/2013 Hooper to Goodison, 29.05.1974.
40. TNA FCO9/2015 Background note on parliamentary question on Greece, 02.04.1974.
41. TNA FCO9/2015 Hooper to Goodison, 02.04.1974.
42. TNA FCO9/2013 Record of conversation between minister of state and Ziggdis, 22.03.1974.
43. TNA FCO9/2015 Hooper to Goodison, 02.04.1974.
44. Helmis, *The troubled two-year period*, p.140.
45. TNA FCO9/2015 'Anglo/Greek relations', Goodison to Hooper, 22.04.1974.
46. Theodore Couloumbis, ... 71 ... 74: *Notes of an academic* (in Greek), Athens: Patakis, 2002, p.263.

47. AGMFA LE/1974/5.11, 4111.4/4/AS72, Broumas to Athens, 22.03.1974.
48. TNA FCO9/2013 Hooper to Baker, 03.05.1974.
49. AGMFA LE/1974/5.11, 4111.4/10/AS867, Broumas to Athens, 18.04.1974.
50. AGMFA LE/1974/5.11, 4111.4/5/AS74, Broumas to Athens, 26.03.1974.
51. AGMFA LE/1974/5.11, 4111.4/10/AS867, Broumas to Athens, 18.04.1974.
52. On this see Wilson, 'The Aegean Dispute', J. Alford (ed), *Greece and Turkey: Adversity in Alliance*, London: International Institute of Strategic Studies, 1984; Rizas, *Greek-Turkish relations and the Aegean, 1973–1976* (in Greek), Athens: Sideris, 2006, especially pp.17–97; and Iraklidis, *Irreconcilable Neighbours – Greece-Turkey: The Aegean dispute* (in Greek), Athens: Sideris, 2007, especially pp.76–87.
53. See Iraklidis, *Irreconcilable Neighbours*, pp.82–3.
54. TNA FCO9/2009 'Oil exploration in the Aegean', Tomkys to Cornish, 21.02.1974.
55. TNA FCO9/2009 'Turkish-Greek relations: the Aegean and oil', R A Fyjis-Walker to Tomkys, 26.02.1974.
56. Cited in TNA FCO9/2010 Callaghan to UKDEL NATO, tel.no.113, 20.05.1974.
57. TNA FCO9/2010 'Greek/Turkish relations', Baker to Wiggin, 19.04.1974.
58. TNA FCO9/2010 Callaghan to UKDEL NATO, tel.no.113, 20.05.1974.
59. TNA FCO9/2010 'Greek/Turkish relations', Baker to Wiggin, 19.04.1974.
60. TNA FCO9/2010 'Turkish-Greek relations', H Phillips, Ankara to Wiggin, FCO, 13.05.1974.
61. TNA FCO9/2010 Ramsbotham to FCO, tel.no.1991, 04.06.1974.
62. TNA FCO9/2015 R A Sykes, Washington to Wiggin, 06.06.1974.
63. TNA FCO9/2015 Callaghan to Washington, tel.no.1240, 31.05.1974.
64. TNA FCO9/2015 Record of conversation, Hattersley and Hartman, 13.05.1974.
65. TNA FCO9/2015 M I Goulding to Baker, 16.05.1974.
66. TNA FCO9/2015 Callaghan to Washington, tel.no.1240, 31.05.1974.
67. TNA FCO9/2005 Record of conversation, Callaghan and Kenneth Rush, 21.05.1974.
68. TNA FCO9/2005 Graham, Washington to Goodison, 22.05.1974.
69. TNA FCO9/2004 Record of conversation, Hattersley and Greene, 14.06.1974.
70. TNA FCO9/2004 Briefs for meeting with Greene, attached to Goodison to Goulding, 13.06.1974.
71. TNA FCO9/2004 Record of conversation, Hattersley and Greene, 14.06.1974.
72. Ibid. See also EAACG Memorandum on 'Greece and her Allies: May 1974', p.5, also attached to TNA FCO9/2004 Goodison to Goulding, 13.06.1974.

73. TNA FCO9/2004 Record of conversation, Hattersley and Greene, 14.06.1974.
74. TNA FCO9/2004 Wiggin to Goulding, 23.04.1974.
75. TNA FCO9/2015 Callaghan to Washington, tel.no.1240, 31.05.1974.
76. TNA FCO9/2004 Record of conversation, Hattersley and Greene, 14.06.1974.
77. Bulletin of *European Atlantic Action Committee on Greece*, no.9, 6 July 1974, p.2.
78. Ibid, p.3.
79. TNA FCO9/2022 'Frigates for the Greek Navy', WSG 21/1, Goodison to Wiggin, 09.07.1974.
80. TNA FCO9/2019 'Relations with politically sensitive countries' memorandum for OPD(74) 18, Hunt, Smith and Roberts, 03.06.1974.
81. The value of the order would be about £460,000.
82. TNA FCO9/2019 'Sales of defence equipment to Greece', Goodison to Wiggin, 05.02.1974. See also FCO9/2019 Cornish to Tomkys, 12.02.1974 and M R McIntosh, FCO to W Kavanagh, Department of Trade and Industry, 18.02.1974.
83. TNA FCO9/2019 'Relations with politically sensitive countries' memorandum for OPD(74) 18, Hunt, Smith and Roberts, 03.06.1974, Annex B and C, 12.06.1974.
84. TNA FCO9/2019 'Greece: defence sales', A V Flowers, Ministry of Defence to Cornish, FCO, 19.06.1974.
85. TNA FCO9/2019 'Greece: defence sales', Flowers to Cornish, 19.06.1974.
86. TNA FCO9/2022 Goodison to Wiggin, 09.07.1974.
87. TNA FCO9/2016 'Greece and the EEC' R Q Braithwaite, European Integration dept., FCO to Butler, 22.02.1974.
88. TNA FCO9/2016 'Greece and the EEC' Braithwaite to Butler, 08.07.1974.
89. LSE/Shore/9/139 Letter Julian Amery, FCO to Peter Shore, London regarding negotiations between the European Community and Mediterranean countries, 24.10.1973.
90. For a general background on Cyprus see Coufoudakis, *Cyprus: A Contemporary Problem in Historical Perspective*, Minneapolis, MN: Modern Greek Studies, University of Minnesota, 2006. On the diplomacy of the Cyprus issue during the junta and the 1974 crisis on the island see Rizas, *The Cyprus issue 1967–1974* and Asmussen, *Cyprus At War: Diplomacy and Conflict during the 1974 Crisis*, London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008, respectively.
91. Wilson, *Final Term: The Labour Government, 1974–1976*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson: Joseph, 1979, p.61.
92. TNA FCO9/1890 Olver to FCO, tel.no.178, 15.07.1974.

93. TNA FCO9/1890 Olver to FCO, tel.no.180, 15.07.1974.
94. TNA FCO9/1890 Olver to FCO, tel.no.180 and 181, 15.07.1974.
95. London Press Service, Verbatim Service 132/74, 15 July 1974.
96. London Press Service, Verbatim Service 133/73, 15 July 1974.
97. On this see Callaghan, *Time and Chance*, p.336.
98. TNA FCO9/1890 Callaghan to Athens, Ankara, Washington, UKDEL, UKMIS NY, tel.no.129, 15.07.1974.
99. On the relationship between the British and the American foreign ministers see Mallinson, '1976: British Cyprus and the Consolidation of American Desires in the Eastern Mediterranean', *Defensor Pacis*, 2007 21, and especially pp.15–6, where it is stated that '[...] Callaghan had succumbed to Kissinger's persuasion, and British foreign policy –or at least military policy- had become increasingly integrated with that of the US'.
100. TNA FCO9/1890 Callaghan to Athens, Ankara, Washington, UKDEL, UKMIS NY, tel.no.129, 15.07.1974.
101. TNA FCO9/1890 Ramsbotham, Washington to FCO, tel.no.2383, 15.07.1974.
102. TNA FCO9/1890 Olver to FCO, tel.no.184, 15.07.1974.
103. TNA FCO9/1890 Olver to FCO, tel.no.190, 15.07.1974.
104. TNA FCO9/1890 'Cyprus', Goulding to Goodison, 15.07.1974.
105. TNA FCO9/1890 'Call by the Cyprus High Commissioner', Goodison to Private Secretary, 15.07.1974.
106. TNA FCO9/1890 Olver to FCO, tel.no.184, 15.07.1974; FCO 9/1890 'Cyprus', Goulding to Goodison, 15.07.1974; FCO9/2006 Goulding to Goodison, 16.07.1974 and FCO 9/1890 Goodison to Private Secretary, 15.07.1974.
107. TNA FCO9/1890 Ramsbotham, Washington to FCO, tel.no.2383, 15.07.1974.
108. According to a Greek official, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was in complete disarray at the time, with most of its seasoned officials leaving and the only one remaining being 'poor' Kypraios who had 'no idea' about foreign policy (Author's interview with Mr X, 11.09.2007)
109. TNA FCO9/1890 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.196, 15.07.1974.
110. TNA FCO9/2006 Goulding to Goodison, 16.07.1974.
111. Ibid.
112. See Donoughue, *Downing Street diary: with Harold Wilson in No.10*, London: Pimlico, 2006, p.166.
113. Callaghan, *Time and Chance*, p.340.
114. Wilson, *Final Term*, p.62.
115. Donoughue, *Downing Street diary*, p.166.

116. Callaghan, *Time and Chance*, p.341.
117. Rizas, *Greek politics after the Civil war*, p.445.
118. TNA FCO9/2003 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.289, 23.07.1974.
119. TNA FCO9/2003 Callaghan to Athens, tel.no.184, 23.07.1974.
120. TNA FCO9/2003 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.297, 23.07.1974.
121. TNA FCO9/2003 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.301, 23.07.1974 and FCO 9/2003 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.307, 24.07.1974.
122. Helmis, *The troubled two-year period*, p.177.
123. TNA FCO9/2003 Callaghan to Athens, tel.no.191, 24.07.1974.
124. TNA FCO9/2003 'Message from Greek Prime Minister to Mr Wilson', attached to Tomkys to Baker, 24.07.1974.
125. Callaghan, *Time and Chance*, p.348.
126. TNA FCO9/2003 Tomkys to Goodison, 24.07.1974.
127. TNA FCO9/2003 Hooper to FCO, tel.no.339, 25.07.1974.
128. Callaghan, *Time and Chance*, p.356.

Conclusion

1. TNA FCO9/2014 'The results of the Greek election', Brooks Richards, Athens to Callaghan, 27.11.1974.
2. TNA FCO9/2014 Goodison, FCO to Brooks Richards, 04.12.1974.
3. TNA FCO9/2014 'The results of the Greek election', Brooks Richards to Callaghan, 27.11.1974.
4. TNA FCO9/2226 Goodison to Brooks Richards, 21.01.1975.
5. TNA FCO9/2226 'Greece: Annual Review for 1974', no.72/75, Brooks Richards to Callaghan, 07.01.1975. The attack referred to is the one of 22 July on the British Chancery by a crowd 'under direction of the Junta in which police did not intervene'.
6. TNA FCO9/2006 Callaghan to UKDEL NATO, tel.no.194, 15.08.1974. On the constraints imposed on foreign policy makers by domestic society see Chapter 9 of Hill, *Changing Politics of Foreign Policy*, and especially pp.222–3.
7. TNA FCO9/2006 'Greek withdrawal from NATO', R J T McLaren, FCO to Sir John Killick, 05.09.1974.
8. TNA FCO9/2014 Memorandum on Anglo-Greek relations, attached to Goodison to Private Secretary, 28.08.1974. On the Association Agreement see TNA CAB128/55, CC (74).35th Conclusions, 12 September 1974.

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INDEX

- Agnew, Spiro 132
Albania 24, 59, 73–4, 80,
 266 n. 22
Amery, Julian 184, 224, 234
Amnesty International 38
Androutsopoulos, Adamantios 199,
 202, 205
Angelis, Odysseas 81, 83, 98, 100,
 102, 106, 119, 124–5, 130–1,
 185
Argentina 203
arms, sales of 3–4, 23, 35–6, 45,
 49–52, 66, 72–3, 78–80, 84,
 86, 88, 94, 97, 108, 115–7,
 125, 128, 136–7, 144, 147,
 155–7, 159–160, 163, 168,
 187, 228, 230–1, 244, 246–7
Ashiotis, 236
Aslanidis, Konstantinos 59
Aspida affair 17
Association Agreement 108, 138–9,
 165, 171–2, 176, 183, 189, 191–2,
 208, 232, 242
Athens Polytechnic uprising 7, 176,
 197, 200
Averoff, Evangelos 99, 106–7, 127,
 183–4
bases, British (SBAs) 19, 65, 88, 146,
 237
Baxter, Brigadier Harry 111, 125–6,
 153, 209
BBC 38, 108–9, 122, 149
Beaumont of Whitley, Lord (Timothy
 Beaumont) 163–4
Beith, John 30
Belgium 77
Bendall, David V. 71, 87
Benn, Tony 36
Bevin, Ernest 25
Braine, Sir Bernard 180
Brandt, Willy 63, 68
Brezhnev, Leonid 25
Brimelow, Sir Thomas 63–4, 80, 90,
 112, 122–3, 190
British Aircraft Corporation
 (BAC) 50
Brockway, Lord (Fenner Brockway)
 148
Brooke Turner, Alan 142
Brooks Richards, F. 241
Brosio, Manlio 37–8
Broumas, General Nicolas 126, 156,
 161–2, 164, 166, 171–4, 208, 218,
 223–5

- Brown, George 15–6, 20–7, 31, 34, 70, 255 n. 71
- Bulgaria 24, 28, 59, 73
- Callaghan, James 57, 66, 179, 217, 228–230, 233–9, 242
- Calvocoressi, Peter 180
- Carrington, Lord 69, 82, 114–5, 124, 129, 133, 143–4, 146–150, 156–7, 170, 220, 246, 265 n. 4
- Castle, Barbara 35–6
- Cavalieratos, Phaidon 149, 162
- Centre Union (EK) 12–3, 15–7, 217
- Chalfont, Lord (Alun Gwynne Jones) 45
- Chile 202–3, 230
- CIA 14, 17, 110, 208, 219
- Constantine II, King of Greece 5, 10, 12, 14, 16, 28–30, 32–4, 40, 49, 54–5, 64, 85, 102–4, 120, 128, 133–4, 170, 177, 184, 204, 238
- Constitution, Greek 5, 34, 38, 40–1, 60, 85, 87, 99, 102, 144–5, 185
- contracts, commercial 6, 36, 41, 50, 53, 94–5, 116, 125, 136, 147, 150, 152, 154, 156, 159–160, 163, 168–170, 181, 187, 189–190, 218–9, 247
- Cornish, R. Francis 198, 224
- Council of Europe (CoE) 3–5, 26, 37, 42, 43, 46, 50–2, 57–8, 61, 75–6, 81, 88–9, 91–3, 108, 110, 242, 244
- Crossman, Richard 35, 51–2, 66
- Cyprus 1–2, 4, 6–11, 15, 19, 22, 24–5, 27–8, 31–2, 34, 42, 54, 59–60, 64–5, 76–7, 81–2, 85–6, 88, 90, 94, 101–2, 105, 107–8, 112, 114, 118–9, 122, 127 –8, 134, 145, 167, 170, 183, 187, 190, 192, 202, 205, 211, 222, 225–7, 231, 233–241, 245–6, 255 n. 76, 269 n. 82, 292 n. 90
- Czechoslovakia 2, 5, 32, 36–8, 74
- d'Avigdor-Goldsmid, Sir Henry 180
- Davidson, Alan E. 28
- de Gaulle, Charles 69
- de Lipkowski, Jean 132, 274 n. 11, 285 n. 9
- defence, cooperation 128, 130, 162, 168, 189–190, 210
- Denmark 81, 108, 135, 139, 204, 221
- Denson, John B. 190
- Disraeli, Benjamin 148
- Dobson, Ray 55
- Douglas-Home, Sir Alec 53, 69–71, 87–9, 102, 105–6, 113, 116, 119–124, 128, 135, 162, 170, 178–180, 184, 186, 189, 195, 198, 201, 224, 233
- Driberg, Tom 103
- Eccles, Lord (David McAdam) 147
- Ecevit, Bülent 237
- Economist, the 23, 45, 69, 199
- Economou-Gouras, Paul 24
- EEC 2, 7, 10, 11, 16, 37, 69, 72–3, 94, 108, 127, 132, 138–9, 142, 144, 151–4, 157, 159–161, 163, 165, 167–8, 170–3, 176, 178, 181–3, 186–7, 189, 191–2, 205, 207–8, 211, 215, 218, 224, 232, 242, 245, 253 n. 36, 280 n. 9, 282 n. 58, 285 n. 9, 286 n. 45
- Efessios, Nikolaos 152
- Egypt 10, 24, 79
- Eleftheros Kosmos 109, 123, 218
- Elizabeth II, Queen 22, 161, 177, 186
- EOKA 10
- European Atlantic Action Committee on Greece (EAACG) 108–113, 128, 131, 140–1, 148, 164, 172, 180, 204, 218, 228–230, 236–7

- firms, british 41, 95, 116, 123, 125, 150, 170, 218–9, 232
- Fleming, Amalia 131, 276 n. 3, 277 n. 37
- France 30, 47, 50, 69, 77, 116, 125, 132–3, 144, 150, 159–160, 168, 190, 207, 215, 241, 285 n. 9, 286 n. 45
- Franco, Francisco 100
- Fraser, Hugh 180
- Fraser, John 90–1, 180, 200–1
- frigates 35, 40, 50, 84, 94, 156, 168–9, 187, 190–1, 218–9, 222, 232, 246–7
- Gaddafi, Muammar 62, 79, 266 n. 21
- Gaddis, John Lewis 74
- Garoufalios, Petros 238
- George, King of Greece 184
- Germany, West (FRG) 23, 30–1, 50–1, 53, 72, 111, 125, 132, 138, 150, 168, 194, 207, 221
- Germany, East (GDR) 20, 59
- Gizikis, Phaidon 199, 210, 238
- Goldsmith, Oliver 155
- Goodison, Alan 169, 181, 183, 191, 193–4, 196, 198, 202, 207, 209–211, 223–5, 232, 235
- Greek Civil War 1, 11
- Greek Committee Against Dictatorship (GCAD) 100
- Greene, Hugh 108–111, 120, 140, 148, 167, 217, 228–9, 236–7
- Greenhill, Sir Denis 86–7, 161
- Grivas, Georgios 27, 188, 246
- Hartman, Arthur 227
- Hattersley, Roy 227–9, 237
- Healey, Denis 24–5, 36, 265 n. 2, 289 n. 5
- Heath, Edward 2, 4, 6, 69–72, 75, 85, 90–1, 94, 96, 103–4, 115, 128, 130, 134, 139, 141, 148, 155, 161–3, 173, 179, 192, 194–5, 204, 207, 243–4, 246–8, 266 n. 7, 286 n. 45
- Hill-Norton, Sir Peter 125
- Hodgkinson, Sir William Derek 83
- Hood, Lord (Samuel Hood, 6th Viscount Hood) 28, 37–8
- Hooper, Sir Robin 93, 95–6, 98, 102, 104–6, 112–3, 118–120, 125, 127, 130–3, 135–6, 143, 150, 152, 154, 157–8, 160–3, 165–170, 174–183, 186, 188–190, 193, 195–203, 205–6, 208–211, 214–6, 218, 220–2, 226, 236, 239, 276 n. 11, 287 n. 55
- International Transport Workers' Federation (ITWF) 41
- Ioannidis, Dimitrios 7, 56, 63, 76, 101, 199, 203, 208, 211, 219, 224–7
- Iraq 24
- Israel 24, 79, 160, 233
- Arab-Israeli conflict 2, 20, 80, 227
- Italy 32, 52, 132, 207
- Jeger, Lena 234
- Jenkins, Roy 46, 52, 66
- John Brown Engineering Ltd. 136
- Jones, Air Marshall Gordon 268 n. 70
- Jordan 79
- Judd, Frank 229–230
- Kanellopoulos, Panayotis 12, 17
- Karamanlis, Constantine 9, 12, 27, 54, 177, 213, 238–9, 241, 266 n. 23
- Kefalas, Anthony 174, 185
- Kershaw, Anthony 90
- Kirk, Peter 124–125
- Kissinger, Henry 226–7, 235
- Kollias, Konstantinos 24
- Konstantopoulos, Savvas 109, 123, 218
- Korea, North 20
- Kotronis, Christos 5, 53, 55–8, 66
- Kypraios, Konstantinos 53, 236, 293 n. 108

- Lane, David 180
Lane, Peter 103
League for Democracy in Greece 40,
 131, 172, 180
Libya 25, 32, 59, 62, 79, 266 n. 21
Limerick, Lord (Patrick Edmund Pery,
 6th Earl of Limerick) 129, 144,
 148, 150–4, 157, 169–170, 195
Luns, Joseph 131, 226, 230, 235, 242
- Makarezos, Nikolaos 23, 100, 123, 137,
 152, 163, 193
Makarios, Archbishop 59, 65, 86–8,
 101, 145, 188, 233, 237–8
Malta 118–9, 122
Mangakis, George 138, 141, 161
Marconi 163, 170, 189, 219
Margaritis, Admiral K. 149
Markezinis, Spyridon 4, 7, 77, 99,
 176, 190, 193–200, 208, 211,
 219, 238
Maud, Sir John 103
Mavros, George 109, 217, 238–9
Michalopoulos, C. J. 152–3
Ministry of Defence (MoD) 55, 82, 156,
 191, 209–210
Mintoff, Dom 118, 122
Mitsotakis, Konstantinos 287, n. 55
Modiano, Mario 185
Murray, Sir Ralph 10, 14, 16–7, 19,
 22–3
- Nasser, Gamal Abdel 24, 79
 Nasserites 100
National Guard 27, 233–4
National Radical Union (ERE) 17
National Union of Mineworkers 181
NATO 1–5, 10, 13, 15, 17, 20, 22–8,
 30–1, 34, 36–8, 42–3, 45–52,
 57, 59
Nea Politeia 63, 70, 89, 90, 109
Neave, Airey 180
Netherlands 44, 207
Nigeria 27, 43–4, 260 n. 3, 265 n. 4
- Nixon, Richard 43, 62, 68, 133, 157,
 186
Noel-Baker, Francis 24
Northern Ireland 44, 198, 218, 222
Norway 139
- Olivier, Laurence 161–3, 172
Olver, Stephen John Linley 233–5
Orr-Ewing, Sir Ian 82
- Palamas, Christos 76–8, 80, 85–9,
 91, 98, 109, 119–124, 126–7,
 129–131, 144–5, 149, 196, 238,
 267 n. 41
- Palmer, Andrew 77, 93, 100–2, 119,
 131, 142, 272 n. 29
- Panagoulis, Alexandros 40
- Papadopoulos, Georgios 5–6, 23–4,
 28, 30, 40–1, 54, 59–60, 63–5,
 75–8, 80, 84–5, 91, 93–4, 96,
 98–111, 114, 116–120, 123,
 126–8, 133–4, 137–8, 140–1,
 144, 146–7, 149, 157, 169–177,
 180–1, 184–190, 193–200, 205,
 208, 252 n. 26, 254 n. 45,
 262 n. 49, 264 n. 82, 271 n. 8,
 276 n. 3, 287 n. 55
- Papagos, Alexandros 9, 11
- Papandreu, Andreas 17, 54, 249 n. 10,
 253 n. 30
- Papandreu, Georgios 10–3, 16
- Pappas, Commander Nikolaos 174
- Paraguay 21
- Pattakos, Stylianos 19, 23, 25, 28, 80,
 98, 111–4, 144, 146, 190, 193,
 263 n. 72
- Paul, King of Greece 11
- Peart, Fred 52
- Peru 203
- Pesmazoglou, John 171–4
- Pike, Mervyn 180
- Pipinelis, Panayotis 44, 54, 60,
 63, 65, 72–3, 75–81,
 263 n. 72

- Pompidou, Georges 69
 Portugal 22, 45, 92, 156, 228
 Poseidon, plan 55
 Powell-Jones, John E. 148
 Prendergast, W. Kieran 148
 Public Power Corporation 136–7
- recognition 4, 7, 19–21, 30–3, 58, 146, 148, 178–183, 187, 200–4, 207–8, 233, 241, 245, 247
 referendum 5, 7, 37–8, 41, 176, 185–6
 Rhodesia 27, 39
 Rippon, Geoffrey 91–2, 117
 Rodgers, William 33
 Romania 59, 73
 Royle, Anthony 85, 134, 138–9, 146, 161, 164, 171–4, 200–1
 Rusk, Dean 22
- Sadat, Anwar 79
 Salazar, Antonio 22
 Sampson, Nikos 7, 236
 Scandinavia 33, 44, 58, 84, 93, 102, 126, 135, 157, 215
 Secondé, Sir Reginald L. 89, 112, 117, 119–120
 Shackleton, Edward 35
 Sierra Leone 21
 Six Day War 5, 24, 32, 42, 68
 Snodgrass, John M.O. 82
 Soames, Sir Christopher 181, 232
 Soares, Mario 230
 Sorokos, Ioannis 47–8, 54, 63–4, 71, 80, 89–92, 103, 105, 113, 115, 119–120, 126–7, 137–8, 141, 155, 223
 South Africa 49, 73, 117, 136, 230, 246, 266 n. 15, 276 n. 11
 Southern European Department, FCO 39, 82, 120, 130, 142, 166, 173, 196–7, 202, 209
 Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) see Bases, British
 Soviet Union 2, 5, 9, 20, 25–6, 28, 36–7, 42, 51, 59, 74, 79–8 , 82, 88, 115, 164, 235–6
 Spain 39, 45, 92, 100, 135–6, 156, 230–1, 233
 Spraos, John 230, 235–6
 Standard Telephones and Cables (STC) 189
 Stephanopoulos, Stephanos 10, 13, 238
 Stewart, Michael 13–4, 33–6, 47–8, 51–2, 72–3, 85, 252 n. 21
 Stewart, Sir Michael 25, 27–9, 34, 40, 44, 63–4, 72, 75, 77, 80, 83–4, 91, 93–5, 98–102, 200
 Syria 24, 79
- tanks, sales of 49–50, 86, 115–7, 125, 147, 246
 Tasca, Henry 75, 104
 Tetenes, Spyridon 216, 219, 222, 236
 Theodoropoulos, Byron 99
 Thompson, George 52, 60–1, 72
 Tomkys, W. Roger 166, 173
 trade 3–4, 6–7, 20, 34, 36–7, 41, 46, 51–3, 59, 72, 94, 108, 114, 116, 128–130, 132, 144, 146, 150–3, 157, 159–160, 163–4, 169, 189–191, 195, 211, 221–2, 230–1, 243–4, 246–8
 Tsakonas, Dimitrios 138, 266 n. 21, 287 n. 55
 Turkey 10, 24–5, 27–8, 32, 59, 62, 77, 79, 101, 107, 112, 149, 229, 231, 234, 236–7, 241
 Greek-Turkish dispute 5, 59, 77, 101, 107–8, 225, 229
 Tweedsmuir, Lady (Priscilla Buchan) 164
 Tzounis, John 221, 224
- United Democratic Left (EDA) 11, 263 n. 63
 United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) 53, 95
 United Nations Peacekeeping Force in

- Cyprus (UNFICYP) 235
USA 20, 25, 30–2, 37–8, 48–50, 52,
61–2, 64, 67, 69, 75, 77–80, 95,
103–4, 125, 132, 144, 156, 168,
175, 186, 193, 195–6, 208–9, 216,
219, 226–8, 230, 232, 235–7,
241–3, 247–8, 267 n. 28, 287 n.
65, 288 n. 78, 293 n. 99
Anglo-American 2, 31, 75, 241, 243,
288 n. 78
- Vance, Cyrus 27
Vardinoyannis, Pavlos 17
Varvitsiotis, Ioannis 106
Velos 171, 174, 177
Verykios, Panagiotis A. 25, 28, 33–4,
37, 45, 126
Vietnam 18, 20, 27, 47, 62, 253 n. 36
 North Vietnam 20
visits 3–4, 6–7, 10, 23–5, 39–40,
53, 82–3, 85, 97, 98, 103, 108,
119–121, 124–5, 127–8, 129–133,
135, 137–8, 142–157, 163, 168–
170, 174–5, 184, 189–191, 195,
197, 208, 210, 214, 216, 218–9,
222–4, 232, 237, 240, 244, 246–7
- Vlachos, Angelos 216, 224, 289 n. 14
Vlachos, Helen 45, 260 n. 13, 279 n. 76
Vospers 35
- Whitehead, John S. 184
Wiggin, Charles 131, 142–3, 167–8,
183
- Wilberforce, William Anthony 106,
120
- Wilson, Harold 2–3, 5, 7, 10, 15,
21–2, 25, 27, 30, 33–7, 40, 44,
48–52, 54, 57–8, 62–7, 69, 70,
84, 155, 213–4, 218–9, 223–4,
230, 233, 235, 237–8, 240,
243–4, 246
- Woodhouse, Christopher
 Montague 59, 79, 140, 180, 197
- Yarrows 218–9, 232
- Young Conservative
 Organisation 181
- Yugoslavia 24, 73
- Zigdis, John 109, 217, 222
Zoitakis, Georgios 19, 137
Zolotas, Xenophon 238

