

Chapter 4

The Truman Doctrine and Non-Governmental Aid: Comparisons In Relief Efforts

At the outbreak of the World War II, Britain had guaranteed Greece's borders. Between 1944 and 1946, Britain maintained a strong military, and financial hold on Greece. British troops prevented communist factions from infiltrating the central government in Athens, while the British government financed Greek postwar reconstruction; however, by 1946, Britain's internal financial status prohibited it from providing any relief to Greece. This situation had a devastating effect on Greece. Unable to finance the rebuilding of its own country, or to assist the Greeks, Britain urged the United States to assume the responsibility.¹

Greece had not recovered from the Nazi occupation that destroyed its economy, infrastructure, and productive capacity, before it became embroiled in a civil war in 1946.² The Germans demolished 650 communities, leaving 750 thousand people

¹ Terry H. Anderson, The United States, Great Britain, and The Cold War 1944-1947 (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1981), 160; Also see Ian J. Bickerton, "Foreign Aid," Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy, ed. Alexander DeConde (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978), II: pp. 160 & 373.

² A.A. Fatouros, "Building Formal Structures of Penetration: The United States in Greece, 1947-1948," Greece in the 1940s. A Nation in Crisis, ed. John O. Iatrides (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1981), 257. Also see Louis W. Koenig, (ed.), The Truman Administration: Its Principles and Practices (New York: New York University Press, 1964), 295.

homeless and destitute.³ The total cost of the economic devastation caused by the German occupation was somewhere near \$8.5 million.⁴

In addition, the Greek army faced defeat by a growing number of communist guerilla forces. The Greek government was unable to begin postwar reconstruction or to halt communist guerilla warfare because of political corruption that rendered it useless, a condition of long-standing duration.⁵

One example is that no series of checks and balances existed within the government, resulting in incompetent officials. Civil servants, whose responsibilities included tax collection, law enforcement, and road repair, spent thirty hours per week at their government jobs, and the remaining time "moonlighting." Consequently, their efficiency decreased. Governmental officials were also corrupt, and bribery was rampant. In addition to working two jobs, 140 thousand government, civil service employees collected government pensions in addition to their government salaries. This was far beyond the resources of the country, and forced inflation to rise. Higher up the government ladder, the Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Constantine Tsalidaris, posed another problem in that it could not pass any legislation because King George retained ultimate veto power.⁶

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Amikan Nachmani, "Civil War and Foreign Intervention in Greece: 1946-49," *Journal of Contemporary History*, XXV (SAGE, London, Newbury Park, and New Delhi, 1990), 491.

⁵ *Ibid.* See also: Greek War Relief Association, 7,000,000,000 Greeks Need Clothes (New York, 1946) 3. That the Greek government was rendered useless was a condition of long standing duration in Greece. For example, between 1922 and 1937 nine coup d'etat's were attempted. Furthermore, between 1920-1922 an astounding 48 different governments ruled the country.

⁶ Fatouros, 257. See also, Nachmani, "Civil War and Foreign Intervention," 494.

Another problem was that the northern territory of Salonika, Greece often changed hands after Balkan military disputes, resulting in a mixed population of Bulgars, Turks, and Greeks.⁷ Critics of the Greek government, specifically the communists, contended that the politicians and government administrators were responsible for aggravating the traditional complaint that the central government treated northern Greece as a province. Northern warehouses stayed empty, while the people in Athens consumed everything.⁸ When aid reached this region, it did so via the government run black market causing political dissension in the North. The government took drastic steps to repress political uprisings, which in turn bolstered the appeal of communism in the northern territory.⁹

A final example of the Greek government's corruption was the way in which it handled political threats. Fearing a coup d'etat from political extremists, the Greek regime began arresting, torturing, and murdering political opponents.¹⁰ The Greek government used suppression of supplies against ethnic minorities, and "gangster like" tactics against political enemies. This forced thousands to flee into neighboring Balkan countries including communist run Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria, a situation that would later return to haunt Greece, as it was these political refugees who provided the basis for the communist guerilla activity, which caused the Greek Civil War.¹¹

⁷ Lawrence S. Wittner, American Intervention in Greece, 1943-1949 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 96.

⁸ Nachmani, "Civil War and Foreign Intervention," 494.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Wittner, "American Intervention," 97.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 96.

Communist intervention from Yugoslavia, and to a smaller extent Bulgaria, furthered the cause of the dominant communist organization, the National Liberation Party (EAM), by helping them establish control in the northern provinces.¹² By late 1944, the EAM controlled large portions of Greece, especially the poorer regions. The Greek government asked Britain, long-time financial and military supplier, to step up its relief effort.¹³

On February 21, 1947, a British official handed Under-Secretary of State Dean Acheson a note stating Britain's intention of liquidating all commitments in Greece.¹⁴ The correspondence requested that the United States government provide financial assistance to Greece in an effort to prevent starvation and political disruption. The British estimated Greece's immediate foreign exchange needs between \$240 million to \$280 million, in addition to substantial sums over several years.¹⁵ In addition, it mentioned the strategic importance of keeping Greece from Soviet domination. Britain set its date for final withdrawal as March 31, 1947.¹⁶

Unbeknownst to the British, the Truman administration was developing a plan by which large amounts of financial aid would be appropriated by Congress to Greece, in an attempt to prevent Communist Yugoslavia from extending its borders into Greece.¹⁷

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Fatouros, "Building Formal Structures," 257.

¹⁴ Walter LaFeber, "The Truman Doctrine," Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy: Studies of the Principle Movements and Ideas, (ed.) Alexander DeConde (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978), III, 98. Dean Acheson received two notes from British officials. One concerned the Greek situation. The second note informed the U.S. that Britain intended to withdraw from Turkey as well. The Truman Doctrine provided financial relief to both countries, but since this paper deals specifically with Greece, the situation in Turkey is not mentioned.

¹⁵ Dean Acheson, Present at The Creation (New York: Norton, 1969), 217.

¹⁶ Anderson, "The United States," 160.

¹⁷ LaFeber, 982.

Before receiving news of the British withdrawal, United States personnel in Greece reported that the collapse of the Greek government was imminent due to increased communist guerilla activity, and the Greek government's inability to handle the crisis. All signs pointed to a likely takeover by the communists.¹⁸

On February 24, 1947, Secretary of State George Marshall met with President Truman, top military advisors, and cabinet members to devise a strategy to obtain the needed funding for Greece.¹⁹ The group decided they would ask Congress for monetary relief assistance, while transferring American stockpiled weapons to Greece to help the government fight the communists. According to historian Walter LaFeber, "Such a request could be made quietly, buried among the financial measures sent by the president to Congress."²⁰ The government required immediate financial relief to Greece in the event Congress passed the proposal after the British deadline of March 31, 1947. The administration accomplished this by enacting an emergency provision for Greece that allowed President Truman to grant \$100 million to Greece from the Reconstruction and Finance Corporation.

The United States needed a formal request from the Greek government asking for assistance. On February 23, 1947, the Greek Charge d' Affaires presented a draft document, written by United States State Department Personnel, requesting assistance

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 169.

²⁰ LaFeber, "The Truman Doctrine," 982.

from the United States. This document led Congress to believe that Greece, rather than Britain or the State Department, had requested help.²¹

Marshall called for an open and frank meeting with a bipartisan delegation of Congress. On February 27, 1947, top members of Congress met with Marshall, Truman, and Under-Secretary of State Dean Acheson.²² Acheson began by summarizing the British note and concluded his statements by describing the turmoil in Greece. He informed the Congressmen that he believed the Soviets intended to infiltrate Greece in order to conquer the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Africa. The fall of Greece meant danger to all democratic countries, and by defending Greece, the United States was defending the world.²³ Marshall continued the meeting by describing the communist threat from Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania. He argued that if these nations escalated Greek political problems into a full-scale civil war, and if Greece fell under Soviet domination, Europe and the Middle East would be left unprotected against communist infiltration.²⁴ Marshall believed that the United States had to save Greece to show America's commitment to stopping communism.²⁵ President Truman also noted that the United States was the only country powerful enough to stop communists. Fearing a possible Soviet expansion, the group decided to support the Truman initiative.²⁶

²¹ Howard Jones, "A New Kind of War": America's Global Strategy and the Truman Doctrine in Greece (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 38 & 47. See also LaFeber, "The Truman Doctrine," 982.

²² *Ibid.* See also: Arthur Vandenberg Jr. (ed.), The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg (New York: Houghton Mifflin), 338.

²³ Anderson, "The United States," pp. 169-170. See also LaFeber, "The Truman Doctrine," 982.

²⁴ Arthur Vandenberg Jr. (ed.), The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg (New York: Houghton Mifflin), 338.

²⁵ Jones, *A New Kind of War*, 39.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

The Truman administration argued amongst itself over how to present the proposed aid to Greece. Acheson wanted simple ideological statements that Americans easily understood. He feared congressional disapproval if the President emphasized monetary issues.²⁷ Speech, writers and administration officials urged "a grave and frank statesmanlike appeal to the American people," focusing on freedom versus totalitarianism while minimizing the monetary costs of the proposal. In addition, public relations man Frank Russell suggested that the administration look beyond Greece and refer to the new policy as providing assistance to all free governments.²⁸

The new policy received the name Foreign Policy Initiative 30, and was developed by the State Department with help from Dean Acheson. It conveyed the philosophies of the Truman administration concerning communism. Foreign Policy Initiative 30 stated that the administration must convince Americans that the conflict between communism and freedom began in Greece with the outbreak of the Greek Civil War. According to this initiative, the United States was the defender of freedom, and wanted a world where people determined their own way of life, and thus would not tolerate a communist take over if any country.²⁹

Truman waited three weeks after receiving the British note before addressing a special joint session of Congress. He chose March 12, 1947 because the date coincided with Marshall's trip to Moscow.³⁰ President Truman's speech revealed that America's

²⁷ LaFeber, *The Truman Doctrine*, 993. See also Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 22.

²⁸ Jones, *A New Kind of War*, 39.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

³⁰ Vandenberg, *The Private Papers*, 341. See also Koenig, *The Truman Administration*, pp. 295-296; Marshall to inform Russian officials that the United States assumed good faith existed between the two. The United States would stand against Russian aggression.

new enemy was communism.. He asked Congress for the largest relief program in American history: \$750 million, along with stationing United States military personnel in Greece, thus directly involving the United States in European politics.³¹

Truman's speech contained only two sentences regarding the United Nations. The administration added these at the last minute in order to secure public support.³² Originally, policy makers considered the United Nations irrelevant, citing ineffective United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) relief distribution, a charter that disallowed loans or grants, and the United Nations lack of funds and military reserves. In addition, international influences also prompted the Truman administration to bypass the United Nations. A British spokesman advised United States policy makers against requesting United Nations intervention because Britain believed that the United Nations lacked the ability to provide immediate help. He added, "...such a move would convey a slight to other nations in trouble."³³ The Greeks, as well, felt the United Nations possessed poor talent, and neither the experience nor the politics designed to conduct a difficult project, and therefore preferred United States governmental relief. A puzzling request since the United Nations Relief and rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) delivered all of the relief supplies from the Orlando Plan, and it assisted the GWRA in its efforts.³⁴

It seems that the main reason for the Truman administration's desire to omit the United Nations is because, as presidential advisor George M. Elsey noted, the Soviet

³¹ LaFeber, "The Truman Doctrine," 980. See also Anderson, *The United States*, 178. Of the \$750 million \$350 million was allocated to Greece.

³² Wittner, "American Intervention," pp. 87-88.

³³ Jones, "A New Kind of War," 51.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

Union possessed veto power in the Security Council. Ironically, after noting all of the reasons why the United Nations was ineffective, Acheson referred to specific guidelines in the United Nations Charter that supported the new policy. First, the Charter allowed individual nations to seize the initiative in affairs of other countries. Secondly, Article 33 of the Charter requested countries in international disputes to exhaust all possible resources before requesting United Nations assistance.³⁵

Nonetheless, the American public and Congress demanded that the Truman Doctrine contain an amendment incorporating a specific United Nations policy. Senator Vandenberg headed a committee that drafted a bill allowing the United Nations a final say in American relief to Greece. It allowed either the Security Council or the General Assembly to terminate American relief whenever either deemed the relief undesirable or unnecessary. In addition, America agreed to end its relief efforts if the United Nations became powerful enough to assist Greece.³⁶

On May 8, 1947, the Truman Doctrine became law.³⁷ It established new precedents for American foreign policy, and called for the use of American money and materials to stop an internal communist threat to a free nation. The Truman Doctrine aimed at economic rehabilitation through financial aid, grants, and loans administered by

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 95 & 52.

³⁶ *Ibid.* See also Wittner, *American Intervention*, 91, and Lewis W. Koenig (ed.), *The Truman Administration. Its Principles and Practices*. (New York: New York University Press, 1964), 302.

³⁷ LaFeber, "The Truman Doctrine," 984. The Senate passed the bill on 2 April 1947 with a vote of 67 to 23. The House of Representatives passed the bill on 8 May 1947 with a vote of 287 to 107.

American personnel. The goal of the funding was to make Greece a self-supporting and democratic nation.³⁷

While the wording of the Truman Doctrine allowed the United States to assist any free nation in fighting communism, it specifically assisted Greece in attacking government corruption and internal government chaos. To combat corruption, the Doctrine provided for centralized control over the program by United States personnel stationed in Greece. One person oversaw all expenditures and reported directly to President Truman.³⁸ To establish internal organization, the administration developed a bureaucratic system with eight hundred staff personnel divided into eight civilian sub-missions headquartered in Athens. Each sub-mission assisted a certain area of the Greek government. In addition, America dispatched 250 advisors to work in the ministries of the Greek government.³⁹

Lastly, the Doctrine designated as its chief concern the reconstruction of the Greek Army.⁴⁰ Truman realized that the connection between the Greek economy and the military meant the probability of military aid surpassing economic aid. However, the Doctrine stated that no part of the monies used for military purposes could be in the form of a loan.⁴¹ The only option remained in providing Greece with a grant. Consequently, of the total \$350 million allocated to Greece by the Truman Doctrine, the Greek Army received nearly \$150 million in the form of munitions, food, and clothing. The United

³⁷ "First U.S. Talks On Plan To Help Greece," *The Times* (London) March 13, 1947, 4. See also

Nachmani, "Civil War," 500.

³⁸ Jones, "New Kind of War," 48.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Nachmani, "Civil War," 500.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* See also Jones, "New Kind of War," 39.

States also provided 100 military advisors, and 900 American soldiers to assist the 150,000 Greek troops.⁴²

The Truman doctrine also allotted \$65 million to the repair and rebuilding of railroads, a major communications and transportation system used in Greece. Another \$35 million went to the rehabilitation of roads and wharves. Along with this funding, American engineers went to Greece to oversee and supervise these projects. In addition, the Department of Agriculture sent experts to help Greek farmers use modern farm equipment. Fiscal experts from the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the Treasury and the Budget Bureau helped the Greek government develop a modern tax system, establish import and export controls, and develop a new budgetary system.⁴³

At the time, the entire political spectrum of Greece liked the Truman Doctrine. Greek right-wing politicians celebrated, the political center voiced satisfaction, and the liberals believed the United States would help them to control Greece. Oddly enough, even though the Doctrine was designed to crush them, the communist EAM supported the Doctrine, but disliked the concept of American military involvement. It preferred United Nations intervention, possibly because the Soviet Union had a voice in the Security Council.⁴⁴

The Truman Doctrine is where we see the differences in relief. On the one hand, private charities provide relief for humanitarian reasons alone. However, they do have limited funds and limited resources to transport and deliver relief supplies. On the other

⁴² Jones, "A New Kind of War," 48. See also Koenig, *The Truman Administration*, 302.

⁴³ "Guidance, Not Dole, For Greece," *The National Week* (March 28, 1947), 15.

⁴⁴ Wittner, "American Intervention," 83.

hand, governments have deeper pockets and an almost unlimited array of resources at its disposal to transport and deliver relief supplies. The Truman Doctrine provided, at the time, the largest amount of financial aid given to any country- \$350 million. The disadvantage with government assistance is that government relief is usually provided with stipulations, as is seen with the Truman Doctrine.

How non-governmental relief affected citizens of Greece is unclear. For example, in the village of Volos, Greece, no written records remain of assistance provided by the United States. An earthquake in 1954 destroyed much of the town, including the Volos newspaper. In addition, for Greeks, their feelings about this entire era, the German occupation, civil war and the Truman Doctrine, is highly emotional, and controversial. Consequently, it is very difficult to find out any information regarding this period.⁴⁵ However, Greece was clearly united on its feelings for the Doctrine.

Greeks approved of the Truman Doctrine because it provided monetary support, amounting to \$350 million, compared to non-governmental aid, which totaled only \$36 million.⁴⁶ This was a major factor in Greece's postwar economic reconstruction. Also, United States reorganization and assistance to the Greek armed forces is credited with preventing a communist takeover during the Greek Civil War.

What Greeks did not like was that the Doctrine established a long-term dependency on the United States. It took six years (1947-1953) before Greece's economy was stabilized, but even so the United States still provided monetary support.

⁴⁵ The author was told by several Greek family members that the subject of the German occupation, and the Greek Civil War were off limits. The author did learn from her family in Volos that her great aunt Phophe died as a direct result of the turmoil of the 1940s. The author was asked to never mention the subject again.

⁴⁶ "Guidance, Not Dole, For Greece," The National Week (March 28, 1947), 14.

In addition, many Greeks felt that the Truman Doctrine was primarily developed in order to stop Soviet expansion, with helping Greece as only an afterthought.⁴⁷ This situation deteriorated in the 1970s with the crisis in Cyprus.

In 1974 Turkey invaded Cyprus, and began a twenty-year occupation of the island. Greeks felt that greater pressure from the United States would have prevented this crisis. They believed that Turkey would have withdrawn its troops from the island, and at the least would have ensured better treatment of Greeks caught in the Turkish-occupied zone. The United States did stop supplying weapons to Turkey, however, the damage between the United States and Greece was done, and would not be resolved for almost twenty years.

An example of Greece's animosity for the United States occurred in 1986 when Secretary of State William Christopher visited Athens. A group of students destroyed a statue of U.S. President Harry S. Truman prior to Christopher's arrival, and the Athens city council refused to have it replaced.⁴⁸ It was not until 1990, when the United States reduced the number of its military facilities in Greece, that the two countries reached a resolution. For Greeks, this signaled that their country was again a sovereign nation. More importantly, however, this agreement changed the way Greeks perceived the United States. America was no longer the superpower that had assisted Greece as a policy instrument against the Soviet Union, but was a defender of Greece's interests.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Lcweb2.loc.gov.goGreece.com. Between 1947 and 1977 the United States provided \$5 billion in aid to Greece.

⁴⁸ Wittner, 292.

⁴⁹ Lcweb2.loc.gov

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Since no historians have written on the topic of non-governmental relief to Greece, this thesis has opened new areas for historical research from both the United States and Greek viewpoints. This includes the development of non-governmental organizations, comparisons to the Truman Doctrine, and examinations of the effects of non-governmental relief efforts on the Greek people. Within the scope of United States history, this paper has uncovered new areas of historical study concerning the development of the specific non-governmental organizations. Since these efforts were not recorded or recognized, those people involved in these groups are relegated, at best, to historical footnotes. This work has brought to light these groups and individuals to the forefront, and provides an excellent example of how non-governmental groups can work in tandem with communities to assist beleaguered third-world countries. It serves as a reminder that this type of relief effort has been successfully going on for a long time.

Concerning Modern Greek history, it was not until May 1999, at Kings College in London, England, that Modern Greek historians gathered to discuss the effects of German occupation, the Greek Civil War, and the Truman Doctrine on Greece. What this conference did not discuss were the effects of United States non-governmental aid on Greece. The information presented in this work is crucial to Modern Greek historians as it offers a wider viewpoint by establishing the contributions made by American non-governmental relief to Greece. With more historical research into these non-governmental organizations, and how they assisted Greece with "no strings attached," we

can open further lines of communication between Greece and the United States, as well as establish better relations between the two countries.

We should not overlook the historical value of the history of the common man. What this paper demonstrates is that even though governmental policies, in this case the Truman Doctrine, receive all the historical limelight, theirs is not the only history. Thousands of American citizens worked, without recognition or reward, to insure that Greek lives were saved during a terrible decade. This work identifies, and to some extent personifies, those individuals whose names and efforts have all but been forgotten. The historical significance of this paper is that it provides historians another tool by which to explore the overall success, and long-term effects of the Truman Doctrine in Greece.

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