

Cyprus 1974

Greek Coup and Turkish Invasion

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Makarios Drousiotis

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Introduction

The Greco-Turkish ‘Para-State’ and Cyprus (1947 – 1970)

At the beginning of 1947, civil war was raging in Greece between government forces supported by the British and those of the Democratic Army controlled by the Greek Communist Party (*Kommounistikon Komma Ellados* – KKE). Britain was facing serious economic difficulties, and her role as the leading power in the Balkans and the Middle East was being put to the test. In an effort to maintain her influence in Greece and to bring the war with the communists to a close, Britain, together with the Greek government, turned to the United States for economic assistance. America seized the opportunity to penetrate Greece economically, politically and militarily – but also Turkey, whose regime Britain was likewise unable to prop up – and to take on a dominant role in the region.

On 12 March 1947, American President Harry Truman promulgated in Congress the Truman doctrine, a programme of economic aid to Greece and Turkey amounting to \$400 million. “It is necessary only to glance at a map to realise that the survival and integrity of the Greek nation are of grave importance in a much wider situation. If Greece should fall under the control of an armed minority, the effect upon its neighbour, Turkey, would be immediate and serious. Confusion and disorder might well spread throughout the entire Middle East”,¹ President Truman told Congress, heralding the onset of the Cold War.

On 20 June, the governments of Greece and the United States signed a cooperation protocol that determined the method of payment and the use of the American aid, according to which general responsibility for its management was assigned to the American Mission for Aid to Greece (AMAG). The first head of AMAG was Dwight Griswold, who arrived in Greece on 14 July and was endowed with powers equivalent to those of a colonial governor. Indicative of the control exerted by the AMAG over the Greek government is an extract from one of its memoranda, dated 17 November 1947: “We have established practical control...over national budget, taxation, currency issuance, price and wage policies, and state economic planning, as well as over imports and exports, the issuance of foreign exchange and the direction of military reconstruction and relief expenditures.”²

The greatest portion of American aid to Greece concerned the complete re-organisation of the country’s armed forces. The Greek army acquired bombers, airports, naval vessels and communications systems. Docks, railway lines, roads and bridges were built. Infantry units became more mobile, with greater quantities of ammunition. By the end of 1947, the Greek army relied exclusively on American assistance, even for its food and clothing.³ At the end of the year, however, a separate American mission was set up, the Joint U.S. Military Advisory and Planning Group, Greece – JUSMAPG – which took away from the Greek generals the responsibility for drawing up the battle plans against the guerrillas of the Democratic Army. With all this military power and under the guidance of American officers, the government forces eventually won the war against the Democratic Army. The Civil War ended in the summer of 1949, leaving in its wake 154,000 dead and wounded. Tens of thousands of members of the Democratic Army went into exile in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Of those who stayed behind, many were executed while the others

¹ Speech by US President Harry Truman to Congress, 12 March 1947. *The Avalon Project at Yale Law School, Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy*, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/trudoc.htm>.

² William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1995), p. 38.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

suffered relentlessly persecution through banishment, imprisonment, torture and displacement to arid islands.

Based on the experience it had gained through its intervention in Greece, the US at the end of the 1940s set up a network of semi-legal paramilitary organisations in Europe, within the framework of a defence plan against the ‘communist threat’. The mission of these organisations was to continue the fight against the communists in the eventuality of any country being occupied by the Soviet Union – and for this reason, the network of organisations was named ‘Stay Behind’. Each national organisation had a different name. In Italy it was the Gladio, in Belgium SDRA-8, in France Rose des Vets, in Holland P-26, in Greece it was called Sheepskin, in Switzerland Schwert, in Britain the Secret British Network and in Turkey Special Warfare Department.⁴ A body named Super NATO, based in the Alliance’s headquarters in Brussels, coordinated the work of the organisations.⁵

Members of the network, mainly fascists and fanatical anti-communists, were recruited, to their mission to prevent the rise of the left to power anywhere in Western Europe, and to impose the domination of the United States through psychological warfare and terrorism. The US National Security Council had ordered that operations of psychological warfare be designed to be “deniable”, meaning, “planned and executed (so) that any US government responsibility for them is not evident to unauthorised persons and that if uncovered, the US government can positively disclaim any responsibility.”⁶

In its decision 10/2 of 1 September 1948, the National Security Council assigned the responsibility for psychological warfare operations to the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC),⁷ which was the covert action arm of the CIA. As Marcus Ruskin, member of the National Security Council staff, wrote to Senator George McGovern, “we were involved in assassinations, assassination attempts. We were operating paramilitary operations with mercenary forces hired in other people’s countries with no knowledge on the part of our own Congress, our press or the American people.”⁸ And, referring to the methods employed by the United States, Christopher Simpson, one of the most authoritative researchers on post-war American policy, wrote: “The role of the United States in world affairs during our lifetime has often been rapacious, destructive, tolerant of genocide and willing to sacrifice countless people.”⁹

The members of the organisations in the Stay Behind network were trained using special manuals written by American specialists in guerrilla warfare. One such handbook, which was used by the Turkish organisation, mentions the following operational methods: “Assassinations, bombings, armed robbery, torture, attacks, kidnap, threats, provocation,

militia training, hostage-taking, arson, sabotage, propaganda, disinformation, violence and extortion.”¹⁰

The existence of the Stay Behind network was revealed for the first time in 1976, in a Senate report on the CIA, prepared by Frank Church,¹¹ without, however, revealing the extent of its operations. Only in 1990, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, was the existence of the Italian Gladio (Latin for ‘sword’) organisation disclosed. It emerged that Gladio had cooperated with the Mafia and the neo fascists, its mission being to prevent the Italian communists from taking power, either through revolution or legitimate elections. Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, in his testimony before a parliamentary committee on 2 August 1990, acknowledged the existence of Gladio and admitted that Italy employed “a strategy of tension” to undercut the influence of the legal communist party.¹² The Gladio revelations were among the causes of the acute political crisis that rocked Italy in the early 1990s. Disclosures followed concerning the operations of sister organisations in other European countries. Although each organisation of the Stay Behind network had its individual name, they all came to be called Gladio because the Italian organisation was the only one about which so much evidence was disclosed.¹³

By the end of the 1940s, the Americans had imposed their complete suzerainty over Greece, displacing all the props that the British had established in the country by 1947. The Joint U.S. Military Aid Group, Greece (JUSMAG Greece), which had succeeded AMAG, employed 5,000 people, many of whom were agents of the CIA.¹⁴ The local CIA station in Greece was founded in 1949 by the agency’s Tom Karamesinis, a Greek American and former cadre in the OSS,¹⁵ and was housed in the Army Fund’s premises, together with the American Military Mission.

Part of CIA operations was the organisation, guidance and funding of the local Stay Behind organisation *Provia* (Sheepskin). Some sources refer to it as ‘Red Sheepskin’. The *Provia* organisation was dependent on the Sacred League of Greek Officers (*Jeros Desmos Ellinon Axiomatikon* - IDEA), which had been founded with the assistance of the OSS immediately after the liberation, with the aim of rehabilitating those officers who had collaborated with the Germans during the occupation.¹⁶ Among the cadres of the IDEA was the subsequent dictator George Papadopoulos, who had served in the Security Regiments in Patra.¹⁷ After the liberation, the members of the Security Regiments were absorbed into National Defence Regiments (*Tagmata Ethnikis Aminis* - TEA), which were established by

⁴ Ertugrul Kurku, “Turkey. Trapped in a Web of Covert Killers” *Covert Action Quarterly*, 61 (Washington: Summer 1967). Desmond Fernandes and Iskender Ozden, “United States and NATO Inspired ‘Psychological Warfare Operations’ against the ‘Kurdish Communist Threat’ in Turkey” *Variant*, 12 (Glasgow: Spring 2001).

⁵ Fernandes and Osden, *art. cit.*

⁶ Lucy Komisar, “Turkey’s Terrorists: a CIA Legacy Lives on” *The Progressive* (Madison, Wisconsin: April 1997).

⁷ For the activities of Gladio in Italy, see “Operation Gladio, Statewatch”, <http://users.westnet.gr/~cgian/gladio.htm>.

⁸ Philip Agee, “Ο ‘νέος αμερικανικός παράγοντας’ και η ‘συγκαλυμμένη δραστηριότητα’ της CIA στην Ελλάδα” [The ‘New American Factor’ and the ‘Hidden Activities’ of the CIA in Greece] in *Anti* (Athens: May 1997).

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ The first IDEA leader Georgios Karayannis writes about it in his book *1940-1952: Το δράμα της Ελλάδας, έποι και αθλιότητες* (1940-1952: The tragedy of Greece, epics and wretchedness). The book was withdrawn shortly after publication with the author’s consent. It has been republished in its entirety as part of the series *The Junta Trials*, published by Democratic Times, p. 1547.

¹¹ Demetris Paralikas, *Ι.Δ.Ε.Α. και Α.Σ.Π.Ι.Δ.Α. (ρίζες και πλοκάμια)*, 1944-1974 [I.D.E.A. and A.S.P.I.D.A. (Origins and Spread), 1944-1974] (Athens, 1978), p. 56.

the Greek government and used in operations against communists throughout the civil war. IDEA played a leading role in the founding of the National Defence Regiments,¹⁸ as did the 'X'¹⁹ organisation, whose leader was the Cypriot Lieutenant Colonel, George Grivas. It was during this period that IDEA member George Papadopoulos made the acquaintance of Grivas.²⁰

According to Christopher Simpson, secret Pentagon papers now in the United States National Archive show that the US pumped millions of dollars into the IDEA, aiming at the creation of a 'Secret Army Reserve' made up of selected Greek military, policemen and anti-communist militia officers. With this aim, sufficient money, arms and supplies were shipped to Greece to equip a fighting force of 15,000 men as part of this programme alone.²¹

The German magazine *Der Spiegel* wrote in November 1990 that in Greece there were over 800 hiding places containing weapons, wirelesses and other equipment – in caves, in the cellars of public buildings, in covered wells, even under remote country churches. *Der Spiegel* mentions that one of the officers of the secret services that knew the men serving in the secret army of IDEA and their duties was Colonel George Papadopoulos. The IDEA army was enlisted in the *Provia* organisation of the Stay Behind network. In 1955, an agreement was signed for cooperation between the network and the Mountain Commando Regiments (*Lochoi Orinon Katadromon* - LOK). The CIA, together with the Special Forces Command of the Pentagon, had taken on the training of the commando officers and supplied them with tents, special lorries and fighting equipment.²² The LOK had a mission to participate in guerrilla warfare operations in the mountains of Greece in the event of a Soviet invasion and occupation, together with the National Defence Regiments. The *Provia* organisation was behind the many operations of Greek paramilitaries during the fifties and sixties, which culminated in the coups of 21 April 1967 in Greece and 15 July 1974 in Cyprus.

Just as in Greece, the United States used financial aid to create an infrastructure to control political developments in Turkey. The same legislation that created the American Mission of Aid for Greece in 1947 also created the American Mission for Aid to Turkey – AMAT. At the end of 1949, the Joint American Military Mission for Aid to Turkey – JAMMAT – was established, through which the armed forces, the police and the country's secret services were organised. By the end of 1950, Turkey had received \$200 million in economic assistance, while 1,200 American military advisers had arrived in the country. From 1950 until 1979, the USA officially granted Turkey military aid amounting to \$5.8 billion.²³ Turkey joined NATO with Greece on 4 April 1952. That same year, the local organisation of the Stay Behind network was founded. The name of the organisation was the Tactical Mobilisation Group (*Seferberlik Tetkik Kurulu* – STK). In 1965, the STK changed its name to the Special Warfare Department (*Ozel Harp Dairesi* - OHD). It was

organised and funded by the CIA and had its administrative centre in the same building as that of JAMMAT.²⁴

Just as elsewhere in Europe, the existence of the organisation was kept secret from Turkey's political leadership. Until 1990, Turkey categorically denied it had an organisation equivalent to the Italian Gladio. Only when a former CIA chief, William Colby, revealed its existence, did the authorities admit it. On 3 December 1990, General Dogan Beyazit, President of the Operations Department of the General Staff, and General Kemal Yilmaz, commander of the Special Forces, revealed that the title of the special department of the Stay Behind network in Turkey was the Special Warfare Department and that its task was "to organise resistance in the case of a communist occupation".²⁵

Bulent Ecevit admitted in an interview to researcher Lucy Komisar that he had learned of the existence of the Special Warfare Department in 1974. He was Prime Minister at the time, and a request was submitted to him from the Chief of the General Staff, Semih Santzar, to pay from the prime minister's secret fund for the erection of new buildings for the organisation. Santzar told him that the Americans had funded the Special Warfare Department from the start, but now they were allegedly pulling out. From another military source, Ecevit was informed that the members of the organisation were lifelong "volunteer patriots", whose names were kept secret.²⁶

The "volunteer patriots" were none other than the Grey Wolves, a paramilitary organisation established in the sixties. They formed the militant arm of the Nationalist Action Party, which was founded by Colonel Alparslan Turkes, of Cypriot extraction, who during the Second World War had been the leader of the Pan-Turkish movement that backed Hitler in exchange for financial support from Berlin. They had hoped the victory of the Nazis would enable Turkey to annex those regions of the Soviet Union with Turkic populations.²⁷

Imitating Nazi practices, the CIA used Pan-Turkish organisations to foment anti-Soviet feelings among Muslim minorities in the Soviet Union. Despite the fact that the Pan-Turks were just as anti-Western as they were anti-Soviet, the CIA's strategy strengthened the ties of the American agencies with Turkish ultra-nationalists.²⁸

The Grey Wolves are held responsible for bombings and the murder of hundreds of people in Turkey, including civil servants, journalists, students, leftist trade unionists and Kurds.²⁹ They played a significant part in three coups in Turkey – on 27 May 1967, on 12 March 1971 and on 12 September 1980.

After 1974, the Turkish Gladio created a base in occupied Cyprus. The organisation laundered money that it received for its activities through banks and casinos in the occupied territories. The Grey Wolves murdered a journalist, Kutlu Adali,³⁰ who had attempted to investigate the activity of the Turkish Gladio in occupied Cyprus.

The relations of the Special Warfare Department with Turkish para-governmental entities and the Grey Wolves were revealed after a car accident on 3 May 1996 near the village of Susurluk, 100 miles southwest of Istanbul. The accident killed a top police official, Husseyin Kocadag, and Abdullah Catli, a criminal wanted for drug trafficking and

¹⁸ Christopher Simpson, *Blowback: America's Recruitment of Nazis and its Effects on the Cold War* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1988), p.81. Paralikas, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

¹⁹ 'X' was a monarchist organisation set up in 1943 with the help of British members serving in the Allies' Military Mission to act as a counter balance to the KKE-controlled ELAM/ELAS.

²⁰ Biographical note on Papadopoulos, <http://www.geocities.com/Pentagon/Base/4343/>

²¹ Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

²² Alexis Papahelas, *Ο βιασμός της ελληνικής δημοκρατίας - Ο αμερικανικός παράγοντας, 1947-1967* [The Rape of Greek Democracy – the American Factor, 1947-1967] (Athens: Estia, 1997), p.25.

²³ Fernandes and Osden, *art. cit.*

²⁴ Celik, *art. cit.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Komisar, *art. cit.*

²⁷ Fernandes and Osden, *art. cit.*

²⁸ "The War against the People: the Contra-Guerrilla. Turkey's 'Cointelpro' Scandal", *ANTIFA Info-Bulletin*, translated from *Kurtulus* weekly, <http://www.ozgurluk.org/contrind/brochu/part1.html>.

²⁹ Martin A. Lee, "Turkish Dirty War revealed, but Papal Shooting still Obscured", *Los Angeles Times*, April 12, 1998.

³⁰ "Cyprus, from Occupation to Annexation?", *Kurtulus*, 1 August, 1998.

murder. Catli had been imprisoned in France and Switzerland for drug trafficking in 1980, but escaped in 1990 and fled to Turkey, where he undertook to fight Kurdish separatists on behalf of the Turkish state.

After the accident, it was revealed that Catli was under the protection of Interior Minister Mehmet Agar, who was forced to resign. He had links with the secret police, who offered him protection and supplied him with diplomatic passports and other documents, which he used in his activities as a drug trafficker or to organise criminal activities at the expense of members of the Turkish opposition.

One of Catli's associates, Mehmet Ali Agca, had been jailed for the murder of journalist Abdi Ipekci on 1 February 1979. Catli helped him escape from prison, and supplied him with forged identities and travel documents. On 13 May 1981, Agca shot and nearly killed the Pope in St. Peter's Square in the Vatican³¹.

The CIA set up a whole propaganda machine and fed public opinion with false evidence that Agca was a secret agent of the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, who had trained him to assassinate the Pope.³² On 24 May 2002, the Bulgarian president's office announced that Pope John Paul II, in a conversation with President Parvanov, had stated that he had never believed that Bulgaria was involved. With this announcement, which is considered to have been made with the assent of the Pope, Bulgaria has been absolved from the false charge.³³ As Lucy Komisar writes, the attempt on the Pope's life was probably the result of cooperation between the Italian Gladio and the Grey Wolves, to create tension and prevent the rise to power of the left.³⁴

When in 1947 Britain had invited the United States to contribute economically so she could maintain her presence in Greece and Turkey, she had not been disposed to cede her dominance to the rising superpower. Britain's intention was to secure help from the United States, without losing influence in the two countries. Very soon, however, America displaced Britain, and after her successful intervention in Greece and Turkey, imposed her power across Europe through the Marshall Plan.

Britain nevertheless retained much of the Middle East under its influence, and worked hard to maintain its decisive role in the region. As a British colony, Cyprus was a key bulwark in the Eastern Mediterranean. The population of the island was about half a million, of which 80 per cent were Greeks and 18 per cent Turks. Most were farmers and workers in mines exploited by foreign companies. The only organised political force was the communist party AKEL (*Anorthotikon Komma Ergazomenou Laou*), which controlled the trade unions and was the mouthpiece for about half of the population, Greeks and Turks.

In its effort to curb the 'Communist Peril', the British Colonial government in the late 1940s helped in the reorganisation of the Church and in bolstering right-wing trade unions.³⁵ However, in the early 1950s, the Church proclaimed a struggle for the union of Cyprus with Greece (*Enosis*), and began to pose a problem for Britain. It was then that the right in Cyprus acquired a political and religious leader, Archbishop Makarios III.

³¹ Kurkcu, *art. cit.* Lee, *art. cit.*

³² Komisar, *art. cit.*

³³ "Πάπας: 'Δεν είχε ανάμειξη η Βουλγαρία στην απόπειρα εναντίον μου'" [The Pope: Bulgaria was not Involved in the Attempt on my Life], *Eleftherotypia*, 25 May, 2002.

³⁴ Komisar, *art. cit.*

³⁵ Xenophon Kallis, "Η Αγγλία και οι δύο μητέρες πατρίδες" [Britain and the two motherlands], *Eleftherotypia*, 13 July 2000.

Charismatic and ambitious, Makarios made self-determination for Cyprus his life's ambition, and undertook an international campaign to promote the demand for *Enosis*, which had been a centuries-long passion for the majority of Greek Cypriots.

Ignoring the harsh realities of international politics and unaware of the rivalries of the Cold War, Makarios believed *Enosis* could be promoted through the United Nations, pressuring Greece to raise the Cyprus issue at the UN. Greece, which was then in the process of joining NATO, was not willing to come into conflict with Britain over Cyprus. Making use of the great attraction that the demand for *Enosis* had for the Greek public, and of the warm support he enjoyed from the Archbishop of Athens, Spyridon, Makarios pressured the Greek government through speeches, rallies and other means of raising popular support.

In contrast to Britain, the United States looked on the Cypriot demand for *Enosis* with sympathy, supporting the principle of self-determination for British colonies after the Second World War in order to further their own interests. In the midst of the Anglo-American rivalry for dominance of the Middle East, a decision was reached to organise an armed struggle for *Enosis* in Cyprus. Two Cypriot exiles in Greece played a leading role in implementing this goal, the brothers Savvas and Socrates Loizides, who had close ties with the Church and contacts in the Greek establishment. The Loizides brothers brought Makarios into contact with the former Army Minister during the Civil War, Georgios Stratos, who in turn proposed the former leader of the 'X' Organisation, Georgios Grivas, as the military leader of the movement.³⁶

Those in Greece behind the initiative for an armed struggle in Cyprus, which led to the formation of the National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters (*Ethniki Organosi Kyprion Agoniston* - EOKA), stemmed from the nationalist right and from the Church, and had initially worked together with the British and later the Americans in the war against the communists. Most of these were cadres in, or dependent on, the Greek para-state:

- Georgios Stratos, Army Minister from January to November 1948 at a time when the army in Greece was under the complete control of JUSMAG Greece.
- Nicolas Papadopoulos (Grandfather), "freshly crowned with the laurels of a national victory over the leftists rebels," according to Savvas Loizides.³⁷
- Dimitrios Bezanis, associate of Grivas in the 'X' Organisation, head of counter espionage.³⁸
- Gerasimos Konidaris, cadre of 'X'.
- Ilias Alexopoulos, veteran Colonel in the intelligence department of 'X'.
- Antonis Avgikos, extreme right wing lawyer, friend of Georgios Stratos.
- Zafiris Balbis, political advisor to Grivas in the 'X' Organisation.
- Michalis and Constantinos Efstatopoulos, in charge of ideological guidance in 'X'. From 1943 they were in contact with Force 133, a special British intelligence agency.³⁹
- Georgos Gazouleas, member of 'X'.
- Cosmas Mastrokolas, one of Grivas' closest associates in 'X'. Twenty years later he played a leading part in the founding of EOKA B.

³⁶ Savvas Loizides, *Άποκη Κύπρος* [Unlucky Cyprus] (Athens: Bergadis Publications, 1980), p. 97. Interview with Socratis Loizides in Papademetris, Panayiotis, Petros Petrides, *Ιστορική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια της Κύπρου, 1878-1978* [Historical Encyclopaedia of Cyprus, 1878-1978], vol. 10, pp. 363-366.

³⁷ Loizides, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

³⁸ Charles Foley and W.I. Scobie, *The Struggle for Cyprus* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1975), p. 15.

³⁹ Ο άγνωστος πόλεμος της X [X's Hidden War], p. 22.