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Keeping Hope Alive:
The Greek Situation and the Development of the Truman Doctrine

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Abstract

After World War II the United States abandoned its isolationist policy and started involving themselves more in world affairs. The Truman Doctrine- written specifically to deal with the Greek Civil War- later became the unofficial foreign policy of the United States during the Cold War. The Doctrine came at the at a time when the United States began to The Doctrine went through many different changes before President Truman's joint address to the House and the Senate. These changes would dictate what American foreign policy would become and would influence the paths of many different countries, starting with Greece.

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Timeline

1770: Considered the beginning of the modern Greek nation

November 1918: Formation of the Greek Communist Party, the KKE¹

1941-1944: Greece occupied by Nazis

1944: Greek Civil War begins

March 12, 1947- Truman addresses Congress asking for aid for both Greece and Turkey

1949- Greek Civil War ends

¹ The party was originally known as the Socialist Labor Party of Greece. In 1924 the name was changed to the Kommounistikon Komma Ellados (KKE)
Edgar O'Ballance, *The Greek Civil War 1944- 1949* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., Publishers, 1966), 29

Abbreviations

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet Union)

EAM: National Liberation Movement (Ethnikon Apelevtherotikon Metopon)

ELAS: National Popular Liberation Army (Ethnikos Laikos Apelevtherotikos Stratos)

PEEA: Political Committee of Liberation (Politiki Epitropi Ethnikis Apelevtheroseos)

KKE: Communist Party of Greece (Kommounistikan Komma Ellados)

EDES: National Republican Greek League (Ethnikos Dimokratikos Ellinikos Syndesmos)

DSE: Democratic Army of Greece

AM: American Mission

AMAG: American Mission for Aid to Greece

“The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died. We must keep that hope alive.” - Harry S. Truman²

Introduction

Back when World War II was just ending, Nazis were still considered evil and Communists were a rising threat. The world may have been focused on the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Cuba, but Greece was also facing a similar struggle. The Greek Civil War is the almost-forgotten Communist battle. After the Second World War the world was still recovering, Greece included. Not only was Greece recovering from the effects of being occupied by Nazi Germany, but they were still undergoing a civil war that started in 1944 and would ultimately last until 1949. The civil war of this small country would eventually shape American foreign policy through 1991.

During World War II the Allies worked hand in hand with the Communists of the Soviet Union to stop Hitler and the Nazis from advancing and wreaking more terror upon the world and its people. After the war ended this all changed. The Soviets occupied any land where their army had stopped. Germany was partitioned off. The city of Berlin was even divided among the four “winners.” Tensions were already high between the Allies, specifically the United States and the Soviet Union. This dated back to the non-aggression pact signed between the two. Greece would bring all of those tensions to the forefront.

² Address of the President to Congress, Recommending Assistance to Greece and Turkey, March 12, 1947; Truman Doctrine, Truman Library, 5

Russia had had an interest in Greece stretching back to the seventeenth century when Catherine the Great attempted to raise a rebellion within Greece against the neighboring Ottoman Empire in order to distract the Turks.³ Russia eventually helped Greece receive its independence from the Ottoman Empire but their influence faded away until the 1920s until the Greek communist party began to gain support.

After World War II, Greek communists tried to overthrow the dictatorial government already in place, yet it did not make as much news as the Berlin crisis. Up until 1936 Greece was a monarchy, when King George II of Greece was persuaded to dissolve the National assembly and give the Prime Minister dictatorial powers.⁴ Greece was one of the few places where the battle against Communism was successful. Greece played as big a role in the battle against Communism as any other recovering country. Greece was destroyed after the German occupation during World War II; the occupation left the country in ruins. The restored government was left without a patron after Britain withdrew because the British government could not financially support the country. This is the story of the reconstruction of a desolate country after the war, the ensuing civil war and the response of the United States.

Before being occupied by Germany, Greece was attacked and briefly occupied by Italy. Italian forces attacked Greece in October 1940 without consent from Hitler. Mussolini had hoped to surprise Hitler with a surprise victory. Greece was not surprised and managed to hold on for a while, but soon it became obvious that the Greek army was out armed. They did not have the necessary anti-tank guns, armored vehicles or modern guns to fight against the superior Italian

³O'Ballance 25.

⁴The Prime Minister was General Metaxas, the former Chief of Staff of the Greek Army O'Ballance 29.

forces.⁵ It was at that point that Metaxas began arresting all known communists and those suspected of having communist sympathies within the country. Greek forces managed to stave off Italian forces until a failed offensive in February 1941. The Greek government then had no choice but to accept British assistance if they wished to remain a free country.

Greece was occupied by German forces between the years of 1941-1944. Since April 27, 1941 Athens, Piraeus, Thrace, Western Macedonia, Crete and other major islands in the Aegean Sea had been controlled by Germany. When German forces finally began leaving Greece in 1944, they left behind a destroyed country. It is estimated that over 2,000 villages were destroyed or decimated and around 1.5 million people were left homeless. Not only was the countryside destroyed, but the economy was in ruins. Currency was worthless because of high inflation, factories were dismantled or destroyed and communication systems were down. When the new government came into power, it faced stripped farms and the public wanting retribution for traitors and collaborators who worked with the Germans. The countryside was in the hands of guerrillas or other small bands and police were unable to retake the countryside because police forces were either nonexistent or had worked with collaborators, so they had no public authority and were untrusted by the people.⁶ These guerrilla forces were generally small, mobile components of the communist Greek forces although there were small pockets of fascist resistance from when Italy occupied the country. The small supporting British force that was in Greece was confined to cities and ports. Even the national forces were useless in retaking the country because they were still displaced outside the country. The government had to do something.

⁵ O'Ballance, 39

⁶ O'Ballance, 71

New Prime Minister George Papandreou thought he had the solution. In a speech made on May 17, 1944, he denounced the National Liberation Movement and the National Popular Liberation Army (EAM/ELAS), therefore denouncing the groups behind them, the Political Committee of Liberation (PEEA) and the Communist Party of Greece (KKE). He then formed the Government of National Unity on May 24, 1944. After the formation of the Government of National Unity, Papandreou undertook the reconstitution of the national armed forces and promised to purge the police and establish a new National Guard in its stead. The ELAS was unhappy with their lack of power, so on December 5, 1944 they attacked Athens and Piraeus. The ELAS in Athens attacked police and government buildings. In Piraeus, they attacked and captured the British-Greek Naval headquarters, Navy House.⁷ The Greek communists had begun to gain power.

The KKE was founded in November 1918 on the theories of Marxism and Leninism. Their primary goal was to “set the revolutionary transformation of Greek society through the elimination of capitalism and the building of socialism and communism.”⁸ In the 1920’s they joined COMINTERN and began following party lines from Moscow. They formed the ELAS which fronted as their military arm and began a resistance movement against the German occupiers in 1941 and quickly strengthened their tactical position. But by 1944 their political position had weakened. When the Caeserta Agreement was signed on September 26, 1944 the forces of the National Republican Greek League (EDES) and ELAS was put under the control of

⁷ Major Jeffrey. C. Kotora, “The Greek Civil War, 1943–1949.” Quantico: Marine Corps Development and Education Command. (War since 1945 Seminar and Symposium April 26, 1985), <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1985/KJC.htm> (accessed November 30, 2012).

⁸ Communist Party of Greece, “Communist Party of Greece- Brief History,” Communist Party of Greece. <http://inter.kke.gr/about/history/briefhistory/> (accessed December 6, 2012).

British General R. M. Scobie. When German forces finally left Greece in November 1944 the KKE thought that they would have a greater share of power. When that didn't happen the ELAS attacked Athens and Piraeus. When the ELAS finally left the Athens suburbs they took with them over 2,000 hostages. From there they marched to the snowy mountains where many died of exposure and the stragglers were shot. A British investigative committee later found 8,752 lightly buried corpses in Attica and Peloponnesus. The people of Greece were so outraged, support for the KKE fell.⁹

Later on the Varkiza Agreement was negotiated and the ELAS was completely demobilized. Another condition of the Varkiza Agreement was a general election which took place on March 31, 1946. The KKE decided to refrain from the elections, instead urging people not to vote. Voter turnout for elections was 60 percent and the observers estimated that only 9.4 percent of those who didn't vote were for political reasons. In the first elections since the mid-1930's the pro-royalist Populist Party won the majority of seats in the new Parliament.¹⁰

The KKE retaliated by establishing another army, the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE). By the end of 1946 the strength of the guerrillas were approaching 10,000 men. For training the guerrillas were sent to the Yugoslav and were instructed by Yugoslav and Albanian instructors in marksmanship, mortars and demolitions. By the end of the next year the KKE had grown confident in its ability to take over Greece. On December 24, 1947 they announced from their radio station in Albania the names of new ministers of the government and a ten point program for the conduction of affairs in Greece. It is interesting to note that when the KKE

⁹ Kitora

¹⁰ Kitora

announced their government, not one foreign nation recognized it including the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).¹¹

During that same time tensions had been brewing between Tito, the leader of Communist Yugoslav and the USSR. The KKE had been receiving most of its external support from Tito and very little from the USSR. On July 10, 1949 Tito announced in a speech that he was closing the borders with Greece. He claimed numerous border violations and killing of Yugoslavs as reasons when Tito actually cut of relations because the KKE supported Stalin. This quickly led to the loss of support for the KKE and lead to its eventual downfall in the war.

The Truman Doctrine originated from a speech given by President Truman to a joint session of Congress on March 12, 1947. The Doctrine was not aimed specifically at a singular event. Instead the Doctrine was developed and revised as events progressed in Greece.

In the Doctrine the President established the United States foreign policy post- World War II. The Doctrine stated that the United States would provide political, military and economic assistance to areas under threat from external or internal authoritarian forces that were also within their strategic interests.¹² That is not all that the Truman Doctrine did, though. After the Greek Civil War ended in 1949, the Cold War had already begun. The Truman Doctrine was reshaped to impact all of American foreign policymaking until the end of the Cold War with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. It reorganized a policy of isolation into a policy of intervention outside of the western hemisphere, - a policy that continues to impact politics today. The Truman

¹¹ Kotora

¹²It was NSC 68 that broadened this definition to include nations that had little bearing on the United States national security
“Milestones- 1945-1952- The Truman Doctrine,” Office of the Historian,
<http://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/TrumanDoctrine> (accessed September 21, 2012).

Doctrine ended the avoidance of foreign commitments during times of peace. The Truman Doctrine now committed the United States to offer assistance in preserving democracy in countries around the world, even if it was limited to interventions found to be in the best interests of the United States.

This paper will argue that the Truman Doctrine was actively shaped and developed by the events in Greece during the time of the Greek Civil War from 1944 through President Truman's speech to Congress in March 1947. It will look specifically at particular details of how a policy developed for an isolated conflict ended up having such an impact on major policy decisions later down the line.

Historiography

The first book written on the Greek Civil War was written less than twenty years after the war ended. *The Greek Civil War 1944-1947* written by Edgar O'Ballance in 1966 is the main source that scholars refer to when writing or talking about the Greek Civil War. He asked two questions: what made it possible for the communists to rise to power and why did they fail? O'Ballance looked primarily at how communism spread through Greece through three different grabs for power starting in the early 1940s and ending with the final attempt between 1946 and 1947. He looked into the factors that led the Communists to gain power and what factors contributed to them falling from power in 1949. O'Ballance looked specifically at the different tactics used by the Communists during their three attempts to take power in 1943, 1944 and 1946. He used many military texts as his sources, primarily military texts from the United States, either published by the government or written by military staff, although he did look at some military documents that were provided by the U.S. government. O'Ballance also offered a

‘blueprint’ that Communists seemed to follow based upon what he drew from the events in Greece and from his comparison as to what happened in China with Mao Tse-tung.¹³ He was concerned with finding a way to defeat the Communists because in 1966 when the book was written, the United States was in the Middle of the Cold War with the USSR. O’Ballance also devoted a chapter to dealing with American aid to Greece, briefly stating that with the enactment of the Truman Doctrine, the United States took on much of the responsibility for helping Greece, but did not explain what the Truman Doctrine was and how it came about¹⁴. He also dealt with the interference from Communist Yugoslavia.

Authors have examined the change in U.S. global policy that started with the Greek Civil War. *A New Kind of War* by Howard Jones studied how the change in American policy towards Greece was the starting point of a new global strategy to fight totalitarianism, or as it is defined today, communism.¹⁵ He also claimed that Greece was part of a larger picture at the time which he concluded by looking at the relations that Greece had with the Soviet Union around the same time. Jones addressed something that many other authors did not, the simultaneously occurring civil war in Turkey.

G. M. Alexander did not provide the American viewpoint that most other books do. He instead looked at British policy regarding Greece before, during and after the civil war as a prelude to the Truman Doctrine.¹⁶ He looked primarily at the British Foreign Office papers on which to base his perceptions on British viewpoint on the events in Greece and the policy

¹³ O’Ballance 17-18.

Mao Tse-tung also known as Mao Zedong.

¹⁴ O’Ballance 141.

¹⁵ Howard Jones. *"A New Kind of War"* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989)

¹⁶ G.M. Alexander, *The Prelude to the Truman Doctrine*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982)

making that would come out of it. He stated that this is only based upon how the British appraised the civil war in Greece and not upon any papers from the Greek State because they were being restricted until 1995.¹⁷ Instead he uses memoirs available from Greece.

There have also been historians that have looked at how the wording of the Truman Doctrine foreshadowed the future policy for the duration of the Cold War. Merrill's article "The Truman Doctrine: Containing Communism and Modernity" looks specifically at how the wording of the Truman Doctrine and the speech made in March 1947 left the door open to become more than just a declaration of aid to Greece and Turkey during their civil wars.¹⁸ He tracked how the Doctrine evolved to become the United States Cold War policy. He also discussed modernism and the effect that had when looking back at the Truman Doctrine. As Merrill's article was published more recently, it is freer of bias than other secondary sources published during the Cold War. Other sources published during the Cold War overall saw communism as bad and the United States as the protector of democracy.

As noted previously, there was also a shift between Cold War attitudes and attitudes of the post-Cold War era in these sources. During the Cold War authors mainly supported the Truman Doctrine because it was actively opposing not only the spread of communism but also communism itself. When sources from both the Cold War period and after it ended are put together along with sources from the Greek Civil War this paper will put together a complete picture of the Greek Civil War and how the Truman Doctrine was developed and changed to deal with the growing Soviet threat.

¹⁷ Alexander, vi

¹⁸ Dennis Merrill, "The Truman Doctrine: Containing Communism and Modernity." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (March 2006): 27-37. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27552744> (accessed October 8, 2012).

The Drafts

There were seven drafts written leading up to Truman's joint address of Congress. In each there was the refining of the idea that it was the United States' duty to step and assist in helping countries to remain democratic. The drafts also ranged from barely mentioning Greece at all to focusing the entire message on both it and Turkey. The early drafts also changed the dates that the British government informed the United States government about the fact that they could no longer support Greece and Turkey. According to the first draft the British informed the United States of this in the end of February, yet all subsequent drafts state that the date occurred in the first week of March. The United States were also told that they needed to respond quickly by Britain or else everything would be over and destroyed for Greece because of the rebels.

The first draft was written on February 25, 1947. In the draft it highlighted "aggressive totalitarianism" and how it was the United States responsibility for "safeguarding the security of the United States further struggle and self-sacrifice" for democracy in the world.¹⁹ The writer refrained from mentioning any hint of any other country until the eighth page of the draft, using instead the broad word of country/countries. This showed the possible extension of the isolated policy into standard foreign policy especially when draft went on to say "the loss by some of these countries of their independence at this time threaten to set off a chain of events the consequences of which are still unfathomable."²⁰ The United States was at this time clearly looking further than just the situation in Greece and Turkey. The draft also states that not only is

¹⁹ Meeting Notes, ca. 1947; DOS; Truman Doctrine, Truman Library. 1-2

²⁰ Meeting Notes, 6

it our duty to help, but it is also our natural instinct to help extend a helping hand to the reconstruction of these countries.²¹

The second draft, written March 3, completely reshuffled the organization of the previous draft. Instead of hiding the Greek situation in the middle and end of the speech it instead brings the issue to the forefront so there is no avoiding it. This draft also summed up the entire situation by clearly explaining that this situation did not come out of nowhere- instead it was the result of a “culminating development in along historical process, and it is as wide as the world.”²² This draft also stressed the polarity of the two different powers, likening it back to the time of Athens and Sparta when there last was this great divide of economic and military strength between two different states.²³ The March 3rd draft also placed the burden squarely on the shoulders of the United States, claiming that if that if there were any forms of government or principles that were wished to survive, that it was up to them, the United States, to see that it would survive.²⁴ The British also played a reduced role within the draft. They are credited with attempting to help Greece, but because they were dealing with devastation in their own country they had been “weakened” so that they were no longer ready for this “historic task” like the United States was.²⁵

The March 4th draft was an important because it was the first one written after the United States was officially informed that the British would be pulling out of Greece. It was also mentioned for the first time that not only were the British asking for aid in Greece, but that

²¹ Meeting Notes, 3

²² Draft suggestions for President's Message to Congress on Greek Situation, March 3, 1947; Truman Doctrine, Truman Library, 1-2

²³ Draft suggestions for President's Message to Congress on Greek Situation, March 3, 1947, 3

²⁴ Draft suggestions for President's Message to Congress on Greek Situation, March 3, 1947, 3

²⁵ Draft suggestions for President's Message to Congress on Greek Situation, March 3, 1947, 2

Greece itself was asking for “financial, economic and expert assistance” from the United States.²⁶ It is very important to note that the government in place at the time, through the Greek Minister situated in Washington, asked for aid from the United States. The Greek government recognized that if they were ever to be successful in restoring the country to a democracy, they must continue to have outside assistance. The United States was one of the only powers that could have assisted Greece because they were not suffering the damage from the war like many other countries. This was also the first time that a draft mentioned communism. Not only did the March 4th draft mention communism, but it also classified it along the lines of other Fascist and Nazi movements.²⁷ World War II had just ended. Every person in the world knew the atrocities that had been committed by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. To be classified as an “aggressive movement” along with Fascists and Nazis gave the American public something to compare the new term of communism.²⁸ The United States once again played up the polarity of the two different governments and the life their citizens led:

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the imposition of the will of the minority upon the majority, upon control by a minority of the press and other means of communication, and upon terror and oppression.²⁹

When one compares the two different ways of life, who would choose one marked with terror and oppression? By comparing the two in the draft it is clear to the reader that there really is only one right way of life and that is the first one.

²⁶ Draft, President's Message to Congress on Greek Situation, March 4, 1947; Truman Doctrine, Truman Library, 1

²⁷ Draft, President's Message to Congress on Greek Situation, March 4, 1947, 3

²⁸ Draft, President's Message to Congress on Greek Situation, March 4, 1947, 3

²⁹ Draft, President's Message to Congress on Greek Situation, March 4, 1947, 4

The March 7th draft contained many of the same sentiments echoed in previous drafts. It reiterated that this originated from a “desperate appeal” by both the British and Greek governments and that there was no one else Greece could turn to.³⁰ Not only were the events in Greece important, but if Greece fell to communism, the effects would span out through the West and East. Because of this “it must be the policy of the United States to give support to free people who are attempting to resist subjugation by armed minorities or outside forces” because the “imposition of totalitarian regimes on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, saps the very foundations of international peace and the security of the United States.”³¹

The March 9th draft clarified that the Greek government was not innocent in the whole situation. The fact that the United States offered aid did not mean that “this Government condones everything that the Greek Government has done or will do.”³² This was an important distinction that was made by the United States because it cleared the United States from some of the blame should the Greek government mishandle or misuse the funds earmarked for their recovery or make other horrible decisions. Despite attempting to avert some of the potential blame the United States also vowed to supervise all expenditures made by Greece after the relief money was attained.³³ This draft also marked a shift away from the use of the word “communist,” shifting instead towards the word totalitarian, meaning that the government sought to control every aspect of the life for their population.

³⁰ Draft, "President's Message to Congress on the Greek Situation", March 7, 1947; Truman Doctrine, Truman Library, 1, 11

³¹ Draft, "President's Message to Congress on the Greek Situation", March 7, 1947, 6, 4-5

³² Draft of President's Message to Congress in regard to Greece, March 9, 1947; Truman Doctrine, Truman Library, 7

³³ Draft of President's Message to Congress in regard to Greece, March 9, 1947, 8

The United States also looked to the future in this draft because “it is only common sense that the nation should safeguard its investment and make sure that its sacrifices shall not have been in vain.”³⁴ This was one of the first mentions of United States looking past the conflict and extending the Doctrine to handle other situations. It also brought up the fact that the United States had both something to gain or lose from the situation. If Greece fell it opened the door for other countries to fall under communist regimes. If Greece retained its democracy, it meant that communism could be defeated and the United States could claim the moral high ground of saying that the better system of the people prevailed.

The March 11th draft put the communist activists on the same level as terrorists like seen in the previous draft.³⁵ Clearly they were not wanted in Greece except by a very small minority and they defied every government order. This draft did underscore that the United States was taking a risk in sending aid to Greece and that it was not to be taken lightly. If this draft was used Truman would have said that “this is a serious course upon which we embark. I would not recommend it except that the alternative is much more serious” but that the United States “shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes.”³⁶ In this draft it had been noted that not only did Greece ask the United States for aid, but they also asked for assistance in effectively utilizing the financial and other aid that was to be given to them. Here again it was mentioned how very important it was that “we,” the United States, supervise any funds that were to be given to Greece so that it could

³⁴ Draft of President's Message to Congress in regard to Greece, March 9, 1947, 7

³⁵ There was an additional draft dated March 10, 1947 that was very similar to the March 9th draft. It incorporated many of the changes marked on the March 9th Draft. Similar sentiments were seen in the March 11th draft

³⁶ Draft of speech, March 11, 1947; Truman Doctrine, Truman Library,

be assured that every penny was spent making Greece more self-supportive and build a better economy in which democracy can thrive.³⁷

The Speech

During World War II Greece was dependent on Great Britain, but after the war Britain was unable to support Greece the way it could before. In the Truman Doctrine, the United States agreed to take on the burden of supporting and rebuilding Greece. The United States considered it imperative to keep Greece from falling into Communist hands fearing that it would begin a spiral of events of Communist takeovers. The objectives of the U.S. in post war Greece were to:

1. To maintain a relatively freehand (unencumbered by substantive host government restrictions) in the operation of U.S. and NATO bases and facilities in Greece and to deny the Soviet Union the opportunity of establishing bases and facilities in the same area.

2. To maintain unrestricted military transit and over flight rights over Greek territory and sea space for American and NATO forces while denying similar opportunities to Warsaw Pact countries.

3. To develop and maintain a favorable trade and investment climate in Greece for U.S. economic interests.³⁸

In Truman's speech to a joint session of the Senate and the House of Representatives on March 12, 1947 he successfully scared Congress and the American public into believing that war was inevitable. The public did not want to face another war like World War II. Although the United States had no action on American soil beside the December 7 attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese, the public had seen pictures and videos of the devastation in Europe and they did not want their country to look like that in the future. If by getting involved in Greece meant that

³⁷ Draft of speech, March 11, 1947, 4-5

³⁸ Theodore A. Coulombis, *The United States, Greece and Turkey* (New York: Praeger Publishing, 1983), 53

it prevented a larger war, the American people were willing to risk that. It also places the burden squarely on the United States by saying that “if we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world- and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own Nation.”³⁹ According to this idea, if the United States did not act and Greece fell, other countries across Europe would be next and it would continue until there were not any democratic countries left.

The President also addressed totalitarian regimes that are behind the Greek Civil War. By doing this he sets up American foreign policy for the foreseeable future. When Truman used the term “totalitarian” he meant communism. This can be seen in Truman’s address to Congress when he spoke of how different people of the world had totalitarian regimes forced upon them, citing the countries of Poland, Romania and Bulgaria as evidence. These countries were all under active Soviet control.⁴⁰ Not only was this an active step to contain the spread of communism as advocated by diplomat George Kennan, but it also marked the onset on the Cold War.⁴¹ Kennan advised that “gauged against [the] western world as a whole, Soviets are still by far the weaker force. Thus, their success will really depend on [the] degree of cohesion, firmness and vigor which [the] western world can muster. And this is [a] factor which it is within our power to influence.”⁴² Kennan also notes that while the Soviet Union was impervious to the logic of reason” it was also “highly sensitive to the logic of force.”⁴³ Kennan was also the source for *The Sources of Soviet Conduct*. Written before the Truman Speech, it was first used as a private

³⁹ Address of the President to Congress, Recommending Assistance to Greece and Turkey, March 12, 1947; Truman Doctrine, Truman Library, 5.

⁴⁰ Address of the President to Congress, Recommending Assistance to Greece and Turkey, 4

⁴¹ George Kennan was an American advisor, diplomat and historian. He was the United States Ambassador to the Soviet Union for 5 months in 1952. He spent much time in the Soviet Union in the 1940s as the deputy head of the U.S. mission in Moscow until 1946. He was considered one of the foremost professions studying the Soviet Union. For more information see *Memoirs, 1925–1950* by George F. Kennan

⁴² Telegram, George Kennan to George Marshall ["Long Telegram"], February 22, 1946. Harry S. Truman Administration File, Elsey Papers; Truman Library. 15 ½

⁴³ “Long Telegram” 15

report to the Secretary of Defense James Forrestal.⁴⁴ It was published in July 1947 under the pseudonym “X” in the journal *Foreign Affairs*. The article was not meant to be taken as the government’s official view of the Soviet situation, yet when Kennan was revealed as the author the connection to the official policy was made and was questioned by other high-ranking government officials as to why it was published.⁴⁵

Public Reception

Newspapers that covered the President’s speech the next day confirmed fears that war was potentially looming. The theory of “quarantining” communism to Greece and Turkey gained widespread approval, but if it failed, the threat of war scared the population.⁴⁶

Internationally the plan was received cautiously and it was agreed that the United States had embarked on “a new and bold foreign policy that might speed a showdown with Russia.”⁴⁷ Great Britain was amazed that the United States was proposing to send American troops to Greece, whereas Britain had just been financially supporting the Greek government. They also saw the speech as a direct challenge to Russia and wondered how it would be received there. Certain portions of Greece were incredibly happy with Truman’s speech, obviously though the Greek Communists were not in support of it. China also agreed that the new foreign policy would apply to the Far East as well as Europe and thought that its implementation would

⁴⁴ George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925–1950* (Boston: Little Brown, 1967), 354–356.

⁴⁵ Kennan, 355

⁴⁶ United Press. "Truman Plan Gets Cautious Reactions." *Wisconsin State Journal (Madison)*, March 13, 1947, Afternoon edition. <http://access.newspaperarchive.com.proxy.uwec.edu/Viewer.aspx?img=100054794> (accessed October 10, 2012).

⁴⁷ Wisconsin State Journal

improve their chances of receiving a five hundred million dollars export- import loan from the United States.⁴⁸

The Division of Press Intelligence within the U.S. government also compiled a report on the reaction of the press and the reception by the American people based upon editorials. They state that the reaction throughout is exceedingly favorable. This can be said even though almost all of the editorials looked at between March 13 to March 18 recognize the risk and the possible failure of the proposed measures.⁴⁹ At the time only about a dozen papers out of the 225 surveyed opposed “meddling” outside of the United States borders. These papers included the New York Daily Worker, New York PM, Chicago Tribune and Washington Times-Herald.⁵⁰

The trend continued in a section report filed by the Division of Press Intelligence concerning editorial support between the dates of March 18 to March 20. There were some papers, notably the Detroit Free Press, which joined the opposition against the proposal. There was also a drop in support for the President’s plan to completely bypass the United Nations on the proposed plan- it fell from four to one in favor to two to one in favor as the week passed after the speech.⁵¹ The public also believed in what Truman warned about in his address to Congress- Russian reception to this policy would not be well-received, and there was a possibility of it escalating into an all-out war, especially if the United States failed to contain the spread of communism beyond Grecian borders.⁵²

⁴⁸ Chinese agreement was prior to converting to Communism

⁴⁹ “Editorial Reaction to Current Issues”, Greek Situation, Parts I and II, March 19, 1947; Truman Doctrine, Truman Library.

⁵⁰ “Editorial Reaction To Current Issues” pt. 1

⁵¹ “Editorial Reaction To Current Issues” pt. 1 and 2

⁵² “Editorial Reaction To Current Issues” pt. 2; Recommendation for Assistance to Greece and Turkey

Even Congress was divided on how to receive the speech. Editorials published on the positions taken by Congress between March 18 and March 20 was found to almost always be in support of the President.⁵³ Chairman Arthur H. Vandenberg of the senate foreign relations committee spearheaded the Republican support for the President's message. Vandenberg was one of the President's most ardent supporters who said that now was the time to say what we meant and to back it up. It was important not to fail the president at such a critical hour- the United States either must take or surrender their leadership within the world.⁵⁴ Speaker of the House Joseph W. Martin and House Majority Leader Charles H. Halleck were both examples of Congressmen who refused to commit themselves to either side initially after the speech. Martin wanted the President's request to be carefully processed because it did place a large burden squarely on the American people and raised many new problems reaching into the future on where American foreign policy would stand. Halleck was of similar mind, insisting that the American people were entitled to know all that would be involved with taking the step to send aid to Greece. This was not just a decision to be made by congress, but also by every taxpayer. Senator Robert A. Taft (R-O.) also refused to take a stand without being more informed about the situation. He was one of the only members of congress to state that he did not want war with the URRS. Whether the United States intervention in Greece made that war with the USSR more probable or not was dependent upon many different circumstances that still needed to be factored into Congress's final decision.⁵⁵

⁵³ Editorial Reaction To Current Issues pt. 2

⁵⁴ Lyle C Wilson,. "'Quarantine' Chances Good." *Wisconsin State Journal (Madison)*, March 13, 1947, Afternoon edition. <http://access.newspaperarchive.com.proxy.uwec.edu/Viewer.aspx?img=100054794> (accessed October 10, 2012).

⁵⁵ Wilson

Epilogue

In the Truman Doctrine \$300 million was given in aid to Greece to be used in specified ways.⁵⁶ \$150 million was to be used to provide Greek forces with arms, equipment clothing, and rations. \$20 million was for agricultural rehabilitation and the final \$130 million was for industrial and economic reconstruction. In aid the United States also gave over \$71 million in military equipment, including 75,000 weapons, 7,000 tons of ammunition, 7,800 trucks and vehicles and a large number of aircraft. Along with providing money to equip the army, the American Mission (AM) fed and clothed 329,000 men of the Greek forces. There were also 165 officers and 196 enlisted men in the AM to support and train new member of the forces. They trained over 4,000 officers and soldiers from Greece along with 50 Air Force cadets.⁵⁷ Even before World War II, the Greek Army had been woefully undertrained and underequipped which is how they were so easily occupied by the Nazis during World War II. The Greek communists took advantage of this by using guerrilla tactics to pick off the small, undersupplied army.

When the United States arrived in Greece the situation was still horrible. 580,000 tons of supplies were brought into Greece by the end May 1948 including 449,000 tons of foodstuff, 86,000 tons of coal, 35,000 tons of agricultural supplies and equipment, 8,000 tons of iron and steel, 2,600 tons of medical and sanitation supplies and 100 tons in other needed supplies. The U.S. supplied around 260,000 tons in other supplies. They also sent \$22.4 million in wheat, 5.4 in wheat flour, 0.4 in Soya flower, 0.8 in fish, 0.3 in macaroni, 1.8 in dried beans, 4.5 in evaporated milk 1.5 in dry skim milk, 0.1 in DDT (pesticide), and 0.3 in additional medical

⁵⁶ Worth \$2,980,142,618 in 2011

⁵⁷ Kotora

supplies.⁵⁸ The AM also contributed an additional \$2 million for the replacement and the rebuilding of houses to house the over 600,000 people displaced by the war. By June 1948, over 7,600 rooms had been constructed to house over 7,000 families, substantially cutting down on the housing crisis.⁵⁹ The goal of the United States was to root out the causes that they identified as the roots of communism by providing enough money to feed the people and supplying them with enough guns and other weapons so that they could defend themselves. By feeding the people and giving them other basic necessities, it limited the likelihood that the people would turn to a form of government where that would be provided for them. It also made them happier with the current government so they were less likely to oppose the government. By giving the Greek people guns they were better able to defend themselves against the communist guerrillas. It was hard for the Greek army to reach small villages because the country was still in ruins. By distributing guns and ammunition throughout the country, the United States was able to ensure that the people could fight back in these remote areas.

Ultimately communism in Greece failed and the aid given to Greece through the Truman Doctrine was the first instance where the United States broke from their isolationist state policy to give aid to another country outside of a world war. This event would be the new definition of foreign policy for the United States. This new foreign policy would have a huge impact on the future of the United States and many other countries around the world. The United States was finally taking active steps to protect and uphold its interests around the world and this would have huge implications, especially in the coming Cold War. The United States showed that they would not stand for the spread of communism and would take active steps to contain and eliminate it in areas of strategic interest. Because of the Truman Doctrine the United States

⁵⁸ Figures are in millions of dollars

⁵⁹ Kotora

embraced their power to effect change in other countries. None of this would have been possible without the small country of Greece and their devastating civil war.

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