

SOTIRIS RIZAS

## UNITED STATES, GREECE AND ANTI-AMERICANISM

James Edward Miller, *The United States and the Making of Modern Greece. History and Power, 1950-1974*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill 2009, xvi+302

Ioannis Stefanidis, *Stirring the Greek Nation. Political Culture, Irredentism and Anti-Americanism in Post-War Greece, 1945-1967*, Ashgate, London 2007, pp. xvi+300

Greek-American relations and especially the impact of the US on Greek politics and policies from 1947 to 1974 had been a topic extensively debated in the press and bibliography. Politically two schools of thought were prevalent in the mid 1970s: One attributing considerable, even dominating, influence in US policy choices towards Greece and its opposite, pointing to internal developments in Greece as the only source of decisions and developments. Understandably American presence was felt to bear enormous capacity in contrast to the limited resources and capabilities of the Greek state. Asymmetry of power relations and history, the Truman doctrine and the proved ability of the US to influence the course and the outcome of the Civil War, gave credit to the first school of thought.<sup>1</sup> The second school of thought was an attempt to absolve the US and Kissinger in particular of responsibility over the Cyprus crisis and Washington's cooperation with the junta. As the former Secretary of State maintained, the US pursued exclusively its national interest. They did not in anyway attempted or had an interest supporting, in imposing or undermining a dictatorship, to sup-

1. The most representative work is Yannis Roubatis, *Tangled Webs. The United States in Greece 1947-1967*, Pella, New York 1987.





port or overthrowing Makarios. Internal political developments in Greece and ethnic conflict in Cyprus bore the sole responsibility for unpleasant outcomes.<sup>2</sup> Highly politicized and heated this debate, it profited during the last decade from a steady flow of monographs in Greek and English based on released archival sources. Every aspect of the relationship is now under study: Its security dimension, US aid policy, the projection of US military power through various bases and facilities, Greece's inclusion in US grand and military strategy, American stance towards Cyprus and Washington's influence in Greek politics.<sup>3</sup>

Two new books were added in this expanding literature in 2007 and 2009. The second one, James Edward Miller's, attempts to present the workings of the relationship in the field of politics and the Cyprus question while the first, Ioannis Stefanidis, deals with anti-americanism in Greece and its intellectual and political sources.

Miller's main sources are the US diplomatic records available to research at the National Archives in College Park and the various presidential Libraries scattered through the United States and administered by the National Archives and Records Administration. Having been assigned with the not easy task to edit the official record of the US government on foreign relations, the well known Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), Miller was in a unique position to access invaluable material which nevertheless, it is to a great extent available to interested researchers. Moreover, Miller enriched the pull of his book's resources with British and French diplomatic records that are in a way complementary to his main source which is the US diplomatic records. Having been interested in Italian politics in the 1940s and the US influence in the shaping of the postwar Italian-American relationship he is not a newcomer in the field of US relations with lesser powers in the Cold War era.

Miller acknowledges that the circumstances in the immediate post-Civil War period in Greece attached an exaggerated degree of influence to the US in Greek

2. Henry Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, Simon and Shuster, New York 1999.

3. Alexis Papahelas, *O Viasmos tis Ellinikis Demokratias* [*The Rape of Greek Democracy*], Hestia, Athens 1997, Ioannis Stefanidis, *Apo ton emfylio ston psychro polemo. O symmachikos paragon, 1949-1952* [*From the Civil to the Cold War. The allied factor, 1949-1952*], Proskinio, Athens 1999, Ioannis Stefanidis, *Asymmetroi etairoi. Oi Inomenes Politeies kai I Hellada ston Psychro Polemo, 1953-1961* [*Asymmetrical partners. The US and Greece during the Cold War, 1953-1961*], Patakis, Athens 2002, Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, *Greece and the Cold War. Frontline State, 1952-1967*, Routledge, London 2006, Claude Nicolet, *Removing the Greek-Turkish Bone of Contention. US Policy towards Cyprus, 1954-1974*, Bibliopolis, Mannheim 2001.



affairs. Greece was financially weak and politically vulnerable. US ambassadors, in possession of Marshall aid funds, could counter powerful indigenous political forces. That was the case of Henry Grady who practically overruled the royal will and intervened in favour of general Plastiras in March 1950. Washington did not see at this time a particular danger from the Northern neighbours of Greece and the emphasis of US policy was on reconstruction and development as a means of social stability, financial self-reliance for the part of Greek state and political legitimacy. Plastiras' program of reconciliation with the defeated left wingers was not thought incompatible to the fundamental US policy aims. The king and the conservative leaning Liberal leader Sofoklis Venizelos succumbed to Grady's ultimatum. The context however shifted very soon in favour of more conservative and security oriented political formulas as a direct response to the Korean war that broke out in June 1950. The Americans perceived the attack of North Koreans as a part of a Soviet orchestrated assault against the West and tended to see suspiciously leniency measures while their policy of reduced military expenditure was reversed. Gradually but steadily the Americans tended to support a conservative political formation under field-marschal Papagos despite the monarchy's opposition. Ambassador Peurifoy, Grady's successor, prevented the establishment of proportional representation that favoured the centrist parties and insisted on the need of a first past the post electoral system which seemed to offer the best prospect of a stable government led by Papagos. Peurifoy's heavy-handedness, Papagos' fierce opposition and the centre parties inability to coordinate their policies, their majority being slim and precarious, converged to produce a landslide for Papagos in November 1952. Papagos' victory marked the beginning of a long conservative domination that ended in 1963. During this period the US-Greek relation was consolidated. Greece, a NATO member since February 1952, accepted US facilities on Greek soil in 1953, and generally shared an atlanticist worldview. Its main security concern was the threat of the North, intermingling traditional Greek concerns of a possible Slavic outlet in the Aegean with the new element of the Slavic neighbours establishing communist regimes in the mid and late 1940s. Although the defeated left was markedly anti-american, rather obviously in post-Civil and Cold War context, the conservative and the liberal forces remained pro-american although dismay was discernible in the case of the latter as a result of Peurifoy's activism.

Papagos' victory in November 1952 is a pivotal moment in Miller's narrative since he perceives this date as the end of direct US involvement in Greek politics. After that, Miller claims, the US did not attempt to influence



internal political developments for Greece had been practically restored as a fully sovereign state. His claim contradicts, and as a matter of fact it intends to, Andreas Papandreou's claim, fully developed in his *Democracy at Gunpoint*, written in exile after the military coup in Greece.

This rather satisfactory situation from the American perspective, only occasionally disturbed by protest over the extraterritoriality enjoyed by US military personnel in Greece, came to an abrupt end in autumn 1954 after the Cyprus question arose as an international issue. Greek public opinion would be enraged by the US decline to support the Greek position in the UN. Moreover it was felt that the Americans sided with the British and the Turks on strategic grounds disregarding Greek Cypriot majority's right to self-determination.

Cyprus as the main destabilising factor in the unfolding of Greek-US relations is obvious in Miller's analysis. Three of the eight chapters of his book are devoted to Cyprus. His narrative reveals the not very enviable position of a superpower although seen as omnipotent by its lesser allies struggling to retain a sort of a balance in its relations with partners pursuing conflicting national agendas.

The settlement of February 1959 only temporarily arrested a slide of Greek public opinion towards neutralism. The United Democratic Left's performance in the May 1958 election had already caught the eyes of the Americans. Washington felt that it should encourage the formation of a united centrist opposition as a bulwark against communist advance. This process was not promoted in antagonistic manner to Karamanlis who still was thought as the best guarantee of Greece's political stability and pro-western orientation. While the Centre's unification in September 1961 and the outcome of the election in October seemed to vindicate US policy since the CU overtook the left, the actual developments displeased Washington. The CU's unrelenting struggle, on the grounds of irregular conduct of the elections, posed the Americans not very convenient questions. US policy however was rather detached: Washington was not opposed to an alteration to power provided the communists were left out of any combination or coalition. Karamanlis was not indispensable from an American point of view while Washington was opposed to a military takeover as it is documented in US records during 1963-64. The reemergence of the Cyprus question in 1963 burdened however Greek-American relations for a second time in a decade and tarred CU government's image in Washington. Makarios was able to exploit to the full the Cold War context while Papandreou was unable to shape and implement a policy independent of Nicosia or Washington's requirements. Although



the Americans were not immediately responsible for his government's destabilization it is evident from Miller's analysis that Papandreou's image was tarnished while the king's was enhanced from Washington's perspective. The Cyprus crisis of 1963-64 was important in another respect: It marked the emergence of Andreas Papandreou as a powerful figure in Greek politics. To the dismay of the Americans Andreas, though educated and established as a respected economist in the US academic community, he tended to forge a platform organized around anti-americanism. He was inclined to see the United States as main source of support of a complex of power that included the monarchy, the conservatives, the army and the entrepreneurial class. His position that Greece could not undergo a thorough and genuine reform if it did not recover its national independence and its freedom of choice gave the Americans the impression that CU's return to power after the July 1965 crisis, during which the embassy discreetly but clearly sided with the crown, would be harmful for Greece's continued connection with the United States.

Stefanidis' research was extended to unpublished archival collections from the National Archives of the United States and the United Kingdom. Of particular importance are the records of the United States Information Agency that provide invaluable information on the attitude of Greek public opinion during the various phases of the Cyprus question. Furthermore, Stefanidis acquainted himself with a vast array of Greek unpublished archival material found in the Archives of Contemporary Social History (The United Democratic Left records), the Greek Literary and Historical Archive (the Kourillas, Merkouris, Pangalos and Spyrou papers), the Karamanlis, Averoff and Tsaldaris records posited at the Konstantinos Karamanlis Foundation and personal papers kept at the Center for Asia Minor Studies (the Christides papers) and the papers of Philippos Dragoumis at the Gennadeion Library in Athens.

Stefanidis, already well acquainted with Greek-American relations and having contributed heavily in a wide range of related issues, sees anti-americanism as a direct consequence of the Cypriot question. He dismisses the thesis that US support to the military regime and the US tolerant attitude towards Turkey during the Cyprus crisis of 1974 had sparked anti-americanism. Irredentism is a constant and powerful element of Greek political culture, Stefanidis points out, and survived in the immediate post-war era. The inspiration of Greek Cypriot majority to unite Cyprus with the Greek state was felt to be an inalienable right. The anti-British feeling generated by London's opposition to enosis (the union of Cyprus with Greece) was easily transferred to the Americans after the fail-



ure of Greece's first recourse to the United Nations in December 1954. In the 1950s the Americans were heavily criticized by an agitated Greek public opinion that was bitterly disillusioned by US realpolitik: The Greeks of various political persuasions felt that the Americans had disregarded Greece's and Greek Cypriots' claim to self-determination because strategic considerations favoured British and Turkish demands. The gravity of Cyprus as the preponderant issue in Greek-American relations was manifested by its mass appeal that transcended political boundaries. Conservative thinking, the Athens daily *Kathimerini* being the most notable case, tended to challenge the fundamental assumptions of Greece's western orientation and NATO membership after the pogrom against the Greek minority in Turkey in September 1955 and the American stance of equidistance between Greece and Turkey.

Surveys that are presented in the final part of Stefanidis' book clearly substantiate the hypothesis that the Cypriot question sparked a sort of "disengagement" between Greek public opinion and the Americans. It is also evident that during the intervals between the Cyprus crises there was discernible a rapprochement between the Greeks and the Americans as shown by the more favourable Greek attitude towards the US or policies related to the US compared to similar answers in times of crisis (Stefanidis, p. 235-236).

The second Cyprus crisis of 1963-64 fuelled again anti-americanism especially since Washington proposed the dispatch to the island of a NATO-led peacekeeping force. Moscow and non-aligned support for Makarios' policy was valued highly by the Greeks while president Johnson's intervention to halt a Turkish invasion in early June 1964 did not really credit Washington in the eyes of Greek public opinion as it was overshadowed by US pressure for bilateral negotiations between Athens and Ankara and, a little later, by Turkish air-strikes on Cyprus. Conservative currents tended this time to be more guarded probably because the rise of the CU forced them to evaluate developments in the light of the domestic political situation. However, *Kathimerini* was once again clearly opposed to US attempts to resolve the political problem of the island describing the first version of the Acheson plan, providing a sort of enosis accompanied by a sovereign base to Turkey, as a system of Ottoman capitulation.

Stefanidis does not see a connection between the political crisis of July 1965 and the preceding Cyprus crisis of 1963-64. He does remind his reader however of the US embassy's documented (FRUS 1964-1968, XVI) implication in the royal effort to prevent the return of Georgios and Andreas Papandreou to power as well as the fact that anti-americanism reappeared as



a result of a domestic crisis this time. There was a widespread feeling that Washington sided with the king and did not favour CU's return to government. This is also Miller's view.

While Stefanidis finishes his narrative in 1967 and, interested as he was in the relationship between irredentism and anti-americanism, is not preoccupied with the developments leading to the coup, Miller unfolds his narrative to the entanglement of the US policy to Greece's political impasse. The king was determined to keep the CU away from government while Papandreou enjoyed an undeniable advantage among the electorate. The crown attempted a compromise that failed nevertheless for both the king and Papandreou could not build a necessary basis of trust to make the political formula workable. The Americans believed however, and that was the key to their reading of political developments, that the king commanded the loyalty of the army and various reports of a middle grade officers conspiring independently to overthrow the parliamentary regime were thought of minor political importance. The interruption of the flow of reports in January 1967 concerning this group of officers did not also spark American interest. Miller does not think that Washington, averse as it was in a Papandreou's return to power, was interested in a dictatorial solution. His point is corroborated by the fact that Secretary of State Dean Rusk did not approve in March 1967 an Athens embassy proposal for a covert program to influence the upcoming Greek election. Washington did not nevertheless do much to avert a dictatorship. When the coup was successfully launched by the colonels on 21 April the Johnson administration only mildly expressed its concern over the demise of democracy in Greece. An embargo on heavy arms was imposed but it was partially lifted in early 1968. The Middle East crisis of June 1967 had underlined the importance of US access on facilities on Greek soil and the failure of the king's attempt to remove the junta in December 1967 had left the country under the completed and undisputed control of the colonels. Miller sees in this readiness for the part of the Americans to cooperate, with no reservations after 1969 and the coming of the Nixon administration and Kissinger in the White House, with the junta the source of Greek deep anti-american feeling. He interprets the US response to the 1974 Cyprus crisis in the context of the evolving Watergate affair that finally toppled Nixon and thinks that Kissinger did not possess the time and the energy to act pre-emptively as indications were coming in Washington that a clash between Makarios and Ioannides was in the offing. He admits that Kissinger's reluctant handling of the junta till 20 July, the day of the turkish landing on Cyprus, followed by the "tilt" towards Turkey, burdened the Greek-American relationship with anger, enmity and dis-



trust that almost destroyed the southeast wing of NATO. He does not nevertheless adopt the view that there was a plan to destroy the Republic of Cyprus for the part of Kissinger or the American foreign policy bureaucracy which should be accountable for lack of coordination and foresight and not for a surreptitious orchestrated attempt to dismember the Republic of Cyprus. His view is corroborated by the available archival evidence. For lack of material that would permit a fresh look on the crisis his conclusion is valid.

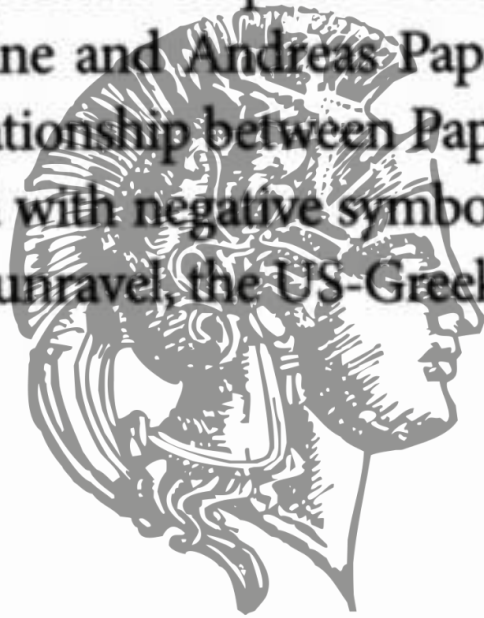
In conclusion, the books reviewed offer invaluable insights to Greek-American relations and tend to aid the formation of a body of literature that does not succumb to the temptation of simplistic reductions. The US neither shaped developments at will nor stood aside as an impotent and disinterested observer of the Greek political situation. There were strong indigenous cultural and political currents at work that though subject to external influences retained a degree of autonomy and independent conception of interest. Washington for its part did have interests to pursue and its conduct was not always committed to the principle of representative government. It perceived its interests through the concept of Containment, a strategic consideration in the context of the Cold War. It was not particularly interested in domestic politics as such but to the extent that political outcomes were affecting its interests and was able to derive maximum advantage from a variety of possibilities. Concerning the most decisive factor that shaped anti-americanism Stefanidis' argument that Cyprus not the junta was the source of Greece's adversarial relation to America is a good point of departure. However, the political crisis of 1965, the coup and the Cyprus crisis of 1974 cemented anti-americanism and established it as a permanent feature of Greek politics while till then it was a recurrent powerful theme but not a constant. In the 1965 political crisis and during the junta Washington was not hindered to cooperate with forces that were not advocates of the majority of Greek political opinion. A sequence of events and choices permitted the construction by Andreas Papandreou of a politically plausible narrative in the mindset prevailing after the 1974 crisis.

In assessing the impact of the US presence in Greece it should be kept in mind nevertheless that the American connection endured crises and collisions, the 1974 crisis being the harder test, for there were strong reasons for the part of a substantial segment of political elites and their following to retain a meaningful bond with Washington.

In the 1950s it was the perception of a threat from the North that contained greek conservative displeasure and the realization of conservative and liberal dis-



tinguished political leaders that Greece's US connection served as a stabilizing factor of a fragile domestic political settlement. After the 1974 crisis the US connection retained enormous value in an altered international environment: Despite détente the division of Europe between two competing blocs had acquired permanence and served as a point of reference for the interested parties. State and political actors, social democrats included, all over Western Europe understood that national policies tending to disengage from NATO would have destabilizing effects for the international system. The power base of European states was not sufficient to permit major recalibration of policies, as it basically crystallized in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In the Greek context, the threat from the North had indeed subsided as a result of détente but Greece was still in need of an American bond as a means to secure a sort of equilibrium with Turkey that seemed stronger and self-confident after the Cyprus crisis. A lurch of Athens towards neutralism would unsettle the regional balance to Turkey's favour for Ankara would be left as the sole western outpost in the Eastern Mediterranean. Karamanlis articulated this doctrine and Andreas Papandreou tacitly accepted its validity after 1981. Thus the relationship between Papandreou and the Americans, though turbulent and loaded with negative symbolic connotations and stereotypes, tended to solidify, not to unravel, the US-Greek relationship.



ΑΚΑΔΗΜΙΑ

ΑΘΗΝΩΝ

