

# Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP): Past, Present and Future

Dr. John M. Nomikos

## **Abstract:**

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*The end of the Cold War more than a decade ago created a world in which the relative stability between the two superpowers has disappeared. On the other side, the 9/11 terrorist acts in US and consequently in Spain (11/03/2003) and in UK (07/07/2005) exercised a lot of pressure on the intelligences services to adjust to new threats by looking their past and preparing for the future. Without exception, the Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP) is restructuring its tasks in order to be capable of confronting new threats and protect the Greek national security. This article analyzes the historical process of NIS-EYP, points out the new responsibilities of NIS-EYP (Intelligence Council, Intelligence Bill) and makes suggestions for the future challenges that the Greek intelligence Service has to face in the 21st century.*

## **Introduction**

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As the Intelligence Community inexorably works its way into the 21st century, it faces an unprecedented array of challenges. The chaotic world environment of the post Cold war offers a wide array of different issues to be understood and a variety of new threats to be anticipated. The rapidly developing information age presents advanced and complex information technology and methodologies to be mastered and integrated into the intelligence process. (1)

Greece as an industrialized nation and active member of the European Union as well as NATO calls for a higher level of management efficiency, effectiveness, and economy and employment criteria. To create a Greek Intelligence Community that can master those challenges and successfully continue to perform its role of supporting national, political, diplomatic, economic and mili-

tary decision-makers plus operational and tactical military commanders.

This article highlights on the challenges that the Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP) has to face into the 21st century. It first describes the historical steps that took place to establish today's NIS-EYP. Second, it points out the legislative procedures (Presidential Decrees) that the Greek Intelligence Community had to go through as well as the new tasks of the Greek Intelligence Service. Third, it concentrates on the development of the Greek Military Service (Second Branch – A2) under the current changes led in the transformation of the Greek Armed Forces; an overarching strategic vision of C4ISR (Command and Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence) architecture and systems; the capacity of creativity, ingenuity and intuition; a sense of history; and an understanding of the basic issues and principles of workplace diversity. At the concluding section, it points out future challenges that the Greek Intelligence Service has to face in the 21st century.

## **Historical Process of the Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP)**

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On May 9, 2003 the National Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP) became 50 years old. In the Hellenic Republic, the first attempt to construct an Intelligence Branch started in January 1926. A new special intelligence branch was formed with the name "State Security Branch" – (Geniki Asphalia). This intelligence branch lasted only one and half year and it was supervised under the President of the government. Ten years later (1936), a new intelligence branch was formed under the name "Defense Intelligence Branch" – (Ypiresia Aminis), which was directly reported to the Minister of Defense. In November 1936, the "Defense Intelligence Branch" was renamed as "General Directorate of Foreign Citizens" and it was supervised by the Minister of Public Order. Its tasks included espionage, and counterintelligence. Despite the limited sources, the "General Directorate of Foreign Citizens" functioned positively on the espionage during the Second World War. In 1946, a new military intelligence branch was established, called "Military Protection Department" – (Ypiresia Prostatias Stratevmatos). After three years (1949), General Alexander Papagos renamed it as "General Directorate of Information" – (Geniki Ypiresia Pliroforion) and it was under his supervision.

In 1952, when General Papagos became a Prime Minister, he remained once again the "General Directorate of Information" into "Central Intelligence Service and Research" – (Kentriki Ypiresia Pliroforion and Erevnas, KYPE). The new intelligence agency was reported directly to the Prime Minister. KYPE put the

foundation for today National Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP). (2)

A new intelligence branch was created as “Central Intelligence Service” – (Kentriki Ypiresia Pliroforion, CIS, or KYP) and is established according to western standards as a self-standing agency being subject to the Prime Minister and having the country’s national security as its mission. (3) From 1969 until 1974, the “Central Intelligence Service” functioned as an independent public service reported to the Prime Minister. (4) Under the statutes enacted afterwards the CIS or KYP was successively subjected to the Prime Minister, to the President of the Republic and as from and subsequent to 1974 to the Prime Minister, to the Minister of the Prime Minister’s Office and again to the Prime Minister.

After the end of the Second World War, NIS-EYP (formerly known as CIS or KYP) main tasks were to track down communists and antimonarchists. During the dictatorship era, under the colonel George Papadopoulos (1967-1974), terrorist attacks began to appear in Greece. Most of them work against the anti-dictatorship resistance organizations that for the most part concentrated their attacks against the police, public officials, institutions, and against foreign states which were believed to support the “Colonels.” (5) CIS or KYP was one of the key elements supporting the military junta. After the fall of the dictators, CIS or KYP, in check by legitimate political forces, did not make the necessary progress and this resulted in the failure of the Greek Intelligence Services to solve a longstanding problem. However, these days, NIS-EYP seems to follow professional ways to safeguard national interests. (6)

The efforts by the former Prime Minister Constantine Karamanlis conservative government after the 1974 to modernize the intelligence service yielded few results. In the 1980s, the Socialists took over the government and tried to bring NIS-EYP under control by assigning party officials to it. The intelligence service was thereby paralyzed under the burden of political patronage. NIS-EYP was the first intelligence agency whose staff not only formed unions but also even summoned general meetings in hotels.

The restructuring of the Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP) started in 1986 with a new Presidential Decree, N.D. 1645/1986, which put the steps to transform the “Central Intelligence Service (CIS or KYP)” towards its new name – “National Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP).” Today NIS-EYP constitutes a self-standing civil public agency and its political head is the Minister of Public Order. (7)

The mission of the National Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP), as defined in Article 2, of the Presidential Decree 1645/1986, includes the following:

- The collection, processing and dissemination, to the component Authorities, of information pertaining to the Country's National Security;
- Counterintelligence activities focusing on foreign Intelligence Officers acting against the country;
- The security of national communications;
- In time of war or mobilizations the NIS-EYP, in parallel with its above-mentioned powers, also becomes the country's intelligence staff.

## **Present Development: The Intelligence Council and Bill**

The Intelligence Council is the coordinating body of the NIS-EYP operations, as established under Law 1645/1986 (Article 6) and Presidential Decree 360/1992 (Article 6). The Council exercises its coordination functions based upon the decision issued by the Foreign Affairs and Defense Government Council (KYSEA) and the Prime Minister. The NIS-EYP director advises the Interior, Public Administration, and Decentralization minister on all issues discussed and submits the Council's opinion to him.

The Council meets every two months, or in an extraordinary meeting, whenever it is deemed necessary by its chairman. Chaired by the NIS-EYP director, the Council membership includes the director of Intelligence and Security of the National Defense General Staff, the director of the Directorate of State Security in the Ministry of Public Order, and a senior representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed by the foreign minister.

Furthermore, up to two senior representatives appointed by the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization minister may attend meetings in accord with the nature of the issues being discussed. Representatives of other public agencies may only attend – without the right to vote – when invited by the chairman. (8)

Before passing the baton of responsibilities for the Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP) to former Public Order Minister Mihalis Khrissohoidis, outgoing Interior Minister Vaso Papandreou signed the Presidential Decree proposed by the Service's management, which was the result of a lengthy elaboration by experts and university professors, chaired by constitutional law expert Spiros Floghaitis. (9) The Presidential Decree was passed on 25th of September 2002 and it established the steps towards the reform of the Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP). (10)

When taking office at the Ministry, former Interior Minister, Mrs. Vaso Papandreou promised a comprehensive upgrading of the National Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP), which is now being implemented. Besides, NIS-EYP staff seems not to be objecting to the Prime Minister's decision to transfer the responsibilities to the

Public Order Ministry and is waiting to see proof of the Service's upgraded role, and also of its active participation in securing a safe environment in light of hosting the 2004 Olympic Games. The restructuring of the NIS-EYP comes at a time during which police has suddenly been making great strides in its way on domestic terrorism, during which NIS-EYP has been effectively sidelined because of weaknesses it had shown in this task in the past. But they were clearly connected to the fact that for many years NIS-EYP had lost its way, did not function as a national intelligence agency, and furthermore, was believed to have been infiltrated by other agencies.

Another important innovation is that NIS-EYP will, from now on, be accountable to the Greek Parliament. Each year the Public Order Minister, as the civilian head of NIS-EYP, will submit a report of the year's activities to Parliament, strengthening its institutional functioning in the context of the democratic system. Finally, **the Intelligence Bill** aimed at the revival of NIS-EYP and its functioning on a professional basis, while also instituting guarantees on human rights and citizens' privacy.

## **New Responsibilities for the Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP)**

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Intelligence services are by nature opaque. In order to prevent their inherent tendency toward autonomy, the Greek State needs to introduce mechanisms for political and internal balances. These checks should not undermine its operative ability but prevent the emergencies of the usual degenerative phenomena. Meanwhile, an advanced proposal for the creation of a new special task force will signal the introduction of a new task to NIS-EYP "traditional" duties under its current reform strategy by introducing seven basic innovations, which will enter NIS-EYP into the 21st century: (11)

- A Research Study Center is created with the purpose of cooperation with scientific organizations, universities and specialized research institutes. It will undertake the drafting of studies and analyses of issues of interests to the National Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP);
- A Staff (strategy) Planning Council (steering committee) is created regarding the Service's (NIS-EYP) policy and for crisis management;
- Emphasis is placed on training with the creation of a "Training Directorate", aiming for modern training, education and specialization of personnel;
- A Sub-Directorate for National Issues is created;
- A Directorate for International Cooperation is created for better exchange of information with allied services;

- A Sub-Directorate for International Terrorism and Organized Crime is being established for the National Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP) to be able to reply to the needs of the new era;
- A New Operation Center together with an Open Sources (OSINT) Center;
- The NIS-EYP staff is allowed to carry arms in the execution of special operational duties.

Under NIS-EYP's reorganization, the provisions of the Civil Service Code are extended to cover the National Intelligence Service civilian personnel, which include the personnel in specific beneficial provisions. According to the new organizations positions for 1,800 civilians personnel, 80 for Armed Forces from the rank of captain up to the brigadier, 75 Greek Police officers from the rank of lieutenant to police brigadier, 15 Coast Guard officers from the rank of ensign to captain and 700 petty officers and privates from the Armed Forces, the Coast Guard or lower ranking employees from the Police Force for the national intelligence service (NIS-EYP) security. (12) In addition, NIS-EYP has 211 civilian intelligence analysts, as well as 48 people who work as administrative staff. (13)

The new structure indicates a significant reduction in the number of uniformed staff, which is a development in keeping with the international models in this sector. Aside from the personnel's obligations resulting from their status as civil servants, each member of staff serving in NIS-EYP is obliged, among other points, to inform NIS-EYP in detail of any travel abroad, the unions or organizations of any category or nature in which he or she participates. (14) It should be noted that, according to law 2738/1999, it is forbidden for NIS-EYP staff to strike or to form a union groups. Despite the law, unions still exist inside the NIS-EYP today. Moreover, as former Minister of Public Order, Mihalis Khrissokhoidis stated when welcoming former Deputy Minister, Evangelos Malesios to the Ministry of Public Order, "the NIS-EYP is being called to play a new, significant role in consolidating national security. The Greek government is evidently aware of the increased demands and will secure the requisite funds in light of the debate on the new budget in the Greek Parliament." (15).

## **Restructure of the Greek Military Intelligence Service**

The competition that often emerged between NIS-EYP and the General Staff, "forced" the leadership of the YEETHA (Greek Armed Forces General Staff) to make its information service independent. Thus, in early 2000, under former General Manousos Parayioudhakis, YEETHA established an independent information collection and processing unit – the Information Service – by way

of upgrading and modernizing the existing sector, which operated under the Second Branch (A2) of the General Staff. (16) Branch A2 (Military Intelligence Service) of the Greek Armed Forces General Staff is charged with organizing an integrated information collection and assessment system for military information. (17) As such it collaborates with the relevant civilian bureaus and agencies within the country and allied agencies within the European Union and NATO frameworks. In this capacity it informs the General Staffs on intelligence and security matters and operationally controls the newly-created joint headquarters.

The reform changes that take place in the Greek Military Intelligence are:

1. A New Special Bureau for the support of the Service Director with a legal, diplomatic, and scientific counselor;
2. A YEETHA (Greek Armed Forces General Staff) Operations Support Directorate is established to divest itself from information collection and dissemination allowing it to concentrate on operations. The Directorate will include an Information Section covering current information and support for the Crisis Management System and the National Operations Center – an exercising and planning section and a Head Quarter (HQ) security section;
3. Within the processing, policy, planning and dissemination department, the Warning Assessment Section is activated, (independent Balkan Unit is established), and training is delegated to the Support Directorate. In addition, an Asymmetrical Threat Unit is established;
4. A Communication and Computer Support Directorate is established to support and develop the relevant sectors;
5. An Information Unit is established to support the Service operationally and for the exploitation of strategic level means of information collection (satellite imaging, satellite communications, etc);
6. The Military Attaché Section is upgraded to a Directorate dealing both with Greek attaches abroad as well as foreign attaches in Greece. The Directorate will also handle all bilateral issues;
7. The Counter-Information Security Unit is upgraded to a Directorate in order to be capable of dealing with new security issues, especially in light of the 2004 Olympic Games;
8. The new structure and the implemented reform changes within the structure (which have not been covered in detail) will present YEETHA (Greek Armed Forces General Staff) with the instrument it needs to gather, manage, and disseminate intelligence in a manner that is timely and efficient, making it possible to pursue joint operations unhindered in war or in operations other than war.

## **Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP): Future Challenges**

Greece needs a modern and efficient intelligence service that can collect and process information that is able to plan and carry out secret operations for the protection of the national interest. The practice of staffing NIS-EYP with military officials and police officers has failed. It needs a new generation of highly skilled officers and modern technological equipment.

However, it is significant to give credits to the productive role of the NIS-EYP towards the break-up of the 17 November terrorist group by coordinating its actions with the Greek Police – Counter Terrorist Branch (CTU). A mistake of one of the 17 November terrorists in a bombing attack unlocked the front door of 17 November terrorists. The Greek Police connected older unexploited evidence to the new facts and managed to arrest the majority of the 17 November members.

The reasons for the dissolution of the main terrorist group (17 November) was the loss of the public's favor or tacit acceptance, the lack of ideology, the internal degeneration of the organizations, the loss of contact with political reality, the recently reinforced professionalism of the Greek authorities, the political will of the State, and certainly the substantial NIS-EYP cooperation with foreign intelligence services such as CIA, FBI, BND, DGSE, MI6, and Mossad.

Overall, intelligence is in an exquisitely awkward position in adapting to a changed world. It is a service industry, one designed to serve Greek foreign policy, but how can it do so when the definition of Greek interests and policies are themselves in flux? It is charged with providing information to its decision makers, (who most of the time), are in the process of redefining their objectives. The National Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP) will not have the luxury of waiting for the changes to solidify.

Therefore, NIS-EYP needs to follow the rest of the western intelligence agencies, which have undergone massive internal changes in recent decades that could be said to constitute reforms. NIS-EYP has to change the nature and extent of its recruitment policies; it has to ensure that its staff is more representative of the population it serves; its personnel policies, in terms of career paths, complaints procedures and the like have been brought increasingly closer to the public service norm (sometimes because of serious personnel problems); its management practices to begin to match those in the private sector more closely; the NIS-EYP should consider seriously to acquire new headquarters facilities. Much of the internal modernization has occurred in the NIS-EYP, but it has to adapt to a new external policy context because of the end of the Cold War, as well as to be subjected to a steadily increasing degree of oversight and



accountability from the appropriate committees at the Greek Parliament.

They will, of course, have to embody the qualities of high national security and professional intelligence competence as well as the undoubted integrity that leaders of the Greek Intelligence Community have always had. But they will also have to have the quality of vision, so that they can foresee an Intelligence Community of the 21st century that is realistic, credible, and attractive future, but is different and better in important ways than that which now exists. They will also have to have the inspirational qualities required to communicate that vision in ways that will motivate the Greek Government, the Greek Parliament and the Greek Intelligence Community members to share in it, so that it can be implemented.

Despite the swirling changes that NIS-EYP has undertaken in the last years, enough is known of the world that intelligence will confront beyond 2010 to begin the reshaping. That world will require intelligence to be dispersed, not concentrated; open to a variety of sources, not limited to secrets; sharing its information and analyses with a variety of would-be coalition partners, including foreigners and people outside government, not guarding its "secrets" tightly. (18) At last, no matter what measures are adopted, NIS-EYP will not be capable of delivering timely and accurate intelligence to the policy makers unless it is protected from political pressures. Therefore, the Greek government should seek to keep the more threatening intelligence operations within reasonable limits, particularly those linked with diplomacy.

## Notes:

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- 1) William H. J. Monthorpe Jr., "Leading Intelligence in the 21st Century", *Defense Intelligence Journal*, Vol. 7, Spring 1998, pp: 1-3.
- 2) See the Official Site of the National Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP): <http://www.nis.gr>
- 3) A Presidential Decree – N.D. 2421/9/5/1953 passed from the Greek Government for the development of the Greek Intelligence Service.
- 4) A Presidential Decree – N.D. 380/69 passed from the Greek Government in order to readjust the tasks of the Greek Intelligence Service.
- 5) Kaminaris Spyros, "Terrorism in Greece and Governmental Responses (1974-1998)", unpublished doctoral thesis at the Center for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Studies, (University of Birmingham, UK, July 1999), p: 49.

- 6) Dimitrios Agrafiotis, "17 November caught at last", *Intelligence Net*, Issue 1, March 2003, Greece, pp: 30-31.
- 7) A New Presidential Decree – N.D. 395/2001 passed from the Greek Government by reengineering the architecture of the Greek Intelligence Service by assigning its new roles.
- 8) Robert D' A Henderson, "Greece", *International Intelligence Year Book*, (Brassey's Inc. Virginia USA, 2002). In addition, see the "Internal Modernization of the Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP)", *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 17:435-448, 2004.
- 9) See the "Profile of the Greek Intelligence Agency" at the Exastriscientia web site: <http://exastriscientia.fateback.com/greece.htm>
- 10) A Presidential Decree – N.D. 255/2002 passed from the Greek Government in order to reform the Greek Intelligence Service (NIS-EYP).
- 11) Manolis Stavrakakis, "Seven Innovations for Modern Agents", *Ependitis Newspaper (Greek Financial Times)*, 28/10/2001, p: 25.
- 12) Ibid.
- 13) "NIS-EYP Files", *Fantomas Magazine (in Greek)*, No. 16, July 2007, pp: 38-49.
- 14) Ibid.
- 15) See also Manolis Stavrakakis, "Seven Innovations for Modern Agents", *Ependitis Newspaper (Greek Financial Times)*, 28/10/2001, p: 25.
- 16) Papadhiokhos K.P., "EYP to Go Through Radical Changes Aimed at Transparency", *Kathimerini Newspaper (Greek)*, 21/09/2002, p:3.
- 17) "The Reorganization of Greek Military Intelligence", *Intelligence Net*, Issue 1, March 2003, Athens, Greece, p: 25.
- 18) Gregory F. Treverton, "Reshaping National Intelligence for an Age of Information", (Cambridge University Press, UK, 2001), p: 20.