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A General Among Diplomats:

General James Van Fleet, the Truman Doctrine, and the Greek Civil War

Oliver R. Garland

Senior Honors Thesis Paper

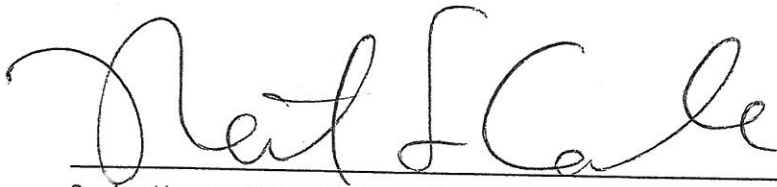
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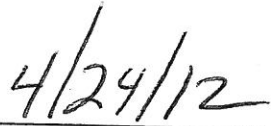
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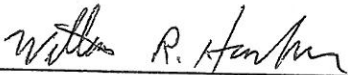
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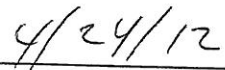
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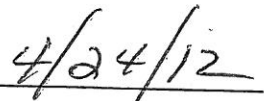
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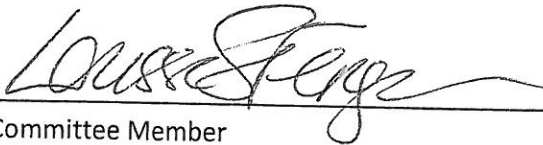
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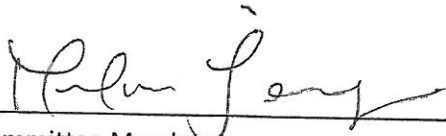
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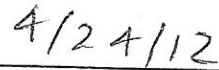
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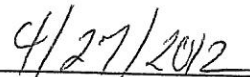
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Introduction

Celebrated by President Truman as the “the greatest combat general ever,” General James Van Fleet played a major role in American history from World War I to the Korean War. Despite these accomplishments, he remains to this day a neglected figure in the study of early twentieth century American military and diplomatic history. Although he would have considered himself primarily a soldier, his many assignments around the world required him to wield diplomatic talents that would have earned the admiration of foreign policy giants from Metternich to Molotov. There can be no doubt that he is a figure as worthy of study as Marshall, Eisenhower, and Bradley.

The objective of this study is to examine and assess the major decisions and impact of General James Van Fleet in his role as executor of the Truman Doctrine during the Greek Civil War from the period of February 1948 to the early part of 1950. Though only in charge of the military side of the Truman Doctrine, Van Fleet often bettered his political and diplomatic counterparts in their own arenas. As the economic and military objectives of the Truman Doctrine aid program became increasingly political, Van Fleet successfully assumed the new role of soldier-diplomat and bridged the political and ideological differences of the competing interests during the Greek Civil War by being both prudent and aggressive, both accommodating and forceful. Additionally, this study seeks to provide an individualized account of Van Fleet’s role in Greece and assess its broader implications for U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War. In particular it seeks to reexamine the historical mythology that has developed around Van Fleet and his supposed influence on Greek politics during this period.

General Van Fleet was born in Coytesville, New Jersey in 1892. A graduate of West Point, Van Fleet served in World War One as a battalion commander and later as an ROTC

instructor at the University of Florida during the interwar period. There he earned a reputation as a great football coach which later played a significant role in his style of leadership. In World War II he served during the D-Day landings at Utah Beach, at Cherbourg, and was later posted to Germany. In late 1947 he was asked by Secretary of State George Marshall to assume command of the military aid program in Greece that had been announced earlier that year as a part of the Truman Doctrine.

The announcement of the Truman Doctrine was one of the most significant events in the history of American foreign relations and the early Cold War era. With the rise of the new bipolar world, it was both figuratively and literally, the first “shots” fired during the Cold War. In 1947, the Greek government was on the verge of financial and political collapse. A civil war had been raging there intermittently for several years. The Anglo-American backed government was fighting a guerrilla force believed to be supported by the Soviet Union. As Great Britain was no longer capable of continuing the economic and military assistance necessary to prop up the regime in Athens, it was forced to announce its withdrawal in February 1947. Tensions in Turkey over Soviet access to the Dardanelles Straits provoked further concerns for the Anglo-American bloc. The Truman Administration, fearing the inevitable power vacuum that would emerge in Greece and Turkey and its implications for the region, agreed to move in and assume responsibility for the crisis. Economic and military aid would be provided to help stabilize the fledgling Greek regime.

In his speech to Congress on March 12, 1947, President Truman uttered the famous sentence, “I believe it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”¹ These words

¹ “The Truman Doctrine.” 12 March 1947, Truman Library Public Papers, May 2010; available from <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=2189&st=&st1=>.

were charged with passionate intensity and were framed as a global Manichean struggle within the bipolar world that emerged from World War II. This speech was the genesis of a new era in American foreign policy. The Truman Doctrine was a policy conceived in self-interest yet cloaked in rhetoric that would accompany a moralistic crusade. The practical limitations of the policy's idealism became all too familiar themes as subsequent events unfolded. Major-General Livesay was appointed to head the first military aid missions but his early efforts were largely unsuccessful and in late 1947, Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson recommended a change in policy and personnel. Van Fleet was selected to replace Livesay. General Van Fleet was appointed Chief of the U.S. Army Group, American Mission to Greece (USAGAMG) and as Director of Joint U.S. Military Advisory Planning Group, Greece (JUSMAPG) on February 6 1948. During his tenure, Van Fleet wielded his military, political, and diplomatic talents simultaneously to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the Truman Doctrine.

Summary of Existing Literature

Traditionally, historians of the Cold War have fallen into one of three dominant schools of thought: Orthodox, Revisionist, and Post-Revisionist/Neo-Orthodox.² After decades of controversy and fairly vitriolic debate, contemporary scholarship has finally reached a point where disagreements are fewer and consensus is greater. This new perspective is now known as the Post-Revisionist consensus.³ The Orthodox school emphasized the role of Joseph Stalin's grand designs and the Soviet Union's aggressive policies as one of the primary causes of the Cold War. The revisionists argue that it was the United States that was at fault. The Post-Revisionist school offers a more balanced and nuanced accounts of the origins of the Cold War.

² For a detailed discussion of the Cold War and its historiography, see J. Samuel Walker, "Historians and Cold War Origins: The New Consensus," *American Foreign Relations: A Historiographical Review* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981), 206-236.

³ Ibid.

It is an approach which attempts to assess the influence of a number of different forces in the rise of the American-Soviet conflict including economic structures and bureaucratic politics. This study, though not primarily concerned with the origins of the Cold War, will operate within the general analytical framework established by this school of thought.

As this study seeks to understand the personality and role of General Van Fleet in the formulation and execution of policy in Greece, it relies significantly on his personal papers that are housed at the George C. Marshall Foundation Library at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia. Additionally, the papers of one of his aides, James Russel Stephens, were also consulted. Combined, they form an extensive collection that provides a wealth of information about the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Planning Group, Greece (JUSMAPG), the British Military Mission (BMM), and their working relationship with the Greek Army and government. Personal and official correspondence, minutes of meetings, and official documents from the collection were used to both recreate the narrative of events while also providing additional insights into the rationale behind many of the decisions made on the ground in Greece.

In addition to the Van Fleet papers, this study consults the standard primary documents of the era including the State Department's Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) series. Supplementary material from the Harry S. Truman Library was used in examining the ideological foundations of the Truman Doctrine. These materials include official memorandum, personal correspondence, speeches, press conference transcripts, and oral histories conducted by previous scholars all available at the library. The standard memoirs of the era were consulted to offer additional perspectives on the early Cold War era and the origins of the Truman Doctrine.

There has been little secondary analysis of the life and career of General James Van Fleet. Several biographical studies have been planned but most of them have been abandoned

during their early stages. The only published biography available is Paul Braim's *The Will to Win*. Though it provides a fascinating narrative, it is not a scholarly biography and was written from the point of view of one of Van Fleet's previous subordinates in consultation with the U.S. Army. It represents an orthodox account of the Truman Doctrine and the United State's role in the Greek Civil War. A scholarly examination of his career has yet to be seen outside of brief appearances in the standard studies of the Truman Doctrine aid program. This study hopes to fill this gap in the historiography of the Cold War by providing an individualized account of Van Fleet's role while synthesizing it with the existing scholarship.

Although there is no shortage of available literature on the Truman Doctrine, there are some particular titles that warrant special attention. John Lewis Gaddis, in his excellent study published in 1972, *The Origins of the Cold War*, reinvigorated the discipline of Cold War studies. While he embraced some of the arguments put forward by the revisionists that the United States and the Soviet Union were equally responsible for the origins of the Cold War, he does suggest that Stalin was more culpable than Truman because of the absence of any democratic institutional restraints in the Soviet Union. Roosevelt and Truman's constant battle with Congress and popular opinion hindered the sort of unitary absolute decision making that characterized Soviet Russia. This is especially true with respect to the Truman Doctrine. Previous problems in dealing with Stalin left Truman and his team with a sour taste and a fundamental sense of distrust. By exploring the impact of these political personalities, institutional restraints, and the effects of bureaucratic chicanery and "inertia," Gaddis offers one of the most balanced and exhaustive portraits of the early Cold War. This study will operate within the general Cold War historical framework established by Gaddis and the post-revisionist school that he represents.

One of the most moderate and balanced revisionist accounts of the Truman Doctrine is Thomas G. Patterson's *Soviet-American Confrontation: Postwar Reconstruction and the Origins of the Cold War* published in 1979. Patterson explores the American ideology of "peace and prosperity" and how it guided American foreign policy from the beginning of World War II through the early Cold War. This ideology emphasized the need for the United States to break with its previous non-interventionism/isolationism and intervene in the internal affairs of other states in order to bring about peaceful and prosperous institutions that would thereby be more conducive to the creation of a peaceful and prosperous world. The United States would be the greatest beneficiary of this new world and thus had a vested interest in ensuring its inception. The Truman Doctrine was just one example of an overarching grand strategy for the creation of a new world order. This study will rely on his analysis of the economics of American foreign policy in understanding Van Fleet's role in the implementation of the Truman Doctrine.

One of the most detailed studies of the Truman Doctrine and its implementation in the Greek Civil War is Howard Jones' *A New Kind of War* published in 1989. Jones' thesis is that the Truman Doctrine represented a new approach to conducting American foreign policy in which the United States committed itself broadly to a new grand strategy of containment while crafting its individual policies according to specific problems. This "new kind of war" would be both flexible and restrained. It would establish a broad and flexible policy to halt Soviet expansion while confining itself to specific achievable objectives. Though the most sophisticated and detailed of any work on the subject, Jones did not have the benefit of being able to make use of the Van Fleet and Stephens papers, which this study will utilize.

A work that loosely falls into the revisionist camp is Lawrence Wittner's *American Intervention in Greece, 1943-1949* published in 1981. Wittner examines in detail how despite

the Truman administration's commitment to preserving democracy and liberal values, it allied itself with some of the most anti-democratic forces in Greece. Wittner demonstrates how American personnel in Greece forged a strong working relationship with the hard right-wing of the Greek government and actively undermined Greek sovereignty and the civil liberties of its citizens. Wittner's analysis is significantly more sophisticated than many of the other revisionist scholars in that he does not forgive the violence and atrocities of the Greek guerrilla forces. Despite the nuanced view of Wittner's study, Van Fleet is treated as a generally minor player in this work.

Bruce Kuniholm, in his 1980 *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East*, provides a post-revisionist account of the origins of the Cold War in the Northern Tier states of Iran, Turkey, and Greece. By framing the Cold War in the Near East as an extension of the century old great power conflict between Great Britain and Russia for influence in the Balkan States, Kuniholm offers an impressive study of the regional impact of the Truman Doctrine and its aid program. This study will rely on this work primarily for the author's insights into the great power's conflict in the Northern Tier and its impact on the social and political tensions in Greece.

Another impressive study from the revisionist point of view is Yiannis Roubatis' 1989 *Tangled Webs: The U.S. in Greece, 1947-1949*. This study emphasizes the role of the United States in undermining Greek national sovereignty from the beginning of the Civil War through "the Junta" of 1967. Though it offers an interesting look at internal political dynamics of American-Greek relations, Roubatis deemphasizes the role of Van Fleet and his colleagues in Greece in order to emphasize the United States' Cold War strategy towards Greece.

One of the most recent studies of the Greek aid program is offered by Judith Jeffries in her *Ambiguous Commitments and Uncertain Policies*. Jeffries is a critic of the Truman Doctrine, though unlike Roubatis, she asserts that the Truman Doctrine was conceived as primarily an economic policy and that the shift towards military aid was never originally intended. Relying extensively on Jones, Wittner, and the FRUS series, she overlooks important sources relating to the implementation of the program on the ground and its early military orientation. Specifically, she made little use of the Van Fleet and Stephens papers that offer substantial insights into the events in Greece and the primary role that military aid played very early on. Her emphasis on the economics of the Truman Doctrine prevents her from noting the significant military element of the policy formulated as early as March 1947.

Prelude: Origins of the Greek Civil War

The Greek Civil War emerged from a long standing conflict between the left and right of Greek politics. Scholars divide the civil war into three phases. The first occurred toward the end of World War II, and it emerged from a decades-old struggle between the left and right. Though for reasons to be explored later, these political classifications are not entirely adequate. During World War II, Greece successfully countered the Italian invasion of late 1940 but quickly came under the control of the German forces when they invaded later in 1941. The German occupation of Greece lasted from April 1941 to the fall of 1944. During this time a loose-knit coalition of political resistance groups emerged that included the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and the right-wing National Republican Greek League (EDES). Though not directly affiliated with the Soviet Union, many, including the Ambassador to Greece Lincoln MacVeagh, believed that the KKE would inevitably fall under the influence of Stalin. The KKE developed into a popular movement called the National Liberation Front (EAM) and its military arm, the

People's Liberation Army (ELAS). The EDES independently pursued its own objectives but gradually it came into an uneasy alliance with the EAM-ELAS. This arrangement lasted until mid-1943 when the resistance coalition broke down over mutual suspicion regarding collaboration with the Nazi occupation. Armed conflict broke out soon after and the fighting lasted until May 1944 when both sides attended the Lebanon Conference. The terms of the agreement reached there was that both factions would become a part of the newly established national unity government. This agreement brought an end to the first phase of the conflict.⁴

Following the liberation of Greece by the British in October 1944, Greece continued to be plagued by political and economic problems. While the new government under the premiership of George Papandreou solidified control in Athens, the EAM-ELAS guerrillas still controlled most of the countryside. The second round of fighting broke out in December 1944 when the government and the Athenian-based ELAS members clashed. The British commander was ordered to deal with the rebellion and the ELAS fled the city and moved north. Fighting continued until the end of January and the second phase of the conflict was concluded with the Treaty of Varkiza in February 1945.⁵ The conditions of this agreement required the repeal of all laws that restricted freedom of speech, granted amnesty to all participants in the round two fighting, repealed martial law, created a national army, demobilized the guerrilla resistance forces, and planned a plebiscite on the return of the monarchy.⁶ Plans for a general parliamentary election were scheduled for the following year.

⁴ Yiannis P. Roubatis, *Tangled Webs: The U.S. in Greece 1947-1967*, (New York: Pella Publishing Company, Inc, 1987), 13-16.

⁵ For a more detailed discussion of the second round see John O. Iatrides, *Revolt in Athens: The Greek Communist "Second Round" 1944-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).

⁶ Roubatis, 17-18.

American policy towards Greece during this time was characterized by casual disinterest. President Franklin Roosevelt and the United States expressed little concern for the Balkan states as long as the Anglo-Russian rivalries over the region did not undermine the allied war efforts. Great Britain had a historical concern for the stability of the region as it ensured a safe line of communications to its colonial assets in India. In addition, during the war, the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) assumed primary responsibility for intelligence operations and coordination with the resistance groups in Greece.⁷ Preoccupation with the Polish question and the United States' traditional policy of non-interference in Greek affairs precluded Roosevelt from taking any definitive position on the issue as the first and second rounds of the Greek Civil War were developing. When the third phase broke out toward the end of 1946, Harry Truman had succeeded Roosevelt in the White House and had already begun changing the tone of U.S. foreign policy. Though Roosevelt had assumed this disinterested posture towards Greece, others in the government, particularly Loy Henderson of the State's Department's Near Eastern Affairs Division and the long time U.S. Ambassador to Greece Lincoln MacVeagh, believed that Greece, along with Turkey, would become very important to U.S. interests in the post-World War II era. It was largely a result of Loy Henderson's efforts that the Truman Administration changed its position towards Greece and decided to expand its role in securing stability in the broader Near East.⁸ Well into 1946, the Truman Administration believed that Greece was fundamentally a British problem.

⁷ Judith S. Jeffery, *Ambiguous Commitments and Uncertain Policies: The Truman Doctrine in Greece, 1947-1952* (New York: Lexington Books, 2000), 4-5.

⁸ For Henderson's efforts to convince Roosevelt of the importance of Greece and the Near East and his greater success under Truman see Bruce Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

The election of March 1946 resulted in a large victory for the Populist Party of Constantine Tsaldaris. The KKE had boycotted the elections over issues relating to disarmament of the EAM/ELAS and concerns for the safety of former ELAS members who had been persecuted during the “White Terror” that Papandreou and his allies had instigated following the Varkiza Agreement.⁹ The election results were widely criticized, and the KKE leaders responded by organizing their own military force. The leader of the KKE was Nikos Zachariadis. A notoriously pro-Stalin partisan, he had been arrested and imprisoned in Dachau during WWII. He reassumed command of the KKE when he returned to Greece and following the election results, moved to organize a guerrilla force capable of fighting the Greek Army. The KKE appointed the legendary guerrilla fighter Markos Vafiades to create and organize the remnants of the ELAS into a new army.¹⁰ By October 1946, “General Markos” had reorganized the ELAS into the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG). Many in the west believed that Joseph Stalin was behind these efforts though this would later turn out to be incorrect. The tactics employed by the DAG during this time included kidnappings, assassinations, and sabotage. During this period there were over 700 different armed clashes between the DAG forces and the Greek National Army (GNA). The guerrilla force reached a maximum strength of twenty thousand with an additional eight to fifteen thousand being trained in Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia.¹¹ These three countries provided substantial amounts of aid to the “bandits” as they came to be called. In response to this, the Greek Government went to the United Nations

⁹ Ibid., 250-255.

¹⁰ Howard Jones, *A New Kind of War: America's Global Strategy and The Truman Doctrine in Greece* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 20-21. Also, Zachary Karabell, *Architects of Intervention: The United States, the Third World, and the Cold War, 1946-1962* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 20-21.

¹¹ Paul Braim, *The Will to Win: The Life of General James Van Fleet*, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 158-160.

Security Council on 3 December 1946. Soon after the council approved the creation of an investigative committee to go to Greece and study the issue.¹²

A plebiscite in September 1946 returned King George to Greece by a margin of two to one and this only furthered mutual hostilities between the government and guerrillas. Guerrilla activity intensified over the next few weeks as they positioned themselves in the northern regions of Grammos and Vitsi, nestled in the mountains near the borders of Albania and Bulgaria. By the end of 1946 Greece was on the verge of disaster. Its continuing economic deterioration, the inability of the Greek Army to respond adequately to the guerrilla threats, and the upcoming revelation that Great Britain would soon be withdrawing its support meant that the third phase of the Greek Civil War was about to begin.

Truman Doctrine: The Aid Program and its Limitations, March 1947-January 1948

On February 21, 1947, the British informed the U.S. State Department that it would be ending its support and withdrawing its forces from Greece. Great Britain was suffering from economic problems stemming from World War II and it was no longer in a position to prop up the government in Athens. Tsaldaris was forced to resign as prime minister under increasing pressure from the British. Dimitrios Maximos assumed the premiership with Tsaldaris as his deputy and Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Truman Administration by this point had committed itself to supporting the Greek government in order to hold off what was believed to be a Soviet-backed partisan insurrection. On 27 February, Truman met with Secretary of State George Marshall, Under-Secretary Dean Acheson, and the leading members of the Congress to convince them of the necessity of a legislative aid program for Greece and nearby Turkey.¹³ Though Secretary Marshall was expected to take the lead in making the case for Greece, he

¹² Kuniholm, 400-404.

¹³ This study does not examine the Turkey issue but a detailed analysis can be found in Kuniholm, 255-270.

“flubbed his opening” and his acting Acheson soon took control of the meeting. Acheson described the situation in Greece in apocalyptic terms. Acheson in his memoirs wrote that “Like apples in a barrel infected by one rotten one, the corruption of Greece would infect Iran and all to the east. It would carry infection to Africa through Asia Minor and Egypt, and to Europe through Italy and France.”¹⁴

Though he despised “crisis diplomacy,” the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Arthur Vandenberg agreed with Acheson’s basic understanding of the situation. American foreign policy by this time was heavily influenced by the ideas of the head of the State Department’s newly created Policy Planning Staff, George Kennan. His views were best exemplified in his *Long Telegram* and in his “Sources of Soviet Conflict” or “X” article published in *Foreign Affairs* the previous year. The conventional wisdom was that the Soviet Union desired expansion. Policymakers believed that Stalin was actively supporting the activities of Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia in Greece in furtherance of this expansionist policy. They did not know whether this expansion was for conquest or security, but Kennan argued that U.S. policy should maintain a “long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies” no matter what their form.¹⁵ This idea of containment formed the foundation of U.S. foreign policy for the next half century and was embraced by many across the political spectrum. Indeed, Senator Arthur Vandenberg, a Republican, noted that the problem in Greece “cannot be isolated by itself. On the contrary, it is probably symbolic of the world-wide ideological clash between Eastern Communism and Western Democracy.”¹⁶ From

¹⁴ Quoted in Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1969), 219.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Quoted in Arthur Vandenberg Jr. ed., *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1952), 340.

the point of view of the U.S., the situation in Greece was more than just a civil war, it was an ideological conflict with global implications.

Vandenberg assured Truman and Acheson of his commitment to an aid program for Greece and Turkey but requested that "Mr. President, if you will say that to the Congress and the country, I will support you and I believe that most of its members will do the same."¹⁷ President Truman delivered such a message several weeks later on March 12 to a joint session of Congress. In his speech President Truman framed the issue in Manichean terms. He said that the world "must choose between alternative ways of life... One way of life is based upon the will of the majority," the other upon, "the will of the minority forcibly imposed upon the majority." This was a grand statement of principles and of the international responsibilities of the United States. With the theory pronounced, the Truman Doctrine now had to be put into practice and the first testing ground was Greece.

On May 22, 1947, Public Law 75 or the "Truman Doctrine" was passed by a vote of 67-23 in the Senate and 287-107 in the House of Representatives. This law established the American Mission for Aid to Greece (AMAG). This new organization was headed by civilian authorities who would work in conjunction with the U.S. Embassy, as well as with the military arm of the aid mission, the United States Army Group Greece (USAGG). Dwight Griswold, a former Republican governor of Nebraska, was appointed the director of the aid program. Though the U.S. Ambassador MacVeagh was theoretically the point person for coordinating all U.S. activities in Greece, Griswold assumed tactical control over the aid program. General William Livesay was appointed the commander of USAGG. His responsibilities were confined to advising the Greek Army on the use of equipment provided to them through the aid program,

¹⁷ Vandenberg quoted in Acheson, 219.

and his role in policy formulation was strictly limited.¹⁸ The U.S. operations in Greece were headquartered at the Grand Bretagne Hotel in Athens.

In July 1947 Dwight Griswold arrived in Athens. Almost immediately there was conflict between him and Ambassador MacVeagh.¹⁹ A major source of contention was over efforts by the United States and Great Britain to create a more “broad based” government in Greece. The general consensus was that a coalition between the Liberal Party of Themistocles Sofoulis and the Populists of Constantine Tsaldaris would be the best possible arrangement. The major disagreement between Griswold and MacVeagh stemmed not from the substance of such a policy but the methods by which to attain it. Both men exhibited very different political styles. Griswold was gruff and direct and maintained no reservations at all about openly intervening in the affairs of Greek politics. In October 1947, he wrote, “it would be wrong for the AMAG or for the United States Government to attempt to represent to world opinion that AMAG does not have great powers or that it is not involved in Greek Internal affairs.”²⁰ MacVeagh, on the other hand, was a professional diplomat who had immersed himself in Greek society for nearly a decade and had hoped to influence Greek policy through indirect pressures. MacVeagh said in July 1947 that, “I believe our policy of careful non-interference in Greek internal affairs to be one of our strongest assets with the Greek people.”²¹

One of Van Fleet’s significant accomplishments later during his tenure was in his synthesis of these two competing views. Van Fleet created an effective interventionist policy

¹⁸ Jones, 50-61.

¹⁹ This feud between Griswold and MacVeagh has been well documented. See Jones, 72-73. Roubatis, 38-44. Lawrence Wittner, *American Intervention in Greece, 1943-1949*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1982), 117-119.

²⁰ Griswold quoted in Roubatis, 53.

²¹ MacVeagh quoted in Karabell, 31.

cloaked in non-interventionist rhetoric that satisfied the Greeks' pride. Ultimately, Griswold's approach came to dominate U.S. policy towards Greece. In late July, the pressure he applied led to Sofoulis and Tsaldaris to begin talking about the formation of a broad based coalition government.²² Sofoulis maintained that, "it was not a question of who the personalities of the new government would be, but rather a matter of making it felt...that a radical change had come over Greece's policy."²³ Though this meeting did not immediately produce results, it planted the seeds for a future collaboration.

On September 5, Loy Henderson met with Sofoulis and explained to him American concerns about the participation of left-wing parties in a possible coalition. Henderson implied strongly that any such participation could endanger the American aid program. Sofoulis understood the implication and agreed to exclude the left from his coalition. This effectively ended any potential for a political settlement between the KKE and the Greek government. During this meeting, Sofoulis also expressed concern over the ideological orientation of the major military governing body the Greek General Staff (GGS). Several of its members were known to be fervent anti-communists who had participated in the "white terror" of the previous government and had been involved in some of the most extreme right-wing violence of the period. Sofoulis hoped to remove many of its members but had met with opposition from Tsaldaris. Although Henderson shared Sofoulis' concerns, no decision was made regarding replacing these officials. This makeup of GGS was an issue that plagued American policy makers well into the next year.

On September 7 1947 Sofoulis and Tsaldaris formed a liberal-populist coalition government. Rumors immediately began circulating about a possible deal between these two on

²² Ibid., 37-38.

²³ Sofoulis quoted in Wittner, 112.

future changes in the partisan makeup of the GGS. The following day, General Livesay and his British counterpart General Stuart Rawlins met to discuss the Anglo-American position on the issue. The decision reached at that meeting was that the Greek government was not to undertake any major changes in the makeup of the GGS without consulting the Anglo-American military leaders.²⁴ Again, the aid program was used as leverage to force Sofoulis' hand on the matter. By mid-October the problem reemerged when Sofoulis wanted to fire the hard-lined royalist head of the GGS General Constantine Ventiris. Ventiris was widely believed to have been involved in the "white terror" and had connections to the secret extremist organization "X." The American and British military missions shared Sofoulis' concerns about Ventiris' activities. Sofoulis agreed to defer to a list of replacements offered by Livesay and Rawlins. On October 15 Ventiris was sacked and was replaced with General Dimitrios Yiantzis. This decision was not entirely pleasing to Sofoulis; however, as Yiantzis had been another general on his list of GGS staff members who Sofoulis had wanted to see go.²⁵

Some scholars have noted that decisions like this were evidence that the Greek nation had essentially ceased to be a sovereign state by this point.²⁶ This view, however, fails to take into consideration the fact that the United States' sole method of applying pressure at this point was in threatening to remove the aid program. It is unlikely that the U.S. would have withdrawn aid at this point, particularly in light of the announcement of the Marshall Plan earlier in June 1947. The U.S. was committed to intervening in Greece and it is unlikely that the threat of "pulling out" would have carried with it the sort of political weight necessary to undermine the Greek

²⁴ Roubatis, 46-47.

²⁵ Roubatis, 48-49.

²⁶ Ibid.

Government. This is especially true given the significant role of Tsaldaris in the formulation of government policy during this time.²⁷

In September 1947 conditions in Greece were deteriorating rapidly. The DAG was continuing its raiding activities and the GNA was proving incapable of meeting the challenge. The GNA was plagued with numerous problems including poor leadership, diminished morale, and a lack of aggressiveness. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff decided to dispatch Major-General Stephen J. Chamberlain to assess the military situation and to provide recommendations on future U.S. policy in Greece. His findings reflected the general mood about the USAAG and the limitations of its mission. As the mission was confined to providing training, it was not able to go into the field nor was it able to have any significant impact on the functioning and effectiveness of the Greek National Army. Livesay was a talented logistics officer but was unable to wield any substantive influence over the GNA and its field operations against the DAG.²⁸ Some of his accomplishments during this time, though, included expanding the GNA to 132,000, increasing U.S. military assistance from \$150 million to \$171 million, and helping to create a National Defense Corps of 50,000 civilians who would assume the responsibilities of the gendarmerie and the garrisoning of Greek towns so that the GNA was free to pursue operations against the guerrillas.²⁹

In addition to the problems plaguing the USAGG, there was continuing conflict between Griswold and MacVeagh. By November 1947, their working relationship had deteriorated to the point where President Truman was forced to issue a new directive that clearly delineated the authority of the aid program. Under this new directive, the aid program fell completely under the

²⁷ Jones, 95-97.

²⁸ Roubatis, 58-60; Jones, 100-103.

²⁹ Jones, 105-106.

Ambassador to Greece MacVeagh. Griswold responded to this new policy by threatening to resign. President Truman was concerned with keeping Griswold on board as his involvement was seen as essential to maintaining the bipartisan foreign policy established between Truman and Senator Vandenberg. MacVeagh, on the other hand, was a skilled long time diplomat who understood the Greeks as they understood themselves and continued to promote non-intervention in their internal affairs. Truman weighed the political benefits of keeping MacVeagh over Griswold but ultimately endorsed the Griswold approach to implementing the aid program. Truman fired Lincoln MacVeagh on November 19, 1947.³⁰

Following Chamberlain's study of the situation, the general consensus in Washington was that a new approach was necessary in Greece. It was decided that a new military organization needed to be created that would be able to more actively involve itself in the affairs of the GNA. To that end, on December 12, 1947, the Joint Chiefs of Staff created the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Planning Group, Greece (JUSMAPG). This new organization would be under civilian control in Greece but would maintain direct communications with the Joint Chiefs of Staff.³¹ This group was temporarily under the command of Livesay, but because of his "lack of progress" in Greece, it was expected that he would soon be replaced. Shortly after the announcement of JUSMAPG on December 23, "General Markos" declared the First Provisional Democratic Government of Free Greece. The following day, he launched an attack on town of Konitsa but was forced to abandon these plans by early January 1948.³² Shortly after on December 28, the KKE was outlawed by the Greek government. By the end of 1947, the DAG had firmly established themselves in the Grammos and Vitsi areas and the GNA were unable to

³⁰Roubatis, 49.

³¹ Roubatis, 61.

³² Roubatis, 63-66.

remove them. The United States and Greek governments believed that the rebels commanded the loyalties or sympathies of nearly 150,000 Greeks.³³ It was decided during this time that if economic and political stability was to be restored then there had to be a military victory over the guerrillas. Secretary Marshall stated during this time that if the Greek military aid program was to be successful, then a new and more “impressive personality” was needed in Greece.³⁴ He found that new personality in Major General James Van Fleet.

Van Fleet in Greece: Politics and Diplomacy 1948

While Greece was being ravaged by civil war and American policy makers were weighing the decision to intervene, General Van Fleet was stationed in Frankfurt, Germany, at the European Command as Chief of Operations, Planning, Organizations, and Training. Van Fleet was appointed Chief of the U.S. Army Group, American Mission to Greece (USAGAMG) and Director of the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Planning Group, Greece (JUSMAPG) on 6 February 1948. The reasons for his appointment were fairly obvious. During World War II, Van Fleet demonstrated his leadership abilities time after time and was known for being an exceptionally aggressive commander. Later in 1948 a young officer named Vickers wrote to General Livesay and noted that Van Fleet “talks like a football coach between halves.”³⁵ This was a very different style than Livesay who was a logistics officer and had very little combat experience. Secretary Marshall decided that Van Fleet was the most appropriate figure to take on the role in Greece.

³³ Jones, 152.

³⁴ *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948 (hereafter cited as FRUS 1948), 5:36-37.

³⁵ Vickers to Livesay, 1948, Van Fleet Papers, Box 49, Folder 21, George C. Marshall Foundation Library, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia, hereafter Van Fleet Papers.

In early February 1948, Van Fleet was called back to Washington D.C. to be briefed by Marshall on his new assignment in Greece. During that meeting, Marshall advised Van Fleet to seek out the aid and counsel of King Paul and Queen Fredericka of Greece. Marshall recognized that one of the problems that plagued the early aid program was the poor working relationships between both the American military and civilian missions but also between the Americans and the Greek government. Marshall suggested that once a relationship was established they should travel with Van Fleet around Greece to visit the frontlines and that in addition to improving morale and fighting ability, that it could be politically advantageous. Van Fleet returned to Germany to coordinate in own personal affairs and then left for London where he met with the British Chiefs of Staff. Van Fleet characterized this meeting as merely an attempt by the British military establishment to "look him over" and determine what sort of threat he would be to their interests in Greece.³⁶

At this meeting Van Fleet discussed with the Chiefs of Staff the major issues and goals of Anglo-American policy in Greece. The British Chief of the Air Force Lord Tedder and Van Fleet both believed that one of the most important goals of the military aid mission was to reorganize the Greek military in such a way as to avoid the sort of political interference that had been characteristic of the government in Athens. Van Fleet maintained that, "The main problem was to prevent tactical direction from Athens, as had occurred in the past. A big proportion of the Greek Army was at present occupied in defending towns and other areas for political reasons and were not used for strictly military objectives." Van Fleet believed that the Greek Army was already prepared to undertake independent operations but that an overall operational plan was necessary and the Greek government could prove to be a greater hindrance to its success than the DAG guerrillas. Another problem was the need to properly coordinate land and air forces. This

³⁶ Braim, 168-169.

required a centralized coordinating effort based in Athens that could act independently of political forces. It was unlikely that the Greeks could establish that sort of organizational structure given the political and military constraints.³⁷ The bureaucratic aid situation in Greece was also highly complex. The British Military Mission (BMM) had five separate entities that acted independently and each of their efforts had to be coordinated within the general framework established by the new American aid mission JUSMAPG.³⁸

These problems were magnified by the general British attitude toward their historical role in Greece. British public opinion was strongly in favor of reducing troops in Greece. Lord Tedder suggested that such criticism could be alleviated if the U.S. was willing to send a "small token force" to Greece as had been suggested by Secretary Marshall. Van Fleet was skeptical of sending additional forces other than those already present in the aid mission. He believed that the U.S. fleet and marines already positioned in the Mediterranean were a sufficient "stabilizing factor." The general view was that the primary concern for the U.S. should be the economic recovery of Greece and that it could only be achieved if law and order was reestablished.³⁹ It was also agreed that the Greeks had to be responsible for defeating the guerrillas. If either the U.S. or Great Britain were forced to take that responsibility then it would have publicly undermined the political legitimacy of the Greek state. Sending combat troops into Greece was therefore an untenable solution. Though the British ultimately maintained forces in Greece into 1952, the U.S. military mission assumed primary responsibility for overseeing the GNA.

³⁷ British Chiefs of Staff Committee Minutes of February 18 1948 meeting, Van Fleet Papers, Box 49, Folder 13, See also Jones, 154-155.

³⁸ Braim, 169. Jones, 158.

³⁹ Ibid.

The main challenge for Van Fleet and his British counterparts was that they had to craft their policies in such a way as to pressure the government in Athens without undermining it. This was made all the more difficult by the general lack of credibility of the Sofoulis government. If the British and Americans were unable to accomplish this goal by the end of 1948, Lord Tedder believed that further “diplomatic pressure” would be needed.⁴⁰ The need to preserve Greek stability required ensuring the creation of a more efficient armed force. To establish this, however, it was necessary to undermine the Greek government privately without it losing even more public credibility. This became the dominant theme in American involvement in Greece over the next two years and Van Fleet was its chief advocate and practitioner.

At this point it is necessary to address an issue that is of considerable significance to scholars of the Truman Doctrine. In February 1948, as Van Fleet arrived in Greece, some scholars might argue that the Greek element of the Truman Doctrine had achieved its purpose. This is true in so far as one defines the purpose of the Truman Doctrine as the prevention of Soviet expansion into Greece. As Van Fleet was preparing to leave for Greece, Stalin met in Moscow with ambassadors from Yugoslavia and Bulgaria to discuss various issues relating to Balkan affairs. Stalin told these representatives that, “one should assist Greece [i.e. guerrillas] if there are hopes of winning, and if not, then we should rethink and terminate the guerrilla movement. The Anglo-Americans will spare no effort to keep Greece [in their sphere].”⁴¹ This statement is found both in Albanian minutes of the meeting as well as in the memoirs of the Yugoslavian diplomat Milovan Djilas. Stalin’s concern over Anglo-American involvement was

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Quoted in Leonid Gibianskii, “The Soviet Bloc and the Initial Stage of the Cold War: Archival Documents on Stalin’s Meetings with Communist Leaders of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, 1946-1948,” *Harvard Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 10, (1998), 130; see also Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1962), 180-182.

linked to his greater concern for other issues impacting the states already in his sphere of influence. Engaging in a protracted fight over the political alignment of a state he had already acknowledged fell under British authority seemed to him to be a losing battle. This was especially true given the strong commitment by the U.S. and Great Britain to defend the territorial integrity of Greece. During this meeting he added, "The uprising in Greece must be stopped, and as quickly as possible."⁴² This is not to say that Stalin did not express interest in the affairs of Greece but rather that it was not as politically significant as other areas of eastern Europe.

These statements would not be known to policy makers and scholars in the west for years to come. From the point of view of those in the west, Stalin was still very much involved in the destabilization of the Greek state and he desired to expand his influence there. This gradual reduction of Soviet interest in Greek affairs does not undermine the importance of the subsequent events in Greece. Though the Truman Doctrine was essentially a success at this point, the war was still raging throughout the country and there was still significant concern for U.S. and British authorities. According to a memo dated March 13, 1948 from one of Van Fleet's subordinate officers, Lieutenant Merrill, problems persisted in Greece. Apart from the continuing presence of civil and military strife across the nation, Greek civil servants had gone on strike over the government's inability to pay their salaries; thousands of Greek children had gone missing; and evidence continued to pour in about the involvement of Greece's neighbors in the insurrection.⁴³ If Greece fell to an independent communist political force, it was unknown what their allegiances might be. The position of the U.S. during this period can best be illustrated with the following statement made by a U.S. representative at the U.N. Speaking on

⁴² Quoted in Jones, 134-135.

⁴³ Memo to the Commanding General 13 March 1948, Van Fleet Correspondence, Box 49, Folder 18.

issues relating to the Greek border crisis with Albania, the representative said that the overall policy of the Soviet Union and its satellite countries was “the establishment in Greece of a minority totalitarian government which would be subservient to the Communist-controlled countries.”⁴⁴ From the point of view of the U.S. and Great Britain subsequent involvement in Greece was still necessary.

Following the London meeting, Van Fleet arrived in Athens on February 24. He quickly acquainted himself with the local players and offices. The general’s meeting with Prime Minister Sofoulis proved to be quite interesting. There he was informed by Sofoulis that because of the nature of the “Greek character,” Van Fleet should avoid telling Greek officials what his intentions were.⁴⁵ If he failed to do this then the enemy would know the details of their operations before the GNA was able to put them into effect. Van Fleet acknowledged this reality early on, and secrecy and subtlety became defining themes of his time as head of JUSMPAG. Soon after this meeting Van Fleet assumed a place on the Supreme National Defense Council (SNDC), which governed military affairs and was comprised of thirty-six members from the Greek cabinet and parliament. There Van Fleet began maneuvering himself through the political thicket as the soldier-statesmen. What made Van Fleet such an effective diplomatic-warrior was his subtle approach to problem solving. A BBC Radio Script from early 1948 said of Van Fleet that he “thinks twice before he says anything, and then used the fewest words possible. He doesn’t deal in subtleties or abstractions.”⁴⁶

⁴⁴ U.S., Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the Department of State, *A Decade of American Foreign Policy: Basic Documents*, (1950), 765.

⁴⁵ This rather controversial assertion can be found in Braim, 165.

⁴⁶ BBC Radio script, Van Fleet Correspondence Box 49, Folder 18.

One of Van Fleet's first achievements in Greece was the restructuring of the Greek National Army. In early 1948 he convinced the SNDC to cede authority over military decision making to the head of the Greek General Staff General Yiantzis. Van Fleet sought to create an independent military executive who would be able to operate freely without political interference. Throughout Van Fleet's tenure in Greece, he maintained that "The political situation in Greece...is having a detrimental effect up on the army."⁴⁷ To pursue this objective, Van Fleet did not employ subtle threats or bold press statements, as were the chosen tactics of MacVeagh and Griswold, but instead he appealed to the King Paul I through his wife Queen Fredericka. Van Fleet made contact early on with the Greek royal family through a personal letter of introduction by Secretary Marshall. In that note Marshall informed Queen Fredericka that Van Fleet was the "most aggressive and hard-driving Army Corps Commander" and that he hoped that, "behind the scenes your personal interest in Van Fleet may be helpful."⁴⁸ Shortly after arriving in Greece, Van Fleet was invited to attend a reception at the home of the royal family. There he had a private audience with Queen Fredericka where the two discussed the crisis in Greece and she assured him that if he had any problems with the Greek government or army that should bring them to her attention. Van Fleet was grateful and just as Marshall had told him in Washington he asked if she and the King would be willing to travel with him to the front lines in the hopes of increasing troop morale. She agreed and the two solidified a bond that would be enormously beneficial to Van Fleet in the months to come. Through her influence, he was able to secure her husband's support for the general's proposals to reform the command structure of the Greek General Staff. With King Paul's intervention, the SNDC approved Van Fleet's plan to place sole executive decision making authority in the Chief of Staff of the GGS.

⁴⁷ Wittner, 121.

⁴⁸ Marshall quoted in Braim, 157.

The head of the GGS was now able to act independently of the SNDC and the Greek Parliament and was free to pursue the war without political interference.⁴⁹

Once the Chief of Staff had achieved independent decision making authority, Van Fleet turned his attention to the senior officers of the GNA. He identified several of them who he believed were too old, ineffective, or unaggressive. At a meeting of the SNDC in March, it was decided, on Van Fleet's recommendation, to retire all of the Lt. Generals of the GNA. Replacements for those men were selected within a few hours and the new policy went into effect within four days. This decision was met with some resistance by the military leadership who actively attempted to use their political connections to save their jobs. Letters poured in from relatives and friends of the terminated generals and Van Fleet courteously rejected all of their pleas.⁵⁰ Prime Minister Sofoulis, Deputy and Foreign Minister Tsaldaris, and King Paul all supported Van Fleet's decision and there was no interference from the SNDC.

His significant involvement and success in influencing internal political affairs has led some such as Roubatis to conclude that Van Fleet exercised virtual control over the entire Greek National Army. It is said that during meetings of the SNDC, there was a general but unspoken consensus that all decisions had to be approved by Van Fleet. One person noted that they would, "observe his expressions so that they would agree on each and every issue with the 'yes' or the 'no' that he would pronounce deliberately and without a smile."⁵¹ This is important as it is indicative of the myth that surrounds Van Fleet's time in Greece. This myth depicts Van Fleet as a viceroy figure who could orchestrate the rise and fall of governments. This absolute power

⁴⁹Roubatis suggests that the strengthening of the independence of the army was directly responsible for much of the political problems that plagued the Greek state later before and after 1967. By enabling the GNA to operate independently and without political interference, the government of Greece was unable to protect itself against the ambitions of the military's leadership.

⁵⁰ Jones, 159. Braim, 167.

⁵¹ Quoted in Roubatis, 63.

seems farfetched when one examines the actual arrangement in Greece. There can be no doubt that all of the American advisors in Greece wielded considerable influence over the decision-making process but to suggest that they could veto proposals by shaking their head fails to appreciate the independent judgment and authority that many in the Greek political and military establishment wielded.

During Van Fleet's time in Greece he was forced to navigate political and diplomatic waters that he had never before had to experience. Press conferences became a regular part of his schedule as well as conferences and high level meetings with members of the Greek government. Van Fleet successfully adapted him to this new environment and learned how to use the media to his advantage. He was careful to never publicly criticize the Greek army or government but did so in such a way to make the public fully aware of the value of Anglo-American military and economic assistance. He communicated his message not through sophistry but by applying a certain passive honesty. This approach stands in direct contrast to Griswold's method, who never failed to publicly blame the Greek army when he thought it could embarrass the government into action.⁵² Griswold though never realized the direct impact such statements had on the morale of the GNA. Van Fleet's methods were also different from Gen. Livesay who frequently criticized the Greek government for interfering in military affairs. Livesay said in an interview with the Greek newspaper *Eleftheria* that, "It [American policy] was not successful in that we did not carry out all we had promised but our aim was to stop Communism and in this respect American policy was successful." These comments contradict the stated objectives of the entire American military and civilian aid mission which was to

⁵² See Memo to the Commander General, Van Fleet Correspondence, Box 49, Folder 15 in which Griswold blamed the Greek army's previous lack of aggression for the continuing presence of the bandits.

strengthen the legitimacy of the Greek government and bolster Greek army morale so that it could more effectively combat the insurgency which had grown to 27,000 fighters.⁵³

Despite Van Fleet's diplomatic talents in maneuvering in front of the press, he knew when being honest and direct could be effective. When asked by *Eleftheria* if victory over the Greek bandits was more a matter of system than arms, Van Fleet replied, "There is only one method: either capture or kill them."⁵⁴ Van Fleet understood the nature of journalism better than he probably realized. He applied blunt and direct humor when it was appropriate and when it was most likely going to have the greatest effect. After only a few months in Greece, the DAG guerrillas attempted to assassinate Van Fleet by placing dynamite charges along a railroad track that he was traveling on while inspecting the frontlines. After this was made public, a journalist asked Van Fleet if he intended on traveling by train anymore. Van Fleet responded, "We will take any train, anytime, and go back there."⁵⁵ This tenacity certainly proved to be a motivating force for the GNA whose members were growing tired of continuing the conflict against the DAG.

Van Fleet's diplomatic talents can be further illustrated by examining his relationship with the civilian directors of the aid missions. When Van Fleet arrived in Greece in February, Griswold was still the head of AMAG. Their relationship proved to be little different than the one that had existed between Griswold and MacVeagh. Griswold did not appreciate Van Fleet's more subtle tactics and was convinced that Van Fleet had little understanding of the political and economic issues facing Greece.⁵⁶ Before Griswold left later that year, he suggested to Truman

⁵³ Declassified Memo from Rankin to Secretary Marshall about Livesay's comments, Van Fleet Correspondence, Box 49, Folder 20.

⁵⁴ Memorandum to the Commanding General 28 February 1948, Van Fleet Correspondence, Box 49, Folder 15.

⁵⁵ See BBC Radio script. Also Jones, 161.

that he replace Van Fleet. Griswold wrote to Truman saying that Van Fleet did “not have an interest in or an understanding of the financial and political problems in Greece.”⁵⁷ Nothing came of his request but it does illustrate some of the early conflicts between the civilian and military branches of the Truman Doctrine aid program

Van Fleet's relationship with Griswold's successor, Ambassador Henry F. Grady, was far worse than anything he had experienced with Griswold. In early 1948, Griswold resigned his position as head of AMAG and Henry Grady, then Ambassador to India, was appointed to take his place both as Ambassador to Greece and as director of AMAG. This was done to correct the errors that plagued the early aid program and had led to the vitriolic bureaucratic infighting between Griswold and MacVeagh. Grady was selected for the job because of his ambassadorial experience but also because he had served as an advisor during the March elections in 1946 and was intimately familiar with the Greek situation.⁵⁸ Grady arrived in Greece in July 1948 and there was immediate tension between him and Van Fleet. Later that year, Van Fleet received a memorandum from Grady accusing him of having stolen his parking place in front of the Grand Bretagne Hotel and coveting his personal aircraft. This particular piece of correspondence illustrates the petty bureaucratic squabbling that Ambassador Grady descended to in his position as Ambassador to Greece and Director of AMAG. Van Fleet cordially responded to this letter downplaying the ridiculousness of the message and reassured his commitment to working with Grady all the while feigning a deferential respect to him.⁵⁹ This did not prevent Grady from

⁵⁶ Jones, 189.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Wittner, 247.

⁵⁸ Henry F. Grady and John T. McNay, *the Memoirs of Ambassador Henry F. Grady: From the Great War to the Cold War*. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2009), 142-143.

⁵⁹ See letter from Grady to Van Fleet, 22 October 1948, Van Fleet Correspondence, Box 49, 35. Also, Braim, 164. Jones, 189.

submitting further complaints to the State Department and to President Truman. In response to Grady's accusations, Truman sent the Secretary of the Army Kenneth Royall to assess the situation in Greece. Royall's visit in late 1948 was made without Grady's knowledge and upon arriving was met by Van Fleet who took him directly to meet with King Paul and Queen Fredericka. During that meeting, both the King and Queen reaffirmed their faith in Van Fleet's talents and abilities. Royall later told Truman, "Just leave Van Fleet alone, and – ambassador or no ambassador – he'll win this war."⁶⁰ From this point on, Truman made no further inquiries into Van Fleet's qualifications or working relationships.

Throughout his time in Greece, Van Fleet maintained that the Greek Civil War was not a civil war. Van Fleet argued that the conflict in Greece was a "struggle for International Communists against the lawfully elected and established Government of an independent state."⁶¹ Van Fleet believed that given the international character of the conflict and the enormous amount of assistance provided by foreign entities precluded the struggle from qualifying as a civil war. Years later, Van Fleet compared the Greek situation to that of Korea and Vietnam and noted that it "took years of planning, infiltration, training and building the framework within the country of propaganda, recruitment, intelligence, and logistics."⁶² This is not entirely correct in that the guerrilla movement developed alongside the Greek government that emerged out of World War II. It is important to note that the specter of international communism had become ingrained in many military and political leaders' minds, and this had the effect of intensifying policies beyond what an otherwise non-global conflict might have entailed. Van Fleet was no exception to this and his view that the conflict did not constitute a civil war enabled him to support severe

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Questionnaire from Van Fleet to Edgar Clark, 27 May 1949, Van Fleet Papers, Box 50, Folder 10.

⁶² James Van Fleet, "How We Won in Greece," *Balkan Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, (1967), 390-391.

measures against the guerrillas and their supporters on the grounds that they were no longer legitimate citizens of Greece. He later said in 1949 that "There can be no agreement between the Greek Nation and the leaders of the banditry. For them the question is posed: Death or unconditional surrender."⁶³ For Van Fleet, the bandits were an entity independent of the Greek Nation and as such they were in no position to expect anything from the government except the application of force.

By early April of 1948 with the reform of the GNA command structure in place, Van Fleet decided that it was time for the army to move against the rebels. Van Fleet believed that the time had come to pursue a small victory for the GNA and the government. In what would become known as "Operation Dawn" the GNA attacked a stronghold of 2000-3000 rebels in the Roumeli area of central Greece. The operation was intended to accomplish several things. One of those was to boost the morale of the GNA. Van Fleet believed that the Greek forces were generally capable but that they had become disillusioned with the lack of progress in their conflict with the DAG. Another objective of this operation was to help strengthen the legitimacy of the Greek government. By this time Athens was a distant political entity for many Greeks. People's loyalties often were with their local communities and families and it was in these areas where the guerrilla influence was strongest. The third purpose of "Operation Dawn" was to damage the strength and morale of the DAG. The operation was a general success in that 409 guerrillas were killed, 843 were captured, and 188 surrendered.⁶⁴ The GNA was invigorated and the Greek Government was able to claim a minor victory against the guerrilla insurrection.

Following the success of "Operation Dawn," Van Fleet turned his attention to the major offensive move being planned for late spring. This plan was called "Operation Crown" and its

⁶³ Van Fleet Questionnaire.

⁶⁴ Braim, 175. Jones, 160.

objective was to launch a three sided attack on the “crown” of the Grammos Mountains where Markos maintained his headquarters.⁶⁵ The GNA would approach from the north, east, and west and cut off the guerrillas that attempted to escape. During the preparations for this operation, Greek military leaders and politicians were continuing to request such things as “bombers, flame-throwers, direct fire weapons, gas, more artillery, armored cars and a larger army.” Van Fleet opposed most of these requests on the grounds that they were “impractical for use in Greece,” and he was deeply concerned that the documents had been leaked to the press.⁶⁶ He believed that the perception could be that the army was inadequately staffed and armed and it could further undermine troop morale. Van Fleet wrote to the Undersecretary of War William Draper in July of 1948, “I hope I can it make it clear that what Greece needs is victory this year, and eventually a better army and not a bigger army.”⁶⁷

By August, ‘A’ Corps had captured the crown of Grammos and the supply lines to Albania were cut off. Markos retreated into the Vitsi region along with his remaining DAG forces. Though Van Fleet believed that the operation was a success, it revealed many of the inadequacies of the Greek military. The GNA had demonstrated that although it possessed the “will to win,” it also showed its leadership’s lack of aggression. At a meeting with Prime Minister Sofoulis in July 1948, Van Fleet criticized the performance of the ‘B’ Corps commander General Kalogeropolous. Van Fleet noted that during the Grammos operation ‘B’ Corps had “crushed the front lines of the enemy on six different occasions and in each case failed to exploit the breakthrough.” For this reason, Van Fleet recommended General Kalogeropolous’

⁶⁵ Jones, 169-179. Braim, 175-180.

⁶⁶ United States Army Mission for Aid to Greece Memorandum for the Record, July 23 1948, Van Fleet Papers, Box 49, Folder 29.

⁶⁷ See letter from Van Fleet to William H. Draper 1948, Van Fleet Papers, Box 49, Folder 29.

removal.⁶⁸ Van Fleet recommended for Kalogeropolous' replacement a member of the GGS named General Kitrilakis. Sofoulis agreed to both recommendations but was concerned about the impact on the performance of the GGS with Kitrilakis' absence. Van Fleet reassured him that any problems would be made up by superior performance as commander of 'B' corp. During this meeting, Sofoulis brought up the possibility of relieving General Yiantzis of his command on the grounds that he too did, "not have the force and aggressiveness which is required by the CG, GGS, and that he has not carried out all of the powers given him as Commander-in-Chief." Van Fleet disagreed with Sofoulis for the time being and recommended keeping Yiantzis on board although within a few months his attitude changed and Van Fleet too was advocating his replacement. This lack of aggressiveness amongst some of the military leaders was further demonstrated when in September; the GNA launched several haphazard attacks on DAG strongholds in the Vitsi region.⁶⁹ These efforts were largely unsuccessful and afterward Van Fleet successfully pushed for the removal of several more generals through forced retirement.⁷⁰

It was around this time that Van Fleet first made contact with General Alexander Papagos. Papagos was a semi-retired distinguished military figure who was known for his successful leadership during the Albanian War against Italy in 1940 and for not being affiliated with any of the political parties.⁷¹ Van Fleet met with Papagos in August of 1948 to discuss the general situation in Greece and to gauge his views on what could be done. Papagos expressed concern about the lack of small unit training amongst the GNA and the need to promote qualified

⁶⁸ United States Army Mission for Aid to Greece Memorandum for the Record, July 23 1948, Van Fleet Papers, Box 49, Folder 29.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Braim, 180-181.

⁷¹ Jones, 187.

junior officers and, “not necessarily in accordance with seniority.”⁷² During this meeting, Van Fleet found himself in general agreement with Papagos about the nature of the Greek conflict and their mutual understanding about what had to be done. As the year went on the two became increasingly close and began shifting the basic strategy that they were going to apply. Up to that point, the GNA had been focusing on geographical and territorial cleansing. Over the next few months, Van Fleet and Papagos decided that it was important not to focus on capturing territory but rather to destroy the guerrilla forces outright. As Van Fleet had noted earlier, there was now only one method available, “either capture or kill them.”⁷³

The first attempt at implementing this new strategy came in late 1948 during “Operation Pigeon.”⁷⁴ The plan was to begin in the south and with small units gradually and systematically move northward. As the order stated, the GNA should, “not be interested to capture objectives, but to find and strike the bandits.”⁷⁵ Similar strategies had been employed earlier during the GNA’s campaign but their efforts had been undermined by guerrilla intelligence and their network of informants. In early December, before the operation was to commence, Greek forces moved into the towns and villages around the guerrilla strongholds and captured thousands of suspected informants. They were then moved to distant areas where they underwent “reeducation” programs. Following this pre-operation cleanup, Van Fleet controversially asserted that, “During a guerrilla war, the government which is being undermined should be under no obligation to protect the rights of persons who are suspected of aiding the enemy,

⁷² Memorandum for the Record, Meeting between General Van Fleet and General Papagos, August 1948, Van Fleet Papers, Box 49, Folder 30.

⁷³ Memorandum to the Commanding General 28 February 1948, Van Fleet Correspondence, Box 49, Folder 15.

⁷⁴ Braim, 200-203.

⁷⁵ Quoted from Braim, 201.

whether or not they are wearing a uniform.”⁷⁶ Such a policy clearly undermined the stated objectives of the Truman Doctrine which sought the preservation of western liberal values, and Van Fleet never made an effort to reconcile these two things without appeals to utilitarian calculus. Years later Van Fleet never apologized for these decisions. He believed that the atrocities committed by the “international gangsters” were far worse than any perpetuated by the Greek government.

“Operation Pigeon” continued through February of 1949. The final result was evidence that the Greek Army had finally embraced the level of aggressiveness that Van Fleet found appropriate. Nearly 5000 DAG forces were captured or killed. “Operation Pigeon” was considered a significant success in GNA’s campaign against the DGA forces. The GNA’s morale was raised and they had inflicted a major blow against the guerrilla forces. Despite these gains though, the conflict was far from over. The DAG still maintained a strong position in the Grammos and Vitsi regions and were still being aided by the local populations and foreign sources. As 1948 came to a close, there was great uncertainty regarding the future course of the conflict. In the coming months, Van Fleet, with the aid of the King and Queen, pushed for further changes in the military and political leadership.

Van Fleet and Greek Final Victory 1949

While Van Fleet was maneuvering through the diplomatic and political currents of the Greek military, the leadership of the KKE was suffering from its own power struggles. The tension between “General” Markos and the former DAG commander Zachariades had been intensifying throughout 1948. Markos favored continuing to employ guerrilla tactics against the Greek government while Zachariades preferred waging a conventional war. Apart from these

⁷⁶ Van Fleet quoted in Braim, 202.

strategic differences, there were also conflicts over the broader strategic objectives of the KKE. Markos was a nationalist partisan who favored an independent Greece with a communist-ideological orientation. Zachariades was fervently pro-Stalinist and favored maintaining closer ties to the Cominform. Zachariades came into further conflict with Marshall Tito in Yugoslavia following the so-called Tito-Stalin split that occurred earlier in 1948. Although these conflicts seem to be significant but they were often accompanied by tribal infighting which proved to be very problematic for the DAG in as it isolated them from their numerous allies and supporters across the border. As the conflict escalated, Yugoslavia eventually sealed its borders thus cutting the DAG off from a vital supply line.⁷⁷

By January of 1949, a political crisis emerged that challenged the legitimacy of the Greek government and its leaders. King Paul informed the leaders of the political parties that if they were unable to reach a coalition agreement, then he would dissolve the parliament and implement another solution. The implication was well understood by those present that the other solution was an extra-constitutional one that might lead to a dictatorial figure. In a rare example of consensus between Van Fleet and Grady, they both agreed that if things did not improve “We should not oppose an extra-parliamentary solution as a last resort and as a natural evolution.”⁷⁸ On January 15, Sofoulis resigned as Prime Minister and the political parties immediately went into negotiations. Ultimately though no extra-parliamentary maneuvers were necessary as a compromise was reached within a few days. The agreement called for broad representation of all four major political parties and that Sofoulis would remain Prime Minister, Alexander Diomedes (a non-partisan political figure) became Deputy Prime Minister, and Tsaldaris remained Foreign

⁷⁷ FRUS, 1949, Vol. VI, 250-251.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 245.

Minister.⁷⁹ The parliament approved these measures with a vote of confidence the following month. The most significant thing that emerged from this political crisis though was the appointment of General Papagos as Commander-in-Chief of the GNA.

By the end of 1948, Van Fleet had abandoned his previous view that General Yiantzis should remain head of GGS. His age and ineffectiveness were becoming more and more apparent and Van Fleet decided that he had to be removed and that General Papagos should take his place as Commander-in-Chief of the Greek National Army. Grady later claimed that Van Fleet and King Paul supported positioning Papagos as Prime Minister. There had been talks throughout 1948 about bringing General Papagos into a government and providing him with broad discretionary powers, but these never went any further than informal discussions. Grady later claimed that he saved the King and Van Fleet from making a huge mistake by convincing them that "little dictatorships tend to become big ones."⁸⁰ Van Fleet believed that the key to success at this point was the appointment of General Papagos as commander-in-chief and providing him with the support he needed to effectively combat the guerrillas. Despite Grady's efforts, Queen Fredericka and King Paul supported Van Fleet's position with respect to General Papagos. Secretary Marshall had extended his support for such a measure during a visit to Greece earlier in 1948. The cabinet was in general agreement and on January 21 General Papagos was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the GNA. In this new position, Papagos was given the exclusive power to appoint and remove senior military leaders and declare martial law. As the head of the GGS and GNA, General Papagos had finally been given the authority and independence that Van Fleet had suggested in early 1948.

⁷⁹ FRUS, 1949, Vol. VI, 240-241.

⁸⁰ Grady, 143.

Shortly after assuming command of the General Staff, Papagos sent a memorandum to all GNA personnel entitled, "Measures Against any Faintheartedness or Inactivity." This memo reflected the views of Van Fleet as much as they did Papagos'. In the message, he praised the spirit of the Greek warrior while eviscerating those he feels have undermined the overall war effort. He was particularly critical of those he believes did not measure up to the image he expected of a Greek soldier because of laziness or cowardice. In the memo, Papagos stated that he will, "SPARE NO STRONG MEASURE," against those who stand in the way of the GNA's objective of imposing, "order by means of total extermination of the communist banditry."⁸¹ Anyone guilty of these infractions was subject to on the spot execution. Van Fleet and Papagos were in general agreement about the overall approach to the conduct of the war. Hard-line effective training, quality leadership, and the "will to win," all had to be employed if the GNA was to be successful against the DAG forces.

In the first few months of their new partnership, Van Fleet and Papagos were faced with several challenges. One of them was the continuing inability of some Greek commanders to properly coordinate their activities. The GNA had been reorganized in such a way as to relieve it of its static role and to ensure that it functioned as a mobile force. Several commanders in 'C' Corps were continuing to spread out their forces to placate local political authorities and this prevented them from functioning as a cohesive and mobile unit. Van Fleet described this problem as "an outstanding example of trying to be strong everywhere and being strong nowhere."⁸² Papagos concurred with Van Fleet's assessment and he issued new orders to all local commanders requiring them to maintain specific levels of reserves.

⁸¹ Memo, Commander in Chief to All Units of the Army, Airforce, Navy, 15 February 1949, Van Fleet Papers, Box 50, Folder 21.

⁸² Memo from Van Fleet to Colonel Temple G. Holland, Van Fleet Papers, Box 50, Folder 2.

It should be noted that Van Fleet was not always in agreement with Papagos on matters of military policy. Throughout much of his tenure, Papagos supported expanding the GNA beyond the 150,000 limit that had been approved the previous year. Papagos went so far as to threaten to resign his position in four months if his demands for an enlargement up to 250,000 men was not met. Van Fleet was in agreement with Grady that it was an unnecessary use of resources and that expansion was not the key to success.⁸³ This did not stop Grady though from continually going behind Van Fleet's back to Marshall and others at the State Department. He claimed that Van Fleet was actively intriguing against the government and did not have a solid grasp of the situation and its complexities. In a memo to Marshall, Grady maintained that, "The key to success according to JUSMAPG thinking is always to more: more men, more money and more equipment."⁸⁴ This was incorrect of course as Van Fleet had repeatedly opposed the expansion of personnel, equipment, and funds. Van Fleet maintained throughout his time in Greece that the real key to success was an improvement of the quality of the GNA and that it was not simply a matter of numbers and fire power. This difference in opinion though never undermined Van Fleet and Papagos' working relationship. They continued to work effectively with one another and their mutual respect never wavered.

In March, Van Fleet developed a plan to begin arming the civilian populations of the Peloponnese. The objective was to provide local villagers with a means of protecting themselves against DAG guerrillas. This was a highly controversial move and Van Fleet lobbied for it on the grounds that he believed that the Greek population would be more willing to fight for their government if they had the means of doing it. The proposal called for disbanding some of the local Home Guard Units that proved "unsatisfactory and undependable." Additionally it called

⁸³ FRUS 1949, 243.

⁸⁴ Quoted in Wittner, 246.

for the distribution of several thousand Enfield rifles through the British Military Mission. Van Fleet suggested that arming the population released the GNA forces from their local responsibilities and allowed them to be able to participate in operations elsewhere in Greece.⁸⁵ By May of 1949, nearly 36,000 rifles had been issued to civilian forces. This did in fact free up many Greek troops as they were able to participate in the next major offensive, "Operation Rocket."

In May of 1949, the GNA commenced "Operation Rocket." This was designed to employ the strategy developed by Van Fleet and Papagos the previous year by targeting 4,500 guerrillas positioned in the areas west of Athens. The operation proved to be an enormous success. Van Fleet was optimistic about the operation and in an interview noted that the reason for the operation's success was that "The Greek soldier knows how to march toward Victory, indifferent about death."⁸⁶ Although the GNA had certainly improved itself dramatically in the previous year and a half, an additional explanation for the success in "Operation Rocket" was that that the DAG had by this time embraced the Zachariades plan of employing conventional military tactics against the GNA. While their previous attacks had been scattered and decentralized, the new DAG approach was to confront the GNA directly in large numbers. The numbers for this conflict speak for themselves as the GNA lost 200 men compared to nearly 3,200 for the DAG.⁸⁷

Additionally, the Yugoslavian border was sealed by this point. Although Van Fleet later criticized those who attributed success of the GNA to the Tito-Stalin split and noted that Tito,

⁸⁵ Memo from Van Fleet to Grady, 10 March 1949, Van Fleet Papers, Box 50, Folder 3. Braim, 210.

⁸⁶ Summary of Interview from Lt. Merrill to Van Fleet, Van Fleet Papers, Box 50, Folder 5.

⁸⁷ Braim, 207-208.

“stated he was closing the border. But he didn’t and he couldn’t.”⁸⁸ Van Fleet argued that the border remained open despite Tito’s efforts and supplies and weapons continued to be funneled across the border. Although Van Fleet was correct that guerrillas and supplies continued to move across the border after Tito’s announcement, it cannot be doubted that the official closing of the border caused a disruption in the supply lines from Yugoslavia to Greece and this greatly contributed to the GNA victory. It was not the sole cause for the success of “Operation Rocket” but it was an important one.

Throughout 1949, the GGS had planned a large offensive against the guerrilla strongholds of Grammos and Vitsi. Known as “Operation Torch,” this was the largest operation up to that point and its objective was to target the nearly 8,000 guerrillas positioned there. In July of 1949, the GNA commenced “Operation Torch.” The plan involved bombing the guerrilla fortifications with an air and artillery assault after which the GNA would launch a direct assault on the guerrilla forces. The assault was to be divided into two sections “A” and “B” with “A” acting as a diversionary force near Grammos. Additionally the GNA was to seal off their possible escape across the border by positioning government forces along the rear of the area.⁸⁹ The bombings began in late July, and in early August, “Torch A” was launched. This first part was a success and “Torch B” followed in the Vitsi area. The last guerrilla stronghold in Vitsi fell in late August and the last of the bandits retreated into Albania. Van Fleet wrote to Papagos praising him for his efforts noting that “The operation has progressed according to your decisions,” and that “American observers everywhere pay high tribute to the heroic soldiers and airmen of the Greek National Forces.”⁹⁰ In Albania, the retreating forces were captured and

⁸⁸ Van Fleet, “How We Won in Greece,” 391.

⁸⁹ Jones, 216-217.

detained by the Albanian government. As a response to international pressure and the fall-out of the Tito-Stalin split, Albania was no longer interested in supporting the partisan cause. The ceasefire was officially announced in October and the Greek Civil War was brought to an end. The total body count by the end of 1949 was 60,000 Greeks dead and nearly 800,000 displaced from their homes.⁹¹ Van Fleet remained in Greece until mid-1950 and the U.S. military mission ended shortly after.

Conclusion

The Proconsul of Greece: The Myth of General James Van Fleet

There is considerable disagreement amongst scholars regarding the nature and success of the Truman Doctrine and General Van Fleet's role in its implementation. It is difficult to cut through the myth that has been crafted around him and his activities in Greece. Indeed, Van Fleet noticed this same problem during his time in Greece. In a letter to his friend Cardinal Spellman in early 1948, Van Fleet said, "all kinds of dishonest charges are made against the Greek Army (and myself!)."⁹² Van Fleet's position in Greece and the role of the United States were continually misunderstood by many people in Greece. Several letters were received from Greek citizens to Van Fleet hoping that he could influence legislation for them or assist in releasing their relatives from prison.⁹³

From the point of view of the U.S., was the Truman Doctrine a success and to what extent did Van Fleet impact that success? The answer to this question ultimately rests on how one defines successful. The insurgency was defeated and the Soviet Union was not able to bring

⁹⁰ Memo from Van Fleet to Papagos, 13 August 1949, Van Fleet Papers, Box 50, Folder 19.

⁹¹ Braim, 215-220. Jones, 218-219. Jeffery, 182-185. Karabell, 35.

⁹² Letter to Cardinal Spellman, 7 April 1948, Van Fleet Correspondence, Box 49, Folder 21.

⁹³ Letter, Van Fleet Correspondence, Box 49, Folder, 22.

Greece into its sphere of influence, assuming that this was ever an actual objective. It can just easily be called a success if it the objective was to prevent any other communist-inspired movement from taking power in Greece. This success though was dependent on a number of other factors separate from U.S. intervention. Among those included the general disadvantage of the DAG in terms of numbers, equipment, and morale. Additionally, the reduction of aid to the guerrillas in 1949 certainly contributed to their defeat. The KKE was never able to consolidate its political influence to any considerable degree and as a result it was forced to embrace civil war as the most viable option for pursuing political power.⁹⁴

U.S. intervention in Greece produced a number of other results that were not as celebrated. The Truman Doctrine established a precedent for U.S. intervention abroad that found varying degrees of success and failure in places such as Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Additionally, the Truman Doctrine as a policy in practice differed enormously from the rhetoric used in Truman's March 1947 speech to Congress. Very quickly, the U.S. was forced to abandon any pretext of defending freedom, democracy, and self-determination in favor of police-state tactics, direct interference, and extra-parliamentary maneuvers.

Van Fleet's own role in these events is just as complex. Van Fleet wielded considerable influence during his time as Director of the JUSMAPG but he is by no means the Proconsul figure that some have made him out to be. He could not veto policies by blinking nor did he manipulate the rise and fall of governments over night.⁹⁵ In early 1950, as the American military presence in Greece was being gradually reduced, Van Fleet was approached by an agent of the General Nicholas Plastiras (who had just won a substantial majority in the most recent election).

⁹⁴ André Gerolymatos, "Greek Democracy on Trial: from Insurgency to Civil War, 1943-49," *Review of International Affairs*, Spring Vol. 2 Issue 3, (2003), 135-137.

⁹⁵ See Roubatis' account of Van Fleet and his influence during Supreme Defense Council meetings, 63.

Plastiras requested a “secret” meeting with Van Fleet. Van Fleet refused to meet with him on the grounds that it was and would appear inappropriate.⁹⁶ In a highly uncharacteristic fashion, Van Fleet later skewered Plastiras in several memos and communiqués to the State Department. He claimed that under Plastiras, “the Communists and fellow travelers have gradually regained their morale and influence and many are now in important positions.” He commented how the new government granted amnesty to “war criminals” and relieved many police and gendarmerie officials.⁹⁷ It is clear that by early 1950, Van Fleet’s influence on Greek politics was waning. The new government that emerged in 1950 was a centrist coalition that resisted royal intervention and many of their policies were generally more conciliatory than the previous ones. Van Fleet’s concerns were sincere but unwarranted and his general tone in these messages was reflective of the broader change in the Cold War mentality. No longer was the Greek Civil War seen as a domestic matter with regional implications. By this time, the Cold War had become a global political struggle and internal threats were seen as international bandits.

In matters of military policy, it is true that he maintained a significant presence during 1948 and 1949. Van Fleet himself said that, “I really had no orders from Washington that I would command the Greek forces, but in practice I actually did.”⁹⁸ Though it can be said that this influence was made possible by the intervention of the royal family and in particular Queen Frederica. What can be said with certainty is that Van Fleet proved to be a highly effective diplomatic figure despite serving in a military capacity. He was forced to wield multiple skill sets to protect the interests of the Truman Doctrine Aid program and to ensure an effective and

⁹⁶ Memorandum for the Record, J.A. McChristian to Van Fleet, 9 March 1950, Van Fleet Papers, Box 50, Folder 36.

⁹⁷ Van Fleet quoted in Wittner, 288-299.

⁹⁸ Van Fleet quoted in Andrew James Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942-1976*, (Washington D.C: Defense Dept., Army, Center of Military History, 2006), 47.

efficient Greek Army. Van Fleet characterized his role in Greece as “Coach Van Fleet.”⁹⁹ In many ways this is an appropriate description. In navigating the highly complex and difficult waters that bureaucratic politics is, Van Fleet was forced to coach from along the sidelines by providing advice, by negotiating, and by maneuvering himself in such a way as to ensure the careful implementation of the Truman Doctrine.

⁹⁹ Van Fleet, “How We Won in Greece,” 391.

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