

Regime Change in the Aegean after the Second World War: Reconsidering the Foreign Influence

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Paper prepared for presentation at the
49th International Studies Association Convention
San Francisco, CA
26-29 March, 2008

Draft: Please do not cite without permission.
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The “third wave” of democratization stimulated scholarly interest on how and to what extent international factors influence regime transitions.¹ Past research focused on domestic causes of democratization and granted foreign actors only “an indirect and usually marginal role.”² However, current studies started to direct their attention on the impact of Western actors on regime change and their policies of democracy promotion.³ Writing in 1992, one of the most prominent scholars of democratization, Larry Diamond, noted that “we stand at an extraordinary moment in history, a time of unprecedented movement to democracy.”⁴ The end of communism left democracy uncontested, increasing the numbers of transitions in the post-1990 era. This trend was followed by Bush administration’s pledge to promote democracy and the European Union’s positive role in stabilizing democracy in several East European nations. As a result of these developments, the growing literature on the external influences of regime change has focused primarily on the post-Cold War cases of democratization.

However, important conclusions can be drawn by studying earlier regime transitions. In the Cold War era, the American government confronted a “dilemma when engaging with friendly dictators in its battle against communism.”⁵ Similarly, after the September 11 attacks,

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

² Philippe C. Schmitter, “An Introduction to Southern European Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Italy, Greece, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey,” in Guillermo O’Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Southern Europe* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), 5.

³ Jon C. Pevehouse, “Democracy from Outside-In? International Organizations and Democratization,” *International Organization* 56, 3 (Summer 2002), 515.

⁴ Larry Diamond, “Promoting Democracy,” *Foreign Policy* 87 (Summer 1992), 25.

⁵ David Adesnik and Michael McFaul, “Engaging Autocratic Allies to Promote Democracy,” *The Washington Quarterly* 29, 2 (Spring 2006), 9.

the US government chose to cooperate with friendly tyrants, such as Saudi Arabia, rather than encouraging democratic transitions in authoritarian allies. Indeed, “democracy promotion has never achieved the status of principal foreign policy interest..., official rhetoric to the contrary notwithstanding.”⁶ This contradiction in the contemporary world has also led some states, such as Russia, Uzbekistan, Belarus, China, Nepal, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, and Venezuela, to denounce American democracy assistance as infringement of sovereignty.⁷ Thus, American influence on democratic transitions produced mixed results after the collapse of communism, similar to the Cold War era. For this reason, studying earlier cases can highlight how democracy promotion works and why it sometimes fails.

This paper studies two cases of regime change after the Second World War. One case, Turkey, made a transition to democracy in 1950. The other case, Greece, became authoritarian after a military coup led by a group of colonels in 1967. This comparison is important even though democracy in Turkey saw at least three military coups since 1950⁸ and Greece’s authoritarianism collapsed in 1974. According to the conventional view held by the Greek sources, the United States was involved in the establishment of the 1967 Greek junta and helped sustain it. Similarly, the existing literature on the 1950 Turkish transition to democracy holds that one of the determinants of democratization was the desire to become part of the Western alliance. Thus, ironically, the new world order set out by the US at the end of the Second World War is seen as the cause of diametrically opposite regimes in two neighboring countries belonging to the same alliance. In Greece it is seen responsible for an authoritarian regime whereas in Turkey it is believed to be the cause of democracy.

⁶ Peter J. Schraeder, “The State of the Art in International Promotion: Results of a Joint European-North American Research Network,” *Democratization* 10, 2 (Summer 2003), 33.

⁷ Thomas Carothers, “The Backlash against Democracy Promotion,” *Foreign Affairs* 85, 2 (March/April 2006), 55-68.

⁸ However, no long term authoritarian regime was established in Turkey after 1950. Ali L. Karaosmanoglu, “The International Context of Democratic Transition in Turkey,” in Geoffrey Pridham ed., *Encouraging Democracy: The International Context of Regime Transition in Southern Europe* (Leicester, London: Leicester University Press, 1991), 160, 170.

What was then the real effect of US foreign policy in the Greek and Turkish regimes? How much role did foreign factors play in the Turkish democratization and Greek military intervention during these the Cold War years? In this paper, I argue that even though domestic dynamics played crucial roles in these cases, external influences also affected the outcomes. External factors changed the calculations of the elites and the cost-benefit analysis of the domestic actors. Especially critical in this regard was the impact of foreign factors on the power and role of the military in Greek and Turkish societies.

In Greece, the end of the Second World War and German occupation brought about a costly Civil War between leftist and rightist forces. The right-wing Athens government and the military won the war with considerable British and American support. American assistance continued after Greece became an ally of the West in the Cold War. However, the Hellenic Armed Forces received the bulk of this aid, strengthening the military relative to the rest of society. This kind of empowerment of the military decreased the costs of repression when the colonels staged their coup in 1967. On the other hand, the experience of the Greek Civil War, the Cold War context, and American indoctrination against communism gave the impression to the colonels that the leftist forces were increasingly threatening the Greek sociopolitical system. This perception that the left must be contained increased the benefits associated with intervention. Thus, for the colonels, the benefits of establishing an authoritarian regime started to exceed its costs.⁹

In the Turkish case, contrary to Greece, international factors facilitated the transition to democracy. By 1950, the benefits of sustaining the authoritarian regime had already decreased due to a number of domestic factors, such as the repression of threatening forces by the Republican People's Party (RPP), the moderate nature of the opposition, and the

⁹ This type of cost-benefit analysis can be rephrased using the terminology of Robert Dahl. According to Dahl, the probability of polyarchy increases when the costs of repression are higher than the costs of toleration. Conversely, the probability of a hegemonic regime increases when the costs of toleration exceed the costs of suppression. It is possible to rephrase the costs of toleration as benefits of an authoritarian regime. Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971).

persuasion of the authoritarian rulers that they could win the elections in a competitive system. Rather than altering the benefits of authoritarianism, what the international dynamics changed in Turkey was the costs of sustaining the regime. Mobilization for the Second World War revealed the weaknesses of the Turkish Armed Forces. This led lower ranking officers to oppose the rule of the Republican People's Party (RPP) and shift their support to the newly established Democratic Party. Since the power of RPP relied partly on the military, the costs of repressing the Democrats and sustaining the authoritarian regime increased when the armed forces lost their cohesiveness. At the same time, the threat posed by Turkey's northern neighbor, Soviet Union, necessitated an alliance with the Western bloc. The Republican leaders believed that it would be difficult to convince the American government that authoritarian Turkey was an ally unless there was a transition to democracy. Thus, the costs of sustaining the single-party regime increased due to the Second World War and the Cold War international context.¹⁰ Coupled with the belief that the benefits of single-party rule had diminished, the Republican elites made a transition to democracy.

International Influences on the Costs and Benefits of Military Intervention in Greece

On 21 April 1967, a group of middle ranking officers forcefully intervened in Greek politics and established an authoritarian regime that lasted until 1974. There is a strong belief among the Greeks that the 1967 intervention was staged by the United States. The claims of Andreas Papandreu and leftist politicians have perpetuated the notion that especially the CIA was directly involved in the insurgency.¹¹ According to this argument, the United States needed a location for its Sixth Fleet in Greece. The intervention became a necessity in order to

¹⁰ Adopting Dahl's arguments, Hakan Yilmaz calls this the "expected external costs of suppression." Hakan Yilmaz, "External-Internal Linkages in Democratization: Developing an Open Model of Democratic Change," *Democratization* 9, 2 (Summer 2002), 67-84.

¹¹ Andreas Papandreu claims that the intervention originated at the Greek Central Intelligence Agency, which was "an administrative and financial appendage of the CIA." *Democracy at Gunpoint, Man's Freedom* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1970), 226.

achieve this goal since the democratically elected Center Union government threatened to sever Greece's ties with the USA. It is clear that during these Cold War years, CIA officers and American embassy personnel had contact with Greek politicians, military officers, and even the colonels before their intervention (since some of them worked at the Greek Intelligence Agency). It is quite possible that they exerted influence and their opinions were taken into consideration before political actions that could have an impact on the NATO alliance were decided. There is also no doubt that the colonels calculated how the Americans would react to a military intervention.

However, there is no evidence to suggest that the Americans initiated the authoritarian regime.¹² Indeed, the first reaction of the American government to the insurgency was to officially oppose it, declare the hope that there would be a return to democracy, discontinue sending heavy weapons, and officially suspend diplomatic relations after the King's failed coup on 13 December 1967. However, these gestures were symbolic, rather than substantive, since at the time the USA could not afford to lose an important ally at the vicinity of the USSR and the Middle East. Later, even these gestures were dropped, heavy weapon supplies were resumed, the administration rebuilt its close ties with Greece, and the Sixth Fleet started operating from Greek territory. But, members of the US Congress and the Senate continued to be critical of the regime, and the attitudes of the administration were not always consistent. For instance, the suspension of heavy weapon supplies was reintroduced at the beginning of Nixon's term. Additionally, some European countries, especially the Scandinavian ones, demanded Greece to be ousted from NATO.¹³ Thus, there was no unified American and

¹² There are indications that the King asked the US ambassador's opinion on the intervention prepared by the military generals before the April 1967 coup. Ambassador Talbot and the administration were against a coup that would prevent the elections in May to take place under normal democratic procedures. Given that the Americans opposed a coup by the King and the generals, it is highly unlikely that they supported and aided the colonels' intervention. Peter Murtagh, *The Rape of Greece: The King, the Colonels, and the Resistance* (London and Sydney: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 110, Maurice Goldbloom, "United States Policy in Post-War Greece," Richard Clogg and George Yannopoulos eds. *Greece under Military Rule* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1972), 238-240.

¹³ Christos L. Doumas, "Crisis, Revolution and Military Rule in Greece: A Tentative Analysis," *The Southern Quarterly* 6, 3 (1968), 273-274, 287, Goldbloom, "United States Policy in Post-War Greece," 238-254, A. G. Xydis, "The Military Regime's Foreign Policy," in *Greece under Military Rule*, 195-197, Adam Garfinkle, "The

NATO policy towards the colonels even when military aid continued and close ties were forged between the USA and the Greek colonels. It seems far fetched to think that the Americans controlled the colonels to the point of making them intervene in Greek democracy. This type of argument directs attention away from the real cause of the authoritarian regime and makes it more difficult to assess the true impact of American involvement.

The following pages will attempt to examine American influence on Greek authoritarianism and how external factors interacted with domestic variables. First, the effects of external military assistance on the costs of intervention will be analyzed. In the second section, the influence of the Cold War on the perceived benefits of establishing an authoritarian regime will be examined.

Civil War Legacy, Military Assistance and Costs of Intervention:

One of the main external influences on the transition to authoritarian regime in Greece was American military aid and training, which created strong and autonomous armed forces. The colonels staged a coup in April 1967 using the equipment, skills, and contingency plans gained during the Civil War years and the Cold War environment afterwards. Years of American and NATO aid kept the military relatively more powerful than the opposition groups. This lowered the costs of intervention for the colonels, who controlled the resources of the armed forces. Military aid continued after the transition to authoritarianism, this time helping the colonels to sustain their regime.

During the Second World War, most of Greece's territories were occupied by the Axis powers of Germany, Italy, and Bulgaria.¹⁴ The King, part of the military organization, and the

Nadir of Greek Democracy," in Daniel Pipes and Adam Garfinkle eds., *Friendly Tyrants: An American Dilemma* (Basingstoke: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1991), 69-73. Greece was banned from the Council of Europe in 1969 and relations with the European Economic Community were frozen. The attitude of the Europeans towards the Greek regime caused the colonels to rely even more heavily on American military aid, diplomatic support, and economic investment. For more information on the European reactions, see Arne Treholt, "Europe and the Greek Dictatorship," in *Greece under Military Rule*, 210-225.

¹⁴ For more information on the occupation, see Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece: The Experience of Occupation, 1941-1944* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

government of the country fled to Cairo. In mainland Greece, most of the country was controlled by the newly established resistance organization, the National Liberation Front (EAM), and its military arm, National Popular Liberation Army (ELAS). Both organizations were led by the communists.¹⁵ After the Axis powers withdrew from Greece, the official Hellenic government returned to Athens. The first conflict occurred between EAM/ELAS and the government in December 1944 when the leftists attacked Athens, following mass demonstrations and a general strike organized by the Communist Party. The British troops located in Athens repulsed the communists, forcing them to sign a truce in February 1945 and to disband.¹⁶ However, after the agreement, the military, police, and anti-communist gangs continued to attack the communists. These assaults were allowed by the government in Athens and the British. As repression continued, the Communist Party reorganized its activists, causing Greece to lapse into guerilla warfare and Civil War.¹⁷ In the subsequent four years, Greece was divided between the communists, represented by the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE), and the right-wing.

The Civil War concluded with right-wing victory thanks to several external factors. First, the communists in Greece did not receive aid from the USSR because of the Percentages Agreement of October 1944. According to this agreement between Russia and Britain, while Greece was left to British influence, Romania and Bulgaria was conceded to the USSR. Keeping its word, the Soviet Union did not provide support to the DSE. After 1949 Yugoslav aid to the Greek rebel forces was also cut. As a result, the leftists could not find necessary supplies against the rightists. The right-wing government forces, on the other hand, were financed and trained by Western powers. In 1947, the Truman Doctrine promised

¹⁵ Hagen Fleischer, "The National Liberation Front (EAM), 1941-1947: A Reassessment," in John O. Iatrides and Linda Wrigley, eds., *Greece at the Crossroads: The Civil War and Its Legacy* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 48-90.

¹⁶ David H. Close, *The Origins of the Greek Civil War* (London and New York: Longman Group Limited, 1995), 137-145, C. M. Woodhouse, *Struggle for Greece: 1941-1949*, 3rd Edition (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Publisher, 2003), 111-139.

¹⁷ Close, *The Origins of the Greek Civil War*, 150-184.

military aid and economic assistance to Greece along with Turkey. After this American commitment, Greece came under the influence of the USA more than Britain. Thanks to this external help, the government forces were able to crush the communists.¹⁸

American assistance partially took the form of civilian aid, which allowed the right-wing government to provide welfare benefits, agricultural credits, and increase state employment opportunities. These measures improved the popularity of the right-wing relative to the leftist forces. Most of the communist soldiers lacked proper food, clothing, and weapons. They terrorized the population under their control to receive supplies and to forcefully recruit members. These measures reduced the popularity of the DSE while American aid increased the support gathered by the Athens government.¹⁹

The second type of American assistance was direct military aid and training. During the Civil War, the Hellenic Armed Forces received \$353.6 million worth of assistance, approximately 160,000 “small arms weapons” and 4,000 “mortar and artillery pieces” from the USA.²⁰ Foreign aid granted the much needed weapons to fight the war and it also provided for the expansion of the army from around 98,000 soldiers at the end of 1946 to 120,000 officers in 1947. At the end of the Civil War, 150,000 officers served in the army alone, as opposed to at most 15,000 DSE forces.²¹ At the beginning of the Civil War, the British were responsible for training the new recruits in the military. Later, the United States took the initiative. After October 1947, the Greek military received tactical advice on how to conduct the war from the joint US military advisory and planning group. Americans also sat in the Supreme Council of National Defense meetings.²² During these crucial years, British

¹⁸ Close, *The Origins of the Greek Civil War*, 189-220, Woodhouse, *Struggle for Greece*, 169-306, John O. Iatrides, “Civil War, 1945-1949: National and International Aspects,” in John O. Iatrides, ed., *Greece in the 1940s: A Nation in Crisis* (England: University Press of New England, 1981), 195-219.

¹⁹ Close, *The Origins of the Greek Civil War*, 214.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 200, 214-216, Thanos Veremis, *The Military in Greek Politics: From Independence to Democracy* (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 146-147, 150.

²² Veremis, *The Military in Greek Politics*, 147-148. The other three institutions in which a representative of the American mission for aid to Greece was present were the foreign trade administration, currency committee, and the social insurance foundation. A. A. Fatouros, “Building Formal Structures of Penetration: The United States in Greece, 1947-1948,” in *Greece in the 1940s*, 250-253.

and later American involvement made it possible for the right-wing to win the war, and also secured an assertively anti-communist military equipped with new tactics on how to fight internal enemies.

After the Civil War, Greece became a secure ally of the West. In 1952, Greece became member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Within this framework, Greece started to receive arms supplies and officer training in the USA or in other NATO countries. The amount of aid the armed forces obtained was disproportional vis-à-vis the assistance other societal groups received. Between 1944 and 1962, the military alone got \$1,600.5 million worth of aid while the whole non-military aid totaled to \$1,918.3 million and \$224.2 million of loans. Moreover, even though after 1956, economic assistance rapidly declined, “military aid... continued to flow as part of the Mutual Security Agreement under the Truman Doctrine and as part of NATO obligations.”²³

This type of disproportional assistance continued after the Greek colonels intervened in 1967. Between 1950 and 1969, a total of 11,229 military officers received training in the USA. Under the same military assistance program, close to 2,000 students received training in overseas NATO installations. Given that there were 11,000 officers in the Greek armed forces after the Cold War, these trainings covered a significant fraction of the officers. In NATO schools military officers were taught not only warfare, strategy and military technology, but also political science, sociology, economics, and psychology.²⁴ In 1970, “there were some 3,000 US military and Defense Department employees stationed in Greece compared to just 210 US government employees who were not attached to America’s military interests.”²⁵ Since no other social group received this much systematic training from a foreign power,

²³ See table 4.7 in A. F. Freris, *The Greek Economy in the Twentieth Century* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1986), 148, quote from page 149-150. According to another calculation, Greece received 1,150 million dollars of military aid but only 341 million dollars for other ventures between 1947 and 1957. Murtagh, *The Rape of Greece*, 40.

²⁴ Constantine P. Danopoulos, *Warriors and Politicians in Modern Greece* (Chapel Hill: Documentary Publications, 1984), 27, Doumas, “Crisis, Revolution and Military Rule in Greece,” 269, Veremis, *The Military in Greek Politics*, 155.

²⁵ Murtlagh, *The Rape of Greece*, 19.

“United States policies have contributed to the hypertrophy of the Greek military establishment compared to the relative atrophy of political structures such as political parties, trade unions, and other pressure groups.”²⁶

In terms of arms supplies, Greece received 941 million dollars worth of weapons from mostly the USA, but also from France and Germany between 1964 and 1973.²⁷ Even though the USA cut heavy weapon supplies at first in order to show its disapproval of the authoritarian regime, it continued providing light weapons. These weapons were actually easier to use against internal opponents, and thus, the US policy did not shift the domestic balance of power significantly.²⁸ Aid poured into the Greek military causing it to become stronger and more autonomous.

A clear indicator of the salience of American influence in keeping the military stronger than the rest of the society before and after the authoritarian regime was how the insurgent colonels took over the government. On the day of the coup, only a handful of middle-ranking officers used a NATO plan entitled Prometheus which was designed to be used only in case of a communist takeover or war with a communist country. The plan sketched how communists and other suspects could be quickly arrested and how airfields, radio, and communications installations could be seized. No real mobilization of the military was necessary for the plan to work properly. Enough tanks in Athens could take hold of crucial spots. Since Brigadier General Pattakos, among the three leaders of the junta, was in charge of armored training, he provided all the tanks in Athens to the insurgency. Then, Lieutenant General Gregorios Spantidakis was convinced to announce to the army units all over Greece that the plan Prometheus was in force.²⁹ Spantidakis was one of the chiefs of staff, and as a result, his pronouncement gave the image that the hierarchy of the military was

²⁶ Theodore A. Coulombis, “The Greek Junta Phenomenon,” *Polity*, 6, 3 (1974), 353.

²⁷ Danopoulos, *Warriors and Politicians in Modern Greece*, 28.

²⁸ Goldbloom, “United States Policy in Post-War Greece,” 242.

²⁹ C. L. Sulzberger, “Greece under the Colonels,” *Foreign Affairs*, 48, 2 (1970), 305. Also see Papandreou, *Democracy at Gunpoint*, 227-228.

taking action. Because under Prometheus all military units knew what they were required to do, the insurgency succeeded in only a few hours. Indeed, the colonels only controlled tanks, the military police, and military schools in Athens.³⁰ Without Prometheus, the mutiny might have never succeeded since the colonels would be obligated to mobilize other key military units. In order for each unit to know what they must do in advance, a bigger plan with more participants would have been necessary. However, the colonels did not enjoy overwhelming support within the military. Thus, there was a good chance for the mutiny to falter without Prometheus and without NATO training which made the plan readily available to the insurgents.

In summary, American military aid and assistance starting from the beginning of the Civil War and continuing during the authoritarian regime, kept the costs of intervening and sustaining military rule low for the colonels. The insurgents took over the government using a plan provided by NATO and the weapons Western powers granted since the Second World War. Such assistance and training was understandable in the Cold War context. However, aid went disproportionately to the armed forces, keeping the military autonomous and stronger than democratic forces. This imbalance decreased the costs of repression for the authoritarian rulers.

³⁰ Athenian, *Inside the Colonels' Greece*, translated by Richard Clogg (London: Chatto & Windus, 1972), 66.

Perceived Threat of Communism and Benefits of Intervention:

The second type of external influence was the Cold War context, which (coupled with Western military training and the legacy of the Civil War) caused the colonels and the right-wing in Greece to perceive the Center Union as a leftist threat. This factor was not the only reason that caused the colonels to intervene;³¹ but it was one of the main motivations. At least, the communist threat became a justification for military rule and a rhetoric that the colonels used to legitimize their hold on power.

After the Civil War, right-wing political parties and especially the National Radical Union (NRU) dominated Greek politics. This situation changed in 1961 when a group of parties from moderate right to the socialists united under the banner of the Center Union party (CU), headed by Georgios Papandreou. In the 1961 elections, the party won 33.7 percent of the votes and became the main opposition party. Two years later, the party gathered 42.1 percent of the votes and won more seats in the parliament than the NRU. In 1964, more than half of the electorate chose the CU, effectively ending the superiority of the right-wing in Greek politics.³²

Ideologically the CU was not an extreme leftist party. According to Papandreou, the primary goal of the party was to decrease the votes of the communist United Democratic Left (UDL) and participate in democracy with the other “nationally-minded” party, the National Radical Union.³³ However, left-wing factions existed within the CU. For instance, among the parties that formed the CU, the Democratic Union of Elias Tsirimokos had its roots in the United Democratic Left and there were claims that 30 deputies were elected to the parliament

³¹ Other factors were the split in the military between higher and lower ranking officers, the threat the military perceived against its own corporate interests, and the professional grievances of the colonels. Veremis, *The Military in Greek Politics*, 153-155.

³² John S. Koliopoulos and Thanos Veremis, *Greece the Modern Sequel: From 1831 to the Present* (London: Hurst and Company, 2002), 100-101, George A. Kourvetaris, *Studies on Modern Greek Society and Politics* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1999), 68-69. For the electoral results, see Richard Clogg, *Parties and Elections in Greece: The Search for Legitimacy* (London: C. Hurst Company, 1987), 41, 45, 49, for more information on the NRU and CU, see Keith R. Legg, *Politics in Modern Greece* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 125-162.

³³ Clogg, *Parties and Elections in Greece*, 39.

with communist support.³⁴ Similarly, some of the parties that made up the Center Union (including the Liberal Party) had previously cooperated with the United Democratic Left in an electoral coalition and won close to 49 percent of the votes in the 1956 elections.³⁵

The leftist faction within the Center Union gained strength especially after Georgios Papandreou's son, Andreas, joined the party to serve in the 1964 government as a minister. Andreas Papandreou's policies resembled the political objectives of the United Democratic Left, which acted as the representative of the Communist Party in exile. The UDL advocated the return of the Communist Party to Greece, separation of Greece from American sphere of influence, abandoning NATO membership, removal of foreign military bases in Greece, and the abolition of certificates of anti-communism for employment in the public sector.³⁶ Andreas agreed with most of the demands of the UDL. He was especially vocal in criticizing Greece's alliance with the USA and its membership in NATO.³⁷ The right-wing military officers interpreted this rhetoric as communistic and fatal for Greece's membership to the Western coalition. Additionally, Andreas Papandreou's anti-NATO and anti-American policies jeopardized foreign budgetary support for the military by threatening to end Greece's alliance that had benefited the armed forces in terms of aid, training, and equipment.

Since the military in Greece, along with the monarchy, was seen as the bastion of right-wing against an internal communist threat, Andreas Papandreou's direct attacks against the military were also interpreted as leftist challenges. First, Papandreou was accused of being involved in a leftist coup, called *Aspida*. Andreas repeatedly refused the allegations.³⁸ However, the conspiracy was uncovered by the intelligence agency, and thus, the regular officers in the military did not have enough information on the validity of the accusations. It is

³⁴ Clogg, *Parties and Elections in Greece*, 39, Christos L. Doumas, "Crisis, Revolution and Military Rule in Greece," 262 ff 7.

³⁵ D. George Kousoulas, "The Origins of the Greek Military Coup, April 1967" *Orbis*, 13,1 (1969), 336-337.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 336, Legg, *Politics in Modern Greece*, 201-205.

³⁷ Kousoulas, "The Origins of the Greek Military Coup," 339-344.

³⁸ Papandreou, *Democracy at Gunpoint*, 145-152, 187-194.

safe to assume that some of them genuinely believed that Papandreou tried to stage a leftist coup using the military.

Second, the Center Union called for the democratization of the armed forces, which meant the curtailment of the military's prerogatives and especially its autonomy from civilian rule. Andreas Papandreou asserted that the military "will not be permitted to point its sword at the throat of Greek democracy" and declared that

the armed forces are made to serve the national interests. ... When, as it will, the Center Union returns to power with wide popular support, it will limit the political role of the army... Military officers who dare to question the national character and purposes of the popularly elected government will have no future and no place in the Greek army. Officers of the Greek army will not be allowed to engage in politics. They will be required to serve the public interests in a professional way under civilian control with overall policy.³⁹

Similarly, the CU demanded to abolish the right of the military to vote in the national elections. The votes of the military officers had favored the right-wing and had the power to determine who would win the elections. Thus, it was an important military prerogative and safeguard against the left, which the CU was insistent on eliminating.⁴⁰

Interviews conducted with 100 military officers from various ranks in the army during the winter of 1968 and 1969 by George Kourvetaris suggest that the coup-makers intervened and the interviewed officers supported the intervention mainly because they perceived a communist threat. Respondents argued that the politicians were unable put down and safeguard the country against the leftist danger because of their personal quarrels and their deficiency to comprehend the social situation. Several reasons were given to justify the subsistence of communist threat, most important ones being the policies of the Center Union

³⁹Danopoulos, *Warriors and Politicians in Modern Greece*, 53-54.

⁴⁰ In 1963, the Center Union threatened to abstain if the military continued to exercise its right to vote in the national elections. Maurice Genevoix, *The Greece of Karamanlis*, trans. by Dorothy Trollope (London: Doric Publications, 1973), 171. In the November elections of the same year, the armed forces vote had been decisive in helping the National Radical Union receive only 2.7 percent of the votes less than the Center Union. 60.5 percent of the officers voted for the NRU as opposed to the 39.4 percent of the electorate. The Center Union received 34.4 percent of the votes of the military and 42.1 percent of the civilians. See, Clogg, *Parties and Elections in Greece*, 46. It was a regularly used tactic to move military units to leftist oriented provinces before the elections in order to balance the results in favor of the right. See Legg, *Politics in Modern Greece*, 218-219.

and Andreas Papandreou. The officers referred to the increasing number of demonstrations in support of the Center Union as repetition of the events leading to the Civil War of the 1940s.

As one officer explained:

We fought the communists in Korea; we defeated them... in Greece. Yet I was stunned to see them again on the sidewalks of Athens. The national danger from communist subversion was seen when Athens was transformed into an arena of mobocracy... [V]iolent demonstrations which had as their objective chaos and the destruction of Greece rather than the economic improvement of the working classes. The same events repeated as they had in the period of 1944 to 1949. We had no choice but to intervene.⁴¹

In a recent interview, one of the leading coup-makers, Stylianos Pattakos, reiterated that the communist threat and the dangers that emanated from the Center Union were the main reasons for their intervention.⁴²

The question of whether there was a real communist threat or not prior to 1967 coup is still one of the most debated aspects of the 1967 coup. Given that the Center Union leadership was not communist, it does not seem that there was a real leftist threat. However, it must be acknowledged that the legacy of the Civil War and the external environment brought about exaggerated claims by the colonels and the right-wing that the CU was dangerous. As Zaharopoulos argues,

Such fears and beliefs were being daily reinforced by the right-wing press, sections of the which kept insisting virtually up until the outbreak of the April *coup*, that Greece was on the threshold of another December (1944) uprising. Many officers –because of the civil war experience and their own deep anti-communist convictions- uncritically accepted these irresponsible press warnings. In other words, the threat of communism was *perceived* as salient. As is well known, perception of a threat is as potent a factor contributing to behavior as the actual existence of such a threat.⁴³

In summary, the legacy of the Greek Civil War, which caused the armed forces to face leftist insurgents after the Axis occupation, and the Cold War mentality, which conceived communism as a great danger, resulted in the belief that Greece was about to face another leftist insurgency. The calculations of the colonels changed, making them believe that the

⁴¹ Kourvetaris, *Studies on Modern Greek Society and Politics*, 137-143, quote from 141.

⁴² Personal interview with the author, 03 September 2004, Athens.

⁴³ George Zaharopoulos, "Politics and the Army in Post-War Greece," in *Greece under Military Rule*, 29.

benefits of intervention were higher than the costs. Years of military aid lowered the costs of suppressing the opposition and staging a coup. At the same time, establishing an authoritarian regime seemed beneficial since it would “clean” the political system from the leftists.

International Influence on the Costs of Authoritarianism in Turkey

International influences during and after the Second World War triggered a transition to democracy in Turkey. The Republican People’s Party (RPP) was in power after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the declaration of the Republic in 1923. The transition to democracy started in 1946 when an opposition party, the Democratic Party, was established. The same year the first direct national elections were held. The RPP won the 1946 elections but the Democrats also gained seats in the parliament. The rule of the RPP ended with the 1950 elections, which brought to power the Democrats.

External factors contributed to this transition by altering the cost – benefit analysis of the top leadership of the Republican People’s Party (RPP). First, war-time difficulties and policies of the RPP caused the alliance that sustained the regime to crumble, and thereby, increased the costs of maintaining single-party rule. During the 1930s, the landed elites and the business community supported authoritarianism because the RPP sustained economic stability, provided a fruitful business environment, and protected private property. However, in the 1940s, this changed: the well-being and security of the economic elites were under attack due to unfavorable policies enacted during the Second World War. The preferences of the military also changed. Whereas during the initial years of the Republic, the military was unified and supportive of the RPP, in the 1940s, the military was split and the lower ranking officers were in opposition to the party in government. The mutinies in the military left the government weak and in no position to successfully repress the opposition. The second

influence of international factors was to persuade the top leadership of RPP and especially president Ismet Inonu that transition to democracy was necessary to secure Turkey's alliance with the West. According to Inonu, the collapse of fascist regimes in Europe after the war and the threat the Soviet Union posed to Turkey required the end of single-party rule in Turkey. Thus, the costs of authoritarianism increased not only due to war-time policies of the RPP but also due to the external context. The following pages will examine these effects of the international factors respectively.

Policies during the Second World War and Increasing Costs

Even though Turkey did not enter the Second World War, the policies of the RPP during the war were the main reason for the breaking up of the RPP-economic elite alliance. The first war-time economic policy of the government was the law of national defense, which increased the control of the state on economic activities. In addition to the provisions that created grievances among the lower classes (see below), the law also threatened the businessmen by permitting the state to arrange production and allowing it to confiscate private enterprises.⁴⁴

Despite this potential danger, however, until 1942, the government did not disturb the activities of the business community. On the contrary, it spurred commercial activities. The economic policy of the state was aimed at supplying necessary substances to the big cities and to the mobilized military. For this purpose, the state bought agricultural products at cheap prices and rationed some of them (such as bread) in the cities, while sold others (such as cotton) at market prices to generate revenue for the military. But such controls proved to be difficult: as the state could not manage rationing properly, it intensified war-time scarcity and

⁴⁴ For the economic policies of the Turkish state during the Second World War, see Korkut Boratav, *Turkiye'de Devletcilik* (Ankara: Savas Yayinlari, 1982), 215-268 and for other policies, see Osman Akandere, *Milli Sef Donemi: Cok Partili Hayata Geciste Rol Oynayan Ic ve Dis Tesirler: 1938-1945* (Istanbul: Iz Yayıncılık, 1998), 145-268.

caused on average 250 percent inflation.⁴⁵ Since individuals were allowed to continue buying and selling the same products the state attempted to control, the result was the creation of a huge black-market and the accumulation of wealth by merchants who could stock scarce produce. Business flourished at record rate: for instance, during the war, 1,982 new companies were registered to the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce and, in Izmir, the number of big enterprises increased from 9 to 41.⁴⁶

Because the tax system was ineffective in transferring the profits of these merchants to the state, the government decided to initiate a one-time-only wealth levy. Even though the levy was supposed to be applied to the business community in general, in practice, the Christian and Jewish minorities of Istanbul were the ones heavily taxed. 2,057 businessmen were taken into camps because they could not pay their obligations. More than half of these were sent to the east for forced labor and 21 died there.⁴⁷ In addition, in 1944, the state used the law on national defense to confiscate the machineries of some of the factories in Istanbul and Eskisehir.⁴⁸ Even though the wealth levy did not affect the Muslim bourgeoisie and the confiscations were not widespread, they demonstrated to the businessmen that their alliance with the state was not solid and that the RPP politicians could threaten their well-being and security.

The business community was not the only elite group that reached the same conclusion at the end of the war: the landowning elite, too, was threatened by the policies of the state. In 1944, the government initiated the ten percent agricultural produce tax in order to increase revenue for war mobilization, and in June 1945, it enacted the land reform law in

⁴⁵ For inflation rates on basic commodities, see Cetin Yetkin, *Turkiye'de Tek Parti Yonetimi 1930-1945*, (Istanbul: Altin Kitaplar Yayınevi, 1983), 183-184.

⁴⁶ Taner Timur, *Turkiye'de Çok Partili Hayata Gecis*, (Ankara: Imge Kitapevi, 2003), 26 ff 6 and Kemal Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-party System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 93 ff 33.

⁴⁷ The best resource on the wealth levy is the accounts of the officer in charge of the collection of the tax, Faik Okte, *Varlık Vergisi Faciasi* (Istanbul: Nebioglu Yayınevi, 1951). For a summary, see Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, 114-117.

⁴⁸ Yetkin, *Turkiye'de Tek Parti Yonetimi*, 186-188.

order to satisfy the antagonistic peasants (see below).⁴⁹ The latter law meant the total elimination of the landowning class because it envisioned distributing lands larger than 500 hectares (or if that is not sufficient larger than 200 hectares) to landless peasants or peasants who lacked sufficient land. The notorious article 17 of the law stated that, in densely populated areas, lands equal or less than 20 hectares would be nationalized and the minimum land a peasant could hold would be 5 hectares.⁵⁰

The landlords in the parliament fiercely opposed the new law. Following their dissent, Celal Bayar (the ex-prime minister close to the business community), Adnan Menderes (a large landowner), Fuad Koprulu, and Refik Koraltan submitted a proposal that demanded the liberalization of the regime. Five months later, the latter three were expelled and Bayar resigned from the party. On 7 January 1946, the four formed the Democratic Party (DP) with the direct participation of the landowners and financial support from the business elites.⁵¹ In January 1947, a group of merchants from Istanbul founded the Istanbul Commercial Association despite the opposition of the state-controlled Istanbul Chamber of Commerce. Even though, according to the law in force, professional associations were prohibited, the new association started to publish an economic journal and held an economic congress. In its publications and other activities, the association gave support to the Democratic Party and criticized the policies of the RPP.⁵² Similarly, among the 250 candidates of the DP in the 1946 elections, 41 were landowners and 39 were businessmen.⁵³

The opposition the RPP faced from the economic elites increased the costs of sustaining the regime. During the 1920s and 1930s, the military was the main repressive organ of the state. Such military cooperation was again needed if the RPP decided to suppress

⁴⁹ For other reasons behind the land reform law, see Asim Karaomerlioglu, *Orada Bir Koy Var Uzakta: Erken Cumhuriyet Doneminde Koycu Soylem* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayincilik, 2006), 117-143.

⁵⁰ Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, 117-125. For more on this issue, see Resat Aktan, "Problems of Land Reform in Turkey," *The Middle East Journal*, 20, 3 (1966), 317-334.

⁵¹ For an account of these events, see Timur, *Turkiye'de Cok Partili Hayata Gecis*, 14-21. For the involvement of the landlords and the businessmen, see Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, 316-317 ff 28.

⁵² Timur, *Turkiye'de Cok Partili Hayata Gecis*, 130-133.

⁵³ Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, 163-165.

the Democratic Party. However, in the 1940s, the Second World War also caused grievances among the military officers. First, the military mobilization for the war revealed the backwardness of the Turkish army. Military equipment was old and necessary supplies were insufficient, causing soldiers to starve and to get transferred within the country without motorized vehicles (and even barefoot). Second, the lower ranking officers complained about their promotion possibilities. The hierarchy of the military was kept so much intact that the members of the board of high commanders chosen for the Second World War were the same generals who fought the War of Independence after the First World War. Worsening the situation still, a number of laws were enacted in the 1940s, which made it possible for high ranking officers to continue their services in the military while lengthening the promotions of the lower ranking soldiers. Accordingly, even though some of the commanders and the Chief of the General Staff Fevzi Cakmak were retired after 22 years, their subsequent replacements were about the same age and seniority. Mobilization for the Second World War revealed these handicaps of the armed forces, causing resentments.

Finally, the autonomy and powers of the armed forces were curtailed partly in order to centralize the decision-making during the war and direct the military's attention to the external threat. In 1940, the authority to execute the decisions of the martial law commanders was transferred from the military to the police forces. In 1944, the office of the chief of staff became responsible to the prime minister and in 1949, it was subordinated to the ministry of national defense. The important functions of the chief of staff (such as military appointments, maneuvers, and education) were either relegated to the ministry or came under its supervision.⁵⁴ These policies did not just affect the lower ranking officers, but the whole military as an institution.

⁵⁴ See for the military related policies of this period, Umit Ozdag, *Ordu-Siyaset Iliskisi (Ataturk ve Inonu Donemleri)* (Ankara: Gundogan Yayinlari, 1991), 125-169, George S. Harris, "The Role of the Military in Turkish Politics (Part I)" *Middle East Journal*, 19, 1 (1965), 62-63, 65.

As a result of these developments, secret organizations started to form among the lower ranking officers. During the Second World War, the main aim of the organizations was to fight against the promotional bottleneck in the Turkish armed forces. After the war and with the creation of the Democratic Party, these organizations changed their aspirations and started to support the new party. Their leaders met with opposition politicians, Bayar and Menderes, and decided to intervene if the RPP refused to step down after the 1950 elections. On the other hand, President Ismet Inonu was aware of the secret organizations and managed to get insurance from a few higher ranking officers that if he wished, the military would intervene against the Democratic Party. In response, the DP got the word from its own supporters that the military was not under the control of the RPP.⁵⁵ As George Harris notes, “this behind-the-scenes maneuvering.... stimulated the political consciousness of the officer corps.” Marking this politicization, influential officers (such as the ex-Chief of Staff Fevzi Cakmak, Lt. General Fahri Belen, Colonel Seyfi Kurtbek, and ex-general Ali Fuat Cebesoy) joined the ranks of the DP.⁵⁶ Thus, the RPP lost the unanimous support of the armed forces during the Second World War. This increased the costs of repression since the Republicans relied on the military to repress rebellions in the past.

Another factor that increased the costs was the way war-time difficulties affected the peasants and the working class. Indeed, the Democrats had good chances of coming to power after 1946 especially due to increasing grievances of the majority of the peasants against the Republican People’s Party government. The dissatisfaction stemmed partly from the policies of the state during the Second World War. Shortly before the start of the war, the government established the Office of Soil Products with the purpose of granting price support to the

⁵⁵ For more information on the secret organizations, see the following memoirs: Fahri Belen, *Ordu ve Politika: Ordu Ihtilalleri, Askeri Diktatorlukler, Anarsinin Kaynaklari, Bolucu Hareketler* (Istanbul: Bakis Matbaasi, 1971), 32-33, Sadi Kocas, *Ataturk’ten 12 Mart’a Anilar*, first volume (Istanbul: Dogus Matbaasi, 1977), 147-159, for summaries, see Abdi Ipekci and Omer Sami Cosar, *Ihtilalin Ic Yuzu* (Istanbul: Uygun Yayınevi, 1965), 11-24, Yetkin, *Karsidevrin*, 595-606, and Ozdag, *Ordu-Siyaset Iliskisi*, 141-144, 164-168.

⁵⁶ Harris, “The Role of the Military,” 64-65. In 1948, Fevzi Cakmak resigned from the DP and formed his own party.

peasants and distributing agricultural produce to the military and the geographical regions that needed it. During the Second World War, the Office collected agricultural outputs to supply the mobilized military. The state paid prices below the market for the crops it accumulated from the peasants in order to keep the costs of bread low in the cities. This policy worked to the detriment of the rural population, who had difficulties making ends meet.⁵⁷ The working class in the cities, on the other hand, was adversely affected by the law of national defense, which stipulated that citizens could be forced to work in factories to increase production. Similarly, the RPP government had the right to increase work hours and days in order to cope with the requirements of war preparation. The peasants, as well, were forced to work on agricultural estates and hand their farm animals to the state.⁵⁸ These provisions turned the peasants and workers against the RPP.⁵⁹ Thus, the policies of the single-party government to cope with war-time difficulties increased grievances among the majority of the population, leading to augmented costs in sustaining the authoritarian regime.

While the war increased the costs, the benefits of keeping an authoritarian regime started to decline due to several domestic factors. First, the Democratic Party was not perceived as revolutionary. The Republicans had established an authoritarian regime in the 1930s partially because their secularist reforms were not welcomed by the majority of the electorate. Trials with democracy in the 1920s resulted in the resurgence of religious activities and threats against the reforms of the Republicans. However, in the 1940s, these reasons for sustaining an authoritarian regime were perceived as declining. When the DP was first established, hardliner deputies led by Prime Minister Recep Peker argued that the new party was planning a revolution that would reverse the Kemalist reforms. However, in 1947, the Democrats signed and accepted a text prepared by President Ismet Inonu,⁶⁰ which guaranteed

⁵⁷ Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, 102-104.

⁵⁸ Boratav, *Turkiye'de Devletçilik*, 248-255.

⁵⁹ Cem Erogul, *Demokrat Parti: Tarihi ve Ideolojisi*, (Ankara: Imge Kitapevi Yayinlari, 2003), 18.

⁶⁰ Samet Agaoglu, *Siyasi Gunluk: Demokrat Parti'nin Kurulusu*, prepared by Cemil Kocak (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 1992), 430.

that the new party would not overturn the reforms. Since the leaders of the DP were well-known politicians during the authoritarian regime, these assurances were perceived as genuine.⁶¹ Inonu presented a speech on 12 July 1947 which declared to the public that the DP was not a revolutionary party. This speech marked the end of the RPP's policy to suppress the DP, and allowed the party to win the elections and takeover the government in 1950.

The second domestic factor that decreased the benefits of sustaining an authoritarian regime was the conviction of the Republicans that they could win the elections under a democratic system. The RPP leadership thought that the Kemalist reforms were now increasingly accepted by the electorate. Since the Democrats were not expected to change the reforms either, the RPP leaders believed that the chances for them to come to power again were good. In fact, the RPP did not expect the DP to be so successful in such a short period of time. According to one of the leaders of the Democratic Party, Adnan Menderes, "apparently, the reason for the soft and tolerant behavior of the People's Party during the first years of the DP's establishment, was because of the conviction that the party would not be able to settle, develop, and strengthen itself vis-à-vis the government and the party in power."⁶² The RPP believed that it could win the elections by regaining the support of the groups it lost. In order to appease the business community, the RPP liberalized trade, devalued the Turkish lira, lifted the restrictions of the sale of gold, and changed the definition of étatism in the party program so that it became more liberal and pro-business.⁶³ To the satisfaction of the landowners, the state refrained from implementing the land reform law, distributing only 3,600 hectares of land and abolishing the most radical provisions of the law in 1950.⁶⁴ The RPP attempted to gain the support of the conservative peasants by softening its secularist stance, such as introducing religious education and adding to the party program the provision that the state

⁶¹ Mustafa Albayrak, *Türk Siyasi Tarihinde Demokrat Parti (1946-1960)* (Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, 2004), 178-179. Albayrak notes that during the 1950 elections, the DP safeguarded the Kemalist reforms and demonstrated that it was not revolutionary.

⁶² Erogul, *Demokrat Parti*, 88 ff 3.

⁶³ Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, 172-174, 302-303, Timur, *Türkiye'de Çok Partili Hayata Gecis*, 80-81.

⁶⁴ Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, 124.

could not interfere in people's religious beliefs.⁶⁵ Such changes in policies reflect the belief that with minor gestures the RPP elites thought that they can retain their power.

Beginning of the Cold War and External Costs:

Turkey did not enter the Second World War and tried to keep its neutrality from the Axis and Allied powers. However, fearful of Germany's presence in Greece and neighboring Balkan states, Turkey also tried to appease the Axis powers. For this purpose, Turkey continued to sell chromite, which was an important raw material in German war industry. Turkey also allowed German military ships, covered up as commercial carriers, to use the straits. These policies of the Turkish government intimidated and created discontent in the USA and Britain.⁶⁶ Both Roosevelt and Churchill demanded Turkey to cut its relations with Germany and declare war against the Axis powers. Under pressure, Turkey first ceased its chromite sales in April 1944, and then cuts its diplomatic relations with Germany in August 1944. This was followed by Turkey's decision to sever its connections with Japan in January 1945. Finally, towards the end of the Second World War, Turkey declared war against Germany, with the hopes of getting invited to the conference that would mark the beginning of the United Nations. This minor goal was achieved when Turkey joined the Allied powers in San Francisco in 1945. However, these gestures came too late and Turkey's neutral policy towards Germany isolated the country from the USA and Britain at the end of the war.⁶⁷

This isolation became a problem especially because the Soviet Union started to threaten Turkey. Already at the beginning of the Second World War, Moscow had demanded Turkey to allow the USSR to build bases in the straits that connected Black Sea to the Aegean. This request was rejected by the Turkish government since it contradicted the Montreux Convention which recognized Turkish sovereignty over the straits. However, the

⁶⁵ Timur, *Turkiye'de Çok Partili Hayata Gecis*, 82, Yetkin, *Karsidevrin*, 441-459.

⁶⁶ Karaosmanoglu, "The International Context of Democratic Transition in Turkey," 161.

⁶⁷ Albayrak, *Turk Siyasi Tarihinde Demokrat Parti*, 35-37.

same issue was raised again in the Tahrán, Yalta, and Postam Conferences. Since both Britain and the USA wanted the straits to be used only for Allied purposes, they seemed to agree with the Russian claims during the Second World War. In March 1945, Moscow added another request and made territorial claims on three cities in eastern Turkey -Kars, Ardahan, and Artvin. Even though the USA and Britain started to oppose Soviet demands after the end of the war, the Turkish government still felt an immediate external threat from Moscow.⁶⁸

This external threat at the beginning of the Cold War required Turkey to be part of the Western alliance. Turkey needed American aid not only for economic development, but also to supply and train the military against a possible Soviet attack. As noted above, mobilization for the Second World War had proven the weaknesses of the Turkish military against an external aggressor. As a result, Turkey wanted to become part of the United Nations, NATO, and the Council of Europe. However, given Turkey's neutral position during the war, it was not clear until 1947 if Turkey would be accepted to these international organizations as a Western ally. For the top leadership of the Republican People's Party, it seemed that sustaining the single-party regime in this context was costly. It was believed that liberalization of the authoritarian regime would play in Turkey's favor and convince the Western powers that Turkey belonged to the democratic camp against the threat communist regimes posed.

It must be noted that this reasoning alone could not have pushed Turkey to change its regime. First, in the subsequent years of the Cold War, it became clear that it was not necessary to be a democratic regime in order to be a Western ally. There were no consistent and long-run international sanctions against authoritarian regimes. As the Greek authoritarian regime of 1967 clearly shows, the United States did not refrain from allying with authoritarian regimes against the threat of communism and Soviet aggression. Similarly, for NATO membership, being a democracy was not a precondition. Otherwise, the authoritarian regime

⁶⁸ Ibid., 37-42, Erogul, *Demokrat Parti*, 19-20.

of Portugal could not have become a founding member. In fact, there is no evidence to suggest that there was any diplomatic pressure on Turkey to democratize.

Second, even though the 1946 multi-party elections might have been necessary for convincing the West that Turkey is on the same camp, there was no such need when the actual transition took place. By 1950, when the opposition Democratic Party won the elections, Turkey was already a member of the UN, and the US President, Harry Truman, had already delivered his famous speech which promised military and economic aid to Turkey.

Finally, the birth of the Democratic Party and its rise to power against the Republican People's Party were hard-won achievements. There was resistance from the Republican People's Party, and the Democratic Party ensured victory only via domestic pressure. Most of the Republican People's Party deputies and the state bureaucracy were hostile towards the new party. In 1946, national elections were held and the newly established party won 66 out of 465 parliamentary seats. However, the leaders of the Democratic Party and the press did not accept the outcome and accused the government of having tampered with the results. The Democrats won the elections in 1950 only with consistent pressure, assurances that Kemalist reforms would not be reversed, and threats of mass mobilization. If international pressure was the only reason, the Democratic Party would not have to fight for its rights and the Republican People's Party would not try to prevent the Democratic Party's rise to power.

Keeping in mind these reservations, the role of the international context in the cost-benefit analysis of the Republican People's Party leadership must still be acknowledged. International influences after the Second World War played a legitimizing role. The collapse of the fascist regimes after the war and the Turkish foreign policy of allying with the West legitimized the demands and strengthened the hands of the Turkish elites who favored democracy.

President Inonu, who is usually seen as the architect of Turkish democracy, justified the first direct elections of the republic and the participation of the Democratic Party to these elections, by the Soviet threat on Turkish soil. In numerous speeches before the 1946 elections, Inonu argued that the Soviet threat can be thwarted and allies can be made only if, with direct elections, the nation proves itself as unified. Inonu explained his decision to allow multi-party politics by the necessity to demonstrate to foes and allies that the Turkish government's foreign policy was supported by the whole nation. According to Inonu, only free elections could show that the government genuinely had the support of the Turkish people. President Inonu implied that even if the Democrats won the elections, they would seek Western alliance against the communist block, and therefore, prove that the nation was unified around this core foreign policy. In one typical speech, Inonu defended the decision to hold competitive elections in 1946 as follows:

We decided on the new national elections in order to determine the domestic and foreign ... policies of the country. It seems that the world has entered into a long period of uncertainty and darkness. In this epoch, the direction of Turkish politics must become internally and externally perceptible.... Under some circumstances, the official declarations of statesmen are not enough to reveal the policies of the nation. In these situations, the nation must firmly ensure its stand by openly demonstrating its own will. The national elections will give us this result... Only the opinion that is revealed by [the national elections] will demonstrate to the world that our country is on the right path and in a strong condition.⁶⁹

As this quotation exemplifies, the leadership of the RPP tied Turkish democratization to international influences after the Second World War and used it as a legitimizing factor for the transition of the regime.⁷⁰

Similarly, the opposition used the international context to strengthen its hands and facilitate a transition to democracy. On 24 February 1945 Turkey signed the United Nations Declaration, which included liberal and democratic principles. Following this development,

⁶⁹ This speech was delivered in Aksehir on 6 May 1946. *Ismet Inonu: Konusma, Demec, Makale, Mesaj ve Soylesiler 1944-1950*, hazirlayan Ilhan Turan (Ankara: TBMM Kultur, Sanat ve Yayin Kurulu Yayinlari No:99, 2003), 72.

⁷⁰

Ismet Inonu promised that “as the conditions imposed by war disappear, democratic principles will gradually acquire a larger place in the political and cultural life of the country.”⁷¹ During the ratification of the UN Charter in the Turkish Parliament, one of the future leaders of the Democratic Party, Adnan Menderes, argued that the democratic principles of the Charter were not yet fulfilled in Turkey. Menderes requested the elimination of restrictive features of the single-party rule. The newspapers picked up on this issue and “the demand to conform to the United Nations Charter soon became the main theme of the press.”⁷² The Democrats split from the RPP and facilitated a transition to democracy in this domestic context. Even though the UN Charter was not the primary cause of democratization, its approval by the government “provided the dissidents with legal and moral arguments against the one-party system and encouraged them to bring their opposition into the open and to seek popular support.”⁷³

In summary, international influences in the 1940s changed the cost-benefit analysis of the Republican People’s Party, like they did in Greece. Policies that the government enacted during the Second World War resulted in increasing antagonism against the single-party regime. This growing opposition was evident among the economic elites, peasants, working class, and the military. Loss of domestic support increased the costs of sustaining the authoritarian regime. At the same time, the international context was changing towards the Cold War. Soviet threats required Turkey to become part of the Western alliance. However, neutrality during the war had distanced Turkey from the USA and Britain. Turkey signed the UN Charter and started to actively seek cooperation against the USSR. This policy commitment legitimized the demands of the domestic opposition and pro-democratic forces. At the start of the Cold War, sustaining the authoritarian regime would have been costly for Turkey’s alliance with the West and American assistance. At the same time the benefits of

⁷¹ Karpat, *Turkey’s Politics*, 141.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 142.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 143.

authoritarianism declined due to domestic reasons. Since the costs started to exceed the benefits, there was a transition to democracy in Turkey.

Conclusions from the Greek and Turkish Regime Transitions in the Cold War

Today's international context is very different than the Aegean regime transitions at the beginning of the Cold War years. Both Greek and Turkish domestic politics were affected by the Second World War. In Greece, Axis occupation and the consequent ascendancy of the communists led to a costly Civil War. The war heightened anti-communist perceptions and exaggerated the dangers associated with leftism. In Turkey, the policies of the single-party government to cope with war-time mobilization and economic difficulties brought about discontent among the population. Soviet threats to Turkish sovereignty produced similar results as in Greece and intensified fears of communism. These conditions that Greece and Turkey faced were unique to the aftermath of the Second World War. It is highly unlikely that the same circumstances will repeat themselves.

However, it is still possible to draw some important lessons from the Greek and Turkish transitions in the 1950s and 1960s. First, the Greek case highlights the importance of domestic recipients of American aid and assistance. The Hellenic Armed Forces were influenced by American support more than other societal groups. According to Charles Tilly, contrary to European cases, in Third World societies authoritarian leaders do not need to bargain with elites in order to wage wars. Instead, they seek foreign aid, which adversely affects the power balance among societal groups. According to Tilly,

the creation of a bipolar, then tripolar world system of states since World War II intensified the competition among great powers for the allegiance of Third World states, and the tendency to leave no part of the Third World neutral. That competition induced the great powers, especially the United States and the Soviet Union, to provide arms, military training, and military advice to many states. In return, the great powers, or major interests within them, received commodities such as oil, political support in the world arena and, sometimes, profits from the sale of arms. In those

states, military organizations grew in size, strength, and efficacy while other organizations stood still or withered.⁷⁴

Similar to the Third World, the strategic location of Greece increased its importance for American interests during the Cold War years. Even though the USA did not directly stage an intervention, military aid had important implications in keeping the armed forces strong, and as a result, lowering the costs of repression in an authoritarian regime. As a result, the colonels intervened and sustained their regime with foreign aid despite the fact that their regime was disdained by the majority of the Greeks. Thus, one conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is that, as many scholars have also argued,⁷⁵ Western assistance and training must be more balanced among different societal forces, including the military, civil society organizations, trade unions, political parties, and other pro-democratic forces. Unbalanced assistance can result in unforeseen and unintentional consequences in domestic politics even when aid was provided only to enhance the recipient's external security.

While the Greek case draws attention to foreign aid, the Turkish experience highlights the importance of ideational factors. The existence of a Western democratic coalition was used as a legitimizing factor among the Republican People's Party leadership and the members of the Democratic Party. However, the presence of a Western alliance did not influence Turkish politics only because its members were democratic nations. Without the formation of a domestic opposition that could capitalize on the international context, the UN Charter could not have the influence it did. In addition, it must not be forgotten that the threat Turkey faced from the Soviet Union was a major security concern. Ideational influences came into the picture when and because they were combined with *realpolitik* concerns. Thus, in

⁷⁴ Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States: AD 990-1992* (Cambridge, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 220. See also Lisa Anderson, "The State in the Middle East and North Africa," *Comparative Politics* 20, 1 (1987), 1-18.

⁷⁵ On democracy promotion, see for instance Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999) and the volume edited by Peter Burnell, *Democracy Assistance: International Co-operation for Democratization* (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2000).

today's world as well, frequent references to the coalition of democratic forces on their own might not lead to the liberalization of authoritarian regimes. The likelihood that this type of discourse has an effect on regime transition increases when it is coupled with credible threats from an un-democratic nation, against which the democratic nations provide security.

Similar ideological influences emanating from the Cold War international context were also evident in Greece. Communism was perceived as a threat and became an important tool in the hands of the colonels. However, ironically, while anti-communism led Greece to authoritarianism, it brought about a democratic transition in Turkey. There were multiple reasons for this divergence. First, in Greece in the 1960s, the communist threat was perceived as coming from domestic actors, such as the Center Union. This domestic danger was exaggerated with the experience of Civil War, which brought the right-wing forces face-to-face with the communists. In Turkey of the 1940s, on the other hand, there was yet no major leftist movement in domestic politics. The communist danger was mostly external and came from the Soviet Union. Indeed, when leftist movements increased their force in the 1960s and 1970s, the Turkish military intervened in democracy, similar to the Greek colonels (albeit for a shorter period of time).

The second reason why the Cold War ideological environment led to two different results in Greece and Turkey was diverging power balances between domestic societal forces. As it has already been discussed above, the Greek military increased its power substantially in the aftermath of the Second World War due partially to foreign aid. This resulted in lower costs of suppression for the colonels. In contrast, the leaders of the single-party regime in Turkey lost power. Sustaining the regime and continuing to repress the opposition became costly because war-time difficulties caused the economic elites, peasants, and sections of the military to turn against the Republican People's Party. Thus, the role that the international context plays and whether or not democratic currents will lead to liberalization also depend on

the makeup of the domestic forces, their regime preferences, and relative power balance. This is why, as mentioned above, it is important to promote democracy by providing assistance to the pro-democratic forces in the recipient country.

The Greek and Turkish regime transitions demonstrate that international influences will have an effect on democratic transitions when two external factors are combined: first, even distribution of aid in the recipient country without necessarily ignoring the strategic interests of the Western powers, and second, the presence of an international democratic coalition that could provide security to the nation from external threats.