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GREEK–AMERICAN RELATIONS
IN THE YOM KIPPUR WAR CONCURRENCE*

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ABSTRACT: This article suggests that there is no hard evidence supporting the conspiracy theory that Georgios Papadopoulos' dictatorial regime was overthrown by the United States in 1973, because the Greek junta leader refused to assist their supply effort in support of Israel during the Yom Kippur War.

The purpose of this article is to explore a widely held "urban legend": namely, that the Americans overthrew the Georgios Papadopoulos Greek military regime in November 1973, because the junta leader refused to assist the US supply effort in support of Israel during the October 1973 Yom Kippur War. This scenario takes as a given that the Dimitrios Ioannidis coup of November 25, 1973 issued from, or in any case was supported by the Americans (and perhaps the "Jews")[1] and, moreover of course, that the Polytechnic uprising a few days earlier was a provocation planned by the same forces, creating the political conditions and necessary climate for the overthrow of Papadopoulos by Ioannidis. This theory holds a prominent position in the wider realm of popular conspiracy theories, which are fond of using simplistic explanations to interpret complicated, dramatic events. One can cite a number of sources that advance or adopt this theory.[2]

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[1] G. A. Michalopoulos, *Η προδοσία της 24 Νοεμβρίου 1973* [The treason of 24 November 1973], Athens n.d., p. 47; cf. Sefi Anastasakos, *Θύελλα στην Αθήνα* [Storm in Athens], Athens 1974, p. 97.

[2] Dusko Doder, "New Mood in Greece", *The Washington Post* (9 December 1973): "The coup that toppled Papadopoulos two weeks ago is also widely assumed to have been the work of the Americans. The Greek rumor suggests that Washington was annoyed by his decision to deny the United States the use of Greek waters and air space during the October war in the Middle East." According to a similar report by correspondent John K. Cooley in the *Christian Science Monitor* (2 January 1974), Papadopoulos and Markezinis "are telling all visitors that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) engineered their overthrow", since Papadopoulos "refused to permit U.S. military flights resupplying Israel to use bases in Greece". For more recent mentions, cf. Michalopoulos, *Η προδοσία*, pp. 77, 79; Antonios Skarmaliorakis, *Μνήμες και μαρτυρίες* [Memoirs and testimonials], Athens 2001, p. 366.

Let's recall in brief the sequence of events: on October 6, 1973, Egyptian and Syrian forces attacked the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights, respectively. By October 8, the Egyptians had established two beachheads on the east bank of the Suez, while the Syrians had advanced ten kilometers into the Golan. On October 9, the Soviet Union began its systematic air and sea re-supply operations. On October 10, Israel mounted a successful counterattack in the Golan, but suffered a new defeat in the Sinai. The next day, Israeli missile boats sunk a Soviet ship docked at a Syrian port, resulting in the gathering of strong Soviet naval forces along the length of the Syrian coastline.[3] On October 13, American aerial supply of Israel began. On the 17th, Israeli armored units managed to cross the Suez and advance into Egyptian territory. On October 22, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution for a ceasefire that was finally implemented on October 25.

That in brief was the Arab–Israeli 20-day war, which arguably ended in a standoff (with a slight advantage for the Israelis) in the military arena, but with a clear gain for the Arabs, mainly the Egyptians, at the political level and in the war of perceptions (within Arab public opinion and beyond),[4] an event that led a few years later to the 1978 Camp David Accords.[5]

It was accompanied, however, by the concurrent proximity of the American and Soviet fleets, directly and without intermediate players, with moments, at a tactical level, of high danger. At the height of this second crisis, more than 100 warships, armed with nuclear weapons,[6] and with only a few miles distance between them, were gathered in the maritime region between the Greek island of Kythira and the Mideast coastline. The United States put all of its military forces globally on high alert, while ships from all waters sped to the Eastern Mediterranean. This situation began to deescalate on November 5, and the alert was cancelled only on November 19.[7]

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[3] Victor Israelyan, *Inside the Kremlin during the Yom Kippur War*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995, pp. 68-71.

[4] Trevor N. Dupuy, *Elusive Victory: The Arab–Israeli Wars, 1947-1974*, New York 1978, p. 603.

[5] David T. Buckwalter, "The 1973 Arab–Israeli War", in Kevin L. Little (ed.), *Case Studies in Policy Making & Process*, Newport: Naval War College, 2004, p. 17.

[6] William B. Quandt, *Soviet Policy in the October 1973 War*, [Santa Monica]: Rand, 1976, pp. 30-34; Lyle J. Goldstein and Yuri M. Zhukov, "A Tale of Two Fleets: A Russian Perspective on the 1973 Naval Standoff in the Mediterranean", *Naval War College Review* (Spring 2004), p. 44.

[7] "Early on 25 October, after a late-night cabinet meeting, the White House responded to Brezhnev's message with a worldwide alert, moving to Defense Condition 3."; cf. Bruce Watson and Susan Watson (eds), *The Soviet Navy: Strengths and Liabilities*, Boulder, CO, 1986, pp. 109-112; Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr, *On Watch*, New York 1976, p. 439.
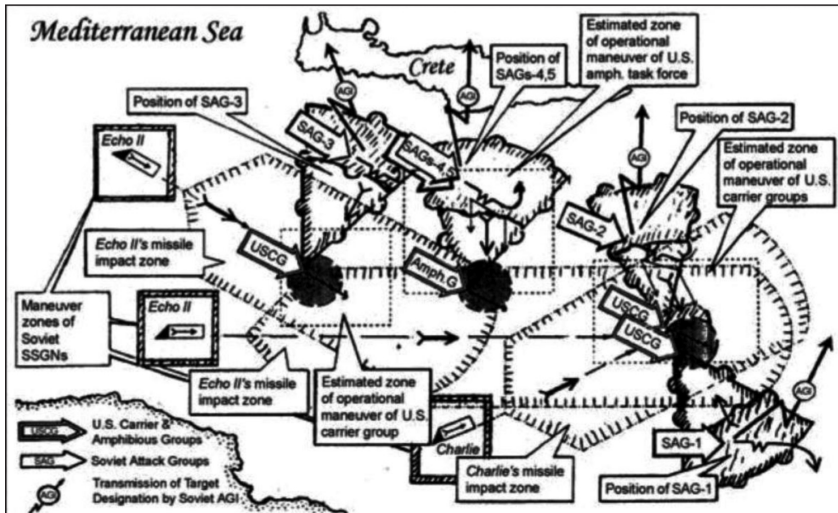
Fig. 1. The gathering of American and Soviet aeronautical forces south of Crete
in October 1973.

Source: Lyle J. Goldstein and Yuri M. Zhukov, "A Tale of Two Fleets:
A Russian Perspective on the 1973 Naval Standoff in the Mediterranean",
Naval War College Review (Spring 2004), p. 27.

The collateral issues that arose during the war, and which are of direct interest to us, were problems relating to American operations to resupply Israel, on the one hand, and, on the other, the consequences of those problems for the confrontation between the Americans and Soviets in the Eastern Mediterranean, in combination with the invocation, genuinely or for show, of the nuclear option.

Let's begin with the issue of resupply. Initial American estimates appear to have been exceptionally optimistic, based on the assumption that Israel would be able to manage an upset by quickly vanquishing its opponents and, as a result, not needing direct aid from the US.[8] These estimates were largely based on the impressive performance of the Israelis during the earlier Six-Day War in 1967.[9] By October 8, however, it had become clear that a similar upset did not appear so easy and that the Israelis had suffered unexpectedly high human and material losses.[10] According to available information, Israel thought that

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[8] Abraham Rabinovich, *The Yom Kippur War*, New York 2004, p. 485.

[9] Robert G. Weinland, *Superpower Naval Diplomacy in the October 1973 Arab–Israeli War*, Arlington, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, 1978, p. 36.

[10] During the course of the conflict, Israel suffered in total around 11,000 casualties (with 2800 deaths) and lost more than 800 tanks and 100 jet fighters; cf. Buckwalter, "The 1973 Arab–Israeli War", p. 17.

it faced a genuine danger and, on the night of the 8th to the 9th of October, the Israeli government is said to have given the order for arming 13 "Jericho" rockets with tactical nuclear warheads. Apparently, these preparatory actions took place without any particular effort to conceal them, thereby enabling the monitoring systems of the two superpowers to detect them.[11] Whether a bluff or not, the fact is that the same day, on October 9, the Nixon Administration decided to support Israel directly with war supplies to fill the gaps left by its losses. The operation was given the code name "Nickel Grass".[12]

At that point, two issues arose: on the one hand, the route to be followed by the US air and naval units involved in the operations, which would need to pass through the territorial waters and air space of allied countries, and, on the other, the resupply and logistic support for these units at bases located in these allied countries. On this point, all of the sources are in total agreement that most Western European countries refused to allow American aircraft transporting aid to Israel to use their air space or refuel at airports on their territory, for fear, among other things, that an Arab oil embargo would be imposed on them.[13]

This stance provoked a strong public reaction from the United States. On October 26, President Nixon declared that, "Our European friends hadn't been as cooperative as they might have been in attempting to help us work out the Middle East settlement." The State Department spokesman Robert McClosky was even more aggressive, pointing out that the absence of full support for US Mideast policies put in doubt the entire meaning of European security, while the statements of his superior, Henry Kissinger, went even further, declaring that he was "disgusted".[14] According to correspondents, the US spokesman at

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[11] George Lenczowski, *American Presidents and the Middle East*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990, p. 129; Warner D. Farr, *The Third Temple's Holy of Holies: Israel's Nuclear Weapons*, Montgomery: Air War College, 1999, pp. 9-15; Quandt, *Soviet Policy*, p. 109.

[12] Memoranda of conversations between, on the one hand, Israeli ambassador to the US Simcha Dinitz and military attaché Mordechai Gur, and on the other hand, Henry Kissinger, Brent Scowcroft and Peter Rodman, 9 October 1973, George Washington University National Security Archive (both accessible online: www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB98/octwar-21a.pdf / octwar-21b.pdf).

[13] Walter J. Boyne, "Nickel Grass", *Air Force Magazine* 81/12 (December 1998), p. 57; Norman Polmar, *Chronology of the Cold War at Sea, 1945-1991*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1998, p. 150; Peter M. Swartz and Karin Duggan, *The U.S. Navy in the World (1970-1980): Context for U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts*, Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, 2011, p. 8.

[14] See "The American Presidency Project: The President's News Conference, October 26, 1973" (accessible online: http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=4022); "Αηδιασμένος με το ΝΑΤΟ ο κ. Κίσσινγκερ για τη στάση του στη Μ. Ανατολή" [Kissinger

NATO headquarters also used "language provocative to the point of shock" in speaking to the representatives of the Western European nations.[15]

The only country that publicly offered help was Portugal, which allowed the refueling of American aircraft at the Lajes airbase in the Azores.[16] From there, American transport aircraft continued their flight over the Mediterranean up to the broader area of Crete and arrived at Tel Aviv, flying a total distance of some 6000 miles. During the portion of the flight path over the Mediterranean, the cargo planes were escorted by fighters that took off in succession from three US aircraft carriers situated along the route, up to 150 miles from the shores of Israel, at which point Israeli fighters took over. The first cargo plane landed at Ben Gurion airport, near Tel Aviv, on October 14, 18:30 local time.[17] American aid included also the urgent delivery of fighter aircraft, since Israeli losses had also been significant. Over two weeks, a total of more than 80 American airplanes, primarily Phantoms and Skyhawks, were delivered to the Israeli air force.[18] In this instance, the fighters initially refueled in the Azores and subsequently on the aircraft carriers USS *Kennedy* (east of Gibraltar), the USS *Franklin D. Roosevelt* (south-east of Sicily) and – critical in relation to Greece – the USS *Independence* (south of Crete), before landing in Israel.[19]

Let us take a look, at this point, at Greece in relation to these complex developments. The country then found itself, as is its habit, closed within the whirlwind of its own world, in the midst of efforts to accomplish controlled "politicization" of the dictatorship. Set in motion in the aftermath of an anti-junta mutiny in the navy a few months before, this process had moved

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disgusted with NATO for its stand on the Middle East], *Τα Νέα* (31 October 1973); cf. Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, New York 1999, p. 709.

[15] "Προκλητική γλώσσα" [Provocative language], *Τα Νέα* (27 October 1973). His name: Donald Rumsfeld. His language had not changed when he addressed roughly the same audience on a similar issue, 30 years later, in 2003.

[16] William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab–Israeli Conflict since 1967*, Washington, DC, 2005, p. 114.

[17] George S. Maxwell III, *Israeli Defense Force (IDF) Logistics in the Yom Kippur War*, Kettering, OH: Air Force Institute of Technology, 1986, p. 54; Boyne, "Nickel Grass", p. 57; Polmar, *Chronology*, p. 150; Rand Corporation, *Interoperability: A Continuing Challenge in Coalition Air Operations*, Monograph Report 1235, Santa Monica 2000, p. 216; Goldstein and Zhukov, "A Tale of Two Fleets", p. 48.

[18] More precisely, 34 F-4 Phantoms, 36 A-4 Skyhawks, as well as 12 C-130E Hercules were sent; cf. "McDonnell F-4 Phantom: Essential Aircraft in the Air Warfare in the Middle East", *Aviation History* (accessible online: http://www.historynet.com/mcdonnell-f-4-phantom-essential-aircraft-in-the-air-warfare-in-the-middle-east.htm/4).

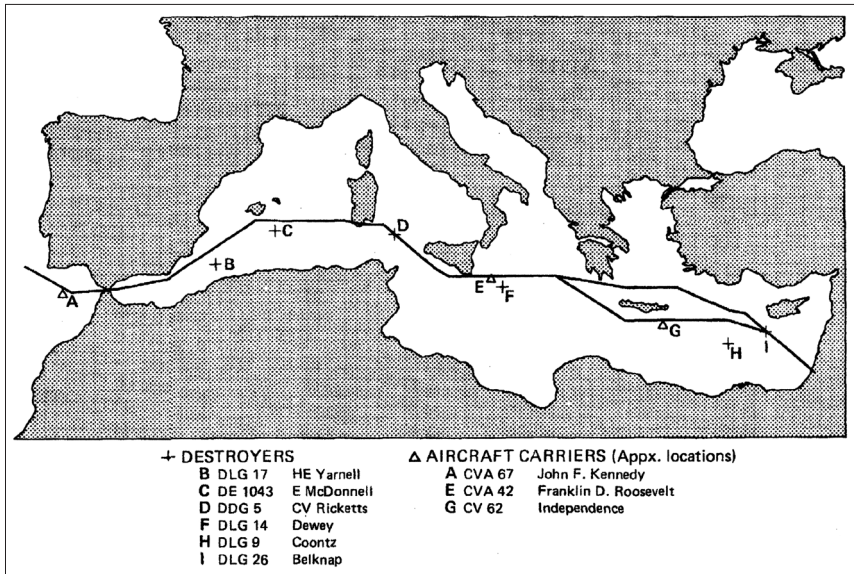[19] Weinland, *Superpower Naval Diplomacy*, pp. 32-36.

Fig. 2. The route of the US airlift to Israel and locations of Sixth Fleet ships
supporting transiting aircraft during the "Nickel Grass" operation.
The USS *Independence* was operating along the southern coast of Crete.

Source: Robert G. Weinland, *Superpower Naval Diplomacy in the October 1973
Arab–Israeli War*, Arlington, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, 1978, p. 34.

on from the formal abolition of the monarchy and self-designation of the
dictator Papadopoulos to the presidency (and the Chief of the Armed Forces,
General Angelis, to the vice-presidency) to arrive at the appointment of the
old right-wing politician Spyros Markezinis as prime minister, in order to
preserve the regime in parliamentary guise.

"Exactly on the evening that the government was sworn in," Markezinis
wrote, "a sudden attack was unleashed by Syria and Egypt against Israel […]
and a war that became known as the Yom Kippur War […]. This unexpected
event was one of the imponderable factors that would determine decisively
the fate of my government."[20]

Communicating with West European ambassadors in Athens, Markezinis
arrived at the belief – and correctly so – that the NATO countries of Europe
had decided "at all costs" to stay out of the Arab–Israeli conflict.[21] On October

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[20] Spyros B. Markezinis, *Αναμνήσεις, 1972-1974* [Memoirs, 1972-1974], Athens 1979,
pp. 255-256.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 256-257. Maintaining a certain balance, Markezinis stated on the day of his
inauguration: "Many ties connect us with Arab countries, but nothing divides us from the
state of Israel, which has also the right to have a place under the sun."; cf. "Israel's Place
under the Sun", *Jerusalem Post* (9 October 1973).

13, 1973, the regime's foreign minister, Christos Xanthopoulos-Palamas, gave a press conference for foreign correspondents in Athens during which he declared that, "The friendly relations of Greece with the Arab states precludes participation, either directly or indirectly, in any actions that might be directed against them."[22] Moreover, responding to a question as to whether the presence of the US Sixth Fleet in Greek territorial waters and the provision of port facilities was consistent with purported Greek neutrality, the minister asserted that Greece was not being used in connection with the situation in the Middle East, noting that the presence of ships of the Sixth Fleet in Greek territorial waters was "continuous and natural", since Greece and the USA were allies. "Besides," he added, "the Mediterranean abounds with ships belonging to powers and superpowers."[23]

Two days after these statements, the Chief of the Greek Navy, Admiral Petros Arapakis, was in Newport, Rhode Island, in the United States in order to participate in the Third International Symposium of Naval Forces taking place there from the 15th to the 19th of October, 1973.[24] On the sidelines of the symposium, Arapakis had an unscheduled private meeting with the US Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Elmo Zumwalt (at the latter's initiative). Their sole topic was the use of Souda Bay in Crete by the Sixth Fleet during the Arab–Israeli war, already underway. Arapakis explained to his American counterpart that there was no reason to worry, since the statements of the Athens government were made "to create an impression for general purposes", assuring him that "the use of the Souda base could continue". "And so it happened," as Arapakis would observe, with the result that, "the American government considered Greece's posture to be very friendly."[25] The conversation was later confirmed by Admiral Zumwalt: "The then Chief of the Greek Naval Command visited me in Washington and told me, 'Don't listen to what is being said publicly in Greece. Use your bases in Greece just as you want.'"[26]

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[22] Recalling the similar statement which he had made on August 5, 1972, when he was the alternate minister of foreign affairs; cf. "Η ελληνική θέση έναντι των Αράβων είναι αμετάβλητη" [The Greek posture towards the Arabs is unchanged], *Τα Νέα* (7 August 1972).

[23] See, characteristically, the newspapers *Ελεύθερος Κόσμος*, *Το Βήμα* and *Τα Νέα* of 14 October 1973; cf. Yiannis Sakkas, "Greece and the Arabs during the Cold War: National Pursuits and Diplomacy", *Journal of Oriental and African Studies* 13 (2004), p. 213. An Arab diplomatic source at the UN headquarters in New York expressed "satisfaction" over Palamas' statements, on condition that "actions do not refute the declarations" (*Τα Νέα*, 15 October 1973).

[24] U.S. Naval War College, *Third International Seapower Symposium*, Newport 1973.

[25] Petros Arapakis, *Το τέλος της σιωπής* [The end of the silence], Athens 2000, pp. 93-95.

[26] See *Το Βήμα* (4 April 1976), p. 12.

Just after the Arapakis–Zumwalt meeting in Newport, the American Embassy in Athens, in a secret telegram, assured the State Department that, "considerable sympathy already has been expressed by Greek officers for US resupply operation to Israel" and that, "in event occasional emergency landings or logistic support activity occur, we do not foresee [a] significant problem". It recalled, however, that, "Despite [the] positive view of USG [US government] policy held by Greek military, and probably by most Greek leaders [...], Greece might be placed in extremely awkward position vis-a-vis Arab countries if any degree of regularity or frequency replaced sporadic, occasional landings."[27]

Let us see then what in fact occurred. We should note that the aircraft carrier USS *Independence*, which was critical to the entire operation, was that fall anchored at the Greek port of Piraeus, from which she departed immediately following the outbreak of hostilities on October 7[28] and headed for the south of Crete. She remained there throughout the war, refueling the aircrafts that were transporting supplies and guarding with her own fighter planes the last leg of the route to Israel, returning to Piraeus on November 5, after the crisis had wound down.[29] In the same period, the Amphibious Operations Flotilla Task Force 61, which included the helicopter carrier *Guadalcanal* and nine other naval landing crafts, with marines aboard, had anchored at the port of Souda in a full state of alert, should their intervention be required (which turned out not to be the case).[30] However, also dropping anchor at Souda, following the lifting of the alert, was the USS *Kennedy*.[31] It is also certain that American cargo aircraft transported supplies to Israel from the American base at Ramstein, West Germany, overflying – at least for some period at the start of the "Nickel Grass" operation – Greek airspace.[32] The use of the Ramstein base had provoked vigorous protest from the Social Democratic Bonn government, which criticized, "the sending of war supplies

[27] Telegram 7196 from the U.S. Embassy in Greece to the Department of State, Athens, October 16, 1973, 1525Z, Richard Nixon Presidential Library, Yorba Linda, CA, Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Country File Greece, Vol. III; cf. Sotiris Rizas, *Οι Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες, η δικτατορία των συνταγματαρχών και το Κυπριακό ζήτημα, 1967-1974* [The United States, the dictatorship of the colonels and the Cyprus Question, 1967-1974] Athens 2002, pp. 161-162.

[28] Joseph F. Bouchard, *Command in Crisis*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, p. 167.

[29] *Μακεδονία* (6 November 1973).

[30] "TF 61 was ordered to Souda Bay (on the northern coast of Crete), where it would remain at anchor until 25 October"; cf. Bouchard, *Command in Crisis*, pp. 166-168.

[31] *Μακεδονία* (17 November 1973).

[32] Cf. article in *Aviation Week*, reprinted in *Τα Νέα* (25 October 1973).

Fig. 3. "Embassy Athens sees no problem using Greece for emergency landing
or 'logistical support'. However, problems could occur if activities more than sporadic",
notes a State Department official, summarizing telegram 7196 from Athens,
dated October 16, 1973, 1525Z.

Source: Richard Nixon Presidential Library, Yorba Linda, CA,
Presidential Materials Staff, NSC Files, Country File Greece, Vol. III.

from Germany to Israel", deeming that it was thus being drawn into the conflict against its will.[33]

Consequently, we can so far document: (a) permission for full use of the port of Souda by the Sixth Fleet, (b) the use of Greek airspace, and (c) the occasional use of Greek airports (mainly the airport at Akrotiri, near Chania, Crete) by American aircraft for "logistic support", on condition that they would not be overused, compromising Greece. It was the most extensive assistance that a NATO country gave to the USA in the specific situation, with the exception of Portugal.[34]

On November 30, 1973, US Undersecretary of State Roger Davies, in an attempt to justify US support for the already-by-then ousted Papadopoulos regime, told the anti-regime Brigadier General Orestis Vidalis[35] that, "There were valid grounds for our relationship with the Papadopoulos government. The recent crisis in the Middle East proved how hard it would be to maintain our position in the Eastern Mediterranean without Greek support."[36] Davies restated that position, in greater detail, in his February 19, 1974 testimony to the US Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee. Greece, he stated, had cooperated in allowing the United States to use communications facilities, as well as the airports at Athens and Souda Bay in Crete, while no restrictions had been placed on the movements or the resupply of the Sixth Fleet.[37] Hence, the

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[33] Cf. *Μακεδονία* (13 November 1973). Later, however, there was possibly a change: "Even flights originating in West Germany were routed to Lajes, then through the Mediterranean to Israel"; cf. Chris J. Krisinger, "Operation Nickel Grass: Airlift in Support of National Policy", *Aerospace Power Journal* (Spring 1989).

[34] The Dutch government also must have provided some facilities (whose nature is not entirely made clear in the literature) for operation "Nickel Grass". It seems likely that, amongst other things, this may have included the use of Dutch airports or the sales of arms to Israel or its generally pro-Israel policy. In any case, it is a fact that immediately after the declaration of the Arab oil embargo against the USA (October 19), an embargo against the Netherlands followed (October 23), while Portugal followed a month later (November 23); cf. *Μακεδονία* (31 October 1973, 3, 4 and 13 November 1973); cf. Roy Licklider, "The Power of Oil: The Arab Oil Weapon and the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, and the United States", *International Studies Quarterly* 32 (1988), pp. 205-226; Duco Hellema, Cees Wiebes and Toby Witte, *The Netherlands and the Oil Crisis: Business as Usual*, Amsterdam 2004, pp. 158-170; "Embargoes on the USA and the Netherlands, 1973", in A. Burdett (ed.), *OPEC: Origins and Strategy, 1947-1973*, Vol. VI, Cambridge 2004; Charles Smith, *Palestine and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, New York 2006, p. 329.

[35] Who had abandoned Greece after his dismissal for participation in the king's counter-coup of December 13, 1967.

[36] Orestis Vidalis, *Confronting the Greek Dictatorship in the U.S. – Years of Exile: A Personal Journal (1968-1975)*, New York 2009, p. 318.

[37] Cf. C. M. Woodhouse, *The Rise and Fall of the Greek Colonels*, London 1985, p. 124, with reference to *State Department Bulletin*, no. 70, pp. 279-284.

Τὸ «Ἰντεπέντενς» καὶ ἓξ ἀντιτορπιλλικὰ εἰς τὸν Πειραιᾶ

«Διὰ συντήρησιν καὶ ἀνεφοδιασμὸν προμηθειῶν».— Ἡ κίνησις σχετίζεται μὲ τὸ μεσανατολικόν;

ΟΥΑΣΙΓΚΤΩΝ, 5. (Ἀπ. Πρ.). Αἱ Ἡνωμέναι Πολιτεῖαι εἰς μίαν προφανῆ προσπάθειαν τῶν ὅπως χαλαρώσουν τὴν ἔντασιν σχετικῶς μὲ τὴν ἐνίσχυσιν τῶν σοβιετικῶν καὶ ἀμερικανικῶν στόλων εἰς τὴν Μεσόγειον, ἀπέστειλε τὸ ἀεροπλανοφόρον «Ἰντεπέντενς», ὅπως ἐπισκεφθῇ τὸν Πειραιᾶ, ὡς ἀνεκοινώθη ὑπὸ τοῦ ὑπουργείου ἀμύνης.

«Ἐκτὸς τοῦ ἀεροπλανοφόρου, συμφώνως πρὸς τὴν ἀνακοίνωσιν τοῦ Πενταγώνου, ἓξ ἀντιτορπιλλικὰ καὶ ἓν τετραλαφόρον τοῦ ναυτικοῦ προσωρμίσθησαν εἰς Πειραιᾶ. Εἰς τὴν περιοχὴν τῆς Μεσογείου ὑπάρχουν πλέον τῶν 50 ἀμερικανικῶν σκαφῶν ἐν πλῷ.

Ὁ ἐκπρόσωπος τοῦ Πενταγώνου κ. Μπίτσερ ἐδήλωσεν, ἐπίσης, ὅτι ἐφ' ὅσον ὁ ἀριθμὸς σοβιετικῶν σκαφῶν εὑρίσκονται προσδεδεμένα εἰς τὸν αἰγυπτιακὸν λιμένα τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας.

Εἰς συνέντευξιν τύπου ὁ κ. Μπίτσερ ἐδήλωσεν, ὅτι εἷς «Ἰντεπέντενς», ἓν ἐκ τῶν τριῶν ἀμερικανικῶν ἀεροπλανοφόρων ποὺ εὑρίσκονται εἰς τὴν Μεσόγειον, κατέπλευσεν εἰς τὸν ἑλληνικὸν λιμένα διὰ συντήρησιν καὶ ἀνεφοδιασμὸν τῆς προμηθείας.

Ἐξ ἄλλου ὁ κ. Μπίτσερ ἐπεβεβαίωσε τὴν ἀνακοίνωσιν τοῦ γερμανικοῦ ἐφοδιαστικοῦ σκάφους εἰς τὴν Μεσόγειον. Ὁ γερουσιαστὴς Τζάκσον εἶναι ἐδήλωσεν ὅτι ἡ παρουσία τῶν σοβιετικῶν ἀπειλεῖ εἶναι ἐνδείξιν ὅτι ἡ Σοβιετικὴ Ἕνωσις ἐπιθυμεῖ ὅπως μεταφέρῃ τοὺς στρατιώτας εἰς τὴν Μεσόγειον, ἐὰν αἱ διαπραγματεύσεις ποὺ διεξάγονται δὲν θεωρηθοῦν ἱκανοποιητικαί.

Ὁ κ. Μπίτσερ ἐδήλωσεν, ὅτι τούτοις, ὅτι ἡ παρουσία τῶν πεζοναυτῶν εἰς τὴν Μεσόγειον δὲν εἶναι δαψιλῆς φαινόμενον. Προσέθεσεν, ὅτι οἱ Ρῶσσοι στρατιῶται ἐπιεμφανίσθησαν καθὼς τὰ πλοῖα ἐπὶ τῶν ὁποίων εὑρίσκονται διήρχοντο διὰ τῶν στενῶν τοῦ Βοσπόρου, κατευθυνόμενα πρὸς τὴν Μεσόγειον. Ὑπελόγισεν, ὅτι ὑπάρχουν 200 ἕως 2.000 πεζοναῦται εἰς ὀκτὼ ἀποβατικὰ πλοῖα.

Ὁ κ. Μπίτσερ ἀπεκάλυψεν, ἐπίσης, ὅτι ἡ ἀμερικανικὴ ἀεροπορία μετέφερε παρατάματα τῶν Ἡνωμένων Ἐθνῶν ἐκ Φινλανδίας καὶ Ἰρλανδίας εἰς Κάϊρον. Διὰ πρώτην φορὰν ἀμερικανικὰ ἀεροπλάνα προσήγγισαν τὸν αἰγυπτιακὸν χῶρον κατὰ τοὺς τελευταίους μῆνας.

Ἀπαντῶν εἰς ἐρωτήσεις περὶ τῶν Σοβιετικῶν πεζοναυτῶν, ὁ κ. Μπίτσερ ἐδήλωσεν ὅτι δὲν ὑπάρχουν ἐνδείξεις ὅτι πεζοναῦται ἀπεβιβάσθησαν εἰς Συρίαν ἢ Αἴγυπτον.

Fig. 4. The aircraft carrier USS *Independence* departed from Piraeus on October 7
and headed for the south of Crete, where she remained throughout the war,
refueling the aircraft transporting supplies to Israel and guarding with her own fighter planes
the last leg of the route to Israel, returning to Piraeus on November 5.

Source: *Μακεδονία* newspaper (6 November 1973).

actual events show that, despite its public reservations, the Papadopoulos regime contributed substantially to American operations during the period in question. From the above can be concluded, as Chris Woodhouse indicates, that the American government of the time had no reasons to be dissatisfied with Papadopoulos or Markezinis.[38]

Let's turn then to the basic argument, not as it was wrongly expressed by his later purveyors, but as Markezinis himself presented it. According to Papadopoulos' prime minister, on November 21, 1973, Xanthopoulos-Palamas delivered to him a secret message from Greek Ambassador K. Miliaresis, conveying Washington's "request" for an expansion of port facilities ("to recognize for the USA rights for wider usage," as he put it) and, at the same time, the use of the Elefsina airport by American aircraft. According to Markezinis, the secretary of state stressed that it was a matter "of the landing of airplanes with nuclear arms […] outside of NATO planning". Markezinis claims that the next day (November 22) he informed Papadopoulos, recommending rejection of the request and that the dictator agreed "without reservation". He noted that it was decided that, if Greek officers were pressured by their American colleagues, they were to refer them to the foreign affairs ministry. Two days later, on November 24, the Chief of Armed Forces, General Zagoriannakos,

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[38] *Ibid.*

contacted Xanthopoulos-Palamas, stressing the danger that this stance perhaps "would provoke American reaction". Nonetheless, the foreign affairs minister insisted that, "The directions of the government are categorical and must be implemented unwaveringly." "The next day," Markezinis concluded dramatically, "my government had been overturned."[39]

Consequently, the Markezinis' version differs considerably from the prevailing conspiracy theory scenario: the differences with the Americans did not, in this account, concern the stance of the Papadopoulos regime during the course of the war, but arose roughly one month later and concerned the "request" for future facilities, more in the sense of the wider US–Soviet Cold War rivalry, as described earlier, rather than the Arab–Israeli conflict. In reality, it was a matter of speeding up a request for a conventional development normally expected in the near term. Indeed, the Greek–American agreement for port facilities that had been signed a year earlier included, in principle, the docking of six destroyers at a specially developed permanent anchorage in the Elefsina region, including administrative services, hosting an infrastructure for 1200 families of crew members and so forth (and which already, by the fall of 1973, had largely taken place). At the same time, the arrangement provided for considering, in June 1974, the addition of an aircraft carrier (whose aircraft would make use of the Elefsina airport as well).[40] As a result, however, of developments in the Middle East, the US is said, in this version, to have asked for a quicker implementation of this capability, from November 1973 (if, indeed, it made this request, since the available American sources do not explicitly mention it).[41]

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[39] Markezinis, *Αναμνήσεις*, pp. 458-468; in a letter from C. Xanthopoulos-Palamas to S. B. Markezinis, December 7, 1975 (as included in the above, pp. 459-460), it is claimed that "[…] the American request to use the air base at Elefsina for the landing of nuclear-armed airplanes was a serious contribution to the overthrow of the government. On this matter, have in mind my confidential note concerning my rejection of this request."; cf. Sakkas, "Greece and the Arabs", pp. 213-214.

[40] "Η συμφωνία διευκολύνσεων. Ολόκληρον το κείμενόν της ως ανεκοινώθη" [The facilities agreement: The entire text as made public], *Μακεδονία* (9 January 1973); cf. Georgios Pesmazoglou, *Μια δεκαετία (1967-1976)* [A decade (1967-1977)], Athens 1976, pp. 226-236; "Θα παρασχεθούν ωρισμέναι τεχνικαί διευκολύνσεις δια τα αεροσκάφη του αεροπλανοφόρου εις παρακείμενον αεροδρόμιον" [Certain technical facilities will be provided to aircraft of the aircraft carrier at the adjacent airport], *Μακεδονία* (11 March 1973); also, "Phase I of the Athens homeporting was implemented in September 1972, involving six destroyer-type ships. […] The Navy had intended to proceed in early summer 1974 with Phase II of Athens homeporting. Involved were an aircraft carrier with its embarked air wing and a dependent support (hospital) ship, enabling the Navy to maintain a two-carrier force in the Mediterranean", in Laurie Van Hook (ed.), *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*, Vol. XXX, Washington, DC, 2007, document 10, pp. 43-44.

[41] In any case, it does not appear in the compendium of the relevant period in a critical

Fig. 5. A warm handshake between the commander of NATO forces in Southern Europe, Admiral Richard G. Colbert (U.S. Navy), and Georgios Papadopoulos in Athens on November 21, 1973.

Source: Author's collection.

It is notable, staying with Markezinis' scenario, that the entire issue arose and ran its course between the 21st and 25th of November, that is, not only a month after the end of the Yom Kippur War, but also several days after the Polytechnic anti-junta revolt and its violent suppression had taken place (thus disallowing any connection between the two events). Another contradiction in the Markezinis version is the attempted causal connection between the rejection of the American request (on November 22) and the Ioannidis coup (November 25) – a contradiction because, aside from everything else, it assumes that the coup was organized and executed within two and a

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secret memo which the staff of the State Department submitted to Kissinger early in 1974 (Van Hook [ed.], *Foreign Relations*, document 10, pp. 29-45), to which we will refer analytically in what follows. On the other hand, however, I am obliged to note that the contents are unavailable for at least three telegrams from the US Embassy to the State Department on the issue of "Elefsis Airfield Negotiations", on November 13 and 14, 1973 (Athens 7889b, Athens 7864b and Athens 7906b).

half days (whereas documentary evidence shows that it had been decided upon and planned at least two months earlier).[42] In addition, let us note Stylianos Pattakos' contention that, on November 20, 1973, he conveyed to Papadopoulos the information that he had from the American Ambassador Henry Tasca, that, "it is being widely disseminated that Brigadier General Ioannidis is preparing to oust you".[43] That would have not been a particularly "conspiratorial" move, of course, on Tasca's part, if Ioannidis was truly just someone acting at the behest of the United States.[44]

However, let us follow what happened next. Did the new Greek junta change its stance in relation to the specific American request? Fully four months after the overthrow of Papadopoulos, talks about the anchorage of the aircraft carrier were still "stalled", pending the existence of "a greater harmony in mutual perceptions", according to the characteristic statement

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[42] Markezinis' claim "ignores, indeed, the fact that the preparation of the coup, politically and technically, had essentially been completed before the issue arose," Rizas aptly noted in *Οι Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες*, p. 163. We can add that General Bonanos was first informed that Ioannidis was making plans to overthrow Papadopoulos sometime in mid-August 1973; Grigorios Bonanos, *Η Αλήθεια* [The truth], Athens 1986, p. 115; according to General Gizikis, Ioannidis' emissary, Captain Thanopoulos, informed him of a planned coup on September 17, 1973; Hellenic Parliament, *Το Κυπριακό στη Βουλή των Ελλήνων* [The Cyprus Question in the Hellenic parliament], Vol. IV, Athens 1997, p. 295. There is also the information from General Hondrokoukis, according to which "Papadopoulos' fall had been discussed in August 1973, but was decided upon one month later."; Dimitris Hondrokoukis, *Ο Γολγοθάς της Ελληνικής Δημοκρατίας* [The Golgotha of Greek democracy], Athens 1974, p. 177; cf. Sakkas, "Greece and the Arabs", p. 214.

[43] "On November 22, I told him the following: Georgios, I told you by telephone the day before yesterday that the American ambassador called me to his office and told me that it is being widely disseminated that Brigadier General Ioannidis was preparing to overthrow you, I informed you last evening that the British ambassador called me to his office and told me the same thing […].So, in front of Angelis I said those things and told him, 'since tomorrow evening, the 23rd of the month, I had gotten tickets to go to my village in Crete, […] should I go, Georgios, or will they seize me there, just as I seized Kanellopoulos?' 'Stelios, go with my blessings and God's will […], those are insanities.'"; Michalopoulos, *Η προδοσία*, pp. 87-88.

[44] It is notable that Papadopoulos himself never adopted this theory. In his testimony to the Parliamentary Investigative Committee (May 5, 1987), in response to the observation of KKE deputy Kostas Kappos that "the USA organized" his 1973 ouster, he stated: "Say that for your own sake, don't involve me"; Kostas Kappos, *Έγκλημα εναντίον της Κύπρου* [Crime against Cyprus], Athens 2004, p. 56. Also, in 1992, in one of the few post-dictatorship interviews he gave, he merely argued that "the Polytechnic, as it is called, was used to halt the politicization of the regime and the path towards a healthy parliamentary democracy", refusing to connect his ouster with other issues; cf. Giorgos Votsis, "Μια συζήτηση στη φυλακή με τον δικτάτορα" [A discussion in prison with the dictator], *Ελευθεροτυπία* (23 April 2007).

of the American Secretary of Defense, James Schlesinger, on March 29, 1974.[45] Such a "harmony" was achieved neither by the time the Ioannidis dictatorship collapsed, nor in its aftermath.[46] What, then, was at issue?

In a secret analytical memorandum (Action Memorandum), which the State Department's policy planning staff sent to Kissinger at the beginning of 1974, the issue is given its proper dimensions:

> Publicly, the former Greek government under President Papadopoulos adopted a slightly pro-Arab posture during the recent war. Anticipating a negative response, we did not ask Greece for landing rights for our military supply airlift to Israel. The government was, however, privately helpful to the United States in a variety of ways [2½ lines not declassified] they allowed us the use of Souda Bay airfield, to a much greater extent and for different purposes than is called for in our bilateral agreement. Souda Bay proved vital to the U.S. Navy for re-supplying the Sixth Fleet. Moreover, the Greeks placed no restrictions on: (1) the Sixth Fleet's access to Greek ports; (2) the activities of the U.S. Naval Communications Station at Nea Makri; (3) the USAF facility at Iraklion, Crete [3 lines not declassified].[47]

Turning then to the present and stressing that, "our most pressing concern at this point is to be able to use Greece as an element of our Eastern Mediterranean strategy", the authors of the memorandum commented on the stance of the Ioannidis regime, noting that the "Greek government's posture, however, is actually at variance with our role in the Arab–Israeli dispute" and that, "its willingness to permit use of facilities in support of non-NATO contingencies is severely limited by concern for Greek interests and communities in Arab states", despite the fact that the Papadopoulos' regime "was covertly helpful to us during the October fighting". Consequently, no "improvement" from the Ioannidis' regime in this area can be divined. In fact, there are clear suggestions to the contrary.[48]

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[45] *Μακεδονία* (24 and 30 March 1974).

[46] Invited in the aftermath of the dictatorship to take a position on whether and to what extent American services controlled Ioannidis, the American ambassador Henry Tasca said: "We didn't have any serious problems in settling the issue of anchoring ships of the Sixth Fleet until Ioannidis overthrew Papadopoulos. Consequently, what kind of control was that? If the United States had the ability to choose a Greek leader, do you actually think we would be so crazy as to choose Ioannidis?"; cf. *Μακεδονία* (28 August 1974).

[47] Van Hook (ed.), *Foreign Relations*, document 10, p. 38, note 10. Participating in the preparation of the memorandum (whose composition began on January 8 and was completed on March 19, 1974) were Winston Lord and Thomas Thornton, director and staff member, respectively, of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, John Day of the Greek Desk and, from the military, Lt. Col. Frederic Flemings.

[48] *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

Among the many contradictions that incurably befall conspiracy theorists is the fact that the only government to support publicly and practically the American effort in the Yom Kippur War was, as we saw, Portugal. Indeed, it needs to be stressed that, according to American military analysts themselves, that contribution was critical, since without permission to use the airport in the Azores, the air transport mission to resupply Israel "could not have been carried out".[49] To stay consistent, therefore, with the reasoning of conspiracy theorists, this would mean that the Tomás–Caetano regime would have been, on that basis, the most secure regime in Europe. However, it was overthrown not much later, on April 25, 1974, and, indeed, three months before the fall of the Greek dictatorship. This broader perspective, however, is alien to the approach taken by conspiracy theorists. For a structural characteristic of this approach is an autistic perception of affairs, according to which "their" issue, in this case the "Greek issue", is of exclusive importance, an issue which all global powers persistently focus on, in an intense and singular way, and that has no connection to what they are involved or not involved with elsewhere. In 1976, the now-retired head of the entire American operation, Admiral Zumwalt, spoke before an academic audience and answered accusations from those in the audience critical of American support for dictatorial regimes. Zumwalt responded sarcastically that:

> Democratic Israel was saved in 1973 only due to the existence of fascist Portugal, where planes of the American air bridge landed; fascist Spain, over which our airplanes were refueled; and fascist Greece, from whose ports the Sixth Fleet and convoys set out. In the course of the Middle East war, Turkey permitted Soviet aircraft to use its airspace and created obstacles for us. To the contrary, Greece permitted the Sixth Fleet to continue to launch from its bases and this is the major difference between Greece and Turkey at critical moments.[50]

In closing, emphasis should be given to other, less apparent parameters, which may illuminate the deeper reasons that conspiracy theory narrative is able to enjoy acceptance, not only among certain supporters of the Papadopoulos regime (for them, the matter is self-evident, since it provides them with the glamour of a "heroic" exit), but also among some of their democratic opponents.[51] It is connected to the fully prevailing (particularly

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[49] Boyne, "Nickel Grass", p. 57.

[50] *Το Βήμα* and *Μακεδονία* (4 April 1976); cf. Sakkas, "Greece and the Arabs", p. 214. The speech occurred in the context of Zumwalt's (unsuccessful) pre-election campaign for a seat in the US Senate and must, in any case, be evaluated in combination with the fact that the audience consisted largely of Greek-American university graduates.

[51] Characteristic are the statements in *The Jerusalem Post* (29 November 1973) by

in that period) view that the 1967 coup and the establishment of the junta was the direct work of the United States and that Papadopoulos served simply as a passive tool, being a paid agent of the CIA.[52]

From such a perspective, it would be inconceivable to acknowledge that the relationship between the United States and the dictatorship was a dynamic process in continuous development, with ups-and-downs, with give-and-take, with bilateral agreements whose content and flexibility of implementation were on each occasion on the negotiating table, and where, along with American interests, attention was given also to the interests of the regime, as well as Greek interests more broadly (at least as those interests were interpreted by the dictatorship). As a result, on the basis of the dominant narrative, even a slight deviation, even the appearance of one, by the "agent" Papadopoulos from the official line of his American "employers", could have been nothing less than a crime of *lèse-majesté* that would justify his immediate "dismissal", that is, his overthrow. It would then follow logically that that sentence would be executed, from this point of view, by another "agent", Ioannidis.[53]

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the well-known anti-regime journalist Elias Demetracopoulos, according to which, "the United States did nothing to prevent the ousting of George Papadopoulos due to the Greek government's refusal to allow U.S. aircraft to use Greek air-space in order to deliver weapons to Israel" (included in Jacob Abadi, "Constraints and Adjustments in Greece's Policy toward Israel", *Mediterranean Quarterly* [Fall 2000], p. 55); cf. also the stand taken by KKE (CPG) deputy Kostas Kappos at the Parliamentary Investigative Committee (May 5, 1987), that "Ioannidis' action was basically organized by the USA and overthrew Papadopoulos without resistance". (Hellenic Parliament, *Το Κυπριακό στη Βουλή*, p. 291); the position of Dimitris Charalambis: "The inability of the Papadopoulos leadership to satisfy the interests of American strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean removed G. Papadopoulos' final support within the structure of power. The negative posture of the Americans towards Papadopoulos began to be expressed publicly as well. The moment for activating Ioannidis had arrived."; Dimitris Charalambis, *Στρατός και πολιτική εξουσία. Η δομή της εξουσίας στην μετεμφυλιακή Ελλάδα* [The army and political power: The structure of power in post-Civil War Greece], Athens 1985 p. 295.

[52] We note, entirely for illustrative purposes, the characteristic headline of the London newspaper *The Observer:* "Greek Dictator in CIA's Pocket" (1 July 1973); cf. the famous question by the chair of the US Senate Armed Forces Committee Stuart Symington: "At any time has Mr. Papadopoulos been an agent for the CIA? […] Did we pay him any money at any time?" and the equally impressive answer of CIA director William Colby: "I cannot answer that now, Mr. Chairman. I just do not know. I can say that we did not pay him personally." (United States Senate, *Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services on the Nomination of William E. Colby to be Director of Central Intelligence*, Washington, DC, 1973, p. 7).

[53] Not irrelevant to this entire perspective is the fact that the statements of the Greek foreign affairs ministry regarding "neutrality" generated displeasure as well for the anti-

PS The John Day Incident

John Day was an important State Department official, who served from 1963 to 1968 in the political section of the US Embassy in Athens, where he played a controversial role[54] and was present at the time of the April 21 coup. Subsequently, he returned to Washington and in October 1973 was made deputy director of the State Department's "Greek Desk".[55] A few weeks later, on November 9, he visited Athens, where he had meetings with Greek and American officials, in the context of a cycle of briefing contacts following his assumption of his new duties,[56] for the purpose of submitting a "detailed report" to the State Department regarding the "internal Greek political situation".[57]

On the eve of his departure for Washington (on November 16),[58] a reception was held in his honor at the American Embassy, at which a number of Greeks were present, including Konstantinos Mitsotakis, Evangelos Averoff, Ioannis Varvitsiotis, Ioannis Tsouderos, Christos Kitsides, Michael

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Nixon congress, which considered it a given that "the aid given over the course of a total of six years to the Athens government presumed something in return from them in the case of the Middle East war" (*Τα Νέα*, 25 October 1973). When Greek officers "took power illegally on April 21, 1967", Democratic congressman and chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee Benjamin Rosenthal stated characteristically that the US government did not denounce them, arguing that the military and strategic advantages of maintaining close ties to the regime weighed more heavily over the long-term interest in restoring democracy and, particularly, that, "without aid to Greece, you have no policy to save Israel". After the negative response of the Greek government to the recent request of the USA for support in the Middle East crisis, Rosenthal asked, "What is the justification for a policy of friendly relations with the Greek dictators?" (*Μακεδονία*, 14 November 1973); a number of such articles appeared in the American press (cf., for example, the *New York Times*, 6, 7 and 20 November 1973, and the *Christian Science Monitor*, 19 November 1973).

[54] In the spring of 1967, a few weeks before the coup, the movements of John Day had upset a portion, at least, of the Center Union: on March 1, 1967 he was one of the three American diplomats who had pointedly left the talk Andreas Papandreou gave to foreign correspondents, protesting his "general and broad attack on the USA"; a few days later in Heraklion, Crete, on his visit to Fivos Ioannidis, the regional representative of EDIN (the Center Union youth organization), Day asked questions of the nature of "What opinion do you have of the line being taken by Andreas Papandreou?", "What are their differences from the line of Georgios Papandreou?", etc., while, in speaking of Robert Kennedy, he characterized him as a "demagogue and street politician", thereby provoking public reactions from EDIN, which issued a relative statement; cf. *Ελευθερία* (2 and 3 March 1967) and *Το Βήμα* (7 March 1967).

[55] *Το Βήμα* (25 October 1973).

[56] *Το Βήμα* and *Μακεδονία* (10 November 1973).

[57] *Μακεδονία* (16 November 1973).

[58] *Το Βήμα* (17 November 1973).

Papaconstantinou, and the former publisher of the newspaper *Ελευθερία*, Panos Kokkas.[59] The journalist and author Solon Grigoriades, a year after the fall of the dictatorship, published a description of that event, adding one more brushstroke to the depiction of the issue of concern here: "At a reception honoring the [American diplomat], at which around 30 journalists, military officers, politicians, and diplomats were present, Day openly stated: 'You must change the Markezinis government, and oust Papadopoulos. We Americans don't want either the one or the other.'"[60] Embellishing, Grigoriades added: "That means that Markezinis did not satisfy the Americans. He didn't aid them during the Arab–Israeli crisis. And as a result, he would henceforward face other adversities in his unlikely effort."[61]

It is not clear whether or not Grigoriades was present as a journalist during that gathering or whether John Day's presumed words were conveyed to him by others. However that may be, this short paragraph has been accepted as an indisputable piece of evidence and has assumed a prominent place in many publications ever since. "An American diplomat visiting Greece soon afterwards was heard to say as much, at a reception in his honor," noted Chris Woodhouse.[62] "The negative stance of the Americans towards Papadopoulos was beginning to be expressed openly," commented Dimitris Charalambis in his exceptional dissertation,[63] and so on. All of them cite Grigoriades' paragraph.[64]

Let us see, however, what else we know about this incident. On October 19, 1973, three weeks before he departed for Greece (and, in any case, after the public position of the Greek regime on the Middle East issue was already known), John Day met with Theodore Couloumbis in Washington. The new deputy director of the Greek Desk tried to convince the Greek professor that, "the politicians should participate in the 1974 elections", which Markezinis was

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[59] *Μακεδονία* (16 November 1973).

[60] Solon Grigoriades, *Ιστορία της δικτατορίας* [History of the dictatorship], Athens 1975, Vol. VII, p. 55.

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] Woodhouse, *The Rise and Fall of the Greek Colonels*, p. 124.

[63] Charalambis, *Στρατός και πολιτική εξουσία*, p. 295; cf. also Alexandros Zaousis, *Ο εμπαιγμός* [The deception], Athens 1998, Vol. II, p. 178.

[64] At least one of those present at the American reception of November 15, 1973 apparently did not arrive at the same conclusion: "Papadopoulos fell because his policies created dissatisfaction in the ranks of the leadership groups of the Junta [which] were gathered around Ioannidis," Konstantinos Mitsotakis averred. "Now, in connection with the involvement of the Americans […] I have no indication and, furthermore, no evidence. I would say that it was an internal matter. The Americans simply accepted the fact."; Thanasis Diamantopoulos, *Κώστας Μητσοτάκης. Πολιτική βιογραφία* [Kostas Mitsotakis: A political biography], Athens n.d., Vol. II, pp. 360-362.

planning, and, when Couloumbis anticipated possible student demonstrations and worker protests, Day countered that, "the students should be satisfied with the liberalization".[65] Such views do not appear to be "anti-Papadopoulos".

A second interesting piece of information is that, on his way to Athens, the Greek-speaking American diplomat made a 48-hour stopover in London, where he met with "circles of self-exiled Greeks".[66] Possibly, his contacts there and subsequently in Athens could have changed his initial impression on the course of events and the true prospects of the Markezinis venture. On the evening of the embassy reception, the main arteries of the capital around the Polytechnic were echoing, for a second day, with the slogans of demonstrators against Papadopoulos, as well as against the Americans,[67] validating in a dramatic way Couloumbis' warning to Day. Based on these givens, it is not impossible that something was said that, in the aftermath, was exaggerated and misinterpreted.

That the American official possibly knew something about the impending coup may be conjectured from what followed. A few weeks after November 25, in discussions which he had with Greeks in Washington, Day insisted that Ioannidis and the officers that collaborated with him originally planned "the overthrow of Papadopoulos and the formation of a National Government under Karamanlis", but "now that Ioannidis had prevailed, they followed another tactic", which, indeed, they characterized as a "retreat".[68] At the same time, Day attempted to have conveyed to Karamanlis that, "he is particularly

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[65] Theodore Couloumbis, *…71 …74. Σημειώσεις ενός πανεπιστημιακού* […71 …74: Notes of a professor], Athens 2002, pp. 285-286.

[66] See L. Kostis' report from London, published in the newspaper *Μακεδονία* (11 November 1973) entitled "Μετά τας αποτυχίας του κ. Μαρκεζίνη. Η 'αποστολή του Νταίη' ένδειξις ανησυχιών του Σταίητ Ντηπάρτμεντ;" [After the Markezinis failure: The 'Day mission' indicating State Department unease?].

[67] "Down with Papadopoulos" and "Americans out"; cf. "Big Student Protest Continues in Athens", *New York Times* (16 November 1973).

[68] In the Greek version of Orestis Vidalis' journal for December 12, 1973: "At the State Department, Day told Nikolopoulos that Ioannidis, along with the military officers, decided on the ouster in order to form a National Government under Karamanlis. Now, however, that Ioannidis has prevailed, he is following a different tactic."; Orestis Vidalis, *Ιστορικό ημερολόγιο. Χρόνια εκπατρισμού, 1968-1975* [Historical journal: Years of expatriation, 1968-1975], Athens 1997, pp. 864-866. In the English version of the journal, the previous note was omitted, but the following one was maintained on December 14, 1973: "I telephoned Couloumbis, who said that he had lunch with Nikolopoulos and Day, and that Day had told them of Ioannidis backing from the initial joint decision they all made together and of the fluidity of the situation."; Vidalis, *Confronting the Greek Dictatorship*, p. 325.

esteemed at all levels of the [American] administration" and that "the rumors that the CIA intervened and overthrew Papadopoulos are fantasies".[69]

The proposition of forming a government of "national unity" under Karamanlis was supported from a variety of directions immediately *after* the coup,[70] but Day's contention that it was Ioannidis' plan *before* the November 25 coup is perhaps an argument which had been leaked to him purposely, during his meetings with contacts in Athens from November 10-16.[71] In any case, all of this may be indicators of a gradual shift by the Americans in relation to the Papadopoulos–Markezinis "experiment", but does not provide evidence for its connection to the Yom Kippur War.[72]

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[69] Vidalis, *Ιστορικό ημερολόγιο*, p. 881; *Confronting the Greek Dictatorship*, p. 331.

[70] First and foremost by Henry Tasca himself, with the support of Tom Pappas (cf. Rizas, *Οι Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες*, pp. 165-168); Nikolaos Makarezos apparently moved in the same direction, *Πώς καταλήξαμε στη "μεταπολίτευση", Νοέμβριος 1973 – Ιούλιος 1974* [How we arrived at the "Metapolitefsi", November 1973 – July 1974], Athens 2010, p. 63; cf. also the commentary by the French correspondent Paul-Jean Franceschini: "Prépare-t-on vraiment sous l'égide de militaires de haut grade, 'raisonnables' et 'modérés', un appel à M. Caramanlis, doté des pouvoirs spéciaux qu'il a réclamé?", *Le Monde* (27 November 1973).

[71] Let us recall that John Day was amongst the contributors to the memorandum for Kissinger, which, as we saw, emphasized that the Papadopoulos government "was privately helpful to the United States in a variety of ways, they allowed us the use of Souda Bay airfield", etc.; cf. Van Hook (ed.), *Foreign Relations*, document 10, p. 38.

[72] "I, too, did not think that the Americans were behind this latest change," noted Orestis Vidalis in his journal for December 11, 1973 (*Ιστορικό ημερολόγιο*, p. 861; *Confronting the Greek Dictatorship*, p. 322). Woodhouse observed: "It was later suspected by many Greeks that the US Administration was disappointed by Greece's neutrality, and decided accordingly to abandon support for Papadopoulos and Markezinis. [...] But the suspicion was not confirmed by American statements in the aftermath."; Woodhouse, *The Rise and Fall of the Greek Colonels*, p. 124.