

"Truman Doctrine"

GREECE AND THE UNITED NATIONS, 1946-49



A SUMMARY ACCOUNT

by Harry N. Howard

I. General

Since 1946-47, the United States has been concerned with the problem of threats to the political independence and territorial integrity of Greece. Through the United Nations it has sought to preserve the integrity of Greece against the actions of her northern neighbors and to find some solution of the problems therein involved. Through its aid missions, American Aid to Greece and the Economic Cooperation Administration, it has sought to help Greece to regain the capacity to cope with the Communist attempt to overthrow the constitutional system in Greece, and to assist that country along the road toward social and economic reconstruction.

II. The Greek Problem in the Security Council, 1946-47

CONSIDERATION OF THE GREEK PROBLEM IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The Security Council first considered the problem of Greece as a result of a letter of the representative of the U.S.S.R. on January 21, 1946 under article 35 of the Charter which charged that the presence of British troops in Greece was a threat to international peace and security.¹ Since no disposition was made on the part of the Security Council, however, to agree with the Soviet thesis, the charge was not sustained. The Greek question came before the Security Council for a second time in August 1947 as a result of a cable from the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs on August 24, 1946, under article 34 of the Charter which

¹ For details see *The United Nations and the Problem of Greece*, Department of State publication 2909, pp. 1-3.

charged this time that the policy of the Greek Government had produced a situation in the Balkans endangering international peace and security. The question was discussed between August 28 and September 30, 1946, but once more the Security Council declined to accept the Soviet thesis.

Since December 1946, the United Nations has been especially concerned with the problems of threats to the political independence and territorial integrity of Greece. The problem of Greece was brought to the attention of the Security Council for the third time when, on December 3, 1946, the representative of Greece, under articles 34 and 35 (1) of the Charter, requested that the Security Council give early consideration to a situation which, it was charged, was leading to friction between Greece, on the one hand, and Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia on the other. The Greek Government declared that the guerrilla movement in Greece was receiving support from Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia, that groups of men were trained for guerrilla activities in Greece, and that foreign assistance had been given to the guerrillas.

THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION OF INVESTIGATION

On December 19 the Security Council unanimously approved a resolution establishing a Commission of Investigation² on which the 11 members of that body were represented and to which liaison representatives of Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Yugoslavia were attached. This Commission which was to make an on-the-spot investigation in order to ascertain the facts as to the disturbed situation along the northern frontiers of Greece,

² For the work of this Commission see particularly U.N. doc. S/300: *Report by the Commission of Investigation Concerning Greek Frontier Incidents to the Security Council*, May 23, 1947, vs. I-III; and *The United Nations and the Problem of Greece*, cited, pp. 3-26.

signed its report in Geneva on May 23, 1947. Among other things, it found that Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia had, in fact, been assisting the Greek guerrilla movement, as charged, and it proposed that the Security Council recommend that the four parties concerned do their best to establish normal and good neighborly relations, abstain from any action likely to maintain or increase the tension in the frontier region, and refrain from any support of elements in neighboring countries aiming at the overthrow of the lawful governments of those countries. Secondly, the Commission proposed that the four parties enter into new frontier conventions along the lines of the Greek-Bulgarian convention of 1931. It was also suggested that a body be established to investigate frontier violations or complaints, use its good offices, make studies and investigations, and report to the Security Council. Finally it was suggested that the proposed commission study the question of international refugees and the practicability of the voluntary transfer of minorities.

The representatives of the U.S.S.R. and Poland, who held the Government of Greece solely responsible for the troubled situation along the northern frontiers, subscribed neither to the conclusions of the Commission nor to its recommendations.

III. The General Assembly and the Problem of Greece, 1947-49

THE QUESTION OF THE "THREAT TO POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF GREECE," SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1947

The Security Council discussed the Greek problem during June, July, and August 1947, but because of five Soviet vetoes, it was unable to reach any decision. The question was taken off the agenda of the Security Council on September 15 on the motion of the United States representative, and on September 23 the General Assembly decided to place the question of "threats to the political independence and territorial integrity of Greece" on its agenda.³ On October 21, 1947, the General Assembly, by a vote of 40 to 6, with 11 abstentions, approved a resolution establishing the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, with representatives of 11 nations, although the U.S.S.R. and Poland refused to serve, and endowed it with powers of observation and conciliation, in

³For convenient reference see *The General Assembly and the Problem of Greece*, The Department of State Bulletin Supplement, Dec. 7, 1947.

general accord with the recommendations of the original Commission of Investigation. Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia were called upon forthwith to cease giving assistance to the Greek guerrilla movement and Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Yugoslavia were called upon to cooperate in the settlement of their disputes by peaceful means. To that end it was recommended that the four parties concerned:

- (1) Establish normal diplomatic and good neighborly relations among themselves as soon as possible;
- (2) Establish frontier conventions providing for effective machinery for the regulation and control of their common frontiers and the pacific settlement of frontier incidents and disputes;
- (3) Cooperate in the settlement of the problems arising out of the presence of refugees in the four states concerned;
- (4) Study the practicability for concluding agreements for the voluntary transfer of minorities.⁴

THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE BALKANS, 1947-48

The United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans, composed of the active representation of Australia, Brazil, China, France, Mexico, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, began its work in Greece in November 1947, and has continued to sit in that country, either in Salonika (December 1947-July 1948) or in Athens (July 1948-49).

In its first report to the General Assembly,⁵ signed at Geneva on June 30, 1948, the Special

⁴For text see *Ibid.*, pp. 1121-1122, and resolution 109 (II).

⁵See U.N. doc. A/574: *Report of the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans*, p. 36. The Special Committee had previously submitted two interim reports to the Secretary-General, on Dec. 31, 1947 (U.N. doc. A/521) and Jan. 10, 1948 (U.N. doc. A/522). For convenience these reports, together with that of June 30, 1948, may be found in *Documents and State Papers*, September 1948, pp. 373-375, and 376-412. It may also be noted that a supplementary report of the Special Committee on the Balkans was signed on Sept. 10, 1948 (U.N. doc. A/644) and an interim report was signed on Oct. 22, 1948 (U.N. doc. A/692). The supplementary report and the third interim report which gave further details and confirmed the conclusions reached on June 30, 1948, may be found respectively in *Documents and State Papers*, September 1948, pp. 413-423, and January 1949, pp. 603-608.

Committee unanimously reached a number of conclusions. Although it had consistently endeavored to establish normal diplomatic and good neighborly relations between Greece and its northern neighbors, only the Government of Greece cooperated with it in any way. Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia not only refused to cooperate with it but also refused to recognize it as a legitimate body of the United Nations. The Special Committee was therefore unable substantially to assist the four governments concerning (1) the establishment of normal relations, (2) frontier conventions, (3) political refugees, and (4) voluntary transfer of minorities. It was evident to the Committee that good neighborly relations did not exist between Greece and her northern neighbors. Moreover it appeared to the Special Committee that the Greek guerrillas were receiving assistance from Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia. Because of the character and scale of the support, it was the view of the Special Committee that it had been given "with the knowledge of the Governments of Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia." The Committee was convinced that as long as the situation along the northern frontiers indicated such support, a threat to the political independence and territorial integrity of Greece would exist and international peace and security in the Balkans would be endangered. Despite the refusal of the northern neighbors of Greece to cooperate with it, the Special Committee was also convinced that it would be possible to assist the four governments concerned toward a peaceful settlement in the interest of all if Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia, like Greece, were prepared to act in accordance with the resolution of October 21, 1947, and in the spirit of the United Nations Charter.

The Special Committee made a number of recommendations in its report of June 30, 1948. The first of these stated that as long as the disturbed conditions continued it was essential that an agency of the United Nations be entrusted with the functions of "exercising vigilance" along the northern frontiers of Greece and of endeavoring to bring about a peaceful settlement. It also recommended that the General Assembly consider "ways and means of obtaining the cooperation of Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia with the Special Committee."

*For a summary of the discussion see "The Problem of Greece in the General Assembly," *Documents and State Papers*, January 1949.

September 19, 1949



THE THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE GREEK PROBLEM, 1948

The General Assembly again considered the Greek question at its third session in Paris in the autumn of 1948.* After a long discussion, by a vote of 47 to 6, with no abstentions, on November 27, 1948, the General Assembly adopted a resolution continuing the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans with clarified terms of reference concerning its work of observation and conciliation. The General Assembly took note of the conclusions of the Special Committee as to the assistance of Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia to the Greek guerrillas and that a continuation of this situation constituted a threat to the independence and integrity of Greece and to peace in the Balkans and that the conduct of these countries had been "inconsistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations." A second resolution, unanimously approved, also recommended resumption of diplomatic relations between Greece and her northern neighbors, the drafting or renewal of frontier conventions, and the settlement of the refugee problem. Finally, the General Assembly unanimously approved a resolution concerning the repatriation of some 25 thousand Greek children who had been removed primarily to the territories of the northern neighbors of Greece.

It should also be noted that the First Committee (Political and Security) of the General Assembly, on November 10, 1948, established a "Conciliation Committee" under the chairmanship of Dr. H. V. Evatt, President of the General Assembly, to explore methods and procedure with the representatives of Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Yugoslavia, looking toward a settlement of their difficulties. By the close of the session in December, draft agreements had been prepared and Dr. Evatt had reported some progress, especially as to the possible establishment of mixed frontier commissions and the drafting of frontier conventions, although the Albanian Government refused to sign any agreement unless Greece gave a formal renunciation to her long-standing claim to northern Epirus, and the Bulgarian and Yugoslav Governments refused to sign unless the Albanian Government signed. Subsequently, during the second part of the third session at New York, the Greek Government, on May 11, 1949, substantially accepted Dr. Evatt's proposals, but no reply was received from the other governments concerned.

Meanwhile the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans continued its work although it suspended its conciliation role until the "Conciliation Committee" headed by Dr. Evatt had terminated its work and submitted a report. In its unanimous report to the fourth session of the General Assembly⁷ signed on August 2, 1949, in Athens, the Special Committee notes that "Albania is the principal source of material assistance" to the Greek guerrillas. The report declares that Albanian support has been "vital to the continuance of the Greek guerrilla movement since all the main guerrilla concentrations are found on the Albanian frontier."⁸ It also points out that Bulgaria has continued to assist the Greek guerrillas, moral assistance to whom has been openly proclaimed by the Bulgarian Government.⁹

On the other hand, it is indicated that Yugoslav assistance has recently declined if it has not ceased, following the Yugoslav-Cominform rift in 1948, and note is made of Marshal Tito's speech of July 10, 1949, concerning closure of the Greek-Yugoslav frontier.¹⁰ The report stresses the very important assistance of Rumania to the Greek guerrillas, including the fact that the "Free Greece" radio has been moved from the neighborhood of Belgrade to the vicinity of Bucharest, and states that this assistance—together with that of the other Soviet satellites, points toward "the existence of a highly coordinated system of support" to the Greek guerrilla movement.¹¹ As the report declares, on a number of occasions the Greek guerrillas have openly acknowledged their foreign support, as stated by the Greek Communist Party itself on January 30-31, 1949, when it proclaimed "in the Popular Democracies we found great and wholehearted support without which we could not have made progress."¹²

Among other things, the report calls attention to the fact that none of the approximately 25 thousand Greek children removed from Greece to the territories of her northern neighbors during 1948 have been returned to Greece in accordance with the unanimous resolution of the General Assembly

on November 27, 1948. Nevertheless, thousands of Greek children, contrary to the spirit of that resolution, have been transferred from one Soviet satellite state to another.¹³ Moreover "in violation of fundamental humanitarian principles, some of these children, both boys and girls of adolescent age, have been sent back to Greece to fight in the ranks of the guerrillas."¹⁴ The report outlines the conciliatory efforts of the Special Committee, noting that its conciliatory role was suspended for 5 months during 1949 to avoid duplicating the efforts of the Conciliation Committee, of which Dr. H. V. Evatt was chairman.¹⁵ The Special Committee, however, immediately resumed this role after the termination of Dr. Evatt's activities. Although the Soviet Union and Poland refused to cooperate in the work of the Special Committee and Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia refused to cooperate or even to recognize it, documents of the Committee were sent regularly to these governments, and the Committee remained available to assist Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Yugoslavia in the solution of their difficulties.

The report concludes that "the continuance of the present situation 'constitutes a threat to the political independence and territorial integrity of Greece and to peace in the Balkans'", reaffirming conclusions which the Special Committee had reached in 1948. The report contains no recommendations which are to be the subject of a supplementary report before the General Assembly takes up the Greek problem in the autumn of 1949.

TEXT OF REPORT OF U. N. SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE BALKANS

General Assembly Official Records:
Fourth Session
Supplement No. 8 (A/935)

Chapter I. Creation, Function and Organization of the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans

A. THE GREEK QUESTION BEFORE THE THIRD REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[EDITOR'S NOTE: The six annexes that appear in Supplement No. 8 (A/935) are not printed here; annexes 3, 4, and 5 will, however, appear in a separate print of Dr. Howard's article and the report. The separate also will include a complete chronology of the Greek case from 1946 to the present.]

⁷ *Ibid.*, par. 136.

⁸ *Ibid.*, par. 144.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pars. 27, 31, 33, and annex 5.

⁷ See U.N. doc. A/935: *Report of the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans*, pp. 1-25, with four maps.

⁸ *Ibid.*, par. 56.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pars. 88-139.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pars. 41, 52, and 152.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, par. 145.

¹² *Ibid.*, par. 67.