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Mr. Peter Bird Martin  
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Dear Peter,

In civilized circles, as you may have noticed, it is no longer fashionable to speak of national character. The painter who attempts an accurate portrait of a given nation will nearly always fall short of flattering the pretensions of those whom he depicts. In our age, more often than not, the subject of such a sketch will retaliate by lodging against the artist the charge that he is a racist. Ordinarily, the claim is unfounded. Unless we are to participate in debasing what was once a very precise term, we must acknowledge that racism--the conviction, once entertained by Arthur de Gobineau, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and the like, that one or more groups, definable by nationality, pigmentation, cranial size, or some other arbitrarily selected set of physical features, are biologically inferior or superior to others--is now exceedingly rare. Generally, at worst, the painter who incurs such wrath is guilty of holding fast to an ethnic prejudice unjustified by the facts. Inevitably, he tends to overlook the variety within the national forest in his eagerness to limn the forest itself.

With regard to what follows, I plead guilty to the charge of oversimplification. Many Greeks do not fit the mold I am about to cast, and they will not recognize themselves in what I have to say. Some may be angry, perhaps exceedingly so. Theirs is an anger I am willing to face. If I am to begin to make any sense out of the situation in Andreas Papandreou's Greece, I must deliberately narrow my focus to a limited spectrum of human types and generalize in a fashion that does an injustice to the diversity obviously present within Hellas. It is impossible to understand political developments in that country and to assess the likelihood of Papandreou's deciding to expel the American military from the bases in Greece, pull out of NATO or the EEC, or go to war with Turkey without paying considerable attention to the peculiar character of the Greeks as a people.

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## I

If you were to make abundant use of Türk Hava Yollari--the Turkish national airline--you would quickly discover that, when the pilot of a particular plane has managed to land the vehicle on the tarmac, the passengers burst into applause. It is the sort of event that makes one shudder to think what it might mean if sometime the airline's passengers were to withhold their applause. This they did on the 12th of September when I flew from Istanbul to Athens. The reason was easy to sort out: there was hardly a Turk on the plane. Virtually, all of the travel back and forth between Turkey and Greece is undertaken by Greeks (many of them originally residents of Istanbul), and as a rule the citizens of Hellas tend to be much more at ease in the air than their Turkish neighbors. Where the Turks are always at home, the Greeks are always on the road. Where the Turks expect and fear for the worst, the Greeks take it for granted that everything will turn out for the best.

After collecting my baggage, I was once again quickly made aware of yet another of the cultural differences between the two peoples. I hailed a cab and set out for the American School of Classical Studies; there, I could leave my luggage while I tried to locate an inexpensive hotel. Caught in heavy traffic, the taxi driver tried a short cut and found himself facing another cab in a street too narrow for them both to pass. Both drivers popped out of the cars, and for ten minutes they insulted one another in colorful language and with considerable zest. Neither was prepared to give way to the other--at least not very soon; and, in this, I later learned, they were by no means atypical. Sometimes, these quarrels, which are exceedingly common, result in an invective aimed at the passengers as well. The virtue of the ladies present and the manliness of the men may be called into question, and sometimes the passengers emerge from the cars to join in a general free-for-all.

I have trouble conceiving of such an event happening in Turkey. Quarrels do occasionally take place, but cooperation is an almost universal rule. I have never overheard two cabbies discussing each other's mothers in unflattering terms. I have never seen two men here engage in a contest at hurling abuse. In Istanbul, many of the streets are narrow: drivers park their cars on the sidewalks; pedestrians walk in the streets. Rarely do I take a taxi without encountering some situation in which my driver or the driver of another car or truck has to back up to make room so that the two vehicles can pass. In heavy traffic, drivers generally make space for those wanting to change lanes. The entire spirit of the enterprise is different. If a quarrel were to erupt, one would be well advised to get out of the way. Turks are stolid, stubborn sorts, slow to anger--but, once angry, not hesitant to act.

It is insufficient to say that the Greeks are more excitable than their neighbors from across the Aegean. They are that, of course, but the differences run far deeper than such an observation would suggest. This much

one can learn from perusing the mass-circulation newspapers published in the two countries.

The newspapers most often purchased by Turks have one thing in common: bright, color photographs of scantily clad, big-breasted women. The stories that accompany these pictures are brief and generally echo a common theme. The women who grace the pages of these dailies are often Europeans or Americans, and nearly all of them find Turkish men irresistible. In Istanbul, semi-naked women are as plentiful in the press as they are rare on the streets. It would be tempting to say that Turks have sex on the brain (which is by no means the best place to have it).

Just why the press is left uncensored I cannot fathom. Turkish women, single and married alike, rarely go out in the evening; dating is by no means unknown but it is relatively rare. As a consequence, the audience in the movie theaters of Istanbul is almost exclusively made up of young, single males, and the films that attract them are quite often soft porn. So, at least, one would judge from the stills displayed in the lobbies of the theaters. These movies are, at the same time, carefully censored, and the scenes depicted in the stills used to advertise a given film are, so I am told, often cut from the film itself. A friend who went to see Flashdance was upset when he discovered that two of the three dance sequences had been too risqué for the censors. In this relatively straitlaced society, contradictions abound.

Athens is a very different place. There, in the warmer months, one is far more likely to encounter a scantily clad young woman on the streets than on the screen, and the children of prosperous Athenians have pretty much adopted the mores of the European and American tourists who pass through the city on their way to the topless and nude beaches of Mykonos, Paros, and Santorini. In the mountain villages of the Mani, where Mt. Taygetus thrusts its way southward into the Mediterranean, one can still find older women dressed in the time-honored way; their daughters are nonetheless likely to be clad in a fashion designed to catch the eye and distract a young shepherd from tending his sheep.

The Greek press is, in contrast, remarkably pristine. Cheesecake is rare, and the vulgar and sometimes offensive photographs and stories that abound in Turkish newspapers such as the top-selling Tan are virtually unheard of. It would be wrong, however, to conclude that the Greek press is sober. In fact, in the realm of politics, the newspapers of Athens are far less responsible than the most scurrilous of the dailies published in Ankara and Istanbul. The space allotted to well-endowed beauties in Turkey is reserved for headlines in Hellas; the attention which the Turks focus on sex the Greeks direct towards the political contest. Each nation has its own peculiar notion of excitement, its own realm of fantasy.

The Greek obsession with politics is complicated by another, intimately related dimension of the national temperament. Forty years ago, Constantine Karamanlis, then a relatively young man just beginning a political career that would lead to his serving as Prime Minister of Greece for fourteen years and President for five, wrote to a friend to deplore the "psychological defects" and the "incurable political incompetence" of the Greek people. No Greek, he

explained, could forgive himself if he helped to bring about the promotion of someone else. As a consequence of this all-encompassing envy, the Hellenes were incapable of political consistency. "It is an incapacity which runs through the whole of our age-long history. Hellenism, you see, has always lived in a state of improvisation and extremism. It can perform momentary miracles, but it cannot make a continuous effort. And politics is above all a continuous effort."<sup>1</sup>

I doubt that any of the events which have transpired in the intervening decades has caused Karamanlis to alter his opinion. I know no equivalent in Greek for the German Schadenfreude, but I would not be surprised to learn of one's existence; few take greater pleasure in the disasters incurred by those around them than the Hellenes. The same cultural ethos that causes taxicab drivers to be so uncooperative and to revile one another in so creative a fashion makes disloyalty, betrayal, slander, and vitriol the common staple of political life.

One consequence of the prevalence of jealousy and the singular bitterness of political rivalries is that virtually all of the Greek papers are viciously partisan. Recent events afford a striking example of just how ugly things can get.

While I was in Athens in late September and early October, the Greek police arrested one Greek officer and two civilians and charged them with passing sensitive information to the Soviet Union. The information that induced the Greek government to place these three spies under surveillance in the first place was said ultimately to have come from Sergei Bokhane, an agent for the Soviet military intelligence (GRU) who had worked for some years under diplomatic cover in Greece prior to defecting to the United States last May. Rumors originating in the U. S. suggested that Bokhane had named anywhere from eighteen to twenty-five Greeks as Soviet agents; one conservative Greek newspaper quoted The Washington Times as having reported that Bokhane had fingered two ministers prominent in the cabinet of the Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou. The Reagan administration was apparently not in any hurry to allow Greek officials to interrogate Bokhane. Two days after the Russian agent's defection, PASOK officials had cooperated with Soviets eager to pack off Bokhane's wife and child on a plane to Moscow. American requests had been ignored.

When the spy scandal broke last month, Constantine Mitsotakis, nephew and political heir of the great statesman Eleftherios Venizelos and current leader of the conservative New Democracy Party (ND), quickly charged Papandreou and his supporters in the Panhellenic Socialist Union (PASOK) with responsibility for Soviet "infiltration ... into the state machine." "By the state machine," he cautioned, "I do not mean government ministers but government advisers, sensitive state services, the foreign ministry, the armed forces, the press, and the business world." Papandreou retorted that Mitsotakis was hatching "dark plans" designed to destabilize democracy in Greece. The next morning,

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1. See C. M. Woodhouse, Karamanlis: The Restorer of Greek Democracy (Oxford 1982) 23-24.

the front page of virtually every PASOK newspaper boasted giant headlines accusing Mitsotakis of "dark plans."

This minor episode is interesting chiefly as the latest in a series of PASOK attempts to vilify the character of Mitsotakis. When the tall Cretan was elected leader of New Democracy in September, 1984, Papandreou immediately denounced him as "an Ephialtes," comparing him with the perfidious Greek who had led a Persian contingent around the pass at Thermopylae in 480 B.C., enabling the army of Xerxes to surround and annihilate King Leonidas and the three hundred Spartans defending the pass. In the electoral campaign that took place late this spring, Papandreou reiterated the charge of treason again and again. By his reading of history, Mitsotakis had betrayed his leader, his party, and his country when he bolted from George Papandreou's Center Union Party back in 1965.

The PASOK campaign took on a particularly ugly tone on the 11th of May. On that day, Avriani--a mass-circulation daily--published a photograph showing a much younger Mitsotakis in the company of two German officers. On the back of the photograph, rumor had it, there was a dedication signed by Mitsotakis. The paper charged that he had collaborated with the SS during the Second World War.

The next evening, at a PASOK rally held on Papandreou's home turf in Patras, PASOK militants led the crowd in chanting, "Tonight dies the friend of the SS." When Papandreou appeared on the platform, he replied, "The friend of the SS, as you call him, does not die tonight--but, like a wandering Jew, he will wander outside public life, symbolizing political corruption." Within a day or two, there were posters plastered all over Greece, displaying the photograph and labelled "The Friend of the SS." The campaign had obviously been planned by Papandreou and his advisers before Avriani even printed the photograph.

It took considerable gall for PASOK to initiate this campaign. Andreas Papandreou left Greece for the United States before the Italian surprise attack that brought his country into the Second World War. He did not hurry back when Hellas faced her hour of danger, and he lifted not a finger to prevent the Nazi conquest. While George Papandreou was serving as Prime Minister of the Greek government in exile, Andreas was a nurse on a US Navy hospital ship. While the younger Papandreou was studying economics or tending to patients in comparative safety, Constantine Mitsotakis was risking his life--initially against the German army on the Bulgarian frontier, and later in the underground on Crete.

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2. The PASOK press, presumably on orders from on high, cut out the anti-Semitic slur when it reported the event--but Mario Modiani, the correspondent of The Times of London, saw the rally on television and reported precisely what was said. When I asked him whether this sort of anti-Semitism was common in Greece, he told me that it was by no means rare but that rhetoric this ugly rarely found its way into the statements of high-level officials.

I have this on good authority. Two summers ago, when I passed through the southern Peloponnesus, I became quite friendly with an English couple--the travel writer Patrick Leigh Fermor and his wife Joan. This September, I stayed with them in Kardamyli for a few days. I knew that Paddy had spent a good part of the war wandering the mountains of Crete dressed as a shepherd; I had read W. Stanley Moss' little book Ill-Met By Moonlight, which describes a successful attempt he and Paddy mought to kidnap the German commander General Kreipe and spirit him off to Cairo. So, one evening over dinner, I asked about Mitsotakis' war record. Paddy, as it turned out, had never worked directly with the ND leader but one of his English colleagues had, and this man had come to Mitsotakis' defense right away last May. Mitsotakis' assignment was particularly delicate: he was in charge of infiltrating the German army. Twice, he was arrested; twice, he was condemned to death; and twice, he escaped. Both of the German officers in the photograph were collaborating with the Greek underground. One of the two stayed on in the island after the war, married a heroine of the Cretan resistance, and settled down.

Soon after Avriani lodged the charge of treason, Mitsotakis produced a sheaf of testimonials from British, Cretan, and German sources. To some extent, the mud thrown stuck nonetheless. In Greece, the truth matters far less than "what everyone says," and the supporters of the various parties live in different worlds. They read different newspapers, nearly all of which tailor the news to fit party needs; they attend different coffee houses; and they absorb a partisan outlook that renders it virtually impossible for them to recognize when their side is distorting the facts. With a single exception, the foreign correspondents I met in Athens assured me that, if Sergei Bokhane did actually implicate two PASOK ministers as Soviet agents, Papandreou would simply suppress the investigation and instruct the party press to treat the entire episode as an American plot. They were persuaded that he would have little trouble getting away with such a whitewash.

They may be right. Anti-Americanism is a powerful force in Greece. While I was in Athens two weeks ago, one of the many shadowy terrorist organizations in Beirut seized four Soviet diplomats, shot one, and threatened to slaughter the rest if the Syrian-backed militias battling Islamic fundamentalists in the Lebanese city Tripoli did not back off. Avriani deplored the kidnapping in sanctimonious tones. It is one thing to grab Americans, the editor wrote. They deserve such a fate, but the peace-loving Soviets are an entirely different kettle of fish.

The advent of television has done nothing to promote objectivity and to reduce the bitterness of partisan strife; if anything, it has made things worse: the two stations are both government-controlled, and the administration in power uses them shamelessly to drum in the party line. In Greece, the struggle of the parties always seems to be on the verge of boiling over into civil strife. Over the last century and a half, it often has. Rarely has any politician shown restraint out of fear that the singleminded, irresponsible pursuit of power might do the country harm. The blithe optimism which Greeks

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3. I have, alas, not seen the movie of the same name.

display when aloft is even more evident in their comportment in the political arena.

## II

To the student of ancient history, this all has a familiar ring. In the late 4th century B. C., when Athens was involved in its epic struggle with Philip of Macedonia and his son Alexander, the great orator Demosthenes squared off against his compatriot Aeschines in a rhetorical contest that would shame even the most talented of contemporary Greek revilers.

For Aeschines, Demosthenes was "the run-away orator and deserter" who got his country into war but would not himself stand and fight. He had made orphans of the city's children; by taking "bribes and the Persian gold," he had prepared the way for the destruction of Thebes. In passing, Aeschines mentions a "young man" named Aristion, "distinguished for extraordinary beauty of person," who "once lived a long time in Demosthenes' house." What Aristion "used to do there or what was done to him, is a scandal that is in dispute," he adds, "and the story is one that would be quite improper for me to repeat." If Aeschines reined himself in for fear of impropriety here, it was a rare event. A little later, he turns to his opponent's family:

His father was Demosthenes of Paeania, a free man, for there is no need of lying. But how the case stands as to his inheritance from his mother and his maternal grandfather, I will tell you. There was a certain Gylon of Cerameis. This man betrayed Nymphaeum in the Pontus to the enemy, for the place at that time belonged to our city. He was impeached and became an exile from the city, not awaiting trial. He came to Bosphorus and there received as a present from the tyrants of the land a place called "the Gardens." Here he married a woman who was rich, I grant you, and brought him a big dowry, but a Scythian by blood. This wife bore him two daughters, whom he sent hither with plenty of money. One he married to a man whom I will not name--for I do not care to incur the enmity of many persons,--the other, in contempt of the laws of the city, Demosthenes of Paeania took to wife. She it was who bore your busy-body and informer. From his grandfather, therefore, he would inherit enmity toward the people, for you condemned his ancestors to death; and by his mother's blood he would be a Scythian, a Greek-tongued barbarian--so that his knavery, too, is no product of our soil.

In this vein, Aeschines continues his diatribe for a good many pages--but to little avail. In Demosthenes, he had more than met his match.

The greatest of the ancient Greek orators virtually made a science of slander. It goes without saying that he accused Aeschines of being in the pay of Philip and Alexander. Harvester, hireling, mercenary--he uses many terms. In reviling his rival's family, he displays a flair for particularly colorful

invective. "I am at no loss for information about you and your family," he tells his rival,

but I am at a loss where to begin. Shall I relate how your father Tromes was a slave in the house of Elpias, who kept an elementary school near the Temple of Theseus, and how he wore shackles on his legs and a timber collar round his neck? or how your mother practised daylight nuptials in an outhouse next door to Heros the bone-setter, and so brought you up to act in tableaux vivants and to excel in minor parts on the stage? However, everybody knows that without being told by me. Shall I tell you how Phormio the boatswain, a slave of Dio of Phrearii, uplifted her from that chaste profession? But I protest that, however well the story becomes you, I am afraid I may be thought to have chosen topics unbecoming to myself. I will pass by those early days, and begin with his conduct of his own life; for indeed it has been no ordinary life but such as is an abomination to a free people. Only recently--recently, do I say? Why it was only the day before yesterday when he became simultaneously an Athenian and an orator, and, by the addition of two syllables, transformed his father from Tromes to Atrometus, and bestowed upon his mother the high-sounding name of Glaucothea, although she was universally known as the Banshee, a nickname she owed to the pleasing diversity of her acts and experiences--it can have no other origin.

Mindful that Aeschines had acted on the stage, Demosthenes calls him "this monkey of melodrama, this bumpkin tragedy-king; this pinchbeck orator." To bring home the man's shameful origins, he calls on him to consider "our respective careers." As he puts it, "You were an usher, I a pupil; you were an acolyte, I a candidate; you were clerk-at-the table, I addressed the assembly; you were a player, I a spectator; you were cat-called, I hissed; you have ever served our enemies, I have served my country." He, too, continues at great length. His listeners apparently revelled in the vitriol.

The degree to which Greek politics was in antiquity and still is today an entertainment deserves further attention. A hundred years before Demosthenes and Aeschines had their final match, according to Thucydides' report, an Athenian orator attacked his countrymen for making a sport of serious matters. "In competitions of this sort," he told them, "the prizes go to others and the city takes all the danger for herself."

The blame is yours, for stupidly instituting these competitive displays. You have become regular speech-goers, and as for action, you merely listen to accounts of it; if something is to be done in the future you estimate the possibilities by hearing a good speech on the subject, and as for the past you rely not so much on the facts which you have seen with your own eyes as on what you have heard about them in some clever piece of verbal criticism. Any novelty in an argument deceives you at once, but when the argument is tried and proved you become unwilling to follow it; you look with suspicion on what is normal and are the slaves of every paradox that comes your way. The chief wish of



each one of you is to make a speech himself, and, if you cannot do that, the next best thing is to compete with those who can make this sort of speech by not looking as though you were at all out of your depth while you listen to the views put forward, by applauding a good point even before it is made, and by being as quick at seeing how an argument is going to be developed as you are slow at understanding what in the end it will lead to. What you are looking for all the time is something that is, I should say, outside the range of ordinary experience, and yet you cannot even think straight about the facts of life that are before you. You are simply victims of your own pleasure in listening, and are more like an audience sitting at the feet of a sophist than an assembly discussing matters of state.

I suspect that Thucydides took particular pleasure in reporting this speech. The orator, whose name was Cleon, was reportedly the most violent demagogue of the age. In the course of launching this attack on his fellow citizens, this orator demonstrated the justice of his claims by providing his audience with the very thing that they purportedly craved--"something that is ... outside the range of ordinary experience." In this case, the diagnosis of the disease is itself a symptom.

### III

I mention the ancient analogue here not to argue that there has been cultural continuity over the millenia (though I have no doubt that this is to some extent true). I am far more concerned with the consequences of Greece's overheated politics.

Modern politics is founded on the supposition, elegantly stated by Benjamin Franklin at a dinner party attended by Dr. Johnson's Boswell, that man is by nature "a tool-making animal." Labor aimed at commodious self-preservation is taken to be the foundation of human dignity, and a man who has worked his way up from the bottom by his own efforts deserves and generally receives more respect than his neighbor born with a silver spoon. Modern republics are concerned little with war, conquest, and glory; they do, of course, exalt acquisition--but only in the economic sphere. In general, they dedicate their efforts to protecting the lives, the liberty, and the property of their citizens. Above all else, they endeavor to guarantee that every citizen receives the fruits of his honest industry. As James Madison put it in The Federalist, "the first object of government" is "the protection" of "the diversity in the faculties of men from which the rights of property originate." Property is to be protected because it is the outward manifestation of the diversity in tool-making faculties that is the ornament of mankind. The earth and its fruits were to be reserved for those whom John Locke called "the industrious and the rational" as opposed to those he termed "the quarrelsome and contentious." It is not, then, an accident that the first modern republic's greatest war was fought over the question of slavery: such a republic could not indefinitely remain half slave and half free; no

regime can survive if it comes gradually over time to be established on two diametrically opposed opinions regarding the nature of justice.

By these standards, Greece--like the Old South--is only partly modern. Most Greeks labor, and they assert their right to the fruits of their industry. But, generally, it is taken for granted that the man who has worked his way up from rags to riches has done so through some form of malpractice, fraud, or dishonesty. The "diversity in the faculties of men" may give rise to a species of admiration but that diversity spawns suspicion as well. Cleverness in the realm of household management is thought to have its shameful and ignoble side. Accordingly, there is considerable pressure on each succeeding Greek administration to enact measures of punitive taxation.

In a sense, the public weal comes first in the Greek estimation. But the commonwealth is quite often conceived less as the protector of private rights than as the arena in which men can demonstrate their prowess and cut a figure. To a degree unknown in the United States, the love of money is subordinated to the desire for social status, and they are alike secondary to the quest for office, for power, and for glory. From this perspective, the most offensive aspect of the Greek Colonels' rule from late April, 1967 to July, 1974 was not the pervasive corruption that it encouraged but the restriction of the citizens to the private realm. In general, the Hellenes are less tool-making than political animals; they tend to take far more pleasure in speech than in the work of their hands. What Xenophon wrote more than two millenia ago could be echoed by one of his countrymen today:

Man is distinguished from the other animals by his desire for honor. All creatures seem, in a similar fashion, to take pleasure in food, drink, sleep, and sex. But the love of honor does not grow up in animals lacking speech. Nor, for that matter, can it be found in all human beings. The eros for honor and praise grows up only in those who are most fully distinguished from the beasts of the fields: which is to say that it grows up only in those judged to be real men and no longer mere human beings.

Like Achilles, the Hellene longs to be "a speaker of words and a doer of deeds," and he tries "always to be the best and to be superior to others." In their love of political drama and in their eagerness to play a role both individually and as a nation on the world stage, the Greeks of our time are little different from the ancient Hellenes. They often seem to prefer <sup>4</sup> quarrels and contention to what Locke meant by industry and rationality.

Therein lies much danger. Greece is a small country, a poor country, that is not of much account in the larger world; as a consequence of the all-pervasive love of honor, the country and its politicians tend all too often to overreach themselves. The Athenians did so in the late fifth century when Alcibiades persuaded them to dispatch a fleet to conquer Sicily, and

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 4. For a detailed explication of this argument as it pertains to the ancient Greeks, see Paul A. Rahe, "The Primacy of Politics in Ancient Greece," American Historical Review 89 (1984) 265-293.

Thucydides makes it clear that they were inspired by the very grandeur of the attempt. Their modern successors did the same at the end of the First World War when they landed troops at Izmir (then called Smyrna) in Asia Minor in an attempt to seize the province from the Turks; they compounded the risk when they marched against the forces that Atatürk was massing near Ankara (then called Angora); and they lost everything when he annihilated their army.

The Greeks--those in Athens as well as those in Nicosia--have been similarly foolish in the case of Cyprus, displaying vainglory, bravado, and no small amount of courage, while consistently acting on the assumption that the Turks poised just forty miles to the North could not or would not intervene to safeguard and assist their beleaguered fellow nationals on the island. In the end, the Greeks of Cyprus lost nearly two-fifths of the island, and Hellas itself came within a hair's breadth of going to war with Turkey and losing much more. It took the forceful intervention of the generals and admirals to prevent the ruthless strongman Brigadier Ioannides from involving his countrymen in a suicidal assault on their Turkish neighbors.

Two years later, in 1976, when the Turks sent a ship to investigate the possibility of drilling for oil in the Aegean, Andreas Papandreou demanded that his country go to war with a nation boasting a population, resources, and an army that dwarf those belonging to Greece. Now, that same Papandreou is Prime Minister of Hellas, and the Greek Parliament will soon enact constitutional amendments that will deprive the nation's Presidency of the powers that up to now have allowed the man holding that office to restrain his Prime Minister from indecent folly.

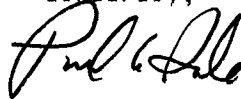
Papandreou was elected to office in 1981 on a pledge that he would pull out of NATO and the EEC and eject the American military from its bases in Greece. So far, he has stopped short of fulfilling his promise. But, in consistently condemning the United States and in lavishing praise on the Soviet Union, he has generated considerable pressure on himself to abandon the West. Furthermore, in March, when he laid the foundation for his own re-election by lurching to the left, breaking with Karamanlis, and announcing that PASOK would back another figure for election to the Presidency, Papandreou displayed a flair for dramatic action (as opposed to mere rhetoric) that does not bode well.

It is fortunate that the last American ambassador, Monteagle Stearns, took a low-key approach; one can, I think, expect the same from the recently arrived incumbent of that post Robert Keeley. Turkish President Kenan Evren and Prime Minister Turgut özal are likely to remain unprovocative as well. But it is uncertain whether this will suffice. Friends of mine in Athens who have watched Papandreou over the years doubt his stability; so, apparently, do many of his former associates. "You have to see just how much he longs for the applause of the crowd," one journalist resident in that city remarked to me. "If his popularity were to wane, as eventually it must, he might follow in the well-trodden path and attempt some grand and dramatic gesture that is terribly rash." Greece has never been an easy ally for the mandarins of Washington, D. C. I should think that she is least so now.

In pondering these circumstances, one should not forget the characteristic reticence of the Turks. It is easy for these two nations to misunderstand

each other. The love of rhetoric that Cleon described so well causes Greeks to say much that they mean when they say it but are inclined to forget, unless forcefully reminded, when it comes to actually making policy. The Turks look on matters in a different fashion; for them, words are rarely toys. As one Turkish saying puts it, "TÜKÜR DÜĞÜNÜ yalamaz: it is impossible for a man to lick up a feast from his own spit." Papandreou and his minions often fulminate against "the national enemy." One may justly wonder whether they then realize that when their well-armed neighbors say something they generally mean business.

Sincerely,



Paul A. Rahe

Received in Hanover 10/28/85