

The Greek Civil War and the Truman Doctrine

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[*Audio cutoff*] ... in 1946 that Konstantinos Tsaldaris, who was the head of the Populist Party in Greece, who was a royalist and a reactionary, who since the trumped-up elections of the 31st of March of 1946 had been the prime minister of the Greek government. It was on that 30th of November of 1946 that Tsaldaris spoke before the General Assembly of the United Nations. And what he told the United Nations was that his country, Greece — a country which was at that time one of the most inefficient and corrupt and reactionary in the entire world — that his country of Greece was the victim of an invasion from powers to the north of Greece. Quite concretely, he was saying that a war had been carried on to Greek soil, specifically by the Communist countries that borders upon Greece (namely, Bulgaria and Albania and Yugoslavia). And he asked the General Assembly to castigate those powers and to make some kind of action that would force their removal.

Now, in this appearance of Tsaldaris before the General Assembly of the United Nations, you have, parenthetically, one of those very early examples of the use of the forum of the United Nations according to the design of those American architects who really had made that United Nations in 1945. Because you recall that it had been at that San Francisco Conference of April of 1945, that they were American policymakers who really had been the architects of what the United Nations would be, and what limitations they would have. And they were very categorical in their action that the United Nations was not going to be an organization that would undercut the sovereignty of the great powers. That it was not going to be an organization that would devolve power upon the poor and the exploited countries of the world; that it was not going to be an organization that really could adjudicate conflicts in any viable manner: but that it was to be a place in which the United States could rally a great deal of support by the pressures that it was able to put on all of those client countries, so dependent upon the United States for economic and military support.

And in the memoirs of Tom Connally, who was that chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and who was a delegate to the San Francisco Conference in April of 1945 — a book with the euphemistic title *Call Me Tom* — and Senator Connally says in that book that it was just magnificent at San Francisco: that whenever it was necessary to build up support for an American position, they called on Nelson, and Nelson Rockefeller was there. He was at that time the Assistant Secretary of State in charge of the Office of Inter-American Affairs, and of course the representative of those Rockefeller interests that were formidable in Latin America. And so Tom Connally says several times on close issues in the debates:

"When our position was challenged by the Russians, we just got hold of Nelson and told him, 'Look, get your people up here right away,' and he always came through." And Latin America became, consequently, an interesting prop for the American position, so that the forum of the United Nations was conceived of by those American policymakers as a rallying point for the American view of world affairs. And all the better, after all, if the spokesman for that particular view came out of those small countries, came not from the United States, but out of other areas where they could say the things that American policymakers indeed wanted to say.

And here is Tsaldaris doing a magnificent thing, saying that there is a Communist menace of aggression in the world, which, after all, is a magnificent instrumentality for so much of what will go into the global intervention of American policymakers. And what Tsaldaris said on that 30th of November was pure invention, in the first place, and in the second place, a very calculated stratagem. It was pure invention because indeed there was a war in Greece, and it was a bona fide civil war that had broken out in the fall of 1946. And that civil war had been mounted by ex-resistance fighters and had been ultimately organized and crystallized by a great guerilla leader up in the mountains named Markos Vafeiadis. And Markos ranks with Aris [Velouchiotis] as one of the two great *kapetanos*, one of the two great guerrilla leaders of this Greek struggle. And Markos was very different from Aris. Aris, after all, something of an intellectual, somebody who came ultimately of a bourgeois family with a lawyer father. Not so Markos in Macedonia: he, a worker who had worked in those tobacco factories of Macedonia, who had led early strikes, who had joined the Communist Party of Greece very young, and had really been always that man of the people who believed in the armed struggle that could be mounted in the villages of Greece. And here, on the 28th of October of 1946, it is Markos Vafeiadis who announces the formation in the Greek mountains of what is called the Democratic Army, and the civil war that will last until August of 1949 begins.

But what is important for us to note is that that civil war begins, first of all, without any encouragement or support from the Soviet Union. That the Soviet Union simply is not on the scene; it does not support this action. That, in the second place, there is no inspiration or support from the Communist countries on the border of Greece. Neither Bulgaria nor Albania ever supports. And when Yugoslavia does send supply finally to the insurgents in Greece, it is not until late '47 and then lasts a relatively short time. And then the third place, terribly important to note that this civil war didn't even have the wholehearted support of the Central Committee of the Greek Communist Party. And here you have a division after all, between those guerrilla leaders in the mountains and the men of the Central Committee back in Athens. And it is the struggle, the titanic struggle between Markos the guerrilla leader and the General Secretary of the Greek Communist Party, Nikos Zachariadis. And Zachariadis who had been formed in Moscow, who had been formed in the Party schools of Stalin, and who was an operative who was a loyal Party man throughout, always had that kind of visceral

distrust of popular movement from below, something that could not be controlled by the Party.

And when Zachariadis thought about insurrection, when he thought about a revolution, he thought about it in those classic terms which had to be derived from the Russian Revolution itself. He thought about it, in other words, as an urban insurrection, as something that would come out of being organized workers of race — a classic urban uprising to be supported by a solidarity from the army, exactly the way it had gone on in Russia in 1917. Perfectly idiotic, idiotic in a primarily peasant country. Idiotic, just as idiotic as it was when that line was imposed upon Indochina and upon China by the Soviets, when the Indochinese and the Chinese Communist parties were stuck in the 1920s and '30s with this strategy of the urban revolution. And when they went from one defeat to another, because their working class was far too small, and their peasants consequently were left aside, which were the great mass of the country. And those Chinese and Indochinese got out of that particular bind only when the Japanese war was on, and when they had to organize against it, and when they were cut off from Moscow.

But here in Greece, Zachariadis has fantastic ideas. He has the idea, for example, that the Greek Confederation of Labor, because it is led by Communists at the beginning of 1946, that it can launch a revolution. And after the bogus elections of the 31st of March of '46, when the right won and installed Tsaldaris, it was Zachariadis of the Central Committee that said, "Now the Greek Confederation of Labor, the Communist left, will launch a general strike and the insurrection will begin." And the government moves swiftly with this fact, and consequently remove the Communist leadership of the General Confederation of Labor, said that their election had been falsified, and installed by itself a reactionary leadership of the Greek trade unions headed by Fotis Makris — who became that great friend of the AFL-CIO, and Makris who dominated the Greek labor movement for twenty-five years, and effectively defused its militancy.

And here is Zachariadis saying, secondly: "Now what is important is for militants to go into the Greek Army, to answer the call to conscription, and consequently to form Soviets inside the Greek Army," to form those weak spots that would mean the army would rally to the insurrection. And this was opposed to what Markos was demanding. He said when militants, Communists or sympathizers, are called into the army, they shouldn't go; they should go to the hills, they should go to the mountains and join the people's struggle. And Zachariadis said no, they were to form soviets in the Greek Army. And so you see how idiotic it is. Because in a country that has been keeping dossier on every militant for twenty years or more, whenever these militants got to the conscription centers, and it was discovered that they were of the left, they weren't led into the army. They were put in concentration camps, they were put into prison, and literally tens of thousands of them suffered that particular fate.

The point is that when the armed struggle begins in October to November of 1946, and when it is primarily approved of, finally, by the Greek Communist leadership, it is because there is no alternative left. It is either to fight or to die; it is either to fight or to let the historic opportunity that was opened by the resistance movement simply go forever. What I am saying is that in taking up arms in this civil war, the great militants of Greece were acting at the extremity of their despair and the extremity of their exasperation. They had seen the betrayal of the Varkiza Agreement in which they had laid down their arms in return for an amnesty and a political freedom that never came. They had seen tens of thousands of their comrades in prison and concentration camps while collaborators and pro-Nazis walked around free and exploited the black market. They saw their countrymen starving to death in the inflation while politicians were making fortunes out of the black market in foreign aid. They saw, if you please, the bogus election of '46, the Tsaldaris government, the return of the king in the September plebiscite. And they saw all that and couldn't stand it.

And then, the shock of recognition that they had no one to depend upon but themselves. Note it well, that shock of recognition. To understand, as the Algerian militants would understand ten years later, that you could not depend upon the socialists of Western Europe: that they were French socialists in '56, Guy Mollet and Robert Lacoste, who sent the French armies down to kill off the Algerian Revolution. And in the same way, the Greeks saw that there had been a change of government in Great Britain: that in July of '45 it no longer was Churchill, but it was Clement Attlee, the Labour prime minister, and with him Ernest Devon, the foreign minister of the Labour Party. And the position of the Labour government, no different about Greece than the position of Churchill. And so they had to act and act by themselves.

And so, you see, there is invention when Tsaldaris talked, but I say that it is calculation, that it is madness but with a method. To which I mean that every responsible policymaker in either London or Washington knew damn well that the civil war in Greece had nothing to do with a foreign intervention. We know that, for example, from the document of the British parliamentary delegation that was sent off to Greece in the summer of 1946 to determine whether the British could ever send enough aid to really stabilize this government, a Great Britain that already was bleeding economically. And this British parliamentary delegation, — which had plenty of conservatives in it, whose report really was an understatement — nevertheless was to say this in its report that was rendered in October of 1946: "It would be a mistake to assume that the activities of these bands in the mountains are mainly due to foreign inspiration. There is strong evidence that amongst these bands are many left-wing supporters who have fled to the mountains simply to escape the terrorism exercised by this right-wing government." And that in the British parliamentary report, albeit that report not published in October of '46, not published ultimately until January of '47.

But here is our friend Lincoln MacVeagh, who is the American ambassador in Greece and who writes to the State Department, in October of '46, this: "Greek policies are tending toward fascism and consequently provoking armed resistance." A perfect understanding that this government itself was driving people to this armed civil war. And then the witness of Edgar O'Ballance — Edgar O'Ballance, who writes an extremely interesting book on the Greek Civil War, a book of that title. And O'Ballance was a British intelligence agent in Greece at the time, and his conclusion, as he put it in that book, has to do with the non-existence of any Soviet presence in this civil war. And writes O'Ballance in *The Greek Civil War*: "Markos had put great hope in the help that the Soviet Union might send, food and war equipment and the like. Yet in spite of his few vague promises, Stalin never sent anything."

And so all of that was known. And what then was the gambit? The gambit was to utilize this Tsaldaris play in the United Nations for several reasons. For the British, to maintain their 16,000 troops in Greece. What other excuse could they have? Unless, after all, there were some foreign intervention. For the right-wing government of Greece, it was to be able to appeal for foreign aid without having to pay any of those reforms internally that might jeopardize their position. And for the Americans? For American policymakers, that position or interpretation of the foreign intervention provided an ideological fluidity behind the effort — behind the effort of American policymakers to systematize, and ultimately to universalize, the strategy of containment.

Now, American policymakers were committed to moving into Greece by the middle of 1946. And they were committed for the very real reason that they knew that the British couldn't continue there: that they would have to give up aid and consequently, when the British show signs of that in the summer of '46, the Americans began to assure the Greek authorities that they would replace the British. And so you get, on the 18th of October of 1946, the assurance by Ambassador MacVeagh to the king, George II — at that time George II — who is going to say that the Americans will replace the British when the time is appropriate. And by the end of the year, the United States sent an investigating mission under Paul Porter, to look over the scene and to find out how much aid would be necessary.

The only question in the minds of American policymakers at the turn of 1947 was when they would have to move; in other words, when the British would withdraw. Now, the British, as you can imagine, didn't want to withdraw. And Ernest Bevin, who was the Labour foreign secretary, very heavily now under attack in Great Britain for supporting such a reactionary regime and attacked by rank-and-file in the Labour government, did promise some reform in Greece. And on the 2nd of January, he replaced (or forced the replacement of) the Tsaldaris government. And that government, replaced by the so-called [Dimitros] Maximos government, which had some so-called liberals in it — Papandreou was in it, Sophoklis Venizelos, those who are the denizens of the Liberal Party — but, you see, that Maximos

government of the 2nd of January kept Napoleon Zervas as the minister of internal security, and the whole thrust of that new government was the same as its predecessor, which just was to round up dissidents, to round up the enemies of the state. And finally, the British had no alternative. They threw in the towel on the 6th of January of 1947. The government published that very critical report of a parliamentary delegation, and implied that it was about to get out. The Greek government couldn't last unless the Americans replaced the British, and the Americans knew that.

But, you see, the real question that you have to ask is not why the Americans went into Greece in 1947, or why they engaged in an operation of economic and military aid. That is rationally discussed or explained. It's simply a question, is it not, of finding a little market that the British are abandoning that the Americans may cultivate. But Greece is no big thing. It's a small country, it has no real great market, it's not something about which the Americans have to make an immense image — and consequently, to have gone into Greece with the Truman Doctrine, to have gone in with that sense of crisis, to have made a whole new global strategy out of Greece. No, no: stretch your imagination. There must be something else.

And in part, of course, it is that Greece is a means to an end. It is a means after all, to a very decisive Mediterranean and Middle Eastern policy on the part of American policymakers. What's much more important than Greece is control of the eastern Mediterranean and ultimately control of that very oil rich Middle East. We know that they wanted those British territories of the Middle East, those British oil reserves in Iraq. We have already discussed that, and what the United States needed were bases of operations in order to indicate that they were the primary power in the eastern Mediterranean, that they really were the dominant force in that part of the world. Now much of that strategy was laid out by the Secretary of the Navy at the time named James Forrestal. Now with Forrestal you really have something. And it is the former president of Dillon-Reid, a most important financial house, an investment house on Wall Street. But it's also a very sensitive guy, James Forrestal. So sensitive, after all, that he went, among all policymakers in America, completely cuckoo and ended in the loony bin. After all, someone so paranoid about this idea of the Russian or the Communist menace, that the American global empire will be interfered with, that he really does see the enemy everywhere, coming out of the wall, crawling up it and so forth.

And when he is the Secretary of the Navy, precedent to his becoming the first Secretary of Defense in the middle of 1947, when he was Secretary of the Navy in '46, he is already saying that military power by itself is not enough. That you really have to have bases everywhere, so that you can utilize that power because the power has to be deployed. In other words, the muscle really has to be flexed. And that has to be a continual policy. Listen to the testimony of Forrestal before the Finletter Committee, the committee on air power in '47. And Forrestal says, "Our security is not merely the capacity or the ability to repel invasion. It

is our ability to contribute to the reconstruction of the world. And that is why I say that our military requirements have to be fitted into the pattern of what we do toward the other larger result: in other words, towards the reconstruction of society as we desire it."

In other words, what Forrestal is saying is that you must have the presence of that force in base after base around the world. And is Greece not a viable base for the Mediterranean? And so it is under Forrestal's orders that the American Navy begins to deploy its ships in the Mediterranean in that crisis of the spring of 1946. And so it is the battleship *Missouri* that puts in at the port of Athens on the 12th of April of 1946. And a month later, on the 10th of May, comes a destroyer, the *Helena*, which likewise puts in at Athens. And you see the point: it is to show that that part of the Mediterranean, that kind of access to the Middle Eastern world has become an American base, has become an American lake. And you see the implications of that. The implications are that the United States must then maintain the status quo in that Mediterranean, the status quo in Greece, and elsewhere. And that's painful. It may mean that you must turn yourself against nationalist and anti-colonial movements because the Mediterranean rims on the colonies of North Africa, after all.

And listen to the advice of Jefferson Caffery — Jefferson Caffery, who is our ambassador in France, a very powerful policymaker — and Jefferson Caffery here in July of '46 to the State Department, saying: "In many ways, it would appear that communism wears a cloak of nationalism and local economy in North Africa, and especially in Algeria." And consequently, on the 15th of August of 1946, two American warships put in at Algeria to threaten the Algerian nationalist movement. All of which gives you an idea of the strategic value of Greece, of the strategic value of it in terms of the Mediterranean and the Middle East, and why this little country of Greece required a very big policy.

But dig into the question more closely. Dig into it from the point of view of the obstacles that had developed to the American design for an open-door empire. Now we have argued that American policymakers had a consensus about the kind of world that they wanted. That they had a consensus that they had the power, the productive force, in order to force open the doors of the world. In order to prevent any restrictive trading blocs and so forth. But you see, something had happened, which was that by '46 and '47, what American policymakers had hoped for in Western Europe really wasn't happening. That Western Europe wasn't the kind of market that American policymakers had dreamed of, and something very peculiar was happening. And you must understand this, if you are to understand this immense shift that begins to take place. You see, in order for the European economies, even if they restored capitalism, even if the Americans succeeded in containing the resistance movement, even if they restored capitalism. What American policymakers needed was not an autonomous competitive capitalism. They needed a client and cooperative capitalism. In other words, they wanted markets in Great Britain and France. They wanted a favorable climate for American

investment. And for that those European countries needed dollars, but they didn't have dollars after the war. They were dollar short.

And consequently, from '45 to '47, the European capitalist countries of the West began to reconstruct their economies by themselves in ways that weren't doing the Americans any good. They began, after all, policies of production goals, as they call them. In other words, the British and the French, pulling in their belts, taking shortages, really trying to reconstruct their particular heavy industry. And more than that: that both in Great Britain and France there is a considerable amount of nationalization in order to refurbish and to modernize some of the basic sectors of the economy. But worse than that, in order to get the goods that they need, there are bilateral agreements. Bilateral trade agreements so that the trade among European countries begins to grow rather large and they begin to supply each other with their particular needs. Well, where do the United States fit into all of that? Quite obviously, Europe is not the kind of buoyant trade market that it wanted. If, after the First World War in 1919 and '20, that there was 9% of the gross American — of the gross national product of the United States — in exports, in 1946 and '47, it was only 5.8%.

You see the point: that the United States could not abide this program of nationalization, of statism, of bilateral agreements that were blocking out the American trade position in that part of the world. And the question was an alternative. And the alternative, quite obviously, was for these economies to have dollars. And if they had dollars, they could buy American goods. And they could create markets, after all, which would make investment profitable and favorable. But where to get the dollars? Not by loans, because that only compounds the indebtedness. That only means that these countries are paying interest and that weighs heavily upon the budget, but by grants. To give these countries money. To enable them, after all, to buy the American goods, to subsidize outright the export trade. You see what we are talking about? We are talking about what becomes the central economic principle of the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan becomes an enormous governmental subsidy to the export trade. Whatever else it is in humanitarian terms, however else it was phrased, it was the way by which the orientation of the European economies of '46 and '47 could be turned around.

But that is expensive, that is hellishly expensive. And it's in that context that you begin to understand the usefulness of the Greek crisis and the usefulness of the Truman Doctrine aura around the Greek crisis. Because you can then claim, after all, that there is a terrific menace in the world, that there is a terrific threat to the security of the free world...

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... that you will be able to get a ready and willing support for what is so expensive and what is so vast a commitment. It's only if you stress that security factor, that you will enable

European governments to take American dollars to build up armed forces, only if you have that aura of crisis. Look, you have to have lived through that, I tell you, to understand what you are talking about when you talk about a concision. Because, you see, the American public was a pretty damn apathetic public in '46. And it didn't so much care about these global policies. They had fought World War II, and consequently, wasn't really fired up about saving the world from communism. And those legislators, whom they sent to the Congress, not so enthusiastic about voting these huge credits for military or for aid programs. There was an opinion to deal with.

Now, granted, policymakers never have to take public opinion really into account. They can mute it, they can repress it, they can oppress it. You know, it was not public opinion in France that ended the Algerian War no more than it was public opinion in America that ended the war in Vietnam. Those wars were ended by the fighting forces in those particular countries of Algeria and Vietnam, and by agreements that policymakers felt they could exploit to their particular advantages. But it's a much more convenient thing if you don't have to go and oppress a public opinion. If, after all, it is like Pavlovian dogs, and consequently salivates every time you say anti-communism and feels, after all, that it has to support, at every moment, the most extravagant request, even the Tonkin Bay request for something that never happened. All of that, you see, begins to build in. You have this terrific, terrific transformation in the public mind. This transformation in the public willingness to go along and the congressional willingness to go along and the crisis does that.

Let me just say something parenthetical, because I was thinking about that this morning. I try not to think about phases of my own past life, but it suffices to say that if you were conscious as a conscious human being, after the Second World War and into the early 50s, and you didn't buy all of that nonsense, and you thought, after all, that it was a terrific kind of fraud... it was a very, very painful experience. You felt you were living always in a universe of complete madness, in some kind of weird picaresque novel in which people have lost their senses and refuse to look at any witness or any evidence at all. And I spent, as you probably know, many of you, those years of the 1950s, in Columbus, Ohio — which, really, from the political point of view is really the anus of the universe. Living in the place of that kind and you are dealing, for example, with anti-imperialism or you're trying to raise those questions, and you're on the run all the time. And that town, you see, had the newspaper (it still does) called the *Columbus Dispatch*. And the *Columbus Dispatch* was an influential paper in central Ohio. And to give you a description of it, is that it has the editorial policy throughout the *Chicago Tribune*, but none of the news. So it's like one long *Chicago Tribune* editorial.

And I got there, and I wasn't saying so very much, just a bit here and there on one street corner or another. Consequently, the *Dispatch* began to get on my track. And I went right in the very first year I was in Columbus, I was invited by the Education School, for reasons that

I still don't understand, to give six public lectures. They were running an adult education program at night on the history of academic freedom. And this in the beginnings, really, of the intensity of the McCarthy period. And so, I thought, well, I'll go slowly about academic freedom, about how the attacks are being made and for what purposes. So, in the first two lectures, I make the first lecture on Socrates and the trial of Socrates. I make the second lecture on Galileo at the Inquisition court. That's as far as I got. Because once I did Galileo, I was attacked in the *Columbus Dispatch* for advocating communism in the school. Why Galileo meant that, I don't know.

So, I was attacked by a man named Preb — Mr. Prebble, who was the Americanization chairman of the American Legion. He said that I was teaching communism, that I was deserting America, that I was disloyal and traitorous. And because the *Columbus Dispatch* likes those kinds of fights, they called me up. And I wasn't yet aware that you never answer the *Columbus Dispatch*. And so they called me up and Catherine Sullivan, a correspondent, she said, "Mr. Prebble says that you are disloyal and you want to give the world over to the revolutionaries, and you want to undermine American Security." So I said, "Oh, well, just quote me as saying that there are too many Prebbles on the beach."

The next day, there's a big headline saying "Professor says too many Prebbles on beach." And from that point on, for ten years, it is a running battle. But you have to have lived that you understand what a Pavlovian public is and how you make one, and how you create one. And why it is that we still have not asked, that we still have not asked the price for that particular kind of perversity of the public mind.

And so it was that by the time you get to the Greek crisis itself, the specificities of the Greek crisis are really the third and the most minor part of the American reasons for penetration. The specificities were there, that after all, in Greece, the United States was able to replace the British position. But beyond that, that through the Truman Doctrine, what American policymakers could do would be to find a laboratory in Greece: in other words, to find the way of really containing and crushing a revolutionary movement that had nothing to do with outside interference at all, and in which you could prop up a reactionary regime and make it survive. And also, and very crucial to the whole strategy, in which you could free the hands of policymakers so that they could experiment, so that they could move freely.

And so, it was that the crisis crested by March of 1947. It crested in February, when on the 20th of February of 1947 the American embassy in London reported that the British Treasury said it would no longer send any aid to Greece. The 21st of February, the British embassy in Washington officially notified the State Department that it was pulling out of Greece. And the next day, the 22nd of February, note it well, Secretary of State George Marshall made a speech at Princeton. And that speech at Princeton already forecasts something important,

because what Marshall said was that the United States bore a very heavy responsibility for the economic and political reconstruction of the world. And he flayed the American public for its disinterest and asked for the loyalty of that public to support large policies.

So that the only question was not whether the Americans would go into Greece. The question was, how large would the policy be? Would it be a policy just to take care of Greece, or something really to shift the entire dimension of American intervention potentiality. And it was, of course, the second course that was chosen. And you get that extremely well illustrated in the writing of a man named Joseph M. Jones, in a book called *The Fifteen Weeks*, which I recommend to your attention because Joseph M. Jones was one of the speechwriters for Truman, and one of the people who drew a draft of the early version of the Truman Doctrine of the 12th of March of '47. And Jones writes this in a letter to Assistant Secretary of State William Benton on the 26th of February of '47 — and note these words well, because you see the global framework within which this policy is being framed:

"There are many signs that the world is approaching this year the greatest crisis since the turn of the tide of the war in November of '42. It is primarily an economic crisis centered in Britain and its empire, in France, in Greece, and in China. If these areas are allowed to spiral downward into economic anarchy, then at best they will drop out of the American orbit and try an independent, nationalistic, or socialistic policy. At worst, they will swing into the Russian orbit. If either of these eventualities were to occur, I don't see how we could avoid a depression far greater than that of 1929 to 1932."

And consequently, it would be the very large policy that would be enunciated with a crisis blown out of all proportions with a threat of communism literally dragged into late versions of that Truman speech of March of 1947. And so, Harry Truman went, and I remember hearing that speech on the radio, and there was a tremendous aura of tension at that time, great announcements in advance that we were in a terrific crisis because this reactionary Greek government was in trouble with some guerrillas up in the hills. And consequently, that the entire world was about to be set on fire. And so, Harry Truman came to the joint session of Congress, and first of all, he said he is saving or coming to save, this Greek government. He said it's not perfect, but it is democratic, this Tsaldaris government. He then asked for \$400 million: \$300 million for Greece, \$100 million for Turkey. The explanation being to stop the armed minority in Greece from sowing disorder throughout the entire Middle East.

But then he got swinging. And the swinging was great, because here you have the greatest Manichaeian version of the world since the reformation of the sixteenth century. And consequently, what Truman talks about are slaves and free people: "At the present moment in world history" — and I want you to think of what it means when you just have this kind of

free swinging fiat, when you interpret or put these specific points of reference into each of these words — "At the present moment in world history, nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one. One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression." Now that is just the way he described the Tsaldaris regime in Greece at that particular point. "The second way of life is based upon the will of the minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression of controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedom." By this time, we were all in chills as we're listening to this speech. And then, "I believe it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples anywhere who are resisting subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure." Get that well, by armed minorities or by outside pressure. Whether there is evidence of an outside intervention? That makes no difference.

Well, something very interesting. All of this tension and then the aid bill for Greece and Turkey passed through the Senate and through the House of Representatives, but in a rather leisurely pace. It passed through the Senate by the 22nd of April. It passed through the house by the 11th of May. Truman went off on a holiday and didn't sign it for three weeks after that. And finally, the aid mission arrived in Greece in the beginning of August. It was the beginning of September that the first American arms arrived. They knew there was time. They knew that they could settle down for a long war. There was no crisis. The crisis had to do with something else. The crisis had to do with that opening to a grand strategy in the Middle East, with an opening to the reintegration of Germany and Japan into the American schema, with a reopening, after all, of a foreign economic aid program of much, much vaster dimensions than before. All of that with the disciplining of an American public to accept it. All of which brings us back to the Greeks.

And for the Greeks, the Truman Doctrine meant the beginning of the era of American hegemony, which has not ended, and it meant the end by August of 1949 of a tremendous struggle to break the bottleneck of history that had been imposed upon Greece. The Americans arrived there, and they quickly found their points of support. Their points of support were the court. And the court was now in the control not of George II, who died on the 1st of April of 1946, but his brother, who was Paul, King Paul. And with Paul, his wife — note her well — who is the queen, Frederica. And Frederica — who is a German princess, Frederica of Brunswick — is the granddaughter of the Kaiser, but that's not her claim to fame. Her claim to fame is that she was one of the real responsables of *Hitlerjugend*. And consequently, in the royal court, is as we say, a conservative ambiance. And there is around Queen Frederica a camarilla that is ferociously anti-Communist, ferociously anti-leftist, very pro-American. The Tsaldaris government, which is restored by the Americans on the 29th of

August of 1947. And that Tsaldaris government really gives over to American advisors the decision-making power in Greece.

But the point is that the war was much costlier and lasted much longer than the Americans had supposed. And in a way, I suppose they relish that the commander of the American forces by 1948 of the American mission in Greece was General [James] Van Fleet. And Van Fleet — who was on this campus in 1967, really, to praise twenty years of Truman Doctrine democracy — General Van Fleet in 1948 said something extraordinary, because it's the same thing you see that the Americans were to say about Vietnam, so many of those commanders: that there was a real value in Greece, because it was a great laboratory of instruction in the fighting of guerrilla war. That just as Vietnam would prove to be that in an electronic age, so Greece would prove to be that a generation earlier. But the statistics are phenomenal, that a year after the Truman Doctrine was enunciated, the American had sent enough economic and military aid so that there was a governmental monarchist army of 136,000 troops. There was a national guard of 50,000 to support it. There was plane support. There was tank support. And all of that against a guerrilla force in the mountains, badly equipped and badly clothed, that never had more than 30,000 armed men.

And it was estimated a year after the Truman Doctrine began that it cost the American taxpayers \$9,000 to fight each Greek guerilla. And that war going on, nonetheless, until August of '49, because there was a terrific will to fight for something historic. And because, of course, the inefficiency and the corruption of the Greek government was so great that the aid was squandered. The aid simply went off and into private enrichment, until finally, simply overwhelming force tolled. But in saying that overwhelming force tolled, let me tell you something, because it really is crucial to the story. If you ask the question of why it is that the Greeks lost that civil war, of why it was that in the last months of 1948 the Greek guerrillas in that civil war could win such magnificent battles, that General Van Fleet could say that the government was in deep trouble, that there really was a hope in the fall of 1948 that the civil war would be won by the revolutionary cause. Why? Why did it fail? Overwhelming American power, to be sure, but something else very sad and very tragic. And that is that the Greek cause got caught in the network and the web of the Stalin-Tito struggle. And that was the coup de grace finally.

And to tell you that story, I can do very briefly. And it is, after all, that the Soviet Union reorganized a version of the Communist International in the summer of 1947. And they organized what was called the Cominform, or the Communist Information Center, which inscribed in it all of the satellite countries of the Soviet Union, in other words, the so-called popular democracies. And the reason that Stalin did that was because the Americans had hardened their line in the Cold War and what Stalin wanted to do was to coordinate all of the foreign policies of the satellite countries around Russian purposes, and so you get them

organized in the Cominform. At the Cominform meeting of the 28th of June of 1948, you get the culmination of an underground struggle between Tito and Stalin by the public denunciation in the Cominform of Tito as a Menshevik, as a Bukharinist, as a Trotskyist, as an adventurer, as an American agent. All of the epithets that were usually used, it was the split.

Now, behind that split, which we will discuss in another context, let me point out two things that are quite important. One is that Stalin hated Tito and the Yugoslavian Communist Party because of its autonomy and independence in the Second World War, that it was the only Communist party that did not follow Russian instructions and that made its own revolution, that was able to fuse an anti-fascist struggle into an anti-capitalist revolution and to succeed. But secondly, there was a Yugoslavian independence in '47 and '48 that was a kind of radicalism. In order to cope with the hardening of the Cold War, Stalin had the position that he would concede to the Americans everything that was not vital to him and stand only on what he considered to be his security perimeter. Which meant that when Tito supported the Greek struggle, and actually sent arms to the Greek struggle, this was contrary to Stalin's policy which he felt would simply exacerbate his struggle with the Americans. And when Tito claimed Trieste and wanted to add it to Yugoslavia, Stalin again imposed his will. And the will was imposed at that Cominform meeting in which Tito was simply isolated and calumniated in the Communist world.

Now what would be the impact upon the Greek struggle? Within Greece, the Secretary General of the parties of Zachariadis was a loyal Stalinist and wanted to support the Cominform position. But it was difficult to do so because Yugoslavia was the only country sending the rebels any aid at all, the only country supporting the revolution in Greece. And consequently, the Central Committee of the Greek Communist Party met a few days after the Cominform resolution and only secretly condemned Tito and didn't make any public propaganda. But within the councils of the Greek Communist movement, it simply deepened and exacerbated the split between Zachariadis and Markos. Because Markos, the guerrilla leader, was very pro-Tito and very much in favor of that kind of guerrilla radicalism that came out of the Yugoslavian Communist Party.

Well, in brief, by the end of 1948, Zachariadis pulled off his coup, and his coup was to expel Markos and the Titoist guerillas, as he called them, from the Greek Communist Party and to take control of the Greek Democratic Army in the mountains himself. And you ask the question, why is it that the Greek cause lost? Was it overwhelming American arms while the Russian sent nothing? Was it the division in Greek Communist leadership which saw the expulsion of Markos? Was it the leadership of the army by Zachariadis, who simply to do Stalin's bidding, led that army into an impasse in 1949? The answer it seems to me is all three, that all three factors work.

And to lay one myth to rest: that in August of 1949, as the war was almost over, Tito closed the Yugoslavian frontier to Greeks. And when he did so the explanation was that by that time the civil war was really won by the monarchist forces, and that the monarchist forces were on his frontier, and he wanted to close that frontier to the threat that they might infiltrate and start guerrilla action against his regime. But that didn't satisfy Stalin. And until the death of Stalin, the Cominform and Communist Party literature that was loyal always blamed the defeat of the Greek cause upon the closing of the frontier by Tito, which is complete nonsense that even the Communist Party admitted after the death of Stalin, when they no longer raised that particular question.

The tragedy is that the reason that Tito closed the frontier wasn't candidly told. He did close that frontier against monarchists, but also because he was so damn scared by 1949 that the Soviet Union would attack this other Communist country that he was playing up for American support, for survival.

And so it is that classic affront to internationalism that does the Greeks in. They pay. In the civil war, 158,000 Greeks die. 3,500 were executed as political hostages. Thousands were in political prisons and literally 100,000 fled into exile. And it opens up the era of Truman Doctrine democracy in Greece — a Truman Doctrine democracy which leaves the door open, to be sure, as it's supposed to be open — but forecloses the hopes of people who put out one hell of a fight in the 1940s for something that really got washed out even of the political discourse once you got the rhetoric of the Truman Doctrine. *[applause]*