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AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH GREECE DURING
THE LAST PART OF WILSON'S ADMINISTRATION AND THE
BEGINNING OF HARDING'S :

THE FIRST ACTIVE AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN THE
INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF GREECE

William Appleman Williams, in an article published in «*Science and Society*»¹ referring to the widely accepted thesis of American isolationism in the years immediately following the First World War, says: «...far from isolation, the foreign relations of the United States from 1920 through 1932 were marked by express and extended involvement with and intervention in the affairs of other nations of the world». Another student of American diplomacy, R. W. Leopold, categorically states that the era of so-called isolationism was actually «more complex than most glib generalizations...would suggest»².

One of the principal architects of the so-called «isolationist policies», Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, testified that the presidency of Harding was far from a period of withdrawal from world affairs: «Never [was there] a period when the United States [was] more active and its influence more internationally felt than between 1921 and 1924»³.

Senator Lodge's statement finds its true application in the case of the American involvement in internal Greek political developments, at the beginning of 1920. As a result of the November 4, 1920 parliamentary elections, the liberal party of Venizelos, in power since the

1. William Appleman Williams, «The Legend of Isolationism in the 1920's», *Science and Society*, XVII, No. 1 (Winter, 1954). p. 4.

2. R. W. Leopold, «The Mississippi Valley and American Foreign Policy, 1890-1941: An Assessment and An Appeal», *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXVIII, No. 4 (March, 1951), p. 635.

3. H. C. Lodge, «Foreign Relations of the United States, 1921-1924», *Foreign Affairs*, II, No. 4 (June, 1924), p. 526.

Salonika coup d' état of 1917¹, was defeated and replaced by a coalition of the so-called «old parties». The victory at the polls of the opponents of the Cretan reformer not only displaced the reform-minded elements of the Greek political world but reinstated by public referendum, to the Greek throne, king Constantine, the symbol and source of power of the conservative and backward elements in Greece, and of the reactionaries in the military and political apparatus of the administration².

The repercussions of this fundamental change in the political affairs of Greece, were manifold and of a wide range. Its most visible effects were in the diplomatic relations of Greece with the major powers. Never before had an internal political change produced a more profound reaction among Greece's traditional «allies», the so-called «protective powers», France and England³. It was a demonstration of raw power, in its most crude form, by the aforementioned states, which had traditionally controlled the plurality of the political and economic manifestations of the kingdom. France and England were aroused against the new regime, by an attempted deviation by the royalist factions, antedating the change itself, of the accepted norms governing the state of tutelage of Greece vis à vis the «protective powers». The liberal western powers had considered this exhibition of semi-independence by the insignificant Balkan state, which up to that time had been their exclusive domain, a provocation and a challenge that had to be crushed, and that no means should be spared in that effort.

1. It replaced Constantine with his son Alexander as the king of Greece. Alexander, a «weak ruler» was, in the opinion of the American chargé d' affaires in Athens, Arthur Frazier, an instrument in the hands of Venizelos «...the institution of the crown prince in Greece [Alexander] is very much an anomaly as the present King exercises neither power nor authority, but plays the role which M. Venizelos thinks best for him to perform». U. S. Department of State, *Documents relating to the internal affairs of Greece, 1920-1929*, Roll 10, Document 868.01/122, September 3, 1920. Hereafter referred as Roll—, Document—. These materials are on microfilm produced by the National Archives.

2. Dr. Edward Capps, American minister in Athens at the time, reported on December 20, 1920, «...the return of Constantine Sunday, evoked great popular enthusiasm». Roll 8, Document 868.00C76/19, December 21, 1920.

3. «Lloyd George, when he received the shocking news [of Venizelos' defeat] pulled himself together and remarked with a grin, 'Now I am the only one left'. To Venizelos he wrote: It almost makes me despair of democracy!» Lord Kinross, *Ataturk* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1965), p. 290.

England and especially France¹ at first recalled their ambassadors, but this decision was abandoned by what later was described as pressure on them by Italy. The French and the British representatives remained in Athens maintaining no official contacts with Constantine². The Wilson administration, in spite of allied pressure³, to disavow and isolate diplomatically the new regime in Athens, considered the return of king Constantine and the defeat at the polls of the liberal party of Venizelos, as part of the normal political processes in Greece.

Wilson's own appointee as minister to Greece, the classical scholar Dr. Edward Capps, despite the fact that only the representatives of Spain and Holland had officially recognized Constantine as the legal monarch of the country, proposed to the state department unconditional recognition of Constantine, requesting new letters of credence⁴. Dr. Capps' initiative was stemming as much from his personal proclivities toward the new regime in Greece, unhampered by the entrenched interests of his colleagues and allies, the French and British ambassadors, and as much from the absence of any contrary advice, hostile to the political change in Athens, from Washington. The state department

1. The American embassy in Paris on May 19, 1922 responding to an inquiry of the state department, as to the reasons for French hostility toward Constantine's government in Greece, partially said, «...attitude on the part of the French is due entirely to their desire to punish him [Constantine] for what they call the «massacre» of the French troops near Athens in December 1916». Roll 8, Document 868.00C76/61, May 19, 1922.

2. «...recall of British and French Ministers received by them Friday has been revoked, for present, reason unknown. British minister has notified [Greek] government that while remaining he will entertain no relationship with King». Dr. Edward Capps, Roll 8, Document 868.00C76/19 December 21, 1920.

3. Warren D. Robbins, chief of the division of Near Eastern affairs of the department of state, in a memorandum to the undersecretary of state Philip Flecher, on March 7, 1921 said: «...I understand that the French Counselor, Prince De Bearn and the British Chargé d' Affaires, Mr. Craigie, called upon Mr. Norman Davis [first undersecretary of state] about two months ago and suggested that United States withhold recognition of king Constantine». Roll 8, Document 868.00IC76/48, March 7, 1921. See also the memorandum of Davis to President Wilson cited on the following pages.

4. Communication to president Wilson on December 28, 1920 by the under secretary of state Norman Davis. «The issue has arisen as to what attitude this government should have toward king Constantine. The American minister has asked for new letters of credence». Roll 8, Document 868.00IC76/480, December 28, 1920.

and the other governmental agencies in Washington, as well as private financial concerns did not have any immediate economic interests of the United States to safeguard, neither the previous liberal regime had made any promises of favorable economic investments, that the new regime was questioning. Therefore, as far as Washington was concerned, the political transformation in Athens was a matter of little consequence for the American interests in the area. It could furthermore be said that knowing the flexibility of the American Open Door Policy¹ and its aggressive deployment at the turn of the century in various economically underdeveloped areas of the world, the United States agencies, could not but welcome the opportunity of the embargo established against Greece by its financial overlords, to enter the Greek market.

However, a few American officials in the area of eastern Mediterranean, susceptible to local political passions, ethnic antipathies, and the indigenous American economic interests, and the developing, in their opinion, strategic opportunities for the United States in Turkey, were interpreting Wilson's foreign policies as far as Greece was concerned, in a different spirit. Rear-admiral Mark L. Bristol, the United States High Commissioner in Constantinople, an ardent Hellenophobe², not hiding his contempt for Constantine and antagonism toward Greek expansion in the Middle East, attempted to force the state de-

1. W. A. Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Delta Book, 1972) 2nd ed., pp. 53-55.

2. «...[Views] represent attitude of Mr. George Horton [American consul at Smyrna] and my own views in opposition thereto. I believe...[Horton] has the natural tendency to sympathize with Greek ideas». On another occasion admiral Bristol expressed the view that, «I can see no justification for any part of Asia Minor being placed under the rule of the Hellenes». Roll 10, Document 868.01/23, September 25, 1920. Admiral Bristol's racial prejudices were properly illustrated in his comparison of the Greeks under the Ottomans to the American Negro in the south. «The feelings of the Turks may best be described as being similar to what undoubtedly would have been the feelings among the population of the Southern part of the United States in case this district were suddenly placed under the authority of the Negro inhabitants». Roll II, Document 868.01/728, August 17, 1922. See also a memorandum by a British career diplomat Mr. Forbes Adam to the British foreign office. Great Britain, Public Record Office, Foreign Office, *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939*, First Series, Vol. XVII, Greece and Turkey January 1, 1921 - September 2, 1922, pp. 531-533. Hereafter referred as *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939*.

partment to adopt a hostile policy against Greece¹. The High Commissioner's conscientious attempts to force a change in the customary pro-Greek, pro-Christian sentiments, which in a mild manner had traditionally influenced American administrations, were the outcome of a broader policy, calculated to bring about an American preponderance in Turkey. There, with the fall of the Ottoman regime, and the newly developing national consciousness, which was rejecting as degrading and as remnants of a colonial past the unequal economic relations of the old Ottoman empire with the western powers, the nationalists were favorably inclined to accept the inroads of the American capital. American financiers were aggressively competing with their British and French counterparts to fill the vacuum left in the territories of the former Ottoman empire by the defeat of Germany, and even to capture what were considered British and French economic enclaves². This as yet ill-defined scouting of the Turkish market had found in the person of admiral Bristol an enthusiastic adherent and promoter. In addition then to his pronounced racial prejudices against the Greeks as an inferior race, the patrician admiral was ambitious enough to become pioneer for the American capital in Asia Minor. Bristol's «diplomatic» offensive was sharply rebuked by the secretary of state, Bainbridge Colby, who in no uncertain terms made plain to the admiral that American foreign policy emanated from Washington rather than from the office of the High Commissioner³.

The state department, headed temporarily by the undersecretary

1. «As vessels under my command may meet Constantine and I may be brought in personal contact with him, I urgently request instructions as to whether he is to be treated as the lawful King of Greece». Roll 8, Document 868.00C76/14, December 27, 1920.

Horton's dispatch to the state department, a copy of which was sent to the president, was as follows: «What attitude should I take on arrival of King Constantine in Smyrna. French Consul General has been instructed by the French government not to take part in any official function of the King». Roll 8, Document 868.00C76/26, December 27, 1920.

2. See a dispatch from the British representative in Constantinople Mr. Rattigan to Lord Curzon in London concerning conflicts of economic nature with American interests upheld by admiral Bristol. *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939*, p. 308.

3. «Department considers that if recognition of King Constantine should be made by this government it should be by its diplomatic representatives at Athens and therefore, does not wish the question to be brought to an issue by you or officers under your command». Roll 8, Document 868.00C76/14, December, 29, 1920.

of state, Norman H. Davis, never a party up to that time to the Franco-English intrigues to crush 'Constantine, was ready to proceed with the recommendation of Dr. Capps to recognize the regime in Greece. Hence Davis strongly suggested to president Wilson that the United States recognize Constantine and continue the war credits¹ to Greece:

The America minister has asked for new letters of credence King Constantine returned... with a plebiscite, fifty-five per cent of all Greeks, seventy-five per cent of the population of old Greece. You will remember that the government of the United States, unlike that of Great Britain and France, took no active part in the dispute which occurred prior to the expulsion of King Constantine. The French Embassy stating that a decision had been reached by Great Britain and France to give no further credits to government of King Constantine suggested the desirability of the United States also suspending further credits.

I am inclined to believe that letters of credence should be issued to Dr. Capps and that the credit negotiated with the Venizelos government should be considered still binding and that the Greek Chargé d' Affaires on proper application should be recognized as representing the government of King Constantine².

President Wilson, viewing Constantine's return as a purely Greek domestic matter not affecting the balance of power in the Middle East, as secretary of state Charles Evans Hughes in 1924 was to claim³, en-

1. In 1918 the allied powers, France, England and the United States, concluded an agreement with Greece known as the Paris Loan Agreement of 1918, to extend credits to the amount of one hundred million dollars to finance the Greek war effort on behalf of the allies. The United States agreed to pay forty-eight million dollars; by 1920 approximately fifteen million had already been given to Greece.

2. Letter by Davis to Wilson on December 28, 1920. Roll 8, Document 868.001C 76/482, December 28, 1920. See also the dispatch of the British chargé d' affaires at Washington of January 18, 1921. The British diplomat was of the opinion that the United States government would have to recognize the new regime in Greece. *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939*, p. 13.

3. In a speech before the Council of Foreign Relations in New York, on January 23, 1924, secretary Hughes defended the state department's policy toward Greece on the following grounds: in view of the special circumstances which attended Constantine's return to Athens and the role Constantine played in the war, it was impossible for the department to grant recognition. Furthermore, Constantine developed a militaristic policy in Asia Minor, by which policy he desired to justify his hold upon Thrace. Recognition implied justification of Constantine's policies and interference in the affairs of the Middle East.

dorsed Davis's proposal to recognize the new Greek regime¹. The American minister in Athens was notified on December 30 of the impending recognition of Constantine by the American government:

Strictly confidential and for your future guidance, Department sees no reason why recognition should not be extended to King Constantine as soon as he assumes office and formally announces to this government his accession to the throne, at which time you will be given new credentials².

Dr. Capps was told on January 7, 1921, by the state department that American recognition was only a matter of days: «Our final decision will be made upon the usual receipt of notice from the King of his assumption of office»³.

The Greek government, to counteract the allied diplomatic and economic isolation, and engaged as it was in a war in the Middle East, was anxious to secure early recognition by the United States. The prime minister, Demetrios Rhallis, of the «old parties» coalition government, in the early part of January 1921 through the Greek chargé d'affaires in Washington, George Dracopoulos, officially notified the Wilson administration of Constantine's assumption of royal duties:

I have the honor to inform your Excellency, by direction of my government that His Majesty King Constantine my August Sovereign having returned to Greece on 6/19 of the month of December last has assumed his high functions⁴.

The Greek government deliberately chose this «informal» manner of notifying the American government of Constantine's return, since neither the pro-royalist parties nor king Constantine had ever accepted the reign of king Alexander⁵, as a legitimate one.

1. Communication from Norman Davis to Dr. Capps: «...the Greek Chargé d' Affaires was subsequently called to the State Department and informed confidentially that while the Department *after consultation with the President* is considering favorably the recognition of King Constantine...» Roll 8, Document 868.00 C76/21, January 12, 1921. Italics mine.

2. Roll 8, Document 868.00C76/19, December 30, 1920.

3. Roll 8, Document 868.00C76/20, January 12, 1921.

4. Roll 8, Document 868.00C76/21. January 12, 1921.

5. From a dispatch of Dr. Capps to the state department of January 18. «Greek government explains failure to announce formally the accession of Constantine due to the fact that he never ceased to be King: He simply resumed his throne after an enforced absence». Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/22, January 18, 1921.

This theory of a «continuous reign» produced difficulties abroad, especially in the United States. Dracopoulos' note was not accepted as the «formal announcement of ascension to the throne»¹, despite the willingness of Wilson to proceed with recognition². Nevertheless, the Greek chargé d' affaires was summoned to the state department where in separate conferences with the secretary and Mr. Robbins he was advised:

*...confidentially that while the Department... after consultation with the President is considering favorably the recognition of King Constantine, it cannot accept the form in which the note was sent as a formal ascension to the throne. He was therefore, requested to inform his government that a formal announcement signed by King Constantine and addressed to the President of the United States would be necessary before a reply was given*³.

Indeed the state department's objections were at the moment strictly a matter of protocol and did not in any way deal with the further implications of the doctrine of «continuous reign»⁴ of Constantine and the consequent corollary, the illegality of the Venizelos administration and the nullification of the international obligations it had assumed for Greece; an interpretation given later by the American minister in Greece⁵ and the state department.

1. «...Mr. Alvey A. Adee, second assistant secretary does not consider this announcement as correct in form. He says that the correct form would be an autographed letter from King Constantine to the president announcing his accession to the throne». Letter from Robbins, chief of the Near Eastern division of the department of state, to the acting secretary Davis. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/21, January 14, 1921.

2. «...if as I understand the president is willing to recognize King Constantine may I inform the Greek Chargé d' Affaires orally what form is required for recognition, in order that he may immediately send for it». From Robbins to Davis on, January 13, 1921. *Ibid.*

3. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/31, January 14, 1921.

4. «Meeting with Rhallys...he frankly acknowledged that the plan being followed was due to Greek government's desire to maintain its theory that Constantine has merely resumed functions after an interruption...» Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/25, January 14, 1921.

5. «Logical corollary to this theory is that all acts of Venizelos government are invalid. This seems to me a more important issue than mere recognition of Constantine as King... I respectfully suggest that Department would do a great

The Greek government considered the issue a purely domestic matter. It ignored the state department's suggestion of a direct communication by Constantine to Wilson, since this would have amounted to a de facto recognition of the Salonika coup d' état. It stated categorically that as far as it was concerned Constantine had always been the legitimate ruler of the country¹. The state department, while refusing to accept the newest communications of the Greek government, through the second assistant undersecretary of state, Alvey A. Adee, in a conciliatory move proposed that:

If he [Constantine] feels that it is hard to use the word accession to the throne, he might use the word reaccession. It is worth noting that the government of the United States did not go on record as withdrawing its recognition of King Constantine².

The unwillingness of the Athens government to accept even a compromise solution was greatly resented by the state department, which as early as January 25, 1921, when the Greek chargé d' affaires called to inquire about the recognition, expressed «certain doubts» about the new Greek government's intention to honor the acts of the Venizelos administration³. At this moment, the primary reasons underscoring the policies of the state department were hard practical considerations, the financial reliability of the new regime and its willingness to assume and honor the financial transactions of the previous administration.

Dracopoulos' assurance that no question of revalidating those acts existed in the policies of the Greek government was received skeptically; the state department withheld any action leading to recognition until a formal notification by king Constantine to president Wilson was received. In addition Alvey A. Adee suggested that Dr. Capps be instructed to inform the Greek minister of foreign affairs

service by drawing from Greek government explicit acknowledgement of legitimacy of former regime by admission that King Constantine succeeds the throne made vacant by the death of King Alexander». Dr. Capps to state department. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/22, January 18, 1921.

1. «...foreign office has replied that King Constantine never abdicated and that he was forced out of Greece and left his throne to his son, King Alexander, who recently died. The Greek government...requested that the announcement be accepted as final». Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/50. January 23, 1921.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/51, January 25, 1921.

that in view of the question cast of Greece's willingness to recognize the responsibilities of the former administration concerning the loan agreement with the United States, the credits which were opened in favor of the Greek government should be suspended until the Greek government provided the necessary assurances¹.

An effort made by the Greek chargé d' affaires to obtain a statement from the chief of the Near Eastern division, Robbins, as to the nature of assurances the state department would accept, drew the chilly comment by the secretary of state: «Robbins was not in a position to request any assurances from the Greek government»².

Dr. Capps, who in the past two months had confidentially supported the royalist government in Athens, became now suspicious of the new Greek administration³. The ability of the new government, as far as the United States was concerned, to respect the international agreements of its predecessors was in question⁴.

Adding fuel to the fears of the Wilson administration, the Greek government summarily nullified hundreds of legislative acts passed under the Venizelos administration, pertaining, of course, to internal matters, but nevertheless, indicative of the revengeful policies of the new regime⁵.

Nevertheless, since a repudiation of Greece's international obligations was never contemplated, the Rhallis administration through Dracopoulos kept the pressure on Washington to recognize Constantine⁶, apparently unable to foresee the implications of its policy on the Ame-

1. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/54, January 31, 1921.

2. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/53, January 31, 1921.

3. «Personally I am more and more impressed by the insincerity of the present government. Their acts at home are in direct contradiction to their professions to countries associated with them in the war». Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/29, February 25, 1921.

4. «...absolute necessity of forcing Constantine and his government to acknowledge legitimacy of Alexander's reign in order to avoid almost hopeless complications in the future». Dispatch by Barton Hall to the state department. Roll 10, Document 86801/40, April 29, 1921.

5. «...is we permit theory now being followed to go unchallenged all acts of Venizelos government likely to be invalidated as hundreds have already been». Dispatch by Dr. Capps to the state department. Roll 8, Document 768.001C76/72, January 18, 1921.

6. On January 25, 1921, Dracopoulos called at the state department to inquire, «Whether there was anything further in regard to the recognition of King Constantine». Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/51, January 25, 1921.

rican government. Dracopoulos' continuous assurances that the new cabinet did not intend to nullify the acts of the Venizelos administration were politely dismissed. Norman H. Davis in a letter to Robbins stated that:

If the Venizelos administration did not legally meet the advances [Paris Loan Agreement of 1918] made to it, it might be a good investment to write off the fifteen million that had already been advanced to Greece in consideration of not having to advance thirty-two million more¹.

This view in a milder form was shared by Alvey A. Adee, who was of the opinion that Constantine should not only write a personal letter to president Wilson emphasizing «his reascension» to the throne, the very idea that was anathema to the royalists, but that:

It might be advisable to instruct our Minister in Athens to inform the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, that in view of the doubts cast on the question of Greek responsibility for the advance already made, the credits which have been opened in favor of Greece be suspended until further notice and that final determination will depend upon the ascertainment of the necessary assurances².

Prime Minister George Calogeropoulos, who succeeded Rhallis in February, while still unable to abandon the highly emotional idea of Alexander's «illegal reign», was forced to accept under the circumstances a partial compromise. The Greek administration bowing to the tremendous emotional passions of the royalist stalwarts and the revengeful proclivities of the returned émigrés, was powerless in repudiating, even for foreign consumption, an issue which was jeopardizing its good standing with a much needed and benevolent ally.

The new government declared to the state department, through the American minister in Athens, that Greece would abide by the international obligations undertaken by the Venizelos administration:

Minister [Greek minister of foreign affairs] desired to convey to Department of State the assurances of his government's intentions to

1. Roll 11, Document 868.01/232, January 26, 1921.

2. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/52, January 28, 1921.

*honor all action of the government of King Alexander, as far as international agreements are concerned*¹.

The issue of Alexander's reign, however, remained still a sacrosanct subject with the royalist parties and the court, which used it to inflame the rank and file of the ignorant agrarian masses of their followers².

King Constantine in a interview granted to Dr. Hill³ «declared in positive terms that he could never recognize legitimacy of Alexander's reign», adding that it was «a purely domestic issue.»⁴ However, king Constantine emphatically stated that the Greek government intended to fully honor the international obligations undertaken under Alexander's reign, adding that «he hoped that the United States would be satisfied with the assurances which had been given to that effect»⁵.

In pursuance of this policy, on March 2, 1921, king Constantine dispatched the long desired letter to president Wilson announcing his reassumption of the royal duties. «In response to the unanimous vote of the Hellenic people, Constantine has reassumed the throne of Greece»⁶. On March 19, the Greek foreign minister in a note to the state department declared:

*The present Royal Greek government recognizes all obligations resulting from treaties, conventions, agreements, concluded with foreign powers or private individuals by the government administering the affairs of the country during the time when the Royal authority was exercised by the late lamented son of His Majesty King Constantine*⁷.

The new American chargé d' affaires in Athens, who replaced

1. Correspondence of Dr. Capps to state department on February 25, 1921. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/29, February 25, 1921.

2. «Minister made it clear that in view of his government, Alexander while exercising function of King was acting as a kind of regent for Constantine». Ibid.

3. Director of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens.

4. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/31, March 9, 1921.

5. Assurances referring to the statement issued by the Greek foreign minister to the American ambassador in Athens on February 25, 1921. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/32, March 19, 1921.

6. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/30, March 2, 1921.

7. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/32, March 19, 1921.

Dr. Capps, Barton Hall¹, said that the resignation of Constantine was imminent².

Charles Evans Hughes, who had just assumed the office of secretary of state in the republican administration of president Harding, in an urgent message to the American legation in Athens demanded a full report «as to what you consider is the probability of Constantine remaining in power»³.

Hall's response to the secretary's note seriously conflicted with his original report. The phrase «practically all newspapers speak of abdication», was changed to «known Venizelist papers speak of the necessity for Constantine's abdication»⁴.

The secretary's inquest also prompted the American consul general in Athens, W. L. Lowrie, to file a report on the supposed Greek crisis. Lowrie, considered the whole story «without foundation», while not excluding an immediate change in government, based on his broader experience of the «Balkan policies effervescent»⁵.

In view of the military developments in Asia Minor, the war department was very disturbed by the rumors in the pro-Venizelos Greek

1. Chargé d' affaires Barton Hall was a controversial figure. Dr. Capps on several occasions suggested that he should be replaced as unfit for the diplomatic service. «Dr. Capps stated that Mr. Hall had not shown tact in his dealings with the British Legation and futhermore, he was no persona grata with the American colony». Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/40, June 16, 1921. On different occasions Dr. Capps commented that Hall, «was not a very valuable officer in the position he now holds». «He was tactless, ignorant, and had not knowledge of French». «In view of the unfortunate condition which appears to exist in the legation it would seem that a change is necessary». Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/54, January 3, 1921. Hall expressed himself quite unsavorily about Constantine and the royal family; he did not have any scruples about his anti-Constantine position. Commenting on a rumor that Prince Andrew, then commander of a Greek army corps, had been killed in action he said «He [Prince Andrew] has not been killed nor has any member of the Greek Royal family seem fit to expose himself in the Asia Minor Campaign». Roll 10, Document 868.00.11/4, May 3, 1921.

2. «...practically all newspapers speak of abdication of King and rumor is current that Gounaris has so advised Constantine from London». Roll 8, Document 70/6811.125, March 19, 1921.

3. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/33, March 22, 1921.

4. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/35, March 30, 1921.

5. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/34, March 24, 1921.

press of New York City and ordered Major Shallenberger,¹ the American military attaché in Belgrade and Athens, to investigate the reported abdication of Constantine². Shallenberger like the consul general found nothing to support the validity of Hall's assertions.

I doubt the report with reference to your cable. The Greek people are still stirring for Constantine but, much strength has been lost for Royal Party. If a political upheaval comes, it will be directed against Gounaris. Except under Constantine, I doubt that mobilization would be possible³.

A few months later the retired American minister in Athens, Dr. Capps, in a conference with the chief of the Near Eastern division of the state department, Warren Robbins, emphasized the stability of the Greek government. «King Constantine's position is strong in Greece owing to the fact that the offensive against the Turkish Nationalists has brought about unity»⁴.

The much discussed offensive, which according to neutral observers did much to consolidate the unquestionable popularity of Constantine, was launched on March 23 against the kemalist forces in Asia Minor, following the failure of the peace conference in London in February 1921⁵. A week later the Greek cabinet was reorganized under the premiership of Demetrios Gounaris, the eminent politician from Patras, and recognised dean of the conservative right. The formation of the Gounaris cabinet in Athens coincided with the inauguration of the new republican administration of president Harding, who succeeded president Wilson in March 1921. Bainbridge Colby was replaced by Charles Evans Hughes as secretary of state. Hughes was far more influential than his predecessor; in fact he was to dominate United

1. On April the war department ordered Shallenberger to proceed to Asia Minor as an observer with the Greek armies in their spring offensive. When Hall learned that Shallenberger had been dispatched to Asia Minor, he sent a cable to Hughes in which he voiced strong objections to the mission: he was primarily afraid that it would be misinterpreted as a way of showing recognition to Constantine. After strong pressure from the war department, Hughes permitted the mission to proceed and told Hall that it did not have any political significance. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/36, April 15, 1921.

2. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/37, March 28, 1921.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/40, June 16, 1921.

5. Lord Kinross, *Ataturk*, pp. 300-302.

States foreign policy for years to come. Harding, gave Hughes a carte blanche to handle the foreign affairs of the United States¹.

By the spring of 1921, the Greek government had accomplished little or nothing in its efforts to obtain recognition and financial assistance from the great powers. On the contrary, the hostility of certain countries increased² as well as their efforts to prevent other powers, especially the United States, from granting recognition³. Gounaris therefore, took the initiative and arranged an informal meeting with Dr. Capps on April 18 on the conditions of Greco-American relations. At that meeting Gounaris summarized the unrelenting efforts of the previous Greek cabinet to gain recognition and expressed his «disappointment» at the ambiguity of the American position in the face of official Greek assurances that all international agreements would be recognized. Once again the Greek government, Gounaris stated:

...was willing to observe scrupulously all international undertakings entered into by the government of King Alexander and the allied and associated powers during the period of war⁴.

1. «The appointment of Mr. Hughes as secretary of state was in no sense a political one. It was due to the simplest of reasons—the confidence of the President-elect in the ability and integrity of the man and the conviction of the former that there was no one better qualified for the office». Following the acceptance by Hughes of the proposed appointment, president Harding expressed his complete confidence in Hughe's ability to direct American foreign policy. «The big thing is that you will serve», wrote Harding, «It strengthens my faith because I believe in you, and feel that the American people share my high opinion». Speaking at a press conference on October 19, 1921, in St. Augustine, where he formally announced the appointment of Hughes as secretary of state, president-elect Harding said: «From this time on gentlemen, you will get your news as to the foreign relations of the United States from the State Department». Samuel Flagg Bemis, ed., *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1921), p. 223.

2. «...it is suggested even that France and Italy are secretly aiding the Turks in the hope of strengthening Turkish claims. The actions of France and Italy may be influenced by the fact that both of these countries may feel that Greece is getting too much by the treaty of Sevres». Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/55, May 14, 1921.

3. Correspondence of Robbins to Flecher, undersecretary of state on March 7, 1921. «...I understand that the French Councillor Prince De Bearn and the British Chargé d' Affaires Mr. Craigie, called upon Mr. Davis about two months ago and suggested that the United States withhold recognition of King Constantine». Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/48, March 7, 1921.

4. Roll 8, Document 868.0001C76/40, March 7, 1921.

Gounaris, who consented to accept the terms of the department of state, declared «that the Greek government was willing to base its announcement of the accession of King Constantine upon a plebiscite»¹. Gounaris's assurances did much to strengthen the convictions of Dr. Capps, who all along was in support of Constantine's speedy recognition. In a conversation with Davis, two months later, Dr. Capps again recommended recognition under suitable guarantees², which both Gounaris and Constantine had expressed their willingness to extend.

A fortnight later (in the early part of May 1921), encouraged by the friendly position of the American ambassador and unable to deal with the mounting financial crisis³, Gounaris instructed Alexander Vouros⁴, the Greek unofficial representative in Washington, to apply formally to the state department for permission to float a loan of twenty-five million dollars to be sponsored by the Greek government, and subscribed to in its entirety by Greek immigrants in the United States⁵. The Greek note was carefully worded and in a conciliatory tone;⁶ but before the department had even had time to study the Gounaris proposal, rear-admiral Bristol, the American High Commissioner in Constantinople, previously mentioned for his pro-Turkish proclivities, learned of the Greek request through the Constantinople dailies⁷ and sent telegrams to president Harding and secretary Hughes to «suggest if possible steps could be taken to prevent the use of any of that credit for the purchase of any war materials or supplies»⁸. Apparently the local press had falsely reported that the United States had already granted a loan to Greece.

On June 3, 1921, Vouros was summoned to the state department

1. *Ibid.*

2. *Ibid.*

3. «Greece without funds, expecting seventy-five million drachmas advanced by the National Bank. Financial difficulties were grave». Report of Lowrie, American consul general to the state department on March 24, 1921. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/34, March 24, 1921.

4. Alexander Vouros' status in Washington is far from clear. In 1922, under-secretary William Phillips, said, «Mr. Vouros, who has for some time been acting as Greek unofficial representative in Washington». Roll 11, Document 868.01/3/11, October 21, 1922.

5. Roll 25, Document 868.51/341, May 13, 1921.

6. Phrases such as, «whether the United States would be willing to grant permission», and «what are the necessary steps» are typical of Vouros' dispatch. *Ibid.*

7. Roll 25, Document 868.51/312, May 14, 1921.

8. *Ibid.*

where he was informed «that nothing could be done in connection with the matter¹». There was no elaboration as to the reasons for the state department's refusal to act on the Greek government's request.

By the early fall of 1921 king Constantine and prime minister Gounaris undertook a major campaign to persuade the Harding administration of the internal stability and financial responsibility of Greece.

Since Barton Hall was in charge of the American legation, and his anti-Constantine prejudices were well known, king Constantine and Gounaris used unofficial channels to approach the Harding administration². Paxton Hibben, a retired member of the American diplomatic staff in Athens, who was serving as an official of the Near Eastern Relief, was used as an intermediary. Hibben, who enjoyed the personal confidence of Constantine, «had been urged by the King to call out the Department and find out if possible, why the United States had up to now refrained from recognizing the present government of Greece»³. He was assured by both the king and prime minister Gounaris that Greece would be willing to give any assurances as regards assuming of obligations made by king Alexander, which the United States government might desire»⁴. On October 27, 1921, in separate interviews with Warren Robbins and Charles Evans Hughes, Hibben made known the Greek proposals. Robbins remained unimpressed by the Greek protestations and was opposed to the idea of recognizing the Greek regime. He believed that American recognition could be regarded as a form of intervention in the affairs of the Middle East. Since Greece was fighting in Asia Minor, «to recognize Constantine after a reputed invasion of Anatolia [apparently the Greek summer offensive] would be quixotic and might be considered as siding with Greece against Turkey»⁵. This pronouncement by Robbins expressing the department's new orientation, constituted a landmark in the unsettled

1. Roll 25, Document 868.51/363, May 31, 1921.

2. In a confidential letter to Hughes on October 31, 1921, just before an official visit by the director of the Greek National Bank, Papafrangos, in vivid color, referred to his relationship with the Greek government which had accused him of being the mouthpiece of England and France and of receiving instructions from the French and British embassies on «how to act in each individual case». Roll 25, Document 868.51/378, October 31, 1921.

3. Roll 10, Document 868.01/58, October 27, 1921. Memorandum by Warren Robbins to Hughes.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

relations of the two countries. For the United States diplomacy, the issue of Greece's recognition was not any longer a matter of Constantine's legal status. Now American interests in post-war Turkey loomed significantly enough to bar any previous obligations undertaken by the United States government during the great war on behalf of Greece.

Hibben's private mission coincided with a direct approach to Washington by the Greek government, through its unofficial representative, Alexander Vouros. While Hibben was in Washington D. C., Vouros submitted the followings memorandum to Hughes, reiterating what Hibben was privately assuring the officials of the state department:

I have been instructed by my government to seek an opportunity of presenting the Department of State, in any manner that shall be agreeable to the Secretary of State a full and unreserved statement of the political events which transpired...in Greece...and also to renew in the most explicit fashion the declaration which my government made February last to the government of the United States in which the former guaranteed to respect scrupulously all international agreements made with the allied and associated powers by the government of Mr. Venizelos, its predecessor¹.

This unreserved capitulation to the demands of the state department by the Greek government never formally reached Hughes. Warren Robbins, the only high ranking official who commented on it, advised undersecretary Flecher against any official action on the Greek note. The chief of the Near Eastern division while clarifying his recommendation argued that the issue of Greek recognition was not «based upon a misunderstanding», as Vouros' memorandum implied: «as you are well aware this is not the case... The matter hinges entirely on international policy wholly discrete from international right»². A week or so preceding Hibben's talks and Vouros' memorandum, H. S. Chilton, councillor of the British legation in Washington D.C., called upon undersecretary Flecher to discuss the subject of the Greek-American relations:

Mr. Chilton left in a very courteous way the impression that our recognition of the present Greek government, by sending a minister there would be unwelcome to Britain³.

1. Roll 10, Document 868.01/78, October 28, 1921.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Roll 11, Document 868.01/228, October 21, 1921. From «Flecher Memorandum».

Flecher¹ assured the British diplomat in no uncertain terms that the United States policy paralleled that of Britain and France:

*...we [United States] had not recognized Constantine's government following or cooperating with France and England...that one of the principal reasons why we continued not to recognize present Greek government was our desire to adopt a course similar to that of England and France*².

In conclusion Flecher categorically restated that the United States «desired to cooperate as far as possible with France and England in the matter»³.

The minutes of this all-important conference on American foreign policy in the Middle East were made available for comment to the chief of the Near Eastern division of the state department, who stressed once more the fact that recognition would be based entirely upon «international policy» and not, as the Greek premier Gounaris believed, on «international right». He concurred with the position taken by the undersecretary, adding that he did not «see any reason for offending the British government at this time»⁴.

Meanwhile on the recommendation of Hibben⁵ king Constantine and prime minister Gounaris had dispatched a three-man economic mission to the United States, headed by the director of the Greek

1. «I [Flecher] referred to the desire of a certain gentleman to be appointed Minister to Greece. I told Mr. Chilton that some pressure was being brought to bear on the President to appoint a Minister to Greece but that we had not yet, following or cooperating with France and England». Roll 11, Document 868.01/78, October 28, 1921.

2. Roll 11, Document 868.01/227, October 15, 1921. From «Flecher Memorandum».

3. *Ibid.*

4. Roll 11, Document 868.01/78, November 2, 1921.

5. When Hibben was discussing the Greek situation with Robbins, he commented that he had proposed to Constantine «to send a mission over here to confer with the State Department and to explain the situation with a view to bring about a better understanding and possibly recognition...he himself had recommended as representatives of this mission, Mr. Parafrango, Mr. Philip Dragoumis, and the Marshal of the Royal Court Mr. Mercati, a confidant of the Royal family». Roll 10, Document 868.01/58, October 27, 1921.

National Bank, Mr. Papafrangos¹ former legal advisor of the American embassy, to negotiate a private loan and possibly seek recognition.

The choice of Mr. Papafrangos to head the mission heralded a new phase in the perplexing web of Greek-American relations. The shift from diplomatic recognition to the negotiation of a private financial agreement, resulted partly from the bewilderment of the Greek government at the failure of its attempts to improve diplomatic relations with the United States, and partly from the growing economic² crisis in Greece. When Dr. Johannes Gennadius³, the former Greek ambassador in London, was sent to Washington in late 1921 as the special plenipotentiary of Greece, to seek ways of improving the relations between the two countries, he also underscored the financial aspect of his mission, publicly emphasizing the economic stability of Greece⁴.

Prior to his departure for the United States, Papafrangos had talks with John G. Erhardt, the American consul in charge in Athens, since he was in disfavor with Barton Hall⁵, the American chargé d' affaires.

1. Mr. Papafrangos was apparently very unpopular with Hall, who in a personal letter to Hughes bitterly attacked him as an opportunist and dishonest. «He [Papafrangos] has even more recently lent himself to the apparently full grown intrigue to discredit me if possible in Washington». Roll 25, Document 868.51/377, October 31, 1921.

2. Reports reaching the state department indicated the desperate economic situation in Greece, «...[economic] situation of the Greek government desperate.» Report of Robbins to Flecher. Roll 8, Document 868.001C76/63, September 30, 1921. While the Papafrangos mission to the United States was under consideration by the Greek government, Gounaris was on a tour of Paris and London seeking financial support and possible recognition, although the visit was described by official Greek communiqués of the time as «purely political». *New York Times*, October 27, 1921, p. 8.

3. When on April 25, after almost six months in the United States, Dr. Gennadius had an audience with Hughes, he explained the circumstances of his appointment as Greece's special envoy to the United States. «Although...he had finished his diplomatic career when...he had...resigned his post in London, but Prime Minister Gounaris on his visit to London on November [1921] had persuaded him to accept this mission to the United States in the hope that he would be able to assist in regularizing the relations between the two countries». Roll 14, Document 868.01/143, April 25, 1922.

4. In a speech to the Cosmos Club of Washington D. C. on January 8, 1922, (he stated...Greece was not bankrupt». *New York Times*, January 9, 1922, p. 6. The importance of this statement will be seen in better perspective when I discuss Papafrangos' visit in the United States.

5. Hall sent a personal letter to Robertson, the new chief of the Near Eastern division of the state department, in addition to one sent to secretary Hughes,

In these preliminary talks¹ (October 25) Papafrangos emphatically declared Greece's willingness to reactivate the 1918 Paris Loan Agreement². But the main goal of Greece's mission was the conclusion of private loans, the proceeds of which would be spent in the United States to purchase gasoline and other products. The Greek government «would be willing to submit proper guarantees as to the payment of the loan...

*which might take the form of giving a monopoly of tobacco or of minerals or the granting of concessions*³.

The possible extension of monopolies for American businesses, an idea skilfully cultivated by the Greek government in its endeavors to conclude a loan, attracted the serious attention of American businesses already in Greece⁴. The chairman of the American chamber of commerce in Athens, Brainerd P. Salmon⁵, whose influence among the American based businessmen was considerable, privately accompanied the Greek mission to the United States, where he approached various

«explaining the visit of Papafrango». Hall's letter apparently succeeded in its purpose of discrediting Papafrangos, eliciting such comments from Robertson as «I know all about Papafrango» and «I will give him no official recognition if he calls». Roll 25, Document 868.51/376, October 29, 1921.

1. Papafrangos requested the consul that he inform the American bankers of his impending visit in the United States. Two years before under the Venizelos administration, colonel Broumis used the same approach to make contacts with American financial institutions for a projected Greek-American financial venture known as the «Broumis project». Roll 25, Document 868.51/376, October 29, 1921.

2. «He began by asking whether the American government would release former credits granted to the Venizelos government. He was respectfully referred to the Chargé d' Affaires [Hall]. Mr. Papafrago then stated that he was interested in making arrangements with private bankers *and that he was willing to confine the discussion to that*». Roll 25, Document 868.51/377, October 29, 1921. Italics mine.

3. *Ibid.* Italics mine.

4. «...judging from talks with several American businessmen...there are several who might be interested in investing capital in Greece if certain concessions were given...especially proposed developments of the water system of Athens». Report of Erhardt to the state department on November 14, 1921. Roll 25, Document 868.51/378, November 14, 1921.

5. For the remainder of the Constantine regime and even during the first months of the revolutionary government in late 1922, Salmon served as unofficial go-between in the Greek-American discussions. On the burning of Smyrna he vehemently protested to the state department, accusing the United States of responsibility for the tragedy in Asia Minor.

offices of the state department¹ and private banks lobbying on behalf of a Greek loan².

The Greek economic mission had very limited contacts with the New York financial houses; only two³ showed enough interest to take up the matter with the state department⁴ and these were discouraged outright from concluding an agreement with the Greek government⁵.

It is interesting to note that in the case of Eastman, Dillon and Company, a financial institution which exhibited a great deal of interest in signing an agreement with the Greek government, secretary of commerce Herbert Hoover wholeheartedly espoused the policy of the state department, which virtually amounted to an economic embargo of Greece. Citing the war in Asia Minor, Hoover proclaimed that no American money should be used to support military ventures; he denied the bankers' claim that the loan proceeds would not be used to purchase military supplies and argued that the loan «would release other funds»⁶.

1. Salmon visited the office of the state department's trade advisor where he complained about the lack of American recognition of Greece, which according to him was detrimental to American interests. Roll 25, Document 868.51/390, January 13, 1922. A few weeks later Salmon visited undersecretary Flecher, where he again complained of the nonrecognition policies of the United States. Flecher expressed some doubts about Salmon's official position: «Mr. Salmon claims to be President of the American Chamber of Commerce...» Roll 11, Document 868.51/229, January 28, 1922.

2. «A Mr. Salmon is in the city [Washington] attempting to make appointments for Mr. Papafrango to obtain a loan». Memorandum by the head of the Near Eastern division to the secretary of state. Roll 25, Document 868.51/392, December 12, 1921.

3. A law firm (Marvin and Pleasants, Counsellors at Law) representing some unspecified financial interests; and the well-known financial firm of Eastman, Dillon, and Company of New York City.

4. Both the interested firms inquired at the state department about any possible objections by the administration to extending a loan to Greece, since the then Greek cabinet was recognized by the United States government.

5. The negative reaction of the state department to the idea of loans to the unrecognized regime of king Constantine was in keeping with the policy of nonrecognition. «Inasmuch as the regime now functioning in Greece is not recognized by the government of the United States...Department could not look with favor upon such a loan». From the secretary of state to Marvin and Pleasants on January 30, 1922. Roll 25, Document 868.51/381, January 30, 1922.

6. Eastman, Dillon and Company in a written memorandum to Hoover on January 3, 1922, claimed that their proposed loan to the Greek government would not be used to enhance the military efforts of Greece, but rather would be spent

Papafrangos¹, frustrated in his dealings with private concerns by the constant and unyielding anti-Constantine attitude of the Harding administration, returned to Greece empty-handed. Dr. Johannes Genadius, the Greek diplomatic plenipotentiary, who had been in the United States since December 1921, remained in the country, occasionally pleading the cause of Greek recognition with various officials at the department of state and with private individuals. While the different emissaries of the Greek government were continuing their fruitless negotiations in New York and Washington, the former prime minister of Greece, Venizelos², was also in the United States, attending meetings of Greek organizations³ and enjoying the winter Florida sun⁴. Later, on April 11, he was to have a personal meeting with secretary Hughes which gave rise to wild speculations in the pro-Venizelos Greek press of New York City⁵.

The strenuous efforts of the Gounaris cabinet to obtain recognition by the United States and permission to conclude a loan were closely observed by Britain, France, and Italy, whose policies towards Greece since December 1920 had been extremely antagonistic, and in the case of France and Italy openly hostile⁶. France and Italy maintained a steady stream of military materials to the Turkish armies. French and Italian merchantmen carrying military supplies to the Turkish Natio-

in the United States. Two-thirds of it would be used to purchase grain, and one-third would be spent on coal, thus aiding the American farmer and the American economy at large. «Not one dollar for war purposes». Roll 24, Document 868.51/383, January 3, 1922.

1. As previously indicated Papafrangos was excluded by the state department agencies, owing to the policy of the Harding administration and the activities of Hall in Athens. However, he called at the department of treasury where he «endeavored to obtain an expression of opinion». *Ibid.*

2. A large part of his time was spent away from Washington; for instance he stayed for a lengthy period at Arkansas' famous spa, Hot Springs.

3. *New York Times*. October 25, 1921, p. 19.

4. *New York Times* in an editorial on March 14, 1921, was highly critical of Venizelos, and expressed doubts that he would be capable of using Constantine's mounting difficulties to regain power in Greece. «It is a little early to expect the return of Venizelos who has been in Palm Beach». *Ibid.* p. 4.

5. *Ethnikos Keryx*, the well known pro-Venizelos Greek daily published in New York City, was to claim on April 13 that Hughes promised Venizelos that «under no conditions ...the government of Constantine would be recognized by this government». Roll 10, Document 868.01/1, April 15, 1922.

6. «France and Italy are already as hostile to Greek policy as they can be without war. England refuses further loans». *New York Times*. March 14, 1922 p. 14.

nalists were often intercepted by Greek warships patrolling off the coasts of Asia Minor, and released to reach their destination, only after intimidating threats by the two powers¹.

France in particular, as early as October 21, 1921, had concluded a separate agreement with the Turkish nationalists, and had withdrawn its military forces from Cilicia:

...they now handed over to the Nationalists large stocks of arms... munitions and other war materials with the implication that more might well be available. This went far to redress the military balance between Turks-Greeks².

Naturally, then France and Britain were not indifferent to the Gounaris diplomatic campaign in Washington D. C. in the winter of 1921. The French ambassador to the United States warned the department of state that «France would deplore recognition of the present Greek government by the United States of America»³. In the spring of 1922 the French government again warned the United States that there would be severe consequences if the Greek regime were recognized⁴.

Britain, considerably more moderate than France in its language, but nevertheless equally adamant in its refusal to resume regular diplomatic relations with Constantine⁵, was worried that the Gounaris economic mission to the United States would bring about an improvement in the Constantine government's international position and perhaps

1. In the case of a French cargo-boat «Espoir» carrying supplies to Kemal and detained by Greek warships, the French government demanded its «immediate release, otherwise France must adopt retaliatory measures of a similar nature toward Greek shipping». «Espoir» was promptly released along with its cargo. *New York Times*, February 23, 1922. p. 3.

2. Lord Kinross, *Ataturk*, p. 236.

3. Roll 11, Document 868.01/235. December 14, 1921.

4. «French Ambassador called today and said he understood we were about to recognize King Constantine in Greece, then referred to the fact that he himself had kept the French government from recognizing General Obregon [Mexican revolutionary whom Hughes constantly refused to recognize due to the confiscation of American property in Mexico] and that he had done that in the face of great pressure from French interests in Mexico». Roll 11, Document 868.01/231, March 8, 1922.

5. In a conversation with the British ambassador on February 17, 1921, Flecher indicated that Britain was represented in Athens by a minister who dealt with the Greek government «as government» but, «who did not recognize King Constantine as King of Greece...» Roll 10, Document 868.01/81, February 17, 1922.

even the eventual recognition of the king. But it would have been impossible for Britain to demand an American economic embargo of private credits to Greece, since she herself was negotiating a loan with Greece of about fifteen million pounds¹. Accordingly in a note to the state department on February 14, 1921, the British government formally stated that there were

...no possible objections by the British government to such questions as loans being discussed by the American government with the present Greek government. Seeing that this does not in anyway involve recognition of King Constantine².

On the day this communiqué was released, the British ambassador himself called at the state department:

...with regard to the British government acquiescence in any financial arrangement we [the United States] might care to enter into with the present Greek government³.

To the dismay of the British diplomat, undersecretary Flecher departed from his previously held position on Greece to the extent that now the United States

...was anxious to clear up the financial situation, but in doing so in a formal binding manner, it would probably be necessary for us to have a regularly recognized government to deal with. [The United States] desired to recover...freedom of action with regard to recognition of the present Greek government if and when our interests require it⁴.

Flecher's doctrine which could perhaps have signified a change in American foreign policy drew no comment from the British government other than a restatement of the official British position: «the British government feels that the present would be an inconvenient

1. According to the *New York Times*, the Greek ministry of finance had announced on January 1, 1922, that the British government had authorized the conclusion of a loan to Greece of fifteen million pounds, after mutual renunciation of the 1918 Paris Financial Agreement. *New York Times* January 1, 1922, p. 3.

2. Roll 10, Document 868.01C76/82, February 16, 1922.

3. Roll 10, Document 868.01C76/81, February 17, 1922.

4. *Ibid.*

moment for the United States government to recognize King Constantine).¹

Flecher's «personal doctrine» partially reflected president Harding's opinion that a new evaluation of Greek-American relations was required in order to accommodate the possibility that Greece would become a political friend:

[President Harding] had asked [Flecher] about our relations with Greece the other day, [in reference to January 28, 1922] and indicated that he would like to appoint a minister to that country [Greece]².

The undersecretary had submitted a memorandum to Hughes on January 28, 1922, preceding by about two weeks the British proposal recommending that America recognize the Greek government:

I think the time has come, when we should re-examine our attitudes with reference to recognition of Greek government. My understanding is that recognition is withheld not only on account of the necessity of clearing up our treasury transactions...but also because of the desire of England and France that we should not recognize it. I believe that we should as a first step give notice to both France and England that in view of recent developments we feel free to act independently with respect to the recognition of the Greek government³.

But the Flecher proposals were never considered.

The Gounaris administration in its campaign to gain American recognition, had meanwhile appointed one of its most distinguished diplomats, Dr. Johannes Gennadius as plenipotentiary. After a delay of more than six months, Hughes consented to see Gennadius on April 22, in a strictly unofficial audience at his home. It was an audience similar to that accorded by the secretary on April 11 to the former prime minister of Greece, Venizelos⁴.

1. Roll 10, Document 868.01C76/83, February 25, 1922.

2. Roll 11, Document 868.01/230, January 28, 1922. See footnote on page 25.

3. *Ibid.*

4. The audience previously mentioned as creating a sensation among the pro-Venizelos Greek press in the United States. Sensitive to possible allegations from the Greek government as a result of these press stories, secretary Hughes dispatched the following message to the American legation in Athens: «Mr. Venizelos called upon me on April 11 and I had a short talk with him at my house receiving him as a distinguished foreigner visiting this country. No political questions affecting Greece were mentioned during our conversation. A Greek language news-

At that meeting¹ Dr. Gennadius unequivocally expressed his amazement at United States policy towards Greece:

*...[I am] at a loss to understand why the United States had not recognized Constantine who had been called back by the Greek people themselves... [United States] a country which professed belief in self-determination, why therefore, had [United States] held off recognition?*²

Elaborating on what he and the Greek government considered the main obstacle to recognition, namely pressure from France, and Britain, Dr. Gennadius said he assumed that the United States had made its policy dependent on that of the British and French but, he concluded, there was «...no reason why the United States should delay its action on account of its allies»³.

To these arguments the secretary had little or nothing to say, remarking only in general terms that the issue was receiving his «careful consideration»⁴.

In the meeting with Dr. Gennadius, Hughes maintained the non-committal attitude which he had a full opportunity to display in the meeting with Brainerd Salmon, who in his unrelenting efforts to assist the Greek government to obtain recognition, had sought an audience with the secretary⁵.

paper, April 13, [Ethnikos Keryx] misrepresented the facts and quoted me *as having indicated to Mr. Venizelos that the government of Constantine would under no conditions be recognized by this government*. In case this matter is brought to your attention by the Greek government there is no objection to your stating the true facts...» Roll 10, Document 868.01/1, April 15, 1922. Italics mine.

1. The only one that Dr. Gennadius had during his prolonged visit to the United States; he left in the fall of 1922.

2. Roll 11, Document 868.01/143, April 25, 1922.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Secretary Hughes had some kind words at the beginning of the the audience concerning Dr. Gennadius; he mentioned, for example, the «generous gift of his library to the American School at Athens». *Ibid.*

5. Salmon had called on Hughes on March 11, and had received the same assurances as Dr. Gennadius had, namely that the matter was receiving the most «earnest consideration». Roll 11, Document 868.01/140, March 11, 1922. The same was always said to financial firms inquiring about the condition of Greek-American relations.

The April meeting concluded¹ two years of official and unofficial negotiations between the United States and Greece².

The following summer (1922) ushered in the last days of Constantine's rule in Greece. The inevitable defeat in Anatolia in August accompanied by the horrors of the forced exodus of nearly two million displaced civilians from their ancestral homes in the East to the shores of Greece, swept Constantine and the «old parties» away. A military revolutionary trimvirate of anti-Constantine officers headed by colonel Nikolaos Plastiras assumed power in Greece and forced Constantine into exile once again. All the major European countries recognized Greece immediately after the military coup. The United States recognized Greece in January 1924, four years after Constantine had landed in Athens, and two years after his second exile in the west³. Recognition was granted only one week after Venizelos returned to Greece as the new prime minister of the country, on the «invitation» of the «military league», which had governed Greece since September 14, 1922.

3. There was a further isolated incident. In the last part of August, Herbert Adam Gibbons published a series of three articles in the *Christian Science Monitor* on the war in the Middle East and the Greek-American diplomatic impasse. But more importantly, Gibbons sought to act as an unofficial intermediary in the Constantine dispute. According to a sworn statement that he made in the state department, he had had an interview in London with the British prime minister Lloyd George, who had asked him to convey the following message to the secretary of state: «The British government would be willing to take the step of recognizing King Constantine if the American government would be willing to take the step». When the American embassy in London made an inquiry into the matter, the prime minister denied making such a statement or empowering Gibbons to convey any message to secretary Hughes. Roll 11, Documents 868.01/124, 125, and 126 on August 17, 28, and 19, 1922.

4. Mr. W. Philips, the undersecretary who replaced Flecher had informed Dr. Gennadius in June that while he could not give him any assurances as to the future action of the department, in his opinion it would have been useful if he could have arranged to remain in the United States a little longer. Dr. Gennadius agreed to stay until the Greek government recalled him. Memorandum to the secretary of state by Allen W. Dulles. Roll 11, Document 868.01/144, June, 22, 1922.

1. Constantine died in Palermo, Sicily, on December 29, 1922, after ten years of bitter struggle with Venizelos which had undermined the very existence of his country and its position in the Middle East.