

PSF

Greece; Lincoln MacVeagh

January 15, 1944.

Dear Lincoln:-

This is the first chance I have had to write to you, as I have been laid up with the "flu". I wish I could have seen you again before leaving Cairo.

I fully understand about the Greek matter and I merely want to let you know what the King had a long talk with me and felt (strictly between ourselves) that he was being "railroaded" or "blackmailed" by the British. He felt that nobody can tell just when the Allies will get back into Greece or when the last Germans will depart and that, therefore, it was premature for anybody to make a final decision as to whether he should return or not. I like George very much -- in fact, I call him by his first name -- but, of course, he is not a very strong or convincing person, as he has not had the opportunity of conducting a Presidential campaign.

Making all due allowances, however, I told him that if I were in his place I would, at the proper moment (not yet), tell the people of Greece frankly that as a constitutional monarch he had gone a bit too far in the Matarxas case even though his intentions were of the best, i.e., the peace of Greece; that, however, he had learned his lesson and that if he continued as King he would do so in a strictly constitutional manner -- and not get caught again at playing with a dictator.

I will bet you a good dinner that if I were in his place -- and wanted to do so -- I would find ways of returning as King of Greece. Actually, however, I can assure you that I have no such ambition! But if I did want to go back I would not do it by going to Bermuda and telling the United States of America that if they really wanted me as President they could jolly well elect me.

When I saw him he was, as you say, much disturbed. He had been getting too much advice and did not seem to be able to make up his own mind.

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED

I wish you would write me and give me your own slant as to what is the best form of government Greece could have. My own mind runs to the idea that a tiny spot in the Mediterranean, like Greece, has its reputation enhanced if it has a constitutional monarch, but with certain provisos:

(a) He should take absolutely no part in government except to open county fairs and give entertainment to visiting firemen.

(b) That the country (and Parliament) should be allowed to have only three parties -- a primary confined to perhaps five parties or six parties, and a general election confined to the three top parties in the primary. Most Latin or Eastern countries would benefit by this.

(c) A Prime Minister elected for a specific term -- two, three or four years -- thus making for continuity and an approach to the republican form of government.

What a mess your two bailiwicks are in! I am inclined to think that Yugoslavia, in the long run, will be more of a mess than Greece. I think I forgot to tell you that when I saw Peter I asked him why he did not marry the girl, take a month's honeymoon, ship her back to England, and go to the front in person -- visiting both Tito and the other fellow (his Minister of War) whose name I cannot spell.

If you see the Crown Prince of Egypt you might tell him how very much interested I was in meeting him. He is an interesting old globe-trotter -- a thorough reactionary I think -- but well versed in the ways of all civilizations.

With my warm regards and all good wishes for the New Year,

As ever yours,

Honorable Lincoln MacVeagh,
American Embassy near the
Governments of Greece and Yugoslavia,
Cairo,
Egypt.



**LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

American Embassy near the
Governments of Greece and
Yugoslavia.

Cairo, December 13, 1943

Dear Franklin:

You did get away from Cairo, just as I thought you would, without seeing me again, but you saw the King of Greece, as I hoped, and that was more important.

In this connection, you may remember that you sent me a message through Ambassador Winant, to the effect that you desired me not to associate myself with any effort to force the King to a course of action against his will, and also that you felt I had perhaps already gone too far in doing just this.

I should like to reassure you, if possible, regarding the second half of this message, as I should hate to have you think me so ignorant of my business after all these years as to associate myself with any foreign policy but our own, without instructions.

Actually, my whole initiative in the matter of the King's decision was limited to my conversation with you and the memorandum I left with you. Having been told by the British Ambassador that a plan he had worked out would be brought up to Mr. Churchill and to you, I secured a copy of it, and gave it to you with my most considered reactions, as I presumed you would wish me to do. But I went no further. When the King asked me to come and see him, and led the conversation on

to

to the question of what should be his policy, I explicitly told him that I could not advise him officially, as I was not instructed. I also reminded him of our own policy, as it had existed all during my time in Greece, of not taking part in the internal affairs of the country. He expressed his thorough understanding and agreement on these points. If you understood from him later, at the meeting I asked you to accord him, that in this conversation I associated myself in any way with a British attempt to force his hand, I fear I must say that he misled you - probably unintentionally, since his mind was much disturbed. He wanted my opinion, and I could hardly refuse to give it when he put our conversation on a friendly and unofficial basis. Furthermore, as you know, that opinion was to the effect that the British plan was a good one and in the King's own interests. But in view of his inability to appreciate this, harrassed as he has been by advice from all sides, I also told him just as clearly as you can have done that he should make up his own mind, and if he couldn't accept his friends' proposal, then he should tell them so squarely, and perhaps evolve with them some other plan that would suit.

A good diplomat shouldn't have to make explanations, so I close off these of mine in some embarrassment, only hoping that you will take them as they stand for the truth they are. Actually, the King, after receiving your advice, has now done what I told him personally he should do in any event. He has made up his mind, and having told the British squarely that

he

could not accept their proposal, has settled on a plan which apparently pleases both himself and them, as well as his own government. This plan was worked out by his Prime Minister, Mr. Tsouderos, and involves a declaration by the King to the effect that when the time comes for him to make his decision whether or not to return to Greece, he will do so "in agreement with his government." I have not seen the King since Mr. Winant delivered your caveat - and spanking - nor have I made any inquiries of my British friends as to what occurred between the King and Mr. Churchill, or anything else connected with the matter. But the mountain has come to Mahomet since Mahomet would not go to the mountain, and I have not been able to avoid being informed. Between you and me, I am told that the King is very happy over having been able, with your support, to make up his mind, and stick to it; that his republican-minded government is as happy as he is, because in his happiness he has agreed to agree with it; and the British Ambassador looks like the cat which has swallowed the canary. Some observers are already saying that the King has been outwitted, and that he should never have signed his new declaration, which ties his future decision to that of his government. It is pointed out that the Prime Minister published the pertinent paragraphs within a few hours of signature, though the document is antedated to early last month to avoid ostensible connection with recent controversy. It is alleged that this haste was due to anxiety lest the King retract and escape a trap. But however that may be, and such early interpretations are

always

always dubious, this time the affair would appear to be of wholly Greek inception, and this, and the fact that I never heard of it till it was all over, leads me at least to hope that no one will tell you that I was involved in it!

Affectionately yours as always,

Lincoln MacVeagh

The President,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XX
American Embassy near the
Governments of Greece and
Yugoslavia.

Cairo, Egypt,
February 17, 1944

Dear Franklin:-

It was awfully good of you to write me as you did - your letter of January 15, which I have before me now. The King of Greece, whom I have seen several times recently, seems to be feeling better for the moment. At least, the problem of his return is not so acute at present, while the principal efforts of our British friends, and of the Greek Government, with whose affairs and prospects they are everlastingly busy, are being directed to securing some sort of rapprochement between the guerrilla forces in Greece, the political leaders there, and the government itself here in Cairo.

These efforts so far seem to have had some success. The guerrillas have declared a truce to their internecine warfare, and their leaders, together with the local politicians and the Government's spokesmen in Athens, seem to be headed toward some sort of conference, the aim being a national unity front. All is not perfectly clear ahead, of course. The most powerful guerrilla group (ELAS) seems dominated by an inner ring (EAM) mainly composed of Macedonian communists and others not nationally minded from the Greek point of view, and is probably aiming
at swallowing

The President,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

at swallowing up the rival groups and forming a kind of Tito movement to face the Allies with a fait accompli when liberation occurs. The idea seems to be that, with headquarters somewhere in the mountains, and control of the main towns, it could be in a position not only to dominate the distribution of relief brought in from the outside, but even perhaps also to accept or reject, as it might please, the returning Government. The present efforts of the British, therefore, are being directed to preventing this possibility, and to jockeying the guerrillas into a "union now," - and in Athens, not in the mountains, - with the Government's representatives. Should these efforts be successful, there is the further prospect that representatives of the union so formed may be brought out from Greece to Cairo and taken into the Government here, thus facilitating the latter's eventual re-entrance to the home land as a government truly of and by, as well as for the people.

You may feel that this is a somewhat complicated plan; but then the situation itself is complicated. Doubtless it will not go through in all its details, and I mention it only to show how things are shaping up at present. There has also been a military plan devised for Greece, - likewise complicated, - and this was recently presented to the Allied Chiefs of Staff as "the Noah's Ark Plan" - why the name, I do not know. Briefly, the British here ("Force 133" plus the Ambassador) have conceived that the Greeks should not be urged, in their present exhausted and febrile state, to continue sabotage operations while Greece is no longer a strategic area. Rather they should now compose their internal differences, and live quietly without incurring any more reprisals for damage

for damage which the Germans have plenty of time to repair. At the same time, however, small forces of them - about 15,000, all picked men trained by Force 133 and our OSS, - should be prepared to take action against communications, et cetera, once the Germans begin to withdraw. At that time it is conceived that a strategic situation would again have arisen, and the Greeks should be ready to meet it. This might seem reasonable, and those who know Greece best feel it in many ways desirable, but the Allied Chiefs of Staff have turned down the idea of any but the shortest respite, and this to be only for the purposes of the "reorganization" of the guerrilla bands. They say the military situation requires unceasing action against the enemy, to hold him and to harry him, and thus the Greeks are not to be allowed to rest, let the consequences to the depressed and exhausted country be what they may.

This military situation, superimposed on the terrible misery existing in the whole occupied region, is what is likely to make all our relief plans very difficult in the early stages. Plans have been made to bring relief in "when the Germans go out." But the Germans are clearly not going out all at once, nor could they do so if they wished. Consequently "liberated areas" will be found existing side by side with "occupied areas" for some time at least, and relief will have to go in armed, to begin with, not only in view of the anarchy certain to prevail where the Germans have evacuated, but also to parry possible attack from any enemy still in the vicinity. The British have a so-called "Liaison Force" established here, under a Major General Hughes, to take charge of the opening phase of relief operations, and the economic section of our Theatre Command, under a young colonel named Billam (note the difference

(note the difference in rank and experience,) has for some time been maturing plans for a similar unit, should we be called upon either to perform in the same manner or to conduct a "joint operation." The British blue-prints I have seen are splendidly developed and most imposing, and the British already have a force consisting of some 150 officers assigned to the task of advising and guiding the local authorities from the moment of arrival in Greece. But troops are lacking, and obviously if there are no authorities to be found, or if these "authorities" are only local bandits who have terrorized the population, while the enemy still has forces here and there eager to seize the supplies we bring in, troops in some numbers will be necessary. General Hughes, even as late as yesterday, has been profoundly pessimistic as to his chances of receiving an adequate force, and on our side, not only do the commissioned cadres so far merely exist on paper, but they include only "20 or 25 Civil Affairs officers to participate on a combined basis with the British to supervise and control distribution of civilian supplies", while Secretary Stimson has written to Secretary Hull, under date of December 21, 1943, "It is the present policy of the U. S. joint Chiefs of Staff not to divert troops from military operation for the purpose of supporting the administration of civil relief in the Balkans".

Two thoughts would appear to recommend themselves in this matter. The first is that though it may indeed be impossible on other grounds to divert American troops to the support of Balkan relief, the idea that such relief can in its early stages, be regarded as a wholly civilian affair is untenable. As long as there are any German troops in the area at all, there will be a "front"

"front" in the Balkans in the true military sense; and as long as such a front exists, the liberated areas involved in it will be no man's land but his who has the force to police and guard it. Ergo, military operations in the Balkans should be considered more seriously than seems to be the case at present, if relief, in which so many of our people are so deeply interested, is to get started. Secondly, if enough American troops cannot be spared to share at least equally with the British in this matter, our military authorities should satisfy themselves thoroughly that the British are going to devote enough strength to it to ensure success before we associate ourselves with it in any way. Our old habit of attaching observers to foreign enterprises may be useful under certain conditions, but we should be careful to avoid its leading us into the appearance of responsibility in vital matters over which we have no effective control. You know, doubtless far better than I, the British habit and skill in putting "English" on the ball. The "English" in Balkan affairs right now is this, that through our association with British schemes we can be handed an equal portion of the blame if these go wrong. Some Americans would even say that a way will be found to hand us a major portion, but I don't believe in being picayune. Sufficient unto many days ahead is the evil of this matter. Let me give you an instance of what I mean, though I feel it may be unnecessary. By agreement between the British SOE and our OSS, the British secret services have the lead in Yugoslavia and Greece, while ours have it in Bulgaria and Hungary. In the latter countries, the British have not wholly played the game with us, but in Yugoslavia and Greece, we have

faithfully

faithfully observed the pact. Yet while our OSS remains strictly under military and not State Department control, and is operating for purely military ends, the Foreign Office has taken over the guidance of the British agents and has immersed them deeply in political maneuvers. This throws our agents, "by association", into a similar position, and despite the fact of our carefully disinterested attitude toward internal political matters in these countries, involves our government, in the eyes of every Greek and Yugoslav, in responsibility for all the British schemes. If you saw as many Greeks and Yugoslavs as I do, you would realize how far this has gone already. It is America and Britain together who are universally regarded as being responsible for what are actually purely British actions, and unless we do something to correct this misinterpretation, we may expect it to continue, since it barks right up the British tree. Actually, as far as concerns the military phase of Balkan relief, the British here are already talking of "joint operations" though all we have suggested so far is the minimal collaboration above noted.

It wouldn't be so bad, of course, if the British were not playing a game out here which is very different from what we perhaps ingenuously conceive to be the agreed-on program for the post-war world. British policy as it is being worked out in the Near East - I say nothing of how it may be expressed in high phraseology for world consumption - is essentially today what it has always been, just as I believe the Russian policy as regards Pan-Slavism and the Mediterranean remains unchanged. It is directed primarily at the preservation of the Empire connections and the sea route to India. People complain of its many apparent contradictions,

contradictions, but all such are easily resolved when the essential is understood; they come simply from the application of the trial and error method to the end in view. In Greece, the British have tried backing the EAM; they have tried backing the EDES; and now they are trying to back the two together. They have tried persuading the King to go in; they have tried persuading the King to keep out. In Yugoslavia they have tried Michailovitch, and are now trying Tito. In answer to the Ambassador here, who protested that putting Tito and King Peter in harness together would be impossible, the Foreign Office replied, "It is something we think we ought to try." And so forth. This is short-term opportunism, if you like. Nevertheless it all shapes up to finding where Britain can secure the firmest vantage ground for the preservation of a stake in the Balkans - obviating total control of Southeastern Europe by any other great power. It is very far from a policy aimed at the reconstruction of the occupied countries as free and independent states, friendly to all others but under the influence of none! But such as it is, it explains many things, including attempts to make American assistance, Lend-Lease or otherwise, appear as British, and, what is more germane to my subject, this itch to exploit for British uses what must seem the God-given collaboration of a people like ourselves, presumed to be inexperienced in the realistic business of international affairs.

Perhaps the cure in this whole matter would be to prove ourselves more realistic than we have hitherto been considered. I may be over-bold to say so, but I am personally very strongly in favor of America's taking the lead in the coming Balkan operation in all its phases,

in all its phases, including the military, whatever may be the short-term reasoning against it. This does not mean that we should contribute all the troops, or even necessarily the major portion. We might actually have but very few. But it does mean that the command should be American. I say this with all the earnestness in my power, not merely because we shall be saddled with the responsibility anyhow, if we let our allies take the lead, but because both sentimentally and practically our leadership is required. The countries we are going into are not merely devastated as by flood or earthquake, they are demoralized, in the full and awful sense of that word, by years of barbarian occupation. Furthermore, they have been profoundly disillusioned by the repeated ineptitudes, political and military, of British policy and action in this region. As my Military Attache' has put it, two things stand out in Balkan psychology today, distrust of England and fear of Russia. Under such circumstances, the extent to which America is being looked to cannot be overestimated, nor can the salutary effect of our guidance, if we will give it. There is hardly a Greek or Yugoslav today who does not think of America first, despite our involvement in current British errors, whenever he dreams of his country's rehabilitation. Superficial observers might perhaps be tempted to put this aside as sentimentalism, but there is good reason behind it. Even in its earliest phases, and perhaps chiefly then, our coming Balkan operations are going to prove critical in what will remain after this war, whether we like it or not, a critical area for the peace of the world. Here was a focal point for the imperialisms of Russia, Germany, and England

and England in the past, and to a certain extent of Italy and France as well. Now only two of these nations remain as great powers in Europe, but have they changed their spots? Realism requires that we consider not only the "bitterness, suspicion and distrust" which General Donovan in a recent communication to the Allied Chiefs of Staff has described as characterizing Greek feeling towards Great Britain today, but also the consequences of this feeling along with other factors, and chiefly the likelihood that if Great Britain remains in the forefront here, playing her old game of power politics with inadequate means, while we remain aloof, the whole area will eventually fall under the dominating influence of the only other great power in the vicinity, namely Russia. To keep Russia and Britain from eventually conflicting in this region, the Balkan States may be reconstituted as genuinely free and friendly to both sides. But this is not likely to be done by either interested power, and only we are sufficiently trusted by all concerned (still sufficiently trusted, I believe) to undertake it. Present military strategy may well be against our diverting troops to the Balkans, but surely the grand strategy of world peace hereafter counsels that what is done to reconstruct this region be done under our direction. Are we to fight a war and sacrifice for victory the aims we seek to win? Where then will be the victory? To save precisely that for which we all have made such sacrifices, the one disinterested power among the three left standing should take the initiative where the interests of the other two clash. The Balkan peoples' sentimental instincts run true to expediency in this matter, where expediency and sentiment coincide on the highest plane. They want
to be saved

to be saved by America, knowing well that the preponderance of power in Europe will certainly drag them to Russia's side if we sell them down the river to the British. I would say then, give us an American commanding general, whatever be the decision about the number of American troops and the constitution of an allied staff. Let it be known that America is running the job, and our operations will benefit from a popular allegiance which no other tactics can secure, and without which only a relative success, which in so important a matter must be tantamount to failure, can possibly be foreseen.

I think this should be enough for one letter, considering that it is written to the world's busiest man! I have not forgotten your request that I write you my ideas about what is the best form of government Greece could have, and will do so, but at another time. For the present, the question seems to pose itself as to whether Greece, and Yugoslavia too, for that matter, is likely to be able to have any government at all, after this war, which will correspond to the essentially non-communist predilections of its people. You are probably right in thinking that in the long run Yugoslavia will prove more of a mess than Greece. Its blood-feuds and mixture of races and religions seem to make this almost certain. As to what we can do in the matter, I don't see how we can escape our present policy of giving military support to the faction which is fighting against the Germans, but this should not blind us to the truth that in so doing we are, indeed, arming a faction, and that evil will come of it later as sure as shooting - Yugoslav shooting. Furthermore, the current British tendency to mix political with military support to Tito,

support to Tito, of which you as well as the Department are doubtless aware, seems calculated to increase the dangers of future trouble. I doubt whether anybody yet has an adequate idea of how the Serbian people, still the vast majority of the Yugoslavs, would react if the King were to sell Michailovitch out and adopt the Partisan Government as his own. However, I shall say no more about this here, as the Department advises me that its attitude toward "the resistance movements in Yugoslavia" is actually under review. Personally, I have felt that the Department has been most wise so far in keeping our involvement strictly on the military level.

Affectionately yours,

Lucian MacVegh

PSF: MacVeagh folder 1-44
Breece
file

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WAR DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON

6 March 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Subject: United States and British Relations
with the Balkans.

In reference to the letter dated February 17, 1944 from Mr. MacVeagh, the information contained therein adds nothing to that contained in State Department message Number 51 from Mr. MacVeagh dated February 18, 1944. In reply to this message Mr. McCloy advised the Assistant Secretary of State that in the opinion of the War Department, the United States Army participation in Balkan relief should be confined to the participation of some twenty five American officers who would aid in the distribution of civil relief. He added that the State Department had agreed that the actual operation of relief and rehabilitation within the country should be undertaken by UNRRA.

The problem of handling civil affairs in the Balkans was considered by the Combined Chiefs of Staff in a meeting on March 3, 1944 at which time a message was cleared for dispatch to General Wilson informing him substantially as above. This decision is consistent with your approval of a State Department recommendation that it was desirable that some combined military aspect be given to the matter of the distribution of civil supplies in the Balkans during the initial period, and with your expressed desire as conveyed to us by the Acting Secretary of State that our participation, so far as military personnel was concerned, should be kept on a very small scale pending the taking over by UNRRA. (See your memorandum dated January 21 on the Balkan problem and your memorandum dated February 21 to the Acting Secretary of State.)

There remains one point to be considered. That is placing an American commander in charge of an operation conducted almost entirely by British forces. This would appear to be a very undesirable, as well as dangerous, move since his real control of the operations would be small and at the same time he could readily be made the scapegoat for any failure in the Balkans.

It seems proper that we do nothing which might involve the commitment of United States forces in the Balkans, a non-decisive theater.

DECLASSIFIED
Letter, 5-3-72

Henry H. Stimson
Secretary of War.

~~SECRET~~
~~SECRET~~

MacVeagh folder
1-44

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

March 1, 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF WAR
BRIGADIER GENERAL
WILLIAM J. DONOVAN

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY. WILL
YOU READ AND RETURN FOR MY FILES?

F. D. R.

Letter to the President from
Ambassador Lincoln MacVeagh, dated
February 17, 1944.

DECLASSIFIED

By Deputy Archivist of the U.S.

By R.T.

Date OCT 30 1972

AIR MAIL

*File
Lincoln McFingh*

Translation of Letter addressed by
Mr. E. J. Tsouderos, Prime Minister of
Greece, to His Majesty the King of the
Hellenes.

Cairo, March 8, 1944

I have the honor to send Your Majesty herewith five documents which Colonel E. Phradellos has brought from Athens on behalf of Archbishop Damaskinos and the political parties.

With Your Majesty's permission I will explain below my views regarding the contents of these documents with the frankness which is always characteristic of me because of my devotion to Your Majesty and to the National interests.

Through these documents, the contents of which Colonel Phradellos has elucidated in conversation, the issue is again raised of Your Majesty's not returning to Greece until the People has had an opportunity to express its wish in the matter. This time, however, there is a difference; they interpret the letter of the eighth of November as a definite decision that you will not return until the People call you, and, therefore, do not ask Your Majesty to make any new statement (see the statement of the political leaders of January 19, 1944, and the letters of Sophoulis, Gonatas, etc.). They do demand, however, the passage of a secret Constitutional Act appointing a Regent to control the political life of the country as soon as the enemy leaves Athens, at which time only would the Act be made public in the Government Gazette. On this there is complete agreement among all the parties without any exception, the political and resistance organizations and the Archbishop. It is proposed that the latter be named Regent.

On the solution of this question depends the settlement of all the other proposals of the parties and organizations, including the problem of final reorganization of the guerrilla army. The solution of the question of the Regency depends on Your Majesty's decision. I consider it my duty at this point to report that Your Majesty's government, if it be consulted on the question, will recommend to Your Majesty that you accept the proposal to appoint a Regent. Furthermore, the message of last December to the Archbishop, which Your Majesty approved, and which concerned the creation of a committee in Athens, under the chairmanship of the Archbishop, to represent the government, anticipated that Damaskinos would perform the functions of a Regent during the initial period of liberation and until our arrival in Athens. A copy of this message is herewith enclosed to facilitate the study of the whole question.

It is apparent from the enclosed documents that the parties feel that the Government in Cairo is National and adequate, and that there is no need of broadening it by the

addition

RECORDED

E. O. 11652, Sec. 5(B) and 5(D) or (E)

State Dept. letter, 3-31-76

By SLR

Date

JUN 17 1976

addition of other ministers. They do not, however, rule out the participation in our Government of one or two ministers as representatives of the parties of the Left. On the other hand, the parties of the Left ask that the Government be broadened and that it be divided into two sections, one of which, composed of four ministers, should have its seat in Greece. This last proposal is flatly rejected by the other parties, which have instructed the ministers who represent them in the present Government to resign if this proposal should be accepted. In any case, what solution is found for the question of the Government will depend on Your Majesty's decision with regard to the appointment of a Regent.

If you agree to the appointment, events will develop normally (insofar as one can correctly use this word under present conditions). Otherwise difficulties will develop, which in all probability will begin in Cairo, and which Your Majesty can imagine.

I am not sure in such a case what position the parties in Greece would take. Perhaps from patriotism they would not themselves take the lead in starting troubles, but they would necessarily follow as observers.

The parties or, more strictly, the leaders of the old parties are themselves reliable, but they have not in fact the power to stem a mistaken tide in public opinion with which they might not agree. I believe that today public opinion is guided by the Leftist elements of every kind and by the armed guerrillas in the mountains. And even if a majority of the people is not with them, let us not forget (1) that we are outside the country and not in a position to guide public opinion and (2) that the popular movements in all countries are directed by the organized and active elements, which do not necessarily represent a majority of the people. The youth of our country of both sexes almost in its entirety, and especially in the cities, has aligned itself with the Leftists; while the enemy occupation has accustomed these young men and women to express their ideas fearlessly and to support them in every possible way. I am forced to conclude, therefore, that inasmuch as this is the situation among the people in Greece, we must not expect events to develop favorably for us if on so vital an issue we place ourselves in opposition to it.

I place these considerations before Your Majesty, that you may have them in mind while you study the serious problem raised by the proposals from Athens.

On the other hand, I am of the opinion that if the appointment of a Regent is accepted, the situation will finally develop in favor of Your Majesty. Indeed, I would venture to say that this might occur even before the Act regarding the Regency went into effect. In this way, today, you avoid the rocks - and at a moment when, without any doubt, a storm is raging in the country. In

any

any case, post-war events and the general conditions which will then be created will lead the people of Greece to sound decisions, for then Public Opinion will not manifest itself under the influence of pressure and in spite of itself.

I am informed that Archbishop Damaskinos, before forming his opinion, consulted many persons: Gonatas, Sophoulis, Mylonas, Papandreou, Petros Rallis, Maximos, Diomede, Sophianopoulos, the Communist Party, Svolos, for the Socialists, and certain military men. Among the latter was General Othonaios who recently refused the command of the guerrillas when it was offered to him unanimously by the parties, the guerrillas, and the organizations. In addition to the above, Damaskinos also consulted others "competent", as he writes, "to judge the internal situation of the country in relation to the political, social and idealogical movements current today." One realizes that the Archbishop's answer is based on a painstaking investigation of the present tendencies of public opinion.

I submit these considerations to the judgment of Your Majesty, upon whom the decision now depends. However, I would suggest that if Your Majesty agrees, you call together our Ambassador in London, Mr. Agnides, Mr. Varvaressos, Mr. Mantzavinos, Mr. P. Metaxas and any other person whom you consider suitable, and that you submit to them, as a council, the documents and my letter. Their opinions may perhaps help us in reaching wise decisions, since the situation is exceptionally critical, and the interests of the Nation and of the Throne demand that the decisions be taken with the political sagacity and perspicacity characteristic of Your Majesty.

(Signed) E. J. Tsouderos.

PSF; MacVeagh folder 1-44

file
personal

April 1, 1944.

Dear Lincoln:-

Yours of March seventeenth is a joy and I think you are wholly right. I am rather sentimental about Greece. My great grandfather and great uncle, Messrs. Howland and Aspinwall, got a frigate for Greek independence, and I myself, in early 1914, got two battleships to save Greece from Turkey. Surely there must be a third occasion.

I think you might go up there at the first opportunity, raise an army of brigands, decapitate the Germans, declare yourself Autarch -- which translated into modern English means a self-winding dictator -- run the show for a couple of years, get thoroughly bored, and finally abdicate in favor of George II. If I were as young as you are I would do just that!

If you don't want to be so strenuous I will put you in touch with some excellent moving picture people and for the next year or two you can get out some real movie thrillers in Greece and Yugoslavia. The public is ready for something new but on the line of Graustark.

I am glad that you and Mohamed Ali have become chummy. Of all the Princes, Potentates and Powers whom I met in Cairo, Teheran, etc., he appealed to me most. A milder mannered man never scuttled a ship!

As ever yours,

Hon. Lincoln MacVeagh,
American Ambassador,
Cairo.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
American Embassy near the
Governments of Greece and
Yugoslavia.

Cairo, March 17, 1944.

Dear Franklin:-

I was sorry to bother you again about the King of Greece - and this time by telegram. But the Prime Minister himself requested it, coming to my office with hat in hand. Now I have been able to get hold of a copy of his letter to King George, to which my telegram referred, and enclose it herewith feeling that even though you may not care to read it, you may like to have it in your files as an example of how Prime Ministers write to Kings, - Balkan style.

On the other hand, if you have time you may find it interesting to glance at. This new flare-up of the king problem in Greek affairs was, of course, foreshadowed in my letters to you of last winter. In the hands of the Prime Minister it has become a purely internal problem, and what is at issue now is the King's taking advice, not from the British but from his own Government, based on a wide survey of opinion recently made within the country. The counsel now given to him to set up a Regency to administer affairs in Greece from the moment of liberation until a
plebiscite

The President,

The White House.

plebiscite can determine the question of the regime, comes from all the political parties as well as from military and other leaders canvassed by the Archbishop of Athens. It happens to run contrary to the King's feeling that the "plebiscite" of 1935 gave him a mandate from his people, and so his first reaction, in answer to a telegram from the Prime Minister, has been to indicate that he will refuse. But he is postponing his final decision against receipt of the Archbishop's and other documents, and the outcome of conversations with "friends."

Should the King accept the solution offered him, the Prime Minister professes to think that eventually, and perhaps even very soon, feelings will change in Greece, as so often happens, and the King will be recalled at the popular desire. But for the present he underlines strongly the unwisdom of trying to oppose "the existing situation" and to stem a "mistaken tide" of opinion dominated by "leftists elements and the guerrillas in the mountains".

Should on the other hand the King refuse, the Prime Minister, who with his government has given full support to the proposed solution, has told me that he would not be able to keep his Government from resigning and that he himself, in consequence, would have to go too. This, he added, would leave the King with no possibility of forming another Government which would

have

have any effective support either within or without the country, while there would be trouble in the Armed Forces, and the "Political Committee" which is now aspiring to emulate Tito in Greece, and which is certainly controlled by Communist elements, would be the gainer.

The Prime Minister is therefore hoping that the King will play ball, and that thus the political parties and the Cairo Government can achieve the desired solidarity against the subversive elements now dangerously active in the country. The State Department is fully advised of the situation, which we are closely watching. So far as Greece is concerned, we are mostly busy here, of course, with the relief picture, while we observe and report on the politics of the hour. I don't wish to burden you with details, but this whole little drama, insofar as it may (if badly played) cost a king his throne and a whole people some agony, has something moving about it, which I am sure you will appreciate.

Now, as to your suggestions regarding the proper constitution for Greece. I entirely agree that a King "above the mêlée" is desirable if a King is to be had at all, and also that the three-party limitation you outline for the parliament would be most helpful in avoiding some of the worst consequences of the political instability of the Greeks. Indeed, this
latter

latter suggestion might even be adopted, and work. But as to the "constitutional monarch," while such a position might be written into the constitution even more clearly than it is today, it could never be filled satisfactorily in Greece except by the rarest of individuals. The trouble is that no Greek will ever believe that a "head man" can't do things if he wants to, whatever may be the rules, and no such "head man" can survive in Greece unless he is accessible. Therefore a successful Greek king, no matter how "constitutional" he may be on paper, must have a very special character if he is to get along successfully with his subjects. He must, in fact, know how to be affable and reserved at the same time, and must combine Nordic strength with Mediterranean tact and indirection. The present King's grandfather was such a man, and reigned successfully for 60 years. But he was a case of sheer luck, - in every sense a "sport," - and what is wanted is a system which will work normally. It may be, as you say, that a tiny country like Greece acquires prestige abroad if it has a king, though I am inclined to think that Greece is somewhat of an exception and will always have a peculiar prestige of her own which many great empires have risen and fallen without acquiring. But for her current well-being, given the character of her people, I would be inclined to favor a republican system on the American model,

model, which allows of the "head man" being changed periodically, though not every day. So far as I know, this is the only system that has not been tried in Greece at some time or other since the ancient Greeks began the discussion of political theory which continues to this day.

One word more, regarding Yugoslavia. The developments which I have been able to see and report from here, however partial in the whole picture, have included some remarkable British maneuvers leading up to what looks very like positive intervention in internal affairs of the country. If indulged in, such intervention is likely to have repercussions long after the war is over, and whatever one thinks of it - my last word from the Department is that our policy is still "under review" - it will make history. It would seem to be as true of folly as of evil that it lives after us, and therefore it is to be hoped that it is not folly to run so counter to the idea you expressed to me here, of letting the Yugoslavs fight their internal differences out among themselves while keeping our own action on the purely military level against the common enemy. However, you are so much better informed about this matter than I am that I can have few if any coals to bring to your Newcastle.

Not to make this letter too long, I will only add that I have indeed met your friend the Crown

Prince

Prince of Egypt, and found the "old globe-trotter" delightful, sartorially as well as personally. I gave him your message and he volunteered that you appeared to him "neater" than Mr. Willkie, and that you talked and acted like a gentleman, - which seemed to me pretty good coming from one so little removed from the dubious Albanian origins of the great Mohamed Ali. Finally, for your amusement here is a South African Press cutting, sent me by one of my "boys" down there, who for some reason thought it gave him cause for congratulating me! It is from the Pretoria "News" of January 22, 1944.

"Lieut.-Colonel E. A. Biden, of Johannesburg, formerly Commanding Officer of the S.A.A.F. tactical reconnaissance squadron, has returned to the Middle East for duty after a protracted stay in the United States, says Sapa's special correspondent in Cairo.

"Lieut.-Colonel Biden was sent "on loan" to the United States Army Air Force to instruct and assist in the opening of a big fighter reconnaissance and army support school.

"During his stay in the United States, he was invited to the White House. President Roosevelt asked him many questions about South Africa, and he was amazed at the President's vast knowledge of the Union."

Affectionately yours,

Lionel McVeagh

file
confidential *BF: Mac Veagh folder*
1-44

American Embassy near the
Governments of Greece and
Yugoslavia.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Cairo, May 15, 1944

Dear Franklin:

Thank you very much for your letter of April 1,
written in the full spirit of that date. Though I should
love to watch you playing "autarch" in the Balkans, and
am sure you could make a success of it if anyone could,
you may believe that I am happy, with millions of others,
that fate cast you for a different role.

Since I last wrote, the situation here has not failed
to become even more interesting and complicated. In my
letter of February 17, I had a good deal to say about
Russia and her growing influence in this region. Recently,
she has made even more rapid advances than seemed likely
a few months ago. This has been true, not only in the
territory reoccupied by her armies, but in the thoughts and
fears of men. The chief intelligence officer of our forces
here said to me the other day, "British Middle East Head-
quarters can't sleep for thinking about Russia," and he
then told me of a map which a Britisher had shown him,
entitled, "The next war begins here," with four places marked
on it, namely, the Danube, the Dardanelles, the Suez Canal
and the Persian Gulf. You may remember the acute British
fears

The President,
The White House,
Washington.

fears of Russia when we were young -- Kipling's "Man who Was" and his "Bear that walks like a Man." These fears are all coming back now with a vengeance, and will doubtless be intensified when Russia is no longer simply one of the great powers but the only great power remaining on the European continent. The British Ambassador to Greece recently said to me, in regard to developments in that country, "Greece is now at the cross-roads, the question being whether she is to move into the Russian orbit and lose her independence, or remain a European country under British influence." Our Consul-General in Istanbul is here to confer with me. I asked him what he thought of the various Communist-inspired organizations now operating as "resistance groups" throughout the Balkans under various guises of democracy and nationalism. His reply was that there can be felt in Istanbul a powerful Russian surge into the Balkan area at present -- "but underneath." Finally, General Smuts, posting through here on his way to London, said to me, "Something very serious is going on in the Balkans." He had no doubt that recent British efforts to deal politically with Tito, and the British handling of Greek affairs to date, have been unfortunate.

In this connection, the British have now apparently failed to sell King Peter to Tito, and having somewhat "burned their fingers" in the attempt, as their own Ambassador here warned them they would, seem to be edging back to our firm position of supporting the latter militarily and the former politically until such time as the liberated people may choose

its

its own régime. At the same time, we have had a political crisis in Greek affairs and a revolt in the Greek armed forces, with results almost exactly in keeping with the Prime Minister's predictions which I quoted in my last. You will remember that Mr. Tsouderos told King George that if he did not agree to certain proposals, the government would fall and the King "would find himself with no possibility of forming another government which would have any effective support either within or without the country, while there would be trouble in the armed forces and the Political Committee which is now striving to emulate Tito in Greece, and which is certainly controlled by Communist elements, would be the gainer." In the event, King George characteristically deferred action, and he now has a new Prime Minister without any Cabinet at all, while negotiations are in progress for the formation of a Government of National Unity in participation with the People's Committee which has been exchanging notes with Tito. Thus, in Yugoslavia a Communist marshal has rebuffed a British attempt to bring King Peter back into the local picture, and in Greece leftist elements have stepped into a position in the national councils which they have never before enjoyed.

The Greek revolt falls somewhat disturbingly into this picture. As an overt mutiny, it has been quelled, at least for the time being, but politically it is still a force and socially it still simmers. On the surface, its causes have all seemed similar to those of other Greek "movements" known to us

to us in the past. As I once misquoted to the Department years ago, "In the Spring an old Greek's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of revolution." By this Spring, the Tsouderos government had been in power for all of three years, and was consequently widely unpopular with the unstable Greeks. The Army, being traditionally "in politics" was of course the normal instrument with which to upset the government, and therefore the lining up of the politicians with a group of Army officers was no occasion for surprise. Furthermore, the issue of royalism versus Venizelism being still paramount in the Greek political mind, and the King having supported the Fascist dictatorship of Metaxas, it was natural that the movement should be on the "liberal" side. A new and disturbing factor was of course injected by the necessity of staging the movement on foreign soil. The British, who are the guardians of security in Egypt, and operationally in charge of the Greek forces, said, "You can't do this!" while the Greeks replied, "It's our affair," and thus some very bad inter-allied complications arose, which have done some harm to the war effort and threatened to do more. But there was something else which was new in this movement, something which sets it aside fundamentally, and not merely on the surface, from all previous Greek "revolutions," and which soon took it out of the control of the politicians and their high-ranking officer friends, placing it squarely in the general international picture created by the Russian advance. This was the existence and activity in the forces, both afloat and ashore, of

Communistic

Communitistic committees and cells. In addition, there has been open support of the movement from Russian sources, expressed by the Ambassador here in criticism of British repressive measures, and by the Moscow press and radio in repeated attacks on the "Fascism" of the Tsouderos régime. I have been informed that after Mr. Churchill protested to Mr. Molotov about the Moscow press, the latter called in the Greek Minister and told him that the Soviet Government is "not interfering" in the Greek internal situation. Recently, too, the Russian radio and press reports have been less provocative than formerly. Nevertheless, like Truthful James, "I state but the facts" when I say that, beneath all its traditional Greek trappings, the revolt was inspired and maintained by an ideology especially associated with Russia, and that while it lasted Russian sympathy with it was openly shown, despite its dangerous implications for the Allied cause. Incidentally, there are also some grounds for suspecting that while the Greek politicians and officers probably were not aware of the nature of the ferment in the rank and file which they attempted to exploit, the Germans had agents here who were, and that the fifth column played some part as a catalyzer in the precipitation of events at this critical time.

Though ostensibly quelled, this revolt has played its part in bringing the forces of the extreme left into the national Greek councils, and from that point of view must be regarded as having succeeded. Furthermore, as I have said, its spirit is still simmering, and it is doubtful whether a substantial

substantial part of the Greek armed forces can be counted on for further service in this war unless present efforts to achieve "national unity" result in a government satisfactory to those elements. The new premier, Mr. George Papandreu, who has just come out from Greece and who, while not exactly in the top political flight, is a much more potent figure than any of the politicians who have been in the government-in-exile these past three years, is a social democrat and strongly opposed to the "resistance movement" known as EAM, which ^{the} ^{press} Moscow has been supporting. The Soviet Ambassador has informed me -- though only a short time ago he expressed complete ignorance of Greek affairs -- that Papandreu is "not the man" to achieve national unity in Greece. On the other hand, British influence has made him premier, and the British are backing him to effect a settlement which will still preserve their paramount influence in Greece. It seems hardly likely that he can succeed. In choosing him, the British have bitterly offended the "liberal" Cairo politicians and have probably alienated what remains of the old Venizelist party in Greece. At the same time, on the very eve of the conference, their military has cracked down heavily on some of these same politicians, and their friends, arresting them for being implicated, even if only through negligence or folly, in the outbreak and political conduct of the recent revolt. Mr. Papandreu is therefore going to the conference in the Lebanon with the assured enmity of the liberals as well as of the left, and since the King and the royalists

are

are nothing to count on nowadays on account of their recent connection with the Metaxas dictatorship, is without visible means of support except for the British and his own eloquence. A miracle may happen, of course, and I hope it will, so that Greek "unity" may be obtained now, but otherwise the outcome would appear almost certain to be more confusion, more resentment over British interference as a cause of Greek frustration, and more turning of the eyes towards Moscow.

In view of all this, and should nothing worse occur, I believe that when Athens is restored we may look to see a diplomatic game there (as well as in the rest of the Balkans, Eastern Europe and the Middle East) similar to that which we saw in the past, only this time not between Great Britain and the Axis but between her and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Can this be prevented from becoming more than a game? If it leads to war, I suppose we shall again be involved. To keep it from doing so would seem, therefore, to be in our most vital interests, and "to achieve harmonious action during the period of peace," as Mr. Hull says, to be the only way. Just now, however, the drift does not appear to be towards harmonious action. This is not true on the highest level, of course, but it may affect that level later through the sowing of suspicion and distrust. In my letter of February 17, I suggested that we might take the lead in the coming Balkan relief operations in order to cushion off the impact of British and Russian pressures. That suggestion, which

which I also made to the Department, was apparently out of line with the short-term, strictly military policy of the hour. On the other hand, much is being done here in the way of economic planning for the Balkans during the so-called military period, in regard to which the Russians are only occasionally being advised, if they are being advised at all. This, which to their minds may very easily appear as masking an attempt at establishing a post-war zone of influence, may be just as dangerous to future harmony as their own propaganda practices which annoy and alarm the British. Perhaps what is needed is closer consultation on all vital subjects having to do with this region. In any case I feel, and am so recommending to the Department, that the Russians should be brought more closely into all our long-term planning hereabouts. Meanwhile, our efforts here to maintain an independent balancing policy, are being heavily handicapped by our good cousins. Though we stand aloof from the interior problems of small states, the British, who do not so stand aloof, "convey the impression that the United States is in full agreement" with their manoeuvres, if I may borrow some words from a recent OSS report. It is difficult to combat this advantage which they are taking of our being their faithful allies without damaging our all-important war-time solidarity. While the process continues, however, we are more and more being committed by implication to one side of the local struggle for influence which, though it may not involve the higher-ups, is nevertheless going on right

L. M. ...
merrily.

merrily. Perhaps the false impression given may be rectified when the war is over, though it would be better if there could be no delay. As General Smuts said the other day, genuine buffer states in this region are a necessity, but if the trends which are now observable under our very noses are continued for long, such states are certainly not likely to be realized.

To turn to happier things, your new Minister to South Africa, General Holcomb, is here (held up for a few days by an illness of his wife's). I have seen a lot of him and we have had long talks about "the Union". I think you have made an absolute ten-strike in picking him, and that the South Africans ought to eat him up, while his shrewdness will never lose sight of the interests of Uncle Sam. "My" people in South Africa, I know, have been somewhat alarmed over the advance publicity and grim photographs of the former head of the Devil Dogs. So I sent our Chargé a wire the other day, as follows: "Please tell all the boys I have had some long talks with your new chief and have found both him and his wife delightful. He is simple, kindly, humorous, intelligent and interested, and with your cooperation should make a great success in South Africa. Best wishes to you all." That, together with letters I have given the General to South African public men, and the diplomats, closes a fascinating chapter of my life for which I am indebted to you.

Ever affectionately yours,

Lincoln MacVeagh

*file
Confidential* PSF: Mac Veagh folder
1-44

July 6, 1944.

Dear Lincoln:-

Ever so many thanks for yours of June
twenty-first. It got here in five days.

What a mess! It is bad enough to have
rows among the French -- almost our nearest
neighbors -- but rows seem to increase with distance.
They are worse in Greece and Yugoslavia; still
worse in Arabia and Persia, and the trouble grows
as we approach India and the Pacific.

It would be so nice from a personal
point of view if young Dewey could adopt the
role of the young Lochinvar from out of the West
while he is still a candidate. His advice, if
published to the world, would wreck him.

Ever so many thanks for those very
interesting stamps. I am awfully glad to have
them for my collection.

With my warm regards,

As ever yours,

Honorable Lincoln MacVeagh,
American Embassy near the
Governments of Greece and Yugoslavia,
Cairo,
Egypt.

Stamps put in stamp envelope for P's collection

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

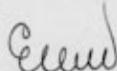
6-29-44

MEMORANDUM FOR MISS TULLY

Dear Grace:

Perhaps this afternoon
will suffice to give this to
the President.

It was sent to me directly.


E. M. W.

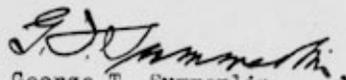


DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

June 28, 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL WATSON:

There is enclosed herewith a sealed envelope addressed to the President, which has been received by pouch from the Legation at Cairo.


George T. Summerlin

Enclosure:
Sealed envelope.



American Embassy near the
Governments of Greece and
Yugoslavia.

██
██

Cairo, Egypt,
June 23, 1944

Dear Franklin:

I forgot to tell you in my last letter that King George of Greece wanted to thank you for comforting messages you sent him when he was in London. He, poor man, is again in a bad way, psychologically, over the question of the timing of his return to Greece. He seemed to have benefited from his visit to London, but since this matter which bothers him so much has come up again, he appears to be once more in the grip of uneasiness and anxiety.

In my last letter I said that I doubted whether anything but a miracle could get the Greeks together after their recent troubles here in the Middle East, and behold, the miracle took place promptly after I wrote, proving once more the difficulty of latter-day prophecy. However, like most if not all modern miracles, this one was somewhat less miraculous than it was advertised to be. The water turned into wine all

The President,
The White House,
Washington.

all right, but the wine proved only synthetic. Everybody at the Conference in the Lebanon agreed to practically everything in principle, but details were left to the Government of National Unity which it was decided should be immediately set up here in Cairo. Then, when the delegates all adjourned here for that purpose, the communist-controlled organizations in Greece, -the so-called EAM and the Committee of Liberation "in the mountains", as well as the Communist Party itself, - refused to allow their delegates to participate, despite the fact that these last had come out from Greece with full powers and had agreed to join. The real reasons for this breakdown are still obscure, but it is surmised that the organizations in question do not wish to relinquish control of the guerrilla bands, through which they hope to control the situation within the country after the German withdrawal, and that they are shy of being connected with a Government which must now proceed with the courtmartialing of the recent mutineers. In any case, however, the only reason which they themselves alleged was that the question of the time of the King's return to Greece had not been settled at the Conference, and here we have the origin of the King's present unhappiness. They said that unless and until it was made clear that the King would not return before the plebiscite, they could not join any Government - except presumably one of their own making. Accordingly, Mr. Papandreou decided to clarify this point immediately

immediately and once for all. It is true that nothing had been decided about it in the Lebanon, but much had been said, in one way or another, and the general opinion of the Conference had clearly been that the King should await his people's call. Therefore Mr. Papandreou passed a unanimous declaration through his cabinet (composed almost entirely of former delegates to the Conference) stating that such was the Government's opinion also, and furthermore that since the King had accepted the Government in full knowledge that its members held this opinion, he had himself signified his assent to it. Mr. Papandreou then went to the King and told him that this declaration would have to stand or he would have to resign, and he also pointed out how desirable it was to make such a declaration at this time in the interests of unity, in order to deprive the Communists of their pretext for not entering the Government. To this the King replied that he obviously could not get another Government if this one, composed of all parties but the Communist, should now resign, and that in any case he could not wish to stand in the way of national unity. He therefore allowed the declaration to stand, and it was published forthwith. He himself has argued to me, in a long conversation which I had with him subsequently, that nothing absolutely decisive has been done. He emphasized that he has made and will make no declaration of his own, which it would be difficult for him to take back, while if circumstances change,

change, the Government is always free to reverse itself. Furthermore he thinks that circumstances may very well change, being convinced that royalism is still strong in Greece and may become even stronger if the communists are unmasked and the people realize the danger of a leftist dictatorship. But unfortunately for his peace of mind, public opinion appears not to be sharing his opinion. Even the royalist Cairo newspaper, Phos, has editorially congratulated the Premier on his definite solution of a vexed question, and praised the King fulsomely for his patriotic action. Consequently the King cannot quite convince himself that despite his logical arguments he hasn't somehow closed the door on himself politically, and is miserable as a result.

I write so much about this because the King himself practically asked me to explain it to you, checking himself, however, with one of his shy laughs and saying, "I suppose it's too confusing to explain to anybody." Personally, in view of the political instability of the Greeks, with which I have plenty of reason to be familiar, I would not say that he has no chance at all of coming back to Greece with his Government's consent before the plebiscite, but the political tide is certainly running against his hopes in this matter just at present, and there may not be much time ahead for circumstances to alter. He seems to think that keeping quiet, which is what he is doing, is his best line just now, and it may very well be that, as Mr. Papandreou told him, it will
favor

favor his chances in the plebiscite not to show too much eagerness to return. Incidentally, the declaration makes it clear that in the interim period the Government will continue to be the King's Government and that while remaining outside the country he will "care for our national interest with our Great Allies, as Chief of the Greek State." Perhaps a regent will be appointed, though at the moment the Premier thinks this may not be necessary. Meanwhile, the new Government has taken over the reins in other matters with equal initiative and determination. It is proceeding to the courtmartialing of the mutineers, and has set up new ministries of reconstruction and supply to collaborate with our efforts and those of UNRRA for relief and rehabilitation. There is much more vitality in it than in its predecessors in exile, which would seem to be a good sign. Without any pretensions to working miracles it is setting its hand soberly to the plough and making some headway with it.

Yugoslav affairs continue in a condition somewhat similar to the Greek, with the British trying to engineer a national unity campaign from outside. But in this case they are playing perhaps a more difficult game, the Yugoslavs being more emotional and less supple politically than the Greeks. The British have already been able to get rid of a Pan-Serb premier and to replace him with a Croat, thus giving a less intransigent character to the Government-in-Exile. But they would also seem to have set themselves to bringing all the resistance groups within the country, as well as the national forces outside

side it, under the supreme command of Tito, which may well prove impossible. As in the Greek business, a measure of success in the present negotiations may be achieved at the outset, and doubtless there will be a flood of propaganda announcing a fuller measure than has been achieved, the British believing in the Virgilian maxim "possunt quia posse videntur." But actually the Serbs who object to Tito constitute a far stronger portion of the nation than do the Communist hold-outs in Greece, and it would seem that an agreement between the new premier and Tito giving the latter command of all the forces will be far from popular in Serbia, where unpopularity on such a subject is serious. It also seems that Tito, though in a chastened mood after his recent collapse, and feeling himself forced to a greater extent than formerly to eat out of British hands, is boggling over "accepting" the King for fear of what his followers may think. Thus on both sides of the radical division in Yugoslavia there are to be considered the essential attitudes of the followers, and not only those of the leaders, if the civil war is not to continue unabated. Furthermore, playing favorites is hardly ever a successful form of intervention in troubled households. A leader without affiliations with either side might raise a standard in Yugoslavia to which mutually antagonistic groups could repair, and do much to get rid of internal dissension, at least for the time being, by calling on all patriots to join him against the Germans. Thus, an American General with
even

even only a small expeditionary force might eventually gather the whole weight of the various resistance movements behind him. This is doubtless an extreme instance of what would seem to be required. But to pick the Partisan leader of one of these movements to lead the whole nation is a procedure too clearly political in its implications to do other than risk perpetuating civil strife. It will be interesting to watch developments.

Regarding the recently disturbing Russian attitude toward Greek affairs, I am happy to report that some improvement has clearly occurred. Following exchanges on the subject between London and Moscow, the Russian press and radio has confined itself now for some time to stressing the desirability of unity, as well as of continued resistance to the Germans, and the British Ambassador told me the other day that he has sensed a new spirit of cooperation in our Russian colleague, which he has no doubt has been instructionally inspired. However, this same colleague has not yet seen fit to call on the Greek Prime Minister, which keeps tongues wagging to some extent. The Russians have had some protests to make, too, against the British in recent weeks, in the matter of British secret operations in Rumania, and I am informed that London and Moscow may come to an agreement to recognize each other's "initiative" in Greece and Rumania respectively, without of course abandoning their own legitimate interests in these countries.

countries. This kind of thing may be only patchwork to cover up the rifts of fundamental suspicion and distrust, but it is all to the good so far as it goes, and the easing of tension here for the moment is marked.

In conclusion, I would say that I am enclosing herewith for your stamp collection some specimens sent out of Serbia by General Michailovitch especially for you. They are stamps of a new issue he has put out. Not being a philatelist myself, I can describe them no further, but have attached the rubric which came with them into my hands, and I hope this will mean something to your expert knowledge.

Affectionately yours,

Luish McVrough

Enclosure:

Stamps issued by General Michailovitch.