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Yugoslav Diplomacy and the Greek Coup d'État of 1967

Abstract: Intensive conversations with members of political parties, closely reading the press, talks with other foreign diplomats, analytical evaluations of many individual events and their contextualization in the wider picture of the situation in Greece allowed Yugoslav diplomats to accurately assess the situation in the country, identify the potential of the military junta and the centers of putschist support in Greece and abroad, follow their show-down with left-wing and democratic options, recognize the ambitions of the putschist regime and the nature of their dictatorship, have insight into the situation of the opposition, make out the contours of a possible state-political system, monitor relations with neighboring countries, closely follow the regime's position to the Macedonian minority, follow the moves of the monarch, assess the permanence of compromises, observe the pressure of the international public and the controversial behavior of the Great Powers, and offer prognoses of the course of events in the near future. Yugoslav diplomats collected some of the relevant information on the situation in Greece in other capitals (London, Ankara, Nicosia, Paris...). This information contributed to a wider evaluation of the existing circumstances and a sharper picture of the developments in Greece. The general opinion was that the Yugoslav diplomats were much better informed and more agile than their counterparts from other Eastern European countries, who were seen as "slow", "unsure", "confused", "contradictory" and so on. In the days and months following the coup, the Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens was a center where many came to be informed, consult with their peers, verify their assessments and hear Belgrade's views. Besides the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, collected information was sent to Josip Broz Tito, Edvard Kardelj, Koča Popović, Mijalko Todorović, Marko Nikezić, Ivan Gošnjak, Petar Stambolić and Ivan Mišković.

Keywords: Yugoslavia, Greece, Diplomacy, Coup d'Etat, 1967, Josip Broz Tito, Edvard Kardelj, Koča Popović

In mid-January 1968 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Belgrade was informed that the unstable political situation in Greece was "impeding" and "limiting" the activities of the Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens, but that the embassy was nonetheless working well. The removal of the provision imposed by the Greek right-wing faction that the Yugoslav diplomats were to cooperate with only one Greek political party – the Center Union (Enosis Kentrou, EK) led by Georgios Papandreou – was seen as a valuable result achieved in the previous period. It was assessed that the embassy in Athens had established "wider

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cooperation" with all Greek political actors and had particularly improved its contacts with the United Democratic Left (Eniëa Dimokratikí Aristerá, EDA), which included the communists. Other contributing factors to this overall positive assessment were the beginning of cooperation with local-level authorities, established contacts with social and academic organizations, strengthening economic ties, communication with the key actors in the political, social and public life of Greece, "opening" a dialogue on the relevant questions of Greco-Yugoslav relations in the present and in the future. As highlighted in the report of the Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens, all of this was achieved in a rather difficult and "constrained" working environment characterized by the instability of Greek governments and the "abnormal and unstable" internal situation in which "right-wing political forces had a decisive influence on the country's policies".¹ In view of this situation, the diplomatic mission in Athens was judged to be working well; the information forwarded to Belgrade was accurate and the assessments of Yugoslav diplomats correct and reliable; there was apparent continuity in the following and assessing of the political situation and the general environment in Greece; the harvested information bore direct evidence that the representatives of the embassy "knew people", "had friends" and were making "professional contacts".²

The moment when these assessments of the activities of the diplomatic mission in Athens were made coincided with the systemic crisis that shook the Greek state and society. The crisis was deep, both political and state-level; it was also confounded by the collapse of the government of Stefanos Stefanopoulos formed in December 1966.³ 1967 was to bring parliamentary elections and the provisional government that was to call and organize these elections was facing a plethora of domestic and international problems that needed to be solved.

In this situation the Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens was instructed to carefully follow the processes and activities which were seen as potentially having far-reaching importance both at the level of internal policy and the international level. Another important task was evaluating the activities of political leaders. The most interesting among them was certainly Andreas Papandreou,

¹ Diplomatski arhiv Ministarstva Spoljnih poslova Republike Srbije [Diplomatic Archives (DA) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia (MSP RS)], Politički arhiv [Political Archive (PA)], file 40, dossier 3, no. 42890, Proceedings from the extended staff meeting of the Embassy held on 11–13 January 1967, Athens, 7 February 1967. Ambassador Javorski and his associates M. Gabričević, B. Komatina, D. Vujanović, T. Vilović, N. Grubišić, Lj. Vujović, S. Nastić and M. Stepanović took part in the analysis of the situation in Greece.

² DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings from the extended staff meeting of the Embassy held on 11–13 January 1967 [hereafter: Proceedings], Athens, 7 February 1967, pp. 4–5.

³ The Stefanopoulos government fell on 22 December 1966.

the young leader of the liberal wing of the Center Union (EK), who was seen as a person of “strong political ambition and views that did not fit into the classic Greek type of parlor-and-party politics”. Based on his public appearances, he was seen as trying to “bring his political image out of his father’s shadow”, but also “not to harm” the interests of the Center Union. Yugoslav diplomats in Athens and the headquarters in Belgrade saw Andreas Papandreou as a “man with a future in politics” and a proponent of the general modernization of Greece, of leaving “the suzerainty of NATO” and of pursuing an “independent national policy”. In the opinion of Yugoslav diplomats, the political views of Andreas Papandreou had “revolutionary significance” and were considered a key factor in the bilateral relations of the two countries and the situation in the Balkans in the future.⁴

Besides Andreas Papandreou and his political supporters (around 40 MPs), another important task was following all forms of “potential differentiation” in the Center Union (EK), especially because reshufflings and shifts in political positions were to be expected, along with “new political alliances and coalitions” with former political opponents. In this context, close attention was also paid to the liberal group led by Georgios Mavros, the politicians gathered around *To Vima* daily, and left-wing politicians who refused to join Papandreou.⁵

Analyses of Yugoslav diplomats claimed that the social and political progress of Western Europe, particularly France, was increasingly encouraging the formulation of independent national politics in accordance with national interests. According to their assessment, Greece was lagging behind in this process. The Greek political life, which unfolded in the framework of “parlor-and-politics struggles” was seen as an “anachronism”. It was noted that on important questions that the country was facing, such as communism and socialism, major political parties had identical views to those promoted by NATO. The prognosis was that “modern progress” would quickly engulf Greece, inevitably shaping different views on foreign policy and its internal situation. Predicting that the political emergence of Andreas Papandreou represented an early sign of new social trends, Yugoslav diplomats strove to use their long-term monitoring of his activities to gauge future socio-political processes, the potential development of the situation in the Balkans, and any changes that might occur in Greco-Yugoslav relations.⁶

Another influential political figure of interest for Yugoslav diplomats was Konstantinos Karamanlis, the politician who was, despite having emigrated to Paris in 1963, “active and present” in the developments in Greece. His frequent meetings with Charles de Gaulle were well known and there were reports that

⁴ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, cat. no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 4–5.

⁵ Ibid. pp. 14–15.

⁶ Ibid. p. 6.

he had undergone a “serious political metamorphosis” toward Gaullism. It was evident that Karamanlis no longer propounded a far-right political line and extra-parliamentary and non-constitutional means of political struggle. These changes in his political views indicated that he had learned some lessons and “revised” his former policy. It was assessed that the course of events would eventually “impose the need” for his return home. In this case, it was assumed that Karamanlis would demand a revision of the Greek constitution; insist on a precise determination of the monarch’s powers; strive to transform the National Radical Union (Ethnikī Rizospastikī Énōsis, ERE) into a modern political party; eliminate the existing leadership; and pursue a much more independent policy in internal and foreign affairs.⁷ The unknown direction of Karamanlis’s policy in this situation meant that the Yugoslav diplomats needed to accurately identify all political forces rooting for his return. To preempt any surprises, the Yugoslav diplomatic representatives were asked to activate their old contacts and thoroughly assess earlier experiences in “relations with him and his circle”.⁸

At the same time Yugoslav diplomats in Athens had to continually follow the activities of the National Radical Union (ERE), seen by Belgrade as a political party that was there to stay for the foreseeable future, particularly because this party, created owing to the efforts of state actors, had not fallen apart or even lost much of its strength during the years spent in opposition and without its leader, who had been forced to leave the country. The National Radical Union had been the decisive factor during the government of Stefanos Stefanopoulos as well as one of the actors in its downfall. According to Yugoslav diplomats, this party had begun to show some changes, primarily its “distancing” from far-right, extra-parliamentary and non-constitutional means of political struggle. Hence the Yugoslav diplomatic representatives in Athens were tasked with establishing contacts with the forces of change in this party.⁹ Following the activities of the National Radical Union (ERE), Yugoslav diplomats noted the high political potential of its leader in the country (since 1963 and the departure of Karamanlis) Panagiotis Kanellopoulos. Kanellopoulos was seen as the most responsible for the fall of the previous government and as a person close to the Crown who was capable of finding a common ground even with his political opponents.¹⁰

The Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens was also interested in the United Democratic Left (EDA), a party made up of communists, and the political activities of its prominent members – Ilias Iliou, Leonidas Kyrkos, and Manolis Glezos. It was seen as a “serious progressive force” with a growing reputation and influence among the people and well-respected in the ranks of civic parties and groups in the Parliament. It was believed that the party’s prestige would

⁷ Ibid. pp. 5–6.

⁸ Ibid. p. 15.

⁹ Ibid. p. 15.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 5–6.

increase over the following months and that the Yugoslav diplomats' existing good contacts with its leadership needed to be improved and developed "as much as possible" and "as much as local circumstances allow". The diplomats were also asked to continue collecting information on intra-party relations, views of some political groups, the influence and tasks coming from abroad, and the political course of the Communist Party of Greece (Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas, KKE). At the same time it was noted that the interest of the representatives of the United Democratic Left (EDA) for Yugoslavia was in a state of "evident positive growth" and that everything needed to be done to further advance its cooperation with the Socialist Alliance of Yugoslavia.¹¹

As regards the Crown – which included the ruling dynasty as well as royalist forces at home and abroad – it was thought that the Yugoslav diplomacy did not need to change anything in the "currently implemented assessments and approach". Of course, it was clear that the Crown played a very important role in the Greek domestic and foreign policy. And while some concessions to democratic forces were noted, there were no reliable indications to tell if this was only a "short-term policy" that would end in a new deterioration of relations or a more permanent political course. The general view of Yugoslav diplomats was that contacts with the Crown should be improved.¹²

* * *

Yugoslav diplomats in Athens were very cautious in their "prognoses" about the chances of particular political parties to win the majority of votes at the forthcoming parliamentary elections. The existing pre-election situation meant that the diplomatic representatives needed to "establish contacts at all sides" and that the efforts of the diplomatic mission were to be "as wide as possible", while focusing on the political parties most likely to come to power.¹³

When it came to the internal situation, Yugoslav diplomats believed that Greece was not experiencing only a deep crisis of government, but also a long-term process of internal instability, a crisis of socio-economic structures, the presence of international strategic and political interests pressurizing all spheres of life. The position of the provisional government was seen as very delicate. Among the issues that could potentially trouble its members, the following were particularly underlined: "maintaining order" in the pre-electoral period; implementation of measures to secure economic and monetary stability; stimulating economic development; disbanding militarist organizations (National Guard Defence Battalions, TEA); intensification of the Cyprus problem; the successful

¹¹ Ibid. p. 16.

¹² Ibid. p. 16.

¹³ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 42424; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, cat. no. 42890, Proceedings, p. 7; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 44962, Conversation with A. Papandreou, coded telegram of 4 February 1967.

resolution of the question of international economic aid and securing international aid. The prognosis was that the conflicting parties would see the provisional government's activities solely through the prism of their own partisan interests and that there would not be enough goodwill and understanding for the forced moves taken by the government. These conclusions were the result of close monitoring of a large number of "political actors" (the Crown, government, parliament, bureaucracy, political parties, army, social elites...) and of an analytical assessment of the synergy of their influences. Conversations with important persons in political life were also an important element of these assessments.¹⁴

In early 1967 the dominant view in the diplomatic mission of Yugoslavia in Athens was that the "Greek bourgeoisie... puts a premium on the stabilization of the internal political situation in the country". It was assumed that there had been a secret pact between Panagiotis Kanellopoulos and Georgios Papandreou to topple the government of Stefanos Stefanopoulos.¹⁵ Their cooperation in the future (post-election), which was speculated about in the left-wing press, was seen as possible by the Yugoslav diplomats. At the same time they hypothesized that this could have been one of the reasons behind the divisions in the Center Union and the political and conceptual conflict between Georgios Papandreou and his son Andreas, who proposed a more "independent" and "modern concept of capitalist Greece". As for Panagiotis Kanellopoulos, the leader of the National Radical Union (ERE), the Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens was convinced that his primary objective was to consolidate his position at the helm of the party and thereby minimize the political influence of Konstantinos Karamanlis, gather the old bourgeoisie of a moderate-right persuasion and strengthen the party. Yugoslav diplomats speculated that the toppling of the government of Stefanos Stefanopoulos had been done with the consent - if not on the demand - of the Allies (US, United Kingdom...). The motivation for such a move was seen in fears of a potential rise of the left which could have profited from the general instability in the country as well as in the need of international capital to have a stable political situation, and the profit secured due to Greece's economic lagging behind other Balkan countries.¹⁶

¹⁴ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, cat. no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 13–14; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 42424, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski about his conversation with Pipinelis of 20 January 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 4243, Coded telegram from Athens on the interior situation in Greece dated 20 January 1967.

¹⁵ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 42424, Coded telegram from Athens about the conversation with Pipinelis of 20 January 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 42423, The internal situation after the fall of the Stefanopoulos government, 20 January 1967.

¹⁶ According to available data, Greece's NNP was growing at a rate of 8%; its industrial production at a rate of 13% and its agriculture had a 3.5% growth per annum. Investments

Based on collected information, Yugoslav diplomats assumed that at the forthcoming elections none of the major parties would manage to win the absolute majority of votes, and that the party that achieved the best result would be forced to form a post-election coalition and eventually call a new election. However, the Yugoslav diplomats were not able to tell who could be part of this hypothetical coalition. It was noted that the temporary cooperation between the National Radical Union (ERE) and Center Union (EK) had ceased and that each of these parties was taking its own positions in preparation for the electoral struggle. It was assumed that the Center Union, in which they took a particular interest, would run in the elections as a whole, but that the disagreements between the conservatives (G. Papandreou), the liberals (Mavros and the group around the *To Vima* daily) and the center-left faction whose members saw themselves as the “interpreters” of the party program (A. Papandreou) would not be resolved. In addition, based on information provided by A. Papandreou, the general pre-election situation was seen as “optimistic” and “very favorable” for the Center Union. A. Papandreou’s own view that the Center Union was still “an old-fashioned party” limited its possible electoral success, although it was believed that a part of the younger generation would nonetheless vote for them. The conspiratory methods of the “junta”, used by the far right, threatened to delay the elections and made left-wing politicians uneasy. However, A. Papandreou was certain of the electoral victory of the Center Union. Just a few days before the introduction of the dictatorship, A. Papandreou believed that the “path to the elections [had been] secured” and that it was “too late... for any extraordinary measures”.¹⁷

The Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens had information that the National Radical Union (ERE) would also retain its unity and come together around Panagiotis Kanellopoulos, who would also attract the support of the right-wing faction led by Panagiotis Pipinelis. In party circles there was concern about the situation in the country, the possibility that the elections would be delayed and a “firm-hand” government formed. Another reason for dissatisfaction was the activity of some Western embassies “whose advisors and secretaries believe that they know enough about Greek political life to have the right to influence its course”. In a bid to avoid this denouement, in late March 1967

had a 17% growth. Immigration was reduced by 25% compared to the previous year. Prices went up by 5% per annum. The country’s debt was larger than its foreign currency reserves. DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 10–11.

¹⁷ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, cat. no. 42890, Proceedings, p. 7; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 4243, Coded telegram from Athens on the interior situation in Greece dated 20 January 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 44962, Conversation with A. Papandreou, coded telegram of 4 February 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 411539, Coded telegram sent by Ambassador Javorski about his conversation with A. Papandreou of 29 March 1967.

the National Radical Union initiated the collapse of the existing government, intending to form its own cabinet and hold elections. According to Yugoslav diplomats, the formation of a government led by P. Kanellopoulos was the “last stage” in the plan of the political right and the Crown to bolster their position on the eve of the elections, use public funds for their pre-electoral propaganda, and employ the official apparatus (primarily the army and police forces) to exert pressure on the voters. This was interpreted by Yugoslav diplomats as a possible sign that after the elections, if they were won by left-wing parties, the King could refuse to cede power to the victorious side in the elections.¹⁸

As far as the United Democratic Left (EDA) was concerned, it was noted that it pursued an “independent” line that separated it from the Center Union and made its program recognizable to voters. The communist leaders were worried about the elections. The system of proportional representation did not work in their favor and they were afraid that some of their party’s supporters would, amidst intense uncertainty, choose to vote for the Center Union instead. Before the dictatorship was introduced, the party leadership had “unreservedly discarded” the possibility of such a development.¹⁹

The fact that the Yugoslav diplomats had registered some US activity but that the role of the US had not been “fully and thoroughly” known to them meant that this question was to be given special attention. The activities of the Soviet Union were monitored no less closely. The Cyprus question and the relations with the Turks were another important topic that the Yugoslav diplomats tried to assess in the general context of the relations between the Great Powers – their intentions to come to a “solution” and the evident efforts of Greek political parties to clear themselves of any responsibility if the Greek side were forced to accept some concessions and abandon its maximalist objectives. The Cyprus

¹⁸ Some of their information about the situation in the National Radical Union was provided to Yugoslav diplomats by Panagiotis Kanellopoulos, DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, cat. no. 42424, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski about his conversation with Pipinelis of 20 January 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 4243, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on the interior situation in Greece dated 20 January 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 411538; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 411614, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski from Athens, 31 March 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, cat. no. 412111, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on the formation of the Kanellopoulos government, 4 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 412141, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski from Athens on the talks with Kanellopoulos, 11 April 1967.

¹⁹ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 42424; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, cat. no. 42890, Proceedings, p. 7; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 4243, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on the interior situation in Greece dated 20 January 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414587, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski from Athens dated 21 April 1967.

question grew increasingly important in the months leading up to the elections, since its resolution was directly reflected in the internal situation in Greece and also involved the country's relationship with the West. Even the "tiniest piece of information" that the Yugoslav diplomats in Athens could learn about the possible transfer of NATO bases from France and the strengthening of this organization in Greece was of key importance for the security of the Yugoslav state.²⁰

In view of the earlier attempts of the Crown to "test the waters for the introduction of dictatorship", indications that a dictatorship would not be able to "maintain the status quo" and the internal and international responses to these attempts, it was assessed that the proponents of a "firm" course would "turn the page" and abandon this compromising policy (for their own "political or self-serving reasons"). In addition, it was concluded that the dictatorship option was not realistic and that it represented an "unfathomable threat" not only to the Greek society but also to the forces that would potentially become its implementers. This was used to explain the intention of the Crown and the US to wash their hands of any stunts the far right might decide to pull and try to find a solution for the systemic crisis at parliamentary elections, thereby at least partially salvaging their jeopardized position and reputation. However, in the assessment of the overall situation, it was underlined that the dictatorship threat had not been "permanently removed" and that the Crown, US and the far right (uniforms and civilians alike) could revert to this option if the developments started to "endanger the very foundations of the order" or if "reasons of foreign policy" lead them to make such a move. Regardless of the final outcome, there was little doubt that the Crown would continue to work on the further "fragmentation" and "de-layering" of political parties, zeroing in on the left, particularly the Center Union. This was also supported by the uncoconcealed ambitions of the monarch and his supporters to "expand" their influence "as much as possible" and the existence of real conditions for him to become the "absolute overlord" of all political developments. The king's decision of early April 1957 to form a government headed by P. Kanellopoulos was also consistent with this scenario.²¹

The Yugoslav communists saw position of the communists (United Democratic Left) in the election year as being not at all easy, noting that they were forced to fight alone and registering their "clear line" and "sharp statements", as well as the "current burning topics" that the party leadership commented on in public (Cyprus problem, economic hardship, relations with Balkan countries, the government's political course and its tasks...). The diplomats also noted that young university students were becoming an increasingly firm pillar of support

²⁰ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, p. 7.

²¹ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 13–14; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 412111, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on the formation of the Kanellopoulos government, 4 April 1967.

to the democratic forces and that the growing success of the struggle for university autonomy was a contributing factor to this.²²

Yugoslav diplomats believed that the “external factor” was particularly important for understanding the general situation in Greece. In all developments in the country they saw a behind-the-scenes American policy and the implementation of NATO’s policies. In their opinion, it was realistic to expect that the US would try to install political forces that suited their interests. It made sense to them that the Americans were interested in stabilizing the situation in the southeastern part of NATO and that for this end they were encouraging an improvement in Greco-Turkish relations. The fact that the government of Stefanos Stefanopoulos had proven unable to deliver a positive resolution of this issue was seen as one of the reasons for its downfall. Another reason was the fact that Stefanopoulos himself was not a man willing to entirely disregard “legality, constitutionality and parliamentarism”. The Yugoslav embassy in Athens had information that the CIA and the American embassy had different evaluations of the situation in Greece, particularly in regard to the need for the Crown to “rely” on “moderate-right” or “far-right” political forces. This divergence indirectly suggested the existence of several lines of American presence in Greece. The Yugoslav diplomats, however, were unable to tell if the Americans would choose to lend their support to some changes and a modernized form of “the bourgeois regime in Greece” or back the existing model and the political forces behind it.²³

As for the United Kingdom, no one doubted that its influence was highly important, its methods more subtle and its policy always more effective and very relevant. It was speculated that the influence of the United Kingdom was even stronger than it seemed and it was believed to have been a long time in the making, branched-out and well-positioned both in Greece and in Cyprus. Yugoslav diplomats believed that the United Kingdom’s policy and interests were behind the moves of the United States.²⁴

Based on analyses of their previous work, the Yugoslav diplomats in Athens knew they needed to pay more attention to any divergences or conflicts of American and British interests, as well as to the political presence of France and the Federal Republic of Germany in Greece. Their alert monitoring of Greco-

²² DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 9. and 14; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 48293, Telegram from Athens of 4 March 1967.

²³ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 11–12; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, cat. no. 44962, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on talks with A. Papandreou dated 4 February 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 48293, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski from Athens of 4 March 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 411539, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on talks with A. Papandreou dated 29 March 1967.

²⁴ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, p. 16.

Turkish and Greco-Bulgarian relations was seen as positive. Caution was advised in assessing the situation in Cyprus and evaluating the importance of this question in Greek political life at home. Another task that needed to be given more attention was Greece's Balkan and European policy.²⁵

The Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens took a special interest in the situation in the Greek army. Regardless of the economic, ideological and political influence they wielded in army ranks, Yugoslav diplomats had information that suggested some reservations of a part of the officer corps towards the Americans and the American influence on staff decisions in the army. They also believed that the Crown had the heaviest influence on army leadership. The group in question included a "clique" of around thirty generals and high-ranking officers of a far-right persuasion, with another 200 officers under their influence. According to the same information, this core of the army leadership could, in certain circumstances, become the "base" for introducing a dictatorship regime, although such an outcome was not seen as likely by Yugoslav diplomats in early January 1967. According to information seen as realistic, the majority of high-ranking officers in the Greek army supported the National Radical Union (ERE); over 50% of lower ranking officers had democratic inclinations; and many were undecided. In addition, estimates suggested that over 60% of active and reserve troops held democratic views.²⁶ As for Yugoslavia, it was assessed that the top ranks of the Greek army dominantly believed that Yugoslavia pursued "a neutral policy and posed no threat to Greece". Some generals were convinced that if the name of SR Macedonia were to be changed, there would be "no problems left to resolve". Nevertheless, Yugoslav diplomats believed that the "Macedonian question" could always be used to intensify negative feelings for Yugoslavia.²⁷

As for bilateral relations between the two countries, Yugoslav diplomats noted that the Greek side, relying on tradition, persistently tried to maintain relations with Yugoslavia "as it once was" and "as they want to see it now". This "inertia" in bilateral relations was to be approached with caution. Hence it was of paramount importance for Yugoslav diplomats in Athens to be well aware "what is Greece like now and what it [was] becoming", as well as to familiarize Greece with "present-day" Yugoslavia. This approach involved not only collecting information and being in the know, but also making their own assessments

²⁵ Ibid. pp. 16–17; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 411539, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on talks with A. Papandreou dated 29 March 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, cat. no. 411538, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on talks with Kanellopoulos dated 30 March 1967.

²⁶ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, p. 12.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 28; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 411597, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on changes in the army dated 30 March 1967.

of the situation in Greece and using them to formulate a more realistic political and diplomatic approach.²⁸

The Yugoslav diplomats noted an improvement in the relations between Yugoslavia and Greece and were satisfied with mutual contacts that had clarified the “existence of minorities and the absence of territorial pretensions”.²⁹ They stated that trade had been significantly improved.³⁰ The new trade agreement between the two countries was based on the guidelines stipulated in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Industrial cooperation was another reason for satisfaction.³¹ Another element in good bilateral relations was freedom of movement. Visas were no longer required for citizens, which could contribute to improving relations in the new year (1967), but this was also met with some apprehension among security services.³² There had been some growth in the field of cultural cooperation. A very important project was a program of cultural cooperation which, among other things, included involving expert institutions to perform restoration works on the Hilandar Monastery.³³

²⁸ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 13–14.

²⁹ In 1966 Greece was visited by B. Pešić, Popov and P. Stambolić, while Plitas, Averoff and Kostas returned the favour by visiting Yugoslavia. In addition to economic questions, political issues were also discussed (including the Macedonian question). DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 17–19; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 6, no. 410611, Note on the talks of State Secretary M. Nikezić with the former Prime Minister of Greece and member of the directorat of ERE, P. Pipinelis, 24 March 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 411539, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on talks with A. Papandreou dated 29 March 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 411538, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on talks with Kanellopoulos dated 30 March 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 413141, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on talks with Kanellopoulos dated 11 April 1967.

³⁰ Trade between the two countries was worth 24.5 million dinars in 1964; 35 million in 1965; and 54 million in 1966. In the following period objectives included: removal of the ban on importing some Yugoslav products; increasing import contingents; encouraging interest in the Yugoslav market; opening business branch offices; participation at fairs; formulating a trade and economic policy.

³¹ Involving the following companies: OHIS Skopje, INA, Industrija motora i traktora, Elektrosrbija etc.

³² Greek security services saw Belgrade as a center where Greek nationals came into contact with other socialist countries and Greek emigration. In 1966 the embassy in Athens and the consulate in Thessaloniki issued 160.222 visas to Greek nationals, while 62.946 Yugoslav nationals visited Greece (a 25% increase compared to the year before).

³³ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 7, no. 415070, Report of the Yugoslav delegation from the negotiations about the Program of Cultural Cooperation between SFRY and the Kingdom of Greece for 1967/68; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 25–27; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 7, no. 415070, Report of the Yugoslav delegation from the negotiations about the Program of Cultural Cooperation between SFRY

"The Macedonian question" was one of the problems that constantly hampered Greco-Yugoslav relations. There was an evident campaign of denying the existence of the Macedonian nation and efforts in the press to exaggerate all unresolved issues.³⁴ On the eve of the electoral campaign, limitations to the movement of the population and more stringent controls by National Guard Defence Battalions and the army were noted in border areas.

Yugoslav diplomats thought that the occasional generating of "tensions" was the result of the need of some politically influential forces (army, far right, CIA, NATO) to make the public believe that Yugoslav "unclear intentions" and pretensions could pose a threat. There was also some apprehension among the Western countries, which had more complicated, deeper and more sensitive relations with Yugoslavia as a non-aligned country than with the members of the rival bloc. Yugoslav diplomats believed that this was being done in order to "block the path" of the Yugoslav model of socialism, and that the "national question" was being used to protect class- and bloc-related interests. Based on this assessment, the Yugoslav side left the "Macedonian complex" to be resolved at a more peaceful time, hoping that the course of events would bring about a change in Greek views. This position was enhanced by the fact that the incumbent Greek government was only provisional and had limited capacity, inadequate to tackle complex problems such as the "Macedonian question". For these reasons they tried to put more emphasis on the questions that the Greek side was more interested in. At the same time, in an effort to launch a more assertive policy towards Greece that would not have to answer to unfounded claims of the far right, there were thoughts of issuing a "public statement about the border" and "absence of any territorial claims" to counter any doubts about Yugoslavia's friendly policy. There were assessments that this would reduce the "Macedonian question" in the eyes of the Greek public to "its real meaning", improve the position of the Macedonian minority, debunk all insinuations of Yugoslavia's territorial aspirations, defeat all forces that were keeping Greek relations with Yugoslavia under an "embargo" of sorts, placate the fears of a "Yugoslav threat from the north"

and the Kingdom of Greece for 1967/68. Cultural cooperation was based on a cultural plan signed in 1965. Although not included in the plan, there were multiple visits by folk dance ensembles ("Ivo Lola Ribar" of Belgrade; "Proleter" of Sarajevo; "Sonja Marinković" of Novi Sad, ensembles from Skopje, etc.); musicians (opera singers M. Sabljčić, R. Rakočević, Z. Krnetić, violinist Marjanović, conductors S. Hubad and V. Čavdarski); painters (M. Protić); scholars (G. Ostrogorsky, S. Radonjić, I. Djurić, B. Gavela.).

³⁴ These included the treaty on the waterways of the Vardar which Yugoslavia had not ratified, collecting "material" on enemy activities in SR Macedonia, unresolved issues of minor border checkpoints, trade zones in Thessaloniki, the construction of a library, the position of the Monastery of Hilandar etc. DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 25-27; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 48293, Telegram from Athens dated 4 March 1967.

among ruling structures, and create a “constructive climate” conducive to resolving issues, establishing contacts, and enhancing Yugoslav political, economic and cultural influence.³⁵

* * *

The coup d'état of 21 April 1967 took everyone by surprise and changed many plans. Already the first reports dispatched from Athens to Belgrade stated that the coup had caught unprepared the members of the United Democratic Left (EDA) who had been arrested in the night of 20/21 April (Iliou, Kyrkos, Glezos). The first targets were party members, MPs, the youth, progressive individuals, both in Athens and in the interior of the country. The police demolished the headquarters of the party and newspaper offices, and confiscated archival material. The headquarters of other political parties and newspaper offices were sealed. In some diplomatic circles in Athens the arrests of some progressive politicians (Kanellopoulos, Stefanopoulos, Mitsotakis, Papaligouras) were interpreted as “camouflage”. However, the majority of diplomats inferred from this development that the political parties had not taken part in plotting the coup. The arrest of Georgios and Andreas Papandreou was a cause of concern for diplomats. The army proceeded to take intimidation measures towards the citizens. In the absence of reliable information, rumors were rampant. Information was scarce, chaotic and often unreliable, but the number of 11,000 arrests was mentioned. The arrests and treatment in prison was believed to be brutal. Foreign correspondents were blocked from “reporting anything” and were treated brutally too. According to information that had reached Yugoslav diplomats, during the night some of the prisoners had been taken on special airplanes to “an unknown location”, presumably the islands. According to the early findings of diplomatic sources (the diplomatic missions of France, Turkey, Italy, Czechoslovakia, USA, Switzerland, Denmark, Mexico, USSR, with which the Yugoslav diplomats cooperated) the coup had been orchestrated by the General Staff, and the putschists were led by General Grigorios Spandidakis, Chief of the Hellenic Army General Staff. However, it was not entirely clear if General Spandidakis fully agreed with the putschists. The coup was done by triggering a previously-drafted action plan to suppress communists (liquidation of the “communist” left) and it was implemented by a group of colonels. Belgrade believed that the coup in Athens had all the markings of “cold-war politics”. And although it was motivated by local, internal reasons, it was believed to dovetail with “some external interests”, above all those of the US and NATO. According to Belgrade’s information, some units had tried to resist the coup (in the north of Greece, Corfu, Crete), but after the king’s intervention they became loyal to the

³⁵ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, cat. no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 19–23 and 30–32.

putschist regime. The king himself, according to the available information, had been presented with a "fait accompli" and did not oppose them as the putschists would not have hesitated to make him abdicate. All sources reported that the monarch had not had any previous ties with the organizers of the coup and that his support to the putschists, given only after the fact, had been an attempt to "avoid bloodshed". In these circumstances, the West saw the Crown as the "only factor of stability" in Greece. The British did not exclude the possibility that the putschists enjoyed the support of the Church. The Prime Minister of the new regime, Konstantinos Kollias, formerly Attorney General of the Supreme Court, was seen as an "obscure figure" with no political experience. Some foreign diplomats thought that the coup could not have happened "without the consent of some US circles", while others highlighted that, for all its influence, the US embassy had been taken by surprise, and that the coup had not suited its plans. The Soviets also admitted that, despite analyses that had indicated the possible implementation of extraordinary measures, they had been "completely blindsided" by the introduction of military dictatorship. It was believed that the Greek army would not make any risky moves in Cyprus. According to early reports, the direct impetus for the coup had been the announced general strike and fears that the forthcoming elections would be used as "a referendum against the monarchy". The dominant opinion at the Yugoslav diplomatic mission was that the restoration of "normal and elementary human and democratic freedoms" in Greece depended on the king and the US.³⁶

From the very first moment the Yugoslav diplomacy did not see the coup as an isolated event but rather as part of a long political process that involved a succession of civilian conservative parties and forces that had emerged victorious from the civil war replace one another at the helm of Greece. It was in this political milieu, in constant showdowns with the democrats and the left, that the political and military forces which had executed the coup had emerged. The fact that the "progressive forces" (the left) had not been destroyed in the civil war and that they had gained prominence in the post-war years had led the radical right to seek a solution for the existing crisis in introducing a dictatorship. In this con-

³⁶ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414587, Coded telegram from Athens of 21 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414590, Coded telegram from Athens of 21 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414561, Coded telegram from Athens of 21 April 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414668, Coded telegram from Athens of 22 April 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414673, Coded telegram from Athens of 22 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414781, Coded telegram from Athens of 24 April 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414612, Coded telegram from Athens of 21 April 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414679, Coded telegram from Athens of 22 April 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414680, Coded telegram from Athens of 22 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416010, Coded telegram from Athens of 29 April 1967.

text, it was believed in Belgrade, the military coup was hardly surprising in view of the fact that local anti-communism and the “threat” of communist aggression on the external level represented the ideological basis of Greek governments, preventing any major changes and giving the army a special place in the “defense of order”. The “dictatorship ideology” was particularly widespread among some segments of the army, police, bureaucracy and right-wing ideologues. Its presence on the political stage, according to Yugoslav diplomats, was advocated equally by internal and external actors with a vested interest in keeping the status quo and the existing positions and order. The fact that the anti-communist action plan also targeted some civic politicians directly led some political groups and individuals, otherwise opposed to any democratic solution for the political crisis in Greece, to distance themselves from the putschists. Yugoslav diplomats concluded that the coup d'état had been easy to carry out, but that its future “remains unclear”. The coup brought several unknown outcomes with it: it made the “fate of the Crown” uncertain; since the government was not able to protect the monarchy, it was unclear if the putschists would delegate power to important civilian figures; and it opened the question of the further moves of the political right, which was inclined to accept the existing situation.³⁷

The Yugoslav diplomats collected their information about the army coup – described in Belgrade as “fascist” from the outset – primarily in Athens.³⁸ This information was often contradictory in terms content, but in some assessments, usually very cautious, the views of the East, West and well-informed Greek sources were almost identical. The coup had taken everyone by surprise, regardless of signals coming from the army that suggested that the growing “chaos” warranted the introduction of a dictatorship. The different sides were also in agreement that the coup was the “work of a small circle of colonels” almost unknown to foreign embassies. It was generally thought that the putschists were royalists, but that the monarch had been presented with a “fait accompli” and that he did not have the freedom to voice his own will; that he initially resisted, but was essentially forced to cooperate. In the opinion of diplomats in Athens, no “return to the old [state of things]” could be expected. Another shared position was readiness to protest with the putschists against the arrests and the brutal treatment of interned politicians. They were convinced that a protest could prevent any executions of communist leaders (Manolis Glezos) and the leaders of the civic left (A. Papandreou). Diplomatic representatives in Athens knew that the situation was worrying and that it was still too early to fully assess the

³⁷ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414669, Coded telegram from Athens of 22 April 1967.

³⁸ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414781, Coded telegram from Athens of 24 April 1967.

“seriousness” of it all. Also, all of them were faced with the same question – how to establish cooperation with the new regime.³⁹

The views of Belgrade were to a large extent burdened by the non-aligned foreign policy concept pursued by Yugoslavia. Based on received information, it was thought that the “military-fascist” coup in Greece had all the hallmarks of the cold-war policy. It was noted that the coup coincided with the foreign policy interests of the US, because the escalation of the conflict in Vietnam and the increasingly evident presence of the USSR in the Near East had made Greece a sensitive geo-political location that allowed “more direct control of developments in the Mediterranean” and “exerting pressure on the Middle and Near Eastern countries”. Belgrade believed that an electoral victory of the left would have made uncertain this strategic-political concept of the US, and Washington could not allow it. The State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs of SFRY believed that the coup was a clear message to other dithering NATO members that no “breaking of bloc constraints” would be tolerated and no “internal evolution” allowed if it could lead to a change in the foreign policy course and result in a shift in the balance of power in Europe. A particular cause for concern was the assumption that the practice of military coups could spill over into the rest of the European continent. It was believed that the implementation of such extreme solutions did not suit European countries which, in line with their own interests, sought cooperation and security in Europe as well as increased political and military emancipation from the US. The response of the USSR was judged as “cautious” and “measured” – as tacit acceptance of the fact that Greece was in the American sphere of interest. It was noted that the Soviets were happy to see American policy being compromised in Europe. The alignment of the US with the monarch was seen in Belgrade as a result of concern for the future of Greece and an attempt to “channel events” in the direction preferred by the US. Belgrade estimated that the military coup in Greece would stall the process of cooperation and security in Europe and therefore the development was seen as an anti-European move.⁴⁰

Yugoslav diplomats paid particular attention to the putschist regime’s face-off with the representatives of democratic and liberal camps, especially the

³⁹ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415152, Coded telegram from Athens of 25 April 1967 on Ambassador Javorski’s conversation with US Ambassador Talbot; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415202, Coded telegram from Athens of 25 April 1967 on Ambassador Javorski’s conversations with the ambassadors of USSR, Bulgaria and Poland; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415203, Coded telegram from Athens of 25 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415321, Coded telegram from Athens of 28 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415410, Coded telegram from Athens of 28 April 1967.

⁴⁰ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416358, Memo to all diplomatic missions of SFRY dated 18 May 1967.

United Democratic Left (EDA). They noted the disbandment of all organizations where the EDA had wielded influence. Their insights into the regime's propaganda revealed that this party had been labeled as an "instrument of international communism in Greece". Pressures on party members and their families, efforts to make its members renounce their beliefs and membership in the party, ultimatums to officials to publicly declare loyalty to the new regime and become "good Greeks", mass arrests, internments and tortures of party members and sympathizers, denying medical assistance to ill EDA representatives in an attempt to remove them by "death from natural causes" – all of this contributed to assessments that the putschist regime was reactionary and fascist.⁴¹ In this context, a noteworthy detail was the request of representatives of socialist countries to the Yugoslavian ambassador Javorski to intercede with the American ambassador, Phillips Talbot, to save the life of M. Glezos.⁴²

The collected reports were contradictory to a large extent, but what they all had in common was a concern for the fate of Greece. British analyses indicated that the social upheavals in Greece had "launched" a group of younger and radical officers, mostly from underprivileged backgrounds, who were unhappy with the "politicians' uselessness and corruption" and willing to implement a "firm-hand policy" in order to secure economic progress. The representatives of France and Sweden condemned the new putschist regime for suspending the parliamentary system and its oppression of democratic and liberal figures. Paris was willing to offer asylum to some Greek politicians. France condemned the putschist regime's dissolution of the parliament and targeting of democratic and liberal foci. Paris was concerned that the military coup had instigated wider instability that could potentially spill over into neighboring countries. For these reasons the French government intended to take a reserved stand towards the new regime. Egyptian and Syrian envoys saw the developments in Greece as the introduction of "Vietnam methods" in Europe and US attempts to find a "surrogate" for NATO. In their opinion, Greece was to be followed by Italy, where the putschist rebellion, with the help of the CIA, could eliminate democratic institutions. For Cairo, the coup and all of its accompanying developments were an attempt to target the United Arab Republic (UAR) and non-aligned countries. Damascus was convinced that the Athens coup was just one in a series of similar

⁴¹ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416389, Coded telegram from Athens of 5 May 1967.

⁴² DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, F. 40, doss. 16, no. 415322, Coded telegram from the Second Command of the State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs to all Yugoslav diplomatic missions dated 4 May 1967. The US Ambassador accepted the appeal of Ambassador Javorski about the life threat to M. Glezos and pacifying the tensions in Greece. Information received from the highest representatives of the putschist government indicated that Glezos would not be executed. In a later conversation with members of the US Embassy Javorski learned of Talbot's intervention to save the life of Andreas Papandreou.

American and Western actions in Asia, Africa and the Near East. Turkish diplomats implicitly intimated that their country was ready to take military action in Cyprus if the putschist regime in Athens decided to make a move in the island. In Ankara, developments in Greece were seen as a “Naser-esque” event, with Turkey pursuing its own propaganda in this context. The government of Cyprus tried to avoid making any public assessments in order to prevent “Greek internal dilemmas and divisions from spilling over to the island”. In Nicosia, it was believed that the Greek position regarding Cyprus would remain unchanged. Based on their talks with Makarios III, the Yugoslav diplomats concluded that he had been surprised by the coup in Athens and showed some uneasiness in regard to the actions of Turkey. Romanians and Hungarians condemned the coup and its oppressive measures. Rome believed that the coup was temporary and that it would not change the Greek foreign policy.⁴³

In April and May 1967 Yugoslav diplomats actively collaborated with other foreign envoys in Athens, supplying the US embassy with information about the positions and roles of politicians such as Glezos in the Communist Party of Greece. They underlined that the United Democratic Left (EDA), which included the Greek communists, had chosen to work towards its political objectives “by peaceful means” and that it had advocated preserving constitutionality and parliamentarism. Contacts with American representatives in Athens allowed Yugoslav diplomats to discern the position of the US towards the putschists. Another information of note was that the putschists, lieutenants and captains during the war, were staunch anti-communists and unsympathetic towards Yugoslavia, which had supported Markos Vafiadis during the Greek Civil War. According to available reports, this group of officers believed that Greece was facing a “Slavic threat” and “a danger from the north”, and that in areas along the Greco-Yugoslavian border a process of intense Hellenization needed to be implemented. Equal attention was paid to the reactions of Soviet and Eastern European diplomats. Belgrade was informed of the prognoses of Eastern European embassies that the putschist regime would evolve in time and that power would ultimately end up in the hands of the far right. Analyses of the new situation en-passant included statements of Greek diplomats that the coup was the result of the “degeneration and corruption of parliamentarism”; that it was a pro-

⁴³ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416010, Coded telegram from Athens of 29 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416473, Coded telegram from Athens; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, nos. 416612, 415453, 415950, 415475, Coded telegrams from Athens; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415371, Coded telegram from Nicosia of 26 May 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 2, no. 416102, Coded telegram from Athens of 4 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416478, Coded telegram from Nicosia of 8 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416612, Coded telegram from Paris of 8 May 1967.

cess of the “internal cleansing” of radical elements in the political life of Greece; and that the situation would quickly change and normalize.⁴⁴

There was no doubt about Belgrade’s concern about the developments in Greece. The events in Athens were discussed at the session of the Foreign Policy Committee of the Federal Assembly of Yugoslavia held on 27 April 1967. In an interview in the *Večernje novosti* daily the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs underlined that Yugoslavia was closely monitoring the developments in Greece and making efforts to develop its relations with its southern neighbor based on “equality and non-intervention”, provided that Greece was willing and “stable enough” to work on establishing such international relations. The Yugoslav diplomacy saw the fascist nature of the putschist regime in its frequent references to the “purity of the Greek tribe”, mentioning the threat from an “enemy race” (the Slavs) and “Slavo-communism”. Belgrade was afraid of a possible de-stabilization of the general situation in the Balkans and the Mediterranean, the strengthening of bloc divisions, and undermining security in Europe. Therefore, Yugoslav diplomats in Cairo were asked to, together with their Egyptian colleagues, consider all options for influencing a more favorable course of events. Diplomatic representatives in Nicosia were instructed to work with Makarios III to assess the repercussions that the Athens coup could potentially have in Cyprus and in the Mediterranean. Yugoslav envoys in Sofia, Paris, Bucharest, Damascus and Ankara were told to make a detailed evaluation of the positions of their respective host countries about the situation in Greece. There were constant contacts and exchanges of opinions with the representatives of the Great Powers.⁴⁵

Reports arriving from Soviet circles in Athens indicated that the new regime was replacing incompetent staff in the bureaucracy with even worse alter-

⁴⁴ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415410, Coded telegram from Athens of 28 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415448, Coded telegram from Athens of 27 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415449, Coded telegram from Athens of 27 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415450, Coded telegram from Athens of 27 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415471, Coded telegram from Athens of 29 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, nos. 415950 and 415984, Coded telegrams from Athens of 3 May 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 13, no. 438038, Coded telegram from Athens of 26 August 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 10, no. 435921, Coded telegram from Athens of 14 October 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 4, no. 436962, , Coded telegram from Athens of 26 October 1967.

⁴⁵ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 414456, Coded telegram from Belgrade to diplomatic missions of SFRY of 28 April 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 414456, Note on the measures undertaken by the State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs concerning the coup in Greece dated 3 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416992, Coded telegram from Athens of 8 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 2, no. 417851, Coded telegram from Athens of 17 May 1967.

natives. It was noted that the putschists had no economic program and that efforts to “quickly conjure one up” were proving futile. The economic situation was seen as very difficult. The absence of loans, according to the reports of Yugoslav diplomats, “had frozen” all relevant economic activities. The collected information suggested that there were growing feelings of “internal dissent”, “ambition”, “envy” and “uncertainty and nerves” among the putschists. The base used to execute the coup and establish the new regime was seen as “too narrow”. The newly established regime, according to reports, was struggling with a lack of staff options. Dissatisfaction was also registered in the army. According to Soviet analyses, there were two options: the regime could quickly resort to “large-scale measures of terror and physical elimination of prisoners and all that is progressive and stands in their way”, or there would be a “positive turnaround and shift in the putschists’ internal and foreign policy”. The Soviet diplomats believed that the “putschist coterie” would never willingly renounce power.⁴⁶

In Belgrade there were fears that the countries of the Eastern “contingent” were trying to “push [Yugoslavia] to be at the frontline” of criticism of the Greek situation and thereby isolate it from the West. For this reason the diplomatic representatives of Yugoslavia shied away from any form of “joint action” with the Soviet Union and the countries of the socialist bloc. Reacting to the views of Eastern European diplomats that reports of the conflicting interests of the US and the putschists were to be regarded with utmost suspicion, that the developments in Greece were to be assessed in the wider context of the Vietnam War and the intensifying conflict in the Near East, and that the efforts of the new regime to present itself as affably as possible were to be received with caution, Yugoslav diplomats – even when they agreed with these views – expressed evident reservations. Like their Eastern European colleagues, they also saw the putschist regime in Greece as fascist (“revival of fascism”). They were convinced that the dictatorship in Greece was “encouraging” the emergence of a “fascist climate” in other European countries (Italy, West Germany) and saw the new Greek regime as a threat to European security. They read the response of other European countries as their being aware that the events in Greece were “a dangerous phenomenon” that needed to be opposed.⁴⁷

Western diplomats expressed concern for the future of Greece. The French and the British openly strove to safeguard the monarchy and the Crown. The British believed that the current situation defied the monarch’s abilities and experience. They saw the putschist regime as a dictatorship of the police rather

⁴⁶ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416992, Coded telegram from Athens of 8 May 1967.

⁴⁷ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 2, no. 418498, Coded telegram from Athens of 19 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 418498/ 2 , Coded telegram from Belgrade to the embassy in Athens dated 26 May.

than the army, and considered it strongly anti-communist in nature. They feared a “sudden explosion of the people’s dissatisfaction”, but did not believe that the putschists would resort to “killing prisoners or any wider measures of open terror”. The British underlined that there had been no imminent reason for the coup. According to London’s information, the putschist regime first attracted supporters in circles that believed that the coup had “put an end to a period of fruitless political friction that contributed little to the country’s progress”. As for relations with Yugoslavia, London underlined that the putschists had “warped views” and that “they had slept through twenty years of Yugoslav internal development”. Belgrade was advised to accept contacts with Athens and contribute to the “evolution” of the existing regime. At the same time the British influenced the members of the putschist regime to stop proliferating tensions with Yugoslavia and bring their relations with the northern neighbor within “a framework of normalcy”.

Envoys of the non-aligned countries were convinced that the US had actively taken part in the coup (via proxy) and that the monarch had also been involved in the recent events. The coup was seen as “well-executed”. The objective and nature of the coup was judged as fascist and anti-communist. It was believed that the putschists had been raised to believe in a “junta” ideology, whose pillars were the Crown, circles in the army and police, and the far-right. The diplomats of non-aligned countries did not expect that the putschists would stand down or that there would be a swift turnaround in Greece. The envoys of Egypt were particularly interested in the policy of the West in the Near East. In their opinion, the toppling of the dynasty – which the putschists had not done – would have given the developments in Greece a “more positive direction”. From this perspective, Cairo believed that the putschists had “squandered their opportunity” and that this had brought them even closer to radical anti-communism and persecuting the left.⁴⁸

Yugoslav diplomats in Athens were actively working on alarming the global public about the issue of political prisoners that the putschist regime held interned in camps, usually in the islands. They actively advocated saving Iliou, the leader of EDA’s caucus in the parliament, who was critically ill. They were among the most agile diplomats in pressuring the regime to release some aged, exhausted or ailing political opponents. The Yugoslav diplomats publicized the information they received from the prisoners’ families, reporting indescribable tortures suffered by communists and members of the United Democratic Left (EDA). The action to get them released “involved” many organizations such as the Jurist Association, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Socialist Alliance and the

⁴⁸ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 417115, Coded telegram from Athens of 13 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 2, no. 418838, Coded telegram from Athens of 24 May 1967.

Red Cross. Frequent contacts were made with the diplomatic missions of the USSR and other socialist countries, Mexico, UAR, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, US, France, Denmark, etc. The putschist regime was asked to allow diplomatic envoys and reporters to visit the camps and prisons where the regime's opponents were being kept.⁴⁹

Immigration from Greece and the regime's terror against the Macedonian minority in the northern parts of the country were monitored with no less attention. The figure of 8,247 immigrants in the first six months of 1967 (4,250 from northern Greece) was several times smaller than in previous years (in 1966 29,500 had left Greece, with 9,300 of those leaving northern Greece), but this was the result of implemented political measures that decided who would be allowed to leave and who would not. At the same time it was noted that the regime and the Greek Orthodox Church were campaigning to ban the Macedonian minority from using their own language. Many arrests of people who had been caught speaking Macedonian in public were registered. The leading role in the reforming of the local population was entrusted to the clergy. An additional contingent of 120 Greek priests was dispatched to Macedonian-populated areas with the task of doing their duty for "faith and country". Another means of intense pressure were school managements, which changed the teaching staff in schools, appointing younger and more agile teachers tasked with "spiritually reforming rural children in Macedonian villages". Children were banned from using the Macedonian language and penalized if they did so. The process of Hellenization was also implemented among immigrants of Macedonian nationality.⁵⁰

Analyses of the statements issued by the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs were read by Yugoslav diplomats as the regime's efforts to justify its existence by citing a threat of "communist regimes". Shifting responsibility to other neighboring countries had its "utilitarian value" in a cold-war world and was meant to, ideologically and politically, secure the understanding of the US and West Europe for the dictatorship in Athens. The fact that Belgrade and other capitals of socialist countries had condemned the putschist regime was seen in Athens as a sign of "anxiety" that their political "friends" (Communist Party of

⁴⁹ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 4I, doss. I, no. 4I6927, Coded telegram from Athens of 10 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 4I, doss. I, no. 4I7158, Coded telegram from Athens of 13 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 4I, doss. 2, no. 4I7707, Coded telegram from Athens of 17 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 4I, doss. 2, no. 4I785I, Coded telegram from Athens of 17 May 1967. The Red Cross mission that visited the camp on the island of Gyaros included an ICRC delegate who had given a positive report on the situation in Auschwitz and other Nazi camps during the Second World War.

⁵⁰ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 4I, doss. 7, no. 428978, Coded telegram from Athens of 4 August 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 4I, doss. 7, no. 428979, Coded telegram from Athens of 4 August 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 4I, doss. 7, no. 442712, Report of the Consul General in Thessaloniki dated 8 November 1967.

Greece, Center Union, United Democratic Left) had been eliminated from political life. In this way the putschist regime tried to paint itself as the victim and the West's most consistent ally in the struggle against communism and to make its neighbors (Yugoslavia, Bulgaria...) appear as a "threat" to Greece. Official Belgrade had information that the putschists, especially one of the regime's chief ideologues Colonel Papadopoulos, underlined that "Yugoslavia was more of a threat to the new regime than the USSR and other countries of the Warsaw Pact". In line with this notion, military exercises of various purposes were being done on the Yugoslav border. The treaty of border exchange was suspended; Yugoslav nationals were exiled or arrested; Yugoslav nationals had difficulties in obtaining Greek visas; anti-Yugoslav propaganda was intensified; the existence of the Macedonian nation was denied... Protests coming from Belgrade and other socialist countries against the suspension of parliamentary institutions were seen by the putschist regime as meddling in the internal affairs of Greece and the "threat of pan-Slavism". Yugoslavia was accused of aspirations to reach Thessaloniki and was described as the "main enemy of the current regime" in Athens. All of this contributed to the "slowing down" and "narrowing" of existing cooperation between Yugoslavia and Greece. However, regardless of the Greek regime's negative assessments, in mid-1967 the Yugoslav diplomacy proceeded to establish "limited contacts".⁵¹

Reports from Athens indicated that the putschist regime was systematically and rapidly working on establishing its control over state institutions. This was particularly true of staff decisions in the army, police, means of propaganda, and key ministries. Yugoslav diplomats saw the regime's fascist nature in its disbandment of democratic and progressive associations, dissolution of over 160 central and regional associations of workers and public servants, confiscating their property and blocking their funds in banks, arresting many officials, banning strike rights, and oppression of national minorities. The absence of any significant changes in the Bank of Greece and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was seen as the regime's intention to avoid additional doubts of the country's economic and foreign-policy course. The formation of a "well-organized and disciplined" regime party and a "liberal party" that would pretend to be its opposition was also meant to contribute to the stabilization of the existing situation.

⁵¹ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 42, doss. 2, no. 418586, Coded telegram from Athens of 22 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 42, doss. 2, no. 420432, Note on the conversation of Deputy State Secretary D. Belovski with the Greek Ambassador in Belgrade, N. Kamboularis, of 16 June 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 42, doss. 3, no. 427297, Coded telegram to all Yugoslav diplomatic missions of 16 August 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 42, doss. 2, no. 422354, Greco-Yugoslav relations after the coup in Greece of 1 July 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 13, no. 438902, Interior political situation in Greece and Greco-Yugoslav relations after the coup of 21 April, 11 November; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 13, no. 442798, Some questions concerning bilateral relations of Greece and SFRY, 18 December 1967.

There were indications that, with the passage of time, disagreements between the monarch and the putschists were beginning to “surface”, as well as reports that the king enjoyed the support of former politicians. It was assessed that the putschists were trying to “re-root” the entire political life in Greece and portray it as “national democracy”. After the liquidation of the left, the main threat to the regime came from the far right. The idea was to weaken its position by implementing personnel changes in state institutions, preventing old political parties and their leaders from getting involved in the country’s political life, strong anti-communism, destroying and demoralizing. This regime policy, according to Yugoslav diplomats, coincided with the “general interests” of the US and the West. The social base of the regime was made up of “middle and petty classes”, as well as the rural population which believed that the putschists would improve its social standing and thereby “rectify the injustices” of the previous regimes. Collected information also indicated that large capitalists (shipping magnates, industrialists...) had still not joined the new regime and were hesitant about returning their evacuated funds to the country. Information coming from the regime’s opponents, foreign diplomats and well-informed journalists suggested that the political situation in Greece was “thickening” and that the responsible political actors were striving to engineer a “peaceful evolution” of political life.⁵²

In the last months of 1967 Yugoslav diplomats in Athens thought that the key actors in Greece (the Crown, the far right, the Americans etc.) were primarily concerned about the extraordinary measures that had resulted from the coup being overcome peacefully (“evolution of political life”). They noted a fear of internal conflicts, growing dissatisfaction and hiccups in the country’s economy. It was concluded that the putschists were working in favor of future right-wing rule, both domestic and foreign, and implementing a “useful cleansing” of democratic forces, which was the reason that they were still being offered compromises. Like the members of the Center Union (Mavros), they did not believe the promises of political changes. According to Yugoslav diplomats, the final outcome was expected to be a “form of parliamentarism” that would incorporate the putschist government. In this way, with the help of right-wing circles in the US and the West, the initiated process of reforming the “revolution” of the coup would be completed. This process would secure the legacies of the

⁵² MSP RS, PA, 1967, doss. 2, f. 41, no. 418678, Coded telegram from Athens of 20 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 2, no. 418795, Coded telegram from Athens of 8 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 2, no. 420689, Coded telegram from Athens of 5 June 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 3, no. 421819, Coded telegram from Athens of 15 June 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 3, no. 423212, Coded telegram from Athens of 23 June 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 3, no. 423480, Coded telegram from Athens of 27 June 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 3, no. 424510, Coded telegram from Athens of 5 July 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 42, doss. 3, no. 427297, Coded telegram from Belgrade to all diplomatic missions abroad, dated 16 August 1967.

coup and establish a sort of “quasi-parliamentarism”, which would at the same time pacify the democratic public opinion in the West. The regime’s tendency to implement “radical measures” had disillusioned the analysts of political developments in Greece that the political opposition (both right-wing and left-wing) could affect the course of events in a more meaningful way.⁵³

Under the military junta, the Communist Party of Greece and the United Democratic Left (EDA) suffered huge losses. Party members who had managed to escape arrest were hiding in very difficult circumstances. Former sympathizers, intimidated by the regime’s threats that anyone who assisted communists in hiding would be tried at a military court, refused to offer them refuge. The police, although initially reserved toward the putschists, had completely identified with the regime after some personnel changes. Artists were being blacklisted, which meant that their work could not be shown or played (composer Mikis Theodorakis, director and art director of the National Theater Alexis Minotis, ethno-musicologist Dora Stratou, prominent actresses Melina Mercouri and Irene Pappas). The anti-communist campaign reached its peak in December 1967, at the time of open dissatisfaction with the situation in the country, the monarchists’ military involvement and the capitulation in Cyprus. In contrast to the general public in the West, which silently watched the wanted-fugitive lists, enormous prizes offered to anyone who would help the regime apprehend communist “assassins” and “criminals”, military courts, the emergence of kangaroo courts, dissemination of false propaganda about a “communist conspiracy”, and the climate of terror, the Yugoslav diplomacy actively worked to assist the “progressive forces” in Greece.⁵⁴

In early December 1967 there were reports from Athens that Konstantinos Karamanlis had decided to become politically active and asked the putschists to stand down. Since his supporters made up a significant chunk of

⁵³ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 4, no. 434660, Coded telegram from Athens of 6 October 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 4, no. 439432, Coded telegram from Athens of 17 November 1967.

⁵⁴ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 3, no. 424669, Coded telegram from Athens of 6 July 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 3, no. 424982, Coded telegram from Athens of 6 July 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 5, no. 442444, Coded telegram from Athens of 13 December 1967. Due to the oppression it suffered, at the 12th Party Plenum of 1968 the Communist Party of Greece split into two factions. From this moment on, according to Yugoslav diplomats who carefully followed the events within the Greek Communist Party, the conflicting party camps, their ideological orientations, possibilities of future cooperation, fundamental views on the internal development of the country, foreign policy and membership were “irreconcilably at odds”. Aware of the harmfulness of their conflict, the two leaderships were ready to accept responsibility for the new situation. The Yugoslav diplomats reported that this was a “deep rift” rooted in different starting points and divergent views on key ideological questions and internal and foreign policy.

the regime's "political base", this move was seen as a "diversion within their own ranks". For these reasons some high-ranking putschists in power demanded that Karamanlis be brought to a military court and tried for high treason. In this new situation the Yugoslav diplomats in Athens predicted a rapid differentiation within the National Radical Union (ERE). Their information suggested that the leadership of the Center Union (Mavros, G. Papandreou), previously inclined to pursue a tactic of waiting and speculating, had positively received Karamanlis's move. At the same time it was concluded that Karamanlis's statement did not indicate any changes in his position towards the left camp and that he still saw them as "responsible for the political chaos that had facilitated the military coup". For watchful analysts, the political "activation" of K. Karamanlis was a sign that something big was about to happen. Some of the information that had reached Yugoslav diplomats suggested that the monarch could take responsibility for the situation in the country.⁵⁵

December 1967 was no less turbulent in Greece than the whole year. In the first days of December, King Constantine II, with the help of the military (Third Army and parts of the Navy and Air Force), tried to make the colonels who had organized the coup to surrender power to civilians. Since he relied on units full of infiltrated junta members, as it turned out, his move could not meaningfully threaten the Regime of the Colonels. Any hopes that constitutionality and parliamentarism would be "restored" fell through and the monarch left the country. Unlike the king, who did not want to see bloodshed and offered amnesty to all participants in the coup of 21 April 1967, some putschists were ready to take to arms against those who "in pursuit of fame had persuaded the king to go against the national government and nation". The regime's intense propaganda insisted on the view that the monarch had been "seduced" by the "enemies of the revolution". Tanks and mechanized infantry were sent out to the streets of Athens. Yugoslav diplomats reported that the army had taken all key public buildings and institutions. Movements of troops were registered in the north of the country. This behavior of the putschists suggested that there would be no compromise and that conflict was "unavoidable". The monarch's failed initiative was seen by diplomats as "immature" and the new situation as "qualitatively novel". The position of the king, who after his attempt to overthrow the putschist regime had gone to Italy, was seen as very difficult and even more reliant on the West. The Yugoslav diplomats closely followed the response of London and Washington to the new events and expected the king and the regime to reach a compromise as a result of their interventions and pressures. The failure of the monarch's counter-coup led the key Western powers to reevaluate the role of the Greek monarchy in the country's power structure and the king's capacity to

⁵⁵ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 4, no. 441558, Coded telegram from Athens of 4 December 1967.

play a vital role in the “process of restoring constitutional order”. In the opinion of Yugoslav diplomats, this was a way for Western countries, primarily the US, to recognize the putschist regime and replace “technical contacts” with full diplomatic relations, while citing an agreement with them and the king (a “façade monarchy” of sorts). In this possible scenario, the role of the monarch would be completely marginalized and merely formal, but the political right-wing camp would be left “some space” to work with after the transition to “constitutional order” promised by the regime. This outcome, which would result in a blend of “putschist dictatorship” and “court conservatism”, would improve the regime’s international position, bolster internal unity (within the junta) and consolidate its position in the army. The only option unacceptable to the US and the West in Greece was allowing the “moderate left” to come to power and inaugurate a process of “turning left”. Yugoslav diplomats noted a “complete indifference of the people” to the political events in the country and based on this concluded that neither the putschist regime nor the monarch and civic politicians had a strong reputation or influence in the country. According to their estimates, the new Papadopoulos regime, with which the Western countries hesitated to establish immediate contacts, could potentially build its popularity in the future on a referendum about declaring Greece a republic. The call of the Communist Party of Greece to the people to mount a rebellion was seen as a risky escapade. Like representatives of other embassies in Athens (US, USSR, United Kingdom), the Yugoslav diplomats also thought that Greece – with or without the king – had “entered a period of permanent instability, with a high probability of more internal upheavals and different possible epilogues”.⁵⁶

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Intensive conversations with members of political parties, closely reading the press, talks with other foreign diplomats, analytical evaluations of many individual events and their contextualization in the wider picture of the situation in Greece allowed Yugoslav diplomats to accurately assess the situation in the country, identify the potential of the military junta and the centers of putschist

⁵⁶ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 5, no. 442332, Coded telegram from Athens of 13 December 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 5, no. 442538, Coded telegram from Athens of 15 December 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 5, no. 442611, Coded telegram from Athens of 16 December 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 5, no. 443215, Coded telegram from Athens of 15 December 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 5, no. 443561, Coded telegram from Athens of 21 December 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 5, no. 443670, Coded telegram from Athens of 23 December 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 5, no. 443780, Coded telegram from Athens of 26 December 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 6, no. 443902, Coded telegram from Athens of 28 December 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 6, no. 444334, Coded telegram from Athens of 28 December 1967.

support in Greece and abroad, follow their showdown with left-wing and democratic options, recognize the ambitions of the putschist regime and the nature of their dictatorship, have insight into the situation of the opposition, make out the contours of a possible state-political system, monitor relations with neighboring countries, closely follow the regime's position on the Macedonian minority, follow the moves of the monarch, assess the permanence of compromises, observe the pressure of the international public and the controversial behavior of the Great Powers, and offer prognoses of the course of events in the near future.⁵⁷ Yugoslav diplomats collected some of the relevant information on the situation in Greece in other capitals (London, Ankara, Nicosia, Paris...). This information contributed to a wider evaluation of the existing circumstances and a sharper picture of the developments in Greece. The general opinion was that the Yugoslav diplomats were much better informed and more agile than their counterparts from other Eastern European countries, who were seen as "slow", "unsure", "confused", "contradictory" and so on. In the days and months following the coup, the Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens was a center where many came to get information, consult with their peers, verify their assessments and learn Belgrade's views. Besides the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, collected information was sent to Josip Broz Tito, Edvard Kardelj, Koča Popović, Mijalko Todorović, Marko Nikezić, Ivan Gošnjak, Petar Stambolić and Ivan Mišković.

Sources

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⁵⁷ Information sent by Yugoslav diplomats from Athens to Belgrade were used and seen as highly valuable. MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 42, doss. 2, no. 417113/2U, Coded telegram from Athens of 17 May 1967.

