

TEXT OF STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE GREEK REPRESENTATIVE

AT THE SIXTH MEETING OF

THE COMMISSION OF INVESTIGATION

Foreign Press Division

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SPEECH DELIVERED IN ATHENS ON FEBRUARY 3, 1947

BY Mr. ALEXIS KYROU, LIAISON OFFICER TO THE U.N.

COMMISSION OF INVESTIGATION

Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen:

The statements so far made by the Liaison Officers of the neighbouring countries must have been a source of great surprise to you. The gentlemen have attempted to persuade your Commission that its mission is the investigation of the internal problems of Greece.

But this is not the case. The job of the Commission was accurately determined by the mandator in its decision of 19 December, 1946. You will remember that the case was brought up by the Greek Government who complained of violations by their northern neighbours of the Greek frontier and of their formenring disturbances in Northern Greece.

The question before your Commission is that of the relations between Greece and her three northern neighbours. It is not either the domestic policy or the political complexion of any one of the four governments concerned.

The nature of the investigation is strictly limited by paragraph 2 of the decision of the Security Council, on the basis of which this Commission was constituted. Permit me to remind you of the wording of that paragraph:

"The Security Council under Article 34 of the Charter
"establish a Commission of Investigation to ascertain
"the facts relating to the alleged border violations
"along the frontier between Greece on the one hand and
"Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia on the other."

The mission of the Commission is further elucidated in article 5 of the same resolution which reads as follows:

"The Commission shall have authority to conduct its
"investigation in Northern Greece and in such places
"in other parts of Greece; Albania, Bulgaria and
"Yugoslavia as the Commission considers should be in-
"cluded in its investigation in order to elucidate the
"causes and nature of the above-mentioned border violat-
"ions and disturbances."

Now, our three neighbours would like to have us believe that the work of this Commission is to discover the causes of the anomalous condition existing in certain parts of Greece. But this is obviously not the case. What you, Gentlemen, have to investigate is the Greek charge that disturbances have been inspired, produced or supported from the outside. Our charge is that these disturbed conditions have been to a very large extent formenring by our neighbours.

You will recall that an attempt was recently made by the Ukrainian Government to direct the attention of the Security Council to the conduct of the Greek Government in its domestic sphere and that the Council took a decision which amounted to a

dismissal of that complaint on behalf of the Ukrainian Government. The Council has taken the view that it has no competence to enter into such questions. The political complexion of Greece or of any other United Nation is out of reach by the very terms of the Charter (article 7) which require us to respect the political independence of member-States.

The assertion that the Commission has the obligation to investigate the causes of the internal situation of Greece could have been plausible only if it could be demonstrated that Greece or the Greek way of life constituted a threat to our neighbours. But it was decided more than once by the Security Council that the internal problems of Greece do not constitute a threat to anybody. That the internal situation of my country, after all she has suffered in the common struggle, leaves much to be desired, we are the first to admit. But we maintain that it is our own job to deal with that problem. And all we ask is to be left alone by our neighbours to work out our own salvation. We ask to be given a chance to solve the many problems that the war has bequeathed to us in its wake.

A systematic campaign has been going on for the last couple of years against this poor country. Our northern neighbours especially delight in applying to us the reproachful appellation of "fascists". But, Gentlemen,

".....what's in a name?

that which we call a rose by any other name would
smell as sweet".

To most of us Greeks -and I venture to believe to many other peoples as well- other countries in this corner of the world deserve that name.

Greece has nothing to hide that is not already known to everybody. The slightest brawl here, properly distorted or magnified, by interested parties, is instantly cabled to the four corners of the world. But the entanglement of this Commission in affairs of this sort, which as I have pointed out before are absolutely alien to its mission, would only result in fruitless prolixities and in ultimate failure. For, where is such an investigation of internal conditions to commence and where is it to end? Moreover, were internal conditions to become the object of this investigation, on what grounds could our neighbours refuse the Commission the right to inquire into the nature of their own regime which, in our opinion, permits and encourages the formentation of trouble in this country?

For all these reasons, I believe Gentlemen, that the work of this Commission can be made to promote the peace of the Balkans only if its jurisdiction is to remain within the letter and the spirit of the Security Council's resolution of the 19 December 1946.

I shall now give you briefly the historical background of the case before us.

The war years were marked in this country by a total resistance on the part of her population and by the untold sufferings of the people. So that when this country was finally liberated, the people had every right to expect the joy that comes from quiet, the recognition of their national rights and freedom from want and fear. But no such joy was theirs. Nor is it theirs now. The Greek people were deprived of this elemental right by those few who, inspired by interested foreigners, exploited the resistance

idea for base political reasons. A rebellion broke out shortly after liberation. The aim was the seizure of the Government by a small armed minority and the imposition of the will of this minority upon the great unarmed majority of the Greek people.

Following the Varkiza Agreement, which put an end to the conflict, the Greek and British armies advanced in Northern Greece and restored the sovereignty of the State to the whole of the Greek territory.

Seven to eight thousand armed communists, known as ELAsites, however, crossed the border, and depending on the part of the territory where they had happened to be, entered Albania or Yugoslavia or Bulgaria. These three countries not only received them with open arms but also deliberately offered them succour and moral and material assistance. By common agreement they decided to send most of them to the Boulkes Camp at Voivodina near Belgrade. Thus, about five thousand men were sent to Boulkes while those who remained in Albania, and Bulgaria were ordered to keep in touch with their partners who had remained in Greece. To Boulkes were sent also about two thousand people, including men of science, workmen, overaged persons; children and women, who had been taken as hostages in December 1944 by the ELAS and under most dreadful conditions had been forced to march in groups towards and beyond the northern borders of Greece. I have at the disposal of the Commission a detailed memorandum by a Society of the families of these poor hostages as well as an album of their photographs. Never was permission granted by the Yugoslav authorities to anybody, including UNRRA Services, to approach the camp where these hostages are kept. The liberation and repatriation of these innocent victims will be an act of charity and their return home will put an end to an important psychological impediment interfering with the establishment of better relations between Greece and her neighbours.

The Boulkes Camp has in the meantime been turned into a sort of guerrilla war academy for the training of bandits. These bandits were of two kinds: first, there were the above-mentioned ELAsites and, secondly, a number of Slav-speaking Greek citizens who has collaborated with the Germans and Bulgars during the occupation of Greek Macedonia and who felt it necessary to flee from Greece after her liberation.

In April 1946 a "Special School for Chieftains" was established where the elite of the communists in the Camp were given special training with a view to reorganizing and directing guerrilla operations in Greece. When the first group of about two hundred, promoted to the rank of Chieftains, had completed their training, the "Nikos Zachariades" Brigade was formed. (Mr. Nikos Zachariades, by the way, is the gentleman who heads the Communist Party of Greece and who lives undisturbed and unmolested in this "fascist" country of ours not far from where this Commission is holding its meeting at this moment.) The Yugoslav authorities pretend that the members of the Zachariades Brigade as well as of a second Brigade, named ELAS after the rebellious army of 1944, are employed in public works in Yugoslavia. But how does it happen then that on several of the corpses of bandits killed while fighting on Greek territory were found identification papers proving their derivation from Camp Boulkes?

Among a great deal of evidence which your Commission will have a chance to examine in Salonica there is a Release Paper from the Bulkes Camp Hospital issued on 31 July, 1946, to Kapetan Christos Zezas. This release paper found on the corpse of this chieftain after a battle in Kokkovo on 22 January, 1947, - that is, only twelve days ago - I have the honour to hand in to you, Mr. Chairman, together with photograph copies of it for distribution to the honourable members.

It is perhaps of interest to note that on the same corpse was found this newspaper published in Greek by the inmates of the Boulkes Camp. The date is 29 December, 1946. Branches of this camp were known to exist until quite recently near Tirana in Albania and Manaritsa in Bulgaria near the Greek border. According to the evidence in our hands there are posts within the territory of our northern neighbours quite close to our border which are used as field hospitals for guerrillas wounded on Greek territory, as ammunition dumps, and as provisional barracks where the guerrillas seek refuge when pursued by the Greek troops. Operations are directed by foreign staff officers who use Skoplje as their headquarters. Skoplje, as you know, is the capital of Yugoslav Macedonia. There also is the Seat of an organization founded by Yugoslav authorities, called NOF (Narod Osvoboditelen Front), that is to say, National Liberation Front. The aim of this organization in the words of its official Bulletin is to incite the few thousand Greek citizens in Central Macedonia who speak Slavic dialects to take up arms against the Greek authorities in order to help and swell the ranks of the guerrillas.

But what is the object, you may ask, of this warlike activity? It aims at sundering from Greece a region, rich in fertile plains, extending as far as south as Mount Olympus, Greek in the highest degree and which the authors of this activity with characteristic arbitrariness call "Aegean Macedonia". By being constantly reiterated of late on the other side of the Greek border, this term reveals the nature of the underlying plan: to raise the question of claims on the Greek Macedonia and at the same time to create a question of the Aegean. Bulgaria's original opposition to the incorporation of this province with its accompanying geographical advantages within the framework of the Federative Peoples' Republic of Yugoslavia seems to have relaxed in return for the support given by Belgrade to Bulgarian designs on another Greek province, that of Western Thrace.

One may distinguish three phases in the application of this plan so far. The note addressed by the Yugoslav Legation at Athens to the Greek Ministry for Foreign Affairs on 22 July, 1945, evidently aimed at opening the campaign diplomatically and at ushering the first phase of the plan. I quote from this note:

"The Legation of the Federative Peoples' Republic of Yugoslavia has the honour, under instructions from its Government, to draw the attention of the Greek Government to the need of putting an end to the persecution conducted in Aegean Macedonia against the Macedonians, our old compatriotes.
"....."The Yugoslav Government expects that the Greek Government shall issue the relevant instructions with a view to putting an end to terrorism and persecution of whatever kind directed against the population of Yugoslav origin in Aegean Macedonia and that it shall respect the rights of our minority."

There followed immediately the first phase of the campaign which consisted on the one hand in the formulation at the Paris Peace Conference of claims affecting Greek territory and on the other in a war of nerves directed against Greece. Attacks in the press and on the radio against this country were accompanied by ostentatious troop movements near the border and by the wholly unwarranted recall of the Yugoslav Minister from his post in Athens. But the reaction to these moves on the part of those interested in maintaining peace and the disciplined attitude of the Greek people apparently prevented the continuation of this terrorism.

The end of the first phase is marked by the intensification of the guerrilla war along the Greek frontiers facing Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Thus, what could no longer be worked from without was now sought from within. The military objective of the guerrillas was the creation of an independent region to be called at the beginning Free Greece and later to become a part of the Federation of Yugoslavia. But the firm stand of the Greek Army and the outraged reaction of the Greek people have prevented the guerrillas so far from realising this strategic objective.

The third phase of the plan began on 19 December, 1946, when the Security Council, acting at the request of the Greek Government, decided to investigate this situation. This phase is marked by an attempt in two different directions: first, an attempt to efface and so far as possible to destroy the evidence and, secondly, an attempt to transpose guerrilla activities southward with the object of proving to your Commission that there is a state of civil war throughout Greece that has nothing to do with our northern neighbours. This, Gentlemen, explains the insistence of my esteemed opponents to derail your activities as a Commission by entangling you in the internal problems of Greece. This also explains my insistence that your Commission should not lose sight of the substance off the problem before us, for on your decision depends its radical solution and the ushering of better days in the Balkan Peninsula.

I should now like to be permitted to recapitulate the evidence in your possession.

First: there are the 18 photoprints of documents forming an annex to the Memorandum submitted by the Permanent Delegate of Greece to the Security Council on 25 November 1946.

Second: there are the different depositions and declarations contained in the Memorandum attached to the Greek recourse of the 3rd December 1946. (Document S/203).

Third: the depositions, reports, notes, newspaper citations and 20 photoprints, presented by the Prime Minister of Greece at the 83rd meeting of the Security Council on 12 December 1946 in Document S/218.

Fourth: samples of arms, uniforms, badges, and ammunition, all of foreign origin, taken from bandits killed in operations or captured and deposited with the Secretariat General on the same date, i.e. 12 December 1946.

I now have the honour to deposit two pamphlets. One of them contains an enumeration of the frontier incidents from January 1 to December 31, 1946. The second contains a selection of depositions of Yugoslav, Albanian and Bulgarian military and civilian deserters, as well as of bandits who were captured or who surrendered after the publication on 23 November 1946 of the Decree of Clemency. All this evidence, selected as it is from a multitude of depositions, agrees in pointing conclusively to foreign intervention. The persons who volunteered information can be interviewed in Salonika and some of them in Yannina for a re-examination by the Commission. >

A large amount of fresh evidence will be presented to the Commission in Salonika whenever the Commission deems it proper to begin an investigation on the spot. The reasons preventing the presentation of this evidence at this stage is obvious and is to be found in a letter addressed by the Permanent Delegate of Greece to the UN Secretary General on the 5 January, 1947. It reads as follows:

by the Sec. Council
"Upon directions from my government I have the honour to express their deep regret for the retardation which is now likely in the arrival of the Comm. o. Invest. estab. under its resolution on 19 December at the area mentioned in Paragraph 4. In fact, whereas it is stated in this same paragraph that the Commission shall proceed to this area not later than 15 January 1947 reports received in Athens indicate that the Commission will not reach its destination before end of January. It is evident that this retardation which is not in strict conformity with the above resolution will further enable the concealment of evidence of the guilt".

I already had occasion to refer to this attempt at concealment after the decision of the Security Council of 19 December. It is interesting to note for instance in this connection an order of the Yugoslav Authorities forbidding foreigners, including persons in the diplomatic service, to visit Southern Serbia. I shall mention the case of the Commercial Attaché of the British Embassy in Belgrade who, on reaching Ochrida, was ordered to leave the region at once, the case of the Councillor of the French Embassy who, on his way to Monastir on service, was forced at Skoplje to return to Belgrade; the same thing happened to the Assistant Military Attaché of the United States Embassy in Belgrade. ./.

When the Greek Military Attache applied for permission in writing to visit the Greek Military Cemetery in Pirot, he received a reply forbidding this visit although Pirot does not lie within an officially forbidden zone. Furthermore, only a few days ago the Yugoslav Government, without any justification or excuse, suddenly asked for the mutual recall of the military attaches of the two countries from their respective posts.

Add to this, the disproportionately long frontier and the configuration of the terrain that render the return of any foreigners to their places of origin a relatively simple matter and you will form an idea of the ease with which foreign tracks can be covered up. Certainly, no foreign gentleman would have lingered there two months to be interviewed or photographed by the press;

But we are convinced that truth will prevail "for nothing is hid, that shall not be made manifest; nor anything secret, that shall not be known and come to light".

The Commission will have the opportunity of finding this truth when they arrive in Salonika and arrange for the reconstitution of the principal incidents in the presence of the officers and men who were attacked by the guerrillas and of any civilians who were in any way involved. A trip of the whole or a part of the Commission to Yannina for a few days will permit the reconstitution of the incidents on the Greek-Albanian frontier.

It is worth recalling here that Mr. Hysni Kapo, Albanian Representative to the Security Council, in a letter addressed to the Secretary General on 6 December 1946 and Mr. Kosanovic, Yugoslav Ambassador in Washington, in a letter addressed to the President of the Security Council on 15 December 1946, mention several violations of the Albanian and Yugoslav frontiers by Greek military forces. This, I think, makes it all the more necessary for the Commission to visit the areas mentioned in these two documents in order to ascertain the facts on the spot.

And for this reason I believe it should be clearly established now that, according to Paragraph 5 of the Security Council's resolution of 19 December, the Commission shall have the right to cross the boundary and visit such places in its vicinity in the four countries concerned as they should consider necessary. ./.

The remarks made by Your Excellency, Mr. Wunsz King, have been warmly welcome by Greek public opinion. The Greek people are deeply conscious of the vital importance attached to the decision to be taken by Your Commission.

The people of this country feel they have a right to believe that they have unhesitatingly done their duty to the utmost; that they staked all in performing this duty; that they were able to contribute to the common victory. But at the same time they see with justified bitterness that almost two years after our united victory, ./.

alone among all the victorious nations, Greece continue to suffer and bleed. She suffered as few countries did during this war; she is still suffering now.

It is up to you, Gentlemen, to give the Greek people the justice that is their due and to let them at least pursue in tranquility the immense task of rehabilitation.

Greece of today, true to her ideals of centuries, has more than done her duty by the world. She now expects the world to do its duty by her.