

V. The Principles of Geopolitics and the Case of the Greek Space in South-Eastern Mediterranean

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Introduction

Analysis and definition of the term Geopolitics is imposed by the need for its determination. The approach of Greece's geopolitical position and the international prerequisites deriving therefrom will explicitly emerge through the elucidation of the said term and the knowledge of its content.

“The first and foremost purpose of Geography is to make war”. The above provoking title was willfully used by the French geographer and geopolitician Yves Lacoste in one of his most important theoretical essays (Maspero, Paris 1977). The essence of the term in question lies in this provocation.

The utility of geography is dual: on one hand, it helps at the organization of the war or the defense of the geographical spaces which are attacked and, on the other, at the economic-political organization of those spaces during periods of peace.

According to Ladis K.D. Kristoff¹ the modern theorist of Geopolitics examines the geographical map of the earth to distinguish what the nature advises us to do in relation to our preferences and not what the nature imposes to us.

1. See Ladis K.D. Kristoff, «The Origins and Evolution of Geopolitics», *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 4 (March 1960).

With the exception of Napoleon who clearly declared that the politics of a State is based on its Geography, Harold and Margaret Sprout² note that Geography influences all immaterial and material phenomena which display territorial dimensions and variations on the surface of the earth or in relation to the earth; they also note that in all periods international politics show “more or less distinguishable patterns of compulsion and subjugation, influence and compliance, patterns which are reflected on political terms with an intense sense of the Geographical Space”.

Consequently, the Geographer directs his efforts to emphasizing the natural dimension of the risks the societies run of being subordinate to similar patterns of influence and compulsion, as if there were a possibility for a hot event, in order to avoid that risk through the intervention of the political leaderships of the planet.

Thus, the risk of war does not derive from Geography or from Geopolitics, one of Geography’s analytical methods. The risk of war will always exist as long as there are natural resources necessary to the economic development of the human societies, the loss or scarcity of which portends both the dependence of one National Social Formation, or a group thereof, to others and the transfer or the decay of the threatened societies, viewed as the basic constituents of a State.

According to Colin Gray,³ the power of the general geopolitical theory lies in the fact that it sets the local action or interaction within an international framework. Those who wish to comprehend the geopolitical dimensions of international security must assimilate the essential notions of Geopolitics.

From the Geographer and father of Geopolitics Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1914) we learn that Geopolitics is Geography under the service of the politics or the State.⁴ We must also stress the following definition of Ratzel’s student, Karl Haushofer (1869-1946): “Geopolitics will be -and must be- the geographical consciousness of the State. Its object is the study of the great vital interrelations of modern man within the

2. See H. and M. Sprout, *An Ecological Paradigm for the Study of International Politics*, Center for International Studies, Princeton 1968, 21.

3. See Colin Gray, *The Geopolitics of the Nuclear Era: Heartland, Rimlands and the Technological Revolution*, Russack/National Informations and Strategic Center, New York 1977.

4. See Fr. Ratzel, *La géographie politique*, Fayard, Paris 1987.

framework of the contemporary space, while its aim is the coordination of the phenomena which link the State with Space”.

In 1963 Saul Cohen⁵ wrote that the quintessence of Geopolitics is the study of the existing relation between the international politics of power and the corresponding geographical characteristics, mainly those geographical characteristics on which the sources of power are developed.

Michel Foucher⁶ considers Geopolitics as an aggregate method of geographical analysis of specific social and political situations regarded within their geographical framework, a method which is combined with the usual speculations (I would say ideological conceptions) typical of those situations.

In our effort to formulate a definition of our own we would say that: we may call Geopolitical analysis of a geographical system of unbalanced distribution of power the method that studies, describes and foresees the behaviors and the consequences of both the relations of the opposing and distinctive international political actions of redistribution of power and their ideological metaphysics, within the framework of the geographical zones where those politics are implemented.

Moreover, I believe that it is necessary to note that since Geopolitics analyzes the juxtapositions between specific opposing international powers, distinguishable in tenor of quality and number, its foremost concern is to take scholastically into account the speculations and conceptions that all of those powers have or develop for themselves.

The duty of geopolitical analysis is to keep its distance from the emotional confusion of the above mentioned speculative conceptions and to reach impartial conclusions. When I use the term impartial conclusions, I must stress that I reject notions such as realistic, fair or morally correct conclusions.

The geopolitical method indicates the application of those conclusions and reveals the dynamics and the orientations of the international phenomena determined by space and time. In that sense, Geography is a non-moralist approach. Of course, geographers will always be influenced by moral intuitions deriving from their specific cultural background. This background is a balanced function of the

5. See S. Cohen, *Geography and Politics in a World Divided*, Oxford University Press, New York 1963.

6. See M. Foucher, *Frontes et frontières*, Fayard, Paris 1991.

requisitions of the geographical whole where they believe they belong or the purposes of which they believe that they serve. History shows the rest.

The geopolitical approach is imposed neither by legal superstructures and international organizations nor through -willingly or unwillingly- inapplicable moral exhortations. The geopolitical approaches are dominated only by one point: the logic of power of the international ruling social and economic cores. Unfortunately, the results of the geopolitically stronger actions are “legalized” -after they have been established- by the legal decisions or the international organizations. There are many relevant examples.

A. The broader international system from the geopolitical structure viewpoint: evaluations

In this second part of the issue we are obliged to present a more general picture of the international system which will help us to specify the Greek space in the way it seems to function in the SE Mediterranean space.

The vacuum of authority derived from the fall of the Soviet Empire, which had been a centrally ruled and coherent political, economic and, mainly, defensive system, is now clear. This vacuum is noticeable due to the lack of two main coefficients: a) the fundamental “focal authority” which is the dominant component marking any organized system and b) the “final organizer” of the system. The term final organizer signifies the final administrator of the system, at least for a time without any visible end. It may seem strange that we do not consider Washington as being the final administrator of the system, as anyone would expect; yet, this is not inexplicable. The blame for this must be put, among others, on the ruling political faction of Washington that has ceded a major part of its hegemonic competence to Bonn aiming at:

a) the fastest possible absorption of the German economic surplus in the East (Central and Eastern Europe) which derived from the detaching of large quantities of international and domestic surplus (see White Book), and

b) the revival of the fears of the peoples of Western Europe For the «restoration of a “German Europe”.

The planners of Washington consider these two facts a general di-

rection which -they believe- will permit them to withdraw an important part of their attention from the European continent on Bonn's expenses to turn it towards the emerging and boiling markets of SE Asia and the Pacific Zone.

In our view, this probable (for others clear) consideration on the USA's stance towards the German side has two extents:

a) on one hand, the projection of Germany to the Mediterranean through the Adriatic Sea, and

b) the German conquest of the regional Central European markets and the transformation of the broader European space (Western and Central Europe) to a Mark zone.

This picture of the more general geopolitical planning will have been accomplished only when there is an answer to the question that concerns us all: does Washington accept co-hegemony of the planet with Bonn? The answer is negative. Things become clearer and, at the same time, more complex for the brains of the USA's geopolitical planning:

1) The governing political faction of Washington takes into account that a part of the American multinational enterprises makes business from Germany. It also recognizes that although the German national expansion to the East incriminates the national Germany at the subconscious of the European peoples, at the same time it strengthens the American mechanisms of detaching of international relative surplus value.

2) Moreover, in every region of apparent expansion of the political and economic power of Bonn (Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe) Washington creates opposing supports which at any time will be able to destroy the establishing powerful German economic empire.

Greece never had a place in the framework of the geopolitical planning of the Continental Powers, being a Maritime Power itself. If Athens runs away with similar choices its future will be obscure in the international environment.

Considering the above we must take seriously into account the tactful effort of the governing political faction of Washington to involve the British Factor in the European case, aiming at the strengthening of the USA's Balkan and West European rears with a NATO presence of European origin. However, this planning does not take into account the British interests and aims to use London as a "breakwater" for an eventually uncontrolled Germany, as was the case during World War

II. This role has been assigned to Mr. John Major given that, due to her completely different but correct views, Mrs. Thatcher has been replaced.

3) However, the reflexes activated in the European peoples have already worked towards this direction; the rapture of the famous “French-German axis” and the creation of a discrete English-French collaboration is an example: the latter is likely to support the nuclear presence of France at the Pacific and as we mentioned before, the strategic and economic planning of Washington is directed towards this region. However, we must not forget that there lie some of the most important consignments of the British Commonwealth’s international economic history.

4) The presence of London, Paris and Washington at the Pacific Zone functions on two levels:

a) it secures the said region from a probable Chinese and Japanese expansion and integration, and

b) it tries to share it out in time among those three poles or economic-political power.

The intermediate juxtapositions between Paris and Washington, e.g., in the matter of the French nuclear tests, are rather explicable under the logic of the internal moves of this still unbalanced system of regional domination, until a medium short-term balance within the system is achieved. Besides, the return of France in the military branch of NATO has proven the truth of the above remark as far as the rallying of the “Germany-fearing” powers under the auspices of USA is concerned. Naturally, the sharing of the cards in the Pacific remains Washington’s competence. The latter seems to have completely adopted the doctrine “divide and conquer”, mainly whenever this can be applied to Great Britain and France. Besides, it is well known that there are not permanent friendships and alliances among States; there are only permanent interests.⁷

5) On the other side, one of the primary objectives of the USA is the accession of CIS into the above System of Domination in the Pacific, and in particular in the form of power multiplier of the American character of this System for two additional reasons:

a) The USA will safeguard the control of the eastern axes of expansion of Germany, and

7. This is Lord Palmerstone’s famous utterance.

b) The USA shall maintain control of the evolution of the giant geopolitical entity called China which does not seem ready, at least for the time being, to undergo the “Russian solution”.

After the above analysis some crucial questions arise: what if things will not evolve in this way? What if the societies do not accept the destructive methods of capital accumulation through the detachment of domestic and international super value? What if the societies react against their coercive transformation to “reserve economic forces”, aiming at the more intense absorption from the number of the unemployed and to a downgrading of their living conditions as well as to a rupture of any existing social plexus? What if German Europe, pursuing the creation of a concrete European zone of influence, persists with the shatter of the national money (and the national economies as a result) through the increase of the deposit rates or the fall of the official discount rates? (This has happened three times during the last two years within the European Union, where 20 million citizens are unemployed).

Then we shall have to discuss about local breakdowns of the above structure, inevitable national-social conflicts and, naturally, as far as the Balkans are concerned, about a general conflagration set off by the “national minorities” issues and the protection of “human rights), issues that will be created or motivated by the social-economic dynamics of the populations that will be forced to move in the Balkan space.

Now, let us focus our attention to the SE Mediterranean, since the picture of the form of the general system has been presented.

B. The description of the geopolitical conjuncture in the SE Mediterranean: theory and action

B.1 The German geopolitical conception (Continental Powers) and the vertical zones of dependence between North-South

Ratzel’s theory of vital space led K. Haushofer, his disciple, to conceive the vertical division of the planet into “vital zones” of influence. These are the vital zones 1) of the USA (Pan-American zone of North-South), 2) of Germany (Euro-African zone of North-South) 3) of Russia (Pan-Russian zone of North-South) and 4) of Japan (Zone of “Asian Co-prosperity”).

The influence zone of each of the above four metropolitan powers, is analyzed in four levels: a) the military, b) the economic, c) the political, and d) the cultural level. The scaling of use of those methods by the metropolitan powers on the regional national formations is inversely proportional to the grade of the defensive, economic, political and cultural autonomy of those formations.

Of course, nothing prevents the implementation of the four methods of pressure at the same time of a combination thereof; the last regional conflicts are an incontestable evidence of it.

B.2 The Anglo-Saxon geopolitical conception (Maritime Powers)

On the contrary, the Anglo-Saxon theorists (Mahan, Mackinder, Spykman) developed a “horizontal” geopolitical conception in relation to the above mentioned “vertical” German one.

The Anglo-Saxon analysts of Geopolitics laid emphasis on the naval powers and on the so-called “base of operations”⁸ which are localized on the so-called “ring of underdevelopment”⁹ and on the “Australian ring of Development”.¹⁰ Emphasis on these notions was crucial for the capability of the Naval Powers (USA, Britain, W. Europe) to exert counterbalancing tendencies against the geopolitical block of Eurasia (Heartland according to Mackinder), namely against the geographical zone comprising the unified Germany and the former Eastern Bloc.

Conclusions:

The first conclusion deriving from the above analysis is that the conflict between the German-Russian and the Anglo-Saxon tendencies has been (particularly during the Cold-War era) vertical. However, both geopolitical conceptions had, and still have, an intersection point: the Mediterranean Sea and its gates of access, namely the Balkans at the North, with Asia Minor also comprised therein, Cyprus and Suez at the South-East, the Maghreb at the South and Gibraltar at the West.

Yet, the analysis in the first paragraph shows the solution of the

8. Lands used as war or political base facilities of the metropolitan powers (NB).

9. Namely the horizontal ring of the Third World Countries which comprises, among others, the 1,500,000 adherents of Islam (NB).

10. Argentina, Brazil, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand (NB).

problem between those two opposing tendencies.¹¹ There is only one solution: the dissolution of Yugoslavia to satisfy those two geopolitical players (Continental and Naval Powers) in the region of South-Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. We shall make ourselves clear in the following paragraph.

B.3. The rectilinear commercial axis Port Said-Skopje-Rotterdam as geopolitical key of the evolutions in SE Mediterranean and the Balkans

Through the examination of the main commercial streams of the regions we reach the following conclusions:

1) The main volume of the commercial transports of high- or medium-technology from the Northern, Western and Central Europe to the Middle East, Maghreb, India and SE Asia passes through Skopje and the Port of Thessaloniki, the Balkan gate, and Suez, the Middle Eastern gate. At the same time, the main volume of fuel transport from Middle East to the Western, Northern and Central Europe passes through the same geopolitical gates of the axis of transport Suez-Thessaloniki-Skopje.

1a) The pipeline connecting Kourtalan (Diyarbakir, SE Turkey) with Alexandretta can be easily controlled by the foreign factor who can easily handle the means of revolt of the Kurdish element in the region to “blackmail” an eventually “disobedient” Turkey. Taking into account the permanent and uncompromising territorial claims of Syria on the said region of Hatay, the foreign interventions may very easily create an explosion in this region. Besides, this is the reason, among others, why there are too many important NATO air bases in this inflammable region, the presence and operation of which has been ascertained by the international community during the recent Gulf War.

If we take into account the factor of the water resources control of the Tiger and Euphrates Rivers from Turkey through the ambitious and giant project of GAP, as well as the permanent rivalry between Syria and Israel for the Golan plateaus and the sources of Jordan River, and the similar situation between Iraq and Israel, we can easily explain

11. For control of sea, air and land commercial routes (NB).

the orientation of Turkey towards Israel and vice versa. Both countries have many profits to gain: on one hand, Israel needs the Turkish air bases in the South of Turkey to strike the rear of Syria in case of conflict as well as the good will of Ankara for its water supply, while Turkey needs the permanent threat of Israel at the rear of Iraq and Syria which might increase the security coefficients in case of conflict with these Arab states. This conflict is unavoidable because of Turkey's hydro-geopolitics in the region.

Unfortunately, Greece has waited till the 1990s to proceed to the recognition of Israel and now it is concerned about the Turkish-Israel defensive relations. We would say that this is a rather belated concern.

1b) The complex of the pipelines joining the deposits of Kirkuk with the Sidon Port in Lebanon¹² and the deposits of Bahrain with the same Port¹³ are completely controlled by the Anglo-American bases in Cyprus.

2) if we draw a line starting from Amsterdam, the seaport of the free oil market of Rotterdam and ending at Port Said, the transit point of approximately 40% of oil of Middle East, this will be a straight line which crosses Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia -the fabrication of Holbrooke- Kosovo, Skopje, the middle foot of Khalkidhiki -which the Skopje maps present as part of the unredeemed Macedonia of the Aegean Sea- and Dodecanese. The distance on this straight line between Rotterdam-Skopje is about 1500 km, while the distance between Skopje-Port Said, on the same line, is approximately 1650 km; that is, the capital of this four-nation State lies in the middle of the commercial route connecting the most important oil-exporting point with the most important point of its free market.

As far as the region of Sporades and Dodecanese (SE Aegean) is concerned, for more than 20 years these islands have been the target of Turkish pretensions supported by absurd and contrary to the international law arguments. This is proved by the well-known Turkish litigation of the Treaty of Lausanne, the curious, so called gray zones at the Aegean etc.

3) The matter of the transport arrangement of the huge deposits of Baku and the pipelines' routes which in any case end at the SE Medi-

12. The route is: Kirkuk-Hadita-Kashr al Ashrak-Sidon (NB).

13. The route is: Bahrain-Rash Tanoura-Kashr al Ashrak-Sidon (NB).

terranean adds another serious element to the definite evaluation of the strategic significance of the SE Mediterranean basin.

4) The last fact which I shall mention concerns the off-shore oil deposits of the NE Aegean; recently, the proposal for their joint exploitation with Turkey under the supervision of the USA is supported even from Greek politicians.

However, despite any ill- or well-intentioned criticism, we must let the perspectives of solutions appear. The straight nationalist views, the xenophobe conceptions do not offer any solutions; they create the pre-requisites of isolationism which harm the Mediterranean, Balkan and European role of the country. Thus, we have to make clear that the exploitation of the off-shore oil deposits in the Aegean and Ionian Sea may proceed in collaboration with the Overseas (ARAMCO) and European (BP-Shell) cartels. However, this must be done honestly and fairly for our country, quickly and with no roll of drums. We do not see any reason why we must assign Turkey a partnership relation concerning Greece's underground wealth. This will be achieved only when we, the Greeks, manage to satisfy both the interests of the international oil cartels and of our country and stop bargaining with powers and groups of interests which never belonged, do not belong and will never belong to our naval geopolitical space. Not only it is obvious that this is a wrong orientation, but it is also natural that those powerful international corporations will resort to compulsive measures against our country. One of these is a hot event in the Aegean in order to follow the policy of the hot regulation of the Metropolises that support and are supported by those oil interests. But then it will be too late.

5) On the other hand, our country must quickly proceed to the development of the Greek arms industry which must be able to supply our country with military electronic technology and mechanical-electronic equipment. In this case we create all those prerequisites which permit the signature of projects of co-production of arms systems with production centers and geopolitically relative countries such as Israel or other overseas countries.¹⁴

14. In a yet unpublished survey of a Special Scientist of the Ministry of Defense, Mr. G. Mourtos, the following is mentioned: Despite the friendly feelings of the Argentinians for our country, Ankara has tried to win over Buenos Aires. When Greece did not respond to the repetitive proposals of Argentina for collaboration in the field of the nuclear technology -where the latter invested large sums- Argentina turned to Ankara. As a result the Argentinian General Direc-

If the above are realized, the expenditure for armaments will be an important development factor for the fields of High Technology and, consequently, Added Value products, e.g. electronics, mechanical, chemical, marine and steel industry products. Beyond the strengthening of the country from the national security point of view, those fields may cause the rise of the whole system of the declining Greek economy characterized by stagnation, fall of industry production, unemployment and retailer attitude.

The mere supply of armament systems is the main reason for the dependence of the country's defense, for the non-productive expenditures which strike its already problematic economy and for its discredit in the international balances or an already anarchic international system. We must not forget Henry Kissinger, the "magician" of American foreign policy, who declares that in the world of diplomacy a loaded gun is always more effective than a brief.

6) The University sector should already proceed to the promotion of all fields (Technology, Geography-Geopolitics, International Politics, International Economics, Turkish, Balkan and Cultural studies) which are able to prepare high-level specialized scientists who will organize Institutes and Centers for the study of the international geopolitical environment of Greece. Those Centers within the framework of the Greek Universities and under the control of the Greek State would be able to produce ideas and orientations for the drawing of the axes of a serious and long-term foreign and defense policy.

Conclusions

a) The economic control on Greece's behalf of the northern part of the commercial axis Rotterdam-Port Said in the East Balkans (an important branch starting from Skopje and ending in Budapest, Bucharest and Sofia, where the trade of the Balkan ports in the Black Sea is conducted, i.e. Konstanz, Varna and Burgas, respectively) may offer a long-term help to the normal evolution of Greece-FYROM relations.

b) The control of this commercial route and the possibility to

tor of the Ministry of Defense Mr. Alfonso Saratso, who had also been Argentina's representative at the Initiative of the Six for Peace and Disarmament was appointed Ambassador of Argentina in Ankara.

check it (through the control of the Dardanelles from the eventual metropolitan administrator of Turkey) is an important factor of power against the Eurasian powers which take commercial advantages from it.¹⁵

Thus, it is clear what a resolute attitude means to the Greek foreign policy. It is such a policy that which will ensure:

- I) the quick integration of the horizontal (Balkan) axis of the Egnatia highway,
- II) the vertical land electric railway axis N-S,
- III) the complete, indisputable and absolute economic (oil) and defense control of the Aegean on Greece's behalf,
- IV) the quick strengthening and promotion of the domestic arms industry,
- V) the strengthening of the Higher Education in the above-mentioned fields.

Yet, it is equally easy to foresee the risks of a submissive, compliant and vague foreign policy. It is time to move with a long-term planning, without any pacifist populism and without any self-interested exploitation of the geopolitical issues of concern for our country. No one wishes for war unless he is psychotic. Those who put such dilemmas are not honored by them. It is time to stop pretending that we do not understand otherwise the price we shall pay will be high.

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15. We must not forget the interest of NATO in the past for this axis, which had been manifested with the formation of Airborne Brigade together with tactical air support and of A.M.F. (L), under the gradual or flexible response doctrine.

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