

## THE DIPLOMACY OF THEODOROS PANGALOS 1925-1926\*

On June 25, 1925, the chief of the Greek army staff, General Theodoros Pangalos, compelled the Government to resign and assumed the premiership, with the avowed aim of restoring political peace and reviving the economy.<sup>1</sup> In the preceding year and a half the country had experienced six short-lived governments and numerous attempted coups. The divisive issue of monarchy versus republic and the related question of responsibility for the Asia Minor catastrophe, the decline of morality and the resulting cynicism which prevailed in the society, the loss of national purpose, which in the past had centered on the "*Megali Idea*," and the increasing inability of the Greek leaders or elites to transcend their parochial interests for the common good, all contributed to the stagnation and uncertainty of Greek political life. Moreover, the financial debts, accrued over almost a decade of uninterrupted wars, and the cost, economic and social, of settling a destitute refugee population equal to one-fifth of the total population of Greece, had placed an onerous burden on the administrative and financial capacity of the state.

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1. Theodoros Pangalos (1878-1952) was a career military officer who joined the Officers' League in the Revolution of 1909 and served effectively in the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. He opted for the Venizelist forces in Thessaloniki in 1916 and saw action in World War I. He was also an active member of the Revolution of 1922 and served for a brief period as Minister of War in the Revolutionary Government of Gonatas and Plastiras. Pangalos became a kind of national hero after assuming, in late December 1922, the responsibility for re-organizing the army along the Greek-Turkish border in Thrace. His rapid and effective reorganization of the Greek military forces in Thrace strengthened the weak position of the Greek delegation and its chief, Eleftherios Venizelos, at the Lausanne Peace Conference. In time, however, Pangalos' position in Thrace and his unrealistic but determined threat to renew the war with Turkey became an obstacle to Venizelos' efforts to achieve an acceptable and peaceful settlement with Turkey. The war party, under Pangalos, threatened not only to upset Venizelos' diplomacy but even tried to replace him at Lausanne. (See Harry J. Psomiades, *The Eastern Question: The Last Phase* (Thessaloniki, 1968), pp. 46-48.) In July 1923, Pangalos also played a major role in forming the anti-monarchist Military League

Unfortunately, the unwieldy problems of Greece were beyond the capabilities of this stubborn but well-intentioned man who was to assume dictatorial powers in January of the following year. Although he personified the mood of the Greek people and reflected their irritation with prevailing conditions, he lacked the qualities of the exceptional political leader which the chaotic situation demanded.

As a dictator he was a curious phenomenon. When Pangalos first assumed power he had no plans to set up a dictatorship. Indeed, he sought and received a vote of confidence from the Assembly.<sup>2</sup> Although he was eventually to rule by force, he did not extol dictatorship in principle nor did he ever repudiate democracy as outmoded or unworkable. He had no particular political doctrine which he wished to impose on his countrymen. He correctly perceived the ills of his country and made an honest effort to end the bickering of the numerous political parties. He admitted Venizelists and anti-Venizelists to his cabinet. He also undertook to curb the excesses of the press and to deal with the problems of corruption and the decline of morals.

His intentions, however, were better than his performance. Despite his great energy and determination and a certain, benevolence in his nature, he failed to deal effectively with internal problems and in the end became a source of embarrassment to the nation. His greatest failure was, perhaps, in the field of foreign affairs. Although fully committed to retrieve for Greece a sense of national purpose and international prestige, he was ill prepared for the task. He was completely out of touch with the new realities of international politics in the aftermath of World War I and lacked the temperament, intelligence and skill to achieve for Greece the security which her national interests required and which was attainable by peaceful means.

Pangalos' policy in foreign affairs was an unrealistic ambition to revive the territorial consequences of the Lausanne settlement. It was the major and only aberration from the *status quo* foreign policy of Greece in the interwar years and all but brought the country to the brink of war and ruin. It was based on the belief that Turkey and Britain were certain to go to war over the Mosul question and that Greece should be prepared to assist Britain in the war and to accept

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which secretly organized military officers with republican sympathies. He was again Minister of War during the brief premiership of Papanastasiou in 1924.

To date no adequate biography of Pangalos exists. One volume of his memoirs covering the period 1897-1913 has been published—Theodoros Pangalos, *Ta apomimanevmata mou, 1897-1947*, Vol. 1, 1897-1913 (Athens, 1950). Vol. 2, 1913-1918 (Athens 1959), pp. 256.

2. Gregorios Daphnis, *I Ellas metaxi die polemon, 1923-1940 (Greece Between Two Wars, 1923-1940)*, Vol. 1 (Athens, 1955), p. 291.

Mussolini's invitation to revive the *Megali Idea* or an expansionist policy at the expense of Turkey. With Britain and Italy as allies, Pangalos hoped to drive the Turks out of Europe and retake Thrace and Constantinople.

## II

### *Britain, Turkey and the Mosul Question, 1924-1925.*

Perhaps the most dangerous and embittered relations which confronted Britain immediately following the Lausanne settlement of 1923 were those existing with Turkey. The Turks could not easily dismiss their emotional resentment of the British. Britain's leadership in the Middle East during World War I, her support of Greece in Asia Minor, and the irritating limitations imposed on Turkish sovereignty over the Straits were neither forgotten nor forgiven. The division between the two countries was further widened by the Mosul boundary question.

The powers at Lausanne could not resolve the Mosul issue although Britain and Turkey agreed to settle their outstanding differences without resorting to the use of force. Article 3, paragraph 2 of the Lausanne Treaty provided that:

The frontier between Turkey and Iraq shall be laid down in friendly arrangement to be concluded between Turkey and Britain within nine months.

In the event of no agreement being reached between the two Governments within the time mentioned, the dispute shall be referred to the Council of the League of Nations.

The Turkish and British Governments reciprocally undertake that, pending the decision to be reached on the subject of the frontier, no military or other movement shall take place which might modify in any way and present state of the territories of which the final fate will depend on that decision.

In the nine months of negotiations which followed the conclusion of the Lausanne Treaty, the two states were unable to reach agreement over the problem of Mosul or the frontier between Turkey and Iraq. Their relations grew steadily worse.<sup>3</sup> In December 1923, the Turkish press spoke of war as a likelihood, and a military council was held in Ankara.<sup>4</sup> Frontier incidents along the Turkish-Iraqi border increased and each Government accused the other of

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3. League of Nations, *Official Journal* (1924), p. 1434. (Hereafter cited as *LNOJ*).

4. Edward R. Vere-Hodge, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1918-1948* (Geneva, 1950), p. 63.

violating the terms of the Lausanne agreement by taking military and other action in territories whose fate was pending decision.

Finally, on August 14, 1924, the British requested that the problem of the Turkish-Iraqi frontier be placed on the agenda of the League Council according to the procedure which was laid down by the Treaty of Lausanne.<sup>5</sup> Two weeks later, both parties renewed their complaints of frontier incidents and violations but agreed to adhere to the decision of the League concerning the dispute. On the same day, the Council decided to set up a Commission of neutrals to study the matter.<sup>8</sup> However, border clashes continued, and, on October 9, 1924, the British sent a final ultimatum to the Turks declaring that if the Turkish forces were not withdrawn from the disputed territory within 48 hours they would feel free to resume complete freedom of action.<sup>7</sup> At the last minute the British ultimatum was reluctantly complied with but for days the border situation remained fraught with danger. It was only on the 29th of October that the situation became less tense and by mutual agreement of the parties to the dispute the League Council arranged for provisional boundaries. Two days later a Commission of three impartial experts was finally formed to study the problem.<sup>8</sup>

As the year came to a close, progress toward a solution to the Mosul controversy remained at a standstill. The British held that the negotiations were concerned solely with the frontier line between Turkey and Iraq and not the disposal of the entire vilayet or province as suggested by the Ankara Government. Both sides presented political, economic, geographic, historical, and racial considerations to support their claims. An important fact in the dispute was that Mosul was racially neither Turkish nor Arab but predominantly Kurdish.<sup>9</sup>

The unsettled conditions along the Turkish-Iraqi border were further disrupted and prolonged by the Kurdish revolt in Turkey which lasted from February to April 1925. The Turks attributed the rebellion to British intrigue and to British plans to discredit Turkish-Kurdish relations in order to influence a favorable decision on the Mosul issue by the Council of the League of Nations.<sup>10</sup> In the course of the year there were British naval maneuvers in the Ae-

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5. *LNOJ* (1924), p. 1566.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 1323, 1339, 1358-1360.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 1648-1649.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 1670.

9. For the presentation of the British and Turkish positions see *LNOJ* (1924), pp. 1318-1321, 1566-1586. See also Leon Crutiansky, *La question de Mossoul* (Paris, 1927); and Hari-ciye Vekaleti (Turkey), *La question de Mossoul* (Constantinople, 1925).

10. France, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, *Bulletin périodique de la presse turque*, No. 39, April 21, 1925, pp. 7-8 (hereafter cited as *BPPT*).

gean and the eastern Mediterranean, and Turkish army units were further reinforced along the Turkish-Iraqi frontier.<sup>11</sup> Finally, on December 16, 1925, the Council of the League awarded the disputed territory to Iraq.

*Italy and the Eastern Mediterranean, 1924-1925.*

During their dispute with Britain, the Turks also felt threatened by Italy and with good reason. The eastern Mediterranean had early attracted Mussolini's attention as an area in which Italy's political and commercial activities might be fruitfully developed. While he sought to neutralize Greece and eventually bring her under his influence, his plans for Turkey apparently encompassed colonization and eventually annexation of portions of Anatolia.<sup>12</sup>

Five months after the conclusion of the Lausanne peace settlement, he declared publicly that the lines for the peaceful expansion of Italy pointed toward the East. It was clear to the Turks that he had Turkey foremost in mind and the declaration was therefore severely criticized by the Turkish press and the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Meanwhile, the construction of Italian naval bases in the Aegean, especially at Leros, further aroused the suspicion of Turkey, and, in May 1924, the Turkish Government delivered an official protest over the concentration of Italian forces in the Dodecanese island of Rhodes.<sup>13</sup> The Italians, of course, denied the allegations that they coveted Turkish territory and assured the Ankara Government of their peaceful intentions. In defense of his policy, Mussolini explained to the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, that Italian activity in the Aegean was simply aimed at preventing Greece and Turkey from quarreling and at helping to preserve the peace in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>14</sup>

The Turkish fear that Italy would invade Anatolia from her Aegean bases at the first opportune moment was not without foundation.<sup>15</sup> In December 1924, Mussolini had offered Britain the gratuitous help of Italy against Turkey in the

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11. Sir Reader Bullard (ed.), *Britain and the Middle East*, 2nd edition (London, 1952), pp. 91-93; *LNOJ* (1925), p. 1435.

12. Montagna (Constantinople) to Mussolini, 17 March 1924, Ministero degli Affari

Esteri, / *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* (Rome, 1952), Series 7, Vol. 3, Doc. 82 (hereafter cited as *DDI*); *The Times* (London), March 22, 1924.

13. Montagna (Constantinople) to Mussolini, 23 May 1924, Doc. 211, *DDI*; Tosti Di Val-minute (Constantinople) to Mussolini, 31 May 1924, Doc. 227 *DDI*;

*BPPT*, No. 35, July

16, 1924, p. 8; *Cumhuriyet* (Istanbul), June 30, 1925.

14. Mussolini to Ramsay MacDonald, 2 May 1924, Doc. 163, *DDI*.

15. Albertazzi (Smyrna) to Mussolini, 13 June 1924, Doc. 258, *DDI*.

event of a conflict over Mosul.<sup>16</sup> In the same month, he asked for a detailed review of the war plans which he had directed to be drawn up against Turkey<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, throughout 1925 the Italian fascists spoke openly of their desire for expansion and of the empty lands in Asia Minor which were in need of Italian workers. A typical speech was that of Mussolini's brother, Arnaldo Mussolini (April 1925):

Tunis?... Perhaps, but later. We have already Tripoli, but Tripoli is only the beginning. There is all the basin of the eastern Mediterranean. There are the remains of the old Turkish Empire. There is Albania, which has petrol, of which we have need. There is also Syria which France will never colonize because she does not have a sufficient population. Then there is Smyrna which should also belong to us. And finally, there is Adalia.<sup>18</sup>

Turkish protests at these "irresponsible" statements reached a high pitch in late 1925 with the publication of a book by the Italian deputy of Milan, Drazio Pedrazzi, which called for the Italian penetration and colonization of Asia Minor.<sup>19</sup>

### III

#### *Greece, Her Balkan Neighbors and the Great Powers, June-December 1925.*

When Pangalos forced the resignation of the Michalakopoulos Government and assumed power in the summer of 1925, the Greeks had recently completed major diplomatic negotiations with Yugoslavia and Turkey. The negotiations with Yugoslavia over the free-zone in Thessaloniki had adjourned, *sine die*, on June 1, with the Greeks rejecting Yugoslav demands that the free-zone be enlarged and, along with the railroad leading to the free-zone, that it be placed virtually under Yugoslav sovereignty. On the other hand, the negotiations in Ankara, dealing with the properties of the refugees and those excluded from the exchange, were successfully concluded and, on June 21, representatives of both states affixed their signatures to the Ankara Accord. The agreement was hailed as the beginning of a new era of close political cooperation and, in the following

16. Count Carlo Sforza, *Contemporary Italy* (New York, 1944), p. 350.

17. Di Giorgio (Italian Minister of War) to Mussolini, 12 December 1924, Doc. 604, DDL

18. Gaetano Salvemini, *Mussolini Diplomate* (Paris, 1932), p. 132.

19. Drazio Pedrazzi, // *Levante Mediterraneo e VItalia* (Rome, 1925;) *Le Messager d'Athines* (Athens), December 29, 1925 (hereafter cited as *MA*).

month, Greece and Turkey exchanged ministers, establishing normal relations for the first time since the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913.

The Michalakopoulos Government had also attempted to improve relations with Bulgaria. The differences between the two states involved a refugee and minority problem, a series of frontier incidents, and the question of a Bulgarian outlet to the Aegean. There was, however, very little progress on this front and, indeed, the Greek Parliament, on February 3, 1925, repudiated the Politis-Kalfoff Protocol (September 29, 1924) which would have recognized the "Slavic" minority in Greece as "Bulgarian." Although assurances were given that Greece would carry out her obligations under the Minority Treaties of the League, Greek-Bulgarian relations remained unsatisfactory.<sup>20</sup>

Pangalos' relations with his three Balkan neighbors in the summer of 1925 left much to be desired. In fact, much of the good work of the Michalakopoulos Government to prevent the isolation of Greece in the Balkans was undone. Pangalos had become increasingly vocal in taking a hard line with Bulgaria. He practically ignored Turkey and for months failed to send instructions to Pericles Argyropoulos, his minister in Ankara. He prolonged the ratification of the Ankara Accord to such an extent that the Turks no longer cared to ratify it and insisted that it be renegotiated.<sup>21</sup> Relations with Yugoslavia were a<sup>7</sup> i badly strained. Pangalos had severely criticized the concessions made by the Michalakopoulos Government in its effort to reach an agreement with Yugoslavia on the free zone in Thessaloniki and had initiated a foreign policy based on close collaboration and friendship with Yugoslavia's arch-enemy, Italy. Meanwhile in August 1925, Turkey initiated the restoration of normal ties with Yugoslavia and with Bulgaria, which soon culminated in the resumption of diplomatic relations and treaties of friendship.<sup>22</sup>

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20. The Belgrade authorities saw the Greek-Bulgarian Protocol as an arbitrary recognition of the existence of a "Bulgarian" minority in Greece which might lead the Bulgarians to claim similar privileges for the "Bulgarian" minority in Yugoslav Macedonia. Belgrade vigorously protested the Greek-Bulgarian Protocol by denouncing ' Alliance of 1913 with Greece in November 1924, and by insisting on a revision of its agreements with Greece concerning the free-zone in Thessaloniki. Pangalos was among the deputies who opposed the ratification of the Politis-Kalfoff Protocol because it would be harmful to the interests of Belgrade. See D. Gatopoulos, *Andreas Michalakopoulos, 1878-1938* (Athens, 1947), pp-184-185; also Parliament of Greece, *Journal of Debates of Parliament*, February 2, 1925, pp. 114-115.

21. *Interview with Pericles Argyropoulos*, Athens, March 28, 1958.

22. *Oriente Moderno* (Rome), Vol. 9, September 1925, pp. 457-458, and October 1925, Vol. 10, p. 518 (hereafter cited as *OM*). The Italian-Greek rapprochement compelled the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Momcilo Nincic, to declare that if Greece could talk of aq un-

The growing isolation of Greece in the Balkans seemed to be serving the interests of the Great Powers rather than those of Greece. The Italians welcomed and encouraged the difficulties encountered by the Greeks in their attempts to renew the 1913 alliance with Yugoslavia, and apparently urged the Greeks to share keen interest in the possibility of intervening in Asia Minor; and the British, although somewhat disturbed with the alleged secret talks taking place between Greece and Italy, seemed to feel that Greece, in her isolation, could be used effectively in Asia Minor in the event of war over the Mosul question.<sup>23</sup>

The drift in Greek foreign policy was not without its critics at home. But the several newspapers which had criticized Pangalos' handling of foreign affairs and his pro-Italian position were either fined or threatened with the suspension of publication.<sup>24</sup> The advice of the Greek foreign office professionals for a moderate and balanced position was also ignored. Finally, in October 1925, a few hours before news of the Greek-Bulgarian incident reached Athens, Pangalos' first Foreign Minister, Constantine Rentis, resigned over differences with his chief. Rentis feared that Pangalos was preparing to risk war with Turkey at a time when both Yugoslavia and Bulgaria were friendly with Turkey and hostile toward Greece and when Greece had no firm commitments for assistance from the Great Powers.<sup>25</sup>

The Greek-Bulgarian incident of October 1925 also exposed the precarious and isolated position of Greece and Pangalos' simplistic and uninformed views of foreign policy. The differences between Greece and Bulgaria reached the breaking point when, on October 19, a Greek soldier and a Greek officer were killed in a border clash. Ever mindful of Bulgaria's claims to Greek territory and convinced, on insufficient evidence, that the incident was premeditated, Pangalos overreacted by ordering the Third Army Corps to advance into Bulgarian territory. The Greeks met with feeble resistance and occupied a sizeable portion of Bulgarian territory. Bulgaria appealed to the League of Nations

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derstanding with Italy, Yugoslavia could retaliate by talking of an *entente* with Bulgaria and Turkey. See Paaayotis Pipinelis, *Istoria tis exoterikis politikis tis Ellados, 1923-1941* (The History of the Foreign Politics of Greece, 1923-1941) (Athens, 1948), pb. 19-37; Elizabeth Barker, *Macedonia: Its Place in Balkan Power Politics* (London, 1950), pp. 31-35.

23. Cheetham (Athens) to Chamberlain, 6 July 1925, C9008/798/19, FO/371/10768, and My 1925, C9618/145/19, FO/371/10765, The Archives of the British Foreign Office, *The Public Record Office* (London) (hereafter cited as *PRO*).

24. Daphni, *op. tit.*, p. 292.

25. Interview with Constantine Rentis, Athens, April 9, 1958. Dodge (Belgrade) to the Department of State, October 10, 1925, File 768. 74/237, Dispatch No. 2829, *National Archives of the United States Foreign Affairs Division* (Washington, D.C.) (hereafter cited as *NA*).

which ordered the belligerents to withdraw to their respective frontiers. Following an investigation by a Commission appointed by the Council of the League, Greece was condemned by the international community and ordered to pay an indemnity to Bulgaria of 45,000 pounds.<sup>26</sup>

However, the "humiliation" of an indemnity to Bulgaria and the rapprochement between his Balkan neighbors did not deter Pangalos from pursuing his revanchist goals. In fact, given the growing internal unrest—the parties tried to topple his government over the Bulgarian incident—he was more convinced than ever that a success in foreign policy was absolutely necessary. With the Bulgarian incident closed, Pangalos returned to his policy of cultivating the friendship of Britain, France and Italy and of exploiting their differences with Turkey.<sup>27</sup>

*Greece, Italy and the Mosul Crisis, January-June 1926.*

The award of Mosul to Iraq by the League in December 1925 was unacceptable to the Turks and for six months there after rumors were rife that Turkey would exercise force to drive the British out of the disputed territory. Firmly convinced that Turkey and Britain would soon go to war, Pangalos displayed an undisguised attitude toward the Turks. On the heels of the refusal of the Turks to accept the League's decision, he declared that the "foreign danger" to Greece called for the reorganization of the armed forces and that Greece would refit the navy and order additional vessels so that "in a short time Greece would become the mistress of the eastern basin of the Mediterranean."<sup>28</sup> A few weeks later he provoked Turkish protests in a major speech before a large audience of Asia Minor refugees in Thessaloniki by championing the *Megali Idea* and by implying that the refugees would soon be in a position to return to their former homes.<sup>29</sup> In another speech he reiterated that Greece would shortly have the best army in the Balkans and a fleet which would enjoy absolute

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26. For a detailed study of the incident see the outstanding work of James Barros, *The League of Nations and the Great Powers: The Greek-Bulgarian Incident, 1925* (London, 1970).

27. A new Anglo-French Accord was signed in November 1925 which reflected French concern that a Turkish success in the Mosul question would lead to Turkish demands on French-held Syria. For Greek interest in the Accord see France, Ministère des Affaires Et-rangeres, *Bulletin periodique de la presse grecque*, No. 85, January 5, 1926, p. 3 (hereafter cited as *BPPG*).

28. *The Times* (London), December 16, 1925; *Eleftheros Typos* (Athens), December 19, 1925.

29. *OM*, Vol. 2, February 1926, p. 82.

supremacy in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>30</sup> Pangalos' supporters, particularly among the refugees, also urged him to exploit Turkey's differences with Britain and to seek Italian cooperation against Turkey and the Slavs.<sup>31</sup> Several Greek newspapers, in their editorials, suggested that in the event of a war between Turkey and Britain, the British could recruit an army from among those refugees in Greece who wished to return to Asia Minor.<sup>32</sup>

In an obvious attempt to secure his northern flank and to upset the growing rapprochement between Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Turkey, Pangalos began in earnest to mend his fences with Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.<sup>33</sup> In early February 1926, he resumed negotiations with Yugoslavia over the question of the free-zone in Thessaloniki and the revival of the 1913 Alliance. But Yugoslavia, taking advantage of the possibility of a Greek-Turkish war, increased her demands on the free-zone.<sup>34</sup> Supported by Italy, Pangalos also attempted to establish correct relations with Bulgaria. On March 1, he saw to it that the remainder of the indemnity owed to Bulgaria was promptly paid.<sup>M</sup> He also initiated friendly overtures to Albania and became quite solicitous of Albanian friendship. He openly supported Italian interests in Albania and dissolved the "North Epirotic Clubs" whose aim had been the liberation of "northern Epirus" or "southern Albania" and its annexation to Greece.<sup>38</sup> The nationalists from the Dodecanese were also warned to play down their demand for the return of the Italian-held Dodecanese to the Greek motherland.

Meanwhile in the Turkish press, the Italophile and revanchist views of Pangalos, who assumed dictatorial powers on January 3, 1926, received wide coverage. The Turkish public was warned of the Italo-Greek designs on the

30. *MA*, January 4, 1926.

31. *BPPG*, No. 86, February 8, 1926, p. 3.

32. *Ibid.*, No. 87, March 16, 1926, p. 2.

33. Dodge (Belgrade) to the Department of State, November 9, 1925, File 768. 74/239, Dispatch No. 2869, *NA*; Alexios A. Kyrou, *Elleniki exoteriki politiki* (Foreign Politics of Greece) (Athens, 1955), pp. 74-75; *BPPG*, No. 87, March 16, 1926, p. 2.

34. *Eleftheros Typos* (Athens), February 9, 1926. Fearful of Greece's ties with Italy, the Yugoslavs in January 1926 informed the Greeks that they were disposed to consider with Greece the conclusion of a Balkan Pact, along the lines of the Locarno Pact, if they could settle their major differences. Pangalos made it known that he was prepared to make sacrifices in order to improve relations between the two countries. See Edward S. Forster, *A Short History of Modern Greece, 1821-1956* 3rd Ed., revised and enlarged by Douglas Dakin (London, 1958), p. 161.

35. Barros, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

36. Laughlin (Athens) to the Department of State, February 12, 1926, File 765, Dispatch No. 509, *NA*; *OM*, Vol. 3, March 1926, p. 136.

Turkish fatherland. On the diplomatic front, the Ankara Government successfully concluded treaties with the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and an accord with France over Syria. In the Turkish Grand National Assembly, the Government urged the ratification of the treaties with Bulgaria and with the Soviet Union, in part, as a protest against Greece — "the vanguard of imperialism."<sup>37</sup>

The lack of progress in the British-Turkish talks over Mosul in the spring of 1926 and the occasional saber rattling in Ankara induced Pangalos to step up his military preparations should war suddenly break out. In March he sent his Foreign Minister, Kanakaris Roufos, to Rome to secure economic assistance, military supplies and a pact with Italy.<sup>38</sup> While Italian aid was promised and plans were developed for common action against Turkey, Mussolini disappointed Pangalos by withholding a formal military alliance.<sup>39</sup> The extent of Italian-Greek cooperation was unknown to the outside world and throughout April and May rumors were rampant that Italy and Greece were committed to an intervention in Asia Minor in the event of a British-Turkish war.<sup>40</sup> The apprehension of the Turks over the Italian-Greek threat sent the Prime Minister, Ismet Inonxi, to western Anatolia and Thrace to inspect the approaches for a possible invasion.<sup>41</sup> In order to force a settlement with Turkey, Britain also intimated that if the Mosul issue should get out of hand, she would not act to restrain Turkey's enemies.<sup>42</sup>

By late May, however, Italian-Greek plans for a war with Turkey were dashed by the easing of tension over the Mosul issue. The refusal of nationalist Turkey to reach an agreement with Britain would have belied the responsible and levelheaded policies which had characterized Turkish diplomacy. Se-

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37. *OM*, Vol. 2, February 1926, p. 21 and Vol. 3, March 1926, p. 137. It appeared that the Bulgarian Government, probably under the influence of Italy, was also interested in exploiting the Mosul question by delaying ratification of the treaty with Turkey until May 27, 1926. See *The Times* (London) April 21, 1926.

38. Daphni, *op. cit.*, p. 333; *BPPG*, ~No. 80, April 30, 1926, p. 6; E. W. Poison Newman—"Italy, Greece and Turkey," *The Nineteenth Century and After*, Vol. 100 (October 1926), p. 552.

39. Laughlin (Athens) to the Department of State, March 4, 1926, File 768. 74/239, Dispatch No. 527, *NA*; Daphni, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

40. U.S. Embassy (Rome) to the Department of State, April 21, 1926, File 765. 67/482, Dispatch No. 480, *NA*; Cheetham (Athens) to Chamberlain, 3 May 1926, C5312/4258/19, FO/371/11356, *PRO*.

41. Bristol (Istanbul) to the Department of State, April 7, 1926, File 765. 67/482, Dispatch No. 1853, and April 14, 1926, File 765. 67/482, Dispatch No. 1861, *NA*.

42. Graham (Rome) to Chamberlain, 7 August 1926, C8571/77/22, FO/371/11384, *PRO*.

rious internal problems, an uncomfortable reliance on the Soviet Union, and the united opposition of the Great Powers finally persuaded the Turks to accept the League's decision and to conclude a treaty with Britain. On June 5, Turkey reluctantly agreed to cede the greater portion of Mosul to Iraq and transferred troops from the Mosul border area to western Anatolia and Thrace. Several classes of reservists were mobilized and negotiations with private British firms for the purchase of arms and ammunition were initiated.<sup>43</sup>

#### IV

##### *The Fall of General Pangalos, August 22, 1926.*

The British-Turkish treaty of June 1926 represented a diplomatic defeat for Mussolini and helped to bring about a reorientation of Italian diplomacy. "An invasion of Turkey without tacit British support and the acquiescence of France, whom Italy was hoping to dislodge from the Danube region, was doomed to failure. Moreover, Turkey could be relied upon to provide the stiffest resistance to an invasion from the West. Italian fascist diplomacy, which from 1922-1926 aimed at creating dissension in the Balkans, altered its course after the Mosul crisis. A new diplomacy, that of peacemaker, was adopted relying heavily on the use of the carrot in peaceful attempts to organize the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean into an Italian sphere of influence.

The settlement of the Mosul issue also called for a reevaluation, if not a complete reversal of Greek foreign policy. But Pangalos, unlike Mussolini, had gambled so heavily on the possibility of expansion at the expense of Turkey that he had lost his freedom of action. In this sense, it could be said that a by-product of the British-Turkish treaty of June 1926 was the overthrow, several weeks later, of the Pangalos regime.

An inflexible man in an inflexible position, Pangalos refused to alter the

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43. Bristol (Istanbul) to the Department of State, June 15, 1926, File 765. 67/482, Dispatch No. 1868, *NA*; *OM*, Vol. 10, October 1926, p. 517. For the treaty see J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, Vol. 2 (Princeton, 1956), pp. 143-146.

It was generally agreed that Turkey yielded on the Mosul issue because of her fear of Italy. Indeed, the Ankara Government used the Italian-Greek threat as an argument to persuade the deputies in the Turkish Grand National Assembly to agree to the settlement which favored Britain and Iraq. See Graham (Rome) to Chamberlain, 7 August 1926, C8571/77/ 22, FO/371/11384, *PRO*; and Bristol (Istanbul) to the Department of State, July 21, 1926, File 765. 67/482, Dispatch No. 2002, *NA*.

44. Bristol (Istanbul) to the Department of State, July 21, 1926, File 765. 67/482, Dispatch No. 2002, *NA*,

course of his foreign policy and called for further preparations for a war with Turkey.<sup>45</sup> He apparently continued to believe that Italy would join in the attack once war broke out.<sup>46</sup> According to his Foreign Minister, Kanakaris Roufos, up to the moment of his overthrow Pangalos was working on a plan with Italy whereby, in the event of a successful war against Turkey, Greece would receive eastern Thrace; and Italy, southwest Anatolia. In addition, a grateful Italy would then cede the Dodecanese islands to Greece. "

By the end of July, the economic and diplomatic mishandling of national affairs had created a great deal of uneasiness in Greece and the threat of a new *coup d'etat* was very much in the air. ^ Widespread disaffection with Pangalos' policies reached a high pitch on August 17, when the Government finally gave in to the Yugoslav demands on the free-zone in Thessaloniki.<sup>49</sup> Pangalos' unwise concessions to Yugoslavia represented a desperate effort to end the isolation which his policies had imposed on Greece and an attempt to protect his northern flank against Bulgaria in the event of a war with Turkey.

The treaty with Yugoslavia seemed to be opposed by every segment of the society. Some attacked it on its merits and others, whose dissatisfaction with Pangalos had been building up for some time, used it as a pretext to vent their grievances. There were protests *and* resignations within the Ministry of Foreign affairs. The political factions and the commercial and industrial classes voiced their concern. There were also disturbances in various parts of the country and, more important, there were voices of discontent within the armed forces. They seemed to be saying that the treaty would not have the desired results but rather would simply lead to further demands by Yugoslavia.<sup>50</sup>

The vehement opposition to the treaty also brought into the open the deep dissatisfaction of all classes with Pangalos' mishandling of national affairs. The economy was in a pitiful state and the work on the resettlement of the refugees was almost brought to a standstill for lack of funds. There were financial scandals, particularly in the area of military procurement, and the state was practically broke, without credit in the international money market. More-

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45. Daphni, *op. tit.*, p. 333.

46. Cheetham (Athens) to the Foreign Office, 22 September 1926, C10589/C5312/4258/19, FO/371/11356, *PRO*.

47. Cheetham (Athens) to the Foreign Office, 27 September 1926, C1307/4258/19, FO/371/11356, *PRO*.

48. MacKillop (Athens) to Chamberlain, 20 July 1926, C8599/67/19, FO/371/11355, *PRO*.

49. Kyrou, *op. cit.*, p. 75; Daphni, *op. cit.*, pp. 322-323.

50. Pangalos had toppled the Michalakopoulos Government in June 1925, in part for its concessions to Yugoslavia, which were far less than those he now offered to Belgrade.

over, in Greek diplomatic and military circles, it was apparent that Greece was neither prepared nor able, in the foreseeable future, to undertake a successful campaign in the east. It seemed criminal to make sacrifices to Yugoslavia and to increase expenditures for a war with Turkey—a war which could not be won and which could easily be avoided. Unfortunately for Pangalos, he could not grasp this truth. Within a week, on August 21, his own Republic Guard acted to remove him from office and on the following day, General Georgios Kondylis invited Admiral Pavlos Koundouriotis to resume the post of President of the Republic. There was a sign of relief within the country and general agreement that Pangalos had carried the state to the brink of ruin.<sup>51</sup>

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### *The Diplomacy of Pangalos in Retrospect*

By temperament, experience and education, Pangalos was hardly equipped to deal with questions of diplomacy and the regional and international systems which emerged after World War I. The new international system in Europe, in which he was to operate, consisted of a number of major powers and many small ones acting largely independently and almost without formal military alliances. It was a system which permitted the smaller states greater freedom in diplomatic maneuvers and negotiations, although the consequences of their actions were to be less certain than in the past. This was also true of the new Balkan sub-system. For the first time the major powers did not particularly identify their interests and prestige with conditions in the Balkans, and the region was composed of several small states of more or less equal size and development without formal internal and external alliances.

Because the system was characterized by flexibility and a great deal of uncertainty, it demanded greater skill on the part of the diplomatists. It was infinitely more difficult to anticipate how small states would behave, how the League of Nations would react, or whether or not the major powers—Britain, France and Italy—would move in unison or as rivals in a given situation. Moreover, the system was subject to conflicting ideas. On the one hand, there was a general desire to consolidate the new European *status quo*, legalized, in Octo-

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51. At the time of the bloodless coup Pangalos was away from Athens on vacation in Spetsai. The Republican Guard, which hoped to replace Pangalos with another puppet, was shortly after the coup ordered to disband by General Kondylis. It refused and was crushed by troops under Kondylis. Pangalos was captured and imprisoned but in time released. He was no longer to play a major role in Greek political life.

ber 1925, by the Locarno settlement. On the other hand, the feeling persisted that border changes were possible and perhaps even legitimate in view of the unsatisfactory peace settlements of World War I. Few of the new or newly enlarged states remained completely satisfied with their borders, to say nothing of the states which lost the war and territory. There seemed, to many, little reason why the newly remade map of Europe should not undergo further adjustments in the future.<sup>52</sup> This was particularly the case in the Balkans. Each Balkan state felt that the new boundary arrangements were in some measure achieved at its expense and, consequently, there was a distinct tendency to attempt to profit from the internal and external difficulties of neighboring states.

It was most unfortunate for Greece that in this complex environment Pangalos frequently flouted the advice of the able professionals in the Greek Foreign Office. Cautious and moderate men, who for the most part fully understood the new conditions in Europe, the career diplomatists were excluded from much of the decision-making process in foreign policy. Pangalos' disagreements with and distrust of the Foreign Office and its not too secret lack of confidence in him, contributed to this state of affairs. The strained relations between the two, underlined in the Barros and Daphni studies,<sup>53</sup> account, in part, for many of Pangalos' decisions in foreign policy.

Pangalos tended to see other states more hostile than they actually were, believed the worst of his antagonists, and was convinced therefore that conciliation was not merely unwise but potentially dangerous. He also tended to perceive what he expected and to act hastily before all the facts were in. He actually believed that the Bulgarian border incident was premeditated, more centralized, disciplined and controlled than it really was. He was genuinely surprised by the united and swift action of Britain, France, and Italy, and by the subsequent decision of the Council of the League condemning his limited invasion of Bulgaria. He was completely oblivious to the significance of the Locarno agreements which were signed only a few days before he ordered the army into Bulgaria. Even the British and French Ministers in Athens found it extremely difficult to make him understand the serious character of the situation in the Bulgarian crisis, and the importance their governments attached to the spirit of Locarno.<sup>54</sup> With the Corfu incident of 1923 in mind it was per-

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52. Evan Luard, "Conciliation and Deterrence: A Comparison of Political Strategies in the Interwar and Postwar Periods," in *Power, Action and Interaction*, edited by George H. Quester (Boston, 1971), pp. 310-333.

53. See Barros, *op. cit.*, all, and Daphni. *op. tit.*, pp. 244-245.

54. Barros, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

haps somewhat understandable that Pangalos should downgrade the importance of the League of Nations as a keeper of the peace. But his complete ignorance of the League Covenant bordered on the scandalous. One high ranking British official commented that only after article 10 of the Covenant, which he had probably never heard of before, was read to him, did he agree that Greece had violated it.<sup>55</sup>

Pangalos also overestimated the degree of common interests Greece shared with the major powers, particularly with Italy. And for all his concessions to Italy, he had very little to show. He gave in to Italy on Albania and silenced the "Northern Epirus" and the Dodecanese unionist movements within Greece. His ties with Italy strained relations with Yugoslavia and Turkey, and when Italian support appeared to be waning, he felt compelled to give in to the exorbitant demands of Yugoslavia on the free-zone in Thessaloniki. He was even prepared to recognize the Slavic minority in Greece as Serbs. With Turkey, he sabotaged the implementation of the Ankara Accord of June 1925, and the resolution of the other issues left suspended by the Lausanne settlement. He also incurred the displeasure of Britain and France by giving in to Mussolini's request, on May 1926, for the removal of the British Naval Mission and the French Military Mission from Greece.<sup>56</sup> After the settlement of the Mosul issue, Britain and France strongly disapproved of his close association with Italian diplomacy.

From Italy, Pangalos received no formal commitments for assistance, although he often acted as if he had. Mussolini refused to provide guarantees to Greece in order to maintain Italy's freedom of action. During the critical stages of the Mosul controversy the three powers, in varying degrees, encouraged his anti-Turkish position and, to some extent, supported his efforts to establish a stable government. After the settlement of the Mosul issue, the major powers found him to be a liability. In short, he allowed himself to be used by the major powers for the service of their interests and to the detriment of his country.

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55. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

56. The Missions were asked back after the fall of the Pangalos Regime. See Cheetham (Athens) to the Foreign Office, 19 May 1926, C6353/218/19, FO/317/11340, and 10 October 1926, C10795/218/19, FO/371/11340, *PRO*.