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TOP SECRET

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*I have this in train.*

*Mr. Egdwood. Brief!*

*Will you find out, if you can, what is recommended in this paper & set it out for the assistance of the PM.*

C.P. (47) 34

25th January, 1947.

*B 25/1/47*

CABINET

POLICY TOWARDS GREECE AND TURKEY

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

As the Cabinet will be aware, the question of British troops in Greece has been under review for some time, and also the state of the Greek Army. We accepted responsibility for giving guidance for the training and development of the Greek Army in order that they might be able to defend themselves against any attack from their neighbours. The Chiefs of Staff, who have examined this problem, recommend that the Greek Army shall be increased and, in view of the difficulties which the Greeks are experiencing with the bandit war, that the training shall be changed. Therefore I recommend that we support the increase of the Greek Army as recommended by the Chiefs of Staff; that the financial liability shall be dealt with as explained hereafter, and that the British forces shall be reduced by 1st April, 1947, to one brigade of four battalions and that this brigade would remain in Greece until the date of the withdrawal of Russian forces from Bulgaria, i.e. 90 days after the ratification of the Bulgarian Treaty.

2. In the event of the Commission appointed by the United Nations not disposing of the trouble on the Greek frontiers it will be necessary for the Greek Army to be trained so as to deal with this bandit warfare. To achieve this they will need additional British equipment and I propose that they should be supplied with this providing the Greek Government will meet this additional cost up to the 31st March, approximately £2,000,000, and that I should be authorised to inform the Greek Government at an early date.

3. With regard to the long term financial position, the United States have indicated that they are interested. I propose that I should be authorised to take up with them the question of the cost of the Greek Armed Forces after the 31st March (when our present commitment ends) with a view to sharing it.

4. There is no doubt that the presence of our forces in Greece has been a decisive factor in maintaining order in a large part of that country and has deterred Greece's northern neighbours from direct aggression and has made it possible to maintain Greek morale in the face of external threats and internal disturbances.

5. I would call attention to the fact that a great source of danger to Greece are the foreign-backed Communist and "Free Macedonian" bands there and unless the Greek Government is placed in a position to deal with these, there will be no political stability or substantial progress in economic reconstruction and the reparation of war damage.

6. I do not think, however, that we should underestimate the amount of recovery that Greece has already made in spite of the difficulties. These problems have been so featured in the press of the world that her achievements have been forgotten. Having undertaken to try and put Greece on a stable basis we must, I suggest, now see it through. The difficult time will come next spring.

7. American economic and financial experts have just arrived in Greece to explore the position and report to the United States Government. It will be essential to know from the United States Government, apart from the military situation, what their precise proposals are and the extent of the financial, economic and military help they are prepared to give over a period of three years.

8. The next difficulty is that of Turkey. We have an alliance with that country, and the United States has in her discussions with us indicated that she was ready to assist in that area as well. The Turkish Army has to be reorganised and equipped and an appropriate contribution to the manpower for essential defence should be provided. Here too, the United States Government should be asked to undertake as large a share of expenditure as possible. I also recommend that we should co-operate in advising the Turkish Government on the training and organisation of their armed forces, that British Service Representation in Turkey should be strengthened for this purpose and that meanwhile the present limited supply of equipment should be continued. Additional equipment which the Turkish Army may need should be provided as a result of the discussions with which we are now asking authorisation to proceed.

E.B.

Foreign Office, S.W.1.

25th January, 1947.

G. R.

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