

Greek voice of unreason

"The Soviet Union's fight for detente is genuine. The USSR cannot be called an imperialist power like the United States. It is a force against imperialism and capitalism."

The usual agitprop from Moscow? Not at all. This absurd statement was recently made by Greece's prime minister, Andreas Papandreu, at a congress of his Panhellenic Socialist Movement. Greece's NATO allies reacted with dismay; the U.S. denounced the statement as "outrageous" — strong talk in the normally gentle idiom of diplomacy.

Does Papandreu really believe that Soviet garrison troops in Eastern Europe and Afghanistan are merely uniformed tourists? Are all those Soviet-armed Cubans in Central America and Africa just educators and dance troupes? And if the U.S. was really the evil imperialist that Papandreu describes, would he be allowed to mouth this nonsense? Perhaps he should ask the Czechs, Hungarians or Poles.

Papandreu is no fool. He is only following the old adage that "nationalism is the last refuge of scoundrels." Greece's economy is in terrible shape. Large government-induced wage increases and rising welfare spending have caused a surge of inflation. Productivity is falling; entrepreneurial Greeks are clearly frightened to invest in a nation run by radical leftists.

Fires of nationalism

Even Papandreu's leftist supporters are growing restive. Some expected instant enrichment under a socialist regime; others, the rapid creation of a Marxist state. In spite of Papandreu's ardent left-speak, neither event has come to pass. Instead, it appears that Papandreu is stoking the fires of Greek nationalism in the hope that this ever-popular distraction will save the faltering political fortunes of his socialist party.

First, Papandreu called for the eviction of U.S. NATO bases in Greece. After much confused negotiations, it now seems the bases will be removed sometime in the indefinite future. Then came the traditional sabre-rattling over the Turks.

The simmering dispute between Greece and Turkey over offshore oil rights and territorial boundaries in the Aegean has been blown up by Athens into a major confrontation. U.S. and Turkish aircraft were even intercepted by their ally, Greece, over the Aegean.

Next, there occurred the ludicrous incident of a Greek destroyer sailing into an area being used for gunnery practice by the Turkish Navy. This mishap caused no damage; nevertheless, Greece almost broke diplomatic relations with Turkey and began calling up army reservists.

Then Greece got itself into a quiet but nasty altercation with supporters of Israel who were infuriated by Greece's close ties to the Arabs and support for the PLO. The result has been a discreet economic boycott of Greece by Zionist groups.

Now, Athens is threatening to send an army division to divided Cyprus. The Greeks are still fuming over the Turkish invasion of the island and its partition into Greek and Turkish zones, a situation exacerbated by the recent declaration of an inde-

**ERIC
MARGOLIS**



pendent Turkish republic on the island. Today, Cyprus is a small war waiting to happen.

Papandreu, along with his socialist and communist allies, has fostered a climate in Greece of bitter anti-Americanism. The recent murders in Athens of U.S. military personnel by leftist terrorists underscores this poisonous atmosphere. The traditional warm, close ties between Greece and America are being purposely sabotaged by Papandreu, a personal tragedy for many Greeks who consider the U.S. as a second home.

Greek socialists have also slavishly followed Moscow's party line by refusing to condemn the crushing of Solidarity in Poland and by denouncing the deployment of U.S. tactical missiles in Europe. Greece's NATO allies, and particularly England, are growing increasingly angered by Papandreu's policies which appear more subservient to Moscow than those of the Italian or Spanish Communist parties.

Is Papandreu conjuring up the imaginary devils of American imperialism and Turkish janissaries just to distract his countrymen from their economic plight? I believe so, but some Greeks suspect that Papandreu may be a dedicated communist intent upon manoeuvring his nation into the Soviet orbit — a sort of Hellenic Castro.

A patriotic silence

Unfortunately, the large number of Greeks who oppose Papandreu face a difficult problem. Few dare raise their voices in protest when Papandreu raises the cry of the Turkish threat or CIA plots to justify his leftist policies. To do so would appear unpatriotic — and Greeks are patriots par excellence. These spurious, high-emotion issues successfully mask the true threat to Greece: Leftist totalitarian rule.

Greeks are undeniably hot-blooded and hot-headed, and I like these qualities. But they are also a wise people with a profound moral sense who can be at once manly and compassionate. We, and Greece's NATO allies, must hope that the innate strength of Greek character, and the common sense of its people, will prevail over the dangerous xenophobia now being promoted by Papandreu.

Like all demagogues, Papandreu is inflaming what is bad in the Greek national character and suppressing those positive elements — love of freedom, industriousness and good sense — that have made Greece one of the world's better countries. Greeks everywhere should tell Papandreu that they do not want to see their homeland, the cradle of democracy, become another Bulgaria.

(Eric Margolis is a member of the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies)